

The Ascott Grapevine



Grapevine Appeal

The Ascott Grapevine is provided **FREE** to every household in Ascott and we wish this to continue for a long time to come.

Although 'The Grapevine' does receive support from the Parish Council, it only raises a limited amount of revenue from advertising. The Ascott Grapevine survives mainly on donations. If you would like to help The Ascott Grapevine continue, any donation large or small would be appreciated. You can give a donation to any member of the editorial team.

If there is an aspect of village life not already covered in The Ascott Grapevine please contact a member of the team to discuss your ideas.

Articles for the next issue of The Ascott Grapevine should be submitted by 1st November 2025.

Articles submitted after this date may not be included.

Call 01993 832004 or email: stuart.john.fox@gmail.com

The Editorial Team:

Stuart Fox, Elaine Byles,
Wendy Pearce, Keith Ravenhill

Content & Editorial Policy

If you have an article, story or poem you would like to submit for publication The Ascott Grapevine editorial team would love to hear from you. Material for publication is gratefully accepted. Due to space considerations material may not be used immediately but may be held over to be included in a later issue.

The Grapevine editorial team reserve the right to shorten, amend or reject any material submitted for publication.

Opinions expressed in contributions are not necessarily those of the editorial team.

Advertising Rates

£17.50 full page

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Advertising Discount:

Book and pay in advance for four issues and receive one advert FREE.

Only if possible, any adverts submitted for publication should be in any of the following formats: .jpg .tif .png .bmp .emf .gif .svg .wmf but other formats can be used.

Front Cover by Wendy Pearce

To advertise in our Local Business Directory (see [Page 64](#)), please contact Wendy Pearce 01993 831023 or wendypearse@btinternet.com. The cost is £5 per year but inclusion is free for our existing advertisers.

Local Churches

Holy Trinity, Ascott-u-Wychwood

Rev'd Mark Abrey Tel: 01608 676572

Wychwood Baptist, Milton

Pastor John Witts 01993 832865

St Mary's Shipton

Churchwarden James Walmsley
01993 830842

Westcote Methodist

Tony Gibson 01993 830699

SS Simon & Jude, Milton

Churchwarden Mike Hartley 01993 830160

Roman Catholic

SS John Fisher & Thomas More, Burford
Priest: Fr Paul Whieldon

St John the Baptist Fifield, St Nicholas, Id-bury

Churchwarden Pat Yaxley 01993 831385

Our Lady and St Kenelm, Stow-in-the-Wold
Priest: Father Stephen Lambert

Holy Trinity, Chipping Norton and
St Teresa, Charlbury

Society of Friends (Quakers), Burford

Nigel Braithwaite 01993 831282

Priest: Fr Clive Dytor 07484158642

Sunday Mass at Charlbury 09:15

Services at the Chase Benefice 2025

All the Church buildings of the Benefice are open for personal prayer and reflection everyday between 10 am - 4 pm. Public worship as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 st Sunday of the month | 10 am BCP Communion Service at Spelsbury |
| 2 nd Sunday of the month | 10 am CW Communion Service at Ascott |
| 3 rd Sunday of the month | 10 am CW Communion Service at Enstone |
| 4 th Sunday of the month | 8 am BCP Communion Service at Ascott |
| 4 th Sunday of the month | 10 am BCP Communion Service at Chadlington |

Ascott residents are welcome at any of these services. Details will be posted on our website and notice-boards around the village.

For those unable to come to services, there will be a recorded weekly service of reflection and prayer on our website: www.thechasebenefice.org.uk or you can listen by phone on 01608 998955.

From the Rector

Dear Friends,

It's a well-worn phrase, but isn't it true? *Where has the year gone?* We're already well past the halfway point, and the summer holidays are upon us once again. For some, it's a time of rest and adventure. For others—especially parents, grandparents and carers—it can feel more like disruption than relaxation, with routines turned upside down and childcare a real challenge.

But it got me thinking: what is '*normal*' anyway? Seasons shift, plans change, and no two days are ever quite the same. We might try to organise our diaries down to the hour, but life has a way of surprising us. Sometimes that's unsettling—but it can also be a gift.

The ancient world didn't run by calendar apps or reminders. People watched the stars, the sun, the rhythms of nature, and trusted in the seasons to guide them. There's something beautiful in that way of living—of being open to the unknown and alive to the moment.

So as summer stretches out before us, I wonder: what new things might this season hold for you? Is there an old dream you've shelved, or a new direction you've been longing to explore? Life isn't just about managing our time—it's about making space for wonder, for growth, for stepping into the unexpected.

As a Christian, I believe God invites us into that kind of living — not always neat or predictable, but rich with purpose and possibility. These summer weeks may just be the right time to take a risk, to try something new, and to embrace the adventure of being more fully alive.

Whatever this season brings, I hope you find moments of joy, peace, and inspiration.

With every blessing,

Mark Abrey

Please Help

It's your village magazine.....

.....so it would be good to hear from you! We would like you to contribute details of village events and activities to the magazine, perhaps with a few photographs and a report.

Do you have an interesting hobby or pastime that you might be willing to share with our readers?

Are you a keen sports-person, including running and cycling? Can you share your experiences and hopefully your successes, perhaps encouraging others?

We always welcome articles, perhaps sharing your experiences and adventures. Could you provide information on gardening subjects, including successes and failures from your allotment? Do you have a favourite recipe that might encourage our readers to try?

What do you like about living in Ascott, or what might you want to change? Let off steam and contribute your thoughts and opinions to a letter page.

Do you enjoy any local walks? If so, could you provide details of what to see, describe the walk, and provide a simple map with instructions to follow so you don't become lost?

If there are significant anniversaries within your family, we are always happy to include a mention of these in the magazine.

Remember, this is your magazine! Please use it and help us to include lots of interesting articles, photographs, and comments.

The Ascott Grapevine editors

Oxfordshire County Council

OCC has just concluded our engagement with local residents on local government reorganisation, which has included an online survey, focus groups, including one with young people, and a paper residents' survey sent to 6000 randomly selected households. A meeting with business leaders from across the county took place on June 28th, and we have also engaged with town and parish councils. OCC also recently commissioned the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to undertake a survey of opinions on how we can ensure that the new unitary structure, whether for one, two or three unitaries, retains and reinforces democracy at a hyper-local level, which could include giving greater powers to some town councils. Conversations are also progressing with the councils in Berkshire to set up a Combined Authority which we hope will be in place in 2027 following publication of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill which went through parliament in July. This will give us more regional say over things like our transport network.

Regarding the roads, we have recently completed surface dressing on 100 roads across the county, and a maintenance programme is about to begin which will see a number of the roads in this area resurfaced.

The County Council has been planning for some time to introduce traffic filters in Oxford city which are designed to reduce traffic congestion in the city centre, but this has had to be delayed because of the work that is going on at Botley Road, which we now know will continue until August 2026. In the meantime we have been asked by the bus companies to find a way to reduce traffic and speed the buses up. We're proposing to introduce a temporary congestion charge in the city, and this is currently under consultation. A decision on whether to go ahead with this will be coming to the County Council cabinet in the early autumn, and if it is agreed, a charge of £5 per car journey will be levied. However, everyone living outside the city will be able to apply for 25 passes per year to drive into the city, so for most of us it should still be possible to take the occasional car journey into the city.

The plan is of course that people should be able to rely on the buses to get them into Oxford, because they are less likely to be stuck in traffic. Here in the Wychwoods, I am very pleased that WOCT continues to serve the villages, and I was delighted recently to be invited to celebrate the acquisition of The Villager's new electric bus, which OCC gave a grant towards. These services are vital to the life of our villages, and I am very pleased that I am able to support them.

During August, I will be meeting with a developer who is building near the station in Kingham and together with GWR, I will be asking them to consider increasing the size of the car park at the station. As many residents in the Wychwoods can choose between going to Charlbury or Kingham I hope that the increased number of spaces at Kingham will take some of the pressure off the station at Charlbury, where there are no options for increasing the parking area.

Liz Leffman



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Coldstone House
in Ascott-Under-
Wychwood



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A day in the life of a Neighbourhood Officer

Dear Residents of Ascott -u- Wychwood,

Hello, my name is Bruce and I am your local neighbourhood police officer, stationed at Chipping Norton. I am a PC (Police Constable) and I work alongside PC Lucy HENDERSON SLATER, PCSO Wes SMITH and PCSO Lisa LAVINGTON.

I've been asked to write a 'Day in the life of' article as a bit of a way of an introduction to you all of what a Neighbourhood Police officer gets up to through any given day.

I personally have wanted to be a police officer for as long as I can remember and although it's cliché it was because I wanted to help people and do some good with my life. I joined at the age of 27, which seems many years ago now, but during that time I have worked mainly in the role of an Incident and Crime Response (ICR) officer up until more recently, when I joined the West Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Team. I have worked as an ICR officer in Oxford and Witney and then as a Neighbourhood officer in the West Oxfordshire area in general, but having been born in the old Chipping Norton hospital, going to Chipping Norton School and living in Charlbury I was happy when the opportunity arose to work in the area where I was born and raised.

My role of neighbourhood officer is a mixed bag, I have various shift patterns which have me patrolling either during the day or at night responding to incidents either proactively or reactively. I can often be seen patrolling either on foot or currently in the marked police 4x4 vehicle.

It's important for me to build relationships with the businesses and residents of the local area to see what the police are doing well and not so well. Hence the input for the Ascott Grapevine.

My role is different every day, dealing with both minor and more serious incidents that are called in to the police and relayed to me via my radio. I also work with our local partners trying to address the local issues of anti-social behaviour and what are the causes of that behaviour.

I will usually arrive at work early to check any emails that have come in overnight before attending a TEAMS meeting with the other officers around West Oxfordshire where we will be advised of any issues that are going on in the area. Once the briefing has been completed the day will be taken up with foot patrols of the local areas, engagement with the retail premises, talks at local schools or have your say meetings out in the communities.

I will patrol any particular areas where we have seen an increase in crime or anti-social behaviour, I will often be sent to incidents that are taking place, which can be low level noise complaints and parking issues to more serious incidents like burglaries or assaults.

I am always interested in gathering intelligence for what is going on in the local area which is essential for being able to arrange warrants which can be executed at any time day or night.

My evening patrols may focus more on the night-time economy, meetings with the local parish councils and then rural patrols acting as a visible police presence.

If you need to make contact with me then please send an email to bruce.claridge@thamesvalley.police.uk

And finally, in the words of Shaw Taylor “KEEP EM PEELED”.

The Secret Beneath Our Patio

When we moved into the old school house back in 2015, we fell in love with its history straight away. It turns out it was the very first school house in the village. Fred Russell told me that his grandmother went there as an infant, and her parents paid a penny a week for her schooling. We still have the original school cupboards where the books and pencils would have been kept — it's lovely to think about what they once held. And thanks to Wendy Pearce, we even have a list of everyone who lived here since it was built — all schoolteachers! We believe it was owned by the Cornbury Estate before it passed into private hands.

Over the years, we found ourselves wanting to make more of the garden. I don't know what it is about getting older, but suddenly the garden became so much more important! When I was younger, I couldn't have told a weed from a plant — life was busy with career and children, and I was just happy they had somewhere to play outside. Back then, gardening at the weekend mostly meant mowing the grass.

We decided it was time to replace the patio and add a little glass extension at the back so we could sit and enjoy the view. We found a lovely chap to do the work, but of course, he started just as the weather turned awful — typical! One day, he knocked on the back door, looking very soggy, and said, “I've found a hole.” So out I went to have a look, and imagine my surprise when he poked his long rake down a tiny gap — and it just kept going!

After a bit of investigating, he discovered what he'd actually found was a well. About fifteen feet deep, beautifully stone-lined, with a lead pipe up one side and a bit of water at the bottom. There was a lot of debate about whether we should

Ascott Grapevine

make it a feature of the new patio, but in the end, we decided to have it capped and covered over — much to the builder's relief!

It's left us wondering — when was it built? Did it supply water to the school house? Was there a hand pump out by the back door? We also suspect there might have been an outdoor toilet at one point. I'd love to step back in time and see what the place looked like 150 years ago.

We'll always know that hidden beneath our patio is the secret of the well — a little piece of the past that's now part of our home's story.

Sarah Tribe





Soldiers of
Oxfordshire
Museum

New art exhibition inspired by story of Oxfordshire soldier's act of kindness to Holocaust survivor

- **New community art exhibition of mediums including painting and film, inspired by a story in the museum's collections**
- **Oxfordshire Yeoman Arthur Tyler wrote letters to the family of Bergen-Belsen survivor Naomi Warren, helping reunite her with family**
- **Coincides with Holocaust Memorial Day Trust's touring *80 Candles for 80 Years* exhibition arriving at the museum**

From Saturday 9 to Saturday 30 August 2025, Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum will display a new exhibition created by local artists and inspired by the story of a simple act of kindness during the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in April 1945.

The Oxfordshire Yeomanry, a Territorial Army regiment serving as an Anti-Tank battery of the Royal Artillery at the time, were among the first troops to enter the Bergen-Belsen camp when it was handed over to British forces. Just ordinary soldiers, they were not prepared for what they would find inside – camp survivors were starving while typhus was spreading rapidly, made worse by cramped conditions, poor sanitation and lack of clean water, as well as around 10,000 dead left unburied.

Amid efforts to relieve the survivors, control the spread of disease, and arrest the camp guards and commandant, came a simple act of kindness. Survivor Naomi Warren, a Polish Jew, was desperate to contact her surviving family, having already lost many while held at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and approached her liberators for help. Oxfordshire Yeoman Arthur Tyler came forward to offer help.

'I met very many British soldiers and I asked everybody to write about me to my family, but nobody did it – only you.' - *Naomi Kaplan, letter to Arthur Tyler*

Arthur Tyler began writing letters to her uncle and sister living in Houston, Texas. This simple act of kindness would eventually see Naomi reunited with them, and ultimately settling and rebuilding her life in the USA.

The new exhibition will combine artwork and film created in response to the story of Naomi and Arthur. The exhibition is the culmination of the *Lifelines* community art project which brought together a group of artists from diverse backgrounds and a shared interest in the transformational power of creativity. Inspired by this

story of a light of hope in a time of darkness, the work on display explores the themes of witnessing, kindness, vision and positivity.

Suzanne Maria Hamber is an artist who works with plaster, sculpture and paint alongside evanescent material like plants and flowers to explore themes of time, change and memory. She became involved in the project as it resonated with her own family history – her mother came to the UK from Austria as a ‘Kindertransport’ refugee in 1939, escaping the Holocaust. Like Naomi, her mother lost many of her relatives, including her parents, to camps like Bergen Belsen. Suzanne says:

“The project has been moving and emotional. Seeing the horrors of Bergen Belsen but also appreciating how there can be survival and redemption and ultimately positivity, from that experience. A kind act by Arthur Tyler opened a world of possibilities for Naomi and for us.”

The museum would like to thank both the Warren family and the Holocaust Museum Houston for their support for the project, the museum, and the exhibition. Naomi Warren spent much of her later life using her experiences to educate on the Holocaust, leaving a lasting legacy which this latest exhibition aims to honour and continue.

This new exhibition will coincide with the Holocaust Memorial Trust’s *80 Candles 80 Years* display visiting the museum on its tour of the UK in the run up to Holocaust Memorial Day 2026.

The *80 Candles for 80 Years* project has involved 80 communities and organisations across the UK who have created unique candleholders, each one inspired by the life story of Jewish people murdered during the Holocaust, and other individuals targeted by the Nazi regime.

The people and organisations who created and contributed candleholders to this exhibition come from a diverse cross-section of society, including educational institutions, prisons, the public sector, faith and interfaith groups, local authorities, inclusive communities, charities, museums and heritage organisations.

80 Candles for 80 Years will go on display at the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock from 12 to 30 August 2025.

About SOFO

SOFO Museum first opened during the summer of 2014, tucked away in the beautiful gardens in the grounds of The Oxfordshire Museum and Woodstock Library, and just on the doorstep of Blenheim Palace.

More than a local military museum, SOFO is a museum that everyone can enjoy, from kids to parents, and to grandparents. They tell stories of how conflict has affected the county and its people, from soldiers serving on the front lines to ordinary people living on the Home Front.

SOFO holds a collection of over 3,500 objects and 7,500 archive items from two county regiments; the Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars (QOOH) and the Ox-

fordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. These are the starting point for reflecting on the county's rich and diverse military heritage.

www.sofo.org.uk

duncan.parsons@sofo.org.uk (FoH & Marketing Manager)

01993 810 210

About the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT)

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) is the charity established and funded by the UK Government to promote and support Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) in the UK. On this day, we remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust and the millions of other people killed by the Nazis. We also remember the many people persecuted in more recent genocides, as recognised by the UK Government.



Women take part in a LifeLines workshop leading to the exhibition



Petra Goetze - Shofar



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15TH SEPTEMBER `IN STEAM` `CRAFTS & SKILLS`

Crafters from the local area including *Oxford Guild of Weavers Spinners & Dyers*, bringing their Big wheel, demonstrations of *Needle Felting, Lace Bobbins, Knitting, and more*. Plus Mini market

19TH OCTOBER `IN STEAM` `WOOD CRAFT AT THE MILL`

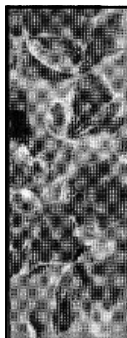
Demonstration of how wood was turned in the day. Plus Mini Market.

Adults £9.00, seniors £7.50, accompanied children FREE open 10.30am to 4.30 last entry 3.30pm.

30TH NOVEMBER CHRISTMAS FAYRE. `NOT IN STEAM` `FREE ENTRY`

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Messages can be left at other times between 09:00 and 16:00



September News – Rivers & Flooding

Evenlode Catchment Partnership - "Restoring the Evenlode catchment for the benefit of all"

The Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) is a dynamic collaboration of over 20 organisations and countless individuals, united by a shared commitment to improving the water environments within the Evenlode catchment which covers the northwest of Oxfordshire. Since our establishment in 2014, the ECP has been dedicated to enhancing water quality, improving flood management, enriching biodiversity, and fostering greater community engagement with our rivers.

Wild Oxfordshire hosts the ECP and leads the natural flood management (NFM), river restoration and wetland creation projects. Changes in land management and river engineering have had a big impact on our wildlife and biodiversity. Natural flood meadow habitat is rare in the Evenlode catchment due to changes to arable farming and past dredging activities, whilst weirs and other barriers block the passage of fish and reduce their access to spawning grounds.

As temperatures rise with climate change in the UK, extreme rainfall days are likely to increase. Recent large-scale flood events in the Cotswolds hit the national headlines, but behind the scenes the ECP delivered one of the first effective lowland NFM projects, demonstrating that NFM on a landscape scale works! Following Storm Bert (Nov 2024) our NFM interventions prevented flooding for all 12 homes at risk in Milton-under-Wychwood.

Field corner bunds in action

In 2018, natural flood management measures were installed on a farm above Milton-under-Wychwood to reduce flood risk in the village below. The first photo shows a group of people standing in the bottom of a field bund on 24th October 2024.



The second photo shows the same field bund in action on 25th November 2024, following Storm Bert. The water is around 2m deep at its maximum and the bund

is holding back around 1700m³ flood water. On this occasion, the houses along the Littlestock Brook in Milton-under-Wychwood did not flood.



Through regular monitoring of our NFM scheme on the Littlestock Brook, it has been thrilling to learn that not only does this project reduce flooding, but it brings multiple benefits including increased biodiversity.

Landowners can also help by increasing the organic matter in their soil which will increase the capacity of the soil to retain water. Many of the landowners along the floodplain are now reverting their arable fields to grass. This will have multiple benefits including sequestering carbon, reducing erosion of soils and keeping nutrients on farms.

The ECP's work has gained recognition for its impact, with coverage in outlets such as *New Scientist* on our water quality citizen science work. We have used our river restoration and natural flood management projects as models for learning and best practice. Together, we are making a lasting difference to the health of the Evenlode's rivers and the communities that depend on them.



Cornwell Estate river restoration.

Our mission is to create a thriving, sustainable water environment that benefits both wildlife and local communities. Find out more by watching our videos and exploring our website at www.evenlodecatchment.org.uk

Ann Berkeley, Evenlode Catchment Partnership Project Manager

<https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/>

Council helps to establish new habitat bank at Pudlicote Farm



West Oxfordshire District Council is set to work with partners to create a habitat bank at Pudlicote Farm near Chipping Norton in a big step forwards for protecting local nature. This initiative supports the government's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy, introduced in February 2024, which requires developers to enhance biodiversity by at least 10% for new projects.

Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning, stated, "This habitat bank at Pudlicote Farm is a significant step towards preserving and enhancing our local biodiversity.

"We wholeheartedly support the recent changes to planning laws that require developers to provide a positive benefit for biodiversity as part of any new plans. If they can't achieve that on the site they are developing they will be able to support biodiversity in the district through this habitat bank.

"By collaborating with local landowners in this way, we can ensure that developments contribute positively to our environment. Not only will this create new and improved habitats for wildlife, but it will also support cleaner air and water, improve flood resilience, and provide a healthier natural environment for local residents to enjoy. It's a win for nature and for our communities."

Habitat banks allow developers to meet the 10% net gain in biodiversity by funding habitat creation and enhancement projects. The Pudlicote Farm project will generate biodiversity units registered with Natural England, which developers can pur-

chase to meet their BNG obligations. They will only be able to do this if they have considered all options on the development site in question first.

The habitat banks allow the creation of new diverse habitats, including wildflower meadows, native woodlands, and wetland areas. These habitats will support a variety of wildlife, enhance ecosystem services, and contribute to the district's nature recovery efforts.

Where farmland is used to create and enhance habitats for biodiversity, the land is often low productivity meaning farmers have additional routes to make use of the land and generate income.

Similar initiatives have demonstrated positive outcomes. For instance, the Ember-ton Habitat Bank in Buckinghamshire has created diverse habitats, enhancing local biodiversity and providing landowners with a stable income. Additionally, the Hor-wich Habitat Bank near Bolton created 49 hectares of thriving natural habitats, supporting wildlife and securing the farm's future.

The Council is also seeking to streamline the process for future habitat banks so that more can be created across the district in future.

Brad Wickens, landowner, said, "The transformation of part of Pudlicote Farm, one prone to flooding, into a habitat bank, marks a significant ecological enhancement. We are establishing water meadows, wetlands, and wildflower meadows, creating a diverse habitat on previously unproductive land and we are witnessing a resurgence of wildlife across the entire farm.

"This initiative will substantially benefit local wildlife and the wider ecosystem. It also provides valuable visual amenity for our local villages. This wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the large number of people involved in the project."

Ben Heaven Taylor from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment: "This project is a vital step towards nature recovery in Oxfordshire and towards the government's '30-by-30' biodiversity target. It's also a great example of an effective partnership between charitable bodies and a pioneering local landowner.

"The project is the vision of the landowner, Brad Wickens, who is passionate about restoring the landscape to a pre-arable state, including a full transition of natural and native habitats from the river, across the floodplain and up valley sides. The project design works with natural processes, using existing topography and existing sources of water to develop the most sustainable and naturally functioning landscape system as possible, that can adapt and evolve with long term climatic and landscape changes.

"This site will provide developers with local options to meet their planning obligations, which has multiple benefits for all parties, keeping the biodiversity gains within the planning authority, contributing to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and providing income to land managers; keeping sustainable land management front and centre in the county."

MAGICAL MEMORIES

A few years ago, over a number of years, we spent several short breaks by the West Dorset Coast in some old coastguard cottages a mile west along the Coast Path from Abbotsbury. It always felt as if we had entered another world away from all the busyness of the rest of the country. A Brigadoon that seemed magical and slightly unreal. The cottages were fairly isolated perched on the rising hillside above Chesil Beach and as they did for the old coastguards in the past gave unlimited views across Lyme Bay. In the daytime the water spread to the horizon, the sunsets ranged in all colours from pale gold to deep red and orange and at night the stars, the Milky Way and all the glory of the heavens sparkled above us. Even in stormy weather the magnificence of the sea was expressed in huge white crested waves and the power of their force as they raged up the pebbled beach shot towering fountains skyward. I have endeavoured to express my feelings in the following poem.

CHESIL

*Glistening tendrils of spray
Caress the rounded curves
Of the sun soaked pebbles.
They rise and fall
With every surge of the white crested waves,
Festooned with wraiths of spindrift.
Driven relentlessly from foreign shores
The claws of the ocean
Reclaim the pebbles
As they slither helplessly
With every surge.*

*Amongst the flotsam and jetsam
High on the strand,
Fragments of shells
Borne on the ocean's swell
From those foreign lands,
And on the highest bank
The flowers of the seashore bloom
In the salt strewn breeze.
Sea pinks and sea champions
Nod politely to each other
Beneath the bristling seakale.*

*Bands of swallows chatter
Whilst ranks of wild geese
Make their stately progress*

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*Through the fresh free air.
A wholesome air. A virgin air.
A virgin beach untouched by man,
Fresh washed and pure
Beneath a benevolent sky.
Chesil!
It's curving extremities
Stretching, it seems, to eternity.

And yet, betimes,
When an eerie breeze stirs the seakale
Then nature takes a stand.
Tumultuous swells surge up
From ocean's depths
And white crested waves hurl fountains of spray
High into the sky
To devour the rising banks.
Then nature flaunts her dominance
And puny man dare only marvel
At such power.*

Surely many of you in the village must have felt the magic of an extraordinary place either in the country or around the world. We should so like to share your magical moments in the Grapevine. Long or short, young or old, please do email or contact wendypearse@btinternet.com or 01993 831023

THE BLUEBELL CHARITY TRACTOR RUN.

The event took place on Sunday 4th May when about 70 tractors came past our garden gateway in Ascott between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. Two modern monsters were in the lead and set a good pace. Their lucky drivers had a limousine type of smooth ride, a large air conditioned cab, their favourite music on call and probably a flask of hot coffee. The long suffering drivers on the old tractors faced a cold wind and the modern road surface had them bouncing up and down like demented yoyos.

An almost unbelievable number of makes and types were on display. It is mind boggling to realise how old they are and their smooth running engines and clean bright colours are a great tribute to their owners and carers. The little grey Fergies are over 70 years old and their introduction brought a new era to agriculture with their hydraulically controlled linkage able to lift up implements for travelling or working and controlling the depth at which they were working.

These tractors would have been badly battered and thoroughly worn out decades ago at the end of their working lives on farms when they caught the eye of someone who rescued them from the normal path to scrap iron and meltdown. They would have been cleaned and the engines stripped down, di-carbonized and re-assembled with loving care. All piston rings and any badly worn parts were replaced but production of these models ceased decades ago and parts would have to be obtained by hook or by crook from elsewhere, scrapyards or someone who had an old tractor for spares.

When the engines started to run again it brought the thrill of achievement, then a coat of paint in the original colours would bring them to the perfect condition which we all enjoyed on the 4th May.

My old favourite, the original Fordson, was not represented but in the 1940s they were active on every farm and produced the food which kept us all going during the Second World War.

Jim Pearce

Tractor Parade



'1950s Fergie'



'The evolution of tractors. 1950s Fergie to today.'

COLDSTONE ANGLING CLUB

It is now nearly twelve months since we opened the lake at Priory Farm, Lyneham.

In that past year we have done a lot of work at the lake with a track leading to the car park being hardcored, the installation of the otter fencing around the lake and gates being installed, the forming and hardcoreing of platforms for fishing, also the landscaping around the lake which enabled us to plant in the region of 380 trees, also shrubs and reeds, thank you to those who have also donated trees to us.

We have been very fortunate to have very considerate land owners in Nathan and his son Matthew Izod, they could not have been more helpful to the Club and are always on hand to help with what wants doing.

As many of you know, we were on the brink of having to finish the Club with the taking away of the lake and river at Manor Farm which was very devastating to the Club, considering the amount of work we had done at the lake, which many of you who walked and sat at the lake appreciated.

In view of what happened, we badly needed to raise money to enable us to continue. The committee decided we should hold our usual Race Night which was extremely well supported by the village and from outside, this enabled us to raise £2,000 for the Club. We would like to thank those of you who supported us at the event, also those who gave their time and for the donated raffle prizes and lastly, to our committee who put in a lot of work to make this a success.

A big thank you to all of you who have supported us over the years, we as a Club are very fortunate and grateful.

P. Moss.

Coldstone Angling Club.



News from West Oxford District Council

Council keeps free parking to support town centres and residents



West Oxfordshire District Council has confirmed that parking will remain free in all Council-run car parks, as part of an updated Parking Strategy that supports local growth, sustainability and thriving town centres.

The Council currently owns and manages 16 public off-street car parks across the district. While there is no legal requirement to offer parking, the Council wishes our car parks to support the residents and local businesses, and help our town and villages remain welcoming to visitors. This provision will continue to be free of charge.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, said:

“Good parking plays a vital role in strengthening our local economy. It helps people access local shops and businesses, meet friends and family, use essential services and enjoy our vibrant town centres. That’s why it’s so important to ensure we continue delivering convenient, well-managed parking as our communities grow and travel habits evolve.

“By reviewing and updating our strategy, we’re making sure our car parks remain accessible and responsive to local needs. I’m proud the Council has made a clear commitment to keeping our car parks free to use – it’s a practical and effective way to support both residents and the local economy.”

The revised strategy sets out plans to improve parking across West Oxfordshire through to 2031. A recent review found that Witney currently has a good level of available parking. However, in other areas such as Burford, Woodstock and Charlbury, there is not enough space to meet demand. The strategy provides a framework to address these challenges and outlines how the Council will work with local councils and developers to explore new solutions.

To help manage demand and improve access to town centres, the Council is looking at ways to improve capacity, encourage quicker turnover of spaces and make better use of existing parking. This includes options such as more short-stay bays in central areas, supporting local businesses and shoppers. Some proposals may require further approval by the Council.

These proposals have been shaped following two years of monitoring car park use across the district. The evidence has informed the strategy’s priorities and potential changes. Any new measures, including stay time limits, will be subject to full public consultation later this year, so residents and businesses will have plenty of time to give their views.

The strategy also reflects changing travel habits, with more people now working from home and choosing to walk, cycle or use public transport. Our action plan commits to supporting Oxfordshire County Council in the delivery and promotion of sustainable transport, ensuring that car parks contribute to these aims. To support this, the Council will continue installing electric vehicle charging points, encouraging people to walk, cycle and use public transport, and investing in low-carbon transport options.

All Council-run car parks will remain free to use, and the Council remains committed to keeping them safe, well-managed and welcoming for everyone.

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Ascott-under Wychwood Then and now



The top photograph shows the blacksmith's forge and adjoining house as it was before 1900. Notice that the adjoining house was thatched, and the only vehicle was a horse and cart. The chimneys appearing behind the forge were cottages that had been given to the village charity and were probably occupied by some of the Ascott Martyrs. They were eventually pulled down around 1900. Today, the land houses Mr Plant's Morris Minor repair and parts supply business.

The lower picture was taken recently, the forge has now been updated, the house has lost its thatch and has been extended beyond the left-hand chimney. Instead of a horse and cart, we now have motor vehicles. The original blacksmith's workshop has at various times been a garage with petrol pumps in the forecourt, a gallery, and now serves as an office for an equine vet.



The Tiddy Hall

Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxon

Founded and given to the village by

R. Tiddy, Esq., in 1912

ADMINISTERED BY LOCAL TRUSTEES

I am delighted to let you know that our AGM, held on 24th July 2025, was well attended with more than 25 residents making the effort to join us for a couple of hours to discuss the future of Tiddy Hall. This is very encouraging as it demonstrates that the village values this longstanding community resource and is prepared to support its continued viability.

The minutes of the AGM and of the committee meeting that preceded it will be saved on the Tiddy Hall website but I will also share the highlights here for the benefit of the wider community. We discussed Tiddy Hall's financial situation in some detail, with a particular focus on the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st May 2025. The accounts haven't been audited yet, but I don't envisage any major changes so was happy to share the report and accounts in draft form.

We actually incurred a significant cash deficit (£28,618.15) last year which looks somewhat alarming given that our total turnover was only £31,161.11. As explained during the AGM, however, this deficit is not a fair reflection of Tiddy Hall's financial performance during the year to 31st May 2025. After accounting for various factors which occurred during the previous year, the deficit attributable to 2024/25 was much lower at £7,580.37.

During the year, we had to replace the heating system at a cost of £10,656 which we had to fund largely out of our own reserves with a little help from the Village Charity who contributed £1,500 to the costs. We are, of course, most grateful to the Village Charity for their generous donation. If we had not had to replace the heating system, Tiddy Hall would in fact have shown a modest surplus for the year. Our budget for the current year shows a modest surplus after anticipated capital expenditure of up to £10,000.

In conclusion, Tiddy Hall is now able to cover its day to day costs and will be able to start rebuilding its reserves. It is essential that we build back our reserves as exceptional capital costs do arise every year so we need to ensure that we operate with a good surplus. We have a long list of 'jobs' that we will need to prioritise over the coming months including a number of urgent items that were highlighted during our recent fire risk assessment. We do, therefore, need to focus on increasing our income from regular bookings, one-off parties and fundraising events.

Speaking of fundraising events, we have scheduled a Dinner Dance for 30th August 2025 featuring internationally acclaimed local supergroup, Three Piece Sweet! Tickets cost £20 which includes a fish and chip supper. Please put the date in your diary and invite your family, friends and neighbours to come along.

Resourcing remains our biggest challenge. According to our constitution, we should have nine trustees forming a management committee but we only have five, two of whom will be resigning shortly after many years of selfless service. During the AGM, Andrew Weaver agreed to become a trustee and take over as treasurer, so I will continue as Chair and Lorna Bates, who joined the committee very recently, will take over as secretary.

I am also delighted to advise that Cathy Ferrier has agreed to become a trustee and join the committee. Cathy is vastly experienced in the charity sector and will, I am sure, add significant value.

I would like at least two and preferably four additional trustees to join the committee. With a minimum of seven trustees on board, the work required to run Tiddy Hall can be shared and will not be onerous.

There was a very lively debate involving the village residents concerning the need to increase usage of Tiddy Hall. John Cull volunteered to set-up a regular pickleball booking starting with one session per week and hopefully increasing to two per week once word gets around. This will be great for social engagement as well as physical fitness. To make this viable, we probably need a minimum of six players per session but I honestly don't think that this will be a problem.

Simon Gidman volunteered to re-establish the occasional film night which used to be very well supported pre-Covid. He also agreed to organise another musical evening following the great success of the previous event.

Other events are being considered including a 'race night' which Pete Moss has offered to help organise and possibly another craft fair.

Finally, we have agreed a sponsorship deal with Ted George (our local estate agent). Further details will follow in due course.

In conclusion, the future of Tiddy Hall is looking more secure than was the case a few months ago. As always, we need more support through bookings and volunteers but the AGM showed that many village residents are happy to give their time, even if not all have the capacity to join the committee.

John Bugeja

Parish Council

August 2025

The school summer holidays are upon us and the village no longer echoes to the sounds of children in the playground. For many, especially parents, summer can be a difficult time keeping kids amused and reasonably out of trouble, so please be patient with your neighbours. It is also festival season, with our area of the Cotswolds being a go-to destination for many visitors. We welcome them to share in our good fortune in living here.

Local Plan 2041

With that in mind, this month we have been focused on the consultation for the preferred policies that will form the basis of the new Local Plan. As you will all I hope be aware, this is an open consultation that will shape development in West Oxfordshire and that has direct bearings on our village.

We have been engaging with the planning team directly and as I write this, we are busy finalizing our written response with help from experts within the village and in partnership with other local and small Parish Councils who, like us, are extremely concerned at some of the wording and the categorization.

As it stands, Ascott has been placed in the list of Tier 3 settlements, which means it can attract windfall housing developments of up to 300 homes, a single one of which would more than double the size of the village. We are challenging that categorization and the evidence base on which it has been made. Whilst we fully recognize the need for housing, as we all know, we simply don't have the infrastructure or geology to support that scale of development. This also stands against the background of the Government's Planning bill, which will remove many of the opportunities for local communities to comment on future planning applications.

There are many other aspects of the 200 pages of proposed policies with which we variously agree or take issue. The new area categorization creates for the first time a sub-area specifically for the Cotswold National Landscape (previously the Cotswold AONB), which brings with it a recognition of the special duties to protect and enhance the special qualities that this brings; there is increased focus on the effects of climate change and an understanding the flood risk is not simply due to the river; and a renewed focus on infrastructure and particularly water and sewerage. However, many of the proposed policies are too open to interpretation or unquantified, which raises the spectre of a deluge of speculative planning applications and appeals to sort out the mess, with all the time and cost that brings. As volunteers, none of us wants to spend our days fighting these.

Many of you have responded to our messages to write in and let the planners know your concerns, and I would like to thank everyone who has engaged with this process.

Pavilion

The other major matter that has been occupying the Parish Council is the Pavilion. This is owned by the village, and the Parish Council are ultimately responsible for its safety and upkeep.

We have been conducting a major review into all the safety aspects, which in turn has led to a lot of work and expense to put right some things that should have been done in the past, or more often that are now no longer up to date. New wiring, new fire alarms and protections, new lighting, new certifications: there is a long list of works and all this has taken a lot of time and public money. We are all extremely grateful to our clerk Angela for the tremendous effort she has put into organizing all of this.

The pavilion is there for everyone, and we need to make sure it is safe, accessible, welcoming and as widely used as possible. We are open to suggestions as to how to make the best use of it for the community.

In the meantime, other works have been going on in the village...

Sand Bin

The sand bin at Tiddy Hall has been broken for some time. Unfortunately, the whole structure needs replacing by Oxfordshire County Council (who own it) and we are hopeful that this will be completed by the end of summer holidays.

Martyrs Seats

The concrete slabs that formed the base for the Martyr's Seats beneath the chestnut tree on the village green, had all become cracked and crooked. After considering a number of options to replace these, we decided on bark chippings (for safety) within an enclosing timber frame and the end result has proven to be very pleasing. Our thanks to Shane Barnes for his work in bringing this to fruition.

Drains

The new road surface, created by putting down chippings over tarmac and letting drivers tamp that down for several weeks before rolling it in, has of course resulted in a lot of those loose chippings ending up in our already fragile drains. This is the last thing we need, and we are urging OCC to come out and clear them sooner rather than later.

New Councillor

We have an urgent vacancy for a new Parish Councillor. This is an opportunity for someone to get involved and make a positive contribution in all kinds of village matters. In a small Parish Council most of the work is practical, and if you think that could be you, please reach out to me or to the other Parish Councillors to find out what life is (really) like on the Parish Council.

And finally

The Parish Council takes an official break in August, though we continue to work on behalf of the village. I hope you all have an enjoyable and restful summer.

Brian Leach, Chair

contact@ascottpc.org.uk



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ASCOTT-UNDER- WYCHWOOD CRICKET CLUB

We can proudly reveal that our 1st XI is enjoying a record-busting season of unheard of success!! Of our 12 Cherwell League 8C fixtures to date, the team has won all 12!

I recall Fred Russell recounting the tale of the team winning the Witney & District league in the 1930s, and we won Division 8B in 2022 - but 2025 looks like it will surpass those honours.

Nearest rivals Stonesfield 2nd were soundly beaten by 94 runs at Ascott in May, then by 6 wickets on their patch in July, and we are currently 83 points clear at the top of the table.

The Cherwell League currently encompasses 208 teams from 6 counties, arranged in 21 divisions - and we have the highest points tally bar none, having not dropped a single point. As I write this at the end of July we need to win probably just 2 more fixtures to clinch the Division 8C title, and if we can win all 6 remaining matches - we'll set a benchmark *never* achieved before in the league, and which may never be equalled. We're also going to need help from the great British weather.

It's also worth noting this success has included vital contributions from young players Andrew Taylor (13), Jake Cooper (13), Eddie Russell (15), Will Harvey (16), Josh Beasant (20) and Rowan Moss (21) - who all live in the village.

On Sundays, Captain Edmund Matthews has also skilfully guided a mainly 'development team' to some memorable wins, such as vs Lechlade, Hook Norton and Enstone.

Individual landmarks this season have come thick and fast. 13 year old leg-spin bowler Charlie Brooks took 5 wickets versus Moreton-in-Marsh, an astonishing achievement in an adult match. Will Harvey has scored his first '50' and taken his first 5 wicket haul. Freddie Ray (on debut), Iain Bryce and Matt Hemming have all also notched their first 50s for the club.

Our small but keen and talented junior section has seen youngsters Amelia Underhill (12), Isabel Garrett (14) and Hope Duncan (14) make their first senior appearance in July, all scoring some runs and / or taking a wicket!

Finally, a very mixed age & ability squad embarks to Devon at the end of August, for our 3 day tour in the Honiton area. This is always a highlight of our season!

Ascott Grapevine

As ever, if you're interested in getting involved with the club as a player, umpire, official or supporter - don't hesitate to get in touch.

Stewart Moss, secretary.

07866 278685

Auwcriccletclub@hotmail.com

Instagram: [ascott_u_wychwood_cricket](#)

Facebook: Ascott UnderWychwood Cricket Club



Some of our fine home-grown village talent starring in a win at Cropredy in May

Stuart

Ascott Shop – report for Grapevine

At the time of writing rain is falling, the grass is greening up nicely from its parched appearance in June and July and the temperature has dipped. However, the shop is generally buoyant, with increased sales, which we hope means that more villagers are acquiring a shop habit. Claire has introduced many new lines, including the weekly plant tray, so that you can fill spaces left by plants that succumbed to the drought.

You will also have met our new volunteers: Peter and Nicky behind the till, and Jordan and Luis as volunteer helpers, assisting Claire behind the scenes and out in front. Their excellent work gives her more time to handle the orders and attend to myriad other problems that inevitably crop up, as well as greeting our customers. Two other volunteers are in prospect, which is very good news, since the more we have the easier it is to run the rotas. Merv has taken a small step back from the shop to concentrate on his prize-winning business, but he is still doing his regular shift and running the Deputy rota system, for which we are very grateful.

Believe it or not, we are already thinking ahead to the Christmas season. The orders for Christmas treats have to be placed in July; any later and the supplies may have run out. All the usual favourites will be arriving in due time, plus some new temptations that Claire and Sarah have spotted. And we will be taking orders for that centrepiece of Christmas dinner: the turkey (or chicken, or duck, or goose...) So make it an Ascott Christmas this year!

Claire plans to continue the wine tasting sessions in the Autumn and will be posting dates.

Nicky Coldstream



Ascott Pre-School

We finished our year with a very successful BBQ and Sports Day held at the beautiful village playing fields. Despite a last-minute cancellation of the Bouncy Castle (due to strong winds) everyone had an afternoon of fun. We were lucky to have such a willing team of helpers which enabled a smooth running of the day and a quick tidy up at the end.

We said goodbye to 21 children at the end of term and are looking forward to welcoming new children and families and helping them to settle in the Autumn term.

We continue to do Forest School at Bruern and have really appreciated the use and upkeep of the site. Thank you to the Astors and the reliability of the Villager Bus and the volunteer drivers who take us to and from the site. We occasionally have to cancel the bus or come back early if the weather is bad – the drivers are always very accommodating of this.

We also hope to be out and about in the village during the Autumn term, you may see us in our High Vis jackets!



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Inflight, you'll enjoy enhanced meals, complimentary drinks, a quieter, more exclusive cabin, and upgraded entertainment—larger screens, noise-reducing headphones, and extra power outlets. These touches reduce fatigue and make the flight feel like part of your journey, not just a necessary chore.

For travellers who want more comfort without the Business Class price tag, Premium Economy is a cost-effective upgrade. I always check prices for my clients—on many routes, it can cost as little as £150 extra when booked in advance on off-peak dates. Most major airlines now offer a Premium cabin, with Emirates recently joining the list and delivering exceptional service—especially impactful on flights to Australia or New Zealand.

Top tip: for transatlantic flights, consider upgrading just your return (often overnight) leg for a more restful end to your trip.

If you'd like help finding the best options, feel free to get in touch.

To the editorial staff of the Grapevine.

I wish to submit these short verses to celebrate over 80 years of attending Holy Trinity Church and the humour it's given me over those years.

I have been a practicing Christian since my early years, I am still practicing, but I still don't seem to be making any progress.

New At for Easter

Er's got a new at fur Easter
Er bought a new un last year
Er's got er eye on the Parson
But I don't think he fancies er
The wimmin behaves like young wenches
And says the vicar's a ansome young man
Then puts on their airs and pretences
If you ask I, it's mutton dressed-up like spring lamb
Us ought to have a uman as vicar
Then us lads ould all flock to church
A young uman dressed in church vestments
Ould make a lovely rare bit of skirt.

Pumping the Church Organ

Which I did for a while, after the Rev. Nicholls threw me out of the choir for shouting rather than singing.

How much longer to pump this organ while that bloody uman screams
Every wick er shout er yead off, showin off to I it seems
The dosey Parson yent much better
His sermon bores ya near to tears
Then he picks they hymn to suit er
Til er screeching hurts yer ears
I recons er's his fancy uman
Choir practice every night
I yent coming pumpin organs
I yent stoppin til it's late
So come on missus stop yer yawpin
Come on missus shut yer trap
The pubs be open now I reckons
Blimey, it's turned twelve o'clock

The pubs remained closed until 12 noon on Sundays until the law changed late in the second half of the last century.

He always seems just out of view

He always seems just out of view
In the shadows singing, now you see me, now you don't
But I have seen him in the glory of the morn
Heard him in the music that feeds my soul with joy
Glimpsed him between the tears of so many sad goodbyes
Before he's gone to the shadows once again
Calling 'if you love me, don't make your faith self-idolatry
For I, not you, will choose who my friends will be'.

I couldn't finish without trying this very old joke in verse.

Wer bist goin with load of muck I shouts to my mate down the strit
Ah, to put on me ruebub he shout back to I
I shovels it on every wick
That's funny I thought as he went is way
I've never been that way inclined
When I as ruebub with my Sundie grub
I alus puts custard on mine

A thought to ponder, do you find if you're like me, when I think I've said something profound or clever, some will always say 'Shakespeare said that 400 years ago, but in a much better way'.

I've been to Stratford to see Shakespeare. I didn't see him, someone told me he died years ago on his birthday.

Final thought, does Putin play Trump like a one string banjo?

Fred Russell



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Sat 6th Sept. The Gerry Colvin Band + support from Craig Joiner **Tiddy Hall**

Tickets £15.00 in advance £18.00 on the door

Gerry has been in the music business a long time, his set is an eclectic mix of genre's. He is a master craftsman at the art of working an audience, he is quite simply infectious & you'll be left wanting more

Sat 21th Sept. Paul McClure **Bruern Farms Café**

Tickets £12.00 in advance £15.00 on the door

Paul McClure's songwriting style takes inspiration from the greatest of sources, from Bob Dylan to Loudon Wainwright III, Ray Davis to The Felice Brothers. A wonderful lyrical balance of wit, pathos, compassion and strength combines with an ear for timeless melody to prove the songs more than strong enough to carry the weight.

Sat 4th Oct Boo Hewerdine **Tiddy Hall**

Tickets £15 in Advance £18 on Door

For over 30 years Boo Hewerdine has been considered one of the UK's finest singer-songwriters. As lead singer of seminal band, The Bible through to his subsequent solo work & long-time collaboration with the incredible Eddi Reader he has become something of a national treasure. He is in demand as a writer, producer & performer.

Sat 18th Oct Mark & Friends **Tiddy Hall**

****** FREE ENTRY ******

Our annual fundraiser (via a bucket collection) with any monies raised going towards the village hall. This year we have another exciting collection of misfits, drop outs & waifs and strays to perform for you. Featuring Bruce Gomersall, Ben Whittaker & Rachel Chai

Sat 8th Nov. Martyn Joseph **Tiddy Hall**

Tickets £22.00 in advance £25.00 on the door

Martyn Joseph is a completely unique and mind-blowing artist. Take everything you think you know about singer songwriters and rip it up. For one man & a guitar he creates a performance with a huge far-reaching sound that is energetic, compelling, & passionate.

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Calling all village organisations

For over twenty years, years the Village Charity has supported a whole host of start up projects in the village, ranging from an outdoor play area for the pre-school, contributing to the walkway in the churchyard as well as replacement heating in Tiddy Hall.

Our funding model has always been that of providing a speedy response, usually where a top-up is needed to get a project underway or unlock larger funding opportunities.

Our aim is to continue to do this for the community and with funds available, we would ask leaders of village organisations to make contact and let us know where we can help.

In the first instance, please contact Secretary Andy Smith email: allsinging1@outlook.com or John Cull email: john@greenascott.co.uk

We treat all applications confidentially and will guide through the application process.

Summer school leavers

A reminder that we have funds available for all young people in our community who will be leaving school this summer for university, college or an apprenticeship. It will contribute towards books or equipment, and it is our 'gift' to wish you well as you look positively towards a bright future.

Again, please contact Andy or John in person or via our emails above.

And finally ...

If you know of anyone facing real financial hardship, with little or no means to meet their bills, please contact Sandy Timms in confidence email: setimms123@gmail.com (Tel: 01993 831870) or indeed, any one of the Trustees.

John Cull

Registered Number: 1099078

Trustees: John Cull (Chairman), The Revd Mark Abrey, Elaine Byles, Nicky Coldstream, Andy Smith (Secretary), Stuart Fox (Treasurer), Keith Ravenhill, Sandy Timms.

Congratulations

To Alice and Mark Read on the birth of baby William John on April 12th 2025



To Emily and Alex Mitchell on the birth of baby Hugo on June 12th 2025.



To Amy Bloy and Callum Hall on the birth of baby Kody on June 16th 2025



NATURE NOTES

If you go down to the woods today.....

You are entering the wood-wide web.

The forest, to a casual observer, is an assembly of trees, shrubs, moss, and wild-life—a vibrant ecosystem teeming with visible life. Yet beneath the ground, hidden from human eyes, lies a



vast and intricate network as vital to the health of the forest as the sunlight that filters through the canopy. This network, popularly known as the “wood-wide web,” is a real, living system of connections that enables trees and plants to exchange nutrients, information, and even warnings, thanks to the extraordinary collaboration between trees and soil-dwelling fungi.

The term “wood-wide web” was coined in the late 1990s to describe the complex mycorrhizal network that links together trees and plants through underground fungal filaments, known as hyphae. These networks resemble the neural and digital webs that define modern communication, even the internet itself, hence the play on words. The wood-wide web is not a theory, but rather a scientific reality, proven through decades of research and experimentation.

The foundation of the wood-wide web is the mycorrhizal relationship: an association between the root systems of most plant species and specialised fungi. Mycorrhizae are the invisible parts of a fungus that attach to plant roots, extending far into the soil and vastly increasing the surface area available for the absorption of water and nutrients. In return, the fungi receive sugars and carbohydrates produced by the plants through photosynthesis. This partnership benefits both parties and, as scientists have discovered, the entire forest community.

While botanists have long known that fungi and plant roots collaborate, it wasn't until the late 20th century that scientists began to uncover the true extent of this

collaboration. Canadian forest ecologist Dr. Suzanne Simard's groundbreaking experiments in the 1990s provided compelling evidence for the existence of the wood-wide web. Using radioactive carbon isotopes, Simard and her team demonstrated that trees could transfer carbon—and thus energy—between one another via underground fungal networks.

Her research revealed that large, older “mother trees” could nurture seedlings by passing them sugars, especially in times of stress or shade. It also showed that trees of different species, such as birches and Douglas firs, could exchange resources depending on seasonal conditions, thereby supporting each other's survival. Simard's work revolutionised our understanding of forest ecology, shifting understanding from one of pure competition to one that also acknowledges cooperation and communication.

At the heart of the wood-wide web are the threadlike hyphae of mycorrhizal fungi. These hyphae wrap around and penetrate the roots of trees, forming vast, interconnected networks. Through this network, plants and fungi can exchange nutrients and chemical signals. Here's how the process unfolds:

- **Nutrient Exchange:** The fungi are extraordinarily efficient at extracting minerals such as phosphorus and nitrogen from the soil. They transport these nutrients to the tree roots, where they are absorbed and utilised for growth and metabolism. In return, the plants supply the fungi with glucose and other organic compounds necessary for fungal metabolism.
- **Communication:** When a tree is stressed by drought, disease, or insect attack, it can release chemical signals—some of which travel through the mycorrhizal network. Neighbouring trees receive these signals and may bolster their defences, producing protective chemicals or toxins before the threat arrives.
- **Resource Sharing:** Mother trees can recognise their kind and allocate more resources to their seedlings, aiding their establishment in the competitive forest environment. In some cases, trees even support sick or dying individuals by channelling nutrients their way, fostering resilience in the entire ecosystem.



The existence of the wood-wide web brings profound advantages to both individual trees and the wider ecosystem:

For centuries, the prevailing view in ecology was that competition for light, water, and nutrients dictated the structure and dynamics of forests. The wood-wide web reveals a richer, more intricate reality: while trees do compete, they also cooperate in ways that benefit the entire community. This balance of competition and cooperation has shaped forests for millions of years, allowing trees to weather storms, fires, pest invasions, and changing climates.

Despite its resilience, the wood-wide web is not immune to threats. Human activities pose significant dangers:

- **Deforestation:** The removal of trees destroys both aboveground and underground connections, fragmenting the network and leaving remaining trees more vulnerable.
- **Soil Disturbance:** Logging, ploughing, and urban development disrupt the delicate fungal networks, breaking the lines of communication and resource exchange.
- **Pollution and Chemical Use:** Fertilisers, pesticides, and pollutants can harm beneficial fungi, reducing the effectiveness of mycorrhizal associations.
- **Climate Change:** Changes in temperature, rainfall patterns, and the frequency of extreme events can alter the composition of fungal communities, potentially weakening the network.

Beneath the forest floor, a hidden network pulses with life, communication, and cooperation. The wood-wide web is a testament to nature's ingenuity.

Stuart Fox

**POST OFFICE
TIDDY HALL
EVERY FRIDAY 2 PM TO 3:45 PM**

Wychwood Library

As many of you may know, Wychwood Library is temporarily operating under new management. My name is Luke and I am filling in for the managers position until Spring of next year. I've thoroughly enjoyed my start and it's been a wonderful experience getting to know all the regular faces at the library. I'd like to thank everyone in the community for how warmly I've been welcomed, the transition has felt very smooth and this could not have been done without the support from Marianne, our Friends of Wychwood Library group, and our many wonderful volunteers.

We have just had a very lovely (and lively) Summer here at the library, and we are just finalising numbers for our Summer Reading Challenge, which even as of writing, promises to show a very strong completion rate, and I'd like to once again congratulate all who have taken part in the challenge and kept their reading going and developing throughout the Summer.

Hopefully even as the months start getting cooler we'll continue to see lots of you at the library. With many dates on the horizon including Halloween and Bonfire Night, we're keen on hosting extra events in the library, including author/illustrator talks, and we always welcome suggestions for events at the library, as well as ideas for crafts that can be produced in the library.

If you have any ideas or would like to assist with craft events, do feel free to get in touch at Wychwood.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk.



WILD ABOUT THE WYCHWOODS - OPEN DAY FOR WILDLIFE FRIENDLY GARDENS

We're looking for gardens which welcome an abundance of wildlife to participate in an Open Day for Wildlife Friendly Gardens in the summer of 2026. Are you in?

Wild About The Wychwoods is our local biodiversity initiative, passionate about caring for wildlife in the Wychwoods. We organise free monthly talks and events promoting our four core projects, almost all of which can be done without even leaving your own home or back garden! Check out our website for more information.

As part of our Go Wild in the Garden project, we'll be organising a **Wildlife-Friendly Gardens Open Day** in the **middle of June 2026** across the three villages - Ascott, Milton and Shipton. Would you like to participate? Any money raised from the visitors' entrance fee will help Wild About The Wychwoods continue to make our talks free to everyone, as well as funding our work in the local schools, inspiring children to care for nature.

We're looking for a limited number of wildlife-friendly gardens which have taken measures to bring wildlife in – from wilding, to pollinator-friendly wildflowers, to insect havens, wildlife ponds (big or tiny) hedgehog highways and much more... the more inspiring the better!

To participate, just email us and our very own wildlife gardening expert can visit your garden to assess the wildlife-friendly criteria. We're looking for a wide range of gardens to inspire everyone, so even if your garden is small it may be just what we're looking for.

Don't forget, places are limited so get in touch now! And do pass on the information to fellow wild gardeners who may be interested. We look forward to hearing from you!

We're Wild about the Wychwoods ... are you?

Contact:

info@wildaboutthewychwoods.co.uk

www.wildaboutthewychwoods.co.uk

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v23

Thurs days only

TOWNEY	Evenlode Village 0900	TO EVENLode	Witney Buttercross Stop 'C' Northbound 1140
	Lower Oddington Village Hall 0905		South Leigh Village 1152
	Upper Oddington Horse & Groom 0907		Witney Sainsbury's 1204
	Bledington The Green 0912		Witney Buttercross Stop 'C' Northbound 1205
	Lyneham Village 0920		Witney Hospital 1207
	Shipton-under-Wychwood Shaven Gown 0925		Crawley The Lamb 1212
	Ascott-under-Wychwood Village 0930		Leaffield Witney Lane 1219
	Leaffield The Green 0936		Leaffield Lower End 1222
	Leaffield Lower End 0938		Leaffield The Green 1225
	Leaffield Witney Lane 0942		Ascott-under-Wychwood Village 1231
	Crawley The Lamb 0948		Shipton-under-Wychwood Shaven Gown 1236
	Witney Hospital 0953		Lyneham Village 1241
	Witney Buttercross Stop 'A' Southbound 0955		Bledington The Green 1249
	Witney Sainsbury's 0957		Lower Oddington Village Hall 1254
	Witney Buttercross Stop 'C' Northbound 1002		Upper Oddington Horse & Groom 1256
	South Leigh Village 1014		Evenlode Village 1305
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Times shown in a green box are request stops only

If you wish to join or alight at these stops, please speak to the driver or call 01451 832 114

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Hiring	Pauline Jackson	01608 811370
	Keith Gowing	01608 811617
New Drivers	Roger Formby	01451 830439
Secretary (and Donations)	Richard Anning	01386 430129

For queries in the event of bad weather, any of the above contacts will be able to provide advice on possible cancellations or delays to services. Alternatively look on our homepage for news/weather updates, or tune to Radio Gloucester or Radio Oxford



Service Supported by Oxfordshire County Council



210 Witney to Wychwoods, Monday to Friday (Except Public Holidays)

Timetable valid from 03 April 2023

Sainsburys		0910	1200	1515	1718
Witney Mkt Sq (D)	0715	0913	1205	1520	1722
Welch Way Library	0717	0915	1207	1522	1724
Range Rd	0722				
Deer Pk Med Cntre			1212	1524	1729
Crawley Lamb		0924	1216	1527	1735
Leaffield Lower End		0933	1226	1534	1743
Burford	0741				
Ascott U Wychwood		0943	1236	1544	1753
Shipton U Wychwood	0753	0950	1244	1550	1757
Milton, Hare	0758	0955	1247	1559	1800

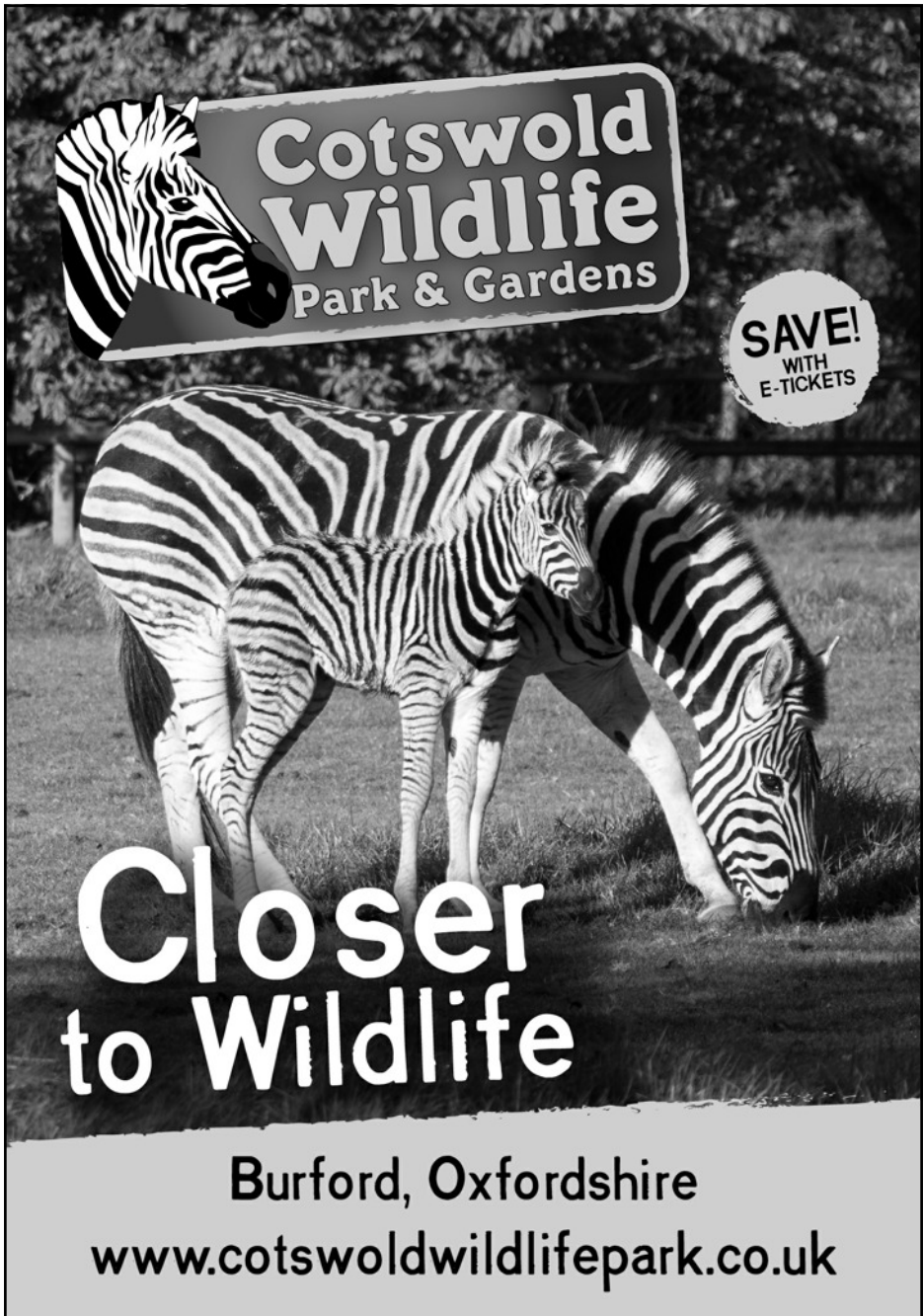
Wychwoods To Witney, Monday to Friday (Except Public Holidays)

Milton Hare	0800	1000	1250	1600	1800
Shipton U Wychwood	0804	1005	1255	1605	1804
Ascott U Wychwood	0809	1011	1302		
Leaffield Lower End	0819	1021	1312		
Burford				1617	1815
Crawley Lamb	0828	1031	1322		
Deer Pk Med Cntre	0835	1038	1329		
Witney Mkt Sq (A)	0842	1044	1336	1646	1828
Sainsburys	0845	1047	1340		
Range Road	0850			1713	
Fernleigh (*Request only)	0907	1100*			

This Timetable is valid from 03rd April 2023.



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THE MAN MOST HATED

Some of you may have seen the program 'Who do you think you are' which charted the ancestry of the singer and actor Will Young. On his mother's side his ancestry was traced back to Edward the First in the 14c. But what you may ask has this to do with Ascott? Well surprisingly it does.

The next most powerful man in the kingdom at that time was Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and he was the Lord of the Manor of Shipton which also included the Manor of Ascott Earl. Ascott Earl Manor consisted of about one third of the land in Ascott parish. Gilbert was married to Edward's daughter Joan of Acre. Edward was in debt to a certain Hugh le Despenser the Elder and to settle that debt in 1306 Edward arranged for his granddaughter Eleanor, Gilbert's daughter, to be married to Hugh le Despenser the Elder's son Hugh le Despenser the Younger. Hugh the Younger was 19, Eleanor 14. Eleanor produced her first child at 16. In twenty years of marriage she had nine more surviving children.

Edward I died in 1307 and was succeeded by his son Edward II. A great favourite of Edward II was Piers Gavaston who was rumoured to be his lover. Piers was totally disliked by numerous other aristocrats because of his influence on the king. The situation eventually led to Piers being killed. By that time Hugh le Despenser the Younger was seeking power assisted by the fact that his wife had succeeded to part of her father's inheritance following his death. This inheritance included Ascott Earl and it was also believed that Hugh bought the Manor of Ascott Doyley so he may have had control over the whole village. This lasted for about four years.

Hugh however was not a liked man. He was known to be arrogant, avaricious and cruel and a great power seeker. With his rise in status he soon insinuated himself into the favours of Edward II which ultimately led to increasing influence over the monarch resulting in Hugh being even greater hated by his compatriots than the late Piers Gavaston. At one point Edward II and Hugh were forced to flee abroad and although Edward II ultimately returned to his throne, Hugh spent two years as a pirate in the English Channel amassing himself an even greater fortune. Eventually Hugh returned to Edward's side but hatred continually increased against the two and when Isabella, Edward's wife, led a rebellion against her husband with the help of her lover Roger Mortimer, the two were captured. Edward II was ignominiously put to death at Berkeley Castle. Hugh le Despenser the Elder was killed but all England, rich and poor alike, wanted Hugh le Despenser the Younger put on trial for all his infamous misdeeds. In 1326 he was convicted of numerous crimes and his lands and properties were confiscated. Amongst other atrocities he was hung, drawn and quartered. The various parts of his body were sent to be displayed at a number of cities in the country.

Eleanor was sent to the Tower for two years and sadly three of her young daughters, barely children at the time, were sent to three different nunneries where they remained for the rest of their lives. History did not treat medieval women very well!

In 1330 four years after Hugh the Younger was put to death, Eleanor was allowed to collect his surviving body parts, probably just a head and a few bones, and deposit them in an elaborate tomb in Tewkesbury Abbey, part of her father's inheritance of Gloucester, where the tomb can still be seen today.

Eleanor remarried whether by her own choice or perhaps enforced upon her and had another son. She eventually managed to reclaim some of her land when her cousin Edward III became king. She died in 1337. Her eldest son, another Hugh le Despenser was later restored to royal favour but whether his land then included Ascott is unknown.

I wonder did such a hated man or indeed Eleanor his wife ever walk or ride the roadways of Ascott, visit Ascott Manor or step over the threshold of Ascott Church?

Wendy Pearse



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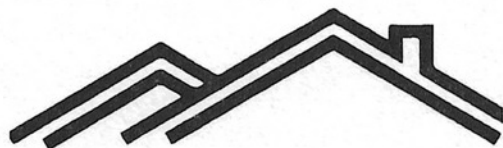
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FarmED

FarmED Wins Prestigious Cateys Sustainable Business Award

10th July 2024

FarmED, the regenerative demonstration farm, Cafe and Conference Barn near Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire, has scooped the prestigious Cateys award for Sustainable Business (SME), sponsored by Tork.

The Cateys, held in partnership with Square, are judged by industry peers and honour exceptional talent and pioneering businesses within the hospitality industry. The winners received their awards at a ceremony at JW Marriott Grosvenor House London on Monday night. Guests at the Cateys awards enjoyed a three-course meal designed by last year's Chef Award winner, Aktar Islam.

The Caterer editor James Stagg said: "It's been incredibly special to welcome some of the country's top operators back to Grosvenor House to celebrate the best of the hospitality industry. This year's winners showcase the breadth of talent across the sector, whether it's large contract caterers, independent restaurateurs or hotel managers making a difference for their teams."

This year, the Cateys launched two new Sustainable Business Awards to recognise the continued importance of sustainable business practices.

Caroline Baldwin, deputy editor at *The Caterer*, said: "Judges have enjoyed deliberating over more and more hospitality businesses all going above and beyond to do their bit for the environment."

What really caught the judges' attention was that FarmED is using its sustainability agenda to gain a competitive advantage in a difficult landscape for hospitality. While its events attract more than 30,000 visitors a year, it's the Café's sustainable practices that are driving revenues as well as savings on the bottom line. Café turnover doubled in 2024 compared to 2023 as more and more people became aware of its nutritious and delicious menus. But thanks to its no waste food system and careful menu planning, the team managed to meet this demand with only an 11% increase in food costs. Other inspired initiatives include installing a composting toilet, installing sensor LEDs, insulating buildings with English sheep's wool and heating only when necessary via an air source heat pump.

Judge Danny Pecorelli, from Exclusive Collection commended FarmED: "An inspirational winner, bursting with innovation, while delivering a beautifully curated educational customer experience."

Commenting on FarmED's win, General Manager, Sally Pullen said:

'The team at FarmED are over the moon to have been awarded a Catey - the most prestigious of awards in the hospitality industry. It's great to show that even a tiny business can make a huge difference in building a sustainable future.

'We would love to share experiences with other organisations - together we can bring about positive changes to our food systems, enabling us to produce delicious, nutrient dense food without wrecking our planet.'

One giant step for Real Regenerative Food,' said FarmED Founder, Ian Wilkinson. That's put us on the food map!'

Wedding Blessing for the Tribe Family



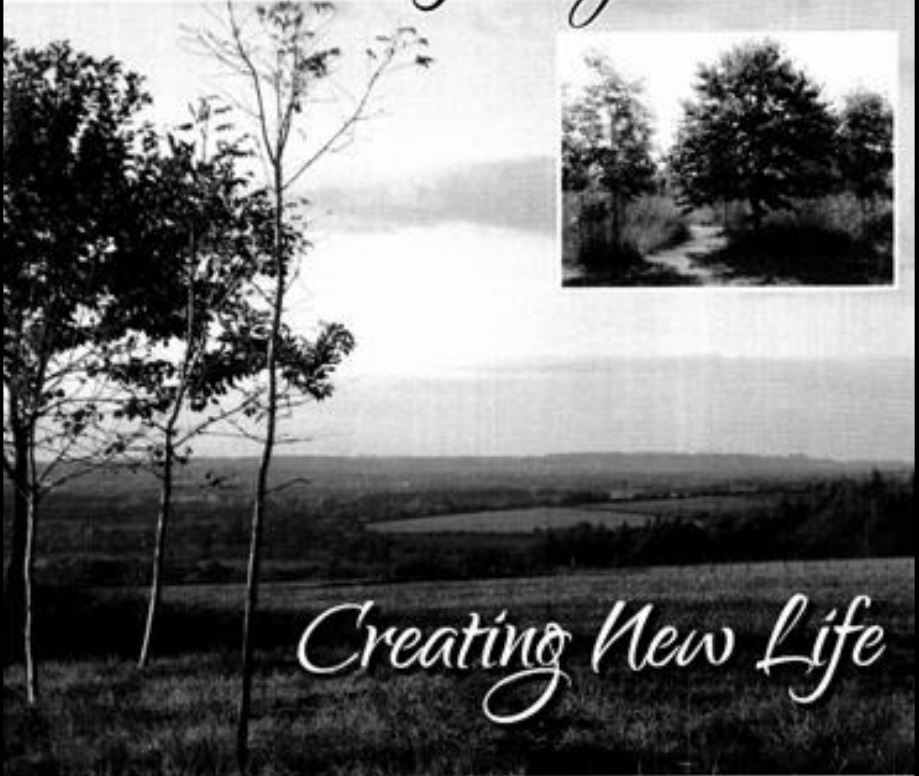
Wedding blessing for Henry Tribe & James Mabbutt

Henry is the son of Mark and Sarah Tribe of the Green

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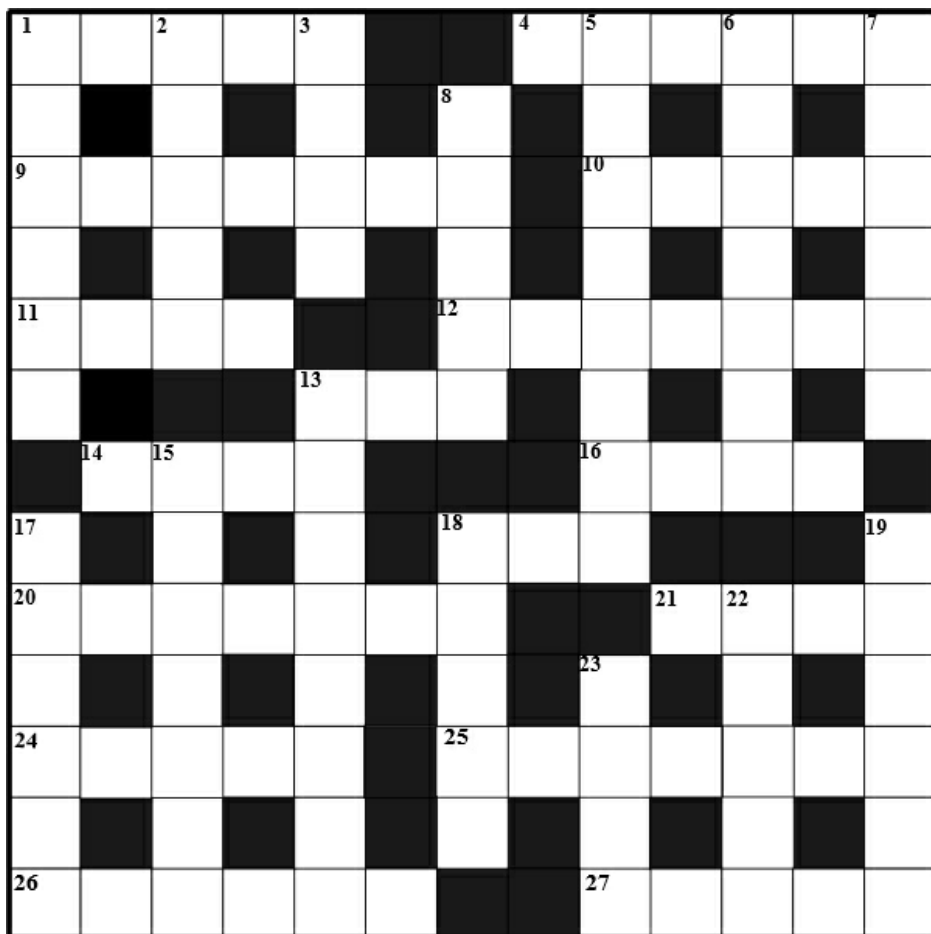
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Crossword Puzzle



Across

- 1 Inscribe (5)
- 4 Sounded dejected(6)
- 9 Pasta dish (7)
- 10 Frequently (5)
- 11 Second-hand (4)
- 12 Detests (7)
- 13 Hard; place (3)
- 14 Beat (anag.) (4)
- 16 Roster (4)
- 18 Produce eggs (3)
- 20 Defeat (7)
- 24 Denoting four (prefix) (5)
- 25 Military man (7)
- 26 Mock (6)
- 27 Discrimination (5)

Down

- 1 Marine mammal (6)
- 2 Publication (5)
- 3 Border (4)
- 5 Adroitly (anag.) (8)
- 6 Axe (7)
- 7 Ruler (6)
- 8 Traded (5)
- 13 Flag (8)
- 15 Smoked herring (7)
- 17 Asserted (6)
- 18 minimum (5)
- 19 Ordain (6)
- 22 Zodiacal (5)
- 21 Office furniture (4)
- 23 Boring; apartment (4)

Solutions to Crossword in Edition 126

Across

- 1 Lead
- 5 Ding
- 7 Article
- 8 Definite
- 10 Rift
- 12 Warm
- 14 Requital
- 16 Misjudge
- 17 Grub
- 19 Alga
- 18 Jets
- 19 Detached
- 22 In front
- 23 Zinc
- 24 Yolk

Down

- 1 Loud
- 2 Dali
- 3 Stair rod
- 4 Acre
- 5 Decrying
- 6 Glut
- 9 Examine
- 11 Feature
- 13 Majestic
- 15 Question
- 18 Jazz
- 19 Daft
- 20 City
- 21 Desk

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Events Calendar - 2025

Date	Time	Event	Venue
August 30 th	7.30pm	Three Piece Sweet (TH Fund Raiser)	Tiddy Hall
September 6 th	10.00am	Coffee at the Mill	The Mill OX7 6AP
September 6 th	7.30pm	Gerry Colvin Band	Tiddy Hall
September 7 th	2.00pm	Tea Dance	Tiddy Hall
September 9 th	7:30pm	Parish Council Meeting	Tiddy Hall
October 4 th	10.00am	Coffee at the Mill	The Mill OX7 6AP
October 4 th	7.30pm	Boo Hewerdine	Tiddy Hall
October 5 th	2.00pm	Tea Dance	Tiddy Hall
October 14 th	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting	Tiddy Hall
October 18 th	7.30pm	Mark & Friends (TH Fund Raiser)	Tiddy Hall
October 25 th	7.30pm	Race Night (Fishing Club Fund Raiser)	Tiddy Hall
November 1 st	10.00am	Coffee at the Mill	The Mill OX7 6AP
November 2 nd	2.00pm	Tea Dance	Tiddy Hall
November 8 th	7.30pm	Martyn Joseph	Tiddy Hall
November 11 th	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting	Tiddy Hall
December 6 th	10.00pm	Coffee at the Mill	The Mill OX7 6AP
December 9 th	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting	Tiddy Hall
December 13 th	7.30pm	Donnelly & South's Christmas Cracker	Tiddy Hall
December 14 th	2.00pm	Tea Dance	Tiddy Hall
December 24 th	6.00pm	Carols on the Green	Village Green

There is a Post Office at Tiddy Hall every Friday between 2.00 and 3.45pm