

COMBERTON CONTACT SEPTEMBER 2026

Art & Craft Exhibition 2026

**Friday
25th**

**Saturday
26th**

**& Sunday
27th**

September

**at
St Mary's
Church
Comberton
CB23 7ED**

**10 am to 4 pm
entry free**

www.stmaryscomberton.org

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Baptist Church Church Office	264707
Benefits Agency Chesterton Road, Cambridge	545200
Comberton Catholics (Fr John Minh)	832397
Comberton Library	0345 045 5225
Comberton Playgroup	262373
Comberton Village College	262503
Adult Education	264721
Cambridge Water Emergencies	01223 706050
Anglia Water Sewerage Emergencies	03457 145 145
Environmental Health Services (South Cambs)	03450 450500
Meridian Primary School	262423
Nursery Way Sheltered Housing	264434
Parkside Police Station	01480 456111
Samaritans	364455
Social Services	264466
(emergency out-of-hours)	01733 561370
St Mary's Church (Associate Priest Chris Westgarth)	07710 661003
Street Light Failure reporting helpline	01954 233330
Village Help Scheme (Chairman Barbara Mitton), See panel on page 7 for transport bookings	262073
Wood Green Animal Shelter	01480 830014
Stray dogs (South Cambs DC)	443000

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West of Cambridge Churches Joint Service

No spare parts

Sunday 27th September 2026
10.30-11.45am
Comberton Leisure, CB23 7DU

All are welcome to join for a morning of sung worship, prayer and fellowship. Together we will be exploring how we all play our part in the the body of Christ.

A session for primary aged children will be run by GenR8.



Supported by: local Baptist churches, Cambourne Church, St John Fisher Catholic Church, Hardwick Evangelical Church, Lordsbridge Team Ministry, Papworth Team Ministry, local Methodist churches, GenR8 and WCCYM

Regular dates for your diary

Day	Time	What	Where
Monday	Morning	Monday Studio	VH
Monday	9.45am - 11am	Comberton Walkers	BC
Monday	3.40pm - 5.35pm	Children's Street Dance Classes	MS
Monday	6pm - 7pm	Tang Soo Do Junior 6-11	MS
Monday	7pm - 9pm	Tang Soo Do	MS
1 st , 2 nd , 4 th Monday	7pm - 9pm	Carpet Bowls	VH
3 rd Monday	7pm - 9pm	Comberton Winemakers	VH
Tuesday	9.30am - 11am	Messy Play (term time only)	CP
Tuesday	10.30am - 12 noon	Cafe	VH
Tuesday	1.30pm - 4pm	Fabric and Yarns	BC
Tuesday	6.45pm - 7.30pm	ChaSamba Adult Fitness	MS
2 nd Tuesday	8pm (Except Aug)	Comberton WI	VH
4 th Tuesday	8pm - 9:30pm	Comberton Heritage Society	VH
Wednesday	10am - 11:30am	Comberton Baby & Toddler Group	VH
Wednesday	9:30am - 12:30	Comberton Shed	Pavilion
Wednesday	2pm - 3:30pm (term time only)	Bumps & Babes	BC
Wednesday	5.30pm-6.30pm	Pilates Class - book via www.faybpilates.co.uk	MS
Wednesday	6.45pm-7.45pm	U15 Football Club	CVC
Wednesday	7pm - 9pm	Tang Soo Do	MS
Thursday	9.30am - 11am	Messy Play (term time only)	CP
Thursday	5.45pm-6.45pm	U8 Football Club	CVC
2 nd Thursday	2.30pm	Comberton Friendship	VH
4 th Thursday not Dec/Aug	2.30pm - 4pm	Oasis Teas	VH
3 rd Friday	7pm (7:30pm start)	Bingo Party	VH

VH = Village Hall CVC = Comberton Village College
 BC = Baptist Church MS = Meridian School
 CP = Comberton Playgroup

Parish Council

Meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Village Hall.

We welcome public attendance and the agendas and minutes can be found at <https://comberton-pc.gov.uk/decisions-meetings/agendas-and-minutes>

Wheelie Bin Collection Dates

Thursday 3 rd September	Black
Thursday 10 th September	Blue & Green
Thursday 17 th September	Black
Thursday 24 th September	Blue & Green
Thursday 1 st October	Black



Advertising Rates

	Size (w x h)	Annual (10 editions)	Single Edition
Whole page	122mm x 183mm	£475	£60
3/5 page	122mm x 109mm	£285	£36
2/5 page	122mm x 72mm	£190	£24
1/5 page	122mm x 35mm	£95	£12
1/5 page	60mm x 72mm	£95	£12
Back page (colour)	122mm x 183mm	One-off only	£90

Comberton Contact Team

Editor and Designer	James Gilbert	07768 421049
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treasurer@combertoncontact.org.uk	38 Westlands	

Distribution	Marian Dymott	01223 263292
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Please supply copy via email in a plain text format and images in jpg, png or pdf with 300 dpi. Please send any submissions for the October magazine by 15th September 2026. Submissions will only be acknowledged if requested and this may take up to a week.

From the Editor

I hope you've managed to get some time off during the summer and haven't overheated too much!

I'm delighted that the Eden Coffee House is now open - another facility serving the community. I interviewed the owners Andy and Hannah about the history behind it and their plans for the future (see page 35).

The big event in September is the annual Comberton Gardens and Allotments Association show - see page 23 and the back cover for more details.

James Gilbert
07768 421049



Comberton Village Website

Regular updates are available at www.comberton.org

Local Government Contacts

Parish Council Chair Jennifer Martin
jen.martin@comberton-pc.gov.uk

Parish Council Clerk Jessie Brewer
clerk@comberton-pc.gov.uk
Comberton Parish Council
PO Box 1549
CAMBRIDGE DO
CB1 0ZS

District Councillors Ariel Cahn 01223 232186
cldr.cahna@scambs.gov.uk
Dr Lisa Redrup 07855 324580
cldr.redrup@scambs.gov.uk

County Councillor Christopher Morris 07971 678429
christopher.morris@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Village Help Scheme

31 August 2026	Angela Donnelly	07939915321
07 September 2026	Angela Donnelly	07939915321
14 September 2026	Barbara Mitton	07939915321
21 September 2026	Barbara Mitton	07939915321
28 September 2026	Gill Redman	07939915321
05 October 2026	Pauline Grounds	07939915321

Volunteer Drivers & Coordinators Needed

Do you have a few hours to spare each week? We're looking for volunteer drivers and coordinators to help community members get to important medical appointments. This service will soon become too difficult to run without more volunteers.

Roles available:

Volunteer Coordinators: Help schedule rides and match drivers with those in need
— can be done from home .

Volunteer Drivers: Use your own vehicle to provide safe, friendly transport for people who otherwise struggle to get to appointments.

You'll make a real difference in someone's life by helping them access essential care.

Requirements:

A valid driver's licence (for drivers)

Reliability and good communication skills

Compassion and a desire to help others

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Email: donnella1505@gmail.com.



The Parish Church of St Mary, Comberton

In the Benefice of The Lordsbridge Team



**25th - 27th
September
10am to 4pm**

**Art & Craft
Exhibition
2026**

Friday
25th
Saturday
26th
& Sunday
27th

**Entry
free!**

Activities and Special Events



Every Wednesday at 9.30am - **Men's Shed** at The Pavilion

Wed 2nd Sept at 9.45am - **Oasis Holiday Club** at Comberton Baptist Church

Thursday 24th Sept at 2.30pm - **Oasis Teas** at Comberton Village Hall

Friday 25th - Sun 27th Sept - **Art & Craft Exhibition** in St Mary's

Sunday 27th Sept at 10.30am - **Joint Service** at Comberton Leisure

Services at St Mary's Church



Sunday 6th Sept at 9.30am - **Back to School Sunday** - praying for the new term and blessing of backpacks

Sunday 13th Sept at 8.00am - **BCP Holy Communion**

9.30am - **Harvest Festival** followed by **Shared Lunch**

Sunday 20th Sept at 9.30am - **Morning Worship**

Sunday 27th Sept at 8.30am - **BCP Holy Communion** at **Toft Church**

10.30am - **Joint Service** at **Comberton Leisure**

On-line Services



Zoom Church: Sunday at 11am - ID: **8231 1473 640**

Tuesday Morning Prayer on Zoom at 9.30am - ID: **495 061 1016**

Wednesday Compline on Zoom at 8pm - ID: **899 215 191**



Quiet Prayer

Our church building is usually open from
7.30am-3pm for visits & individual prayer.

On-line Giving

We can now accept on-line donations;
more information on our website.



Find us on Facebook:

St Mary's Church, Comberton

For information about Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals,
please contact The Rev'd Chris Westgarth

Associate Priest: The Rev'd Chris Westgarth

chris.westgarth1@btinternet.com

Tel: 07710 661003

http://



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Comberton Cinema

Comberton Village Hall



Bernard MacLaverty's novel follows Gerry and Stella Gilmore, a couple in their late sixties who have built a life in Glasgow after leaving Northern Ireland. With their son and grandson now living in Canada, a subtle distance has settled into their family life. Hoping to reconnect and step outside the rhythms of their everyday routine, they take a midwinter trip to Amsterdam - a city that gently stirs memories they've long carried with them.

Cast: Lesley Manville, Ciarán Hinds, Julie Lamberton.

Wednesday 16th September 2026

Doors open 7.30 pm, film starts 7.45pm

Comberton Village Hall

Ticket £5 on the door

This event is sponsored by the Village Hall Trustees.

Further information: Sandra Hyde 01223 262075.



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Mindset: The Foundation of Lasting Change

So far, we have explored walking as a basic form of movement, along with sleep and hydration. Together with nutrition and other forms of exercise, which I will cover in future months, these are the foundations of good health.

This month, however, I want to focus on something that lies at the heart of putting all these healthy behaviours into practice: **our mindset and beliefs**.

We all have beliefs about ourselves and our approach to life. Some of these beliefs are helpful, while others can limit us and prevent us from making the changes we want.

We might tell ourselves:

- “I’m too old.”
- “I’m too busy.”
- “I’ll start next month.”

Or after we have started, when we face a challenge or make a mistake, we may stop trying altogether:

- “I knew I couldn’t do it.”
- “I never see anything through.”
- “I always fail.”
- “I’m no good at this.”

These thoughts can feel like facts, but they are often simply well-practised patterns of thinking.

To change our habits, we first need to understand ourselves. We must take into account our lifestyle, responsibilities and commitments while also looking with curiosity at the thoughts and beliefs influencing our behaviour.

Small, incremental changes carried out consistently produce lasting results.

Consistency matters more than perfection.

A setback can help us understand ourselves, our circumstances and our needs. The most helpful response is to learn, adjust and continue moving towards the goal.

In health coaching, learning what works for your body and your lifestyle is a process. Developing the skills to move, eat, rest and recover appropriately may take six months, a year or longer. That may not sound as appealing as a rapid transformation, but habits built gradually are much more likely to create lasting results.

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This month, I encourage you to notice your thoughts.

Are there any limiting beliefs or recurring negative patterns that may be holding you back?

Can you change the thought into a more positive one? Sometimes that can be as simple as adding the word 'yet' at the end of a sentence or changing the words 'have to' to 'get to', which can feel far more empowering.

Liz Fursse (Integrative Health and Nutrition coach)



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SATURDAY 19th SEPTEMBER

10-1

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Comberton Heritage Society

Our talk in June was entitled "The House of Spies", and was given by Roger Leivers. Roger told us how, in the summer of 1942, Farm Hall in Godmanchester was requisitioned by the RAF and became Station 61b, part of the Special Intelligence Service. Over the next three years, agents from almost every occupied country passed through the Hall on their way to an uncertain future. When, in the spring of 1945, agents were no longer being dropped, the Hall was transformed into a 'holding' property for 10 German nuclear scientists, captured during the advance into Europe. Unbeknown to them, every room was 'bugged', even the garden. They remained there until January 1946, never once suspecting that their every word was recorded.

Little did we know that quiet and picturesque Godmanchester was a centre of so much secret activity in the Second World War. A fascinating talk and a fine way to end our 2025/26 programme.

After our summer break, the first talk will be given by Stephen Owen who will tell us about The Bedford and Cambridge Railway, known as the Varsity Line, opened in 1862 linking Bedford with Cambridge. Stephen is a local railway preservationist and historian best known for rescuing the former Old North Road station at Longstowe

This meeting will be at 8pm on Tuesday September 22nd at Comberton Village Hall.

New members to the Society are very welcome - just £20 for a years subscription.

For further details - e mail janewalker321@icloud.com

Comberton WI

Our Speaker at the July meeting was Petra Tucker who is part of a team that volunteer at Littlehey and Whitemoor prisons. Petra's job is to encourage and teach those in the prison to learn to sew in groups and ultimately produce a finished item. Petra explained that for many it is a struggle, for some it is not for them, but for those who complete their work, the pride they show is wonderful. Petra gave a very interesting and informative talk.

Our next meeting will be held at 8 pm on Tuesday 8th September at Comberton Village Hall. Our Speaker will be Fran Saltmarsh talking The Roaring Twenties. All are very welcome.

Sue Lewis
Comberton WI



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September Challenge

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Your numbers up.....and down.....

Follow the clues below and your arithmetical odyssey will unfold. The final number is all that is required but please use the brackets to record the answer to the clue in question and the cumulative total at that stage.

Once upon a time a Mr. G. Orwell wrote a book with a numerical title! This number is your departure point. From this figure deduct the highest cubed figure it is possible to deduct and remain positive (/). Add the Dam Busters FILM Squadron number, not 617 (/). Deduct the combined total of 4,5 and 6 cubed, individually, (/). Add the square of 698 less the square of 697 (/). Now add the number of yards in 7 miles (/). You must now deduct the highest cubed number which is less than your running total at this point. Now take the 3 numbers of your total so far, cube each individually and add the three products to your total (/). Now take the first four numbers after the decimal point in PI, interpret as a four figure number and add to your running total (/). Deduct the year of the Battle of Mortimers Cross (/). Deduct the number in Baker Street where a Mr S Holmes resided (/). Deduct the cubed number of the Wonders of the World (/). Deduct the number of days in the Jewish month of ELUL (/) and finally deduct the international dialling code for Angola (/) =FINAL TOTAL).

Entries to the store no later than the 14th September. First correct entry out of the bag wins the prize of wine and chocolates generously donated by the CO-OP.

Name / Postal Address.....

Email Telephone

Puzzle 239 LR 9/26

Seniors

Holiday Club



Butterflies
Wednesday 2nd Sept
10am - 4pm

OASiS

£10 to include
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board games, film club,
bingo or just relax with a
newspaper or a jigsaw

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Oasis takes place at Comberton Baptist Church, Green End

For details and booking call 07967 500134 or email oasis@c-b-c.org.uk

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First Monday of the month



Third Monday of the month

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COMBERTON ALLOTMENTS & GARDENS ASSOCIATION

It's 'Comberton Autumn Show' time again! Our 73rd Show is on Saturday 12th September in the Meridian Primary School.

By now every house in Comberton should have received a copy of the Show Brochure (*if you haven't, pick a copy up at Local Post Offices & Shops*), please look through it and plan your entries, there is a class for everyone!

All exhibit entries are free and forms can be emailed to combertonshow@gmail.com or delivered to the Show Secretary, they must be pre-booked by the evening of Friday 11th September; no entries will be accepted on the Saturday.

Staging is between **8.30 and 10.30am** on the day; you simply collect your entry cards and display your exhibit, stewards will be on hand to guide you to the appropriate area.

As the entries are free there will be no monetary prizes but prize certificates and trophies will be awarded as usual. The Show opens to the Public at **3pm**..

Our judges give their time voluntarily to come and officiate so please enter; we like to give them a sufficient number of entries to ponder over and make their trip worthwhile!.

Vegetables, Fruit and Flowers: Probably the most challenging growing season ever, a wet start to the year and then extreme heat and drought, but many plants are still looking healthy mainly thanks to judicious watering. However, whether they are in prime condition or not, try an entry, the weather has been the same for everyone and it could be your year for the prize.

Remember the 'Harry Sewell Trophy', it is a restricted class in this otherwise open show, for **residents of Comberton** or holders of an **allotment in Comberton**; this display of 3 different vegetables (*from a very long list*) gives you a better chance of winning without any outside competition.

Cookery and Preserves: There are **11** cookery classes including one set recipe for 'Lemon Drizzle Cake' and **7** different preserve classes; try your hand at winning the 'Evelyn Watts Trophy' awarded for highest points in cookery.

Of course there is also the eagerly contested **Men only Cake** class for the 'Gerry Hall Tankard', the challenge this year is for the men to bake a '*Chocolate Swiss Roll*' to a set recipe

Childrens' Cookery offers a choice of '*Chocolate Cornflake Crispies*', '*Cheese Straws*' and the ever popular '*Decorated Rich Tea Biscuits*' with a '*Flower Face Theme*'.

Handicraft: Again **11** classes for adults and **10** for children covering a full range of skills; so still time to finish that crafting, woodwork or needlework project and also time to set the youngsters on a creative path!.

Painting & Drawing. Last year we had a reasonable display of artwork in our adult class showing the amazing talent that exists in the village, so be you an accomplished or aspiring artist please exhibit your work in the Show and better last year's entries so that the visitors can share in your creativity.

Childrens' Art: There are 3 subjects for your children to choose from; paintings are judged in 5 different age categories so a child will always be competing with their own age group. The Childrens' art will be displayed in the Main Hall alongside the entries from Meridian School and the Comberton Playgroup.

The artwork judged best in show will be awarded the *Frank Hollick Book Prize*.

Photography: This year the 3 categories for adults are '*Sunset*'; '*Natures Patterns*' and '*A Form of Transport*' and for the children '*My Friend – Animal or Toy*'; as always we encourage a wide interpretation of the subject.

Have you taken a picture that fits? If not there's time to get out there with the Camera or Phone. The Best Photograph in the show will be awarded the '*Mike Winney Plate*'.

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Home Made Wines: There are **6** classes and as usual the public will be queueing up in the afternoon to taste the entries. Peter Allerton will again be the judge with the difficult task of selecting the best wine from the many entries!

Full details of the Show, entry procedure and classes are in the **Show Brochure**; but whether you submit an entry or not please come along in the afternoon and see the talent that exists in your village, there's plenty to inspire!

Robin Worship – CAGA Secretary (robin.worship7@gmail.com)



Comberton Squash Club Winter League Update

Comberton Squash Club has had a strong and encouraging season in the **Cambridgeshire Winter Leagues 2025/26**, with all three teams showing good progress across the divisions.

The **1st team**, newly promoted into **Division 1**, competed well at the top level of county squash and finished an impressive **3rd place**. This was a very positive result after moving up a division, showing that the team can compete strongly against some of the best sides in Cambridgeshire.

The **2nd team** also stepped up this season, having been promoted into **Division 2**. They finished **6th**, gaining valuable experience in a tougher league and putting in some competitive performances throughout the winter. The season should provide a strong platform to build from next year.

A particular highlight has been the launch of the **3rd team**, which was created mainly to give juniors and newer players the chance to experience team squash. They entered **Division 4** and finished an excellent **3rd place**, with 10 wins from 14 matches. This is a fantastic achievement and shows the strength of the club's developing players.

Overall, it has been a very encouraging season for Comberton Squash Club. With two teams adjusting to higher divisions and the new 3rd team giving juniors a pathway into competitive squash, the club continues to move in the right direction.

New players of all ages and abilities are always welcome.

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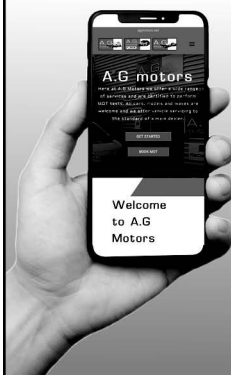


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Summer Reading Challenge, 'Read to the Beat', celebratory ceremony will be held on **Friday 11th Sept. 2026, 4pm – 5pm**. Please bring along your percussion instruments you had made at Comberton library during the summer.

Digital Buddy Assistance -Need any assistance want to get online? with uploading photos, bus pass renewal/new application or even accessing your emails. Digital Buddy will be here to assist you at Comberton library, on **Mondays, 11am-1pm**, every week. Come and book an appointment with our digital buddy.

Digital Buddy on **Monday 5th October** - will demonstrate how to manage your library account on Spydus (online service) between **11am – 12.30pm** Please bring along your IT device.

School projects

As the new school year begins, don't forget how much libraries can help with school projects. We have a wide selection of junior non-fiction books, packed full of trustworthy facts and information. With a library card you also have free access to online dictionaries, encyclopaedias and history research websites: visit our website and explore our learning and research page.

Comberton Library Bookworms: Looking for the next great book? A monthly list can be found here. The Comberton Library Bookworms will handpick a selection of titles recently enjoyed by our readers. There is something for everyone, whether you favour fiction, nonfiction, or something new!

One August Night - Victoria Hislop - Fiction (Historical)

The Binding - Bridget Collins - Fiction

The Missing Boyfriend - Alex Stone - Fiction

A Fire in Their Hearts - Philip Paris - Fiction (Historical)

Silent Child - Toni Maguire - Non-Fiction

That Beautiful Atlantic Waltz - Malachy Tallack - Fiction

Weekly activities

Knit, Sew and Natter group continues to meet in Comberton Library at **10.30am – 11.30am**; **September** dates: 14th and 28th. **October** dates: 12th and 26th. **November** dates: 9th and 23rd. **December** dates: 7th. Then every other Monday onwards. Newcomers warmly welcome. There are always tea, coffee and biscuits available.

Come sing along and have fun, **Rhymetime, 10.30am – 11.00am** (except during the school holidays) for children between 0 to 4 years of age. **September** dates: 7th and 21st. **October** dates: 5th and 19th. **November** dates: 2nd, 16th and 30th. **December** dates: 14th. Also, come and join the First Steps Library Club, aged 0-4 years. So, don't forget every visit to the library, attending events like Rhymetime your child will get a special stamp, towards getting a certificate.

It's Lego Time with Duplo. **Saturdays** starting at 10.30am. Come and have fun building and exploring your imagination. Every child needs an adult to accompany them. **This is a free event.**

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Chronicle of the Friends of St Mary's Part 3

Part Three covers the Friends of St Mary's through the years 2022–25. Our 2nd Chairman, Godfrey Curtis, completed 4 years in post at the end of 2022. Thank you, Godfrey, for steering the ship through difficult times – not least, Covid-time. When the Revd. David Newton asked in 2022 how the Friends were placed, we reported that our aim was still the car park upgrade plus the outstanding repairs. We were Zoom-ready for fundraising – outdoor activities only!

Paul Hardy, with Brian and Revd. Chris assisting, developed a 2 in 1 boundary walk called 'Beating the Bounds'. The shorter and longer walks allowed wide community participation. Mark McKeown donated two 'pop-up' posters, one featuring the long list of church repairs from 2014 and the other showing the many Grade-Listed buildings in Comberton. East Anglia has 67 Grade 1 Structures and St Mary's Church is one. Writing in Contact, I mentioned a particular headstone commemorating Henry Day. His great-niece wrote to me saying that Henry's two cousins, Alfred and Walter Day, also died fighting in that Great War. So much village history lies in a churchyard – remember Gray's Elegy?

I became Chairman again in 2023. The car park, pathway and wall repair project was like an unmade jigsaw puzzle. Each piece posed a similar set of questions – is permission needed, from whom and can we do a proper job cheaper? Perhaps there was also an anxiety about the church spending money on 'the fabric'. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) conceded that professional advice had not yet been taken and felt that it was for the Friends to seek and pay for it - if so minded! With so much uncertainty I wondered if the Friends should stand back from the project. Revd. Newton declared he would be very sad if the disability parking upgrade was abandoned, admitting 'we understand so little, so – over to the Friends'.

Acting on this challenge, in February 2023 I walked into the offices of R Carter on Horizon Park and secured a site-visit by Steve Allen, Head of their 'Small works Section'. He recommended John Cobb & Sons of Orwell. My researches included Rex Webb recalling the first car park graveling and inspecting the 2007 plans of the North Porch Extension. These showed that digging a septic tank and soak-away in the car park surely caused the later ponding in the car park after heavy rain. Cobb and Sons issued fresh quotes as our plans developed and time passed. Quote C gave way to Quote D - £13,360.80 gross – which we used for our application to the Jesus College Proby Trust. This was awarded in July and in the same month we welcomed Susan Royce as our new Treasurer and as a Trustee. We said farewell and thanked Richard Elleray, our founding Trustee Treasurer.

Still aspiring to a closer working relationship with the PCC, we were still

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uncertain about the need for planning permission for car park and pathway. When local government and Diocesan offices were contacted directly, they affirmed the need for permission – of different sorts! The final Cobb site-visit in November 2023 yielded Quote E, adding an extra £3,433.20 and a start date of Spring 2024!

Back in June, the Revd. Chris and Jane Hughes created a floral raised bed depicting a crown near the North Door, as a tribute to the new Monarch. On the day after Coronation Saturday, I joined residents of houses around the church for a picnic on the green parking area. Next day I delivered a fundraising Trifold to 12 houses. One person rang back with a promise of a goodly sum!

In the December Contact I reported over £600 raised by our October Ceilidh. These funds helped the PCC to agree to a survey of the church roof just before Christmas. In the Roof report Steve Austwick (SA) said that the lead was over 100 years old and showed many linear weaknesses and weld fractures. Age had loosened the limestone mortar, easing flashing away from the parapet walls. The repair would cost just over £10,000 gross. So we asked - 'Could we be lucky again with the Proby Trust?'

2024 was a big year for church repairs! An internal nave wall 'blew' its plaster early on and re-plastering was paid for by a church legacy. Churchwarden Teresa and the Friends applied to Jesus College for a second time, this time citing more roof leaks and more interior damage. To our great delight and relief, the College made a second grant.

Roof work was completed in early April 2024. Stephanie Norris, our architect, completed her 2024 Quinquennial Inspection at the same time. Roofer SA gave his opinion that, with regular maintenance and repairs, the roof could be serviceable for another 15-20 years. The car park upgrade, repairs to churchyard wall, repaired pathway and path lighting came swiftly together. The total of gifted monies spent in 2024 was over £35,000 of which two Proby Grants from Jesus College totalled £22,189.80. In February 2025 the Friends received a £5000 donation, earmarked as restricted for roof guttering. In May, SA installed three longer spitters on south side and walked the roof. One year after major repairs, he counted 8 new lead cracks. He applied mastic paint and agreed that a yearly inspection was now sensible.

Brian McCabe created a grant application form which emphasised that St Mary's Church was already a venue for a wide range of community events in addition to normal church activities. It mentions regular use for exhibitions of work by local artists, concerts, lectures, fêtes and musical workshops, all open to everyone. In September 2025 PCC Treasurer Hilary was able to use some of the unused £10,500 FOSM monies from 2024 to pay Herringbone for the Quinquennial Inspection 2024 'Urgent' work.

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Prof Susan Oosthuizen, a one-time Comberton resident, agreed to speak about pre-Norman history in the Bourn Valley - in our church. This was part of our Autumn 2025 program of Three Events which also featured a Violin and 'cello Concert and a Ceilidh.

In November - a big scare - Emergency boiler shut-down enforced for Health and safety reasons. The fire door clay seal (renewed every annual service) had failed early. The boiler was duly serviced and went back into action - but the Writing is definitely on the Wall! During 2025, FOSM presented four fundraising Stalls, three fundraising Events and wrote four Articles in Contact Magazine.

Through the years 2024-5, we were without a Vicar – in an 'Interregnum'. During this time, the Friends found a growing sense of partnership with the PCC through the Fabric and Finance sub-committee. Our grant fundraising was far and away the most productive part of fundraising in 2023/4 but we cannot go again to the Proby well – not for a while! As we approached our 10th anniversary year in 2026, the Friends were still worried about the roof.

PS. We hoped the patched roof will keep us dry as we fundraise but our latest survey (2026) has prompted an urgent repair of the North and South Aisle roofs (Photo - The Jolly Roofers return!). Our current deadline for a new roof is still 2035!

David Hughes, Chairman, FOSM
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Eden Coffee House

The Eden Coffee House in Comberton is owned and run by Andy and his wife Hannah. Formerly Cruickshank's Butchers, they acquired the property in South Street in late 2023, and it is now open for us all to enjoy. But how did this come about? Around 10 years ago, Andy and Hannah decided they wanted to run a business together; Hannah had a lifelong dream to run a coffee shop, and Andy loved Land Rover Defenders; the two ideas came together and they created a successful mobile coffee business, serving coffee out of the back of a converted Land Rover to rural venues. Over time Andy fell in love with coffee and everything coffee related, and their ambition grew to wanting a permanent base where they could create a sense of community around coffee.

Andy was brought up in Comberton and heard that the butchers was coming up for sale; it was their ideal venue, in the heart of a

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rural community that they both knew well. They managed to buy the property before it went to auction, most likely saving it from being redeveloped into housing. I suspect many will wonder why it took so long to open – the reality was the property had not changed since the early 1960's, and the change of use from butchers to coffee shop meant complying with all the modern legislation for a business serving coffee and food items. Andy and Hannah sold the converted Land Rover to help fund the refurbishment, but the amount of work required and associated cost meant it took them much longer than they had originally hoped to get the Eden Coffee House ready.

But it is now open, and I know many from Comberton and further afield have been enjoying the hospitality and sense of community around coffee, exactly as Andy and Hannah intended.

And how will the business develop over time? At the moment Andy and Hannah are focusing on getting the basics right, with coffee and cakes to accompany; they are hoping to offer a small lunch menu in the Autumn.

The Eden Coffee House is open 5 days a week, Tuesday through Saturday, from 9am to 4pm.

The Editor



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*Additional information for groups:

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- Groups working with children and/or vulnerable adults will need to have child protection and vulnerable adult policies & procedures in place
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