

Issue 558

December 2025

The *Crownmarsh News* team

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

Editorial & layout this month: Lisa Gallacher and John Griffin

Editorial support: James Taylor, Gay Holden, Julian Park, Toni Taylor and Jane Thrift

Advertising: Pat Shields

Distribution: Frank Sadler and the team

ADVERTISING RATES

Our 2024 rates for a one-eighth-page display advertisement (nominal 9cm wide x 7cm tall):

1 month	£10.25
3 months	£29.00
6 months	£54.45
12 months	£101.60

Leaflet distribution

For a single sheet loose insert in the *Crownmarsh News* (size up to A4) our rate is £36.30 for 1 month. Advertisers must supply their own inserts (930 copies please).

The *Crownmarsh 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.

Useful telephone numbers

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Next month's issue

All new advertisements and all copy for the January 2026 *Crownmarsh News* must reach us by our **20th December deadline**.

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

crownmarsh.editor@gmail.com

or deliver to the editors at 57 The Street.

For all advertising, please contact

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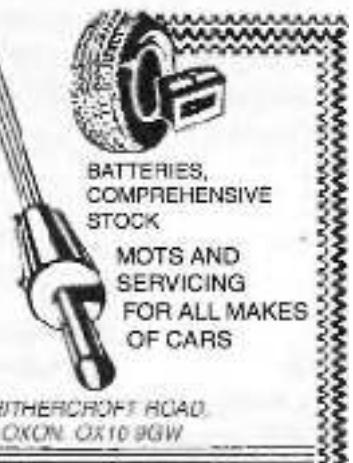
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What's new at Crowmarsh Gifford Primary School?

Children in Need: 25 challenges

This year the theme of Children in Need was 25 challenges. For example, Year 6 did 25 minutes of miniature cooking with miniature snacks (YUMMY) and Year 5 did 25 drawings and crafts. We all had a lot of fun and raised £300 for Children in Need.

Football tournament

On Monday 10th November, some boys from Year 5 and 6 went to Wallingford School for a football tournament. They got to the semi-finals against Benson, but Toby just missed a goal and hit the post. Two of the team scored and we came 3rd. The team tried very hard in the tournament and played well.

Netball tournament

The netball tournament was on 23rd October. We had two teams but sadly neither of them got into the semi-finals so we were very sad. Both teams were beaten by Benson Primary School, and the teacher attending was the coach (Mrs Brettell).

Written by Penelope, Isobel and Fleur

Community Café and Christmas Sale

Saturday 13th December, Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall, 10am to midday

Come and help raise money for the Crowmarsh Church building project at a festive community café and sale on Saturday 13th December, as well as meeting neighbours.

As well as tea, coffee and homemade cakes there will be stalls selling Christmas gifts, games, toys and books and Crowmarsh Scouts will be running a Christmas wreath making stall. There are still a few spaces available for sellers: email Zoe on garagesale25.oxvok@passmail.net for more details.

Our local neighbourhood police team will be holding a drop-in "Have your say" session at the same time and place, so come along if you want to find out more about their work.



Lost on Halloween

A well-loved toy, dropped in excitement on our driveway during trick-or-treat.

We would love Father Christmas to reunite it with its young owner.

Please email:

lost.in.thamesmead@gmail.com

Past Times with David Beasley

Howard Gould's Mongewell Estate

When Alexander Fraser died in 1916, Mongewell House became an orthopaedic hospital for wounded officers during the First World War. It closed as a hospital in 1918 and was sold to the American financier, Howard Gould.

Gould spent a considerable amount of money on the house and grounds. As he was an atheist, he had the path to the Church lowered so he would not see worshippers from the village attending. He also built a sports pavilion to the right side of the house. The pavilion was built in the style of a country club and included a 40-feet swimming pool. It was lined with blue-green tiles and when the sun shone through the windows that ran the full length of the pool, the water sparkled.

On the ground floor, the pavilion also featured a two-lane maple bowling alley, along with both squash and stické courts. Stické is a racquet sport similar to tennis, played in a smaller enclosed court using standard lawn-tennis racquets and low-pressure balls. The men's dressing room was complete with a Turkish bath. The upper floor included a table-tennis room (referred to as 'ping pong' when the

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

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

pavilion opened in 1924) and a ladies' dressing room. There was also a tearoom with a balcony overlooking the grounds.



Howard Gould, New York financier (1871-1959)

Outside, there was a hard-surface tennis court suitable for year-round use, as well as bowls and croquet greens. A path led down to the boathouse which is the only structure from the original complex that still survives.

The pavilion itself was removed during the war to make way for wooden huts used by the RAF. Today, little remains to indicate the presence of a building that must once have been quite an attraction, constructed exclusively for Howard Gould's guests.

Wallingford U3A

The next meeting of Wallingford U3A is a Christmas Party for members on Wednesday 3rd from 2pm in Crowmarsh Village Hall.

The programme begins again on Wednesday 7th January 2026 at 2pm at the same venue when the speaker will be Dr Martin Holmes on "Rishi Sunak - A Reputation Revised?". Visitors for this meeting are very welcome at £3.00 per person.

Please visit our website for more information: <https://wallingford.u3asite.uk>.

Nettlebed Country Music Club

Announcing a 'Bit of a do' for Christmas taking place on Saturday 13th December from 8pm to 11pm at the Country Music Club, Nettlebed, RG9 5DD. A range of well-known country music songs and sounds of the 60s and 70s played by a 5-piece band live on stage. Join us for a great atmosphere! Free local parking and bar - teas and coffees also available.

Tickets are on sale on the evening, £10 per person. If you have any questions, please contact Keith on 07752 374 610.

Wallingford Photographic Club

The photographic club continues into winter with talks, presentations, competitions and practical sessions. We meet on Thursdays from 7.30pm at Crowmarsh Pavilion, with a handful of sessions taking place online to make the most of inviting speakers from far away. Please visit wallingfordphoto.club for more information.

On 4th December we have an intriguing talk from Ted Kinsey called 'Under Tracks'. Ted is a photographer specialising in black and white images and shoots only on film.

On 11th December we have a club social to end 2025, featuring a quiz and a check-in on our personal projects for the year.

The new year brings a busy month, opening on 8th January when we share progress on our themed assignments (following on from the club talk in December focusing on black and white images).

Then on 15th January we have our first external competition of the programme, a second match-up against a photography club based in Spain (so an online-only session).

On 22nd January we will have a club night where we collaborate to select images that will be entered into the upcoming 'Intimate Landscapes' competition.

This is followed by our second internal non-themed competition of the season on 29th.



Team Vicar: vacancy

Churchwardens:

Linda Parker Tel: 836100

Margaret Foster Tel: 836076

St Mary Magdalene's Church, Crowmarsh Gifford

December Services

Please note all our Services for the time being are at the Pavilion on the Recreation Ground.

Sunday 7th	11.00am	Family Service
Sunday 14th	11.00am	Parish Communion
Sunday 21st	11.00am	Parish Communion
Thursday 25th	11.00am	Christmas Day Parish Communion
Sunday 28th	10.00am	Team Communion in St Agatha's, Brightwell cum Sotwell

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

The Churchwardens write ...

Dear Friends,

By the time you receive this newsletter, many of us will have already experienced the beginning of the commercial build up to Christmas. As we make plans to celebrate the Season with friends and family, it is important to remember that we are also in the season of Advent, the four weeks of waiting, watching and preparing, to ready our hearts for the coming of Christ. This season encourages us to slow down, to pray, and to reflect. It is a time to look outward in service and inward in faith. As we prepare our homes for Christmas, let us also prepare our hearts, making room for Christ.

Work in the church is progressing well and we look forward to welcoming you all into the church in the New Year when we will have a special Service of Dedication of the toilet and servery. We would like to encourage everyone in the village to come and see how the work is progressing and how near it is to completion. We are having an open day on Wednesday 17th December when you will all be welcome to have a cuppa and cake in the church and see the great progress. We will be there to answer questions between 9-11am and 2.30-4.30pm on the day.

On Saturday 13th December at 7.30pm Linda Parker will be giving a talk in St Mary's Church, Wallingford, to raise funds for the church toilet and servery. The topic is "Christmas in Wartime" and it will look at how Christmas has been celebrated by Armed Forces and civilians in the conflicts of the 20th and 21st Centuries.

As with most building projects, the reordering of the church has turned out to be more costly than anticipated. During the work we uncovered areas that required attention for health and safety reasons, as well as other unexpected expenses, for example, the complete reconstruction of several pew ends. We are grateful for the generous donations we have already received, and we ask that you consider supporting us as well, helping us to complete this work and strengthen the presence of your church within our village community.

As the church building will not be used over the Christmas period this year, please check the listing above, to see what Services will be taking place. All children are welcome to join us at 11am on Christmas Day in the Pavilion to share the joy and wonder of the birth of Jesus.

Blessings, Linda Parker & Margaret Foster; Churchwardens.

Benson Garden Club

Our talk on 6th November was by Chris Beardshaw on 'Painting with Plants'. He began by observing that as a nation we probably have more gardens open to the public than anywhere else and a phenomenal appetite for visiting them (and for eating the accompanying cake!). Part of this fascination is because our gardens are wonderfully diverse.

Despite the diversity, Chris highlighted that many gardens draw upon fundamental design principles that have endured since ancient times. Lawrence Johnston's influential Arts and Crafts garden 'rooms' at Hidcote Manor, the grandeur of Versailles, and the serene karesansui (dry landscape) garden at Ryōan-ji in Kyoto all exemplify these shared principles. Even an etched garden scene discovered in an Egyptian tomb shows just how timeless good garden design truly is.

Among the principles Chris described was the importance of a clearly marked entry point, a transition that signals leaving the outside world and entering the garden. This narrowing of space is simple to achieve, perhaps with a small archway or two plants framing the entrance. A second principle is enclosure: a garden should have some form of boundary to create a sense of seclusion and privacy.

Finally, within the garden there should be a focal point at the far end, creating a direct line of sight, with planting to left and right adding interest and guiding the visitor's journey. Upon reaching that focal point, there should be an opportunity to pause and enjoy a view back across the garden, completing the experience.

Turning to planting schemes, Chris shared how you can create a border with year-long colour. To create interest, use hot colours like reds, oranges and yellows in sunlight and then blues, purples and whites in the shade. Chris humorously warned us to be wary of plant gifts prefaced with, 'Oh, have one of these, I have loads of them' – a potential indicator that the plant has weed-like tendencies!

On 4th December, we welcome Clare Foster, Garden Editor at House & Garden UK, coming to talk to us about 'Pastoral Gardens', which is also the title of her new book. On 8th January, we look forward to meeting Katharine, the Tea

Break Gardener, who will share shade-loving plant ideas for a woodland garden.

Each talk is £2 for members, £5 for visitors – just turn up at our usual venue, Benson Parish Hall, OX10 6LZ: no need to book. Doors open at 7.15pm for a 7.45pm start.

For information about the club and how to join see bensongardeningclub.weebly.com or email bensongardeningclub@gmail.com

Liz Harrison

Parish council notes

Crowmarsh Parish Council met on Thursday 6th November 2025 at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall.

Mrs Zazie Carruthers, a resident of North Stoke, was unanimously co-opted as a parish councillor and welcomed to the meeting.

Councillors John Griffin, David Rowley, Anna Best, Stephen Sherbourne, Andrew Johnson, Julian Park, David Topliss and Zazie Carruthers, Parish Clerk Sue Rance, County Councillor Gavin McLauchlan, District Councillor Sue Cooper and three members of the public were present.

The Chairman will lay a wreath on behalf of the parish council at the lychgate in Crowmarsh Gifford on Remembrance Sunday; the clerk has arranged for a wreath to be laid in North Stoke.

Finance

Councillors agreed a grant of £250 to the Wallingford Volunteer Drivers, £200 to Clean Slate, a charity supports victims of abuse and exploitation, and £200 to The Abingdon Bridge charity, which supports the mental health and well-being of young adults.

Payments agreed included £7452.74 for resurfacing the tunnel mound in the playground and £576 for tree surgery.

Planning

Decision by SODC

P25/S0408/LDE Annexe, 202 Crowmarsh Hill, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8BG. Use of annexe building as independent residential unit. Refusal of Lawful Use or Development.

Consultation

P25/S3116/HH 2 Lane End, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8DG. Single storey rear extension to replace conservatory. Recommend approval.

Major developments

A decision on the Newnham Manor application legal agreement is still awaited.

County Council report

County Cllr McLaughlan's report had been circulated. As part of the consultation on improving the fire service, there is a suggestion that Wallingford Fire Station could be relocated to Crowmarsh Gifford.

Cllr McLaughlan will attend a consultation session about the proposed Abingdon Reservoir. He has highlighted serious misgivings about the possible impact of the reservoir, in particular arrangements for emergency discharge, due to the flow rate.

He and Cllr Sherbourne have been pursuing the County Council officers over the long-overdue replacement speed indicator device in North Stoke.

District Council report

The District Councillors' report included the Councils' progress towards net zero and a new policy on homelessness and rough sleeping. They will report back on SODC's planning enforcement at the next meeting.

Strategic priorities

A site meeting has been held at Watery Lane with a potential contractor to improve the surface, in line with OCC's walking and cycling strategy.

Designs and costings are awaited from the county council for new signs at village entrances from both Wallingford Bridge and the road from Henley.

The parish council will review its strategic priorities in the new year.

Environment and recreation

Cllr Park will plant trees at the recreation ground to replace those that had died during the hot summer.

The CCTV policy was reviewed and approved

with minor amendments to update the names.

Resurfacing with either synthetic mulch or wet pour under two large play items is being costed. The play mound with the tunnel has been repaired successfully. New flooring for the main hall in the pavilion is being researched. The committee will meet again in January.

Traffic and transport

Cllr Best had met with Thames Valley Police to discuss data from the speed camera. The top speed recorded in the 30mph zone was 61mph. The police are now doing more frequent speed checks. Four volunteers have been trained for community speed watch and others are welcome.

The District Councillors have also asked for the speed limit on Nosworthy Way to be reduced to 40mph instead of 50mph.

Neighbourhood police officers will hold their next 'Have Your Say' meeting at the Crowmarsh Community Café on Saturday 13th December from 10.30 to 12.00.

Other matters

Cllr Best will meet with Cllr Stevenson to bring a recommendation on updating the website and providing official gov.uk email addresses for the council.

Autumn leaves are becoming a safety issue on Wallingford Bridge and in other places: road-sweeping is needed. Gully-emptying has been promised.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 4th December at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm. Members of the public are very welcome to attend. The precept and budget for next year will be considered at that meeting.

There are still vacancies on the parish council. To find out more, please contact the Parish Clerk or speak to any councillor.

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

What's happening at Wallingford Library?

Storytimes

We've a wintry themed Storytime on Monday 1st December at 3.30pm. Come along for penguin stories and make a rocking penguin card afterwards. Free and no need to book, craft suitable for ages 3+ with supervision.

Saturday 13th December is another opportunity to come to the library and enjoy a story. Join us from 10am for some stories and then stay and play with Lego afterwards.

Christmas stock

No, not the sort of stock to go with your turkey, we're talking about book stock – not to be poured over your Christmas dinner! We've a wonderful collection of Christmas books in for adults and children. If you are looking for crafting ideas, recipes or seasonal stories, we've got something here for you. We've also got a lovely collection of Christmas themed jigsaws, free to borrow, just the thing once you've cleared away the Boxing Day buffet.

Library tote bags

We mentioned in an earlier edition that we will be selling library tote bags and we now have two designs available. Choose from 'I love my library' or a design with a quote from Albert Einstein. They are made from washable 100% cotton and sell for £3. Fill them up with books for an ideal present for a bibliophile.

Christmas crafts

We will have free crafts on the table during the Christmas holidays, just drop in from Saturday 13th December onwards. This year children (or adults!) can make a decoration for your tree from a milk bottle top. If you have spare plastic milk bottle tops, we'd be grateful to have them.

Tech for Christmas?

If you are lucky enough to receive a new gadget for Christmas, remember that we have volunteer Digital Helpers who can help you get to grips with setting up and using new devices. Free sessions are usually available from 1pm-3pm every Tuesday and 10.00-12.00 on Thursdays, we also have a third

helper who offers appointments at mutually convenient times. Please phone, email or call in to book.

Magazine Share

We will be bringing you another Magazine Share early in December. Come and pick up a free magazine: there is something for everyone with festive favourites included.

What's on in January?

Beat the January blues at our free Meet Up Monday coffee morning at 10.30am on 5th January, everyone welcome. Age UK will also be here from 10.30am on Friday 2nd January offering support and advice or just the chance to share a cuppa with a friendly face.

What we're reading...

The Christmas Tree Farm by Laurie Gilmore
A perfect Christmas romance. Kira has accidentally brought a Christmas Tree Farm and doesn't even like Christmas.

The Greedy Queen: Eating with Queen Victoria by Annie Gray

If you think the best part of visiting a stately home is the kitchen, then this book is for you. A book that conjures up a world of gleaming copper pans, elaborate jelly moulds, rich elaborate menus and liveried waiters in powdered wigs. A unique insight into Victoria's world seen through the lens of her dining table. It might not be the book to read just after your Christmas dinner though! Both books available through Oxfordshire libraries.

Contact us on 01865 815193 or email Wallingford.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk

We will close at 5.30pm on Tuesday 23rd December and re-open at 9.30am on Friday 2nd January. Larger libraries will be open during the festive break but closed on Bank Holidays. Please see the Oxfordshire County Council website for further details.

Community police visit

What do you think about local policing? Our neighbourhood policing team will hold a "Have your say" session at the Community Café on Saturday 13th December at 10.00 at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall. All welcome.

The Corn Exchange events

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

Cinema tickets £10 for Adults and £5 for under 16s unless otherwise stated. Doors open at 2pm and 7pm and the bar will be open so there's plenty of time to collect drinks beforehand. Films with subtitles will be shown on Wednesday afternoons at 2:30pm.

Cinema

Mon 1, Tues 2, Sun 7 at 7:30pm – *Springsteen: Deliver me from Nowhere*
Wed 3, 2:30pm – *One Battle after Another* (15)
Wed 3, Thurs 4 at 7:30pm – *Dragonfly*
Fri 5, Sat 6 at 7:30pm – *Anemone* (15)
Tues 9 at 7:30pm – *Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale* (PG)
Wed 10 at 2:30pm and Thurs 11, Fri 12, Tues 16 at 7:30pm – *Blue Moon*
Sun 14, Mon 15 at 7:30pm – *Nuremberg*
Wed 17 at 2:30 pm and Wed 17, Thurs 18 at 7:30pm – *The Choral*
Fri 19, Sat 20, Sun 21 at 7:30pm – *Wicked: For Good* (PG)
Mon 22 at 7:30pm – André Rieu's Christmas Concert: Merry Christmas

Live Screening

Wednesday 10th, Wednesday 23, 7:15pm, The Royal Ballet in Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker. £18 (adults), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s). The Nutcracker has enchanted audiences since its 1984 premiere and is sure to be a festive firecracker for all ages.

Live on Stage

Saturday 13th, 7:30pm, Punchbowl. All Tickets £12. The Sinodun Players present an evening of seasonal offerings, with a second half of music from their own talented band, Outliers. All funds raised will be donated to Crisis at Christmas.

Hansel and Gretel, written by Marilyn Johnstone, performed by the Sinodun Players

Fri Jan 16, Wed Jan 21, Thurs Jan 22, Fri Jan 23, Tue Jan 27, Wed, Jan 28, Thurs Jan 29, Fri Jan 30, 7:30pm.

Sat Jan 17, Sat Jan 24, Sun Jan 25, Sat Jan 31, 2:00pm.

Sat Jan 17, Sat Jan 24, Sat Jan 31, 6:30pm.

Tickets £15 (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday), £18 (all other performances), £10 (under 16s)

Sue Ryder Christmas tree recycling

To learn more about this eco-friendly fundraising initiative in the Thames Valley, supported by Rabbits Vehicle Hire, and to reserve a collection, sign up at www.sueryder.org/treethames by midnight on 4th January 2026.

Trees will be collected from your home between 7th and 16th January in exchange for a donation to support Sue Ryder's work in palliative care and bereavement support.

Christmas band concert

Wantage Concert Brass Band will be bringing Festive Cheer to Benson with their Christmas Concert on Sunday 7th December at 7pm at the Benson Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson. There will also be a raffle and refreshments.

The Concert is a joint event between the Band and the Benson Community Shed (BenShed). BenShed will have moved into its new home before the concert, and will be opening its doors from January 2026. So come along on 7th December and get into the Christmas spirit while supporting two very good causes.

Tickets (£10 each, children under 16 free) are available now from Derrys Den, Benson, Chapel Lane Hair & Beauty, Benson, via the website: www.wantageband.org/events or from BenShed: bensoncommunityshed@gmail.com

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

To book North Stoke Village Hall

Phone Nikki Arnfeld on 07969 788766 or email narnfeld@yahoo.co.uk

Cholsey Repair Café

Give or take a pandemic, Cholsey Repair Café will open its ninth year of operation on Saturday 17th January 2026 at the Cholsey Pavilion, between 10.00 and 12.45.

The volunteer fixers offer help or advice on all manner of repairs to domestic items, from tool sharpening to bicycles, electricals, small furniture, textiles and even ultrasonic cleaning of small things like watch straps or jewellery. Help is always free of charge although a modest donation towards operating costs is appreciated.

Our website www.cholseyrepaircafe.com provides more information or you can email repaircafe@cholsey.com

Breaking the cycle of homelessness

New district council strategy

Homelessness extends far beyond rough sleeping and can impact anyone, often without warning. It is frequently hidden, such as sofa surfing, encompassing individuals living in insecure, inadequate, or unsanitary housing, as well as those affected by domestic abuse.

Proactive work to break the cycle of homelessness for vulnerable people and ensure support is accessible, effective, and timely is the focus of a new council strategy which was approved in October. Following a public consultation held in May and June, a new Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been put in place by South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse district councils, covering the period 2025-28. The District Council has a legal responsibility for housing and preventing homelessness and the current strategy (2020-25) has been very successful in ensuring that SODC consistently achieves homelessness prevention rates which are over 20 percentage points better than the national or South-East average.

This success is achieved by working closely with every individual at risk of homelessness to help them find sustainable accommodation.

Here are just two examples:

Becky from Didcot was helped to find a home and said: "I just wanted to say again how thankful and grateful we are as a family to have had you as our housing officer at such a low point in my life. You were empathic, patient, warm and you made that really dark place a bit easier to cope with."

M Hussain and family said: "I want to express my sincere gratitude for all the hard work and effort you and your entire team put into helping us find shelter. We truly appreciate your dedication and support during this difficult time."

Often multiple and complex health needs can lead to a risk of homelessness – and these difficulties, combined with limited access to support, can create and perpetuate a cycle of homelessness for those who are most vulnerable that is difficult to escape from. The Council's new strategy lays out the proactive steps we take to break the cycle of homelessness and ensure that the support people need is available and accessed quickly and effectively.

Minimising the use of temporary accommodation, which can be disruptive to people's lives, especially for children, is also an important part of our work to tackle homelessness. The Council's Housing Team works hard to source long-term, affordable homes for people who are at risk of becoming homeless – helping to provide stability and security and reduce the need for temporary accommodation.

Since temporary accommodation is still needed sometimes, SODC continues to purchase property to be used for these cases, which will lead to a reduction in the need for B&Bs. Latest figures (April – June 2025) show that in the South East more than half of people registered as homeless stayed in nightly paid or B&B accommodation, while in South Oxfordshire the figure was just 16 per cent.

The strategy includes identifying issues early such as 'hidden homelessness' and sofa surfing – as eviction by family and friends is the top reason for home loss in this area.

The continued focus on early homelessness prevention, working closely with every individual at risk of homelessness to help

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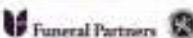
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them find sustainable accommodation has yielded high prevention rates. The councils' outreach service will continue to proactively identify any rough sleepers without delay, ensuring that they receive specialist advice and support.

See the council's website southoxon.gov.uk/housing for the new strategy and help with homelessness.

Jewson's site development

T A Fisher have submitted a planning application to develop the former Jewson builder's merchant yard at 50 The Street, Crowmarsh Gifford. The plans are published on the South Oxfordshire District Council

website, reference P25/S3162/FUL, where you can comment on their proposal which is for 14 dwellings plus restoring the Grade II listed building and converting it to a dwelling.

Exhibition in Woodstock

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock is hosting a powerful new exhibition of artwork by Level 3 Art & Design Students of Abingdon & Witney College. The exhibition, open until 9th December 2025, marks 80 years since the end of the war and the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp by Allied forces.

The exhibition forms part of the museum's wider commemoration of the Holocaust and the Oxfordshire Yeomanry's role in liberating

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Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Through creative interpretation, the students have produced thought-provoking works that explore memory, loss, hope and resilience, offering a new generation's response to this historic event. Students responded to deeply personal stories and artefacts from the museum's collection, among them those of Holocaust survivor Naomi Kaplan and Oxfordshire Yeomanry soldier Arthur Tyler. Arthur was approached by Naomi and wrote letters to her family in the USA, eventually leading to her reuniting with them, and the start of a new life in Houston, Texas.

Naomi dedicated much of her later life to educating about the holocaust and the dangers of discrimination, leaving a legacy which continues to this day through the Holocaust Museum Houston and now in the UK through Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum.

Letters from Liberation stands as a poignant testament to the power of art to bridge generations, connect communities, and highlight history's most vital lessons.

Is your child 3 or 4?

Now is the time for parents of 3 and 4 year olds to apply for a primary school place. If your child was born on or between 1st September 2021 and 31st August 2022, you need to apply now. The deadline is 15th January 2026.

Apply online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/primaryadmissions. If you need help or further information, please email admissions.Schools@oxfordshire.gov.uk or call 01865 519800, option 2.



Let there be light!

Thanks to the Southern Electric contractors who finally fixed the lights on Wallingford Bridge, encouraged over many months by parish and county councillors and the public. Just one left to fix—by Christmas we hope!

Reservoir consultation now

Thames Water is proposing a very large new reservoir in Oxfordshire to supply water to 15 million people across the South East. The statutory consultation period runs for eleven weeks until 13 January 2026. Please respond at <https://www.ipos.uk/SESRO>.

Fire service improvements

Oxfordshire want your views on improving our firefighters' response to emergencies. Have your say at letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ofrs-consultation by 20th January. One proposal is to move Wallingford's Fire Station to Crowmarsh, site not specified.

Improving cycling and walking around Wallingford

Can you help make walking, wheeling and cycling easier and more enjoyable for all in the Wallingford area? See the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), drawn up with local input, and have your say by 7th January: letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wallingford-lcwip-2

Do you need a rest?

The parish council is open to suggestions from readers if you think a small infrastructure improvement such as a well-positioned bench could be of benefit to residents and visitors. Contact the parish clerk (see p. 7).



World soil day 5th December

World Soil Day highlights the importance of healthy soil and its sustainable management. Soil is vital for plant growth and therefore food production. Healthy soils filter and store water, reducing the risk of flooding. Soil can mitigate climate change by storing carbon from the atmosphere. It provides a habitat for many species including bacteria, fungi, worms and invertebrates. www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk



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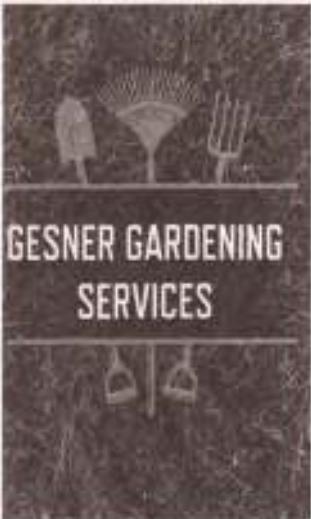
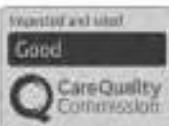


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WHAT'S ON — DECEMBER 2025

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
Saturday mornings	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	Services are currently held in the pavilion on the rec
Various days	Differing times	Didcot and Wallingford Ramblers	www.ramblers.org.uk/didcot-wallingford
Various days	Differing times	CTC Wallingford cycle rides	www.ctcwallingford.org.uk
Various days through the year	Differing times	Cholsey and Wallingford Heritage Railway	www.cholsey-wallingford-railway.com

This month

Wednesday 3rd	14.00 onwards	U3A: Christmas Party	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Thursday 4th	19.30 onwards	Crowmarsh Parish Council Meeting	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Friday 5th Saturday 6th	18.00 to 21.00 10.00 to 16.00	Christmas market: crafts, gifts, food and drink, children's activities	Fison Barn, Earth Trust, Little Wittenham OX14 4QZ
Saturday 6th	19.30 onwards	Benson Choral Society concert: Bach, Christmas Oratorio	Dorchester Abbey
Sunday 7th	10.00-17.00	Wallingford Christmas Market and Santa Dash	Wallingford Market Place and around the town centre
Wednesday 10th	18.00 to 19.00	Community Christmas Carols	Wallingford Market Place
Saturday 13th	10.00 to 12.00	Crowmarsh Community Café and neighbourhood police "have your say"	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Saturday 13th	19.00 to 21.30	A Night of Carols	Dorchester Abbey
Saturday 13th	19.00 to 21.00	Dr Linda Parker on "Christmas in wartime" (see p. 5)	St Mary-le-More Church, Wallingford
Saturday 20th	19.00 for 19.30	Jazz at St Peter's – Christmas Jazz	St Peter's Church, Thames St
Wednesday 24th	15.00-16.00	Crib Service	Crowmarsh Pavilion
Thursday 25th	11.00-12.00	Christmas Day Festival Communion	Crowmarsh Pavilion

January 2026

Wednesday 7th	14.00 onwards	U3A: Dr Martin Holmes on "Rishi Sunak — a reputation revised?".	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Saturday 17th	10.00 - 12.45	Cholsey Repair Café (see p. 10)	Cholsey Pavilion