

The Avening Community Coronavirus Team



Neighbourhood Network Newsletter #7



Hello!

This is the first newsletter since Boris Johnson announced the easing of lockdown. It's fair to say that some of us have been eased more than others. For many little has changed, particularly as social distancing is still very much in place. Children are still being home-schooled. Key-workers continue to work flat out. Most shops remain closed. You can't yet hug a grandchild who doesn't live with you. Those who are shielded, ill or in self-isolation are still at home, unable to go out. But others have returned or are about to return to work – which may bring relief or new challenges. We can have picnics further from home. We can sunbathe in public spaces or take a trip down the Nailsworth Road to shop at the garden centre. Some of us can play our favourite sports.

I suspect we're not the only household where all of this triggered a few days of 'lively debate', many starting 'how come you can play golf when I can't... [insert almost anything that doesn't involve golf]' and peaking at a shrieking crescendo with a sentence going something like '...my friend's mother...can't even...hearing aid'. It took Mandy Slater on the latest Café Zoom to remind us all quietly that these initial tentative steps at easing lockdown mostly mean staying safe and using your common sense.

This newsletter will do its best to help you keep up with the biggest changes – although they are now coming so thick and fast it is impossible to cover everything in just six pages. Local Facebook sites, including the Avening, Minchinhampton and Tetbury Chat and Information page are worth joining to keep up with shop openings and other local news.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1638175509729523/>. Minchinhampton Life has put together a regularly updated list of all local businesses on <https://minchlife.com> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/nailsworthtown> is pretty good at sharing news of shop and business openings and offers. For the latest official guidance and news sign up to the government's Coronavirus updates on <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>. Go to <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershires-community-help-hub> to access local public services. And if you get stuck or need a bit more help, you can always contact your neighbourhood coordinator or email covid19@avening-pc.gov.

But if what you *really* want is a break from all this (and let's face it, who doesn't?), then the Big Avening Wildlife Watch gives you the perfect excuse to take some time to stand and stare. Between 23rd and 25th May everyone in Avening is encouraged to record the wildlife they see in their gardens and around the village. Not sure of the name of the little brown job you've spotted in the hedge? Take a photo, share with Phoebe Carter and she'll try to identify it. Write your sightings (with your name and address if you are happy to do so) on a piece of paper and drop at 56 Sandford Leaze or email them to Phoebe at pk1c1@hotmail.com. By the end of the weekend, we should have a snapshot of Avening's wild comings and goings – the biggest village-wide citizens' science project ever.

So here's a slogan for next weekend: GET OUTSIDE AND GET WATCHING.

It appears that some slogans are easier to write than others....

Around Gloucestershire

This is a shorter section than usual, not because there is too little to say, but because there is too much to summarise accurately. Instead, here is the link to the government's page answering the frequently asked questions about what has changed – and what hasn't. It covers a range of issues such as **public spaces, going to work, workers' rights, schools and childcare**. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

The easing of lockdown has meant that a number of local sporting organisations and venues are beginning to change their guidance, are preparing to re-open in some form over the next few weeks or have already opened.

In Avening, you are never more than six feet from a golfer so the news that the **Minchinhampton golf courses** have re-opened was widely welcomed. At the moment they are open to Members only <http://www.minchinhamptongolfclub.co.uk>, but they are reviewing regularly and when safe will open to Members' guests and - eventually - visitors.

Similarly **Minchinhampton Tennis Club** has reopened to members <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/MinchinhamptonTennisClub/CoronaUpdate>. Unfortunately information about courts and clubs in Nailsworth and Tetbury was a little more elusive!

Barton End Stables regularly updates its Facebook page and has announced that it is resuming private lessons for BEEC liveries <https://www.facebook.com/bartonendstables/>

Gyms aren't yet open, but there are numerous online sessions and easy-to-follow programmes such as **Couch to 5K** for anyone who is battling with their 'Corona Curves' <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/couch-to-5k-week-by-week/>

Team sports will have to wait a while, so Gloucester Rugby has got creative with Gloucester Rugby Rewind games and other activities, all of which are available on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/gloucesterrugby/>. Meanwhile Forest Green Rovers has live Q&As and some brilliant FGR face coverings <https://www.facebook.com/fgrfc>. It also threw itself into the FIFA Ultimate QuaranTeam tournament...defeated 3-0 by Brentford in the 32nd round. We won't dwell on that too much then....

Around Avening

Six weeks ago a group of remarkable people volunteered to set up a network across the village to support their neighbours in whatever way they could. This week we checked in with them via Zoom and began discussing how things may evolve over the coming weeks and months. Most importantly, **Tony Slater** thanked them for what they had done to preserve and enhance the village's community spirit and to help ensure that everyone felt supported and connected during lockdown. The list of our brilliant volunteers is here: <https://www.avening-pc.gov.uk/coronavirus.htm>.

Avening's Big Wildlife Watch will be featuring on Faye Hatcher's show on BBC Radio Gloucester on Saturday morning when Faye interviews organiser **Phoebe Carter**. Listen live or catch up on <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p008b66m>

The Powis Lane WhatsApp group has started sewing face-coverings, inspired by an example from **Marilyn Filis's** daughter-in-law in Thailand. If you are interested in having a sew, the government has issued guidance for how to make a face-covering for personal use: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>.

Talking of face-coverings, rumour reaches us that **The Bell** has ordered a batch which, according to a reliable source, are 'so fashionable that we might wear them even when we don't have to.' Oh my.....

The Tuesday Cupcakes for Avening School got a glamorous makeover this week courtesy of pupil **Ailish Boyle** who made vanilla sponges topped with some very sparkly sprinkles! Mum **Cat Strauss** said that taking the cakes (as well as gluten-free orange blossom and almond biscuits) to the school had an extra dimension as Ailish, who is currently being home-schooled, got to wave at her classmates through the window. A Paul Hollywood handshake doesn't come close to an Avening School wave....

The **Rev Gerald South** has signed up to walk, run and cycle a combined distance of 100 km before the end of the month to support local youth charity The Door www.thedoor.org.uk. The Door also staffs our Youth Club and does much more by way of supporting young people and families in Avening and the Stroud area. Please contact Gerald on 01453 883456 or gp.south@btopenworld.com If you'd like to support him. Run, Gerald, run!

The Community Café shared its lockdown menu this week, which includes details of the Zoom Cafes, seed stall, roadside libraries and school cake bakes. The Committee is also cooking up one or two specials which will be unveiled over the next few weeks, so follow them on Facebook to keep up with news. And, thanks to **Gill Adams'** powers of persuasion, put Monday 25th May at 7.30pm in your diary for a special Zoom Café....details coming soon. <https://www.facebook.com/aveningcafe>

This coming Thursday is Ascension Day. To celebrate this Avening Church will hold a Zoom service at 7.15 pm to which all are welcome. This is also the end of Christian Aid Week – Avening has previously raised several hundred pounds for their work but cannot do so this year. If you would like to donate please go to: www.christianaid.org.uk Some of our church community are making regular phone calls to other villagers. For further details on all of this, please get in touch with Gerald on 01453 883456 or gp.south@btopenworld.com, Avening Church itself is closed but worship of God and care for others continue. To keep in touch with the Church please go to: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14317/.

The Foodbank collection box is now in the front garden of **Elizabeth Buchanan's** house, 14 High Street, where donations of non-perishable items are welcomed, especially as demand is now very high. If you shop at Tetbury Tesco there is a collection box there too. For details of the foodbank, including what items of food they need and how to get food bank support, see <https://cirencester.foodbank.org.uk>

Celia Carter, who has been quite ill with the virus is now, after two weeks, feeling herself again and wants to thank the many people who left things on her doorstep and sent lovely messages. She urges people to follow the advice of their doctors when it comes to treatment and to take the virus seriously. Glad you're feeling better, Celia!

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce was given a huge thumbs up by the Community Café Book Club at their Zoom chat on Thursday. 'The novel's themes are so relevant in these uncertain times ... wonderfully serendipitous!' was **Susie Scurfield's** verdict. It wasn't hard to decide the next book – *Harold's* sequel, *The Love Song of Queenie Hennessy* will be the book for June. Contact Clare Bebbington on ccbebbbs@gmail.com if you'd like to take part, and please if you are ordering books think first about our friends at The Yellow Lighted bookshop who are working so hard to keep going.

The Avening Angels have been keeping members' vocal chords exercised during lockdown, singing pieces for Avening church including Morning Has Broken, Be Thou My Vision, Amazing Grace, and Lord of all Hopefulness. **Sarah Hale** records the music and sends it to choir members who record their parts and send it back. Somehow, with the wonders of technology

Sarah and her son Julian put all the individual tracks together to produce a lovely sound. Although Sarah has now gone back to work, The Angels are hoping she will be able to continue all her hard work and so appreciate all that she has done so far. As **Mandy Slater** says, singing is good for the soul, and during these difficult times, very therapeutic.

The University of the Third Age in Tetbury has had to stop many of its activities during lockdown, but one or two are continuing. **Beverley Rymer** took part in a reading of The Importance of Being Earnest via Zoom this week (would Lady Bracknell approve of Zoom? I'm sure she'd have something to say about it) and said the technology worked really well. <https://tetburyu3a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Play-Reading.pdf> for more details.

Food features frequently in the newsletter and we're very happy to point people in the direction of **Helen Fisher** at Brandhouse Farm in West End who is selling delicious quails eggs outside the barn (£2.00) as well as free range hens eggs (£1.50). Pick up some honey from **Ian MacDonald** on the way there, and some beer at **The Bell** on the way back!

We'll end with some lovely news. Avening Church's Christmas organist **Theo Jones** and his partner Sarah welcomed a baby boy, Leopold, into the world this week, and we hear that Leo has long fingers, just right for playing the piano or organ. Theo's mother **Marilyn Jones** tells us she's 'thrilled' with the long-awaited arrival. Let's finish by wishing little Leo and his parents all our love from everyone in Avening.

Any comments and suggestions for the newsletter, please contact Clare Bebbington (ccbebbbs@gmail.com). In the meantime, stay safe, stay connected and in the words of so many social media memes, be kind.

With best wishes and thanks for everything you're doing,
Avening Parish Council

The Lockdown Lowdown

Each week we compile a handy list which will make life under lockdown a bit easier

This week: Going Back to Nature

Get ready to list our birds, bugs and bees for The Great Avening Wildlife Watch on May 23-25. There will be a Green Book Box outside 6 Old Hill in the run up to the Watch so if you have old wildlife guides or other 'green' books, please think about sharing. Most of all, stop reading this, get outside - and have fun!

The **Wild About Avening** Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Wild-about-Avening-108807527428528/> never fails to interest and delight. This week alone, we've had pics of the **Harris Family's** hedgehog box and its snuggled-up occupant and some wonderful photos from **Nige Bowsher** and **Dave Gardiner**. Not to mention memorable video clips posted by

Peter Marciniak of a grass snake and **Estelle St John-Smith** of the deer she spotted while making charcoal in the woods.

Avening ecologist Phoebe Carter, who is leading Avening's Big Wildlife Watch, recommends Twitter feeds from three other local organisations: Wild Stroud <https://twitter.com/wildstroud>; the Stroud Valleys Project <https://twitter.com/svpcharity>; and Wild Cirencester's <https://twitter.com/wildciren>, which includes news of Ciren's peregrine falcons.

Three Gloucestershire-based organisations have done their best to keep people engaged during lockdown:

The **Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust** has a raft of activities and advice – a photo competition, Billy's Camera Trap Tuesdays (which are fantastic!) and how to visit reserves safely during this phase of lockdown <https://www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk/home-ideas>

The **Slimbridge Wetland Centre** is closed but has shifted to Twitter. They update their #WWTHomeLearning hub every Monday. <https://twitter.com/WWTSlimbridge>

Our friends at **Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (whose Rural Skills offshoot ran the hedge-laying session at the playing field in February) has a great Twitter feed and may still have some free wildlife flower seeds in support of #nomowmay, which encourages us to leave at least part of our gardens a bit messy – the biggest and easiest thing you can do to support wildlife! <https://twitter.com/cotswoldsaonb?lang=en>

If you're participating in the Big Wildlife Watch, log on to the national wildlife websites for help in identifying what you see: **RSPB** www.rspb.org; **BugLife** www.buglife.org.uk; **Butterfly Conservation** www.butterfly-conservation.org; **Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust** www.arc-trust.org; and **The Mammal Society** www.mammal.org.uk Or even read a book: Wildflowers, Butterflies and Trees of the Slad Valley by Morris Richard (Qwertyop, 2014)

If you are thinking about exploring further afield, the **Cotswold Water Park** is beginning to reopen its car parks <https://www.waterpark.org> but sadly as this newsletter went to press, **Westonbirt Arboretum** remained closed. <https://www.facebook.com/WestonbirtArb>

Log on to the Avening Parish website for previous editions of the Neighbourhood Network Newsletter, or pick up hard copies from outside 6 Old Hill.