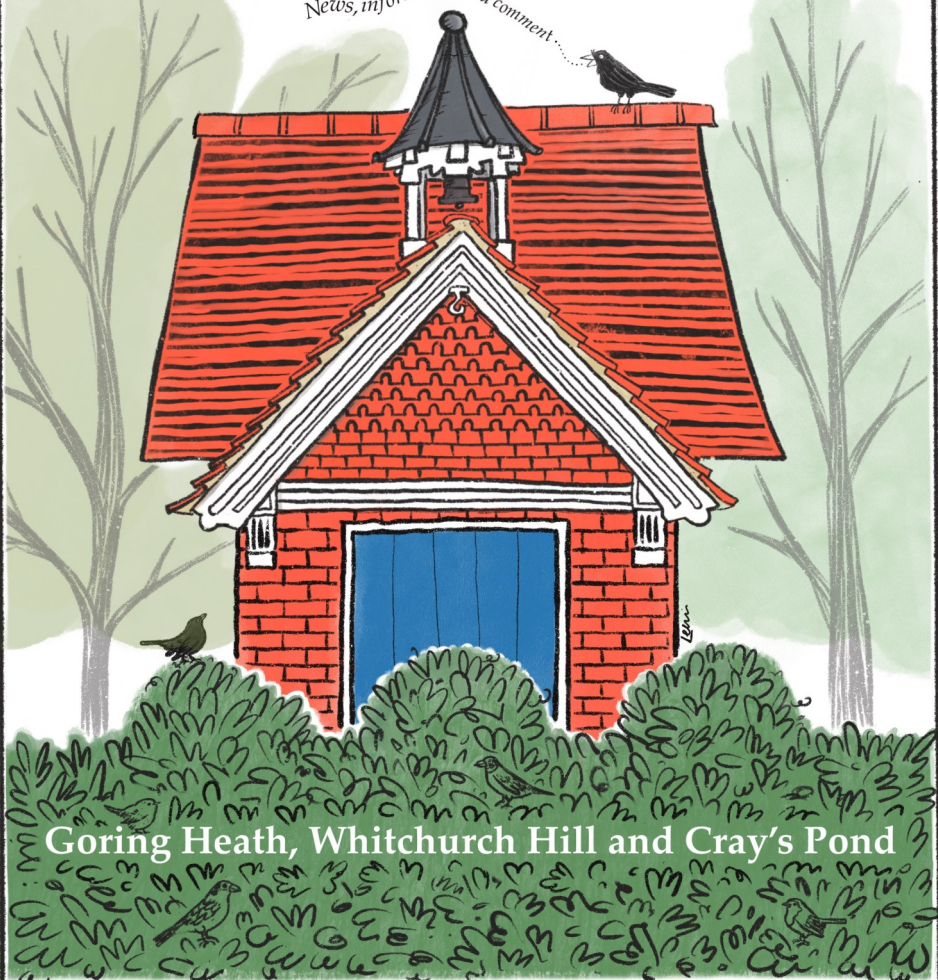


Oct 2026

Issue 211

GORING HEATH NEWSLETTER

News, information and comment...



Goring Heath, Whitchurch Hill and Cray's Pond

goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

goringheathnewsletter@gmail.com

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH
TWINNING
QUIZ
NIGHT

& CHILLI SUPPER

*
Q1. WHEN IS IT?

SATURDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2026

6.30 PM FOR PROMPT 7 PM START

Q2. WHERE IS IT?

GORING HEATH PARISH HALL RG8 9AG

Q3. HOW MUCH?

£15 PER PERSON

**TO INCLUDE A DELICIOUS CHILLI SUPPER
WITH A VEGETARIAN OPTION**

LICENSED BAR

Q4. HOW MANY?

TEAMS OF 4-6

**COME AS A TEAM OR JOIN OTHERS
TO MAKE A TEAM ON THE NIGHT**

Q5. HOW TO BOOK?

TICKETS VIA SARAH DRAGONETTI

SARAH@DRAGONETTI.CO.UK

ADDING IF YOU WANT VEGETARIAN CHILLI

* QUIZ QUESTIONS WILL PROBABLY BE
TOUGHER THAN THOSE ABOVE

POSTER DESIGNED BY @BAHTISTIC

Chair's Address



As we move towards autumn, the parish is beginning to take on that familiar change of season. After the long, hot and exceptionally dry spell over the summer, the recent rainfall has been very welcome indeed. The gardens, hedgerows and fields are already looking refreshed, and there is something rather reassuring about seeing the countryside green up again after such a prolonged period of heat and dryness. Hopefully, we can now enjoy some of those beautiful late-summer and early-autumn days before the leaves begin to turn.

One of my particular highlights was the privilege of attending the tercentenary celebrations of the Allnutt & Baker Almshouses. Three hundred years is a remarkable milestone, and it was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the history of the Almshouses and their enduring place within our community. Celebrations such as this remind us that we are custodians of a parish with a long and fascinating history, and that the community we enjoy today has been built up and cared for by generations before us.

As we look ahead, the Parish Council is always keen to hear from residents about what matters to them and how we can make our parish an even better place to live. If you have an idea for a community initiative, an improvement you would like to see, or simply a suggestion that you think could benefit the parish, please do bring it to the Council. Not every idea will necessarily be possible, but we are always happy to listen, discuss possibilities and see what we can do together.

As the evenings draw in and we head towards autumn, I hope everyone has enjoyed the summer and made the most of everything our parish has to offer. Whether it has been a walk along the Thames, a village event, a quiet afternoon in the garden or simply catching up with friends and neighbours, these everyday moments are what make Goring Heath such a special place to live.

Warm regards,

Mark Skidmore,

Chair of the Parish Council



Whitchurch Hill Village Fete Fund: Grant Applications Now Open!

Supporting Local Causes in Our Community

The Whitchurch Hill Village Fete is a popular event attended by many people from across South Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. The Fete fund currently holds approximately £1,700 available for distribution to deserving causes within the parishes in the surrounding area.

Funding Priorities

Priority for funding will be given to projects or asset purchases that:

- Provide a direct benefit to the local community
- Do not receive direct financial support from local government sources

If you are part of a community group, organisation, or initiative with a proposal that fits these criteria—whether it's for equipment, resources, or a new activity that will enhance community life—we'd love to hear from you.

How to Apply

To request an application form, please write to Peter Burdon, parish councillor in Goring Heath, at

cllr.peter.burdon@goringheathparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Peter will be happy to guide you through the straightforward application process and to answer any questions about eligibility or the types of projects the fund can support.

Let's Make a Difference Together

The Whitchurch Hill Village Fete fund is a testament to what a community can achieve. If you know of a good cause that could benefit from a helping hand, don't hesitate to get in touch or tip off someone you know in the community.



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.

Act of Remembrance Sunday 8th November at 11am

Every year there is a Service of Remembrance at the War Memorial (B471 on the hill between Whitchurch and Whitchurch Hill)

It is an opportunity to remember the Armed Forces and their families from the UK and the Commonwealth, the vital role played by the emergency services and those who have lost their lives as a result of conflict or terrorism.



The road is closed between 10:45 and 11:15 to allow wreaths to be laid.

All are welcome at the service.

Dogs in the Countryside – a plea for responsible ownership

I have always enjoyed living in the countryside, but a recent experience has made me increasingly concerned about dogs being allowed off the lead without effective control.

Recently, I had the distressing experience of watching an out-of-control dog attack, bite and kill my chickens. The dog, one of two large Labrador-type dogs, was off the lead and its owner was unable to control either of them. The chickens were on private property, securely enclosed behind electric fencing, but the fencing was flattened and pulled out of the ground during the attack.

For many of us, chickens and other animals are much-loved pets, and we invest considerable time, care and emotional energy in raising them. To see them terrorised and killed in their own secure enclosure was utterly shocking.

I was fortunate not to be bitten when I tried to grab the dog's collar, although I was pulled to the ground and badly wrenched my shoulder. The dog was not wearing an appropriate identification tag.

The owner did apologise and compensated me for the loss of the chickens, but that is not really the point. The incident has made me much more aware of the potential problems caused when dogs are allowed off the lead without effective recall or control.

Over the past year, I have also noticed more dogs being allowed to roam freely, disappear out of sight of their owners, or chase wildlife and farm animals. This can cause considerable distress and, in some cases, serious injury or death to livestock and wildlife. Even a friendly or normally well-trained dog can behave unpredictably when it encounters farm animals. This can cause considerable distress and, in some cases, serious injury or death to livestock and wildlife. Even a friendly or normally well-trained dog can behave unpredictably when it encounters farm animals.

I would therefore urge both residents and visitors to follow the **Country-side Code**: keep dogs under close control and on a short lead when livestock is nearby, and stick to public rights of way and bridleways.

We all want to enjoy our beautiful countryside, and responsible dog own-

ership helps to ensure that it remains safe and enjoyable for everyone, including our farmers, wildlife, other animals and people who may be nervous around dogs.

A Local Resident

Twinning Trip - May 2026

In May this year 18 members of our Whitchurch and Goring Heath Twinning Association visited our beautiful twin village of La Bouille, on the banks of the Seine, for a long weekend. We are very grateful to Whitchurch and Goring Heath Parish Councils for their generous grants, and were pleased to have the Chairman of Whitchurch PC, Jim Donahue, join us.

As usual, we were treated to warm hospitality and were extremely well entertained by our hosts. We visited local places of interest, including nearby Rouen, and some of us met up with other twinning families and friends. A memorable highlight was when one of our hosts showed off his skill at dinner by opening the champagne with a sabre - dramatic!

On the Saturday night everyone met up for a joint meal prepared by the French committee. Speeches were made and the friendship and bonds that have been forged over the years were acknowledged.

We are very much looking forward to the return visit of our French friends next year. We want it to be special as ever and our first fundraising event will be a Quiz Night on **Sat 31st October**.

Tickets via sarah@dragonetti.co.uk (see page 2 for more information)

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.

District Councillor's Commentary



Last time I wrote at some length explaining the proposed Local Government Reorganisation that seemed to be coming at full speed, and I concluded by observing that I doubted that any of the benefits of the reorganisation, such as improved efficiency, greater economic growth and reduced costs would actually arise. Perhaps government reads the Goring Heath Newsletter, and pays careful attention to my comments, because, as we all know now the plan is “under review”, which in government speak may mean it has been abandoned.

That end of term feeling which some of us at SODC were enjoying has now been snatched away, and we now have full attention on our usual responsibilities. The main effect is that there will now be an election in May 2027 in accordance with the previous four year cycle. I am sorry for the council officers in all the authorities concerned who had been working out how everything was going to be divided up, combined together, reallocated or redesigned. That was a lot of work in hand and to come, which for now at least, has gone away.

As it is, many of the changes that South Oxfordshire has been doing in the last few years, such as putting in new back office systems to replace the mess that Capita had left us with, are now going to be able to be used for a reasonable period.

For the moment however, we are still facing the prospect of being part of a regional Mayoral authority, and the current thinking is that this would be an area that encompasses not only Oxfordshire and Berkshire, but also Swindon and Buckinghamshire. There has been very little interest in election of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and probably wouldn't be for the Mayor either.

LGR or not, SODC is also pressing ahead with a new Joint Local Plan (JLP2), even though the most recent Joint Local Plan (JLP1) is still under examination. There is currently a consultation on what the priorities Local Plan should include. This consultation runs until 29th September, so you may have to be quick to get included. Priorities could include more housing in rural areas, or, conversely the protection and enhancement of rural areas.

An update to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has also come into effect, maintaining protection for National Landscapes (in our case the Chilterns AONB), and also emphasising the value of trees, old and new, in developments. The importance of Green Infrastructure is given greater weight than previously, noting that in addition the climate change mitigation, green infrastructure is important for recreation, good place design and health and well-being.

Peter Dragonetti

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

Dates for your Diary

Whitchurch on Thames Primary Art Café	3rd October	10:30am
Hardwick Annual Forestry Walk, Path Hill Farm	4th October	2:00pm
Woodcote Volunteers Tea Party	7th October	2:30pm
Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society	15th October	2:30pm
Pangbourne Art Group Annual Exhibition	17th/18th October	
Checkendon Pre-School Halloween Cake Sale	19th October	3:15pm
Pangbourne Twinning French Film Night	25th October	7:30pm
Whitchurch and Goring Heath Twinning Quiz	31st October	7:00pm
Friends of St Mary's and St John's Art Café	7th November	10:30am
Remembrance Sunday	8th November	10:50am
Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society	19th November	2:30pm
Whitchurch on Thames Primary Bingo evening	19th November	7:00pm
Pangbourne Twinning French Film Night	29th November	7:30pm
Friends of St Mary's and St John's Art Café	5th December	10:30
Save our Spire Christmas Community Concert	12th December	5:00pm
Whitchurch Art and Craft Exhibition	27th/28th February	
Mike Holland's Quiz Night	6th March 2027	tbc

Planning Decisions

The following planning applications, submitted up to 8th Sept 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/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	Granted
<u>P26/S3179/HH</u> Querns Collins End Goring Heath Reading RG8 7RH Single storey infill extension and internal layout alterations, which include re-modelling of the kitchen. External alterations to existing barn. Internal alteration which include forming an opening in the dividing wall between Querns Cottage and the barn. External works to include a relocated entrance, driveway, swimming pool, and new garden store.	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/S2563/HH</u> The Thatched Cottage Bozedown 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>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		

Premises and application details	Parish Council	Notes
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 Bozodown 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	



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studio@thebathroom.studio


THE BATHROOM
— STUDIO —

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, and have been a bit sporadic due to all the heatwaves we have experienced. Our next work parties will be on 30th September, 28th October and 25th November. Work parties at St Mary's churchyard are less frequent and the next date is to be decided, but I believe some tidying is required since the scaffolding has been removed following completion of the Spire.

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

Save our Spire!

The new Spire is now complete, and looks very elegant now that the scaffolding has been removed. We are so grateful to the PCC for achieving this, as a lot of energy and thought has been required in order to plan the work, raise the funds from a number of sources and agree the contract with a suitable workforce.

Fund Raising

A successful Art Café was held in The Old Stables on 1st August when £140.50 was raised. Our next Art Café will be on November 7th followed by one on December 5th.

Please consider dropping in to join us for a cup of coffee or tea and some home-made cake and convivial conversation.

Future Events

On 12th December, a Community Christmas 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. We are delighted to welcome two new members and our membership is now 69.

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

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



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SCAN ME

The Whitchurch Art & Craft Exhibition 2027

The next Exhibition will be held on the weekend of **27th & 28th February 2027**.



It will be in the same popular format in the Whitchurch Village Hall in Manor Road, and open for all current residents and ex-residents of Whitchurch-on-Thames, Whitchurch Hill and Goring Heath to enter, and also children attending the local schools.

There are various categories – something for everyone! Our judges will be awarding cups for best exhibits in Art, in Craft, in Photography and for Film & Animation. There is also recognition for the best first-time adult exhibitor, Best in Show overall, and junior winners in four age groups too.

The planning team will soon be meeting to decide on the 2027 theme for the Joyce Voysey prize – it will be announced in the December issue of this magazine and on our website. Meanwhile, please get the dates in your diaries and start planning your entries in any of the categories – remember that they can be on any subject. Those long winter evenings ahead of us are ideal for working on your favourite projects!

All the information about how to enter the exhibition will be available in due course on our website at www.wotarts.co.uk and on our Facebook page.

We very much look forward to seeing your creations next Spring!

Sally Woolhouse sally@wotarts.co.uk

Pangbourne Art Group Annual Exhibition

***Pangbourne Village Hall, Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th October
10am to 5pm***

Local artists are displaying their work. More than a hundred paintings will be on display and visitors can also buy cards and enjoy tea, coffee and homemade cakes.

They are a friendly club, meeting on Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 4pm and welcoming artists of all abilities.



Oxford Traffic Filters :

What do they mean for local drivers?

From Monday 28th September, Oxford's traffic-filter trial will replace the temporary £5 congestion charge. You will no longer be able to pay to drive through a traffic filter – if you are driving a car through a filter during its operating hours, you will need a valid permit.

There are six traffic-filter locations:

- Marston Ferry Road and Hollow Way: Monday–Saturday, 7am–9am and 3pm–6pm
- Hythe Bridge Street, St Cross Road, St Clement's Street and Thames Street: Monday–Sunday, 7am–7pm.

The filters apply to cars and motorhomes. Vans, lorries, buses, coaches, motorbikes, mopeds and scooters are exempt and can pass through at any time. Electric cars are not exempt.

Do I need a permit?

If you already have a congestion-charge permit, most permits will automatically transfer to the new traffic-filter scheme. Oxfordshire residents who qualify for a resident permit can apply for 25 free day passes per year; residents within the Oxford permit area are eligible for 100. Other permits are available for groups including Blue Badge holders, carers and community health and care workers.

If you don't have a permit and drive through a filter while it is operating, cameras will record your number plate. During the first six months, your first contravention will result in a warning rather than a fine. After that, the penalty is £70, reduced to £35 if paid within 21 days.

The good news for drivers is that all parts of Oxford remain accessible by car without passing through a traffic filter, although you may need to take an alternative route. It is therefore worth checking your usual journey before the trial begins.

Find the traffic-filter map, check whether you qualify for a permit and apply online:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/oxford-traffic-filters>



Woodcote Volunteers

‘Let's Get Digital’ initiative

We are changing the way we offer this service to make it more flexible and responsive for those people who need assistance with their digital devices or who just want to learn a bit more. Instead of offering two sessions a month, we are available to meet you in the Library in Woodcote at a mutually agreeable day and time when the Library is open and is not busy with other activities. The sessions will still last up to one hour with one of our friendly and knowledgeable volunteers who are all DBS-checked. Maybe you'd like to know about AI? How to avoid a scam or the basics on your phone? Whatever your issue, even if it is a small one-off niggle, one of our volunteers will be able to assist. If you would like to know more or set up an appointment, please call 01491 877749 and speak to Jane.



Volunteer story

As part of our series of volunteer stories, this month we have a story from David, who is a volunteer driver as well as the Drivers' Representative on our committee.

"I joined as a volunteer driver in November 2023, after I retired, as I wanted to give back to the community in which my wife and I have been living for over 40 years. I have found it to be a really rewarding experience (as has my wife, who is also a volunteer). The clients are always very appreciative, and you meet some lovely people.

Talking to the clients, I know that the services we provide are invaluable to them. A great thing about the role is that you can give as much or as little time as you wish, choosing the days you drive and the journeys which you feel comfortable driving. If you can't help with any drives for a period, for whatever reason, then that is not a problem as you can take a break and pick it back up when you are available again. We currently have over 100 clients and typically Woodcote Volunteers provide 600-700 drives per year, mostly to medical appointments but also to social events as a way to address the real issue of social isolation."



Further information about our volunteering opportunities can be found on our website (see below). If you think you'd like to join David and become one of our team of volunteer drivers we'd really love to hear from you. Either email info@woodcotevolunteers.org or, for an informal chat, call Jane on 01491 877749 and if necessary, leave a message.

Tea parties

Tea parties for our clients are held at the Community Centre in Woodcote on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month. We provide tea and home-made cakes and there is no charge. The next tea party will be on Wednesday 7th October 2026 at 2.30 - 4.00 pm and will feature entertainment from our own local musical virtuoso, Tim Valentine. If you need a lift to get there, call our office phone number (below).

A shout out for our cake makers

They may work behind the scenes, but we could not do without our team of cake makers, who provide delicious homemade cakes for our Tea Party clients as well as for our Saturday morning coffee shops at the Community Centre. Our team of regular cake makers for the tea parties comprise Jackie Anderson, Wendy Law, Caroline Hadley and Carol Anderson (no relation) and they are supplemented at our coffee mornings by many others. We wish to thank them for their hard work. If anyone not involved in the Volunteers would like to help out with an occasional cake for our monthly tea parties, please let us know by email or phone (details below). We would be extremely grateful, thank you.

Finally...

To request a driver please call the Woodcote Volunteers' office on 01491 681171, giving at least three days' notice as it can be hard to find someone at short notice – but we will always try! Office opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30 – 11.00 am (except bank holidays and the Christmas period). Outside these times leave a message and you will be called back the following working day. Other details:

Volunteer: info@woodcotevolunteers.org.uk

Website: www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/woodcotevolunteers

General enquiries: **01491 681171**



Save Our Spire Update

It is wonderful to see the newly restored St Mary's spire and the associated works now complete. A big thank you to everyone who has made this possible from across the community and beyond, and for your support and interest in the project.



Photo courtesy of Jim Donahue

We celebrated two weddings at St Mary's in September following the re-opening, and Sunday services resumed from the first Sunday in September. We will be sharing further information about the project and other updates over the coming months, but in the meanwhile, please "Save the Date" for this year's Community Christmas Concert which will be on **Saturday 12th December 5.00-7.00pm** at St Mary's.

We hope you can join us there to celebrate completion of the project as well as Christmas festivities. More details will be available on the Whitchurch Village Website and on posters nearer the time.

The Save Our Spire Project 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

A celebration of 300 years of affordable housing

Goring Heath Almshouses celebrated its 300th Anniversary on 12th September in the tranquil 23-acre grounds of its Grade 1 listed buildings. The 65 guests included current and former residents and trustees, Mr David Woodgate, Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Mr Willie Hartley-Russell, the Chairman of the Almshouse Association and Mr Mark Skidmore, the Chairman of Goring Heath Parish Council.

A special service of celebration in St Bartholomew's chapel - led by the Charity's Chaplain, the Rev Ross Hathway – was followed by a sit-down lunch. Artifacts and documents from the Charity's history were displayed in the common room. Later, Mr David Woodgate and Mr Garry Forster, the Chairman of the Charity, unveiled a plaque in the grounds near three newly planted copper beech trees to commemorate the event.

The Charity was founded in 1726 by Henry Allnutt, a lawyer and local land-owner from the Allnutt family of Ibstone, near Stokenchurch. He bequeathed most of his estate to building the almshouses at Goring Heath for twelve 'decayed tradesmen' from local parishes; happily a far cry from today's residents who live in homes much improved since 1726. Indeed, recent trustees have made significant improvements including installing new back up boilers but there are always new challenges including finding the funds to update the cold water system which will cost some £150,000.

As Mr Hartley Russell reminded everyone, almshouses have been a bed-rock of affordable housing for centuries and he noted that those here at Goring Heath were a perfect example of this.

Garry Forster

Chairman, The Allnutt & Baker Almshouse and Educational Charity



Willie Harley Russell, David Woodgate,
Garry Forster, Mark Skidmore



Rev Hathway leads the service of
celebration



Brenda Jacobs, Jane Scobie, Sue Gair, Pauline Cooper & Jo Wooldridge enjoying tea in the garden



David Woodgate and Garry Forster unveil the commemorative plaque



Garry Forster speaking at the celebration lunch



Ian Smith and Sue Gair exploring the history of the Almshouses.

All photographs courtesy of Jim Donahue

From Our County Councillor : What's Happening in Oxfordshire



20mph speed limits – parish council review

Around 280 parish and town councils took part in Oxfordshire's 20mph programme, with some schemes now having been in place for three years. The County Council is seeking feedback on how well the lower limits are working, where they may be less effective and what might improve compliance. It is also monitoring traffic speeds and reported collisions and can provide local data on request.

Parish and town councils are invited to submit observations by the end of November. Physical traffic-calming measures are not funded through the original 20mph programme, but highways officers can advise on possible measures and local funding sources such as Section 106 or CIL.

A4074 gas main works

Following the recent disruptive closure, the A4074 has reopened to through traffic. From Monday 14 September, three-way temporary signals will operate at Rokeby Drive while SGN carries out urgent gas-main replacement works.

Around 550 metres of gas main between Rokeby Drive and the Pack Saddle slip road needs replacing because of concerns about the condition of the pipe. The works are expected to take around 12 weeks.

Fourteen advance warning signs have been installed to discourage HGVs from using unsuitable village routes, with additional traffic-management staff during the initial set-up. OCC will carry out regular site inspections and remain in contact with bus operators. CCTV may also be considered if inappropriate HGV routing or poor driver behaviour continues.

Bus services will be maintained. I will continue to press for disruption to be minimised, and residents and parish councils are asked to keep reporting any problems.

Goring to Wallingford Greenway

There has been encouraging progress on the proposed Goring to Wallingford Greenway. The preferred route would provide a largely off-road link along the western side of the B4009. Agreement from two private landowners is needed to make the route continuous, and discussions with both have been progressing well.

A further site visit took place on 11th September and the outcome was very positive. Subject to final agreement, we expect a definitive answer within around two weeks.

OCC officers are also exploring potential funding and how the Greenway could be included in future active-travel and rights-of-way plans. For the first time, this is starting to feel like a route that may actually happen!

Goring Gap Local Cycling and Walking Plan

There has also been a significant step forward on plans for a Goring Gap Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Funding has been brought forward by a year and is now included in this year's County Council budget, allowing work to begin sooner than expected.

The newly established Goring Gap Active Travel Group is working with OCC officers on preparatory work while consultants are appointed. The geographical coverage of the plan is still being considered, including how best to capture important links between Goring and surrounding communities.

Bringing the funding forward and starting the local work is very encouraging progress.

Gully cleaning and flooding

The next programmed round of gully cleaning in the Goring and Woodcote division is scheduled for February and March 2027.

If a blocked drain or gully is causing, or is likely to cause, flooding before then, please report it through FixMyStreet rather than waiting for the scheduled clean. If a safety-critical or persistent problem is not being resolved, please send me the FixMyStreet reference so I can escalate it.

Grass cutting and highway visibility

Highway verge cutting is primarily a road-safety service, rather than a general tidying programme. Junctions, bends and other locations where visibility is critical are prioritised and may be cut more frequently, while other verges may be left longer to support wildflowers and wildlife.

If overgrown vegetation is restricting the sightline of a driver, cyclist or pedestrian, this can be reported through FixMyStreet.

Oxford traffic filters

Oxford's traffic-filter trial is due to begin on Monday 28 September, replacing the temporary congestion charge. Drivers without a permit will no longer be able to pay to pass through the filters, although every part of Oxford will remain accessible by car using alternative routes.

See page 15 for a detailed guide to the traffic filters, including the locations, operating times, permits and what the changes could mean for local residents.

Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers

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

Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society

Just to prove that history is not just dates and long ago, we have two meetings this autumn of a different flavour.

On Thursday 15th October a talk on Gilbert and Sullivan by Stephen Goss explores the world of the famous Savoy comic operas which began in 1881, the most famous being HMS Pinafore, Pirates of Penzance, and The Mikado. He has also found some references to Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

A completely different experience awaits us on Thursday 19th November when Tom Crook brings us up to date with an account of Satire, Scandal and the Establishment in post-war Britain. His history of Private Eye may well be an eye opener!

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

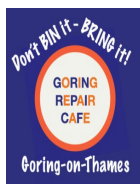
GORING REPAIR CAFÉ

Free repair service by skilled volunteers

Goring Village Hall 10:00am—12:30pm

5th December

Full details on website



www.goringrepaircafe.info

Voluntary donations are welcome cover expenses

Refreshments available in Café Bellême

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

WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL

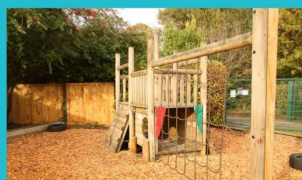


For children aged 2 - 5 years

**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**

Join our friendly team at Citizens Advice!



Are you seeking a new challenge, and want to contribute something positive to your community? Citizens Advice Oxfordshire is looking for dedicated and compassionate volunteer advisers to work in our offices.

Citizens Advice gives people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are and whatever their problem. Our volunteers play a vital role, ensuring that people receive the advice and support they need.

A Citizens Advice volunteer recently commented on the way many clients are transformed after benefitting from the close attention and help of an adviser. Lewis told the Henley Standard: "There are problems that seem insurmountable to those experiencing them, but we break down those seemingly impenetrable problems into manageable steps, providing a route out of despair. This process has a profound impact on the resilience and happiness of our clients."

What kind of basic skills will you need to volunteer with us?

You will need to be confident with computers and have both a willingness to learn and a positive desire to help people. In the course of your volunteering you'll learn new skills and meet new people, helping clients with problems in the areas of debt management, benefits, employment, housing and relationships (no prior knowledge necessary).

After extensive training you will be giving confidential advice to clients, mainly on the telephone at first, and then later by emails, in person or by using webchat.

We would like you to be available for two sessions per week, either mornings or afternoons or for a whole day. We offer a rewarding, flexible and supportive working environment.

If you would like to discuss these volunteering roles, please email: volunteer-recruitment@caox.org.uk and one of our staff will contact you.

What's happening at Checkendon Pre-School:

Look what we have been doing....



Welcome back to the new term at Checkendon Pre-school! It has been wonderful seeing everyone return, and the children have dived straight into an exciting autumn. We've been embracing the changing season by exploring the autumnal woods, building fantastic dens, and looking after the pumpkins growing in our flowerbeds, all ready for Halloween. These hands-on outdoor experiences provide rich opportunities aligned with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), supporting children's physical development through gross motor skills in den building, fostering communication and language as they discuss the changing natural world, and encouraging personal, social, and emotional development through cooperative play. Our story of the term is the lovely One Snowy Night, which supports early literacy and listening skills, while sparking plenty of cozy imaginative play. Looking ahead, we are eagerly anticipating our upcoming Halloween fundraiser as well as celebrating both Halloween and Bonfire Night together as a community, which helps build a strong sense of belonging and cultural understanding. We will be having a Halloween cake sale on **Monday 19th October** from 3:15pm, please come along and support us.



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.

Checkendon Pre School CIO. Registered as a Charity No 1156803

Ways you can support Checkendon Pre-School

Easy fundraising. Please support the Pre-School and sign up to raise funds for the Pre-School - <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/checkendonpreschool/>

ARE YOUR LOCKS BEHAVING BADLY?

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Call Christopher:

07772 111 222

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 11.00am

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

Hardwick Happenings

Like all of us, Hardwick has been suffering the extreme drought of this summer in a variety of ways; not enough grass or hay for the cows or sheep, mature trees (especially beech which is very susceptible to drought stress) losing limbs, and a population explosion of American crayfish in the river due to warmer water.



The increase in drought years underscores the need for more resilience in agriculture and forestry, and the importance of producing food on all the land we can in a sensitive way, as reduced fertility makes Britain even less food secure than ever. In the woods the benefits of our near-natural woodland management are also evident as naturally regenerated saplings are proving much more resilient to drought than plantations.

Hardwick's Interim Trustees (who will become the first Trustees of the community-led Trust that will soon own the Estate) have spent some time this summer fine tuning the vision, mission and values of Hardwick with the community here, in order to guide decision making around the development of the old Stud farm, as well as new agriculture in former horse fields.

The final wording of the Trust's vision is:

Our vision is to be a pioneering, living model of community-led stewardship, where people and nature flourish together, cultivating organic enterprise and food autonomy, enabling sustainable rural livelihoods and sharing the benefits of access to land with the local community and those who need it most.

We seek to address the colonial history that links us to the rest of the world, have the courage to do what's needed locally to respond to the social and global ecological challenges we face, and to learn from our experience and share what works, educating and inspiring others to do the same.

If any of this resonates with you and/or you would like to be involved in the Estate via volunteer days or subscribe to the 'Friends of Hardwick' newsletter, please do get in touch.

Upcoming events:

Sunday 4th October 2pm – Annual forestry walk and talk with Hardwick's Forester Ben Manning. Meet at Path Hill Farm, RG8 7RE.

Miriam Rose, Transition Lead.



Goring Heath Parish Charity

Regd. No 1056772

Mike Holland Quiz Night

SAVE THE DATE

Sat 6th March 2027

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



Whitchurch Primary School Update

New Academic Year, New Beginnings, Same PTA Spirit

The new school year is now in full swing, and it has been wonderful to see the school come alive once again!

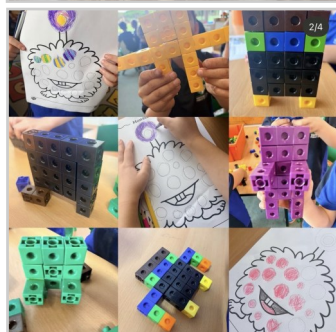
We have been delighted to welcome lots of new Reception children, who have been settling into school life brilliantly. They have been enjoying spending time with their Year 6 buddies, getting to know one another, chatting, sharing stories, and reading together. It has been lovely to see new friendships beginning to form, and plenty of smiles along the way.

Across the school, classrooms have been buzzing with children getting stuck into their learning. Practical Maths and Science activities, getting hands-on and putting their learning into action. Meanwhile, creativity has been flowing with some children busy making their very own "Mood Monsters" a fantastic way to explore feelings while getting creative.

Our Year 5 and 6 children have already had an exciting start to the year too, heading off on their five-day residential trip to Kilvrough. They had an action-packed time, with opportunities to bodyboard, climb, abseil, and go caving, as well as plenty of time to have fun and make memories together. They had a fantastic adventure!

Time to celebrate

We also wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate the **FANTASTIC KS2** results achieved by our children this year. The school is incredibly proud to have achieved results placing it in the **97th and 98th percentiles** nationally.



This is a truly fantastic achievement and reflects the hard work, dedication and commitment of the children, teachers, and the whole school community. A huge congratulations.

PTA Events - let the fun begin

Looking ahead, the PTA has lots of fun-filled events planned for the coming months, and we would love to see as many families and members of the wider village community as possible.

Our next event is our Cake Café at the Old Stables on **3rd October** at 10:30am. Come along, grab a slice (or two — we won't tell!), enjoy a cuppa and have a catch-up. We would absolutely love to see you there.

And get your dabbers ready because **BINGO** is coming!

Join us on **19th November at 7pm** at the Village Hall, Manor Road for an evening of fun, laughter and, hopefully, a few winning numbers! Tickets will be available for sale soon.

Every penny raised by the PTA goes towards supporting the school and creating even more fantastic experiences and opportunities for our children, so your support really does make a difference.

Here's to another fantastic jam-packed school year!

Hayley Wilkins

On behalf of the Whitchurch Primary Parents' Association

Registered Charity 1114159



Charity No. 1198347

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

MON, TUES, FRI, 10-12.30 WEDS 2-5 SATURDAYS 10-12.30

www.shedquarters.org.uk



Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School

New Beginnings, New Adventures

There is something rather special about September.

After the long days of summer, our school once again fills with excited chatter, nervous smiles and the familiar sound of children greeting old friends. It is a season of new beginnings, and nowhere is that more evident than in the lives of our youngest and oldest pupils.

For our newest children, this month marks the start of an incredible journey. Their first day at school is a milestone that families will remember forever, new uniforms, oversized book bags, polished shoes and, perhaps, a few tears from children and parents alike. It is the beginning of years filled with discovery: learning to read, making friendships, asking endless questions and developing confidence one small step at a time. We look forward to welcoming them into our school family and helping them flourish.

At the other end of the school, our Year 6 pupils are preparing for a different kind of beginning. As they leave the familiarity of primary school behind, they take with them so much more than academic knowledge. They leave with memories of school productions, sports days, residential trips, laughter in the playground and the kindness of teachers and friends who have helped shape the young people they are becoming.

Watching children grow from nervous four-year-olds into confident, thoughtful eleven-year-olds is one of the greatest privileges of working in a primary school. Every year reminds us that childhood passes remarkably quickly, but the values nurtured during these early years: kindness, resilience, curiosity and compassion stay with them for a lifetime.

As a church school, we are reminded that every new beginning is accompanied by hope. Whether a child is taking their very first steps into a classroom or their next steps towards secondary school, we pray that they will know they are valued, encouraged and never alone on their journey.

To all of our new families, welcome. To our Year 6 leavers, thank you for the joy you have brought to our school, and may you embrace the exciting opportunities ahead with courage and confidence.

We wish every child, every family and all those who work in our schools a happy, healthy and successful new school year.



Pangbourne Twinning Association
French Film Nights
Presents

Souvenir

A film by Bavo Defurne (cert.12)
with English sub-titles

Starring

**Isabelle Huppert, Kévin Azaïs & Johan
Leysen**

Sunday 25th October

6.45pm for 7.30pm

Open to all

Pangbourne Village Hall

Entry £7 per person

Pre-film drinks available

www.pangbourne-twinning.org



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

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

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
13th November 2026	December 2026
15th January 2027	February 2027
12th March 2027	April 2027

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	



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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