

December 2021 / January 2022

# FOCUS

Issue 263

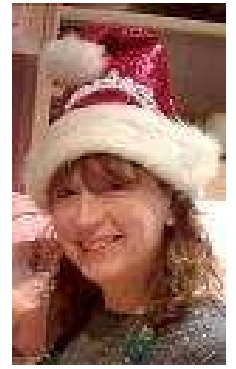


Parish Magazine of St. Stephen's, Hightown



The Christmas and New Year Issue

# Editor's letter December 2021



## *Hello and welcome to the Christmas and New Year Edition*

*On my daily dog walks around Hightown, I have observed the colour gradually draining from the landscape; the grey geese blending with the grey skies above and the silvery grey mud flats down on the beach. The pinks, blues and yellows of earlier in the year are but a distant memory, as is the spring chorus of birdsong. I fondly remember the baby swallows hatching and then leading their parents a merry dance to keep them well fed and it always fascinates me to think that those same birds are now nearly half a world away, basking under African skies. However, I know that one day, in the not too distant future, those little birds will respond to some mysterious, unseen signal and begin their long and arduous journey north. And one fine day next spring, as I take my daily walk, I shall be blessed to see and hear them once again, bringing joy and gladness to my heart.*

*In this issue, you can: read about local resident and pet lover, Caroline Backland, who tells us about her work in Hightown; follow a tried and tested recipe, courtesy of Gill Rowe; read a seasonal poem by John Betjemen; prove yourself to be a wise man, or woman, by taking the Christmas quiz, and much more.*

*So, as the year draws to a close and gives way to the new, I wish each of you a wonderful Christmas and a new year that, please God, brings hope and a renewed determination to heal our fragile planet.*

Colette.



With special thanks to Carol Cooke for providing the beautiful artwork for the front cover and Prayer Prompts.



Entries for future issues of Focus to be sent to:

[Focus.Magazine@StStephensHightown.org.uk](mailto:Focus.Magazine@StStephensHightown.org.uk)

Please submit before the last day of the month.

**Dear All,**

**Life can go swimmingly along and then suddenly there's a jolt and a reminder of how vulnerable we are, how quickly life can move from being happy and stable to being precarious.**



**The Christmas story revolves around God choosing to become human and then being born in unsuitable circumstances - stables are not ideal for birthing and tiny babies. Yet, God chose to come to be with us, as one of us, wanting to be in relationship with us.**

**I timetabled myself to write this letter, this afternoon, when I wouldn't be disturbed. But it's not turned out like that. I'll explain why: I knew my granddaughter Maisy had a bad cold and was having a few days off University - she's a student in Manchester. A couple of days ago we chatted and she sounded tired. But, an hour ago, I had a phone call from Maisy's mum saying that this morning Maisy had struggled to breathe and was now in Oldham Hospital with low oxygen levels.**

**As I'm writing this letter, I'm also listening out for messages, hopefully telling me that she's fine and breathing again properly. This wasn't Covid, just a bad chest infection, the doctor had said.**

**So, sorry if you were expecting a happy Christmas vicar's letter! But, the worry about Maisy has brought to mind how Christmas celebrates God coming to us. I think about God, safe and secure, and yet wanting to communicate with us, wanting to love us and to bring us back to Himself., He was willing to risk becoming one of us, with all the ups and downs of humanity that this would involve. Christmas time is a celebration of this decision and this birth.**

**I've just checked my phone. Still no messages. No news is good news I always tell myself. And I pray for Maisy and pray she will get better. This afternoon I know God loves me and God loves Maisy and I think of Jesus being that baby in a hostile world and I'm grateful that God came so we can have that relationship with our Lord, our Saviour, our Creator.**

**I also know Maisy is a fit 20 year old and no doubt will learn to not ignore chest infections from now on!**

**I've just had a call to say they're sending Maisy home and my daughter is revving herself up to give Maisy a lecture about not burning candles at both ends! I'm glad I'm not there to hear this - interestingly enough, I remember giving a similar lecture to Maisy's mum when she was at Uni!**

**(cont.)**

(cont.)

*Christmas will be a time to celebrate Jesus' birth and I'll be glad this year that we can do this with a bit more freedom than last. Thank you God that you came to earth and were born in Bethlehem. Thank you that you took the risk. And God bless our students!*

*Happy Christmas to you and your loved ones.*

*Jan - Revd Jan Ashton*



# CHRISTINGLES

**Christmas Eve  
at 3:00pm or 5:00pm**



Church Hall to make them-  
then Church to light them  
A Collection will be taken  
for The Children's Society

To help preparation it would be  
good to know how many intend to  
come.

Please message Jan-

FIRST  
COMMUNION OF  
CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve  
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

8:00PM

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Police (Non-Emergency) – 101

NHS (Non-Emergency) – 111

Sefton Council Main Number – 0345 140 0845

Adult Social Care – 01704 704389 (North) / 0151 529 3761 (South)

Children's Social Care – 0151 934 3114

Children's Safeguarding Concerns – 0345 140 0845 (8am-6pm)

Sefton Council Emergency Duty Team (weekends) 0151 934 3555

Sefton Council for Voluntary Service – 0151 920 0726

Healthwatch Sefton – 0800 206 1304

Sefton Security – 0151 934 4746

NHS Southport and Formby CCG: 01704 395 785

Sefton Carers Centre (helpline) – 0151 288 6060

Stop Hate UK - 0800 138 1625

Sefton Women's & Children's Aid - 0151 922 8606

National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247

# Services in St Stephen's Church December/ January

## November:

Sunday 28th 6:00pm Advent Carol Service

## December:

Wednesday 1st 10:30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 5th 10:30am All Age Advent Service  
6:00pm Evensong

Wednesday 8th 10:30am Eucharist with extended Prayer Time

Sunday 12th 10:30am Eucharist Nearing Christmas  
6:00pm Evensong

Wednesday 15th 10:30am Eucharist with extended Prayer Time

Sunday 19th 10:30am Morning Praise—Sunday before Christmas  
6:00pm Carol Service

Wednesday 22nd 10.30am Eucharist with extended Prayer Time

Christmas Eve 3:00pm Christingle  
5:00pm Christingle  
8:00pm First Communion of Christmas

Christmas Day 10:30am Eucharist

Sunday 26th 10:30am Eucharist for St Stephen's Day  
6:00pm Evensong

Wednesday 29th 10:30am Morning Prayer for Christmas

## January 2022:

Sunday 2nd 10:30am All Age Eucharist for Epiphany  
6:00pm Evensong

Wednesday 5th 10:30am Eucharist for 12th Night, extended Prayer Time

Sunday 9th 10:3 am Eucharist  
6:00pm Evensong

Wednesday 12th 10:30am Eucharist, Extended Prayer Time

Sunday 16th 10:30am Morning Prayer  
6:00pm Evensong

Wednesday 19th 10:30am Eucharist, Extended Prayer Time

Sunday 23rd 10:30 Eucharist  
6:00pm Evensong

Wednesday 26th 10:30 Eucharist, Extended Prayer Time

Sunday 30th 10:30am Eucharist  
6:00pm Evensong

## Sanctuary Flowers

5th December           Advent Greenery  
18th December        Christmas Flowers  
Everyone 10:00am

## Brass Cleaning

December               Beth Cresswell  
January                 Rev. Jan Ashton

## Baptisms

### 8th January 2017

Emma Esther Budd  
Rebecca Ann Budd  
Eleanor Grace Burrows  
Abigail Pamela Eddisbury

### 14th December 2014

Isla Lucy Green

### 18th December 2016

Nathaniel Patrick Douglas Wood

## Birthdays

Chloe Paige Wormald   31st January 2015



# Christmas

## Carol Service

**Sunday 19th December at 6pm**

**Joyful singing, the telling of the Christmas story,  
mince pies and mulled wine**



## Christmas by John Betjeman



The bells of waiting Advent ring,  
The tortoise stove is lit again  
And lamp oil light across the night  
Has caught the streaks of winter rain  
In many a stained glass window sheen  
From Crimson Lake to Hooker's Green.

The holly in the windy hedge  
And round the Manor House the yew  
Will soon be decked to strip the ledge,  
The altar, font and arch and pew,  
So that the villagers can say  
"The church looks nice" on Christmas Day.

Provincial public houses blaze  
And Corporation tramcars clang,  
On lighted tenements I gaze  
Where paper decorations hang,  
And bunting in the red Town Hall  
Says "Merry Christmas to you all."

And London shops on Christmas Eve  
Are strung with bells and flowers  
As hurrying clerks the City leave  
To pigeon-haunted classic towers  
And marbled clouds go scudding by  
The many-steeped London sky.



And girls in slacks remember Dad,  
And oafish louts remember Mum,  
And sleepless children's hearts are glad,  
And Christmas-morning bells say "Come!"  
Even to shining ones who dwell  
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.

And is it true? And is it true,  
This most tremendous tale of all,  
Seen in a stained glass window's hue,  
A Baby in an ox's stall?  
The maker of the stars and sea  
Become a Child on earth for me?

And is it true? For if it is,  
No loving fingers tying strings  
Around those tissued fripperies,  
The sweet and silly Christmas things,  
Bath salts and inexpensive scent  
And hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,  
No carolling in frosty air,  
Not all the steeple-shaking bells  
Can with this single truth compare -  
That God was man in Palestine  
And lives today in Bread and Wine.





# The Three Wise Men Christmas Quiz



1. What is Scrooge's first name?
2. Complete the lyrics: On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me.....
3. In which city does Miracle on 34th Street take place?
4. What date is Epiphany?
5. How many different types of gifts did the wise men bring? Can you name them?
6. Can you name all of Santa's reindeer ?
7. Who stole Christmas?
8. What colour are the berries of mistletoe?
9. In which town was Jesus born?
10. What fruit do you need to make a Christingle?
11. What is traditionally hidden in a Christmas pudding?
12. What does the word 'Advent' mean?
13. Santa Claus is also known as Saint\_\_\_\_\_?
14. 'The rising of the sun and the running of the deer'...Name the carol.
15. When are the 12 days of Christmas traditionally celebrated?
16. Which country banned Christmas one year?
17. Name the Christmas-themed ballet that premiered in Russia in 1892.
18. London's Trafalgar Square Christmas tree is traditionally grown by which country?
19. Are there any towns called Christmas?
20. What is the chemical formula of snow?

Answers: 1. Ebenezer. 2. seven swans a -swimming; 3. New York. 4. 6th Jan. 5. 3, gold. frankin-  
cense, myrrh. 6. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner Blitzen, Rudolph. 7. The  
Grinch. 8. White. 9. Bethlehem 10. Orange 11. Coin 12. Coming 13. Nicholas 14. The Holly and  
the Ivy 15. Dec 25—Jan 5 16. England 1644 17. Nutcracker 18. Norway 19. Yes. In Arizona,  
Florida and Michigan 20. H<sub>2</sub>O and

# PRAYER PROMPTS FOR DECEMBER



**1st.** Pray for family and friends and for those who are closest to us.  
For All the People of Hightown.

**2nd.** Pray for our community in Hightown and beyond.  
For the People of Marston Crescent and Mayfair Close.

**3rd.** Pray for loved ones who may be in need of extra help and support.  
For the People of Langley Close and Richmond Close.

**4th.** Pray for leaders of our country, within our community, and around the world; that they will make good decisions.  
For the People of Blundell Road. And Blundell Avenue.

**5th. 2nd Sunday of Advent.** Pray for our Healthcare system, for all who work within it; and for all who need it's services.  
For All the People of Hightown.

**6th.** Pray for the elderly, that their needs are met.  
For the People of Thistledown Drive and Bankside.

**7th.** Pray for the young, that they get the best start in life.  
For the People of Orrell Hill Lane, North End Lane and Gorsey Lane.

**8th.** Pray for children that their education fulfils their needs.  
For All the People of Hightown.

**9th.** Pray for the schools and teachers, that they fulfil their mission.  
For the People of Delph Road and Ackers Lane.

**10th.** Pray for those in difficult jobs; that they are valued and appreciated. For the People of North Dunes and Westway.

**11th.** Pray for people who have lost their way that they may find help and assistance.  
For the People of Blundell Grove, Larkhill Grove and Withinsfield.

**12th. 3rd Sunday of Advent.** Pray for the hungry; that their basic needs are supported.  
For the People Of Old Acre and Riverside.

**13th.** Pray for the sick, and those in need of healing.  
For the People Of Elmcroft Lane and Sandy Lane.

**14th.** Pray for the homeless, that they find shelter and permanent homes.  
For the People of St. George's Road and Emerson Close.

**15th.** Pray for people effected by conflict and war.  
For All the People of Hightown.

**16th.** Pray for people in countries affected by famine.  
For the People of Sandhills and Briary Croft

**17th.** Pray for the world's religions; that they learn to work together, in peace and harmony.  
For the People of Village Way and the Roundway.

**18th.** Pray that God's blessings be upon all humanity.  
For the People of Elvington Road.

**19th. 4th Sunday of Advent.** Pray for the wisdom to do the right thing.  
For the People of Alt Road and Lower Alt Road.

**20th.** Pray for the patience to listen and to understand.  
For the People of the Range and Altcar Camp.

**21st.** Pray that God may use us to do his will.  
For the People of Whitefield Close and Oakfield Road.

**22nd.** Pray for the understanding to say the right thing to help other people.  
For the People of Wignalls Meadow and Moorhouses.

**23rd.** Pray for the fortitude to help where we can.  
For the People of Grasmere, Windermere, Thirlmere Roads and Thirlmere Mews.

**24th.** Pray that we find the time to be with others and give of ourselves.  
For the People of School Road and Rathbone Road.

**25th. Christmas Day.** Pray that on this special day we remember the true meaning of Christmas.  
For All the People of Hightown.

**26th. Boxing Day.** Pray for health and happiness of all our friends and family.  
For the People of St. Stephen's Road and Hester Close.

**27th.** Pray that the world will see the beginning of the end of the pandemic.  
For the People of Thornbeck Avenue.

**28th.** Pray that we learn to care for our precious planet, and begin to live more sustainably.  
For the People of Mark Road.

**29th.** Pray that we find the thing we are each able to do that will “make a difference”  
For All the People of Hightown.

**30th.** Pray that the New Year will bring, healing, peace, prosperity, happiness and fulfilment  
For the People of Holmfield, Moss Lane and Local Farms.

**31st.** Pray that 2022 will be a year when God’s light will live in our hearts.  
For the People of Sandilands Grove and Tudor Gardens.



# PRAYER PROMPTS FOR JANUARY



- 1st. Naming and Circumcision of Jesus. Help and guide us as we go into a New Year  
*For the people of Tudor Gardens and Thirlmere Mews.*
- 2nd. **The second Sunday of Christmas.** We pray for grace as another year starts, to listen and help others  
*For All The People Of Hightown.*
- 3rd. For those who find the dark winter months difficult  
*For the people of North Dunes and Westway.*
- 4th. For the poor and the homeless in our society  
*For the people of Elmcroft Lane and North End Lane.*
- 5th. For wisdom and integrity to all who govern throughout the world  
*For the people of Alt Road and Lower Alt Road.*
- 6th. Epiphany. We give thanks to all who have tirelessly looked after the sick and the elderly  
*For the people of Windermere Road and Sandy Lane.*
- 7th. For the food that we have, and pray for the hungry  
*For the people of Bankside and Holmfield.*
- 8th. Eve of Baptism of Christ. We pray for those who have lost their way, may God's hand guide them  
*For the people of Withins Field and Blundell Grove.*
- 9th. **The Baptism of Christ. The first Sunday of Epiphany.** We give thanks to our clergy in Hightown, and for all who support them  
*For All The People Of Hightown.*
- 10th. Help us to see and support the needs of those around us  
*For the people of Thornbeck Avenue*
- 11th. We are thankful for the kindness and companionship of our family and friends  
*For the people of Old Acre and Mayfair Close.*
- 12th. We give thanks to all who welcome newcomers and strangers into our midst  
*For the people of Sandhills and Briary Croft.*
- 13th. We pray for the housebound and those with poor mobility who are unable to get out and about  
*For the people of the Range and Altcar Camp.*
- 14th. We give thanks for the joy that children brings us  
*For the people of St. George's Road and Gorsey Lane.*
- 15th. We give thanks for the dedication of group leaders within our community  
*For the people of Hester Close and St. Stephen's Road.*

# PRAYER PROMPTS FOR JANUARY

(Continued)



- 16th. **Second Sunday of Epiphany.** We pray for patience and wisdom to listen and hear the Lord's word  
*For All The People Of Hightown.*
- 17th. We give thanks for all the good things in life  
*For the people of Elvington Road.*
- 18th. The week of Prayer. We pray for all whose lives have been touched by sickness or grief. May they have strength  
*For the people of Riverside and Larkhill Grove.*
- 19th. For those who serve in the armed forces both at home and abroad  
*For the people of Wignalls Meadow and Moorhouses.*
- 20th. For unity and openness within our churches  
*For the people of Grasmere Road and Thirlmere Road.*
- 21st. For patience and understanding when life is difficult  
*For the people of Whitefield Close and Oakfield Road.*
- 22nd. For researchers into medical cures. May they continue their good work  
*For the people of School Road and Sandilands Grove.*
- 23rd. **Third Sunday of Epiphany.** We pray that all the world leaders strive to minimise our carbon footprint on our planet  
*For All The People Of Hightown.*
- 24th. For direction and purpose in our lives  
*For the people of Langley Close, Richmond Close and Emerson Close.*
- 25th. The Conversion of Paul. We pray for forgiveness for all our failings and sins  
*For the people of Rathbone Road and Thistledown Drive.*
- 26th. For God's glory to be shown through our unity with one another  
*For the people of Blundell Road and Blundell Avenue.*
- 27th. For the unemployed and those seeking employment  
*For the people of Mark Road.*
- 28th. We pray for all who seek refuge in other countries due to conflicts and persecution  
*For the people of Orrell Hill Lane, Moss Lane and local farms.*
- 29th. We give thanks for those who risk their life to save others  
*For the people of Marston Crescent, Brentwood Close and Alton Close.*
- 30th. We pray for peace and harmony between nations where there is unrest  
*For All The People Of Hightown.*
- 31st. Help us Lord to see the beauty of the world around us, and the goodness in the people we meet  
*For the people of Village Way and the Round Way.*

# Who's Who at St. Stephen's

<b>Vicar</b>	Rev. Jan Ashton (Jan) <a href="mailto:Jan.Ashton@StStephensHightown.org.uk">Jan.Ashton@StStephensHightown.org.uk</a>
<b>Reader</b>	Mr. John Gibson
<b>Wardens</b>	Mr. Michael Cudby Mr. Geoff Bailey
<b>PCC Secretary</b>	Mrs Beryl Howard
<b>PCC Treasurer</b>	Mr. Keith Aldis
<b>Gift Aid Secretary</b>	Mr. Brian Taylor
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Mrs. Sonia Bunyard
<b>Wills and Legacies</b>	To be appointed
<b>Electoral Roll Officer</b>	Mrs Beth Cresswell
<b>Sacristan Team</b>	Miss Hazel Roberts
<b>Health and Safety</b>	Mr. Stanley Alty
<b>Flower Rota</b>	Mrs Hilary Munro
<b>CMS Secretary</b>	Mrs Beryl Howard
<b>St. Stephen's Youth Club</b>	Rev. Jan Ashton
<b>Church Hall Bookings</b>	Mrs Sally Fraser
<b>Focus Editor</b>	Colette Grove <a href="mailto:Focus.Magazine@StStephensHightown.org.uk">Focus.Magazine@StStephensHightown.org.uk</a>
<b>Focus Advertisements</b>	Val Monchar
<b>Focus Distribution</b>	Mr and Mrs K Bradshaw
<b>St. Stephen's Church Website</b>	<a href="http://StStephensHightown.org.uk">StStephensHightown.org.uk</a>

# Village Organisations and Activities

<b>Tuesday Group</b> , St Stephen's Hall Tuesday morning 10am	Beryl Howard Jan Branigan
<b>Hightown Friendship Group</b> 2nd Wednesday at 8pm, St Stephen's Hall	Margaret Wear
<b>Gardening Club</b> 2nd Monday St Stephen's Hall 8pm	Hilary Munro
<b>Bowling Club</b> , Sandy Lane	Diana Killen
<b>Hightown Club</b>	Chris Scrine
<b>Blundellsands Sailing Club</b>	Rohan Pickard Chris Williams
<b>Probus Club</b>	Clive Rowley
<b>Yoga Classes</b> , Hightown Club	Rose Billinge
<b>Flower Show</b>	Ian Wear
<b>Open Mic Poetry Group</b> 3rd Thursday 7.30pm, Hightown Hotel	Tony Higginson Sally Anne
<b>Craft Group</b> , Thursdays, 1.30—3.30pm	Sue Taylor
<b>Village Singers</b> , Our Lady of Victories Hall, Mondays 1.30—3pm	Chris Payne
<b>Hightown Parish Council</b>	Jenny Farrar
<b>Chair Fitness for health and balance</b> Wednesdays 11.30—12.30, St Stephen's Hall	Gaynor Mc Hugh

# People in Our Parish



## Caroline Backland

I moved into the village around three years ago. I'd researched the area and thought it had everything that I was looking for and I haven't been disappointed.

I'd been a driving instructor for the previous ten years and after my dog, Molly, suddenly passed, at the age of fourteen, I thought that I needed a change. I had always had dogs in my life but wasn't ready to take on a new dog at that stage. I, therefore, thought it would be a great idea to combine my love of animals with a new business venture and so **Caroline's Canine Solutions** was created.

The home boarding side of things took off straight away and soon I had a good combination of dog walking and 'houseguests'. I had decided from the beginning to only mind individual or same household pets at any one time.

You require a Home Boarding License from Sefton Council, amongst other things, which isn't cheap or easy to obtain with lots of conditions and administrative tasks to complete. The past eighteen months haven't been great for everyone's business, I know, but I'm proud to say that my business has survived. The 'icing on the cake' was to gain my fifth and final star rating, in October, from Sefton Council.

I offer a range of services including:

- Dog walking
- Home boarding
- Local Pop Ins
- Home checks while you're away
- Dog wedding chaperone

You can find me on Facebook  
@ Caroline's Canine Solutions

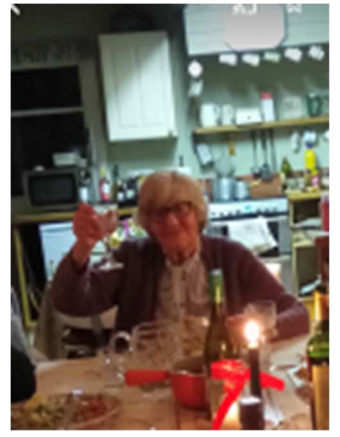


Caroline with Dotty, the  
miniature shnauzer

# From Gill's Kitchen

## Apple Chutney

My dear friend, Gill Rowe, passed this recipe on to me many years ago and it has been a firm favourite ever since. Apart from being an excellent store cupboard essential, it also makes a tasty accompaniment to cold cuts on Boxing Day. Jazz up the jar, a little, with a jolly tartan bow and you have the makings of a very special Christmas present.



### Ingredients:

- 3 dozen sour apples
- 1 and half lb sultan
- 3lb Demerara sugar
- 4oz mustard seed
- 2 fresh chillies or 4-6 dried chillies
- 1 rounded dessert spoon turmeric
- 2oz ground ginger
- 1 and half lb onion, thinly sliced
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 1 quart vinegar

### Method:

Peel, core and slice the apples, cut chillies finely, if fresh.

Put everything into a large pan and simmer gently for 1 and a half to 2 hours until very soft and pulpy.

When cooled slightly, turn into sterilised jars and store in a cool, dry place.

#### Tips on Jars

Wash jars and lids in hand-hot soapy water. Towards the end of cooking time place jars into a warm oven. Filling warmed jars helps to keep the fruit distributed evenly throughout the chutney.



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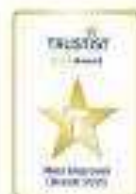
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**Jeff**

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**For details, Please contact:**

**Brian Taylor: 0151 929 2720**

**Keith Aldis: 0151 929 3612**

Do you want to lose a  
dress size for Christmas?

1lb a week with a great start  
will do that...

Two Wednesday classes in St Stephen's Church Hall, Hightown  
8.30am to 9.30am and 9.30am to 10.30am

Weigh in and chat with our Experienced Slimming World Hostess  
Viv, who will give advice on meals and the best healthy way to  
lose weight, help us to achieve our goal weight and, even more  
important, help us to maintain it.

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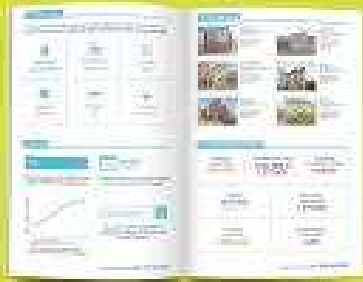
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**Rohan Pickard – Sailing Secretary**  
[rohan.pickard@gmail.com](mailto:rohan.pickard@gmail.com)

**Chris Williams – Rear Commodore**  
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Founded 1907

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**For Membership Enquiries, Contact: Chris Scrine: 07884 491 806**

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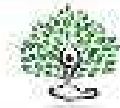


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07967 140809

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Rose Billinge - M: 07900 017 608

Email: [RoseBillinge@Yahoo.co.uk](mailto:RoseBillinge@Yahoo.co.uk)

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