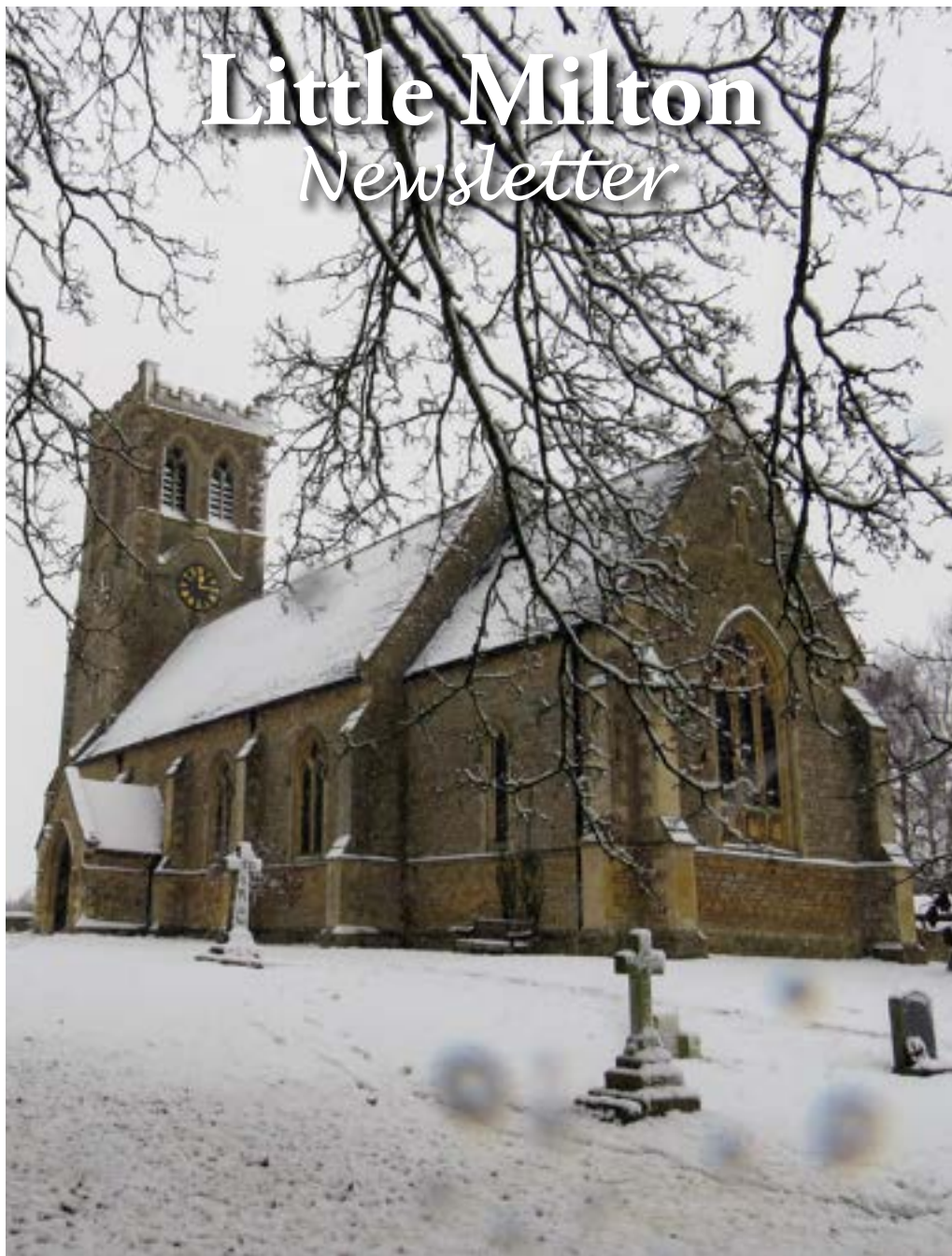


Little Milton *Newsletter*



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: JANUARY 2025

Sun	5th	9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion CW St James'
Tues	7th	9.30–10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge
Wed	8th	9.30 – 3.30 p.m. 7.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge Parish Council – Pine lodge
Thurs	9th	6.00 – 7.00 p.m. 7.30 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine Lodge WI Meeting - Dinner
Frid	10th	9.30 a.m.	Keep Fit – Pine Lodge
Sun	12th	10.30 a.m.	Family Service – St James'
Tues.	14th	9.30– 10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge
Wed	15th	9.30 – 3.30 p.m. 7.00 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge Craft Evening – Pine Lodge
Thurs	16th	6.00 – 7.00 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine Lodge
Frid	17th	9.30 a.m.	Keep Fit - Pine Lodge
Tues	21st	9.30– 10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge
Wed	22nd	9.30 – 3.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge
Thurs	23rd	6.00 – 7.00 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine Lodge
Frid	24th	9.30 a.m.	Keep Fit – Pine Lodge
Sun	26th	9.00 a.m. 10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion BCP – St Mary's Benefice Morning Worship – St Peters
Tues	28th	9.30– 10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge
Wed	29th	9.30 – 3.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge
Thurs	30th	6.00 – 7.00 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine Lodge
Frid	31st	9.30 a.m.	Keep Fit - Pine Lodge
FEB Sun	2nd	9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion CW – St James'

PLEASE NOTE If in doubt please check with the event organiser that the event is still taking place at the date and time stated.

EDITORIAL

I would like to wish all our readers a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

As editor I take the opportunity to reflect on the general wellbeing of our community and the challenges and to thank them on your behalf. I fully accept it is only my view.

In the January Newsletter 2024 I hoped that the difficulties and challenges of the Covid years would allow us all to move forward and rebuild confidence in our lives. Sadly, world events continue to bring uncertainty and our national challenges equally make it difficult to return to what we might call normality.

However, we all need to seek inspiration as we look ahead to 2025. I have again taken the opportunity of listing some quotes that might help us think about what we can do in our lives

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And old lang syne!
For old lang syne, my dear,
For old lang syne.
We'll take a cup of kindness yet,
For old lang syne.
~ *Robert Burns*

New Year quotes about new beginnings

1. "Celebrate endings—for they precede new beginnings." —*Jonathan Lockwood Huie, author*
2. "New beginnings are in order, and you are bound to feel some level of excitement as new chances come your way." —*Oscar Auliq-Ice, author*
3. "Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on." —*Hal Borland, author, journalist and naturalist*
4. "You can get excited about the future. The past won't mind." —*Hillary DePiano, playwright and author*
5. "And now we welcome the new year. Full of things that have never been." —*Rainer Maria Rilke, poet*
6. "An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves." —*William E. Vaughan, journalist and author*
7. "The way I look at it, every day that I'm moving forward is a day I'm not moving backward." —*Bobby Bones, radio personality*
8. "I think the more unexpected something is, the more there is to learn from it." —*Michael J. Fox, actor*
9. "I hope you realize that every day is a fresh start for you. That every sunrise is a new chapter in your life waiting to be written." —*Juansen Dizon, poet*
10. "There are far better things ahead than any we leave behind." —*C.S. Lewis, author*
11. "With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts." —*Eleanor Roosevelt, former First Lady*

12. “The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old but on building the new.” —*Dan Millman, gymnast, coach and lecturer*

13. “Whatever it is you’re scared of doing, do it. Make your mistakes, next year and forever.” —*Neil Gaiman, author*

14. “Each day is a new beginning, the chance to do with it what should be done and not to be seen as simply another day to put in time.” —*Catherine Pulsifer, author*

15. “If you’re brave enough to say goodbye, life will reward you with a new hello.” —*Paulo Coelho, novelist*

16. “Although no one can go back and make a brand-new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending.” —*Carl Bard, writer*

17. “We must be willing to get rid of the life we’ve planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us. The old skin has to be shed before the new one can come.” —*Joseph Campbell, writer*

18. “Just when the caterpillar thought her life was over, she became a butterfly.” —*Unknown*

I am often told by new and established residents that our village is a great place to live as they enjoy the tranquillity of a rural community and the efforts of volunteers who make our local organisations appear to work so smoothly. I have highlighted regularly in my editorial the challenge for each organisation to develop a succession plan to allow these vital community services to continue. We need to generate the interest and hopefully the enthusiasm for villagers to consider putting themselves forward in the future but the work starts now. I would like to thank on behalf of all our organisations the generosity of our residents in supporting their hard work and dedication.

The Parish Council has continued to represent our community and plays an important role in influencing various Partners in Local Government. 2024 saw the introduction of 20 mph limit through the village and the set-up of a Community Speed Group. The Parish Council continues to engage with OCC to establish a weight limit through the village. A SID (Speed Indicator Device) will be installed in 2025 that will further make our village a safer place. The Milton House development is progressing and the Parish Council will be giving consideration to the investment of the Community Infrastructure Levy over the next two years. The Parish Council requires the engagement of the village to help it identify the concerns and opportunities that need to be addressed. I would urge you to know your Parish Councillors and to exchange your thoughts with them or better still attend the monthly meeting. I would like to thank the Council on your behalf for the work they do on our behalf.

The Village Hall committee provide an excellent facility that is hired out for regular and one-off hire. They also provide social events for our community and have provided two theatre shows. The Committee perform an excellent job but will always welcome new committee members or as supporters of particular events e.g. Quiz Nights Make a point this year of coming to the Annual General Meeting to visibly offer your support. A big thank you to the committee for maintaining this vital village asset.

Our Village Shop and Post Office is a very important amenity and one that has gone from strength to strength. I highlighted the cost of energy in 2024 and I hope that it will

benefit from solar panels after being successful in receiving grant funding for the project.

Our Shop/Post Office is a vital community asset that we need to do all we can to ensure its long-term survival. This will depend upon being able to broaden the support of volunteers both for those working in the shop and the work done by those outside the shop. This is essentially the administration and financial support that the shop needs to survive. Perhaps this is something that you could offer and I urge you to contact Kevin Hunt. This leads me into thanking on your behalf the excellent work done by Kevin and the Shop Committee, Alison, Clare and all the volunteers.

We are fortunate to have an excellent school that is supported by hardworking staff and governors as well as a community that values their efforts. We should all recognise that it is not without challenges as a recent change in the headteachers showed.

Our pub has now become established with Ben and Charmain and we thank them for keeping this prized asset alive and thriving in our community

St James' has a dedicated PCC as well as a number of volunteers who clean the church, decorate the church with flowers and maintain the churchyard and I thank them for their hard work. The Church is a key cornerstone of our community and I am sure that sentiment is supported by both church and non- church members of our village.

The publication and distribution of our Newsletter is something that happens each month and I am sure that the Village would like to say thank you to all who are involved. In March of 2024 Keith Hodges has a serious medical condition that resulted in me having to find a new provider. I am pleased to say that MP Printers in Thame now print our newsletter. I would like to thank Keith Hodges at Colourplus for his excellent service and support to me as editor over many years as well as the distributors who diligently deliver a newsletter to each house. As editor I appreciate the excellent photographs that I receive from some of the village photographers and most importantly to all the correspondents who submit their articles each month.

Finally on your behalf I would like to thank Mr Freddie van der Mierlo our County Councillor and Georgina Heritage our District Councillor for all their support.

2025 will continue to challenge our community and those involved in the day to running of the various organisations that we all use and value. If we all enjoy the village, we live in let us all make every effort to ensure that Little Milton continues to be a great place to live and keep a watchful eye for your neighbours.

Editor

SUMMARY FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER 2024

Below is a summary of some of the topics and discussions which took place at the additional Parish Council meeting held in December.

District Councillor Report

Cllr Georgina Heritage reported that the Joint Local Plan (South Oxfordshire District Council and the Vale of the White Horse District Council) has been submitted. As soon as the plan is submitted it carries some weight in planning considerations. As of today, the District Council has a 4.6-year land supply which is slightly above the Government's requirement of 4 years. The new National Planning Policy Framework is due to be released tomorrow. HIF1 – transport infrastructure in the Didcot area has been

approved by the Secretary of State. The Parish Council noted that HIF1 may increase vehicle numbers through the village and will keep a keen eye on the project as it develops.

Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

Refurbishment of the MUGA surfaces is complete and the project signed off with the contractor today. Cllr van der Merwe has sent a progress report to FCC, the grant funder for the project. The surfaces look very sandy at present but with use and some rain the sand will blend into the surface. A further layer of sand will be applied in the spring. The MUGA is ready to use, and parish council encouraged people to do so. Trainers and shoes can be worn to play on the surface but no footwear with studs.

The electrician will fit the two coin meters and an extra set of timers to the lights to act as an override to avoid lights being left on overnight. A charging system will be introduced in the new year. The Parish Council has already received enquiries from local football teams wishing to use the facility. The basketball hoops, backboards and nets are to be replaced.

Reports from Committees

Open Green Spaces

Following the removal of a tree and a request from residents, the Parish Council agreed to purchase four trees to be planted along Milton Manor Drive.

Communication

A progress list of activities and projects delivered by the Parish Council during 2024 is being drawn up and will be published shortly.

Highways

Two residents have come forward to join Cllr Sheppard as Super Users for the village. Oxfordshire County Council will provide online training and equipment. Once trained Super Users can mark up and report problems related to the highways and footpaths within the 20 / 30mph speed limits directly onto the system enabling repairs to be carried out quicker.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Wednesday 8th January 2025**, in Pine Lodge, commencing at 7.30pm. Please visit the Parish Council website to read full minutes of Parish Council meetings.

Andrea Oughton, Parish Clerk

Current Council members

Councillor Francois Van Der Merwe (Chairman)	07740 438770
Councillor Howard Harrison	01844 279946
Councillor Adam Sheppard	01844 279217
Councillor Ed Horwell	07527 346187
Councillor Giles Denby	07484 187852
Councillor David Wakeling	01844 278014
Parish Clerk Andrea Oughton	clerk@littlemilton.org.uk
County Councillor: Freddie Van Mierlo	07944 492438 freddie.vanmierlo@oxfordshire.gov.uk
District Councillor Georgina Heritage	georgina.heritage@southoxon.gov.uk

SODC: WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

The minimum charge is £53.50 for up to 3 items and £10.25 for each additional item. There is a maximum of six items per collection day: if you have more than six, you'll need to book another collection day. Please note that a bed and mattress count as 2 items and a three-piece suite (consisting of 1 settee and 2 chairs) counts as 3 items.

Before you contact us to book your bulky waste collection, have a good think about whether you have any other big items to dispose of. Once we have processed your booking, we are unable to make any alterations or add any other items – even if you have only booked one or two items.

To arrange this service residents can call the Public Amenities Team on 01235 422406 or book on line from the Council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk

Give your furniture to a good home

Have you considered donating your furniture to charity or a good home? Emmaus is an Oxford based charity that will come out to all areas of the county and collect unwanted furniture free of charge. For legal or practical reasons this does not include soft furnishings without a fire label, safety items, or any item that is not in a saleable condition. Please [visit the Emmaus website](#) for more details.

BIFFA: WASTE COLLECTION DATES – JANUARY 2025

	Brown	Grey	Green	Food
2nd January ++	No	Yes	No	Yes
8th January ++	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
14th January	No	Yes	No	Yes
21st January	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
28th January	No	Yes	No	Yes

++ Change due to Bank Holiday

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Meetings and Council Activity

There hasn't been a full council meeting over the past month but it's been a full calendar of Council and Cabinet activity, much of which is detailed later in this report.

In the Haseley Brook ward, the majority of communications I received from residents in November have related to flooding issues. Many of the problems have to be referred to Oxfordshire County Council (and some to Thames Water and/or our MP) and I can't always offer as much help as I would like, but I fully appreciate the serious problems residents are experiencing and I will always endeavour to assist or advise if I can. Applications for the Councillor grant scheme closed on 29th November and, perhaps unsurprisingly, two of the five Haseley Brook applications are for flood defence equipment.

With regard to this grant scheme, the total requested by the five applications in our ward is £10,700 which exceeds the £5,000 councillor grant allowance quite significantly, and it's a similar picture in most South Oxon wards. It will be a difficult task to work through the applications with the aim of distributing funds fairly, but it's great to see so many fantastic community-focused applications.

I recently presented to Cabinet the details for a new Performing Arts grant, which had been proposed and agreed in February 2024. I'll look forward to providing more information on this exciting community-based scheme soon. Over the past month I have

also chaired the Health Improvement Partnership at County Hall and look forward to introducing the report from this meeting at the statutory Health & Wellbeing Board this Thursday 5th. Next week I shall be chairing the PCC and Chief Constable's annual report on 10th December, and preparing for Full Council on Thursday 12th.

48 affordable new homes in Thame and Wheatley

The first of three new projects to provide 48 new, genuinely affordable and energy efficient homes in Thame and Wheatley to meet local needs is now finished and has welcomed new tenants. The homes are a combination of new builds and conversions and will include one-bed houses and flats at affordable rent or under a shared ownership scheme, as well as independent living accommodation for over 55 and 60-year-olds.

Brought to life through SODC's partnership work with Soha Housing, Thame Community Land Trust and Thame & District Housing Association, the homes are largely funded by Section 106 affordable housing grants from developer contributions.

In Thame, the first residents have moved into their new homes and are enjoying energy saving solar roof panels and ground source heat pumps which will help keep energy bills low, as well as access to EV charging points.

A newly-built property in Wheatley of 12 one-bed apartments is also welcoming new tenants. The eco features mean the building will achieve zero carbon emissions when in use.

In addition, work is due to start on a third project of 31 affordable rent or shared ownership new-build houses and flats in Thame in 2025. The mix of new, affordable homes was established through a housing needs survey specific to Thame and will be available for people with a local connection to Thame.

Vision for the future of sports pitches and leisure facilities approved

A vision for the future of sports and leisure facilities across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts was approved by both Cabinets last week. With both councils committed to creating healthy and inclusive communities, the aim is to support wellbeing through increasing opportunities to be physically active, with high-quality, accessible and affordable local facilities near to where people work and live. The councils have produced Leisure Facilities Assessments and Strategies and Playing Pitch Strategies that set out the current and future provision of facilities across the two districts. The reports identify the high level, strategic need to protect and enhance existing facilities, alongside the need to provide new facilities ranging from tennis courts, gym facilities and swimming pools, to pitches for football, rugby union, cricket and hockey.

The councils appointed external experts to help identify what was already available, what needed improvements and where new facilities could be introduced in the districts. Each district then ran consultations earlier this year between March and April 2024 asking sports clubs, leisure users and sports enthusiasts, alongside residents and town and parish councils, to have their say on sports and leisure facilities provision – and to give their feedback about what the Councils, in partnership with other organisations, need to protect, enhance, and provide.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils both unanimously approved the strategies at Cabinet meetings in November, and SODC's report can be viewed here: [Cabinet Agenda 28/11/24](#)

The next steps will be to create action plans linked to the strategies and to work in partnership with sports clubs, town and parish councils, national governing bodies, leisure providers and other organisations to allocate funding and support projects going forward.

Council Vehicle Decarbonisation Update

South Oxfordshire and Vale councils have taken delivery of their first electric food waste collection vehicle, as well as two new electric vans on their maintenance fleet, as part of the councils' ambitions to decarbonise vehicle fleets and move towards net zero.

The food waste vehicle, a Terberg EV ORUS, was delivered to the Culham depot of waste contractor Biffa earlier this autumn. It is being used throughout both district council areas as part of the fleet of 12 food waste collection trucks. The diesel food waste trucks each cover approximately, 26,000 miles per year, which with an average load would produce 30.9 tonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent). By changing to an electric food waste vehicle, the councils expect to save more than 20 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent a year.

In addition to the reduction in carbon emissions, the EV will also save time and energy as it has a compressor function which means that despite being the same overall size as the other food waste trucks, it can take more food waste before it fills up. This means fewer trips to the food waste reprocessing facility in Wallingford to empty the truck before it can continue its collection round. The new vehicle also has a lift to allow the bins to be mechanically lifted and emptied into the waste compartment, which will be quicker for the collection crew as the current food trucks are loaded by hand. The vehicle like most EVs, is also quieter than diesel and petrol vehicles.

With regard to the maintenance vehicles I mentioned, the all-electric Renault Kangoo vans will be used by the parks team and the public toilet cleaning team to travel throughout both districts, as they conduct inspections, perform cleaning and maintenance work, and make deliveries to various sites.

These electric vehicles (EVs) will replace petrol and diesel vans, making a significant impact on reducing the councils' carbon emissions – it is estimated each van has saved 475.25kg of carbon dioxide equivalent in the first two months of use.

Their arrival is the beginning of a broader plan by the councils to fully convert the 12-strong fleet of maintenance vehicles used by the facilities, toilet cleaning, and parks teams to electric vans within the next three years.

Parks officer, Richard Embling, who uses one of the new EVs every day, said, "Charging is straightforward, as most of the areas I visit are in towns where we've installed chargers in council car parks. The range is decent, between 130 to 160 miles on a full 'tank' depending on the weather and the load I have onboard. This means I could go about three days without charging and still have some range left".

Food businesses asked to '♥ your area'

Food businesses in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are being asked to play a key role in reducing litter by supporting the district councils' '♥ your area' campaign.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are looking to local traders as well as national names to display anti-litter stickers on takeaway food

packaging and posters at their premises. By doing so, businesses can help to create cleaner, more welcoming streets for everyone.

The councils' ‘♥ your area’ initiative aims to tackle the rising issue of litter in public spaces. During the summer banners and posters were displayed in prominent areas to remind people enjoying food and drink outdoors to bin their litter or take it home. With the weather getting colder, the councils are now focussing on encouraging takeaways and other food businesses to help spread the message.

The first business to sign up to the campaign is McDonald's whose local franchisee has agreed to add the councils' sticker to packaging handed to their drive-thru customers at Abingdon and Milton Heights and to walk-in customers at Botley and Didcot. A banner opposite the front door of the Abingdon premises has also been reminding people leaving the restaurant to bin their litter.

If you run a food business and would like to get involved, or know someone who does, you can email waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk

Leisure Facilities Update

We have some really positive leisure updates, including great news for gym users across South Oxfordshire, with a major investment by the council of £210,000 in new, state-of-the-art gym equipment. Park Sports Centre in Wheatley, Abbey Sports Centre in Berinsfield and Thame Leisure Centre will all benefit from new equipment, including treadmills, bikes, weights and resistance machines.

Working in partnership with leisure providers (GLL) has enabled the council to secure the best possible equipment at the best available price from Technogym. Users will start to see the new equipment from late November and during December. Where possible the equipment purchased is using the latest technology along with self-powered kit, ensuring residents continue to receive the latest cutting-edge equipment on the market.

Much of the current gym equipment at all the centres is over 10 years old and the gyms will benefit from a boost with new, modern equipment.

The Technogym equipment works off a 'Wellness Cloud' allowing residents to use Wi-Fi programmes across any leisure centre they are at for this system. All equipment is compatible with the Better Mobile App used by members to support their fitness programmes.

Old equipment will go back to Technogym and as much of the old equipment will be recycled as possible.

We're also pleased to report that SODC and its leisure provider, Better, are celebrating a successful 2024 summer season at Riverside Park and Pools, with almost 16,000 visitors to the outdoor pool which is a significant rise from previous years (up 17.8 per cent compared to 2023) and a testament to the pool's popularity. The season extended from 25 May to 8 September 2024, with the introduction of lots of new activities.

The newly redeveloped splash pad again proved to be an enormous hit with visitors, drawing consistent crowds and reaffirming its popularity as a key feature of the destination.

As well as the return of regular activities such as aqua aerobics, swimming lessons and swim doctors, some of the other standout offerings included a First Aid and Water Safety Day on 16 August, which included a children's water safety lesson, followed by

an adult CPR and First Aid session. This year also saw the return of the popular Summer Solstice event, where the pool stayed open from 5am to 9pm so swimmers could enjoy both the sunrise and sunset.

The newly launched ‘End of Season Dog Swim’ was hugely popular. This sold-out event allowed dogs to take a splash in the pool, accompanied by their delighted owners. Due to its overwhelming success, the Dog Swim is sure to become a regular feature in future seasons.

The campsite has continued to be extremely popular, with guests frequently praising the experience and sharing positive feedback about their stay. Nearly every weekend saw the campsite fully booked, and there wasn't a night without campers.

Looking ahead to the next season there are plans to expand the site with more pitches and a fully accessible Changing Places facilities will be available at the Camping block toilets. Work is currently underway to improve the accessibility at the site with the installation of accessible moorings and improved pathways.

GREAT MILTON METHODIST CHURCH SERVICES: JANUARY 2025

For further info. Please contact Rev. Stephen Spain on 01865 763676

Date	Time	Church	Preacher	Comment
5th January	11.00 a.m.	Great Milton	David Harper	
12th January	11.00 a.m.	Great Milton	Local Arrangement	
19th January	11.00 a.m.	Great Milton	Rev. Stephen Spain	Holy Communion
26th January	3.00 p.m..	Great Milton	Alistair Jackson	

BENEFACTORY SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2025

Sunday 5th January

9.00	Holy Communion	St James' Little Milton
10.30	Family Worship	St Peter's Great Haseley
6.00p.m.	Sung Compline by Candlelight for Epiphany	St Peter's Great Haseley

Sunday 12th January

9.00	Holy Communion	St Mary's Great Milton
10.30	Family Worship	St James' Little Milton

Sunday 19th January

9.00	Holy Communion	St Peter's Great Haseley
10.30	Family Worship	St Mary's Great Milton

Sunday 26th January

9.00	Holy Communion BCP	St Mary's Great Milton
10.30	Holy Communion BCP	St Peter's Great Haseley

RECTOR'S PINT

As I write, we are approaching the middle of December, and the shortest day of the year. I love this time, especially when the weather is moody and broody with clouds scudding across the sky. I love the silhouettes of the trees against the horizon, especially as the light fades. We are, of course, also entering into the busy-ness of Christmas and the build-up to Christmas Day itself.

By the time you read this, all that will be over, we will have celebrated the start of the New Year, and January lies ahead. I am sure that I am not the only one who finds January, and the anti-climax after a busy December (although with some relief that we got through it all!), a bit of a struggle. However, the month can have its joyful moments, such as the emergence of drifts of snowdrops, a sign of things to come.

I rarely, if ever, make New Year's resolutions, probably because I am highly likely to break them! However, I do think there is worth and value in looking ahead and making plans. Cath and I now know that 2025 will be particularly significant, as we are planning to retire towards the end of the year. I will have turned 65 in December 2024, although Cath will have a while to wait for her state pension, as she is a whole ten months younger than me! Nonetheless, we feel it will be the right time to make that change. We still need to confirm the details and the date but at the moment, that is our plan.

With this in mind, I attended a pre-retirement course, arranged by the Diocese, last May, which turned out to be surprisingly good and very helpful. One of the standouts was from a retired clergyman who pointed out that 'God goes ahead of you'. In making plans, I believe that is so important. Even as a Christian, it's easy to slip into a mindset of thinking that somehow, we make our plans and then God fits in, but in fact, God is ahead of us.

One of the Bible verses that has strengthened us, and Cath particularly, over the years, comes from the Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope"* (Chapter 29, Verse 11). In what looks to be a year of significant change for us, we will hold onto that.

Whatever your plans are for 2025, whether it will be a year of significant change or not, I do wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Simon

CHURCH CLEANING ROTA FOR JANUARY

W/E 5th January	–	Mrs A Blagg & Mrs Cathy D'Aeth
W/E 12th January	–	Mrs M Davies & Mrs S A Dennis
W/E 19th January	–	Mrs L. Lovegrove & Mrs C Coward
W/E 26th January	–	Mrs A Jones & Mrs Sarah Holifield/E
W/E 2 nd February	–	Mrs Maggie Bell & Mrs Wendy Newby

Church Cleaning

We celebrated another year's cleaning with our traditional meal up at the Lamb with many thanks to Reece and Ben for looking after us so well... However, we also said goodbye to Eleanor who has been on the team with us for over 17 years and without whose help we certainly would have been a poorer team. We wish Eleanor well and extend a warm welcome to Maggie Bell who will now be cleaning with Wendy, beginning in 2025...

CHURCH FLOWER ROTA FOR JANUARY 2025

W/E 5th January	-	TBA
W/E 12th January	-	TBA
W/E 19th January	-	TBA
W/W 26th January	-	TBA

CHURCH FLOWERS

The rota for next year will be available in January. If there is anyone who would like to join our small but happy group, please let me know

Also, if anyone wants to give a donation so that flowers can be put in church to remember someone on a special day, we would be happy to oblige.

CAROL SINGING IN LITTLE MILTON WEDNESDAY 18th DECEMBER

The Newsletter went to press earlier in December so this will be written up in the February Newsletter.

Sally Ann Dennis

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Saturday afternoon on December 14th and it was time for another Little Milton special event – The Christmas Fayre.

I cannot express enough thanks to all those who made it possible – the makers, bakers, crafters, raffle sellers, children's activity organisers, stall holders, table movers, drinks sellers, and, of course, all of you who turned out in such fantastic numbers to show your support.

A special thank you to Santa who found time in his busy schedule to pay us a visit. X

We do not have the final figures at time of going to press but the profit will be shared between the School, the Orchard and St James's Church

A very Happy New Year to you all.

Teresa

LITTLE MILTON CHRISTMAS CARD

Thank you to everyone who contributed and supported the Village Christmas Card in 2024. With Special thanks to Juliette at Morgan & Associates and Ben and his team at The Lamb Inn for sponsoring the printing of the card.

Little Milton raised an incredible £2,024 – thank you!

Great Milton joined in the fun this year and produced their own card and (by a scary coincidence) raised £2,022, so collectively we have contributed over £4,000 to this wonderful charity.

I'll be chasing you for your 2025 contributions in early November!!!

Roger

FRIENDS OF LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL- 200 CLUB

December

The December winners will be published in the February newsletter.

Editor

FRIENDS OF WELLS FARM

England is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the World, worse than the UK, which also includes overseas territories. We complain about other Nations not doing their bit to protect their wildlife and yet we continue to make it difficult for landowners to safeguard what they have and housebuilding on "green land" is accelerating. To add to this, invasive species are threatening the existence of resident animals. If you walk around the reserve, you may well see a muntjac deer or a grey squirrel, but no native mammals. Both do significant damage to woodlands, which affects birds and the trees themselves. With climate change we are also seeing changes to insect populations. In a summary for this year, Colin Williams at BBOWT highlighted the most disappointing butterfly survey season he can remember. It is now a "Butterfly Emergency". There are similar results for many insects that are needed to pollenate our crops. But fortunately, with change there are some species that benefit. All the rain has increased areas of wetland in Oxfordshire this winter, resulting in good numbers of birds such as lapwing, golden plover, snipe and widgeon. It is worth a trip to Otmoor to see them if you get the chance. At another BBOWT reserve they have found a new species of fungus (A Fibrecap), and it was a good Autumn for look for fungi. Did you know that one smells of aniseed. It shows the importance of surveying and monitoring. In December I ran an event on Wells Farm to hunt for Harvest Mouse nests. We did find some which is good news as they are so small (the weight of a 10p coin) and they overwinter in nests about ankle height in tall grass or hedgerows. Prolonged rain and flooding they have no defence for and many more are not surviving the winter. So, it is good to know we still have some at Wells. I plan to do another survey on **Saturday 18th January**, 10am - 1pm if you want to join in. I also plan to continue with the hedge laying on **Sunday 19th** (10-1) and you are also welcome to join that or come and find out how it is done.

We have sheep and cattle on the reserve and are looking for someone to join our stock watch rota. If you are interested about this or any of the events above, just email me for more information.

Happy New Year

Paul Jeffery - Reserves Warden (paulj201@hotmail.com)

WELLS FARM ALLOTMENTS

The best way to keep the soil from becoming waterlogged is to cover it for the next couple of months. Standard plastic weed matting is a long-term problem as it can unravel, leading to the build-up of micro plastics. There are biodegradable alternatives which are worth considering. Now is the time to think about your planting plan: What, Where, When. Some plots have heavy clay soil while others are sandy so each requires a different approach when preparing for the coming growing season. Will we have another wet year or will it be dry? It is hard to forecast, but for every increase in global warming by 1 degree Celsius there is an increase in the atmosphere's water holding capacity by 7%, so I guess wet is more likely. Maybe we should grow rice!

If you would like an allotment or want more information please contact me.

Paul Jeffery - (paulj201@hotmail.com)

DATE OF NEXT SEWING GROUP

After a delicious Christmas Lunch in December the group will be meeting again on Wednesday 22nd January in Chiltern View at Teresa's home from 11.00 onwards. We sew, quilt, knit, stitch, embroider and chat...do join us or phone me for a chat and find out more (01844 278029). We were saddened to hear of the death of one of our founder members, Gill Taylor, and extend our warmest condolences to her family.

Sally Ann Dennis

TONS TOGETHER (LITTLE MILTON) WI

In December, we were entertained by Origami enthusiast, Peter Buchan-Symons. We excelled at naming as many origami things we knew, learnt all about its origins and then made a heart, box and cup. Thank you to Helen for the wonderful festive tiffin & everyone for helping start Adele's fundraising for her Girl-Guiding trip to India.

On Thursday 9th January 7pm, we have our **annual New Year dinner** at the **Fox & Goat in Tiddington**. Let me know if you'd like to join us for dinner, everyone welcome.

Do you live in Little Milton, Great Milton, The Haseleys, Stadhampton or surrounding villages, new to the area, want to meet new people, make new friends? Then join Tons Together WI and meet like-minded, local women of all ages in an informal, friendly group.

We meet every 2nd Thursday of the month in the Pine Lodge OX44 7PZ at 7.30pm (unless we're out!).

Too shy to come by yourself or need a lift? Contact us & we'll find you a WI buddy.

Like us at www.facebook.com/lmpinelodge

Pine Lodge website: www.lmvh.org.uk

Kath Stacey 01844-279438 tonstogetherwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

VIEW FROM VIEWS

I hope you all had a great festive season and, are now ready for the "Trump New Year" we are all promised.

In the last month or so I wrote about the lack of berries, now that flocks of Fieldfares are appearing their main diet, as far as I know are, these berries, so what they are going to live on I hate to think, probably the food we have grown for our native birds. It was odd that early in November, there was a noticeable lack of Game birds, then they reappeared when the weather got colder and windier later in the month, very hard to explain many others said the same. The pigeons are very grateful to us for not having cut our lupins yet, it seems that as fast as the seeds fall out of the pods they disappear, which can only be the pigeons, I think I shall have to send a bill to my neighbours who have rape, for feeding the pigeons, instead of decimating their rape.

The first of our autumn planting, which due to weather was a little later than we would have liked, is looking as good as one could have hoped for, except that the wetter parts of the fields are showing signs of stress. It is surprising how these areas seem effect the eventual yield of a field, in spite of appearing to only be a small part of the whole. Now apart from the area of unharvested Lupins, (doubtful we will be growing his crop again until earlier ripening varieties are available), the rest of our autumn planting was completed, with some 30 acres of Beans and a further 20 acres of Wheat, by the end of November. Again, as last year this Wheat was planted direct into a cover crop, as we

had successfully experimented, this included the small area where we tried, (unsuccessfully), to grow Clover as a companion crop. This area should grow a cracking crop, as it has had virtually only grown Clover for 3 years meaning as clover produces natural Nitrogen will have put loads of it into the soil, we'll see!

It cannot have escaped readers notice that we in the Agricultural world are still reeling from the recent Budget, we are still not sure how we here at the Views will be affected and have scheduled a meeting with our solicitor, early in the month to try and understand how it will or, won't, work for us and what measures we can take to survive. I think we made it quite clear collectively that we are not happy with the Government's attitude to our industry as they seem hell bent on throwing us under the proverbial bus, after promising greater support for the industry during the election campaign. The measures announced will be a real problem to most. Our problem as most readers will understand that we are unable to adjust our prices as a result of increased costs, as the retailers, our customers have to consider what their customers, (all of us) are prepared to pay. So, we either we give up, as some will, or find other income sources. This could well mean more intensive forms of producing relying more on chemicals, Solar or wind farms or, of course development. Any of these options will undo all the environmental initiatives we have done and, been encouraged to do. It could also encourage larger units as farms amalgamate, and agribusiness increases, driven by larger companies controlled by accountants.

This will also probably result in less home production and more reliance on imported foods, which as we all know are produced to much lower standards than our own, using chemicals that are banned from use in the UK. There is still an advantage for those with large sums of money to invest. Now, to add insult to injury, the Government have announced just short of £550m in extra payments to farmers, as if this will mitigate the financial damage they have inflicted on us, this will only be available with conditions attached, which will mean in no way will this compensate for what they are threatening to take out of the industry,

Recently most readers will have read, that the Farmer owned Milk company "Arla", have been experimenting the use of a feed additive that will, if fed to dairy cows reduce their methane emissions by up to 30%, in the present conditions one would have thought this would have been received as a great step forward but, "OH NO" this is tampering with nature, this is very worrying as it seems whatever our industry does, there is immediate rejection by the public, media, or whatever. This only represents as far as I understand about a teaspoonful in a cow's daily intake. Once again due to financial pressures, where milk producers have to intensify to produce milk at an affordable price, they are criticised for taking these measures to do so. Unfortunately, this is the price of feeding the ever-increasing population, at a price they can afford, again this leads to bigger industrialised production methods, it is these that can and, do increase the methane produced.

Again, Happy New Year.

Charles Peers

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www.lmvh.org.uk

Regular Activities in the Hall include:

Tuesdays at 9:30 am, Keep Fit on with Alyce (alycefwf@gmail.com)

Tuesday 6:00 pm Dance school (megan_ah@hotmail.com)

Wednesday 9:30 am Advanced Textile on workshop with Amargeet (amarjeetnandhra@virginmedia.com)

Thursday 10:30 a.m. Fitness with Focus (mobility and stretching) on with Alyce (alycefwf@gmail.com)

Thursday 6:00 p.m. Keep Fit on with Alyce (alycefwf@gmail.com)

Friday 9:30 am Fitness with Focus (mobility and stretching) on with Alyce (alycefwf@gmail.com)

WI 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m.
contact Kath Stacy kathstacey@yahoo.co.uk

Crafts 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
contact Kath Stacy kathstacey@yahoo.co.uk

Little City 08:30 - 13:30 once a month on a Thursday (rosie@littlecityuk.com)

Parish Council 2nd Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
For further details contact clerk@littlemilton.org.uk

Village Hall committee 2nd Monday 7:30 p.m. For further details
contact giles.pinelodge@gmail.com

For details of, news, booking info and the online events calendar please view the Pine Lodge webpage at <https://lmvh.org.uk/>, or contact Linda Lovegrove linda.pinelodge@yahoo.com



Hedgerow Highways

Hedges are a vital part of our local nature, providing shelter and resources for many species of mammals, insects, and birds (from hibernating hedgehogs to the smallest of beetles). They're crucial wildlife corridors that allow safe travel between isolated habitats.

The benefits that hedgerows provide for biodiversity are endless. In a heavily fragmented landscape, hedgerows link up valuable habitats for wildlife such as woodland, grassland and ponds. This connects populations that would otherwise be isolated and vulnerable and allows relocation to better habitat. Over 100 priority species utilise hedgerows for a variety of reasons such as for shelter, food, or navigation. Birds and small mammals' nest in hedges, bats use hedgerows as foraging grounds and navigational markers, and reptiles hide in the long tussocky margins associated with hedgerows.

November through to March is the best time of year to plant new hedges. The first step is to acquire your roots. In Oxfordshire we recommend planting Blackthorn, Spindle, Buckthorn, Guelder Rose, Hawthorn, Wild Privet, Cherry Plum, or Hazel. Plant 4 or 5 plants per metre, about 25cm apart using the slit planting method, ensuring all fibrous roots are completely buried in the soil. To see a detailed tutorial of this planting method, head to our website where you can watch a demonstration from expert Nigel Adams. <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/guidance/hedgerows-guidance>

Aftercare for hedgerows is crucial. Keep weeds and grass away from the hedge plants for the first 2-3 years to give them plenty of space to absorb moisture and light. Thoroughly water the plants during dry spells. Compost can be very helpful to maintain vigour due to the competition for nutrients between such closely situated plants. Try to trim your hedge annually in the first three to five years to encourage bushy growth. Once your hedgerow is fully established (approximately 5 years) you can trim every year or every two or three years but make sure you don't trim your hedge to the same place every cut. More detailed aftercare information is also available on our website. Good luck with your new hedges!

New Year – New Nature!

Why not make some **green themed resolutions** this new year! Perhaps yours is to cultivate new hedge life. Maybe you're going to reduce your meat intake, find eco-friendly cleaning products, or make your garden more wildlife friendly using native plants. There are endless ways to make a difference!

Why not sign up to our monthly email Bulletin, visit our website, and follow us on social media for the latest nature news and ways you can join others in helping nature in Oxfordshire <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/news>

Jess Bouwer – Wild Oxfordshire Hedgerows & Partnerships Officer



Walks Programme 2025

JANUARY

Sunday 5th

Leisurely, scenic 7 mile walk from Aston Rowant, by Lambert Hotel off A40, through Cowleaze Wood and Wormsley Estate. Two hills, no stiles.

Wednesday 8th

Starting in Bledlow, a 5½ mile walk via Lodge Hill and Princes Risborough Golf Course.

Tuesday 14th

Gentle, social 2½ mile walk from the Eight Bells PH, Long Crendon, around the village on pavements and village footpaths. Optional pub visit at the end for coffee.

Thursday 16th

Short circular 4 mile walk from Wheatley, public car park off Church Road, behind King and Queen PH. Up and downs to the windmill, Littleworth, Shotover, Shotover House, then finally back to Wheatley.

Sunday 19th

7 mile walk from Ewelme, Cow Common car park, via Brightwell Grove and Brightwell Baldwin.

Thursday 23rd

A delightful level 5½ mile walk from Little Milton Village Hall car park, taking in the Great and Little villages of Haseley and the Miltons. Opportunity at the end for refreshments at Little Milton Community Shop.

Friday 31st

Scenic 7½ mile walk from Beckley Village Hall via Stanton St John and Woodperry.

All walks start at 10am unless otherwise stated.

Please check the website to confirm details as programme subject to change:

www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/thame-wheatley/walking.html

or phone 01844 213608

Leaders' contact details and suitability of walks for dogs can also be found on the website.

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- **Pharmacy First Service (PFS)**, whereby pharmacies can treat
directly seven common health conditions.
- **Group Consultation Clinics** – Group clinics are currently being
offered for the menopause and hypertension. Eligible patients are
being invited to attend, but if you would like to know more, please do
contact us.
- **Whooping Cough** infections, symptoms and treatment
- **Drink Coaches** – take the quick and confidential text
- **Travelling abroad** – what MHS can and cannot do for you

WHERE IS FATHER CHRISTMAS?

The talking point around the Village in mid-December was not about the HGV traffic on the A329, the speeding traffic on the Haseley Road.....no it was about **WHO STOLE FATHER CHRISTMAS** from the village green. As a village the incidence of petty crime is fairly non-existent so when such events happen it is shock.



The good news is that Father Christmas has now been restored to his place on the village green. A special thank you to Paul and Roger for bringing joy to us all at this Christmas time

Editor

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January great for winter walks



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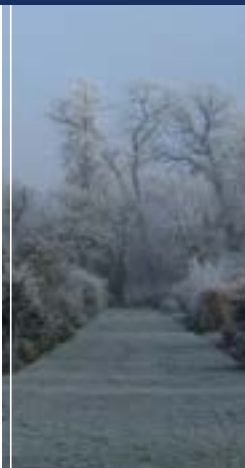


WINTER AT WATERPERRY GARDENS

Enjoy *winter walks* and see the gardens turn into a spectacular vision as the frost spreads across the grasses and trees, the mist winds around the garden and the Riverside Walk. The garden is at its most dramatic state in January as it is cut back for the winter and prepares to burst into new life with *Snowdrops* in February.

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Church: St James	01844 278349	Revd. Simon Cronk
Doctors	01865 872448 111 0845 345 8995 999	Morland Surgery Out of Hours Service NHS Helpline Medical Emergencies
Little Milton School	01844 279310	TBA
Milk Deliveries	07773006485	SHT Ltd (Alan Woods)
MUGA	Bookings for the courts are made at the Post Office	
Neighbourhood Watch	01844 279468	Mark Willis
Newsletter	01844 279150	Raymond Fergusson (Editor)
OCC	01865 792422	All enquiries
Parish Council	01844 278180 01844 875635	Francois Van der Merwe (Chair) Andrea Oughton (Clerk)
Pine Lodge	01844 278605 01844 279535 0844 7255568	Steve Willis (Chairman) Linda Lovegrove (Bookings) 24/7 Call out service
Police	101	Thames Valley Police (Non-emergency)
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Front Cover: Courtesy Raymond Fergusson: St James December 2017



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