

KINGSLEY NEWS

THE NEWS AND VOICE OF YOUR COMMUNITY

DECEMBER
2025



Newsletter Highlights

Kingsley News -
moving forwards

Kingsley Book Club

Kingsley Players' Cold
Comfort Farm - review

KCA Chairman report
and Thank you

Our railway heritage

Kingsley Walkers



KINGSLEY
COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION

Online edition at
www.kingsleyvillage.co.uk

A registered charity
Charity number: 503072

Kingsley Community Association - Committee Members

<i>Chairperson/Bookings</i>	Heather Hayes - Tel: 07955 648670
<i>Kingsley News Editor</i>	Steve Easton - kingsleynewseditor@gmail.com
<i>Treasurer</i>	Sarah Bridger
<i>Secretary</i>	Ann Kavanagh
<i>Printing: Simon Batey; Printing Support: Jane Wodhams; Distribution Co-ordinator: Carol Rowlands</i>	

Kingsley Community Centre: Regular Weekly Classes

Tai Chi	Monday	10.30am to 11.30am	liverpooltaichi@gmail.com
Gentle Yoga	Monday	6.15pm to 7.30pm	janet@cheshireyogafitness.co.uk
Pilates	Tuesday	12pm to 1pm	dickienad@yahoo.co.uk
Karate	Tuesday	6pm to 7pm	dan@kenshinryu.co.uk
Yoga	Tuesday	7.30pm to 8.30pm	bjerk@hotmail.co.uk
Gentle Keep Fit	Wednesday	11am to 12noon	janet@cheshireyogafitness.co.uk
Yoga	Wednesday	7.30pm to 8.30pm	will@yogaandhealingcheshire.co.uk
Hiit	Thursday	6.30pm to 7.30pm	info@alutottraining.com

Community Centre Standard Hire Charges	Whole Centre	The Hall	Club Room	Green Room
Friday or Saturday Evening 6pm to 11pm	£90	£50	£45	£45
Sunday to Thursday Evening 6pm to 11pm	£60	£40	£30	£30
Sunday to Friday 8am to 12 pm or 1pm to 5pm	£45	£30	£20	£20
Saturday 8am to 12pm or 1pm to 5pm	£50	£35	£25	£25
8:00am to 11pm (All Day)	£150	£90	£75	£75

Rooms can be hired for an hourly rate of £15 per hour.

There is a standard charge of £35 per session for the provision of the bar.

Welcome to the December 25 edition of Kingsley News,

Dear Reader,

We're writing to share an important update about Kingsley News.

For over 50 years, Kingsley News has connected our village with local events, stories, and services. It's been made possible by volunteers, advertisers, printers and distributors who care deeply about keeping Kingsley informed and connected.

After much discussion, the committee has decided to move Kingsley News to a quarterly publication schedule. This change reflects the reality that we've not yet found a new volunteer editor, and producing a monthly edition has become increasingly difficult for our small team. A quarterly format will be more sustainable and still allow us to share upcoming events, features, and community news.

We're grateful to Steve Easton, who has kindly agreed to continue editing the newsletter as we make this transition. His support will help maintain continuity, and we appreciate his support.

Looking ahead, we're keen to find a new volunteer editor — or a small editorial team — to help shape future editions. If you enjoy writing, organising content, or working with others to share village stories, we'd love to hear from you. Full support will be provided, including help with layout, printing, and any technical aspects, so you won't be on your own.

We also recognise that the way we share information has changed. Many events now appear on Facebook or the village website, and we hope the newsletter can complement these platforms. With fewer editions, we also hope more people will feel able to contribute, whether that's a short article, a photo, or a helping hand behind the scenes.

We're holding a festive drop-in session at the Community Centre on Saturday 20th December from 4pm. Come and join us for a mince pie and mulled wine, the bar will also be open — all are welcome.

Thank you for your continued support.

Warm wishes,

Heather Hayes (Chairperson)

On behalf of the Kingsley Community Association

*I hope you continue to enjoy reading this edition and please do give feedback too.
Please, don't forget that Kingsley News is also available in digital format on the Kingsley village website, www.kingsleyvillage.co.uk.*

See you all again in March!!

March 2026 Issue (out 1st March) - Deadline for articles / adverts 15th February 2026

Christmas...and All that Jazz!



Sunday 7th December 2025

Musicians from the **BBC Philharmonic** visit **Kingsley** for the first time to play well-known jazz standards, new jazz compositions, and some seasonal favourites to get you in exactly the right mood for Christmas. Your glass of mulled wine and a mince pie will be waiting for you.

Peter Willmott – Electric Guitar **Julian Gregory** – Violin

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Doors open from 7.00pm. Music starts from 7.30pm

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Thank You

We have two wonderful facilities in our small village: the Community Centre managed by the Kingsley Community Association, and the Kingsley and Newton Village Institute with its thriving Bowls, Tennis and Snooker Sections. I have been involved with both organisations since moving to Kingsley in 2002 and I know at first hand what it takes to keep those two facilities 'up and running'. Last year I retired from the KNVI Management Committee and this November I retired and stood down from the KCA Committee.

The KCA Committee members I served with until November 6th 2025 are 'mentioned in despatches' so to speak, in my 2025 Chairman's Report below. I take this opportunity to thank all those of you who, through my involvement with the Kingsley Community Association (22 years) and the Kingsley and Newton Village Institute (9 years), have given me support, guidance and advice – and friendship – over the years. It has been an interesting journey and a great privilege. Heather Hayes has my best wishes as she takes on the Chair.

KCA CHAIRMAN REPORT AGM THURSDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2025

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, once again it is my privilege as KCA Chairman to welcome you to the AGM of the Kingsley Community Association.

It has been another busy time for the Association and the Community Centre. On a practical level, we continue to maintain and manage the building. Regular cleaning is undertaken by a local firm and wherever possible we engage local people to carry out any repairs or maintenance required. Thanks to Heather Hayes and her husband Ian and to Vic Wodhams, all three of whom always seem to be on hand to solve the myriad of problems that arise throughout the year.

As mentioned in my 2024 Chairman's Report, a storage battery was installed in April 2023 and this in conjunction with the solar panels has led to a considerable saving in our electricity consumption. The storage battery only has the capacity to store electricity through a daily cycle but it does mean that electricity generated during the day can be stored to provide electricity for lighting evening events. This means that around one-third of our generated electricity is not being used in the Community Centre. However, in recent months we have negotiated a tariff for us to sell our unused electricity back to the supplier. This means that all of the electricity we generate from the solar panels is being used for the benefit of the Community Centre. Furthermore, the extraordinarily sunny summer months that we have experienced this year means that we have actually earned more from selling our electricity than we have paid to buy electricity this summer.

Our heating system has been recently overhauled; this will lead to increased efficiency and cost savings.

We continue to provide regular weekly exercise sessions at the Centre, to suit all ages and levels of activity: Tai Chi, Pilates, Yoga, Karate, Gentle Yoga and Gentle Keep Fit and the rather more energetic Aluto Fitness and Wellbeing. All are well supported by Kingsley residents – in fact the Aluto class has expanded to cover two nights a week.

continued overleaf

Loose Connections, a local rock pop band, Highfield Choir and Ashton Sings continue to put on events at the Centre; all attract large and appreciative audiences. Each December Kingsley St. John's School puts on their Nativity Play at the Centre, and pupils and teachers attend the MacMillan Coffee Morning that we host at the Centre in September each year. I am particularly proud of the warm and strong relationship that exists between the Community Association and Kingsley St. John's, built up over many years; we always look forward to engaging with them.

The Centre continues to serve the Community.

The Friday fortnightly coffee club continues to be well supported and clearly fulfils a need in the village. Thanks to Stephanie Thornhill and her team for organising the morning and for bringing so many to the Centre for coffee, cake and a chat. Ear Clear still operate their Ear Wax Removal Clinic in the Green Room at the Centre, consultation by appointment.

The Centre also hosts on a Thursday evening, on the extension car park, the family run fish and chips business 'Just For You'. Arthur's Pizzeria also sets up and sells from the car park on a Tuesday evening. Both enterprises are proving to be very popular. We provide a new service this year: on a Friday afternoon Ross's Rolls uses the Community Centre kitchen to sell his ready-made take-home pies and rolls.

The Centre became a polling station for the By-Election held in May 2025. A recent addition to our schedule is a regular Police Surgery at the Centre. This is a welcome back – we last hosted them in 2015.

Steve Easton continued this year to do a sterling job of editing Kingsley News which is delivered to every household in the village and is available digitally. Thanks to Steve, and to Simon Batey and Jane Wodhams for doing the printing of it, and Carol Rowlands for co-ordinating its distribution throughout the village. And of course thanks to our willing band of volunteers who deliver Kingsley News for us each month.

I am sorry to say that Steve will be editing his final Kingsley News in December this year. He is standing down because of time constraints and ongoing commitments. Our grateful thanks to Steve for all that he has done. We are advertising for a new editor and are hopeful that someone in the village will step forward to take on this interesting and rewarding role. Since coming to Kingsley over twenty years ago I have regarded Kingsley News as a vital part of Kingsley Community Association's continuing communication with the village residents. Not everyone has access to Social Media and I know from personal experience how many do rely on – and appreciate- the information contained within it and the efforts of the volunteers who make its publication possible. I look forward to welcoming a new editor to take it over in due course.

Kingsley Players and Kingsley Players Youth Theatre have continued with their performances at the Centre throughout the year. Kingsley Players put on Allo Allo Goodbye Goodbye in November 2024. Kingsley Players began their fundraising performances of Allo Allo back in November 2003 and 21 years later put on their final performance. Over the years they have raised thousands of pounds for many charities including KCA and we extend to them our grateful thanks. In February 2025 we enjoyed their performance of Annie and in May we were treated to The Importance of Being Earnest. I admit that I do feel guilty at times that I take their top-class performances for granted. We are so fortunate to have such a talented team of Players here and of course all of the backroom staff who work so hard to bring these performances to fruition. On behalf of the village, I thank you sincerely for all that you do.

Thank you also to Steve Easton and Anne Kavanagh for their organisation and running of the bars during the evening performances given by the Players and private functions held at the Centre, and to those who give up their time to work behind the bar when required.

The Kingsley Youth Theatre continues to thrive. In October 2024 they received national recognition from the president of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association for their production of A Monster Calls in March 2024. They were one of only 10 productions from across the country to receive this Presidential Commendation. Our congratulations go to Jake Powell and his talented young Players.

I thank all of our associated groups for their continued use of the Kingsley Community Centre.

My thanks to all fellow Committee Members for their continuing hard work, all undertaken with good humour. Particular thanks to Heather Hayes for all that she does in the day to day running of the Centre and in ensuring that we maintain our amicable working relationship with all the groups and private hirers using the Centre. A great deal of the work that Heather does is behind the scenes: it is fully recognised and appreciated by her fellow committee members. For the present, Kingsley Community Association is financially secure and stable with the support of many regular users of the Centre, both inside and outside.

What of the future? We are a small committee of volunteers, striving to serve Kingsley residents as best we can. I happen to think that we are doing a pretty good job. However, there are some on this committee who have been supporting the Association for nearly 50 years: hats off here to Malcolm and Joan Barker. I have clocked up 22 years this year and I admit that I am running out of ideas and energy. We desperately need to attract younger Kingsley residents to join with us in bringing to Kingsley Community Centre events that can be enjoyed by people using this great village facility. My hope for the coming year is that we can do just that. I wish Kingsley Community Association well.

Elizabeth M. Batey November 2025

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Many years ago I did a psychology course. It included analysing practical experiments on the human psyche. There were no electric shocks or people pretending to be cruel prison guards but it did introduce the idea of confounding variables and the difference between association and causation.

One example: As ice cream sales rise, so does the number of people who get sunburn. Both events are associated because they both happen in hot, sunny weather, but eating ice cream is not the causation for sunburn.

This month there was an article where regular walking was shown to delay the onset of Alzheimer's. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/nov/03/walking-3000-steps-day-may-slow-progression-alzheimers>

I immediately wondered if this applied to solo walking or whether that study might have been confounded by the beneficial social effects for people who walk in groups and exchange more than the odd word as they go along.

https://www.alzheimer-europe.org/news/recent-study-suggests-being-social-may-help-delay-dementia-onset-five-years?language_content_entity=en

Whatever the science, the Kingsley Walkers have been out again walking and chatting and hopefully kicking their Alzheimer's cans a long way down the road.

In late October we walked 8 miles from Eastham Rake station on the Wirral. We joined the Wirral Way at Hooton station and had a coffee stop at the former railway station at Hadlow Road. Then, through the lovely village of Willaston where an Elizabethan E shaped building was pointed out. Apparently this design allowed for “status and function, with projecting wings to separate family from servants (not a problem in our house) and a central block featuring a long gallery and grand entrance”.

We then passed a windmill, obviously designed so that the miller could spy on his neighbours from on high. The lovely views and countryside were crowned with a stop on a beautiful tree-lined path to eat our pack lunches.

Early November involved a drive to the Pheasant Inn at Burwardsley then a lovely 5 miles across fields with a respectful stop to observe a 3 minute silence for those who gave their lives and never returned to England's green and pleasant land.

New members are always welcome to join our longer walks or the shorter ones which involve a pub lunch at their end.

Please contact:

kingsleywalkerswa6@gmail.com

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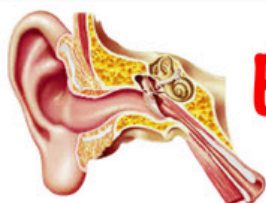
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COLD COMFORT FARM

“Narsty. Narsty. Narsty.” An evening of entertainment last month at the Community Centre was anything but “nasty”. However, these words were repeated with great conviction by the “mad, bad and strangely clad” Ada Doom in the recent production of Cold Comfort Farm. She was one of many colourful characters in the Starkadder family.

The play, Cold Comfort Farm was adapted by Paul Doust from the comic novel by English author Stella Gibbons, published in 1932. It parodies the romanticised, sometimes doom-laden accounts of rural life popular at the time. Flora Poste, a recently orphaned socialite, moves in with her country relatives, the gloomy Starkadders of Cold Comfort Farm, and becomes enmeshed in a web of violent emotions, despair, and scheming, until Flora manages to set things right.

The role of Flora is pivotal to the whole play and was superbly crafted by Megan Billing, a newcomer to the Kingsley Players. She was ably supported by an excellent cast made up of other new faces to Kingsley, as well as some seasoned players. All of whom brought their characters very much to life. Amongst the newcomers were members of the “ensemble” who played the Church congregation, the extended family at the “counting”, guests at the ball and at the wedding. Many of these actors had been persuaded to take part (or was that, press-ganged into service?!) by director Malcolm Barker with a promise of a pint at the pub! Either way these brave novices seemed to enjoy the experience and certainly added to the whole performance. As ever, the show would not have been possible without the support and hardwork of the stage management team, the set builders, lighting and sound technicians, the costume team, makeup artists and the front of house team.

It was a fitting production on the eve of the Kingsley Players’ 50th anniversary, as Malcolm first directed this classic comedy in 2001 for their 25th anniversary.

The unanswered question was a mystery in 2001 and remains a mystery in 2025. What was the “ ‘summat narsty in’t woodshed”?? The mind boggles!



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Kingsley Players launch Golden Anniversary celebrations with popular panto, 'The Magic Wishing Well' (28 – 31 January 2026)

Kingsley Players celebrate 50 fabulous years of community theatre next year – launching 2026 with a fantastic, traditional pantomime, 'The Magic Wishing Well' by the group's own musical director Arnold Ashbrook.

The Kingsley stage will once again be filled with enthusiastic, talented adults and children, taking the audience on a magical journey to Fairyland for five electric performances at the end of January.

Incompetent witch Grizelda Graddlestick is joined in a mad plot by a host of eccentric characters, including three lost children, two naughty gangsters, a couple of ugly sisters, elves and Old King Cole, who sings remarkably like Elvis Presley. Thankfully three young heroes save the day through the magic of song and dance!

Jo Oultram, panto director and chair of Kingsley Players, said: "A panto by our very own musical director gives us the perfect start to a wonderful golden year of special celebrations. Over the last half century, our award-winning theatre group has staged dozens of top plays, musicals and pantos, as well as many much-loved, fund-raising tours of the BBC hit comedy 'Allo Allo'.

"Ten years ago, we launched our own successful youth theatre to provide more drama opportunities for local youngsters, and they will be playing an active role this year, staging three productions, including Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein' and 'Matilda the Musical'.

"And for adults, we have a special treat in store as we head to the First World War trenches and a special stage version of the hit BBC comedy 'Blackadder Goes Forth' in May. Please come and support us!"

'The Magic Wishing Well', by William Arnold Ashbrook, will be on stage at Kingsley Theatre in Kingsley Community Centre, from Wednesday 28 to Saturday 31 January 2026, 7.30pm, with a Saturday matinee, 2pm.

Tickets cost £12, with £8 tickets available for students/children.

These can be booked online at www.kingsleyplayers.co.uk or by ringing the box office on 07724 892154.



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The Living Well Service supports our communities by providing:

-  Winter vaccinations
-  All routine NHS vaccinations
-  Health checks
-  Mental health support

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Wednesday 3 December

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Services in December 2025

Sunday 7th December

10.00 am Family Holy Communion at Kingsley
6.30 pm Sacred Space at Crowton

Sunday 14th December

10.00 am Holy Communion at Crowton
6.00 pm 2nd Sunday @ 6 – at NCK Centre, Norley

Sunday 21st December

10.00 am Lessons and Carols at Norley

Wednesday 24th December Christmas Eve

10.00 am Holy Communion at Alvanley
4.00 pm Crib Service at Crowton
4.00 pm Christingle at Alvanley
11.30 pm Holy Communion at Kingsley

Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day

10.00 am Holy Communion at Norley & Crowton
10.00 am Family Service at Kingsley

Mid-week Holy Communion all at 10.00 am

4th December at Crowton
11th December at Kingsley
18th December at Norley

***St John's Church is open every Tuesday
morning 9.30am – 12noon***

***for private prayer or just to take some quiet
time out***

Associate Minister Revd. Hilary Merrington
Tel: 01928 788087

Email: hilary.merrington@btinternet.com
Church website www.nck.org.uk

Worship at The Hurst Methodist Church

December 2025

Sunday 7th December

10am Morning Worship
led by Mrs E Holmes

Sunday 14th December

10am Morning Worship
led by Revd A Gibson

Sunday 21st December

6.30pm Carol service
led by Revd C Rawlinson
No morning worship at the Hurst today

Wednesday 24th December

11.15pm Midnight service
led by Revd C Rawlinson

Thursday 25th December

10am Christmas Morn worship
led by Mrs J Batey

Sunday 28th December

10.45am United service at Norley
led by Revd S Levitt
No morning worship at the Hurst today

*A warm welcome awaits all who wish to
attend.*

We are anxious the most vulnerable of
our community feel safe, so ask that you
please do not attend if you have cold or
flu symptoms.

Feel free to wear a mask if you wish.

KINGSLEY **PRAYER DIARY**

Each week of the year Christians in Kingsley pray specially for people in a different area of the village and its surroundings. During December we think of, and pray for people living in: -

W/c Dec 7th Town Well and The Brow

**W/c Dec 14th Waterloo Lane
and Finney Lane**

W/c Dec 21st Dark Lane

W/c Dec 28th Delamere Road and Crofton

Come and try **"TOO BUSY TO STOP?"**

WHAT is it? An opportunity to escape from the hurly burly of Christmas preparations and to re-visit the Christmas story, say a prayer, light a candle, reflect on what is at the heart of Christmas - or to just sit quietly and rest.

WHERE is it? At the Hurst Chapel Kingsley.

WHEN is it? Saturday 20th December 10am – 6pm

If you would like more information, please contact Janet Batey (01928 788706)

Christmas – a season of light

The debate about the right time for Christmas lights to go up in and around our homes and communities is always interesting. I've learnt this year that in the Holy Land, Israeli and Palestinian Christians put up lights at the beginning of Advent. The twinkling lights are seen as a time of visibility amongst the Jewish and Muslim majorities in local communities. It is a time when Christians can shine, be noticed and proclaim that Jesus Christ is a light in the darkness for all the world. Setting aside any sadness we may feel that things will be very different for many Christians in the Holy Land this year, I am reminded of the need for us to allow the light of Christ this Christmas to shine in all our hearts.

Christmas – a season of Hope

Christian hope is rooted in the oracles of the Old Testament prophets who reflected on the suffering of the people of Judah during their exile in Babylon. From that suffering came the vision of a Messiah who would save people and lead them to a place of restoration, renewal and resurrection. For Christians, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem centuries later fulfilled that hope. Advent hope does not promise that everything will get better, more that God is with us on our journey through life.

Christmas - a season of Peace

We may smile as we reflect on the thought of peace in amidst our preparations for Christmas. But this peace is an inner peace that will help us to face the challenges and frustrations of daily life and our concerns for world peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace for each of us individually, and for the world. The Prince of that inner peace that our faith can bring. The Peace that brings calm to our souls and gives us the energy to make this time of celebration of the birth of Jesus, special and meaningful. A wonderous gift.

Christmas – a season of promise

Jesus brings hope to our troubled world. A promise that can shine as a light into our preparations and nestles itself in amongst our worries, our concerns and sometimes, our sadness.

Jesus, bringer of light, of hope, of peace and of promise, may we catch glimpses of you as we prepare ourselves to celebrate your birth and your story. May we grow in faith and come to know you more dearly, this Christmas time. Amen.

Gail Fullbrook – Lay Minister

Coffee and Chat

Please come and join us each **Tuesday morn 10am** at the Hurst Methodist Church
For 'Coffee and Chat', meet old friends and new. **You will be most welcome**

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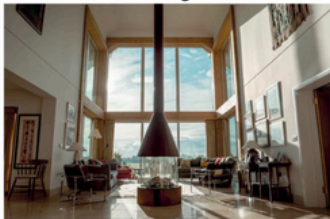
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7:30pm

St John's Church, Norley



Tickets £12.50 including seasonal drink and mince pie

Contact Barbara on 01606 882533/ 07508 535927

barbarajbuckley@gmail.com



St John the Evangelist - Kingsley
175th Anniversary 1851 - 2026

To launch this special year we are hosting a

Christmas Tree Festival

Open on the following Saturdays in December

6th, 13th, 20th

10:00am – 4:00pm

& Monday 22nd December

6pm - 8pm



Get in the festive mood and enjoy visiting the trees decorated by local

Organisations and businesses

You are invited to this free event which includes festive refreshments



PLANTING FOR SPRING

Although Christmas is just around the corner preparations have been made with daffodil bulb planting in Kingsley village.

Moving into the area nearly 6 years ago and taking on retirement with a new hobby, gardening - I had the idea to try and generate beautiful areas within our village. Deciding on the planters, that being three at the Cross and one near the Church my husband and I decided to plant summer flowers and we were overwhelmed with the gratitude and response on Kingsley's social media sites.

Then in September I joined the Kingsley Parish Council and expressed my desire to improve local areas, we then contacted St John's School to see if their pupils would like to assist in the bulb planting which took place on 17 November from 9.45 am. The weather albeit rather cold, remained dry. Each pupil (48 in total) had 2 bulbs each and the teachers divided the children into groups - what a successful morning we had !

The children were delightful, curious, excited so well mannered, their faces lighting up with the thought that their bulbs will one day grow into a "Feast of Flowing Daffodils".



Chris and Phil Blythe



Kingsley St John's Primary School

Foundation Governor Vacancy
Join us as a Foundation Governor.



*Believe in the
light, whilst you
have the light, so
that you may
become children
of light.'*
John 12:36

Do you care about education, community, and supporting children as they grow in both learning and faith?

Kingsley St John's is seeking a committed Foundation Governor to help uphold and strengthen the school's distinct Christian character.

As a Foundation Governor, you will:

- Support and promote the school's Christian ethos, ensuring it is reflected in our vision, values, and daily life
 - Work with the Governing Board and school leadership to guide strategic direction and raise standards
 - Provide support and constructive challenge to help the school flourish academically, spiritually, and socially
 - Bring your skills, experience, and commitment to a team dedicated to serving our children and community
- This is a voluntary role, open to individuals who are supportive of the Christian foundation of the school. You do not need prior governance experience — full training and ongoing guidance are provided.

If you feel called to serve in this way or would like to find out more, please contact:-

Rachel Jones (Headteacher)

head@kingsley-st-johns.cheshire.sch.uk

Or, alternatively, call in to the school office to find out more about our beautiful school.

Love; Learn; Aspire; Achieve

OUR RAILWAY HERITAGE

2025 marks the two hundredth anniversary of the first passenger railway, the Stockton to Darlington railway opened in 1825, followed soon after, in 1830, by the opening of the first inter-city railway, the Liverpool and Manchester railway.



In our current era, which has experienced the dramatic effect on society of the internet revolution and is now awaiting the promised transformation from artificial intelligence, it is too easy to assume that such rapid changes are today's novelties.

However, the arrival of railways was just as dramatic and swift, two hundred years ago.

Following the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway, in 1837, the Grand Junction Railway Company (which was established in 1832) opened its railway linking Birmingham to the Liverpool and Manchester railway. This was the first long distance main line railway (114 miles in length) and was built by a team led by George Stephenson.

Note that this railway joined the Liverpool and Manchester railway at Newton north of Warrington, from where passengers had to change to go west or east to Liverpool or Manchester. Liverpool and Manchester direct lines were built later.

10 July 1837 saw the first train leave Birmingham - 'At seven o'clock precisely, the bell rang, and the opening train, drawn by the "Wildfire" engine, commenced moving. The train consisted of eight carriages, and bearing the following names: - The Greyhound, The Swallow, The Liverpool and Birmingham Mail, The Celerity, The Umpire, The Statesman, and The Birmingham and Manchester Mails. The train started slowly, but upon emerging from the yard, speedily burst off at a rapid pace. To those who for the first time witnessed such a scene, it was peculiarly exciting, and the immense multitude, as far as the eye could reach, gave expression to their admiration by loud and long-continued cheering, and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs.'

Dutton Viaduct near Acton Bridge, is one of the principal engineering features of the railway, crossing the River Weaver and the Weaver Canal, and being 60 feet high and 500 yards long. For a major project like this to go from concept to its opening in only five years is an extreme contrast to the drawn out and expensive travails of today's HS2 project. The Grand Junction railway cost c £20000 per mile, equivalent to today's £3.3 million per mile. HS2 is currently estimated to cost £475 million per mile.

Note also that this railway was opened ahead of the linking London to Birmingham railway, which was opened a year later, in 1838 and which was the first mainline railway serving London.

Stations on the Grand Junction line included our local stations, Hartford and Acton Bridge, dating back to 1837 which are therefore two of the earliest passenger stations in the world and were main line railway destinations before London!

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The Hurst Gift Service 2025

Apologies that by the time you receive the Kingsley News, the Gift Service will probably have taken place.

The Hurst Gift Service took place on Sunday November 30, and we donated the gifts to Trinity Kings Cross for their hamper appeal.

The hampers were put together for families who were struggling in the Widnes area and for care leavers. The hampers comprised of bags of groceries, toiletries and toys/gifts. The families are referred to Kings Cross by Health and Social Care, Schools. Care Leavers are those who were in the care system up to the age of 16, and then have to make their own way and find their own accommodation. The hampers are distributed by the relevant referring organisation.

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In the last few years Trinity Kings Cross have supported over 200 households each year (around 250 adults and 400 children per year).

Any help with, toiletries, toys and gifts (especially for older children) was greatly appreciated.

If you would rather give a monetary gift, this would be equally appreciated as it would mean that Kings Cross could buy items to complete gift bags where items are short (cheques made payable to Trinity Kings Cross). Money / cheques can be handed in at The Hurst and we will ensure that it is taken across to Trinity Kings Cross.

With Thanks
Stuart Clark

Frodsham Sings for Christmas!

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Frodsham Sings and Friends
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MONDAY 22nd DECEMBER 2025

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KINGSLEY BOOK CLUB



Review: Still Life by Louise Penny

We chose *Still Life* for a bit of light relief—a cozy, easy read and the first in the popular Chief Inspector Armand Gamache series. Set in the charming yet enigmatic village of Three Pines, the story begins when a beloved local artist, Jane Neal, is found dead under suspicious circumstances, shattering the community's peaceful façade.

While the premise intrigued us, opinions were divided. Some readers enjoyed the setting and gentle pace, but others found flaws in the police procedure and felt the writing didn't quite hit the mark. Reception ranged from outright dislike to mild enjoyment, with one member admitting it wasn't their cup of tea. Four readers gave it an "OK," but overall, the book didn't impress—especially considering the series now spans 21 instalments.

Average score: 2.93/5 - A mixed start to a long-running series.

The Kingsley Village Book Club meets on the second Thursday of each month at 7:30pm. In December this will be at a regular's home so please email Janet for details. From Jan 2026 we will meet at the Red Bull. All are welcome—whether you've read every page or just want to listen in! We let the conversation go where it likes, and it's often lively, surprising, and full of good humour. We read both modern novels and classics from around the world, but nothing too heavy or too long. Our choices range widely: prize-winning contemporary fiction, detective stories, short novels, translated works, historical sagas, and the occasional literary classic. Some are well-known favourites; others are hidden gems suggested by members. Everyone is encouraged to choose a future book if they wish, so the list develops organically and reflects the group's variety of tastes.

2025–26 Reading List (July–March) — with average scores out of 5 where available:

- Jul – *Driving Over Lemons* — Chris Stewart (3.98)
- Aug – *The Catcher in the Rye* — J. D. Salinger (3.86)
- Sep – *The Siege of Krishnapur* — J. G. Farrell (3.16)
- Oct – *My Brilliant Friend* — Elena Ferrante (3.81)
- Nov – *Still Life* - Louise Penny - 2005 Canadian village murder/detective yarn (2.93)
- Dec – *A Good Man in Africa* — William Boyd — bumbling British diplomat
- Jan – *Foster* — Claire Keegan — child sent to rural Irish farm (set in 1981)
- Feb – *The Midnight Bell* — Patrick Hamilton — staff/guests in a 1930s London pub
- Mar – *The Forbidden Garden of Leningrad* — botanists under siege in WW2

We score each book out of 5, and our discussions often bring out unexpected perspectives and lively debates. The top scorers in 2025 have been *Young Mungo* by Douglas Stuart (4.20) and *In Memoriam* by Alice Winn (4.04), while the lowest was *The Glamour Boys* by Chris Bryant (2.36) — even the less-loved books can spark some of our best conversations.

New members are always welcome—just turn up with your curiosity and love of books. Whether you prefer to quietly soak up the discussion or dive into the debate.

If you would like further information, please email Janet.Owen10@outlook.com.



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A Heartfelt Thank You to Cascades Ltd

Kingsley Parish Council is delighted to acknowledge the generous support of Cascades Ltd, who have *kindly sponsored this year's village Christmas tree.*

Cascades, a newly opened Design Studio & Showroom in Kingsley, launched this summer to great local enthusiasm. Their showroom features luxury bathroom displays, a bespoke design service, and expert advice—quickly becoming a favourite among residents.

In the true spirit of community, Cascades stepped forward to help fund the Christmas tree, bringing festive sparkle to the village centre. Business owner Rory shared: “We’ve been blown away by the support we’ve received since opening our showroom this summer. Kingsley has such a strong community spirit, and sponsoring the Christmas tree felt like a lovely way to give something back and help spread a bit of festive cheer. We’re really looking forward to celebrating our first Christmas here and welcoming more customers through our doors in the New Year.”

We encourage everyone to pop into the Cascades showroom, browse their stunning designs, and chat with the team about planning your dream bathroom.

Thank you, Cascades Ltd, for helping Kingsley shine this Christmas!

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