

# YARNTON

FEBRUARY  
2026

# VILLAGE

# NEWS

## Editorial Committee:

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[www.facebook.com/Yarnton](http://www.facebook.com/Yarnton) Village Community Group

## CALENDAR FOR THE MONTH

### Scouts - all open to both boys and girls

Mondays                      Cubs aged 8–10, 6.30 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
                                    Explorers aged 14–18, 8.15 p.m. – 9.15 p.m.

Wednesdays                Beavers aged 6–8, 5 p.m. – 6.15 p.m.

Fridays                        Scouts aged 10–14, 7 p.m. – 8.45 p.m.

### Girl Guiding

Tuesdays                    Guides aged 10–14, 6.30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Wednesdays                Brownies aged 7–10, 6.30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>                    Indoor Bowls Club, Village Hall, 10 a.m. (*and every Monday*)

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>                    Community Drop In, Village Hall, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.  
(*and every Monday*)

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>                    Yarnton Band, 7.30 p.m. - 8.45 p.m. (*and every Monday, except Bank Holidays*)

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>              Lunch Club, Village Hall, 1 p.m.

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>                   Yarnton Band Learners and Training Band, 6.45 p.m. - 7.25 p.m.

                                    Senior Band, 7.30 p.m. - 8.45 p.m. (*and every Thursday*)

Friday 6<sup>th</sup>                     Copy date March Village News

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>             Parish Council Meeting, Village Hall, 6.30 p.m.

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>                W.I. Village Hall, 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup>             Lunch Club, Village Hall, 1 p.m.

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>                Gardening Club, Village Hall, 7.30 p.m.

### St. Bartholomew's Church

#### Regular services

Sundays                      8 a.m. Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)  
                                    11 a.m. Parish Communion, with Junior Church, followed by coffee

Wednesdays                9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

Morning Prayer             Monday – Thursday, 8.30 a.m.

Evening Prayer             Monday – Thursday, 5.30 p.m.

**On Facebook**              Sundays, 9.30 a.m. Sunday Eucharist

## Advertising Rates

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Donations towards our running costs will be gratefully received at any time. The bank details are: Yarnton Village News, Sort code 09 01 54, Account No. 42646089.

## Copy Deadline for March Issue

Material for inclusion in the March Newsletter should be received by midday on **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February**.

Copy should be e-mailed to: [ruth@astall.com](mailto:ruth@astall.com) and [maryclarke2305@googlemail.com](mailto:maryclarke2305@googlemail.com)

or delivered to Mrs. Ruth Astall, 19 The Spears, tel. 372637.

The Editorial Committee reserves the right to cut, edit, or omit articles, or refuse advertisements for reasons of space limitation, suitability, etc. Their decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into.

Copy date for the April issue is **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March**.

## YARNTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Parish Councillor Vacancy

Yarnton Parish Council is seeking enthusiastic and community-minded residents to join the Council. This is a voluntary role that offers opportunities to help shape local services, and represent the interests of residents.

As a Parish Councillor, you will work with fellow Council members to help improve community facilities, consider planning matters, support local initiatives and help make Yarnton a better place to live.

No previous experience is required – just an interest in local issues, the ability to listen to residents and work collaboratively to help improve local issues.

If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please either contact the Clerk via the contact us page on our website, or attend the next Parish Council meeting.

For further information, and to find out more please visit [www.yarnton-pc.gov.uk/become-a-councillor](http://www.yarnton-pc.gov.uk/become-a-councillor)

[www.yarnton-pc.gov.uk](http://www.yarnton-pc.gov.uk)



To all of our amazing Friends and Neighbours,  
We would like to say a massive thank you and HUGE HUGS to everyone of you for the kindness and caring nature that you showed us when our beautiful, lovely, caring son and brother was taken from us in such a cruel and careless way.

Matthew would have been so appreciative, as we are, for the outpouring of support that you have all shown to us.

Please don't be strangers, come and have a chat, hug or shoulder to cry on. You will be most welcome.

Thank you again from the bottom of our hearts.  
Love and Best Wishes,

Sue, Dave, Megan and Melanie x

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## Rutten Lane Play Park Renewal Project – Community Update

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Park Renewal Project survey. A fantastic 435 people shared their views, helping to build a clear picture of how the park is used and valued by the community, and where priorities lie for the future.

The survey showed strong support for park renewal. Features such as the zip wire, open green space, swings and climbing equipment are clearly well loved. Many respondents highlighted areas needing attention, including worn or muddy surfaces, ageing or damaged equipment, poor lighting, and a lack of facilities for older children and teenagers.

**Outdoor fitness equipment** also emerged as a key priority, and we are delighted to confirm that funding specifically allocated for this purpose has been identified through local housing development contributions. This funding will be used to deliver new outdoor gym equipment at the park.

We are now seeking supplier quotes, and further community engagement will take place before final decisions are made.

### **SAVE THE DATE – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May**

Yarnton Play Park, Rutten Lane. Please save the date for what we believe will be Yarnton's **very first Village Fete!** Plans include a raffle, craft and local business stalls, and we are hoping to enjoy performances from local groups. The fete will bring people together while raising funds to support the ongoing play park renewal.

Volunteers to help with organising and on the day are very welcome. If you'd like to get involved, please get in touch - we'd love to hear from you:

[yarntonparkrenewal@gmail.com](mailto:yarntonparkrenewal@gmail.com).

We'll share further details as plans for the fete develop.

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## DEMENTIA CAFÉ

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Please contact us for further information and to book a place:

T: 01865 259555 | E: [info@florynhousecare.co.uk](mailto:info@florynhousecare.co.uk)

**[www.florynhousecare.co.uk](http://www.florynhousecare.co.uk)**  
Sandycroft Close, Yarnton, Kidlington OX5 1WF

## Joy and Sorrow – Yarnton Band



*Merfyn Hughes – Photo: Hughes family*

The sorrow comes from news that a former conductor has died, and Lynne Whitley pays tribute to him below: 'The band were sad to hear that Merfyn Hughes passed away on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. Merfyn conducted the band from 1970 to 1974 and was one of the band's most successful conductors on the National contesting stage. During his time the band qualified for the National Finals 4<sup>th</sup> section in 1970 and 1972 and 3<sup>rd</sup> section in 1973 and 1974, which included the band winning the London & Southern Counties regional contest in 1972 (4<sup>th</sup> section) and 1974 (3<sup>rd</sup> section). Several ex-Yarnton players were still in touch with him and left messages on his Facebook page. Merfyn also played with Pressed Steel Fisher and Morris Motors Band in his younger days. Our thoughts are with his wife Margaret who he'd been married to for over 62 years.'

The joy comes from a happier event in the photo below of James Pye leaving the village church after our Carol concert. His mother comments: 'We think James looks like Mr. Bump, from the Mr. Men, from the back when he's got his tuba case on!!'



*Photo: Tanya Smith*

On 28<sup>th</sup> February we will be playing in the District's Winter contest at Cokethorpe School.

*Peter Hewis*

### **Reporting Flooding Incidences**

It is crucial to report any issues with flooding to the relevant authorities, in order that the matter is recorded.

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For more information, please call our Combe office on 01865 987781, visit [www.theburnsidepartnership.com](http://www.theburnsidepartnership.com) or email [anna.boucher@theburnsidepartnership.com](mailto:anna.boucher@theburnsidepartnership.com)



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## How to make sure your pets will be OK after you die

Right. We Brits adore our pets. And if we're being honest, we often like them a lot more than actual people. So, it's only natural to think about what will happen to them when we're no longer around.

Now, you might assume that, given how much we dote on our pets, the law treats them with the same respect as, say, a distant relative. But no. Under the law, your beloved pooch is treated as... a possession. Like a rusty old lawnmower or that ridiculous ceramic gnome collection you keep insisting is 'vintage'.

With pets having no legal personality, you can't leave them money in your Will, nor can you name a 'guardian' for them like you would for your kids. In the eyes of the law, they're assets - things to be handed over, like a watch or an old armchair. Charming, isn't it?

But before you start ranting about how outrageous this is, fear not! You can make provisions to ensure your furry friend isn't just tossed aside like an old teapot. Here are some of them.

### ***Giving Your Pet Away (Yes, really.)***

One of the simplest ways to make sure your pet is looked after is to gift it to someone in your Will. But before you start scribbling down names, ask them first. Nobody wants to wake up one day to find they've suddenly inherited a Great Dane that eats more than they do.

It's also worth naming a backup in case your first choice is *unavailable* (read: has realised the financial black hole they're stepping into). Speaking of which, looking after an animal isn't cheap - dogs alone can cost over £1,500 a year. So, unless your chosen recipient is a millionaire, you might want to leave some cash to help them out.

That said, money left in a Will is a gift, not a binding contract. So if the recipient decides to use it for a holiday in the Maldives instead of dog food, tough luck. Bottom line: choose the candidate wisely.

### ***Letters of Wishes: The Pet Owner's Manifesto***

Wills are set in stone. Letters of Wishes? Not so much. These are handy little documents that let you provide *extensive* instructions on how you'd like your pet to be cared for - without having to rewrite your Will every time you adopt a new cat. Some people take this very seriously, drafting full-blown pet care manuals. Dietary preferences, favourite toys, bedtime routines - it can all go in. And why not? If we're going to be *that* person who only buys the expensive organic dog treats, we might as well make sure it continues after we're gone.

It's also smart to jot down practical details somewhere: vet contacts, insurance policies, microchip numbers - basically, everything someone would need to step in and take over smoothly.

### ***Animal Charity Schemes: Because not everyone wants your Parrot***

If you don't have a willing human volunteer, don't panic. Plenty of animal charities offer schemes to rehome pets after their owners pass away.

The idea is simple: you register your pet, include the necessary wording in your Will, and when the time comes, they take over and find your pet a loving new home. Best of all? It's free. Though, let's be honest, it wouldn't hurt to leave a donation as a thank-you.

### ***Don't forget about your Pet while you're still alive***

Wills cover what happens when you die. But what if you're still here, just... incapacitated? A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) can ensure your pet is looked after if, say, you end up in a coma after a particularly unfortunate skydiving accident.

And - crucially - don't forget the temporary arrangements. If something happens suddenly, who's going to feed the cat while all the legal stuff gets sorted? Let your loved ones and executors know in advance.

### ***Final Thought***

Nobody likes thinking about death. But if you want to make sure your pet isn't left homeless or - worse - sent to live with your least favourite relative, plan ahead. A few simple steps now will ensure that your four-legged, winged, or scaly best friend is cared for long after you've gone.

At The Burnside Partnership, we love our pets as much as you do. So if you need help getting your affairs in order, give us a shout.

*Anna Boucher is an inheritance tax, wills and probate specialist solicitor at The Burnside Partnership (Combe office). Each month, Anna will share helpful tips on inheritance law, mixing humour with practical advice. If you have any followup questions, you can email her at [anna.boucher@theburnsidepartnership.com](mailto:anna.boucher@theburnsidepartnership.com) or call the Combe office on 01865 987781 and ask for her secretary, Sarah.*



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### Yarnton Village Hall

The hall comprises a large Main Hall with enclosed garden and a smaller Back Room with use of kitchenette. The hall is fully accessible - facilities include stage, kitchen, toilets with disabled facilities and car park. The hall is available for hire for meetings, training events, shows, lunches, clubs, sales, parties, etc.

The charges for hiring the **Main Hall** or **Back Room** are, per hour unless stated:

Village residents: £11.00

Non Village residents: £13.00

**Kitchen:** £8.00 - per session

A separate deposit of £100 is required when booking the hall

For further information or to book the hall please contact Booking Secretary

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Hello neighbours! I hope the start of the New Year has been better for you than the cold, wet weather we experienced. Every day seems to be unpredictable. The things we can foresee in Yarnton W.I. are friendship and good times filled with interesting times together.



I hope you have had the opportunity to look at our latest post box topper- a fun circus scene. We are planning our next topper for Spring. I'm sure it will be a cheerful one. On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January at our monthly meeting, we had the pleasure of spending the evening together after the holiday period. We hosted Jeremy Sharp, an extremely knowledgeable historian and educator relating the story of his family during the Nazi occupation of Austria during World War Two and since. His grandmother and mother left Austria and came to England, leaving his grandfather behind, who was subsequently taken to Auschwitz and died. His mother later married in England and had four sons, the youngest of whom was Jeremy. It was a very sad story of the lives and deaths of the Jewish people in Eastern Europe. History was made more personal by his story. We went home feeling quite thoughtful.

Our February monthly meeting will be quite different but also very interesting. We are hosting a local reflexologist, Tracey Cox from Zones of Serenity, educating us on her speciality with perhaps a demonstration! This talk will certainly be of interest to us all.

We were happy to read in the Village News that the Rutten Lane Play Park group will be organising a Village Fete/Fun Day in May in which we have agreed to take part. I am sure we will host both exciting and diverse activities for the enjoyment of all attending. Certainly something to look forward to!

I hope you are all fit and healthy as we approach Spring. We look forward to meeting you at the Fun Day if not before.

*Judy Blake, President Yarnton WI*

**News from the Manor**

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## February

February can be a tricky month - both Christmas and summer feel a long way off! But despite winter chills and bare branches, there's always something growing.

This month we're watching and waiting to see if the 4,000 new bulbs our wonderful gardeners planted in the Library Garden last term will show themselves and get growing. As Seb said 'it sounds like a lot, but you'll be amazed how they disappear'. The bulbs are just one element of this new garden space that our Library users have a front row seat on - new trees selected for blossom and autumn colour, and swathes of native meadow plants for pollinators. It's not much to look at yet, but the seeds, bulbs and roots are there, so now we just wait...



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## Flowers in the January garden

Sadly we didn't have much response from people regarding plants in bloom in their gardens on New Year's Day. The average number of plants was 8 and the number of varieties was 15. I was surprised there weren't more different plants considering the very mild weather in December.

*Ruth Astall*



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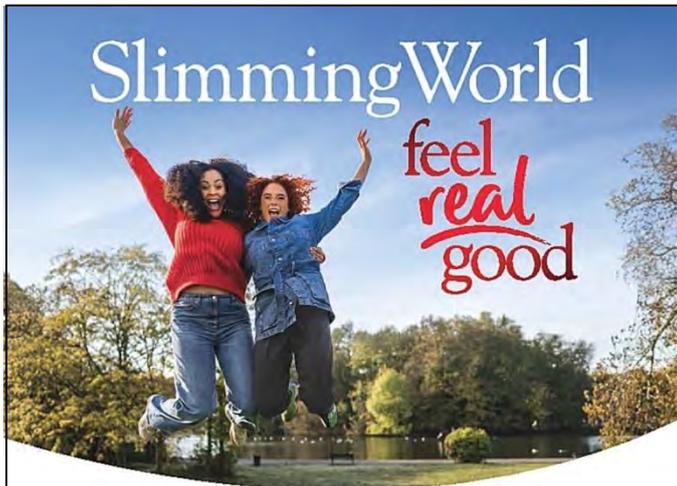
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## Kidlington & District Historical Society

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February, when our speakers will be Ann and John Ford, whose talk is entitled 'Morris Minors in the media – not about engines and gearboxes'.

The meeting is held at Kidlington Baptist Church, OX5 2DS. Doors open 7.30 p.m. with meetings starting at 7.50 p.m. Visitors £5. Ample car parking.



**Kidlington Football Club**

**Tuesdays 4.00, 5.30 & 7.00pm**

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**Cassington Sports & Social Club**

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**Gemma 07581 306746**



**Yarnton Gardening Club**

At our A.G.M. in December we were very pleased to welcome two new committee members, David Edwardson and Dave Elvidge; we hope they will bring new ideas and expertise to the committee. Pamela Tingay, who had been a committee member for a number of years, stepped down, as she has moved to Witney and doesn't find it so easy to get to meetings as when she was in Yarnton. We thanked her for her help during her time on committee.

Following discussion, it was agreed that annual subscriptions should be increased to £25 from January 2026, in order to safeguard the financial position of the club and allow it to continue in its current form. Visitors' fees were increased to £5 per meeting. Speakers' costs, in particular, are increasing and we want to keep attracting the wide range of excellent speakers which Serena is able to find.

After the business, the social evening began, with excellent food provided by members, and a visit from Yarnton Band to sing carols, as well as a festive raffle.

Our February speaker is Hugh Warwick, whose talk is intriguingly entitled 'Why did the hedgehog cross the road?' We meet in the Village Hall on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 p.m.

*Ruth Astall*

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Low Carbon Oxford North (LCON) is the winner of the Climate Community Group award at the 2025 Oxford Climate Awards in recognition of its work in empowering residents to cut carbon at home. Investing in our homes to make them more energy efficient can help lower carbon emissions, future-proof them against climate change, and make them more comfortable to live in, both in summer heat and winter cold.

Low Carbon Oxford North launched their [Housewarming Programme](#) in 2022 with a set of comprehensive [guides](#) on retrofit. Since then, LCON has helped dozens of homeowners to take the next step in retrofitting their homes. If you would like to have support as you think about your own energy efficiency project, you can join their Housewarming meetings starting 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and running until 3<sup>rd</sup> March. The series of five meetings takes place in The Annexe, North Oxford Association Community Centre, Summertown and is free of charge. More details on how to book a place on LCON's website [lcon.org.uk/energy/housewarming](http://lcon.org.uk/energy/housewarming)



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## Cherwell Collective

Over 10,000 kg of surplus holiday food that grocers couldn't sell in time was given to the community and saved from going to waste in Cherwell Collective's **Midday Mass Distributions**.



*Photo Credit: Wilson-Cook Photography*

Over 1500 people stopped by to take the food home at no cost to them. Many visitors emphasised that these distributions are very much needed and are an essential lifeline to some of the families that are struggling during this cost of living crisis. Later in January, Cherwell Collective's Climatedarian Kitchen hosted a Big Lunch for the Community over the week of 'Blue Monday' to 'Beat the Winter Blues'.

Cherwell Collective is extremely proud of the team, volunteers, and partners like the National Lottery Community Fund, Savona Foodservice, ODS, and Barton Community Association that have enabled them to support the local community during a difficult time of year.



*Photo Credit: Wilson-Cook Photography*

We are currently accepting applications for our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Sustainable Fashion Show at Blenheim Palace. You can apply to be a designer, model, or a volunteer at our exclusive show which showcases amazing fashion innovators in our region. The applications are available at [cherwellcollective.com/carbon-cost-of-fashion](https://cherwellcollective.com/carbon-cost-of-fashion).

# Chris Lord

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## Improving Your Home Part 1. Loft Conversions

A loft conversion is one of the most effective ways to gain extra space and increase the value of your home. Whether you're after a new bedroom, a home office or simply more storage and flexibility, converting your loft can be a good investment. But it's also a major project that requires careful planning, good design and the right expertise to get it right.

The starting point is assessing whether your loft is suitable. The key measurement is head height - ideally 2.3 metres from the top of the ceiling joists to the underside of the ridge beam. That allows for insulation, a new floor and comfortable movement. The type of roof is also important. Older properties with traditional cut timber roofs are usually more straightforward to convert, while modern trussed roofs will need structural alteration. You'll also need to carefully consider the staircase location - it must comply with Building Regulations and must not compromise the means of escape from fire for the existing rooms below, and that it's wide enough for getting furniture in. Ideally, the loft should feel like a natural continuation of the house, with enough usable space for furniture and good daylight. Roof lights are simple and effective, while dormers make the room feel bigger and offer more layout options.

Many lofts can be converted under Permitted Development, which avoids the need for Planning Permission. However, this can't be assumed. If your home is in a conservation area, is listed, or if the design includes large dormers, balconies, or significant changes to the roofline, Planning Permission may be required.

Structurally, a loft conversion is demanding. The existing ceiling joists in the rooms below are designed to hold up plasterboard, not support the load of people, furniture and new finishes. New floor joists must be installed, typically supported by steel beams that transfer loads to structural walls. Trussed roofs may require new bespoke supports. A structural engineer must design the changes, and Building Control must approve them.

Building Regulations also cover fire safety. The loft room must have a safe escape route, usually through a protected stairwell leading to a final exit. You'll need interlinked, mains-wired smoke alarms on every floor, and in most cases, new or upgraded fire-resistant doors. The new space must be well insulated for both energy efficiency and sound separation, and you'll need proper ventilation to prevent condensation - particularly in bathrooms.

As I've noted previously, choosing the right builder is crucial. With loft conversions, experience matters. General building skills are not enough. Ask to see past projects, check references and ensure they carry insurance. Use a clear written contract detailing the scope of work, timescales, cost and what happens if things change. If you live in a terraced or semi-detached property, you may need to serve a Party Wall notice to your neighbours.

According to Nationwide (2023), converting a loft into a bedroom can add up to 20% to your home's value, depending on the location and layout. That can mean an uplift of £35,000 to £60,000 in areas of high demand, particularly across southern and central England. These estimates are based on 2024-2025 build costs and include VAT. Semi-detached and terraced homes are especially suitable, provided there is enough roof height. With typical costs ranging from £25,000 to £45,000, the return on investment can be strong - often 1.3 to 1.7 times the spend. The greatest value is gained when the conversion creates a third or fourth bedroom, and since loft upgrades can also improve insulation and help raise your home's EPC rating.

<i>Good Neighbour Scheme</i>	<b>Covering Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke</b> Offers help to anybody over 60 or disabled with gardening, befriending, shopping, dog walking etc. <b>All Volunteers are fully DBS checked.</b>	<b>Please contact</b> Kidlington Information Centre on <b>01865 378479</b>
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# ⊕ St Bartholomews Yarnton

## Contact details:

*Rev'd Oliver Petter*

*Rector, Benefice of Yarnton with Begbroke and Shipton on Cherwell*

*Address: 26 Church Lane, Yarnton, OX5 1PY*

*Email: vicar@ybsbenefice.org.uk*

*Tel: 01865 372714*

**Associate Vicar: Rev'd. Sue Spankie**

**Tel: 07868 855435**

**Email: revsue@ybsbenefice.org.uk**

**Website: www.ybsbenefice.org.uk**

**Facebook: @yarntonchurch**

## Regular Services and Events

### Sundays:

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

9.30am Benefice Online Service (St. Bartholomew's Facebook page)

11.00am Parish Sung Communion with Junior Church, followed by coffee

5.00pm *Yarnton Evening Worship (once a month, will continue 11th Jan 2026)*

### Wednesdays:

9.30am Holy Communion

10.30am Little Sheep (term time)

*for under 5s and their parents/grandparents/carers*

*- crafts, songs and a story -*



## Study Groups in February

### Benefice Lent Group

- Tuesdays from 7pm

- Begbroke Village Hall

- Food - Faith - Fellowship

### Lunchtime Lent Group

- Tuesdays 12.30-1.30

- St Bartholomew's Parish Room

- Study and fellowship with coffee

Both beginning 24<sup>th</sup> Feb



## Candlemas

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> Feb @ 11am**

*Jesus revealed as light to the nations*

**Celebrating the installation of the new sound system**

**Followed by a bring-and-share party lunch!**

**All welcome**



# YARNTON EVENING WORSHIP

St Bartholomew's Church, Church Lane, OX5 1PY

5:00pm - 6:30pm

18<sup>th</sup> January | 8<sup>th</sup> February | 8<sup>th</sup> March

## ASH WEDNESDAY

**Holy Communion  
with Imposition of Ashes**

**Wed 18<sup>th</sup> Feb @ 9.30am**



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Our Riverside Tea room is open every Wednesday from 10.30 a.m. till 3 p.m.; call by and enjoy a slice of cake and a cup of tea. You all are very welcome.

**Advance notice:** 15<sup>th</sup> March: Themed 'Mill In Steam'. Combe Mill will be opening again to welcome all to our late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Grade 11 Listed Building, which in its day was the workshop to Blenheim Palace Estate by the River Evenlode. Steam Beam Engine, Restored Waterwheel, Line Shafting, Collection of Towers Clocks, with all machinery running as used in its day. Make a poker in our Dual Blacksmiths' Forge; Tinkering Area for the Children and much more. The Tea Room and BBQ will be open. Adults £9.50. Concessions £8.50. Accompanied children under 15 free. Dogs most welcome. Free Parking. Ask about Gift Aid. Open: 10.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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### Yarnton Netball Club

Is the New Year a time to take that step back to netball? The Yarnton Netball club is a substantive club within our county with continuously developing squads in many age-groups. Whilst the aim is for competitive squads to play league at the Oxfordshire centre, recreational netball at the local weekly training is also offered and encouraged. And so half way through the winter season our Emeralds senior team is 8<sup>th</sup> from 12 teams in Division 1, whilst our Diamonds wait to make a breakthrough in their tough Division 3. Our U19s have been playing against very strong clubs, as have our U15s, whilst the U13s and U11s are making good inroads against their opposition, with the U13s second in their division. Congratulations to all players and support personnel.

We continue with weekly training on Tuesdays at Rutten Lane, Yarnton – and remain in need of a second floodlit court in order to fully support growth of the club going forward. Senior session is 7.30 p.m. until 9 p.m. with school years 10-13 preceding at 6.15 p.m. to 7.15 p.m. The younger age groups meet on Wednesday evenings – school years 4-6 are 3.30 p.m. - 4.30 p.m., with years 7-9 at 4.40 p.m. - 5.40 p.m. The club would like to support the development of male and mixed netball and is looking to provide this session on Wednesdays later in the Spring. For updated information on all age-groups please email: [yarntonnetballclub@outlook.com](mailto:yarntonnetballclub@outlook.com) or [yarntonyouthnetball@gmail.com](mailto:yarntonyouthnetball@gmail.com) or via Facebook.

The Netball Super-league will begin its season with the Netball Super-cup at the Utilita Arena, Sheffield on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February. The eight super-league teams will be giving us an exciting taster of the season ahead – a showcase of the country's top players – and such skill. Tickets now available from the England Netball website. Whilst netball settled into the Commonwealth Games a couple of decades back and we look forward to the Glasgow Games this summer, netball still remains outside the Olympics orbit. World Netball and Australia are leading the bid to get netball included in the Olympics which will be hosted by Brisbane in 2032 – please link to <https://netball.sport/back-the-bid/> to add your voice. 100,000 signatures have been captured already – more would help. Netball is a true team-sport – not one person can win the game and the costs at local level are relatively low, especially when play is outdoors. The international play is now phenomenal – such aerial skill, and England goals now consistently high against the top competition of Australia and New Zealand. Intra-county leagues and Premier Leagues is a testing ground designed to hugely push fitness and skills and involves very many tens of thousands of talented players across the county. Local recreational netball is just fun and brilliant to be involved in. Time to give netball a go?

*Sue Blackshaw – Yarnton Netball Club*

# YARNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Email: [clerk@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@yarnton-pc.gov.uk), telephone: 01865 378476, website: [www.yarnton-pc.gov.uk](http://www.yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

All correspondence sent by letter or email to the Parish Council must include the sender's name, address and telephone number. The Parish Council is unable to discuss correspondence received without these details. Please note that the Parish Council office is open to residents by appointment only as the office is not staffed full-time.

**Parish Council Chairman:**

Mike Groves: [mike.groves@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:mike.groves@yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

**Parish Council Vice-Chairman:**

Fiona Mawson: [fiona.mawson@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.mawson@yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

**Other Parish Council Members:**

Debbie Behan: [debbie.behan@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.behan@yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

Ian Middleton: [ian.middleton@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:ian.middleton@yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

Samuel Smith: [samuel.smith@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:samuel.smith@yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

Joe McEaney: [joe.mceaney@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:joe.mceaney@yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

Lesley McLean: [lesley.mclean@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.mclean@yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

Dorothy Walker: [dorothy.walker@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:dorothy.walker@yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

**Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer:**

David Thornhill: [clerk@yarnton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@yarnton-pc.gov.uk)

**District Councillors:**

Jean Conway: [jean.conway@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:jean.conway@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

Lesley McLean: [lesley.mclean@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.mclean@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

Dorothy Walker: [dorothy.walker@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:dorothy.walker@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

**County Councillor:**

Lesley McLean: [lesley.mclean@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.mclean@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**Planning:**

Any members of the public who wish to comment on or object to any of the following planning applications can either contact Yarnton Parish Council via the Clerk's office or Cherwell District Council via the planning portal here:

<https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/>

**Planning applications:**

Application No.: 25/03252/F. Proposal: Single-storey rear extension. 4 Great Close Road, Yarnton, OX5 1QW

**Parish Councillors:**

There are currently vacancies for two Parish Councillors. If you are interested in becoming a Councillor, please either contact the Parish Clerk for details or attend the next Parish Council meeting.

**Future meetings:**

The next ordinary Parish Council meeting is on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> February at 6.30 p.m. at Yarnton Village Hall.

Members of the public are welcome to attend all Parish Council meetings for all or part of the meeting. Members of the public who wish to speak need to contact the Clerk 7 days in advance of the meeting, giving notice of what they wish to say; any person will be limited to 5 minutes, and the total time for public contributions is limited to 15 minutes. Members of the public wishing to speak on any other matter or to be involved in the Councillors' general discussion may only do so at the discretion of the Chairman.

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## Oxford Bus and Morris Motors Museum Visiting Buses on New Year's Day

There is much more going on at the Bus Museum than just a static display of artifacts. The 2026 programme of events is now on our website [www.oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk](http://www.oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk). We shall load more details as the dates get nearer.

On New Year's Day we had a Christmas Jumper competition and were surprised by the number of visitors who took part. The winners of the adult section were a family, David, Myra and Paul. The joint winners of the children's competition were Harvey and Lucas.



*Photo: Kirstin Blackman*

Three buses also visited the museum on New Year's Day, giving free heritage bus rides. Often visiting bus have interesting stories and histories to be discovered.

The first visitor was an ex-London Transport Routemaster - RM 1859 in Reading livery. It is Leyland-engined with an AEC/Park Royal body. New in 1964, the bus worked in London until 1984, when it was acquired by St. John Ambulance and used for transporting volunteers. In 1994 it was bought by Reading Mainline Buses and went back into public service for four years before being sold for preservation.

The second bus was the first Optare Spectra ever to be built. The Spectra was a joint venture between Optare and DAF with the body based on a design by MCW Metrobus. This bus was built on a DAF DB 250 chassis and was exhibited at the Coach and Bus Exhibition in 1991, before being sold to Reading Buses in February 1991 and numbered 701. It could kneel to up to 100mm (3.9 inches). Spectra buses typically seated 71 passengers and later were redesigned and built on a low floor chassis with a longer wheelbase. The height was reduced to 4.17 metres (13 ft. 7 ins.).

Between 1992 and 2001 Reading buses bought another 25 Optares as replacements for their Routemasters. Other companies which operated Optares included London Buses, which also took 25, Travel East Midlands 20, and Arriva Yorkshire 42.

However, the largest fleet was Wilts & Dorset with 78. The final Optare Spectra was built in 2006.

The last visitor was a 1961 AEC Regent V, like our 1957 bus 956 AJO but with a major difference: it is left-hand drive and was built for export to Lisbon, Portugal. It is often forgotten now but in the 1950s and 1960s, Britain was a major exporter of bus chassis and second hand buses.

The visitor, HH 97 96, was one of more than 200 exported to Lisbon between 1960 and 1966. The body was built locally by Portugal UTIC to a design by the English company Weymann. HH 97 96 worked in Lisbon until the mid-1980s when it was acquired for preservation and shipped back to Britain. Recently, it was bought by one of our directors and has been driven to York.



*Photo: Mark Howard*

Our next event is our half-term running event on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February. Watch the website for details.

*Frank Collingwood*

**Woodstock Methodist Church, Oxford Street, Woodstock**  
**Kidlington Methodist Church, Oxford Road, Kidlington**

**Minister:** Rev. Paul Carter, tel. 01865 373958, Email: [paul.carter@oxfordmethodists.org.uk](mailto:paul.carter@oxfordmethodists.org.uk)

**Local Contact Woodstock:** Mrs Sue Beuzeval, tel. 01865 849696, Email: [sue.beuzeval@woodstockmethodists.org.uk](mailto:sue.beuzeval@woodstockmethodists.org.uk)

**Local Contact Kidlington:** Mel Snelling, [mel.snelling@kidlingtonmethodists.org.uk](mailto:mel.snelling@kidlingtonmethodists.org.uk)

There are no Methodist churches in Yarnton, but you will find one in both Woodstock and Kidlington. Details of forthcoming services are below, but there are also various midweek activities, details of which can be found on the appropriate website.

Everyone is welcome to come and join us at any time.

**Services in February**

'Local Arrangement' invariably means instead of a 'live' preacher you can watch a pre-recorded service on screen at church.

Go to [oxfordmethodists.org.uk/worship.html](http://oxfordmethodists.org.uk/worship.html) where details can be found of various recorded services

**Woodstock**

1 <sup>st</sup>	10.30 a.m.	Paul Spray
8 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 a.m.	Local Church Group
15 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 a.m.	Rev. Stephen Spain
22 <sup>nd</sup>	10.30 a.m.	Rev. Paul Carter <i>Holy Communion</i>

**Kidlington**

1 <sup>st</sup>	10 a.m.	Rev. Paul Carter <i>Covenant Service</i>
8 <sup>th</sup>	10 a.m.	Margaret Sawyer
15 <sup>th</sup>	10 a.m.	Paul Rosentall
22 <sup>nd</sup>	10 a.m.	Local Church Group

We also have a Junior Church which meets every week at 10.30 a.m. and ranges in age from two to early teens. The first part of the morning is shared with adults in church before we then go round to the church hall to share in our own activities. We are always delighted to see new members, whether with or without their parents!

Every Thursday we meet at 10.00 a.m. for a short informal time of prayer followed by coffee. On the third Thursday of the month, this incorporates a celebration of communion. All Welcome!

The Kidlington church also runs a Junior Church and crèche on Sunday mornings.

# FOREST TOTS

**Mondays**  
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Are you recently retired and looking for local social activities around interests you have already or would like to pursue a new interest? Our u3a branch is centred in Woodstock but welcomes people from the surrounding areas. Our interest groups develop when someone is willing to run them – maybe you have something that you can offer? If so please make contact with us through the website: [www.woostocku3a.uk](http://www.woostocku3a.uk). We would be delighted to hear from you. Monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at St. Hugh's Centre, Hensington Road, Woodstock, OX20 1JL. 1.45 p.m. for 2 p.m. speaker. Our January speaker was Anna Boucher from the Burnside Partnership, who specialises in Wills, Probate, Trusts and Power of Attorney. Anna gave us practical, down to earth advice on these. She stressed that this does not have to be a grim and morbid experience, explaining how important planning for the future is.

The speaker in February will be Timothy Walker, a lecturer, botanist, author and gardener. The talk is entitled 'How to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Gardener'. Visitors £3 to include tea and biscuits.

Please note that in 2026 there will be a change to the meeting time. Our new meeting time will be **2.15 p.m. for 2.30 p.m.** speaker. For further information on our forthcoming speakers, please refer to our Website: [www.woostocku3a.uk](http://www.woostocku3a.uk). *Sian Wallworth, Press Secretary*

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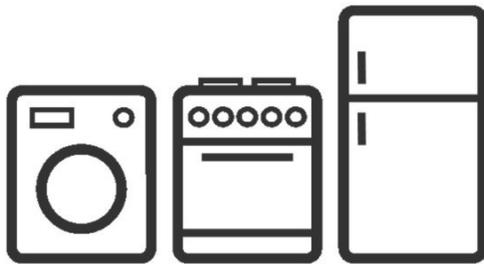
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## Snowflakes, Sass, and Suburbs: Life in the Winter Urban Wildlife Garden

When most humans retreat indoors for winter, the urban wildlife garden kicks into its real prime-time programming - an ice-cold reality show starring the city's scruffiest, furriest, and most feathered personalities.

**The Squirrels: acrobatics, but petty.** The squirrels, who spent autumn stuffing acorns into every conceivable crevice (including the electric meter box, which the landlord still insists was 'vandals'), now devote winter to competitive bird-feeder heists. They approach it with the intensity of Olympic athletes and the moral compass of career criminals. One squirrel - known only as 'Flip' because he once did a triple somersault off the compost bin - has developed a system that involves dangling by one toenail while taunting the birds below. It works more often than it should.

**The Pigeons: neighbourhood gossip columnists.**

Pigeons, wrapped in their naturally puffy down jackets, strut around like they own the place. They hold daily conferences on the garden fence, cooing loudly about the events of the day.

'Coo-rru? Coo-ruu!' translates loosely to: *Did you see that squirrel wipe out?*

'Ruuu-cool!' means: *Someone dropped half a bagel near the bus stop; assemble the squad.*

If a pigeon glares at you, don't worry - it's probably just critiquing your footwear.

**The Fox: elegant, aloof, definitely judging you.** At twilight, a sleek red fox slips through the blanketed shrubs like it's auditioning for a luxury cologne commercial you see on TV around Christmas. It pauses only to stare disdainfully at the mess the pigeons have made of the mulch. The fox does nothing to fix the problem, of course - lead actors don't do clean-up - but its silent judgment encourages everyone to pretend they're tidier than they are.

**The Mice: Winter's tiny real-estate tycoons.** Under the shed lives a clan of mice engaged in nonstop home renovation. Every night, they drag in new 'furnishings' - a lost mitten pom-pom, a stray Cheerio, and once, an entire dog toy they somehow rolled across the patio. Their winter lifestyle philosophy is simple: if it fits, it's décor. If it doesn't fit, you chew it until it does.

**The Long Tailed Tits: The garden's hype squad.** They bounce through the snowy branches shouting like caffeinated motivational speakers. Their energy alone melts frost. If squirrels and pigeons ran the place, chaos would reign; Long Tailed Tit's keep morale high, even when the wind chill is personally insulting.

**Final Verdict.** While humans grumble through winter, the urban garden throws its liveliest seasonal party. Just remember: you're not sweeping the patio - you're clearing the dance floor for the wildest neighbours you'll ever have. Happy Gardening.

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[www.wildmaninspires.co.uk](http://www.wildmaninspires.co.uk)

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**Shrove Tuesday – 17<sup>th</sup> February**

For some this is the start of Lent – you may be giving up chocolate, alcohol or just observing this religious event. For others this is just a good excuse to test your pancake flipping skills!

We're delighted to share that in **2025**, the store raised an impressive **£379.75 for Sobell House** through the plastic bag charge alone. This is in addition to the fantastic funds raised through **in-store events and donation tins**, helping to support the vital work Sobell House does in our community.

**Six Nations kicks off 5<sup>th</sup> February – on a Thursday!!!**



**Store Times**

Monday – Saturday 6am – 11pm  
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