



CHECKENDON VILLAGE NEWSLETTER



No 849

May 2026

Price 50p

BLUEBELL WOODS



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PARISH DIARY— MAY AND BEYOND, 2026

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
Wednesday 6 th May	7pm	Woodcote Volunteers AGM	Woodcote Village Hall
Saturday 16 th May	10am – 12.45pm	Cholsey Repair Café	Cholsey Community Centre
Monday 18 th May	Please check	Checkendon Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall
Tuesday 19 th May	6.30pm	Carolyn Kirby Book Talk	Woodcote Library
Wednesday 20 th May	3 – 5pm	Games Club	Ipsden Village Hall
Saturday 30 th May	From 1pm	Friends of Checkendon, Nettlebed and Kingwood Polish Camps event	The Black Horse, Checkendon
Saturday 13 th June	5pm	Checkfest	Checkendon School
Sunday 28 th June	8am – 12 noon	Checkendon Boot Sale	On and around the Rec / Green
Saturday 25 th July	5.30pm	Ipsden Music in the Barn	Ipsden Farm Barn

Deadline for contributions to next month's Newsletter...

The June 2026 issue of the Checkendon Newsletter will be published on 29th May. Contributions by email to checkendon.news@yahoo.co.uk as soon as possible please but no later than the deadline of **5pm, Monday 18th May.**

Paper copies, by 1pm on 18th May to Jane Falinska (01491 680307) or Vanessa Hart (01491 680359)

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE OVERDUE!

Only 30% of subscribers have paid subscriptions so far. Please send your newsletter subscription to the Newsletter bank account. Name: 'Checkendon Newsletter'. Business account. Sort code 09 01 50. Account number 05617154. Subscription is only £5 per annum. Please make sure you identify yourself.

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DIGITAL CHECKENDON



Did you know that there is a supportive village WhatsApp group with over 65 members?

Email your name and phone number to Suzanne.m.bradley@icloud.com if you would like to join
Also [Checkendon Villagers Facebook Page](#)



And the village website is www.checkendon.net

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MP



Freddie van Mierlo MP writes...

May 2026



Some edited highlights from the last constituency newsletter...

The highlight of my month was a PMQ. PMQs are allocated by random ballot, and, unfortunately, I'm yet to be lucky in the ballot. MPs can still 'bob' (stand up and down) during PMQs hoping to be called by the Speaker and this month it finally happened. I wasted no time demanding further action on **water quality**, and **Thames Water's** appalling record.

I also met with local campaigners on **water quality**, David Wallace and Laura Reineke, as well as Johnny Hobbs (of **Hobbs of Henley**). It was pleasing to hear that the actions requested by Hobbs and boating industry representatives at a roundtable meeting I hosted last year in Parliament has led to concrete action by the Environment Agency, including the removal of abandoned boats, the development of a management strategy, and a future for the Sunbury Dry Docks. These will significantly improve the viability and vitality of our riverside economy. The Environment Agency has rightly come under some criticism but I'm grateful for their cooperation and engagement with me on this issue.

Schools continue to feature heavily in my constituency calendar. It was a total pleasure to be grilled by Year 6 at **Valley Road Primary School in Henley** on topics such as cyber security, river water quality and potholes. I was hugely impressed by the research they had done into Parliament. Thanks also go to **Langtree High School** in Woodcote for their warm welcome and for taking the time to raise concerns the need for urgent repairs to some buildings on site. It was also brilliant to catch up with **Shiplake College** and **The Henley College** in Westminster.

I was super proud to be able to celebrate **English Tourism Week** last month by showing off **Waterperry Gardens**, one of our constituency's many unique and special gems.



With very best wishes,

Freddie van Mierlo MP

Henley & Thame.

freddie.vanmierlo.mp@parliament.uk



HAPPY BIRTHDAY VANESSA

The Newsletter team would like to wish a big "Happy Birthday" to Vanessa Hart, who turned ninety recently. Vanessa has worked on and helped with the Newsletter since 1960.

LANGTREE CHURCHES – MAY ROTA

Sunday 3rd May – Fifth Sunday of Easter (White)			
<i>The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.</i>			
Ps.31 : 1-5, 15-16 (or Ps.31 : 1-5)		Acts 7 : 55-end [or Gen.8 : 1-19]	
1 Pet.2 : 2-10		John 14 : 1-14	
8am	Woodcote	Holy Communion	DB
9.30am	Ipsden	Holy Communion	JB
9.30am	Stoke Row	Family Service	KD
9.30am	Whitchurch OT	Parish Communion	JL
9.45am	Woodcote	Parish Communion	DB
11am	Checkendon	Morning Prayer	KD
11am	North Stoke	Holy Communion	JB
Sunday 10th May – Sixth Sunday of Easter (White)			
<i>The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.</i>			
Ps.66 : 7-end		Acts 17 : 22-31 [or Gen.8 : 20 – 9 : 17]	
1 Pet.3 : 13-end		John 14 : 15-21	
8am	Woodcote	Holy Communion	DB
9.30am	Stoke Row	Morning Prayer	KD
9.30am	Whitchurch Hill	Family Communion	JL
9.45am	Woodcote	SLOW church	DB
10am	Ipsden / N. Stoke	Service online via Zoom	JB
11am	Checkendon	Holy Communion	KD
Sunday 17th May – Seventh of Easter (White)			
<i>The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.</i>			
Ps.68 : 1-10, 32-end (or Ps.68 : 1-10)		Acts 1 : 6-14 [or Ezek.36 : 24-28]	
1 Pet.4 : 12-14; 5 : 6-11		John 17 : 1-11	
8am	Woodcote	Holy Communion	DB
9.30am	Ipsden	Holy Communion	DB
9.30am	Stoke Row	Informal Worship	KD
9.30am	Whitchurch OT	Service of the Word + APCM	JL
11am	Checkendon	Family Service + Baptism	KD
11am	North Stoke	Morning Prayer	BT
9.45am	Woodcote	Open Door	LWL
4pm	Whitchurch Hill	Outdoor Church	JL
Sunday 24th May – Pentecost (Whit Sunday) (Red)			
<i>The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.</i>			
Ps.104 : 26-36, 37b (or Ps.104 : 26-end)		Acts 2 : 1-21 or Num.11 : 24-30	
1 Cor.12 : 3b-13 or Acts 2 : 1-21		John 20 : 19-23 or John 7 : 37-39	
8am	Woodcote	Holy Communion	DB
9.30am	Ipsden	Morning Prayer	JB
9.30am	Stoke Row	Holy Communion	KD
9.30am	Whitchurch Hill	Service of the Word	JL
9.45am	Woodcote	Parish Communion	DB
11am	Checkendon	Pentecost Holy Communion	KD
11am	North Stoke	Holy Communion	JB
Sunday 31st May – Trinity Sunday (White or Gold)			
Ps.8		Isa.40 : 12-17, 27-end	
2 Cor.13 : 11-end		Matt.28 : 16-end	
10.30am	Ipsden	Team Service	JB & JL

**KD = Rev. Kevin Davies: JL = Rev. James Leach: JB = Rev. John Blair:
DB = Rev. David Benskin: BT = Brian Turner: PF = Peter Ferguson: LWL = Lay Worship Leaders**

**ZOOM SERVICES**

There is a weekly service of Evensong via Zoom (ID 410935129)
with Rev. John Blair on Wednesdays at 5pm.

THE RECTOR WRITES



Worship

Do you ever have moments when you wonder what the point of it all is?

Kevin Davies

Rector



Most people do. And, from time to time, we make life choices based upon our best guess to the answer to this question.

For example, some people will say “The point of it all is to look after your health.” Others might say “The point of it all is to get as much money as possible.” Still others might say “I’m going to try and be happy and have lots of fun before I die.”

All of these are fine and dandy, however they are somewhat self-centred. And, as we’ve just seen with the views from the Orion space craft, somewhat trivial. “Kevin’s life choices” look mighty insignificant from 200,000 miles away. There’s a much bigger picture. It’s easy to understand, looking from space, how “living our lives in peace with one another”, or “living so that the Earth stays as beautiful as it is” make slightly fuller answers to the question “what’s the point”?

So, there can be “corporate” reasons for existence, as well as self-centred ones. Sometimes, our responses to the world as we find it can include living in ways that are not totally selfish but are recognitions that we share this planet with others. However, even this larger view can be yet greater. What happens when we travel so far that the earth becomes just the “pale blue dot”, and eventually too small to view at all? How are we to respond to the vastness and grandeur of space, the enormity of scale of the Universe? Do we “fit,” or are we “freaks”?

When we bump into the mystery and majesty of the infinite we struggle to find the words. But, throughout the ages, humanity has tried to respond – perhaps in a painting or other work of art, perhaps in a poem or song, or piece of music, sometimes even in a great building.

When you sit in stillness before a picture in the National Gallery, when the hairs on the back of your neck go up at a certain place in a song or symphony, when words bring you to tears, or when a sunset leaves you speechless, you are responding to that which is greater than you, and you are touching the edge of worship. The “I see it now” moments that surprise you, the love that holds you even in the midst of loss, the awareness of the Spirit that gives you life, and breath, and the gift of time, fleeting, in which to share, and to see, and to learn, and to begin...something. The revelation that, despite your utter insignificance, you are known, and loved, and that you matter.

There is an older answer to the “point of it” question, found in one of the Church’s teachings. It says, “the chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” On this count, worship is the whole point. It is our response to everything, a small scrap, something we give back to God. This can be both joy, and sorrow, hope and despair. It can be both Art and Science. It is probably the most human thing we can do, in that it fulfils one of our deepest needs, which is to acknowledge that there is a great Truth, something we can only partly see. (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)

Revd Kevin

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

We're moving up to Whitchurch Hill for our meeting on Thursday 21st May. We'll be talking about the Alnutt alms-houses on Goring Heath and the school there, which several members attended. John Baker was Head for many years, and he published several books about the local area.

We meet at 2.30pm and non- members are welcome to join us.

In June and July there are outings for members.



WALLINGFORD FOOD BANK

Please support your local food bank.

CURRENT URGENT NEEDS

- Long life milk and fruit juice
- Pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Rice
- Tea bags, small coffee jars
- Tins of fish
- Tins of fruit
- Tins of meat
- Tins of vegetables

HOW YOU CAN HELP US

- WE'RE WORKING WITH CHARITY, BANKTHEFOOD
- WANT TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED?
- DOWNLOAD THE FREE APP AT WWW.BANKTHEFOOD.ORG
- SEARCH FOR US USING THE POSTCODE FINDER
- THE APP WILL PING YOUR PHONE A LIST OF URGENT ITEMS
- MAKE A DONATION & MAKE A DIFFERENCE



WWW.BANKTHEFOOD.ORG Bank the Food

BanktheFood is a registered charity (Charity Commission for England and Wales 1194167)

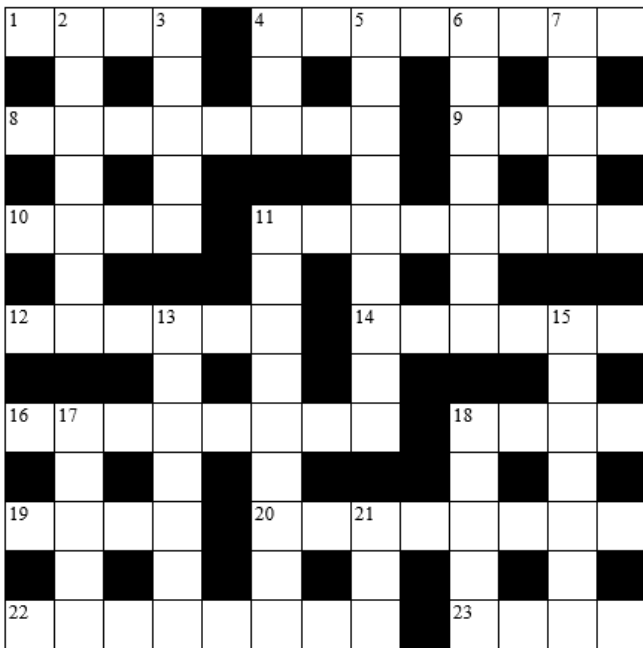
How to support your Food Bank

When you are out shopping, the best way to support local Food Banks is to use the www.bankthefood.org app. This tells you what is urgently needed at your local Food Bank. Many supermarkets / shops now have a donation box near the checkout, so it's easy to drop items there and means you don't have to bring donations back with you and then take them to a donation point e.g. Checkendon Church.

If the shop does not have a donation box, or you want to donate surplus items from home, you can: a) take items directly to the Food Bank – at the back of the Ridgeway Community Church, Wallingford (access via Wood St) between 10am-1pm on Mondays or Thursdays; b) leave items in the plastic box just inside the door of Checkendon Church; or c) leave items (in a bag please) on my doorstep (Eveleigh, Whitehall Lane, RG8 0TN). Text me on the number below to let me know, if you can.

If you would like to donate and do not have transport, please give me a call / text and I'll come and collect. I am also on the village WhatsApp group.

Steve Daniels, 0771 228 2182

CROSSWORD 123 BY TIM LOWTH**Across**

- 1 Lithium and iron combined: a recipe for vitality! (4)
 4 Unsettled chain gang ignores a rescheduling (8)
 8 Risqué ringer's seasonal woodland delight (8)
 9 Newspapers Royal Academician gets on vacation (4)
 10 Ignoring the odds, Burghley is not pretty (4)

- 11 A random way to select and create pictures prolifically? (4,4)
 12 Little Florence, with hesitation, finds a bloom (6)
 14 It's a possibility vice-chancellors entertain this (6)
 16 She's following van initially: it disappears (8)
 18 Perhaps Antony and Cleopatra have fun (4)
 19 Roguish architectural feature (4)
 20 Dependable with regards to being legally responsible (8)
 22 Most pleased daughter is in woodland clearing by street (8)
 23 Spoil equestrian's first horse (4)

Down

- 2 I hear sick raptor is unlicensed (7)
 3 See about example for a lament (5)
 4 Prompt for a piece of snooker equipment (3)
 5 Maybe marriages are indicated in case all changes (9)
 6 Great ape found in a small brook in an Indian state (7)
 7 Almost time for hours of darkness (5)
 11 Shred okra, cook for unexpected winner (4,5)
 13 Made an assessment of a walk through water, so to speak (7)
 15 One who has yet to learn to walk is a toady (7)
 17 Measure of interest I lost initially for a month (5)
 18 Lass returns shortly in the afternoon – to sing this? (5)
 21 Auction item comprising some underclothes (3)

GAMES CLUB

Bored with sitting on your own, playing Solitaire on your phone or staring at the telly? Come to Games Club : a monthly afternoon of games - from Dominoes to Scrabble, from Beetle to Bananagrams. Play your old favourites or learn something new. Games will be provided, and there'll be refreshments too. All free of charge, courtesy of a council grant!*

Taking place on the third Wednesday of each month, the next Games Club will be on 20th May from 3pm to 5pm at Ipsden Village Hall. We plan to rotate the club round different local villages in subsequent months, but you don't have to wait for your village's turn: if you're in North Stoke or Checkendon, for example, we would love you to come to Games Club in Ipsden.

Lifts can be arranged for those who need transport.

Any questions? Email katemoberly@hotmail.com

*Funded by the Connected Communities Fund, delivered in partnership by OCVA (Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action) and CFO (Community First Oxfordshire) on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council.



CHECKENDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School

Respect

Integrity

Compassion

Courage

Hope

Live

Love

Learn

Email: office.3801@checkendon.oxon.sch.uk

February 2026

Roll up!! Roll up!!



In March, the school celebrated a vibrant Writers' Fortnight, taking inspiration from *The Greatest Showman* and the magic of the circus. Over two weeks, pupils across all year groups explored a wide range of imaginative writing, including descriptive pieces, poetry, character narratives, and dramatic storytelling. The fortnight provided an exciting opportunity for pupils to experiment with language, extend their vocabulary, and develop confidence in their writing.

To launch the theme, everyone participated in a circus skills workshop, which served as a hands-on stimulus for their writing. Pupils learned to juggle, balance, spin plates and hula hoop, immersing themselves in the sights, sounds, and energy of a circus environment. The workshop sparked creativity and provided concrete experiences for pupils to draw upon in their writing.

One pupil reflected, *"I didn't think I could do it at first, but I kept trying and was really proud when I got it."* Another commented, *"It felt like being part of a real circus – it gave me lots of ideas for my stories."*

During the fortnight, classrooms were filled with enthusiasm and ideas. Pupils experimented with descriptive language to capture the spectacle of the big top, wrote imaginative dialogues between circus performers, and explored narrative structures in creative ways. Teachers noted that the hands-on experiences from the workshop encouraged risk-taking in writing, as pupils were inspired to translate the excitement and challenge of circus skills into words.

Families were warmly invited to view the children's work following Open Worship - and the pride pupils displayed in their writing was evident. The event offered a wonderful opportunity to celebrate their creativity with the wider community and showcase the effort and imagination that had gone into their pieces.

We are particularly grateful to the PTA for funding the circus workshop. Their support allowed us to offer this enriching experience, which not only inspired pupils' writing but also helped develop resilience, confidence, and teamwork. Without such generosity, opportunities like this – which connect hands-on experience with learning – would not be possible.

Writers' Fortnight was a fantastic celebration of imagination, creativity, and the power of first-hand experience to inspire learning. The fortnight reminded us all of the joy of storytelling and the importance of providing pupils with memorable experiences that feed their writing and fuel their love of learning.

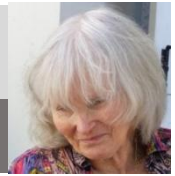




HEDGEROWS

Daphne Horne

Columnist



Hedgerows, particularly in the countryside, are a part of the landscape often accepted without interest. In England, hedges were used to protect animals and property as far back as the Bronze Age. In the early Anglo-Saxon era, hedges would have been saplings taken from nearby woods. This is the reason trees are often found growing in hedges. As a hedge became established, many species were introduced by nesting birds dropping seeds. Hedges were cheaper than fences and thorns were particularly prized as they kept animals enclosed and prevented attack by predators such as wolves. A mixed hedgerow would also provide firewood, needed for heating and cooking.

In the 1590s, during a time of bitter cold and poverty, people were punished for stealing hedges for fuel. The courts ordered them to be put in the stocks for two hours.

When the Enclosure Acts were passed during the 1600s to the 1800s, the old system of strip farming gradually disappeared. Landlords took over the narrow plots of land farmed by peasants and made larger fields protected by hedges. The older the hedge, the more species were growing in them. For example, hazel, blackthorn, hawthorn, ash and oak trees in the hedgerows were often left to grow tall to be used as boundary markers. This is the reason we have many large and ancient trees in borders. These ancient hedgerows gradually yielded not only protection and firewood but useful poles and also food such as nuts and berries. Those planted in the 1800s tended to have only one species of hedge, which is now the usual method used.

In wartime, many hedgerows were ripped out to make room to grow a few more crops. Modern farming methods with large machinery required larger areas : consequently, since World War II, over 118,000 miles of hedgerows have been lost.

In recent times, it has been realized how important it is to retain hedges. They help to absorb carbon dioxide and water thus helping the environment. Hedgerows are also vitally important to wildlife. They protect over 130 endangered species including bats, hazel dormice, hedgehogs, harvest mice, lizards, bees and many species of beetles and butterflies. Animals are able to travel safely through hedgerows, particularly hedgehogs and dormice. Nesting birds are now protected, as it against the law to cut hedges between the 1st March and 31st August, if birds are nesting. Hedges also encourage and protect flora, providing more plants to feed the wildlife. Ancient hedgerows would have anemones and bluebells thriving alongside them.

There are now schemes for encouraging people, particularly farmers, to plant hedges. The Woodland Trust has a scheme for funding for planting hedges over 100 metres in length. Hedges in gardens are important and can help - with mixed hedges being preferred, as they provide food as well as shelter for wildlife. Even the smallest hedgerow is important.

Daphne Horne



Soldiers of
Oxfordshire
Museum

***Lee Miller: A Woman at War* exhibition to go on display at Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock, this summer.**

- Exhibition of war photographs by renowned photojournalist, photographer and surrealist, Lee Miller from 23 May – 13 September 2026.
- Follows a major exhibition of her photographs at London's Tate Gallery.
- Includes photos taken of nurses at Churchill Hospital Oxford, her first wartime assignment for *Vogue*.
- Alongside many iconic photographs taken in wartime Britain, Miller accompanied US troops into Europe, a correspondent on battles and the liberation of concentration camps.

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, the county's military museum based in Woodstock, opens a new exhibition of Vogue model, surrealist photographer and war correspondent Lee Miller's wartime work in *Lee Miller: A Woman at War*, from 23 May to 13 September 2026.

During the Second World War Lee worked as a combat photographer with the US Army, creating a unique historical record.

The new exhibition will showcase her experiences of the time, covering her war correspondence work for *Vogue* from 1942 where she highlighted women's roles in the war effort, as well as the reality of life for women caught up in conflict across Europe.

Miller would become one of the few female photojournalists on the front line covering the Normandy invasion and the liberation of Paris. Her work in the newly-liberated concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dachau was sent to *Vogue* in 1945, accompanied by the caption 'I IMPLORE YOU TO BELIEVE THIS IS TRUE.'

Her background in surrealism often came to the fore especially with her photographs of the Blitz, and the iconic photograph of her bathing in Hitler's bathtub in Munich on the same day he died was heavy in symbolism, she wrote 'I washed off the dirt of Dachau in his tub'.

Lee Miller: A Woman at War opens on the Cloister Gallery at Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock from 23 May to 13 September 2026. Admission prices apply, please see www.sofa.org.uk for up-to-date admissions and visitor information, including prices, offers and opening times.

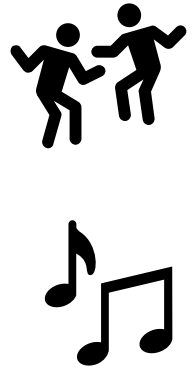
Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock, OX20 1SN

www.sofa.org.uk/

frontofhouse@sofo.org.uk

01993 810 210

MUSIC AT THE BARN (IPSDEN)



It's back again! We're so pleased to announce the return of Ipsden's Music at the Barn 2026 - Live Music on a summer's evening in the beautiful 18th Century barn courtyard at Ipsden Farm, thanks to Nick and Kate Miller, on Saturday 25th July. Music will be from 6pm until about 9pm, and gates will open at 5.30pm.

Bring your own picnic, drinks, blankets and tables/chairs. Please - no BBQs to comply with insurance regulations. Come and relax, enjoy a varied programme of acoustic music by local musicians and singers who provide their time and talent for free.

Entry tickets are £8 for adults at the gate and from The Ipsden Village Shop, or £9 from TicketSource. Under 16s are free. Online tickets from [PCC of Ipsden Entertainment Committee event tickets from TicketSource](#). There will be a raffle as usual. Donations to the raffle are very welcome, please contact siobhan.bennett28@btopenworld.com. Net proceeds will go to the Restoration Fund for St Mary's Church, Ipsden.

FEEDING THE BIRDS



Please **DON'T** feed garden birds between May and October

You may have seen articles in the media asking us not to use bird feeders in the warmer months. The **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)** has confirmed that feeders can become disease hotspots – and spread the disease Trichomonosis, which has caused a big decline in species such as chaffinches and greenfinches. Greenfinches are now on the red list of endangered birds.

For more information, please visit the official RSPB website: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/>

CHECKENDON PRE SCHOOL

What's happening at Checkendon Pre-school:

Look what we have been doing....

We have been enjoying Easter. Creating some EGGstra special craft; baking some EGGcellent Easter nests in Little Chefs (they were delicious); singing and joining in with some of our favourite action rhymes and Easter dances in Work out Wednesday; and Hunting for the Rainbow Rabbits (who have been hiding all week both indoors and outdoors).

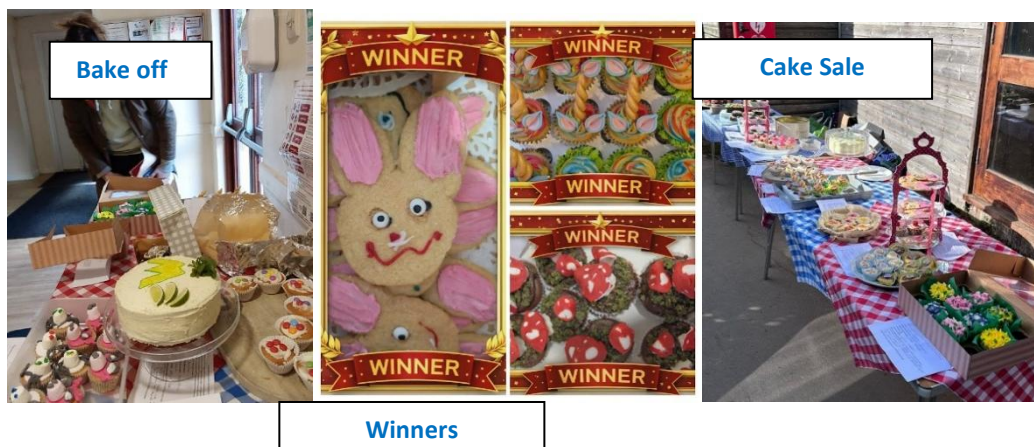
The Checkendon Pre-School "Easter Bake Off" Fundraiser was on Thursday 26th April. We were delighted to see so many CRACKing entries from bakers of all ages. There were some very impressive and creative bakes. The lovely Imma Bakery came in and judged the bakes on decoration and imagination in all three categories. Thank you Tonah for your EGGspert Judging. The winners for each category were: Adult – Natalie Groves with her Unicorn Poop cupcakes; Children 5 + - Rosah Giazkova with her Toadstool cupcakes; and Pre-School winner - Max Wharton for his beautifully decorated Easter bunny biscuits. We would also like to thank Imma Bakery, Waitrose and Annabel Booker for donating the prizes for the winners. Well done and thank you to everyone who entered our competition and brought cakes in after for a cake sale. Thank you to everyone for continuing to support our wonderful Pre-School. We managed to raise a total so far of £250.00 – We now have enough to buy another panel for our new role play panel house. We hope you all had a Happy Easter.

To find out more about Checkendon Pre-School, do visit our website www.checkendonpreschool.co.uk, call us on 01491 682589, e-mail preschoolcheckendon@gmail.com or just pop in – we always look forward to welcoming you to Checkendon Pre-School.

All Enquiries please contact: preschoolcheckendon@gmail.com, Tel: 01491 682589
www.checkendonpreschool.co.uk

Ways you can support Checkendon Pre-School

Easy fundraising. Please support the Pre-School and sign up to raise funds for the Pre-School -
<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/checkendonpreschool/>



Checkendon Pre School CIO. Registered as a Charity No. 1156803. Checkendon Village Hall, Checkendon, Nr. Reading, RG8 0SR. Tel: 01491682589 E-Mail: preschoolcheckendon@gmail.com.
www.checkendonpreschool.co.uk


CHECKENDON QUIZ RESULTS




Checkendon Quiz Team retain Knock-Out Title for Third Year in a row!
 On 18th March, at Benson Village Hall, The Checkendon Quiz Team won the South Oxfordshire League Knock-Out Cup for the third year in succession. The Knock-Out competition is decided on one evening where teams of six represent each village. Congratulations to our team which consisted of Captain Matthew Wickens with Carolyn Beech, Louis Powell, Kit Merson, Mary Daniels and Steve Daniels.



Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	Rank
Checkendon	8	8	10	9	10	10	19	10	84	1
Warborough & Shillingford	9	8	9	9	9	8	17	9	78	2
Nettlebed	10	8	8	9	8	9	15	10	77	3
Ewelme	10	7	9	8	10	7	15	10	76	4
Tokers Green	9	9	9	8	8	5	15	10	73	5
Blewbury	10	8	9	7	8	4	17	9	72	6
Woodcote	9	7	9	6	9	7	14	8	69	7
Stoke Row	7	7	8	7	6	7	14	8	64	8
Bix & Assendon	6	5	9	6	5	7	10	9	57	9







Author Event at Woodcote Library

Tuesday 19th May – 6.30pm

We are excited to welcome award-winning historical novelist
to Woodcote library!

Carolyn Kirby will deliver an illustrated talk exploring the
background and historical context of her third
novel, *Ravenglass*... a gripping 18th-century coming-of-age
tale set on land and sea during Bonnie Prince Charlie's
rebellion

If you would like to join Carolyn to hear about
her exciting new novel, please contact
Woodcote library to reserve your ticket.

Woodcote Library: 01865 815215 or email
Lisa.Trood@Oxfordshire.gov.uk - Library Manager

**This event is free so please reserve your
ticket asap!**

There will also be a Q&A session and an opportunity
to buy a signed copy of *Ravenglass*

Refreshments will be available (cash only)
We hope you can join us !

CHECKENDON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of Checkendon Parish Council held on 12th January 2026

1. Present

Mr. M. Wickens, Mr. T. Corbishley, Mr. D. Petherick, Mr. P. Merson, Mrs. H. Waggett, Mr. D. Brown. Also Cllr. Higgins and Cllr. Norman.

2. Apologies.

None

3. Minutes of 24th November 2025.

These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising from minutes

None.

5. Report from SODC

Planning Reforms: The Government has released a raft of new guidance, including details on the forthcoming 30-month process for preparing new-style local plans. Proposal for fewer committees and more decisions by planning officers/ secretary of state because of emphasis on house building targets. *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):* A draft revised NPPF was published on 16 December 2025 for consultation until 10 March 2026. It aims to create a more rules-based system and accelerate delivery of 1.5 million homes this Parliament.

An example of a proposal for up to 70 new homes on a green field site in Emmer Green (on the former Reading Golf Course, but within South Oxfordshire), was refused by SODC's Planning Committee last month. The key reasons given by the Committee were that the proposal was contrary to policy including the Kidmore End Neighbourhood Plan, would erode the rural separation between Kidmore End and Reading, would cause unacceptable landscape harm, and was a green field site not allocated for development.

Checkendon is well protected, located in the Chilterns National Landscape away from major towns.

Four Horseshoes - Heritage Category: Listed Building Grade: II, Number: 1368910 falling into disrepair – original thatching and Cllr. Norman would appreciate specific details/ evidence to support this with SODC Heritage Officer. Has been vacant since 2013

Deer's Lane access- Cllr. Norman would like details of this to support the rejection.

6. Report from OCC

Budget: Setting of the county council budget for the coming financial year is set to dominate the first few weeks of 2026. The government had left no time for officers to work out savings proposals.

Oxford Congestion Charge – current offer of free park and ride bus journeys in Oxford will continue until the end of March 2026.

Highways Department: Cllr. Higgins is meeting on site with two highways officers on 4th March 26. Map sent to him before Christmas and updated on FixMyStreet. He would like references for these as he will try to accelerate action, especially on red marked potholes in Lovegrove's Lane. Gully clearance is expected by end of March. Mr. Brown explained the flooding of his property because of gully issues in Whitehall Lane. The complaint was upheld but no resolution- Cllr. Higgins would like details to support.

Oakley Wood – booking from 14th January 26 initiated because of closure for safety upgrades of Redbridge Household Waste Recycling Centre. Also to reduce waste from non-Oxfordshire residents. Discussion about small trailers (2.4m) and the 'no ramps' rule

7. Highways and Footpaths.

The footpath by the Court still problematic, Mr Corbishley to follow up on this and the hedge belonging to the Court now encroaching the road and exacerbating the flooding problems.

8. School Report

Ofsted Inspection- still waiting to be able to share the report.

Teaching and Learning – children are learning about Oxford, Space and the world around them.

Laser Show – Raised over £4000 looking to spend this year on the school buildings and the grounds (new wood chip track and continuing the decorating) as well as updating our computer system.

Community Events – Thank you to those who attended the Nativity or Church Services

School Numbers- Currently 88 children.

Christmas Tree – Thank you to the Parish Council for providing it.

9. Playing Field Report

Car Park – quotes will be sought to repair in drier weather.

Pavilion – discussion regarding funding progress.

10. Playground Report

Report signed. Mr Corbishley and Mr Merson made repairs to wooden structures, reflecting the ROSPA report, to make the equipment safe. Shavings have been topped up.

Quotes for replacement already circulated - summary:

- **Playdale** – did not provide a plan – discounted
- **Discovery** – (March 2025) very attractive and modestly priced but not including removal/ disposal. A big area of wood chips – discussion about ongoing cost.
- **ESP** – basic tower and bridge. No bank but removal was included.
- **Family Tree** – most expensive included removal/ disposal and replace like for like.

Discovery was selected after discussion, and they will be contacted again for an update. Mr. Corbishley now able to apply for grants, using the present quotes.

11. Village Hall Report

Christmas quiz raised £886.90 for Village Hall funds. An excellent result.

12. Correspondence.

Confirmation of Four Horseshoes fence enforcement.

13. Finance

a. Payments made.

08.12.25. RW Butler. WAV/AP. £1800.00.

b. Payments received.

08.12.25. Barclays. Interest. £430.40.

c. Bank reconciliation.

This had been completed.

d. Budget for 2026-2027

Precept setting; agreed 4.5% increase.

14. Planning.

a. Applications received.

P25/S3001/FUL. Four Horseshoes Garden. Amendment (Drainage). PC no objection.

b. Decisions received.

P25/S3191/FUL. Four Horseshoes Fence (Retrospective). Refused/Withdrawn.

P25/S3107/LDE. Heath End. Lawfulness Certificate. Confirmed.

P25/S3295/HH. Maple Cottage. Conservatory to room, etc. Granted.

15. Other Matters for Discussion.

Near overflow flooding of ditch behind Balfour's Field- first dug in 2007. Will inspect and clear as needed.

16. Next Meeting.

The following meeting was on Monday 23rd March 2026

Minutes and agenda are on the Checkendon webpage <https://www.checkendon.net/parish-council>

The next meeting is on Monday 18th May at Checkendon Village Hall.

AGM OF THE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE, HELD ON 11TH FEB 2026



It was another successful year, with new flooring installed in the kitchen, various improvements and repairs made to the building (most of them thanks to Bill Beeton the Chair of the committee). The fundraising events of last year were profitable, but the aim of such events is as much to promote community engagement in the village as making money. The Bluebell Teas, the Car Boot Sale and the Annual Quizzes bring people together and are important markers in village life.

There was discussion about setting up a regular event where people can play board games. This is dependent on volunteers being able to host it.

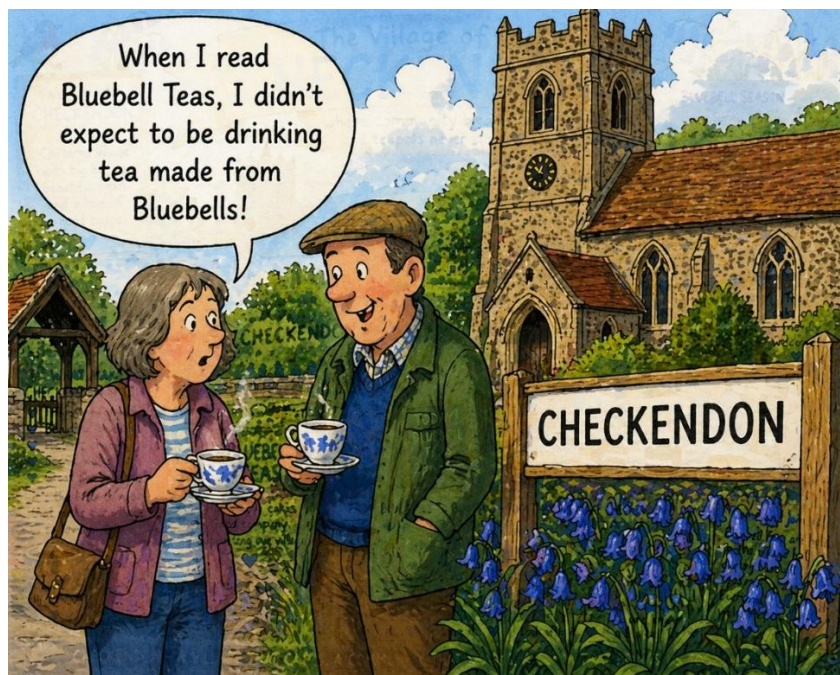
It was agreed that donations will be made from the Village Fund to the upkeep of the playground and towards the newly formed Friends of Checkendon Polish Camp, who are hoping to restore some of the derelict buildings left over from the camp.

There are plans to refurbish the toilets to make the hall a more attractive venue.

Checkendon Village Hall Committee currently consists of Bill Beeton, Tim Corbishley, Mary Daniels, Duncan Brown, Denise Stanworth, Alison Broadbridge and Doug Griggs, plus representatives from Checkendon Pre School. We meet approximately four times a year and would very much welcome new members. It isn't a big commitment but we do need new members with new ideas. If interested, please contact any of us. My contact details are at the back of the Newsletter.

To paraphrase something that John F. Kennedy once said - 'Ask not what your village can do for you, rather, what you can do for your village'.

Mary Daniels



WALLINGFORD ACCESSIBLE BOAT CLUB (WABC)



Wallingford Accessible Boat Club Set to Launch Exciting New Season on the River Thames

Wallingford Accessible Boat Club (WABC), the much-loved local charity offering free river trips for disabled and less mobile people across Oxfordshire, is gearing up for another season.

Bookings for WABC's popular two-hour trips opened on **Monday 20 April** via the charity's website: www.wabc.org.uk, with the first trips of the 2026 season on **Wednesday 6 May**.

WABC Chairman **John Jenkins MBE** said: *"We are incredibly excited about the upcoming season. Not only are we aiming for another record-breaking year, but we've also introduced a range of new features on our wheelyboat, WOW-one, to make every trip even more enjoyable for our passengers."*

New volunteer crew members means the charity can now offer **an enhanced schedule of trips—running twice daily, six days a week—significantly increasing capacity.**



STOKE ROW WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

In March, we held our annual meeting which includes the election of a committee and President for the coming year. This year, two committee members stepped down, one of whom had been on the committee for twelve years and she was presented with a beautiful flowering plant. Two new members were voted on to the committee and the current President, Tilley Smith, was voted in for another year. Our secretary read out the committee report, in which she highlighted the many activities the group had taken part in over the past year and what a year it has been: from walking and theatre, to Burns night and ceilidhs!

Thanks to fundraising over the last year, our finances are in good shape for the year to come and we will be able to pay our speakers booked for the new programme! Our President thanked the members of the committee and all our members for their support highlighting the contributions they had made to the group's success. We then had a presentation by Raj from Therapies on Thames about their work in offering physiotherapy and rehabilitation, particularly for the elderly being discharged from hospital. His expertise and passion were very clear and what he had to say was of great interest to our members. The evening finished with a short photographic presentation portraying our activities over the year and we look forward to another exciting year ahead.

We have been outdoors too, with a lovely spring walk around the Stoke Row area - via English Farm - followed by afternoon tea at Maureen Hay's house in Stoke Row. Thank you Maureen for your hospitality, especially as so many of us descended on you!

At our April meeting we heard from Karina Phillips on 'The Role of Clinical Massage'; on 19th May, it is our resolutions meeting, with comedy from our drama group; and, on 16th June, we will hold our annual garden meeting in Sonning Common. There will also be regular meetings of our craft, book and drama groups, games, swimming, theatre trips and coffee and chat sessions via Zoom. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact our secretary via email: stokerowwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

CHECKENDON BOOT SALE

CHECKENDON BOOT SALE



Sunday 28th JUNE

Open from 9 am to NOON

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set up 8 am for stallholders**

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WOODCOTE VOLUNTEERS



Drive statistics for 2025

Analysis of all the drives done by Woodcote Volunteers last year shows that our drivers did a total of 633 drives for 80 different local residents - almost two-thirds were for medical purposes. Our Winter Wheels initiative (free drives during December through to February), was even more successful than last year, with 201 drives covering over 3100 miles and saving our clients nearly £1500 in mileage expenses. However, the statistics show that we had slightly fewer active drivers in 2025 than in 2024, so once again we are appealing for new volunteers to come forward. If you might be interested, we would love to hear from you. Being a volunteer driver is a wonderful opportunity to help others while making new friends. Without our help, many of our local residents would really struggle to get to their hospital and other medical appointments - and we also see ourselves as having an important role in addressing the perennial problem of social isolation in Woodcote and the surrounding villages. Please go to our website www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk to find out more about the role and how to contact us.

Volunteer Story

As part of our occasional series of volunteer stories, this month we have a story from Erica, one of our newest volunteer drivers. "I started driving at the end of 2025. And I'm loving it! I'm doing one or two drives a week, and I've already met many people living in and around Woodcote, both fellow volunteers and service users. The clients are mostly elderly and no longer able to drive for various reasons. They're a joy to talk to, all having led interesting lives, and some with more than nine decades of life experience and wisdom to share...The clients are without exception very grateful to the volunteers. Until I started volunteering, I'd not realised just how many people are entirely reliant on others to get to shops, the pharmacy, hospital appointments, the optician etc., not to mention community support groups. Were it not for the service Woodcote Volunteers provide, every appointment would be a worry. Importantly for the volunteer, you can do as many or as few drives as you are able...If you're still wondering whether becoming a volunteer driver is for you, I cannot hesitate to recommend it. You'll be joining a lovely group of volunteers, and it's a wonderful way to meet new people and to make new friends within the community".

Tea Parties

Tea Parties for our clients are held at the Community Centre in Woodcote on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month. We provide tea and home-made cakes and there is no charge. The next tea party will be on **Wednesday 6th May 2026 at 2.30pm**, finishing at 4.00 pm, and will feature another fun quiz. If you need a lift, call our office phone number (see below), giving us plenty of notice.

Finally... If you need a driver, please give us at least three days' notice as it can be hard to find someone at the last minute – but we will always try!

To book a driver, call 01491 681171 giving as much notice as possible.

To volunteer, email: info@woodcotevolunteers.org.uk

Our website: www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/woodcotevolunteers

General enquiries – call 01491 681171

CHEFFK fest 2026

Sat 13th June 5pm

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MOBILE POST OFFICE

Mondays	Woodcote Layby Whitehouse Road RG8 ORX	08:00-10:00
	Stoke Row outside village hall RG9 5QL	10:15-11:15
Tuesdays	Stoke Row Opposite village Hall RG9 5QL	09:30-10:00
	Checkendon Opposite school RG8 OSR	10:00-10:30
	Woodcote – layby Whitehouse Lane, RG8 ORX	11:00-13:00
Wednesdays	Nettlebed outside Village Hall	12:00-13:30
Thursdays	Nettlebed outside Village Hall	13:15-16:15
Fridays	Woodcote Layby Whitehouse Road RG8 ORX	11:45-12:45

NOTICEBOARD

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Spare copies of the Newsletter are available from the Church (just inside the door on the right). Money (50p a copy) can be put in the box in the wall on the left-hand side of the door. Some copies are also left in the 'Village Library' in the old bus shelter.

ORDERING THE NEWSLETTER

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07580 419096, marykatharine@live.co.uk
Viewing can be arranged

To advertise in the Newsletter

Please email: checkendon.news@yahoo.co.uk
with 'Advert' in the subject line

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