

Issue 560

February 2026

The Crowmarsh News team

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

Editorial & layout this month: Toni Taylor and Jane Thrift

Editorial support: John Griffin, Lisa Gallacher, James Taylor, Gay Holden and Julian Park

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.

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

Useful telephone numbers

Emergency only	999
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Next month's issue

All new advertisements and all copy for the March 2026 *Crowmarsh News* must reach us by our **20th February 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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Parish council

The next meeting will be on Thursday 5th February 2026 at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm. Members of the public are very welcome to attend.

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

Planning application for 195 new houses

Please submit your views to SODC on the new planning application for 195 houses off Benson Lane, reference P25/S4092/O : <https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P25/S4092/O> and copy to the Parish Clerk (above)

Wallingford U3A

On 4th February at 2-3.30pm, the U3A meeting at Crowmarsh Village Hall will be a talk by Stephen Capel-Davies entitled 'Ways Over Water'.

Visitors are very welcome at £3 per person. Our website is: <https://wallingford.u3asite.uk/events/>

Crowmarsh Gifford School

Young Voices

On the 16th January, year 4, 5 and 6 went to Birmingham to perform the songs that they had practiced for ages. The arena that they went to was huge and extremely loud!

They even sang with famous musicians such as Connie Talbot and Aneesa Folds! Over 6000 children were in the choir. These super singers got back at 11 o'clock and fell fast asleep!

Preschool and year R's space experience

These lucky children had a visitor who told

them all about their topic of earth and space! These students went inside a huge black inflatable dome and saw lots of constellations and planets, and it looked like they were in space!

The year 4s got a visitor who taught them about how they used to live in AD 410 to 1066.

The year 4s had an Anglo-Saxon Day and all dressed up in their unique costumes! They learned all about them and even did a quiz!

by Year 6

Start Your Child's Journey at Crowmarsh Gifford Pre-School!

Give your little one the best start at Crowmarsh Gifford C of E Pre-School, where children learn, play, and grow as part of our school family. Our friendly, nurturing team helps children develop the confidence and skills they need to be ready for school - all in a fun, supportive environment.

Limited places available! Join our school community and watch your child thrive. Contact us to find out more:

office.3200@crowmarsh-gifford.oxon.sch.uk
Tel: 01491 836785

Emergency Planning

The parish council did not meet in January, but we are reviewing and updating our emergency plan. This contains contact details of local people and facilities to be mobilised in a local emergency, although overall emergency planning rests with Oxfordshire County Council and the emergency services.

Extra support is available to elderly or vulnerable residents in a power cut or interruption of gas supply. If you are aware of anyone who may require extra assistance please encourage them to sign up to the Priority Service Register. The PSR - The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free UK-wide service which provides extra advice and support, including when there's an interruption to your electricity or gas supply.

<https://www.thepsr.co.uk/>

Past Times with David Beasley

Madge Belmont

In November 1922 a spectacular demonstration of escapology was demonstrated at Wallingford by Madge Belmont. Miss Belmont was well known as an escapologist. She was thought to be the first female escapologist in the UK. She was to be suspended by her ankles bound in a straight-jacket, a stunt which she first performed in 1913, which was some two years before the world-renowned Harry Houdini. Her date of birth is stated as 1877, which would have made her 45 when she performed the stunt in Wallingford. She is thought to have died in 1931.



She appeared in the Kine Croft at 1.30pm, next to the Wallingford Brewery, where she was bound in a straight-jacket, tied hand and foot and hoisted up by the Brewery hoist to some sixty feet in the air, suspended by her ankles. It took her some two minutes to free herself and be lowered to the ground. She did not want payment for risking her life, but asked for a collection to be made for the Wallingford Cottage Hospital. This was duly done by Mr F Dover and Mr Honey amongst the considerable crowd and the sum of £4-0s-2d was raised for the Cottage Hospital. For the risks she had taken it seems a very small sum, but as most people would have

given a penny or half penny, that amount represents a large collection for those days.

I have in my collection a postcard of Madge Belmont which had been bought by a Wallingfordian and on the back he had written "Saw her at Wallingford in November. Jolly good." Which seems to be the view of most people who saw her that day.

That month she also appeared in Sheffield and Glasgow, doing the same stunt but varied by having her hands handcuffed.

Wallingford Photographic Club

Wallingford Photographic Club (wallingfordphoto.club) continues into 2026 with talks, presentations, competitions and practical sessions up until May. 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.

February is rather busy: we have an online speaker on 5th where Chris Upton takes us round "Thoresby – The End of the Mine". Chris spent nine months documenting the last pit in Nottinghamshire, the buildings, and the people at and around the pit in its final days. Then on 12th we have the popular "You are the Judge" session where we team up and critique each others' images. In a friendly and constructive way! On the 19th we have a presentation on theatre photography from Cat Humphries, then the 26th brings the final of the annual Intimate Landscapes we have enjoyed over recent years. It's a competition with 13 other clubs so is an online-only session.

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

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



Team Vicar; Vacancy
Churchwardens: Linda Parker
Tel: 836100
Margaret Foster
Tel: 836076

St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Crowmarsh Gifford

Services for February

Sunday 1st February	11.00am Family Service.
Sunday 8th February	11.00am Parish Communion Special Communion Service to Celebrate the Refurbishment of St Mary Magdalene
Sunday 15th February	11.00am Parish Communion
Wednesday 18th February	7.30pm Ashing Service & Communion in St Leonard's Church Wallingford
Thursday 22nd February	11.00am Family Communion

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

We are nearly there! We have been assured by our builders that everything will be finished in good time for that all important Spring Clean, when we can re-open St Mary Magdalene's for Services once more. Already the kitchen is in place, the plumbing has been done, the cupboards are ready to be filled. At the time of writing all the carved Oak cladding is already in church waiting to be put into place, we are just waiting for that all important piece of porcelain which will mean we shall be fully functioning!

We are looking to have a Celebratory Communion Team Service at 11am on 8th February, when we will be able to thank all those who have helped in any way to get this far.

We are hoping that we shall have a faculty granted very soon for a new floor in the Lady Chapel (North Transept) and for the floor to be raised in the old kitchen.

As you receive this newsletter, it will be nearly the season of Lent which starts on Ash Wednesday 18th February. Lent is a penitential season when we reflect on our lives and prepare for the festival of Easter. Many people give things up for Lent but perhaps we should consider taking something on, perhaps a voluntary task, or a renewed commitment to prayer or Bible reading.

St Mary's house group, which meets on a Thursday afternoon, is going to follow the Diocesan Lenten course, "Come and See". All are welcome whether you have been coming to church for years or are new to Christianity. Please contact the churchwardens if you are interested.

Blessings,

Linda Parker & Margaret Foster
Churchwardens

The Corn Exchange events

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.

Please check the website (www.cornexchange.org.uk) for any updates.

Cinema

Sun Feb 1, Mon Feb 2, Wed Feb 11, 7:30pm, Wed Feb 11, 2:30pm Hamnet (12A)
Tue Feb 3, 7:30pm, The Choral (12A)
Wed Feb 4, 2:30pm & 7:30pm, Wallingford: The Story of an Ancient Town – free film to celebrate the Sinodun Players' President John Warburton's Birthday – booking required
Thurs Feb 5, Fri Feb 6, Sat Feb 7, 7:30, Sentimental Value (15)
Sun Feb 8, Mon Feb 9, Thurs Feb 12, 7:30pm, Marty Supreme (15)
Tue Feb 10, Wed Feb 18, 7:30pm, Wed Feb 18, 2:30pm, Fackham Hall (15)
Fri Feb 13, Sat Feb 14, 7:30pm, The Housemaid (15)
Sun Feb 15, Mon Feb 16, 7:30pm, Saipan (15)
Tue Feb 17, Thurs Feb 19, 7:30pm, Wed Feb 25, 2:30pm, Song Sung Blue (12A)
Mon Feb 23, Wed Feb 25, 7:30pm, Nouvelle Vague (12A)
Tue Feb 24, 7 :30pm, Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale (PG)
Sat Feb 28, 7:30pm, Is This Thing On (15)

Live Screening

Thurs Feb 26, Fri Feb 27, 7pm, NT Live: The Audience (PG)

Tickets £18 (adult), £15 (seniors), £10 (under 18s)

Live on Stage

Wallingford Winter Blues and Jazz 2026 Weekend

Fri Feb 20, 7:30pm, Danny Ilett: Jazz at the Movies. All Tickets £20
From Disney to Bond and beyond, Jazz has been a part of all our cinema going lives. Hear some of your favourite movie songs performed by one of Britain's finest jazz singers and guitarists, Denny Ilett and an all star band of his friends.

Sat Feb 21, 7:30pm, Chris Cobbson: Jazz from Africa. All Tickets £20

Chris Cobbson is of Ghanaian heritage and his wonderful show has songs from Ethiopia, South Africa, Senegal and all across Africa. The quintet includes Chris on guitar and the wonderful 21-stringed Kora instrument which originates in West Africa.

Sun Feb 22nd 7:30pm, Ma Bessie and the Pigfoot Band. All Tickets £20
Building on her passion for the Empress of the Blues, Julia Titus performs as Ma Bessie, sharing the music of Bessie Smith and her contemporaries with a new generation of listeners. Julia's rich, warm vocal sound brings classic blues and jazz tunes from the inter-war years to life, alongside original songs and hand-picked covers.

This intimate new show features fresh, unheard material while keeping all the favourites that audiences love. The Ma Bessie repertoire includes classics such as 'Careless Love', 'Send me to the 'lectric chair', 'I forgot to say I love you' and 'Someone is knocking my door'.

Nettlebed Country Music Club

So, what are you doing on Valentine's Night?

Nothing? Well then - how better to enjoy this romantic night than with the very well known Pat and Caroline - the McGrath Duo - live on stage Saturday 14th February!

£10pp donation on the door. No tickets needed.

Brought to you by the Nettlebed Country Music Club, High St, Nettlebed RD9 5DD.8pm to 11pm (doors open 7.30)

Free parking. Disability access. Bar also sells soft drinks, tea etc.

Any questions? Don't hesitate - just call Keith now on 07752 374 610

Next Live Nights:

Sat 11th April, Sat 16th May, Sat 27th June and more to follow later!

Also 1st & 3rd Tuesdays monthly: CD dance nights, 7.30 to 9.30pm - only £5pp – just arrive!

Wallingford Library

February and love is in the air!

We've heard that Taylor Swift is due to get married in June this year: we think our invitation might have got lost in the post though. To celebrate Valentine's Day, we are inviting all you 'Swifties' and aspiring designers to draw outfits for the Supercouple's big day. What sort of dress would our Showgirl favour? Something fabulous, frothy and traditional or pared down, modern and minimal? Will Travis go for big shoulder pads or wear his number 87 shirt under his morning suit? You can choose! Pop into the library from Valentine's Day, Saturday 14th February and pick up one of our design sheets then get busy designing over half-term. The closing date for entries is Monday 23rd February and a lucky winner will receive some Swifty merch.

More half-term fun!

We'll have the crafts table out for you this holiday. You can make a moon and star wand to observe the beginning of Ramadan or you can make a mini hobby horse to commemorate Lunar New Year's Year of the Horse. Moon wands will be available all holiday but come along on Tuesday 17th at 10.30am to make your horse. No need to book, just pop in.

National Year of Reading

2026 is the National Year of Reading so we are excited to be promoting reading for pleasure, it's definitely our favourite pastime. To encourage little ones to find joy in books, why not come along to one of our story times? We have a monthly story and craft session for primary school aged children on the first Monday of each month. On Monday 2nd at 3.30pm we'll be reading a bug themed story, followed by a craft. We also have Saturday Storytimes, keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details.

Lego

We'll have Lego out on alternate Saturdays from 10.30am-12.30pm. Our Lego days will be on the 7th and 21st then every fortnight thereafter.

Magazine Share

We'll have a free Magazine Share for adults during the half-term holidays, if you have some pre-loved magazines you wish to donate, we're looking for general interest titles

that aren't more than a year old. This gives a new home to a magazine you no longer need.

Family History sessions return

We are delighted to welcome Kevin, Oxfordshire Family History Society's volunteer, back to Wallingford library for one-to-one sessions. Kevin will be with us on the fourth Thursday of each month, starting from February 26th. Hourly sessions are free and can be booked from 1pm-6pm by contacting us on 01865 815193 or emailing: wallingford.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Age UK Drop-ins

Age UK's Community Link worker will be in the library on the first Friday of each month from 10.30am-12.00. Come along for a cuppa and a chat or for advice and information about Age UK's wide range of services and support.

What we're reading

A Notable woman; the romantic journals of Jean Lucey Pratt edited by Simon Garfield. A journal kept for over 60 years by an 'ordinary' woman from the age of 15 until her death. A candid diary, sometimes surprising but always displaying honesty and humour, detailing a life lived against the backdrop of some of the tumultuous events of the 20th century. We learn of her failed love affairs, her devotion to her cats, her career concerns and money worries. One wonders if Helen Fielding had read this in creating her character of Bridget Jones: some things never change!

The Crash by Freda Mcfadden

A thriller involving a pregnant woman trapped in a basement. Will she escape before she gives birth or die trying?

The Scandal (Beartown) by Fredrik Backman

The Beartown hockey team has been hit by scandal. Will they survive the outcome? Or will they buckle under pressure? This will make you root for a hockey team, even if you do not like hockey.

All books available through Oxfordshire libraries.

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

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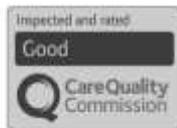
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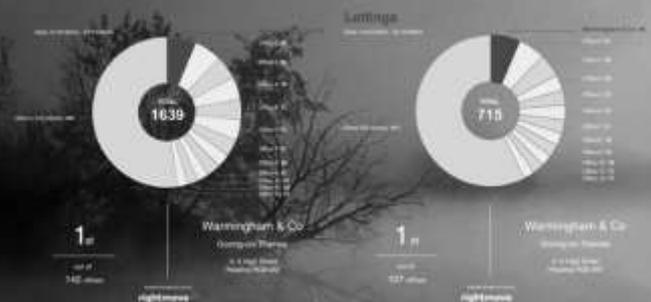
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Benson Garden Club

Benson Garden Club's talk on 8th January was given by Katharine Woods who shared shade-loving plant ideas for a woodland garden or shady area. Before making any plant choices, Katharine suggested we observe and understand at which times of year the area is in shade and whether the soil is dry or damp. This will then inform your ability to choose the right plant for the right place. She then went on to give lots of suitable planting suggestions, along with how she had created her own woodland area by renovating an overgrown and shady part of her garden.

Some of the suggested plants were relatively well-known but she also shared unusual but highly effective planting combinations (e.g. wild garlic with *Tiarella cordifolia* to create a mass of frothy flowers). Some plants were suggested for providing year-round structure, such as *Hamamelis 'Jelena'* and *Dryopteris marginalis*. Others were recommended for providing points of interest, such as the Tatting fern, *Corydalis temulifolia 'Chocolate Stars'* and Double Bloodroot (which has dainty white flowers resembling miniature water lilies). Being the season for snowdrops, Katharine showed us some beautiful examples, which you might plant in drifts or, for the more unusual varieties, in smaller groups. *S. Arnott*, for example, was recommended as a good choice if you are looking for a larger snowdrop flower. Moving into spring, Katharine recommended *Narcissus 'Thalia'*, with its beautiful scent, and *Narcissus cyclamineus* if you are looking for a striking but petite daffodil. For early May, she recommended the deciduous Ostrich fern, with its beautiful emerald green foliage. Later in the year, *Cyclamen hederifolium* is perfect for late August / September colour and *Cyclamen coum* for winter colour. More generally, hostas are always good for shady areas. A magnificent example is 'Empress Wu', but Katharine also recommended the smaller scale but relatively slug resistant 'Bulletproof'.

By the end of the talk, we had plenty of ideas for creating a shady garden - what had seemed like a problematic space could now be seen as an exciting opportunity to create

something special.

On 5th February we are looking forward to welcoming Guy Deakins with his intriguing talk on 'Sexy Pollinators'. This talk is £5 for visitors, £2 for members – just turn up on the door, no need to book.



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On 5th March we are very pleased to announce that we have Rachel de Thame coming to speak to us. Rachel is a regular presenter on *Gardeners' World* and hosts her own BBC series, *Small Town Gardens* and *Gardening with the Experts*. Previously she was gardening consultant for *The Vanessa Show* and a reporter for *Heart of the Country*. As well as *Gardeners' World* and other shows, she is a regular on the BBC's coverage of the Chelsea and Hampton Court Flower Shows. Rachel has written a number of gardening books and regularly writes columns for *The Sunday Times*, *the Telegraph*, and *Gardeners' World* magazine. This is a ticketed event - £16 for visitors, £10 for members. Please email us to purchase (contact details below) or buy them in person from Derry's Den (26 High Street, Benson).

Both events will be at our usual venue, Benson parish hall, OX10 6LZ. Doors open at 7.15pm for a 7.45pm start.

Further information about the club and how to join as a member can be found on our website <https://bensongardeningclub.weebly.com> or please feel free to email bensongardeningclub@gmail.com

Liz Harrison



Wallingford Museum

Wallingford Museum looks forward to welcoming visitors from Tuesday 3rd March. Winter has been really busy at the Museum, with much internal reorganisation and improvement underway to better care for the Museum's collections and to prepare new exhibitions for this year.

'Agatha Christie's Wallingford'

Wallingford Museum will mark the 50th anniversary year of Dame Agatha Christie's death at Winterbrook House, with a special exhibition highlighting aspects of life in Wallingford during her later life.

With the completion of Max Mallowan's archaeology in the Middle East, Agatha and her husband spent much more time in their latter years at home in Wallingford. In the 1950s-70s she and Max were both busy writing – he, compiling his archaeological reports and memoirs, and she, writing her later novels.

Letters and locally gathered memories reveal some of the difficulties and joys they experienced as older age approached. Love of pantomime and dogs feature among the aches and pains – with new material displayed for the first time.

It was a time when Wallingford was developing, celebrating the 800th anniversary of the granting of its Charter, visited by the new Queen Elizabeth II, and growing in size. The town was experiencing the coming of the first housing estates and the building of the new ABM Maltings, while also facing the possibility of significant development in its centre.

With many images of the town during these significant later years, the exhibition presents a fascinating view of the Wallingford Agatha and Max would have known as 'home'.

'Through Wallingford's Workhouse Door
Explore, Experience, Endure'

Step inside one of Wallingford's most powerful and challenging histories.

This new exhibition invites visitors to cross the threshold of the Workhouse and discover what life was really like for the men, women and children who passed through its doors — not by choice, but through necessity.

The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society (TWHAS)

Wednesday 11th February - Jonathan Stamp: "The Summer of 43"

Jonathan Stamp, who lives in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, has a keen interest in Roman history and has for long been fascinated by the local presence of Romans.

His Talk will give the historical/political background to his hypothesis that the recently discovered Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Roman road was first used very early on in the Roman invasion, even in very first year of the Roman invasion in 43AD.

Come and hear the evidence, and decide for yourself!" It promises to be a very interesting evening.

<https://www.twahas.org.uk/meetings-programme.html> for the 2026 talks programme.

Sue Wright

Rock Choir Concert

The Chair of South Oxfordshire District Council, Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan, is organising a fund raising concert in Dorchester Abbey that will take place on 28th March. The performance will be by a local rock choir so it promises to be a fun evening.

Tickets cost just £25 each and can be purchased online via the

<https://www.wallingfordfamilycentre.com> events page.

All profits from the evening will be shared between Sue Ryder Palliative Care Hub in South Oxfordshire and Wigod Way Wallingford Family Centre.

Treehouse School

Treehouse School 5k, 10k and Family Run Sunday 29th March

Looking for a challenge for 2026? Train for the Treehouse School 5k or 10k run, set in and around the village of Cholsey, Oxfordshire. The course is almost entirely off-road. The full 5k and 10k route are shown on the website. We use chip-timing, hand-made wooden medal and offer to plant a tree or to give a T-shirt to all pre-registered runners. Trophies are awarded to the first three males and females in the 10k, as well as the fastest male and female in the 5k. For more details or to book your place, or if you would like to volunteer, visit <https://treehouse10k.org.uk/>

Secondhand Bike Sale

We are looking for any donations for our Massive Secondhand Bike Sale, at The Kinecroft, on Sunday 10th May as part of Wallingford Car Rally. If you have a bike that you would like to donate, then please contact me and I will arrange to have it collected from you. We accept children's and adult bikes, scooters, bike accessories, wheeled toys etc.

Selling your bike

If you have a bike you would like to sell then bring it along to the Kinecroft on the morning of 10th May between 9am and 10.30am. You will get 75% of the selling price, and The Treehouse School will get 25% if it sells. If it doesn't sell it costs you nothing. If you are looking to buy a bike put the date in your diary!

More details from joryman@btinternet.com
07747801264

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Benson Lane

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (CROWMARSH) (SPEED LIMITS) ORDER 20

NOTICE is given that Oxfordshire County Council proposes to make the above order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and all other enabling powers. The effect of the order – for road safety reasons – is to introduce a new 30mph speed limit on Benson Lane in Crowmarsh Gifford – between its junction with the A4074 and the current village 20mph speed limit to the south, replacing the existing 60mph National speed limit in the process. The Oxfordshire County Council (Crowmarsh) (Speed Limits) Order 2023 will be revoked/replaced as necessary.

Documents giving more details of the proposals are available for public inspection online by visiting: <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk> Hard copies may be made available on request.

Objections to the proposals and other representations specifying the grounds on which they are made may be sent in writing to the address below by the end of 20 February 2026. The Council will consider objections and representations received in response to this Notice. They may be disseminated widely for these purposes and made available to the public. Traffic Regulation Order & Schemes (Ref: CM/12.6.181/P0379) for the Director of Environment & Highways, Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND.

Email: christian.mauz@oxfordshire.gov.uk,
Telephone: 0345 310 1111

Botley Road bridge replacement

From 1st to 8th February, trains won't run between Oxford and Didcot Parkway while the Botley Road rail bridge is replaced. During this time, the walkway under the bridge will also be diverted.

SODC Update

New Chief Executive and new Leader now in place

Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers, member for Goring and the former deputy Leader was elected as the new Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council in December following the decision of Cllr David Rouane to step down after over four years at the helm. At the same meeting, Council confirmed the appointment of Adrianna Partridge, who was previously Deputy Chief Executive with responsibility for Policy, Corporate Services and Transformation, as the new Chief Executive of both South and Vale Councils. Adrianna will be in post to oversee the transition to whatever new Unitary Authority succeeds SODC in due course.

Local Government Reorganisation

The government is consulting on the “technical details” of the three proposals for reorganisation in Oxfordshire and we await the verdict and subsequent public consultation on the chosen option(s). Meanwhile, we become more restricted in terms of costs and timings for any suggestions for new or better services but continue to implement our strategic plan as before.

Leisure facilities contract renewed for three years

Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), who operate under the brand ‘Better’, has run seven leisure facilities in South Oxfordshire and four in Vale of White Horse, (including outdoor pools in both areas) on behalf of the two District Councils for many years. A short-term contract extension, rather than a new long-term deal will provide the greatest flexibility for the new unitary council that will be replacing the two districts in the next few years. The new three-year contract will generate cost savings with no compromise on service with a focus on quality, accessibility and sustainability. This follows our recent investments in major energy-saving decarbonisation projects across several sites, such as new windows, solar panels, air source heat pumps and external wall insulation. These aim to reduce the Councils’ overall carbon emissions by more than 25 per cent. In South Oxfordshire the contract covers the following facilities:

Didcot Wave
Didcot Leisure Centre
Abbey Sports Centre, Berinsfield
Thame Leisure Centre
Henley Leisure Centre
Park Sports Centre, Wheatley
Riverside Outdoor Pool and Campsite, Wallingford

Parking charges in the next financial year

There will be some minor alterations to car parking charges later this year but the 1 hour free will remain. Hourly rates will increase by about 5% but parking permits for a particular designated car park will decrease slightly as they will be subject to a discount of 50% rather than the current 40% of daily usage. There will also be a consultation on changing car parks to pay on arrival, and ticketless/paperless (rather than Pay and Display).

The Cholsey Archive

Remarkably, it’s almost three months since *A Journey Through Cholsey’s Past* played to a packed house (if you were there, you know I mean that literally!) last October, and a very enjoyable evening it proved to be. The formula was too good not to be repeated, so a second selection of local stories and appropriate music will hit The Cholsey Pavilion on Friday 13th, starting at 7.30pm. As before, admission will be just a fiver at the door and includes a nibble and drink in the interval.

This time we will have something aeronautical, something from World War 2 and, by request, something about Fair Mile Hospital. Versatile folk musicians *Three Pressed Men* have racked their brains for songs and tunes that tie in with the subject matter – and have come out slightly ahead of the challenge.

We’d like to hear from you if you intend to come, so that we can plan refreshments and so forth, but we are not offering seat reservations as such. On the other hand, we will do our best to help anyone with particular needs. Email archive@cholsey.com or phone 01491 652295, so that I’ll be ready to welcome you. Best wishes, Ian Wheeler

From your MP

Dear Residents of Crowmarsh,
As we begin the New Year, I wanted to share a short update on some of the work I have been doing in and for Crowmarsh, and to thank everyone who has been in touch with me over recent months.

We have received a steady stream of completed Autumn Winter surveys from Crowmarsh residents, and we are now in the process of collating the results. Thank you very much to everyone who has taken the time to share their views. If you have not yet completed the survey, I would be grateful if you were to do so. Your feedback is really important to me and will help shape my priorities over the year ahead. The survey can be completed online by visiting www.oxonld.uk/freddie.

The recent weather has had a noticeable impact on roads across the constituency. I am continuing to liaise with Oxfordshire County Council to press for pothole repairs to be carried out in a timely and proactive way. I know this is a real concern for many residents and I will keep raising the issue until improvements are delivered.

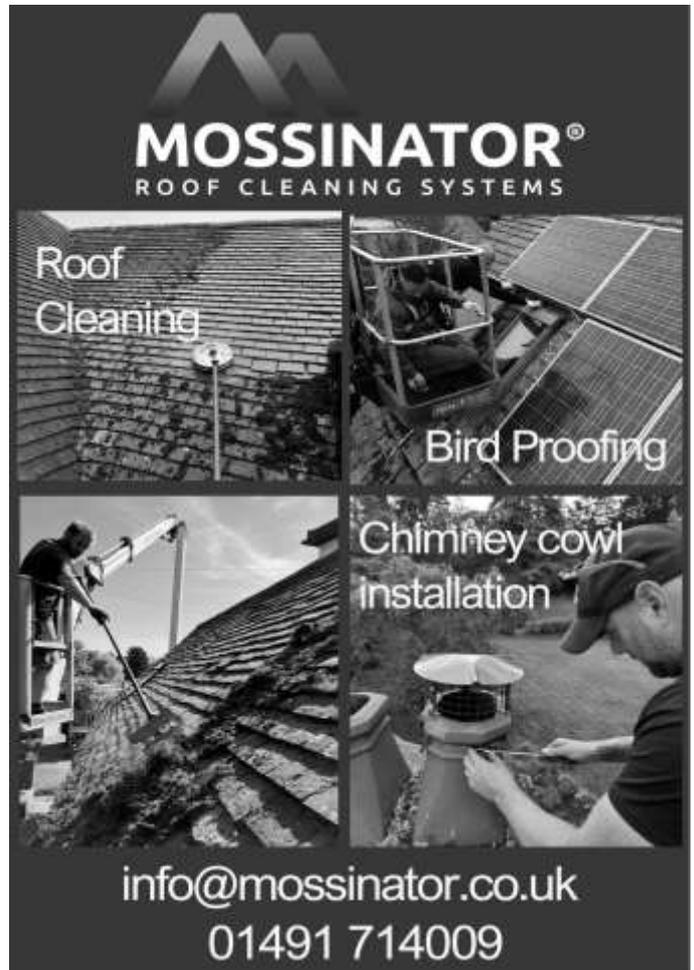
In response to the recent consultation on proposed changes to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, I have been meeting with Fire Chiefs to ensure that all areas of the constituency including Crowmarsh are not adversely impacted by the proposed changes. Protecting local emergency services remains a key priority for me.

Thank you again to everyone who has been in touch. As always, if there is something you would like me to raise or pursue on your behalf, please do get in touch.

With best wishes, Freddie van Mierlo MP

The Crowmarsh News urgently needs your help!

We are a friendly bunch who put the newsletter together every month and we would welcome more assistance with layout and editing. Please do contact us, via the editor (contact details p1) if you would like to join the team!



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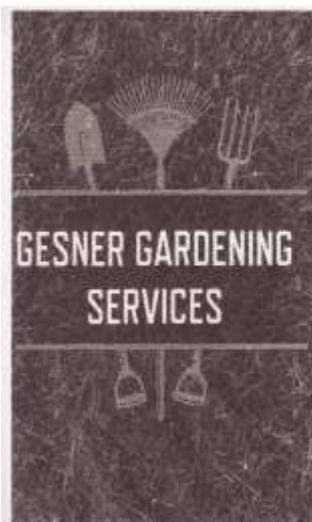
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WHAT'S ON — FEBRUARY 2026

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
Most Saturdays	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
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
Various Days	Differing times	Music at Dorchester Abbey	https://www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/whats-on/

February 2026

Wednesday 4th	14.00 onwards	U3A: Ways over Water	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Wednesday 4th	19.30 onwards	Crowmarsh Parish Council meeting	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Friday 6th	17.30-20.00	Pizza and Politics: a discussion event for young people	Central Wallingford, see Wallingford Town Council WWW to book
Saturday 7th	19.00 onwards	Flute and Harp Musical Performance	St Marys le More Church Wallingford, see https://www.anitapiano.com/wrw26
Wednesday 11th	19.45 onwards	TWHAS: The Summer of 43AD	St Marys le More Church Wallingford
Saturday 14th	10.30-12.30	Crowmarsh Community Café	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Friday 20th - Sunday 22nd	Various	Wallingford Winter Blues and Jazz 2026 https://wallywinterbluesnjazz.co.uk/	Corn Exchange and other venues
Saturday 21st	9.30 -16.00	Oxford Brookes Science Bazaar 2026	Oxford Brookes University, Headington, see their website

March 2026

Wednesday 4th	14.00 onwards	U3A: Turner and Constable	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Thursday 5th	19.30 onwards	Crowmarsh Parish Council Meeting	Crowmarsh Village Hall