

Issue 547

January 2025

The Crowmarsh News team

The *Crowmarsh News* is run by the Crowmarsh News Association, a group of local volunteers — more help always welcome!

Editorial & Layout: Toni Taylor and John Griffin

Editorial support: James Taylor, Julian Park, Gay Holden, Jane Thrift and Revd Kevin Beer

Advertising: Pat Shields

Distribution: Frank Sadler and the team

The *Crowmarsh News* is a self-funded publication, and we regret that we are unable to accept unpaid advertising, even from local businesses and societies.

We welcome material for inclusion but do not necessarily endorse the views of contributors. We reserve the right to refuse material or to shorten contributions as may be appropriate: editorial decisions are final.

ADVERTISING RATES

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Next month's issue

All new advertisements and all copy for the February 2025 *Crowmarsh News* must reach us by our **20th January deadline**.

For all items of news, articles, notices or correspondence, please email

crowmarsh.editor@gmail.com

or deliver to the editors at 57 The Street.

For all advertising, please contact

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Happy New Year!

A very happy 2025 to all our readers. And a warm welcome to anyone who has recently moved into Crowmarsh Gifford, Mongewell or North Stoke. We hope you will be very happy here and quickly become part of your local community.

News from Crowmarsh Gifford CE Primary School

This past month here at Crowmarsh School we have been busy with Christmas nativities, church services and our Christmas fete.

On 30th November, the PTA held a Christmas fete here at the school. Some of the stalls included: biscuit decorating, jumble sales, Christmas jumper sales and pick a present for a relative. Everyone did an amazing job and in total we raised a whopping £1516.09. So a big well done to everyone who helped raise that amazing sum of money.

As always at Christmas time, classes put on a nativity or carol concert, all telling the same story from the very first Christmas night, when Jesus was born. This week, we asked some pupils about how they are finding their performance. "I like the songs because they are really funny," said a year 3. "I like the story we are telling, The Grinch."

But as a teacher is it more hectic than it is for the children? We interviewed two teachers. "It is nice to be able to tell the Christmas story with lots of cheerful songs," Mrs Cooper said. "So sweet, love it, but a bit hectic," Mrs Hurley added. But one of the most important things is that it is the last nativity for the Year 6s! "It was really fun, one of the best times EVER," Anja said.

As part of this newsletter, we went to interview some of the brilliant staff and teachers to find out a bit more about them.

First, we took a trip down to Reception to ask Miss Moore some interesting facts about her.

1. If you weren't a teacher, what would you be?

I would still work in a school because I love working with children.

2. What's your favourite Christmas food?

Plain mince pies are the best.

3. Why did you become a teacher?

I did not like school, so I did not want children to feel like that when they are at school.

We then asked Mr Smith about his Christmas.

1. What's your favourite thing to watch at Christmas?

Ooh the movie, Father Christmas.

2. Do you ever go to a different country for Christmas?

Well, I am not going anywhere this year, but I did go on a safari, and I went to Sri Lanka.

3. Do you play a specific game every year?

We normally play exploding kittens.

After that we asked Mrs Corrigan.

1. What is your favourite tradition with family?

Going to Waddesdon Manor, and on Boxing Day I like going to the beach.

2. Why did you become a teacher?

To help children learn and watch them grow.

3. What's your favourite Christmas movie?

I love Home Alone.

Then we questioned Mrs Whitley.

1. What's your favourite Christmas song?

I love Driving Home for Christmas.

2. What's your favourite thing about Christmas?

Having fun with children.

3. What's your favourite Christmas food?

I love cheese, so I think that's my favourite.

And now, that brings us to the end of our newsletter. We hope that you enjoyed hearing all about what's been going on.

Merry Christmas from all the children at Crowmarsh Gifford Primary School.

**Please see the parish website for the latest on many local matters:
www.crowmarshgifford.org.uk**

Past Times with David Beasley

Christmas Day at the Workhouse in 1901

The popular view of Victorian workhouses at Christmas is that they were very grim, unhappy places, and that there was little celebrating of Christmas in the homes.

But if that is so, Wallingford must have been the exception. Every effort in the workhouse seems to have been made to celebrate Christmas to a level many of the inmates had before. The morning started with a service by Revd Babington of St Peter's Church who was chaplain to the workhouse. The dining hall and the infirmary were both seasonably decorated under the supervision of Mrs Longhurst, the Assistant Matron.

All work was entirely suspended on Christmas Day, and little luxuries and extra food were given out, their plates being filled as much as they wanted at mealtimes. At the breakfast coffee was added to the menu. For dinner there was sufficient roast beef and plum pudding to satisfy the keenest appetite: there was enough plum pudding for a pound per head to be served.

A generous donation of tobacco, snuff, oranges and sweets followed. In the evening tea or coffee was served by Mr and Mrs Cawse and Miss Cawse. The festivities were attended by 126 inmates, and 30 elderly inmates from the Infirmary. At the end of the day each inmate was given a Christmas booklet by Miss Fairthorne.

No children are mentioned because they were all in Cottage Homes. The Homes at that time had 32 children in the three cottages that made up the Homes. On Christmas morning the children were so excited they were up dressed as early as a quarter to two in the morning. They were of course sent back to bed, but by three they were up and dressed again. The day finally started with boys, led by Master Longhurst with a cornet, singing carols at the Homes and the Workhouse. At eight o'clock the children were given a good breakfast of rolls and butter. At half past ten the boys attended a Christmas service at St Peter's, Revd Babington officiated, followed by a Christmas dinner.

After dinner for the girls and younger children there was a large Christmas Tree, the daughters of Mr Newton junior of Crowmarsh, had dressed nine dolls for the girls. Till bedtime, which had been extended till ten o'clock, the children were allowed to play with their gifts. Many of the presents were contributed by the ladies of the district, Miss A Hedges gave each child an orange and walnuts, Miss Fairthorne gave a packet of sweets and a book, all the presents were in the stockings of the children.

This seemed to be an enjoyable Christmas for all in the Workhouse and Cottage Homes.

Wallingford Bridge Estate Charity

The main aim of the Wallingford Bridge Estate Charity is to assist organisations for any charitable purpose in the Wallingford and Crowmarsh area. In the past modest grants have been awarded, for example to the Wallingford Museum, Crowmarsh Gifford School, Homestart and St Leonard's Churchyard Group, for volunteer expenses and specific items. Please note that the grants are not in the form of cash.

The Trustees would welcome applications from local organisations meeting the above criteria and whose purpose is to help others, as this can be a very effective way of ensuring that assistance reaches as many deserving cases as possible.

Applications should be in writing accompanied by accounts and sent to Wallingford Bridge Estate Charity Secretary, 8A Castle Street, Wallingford, OX10 8DL or by email to senioradmin@wallingfordtowncouncil.gov.uk.

Grim's Ditch survey

Do you use the Ridgeway path along Grim's Ditch from Mongewell towards Nuffield? The Historic Ridgeway Project is interested to find out more about how this path is being used by locals. If you are interested in helping, there is a link to a survey on the Crowmarsh village website <https://crowmarshgifford.org.uk>, open until 12 pm on 10th January.



Team Vicar: The Revd Kevin Beer
The Vicarage, 34 Thames Mead,
Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8EY
Tel: 01491 599873 (day off Monday)
Email: teamvicar@wallingfordcofe.org.uk
Blog: revkevbeer.blogspot.co.uk

St Mary Magdalene's Church, Crowmarsh Gifford

January services (at St Mary Magdalene unless otherwise stated)

Sunday 5th	11 am	Epiphany Family Service
Saturday 11th	10.30 am to Noon	Community Café at Crowmarsh Village Hall
Sunday 12th	11 am	Parish Communion
Sunday 19th	11 am	Parish Communion
Sunday 26th	11 am	Family Communion
Sunday 2nd February	11 am	Candlemas Family Service

Morning Prayer – every Friday at 9am

Evening Prayer – every Sunday at 4pm

Full details at www.wallingfordcofe.org.uk/calendar

The Vicar writes...

Happy New Year!

2025 will be a year of change at our church. I will be retiring at the end of April, and our church building will be transformed with the new toilet, servery and entrance area providing much needed facilities to serve our congregations and visitors alike. They are things that, God willing, we can predict. But what about other things – our health, the economy, world events and the pace of climate change?

As Christians, we can always look forward with hope, claiming the promises of God, whatever circumstances we may be facing:

“It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” (Deuteronomy 31:8)

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

“... remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20)

Even a small amount of faith in an infinite God multiplies out to something huge and significant. Indeed, our own salvation is possible not by our own pitiful efforts, but by our trust in his grace and mercy alone. Come and join us during this Epiphany season as we celebrate the revelation of Jesus as God's Saviour.

Blessings,
Rev Kev

To book North Stoke Village Hall

Phone Nikki Arnfeld on 839736 or email
narnfeld@yahoo.co.uk

To book the pavilion or hardcourt on the Recreation ground in Crowmarsh Gifford

Phone Chris Strange on 07711 904252, or
email chrisstrange47@gmail.com

Parish council notes

Crowmarsh Parish Council met on Thursday 5th December 2024 at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall. Councillors John Griffin, Anna Best, Stephen Sherbourne and Andrew Johnson, Parish Clerk Sue Rance, Finance Officer Yvonne Peet and three members of the public attended.

A member of the public asked whether, following the site meeting with the Highways Engagement Team, there was any further news about extending the pavement at the entrance to the French Gardens development at Benson Lane and the improvements to Footpath 2. Information has been forwarded to the relevant officers and a reply is awaited.

A member of the public expressed concern about road safety near the entrance to the French Gardens site and suggested a sign should be displayed warning drivers about children crossing the road. Arrangements are in hand to cut back the trees in this area prior to an extension to the pavement.

Matters from previous meeting

The Clerk will ask Cllr Park about progress with the tree survey. Money will need to be allocated in the budget to pay for this.

The deep cleanse of certain areas has been carried out and favourable reports were received about the tasks completed.

Finance

Payments agreed included £630 to Benson Tree Services for tree work at Robert Sparrow Gardens, £632.89 for lawn mower servicing and £136.21 for allotment insurance.

A donation of £250 was agreed to the organisers of the Thames Run 2025, a fundraising event in support of Crowmarsh Gifford School and Style Acre.

A request had been received from Revd Kevin Beer, on behalf of St Mary Magdalene Church, for £5000 towards the cost of improvements to the church facilities including a toilet and baby-changing area, a kitchen/servery and drainage connections. After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Sherbourne and seconded by Cllr Griffin that a grant of £5000 be made and this was agreed. This will be paid from Community

Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money and the parish council is looking forward to more community use of our historic church.

The accounts status at 30th November showed total receipts for the year to date were £124,275.02 and total payments were £73,039.22. The balance at the bank was £231,818.58. A copy of the Community Infrastructure Levy return has been uploaded to the website.

The main finance item was consideration of the budget for 2025/26 and the precept to support this. The Finance Officer had met with Mr Chris Strange to assess the potential income and expenditure for the pavilion and recreation ground and maintaining the nature area. At present the draft budget projected a deficit of £13,000 on running costs, some of which was for specialised regime of cutting to encourage biodiversity on the nature area, which is proving successful.

It was recommended that a salary increase of 5% should be included for budget purposes although the actual pay increase is yet to be determined. Costs may also increase if the council will need to pay the increased employers' national insurance.

After discussion, an increase of 5% in the precept was proposed by Cllr Sherbourne and seconded by Cllr Griffin, with a view to achieving a balanced budget in future years and this was approved along with the draft budget for 2025/26, which will be reviewed in the new year.

Quotes of £200 and £300 had been received from two potential internal auditors. After reviewing the terms and conditions it was agreed to accept the lower quote for next year's audit.

Planning

Decisions by SODC

P24/S3031/HH Morrells Farm, Nuffield Lane, near Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 6QQ. Proposed pitched roof over existing front porch, proposed side dormer, alterations to existing front and rear dormers and new front and rear roof lights and Juliet balcony to rear (As amended by plans received 28 October 2024). Planning permission.

P23/S2127/FUL Nosworthy Way, Mongewell. Change of use of land to EV charging facilities (as amended and amplified by additional tree, archaeological and ecological information). Appeal decision: planning permission refused.

Consultation

P24/S3572/HH 12 Home Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8EL. An air source heat pump next to the boundary of a neighbour's property. SODC's Environmental Protection team had no adverse comments with regards to potential environmental nuisance issues. Recommend no objection.

Major developments

A decision on the Newnham Manor application legal agreement was expected.

Neighbourhood plan

Dr Nicholas Robins has commissioned a redrawn base map of the parish for the neighbourhood plan.

County council matters

The Clerk will apply for £300 from County Councillor Bloomfield's priority grant fund for tree planting at the recreation ground.

District Council report

District Councillor Cooper highlighted the council's new waste strategy and the trial of an electric refuse collection vehicle.

Strategic priorities

The council agreed to accept the quote of £300 for the final design of the interpretation boards. A strategy planning meeting will be held on Thursday 16th January 2025 to review the council's priorities for 2025 and beyond.

Environment and recreation

The official portrait of His Majesty King Charles III is now on display in the pavilion. A new flood marker is in place on the path.

Cllr Rowley is reviewing quotes for repairs to the play area grassy mound and tunnel. This matter will be discussed by the Environment and Recreation Ground Committee at their meeting in January.

The trimming of trees at the bottom of Cox's Lane and between Robert Sparrow Gardens and Park View was a great improvement.

Traffic and transport

Cllr Johnson reported that from time to time the phasing of the traffic lights on Wallingford Bridge is set to prioritise traffic leaving the town, which can create long queues in Crowmarsh. This will be raised with the Highways Engagement Team.

A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is to be developed linking Benson to Crowmarsh, Wallingford and Cholsey. The county council will arrange a steering group meeting in the new year which Cllr Griffin will attend.

Other matters

The Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils has recommended that parish councils sign up to the Oxfordshire Councils' Charter. This had been circulated and after discussion it was agreed that the charter be adopted.

The government is currently consulting on allowing remote attendance and voting at local government meetings including County, District and Parish councils.

The County Council is introducing a booking system for its Household Waste Recycling Centres in 2025, including Oakley Wood.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 6th February 2025 at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm. Members of the public are very welcome to attend.

Parish Clerk: Mrs Sue Rance, 2 Home Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford, OX10 8EL email: crowmarshparishclerk@gmail.com

Chairman: John Griffin, 29 Thames Mead email: johngriffin@phonecoop.coop

Services at St Mary's Church, North Stoke

**Sunday 5th January, 11 am
Epiphany Holy Communion**

Sunday 19th, 11 am Holy Communion

Sunday 26th, 11 am Morning Prayer

**Sunday 2nd February, 11 am
Candlemas Holy Communion**

School applications

As part of the application process for reception entry to infant and primary school, Oxfordshire County Council is advertising the need for parents and carers of children born between 1st September 2020 and 31st August 2021 to apply for a school place.

Please check the web page www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/primaryadmissions which has all the information needed, plus a link to the online application form. The School Admissions Team can be contacted at admissions.schools@oxfordshire.gov.uk or on 0345 241 2487. The deadline for receipt of completed applications is 15th January 2025.

The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society

The next TWHAS talk will be on Wednesday 8th January in St Mary le More Church at 8pm. The subject is Women of the Anarchy, the amazing women who controlled the politics of England during this turbulent time in the twelfth century. Empress Matilda was besieged in Oxford Castle in 1142, and it was from here that she made her dramatic escape. Hear more about these tales of Oxford Castle.

The speaker is Sharon Bennett Connolly, a celebrated author who has written extensively, in particular about women's mediaeval history.

Check the website www.twahas.org.uk/meetings-programme.html for the full talks programme. Visitors welcome (£5).

Photographic Club

In 2025 Wallingford Photographic Club (wallingfordphoto.club) continues its winter programme of talks, presentations, competitions and practical sessions. We meet on Thursdays from 7.30pm at Crowmarsh Pavilion, with a handful of sessions online during the season, to make the most of inviting speakers from far away.

We reconvene on 9th January with a members' evening, '8x10' where eight members present for ten minutes on a topic of their choice. Then on 16th Joe Houghton joins

us for an online session on 'Mono processing live' where he discusses the different approaches and thought processes needed to both shoot and post-process your images in black and white.

On 23rd January it's the popular and informative 'You are the judge' session, where we sit in groups to critique and score a selection of members' images. It's very interesting to be on the other side of the judging process! The month ends with our third Club competition of the season: 'No Set Subject 3' on the 30th.

Wallingford and District Art club

Join our friendly club for a live demonstration as professional artist Claire Cross paints an atmospheric landscape in pastels on a dark acrylic background. The demo will be held at Centre 70 (off Goldsmiths Lane in Wallingford) from 7.30 to 9.30pm on Tuesday 21st January and is free for club members, £5 for visitors.

If you would like further information about this event or other club activities, please visit the website at www.wallingfordartclub.org.uk or email admin@wallingfordartclub.org.uk.

Benson Garden Club

Our event for December, 'A Christmas Table Decoration', gave us the chance to create our own festive table decorations in time for Christmas. The atmosphere in the hall was decidedly festive as members and their guests were treated to mulled wine and mince pies on arrival. Carefully laid out piles of fir, pine and other foliage wafted their own Christmas scent into the air, foraged treasure which we viewed with eager anticipation. Annie Smith got things going with a practical talk and demonstration.

Annie started with how to prepare our containers to secure the stems (her favourite is to use chicken wire) and then deftly made her arrangement, explaining how to achieve a professional finish. Tips and tricks included how to use dried oranges – take three slices and layer on top of one another, bend a piece of florist wire in half and poke both ends

through the oranges' centre and twist. You then wind the wire around a stick. A similar technique was applied to pine cones – wrap florist wire around the base, before attaching to a stick. If you want to add some baubles, remove their tops and insert a stick (make sure to use only plastic baubles for this). Sticks and florist wire are clearly very useful!

After admiring Annie's beautiful creation, we then started on our own decorations. There was a plentiful supply of greenery, pine cones, teasels, dried oranges, cinnamon sticks and other lovely things for us to use. We were also given the opportunity to try a greener alternative to the traditional floral foam. Then there was much snipping of greenery, standing back to check the overall shape and, of course, plenty of convivial chatter. By the end of the evening, we had our beautiful table decorations – all unique, Christmassy and ready to add festive cheer to our homes.

On Thursday 9th January we have Chris Day on 'Growing Under Cover'. Chris is a professional horticulturalist, gardening magazine editor and writer, and regular podcaster and speaker. Whether you are growing plants this season under a cloche or cold frame, or in a polytunnel, greenhouse or conservatory, timely advice will be on offer. Chris will be looking at specific plants for protected cropping, the logistics of growing crops and ornamentals under glass and plastic, and some of the pitfalls of this type of cultivation.

Then on Thursday 6th February we have Dr Stephen Head coming to talk to us about 'Garden Ponds for Wildlife'. Stephen is a zoologist and ecologist who had a lecturing career before, amongst other things, helping to run the Wildlife Gardening Forum. He has also made radio and television appearances to promote wildlife gardening.

Both events will be at our usual venue, Benson parish hall, OX10 6LZ. Doors open at 7.15pm for a 7.45pm start (£2 for members, £5 for visitors – just turn up, no need to book).

Further information is on our website <https://bensongardeningclub.weebly.com> or email bensongardeningclub@gmail.com

Liz Harrison

Henley and District Stamp Club

The club is a friendly group and we would be delighted to see visitors or new members. There is a wide range of subjects that come under the umbrella of philately. If you are interested in facts concerning stamps or postal history, why not come along and explore how you can promote your interest? Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month in Bix Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Further details can be obtained by phoning Steve on 07767 251670 or looking on our website: www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk

Can you help us produce the Crowmarsh News?

The Crowmarsh News Association are the small team who produce your Crowmarsh News every month. We are very keen to find a few more volunteers to help us with editing the material we receive. You don't need to be a professional or experienced proof reader, so long as you can spell (with the aid of a dictionary or spell checker!) and use a computer and are willing to have a go. Why not give it a try?

We are also looking for volunteers to lay out the pages in Microsoft Publisher and to deliver the finished product door-to-door once a month. The more volunteers we have, the less time each person has to spend. We would like to have three or four editing and page layout teams: at the moment we only have one editor, so we really need some help with that!

If you would like to get involved or want to find out more, email crowmarsh.editor@gmail.com or speak to any member of the team – you will find our names on the front cover.

Sustainable Wallingford

Sustainable Wallingford's annual general meeting and social, including a quiz, will be held at the Methodist Hall in St Leonard's Square, on Tuesday 28th January, starting at 7.30pm.

The Corn Exchange events

See the website www.cornexchange.org.uk for full details, latest updates and to book tickets.

Cinema

As usual in January there are no films, as the theatre is showing the pantomime *Dick Whittington*. Cinema will start again on Sunday 2nd February with a showing of *Conclave* starring Ralph Fiennes, Stanley Tucci, John Lithgow and Isabella Rossellini.

Live on stage

From Friday 17th January to Saturday 1st February the Sinodun Players perform the pantomime *Dick Whittington*, written by Alan P Frayn.

7:30pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings, 2:00pm and 6:30pm on Saturday evenings.

Tickets £15 (adults), £10 (under 16s) on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, £18 (adults), £10 (under 16s) on Friday, Saturday, Sunday (including matinees)

Join us for a magical adventure with Dick Whittington, the classic pantomime filled with laughter, music and fun for all ages! Follow young Dick and his loyal cat as they set off to seek fame and fortune in London, where the streets are said to be paved with gold!

Coming soon

Les Miserables (40th anniversary staged concert), Tuesday 4th February, 7pm. Tickets £12 (adults), £10 (seniors), £8 (under 18s).

Tales of Hoffman by Offenbach from the Royal Opera House, Tuesday 6th February, 6:45pm. Tickets £18 (adults), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s).

Wallingford Winter Blues and Jazz
Friday 14th to Sunday 16th February

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde from the National Theatre, Thursday 20th February, 7pm. Tickets £18 (adults), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s).

Swan Lake by the Royal Ballet. Thursday 27th February, 7:15pm. Tickets £18 (adults), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s).

Wallingford CTC cycle rides

All rides start from Wallingford Market Place and last approximately 3 hours. Full details on the CTC website www.ctcwallingford.org.uk.

Date	Time	Title
Thursday 2nd	1300	New Year's ride
Sunday 5th	1300	Slower Sunday
Thursday 9th	1300	Fun Thursday
Thursday 16th	1300	Fun Thursday
Sunday 19th	1300	Mid-paced Sunday
Thursday 23rd	1300	Fun Thursday
Thursday 30th	1300	Fun Thursday

Winter Recitals Wallingford

Winter Recitals Wallingford (WRW) returns with two exciting chamber concerts this winter.

WRW was founded by pianist Anita D'Attellis in 2018 to programme and perform a wide variety of music, mixing rarely-heard 'hidden gems' with very familiar works. Her fellow performers are established musicians at the top of their field, or younger, talented instrumentalists at the start of their careers.

WRW is a not-for-profit venture and has raised over £21,000 for charity. The proceeds will be shared between St Mary le More Church (the venue) and the Sue Ryder South Oxfordshire Palliative Care Hub.

On Sunday 26th January, Romantic Dreams will include Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder, songs by Duparc, Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky, and instrumental pieces for piano and strings.

The second concert on Saturday 8th February will include music for oboe, horn and piano by Schumann, Coleridge-Taylor, Jane Vignery and Reinecke.

Both recitals start at 7pm; doors open at 6:30pm. Tickets are £18; £5 for under-19s.

Details at www.anitapiano.com/wrw25

North Stoke events

See details in the Window magazine online: www.ipsdenvillage.co.uk.

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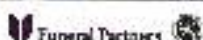
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Cholsey Repair Café

Saturday 18th January will see the first Cholsey Repair Café of the new year.

Bring your troubled domestic items to the Cholsey Pavilion between 10am and 12.45pm and clever fixers will do their best to help you get them working again. Lately, we have breathed new life back into radios, clothes, bicycles, garden tools, furniture, ornaments and various electrical equipment.

We also PAT test, sharpen, glue and solder and can even ultrasonically clean jewellery, watches or other small items. Don't bring your dud Christmas gifts, though: they will be under warranty and we don't interfere!

More information can be found at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com.

You might like to know that our dates for 2025 (all Saturdays) are as follows: 18th January, 15th March, 17th May, 19th July, 20th September and 15th November.

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Pop in or call for your 2025 Calendar!

For a 2025 calendar, call 01491 652345 or visit www.warmingham.co.uk

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Crowmarsh Church building appeal

We have exciting plans for our ancient village church to improve its amenities and enlarge its use for the community.

I am sure that most Crowmarsh residents know of the Grade I listed village church of St Mary Magdalene. Picturesquely sitting behind yew trees by the bus stop in The Street, it was built soon after the Norman Conquest and has several Norman features, including its font and windows, which make it of exceptional historical importance.

Over hundreds of years, thousands of local parishioners have worshipped under its ancient portals, celebrated marriages and baptisms, and honoured their departed. It is likely that many people still living locally will view it with fond memories.

For years its enthusiastic congregation has wanted to make its building more 'user friendly', especially for the elderly and those with young families, by providing a toilet and installing a kitchen and servery to provide refreshments. Several plans had been prepared to no avail, but at last a plan has gained the necessary approval, so now the hunt is on for the money to pay for the improvement project.

As well as complicated building work inside the church that will comply with rules governing ancient buildings, the project will embody excavations for plumbing and drainage, replacement of rotten flooring and a land drain on the outside to cure damp problems, which will involve excavating part of a burial ground.

The project will cost £150,000 of which £50,000 has already been raised through parishioners' donations over the past 20 years, legacies and events. To raise the £100,000 still needed, the church's fundraising sub-committee has launched an appeal.

Applications for grants from funding bodies are under way, along with plans for local events. Already Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust has promised £30,000. More applications are being made and will be favourably viewed by funders if local people themselves are seen to be supporting the efforts.

So, citizens of Crowmarsh! Please ask yourselves what you can do to help make your historic church more 'user friendly'. Personal donations, large or small, will be most welcome (preferably with Gift Aid), or why not consider running your own small fundraising event such as a 'Friends & Family' coffee morning or a 'Bring & Buy' sale: all sums mount up, as well as the events being fun!

We would also welcome help from anyone with expertise in communications and publicity to ensure that the message about our project gets to a wide local audience.

If you would like to donate, please contact the vicar or churchwarden or scan the QR code.

Our greatest thanks in anticipation of your support.

Revd Kevin Beer (Vicar)
and Linda Parker
(Churchwarden) on behalf
of the Parochial Church
Council and Parishioners.



Email crowmarshcw@wallingfordcofe.org.uk
Tel 599873 or 836100

Children's party success

The 2024 Children's Christmas Party was a great success. Everyone enjoyed the disco and all of the children received a present from Father Christmas.

Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall Committee have agreed that this year's party will be on Saturday 29th November: save the date.

Transformation of Just Trading

New Year = New Start

19 years ago a group of friends opened Just Trading, the shop that we wanted in Wallingford.

Our over-arching aim was, and still is, to make it easier for people to make more ethical shopping choices. We do the work to investigate product claims and find the best value for money. We bring together fairly-traded, organic and sustainable products all

under one roof, because these concerns are all connected as part of trading with respect for people, their work and our beloved planet.

Initially the shop was run entirely by volunteers, but as we built the business up we were able to start paying staff, but this year has been very tough financially and if Just Trading is going to survive it needs to go back to being run by volunteers.

We have always thought of ourselves as a community shop, so if you want to see Just Trading continue, please consider how you can support us to transform it into Wallingford's Community Eco Hub & Shop. We are re-arranging the layout to create a space with comfy seating, a small meeting space, hot drinks on tap, information boards. If you or an organisation that you work with would like to use the hub, come and influence how we organise it. Have you an unwanted sofa that you could donate or any spare notice boards?

Would you like to join our shop operations team? Have you skills that you could offer?

Our customers are so lovely, we have a great social time. Several of our staff are staying on for a while and will pair with new volunteers until they are fully trained.

All we can guarantee at present is to be open on Thursdays 10.00 – 19.00 and Fridays 09.00 – 17.00, but we hope to add more days as people join us. We would love to hear from you if you can help run the shop for a couple of hours, especially in the morning.

Join us to save Just Trading. Contact Amanda Griffin, 826600 or acgriff9@phonecoop.coop.

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum asks visitors to share their bears

In 2025, Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum will launch a brand-new exhibition of original artwork by E H Shepard, best known as the original illustrator of A A Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* and the 1931 edition of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*.

The Woodstock-based museum is asking visitors and local people to share the impact

the characters Shepard drew to life have had on them, and to bring in their own Winnie-the-Pooh character teddy bears to go on show alongside the exhibition.

By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Ernest H Shepard had already become a regular contributor to the popular *Punch* magazine, and he often drew cartoons about the war for the publication, among many others. By 1915 recruitment increased to include those over 30 and Shepard soon enlisted, serving as an officer in the Royal Garrison Artillery, first in France and later Italy. From the start of his officer training in 1915, he began to document the war as he saw it, in pencil sketches, pen and ink drawings, and even watercolours.

The collection of Shepard's work, including some of his children's illustrations alongside a wealth of his Great War sketches and comic art, come to the museum on loan from the University of Surrey Archives and The Shepard Trust and will be on show for the first time in Oxfordshire.

Anyone interested in lending their bear to the museum for display can get in touch by email engagement@sofo.org.uk or telephone 01993 810 210

The museum looks forward to welcoming visitors to the new exhibition from 18th January to 31st August 2025.



Ref No. ST/6/2 Pen and ink illustration depicting a British officer reading a letter to a soldier with a bandaged head. Published in 'London Opinion and Today' magazine on 22 May 1915. © The Shepard Trust, 1915, from The Shepard Trust Archive, University of Surrey.

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WHAT'S ON — JANUARY 2025

Regular events and meetings

Tuesdays	14.00-16.00	Short Mat Bowls	Crowmarsh Gifford Pavilion
Every Friday	9.30-12.00	Wallingford Country Market	St Mary-le-More Church, Wallingford
Saturdays from 11th January	10.00-12.30	Local Producers' Market	St Mary-le-More Church or Wallingford Market Place
Every Sunday	11.00 onwards	Parish Communion. Family service on the first Sunday of the month	St Mary Magdalene Church, Crowmarsh Gifford
Thursdays	19.30 onwards	Wallingford Photographic Club	Crowmarsh Gifford Pavilion
Various days	Differing times	Didcot and Wallingford Ramblers	www.ramblers.org.uk/didcot-wallingford
Various days	Differing times	CTC Wallingford cycle rides (p.10)	www.ctcwallingford.org.uk
Various days through the year	Differing times	Cholsey and Wallingford Heritage Railway	www.cholsey-wallingford-railway.com

This month

Wednesday 8th	14.00 onwards	U3A: Theresa May: a reputation revised (www.wallingford.u3asite.uk)	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Wednesday 8th	20.00 onwards	TWHAS: Women of the Anarchy (p.8)	St Mary le More Church
Thursday 9th	13.00 onwards	Fun Thursday CTC cycle ride (p.10)	Wallingford Market Place
Saturday 11th	10.30 - 12 noon	Crowmarsh Community Café	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Saturday 18th	19.00 to 21.00	Vivaldi, the Four Seasons	Dorchester Abbey
Sunday 26th	18.30 for 19.00	Winter chamber music: Romantic dreams — www.anitapiano.com/wrw25	St Mary le More Church, Wallingford
Tuesday 28th	19.30 onwards	Sustainable Wallingford annual general meeting, social & quiz	Methodist Hall, St Leonard's Square, Wallingford

February 2025

Wednesday 5th	14.00 onwards	U3A: AGM plus "The life and music of George Gershwin"	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Thursday 6th	17.30 onwards	Crowmarsh Parish Council meeting	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Saturday 8th	18.30 for 19.00	Winter chamber music: Oboe, horn and piano (see p.10)	St Mary le More Church