



Blackawton Beacon

May 2026

published jointly by the Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council

Wormcharming

from Hannah Smith

Sunday 3rd May ~ 40th Year!

Join us for a day of fun, laughter, and community spirit at this year's International Festival of Wormcharming!

Registration for Wormcharming teams will be from 10.30 – 12.00 am outside the George Inn. Drinks will be available at the village shop.

Alongside the main event we'll have a range of activities in the Secret Field, with festivities continuing throughout the afternoon and into the evening. Food and drink will be available in the field and the village hall bar will be open (with an array of beers!) plus live music and the famous auction!



Blackawton Wormcharming Auction will begin at 7.00 pm. Don't forget to grab your auction number from 6.00 pm!

This amazing annual event runs by the power of volunteers and we need some more! Any and all volunteers are welcome, so if you can lend a hand in any way please contact chris.oughton@yahoo.co.uk.

All hail the mighty worm!

Wormcharming Fun Dog Show

from Carey Burton

Sunday 3rd May

In the secret field, immediately following Wormcharming

£1.00 cash per dog per class –pay on entry



- | | | | |
|---|------------|---|----------------|
| Smart paws | Great coat | Best tail | Beautiful eyes |
| Wonderful ears | | Hilary Hall memorial class (open to all dogs) | |
| Shapely six legs (handler and dog) | | Rescue dog (sponsored by Lottery Dogs) | |
| Best in Show ~ Open to all previous winners | | | |

Blackawton welcomes thoughtful dog handlers. Please pick up after your dog.

For more information on the dog show please contact Carey **07754 493160**.



Christian Aid Jumble Sale

Blackawton Village Hall

Saturday 9th May at 2.00 pm

There will be clothes, bric-a-brac, books and toys as well as plants and cakes and a raffle. **Offers of help would be appreciated**, and jumble can be brought to the church on Saturday morning. If you would like anything collected, please ring **01803 712362** or email kate.janman@gmail.com. **Nothing is too big or too small.** Card payments will be accepted!

Envelopes will be delivered to homes during **Christian Aid Week**, but they will not be collected. Donations can be made online or brought to the Jumble Sale (instructions will be with your envelope).

Blackawton Parish Council

Blackawton Parish Community Meeting

You are warmly invited to join us for an evening of updates, discussion, and community connection

Wednesday 13 May at 7.30 pm

Blackawton Village Hall

Guest Speakers: Blackawton Primary School

Updates and insights from our local school

South Dartmoor Community Energy

Simple, low-cost ways to retrofit for better energy efficiency

Introduction to new technologies

Guidance on grants

Refreshments provided



Blackawton Allotment Association

from **Jill Kelly**

There will be a plant sale at Wormcharming

1.00 pm to 4.00 pm outside the Village Hall

We have allotment plots available at an annual rent of only £18! We are happy to meet you on site to show you round and explain how the allotments work. If you are interested in a plot, please contact the Secretary, Jill Kelly, on: allotments@blackawtoncommunity.com.

Why not share a plot with a friend to get started?

St Michael's Church

Services for May

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Service</i>
Sunday 3rd	9.30 am	Holy Communion (by extension)
Sunday 10th	9.30 am	Christian Aid Service
Thursday 14th Ascension Day	7.00 pm	Holy Communion <i>followed by a light supper</i> <i>United Benefice service at St Peter's, Stoke Fleming</i>
Sunday 17th	11.00 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 24th Pentecost	9.30 am	Morning Worship
Sunday 31st Trinity Sunday	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>United Benefice service at St Michael's, Strete</i>

The services above are correct at time of going to press. Please see weekly pew sheet, gate notices or "A Church Near You" website for the latest information. We will also email any changes or additions to our mailing list – if you're not on our mailing list and would like to be, please send an email saying "subscribe" with "Blackawton Church News" as the subject to chris.janman@gmail.com.

There is a **Mini Food Bank** in the Church porch, open 24 hours a day, every day. **Please give what you can and take what you need.**

Reader's Corner

from **Jenny Harris**

Give thanks for every day. Cup your hands and imagine that you are holding a small seed in them. When you look at the seed you have no idea what will come from it; whether it will be a beautiful blossom, a small insignificant weed, or a giant tree. This seed symbolises the possibilities that lie in this day.

Here is today, O God. I don't know what this day will bring, although I like to think that I do. I have my schedule, my to-do list filled in, my agenda duly noted. I like to think that I have this day under control. But I know that's not how most days go. I know that today I will be surprised by sorrows, joys and challenges. I know that today may just be an ordinary day, or it might be the most extraordinary day of my life. And I know that you are the only one who knows what lies ahead. So I offer you this today. Raise your cupped hands and imagine giving the small seed to God.

Here is today, O God. I give it to you, trusting you will take whatever happens in this day and use it for your glory. I trust that whatever happens today you will be with me. Thank you for this day and for its endless possibilities. Thank you that I can face this day with you. Here is today, O God. A part of all the days we have spent together, a part of all the days to come, a part of who I am and where I am on my journey. A part of the plan you have for me. Take this day. Use it to your glory. Thank you, God.

Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch on its branches. *Matthew 13:32*

Peace and joy be with you all.

Our church team

Vicar	Rev'd Matt Gorton	01803 906861		
Churchwardens	Kate Janman	01803 712362	Lay Readers	Frank Robinson 01803 712249
	Chris Janman	01803 712362		Lyn Robinson 01803 712249

Village Life



Blackawton Amateur Dramatic Society

from **Chris Janman**

The BADS AGM will be held on **Tuesday 19th May** at Ruby House. This is usually very dull and very short, so will be followed by a **Play Reading** (play to be decided, but it will be a comedy, either ancient or modern).

Advance notice: BADS will be staging a **Variety Show** in the Village Hall on **Saturday 6th June** at 6.00 pm (so people of all ages can take part). You've got a month to practise your song or other piece of music, or perfect your magic trick or find (or write!) a sketch to put on with a friend or two. Please give your name to Chris Hamilton (hamilton.christine33@yahoo.com) or another BADS committee member, and encourage others to do the same. Or just come along and enjoy the show.

Blackawton WI

from **Sandra Tope**

May is the month of our Annual Meeting, when we have a round up of the previous year, what went well, what didn't! Then all the committee are reelected, and officers confirmed. This being the case we don't have a speaker, just coffee, biscuits and probably a quiz, or just time to chat!

Our Book club was reading *The Island of Missing Trees* by Elif Shafak which was generally agreed to be a success, and enjoyed by all. The story is based around a fig tree growing in Cyprus and London, I promise, it's better than it sounds! The tree watches and comments on everything going on in the café where it is growing, which made us all wonder what trees are able to do! A total change of style in the next book though, which is *Circle of Days* by Ken Follett.

A few members went to Shilstone Manor earlier in the month on a glorious sunny day, and walked around the gardens there. Well worth a visit, and the lunch was delicious.

Visitors are always welcome to our meetings, the next being on **20th May** at 10.30 am in the Village Hall. So if you're thinking of joining us, you can come for two meetings free of charge and no obligation. For more details call Sandra on **01803 712622** or Sue on **01803 712145**.

West Dart Bus



News

from **Claudia Benzies**

The West Dart Community Bus serves the parishes of Blackawton and Dittisham and is available to the whole community - and well-behaved dogs. Currently, the bus goes to Dartmouth every week and once a month to The Willows and to Newton Abbot. These community trips are free and driven by trained volunteers. We only ask for donations.

We want to hear your thoughts about the West Dart Bus timetable, and any other ideas. Should we change the timetable? At present Dittisham residents are the majority on Fridays and want to keep the Friday trips to Dartmouth. Would you want weekly trips to Totnes, and on to The Willows and Newton Abbot monthly? Would you use it and which days? Please let us know; speak to your friends and neighbours, and tell your bus driver or contact Claudia, **07712 210300**.

Recruitment. Currently all the drivers, except one, are from Dittisham and Cornworthy, including two new drivers awaiting the free volunteer training. Here's an opportunity for anyone else interested in driving the bus. **Come on, Blackawton ...** Call Claudia, or Alex at Ivybridge (details below).

Relief Driver(s) are needed as occasional standby for the regular school bus driver. The West Dart Bus has the Blackawton School contract for the twice-daily run between Blackawton and Dittisham. Call Claudia, or Alex Thom (details below) if you might be able to help.

We now have a second bus with wheelchair access - available for hire soon. Drivers will be trained in using the lift and access equipment.

Regular services

Journeys are free (and donations welcome). Sit back, enjoy the views, save on fuel, parking & frayed nerves.

Please book to ensure the bus does come for you; call **01752 690444** or email **info@ringandride.net**. Or call Claudia Benzies, Coordinator, on **07712 210300**.

Where possible, passengers can be picked up/dropped off elsewhere on the route by request. (eg. outlying hamlets, Totnes, Paignton, Torbay Hospital, Newton Abbot Hospital, Newton Abbot Station ...)

Timetable for May:

Friday 1st	Dartmouth via Dittisham
Wednesday 6th	The Willows, Torquay via Totnes
Friday 8th	Dartmouth via Dittisham
Friday 15th	Dartmouth via Dittisham
Friday 22nd	Dartmouth via Dittisham
Wednesday 27th	Newton Abbot via Totnes
Friday 29th	Dartmouth via Dittisham

All trips depart from Blackawton Bus Shelter at 9.30 am. Return trips depart at 12.30 pm (return time flexible upon request) and arrive in Blackawton between 12.45 and 1.00 pm.

The West Dart Bus seats 16 people and is **available for hire** to local community groups and residents for only £65 + fuel and a volunteer driver – subject to availability. Call Claudia Benzies on **07712 210300**.

Library in the church

from **Chris Hamilton**

Read a good book lately? At the back of the church we have a collection of books. They are all fiction due to space but there is a good variety. Come and try one if you haven't read lately.

If you have books you no longer want please feel free to donate them to our library if they are in a good state. Thank you to the person who made a large donation in April.

Dog fouling

from **Linda Lord**

Residents are pleased to see that the partially opened footpath at the bottom of the French Furze estate is now being used. However, some dog owners are not picking up their dog's poo. Please remember that children play here – let's keep it clean and safe for everyone.

Blackawton and Strete History Group

from **Andrea Scott**

An update! The Facebook page for BASH run by Gary and Justine Hadden now has over 600 members and regular new content and comment, so is running really well. If you are not already a member, search for BASH on Facebook and do join up. It is full of fascinating information and photos.

We have two dates for this year. **Thursday June 4th**, 7.00 pm at Figtree, we are hoping to repeat last year's "Show and Tell" evening when we invited people to bring something special and to share its story – something related to Blackawton or something old or quirky, or just something much loved. Do come and enjoy a fun relaxed evening. For more information call Andrea on **01803 712753**.

On **Friday 25th September** Chris Janman will give us a talk on the history of Blackawton Church. More details about both events nearer the time. We would be delighted to see you and even more delighted if you would like to be on the BASH committee and help us organise future events!

Tree Warden

from **Bob Harvey**

"There is still the need for a clear national policy which will equate the land needs of industry, housing, food production, forestry, sport and recreation." This was the conclusion of a study *The Land of Britain and how it is used* by L. Dudley Stamp, the most respected geographer of the time, prepared for The British Council in 1946. In 2026, 80 years later, we have at last a Government which has recognised this need and has prepared a national Land Use Framework for England.

This 60 page document was published only in March so it needs time for detailed study before we will know how it affects our trees and woodland for the future. However, the categories now include solar energy, and distinguish between broad-leaved woodland and coniferous woodland which combined take 11% of our land – the same area as urban land. Arable and grassland currently take 60% of our land, with 8% 'wild' mountain, heath and coastal.

Next month I shall review the expert opinions of the implications for all of us, as our land is an absolutely finite resource - but we have more and more people.

Big Lunch

from **Rosemary U'Ren**

Advance notice: the Big Lunch will take place on **Sunday 7th June** from 12.30 pm in Blackawton Churchyard. Bring (if you can) and share. No cost and **all are welcome**. If you have any queries phone Rosemary U'Ren **01548 521278**.

Sustainable Blackawton

from **Ruth Coe**

The next Sustainable Blackawton meeting is on **Tuesday 12th May** at 7.00 pm at Figtree, Vicarage Road. New members very welcome. Contact **douglasnoble@icloud.com** if you want to find out more.

Community Emergency Hub

Blackawton Parish Council is constructing an Emergency Plan with the assistance of Devon Communities Together and the Resilience Forum. As part of this initiative a "Community Emergency Hub pack" is to be stored in the Village Hall. This contains a guide and several lanyard badges defining roles for people to help the community including a Receptionist, Needs and Offers Officer, Supervisor, Public Information Officer, Facility Manager, Welfare Officer and Information Officer. These roles (and badges) are not predefined individuals but are to be allocated to appropriate people as they arrive at the Hub to help. This avoids the risks inherent in assigned personnel being absent (on holiday, off sick, moved away from the area etc). Detailed information on each of these roles is included in the guide and is described on each badge. The completed Blackawton Emergency Plan will also be held in the Hub pack.

Community compost site

Sustainable Blackawton continue to manage the site, accepting garden material on Sundays between 10 and 12, please conform to this routine. This initiative will **only** be successful if the right material is stored on the right place, so we need your help on this. Any interested volunteers are also welcome to come along, maybe to learn as well as help as the season becomes busier. Thanks to all who have visited and contributed to the volume of material we now have (almost ready for a shredding/chipping session!).

Wind power feasibility study

The grant application succeeded, the project is about to start and, given geopolitical uncertainties, this investigation into the possibility of locally generated power is timely. The project needs **all** local residents to engage with this project, to discuss, support or object, so that everyone has a say. As the demand for electricity increases, more technology, more heat pumps, more EVs, our reliance on imported energy becomes even more of a security issue. Locally generated, locally used electricity is now recognised as crucial for our future prosperity.

Our selected partner in this project, an independent CIC Community Power Solutions, hosted an introductory Zoom meeting recently and explained how the project will proceed once the necessary

acceptance forms have been signed off by Blackawton Parish Council. Since this was decided at the Parish Council Meeting on April 13th this project may already be underway as you read this!

National Emergency Briefing

Climate change has been studied by serious scientists for many years. Several operating in different areas of expertise came together in November 2025 to present their views to an audience in Westminster. All finished on a hopeful note with solutions to the problems we have caused, but this will need political will and government action to counteract corporate greed, as well as informed and active citizens who understand what is at stake. A follow up film has been made and will be shown at many venues across the country. There is an opportunity to see this film in Totnes Civic Centre on **Friday 15th May**.

Wind Turbine Myth

The myth that wind farms are a guillotine for birds is debunked by hard evidence in a 2009 study that used European and US data on bird deaths. The study concluded that fossil fuel-based power stations kill fifteen times more birds than wind and nuclear power stations. The study found that nuclear power stations and wind farms caused about 0.3-0.4 fatalities for every gigawatt-hour (GWh) but power stations that run on fossil fuels lead to 5.2 fatalities per GWh. Wind turbines kill between 214,000 and 368,000 birds every year. On the other hand, cell and radio towers take the lives of 6.8 million birds annually. On top of that, cats are responsible for about 1.4 billion to 3.7 billion bird deaths.

There's an even larger threat to birds and all species – climate change; increasing temperatures are causing changes in bird migration and reproduction patterns, as well as impacting habitats, food and water sources, and nesting sites. In Europe, a warming climate accounts for the decline in 92 bird species, while in North America, 314 species are imperilled.

Village Hall

Pride & Prejudice – a review

from **Adrian Kyte**

If you were not among the 70 or so people in the audience at the Village Hall on 21st March you missed a treat. The 2-handed cast of Vox Theatre presented us with a slightly 'tongue in cheek' version of Pride & Prejudice with multiple split second costume changes with all the characters in the book getting a mention. I did not actually see the 2 younger Bennett sisters on the stage but maybe I missed them as they were certainly mentioned in the dialogue. Thankfully we did not see Colin Firth, sorry Mr. Darcy, emerging from the lake but there was a very watchable piece of slapstick as a substitute. There was a very believable fight scene between the right side of Mr. Darcy and the left side of the dastardly Wickham over Lydia Bennett's honour with punches going back and forth. But it all ended happily with Lizzy and Darcy together at last.

There was a prerecorded soundtrack to enhance the action on stage. Particularly effective was the sinister Darth Vader 'Star Wars' theme along with the dark cloak and hat for the dreadful Lady Catherine de Bourgh. A very enjoyable evening!

May events

Wormcharming	Sunday 3rd, various activities throughout the day.
Christian Aid Jumble Sale	Saturday 9th, drop off jumble from 10.00 am, doors open 2.00 pm.
Parish Council Meeting	Monday 11th, 7.30 pm.
Blackawton Parish Community Meeting	Wednesday 13th, 7.30 pm.
WI Monthly Meeting	Wednesday 20th, 10.30 am to 1.00 pm.
Hatha Yoga	Wednesdays 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th, 9.00 to 10.15 am.
Chair Yoga	Wednesdays 6th, 13th & 27th, 10.30 to 11.30 am.
	To book yoga classes ring Hannah Roberts 07951 079608 .
Community composting	every Sunday, except 3rd , 10.00 am to 12.00 noon.

Please only add compost to the bays when a volunteer is present. **No fly tipping**. Some things can't be recycled through small composting systems like ours e.g. woody material greater than 1 inch (2.5 cm) diameter, pernicious weeds such as bindweed, Japanese Knotweed, Ground Elder, Phormium, Cordyline, Bamboo and, of course stones, metal or plastic objects.

Car parking

Quite a few cars regularly use the Village Hall car park and normally this is not a problem but when there is an event at the hall the committee request that you park elsewhere. The dates this month are Sunday 3rd all day, Saturday 9th afternoon and Wednesday 13th evening.

Booking the Village Hall

The best way to check availability and make a provisional booking of the Village Hall is to use the interactive calendar at the bottom of the page on the community website blackawtoncommunity.com/community-page/blackawton-village-hall. This page also gives an overview of our facilities and hire rates for various types of event, as well as a link to the Conditions of Hire. If you don't have internet access, please fill in a booking form (available in the shop or the notice board next to the hall door) and drop it into the post box on the wall of the hall. The post box is checked weekly.

Please don't make any commitments until you receive confirmation that it has been accepted. Should an election be called, Thursday bookings are subject to cancellation with full refund of any hall fees already paid. All bookings require a security deposit.

Hirers please remember that time to set up and clear down must be included in your booking request as there may be another event immediately before and/or after your booking. Overrunning will result in part or all of your security deposit being withheld to cover refunds to the additional time and any refunds that have to be issued to other hirers if their booking is affected. The Conditions of Hire that you agree to when requesting the booking states that all rubbish must be removed from the hall and the hall left clean and tidy, please make sure that everyone involved in running your event knows and understands this. Due to these conditions being ignored recently, a minimum of £20 of your deposit will be retained if any rubbish is left and this will increase if the hall is not left clean and tidy, to cover extra cleaning costs.

Community Shop

from **Kate Purver**

Shop telephone: **01803 712157**. Shop email: blackawtonshop@gmail.com

Committee email: shopsecretary@blackawtoncommunity.com

Opening times

Shop:	Monday to Friday	8.30 am – 5.00 pm
	Saturday	9.00 am – 1.00 pm
	Sunday	10.00 am – 12.00 noon

Post Office: Monday to Saturday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm



Did you know: the community shop may be raising the value of your house? House prices in villages which have community assets including a shop have been estimated to command a 5% premium. Perhaps our shop is more valuable than you realised! And that's before taking into account the incalculable value to the community of having the shop here – not just the convenience, but the social interaction and connections which it generates.

To support this key asset – please do consider, could you **volunteer in the shop**? We'd love to expand our team. Do drop in and let us know/have a chat – any help would be really welcome! – whether you could do a regular shift (of a couple of hours) every week / fortnight / month... or would prefer just to fill in from time to time. All training will be given, you won't have to work alone - support is always available from Sue and our other wonderful volunteers. Thank you!

Following on from Ali Soper's fun mosaic pieces, this month our **featured local artist** is one of Blackawton's own: lovely hand-made lampshades by Charlotte for Isola May design will be on display and for sale. Charlotte also makes to order, and is planning some lampshade-making workshops; for details, drop into the shop!



Wines of the Month - each £7.25 (usual price £7.75)

Versare Pinot Grigio

This dry, fresh Italian white has delicate aromas of green apple, lemon zest and pear, combining to give an intense bouquet and a lively taste on the palate. Great on its own chilled, with fish or grilled dishes. Very good value for money, and ideal for spring/summer drinking!

Versare Merlot

A rich, full-bodied ruby red from northern Italy, with notes of black cherry, plum, and chocolate. Fruit-led, smooth and approachable, this makes for easy, balanced drinking with delicate flavours and a soft, moreish finish. Perfect paired with hearty meat dishes and mature cheeses.

Red Hill Market Garden grows and supplies fresh, organically produced vegetables throughout the year in Blackawton.

Seasonal Vegetable Bags are available to order for **£12.95**. We deliver to Blackawton Community Shop every Thursday.

Order on a weekly basis - no subscription required.

To find out more please contact Jonathan on

07747 412274 or at redhillmarketgarden@gmail.com



Blackawton School

from **Vicky Harris**

Growing our school garden and welcoming wildlife.

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported our gardening and biodiversity projects so far. Your encouragement and generosity are helping us create a richer, greener environment for our children to enjoy and learn from.

Recently, we were delighted to receive a wonderful donation of locally made bird boxes and bird feeding station for our garden and Forest School area. We are very excited to see birds making Blackawton their new home and hope this will encourage even more wildlife into our school grounds. Special thanks to Saw Mill, who supply us with wood chip to support the breakdown of food waste. And, the Studd family for their support and supply of fresh woodchip for the forest school area.

As we continue to develop the garden and outdoor learning spaces, we would be very grateful for any spare gardening items you may have while sorting through your own gardens. If you would like to donate, please leave items inside the school garden gates. We are currently looking for plant pots (ceramic, plastic, clay or other types), watering cans, rakes, spades, hand tools, spare seeds, seedlings or bulbs, bird feeders or bird seed. Every donation, big or small, helps us enhance the school grounds and create a space that supports both biodiversity and the wellbeing of our children. Looking ahead, we are also hoping to create a dedicated birdwatching area so pupils can observe and learn about the wildlife that shares our environment.

We look forward to inviting the community to our Dough and Grow Garden in the late summer term. You can see/taste for yourselves, what delights we have been growing. Thank you again for your continued support. It truly makes a difference.

Parish Council

Churchyard and cemetery management

from **Sue Hadow** and **Polly Morrow**

As I'm sure you've noticed the Parish Council have altered the grass cutting regime in both the Churchyard and Cemetery and are trying to manage both places with greater diversity in mind for plant, invertebrate and animal species.

We would love to hear from any parishioners and local groups who would be interested in helping us achieve this and who may have ideas to share and expertise to offer. We plan eventually to create an information board for both the churchyard and cemetery which will outline how the management of both places is changing and why. Please send any thoughts, information and ideas you have to Sue at suehadow@gmail.com.

The Thoughts of Chairman Rake

from **Simon Rake**

The eyes of Caligula

You probably noticed, when reading the minutes of the April meeting of the Parish Council a moment ago, that Cllr Mardon has resigned from the Parish Council. Charli has been a valued and insightful colleague on the Council and we are sorry to see her go. She ensured that our gender balance remained more or less, well, balanced, and reduced the average age of Councillors considerably.

Of course this now leaves us with a vacancy on the Council. There is no reason why it can't be you if you are 18 or over, and meet one of the four following criteria: you are on the register of electors for the Parish; you own or rent land or premises in the Parish; your main or only place of work is in the Parish; or you live in the Parish or within 3 miles of it (these last three criteria are for the whole of the 12 months prior to nomination).

When we have had vacancies in the past, one of the main concerns expressed by people is that they would not have the time to do the job. Of course this is a valid consideration, but in reality the time burden is not that great. The only formal requirement is that you attend the monthly meetings (apologies for the occasional absence are of course accepted). Beyond that, and as clichéd as it may sound, being a Councillor is very much what you make it or what you make of it.

Because of my roles on the District and County Councils I have the pleasure (!) of attending 11 different Parish or Town Councils every month. Each has its own character and its own approach. What they all have in common is that they bring together people deeply committed to their communities and trying to have a positive effect. Granted, sometimes personalities and egos can get in the way of the true path, but on the whole most Councils seem to rub along well enough and step-by-step, little-by-little, help make their communities better places to be. I'm also proud to say that Blackawton PC is one of the more convivial, collegiate and constructive Councils, although maybe I'm biased.

So who would be the ideal candidate and what would they bring? Well, in an ideal world you would have the reflexes of a ninja, the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, the charm of Beau Brummel and, as François Mitterand is reported to have said of Margaret Thatcher, the eyes of Caligula and the mouth of Marilyn Monroe. But as we all know this is far from an ideal world. As I see on my monthly rounds people bring a wide variety of skills, interests and perspectives. No one Councillor covers everything; ultimately what matters is the blend.

A notice of vacancy has been posted, which means that if ten electors from the Parish request an election before 8 May, an election we will have. Otherwise, the Parish Council will co-opt a new member. The new member will have an initial term of slightly less than a year, running to the elections due to be held in May 2027 – so this could be an ideal opportunity to get a taste for what the role involves before deciding whether or not to stand again.

As ever, please get in touch with me, or any other current Parish Councillor if you would like to know more about the role. Better still come along to the Annual Parish Meeting on 13th May to find out more about what the Parish Council has been up to over the past year, and its plans for the year ahead.

Blackawton Parish Council meeting

from **Annette Thom**

Notes of the Monthly Meeting of Blackawton Parish Council held on Monday 13 April 2026 at 7.30 pm in Blackawton Village Hall. Complete minutes can be read at **www.blackawtoncommunity.com** or the parish noticeboard.

Present: BPC Cllrs Oughton (Vice-Chair and meeting Chair), Hadow, Luckens, and Thomas were present, as were Clerk A Thom. There were two members of the public present for the first part of the meeting. **Absent:** Cllrs Rake and Coe.

Open forum

The members of the public present were interested in the Wind Turbine Feasibility Study item.

Councillors forum

Cllr Mardon has resigned from the Parish Council.

Declarations of interest

Cllr Hadow declared an Other Registerable Interest in the Wind Turbine Feasibility Study item, as a member of Sustainable Blackawton. It was resolved to grant a dispensation for period of four years to speak and vote on items related to the Wind Turbine Feasibility Study.

Wind turbine feasibility study grant

It was unanimously resolved to approve BPC's signature of the Grant Funding Agreement. It was resolved to approve BPC's signature of the Non Disclosure Agreement with the study provider (Community Power Solutions Ltd.). It was agreed to create a Steering Group as a central point with which CPS will share information. The Steering Group will then take action, share more widely etc. as required. The Steering Group will have two representatives each from BPC and from Sustainable Blackawton. The Clerk will be included for oversight because BPC has legal and contractual obligations which must be met because it is the organisation receiving the grant. The meeting nominated Cllrs Rake and Coe as BPC's two Steering Group members (subject to their acceptance). Sustainable Blackawton will choose its two representatives and advise.

Planning applications

South Hams District Council's Planning Decisions

- 0140/26/HHO Lower Abbotsleigh TQ9 7AF. Householder application for retrospective permission for a timber summerhouse built within 2m of the boundary. **Conditional approval.**
- 0375/26/ARC Bow Cottage, TQ9 7AH. Application for approval of details reserved by condition 6 (Historic Building Record) of planning consent 1800/25/LBC. **Discharge of condition approved.**
- 0378/26/ARC Bow Cottage, TQ9 7AH. Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 6 (CEMP) & 8 (Historic Building Record) of planning consent 1799/25/HHO. **Discharge of condition approved.**
- 0551/26/AGR Grimpstone Farm, TQ9 7DW. Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed agricultural storage building measuring 13.1m (L) x 6.7m (B) x 6.8m height to ridge. **Prior approval not required.**
- 0192/26/CLE The Linhay, Higher Wood Farm, TQ9 7AB. Certificate of lawfulness for non compliance with occupancy condition. **Cert of Lawfulness (existing) certified.**

Review of New Applications

- 0795/26/HHO 65 French Furze Road, TQ9 7FN. Householder application for proposed rear dormer to form additional bedroom with en-suite. It was resolved that no response will be submitted.
- 0862/26/HHO Stone House Farm, TQ9 7DE. Householder application for single storey rear extension & revised front entrance. It was resolved that no response will be submitted.
- 0865/26/TCA 3 Church Hill, TQ9 7BQ. T1: Oak – remove, too large, causing excessive shading, too close to power line. It was resolved that no response will be submitted.
- 0902/26/HHO 26 French Furze Road, TQ9 7FN. Householder application for rear extension and alterations to existing dwelling. It was resolved that no response will be submitted.
- 0917/26/ARC Bow Farm, TQ9 7AH. Application for approval of details reserved by condition 7 (Sustainable Drainage Option) of planning consent 1799/25/HHO. It was resolved that no response will be submitted.

French Furze development

Cllr Oughton said that there will be another public residents meeting in the Village Hall next Wednesday. It will discuss re-selection of a management company.

Cllr Thomas reported that he and Cllr Rake attended a Business Units site inspection on 13 March. About half of the things on the snagging list had been done. On 23 March a Teams meeting about the creation of a Traffic Management Plan for the Business Units was attended with the developer's Planning Manager. That meeting also discussed where waste disposal bins will be sited. On 30 March Cllrs Rake and Thomas met with a representative of the developer about the rectification work. A plan was agreed to reconvene in the week after Easter.

Greenslades Road circuit footpath

The proposal to alter the existing S106 requirement was discussed. It was resolved to support the proposal to replace the existing S106 requirement for scalplings, to suggest that the footpath surface be levelled with a slight slope towards the hedge, and to suggest a drain at the bottom towards the culvert with a pipe of approximately six metres in length straight across.

Parish Council noticeboard in the Main Street bus shelter

It was agreed that the noticeboard will be used primarily for Parish Council notices. No private notices will be posted. Where space permits other official notices will be accommodated. Requests are to be directed to the Clerk. BPC will review in three months. If residents think there is a requirement for more community noticeboard space and want the Parish Council's assistance they are invited to submit a proposal.

Blackawton community emergency hub

BPC will wait for a response from the Village Hall Management Committee before advertising the emergency hub.

Felling trees in the Blackawton churchyard

No action is being taken to place a temporary 'deadwood habitat' sign. There is one remaining dead cherry tree, next to the footpath towards School Lane. It was not recommended for felling in the 2025 tree risk assessment survey. Cllr Hadow will remove one branch which overhangs the footpath. As a low risk tree with some benefit as deadwood habitat no action is taken pending the next planned tree risk assessment survey in winter 26/27.

Planting churchyard trees

The revised proposal to plant an avenue of five rowans the east side of the footpath and three on the west as is permitted by graves was agreed. The meeting considered planting the remaining two rowan trees

elsewhere in the churchyard. No final location was chosen. The Clerk was asked to obtain advice from the nursery providing the rowan trees about whether it is too late in the year to plant the rowan trees now and BPC will proceed based on that advice. The planting of the planned crabapple tree was deferred.

Churchyard wall maintenance

It was resolved to approve signature of the proposed contract with the stonemason. It was resolved to carry out additional works on Park Lane (to a bulge area) and on Main Street (to helibar brace across a crack) as quoted by the stonemason doing the planned works (£2,550).

BPC policies and procedures

It was resolved to approve the draft BPC Equality and Diversity Policy.

Finance

Update on current financial position. The reports at 31 March 2026 showed total funds of £58,789.25 and an unearmarked general fund of £16,259.16. The bank reconciliation at 31 March 2026 reconciles and was signed.

Payments authorised:

Clerk March Expenses Reimbursement	£18.55
Devon Communities Together Membership Annual Fee	£50.00
Scribe Accounting & Cemetery Software	£535.68
Felling Churchyard Trees	£1,740.00
Devon Association of Local Councils Annual Fee	£379.57
Website Updates	£22.00
Payments made since the last monthly meeting:	
Churchyard tree pre-felling bat survey	£283.00
ICO annual fee (direct debit)	£47.00

Correspondence

Devon County Council responsible to distribute Government funding for low-income households Oil Heating through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CaRF).

Contracted Work

Parish Lengthsman. It was resolved to accept the application from the current lengthsman to continue with a £1/hour increase in the hourly rate in 26/27.

Cutting back vegetation growing on St Michael's Churchyard's walls and gate pillars. It was resolved to accept the quotation from a provider based in Blackawton if they meet the criteria for the role, and the lowest quote if they don't.

Cemetery Treeworks

It was resolved accept the lowest cost quote for the removal of fallen Monterey Cypress branches and removal in the autumn of the tree growing on a grave, and that the Clerk will confirm management of arisings as per the work description.

BPC Insurance 2026-2029

It was resolved to enter into a new long term three year agreement with the current insurer at a cost of £671.63 in 26/27.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held in the Village Hall on **Monday 11th May 2026** at 7.30 pm. You are most welcome to join the meeting and raise any issues which may be of concern to you.

Council contacts

Cllr Ruth Coe	01803 712131	ruth@blackawtoncommunity.com
Cllr Sue Hadow	07306 007681	sue@blackawtoncommunity.com
Cllr Rob Luckens	01803 712111	rob@blackawtoncommunity.com
Cllr Chris Oughton, Vice chair	01803 302487	chriso@blackawtoncommunity.com
Cllr Simon Rake, Chair	01803 861129	simon@blackawtoncommunity.com
Cllr Steve Thomas	01803 712840	steve@blackawtoncommunity.com
Annette Thom, Parish Clerk	07979 391442	parishclerk@blackawtoncommunity.com
Tree Warden, Will Benzies	01803 712662	clyston23@gmail.com

Other contacts

South Hams Cllr Simon Rake	01803 861129	Cllr.Simon.Rake@southhams.gov.uk
South Hams District Council	01803 861234	customer.services@southhams.gov.uk
SHDC emergency out of hours	01803 867034	

Devon County Cllr Julian Brazil 01548 511109 julian.brazil@devon.gov.uk

07970 971140

Devon County Council

0345 155 1015 customer@devon.gov.uk

Police non-urgent reporting

101 101@dc.police.uk

or online form at www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/your-area/teams/Dartmouth/Contact

There are **Report It** buttons on www.blackawtoncommunity.com to report problems to DCC (eg. highway issues such as potholes and flooding) and SHDC (eg. planning enforcement, missed waste collection, fly tipping, and abandoned vehicles)

the Wider Community

Children's Hospice South West

from Ann Green

Coffee, Cakes and a Castle

We are hosting a fundraising Coffee Morning at The Royal Castle Hotel, Dartmouth on **Tuesday 19th May**, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm. Please pop in for a drink, delicious homemade cakes, a tombola and crafts.

The Royal Castle Hotel, now beautifully renovated, is supporting the event as a fundraiser. The hotel is owned by St Austell Brewery, which has a two year partnership with CHSW. Across their 47 pubs they are giving 25p to CHSW for every fish and chips meal they sell, and we all know how popular this dish is in the South West! So 'Eat More Fish & Chips@The Castle' too!

We look forward to seeing you all.

from the Editor

The Beacon is produced monthly and distributed to over 300 houses in the village and surrounding area. Email beacon@blackawtoncommunity.com if you would like a copy to be delivered to you. You can also ask to receive the Beacon by email.

Please send your Beacon contributions by email to beacon@blackawtoncommunity.com. Contributions on paper can be posted to, or dropped off at, 1 The Cross, Park Lane, Blackawton, TQ9 7BD. The deadline for the June edition is **Thursday 21st May**.

If you would like to make a donation, please put **Beacon** on the outside of the envelope and put it in the Church's donation box beside the visitors book, or drop it off at 1, The Cross, Park Lane. Please note that cheques must be payable to **Blackawton Parish Church**. Thank you.

Andrew Morrow

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Parish Diary

May 2026

Friday 1st	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Dartmouth	Bus shelter
Sunday 3rd	10.30 am	Wormcharming	Everywhere
	7.00 pm	Wormcharming auction	Village Hall
Wednesday 6th	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to The Willows via Totnes	Bus shelter
	9.00 am	Hatha Yoga	Village Hall
	10.30 am	Chair Yoga	Village Hall
Friday 8th	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Dartmouth	Bus shelter
Saturday 9th	2.00 pm	Christian Aid Jumble Sale	Village Hall
Sunday 10th	10.00 am	Community composting of garden material	Village Hall
Monday 11th	7.30 pm	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall
Tuesday 12th	7.00 pm	Sustainable Blackawton meeting	Figtree, Vicarage Road
Wednesday 13th	9.00 am	Hatha Yoga	Village Hall
	10.30 am	Chair Yoga	Village Hall
	7.30 pm	Blackawton Parish Community Meeting	Village Hall
Friday 15th	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Dartmouth	Bus shelter
Sunday 17th	10.00 am	Community composting of garden material	Village Hall
Tuesday 19th	10.00 am	Children's Hospice South West Coffee Morning	Royal Castle Hotel, Dartmouth
		Blackawton Amateur Dramatic Society AGM	Ruby House, Vicarage Road
Wednesday 20th	9.00 am	Hatha Yoga	Village Hall
	10.30 am	WI Monthly Meeting	Village Hall
Thursday 21st		Beacon deadline for June edition	
Friday 22nd	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Dartmouth	Bus shelter
Sunday 24th	10.00 am	Community composting of garden material	Village Hall
Wednesday 27th	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Newton Abbot via Totnes	Bus shelter
	9.00 am	Hatha Yoga	Village Hall
	10.30 am	Chair Yoga	Village Hall
Friday 29th	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Dartmouth	Bus shelter
Sunday 31st	10.00 am	Community composting of garden material	Village Hall