

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS DATES

St. Mary's Church at Pilsdon has a Eucharist service every Sunday at 6:30pm. During the season of Advent and over the Christmas period we will be having additional services to which all are very welcome.

The festive services and events will be as follows:

Sunday 22nd December	6.30pm	Carol Service with Broadoak Choir
Tuesday 24th December	11.30 pm	Midnight Mass
Wednesday 25th December	11.00 am	Christmas Morning Service in the North Barn
Tuesday 31st December	from 9.00 pm	Pilsdon Quiz and Entertainment, Common Room

Community Member & Community Volunteers Opportunities

The Pilsdon Community is seeking a new Community Member and volunteers to join the existing team, based on our 12 acre farm in West Dorset. Community Members and volunteers are drawn from a variety of backgrounds and professions; the key requirements being a demonstrable sense of calling to the role, being a good team player, flexibility in work patterns, strong relational qualities and an ability to work in an emotionally and physically challenging environment.

If you would like more information about the Pilsdon Community please visit our website at www.pilsdon.org.uk.

If you would like to be considered for either of the above posts please write to the Warden outlining your suitability for the post and enclose a c.v. Postal and email address are outlined below.

www.pilsdon.org.uk Twitter: [@pilsdoncomm](https://twitter.com/pilsdoncomm)

Reg. Charity 261139
www.pilsdon.org.uk
pilsdon@btconnect.com
Pilsdon Manor
Pilsdon
BRIDPORT
DT6 5NZ

The Pilsdon Community

Sharing a common life of prayer, hospitality and work



Peace and Good Wishes this Christmas
December 2013

****2014 Pilsdon Calendar****

The new Pilsdon desk calendar is now available to buy. At just £5 each they make excellent Christmas gifts and it is a great way to support the community's fundraising efforts. To purchase calendars please fill in and return the form that is enclosed with this newsletter.



You can find out the latest news from Pilsdon by looking on our website at www.pilsdon.org.uk and following us on twitter [@pilsdoncomm](https://twitter.com/pilsdoncomm).

Supporting Pilsdon

There are many ways in which people can support the Pilsdon Community. Our foundation in mission and ministry is to be a place of prayer, hospitality and work.

We hope that you will join with us in prayer for our community, for our life and work in serving and living alongside one another.

If you would like to explore the opportunity to support The Pilsdon Community in a practical or financial way please do get in touch with the community office on 01308 868308 or email pilsdon@btconnect.com.

I have been quite amazed, as an Englishman arriving in a Welsh-speaking area, to find so much friendliness and welcome amongst the people I have met. By hitch-hiking to town and back I've had opportunities to meet quite a few locals, some of whom have become friends. In Machynlleth itself I have got in with a bunch who work (or used to work) at the nearby Centre for Alternative Technology who have been a great source of friendship, advice and encouragement. A couple of them are running their own local veg-growing and veg-bag delivery scheme. A stall at the weekly town market is operated by a local co-op of growers and producers. My local village has a monthly farmer's market, and my local shopkeeper seems willing to try selling my veg. It seems there are routes to market at least.

Writing this in November back at Pilsdon, having had a chance to reflect on it all, I can say that the answers to the three questions above are all a (tentative) yes. I plan to go back in the spring-time to begin sowing, with my fingers crossed that I'll have something to sell at the end of it! So much more happened during those six months that there is no space to include it all here but if you're interested check out my weekly blog which can be found online at mattswanoffgrid.blogspot.co.uk. (I also keep a "Pilsdon" blog at mattswanindorset.blogspot.co.uk). Feel free to contact me on the blogsite if you like!

Garden Report from Catherine.....This article is being written in the midst of a great apple



abundance. A faithful team of apple collectors (headed up by Matt who is back, hooray) have been enjoying the Autumn sunshine wheeling in our various apple varieties... exactly what variety is what is subject to much speculation as maps and rumours of maps drawn up of the orchard are not easily deciphered. Each year at Pilsdon sees new apple products being brought to our palates. This year a highlight has been 'apple leather' courtesy of our Bruderhof sister. This is a chewy material of liquorice type consistency made only of apple residue; deemed very tasty, particularly by our youngest (18 month old) resident. A much awaited product, however, is still to meet our anticipating lips when a team of apple gatherers will be travelling to Five Penny Farm to take a quarter of a tonne of our apples to press in to apple juice. Provided the various logistical

hitches can be resolved, Pilsdon apple juice will be available at our Christmas stall in Bridport on 15th December. If this wasn't excitement enough, this week has perhaps seen the gardening team's most interesting purchase of the year ... a 'pH o-meter'! This will enable us to prepare the soil optimally for next year's crops. There is much discussion in current gardening meetings about exactly what to grow where and who's growing it, and seed ordering for next year is 'in the forefront of our minds'. As the seasons come and go, the gardening team says goodbye to faithful diggers and hello to new enthusiasts. Plus many respite visitors or people on trial weeks have offered a helping hand, ensuring our ever increasing muck pile is dispersed on our vegetable beds. So, thanks to all who have contributed to the garden this year and in turning our produce in to the varying tasty assortments that reach our table.

Matt Swan is back.....notes from a small plot

It struck me one day as I laboriously dug my way over yet another of Pilsdon's weed-infested vegetable patches that it would be so much more convenient if we humans could digest all these wonderful plants that are so well-adapted to our climate and soil that they spring up without us doing anything. Meadow-grass, couch-grass, dandelion, creeping buttercup, etc., are all food to goats but we are obliged to clear it all away to sow the limited range of plants we can actually eat. Thankfully this occupation, although hard work, I've found to be very rewarding, especially when the produce ends up in my own stomach!

I joined Pilsdon in March 2012 as a residential volunteer and began to learn how to grow vegetables in the extensive garden plots and polytunnels. Prior to that I had lived a rather more conventional and urban existence, relying on supermarkets and takeaways to provide my meals without wondering too hard where it all comes from. The shock of being asked to grow the food the community itself eats, and the wonder of it actually working, watching the seeds transform themselves into their various mature forms and then plucking off their edible bits to go straight to the kitchen and onto the table within a matter of hours, was a revelation to me.

Last December I bought six acres of land in mid Wales with the intention of living on it in a low-impact manner, growing fruit and veg on it to feed myself and selling the surplus to local people. It was not a part of the world I was familiar with, I knew nobody there, but land is too expensive near to Pilsdon. This plot has water (a stream as its eastern boundary, a river forming its southern edge), lots of trees for firewood and shelter, open level areas for growing, a southwest orientation, and is only a mile from a small settlement with shop, pub and cafe. Moreover it has an awesome natural beauty afforded by the surrounding mountains, rivers, forests and birdlife.

After a flurry of purchasing everything I thought I would need including a small caravan to live in, a 4x4 car to tow it, a solar panel, a bottle of propane gas, a chainsaw, a fishing rod, a hammer and handsaw, a pair of wellies and a hundred other essentials, I set off from Pilsdon this April to spend the next six months living on my land. It was the biggest solo adventure of my life. I would learn to live simply, without TV, radio (no reception in the valley) or internet, except on occasional trips to the nearest town, Machynlleth. I would be spending large chunks of my time working the soil with a spade since the area I planned to cultivate was infested with dense clumps of soft rush which had to be removed, and then twelve large raised beds created from the bare earth. Fortunately I enjoy digging and am generally comfortable with my own company, although this would be for me an unprecedented length of time spent living alone.



MICHAEL WRITES

Apples. Have you ever seen so many apples or been challenged to find so many ways to use apples. We have eaten, peeled, baked, blanched, frozen, pressed dry stored and generally have tried to let no apple go un-treasured, unloved or not put to the good purpose inherent in its creation.

It is a great time of year. The creative ideas that processing apples brought forth and all team work that preparing and storing all the produce of Pilsdon causes to bring people together with a common purpose rooted in creation and brought to fullness in community.

Moving the Autumn season: Pilsdon's 55th Anniversary, Harvest, and Bonfire Night, are all places where we can reminisce and recall all the moments that built up to these events. They remind us of how far we have come, how much we have learned and how living in this community has moved our lives into areas and skills and friendships we could not have imagined if left on our own.

But this is also a time of preparation!

Advent begins very soon. A time of preparation and waiting and a time of thinking about new beginnings. Advent for Pilsdon will not only see the new Loose Box development come to the completion of the first phase; a new building, looking very similar to the old, but with new purposes; a sign of growth. It is a lot like Pilsdon itself, a place unchanged and yet a place that is very different from the 1958 original.

This year has seen the launch of a new website, Pilsdon becoming active on Twitter (over 200 followers around the world!), and a resurgence in interest from the greater community. Pilsdon is learning a new way to communicate while trying to stay in touch with our friends. Pilsdon is growing our family and that sense of belonging which the world does not always provide.

The animals are about to move into winter accommodations. The gardens are being fertilized for the next growing season, the freezers are full of produce and Pilsdon is in a gentle period of waiting for renewal and for that great minder that we are an ever renewing people—Christmas!

Pilsdon continues to renew itself through the years. This growth and change is encouraged by the gifts so freely given in prayer, work and support by our many friends and angels both near and far. Blessings for this season of grace! Happy Christmas.



The Pilsdon Community: Celebrating 55 years....



It is 55 years since Percy and Gaynor Smith founded the Pilsdon Community. Since then it has been a refuge for people in crisis, supporting many hundreds of people through the subsequent decades. It was great to be able to join together with friends and supporters of the community on Sunday 13th October to

thank God for the continued vibrant life of the community. Over the course of the day over 70 people visited, many staying for a fantastic cottage pie and apple crumble lunch. Our focal point for the day was a Eucharist service in the church, with guest preacher Rev. Dr. Tim Naish, Dean of the Oxford Ministry Course and lecturer at Ripon College Cuddesdon. After lunch there was a 'meet the trustees' event, with an annual report from the Warden and an update on the

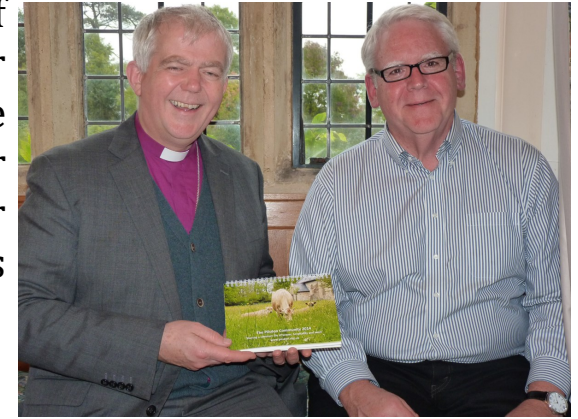


loose box development. At the close of the day the anniversary cake was cut by Hilary Joyce, our chair of Trustees. The cake was made by Jane, one of the community members and was decorated by Mary, a former Guest at Pilsdon who now runs her own cooking business in Bridport called 'Made by Mary'. We are very grateful for the continued friendship of the many people who



support our community life at Pilsdon.

We were also delighted to welcome the Bishop of Salisbury, The Rt. Rev. Nick Holtam who stayed for tea. Everyone enjoyed sumptuous homemade scones, Pilsdon jam and butter and cream from our faithful Jersey cows. Bishop Nick also launched our new 2014 calendar, buying the first copy which was hot off the press.



Other news from Pilsdon.....



Our bonfire night celebrations went with a bang this year! Our festivities began with a procession with homemade lanterns from the church to the north barn. On arrival at the barn the fire was lit and everyone enjoyed the warmth of its glow - happily accompanied by hot dogs, beef burgers and doughnuts and a magnificent fireworks display.

The development of the former loose boxes has been progressing very well, as we go to press we are still ahead of schedule. Construction firm BAM, housing charity CRASH and consultancy company EC Harris have maintained incredible momentum on the development from day one. Site manager Tony is an ever present figure to keep everything in order and despite some upheaval there has been minimal disruption to community life. Former community member Dilys Hunt has been keeping a close watching brief on the project and we are hopeful that the new winter quarters for the livestock will be ready by the time you read this article.

