# Alton Methodist Church NEWSLETTER

### September 2025



Minister: Rev. Philip Simpkins

Tel: 01420 83167

 ${\bf Church\ website\ www.alton method ist.org.uk}$ 

Circuit website www.hsbcircuit.org.uk



Alton Methodist Church is in a covenant partnership with the Parish of the Resurrection in the Greater Alton project.



### Dear Friends,

What a lovely summer we have been able to enjoy! The sun has shone; the skies have been blue and some of us may have been away on holiday.

We enjoyed a trip up to Wiltshire where we stayed on the farm, catching up with family and watching the sun set as the cows grazed in the fields. We also drove up to Liverpool (a first experience) where we celebrated our nephew's wedding in Sefton Park, meeting with Angela's side of the family.

Time was spent on the Isle of Wight where we lazed in the garden, counted rabbits (!), walked the many bridal paths, swam in the sea and celebrated our Pearl Wedding Anniversary with breakfast overlooking the Solent, an open top bus



ride, a boat trip around the Needles and an evening meal with friends.

Now that summer begins to drift into early autumn, we look forward to all that this new season brings in the life of the church.

We are delighted to welcome Mrs Emily Spencer as our new Anna Chaplain in a service of commissioning on August 31<sup>st</sup> at St Lawrence Church, 10:30am.



Emily's husband is a vicar in Cowplain and she has two daughters, Chloe and Leah. Emily will, I am sure, be a great blessing to us and along with your support will lead the Anna Chaplaincy team with wisdom, grace and compassion. I am sure that you will give her a warm welcome and pray for her ministry amongst those of us in our older years.

The new Methodist year will also begin with the amalgamation of two circuits, the Hants Surrey Border Circuit and the Berkshire Surrey Borders Circuit. The name will be the Blackwater Valley Circuit. There will be a service of celebration and a welcome to a new member of the staff team, Rev Wes Hampton, at High Cross Church, Camberley on Monday September 1<sup>st</sup> at 7pm led by Rev Conrad Hicks. I hope that we will be well represented from Alton!

We were sad to hear that **Iris Anderson**, a long-standing member and friend of the church had died in August, and everyone is welcome to attend a thanksgiving service for her life on **Tuesday 16**<sup>th</sup> **September at 2pm** followed by refreshments in the church hall.

All the usual groups and activities will soon be back in full swing – and we are so grateful to all of you who give of your time, gifts and commitment to ensure the smooth running of the church.

The 'Compass Course' will conclude with two sessions in September held at the Manse on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept & Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> Sept.

A date for your diary is the first fundraiser for our new charity of the year, Naomi House. There will be a quiz evening held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October in the Church at 7pm with quiz masters Alison and Graham Noakes leading the evening. A supper is included so why not come along, create a team and enjoy a wonderful evening, through which we can raise some funds for Naomi House (Children's Hospice).

**Harvest Festival** will be celebrated on **Sunday October 5**<sup>th</sup> at 10am when we will give thanks to God for his many blessings.

All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above.
Then thank the Lord,
O thank the Lord for all his love.

Every blessing, Philip



### **Lunch Club**

We are looking forward to **Lunch Club on September 9**<sup>th</sup> after Andy, Denise and the team have had a well-deserved break over August.



We begin gathering for lunch anytime after 12 noon and aim to eat at 12:30pm. There will be a delicious two course meal followed by a cup of tea and a brief devotion.

### The cost of the lunch is now £5 after popular request!

We are able to receive both cash and card payments with our tap and pay machine.

New members and friends are always welcome.

Regular members will already be booked in, but if you are unsure, want to book a friend or indeed need to cancel just ring Philip and leave a message on 01420-83167.

### **Stay and Play**

Stay and Play has also enjoyed a well-deserved break over the summer but looks to begin meeting once more (Parents/Carers & Tots) on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 10-11:30am.



Angela and Liz are delighted to be

joined by Liz Strain who has joined the team as we seek to support parents and their young children at this early stage of life.

I know that they have been washing all the toys in preparation – so thank you!

## MSF (Doctors Without Borders)



We have learnt so much about the work of MSF over the last Methodist year (Sept

to August) through our newsletters and presentations in Church. I have begun to notice how often MSF is mentioned on the news, whilst working in Gaza amongst people in desperate need of help.

Thanks to your generosity we were able to send off funds raised to MSF in the summer and received the following reply:

Mr Titterington and Members of Alton Methodist Church,

Thank you so much for your incredibly generous donation of £5,720 to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) raised through your outstanding fundraising efforts. Your support is hugely appreciated and helps our teams provide medical care to the people who need it most.

Amazing!

### **Naomi House**

In this new Church year members of the AGM selected a new charity to support – this time closer to home, Naomi House. Over the coming months we will seek to learn about the work that they do and in response raise funds which we will then donate to their cause.



As many of you know Naomi House is a charity that provides hospice care to very sick and life limited children.

Their nursing care and family support teams provide wonderful medical and emotional support both to the children and their families at a very difficult time. At the end of a child's life they also seek to help create a very peaceful and dignified end surrounded by loved ones.

**Their vision is:** is a future where children, young adults and their families have access to compassionate support and expert palliative care, when and where they need it, on the good days, difficult days and last days.

**Their Mission is:** to always provide outstanding care for children, young adults and families. Guided by the families we support, we will develop innovative services to provide personalised care and invest in our staff, our volunteers and our communities, to deliver an inclusive and collaborative service.

### Their values are to be:

Agile: taking the initiative, being innovative, showing flexibility and always listening and learning.

**S**upportive: being committed to helping others and by acknowledging and rewarding contribution.

**P**roud: recognising and celebrating our colleagues, the work we do and the difference we all make.

Inclusive: creating an environment where everyone feels valued, empowered, respected and heard, where everyone feels they belong.

Responsive: being committed to taking responsibility, taking action and getting results.

Encouraging: inspiring everyone to do their best, to get involved and to strive to improve. <sup>1</sup>

I have been in touch with Naomi House & Jacksplace and we plan to meet in person to discuss how together we might hear about the work they do and over the coming year seek to support them.

Thank you!

1. Learn About Us | About | Naomi House & Jacksplace

### **Quiz Evening & Supper**

In aid of Naomi House

Saturday October 4th at 7pm

Alton Methodist Church
(A GAP event)

Please note the date and place your name on the sign-up sheet as a team or as an individual (when you can be placed in a team) over the coming month.

The quiz will be run by Alison and Graham Noakes from Farnham who regularly host a quiz at the Spire Church & elsewhere!

I have asked for lots of questions on sport and gardening so that I have a chance to do well! (I am not sure they were listening!)

# Welcome Service for the Reverend Conrad Hicks As Chairman of the South-East Methodist District Saturday 6th September, 3pm Redhill Methodist Church

Gloucester Road, Redhill RH1 1BP

All are welcome.

### **CAMEO NEWS**

Sian Mills, Project Manager of Alton Food Bank, visited us in July to bring us up to date with the work of our local food bank. She told us that Alton residents and businesses are generous supporters in terms of foodstuff donations, monetary contributions and practical help. Some of our church members are regular volunteers at either the Warehouse or the Distribution Centre. More detailed information about Alton's Food Bank can be found in Sian's recent article, printed elsewhere in this Newsletter.





August saw the return of one of our favourite speakers, David Allan, who gave us a fascinating insight into the postal history of Alton, complete with a display of historic stamps and postmarks.

**At our next meeting on September 27th** one of our CAMEO members, Margaret Hodson, will be sharing with us memories of her visit to Nepal.

Judy, Janet & Anna.

### **Ladies @ Wetherspoons**

We are getting together on **Thursday 25th September** for coffee and chat from 10am - why not join us?

### **Prayers at Noon**

The prayer group will be meeting on **Tuesday 2nd September** at 12 o'clock. As we start the Methodist new year and everything begins again we need to ask for God's help and guidance.

### Singing our Faith and Church Bible Study

These groups will start again in October.

### **Macmillan Coffee Morning**

On Friday 26th September there will be a coffee morning at church to help raise funds for the important work carried out by Macmillan. Come and enjoy coffee and cake between 10am and 12 - all for a good cause.



### **Church Family News**



We were saddened to learn of the death of Iris Anderson, a faithful member here for many years. A service will be held at church on **Tuesday 16th at 2pm** to give thanks and celebrate her life. Her family and friends are in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

For all those who are facing a difficult time we pray for God's blessing.

### **2nd Alton Company News**



The summer term finished with barbecues and games – already a distant memory – and the older Boys enjoyed their Summer Camp.

Anchors and Juniors start again on 12th September, with the older Boys starting a week earlier, on 5th September.

David Allan (Captain)

### **Anchors & Juniors**

The Anchors and Juniors enjoyed playing at Hogmoor Enclosure on their last evening before the summer break, particularly the zip wire. Even the leader's had a go!







We are looking forward to welcoming the boys back on Friday 12th September and we have some new friends joining us.

We will be having a joint evening with the Girls' Brigade in October, when David Betts will be joining us for a fun-filled evening with Jesus at the centre.

Lt Glenda Bentley

### **Company and Seniors**

Following on from an action-packed summer programme, we were very lucky to be able to offer our Boys a traditional BB camp, with the help of 1st Woodley and 2nd Fleet companies. Their input is essential in the running of camp. We were delighted to take 18 boys this year, with nine from Alton, six going for the first time!

We had fantastic weather, which always makes for great memories. The Paddle Boarding and Zip Wire seemed to be the highlights for most.

We learned how to make our lives successful with the help of God, Jesus and the bible.

The experience this gives the boys, being away from home, having to meet new people and eat different foods, are invaluable life skills. The boys amazed themselves with some of the things they achieved. It was a great feeling to encourage and watch them develop in such a short period of time.

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It was a very successful camp, and we hope to take the same numbers, if not more, to our 2026 camp, which will be in Wales.

Daniel Vincent (Lt)

Sunday Dinner at Camp

### **Girls' Brigade News**

have been up to over the summer.



We are so excited to be back after the summer break and can't wait to get started on another fantastic year at Girls' Brigade! Our first meeting will be on Monday 8th September, and we're looking forward to welcoming everyone back and hearing all about what people

If you know a girl who would like to join us, we'd love to welcome them into our group. It's a great place to make friends, try new things, and have lots of fun. Just get in touch and we'll be happy to give you more details.

We are also looking for a few extra helpers this year. If you, or someone you know, could come along on a semi-regular basis to lend a hand, we would really appreciate it. All training would be provided and a DBS check would be required.

Finally, we'd love to connect more with our church family. If you have a skill, hobby, or passion you'd like to share, or if you'd be happy to come and talk to the girls about something you love, please let us know. It could be anything-crafts, music, cooking, storytelling, or even something unusual

As always, thank you for your prayers and support. We're looking forward to a wonderful year ahead and hope you'll be part of it in some way!

Amy Evans (Group Leader)



We've had two expedition groups out during the summer holidays. Our Bronze group tackled the challenging woodlands of the Surrey Hills, camping at a beautiful, secluded site on Ranmore Common.



The Bronze group at their starting point in Holmbury St Mary

A couple of weeks later, a Silver group enjoyed their three-day expedition in Shropshire, walking on Wenlock Edge, the Long Mynd and the Stiperstones, and appreciating the extensive views.



The Silver group at their starting point on Wenlock Edge

The final expedition of the year takes place this month – another Silver group – with five boys heading for the Peak District.

David Allan

### Young Venturers

### Recognition!

Our successful Year 8 Venturers will be joining us in Church on **Sunday 7th September**, to receive their Certificates.

The support of the church is hugely appreciated.

David Allan



On their expedition

## ALTON FOODBANK VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



The Alton foodbank is affiliated to the Trussell Trust national network of foodbanks. It was started in 2011 by the Butts Church, Alton who then established a separate charity, Alton Christian Care Ltd. This is now responsible for running the Alton foodbank.

The foodbank has two part time paid managers but is staffed mainly by volunteers, a number (but not all) of whom are members of churches from across the area. Volunteering in the foodbank is a great opportunity to help those in need in our community and to have fun getting to know people from the community. There are several areas where people can volunteer and full training will be provided for all roles.

### WAREHOUSE VOLUNTEER (MALTINGS CLOSE)

All donated and purchased food is weighed, sorted, dated and stored in the Foodbank warehouse before being taken to the distribution centre in Market Square, Alton. This is carried out on either a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday 10.00-12.00 noon or Tuesday 1 - 3pm. The work requires some physical lifting and the ability to stack items on shelves. However, we make sure that no volunteer lifts anything they are not capable of. In this role a volunteer will not come into contact with the public and will generally be working with three other volunteers.

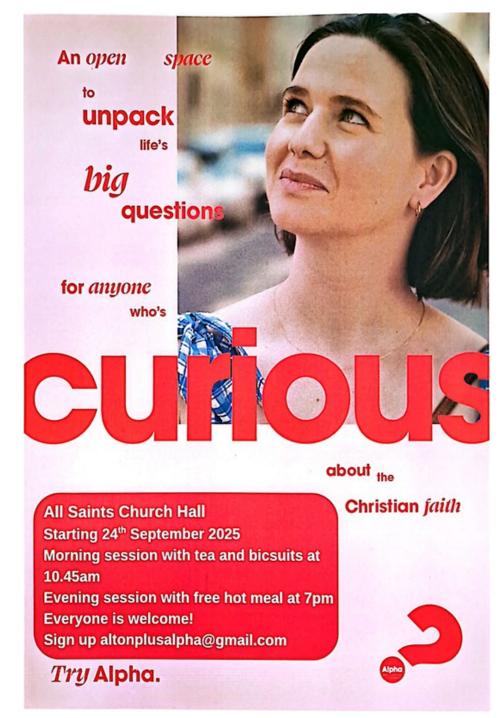
### HELPING AT THE FOODBANK DISTRIBUTION CENTRE (MARKET SQUARE)

In the distribution centre volunteers meet and interact with the general public. Volunteers meet clients and make up food parcels to give out. We have an informal chat with clients, discuss their situation and where possible, think of other agencies who may be able to offer them further support. The foodbank is a Christian organisation and some of our volunteers may offer to pray, if appropriate, with a client. The prayer is usually short and clients are free to say no. The distribution centre is staffed by 3 or 4 volunteers on a Tuesday 6.15-7.30 pm, Wednesday 12.15-2.00pm and Saturday 10:15-12.00 noon.

### TRANSPORT TEAM

Our Warehouse and Centre are on different sites. We recently created a Transport Team consisting of volunteers who are willing to use their vehicles to transport crates of food from the Warehouse to the Centre when needed. We hope volunteers on this team would be able to help once or maybe twice a month, and you would always work with at least one other volunteer. The day for transportation is likely to be a Wednesday morning but this could be flexible.

Every 4 months a volunteer rota is put together and volunteers commit to as many or as few sessions as they can. If you are interested in any of the above roles, please contact Sian Mills on <a href="mailto:info@alton.foodbank.org.uk">info@alton.foodbank.org.uk</a>.





Do you want to break free from a **life-controlling habit** such as smoking, gambling, over-eating, internet or social media addiction, shopping compulsions, binge

drinking, taking drugs, etc. – in fact any habit which once might have brought us comfort or fun, but is now spoiling our daily living?

**Fresh Start** is a 9-week course based on principles from the 12-steps-of-recovery process, backed by 1-to-1 coaching and a support group of others wanting to tackle their dependencies. It's **free** and completely confidential. See https://harvestchurch.uk/fresh-start

The next local course will start with an introductory session on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October, 7:30 – 9pm, at Alton Maltings. It will be led by Fresh Start coaches, Ann and Anna.

After previous local courses, a man tackling an internet addiction said: "I'd like to thank you...for putting on the Fresh Start course and helping me achieve my goals...I am very grateful for the work you did with us." Another, tackling a gambling addiction, said: "I was gambling to excess and constantly worried and anxious over money. I am now happier and am getting my priorities right... I can never say THANK YOU enough times as I never thought I could beat this addiction". A woman now in recovery from alcohol addiction said: "I wouldn't be where I am today, if I hadn't come on Fresh Start".

If you want to be free of a life-controlling habit, join the Fresh Start course. Or if you know someone who wants to tackle such a habit, recommend Fresh Start to them.

To enquire or register for the course, call Mark Rumsby on 07769 030913 or email freshstart@harvestchurch.uk

### **Craft Swap**

# St Lawrence Church Parish Centre, Alton Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2-4pm

We are once again holding one of our very successful Craft Swaps, this time on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September at the Parish Centre. Start looking out all those craft, knitting and sewing materials you have never got round to using, ready to donate for the day. And come along on 6<sup>th</sup> to take away anything you might find useful. All we ask in return is that, if you are able, you make a monetary donation, which will be given to a local charity.

You can bring along any unwanted items on the day or you can leave donations of goods in St Lawrence, All Saints or the Methodist church in Alton, or St Peter's, Beech, The Church of the Holyrood in Holybourne, St Mary's churches in Bentworth and Lasham and St Paul's in Shalden.

**Labelled boxes** will be available to receive them from **Saturday 9**<sup>th</sup> **August**. We are happy to receive fabric, haberdashery, wool, craft and pattern books, paints, canvas, beads, rubber stamps... If it is craft-related, we will take it!

Please spread the word amongst your friends and encourage them to come along. Any left-over materials at the end of the event will go to St Lawrence School, Alton, Parish of the Resurrection Youth Work or local charity shops.

We look forward to seeing you.

St Lawrence Eco-Church Team



**Philip & Angela would like to say thank you** for the lovely cards & messages we received on our 30th Wedding Anniversary.

We had a very special day.

### **OPEN SIGHT**

Alton Open Sight is a social club for those with a visual impairment. It meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at All Saints Church Hall at 2.30pm. The **next meeting will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> September** when we be taking a "journey through space" with the help of resources from Living Paintings. Living Paintings is a company that provides free tactile books (with accompanying audio) for visually impaired people of all ages and this will our first experience of using these resources.

The meetings provide an opportunity to make new friends over an afternoon tea, with a chance to share information on coping with sight loss.

We welcome anyone with a visual impairment. If you are interested please either email Sue at AltonOpenSight@gmail.com or contact Open Sight via their website https://opensight.org.uk or telephone 02380 641244.

A Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for the life of
Iris Anderson (11.06.1942 – 07.08.2025)
Will be led by Rev Philip Simpkins
on Tuesday 16 September, 2.00pm at Alton Methodist Church

Afternoon tea will be available following the service.

Please contact the Church office on: <a href="mailto:altonmethodist@hotmail.com">altonmethodist@hotmail.com</a>, or

Mrs Fiona Rawlings, <a href="mailto:fionaroland.rawlings@ntlworld.com">fionaroland.rawlings@ntlworld.com</a>

01536 398514 // 0790250394 if you plan to join us for tea.

We would like to know if you have any special dietary requirements.

### All welcome

A retiring collection will be taken for the Anna Chaplaincy, Alton

### HARD OF HEARING GROUP at ALL SAINTS CHURCH HALL, ALTON



In August we departed from our usual venue at All Saints Church Hall and met instead at the Allen Gallery. There were fewer numbers than usual for various reasons, one being problems with the Community First mini bus. A number of members now rely on transport to bring them to our meetings – and to take them home again! So, hopefully this issue will be resolved!

In September – on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2pm - we will be joining with other local folk to celebrate Harvest Festival at All Saints Church. All are welcome to join in a traditional service where you can sing your favourite hymns! Emily Spencer, the new Anna Chaplain, will be leading the service, and light refreshments will be served afterwards. Do come and bring harvest gifts – afterwards these will be given to the Food Bank, and any fresh produce will be sold and money donated to the Anna Chaplaincy funds.

Our Programme for 2026 is being prepared – but to enable this to go ahead it would be really helpful to have a new volunteer – or 2!! If you might be able to help us for a couple of hours please do get in contact with me! In anticipation.....!!

Contact: Annette Blackman 01420 543219 ablackman4@googlemail.com

### LIP READING

This Group, providing support for those with communication problems due to their poor hearing, restarts again on

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September**. Why not come along and give it a try, you will be surprised at how much it can help. The hour long session comprises of fun exercises to practice recognising words and phrases that hard of hearing people find difficult to hear or lipread. This is followed by time over a cup of tea in which to practice these skills. For more details contact Kate on 01420 83514 <a href="mailto:kaddando@gmail.com">kaddando@gmail.com</a> All will be made most welcome!

### **KNITTERS ANONYMOUS**



Handmade – with Love

Judging by the amount of donations received over the summer the hot weather has not deterred any of our industrious supporters! One knitter used her time while watching the Wimbledon tennis to make a bag of assorted prem baby hats! Others have been adding to our supply of Bliss Stockings, Teds /Toys and RED Hats ready for Christmas! (Our Teddy Bear Lady is now making her bears in Father Christmas costumes!!)

If you fancy a change from knitting, the charity is also requesting some fabric drawstring Memory Bags approx. 6/7 inches by 8/9 inches in attractive nursery or patterned fabric (some ladies have managed to find and recycle suitable duvet-covers from charity shops).

Amazingly six large bags of baby knits were delivered to the Bliss collecting point at the end of August and ten large bags of warm knits and crochet blankets were delivered to Help for Refugees in the UK and Overseas Charity at the end of July. Well done to you all and thank you so much!

A question we are often asked is 'What would you like me to knit?' The short answer is 'Whatever you enjoy making!' We can place everything you care to give us so do continue to make your favourite things.

Anonymously donated items can be left in the box provided in the back of All Saints Church. You can also bring your donations to the regular monthly meetings the next of which is on **Tuesday 16**<sup>th</sup> **September** from 2pm until about 3.30m, in All Saints Church Hall, Queens Road.

Do pop in if you are passing, have a cup of tea with us and see what we are doing.

For more details contact Kate on 01420 83514 kaddando@gmail.com

### **Dates for your Diary**

#### **SEPTEMBER**

Mon 1	7.00pm	Blackwater Valley Circuit Celebration at High Cross Church, Camberley
Tues 2	12 noon 7.30pm	Prayers at Noon Compass Course (8) at the manse
Wed 3	10-11.30am	Stay & Play restarts
Thurs 4	4.00pm	GAP Council mtg at Old School House
Sat 6	3.00pm	Welcome service for Rev Conrad Hicks at Redhill Methodist Church
Tues 9	12.30pm 7.30pm	Lunch Club Local Preachers meeting at Frimley Green Methodist Church
Tues 16	2.00pm 7.30pm	Funeral of Iris Anderson Compass Course (9) at the Manse
Thurs 18	7.30pm	Circuit meeting at Fleet Methodist Church
Tuies 23	7.00pm	Stewards' meeting at the Manse
Wed 24	10.45am 7.00pm	Alpha course (1) at All Saints Church Hall (Morning and evening alternative sessions)
Thurs 25	10.00-12.00	Ladies@ Wetherspoons
Fri 26	10.00-12.00	Macmillan Coffee Morning
Sat 27	2.00pm	CAMEO

### **More Dates for your Diary**

### **OCTOBER**

Sat 4 7.00pm GAP Quiz Night Here

Sun 5 10.00am Harvest Festival service

**NOVEMBER** 

Sun 2 4.00pm Candles of Remembrance service

Sat 29 10.00-12.00 Christmas Fair

Events are at Alton Methodist Church unless stated otherwise. Please look at articles in the Newsletter giving more information.

The October issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 28th September.



### **Services at Alton in September 2025**

Sunday 7th 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

10.00am Liz George - with Young Venturers presenta-

tion of certificates

Sunday 14th 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins - Holy Communion

Sunday 21st 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

10.00am Rev Nick Oborski

6.00pm GAP Evensong at St Lawrence followed by

drinks & nibbles

Sunday 28th 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

10.00am Annah Mwadiwa

### **CONTACT US**

Church Office: Email altonmethodist@hotmail.com (Tel 01420 82695)

The church office is not usually staffed. Emails will be picked up and passed on to the relevant person, but answerphone messages may be overlooked.

For pastoral matters, please phone or email Rev Philip Simpkins.

Tel: 01420 83167 Email: philip.simpkins@methodist.org.uk

**For administrative matters**, including bookings, please contact Mrs Liz George via the church email address (above) or Tel 01420 88721

Items for inclusion in the **October** issue of the "Newsletter" should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 21st September** at the latest, please.

If you are able to email your contribution to the office (or to Nancy) it would be much appreciated.