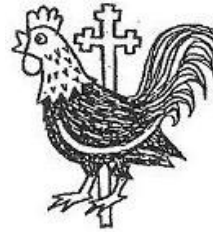


# East Coker Society Newsletter

January 2025

Free Issue No 197



Secretary: Sarah Owen:	862218	
Treasurer and Distributor: Martin Wells	864198	
Newsletter Editor: Lesley Lindsay	862868	<a href="mailto:l.lindsay@eastcoker.com">l.lindsay@eastcoker.com</a>

## East Coker Society News

Happy New Year!

Does the village still have a reading group? If not, can we invite someone to start one? The Café may be happy to have a small group of customers at less busy times. The Mobile Library is very happy to support such groups and can provide up to 10 copies of a book with sufficient notice. What do you think?

East Coker Society Newsletter – published quarterly (January, April, July and October). Free of charge. All local clubs, societies and organisations are encouraged to provide input. It has been the main source of information since 1975. Distributed by email and posted on the website at [www.eastcoker.com](http://www.eastcoker.com).

Printed copies are also available at Goose Slade Farm Shop, The Helyar Arms, St Michael and All Angels' Church, the Village Café and East Coker Hall.

If you wish to subscribe, please contact Lesley at [l.lindsay@eastcoker.com](mailto:l.lindsay@eastcoker.com).

Sarah Owen, Secretary, East Coker Society

### Next issue

The next issue of the Newsletter will be in April 2025.

Copy, please, to Lesley Lindsay at [l.lindsay@eastcoker.com](mailto:l.lindsay@eastcoker.com) by **28 March 2025 or sooner if possible**.

## Village Clubs and Organisations

### EAST/WEST COKER BRANCH ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

#### Poppy Appeal 2024

Thanks to everyone who contributed, East Coker School, East Coker Café, Goose Slade Farm Shop, Helyar Arms, M&S at White Post, West Coker Road Shop and Post Office, and the Quicksilver Mail. Our appreciation also goes out to our band of House-to-House collectors and the congregation of St Michael's for their support. With your help, we were able to raise £6,317 all of which will go directly to helping our Armed Services Community.

#### £1,000 Donation

Our President, David Holland will be presenting a cheque, on behalf of the branch, for £1,000 to the Legion's County Welfare Fund later this month at our Annual County Conference in Taunton. This would not be possible without the valued contributions from our supporters at events such as our Annual Cheese and Wine Evenings and other donations.

#### Annual Cheese and Wine Evening

A date for your Diary, we are already at the planning stage for the next **Cheese and Wine Evening on 9 May 2025**. We have booked The HMS Heron Volunteer Band for what should be another great evening of music and good food.

Dave Giles  
Chair East/West Coker Branch.

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## EAST COKER WINE CIRCLE

Saturday 1 February - Theme Night. Chinese New Year - the year of the snake

Wednesday 5 March - Bee keeping and honey

Wednesday 2 April - Commercial wine tasting - tba

Wednesday 7 May - Bonny Sartin

Special event - 21 March (Friday) Charlie and the Chocolate Factory 7.30pm, at Westland Entertainment Centre.

Tiplers' weekend - the Palace Hotel, Paignton 4-7 April.

We welcome new and old looking forward to a New Year.

Sarah Rashley

## EAST COKER WI

The WI is an organisation for all women of any race or creed to inform, support and provide friendship. We meet every month on the last Thursday at 7.30pm at East Coker Hall, except for June, when there is an organised outing, and in December for a Christmas meal.

Each month, a different speaker is found with either amusing tales or interesting information.

Once a year, we hold an Open Evening for both sexes. On Thursday 30 January, we will hear Mr Francis Burroughs with a light-hearted talk on why one should not let your daughter pursue an acting career. Guests welcome.

Anyone interested in joining the WI can contact secretary, Pauline Gubbins on tel 864430.

Joyce Pryor



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Contact Alice: 07783 928532

Louise: 07743 780609

#### **EAST COKER VILLAGE HALL CHARITABLE TRUST**

We are sure the majority of you are now aware that the East Coker Village Hall roof has come to the end of its useful life – in fact, if you look up you will notice patches on the ceiling – tell-tale signs of water ingress. This is due to the original roofing panels eroding. A great deal of work has gone into this project, the cost of which will be in the region of £110,000. As is very often the case, having cleared one hurdle, another is put up which we have to jump – the latest being that, as we are a 'public building', we have had to put in for building control. Funds currently stand at circa half of the monies required. We are most grateful to those parishioners, clubs and users of the Hall for donations which they have made to the fund. In addition, the sums raised by the organisers of the Picnic in the Park and the Annual Christmas Lunch are much appreciated. Our thanks to all of you.

We continue to work on various fundraising ideas, which, once set in motion, will be advertised and which we hope will be well supported. We are extremely fortunate to have such a facility, which the trustees are keen to maintain and improve to as high a standard as possible. If any of you are able to assist with fundraising events we would be delighted to hear from you, contact may be made via email [echbookings@btinternet.com](mailto:echbookings@btinternet.com) or by telephone 01935 862447.

Should you wish to make a donation to the fund, this may be done either via BACS or cheque:

Via BACS:      Account name:      East Coker Village Hall  
                 Sort Code:              40-52-40  
                 Account number:      00101770

By cheque:      Made payable to East Coker Village Hall and sent to:  
                         The Secretary, East Coker Village Hall, 21 Mill Close, East Coker, BA22 9LF.

We also have a 'Just Giving' page, which can be accessed via the following link <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/eastcokerhallroof>. Alternatively, go to the JustGiving site and search for East Coker Hall. In addition, we are looking to set up a 'Give as you Live Online' account – this should give us access to donations from over 6,000 stores such as M&S, John Lewis, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Boots, Screwfix, Argos.

Enough of our roof trial and tribulations, and on to other matters:

Film nights were very poorly supported during 2024. There will be no film this month (January). Depending on what films are offered to us, consideration will be given to showings in February and March. Details will be put on the Hall website.

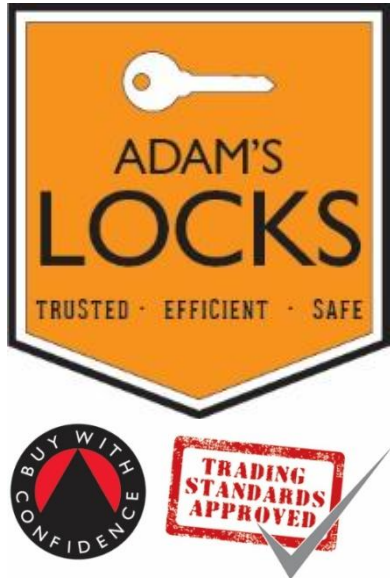
Christmas decorations: Our thanks to the Decorating Team, who, yet again, decorated the Hall in time for the Annual Pantomime. The team now have the decorating down to a fine art, completing the task in well under four hours.

The Village Hall is exceptionally well used by a wide range of groups, clubs and classes as well as being used for birthday parties and various family events. It has excellent facilities, all of which are included in the hire rate.

Run by a committee of dedicated trustees, all of whom are volunteers who wish to ensure that the Hall continues to be a valued community facility, we would welcome new committee members to assist in the running of it. You should be committed, willing to help with various tasks and be prepared to take on the responsibilities associated with acting as a trustee. It is not onerous and should not take up much time. We have four meetings a year (including the AGM). If you are interested in helping to ensure that the hall remains a valued community facility, please make contact via the website email address [echbookings@btinternet.com](mailto: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>

With best wishes for 2025.



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## EAST COKER GARDENING CLUB

We ended 2024 with a talk by Colin Vardell on the garden he and his wife have created over the years. We shared a sense of wonder as we watched Colin's superb photos and listened to his descriptions of his recipe for a wild garden. He showed us how his and wife Susy's home became a passion and life work as a nature reserve and canvas for his photography. Planting some 2,000 trees and digging two sizeable ponds, using neither fertilisers nor insecticides, Colin led us through the years and seasons, showing us his superb photos and sharing his knowledge of wild things. A wonderful way to finish off what has not been one of the best gardening years.

### The programme for the next few months is as follows:

Thursday 13 February	The History of Forde Abbey and the Gardens - Dr Paul Bygrave
Thursday 13 March	Otters – Stephen Powles
Thursday 10 April	Remarkable Trees of Stourhead – Emily Utgren
Thursday 8 May	Shopping Evening at Brimsmore
Saturday 17 May	Plant Sale at East Coker Hall – 10am to 12 noon. Refreshments and homemade cakes.

We try to provide a varied programme during the year. We are always happy to welcome visitors and new members; whether you are interested in gardening or would just like to join a group of friendly, sociable people. The Propagator, a free newsletter containing Club news, notes of gardening events, tips, etc is distributed via email, with hard copies available at each meeting for those not on email.

During the growing season, there is a produce stall stocked by members with plants and produce. Vouchers offering discounts on seeds, seed potatoes, young plants and seedlings are available during January and February, with offers on spring bulbs and over wintering onions and shallots come summer. Bulk order discounts are available to members during January with special order forms for sundry goods, such as compost. Twice a year there is a growing competition. Plug plants will be distributed for the competition to be held in the summer. Day trips are arranged to places of interest.

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 £25, with subs of £2 per meeting. Visitors £5. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, commencing at 7.30pm (doors open at 7.00pm) 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 wish to speak to us, please phone me 01935 862447. We try to provide a varied programme during the year. We are always happy to welcome visitors.

Helen

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## EAST COKER ANNUAL FLOWER AND PRODUCE SHOW

The Annual Show will be held this year on **Saturday 16 August** at East Coker Hall. As always, we look forward to welcoming exhibitors old and new. If you haven't exhibited before, please be assured that help is to hand, and assistance available on the day of the show.

If you would like to know about what is involved in exhibiting, please feel free to make contact, telephone 01935 862447. It is great fun, very rewarding – and you never know – you may go away clutching a red card, having won a first. The committee will be working on the schedule during the next month or so, ready for printing and distribution.

Wishing you all a happy 2025, good growing weather and successful baking, sewing, painting, and photography.

Helen



## EAST COKER POETRY GROUP - Forthcoming Events

Meetings are held in the Village Café, East Coker, BA22 9HY starting at 7.30pm.

There is no charge, and parking is available for our evening meetings behind the Café.

This year has been the 20th year of the East Coker Poetry Group, and I am pleased that the year has continued the varied selection of styles and material at our poetry evenings. Poetry comes in all 'shapes and sizes' and I hope that we will continue to champion poetry in an ever-changing world. That we have something to say and still want to say it, is shown by the number of new poets and the popularity of poetry in this area. Our first meetings of 2025 bring us a taste of what poetic talent is found in this part of the country.

### Tuesday 28 January 2025 - Open meeting + Guest Poets

Our Open meetings always bring forth interesting poetry. Bring some poems to read; either your own or by any poet you think may interest the group.

Our meeting will start with short readings by local poets Alison Read and Andrew Haylock

### Tuesday 25 February 2025 - Sheila Hopkins and Kara Bignell-Bird

Sheila Hopkins' poetry has been well received at the Yeovil Literary Festival. Her poems cover a wide range of subjects, many inspired by her life experiences. She has published several collections - Life on Location, Dancing to Your Tune and Flowers in a Jar.

Kara Bignell-Bird hosts 'Words with Wine' poetry readings at 'Eight' in Silver Street, Yeovil.

### Tuesday 25 March 2025 - Somerset and Dorset Poets

Trevor Pearce takes us on a poetic journey through the eyes of poets who have lived in the Counties of Somerset or Dorset. There is a wealth of great poetry – and this will also be one of our popular 'audio – visual' meetings.

Contact via our website or email [info@eastcokerpoetry.org.uk](mailto:info@eastcokerpoetry.org.uk)

Our website [www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk](http://www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk)

Contact David Cloke for more info about the group: Email [info@eastcokerpoetry.org.uk](mailto:info@eastcokerpoetry.org.uk).  
Website [www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk](http://www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk) will carry details of meetings when they are confirmed.

David Cloke, East Coker Poetry

## Young People

### EAST COKER SCOUT GROUP



Charlie and Faye, our two Explorer Scout Young Leaders, spent 15 days travelling across Europe in July / August alongside six other explorer scouts to complete their Explorer Belt award. They travelled by train to Holland, Germany, Switzerland and Italy – before taking six trains back-to-back from Rome to Yeovil.



International opportunities are highlights for anyone within scouting and they spent four days at Kandersteg International Camp site in Switzerland alongside scouts from across Europe, where the scale of the mountains and the stunning scenery impressed as much as the icy lake swim. Whilst in Berlin, they visited Checkpoint Charlie and whilst in Naples wandered the ruins of Pompeii. An evening cooking lesson in Rome which included pizza and tiramisu making was far more successful than trying to cook 'local' cabbage soup in Berlin. The team presented the tales of their adventure to parents, scout leaders and the Crusader explorers as the final part on the Belt. Congratulations to all.

Our cubs have already been kayaking at Sutton Bingham and have a varied programme of activities planned for this term.

[www.eastcoker.com](http://www.eastcoker.com)

The scouts have been to the woods for fire lighting to cook bananas and pancakes. This term's activities include letterboxing on Dartmoor, a Day hike, County Challenge and a survival weekend. We currently have no beaver section as we have no adult team members to run this section. We would welcome contact from anyone who feels they could help us with our beavers (6-8 years old).

We run East Coker Scout Group with a small team of leaders and supporters. As well as looking for new beaver section team members, we are also seeking additional people to support our Trustee Board and Group Leadership Team who support the running of the Group.

If you have any time you feel you could offer us, please do get in touch – this may be anything from helping maintain the scout hut, to looking after our equipment or joining one of our teams.

Thank you for all your support.

David Webber, Group Scout Leader  
[eastcokerscouts@gmail.com](mailto:eastcokerscouts@gmail.com)



1<sup>st</sup> East Coker Scout Group



### **EAST COKER VILLAGE QUIZ** **19<sup>th</sup> 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 22 March** starting at 7.00pm (arrival from 6.30pm).

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](mailto:eastcokerscouts@gmail.com) by the end of Saturday 15 February if you wish to enter a team. Just as a reminder, teams can be up to 6 quizzers strong.
- 2 By Wed 19 February, we will let you know if you have a spot. Last year, we had a few spaces left for the quiz; however, should we have too many entries this year, 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 8 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](mailto:eastcokerscouts@gmail.com)

### **EAST COKER PLAYGROUP - Follow us on Facebook: East Coker Preschool**

Children can join us from the age of 2 years. We accept Somerset Council 2-year-old funding, 15-hour Universal Early Years Entitlement, Working Families Entitlement 15-hour, Tax Free Childcare and Childcare Vouchers. For more information on support with childcare costs, please visit [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://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 £2.00 or a donation/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 on 07503 751133 or email [office.ecplaygroup@gmail.com](mailto:office.ecplaygroup@gmail.com).

Eve Dudden

**EAST COKER PRIMARY SCHOOL**



Happy New Year from everyone at East Coker Primary School!

What a very busy autumn term we have had. Our topic was 'Scrumdidlyumptious' and there was quite a bit of cooking going on, making cakes and the older children made their very own chocolate bar!

We began the year welcoming our new Reception children who have really enjoyed our play based learning and outdoor area. In October our Year 3 children began brass lessons thanks to the PTFA who kindly pay for all children in Year 3 to learn a musical instrument for ten weeks.

We have been on several visits this term as well. Our Year 6 children went off to Oakhampton for a week which was subsidised by the PTFA. This was a new venue for us due to the smaller numbers we have in year 6 this year but a huge hit and we will be going again in September. They thoroughly enjoyed the axe throwing, archery and gorge scrambling to name just a few of the activities they took part in.

There was also a visit to Exmouth Zoo for Year 3 and Year 4 children which everyone really enjoyed. This linked with our science topic this term. This was also heavily subsidised by the PTFA.

I am very proud to say that we have earned the Gold Artsmark Award this term due to the high level of arts we provide across the curriculum both during and out of school time. Huge thanks to Mrs S Allen for all her hard work and for elevating The Arts even further. The biggest change for us is the greater responsibility our children have been given in running events and making changes across The Arts curriculum.

As part of our longer-term IT plan, the classes have all been updated with new and much larger smartboards. This enables us to keep up to date with the latest tech to continue to support teaching and learning. The next job is a new phone system coming in January!

Mr Maddick, our Site Manager has been working hard to support the school with improvements to the Willows block. We have now created our very own cookery room for the children to be able to use as part of their Design and Technology curriculum. We have a lovely new kitchen, fitted with new furniture, to help deliver cookery lessons.

**East Coker Primary School**  
for reception to year 6

**BREAKFAST & AFTER SCHOOL CLUB**

activities include:  
homework help  
special themed days  
sports  
art & craft  
breakfast or snacks  
toys and alot more....

monday to fridays  
7.30-8.45am  
3.30-4.30pm, 3.30-5.30pm & 3.30-6pm

book via parent pay

We have also had a very successful term with our new Breakfast and After School Club. The children have really enjoyed the outdoor space and the wide range of art and crafts available. They have also loved the bacon sandwiches and pizza bagels!

At the end of the term, we had our usual Christmas door competition as well as decorating the whole school. We were very lucky to have a beautiful Christmas Tree donated to the school from Palmers, which the children decorated with their own decorations.

We were also exceptionally lucky this year to get a visit from Santa and his elf who dropped by via helicopter. They stayed and spoke to the children and sang songs before they flew off to visit other schools. The children had a really lovely time. Thank you RNAS Yeovilton.



The PTFA and helpers had a very busy two afternoons supporting the children with their Christmas shopping and wrapping. They also had their Christmas raffle which showcased some fantastic hampers. Thanks to the events the PTFA run, the money raised is used to make further improvements for the children. Last year, the PTFA supported the children in many special events, reduced costs to parents for school visits and also did some match funding in order to improve our outdoor area. This was led by the school council.

We had several end of year Christmas events such as our Reception Sing A Long and our Infant Nativity. We also had our annual Christmas carol service 'Christmas Around The World' at St Michaels and All Angels' church led 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.

Our theme this spring term is 'Castles' and we are looking forward to finding out about the Elizabethans and significant historical events and individuals.

We are also very excited to be working with Mr Simon Dicker at OSR projects in West Coker once again. 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.

If anyone would like to come and support the children in school with their reading, design and technology sessions, such as sewing/cooking and general help and support it would be greatly appreciated. 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/>.

Jane Hesketh-Williams, Head Teacher, East Coker Primary School

## The Churches

### ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS' CHURCH

On 7 October, our new Rector, the Reverend Phil Macaulay was officially installed and licensed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells. In his first few months, Phil has been busy getting to know his new parishes and their congregations, and all the signs are that he is going down very well indeed. He has led a number of services at St Michael's, including a wonderful baptism in November and the Annual Carol Service the weekend before Christmas Day. The church was as full as we have seen it for years for the carol service and we aren't sure whether that was people coming to see Phil, or folk attracted by the offer of free glühwein! A bit of both perhaps.

The Annual Remembrance Service was a great success again this year, and many thanks go to the Royal British Legion, particularly David and Jill Holland, for organising it. The church was also full to bursting for East Coker School's Annual Christmas Concert on the last day of term, and again full of happiness and music for a great Family Communion Service on Christmas morning. Anyone who attended one of the Christmas events will agree that the church was looking fantastic, thanks to the hard work, imagination and creativity of our flower arranging team.

We haven't yet planned a schedule of services for the Easter season, but there will be plenty of activities, events and services leading up to and on Easter Sunday. Keep an eye on Facebook and village notice boards for more details nearer the time.

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 the church's distribution list, email the PCC Secretary, Christine Vince, on [christinevince2@btinternet.com](mailto:christinevince2@btinternet.com).

We also post news and notices on Facebook – St Michael's Church has a page [www.facebook.com/East.Coker.Church](https://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](mailto:tofferb@gmail.com).

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

Toffer Beattie, Churchwarden

## **REVEREND PHIL WRITES ....**

### **Happy New Year and Hello to East Coker, Closworth and Sutton Bingham! - 6 January 2025**

I write on the Feast of the Epiphany, an ancient Christian Festival when the church remembers the story of the Magi coming with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the infant Jesus (Gospel of Matthew chapter 2). It is also connected with the story of the adult Jesus' own baptism by John the Baptist that commenced his ministry, together themes of beginnings and journeys. I just had the joy of leading a very joyful assembly with the children at West Coker School where we thought together about how faith encourages us on long and difficult journeys.

I have been Rector/Vicar of the Coker Ridge Benefice, including All Saints Closworth, St Michael's East Coker and All Saints Sutton Bingham, since early October and it has been a bit of a whirlwind of meeting people and getting to know places. I feel immensely privileged to be in such a beautiful corner of the country and have found people to be full of kindness and grace. This journey for me I hope will be a long one, and I would love to be able to help all seven of the village communities to find spaces where they can be encouraged in their relationships with God and with one another. I do have a strong faith, and I've given my life to try to make sense of it and do my best to follow the Lord Jesus, but I know I'm probably not right about everything and certainly don't have all the answers. I trust each of you have your own stories of faith and thinking and I'd be very happy to listen as well as to share.

I'm so privileged to be able to look forward to at least one wedding at both Closworth and East Coker this year, hopefully some christenings/baptisms, all the beautiful Holy Communion services and of course funerals are powerful and precious occasions. I am so very grateful to all the wonderful volunteers and supporters of these Churches, whether they have lots of faith or a little, for this is your church.

### **2025 Special (provisional) Plans**

I am especially looking forward to some special events through the year, in addition to our regular services and the festivals you would expect like Christmas, Easter, Remembrance etc.

- The St Michael's East Coker Annual Parochial Church Meeting is planned for 7.00pm on Wednesday 2 April in the Dampier Room of East Coker Hall.
- The All Saints, Sutton Bingham Annual Parochial Church Meeting is planned for Sunday 6 April, straight after the 11.00am Service finishes.
- I hope to lead a Maundy Thursday Holy Communion Service at St Michael's at 7.00pm on 17 April.
- I hope to celebrate the Festival of the Ascension on Thursday 29 May with a 7.00pm Holy Communion at All Saints, Closworth.
- I have some provisional ideas for a 'Coker Ridge Pilgrimage Weekend' over 6-8 June where we encourage people to visit as many of the seven Churches at their own pace and engage with family friendly activities and prayer stations at each one.
- I hope to celebrate the Festival Corpus Christi on Thursday 19 June with a 10:30am Holy Communion at All Saints, Sutton Bingham.
- Patronal Festivals are special days we can use to celebrate our Church buildings and communities - I like the combination of having a Holy Communion Service and some good food and drink together after. For East Coker, we celebrate St Michael's a day early on the Sunday 28 September and for Sutton Bingham and Closworth, both being All Saints, I expect we will do a 6.00pm Service at Closworth on Saturday 1 November, and Celebrate the Festival at Sutton Bingham with our 11.00am Sunday service on 2 November.

Thank you all for all that you already may be doing to support the journeys of this church, this village community and your neighbours. Thank you for every check-in phone call you give to one another, every small chat, kind word or smile that builds up love and peace in this world. May God bless you and your household with peace and hope into the beginning of and throughout 2025.

Reverend Phil Macaulay, Rector of the Coker Ridge Benefice

[officecokerridge@gmail.com](mailto:officecokerridge@gmail.com)

07977849670

7 Cedar Fields, West Coker, BA22 9DB.

Grace and peace, Phil

## 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 are continuing to run the 321course at our Café Church on the first Sunday of each month. It 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! The 321course will run until July. You can sign up for free at [321course.com](http://321course.com) so if you miss a month in person, you can catch up in the comfort of your own home.

Café Church is always on the first Sunday of the month, where fresh coffee, croissants and bacon rolls are provided. 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 <https://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](mailto: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

### 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 4 February    Tuesday 4 March    Tuesday 1 April**

**OD ARTS  
FESTIVAL**  
23-25 MAY 2025



**Od Arts Festival 2025 – *Thinking in Circles*** creates conversations through art, film and performance in rural Somerset, including a six-month programme of creative activities, culminating in a three-day festival in May 2025.

This year's festival is dedicated to supporting and engaging with contemporary artistic practice and community activity that explores cycles of growth, production, and consumption.

Acknowledging feelings of ecological grief and culpability in our consumerist and colonial culture, participating artists will connect sensitively with the rural context of the festival and offer an opportunity to pause and discover alternative ways of thinking. The festival invites participants to consume new ways of thinking, share food, laughs and ideas, and grow together.

Participating artists will be announced in January. If you would like more information about the festival, please look at <https://odartsfestival.co.uk/> or sign up to our newsletter which is at the bottom of the website. We don't send loads.

**Festival dates 23 May to 25 May 2025 – Put it in your diary.**

**Call out for festival volunteers.** Our art venues across East Coker and West Coker are stewarded by volunteers. Each shift is 2.5 hours long and you are paired with one other if possible. You can sign up for as many shifts as you would like. You don't need to know about art, as we host an introduction morning before the festival, so you know what to do and it's a good time to meet other volunteers and some of the artists taking part.

All volunteers are gifted with a free festival T shirt! It's good fun and a great way to meet others.

Please email [chantelle@osprojects.co.uk](mailto:chantelle@osprojects.co.uk) or call 07967 756356 if you are interested.

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Mr H

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**RICS** If you have instructed another agent on a Sole Agency or Sole Selling Rights basis, the terms of those instructions must be considered to avoid a possible liability to pay two commissions.

**The Property Ombudsman**

## MONICA'S THOUGHTS ON THE NEW YEAR

Well, Christmas is over, presents and cards sent, and now the task off sending thank you letters. Some time ago singing harvest hymns, the words "All good gifts around us are sent from heav'n above; Then thank the Lord ..." made me think, how many things do we take for granted?

The gift of sight we take for granted. After watching the coronation, I was aware I had an eye problem. I shut my right eye; all I could see with my left eye was a black square - no picture. I looked out of the window again, all I could see with my left eye was a black square, no details of the doors and windows of the houses - no trees, no gardens, no print in books. The sight of my left eye had gone.

Help was at hand from my optician and the hospital, together with the organisations supporting people with sight loss. I could not have coped without all their help. I still cannot see much with my left eye, but I am extremely grateful to be able to see with my other eye my great-great nieces and nephews as they grow up, and the flowers in the garden.

It's been a bit of a jolt when something I took for granted is lost, and I think now at least I can hear. A number of my friends are profoundly deaf and can hear nothing, not even the lovely church bell. Another friend cannot speak and has to be tube fed. At least I can sleep and eat, and my adorable cat Flora thanks me for her care. I have a lot to be thankful for.

One big 'thank you' must go to our new vicar. If you have not been to church recently, come back. He is young and very good with young children - and very welcoming. Thank you, Rev Phil.

Monica Whipp

## **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](http://www.thegoosefarm.com).

Liz & Phil

## **EAST COKER PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Live Nativity**

East Coker gathered for a spectacle of festive spirit, community pride, and just a touch of unpredictability as their second annual Live Nativity Play, complete with a star-studded cast of villagers and even more famous animals, were a big hit. Among the many four-legged stars was Hairy McClary, a goat with showbiz credentials that would make any Hollywood agent proud. The production had a light-hearted charm with not everything going to plan, which was much appreciated by a large audience.

It looked like weather was going to be a challenge, but luckily Storm Darragh passed over just in time. A big thank you must go to Bridget Suggs and Sandi Wintersgill for organising this event; thank you also to the cast, all the volunteers who manned the gate, kept the traffic moving safely and those who kept the audience warm on a chilly evening with mulled wine and warm food.

We would also like to thank Pen Mill scaffolding who built the stage for free which we were incredibly grateful for. Photos of the event can be found on the East Coker Parish website.

### **School signage**

For some time, there have been 20mph signs with warning lights in North Coker for the Primary School. These are situated on the Yeovil Road and the road coming in from East Coker but there has been no such signage for those approaching from Burton. Some of you may have noticed this has been rectified with a new 20mph sign which is awaiting the warning lights which should appear very soon.

### **Playground path**

Many parents whose children attend East Coker Pre-school will be all too aware of the problem of mud on wet days when coming to drop off and pick up their children. The Parish Council has commissioned a new gravel path which is due to be ready for the children's return after the Christmas holiday period, hopefully meaning the necessity for wellies will be a thing of the past.

### **Cemetery**

Having finished the extensive removal of badger setts, trees and shrubs and landscaping on the north side of the cemetery, we are awaiting the arrival of Spring to add the final touches of grass-seeding and erecting a fence. We hope those visiting this winter will forgive the temporary muddy areas.

### **Parish Ranger**

Despite the very wet weather thrown at us in October and November, it was noticeable how relatively few flooded areas appeared on the roads around the parish. This is largely due to the constant battle Tim (our Ranger) and his men fight to keep the drains clear of mud and leaves. They also do sterling work to keep the footpaths clear and the villages litter-free.



However, these are large and never-ending tasks, and we would ask all to help in picking up litter, keeping the roads and paths clear of overgrowth from gardens and generally doing whatever one can to maintain our lovely corner of Somerset. We are also sure Tim would appreciate an encouraging word or two if you see him working around your area!

May we wish all in the parish a happy and healthy 2025.

Cllr Carter-Uren

# ART CLASSES

WITH ARTIST & LECTURER  
ELEANOR FARR MA

*Learn to draw & paint  
Beginners and intermediates welcome.  
We'll work through all the fundamentals of drawing  
and painting together. You'll learn techniques to  
inspire you and create beautiful artworks, whilst  
experimenting with new materials.  
All in fun and friendship*

**JANUARY TERMS 2025 BEGIN:**

**TUESDAY CLASS 7TH - 13:05 - 15:05  
WEDNESDAY CLASS 8TH - 13:30 - 15:30  
SATURDAY CLASS 11TH - 10:00 -12:00**

**£180 FOR A 10 WEEK COURSE  
EAST COKER VILLAGE HALL**

Book early to avoid disappointment. Places limited.  
To book your place please contact Ellie Farr 07745216811 or at  
enquiries@eleanorfarr.gallery



## QUARTERLY VILLAGE DIARY January 2025 – April 2025

Tues 28 Jan	Poetry Group – Open Meeting	7.30pm	Village Café
Sat 1 Feb	Wine Circle – Theme Night	8.00pm	East Coker Hall
Tues 4 Feb	Mobile Library	1.50pm – 2.10pm	Helyar Arms
Thurs 15 Feb	Gardening Club – History of Forde Abbey	7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Tues 25 Feb	Poetry Group – 2 Poets	7.30pm	Village Café
Tues 4 March	Mobile Library	1.50pm – 2.10pm	Helyar Arms
Wed 5 March	Wine Circle – Bee- Keeping	8.00pm	East Coker Hall
Thurs 13 March	Gardening Club – Otters – Stephen Powles	7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Fri 21 March	Wine Circle	TBA Westlands	Entertainment Centre
Sat 22 March	Scouts 19 <sup>th</sup> Annual Quiz	6.30pm – 7.00pm	East Coker Hall
Tues 25 March	Poetry Group – Trevor Pearce	7.30pm	Village Café
Sun 30 March	British Summer Time Begins – clocks go forward 1 hour		
Tues 1 April	Mobile Library	1.50pm – 2.10pm	Helyar Arms
Wed 2 April	East Coker Annual Parochial Church Meetng	7.00pm	Dampier Room
Wed 2 April	Wine Circle – Commercial Wine Tasting	8.00pm	East Coker Hall
4 April – 7 April	Wine Circle - Tipples Weekend		Palace Hotel, Paignton
Thurs 10 April	Gardening Club – Remarkable Tree of Stourhead	7.30pm	Emily Utgren
<i>Fri 9 May</i>	<i>Advance notice - RBL Cheese and Wine Evening</i>		

**Copy for the April 2025 Newsletter by 28 March or before if possible**