



Spring Bulletin May 2025

Programme

As a reminder the meetings for the summer are included below.

- May is now an outing to Morton Hall Gardens, on 20th in the afternoon.
- 10 June is the third instalment of a walk around Tewkesbury's Alleys, starting at 7pm outside Boots. Just turn up. No need to have been before or to book.
- 14 June at 2pm is now the garden party at 14 Owletts End; the date chosen so that we can celebrate National Civic Day.
- On Saturday 29 June Gill is leading a walk around the main heritage sites in the town, for the Festival of Words. This year's walk will include information about some of the people associated with the sites. If you would like to join in, please check the FoW website for details and booking. <https://www.eveshamfestivalofwords.org>.
- Gill is happy to lead a walk for members in the summer; please let us know if you would like this to be arranged.
- Nothing arranged as yet for July and August, but there may be a visit to the Skye Garden in Wick; details to follow if this becomes a possibility.

Annual Subscription

PLEASE remember to change your Direct Debit or Standing Order to our new annual rates of £12 for an individual member, £18 for a couple and £30 for a business. These rates apply from 1st March 2025 and will be the same for 2025/2026. We will keep reminding you, but we do not want to have to contact members again who have forgotten come March 2026. Those who usually pay by cash or cheque, Pat will remind you.

Your Civic Society on Social media <https://www.facebook.com/EveshamCivic>

We continue to use our Facebook page to promote our programme of events and activities by us or others that are trying to improve our town.

Paula and Julie posted the following since our last news bulletin: (12 Jan) a post saying it's not too late to purchase the limited-edition prints for the Almonry fundraising for the museum refurbishment; (15 Jan) shared information about the 25 January Almonry Community Consultation event; (6 Feb) The Battle of Evesham talk by Sir Tony Robinson on 2 and 3 August; (8 Feb) a post about pedestrian safety on Bridge Street; (21 Feb) posts and photos of the new railings at the back of All Saints Church, and the ETC signage regarding the status of the Riverside Shopping Centre; (23 Feb) post and photo of Gill handing over a cheque for £2187 to Ashleigh for Almonry Museum refurbishment; (24 Feb) photos of work being carried out on 40-44 High Street and 12-18 Bridge Street; (end Feb) the Letters of Commendation photos; (13th March) WCC's Archive and Archaeology Service survey; (23rd Mar) VECS involvement in Anti-Litter Evesham's annual town

centre spring clean. In April we promoted (again) the sale of our Almonry limited edition prints, our AGM meeting, the installation of new benches in the town centre, the hand-painted asparagus murals in shop windows (funded by WDC), and wished everyone a Happy Easter.

Facebook data tells Paula that in February our page had 4,402 views; in March our page had 4,173 views, and we continue to grow our audience - now 104 likes and 122 followers.

The Almonry Restoration Project: fundraising

Our deputy Chairman, Brian Chilver has valiantly continued to persuade members, friends and family to invest in one, or more, limited-edition prints of the Almonry. He has also persuaded others to make donations to the fundraising effort, if they do not wish to buy a print. As previously reported a cheque for the 2024/25 financial year was handed over to Ashleigh Jayes in February, for the sum of £2187.50. Funds have continued to be raised. Prints are still available to purchase and we will be promoting their sale for the next few months.

Come the summer we will cease this part of the fundraising effort in favour of selling notecards and Christmas cards. Packs of notecards based on a painted Almonry image painted by Joyce Doyle will become available soon. She has also agreed to allow us to use another of her paintings of the Almonry, this time in the snow, as a Christmas card.



Evesham Place Board <https://www.wychavon.gov.uk/business/evesham-place-board>

The improved shop front on 40 High Street benefited from a grant from the Board and new flags, with spring blossoms, were paid for by the Board.



A full list of Place Board activities is included at the end of this bulletin.

In the next year or two the EPB will be looking at improving parking provision, improving signage and promoting active travel, especially provision for safe cycling.

Still no news on the future of the Riverside Shopping Centre and the Public Hall. It was reported in the Evesham Observer recently that the Town Council has issued a Section 146 Notice to PJK Investments for breach of its lease conditions regarding the Town Hall.

Also, we hope that you noticed the asparagus images that Wychavon District Council sponsored as part of promoting the asparagus heritage of the town. They have appeared in many of the independent shop/business units.



Planning and Enforcement

VECS has made submissions to Wychavon District Council on a number of significant planning applications this year.

1. Proposed housing development off Three Cocks Lane, Offenham – objection on the inadequacy of the local road for additional traffic and the use of best and most versatile agricultural land for housing.
2. A scheme for 114 houses and sports pitches on land off Station Road, Broadway – comment about the lack of provision of allotments.
3. Land off Sandown Road/Hamilton Road, Evesham – objection on the problems of additional traffic joining and leaving Cheltenham Road.
4. Proposed housing at Lisbon Nurseries, Willersey Road, Badsey – 4 pages of objection on a number of grounds, but essentially that the site is in open countryside, so not sustainable and contrary to the Council's and National planning policies.
5. 55-57 Port Street (old Carrick Travel premises), use of part of the property for accommodation – supported, with encouragement given for the use of the whole premises for housing.

We are delighted to report that at long last and after much lobbying, the 'pink' shop Listed Building on Port Street has now been repainted in heritage colours. Also, the neighbouring shop has removed its very garish shop name board.



Evesham and Broadway Arts Society Annual Competition.



At the two previous events Brian Chilver chose the winner of the Vale of Evesham Civic Society Special Award as a picture of the Almonry by Lesley Brockbank; the front and the garden, both of which are now available as limited-edition prints (see Almonry fundraising). This year the competition was judged by Pat and Ian Stanton on behalf of the Society and they have also chosen a picture by Lesley. This time it is of the Walker Hall and Norman Archway.

And Finally

1. VECS has been asked to carry out a survey of the shop signage in the Conservation Area, to identify those that stand out as good or bad. If you would like to join a small group to do this, so that we get more than one view on what can be very subjective, please let one of the committee know. To be arranged probably late May/early June.
2. It is looking likely that Evesham College will soon be closed. Please let us have your views on what that site would be best used for. One suggestion already put forward is for a new hospital, releasing the land at the existing hospital site for housing. Would you support this? Any other ideas, please?

Full list of Evesham Place Board projects - it is the little things that count.

- Ran the Evesham Ambassador programme bringing together all of the people who are doing great things to make Evesham a great place to live, work and visit.
- Ran a Business Front Improvement Grant where properties in High Street, Vine Street and Merstow Green could apply for between £500 and £10,000 per unit to improve their business frontage; awarded 8 grants for a total of 18 units.
- Organised a mural for 41-43 High Street which has been vacant for some time. The mural tells various stories from Evesham's history using humour and fantasy.
- Installed solar path lighting in Abbey Park, Evesham as part of the Enlighten Evesham creative lighting trail.
- Supported WDC to commission an accessibility audit of the public realm in the town centre.
- Distributed a 'What's On in Evesham and the Vale 2023' flyer with over 50 local events to over 22,000 households in the WR11 postcode.
- Funded the Brass Bands in the Park programme, featuring 12 performances over the Summer 2023, it brought the bands back to the park for the first time since before the pandemic.
- Commissioned 100 flags for the Coronation of King Charles III; new Barons' flags to be used annually for the Battle of Evesham and Spring blossom flags to promote the Vale Blossom Trail.
- Ran a social media campaign promoting the opportunity to come to Evesham to try Vale of Evesham Asparagus which had a reach 324,386 people across Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire.
- Commissioned the refurbishment of all the noticeboards around the town including new locks.
- Provided match funding to get the churchyard gate pillar fixed at All Saints Churchyard. We recommended a grant to Evesham Town Council to support an 18-month one day a week contract for a Communications Specialist to manage the Visit Evesham website and social media.
- Sent out a survey to town centre businesses so we can better understand some of their challenges and aspirations and how these could align with the strategic objectives of the prospectus.

- Provided a grant to Evesham Town Council to purchase additional Christmas lights for Market Square and install a new box to extend the lighting to the bottom of Bridge Street.
- Made a contribution towards commissioning a feasibility study for a battlefield centre on Green Hill.
- Gave a grant to pay for lighting for the Evesham Artisan Christmas Fayre in 2023 and 2024.
- Brought together all of the people making things happen on or around the River Avon in Evesham so we can all work together to develop an action plan to make the most of the river setting.
- Commissioned the development of a place brand for Evesham and provided funding for the development of the Visit Evesham website.
- Commissioned a review of the signage and wayfinding across the town to improve the visitor experience and showcase Evesham's unique assets.
- Funded the purchase of two additional dragon pedalo boats for Avon River Activities to increase their capacity for offering family river activities.
- Awarded a grant to Avon Navigation Trust to enable them to purchase flags, promotional activities and volunteer expenses to support them with piloting their river trip boat in Summer 2024.
- Funded the framing and installation of a mural produced by Garage Arts for Evesham Abbey Trust depicting the history of the Abbey to enable it to be displayed in Abbey Park.
- Funded a graffiti removal company to remove long standing graffiti on some private properties and public realm infrastructure across the town centre.
- Funded the initial set up costs and 12-month licence fee for the DISC app. A platform to enable town centre businesses to protect themselves from crime by better communication with each other and the police.
- Awarded a grant to improve the Vine Court and Vine Mews entrances from Waitrose car park to encourage footfall into the town centre, river and heritage quarter and worked with the owners to instigate and plan future improvements within the arcades.
- Funded Evesham Town Council to purchase 20 new metal benches, reducing their maintenance costs. The addition of arm rests will contribute towards accessibility improvements in the town centre. Five of these benches are 'time to chat' benches to promote a reduction in loneliness and isolation.
- Worked with The Valley, Evesham to develop a Christmas Nutcracker Trail which saw 20 7ft Nutcrackers in businesses across Evesham town centre and The Valley, to support footfall over the Christmas 2024 period. This resulted in over 1200 unique shop visits and a significant town centre footfall increase on 2023 figures.
- Sponsored two awards at the Love Evesham Awards 2024 for 'Top Attraction' and 'Evesham Community Champion'.
- Funded resurfacing works in Abbey Park to improve accessibility and enable the solar lighting to be installed.
- Grant aided All Saints Church to enable the installation of pigeon control measures on the Bell Tower.
- Funded the improvement of the two garden entrances at Evesham Library. The proposal includes outdoor space for children to do activities and a garden of reflection adjacent to the Registry Office with a backdrop for wedding photos.