

The Redlake

No 70

Spring 2025

Welcome to the Spring 2025 Redlake newsletter



New lambs out in the sunshine. Photo © Wayne Davies

Shropshire Hills National Landscape Draft Management Plan, 2025 - 30 - have your say

The SHNL Management Plan aims to set a future direction for the Shropshire Hills (which includes our area in the Redlake Valley). The National Landscape (used to be called Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty, or AONB) aims to conserve and enhance our area's unique natural beauty.

The draft Plan sets out local priorities as well as taking account of influences from outside the area including global environmental change and national policies. It aims to influence and guide landowners, organisations and individuals on a wide range of topics by setting out how to best manage the Shropshire Hills landscape. It includes policies to influence decisions which affect the area, and identifies actions for partners to deliver.

The draft Plan will be out for consultation early May to the end of July, and comments and suggestions from everyone are invited. You will find the Plan document on the SHNL website.

Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL) to run another year

The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme has been extended to March 2026. If you farm or manage land within the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, funding is available to deliver projects under the themes of nature, climate, people and place.

More information at
www.shropshirehills-nl.org.uk/help-to-look-after/farming-in-protected-landscapes

The Redlake is funded by Redlake Valley Hall Funds and neither the hall committee nor the editors can accept responsibility for any opinions expressed by contributors in these pages. The editorial team reserves the right to edit contributions as it believes appropriate.

Farming Column: Bob James

In December, nature threw everything at us: strong winds led to power outages—how dependent we are on electricity! I am old enough to remember when there was no mains electricity in the valley. Some had their own generators. We had a little petrol one which lived in the coal shed, strong enough to run two lights, a television and an iron but you had to turn the lights and TV off to use the iron. We watched the first ever episode of Coronation Street in 1960.

Outside lambing in those days at night with a tilly lamp if anything was wrong, put the lamp down grab the ewe, drag it into the shed and go back for the lamp then discover it was the wrong ewe ...

Then we had heavy rain followed by flooding. In days of yore farmers would be out turning the silt laden waters onto fields to fertilise the land. This slowed the water flow so no flooding. Downstream remains of the old flood ditches are still visible today.

Then came the snow with hard frost and ice. And it seems that residents living between New Invention and Bucknell were second class citizens. Seven days of sub zero temperatures and not even a token pass with a gritter lorry; do we pay less council tax as a result?

During hedge laying season alas Defra suspended conservation grants, so laying came to a standstill. I did a garden hedge in Lydbury North having agreed the job via email. On arrival I discovered the hedge backed onto the village hall car park. Fearing laughter and ridicule at my efforts I put a sign up saying: FRANK BRIGHT HEDGE LAYING LTD.

Back home I am laying a hedge that should have been done fifty years ago: clumpy Hazel, 7 metres high and still plenty of firewood coming out (PC take note).

Since then we have had perfect lambing weather: dry and sunny, a bit cold at night and many month-old lambs have not seen a spot of rain. Some April showers would be most welcome!

This lovely Labour government has driven another nail in the hill farmers' coffin with suspension of the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) Once again the big boys have grabbed all the available funding; nothing new here. Ten percent of farmers have always claimed 90% of subsidies. Drastic cost-cutting measures have taken place at Bryncambric: the quad bike has gone and been replaced by a cheaper alternative.



Clun & Chapel Lawn Parish news

Noticeboard: A Council notice board is being built, for installation in Chapel Lawn shortly.

Representation of Chapel Lawn: May sees a newly-formed Council for the next 5 years. I am not standing for another term. Once the vacancies have been filled, if not before, a Councillor representing Chapel Lawn will be decided upon.

Mark Duffee

Shropshire Sign Cleaner visits

Observant residents may have noticed some of our road signs on the A488 have had a bit of a spruce up recently. John Edwards, the Shropshire sign-cleaning biker, who has been rather a hit on Facebook (look up Sign Cleaning Enthusiasts UK) came down our way and cleaned up signs in Clun and at New Invention. Unfortunately, some of the signs apparently have 'sun damage' so will not now wipe entirely clean

Call for photographs!

CPRE Shropshire is running a photography competition called **Sense of Place**. You are invited to submit your photos (up to 4) free of charge of your favourite parts of Shropshire for a chance to win a cash prize of £150. Entry deadline 31st August. Winning artworks will be printed and exhibited at the Gateway Gallery in Shrewsbury in October. More information at www.cpreshropshire.org.uk/sense-of-place or ask Sarah Jameson (email on back page).

Church news

World Day of Prayer

St Mary's Chapel Lawn was host to the Middle Marches Benefice's World Day of Prayer 2025 on the first Friday in March. It was part of a global movement which circles the world in a wave of prayer. Representatives of six out of our seven churches came to read parts of the service written by women from the Cook Islands in the Pacific Ocean. Some of us wore flower crowns or came dressed for the occasion with flowery tops. All who came were given an alstroemeria flower representing the many flowers found on the islands. The service's theme song "Wonderfully Made" was sung several times binding the spoken stories, prayers and worship hymns together beautifully. The service ended with light refreshments of tea, lime biscuits (a Cook Islands recipe), donated cakes and a fruit platter. Over £100 was collected for WDoP grants and future services.



Pat Hancock, 1941-2024

At the age of 37, Pat Hancock relocated to south Shropshire from Cheshire in 1978 with her husband and two girls, Sally and Elizabeth - and so began the family venture into farming. Experience working for the NHS in Crewe and Nantwich opened doors here. Doctor Davies of Wylcwm Street Surgery persuaded her that her skills would be well placed up at Knighton Hospital. She became hospital administrator and studied management, opening numerous doors, leading to work within the Powys Trust. With the expansion of Knighton Hospital, and the building of a care home, she became the Care Home manager alongside her hospital manager role.

As retirement loomed, and worried she wouldn't have enough to do, part time work in Craven Arms Library beckoned. She also volunteered with groups to support people in care homes with legal matters and other support.

Alongside this busy career was her family, so important to her, from the early days at the Obley, with lambing and harvest and running teenage daughters about. With the arrival of four grandchildren, she would have all of them for a week, with days out or just enjoying the outdoors at home.

As her own children grew and then the grandchildren there was always this guiding hand encouraging and gently pushing you to have a go, if you didn't like it that was fine, but you could always say you tried.

Holidays were cherished, the planning as much as the weeks themselves, after one trip to France where Dad

couldn't read the map or more importantly the menu, America opened new doors. With nothing more than a flight booked and a hire car reserved they would fly off for three weeks, finding remote motels in sleepy American towns or rural outback, they were in their element, 1000's of miles later they would return home and joyfully share all their stories of which there were many over the years covering 24 states. Other English speaking countries Australia, New Zealand and Canada were explored leading to the confidence needed to travel to other parts of the world.

Mum's faith played an important role in her life, joining the congregation at St Mary's Chapel Lawn and slowly involving herself in the running and upkeep of the church. Friendship too was very important to her, keeping in touch with friends all over the country, and everyone in the surrounding area.

When cancer loomed three years ago, she faced this head on and battled long and hard, still enjoying life and holidaying. Her funeral at the end of January 2025 showed to us her family how much she meant to so many and for that we are eternally grateful.



Sally Lewis

(A full version of this Obituary will be made available on the Redlake website in due course)

Woodlands under discussion

On Friday 28 March, a conference to encourage the restoration and creation of native woodland was held at Norbury Village Hall with over 100 people attending. It was also an opportunity to showcase Marches Artists for Nature, a new group of artists and makers in south Shropshire. Chapel Lawn and the Redlake were well represented and Sarah and Simon Jameson experienced brisk sales on their trade stand. On behalf of the Redlake Valley Community Benefit Society, Patrick Cosgrove gave an illustrated talk on the history of the Brineddin Wood quilllets and the work of the society. Other speakers covered topics as diverse as hazel coppicing, agroforestry, restoration of lost hedgerows and the recolonisation of Britain by tree and wildflower species after the last Ice Age. More information at middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/woodland-conference-presentations

Chapel Lawn events

Chapel Lawn WI

Meetings on 2nd Tuesday of month. Programme for 2025:



Tuesday 13 May 7pm

Tania West, Motivational Speaker

Tuesday 10 June 7pm

An introduction to Gel Plate Printing

Tuesday 8 July

Summer Outing

Tuesday 12 August 7pm

Debby Gatehouse will do a colour analysis for one lucky member

You are most welcome to come along to three meetings free of charge to get to know us and find out if you'd like to join

Christine Rogers 01547 530258 / 07780 728812

christine@techsyst.co.uk

Village Hall Annual Meeting

Wednesday 7 May 8pm

A warm invitation to all residents of Chapel Lawn and Obley. Come and hear what has been achieved in the past year. Have your say about plans for the future. And enjoy a drink and nibbles on the house!

Contact Di Cosgrove 01547 530347

deedee151@hotmail.com

Cheese and Wine Event

Saturday 26 July, 7:30pm

Village BBQ

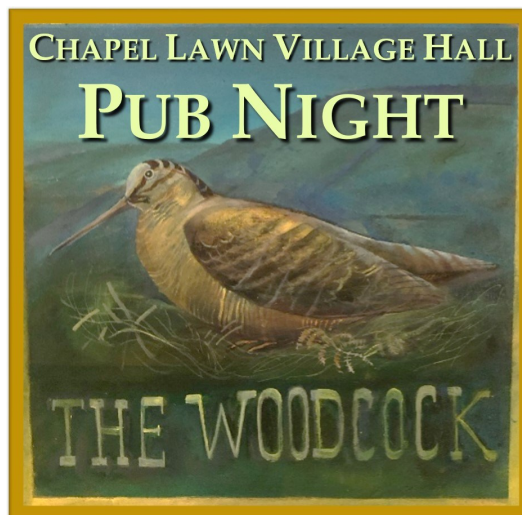
Saturday 9 August

Chapel Lawn Book Group

The group meets at the end of every month. A wide variety of books is chosen, and the discussions are always interesting and thought provoking. **Contact Di Cosgrove on**

deedee151@hotmail.com or

01547 530347 07772121147



Pub Nights

Darts and other pub games. Everyone welcome!

Saturday 10 May from 8pm

Saturday 14 June from 7:30pm

VE Celebrations: Thursday 8 May

James Middleton is very kindly building a bonfire on the camp for the VE celebrations on 8th May. Hopefully it will rain before then but we may have to reschedule and celebrate in another form if the ground is too dry.

The bonfire will be lit at 8.45pm, and if anyone has any ideas for the children beforehand, ball games etc, let Christine Oakley know. Please bring your own picnic Big thank you to Josh again for letting this happen.

Farmers' Butty Van

The next farmers' Butty Van is on Wednesday 21 May, 10.40 to 12.30 at Five Turnings farm, by kind permission of Carl and Ffion Price.

Contributions for the Redlake Newsletter should be sent to Sarah Jameson on images@sarahjameson.co.uk

A digital archive of past issues of the Redlake newsletter going back to 2007 is now available to read/download on the Village Hall website where there is also a useful what's on page:

Go to: chapel-lawn.co.uk/the-redlakes