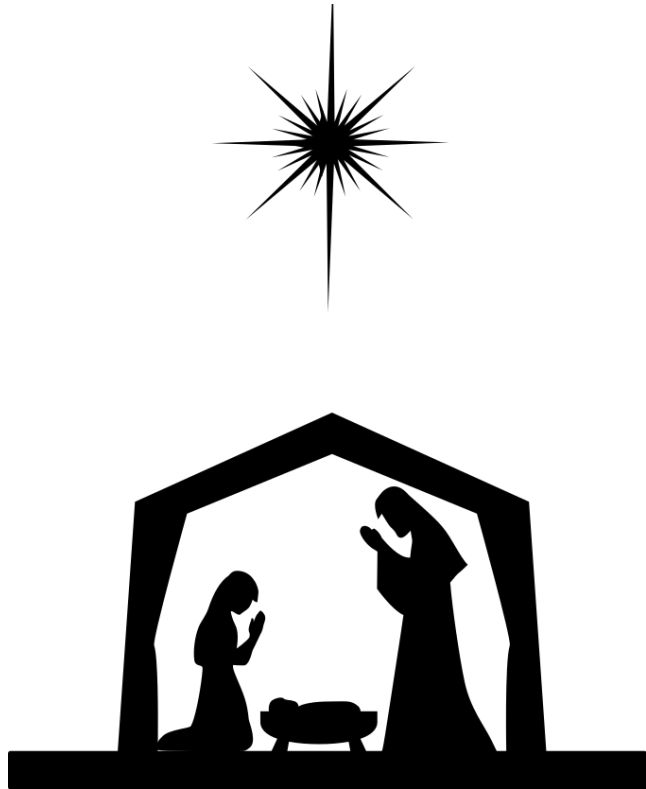


# Alton Methodist Church

## NEWSLETTER



### December 2025

**Minister: Rev. Philip Simpkins**

**Tel: 01420 83167**

**Church website [www.altonmethodist.org.uk](http://www.altonmethodist.org.uk)**

**Circuit website [www.hsbccircuit.org.uk](http://www.hsbccircuit.org.uk)**



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



Dear Friends,

With the turning on of the Christmas lights, the selling of trees, the decorating of homes, the writing of cards and the search for presents ongoing we enter the advent season with a sense of joy and anticipation.

With that in mind I have been instructed to put our tree up early this year as Luke and Mariel (son and daughter in law) will be arriving from Canada in mid-December for a fortnight – excitement and preparations are rising at the Manse!

Advent is a time of excitement and preparation, not only as we make our own plans as to how we celebrate the festive season but also as we relive the Christmas story.

One of the traditions we enjoy is the singing of Christmas carols. I was reading that carols began life as pagan songs sung at the winter solstice celebrations. The word carol means to 'dance or sing a joyful song. The early church replaced the solstice celebrations with Christmas and created songs with Christian lyrics instead.

*'In AD129 a Roman bishop decreed that the song 'Angel's Hymn' should be sung at a Christmas service in Rome and this became one of the first carols known to us.'*<sup>1</sup>

I wonder what your favourite carol is - there are so many!

We might begin with '**Come thou long expected Jesus**' – a hymn that echoes the longing felt by the Jewish people for their Messiah and Saviour to come – the Prince of Peace & Wonderful Counsellor.

**'The Angel Gabriel from heaven came'** may be difficult to sing, but it instantly reminds us of the visitor Mary encountered as a young woman being given the message that she would be the mother of our Lord - '*A most highly flavoured lady*' as someone I know mispronounced it at a carol service!

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1. A Stocking Full of Christmas, Mark Stibb, 2005, p19

I always love to include **‘Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord’** – because it helps us to picture the song of Mary, known to many of us as the Magnificat. Sheer joy, despite the cost, at being the Lord’s servant.

**‘O Little Town of Bethlehem’** takes us right to the heart of the story and paints a rather idyllic picture of a starlit sky proclaiming the birth of Christ coming into an unsuspecting world, *‘While mortal sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.’*

The joy of that first Christmas leaps from the **Calypso Carol**:

*O now carry me to Bethlehem,  
to see the Lord of love again;  
Just as poor as was the stable then,  
the Prince of Glory when he came.*

Mary, angels & shepherds all rejoice at the birth of a newborn King.

As for a carol that always provokes a response from us, how can we not include **‘In the bleak mid-winter’**. Christina Georgina Rossetti not only leads us to the manger scene where we find ourselves joining the nativity scene but finishes with a question:

*What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.  
Yet what I can I give him – give my heart.*

The anticipation and excitement of Christmas lead us to the manger where we can make our own heart felt response to God through which we can discover the hope, peace and joy that was promised all those years ago.

Have a wonderful Christmas season!

*Philip*

## Lunch Club

We had a real treat in November when Andy and Denise cooked us roast lamb and lots of vegetables – all made complete with a dash mint sauce. Mango Sponge with cream followed as did a siesta!

We are indebted to them and all the catering team who give of their time freely and produce such wonderful meals all served to our tables – Thank you!

We would also like to thank Janet who for many years has helped serve in the kitchen. Having served her time in the kitchen Janet has now been promoted to calling us all to order by ‘banging the wooden spoon’ before grace is said and then sitting back and enjoying being served for a change.

The **Christmas Lunch** is on **Tuesday Dec 9<sup>th</sup>** and is always a lovely occasion as the tables are arranged and decorated in the church sanctuary. Following the lunch, we will enjoy singing two or three carols and Emily will lead us in a Christmas reflection. (Price £5)

Please note that the Christmas Lunch is now **fully booked** (over subscribed in fact) as we have to cap the numbers to 60 people in fairness to the kitchen staff. **If you are unable to come, please let Philip know (01420- 83167)**



### **Congratulations to Doris Mearles having celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!**

Doris is very grateful for all your cards and best wishes, however this card from the King & Queen was very special indeed!

We are so grateful to Doris who has collected lunch club money for many years – always smiling & gracious!

## Christmas Services

**Advent Service (GAP)**  
**Sunday 30th November, 10am**  
**at Alton Methodist Church**

We welcome friends from the Parish of the Resurrection to share in this united service.

**Carol Service**  
**Sunday 21st December at 4pm**

A wonderful opportunity to sing some favourite carols, listen to familiar readings and re-live the Christmas story. It will be followed by a cup of tea and a mince pie!

## Christmas Day Celebration

Led by Rev Philip Simpkins at 10am

Come and celebrate Christmas together with some wonderful carols, readings and a Christmas Day reflection – a 40min service, so plenty of time to baste the turkey or travel to friends for lunch!

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December at Holyrood CofE, Holybourne at 10:30am**  
**(GAP)**

We join with our friends at the Parish of the Resurrection for a post-Christmas service led by Rev David Chattell.

*(please note, there will be no service at Alton Methodist on Dec 28<sup>th</sup>)*

## Christingle

This year, instead of Christmas Eve, Philip will enjoy attending both Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade to share in Christingle activities with the children.

## Candles of Remembrance



On All Souls Day (Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>) we gave thanks for the lives of those that we have loved and lost. Through hymns, poems and prayers we reflected on all that people have meant to us in the past. In addition, we lit candles and wrote people's names on prayer angels created by Anna, placing them on a prayer tree. Thank you to everyone who contributed and came to this very meaningful and special service.

## Anna Chaplaincy Christmas Event

**Wednesday 3rd December**

**2.00pm—3.30pm**

**At Alton Methodist Church**

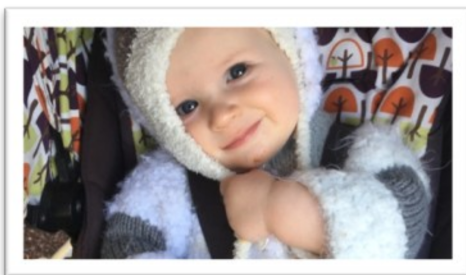
*Activities, Carol Singing, Christmas Tea*



## Our chosen charity of the year is Naomi House & Jacksplace.

A small group of people (stewards) have been invited to have a trip to see the amazing work that the hospice does – and then will be more able to report back!

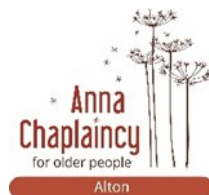
*At just one year old, Thomas was diagnosed with a childhood cancer and a rare neurological condition. Thomas and his family were supported by Naomi House & Jacksplace, as he came to the end of his life.*



Following our successful quiz evening in the autumn we have been planning a number of fundraising events for the new year which may well include **'Hospitality Fortnight'** whereby people will be invited to provide and donate a meal for their chosen number of people (e.g. coffee & cake, afternoon tea, curry evening, Sunday lunch, brunch). The organiser of the event will set a price for each meal and invite people to book to come through them. The fun is, you won't know who has offered the meal or who may be joining you around the table until the actual day when you open the door and meet your guests! More from the stewards in due course with the aim of it happening in April/May.

There are also events being planned by the Brigades as well as through Cam-eo. In addition, 25% of our annual gift day to be held in July 26' will also go towards Naomi House & Jacksplace.

We look forward to learning more about our charity for this year and supporting them as much as we can!



## Update from the Anna Chaplaincy!

*[Submitted for November Newsletter  
the editor apologises for its late publication]*

Since I last wrote in October, the Anna Chaplaincy has continued to be a presence in the community, with our dedicated team of faithful volunteers visiting older folks in their homes, being a listening ear at many community groups and helping to lead an array of care home and independent living services. Harvest has of course been the theme at many of our services, and it has been wonderful to celebrate together God's provision and blessings in our lives. I had the privilege of leading All Saints Hard of Hearing group's annual Harvest festival, where singing of some traditional harvest hymns was aplenty! An array of delicious produce was collected and distributed to our local food bank.



*Myself and Sharon from  
Alton Foodbank, who  
joined us for this occasion*

Another recent highlight for the Anna Chaplaincy has been taking our first service at the new care home Alton Place, where Philip and I led a Harvest themed service for the residents there. Everyone enjoyed singing the Harvest hymns and it was a joy to be in fellowship with one another in this new place.





*Me with our 'harvest props'!*

Now a couple of months into my role as Anna Chaplain, it is clear how important the Anna Chaplaincy ministry is, not only to our own town here in Alton, but nationwide. I recently had the privilege of attending the Annual Gathering of Anna Chaplains in Hertfordshire, where Anna Chaplains across the UK met for networking and teaching. I was immensely proud that I represented the place where Anna Chaplaincy first began-

what an honour! If you feel that God may be nudging you to explore being part of the Anna Friends team, please don't hesitate to contact me and we can further explore this together.

With every blessing, Emily (annachaplainalton@gmail.com 07535 209537)

### **Warmest Wishes this Christmas from the Anna Chaplaincy team**

The season of advent is upon us and preparations have begun for Christmas. It certainly is a busy time for many of us, with lots of festive events to attend, cards and gifts to buy and family and friends to catch up with. The Anna Chaplaincy team have been busy in the town and surrounding villages, visiting people in their own homes and residential homes, leading services, attending community groups, lunch clubs and coffee mornings, as well as preparing for **our Christmas event to be held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2-3.30pm at Alton Methodist Church**. This is a great opportunity to meet with others and relax, with carol singing and a Christmas tea to finish off.

As we enjoy the festive excitement, we are also mindful of those who struggle at this time of year for different reasons, remembering how powerful a listening ear and friendly face are in the midst of uncertainty and vulnerability. As we celebrate Jesus' story this season, may we also be encouraged to listen to the stories of others, for the precious memories that we are privileged to be told about and personal experiences that are shared. May we offer comfort and companionship to each other this Christmas time.

Every blessing, Emily

## **Church Family News**

We send our love and best wishes to the **Robertsons** now **Eleanor** has been able to join **Ian** in their bungalow.

Our prayers are with all those suffering in any way at this time and especially lift up **Peter and Terri White**.

We have welcomed several new people to our services and we hope they find themselves at home here.

**Congratulations to Dan Simpkins** and team who won the best Adventure and Exploration film at the prestigious Kendal Mountain Film Festival.



The 30 min. documentary called 'The Lost Boys of the Carbis Bay Crew' follows the exploration of abandoned tin mines in Cornwall and the reasons why the colourful characters who venture underground find solace in exploration. The film will be shown in Cornish cinemas in the New Year.

## BB Appeal for Staff

You will no doubt have heard that our Boys' Brigade Company is looking for a volunteer – or more than one! – to work with our 8 to 11-year-olds on Friday evenings.

This is really urgent, and I would ask everyone to consider whether they might be able to help, or to provide contact details of anyone they know who might potentially be willing to assist.

BB is currently struggling for leadership; prayers and active support would be appreciated.

David Allan (BB Captain)

Tel: 01420 84739



## Prayers at Noon

The prayer group meets on **Tuesday 2nd December** to pray for this special time of year. Why not come along at midday for just about 15 minutes?

## Singing our Faith

This group will be carol/hymn singing on **Tuesday 2nd December starting at 2pm** and finishing with a cuppa and a mince pie. Everyone is welcome.



## Church Bible Study

On **Tuesday 16th** the Bible study group meets at 2pm. Last time we thought about Advent and this month - not surprisingly - we will be looking at the Christmas story.

## 2nd Alton News



We had an excellent turnout for the Remembrance Day ceremony, with our band leading the parade as usual. The weather was very kind to us – mild and dry. Ivan helped to lay the wreath, and all the boys were extremely well behaved during the long time of standing still!



## Anchors

The boys have been busy making Christmas cards, each with a message and a tea bag for members of our community as well as learning about Remembrance and taking part in the town Remembrance service.



We will be finishing with a family Christingle on Friday 12th December

Glenda Bentley

## Company and Seniors

We've taken part in two Battalion competitions recently, achieving a 4th place in the Orienteering and a 3rd place in the Chess event. On Fridays, we're now into our Interests sessions, with three groups – one doing DIY, one making and painting models, and the third cooking a variety of (hopefully tasty!) dishes in the kitchen.

By the time you read this, we'll have organised the Games Zone at the Christmas Fair and competed in the Battalion Table Tennis championship. Then there's carol singing on **Wednesday 17th December – all invited** to join us at **7pm** when we'll be raising money for "Action for Children". And, before Christmas, we'll be running the usual "postal" service, with cards being delivered across Alton and Holybourne.

David Allan (Captain )

**Local**

**Christmas Card Delivery**

2nd Alton Company, The Boys' Brigade  
CHRISTMAS POST 2025



40p

Once again, the Boys of our BB Company will deliver Christmas cards to addresses in Alton and Holybourne. Stamps are now available, priced 40p – significantly less than Royal Mail's 87p (or £1.70 for first class!).

The stamps and the postbox are in the foyer as usual, with **last posting being midday on Wednesday 17th December.**

David Allan

## Girls' Brigade News

Our youngest girls, in the n:vestigate section, have been combining the Storytime badge with preparing for Christmas. We've looked at why it is wrong to be selfish with 'The Little Red Hen', how working together can help us with 'The Enormous Turnip' and the importance of not giving up with 'The Tortoise and the Hare'. We've also coloured figures to create a nativity scene and practised carols.



*Interactive storytelling*

The older girls have been packaging donations for the Christmas Fair jar tombola and thinking about the importance of Advent and Christmas in the church year.



*Making advent wreaths*



We held a cake sale on Monday 10th November in aid of Children in Need. Amy provided the cakes and many of the girls took a few home to share with their families.

We'll all be singing carols at Austen Place on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December, hopefully with a bit of support from parents. Then we finish the term with Philip leading a Christingle service for all our families on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December.

We start again in the new year on Monday 5th January.

Nancy Buck

Expedition training will start on Wednesday evenings in the New Year.

Anyone who is interested in taking part should come to the church on **Wednesday 10th December** – Young Venturers (for School Years 7 and 8) at **7pm**, and older ones (tackling DofE) at **7.30pm**.

David Allan

## CAMEO NEWS

Leisurely Christmas shopping whilst enjoying tea, cakes and conversation was the order of the day at our November meeting. The charity HomeStart provided us with a large range of gifts, including some very cute dog and cat door stops. Thank you to Ann and Sue for their help with sales. We were delighted that the event raised £117 for the charity.



Our next meeting will be at 2pm on 6th December when we will enjoy our annual Christmas Tea.

Judy, Janet & Anna




CELTISH  
 Nigel Cameron & Julie Cameron-Hall

CHRISTMAS CONCERTS  
 Wednesday 17th December  
 2.30pm & 7.00pm  
 St. Lawrence Church  
 Church St, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2BW  
 Admission by donation. Interval refreshments

A glorious light  
 has dawned

resurrectionbenefice.org    celtish.org

*Christmas Eve Services at St Lawrence Church*

*4.00pm: Crib Service*

*11.15pm: Midnight Communion*

## HARD OF HEARING GROUP

at

### ALL SAINTS CHURCH HALL, ALTON



The 25<sup>th</sup> November – the date of our grand pre- Christmas Party has come and gone – it was a truly splendid occasion, with singing, quizzes and scrumptious food. Many thanks to Robin Kemp and the members of the Community Choir, and to Sarah Neish for the food, and to our happy band of volunteers who worked so hard to make it such a success!

Our Programme for 2026 is now ready – packed with exciting talks and events – please let me know if you would like to receive a copy – you won't be disappointed!

**Our next meeting takes place on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm.** Mike Colvin [Home Instead] will talk to us about Personal Security with regard to our money and savings. Sadly, this is such an important subject in today's world. Mike will give us advice on how to keep as safe as possible.

On a lighter note, it would be lovely if we could find one or two new volunteers to assist our group. If you can help us for a couple of hours once a month on a Tuesday afternoon do let me know.

**Wishing you a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year from our Hard of Hearing Group members and volunteers!**

Contact: Annette Blackman 01420 543219

[ablackman4@googlemail.com](mailto:ablackman4@googlemail.com)

**REMINDER – there is NO Lip-Reading session in December**

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 6th January 2026**

Because of your hearing loss, if you are having difficulty in joining in conversations, why not make it your New Year Resolution to come and see how Lip Reading can help you! For more information contact Kate 07811744843 (text only) or [kaddando@gmail.com](mailto:kaddando@gmail.com)

## Knitters Anonymous



*Hand made – with Love*

Once again, thank you to all you kind people out there who have, over the past year, donated so many much-needed items to our two main charities – Bliss for prem babies and Help for Refugees in the UK and Overseas. Everything finds a home and is so appreciated by the recipients.

Thank you also to those who have found wool surplus to their needs and have donated it to be knitted or crocheted up by our industrious group. It is such a pleasure to regularly find your generous donations in the collecting box at the back of All Saints church.

The group will have its **last meeting of the year on Tuesday 16th December** from 2pm in All Saints Church Hall. Do drop in if you are passing.

A Happy and Peaceful Christmas and New Year to you all!you !

Kate Dando [kaddando@gmail.com](mailto:kaddando@gmail.com) or 07811744843 (text only)

*Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
Born to set thy people free,  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in thee.*

*Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth thou art,  
Dear desire of every nation,  
Joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a king,  
Born to reign in us for ever,  
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.*

*By thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By thine all-sufficient merit  
Raise us to thy glorious throne.*

*Charles Wesley (Singing the Faith 169)*

**Come and join us for**  
**Alton Churches**  
**POP-UP**  
**CAROLS**  
**On a green space near**  
**you 2025**  
**Everyone is welcome**

Scan here for dates and locations

The Lord has come...  
Luke 2:11

[www.harvestchurch.uk](http://www.harvestchurch.uk) [www.resurrectionbenefice.org](http://www.resurrectionbenefice.org) [www.thebuttschurch.org.uk](http://www.thebuttschurch.org.uk)

# POP-UP CAROLS

On a green space near you this December

Friday 5	6.30pm Barleyfields, nr Holybourne
	7.00pm Charrington Close, Rivermead Gardens
Sunday 7	5.00pm Wentworth Gardens
Monday 8	6.30pm Vyne Close
Tuesday 9	6.30pm Hop Field Place
	7.30pm The Butts Green
	8.30pm Alton Sports Centre
Thursday 11	7.00pm Ridgeway (between Lingfield Close and Fontwell Drive)
	7.30pm Northanger Close
	7.30pm Sandringham Close
Friday 12	5.30pm Beech Village Hall
Saturday 13	5.00pm Lipscombe Rise
Monday 15	2.00pm The Lawn Care Home
Tuesday 16	7.00pm Holland Drive, Medstead
Thursday 18	2.00pm Brendon Care
Monday 22	7.00pm The White Hart Pub, Holybourne

For Christmas service details please visit our websites

[www.harvestchurch.uk](http://www.harvestchurch.uk)

[www.resurrectionbenefice.org](http://www.resurrectionbenefice.org)

[www.thebuttschurch.org.uk](http://www.thebuttschurch.org.uk)

[www.altonmethodist.org.uk](http://www.altonmethodist.org.uk)



Alton Concert Band,  
Alton Choral Society & Ancora  
Present in aid of

HOME  
START

FREE  
ENTRY

# The Wonder of CHRISTMAS

A CONCERT OF CHRISTMAS  
MUSIC & CAROLS

Saturday 6 December 2025

Doors open 6.30pm for 7.00pm

Alton Maltings

Entry only with a ticket available from

[www.altonchoral.org.uk](http://www.altonchoral.org.uk) or

*This free concert is now fully booked!*

*If you have a ticket, please remember that on-site parking is limited to  
blue badge holders who have reserved a place.*

*Contact Nancy on 01420 85994 to reserve a parking space or to cancel  
your ticket if you are unable to attend.*

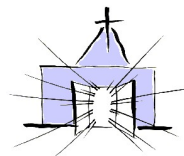
## Dates for your Diary

### DECEMBER

Mon 1	6.00pm	GB Carol Singing at Austen Place
Tues 2	12.00noon 2.00pm	Prayers at Noon Singing our Faith
Wed 3	2.00-3.30pm	Anna Chaplaincy Christmas Event
Sat 6	2.00pm 7.00pm	CAMEO Christmas Tea Wonder of Christmas at Alton Maltings
Mon 8	6.00pm	GB Christingle
Tues 9	12.30pm	Christmas Lunch Club
Wed 10	7.00pm 7.30pm	Young Venturers meeting Dof E meeting
Sat 13	10am-4pm	Christmas Tree Festival at St Lawrence
Sun 14	12noon-4pm 4.00pm	Christmas Tree Festival at St Lawrence Christingle Service at St Lawrence
Tues 16	2.00pm	Church Bible Study
Wed 17	7pm 2.30 & 7pm	BB Carol Singing Celtish Concerts at St Lawrence
Fri 19	6.00pm	BB Christingle
Sun 21	4.00pm	Carol Service

Please look at articles in the Newsletter giving more information.

**The January issue of the Newsletter should be available from Sunday 4th January.**



## Services in December 2025

<b>Sunday 7th</b>	<b>2nd Sunday in Advent</b> 10.00am Phil Smith
<b>Sunday 14th</b>	<b>3rd Sunday in Advent</b> 10.00am Liz George
<b>Sunday 21st</b>	<b>4th Sunday in Advent</b> 10.00am Rev Anne Day - Holy Communion 4.00pm <b>Carol Service</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b>	10.00am Rev Philip Simpkins - Family Celebration
<b>Sunday 28th</b>	<b>1st Sunday of Christmas</b> 10.30am <u>GAP Service at Holyrood, Holybourne</u>
<b>Sunday 4th January</b>	<b>2nd Sunday of Christmas</b> 10.00am Jennie Marlow

### CONTACT US

**Church Office:** Email [altonmethodist@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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 **January** issue of the “**Newsletter**” should reach the editor, Nancy Buck, by noon **Sunday 28th December** at the latest, please.