
GREAT SHEFFORD PARISH NEWS

FEBRUARY 2026

A belated Happy New Year to all subscribers. I decided not to circulate a January news as with the school and under fives closed for the holiday, and no Parish Council meeting in December, there was little to report.

So far, 2026 is following the start of 2025 in being very wet. At a recent meeting of the Lambourn Valley Flood Forum the EA informed us that rainfall between September and December last year was 115% of long term average with October '25 to March '26 needing to be 150% of long term average if we are not to go into drought. However, January had seen 166% by the 26th and we know what has happened in the interim. Whilst the Flood Alleviation Scheme has yet to be tested, the springs from South Fawley are still rising - mid February is the average time of year when the flow commences and with the amount of water going into the aquifers, it looks likely water will be in the ditch alongside the A338 soon.

There have been more changes in the Parish Council with Piers Storey resigning from the Council, his place as Chair has been taken by Tony Coard with Carol Turner stepping up to the position of Vice-Chair, which leaves a vacancy on the Council again. More information on the position can be obtained from Mel Taylor Parish Clerk via: clerk@greatsheffordparish.gov.uk

The calendar is brief this month but we have advance notice of the ever popular Curry & Quiz night next month. If you are involved with churchyard tidying, Social Club or yoga, please would you ask someone from your group to submit an article and details of dates of activities by 25th February for inclusion in the March Parish News - guessing dates leads to misinformation! It is important that the community gets to hear of events - a new parish website is still under construction and notices around the village are not seen well at this time of year.

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Linda Bowden

Editor

Village Calendar February 2026

Sunday	<u>1st</u>	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion, St Mary's
Monday	<u>2nd</u>	7.30 p.m.	Parish Council, Village Hall
Wednesday	4 th	9.00 a.m.	Candlemass, St Mary's
Wednesday	4 th	7.30 p.m.	Bellringing, St Mary's
Thursday	5 th	6.15 p.m.	Pilates, Village Hall
Thursday	5 th	6.45 p.m.	Alpha Course, West Downland Rectory
Friday	6 th	9.30 a.m.	Craft Club, Village Hall
Saturday	7 th	7.30 p.m.	Bingo & Raffle, Social Club
Wednesday	11 th	7.30 p.m.	Bellringing, St Mary's
Thursday	12 th	6.45 P.M.	Alpha Course, West Downland Rectory
Thursday	12 th	6.15 p.m.	Pilates, Village Hall
Friday	13 th	9.30 a.m..	Craft Club, Village Hall
Friday	13 th	3.15 p.m.	PTFA After School Cakes Sale
Sunday	15 th	10.15 a.m.	Café Church, St Mary's
Wednesday	18 th	7.30 p.m.	Bellringing, St Mary's
Thursday	19 th	6.45 p.m.	Alpha Course, West Downland Rectory
Thursday	19 th	6.15 p.m.	Pilates, Village Hall
Friday	20 th	9.30 a.m.	Craft Club, Village Hall
Sunday	22 nd	4.00 p.m.	Prayer & Praise, St Stephens, Shefford Woodlands
Wednesday	25 th	7.30 p.m.	Bellringing, St Mary's
Thursday	26 th	6.45 p.m.	Alpha Course, West Downland Rectory
Thursday	26 th	6.15 p.m.	Pilates, Village Hall
Friday	27 th	9.30 a.m.	Craft Club, Village Hall

Using Grit Bins This Winter

As the winter weather is upon us, the Parish Council would like to remind residents that the grit bins located around the parish are there for everyone to use when conditions become icy.

The grit in these bins may be used on pavements and minor roads, to keep local routes safer for pedestrians and road users. During periods of frost, ice or snow, residents are welcome to spread the grit on particularly slippery areas.

We kindly ask that grit is used considerably and sparingly, so that supplies are available when needed. Grit bins are provided for public safety and should not be used for private driveways or stored for personal use. If bins need topping up, please email the Parish Council at clerk@greatsheffordparish.gov.uk with the location. By working together and looking out for one another, we can all help keep our village moving safely during colder weather.



SHEFFORD CRAFT CLUB

A Happy New Year from us all at the Shefford Craft Club. We have had a busy couple of months with a silk painting workshop creating some cards, both Christmas and more general cards, a fun Christmas Party lunch and quiz and a needle felting workshop to make bookmarks. This was working in two dimensions, but it is possible to make three-dimensional items as well. You stab the wool roving into the background felt using a very sharp barbed needle, (mind your fingers!) and it magically binds itself together. It is always interesting to see how many different ideas our members have on these subjects.



I am sure we are all enjoying getting back to our normal routines now and looking forward to the lengthening days and hopefully some better weather. Do come along on a Friday morning to see what we get up to in our friendly group. We are happy to show people around and if you feel you would like to join us, we charge a modest £2 a session which covers refreshments and most workshop expenses.



Best wishes
Stevie

Message from Lambourn Surgery which might help with your aches and pains:

We now offer access to a self-management app, getUBetter, to aid recovery from your muscle or joint problems if you have one.

The app will guide you day-by-day through a string of exercises and tips to help you get better. To get started, click [getUBetter - getUBetter App], download the app, click create an account, enter your postcode and select your GP practice.

getUBetter is designed to provide you with the knowledge, confidence, and skills to self-manage all common muscle or joint conditions. It is designed to be used alongside the health system and therefore will signpost you back into the system if you need additional review.

It is suitable for 80% of muscle or joint conditions, which includes new, ongoing or returning muscle or joint conditions, and supports you while you wait for treatment e.g. Physiotherapy.

It is not designed to be used for any muscle or joint condition which requires more targeted management and care - for example:

- Fractures (broken bones)
- Post-op
- ACL tears
- Achilles ruptures
- Worsening neurological symptoms
- Pregnancy-related problems

Lambourn Surgery

GREAT SHEFFORD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

The Parish has a small allotment site just outside the village, run by a committee elected from the plot holders at the Annual General Meeting. The allotment year starts on 1st April each year and whilst currently all plots are taken, it is likely there will be one or two available to rent from the start of the year. Each plot is half a standard size and rents are £20 plus membership of the Society - £5/year. If you would like to know more please contact Paul Akers 07977 585971 or Linda Bowden 07850 643952.



Great Sheffield Under Fives



www.greatsheffordunderfives.co.uk

Our “drop in” Monday Baby & Toddler group, run by Debbie and Kathryn, has been busy with many new parents, carers and their very young children. This runs on Monday mornings from 9.30 - 11am for £3 including refreshments for all so please come along with your little ones. Penny Locke from the Hungerford Food Community has visited to cook tasty snacks with the families using inexpensive ingredients and air-fryers. Delicious!

At Pre-School we have welcomed artists from the City Arts project in Newbury to join us for three mornings. The children are making crafts based around the stories of Elmer the Elephant; a plastic milk carton can be converted to Elmer surprisingly easy! The children will also be working with clay. To support the learning we have given each child an Elmer story book, wrapped in brown paper, to keep at home or to bring in and swap from our dedicated Elmer selection. We love to encourage a love of reading, and the secret book is a great start.

The weather has been very miserable, but we continued to learn outside every afternoon; we have bought a wheelbarrow to take to the woods and fields, it has accompanied us on every trip! With our wetsuits on we splashed in puddles, visited the Bug Hotel, walked across the fields and enjoyed the park. We tried to count the birds in the rain as part of the RSPB Big Bird Watch, plus we have identified their sound using the free Merlin Bird App and heard a Common Chaffinch and Blue Tit.

We do have Pre-School spaces in September so if you would like to know a little more about what we can offer your pre-school child, please do get in touch or look at our website.

www.greatsheffordunderfives.co.uk

Best wishes,

Denise Herrington



West Downland Benefice

The Church of England in Brightwalton & Catmore
Chaddleworth, Fawley, Great Sheffield & Sheffield
Woodlands, Leckhampstead and Welford & Wickham.

Dear Friends,

This time of year can be confusing to work out where we are. January seems to go on for ever. The weather seems to be keeping us all indoors. In the church we have been

celebrating the Epiphany since the 6th and that continues until the 2nd February. Will we ever get to spring?!

The news has also been pretty bleak through the winter months. We are desperate for some green shoots of new life. However, we have made it to February. As the snowdrops push through the hard ground, we can start to look forward to brighter days ahead.

At some of the Christmas events that were run across the benefice, I had a number of people ask me if we were going to run an Alpha Course at any point. For those who don't know, Alpha is an opportunity to unpack life's big questions. It starts with a meal, then a short video with a topic to explore and then plenty of time to chat and hear what other people think.

Everyone is welcome. The first session will be held in the Rectory on Thursday, 5th February and you can sign up here:

<https://forms.gle/69xCHUVchkBj8zAf6>

Looking forward through the rest of February, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (18th February) and we have come up with a fun fundraising idea to round throughout Lent (until the end of March) based on the parable of the Talents. We will be offering £10 notes to anyone who wants to participate. The idea is that you take your £10 and try and grow it. Perhaps you could make marmalade, or some other craft? You might be good at up-cycling or repairing. Whatever your talent might be, if you can think of a way to make some money at it to help preserve our wonderful church buildings then do let us know. You can email Office@westdownland.co.uk if you would like to join in. There will be an artisan market during March for people to buy the amazing things that are created. Watch this space!

With my love and prayers,

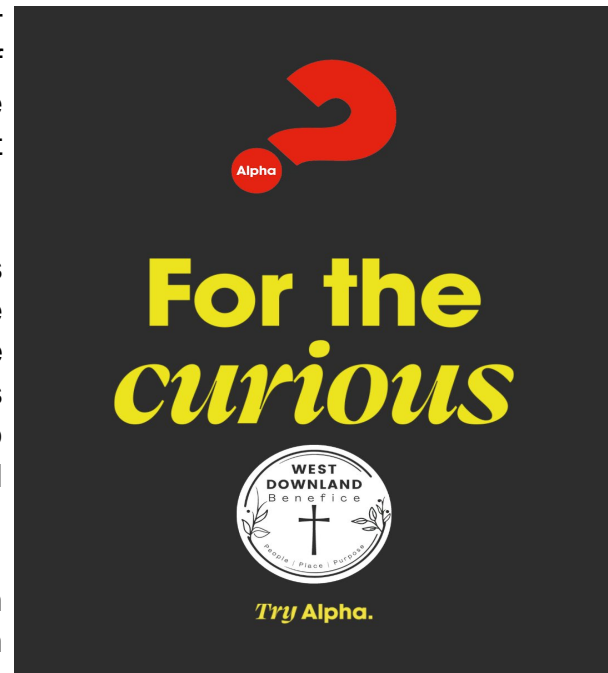
Rev Mike
x

Office Contact Details

www.westdownland.co.uk

Email office@westdownland.co.uk

Telephone 07954 117093





Everyone's welcome

Alpha is for anyone who's curious
to explore the Christian faith.

Alpha

YOUR PARISH CHURCHES PROUDLY PRESENT

CURRY & QUIZ NIGHT

*Saturday
7th
March*

**GREAT SHEFFORD VILLAGE HALL
DOORS OPEN AT 7PM**

Enjoy
**QUIZ
RAFFLE
FOOD
BAR**

EVERYONE CAN PLAY!

£15 each - includes Quiz & Curry
(12yo - 16yo's £7)

A choice of delicious homemade curries
including vegetarian option plus bombay
potatoes, saag aloo & rice

Reserve a place by calling/texting
Denise Herrington 07867934387 or
Emma Richardson 07789621909

Teams of 4-6.....We can make up teams on the
night, or you can make up a team beforehand

Supporting and maintaining our churches

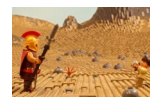


News from Chaddleworth St Andrew's and Shefford C.E. Primary Schools

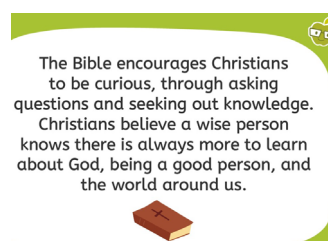
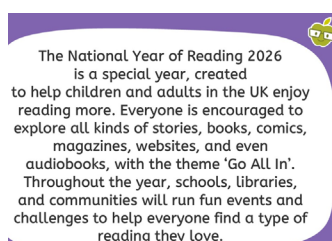
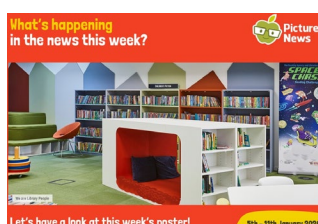
Thank you to all our families and children who shared thoughtful cards with Christmas greetings and kind gifts, we hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas break.



We started the week with our first whole school worship of 2026, sharing the Bible story of David and Goliath from the Old Testament.



Red Kites and Owls are working with the Berkshire Cricket Coach this term.



Parent and carer community news and information...



The Children's Commissioner has recently published a new guide, [What I wish my parents or carers knew: A guide for parents on managing children's digital lives.](#)

The Children's Commissioner has shared,

"Supporting children's safety is a shared responsibility between families, schools and wider society. For parents and carers, this responsibility has become increasingly complex as children's lives are now deeply intertwined with the digital world. Many parents face difficult decisions about how to balance protecting children from online harm with enabling access to spaces that are now central to learning, socialising and play.

This guide is written, in recognition of the complex, rapidly evolving landscape in which children – and parents – are navigating. It focuses on the challenge of managing children's everyday online habits.

This guide was written with the direct involvement of children in England. It is a reflection of their views. My office visited schools to speak to teenagers, and spoke to my Youth Ambassadors and Youth Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Panel to get their expertise on what works and what doesn't work between parents or carers and children in the 21st Century.

When I speak to children about what they would do differently when it comes to being online, with the benefit of hindsight, I ask them: would they give a smartphone to their own teenager? Almost unanimously, they tell me no. They want to be protected from it as long as possible.

As educators and leaders, you play a vital role in supporting parents and carers to navigate these challenges.

Responses to my recent school survey show just how concerned school leaders are about their children's safety online, despite most already taking steps to limit or ban devices from the classroom. Children are clear that they value firm, informed and protective boundaries when adults have concerns about the content they are accessing online.

As parents, carers, and educators, our job must begin and end with our children's care and safety. It's what they expect and what they want from you.

As one young person told me: "Don't be afraid to be firm... If you are worried [that] your child is seeing harmful content and you don't know what they're watching and it's affecting the behaviour, just take it that you know best – they don't."

I hope this guide will be a useful resource for your school community, and I encourage you to share it with staff and parents where appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Rachel de Souza
Children's Commissioner"



Friday fruit snacks...

Our popular initiative of 'Friday Fruit Pots' is back! With the keen organisation of Lilly-Rose and Kasey who prepare and present the mixed fruit selection bowls in time for break, everyone has a fruit salad option, alongside the varied daily healthy fruit snack offer, to enjoy as a healthy snack at the end of the week- yum!



They find change, uncertainty and new things tricky to manage.

Getting things wrong, they have such self-doubt.

They struggle going to school.

Being away from parents.

Low self-esteem and confidence.

They need everything to be a certain way.

Homework & friendships are triggers.

THE BIG 'A' ANXIETY WORKSHOP
EMPOWERING PARENTS & PRACTITIONERS TO HELP ANXIOUS CHILDREN

Led by:
KATIE PURDY

Founder of:
MINDFUL BRAIN

5 WEEK ONLINE COURSE

JOIN US
26th February 2026
5th March 2026
12th March 2026
19th March 2026
26th March 2026

7.45 PM - 8.45 PM

Katie is a former Head Teacher & leading Children's Wellbeing and Mindset Coach in Reading & West Berkshire.

BOOK HERE:

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

Session 1: We will explore what anxiety is, how it affects the mind, brain and body and identify signs and symptoms to look out for. We will also examine triggers, types of anxiety, and debunk myths about anxiety. We will begin our journey to learn ways to support a child.

Session 2: We will focus on how to respond and co-regulate in those peak moments of heightened anxiety. You will learn the best approach to use in this 'crisis state', when reasoning and rationalising is out of the window!

Session 3: We will learn how our words have power! Using NLP techniques, we shift anxious patterns of thought and behaviour.

Session 4: We learn how to reflect on 'peak moments' and plan ahead to prepare for potential triggers. Our approach cultivates collaborative relationships, develops emotional intelligence, harnesses autonomy and values mental health and wellbeing.

Session 5: We will equip you with all the tools you need to prep and reset after those wobble moments. This session focuses on a proactive approach to 'Brain health' using mindfulness and breath work techniques. You will leave the session with a tool kit full of knowledge and skills to implement, creating a calmer place for all.

SIGN UP!

www.mindfulbrain.co.uk/usefullinks

MINDFUL BRAIN

Stingers Netball...

'A small group of us went to Park House on Tuesday evening for a very cold netball tournament against lots of local schools. Despite the freezing weather, the girls played brilliantly, showing incredible perseverance and teamwork and really challenging their opponents. We played three very closely-fought matches, with some fantastic interceptions and great movement up the court. The team encouraged each other, cheered on the other teams' successes and showed amazing sportsmanship. A thoroughly well done to all of them; I was so proud!' Mrs Chrimes



Would your child like to try a new instrument?

Please contact our brass and woodwind music teacher, Mr Crouter, for more information: Call 07776 381 510 or 01488 680 674 Email timcrouter@aol.com to come and try an instrument first if they would like to.



OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

FREE FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY!
MOST SUITABLE FOR 5-16 YRS

SCIENCE BAZAAR

Saturday 21 February 2026

9:30am - 11:30am Relaxed autism-friendly early opening
11:30am-4pm Open to all

Fun activities, hands-on workshops, experiments, talks, show, competitions and cafe





BOOK
TICKETS



MORGAN
SINDALL
CONSTRUCTION

www.brookes.ac.uk/sciencebazaar
sciencebazaar@brookes.ac.uk

 @OxfordBrookesPublicEngagementResearch
 @oburesearchpublicengagement

Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus, OX3 0BP

NO PARKING ON SITE EXCEPT FOR ACCESS NEEDS

Great Shefford Sports & Social Club

Visit us:

Wednesday 7:30pm - 11:00pm

Friday 7:30pm - 11:00pm

Saturday 12:00pm - 4:00pm & 7:30pm - 11:00pm

Sunday 12:00pm - 4:30pm

Contact us:

Email: greatsheffordsocialclub@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61567726790943>

Phone (Sandra): [07748403778](tel:07748403778)

Find us:

At the back of the village hall.

Opening Hours: Due to the sun taking a rest for the next few months, we are too. Friday evening opening will now be from 7.30pm.

If you haven't been to the club before, we would love you to welcome you for a drink and/or our upcoming events. If you have any comments, suggestions and/or questions about GSSSC please contact us & we look forward to seeing you at the club soon!

* * * * *



Summary of Minutes of a meeting of Great Shefford Parish Council held on Monday 5th January 2026 at 7.30pm at Great Shefford Village Hall

Present: Councillors Steve Bullock, Tony Coard, Jessica Copcutt, Louisa Freeman and Carol Turner

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Parish Clerk)
District Councillor Clive Hooker

ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN

Following the resignation of Piers Storey as Chairman and a Parish Councillor, Council elected Councillor Tony Coard as Chairman of the Parish Council for the remainder of the municipal year 2025/26 following resignation of Piers Storey.

Councillor Coard chaired the meeting from this point and Councillor Carol Turner appointed as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council for the remainder of the municipal year 2025/26.

An **apology for absence** was received from Councillor Miranda Armstrong.

There were no **declarations of interest**.

The **Minutes of the meeting** held on 3rd November 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

- i. There were no members of public present and no questions had been received.
- ii. A response was awaited from West Berkshire Council Highways Officers regarding visibility concerns caused by a fence at The Swan pub.
- iii. No progress to report regarding engagement with the Environment Agency and West Berkshire Council Officers regarding a site visit to discuss risks and potential remedial actions relating to local drainage infrastructure.
- iv. District Councillor Clive Hooker congratulated Councillors Coard and Turner on their appointment as Chairman and Vice Chairman, and provided the following updates:

Road noise complaint - Shefford Woodlands was being processed by West Berkshire Council as a stage 2 complaint, and Councillor Hooker had discussed the issues with senior Officers. This relates to a section of the B4000 from the junction of the A338 Hungerford Hill to past the turning to Shefford Woodlands. recent resurfacing had heightened the issue of Highway noise.

Several objections had been submitted **to the Spring Meadows planning application** so the application will be referred to the Western Area Planning Committee (WAPC) who will undertake a site visit prior to determining the application.

The Parish Council will have the opportunity to attend the site meeting and residents may also appoint a representative.

The Parish Council may attend and speak (for up to five minutes) at the WAPC meeting and one objector may also attend and speak.

ROAD SAFETY

The following updates on engagement with West Berkshire Council Highways Officers regarding the proposed relocation of the school bus stop and highway signage enhancements were noted:

The signage review is included on the list of schemes to be approved for work during the financial year 2026/27. Once approval to work on the review has been granted, it will be allocated to an appropriate Officer to undertake the review.

The Transport Team, who deal with school transport, have been asked to look into where potential replacement bus stands/stops could be provided, to limit the need for pupils to walk to the stop outside the pub and therefore reducing the pedestrian conflict at the junction.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following planning updates were noted:

Application No.	Address	Details	WBC Status	GSPC response
25/01800/FULM AJ	Land to the west of Spring Meadows	Proposed 16no. dwellings, new access, public open space and landscaping	Awaiting decision	As per appendix to Minutes of meeting 06.10.2025
25/02250/COND	Land East of The Old Post House Newbury Road Shefford Woodlands	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 4 (HMMP) of approved 25/00567/FUL	Approved	Nil
25/02366/COND	Shefford House Newbury Road	Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3, 6, 7, 8 of approved 24/02716/HOUSE	Part approved (3), part refused (6,7,8)	Nil
25/02450/AGRIC	Land south of Trindledown Farm Wantage Road	Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed twin gabled agricultural storage barn	A planning application is required	Nil
25/02689/AGRIC	Land south of Trindledown Farm Wantage Road	Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed twin gabled agricultural storage barn	Awaiting decision	Nil
25/02794/FUL	East Shefford House	Installation of an above ground 48 panel solar PV array	Awaiting decision	Nil

FINANCE

the following payments were approved:

Payee	Amount	Invoice reference / date	Due date	Description
Tactical Facilities Management	£217.01 (£180.84+VAT)	SI-4659 26.11.2025	26.12.2025	Monthly grounds maintenance - November 2025
Tactical Facilities Management	£253.86 (£211.55+VAT)	SI-4716 27.11.2025	27.12.2025	Waste removal & Litter Picking - November 2025
Tactical Facilities Management	£150.00 (£125.00+VAT)	SI-4765 27.11.2025	27.12.2025	Weed treatment of play equipment matting AGREED AT SEPT MEETING (Minute ref 2025-09/11iii)
Tactical Facilities Management	£217.01 (£180.84+VAT)	SI-4825 21.12.2025	20.01.2025	Monthly grounds maintenance - December 2025
Tactical Facilities Management	£253.86 (£211.55+VAT)	SI-4933 22.12.2025	21.01.2025	Waste removal & Litter Picking - December 2025
M Taylor	£482.40		30.11.2025 PAID 01.12.25	Parish Clerk's Salary - November 2025
M Taylor	£482.40		31.12.2025 PAID 04.01.25	Parish Clerk's Salary - December 2025

The full copy of the minutes can be found on the village website: [Parish Minutes | Great Shefford](#)