

YARNTON

MARCH
2026

VILLAGE

NEWS

Editorial Committee:

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

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

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

Wednesday 4th Lunch Club, Village Hall, 1 p.m.

Thursday 5th 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*)

Wednesday 11th Parish Council Meeting, Village Hall, 6.30 p.m.

Thursday 12th W.I. Village Hall, 7.30 p.m.

Friday 13th Copy date April Village News

Wednesday 18th Lunch Club, Village Hall, 1 p.m.

Thursday 19th 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

One-eighth A4 page: £13 per issue, £117 per year. One-quarter A4 page: £21 per issue, £189 per year.

One-half A4 page: £35 per issue, £315 per year. Whole A4 page: £60 per issue.

Classified Ads: 5p per word. Must include telephone number.

The Editorial Committee in no way accepts responsibility for services supplied by our advertisers.

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Yarnton Village News is printed by KMS Litho (Litho & Digital Impressions Ltd.), tel. 01608 737640, email: enquiries@kmslitho.co.uk

If you contact any of our advertisers, please tell them you found them in the Yarnton Village News.

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 April Issue

Material for inclusion in the April Newsletter should be received by midday on **Friday 13th March.**

Copy should be e-mailed to: ruth@astall.com and 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 May issue is **Friday 10th April.**

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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

www.yarnton-pc.gov.uk

Our speaker for January was Anna Boucher from the Burnside Partnership. Anna is a specialist in Wills, Probate, Trusts, and Powers of Attorney and gave an informative talk on this subject which was full of practical information. The importance of Powers of Attorney was explained. Anna detailed the two different types: 'Property and Finance' and 'Health and Welfare'. Anna stressed that this is not a morbid or depressing business. Most people find it is a great relief when everything is in place and your wishes are known.

In February our speaker was Timothy Walker, a lecturer, botanist, gardener, and author, whose talk was entitled 'How to be a 21st Century Gardener'. Timothy gave an extremely interesting talk about the future of gardening in the UK in the view of climate changes. He explained how we reduce the impact of these climate changes on the world's natural resources and help plants whose habitat is evolving faster than they can.

Our speaker on 5th March will be Malcolm Wells. The talk is entitled 'So Far So Good'. We will hear light-hearted stories about his time at Canine Partners as their national speaker. Malcolm will also speak about his experience in the Army as a musician and medical assistant in the Gulf War. Visitors £3 to include coffee/tea and biscuits.

The Theatre Group went to see 'The Constant Wife' by Somerset Maugham, an RSC production at the Playhouse at the beginning of February. At the end of February, the group is booked to see Edward Albee's 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?' at the Playhouse.

Welsh Conversation Group. Are you a Welsh speaker or would like to practise your Welsh? We are setting up a Welsh Conversation Group. For more information, please visit our website: www.woostock.u3a.uk.

The Historic Churches Group visited Bartlemas Chapel in Oxford during January. We were met by a guide and given a fascinating historical talk. This was founded by Henry I in 1126 as a chapel for the leper's hospital. It was situated outside the city walls to prevent the spread of the disease. The chapel and hospital were extensively damaged during the English Civil War. There are two remains of painted crosses on the west wall. The wooden screen dates back to 1651 and was given by Oriel College.



Our monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at St. Hugh's Centre, Hensington Road, Woodstock, OX20 1JL, 2 p.m. for a 2.15 p.m. speaker. Our u3a branch is centred in Woodstock but welcomes people from the surrounding areas. Are you recently retired and looking for local social activities around interests you have? 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.woostock.u3a.uk. We would be delighted to hear from you.

For more information on forthcoming speakers, please visit our website: www.woostock.u3a.uk.

Sian Wallworth, Press Secretary

St Bartholomew's Yarnton



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 -



The Christian season of Lent lasts throughout March. Christians have traditionally sought to devote time to living out their faith. Jesus speaks of the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and acts of service and giving within his 'sermon on the mount' in chapter 6 of Matthew's gospel. The season of Lent is not simply an act of will however. For Christians, **Lent is above all a season of Grace.** Grace refers to God's freely given infinite love, a love which cannot be earned but is pure gift. The culmination of Lent is Good Friday, marking the death of Jesus on a Roman cross, where the love of God in Jesus is revealed most fully. As John writes: "*God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that all who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3.16). Christians believe that death does not have the final word. On Easter morning the tomb of Jesus was empty and he appeared to his friends, who shared the joyful news: "He is risen!" **All are invited to join our worship in Lent as we enter into these mysteries of faith.**

YARNTON EVENING WORSHIP

A service bringing together ancient and contemporary expressions of worship.

All are welcome!

St Bartholomew's Church, OX5 1PY

5:00pm - 6:30pm

18th January • 8th February • 8th March

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

Lent & Easter @ St Bartholomews Yarnton

PALM SUNDAY
Sun 29th Mar

Meeting at 10.45am Park
 Close to process to St
 Bartholomew's Church

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" *Matthew 21:9*



MOTHERING SUNDAY

Sun 22nd Mar



Join us as we recognise those who have shown us a mother's love
 - With posies made by the Junior Church

From Sun 15th March there will be prayer stations available in church, to reflect on themes of Mothering Sunday.



Triduum Services

Maundy Thursday Thurs 2nd April @ 7pm
Good Friday Fri 3rd April @ 2pm
Easter Sunday Sun 5th April
 @ 6am
 @ 11am

Holy Communion with washing of feet
 Good Friday Liturgy

Dawn Vigil
 Holy Communion followed by Easter egg hunt!



Benefice Groups in March

Tuesday Evening Group

- From 7pm
- Begbroke Village Hall
- Food - Faith - Fellowship

Tuesday Lunchtime Group

- 12-30-1.30pm
- St Bartholomew's Parish Room
- Study and fellowship with coffee

Wednesday Holy Cross Lent Group

- From 12.30pm
- Holy Cross Church
- Prayer & Reflection





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News from the Manor

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March

As spring begins to show itself on the estate here, we've also been reflecting on the life there is around us in Yarnton village and the many people who make it a great place to live!

On Feb 5th we were pleased to welcome around 30 people to the first Love Yarnton dinner here at the Manor. These were people who lead and support groups, clubs, initiatives and schemes in our village. From the Flood Defence Group to the Gardening Club and the Community drop-in to the Yarnton Blues there was a wonderful eclectic mixture of people and interests represented. We loved being able to meet some of the people behind such amazing community work, and to take the evening to celebrate and recognise these heroes for all they do for our village.

It was also great fun to see people putting faces to names they've only known on email for months or years, including the wonderful Yarnton News team, who are now REAL people for us all!

Want to know more? Sign up for our newsletter by using the QR code or check out our new website: yarntonmanor.org



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Curriculum

Our wonderful village primary school continues to be a place full of energy, curiosity and pride, and it has been a pleasure to see all children, without exception, flourish this term. The pupils have been working incredibly hard, both in the classroom and beyond. From developing their reading and maths skills to exploring art, science and the outdoors, their enthusiasm for learning has been a joy to witness. We are particularly proud of the way the children support one another and demonstrate kindness, respect and responsibility every day. The children have been exploring new and exciting topics in all of their subjects this term – linking their learning to our school values where appropriate. The school has key priorities that we are all strengthening together; these include small step learning, high level vocabulary and a culture of excellence.

Enrichment

We are excited to share the wonderful opportunities that the children at William Fletcher have planned to enrich the learning taking place in the classroom. This term has included many highlights, from school trips and special assemblies to sporting activities and creative projects. The children have embraced every opportunity with confidence and determination, and their achievements – both big and small – are celebrated daily. We are committed to providing experiences for all children to explore their local community and beyond to inspire and engage them further. The Year 6 children have attended a week-long residential trip to The Woodlands Centre, Glasbury and the Year 4 children will spend two nights away at Youlbury – we know the children will have a wonderful time and develop skills beyond the classroom. The club offer has been extended and we are now proud to offer a wide range of after school clubs – theatre kidz, iRock, cricket, art, sing and signing, netball, athletics, eco club and iBrick (Lego and robotics!) Something for everyone!

High Flyers After School club offers a wonderful, enriching wraparound offer every day after school until 6 p.m. Children have access to OFSTED-approved childcare provision which carefully combines the freedom of unstructured play, with the right mix of planned activities to inspire and stimulate young minds. We are proud to support our families with the offer alongside Breakfast Club from 7.30 a.m. each day.

Community

William Fletcher Primary School is proud to be part of a vibrant and supportive community. The school has established links with many community groups such as St. Bartholomew's Church, The Marlborough School, Blenheim Palace and Floryn House. We have developed further links with Yarnton Manor, Yarnton Day Nursery, The Wychwood School and Oxford United, who have all supported the learning of the children in our school. These connections help our pupils understand that they are part of something bigger and that their village is a place where everyone matters. Together, we are helping our children grow into happy, confident and capable young people. We look forward to welcoming you to future school events and continuing to work closely with our village community.



We have spaces available in our school. If you would like to arrange a visit or to meet the Headteacher, Claire Martin, please contact the school office on 01865 372301 or office.2354@william-fletcher.oxon.sch.uk

Reporting Flooding Incidences

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

ThamesWater.co.uk(Report a Problem):

Please report any issues with foul sewage Overflows near water-courses.

FixMy Street.com:

To report any highway-related matters (e.g. blocked drains, gulleys, water-courses).

Oxfordshire County Council:

<https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/report-flood/>
to report any flooding.

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

yarntonvillagehall@gmail.com or **07948 722633**

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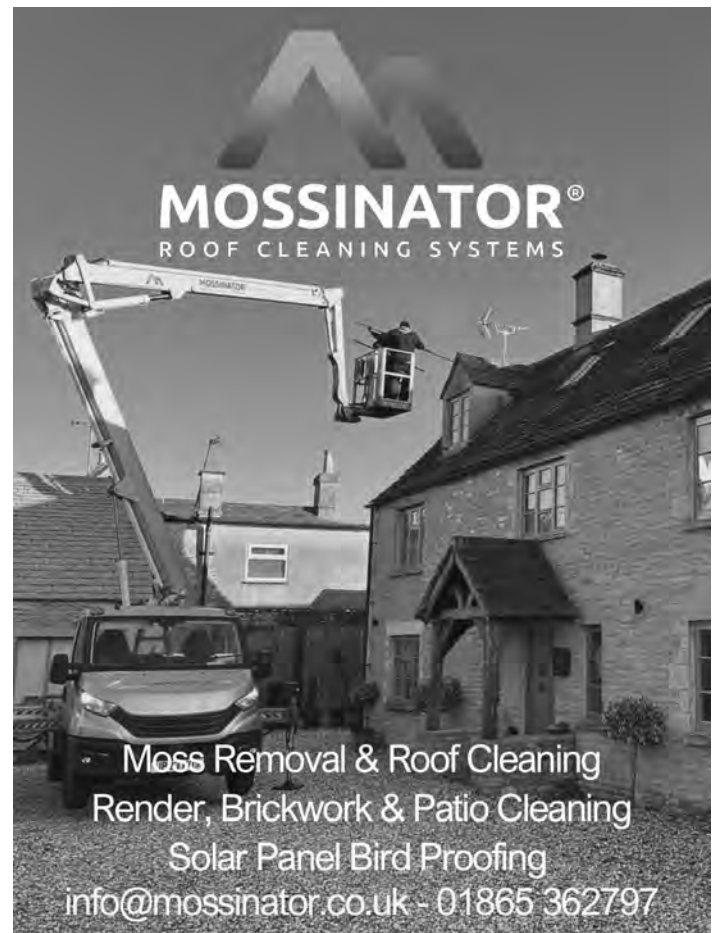
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Latest News from the Rutten Lane Play Park Renewal Group

The community voice

Following the February update, we've been looking more closely at the feedback from the community survey. As part of this, a workshop was held with children at William Fletcher Primary School. Rather than designing equipment, the children talked about how they use the park, what feels fun or difficult, and what helps children of different ages and abilities feel confident joining in.

The children were thoughtful, articulate and generous with their ideas, placing a strong emphasis on accessibility, safe and comfortable surfacing, clear routes through the park, and places to sit, rest and watch friends as part of play. Their contribution has provided valuable insight and is helping to shape how the park should work in the future, alongside the wider community survey responses.

What's happening next

Outdoor fitness equipment has emerged as a key priority, and we're pleased to confirm that funding for this has been identified through local housing development contributions. We're now exploring options and seeking supplier input, with further community engagement planned before decisions are finalised.

We'll also be moving into early concept design work for the children's play area, exploring layout, movement, access and surfacing. This is an ideas-testing stage - nothing is final.

Village Fete – Sunday 17th May

Planning continues for Yarnton's Village Fete at Rutten Lane Play Park. The fete will bring the village together while raising funds to support the ongoing renewal of the play park.

Plans include a raffle, craft and local business stalls, and performances from local groups.

Volunteers and local groups are very welcome. To get involved, please contact:

yarntonparkrenewal@gmail.com

If you'd like to have a stall, please contact **Linda on 07579 779 539**.

Further updates will be shared as plans continue to develop.



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Oxford Bus & Morris Motors Museum

Buses wouldn't run without high-speed diesel dispensers and heavy-duty transfer pumps – efficient dispensers of fuel for coach and bus operators. Large robust stainless-steel boxes pumping out fuel, buses rely on them for speed and efficiency. But none have the romance or appeal of the Red Sentry.

My favourite object in the Morris Motors Museum is this century-old petrol pump. It must have been built in the 1920s, as there is a glass window at the top so customers could see the fuel being pumped to the nozzle, a feature absent before 1920. Few have probably heard of Sylvanus Freelove Bowser from Fort Wayne, Indiana, but he played a critical role in the automotive industry. It was he who, in 1885, invented the petrol pump.



It was initially used in general stores to suck kerosene from barrels and dispense the liquid into customers' metal tins, which was then used to fire up lamps and cooking stoves. Soon Bowser noticed that his pump was being used for petrol and so he added a hose to the device. To determine how much liquid had been dispensed, the operator counted the number of handle cranks – perfect for small petrol tanks of the time.

Bowser later improved the pump to include safety measures and added a hose to directly dispense fuel into automobiles. His 'Self-Measuring Gasoline Storage Pump' quickly became popular with the motoring public. For a time, the term 'Bowser' was used to refer to petrol pumps, and it is still the name for aviation tankers, particularly in Australia.

Our Red Sentry has a calibrated glass cylinder on top, so motorists could check they were receiving the right amount of petrol and that it was clear and without contaminants. The desired quantity was pumped up into a calibrated cylinder and once pumping stopped, the gasoline dropped into the customer's tank by gravity.

These pumps became popular all over the world and in the early twentieth century were imported in vast numbers into the UK. A clock face was introduced in 1910 to measure the volume of liquid, which was still hand-cranked. Early pumps were up to 10ft. (3.04m.) tall and painted in bright colours – usually red – so motorists could easily spot them, and often decorated with the oil company's livery (ours is Shell). There were no garages – just pumps by the roadside.

The first filling station in the UK was opened in November 1919 at Aldermaston, Berkshire, by the Automobile Association (AA). At the time, the AA was trying to promote the sale of British-made benzole fuel – a by-product of burning coal – as an alternative to imported Russian petrol. Russian benzole had been widely available, but after the 1917 Russian Revolution, this trade was viewed as tantamount to supporting the Bolsheviks.

The Aldermaston filling station had a single hand-operated pump and motorists were served by AA patrolmen in full uniform. The AA opened another seven filling stations, and soon the idea of selling British-made fuel took off, with 7,000 pumps in use by 1923.

Initially pumps were on the side of the road, but local authorities in towns and cities began to charge up to an annual rent of £20 for the use of their pavements. To avoid the rent, pumps were placed on the vendor's premises with a long arm across the pavement so that the petrol was dispensed into cars parked in the road.

Buses in the early twentieth century were filled from roadside pumps, but while hand-cranking may have built up biceps, the time and energy taken to fill fuel tanks soon led to dedicated teams re-fuelling from bulk storage depots. Pumps may now be duller than the stylish Red Sentry, but time and efficiency won out – but the design still stands the test of time.

A selection of petrol pumps is displayed in the museum dating from the 1920s to the 1950s.

On Sunday 15th March we shall be celebrating Mother's Day by giving free entry to the museum and a cream tea to all mothers who bring their under-16s to the museum.

On 29th March we have a 'Scooter Sunday'. All scooters are welcome - classic and modern. *Frank Collingwood*



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CombeMill, Blenheim Palace Sawmills, Combe, OX29 8ET

On Sunday 15th March we have our first themed 'Mill in Steam' event for 2026. Bring the children along to enjoy the revamped 'tinkering area' and the Tea Room and BBQ will also be open.

Combe Mill in its day was the workshop for Blenheim Palace Estate by the River Evenlode. It is a late 19th Century Grade II Listed Building, with 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.

Admission: 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 4.30 p.m.

Open Wednesdays from 15th March for self-guided tours, with volunteers on hand to talk about Combe Mill and its history.

Admission: Adults £6, Concessions £5, Accompanied children under 15 free.

Open: 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Contact Combe Mill Society, tel.01993 358694.

www.combemill.org

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St Peter's C.E. Primary School, Cassington OX29 4DN





Yarnton W.I.

Hello neighbours. I heard on the television this morning that there has not been one dry day in some parts of the UK this year, which is a 150-year record. I hope this has not made you feel in a low mood as you must remember that Spring is coming up soon. The bulbs are in bloom and the clocks will soon be changing to give us an extra hour of daylight in the evening.

We in Yarnton W.I. are feeling upbeat and positive as we enjoy seeing one another and spending time together. Our monthly meetings and regular coffee mornings allow us an opportunity to share our thoughts and ideas. We are meeting a local reflexologist from the village this month who will tell us about her work and describe how it could benefit us and help others. You may have visited her - Tracey Cox. I'm sure she will have gained some new clients while we gain more knowledge and insight into how reflexology can be helpful for us.

Our March meeting is our Annual Meeting when we elect (or re-elect) our officers and committee. We are fortunate in that we have members who are dedicated to ensuring that we run smoothly and that every meeting is educational and enjoyable. They also plan activities and outings that suit our members. We will also have a speaker from the charity MIND, which is the charity we are supporting this year. It's another opportunity for us to learn more about their good work.

We have agreed a theme for our next postbox topper which you will see in the Spring. More details next month! We have also agreed to participate in the village fete on 17th May. We are developing good plans for our stall. I'm sure you will be looking forward to our W.I. cakes. We are also participating in Clare Dodwell's Rural Engagement Health and Care Survey. So once again we will be keeping busy and looking forward to meeting you. Put the second Thursday evening of May, July and February in your diary to come and join us at the Village Hall for our open evenings. I will advise what speakers are booked in advance and of course ladies are welcome every month as visitors. We look forward to meeting you soon.

Best wishes from Judy Blake, President



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Inheritance Risks for Blended Families and Cohabitees in Oxford

There is a comforting British assumption that things will, broadly speaking, sort themselves out. We apply it to the weather, to plumbing, and - most perilously - to inheritance. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Oxfordshire, a county notable not only for its spires and cyclists but also for its very high proportion of cohabiting couples and blended families. These are modern arrangements, entirely sensible in life, but surprisingly ill-served by death.

The difficulty arises when someone dies without a Will, thereby inviting the fixed laws of intestacy to step in. These rules are tidy and well-meaning, but they rarely reflect modern family life. Intestacy does not recognise 'what Mum would have wanted'. And it is spectacularly unimpressed by long-term relationships that never quite got round to legal formalities. Let us begin with cohabiting partners. Despite what many people believe - often after thirty years of shared mortgages, Labradors and Christmas traditions - there is no such thing as a 'common law spouse' in England and Wales. On intestacy, an unmarried partner receives nothing. Not the house. Not the savings. Not even the toaster they jointly selected in John Lewis. Everything passes instead to blood relatives: children, parents, siblings. This can leave a surviving partner distressed (not to mention homeless).

Ex-spouses add another layer of interest. Divorce severs inheritance rights on intestacy, which is sensible enough, but separation does not. If you are still legally married - even if you have not spoken since the London Olympics - your estranged spouse remains first in line. Conversely, a new partner, no matter how devoted, remains legally irrelevant. The law, like an old filing cabinet, cares only about what is officially labelled.

Oxfordshire, with its property values, second marriages, and long-term cohabitation, is fertile ground for these problems. A house purchased before a relationship, children from a previous marriage, and a partner who 'will be fine' are all too common features of intestacy disputes heard in court. These claims are expensive, stressful, and often permanently corrosive to family relationships. Lawyers do well. Families do not.

The antidote, happily, is neither complicated nor gloomy. A bespoke Will allows you to decide who receives what, when, and on what terms. For blended families, this often means using trusts: for example, allowing a surviving partner to remain in the home for life, while ensuring that the property ultimately passes to children from an earlier relationship. This approach acknowledges emotional reality while maintaining long-term fairness. It is also vastly cheaper than litigation conducted while everyone is grieving.

For cohabiting couples, a Will is essential. It can provide outright gifts, life interests, or discretionary trusts tailored to the survivor's needs, while still protecting assets for children or other beneficiaries. Without one, the survivor must rely on a court's discretion and hope the judge agrees they were sufficiently dependent. Judges are clever people, but they are not clairvoyant.

Alongside the Will itself, a statement of wishes is a quietly powerful document. It is not legally binding, which means it can be conversational, humane, and explanatory. It allows you to set out why you have made certain decisions: why one child receives more, why a partner may live in the house but not inherit it outright, why a stepchild is included despite not being legally related. This context can be invaluable in preventing disputes. People are far less likely to argue with a decision if they understand the thinking behind it - even if they still grumble.

In short, intestacy is designed for a world that largely no longer exists. Blended families and cohabiting couples are normal, sensible, and loving arrangements - but the law will not accommodate them unless formally invited to do so in Court. For my clients, writing a Will is not a negative or morbid experience. On the contrary, it brings clarity, relief, and the quiet satisfaction of knowing that those they care about are properly looked after. In that sense, making a Will is one of the most considerate things you can do: it spares your loved ones uncertainty, conflict, and the misery of an entirely avoidable - and often costly - legal dispute.

If you would rather these matters were handled calmly, clearly, and without leaving anything to chance, I can help. From our office in Combe, I advise clients across Oxfordshire on bespoke will-writing and inheritance planning, drawing on years of practical experience. A measured conversation now can spare your family a great deal of stress and expense later, so do get in touch if you have any questions.

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 or call the Combe office on 01865 987781 and ask for her secretary, Sarah.



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For more information, please call our Combe office on 01865 987781, visit www.theburnsidepartnership.com or email anna.boucher@theburnsidepartnership.com



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Improving Your Home Part 2. Garage Conversions

Converting a garage into a habitable space can be a cost-effective way to add value and functionality to a home, providing an additional bedroom, a home office, a home cinema (although extra soundproofing will be required), a gym or simply a quiet space separate from the main house. For households with off-street parking or unused garages, it's a logical first step in improving the usability of the property. Integral garages generally offer easier access to services and may already have insulation on shared walls, whereas detached garages may be more complex to convert.

The first thing to check is whether the existing structure is sound. Most garages are constructed with a single skin of brickwork and an uninsulated floor slab, and possibly without a damp-proof course (DPC). Garage floors may also be slightly sloped or uneven. Older garages may require structural reinforcement. Floors in integral garages are usually lower than the house and will need raising to improve access. The converted garage will need adequate natural light and ventilation, as required by Building Regulations.

In most cases, garage conversions fall under Permitted Development, provided that the work is internal and doesn't enlarge the structure, the property is not a listed building or in a conservation area, the conversion doesn't remove the only parking space, especially in areas with parking restrictions. You do need confirmation from the local planning authority that the proposed work is indeed Permitted Development, for which a Lawful Development: Proposed Use application is required to confirm that PD rights apply.

Building Regulations approval is mandatory. Key requirements include the structural stability and suitability for the new use. Where load-bearing walls or beams are affected and possible reinforcement may be needed, or if removing a load-bearing wall (e.g. between the house and garage), a structural engineer's assessment and structural calculations are required. Walls, floors, and roofs must meet minimum U-values, and you will need to extend the central heating system or install separate heating. If the garage is attached to the house, fire-resistant doors and walls will be required and escape routes must comply with regulations. Mechanical extract ventilation will be required in kitchens or bathrooms, and all electrical work must be carried out by a certified electrician. If adding a bathroom, plumbing must meet water efficiency standards.

Replacing the garage door is usually the most visible alteration, usually with a window similar to those of the rest of the house with infill matching the existing masonry. It's important that the new façade treatment integrates sympathetically with the original elevation. Other design considerations include adding windows or roof lights to improve liveability. Garages are often used for storage, so if you will be losing garage storage, consider built-in solutions elsewhere in your home. Ensure privacy if the garage faces a public area and ensure that there is no loss of parking. Try to match the interior style to the main house for cohesion and consider future-proofing (e.g. wiring for smart home tech).

Converting a garage can deliver a return on investment of around 10-20% for terraced and semi-detached homes at an average cost of between £10,000-£20,000 according to the RICS, depending on size and quality of finishes, which can be cheaper than an extension but offering similar benefits. A low-cost basic conversion costing around £5,000-£12,000 would typically add 5-10% to property value (Home Owners Alliance). For larger semi-detached and detached homes an average cost of between £25,000-£45,000+ for a luxury home, office or guest suite, the ROI can add 15-20%+ to property value (Savills), with the potential for rental income (if compliant with regulations).

Jan Liberadzki BA Arch (Hons), MSc, JLDA

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YARNTON PARISH COUNCIL

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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

Parish Council Vice-Chairman:

Fiona Mawson: fiona.mawson@yarnton-pc.gov.uk

Other Parish Council Members:

Debbie Behan: debbie.behan@yarnton-pc.gov.uk

Ian Middleton: ian.middleton@yarnton-pc.gov.uk

Samuel Smith: samuel.smith@yarnton-pc.gov.uk

Joe McEaney: joe.mceaney@yarnton-pc.gov.uk

Lesley McLean: lesley.mclean@yarnton-pc.gov.uk

Dorothy Walker: dorothy.walker@yarnton-pc.gov.uk

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer:

David Thornhill: clerk@yarnton-pc.gov.uk

District Councillors:

Jean Conway: jean.conway@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Lesley McLean: lesley.mclean@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Dorothy Walker: dorothy.walker@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

County Councillor:

Lesley McLean: 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.: 25/02838/F. Applicant's Name: Fraser's Retail Limited. Proposal: Extension of garage premises to provide enhanced car valeting facilities, EV charging and associated works. Location: 93 Woodstock Road, Yarnton, OX5 IPT. Details of amendment: Amended plans received.

Application No.: 26/00218/F. Proposal: Single-storey rear extension and pitched roof over existing garage linking to main dwelling. Location: 51 Aysgarth Road, Yarnton, OX5 IND.

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, 11th March 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 Councilors' general discussion may only do so at the discretion of the Chairman.

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

Local Contact Woodstock: Mrs Sue Beuzeval, tel. 01865 849696, Email: sue.beuzeval@woodstockmethodists.org.uk

Local Contact Kidlington: Mel Snelling, 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 March

'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 where details can be found of various recorded services

Woodstock

1 st	10.30 a.m.	Jo Hibbard
8 th	10.30 a.m.	World Day of Prayer, Local Church Group
15 th	10.30 a.m.	Alastair Jackson
22 nd	10.30 a.m.	Margaret Sawyer
29 th	10.30 a.m.	Rev. Paul Carter <i>Holy Communion</i>

Kidlington

1 st	10 a.m.	Rev. Paul Carter <i>Holy Communion</i>
8 th	10 a.m.	Rev. Michael Sawyer
15 th	10 a.m.	Rev. Miriam Moul
22 nd	10 a.m.	Local Church Group
29 th	10 a.m.	David Harper

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.



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Yarnton Netball Club

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 netball to play league at the Oxfordshire centre, recreational netball at the local weekly training is a good way to develop confidence and skills.

The winter season continues with the wet weather causing some disruption. Despite this our Emeralds and Diamonds continue their commitment for the season, as well as the U19. The junior squads of U15, U13 and U11 are also making good progress. Congratulations to all players and support personnel.

Tuesdays at Rutten Lane, Yarnton is the seniors training time 7.30 p.m. until 9 p.m., with school years 10-13 preceding at 6.15 p.m. to 7.15 p.m. Whilst we are appreciative of the floodlit facility in Yarnton which has met our needs over the past 20 years, we are now very much in need of a 2nd adjacent netball court. Where is the facility development for netball in all the planning energy that is going on around us?

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. For updated information on all age-groups please make contact:

yarntonnetballclub@outlook.com or yarntonyouthnetball@gmail.com or via Facebook.

Local recreational netball is just fun and brilliant to be involved in – do get in touch.

The Netball Super-league has begun with the showcase Netball Super-cup in February with all eight super-league teams together for the one day opening competition. A showcase of the country's top players – and such skill. Geographically, Oxfordshire falls between netball franchises – so travel to matches is a consideration; however the promotion of netball depends on support at these events – so who will you support? Birmingham Panthers, London Pulse, Loughborough Lightning, LexisNexis Dragons, Manchester Thunder, London Mavericks, Nottingham Forest, or NIC Leeds Rhinos. Whilst netball settled into the Commonwealth Games several decades back and we look forward to the Glasgow Games this July, 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.

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 main problem for development is lack of netball courts. The skill level at national level is now phenomenal – such aerial skill and England goals now consistently high against the top competition of Australia and New Zealand. South Africa is now also a leading contender; they played England recently in Johannesburg; the Proteas at home, holding out against the Roses in the last match. The Commonwealth Games will be spectacular.

Sue Blackshaw, Yarnton Netball Club

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Oxfordshire County Council has asked two local charities, Healthwatch Oxfordshire and Community First Oxfordshire to consult residents about what it's like living in one of the following rural areas in Oxfordshire.

- Cropredy, Heyford, **Yarnton**, Chipping Norton, Charlbury, Long Hanborough, Freeland (to be led by Community First Oxfordshire)
- Deddington, Chalgrove, Sonning Common, Faringdon, Stanford in the Vale, Shrivenham, Watchfield (to be led by Healthwatch Oxfordshire)

We want to learn about people's views about living in these communities and some of the assets, barriers and opportunities faced. What helps people stay healthy and well, and what makes this difficult? We will be running an online and paper survey open until 1st April 2026. We will also be holding focus groups for up to 12 selected participants in each of the 14 communities. You can fill this survey in online at this link: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/rurallivingpublic/>



We can provide surveys in printed format, easy read and other languages on request. For more information, or help filling in the survey, contact: Healthwatch Oxfordshire Office F20, Elmfield House, New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1PB, tel. 01865 520520, hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk, www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk, and follow us on X, Blue Sky, Facebook, and Instagram.

What is it for?

This work is part of Oxfordshire's coordinated focus on understanding the barriers and opportunities to health and care in rural areas, and the wider building blocks of health. These communities have been selected on the basis of 'population health data' which indicates that they have pockets of inequalities in health. This is part of Oxfordshire Marmot focus on health inequalities and tackling the underlying causes (See here for more information:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/public-health-and-wellbeing/oxfordshire-marmot-place/marmot-place-programme>).

The final report will be used by Oxfordshire County Council and others to help plan services and understand more about the needs of these rural communities.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire is an independent charity for people who use health and care services.

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/>

Community First Oxfordshire is a community development and placemaking charity. <https://communityfirstoxon.org/>



Yarnton Gardening Club

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Our talk this month has the intriguing title 'Are seven greenhouses really necessary? A topic for debate and discussion'. Dr. David Edwards is our speaker and hopes to stir up a lively conversation about the merits of owning a greenhouse. We meet in the Village Hall on Thursday 19th at 7.30 p.m. Visitors are always welcome (£5).

Dates for your diary: Our first outing of the year is on Tuesday 12th May, to Foxington at Britwell Salome, near Watlington, travelling by cars to arrive at 2.30 p.m. We will have a guided tour of the garden, followed by tea and homemade cakes. The cost will be £11 for members and £13 for non-members, and there will be a list at the meeting for you to sign up.

Plant Sale: Our annual Plant Sale this year is on Saturday 23rd May in the Village Hall - at a different time this year of **2.30 p.m.** So make a note of the date and time, and when you're sowing seeds or splitting plants in your gardens, then please bring any spares along for sale. More information next month.

Ruth Astall



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Kidlington & District Historical Society

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 31st March, when our speaker will be John Duddington, whose talk is entitled 'Wick Hall - from bin bag to book'.

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.

A Wildlife Garden's Unofficial Report on Humans

Fox's Statement

Look, said Mrs. Fox, I've been studying humans for years. Purely for academic reasons, of course, and absolutely *not* because they leave bins full of delicious research materials. Humans are fascinating creatures. They wander into the garden wearing 'outdoor clothes', which appear identical to their indoor clothes except muddier and accompanied by loud sighing.

They plant things, and just expect them to grow, then talk to the things, they fuss over things, then get upset when the things don't grow. They call this 'gardening'. I call it 'free entertainment'. Sometimes they even leave out snacks for birds, which I generously help clean up. They should thank me, really. I'm practically a public servant.

Woodlouse's Statement

Humans? Oh yes, said Grandma Louse, the stompy giants. I mostly see their boots. Big boots. Heavy boots. Boots that have no respect for a quiet afternoon under a flowerpot. From my vantage point, approximately 1.3 centimetres above soil level, humans are unpredictable. One moment they're gently lifting a log to 'check for wildlife', and the next they're shrieking because they've found... wildlife. Honestly, I don't know what they expected. I'm not here for drama. I'm here to decompose leaves and mind my business.

They also seem obsessed with 'tidying'. Why? The garden is perfect as it is: messy, damp, and full of rotting wood. Humans keep removing the best bits. If they could stop cleaning up my house, that would be ideal.

Sparrow's Statement

I observe humans from the bird feeder, said Brother Sparrow, which they refill with the enthusiasm of a medieval banquet host. They scatter seeds like confetti at a wedding. I approve, and so do my friends.

However, humans do have a strange habit of pointing at me and whispering things like, 'Look! A sparrow!' as if I'm not fully aware of being a sparrow already. They also attempt to photograph me, but their timing is terrible. I'm either mid-chew, mid-blink, or mid-poop, or undertaking them all at the same time. They never get my good side. Still, I appreciate their efforts. Without humans, I'd have to forage naturally, and frankly, I've grown accustomed to the buffet lifestyle.

Joint Conclusion

After extensive observation, we, the fox, the woodlouse, and the sparrow, agree on the following:

- Humans are loud but mostly harmless.
- They enjoy rearranging nature for fun.
- They provide snacks, intentionally or otherwise.
- They panic easily when something with more than four legs appears.
- They are, in summary, peculiar but useful creatures.

We recommend keeping them around. Just... supervised. Happy Gardening.

Stuart Mabbutt, Wildlife Gardening Specialist, tel. 01865 747243
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The young man and Yarnton Band



Photo courtesy of the Oxford Mail

The photo above was taken in 1983, and conductor Guy James holds the shield won by the City of Oxford training band in a county competition. Move on to 2026 and that young man is now conducting Yarnton Band and has done so for more than 25 years; over all those years Guy has trained hundreds of young (plus old!) players and many villagers owe him a debt of gratitude for all his work. We do have room for a few more learners in our Training Band and for beginners of any age. In the main band we would welcome another Bb Bass player and a soprano cornet player.

At the District's Contest on 28th February we played a test piece, *Music for Jock Tamson*, and we rely on any Scottish readers to interpret the title of our first movement, *Nyah Fearties*; the other two movements were *Inchkeith* and *Wha's like us?*

Make a note now that on 2nd May we will be playing at the Red Lion, and if anyone wants to book the band they should contact enquiries@yarnton-band.org.uk. Please be sure to include your name and a contact e-mail and/or phone number. Brass players turn up all over the place and in January on the BBC Radio 3 programme 'In Tune' Katie Derham interviewed the jazz singer Ian Shaw and the trumpet/flugel player Guy Barker. Both played in brass bands during their younger days - Ian played a soprano cornet and Guy played cornet. I'm sure that both would agree with the quote below.:

Playing in a brass band is more than an ensemble making music together. It's about teamwork, dedication, energy and fun. It's about the audience reaction as you hold the last chord of a performance. It's about that special moment when everything clicks together and it feels like flying. From a Yamaha instrument advert.

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Kidlington's Climatarian Kitchen Café announces new hours for 2026

Climatarian Kitchen, a community not-for-profit café in Kidlington by Cherwell Collective, is thrilled to announce daily weekday café hours. Monday - Friday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. The café will operate out of Waste Innovation Station Headquarters (WISH) in Kidlington (OX5 1EE).

What to expect

The menu



EAT TO SAVE THE EARTH: ONLY SURPLUS, SEASONAL, & LOCAL INGREDIENTS
Minimum £3 donation for animal-based dishes.
Please inform us of food allergies and requirements prior to ordering.

BRUSCHETTA Lush and fresh seasonal snack. Approximate carbon footprint per serving: 243g CO ₂ e (0.86 mile car trip).	CARBON COST £1
SOUP A healthy option packed with nutrients. Approximate carbon footprint per serving: 590g CO ₂ e (1.98 mile car trip)	CARBON COST £2
PLANT BASED SANDWICH Always vegan. Approximate carbon footprint per serving: 663g CO ₂ e (2.22 mile car trip)	CARBON COST £2
ANIMAL-BASED SANDWICH Chefs choice seasonal dish helping guide us all to eating less but better meat, dairy and eggs Approximate carbon footprint per serving: 1175g CO ₂ e (3.94 mile car trip)	CARBON COST £4
PUDDING OF THE DAY Chef's choice. Approximate carbon footprint per serving: 911g CO ₂ e (3.06 mile car trip).	CARBON COST £3
HOT DRINKS Inquire with your server about today's selection. Approximate carbon footprint per serving: 440g CO ₂ e (1.48 mile car trip).	CARBON COST £1

PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN!
We suggest £1 per car mile equivalent of your food's carbon footprint. Paying what you can helps to support an inclusive space where everyone can afford to enjoy delicious, homemade, eco-friendly food together.

WHAT IS THE ODOMETER ON THE MENU?
Our diets have a Carbon Cost, meaning our planet is impacted by our food supply chain. To demonstrate this, we calculate the carbon footprint of each dish. We then convert that carbon footprint into car mile equivalents so it's easy to understand.

Scan to access our recipes



Climatarian Kitchen food is cooked entirely from surplus; meaning that all ingredients are surplus from local grocery shops, food businesses, or community gardens. This directly reduces food waste in the community by putting to use perfectly delicious ingredients that would otherwise go unused.

This brings an element of excitement to Climatarian Kitchen's diners as well as its cooks; the menu is constantly changing! Although you can count on a set menu of plant-based and animal-based sandwiches, a soup, a pudding, and hot drinks each day, the kinds of each change on a weekly (and sometimes daily) basis, according to seasonal surplus and the creative vision of our wonderful chefs.

Pay-what-you-can pricing

We want everyone to feel welcome at our tables. That's why we have a pay-what-you-can policy; there are no set prices for menu items.

When our visitors truly pay-what-you-can, those in financial hardship can still enjoy a hot meal with friends, as the cost to provide them with a meal is covered by others. It's a win-win for everyone involved! You'll notice that our menu has a 'Carbon Cost' to the right of each item. This is the carbon footprint of that item in *car miles*. In other words, it shows how many miles in a car you'd have to drive to produce the same amount of emissions that it took to produce your dish.

We use the Carbon Cost to suggest how much you pay for your food; making dishes with a lower carbon footprint less expensive than ones with a higher carbon footprint.

Applications open for Blenheim Palace Sustainable Fashion Show

It's not too late to apply to be a model or designer for Cherwell Collective's Sustainable Fashion Show at Blenheim Palace this September. Models receive free catwalk training (no experience required), and designers are offered a free place in our runway show to celebrate sustainable practices locally.

Applications close this month, so don't be late, scan the QR code for the application forms.



Budgens OF YARNTON



Mothering Sunday 15th March

Mothering Sunday is a day to cherish, a day to show your mother just how much you care. Remember, in the store we have a variety of goods to help you make your day that little bit more special, from cards to flowers to chocolate, among a host of things your mother will just love!



Don't forget to Change your Clocks – 29th March 2 a.m.

We just love the clocks going forward – the mornings start to get lighter and the evenings that little bit longer – spring has arrived! Daffodils at the ready!



Wild Bean Cafe

Wild Bean Café has taken off at Yarnton! Better coffee, better pastries and hot food, amazing smoothies. What's not to love at the award-winning Wild Bean Café!



Six Nations – Final Weekend 14th March

Another crunching year of the Six Nations comes to an end with Super Saturday, which is always a treat. We'll have snacks and beers at the ready at Frasers Budgens!



Store Times

Monday – Saturday 6am – 11pm

Sunday - 6.30am – 10.30pm

Post Office Times

Monday – Friday 9am – 5.30pm

Saturday 9am – 2pm

Sunday CLOSED



Remember, you can join our exclusive Platinum Club online at www.frasersbudgens.co.uk. You'll get 2p off a litre every Saturday & Sunday, Third off Platinum Car Washes Mon-Weds, 20% off hot drinks, 10% off Laithwaites, a free product each month and money off voucherstoo... phew!



Begbroke Bowls Club



A New Year and looking forward to another outdoor season!

Open Day – Open Day – Open Day – Open Day
Saturday 26th April from 2 p.m.



Whether you're completely new to bowls or already an experienced player, you're warmly invited to our club's Open Day. Come along, have a relaxed roll-up, and enjoy friendly coaching with a selection of bowls available. Everyone is welcome, and season's membership is available if you'd like to join. This year's fixtures, both home and away, will be published soon. The bar will be open on our Bowls Open Day, so it's a great chance to meet people and enjoy the club atmosphere.

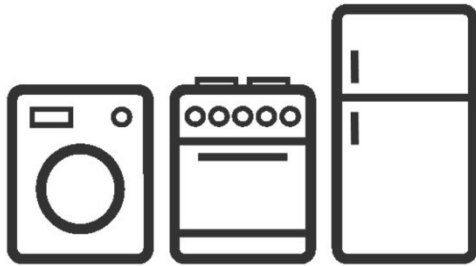
If you can't make the Open Day, throughout the season we also run an informal Friday roll-ups from 6 p.m. onwards, perfect for trying bowls or keeping your hand in.

Please check out the bowls website for further information

<http://begbrokebowlsclub.co.uk>

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