Blackawton Beacon November 2025

published jointly by the Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council

Blackawton Bonfire and Fireworks

Saturday 8th November

The barrel will be lit at the George Inn at 6.30 pm, then process to the bonfire field.

Burgers/hot dogs/mulled wine/beer/soft drinks available in the field.

There is no admission charge. Please come, enjoy the display **and donate generously.**

CASH ONLY in the field.

Please follow car-parking directions and watch out for excited children.

Blackawton Christmas Choir is back!

Starting 10th November 2025

Every Monday 7.30 pm - 8.30 pm

Orchard House, Vicarage Road (Alice Swan's front room!)

A very relaxed choir to bring a bit of Christmas singing joy

Adults of all ages and abilities welcome. Singing a mix of carols and modern. £20 all in. Conducted by **Sue Hadow**.

Ending with carol singing round the village, exact date t.b.c.

1st Dartmouth Scouts from **Charlie Howell**

Having a pre Christmas clear out? Looking for preloved gifts?

Indoor Car Boot Sale

Saturday 22nd November, 10 am – 12 noon

(Sellers from 9 am)

Blackawton Village Hall

£5 per table *Refreshments available*

email: denmark26fundraising@outlook.com to book

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR BLACKAWTON COMMUNITY SHOP

Volunteering in the shop is a great social activity and plays a vital role in our community. Can you give a couple of hours a week or volunteer as and when?

"*It took me a while to volunteer. That wasn't to do with talking to people. It was a reticence to do with the till. When I finally did volunteer, I had an established volunteer to help me. He is patient and kind. Then I relaxed. I have met so many different people and had so many laughs. It actually cheers me up if I am down. I absolutely love working there*." Shop volunteer

For more information, please have a chat with Julie Duffy, Shop Manager, or any volunteer, or contact: **blackawtonshop@gmail.com**.

VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED FOR BLACKAWTON COMMUNITY SHOP

Do you have experience of running a business, marketing, IT, accounts, retail, social media or holding a professional position? Please bring your experience to the Shop Committee. You do not need to be a volunteer in the shop.

Blackawton Community Shop Association is a Community Benefit Society and the Association is run by its volunteer Committee. While day to day management of the Shop is handled by the Shop Manager, volunteer committee members have oversight and make strategic decisions.

We want to increase the depth and breadth of knowledge and expertise on the Committee.

What will it involve? Attendance at committee meetings and the AGM (about 8/10 meetings per year). Reading relevant information. Responding to requests for opinions on issues between Committee Meetings. Volunteering to take on particular projects from time to time.

For more information, please contact: **shopsecretary@blackawtoncommunity.com**.

St Michael's Church

Services for November

Date	*Time*	*Service*
Sunday 2nd	9.30 am	Holy Communion (by extension)
Tuesday 4th	9.00 am	Connect! *(every Tuesday during term-time)*
Sunday 9th Remembrance Sunday	10.50 am	Remembrance Service *at the War Memorial*
Saturday 15th	7.00 pm	Autumn Supper *at Melrose Cottage*
Sunday 16th	11.00 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 23rd	9.30 am 4.00 pm	Morning Worship THE 4
Sunday 30th Advent Sunday	11.00 am 6.30 pm	Holy Communion *at St Michael's, Strete* Advent Carol Service (*both United Benefice services)*

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.**

Autumn Supper

Everyone is welcome!

The Autumn Supper will take place on **Saturday 15th November** at Melrose Cottage (courtesy of Tony & Charlotte) at 7.00 pm. Two courses, price £10 (minimum) per person. All dietary requirements catered for as long as you let us know what they are!

Please let Kate know if you wish to come; email **kate.janman@gmail.com** or ring **01803 712362**.

Reader's Corner

from **Jeff Hacon**

Autumn: 'Season of mist and mellow fruitfulness' wrote Keates. 'No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds! - November!' ends Thomas Hood's much less positive poem. How do you feel as the nights grow longer and the warmth of summer fades into your memories? Do you celebrate the generosity of God in the bounty of harvest? Do wonder at how trees convert air carbon dioxide water and minerals into apples or how cows turn grass into milk, beef and more cows? Or do you just mourn the end of summer and the poorer weather. We know that autumn will be followed by winter (with Christmas) and then the new life of spring, and so the cycle of the seasons will continue until the world's end.

In the midst of this constant change, God never changes. His love is always the same; his character dependable and his ways and purposes constant. The Bible reminds us that Jesus also never changes. 'Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever'. The changelessness of God is a source of hope as we face the environmental crisis we are making. God is never taken by surprise. Whatever mess we get ourselves into - if we turn to him he will guide us through it.

Jesus answered the question 'What can I do?' by quoting two parts of the Old Testament. ' Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbour as yourself'. If we truly love God we will appreciate and respect his earth which he loves and which he has trusted us to care for. If we truly love all our global neighbours then we will be prepared to make the changes to our lifestyle that will limit the harm climate change is making to their lives.

Try really looking at a little bit of nature. A branch of hawthorn or a discarded feather. Let it speak to you. Then watch the effects of a hurricane or a climate change-induced drought and let that speak to you too.

May God bless our communities this Autumn.

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

With Cheerful Voice

from **Ian Hutchcroft**

An informal concert of choral music in aid of Blackawton Village Hall Fund

The Swan Singers

Tricia Rees-Jones (conductor)
Julian McNamara (piano)

Sunday 2nd November, 2.00 - 3.00 pm

Blackawton Village Hall

Join the Swan Singers, here on tour from Somerset, as they perform a varied and entertaining programme of choral music including settings of traditional songs by Holst, Mancini and the Seekers, a nod in the direction of Gospel from Moses Hogan and pieces by contemporary composers including Eriks Esenvalds, Alan Bullard and Richard Rodney Bennett.

Donations on the door (suggested £5) Bar and refreshments from 1.30 pm

Blackawton WI

from **Sandra Tope**

For October's meeting we had a local speaker in the shape of Tania Bryson from Dream Thyme Herbal. She showed us how to make a Fire Cider Oxymel, using foraged and kitchen cupboard ingredients, to keep us all healthy. We are looking forward to her return visit in a month, to taste it once it has brewed. Her tip to cure a cold, a chopped onion in a sock overnight, sounds interesting, so we will try it out on the next poorly lady and see if it works! Once Tania had completed her demonstration she judged our Bloom of the Month, placing Rose Marie Hannaford in first place. The competition for a small floral arrangement was won by Val Harding.

We have been busy putting together shoeboxes for the children of Ukraine for PUMA to deliver. Hats and toys, knitted by members, have been included as well as the usual toys, colouring books, pens and pencils and all the usual bits and pieces. We hope they are a small comfort to those suffering from the war.

Now the dry weather has left us, and the temperature has started to drop, we have started to plan our Christmas lunch for this year. How fast time flies! The November meeting will be held on Nov 19th, at the Village Hall at 10.30 am. Our speaker will be Jackie Bufton and we will be making a pretty picture using glass and dried flowers. This is our usual all day event so if you want to come along, please bring your lunch.

For more details on anything, please call Sue on **01803 712157**, or Sandra on **01803 712622**.

Caroline Voaden, MP

from **Jonathan Evans**

Contact your local MP, Caroline Voaden, for help with an issue you are facing. As part of her remit, Caroline can assist with anything that is the responsibility of a national government department, such as pensions and benefits.

If you are unsure if your challenge is covered by this remit, visit the UK Parliament website to check or contact Caroline and she would be happy to guide you to whoever is best place to help. You can email her at: **caroline.voaden.mp@parliament.uk** or call her office on: **01803 658461**.

Tree Warden

from **Bob Harvey**

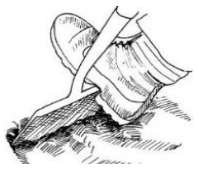
TREEN: “of the tree” or “treown” in old English

Bamboo is technically a grass but when it gets to 15 feet tall, as mine are, it looks more like a tree. Gardeners now buy their bamboo sticks shipped thousands of miles from China but traditionally they used coppiced Hazel from local woods like mine. A century ago there was a bamboo farm in Cornwall due to the mild climate, but now we’re all getting a mild climate why not grow your own as I do But choose the species with care or you’ll be engulfed.

William Benzies will be taking over as official Tree Warden for Blackawton, but we have agreed that I shall continue to try to splice a short note in to the Beacon each month. Thank you, William, I’m very grateful as I can no longer travel to check on tree applications.

A year in a Blackawton garden

from **Jill Kelly**



September and October have seen a wash of beautiful late colour in the garden. There are pink and blue Asters, pink, red and orange Dahlias, orange Alstromeria, blue, pink, purple and orange tender Salvias, pink Nerine Bowdenii, red and purple Fuchsias, pink Zinnia, Penstemon and Japanese Anemone, yellow Rudbeckia, Californian Poppy and Calendula and the odd late rose.

To my surprise, two Fuchsias have bounced back from gall mite and are giving a good display. Not such a positive outcome for the Box. I have now realised the problem was not blight but moth. It has decimated most of the Box in the garden. We have dug up all the affected plants and are replacing them with yew balls which I bought cheap last Winter and looked after ready for the looming hour of need. One box is being replaced with a Phillyrea Angustifolia which Monty Don was waxing lyrical over.

In the garden, I still have some plants which I grew from seed to make room for, biennial Sweet Williams suffering in their pots, and the perennials, Actaea Racemosa with wonderful dark foliage, and Monarda (Bergamot). The weeds do not seem to be too bad, but there will be the usual weeding and mulching of the beds to be done before the bulbs start showing.

Dahlias are covered in tiny snails. Although they look innocuous, they do quite a lot of damage and I think it is worth trying to get rid of as many as possible to avoid them growing into big munchers next year. October and November is a tremendously busy time in the garden preparing for next year.

Blackawton Allotment Association

from **Jill Kelly**

It is likely that there will be plots available for the next Blackawton Allotment Association year which starts in March. We are happy to meet you on site to show you round and explain how the allotments work and what the costs are. If you are interested in a plot, please contact the Secretary, Jill Kelly, on: **allotments@blackawtoncommunity.com**.

Wormcharming

from **Chris Oughton**

Your Wormcharming **needs you!**

We need volunteers to help arrange the great Wormcharming event of 2026! If you can manage an hour or two a month and some time on the weekend in May, please do come to The George Inn at 7:30 pm on **Wednesday 5th November** and join the team! If you can't make it, but are still interested, please email **chris@yahoo.co.uk**.

Sustainable Blackawton

from **Ruth Coe**

Community Composting

AT LAST! Our project to create and manage a site for Community composting of garden waste is planned to “open” to accept garden material on 7th December 2025. This is an **open** site but we are (optimistically say some!) trusting members of this community to use it responsibly, according to a process that will ensure good results and create excellent soil improving compost. This is a community-owned and managed asset, belongs to local people, and is managed by volunteers on trust for residents, so **NO FLY TIPPING PLEASE!**

Signage will be on site to confirm what is, and is **not**, acceptable, and this will include woody material too thick (over 1 inch diameter) to be shredded by the machinery we have available. Pernicious weeds such as bindweed, Japanese knotweed, and ground elder, tough-to-compost plants (phormium, cordyline and

bamboo) are not acceptable and of course stones and metal objects would cause damage to shredders. **No food** waste is acceptable, the risk of vermin is too great to countenance this in an open composting system.

Initially the site will only accept material whilst our volunteers are on site from 10.00 until 13.00 on Sundays. This is so that demand may be assessed, procedures can be confirmed and the bays can be successfully managed with rotation being explained and material stacked tidily for the benefit of other users of the Village Hall. Initially also the site is **not** available to contractors with enormous amounts of waste that would overwhelm the available bays. We have no idea yet how much material will come to us, so initially only "domestic waste" from residents own gardens will be accepted. This will be reviewed after a while when we better understand the demand. Sustainable Blackawton anticipate a small income from "carbon credits" will eventually be paid, provided that clear records of compost taken are kept. This obviously will not happen for some time, though we hope there will be sufficient volume for a speedy process.

Members of the Village Hall committee, following a "risk assessment", have ordered a fence to be installed along the top of the bays. Young cyclists using the newly cleared and constructed bank behind the bays as a "pump track" will then not be at risk of falling into the bays (Not yet a "soft landing"!)

If you have any interest at all in this project please do come along and see what a great job Matt (Coppertops) has done. Thank you Matt, and thanks also to all the funders.

Investigation into more community owned local power generation

A small group of parishioners has completed an application for grant funding, together with supporting documents, to NetZeroSW for a feasibility study that would assess the possibilities for a local renewable energy project based on a utility scale wind turbine. Approved by the Parish Council, and to be submitted before the closing date of November 3rd, this grant offer is heavily over-subscribed so success is by no means guaranteed.

Given the urgent need to move away from fossil fuels, the demand for electricity will inevitably increase, even if we all make efforts to reduce our consumption (not a given!). Clean, renewable energy installed and used locally helps to balance demand on the grid, avoids long distribution lines and subsequent loss of power, assists the reduction of carbon emissions and can offer great benefits to local people. Central government plans 8GW of community energy generation to power 4 million homes by 2030, and to achieve that plan to help fund community energy projects, and so we need to have a pipeline of projects ready to go as soon as possible. A large part of the work in the feasibility study is community engagement, so your views on this matter will be crucial, extremely valuable and taken into account should the grant be successful and the study does proceed.

A recent, well attended "Community Energy Assembly" in Kingsbridge, hosted by Sustainable South Hams, confirms the undercurrent of great positive action in the South Hams and across Devon. This was noted recently in another, global conference where South Devon was referred to as a beacon of hope for the future, extraordinary for a small (in global terms) place! Let's join that movement and hope that our whole community will benefit from our local projects.

West Dart Bus

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**.

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 November:

Wednesday 5th	The Willows, Torquay via Totnes
Friday 7th	Dartmouth via Dittisham
Friday 14th	Dartmouth via Dittisham
Friday 21st	Dartmouth via Dittisham
Wednesday 26th	Newton Abbot via Totnes
Friday 28th	Dartmouth via Dittisham

All trips depart from Blackawton Bus Shelter at 9.30 am. Return trips depart at 12.30 pm 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**.

Community Shop

from **Kate Purver** and **Julie Duffy**

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

Autumn is well and truly with us and we're continuing to stock up on seasonal goods. We've changed things around a bit in the shop, to help you rediscover old favourites and spot new treats! We have some new autumn/winter chutneys, new-flavour crisps and some nice fancy chocolates if your mind is turning to gifts. Other recent additions include **award-winning cheeses** from Stone Tree Dairy, just outside Dartmouth - Helen and Martin's happy goats have amazing views from their fields - maybe that's what makes the cheese taste so good!?

The shop will be open from 5 pm on village **fireworks evening** on 8 November, if you need a quick boost before the main event gets going – drinks and snacks available and we'll be doing tea and coffee too. Last year was fun, hope to see you then!

Bulk orders: did you know we can order dry goods in bulk for you through our wholesaler? From big bags of lentils for your stews, to garlic powder as a horse-feed supplement… we can help! And don't forget there are savings to be had by using our **refill station**: we have quite a range including Ecover, Bio-D and Faith in Nature products.

A date for your diaries: the **Christmas prize bingo** on Friday 5th December in the village hall – it promises to be a fun evening! (Any prize donations also much appreciated of course! - if you can donate something please pop it into the shop, many thanks.)

Wine of the Month

Cape 312 Shiraz, South Africa 13.5% ABV - £7.50

A bold, full-bodied wine, with vibrant notes of blackberry, dark cherry, and plum complemented by hints of spice and pepper. Smooth, soft and fruity with a rich finish. Ideal with barbecued sausages, peppered steak, or hearty stews. Amazingly good value!

And finally : for the past few years, we've been providing a box for recycling pill blister packs, at the shop's expense. It's been incredibly well used – people seem to come from far and wide with bags full of packs to recycle. Sadly though, this means it's been rather a victim of its own success: the huge box fills up quickly – and it's now costing the shop around £800/year – a sum which unfortunately we can no longer afford. We've been very glad to provide the service, but alas we can no longer do so – this box will be the last. Unless, of course, any local business would like to sponsor the service – if there is any possibility of this, we'd be extremely appreciative; please email us at the committee email above.

Meanwhile, Boots have a blister pack recycling scheme which is available in Newton Abbot and Torquay. If we find any more local schemes, we'll keep you posted.

Blackawton School

from **Vicky Harris**

Autumn in Full Swing at Blackawton Primary!

Blackawton Primary School has launched into the autumn season with a fantastic celebration — our very own Apple Day! The whole school came together to make fresh, delicious apple juice for everyone to enjoy. A huge thank you to all who donated apples — we couldn't have done it without your generosity! Our wonderful Gardening Club put some of the leftover apples to good use, baking up mouth-watering apple crumbles that filled the school with the sweet scent of autumn. Even our worms got a treat, happily munching on the leftover apple pulp!

As the unusually sunny autumn evenings continue, we've been busy tidying up our garden area, reflecting on what has been a truly bumper year for crops here at Blackawton. Our fruit and vegetables have flourished, and thanks to the support of our local community — who have been purchasing our produce from the Village Shop — we've been able to invest in some exciting new additions. With the funds raised, we've bought a small classroom stove, apple peelers, cooking ingredients, and some bright bedding plants, along with three new bee-friendly plants to help support our buzzing pollinators. Next up in our culinary adventures: Christmas Chutneys! Keep your eyes peeled for these festive creations, which will be available to purchase in the coming months.

We'd also like to give a big thank you to Dr. Benzies, who kindly volunteered his time to visit the school and speak to the children about his work as a doctor in the community. The children were captivated by his stories and inspired by his dedication. If you have a passion or skill you'd like to share and want to make a difference to our younger generation, please get in touch with the school office — we'd love to hear from you!

Looking ahead, we're excited to embark on our next big project as guardians of the environment. With support from the National Education Nature Park Programme, our pupils are learning how to map out the biodiversity in our outdoor spaces. Through creativity and collaboration, we'll be making thoughtful decisions to improve our school grounds — for both children and nature alike. It's an exciting time to be part of the Blackawton community — where growth, curiosity, and care for the planet are always in season.

Village Hall

November events

from **Adrian Kyte**

With Cheerful Voice: concert by The Swan Singers in aid of the Village Hall (**see above for details**)
Sunday 2nd, doors open 1.30 pm, concert 2.00 to 3.00 pm,
bar and refreshments 1.30 to 4.00 pm ish.

Parish Council Meeting	Monday 10th, 7.30 pm.
WI Monthly Meeting	Wednesday 19th, 10.30 am.
Indoor Car Boot Sale	Saturday 22nd, sellers 9.00 am, public 10.00 am to 12.00 noon.
Hatha Yoga	Wednesdays 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th, 9.00 to 10.15 am.
Chair Yoga	Wednesdays 5th, 12th & 26th, 10.30 to 11.30 am.
BADS pantomime rehearsals	Sundays 9th, 16th & 30th, 3.00 to 5.00 pm.

Hall Booking

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 complete a paper booking form available from the Village Shop and place it in the letter box near the Hall's main entrance. However your make your booking please don't enter into any other commitments until the booking is confirmed. All Thursday bookings are at risk of cancellation should a surprise election be called. All bookings require a security deposit. Hirers please remember to include set up and clear down time in your booking request as there may be another event immediately before or after yours.

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 concerned this month are those above and Sunday 23rd all day.

Hire of furniture and crockery

Village Hall furniture and crockery can be hired if not in use at the Hall. Details of what is available are on the hall website. Requests should be made to **villagehall@blackawtoncommunity.com**.

Keeping Blackawton Cemetery Safe and Peaceful

from **Annette Thom**

Blackawton Cemetery is a place of rest and reflection for our community. To help keep it safe, accessible, and respectful for everyone, the Parish Council kindly asks all visitors to follow a few simple guidelines:

No Glass Containers: Please use stone or similar durable materials for flowers or memorial items. Glass can break and cause injury.

Maintenance: Items that interfere with maintenance will need to be removed; for example plant pots placed on the grass.

Respectful Decoration: Objects that become unsafe, damaged, or unsightly will be cleared by the Council; for example old memorial wreaths and old seasonal decorations.

By following these guidelines, we can ensure that Blackawton Cemetery remains a safe, welcoming, and peaceful place for all. Where possible reusable items removed, such as flower vases, will be kept for six months. You are invited to contact the Clerk to request them.

For enquiries about burials, memorials, or cemetery rules, please contact the Parish Clerk at **parishclerk@blackawtoncommunity.com** or **07979 914427**.

Let's Keep Blackawton Clean and Beautiful

We all love walking our dogs around our lovely village, but please remember to always carry waste bags and clean up after your pets. Dog mess left on paths, verges, and play areas **isn't just unpleasant** - it's a health risk, especially for children.

South Hams District Council is asking all dog owners to do their bit by **bagging and binning** their dog's waste responsibly. Anyone caught not cleaning up after their dog could face a **£100 fine**.

If you notice dog mess or have information that could help identify repeat offenders, please report it on the South Hams District Council website - just search "**report dog fouling**".

Together, we can keep Blackawton clean, safe, and a place we can all be proud of.

Bag it. Bin it. Keep Blackawton beautiful! **www.southhams.gov.uk/report-it**

The Thoughts of Chairman Rake

from **Simon Rake**

Enforcement matters

The problem with the planning system… let me start that again. One of the many problems with the planning system is that everyone thinks they know how it should work, but not many know how it actually does. Nowhere in its many corners and crevices is this truer than in the area of planning enforcement; the part of the system that seeks to ensure that development is properly controlled.

The first common misunderstanding is that planning permission is required before development takes place. It is not. There is nothing illegal about building without asking permission to do so (unless we are talking about works to, or affecting a listed building or protected tree), but I would strongly advise against it! Why? Why go to the trouble and cost of a planning application if you can just go ahead and build anyway? The answer is simple: there could be a great deal more trouble and cost ahead if you don't.

If your unauthorised development is drawn to the attention of the Local Planning Authority then the potential costs could quickly start to rise. If the building is not yet complete, you may be issued with a Stop Notice, and work will have to cease (we are now getting into the realms of the criminal law; failure to stop can attract hefty fines or worse). At this point, or if the works have already been completed, you will probably be required to submit a retrospective planning application. Thus you will have all the trouble and cost of a planning application but will now have the added risk and costs of having to restore the site to its original state if the application fails (on top of whatever you have spent on the building works so far).

The retrospective application is the second major source of misunderstanding. Many a Planning Committee has groaned inwardly as an objector or Parish Council representative has worked themselves up into a lather of indignation about the fact that an application is retrospective. This, they claim, should be enough own its own to rule it out. It is not. Hard as it may be in practice, the application has to be considered on its merits and cannot be 'punished' for its retrospective nature. Nor can it be 'favoured' by considerations of the costs (whether financial or in carbon terms) involved if the building has to be

demolished in the event that the application is refused. In other words, the Planning Officer or Planning Committee is tasked with the act of imagining that this is a fresh application on an undeveloped site

Fortunately, these extreme cases, where no authorisation for development has been sought, are rare. More common are 'technical' planning breaches, where development does not accord with the agreed plans or some other condition of a planning consent has been breached, which brings us on to a third misunderstanding: the Planning Authority is not obliged to act, even where a permission has been breached. Enforcement is a discretionary activity for Planning Authorities, and although most if not all have an Enforcement Team, they can choose what course of action to take and in which cases. In many cases (though not all by any means) where a development deviates from the approved plans, an Authority may take the view that no significant harm is done and therefore no action is necessary.

Could these rules be improved? Certainly. Do I like them? No, not very much; they are complicated, difficult to implement and, perhaps worst of all, seem to fly in the face of our basic human liking for fairness. All that said, these are the rules and we are probably all better off if we understand them.

Why did I choose to write about enforcement this month? Well, thankfully enforcement cases are relatively rare in Blackawton, but every so often we get a little spate of enquiries from Parishioners about development around the Parish. In general we advise people that they should report possible planning breaches themselves – the process is completely confidential – but we will be discussing this with the Enforcement Team to see if we should consider a change of approach. In the meantime, if you have any concerns about development, please contact the South Hams Enforcement Team via the website or by calling 01803 861234.

Blackawton Parish Council meeting

from **Annette Thom**

Notes of the Monthly Meeting of Blackawton Parish Council

Held on Monday 13 October 2025 at 7.30 pm in Blackawton Village Hall. Complete minutes can be read at www.blackawtoncommunity.com or the parish noticeboard.

Present: Parish & South Hams District Council Cllr Rake (Chair), and Parish Cllrs Oughton (Vice-Chair), Hadow, Luckens, Mardon, and Thomas were present, as were Devon County Cllr Brazil for his report, Clerk A Thom, and one member of the public for the Open Forum. Absent: Cllr Coe.

Open Forum

Blackawton Cemetery. A member of the public discussed their family's request to inter the ashes of a non-resident whose spouse is interred in the Cemetery into the existing grave.

Councillors Forum

BPC's Policy regarding Notifications to SHDC about Possible Breaches of Planning Legislation. Cllr Rake asked Cllrs to consider whether BPC's approach (asking those who notice the possible breach to report it themselves directly to SHDC, with technical support from BPC if needed) for possible discussion in a future meeting of BPC. Cllr Rake will later this month discuss with SHDC Officers what Officers preferred approach is.

Report from Devon County Council Councillor

Cllr Oughton said that adoption of the roads within French Furze by DCC (and the adoption of the sewage system by South West Water) is still two years away. The roads are in a 60mph speed zone now. DCC Cllr Brazil explained that DCC cannot do a TRO [Traffic Regulation Order] because the roads are not adopted. Cllr Brazil noted that the Police still have powers if vehicles drive at dangerous speeds. Local Police could be asked to attend, for example around School drop off times. Cllr Brazil said that if Blackawton would prefer the village was a 20 mph zone to raise that with DCC now. There will be an advertising process for the speed zone when the French Furze area roads are adopted by DCC. It would save Blackawton money if a change to the village speed limits was advertised at the same time.

Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) were discussed. Communities can go through a SCARF process. It was noted by BPC that a speed survey was done fairly recently, in 2022, and that it showed general compliance with the 30mph zone. The maximum speed measured during the survey was 25mph. So long as VAS don't cause a safety issue Cllr Brazil hopes that DCC Highways would co-operate. BPC would liaise with Highways. Several suitable sites could be agreed and VAS could be rotated between sites by BPC. Cllr Brazil noted that Strete is also landscaping so that it is obvious to drivers that they are entering a village. If BPC wants to action a 20 mph zone in the French Furze area the Clerk would write to Cllr Oughton's DCC contact and copy to the DCC Neighbourhood Officer and to Cllr Brazil. A request for VAS would go to the latter two.

There was some discussion about engineering works to improve visibility at Forces Cross; if works are possible they are likely to be several years away.

Regarding indicative costs to change speed zones, Cllr Rake said that a change is being considered for the road to Newton Abbot, near the Pig and Whistle public house. DCC's charges will be nearly £20,000: for design, advertising a TRO, and for traffic management.

Cllr Brazil gave his apologies for the 10 November 2025 monthly meeting of BPC.

Report from South Hams District Council Councillor

SHDC Cllr Rake reported that the full Local Government Reform proposals are due with Government by 28 November. DCC have supported 'New Devon': all Districts merging to create a new County Authority, with Plymouth and Torbay each separate. SHDC support the 4-5-1 proposal, or the 4-5-1 plus proposal which lets Plymouth expand into the Plymouth urban fringe. In Cllr Rake's view those two are the only sensible ones proposed. The Government will put its preferred proposal out for public consultation next spring. The May 2027 elections would have been District Council elections. They will now be elections to a shadow authority. The shadow authority will have until 1 April 28 to become operational.

SHDC is working on its 26/27 budget and that budget is under strain. The Fair Funding Review has taken place and SHDC's settlement will be announced before Christmas. The waste collection grant has been reduced from £1 million to £700,000.

SHDC's 25/26 budget performance is good. Car Parks receipts are ahead of budget.

Planning Applications

South Hams District Council's Planning Decisions.

1987/25/FUL Land At Sx 808 527 (Nr West Drayton Farm) Blackawton. Provision of new agricultural access. Conditional Approval.

2823/25/TEX St Michael's Church, Church Hill, Blackawton, TQ9 7BQ. Removal of dead tree in Churchyard. No Objection Raised.

Review of New Applications .No comments will be made by BPC to SHDC on the following applications:

New pavement licence application: Coastal Trail, Riverside Court, South Embankment, TQ6 9BH.

New pavement licence application: The Crafty Mussel, South Embankment, Dartmouth TQ6 9BH.

The following applications were noted. No comments are being be made by BPC to SHDC. SHDC's decision's will be based on evidence & planning policy:

2635/25/PDM Land At SX801505, Blackawton, TQ9 7AZ. Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use of agricultural barn to 4no. dwellinghouses (class C3) & for associated development (Class Q (a+b)).

2657/25/AGR Yonder Parks Bungalow Blackawton TQ9 7DR. Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed general purpose agricultural building measuring 22.86m (L) x 18.28m (B) x 9.14m height to ridge.

French Furze Development

The assessment of the Business Units by Cllrs Rake and Thomas (in their role as Directors of the Blackawton Business Units CIC) and an SHDC Officer found minor snags. The Units are pretty much ready. A snags list was sent to the developer. There has been no reply yet. The Units were to be Business Class B1, however that Class no longer exists. The Units will be Business Class E, which is broader.

The meeting was told that the MUGA is unsafe. Cllr Rake will arrange a visit from SHDC's Environmental Health team. The new drainage system being developed for French Furze includes redirecting and managing water run-off from the farmland above, as well as a drainage solution for the open drain and below.

Devon County Council Highways Matters

BPC agreed to request a 20mph zone for the village, with the 20mph zone to be extended to the 'Welcome' signs on the Forces Road and on the Quarry Road entrances to the village, and with limits as existing at the other entrances to the village. A public consultation is part of Devon County Council's process to respond to BPC's request. BPC decided not to progress a project to install Vehicle Activated Signage in the village at this time. This matter will be reviewed depending on feedback from DCC regarding timings of implementation of a 20 mph zone. BPC will ask the French Furze developer for its support for the 20mph zone and to make a financial contribution.

Management of Trees in the St Michael's Churchyard

Cllrs Hadow and Thomas reported that there is plenty of interest from Blackawton craftspeople to use the wood from the cherry trees that need to be felled in the Churchyard. Cllr Hadow is keeping a list. The Clerk will pass on the name of an interested Totnes resident. Those outside the Parish would receive second preference.

The proposals to leave cherry tree trunks in situ as habitat deadwood, or if that is not acceptable then stacking any unused cut wood in a series of low piles against the north Church wall were discussed. It was agreed that Cllr Hadow will investigate possible nearby locations, such as the School. There is limited space in the Churchyard and the access to the churchyard wall for maintenance purposes is important.

It was agreed that eight Rowan trees in seven to nine foot containers would be planted before spring to replace the avenue of mature cherry trees. The Clerk will obtain comparison purchase costs. The trees will

have protective matting. Planting will be a team effort by Cllrs, ideally into the holes of the Cherry trees being removed. Cllr Luckens agreed to water the planted trees as necessary using the Church's outside tap. Cllr Oughton will try to source a heritage Crab-apple, which will replace the dead cherry on the path to School Lane. Timing of the tree-felling will depend on the result of the pending bat survey.

Maintenance and Restoration of Gates in the St Michael's Churchyard

The Report was noted, including the agreed method, grant funds will be sought, a Church Faculty application is required for the lychgates, & suggesting removing the remaining lychgate into the Church to protect it pending the works. Removal of the lychgate was agreed if feasible and with the PCC's agreement.

Noticeboard

The Clerk will cost the installation in the Main Street bus shelter of a Parish Council noticeboard with two sides of 6A4 size each, made of accoya, with a marine ply back if it's not accoya, self-healing recycled rubber pinboard, polycarbonate glazing, locked doors, and stainless steel hinges. The Parish Council might provide financial support for the extension of community noticeboard space near the Community Shop if that's required. The current wooden noticeboard is full of community notices, however it's not managed and many notices are very old.

Blackawton Cemetery

The request from a family to purchase a grave to inter the ashes of a non-resident whose spouse is interred in the Cemetery was discussed. Their preference would be to inter the ashes in the spouse's existing plot. The Clerk has replied that this is not possible because it's a single plot and its illegal to disturb human remains, including interred ashes. Cllrs agreed that because the ashes plots in the Blackawton Cemetery are widely spaced it may be possible to place ashes next to those already interred. That approach is acceptable to BPC. The Clerk will assess on-site with Cllr Thomas, and advise the requester. The approved charges schedule will be used.

Notice for the Beacon about the Blackawton Cemetery

The proposed Notice to ask for the community's to help managing the Blackawton Cemetery was approved with the addition of some examples about the sorts of items which cause a problem.

Warden Vacancies

The appointment of a new volunteer Tree Warden was confirmed. Cllr Rake said that he has received an expression of interest in the vacant Footpath Warden role and will be meeting with them soon to discuss.

Meeting Action Items

The review of the list was deferred, except for the Clerk's brief update on the Cemetery safety issues. The Clerk and Cllr Rake will review.

Finance

Annual Governance and Accountability Return Audit 24/25. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit and the External Auditor's Report were noted. No matters were raised.

Update on Current Financial Position. The Reports were noted, including a Report against the budget to 30 September 2025, and the Bank Reconciliation at 30 September 2025 was signed. The new 'Churchyard' Cost Centre, to reflect the new clarification of responsibility, was noted. At 30 September 2025 the total balance was £72,270 and the unearmarked General Fund £26,845 (this balance includes the received second half of precept).

Payments & Receipts. It was resolved to authorise the following payments:

Clerk September Expenses Reimbursement	£107.53
Parish Lengthsman June 2024 to March 2025	£1,012.00
Grounds Maintenance Churchyard Frequent cuts 2, 16, & 30 September	£306.00
Grounds Maintenance Cemetery Frequent cuts 2, 16, & 30 September	£324.00
Blackawton Defibrillator Annual Support	£198.00

The following Payments authorised since the last monthly meeting were noted:

Parish Lengthsman April to August 2025	£310.50
External Audit 2024/25	£252.00
Cut flush Churchyard wall vegetation, completion of cut	£381.25
Bulb grant, four bedding packs October 2024	£15.00

The following Receipts were noted:

Precept second half	£14,971.50
VAT Refund 2024/25 Financial Year	£1,092.90
DCC Public Right of Way Grant Minor Repairs	£420.00

Parish Lengthsman Rate

It was resolved to approve an increase in the hourly rate to £24.

Correspondence
The following correspondence was noted:

- Better Housing Better Health - https://www.bhbh.org.uk/ A not-for-profit free of charge service to help residents access fuel poverty advice and support.
- SHDC Invitation - South Hams Energy Assembly Saturday 18 October 9:30-3:30.
- Primary School, 30/9/25, Sharing correspondence about dog fouling between School and Car Park. The Clerk has shared SHDC's dog fouling information and reporting webpage, and requested SHDC public notices and a visit from the Localities team.
- Invitation, Dartmouth Caring AGM, Tuesday 21 October 17:00 for 17:30-18:30.
- Hastoe, Request for help to establish Land Registry boundary.
- Invitation Annual Slapton Ley Research Seminar on Saturday 15th November 2025, 10:00-16:00.

Closure of the Meeting
It was resolved, in accordance with the 1960 Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, to exclude the public and press during consideration of the following items because of the commercial-in-confidence nature of the business.

Management of Trees in the St Michael's Churchyard
The decision made by the Clerk in consultation with Cllr Hadow under delegated authority to contract a free-lance contractor to do an initial survey for bats (Ground Level Tree Assessment and a Potential Roost Features Assessment) on trees planned for felling at a cost of £536 was summarised and noted.

Maintenance and Restoration of Gates in the St Michael's Churchyard
It was resolved to accept the quote of £19,342 from a contractor with the heritage qualifications and experience that BPC now understands is required to carry out the project. The quote does not include the creation of method documents for the Faculty application to the Church of England for the works to the lychgates. The timing of the works will depend on grant funds received and approval of the Faculty application.

Notes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Blackawton Parish Council
Held on Monday 20 October 2025 at 7.30 pm Blackawton Village Hall.
Present: Parish & South Hams District Council Cllr Rake (Chair), and Parish Cllrs Oughton (Vice-Chair, and Chair of the start of the meeting), Coe, Hadow, Luckens, Mardon, and Thomas were present, as were Clerk A Thom, and three members of the public. Cllr Rake arrived a few minutes late having represented SHDC at another Parish Council's meeting (arriving a few minutes after the meeting starting, when Cllr Coe had started her summary of the current context and responses to Cllrs advance questions). Absent: No Cllrs absent.

Application for a Wind Turbine Feasibility Study Grant
Cllr Coe's proposed application for BPC to apply for a Government Great British Community Energy Fund grant to pay for a Community Owned Wind Turbine feasibility study was discussed. Cllr Coe said that the proposal has the support of Sustainable Blackawton and that a community owned turbine, if feasible and installed, would provide community and environmental benefits. Sustainable Blackawton does not have an organisation type which qualifies it to make a submission in its own right. Community consultation and engagement are a part of a feasibility study's contracted work. If the grant is not successful the Fund provides formal feedback to help with the preparation of any future application.
It was resolved unanimously to support in principle the submission of the application for grant funds for a community owned wind turbine feasibility study. It was resolved to delegate the Clerk authority in consultation with the Chair Cllr Rake, to approve the final application. It will also be circulated to all BPC Cllrs. Cllr Coe will provide the final application and supporting documents to the Clerk by Thursday 23 October 2025.

Blackawton Community Emergency Plan
The working draft was discussed. BPC decided not to identify a Co-ordinator or members of a Community Response Team, as described in the Devon Communities Together Draft Emergency Plan. BPC will produce a leaflet to help households prepare in advance so that they are able to be more resilient during an emergency, Cllr Rake offered to do this. The Community Shop will be the centre of communications in an emergency. There might be a voluntary register of people who know they could be vulnerable in an emergency. The Clerk will modify the draft Emergency Plan to reflect this approach.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held in the Village Hall on **Monday 10 November** 2025 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 Charli Mardon		charli@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, Bob Harvey	01803 712662	clyston23@gmail.com
Parish Lengthsman, Ian Cumberlidge	07773 691260	

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 07970 971140	julian.brazil@devon.gov.uk
Devon County Council	0845 155 1015 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)

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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 December edition is **Thursday 20th November**.

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

November 2025

Sunday 2nd	2.00 pm	With Cheerful Voice - choral concert	Village Hall
Wednesday 5th	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
	7.30 pm	Wormcharming Team meeting	George Inn
Friday 7th	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Dartmouth	Bus shelter
Saturday 8th	6.30 pm	Blackawton Bonfire and Fireworks	George Inn/field
Sunday 9th	3.00 pm	BADS Pantomime rehearsal	Village Hall
Monday 10th	7.30 pm	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall
	7.30 pm	Blackawton Christmas Choir	Orchard House
Wednesday 12th	9.00 am	Hatha Yoga	Village Hall
	10.30 am	Chair Yoga	Village Hall
Friday 14th	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Dartmouth	Bus shelter
Saturday 15th	7.00 pm	Church Autumn Supper	Melrose Cottage
Sunday 16th	3.00 pm	BADS Pantomime rehearsal	Village Hall
Monday 17th	7.30 pm	Blackawton Christmas Choir	Orchard House
Wednesday 19th	9.00 am	Hatha Yoga	Village Hall
	10.30 am	WI Monthly Meeting	Village Hall
Thursday 20th		Beacon deadline for December edition	
Friday 21st	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Dartmouth	Bus shelter
Saturday 22nd	10.00 am	Indoor Car Boot Sale	Village Hall
	7.00 pm	Stanborough Chorus concert - Brahms Requiem	Modbury Church
Monday 24th	7.30 pm	Blackawton Christmas Choir	Orchard House
Wednesday 26th	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 28th	9.30 am	West Dart Bus to Dartmouth	Bus shelter
Sunday 30th	3.00 pm	BADS Pantomime rehearsal	Village Hall
	6.30 pm	Advent Carol Service	Church