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Owing to pressure of copy space we regret it may be necessary to abridge any article. (E-mail copy much appreciated).

Disclaimer

The Editorial team takes no responsibility for any information given or views expressed in the Oxdrove and will not be held liable for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from the use of information and advertisements in this publication.

THE OXDROVE

Church and Community News

Of

The Candover Valley and Wield

Rector: David Chattell, The Rectory, Preston Candover

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Benefice administrator – Tricia Knight email address:

beneficeFCW@hotmail.com Phone 07541 463750

Contact preferred by e-mail

Rota for Services

BCP = Book of Common Prayer CW = Common Worship LL = Lay led

The Parishes of Farleigh, The Candover Valley and Wield

Sunday 7th January

Epiphany

08.00	Ellisfield	Holy Communion BCP
09:30	Wield	Matins
09.45	Cliddesden	Morning Prayer
10:00	Preston Candover	Morning Prayer
11:00	Northington	Holy Communion
11.15	Dummer	Sunday Special
<i>Readings</i>	Isaiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:1-12, Matthew 2:1-12	

Psalm 72

Sermon “The Magi’s quest”

_____”_____

Sunday 14th January

Second Sunday of Epiphany

08:00	Dummer	Holy Communion
09:45	Ellisfield	Morning Prayer
10:00	Preston Candover	Holy Communion
11:15	Cliddesden	Family Holy Communion
18:00	Wield	Evensong
<i>Readings</i>	1 Samuel 3:1-10, Revelation 5:1-10, John 1:43-end	

Psalm 139

Sermon “We have found him”

_____”_____

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Dear Friends

What would make a large and welcome change in your life, perhaps a large sum of money, improved health, or resolution of some intractable problem? I'm sure we all have the "if only" list and that thought might preface much of our thinking.

In the New Year we traditionally think about changes we believe would be good for us in the coming months and the little phrase "If You Always Do What You've Always Done, You'll Always Get What You've Always Got", attributed to Henry Ford, might prompt us to actually do something new!

There are some things that we can change, through new discoveries, new fitness regimes, new thoughts.

What are your thoughts about God? An Oxford Chaplain said that students often told him, I don't believe in God" to which he replied, "what kind of God don't you believe in?" and then explained he didn't believe in one like that either!

In our carols services only days ago we heard of Jesus being "with God in the beginning", as God and with God, and that in his earthly life he revealed God to us as the 'light of the world' who gives light to all.

Jesus illuminated human hearts in darkness so that they could see what God was really like, not the invention of their own thoughts or constructions of culture.

Perhaps growing in knowledge about God would bring the greatest blessing this New Year, through reading the gospels, so we too see the 'light of the world' who reveals God's person and love to us.

Blessings
David

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Many thanks

Very many thanks to all those who cleaned and decorated St Peter's Church for Christmas. And all those who worked so hard on the graveyard and the War Memorial.

New Year Drinks at Preston Candover

All residents of Preston Candover, Axford, Nutley and Gobley Hole are warmly invited to join the Trustees and Committee of Preston Candover Village Hall to celebrate New Year 2024 with drinks and nibbles.

Please join us on Monday 1st January, 12noon - 2.00pm in the Village Hall.

Everyone welcome!

Anne, PCVH Chairman



Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2023

Thank you to all the generous people who gave, collected, and hosted RBL poppy boxes this year.

The Total so far from the church service and boxes is **£5500.02** plus gift aid & QR code money.

(QR code donated money is counted centrally but will be allocated to the district) I hope to get the final total in the new year.

Your support has made a real difference to those in the Armed Forces Community.

With grateful thanks

Joanna Gibbons

Poppy Appeal Organiser SBA13 Preston Candover



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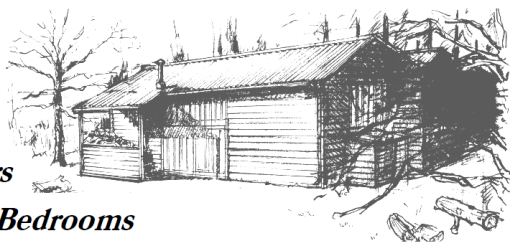
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Sidesmen and Readers

<u>Church</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Sidesmen</u>	<u>Readers</u>
St John's Northington		Mark Ashburton	Mark Ashburton
St Peter's Brown	28 Jan 11.00am	Sue Marriott	Rhys Smith Jonathan Moseley
St Marys Preston	7 Jan 10.00am	Anne L:uneburg	Gunnel Berry
	14 Jan 10.00	Marina Avis	Anne Luneburg Marina Avis
	21 Jan 10.00	Marina Avis	To be advised
	4 Feb 10.00	Anne Luneburg	Anne Luneburg
All Saints Bradley	28 Jan 8.30	Christopher Swan	Christopher Swan
St James' Wield	7 Jan 9.30am	Catherine Simons	Catherine Simons Amanda Bromfield
	14 Jan 6.00pm	Robert Grande	Eileen Collins Alwin Hutchinson
	21 Jan 9.00am	John Lailey	Selina Geddes David Cowley
	4 Feb 9.30am	Alwin Hutchinson/ Allan Futtu	Catherine Simons Max Konig (TBC)

Church flowers, cleaning and Key Holders

St. John's Church Northington			
St Peter's Church Brown Candover	Key Holder	January February	Geoff & Alison Ellett Celia Foote
All Saints Church Bradley	28 Jan 8.30am	Christopher Swan	Christopher Swan
St. Mary The Virgin Preston Candover	7 Jan 10.00am	Anne Luneburg	Gunnel Berry
	14 Jan 10.00am	Marina Avis	Anne Luneburg Marina Avis
	21 Jan 10.00	Marina Avis	To be advised
	4 Feb 10.00am	Anne Luneburg	Anne Luneburg
St James' Church Wield			
	Cleaner	Permanent	Leanne Griffiths



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St John's Organ Restoration Project: Education and Community Programme

UPDATE (January 2024) AND CONCERTS AND EVENTS AHEAD!

Following the completion of the restoration work on the organ of St John's Northington last June, audiences have been enjoying events and activities as part of the linked community programme. Almost 600 people of all ages have come to St John's to enjoy the activities on offer: from heritage tours to organ and choral concerts, to events for children and families, to a beautiful sound/light performance of Sonic Cradle, to a wonderful and joyous community festive celebration with The Grange Festival.

AND - there is more to come!

THURSDAY 15th FEBRUARY at 11 am - BRASS FAMILY CONCERT for HALF TERM

Have you ever wondered about the lower brass instrument - the Tuba, Euphonium, and Trombone? Well - a trio of low brass instruments (the endangered species of the Brass family!) is coming to Northington to give an inspiring family concert during half term, and, its free for children! Find out and listen to the amazing music made by the lower Brass instruments! Join in afterwards with a very informal Brass Instrument workshop by Hampshire Music Service teachers - try out your favourite Brass instrument!

All ages welcome: Adults - £5; Children FREE (Juice & biscuits provided)

Booking via Eventbrite – Information on <https://www.stjohnsnorthington.org/>

SUNDAY 18th February at 6.30 pm - Choir concert for St Valentine's Day ('Upon Your Heart')

Winchester Consort singers will be performing at St John's Church, Northington, on Sunday 18th February at 6.30 pm, when there will be a distinct sense of love in the air! The concert (c. one hour in length), entitled *Upon Your Heart*, will include some of the best choral wedding music, ranging from the wonderful and stirring, to the intimate and tender, together with close-harmony/jazz arrangements of some well-known secular love songs. The programme will include pieces by Faure, Rutter and Whitacre, and Jerome Kern, Cole Porter and 'Fats' Waller. **Tickets £10 (Under 18s free) – available on the door (cash only)**

For details of all events please see: <https://www.stjohnsnorthington.org/>

All events have been made possible by generous grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund; Hampshire & the Islands Historic Churches Trust; and other kind donors.

On This Day in Wield

Here's just a few stories from yesteryear.

11 January 1830

A Case:- "This is to certify that I John martin of Wield, had a violent inflammation in my hand, which was swelled to an enormous size, and one finger was putrefied, and the bone quite bare. In this dreadful state, I applied Kemp's invaluable Vegetable Ointment, which entirely cured it, and, through the blessing of God, I have the use of my hand and finger as well as before.

Witness: Thos Pern -Churchwarden: Chas Cosens Overseer"

17 January 1939

Hurricane Wrecked in a Field

In heavy rain and mist shortly after 10 o'clock this morning an RAF Hurricane plane crashed into a ploughed field at Manor Farm Wield, near Alton.

The pilot, Sargent Griffiths, was picked up dead about 100yards way from the wreckage, and it was assumed he either fell or jumped out of the machine. His parachute which was strapped to his back, was unopened.

The engine came to rest in a mass if entangled wreckage. The position after the accident was that the body of the pilot and the engine were equidistant from the fuselage.

First on the scene was Mr T Marshall, who farms at Wield Farm, and he phoned to Alton Police Station and police officers drove to the scene in an ambulance.

The field was inaccessible from the roadway and the body had to be carried for more than a mile on a stretcher to the ambulance. The body was taken to Alton Infirmary Mortuary.

Several farm workers heard the crash from a mile and a half away. One of them said: "I could not see the plane, but I heard its roar. Suddenly the noise faded out, then I heard a crash" Mr T Kurley, a carter told the Evening News that he saw the machine coming down in a spin.

20 February 1809

Lost Supposed to be STOLEN.

On Friday Night the 3rd February 1809

Two Horses (one aged, and the other young). Both are Black Horses, with white faces, and white in the hind and fore legs. The young one is a Stone Colt, rising two years old, and weak in his knees.

If Stolen a reward of FIVE GUINEAS will be given on conviction of the offender or offenders; if Strayed, a liberal Reward will be given, and all reasonable expenses paid , on application to Mr John Collins ,of Wield near Alton.

Supposed to be stolen by the same men that stole the Asses from the straw -yard at Wonston.

Thank you to Jonathan Enderby for sending them into Oxdrove. .

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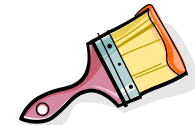
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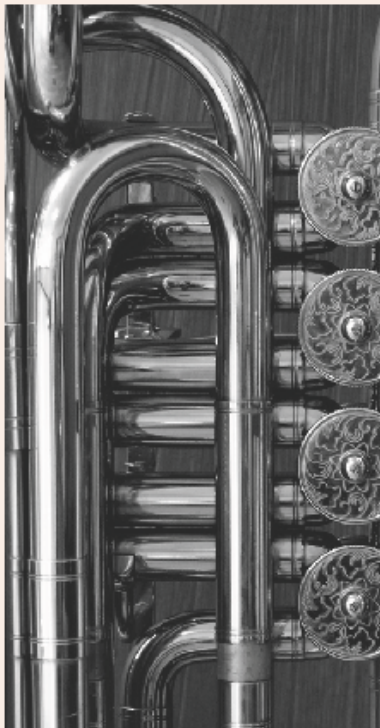
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NORTHINGTON

BRASS FAMILY CONCERT



Thursday 15th February
at 11am

BRASS TRIO

Half term concert for everyone! Free for Children!

Come and find out and hear the amazing music made by the lower Brass instruments: TUBA, TROMBONE and EUPHONIUM! All ages welcome:

Adults: £5; Children FREE
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Followed by informal Brass Instrument workshop by Hampshire Music Service teachers - Come and try out your favourite Brass instrument!

Find out more & book tickets
www.stjohnsnorthington.org



Find us on social media: @stjohnsnorthington

where to seek help if required, what you should do to keep your child comfortable and how long your child's symptoms are likely to last. <https://what0-18.nhs.uk/> they also have a whole section on Covid, Strep A & Scarlet Fever.



The period immediately after Christmas can be challenging for some. Men in particular may find it difficult to open up about their feelings. You can find out more about men's mental health and support here.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/men-and-mental-health>

Reminder – Patient Forum

Our next Patient Forum meeting will be held on Thursday 18th January 2024 at 6pm in the surgery waiting room. We look forward to these meetings as a chance to share information and ideas about how we work and for our patients to support us with constructive feedback and questions. Further details of the meeting topics will be published next month in our newsletter and will be posted on our website and Facebook page. Please put the date in your diary – we hope to see you there.

Welcome to our new ANP

We offer a very warm welcome to Lorna Davies who joins us as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in mid-January.

Lorna has been working at a Winchester GP practice, so has lots of experience. Lorna will be working alongside our GPs & existing Advanced Nurse Practitioner to deliver on the day care Monday-Friday.

Not attending your appointment

Please remember if you cannot attend your appointment, please contact us to cancel it ASAP please.

You can reply to your text message appointment reminder with 'CANCEL' or call in. Your appointment could be offered to another patient who urgently needs advice.

Afternoon Closure – Wednesday 28th February

The surgery and dispensary will be closed from 12.30pm to enable all GPs & Nurses to attend a compulsory training meeting this afternoon.

Our phone lines will **not** be open this afternoon.

If you require urgent medical attention, please call 111.



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SAMARITANS

January can seem like the darkest month of the year. If you're struggling, Samaritans are promoting. **"Brew Monday"** on the 15th Jan to raise awareness of the support they offer.

You can also keep track of how you're feeling and get recommendations for things you can do to help yourself cope, feel better and stay safe in a crisis.

www.samaritans.org Call 116 123

Cervical Cancer Prevention Week

It's

Cervical Cancer Prevention Week from **22nd Jan to 28th Jan** and Jo's cervical cancer trust is holding its biggest event yet, raising awareness for cervical cancer.

The symptoms of cervical cancer can include:

- Unusual vaginal bleeding, especially after menopause
- Changes to vaginal discharge
- Pain or discomfort during sex
- Unexplained pain in your lower back or between your hip bones (pelvis)

If you notice changes, it's better to get checked.

Lisa, a mother of two, was diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2013. Read about her experience being diagnosed and going through treatment via [this link](#).

Lisa B's Story | Cervical Cancer | Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust (jostrust.org.uk)

Healthier Together:

It can be extremely stressful when your child is unwell. We know that there is a huge amount of information available at your fingertips, but finding something that provides clear and accurate information is not always easy! The resources on the Healthier Together website have been developed in partnership between parents and healthcare professionals from across Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. You'll find clear information on common childhood illnesses, including advice on what 'red flag' signs to look out for,



ST JOHN
THE EVANGELIST
NORTHINGTON

CHOIR CONCERT

WINCHESTER CONSORT



Sunday 18 Feb at 6.30 pm

Tickets - £10 (under 18s free)
(Available on the day at the door)

'Upon your Heart'

A concert for St Valentine's Day with some of the best choral love-themed and wedding music ranging from the grand and stirring to the intimate and tender, from Faure, Rutter and Whitacre, to Jerome Kern, Cole Porter and 'Fats' Waller.

A song for everyone!

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Find us on social media: @stjohnsnorthington

Walking with Wildlife, Robert Bryant

In the dim light of a misty morning, a curious whistling breaks the silence – a haunting call that takes me back to when I was a boy listening to my father whistling for our dog. The call, a lengthy drawn out tone followed by a burst of short sharp notes, comes from a line of trees bordering the back field. Standing at our back gate, I scan the far tree-line, watching and waiting for the callers to reveal themselves. Presently two red kites emerge, drifting over the trees; it's their raptor calls that I hear, quite distinct from the mewing cries of buzzards. Kites, once rare, are now widespread and well established in their ancestral downlands.

It was on Remembrance Sunday when I first heard the chatter of fieldfares, my earliest encounter of this season. On a dull grey rather sombre day, these wintering thrushes were noisily and eagerly tucking in to mistletoe berries, feasting among the mistletoe clumps hanging high in the bare canopies of an avenue of lime trees on Northington Down.

These limes cross the skyline, linking visually with the beech hangars of Grange Woods nearby. Here at the crossroads just beyond the parish notice-board, troops of toadstools have sprung up from the dense carpet of leaves beneath the beeches. They form a splendid fairy ring, some eleven paces in diameter. Riffing through my Collins pocket guide to Mushrooms, I find these saucer-sized caps, cloud-grey with buff centres, are most likely to be clouded agarics – a late autumn fungus of the woodland floor that smell apparently of turnips.

On a fine morning of misty sunshine, we head out for a brisk stroll. The distant woods are lost in the fog but the canopies of the roadside oaks, still in leaf, bask in the sunlight. A tracery of dangling dewy cobwebs adorns the hedge-banks. Fieldfares clatter, hidden in the foggy treetops, gobbling up ivy berries. Shadowy forms of pheasants race away across the bare field. The rising sun shines through a bank of drifting fog forming a luminous fog-bow.

Robert Bryant
7th Dec '23

WEATHERWISE By Simon Bourne Summary of weather observations taken at Northington Down in November 2023

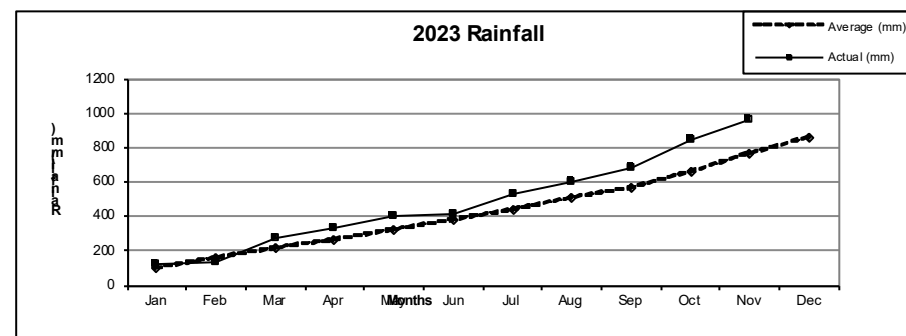
Temperatures (degrees centigrade/Fahrenheit)

Highest	14.8/58	(18 th)
Lowest	-5.5/22	(25 th)
Warmest Night	9.1/48	(1st & 14th)
Coolest Day	2.8/37	(30 th)
Average maximum temperature	11.0/52	
Average minimum temperature	2.9/37	
Number of air frosts	7	

Rainfall (millimetres/inches)

Monthly total	115.3/4.54	(average 99.7/3.93)
Annual total	961.9/37.87	(average 769.6/30.30)
Maximum 24hr. rainfall	26.2/1.03	(1 st)
Number of days with rain	21	

Summary November was largely unsettled with rain on all but one day in the first three weeks and temperatures were about average for late autumn. It was wet and breezy overnight on the 1st/2nd, with over an inch of rain but nothing compared to that experienced by the Channel Islands and northern France from Storm Ciarán. High pressure in the fourth week brought a few days of dry and sunny weather and temperatures dropped significantly below the seasonal norm in the last week with snow flurries on the 30th. The coldest night at 22°F occurred on the 25th. Overall, the month was cooler than normal, due to the overnight temperatures, with above average rainfall. The autumn was mild and the third wettest in over two decades.



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Candover Valley Gardening Club

For our last meeting of the year, we welcomed Jacqueline Aviolet who gave us a very amusing talk entitled Brussels Sprouts to Tangerines. She spoke about the history of Brussels sprouts (or Brussels buds as she liked to call them) and the multitude of different tangerines, clementines, satsumas, easy peelers. She briefly covered the traditional Christmas

dinner – carrots, parsnips, potatoes - how to grow and recommended cooking methods. She brought along bags of vegetables which were distributed to members! We all enjoyed festive refreshments including mulled wine and mince pies.

On January 18th we will be having a light-hearted quiz and will be joined by our gardening friends down the valley – Cliddesden, Farleigh Wallop and Ellisfield Horticultural Society.

All our indoor meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month in Preston Candover village hall at 7.30pm. If you would like to join us, guests are very welcome for a small fee and we always welcome new members – currently £12 for the year which is very good value.

You can find us on Facebook – **Candover Valley Gardening Club**

Farleigh Parish Playgroup



Cliddesden Millennium Village Hall

Friday Mornings 11am-12noon Term Time

3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th November

1st and 8th (Christmas Party and visit from Santa) December

0 - 4 year olds and their grown-ups.

A warm welcome awaits you - we look forward to you joining us for a fun and happy time.

Cost: £2 donation per family

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Please contact **Wendy Simson on 01256 389457** or at wendy.simson3@gmail.com

Candover Valley Club



The Candover Valley Club is located in the beautiful village of Brown Candover next to St. Peter's Church, and is fronted by the village cricket field. The Club has a fully licenced bar with kitchen, skittle alley, dart boards, pool table, TV, wifi and a separate function room suitable for large parties. A marquee, tables, chairs, crockery and cutlery are also available to hire.

Please contact cvchires@gmail.com for more information about using these wonderful facilities, or come for a drink on Saturday from 6.30pm.

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New Year on the Farm—Julian Gibbons

Happy New Year to everyone. As arable farmers we will be glad to see the back of 2023 which just seemed hard work from the time it started raining in March. At least we have the chance to wipe the slate clean and hope for a better 2024 with kinder weather. 2023 did see the successful launch of the Candover Valley Farmers cluster group and special thanks must go to steering group who have got it up and running with a full program of events for the winter. In November we had a meeting on hedge-rows, their history, importance to the environment, how to score them and better ways to maintain them to improve them. Under the new Sustainable farming initiative there are many hedgerow options that we can choose and at last we are going to get reward for having kept our hedges and encouraging hedgerow trees. We will have to score our hedges in a baseline assessment. This we were told could be done using a system developed by the People's Trust for Endangered Species. IF your interested visit their website at www.ptes.org/hedgerows. We will probably see a whole range of different management options chosen. We are starting to coppice some of our overgrown hedges to rejuvenate them. Years ago this would have been done by hand, but now a shear grab on a 360 digger can do the work much quicker and cheaper.

In December we had a talk and farm walk, courtesy of Moundsmere Estate, on farm woodland and trees. We had some very interesting speakers, but the best thing was the walk around some of Preston Oakhills to see some of the work that has been going on to rejuvenate the woods and hear some of the history of how some of the species mix came about. We looked at one parcel that had become dominated by Ash that due to Ash dieback disease had had all the Ash removed leaving a sparse population of Oaks. Ash had probably become dominant in this section because the mature oaks were removed during the last war. Ash will self-seed everywhere, so in the absence of restocking with oak, ash filled all the space.

We also learnt the danger of felling diseased Ash, that can shatter and fall very unpredictably if felled with chainsaws. The shear grab is the safer method; a worrying number of woodmen died in 2023 trying to fell diseased Ash trees by chainsaw. Ash trees need to be felled quickly after they show signs of disease whilst the wood still has some value. Within a few years it has negligible value even for firewood.

In January we have a visit to Rotherfield Estate to look at the conservation work that has taken place there. We will also be given a lesson in bird identification ready for the Big Farmland Bird Count that takes place between the 2nd and 18th February (see www.bfbc.org.uk).

Our farm has been chosen by the BTO for bird surveys over the winter months to see the effectiveness of wildbird food strips. These contain a mix of seed-bearing species that should keep the birds fed through the winter and this is supplemented by hopper feeders and hand feeding through the hungry months of December to April. Their first visit was in early December, and it will be interesting to see their results. They are surveying the fields and hedges, but not the woodland and this is being repeated across the country. This area is being plagued by poachers driving through hedges, smashing fences down and cutting locks and trashing fields several times a week This is happening at night and if you see lights over fields after midnight, please ring 999 with any concerns. These are very violent people, and you should not approach them, they have no respect for life of animals or people.

What's on in Wield?



On Saturday 16 December Wield Social group held a very successful Christmas Open Day at Wield Village Hall.

Among the stall holders were Robert and Bridge Grande with wonderful ceramics, hand woven scarves and other items, Kate Perkins (Munki Makes), with her delightful Christmas cards and prints, Kate Parker (Herblist) who told us all about her herbs and ways to use them and had some cold remedies to taste as well as some herbal potions, teas etc to buy, Annabelle and Aayan who sold delicious sweets, Amina who sold Fair Trade Crafts, Margot from Bradley Orchard, and Fi from Love Reiki.

An extremely good raffle and Tombola were also held. We were inundated with generous donations and sold over 600 tickets.

The ten entries in the Mince Pie Tasting competition presented stiff competition and judging was taken very seriously, the judges using a grid to judge aesthetics, filling texture, pastry texture, and overall taste.

The results of the mince pie contest were:

1st - Jenny Fidgeon, 2nd - Eileen Collins and 3rd- but still very tasty - Margaret Parker. Mince pies with tea and coffee were on sale all day. Jonathan Enderby (Chair of the Village Hall Committee) presented a cup to the winner and a prize of a tea towel. The cup can be held for a year and the contest will be held again next year.

The total amount raised towards the £10,000 target was £369.17. The first open day in November raised £142.70 so the grand total so far is **£511.87, 5% of the way there.**

A very good start to their fund raising.

The social group have lost of other events for you in the coming months including a Wellness Day, Cheese and Wine Tasting, plant sale and much more.

Watch this space each month to find out

What's on in Wield?

Stop Press!

New Local History Group first meeting will be held in the village hall on Thursday 18 January 2024 at 7.00pm

If you are interested in joining, just turn up on the evening.



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Jackie's County Corner: Happy New Year!

Firstly, thank you to all of you who practised for weeks and made costumes to perform at all the local Pantomimes this Christmas! Unfortunately, I couldn't get to them all, but particularly enjoyed the three henchmen and their password routine at Old Alresford! Brilliant!

I have mentioned the budget problems facing the County Council in previous County Corners.

Working groups are now set up for all of the possible areas for cuts, and the first meetings took place in mid December. These include cutting School Crossing Patrols, making School Transport changes, reducing the spend on books at libraries, reducing services (or maybe cutting out) the HWRC sites.

These working groups are set up according to the number of councillors in each political group on the council, so the ruling group has the overall majority on each working party.

The last Cabinet Meeting took place on the 12th December. You can watch this online from this link. <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=134&Mid=10705>

It included an item on the overall economy of Hampshire, including taking back the Solent and M3 Local Enterprise Partnerships into the County's work programme. There was a second item on the budgetary pressures, and a review of the Climate Change Annual Report.

Another item of interest to many in my division was related to the Superfast Broadband Project. For those of you now connected to Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) this will feel very different to those still not enjoying fast internet speeds. Project Gigabit has followed on from the superfast broadband programme. It should reach yet more of the last 5% still waiting.

There was also advanced notice publication of the consultation with the final proposals for the Hampshire Minerals and Waste plan update, covering the National Park too. Please give me your thoughts before the consultation closes in February 2024. Frustratingly, the revised plan continues to 'save sites' once they have been allocated for waste or recycling, and still fails to prevent oil and gas extraction, even in the National Park. I don't have a final date for the consultation as I write this in December, but I will publish the closing date in my February article.

Do you use a SAT NAV? Are you tempted to let it 'do the thinking for you'? We have seen a rise in the incidents of drivers using the wrong lane on dual carriageways, and it is thought to be connected to blindly following SAT NAV instructions. It is a very scary experience for anyone meeting a car coming towards them on the wrong side of the road. Reports of this happening on the A31 and the A33 have been received. The County Council has reviewed all the signage twice in the last few years and has added new signs on the A31, but if it happens to you, please let me know with the place, date and time. This information could save lives. Thank you.

The new STOP signs on the A33 at the Cart and Horses junction were installed in the Autumn, and soon a new Speed Indicator Device should be in place on the southbound carriageway to keep vehicles to 40mph. The County Council will publish the outcome of the 'Traffic lights or Roundabout' consultation very soon, but we have to await the M3 junction 9 decision before any likely solution for a safer junction is drawn up.

Finally, the picture above is when Chris and I went to see the new 'nutrient stripper' being installed at the WCC Water Treatment site at Itchen Abbas. As a Winchester councillor as well as a county councillor, it's good to see us making progress on reducing pollution in our chalk streams: making a good start to 2024.

Cllr Jackie Porter Jackie.porter@hants.gov.uk 07973 696085 website www.jackieporter.co.uk

Farleigh Parish Playgroup



Cliddesden Millennium Village Hall

Friday Mornings 11am-12noon Term Time

12th, 19th and 26th January - Happy New Year

2nd, 9th (closed on 16th for half term) and 23rd February

0 - 4 year olds and their grown-ups.

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Swarraton and Northington WI

At our Christmas meeting we welcomed Olly Butler, "Olly Jester" to speak about her experiences as a children's party entertainer. As one of the very few women to take up this occupation it was interesting to hear about the many ways she devised to hold the attention of young audiences and keep them amused.

Olly and her husband were both in the Royal Navy but postings to different parts of the UK called for a change of career. She liked children and first thought about taking up a career in teaching but after helping out with parties on the base for friends she was persuaded by colleagues and friends to develop her skills and she became "Olly Jester".

Designing a good jester's costume took several remakes. It had to be bright and cheerful, not scary, easy to move in and get into quickly as sometimes finding a good place to change on arrival at a party could be difficult. She often changed in sheds greenhouses or the smallest room in the house!

Olly developed a variety of activities which appeared from her suitcase and a large Alibaba basket. These included a mystery box, Algernon a furry worm, dressing up outfits for the birthday prince or princess and balloon modelling. Stories were acted out and audience involvement very important.

It was a lovely talk full of anecdotes and the comic things children say and do. It was a jolly way to start our Christmas meeting.

The Christmas tree was beautifully decorated. There was a Christmas bring and buy stall to raise funds for our Days for Girls charity and a lovely Christmas tea to round off the afternoon.

Looking ahead to 2024:

Lasagne Lunch in the hall on Friday 19th January 12 for 12.30

HCFWI Spring Council meeting March 20th Winchester Guildhall

Members were encouraged to source the excellent online courses run by Denman/WI.

We were sad to hear of the death of Bobbie Sanderson, a former President and active committee member. Bobbie will be remembered for tennis matches, Scrabble competitions, quizzes and so much more! She entertained us all with great humour as a panellist on 'Call My Bluff'. Bobbie's enthusiasm was infectious, and she enjoyed the many friendships she forged at WI. She was much loved and will be greatly missed.

We wish you all a peaceful and healthy 2024.




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In that time, my view hasn't changed. Winchester is a fast growing city and I want to see A&E services maintained as they are today plus full consultant-led maternity services on the RHCH site. If the clinicians, who must ultimately decide, feel things can be changed in a way that provides safe and sustainable services for my constituents it's up to them to make the clinical case. We are listening.

You can see years of work on this issue, details of the many ASKtheNHS public meetings I have held and links to the aforementioned consultation at stevebrine.com/prioritynhs and you can see more at facebook.com/SteveBrineMP

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Happy New Year!

You will be aware of plans for a **new hospital** between Winchester and Basingstoke (near junction 7) and the implications thereof for the Royal Hampshire.

Those proposals, now out for consultation until March 17 2024, mean different things to different people and junction 7 is a bit nearer these villages than some of those I represent to the south of Winchester. What we share is potentially a big change to the way acute hospital services are organised and delivered in mid/north Hampshire.

This was always a reality destined to dawn; from the moment Hampshire Hospitals NHS Trust brought together the RHCH, Basingstoke Hospital and Andover War Memorial. The configuration of acute services – what’s done best where – has been discussed for many years but it was the advent of the New Hospitals Programme that gave it real resonance here.

On first reading, for the NHS in Hampshire to finally publish details on how it will invest between £700 million and £900 million in hospital services for my constituents is not to be sniffed at and it shows the silliness of those claiming this project is the result of Ministers cutting NHS budgets.

It is true, this investment gives us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve hospital facilities. The brand-new hospital – accompanied by even more upgraded hospital buildings at Winchester - will enable our NHS to meet the changing needs of our growing and ageing population. Furthermore, it will help our local NHS to attract and retain the best staff; something it has struggled with in recent years.

In all options being consulted upon, Winchester hospital would continue to provide 24/7 urgent treatment, a same day emergency care service, and midwife led maternity services. At present we have full consultant-led obstetric services on both acute sites.



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What's that tree?

Standing sentry along the banks of our chalk streams, trees play a crucial role in these ecosystems. Their shade keeps the water cool in summertime, and their roots help to prevent bank erosion. Now that deciduous species have shed their leaves, the complex structures beneath have been revealed. It's an ideal time to appreciate your streamside trees and improve your identification skills!

Begin your quest by narrowing down the list of options. Trees growing close to streams are likely to prefer damp soil. The wood of alders, for instance, is actually stronger when wet! Other water-loving trees include goat willow, white willow, downy birch, oak, and lime. You could even find a black poplar – once a staple of floodplains, but now a rare sight, in part due to the drainage of land for agriculture.

With your shortlist ready, take in the big picture. The overall shape of a tree is a great clue – most notably the pattern of its branches. Monopodial trees like the black poplar grow in the same direction every year, typically gaining branches on either side. Conversely, sympodial trees like the oak and lime change their growth direction with every new branch, giving them a less uniform 'zigzag' appearance.

Nestled among the branches, you might find another clue: buds. Dormant during the winter months, they will become leaves, shoots, and flowers once spring arrives. Goat willows have round, hairless buds, whereas white willow buds are thin and hairy. The grouping is also important – oak buds grow in clusters, but lime buds have an alternating pattern and black poplar buds form spirals up twigs.

Lastly, take a close look at the bark. Trees grow from the inside, and their outer layers respond in ways determined by their composition. The thin layer of the downy birch peels away like paper, while the thick layer of the alder cracks into fissures. Oak and lime bark is pushed up into ridges. But remember that young trees sometimes have smoother bark that will become more uneven with age.

If you need a little help with your tree ID, the Woodland Trust have a free app that works with bark, buds, and branches – perfect for wintertime. If you'd like to learn more about the wonderful world of chalk streams, you can explore the Watercress and Winterbournes scheme by visiting www.hiwwt.org.uk/winterbournes. Our work is made possible by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Free Online Talks

'Photography for Chalk Stream Conservation' 11th January, 7pm

Award-winning photographer Paul Colley shares his chalk stream images, explains the techniques behind them, and explores how they are used in chalk stream conservation.

'The Devastation and Restoration of England's Chalk Streams' 8th February, 7pm
Are chalk streams really "man-made habitats"? We explore how modification impacts these precious habitats, and how restoration can help return them to good health.

Book your tickets at hiwwt.org.uk/winterbournes.



Wishing all our customers a happy 2024

We wish a happy, healthy and peaceful new year to our customers and thank you all for your continued support.

Welcome aboard

We are delighted that Becky Robson from Upper Wield is joining the CVCS team as a senior assistant and (in due course) duty manager. When you are next in the store do please say 'hello' and make her feel very welcome.

Food bank donations

During December we were collecting donations for the Basingstoke Foodbank. Thank you to everyone who generously put extra items into their baskets or donated cash to be spent on goods the foodbank needed. We will let you know how much was raised in the February magazine

Marmalade-making month is here!

Any day now, boxes of sunshiny oranges from Seville will be arriving - ready to be made into that special, zingy breakfast conserve. You will find a recipe sheet, plus sugar and lemons in the store. The only extras you'll need are some clean jam jars, a preserving pan, and some labels!

Community projects fund

If you are involved with a local club, society or organisation in the catchment area and have a project in need of funds, why not consider applying to the CVCS community fund? For details of how to apply and to download an application form, please visit the website www.cvcs.org.uk or contact Jocelyn Rogerson on 01256 389661.