



VILLAGENEWS

APRIL 2026



Drive It Day, The Royal Oak

CLASSIC CARS ROLL INTO THE VILLAGE FOR DRIVE IT DAY



'Yesterday's Vehicles Supporting Today's Children'

This month, our village will host a wonderful slice of motoring history as part of the annual Drive It Day celebrations, with one of the featured stops at our very own Helen Browning's Royal Oak.

National Drive It Day was established in 2005 by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs. It commemorates the One Thousand Mile Trial of 1900, which proved that the then-new motor car was a practical and reliable form of transport. Today, the event celebrates Britain's rich motoring heritage while helping to ensure historic vehicles remain a visible and valued part of life on UK roads.

The day also supports the NSPCC's Childline service. As Sir Peter Wanless, CEO of the NSPCC, says: "Childline is a crucial service on which young people can rely—day or night—whatever problems or dangers they are facing."

Visitors to the Royal Oak can look forward to an impressive display of beautifully maintained vehicles, from elegant pre-war models to much-loved classics from the 1950s, 60s and beyond. The arrival of these historic cars—often in convoy—offers a rare chance to experience motoring as it once was.

It's a perfect opportunity to get up close, chat with owners, and enjoy the warm, sociable atmosphere of a much-loved local venue. Whether you're a lifelong enthusiast or simply curious, there will be something for everyone.

Do come along on **26th April** to soak up the atmosphere and celebrate this special occasion in the heart of our community.

Buy your fundraising plate here:
driveitday.co.uk/shop



History Live



The North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust, in partnership with The Merchant's House and Wiltshire Historic Buildings Trust, is proud to announce HISTORY LIVE, an exciting week-long event designed to celebrate history in all its forms. This inaugural festival promises to become a landmark occasion for Marlborough, offering a rich programme of experiences for history enthusiasts of all ages. From Monday April 20 through until Saturday, April 25 highlights of History Live include:

- Engaging lectures exploring a range of historical topics.
- A guided walking tour of Marlborough, uncovering the town's hidden stories.
- Visits to iconic local sites, including Wilton Windmill and Shaw House.
- A special film screening of A Kingdom in Chaos at The Parade Cinema.
- A twilight tour of The Merchant's House, offering a unique evening perspective.
- Live music performed by acclaimed musician and Bishop of Ramsbury, Andrew Rumsey.
- A virtual tour of The Merchant's House New York, connecting Marlborough to international heritage.
- A culminating audience with renowned British field archaeologist Phil Harding, providing rare insights into archaeological discoveries.



Booking:

themerchantshouse.co.uk/book-now

(or scan the QR code)



Wanborough Cubs Need YOU!

We're looking for local adults to join the team and help give young people aged 8-10.5 amazing opportunities

No experience needed

Just a little time can make a big difference

Contact - meL.woolley@scouts.org.uk for more info!

Bishopstone Stores

Now that the clocks have changed and its still daylight when 6pm comes around and I close the shop door, we can officially say that spring is here and summer isn't far away!

This month we have welcomed the lovely Chris from Braeside Bees based in Wanborough. He is now stocking our shelves with his fabulous local honey. Offering set and runny versions of the good stuff, alongside the fabulous infused options. Get all the goodness of ginger, turmeric or cinnamon combined with the benefits of honey. Perfect. We also stock his bee pollen. It's only a matter of time until these incredible grains become a superfood, their benefits seem endless. From improving your immune system, enhancing your energy levels, and having anti-inflammatory properties, to helping digestion and weight control, supporting your heart and skin and being full of anti-oxidants, we really do have to thank the bees for these! Why not try sprinkling some on your breakfast, stirring into yoghurt or adding it to a smoothie? Just a teaspoon a day could provide you with all the vitamins, minerals and amino acids you need. Also new on the shelves this month is our range of delicious cooking sauces. These will make dinner time super quick and easy and they are perfectly paired with our organic meats and Bishopstone grown veggies. Real Organic by Helen Brownings is available in the shop now and have been rigorously tested by the staff – why not give them a try?

Hope to see you soon
Lynne x

[@helenbrowningsbishopstonestores](https://www.facebook.com/helenbrowningsbishopstonestores) [@bishopstone_stores](https://www.instagram.com/bishopstone_stores)

Opening Hours

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



RECYCLING MATTERS

by Karen Walker

Did you take part in The Big Plastic Count in March? We did, and I found the results truly astounding. I'd like to think that we try and do what we can to recycle and eliminate plastic waste and we largely cook and bake from scratch, but I was still shocked by the numbers. If I'd taken a guess before the exercise started, I think I would have probably estimated about half of our final number. I think it's akin to the great weight-loss tip of writing down everything that passes your lips – it's often much more than you think. But knowledge is power and, just like recording your afternoon munchies might help you realise why your weight is creeping up, understanding your volume of plastic waste and where it's coming from might also spur you into action.

There were only two of us at home during the week of the count, but we still managed to use a staggering 89 pieces of plastic which, if typical, would equate to a ginormous 4,628 pieces every year. And if our household was representative, it would result in 130,046,800,000 pieces of plastic being used in the UK alone. I actually felt it was quite a good week as we only finished 3 items of cleaning and toiletry products that week – everything else was food-related, either for us or our 3 cats.

Although we recycle, what happens to that recycling might surprise you. Only 12% of it is reprocessed into new materials. Ironically, in the past two years, 21 plastic recycling and processing plants have closed in the UK, driven by high levels of cheaper waste exports and the low financial (but not environmental) cost of virgin plastic. An equal percentage is sent overseas, with the UK being one of the top three exporters of plastic waste. 10% of it is still sent to landfill with the remaining 66% of it being incinerated, releasing carbon, toxins and pollutants into the air and contributing to climate change.

Out of our 89 pieces of plastic, 28 were single-serving cat food pouches – so over 31%. This was the area that I thought I would

try and tackle first to get the maximum impact. Currently, as well as having some more nutritious and sustainable Lily's Kitchen and Royal Canin dry foods, we also give our cats Felix 'As Good As It Looks', as it appeals to my human sensibilities and they wolf it down! Although, to be fair, they wolf all of their food down! The logical solution would seem to be to switch from plastic pouches to an old-fashioned large 400g tin and although there don't seem to be as many of these around these days, I've done a bit of research and have ordered some Classic Cat Food (made by the same company that makes the Butcher's dog food) to give it a try.

The Classic Cat Food does seem to give a number of other benefits too – it is produced in the UK by a British company (Purina – the makers of Felix – have factories in Europe and Thailand as well as one in the UK), it is more nutritious and has a much higher meat content. By weight, it is almost half the price of the Felix product. I was also astounded to see when looking at the ingredients of the Felix product, that it contains 'various sugars!' Apparently this is used to improve the appearance and make it more palatable. I now feel I've been giving our beloved cats the feline equivalent of junk food for all these years and wonder whether it has contributed to their dental issues. Anyway, it will only be a 'win', if my cats will actually eat it. I will let you know....

Finally, I've discovered this month that you can separate and recycle Lindt Lindor wrappers! Of the ones I tried, the foil and the film wrapper separated easily and the foil then satisfies the scrunch test, meaning it can be recycled. As with any aluminium foil, small pieces should be amalgamated into the size of a tennis ball. Bizarrely, a Google search suggests that the ease of separation might vary by flavour, so I'll happily 'take one (but probably more!) for the team' and do my own extensive research!

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



Monthly Musings

I don't think we can approach late spring without mentioning the Chelsea flower show, running this year from 19th-23rd May. Here is a sneak preview of three wildlife friendly native plants that will be featured in this years show:



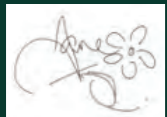
Taxus baccata-Native yew (The Boodles Garden). Rosa glauca our wild rose (In the hedgerow in the sky-Tech Mahindra) and Lamium album, the humble white dead nettle (A seed in time Garden)

The Potting Shed: Things to do in April-May

- Prune winter flowering shrubs such as Daphne to shape, if required.
- Prick out seedlings kept indoors and grow on in larger pots
- Harden off tender perennials that have been growing indoors or under glass, but keep an eye on the weather and bring them in if there's a risk of late frost!

May is a great month to plant seeds such as sunflower and Cosmos directly into your garden soil.

Happy Gardening!



07811 367320
janepearsondesign@icloud.com
The Lynchetts, Icknield Way, Bishopstone
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

ridgewaygardeners.co.uk | info@ridgewaygardeners.co.uk



Virginia, our secretary, opened the meeting in March by reminding us of some future events as well as our regular meetings.

Firstly: The **ANNUAL PLANT SALE** which is in May, encouraging members to bring in any unwanted plants, cuttings or seedlings for the sale.

Secondly: The planned trip to **HIDCOTE** in June. (See below for more details of both these events)

She then introduced Paul Green, who returned with another of his interesting and informative talks.

"The Best Thing Since Sliced Bread" - that was the title of Paul's talk on this occasion.

Paul is from **Greens Leaves Nursery** in Newent, Gloucestershire, which specialises in a wide selection of unusual plants from around the world. He is particularly interested in propagation and development of new and improved varieties and brought along a wonderful display of examples.



Improvements are very often subtle, not always obvious to you and me, there may be new colours and habit but also they may be hardier, more tolerant of our more extreme climate conditions, hot/cold, wet/dry etc. Resistance to pests and diseases can also be bred into the plants, an essential quality as we move away from pesticides.

Paul showed us many new varieties he had brought along: Mahonias, Salvias, Fatsia and Nepeta to name a few. These all had new qualities, some with different growth habits, smaller or bushier, interesting colours and names as well as well as improved resistance and hardiness.

He did however explain that gardening is not an exact science and consequently descriptions of a plant's hardiness and temperature tolerance is not 100% reliable. There are many other factors involved; wind can be a serious problem to some plants, as can sudden environmental changes in temperature and rainfall, all things which should be taken into account when deciding where to site each one.

Older varieties, Paul emphasised, still have their place in our gardens and give some beautiful displays of colour and form, though can be prone to suffer as we get more variations in weather.



Of course the large selection of plants Paul had brought along were for sale and it didn't take long before the assembled audience was choosing specimens to take home. Definitely fewer plants to load back into his van at the end of the evening!

Reminder: Hidcote Trip: Reserve your place before they get snapped up.

Thursday 18th June 09.30-15.00hrs

Trip Costs:-

- Garden Entry – National Trust (NT) members free entry
- Garden Entry – Non NT members £19 per head
- Coach (Bishopstone Village Hall return) £20 per head
- Places allocated on a first come first served basis

Send an email to info@ridgewaygardeners.co.uk to register your interest.

DON'T FORGET the ANNUAL PLANT SALE coming up in May, (see Diary Dates). All contributions are welcome so when you are out and about in your gardens as the weather improves and find any seedlings, or plants to be divided, pot them up, label them and bring them along. They may be just what another gardener wants to fill a space, start a new border or fill their greenhouse or veg plot.

All proceeds from the sale go towards the funding of speakers at the monthly meetings, these costs are rising all the time so this is a very important event for your club.

We look forward to seeing you all again at the next meeting in April (details below in 'Diary Dates') Everyone is welcome whether you are a first time gardener or an 'old hand' or simply looking for new ideas.

Latest News: Our Very Own Web Site

We are pleased to announce the launch of our website. <https://ridgewaygardeners.co.uk/>

Take a look! It has all the information about the club and upcoming events. No longer will you need to search for pieces of paper, you put somewhere safe, to remind you of the next meeting. It's all on the website.

Diary Dates

Saturday 9th May - ANNUAL PLANT SALE : 10.00 to 11.30 : Bishopstone Village Hall

Please bring along any contributions to the sale between 8.30 and 9.15am or contact us via email info@ridgewaygardeners.co.uk to arrange collection.

We will not be pricing individual items but there will be a "bucket" by the door for donations for any plants 'bought', and remember all proceeds go your club to cover costs of speakers and hall rental.

Wednesday 13th May : Jane Pearson : Bishopstone Village Hall : 7.00pm "A New bed from Scratch"

Jane, a qualified horticulturist and garden designer, will share her extensive experience in creating beautiful borders from scratch. This session promises practical, adaptable ideas you can confidently apply to your own space.

Wednesday 10th June: Ben Newman : Bishopstone Village Hall : 7.00pm "Creating and Caring for Garden Ponds, Design, Plants and Wildlife."

Our very own water garden specialist from The Water Garden in Hinton Parva will share his vast experience on everything to do with creating and nurturing a garden pond. He will be bringing along a selection of plants for sale on the night.

Thursday 18th June: Trip to HIDCOTE : see details above.



Ask Fanny. Loose lips, sharp advice.

Write to Fanny: BishopstoneEditor@gmail.com

Oils not well

Dear Fanny
How much should I spend on a lock or other security for my oil tank in the garden? I have heard there are thieves about, syphoning my valuable sludge, thanks to the remarkable activities of two of the most horrible men in the world.
Yours, Ena Sharples, Hinton Parva

*Dear Ena
Indeed, I have heard such reports already from people with exposed and accessible tanks and gushers, especially in Hinton Parva. It's a good idea to put a simple padlock on the tank cap—just a little deterrence goes a long way, we all know that. I think possibly one of the wider pictures here (apart from being glad not to be living in Lebanon, and happy not to be an Iranian under that disgusting regime) is that we have been shown again to be hopelessly dependent on oil because of our lazy and cheapskate energy habits; and environmentally, was it 10m tonnes of CO2 dumped into the atmosphere in week one of the war? Certainly more than we all saved by recycling our old boxes...
Yours in shared misery
Fanny*

Shenanigans again

Dear Mrs Hole
Just eavesdropping on one of the parish's older residents the other day, couldn't help but hear them talking about there being more inter-marriage affairs in the 'good old days'! I wonder, Fanny, if you could shed any light on this?
Alison Wilson, West End

*Dear Alison
Of course, delighted to! Albeit my knowledge of such activities is scant. She (it was a she?) is right. There were a lot more local affairs five or more decades ago simply because some villagers found it so hard to leave the village at all. Their jobs were here; the bus service was still terrible; not many people had cars or decent motorbikes, so some of us —ha ha—had to take our illicit pleasures a bit closer to home. There wasn't the prurient and all seeing social media nonsense spewing its fake news everywhere. Probably it took a few months before an affair in Bishopstone became common knowledge in Hinton Parva. And even then, no-one was interested!
Yours helpfully
Fanny*

Dear Fanny
Were you aware of the latest Thames Water cock up? Just the usual incompetence? Residents in 7 houses in Church Lane (Bishopstone) were surprised to find the Thames contractors and diggers hermetically sealing them in one morning this month, with no warning. When challenged, the residents were told that they could 'escape' by driving through the churchyard.
Are there no depths to which Thames Water cannot sink?
Mr and Mrs N, West End

*Dear Ns
I am not surprised. I suspect that Thames Water (one of those remarkable institutions that actually will never sink no matter how appallingly they behave) probably, like van and lorry drivers all over the world, simply consulted their Google Map and saw that there was some sort of route via the churchyard, conveniently not noticing the stairs and gates (and gravestones). My wider point here is it seems the bigger the enterprise, and this applies across*

*almost all businesses and organisations, the more cock ups and fewer efficiencies there are. Decisions appear to be made in some sort of void. Ten out of ten for modern management speak and jargon, but nil out of ten for what happens on the ground (or in the sewers). My view—get back to local water boards and local admin, although most of you won't have a clue what I'm talking about.
Fanny Hole*

Dear Mrs Hole
Now that we have an additional three members of the LBGHTQ community living in Bishopstone, would you be interested in helping me organise a parish-only LBGHTQ march between the villages, in support of anything controversial that springs to mind?
I think there are now sufficient numbers to make a march quorate, and lots of non-LBG etc. people might also take part.
Yours non discriminatingly
Mr Marks, High St, Bish

*Dear Mr Marks
No thanks. I'm bored of all this innuendo. Please find me a story about trees, hedges and fences instead. Or possibly speeding drivers, and how to stop them. Or nice stories about the lovely people that live here, and have lived here, and how we don't take enough time to celebrate them.
Your lovely
Fanny*

MEN'S WALK TO SUPPORT

Prospect Hospice



An 8-mile walk bringing men together to support local hospice care, finishing at the County Ground to watch Swindon Town live.

Saturday 18 April 2026

WALK. TALK. SUPPORT

Proudly supported by  DEACONS

Join us:
prospect-hospice.net/mens-walk

SCAN ME 

APRIL HARD SUDOKU

LAST MONTH'S WINNER IS **Yuet Dickinson**
Grab your voucher from Lynne at the shop!

This month's was pulled from the builders hat by David who is building the construction opposite the shop! Well done **Yuet Dickinson** for winning this month with your Sudoku entry!

Other this month entries were:
Codeword: The Phillpotts, Debbie Clark, Julie B, Paula Bartlett, Yuet Dickinson, Peter Walker, Keith Franklin

Sudoku: Peter Walker, The Phillpotts, Geraldine Pass, Debbie Clark Keith Franklin, Nick Steele, Julie B, Suzy

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

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

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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

Courtesy of puzzles.ca

APRIL 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

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| | 12 | | 8 | | 1 | | 1 | | 16 | | 11 | | 6 | |
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| | 2 | | 24 | | 19 | | 2 | | 20 | | | | 9 | |
| 5 | 2 | 16 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 26 | 9 | 18 | 15 | 12 | 8 |
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| 7 | 12 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 23 | 12 | 16 | 6 | 26 | | 9 | 17 | 9 | 12 |
| | 6 | | 6 | | 2 | | 6 | | 11 | | 26 | | 4 | |
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ABCDEFGHIJKLM
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Winning Sudoku from last month

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

DICKIE'S diary

Richard Green



Writing March 19th at last some lovely days after a long, wet winter. The countryside is coming alive. This morning was my first hearing of the early migrant, the chiff-chaff. They have now joined our residents' dawn chorus with the equally repetitive great tit, alongside the blue tits and fluted black birds with rooks and crows all busy at nestbuilding. Listen for the yaffle of the green woodpecker and the drumming as they and the greater spotted prepare their nesting sites.

On the farms David Williams at Lower Idstone Farm is busy lambing. The spring calving herds at Bishopstone and Starveall are back in production again, going out to grass whilst those still waiting to calve have up to now remained inside. On our farm the drier land at last can now be prepared for a spring malting barley crop. One field has been ploughed and pressed before the drill and another large block on the high downs will be just disced to incorporate the dying greening crop that we are encouraged to plant over winter. Our cattle are still inside being fattened. Disappointingly TB testing has identified our first reactor for four years. Now slaughtered, we learn that there were no TB legions in the lungs. Frustrating no further epidemiology is undertaken to clearly identify the veracity of the TB cull. Meanwhile we now will have to bear the more frequent testing to get clear again which is a serious hassle gathering the cattle twice in a week for the skin test at grass over the summer.

This spring I have been given two packets of seeds for the garden, one after attending the memorial in Hertfordshire to the late June Wilmers a remarkable lady, late of Kingston Wilmers. She supported her son-in-law's seed flower business. The second of wild flowers has come my way from Toyota after my silver Mitsubishi died, replaced by a hybrid Rav 4. Our gardens and road sides are and have been beautifully enhanced by snow drop, daffodil, narcissus, primrose, hellebore, hyacinth and anemone. What is so rewarding is that these perennials are such good value, appearing year after year and some like snow drop and primrose can even proliferate. Look out for the cowslips along the A 419 to Cirencester and beyond. In the woods look out for the blue bells, dogs mercury, woodland anemone, violet and the early purple orchids on heavier sites.

Butterflies are only beginning. I have seen a peacock and brimstone but no orange tips as yet.

Photo of the month

SEND US YOUR SNAPS
Email: BishopstoneEditor@gmail.com



Thank you for this month's lovely winning photo, 'Sunrise over the Downs' from **Ceredig Jones** (above). Our runners-up this month are, **Francesca Walker** (back cover) and **Justin Moss** with his triptych of intentional disconnection (below). Some great pictures again this month — thank you all, and please keep them coming!

Inside the Peach Pip

by Anna Bareham

The Vicar of Nibbleswicke, by Roald Dahl

'I am the new rotsap, the new raciv of Nibbleswicke! Dog help me!'

One of Dahl's lesser known children's stories, *The Vicar of Nibbleswicke* was written in association with the Dyslexia Institute and published posthumously in 1991, with the rights auctioned off for the benefit of the charity. I discovered it when writing my dissertation, and have since read and re-read it many times, never failing to laugh.

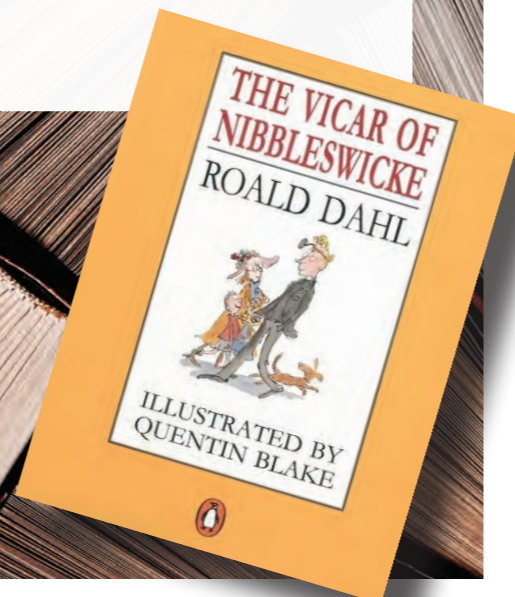
It follows the Reverend Lee, a dyslexia sufferer since childhood, who upon taking up his first role in a parish develops an unusual (fictional) form of the disability: Back-to-Front Dyslexia. This involves certain words coming out backwards when he says them, involuntarily and without his notice. As a result, he incites 'the blessing of Dog Almighty', informs the knitters of the parish that they 'stink',

advises churchgoers not to 'krap' at the side of the road, and instructs his congregation to 'pis', not 'plug', when drinking from the communion cup.

With his doctor's advice, the Reverend Lee devises a headpiece with a mirror in front of his eyes, so that he can deliver his sermons whilst walking backwards - when he walks backwards, his words come out forwards. Genius!

This book is so full of hilarity and only takes a few minutes to read. Get it for your bookshelf and read it when you need cheering up.

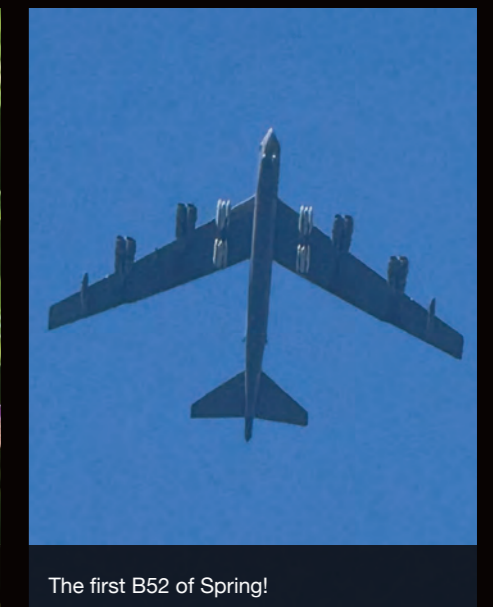
Flinging love,
Anna



Peacock Butterfly, fresh out of hibernation



The first wild violets of Spring!



The first B52 of Spring!

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.

CHURCH NEWS



A Letter From The Vicar

I find April a profoundly hopeful time of year. Spring is at full throttle in the natural world all around us and the great shout of Easter praise looms close now. We will gaze again, uncomprehendingly at first, like the first disciples, into the empty tomb and contemplate again, as for the first time, the wounded hands and pierced side of the Risen Jesus. As understanding gradually dawns in our hearts and minds, so astonished faith and great joy, replacing our deep despair bursts out, bringing the light of hope into our whole being, even in the midst of a dark and troubled world.

There is a phrase which has struck me this Lent from the Anglican Office of morning prayer: **“In the darkness of our sin your light breaks forth like the dawn.”** This is, for me, both realistic and hopeful. Darkness is a reality in our world; not only with open warfare between powerful nations with, at the time of writing, no certain good end point in sight, but also our unrelenting war on the natural world, which simply goes grinding on, day by day, seemingly unobserved, but with many frightening end points clearly in sight. But do we care, or do we care enough? The trouble with the deceit and corruption of evil is, as one former soviet dissident famously put it: “If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?” Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956. So where is true hope to be found when I myself am part of the problem of fallen humanity?

The light that breaks forth in our darkness is of course the truth found in Jesus Christ: His death on the cross which deals with evil and sin once for all and his glorious resurrection from the dead, the herald and foretaste of the coming new heaven and new earth - God’s promised restoration of all things in the fullness of time.

I love Tolkien’s masterful epic tale The Lord of the Rings which puts into a narrative story form some of these great underlying truths of the Christian faith. My favourite quote from all three films is brilliantly delivered by Ian McKellan as Gandalf. The peoples of middle earth are hemmed in and besieged by the great Orc army of Saron in Helms Deep. The future looks hopeless and destruction imminent. Gandalf tells the fellowship that he is going away to get help and departs - worryingly for them - now they are all alone. But his last words before he disappears are both strange but offer a slither of hope **“Look to the east on the third.”** And so it was that he appears, on the third day, and so deliverance comes with help from beyond.

Neither are we alone because: **“In the darkness of our sin your light, O God, in the person of your Son our Saviour, breaks forth like the dawn.”**

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

Our churches are: All Saints: Liddington SN4 0HB,
St. Mary’s: Bishopstone SN6 8PY,
St. Andrews: Wanborough SN4 0BZ,
and St. Swithun’s: Hinton Parva SN4 0DW.



Photo: Kate Wright, St Swithun's, Hinton Parva

Church Services. Full details on www.achurchnearyou.com

The Parish of the Wellspring Villages

The main morning Church Services always start at 10.30am.

| Day | 2026 | Time | Venue |
|-----|-------|---------|------------------------------|
| Sun | 19.04 | 10.30am | HC, St Andrews |
| Sun | 26.04 | 8.30am | BCP (1662) HC, All Saints' |
| Sun | 26.04 | 10.30am | Morning Worship St Swithun's |
| Sun | 03.05 | 10.30am | HC, All Saints' |
| Sun | 10.05 | 10.30am | HC, St Mary's |
| Sun | 17.05 | 10.30am | HC, St Andrew's |

Prayer

O God,

You created me to enjoy a relationship with you. At the beginning of Lent, I admit that I'm sinful, and often fall away.

You're the God of holiness, love, and justice. In your mercy, you draw near to me. Thank you that you planned a way that I might return to you through Jesus.

Draw me into a deeper understanding of your plan for salvation this Lenten Season, so that I would grow my trust in you. Amen.

St Mary's Church Cleaning Rota 2026

| | |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 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

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

April 2026

WE STILL NEED TWO MORE COUNCILLORS

At the close of nominations on 9th April, only seven nominations had been received for Bishopstone Parish Councillors.

As there are nine vacancies, the nominees are elected unopposed and there will be no need for a vote.

On the plus side, this saves the Parish over £1000 in election costs.

On the downside, two more councillors are required to complete Bishopstone Parish Council's legal complement of nine. The new Council will be looking for candidates to co-opt as soon as possible.

COULD YOU BE A PARISH COUNCILLOR? Two more councillors are required for Bishopstone Parish Council.

Candidates from Hinton Parva would be particularly welcomed, as the village is now somewhat under-represented, and younger members of our community are also urged to consider stepping up.

The Parish Council meets once a month on a Monday evening, when it reviews and comments on planning applications and other matters of community interest or concern in Bishopstone, Hinton Parva and Russley Park.

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES



Clockwise from top left: Ian Thomas, Gill May, Steve Bell, Karen Walker, Dinesh Thanigasalam, Dai Wilson and Karen MacGregor

We liaise with our Borough Councillor and Swindon Borough Council, dealing with issues such as potholes, footpaths, dangerous trees, fly-tipping, traffic, drainage and flooding.

Councillors in this Parish have done much to preserve the beauty of our villages and maintain their Conservation

status, and to protect our wonderful natural environment.

Could you join them and help keep the Parish safe for future generations to enjoy?

For further information speak to any Parish Councillor or contact clerk@bishopstoneandhintonparva.org

Farewell and thank you to those leaving

We are sorry to say goodbye and thank you to two long-serving councillors who have stood down at this election.

Cllr Julian Cooke served as a Parish Councillor for 18 years and his wealth of local knowledge and hands-on approach to problem solving have been greatly appreciated. Cllr Val Brodin has served

for 12 years, seven as Chair, a role that made full use of her encyclopaedic memory and attention to detail.

Finally, we wish a joyful retirement and happy travels to our Parish Clerk Jaine Blackman, who joined us during the pandemic and stepped quickly and efficiently into the role, managing our

meetings, communications and finances and responding to residents' problems with proficient cheerfulness for six years. A new Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer has been appointed and will be in post from the end of April – we are delighted to welcome Emma Hill to this position and to the Parish.

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 (until 11th May)

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/

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.

11th May **Bishopstone** to include parish meeting which starts at 7pm and to agree further meeting dates for the rest of the year.

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)

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/PAOTH/26/0246 Prior Approval Notification for the Change of use from agriculture to flexible commercial use (fitness studio falling in Use Class E at Ridgeway Barn, The Ridgeway, Bishopstone.

S/HOU/26/0311 Erection of a post and rail fence (3ft high) and a new box hedge at West End Cottages, Icknield Way, Bishopstone.

S/HOU/26/0305 New greenhouse, Hawthorns, Cues Lane, Bishopstone.

S/HOU/26/0227 Removal of single storey extension to front elevation.

Erection of single storey and two storey side and rear extensions to dwelling. Formation of single storey glazed link to existing detached store to rear of dwelling. Erection of estate fencing to front boundary within site, gates and piers. Replacement terrace to side of dwelling.

Conversion of outbuilding to ancillary annexe accommodation with associated works at Prebendal Farmhouse, Icknield Way, Bishopstone.

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.

REFUSED

S/26/0121 Change of use of agricultural building to form a single dwelling (Class C3) at Barn Adjoining Church Farm, Hinton Parva.

APPEAL

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

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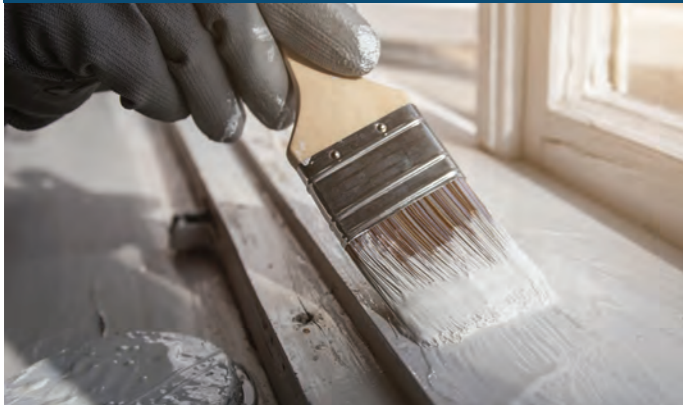
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VILLAGE HALL news



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Come and join us on Saturday morning, the **25th of April** for a wash and brush up of the Village Hall.

All welcome to lend a hand **09:00-12noon**.

Equipment and refreshments provided.

Village Hall Chair: Richard Walker
01793 791 913 | richard@eddingtons.co.uk

HINTON PARVA

If you have any ideas for future events or would like to be involved in any capacity to help our beautiful village hall thrive, please get in touch at our email address

hpvillagehall@gmail.com.

Karen Walker on behalf of Hinton Parva Village Hall Committee

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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.



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

Doreen Cooper

Doreen was born near Faringdon at Coleshill. After several local moves she ended up living in the Wyncies in Bishopstone with her dear husband of over fifty years Stan.

She worked at Listers in Wroughton in the administration offices and then in the accounts department at Bunces Engineering in Ashbury.

Doreen was a good Bishopstonian doer. Always ready to help with fetes, festivals, gardening society events, flowers in the church, dog walking and chicken husbandry. Above all Doreen was so kind and supportive of people and their families at difficult times.

She was a happy and positive person and hated any fanfares for her thoughtfulness and consideration, now she's not here to stop us I think all who knew her will agree she was one of life's great gals and will always be remembered with much affection.

Doreen died on 15th February this year aged 84.



JOEY JODPHUR (JJ)

FROM DEEP IN THE VALLEY OF THE RACEHORSE

The Prestbury Cup finished Ireland 15, GB 13 (or Ire 15, GB 9, Valley of the Racehorse 4 in Jodphur's competition). It was a great week all round with competitive racing, healthy crowds and a good atmosphere. The racecourse executive had made many small tweaks to improve the racegoer experience, not least reducing the price of a pint of Guinness to £7.50 - for a major sporting event this is very reasonable indeed. At Wimbledon a pint of premium French lager will set you back £8.85! The car parks were much improved with extra hardstanding and trackway and London 2012-style gamesmakers were on hand at the turnstiles to welcome you and wish you luck for the day. Clerk of the Course Jon Pullin faced a difficult job with regards to watering facing criticism from Irish training ranks that the ground was too quick. He was in a hopeless position given the mixed forecast but perhaps erring on the side of caution and applying a bit more water would have been the least contentious outcome.

There were four equine fatalities at the meeting, mercifully all of which unrelated to the mystery sink hole which appeared at January's trial meeting. All four deaths were unrelated and will be thoroughly investigated by the British Horseracing Authority. The collapsed drain from January has since been investigated and will now require a major refurbishment plan which has curtailed Cheltenham's final three fixtures, with the grounds team understandably needing to carry out the work in optimal spring growing conditions so the track can be ready for next season.

Amongst the equine winners, Old Park Star won the opening Supreme Novices hurdle for Nicky Henderson, despite unsuitably good ground and a future likely to be over larger fences. He was a very striking individual in the paddock and his best years lie ahead of him for sure. This capped an incredible week for the Seven Barrows handler with three wins in total. Lossiemouth finally landed the Champion hurdle, marking an astonishing four successive wins at the Festival (Triumph hurdle, plus two Mares equivalents beforehand). Johnny's Jury came from last to first to win the Albert Bartlett for Lambourn trainer Jamie Snowden under a patient ride from Gavin Sheehan. It had been a frustrating week until then for the Folly House trainer, but he finally got in on the act midway through the final day (until then, he'd been letting Nicky do all the heavy lifting for the Valley!). The star performance of the week however, came in the shape of Gaelic Warrior who



was as cosy a winner of the Gold Cup as you could wish to see under Paul Townend for the indefatigable Willie Mullins who ended the week with no less than 8 winners.

Constitution Hill continued on his new flat racing career with another victory on the all-weather in a novice at Kempton Park and has been given a handicap rating of 101 by the BHA. Whilst not as impressive as he was at Southwell in February, the race wasn't run to suit, he stretched out nicely and beat a potentially nice horse of Andrew Balding's in second. It's nice to see him enjoying himself and he provides a welcome boost in crowd support wherever he goes. Racing's best marketing tool is staring us in the face and has four legs! That's why jump racing is so popular because the horses come back year on year and become household names. Newbury's Group 3 John Porter Stakes on April 18th will be his next destination where we will really see if he can cut it at the top level on the flat.

The Grand National falls in between editions but Jodphur's predictions for the Aintree spectacular are:

1. Johnnywho
2. I Am Maximus
3. Grangeclare West
4. Lecky Watson



The Royal Oak Diary



Your appetite for outstanding current affairs shows no signs of abating—50 people crammed in for our Iran/US/Israel debate just after Easter, and we'd have had more if space allowed. Superb speakers from ex Defence Academy bigwigs, lamenting, obviously, the lack of influence that this country is able to display these days on the world stage. Partly due to defence spending, and partly due to spending it on the wrong stuff. We're 25 years out of date, the way we operate. Clearly some people think any defence spending is a waste of money, and decent arguments went both ways about whether the population currently is actually prepared to fight a war. And that depends on what sort of war, of course. Probably won't involve tanks. Such a shame the audience was so 'mature'—we're the ones that might not be here when the s..t hits the fan. It's those of you a bit younger who should be taking this very seriously.

Well, that's enough gloomy stuff, although tbh I'm not that bothered about being quite old. It's got to that time of my life, and the life of lots of us, when we need to make the most of our continued good health and party like there's no tomorrow. While Fanny elsewhere appears to go on and on (and on) about sex and drugs, HB's Royal Oak is generally more interested in stimulation through food, booze and interesting chatter; and stimulating other senses, eg visual and aural, through **classic cars and bikes (Drive it Day April 26)**; through our **monthly quiz nights (next one, the first Monday of May, the 4th), music—Three Bop, first Friday of May, the 1st**—and of course **Pig Racing on May 31**, all day extravaganza of food, drink, pigs, music and road closure. If you don't want to be around, and avoiding the irritation we can occasionally provide, try to leave Cues Lane before 11am. And come back after 4.30.

We will this year on several occasions be showcasing more local bands at these events—**Richard Walker's EZE TIGER are threatening to be here for pig racing, as are Gary Pass's Halcyon Men**. Remarkably talented older people. And we will try to give them more exposure as the year moves on, usually on Saturday afternoons in the garden.

We hope to see any or all of you, whenever it suits. We're getting quite good at it, some people tell us. It's only taken 19.5 years.

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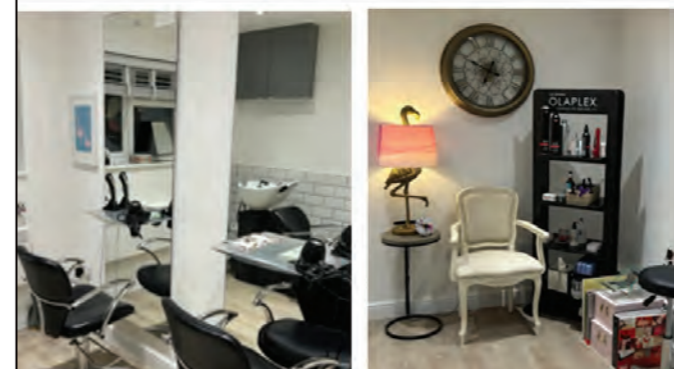
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01793 618 080
sales@chappells.uk.com

GRANT FRAZER TOWN & COUNTRY
01793 228 440 | 07737 745 231
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 & Accommodation

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
07769 943 956
miclawre@cisco.com

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

Professional Services

JANE PEARSON DESIGN - GARDEN
07811 367 320
janepearsondesign@icloud.com

LULI CREATIVE DESIGN - GRAPHIC
07795 086 197
info@luli.uk

PARISH COUNCIL
07913 819 422
clerk@bishopstoneandhintonparva.org

PEARCE FUNERAL SERVICES
01793 832 072 | 422 422
info@pearcefuneralservices.co.uk

Retail & Shopping

BISHOPSTONE STORES
shop@helenbrowningorganic.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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We are non-profit!

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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Send us your DIARY DATES
Email: BishopstoneEditor@gmail.com

April 2026

| 2026 | Time | Event | Place | Contact |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|--|
| Sat/Sun | 25.04 - 26.04.26 | 10.30am, 1pm or 3pm | Mayhem of Mad4Animals | Lydiard Park lydiardpark.org.uk/event/mayhem-of-mad4animals |
| Sun | 26.04.26 | | Drive It Day | The Royal Oak 01793 790 481 |
| Sat | 02.05.26 | 11am | Lydiard Park Race for Life-Cancer Research | Lydiard Park raceforlife.cancerresearchuk.org/find-an-event/lydiard-park-5k-2026-05-02-1100 |
| Thurs | 07.05.26 | 7am-10pm | Voting Day: Election of Councillors | Bishopstone Village Hall elecereg@swindon.gov.uk 01793 445500 |
| Fri | 08.05.26 | 5pm-8pm | Food for Thought , Hinton Parva: Fish and Chip van (pg.19) | Charlbury Stables SN4 0DW grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com |
| Sat | 09.05.26 | 10am - 11.30am | Gardening Club: Annual Plant Sale (pg. 5) | Bishopstone Village Hall Marion Peck 01793 791 001 |
| Wed | 13.05.26 | 7pm | Gardening Club: Jane Pearson (pg. 5) | Bishopstone Village Hall Marion Peck 01793 791 001 |
| Sun | 31.05.26 | | International Pig Racing | The Royal Oak 01793 790 481 |
| Wed | 10.06.26 | | Gardening Club: Ben Newman (pg. 5) | Bishopstone Village Hall Marion Peck 01793 791 001 |
| 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 |
| 1st Monday of each month | | | Pub Quiz | The Royal Oak Book a table: 01793 790 481 |
| 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 0AE 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: Francesca Walker

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