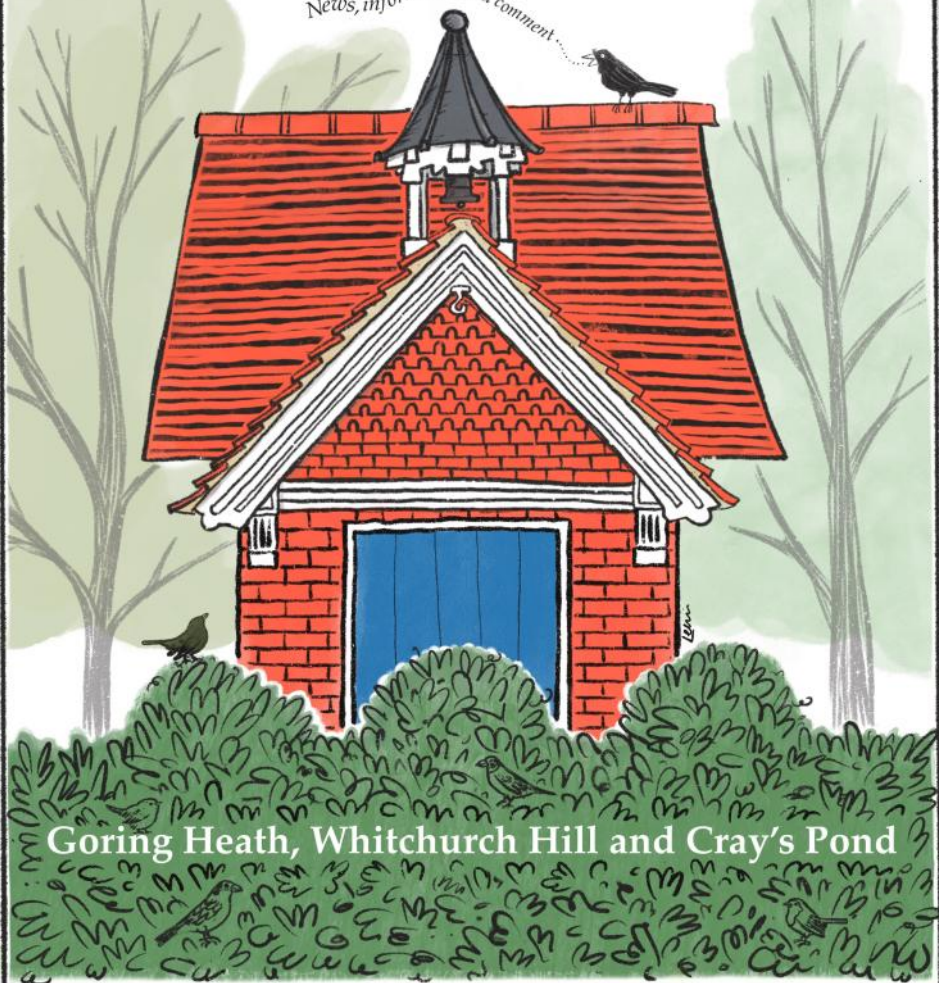


April 2026

Issue 208

GORING HEATH NEWSLETTER

News, information and comment...



Goring Heath, Whitchurch Hill and Cray's Pond

goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

goringheathnewsletter@gmail.com

Goring Heath Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

Goring Heath Parish Hall

B471 Whitchurch Hill

RG8 7NY

Tuesday April 14th 2026

8.00pm - 9.30pm

All welcome

Refreshments will be available.

For further information or to add to the agenda please contact the clerk at

clerk@goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Chair's Address



As we move into the spring months, it's wonderful to reflect on the many ways our community continues to come together.

Our fantastic Quiz Night at the Parish Hall back in February was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

Events like these are a reminder of how lucky we are to have such an engaged and supportive community. A particular thank you must go to Mike Holland, who once again did a brilliant job as quizmaster and kept everyone entertained throughout the evening.

More recently, on 28 March, we held our community litter pick. It was heartening to see residents of all ages giving up their time to help keep Goring Heath looking its best. Thank you to everyone who came along and played a part in looking after our parish environment.

Planning for the annual Whitchurch Hill Fete is also well underway. The organisers are working hard behind the scenes and there are some exciting new interactive additions being planned this year, which we hope will make the day even more enjoyable for all ages. It promises to be another wonderful community occasion and we look forward to sharing more details soon.

Looking ahead, the Annual Parish Meeting will take place on 14 April. This is always an important opportunity for residents to hear about the work of the Parish Council, share views, and raise any matters of interest in the parish. I very much hope to see many of you there.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere and heartfelt thanks to Emma Burdon for her time as Parish Clerk. Emma has given a tremendous amount of dedication, professionalism and care to the role, providing invaluable support to the Parish Council and helping ensure that everything behind the scenes runs smoothly. Parish Clerks are often the unsung heroes of local government, and Emma has gone above and beyond in serving both the Council and the wider community. Her guidance, patience and hard work have been greatly appreciated by councillors and residents alike, and we are extremely grateful for all that she has done for Goring Heath during her time with us. Thank you, as always, to everyone who contributes to making Goring Heath such a vibrant and welcoming place to live.

Warm regards,

Mark Skidmore,

Chair of the Parish Council

Quiz Night 2026!

The Parish Hall was packed on the evening of Saturday 28th February for the annual quiz night, with 10 teams vying for the Theresa Elsome Cup. Competition ranged over 8 rounds including Entertainment, Sport, Famous Faces and the Dolly Holland memorial round (on dogs).



The winning team - Where's Skidmore? -
with Quiz Master Mike Holland



The Dolly Holland Memorial

Teams included recent winners the Daffodils and the Coombe Raiders. However, it was 'Where's Skidmore?', named following the late arrival of the new Chair of the Parish Council, Mark Skidmore, who came through and claimed the trophy. In total £600 was raised for the Parish Charity.

Mike Holland

Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society

We're looking at a noble British institution at our next meeting. Alan Long, our speaker, will explore the naming of Oxfordshire pubs at 2.30pm on Thursday 16th April. The meeting takes place at Whitchurch Village Hall, and all are welcome, with non-members paying £3 to include tea and biscuits – no beer unfortunately! Where did all those bears, lions, greyhounds and suns come from?

Information about our meetings can be seen on the "What's On" section of the Whitchurch Website <https://whitchurchonthames.com>, or from

Vicky Jordan

vickyjordan5@hotmail.com 0118 984 3260



WHITCHURCH HILL
VILLAGE FETE

 **SATURDAY 23rd MAY**
FROM 2PM

GRAND PRIZE DRAW

CIRCUS PERFORMERS

 **SIDE SHOWS**

BBQ

PUB

TEAS

CHILDREN'S RIDES

GIFT STALLS

BRASS BAND



DOG SHOW

EGG THROWING COMPETITION

Dates for your Diary : *April and May*

Event	Day	Date
<i>Easter Weekend</i>	<i>Friday to Monday</i>	<i>3rd April 6th April</i>
Friends of St Mary's and St John's Art Café The Old Stables, Whitchurch on Thames (10:30am - 12:30pm)	Saturday	4th April
One-to-One Digital Advice session Woodcote Community Centre (2pm - 4pm)	Saturday	4th April
Woodcote Volunteers Coffee Shop Woodcote Community Centre (10am - 12:30pm)	Saturday	11th April
Annual Parish Meeting Goring Heath Parish Hall (8pm)	Tuesday	14th April
One-to-One Digital Advice session Woodcote Community Centre (10am - 12 noon)	Thursday	16th April
Pangbourne Bowls Club Open Day	Saturday	18th April
French Film Night Pangbourne Village Hall (6:45pm for 7:30pm)	Sunday	26th April
Pangbourne Bowls Club Open Day	Saturday	2nd May
One-to-One Digital Advice session Woodcote Community Centre (2pm - 4pm)	Saturday	2nd May
<i>May Day Bank Holiday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>4th May</i>
Woodcote Volunteers AGM Woodcote Village Hall (7pm)	Wed	6th May
Whitchurch & Goring Heath Twinning Association visit to La Bouille	Friday - Monday	14th - 18th May
One-to-One Digital Advice session Woodcote Community Centre (10am - 12 noon)	Thursday	21st May
Whitchurch Hill Village Fete The Recreation Ground (from 2pm)	Saturday	23rd May
<i>Spring Bank Holiday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>26th May</i>



Tots on the Thames



**The Old Rectory Stables
Whitchurch on Thames (RG8 7DF)
WEDNESDAYS 10.00 am – 11.30 am**

A stay-and-play Baby and Toddler group

Let them: play, create, sing, snack and make friends!

While you enjoy a hot cuppa and a biscuit!

£3 per session

For more information email Debbie on debs.leach@btinternet.com

The Parish of St Mary the Virgin Whitchurch-on-Thames with St John the Baptist
Whitchurch Hill

Vicar: Rev'd James Leach.

Email: jamesleach.whitchurch@gmail.com Tel: 0118 976 5905

District Councillor's Commentary



Well, the world is becoming a more confused and difficult place, and we are all going to be affected, even if it's only in our pockets at the moment as the cost of petrol and other energy goes up. I think what is now most noticeable is the blatant lies spoken by some leaders in other countries. It is shocking that what we think of as respectable democracies have adopted the same low standards of what Ronald Reagan called the evil empires.

Whatever one may think of British politics, we don't seem to have sunk as low in mendacity as some places.

Recent events also rather dim the attractions of life in the Gulf States, and perhaps we will see fewer stories about people who have gone to Dubai and elsewhere to escape British taxes, some of whom have been airlifted back by the British taxpayer-funded British government.

All that is a long way from Goring Heath, where the community in Cray's Pond came together to work on the pond a few weeks ago, and lots of us turned out again with the litter pick at the end of March. On a more relaxing note, the Parish Hall quiz and fish and chip supper was great fun, and as popular as ever, with keen players turned away because it was a sell out. Looking forward, the Whitchurch Hill Fete will again be a great community event, with the different people coming together to run key features, whether it's the WI with their tea tent, the Parish Council running the barbecue or the Cray's Pond Community Group serving beer at the bar.

All of these events are chance for anyone to get involved, make friends and contribute to society. If events in the Middle East take a turn for the worse, we might need all the strength we can muster to keep society together.

On a less parochial note, the District Council set its budget a few weeks ago, and once again, through effective management and the benefit of higher interest income from its cash balances, it was in the enviable position of being a financially secure local authority. It has to be admitted the District Council does not face the bottomless spending pits that include Adult and Children's Social Services, Special Education Needs or even the ever present potholes. When, in due course, the District Council is

swallowed up into a Unitary Authority of some shape or size, all the careful financial husbandry will be subsumed.

Peter Dragonetti

SODC District Councillor for Kidmore End, Whitchurch, Goring Heath and Mapledurham Heath

Extra garden waste collections

If you are a garden waste permit holder, you will be able to have extra garden waste collected for free, on your normal collection day only:

- between 20 April and 1 May 2026
- between 2 and 13 November 2026



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Planning Decisions

The following planning applications, submitted up to 10th March 2026, have been considered. Where a decision is not given, it means the Parish Council has not yet received written confirmation from SODC.



Premises and application details	Parish Council	Notes
<u>P26/S0593/LDP</u> The Pothole Eastfield Lane Goring Heath RG8 7ST Erection of a wooden gazebo	No Strong Views	
<u>P26/S0525/HH</u> Grey Court Cottage Whitchurch Hill RG8 7NX New porch, garage extension & lantern to kitchen roof.	No Strong Views	
<u>P26/S0413/HH</u> Rosemary House Hill Bottom Whitchurch Hill RG8 7PU Ancillary accommodation in roof of garage to provide bedroom with en-suite shower.	No Strong Views	
<u>P26/S0273/LB</u> Pilgrim Cottage Path Hill Goring Heath RG8 7RE Application to replace all of the 1961 and 1988 window and door joinery.	No Strong Views	
<u>P26/S0131/LB</u> Copyhold Farm Lady Grove Goring Heath RG8 7RT Replace failed clay tiles on The Old Stables with new clay tiles of a similar design and appearance	No Strong Views	
<u>P26/S0003/HH</u> 1 Beechwood Close Goring Heath RG8 7SG Proposed front porch and single storey side extension with partial garage conversion, Addition of hanging tiles to front gable.	No Strong Views	Granted
<u>P25/S3790/LB</u> Lavender Cottage Coldharbour Goring Heath RG8 7SY Proposed installation of oil boiler and oil storage tank adjacent to east end of property.	No Strong Views	Granted

Premises and application details	Parish Council	Notes
<p><u>P25/S3762/FUL</u> Land south of Goring Heath Road Whitchurch Hill RG8 7PN Demolition of existing stables and redevelopment of small part of the paddocks to construct a detached self-build bungalow with relocated access and associated landscaping.</p>	<p>Objection</p>	
<p><u>P25/S2734/LDE</u> The Pothole Eastfield Lane Goring Heath RG8 7ST Certificate of lawfulness for the operational development of Building B (completed 2016) and also of a fence (completed 2017).</p>	<p>No Strong Views</p>	
<p><u>P25/S2648/FUL</u> Woodcote Sawmill Pot Kiln Lane Goring Heath RG8 7SS Single storey barn / outbuilding extension.</p>	<p>Objection</p>	
<p><u>P24/S2309/FUL</u> Land to the north and west of Pangbourne Technology Centre Bozodown Drive Whitchurch Hill Installation of ground mounted photovoltaic solar panels</p>	<p>Objection</p>	
<p><u>P24/S3513/DA</u> Butlers Farm Goring Heath Road Whitchurch Hill Without planning permission, the material change of use of that building from agriculture, to a mixed use of agriculture, general storage and residential dwelling. Without planning permission, the creation of hardstanding sited on the Land , that facilitates the material change of use.</p>	<p>Objection to the appeal</p>	

Party hire

Don't forget you can hire cutlery, glasses, plates, catering teapots, good folding chairs and tables from Goring Heath

Parish Hall at competitive prices, and it's nice and local.

For information and booking:

bookings@goringheathparishhall.uk

The Friends of St Mary's and St John's

The Friends are an independent charity and welcome members from all faiths and none. We aim to bring together the local community in support of the preservation and improvement of our two churches and their churchyards.

Registered Charity no. 116833

The Friends are continuing to work on the churchyard at St John's. A Management Plan has been created and agreed by the PCC using advice from Caring for Gods Acre. The idea is to enable it to be sensitively managed as a place for Christian burial, to be welcoming for the visitors to the church and churchyard, and to encourage biodiversity of the local flora and fauna. It is envisaged that some sections will be roped off to allow paths to be mowed shorter and others left longer in order to create varying habitats for different species of wildlife.

We are creating a **Nature Trail** in the churchyard for everyone to explore at **Whitchurch Hill Fete on May 23rd**, and will be working towards this date to show the intentions of our plan.

Work Parties

Our regular churchyard working parties at St John's take place on the last Wednesday of the month, starting at 10am. The next one will be on 29th April.

Work parties at St Mary's are on a more ad hoc basis and the next one is planned for 22nd April.

Thank you to all those that make a regular appearance as many hands really do make light work.

If you fancy joining one of these sessions, please get in touch with Sally Woolhouse whitchurchfriends@gmail.com. A welcome cup of coffee is always provided at half time.

Save our Spire!

The PCC have been successful in their request for National Lottery Funding which is marvellous news.

The Friends had previously agreed to assist funding the project and have arranged for £20,000 (and the additional interest from the dedicated

account) to be transferred to the PCC in early June.

Work is due to start in mid-April which will be very exciting to see.

Fund Raising

A successful Art Café was held in The Old Stables on February 7th, when £181 was raised. Thank you to all of you that supported the event. Our next **Art Café will be on Easter Saturday, April 4th**. Please drop in for cake and coffee if you can.

Future Events

Granny's Attic is once again planned for the **Whitchurch Hill Fete on May 23rd**. If you are currently having a bit of a clear out, please remember The Friends for any articles that are small enough to carry away on the day: such as unwanted gifts, tools, knick-knacks, kitchen implements, plant pots, small items of china, accessories, vases etc etc. We do not take clothing or books. Please contact me via the website address below if you would like me to come and collect and store any donated items.

Membership

We are always keen to welcome new Friends. For more information on how to join please go to the Whitchurch on Thames village website at <https://whitchurchonthames.com> and follow the link for the Church, or ask me, or Sally Woolhouse.

Sarah Dragonetti, Chair of The Friends

whitchurchfriends@gmail.com

Publicise your event and increase attendance by giving us the dates.

We welcome event dates from all local charities and groups for FREE listing in the Newsletter.

Please send the details to the Editor at

goringheathnewsletter@gmail.com

Please allow sufficient time in advance for the publication of the appropriate newsletter. Contribution deadlines and publication dates are on the inside back cover.

The Whitchurch Art & Craft Exhibition 2026



This was a very successful exhibition, which was held over the weekend of 28th February/1st March in Whitchurch Village Hall. The standard and variety of the entries was most impressive. It was enjoyed by many visitors over the weekend, as were the refreshments which were served on both days.

The timing of the event was moved from the traditional pre-Christmas weekend in mid-November, to this early spring weekend at the end of February. This new schedule was very popular with everyone and will now become the new timing for future years.

The exhibits were judged on the Friday evening by 3 external experts, and the winners were chosen in all the art, craft, photography and film categories, entered by adults and young people. The theme for the Joyce Voysey Prize was 'My Happy Place' and, not surprisingly, this encouraged a wide range of imaginative creations, especially from the younger exhibitors.

There were 9 adult exhibitors who had never taken part before. In total, there were 236 entries across the full spectrum of classes, in art, craft, photography and film, from 120 exhibitors, both adult and young people. Of particular note was the record number of film/animation entries – 6 in total – which competed for The Brazil Award. This award was presented for the first time in 2018 by Nick Brazil, who was a keen local filmmaker and photographer and who sadly passed away in January this year.

Also, on the stage, the three local schools, namely Whitchurch Pre-School, the Whitchurch Primary School and the Oratory Preparatory School, had set up impressive and colourful displays of school work by their students. These are always enjoyed by all the visitors.

The full list of the prize winners can be found via the link on the Exhibition webpage on the Whitchurch website (whitchurchonthames.com/groups/artsandcrafts.html). Also, the website's Photo Gallery holds a great selection of photos of the exhibition.

I would like to thank all of the great team that helped in many ways to set

the exhibition up, and without whom it would be impossible to achieve, in the tight schedule. My special thanks must go to the planning and organising team (Sarah & Adrian Dixon, Wendy Ferguson, Jean-Marc Grosfort, Kate Lowe and Eiliis Baty) and to all the volunteer helpers, for all their hard work and support which made it another successful show.

And remember, it is never too soon to start work on your entries for the 2027 exhibition!!

Sally Woolhouse

Chair

Organising Committee



GORING HEATH PARISH HALL



To hire our charming, picturesque and well equipped village hall for your next party, community event or society, please contact bookings@goringheathparishhall.uk

The hall, over the last twenty years, has undergone continuous sympathetic refurbishment and extensions and provides all you would expect of a modern venue to host your event or meeting, whilst retaining its charm and original character. For full details please visit our website:

goringheathparishhall.uk

or contact bookings@goringheathparishhall.uk to discuss your requirements.

Cray's Pond Work Party

On a mild and dry Saturday morning in late February, about 15 volunteers turned up at the Pond to tackle a big clearance job.

Whilst most of us tackled the large bramble thicket and pollarded the goat willow to the west of the pond, two or three undertook the removal of willows that had established in the pond margins. Cables were attached and the trees were winched out by hand.

All the arising material was removed to the southern woodland edge of the pond and built into a long dead-hedge habitat.



Time didn't allow the removal of all the offending willow in the pond or the removal of the stumps which are drying out by the pond, prior to disposal. Big thanks are due to all those who joined this effort.

Martin Wise



THE SUN INN

WHITCHURCH HILL RG8 7PU
01189 843 909



EXPERT REAL ALES REGULAR EVENTS
LUNCH SERVED DAILY* BEER GARDEN



Spring Beer Festival 30th April - 4th May

THU 30 TH APRIL	FUN BEGINS
FRI 1 ST MAY	7:30PM MORRIS DANCING & MUSIC
SAT 2 ND MAY	5PM: BBQ & SINGALONG WITH ADAM
SUN 3 RD MAY	3PM: HOG ROAST & LIVE BAND
MON 4 TH MAY	FINAL DAY; DRINK US DRY!

OPENING HOURS

MON	12:00	20:00
*TUES	15:00	21:00
WED	12:00	21:00
THUR	12:00	21:00
FRI	12:00	23:00
SAT	12:00	22:00
SUN	12:00	19:00

**No food on Tuesdays*



Follow our Facebook page for updates!



facebook.com/TheSunRG8

Pangbourne Bowls Club



Your local Bowling Club is getting ready to open for the new season.

Situated at the Recreation Ground, Thames Avenue, Pangbourne RG8 7PY, we enjoy playing roll ups, as well as friendly and competitive matches. Mustn't forget the social activities too - there is something for everyone.

Tuition will be offered to all new to the game. This year we have moved away from the traditional club top and white trousers to more dynamic predominately navy blue tops and trousers/skirts/ shorts/cropped trousers. This modernising compliments all the work done this year to upgrade the pavilion kitchen and develop the green and surrounding area.

The winter might be a dormant time for some, but not for our hard working green team. The grass is looking good - and will soon be ready for a short back and sides ahead of our official opening. Two important dates are coming up - Saturdays **18 April and 2 May**. Our doors will be open for returning players to sign on for the season, but also for anyone new to come along to meet us and see what we are about. Everyone will be made most welcome. If you would like a chat about the club before visiting please feel free to contact **Sally Bergmann on 07585195669** . I look forward to hearing from you.

RG8 Badminton



We are a small, friendly and sociable club. We play regularly during the badminton season and our club members range in different levels and abilities. We welcome new adult members but are currently unable to take any new youth members (14 years plus in full time education) but please register an interest and we will be in touch when capacity allows. Unfortunately we are unable to accommodate beginners.

We meet on Thursday evenings in the Community Sports Hall at Langtree School (term time only) 7.30pm to 9.00pm.

Subscriptions are paid on a seasonal basis (Sept - May). It equates to approx. £3 - £4 per session for adults and £2 for youth members. An introductory session is provided free of charge. If you want to know more and would welcome some fitness, fun and friendship then visit our website www.rg8badminton.co.uk or ring **Julie on 07980 413026**.

ST MARY'S YOUTH CLUB

FRIDAY NIGHTS

7 – 8.30PM

THE OLD STABLES

YEARS 6 - 10

music, games, table tennis, tuck shop*

*bring some money for tuck shop

FRIDAYS 5.30pm – 6.30pm YEAR 6

FRIDAYS 6.45pm – 7.45pm YEAR 7 and 8



Langtree Team Ministry

The Parish of St Mary's Whitchurch-on-Thames
with St John's Whitchurch Hill
Email: jamesleach.whitchurch@gmail.com
Judi Green: green_judi@hotmail.com

Woodcote Volunteers



Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held on **Wednesday 6th May** in the Pavilion Room, Village Hall, Woodcote, from 7pm. All of our volunteers and the wider community are encouraged to attend, to find out more about our service and to meet those who are involved.

Volunteer Story

For the first of an occasional series of volunteer stories, we are featuring the story of our Chair, Sarah White. In her words:



“Five years ago, after moving to Whitchurch Hill and reducing my working week to four days, I wanted to find a way to give back to the community. That’s when I discovered Woodcote Volunteers – and became a driver.

Driving for the charity is a win-win - not only does it provide a much-needed service to our local community, it gives me the chance to meet fascinating people and hear their stories, to give something back without a huge time commitment and to feel the gratitude of those we help.

The more I drove, the more I realised what an incredible service Woodcote Volunteers provides. It’s not just about transport – it’s about connection. From regular coffee mornings to tea parties, the charity creates social opportunities that combat isolation.

So, when the Chair position became available, I was delighted to put my name forward. Working with such an experienced and passionate committee has made the transition easy – and inspiring. Even after 40+ years, Woodcote Volunteers continues to adapt. Last year, we launched a Digital Support service, offering one-to-one help for people who want to get online safely and confidently. It’s just one example of how we’re finding new ways to support those in Woodcote and surrounding villages who experience isolation. I have found being part of Woodcote Volunteers is rewarding, meaningful..... and fun.”

Tea Parties for our clients

In March our clients were treated to a recital by Woodcote’s own highly

talented professional pianist, Tim Valentine, which they loved. Our next Tea Party will be on **Wednesday 1st April 2026 at 2.30pm**, finishing at 4.00 pm, and will feature something very different – a demonstration of weaving by Janet Nicholls. Janet uses a small loom to create small wall hangings, place mats and lots more. It should be very interesting so please come along to our free event for tea, cake, talk and good company.

Tea Parties are held at the Community Centre in Woodcote. We provide tea and home-made cakes and there is no charge. Please give us plenty of notice if you need a lift by calling our office phone number below.

Woodcote Winter Wheels

February was the last month this winter that our free drives were offered. We were able to offer free drives over the winter due to the generosity of the Woodcote Rally and would like to thank them again. It was a very well received initiative, with over 150 drives undertaken in the period, resulting in significant savings for our clients. We hope to be able to repeat this next winter.

Coffee Morning

Our first Coffee Shop of the year will be held on April 11th from 10.00 am - 12.30 pm in Woodcote Community Centre. It would be lovely to see you all there to enjoy coffee, teas and homemade cakes!

Call out for new drivers

We do need a few more drivers and we would love to hear from you! Being a volunteer driver is a wonderful opportunity to help others while making new friends. Please go to our website www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk to find out more about the role and how to contact us.

TO FINISH.....

If you need a driver, please give us at least three days' notice as it can be hard to find someone at the last minute – but we will always try!

To book a driver, call 01491 681171 giving as much notice as possible.

To volunteer, email: info@woodcotevolunteers.org.uk

Our website: www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/woodcotevolunteers

General enquiries – call 01491 681171

Do you remember when...

Flint House was built back in 1913 and over the years, it has been a family home, a convalescent centre for wounded servicemen in the Second World War, a private school, a water board training centre and, since 1988, the base for the charity Flint House Police Rehabilitation.

The charity, which was originally started in Hove in 1890 and cares for injured and unwell police officers, is undertaking a heritage and history project into its past. It is eager to hear from residents

about their memories of Flint House over the years. The house is located in Reading Road, near Goring.



All comments and feedback will be gathered to help create a lasting record of both the house and the charity. We would particularly like to hear from anyone who has information about some of the previous owners, such as the Garrard and the Whittington families. Perhaps you recall when it was a private school run by Mr and Mrs Tuyn? Did you train there as a water board technician? We are also keen to hear from people who might have worked at Flint House or who had family members or friends who did so.

You can see on our website some of the initial research we have undertaken in the About Us pages - <https://www.flinthouse.co.uk/about-us/>.

If you would like to take part in our project and tell us about your memories, please contact, Julie Pink, Fundraising and Engagement Manager on fundraising@policerehab.co.uk. Or, if you prefer, please drop your written memories to the charity reception along with your name and contact details. Many thanks from everyone at the charity.



From the Save Our Spire Fundraising Team.

The Save Our Spire Fundraising team are delighted to announce that the project will receive a grant of circa £150,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This together with the local fundraising to date means that there are now sufficient funds for the project to commence., which is great news. Works are expected to start on site at St Mary's after Easter.

A big thank you to all whose generosity and support have made this happen.

In the meanwhile, fundraising continues for the remaining £25,000 required to complete the project. If you would like to donate, please scan the QR code or contact Ken Baker at baker_kenneth2@sky.com



Scan to donate

Further details regarding fundraising and progress on the project will be posted on the Whitchurch village website (www.whichurchonthames.com) and in the next edition of this newsletter.

Thank you for your continued support.

The Save Our Spire Fundraising Team.



Shedquarters is a Men's Shed located in the car park of Peppard War Memorial Hall.

If you want to learn how to make things from wood or metal, or just want a cuppa and some company,

please come and visit us

MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, FRIDAYS, & SATURDAYS, 10-12.30

www.shedquarters.org.uk

Let's Get Digital



A reminder that we offer free one-to-one advice sessions for local residents who have any queries that arise from using their digital devices, such as a smart phone, tablet or laptop. Even if you have none of these, you are welcome to come along to find out what it is all about as we have devices you can try out! Being connected to the online world

helps you stay connected to the wider world by easily connecting to friends and family and allowing you to receive and search for important information.

We understand that the digital world can seem daunting. I expect many readers will have had the experience of seeking help from a family member or friend, who takes charge, presses a few buttons and hands the device back! That's great but not so helpful if it leaves you as puzzled as before! We have a different approach. We will show you what to do but **you** are the one pressing all the right buttons! We feel you learn best by actually doing it and if necessary, repeating it until you understand. Often the issue is dealt with in one session, but you are welcome to return as many times as needed until you have the confidence to go solo.

The advice sessions last approximately 45 minutes to an hour and are held twice a month (see below).

Our team of friendly local volunteers have a wide range of experience of the digital world. All are DBS-checked and will do their best to answer your queries, however simple or complex, by working with you to help you understand more. Your online safety is always at the front of our minds, so if needed, we will offer guidance.

The advice sessions are held in **Woodcote Community Centre** twice a month at **2-4 pm on the 1st Saturday** and at **11.00 am -12.00 noon on the 3rd Thursday** of each month.

There have been a wide range of queries – here are a few examples:

- Something's not working properly and I don't know what to do!
- How can I get rid of pop-up messages I don't understand?
- What happens if my storage is full?
- How do I search the internet for information?
- How do I delete unwanted accounts?

- How do I set up or delete apps on my phone or tablet?
- My device is running very slowly – why?
- I've been given a device – where do I start?
- How do I send and receive emails/texts/WhatsApp messages?
- How can I set up and use the NHS app to book a GP appointment online?
- How do I organise/send/receive photos?

To book your slot, **please call 01491 877749** and leave a voicemail if necessary. Someone will phone you back to take your details.

Whitchurch Hill Women's Institute (WI)



Another WI year has come to an end but just as quickly we start another.

Meeting the third Tuesday of every month (not December) at 10am in the Parish Hall, we welcome ladies of all ages and interests. What do we have in common?

Good company is the key, with an interest in the world around us. Monthly speakers keep us in touch with diverse topics, something for everyone. Certainly this coming year our intention is to have more uplifting topics to learn about and/or participate in.

April - Birthday Lunch to celebrate our 70 plus years as a group. Free lunch to all members.

May - A Talk on Hearing Dogs.

June - Secrets of a Suitcase - Life in Royal Service

There is a subgroup who like to Knit and Natter (though we are not all craft people at heart), whilst another group meet regularly at a local pub for lunch. Around all this there is the opportunity to meet with other WIs for social events - and try new activities organised by the District WI Group.

Our Secretary Frances Strange would welcome a call from anyone interested in visiting us to see first-hand what we are about. She can be contacted on 01189842162.

Sally Bergmann

Here we go again!!!!!!!

Whitchurch Hill Fete
Saturday 23/05/2026

After last years great success we have been asked to run the Fete Bar again this year.

So planning is underway by the group to ensure we have the right equipment, and the right stock in the right place at the right time.

Last year we were blessed with volunteers to help with the bar set up etc., and providing bar staff ready to serve all those thirsty fete-goers.

And we need that type of help again please

So if you want to help us in any way in getting the bar open and staffing the event please get in touch.

We know it is a well worn phrase but we really can't make this a success without some of the 'White Lion' supporters coming forward to help.

Our Fete Bar also seeks to remind the local and wider community that we still want the White Lion open again as a fully functioning Pub/Bar/Restaurant/Café etc.

So if you can spare us some time please get in touch by email to

crayspondcommunitygroup@gmail.com.

We do that hope some of you can help.



CPCG Officials:

Fiona O'Brien - Chairperson

Bill Pechey - Secretary

Chris Hurst - Treasurer

Website- www.savethewhitelion.com



Langtree Team Ministry



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

OUTDOOR CHURCH

Connecting with God in nature

**We meet at 4.00pm
at St John's Churchyard
Whitchurch Hill**

Join us as we connect with God together outdoors,
followed by a meal in the parish hall across from St John's.
Suitable for all ages.

**Sunday 18th January
Sunday 15th February
Sunday 19th April
Sunday 17th May
Sunday 21st June
Sunday 19th June**

The Parish of St Mary the Virgin Whitchurch-on-Thames with St John the Baptist Whitchurch Hill
Registered Charity Number: 1213356

Vicar: Rev'd James Leach.

Email: jamesleach.whitchurch@gmail.com Tel: 0118 976 5905

WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL



For children aged 2 - 5 years

Government funding
for 15 and 30 hours

Flexible sessions,
term time

Cooked lunch option



Learning through play approach

Rural setting, new eco building, large outside play area
and dedicated allotment space



SENCO, Forest school, Health Smiles
and Hygge accredited.



Find out more at
www.whitchurchpreschool.org or ring 0118 984 4516

Calling all students!

The Secretary of Whitchurch United Charities would like to remind all families that the Charity has funds available to help meet the costs associated with educational needs such as books, equipment or educational trips.

Eligible students are young people between the primary school age and 25 years and whose permanent residence is within the parish of Whitchurch.

Applications are processed twice a year, with the closing dates being 31st March and 30th September. However, late applications are considered if the available funds for the previous 6 month period have not been fully allocated.

All applications and decisions are treated in strict confidence by the Trustees.

If you would like to know more, please do contact Sarah Dixon (our Grant Application Secretary).

Contact details:

Telephone: 0118 984 4262,

Address: Flint House, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch on Thames, RG8 7HH

e-mail – whitchurchunitedcharities@gmail.com



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"Everyone at Mumby's has been so supportive from the very beginning. The carers have also been fantastic, supporting my mother to live independently and caring for her needs."



Finalist 2026

Discover how we can help:



01865 391 187



info@mumbys.com



SCAN ME

From Our County Councillor : What's Happening in Oxfordshire



Residents in across Oxfordshire, including Goring Heath, will have seen a significant increase in potholes this winter. Prolonged heavy rain followed by repeated freezing conditions has caused rapid road deterioration, as water seeps into cracks, freezes, expands, and then thaws. With around 3,000 miles of roads in Oxfordshire, potholes can form faster than they can be repaired.

Some fixes carried out during the worst weather are temporary, as water-logged potholes cannot be permanently repaired until conditions improve. More durable repairs are now beginning as the weather dries.

The issue is not just down to one bad winter. It reflects years of reduced maintenance funding, ageing road surfaces, and increasing pressures from traffic and weather. When preventative maintenance is cut back, roads deteriorate more quickly and become more costly to repair.

Oxfordshire County Council is increasing investment to around £69 million this year and has expanded repair capacity, with 21 crews now working across the county, including weekends. There is also a stronger focus on longer-lasting repairs, improved drainage, and preventative treatments to slow deterioration.

While improvements will take time, this approach aims to stabilise and gradually improve road conditions. In the meantime, residents are encouraged to continue reporting potholes, as this helps prioritise repairs locally. Details of how to do this are on page 41 of the newsletter.

Warm Homes Grant

Oxfordshire County Council has secured government funding to help low-income households improve home energy efficiency. The Warm Homes Local Grant offers fully funded upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, and heat pumps for eligible homeowners and private tenants.

These improvements can lower energy bills and make homes warmer. Funding is limited and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Find out more or apply at: www.welcomethewarmth.org.uk

Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers

Maggie.Filipova-Rivers@Oxfordshire.gov.uk 07850 141623

Something for Everyone this Summer!



The club is in full swing for spring and summer, with a welcoming mix of social tennis, coaching and league matches for all ages. New members are always very welcome.

Adult coaching runs on Tuesday evenings and Sunday mornings, with sessions to suit all levels. Our popular Back to Tennis session (Tuesdays 8–9pm) is ideal for returning players looking to rebuild confidence in a relaxed, supportive setting.

Junior coaching returns on Fridays (17 April–10 July) for ages 4+, with places filling quickly.

Pickleball and Walking Tennis run on Saturdays (13:00–14:00), offering fun, inclusive ways to get active. Social doubles takes place on Fridays and Saturdays, bringing players together for friendly matchplay.



Scan to go to the website

Get in touch to find out more and come along.

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For More Advice & Help
Call Christopher:

07772 111 222



Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School

Good news from Ofsted Inspection

Checkendon Primary School has recently been inspected by Ofsted under the new national framework, becoming the first school in Oxfordshire and one of the first in the country to do so, and the outcome was extremely positive. Inspectors described the school as a “*happy village school*” where kindness, respect and strong relationships are the norm.

A strong, caring community

The school was praised for its welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, where children are known as individuals and supported to thrive. Inspectors recognised the strong “family feel” that many in the village associate with the school, and the way older pupils naturally look out for younger ones. Behaviour was described as excellent, with calm routines and positive attitudes to learning.

High standards of learning

Pupils continue to achieve very well, particularly in reading and mathematics. Over the past three years, results in national tests have been well above average, showing that children leave the school well prepared for secondary education.

Safeguarding and wellbeing

Safeguarding was judged to be fully effective, with inspectors noting that pupils feel safe, cared for and listened to, something the school considers its highest priority.

Areas for improvement

Two areas for further development were highlighted: enhancing early writing skills among our youngest learners, and improving overall attendance. The school is taking targeted action to support children in developing their writing skills, while attendance remains an area where we encourage families to work with us, so that every child can make the most of their learning.

What Ofsted said

“Pupils are proud to belong to this happy village school.”

“Kindness and courtesy are the norm.”

“The school has high expectations for every pupil.”

The school community is proud of this outcome, which reflects the strong relationships between staff, families and the wider village. Even for residents without children at the school, it is reassuring to know that the village school re-

mains a thriving, caring and successful part of local life.

If you would like any further information, or a paper copy of the report, please don't hesitate to contact the school.

[Email: office.3801@Checkendon.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3801@Checkendon.oxon.sch.uk)

What's happening at Checkendon Pre-School:

Look what we have been doing....



As Spring arrives, we have noticed that the daffodils are coming into bloom, the snowdrops and crocus are also giving a beautiful bit of colour after the cold, wet winter. The Checkendon pre-school garden continues to be a big hit with the children, understanding about cause and effect, and what plants need to survive and flourish.

The children have also been celebrating World Book Day, joining in with well-loved stories, using puppets and dressing up as characters in books such as Meg and Mog and Puss in Boots. We have enjoyed lots of our favourite stories and learning how to take care of books.



World Book Day

We celebrated Mothers Day with the children with a Mother's Day Diddi-Dance, which they thoroughly enjoyed as well as making some beautiful decorated boxes for their mummies.



Mother's Day Diddi Dance

We have also been enjoying lots of Easter activities including Easter dancing, making cards, and hunting for Easter chicks, bunnies and eggs outside. Little chefs made some delicious Easter nests. We even had a visit from the Easter Bunny!

To find out more about Checkendon Pre-School, do visit our website: www.checkendonpreschool.co.uk, call us on 01491 682589, e-mail preschoolcheckendon@gmail.com or just pop in – we always look forward to welcoming you to Checkendon Pre-School.



Easter

Checkendon Pre School CIO. Registered as a Charity No 1156803



Whitchurch Primary School Update

As we race towards spring, our children have been making the most of another action-packed term bursting with fun, energy, and a few impressive achievements along the way!

The Parents' Association committee kicked things off in delicious style with a fantastic cake sale at the Art Café. Thanks to lots of tasty treats and generous supporters, a whopping **£325** was raised! This brilliant total will go towards refreshing our school's sports kits, and we can't wait to see our children proudly debuting them at upcoming events.

Sport has been high on the Whitchurch agenda —with plenty of action both by hand and by foot! Our teams took on local schools in football and netball tournaments, showing great teamwork and determination. Meanwhile, our speedy runners have been dashing around Goring and Bradfield College at cross-country events, bringing home **second and third place overall**.

What an achievement—well done, Whitchurchers!

The dancing shoes also came out for another highlight of the term: the much-anticipated Parents' Association school disco. Glow sticks at the ready, the hall was buzzing with energy as pupils danced the night away to brilliant tunes from our very own resident DJ, Mr Chesters. Safe to say, it was the place to be.

Back in the classroom, there has certainly been no rest for the wicked. Celebrating World Book Day in wonderfully creative fashion by crafting favourite book characters out of potatoes—and we had some absolute corkers! An epic book-swap followed, where pupils exchanged their pre-loved books for new stories to enjoy. A fantastic way to reuse, recycle, and keep our reading—and our school—green.



Potato Characters

Finally packed into this term has also been some fantastic learning adventures. Our children have been busy exploring patterns, experimenting with volume and capacity, and discovering how shadows are formed. They've been hurtling through space, learning about planet Mars and robots, and

investigating what affects the size of craters on the Moon. And as if that wasn't exciting enough, they've explored the fascinating topic of evolution and inheritance—and even had a go at extracting DNA from fruit. All this and more in just one term's work at Whitchurch.



Patterns

We are now all looking forward to some warmer weather and a good Easter break - and with that being said: "Happy Easter to our wonderful community".

Hayley Wilkins

Whitchurch Primary School Parents' Association Treasurer

GORING REPAIR CAFÉ

Free repair service by skilled volunteers

Goring Village Hall

10:00am—12:30pm

6th June - Repair Café and Exchange Event

12th Sept and 5th December

Full details on website



Voluntary donations are welcome cover expenses

www.goringrepaircafe.info

Repair - Recycle - Reduce consumption & carbon - Restore our Planet

Refreshments available in Café Bellême

**St. Bartholomew's C of E Chapel
The Allnutt & Baker Almshouses
Goring Heath, RG8 7RS**

Open to the Public - All welcome



Alternating weekly services, Matins & Holy Communion at 11.00
starting on:

1st February with Holy Communion

8th February with Matins

All Services are taken from the Book of Common Prayer

Chaplain: Rev Ross Hathway

Contact: 01491 681699

Purley Barn Bridge Club

The friendly club for folk from round and about the Purley, Pangbourne, Tilehurst and Goring areas!

We meet at the historic Barn, Goosecroft Lane, Purley, RG8 8DR every Friday morning at 9.40am for a morning of friendly bridge with friendly people with a break for a chat, coffee, tea and biscuits.

Basically, Purley Barn is a social club whose members play bridge.

No previous experience is necessary and free coaching is available if required. Playing bridge at the Barn is an ideal way to meet people who don't take the game too seriously and who are always welcoming of new members – just turn up before play starts on a Friday and we'll fit you in.

We also play online on Tuesday evenings – so why not give that a try as well. Play your cards right and ring **Martin on 07746 680183** or visit our website at: <https://www.bridgewebs.com>





Important information

Goring Mobile Service located at:

Outside West Holme Stores,
24-26 Wallingford Road,
Goring, Reading, RG8 0BG

The opening times will be changing from
the week commencing
Monday 16 March 2026

New Opening hours	
Monday	No Service
Tuesday	13:30 - 16:00
Wednesday	08:00 - 11:30
Thursday	No Service
Friday	No Service
Saturday	No Service
Sunday	No Service

For information in Braille, large print or audio call 03452 66 01 15, Textphone 03457 22 33 55
or to see a copy of our Principles of Community Engagement about changes
to our Post Office network visit our website
postofficeviews.co.uk



Pangbourne Twinning Association
French Film Nights
Presents

Portrait of a Lady On Fire

(Portrait de la jeune fille en feu)

A film by Céline Sciamma (cert.15)
with English sub-titles

starring

Noémie Merlant, Adèle Haenel & Luana Bajrami

Sunday 26th April

6.45pm for 7.30pm

Open to all

Pangbourne Village Hall

Entry £7 per person

Pre-film drinks available

www.pangbourne-twinning.org





PROJECT NEW NGOMA DINNER & THEATRE NIGHT

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR:
A **TWO COURSE DINNER** WITH A LIVE **ROMANTIC COMEDY**
'JACK AND SARAH' BASED ON THE ORIGINAL FILM
STARRING RICHARD E. GRANT, JUDI DENCH AND IAN
MCKELLEN.

THE MILL AT SONNING, RG4 6TY
SATURDAY 2 MAY 2026 AT 5:30PM

£120 PER PERSON TO INCLUDE:
2 COURSE DINNER, COFFEE & SHOW

BEVERAGES, RAFFLE TICKETS, & GRAND
AUCTION ITEMS SOLD SEPARATELY

★ TICKETS WILL BE ALLOCATED ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVED BASIS
ALL PROFITS WILL GO TO PROJECT NEW NGOMA

TICKETS **MUST** BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE VIA
WWW.PROJECTNEWNGOMA.ORG (EVENTS TAB)
OR SCAN THE QR CODE HERE



Bus Service for Goring Heath on Tuesdays:

Goring to Reading

	Tue
GORING, Railway Station	10:15
Streatley, The Bull	10:17
Lower Basildon, Park Wall Lane	10:21
Basildon Park, Entrance	10:23
Beale Park, Entrance	10:25
PANGBOURNE, The George	10:28
Whitchurch-on-Thames, Greyhound	10:31
Whitchurch Hill, The Sun	10:36
Crays Pond, Beechwood Close	10:40
Goring Heath, Almshouses	10:42
Cane End	10:46
Upper Woodcote Road, Shepherds Lane	10:50
Highmoor Road, Methodist Church	10:53
Caversham, Library	10:57
READING, Blagrove Street EO/EP	11:02
READING, Friar Street FC	11:05
READING, Tesco Kings Meadow	11:10

Reading to Goring

	Tue
READING, Tesco Kings Meadow	12:55
READING, Blagrove Street EO/EP	12:59
READING, Friar Street FC	13:00
Caversham, Library	13:05
Highmoor Road, Methodist Church	13:07
Upper Woodcote Road, Shepherds Lane	13:09
Cane End	13:15
Goring Heath, Almshouses	13:19R
Crays Pond, Beechwood Close	13:20
Whitchurch Hill, The Sun	13:23
Whitchurch-on-Thames, Greyhound	13:27
PANGBOURNE, The George	13:29
Beale Park, Entrance	13:31
Basildon Park, Entrance	13:32
Lower Basildon, Park Wall Lane	13:33
Streatley, The Bull	13:38R
GORING, Railway Station	13:40R

Household Waste Recycling - Book in Advance!

You now need to book an appointment in advance to visit any of Oxfordshire's household waste recycling centres, such as Oakley Wood.

And you also need to take proof of address with you, such as your driving licence, or a recent council tax or utility bill.

To find out more and book a visit to a household waste recycling centre, go to: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/household-waste/household-waste-recycling-centres/book-recycling-centre-visit> or scan the QR Code

If you are unable to book online, call OCC's Customer Services Centre on **01865 519800**



**SEND US YOUR
POTSHOTS**

Want a faster service?



Submit good quality photos
and help us locate, grade and prioritise our resources to fix our streets.

Report on fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk

 **FixMyStreet**  **OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

You can help OCC improve our roads by reporting potholes and other issues on FixMyStreet:

<https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk> or scan the QR code.



Uploading clear photos when you report a pothole helps our highways team assess and prioritise repairs more quickly. Tips for helpful photos:

- ◆ Show the pothole's location with a wide-angle shot. Include landmarks like house numbers or road markings (but avoid personal info or number plates).
- ◆ Add a close-up photo with something to show the pothole's size and depth.

Please stay safe: Only take photos when it's safe to do so. Never step into live traffic or put yourself at risk. Together, we can make Oxfordshire's roads safer and smoother.

COUNTY and DISTRICT COUNCIL INFORMATION

South Oxfordshire District Councillor

Peter Dragonetti	Covert Cottage, Hill Bottom	07866 202 908
	Whitchurch Hill RG8 7PT	01189 844 711
	peter.dragonetti@southoxon.gov.uk	
Council Offices	Abbey House, Abbey Close	See below for department phone contacts
	Abingdon OX14 3JE	
	www.southoxon.gov.uk	

Oxfordshire County Councillor

Maggie Filipova-Rivers		07850 141 623
	maggie.filipova-rivers@oxfordshire.gov.uk	
Council Offices	County Hall, Oxford OX1 1ND	01865 519 800
	www.oxfordshire.gov.uk	

POLICE	Thames Valley Police	0845 850 5505
POLICE	PEC - Non-emergency calls	101
POTHOLES		0345 310 1111

South Oxfordshire District Council Department Numbers

Main customer service number	01235 422 422
♦ Planning	01235 422 600
♦ Building Control	01235 422 700
♦ Environmental Health, Food and Safety	01235 422 403
♦ Licensing	01235 422 556
♦ Elections	01235 422 407
♦ Car Parks	01235 422 118
♦ Community Safety	01235 422 590
♦ Street Naming and Numbering	01235 422 344

The Goring Heath Newsletter is published by the Parish Council six times a year and is delivered free to every household in the Parish.

To contributors to the Newsletter:-

It would be most helpful if copy could be submitted to the editor as a document attachment to email and sent to goringheathnewsletter@gmail.com

Deadline for contributions	Publication month
15th May 2026	June 2026
17th July 2026	August 2026
11th September 2026	October 2026

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Parish Council.

LOCAL GROUPS—CONTACT DETAILS

Chiltern Society Footpath Representative	Liz Collas	01491680466
Chiltern Society Path Maintenance Volunteers	Howard Dell	01494764149
Goring Heath Parish Charity	Chris Whatmore	01189844022
Goring Heath Scouts, Brownies and Guides	Doreen Pechey	01491681236
	Andrea Bain	
	goringheathguiding@gmail.com	
Goring Thames Sailing Club	www.goringthamessc.com	
Pangbourne Bowls Club	Sally Bergmann	07585195669
Pangbourne Tennis Club	info@pangbournetennis.org	
RG8 Badminton Club	Julie Drury	07980413026
South Oxfordshire Archaeology Group (SOAG)	Nancy Nichols	01189787829
Tai Chi and Qigong	Karen Pounds	07867954786
Tots on the Thames, Baby and Toddler Group	Debbie Leach	
	debs.leach@btinternet.com	
Whitchurch Hill Camera Club	www.whitchurchhillcameraclub.com	
Whitchurch and Goring Heath History Society	Vicky Jordan	01189843260
	vickyjordan5@hotmail.com	
Whitchurch and Goring Heath Twinning	Wendy Ferguson	01189841262
	wendyefergie@gmail.com	
Whitchurch Hill WI	Frances Strange	01189842162
Woodcote Volunteers	Office	01491 681171
Goring Heath Parish Hall: Bookings and Enquiries: Chris Whatmore 07850691920		
Email: bookings@goringheathparishhall.uk		



GORING HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIR

Mark Skidmore Cllr.mark.skidmore@goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

VICE-CHAIR

Peter Dragonetti peter@dragonetti.co.uk 01189 844711

COUNCILLORS

Peter Burdon Cllr.peter.burdon@goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Liz Collas Cllr.liz.collas@goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Mike Holland Cllr.mike.holland@goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Martin Wise martinwise10@hotmail.com

CLERK

Andrea Bowerman clerk@goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk 07890 547602

GORING HEATH NEWSLETTER

EDITOR

Louise Shearer goringheathnewsletter@gmail.com 07554 432216

Advertising in the Newsletter

The Newsletter is issued every two months and covers Goring Heath, Cray's Pond and Whitchurch Hill.

The rates for advertising are £15 for half a page and £25 for a full page advert.

To find out more, please contact the Editor at

goringheathnewsletter@gmail.com