

August 2023



50p

Life



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LIFE MAGAZINE EDITOR

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Articles for the September edition are due **Sunday 13th August**

Editorial Notes

At the end of June, the ordination of our benefices new curate Rachel Pengelly (among others) was held in Wells Cathedral with barely an empty seat. For me it was a memorable occasion and good to share the experience, and afterwards I captured the photo on the back cover of Rachel and her documents/certificate duly received.

We see more of Rachel on the front cover at the July Benefice Service in Compton Dundon, and you can read Pat's account of the service plus a photo of the music group on page 20.

You can read of more activity at Compton Dundon on pages 15/16 in Helen Thomas's 'wilder churchyards' article, and the busy volunteers can be seen on the back cover.

The final collage of pictures was taken at July's afternoon teas (page 17). Roger.



Trinity Handbells are out and about. On Saturday 26th August we will be entertaining the visitors at the East Somerset Railway on Cranmore Station before the departure of the 11am, 11.45am, and 12.30pm trains.

This is part of the Bank Holiday Weekend of family fun. Roger.



Rector's Letter

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” Psalm chapter 139 verses 13, 14a.

Dear Friends,

I am writing in the immediate aftermath of the tragic death of an 8-year-old London schoolgirl killed by a car which crashed into the school grounds. These events are always utterly shocking, and the death of any child is devastating.

This incident occurred during the Diocesan led week of prayer for children and young people making it all the more poignant.

I often hear within the church the comment along the lines of ‘why do we see so few children in church these days?’ It is a good question to which there are both simple and more complex responses. The stark reality is that children no longer flood through our doors as they perhaps used to a generation or two ago. We live in post Christendom times with many families having little church or Christian background. This, of course, reminds us of the gospel imperative that we are to proclaim Jesus across our nation.

Whether our children are some of the 5% who do come into our buildings or the 95% who do not, all are fearfully and wonderfully made; individuals who God longs to see turn to him.

Whilst the days of assuming crowds of children in our Sunday Schools or pews may be no more, we still have many opportunities to share Good News with new generations in our communities, whether in Messy Church, Open the Book, our local schools or other community events.

As well as taking Good News to the next generations, I have been recently challenged again to be prepared to hear Good News from them also. At a recent Mission Church service, we shared a Tearfund video of Christian young people talking passionately and clearly about issues that were important to them including climate change.

This Summer, our children and young people, released from school will have more time on their hands; time to talk, will we give them the time to be heard?

With my love and prayers, Ana



Summer Reading

Many people use the opportunity of the slightly quieter summer weeks to pick up a book whether that be whilst lazing on the beach, watching the rain lash down from out of a holiday window or just at home!

Why not, this year make that a Christian book, be that a book of the bible or some of the new books being written all the time by Christian authors? Maybe you have a book in mind, but if you would like a suggestion or two, perhaps consider 'the ruthless elimination of hurry' by John Mark Comer or 'How to pray' by Pete Greig, two books I have certainly benefitted from.

If you do choose a book, consider writing a review for a future edition of Life.

Happy reading.

Ana Lawrence

As you read this you may well be putting your feet up and having a well-earned rest from school, work or even church! Summer is a time for taking things a little easier and making space for rest and relaxation. But of course, many continue to work hard to make such recreation possible for us! We may want to take a moment to value all those who make our holidays possible. There's always room to say, 'thank you!'

You will be aware that I recently had the opportunity of taking a little time out for some sabbatical. Howard and I spent a month walking the Via Di Francesco, a pilgrimage walk, in the footsteps of St Francis, in Italy. We walked some 140 miles from Rome to Assisi, using local transport for the other 40 or 50 miles along the way. We took our time, not least because of the wear and tear on our hips and knees as we went up and down steep gradients. In addition, it gave us room to notice things along the way.

It is often the small, seemingly insignificant things which can get overlooked as we travel through life isn't it. How many of us make the time to 'stand and stare' as William Davies puts it in his poem, 'Leisure'? So, I found myself discovering new

meaning in the unexpected moments of pause that the walk brought us. The brief conversation with Destiny, a refugee, whilst we waited at a bus stop, who generously shared his bus tickets

with us. The awareness of the world of creation around us – birdsong; the quill of a porcupine on the path; a family of wild pigs running through wheat fields. The kindness and hospitality of strangers. Encountering God in new people and places.

During this month, when perhaps the business of your life is stilled a little, are you expecting to encounter God? Will he need to break in or interrupt you, or how might you intentionally make time for him? Where might you notice the glimpses of God in the world around and hear his voice speaking into your experience?

I hope that this summer you will experience not only the rest and recreational power of a good holiday but also the space to renew your relationship with God. Along with the writer to the Ephesians, I pray 'that you may have the power to comprehend, ...what is the breadth and length and height and depth,' of God's love for you.

With love and prayers +Ruth

Farewell to Diana

As you will all be aware, Reverend Diana Greenfield will be moving on soon to a new post in North Wales. As a benefice, we will formally bid farewell to Diana on Sunday 27th August 3pm in the Parish Church, Street. We will begin with a service, at which Diana will preach and this will be followed by a BBQ if the weather is good. In the event of bad weather being forecast, we will change this to a bring and share inside the church. Do come if you can, to say goodbye to our pioneer minister and please put the date in your diary. Ana Lawrence

Better than good news!

I think that good news is always encouraging, positive and what we need to hear more of. Well perhaps I have some good news to share.

But to introduce the idea let me start with a question. If we were to take out from any of the Gospels all the miracles that Jesus did, what would be left? I haven't got a precise answer, but I think a lot would go! Wherever Jesus goes, making people whole and healing seem to be at the top of his to do list. Healings come in so many various ways, each unique to the people he meets. Jesus sees this as meeting the needs of all, so they can find their way to knowing God better. This is his way of bringing in God's Kingdom. This enthusiasm for healing is continued by the early church where we hear of elders going out to those who are sick and anointing them with oil. It is an essential ministry that brought so much to so many. Does it still happen today? We don't seem to see this as often, but in various churches Christians seek God's touch to bring relief for others. A Diocesan team work with churches to offer this ministry. Here in Street, Walton and Compton Dundon we do pray for others, both in our services and through prayer support. I feel now could be the time to listen to God and seek to extend this, giving it a higher profile. What does this mean? Well, I'm not entirely sure and I am seeking guidance. Should we be offering the laying on of hands at some of our services? Perhaps? The reason for writing something about healing and wholeness is to ask what we in this benefice see God asking us to do? Is this the time to step out and take action, or wait to see what God is asking us to do?

So I am writing to seek your insights. It will be easy to pass this by and say it is for someone else. Please reflect and pray about healing and wholeness, would you want this for yourself? Not necessarily now, today, but in the months to come? If the answer

is yes, then what should we do? So many questions, but the answers are not always clear.

So what might you do? Share your reflections, ideally with me. Written, verbal, whatever. But don't leave it to others. May God challenge us, perhaps even call us to do new things in his name. Skills needednone. The Holy Spirit equips as we go!

David Hatrey



Ways to Give

The  Diocese have launched a new resource, which allows parishes to bring together all the options for giving in one place. 'Ways to Give' is an online portal, where you can find details of all the different ways in which you can financially support the life and ministry of your church.

At SWCD Churches we have pioneered this resource and you can find links to our 'Ways to Give' pages on a banner page on our church website. If you are online why not check it out?

Can I highlight two particular ways that you can support your church, absolutely free, both of which are featured on the 'Ways to Give' pages.

Easyfundraising. A site for those that buy online. Thousands of retailers will make a charity donation for each purchase you make, at no cost to you. If you register and nominate your parish as the beneficiary, donations will be collected and sent to your church automatically.

Gift Aid. We featured this in the church recently and, if you are a taxpayer and have not yet gifted your donations, please consider doing so and increasing their value by 25% for free!

Kevin Lawrence

For the benefice stewardship team

CHARITABLE GIVING 2023

Each year, each of our Parochial Church Councils decide on charities we will support, based on recommendations from church members.

During 2023, we are delighted to be supporting the following organisations through our giving:

Compton Dundon

CHARIS, a charity working with refugees, based in Taunton,
The Childrens Society a national Christian charity supporting children

Walton

Mission Without Borders, an international Christian charity
Youth With a Future, a local Christian charity working with the homeless

Zimbabwe homeless support with Annie Makoni

Street

Tearfund, a Christian international development charity
Premier Christian Radio, A UK based Christian broadcaster
In addition, as a benefice, we will be supporting and partnering with our link parish of Mfuwe in Zambia, as part of our Diocesan Zambian link.

It was great to be able to share 'up to the minute' prayer requests from Mfuwe as part of 'Zambia Sunday' in each of our churches on July 2 (through the power of modern communication methods!) and we hope to feature more of our supported charities in our services and elsewhere. However, to do that well, we need people to act as links between the charities and our churches, for example to gather and share information and prayer requests. Is this something you could consider doing for one or more of the charities above? If so, please do get in touch. Finally, a reminder that we are considering running a benefice trip to Zambia, to visit our link parish as well as enjoying the fantastic game reserve in which it is based. If you are interested

in discussing the possibility of joining the trip, which we have pencilled in for June 2024, please contact me as soon as possible so we know whether such a trip is viable.

Kevin Lawrence. For the benefice Charitable giving group

Compton Dundon Events Group

Our St Andrew's Church Events group meets monthly to discuss planned and proposed events. Some are intended as social occasions, for example 'CAMEO' ('Come And Meet Each Other') on the first Wednesday of the month, or a Cream Tea in the Village Hall.

Other events, whilst being fun and entertaining, are also fundraisers for the church and invaluable sources of income.

Two such events, the 'Jive Aces' evening that raised money towards the bell restoration project, and our church stall at the village Coronation Fete. This year we also welcomed Gregory Steward to perform a musical concert in church. Last weekend many villagers and visitors enjoyed the Open Gardens afternoon. Events to suit all tastes!

Looking ahead, we have another Cream Tea on September 2nd and a Barn Dance at the end of that month. Later in the year is our now famed 'Big Breakfast' and the Christmas Market in church in December.

St Andrew's is grateful to all those who work so hard to sustain this programme of events.

We are always keen to welcome new members, so if this is for you, do come along to the next meeting or speak to Pat King about joining the group. The Events group dates are published in the weekly 'Lifeline' and Pat can be contacted on 01458 274926 for further details. Thank you. Pat

My Faith Journey

I have been a Christian for over 60 years now. I was very fortunate to be brought up in a Christian home. I was surrounded by people to guide me in the Christian faith.

God has seen me through the worst of times. In the space of two or three years my marriage broke down, then I had breast cancer for the first time. Then my mother died. This gave me the opportunity to move to Street and start a new life. I know God brought me here.

One of the promises God gave me at that time was: 'But now the Lord, who created you, O Israel, says, Don't be afraid for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name. You are mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through the rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression you will not be burnt up- the flames will not consume you.'

Those words were typed up and put on my bedroom wall – and they are still on my bedroom wall. He kept his promises.

When I had breast cancer for the second time, I knew God had allowed this to happen, and if he had then he had a good reason for it. When I accepted that I was filled with God's peace.

God speaks to me in several ways. From the Bible, sermons, hymns and the 'still small voice'. One line from a Graham Kendrick hymn always makes me smile – 'He turns our weaknesses into his opportunities'. It makes me realise what an enormous opportunity I present Him!

More recently: A few months ago, I was in the bathroom cleaning my teeth. I realised I hadn't put my watch on. Knowing I'm quite capable of forgetting all about it in the few steps from the bathroom to the lounge I recited over and over 'put your watch on, put your watch on'. A voice intruded on my thoughts asking "What are you doing?" I replied "I'm reminding myself to put my watch on."

"You could just ask me."

"But you are Almighty God – you have universes to govern. You can't have the time to help with such a tiny little detail in my life!"

"But I like being involved in the details."

You would think after having been a Christian for so many years I would have realised that!

On Good Friday I went to the Salvation Army for their service in the morning. We reached the stage of Jesus in the garden. I had my eyes closed as I pictured the scene, felt a little of what Jesus must have felt. He knew what he was to go through. He must for a time have been overwhelmed by the horrors he was to endure. Then the still small voice broke into my thoughts. "And then I thought of you." It really brought that message right into my heart. Yes, I knew He'd died for me – but for the whole world. This brought it right back to just Him and me. It took it being personal to a whole new level.

I really love the still small voice. He takes his message straight into my heart.

What have I learnt over the last few years? Life is a lot easier if you let God into the detail. And His love for me is so great that he suffered death on the cross and Hell just for me. Yes for everyone – but I'm not a number in millions or billions. He did it for me, because of his great love for me. He's always there for me – and always keeps his promises.

I look forward to what He's going to teach me next.

Jenny Attewell.

Walton Matters

Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour, talking with Jesus....

Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."....

A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.". When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

Luke. Ch 9. V's 30 &33-36.

Sunday 20th August.

We are holding a cream tea in Walton village hall from 3-5 pm. This is a community event so we hope as many as possible will come and meet with each other over delicious scones, jam and cream. It would help us considerably if we have an idea of numbers so please let Sandra or Liz know, or pop your name down on the list on the table just inside of Church. As a village there are lots of social groups so it will be good to get together occasionally and support each other.

Saturday 23rd September.

We are hosting a barn dance at the village hall with 'Rough Round the Edges' playing for us so we are guaranteed a great evening. This will give you chance to practice ahead of Compton Dundon's harvest supper and barn dance the week after. Lots of fun to be had with a supper provided. Bring your own drinks. Tickets will be available from the 4 churches, Andy Savage, Liz Selway and Sandra Gristock. Book quickly as the hall will have limited capacity for dancing. Looking forward to seeing you there for a spin around the floor.

Our Eco Churchyard

After our no mow May again this year we are thrilled to see yellow rattle and pyramid orchids growing again in the uncut area. So exciting to see plants that used to be around, appearing again when given a chance. I know the eco group had a look around to see what else is appearing so we look forward to hearing from them at some point. Sandra Gristock

Flower rota.

12th August. Sandra Gristock

26th August. Wedding.

Wilder Churchyards, St Andrew's

What joy and pleasure this project has brought to so many people! Comments from the many visitors from far and wide who visited the churchyard as part of the Village's Open Gardens only served to re-enforce this as we were overwhelmed with positive comments about the wilder areas of our churchyard.

Buoyed with enthusiasm following such encouraging remarks a group of us met in the churchyard armed with strimmers and rakes to assess which areas would benefit from a July cut.

On inspection it was quickly realised that most areas could in fact be left for at least another month if not longer.

Pyramidal orchids, ox-eyed daisies and yellow loosestrife were amongst the flowers still in bloom and with possibly more to follow. Another area which superficially looked ready for a cut was alive with brown butterflies, soldier beetles, ladybirds and other insects. The seed heads in this area would provide welcome food for birds too.

The team did set to work on two areas and it will be interesting to see what plants might appear later in the summer in the shorter grass.

The cut grass was raked off to reduce the fertility of the soil and the cuttings were heaped to make a wildlife habitat. Hopefully the slow worms will quickly discover this!

What proved to be a most enjoyable couple of hours ended with a very welcome glass of village cider or lemonade, pasties and gingerbread.

It is incredible what plants and the attendant insect and bird life have appeared in the churchyard at St Andrew's in this first summer of keeping a few areas "wild".

Plant Stall

This was another very successful venture at St Andrew's and again appreciated by villagers and the many visitors to the church. Over £250 was raised.

A huge and heartfelt thank you to all those who have helped initiate and supported these projects. Helen Thomas.

Pudding Party

On Sunday 6th August between 4 and 6pm, Kevin and I will once again be hosting the annual pudding party in the Rectory Garden. The idea is that you bring along a pudding (shop bought or home-made is fine) to share. If you have a garden chair, please also bring this and pray for good weather. Looking forward to seeing many of you there.

Ana Lawrence

Craft and Afternoon Tea

During our July Afternoon Tea Time we welcomed Jenny Collins into the Mission Church. Jenny arrived with lots of craft ideas, involving paint and accessories to decorate. Some of the finished results were really creative. After the craft activity we had a cup of tea and some cake while we chatted to each other.

On the third Thursday afternoon in August, at 2-30pm, Kay Savage will be telling us about 'Life as a Vet'. Everyone is welcome to come along.

Afternoon Tea

Thursday 17th August

2-30pm

Mission Church

Street

Kay savage will be telling us about

'LIFE AS A VET'

Followed by

Tea, cake and time to talk to each other

Reshaping the Glastonbury Deanery – the shared local ministry plan

At these difficult times, the Diocese of Bath & Wells is experiencing challenging financial circumstances which mean every deanery is reevaluating how ministry is effectively conducted and how clergy are deployed. This Deanery needs to reduce from 6.5 stipendiary ministers to five by 2027. The aim is to submit a proposal to the Diocese by the end of January 2024 to meet the Diocesan timetable. This is not a 'numbers game' but about trying to find opportunities to do things differently that meet today's context and build for the future. We will also explore the role of lay ministry and how to use people's talents more effectively.

Over the last few months, we have gathered data on parishes and sought opinions from the active congregations. A small working group has been created to discuss the findings in detail. This group is a balance of laity and clergy, rural and urban, larger and smaller benefices to represent the Deanery at large and not to argue for one parish over another or any particular vested interest. The group will provide the Deanery Synod with options by the end of October, which Synod Representatives will take to PCCs for consideration, with agreement on which one to take forward in December. This option will be developed into a proposal for the bishop.

This will be challenging. We must all be sensitive to the fact that people's jobs are being discussed as we consider how best to sustain our current congregations and develop God's commission to spread His gospel of salvation. There is no right or satisfactory answer and some hard decisions will be made. What we ask for is your constructive support and prayers as we undertake this work.

Charles Hunt (MOMMS benefice) Glastonbury Deanery Synod Representative

New Members evening

It's been great to welcome a number of new people to our churches over the past few months. In the early Autumn, we will be hosting a 'new members evening', an opportunity to more formally welcome those who have joined us and to share something of the vision, life and ministry of SWCD churches. If you have completed one of our welcome cards, you will receive an invitation shortly. If you haven't yet filled in a card, please pick one up in our churches and hand it to a steward or warden.

Ana Lawrence

Accommodation Needed

A single lady from one of our churches is looking for rented accommodation from the middle of September ideally in Street or within easy access. She is working and can pay a reasonable rent. If you or someone you know can help, please contact the church office in the first instance and we will arrange to make the introductions. Ana Lawrence

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OPEN GARDENS RETURNS TO THE VILLAGE

Visitors came from across the county to enjoy the eight gardens that were open in Compton Dundon village on Sunday, July 9th, and we were blessed with a delightful sunny afternoon. Over £2000 was raised, which will go towards the Bell Appeal, the fund set up to restore the bells in St Andrew's Church.

The gardens were all beautiful, reflecting (no doubt) weeks of preparation, and it was clear they were widely enjoyed. They varied in style and design, providing interest and contrast for our visitors. Cakes, teas, squash, cream teas and Pimms were all on offer, and clearly appreciated. Great thanks is due to everyone who helped to make it a successful day, and in particular to those who so generously opened their gardens. Anon.

Welcome to Rachel

On Sunday, July 16th the Benefice community of four churches came together for a Communion Service in St Andrew's, Compton Dundon.

We were delighted to welcome our new Curate, Rachel Pengelly, and her family. She described her personal journey of faith and an insight into what she would like to achieve during her three years here. We very much look forward to sharing all that she has to offer.

As usual in Benefice services a group of musicians (who call themselves 'The Benefice Band!') enjoyed leading the worship with a rousing selection of hymns that everyone evidently enjoyed singing and they certainly enjoyed playing.

Following coffees in Church we took our picnics into the marquee or out on to the grass behind the building, with its far reaching views. It was lovely to have the opportunity to chat to those known, and others newly met.

We look forward to the next time we will all be worshipping together.
Pat King.



New Chalice Assistants

At our July PCC's the following people named below were approved to serve as chalice assistants – most for 'public' worship and some for 'general' worship. Most of our chalice assistants have recently done a refresher training session (in May or June this year) following the Covid break when we were unable to offer communion in two kinds

For Public Worship Services only

Catherine Atkins, Jeff Brewer, Diane Gray, Helen Thomas,
Peter Axhorn, Trish Cox,
Yvonne Guerin, Carol Brewer, Sonia Beaty, Val Lake, Delyth
Wride, Amanda Swift,
Gill Attwell, Angela Reeve, Pauline Atkins.

General Permission (for public worship services and taking the sacrament to people in their home)

Hilda Grint, Suzie Williams, Michael Bell, Sandra Gristock,
Linda Wilson

We are so grateful for those members of SWCD Churches who offer this ministry. Please pray for them as they help us to worship God, love our community and grow in faith.

Ana Lawrence

What is Eco Church?

In last month's Life you may have noticed references to Eco Church. It is some time since our Benefice embarked on this project, over time we have spoken to individuals and groups in our churches about what we are doing, this is a brief explanation of Eco Church and a summary of our journey.

The Eco Church Award Scheme for churches in England and Wales was developed by A Rocha UK, a Christian Environmental Charity, in alliance with others. The 3 levels of Award are Bronze, Silver and Gold. To qualify for an Award a Church must reach a required standard in each of 5 areas of church life, these are:

Worship and teaching

- Management of church buildings
- Management of church land
- Community and global engagement
- Lifestyle

The Award recognises what we are already doing; the Eco Church website provides resources giving support and advice. Eco Church is provided free of charge to help churches to celebrate what they're doing to care for the environment and to decide what to tackle next. A Rocha UK is also involved in other schemes aimed at showing Christian care for the environment. My involvement arose from a course at Sarum College where I was introduced to Ecotheology. In discussions I was challenged to turn my studies into something practical. Following attendance at a Diocesan Eco Church day in 2018 I approached Street and Walton PCCs with a proposal that we work towards applying for an Eco Church Award. Suzie (Street) and Sandra (Walton) joined me and the group was formed. We worked together and were granted a Bronze Award for each Church in April 2020. Compton Dundon joined in November 2020 and achieved a Bronze Award in July 2021, now we are working towards a Silver Award. Our group members are: Compton Dundon: Trish Cox, Helen Thomas, Walton: Sandra Gristock, Andy Savage, Street: Suzie Williams, Sue Ripley. New members welcome.

Sue Ripley (Street) for Eco Church Group

Bank Holiday Walk

Monday August 28th



Meet at the Mission Church

Car park at 10am



**For a short benefice walk along
some of Street's footpaths,
lanes, and green spaces**

(Dogs on leads please)

After which we will enjoy free

Tea/Coffee Biscuits/Cake

Leader Roger Harmsworth

I am a member of God's own family

'... WE ARE NOW MEMBERS OF GOD'S OWN FAMILY ...'
1 Peter 1:3TLB

God wanted a family, so He created you to be part of it. Our families here on earth are wonderful but fragile, often broken by divorce, distance, growing old, and inevitably – death. On the other hand our spiritual family will continue throughout eternity. That family is a much stronger union, a more permanent bond than any of our blood relationships.

The moment we were born into God's family we were given some incredible advantages: the family name, the family likeness, family privileges, family access, and the family inheritance. Paul writes: '... I want you to realize what a rich and glorious inheritance He has given to His people' (Ephesians 1:18 NLT).

What exactly does that inheritance include?

- First: we get to live with God forever (1 Thessalonians 5:10).
- Second: we will be completely changed to be like Christ (1 John 3:2).
- Third: we will be free from all pain, death, and suffering (Revelation 21:4).
- Fourth: we will be rewarded and assigned positions of honour and service in the greatest of all worlds (Mark 9:41).

What an inheritance! You are far richer than you realize. What is waiting for you beyond this life is priceless, pure, permanent, and protected. Nobody can take it from you; it cannot be destroyed by war, a poor economy or a natural disaster. Your eternal inheritance, not retirement, is what you should be working toward and excited about.

Anytime you feel worthless, unloved, or insecure, pause and remind yourself: 'I am a member of God's own family.'

*From the daily readings in 'The Word for Today'. This booklet of devotional readings is published every three months and is available free of charge through the generosity of supporters, from: UCB Operations Centre, Westport Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 4JF.
Tel: 0845 60 40 401. Email: ucb@ucb.co.uk*

