

S<sub>outh</sub> E<sub>ast</sub> D<sub>U</sub> rham M<sub>ethodist</sub>

# NEWSLETTER

for Bowburn, Shincliffe and  
Elvet Methodists

Sedum:  
a family of  
small plants  
with fleshy  
leaves,  
found on  
rock or bare  
ground.



“....I tell you  
Peter; you are  
a rock, and  
on this rock  
foundation I  
will build my  
church.....”

OCT. - NOV. 08

*A letter from our Minister*

*Dear Friends,*

After more than 35 years of writing “The Minister’s Letter”, or its equivalent, for church magazines, I can testify that one of the most dispiriting things about writing such pieces is the lack of response one often gets. So a few years ago I was very pleased that one such letter provoked a number of comments, even though most of these were from people who did not agree with what I had written. The most interesting thing about these responses, however, was that several of them reacted to things that the writers thought I had said, but which in fact I had not said!

How easy it is to be misunderstood! However hard one tries to speak or write clearly and unambiguously, one can never be sure that one’s words will not be misinterpreted (usually unintentionally). More than 30 years ago I remarked in passing during a sermon that some churches in the locality were unlikely to survive for many more years. A few days later, someone who had not been present told me that he had heard that I had said that that particular church should be closed in the near future! I had said nothing of the sort; I had not implied it; I had not even so much as thought it; but that is what someone present believed that he or she had heard me say.

I have no doubt that I myself often misunderstand others just as much as I myself have been misunderstood: we sometimes read meanings into what is being said that are simply not there, or fail accurately to detect the real meaning of the words of others. I suppose this is a salutary reminder that communication is not just about words. It is also about relationships that are open, honest, and trusting.

### 3

Sometimes, however, there is no doubt about what is being said. I once heard about a talk entitled 'Naughty Words'. The speaker, I was told, began by making it clear that she was not going to talk about what we call 'swear words'. She thought it unlikely (and she was probably correct) that any of her audience habitually used that sort of 'naughty word'. But, she suggested, many of them may have been guilty of using other naughty words – words which wounded, words which condemned, words which contained destructive criticism or malicious gossip – and, in the speaker's judgment, words such as these were much 'naughtier' than swear words. The account of that talk has remained with me over the years as, from time to time, I have been on the receiving end of such genuinely 'naughty words' and, from time to time, have been guilty of uttering such words myself.

I conclude with some words from the Letter of James:

The tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue - a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. (*James 3:5-10*)

Yours sincerely,

*Neil Dixon*

## WORSHIP IN OCTOBER

### Bowburn

- 5th 10.45 a.m. Dr A C Klottrup
- 12th 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon—Holy Communion
- 19th 10.45 a.m. Rev Kenneth Mankin
- 26th 10.45 a.m. Rev Andrew Lunn (**Church Anniversary**)

### Elvet

- 5th 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon - Holy Communion  
6.00 p.m. Dr M Wilson
- 12th 8.30 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon - Holy Communion  
10.45 a.m. Mr John Scott  
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon & Rev Julie Lunn
- 19th 10.45 a.m. Mr S Ingrouille (WSC)  
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon & Rev Nigel Johnson—  
Holy Communion
- 26th 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon  
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon **Taizé**

## WORSHIP IN NOVEMBER

### Bowburn

- 2nd 10.45 a.m. Mr C S Cockling
- 9th **9.30 a.m.** Rev Neil Dixon  
**United Service for Remembrance Day**
- 16th 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon—Holy Communion
- 23rd 10.45 a.m. Mr S Ingrouille (WSC)
- 30th 10.45 a.m. Mr Mark Bagnall

### Elvet

- 2nd 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon - Holy Communion  
6.00 p.m. Prof Jimmy Dunn
- 9th 8.30 a.m. Rev Heather Taylor - Holy Communion  
10.45 a.m. Dr Jocelyn Bryan  
**Remembrance Day with Parade**  
6.00 p.m. Rev Julie Lunn
- 16th 10.45 a.m. Mrs Mary Tribe  
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon - Holy Communion
- 23rd 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon  
6.00 p.m. Rev Angela Long
- 30th 10.45 a.m. Rev Kenneth Mankin  
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon & Rev Julie Lunn  
**Taizé**

## **THE METHODIST CONFERENCE 2008**

This year's Conference, held in Scarborough from 3-10 July, inducted Revd Stephen Poxon as president of the Conference, Mr David Walton as vice president, and ordained 55 new Methodist ministers.

For the first time, live video of Conference proceedings was broadcast via the Conference website and live audio was broadcast in partnership with Premier Christian Radio. These proved to be very popular facilities as people watched and listened around the world.

### **Young people**

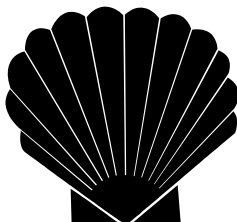
Investment in young people aged 16-23 was high on the Conference agenda and over £4 million will be spent over the next five years on a Youth Participation Strategy aimed at increasing the involvement of young people in running the Church.

Conference also gave its support to a new Pioneer Ministries scheme in which the Church will invest £4 million to establish new congregations across the country, aimed especially at young adults and those with no prior contact with church.

### **Ecumenism**

The Church continues to work ecumenically and renewed its commitment to working with the Church of England for another five years on the joint Fresh Expressions scheme, which supports and encourages new and innovative ways of being 'church'.

Conference affirmed the covenant with the Church of England, signed in 2003, and supported the appointment of a body to continue the work of implementing it. This body will include representation from the Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopal Church. The United Reformed Church will also be invited to continue to participate.



### **Conference reports**

Major reports included one on early human life which examined sensitive issues such as stem cell research, fertility treatments and abortion, and Conference voted to review the Church's current stance on abortion.

A major challenge to eliminate discrimination in the Church was received in a report on equalities and diversity which charts the journey that the Church is making in striving to become fully inclusive. The report identified further work and commended *Equally different?* a new online resource designed to help everyone engage with this important issue.

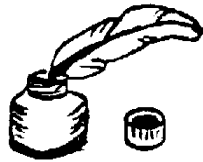
Conference also addressed many other contemporary concerns including knife crime, pressures on young people and the situations in Burma and Zimbabwe. The UK Government was condemned for its failure to care for Zimbabwean refugees and urged to stop all deportations to Zimbabwe and grant indefinite 'right to remain'.

### **Looking ahead**

Looking towards Conference 2009, to be held in Wolverhampton from 2 to 9 July, the Revd David Gamble was elected president designate and Dr Richard Vautrey, vice president designate.

Full information on Conference can be found at:  
<http://www.methodistconference.org.uk>

*Equally different?* resources are freely available to download at:  
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/equallydifferent>



## EDITORIAL

*Dear Friends,*

I am much more of a listener than a watcher. I tend to absorb news through auditory rather than (tele)visual means, unlike most people. I suppose I like to avoid the harshness of some news images, and I know I like to make images in my own head for things that I hear - or read.

I heard something on Radio 4 to which I keep returning. A panellist on "Heresy", a programme which attempts to challenge conventional wisdom on all things, said something which keeps echoing round my mind. I can't remember the exact words, but the gist was: we in the West are complacent about Third World events, disasters, horrors - because they are so far away. Even if we witness them on TV, we can ignore them: they are presented to us in a medium which we associate with fiction - and so we treat the real tragedies of the Third World as though they were theatre.

I find this view very challenging. We Christians often pray for Third World issues, or we may, like others, send money to alleviate a particular disaster - but how far do we *believe* in what we do - and how can we make our prayers real?

*My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:  
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.*

Shakespeare summed up the problem for us.

*Jackie*



**EXPLORE THE MEANING OF FAITH IN THE WORLD OF POLITICS - FREE HOUSEGROUP RESOURCES**

***The Art of the Possible*** is the name of a new resource for churches - six sessions for housegroups with leaders' notes and group handouts.

Sessions include:

*How our images of God shape our understanding of politics*

*What do we mean by 'justice'?*

*Being a change-maker*

*How should Christians relate to the state?*

*How does parliament work ? and how can we influence it?*

*What does politics mean for your local church?*

Produced by the Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, the resources can be freely downloaded from:

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/artofthepossible>



I would like to thank all the people of Elvet for their good wishes and prayers since my recent surgery. They have been a great support. Thanks too, to all those who have undertaken my stewarding duties during the last few months.

Gwynneth Watchman

*Thoughts*

- Invitations are like bananas - none then bunches.
- Three boys in the playground are discussing their fathers.  
First boy: My dad writes in his book, calls it a poem and they give him £50.  
Second boy: My dad scribbles on lined paper, calls it a song and they give him £100.  
Third boy: My dad scribbles his notes on a few sheets of paper, calls it a sermon and it takes four people to collect all the money.
- The way some people find fault, you would think there was a reward.
- Morale is when your hands and feet keep going when your head says it can't be done.
- The person who thinks of Number One, should remember that it is next to nothing.
- Intelligence is when you spot the flaw in the Boss's reasoning; wisdom is when you keep quiet.
- Heredity is something you believe in if you have a bright child.
- There are two kinds of statistics, the kind you look up and the kind you make up.
- Before borrowing money from friends, decide which you want most.

As Revd Paul Wood is going to Coventry Central Hall, I thought readers might be interested in this work which is already being done there.

### **Prayer Shawls**



From Coventry Central

Hall

After hearing about The Prayer Shawl Ministry a small group of us began to meet in Wesley's Coffee Shop on Thursday afternoons. The first shawl we made was taken to a church member in hospital who gained great comfort from the gift and the accompanying prayer. The second was made for a terminally ill friend who took it with him into the hospice and was wearing it when he died.

This ministry has grown so much that we recently took 15 shawls to the local hospice. They were dedicated by the chaplain who told us how very comforting they were to both patients and relatives. In particular we make brightly coloured shawls for bereaved children who love to wrap themselves in them.

This is a ministry of prayer and compassion, which has also helped those producing the shawls, as some have been recently bereaved themselves. We consider the process as outreach too because as we are knitting, folks ask what we are making and meaningful conversations often follow.

Email contact: Revd Viv Gasteen -  
mailto:cch@coventrycentralhall.co.uk  
Website: <http://www.shawlministry.com>

*Electronic Advances!*



Have you visited the Elvet web site, [www.elvet-church.org.uk](http://www.elvet-church.org.uk), recently? We have now got calendars of activities at Elvet there, regularly updated, so if you want to find out what's going on, have a look!

There are three separate but complementary lists:

- The “Month at Elvet” button at the top of the home page will lead you to a complete diary of Elvet activities from three days before the date you look at it to 35 days afterwards.
- The “Events at Elvet” button at the left-hand side of the home page goes to a list of *public* events at Elvet for the coming 3 months.
- The “Worship” button, also at the left-hand side of the home page, takes you to all the services and related events at Elvet for the coming 2 months.

Someone has to keep these lists up to date. In fact, it involves keeping a master list fully up to date – the web site lists are then automatically updated every time anyone accesses the web site. Penny, Bissell, Mary Hogg, Ken Slater and Robin Harris are taking two-month slots to do the updating. If you want an event to be included in the list, make sure we know about it!!

This way of organising Elvet's diary also leads us to help with the perennial problem of possible double booking of rooms for events. We shall arrange for a sheet to be displayed on the inside of the church's back door displaying the current bookings, so that people can readily see when rooms are unavailable for other purposes. The detailed nature of bookings will not be displayed.

We are also organising groups of email addresses to make it easier for us to communicate with one another. We already have a composite address for Elvet Church leaders, which includes all those who have leadership roles in any of our many activities and will be automatically updated when people's responsibilities change. This address will be particularly useful to Neil and Julie and to the Church Council secretary. As a team, the Elvet Electronic Group has the email address (surprise, surprise!) [electronic@elvet-church.org.uk](mailto:electronic@elvet-church.org.uk). We also plan to have one for church members. If you would like your email address to be part of this list, send us a message about it. Leading on from that, we hope to establish a more "outreach" list of Friends of Elvet, to include, where possible, members who have moved away, children of members, and people who have been married or had children baptised at Elvet. We ask your help to identify such people. Please send us relevant email addresses (with the consent of the people involved of course). To everyone on these address lists we can give two reassurances: (a) we will try to ensure the lists are not overused – we want them to provide useful communication, not to irritate, and (b) since these are group addresses (emails go first to a holding account and are then passed on as appropriate), individual email addresses are not exposed to the general public.

We welcome comments on all these matters. Talk to us, phone us – or(!) email us.

The Elvet Electronic Group ([electronic@elvet-church.org.uk](mailto:electronic@elvet-church.org.uk))

(Penny Bissell, Steve Bissell, John Chamberlayne, Robin Harris, Mary Hogg, Ken Slater)

**“Then was our mouth filled with laughter”**

(Psalm 126, v. 2)

Do you know your hymns?

The Dentist's Hymn ... *Crown Him with Many Crowns*  
The Weatherman's Hymn ... *There Shall be Showers of Blessings*  
The Contractor's Hymn ... *The Church's One Foundation*  
The Tailor's Hymn ... *Holy, Holy, Holy*  
The Golfer's Hymn ... *There is a Green Hill Far Away*  
The Politician's Hymn ... *Standing on the Promises*  
The Optician's Hymn ... *Open Mine Eyes that I Might See*  
The Inland Revenue's Hymn ... *I Surrender All*  
The Gossip's Hymn ... *Pass It On*  
The Electrician's Hymn ... *Send the Light*  
The Shopper's Hymn ... *Sweet Bye and Bye*  
The Estate Agent's Hymn ... *I've got a Mansion, just over the Hilltop*  
The Physiotherapist's Hymn ... *He Touched Me*  
The Doctor's Hymn ... *The Great Physician*

AND ... a few hymns for those who speed on the motorway...

45 mph ... *God Will Take Care of You*  
65 mph ... *Nearer, My God, to Thee*  
85 mph ... *This World is not my Home*  
95 mph ... *Lord, I'm Coming Home*  
100 mph ... *Precious Memories*

*A prayer from Malawi*

It can be difficult to grow food in Malawi because unpredictable floods are followed by unpredictable draughts.

We pray that those of us who farm should harvest a lot of food so that this year we will not have hunger.  
In the name of Jesus, AMEN.

=====  
**In the year 2008**, the Lord came unto Noah, who was now living in England and said, "Once again, the earth has become wicked and overpopulated, and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save two of every living thing along with a few good humans." He gave Noah the CAD drawings, saying, "You have six months to build the Ark before I will start the rain for forty days and forty nights." Six months later, The Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard, but no Ark.

"Noah!" He roared. "I'm about to start the rain! Where is the Ark?" "Forgive me, Lord," begged Noah, "but things have changed. I needed Building Regulation Approval because the Ark was over 30 m<sup>2</sup>.

I've been arguing with the Fire Brigade about the need for a sprinkler system. My neighbours claim that I should have obtained planning permission for building the Ark in my garden because it is a development of the site, even though, in my view, it is a temporary structure, but the roof is too high. We had to go to appeal to the Secretary of State for a decision.

The Local Area Access Group complained that my ramp was going to be too steep, and the inside of the Ark wasn't fully accessible; then the Department of Transport demanded that a bond should be posted for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I told them that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it.

Getting the wood was another problem. All the decent trees have Tree Preservation Orders on them and we live in a Site of Special Scientific Interest, set up in order to protect the owls. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls - but no go!

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**Congratulations:**  
to all Elvet, Bowburn and Shincliffe  
young people  
who have been successful in recent  
national examinations

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**Continued from page 15**

When I started gathering the animals, the RSPCA sued me. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. They argued that the accommodation was too restrictive, and it was cruel and inhumane to put so many animals in a confined space.

Then the County Council and the Environment Agency ruled that I couldn't build the Ark until they'd conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood.

I'm still trying to resolve a complaint with the Equal Opportunities Commission on how many minority ethnic groups I'm supposed to hire for my building team. The trades unions say I can't use my sons. They insist I have to hire only CSCS accredited workers with Ark-building experience.

To make matters worse, Customs and Excise seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species. So, forgive me, Lord, but it will take me at least ten years to finish this Ark.

Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky. Noah looked up in wonder and asked, "You mean you're not going to destroy the world?" "No," said the Lord. "The Government beat me to it."



## **Unlocking Autism**

### **Elvet Methodist Church Project 2008-2009**

Beverley School in Middlesbrough educates children with autism. The children and young people come from both Middlesbrough itself and from surrounding local authorities.

Our new Elvet project will set up the finance to provide after school activities for 2009-2010. The approximate cost to run a six week activity (one night per week) is £1,500: the money would be spent on:

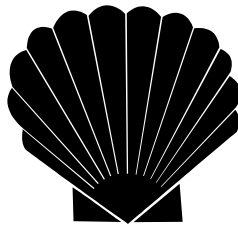
- paying experienced staff to help support students during after school activities (on average one adult to every three pupils)
- providing transport home for the pupils
- employing expert professional coaches and artists to work with the pupils

There are approximately half a million people in the UK with autism, a life-long disability which affects social and communication skills. As a consequence, people with autism have difficulty in making friends and in understanding the world around them.

Beverley School's after school activities provide enlarged opportunities for the school's students and respite those students' parents. It is a most worthwhile cause for us to support.

BAPTISMS

We have celebrated Christ's love and welcomed into the Church  
Community:



*at Bowburn:*

13th July *Gabrielle Anna Lister*  
*Stephen Alexander Lister*  
*Annabell Zeta Frewin-Wood*  
*Emily Elizabeth Frewin-Wood*  
*Alfie Jayden Chilver*

*at Elvet:*

27th July *Owen David CONLEY* and  
*Henry Oscar EVANS*  
24th Aug *Millie Grace POWELL* and  
*Emily Jean MAW*  
14th Sept *Charlotte Elizabeth Rose HART*

*Welcome!*

WEDDINGS

**We congratulate the following on the celebration of their marriage at Elvet.**

26 July *Martin CLARKE and Alison HILL*

9 August *Shaun HOOD and Emma HALLAS*

9 August *Gareth OWEN and Sarah CHORLEY*

16 August *Barrie EVANS and Caroline BARNES*

24 August *Stewart SMITH and Amanda BROLLY*

28 August *Paul LAWSON and Kathleen PORTER*

5 September *Philip DEFTY and Jayne SHARPE*

*Congratulations!*



FUNERALS

**Our condolences to the family and friends of**

**Robert Anthony BLACKETT**

**whose funeral was held at Elvet on August 7th**

**and of**

**Audrey Joyce SHIELD**

**whose funeral was held at Elvet on September 5th**



## Elvet Communion Collections

Please give generously. *If possible, information on charities will be on the church hall notice board.*

**October - Mercy Ships** - hospital ships that reach out to the world's poorest people. With operating theatres and a 40 bed ward, the vessels became an 11,701 tonne floating hospital, carrying a volunteer crew of 350 from all over the world. This organisation exists as a compassionate response to a world need. On ships and land bases dedicated volunteers bring their wide-ranging skills to promote health and well-being by serving the urgent surgical needs of the forgotten poor and empowering developing communities.

**November - British Legion** - The Royal British Legion provides financial, social and emotional support to millions who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, and their dependants. Currently, nearly 10.5 million people are eligible for their support and they receive thousands of calls for help every year.

**December - MIND** - is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales who work to create a better life for everyone with experience of mental distress by: a) advancing the views, needs and ambitions of people with mental health problems; b) challenging discrimination and promoting inclusion; c) influencing policy through campaigning and education; d) inspiring the development of quality services which reflect expressed need and diversity; e) achieving equal rights through campaigning and education.



**CRADLE ROLL BIRTHDAYS**

**October**

- 13th Lydia Pickering (Elvet)
- 26th Ollie Jay Jackson (Bowburn)
- 27th Poppy Thompson (Elvet)

**November**

- 17th Eve Sienna Berryman (Bowburn)
- 27th Emily Davenport (Elvet)

**JUNIOR CHURCH BIRTHDAYS**

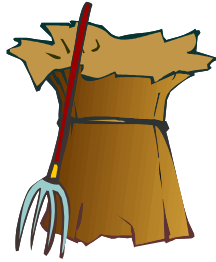
- October** 1st Fraser Jardine (Elvet)

**November**

- 6th Joshua Lee (Bowburn)
- 7th Laura Phillips (Shincliffe)
- 20th Laura Dunn (Shincliffe)
- 26th Nicole Lunn (Bowburn)

*A Happy Birthday To You All*

## A Harvest Song



Come, sing a song of harvest,  
Of thanks for daily food!  
To offer God the first fruits  
Is old as gratitude.

Long, long ago, the reapers,  
Before they kept the feast,  
Put first-fruits in a basket  
And took it to the priest.

And shall we, then, forgetful  
Of where creation starts,  
With science in our pocket  
Lose wonder in our hearts?

May God, the great Creator,  
To whom all life belongs,  
Accept these gifts we offer,  
Our service and our songs.

And lest the world go hungry  
While we ourselves are fed,  
Make each of us more ready  
To share our daily bread.

**THE WEEK IN BOWBURN**

Sundays	<b>10.45 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship</b>
	5.30 pm	Evening Worship on some Sundays - see notices
Tuesdays	5.30 pm	* Kids' Club
	5.30 pm	"Messy Church" (1st in month)
Wednesdays	2.00 pm	Women's Fellowship (1st and 2nd in month only)
	<b>2 - 3 pm</b>	Prayer & Fellowship Meeting <b>last Weds of month.</b>
Thursdays	9.00 am	* "Drop-in" * <i>term-time only</i>

**THE WEEK AT ELVET**

Sun	8.30 a.m.	Second Sunday, Holy Communion
	<b>10.45 a.m.</b>	<b>Morning Service &amp; Junior Church, including Crèche</b>
	<b>6.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Evening Worship</b>
	7.30 p.m.	MethSoc (term-time)
Mon	2.00 p.m.	Prayer Meeting (2nd & 4th Mon)
	6.00 p.m.	Cubs (Open Group) [Boys and Girls 8-10½]
	7.30 p.m.	Guides (Open Group) [Girls 10-16] <b>meets at St Giles'</b>
	7.30 p.m.	Explorers (Open Group) [Mixed 14½-18]
	7.45 p.m.	House Group at Newton Hall (alternate weeks)
Tue	10.15 a.m.	Halliday Grove House Group (alternate weeks)
	5.30 p.m.	Beavers (Open Group) [Boys and Girls 6-8]
	7.10 p.m.	Scouts (Open Group) [Boys and Girls 10½-14½]
Wed	2.00 p.m.	Women's Fellowship (1st & 3rd wks)
Thurs	10.00 a.m.	Arts & Crafts Workshop
	7.45 p.m.	Thursday Club for All (alternate weeks)
	7.45 p.m.	House Group at Shincliffe (alternate weeks)

**ELVET and BOWBURN METHODIST CHURCHES**

**Minister:**

Rev Neil Dixon BA MPhil,

Tel: 384 8755

and

**University Chaplain**

Rev. Julie Lunn, BA, MA

**DON'T FORGET**

Copy for the **December**  **January** Newsletter  
should reach Jackie Fielding by

**9th November,**

via the pocket in the rear entrance hall at **Elvet**,

by phone on Durham 384 7305

or by e-mail at [fielding@durhamcity.org.uk](mailto:fielding@durhamcity.org.uk)

Alternatively, those at **Shincliffe** can contact

Jim Harper on Durham 386 4360.

Those at **Bowburn** can contact

Liz Atkinson on Durham 377 0687.