



Woodcote

Vol 36 No 4

April 2024

CORRESPONDENT

Delivered free to homes in Woodcote, Exlade Street and Crays Pond

PARISH COUNCIL AT FULL STRENGTH

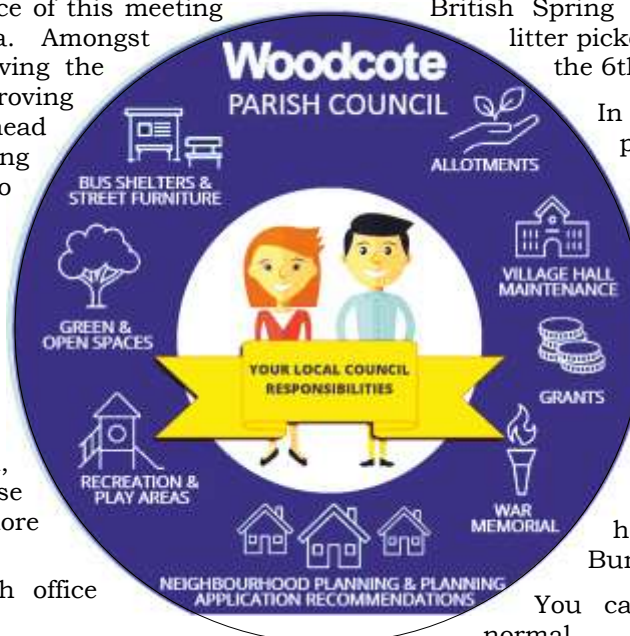
March 7th saw the first full council meeting, with the newly appointed Clerk & RFO and no empty councillor seats after the co-option of Cllrs Sloper and Byrne at the February meeting. Two councillors gave their apologies in advance of this meeting which had a very full agenda. Amongst the standard items of approving the previous minutes, approving payments for the month ahead and responding to planning applications, the Council also settled down to discuss some big-ticket items including approving:

- To advertise for and appoint a Facilities Assistant as a six-month trial to manage amongst other items maintenance of the village hall, allotments etc. Please contact the Clerk for more information and apply.
- £6,000 to rent the parish office from the Village Hall.
- A £6,000 grant to the Village Hall to help with some of their running costs.
- A £6,500 grant to the Friends of the Woodcote Primary School toward the costs of the new fixed roof over the reception classroom playground.
- A £1000 grant to St Leonards Church toward their £2100 yearly bill for church yard maintenance.
- A £3000 budget for the remedial works at the Greenmore Ponds.
- £1000 to remove dead trees on the parish council land on Long Toll.

It was also approved to move the Parish Council to a gov.uk domain, purchase a replacement battery for the defibrillator at the village hall, and the risk assessment was approved to accompany the Great British Spring clean being organised by our litter picker L Crockett for the weekend of the 6th/7th April 2024.

In the coming months, we will provide short profiles on our Councillors. In the meantime, a little about the new Clerk and RFO. Laura White is a qualified Clerk, who has been working locally as a Parish Clerk since October 2018. Her husband Phil is a Governor at Woodcote Primary School, where their two children attend school. Some of you may have come across Laura before, through her ongoing work at the Whitehill Burial Ground, Goring.

You can contact the Clerk on the normal email address, Clerk@WoodcoteParishCouncil.org.uk, call 07594 210389, or drop into the office whenever the "Parish Office Open" sign it outside the village hall. Generally, the office will be open on a Wednesday morning 10:00 – 12:30, however as the only person in the office this will be subject to change depending on annual leave, illness or training. You can also arrange appointments to meet at other mutually agreeable times. The Clerk works 18 hours per week, so you likely won't get an immediate response, but you will get a response.



COMMENT FROM ST. LEONARD'S

Spring is firmly with us now; the spring flowers are up and showing us the new life that has come in this special season. In the fields you may have seen the new life we associate so strongly with spring in the form of the playful little lambs that adorn the Oxfordshire and Berkshire meadows.

Within the church right now we have just celebrated the new life that Jesus brings through the celebration of Easter. The very first Easter was full of emotions and mystery. Mary Magdalene, a devoted disciple who watched Jesus die just three days before, went to the tomb where he had been laid first thing on that first Easter Sunday, full of grief and sadness.

Mary is surprised to find the stone rolled away and the tomb empty, and in her shock and grief, does not recognise Jesus when she meets him and talks with him, believing him to be a gardener.

'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him!' she cries, in turmoil.

Then Jesus calls her name, "Mary". When she hears those words, Mary recognises Jesus and falls at his feet, saying "My master."

Mary then runs off to tell the disciples the news: "I have seen the Lord!"

In doing so she becomes the first person to ever preach the good news that Jesus Christ is risen. The church then goes forth into the world, to preach that Jesus has risen from the grave.

There have been many Easters since that first special, monumental day, but the fresh hope and joy remains that those first followers experienced and relived in churches across the world. Jesus loves and cares for each of us, he is risen and through him we can have new life. May you feel his love and care with you always in all you do every day of your life.

To read more about, check out John's Gospel 20, 17-18.

God bless,

Reverend David Benskin
Team vicar for the Langtree Team

Services at St. Leonard's

We are delighted to offer the following services offer this month. You are most welcome to attend any or all of them. Please know you are welcome also to bring people with you.

April Services:

Sunday 7th April

- 8.00 am Holy Communion
- 9.45 am Parish Communion

Sunday 14th April

- 8.00 am Holy Communion
- 9:45 am Worshipping together

Sunday 21st April

- 8.00 am Holy Communion
- 9:45 Open doors

Sunday 28th April

- 8.00 am Holy Communion
- 9.45 am Parish Communion

Online Services

We continue with our online service of Night Prayer every Tuesday at 8.30 pm on Zoom. This follows the ancient monastic pattern of Compline and lasts for about 20 minutes. Join us from the comfort of your home with a hot drink as we finish the day with prayer. A warm welcome awaits.

If you would like to join us, please email me:

Rev'd David Benskin: revdbenskin@gmail.com for the contact details.

WOODCOTE WI

Ann Larden welcomed the members and two visitors to our 80th birthday celebrations. The tables were decorated with spring flowers, and we had some of the old scrapbooks on display. Thank you to Margaret Carter.

Celebrating their birthdays this month are Debbie Emmett and Shirley Bryant, we hope they had a good time.

We welcomed John Paine again at very short notice, thank you John, who spoke on *The Magic of Egypt*. We had a wonderful trip down the Nile. John showed us photographs of the Karnack Temples, the Valley of the Queens and Kings at Luxor and Lake Nasser.

This was followed by a birthday tea with many thanks to Hazel Tagg, Wendy Muchamore, Debbie Emmett and Louise Heathcote for all the delicious food. There was a raffle for the old bone china cups and saucers which are no longer used.

The lunch club this month are going to the Swan at Compton. We will be visiting the Watersperry Gardens in May.

In April the speaker will be Peter Tickler, who will give a talk on *Crime Fiction*.

We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the Month at 2.30 pm in the Village Hall.

Judy Williams

ST LEONARDS QUIZ NIGHT

Please come and join us for a fun quiz night on Friday 12th April, 7:30pm at the Village Hall. Tickets are £8 per person and does include nibbles and a banger baguette. Wine and soft drinks are available to purchase.

Individuals and teams up to 6 players are welcome. If interested, contact Gillian on 681711.

All proceeds to go to St Leonards church. Hope to see you there.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



It was good to see the latest parish council meeting included a full contingent of councillors for the first time in a while (at least since I moved to Woodcote). The meeting was also well attended by

various organisations from the village. The council decided to financially support a number of their projects.

With a lot of recent news about councils going bust, it is reassuring to hear that SODC passed a budget without cutting our services. It is sad to hear that in many areas the public face large council tax rises whilst their services are being cut dramatically. I'm glad that we are fortunate not to such a sad position.

This issue features articles that really showcase the wide range of interest and activities available in and around the village. It is great to live in a village with so much going on.

Happy Easter,

Nick

PUBLISHER INFORMATION

Editor: Nick Kolpin *[via email]*

Articles for inclusion: to the editor by email to: wood-co@runbox.com, or letters may be handed in at the library. To be received by the 12th of the preceding month.

Advertisers: To place an advertisement, please email wood-co@runbox.com for details of prices and how to produce your ad in our house style. The deadline for payment and your finished advertisement is the 12th of the preceding month.

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WOODCOTE VILLAGE FETE

Save the Date!



Last Year's Village Fete

This year's Village Fete will be on Saturday 14th September 12-5pm. Please put the date in your diaries! Planning is already underway. This is a community event, and we encourage everyone to get involved.

The competition guide will be made available soon, so time to start thinking about planting, baking and creating. Competition entries will be showcased at the fete for everyone to enjoy, awards will be presented and some of the entries auctioned.

If you love our Village Fete and are able to help organise it this year, the fete team would love to hear from you. Also, if you are a local business or organisation who would be able to support the fete in some way please do get in touch. Call 07773 447504, email woodcotefete@gmail.com or message us via our Facebook page [@WoodcoteVillageFete](https://www.facebook.com/WoodcoteVillageFete).

The Fete Team

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Budget

Amid the waves of bad news about local authorities on the brink of bankruptcy, SODC voted to approve its 2024-2025 budget with no cuts to services and the council's finances stable.

The budget prioritises quality, cost-effective local services, significant support for community projects and investment in local facilities. £500,000 will be made available to support community projects, such as to help improve people's quality of life, improve local facilities and deliver action on climate change. £60,000 will be made available to support the arts across South Oxfordshire and £405,000 to improve the facilities at Cornerstone Arts Centre following a review of the facility and a new strategy approved last month.

Unlike many councils across the country, there was no consideration of reducing services. The Community Hub will continue to provide vital support to residents, and in light of the increasing challenges of homelessness, there is also increased funding for homelessness prevention and an expansion of the housing team.

The council's capital budget includes significant planned investment in social housing and decarbonisation of leisure centres to reduce energy usage and ongoing costs.

The council tax for 2024/25 has been set at £146.24 for the year for a Band D property, making South Oxfordshire the seventh lowest taxing district council in the country.

SODC's element of the council tax, paid by householders, funds services such as: household waste and recycling collections, community support, leisure services, parks and public toilets, housing services, planning services, environmental health and licensing.

You can find out more about the budget on the SODC website, southoxon.gov.uk.

New Community CIL Fund

Town and parish councils and not for profit community groups in South Oxfordshire are now able to bid for their share in £750,000 of new funding to improve or deliver new community amenities.

The Community Infrastructure Levy Pilot Grant Fund will give organisations a financial boost of between £75,000 and £250,000 per project for new or expanded facilities including community centres, sports and cultural facilities, open spaces, play areas and more, which are needed as a direct result of new development.

The grant is funded by contributions from developers for building new homes in the district.

Projects will need to deliver new or expanded physical infrastructure to cater to more residents and weight will be given to projects that have elements of sustainability, inclusivity and consideration of environmental impacts.

Expressions of interest are open to organisations for six weeks with submissions closing at 5pm on 5 April 2024. Following the EOI process, projects that meet the funding requirements will be invited to submit a full application.

Changes to the Garden Waste Service

The District Council has set out plans to change the way its garden waste service is paid for in 2025.

The council has agreed the introduction of a permit scheme from April 2025 which will include subscribers receiving a sticker for their bins to identify them as fully paid-up garden waste customers. All subscribers will receive a new sticker annually each time they renew.

The garden waste subscriptions currently run via annual direct debit payments from the date people signed up for the scheme. Next year, the councils will stop taking direct debit payments for the service. Customers will instead make a single annual payment by debit or credit card, so that everyone's payment year will run from 1 April to 31 March each year.

Current subscribers will receive notification of the changes with this year's invoices. This will provide more information on the new system in 2025 as well as details of changes to their direct debit payment this year and the annual fee increase to cover the cost of running the service.

Council reaffirms its commitment to supporting people seeking sanctuary

In its first full meeting of 2024, council debated significant points of interest to the district, with a motion centred around support for Ukrainian refugees and the council's commitment to supporting people of any background displaced by war and persecution.

The Council passed the motion and resolved to continue to collaborate with Oxfordshire councils, statutory and voluntary sector partners in the development of a strategic approach for supporting people seeking sanctuary from any background which is coherent, effective, and compassionate.

The motion came ahead of 24 February marking two years since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

WOODCOTE VOLUNTEERS

Computerised booking system

Our new booking system is now up and running and we wish to thank Woodcote Rally again for their financial contribution to this.



Dave and Tim test driving our new computer system.

For clients, there is no change, call us as usual to request a driver during our opening hours of 9.30am to 11am each weekday morning or by leaving a voicemail message. The office team will enter the request on our booking system, which automatically sends out an email to all drivers that same day. It is a much better system for both office team and the drivers. For office helpers there is no time-consuming phoning around and all drivers are notified of the jobs needed, not just those that are able to answer their phones between 9.30am and 11am.

Tea Party initiative for our clients

Our clients can at times feel quite isolated and don't get out as often as they would like. To help address this, a team of volunteers put the idea of a monthly "Tea Party" to our clients. There was a very positive response. Please note, this is for our clients only, those who have no means of transport and live in the catchment area.

We do need new volunteers to assist us with the running of this initiative, and would appreciate any help you can provide, whether it is to provide a lift once a month, to help in the kitchen or just to sit

with our clients to make them feel welcome and supported. If you would like to get involved, please email info@woodcotevolunteers.org.uk. Thank you.

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will be held on Wednesday, 17th April, 7pm at Woodcote Village Hall, Pavilion Room. It is a public meeting, so anyone is welcome to attend. If you are considering joining Woodcote Volunteers either as a driver, office helper or committee member, it is a good place to find out more. We are fortunate to have been offered a talk by Goring and Woodcote Medical practice manager who will update us on the latest developments at the surgery.

New Treasurer

Our wonderful treasurer and driver, Ken Ison, is stepping down from this role after 18 years of service to us and the community. He certainly deserves some time off! We will be welcoming his replacement, Richard Anderson, who is very kindly giving his time and expertise to support us in this key role.

Dementia Friends

There was an excellent turn out by our volunteers for a talk from the Alzheimer's Society about dementia. Everyone who attended is now a "Dementia Friend" who knows about dementia and the many different ways it can affect daily living. They will be even better able to assist, support and understand those people with this disease, whether they be clients, family members or friends. Everyone agreed it was a very well delivered, relevant and interesting presentation. Our thanks to the Alzheimer's Society who provided the speaker at no cost.

To Finish...

We are sorry to be saying goodbye to three of our long standing and long serving volunteers this month. Chris Chant has been a driver and office helper for over 20 years. Shirley Bryant has been with us in the same roles for 30 years and as previously mentioned, Ken Ison, who has been driving for 22 years. Their experience and wisdom will be greatly missed. Thank you so much for all you have done.

If you are thinking about becoming one of our drivers or office helpers, we would love to hear from you! Please go to our website to find out more about the various roles, joining and how to contact us.

As usual, if you need a driver, please don't hesitate to call our office on 01491 681171. We collect from Woodcote and immediately surrounding villages. If you would struggle to pay a driver's expenses, please mention this to our office team when you book, as we may be able to help.

Please give us as much notice as possible before the date you need us. One of our friendly office workers will answer the phone between 9.30 and 11am on weekdays (excluding public holidays) and you can leave a message on the answerphone at other times.

Find out more about us by looking at our website www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk or our Facebook page www.facebook.com/woodcotevolunteers.

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WOODCOTE FOOTBALL CLUB

It has been a pretty frustrating time for the club in the past month as the weather has once again intervened to cause postponements which will inevitably create a very hectic end to the season. As soon as British Summer Time begins, we will find ourselves playing quite a few midweek evening matches. Currently, we have around twenty matches to complete between 10th March and the end of April and with only seven Saturdays in that time, midweeks are going to be busy.

The first team has managed to play two League matches, winning against Drayton at home by 4-3, with goals scored by Toby Nowell, Joe Webber 2 and Ben Rusher. This was followed by two weeks of postponed matches and a home defeat by 2-1 against Abingdon United, with our goal coming from Toby Nowell. The loss to Abingdon has almost certainly put paid to any hopes we had of winning the league.

North Berks League, Division One

	Played	Points
Abingdon United	13	32
Berinsfield	13	31
Woodcote	9	16
Compton	10	14
Dorchester	10	14
East Hendred	12	12
Drayton	11	11
Steventon	8	9
Long Wittenham	12	3

The Development team has only managed to play one match in which regrettably they lost in the semi-final of the North Berks Kingham Cup to Wantage Town 'A' by 4-2, our goals coming from Sully Akers and Archie Clark. Two of the matches postponed were the first team's semi-final in the Oxfordshire Charity Cup against Garsington and the Development team's semi-final in the North Berks War Memorial Cup against Lambourn.

North Berks League, Division Two

	Played	Points
Frilsham	13	27
Kingston	14	26
Benson	13	25
Letcombe	14	25
Lambourn	13	24
Sutton Courtenay	12	22
Drayton	13	14
Burghclere	14	13
Woodcote	12	10
Grove	14	4



Development team



Toby Nowell



Joe Webber



Laymar Clibbon-Collins

WOODCOTE CRICKET CLUB

Anyone for Cricket?

The 2024 season is fast approaching and once again we are looking forward to a very busy fixture list from the end of April through to the end of September. We will be running two teams in the Berkshire League, the 1st XI in the Premier Division and the 2nd XI in Division 5. The first home match will see the 1st XI against Silchester on Saturday May 4th. We also run a Wednesday XI which plays in the South Oxon Midweek League and these matches are played at 6.00 pm on Wednesdays between mid-May and the end of July. We also have a number of Sunday friendly matches from June to September. Our annual tour to Cheltenham is on the first weekend in September.

Indoor nets start at the Oratory Sports Centre on Wednesday March 6th from 8.00 – 9.00 pm when we hope to see all existing members and we would love to welcome any new members who wish to attend. As a club we are completely inclusive, and we welcome players of all standards and are keen to help beginners develop skills. We have a number of teenage players playing regularly in our 2nd XI and in Sunday matches. So, please do not be put off because you think you are not good enough at throughout the season providing opportunities for players to develop their skills. If you wish to know more, please contact me, sampeates@gmail.com, 07710858366.

Women's Softball Cricket

If there is enough interest, we will be running some sessions for women/girls possibly one evening a week. Other local clubs have started running teams and getting a lot of interest. Please email sampeates@gmail.com if you think you may be interested.



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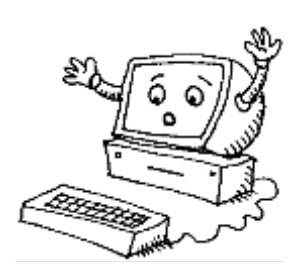
  

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WOODCOTE CONSERVATION GROUP

2024's toad patrol

February's unseasonably mild weather got Woodcote's annual amphibian migration off to an early start. Our thanks to the team of dedicated and enthusiastic patrollers of all ages who turned out in force with buckets on wet nights around Greenmoor Ponds, on Shirvell's Hill and along the South Stoke Road. At the time of writing, toad patrol remains ongoing so we will provide a report in next month's edition.

An update on the restoration of the Lower Greenmoor Pond

Woodcote Conservation Group continues to work with the Parish Council to restore the Lower Pond. Hydrogeological monitoring by our Working Group has confirmed that the ponds sit between a layer of Clay with Flints and the Lambeth Group, which is the source of the groundwater feeding the pond. The depth of water in the pond has been rising and falling in response to the winter weather, demonstrating that the pond has 'a leak'. The good news is that ongoing monitoring of boreholes we have sunk indicates the Lower Pond should recharge up to about 2 m below adjacent ground level once restored.

On behalf of the Parish Council, we have approached a number of local contractors for quotes to carry out the initial phase of work which will involve excavating the silt from the centre of the pond. However, while the pond is holding water it is unsafe for this work to start. It is anticipated that the work may be carried out in July or August assuming the pond has dried. Also, by then, the amphibian breeding season will have finished. We will continue to keep you informed.

The wonder of trees: Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)

If you see a spectacular tree covered in a mass of white blossom which is buzzing with bees, you may well be admiring this month's tree.

Prunus is a genus in the family Rosaceae which includes plums, blackthorn, laurel, almonds, apricots, peaches etc. The family is characterised by species with regular, often scented, flowers which have petals or sepals in groups of five. The fruits are

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often juicy and attractive to mammals and birds as well as us.

Wild cherry is one of two native species of *Prunus* in the British Isles and is common in the Chilterns where clay is over or near chalk. The other, Bird cherry (*Prunus padus*), is native north of the Midlands. Wild cherry is characteristic of woodland edges and hedgerows, but also grows as part of the understorey in local woods where there are gaps in the canopy. A distinguishing feature is its shiny purplish-brown bark which has prominent horizontal bands.

Wild cherry, also sometimes called Gean, usually flowers in late March or early April before its leaves unfurl, but February's unseasonably warm weather has meant some plants are flowering early this year. In times past, the blossom in the cherry orchards at Stoke Row was a local attraction, with people coming out from Reading in charabancs in spring to admire it. Pollinated flowers develop into bunches of 3-5 small 2.5 cm ovoid fruits which start a glossy yellowish and turn bright red by July before turning blackish red. Once a food crop, with branches of wild cherries sold in London streets, these days the fruits are usually eaten by birds.

Wild cherry is self-sterile so more than one tree needs to be present for fruit to be produced, but they also sucker, a form of reproduction that does not involve another tree as new shoots are produced from their root system. The growth of new shoots can be triggered naturally, or as a result of stress, e.g. drought or root damage. Wild cherry root suckers sometimes grow into lines or clumps of trees.

Cherry wood is a reddish brown, streaked with gold and pale green. It has a fine, attractive grain and polishes well. It was prized for making furniture and musical instruments, as well as for carving and turning. It is still sought after for cabinets, turnery and other furniture and is used for veneers, joinery and decorative panelling. As firewood, cherry burns slowly, produces a good heat and the smoke is perfumed, the scent described as being like flowers in bloom.

We hope you enjoy our articles in the Correspondent. Woodcote Conservation Group run events throughout the year about the wildlife and green spaces around the village including guided walks. We also meet on the third Saturday of most months to

care for Greenmoor Ponds and Tidmore Pool. Do come and join us to lend a hand at one of these 'green gym' sessions. For more information about our activities and how to become a member, see our website <https://woodcotecg.org.uk/>.

Woodcote Conservation Group

PREPARING FOR A GENERAL ELECTION

The government has announced that 2024 will be a general election year, although they have not yet announced when the election will be held. It is possible that the election will be held in May, to coincide with local elections. It may be delayed until autumn. The latest it could possibly occur is next January.

You can register to vote at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. The same service can be used to change your voting method between voting in person, by post or via a proxy. The process only takes a few minutes, but you will be required to know your National Insurance number, if you have one.

This will be the first general election where a photo ID will be required to vote in person. You can use a passport, driving licence or blue badge. A range of other IDs will also be accepted, particularly for older people. A full list can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/photo-id-youll-need>. If you do not have a valid form of ID, then you can apply for a free form of ID for voting at www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate, although you will need to be registered to vote first. A photo ID is not required if you vote by post. If you apply to have a proxy vote on your behalf then you will not require a photo ID, but your proxy will need one for themselves.

The 2023 review of parliamentary constituencies made minor changes to the Henley constituency boundary and renamed it to Henley and Thame.

In January 2024, the rules for overseas voters changed. Previously they were only allowed to vote for 15 years after they left the UK. This rule has now been abolished and they will be eligible to vote for life. Overseas voters can vote either by post or via a proxy in their constituency.

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SPRING FAIR AND LOTS MORE AT YOUR VILLAGE HALL

It's been a long wait but with spring finally upon us we are busy putting the finishing touches to the Spring Fair which will take place on Sunday 28th April. We have a fantastic mix of over 40 of the very best artisan food producers and crafters coming along. And with most of our stand spaces selling out within 24 hours, it seems word of our events has spread far and wide!

Expect to see many of your favourite food producers including the Fungi Farmer, Tarte in a Box, Johnny Hot Stuff, Berkshire Trout and the Henley Distillery to name a few, alongside some new producers who have heard great things about the village's healthy appetite! It's not just the foodies who have been hungry to get involved. Many of our favourite crafters will be returning alongside some new faces including Sarah from Mill Down Pottery in Goring who will be bringing her handmade ceramics and Jo McKenna will be coming along with her luxurious, hand finished knitwear.

For the green fingered, there will of course be plants and some inspiration for the garden. Of course, there will be plenty of refreshments on offer. The Witches Kitchen will be serving up tea and cake in the tearoom, The Butterfly Café will be on hand with the coffee, Friends and Flavours will be cooking up their handcrafted burgers and Tutt's Clump Cider will be pulling the pints.

And who doesn't love to be entertained whilst sipping cider in the fresh air? Well, Woodcote has a fledgling band who have been tucked away rehearsing in the village hall during the cold dark months. The 'Woodcote Collective' play mainly country/folk songs with some blues and sea shanties too and will be making their debut performance at the Fair. They confess to being slightly nervous and very excited so lots of encouragement and possibly some audience participation may help!

So, whether it's some plants for the garden, something wholesome and tasty, a piece of pottery or just a couple of hours out to browse, see friends and neighbours and enjoy the atmosphere, come and join us. The ice cream man will be keeping his fingers crossed for a warm dry day, as will we!

Sunday 28th April, 11am – 3pm. Entry is free.

In other news...

A new counselling service will be operating from a private space at the Village Hall. Karen Rhodes of Time to Talk is an experienced counsellor who is able to offer support for a wide range of issues such as anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties, struggles with life events and more. Karen provides a confidential, non-judgemental space to explore your thoughts and feelings freely to enable a deeper understanding of yourself and your life. Using psychodynamic theory and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Karen will work with you to develop coping strategies, enhance resilience and foster positive change. If you are interested in discussing counselling options with no obligation, please

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contact Karen and leave a short message with your contact details.

Email TimeToTalk@gmail.com or call 07389 094978.

We have a small handful of tickets remaining for our night of Gypsy Jazz on Saturday 13th April with the Remi Harris Hot Club Trio who will be taking in Woodcote on their spring tour. Look forward to an evening of music ranging from the acoustic jazz of the 30s and 40s to the eclectic blues of the 60s and 70s, influenced by the late greats Django Reinhardt, Peter Green, Wes Montgomery, Jimi Hendrix and more... If gypsy Jazz is your thing, it doesn't get better than this!

Tickets are £20, available online at www.woodcotevillagehall.com.

And finally, we are pleased to report we have updated some of the older tables at the hall. We now have a good selection of clean, lightweight tables in three different sizes. So, no matter what you get up to in the hall there should be a good variety of tables to suit. It's thanks to everyone in the village and beyond who support the Village Hall Charity, our events and activities as it's the proceeds from these activities, combined with donations from Woodcote Rally and Woodcote Village Fete, which enable us to update and improve our facilities.

You can find out more about Village Hall events, activities and hire at www.woodcotevillagehall.com or by calling 07929 203096.

THE ASIAN HORNET

The Asian hornet is an invasive, non-native hornet from Asia. It is a highly aggressive predator of insects and poses a significant threat to our ecology. In 2004 it was accidentally introduced to France, it spread rapidly across Europe and is now crossing the channel into the UK. Asian hornets fly across the channel, they also hitch rides on vehicles and goods, so the areas at greatest risk are ports and transport links. Sitting in the M3/M4 corridor puts us at risk. Nests have been found (and destroyed) in London, Ascot and Slough. Understanding its present and potential dangers is crucial for responsible community action.

Social insects like bees are an easy lunch for the hornets because there are thousands of them in one place. The hornets hawk around the hives, plucking bees from the air to feed to their larvae. Sometimes the hornets take a few bees, sometimes they take a lot, but the scent of just one or two hornets around the hive is enough to stop the bees from leaving the hive. Normal behaviour stops and the bees become very stressed. The bee colony may fail because of the number of bees the hornets have taken, equally the stress caused by the hornets' presence can cause the colony to fail. Beekeepers take the health and welfare of their bees very seriously.

Asian hornets favour social insects, like bees and wasps, but will eat all insects. They hover near beehives, snatching returning bees, and butchering them to feed their larvae. This can decimate bee colonies, impacting pollination and honey

production. Portugal have noted a 35% reduction in honey production (BBKA news February 2024).

Asian hornets are aggressive insect predators, one nest needs around 100,000 insects to feed their larvae in a year. This level of predation has a brutal effect on the local ecology. Our native insects all have important jobs, including pollination, clean-up crew and being a food source for other insects, birds, reptiles and mammals. Later in the year, Asian hornets will feed on ripe fruits, which then rot and have had devastating effects on crops such as wine grapes.

While they are mellow when foraging, defence of their nest is highly aggressive. The stings are painful and can cause allergic reactions in some individuals.

What can we do? Be vigilant, learn to identify Asian hornets and report sightings to relevant authorities. Participate in our community programme. Help us to monitor and trap Asian hornets, contributing valuable data for tracking their spread. Groups such as gardening, allotment, hiking/walking groups, conservation etc. would all be able to combine efforts and help monitor traps. If you would like to help, please contact Sue via email at asianhornet@rbka.org.uk. Sue and the team would be happy to offer a presentation/ talk to community groups.

The Asian hornet has distinctive markings, with yellow legs and an orange band on the fourth segment on its black body. European hornets are brown and have yellow abdomens and brown legs, they are larger than an Asian hornet. Asian hornets have striking yellow 'socks' – leading to its common name in Asia of the 'yellow-legged hornet'. They are slightly smaller than our native European hornet but larger than a common wasp. They are darker than European hornets and many types of wasps but have a distinct orange face and an orange-yellow band towards the tail end of its abdomen.



If you spot any Asian hornets and it is safe to do so, try and take a photo. Make a note of the location and report the sighting by email to alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk, or using the free Asian Hornet Watch app.

Sue Abbott
Reading & District Beekeeping Association, Asian
Hornet Action Team
asianhornet@rbka.org.uk

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WOODCOTE AMATEUR DRAMATICS SOCIETY

Since our record-breaking production of An Amateur Killer last November, WADS have certainly not been resting on their laurels or basking in the glory. Oh no, it's straight on to the next adventure. I've been to various libraries and scouring the internet to find our next thrilling production. After reading through countless scripts, staying up half the night and even dreaming about some of them, I have finally come up with what will hopefully be a couple of belters.

It's a Double Bill for our next production with not one but two 1 act plays.

The first is called The Attic by Robert Scott. This little chiller of a ghost story is set in, you guessed it, the attic of a suburban home of Demi and Callum. What are the strange noises that can be heard and what's the story behind the half-written letter Demi finds? Is it a confession of a terrible doings? There's only one way to find out the answer!

The other play to end the evening is a lovely comedy called White Lies by Richard James. This little gem is about four ladies that used to be best friends at university many years ago. It's time for a reunion to catch up! Is that a good idea though? Do you think some of the old rivalries and feeling towards each other are going to resurface? You bet they are! This award-winning comedy has lots of very witty lines with some outrageous and quirky characters. Just like the sort of people you meet every day!

The all-important dates are May 16th, 17th and 18th. Tickets are £12, available now from our box office at 07956 136750, or online at woodcotedrama.co.uk.

FRONTLINE: HELPING PEOPLE STRUGGLING UNDER THE BURDEN OF DEBT

Frontline Debt Advice is a charity, licenced by the FCA, whose principal aim is to help those whose lives are blighted by debt. The Reading branch (one of 15 in the South of England) deals with 250 to 300 clients per year typically having total debts of between £2 m and £3 m.

Debt affects people very negatively and for some, they will feel that life is no longer worth living. Those working to release clients from the burden of debt are richly rewarded by seeing the positive impact of a fresh start.

Having moved to Woodcote in December, I started as a Volunteer Debt and Benefit Adviser earlier this year. I approached Frontline having seen people struggling with debt while I was conducting research for a government survey.

People are often surprised to hear that Frontline doesn't help clients by providing money! Instead, we are able to negotiate with creditors on our clients' behalf with a view to arranging a manageable repayment schedule for them. In more extreme cases we can help clients by taking them through the Debt Relief Order process by which debts of up to £50,000

can be written off. The upper limit for DROs was raised in the recent budget which shows that the government also recognises the importance of enabling people to have a fresh start.

Those of us who have been able to avoid the trap of unmanageable debt may be tempted to assume that those in debt are there as a result of profligacy. However, this is not the case. For most, the starting point is a negative event such as a death of a loved one or a relationship breakdown. Furthermore, most clients genuinely want to repay the debts they have incurred.

As well as being a volunteer adviser, I am the Branch Manager at Reading looking after a team of 14 volunteers. We have a waiting list of clients needing help and a shortage of advisers so I'd be delighted to hear from anybody who feels they may be able to spare a few hours per week to join us.

If you, or somebody you know is struggling under the burden of debt, please get in touch.

Richard Anderson
richard.anderson@frontlinedebtadvice.org.uk

WOODCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Just after half term we received our Ofsted call. The process was a two-day Inspection which was very thorough and enabled the Inspector to get to know our school well. Our report has not yet been finalised, so we cannot yet share the outcome with you all but will do as soon as we are allowed.

March means World Book Day to all Primary School pupils and staff. This year we had the most amazing variety of costumes. There were so many books represented which has led to much discussion about books and characters, thus introducing new book recommendations for many of us across the school. The day after, we held an assembly where each class spoke about their class reading book, sharing stories, artwork and ideas all inspired by their reading. What a magical assembly, it was fabulous. Working in our house teams, we went on to test our knowledge of books, characters and authors in a huge quiz at the end of the day. Woodcote children are avid readers, and this shows!



Late February and early March have been sporty months for Woodcote Primary School. We entered two teams for the Woodcote Partnership Netball competition. Our B Team won the B category, very well done to them. Our A Team came second in the A

category securing them a place at the Oxfordshire finals later this month. This is very exciting. We are proud of the year 5/6 teams and wish the A team the best of luck at County.



Huge Congratulations to Angus who represented Oxfordshire Primary Schools at the National Cross-Country Championships held in Loughborough. Angus represented our school and the county with pride. It was a super muddy and tough, 2.7km course. Angus completed the 2.7km in 12 minutes and 51 seconds, coming a fantastic 144th out of 265 boys who entered the race. Congratulations Angus, what a great run.



Year 3/4 entered two teams for girls' football this month. In both competitions both teams were placed 3rd. The girls were fabulous having never played a competition before. In true Woodcote style they all were great ambassadors showing the Olympic values of team spirit and determination.

This photo is of our year 5/6 footballers (girls) who also entered a competition, at The Oratory School and our B team were second. Here they are wearing our new football kit and sporting their medals. Well done to both teams!

Our youngest children, in Oak class, enjoyed a visit from a local vet. They learnt all about looking after their pets and what happens at the vets. Thanks to the team from Oakley Vets who came out to see us.

Oak class have also been on a trip recently. As part of their imagination week, they went to the moon in rockets and had a space-picnic. This was a magical time, and the children thoroughly enjoyed it. I am pleased to report that they re-entered the Earth's atmosphere without trouble and are all back in Woodcote.

We are delighted to Welcome Miss Hawker to the Year 2 teaching team. Miss Hawker has a great deal of experience and has taught year 2 before. We are looking forward to working with her. Miss Hawker will job share two days a week with Mrs Morris.

We are still looking to recruit both part-time and full-time Lunchtime Supervisors. Please let your friends know and ask them to contact us for more details.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Easter break.

Mrs L. Hunt

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CABIN PRESCHOOL

As we embrace the arrival of spring, we wanted to share some delightful moments from our cozy haven at Cabin.

Despite the dark, wet, and windy weather on Friday with the start of Spring, we've transformed our indoor spaces into warm and inviting nooks for play. The children continue to explore the changing seasons outdoors, their curiosity undeterred by the elements.

Wednesday holds a special place in our hearts, it is officially the best day of the week! Oak class join us to participate in "Wheelie Wednesday," leaving with tired smiles and perhaps a bit of dirt, a sure sign of an afternoon well spent.



Wheelie Wednesday with Oak class

The talented kitchen team at Langtree serves up delicious roast dinners. The children eagerly clean their plates, followed by their favourite treat: jelly! While we should technically say "fruit," they've also been enjoying the portions of fruits and vegetables generously donated by our parents. From apples and oranges to cucumbers, peppers, mangetout, bananas, and cherries (courtesy of our community food share scheme from the Co-op; thank you!), their taste buds have been on quite the adventure. We even introduced persimmon fruit, a delightful cross between mango and sweet pepper. It received rave reviews.

We believe in inspiring our young learners to try new things and embrace novel experiences. These endeavours not only build confidence but also enhance their overall well-being.

Our little artists have been hard at work creating heartfelt gifts for their beloved mothers. Expect

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beautiful handmade cards, a sweet song, hand-painted pottery, and delicately threaded necklaces. It's a labour of love, and they can't wait to share these treasures with you.

The Friday afternoon before Mothering Sunday, we invited all mummies to join us for tea and cakes. It's a lovely opportunity to connect, chat, and get to know your child's friends. This heartwarming tradition is a highlight on our Cabin calendar.

At Cabin, our little explorers have been on an exciting journey through the world of dinosaurs. Learning those tricky dinosaur names has been an adventure in itself! But that's not all, we've been busy creating our own prehistoric wonders.

The children did a group activity creating a volcano, complete with exploding lava (red handprints) and some trees (green handprints) for a lovely Dinosaur wall display. They loved making the red and green handprints and scrunching up brown tissue to create the volcano. Each child crafted their very own dinosaur; a Plateasaurus with Charlotte's help and imaginary dinosaurs named after themselves with "Katieasaurus". We also delved into the past by making fossils using clay and various textured objects. The room buzzed with creativity.

We've been loving having outdoor adventures with colours. Rain or shine, we venture outdoors every day. While raindrops dance around us, we occasionally catch glimpses of sunshine. Soon, we'll be planting herbs and vegetables in our pots, eager to incorporate them into our Cabin experiences.

Our Monster Phonics sessions are a hit. Every day, we practice letter sounds, exploring different ways to make learning engaging. The children eagerly listen to monster stories. They are a delightful mix of education and fun.

Numbers surround us. From the sand area to the mud kitchen and water trays, we infuse math into our daily activities. Counting each morning helps the children recognize and appreciate the magic of numbers.

Join the Fun: If your child wants to be part of our vibrant community, feel free to call us at 01491 680854 or email info@thecabinpreschool.co.uk to book a visit or enrol.

Two-Year Places Available: We've received numerous inquiries about our two-year places. If you're interested, we do have some availability. Don't hesitate to reach out, we're here to assist and advise.

Here's to a perfect spring season filled with joy, growth, and cherished memories.



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WOODCOTE PRE-SCHOOL

The children have had an exciting and busy term this half term with lots of play, baking, games, arts and crafts.

The children enjoyed celebrating St David's Day, playing knights, princesses and castles. They sampled Welsh rarebit & Welsh cakes for snacks.

On Monday 4th March we explored World Wildlife Day. We took care of lots of different animals in the vet's roleplay. We played with the jumping frogs, dressed up as different animals, made birds nest crispy cakes and explored the different environments that animals live in, such as the sea and the desert.

We had a super fun day celebrating World Book Day on March 7th. In fact, we celebrated all week long! The children were invited to dress up as their favourite characters all week and bring in their favourite books to share. On World Book Day, we made *Gruffalo* crumble, had tea with a tiger, built the *Three Little Pigs*' houses, explored the different animals from *Monkey Puzzle* and made our own brooms with the characters from *Room on the Broom*. We were very impressed by all the characters that came into Pre-School over the week, including Spider Man, Elsa, Paddington, the Gruffalo, Mirabel, Minnie Mouse, Princesses and Dennis the Menace, Winnie the Pooh to name a few.

Thank you to all the mummies, grandmas, nannies, aunties and friends who joined us for our Mother's Day morning. The children were very busy and took great pride in making their mummies some beautiful cards and a decorating a picture frame made from lolly sticks. The children worked hard making cakes for their families to enjoy, we have been doing a lot of cooking recently, practising our maths when measuring out our ingredients, mixing and scooping.



British Science Week saw us exploring some Space, dressing up as astronauts and having fun with galaxy playdough. We made rockets from blocks, completed space puzzles and explored different textures, like shaving foam and jelly. We explored what might happen if you added paint or water to shaving foam. We gave the children the opportunity to experiment with various coloured paints, mixing and making their own colours. We made our own bubble mixture and had great fun, chasing and popping the bubbles whilst admiring the different colours.

International Maths Day saw the children focussing on number blocks. We used our own resources and incorporated maths into every area of learning.

The children have been really enjoying dressing up recently, so we have provided them with lots of opportunities to express themselves through different costumes. They particularly like the emergency services, superheroes and the princess and knights, animal dressing up and admiring themselves in the mirror. There have been so many specific dates and festivals this last term giving the children so many opportunities to express themselves, explore different cultures and sample various foods from around the world.

We would like to say a huge thank you to Woodcote Rally for our grant. So far, we have been able to purchase a beautiful new sofa and rug for our book corner.

Now that the weather is getting better, we have been able to get out and about more often. It will be very exciting to visit the allotment and find out what is growing and what we are going to plant next! You will see us out and about on the rec, at the park and exploring our village.

We are running Easter Holiday Club again from the 2nd – 5th April. If you would like to book your child in, please call us on 01491 682300 or email us on woodcote.pre-school@hotmail.co.uk. We do lots of fun activities like baking, painting, walks, Easter Egg Hunts, picnics and crafts.

We still have availability if you are interested in your child starting with us. We offer all funding including the new 2-year funding which begins in April 2024. If you would like to come for a visit or would like any more information, please contact Wendy Powell on 01491 682300, email: woodcote.pre-school@hotmail.co.uk or you can download forms from our website.



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CHECKENDON PRE-SCHOOL

Our theme this term is 'Space'. This was taken from one of the children's interests. The children have been investigating space, looking at different planets, astronauts and making rockets to fly us to the moon!



We have been using our imaginations and become astronauts and have been flying off to the moon in our space rocket to visit the moon and explore, 5,4,3,2,1 Blast off!

We have been learning all about the moon, what it is made of, gravity and how long it takes to get there. The children have taken pictures of themselves and have used these pictures to turn themselves into an astronaut which we have put up on our 'We are out of this world display'. We have enjoyed making flags to plant on the moon along with our very own footprints on the moon which we made from plaster of Paris so that all the astronauts who visit the moon will know that Checkendon Pre-school have been there.

The children have also been celebrating World Book Day, joining in with well-loved stories, by using puppets and dressing up as characters in the books such as the *Gruffalo* and *A Squash and a Squeeze*. We have also been listening to stories on the cd player. This is a lovely way to practise our listening skills, and encourages the children to join in with key events and phrases in stories, as well as becoming aware of how stories are structured.

We have also celebrated Mother's Day with the children bringing in pictures of their mummies and talking about all the wonderful things our mummies do for us. We also invited them to join us to celebrate Mothers' Day by enjoying our Diddi Dance session with us. This was a great success with both parents and children alike having a brilliant time.

I am delighted to inform you that Checkendon Pre-School C.I.O has been able to raise just under £1000 last year with a wide variety of fundraising events such as the Christmas raffle and our sponsored fishing event. This is a very welcome support which will enable us to provide some wonderful new resources for the children to support their learning and development so a very big thank you all who supported this scheme. Our next fundraising event is the Checkendon Run on Sunday June 14th. Please come along and show your support. If you feel you might be able to help at the

event, please let us know at checkrun1@checkendon-run.org.uk.

On behalf of Checkendon Pre-School we would like to say thank you so much for your continued support.

To find out more about Checkendon Pre-School C.I.O, do visit our website www.checkendonpreschool.co.uk, call us on 01491 682589, e-mail preschoolcheckendon@gmail.com or just pop in. We always look forward to welcoming you to Checkendon Pre-School.

Kelly Mullins

GORING HEATH BEAVERS

Our activities last month were, as usual, eclectic. We started with Chinese New Year, this time the Year of the Dragon. Having, and I quote, "learned stuff" (with Chinese music in the background) the Beavers moved on to their favourite activity: eating. Predictably, whilst they loved the rice crackers and fortune cookies, the green tea was less of a hit. Ken Groom's dragon (Derek) and Midge's lion-dog made it out of the shed and the Beavers had glorious fun parading round the Hut. The ear-splitting racket frightened off any bad spirits without need of firecrackers.

After half term the Cubs came to play, with all parents invited. After a round robin of fire-steel practice, a scavenger hunt and happy Scouting reminiscences in the lavvu (our Laplandic teepee), we had a presentation from County about volunteering (see what they did then?). Our brilliant parents are very supportive (frankly without their weekly help we would now struggle to run), but if anyone would like more information about the possibility of volunteering, whether in an administrative role or as a leader/section assistant, please contact Linda Burton on 07956 136750. The evening culminated with a splendid campfire and, of course, marshmallows.

On the 29th of February we visited the Bear Dog Wood for an adventure in the dark. As ever, old-hand Euan asked non-stop questions all the way from the car park whilst newbies were wide-eyed; all were delighted with the torches and puddles. Continuing with last term's 'space' theme, Midge had set up a rocket launcher. The Beavers crept through the wood, collecting 'rocket fuel', an empty pop bottle and a key en route. The Beavers launched bottle rockets (much glee!) then the chest was opened: marshmallows! (no, what really?) The Beavers built a fire and in no time, they were stoked with another dose of pre-bedtime sugar.

On the 7th of March the Beavers learned about the history of Mothering Sunday, Dragon explaining how it differed from the modern norm of Mothers' Day. The Beavers set about decorating and bagging biscuits for their mums; these turned out surprisingly well (the biscuits, not the mums).

As this is being written, the Beavers are bracing for the North Leigh long-distance hike; they have a title to defend and so are perhaps a little more focussed than last year. More next month.

WALLINGFORD CORN EXCHANGE

All regular performances normally start at 7:30pm unless stated otherwise. The bar and auditorium will open from 7pm so there's plenty of time to collect drinks beforehand. Films with subtitles will be shown on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons at 2:30pm.

Please look at the website (www.cornexchange.org.uk) for updates. Tickets £10 for Adults and £5 for under 15s unless otherwise stated.

Cinema

Bob Marley – One Love (12A)

- Monday, 1st April, 7:30pm
- Tuesday, 2nd April, 7:30pm

Origin (PG)

- Wednesday, 3rd April, 2:30pm
- Thursday, 4th April, 7:30pm

Dune Part II (12A)

- Friday, 5th April, 7:30pm
- Saturday, 6th April, 2:30pm
- Saturday, 6th April, 7:30pm

The Taste of Things (12A)

- Sunday, 7th April, 7:30pm
- Monday, 8th April, 7:30pm

The Lavender Hill Mob (U)

- Wednesday, 10th April, 2:30pm
- Wednesday, 10th April, 7:30pm

Oppenheimer (12A)

- Thursday, 11th April, 7:30pm

Monster (12A)

- Friday, 12th April, 7:30pm
- Saturday, 13th April, 2:30pm
- Saturday, 13th April, 7:30pm

Driving Mum (12A)

- Sunday, 14th April, 7:30pm

The Zone of Interest (12A)

- Wednesday, 17th April, 7:30pm

Il Capitano (12A)

- Friday, 19th April, 7:30pm
- Saturday, 20th April, 2:30pm
- Saturday, 20th April, 7:30pm

Drive Away Dolls (15)

- Sunday, 21st April, 7:30pm

On the Waterfront (12A)

- Monday, 22nd April, 7:30pm

Wallingford on Film

- Wednesday, 24th April, 2:30pm
- Thursday, 25th April, 7:30pm
- Two films about Wallingford as a fundraiser for the theatre.
- All tickets £5.

Ghosbusters – Frozen Empire (12A)

- Friday, 26th April, 7:30pm
- Saturday, 27th April, 2:30pm

The Color Purple (12A)

- Saturday, 27th April, 7:30pm
- Sunday, 28th April, 7:30pm

Mother's Instinct (15)

- Monday, 29th April, 7:30pm
- Tuesday, 30th April, 7:30pm

Live Screening

NT Live, *Dear England*

- Wednesday, 3rd April, 7:00pm
- filmed live on stage at the National Theatre, London
- £18 (adults), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s)

With the worst track record for penalties in the world, Gareth Southgate knows he needs to open his mind and face up to the years of hurt, to take team and country back to the promised land. Joseph Fiennes (*The Handmaid's Tale*) plays Gareth Southgate in James Graham's (*Sherwood*) spectacular hit play that explores nation and game. The country that gave the world football has since delivered a painful pattern of loss. Why can't England's men win at their own game? With the worst track record for penalties in the world, Gareth Southgate knows he needs to open his mind and face up to the years of hurt, to take team and country back to the promised land. Director - Rupert Goold.

The Royal Ballet – MacMillan Celebrated

- Tuesday, 9th April, 7:15pm
- £18 (adults), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s)

The Royal Ballet celebrates the breadth of Principal Choreographer Kenneth MacMillan's one-act ballets. *Dances Concertantes*, commissioned by Ninette de Valois in 1955, was MacMillan's first major work. An early sign of the incredible artistic output that would follow, the work's critical success spurred MacMillan to abandon performing in favour of choreography. It is followed by *Different Drummer*, MacMillan's complex and haunting balletic interpretation of Woyzeck, Georg Büchner's play about a soldier's descent into madness. The mixed programme concludes with *Requiem*, his 1976 work for Stuttgart Ballet, created in memory of its late artistic director, MacMillan's friend and former Royal Ballet dancer and choreographer John Cranko.

NT Live – *Vanya*

- Monday 15th April, 7:30pm
- Filmed live in London's West End
- £18 (adults), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s)

Andrew Scott (*Fleabag*) brings multiple characters to life in Simon Stephens' (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*) radical new version of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. Hopes, dreams, and regrets are thrust into sharp focus in this one-man adaptation which explores the complexities of human emotions.

John Singer Sargent: Exhibition on Screen

- Tuesday 16th April, 7:30pm

- Wednesday, 17th April, 2:30pm
- From the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Tate Britain
- £10 (adults), £5 (under 18s)

John Singer Sargent is known as the greatest portrait artist of his era. What made his 'swagger' portraits remarkable was his power over his sitters, what they wore and how they were presented to the audience. Through interviews with curators, contemporary fashionistas and style influencers, Exhibition on Screen's film will examine how Sargent's unique practice has influenced modern art, culture and fashion. Filmed at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Tate Britain, London, the exhibition reveals Sargent's power to express distinctive personalities, power dynamics and gender identities during this fascinating period of cultural reinvention. Alongside 50 paintings by Sargent sit stunning items of clothing and accessories worn by his subjects, drawing the audience into the artist's studio. Sargent's sitters were often wealthy, their clothes costly, but what happens when you turn yourself over to the hands of a great artist? The manufacture of public identity is as controversial and contested today as it was at the turn of the 20th century, but somehow Sargent's work transcends the social noise and captures an alluring truth with each brush stroke.

An American in Paris – The Musical

- Thursday 18th April, 7:30pm
- £18 (adults), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s)

This breathtakingly beautiful Tony Award-winning Broadway musical inspired by the Oscar winning MGM film, tells the impassioned story of discovering love in the 'City of Light'. Jerry Mulligan is an American GI striving to make it as a painter in a city suddenly bursting with hope and possibility. Following a chance encounter with a beautiful young dancer named Lise, the streets of Paris become the backdrop to a sensuous, modern romance of art, friendship and love in the aftermath of war. Featuring the gorgeous music and lyrics of George and Ira Gershwin (including the classic hits, *Wonderful* and *I Got Rhythm*), stunning designs and show-stopping choreography, this incredible production received a record-setting 28 five-star reviews from the critics.

The Royal Ballet – Swan Lake

- Wednesday 24th April, 7:15pm
- £18 (adults), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s)

Music: Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky, Choreography: Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov, Additional Choreography: Liam Scarlett and Frederick Ashton

Out hunting, Prince Siegfried chances upon a flock of swans. One among them transforms into the beautiful human Odette and he is immediately enamoured. But Odette is bound by a spell which keeps her captive as a swan during the day. Can Siegfried free her?

Tchaikovsky's sensational score combines with the evocative imagination of choreographer Liam Scarlett

and designer John Macfarlane to heighten the dramatic pathos of Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov's quintessential ballet classic. Swan Lake remains to this day one of the best-loved works in the classical ballet canon.

WITHYMEAD NATURE RESERVE

Open Days 2024

We are open every Sunday (except 14th July) 10 am to 5pm, from the 7th of April until the 25th of August. Loddon Lily Sundays are on the 7th of April until the 19th of May, when our signature flower is in bloom. We will be serving cream teas 2-5pm on 28th Apr, 26th May, 30th Jun, 28th Jul and 25th Aug. No need to pre-book for any of these dates, just turn up and enjoy. Entry is free, but donations are welcome.

We Also offer pre-bookable visits on Fridays for up to two hours at a time between 10am and 4pm, during the same period. Visit www.withymead.org for more information. We look forward to welcoming you to this gem by the Thames.

Seeking a New Trustee

Would you be interested in joining our Trustee group at Withymead Nature Reserve?

This is an exciting opportunity to get involved in a decision making and advisory role for a small, local charity that seeks to promote, protect and preserve the flora and fauna found in and around Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire and to utilise the reserve for the general education and benefit of the public with regard to nature.

Withymead Nature Reserve is a 13-acre riverside wetland site midway between Goring and South Stoke. The site is a hidden gem and encompasses a variety of habitats within a relatively small acreage. Riverine, fenland and woodland habitats support a profusion of flora and fauna.

Withymead is owned and managed by The Anne Carpmael Trust (CIO) which is a registered charity (Charity Number 1199071). We are seeking someone to join the Trustee Board, ideally someone with an ecological background or an interest in this magical place. We work as a team with our resident wardens and all Trustees are encouraged to support some events and open afternoons which are held during the spring and summer months when the reserve is open to the general public.

Trustees meet formally 3 times a year.

If you have a passion for preserving special places and for sharing them with others. If you have time to get involved both behind the scenes and during our open season, this could be for you?

If you think you may be interested and would like to know more, we'd love to hear from you. You are most welcome to visit the reserve.

Jenny Hedge
Chair of Trustees
Anne Carpmael Trust (CIO)
jenny.hedge@tiscali.co.uk

HENLEY AND DISTRICT STAMP CLUB



Have you considered starting a new hobby? Could it be stamp collecting?

The Henley Stamp Club is a friendly group. We would be delighted to see new visitors or members. If you are interested in facts concerning stamps or postal history, why not come along and explore how you can promote your interest?

To learn more about stamps and postal history why not visit us at Bix one Wednesday evening? You can then meet other people who find postal history and the story of stamps fascinating too.

Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month in Bix Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. On Wednesday 10th April we have guest speaker Tim Dexter giving a talk and display on the subject of *Morton Bay Period-Queensland*. On Wednesday 24th April we have a guest speaker Albert Jackson giving a talk and display on the subject of *Anschluss 1938: German Occupation of Austria*.

Visitors and new members are very welcome. Further details can be obtained by phoning Steve on 07767 251670 or on our website: www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk.

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

Say "William Morris" and you can't be sure what image comes into the listeners mind. Is it the artist of the famous willow pattern? Or the founder of the company that made the mini?

On Thursday 18th April we welcome back Marie-Louise Kerr (curator without museum) to explore the lives of two very different men with the same name. Her talk, *The Two William Morris's of Oxfordshire* begins at 7.30pm (coffee served from 7pm) and is at Whitchurch Village Hall. Non-members are welcome to join us, and we charge just £3 to include coffee and biscuits.

GORING UNPLUGGED

Goring Unplugged is something of an institution. If you live locally, you've probably heard of it even if you've never been! For over 20 years they've hosted regular acoustic music nights in Goring Village Hall. They're very relaxed. The audience bring their own drinks and snacks, and everyone lends a hand stacking the chairs afterwards.

The heart of the evening is, of course, the musicians. There are usually five or six acts performing a few songs each. A mix of young talent taking the stage for the very first time, seasoned local performers, and occasionally internationally renowned artists.

Musically, anything goes. A typical night will mix singer-songwriter and folk acts with indie rock, a capella, and more experimental performances. (What do you mean, you've never heard a nose flute?) The only requirement is everything is played on acoustic instruments. It gives the whole evening a lovely, intimate feel.

Goring Unplugged has a knack for bringing together musicians who go on to do big things. Local stars The Mysteries and Heather Jayne and the Red Shoes first played on Goring Unplugged's stage, as did rock band The Lightyears, who went on to play Wembley stadium and tour internationally.

For their 20th anniversary last year, they brought Goring alive for a whole weekend with a series of musical picnics and shows in local pubs, which has led to a whole new generation getting to know Goring Unplugged. Their Christmas show was packed with over 150 people in the village hall.

Just £5. Doors at 7.30. Music at 8.

Put these dates in your diary, and we'll see you there!

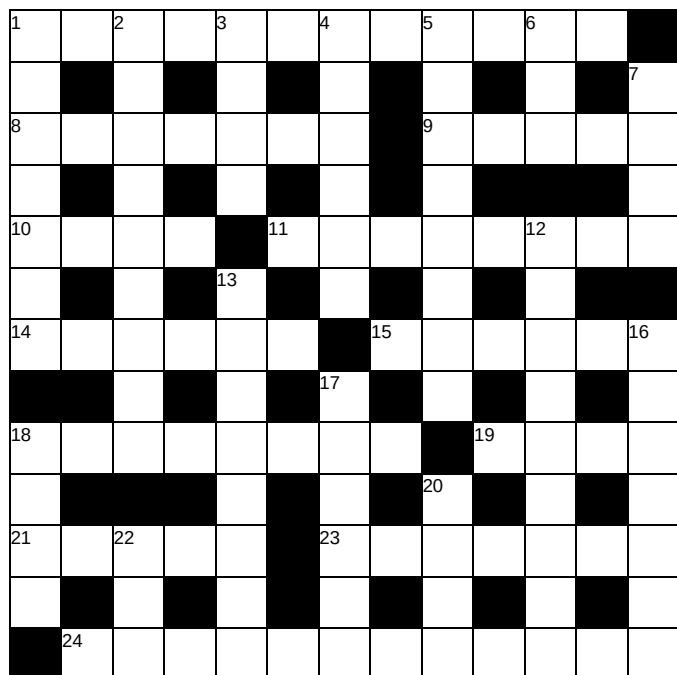
- Friday 26th April 2024
- Friday 28th June 2024
- Friday 27th September 2024
- Friday 29th November 2024
- Christmas special: Friday 20th December 2024

WALLINGFORD & DISTRICT ART CLUB



Join our friendly Wallingford and District Art club for a live demonstration as professional artist, Jessica Parker, demos painting street scenes using mixed media. Her work often features derelict and abandoned buildings or structures, and she uses discarded materials and artwork to emphasise her reuse/recycle/re-purpose mindset. The demo will be held at Centre 70 from 7.30pm-9.30pm on Tuesday 16 April and is free for club members or £5 for visitors. If you would like further information about this event or other club activities, please visit the club website at www.wallingfordartclub.org.uk or email admin@wallingfordartclub.org.uk

APRIL CROSSWORD



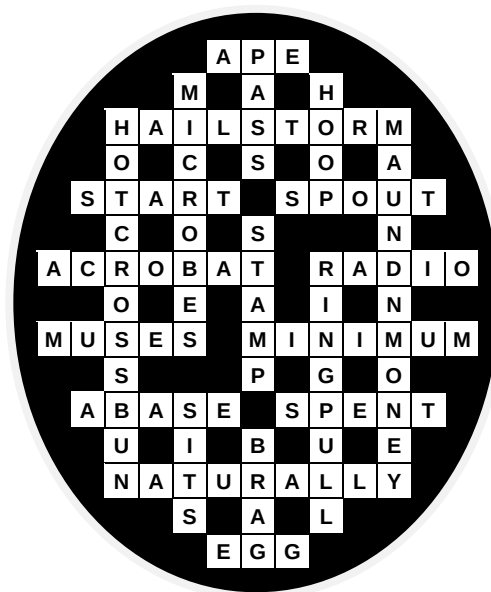
Across

- 1 Stodgy grease spread on Bard's anniversary (2,7,3)
- 8 Manage verse in middle of poem (7)
- 9 Rock bottom – china dirty inside (5)
- 10 Consumes last of the banana biscuit cakes (4)
- 11 Patching ruined bed-time attire (8)
- 14 Assets, or parts of? (6)
- 15 Country loses female far from the sea (6)
- 18 Repeats crane set assembly (8)
- 19 Sell end of record (4)
- 21 She needs £50 for cover (5)
- 23 Upgrade – hence an improvement
- 24 Expensive sounding opening session orators go to Holme's head (4, 8)

Down

- 1 Exhibitors April weather (7)
- 2 European giant's entry at Crufts (5,4)
- 3 Open University direction of flower (4)
- 4 Language council eager to back (6)
- 5 Student body back to excel in summer glow (8)
- 6 Increase promo with another 500 (3)
- 7 Omit first defender running onto pitch (4)
- 12 Dare to dispute (9)
- 13 Shopkeeper about to follow Queen (8)
- 16 Units of scholarship (7)
- 17 Declare a time to examine (6)
- 18 Got up for wine (4)
- 20 Youngster turned back having eaten hot lentil dish (4)
- 22 I hear and see (3)

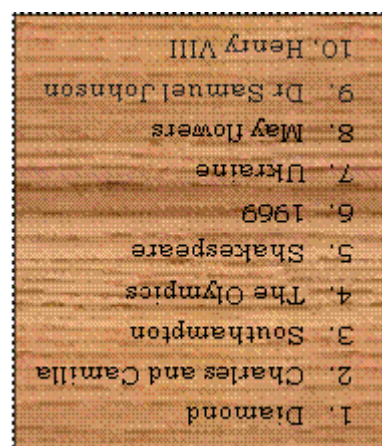
EASTER CROSSWORD SOLUTION



APRIL QUIZ

1. What is the gemstone for those born in April?
2. What royal wedding took place in April 2005?
3. From what port, in April 1912, did the Titanic sail?
4. What, after 1500 years, was revived in April 1896?
5. What Playwright's birthday fell on St. George's Day?
6. Concord's maiden flight was in April of what year?
7. In what country, in April 1986, did the Chernobyl power plant explode?
8. April showers bring forth what?
9. Who published his famous *Dictionary* in April 1755?
10. Who became King of England in April 1509?

QUIZ ANSWERS



DATES FOR THE DIARY

Regular Weekly Events

Every Monday

**** Youth Club – Juniors (year 7's).**
Woodcote Village Hall. 7.15pm-8.45pm.

Every Tuesday

**** Youth Club – Seniors (years 8, 9 & 10).**
Woodcote Village Hall 7.15pm-8.45pm.

Every Thursday

**** Rhymetime for pre-schoolers.**
Woodcote Library 10.15am-10.45am

**** Chance To Chat.**
Mowforth House 2.30pm-4pm

APRIL DATES

Tues 2nd	*	BMMHS Zoom talk: 'Stanford Tuck - Hero of the Battle of Britain'. Email zoom@bmmhs.org. 7.30pm
Wed 3rd	*	Wallingford U3A meeting. Crowmarsh Village Hall. 2pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: 'A year of taking pictures'. 8pm
Sat 6th	*	Coffee Shop in aid of Checkendon Brownies & Oxford Hospitals School (cash only). Woodcote Community Centre. 10am-12.30pm
	*	Goring Repair Café. Goring Village Hall. 10am-12.30pm
Tues 9th	*	Board Games Club for adults. Woodcote Library. 3.30pm-4.45pm
Wed 10th	*	BMMHS Talk: 'Creating a British Way of War'. Woodcote Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Henley & District Stamp Club meeting. Bix Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society meeting: Digital competition No 4. Whitchurch Village Hall. 8pm
Fri 12th	*	Quiz Night in aid of St Leonard's Church. Woodcote Village Hall. 7.30pm
Sat 13th	*	Coffee Shop in aid of Stoke Row WI (cash only). Woodcote Community Centre. 10am-12.30pm
	*	Jazz Night: The Remi Harris Hot Club Trio. Woodcote Village Hall. 8pm
Tues 16th	*	Wallingford & District Art Club demonstration: 'Buildings in mixed media'. Centre 70, The Kinecroft, Wallingford. 7.30pm
Wed 17th	*	Woodcote WI meeting. Woodcote Village Hall. 2.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: 'Composition and Working with Light'. 8pm
Thur 18th	*	Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society meeting: 'The Two William Morris's of Oxfordshire'. Whitchurch Village Hall. 7.30pm

SMALL ADS

AVON CALLING :: I'm your local AVON representative, would you like a brochure?

Kerry 01491 682437/07966 509908

LOCAL HANDYMAN :: No job too small. DIY jobs in and around the home. Kitchen and bathroom renovations undertaken. Call James 07961 882281

APRIL DATES *Continued*

Thur 18th	*	Woodcote Volunteers AGM. Woodcote Village Hall. 7pm
	*	Wallingford Photographic Club member's evening: Dayout Review. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm-10pm
Sat 20th	*	Coffee Shop in aid of Woodcote WI (cash only). Woodcote Community Centre. 10am-12.30pm
	*	Saturday Crafts: Earth Day. Woodcote Library. 10.30am-11.30am
Tues 23rd	*	Chatterbox. Woodcote Community Centre. 2pm-3.30pm
Wed 24th	*	Henley & District Stamp Club meeting. Bix Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society talk: 'My African Adventures'. Whitchurch Village Hall. 8pm
Thur 25th	*	Wallingford Photographic Club competition: End of Season. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm-10pm
Sat 27th	*	Coffee Shop in aid of WADS. Woodcote Community Centre. 10am-12.30pm
Sun 28th	*	Woodcote Spring Fair. Woodcote Village Hall. 11am-3pm
	*	Withymead Nature Reserve Open Day. 2pm-5pm

FORTHCOMING DATES IN MAY

Wed 1st	*	Wallingford U3A meeting. Crowmarsh Village Hall. 2pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: '30 Years of Club Photography'. 8pm
Thur 2nd	*	Wallingford Photographic Club meeting: End of Year Wrap Up. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm-10pm
Sat 4th	*	Goring Chamber Choir presents: 'Summertime to Skyfall - music from great movies'. St Thomas' Church, Goring. 3pm
Tues 7th	*	BMMHS Zoom talk: 'Forbidden Art of the Third Reich'. Email zoom@bmmhs.org. 7.30pm
Wed 8th	*	Henley & District Stamp Club meeting. Bix Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society meeting: Picture of the Year competition. Whitchurch Village Hall. 8pm