

Congresbury Life

Issue 15 February/March 2026

News from the Parish Council

The weather is cold, and sometimes it may seem we are hibernating, but behind the scenes the work of the Parish Council goes on. We are still talking to Tincknells as well as looking at other parking options, chasing the developers regarding the reserve matters for Mulberry Farm, planning to repaint the blue footbridge in the next year, maintaining and upgrading the Old School Rooms, replacing and adding litter and dog waste bins, attending airport expansion meetings, liaising with solar farm developers, and developing the volunteer teams who help care for the village.

Our District Councillor, Dan Thomas, feeds our concerns to North Somerset and lets us know what they are planning which concerns us. Parishioners are invited to come and have their say at full council meetings once a month. Members of the public get 5 mins each to state their case. Councillors can't answer questions but will listen and discuss later.

Even better, do you have the skills to pick up one of these issues, or help the Parish Council with forward planning and funding? Come and join us!

The next full councils are 9th Feb and 16th March, at 7.30

Local Council Budgets

Currently North Somerset Council are working on producing a balanced budget for 2026-27. You may have seen the recent response to the Government's 'Fair Funding Review' of local authorities. As it stands, we're set to receive £18.6m less than previously. Add to this NSC's lower than average council tax rates, plus the rising costs we're all experiencing, and it makes balancing the budget increasingly difficult. We're facing a funding gap of £15m in 2026-27, rising to £42m over subsequent years which equates to over 17% of our total net budget.

I'll be touch with more updates soon but in the meantime if you have any issues I can assist with, please get in touch, with your District Councillor dan.thomas@n-somerset.gov.uk or call/message me on 07727 075780.



**Congresbury
Volunteers**

When you read this, the Wassail will have taken place, and the orchard shown some love for next year. However, love alone will not suffice, and we will be pruning the trees on Saturday 7th Feb from 10am until lunch time, or

when we get too cold to continue. We have an expert pruner to guide us, so if you want to learn some techniques, please book a place. We will be asking for small voluntary contributions towards the cost of the tuition.

On another topic, you will notice that one of the planters at the Cross was sadly damaged beyond repair, presumably by a vehicle, and has been replaced by smaller planters relocated from elsewhere. The planters are important protectors of the historic Cross. If the planter had not taken the blow, the damage could have been much more serious.

To join the Volunteers, contact lizzie.burd@congresbury-pc.gov.uk



**Pancake Day at
St Andrew's Church**

Celebrate Pancake Day at St Andrew's Church, Congresbury, on Tuesday 17th February at 10.00am. Enjoy pancakes and a friendly, welcoming atmosphere at this community event. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Children under 16 should be accompanied by an adult.

Christmas Street Fair

Over £3,700 was raised for local charities and community groups on Broad Street on the mercifully dry and still evening of 3rd December. Many thanks to the crowd who turned out on the evening and the band, singers and dancers for the fabulous entertainment. Special thanks to the many volunteers who ran stalls and made it happen logistically and to the sumptuous hampers put together as raffle prizes by Scout and Guide sections. A big shout out to the Parish Council and to local businesses for their generous contributions on the evening and for donating prizes for the raffle.

A lot of effort goes into making this event happen. If you would like to help, make this event a success next time, please contact congresburyfair@outlook.com



We need your support throughout the year, as well as at the Fair.

Information about helping Scouts: Geoffreymbailey@btinternet.com and helping Guides: Sonya [07715876827](tel:07715876827).

We are looking for people who can spare a few hours a month to join our leadership teams, with support from current leaders, to run not only the current sections but help restart the Guide section, for girls aged 10 years plus.

Congresbury Community Library

Thursday 26 February one of our volunteers, Hugh White, is giving a talk on his work as a Pathologist in Bosnia where he was involved with investigations following the war in that country.

Our March talk on Thursday 26 March "Toad Tales" is being given by Shelia Gundry, a representative from Froglife, a national wildlife

charity committed to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles.

Both talks are at the Methodist Hall, on High Street, Congresbury, starting at 7:30 pm. Tickets cost £4, available from the library or at the door.

During March to celebrate Children's World Book Day we are hiding a number of our favourite book characters in the library for children to find. Our Easter chicks will be hiding on our shelves at the end of March.

Remember we have a range of jigsaw puzzles available to swap throughout the year plus the books in our Honesty Library which anyone can borrow.



A New Year and a new logo - we hope you like it!

Moths and **Bats** are highlighted in our final two talks of this winter season and the ever-popular Plough Inn quiz returns. Our talks at Horsecastle Chapel, 18 Horsecastle Rd Yatton, BS49 4QQ 7.30-9.15pm (7.15 for refreshments) are free for YACWAG members, but non-members are very welcome - a small £3 donation is appreciated - or join on the night! Annual membership is only £5 - £15.

Thursday, 12th February Moths: Why They Matter and How Can We Help Them

Using his beautiful photographs, Higgy will introduce us to the wonderful world of moths. We'll explore their remarkable diversity, the declines they've experienced, the pressures they currently face and the practical steps we can take to make our gardens more moth friendly.

Thursday, 26th February Danielle Walker, Project Officer, North Somerset Bat Survey,

will inform us about this citizen science project led by the Bat Conservation Research Lab at the University of Bath. Data gathered enables NS planners to minimise

the impact of new housing developments on bats and wildlife at large. Come along to learn what's been found so far and how you can help!

Sunday 22nd March - 7.30pm (for 8pm start)

The Plough Inn, High Street, Congresbury, BS49 5JA

Friendly, fund-raising Pub Quiz

Kindly led once again by Phil Mellor, this is a popular event so be sure to take your seat early. Come with friends or join with others on the night to make a team. £1 per person entry + optional raffle.

www.yacwag.org.uk

BLUEY



Bluey are running their regular **FREE Tuesday** shopping trips for 2026 to Weston Tesco and Sovereign Centre, every week. Leaving 9.50am, Returning 12.50pm
Can also take in Sainsbury's and Dunelm etc. on request. Pick-up from houses. Trips elsewhere will begin in the Spring.

We are looking for Volunteer Drivers urgently and helpers for our committee. All training given. Please consider giving a few hours to your community and help "Bluey" to continue.

To book a seat or the bus, please ring 01934 257247 or email: bookingmanagerbluey@gmail.com
Congresbury Community Transport - Driving for the community!

Congresbury WI

Our members enjoyed an excellent Christmas lunch at the Star pub in Star village. The donations for the food bank were gratefully received. At our February meeting on the 18th Nick Meyer will be talking about "A disreputable scandal". We have no idea which scandal this will be! And on 18th March we'll be

hearing about the history of handbell ringing and have a short concert from the Ladye Bay Ringers. The WI year starts in April when the new programme will be revealed and subscriptions are due.

We meet at 2.15 pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month in the Methodist Hall. We'll be hoping to welcome new members as well as visitors. The charge for non-members (including tea and biscuits) is £4.

Susan Hibberd, Secretary.

Congresbury Allotments Association

Our next meeting will be the AGM in the Old School Rooms at 7pm on Thursday, 29th January. A chance to have a good moan about the weather, to mention concerns and make suggestions to improve our Parish Allotments.

Rent renewal is at the end of February with information going out a month before. We hope for lots of enthusiastic new tenants as there will be quite a few plots vacant. Some of them will be easier to get in shape than others!

Much effort has gone into measuring plots recently; this might lead to a wider range of charges as there is such variation in shape and size. Possible changes still have to be discussed by the Parish Council. We are very happy that the P.C. is setting up a working party to increase its involvement in allotment administration.

Meanwhile negotiations are continuing for a new lease with the QEII trust which rents the site to the Parish Council.

If you're interested in getting an allotment or joining the waiting list, please contact the Parish Office, admin@congresbury-pc.gov.uk A full plot for last year costs £45 and a half plot £23.

Susan Hibberd, Secretary



Congresbury Youth Partnership

Our regular term time clubs are:

For ages 8 -11 Weds 3.30 to 5pm

For ages 11-16 Weds 6.30-8.30pm

Code Club is on Mondays: drop in as soon as you can after school, until 5.30pm, to experiment with SCRATCH, PYTHON and basic electronics/robotics.

congresburycodeclub@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook to see our Half Term programme.

Volunteers need to help run all groups and keep them going.

Congresbury Singers

Into the New Year and the start of rehearsals for our Spring concert on Saturday 21st March 7.30pm at St. Andrews Church. This concert is entitled "A Choral Mass by Six Composers" and features the elements of a classical Mass, but with each section in our presentation being by a different composer.

This is an entirely new and innovative approach, and our Musical Director has chosen pieces that will not only showcase the individual composers, but each piece will flow through from the previous to provide an insight into the varying styles of the individual composers. Tickets priced at £12, to include refreshments at the end of the concert, will be available from Congresbury Post Office and Re-Store, Broad Street, Congresbury.

As ever new members are always welcome so if you'd like to give singing a try, please come along to any of our weekly rehearsals on Tuesday nights, 7.15pm for 7.30pm start, at the Congresbury War Memorial Hall, where you will receive a warm welcome.

Congresbury History Society

Our upcoming talks at the Methodist Hall, starting at 7.30pm Cost £4 for non-members

18th Feb Philip Ashford on Piracy, war and Plunder in the Bristol Channel, 1400 -1650

18th March Clive Burlton The Life and Times of Harry Dolman

15th April John Smith Battle of Britain over Somerset

Congresbury War Memorial Hall

A message from the chairman, Irving Prowse

Due to some unexpected circumstances around my health the twice monthly Book Sales will not resume until March 14th and March 28th, 2026. In future the Book Sale will run between 10.00am and 12 noon. Reasons will be explained to my regular customers in due course but are necessary as we start the 28th year of the sales.

There will be reductions in price, which will benefit all buyers, as the items will be sold on a "Buy One Get One Free" basis on all stock. Similar reductions will also apply to Jigsaw Puzzles. Hopefully villagers will take advantage of stock reductions.

The size of the village has been gradually rising. Many people may not realise that the hall is a registered charity. They might like to look at what the hall has to offer, including Bingo, Badminton, Snooker, Rifle and Pistol Shooting and many others, when there is a Book Sale on. This is an open invitation to all to check us out. Look forward to meeting you.

Footpaths group

Are you new to the village, recently retired or looking for a way to stay

fit? Why not join our footpaths group on our monthly walks. We have a short walk of approximately 4 miles on Tuesday 3rd February and March 3rd.

Meet at the Riverside Car Park by Congresbury Bridge at 9:30 am and we share transport to the walk location, usually finishing at a coffee stop about midday.

On Sunday 15th February and 15th March; we will be doing longer walks of about 6 miles. Meeting again at the Riverside Car Park at 10:00 am, we use Bluey to save on car travel and take a packed lunch which we can enjoy during the walk.

If you are interested, please contact Julia on 01934 876454 or Marilyn on 01934 832657 for further details.

On Friday March 6 we are holding our AGM at the Old School Rooms at 7:30 pm. This will be part AGM and part social occasion with an American Supper. If you would like to join us, please let Julia or Marilyn know.

We are a very friendly group, and it is a great way of meeting new people.

Run Fatboy Run (his own words)

"The Stewart Dewer Fund" (in memory of a well loved retired mental health nurse of our parish) seeks to support young people in Congresbury, Hewish, and Puxton, with small grants (usually approximately £50-£100) towards educational trips, camps, life experiences, coaching, training, indeed anything that helps young people feel or know they are valued and able to flourish.

Our vicar, Matt Thomson, is planning to run (or walk) the Alicante Half Marathon on the third weekend of February. You can sponsor him and support the work of Fund at [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stewart-dewer-fund](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stewart-dewer-fund)

There will also be a Sponsorship form and Donation Box in the Church Office (please put any donation in a small envelope) Applications to the fund can be made through St Andrew's Church, or members of the Dewer family.

The Community Cafe, thanks to its volunteers, customers and the generous support of Lisa and Neil co-owners of Debbie Fortune estate agents, donated a total of £5,730 to the following causes last year; Children in Need, Weston Hospicecare, Macmillan Cancer support, Great Western Air Ambulance, Children's Hospice South West and St Andrews school.

We worked with Weston College as part of their Ready to Work programme, with some of the bakery students running a cream tea session in July and one of the students volunteering for a few months. We are looking at doing more of the same this year.

Alongside of our fundraising efforts we will be supporting Debbie Fortune's estate agents' pledge to raise monies for Weston Hospicecare.

Congresbury Gardening Club

The Gardening club is holding their Spring Show on the 21st March. There are lots of classes which you and your children may like to enter, from prize specimens from your spring garden, cakes and other domestic classes and children's Easter competitions.

Pick up a schedule from the Post Office and have a go entering. Top prize is £1 per class (yes all of that!), maybe even a cup and a lot of kudos! We will also be very pleased to see everyone in the afternoon when tea and cakes will be available.

The club will also be meeting on the first Thursday of each month

until April with talks by Helen Picton and Julie Haycock. More details on the club's website.

Congars Hub



Congars Hub has its popular board game afternoon on the following dates Tuesday 10th and 24th February, 10th and 24th March.

The afternoons start at 1pm at the Congresbury Youth Partnership Youth Club. Free parking, donation towards the upkeep of the building and for the refreshments. Everyone welcome. Come along for a cuppa and meet new people whilst challenging each other over a game.

With springtime coming Congars Hub will be looking to start up a new monthly coffee morning, a monthly walk with coffee at the end, some more PCSO drop ins and reintroducing the repair cafe. Look out for more details in future editions of the Congresbury Life.

For further information or if you want to get involved, please contact Sonya on [07715876827](tel:07715876827) or congarscafe20@gmail.com

A Message from the Team

If you are keen to volunteer for the village or have a piece that can be contributed to the magazine, please get in touch.

We have Opportunities for volunteers able to help us with formatting and editing.

Big Teams of People, Each Doing a Little

congresburylife@gmail.com