

Summer Newsletter

August 2025

Helen writes:

What's your Pilsdon story? I met someone recently who found out I lived at Pilsdon and then said, 'well, my Pilsdon story is...'. It got me thinking about the hundreds and hundreds of Pilsdon stories that there are out there. We're all linked by the tapestry of the story of Pilsdon, wonky bits and eccentric patterns and all. Some of us have been a part of the Pilsdon Community since the beginnings, some like me are newcomers, some have yet to find their way here.

We are story telling creatures, it's one of the major things which helps us to make sense of the world and what happens to us along the way. Histories, faith stories, anecdotes, all come together to form our collective memory, and inform our sense of where we've come from and where we're going. They reveal what is important to us, what our hopes and fears are. We are entering a period of wanting to invite more people to find *their* Pilsdon story. We want to be welcoming new Guests very soon, and new Volunteers, and new Members, and new Trustees.

You, dear friends of Pilsdon, are a key part of this next bit. We need you to help tell the Pilsdon story. You might not be wanting to come and live at Pilsdon, but your friend or relation, or *their* friend or relation might!



Word of mouth is by far the most effective way to get the story told, and to enable the next generation of Pilsdon folk to find their way here. So tell anyone who'll listen about Pilsdon, about the work we do here, about your connection with it, about this very special place and very special people that make up the community.

Our 'common life of prayer, hospitality and work' is one of laughter, tears, success, wobbles, beauty and plenty of muck. It's a life which has so much to offer, and we want to enable the community to grow and thrive.



So please, tell your Pilsdon story, tell the story of The Pilsdon Community so we can begin the next chapter. Let it reach the ears of people in crisis, who will benefit from this space and the support they need to do the work of healing. Let it reach the ears of people looking to spend some time in community, living and working, and learning new skills together.

Key to this will be finding new Members. We're looking for people whose Christian faith will guide and sustain them and help them to hold this community in love and prayer. People who can bring their life experience and share it with us, and learn from us too. People who have strength of character, and a gentle heart. Maybe you are that person, maybe you know that person, maybe the person you pass this newsletter on to knows that person!



The Pilsdon community stretches out through you far and wide, let's use that network to tell its story and enable those who want to join in the next chapter to find their way here.

FARM TO FORK IN TEN METRES

Mary writes:

We began harvesting from our garden in early May when the first of our peas were picked. At first there were just a few, we ate them podded or as tender mangetout scattered within freshly harvested salads, but then... abundantly, alongside the broad beans that Henry had planted a couple of months earlier. Next came the strawberries, tended and kept free from bindweed by Simon, and then the raspberries. We greedily ate them fresh with the first of the cream from the cows newly milked after they had given birth in June. We needed a small army of people to gather in the vast number of blackcurrants this year, 32 ½ kgs to be precise. Whilst most have been frozen, their summery flavour preserved for the winter months, some became jam and others delicious sorbet.

We are now well in to it: delightful basil which is transformed into punchy pesto (with the help of serious quantities of garlic); courgettes griddled to perfection (no fire alarms so far); potatoes eaten within two hours of being dug up; perfect little carrot thinnings bringing more colour and sweetness to our plates; Jack has battled the slugs and caterpillars to bring us spring cabbage and kale against all the odds. French and Runner beans are now plentiful and the familiar seasonal sight of stringing and slicing them on the bench outside the Aga Room will soon be a daily one. The apples are ripening nicely, as are the over 80 tomato plants. Treasure troves of melons are hiding in the undergrowth, along with the squash and cucumbers, all waiting to be discovered. Beetroot, fennel, celeriac, broccoli, aubergines, chillis, sweet peppers, parsley, dill...the vegetable garden is at its most alive at the moment, and we are really celebrating its goodness.

I took great delight in eating the first pea, the first strawberry, the first broad bean. We ritualised the eating of our first ripe tomatoes, slicing them, salting them a little and sharing the pieces around. These first mouthfuls just the beginning of what has now become an abundance of ordinary miracles; small seeds, compost, water and patience amounting to bowls, jars, plates and freezers full of food to feed us and to share with others.





EUROVISION—Volunteer Ellie made an epic string of flag bunting for Eurovision night in the Library



We are changing the way we collect our on-line donations and will in future be using the church of England recommended organisation called Give a Little. We are incredibly grateful for your support and

for those of you who give regular donations we will be writing to you individually to let you know how to make the change. We will be updating our website soon and any new donations will then be collect through Give a Little.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!



A VISIT FROM OUR MP—EDWARD MORELLO

We were really pleased to meet our new MP, Edward Morello, who came for morning tea break and a wander round to find out more about the community and how he might be able to help us going forward. He is from Bridport, and had heard of Pilsdon, but never been before.

Edward has been our MP since the election last year, so is relatively new in office, and it was good to be able to talk with him about some of the issues that guests and wayfarers face. It's good to be able to build up these relationships so that going forward we can see how he can help us as a community and also individual situations.

The Pilsdon Community constitutes a very large part of the Pilsdon electorate so it was well worth his turning out to woo the voters!



DOWN ON THE FARM

James writes:

Despite my ongoing desire to plan ahead and be on top of things, the farm often throws a curve ball into the mix and brings many surprises. A small window of opportunity opened up to go on holiday before calving began this year but two early births resulted in both calves arriving several days before I got back. It was disappointing to miss such special moments but everyone who stepped in did a great job and both Gordon and Dougal were born happy and healthy.

With 'Willow' being a first time mum this year we did have some concerns about how she'd get on with looking after her calf. Milking can be tricky with new cows at the best of times but is made even more difficult when health issues bring greater sensitivity. The romance of a tranquil moment sitting in the parlour on a quiet summer morning, watching the collected milk rise slowly as the swallows dart aerobatically round the yard, has been somewhat disrupted by Willow's determination to prevent any of the above taking place. With the same level of skill demonstrated in the football during the Euros, Willow has a phenomenally accurate kick which can send a bucket flying across the parlour floor in a split second as soon as you lose concentration. It requires an immense amount of patience and strategising to work through these challenging phases and I admire everyone who's been willing to persevere despite the frustrations during these past few months. We are making some progress though and hopefully, just like her mother 'Foxglove,' she should settle down in time.

Exciting new additions to the farm animals include 4 pigs. We've not had pigs for ages and so it was wonderful to start building a new relationship with a local farmer who can provide as many as we'd like in the future and has been a great source of advice and support. All four are settling in well and enjoying our spare milk and apple peelings.

The sunny weather has been great for getting on with jobs but the grass has suffered, quickly turning brown, and has led to us getting quite creative about what grazes where and how to make the best use of what areas we've got. We were contacted by our friend Betsy, who's been involved in the newly purchased community field in Whitchurch, and asked if we'd like to take their first cut of hay. This was a great collaborative moment, baling, stacking and transporting and has meant that we've been fortunate enough to get some early hay for the animals.





DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Pilsdon's 67th Anniversary
Sunday 19th October
(arrivals for coffee at 11am)

Do let us know if you would like to come
by ringing or emailing the office:

01308 868308

pilsdon@pilsdon.org.uk

A PLACE TO BLOOM

There are many beautiful flowers and plants around Pilsdon, some of which have been carefully planted and some have blown in on the wind. Salena has a small hydrangea plant which hadn't flowered since it came here: "It flowered once, and then I brought it down here and it hadn't been able to flower. I hadn't put much effort into it till this year until Jack put the tea-bags in, and then it flowered. It's found its flower—it had what it needed."

Jack lets us in on some of his gardening secrets: "I put some compost and mixed it with the soil, and I added some root builder—which is just bone, and some tea leaves. They did the trick, and watering it quite regularly. They're quite thirsty, hence the name 'hydrangea' and you have to keep watering it. It will grow bigger than that that, needs a bigger pot. If you want the hydrangeas to grow bigger than that you need to cut out the side flowers, it sends more energy to the hydrangea flowers. It was quite surprising when they started coming up, I really enjoyed that, especially seeing Salena's face when she hadn't seen it flowering!"

It seems a really beautiful representation of the way plants—and people—thrive when they are in the right place, when they have what they need and are given the right love and support. Blooming marvellous.



PILSDON STORIES

Keep an eye out for Pilsdon Stories being shared, to give people an insight into Pilsdon life and encourage those who might come here to join us.

Find us at

 pilsdon.org.uk

 [instagram.com/pilsdoncomm](https://www.instagram.com/pilsdoncomm)

 www.facebook.com/communitypilsdon

 www.youtube.com/@pilsdoncommunity1676

If you have a Pilsdon Story to share get in touch:

pilsdon@pilsdon.org.uk

If you're on social media please do like and share our posts—it really helps them to get seen by a wider audience. We want to reach out as far as possible to make sure that the person who isn't quite sure what they're looking for finds the way to *their* Pilsdon Story.



LYDIA IS A PRIEST!

Lydia Reece, a long time friend of Pilsdon was ordained at Salisbury Cathedral on Saturday 28th July. The Cathedral was packed with people wanting to witness this special moment and support those who were being ordained on this very special day. Lydia invited Helen to the service to join in the 'laying on of hands' on behalf of The Pilsdon Community. At this moment in the service the Bishop lays their hands on the candidate's head and prays for the Holy Spirit to come down on them, and other priests also pray with their hands on the person. It was a real honour to be there with Lydia on such a happy and holy occasion. As you can see Lydia's husband Jimmy and friend Lyndon, both former Pilsdon volunteers were also part of the 'scrum'!

Lydia has since led her first Holy Communion service in Pilsdon church and we were very blessed by it, we look forward to welcoming her back many more times in the future.

INCLUSIVE CHURCH

The Trustees of the Pilsdon Community have voted to apply to join the Inclusive Church Network. The vision of the network fits in very well with the ethos of Pilsdon and we hope that being a part of it will celebrate our commitment to the worth and dignity of everyone who comes here; help us to identify where we have work to do; and raise our profile with those who may one day become a part of the community. *"We believe in inclusive church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate.*

We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neuro-diversity, or sexuality.

We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ."

www.inclusive-church.org



*Thank you Amanda for all that you have done over the years for and with us at The Pilsdon Community. And for all you **will** do because we know that you will continue to be a good and faithful friend of Pilsdon.*

SOLSTICE

We celebrated the summer solstice with supper in the yard around a midsummer fire—we didn't need the heat but there is something special about gathering around a fire nonetheless!

We have very much enjoyed eating outside during the summer months, many of you reading this will I'm sure have fond memories of lunch in the garden. The turning of the seasons reveals treasure upon treasure in the world around us and we are blessed to be able to stop and notice them.



A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR OF TRUSTEES...

Amanda Streatfeild, Chair of Trustees, writes:

I write this last newsletter as Chair of Trustees. I hand over to Chris Stoot in the autumn and I know that he and Els, Kathy and Tim will continue to work as a fantastic team. I took over from the leadership of Andy Davey who has been a great support to me and Pilsdon since then with project managing the new cabin build and volunteering during our 'interregnum'. I hope that as I step down as Chair, I can continue to be a cog in the wheel of help and support that keeps Pilsdon going. Living only three miles away, they will find it difficult to keep me away! I will leave Chris to introduce himself at the Anniversary, but the Community will be blessed with the leadership of a very special person.

God bless us all.