



VILLAGE NEWS

FEB 2026



BADS DELIVERS A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Well, other parishes and villages across the nation should be terribly jealous. How many of them could put on such a performance, with every one of the 20 people involved (except one, the outsider from Idstone) from the same small parish? How many people are there in this parish, anyway? Including Russley, probably about 800. And possibly 30 percent of them actually came to watch, as well. With the eager cultural beavers from other local parishes filling all the other seats.

This, of course, is my review and wrap up of the annual performance of the Bishopstone Amateur Dramatic Society, who ran their Bunch of Amateurs past three full houses and one 90% full house in mid January—and entertained all of us, as we marvelled at the ability of these busy people to remember every line, except one, and every movement and every scene and lighting change over more than 8 hours on stage.

I could dwell on the outstanding Tom Green, as Lear—possibly his best yet; Tim Finney's appalling grumpiness, so out of character; Val Brodin and her flirty skirts, or lack of them; the underused but very talented physiotherapist Frances Parkes, but that's the way plays go; Graham Philpotts' coming of age as a comedy actor; Ray Henderson's accent—but really, the major credit has to go to Belinda Nicholls as director (and very accomplished actor), who drove this bunch of never-has-beens, and definitely won't-bees, to probably the best performance in the time I have been watching them. I am aware that behind the scenes, it was not all plain sailing between October and January, with one or two tetchy moments, ho ho—but you'd never have known it.

And of course the background crew, whom you hardly ever see or hear about—from Millie Green, who also drove everyone hard (and mad, apparently, said Mr Finney...) as assistant producer, and the creator of so many of the smart props, and the play literature and programmes and posters; the literally out of sight work of Julie Stoner and Mark Jordan (Mark thought



he was signing up for a few hours set building in October and ended up at almost every rehearsal, and every performance); the light and sound effects crew, Russell Hatch and Duncan Stoner, the lovely village men and women who ran the bar and took the tickets on the door. And the Village Hall elders, thank you, for allowing BADS to use the place so relatively cheaply so often—or so I am told.

So, between them all, 350 or so people were regally entertained, in a traditionally miserable weather week in mid winter Wiltshire, and great credit to everyone involved. As I said above, other parishes (and towns and cities) should be jealous. Walter Plinge.



Photos: Jay Wadsworth



Bishopstone Stores

So, January is done and dusted and we welcome February with open arms. The longer days, the spring bulbs and, hopefully, a little less rain, mean that spring is most definitely on its way!

Exciting times for me this month already when I was let out for the day to attend the huge Spring Fair at the Birmingham NEC. This was a full-on day as I scoured 8 of the NEC halls to find new products for the shop. We always think very carefully about what we sell, where it has come from and how it is made, and there were many items that really wouldn't have been a good fit for us. But there were some that I was really delighted to find. Needless to say, watch this space (and our social pages) for some really special new lines, made by some fantastic people, that will be landing here in the near future.

While it is always fantastic to share our new wares with you, please don't forget about all the wonderful things from lovely local businesses that we always have : our friends at Grove Farm Butchers who sort out our fresh meat and deliver every Friday, the wonderful talents of Astons Bakehouse who turn our Eastbrook grains into amazing bread, Berkeley Farm dairy who bring us fresh, organic dairy produce twice a week, Pete growing the very best veg right here in the village and, of course, our very own kitchen team baking some superb cakes and sweet treats (thank you Jasmine!)

Happy February to you all – hope to see you soon
Lynne x

@helenbrowningsbishopstonestores @bishopstone_stores

Opening Hours
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday,
Friday & Saturday: **9am - 6pm**
Wednesday: **9am - 1pm**
Sunday: **9am - 3pm**



RECYCLING MATTERS

by Karen Walker



I was very sad to hear that The Refillery in Shrivenham is to close in its current form. Key elements of it will move into the all new Hub, when it reopens. The original Hub accommodation was rent-free, but the all new and improved version, shared with the Post Office, will come with the addition of rent when it opens so the changing financial position has caused a re-think on the way forward for Sustainable Shrivenham. There's a meeting to discuss what comes next on the 10th February so I hope to report back next month.

One of the things I've loved about the Refillery's Facebook page is that they often re-post tips from the wonderful Nancy Birtwhistle. If you're interested in saving time, effort and money, being greener or just want to know how to easily make real chocolate biscuits after the revelation that some brands can't use the word 'chocolate' in their description anymore(!), do take a look at Nancy's own Facebook page. She has some amazing tips and recipes and her no-nonsense videos are really easy to follow. You could easily lose an hour or two picking up her ideas and be amazed at her results.

Do consider signing up at thebigplasticcount.com which will take place between the 9th and 15th March. For one week, thousands of people in the UK will record every piece of plastic packaging that they throw away or recycle, to help get a true picture of the UK's plastics crisis. This information will then be used to inform the government and hopefully target solutions.

I'm fascinated by, and highly recommend watching the programme 'What Not to Eat'. It's all about reducing eating ultra-processed foods to improve health issues (and reduces environmental impact of course!) I admit I am one of those people who check-out other people's shopping at the

supermarket! Scan-as-you-shop (and putting the items straight into your shopping bags) has reduced my ability to mentally pass judgement, which is probably a good thing! Anyway, one of the light bulb moments for me from this programme was the realisation that I don't need to peel certain fruits before putting them in my breakfast smoothie concoction. I confess I have never bitten into a kiwi fruit or peach (always nectarines instead!) because I have this thing about the texture of the skin. I always thought it would be like biting into velvet, just too weird! Anyway, blitzing the fruit in the blender means there's no waste, I get more for my money and I have the addition of added fibre, which according to the programme's Professor Tim Spector, the majority of us in the UK are short of in our diet. I've tried it on both kiwis and some yellow-stickered, very ripe peaches and it worked a treat. I naively and incorrectly thought the skin would taste different somehow...! This autumn I'll be experimenting with the russet apples and the conference pears that grow in our garden!

Professor Tim Spector and other experts advocate eating at least 30 plant-based foods per week for better gut health and I've been giving it a go as a New Year's resolution (and not just because 70%+ chocolate is included on the list!) I'm a bit of a Luddite when it comes to using my phone, but one thing that has helped me with this challenge and other habits I'm trying to maintain is to keep a list on my phone as it's easily accessible and you can set it up to keep a tally for you or include a box which you can very satisfyingly tick on completion. It's much simpler than keeping track on a piece of paper somewhere and the simple gamification seems to help me! I might have just passed a very big birthday, but I'm clearly still a child at heart (or when it comes to the texture of food!)

Are you interested in becoming a Governor at Bishopstone School?

- Do you care about improving children's education and want to contribute to your local community?
- Can you volunteer, become part of a team and value contributions made by others?
- Are you willing to challenge and ask questions?
- Are you open to new ideas? The time commitment is probably not as much as you fear.

Have you experience in any of the following:



- Education (not connected to the school),
- Finance,
- HR, External Communications,
- H&S

Want to find out more? We need people just like you!

Please contact Lynne Fletcher, Governance Professional by email, clerk1@Bishopstone.Swindon.sch.uk or the school office on 01793 790521

HAPPY GARDENS

by Jane Pearson

Photo: March Garden Answers Magazine subscription.



Monthly Musings: Uncertain Weather

I don't think I can ever remember such a wet February! After the scorching summer of last year, many gardens are now waterlogged. I've been giving thought to how we can help our gardens, and the plants in them to become more weather resilient and I've been making notes of the plants in my own garden and my clients, to see which ones are coping the best.

Luckily, this month March garden answers magazine has an article all about "Designing in Beauty for Uncertain Weather." Greg Loades has lots of ideas to help us protect our soil, shelter plants and create a space that works in sunshine, storms and everything in between. In a nutshell, Greg divides this mammoth task into a few basic categories:

Improving your garden's wind resistance

Consider planting a hedge next to an existing fence or incorporating hedges within a larger garden to make rooms. Hedges don't just filter wind, they can also provide shade to lessen summer scorching, their roots uptake excessive rainfall and they make wonderful wildlife corridors. Alternatively, decorative grasses can create a sturdy but not impenetrable defence against gales and create the pockets of shade you need.

Protect your soil with plants

Strong winds and high rainfall can expose topsoil to erosion, which in turn, reduces the soil's fertility. Dense planting will protect the soil from being washed away by the impact of rain events and will slow down the flow of water, reducing flood risk. If your plants are still relatively small and newly planted, it's a good idea to mulch around them with well rotted compost or sow some hardy annuals directly onto the soil which will bring you a splash of colour whilst your new prize plants establish.

Finally, my favourite saying of all time! "Right plants, right place"

Well established plants which have put down strong roots because they love their growing conditions, are always more likely to be able to cope with harsher conditions than those that haven't. Growing plants that suit your soil and microclimate will help your garden become more resilient and save you heartache and a fortune in the long term. The tricky bit is, what plants to grow that can cope with both summer heat and drought but also won't give up the ghost when the garden floods or is faced with a deluge of heavy rain? I've mentioned of a couple of hardy souls below, but if you would like more ideas, please don't hesitate to contact me and book an advice session.

Plant Spotlight:

Three plants for "whatever the weather"



Miscanthus sinensis 'Ferner Osten' (Eulalia 'Ferner Osten')



Asplenium scolopendrium (Hart's tongue fern)

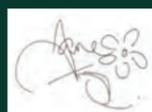


Rosa 'Lady of Shalott' (Rose Lady of Shalott)

The Potting Shed: Feb-March

- Divide Perennials
- Start dahlia tubers off indoors or in a greenhouse
- Repot house plants
- Sow Hardy annuals from March directly outdoors
- Resume mowing (on a dry day!)
- Divide & plant Snow Drops 'in the green'

Happy Gardening!



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www.janepearsondesign.com/hints&tips

Please visit my website at janepearsondesign.com/blog for Readers Question Time and much more!
www.janepearsondesign.com/blog

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The Ridgeway Gardening Club

Contact: Marion Peck: 01793 791 001



Welcoming New Members

At the Ridgeway Gardening Club, we aim to do things a bit differently.

If you've ever looked at a plant and thought, "I wonder why you're dying" then congratulations — you're already halfway qualified to join our Gardening Club. The other half? Turning up. Preferably with enthusiasm, but we'll also accept mild curiosity and a willingness to ask questions. You don't need experience to join us. You don't need a sprawling garden or a Latin dictionary of plant names. All you need is a spark of interest and a willingness to get your hands a little muddy. Because gardening isn't about perfection, it's about discovery. It's about learning what thrives, what struggles, and how to create a successful environment working with what you have available.

Our club is a place where beginners, experts, and people who once kept a cactus alive for three whole weeks can come together to learn, laugh, and socialise. We share tips, swap seeds and cuttings, and celebrate our successes whether that be keeping the lawn alive or winning the slug battle.

The Ridgeway Gardeners are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive atmosphere in which every member feels valued. Beginners are guided with patience and encouragement, while more experienced gardeners are invited to share their expertise. Our activities for the coming year include guest speakers, practical demonstrations, plant-sharing events, a visit to an iconic Arts and Crafts garden and a newly launched Garden Buddy Scheme.

Maybe you are new to the area, or moved into a new build, or simply want to improve your outdoor space - then come and join us and be inspired. A year's membership costs just £12.50 which includes free entry to our monthly events, access to our Garden Buddy Scheme and members discounts of 20% at Suttons Seeds and Plants, a great way to top up your plant stock for the Spring and Summer ahead.

So, if you are wondering if this is one for you why not send us an email to info@ridgewaygardeners.co.uk to register your interest in membership or come along to one of our planned events and pay a 'per event' fee of £5, which includes refreshments on the night.

The meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month, except January and August, and as always everyone is welcome. There is a one-off payment for an evening for non-members, or a single payment of £12.50 for a year's membership.

We look forward to welcoming you.



Diary Dates

Wednesday March 11th - Paul Green: Bishopstone Village Hall. 7.00pm

'The Best Thing Since Sliced Bread'

Paul is from Green's Leaves specialist plant nursery in Newent. He will be comparing old vs new varieties and the thinking in new plant development. He will be bringing along a selection plants for sale from his Gloucestershire nursery.

Details of meetings and speakers for the rest of the year will be circulated as soon as the last elements are finalised.

Wednesday April 8th - Hannah Mycroft : Bishopstone Village Hall : 7.00pm

"Pots for Hot Spots and Shady Characters"

Harriet Rycroft spent 14 years as head gardener at Whichford Pottery and is author of 'Pots' - a comprehensive handbook covering everything you need to know about growing plants in pots all year round. Harriet will be delivering an informative talk accompanied with a practical demonstration. Copies of her book will be available on the night at a discount price of £10 cash.



BISHOPSTONE ALLOTMENTS AVAILABLE

On behalf of the Church Commissioners and their land agent Strutt & Parker, several half allotment plots are now available to rent by the local community. A perfect opportunity to grow your own fruit and vegetables.

The price is £8 per half plot per year (April to March)

No permanent structures such as sheds are allowed but low level storage is permitted.

Although livestock cannot be kept, bee keeping is encouraged by the owners.

If you are interested in taking an allotment in Bishopstone,

contact Steve Bell on 07598 185 643



JOEY JODPHUR (JJ)

FROM DEEP IN THE VALLEY OF THE RACEHORSE

A week can be a long time in National Hunt racing, just ask Nicky Henderson. From the emotionally charged high of Jonbon's win in the Clarence House Chase at Ascot, to the despair of Sir Gino sustaining a season-ending pelvic injury at Cheltenham's Trial Day a week later. The racing gods continue to put the 75-year-old Lambourn trainer through the wringer. To the Berkshire track first, the admirable 10 year old's record of never having finished outside the first two, was under serious threat facing a small but select field of rivals in the 2 mile Grade One showpiece. Jonbon had chased home Willie Mullin's grey Il Etait Temps on his last two starts and there was little to suggest the ageing superstar could turn the tables. Turning for home with two fences left, the Seven Barrows star was in a spot of trouble and also had Dan Skelton's Thistle Ask to reel in as well as the grey. Il Etait Temps crashed out at the second last with a tired fall, leaving only two. Jonbon's stamina (a comfy stayer at this trip) began to kick in and he winged the last under stand-in pilot James Bowen to reel in Thistle Ask. The roof duly came off the impressive Ascot grandstand. It was a sweet moment too for the young Welsh jockey, whose only previous ride on Jonbon came in the same race two years ago when a bad mistake saw the horse beaten at odds of 1-4. The biggest cheer of all however was reserved for Il Etait Temps, who after a worrying 5 minutes winded on the floor, got his breath back and got to his feet. It was pure sporting drama all round.

In light of stablemate Constitution Hill's hurdling woes, Sir Gino had catapulted himself to the top of the Champion Hurdle market rather by default than design, as 12 months previously he seemed destined for a future over the larger fences. The 6-year-old is a tall, handsome horse with seemingly untapped potential, and Cheltenham's Unibet International hurdle was supposed to be a gentle warm up to an inevitable coronation in March. Disaster struck however down the back straight when Nico De Boinville pulled his mount up immediately with the horse sustaining a pelvic hairline fracture. The very best veterinary care was administered on the course, and after a spell at Three Counties Veterinary Hospital the horse is safely back in his Lambourn stables. It's still early days, but there is a good chance that he can make a full recovery and race again.

With only the Dublin Racing Festival to go, the Cheltenham Festival fields are beginning to take shape. The Champion Hurdle now looks like a walk in the park for Willie Mullin's star mare Lossiemouth if they decide to take that route over the easier mare's equivalent, but don't discount last year's surprise winner Golden Ace, trained in Devon by Jeremy Scott. Despite his Ascot heroics, Jonbon may step up in trip to tackle the Ryanair Chase over ½ mile further on the Thursday. His best chance to win a Queen Mother Champion Chase was surely last year. This would leave Marine Nationale to double-up in Wednesday's showpiece. The Stayer's Hurdle picture is very messy but take a chance on Marlborough trainer Emma Lavelle's horse Ma Chantou, who took the Cleeve Hurdle trial at Cheltenham in good style. Emma trained great stayer Paisley Park to win the same race in 2019. The Gold Cup picture will become a lot clearer after the Leopardstown Gold Cup, but there are enough doubts over most of the Irish challenge to suggest the blue riband might be heading back to Seven Barrows in the shape of Jango Baie. A staying-on fourth in the King George photo finish at Kempton on Boxing Day, Jango will much prefer the left-handed staying test that Cheltenham offers compared with the Sunbury track, whose fences come at you quickly. It could be a big week for another Lambourn trainer Jamie Snowden, who is amassing a nice squad of horses for jumps racing's world championships. Wendigo, so unlucky in last year's Albert Bartlett, has won the Grade 2 John Francome Novices Chase at Newbury this year and looks a top-class stayer in the making who should go very close in the 3 mile Brown Advisory.



Joey Jodphur 2026 Cheltenham Festival Tips

Tuesday

Old Park Star (Nicky Henderson), Supreme Novices win 9/4

Golden Ace (Jeremy Scott), Champion Hurdle each way 10/1

Lulamba (Nicky Henderson), Arkle Trophy, win only 13/8

Myretown (Lucinda Russell), Ultima Handicap Chase each way 10/1

Wednesday

Marine Nationale (Barry Connell), Queen Mother Champion Chase, win 13/8

Wendigo (Jamie Snowden), Brown Advisory Novices Chase, 10/1.

Thursday

St Irene (Nick Scholfield), Mares Novice, each way 33/1

Jonbon (Nicky Henderson), Ryanair Chase, each way 8/1.

Ma Chantou (Emma Lavelle), Stayer's Hurdle, each way 8/1.

Friday

Jango Baie (Nicky Henderson), Gold Cup, win 7/1.

Ask Fanny

Still judging you. From prison.

We regret to inform you that our much-loved resident agony aunt, Fanny, is presently serving a three-month custodial sentence, having been found guilty on five separate counts: the unearthing of buried mud; frippery with malicious intent; questioning the unquestionable; thinking in public; and the unauthorised appropriation of rain.

It is anticipated that she may be eligible to rejoin the team around Easter, subject to good behaviour and the discretionary application of a reduced sentence. Further updates will be issued as and when developments arise.



Write to Fanny and you might get a response in April:

BishopstoneEditor@gmail.com

FEBRUARY HARD SUDOKU

LAST MONTH'S WINNER IS Lucy Groom
Grab your voucher from Lynne at the shop!

Thank you for your entries! Well done **Lucy Groom** for winning this month with your codeword entry!

Other this month entries were: **Codeword:** Keith Franklin, The Phillpotts, Paul Bartlett, Peter Walker, Debbie Clarke

Sudoku: Keith Franklin, Debbie Clarke, Susy, Nick Steele, Yuet Dickinson, Lucy Groom, The Phillpotts, John Iles

ENTRY DEADLINE: last day of the month. Thank you.

Those who complete both puzzles have their name put into the hat twice.

1	8									2
		5	3		9					
					1					
	6	3			2			9		
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						5	4	6		
	1				3	8				4
						7				
		7		2	6					

Win a £10 Voucher!

Please submit your completed Sudoku and/or crossword by the end of each month, either in person or by email to Lynne at Bishopstone Stores.

A £10 voucher is awarded each month — one winner will be drawn at random from all correct entries. The draw takes place on the 1st of the month, and the winner will be announced in the following issue. You can collect your voucher from the shop after the announcement. The voucher gives you £10 off your bill at either the pub or the shop. Drop them in, or submit by email to: shop@helenbrowningsorganic.co.uk

FEBRUARY CODEWORD

Codewords are like crossword puzzles but have no clues!

Instead, every letter of the alphabet has been replaced by a number, the same number representing the same letter throughout the puzzle.

All you have to do is decide which letter is represented by which number!

To start you off, we reveal the codes for two or three letters

	14		1		6		14		12		7		18	
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	16				5		14		18		8		22	
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A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Winning Sudoku from last month



DICKIE'S diary

Richard Green



Infilling some weak spots in a boundary hedge with new bare root hawthorn plants a good flock of long tailed tits rose from a nearby bush. I am familiar with a "charm" of gold finches but I had to look up the collective noun for long tailed tits. They are called a volery or zephyr. They may have 6-12 eggs but with a second brood the young of the first breed can remain together in the same company to form these larger zephyrs. I remember aged about ten finding my first long tailed tit nest. Volery can also apply to wagtails (from the Latin to fly). Collective nouns for birds are often onomatopoeic as in a murder of crows, a parliament of rooks, a mischief of busy magpies associated with the country dogrell "one for a boy two for a girl etc choughs, as seen on some coastal cliffs or in alpine ski resorts are known as a chattering, owls a wisdom and I include a picture of three young barn owls taken by me at Zulu farm just before they fledged in July 2011. Memorably the force of nature of wheeling starlings at dusk is known as a murmuration and larks ascending as portrayed in music by Vaughan Williams are known as an exultation.

Digging my vegetable patch in the frost this morning because that's when it goes most easily, I was as you might expect joined soon by a robin. The collective noun for robins is a worm! I have no idea why wrens are a chime and swallows a kettle or linnets a parcel. Linnets commonly also congregate together in winter as flocks of little brown jobs (lbj's). This is where the phone apps are so valuable in identification. Perhaps I can understand why house martins are known as a circlage, sparrows a quarrel, snipe a wisp as they peel away

showing their white belly and ptarmigan which I have seen in the Alps skiing are understandably known as an invisibleness against the snow.

Jays are a scold with their raucous cry and woodcock a fall probably because of their flight pattern. Woodpeckers dipping flight is so similar to that of a jay that a friend of mine was so embarrassed to shoot one once by mistake. To remind him to be more careful I bought him a cap sporting a woodpecker motif. Though jays can be predators of birds eggs and nestlings some shooting people like them about because jays bury acorns which may in time be oaks. We once observed Mr and Mrs green woodpecker on our lawn at close quarters searching for ants, their favourite food. It was instructive to observe the different red head marking between the sexes and their noun is a descent, again obviously from their dipping mode of flight like a Jay.

Inside the Peach Pip

by Anna Bareham

Crochet Shapes, by Katie Jones

I am not usually one for New Year's resolutions, as they feel too rigid and I tend to have fallen by the wayside by this time. Instead, this year I have decided to assign myself a theme: Creation. I am always picking up hobbies, pursuing them intensely for two weeks and then forgetting about them entirely, so I didn't think it best to attempt a whole year practising a specific hobby, but I do like the idea of engaging myself consistently in creative projects, whether that is writing, painting, collaging or, my current favourite, crocheting.

I have followed Katie Jones on Instagram for a while (@katiejonesknit), because her crochet creations are bold, full of colour and totally unique. There is a lot of rubbish fed to me by social media platforms, but Katie Jones' content is wholesome and brightens my day. Some of her patterns are available to buy online, and some to download for free, but she is also a published author of *Hip to be Square* and,

more recently, *Crochet Shapes*, which I received for Christmas and am looking forward to using in the coming year. Suitable for beginners, she first provides helpful diagrams of all the basic crochet stitches, then patterns for creating a range of shapes including the traditional granny square, followed by patterns for a variety of clothes and accessories that can be made using those shapes. Once you have mastered the shapes, the possibilities are endless! This book would be a great introduction to crochet for anyone unfamiliar with the craft, or an excellent source of ideas for more experienced crocheters. I can't wait to get stuck in.

Here's hoping this will be a year of less consumption and more production. Less AI, more human.

Flinging love,
Anna

Photo of the month

SEND US YOUR SNAPS
Email: BishopstoneEditor@gmail.com

Become the village paparazzi with a keen eye and a steady hand. Each month, our panel of highly opinionated judges (imaginary monocles firmly in place) will crown a winner. The prize? Full-colour glory and the quiet satisfaction of being talked about in the queue at the shop.



Thank you for this month's lovely winning photo (top) from **Simon Sea**. He said,

"It was taken on the Ridgeway, just east of the B4000, the deer had just crossed the ridgeway going south & gathered into the group to look back at me. I counted 65ish, 5 stags & 60 does."

Our runners-up this month are, the lovely doggie photo (left) from **Ceredig Jones** and another stunning sky photo from **Francesca Walker** (below).

Some fabulous pictures again this month — thank you all, and please keep them coming!



CHURCH NEWS



WELLSPRING Villages

A Letter From The Vicar

Recently I found myself, once again, walking the beautiful Coastal path along the North Cornish coast. It is and has been a favourite stomping ground of mine and of our family for many years now. On a good day it is quite simply, stunning, in its beauty and peace. Along the path you pass through many kissing gates. Ingenious devices which allow walkers to pass through, one at a time, from either direction, but which prevent cattle and sheep from doing the same.

This year the kissing gates got me thinking about a deeply important aspect of the Christian faith; namely forgiveness. Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, will be on Feb. 18th this year and Lent, the forty days of preparation leading up to Easter, is a time when we take a steady look into our hearts to observe and ensure we are walking along the pathway of God's love and truth, in all our relationships and living. Forgiveness is a crucial and central aspect of this. Receiving the wonderful all-encompassing forgiveness of God that Christ won for us on the cross and the giving of forgiveness to others, who may have offended, hurt or harmed us in the past, or in our daily living now.

It is a common experience in our human relationship with others that people let us down, or deliberately hurt us, in many different ways, as we sometimes let others down too. We have certainly let God down in our relationship with him through our lives and at various points, but the good news of Easter is that because of the 'once for all' victory of the cross, where Christ paid the price of our failure to love him and others as he loves us, so we can receive God's full and free forgiveness within our hearts, for all time. This is at the heart of our Christian faith and flowing from this is our calling, in His love, to offer forgiveness to those who have wronged us. In the Lord's prayer we ask God to forgive us our sins as, in the same breath, we acknowledge our commitment and willingness to forgive those who have done wrong to us.

Now that is admittedly very challenging! *Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.* This needs to be more than words we say but actions we implement. This phrase from the Lord's Prayer reflects Jesus' consistent teaching that receiving the forgiveness of God goes hand in hand with actually offering it to those in our lives who have wronged us. If people have very deeply hurt and harmed us for forgiveness is, humanly speaking, often beyond our own resources to achieve. However, we can turn in that direction and ask God to help us and do the forgiving within us, where we cannot, and this can be a process which takes time and space to navigate. In the more everyday nature of relationships, in our families and communities, and of course in our church communities also, things like animosity, grievances and broken relationships all need to be dealt with promptly, in the grace of God, leading to reconciliation and forgiveness. We are all fallen sinners needing God's forgiveness and He offers us this in Christ, but He also calls us to forgive others, out of His love of us. Where He leads, we must follow. In other words, forgiveness in our Christian lives is very much like a Kissing gate. When the part of us that receives God's forgiveness is unlocked to allow God's love through to us, it is by definition open to let our love back out to others around us also. But if we lock the gate of forgiveness to others we are in danger of not being able to receive the forgiveness of God ourselves. Unforgiveness can be a very heavy weight to carry around. Forgiveness is both liberating and freeing. It is foundational for health and joy in our hearts and in all our relationships. Animosity or nursing a grudge is not the way of Christ. Let's make sure this Lent the kissing gate in our own heart is open for forgiveness to pass through, both ways, God's and ours. Travel well this Lent.

Kind regards, Revd Steve Paynter
stevedpaynter@gmail.com 01793 296870

Our churches are: All Saint Liddington, St. Mary's Bishopstone, St. Andrew's Wanborough, and St. Swithun's Hinton Parva.



Church Services. Full details on www.achurchnearyou.com

Photo: Kate Wright, Hinton Church

The Parish of the Wellspring Villages

The main morning Church Services always start at 10.30am.

Day	Date	Time	Venue
Sun	15.02.26	10.30am	HC, St Andrew's, Wanborough
Wed	18.02.26	7pm	Ash Wednesday. Ashing with HC All Saint's, Liddington

Lent Course at Hinton Village Hall each Wednesday following 7-9pm. All welcome. Do join us as we study five key moments in Jesus' final week.

Sun	22.02.26	8.30am	BCP, HC, St Mary's, Bishopstone
Sun	22.02.26	10.30am	MW, St. Swithun's, Hinton P
Sun	01.03.26	10.30am	HC, All Saints, Liddington
Sun	08.03.26	10.30am	HC, St Mary's, Bishopstone
Sun	15.03.26	10.30am	HC, St Andrew's, Wanborough
Sun	22.02.26	4pm	Confirmation Service, St Andrews
Sun	29.03.26	10.30am	HC, St Swithun's, Hinton Parva

Prayer

Dear God, by whose power we are created and by whose love we are redeemed: guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give ourselves to your service, and live each day in love to one another and to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HC: Holy Communion, BCP; Book of Common Prayer, MW: Morning Worship

St Mary's Church Cleaning Rota 2026

Feb '26	Jane G. & Maggie
March '26	Sarah & Jenny
April '26	Liz & Gaye
May '26	Rachel Blunt & ?
June '26	Debbie & Rachel P.
July '26	Jill & Karen Mac G.
Aug '26	Fran & Karen S.
Sept '26	Chris & Gill
Oct '26	Jane G. & Maggie
Nov '26	Sarah & Jenny
Dec '26	Liz & Gaye

Thank you to the great team who help clean the church. We would love to hear from new volunteers who'd like to join us. It involves no more than 4hrs cleaning during your month on the rota, so not too onerous! Please contact Sarah Bally 07788715742

All dates and times are submitted to the Editor.

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The Parish Times

Bishopstone Parish Council, serving Bishopstone, Hinton Parva & Russley Park

February 2026



WHY YOU SHOULD BE PICKING UP AFTER YOUR DOG

Councillors are receiving a growing number of complaints about dog mess left on footpaths and in popular walking areas. It is an offence (yes, even in the countryside) and anyone who fails to clear up after their dog can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £100. Here are four good reasons to clear up after your dog:

- 1. IT WILL NOT QUICKLY BREAK DOWN** Dog waste can take up to a year to fully break down. Plus, when rainwater washes over dog poop, it flows into the drainage systems. The contaminated water is carried into our streams, ponds and rivers.
- 2. DISEASE-CAUSING BACTERIA AND PARASITES** Even if your dog does not show symptoms of being sick their waste can carry diseases that are harmful to humans and other pets. The parasites and bacteria can stay in the soil for years. By not picking up, you're putting at risk other pets, children at play and people enjoying country walks.
- 3. IT'S COMMON COURTESY** Picking up after your dog is not only common courtesy but your duty and responsibility as a pet owner. When faeces are left lying on public paths, verges and grassy areas, the smell can quickly become overwhelming. It's just good manners to pick up.
- 4. DOG POOP IS NOT A FERTILIZER** If you think that dog waste is a natural fertilizer, think again. Since most dogs' diets are high in protein, it has the reverse effect. Dog poo is exceptionally high in nitrogen and phosphorus, so if you let your dog's waste lay in your grass, it can actually cause burns in your lawn. Since it's so acidic, it will kill your grass if it isn't picked up. Dog poop can contaminate fruits, vegetables, and surrounding areas.

REPORT THE FLY TIPPER

The Parish is currently suffering from a plague of fly-tipping and littering of outrageous proportions.

We are very grateful to SBC for their rapid removal of reported problems, and the Parish Council would like to see more action taken to prosecute offenders. However, prosecution requires evidence and rapid reporting. If you see anyone dumping rubbish in the parish, please photograph the incident if you feel it is safe to do so, make a note of vehicle markings and registration numbers, and report the incident online using Swindon's fly tipping tool. Please give the exact location – the app What3Words is very useful for this.

Report at: https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20023/environmental_problems/28/fly-tipping

<https://what3words.com>
The Parish Council removed the burnt-out litter bin on White Hill, near Charlbury Tump, because it was attracting dumping.

The 'please take your rubbish home' sign is having the same effect, and will be removed. We have debated installing CCTV but sadly don't have the manpower or resources to manage a surveillance scheme lawfully ourselves. The Parish Council continues to ask SBC to deploy its mobile CCTV facility in our known problem areas.

You can help to keep our villages looking good by joining a litter pick next month.

Meet at 10am at Bishopstone or Hinton Parva village halls on Sunday 1st March.

FOLLOW ALL OUR LATEST NEWS ON FACEBOOK @bishopstoneandhintonparvaparcouncil

WELCOME TO THE PARISH

The Parish Council always extends a warm welcome to all new and prospective residents of the Parish.

We are very pleased that you've chosen to live in our community. The Parish contains two conservation areas and everything south of the Icknield Way is also in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Many houses are also listed.

Naturally this brings with it all sorts of challenges when it comes to tree felling, house alterations, etc. There are also other regulations aimed at preserving the character and beauty of the parish. If in doubt, please check, we are only a phone call away.

The Parish Council is always available to answer any questions you may have on any particular aspect of living in a conservation area, the area of outstanding natural beauty or listed buildings.

Contact the Clerk, the Chair or any member of the council - the councillors email addresses appear below, along with the Clerk's telephone number. We do hope you will be very happy here.

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Ms Jaine Blackman (Clerk)

Phone: 07913 819422

Email: Clerk@bishopstoneandhintonparva.org

Mrs Val Brodin (Chair)

Cllr.valbrodin@gmail.com

Mr Ian Thomas

Cllr.ianthomas@gmail.com

Mr Julian Cooke

Cllr.juliancooke@gmail.com

Mrs Gill May

Cllr.gillmay@gmail.com

Mr Steve Bell

Cllr.sbell@gmail.com

Mrs Karen Walker

Cllr.karenwalker@gmail.com

Dr Karen MacGregor

Cllr.karenmacgregor@gmail.com

Mr Dai Wilson

Cllr.daiwilson@gmail.com

The Parish Council's policies and documents can be viewed at bishopstoneandhintonparva.org/

There is a casual vacancy on the council following the resignation of Cllr Lucille McGrath. She is sincerely thanked for her service to the parish council and residents.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2025 /26

Meetings begin at 7.30pm. Late changes are shown at bishopstoneandhintonparva.org/parish_council/ and on the notice boards. Members of the press and public are welcome to attend.

2nd March **Hinton Parva** 11th May **Bishopstone** to include parish meeting
13th April **Bishopstone**

Useful Information

Swindon Borough Council: Reception Premier House 01793 465055/465056; **Civic Offices** 01793 463668; **Wat Tyler House** 01793 463725

For problems with waste collections call Streetsmart on: Monday to Friday 8am-8pm 01793 445501; all other times 01793 466453

Report fly-tipping or pot-holes to SBC: swindon.gov.uk/my_account
Wiltshire Police non-emergency number (less urgent than 999): 101
Borough Councillor Gary Sumner - GSumner2@swindon.gov.uk

PARISH COUNCILLORS' KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Finance TBC

Footpaths and Highways Julian Cooke (Hinton Parva)/Ian Thomas (Bishopstone)/Dai Wilson

Pond & Island Steve Bell/Dai Wilson

Hinton Parva Village Hall Karen Walker

Bishopstone Village Hall Steve Bell

Hinton Parva Charities Julian Cooke

Bishopstone United Charities Doug Stevens (PC nominee), Christine Thomas (PC nominee), Laurie Manktelow (PC nominee)

Trees Julian Cooke (Hinton Parva) Ian Thomas (Bishopstone)

Responsible Financial Officer Jaine Blackman (Clerk)

Planning Ian Thomas

Website/IT Gary Pass (community volunteer)

Policies Gill May/Karen MacGregor

School liaison Dai Wilson

Russley Park Julian Cooke

CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS

All planning applications, their history and all supporting documents can be viewed at: www.swindon.gov.uk/planning Planning issues are discussed at the monthly Parish Council meetings. Public representations are heard prior to the start of the meeting.

S/HOU/25/0046 Erection of retaining walls in the rear garden, the installation of balustrade safety fencing across the middle terrace area, and engineering operations including the re-profiling of land to form a ground-level patio terrace area, a middle terrace area, shrub/earth banks and an upper-level lawn area (part retrospective) at The Rails, Oxon Place, Bishopstone.

S/HOU/25/1603 Erection of proposed first floor rear extension and replacement front pitched roof dormers. Partial demolition of the existing roof to facilitate the extension and dormers. Work to existing trees in rear garden at Down Hill, Oxon Place, Bishopstone.

S/HOU/25/1037 Erection of 6ft fence in replacement of existing hedgerow which has died at 1 West End Cottages, Icknield Way, Bishopstone. ACTION: Clerk to reiterate parish council's objection.

S/25/0666/REPPER Land At Mount Pleasant Farm, Mount Pleasant Farm Lane, Horpit. Construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a ground-mounted solar farm complete with landscaping, associated infrastructure and temporary access.

GRANTED

S/HOU/25/1520 Erection of two storey extension to side and rear. Detached garage at Charlbury House, Hatchet Hill, Hinton Parva.

APPEAL

S/LDP/24/1400 Certificate of Lawfulness (proposed) for the removal of a garden wall to create vehicle access at 2 Church Row, Hinton Parva.

VIEW THE PARISH WEBSITE AT WWW.BISHOPSTONEANDHINTONPARVA.ORG

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BISHOPSTONE INFO/BOOKINGS:
Michelle Bishop: 07769 943 956
Email: miclawre@cisco.com
Hourly rate: £11 residents, £15 non-residents

HINTON PARVA INFO/BOOKINGS:
Ella: 07916 599 772
Email: ellakusta01@gmail.com
Hourly rate: £10 residents, £12.50 non-residents

HINTON PARVA

Annual Village Supper

If you manage to get to this bit of the Village News before the 21st of February and don't have any plans for that evening's meal, do see if there are any spare tickets going for our Annual Village Supper on its revised date. This is our Hall's main fundraiser of the year so we would love to see a full house!

All are very welcome - residents from other towns and villages as well as locals, friends and family. And for a mere £15 you will receive a splendid home-cooked, 2 course (or more) meal, with entertainment and a raffle. We'd also welcome offers of help, donations of puddings and any suitable raffle prizes.

Please contact Ella at ellakusta01@gmail.com or on 07916 599 772 for bookings or for further information.

We hope to see you there!

Karen Walker on behalf of Hinton Parva Village Hall Committee

Beautiful But Impoverished Village Hall Seeks Kind-hearted Cleaner For a Low-commitment Relationship!

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Or could suit a community-minded volunteer(s) with an option to work with an enthusiastic committee member to share the fun!
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Talk to any Hinton Parva Village Hall committee member, email us at HPvillagehall@gmail.com or phone 07866 837247 to find out more.

Hinton Parva Village Supper

menu

Your choice of

- ~ Pork & Prune Casserole
- ~ South African Bobotie with Yellow Rice
- ~ Pheasant Casserole
- ~ Cheesey Topped Cottage Pie
- ~ Vegetarian Lasagne

All served with baby potatoes, beans and peas

Followed by

- Home Made Puddings galore!
- Cheese & Biscuits
- Hand Made Chocolates

Bon Appetit!

BISHOPSTONE WITH HINTON PARVA VILLAGE FETE

Saturday 12th September

We have a date and planning is now well underway for this year's Fete which will be taking place on Saturday 12th September at the lovely Winding Wood site in Bishopstone. Thank you to everyone for helping us get this far! We'll be bringing back some old favourites and trying some new ideas including a Chocolate Fountain! Hopefully the date later in the year will mean that we'll be able to go ahead with our planned Dog Show this year - aah, the challenges of the British weather!

We're planning to fill the day with entertainment; some new to the Fete and also some that were such a hit last year in Hinton Parva. We'll reveal all as we get them lined up. But we can always squeeze in more - If you want to showcase your talent, we'd love to hear from you.

If you have any ideas for the event or would like to help, have a stall or take part, do please get in touch

with **Christine on 07789 414147** or littlecot2010@hotmail.co.uk

We already have a couple of specific needs if you feel able to help - we're desperate to hear from those of an artistic persuasion who could help with painting our posters or are a whizz with a software design package to help us produce our event programmes.

Looking ahead please put aside for us any: - Books, Bottles (of any kind!), Soft Toys in good, clean condition and anything suitable for the White Elephant stall and start thinking of ideas for the Country Larder stall! We would also love, love, love to have some raffle prizes - big or small, so if you could donate goods or services please get in touch. Remember, all the funds raised go towards the upkeep of our two beautiful churches and supporting other local amenities.

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The Royal Oak Diary



We're restarting our monthly **pub quiz**—readers of this will realise the next one is the **first Monday of March, the 2nd**. All of the 2025 versions, starting last autumn, were in my view remarkably successful—I had expected interest, and enthusiasm, but not at the level that we then experienced. And the various teams are always happy to have teamless players join them. And we've raised another £200 or so for the school playground fund

And our monthly jazz—**ThreeBop**—as ever during the winter/spring, here on the **first Friday of each month, so March 6, from 6.30 for two hours**. Just smart stuff, to listen to or talk over.

Hope we see you, and that the guns have been silenced
TF

Bloody hell, where does the time go? Doesn't seem a minute since we were telling you about the fun we were offering in December, and here we all are out collecting winter fuel, or stealing it in some instances, and trying to stave off the end of the world as we know it all thanks to the man who doesn't seem to be acting like Father Christmas.

It is extraordinary how one person has come to dominate conversation between mostly horrified worldly-wise people who gather in places like this. Never before have I heard tables of drinkers and diners discussing the implications of the American 'mid-term' elections (happening in November) over their Guinness Zeros and their 3Bs. And why May this year is a crucial date in US politics, since that's when nominations for the mid terms go in. Surely, you'd say, there has to be something crucial happening this year over the pond, if the series of catastrophes that we're seeing unfold every minute/day/week are to stop at some point. They can't carry on, can they? Extraordinary is not the right word, by a mile. I write this as Minnesota comes to terms with another fatal shooting by 'lawmakers'.

But even so, we cannot let all this appalling activity get in the way of our daily minutiae and hopefully fun, or we'd all go mad. At my age, if it's not fun, why do it? So having kicked the new year off with a raucous round of cocktails, and then fed 150 people their pre-theatre suppers, and then convinced 45 people to help us choose our new organic wine list, it's probably time for some less boozy entertainment. Or not.

So we thought we'd televise, as usual, the **6 Nations Rugby**, that Guinness drinking festival that happens every February and March. Every match that we can, and every match that you're interested in, with our TV over the fireplace by the bar.

The whole thing kicks off on the weekend of **February 6/7/8** and runs through to the end of March. Come and enjoy it. Good beer, warm fire, lovely crowd, usually quite nice food from quite nice chefs.



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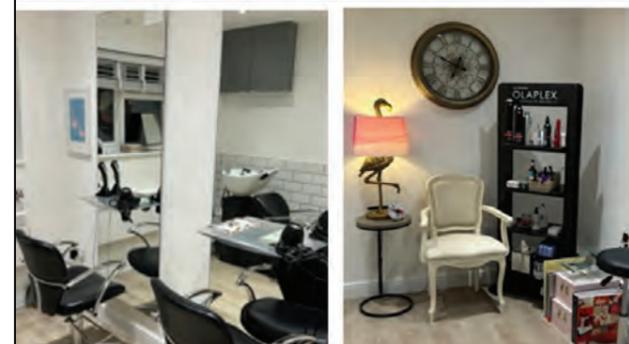
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grant@granfrazertc.co.uk

Health & Wellness

COMMUNITY CATALYSTS
07341 425 126
awingad@communitycatalysts.co.uk

RACHEL PAYNE HAIRDRESSER
07527 607 947

SHRIVENHAM FOOTBALL CLUB
shrivenhamfc.co.uk

WATCHFIELD OPTICIANS
01793 783 848
info@watchfieldopticians.com

Home Services & Trades

ENVIRO PEST CONTROL
07379 276 187
enquiries@enviropestcontroltd.co.uk

HERITAGE TREE CARE
01793 790 210
ian@heritage-treecare.co.uk

MOWERFIXER
07899 791 833
doug@mowerfixer.co.uk

WILSON CONSTRUCTION
07894 759 055 | 01793 376 830
lee@wilsonconstruction.org.uk

Hospitality & Accomodation

BRYN LLINOS
brynllinos@yahoo.com

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
07515 288 414
grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com

HELEN BROWING'S ROYAL OAK
01793 790 481
info@helenbrowningorganics.co.uk

THE OWL BARN
hello@theowlbarnwiltshire.co.uk

VILLAGE HALL: BISHOPSTONE
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miclawre@cisco.com

VILLAGE HALL: HINTON PARVA
07916 599 772
Email: ellakusta01@gmail.com

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07811 367 320
janepearsondesign@icloud.com

LULI CREATIVE DESIGN - GRAPHIC
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PARISH COUNCIL
07913 819 422
clerk@bishopstoneandhintonparva.org

PEARCE FUNERAL SERVICES
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info@pearcefuneralservices.co.uk

Retail & Shopping

BISHOPSTONE STORES
shop@helenbrowningorganics.co.uk

BLOOMFIELDS FINE FOODS
01793 783 999 | 766 399
bloomfieldsfinefood.co.uk

PUREHEAT FIREWOOD
01793 855 277 | 07885 542 718
pureheatfirewood.co.uk

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Contributions

If you'd like to write an article or submit any photography please email Andrea or Val for consideration in the next issue. We aim to distribute the newsletter on or around 15th of each month.

Please note that the DEADLINE for any submissions will be the last day of the previous month. We welcome submissions earlier, if possible. As we are volunteers and manage the village news alongside our other jobs, late submissions run the risk of not being included. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

If you would like an advert designing for placement in the village news, please contact andrea@luli.uk who offers a discounted rate for Village News adverts.

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The Village News is created and run by a small group of volunteers and is a non-profit organisation affiliated to Bishopstone Village Hall. Reg Charity no 271165.

Donations

If you would like to make a donation to help with the upkeep please contact Treasurer Andy P, or there are additional copies available and a donation box on the counter in Bishopstone Stores.



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BishopstoneEditor@gmail.com

February 2026

2026	Time	Event	Place	Contact
06.02.25 - End March		6 Nations Rugby: Televised in the pub	The Royal Oak	01793 790 481
Fri	13.02.26	5pm-8pm Food for Thought , Hinton Parva: Fish and Chip van (pg.19)	Charlbury Stables SN4 0DW	grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com
	02.03.26	Pub Quiz	The Royal Oak	01793 790 481
	06.03.26	3Bop: Monthly Jazz at the pub	The Royal Oak	01793 790 481
	11.03.26	7pm Gardening Club: Paul Green (pg. 5)	Bishopstone Village Hall	Marion Peck 01793 791 001
Fri	13.03.26	5pm-8pm Food for Thought , Hinton Parva: Fish and Chip van (pg.19)	Charlbury Stables SN4 0DW	grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com
Wed	08.04.26	7pm Gardening Club: Hannah Mycroft (pg. 5)	Bishopstone Village Hall	Marion Peck 01793 791 001
Fri	10.04.26	5pm-8pm Food for Thought , Hinton Parva: Fish and Chip van (pg.19)	Charlbury Stables SN4 0DW	grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com
Fri	08.05.26	5pm-8pm Food for Thought , Hinton Parva: Fish and Chip van (pg.19)	Charlbury Stables SN4 0DW	grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com
Fri	12.06.26	5pm-8pm Food for Thought , Hinton Parva: Fish and Chip van (pg.19)	Charlbury Stables SN4 0DW	grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com
Fri	10.07.26	5pm-8pm Food for Thought , Hinton Parva: Fish and Chip van (pg.19)	Charlbury Stables SN4 0DW	grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com
Sat	12.09.26	Village Fete: Save the Date!	Winding Wood Field Bishopstone	littlecot2010@hotmail.co.uk 07789 414147
Sun	27.09.26	Swindon Half Marathon		swindonhalf.co.uk
Every 3rd Sat from 18.01.25	9am - 12pm	Wanborough Farmers Market	Wanborough Village Hall, SN4 0AD	Lorna Naseem 07903 210 505
Every Tuesday	9.30am	Fitness Classes. All abilities	Bishy Village Hall	lorna.sams@outlook.com
Every Thursday	10.30 - noon	Coffee, Cake and Chat, Wanborough. £5.00, all welcome	The Brewers Arms SN4 OAE	If you need a lift, call Lorna: 07903 210 505
2nd Mon of month	7pm	The Burj Fundraising Supper: for The Prospect Hospice (charity number 280093)	The Burj, Foxhill	WrightK@warnefordschool.org.uk
2nd Thurs of month	7pm Start 7.30pm	WI: Bishopstone & Hinton Parva WI	Either Village Hall	Jan Chapple: janatwan@icloud.com



Photo: Ceredig Jones, The Ridgeway

Church Services - pg 10 Parish Council Meetings - pg 13

The views of individual writers expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, the parish council or the church. If you have any feedback or questions, please contact one of the editorial team listed on page 23. Apologies for any stray typos. We try hard to catch them all but occasionally some escape. You may also deliver items by hand to Bishopstone Stores and Lynne will kindly pass anything on to us. Please make sure that you include any names and contact details so that we may get in touch with you. None of these personal details will be published unless we are specifically asked to do so.

Tell us your thoughts!
**'LETTERS TO
THE EDITOR'**
Email:
BishopstoneEditor@gmail.com

Dates are correct to the best of our knowledge at time of going to print. Please see Facebook for any interim updates.

Stick me on your fridge