

Committee Comments

It is hard to believe that our magazine is now coming up to its third birthday. A great deal of hard work has gone into making that a reality. I find myself wondering where City Boy has landed this year. I wondered if he was off chasing butterflies, but then I recalled a whisper that he was off to somewhere called Mar-e-Lago. I have no idea where that is and the relevant emails seem to have been deleted.

It is only right that at this time of year that we say a very big thank-you to our advertisers, without whose financial support we would have had no magazine. Thank you all very, very much. We hope your business has grown as a result of your advertising with us. And a big thank-you to Brenda Scott who has so successfully managed our advertising. It must also be a big thank-you to Trevor Franklin, our printer, who has given us a really great deal for a very high-quality publication.

Our world is not a particularly happy place as we go to print, but at least Villages News is not yet being sued by Donald Trump! We wish you and yours all the very best for Christmas and New Year. Please send us all your news for publication in 2026, but please do heed the cut-off dates for inclusion (see the box below this). It is not easy putting a publication like this to bed and late requests for inclusion are not exactly what the doctor ordered .

ARTICLES FOR THE MAGAZINE

Please note the deadline for receipt of articles is noon on the 17th of each month—next issue will be February 2026

Please send articles for the magazine to:

For the villages of Aldermaston and Wasing: cathy.jones@ukmessage.com

For the village of Brimpton: brimptoncommon@aol.co.uk

For the village of Beenham: patowen0@hotmail.com

For the villages of Midgham and Woolhampton:

henderson.sarah.c@outlook.com

Please send articles relevant to the all the villages to:

brimptoncommon@aol.co.uk and henderson.sarah.c@outlook.com

Articles are included and edited/amended at the editors' discretion.

Useful Contacts

Non-emergency numbers:

NHS 111

Police 101

Environment Agency hotline (eg for flooding, pollution): 0800 80 70 60

Problems with roads (eg potholes), footpaths etc:

www.westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem

Doctors' surgeries:

Chapel Row Surgery: 0118 971 3252 Holmwood Surgery: 0118 981 4166

District Councillors:

Woolhampton/Midgham: Chris Read: 07714 081565

Aldermaston/Beenham/Brimpton: Dominic Boeck: 07956 546 506

Parish Councils: Clerks' details:

Aldermaston: Abi Lewis: parishclerk@aldermaston.co.uk

Beenham: Lauren West: 07919 916 125

Brimpton: Christine McGarvie: 0118 970 1576

Midgham: Ellie Brewer 07877 122127 Woolhampton: Ellie Brewer 07877 122127

Village Halls:

Aldermaston: aldermastonparishhall@gmail.com

Beenham: 01189 714 822 Brimpton: 0118 971 3731 Midgham: 07941 093 853

Woolhampton: bookings.woolhamptonvillagehall@hotmail.com

Churches:

Aldermaston & Woolhampton Benefice: 0118 971 2891

Brimpton Baptist Church: 07944 956242

Douai Abbey: 0118 971 5300

Magazine advertising:

Brenda Scott: 0118 971 3113 mrsbscott@btinternet.com

This magazine is printed by Nova Press, Thatcham House, Turners Drive, Thatcham RG19 4QB. Tel: 01635 876498



What is a 'Reverse Advent Calendar'?

A reverse advent calendar is where you pick one item a day to donate to your Foodbank.

This is a great way to show that Christmas is about giving as well as receiving.

This year's calendar is about re-stocking our empty shelves,

see our 12 Gifts of Christmas initiative for seasonal treats and extras

4.0				
1st UHT Milk	2nd Jam	3rd Instant Coffee	4th Tinned Vegetables	5th Tinned Soup
6th Cereal	7th Tinned Fish	8th Baked Beans	9th Pasta	10th Instant Mash
11th Pasta Sauce	12th Sugar	13th Tinned Fruit	14th Non Bio Laundry	15th Rice
16th Deodorant	17th Fruit Juice (Longlife)	18th Confectionary	19th Tinned Custard	zoth Toilet Roll
21st Washing Up Liquid	22th Tinned Tomatoes	23th Tinned Meat	24th Rice Pudding	*

ITEMS CAN BE DELIVERED DIRECT TO THE FOODBANK ON OR BEFORE MONDAY 22
DECEMBER 80 Greenham Business Park, Greenham, Thatcham, RG19 6HW
OR

DROPPED OFF AT YOUR NEAREST LOCATION SEE BELOW BY 19 DECEMBER, THANK YOU

Drop off locations:

Aldermaston and Wasing: The Rectory, Wasing Lane and 19 Swan Drive, The Wharf.

Beenham: Under community noticeboard.

Brimpton: Inside the porch at St Peter's Church and Georgina Hairdressers.

Midgham: St Matthew's Church. Open daily between 09:00-15:00.

Woolhampton: Inside the porch at St Peter's Church.

Beenham News

BEENHAM VILLAGE EVENTS

BEENHAM CALENDARS 2026 are now on sale! There are 2 VERSIONS - £5 EACH

Thank you to everyone who contributed photos to our beautiful 2026 calendars.

These will be on sale at the School Fayre on December 5th, at the Christmas Market on December 13th and in the Six Bells; or to reserve a copy please call Pat Owen: 07947478840, or email: patowen0@hotmail.com.

BVE CHRISTMAS EVENTS

SUNDAY DECEMBER 7th

4pm Christingle in St Mary's - please get there early to be certain of a seat.

5pm Beenham tree lighting outside the school.

Followed by the traditional village mulled wine and mince pies in the Community Hall, and Christmas songs and carol singing accompanied by The **Beenham Wind Orchestra**

From 6pm Supper at the Six Bells! Please call and book a table.



IF ANYONE IS WILLING TO DONATE/MAKE MINCE PIES FOR THE TREE LIGHTING EVENT PLEASE LET ME KNOW OR LEAVE THEM IN THE BOX IN NOLA'S PORCH AT FERNWOOD OPPOSITE THE SCHOOL. MANY THANKS



MONDAY DECEMBER 15th

Father Christmas will be visiting Beenham again this year!

He will be stopping at: 5.00pm: The Six Bells 5.30pm: The Strouds

5.45pm: Stoneyfield - 2 stops

6.00pm: The Warings 6.15pm: Back Lane



Father Christmas would love to receive any Christmas letters to make sure he has everything in order for the big day so come out and see him ⁽³⁾

TO VOLUNTEER to help at any of these events please contact:

Pat - patowen0@hotmail.com 07947478840

Beenham Village Hall AGM: Saturday 13th December 2025 4.00pm after the Christmas Market at the Hall

The Managing Trustees of the Charity known as the Village Hall, in the Parish of Beenham, hereby give notice to the Representative Members and all inhabitants of the area of benefit that all villagers of 18 years and upward shall be entitled to attend and vote at the aforesaid Annual General Meeting to be held on the 13th December in the Village Hall.

We hope you will come to the Village Market and join us afterwards to have a say in how your Village Hall is run and to participate in the election of the Committee for another year. We look forward to meeting you.

Tim Le Blond, Chairman Village Hall

News from Greyfield Wood

Hello to you from Greyfield Wood!

For those of you who have recently walked in the wood, you will have noticed that the cleared, felled areas have now been staked out. By the time you are reading this I expect that the planting of the saplings will be well underway.



We expect to have planted some one thousand saplings be-

fore the end of the year. This will be an amazing achievement, especially when you think that a year ago we were still manually felling diseased trees that threatened the safety of the public footpaths. Plus we were enduring almost constant rain! Since then we have had contractors in to fell the more dangerous areas and also cleared the felled areas ready for planting.

I cannot thank our volunteers enough for their splendid and dedicated work in 2025. This is what the Greyfield Wood Community Interest Company is all about! Also, we will have felled the Christmas tree, which will now be erected outside the village school. So, with that in mind, it only remains for all the Directors of Greyfield

We will be back with you in the February edition.

If you would like to join our group of volunteers please contact me. You are not expected to be there every week, just come when you are able. Every small activity in the wood helps.

John Hammond, john@meadvale-bays.com, 07818 400440

Wood to wish you a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

THATCHAM CONNECT BUS SERVICE

The Thatcham Connect on-demand bus service that serves our villages has been improved. You can now pre-book a seat from many pick-up points in the area to Theale, Thatcham Broadway, Thatcham Station or West Berkshire Community Hospital, apart from within Thatcham and along the A4 Bath Road (due to conflict with other bus services).

Service operates Monday to Friday, 0900 to 1445. Book up to 7 days in advance.

Bus passes are accepted after 0930.

You can download an App to book online.

Full details on www.westberks.gov.uk/communityconnect.

If you don't like Apps you can phone 01635 519650 to speak to a very helpful person, or email communityconnect@westberks.gov.uk.

SHOPPER'S BUS TO SAINSBURYS

There is a handy shopper's bus on Monday and Wednesday to Sainsburys Calcot. It leaves Thatcham at 1110 and goes via Brimpton, Aldermaston, Beenham, Bradfield. The return bus leaves at 1340. Full details on the website.

Summary of notes from November's Beenham Parish Council Meeting

(full notes are on noticeboards, PC website and Beenhamonline)

Public Forum: Beenham Tea Party raised £200 for MacMillan Cancer Care.

The Community Connect bus service now operates a route to WB Community Hospital – see separate article.

The recent accident at A4/Beenham Hill junction was raised. Three months ago WBC reported that this junction was safe if drivers followed the road marking directions.

Library Services:The Library services manager gave a presentation of the options available to Beenham. They were: A pop up service; Use of a Community bookshelf; WBC's e-book service. The PC favoured the e-book service. The Tea Party may hold tutorials for the e-book service. A survey of parishioners' wishes is to be set up.

Councillors:The recent vandalism at the school was discussed and WBC will be approached for supportive ideas. CCTV is possibly an option.

Give Way signage on the single track section of Back Lane was discussed. WBC will be approached for guidance.

Repainting the parking bay lines for the School/Community Room: WBC to be contacted. Road and footpath issues were reported on.

SID (Speed Indication Device) to be used to record traffic in the village over the next year.

Parking on Footpaths/Pavements: This is continuing to occur and is an offence. The PC strongly urges parishioners to be considerate of others and refrain from parking in such a manner.

Aldermaston Wharf/Mallards Way parking congestion: WBC have proposed various options to this serious issue. The PC has sent a letter to WBC detailing the perceived flaws in these and asking for a meeting to discuss the matter face to face.

Planning Matters

25/02231/FULMAJ: Pips Way, Beenham. Amended wording. The PC will leave it to WBC.

25/02041/HOUSE: Fairview, Bath Road. Rear extension. No objection

25/02313/FUL: Butlers Farm, Beenham. Erection of barn and diversion of footpath. No objection.

25/02243/NONMAT: Hillside Cottage, Bourne Lane, Beenham. No objection.

District Councillor

WBC has received reports of dangerous driving incidents on the A4 between the Ufton and Beenham Village turn offs.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held in the Community Room on Mon Dec 1st at 7.00pm.

Full details of the Councillors (including email addresses) are on the PC website at beenham-pc.gov.uk/councillors/ .

All correspondence to the council should be addressed to the Parish Clerk.

Parish Clerk: Lauren West Tel: 07919 916125. Email: clerk@beenham-pc.gov.uk

Community Room Bookings: Paula Read Tel: 07793116937 Email: info@beenhampreschool.org

Beenham Community Website: https://www.beenhamonline.org/

DIARY OF EVENTS FOR BEENHAM - DECEMBER 2025

Date	Event	where	contact
Tuesdays	Art Group 10am-12pm	Victory Hall	Georgia: 07970 646713
Tuesdays	Badminton Club 8pm - 9.30pm	School Hall	Ernie: 07954 127 771
Mon 1 st	Parish Council meeting 7pm	Community Rm	
Tue 2 nd	Dress rehearsal for School Play.	School Hall	01189713397 for
	Villagers very welcome.1.30pm		tickets
Wed 3rd	Beenham Friendship Club for		Marion:9713094
	over 55s. Christmas Lunch		Tina:01635826154
Fri 5 th	5-7pm: School's Christmas Fair	Beenham School	
Sat 6 th	10am - 8pm: Charity Christmas	Field Barn Farm,	Kate: 07585771121
	at the Farm	Beenham, RG7 5LT	
Sun 7th	4.00pm: Christingle	St Mary's Church	Pat:07947478840
	5.00pm: Tree lighting	On the green outside	
	Mulled wine, mince pies and	the school	
	carol singing	School	
	From 6pm: basket meals -		
	Six Bells – please book	Six Bells	9713368 to book
Wed 10th	WI: members only this month	Community Rm 7.30pm	Sally: 07776 251 228
Thu 11th	Beenham Walkers: Car share to	Meet at Victory Hall at	Pauline Stares
	Hermitage for circular walk from	9.30am	01189713481
	garden centre and back.		
Thu 11th	Charity Christmas Quiz Night 8pm	Six Bells 7.30 for 8pm	9713368 to book
	Teams up to 6 £4/person		
Fri 12th	2pm Christmas Tea Party at	School - Tickets from	01189713397 for
	Beenham School	the school office	tickets
Sat 13 th	2pm - 4pm: Christmas Village	Victory Hall	Sally: 07776 251 228
	Market		
Sun 14th	4pm: Carols by Candlelight	St Mary's Church	Brinelle: 07873548852
Mon 15 th	5pm – 6.15pm: Father Christmas visits Beenham	Stops on posters	Pat: 07947 478 840
Tue 16 th	2-3.30pm: Christmas tearoom	Victory Hall	Dru:07815 055 040
			Pat:07947 478 840
Thu 25th	CHRISTMAS DAY		
Fri 26 th	BOXING DAY		
Sat 27 th	Advent Window Walk through to New Year's Day.		

TBC - look out for date on FB and beenhamonline

Carol singing around the village from Warings to Six Bells- everyone welcome – time tbc. If you would like to add anything to the village diary, please contact patowen0@hotmail.com or 07947478840

Victory Hall Bookings contact Nola – nolesandfrank@hotmail.co.uk or phone 01189 714 822

Beenham Primary School

As the autumn term rolls on, Beenham Primary School has been buzzing with energy, excitement and a real sense of community spirit.

Our Year 5/6 Tundra Class recently returned from their residential trip to PGL Liddington, and what an adventure they had! From abseiling and canoeing to problem-solving challenges and team-building games, the children threw themselves into every activity with enthusiasm and resilience. Staff were incredibly proud of how well they represented the school, supporting one another through new experiences and embracing every opportunity with smiles (and occasionally muddy boots!) It was a memorable few days that will no doubt be talked about for the rest of the year.

Back at school, preparations for Christmas are now in full swing. Costumes are being sewn, lines practised and songs rehearsed as we get ready to share this year's festive production, *The Landlord's Cat*. The children are very excited to perform for families and the wider community, and we can't wait to welcome everyone to enjoy the show. It promises to be full of warmth, humour and the joyful spirit that makes this time of year so special.

We were also delighted by the turnout at our recent open mornings for parents seeking a Reception place for September 2026. It was wonderful to meet so many families and to show them the nurturing learning environment that Beenham offers. If you were unable to attend, there is still time to book a private tour with our headteacher. We encourage families to get in touch before the January application deadline to ensure they have all the information they need.

As part of our continued commitment to strengthening the school's leadership and links with the wider community, we are currently looking to recruit new governors to our governing body. School governors play a vital role in shaping the strategic direction of the school, supporting staff, and ensuring we continue to provide the very best education for our children. We would particularly welcome involvement from members of the local community, whether you are an experienced professional, a retiree with time to give or simply someone passionate about local education.

If you are interested in booking a school tour or finding out more about becoming a school governor, please contact the school office. We would love to hear from you and warmly welcome your involvement in our lovely school!

Village Market

Have you done all your Christmas shopping? Got all those stocking presents or last minute emergency spare presents?

If you are that perfect, then come and relax at the market on December 13th, from 2 to 3.30 - have a mince pie, maybe some mulled wine, or a coffee. But if you are looking for last minute items (including the Beenham Village Calendar!) then we have lots to tempt you, or to get you ready for parties.

Come and enjoy!

Brimpton News



Diary Dates

Tuesday 2nd December: Parish Council meeting in the Village Hall. Starts at 7.30pm.

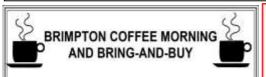
Wednesday 10th December: Coffee morning in St Peter's Church, 10am to 11.30am. Everyone (including dogs) welcome.

Sunday 14th December: Parish Carol Service at St Peter's Church, starting at 6pm.

Tuesday 6th January: Parish Council meeting in the Village Hall. Starts at 7.30pm.

Friday 16th January: Opening Night in the Village Hall for *Murder at Brimpton Towers*, raising funds for St Michael's Hospice. Curtain up at 7.30pm. Tickets available at £12.50 from Monday 1 December.

Saturday 17th January: Final performance of *Murder at Brimpton Towers*. Time, place and tickets as above.



Thank you to all the generous people who supported our coffee morning on 13th November.

Special thanks to Brenda and Bill for making their friends and neighbours so welcome. It was a very happy morning, and we were delighted to raise nearly £600 for St Peter's Church.



Everyone (including dogs) welcome

Brimpton WI News

At October's meeting we welcomed Joyce Meader as our Speaker on "Historic Knitting", who for many years, has been collecting commercially printed knitting patterns. She is a Member of the Historic Knitting Association, which meets regularly on- line, with members from around the world. Back in 1830 the National Girls' School published a booklet "The Knitting Companion", which gave the answers to a series of "How do I....?" questions on a whole range of knitting techniques, but had no diagrams, nor stitch patterns such as we would expect to see nowadays, for these you had to await Mrs Beaton's "Household Management" from the !840's. Joyce illustrated her talk not only with older pieces of knitting she has been given or found in Jumble sales etc, but also with pieces she has knitted up following the printed instructions in the pamphlets, booklets and work cards. From the early 20th century items such as corset covers, braces, scarves and socks featured largely, often illustrated with a single, very small picture. When recreating such designs there were problems to overcome such as needle size, the thickness/fineness of the yarn etc. It was as not until later in the 20th century that standardisation of such crucial aspects was made. Knitting on more than two needles was essential for some garments eg socks. Circular needles were not invented until 1910. The fashion was for needles to have gold tips. All sorts of subsidiary pieces of equipment such as needle gauges, darning mushrooms /eggs etc. proliferated in a range of designs, all of which are now very collectable.

Later colours were introduced by the yarn manufacturers, and a wide range of different wool/silk/cotton/man-made threads in a wide selection of colours to suit all tastes were produced. Men's patterns tended to be plain and boring until Edward, Prince of Wales started wearing Fair Isle sleeveless pullovers when playing golf. From then up to the present day they are still popular. Exotic wools such as Angora became fashionable for a while too. If you look at the patterns for baby clothes from the 1920- 1950 there is very little change, and old favourites go in and out of popularity. The coarser quicker knit wools are first seen in the 1930's and remained popular through to the 1980's. The ability to knit was essential during the Second World war and un-picking a partially worn garment to create a new item was popular.

Knitted toys for children and adults are now particularly popular and patterns for whole families of miniature dolls, all dressed differently are available and should you wish, you can knit plants for miniature gardens etc. But the knitting of clothes is again popular, and looks like remaining so into the future.

Our December Meeting takes the form of our Annual Christmas Buffet for members and their guests but we will be back on January 20th at 7.30pm in Brimpton Village Hall to listen to Sophie Fryer on "Secrets of a suitcase- A life in Royal service."

To contact us our President is Shelley Bassil (0118 9710563) or our Secretary Annette Dolphin (0118 9710090) or use our dedicated e-mail link brimptonwi@berkshirewi.co.uk

Gwynedd Roberts WI correspondent

Brimpton 100 Club

The 100 Club winner for November was no. 32, Sue Hunt's grandchildren.

Brimpton Parish Council

The Parish Council met on Tuesday 4th November. We discussed the first draft of the 2026/27 budget which showed a reduction of 1% on the budget for the current year. We will finalise the figures for our December meeting at which time we will decide whether to fund the budget from our reserves or by setting a precept (an addition to the Council Tax), or a combination of both.

The "Brimpton" sign in Brimpton Road, past the Baptist Church, has been demolished, presumably in an accident. It has been reported to WBC.

There has not been any further action by Thames Water regarding flooding at the sewage pumping station. As a result the use of tankers may soon be an issue again.

Brimpton Lane, near Able Bridge, is starting to flood. We have asked WBC to clear the gullies before water on the road turns to ice.

Mrs Brims, Churchwarden at St Peter's, reported on the outcome of the survey of the spire carried out earlier in October. The inspection revealed the masonry is in good condition, apart from a crack in south west corner and the timbers are in good shape and structurally sound. However, the cedar shingles are in very poor condition. The architects have recommended the full replacement of the shingles, preferably using oak.

Mrs Brims is waiting for an approximate order of cost from the architect but it is clear the work is likely to be very expensive. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) which is responsible for the maintenance of the building, has yet to discuss the report but the Churchwardens hope to hold a public meeting in the New Year to set out the scale of the problem after which they will form a working group, including residents, to discus among other things how to raise the money needed for the repairs.

West Berkshire Council has asked parish councils to consider signing the Armed Forces Covenant. However, the Covenant is focussed on education, housing, health and jobs, so before the meeting I asked WBC whether this was appropriate to Parish Councils. I have had no response as to what they think we can contribute when we do not provide any of the four key services. We reaffirmed our support for commemorative events, particularly those fund raising for military charities, but we were not keen to sign anything that is in reality just "words". When we understand what support WBC think parish councils can offer, we will discuss this again.

The Parish Council will meet again on Tuesday 2nd December, starting at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend. If you have an issue of concern and it is not already on the agenda, you can raise it in the Open Forum before the meeting formally begins.

Residents can receive Parish Council news and more about local events if you receive via email the fortnightly Parish Update. If you would like to do so, please let me know at: jhicks@brimpton-pc.gov.uk.

John Hicks Chairman, Brimpton Parish Council

Poppies

Some time ago my lovely friend. Sue Storey and I, would stand at the Font in church and discuss how we could jointly make a great display for Remembrance. Sue always made a beautiful flower display for the Font and so we hatched a plan for the addition of a "waterfall style" crochet/knitted poppy display. As you all know, we lost our dear Sue last year, so with a very heavy heart nothing was achieved.

This year I was determined to see our plan through to fruition so I asked for any Brimpton community fibre artists (crocheters and knitters) if they would like to make a few poppies to be included on the "waterfall". The response was slow at first but then I was chuffed to find a bag of beautifully knitted poppies in the church waiting for me one Sunday! No idea who made them, but thank you! Over the next few weeks the poppies flooded in by the bag full!!! People seemed to warm to the idea and poppies came from far and wide, Brimpton, Tadley (Damaris), Old Basing, Thatcham.

I had to call a halt to the production line at the end of October to concentrate on the assembly of the "Waterfall" and so 5 intrepid



assemblers went to Brenda's house to begin construction! (her table is so much bigger than mine)! All went really well on the first day, or so we thought! A quick "fitting" uncovered gaps where they shouldn't be, so more poppies were tied/sewn on. On the 2nd day, I spent most of my time in an armchair at home, underneath the "waterfall" filling gaps and tidying up. I can tell you, it was very warm under there, like being covered in a heavy blanket! On the 3rd day 2 of us went to install the "'waterfall" and again, once it was attached to the font, more gaps appeared necessitating more tweaking! But then it was done!

I want to say a huge THANKYOU to everyone who helped with making, constructing and installation. I certainly couldn't have achieved this without all your help.

Peace and love to all

Marcia

P.S. (Does anyone fancy yarn bombing the war memorial for next year) 😂 😂







Midgham News



A4 crossing

I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal thanks to Chris Reed and Midgham Parish Council

In July last year I contacted West Berkshire Council about the possibility of dropping the kerbs to provide an accessible, safe crossing point across the A4.

As my husband's health deteriorated last year, crossing this road safely, particularly with a wheelchair or walking aid became increasingly dangerous.

This request was initially declined and I found myself in touch with Cllr Chris Reed. Without his and the members of the Parish Councils support, we would not have the crossing we can now use and I am eternally grateful.

Chris was compassionate and understanding, always listening and keeping me updated.

I hope "Carol's Crossing", as it's been affectionately referred to during correspondence, provides safe passage for all those trying to safely navigate the A4.

I would encourage all residents to engage in the future of our village, especially as we grow. If we don't, we are in danger of us losing our identity and just becoming a filler of houses between Thatcham and Woolhampton. Be proactive, be a villager who picks up rubbish, cleans the bus stop, clears overgrowth, because many have done so over the years and now it's our turn. Please engage with the upcoming neighbourhood village plan process. Change and having a positive impact is possible, the crossing is proof of that. If an 80yr old can have a voice, so can everyone.

Carol Pettifer

Midgham Café Church
Thursday December 4th at 2pm in the church
No café church in January

Tony Billington

Tony Billington, who died in September, had been a churchwarden at St Mathews since 2018. He very much enjoyed that role, and was able to contribute his extensive handyman skills to the effective running of the Church (particularly its boiler!), and gardening know-how to the maintenance of its grounds. Nothing was ever too much trouble, and any obstacle was easily overcome.

Tony was well known for his own garden at his house, Lindens, and in particular, its large arboretum, planted between 1895 and 1902 and known as the Dell, which he had purchased around 1988 from a

neighbour. This was his pride and joy, and he enthusiastically showed everyone around. It was a labour of love for him, and enormous effort was put into restoring it, rediscovering long-lost paths and steps, and adding a pagoda and a bridge amongst other things. He opened it to various groups in the spring, and the church supplied tea and cake, and benefited from the proceeds. This was often combined with a classic car gathering open to all, with one event serving over 300 cups of tea!

You will gather that Tony was also a car enthusiast, and owned, since 1972, a white, 2+2, 4.2 litre Jaguar E-type Series 2, which he used regularly rather than keeping as a 'museum piece'. In addition to driving it around the country lanes he also drove around Europe.

Tony came from a very high achieving sporting family with several generations competing for Britain in various tennis tournaments, including playing at Wimbledon. He himself represented Berkshire at tennis for many years, and whilst at Oxford, twice played in the prestigious Prentice Cup competition, both here and in America, and later became its chairman.

A Service of Thanksgiving was held on 1st November at Bradfield College Chapel where over 400 people from far and wide attended. Tony will be remembered by all for his willingness to help in any way, his constant good humour and charming smile, his delicious mulled wine at the carol service, and his contribution to St Matthews and the community. He is survived by his wife, Fayleen, their collective 5 children and 13 grandchildren. He will be sorely missed.

Midgham Village Hall

In December there will be no coffee mornings. The next coffee mornings will be on January 7th and 21st.

Christmas party

On December 10th from noon, there will be a Christmas party in the Hall. please bring an item of food to share with your neighbours and friends and let's make it even better than last year's!

Everyone welcome.

Quarter Peal

On Saturday 1st November, a quarter peal was rung at Midgham to celebrate the life and service to St Matthew's of Tony Billington. He had a big interest in ringing and knew much about the history and workings of the bells. The method rung on six bells was called St Clements with variations.

Martin Rice 1. Jemma Hurst 2. Angela Brown 3 (800 quarters to date) Kevin Britton 4 Mike Hurst 5 (Called) Mark Robbins 6 .



Roy Pratley

Woolhampton News

Village Market

Goodness, hasn't this year flown by?! Nevertheless, here it is again - it's here, the BIG ONE! The Christmas Market will be on Saturday 6th December from 10a.m. to 12noon in the Village Hall. (Might Santa be prepared to call in to wish everyone a Merry Christmas? Of course he will!!)

Our regular stallholders will be able to offer a great variety of perhaps unusual Christmas presents, particularly in jewellery, soft furnishings, and so forth. Come along to see just what is available.

There will also be 2 FREE raffle draws so make sure that you collect your raffle ticket as you enter the Hall to join in the fun.

All visitors are welcome to this monthly community event – no entrance fee, refreshments (including hot bacon rolls) are available. Look forward to seeing you there.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas, Best Wishes for the New Year and thank you for your support during the year. Please note that there is no Market in January, the next one being on Saturday 7th February 2026.

Annual Show 2026

Yes, it's early but here's a quick 'heads up' regarding the date of next year's Annual Village Show which will be held on Saturday 15th August 2026.

Categories, classes and format have yet to be decided but almost certainly there will be

- 1) the potato-growing competition, and
- 2) the Woolhampton Village Sunflower competition.

The ever-popular potato-growing competition is fun and open to all, you do not have to have a garden, just a large(-ish) container, bag or pot.

The Sunflower Competition seems to have become a feature and will be held again, open to everyone.

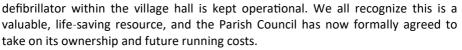
Update from the Chair — Woolhampton Parish Council

Dear Residents,

I'd like to begin by simply offering an enthusiastic "Merry Christmas" to villagers on behalf of the Council, and to say in advance that I hope you all have a fantastic new year!

Alongside funding improvements to our thriving Primary School and immaculate recreation park, I would suggest that a great deal of our work within the Council this year has emphasized the safety of our residents.

To give one example, Cllr Harwood deserves a lot of credit for having ensured that the



Our focus on the hall's safety doesn't stop there. We will also be working closely with the trustees, who highlighted that in the event of a fire, there is no viable exit for disabled visitors. We are exploring the possibility of installing a new ramp to ensure the hall is safe and accessible for everyone.

For our youngest residents, I'm also pleased to report that the necessary repair works to the playground fencing have been completed following its recent safety inspection!

We are pushing for stronger intervention from our MP to address the unacceptable delays and dangerous increase in lorry traffic from the Thames Water works, led by Cllr. Garden. This has been particularly challenging for Station Road residents.

I was saddened to learn of the passing of Tony Renouf, who was a talented former Chair of the Parish Council, and our thoughts are with his family. Naturally, we will be discussing within the Council how to commemorate his very significant contributions to village life over the years.

If you need to contact me for any reason, my email is: ben@woolhamptonparish.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued support,

Ben Holden-Crowther Chair, Woolhampton Parish Council

Henry Coxeter - 'Newbury Coat', Post Office and B & B



In 1847 Henry Coxeter came to Woolhampton from Newbury when four years of age with his tailor father and, later, was an apprentice and part of his father's tailoring business housed in what was to become the village post office. An ancestor was Newbury tailor John Coxeter of Greenham Mill who in 1811 produced the 'Newbury Coat' for Sir John Throckmorton. The latter had made a wager of 1,000 guineas that Coxeter would take the fleece from a sheep and make a coat between the hours of 5a.m. and 8p.m., able to be worn on the same day. The coat was completed at 6.20p.m. and Sir John appeared in the coat before an assembly of over 5,000 citizens. The sheep was killed, roasted, carved and distributed to the crowd with a gift from the tailor of 120 gallons of beer.

Henry became Woolhampton post-master in 1871 with the office housed in the Coxeter family home, 'Orchard Leigh' next to the original 'Angel Inn'. Rowland Hill had introduced the penny post in 1840, and 515 post offices had been opened by 1855. It was Henry's custom to collect the mail from the village station in a handcart for later delivery. He needed to announce this by knocking loudly on house doors, required when household letter boxes were not yet customary. Mail for Brimpton and the outlying district was delivered by 'rural messengers' such as Elizabeth Bright.

A part of 'Orchard Leigh' offered accommodation, much to the concern of Dorcas, Henry's wife, and was a popular venue for the many visitors to this popular village. The visitors' book contains complimentary entries from the many artists attracted to the village plus names of tourists from the United States.

The post-master was a member of both Woolhampton and Bucklebury parish councils (he owned property in the Slade) representing the latter on the district council. In March 1923, while conducting a service at Mortons Chapel, Bucklebury, Henry was reading the words "But Mary stood at the sepulchre without weeping" when he collapsed. This proved to be fatal. Sadly Dorcas had died in 1910. On the day of Henry's funeral the congregation attending at St Peter's filled the church and many failed to gain admittance. In 1931 the half-timbered 'Orchard Leigh' was demolished, together with the 'Angel', as part of the scheme to widen the Bath Road.

John Trigg

Woolhampton & Midgham WI October and November 2025

It is almost Christmas which we are all starting to think about. You can hardly miss it with all the shops and garden centres putting on good displays of all sorts of goodies. It seems impossible we are into winter as, so far, it has been unusually warm for this time of year.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our October meeting due to resurfacing work in Woolhampton on the A4 for a week in the evenings. Luckily we are going to rebook Lorraine next year to treat us to Old Time sequence dancing.

This month we welcomed Clare Goodall who is a Storyteller and Musician. She brought with her a large collection of old and ancient pipes and reed instruments of various sizes which she played. A small horn shaped pipe, recorder, various sizes of Crumhorn (curved at the end) and a Shawn, the largest. She also played on a Bagpipe. We learnt how they were made and their different sounds. It was all very interesting. She is interested in the medieval period and likes to wear medieval costume.

Several of us are now looking forward to our visit this month to Longacres Garden Centre for Christmas shopping and lunch. Then in December we have our Christmas lunch at the Bull Stanford Dingley and of course our December Christmas party in Woolhampton Village Hall.

If you would like to know more about our activities please come along as a guest at one of our meetings. You will be very welcome, and you may decide to join us! Guest fee is £4 and includes refreshments. We meet on the second Tuesday of the Month at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Woolhampton.

Recycling

It will greatly help our wonderful school's funds if you would consider the following recyclable items:

a) Empty ink cartridges

Please note that the Woolhampton Village School can now accept empty ink cartridges to recycle. If you have any to dispose of, please bring them the Market and we will arrange for them to get to the school.

b) Fabrics

There are also recycling bins in the School playground for <u>clean</u> fabric, clothing, paired shoes, handbags, etc., but unfortunately NOT bedding (e.g. pillows, duvets, etc.).

If you are unable to get to the School, then please bag up your donation and bring it along to the monthly Village market held in the Village Hall.

Woolhampton School

As I write this, I'm still smiling after our wonderful Fireworks Extravaganza last weekend — FOWS' (Friends of Woolhampton School) biggest fundraiser of the year and a much-loved event we are so fortunate to share with our local community. Seeing children of all ages, parents, grandparents and and neighbours gathered together for an evening of fun, games and sparkling entertainment is a lovely reminder of what can happen when we all come together.

With the final touches being made to our playground improvements, we're now beginning to look ahead to the next project our fundraising may support. Like many schools, we continue to feel the impact of significant budget cuts. Despite these challenges, our commitment remains firmly rooted in providing the very best education and wellbeing for our children. One essential resource we are now in urgent need of replacing is our school minibus.

Our current minibus is a lifeline for so many aspects of school life. It enables us to:

- Take children to sporting events and competitions
- Offer enriching educational visits and trips
- Provide daily transport for some children to and from school
- Collect pupils from neighbouring schools so they can attend our after-school club

To keep providing these opportunities and to continue giving our children access to experiences they otherwise wouldn't have - we need to raise £20,000 for a replacement minibus. Sadly, this is far beyond what our school budget can cover, so we are turning to the community we are proud to be part of.

If you, your family, or your business would like to support us, we would be incredibly grateful. **Donations of any size truly make a difference.** For businesses, we hope to offer the opportunity to feature company logos on the new minibus (criteria to be confirmed), which will be seen travelling in and around our beautiful village. If you are able to help in any way, please contact the school office or feel free to email me directly at

Carly.Madders@woolhamptonschool.org

Meanwhile, back in school, the children have been as busy as ever - competing in cross-country at Elstree School, exploring Science workshops at Bradfield College, and learning about the significance of Remembrance Sunday. Two of our pupils even bravely performed the Last Post on their cornets, and they did a wonderful job.

With just a few weeks left of term, we now look forward to our Nativity performance, our Christingle service, and a football tournament at Park House - all moments that remind us how lucky we are to be part of such a vibrant and supportive school community.

Carly Madders, Foundation Governor

Stamps and Milk Carton Tops

Please note that, with Christmas post nearing, used stamps will be welcomed by the ladies supporting the Air Ambulance. These dedicated ladies are regular attendees at the monthly Village Market.

Milk carton tops are happily taken by Hazel (bird-food stall at the market) to be recycled.

WOOLHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL – APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEER TRUSTEES

Following its opening in 2006, Woolhampton Village Hall has become a thriving centre of our community with a variety of regular group activities and one-off events for all ages.

Run by a collection of volunteers, who form the Village Hall Management Committee, additional volunteers are needed to become Village Hall Trustees and protect the longevity of this unique resource for the village.

If you feel you are able to commit to attending 4 evening meetings per year then please contact our Chair of Trustees, Nikki Jordan, for more information at: npm151924@gmail.com

What's on in Woolhampton Village Hall

Village Hall Market – 1st Saturday of every month from 10am until 12 noon.

Mondays

Dance Class (Ballroom/Line Dance) - 2pm until 4pm.

Dance Fit with Lorraine - 5.45pm

Pilates with Lorraine 6.35pm

Tuesdays

Stroke Care - 9am until 3pm

Kool Kids Dance - children's combo dance class at 5pm

Dance Studio Reading – adult beginners Ballroom & Latin at 6pm

Womens Institute -7.30pm until 9.30pm, every second Tuesday of each month

Wednesdays

Lunch Club - 1st and 4th Wednesday of each month at 12 noon

Thursdays

Flexercise - 10am until 12pm

Art Class - 1.30pm until 3.30pm and 7pm until 9pm

Fridays

Bowls - 2.30pm until 5pm.

For any further information please visit: www.woolhamptonvillagehall.co.uk Bookings.woolhamptonvillagehall@hotmail.com

District Councillor's Surgery in Woolhampton Village Hall

After holding successful surgeries on the last Saturday of the month during the past year (the last one being 29th November), our District Councillor, Mr Chris Read, intends to continue with them during 2026, starting on Saturday 31st January from 9 to 11a.m. Thereafter on the last Saturday of each month at the same time. He welcomes interaction from local residents about issues of concern for our environment.

Aldermaston News



Aldermaston CE Primary School

Our school value this term is Hope and the children are learning about what hope means and reflecting on the story of The Three Wise Men. Our superhero friend is the Firefly Thinker who is great at solving problems and explaining his ideas. He also reminds us of the British Value of Mutual Respect and Tolerance – we celebrate diversity and welcome opportunities to learn about ideas and beliefs which are different from our own.

Much has been packed into recent weeks including our Armistice Day service at St. Mary's Church, experiences like the Rock Steady music sessions and the inspiring AWE Ada Lovelace Day visit which brought STEM life to learning in exciting ways. We are now looking forward to all the traditional activities connected with Christmas including our Nativity performance (at the church for a new experience), our school Christmas lunch, a whole school trip to The Watermill Theatre, Newbury to see' Little Mermaid' and the making of decorations for the Christmas tree in House groups. This allows all the children in a particular house the opportunity to work together with the older pupils able to support the younger ones. Teamwork and collaboration in action, and great fun.

The school benefits from and values its strong links with the local community and we are thankful for the continued support.

On behalf of everyone associated with the school may I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year. More news in 2026!

Cathy Jones, Foundation Governor



Weds 21st January 2026, 7:30pm

Officers Mess, The Hinds Head Inn

a talk on

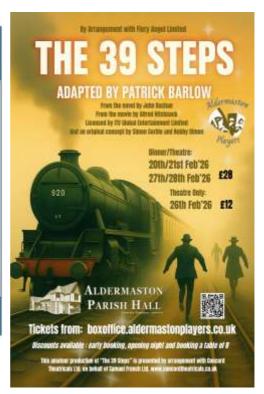
"Flying from Aldermaston 1942-1952"

By Paul Burton (local author & researcher)

Free to members , non members £5

per la branchi dell'action

Aldermanton History Online





Aldermaston Parish Council – 11th November 2025

Our meeting was well-attended. The Parish Hall Committee gave a presentation and requested financial support. Despite the Committee's best efforts, the Hall's costs are higher than its income, so reserves are being depleted. APC agreed that it can fund improvement projects and encouraged the Committee to produce financial forecasts to help identify expenditures suitable for PC grants.

Concerns were raised about increasing HGV traffic on weight-restricted Church Road, Spring Lane and Rag Hill. Drivers using phone Satnav rather than prescribed HGV routes are to blame. Cllr Shepard-Price said WBC had prosecuted HGV drivers that he photographed using Church Road and encouraged others to report to WBC if they had similar evidence. APC will follow up on a long-standing request for improved signage which was approved in principle by WBC but not prioritised.

Elsewhere concerns were raised about the new caravan site established on the Reading Road. APC confirmed that the development is unauthorised, WBC has issued a Temporary Stop Notice (currently being ignored!) and that the land is owned by those occupying it who have already submitted a retrospective application for 13 traveller pitches. We have been advised this application will likely be refused and then appealed. Only after an appeal is dismissed, will WBC be able to enforce the removal of caravans. The whole process will take 2-3 years. The lengthy process is frustrating, but APC appreciates the decisive, early intervention of WBC Enforcement.

In planning we had 5 new applications, all to Discharge Conditions for the new Blacks Lake Industrial Estate, Paices Hill. We will comment on the Construction Management Plan, Travel Plan, and Emergency Plans, but will not be Objecting. WBC made just one planning approval, for changes to an industrial unit at Youngs. Praxis' Appeal relating to the renovation of its Lodge Houses has been upheld, which means it will not have to make repairs to a bridge in the park as part of the development.

Delays to road safety works next to the school on Wasing Lane meant they weren't completed over half-term. APC agreed to pursue a request for physical traffic calming measures in the same location having seen clear support for this in the school's survey on road safety.

Cllr Crawford gave feedback on AWE's recent LLC meeting. AWE highlighted the significance of the dismissal of an Appeal for 148 houses in the Burghfield DEPZ by the Secretary of State. All appeals in the DEPZ will now be decided this way giving more weight to AWE/MOD and ONR recommendations. There was also an impressive presentation from the MOD police on their proactive community policing that aims to disrupt criminality and construct a network of vigilance!

We concluded with a run through of our 2026/27 budget. Costs will be slightly higher, but we have adequate reserves so are likely to keep our precept fixed at £13.5k. This will be confirmed at our December meeting on Tuesday 9th December. For details visit our website at www.aldermaston.co.uk.

Sophie Crawford



ALDERMASTON PARISH HALL

Charity Number: 300110

Strengthening finances, sustainable and successful funding plan, at the heart of the Community.

Our beautiful and historic Aldermaston Parish Hall will be 130 years old in 2027, having been built in 1897 by C.E. Keyser to serve as a community facility for Aldermaston.

The hall is run by a group of volunteer trustees who together with a dedicated and loyal caretaker maintain, oversee and improve the hall, with strong governance, on-line booking system and website. We are looking to increase regular hires and have more fund-raising at the same time as meeting the needs of the community. We attract users from across and outside the Parish who love the range of space with the main hall, stage, small billiard room and upper gallery as well as a good size kitchen and facilities.

We have been fortunate to present to the Aldermaston Parish Council, highlighting our desire to work more closely in partnership with them, review the potential for sustainable funding and opportunity for new activities and events.

What next? We want to continue to be at the heart of the community and therefore are looking for support, encouragement and ideas for example on new activities or events. Perhaps you would like to be involved in fund raising or community events, in particular our high profile event for our 130th year. Please share ideas and support the hall, contact: aldermastonparishhall@gmail.com.



Beenham's very own "Silence of the Lambs"

Everything was as usual at the Beenham Village Market on Saturday 11th October until Sally and Ian Pellow asked me if I could identify a strange moth that they had found on their windowsill from a photograph they had taken. I took one look – and, well, could I???!!!! It was a death's head hawk moth (*Acherontia atropos*), so called because of the skull-like yellow markings on its thorax. With a 12 cm wingspan, it is the largest British moth and Pat Owen and I hightailed it to the Pellows' to see it for ourselves.

The moth's actual home is Africa and the Mediterranean, but it is a strong flyer and, every year, a very few migrants make it to our shores. It can breed here if it arrives early enough and can find a mate. Foodplants of its caterpillars, that grow up to 15cm long, include deadly nightshade and potato – but it cannot survive our winters. The adult will raid bees' nests and steal honey, avoiding the occupants' anger by emitting a scent (pheromone) that makes the bees think it is one of their own. Its Old English name was "bee tyger", from its association with bees' nests together with the yellow and black markings of its abdomen and hindwings. If disturbed, it will emit a high-pitched chirrup by blowing air through its modified proboscis. Indeed, after gentle encouragement, the Beenham specimen duly obliged with a brittle rattling noise.







L. M. Harwood collection NOT the one from Beenham!

Asia has two very similar looking moths in this family -A. Iachesis and A. styx. In Greek mythology, Atropos was one of the three Mora; he would cut the thread of life of souls. Lachesis, another Mora, allocated lifespans to beings, and Styx was the goddess who gave her name to the river bounding Hades. The Acheron was a tributary of the Styx. Long linked with superstition and death due to its appearance, A. atropos was first recorded in Britain at the time King Charles 1 was executed. This could be because it would have coincided with the introduction of the potato to the UK. To explain the title of this article, "The Silence of the Lambs" features Acherontia styx.

If you would like more facts about this intriguing moth, check out the URL below. This rare encounter was an entomological first for me – and very likely a last!

Laurence Harwood

https://butterfly-conservation.org/news-and-blog/species-of-the-month-deaths-head-hawk-moth

Christmas Services across the Benefice

Christmas Eve

St Peter's, Woolhampton	3pm	Crib Service
St Mary the Virgin, Aldermaston	4.30pm	Crib Service

Christmas Day

St Mary the Virgin, Aldermaston	10.45am	Family Communion
St Mary's, Beenham	9.15am	Family Communion
St Matthew's, Midgham	9.15am	Family Communion
St Peter's, Brimpton	9.15am	Family Communion
St Peter's, Woolhampton	10.45am	Family Communion



Carol Services across the Benefice

St Mary's, Beenham

14th December at 4pm

St Peter's, Brimpton

14th December at 6pm

St Peter's, Woolhampton

21st December at 4pm

St Matthew's, Midgham

21st December at 6pm

Any queries, please contact the Revd Jane Manley

0118 9712 891 jmanley.awb@gmail.com

NATURE NOTES

I have thought hard about this, but it will out. We need to think again about foxes. They are not what they used to be — cunning and wily wild animals. They walk openly through towns, scavenging, and threatening the local pets; they are therefore badly fed and dim-witted, and not at all what they were. However, under present laws, once in town they are there to stay. I have always felt that if the digging-out of the fox when it had gone to earth was stopped a good time could be had by all — fox included. But I can't imagine any farmers now happily allowing the hounds to hunt their land for the bottle of whisky which they received at Christmas!

I will finish with my favourite hunt story. Most of my life I have lived on the top of a hill, with wide views. In Cornwall one autumn I could hear the hunt, so took a position where I could see. They were in the valley and I saw the fox wade into the stream, walk along it a good way and leaving it, trot up the hill, where it sat and waited. It then moved to a position where it could see the hounds below still in the stream, decided not to bother and trotted off.

Don't forget to cut your holly! Happy Christmas.

Stella Nesbitt



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Church Services in the Villages

Douai Abbey

Contact number 0118 971 5300

Weekdavs

6.20 am Matins & Lauds

7.45 am Mass

12.50 pm Midday Office

6.00 pm Vespers 8.00 pm Compline

Sundays

As above, plus

10:30 am Mass

But no Compline

Brimpton Baptist Church

Contact number: 07944 956242

Sunday service: 11.00 am

Wednesday night Bible study: 7.00 pm

Church of England Services Contact number: 0118 971 2891 (awb.org.uk)

St Mary the Virgin, Aldermaston and St Nicholas, Wasing

7 December	10:45	Carol Service (Wasing)
14 December	10:45	Holy Communion
21 December	10:45	Holy Communion
24 December	16:30	Crib Service
25.5	40.45	

25 December 10:45

Family Communion

St Marys, Beenham

7 December 09:15 **Holy Communion** 14 December 16:00 Carol Service 25 December 09:15 Family Communion

28 December 10:00 Benefice Holy Communion

St Peters, Brimpton

7 December **Holy Communion** 10:45 14 December 18:00 Carol Service 25 December 09:15 **Family Communion**

St Matthews, Midgham

7 December 09:15 **BCP Holy Communion**

21 December 18:00 Carol Service

25 December 09:15 **Family Communion**

St Peters, Woolhampton

14 December 10:45 Holy Communion 21 December 16:00 Carol Service 24 December 15:00 Crib Service

25 December 10:45 **Family Communion**

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