

Arts and Leisure Festival in Winsham

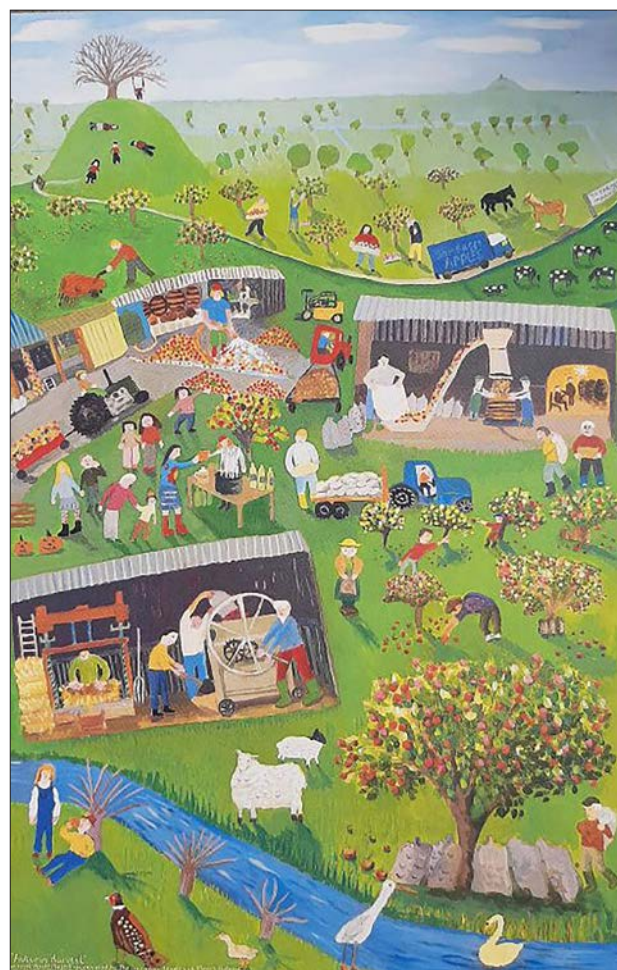
Winsham is a small South Somerset village on the B 3162 a scenic road between Chard and Bridport. Many will have driven through the village at one time or another or simply turned off here to visit Forde Abbey or Cricket St Thomas. The village lies in the tranquil Axe valley close to where Dorset, Devon and Somerset meet. Farm land is mostly given over to dairy, beef and sheep. Miraculously Winsham still has a pub, The Bell recently re-vamped and changed hands, plus a primary school, a village shop run by the community and a post office. Not bad these days. There's quite a lot going on in the village and the latest venture is an Arts and Leisure festival sponsored by the Parish Council which began on Saturday 26th September and will continue until Saturday 10th October 2026.

The festival consists of over 25 events and kicks off with a finely tuned concert in St Stephen's church given by the local and very professional string quartet called the Kilima Quartet comprising of Polly Orr Ewing, Rowan Patterson, violins, Alex Chivers viola and Chris Sampson cello. They will be playing Haydn, Beethoven and Borodin.

Other highlights include an illustrated talk by local author James Crowden on Literary Somerset. Not just TS Eliot, Wordsworth and Coleridge but Virginia Woolf in Wells, Thomas Hardy in Yeovil as well as the Powys brothers in Montacute, John Steinbeck near Bruton and a handful of interesting war poets passing through Somerset along with Tolkien on his honeymoon in Clevedon and Cheddar Gorge. The list goes on.

If books are not quite your thing then there is a small Cider festival including tastings from four very local but top notch cider makers viz: Wyldlands, Monkton Wyld, Supreme Champions this year at the Bath & West; Temple Cider sheltering under the northern slopes of Pilsdon Pen; Dinnington Cider and Rawlins Cider from Horton. Added to this cider bonanza will be a talk on Cider History by James Crowden and another talk on Somerset Cider apples by the famous pomologist Liz Copas who used to work at Long Ashton Cider Research Centre. Winsham just happens to be at the hub of a very vibrant cider renaissance. Meet the cidemakers and sample their cider which will also be on sale.

Added to these key events will be a plethora of other activities and shows including the annual Art exhibition in the Jubilee Hall and several dance events. These include three regular and starter sessions for My Ballet run by Carla Sheills who masterminded last year's Bridport Dance Festival. Followed by two



Cider Making! Painting by Kate Lynch

Modern and Jazz sessions run by Eli Hodgson and an Afternoon Tea Dance.

Just to give you an idea of how much actually goes on in Winsham every week of the year there are introductions to regular clubs and activities including Pilates, Tai Chi & Gigong, Aikido, Yoga, Bridge, Art with Deborah, the Ad Hoc club, Mini Pub games, a Festival Pub Quiz, Short Mat bowls, the Jubilee café, the horticultural Society, the Community Club, Winsham Walkers and Winsham Juniors FC. The whole festival will end with a Harvest supper, by which time the parish will no doubt be knackered but in high spirits.

Most events are free but there are tickets for one or two special events like Music and Cider tasting. Tickets can be bought from the Village shop. Winfest was masterminded by John Sullivan helped by Paula Bramley Ball. Come along and enjoy yourself. See www.winsham.org.uk and Winsham Community page on Facebook.

Winsham Festival aka WinFest runs from 26th Sept - 10th Oct 2026.

Visit: <http://www.winsham.org.uk/Community%20Matters/Talksandhobbies.html>