



Sharing a common life of prayer, hospitality and work



Easter Newsletter April 2025

*Helen writes:*

I remember being told a few years back a story about someone overhearing a supermarket conversation about Easter which ended up with a wondering along the lines of “well, it’s a lot of fuss really over a few eggs isn’t it?!”

As a holiday Easter is a little bit of a harder sell than say Christmas, everyone can appreciate the miracle of a baby. Easter takes us to the darkest of places, and you can’t really make sense of the rest of the story without that. Holy week and Easter is a really rich time of the Church year and the Pilsdon experience is a rich one too as we are able to move through the season together. Last year we carried palms round the yard, ate a Maundy Thursday supper in church and then celebrated communion on the same table, we walked the stations of the cross around the site in the pouring rain, we woke early on Easter to meet the rising sun as we celebrated the resurrection. And yes, we had Easter eggs! We’ll be doing it all again this year - being able to fully experience Holy Week in this way is something very special, and one of the gifts of living and worshipping in community as we do.

Eggs are quite prominent on my mind at the moment – but it doesn’t actually have anything to do with Easter! As mentioned in the last newsletter, we welcomed a new flock of hens at the end of last year. They have settled in well, and been laying like nobody’s business. A couple of weeks after they’d arrived I asked Henry how many eggs we’d had one day. “Twenty one,” he replied, “ which is strange, seeing as we’ve only got twenty chickens.”





So with twenty eggs arriving every day (give or take), we have been enjoying all sorts of egg based meals and goodies. To name but a few: egg fried rice, spaghetti carbonara, pancakes, toad in the hole, omelettes, cakes, ice cream, custard, frittata, as well as eggs fried, scrambled, poached, and boiled (Adam offers four or eight minute egg options for Thursday breakfast). Keep an eye out for our new cookbook: 'The Pilsdon Community's 1001 ways to cook an egg'.

While we were without chickens we had quite the opposite problem, and had to make sure we were buying in enough eggs to see us through our usual pattern of meals, plus extras for baking etc. There were several mayday calls when people were due to come in and see us, to please

pick up three dozen eggs en route. It has made us all the more grateful for the abundance now it is here. Even when we suddenly seem to have 90 eggs stacked up that need something doing with them!

Lent and Easter are seasons which remind us that sometimes life is stretched and resources are scarce, and other times we can be almost swamped by the abundance around us. Swamped by love with no beginning and no end, by the kindness and support that we share with one another, by Spring doing it's thing and pushing forth shoots and life bursting out all around us in a quite outrageous way.

We're quietly preparing the ground here, trusting in God's abundance and making space for those who are already here to grow, and for those yet to come to put down roots and join in this life - which is sometimes stretched, often challenging, but always rooted in loving kindness.



## FARMYARD TALES

*Ellie writes:*

Since taking over the managing of the Farm here at Pilsdon in January, I've been feeling a mix of emotions. Excitement and happiness, but also that little voice of imposter syndrome in the background saying, "oh dear, you're in way over your head!". The excitement comes from my love for animals and an eagerness to learn everything I can about how to care for them, make them thrive and just a curiosity about this new farming world I'm entering. The imposter syndrome comes from the worry that I'll not be as good as previous people in this role, and I still have a lot to learn.



But what I try to remind myself (and several people here remind me too!) is that everyone has to start somewhere. You learn and you grow by doing, by experiencing things for the first time and seeing what went well and what could have been a bit smoother.

Previous farm managers kept meticulous notes and advice, filled out diaries with what tasks were completed on what day and giant wall calendars to see the year as a whole. Therefore, I'm in an incredibly fortunate position where if I ever get worried about "ahh when are we supposed to give that vaccine to the sheep!", I can look back at Pilsdon past and have the support and confidence of those who were here before me.

This is one of the many reasons that Pilsdon is such a special place. People who come to live, volunteer or stay as a wayfarer, are not only supported by the people who are here – but the history and core heart of the community that continues to be enriched and grows every day.



So I may not be a professional farmer with years of experience, but I'm building up my knowledge and confidence each day, with the support of everyone here and everyone who has been here.

And finally, here's a terrible joke for you...

Why do cows have hooves instead of feet?

Because they lactose! (bad-dum-tis)



## GIVE A LITTLE



We have a new donation partner 'Give A Little' helping us with our cashless donations. We are so grateful for all our supporters. If you would like to give a one off, or a regular donation go to [pilsdon.org.uk](https://pilsdon.org.uk) and click on the 'Make a Donation' tab.

## COME AND SEE US AT



**16<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**Millenium Green and Bucky Doo Square Bridport**

**9.30am-3.00pm**



## NOTES FROM THE GARDEN

*Bob writes:*

Seeds are worth more than their weight in gold! That's what I discovered when I made the comparison having spent some time in the greenhouse sowing seeds and wondering at the price of some specialist varieties. I was keen to try a cherry tomato called Sweet Aperitif, superb taste and yielding five hundred fruits per plant! I failed to register how many seeds per pack when I ordered the seed and thought there was a mistake somewhere in the packing process when I only found ten seeds in the packet.



There are approximately four hundred tomato seeds per gram so if I were to buy one gram of Sweet Aperitif it would cost me £160 (£3.99 for 10 Thomson & Morgan seeds) whereas one gram of gold would be only £123. Back in the garden, in the real world, we have recently planted our early potatoes, more seed potatoes than a man can lift for under £50 ! Bargain.



Also under the soil we have broad beans, over-wintered garlic, white and red onions, and in the polytunnel spinach, carrots and various salad bits. The greenhouse is filling up with a range of flowers, vegetables and herbs which are yet to germinate but we hope will yield strong viable plants to plant out as soon as conditions come right. Please watch and wait to see how we do. It will be hard to beat the natural beauty and abundance that surrounds us here, the meadow by the church is a picture in the morning sun with the wild daffodils in flower.

Returning to my opening statement, yes, seeds are worth more than gold at any price – what can you do with a gram of gold?



## MEMBER RECRUITMENT – WE NEED YOUR HELP

We have a solid trinity of Members in Ellie, Bob, and Helen, but we do need to find more! We need your help to spread the word about Pilsdon, I firmly believe that word of mouth is our strongest tool. We are looking for people who:

- Are looking for their next adventure
- Can commit to coming and living in community for a few years
- Are mature and inclusive in their Christian faith
- Are practically minded and willing to try new things
- Are resilient and resourceful
- Want to help people, animals, and plants bloom and grow
- Don't take themselves too seriously – a sense of fun is an asset

If that sounds like you, get in touch! Or maybe that sounds like someone you know, tell them about Pilsdon – sow the seeds and see what blooms.

**Thank you for your support, we couldn't keep going without it.**



**DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:**

**Pilsdon's 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2026 – Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October**





## PILSDON PANCAKE PANDEMONIUM!

The calendar in the aga room is marked with the high days and holy days of the Pilsdon year. High up there in the list of feast is Shrove Tuesday – pancake day. We had a grand old time with pancakes three ways over the course of lunch *and* supper. The pancake race took place on three legs over an obstacle course again (you can get a pancake’s eye view on our Instagram and Facebook pages), much to the bemusement of the bovine onlookers. Ellie and Dan were victorious! And of course there was some flipping good flipping of pancakes up onto the roof. We didn’t manage any record breaking throws

this year, but it was good to have a bit of fun on a grey February day. Plenty of time to get in training for next year!

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## LENT

We have been exploring Lent using our five senses this year, watching part of ‘The Chosen’, listening to pieces of music which we have a spiritual connection with and the Pilsdon soundscape, working with clay, making bread to eat, and mixing aromatherapy oils for hand lotion (lots of hard working hands round here!). Lent is a very embodied season, and this has been a slightly different way to ready ourselves to enter into the story of Easter again.





## **EASTER AT PILSDON**

### **Maundy Thursday**

Holy Communion at 8pm

### **Good Friday**

Stations of The Cross 12 noon

Meditations in the church from 1-3pm

### **Easter Sunday**

Dawn Service 5.30am

## **A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR OF TRUSTEES...**

*Chris Stoot, Chair of Trustees writes:*

I am often asked “what does a Trustee do?” or “what is the role of the Chair of Trustees”. The answer is never a simple one and, dare I say it, the answer is usually jumbled. However, ultimately the Trustees are accountable for the Charity’s governance, finances and overall direction whilst making sure that it adhere’s to the founding principles always acting in the best interests of the Charity. The overall management of finances is key, avoiding risk and responsibly managing resources. The Chair acts as lead for the Trustees giving leadership for the board and acting as the link between the board and the Warden

The above is a technical answer. It is usually the case that the Board of Trustees of a charity meet quarterly to carry out their duties, often with minimal contact between those meetings. But, that is most definitely not the Pilsdon way. We, as a quorum, are involved in the day to day activities of the Community carrying out a variety of duties including overnight or longer stays, cooking meals, chatting and getting to know the Members, guests and



wayfarers. We are very much hands on and certainly not strangers at Pilsdon. That is partly why it is such a great honour to be a Trustee of Pilsdon.

In the early part of the year we have an Away Day. This is where the Warden, Operations Manager, Members and Trustees gather off site, not to discuss day to day issues, rather to openly and comfortably talk about how we are feeling and faring both as individuals as well as collectively together. This year the day was facilitated by Rev Jonathan Herbert from Hilfield Friary. This is not a minuted meeting but, what I can say is that it brings us closer together as a team with mutual personal respect and understanding. Whilst doing our normal duties we look after and support each other and we build as we go. I have a huge amount of respect and admiration for every member of our team and I have every confidence we will support the Community into a healthy future.

With blessings to all who read this newsletter and to all our supporters. We are truly grateful for everything that you do for the Community.

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## **PILSDON STORIES**

*Tim Collings, who lived at Pilsdon from 2021-2023, writes:*

I was born into a Salvation Army family in 1980. My parents were officers, but I grew up with my brother, sister, mother and stepdad. With both dads being bandmasters, it was inevitable that I had a tenor horn on my lips from the age of four! Tragically, I lost my brother, Justin, when I was just eight and he was thirteen, in horrific circumstances.

At 13, I felt called by the Lord and went to the mercy seat. I left that meeting saying, "What am I supposed to do? Aren't I too young?" From that point on, my life was on a downward spiral, starting with tobacco and alcohol and soon leading to various illegal drugs and risky behaviour. I became involved in the festival scene and music industry. Although I was successful and wealthy, I was a party animal and a waster. I tried rehab and other therapies to no avail.





I came back to Devon, getting into a non-Christian marriage. That's when my poor mental health started to manifest in obvious ways. I was sectioned, diagnosed as having bipolar disorder and put on heavy medication. I got divorced. My drug-taking became extreme. I was written off by everybody – doctors, families, friends, ministers. The state said I would never work again. How I didn't die we do not know. One day I got on my knees and prayer "Lord, what shall I do?" The answer came: Christian community.

I found the Pilsdon Community, a haven with a farm and a chapel, it was the perfect place to heal away from the pressures of life and the past. I milked cows and shepherded sheep. I spent two clean years working on me and praying about my future. My relationship with God improved, leading to almost getting baptized, but I felt I wanted to make the commitment via the Salvation Army.

I moved back in with my mother. I began cleaning the local Wetherspoon, which progressed to running my own business. I came off all medication due to a change of diagnosis to Complex PTSD. However, that's all immaterial compared to what is actually important – what about my soul? On Covenant Sunday last year, I felt called again at Newton Abbot Corps. I went forward with the words in my head: 'All to Jesus I surrender, all to thee I freely give'. Momentum gathered from that point.

I met a Christian lady, Helen. We got married and I became Dad to her son. We now attend Plymouth Exeter Hall Whiteleigh, where I lead worship on piano. This year we will be enrolled as soldiers. What a miraculous transformation! All I can say is it started with prayer.

*This story was originally shared by Tim in the Salvationist, the Salvation Army newspaper.*



We would like to invite you to share *your* 'Pilsdon Story'  
(anonymously if you wish).  
If you'd be interested please email: [pilsdon@pilsdon.org.uk](mailto:pilsdon@pilsdon.org.uk)



*An aerial view of Pilsdon taken by Chris,  
our chair of trustees with his new toy drone camera.  
He's a great photographer so we look forward to more from him!*



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