

Coaley Parish NEWSLETTER

Issue no 146
February / March 2026

Produce Show Look Ahead
Celebrating 100 years

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATE	EVENT	TIME	VENUE
7th Mar	Action for Nature Day	10.00am - 12.00pm	Hall
21st Mar	Murder has been Arranged	7.30pm	Hall
3rd -4th May	Plant Swap		
27th Jun	Coaleyfest		

Parish Council meetings are normally on the first Tuesday of each month, except August, at 7.30pm.

See the council's website at www.coaleypc.org.uk for meeting agendas and minutes and to sign up for email updates from the council for news that can't wait for the next newsletter.

Please let us have your contributions for the next issue by Monday 16th March 2026.

email: newsletter@coaleypc.org.uk

web: www.coaleypc.org.uk

facebook: [coaleypc](https://www.facebook.com/coaleypc)

This issue edited by Stephen Cook.

Cover picture: Snowdrops signaling the end of winter and the promise of spring.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

Coaley resident, Mrs Kathleen Meredith celebrated her 100th birthday in January. Kathleen and her late husband, Tom, moved into Elmcote Lane on their marriage in 1951 and then moved into the centre of the village 14 years ago.

As part of the celebrations Coaley Bellringers rang a quarter peal which featured 100 calls and a method called 100th Anniversary.

Kathleen's many friends and neighbours joined together to share

this auspicious occasion and to celebrate this wonderful lady, who has been part of our village for so long!!

Kathleen would like to thank her many friends from the village and beyond, Coaley bellringers, Coaley WI and all those who gave their time, sent flowers, presents and cards which helped make her birthday such a special day. She was delighted and touched beyond measure by people's kindness and thoughtfulness. Thank you all.



COALEY PRODUCE SHOW EVENTS FOR 2026

January's here, the snowdrops are poking their heads up through the soggy soil and thoughts are turning towards the new gardening year. Coaley Produce Show Committee have taken down the Christmas Tree and we are now planning the events for 2026. Here is a summary with further details being released as the year progresses.

Coaley Produce Show Plant Swap

This will be on 3rd and 4th May (Bank Holiday weekend) from 10am to 4pm. Save the date in your calendars so you don't miss out. Also don't forget to put in a few extra seeds, pot up any seedlings you find in the border and keep bits of plants you are dividing. They will all ensure you have plenty of plants to swap.

Coaley Garden Cup Competition

This year's Coaley Garden Cup Competition will be judging 'A Wildlife Garden'. This can be an entire garden or just a nominated area. The judges will take into account the number of measures that have been included to encourage and support wildlife, including planting schemes.

Judging will take place on a weekend in mid-June, exact date to be advised in the next issue of the Newsletter. Two independent judges will visit your garden to view each entry. If you cannot be at home then, with your permission, the plant can be judged in your absence.

Closing date for the competition will be Sunday 24th May.

Entry forms will be available from the Village Shop from the beginning of April or get one from www.coaleyproduceshow.org.uk. Completed forms can be left at the shop or emailed to lapley.cottage@gmail.com.

The result will be announced at the Coaley Produce Show on Saturday 5th September 2026.

Snowdrops and primroses have been spotted

Some of our days are now heading into Spring so time to dust off your photographic skills and go snapping! Coaley Calendar shows off our beautiful environs and you are the ones who enable others to see them month by month.

File your pictures until the Autumn and when you come to choose your best ones to enter for the calendar you should have a lovely record of the passing year. Don't forget that calendar entries need to be in landscape format.

Coaley Produce Show

This will be held on 5th September in the Village Hall as usual. So, start thinking now about what you will plant as the weather warms up.

The 2026 arts and crafts and photography classes follow to allow you to plan ahead.

CRAG NEW YEAR UPDATE

Arts and Crafts

- F69. A knitted or crocheted animal hat for a child or adult.
- F70. A heart-shaped pillow for donation.
- F71. A tote bag.
- F72. Nursery mobile.
- F73. An item made from wood.
- F74. A mosaic.
- F75. A toad abode.
- F76. 'Spring', any medium.
- F77. A botanical watercolour.
- F78. A portrait, any medium.
- F79. A decorated box.
- F80. A Limerick starting "On walking through Coaley one day..."

Photography

- G81. Local wildlife.
- G82. Fun on the beach.
- G83. A local landmark.
- G84. Pattern.

Following the success of the on-line photograph entry process in 2025, this will be the only way to enter in 2026. Printed entries will not be accepted.

Christmas Tree Lights

I'm sure we don't want to be thinking about this yet, but we will be switching on the Christmas tree lights on Sunday 29th November.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

A big thank you to everyone who supported the MacMillan Coffee Morning in the shop this year, we raised a fantastic £633.00.

We're delighted to start the New Year with some fantastic news. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we have raised the funding needed to construct the new Toddler Park.

Two substantial anonymous donations took us over our target and are a wonderful reflection of the belief our community has in creating something truly special for local families. Kompan will be installing the park in the spring, and surplus soil will be retained on site to landscape the mounds.

Our Adopt a Tree campaign has also been a great success, with all eight trees now sponsored. We'd like to say a special thank you to the families involved, as well as the WI Produce Show and CADS, for their support. Sponsors will be invited to help plant their tree at a Planting Day in March.

With the help of CUCAN, we will also be planting a native hedge along the front fence to improve its appearance and create valuable habitat for wildlife.

TFN have recently tidied up the paths, refilling surfaces and neatening the edges — thank you for all your hard work.

Supporting Nature at the Rec

Earlier in the year, CRAG carried out a Bioblitz survey with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, recording as many species of plants, animals, fungi and other organisms as possible across the

Recreation Ground. This survey has helped inform our plans to further enhance the local environment.

We are currently developing these ideas and invite local residents and organisations to an Action for Nature Day on 7 March, 10am–12pm, at the Village Hall. Activities will include building beast hotels, creating bee sand castles, wildflower planters and mini ponds.

We were also pleased to host our first Nature Morning on 10 January. This month's theme was frogs, and we were delighted to be joined by Coaley Toad Patrol, who shared information and activities to promote safer roads for toads. Volunteers are always welcome — please contact Mick Gadsby on 07954 785190.



A big thank you to Sarah Lorkin, Abby Birkbeck, Paul and Amanda Godden, and everyone who helped organise these events.

CRAG Pub Quiz Success – 19 January

A huge thank you to everyone who

joined us for the recent CRAG Pub Quiz. Around 70 quizzers filled the room with laughter, friendly competition and some seriously impressive brainpower.



Our brilliant host, Suzie, kept the evening buzzing with her trademark energy and wit as teams tackled rounds on general knowledge, art, literature, music and TV. The quiz raised much-needed funds for the Recreation Ground. Special thanks to those who donated prizes and helped make it such a memorable night.

Looking Ahead to Spring

As we prepare for spring, our growers have been overwintering plants, pricking out seedlings and potting on young plants for the sensory garden.

We'll also be arranging a community clean-up day in February, with activities including minor repairs to play equipment, sweeping, litter picking and strimming. If you can spare an hour, all you'll need is a pair of gloves. Full details will be shared soon.

C R A G



P R E S E N T S

MURDER HAS BEEN ARRANGED

By Patricia Gay



Saturday 21st March 7.30pm

£20 per person - ticket includes supper

For tickets please email coaleyreactiongroup@gmail.com

Sage

Kindly sponsored by our friends at Sage Residential

Sage

Murder Mystery Show

Following the success of last year's devilishly difficult murder mystery, CADS are back in rehearsal with a brand-new crime, A Murder Has Been Arranged. Audiences will be challenged to put their detective skills to the test as secrets unfold, clues emerge and suspicion falls on everyone... So budding detectives — dust off your magnifying glasses and sharpen your powers of deduction for 21 March. Further details to follow.

Please keep an eye on our social media channels and village noticeboards for updates and ways to take part.

Thank You, Coaley

We'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to Sarah Lorkin, who is taking a well-earned break after more than a year of delivering a wealth of fantastic events for CRAG. We will miss her drive, creativity and meticulous organisation enormously.

Thank you to everyone who has given their time, energy and generosity to CRAG. Coaley is incredibly lucky to have such dedicated people making great things happen. Together, we're not just building a playground — we're growing a stronger, greener and more connected village.

CRAG always welcomes new volunteers. If you can spare an hour or two to help, please do get in touch at coaleyreactiongroup@gmail.com www.coaleyrec.co.uk

SHOP



**COALEY
COMMUNITY
SHOP**

Volunteer party

On a very wet and windy evening in the first week of January many of our stalwart volunteers joined us for our annual volunteer party. Members of the committee excelled themselves by providing a feast of tasty finger food lubricated with mulled wine and other liquid refreshment.

We were greatly entertained with a quiz with a grocery theme. This was closely fought and only won by Caroline Eardley on a tie break. Controversy was stirred up with some heated debate on how many rolls of toilet paper the average family uses in a year. This debate continued for several days!

Steve Wills, chair of the management committee, gave an appropriately short but heartfelt vote of thanks to all shop volunteers for all the hard work and commitment they put in throughout the year.

We always need more volunteers. It's a great way to meet new people and contribute to village life. The committee makes sure that volunteers are fully supported, and new volunteers will always work alongside old hands until they are confident. Please do speak to one of our volunteers if you

are interested in joining the team.

Grants to local organisations

Coaley Community Shop has financial reserves that occasionally allows it to make small grants or donations on an ad hoc basis to organisations that are consistent with its aims and objectives. These are likely to be made twice a year, in or around May and November. Grants or donations will be made entirely at the discretion of the management committee. This was recently formalised by a new policy approved by the management committee at its December meeting.

Donations or grants will be made to local organisations or groups that can demonstrate that the money granted will be for the benefit of the Coaley community. Grants will not be made to individuals. We will not give money that is inconsistent with the Coaley Community Shop vision or its specific aims and objectives.

The availability of funding will be publicised twice a year. Grants and donations provided will also be publicised. Details will be set out in a report to the annual general meeting and will be publicised on the shop website, Facebook page and in the Coaley Newsletter.

At its December meeting the management committee, in line with its new policy, approved a grant of £1597.47 to Coaley Playgroup to pay for emergency repairs to its outdoor shelters.

Donations to the shop

From time-to-time people very kindly offer surplus produce and other foodstuff they have generated in the garden or in the kitchen. We have had offers of eggs and confectionary. Whilst we know that this is well meant and is intended to benefit the shop, we very much regret that we are not able to accept these offers because of health and hygiene regulations.

We are only able to accept fresh fruit and vegetables that have not been processed.

However, we can accept donations of clean books and complete jigsaws. We have a very extensive library of both and these are all available to borrow. For all you dissectologists (collective noun for puzzle enthusiasts!) out there we have recently had a new supply of jigsaws. So come in and check them out.

Contact us

coaleycommunityshop.org
[www.facebook.com/
coaleycommunityshop](https://www.facebook.com/coaleycommunityshop/)

COALEY PANTOMIME 2025

CADS were back with customary gusto for their 2025 pantomime, 'Camelot', written by Limelight Scripts. Led by first-time director Emily Smith they took us on a hilarious whirlwind adventure through the fabled kingdom of yore.

Stepping under the battlements and into the village hall (decorated as a castle courtyard, with accompanying traditional tavern music), the audience were greeted by a dazzling array of characters. Jasper the Jester jingled across the stage played by Scarlett Young (*below*), and Steve Birkbeck was back in the frock as the



outrageous dame Nurse Bedpan (*right*), who was busy pursuing the suave Sir Lancelot Bond, played with scene-stealing charisma by Jude Taylor. We met the wizard Merlin (Paul Freeman, *above*) as he waltzed his way into proceedings in an incense-induced haze, and Jody Allen and Simon Johnson threw themselves into their roles as the comedy double act Rough and Tumble with unmatched enthusiasm!

A panto's not a panto without a baddie to boo, and this year we were treated to Lydia Tutton and Noah Birkbeck as the enraged witch Morgana and her son Mordred. The melodramatic pair were seeking revenge on Camelot's

upper-crust monarchs King Arthur (John Sirett) and Queen Guinevere (Lisa Miles), who themselves were just trying to prepare for the wedding of their daughter Princess Eleanor to the dashing Prince Hector, sweetly played by Lola Smith and Iyla Telling, respectively.

Set against the backdrop of the Coaley Art Group's stunningly painted scenery, the characters led us gamely through Camelot, from the depths of Morgana's underground lair, to a gloriously retro MI5, and finally to the picturesque

centre of Camelot Town for a the obligatory panto happy ending. There were lavish costumes, a confident chorus, bubbly songs and jokes aplenty!

Coaley pantomime is truly a whole village effort, with people involved both onstage and behind the scenes, and a huge thank you goes out to everyone who gave so much of their time to making Camelot a resounding success.



PLAYGROUP

Last term was super busy with all of our Christmas celebrations. The children made some lovely crafts for their parents and we celebrated with a Christmas party on our last day with a special visit from Father Christmas. Since returning we have enjoyed hearing about all of the fun the children and their families had over Christmas.

This term our focus books include 'We're going on a bear hunt', 'Supertato' and 'what Colour is Love'

We will also be learning about Scotland inline with Burns night.

We are looking forward to the spring time and the warmer weather arriving when we will be starting to grow some plants and vegetables.

Donations

We are always looking for donations of particular items to support our themes and topics.

We are currently looking for some more Peppa pig toys and other popular character toys, costume jewellery such as bangles and necklaces, as well as old handbags. Dressing up clothes and zoo animals.

Our next few role play area's will include a hairdressers, a shop, a garden centre and a dentist. If you have anything that we may be able to use we would be very grateful.

Please think of us if you are having a clear out after Christmas and please get in touch if you have anything you are able to donate.

We don't need any books, construction toys or puzzles. Thank you.

Availability

We are currently full and have a waiting list in place until September 2027.

Please get in touch if you would like to add your child to our waiting list, spaces are filling up fast.

Getting in touch

You can follow us on Facebook where we share lots of photos of our activities.

email: coaleyplaygroup@gmail.com
Telephone: 07434364850

Playgroup Session Times

	Morning session	Full session
Mon, Tues, Thurs	8:50am – 12:50pm	8:50am – 2:50pm
Weds and Fri	8:50am - 12:50pm	closed

FRIENDS OF COALEY SCHOOL (FOGS)

.....
27TH JUNE
.....

**FAMILY FUN
LIVE MUSIC
FOOD & DRINK**

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

COALEYFEST '26



SCHOOL

A very happy New Year from all of our school family. I hope that the Christmas break brought rest, joy and moments of peace for all. As we step into a new term, it feels fitting to pause for a moment and reflect on the magic, awe and wonder of the weeks leading up to Christmas in school.

December is always such a treasured time in our school calendar, and this year was no exception. Our Christingle Service once again provided one of those truly special Coaley moments. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who came along to share in this beautiful service. Each year, there is a collective breath held as the Christingles are lit and the lights go out—then the soft glow illuminates the children's faces with a quiet joy that is simply unforgettable.

We were also incredibly proud of the talent and enthusiasm on display at our Christmas Carol Service. Our younger children in Robins' Class stole hearts as they carefully and confidently re-enacted the Nativity story. Their storytelling was enriched by the musical gifts of pupils who played violin and piano throughout the worship, weaving thoughtful melodies between our traditional Christmas hymns. It was a celebration of both faith and creativity—a true highlight of the festive season.

Now, as we settle back into school routines, the spring term is already in full swing with a wonderful sense of energy. We were thrilled to welcome

RockSteady Music School into Coaley to launch their new rock offer. During the morning, the school hall was transformed by the sound of drums, guitars, and enthusiastic singing—including a lively rendition of 'We Love Sausage Rolls'! It was an electric wow moment for our whole community and one the children are still talking about.

Continuing on the musical theme, Owls' Class have begun learning how to play the ukulele this term. Their progress in just a few short weeks has been remarkable. The children are already looking forward to sharing their developing skills with a wider audience at the end of the spring term, and we can't wait to see (and hear!) their confidence grow.

It has also been a joy to welcome our newly established Open the Book Team to Coaley. Their storytelling-led Collective Worship sessions have added an inspiring, interactive dimension to our gatherings. The performances captivate the children and deepen their engagement with the stories and messages at the heart of our shared values.

Another exciting highlight this term is the launch of our Public Speaking Competition. During the first week back, children who chose to participate began preparing their presentations, ready to first share with their house before progressing to the wider school. Democratic voting will help select our house winners. This competition is always one of my personal favourites, as it showcases the courage, passion,

and individuality of our pupils. It never fails to make me feel incredibly proud: seeing children find their voice, speak from the heart, and share what truly matters to them is both inspiring and uplifting.

As we continue through the spring term, I look forward to all the learning, celebrations, and moments of joy yet to come. Thank you, as always, for your continued support of our school community.

Warmest wishes,

Jen Thomas
Headteacher,
Coaley C of E Primary Academy

WI

In November Coaley WI's speaker started his talk with the warning - dont try this at home. His subject was all about sword swallowing!

Dr Witcombe realised that there was little medical literature about sword swallowing and became interested in learning more about it and its possible dangers. He began by showing Xrays of the body from the nose to the oesophagus, pointing out the possible danger areas when swallowing swords. He made contact with a sword swallower in America, who had received an injury while swallowing a sword due to being distracted by a misbehaving macaw!! The longest sword that can be swallowed is 40cm. Though some claim to have swallowed 60cm. Most swallowers lubricate the

blade with their own saliva. They must first learn to overcome the gag reflex - they start by putting fingers down their throat and progress to larger objects. They have to put their neck back to get a vertical alignment down the throat. Dr Witcombe published a paper on the side effects of sword swallowing and was surprised to be awarded the IG Nobel prize for Medicine.

Coaley ended the year with a Christmas meal at the Old Fox . The food, service and company was excellent and a great time was had by all. We were delighted to be joined by former member Kathleen Meredith who celebrated her 100th birthday in January 2026. Happy Birthday Kath.

We start the new year with a new programme and lots of interesting talks and outings too. Our year starts with a talk from Gloucester constabulary about how to protect ourselves against Fraud.

New members and visitors are always welcome. £4 on the door includes a glass of wine or juice on arrival and tea and biscuits during the interval. If you wish to come along but would like someone to join you on your first visit, get in touch and we can organise this for you.

June Dunlop
Secretary
Coaley WI

coaleywi@hotmail.com
coaleywi

USEFUL CONTACTS

Parish Councillors	Martin Pearcy	890818
	John Hobson	07715 558110
	Shona Pearcy	890818
	Penny Wait	860191
Parish Clerk	Lynn Thornton clerk@coaleypc.org.uk	545880
Stroud District Councillor	Martin Pearcy cllr.martin.pearcy@stroud.gov.uk	890818
GCC Councillor	Richard Dean richard.dean@gloucestershire.gov.uk	
Vicar	Graham Stacey	709859
Village Hall	Lesley Chalmers	890788
Need a lift to Coaley Church? Co-ordinator	Isobel Farmer	890556
Tree Warden	Shona Pearcy	890818
Snow Warden	Jonathan Leigh coaleysnowwarden@gmail.com	860665 07767 660206
Community Shop		899000
Coaley WI	June Dunlop	890302
Friendship Group	Pat Grimwood and Isobel Farmer	890689 890556
ST Emergency Water & Sewage Centre (24 hr)		0800 7834444
Gas Emergency Leaks etc (24 hr)		0800 111999
Electricity Loss of Supply (24 hr)		0800 6783 105 or 105
Street Lights		08000 514514