

Lurgashall News

FEBRUARY 2026



Highlights



February Gardening
pages 22-25

Lurgashall Mill Pond
pages 9-11



February, a form pale-vestured, wildly fair. One of the
North Wind's daughters with icicles in her hair.

Edgar Fawcett

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CHURCHWARDENS

Amanda Worrall, Hillgrove House, GU28 9EW 01428 707436
Rob Holgate holgate.family@btinternet.com 0738758 2100

St. Laurence Church Cleaning

Enjoy lively conversation and a great work out in a beautiful village location .

Church cleaning 1 morning a month for an hour .

Contact: Judy Pavia 01428707265

Church Services for February 2026

1 February <i>Presentation of Christ in the Temple</i>	10.00 am	Lurgashall	Holy Communion <i>Canon Nigel Nicholson</i>
8 February <i>2nd Sunday before Lent</i>	10.00 am 10.30 am	Lurgashall Ebernoe	Holy Communion <i>Rev Richard Lloyd</i> Pet Service
15 February <i>Sunday next before Lent</i>	<u>11.00 am</u> 10.30 am	Lurgashall Northchapel	Holy Communion <i>Rev Jack Mulder</i> Holy Communion <i>Bishop of Horsham</i>
18 February <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	10.00.am	Lurgashall	Ash Wednesday Service <i>Canon Nigel Nicholson</i>
22 February <i>First Sunday of Lent</i>	10.00 am 10.30 am	Lurgashall Ebernoe	Holy Communion <i>The Venerable Dr Tom Carpenter, Archdeacon of Chichester</i> Morning Service

Sidesmen

Date	Sidesman	Reading	Flowers
1 Feb	Sally Stainton	Hebrews 2:14-end Luke 2:22-40	Holly Hunter
8 Feb	Judy Pavia	Romans 8:18-25 Matthew 6:25-end	Anthea M-Jenkins
15 Feb 11.00 am	Andy Kinnear	2 Peter 1:16-end Matthew 17:1-9	Elizabeth Clark
18 Feb	Elizabeth Clark	Ash Wednesday	Lent - No flowers
22 Feb	Rob Holgate	Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11	Lent - No flowers

From the Churchwardens



As we look back on the Christmas season, we are reminded once again what a privilege it is to belong to this community. Christmas Day at St Laurence was a true celebration of hope - made all the richer by the two wonderful services that preceded it: our Carol Service and the ever-joyful Nativity. Each one brought its own light, its own laughter, and its own reminder of why these traditions matter so deeply.

Watching everyone gather at the Noah's Ark after the Christmas Day Service, faces bright with goodwill and the simple pleasure of being together, we were struck by how fortunate we are. In a world that can often feel fragile, moments like these anchor us. They remind us that belonging is not an abstract idea - it is lived, shared, and strengthened every time we come together.

It is easy, at times, to feel overwhelmed by events far beyond our control. The global stage can seem uncertain; the headlines often unsettling. Yet history shows that communities endure not by looking outward in fear, but by looking inward with determination. When the world feels unsteady, the most powerful thing we can do is nurture the places closest to us - our homes, our friendships, our village.

In that spirit, the church and the village pub continue to play their timeless roles: lifting spirits, offering welcome, and reminding us that kindness is a force in its own right. This is how people have always weathered difficult times, and it is how we will continue to do so - together.

As we turn now from Christmas towards Easter, February brings the beginning of Lent, a season of reflection and renewal.

Shrove Tuesday falls on 17 February. The word shrove comes from the Old English shrive, meaning to confess and receive absolution. Today, of course, it is better known as Pancake Day - a cheerful and practical way to use up rich ingredients before the fasting and simplicity of Lent begin.

Ash Wednesday follows on 18 February, and we are pleased that Nigel Nicholson will lead the 10am service at St Laurence. Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent's forty days of prayer, self-examination, and preparation for Easter. The sign of ashes reminds us of our humility and our dependence on God's grace, inviting us to turn again towards renewal and hope.

As ever, we are grateful for each of you - your presence, your support, and the quiet acts of kindness that make this parish what it is. With community and compassion, we will continue to walk forward together.

With every blessing,

Rob and Amanda
Churchwardens, St Laurence

Lesley Bartlett would like to say a big thank you to everyone for the kindness, support, and sympathy shown to her following the death of her mum, Brenda, who passed away at the end of November.



THE VILLAGE HALL 50:50 CLUB



Congratulations to January's Winners:

1st prize: Brenda Wright

2nd prize: David Godfray

The 50:50 Club is one of the main sources of income for our Village Hall, and its contribution is vital to maintaining this important village asset. Please join and help your Village Hall.

Just call Steve on 077783357272 or email to

catherine.nicholes@hotmail.co.uk

Lurgashall Oil Buying Group

Northover Energy provided the lowest price for our New Year order of 18,000 litres order, at 53.20 ppl +VAT.



The next order will be placed at the beginning of March. Please let me know if you are interested in joining the Group.

Colin Robertson lurgashall.oil@gmail.com

Here for our community

Lurgashall Village Hall and its equipment are available for hire, with special discounted rates for residents of the parish.

The hall is great for children's parties, exercise and dance classes, family gatherings, meetings, film shows – in fact, almost anything you can think of!

Equipment for hire includes tables, chairs, crockery, cutlery, glassware and the ever-popular large urn!

Our rates are very reasonable indeed. To find out more, please go to www.lurgashallvillagehall.org or contact the Booking Secretary on lvhmc.bookings@gmail.com

VILLAGE LUNCH

The next village lunch will be on the 9th February. Just put your name on the list in the Shop. This closes on the Thursday before the lunch. Please contact Sally Stainton on 07810634063, if you have any dietary requirements.

VILLAGE HALL

Change of Plan for Lurgashall Village Teas

Due to lower numbers attending recently, we've decided to make a small change to our Village Teas. From now on, we'll be holding four special teas a year.

There will be no tea in February, but there will be an **Easter Tea at the end of March**, followed by teas in June, September, and December.

We're hoping that having fewer, more special occasions will make each one feel a bit more of a treat and encourage more people to come along.

We really look forward to seeing you there and hope you can join us for these lovely get-togethers.

Change of Plan for 50:50 Club

The Village Hall 50:50 Club invites members to contribute up to £10 a month towards the upkeep of the Hall, with half of the money raised shared out in monthly prizes and a bonus draw at the end of the year.

The cost of keeping the Hall running has risen considerably in recent years, so we are now making changes to the Club's rules which will increase the contribution limit per month from £10 to £20. This change will take effect from April.

If you are already a member and would like to increase your monthly standing order contribution, or if you would like to join the Club and start a new contribution, please call Steve Corr on 07778 357272 or email Cathy Nicholes on catherine.nicholes@gmail.com.

THANK YOU!

<https://www.lurgashallvillagehall.org>

P A C T NEWS

Petworth Area Churches Together

Working together in harmony



NEWS FOR FEBRUARY

The Closure of the United Reformed Church in August 2024 was a sad loss to Petworth. Not only did they provide non-conformist worship in the town, but also made their premises available for community initiatives

As to the future of the building, according to the URC Southern Synod property department, the building needed to be sold... However, the Elders expressed their preference that the first option might be for another church denomination to take on the building. Their second preferred option was for a community hub project. They made clear a commercial or residential development would not be favoured.

Petworth has been exploring the concept of a Community Hub for some years... So a meeting of Petworth community organisations took place to give further attention to this. Much interest was shown, but no one was prepared to commit at that stage. However, after a reduction in the asking price, three people have recently expressed an interest. All 3 would like to be involved in initiating a community hub in the building. Two have already submitted offers, one of which has a vision for an interdenominational Christian centre where community projects can also take place, whose offer has already been accepted.

PACT - a gathering from different denominations working together to foster positive relationships.

Gerald Greshamcooke@gmail.com

Pactpetworth@gmail.com . <https://petworthareachurchestogether.com>

LURGASHALL MILL POND



History, Hydrology and Change Over Time

Lurgashall Mill is believed to date back to the 17th century. Like many mills of that period, it was constructed to harness water power for grinding grain into flour, and formed an important part of the local agricultural economy. The original mill building was later dismantled and carefully restored, and it now resides at the Weald and Downland Living Museum.

Historically, Lurgashall Mill Pond was considerably larger than it is today. Mapping from the late 1800s clearly shows a much greater surface area of open water, extending well beyond the present pond margins.



Historic map showing the much larger extent of Lurgashall Mill Pond in the late 19th century.

Modern satellite imagery highlights how much the pond has reduced in size and depth, reflecting centuries of gradual change.

The construction of the head wall and dam that created Lurgashall Mill Pond caused the pond to act as a natural silt trap. Over the past 300 years, sediment has steadily accumulated. This process has accelerated with changes in upstream land use, including

agriculture and forestry within the wider catchment above the mill. As sediment builds up, vegetation becomes established, which in turn traps further silt. This creates a gradual but compounding effect, steadily reducing both the depth and extent of open water.



Modern satellite view showing the present extent of Lurgashall Mill Pond and its surrounding catchment.

Despite this reduction, the pond's catchment remains substantial. It lies between Bexley Hill and Blackdown, meaning water levels within Lurgashall Mill Pond can change rapidly depending on rainfall and ground conditions. During prolonged wet periods, once the surrounding land becomes saturated, water levels can rise very quickly.

Many residents will remember the winter of 2013–14. On 23 December 2013, Lurgashall Mill Pond overtopped following exceptional rainfall. Under normal conditions, the average mean flow through the pond is approximately 0.15 cubic metres per second, with relatively low volumes passing downstream through the sluice gates. Following the overtopping event, calculations by a reservoir engineer indicated that peak flows may have reached between 35 and 45 cubic metres per second. At that time, the available overflow capacity was approximately 19 cubic metres per second. The highest level ever recorded at the River Lod at Halfway Bridge is 2.93m, reached on Tuesday 24th December 2013 at 5:30am.



In response to this event, additional flood mitigation measures were introduced in 2014, including the installation of an extra overflow, providing a further estimated capacity of around 4 cubic metres per second to help manage extreme flows in the future.

Also in 2014, a detailed survey of sediment levels was carried out during the summer months. Core samples were taken down to the pond bed, or as far as the sampling equipment would allow. In places, up to 16 feet of silt was recorded. Analysis of these samples identified a clear dating marker from 1954, linked to atmospheric nuclear testing, which provides a recognised global reference point. This allowed surveyors to establish that approximately 1.5 metres of additional sediment has accumulated between the mid-1950s and 2014.

From an ecological perspective, Lurgashall Mill Pond continues to support a stable population of coarse fish. Species present include perch, pike, carp, bream, tench and eels. A defined river channel remains through the pond, along with deeper areas that provide refuge for fish during periods of higher



flow. The area also supports a well-established colony of kingfishers, a strong indicator of good habitat quality. The pond and surrounding habitat are used extensively by migratory birds, including swifts and swallows, which feed over the water during the summer months. The lake is also regularly used by wildfowl, particularly during periods of migration and throughout the winter.

The surrounding woodland, hedgerows and water margins provide excellent conditions for bats. Numerous species have been observed or identified in the area, taking advantage of the rich insect life associated with the pond and river corridor. This makes Lurgashall Mill Pond an important local habitat for nocturnal wildlife as well as a valuable ecological feature within the wider landscape.

Further downstream from the southern sluice gates, the river transitions from a relatively quiet, shallow channel into one that can overtop its banks during periods of high flow. When this occurs, it contributes to erosion of the riverbanks, highlighting the ongoing balance between natural processes, historic infrastructure and modern land management.

Lurgashall Mill Pond remains a valuable and evolving feature of the local landscape, shaped by centuries of human activity and natural change, and continues to play an important role in the environmental and historical character of the village.

Andrew Loughan – Mill Farm Lurgashall

LURGASHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Lurgashall Parish Council held a meeting on Thursday 9th January 2026. DRAFT minutes from this will be available to view on the Village Green noticeboard and the website.

The MOBILE SKIP will be returning to Lurgashall on Saturday 7th March 2026 between 10am and midday at the Village Hall car park. Thank you to the VHMC for their continued support in allowing this to take place.

COMMUNITY TIDY UP: The Spring Litter collection day is on Saturday 28th March 2026. Meet at the Village Hall Car Park at 10am for equipment. Please join in and help keep the village tidy.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING DATE: Thursday 16th April 2026 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall

HEDGE CUTTING: Please may residents be reminded that hedgerows and trees bordering our parish roads are the responsibility of the adjacent landowners, not West Sussex County Council Highways. This is especially important on our rural roads where sight-lines and widths are already limited. Please be considerate and check and cut if required before 1st March. Also be reminded of the responsibility to maintain any ditches and any watercourse on your land.

REPORTING HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Please report potholes, drainage issues, overgrown vegetation, fly tipping and much more <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/>

Keep up to date with local road closures: www.one.network/uk/westsussex

SUPPORTING YOU

Many people are finding things tough at the moment due to current cost of living pressures. Chichester District Council's 'Supporting You' campaign highlights the range of help that you can access. Find out more about the support that's available to you

<https://www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyoucampaign>

Mrs Helen Cruikshank
Clerk to Lurgashall Parish Council

Email: helencrk@gmail.com

Tel: 01798 860788

<http://www.bitcloud.org.uk/lurgashall/>

CHAIRMAN

Mrs A Martin-Jenkins

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Dr A H J Tate

COUNCILLORS

Mrs B Burkhart

Mr N P Jowett

Mrs J Landstrom

Mr A Loughan

Mr T Macaulay

Mr A Stainton

Mr P Wilding

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Mrs Brett Burkhart

07876 594168

bburkhart@chichester.gov.uk

Mrs Eleanora Newbery

01428 656941

enewbery@chichester.gov.uk

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Mrs Janet Duncton

01798 344914

janet.duncton@westsussex.gov.uk

From the Editor

The Lurgashall News is distributed free to every Lurgashall household. Copies are also available in the Shop, the Church, Lodsworth Larder, the Northchapel Shop and online at <http://www.bitcloud.org.uk/lurgashall/>

Printing costs have risen sharply over the last 18 months. It has therefore proved necessary to increase advertising charges though we have tried hard to keep the increase to the minimum. We hope to increase the size of the News to 40 pages in the Spring.

If you would like to place an advertisement please contact me.

liz@stedall.com

Prices valid from 1st April 2026

New Advertisements are welcome

Advertisers who live in the parish or whose business is in the parish

¼ page	£50 per annum	£5.50 per month
½ page	£90 per annum	£8.50 per month
Full page	£160 per annum	£15 per month

External Advertisers

¼ page	£80 per annum	£8.50 per month
½ page	£160 per annum	£15 per month
Inside page	£300 per annum	£30 per month
Back page	£360 per annum	£36 per month

Sizes	Height	Width
1/4 page portrait	90mm	63mm
1/4 page landscape	50mm	130mm
1/2 page landscape	90mm	130mm
Full page	210 mm	148mm

Print quality PDF or JPG preferred. Please contact liz@stedall.com

There is no difference in price for colour advertisements.

Haslemere Library February Events 2026



Lino Printing Adult Craft Workshop

Make a personal card whilst having fun and learn a new skill. Beginners course.

No drawing skills required
(we have templates!)

**Tuesday 3rd
March**

13:00 - 15:30

**£8.50 per
adult**

Book Now:

haslemere.library@surreycc.gov.uk

Please wear old clothing or bring an apron!



Junk Modelling Rockets and story



Thursday 19th Feb
11am-12pm
£1 per child

FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS

Friday 20th February

Drop-in: 10am-4pm

Age 5+yrs

£2.50 PER PERSON



Crochet Heart Accessory Making

Saturday 14th February

2.00pm - 4.00pm

Ages 10yrs+

£8.50 per person

Book at

haslemere.library@surreycc.gov.uk



Lunar New Year LANTERN SCULPTURES Book Folding Craft Event

Drop-in: 10am-4pm

**TUESDAY 17TH
FEBRUARY**

£2.50



Coffee and Company : Meet the Police

Saturday 7th February

10-11.30am

FREE



Food Waste

Your new weekly food waste collection service is coming soon!



From spring 2026, the council will be introducing a new weekly food waste collection service for households which will be rolled out across the Chichester District area-by-area. Before collections start, each household will receive a kitchen caddy (about the same size as a toaster), a roll of caddy liners to get you started, an outside bin (about the same size as a pair of wellington boots), and instructions on how to use the new service. You won't need to be at home to receive the containers, we'll place them outside your property. These will be delivered in phases, ensuring minimal delay from when you receive your bin to your first collection starting.

Nearer the time, collection dates will be available online at:

www.chichester.gov.uk/checkyourbinday Your food waste collection day may be different to your recycling and waste collection day, so we strongly recommend that you check your start date before you begin to use your bin.

All household recycling, waste, and garden waste (if subscribed to) collections will continue as usual every two weeks. Collections for communal properties who share bins will start later in the year. More information will be provided to residents nearer the time.

If you live within the district, you can download the council's app! It's a handy way to stay updated as we get closer to launching this new service. Make sure that you sign up for notifications to receive live service updates during roll out, including for bin deliveries and service start dates. You can find more information at: www.chichester.gov.uk/chichesterdcapp

Food waste collections are on the way, and every bit counts - no matter how much or how little you currently throw away. About a third of the average rubbish bin in the Chichester District is food waste, so once you start separating it, you might be surprised at how much you're wasting.

More information, including what you can and can't recycle, can be found on our dedicated webpage, which we will regularly update:

www.chichester.gov.uk/food-waste

THE AULD FOOL ON THE MATTER OF BANTER AND DRAFTS.....

Inter-Marital Banter seems to work quite well for The Auld Fool and Badger at Whites Green, but with the advent of colder weather the edge has become a little sharper.....The Badger has developed a habit of not-quite-closing the outside doors, while laden with a basket of washing, the Security Patrol of Labradors Molly and Tess are happy to push them wide with the resulting ingress of cold air....this has prompted the Auld Fool to find - somewhere in the depths of what still functions as a brain – an obscure observation from the depths of history.

“Do’s tha’ cum fram Yapton....” He tones while carefully closing the offending door.....

....and where did that come from ?

Well, an ancient historian from Bognor Regis told me the following:

In early Victorian/Georgian times the homes of farm workers in the area of Yapton were extremely poor – and wooden doors to their hovels were a rarity – the entrance being closed by a sacking sheet to keep out the winds – this sheet was self-closing so the concept of closing a door was not widely adopted.

I remember in the early 1960’s hearing the Landlord of the Royal Oak at Hooks Way berating a group of students for leaving his pub door wide open with those very words.....

Memories are funny old things.....





LURGASHALL CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Thank you to everyone who joined in the fun and raised £134 towards the upkeep of Lurgashall Village Hall

Congratulations to NICK CARTER winner of the £100 prize

1	Trois poules (5,6,4)	Three French hens
2	University fellow needs this to get in (6)	Donkey
3	Good ventilation during trips on an aircraft (5,6)	Fairy Lights
4	I like mine to be mixed with a bit of spice (5,4)	Mince Pies
5	What you might be dreaming of at this time of year (5)	White Christmas
6	One hears it is what St George did to the dragon (6)	Sleigh
7	One will need Pam & Tim to create a show (9)	Pantomime
8	I am just able to look inside (6)	Stable
9	Sounds like what snoop dog may be doing whilst looking at the Daily Telegraph perhaps (8,5)	Wrapping paper
10	Jacobs maybe but without cream (8)	Christmas crackers
11	I am the fool involved with a fly (1,4,3,2,8)	O Come All Ye faithful
12	One hears it might be a bit wet for my beloved (8)	Reindeer
13	Singing about this in Germany may remind you of the end of the Labour Party Conference (4)	Christmas Tree
14	October 30 th 1974 in the jungle (6,3)	Boxing Day
15	The top card is about to capture the king (4)	Christmas Cake
16	"Kay, why are you drinking tea around the middle of September?" (6)	Turkey
17	Liz edging around the French (9)	Bethlehem
18	What might be roasting on an open fire (9)	Chestnuts
19	Return the cradles to His Royal Highness (8)	Stocking
20	Mourinho's level of acidity (6)	Joseph
21	A trio of sagacious males (5,4,3)	Three Wise men
22	Look what President Putin selected to be put on his Christmas Tree (6)	Tinsel
24	Person in charge has lost heart (6)	Manger
25	Bella is starting to be followed by an excited bull (6,6)	Brandy butter
26	That woman follows what might be in the frying pan (6)	Father Christmas
27	All is quiet and the sun has set (6,5)	Silent Night
28	You have to break the code before getting shares (11)	Decorations
29	Does he take part in red nose day? (7)	Rudolph
30	Carol and Stephanie start to cross a road (5)	Christmas cards
31	The newspapers gather around hospital department (8)	Presents
32	Mix up, two old pennies and a gin (7)	Christmas pudding
33	Chop the trees off a soap opera (5)	Holly
34	Seasonal greetings in Paris showing delight with the European Union then getting cross and excluding the Spanish (6,4)	Joyeux Noel
35	Address the Nation on writing cheque about expenses without involving former partner (6 6)	Queen's speech
36	Cliff Richard had this with his wine (9)	Mistletoe
37	A confused German is after a way in (4,2,1,6)	Away in a manger
38	River in group before the first part of Maria's drink (10)	Poinsettia
39	That woman added a postscript about a group of cows (9)	Shepherds
40	Short advert opening with a sieve, where the consonants are constant, but the vowels are variable (6,8)	Advent Calendar

Please support your community

Village Shop & Post Office



Thankfully dry January is now behind us, so it's worth checking out our excellent range of wines. Supplied by Hennings, local wine merchants, you can be assured of quality and good value. The shop also has a great selection of beers and ciders too.

Did you know that you can pre-order your favourite wine or champagne, half or full cases, in advance to collect from the Village Shop? If you are interested, please visit the shop and speak to Jo Hamlyn or send an enquiry via email.



Don't forget a date for your diary, Valentine's Day on 14th February. It's a good excuse for a bottle of fizz. We have a range of fabulous cards and delicious chocolate gift boxes too.

Are you missing your regular trip to Waitrose in Haslemere this month, currently closed for refurbishment? Shop local instead and if we don't have what you need, do let us know. Our shop may be small but we have a little bit of everything!

	VILLAGE SHOP		POST OFFICE	
	OPEN	CLOSE	OPEN	CLOSE
MONDAY	9.00 AM	5.00 PM	9.30 AM	12.30 PM
TUESDAY	9.00 AM	5.00 PM	9.30 AM	12.30 PM
WEDNESDAY	9.00 AM	5.00 PM	9.30 AM	12.30 PM
THURSDAY	9.00 AM	5.00 PM	9.30 AM	12.30 PM
FRIDAY	9.00 AM	5.00 PM	CLOSED	
SATURDAY	9.00 AM	5.00 PM	CLOSED	
SUNDAY	10.00 AM	1.00 PM	CLOSED	

TEL
EMAIL
WEBSITE

01428 707277
lurgashallvillageshop@gmail.com
www.lurgashallvillageshop.uk



THE NOAH'S ARK COUNTRY PUB



We look forward to welcoming you to the Noah's Ark. Join us for a drink at the bar, or for lunch or supper in our restaurant, bar and spacious Ark room.

To book your table, see our current menu, or for opening hours, what's on, and more information, please visit our website.

reservations@noahsarkinn.co.uk | 01428 707346 | noahsarkinn.co.uk

Join us on Tuesday February 3rd
for a talk by Rebecca Hossack



Australian Aboriginal Art: Rock, Bark, and Ochre

One of the most important things to know about Australian Aboriginal art is also one of the most curious: this is an art form that is both the oldest continuous artistic tradition in the world, and one of the newest 'art movements'.



Talks held at 2pm in Fittleworth Village Hall, RH20 1JB

Doors open 1.15. Coffee & tea afterwards

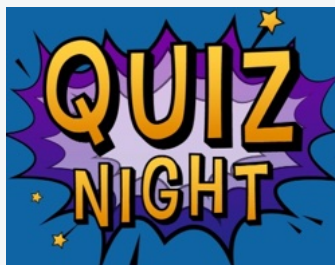
Visitors most welcome - £10

For further details contact Gilly Myers on 07805731663

or email westsussex@theartssociety.org

www.theartssocietywestsussex.org

SAVE THE DATE LURGASHALL RECREATION ASSOCIATION



THURSDAY MARCH 26TH 2026

7pm for 7.30pm quiz start

Lurgashall Village Hall

Tickets £20.00 per person (excluding team host).

**Up to eight members per team. For more information and to book your team slot
contact Joanne Vaughan on 07802 946220. Without a team?**

We'll find one for you



LURGASHALL HORTICULTURAL CLUB

Established 1983

Frost and light snow help control overwintering pests, aid seed germination, stimulate hardy bulbs into growth, and improve flowering potential in some perennials. Frost also improves flavour in leafy crops like brassicas. But tender new shoots may suffer from frost damage and quick thawing, and frozen waterlogged soils can damage roots. Damage appears as blackened or wilted leaves on young shoots of roses, hydrangeas and photinia for example, and early flowers of magnolias and camelias brown off and drop. Protect small shrubs and trees with horticultural fleece before frosts begin.

Jen

February seed sowing

Rather than waiting until April to start outside, February is a good time for seed sowing - as long as you have a warm window sill, a heated propagator, or a greenhouse. It will give you earlier flowers and an extended cropping period for vegetables. The old guide was to sow around Valentine's Day, when the light levels are starting to increase, and the seedlings will have an easier time to establish themselves.



Ideally using a propagator with a light, you can sow in pots or trays of **seed compost**, and cover in cling film to hold in the moisture. That gives the seeds the best chance to germinate. So just follow the seed packet advice for sowing depth, temperature and whether in light or dark.

Vegetables to sow now include: **Broad Beans, Lettuce, Onions, Spring Onions, Early Cabbage, Cauliflower, Radish**, and herbs such as **Parsley**.

Flowers to sow now include: **Cosmos, Sweet Peas, Antirrhinums, Marigolds, Geraniums, Salvias, Pansies** and **Violas**.

As the seedlings start to grow, they will need to be pricked out into pots and moved into more light such as a greenhouse, polytunnel or cold frame.

It's all extra work, but it can be very satisfying to do it yourself - so good luck with an early start!

Mark

Containers and Baskets for Winter Colour

Winter Flowering Pansies and Violas



Widely available now from garden centres and online in lots of colours, and ready to plant out, Winter Pansies will give gorgeous splashes of colour during the colder months, through spring until early summer. For example, six plants in a 12"-14" hanging basket of **multi-purpose compost** will provide masses of flowers, and survive frost and snow. Prolonged cold may slow flowering a little, but as temperatures rise again, they'll soon bounce back! Dead-head regularly

to encourage flowering, and start to feed fortnightly after about 6 weeks.

WINTER WATERING: When planting up your winter baskets and containers, always use **TEPID** water - icy water can shock and even kill young plants, especially if they have been commercially grown. Tepid watering throughout cold weather will also help keep the soil from freezing. Ensure you pour directly onto the soil, not onto the leaves or flowers. If you're using collected rainwater in your watering can when it's really cold, top it up with some hot water from the kitchen tap....!

Jax

Jen's tips and ideas for February

Winter Pruning :

Now is the time to clean and sharpen your secateurs, loppers & saws. Clean cuts are essential for prevention of disease & damage.

The main goal for winter pruning is to bring productive vigour & better health to the plant: remove all dead, diseased or damaged growth, improve air circulation and encourage a good framework.

A general rule – plants that flower on current year's new growth can be pruned before that new growth begins, **but not whilst there are frosts!**

Examples of plants to prune before spring:

Wisteria; Grape vines; Roses (*not ramblers*), **Dogwoods; Buddleia davidii** (*not B. alternifolia or globosa*); **late summer Clematis** (group 3); **Autumn raspberries & berry fruit shrubs; Fruit trees:** just a light tidy now - always best to do the main prune in Summer - *but NOT stoned fruits at this time of year.*

Hydrangeas: wait for good strong buds to break and late frosts to pass.

Frost damage:

Prune frosted sections on shrubs and trees back to a healthy, strong bud that faces the direction you want new growth to take. However, wait until the risk of frost has passed — pruning too soon can encourage vulnerable, tender growth.

On perennials, leave any wilted, slushy stems to add a layer of protection against more frosts. Clear once frosts have ceased and new growth starts.

Pruning Special Focus Plant:

Wisteria:

During mid/late summer we do a light reduction of overzealous stems to 6/8 buds (you don't have to be too precise as it is more of a tidy up and encourages flower bud production).

The winter prune is more formative and precise. Reduce the previous pruned shoots to 2-3 buds from the main stems. Look for those plump flowering buds and don't cut these off!

Thin out congested stems, removing tangled young shoots, and train a few new strong shoots into open spaces to replace old non-productive growth. Prune the tip of long new shoots once they have filled the space.

Fun Fact: Identifying your wisteria during the winter:

Japanese (*W. floribunda*) **twine clockwise**

Chinese (*W. sinensis*) **and American** (*W. frutescens*)

twine counterclockwise!

Japanese and Chinese seedpods are fuzzy.

American seedpods are smooth.

The American *Wisteria frutescens* is an excellent choice for smaller gardens, especially in damp areas.



Wood Ash:

If you have an open fire or a wood burner, collect the wood ash for your garden: it is high in potassium (potash) and calcium, both of which are vital for healthy plant growth.

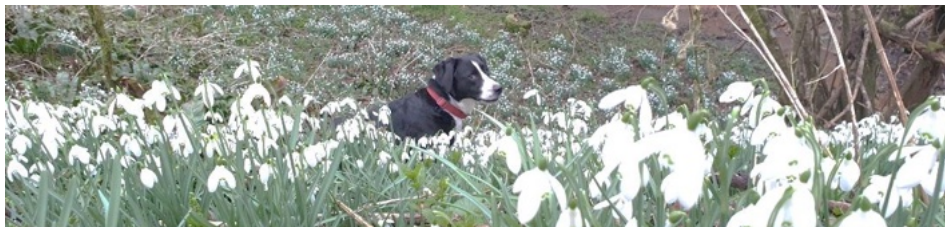
Sprinkle *sparingly* around shrubs, fruiting trees, soft fruits & tomatoes; as a soil improver in new planting areas, veggie beds and compost heaps; as a lawn top dressing; and to lower algae development in ornamental ponds.

Other great uses: chemical free deterrent for ants, slugs & snails; de-icer for paths; odour remover (*e.g. pet prone areas outside*); against pests & mites in poultry runs.

NB: *make sure it is clean, chemical and plastic free wood you are burning.*

Plants of the Month:

Snowdrops, of course, are THE February flowering bulb! The Common Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis* forms carpets in our woodlands and along streams around Lurgashall, loving our cool, moisture retentive soils. There are 20 known species, each differing in bloom time, size, height, and appearance.



Pru amongst the Snowdrops...

Helleborus foetidus is our native hellebore growing well in a moist sunny or semi shady spot, with architectural evergreen leaves and tall (24") upright creamy lime green flowering stems from late winter throughout spring. Looks best as part of a woodland style planting area and stands out this time of year with early flowering.



Club News:

We look forward to welcoming everyone to our first Club Event of 2026:



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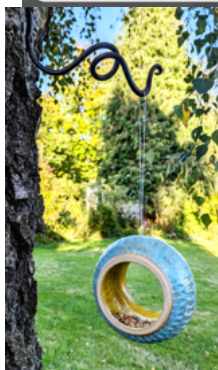
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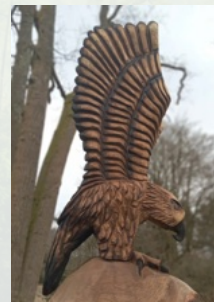
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