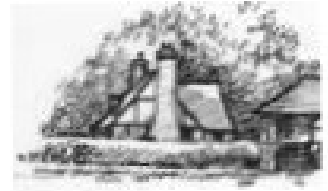


CHECKENDON VILLAGE NEWSLETTER



No 848

April 2026

Price 50p

It's Springtime !



Parish Diary Dates for April – June 2026

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
Saturday 21 March – Thursday 30 April	11.00 – 5.00 Tues. to Sat. 2.00 – 5.00 pm Sun.	Oxon. Military Heritage In 50 Objects Exhibition	Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock
Wednesday 1 April	2.30 – 4.00 pm	Woodcote Volunteers Tea Party	Woodcote Community Centre
Saturday 4 April	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Digital Help Service	Woodcote Community Centre
Thursday 16 April	11.00 – 12.00 am	Digital Help Service	Woodcote Community Centre
Thursday 16 April	2.30 pm	Talk on Oxfordshire Pubs - W&G HHS	Whitchurch Village Hall
Friday 17 April	From 7.00 pm	Checkendon School Quiz Night	Checkendon School
Sunday 26 April	2.00 – 5.00pm	Bluebell Sunday with Teas	Checkendon Village Hall
Wednesday 6 May	7.00 pm	Woodcote Volunteers AGM	Woodcote Village Hall
Saturday 16 May	10.00 – 12.45 pm	Cholsey Repair Café	Cholsey Community Centre
Saturday 30 June	From 1.00pm	Friends of Checkendon, Nettlebed & Kingwood Polish Camps event	The Black Horse, Checkendon
Sunday 28 June	8.00 – 12.00 am	Checkendon Boot Sale	Checkendon Field & Lawn

The **MAY 2026** issue of the Checkendon Newsletter will be published
on **Friday 1 May 2026**

Contributions by e-mail as soon as possible please, but no later than **5pm Friday 18 April** to Checkendon.news@yahoo.co.uk

Newsletter subscriptions: Please send your £5 annual subscription, preferably online, to the Newsletter bank account. Name: 'Checkendon Newsletter.' Business account. Sort code 09 01 50. Account number 05617154. Please make sure you identify yourself.

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DIGITAL CHECKENDON

Did you know that there is a supportive village What's App 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



LANGTREE CHURCH SERVICES

April 2026

Thursday 2 April – Maundy Thursday (Red)			
Ps.116 : 1, 10-end (or Ps.116 : 9-end)		Exod.12 : 1-14 (or 12 : 1-4, 11-14)	
1 Cor.11 : 23-26		John 13 : 1-17, 31b-35	
7.30	Woodcote	Maundy Thursday Team Service	DB & PF
Friday 3 April – Good Friday (Red)			
Ps.22 (or Ps.22 : 1-11 or Ps.22 : 1-21)		Isa.52 : 13-53, end	
Heb.10 : 16-25 or Heb.4 : 14-16; 5 : 7-9		John 18 : 1-19, end	
9.45am	Woodcote	Easter Crafts	LWL
10.30am	Checkendon	All Age Easter Activities in School	KD
12pm	Mongewell	Words from the Cross	JB
2pm	Whitchurch OT	Good Friday Service	JL
3pm	Woodcote	Good Friday Hour at the Cross	DB
Sunday 5 April – Easter Day (Gold or White)			
<i>The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.</i>			
Ps.118 : 1-2, 14-24 (or Ps.118 : 14-24)		Acts 10 : 34-43 or Jer.31 : 1-6	
Col.3 : 1-4 or Acts 10 : 34-43		John 20 : 1-18 or Matt.28 : 1-10	
8am	Woodcote	Holy Communion	DB
9.30am	Ipsden	Easter Day Holy Communion	JB
9.30am	Stoke Row	Easter Day Holy Communion	KD
9.30am	Whitchurch OT	Easter Day Holy Communion	JL
9.45am	Woodcote	Easter Day Holy Communion	DB
11am	Checkendon	Easter Day Holy Communion	KD
11am	North Stoke	Easter Day Holy Communion	JB
Sunday 12 April – Second Sunday of Easter (White)			
<i>The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.</i>			
Ps.16		Acts 2 : 14a, 22-32 [or Exod.14 : 10-end; 15 : 20-21]	
1 Pet.1 : 3-9		John 20 : 19-end	
8am	Woodcote	Holy Communion	DB
9.30am	Stoke Row	Morning Prayer	PF
9.30am	Whitchurch Hill	Service of the Word	LWL
9.45am	Woodcote	Worshipping Together	BT
10am	Ipsden / North Stoke	Online service via Zoom	JB
11am	Checkendon	Holy Communion	DB
Sunday 19 April – Third Sunday of Easter (White)			
<i>The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.</i>			
Ps.116 : 1-3, 10-end (or Ps.116 : 1-7)		Acts 2 : 14a, 36-41 [or Zeph.3 : 14-end]	
1 Pet.1 : 17-23		Luke 24 : 13-35	
8am	Woodcote	Holy Communion	DB
9.30am	Ipsden	Holy Communion	JB
9.30am	Stoke Row	Informal Worship	PF
9.30am	Whitchurch OT	Service of the Word	JL
9.45am	Woodcote	Open Door	LWL
11am	Checkendon Village Hall	All Age Service & Easter Brunch	KD
11am	North Stoke	Holy Communion	JB
4pm	Whitchurch Hill	Outdoor Church	JL
Sunday 26 April – Fourth Sunday of Easter (White)			
<i>The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.</i>			
Ps.23		Acts 2 : 42-end [or Gen. ch.7]	
1 Pet.2 : 19-end		John 10 : 1-10	
8am	Woodcote	Holy Communion	DB
9.30am	Ipsden	Morning Prayer	PF
9.30am	Stoke Row	Holy Communion	KD
9.30am	Whitchurch Hill	Family Communion	JL
9.45am	Woodcote	Parish Communion	DB
11am	Checkendon	Short Service + APCM	KD
11am	North Stoke	Morning Prayer	BT

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



ZOOM SERVICES

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

Spring 2026

All Age Services at Checkendon Church.

Good Friday 3 April

10.30AM EASTER ACTIVITIES
in the School Hall
Craft, colouring and music for Easter

Sunday 19 April

11am Easter Brunch Food for sharing, from “Passover to Pentecost”





THE RECTOR WRITES

By Revd Kevin Davies



Starting to Pray

It is OK to pray. If you've wondered now and then about praying and then didn't because you weren't sure about the what or the when, or the how, here's a few tips to help you.

1. Prayer is something between you and God. Find a quiet spot where you can get away from all the distractions of the day and be by yourself. Put your phone on silent and ideally leave it somewhere else. God rarely uses the phone.
2. Don't worry about what you will say. You don't need words. Just be quiet for a few minutes. If something comes to mind, look at it carefully, but then deliberately put it down. If it sticks with you – perhaps it is a worry, or concern, see if you can hold it up before God. Show the matter to him and look at it together.
3. Remember prayer is as much about you being still, and listening, and looking at the world, as it is about your giving God a long shopping list of your own needs. God knows your needs. He wants to know you better. And you are so much more than your needs. Time spent listening is never wasted.
4. As a guide, you should talk to God about what is on your heart, whether that is as personal as a family member's ailments, or as large as global war and peace.
5. Some find it helpful to write down their prayers in a journal or diary. The act of writing can sometimes help us clarify what we mean.
6. If home is too busy, or noisy, it is OK to pray outside. It is OK to pop into church for a quiet time, too. Everyone is welcome to do this. It is your church, after all. (You would be surprised how often I find people doing just this – sitting quietly in a pew, remembering, giving thanks. It is a sacred place, and the prayers of those before us have soaked the building with love. The air has been softened there, and it in turn softens our hearts to God's love and mercy.)
7. If your day is full to bursting, and you really can't get a moment away from all the jobs, prayer is still possible. There are always "autopilot" tasks which lend themselves to prayer whilst doing them. Doing the ironing, mowing the grass, making the train journey home, for example. Set your body into "remote", while you talk to the pilot.
8. There are other settings for prayer, too, which are "corporate" in that they happen with other people. For example, prayers in small groups or prayers in a church service. These are different ways of praying and tend to be more structured just so that everyone can follow what is happening.
9. You can pray for any number of reasons – you might be upset or joyful, sad or angry, or simply overwhelmed by everything that is going on. However, you are feeling, and whatever the reason for your prayer, it is important to remember that God sees, hears, and "gets it."
10. Start gradually. If you ask God to draw near to you, He will.

May the blessing of the risen Lord Jesus Christ be with us all this Easter time.

Your Rector, Revd Kevin Davies.

CHECKENDON PRE-SCHOOL



What's happening at Checkendon Pre-school: Look what we have been doing....

As Spring arrives, we have noticed that the Daffodils are coming into bloom, the Snowdrops and Crocus are also giving a beautiful bit of colour after the cold, wet winter. The Checkendon pre-school garden continues to be a big hit with the children, helping them develop new skills including responsibility of caring for plants, understanding about cause and effect, and what plants need to survive and flourish.

The children have also been celebrating World Book Day, joining in with well-loved stories, using puppets and dressing up as characters in the books such as 'Meg and Mog' and 'Puss in boots'. We have enjoyed lots of our favourite stories and learning how to take care of books.

We celebrated Mother's Day with the children, with a Mother's Day Diddi dance, which we thoroughly enjoyed as well as making some beautiful, decorated boxes for their mummies.

We have also been enjoying lots of Easter activities including Easter dancing, making cards, hunting for Easter chicks, bunnies and eggs outside, and little chefs made some delicious Easter nests. We even had a visit from the Easter Bunny!

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/>



Mother's Day Diddi Dance



Easter



World Book Day

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 PRIMARY SCHOOL



Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School

Respect

Integrity

Compassion

Courage

Hope

Live

Love

Learn

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

April 2026



Willow Class Trip to Oxford

As part of their geography learning, Willow Class have been exploring the city of Oxford, and last Wednesday they enjoyed a truly memorable and **fun** day out. We place great importance on taking children beyond the school environment, as these real-life experiences bring learning to life and provide opportunities that children do not always get the chance to experience.



The day began at the Martyrs' Memorial before the children continued to the Weston Library, walked beneath the Bridge of Sighs and discovered Edmond Halley's House. As they explored the streets, the children searched carefully for clues, encouraging them to slow down, look closely and really notice the details of Oxford's historic buildings.

"It felt like we were detectives looking for secrets in the buildings," said one child.



Along the High Street, they explored university buildings before arriving at St Mary's Church. Here, the children heard the famous story of how C. S. Lewis, after attending Evensong, stepped out into the snow-covered street and turned a corner. In the lamplight, he noticed a door set into a wall. The door had a knocker shaped like a lion's head, inspiring Aslan, and the porch above it was supported by two carved fawns, later reflected in the character of Mr Tumnus.

"I liked standing there knowing that was where the idea for Narnia started," shared another child.

After lunch, the class visited the Bodleian Library for an engrossing and **fun** guided tour. Seeing such an iconic place helped the children make meaningful links between geography, history and literature.



"I couldn't believe how old the books were, it felt like being inside history," commented one pupil.

Throughout the day, the children were a credit to the school. Staff and members of the public at several locations commented on their excellent behaviour, politeness and curiosity, which was wonderful to hear. Trips like this are an important part of our commitment to widening experiences and enriching learning beyond the classroom. Please do visit again as a family, the Bodleian Library is free, and the children are now experts! It was a day full of learning, discovery and **fun**, one the children will remember for years to come!

The poster features a dark blue background with a string of glowing white lights at the top. On either side, there are stylized illustrations of hands holding up the scene. The main text 'QUIZ NIGHT' is written in large, glowing yellow-outlined letters.

QUIZ NIGHT

at Checkendon CofE School

FRIDAY 17TH APRIL

Doors 19:00 | Quiz 19:30

Tables of 6 for £60

Licensed bar and snacks available to purchase

Buy tickets via the QR code or by visiting:

www.pta-events.co.uk/checkendonprimary

Any queries or for individual tickets
please email Lucy Crump at
lucy.asanders@hotmail.co.uk



LOCAL NEWS

STOKE ROW W. I.

February was a special month for Stoke Row WI as it is 70 years since our group was formed and to mark the occasion we turned our monthly meeting into a party. The evening started with drinks and canapés to a background of lively music from the likes of Elvis and Bill Hailey and there was such a buzz in the room as everyone gathered to celebrate. We took our seats for a rousing chorus of Jerusalem with which our members online also joined in. Our drama group then entertained us with a presentation entitled 'Through the decades' as they reminded us of key world events and significant events within SRWI since 1956. This was complemented by an exhibition of memorabilia from over the decades supplied by our members, together with photos and scrap books documenting the activities of Stoke Row WI over the years. Amazing to see where SRWI ventured on their days out by train and to hear about their successful darts team. We are lucky to have seven lovely ladies who have been members of the WI for more than 20 years and in particular we paid tribute to Daphne Stallwood who has been a member for 63 years, Sheila Griggs, a member for 55 years and Marion Turner, a member for 50 years. They were all presented with certificates to mark the occasion. The President then cut our birthday cake and pieces were handed round for all to enjoy. All agreed it was a great evening.



This month Stoke Row WI teamed up with Whitchurch Hill WI for a special craft event held at a member's house. Under the guidance of Sue, a tutor from Berkshire Federation, some of us tried our hand at decorating shells by coating them with paper napkin designs and others tried silk painting floral designs which were then incorporated into cards. It was a very enjoyable afternoon, and our thanks go to Sandra Farmer for organising the event. We look forward to more such craft events.

In March (but too late to report on here) we will hold our annual meeting to elect a new committee and President and on 21 April we will hear from Karina Philips on *The Role of Clinical Massage*. There will also be a walk and 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

Denise Stanworth

ANNUAL BOOT SALE



Advance Notice

Checkendon's Annual Boot Sale will take place on **Sunday 28 June** between 8am – 12 noon.

More details to follow in the coming months.

Time to start emptying your cupboards, loft and garage!

CHOLSEY REPAIR CAFÉ

The next Cholsey Repair Café at the Cholsey Pavilion will be Saturday 16 May. Doors will be open from 10.00 until 12.45 and you can bring along all manner of domestic items, including bicycles, for the expert attentions of our volunteer fixers, who will do their best to help you repair them. If the session is busy, you can make the wait more pleasant with a really good cuppa and cake from Cholsey Community Café, right next door. We are one of the longest-running and most respected repair cafes in Berks and Oxon. More detail can be found at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com. After this, the next date will be Saturday 18 July.



LOCAL NEWS

1ST CHECKENDON BROWNIES

This Spring Term has been great fun at Brownies. We have six girls who have completed their Skills Builder Challenges for their Be Well theme. This included them learning about how to deal with an unconscious person, how to put them into the recovery position and call for an ambulance, as well as walking out in the countryside and following a map. We have also spent time on our District Thinking Day working alongside other Brownie groups and finished by toasting s'mores on an open fire and really enjoying eating them!



We would like to thank the two representatives from the Hearing Dogs for the Deaf who came with their cockapoo 'Tikka' and talked to us about her working role in supporting them as their 'hearing dog'. Tikka was gorgeous and we are looking forward to raising some money for the charity later this year.

Now that the weather is warming up and the evenings are getting lighter, we are looking forward to being out in the woods, building shelters and playing wide games.

If you have a girl aged between 7 and 11 who may be interested in joining us, please do get in touch - CheckendonBrownies@gmail.com

BLUEBELL SUNDAY - 26 APRIL

On Sunday afternoon 26 April, we will be holding our annual 'Bluebell Sunday', when we welcome everyone to enjoy a walk through the beautiful beech woodlands around Checkendon with their splendid displays of bluebells.

There will be tea and homemade cakes available in the Village Hall from 2-5pm. This is a wonderful social event, and the Village Hall Management Committee look forward to welcoming you.

Of course, we can't put on such a lovely spread on our own, so if you can help on the afternoon or donate a homemade cake it would be really appreciated. Contact Denise 01491 680773.



Many thanks
Denise

LOCAL NEWS

GET DIGITAL HELP



A reminder that we offer free one-to-one advice sessions for local residents who have any queries that arise from using their digital devices, such as a smart phone, tablet or laptop. Even if you have none of these, you are welcome to come along to find out what it is all about as we have devices you can try out. Being connected to the online world helps you stay connected to the wider world by easily connecting to friends and family and allowing you to receive and search for important information.



We understand that the digital world can seem daunting. I expect many readers will have had the experience of seeking help from a family member or friend, who takes charge, presses a few buttons and hands the device back. That's great but not so helpful if it leaves you as puzzled as before. We have a different approach. We will show you what to do but **you** are the one pressing all the right buttons. We feel you learn best by actually doing it and if necessary, repeating it until you understand. Often the issue is dealt with in one session, but you are welcome to return as many times as needed until you have the confidence to go solo.

The advice sessions last approximately 45 minutes to an hour and are held twice a month (see below).

Our friendly local volunteers have a wide range of experience in the digital world. All are DBS-checked and will do their best to answer your queries, however simple or complex, by working with you to help you understand more. Your online safety is always at the front of our minds, so if needed, we will offer guidance.

The advice sessions are held in **Woodcote Community Centre** twice a month **at 2-4 pm on the 1st Saturday** and at **11.00 am -12.00 noon on the 3rd Thursday** of each month.

There have been a wide range of queries – here are a few examples:

- Something's not working properly and I don't know what to do!
- How can I get rid of pop-up messages I don't understand?
- What happens if my storage is full?
- How do I search the internet for information?
- How do I delete unwanted accounts?
- How do I set up or delete apps on my phone or tablet?
- My device is running very slowly – why?
- I've been given a device – where do I start?
- How do I send and receive emails/texts/WhatsApp messages?
- How can I set up and use the NHS app to book a GP appointment online?
- How do I organise/send/receive photos?

To book your slot, **please call 01491 877749** and leave a voicemail if necessary. Someone will phone you back to take your details.

LOCAL NEWS

WOODCOTE VOLUNTEERS

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held on **Wednesday 6 May** in the Pavilion Room, Village Hall, Woodcote, from 7pm. All our volunteers and the wider community are encouraged to attend to find out more about our service and to meet those who are involved.

Volunteer Story

For the first of an occasional series of volunteer stories, we are featuring the story of our Chair, Sarah White. In her words: *“Five years ago, after moving to Whitchurch Hill and reducing my working week to four days, I wanted to find a way to give back to the community . That’s when I discovered Woodcote Volunteers – and became a driver. Driving for the charity is a win-win - not only does it provide a much-needed service to our local community, it gives me the chance to meet fascinating people and hear their stories, to give something back without a huge time commitment and to feel the gratitude of those we help. The more I drove, the more I realised what an incredible service Woodcote Volunteers provides. It’s not just about transport – it’s about connection. From regular coffee mornings to tea parties, the charity creates social opportunities that combat isolation. So, when the Chair position became available, I was delighted to put my name forward. Working with such an experienced and passionate committee has made the transition easy – and inspiring. Even after 40+ years, Woodcote Volunteers continues to adapt. Last year, we launched a Digital Support service, offering one-to-one help for people who want to get online safely and confidently. It’s just one example of how we’re finding new ways to support those in Woodcote and surrounding villages who experience isolation. I have found being part of Woodcote Volunteers is rewarding, meaningful and fun.”*



Sarah White

Tea Parties for our clients

In March, our clients were treated to a recital by Woodcote’s own highly talented professional pianist, Tim Valentine, which they loved. Our next Tea Party will be on **Wednesday 1 April 2026 at 2.30pm**, finishing at 4.00 pm, and will feature something very different – a demonstration of weaving by Janet Nicholls. Janet uses a small loom to create small wall hangings, place mats and lots more. It should be very interesting so please come along to our free event for tea, cake, talk and good company.

Tea Parties are held at the Community Centre in Woodcote. We provide tea and home-made cakes and there is no charge. Please give us plenty of notice if you need a lift by calling our office phone number below.

Woodcote Winter Wheels

February was the last month this winter that our free drives were offered. We were able to offer free drives over the winter due to the generosity of the Woodcote Rally and would like to thank them again. It was a very well received initiative, with over 150 drives undertaken in the period, resulting in significant savings for our clients. We hope to be able to repeat this next winter.

Coffee Morning

Our first Coffee Shop of the year will be held on 11 April from 10.00 am -12.30 pm in Woodcote Community Centre. It would be lovely to see you all there to enjoy coffee, teas and homemade cakes!

Call out for new drivers

We do need a few more drivers, and we would love to hear from you! Being a volunteer driver is a wonderful opportunity to help others while making new friends. Please go to our website www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk to find out more about the role and how to contact us.

TO FINISH....

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

LOCAL NEWS

WHITCHURCH AND GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

We're looking at a noble British institution at our next meeting. Alan Long, our speaker, will explore the naming of Oxfordshire pubs at 2.30pm on Thursday 16 April. The meeting takes place at Whitchurch Village Hall, and all are welcome, with non-members paying £3 to include tea and biscuits – no beer unfortunately! Where did all those bears, lions, greyhounds and suns come from?

WALLINGFORD FOOD BANK

Manager's Report for February 2026

"Spring appears to be with us, finally. As I write, the sun is shining, and I hope it still is when you read this. We really do not want any more rain. This month we have fed 311 households - an increase of 30.5% in numbers of households on last year. However, we are not yet as high as the peak figures in early 2024.

We continue to be grateful for all the support you offer us. We have had such positive responses to our requests for help. One supporter arranged for items we needed, to be delivered from an online supermarket, at a convenient time, which was amazing. We have also had several people volunteer to help us, in response to a plea on Facebook. Thank you to all those that offered; we were overwhelmed at your kindness.

*Please know that you do not have to shop at one of those places; you can check the app and shop anywhere that suits you. We currently have 940 users on our www.bankthefood.org app, so it would be amazing to get to 1000. Please bear in mind that we are currently **swimming** in soup, baked beans and fish and dried pasta so please choose long life milk or juice, jars of coffee, tins of potatoes, vegetables and tins of meat instead. Easter is on the 5 April this year, so it would be lovely to start seeing Easter eggs arriving, so that we can get them out in good time to families.*

With many thanks for all your support, Alice Penney"

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



LOCAL NEWS

SOLDIERS OF OXFORDSHIRE MUSEUM

New Exhibition: Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum tells the story of the county's military heritage through 50 objects

- New exhibition displays 50 key objects which tell the story of the county's military heritage
- Objects on display illustrate Oxfordshire stories from the Napoleonic Wars to the Second World War
- Insights into wartime life in the county, and the history of the two county regiments, The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars
- Alongside the exhibition, the museum will be offering 50 Objects outreach talks, bringing their collections to you



Soldiers of
Oxfordshire
Museum

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, the county's military history museum based in Woodstock, will open a brand-new exhibition entitled *Oxfordshire's Military Heritage in 50 Objects* from 21 March to 30 April 2026.

The collection of objects going into the exhibition combine highlights from the museum's permanent displays from the past 10 years with recently donated items on show for the first time.

Alongside the exhibition, the museum will be expanding its outreach programme by taking a package of talks themed around *50 Objects* on the road, offering to bring selections of objects with an expert speaker to clubs, societies and organisations across the county. Talks and speakers are now bookable by contacting the museum or visiting the website.

Mk 1 Horsa G glider, signed picture



Wordsworth's watch



A full list of the 50 Objects, with images, can be found at www.sof.org.uk/collection/oxon50objects
Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock, OX20 1SN www.sof.org.uk
frontofhouse@sof.org.uk . Tel: 01993 810 210

WABC gets £13,273 from the National Lottery

Wallingford Accessible Boat Club (WABC) has been awarded £13,273 from The National Lottery Community Fund, made possible by National Lottery players. The funding will support the club's ongoing work to provide safe, inclusive and accessible boating opportunities for people of all abilities, helping passengers build confidence, independence and social connections. Chairman John Jenkins MBE said: *"We are incredibly grateful to National Lottery players for their support. This funding will make a real difference to our passengers and volunteers, helping us continue to provide life-enhancing experiences on the water for people of all abilities."* A huge thank you to everyone who plays the National Lottery, you are helping us change lives locally.

LOCAL NEWS

WILD OXFORDSHIRE

Our Big Give Christmas Challenge raised £18,769 towards our Community Meadows and Margins project. We thank everyone who gave and/or helped.

Wildlife River Corridors

Wildlife corridors are living tapestries woven together to produce a natural passage connecting fragmented habitats. These vital tapestries allow animals to safely migrate, find food, reproduce, and adapt to environmental changes while keeping our landscape functioning as a single, connected system rather than a scatter of isolated fragments. Thus, migration is the key behavioural adaptation that allows nature to thrive.

But with increased development of land, through housing, road building, and agricultural activity, the mobility of wildlife has become restricted, areas isolated, and the genetic diversity of our ecosystems reduced. And this extends to our rivers and waterways. These waterways, which are so key to providing vital habitat for freshwater wildlife, now find themselves confined and carved apart by human pressures. Strengthening both land and river corridors restores the weave of the landscape. It rebuilds the very connections that allow ecosystems to function, species to thrive, and nature to adapt in an ever-changing environment.

At the Evenlode Catchment Partnership (a collaboration of over 20 organisations and many more individuals, united by a shared commitment to improving the water environments within the Evenlode catchment, hosted by Wild Oxfordshire), we value the role of these corridors as lifelines that connect segregated habitats, while championing the benefit to communities when local green and blue spaces are cared for. We have developed innovative approaches to river restoration, such as the creation of wetlands, ponds, and fish passages, alongside natural flood management efforts like the installation of leaky woody dams and storage bunds. These interventions not only restore natural habitats but also reduce flood risks, benefiting local communities. Additionally, intensive farming practices rely heavily on fertilisers and pesticides, and that dependence comes at a financial cost to farmers, poorer water quality, and shrinking space for wildlife. When fields are pushed to produce more, the landscape loses the complexity and breathing room that rivers, insects, birds, mammals, and soil organisms need to function well. Sustainable farming offers a different path. Across Oxfordshire and the Evenlode catchment, farmers are being supported to adopt approaches that work *with* natural processes rather than against them.

What's possible?

Even occasional involvement helps build bigger, better-connected habitats. Here are some examples to get you started:

Join a local Friends of the River group, hedgerow planting days, River fly surveying and monitoring, pond creation, or organise litter picks along local streams and rivers.

Report pollution or blockages using - The Environment Agency incident hotline or visit [Report an environmental problem - GOV.UK](#),

[Thames Water's pollution reporting page](#) and the Canal & River Trust for fly-tipping using their contact form.



Evenlode river near college farm, Bledin



Gardening tips for April

Spring has sprung; dandelions, primroses, and crocuses have all shot up from the once frosty soil. And you'll be pleased to hear that April marks the start of the sowing season - this is where the fun begins. Here are some tips on how to bring more wildlife (and a splash of colour while you're at it) into your garden, community green space, or any outdoor patch you can get your hands on.

1. Plant for pollinators - Now is your time to start planting native plants, flowers, and more. Planting nectar-rich flowers attracts these winged beauties, such as butterflies and bees, and provides a vital food source later in the year. Try plants such as Snake's Head Fritillary, Forget-Me-Not, or a climber like Honeysuckle, which will also attract moths and bats in the summer.
2. Provide water sources -Don't just feed the birds, give them something to drink! Water features are a must-have for any wildlife-friendly space. From birdbaths to ponds, water sources provide essential habitats, hydration or even a bath for your feathery (and not so feathery) guests.
3. Sow everything - There is an abundance of fruit and vegetables that can start to be sown in April, from salads leaves to potatoes. Help nature out and give yourself a tasty snack whilst doing so.
4. Add a compost pile - Composting really is a benefit to all- turning kitchen scraps and garden waste into nutrient-rich soil, you're feeding your plants and reducing waste. Pick a level, well-drained, easy spot to access to use as your compost heap — you can also purchase ready-made compost bins. Build an airy base using twigs, straw, and small branches. Layer browns and greens: 2:1 browns-to-greens (by volume). Add moisture: damp, not soggy. Turn regularly every 1–2 weeks. You can then start adding your waste, such as vegetable peels and fruit cores, fresh grass clippings, coffee grounds, tea bags (plastic-free), weeds (but only if they haven't gone to seed), and crushed eggshells.

UPDATED POST OFFICE TIMES

Mobile Post Office Times

Checkendon	Tuesday 10- 10.30		
Stoke Row	Monday 10:15 - 11:15 and	Tuesday 09:30 - 10:00	
Woodcote	Monday 08:00 - 10:00,	Tuesday 11:00 - 13:00 and	Thursday 11:45 - 12:45
Nettlebed	Wednesday 12:00 - 13:30 and	Thursday 13:15 - 16:15	

Ipsden Post Office Opening hours

Monday 08:15-13:00, 14:00-15:00
Tuesday 08:15-13:00, 14:00-15:00
Wednesday Closed
Thursday 08:15-13:00, 14:00-15:00
Friday 08:15-13:00, 14:00-15:00
Saturday 08:15-12:00
Sunday Closed

See page 24 for more details.



LOCAL NEWS

THE WOODCOTE WORK HUB

A new flexible workspace, the **Woodcote Work Hub**, has officially opened at Woodcote Community Centre, providing a dedicated environment for remote workers and freelancers seeking a professional place to work and host business meetings close to home.

Located on the first floor, the Work Hub offers a bright and quiet setting designed to support modern working patterns. The facility includes two workstations, high-speed broadband, printing facilities, and a breakout area, alongside tea and coffee making facilities. The space can be booked by the hour, half, full or for multiple days, giving hirers the flexibility to work in a productive environment without commuting long distances.

The project builds on efforts to modernise the Community Centre, which has served local residents since the restoration of the Old Schoolhouse as a community facility in 1993. With the increasing number of people working from home across the region, the Work Hub aims to provide an alternative workspace which encourages collaboration, productivity, and community connection.

Karen Woolley, Chair of the Community Centre said *“the new hub reflects the evolving needs of the village: As more people adopt flexible and remote working, having access to a professional workspace within the community is increasingly important. The new Work Hub provides a welcoming environment where people can work productively while staying connected to the local community.”*

The hub is expected to benefit residents across Woodcote and surrounding villages by offering an accessible alternative to city-centre coworking spaces and daily commutes.

Bookings for Woodcote’s Work Hub are now open, with online reservations and keyless entry making access quick, simple and convenient.

Louisa Devismes, Woodcote Community Centre

Email: bookings@woodcotecc.org.uk

Website: <https://woodcotecc.org.uk>



FROM OUR MP



Freddie van Mierlo MP writes...

April 2026

From our MP

In February, I spoke again on Chalgrove Airfield in Parliament, focussing on the unsuitability of the site for a new town due to the lack of transport links. I voiced my frustration that developers can come back time and time again with planning applications - only needing to succeed once. I'm very disappointed that yet another 160 homes will be tacked onto Chalgrove following the success of Gladman Homes at appeals - a site I had previously successfully defended as a local councillor.

Two petitions were handed in to Number 10 by residents this month. The first, was by Sarah Green of Thame, who had collected over 3,600 signatures in support of the Thame-Haddenham Greenway. Following on from this, I met with officers from the County Council to continue to press for progress. The second petition delivered to Downing Street last month was in support of Jason's Law. The family of Jason, who very sadly died by suicide, are campaigning for better bereavement support for families like theirs. It was an honour to accompany them on an important and memorable day. I welcomed the approval of an additional £3m in the Lib Dem run County Council's budget for the Watlington Relief Road. This followed an attempt by the Green Party to scrap the road entirely - a move that betrayed promises made by the Greens at the last local elections. I urged the Green Party's local leader to withdraw their amendment to the budget and was pleased when he did so.

In Westminster, I challenged Health Ministers about the availability of HRT implants. There is an ongoing supply issue with these medicines affecting a small number of constituents. Despite almost a year of questioning, the Government is yet to secure a supply. If you have been affected, please get in touch as I am now coordinating a wider cross-party response. My role on the **Science, Innovation and Technology Committee** continues to develop and I was pleased to have been invited to be part of a **Public Bill Committee on Cyber Security**, laying down amendments to a bill that legislates for companies to improve cyber security. My amendments concerned improving cyber security in the public sector as well as setting up a support service for SMEs. Sadly, neither Labour nor the Tories backed them. In Westminster Hall (The Commons 'second debating chamber'), I challenged ministers on support for young families, the availability of IVF, and SEND provision. I also covered planning rules and transport infrastructure in debates organised by Lib Dems. In the Committee Room I also attended a meeting on the Government's **White Paper on Water** that included campaigner Fergal Sharkey, as well as those featured in the Channel 4 drama Dirty Business. There's no doubt this moving and disturbing drama will now galvanise further calls for action - not just the window dressing planned by the government.

As usual this month I ran my regular online surgeries and spoke with a range of local campaign groups to keep updated and aligned in where I can provide support. I'm always here to help if needed - you can reach me at freddie.vanmierlo.mp@parliament.uk.

LOCAL POLISH CAMPS



Last year, we started a Facebook group to keep alive the British Polish heritage of the camp which existed at Checkendon during World War II and afterwards. The *Friends of Checkendon, Nettlebed and Kingwood camps* now has > 400 local members (new members are welcome). We want to preserve the memory of the sacrifices of the Polish community who lived, worked and went to school here, and we hope to pass their stories on to future generations. To achieve this, we are collaborating with the Parish Council and Village Hall and plan to include the primary school in future.

We are planning a series of events. The first is at 1pm Saturday 30 May 2026 at the Black Horse - all welcome (see attached poster). Hopefully there will be our 100-year-old veteran member from Stoke Row, along with World War II re-enactors, 1940s cars and Polish folk dancers, along with villagers, Polish descendants and their families. We hope to unveil a plaque on the green in November 2026 to coincide with Remembrance week and significant Polish dates, notably Independence Day, 11 November. We plan at each of these events to open the village hall and have small exhibitions, photos of the Polish camp, artwork and displays. In the future, we hope to restore some of the remaining Nissen huts in the woods.

For 2028 we are planning a major international event at Checkendon - the 80th anniversary of the arrival of the first Polish refugees in the village. Descendants from Australia, Canada and USA plan to come.

We are trying to raise funds to help us realise our vision for Checkendon - please help us by donating today to:

Checkendon Village Fund, Account no. 05340985, Sort code 60-10-35
IBAN- GB69NWBK60103505340985



CHECKENDON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of a meeting of Checkendon Parish Council held on 24th Nov 2025.

1. Present

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

2. Apologies. - Mr. D. Brown and Cllr. Norman

3. Minutes of 28th July 2025.- These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising from minutes - None.

5. Report from SODC - An email report was received for October 2025.

6. Report from OCC

Awaiting central Government decision on local government reorganisation.

Oxford congestion charge – 25 free permits per year for Oxfordshire residents- application online.

The Cowley Branch Line is to be reopened.

Get Oxfordshire Working Plan is a new initiative to increase employment (already lowest unemployment in England).

Broadband rollout has been controversial. Cllr. Higgins now has useful contacts with Gigaclear.

Highways have met once with Cllr. Higgins for a walking appraisal. PC to let him have details of potholes before Christmas, as he plans to tackle this area in the new year.

Gully clearance has been increased from every four years to annually.

7. Highways and Footpaths.

The footpath by the Court still problematic, Mr Corbishley to follow up.

8. School Report

Ofsted visited last week, there will be an open session to explain the outcomes in due course.

In September there were 88 children, and the tours have been well attended with families from further afield. Wednesday 10th December Nativity play all invited but please RSVP.

Wednesday 17th December 2.30 Christmas Church Service.

The PC agreed to pay for the Christmas tree on the green, also new lights and decorations.

The PC donation of £500 has not yet been paid in nor acknowledged.

9. Playing Field Report

Quote for chain link fence on roadside from RW Butler £4,995 +VAT.

Sports Club and PC agreed to share cost; to be included in budget.

10. Playground Report

Mr Corbishley and Mr Merson made repairs to wooden structures reflecting the ROSPA report make the equipment safe.

Mr Corbishley has approached 4 companies to get quotes for refurbishing the play equipment. Despite meeting 2 firms on site, he has yet to receive any quotes. Three are required for grant applications. To be followed up in January meeting.

11. Village Hall Report

Christmas themed quiz on 29th November, oversubscribed.

12. Correspondence.

New property at Hook End Farm has been named The Yard; confirmed by SODC

13. Finance

a. Payments made. -None

b. Payments received.- None

c. External Audit. -Bank reconciliation completed.

14. Planning.

a. Applications received.

P25/S1731/FUL. Deers Lane/Hookend Lane. New access. PC strong objection.

P25/S3001/FUL. Four Horseshoes garden. Pair of dwellings. PC no objection.
P25/S3107/LDE. Heath End. Lawful Development Cert. PC has no information.
P25/S3191/FUL. Four Horseshoes fence. Retrospective. PC strong objection.
P25/S3295/HH. Maple Cottage. Conservatory to room etc. PC no objection.
b. Decisions received.
P24/S3106/FUL. Land off Uxmore Road. New Dwelling. Appeal dismissed.
P23/S3383/FUL. Gilcroft Cottage. New Dwelling. Granted.

15. Other Matters for Discussion. -None

16. Next Meetings.

Monday 12th January 2026.

Monday 23rd March 2026

Monday 18th May 2026

Monday 27th July 2026

Monday 28th September 2026

Monday 23rd November 2026



CROSSWORD 122 BY TIM LOWTH

Across

- 1 Go out with a sticky fruit (4)
- 3 Stressed to return for puddings (8)
- 8 This war distressed spirits (7)
- 10 Priam's third boy digests one Homeric epic (5)
- 11 Intense blow unexpectedly leads to pain in the arm (6,5)
- 13 Crazy desire to live (6)
- 15 Liz stopped short by an inhabitant of Tripoli, say (6)
- 17 Eat too much? No! Urge devil to change (11)
- 20 Strongly dislikes end of style in hats (5)
- 21 Firm tenor goes back for a diadem (7)
- 22 Sinbad's last ship approaching headland without light (8)
- 23 Rats unsettled one such as Ivan the Terrible (4)

Down

- 1 Go after drink when the economy declines (8)
- 2 A number of coaches teach (5)
- 4 Oriental stops too soon for festival (6)
- 5 Perhaps Noah bruised Phil badly (11)
- 6 Liar goes up road to find a form of transport (7)
- 7 Audibly sighed for team (4)
- 9 For example, he is like Cain in Genesis (5,6)
- 12 Maybe great-grandfather carts one around (8)
- 14 Protest about one who watches (7)
- 16 One of pieces substituted to create a sign (6)
- 18 A bit of beastliness leads to punishment in school (5)
- 19 Get rid of hut (4)

Bonus clue

A 2,14 is likely to be found near 6,18.

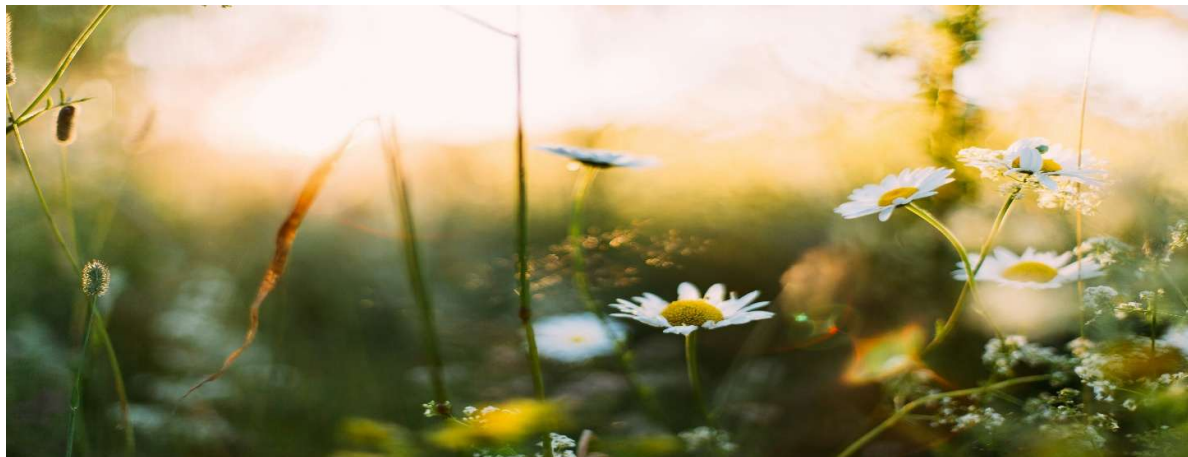
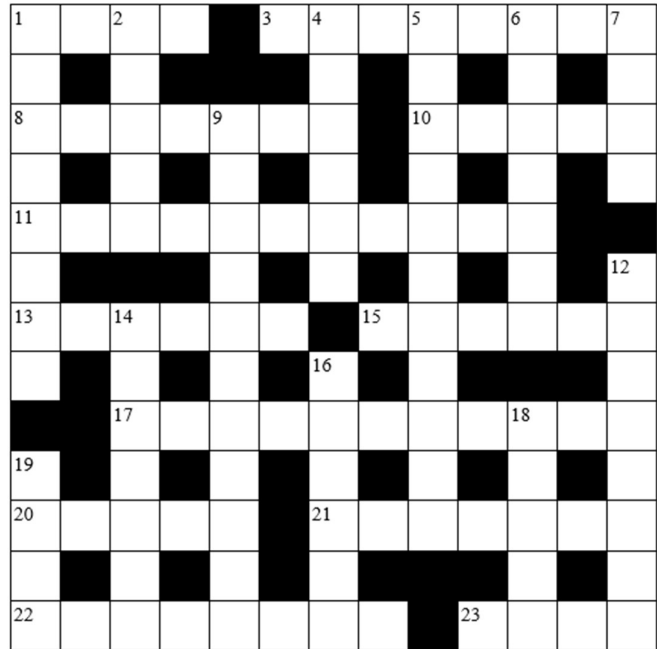


Photo by Daiga Ellaby

AND SHOES

Daphne Horne

Columnist



Socks and shoes evolved in the same way, from the covering of bare feet in skins. It is thought that pieces of bark or wood tied on with thongs were used as soles. Evidence has been found in America of shoes dating to ten thousand years BC. The Romans wore sandals with a thong across the foot and around the ankles. Footprints have been discovered in South Africa with the distinct pattern of a sole believed to be from 73,000 years BC. Later in Egypt a sandal similar to the modern "flip flop" was worn. These were often made from papyrus or palm leaves. In India they were made from wood. Many people still preferred to go barefoot, the Greeks in particular, and they fought their battles barefoot. The Romans preferred footwear and they had left- and right-handed sandals.



First Century caliga Roman sandals found in London, London Museum

About 4BC, the Greeks began to wear ornamental footwear. It became a status symbol with white shoes worn by young married women or those about to be married. Courtesans wore shoes of different colours, the lighter the colour of the leather the more expensive the shoe. The Greeks became renowned for their shoemaking.

During the Middle Ages, espadrilles were worn by peasants in the Pyrenees. These were made with braided jute soles and cloth tops often tied round the ankle with fabric laces. The name comes from the esparto grass first used for making them.

In mediaeval days, wooden clogs were very popular. Fashioned from maple or ash they were the choice of workers as they kept feet warm and dry. For those with money, leather shoes were often made two feet (61cm) long, the toes stuffed with things like hair or moss. These shoes were made by attaching the sole and turning the shoe inside out. Later the sole became thicker and was attached with a welt. They were worn as fashionable dress.

Shoemakers were also called Cordwainers, a name derived from the Cordovan leather used for shoe and boot making. Cobblers were kept distinct from cordwainers and were not allowed to use new leather for making shoes. They were only allowed to repair and "cobble" or patch shoes.

Because boots were needed for the army, machines were invented to increase production. It wasn't until the nineteenth century that factories appeared producing identical pairs of boots and shoes. In modern times, shoes and boots are made for fashion, work, sports, and leisure wear.

Wellington boots, named after the Duke of Wellington, evolved from a pair of riding boots preferred by the Duke. They were made of leather and shaped to his leg. These boots became very fashionable in the 1800's amongst the upper classes. During the First World War, waterproof boots were needed for the army and Wellington boots were eventually made in rubber by the North British Rubber Company (now the Hunter Boot Ltd). Production increased again in the Second World War to supply the forces, being essential for wearing in wet and muddy conditions. After the war, Wellington boots increased in popularity and were worn by men, women, and children. They are now made in many colours for fashionable wear.

There are many shoe and boot idioms in our everyday language. Most commonly "stepping into someone else's shoes", "as tough as old boots", "the shoe is on the other foot", "Goody Two Shoes", and "too big for his boots".



— 170 YEARS —



Daphne Horne

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

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 <h3>MOBILE POST OFFICE</h3>		
Mondays	Stoke Row – Opposite Village Hall RG9 5QL	10.15 – 11.15
Mondays	Woodcote Layby Whitehouse Lane RG8 0RX	08.00 – 10.00
Tuesdays	Checkendon Opposite School RG8 0SR	10.00 – 10.30
Tuesdays	Stoke Row – Opposite Village Hall RG9 5QL	09.30 – 10.00
Tuesdays	Woodcote Layby Whitehouse Lane RG8 0RX	11.00 – 13.00
Wednesdays	Nettlebed Outside Village Hall RG9 5DD	12.00 – 13.30
Thursdays	Nettlebed Outside Village Hall RG9 5DD	13.15 – 16.15
Thursdays	Woodcote Layby Whitehouse Lane RG8 0RX	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.

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Please email:
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with 'Advert' in the subject line

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