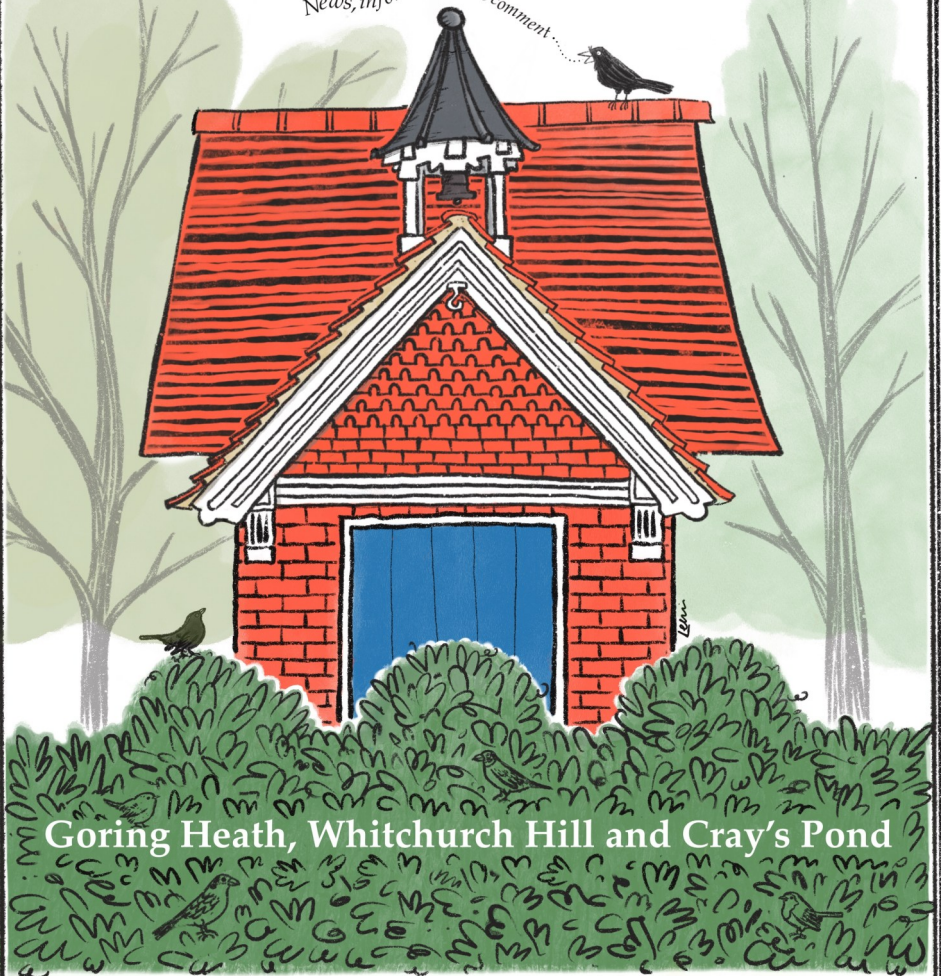


Aug 2026

Issue 210

GORING HEATH NEWSLETTER

News, information and comment



Goring Heath, Whitchurch Hill and Cray's Pond

goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

goringheathnewsletter@gmail.com

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



angtree 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

Chair's Address

Summer has certainly made its presence felt this year, with several periods of exceptionally hot weather. Many of us will have been making the most of the sunshine, enjoying time in our gardens, exploring the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside and, for those seeking to cool off, enjoying the nearby River Thames, as well as the occasional barbecue with family and friends. While the heat and sunshine are welcome after a long winter, the recent heatwaves have also been a reminder to take sensible precautions, look out for neighbours who may be more vulnerable, and use water thoughtfully during these dry periods so that we can all help conserve this precious resource.

One person who has certainly been making the most of the countryside is Councillor Collas, who has once again undertaken the enormous task of surveying every public byway within the parish, either on foot or by bicycle. This is no small undertaking and represents many hours of dedicated work to help ensure our rights of way remain accessible and any issues are identified. On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank her for this invaluable contribution.

Our local community calendar continues to be as busy as ever. The Sun has once again been hosting a range of special events, including the inaugural Cider and Sausage Festival on 12 and 13 July, bringing together residents and visitors alike for a weekend of good food, drink and community spirit. The Stoke Row Steam Rally, held once again in Whitchurch Hill, was another tremendous success, attracting visitors from across the area and providing a wonderful celebration of our rural heritage. A huge thank you goes to everyone involved in organising such an enjoyable and well-supported event.

The Parish Council continues to invest in facilities for residents. Plans are progressing to improve the basketball area at the playground by installing a solid surface beneath the hoop, making it safer, more durable and usable throughout the year. We are also developing proposals to enhance the playing field in Whitchurch Hill, creating an even better space for recreation and community enjoyment.

Another small but much-loved feature of parish life that we hope to restore is our public telephone box libraries in Whitchurch Hill and Crays Pond.

These have provided a valuable community resource for many years, and we look forward to seeing them refreshed and back to their best for everyone to enjoy.

As always, my thanks go to all those who give their time so generously to support our parish, whether through volunteering, organising events or simply helping neighbours. It is these countless acts, large and small, that make Goring Heath such a special place to live.

I hope you all have a wonderful remainder of the summer and continue to enjoy everything our parish and surrounding countryside have to offer.

Warm regards,

Mark Skidmore,

Chair of the Parish Council

Thank You to Our Newsletter Volunteers

Have you ever wondered how the *Goring Heath Newsletter* arrives through your letterbox each month?

Once the newsletter has been printed, it is thanks to a wonderful team of volunteers that it reaches homes throughout the parish. Whatever the weather, they faithfully deliver their allocated rounds, helping to keep our community informed about local news, events and organisations.

Behind the scenes, Yvonne Smith plays a vital role by receiving the printed newsletters, sorting them into the various delivery rounds and ensuring that everything is ready for our distributors. Without her careful organisation, the monthly distribution would be a much more difficult task.

The Parish Council would like to place on record its sincere thanks to Yvonne and to every one of our volunteer distributors. Their reliability, commitment and willingness to give their time each month are greatly appreciated.

The newsletter is an important way of keeping our community connected, and quite simply, it would not be possible without the dedication of these volunteers. Thank you all for everything you do.



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.

Could You Help Deliver the Newsletter?

We are looking for a volunteer to deliver the **Goring Heath Newsletter** to homes along part of **Goring Heath Road in Whitchurch Hill**.

The newsletter is published every two months, so this is only an occasional commitment, but it plays an important part in keeping our community connected. Deliveries can be made at a time that suits you and provide a pleasant opportunity for a walk while helping your local community.

If you think you could spare a little time every other month, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact **Louise Shearer**, Editor, for more information. *Thank you!*

The Local Footpath and Bridleway Network

We are fortunate to have a very extensive network of 'Rights of Way' in our parish, and I was made fully aware of how extensive when I did my June inspection of every path - all (I understand) eighteen miles of them.

The County Council is responsible for all highways, whether pedestrian or motorized, and everything in-between. However, they are greatly helped by the volunteers of the Chiltern Society who have a team of dedicated footpath representatives in every parish. I am the rep for Goring Heath. The society also has a team of maintenance volunteers who do much of the work to keep paths in good shape. This is very often the responsibility of the county or the landowner but lack of funds, or enthusiasm, mean that the volunteer team step in to help to keep the paths accessible and enjoyable to use.

The paths are, mostly, in good condition. Given the very dry conditions we have experienced this summer there was a lack of mud, and the encroaching brambles are not as bad as sometimes. I did a light trim on some of the paths, but found a few that had rather more growth than I could manage. Regular walkers will know which paths I refer to.

One of these is the path which goes south from Copyhold Farm which I believe is very popular especially with local dog walkers. This is a restricted byway and is meant to be wide enough to drive a cart down, but is currently hardly wide enough to walk down in places! I believe the team from the county have agreed to put this path on their 'cutting list', although I have not been given a date so am not totally convinced it will happen.

Another overgrown path is the footpath which goes from opposite Eastfield Lane towards the B471, going south of the Oratory School. It is very overgrown with brambles and I have asked the Chiltern maintenance team to put this one on their list. Just two examples of paths where action is needed.

One of the pleasures of my inspection is encouraging me to walk or cycle those paths which I would not otherwise do, and I am reminded of how varied they are in terms of both scenery and character. One of my favourite paths goes through the woods south of Woodcote to the west of Long Toll. It is very peaceful and a delight to walk.

My inspection gives me a 'snapshot' of the state of the path on the day that

I walk it but I need more 'eyes on the ground'. If you come across a problem on a path - a fallen tree for example, please let me know as soon as possible. I will contact the landowner if I know who that is. If not, I will report it to the county, or ask the maintenance team to clear it if it is not too large. If you are not familiar with the local paths I have included a map to show you how many routes there are, and how well connected they are. The red ones are footpaths – no cycle or horses on these please. The green ones are bridleways and restricted byways: riders on bikes, and horses, welcome. I hope you will venture out in the parish and enjoy our lovely countryside as much as I do.

Goring Heath Paths



Liz Collas

Report Potholes on FixMyStreet!

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



Uploading clear photos when you report a pothole helps the OCC highway team to assess and prioritise repairs more quickly!

District Councillor's Commentary

As you will already have heard, the decision has been made and we are going to be in Ridgeway Unitary Authority, composed of most of South Oxfordshire, West Berkshire and the Vale of White Horse. Oxfordshire County Council is going the way of Berkshire County Council, ending hundreds of years of historical local government.



Although the government said it was not going to change existing boundaries, and indeed it has done so in respect of West Berkshire so that Ridgeway will include parts of Tilehurst which Reading was keen to have included into its area. Conversely Oxford, which is now also to be a unitary authority, is to expand considerably into South Oxfordshire to include Dorchester and Shillingford and touching the northern edge of Benson.

Much of the Oxford Green Belt will now be available for development, something that has already started to happen, and the wider functions undertaken by the current county council will now be split over three authorities. One of the biggest costs that the current county council carries is that of social care for both children and adults, and now that responsibility is to be reallocated to the new unitary authorities.

Presumably much of what was Oxfordshire Social services will be passed over pretty much completely to the new Greater Oxford Authority, while what was the Social Services part of West Berkshire, already a Unitary Authority, will take on that function in what had been South Oxfordshire. Although this is all done in the interests of improving efficiency and saving costs and promoting economic growth, I doubt whether any significant such benefits will actually arise.

Of course for most of us this change will not make any difference at all, and will be lost in the pattern of changes that gradually creep up, sometimes to our benefit and sometimes just to our annoyance.

South Oxfordshire will, I think, stagger on until April 2028. There will be elections for the new Council in 2027, but existing councillors will stay in post until the new authority kicks in. The government is also keen on changing the planning system to promote growth, and one change that is happening from October is that the District Council Planning Committee is

being weakened, in that most planning decisions will be made by Planning Officers and not by the Planning Committee, even when Parish Councils or ward members think that a matter is serious enough to be considered by the Committee. In reality, most planning decisions are taken by officers, and the Planning Committee will often follow the officer's recommendation anyway.

Currently, if the Parish Council disagrees with an officer's recommendation, then it comes to committee and the Parish Council can put its point across. This is a chance for people to take part in a democratic process in the consideration of development, and while it may not always turn out as desired, cutting out that opportunity disenfranchises us all, which is not a good thing for society

Peter Dragonetti

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



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Planning Decisions

The following planning applications, submitted up to 14th July 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/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	With-drawn
<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).	No Strong Views	Refused
<u>P25/S2648/FUL</u> Woodcote Sawmill Pot Kiln Lane Goring Heath RG8 7SS Single storey barn / outbuilding extension.	Objection	Granted
<u>P26/S2563/HH</u> The Thatched Cottage Bozdown Drive Whitchurch Hill RG8 7PE Demolition of lean-to structure and replacement with an oak framed extension. Structural and non-structural alterations and repairs to existing cottage	No Strong Views	
<u>P26/S1489/LDE</u> Woodland (Till's Wood) northwest of Deadmans' Lane and southwest of the A4074 Certificate of lawfulness to regularise hut and associated structures	Objection	
<u>P26/S1768/HH</u> Lower Hitch Cottage Whitchurch Hill Reading EG8 7NU Single-storey porch extension following demolition of existing porch structure, single-storey rear extension including alterations to the raised patio, alterations to the annex roof to form side-facing gable with metal access stair on side elevation, removal of existing bay window to annex, replacement roof over annex pool and full facade insulated render applied, including replacement windows and doors to all facades.	No Strong Views	

Premises and application details	Parish Council	Notes
<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.	Objection to the appeal	
<u>P24/S2309/FUL</u> Land to the north and west of Pangbourne Technology Centre Bozedom Drive Whitchurch Hill Installation of ground mounted photovoltaic solar panels	Objection	
<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.	Objection to the appeal	



NOT ALL SUPERHEROES WEAR CAPES...

Could you be a Superhero?

Woodcote Volunteers urgently needs **Volunteer Drivers** to support local people in need of help getting to medical appointments or staying connected in their community

- Very flexible
- Just a few hours a month would make a huge difference
- Mileage expenses reimbursed

If you would like to make a real difference in your local community we would love to hear from you

To find out more visit our website www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk or contact Jane by email at info@woodcotevolunteers.org.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

Work Parties

Our regular churchyard working parties at St John's take place on the last Wednesday of the month, but due to the recent heat waves we have cancelled two sessions. Our next is planned for 29th July starting at 10am. Those at St Mary's are on a more ad hoc basis - the next one is planned there on 12th August.

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 at whitchchurchfriends@gmail.com. A welcome cup of coffee is always provided at half time.

Save our Spire!

Work at St Mary's is well and truly underway and all is going to plan. Completion is anticipated to be in September but sometimes things can take longer than expected. The Friends finally donated £20,750 towards the project which is being managed by the PCC.

Fund Raising

A successful Art Café was held in The Old Stables on 6th June when £181.50 was raised. Our next **Art Café will be on Saturday, 1st August** and in all likelihood will have happened by the time this Newsletter is published.

We are very grateful to all of you who support these events by baking, donating raffle prizes, or by coming to the event. The Art Cafés occur each Saturday morning for differing charities each week, and are advertised at The Toll Bridge. Each one is worthy of a visit!

Whitchurch Hill Fete was an amazing success this year thanks mainly to the careful planning by the organisers and also due to the fabulous weather. **Granny's Attic** made a final net profit of £543.00 as a few

unsold items have since been sold at Checkendon Car Boot Sale. The generosity of our local communities is wonderful and The Friends are so pleased that this continues to be a popular stall.

The Nature Trail which was aimed at children, celebrated the biodiversity within the church yard, and was an interesting and thoughtful activity. We thank Sally Woolhouse for organising this.

Future Events

On **12th December**, a Community Carol Concert will be held at St Mary's and is still in the early stages of planning. Please note it in your diaries as it promises to be festive and fun.

Membership

We are always keen to welcome new Friends. Membership currently stands at 67 members.

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. Subscriptions start at a minimum of £10.00 per year and can be Gift Aided.

Sarah Dragonetti, Chair of The Friends

whitchurchfriends@gmail.com



Charity No. 1198347

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www.shedquarters.org.uk

New Basketball Practice Court

When Mark Skidmore, now Chair of the Parish Council, joined the council last year, he initiated a survey within the locality for investment ideas. One idea that came forward was to invest in the play facilities on the Whitchurch Hill recreation ground. In particular, the area around the basketball post and hoop.

As a player in my school days, I can attest to the unsuitability of the ground around the post and hoop for dribbling practice (very uneven grass surface) and free throw practice (no marker of the distance). As a result, the facility is rarely used if at all. If investment was made in a suitable surface, it could provide the opportunity for both adults and young, budding Harlem Globetrotters to practice and hone their skills.

Clearly, there is no need for a full-size court, nor would it be aesthetically appropriate. But a small practice area could serve a useful need. The basketball website dunkstar.com recommends that *“The absolute minimum size for a basic shooting area is 20ft by 25ft (6.1 × 7.6 m)”*. This enables free-throw practice and basic shooting drills or games.

The question then is what the surface material should be. It should provide good bounce, be non-slip, hard-wearing and weather-proof (sun, rain and ice), require minimal maintenance and be at a reasonable cost. The options are:

- Acrylic sports surface on a concrete base
- Concrete
- Asphalt/tarmac
- Modular sports tiles
- Resin-bound gravel



An AI tool, such as ChatGPT, is ideal for this question and the criteria. ChatGPT has ranked the list above in order of alignment with the criteria. But for a low use surface such as is proposed, it recommends concrete as it is much more cost effective than acrylic and has many of the benefits if correctly installed. Accordingly, we propose to install a smooth concrete slab 150mm deep with steel reinforcement with a very shallow runoff to avoid standing water. The picture gives you an idea of the appearance on the recreation ground (it will have painted markings).

We have an outline cost for the project, which is well within the council's means, so the next step would be to seek three quotations for the work to be carried out after the summer. Prior to initiating that work, I am seeking parishioners' views on the proposal. If you have any comments or ideas, please email me at: cllr.peter.burdon@goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

Councillor Peter Burdon

Pangbourne Bowls Club

For those who enjoy the game of bowls the summer season always seems to pass so quickly.

This year is no different. Starting in April and finishing in mid September we are two thirds of the way through already. Where does the time go?

We are pleased to report the arrival of a few new members this year and a considerable upgrade to the internal decor of the Bowling/Tennis Pavilion. Outside a major investment has taken place to the green's watering system - which had improved the playing surface considerably.

Matches - both league and friendlies continue apace - alongside the traditional internal competitions for all members.

Socially we have enjoyed a number of summer gatherings - making the most of the longer evenings and warmer weather. Within that we have run successful fundraising events too - a stall at Pangbourne Fete and the Art Cafe in March. It all goes towards building team friendships - and of course extra finances for the club. Pangbourne Fete alone raised over £300.



The Bowls Club at Pangbourne Fete

Contact **Sally Bergmann** on **07585195669** for more information.

Woodcote Volunteers

Two upcoming socials and volunteer recruitment events

On **Saturday, 8th August, 10.00 am–12.30 pm**, we're holding one of our regular coffee mornings at **Woodcote Community Centre**. We're also inviting anyone interested in volunteering to come along for a coffee (on us!) and an informal chat. Whether you're curious about becoming a volunteer driver or helping in another role, it's a great opportunity to find out more with no obligation. We'd love to see you. If volunteering isn't for you, please come along anyway and support our local work.

Our second event is a **Volunteers' Social Evening on Thursday, 20th August, 7.00–10.00 pm**. As well as thanking our volunteers for everything they've done this year, we're inviting prospective volunteers to meet the team, ask questions and find out what volunteering involves. Drinks and nibbles will be provided.

Volunteer story

"I first volunteered as a driver in the late 1980s while bringing up three young children. Eventually I had to step down, but after retiring I was persuaded to return – a decision I've never regretted. Today's induction process provides excellent support for new drivers, and the online booking system lets us choose journeys that fit our availability without pressure.

One client told me the only time she and her husband now leave home is for medical appointments. Giving up driving and losing independence can be difficult, so whether it's for a hospital visit, shopping or a social outing, Woodcote Volunteers provides a valuable service that really does make a difference."

If you'd like to join Chris and our team of volunteer drivers, we'd love to hear from you. Email info@woodcotevolunteers.org.uk, call **Jane on 01491 877749** for an informal chat, or come along to one of our volunteer recruitment events.



Tea parties

Our monthly tea parties are held at **Woodcote Community Centre** on the **first Wednesday afternoon** of each month. Tea, home-made cakes and good company are all free. Our July bingo afternoon was a great success, thanks to our wonderful caller, Richard Anderson. The next tea party is on **Wednesday, 5th August, 2.30–4.00 pm**. If you need transport, please call our office.

Help with using your digital devices

Our free one-to-one digital advice sessions continue for anyone needing help with smartphones, tablets, laptops or using the internet. Sessions are held twice a month at **Woodcote Community Centre: 2.00–3.00 pm on the first Saturday** and **10.00–11.00 am on the third Thursday**. The next sessions are **Saturday, 1st August** and **Thursday, 20th August**. To book, call **01491 877749** and leave a voicemail if necessary.

Finally...

To request a driver, call **01491 681171** at least three days in advance if possible. The office is open **Monday to Friday, 9.30–11.00 am** (except bank holidays and Christmas). Outside these hours, please leave a message and we'll return your call on the next working day.

Volunteer: info@woodcotevolunteers.org.uk

Website: www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/woodcotevolunteers

General enquiries: **01491 681171**

Spring Plant Stall- Elsinor

It seems a while ago now but I've not forgotten the generosity of the many people who joined in with this year's plant stall.

It wouldn't be successful without the many and varied donations from villagers and of course without those who purchased them.

Together we raised £250 which has been sent this year to Cancer Research.

Thank you all.

Sally Bergmann



SAVE OUR SPIRE!

ST MARY'S CHURCH, WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES

Save Our Spire Update – Restoration in Progress

In the last edition of the newsletter, we announced that work on St Mary's spire had started. The scaffolding now covers the spire, the clock faces have been taken down and shingles removed, and the restoration of the spire is making good progress! The photo shown here was taken by churchwarden Ken Baker during a site visit and shows work in progress on the very top of the spire.

By the time the next edition of this newsletter is published, we will hopefully be able to share pictures of the newly restored spire and further updates on the project.



The Jazz in the Garden event at St Mary's House with music from local band WOTJam on Saturday 18th July went very well. The music was lovely and the weather was too! A very pleasant evening enjoyed by all.

The photo shown to the right here is from the Jazz in the Garden event, showing the WOTJam band in the foreground and the scaffolding-covered spire in the background, in the summer evening light.



Further details on these and other fundraising updates, and progress on the project will be posted on the Whitchurch village website (www.whitchurchonthames.com) and in the next edition of this newsletter.

If you would like to donate, please scan the QR code shown here or contact Ken Baker at baker_kenneth2@sky.com



Thank you for your continued support.

The Save Our Spire Fundraising Team.

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Whitchurch Hill Women's Institute

We meet at **Goring Heath Parish Hall** on the **third Tuesday of every month at 10.00 am**. Our varied programme features a wide range of speakers and activities, offering something for everyone. We also enjoy regular social events, including a monthly pub lunch, and our Knit and Natter Group, whose members create knitted items for various departments at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

If you would like to find out more about Whitchurch Hill WI, please contact **Frances** on **0118 984 2162**. New members are always warmly welcome.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society

Our May meeting about the Goring Heath almshouses and school, founded by Henry Allnutt, proved to be of interest to more than our usual membership. There were members of a book club who had just read Trollope's "The Warden", those who had attended school there, and two current residents, among others. We learnt that we were lucky to have the charity founded on Goring Heath, as it was only after a disagreement with his nephew that the original site in Cassington was abandoned.

The "Red Alert" for hot weather forced us to postpone our Chiltern outing until the beginning of July. On a more comfortable day we visited several churches near Lewknor, including mediaeval St Margaret's with "its ostentatious but enjoyable piscine, sedilia, tomb recess and priest's door, all richly carved" (Richard Wheeler, Oxfordshire's Best Churches).

In Chalgrove we had an enjoyable pub lunch at the Red Lion and we then went on to St Mary's to look at the amazing wall paintings.

After a summer break, we start our autumn lecture season on **17th September** to hear from Stephen Barker about a not often discussed aspect of the First World War - its trench humour.

This is followed on **15th October** by a talk on Gilbert and Sullivan by Stephen Goss, with reference to their wit, and also to Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

Both meetings are at 2.30pm in Goring Heath Parish Hall. Non-members are welcome, and the £3 fee includes tea and biscuits.

Contact Vicky Jordan for more information

vickyjordan5@hotmail.com 0118 984 3260

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:

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**Woodcote Village Fete –
Saturday 12th September
12 noon to 5pm**



Come along and enjoy a fun day out at Woodcote Village Fete

This is a great event for the whole community.

Entertainment includes live music, a dog show, a Produce & Craft Show, inflatables and a tug of war. Bubbles Man will return again to entertain the children (and adults!) with his giant bubbles. His performance will be at 1pm for an



hour and after that he will give you the opportunity to create some bubbles yourself! We also have a raffle with some great prizes, including £100 cash prize, and a variety of stalls to peruse.

There is plenty of food and drink on offer too. There will be a bar, a traditional tea tent, Soleuna pizza van, a barbecue, Olives & Lemons greek food, Açai Love bowls and smoothies, an ice cream van and a coffee truck.

Woodcote Village Fete has a website – woodcotefete.com – with more information about the fete including stalls and raffle prizes etc. and also has the Produce and Craft show competition entry form and competition categories for those of you who might like to enter.

For those of you on social media please like and follow our Facebook page [@WoodcoteVillageFete](https://www.facebook.com/WoodcoteVillageFete) for further updates and information.

See you all there on Saturday 12th September 12pm to 5pm for a fun day out!

The Woodcote Village Fete Team



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Finalist 2026

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Holy Communion the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays

Matins (Morning prayer) on the 2nd and 4th Sundays

All Services are taken from the Book of Common Prayer

Chaplain: Rev Ross Hathway

Contact: 07895 588 240

From Our County Councillor : What's Happening in Oxfordshire

June/July



Oxfordshire County Council has successfully balanced its 2025/26 budget despite continuing financial pressures.

While overspending in areas such as Adult Services, Highways and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) was offset by careful financial planning and higher investment returns, the council expects future budgets to remain challenging as demand for essential services continues to grow. Work has already begun on the 2027/28 budget, with a commitment to protect frontline and statutory services wherever possible. The council is also modernising its property estate, including the move from County Hall, to reduce long-term costs.

The council has launched a campaign calling on the Government to introduce a **Cool Homes Grant** to help households adapt to increasingly frequent heatwaves. It is seeking funding for measures such as improved ventilation and external shading. This summer, a **Heat Safe Homes** pilot will also provide advice and practical support to residents most vulnerable to extreme heat.

The booking system at Oxfordshire's **Household Waste Recycling Centres** continues to be monitored. Early results show no increase in fly-tipping or doorstep waste collections. The scheme has also reduced misuse, identifying traders who were using the sites inappropriately and recovering costs from out-of-county users. Around 99% of bookings are now made online, with the council continuing to review the system to ensure it remains convenient for residents while protecting public funds.

Supporting children and young people with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities** (SEND) remains a key priority. In response to rising demand, Oxfordshire has submitted a SEND Reform Plan to Government, setting out how it will improve services and outcomes while placing them on a more sustainable financial footing as part of a national programme.

Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers

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

THE SUN INN

WHITCHURCH HILL RG8 7PU
01189 843 909



EXPERT REAL ALES

REGULAR EVENTS

LUNCHES SERVED*

Excluding Mon & Tues

HUGE BEER GARDEN



**Let's end the Summer
doing what we do best...**

AUGUST BEER FESTIVAL

THU 27TH - MON 31ST AUG

LOCAL ALES

BBQ FOOD

LIVE MUSIC

GREAT CIDERS

See Facebook or website for
more event info & timings

OPENING HOURS

MON	15:00*	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

**From August, we'll be
opening at 3pm on Mondays.*

New Website in Progress! Keep up to date at: www.TheSunRG8.com

Scan here and follow
us on Facebook:



facebook.com/TheSunRG8



Hardwick Happenings

Greetings all from Hardwick!

As summer has set in early! With the recent heatwave, the fields are already buzzing with crickets, moths and butterflies, and glow worms are appearing in the hedgerows. The river, and the public swimming spot at the bottom of Sheepwash Lane are a sanctuary from the heat for us ill-adapted humans, and we welcome locals to use this spot, parking in the layby at the top of the lane and walking down through the pedestrian gate (as there is no parking at the bottom). Needless to say please take all rubbish with you and be respectful of the rowing clubs that also use the area.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to all local people who kindly gave their time to help clear the 'garden' area behind the Stud Farm buildings. It was a very productive day clearing brambles to reveal many wonders including a third huge underground water tank (two were already known of).



These were presumably built at the same time as the Stud around 1900 to take water from the roofs as well probably from the Estate's private water system which distributed water from a well and reservoir on Collins End until the 1950s.

Water for horses was a major consideration and possibly connected to another recent discovery in the Stud Farm barn. An inscription on the wall says "J Nott, RHA, 1914". This seems to refer to the Royal Horse Artillery, who were largely based around the area including at Goring and Blewbury. On 8th October 1914 King George V reviewed nearly 6000 mounted troops on the Fairmile near Wallingford, in preparation to go to war in Europe. It seems that Hardwick's Stud must have been requisitioned to house and train some of these horses as part of the war effort. Its so interesting to unearth these fascinating pieces of local history as we look to develop these buildings for the future. Perhaps some of this could feature in a Hardwick mini-museum one day.... a pipe dream of mine!

For those who don't know the story of the incredible discovery of the larg-

est IRA weapons cache in England behind the Stud Farm by Hardwick woodsman Tim Sheldon in 1983, I encourage you to listen to the recent BBC Berkshire podcast 'Bombs in the Forest' in which he is interviewed (find on BBC Sounds).

A further discovery recently made when clearing out the old Estate Office was a weighty and detailed journal written by Estate Forester Clive Marriot between roughly 1905 and 1940. This incredible resource describes the planting of huge areas of fields into the woodland we know today, including much of Bottom Wood. It seems strange to think that so much of Hardwick's woodland was agriculture only 100 years ago.

After resting the Stud Farm fields over the winter and spring, they will soon be cut for hay, in order to remove some of the rye grass introduced by horse's hay and promote a more productive and biodiverse sward. A biodiversity survey has recently been carried out, and the results of this, and work by the Hardwick community and Trustees to fine tune the Vision and Mission of the Hardwick Trust, will help inform the future use of these fields. We will keep you updated on developments as they occur.

Upcoming events:

The Organic Coffee Cart is open for delicious coffee, pastries, bread and more at Lin's Veg Shed every Saturday 9am – 1pm.

12th September - Fermentation Course with Tamara Schiopu – learn to use autumn veg to create delicious pickles and ferments. 10 am - 3 pm. See Tolhurst Organic website: <https://www.tolhurstorganics.co.uk/events>

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.

In Memoriam – Peter Lambourne

One of Goring Heath's longest-standing residents, Peter (Pete) Lambourne sadly passed away on 24th June, just a week after celebrating his 90th birthday.



The Lambourne family's roots in Whitchurch Hill stretch back well into the nineteenth century. Pete's parents, grandparents and many members of the wider Lambourne family all lived locally, making them an important part of the parish's history for generations.

Pete married Margaret, who grew up in Henley-on-Thames, and in the early 1960s they built their home on Goring Heath Road on land once owned by Pete's grandfather, Arthur John Lambourne. There they spent the next 65 years together, bringing up their two children, Jane and David. The family has since grown to include grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

When Pete and Margaret moved to Goring Heath Road, the neighbouring land was still occupied by the village allotments. The plots for the houses had been sold by the Weare Gardiner family, with several purchased by members of the Lambourne family, further strengthening their long association with the village.

Pete spent his working life in the building and decorating trade, mainly with GDS (General Decorating Suppliers) in Henley. During the 1970s he helped build the outdoor swimming pool at Goring Heath School, attended by Jane and David. It was an unusual and much-valued facility for a small village school, where many local children learned to swim.

Away from work, Pete's great passion was football. A lifelong supporter of Reading Football Club, he first watched the Royals at Elm Park as a young boy and remained a loyal season ticket holder at the Madejski Stadium until a few years ago. He was also a keen supporter of Woodcote FC.

Those who knew Pete will remember a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, and a kind, easy-going gentleman with a twinkle in his eye, a gentle sense of humour and time for everyone. He was a wonderful neighbour and friend whose quiet warmth touched many lives in the village and beyond. Our sincere condolences go to Margaret, Jane, David and all of Pete's family and friends.

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**



Whitchurch Primary School Update

Celebrating another incredible academic year at Whitchurch Primary School

As we settle into a new school year, it's a great opportunity to look back on what was an unforgettable summer term at Whitchurch Primary School. From outstanding sporting achievements and successful fundraising events to memorable performances and heartfelt farewells, it was certainly a year to celebrate.

In June, the PA hosted an epic Colour Run, which proved to be one of the highlights of the year. Children from every year group had an absolute blast running through clouds of vibrant rainbow colours. Families supported the event by baking and buying homemade goodies, helping to raise a fantastic amount of money for our school.

The PA also enjoyed being part of the Whitchurch Village Fête, serving plenty of ice creams. A huge thank you to all our fantastic parent volunteers who gave up their time to make the day such a success.

Our Year 5 and 6 pupils also dazzled audiences with their end-of-year productions, showcasing an incredible amount of talent and proving we have plenty of budding stars at Whitchurch.

July brought our annual Sports Day, and what an incredible event it was! Our determined children gave their all, with many school records being broken. The atmosphere was filled with excitement, team spirit, and enthusiastic cheering from the sidelines. It was also a wonderful fundraising event, and we'd like to thank everyone who came along to support our amazing young athletes.

The end of the school year also saw an emotional farewell to our Year 6 pupils at their Leavers' Assembly. We are immensely proud of everything they achieved during their time at Whitchurch and know they have now settled into the exciting next chapter of their education at secondary school. We wish them every success for the future.

We rounded off the academic year in style with our fantastic Summer Fair. This year's fair was made even more special as we celebrated and thanked

two very special members of our school family: our wonderful Headteacher and our much-loved Year 4 teacher, Mrs, and Mr Chesters, who retired over the summer. Their dedication, kindness, and unwavering commitment to generations of Whitchurch children have left an incredible legacy, and they will be greatly missed. We wish them every happiness in their well-earned early retirement.

Finally, thank you to everyone who supported the PA throughout the last school year. Every cake baked, ice cream sold, raffle ticket bought and hour volunteered helped make a real difference for our children.

As we look ahead to another exciting year at Whitchurch Primary School, we'd like to thank everyone in our school and village community for their continued support. Here's to another year of learning, fundraising and making wonderful memories together.

Hayley Wilkins

On behalf of the Whitchurch Primary Parents' Association

Registered Charity 1114159

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

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**

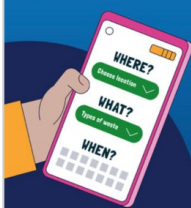
From 14 January 2026

Book your visit to our Household Waste Recycling Centres

You can book up to **30 minutes*** before on the day or up to **two weeks** in advance.

*Subject to availability

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL






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

COUNTY and DISTRICT COUNCIL INFORMATION

South Oxfordshire District Councillor

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

Oxfordshire County Councillor

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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**](mailto:goringheathnewsletter@gmail.com)

Deadline for contributions	Publication month
11th September 2026	October 2026
13th November 2026	December 2026
15th January 2027	February 2027

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

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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	



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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