

St Mary's Parish Church Whitegate



NEWS FOR AUGUST 2026



Our cover photo

This shows how joyous and popular an event this year's Whitegate Music Festival was, with clement weather and, in short, ideal conditions in which to celebrate a wonderful community event. John Blayney writes more fully about it below. More photos follow in the subsequent page, to illustrate the overwhelming success of the event.

The sun shone, the Pimm's flowed, and music filled the Green at the centre of the village. Whitegate Music Festival 2026 was the biggest and the best yet!

This year we enjoyed an even more varied programme of music. Old favourites such as the "Friendly Voices" choir, Bryn Llewellyn and "Behind the Beat" were joined by a new young band, "Replay", who electrified the crowd with their edgy enthusiasm, and the wonderful indie band duo "Tapestry". The whole event was compared by the indomitable Paul Cronin.

The bar was very busy, with chilled cider and real ale on tap this year in addition to all the usual drinks. The Pimm's tent did a roaring trade, as did the BBQ where freshly-cooked burgers and hotdogs were followed by sweet treats.

Free Face Painting was enjoyed by children and some adults! There was a play area for small children, and table tennis and table football for those who were a bit older. With the hot weather, the church itself provided a peaceful space in which to cool down and explore.

Thank you so much to this year's musicians, and to all the volunteers who contributed to the success of Whitegate Music Festival 2026. Putting on a music festival requires a tremendous team effort from many, and we couldn't stage this great community event without countless dedicated villagers and parishioners. The end result was a wonderful day out for over 350 people, a great sense of community, and over £6400 raised to help keep St Mary's going!

If anyone would like to come and join us putting on this and other village activities, please talk to Elaine Campbell or John Blayney.

Weekly Reading Sheets: www.stmaryswhitegate.org/

Readings and prayers for August services are on the website. Each service sheet contains the readings and prayers specific to that Sunday. If you don't see the sheets straight away on the Home page, click on the Blog button, top right.

August Diary

2nd	10.30 am	Lammastide Benefice Service	St Peter's
4th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsideside	L.B. Methodist Chapel
5th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
9th	9.30 am	Trinity 10 Holy Communion	St Mary's
11th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsideside	L.B. Methodist Chapel
12th	9.00 am 10.00 am 12.00 noon	Men's Breakfast – <i>see page 8 for details</i> Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	Village Restaurant, Blakemere The Mews St Mary's
16th	9.30 am	Trinity 11 Morning Prayer	St Mary's
18th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsideside	L.B. Methodist Chapel
19th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
20th	9.45 am	Whitegate Amblers – <i>see page 8 for details</i>	TBC
23rd	9.30 am	Trinity 12 Holy Communion	St Mary's
25th	2.00 pm	Bible Study at Commonsideside	L.B Methodist Chapel
26th	10.00 am 12.00 noon	Crafty Coffee Holy Communion (BCP)	The Mews St Mary's
30th	10.30 am	Trinity 13 Benefice Holy Communion	St Mary's

Other Events

First Thursday Café in The Mews on Thursdays 6 August and 3 September,
Men's Breakfast at the Village Restaurant, Blakemere on Wednesday 12 August and held monthly.

August letter from the Vicar...

We begin the month with something new, a service for Lammastide. Usually celebrated on 1st August Lammas is an ancient festival marking the beginning of Harvest. In the church where I grew up we used to hold Harvest Festival sometime around mid-September, my father used to refused to sing 'All is safely gathering in' because as a keen gardener much of his fruit and vegetable were still on the trees or in



the ground. Perhaps this is why throughout my ministry I have always tried to hold Harvest Festival at the beginning of October?

Yet harvesting begins much earlier. The book which has inspired our family services on the first Sunday of each month, "*Ploughshares and First Fruits – A year of festivals for the rural church.*" notes that by the beginning of August much of the barley harvest may be already gathered. Lammas means 'loaf-mass', it is a thanksgiving for our daily bread, its origins stretch right back to the Old Testament when farmers would bring the first fruits of their fields as a thank offering to God.

Their harvest had a beginning and an ending. The first fruits were presented to God in thankfulness. The last gleanings of the harvest were left in the fields to provide for refugees, widows and orphans. Thankfulness and justice go hand in hand. When we dispel the myth that we are self-sufficient we are freed to understand the needs of the poor more graciously and to respond more joyfully.

One of the enduring puzzles is how the Christian faith spread so quickly during the early years of the church. I referred to this recently but come back to it again because it is relevant to Lammastide, the beginning of the Harvest season.

When we speak of the early church we are looking at the first five hundred years, these were years of dramatic changes in culture, politics and economy. The historian Diana Butler Bass writes, "For all the complexity of primitive Christianity, a startling idea runs through early records of faith: Christianity seems to have succeeded because it transformed the lives of people in a chaotic world. During this time, Christianity was not so much about doctrines or eternal salvation, but about how to live a better life here and now, within the "reign of God."

Within the Roman empire Christianity offered a different worldview and encouraged alternative behaviours. Christians did not aspire to gain wealth but instead focussed on sharing their resources within the community. They supported one another rather than looking out for self. A contemporary commentator noted, "See how these Christians love one another." Their fellowship was inclusive crossing social norms and boundaries. Christians lived at the bottom and the edges of society having an inherent connection with Jesus who had lived simply, gathered with outcasts, and knew rejection and suffering. A teaching written around 90AD says, "Share all things with your brother, and do not say that they are your own. For if you are sharers in what is imperishable, how much more in things which perish!"

Thanksgiving and justice will always go hand in hand. As we begin the Harvest season may God free us to receive gladly and share joyfully.

Paul.

Contacts

Vicar 	Churchwardens Anne Blayney 07815 713012 Sandra Paskin 07950 125791
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NEWS Coordinator Roger Wilkes 01606 75738	Church Flowers Pam Davies 01606 557833
Mothers' Union The contact role for Mothers' Union is VACANT at present. Would any of the members be prepared to do that job?	Social & Fundraising Group John Blayney 07964 844642

News and Notes

A New NEWS Coordinator at last! Hello folks! My name is Roger (Wilkes), and you can find my contact details under **Contacts** above.

I must begin by paying my own tribute to Chris (Ball), who edited **NEWS** absolutely brilliantly over so many years. In no respect can I match Chris's talents, especially during these next few issues. Please bear with me as I try to make a reasonable job of things, without committing too many howlers. And please, *please*, feel free to send me any contributions for inclusion, especially any items of news.

Social and Fundraising Committee

Hymns and Pimm's: 19th September 3.00pm in St. Marys Church, Whitegate.

Spend an enjoyable afternoon at the end of summer singing your favourite hymns while enjoying a glass of Pimms.

Pimms or non-alcoholic drinks will be served at 3.00pm, and you can join in singing the chosen favourite hymns from 3.30pm.

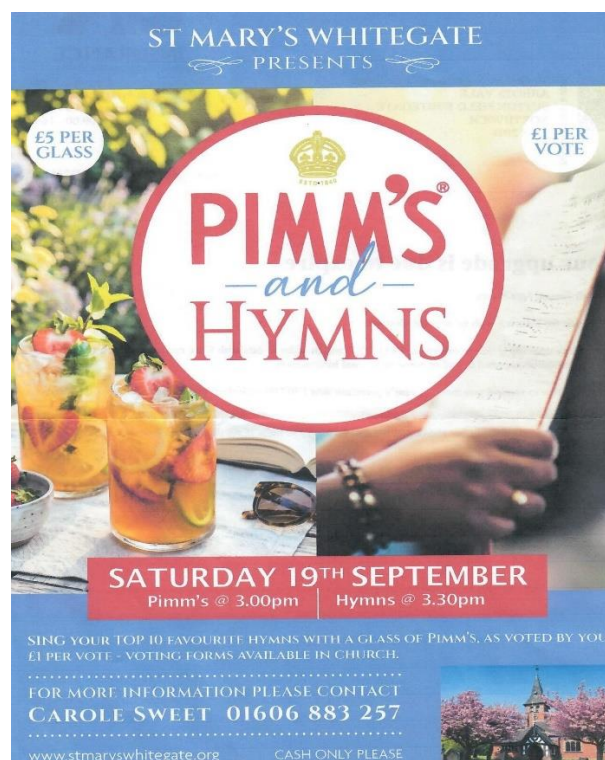
In preparation, a list of the 50 most popular hymns has been selected, and will be posted on the notice boards in church and The Mews. The list of hymns and voting slips will be in church, or obtained from a member of the church choir. The 10 most popular will be sung during the afternoon and additional glasses of Pimms etc. will be available.

A box will be available in the church for the £1 voting slips and money, and you can vote as many times as you wish, or for your favourite as many times as you like, at £1 a time, but final choices must be made by **13th September** to allow for the 'hit parade' to be finalised.

This will be a cash only event, and entry tickets will be £5 each which includes the first drink. Extras can be purchased during the afternoon.

There will also be a raffle with tickets being sold on the day, so if you have any unwanted gifts in your drawer please let me have them and I can make up some prizes. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Carole Sweet 01606 883257





Whitegate Music Festival 2026

ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH WHITEGATE

Harvest Supper



Come and join our celebrations with a delicious traditional 2 course meal followed by tea and coffee.

Also on offer are Games, Raffle, a Bar and good company!

Saturday 10TH October

in Whitegate School Hall

KEEP THE DATE



Whitegate Amblers

August - Neumann's Flashes

Come and join us for our monthly walk the local countryside. You can let us know you are coming by texting or phoning or just turn up on the day. If you need a lift from Whitegate please phone in advance.

Date: Thursday 20th August

Time: Meet 09:45 -Walk starts 10:00 (approx 2 hr)

Start: Witton Bridge Carpark, Old Warrington Road, off Leicester street. (CW9 5LN).

Description: Guided walk around the Flashes & Marbury Park. No Stiles but possible mud.

Notes: Free Carpark. We welcome well behaved dogs who can be kept under control at all times. Toilets half way at Marbury Park. For more info contact John Blayney (07964844642)

