

February 2020

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*The*  
**DEDDINGTON NEWS**

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## The DEDDINGTON NEWS

I know it's February but I think most in the parish would agree that we're very lucky to live in such a wonderful community. We have volunteers who give their time on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to think of others and have created some special traditions as well as raising funds for local causes. You will see below Christmas lunches being dished up for delivery.

JC

### What's on February

- Wed 4 Photographic Society: Backyard Birds, Roger Hance, Adderbury Institute, 7.30pm
- Sun 8 Wassail: Community Orchard, Clifton, 4.00pm
- Wed 11 Women's Institute: Holly Tree Hall, 2.30pm
- Thu 12 History Society: RAF Brize Norton – Over 80 years of Flying Operations, Trevor Jackson, Primary School, 7.30pm
- Wed 18 Parish Council: Hempton Lounge, Windmill Centre, 7.30pm
- Sat 21 Windmill Quiz: Windmill Centre, 7.00pm
- Thu 26 Book Group: Call Sally Lambert, 01869 338094, for details
- Sat 28 Farmers' Market: Market Place, 9.00am–12.30pm
- Sat 28 Fair Trade Stall: Deddington Church, 9.00am–12.30pm

### March

- Wed 4 Photographic Society: Adderbury Institute, 7.30pm
- Tue 10 Women's Institute: Holly Tree Hall, 2.30pm



*Alex with his daughter, Rosie, checking all dinners were complete, while Mary eagerly waits*

Alex and his team may only serve Christmas lunch to an increasingly small number of people but, it's clear from this photograph, that it is a very welcome service. The delivery team reported that they were welcomed, usually with tears and a hug.

Preparing, serving and delivering the meals were: Alex Moss and daughters, Rosie and Milly; Mike and Sue O'Brien; Daire Dowling; David Westbury; Gregg Brown; and Harriet Palin.

Submission of any article to the Deddington News carrying personal information (for example names, locations, pictures) will imply that the person submitting the article has obtained the necessary consent from the individual (or parent / guardian in the case of a minor) / company / organisation for this information to be used both in print and online.

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## DEDDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Meeting 17 December in Parish Church

*Present:* Cllrs Cox, Mobbs, Oldfield, O'Neill, Palin, Robinson (chair), Rogers (Dist Cllr), Snashall, Swadling, Timms, CCouncillor Epps, three members of the public, the parish clerk and the *DN* reporter.

#### County Council

The recently published Oxford Growth Commission's Interim Report talks of increasing house building totals above existing levels without mentioning the 11,000 houses approved but not yet built across Cherwell.

#### Finance and General Purposes

A 2026/2027 budget of £110,884 was adopted, giving an increase of 9% in the annual precept, meaning approximately £6 a year for a Band D household.

It was agreed in principle to recommend a grant of £2,440.80 to support the library for the next year.

#### Planning

##### *No objection*

The Orchard, Main Street, Clifton: rear extension, replace conservatory with new orangery.

Crown and Tuns flat, New Street, Deddington: plaster replacement, ceiling repair, reinstate stud wall.

#### Large Scale Development

In November, Jim Calcutt reported contact from a developer interested in locating a five-megawatt solar farm on land south of Pure Barn, east of the Oxford Road, with power fed directly into the adjacent substation. Without positive feedback from the PC he would not follow up the contact. The panels would cover 16 acres with a further three and a half acres in the lower swampy section devoted to wildlife habitat. The site is listed as a cherished view in the Neighbourhood Plan which states that 'development proposals that would have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the integrity of the identified key views will not be supported'. After a site visit the PC agreed that it would not object to any forthcoming proposal as the site is sufficiently concealed by trees and the brow of the hill, allowing only a small strip of panels to be visible and thus not affecting the view 'unacceptably'.

The PC offered thanks to the Fuller family for its generosity in giving the parish, at considerable cost to themselves, the nursery and car park at the new development north of the fire station.

#### Highways and Transport

OCC will fell 16 diseased trees on its land in Deddington and plant 32 new trees. The PC will submit suggestions for the species and location of the replacement trees.

### Meeting 21 January at the Windmill Centre

*Present:* Councillors ap Simon, Cox, Mobbs, Oldfield, O'Neill, Palin, Robinson (chair), Rogers (District Cllr), Swadling, Timms, Watts, County Cllr Epps, 10 members of the public and a *DN* representative.

#### 10 minute Forum:

The OCC tree officer said, referring to the felling and

monolithing of some of the horse chestnuts at Hempton and Hempton road, their usual presumption is to do nothing. Their responsibility is to protect the highway. After an inspection last year, it was concluded that 16 trees needed attention. He was apologetic but OCC is unaware of how the trees came to be there or any presumed ownership. They are all affected by bleeding canker but most are fine to be retained but some have been exposed to fungus. All trees taken down will be replaced by two trees. A resident of Hempton spoke on behalf of Bill Washington, whose father planted the horse chestnut trees. He wants all the trees preserved and removed ones replaced before the end of February with red horse chestnuts that are more resilient. He confirmed his wish to work with the county.

#### County Council

There is a significant deficit in government funding and OCC is exploring options to fill the gap. A consultation is taking place until 20 January involving the Fire and Rescue Service.

There have been considerable problems with traffic management for the current Thames Water work on the A4260 and Cllr Epps is following them up with a site visit with the company.

#### District Council

There is a supply of UV pens with the parish clerk for marking garden machinery, bikes etc with postcode so that if stolen and traced they can be reunited.

#### Environment and Recreation

Topsoil is being provided to fill holes at the cemetery where ground has sunk.

Playground repairs are causing a lot of complaints and PC is trying to get repairs completed as soon as possible.

#### Finance and General Purposes

Library funding of £2,440 was agreed.

The dates of 18–21 November for the annual fair were agreed.

Two new salt bins will be bought for Fardon Way and the south end of New Street.

#### Planning

##### *No objection*

The Priory, Hudson Street, Deddington: tree works.

Castle View Goose Green, Deddington: tree works.

#### Large Scale Developments

A meeting between the PC, OCC and CDC has been arranged to progress the new nursery building.

#### Highways

There are few lights on Fardon Way making access dangerous. The PC will ask OCC to review.

Funding is being sought from OCC for completing Clifton road work that should have been completed by developers.

The police will continue attending the farmers' market, to try to build awareness about safe parking.

**Next Meeting: 18 February at 7.30pm  
at the Windmill.**





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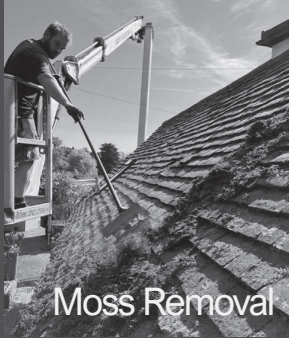
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## DEDDINGTON HEALTH CENTRE

### *The PPG looked back at 2025*

At the start of the year the Patient Participation Group welcomed Dr Speight to give a presentation on the online triage system. He outlined why the change was necessary and what progress had been made since its introduction in November 2023. An online system is now a Department of Health requirement, so it was good that the health centre was ahead of the curve.

At our March meeting, members met with the Dispensary Services Manager who outlined the workings of the department and the efficiencies of having a drug storage robot and software to help with record-keeping and effective dispensing. It saves an estimated one and half person's time.

The next department for a deep dive on responsibilities was Patient Services and it proved that the team covers a multitude of tasks for patients, GPs and outside agencies. It is so much more than just answering the phone.

The PPG has also met with the Nursing Services Manager and heard about the multi-faceted tasks covered by the nursing team including phlebotomy, long-term condition care, home visits, vaccinations and a monthly Saturday clinic (with a GP on call) for longer patient assessments.

The year ended with a look at complaints received during 2024–2025 to learn how they are reviewed and resolved.

The triage system has a new name: the Advice and Appointment Hub. The PPG also has an area on the

Health Centre website and a more prominent display space in the waiting area where written feedback/contact can be placed in a box.

There have been changes to the group with a new chair being appointed in September and the practice manager stepping aside to allow the deputy PM to attend meetings. We've also been joined by Dr R Davis as the GP representative.

Happy New Year from the PPG.

**Anne Hunsley**  
**Patient Participation Group**  
**ppg.deddington@gmail.com**

## Oxfordshire County Council

OCC has been awarded government funding to help low-income households make their homes more energy efficient through the Warm Homes Local Grant. This scheme provides fully funded upgrades such as insulation, solar panels and heat pumps for eligible homeowners and private tenants.

Please contact the Welcome the Warmth team on 0800 038 6775 or [info@welcomethewarmth.org.uk](mailto:info@welcomethewarmth.org.uk).

### *Congestion Charge*

There are six congestion charge locations in Oxford for anyone travelling by car. Residents can apply for a limited number of passes, and permits are available for other groups including Blue Badge holders and mobile traders

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## DRIVING UKRAINE

On 9 January 2026, Maksym Stodolia, head of Ukrainian Operations and co-founder with Fynn Watt of Driving Ukraine in early 2022, gave a powerful, sensitive and emotional update on the current situation in Ukraine so far this winter.

'This is undoubtedly the hardest winter of the entire war. Dnipro, a city in south-eastern Ukraine and the largest frontline city that has become a logistics bastion for our military, has ended up in a complete blackout as a result of constant missile strikes on energy infrastructure. Most districts have electricity for only 2–5 hours a day and some areas have been completely cut off from power. Schools, kindergartens and state institutions have suspended operations. Local businesses and grassroots initiatives are massively switching the city to alternative energy sources. The city hums with the sound of generators to provide children with light and warmth in  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

Kharkiv, a city in north-eastern Ukraine, is in a similar situation. Local authorities are urging people to temporarily relocate to areas with better conditions until warmer weather arrives.

In Kyiv, local authorities ordered the water to be drained from the heating systems of the entire left bank of the city as, due to severe frosts and lack of electricity, water pipes could burst. People are organising into groups, each bringing uninterruptible power supplies, portable heating systems, generators, and everything needed to get through the cold more easily. Local businesses are offering their pre-prepared premises free of charge so that children can continue their schooling and are treating them to hot cocoa.

Today, Lviv was attacked by the hypersonic ballistic missile "Oreshnik", which is designed to carry nuclear warheads. It reaches speeds of up to 13,000km/h, which meant that residents of Lviv did not even have time to reach bomb shelters. Ukraine's air defence systems did not manage to announce an air raid alert to warn the population. Around midnight, just as we were getting ready to go to sleep, we were shocked by a very powerful series of explosions. We could

not understand what was happening, as no air raid alert had been declared. Fortunately, no one was injured. Thankfully, the missiles did not carry nuclear warheads, but due to their enormous kinetic force, the strike severely damaged one of the key electrical substations near Lviv. As a result, the city has switched to rolling power outages, with electricity available for about eight hours a day. This is especially difficult when temperatures drop to  $-12^{\circ}\text{C}$  and the coming weekend is expected to be the coldest of the year.

This is truly the most difficult winter of the entire war. But we are not giving up. We are organising and rising to meet these challenges. I have not seen such unity among Ukrainians in a very long time. People in Lviv are sending their power banks, warm clothes and generators to friends in the east. Yes, we also lack electricity, but it is even harder in the east. We understand that it is difficult for us, but it is many times harder for the soldiers in the trenches. That is why we are mass-producing trench heating candles, organising convoys with winter aid to the combat zone, and supporting those who are defending us in these conditions. Together with our neighbours, we go out into the streets with shovels to clear snow, helping municipal services that are now fully focused on restoring energy infrastructure.

Every Ukrainian I know also gets to hold on to the fact that we have you as our friends, supporting us in these times; the help from the UK and across the world is seen every day here in Ukraine and let me tell you, it makes a massive difference.

So thank you for continuing, we weren't expecting it to get harder but when it did, you were all there for us.

We are angry and exhausted but we do not give up. Challenges give us even more motivation to unite and defend what is ours. We know that after a harsh winter and bitter cold, a beautiful spring with warmth will come. We know that after all these trials, peace will inevitably arrive. We know that life will overcome death and light will overcome darkness. Even during a blackout, this does not matter, because we are united and we act together.'

On the home front, Driving Ukraine's Convoy 55, celebrating International Women's Day, will leave Deddington – 20 women volunteers, 15 vehicles, seven countries and four days, 12–14 March! We are looking for volunteers – this is not just a convoy – it is a chance to do something real and lifesaving. Visit [DrivingUkraine.org](http://DrivingUkraine.org).

**Jenny Soddy 07976 922558**



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## ANOTHER ROAD CLOSURE

There will be a temporary road closure for Thames Water to carry out water mains replacement from 9 March–20 April. Hudson Street at its junction with High Street/New Street will be closed and there will be two-way traffic lights on the A4260 and traffic from the Grove will need to filter in. Stagecoach has been advised, as Horsefair and Market Place bus stops will be suspended.



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## CHURCH

### Parish Church SS Peter and Paul

December seems long ago, but it was lovely to see many of you at our special services. In January we celebrated the arrival of the Magi in our Epiphany family communion and evensong services. Epiphany ends at Candlemas on 1 February which we will celebrate with our special family communion and choral evensong services.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on 18 February when we will hold a special evening service with 'Ashing'. Lent is a six-week season in which we reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross and acknowledge the need for our own forgiveness. We will again be running the Come and See Lent course from Oxford Diocese. The theme for this year is Discovering Jesus through the Eucharist which will explore the profound meal at the heart of Christian life. It's perfect for new and old Christians alike. Find out more and register at <https://oxford.anglican.org/campaigns/come-and-see/>. You will receive a short daily email to reflect on and a weekly video link to explore in more detail. There are special materials for children and young people. We will run weekly Lent discussion groups on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm, starting on 24 February. We hope to see you there.

The Rev Nick Fielden is vicar of Deddington with Hempton and the Barfords. Mondays are his usual day off, so if you need a member of the clergy urgently on a Monday, please contact one of the wardens. Barford St Michael's church is open every day 10.00am–3.00pm. Deddington church is open from 9.00am–4.00pm with church services streamed live. Updates are on [www.deddingtonchurch.org](http://www.deddingtonchurch.org) or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DeddingtonChurch>.

For funeral and home visits in case of illness please contact Nick on 01869 934794 or [vicar@deddington-church.org](mailto:vicar@deddington-church.org), or one of the church wardens: Deddington: vacancy; Barfords: Sue Addison 07484 718791, Sally Barber 07776 241218 or [barfordchurches234@gmail.com](mailto:barfordchurches234@gmail.com).

For baptism, wedding and general enquiries please contact the Parish Administrator: [office@deddington-church.org](mailto:office@deddington-church.org).

#### February

Mon	8.45am	Morning Prayer
Tue	8.15am	Morning Prayer
Wed	10.00am	Holy Communion (with healing prayer on 4th Wednesday)
Thu	9.30am	Tea+Toast and Squiggles and Wiggles (term time)
Fri	8.45am	Morning Prayer
	5.15 pm	Evening Prayer
Tue 24	7.30pm	Lent Course begins
Sun 1	10.30am	Family Communion (breakfast and crafts from 9.45am)
	6.00pm	Evensong
Sun 8	10.30am	Holy Communion
Sun 15	10.30am	Holy Communion
Wed 18	7.00pm	Holy Communion with Ashing for Ash Wednesday
Sun 22	10.30am	Holy Communion

#### Hempton

Sun 15	9.00am	Holy Communion
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#### Barford St Michael

Wed	5.15pm	Evening Prayer
Sun 1	10.30am	Coffee and Chat
Sun 15	10.30am	Family Service
Sun 22	10.30am	Family Communion

#### Barford St John

Sun 8	9.00am	Holy Communion
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#### From the Parish Registers:

##### Funerals

Rosemary Clark  
Jean Gibbard

## RC CHURCH

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10.30am Saturday Confessions

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8.30am Sunday Mass

11.30am Sunday Mass

### St Joseph's, Banbury

10.00am Sunday Mass

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# DH History Corner

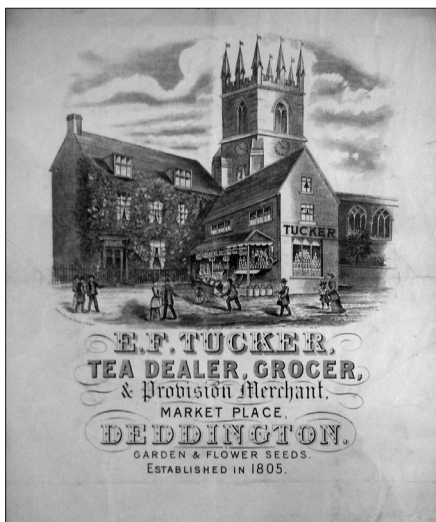
[www.deddingtonhistory.uk](http://www.deddingtonhistory.uk)

This article was occasioned by Andrew Jacob posting a 'With Compliments' card dated 18 February 1897 belonging to Mr and Mrs RS Tucker on Facebook's Growing up in Deddington. It prompted me to try and draw together the history of the 'Tuckers' building (now Otters) in the Market Place.

John Plumbe's scrapbook archives and back copies of the *Deddington News* have been of particular help in this. According to Mary Vane Turner's *The Story of Deddington*, there was a tavern on the site before it became a Tea House and Grocery Store. Deddington Map Group research established that it was called Kempster's Ale House. The first recorded proprietor of the premises is a newspaper announcement in 1851 of Mr John Dean, Grocer, Deddington, marrying Miss Jane Gilkes. A c1860 photograph of the building has his name on the front. As was fairly common at the time, he issued his own trading tokens stamped Grocer & Tea Dealer.

It became Tuckers Tea & Grocery Store some time after the 1861 census and before 1868 when Elisha Tucker (born c1840 in Frome, Somerset) first appears as its proprietor in *Cassey's Directory*, employing two assistants and a boy. The store's advertisement (see image) claimed 'Established in 1805.' This must refer to even before John Dean. Perhaps his father, Henry, also dealt in tea. According to *Kelly's 1911 Directory* Elisha's son, Robert F Tucker, was also a grocer and the village postmaster. The Post Office was located on New Street, now The Old Post House. Elisha was still listed as a grocer, so they were running the shop together. Bernard Bowerman recalled Robert in his memories of Deddington, <https://www.deddingtonhistory.uk/people/bernardbowermansmemories>, running the store and Post Office in the 1920s and 30s, the latter having been relocated from New Street to the store.

*Kelly's 1939 Directory* lists a change of ownership with Mr Vincent R Boone as its proprietor. Not much is known about him, but Sid Berry, in a 2005 aural recording 'Memories of Deddington', said '*they [Deddington British Legion] had a bloke named Lardy Vincent. He got a grocer's shop at Bloxham, near the war memorial and he got Tuckers when Tuckers was in the Market Place and he had that as well ...*' One supposes Lardy was his nickname from his trade. He passed the shop on to his son Raymond who sold it post WWII to Ted Moseley who sold it to Mervyn Wynne and his wife Marjorie (Nicky) in the late 1950s. They had a small wood carved bas-relief plaque made of the house, now Quince & Clover, and of the shop, now Otters. This is in the Parish Archive room at the Windmill.



The Wynnes sold the shop to John Cannell in 1972. Frank Steiner recalled he was known as the Colonel. Son Peter and his wife, Sylvia, ran it as a general store specialising in food. It was popularly known as Harrods of north Oxfordshire, allegedly because it stocked more cheese than its London namesake.

In 1988 it changed hands and use when Barrie and Annabel Gregory took it over to sell antiques and bric-a-brac as Tuckers Country Store. The Gregorys departed for a life in the West Country in 1998 when it changed use again into a restaurant run by Jamie Dexter. He sold it to Martin Ellis, then licensee of the Red Lion, in 2002 who opened it as Bowlers then renamed it as the Olive in 2004. It was put up for sale in November 2004.

It was purchased by Michael Whitley in 2005 and was first advertised in the *DN* as Otters in February 2006, with Mike as the chef who became well known for his cuisine. It had to close in 2021 due to the Covid epidemic and, sadly, has remained closed ever since. An expanded and illustrated version of this article – together with a link to multiple images in the Gallery – can be found via a link on the Home page of [www.deddingtonhistory.uk](http://www.deddingtonhistory.uk).

**Rob Forsyth**  
[robert.s.forsyth@gmail.com](mailto:robert.s.forsyth@gmail.com)



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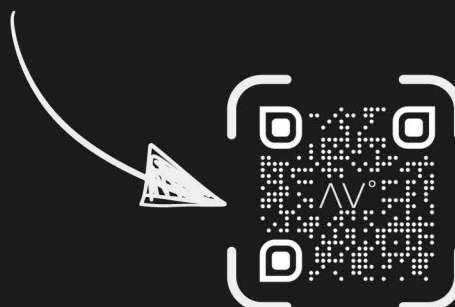
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## HIGH SPEED DEDDINGTON?

Over its history, Deddington has held some importance in the country's affairs, from the Castle which was the headquarters of the second most powerful man in Britain, Bishop Odo, <https://tinyurl.com/mr2h-cd6j>, to the more recent technological revolution that arrived with fibre broadband to the area covered by Deddington telephone exchange. It has now been decommissioned, 13 years after the area was used as the first pilot location for BT's fibre-only exchange programme.

Some of you may have heard or read in November 2025 a news item about the closure of the exchange on Chapman's Lane but may have wondered why this warranted being a national news item.

In late 2011 or early 2012 Jim Flux, then chairman of the parish council, heard of the fibre-only exchange pilot scheme and applied. There was then a move afoot by some local businesses to increase the demand for the pilot when Deddington was just one of several villages being considered. Hamish Stoddart of Peach Pubs was keen to have a more consistent internet access. Deddington needed to hit a number of commitments from locals to sign up to move to the new service in order to persuade BT to use Deddington exchange as the pilot.

The pilot was an important exercise for the industry as it tried to understand the opportunities that would arise from the fibre-only world. It was exciting to feel we were at the forefront of such an innovation and I quickly signed up, not least as a potential benefit in relation to the *DN*. In March 2012 BT announced that Deddington had been selected as the pilot for ultra fast fibre to the premises (FTTP). The programme was intended to explore the potential for fibre-only services for both broadband and phone, although at the time, we were less aware of the effect on our phone service. The excitement came from download speeds being promised up to 330Mbps (megabits per second) and upload speeds of 30Mbps. At the time, we could only receive maximum speeds of around 6–8Mbps. Imagine streaming a film with those speeds and I won't start on the effects of more than one device being used in the same household. Remember the old dial-up internet? What would we have done during the pandemic when so many meetings were arranged via video conferencing, as they now are for those working from home?

In October 2012, the bigwigs from BT and Openreach gave a presentation to members of local councils and the press, including *DN*, in the Deddington Arms. Following this the grapevine reported seeing groups of yellow-jacketed technical BT people around the area with a good deal of measuring, muttering and looking down holes. Several of us were invited to see work being carried out down the holes and we all donned hi-viz jackets and asked questions, with part of the outing being reported on BBC South Today; it

must have been a quiet news day!

As with the more recent switch to digital phones, the trial was not straightforward, particularly for older properties with thick ironstone walls. But it wasn't just older properties that presented challenges. The Dae-dings had to have new ducting laid to house the cable as the original copper telephone wires had been laid directly into the ground. Accessing some remote locations such as high demand user Dijon Designs off the Clifton Road presented particular difficulties. Simon Baxter of Dijon Designs recollects: 'I was amazed to witness BT 'blowing' a thin, delicate-looking, bunch of fibre cables half a mile down the farm track. They used the original pipe and compressed air and I was impressed as I suspected it had been there a long time. It looked very fragile. It was all so new, even the engineer took delight in demonstrating to me how they joined the hair-like fibre cables. We already had the infrastructure to deliver high speed internet to every desk. It was robust, fast and never seemed to suffer any peaks and troughs like the old copper exchange.'

Places like the flats in the Bullring and the Co-op building with multiple occupancy were another challenge. Further difficulties arose after the trial was completed as far as BT and Openreach were concerned. Anyone who hadn't opted in at an early stage experienced some difficulty. As recently as six years ago, new customers were being told by BT that FTTP was not available in Deddington.

Openreach will have a remaining 1,000 super digital exchanges serving the whole of UK in place of the existing 4,600, of which Deddington exchange was one. At least for the time being, we now know what's happening to the land adjacent to the property on Chapman's Lane.

**Jill Cheeseman**



*The new BT sign at the exchange*



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*On a damp market day last November, many representatives of their organisations accepting cheques*

After deducting expenses like publicity material, new stalls, insurances, crew t-shirts and the annual lunch held to reward all the volunteers who make the market possible, there is a surplus. This is gifted to Deddington parish organisations and those who serve our community for capital purchases.

Last November, we donated nearly £2,500 to organisations including Adderbury Deddington & District Photographic Society, Deddington Brass Band, Deddington Bridge Club, Deddington Church, Deddington Craft Group, Deddington Cricket Club, Deddington

Scouts and Cubs, Deddington Environment Network, Deddington Housing Association, Deddington Library, Deddington Nursery, Deddington Players, Deddington Parish Archive, Deddington PTA, Deddington Tennis Club, Friends of Hempton Church, The Holly Tree Club, Homestart Banbury & Chipping Norton, Bicester and Deddington PFSU.

**Tei Williams**

**Chair Deddington Farmers' Market**  
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## EVENTS AT THE WINDMILL

**W**e all know the Windmill Centre as a community resource which provides a hub for activities catering for local people of all ages ... and dogs. You may not know that there is a group of volunteers known as the Windmill management committee that does an excellent job, maintaining and improving the Windmill's indoor and outdoor spaces so that they can be hired by clubs, businesses and individuals. Until now this committee has not been involved in actually running any of the activities that happen at the Windmill, but now that is going to change.

In my pre-retirement life, I was a teacher and have served on many PTAs, running events for parents and families. I joined the Windmill committee last year, hoping that I could continue to organise social events for the local community. My long-term aim is to hold some kind of function at the Windmill at least

once a month but, before this is possible, there is still some refurbishment needed in what is currently the sports hall. Any money raised at these events will be split between this refurbishment and a designated local 'good cause'; this year's good cause being the Deddington library.

The first event to be part of the programme is a quiz on 21 February and we also have a race night planned for 25 April. I hope that, once we have a more suitable space to work with, we can start a community cinema and stage some live music events, but I need your help. If you have ideas about what events we could run, if you would like to help in running them or if you would simply like to come along and enjoy yourself, then contact me.

**Peter Hogben**

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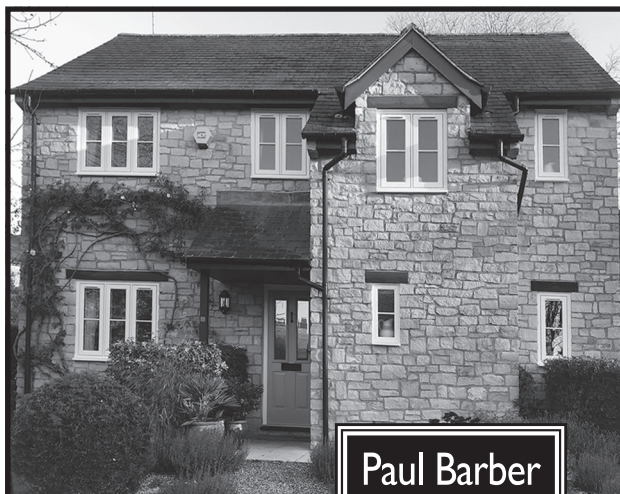
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## POSTCARD FROM AMERICA

### Christmas, Medicare and Ice Hockey

Christmas is a time for friends and family and America celebrates in much the same way as the UK. There is plenty of shopping, eating and drinking but perhaps a larger amount of worshipping. My wife loves her nine foot artificial fir tree and spent three days decorating it with lights and ornaments. This stirred an old memory of a message on Friends Reunited from a primary school friend. Mary said she thought of me every Christmas when she put the decoration I made for her on her tree. I had spent 20 years trying to forget this boiler.

Unfortunately, it appears that the US administration didn't absorb too much Christian spirit. There is no loving of neighbours going on. The fatal shooting of a female demonstrator in Minneapolis has turned into an excuse to focus on the facts that she had a wife and was an 'affluent white female urban liberal'. The new ethos is domination of territory and exploitation of natural resources. As Stephen Miller, White House deputy chief of staff, put it, 'We live in a world that is governed by strength, that is governed by force, that is governed by power.' Not a lot of love. It's Greenland next.

The American new year means it is time to waste endless amounts of time renewing our health insurance. When I came off company health insurance 2.5 years ago, I took advice from a 'consultant'. After asking questions such as 'Why is this policy free?', I signed up for the recommended Medicare Advantage

plan. But now I can see that this plan was great while I was healthy, but would end up costing me a fortune in co-pays, the amount insurance doesn't cover, once I got old and sick.

What I never realised is that Advantage plans are not Medicare, the 'free' healthcare coverage for old folk like me. The insurance companies get paid a flat fee by Medicare to take patients out of the system and want to find ways to make money. Around 40% of retirees are now going onto Advantage plans, which is not surprising when the 'consultants' are paid to push people this way. What the retirees aren't told is that once they opt out of standard Medicare, it's very hard to get back in. I was lucky: I could switch because United Healthcare cancelled my free plan, but it took me two hours online and 12 hours holding on calls chasing my application. I now have standard Medicare (\$212 pm), plus a 'Medigap' top-up plan to cover extra costs (\$192 pm), a drug plan (\$0), and a dental plan (\$136 pm). Between us we spent \$20,000 on healthcare last year. It doesn't appear Medicare is free after all.

While Trump focuses on bullying and retribution, we are running headlong into a nightmare adoption of AI. Who is going to set the boundaries, and ensure that the benefits accrue to everyone? There are seven companies that make up more than 30% of the US stock market. Their investment in AI is responsible for all the growth in the US economy. These are the businesses that will control our destiny. Will they think about the wellbeing of ordinary folk or will they pursue their personal profits? They want you to trust them. Really?

My new year resolution was to be positive and not get wound up by the current situation in this bizarre country. We even went to an ice hockey game with a couple of Trumpists. We won – that's the Colorado Avalanche, not us Brits. I felt a bit like John Cleese in that Fawlty Towers sketch, I didn't mention the war. Happy new year – let's make it Great Again.

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### Christmas Carols, Again!

Deddington Brass would like to thank all of you who turned out – in your hundreds – to support and join them for the annual Christmas Eve Carols in the Market Place. Special mention goes to the young choristers who came and helped lead the singing from the front, to Deddington Fire Brigade who did the same from the sidelines and to Nick Fielden for the blessing. For the first time, we sold out of mulled wine which helped us raise over £500 on the evening. This year, our nominated charity was Homestart, a national charity with strong local connections that helps vulnerable families with young children. We hope that we will see you all next Christmas Eve, 6.00pm in the Market Place where we hope to raise even more money for charity.

**Graham Wallington**

## NEWS FROM CLIFTON

An exceptional 28 Santas made their traditional appearance in the village over the seasonal period and this year the chosen charity was the Candleford Library with funds being sent to the Friends, who raise money to maintain the exceptional service delivered by the manager and the excellent team of volunteers. This year apparently only £170 was raised so I'd like to ask any neighbours who might have enjoyed seeing them if they 'chipped in' to ensure this piece of madness continues.

New Year's Eve was a novel event here, with many taking to the Duck for an interesting proposition. With the pub being closed over the first three weeks of '26 an 'everything must go' event was planned by Max. Many of our residents took advantage but there were a few spaces going spare, which one customer surmised meant they enjoyed a ten course taster menu and not a seven course as advertised. This was much enjoyed at the standards now being expected.

CAST held their AGM but were shocked to learn their chairman, Peter, was moving on but, in the mean time, he will continue the campaign to deliver hard traffic calming measures, widely seen as the only effective counter to speeding traffic, especially when TVP, (who were not consulted over the 20mph limit) feel they lack the resources to enforce these limits. CAST are also keen to raise a few more speed watch volunteers, especially from Main Street residents who are most affected by this scourge.

Clifton-sur-Mer has returned, as you may expect, but the population of wild ducks and geese all make the environs even more interesting. Paddle boarders could certainly have some fun without any danger of drowning. Fancy getting your kids up on boards?

Any news, comments or content, pleased send it through to me.

**MartinDNBruce@gmail.com**



Thank you to all who supported our 2026 Deddington parish calendar. We are indebted to our loyal and valued sponsors; the talented photographers who submit their work; our retailers for selling the calendars for us; Deddington farmers' market for letting us set up stall; and our wonderful community for buying the calendar.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the opening of Deddington library by JRR Tolkien, so we are planning events and fundraisers during the year to celebrate this remarkable milestone. If you have any thoughts or suggestions, or would like to get involved with our fundraising, we'd love to hear from you.

To kick this year off, the Windmill Centre is holding a quiz night on Saturday 21 February, from which a percentage of the net proceeds will be donated to support the library. Have a fun night out and support your village library too!

**Bryn Williams**  
**abw@brynwilliams.com**



## BLISSFUL THINKING

We are pretty good at anthropomorphising animals in animations and literature in order to try to directly empathise with their concerns ... or more likely to sell board games, cereal or toilet cleaner. And also the reverse-anthropomorphising thing of comparing human anatomy to machines.

Comparing our brain to a computer is the most obvious. How many times do we depict ourselves as having too many mental tabs open, a dreaded Black Screen of Death, or simply needing a reboot? Like our favourite laptop when it gets to a certain age, commands react more slowly and memory space becomes sparse and more unreliable. Our physical body's most obvious avatar is a car. The chassis has picked up some dents, we get stuck in first gear and spend more money as we break down more often.

We have a new player in town now with AI. Like computers and cars, we built it, and it represents our traits – the worst traits it seems. The 'artificial' part should be heavily accented, like the human who copies the test answers of their neighbour but fails a follow-up verbal quiz. Because the 'intelligence' they displayed was 'artificial' after all. The sad thing is it didn't have to be like this. AI would have been revered, had it only focused on improving health outcomes or solving the climate crisis quickly, rather than exacerbating it by sloppily copying the creative and academic work of humans to save the owners of the AI models from compensating the humans that actually created the work. And of course the kicker: humans are still required to monitor work it produces, which I remember every time I think about that giant hare statue in the Market Square.

**Aaron Bliss**  
**aaronjbliss@hotmail.com**

## BOOK REVIEW

**Etta Lemon, the Woman who Saved the Birds by Tessa Boase**

Etta Lemon was one of the founders of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in 1891, when it was named SPB – the Royal charter was granted in 1904.

The book's wide sweep covers not only Etta Lemon's outrage at the mass killing of birds – almost driving some species to extinction – to provide feathers for fashionable hats, but also the suffragettes/suffragists, whose campaign began shortly after Etta Lemon's and who were of course far more prominent.

Boase is informative about social history, conditions of workers and the rise of feminism alongside the origins of the RSPB – now one of the UK's largest conservation organisations. Yet, until now and the publication of this book, Etta Lemon and her colleagues were barely acknowledged. There's much to learn and enjoy in this fascinating account.

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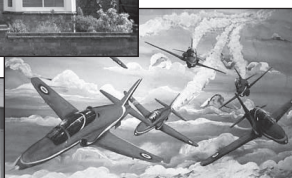


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## CALLING ALL CLUBS

### Photographic Society

We kicked off 2026 with a fantastic first meeting where members shared their top three images from 2025. The selection reflected the diversity of our community's interests, featuring everything from Neolithic hills and miniature houses to street photography, kestrels, VE Day celebrations, local Tour of Britain cyclists, Zimbabwean leopards, starry skies, steam rallies, and London protests.

In February we're delighted to welcome Colchester-based photographer Roger Hance, who will be sharing his expertise on backyard birds, exploring their variety and offering tips on how to photograph them at their best.

Make it your 2026 resolution to join us. Come and enjoy inspiring talks from our wonderful guest speakers.

**Courtney Killpack**  
[www.addphoto.co.uk](http://www.addphoto.co.uk)

### History Society

In December, Dr Simon Wenham gave an interesting talk entitled 'More than Three Men in a Boat: The Rise and Fall of Pleasure Boating on the Thames'. The Thames has been described as 'an open-air museum of English culture'. In late Victorian times it was transformed from a largely working waterway to an increasingly recreational environment in a golden age for pleasure boating. The introduction of the railways affected the number of boats used by water-based trades and so spare boats were rented out. In 1861 Salters had 203 boats increasing to 900 boats in 1887 but this declined to 700 in 1893. The proliferation of passenger boats was an early form of mass transportation. Some were redesigned for leisure and recreational camping was first popularised on the Thames from about 1870 onwards with the introduction of tent boats leading to camping by the river. Property damaged by visitors, eg stealing eggs, milking cows at the incorrect time and campers causing havoc resulted in the introduction of the Thames Preservation Act 1875.

In the twentieth century, the increased use of motor cars resulted in declining numbers of leisure craft as people travelled to the countryside rather than the river. Boats became motorised with cabin cruisers becoming popular as well as larger passenger boats that went on longer distance trips. From the late 1950s there was a sustained period of growth which peaked in the late 1970s with one million craft going through locks on the Thames each year, often leading to long delays at busy times. With the river authorities discouraging the development of riverside facilities and the increase in travel abroad, the number of boats on the Thames then declined. This talk, covering 150 years of pleasure boating and the river's history, certainly demonstrated why the Thames is an asset to be valued and celebrated.

Our January meeting had to be cancelled due to Storm Goretti but we look forward to welcoming you

to our 12 February meeting when Trevor Jackson will be speaking on 'RAF Brize Norton – Over 80 Years of Flying Operations'.

**Jean Dipper**  
[jean.dipper28@gmail.com](mailto:jean.dipper28@gmail.com)

### Deddington WI

December and January were very busy. In December we had our Christmas lunch and a craft session. This year we had fun making wreaths which hung neatly on front doors. In January we were visited by the Oxfordshire Adviser for Dementia who told us about the various types of dementia and the facilities available for them. It was interesting and helpful.

On 13 January we had an evening at the New Theatre, Oxford, to see a brilliant performance of *The Sound of Music*. It was an extremely good production with a cast of children who could sing good harmonies. We look forward to next year's production.

**Moir Byast**  
[magicandmischief05@gmail.com](mailto:magicandmischief05@gmail.com)

### Holly Tree Club

The Holly Tree Club committee would like to wish all our members and supporters a very happy new year.

We'd especially like to thank Nellie & Dove, Polka Dots, Bengal Spice, the Co-op, the Unicorn, Eagles, the Flower Shop, Medipill, Cedar Therapy, the Deddington Arms, the Red Lion, Marsh and Miller and Home Instead who donated an amazing array of gifts for our Christmas lunch raffle. Your support is greatly appreciated and our members thoroughly enjoyed the event.

**Julia Cork**  
[Julia.cork@thedha.org](mailto:Julia.cork@thedha.org)

### Local Vocals Community Choir

Our new year at Local Vocals has started in the best possible way with the return of Rachel, our choir leader, and a few members who found it difficult to be with us in 2025. Rachel is already making demands on our singing prowess with a mixture of folk and pop songs, including one where the men must hold a note for 12 beats. St John's Ambulance are on stand-by.

To find out more about our choir, which meets 7.30pm at Deddington Primary School each Monday during term time, please go to our website [www.local-vocalscc.co.uk](http://www.local-vocalscc.co.uk). New members are always welcome.

**Alison Grieve**

### Hempton Book Club

*The Square of Sevens* by Laura Shepherd-Robinson is a nice chunky book (536 pages) set in Georgian Bath and London that follows the journey of Red as she seeks to answer the question of her parentage and family. She's a fortune teller and uses her skills to insinuate herself into the upper echelons of society to solve the mysteries of her background: who is her mother and is she next in line to inherit a fortune? Add

## CALLING ALL CLUBS

Continued from p21

to this a murder mystery and the result is a satisfying read.

Some of the group thought the book waffled around in the middle and could have been shorter but it was worth finishing as it was quite surprising.

Would we read another by the author? the general opinion was probably not. Would we recommend it to a friend? Yes, if they like a good historical novel.

**Jo Churchyard**  
jochurchyard@hotmail.com

### Book Group

Joseph O'Connor's *My Father's House* is a work of historical fiction, though based on real people and events. Set in occupied Rome in 1943, it tells the story of an Irish priest, Hugh O'Flaherty, who was later dubbed the Scarlet Pimpernel of the Vatican. His position in the independent state of the Vatican gave him the opportunity to help prisoners of war and

others to escape from Italy.

Several members of his organisation, known as the Choir, are also based on real people. The backgrounds and thoughts of these courageous individuals are revealed in several interviews interspersed with atmospheric descriptions of complex planning and suspenseful moments. We all found the subject matter interesting and praised the characterisations, but we were otherwise evenly divided in our reactions to the novel. Some felt the narrative was slightly too long, occasionally patchy and lacking sufficient tension. Others found it immersive and gripping.

**Book Group**

### Deddington Players

The pantomime is over for another year and we had a blast! Whether you were in the audience or in the show, we hope you enjoyed this year's production, *The Little Mermaid*. We had over 60 people on stage and almost the same number working behind the scenes and on the night, to make things happen. Though the wigs, costumes and scenery are put away for another year, we get together and do small performances such as at the Deddington Festival during the year. If you've been inspired to join us on stage or backstage, contact deddingtonplayers@btinternet.com.

**Suzie Upson**

## SPORT

### Deddington Town FC

*First team results:*

22.11.25 Arncott Athletic (h) (CUP)W 7-0  
Fountain (3), Whitrow, Hardy, Taylor (2)  
6.12.25 Kings Sutton (a) D 2-2 Arnold,  
Fountain  
13.12.25 Hook Norton (a) (CUP) L1-5  
20.12.25 Shipston Exc Res (h) W 2-1

*Reserve team results:*

22.11.25 Wroxton Spts Res (a)W 5-3 Jones (2),  
Jackson, Reed, Warman  
29.11.25 FC Kayi (a) W 3-2 Arnold,  
Lewis, Jones  
13.12.25 Wroxton Spts Res (h)D 0-0  
10.1.26 Longford Park A (a) D 2-2 Arnold,  
Cox

It's been a very happy new year for both sides thus far, with the Humbugs and the Latics sitting atop their respective tables. Highlights for the First Team include a 7-0 victory over Arncott in the Coronation Cup, with Jack Fountain bagging a hat-trick, then adding another goal in a draw with closest league challengers Kings Sutton. The Reserve team, normally full of goals, ran out of steam against Wroxton, and needed two very late goals from Edward Arnold and James Cox to salvage a draw with Longford. It's looking promising in 2026 for both sides but, as always, your roars of approval inspire them to ever greater heights, so the Windmill Centre playing field at around 2.00pm is always the place to be.

**Aaron Bliss**  
07909 642882

### Deddington Town FC – Youth

The Under 15s playing in the B League of Oxfordshire Youth Football League had a 4-4 draw away at Ducklington, followed by 6-0 away defeat at Didcot

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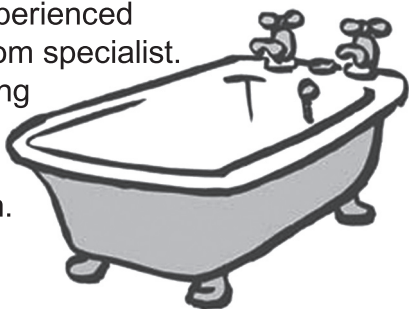
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## SPORT

*Continued from p22*

Town, 5–3 home win against Kidlington Youth and a 0–2 away win at Easington Sports in the county cup. The Under 14s playing in the Witney & District Youth League, had 4–5 away win at Bourton, 1–2 home defeat to Carterton and 0–8 home defeat to Banbury Irish. They also had a 1–2 home defeat to Wychwood in the county cup. The Under 13s playing in the C league had a 11–1 win over Adderbury Park, 2–6 away win at Carterton, 0–10 away win at Faringdon, and 9–0 home win over Highfield. They currently sit second in the league. The Under 12s playing in the C League had a 2–1 home win over Stonesfield followed by a 3–7 home defeat to Longford Park and currently sit second in the table.

After five years with the club, Dan Branch stepped down as secretary in December 2025. He has been a brilliant officer for the club and provided much needed support to ensure our football offer to children and young people works well.

The secretary is one of the most important roles in a grassroots football. It is the main point of contact with

the leagues. The secretary also provides key support to team managers and looks after the administrative duties for the youth part of the club. The main responsibilities are applying for membership of the leagues; registering players; submitting our annual England Football Accredited application and organising club meetings. If you are interested, please email Dan at [secretarydtfc@yahoo.com](mailto:secretarydtfc@yahoo.com) for more information and an informal chat. This is the one role in the club when you do not really need to know anything about football – you just need to be organised and have great people skills.

If you want to get involved with the club as a volunteer or a sponsor, contact Roger Sykes, Club Development Officer, 07899 914425 or [carsykes@btinternet.com](mailto:carsykes@btinternet.com)

Further information about the club is on our website – [www.deddingtontownfc/](http://www.deddingtontownfc/), or visit us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/DeddingtonTownFc](http://www.facebook.com/DeddingtonTownFc).

**Roger Sykes**  
**Club Development Officer**

## YOUTH

### 1st Deddington Guides

We packed in lots of activities last half-term. One favourite was film night; a great way to relax – the Guides wore their onesies or PJs and, with the inevitable snacks, settled down for a cosy evening. We've tended to get crafty since then, starting scrapbooks and learning how to make friendship bracelets, led by Daisy, following her recent trip to Cambodia.

We've also been working hard at our Food Critic badge and four girls reached their goal by the end of term. Well done! Christmas then took over and we made various decorations and ended the term with our party. There are lots of things being planned for this term already.

All girls over 10 are welcome – come along and give us a try.

**Maggie Rampley**  
**07957 600755**

### 1st Deddington Scout Group

#### Cubs

Cubs had an exciting time in December and demonstrated great perseverance making catapults, using lolly sticks, elastic bands and spoons. They then

had a battle with marshmallows against the other packs. They created clay Christmas decorations and we finished the term handing out lots of badges and saying goodbye to our older Cubs who are moving onto Scouts.

**Tina Deacon**  
**[deddingtoncubs@gmail.com](mailto:deddingtoncubs@gmail.com)**

#### Scouts

The Scouts finished off the year with a night hike fuelled by Haribo and a movie night complemented by popcorn and ice-creams.

Earlier in the month we had a skills evening when they learnt how to sew (thanks to Roger Moyce), take taps apart and bend pipes (thanks to Ian Anthistle) and wire a plug. Many went home happily waving lengths of copper tubing – worth remembering next time they ask for an expensive present. We also tried some glass painting which turned out surprisingly well.

**Pete Churchyard**  
**[deddingtonscouts@gmail.com](mailto:deddingtonscouts@gmail.com)**

Many thanks to everyone who used the Scout Christmas Post and special thanks to Eagles for hosting the box again.

## PFSU AND NURSERY

This term at Pre School our topic is All Creatures Great and Small. The children have been making pasta snakes, junk modelling animal habitats and making portraits of their favourite animals. They are looking forward to Katherine, the vet, visiting us soon. In February we will celebrate Chinese New Year and the year of the Fire Horse.

At Nursery the children have been learning about hibernation. They have been making bird feeders and creating artwork for our main display – We are Going

on a Bear Hunt and will be celebrating Valentine's Day in the coming weeks.

After half-term our focus switches to springtime in both settings and we will be inviting mums and grandmas in for our Mother's Day celebrations.

Our next fundraiser will be the Easter Trail on Saturday 21 March. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details.

**Shrene Saleh-Gillett**  
**[info@deddingtonnurseryandpfsu.co.uk](mailto:info@deddingtonnurseryandpfsu.co.uk)**

## HERE WE COME A-WASSAILING!

On Sunday 8 February at 4.00pm sharp, we are inaugurating a wassail at Welford's Piece on Tithe Lane, Clifton. Everyone from across the parish is welcome. As parking is sparse around Tithe Lane where we will be gathering, please walk or cycle if you can.

The word wassail comes from the Saxon 'waes hale', meaning 'be in good health', and the correct response is 'drinc hale' (no translation necessary). For centuries, it was a country tradition that celebrated the tipping point of the year and sought to banish the darkness and hurry in spring's lighter days. A wassail in the green celebrates an orchard and all the things it gives us. It looks backward to the season just gone and thanks the trees for giving fruit and cider and also does everything in man's (and woman's) power to set the orchard fair for a fruitful season ahead.

The community orchard planted by volunteers at Welford's Piece (with initial funding from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and ongoing support from Deddington parish council and the farmers' market) is entering its fifth year. As the volunteers who have cared for the trees since 2021, we wanted to celebrate their survival and the fact that last autumn many of them bore fruit for the first time, so we decided to

throw a wassail, with music, mulled apple juice and a hullabaloo!

Please come and join the celebration, starting with a musical procession down to the trees, headed by a wassail king and queen and a group of musicians led by Heidi Fardell. We will then toast the king tree, hang pieces of toast in the hedgerow (to feed the birds and encourage insects to pollinate the blossom), join together to make a hullabaloo to see off the dark, and sing a wassail song or two. Then it may be time to repair to the Duke's Head – to celebrate Clifton's local being open again too.

You will need: some greenery or shiny mirror round your hat or clothes, field-friendly footwear, a mug (for free apple juice harvested and pressed by the orchardeers from an older Deddington orchard, mulled or plain), a slice of toast (Hovis, Gail's or home-baked, the birds don't mind) and a noise-maker (saucepan and wooden spoon, whistle, rattle, drum?). Leave shyness at home. Join your neighbours in making a noise, letting your hair down and looking forward to the coming year.

**Jo Eames**

***jo.eames@stoddart.co***

## TRACTOR RUN

Once again the Tractor Run proved to be the highlight of the year for Katharine House Hospice's fundraising efforts.

Back for its tenth year, it was more amazing than ever. A fleet of 100 fairy-lit tractors made the journey from Barford St Michael passing through Bloxham, Banbury, Adderbury, Aynho and Deddington and thanks to you all, over £102,000 was raised.

Special thanks go to all the sponsors who generously supported the event and to Deddington Primary

School who provided parking on the night; the Red Lion, the Deddington official provider of refreshments; and the volunteers and the villagers who kindly came watch and donate on the night. The award for the 2025 Best Dressed Tractor went to No 56, Toby Nunneley, his third year of winning – we eagerly await his 2026 tractor masterpiece.

Please look out for upcoming events and challenges to raise money for the Hospice in 2026.

**Jenny Soddy 07976 922558**

## GROW A ROSE FOR ROSE HILL

### **Communities Across Oxfordshire Unite to Tackle Food Insecurity**

Grow a Row for Rose Hill is a community-led initiative responding to food insecurity in Rose Hill, one of Oxford's most deprived areas. The project brings together growers, volunteers, and community organisations across Oxfordshire to ensure children and families have access to fresh, nutritious food.

A key part of the initiative has been the generous support of gardeners from Deddington Allotment Society who have been donating surplus fruit and vegetables to Rose Hill Junior Youth Club (RHJYC). The Youth Club provides around 130 hot meals every week to children and young people who would otherwise struggle to access regular, nutritious food.

Mike O'Brien from the Allotment Society said: 'This partnership represents a powerful example of one community supporting another, with growers in a rural setting helping meet urgent needs in an urban area facing food insecurity and rising costs.'

'Fresh produce makes a real difference to the meals we provide,' said RHJYC's Food Ambassador,

Gregg Brown. 'The donations we receive directly support children and young people in our community and this kind of community partnership means a great deal.'

Grow a Row for Rose Hill encourages individuals, schools, allotment holders, and community groups to grow an extra row of produce and donate it to organisations supporting residents and families in need. Alongside tackling food poverty, the initiative promotes sustainability, education and stronger community ties.

'Grow a Row for Rose Hill shows what's possible when communities work together,' said Gregg. 'It's about more than food; it's about dignity, connection, and practical action.'

The project is seeking further growers and partners to build on this momentum throughout the growing season. Donations of produce, time, and resources are all welcome. For more information or to get involved, please contact me on [fran@rhjyc.org](mailto:fran@rhjyc.org) or 07770 324 277.

**Fran Gardner**





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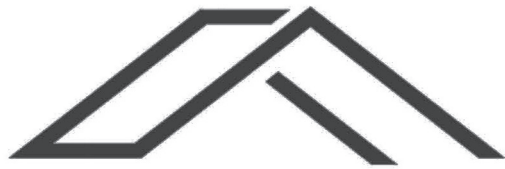
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## NORMAN WEST 1933–2025

Norman was born on 16 April 1933 in North Aston to Frederick and Emma West. He had three brothers: Harry, Godfrey and Les, who have all sadly passed away, and a sister Mary. Norman spent nearly all his life at 22 The Green.

He went to school in the village and worked at Park Farm until he was called up for his National Service from 1952–1954 with the Royal Artillery in the Korean War. On leaving the army he started working for a local building firm, Hippersons, at the camp in Upper Heyford, first as a teaboy and then as a buyer. He stayed in this job for 40 years until he retired.

In 1960 he married Eileen and 65 years later they were still happily married. They had two daughters, Linda and Tracy, three grandchildren, Karen, Paul and Becky, and four great-grandchildren.

Growing up in North Aston Norman was a devoted church goer, choir boy and bell ringer. He has taught many North Aston residents to ring the bells including Karen, Paul and Becky. He also helped to maintain the churchyard over the years. Norman helped to set up the village cricket club and played for many years in the team, becoming a keen batsman. Many Sundays through the summer saw all the family involved: Norman playing cricket, Eileen doing the teas and Linda and Tracy running after lost balls. He enjoyed playing football in his youth and was also a keen Oxford United supporter.

He joined the Royal British Legion in 1956 where he

was treasurer to the Branch and Club from 1975–2001, Branch until 2018 and also the Poppy Appeal organiser for most of this time. His efforts raised thousands of pounds for the charity every year. He was the Branch standard bearer and president from 2001–2008.

His long years of outstanding service to the Royal British Legion were recognised in 2018 by the award of a Gold Badge and receipt of a Centenary Award from the county, following his nomination for a national award.

Norman's contributions to his own community and that of the Royal British Legion were immense. It is fair to say that the success of the Branch and Club owed everything to him. He was unstinting with his time, meticulous with his organisation and extremely modest over the results. In the many years that he ran it, Deddington must have raised over £150,000 for the Poppy Appeal. At the time of the sad necessity to close the Club for lack of income or capital to repair and maintain the building, he was a great support to me, as one of the trustees of the building, while we navigated our way through the legal challenges of negotiating with the Chairity Commissioners, the parish council, lawyers on both sides and, lastly, with the buyer of the building. His quiet confidence and commitment were of inestimable value.

**Becky Brown, granddaughter,  
and Rob Forsyth**



'It's behind you!' Well yes indeed, by the time you read this, the ever-pop-

ular Deddington panto will be well and truly behind us. As I write though, the opening night is just in front of us and, as always with panto, there is a lot of nervous and excited anticipation, costume malfunctions and last minute learning of lines. This year sees a record cast of 66 players perform a very Deddingtonian interpretation of *The Little Mermaid* – three glorious sell-out evenings of silliness at the Windmill to help you through those January blues.

Another Windmill event that will probably have already taken place by the time this lands on your doorstep is the Football Club Quiz Night on 31 January. A really fun evening and a useful fundraiser for Deddington Town FC – the biggest and best-supported club we have in the village.

Talking of quizzes, I'm delighted to announce one that hasn't taken place yet and to which you are very warmly welcome. The Windmill Quiz Night is on Saturday 21 February at 7.00pm and is the first in a brand new programme of community events that we want to put on at the Windmill over the coming year and

beyond. It's £7.50 per person with teams of up to six and there is a licensed bar to help you free up those nuggets of knowledge buried in the inner recesses of your brain. We're expecting up to a hundred people for this inaugural quiz so make sure you enter your team today by emailing our quizmaster, Peter Hogben, at [events@thewindmillededdington.org](mailto:events@thewindmillededdington.org). All proceeds will be divided between the Windmill and our guest charity for 2026 – the Deddington library. Look out for future Windmill events as we go through the year.

Last but not least on the community event list is the fantastically popular Monthly Lunch Club run by Gregg Brown. This year, Gregg will be inviting you to join him for great home-cooked food, great conversation in great company on the last Friday of every month, starting on Friday 27 February. Who says the Windmill is just a sports hall?

If you have an event planned for 2026, we hope you will consider holding it at the Windmill. Just visit our website [www.thewindmillededdington.org](http://www.thewindmillededdington.org), our Facebook page or call our bookings secretary, Julie on 07720 834006. On behalf of the Windmill management committee, can I wish you all a very happy and successful 2026.

**Vaughan Jones**  
[chair@thewindmillededdington.org](mailto:chair@thewindmillededdington.org)



## NEWS FROM HEMPTON

Sadly the year ended with the deaths of two long term Hempton residents. Derek Parker died in October and Jean Gibbard in December. Jean was born in the village and lived in the same house in Duns Tew Road for 60 years after she was married, having been born in Batchelors Row.

### **The Christmas Fayre**

Our much reduced, 'cosy' fayre was as always well supported and we raised a brilliant £1,181.30 at the last count. Thanks to everyone who helped and donated to the raffle, cake stall and tombola and to the Dodds family for the lovely tree which stood outside, adorned with baubles.

### **Tractor Run**

Again, this was a successful event raising £114. Mulled wine, hot chocolate (expertly topped with cream by Maureen) and left over cakes from the fair were very popular. The tractors were amazing, as was the generosity of the villagers to Katharine House. Well done the bucket shakers!

### **Carol Service**

We squeezed into the Old School Room for our annual service, with members of the choir from Deddington. It's always a lovely start to Christmas.

Welcome everyone who has recently moved into our village. We hope you enjoy living here as much as we do and we look forward to seeing you at some of our events and gatherings.

**Jo Churchyard**

When I saw the proposed position of the eastern build-out near the village entry, my immediate concern was that it was so close to the junction with St John's Way, there would be significant risk to traffic exiting the junction and turning left directly into oncoming traffic negotiating the build-out. I heard similar concerns from other residents.

Of course if everyone drove with care and attention, the potential for head-on collisions would be avoided. However, every day we witness blatant disregard for the law or consideration for other road users and failures of judgement or downright aggression. I foresee some drivers failing to reduce their speed through the build-out in order to avoid waiting for oncoming traffic.

The day following installation of the build-out, near misses and ill-judged observance of the rules of the road were already witnessed. Similar incidents were observed during the temporary trial of the build-out.

When approaching a road traffic build-out in the UK, the rules of the road are based on giving way, not having an absolute right of way. The guiding principle is safety and avoiding collisions and you must follow specific rules based on signage and obstructions. The responsibility lies with the driver to ensure safety and avoid incidents. What potentially tragic irony if, in an attempt to solve one problem, we create another possibly more serious problem.

In December a notice was stapled to one of the horse chestnut trees guarding the gateway to Tomwell Farm on the B4031, stating it was to be removed. Four

weeks later villagers were alerted to the arrival of arboreal assassins by the sound of buzz saws, when the tree was cut down to ground level. Three other trees on the north verge were decapitated, leaving two metre totems denuded of all their limbs.

Villagers were incensed at what they perceived as vandalism and quickly assailed BDC Tree Services, demanding a halt to the work and an explanation. The matter was particularly upsetting for one native resident whose father, Dennis Washington, personally funded, planted and nurtured the avenue of horse chestnuts on both east and west approaches to Hempton, as well as planting 1,000 daffodils along the avenue. He was a native of Hempton and quite a character, regarded for his many philanthropic deeds.

I think CDC was taken aback by the passion expressed by the villagers for the trees. I believe they have agreed to consult on planting to fill in the gaps and improve notice of future works. The trees were diagnosed with bleeding canker, a serious and widespread bacterial disease devastating horse chestnut trees. Some die within years; others recover, and many require removal for public safety due to weakened trunks and branches. Its impact is severe, especially given the combined threat with the horse chestnut leaf miner, leading to significant loss of mature trees. Curiously the totems were left in situ, potentially leaving diseased wood to spread the virus infection. I refrain from speculation but note that the disease must be managed if we are not to lose the entire legacy.

**Stuart Oldham**

**[sj\\_oldham@btinternet.com](mailto:sj_oldham@btinternet.com)**

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## **Friends of the Castle Grounds**

### **Wildflowers at the Castle Grounds**

We look forward to new flowers appearing at the Grounds in spring. Richard Lehman has planted one thousand bulbs each of wood anemones, winter aconites, wild daffodils and snake's head fritillaries around the outer banks in memory of his late wife, Sue Edgar.

We are looking to populate the north bank with wildflowers from seed and from potted seedlings and cuttings. Mike Robinson has scattered some 'bee-bombs' on the north bank, each containing a variety of native wildflower seeds. Wildflowers often grow more slowly than other flowers so may not flower until the second year, but we shall see what emerges. We would welcome donations of native plants that fit naturally into a semi-wild setting, such as primroses, cowslips, meadow cranesbills, champions, wild garlic and similar. Richard is happy to collect these and help split and pot them: [contact richard.lehman@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:richard.lehman@kcl.ac.uk).

We meet in the Deddington Arms on the second Wednesday of each month and you're welcome to come along.

**Charlotte Holmes**

**[info@friendsofcastlegrounds.co.uk](mailto:info@friendsofcastlegrounds.co.uk)**



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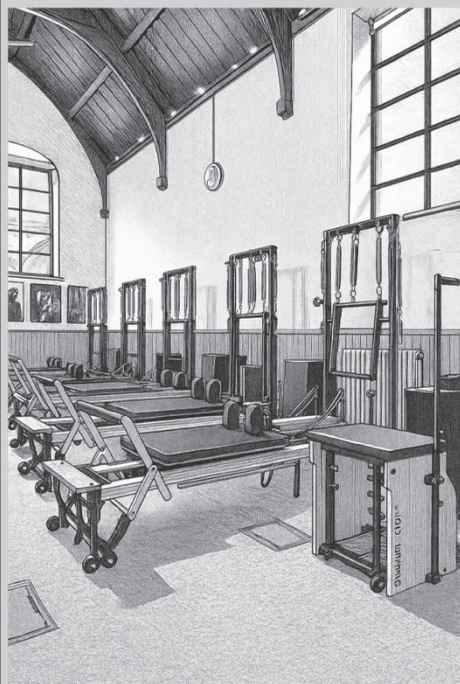
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HOSPITALS:	
Churchill	0300 304 7777
New Foscote (Private)	01295 252281
Horton General	0300 304 7777
John Radcliffe	0300 304 7777
Oxford, The Manor (Private)	01865 307777
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre	0300 304 7777
Katharine House Hospice	01295 229940
NHS Non emergency	111
PARISH CLERK	01869 337447
(Monday 9.00am–12.30pm, Wednesday 9.00–5.00pm, Thursday 9.00–12.30pm)	
POLICE (non-emergency, 24 hrs)	101
PRIMARY SCHOOL (C of E)	01869 338430
PFSU	01869 337484
VILLAGE NURSERY	01869 337383

DEDDINGTON LIBRARY	01865 816010
Monday	2.00–7.00pm
Wednesday	9.30am–1.00pm
Thursday	1.00–5.00pm
Saturday	9.30am–1.00pm

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Stagecoach Bus Company	01865 772250
Traveline (Public Transport)	0871 200 2233

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Ofgem	020 7901 7295
Thames Water (24hrs)	0800 316 9800

WARRINER SCHOOL, Bloxham	01295 720777
WINDMILL CENTRE	07720 834006
OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	01865 519800

**DEDDINGTON CLUBS & SOCIETIES:** The full list of contacts is available from the Library and Deddington OnLine website at <http://www.deddington.org.uk/directory>.

**DEDDINGTON CHURCHES** See section inside



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