

ItchenValleyNews

Abbots Worthy, Avington, Easton,
Itchen Abbas and Martyr Worthy

Issue 130 | Dec 2024 / Jan 2025



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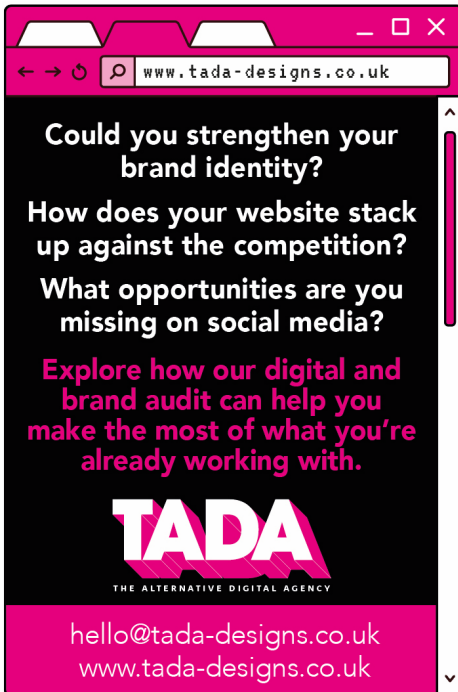


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WELCOME to the Itchen Valley News



It is almost Christmas again! How did that happen so fast? Mind you, it has been Christmas at John Lewis Oxford Street, London since late September when I dropped in only to find sparkly trees on the ground floor. What an abomination so early.... Welcome to the December 2024 and January 2025 edition: two for the price of one, as it were.

Looking back to Remembrance time in November, the funds raised by the poppy sellers of the valley, of which I am one, were impressive. I really enjoy going door to door in early November as it is a rare opportunity to stop and chat with the people you know (and those you don't). The total raised was phenomenal, boosted by the Ride for Remembrance at The Cricketers in Easton which was a inspired concept (see page 4).

The countryside is bedding down for winter but I have a question. Why is it necessary to cut back the hedges so early now? I know there is legislation which prohibits hedge cutting between March and August to protect nesting birds, but where are birds and small mammals supposed to get their winter food if all the berries and fruits are shaved off the hedges in early September, which certainly happened wholesale in this valley this year?

Talking of food, if you are like me and cannot abide mincemeat, then we have an alternative Christmas pudding for you. See page 24 for the recipe.

Michael Smith has concocted a fiendishly tricky Homophone Quiz to keep you busy over the

Christmas and New Year period. The winner's prize is a £50 voucher towards a meal at The Chestnut Horse pub in Easton. Why not give it a try?! There is also a fascinating insight into the work of the Environment Agency on page 30 with interesting facts which affect us all. Well worth a read... From everyone on the Itchen Valley News editorial team, we wish you a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

The editors for the February 2025 issue will be Charlotte Appleby and Brigid McManus.

Catherine Hahn

Itchen Valley News

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Copy date for articles and one off advertisements for the **February 2025 is Wednesday 15 January 2025**

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Cover photo by **Juliet Lock at Wild Bunch florists** and other photos from various

What's On

Itchen Abbas Primary School Christmas Fair

Saturday 30 November

At Itchen Abbas & Avington
Village Hall 2.30– 5.00pm

Itchen Valley Choir Winter Concert

Wednesday 4 December at

7.45pm. Itchen Abbas & Avington
Village Hall. In support of the RNLI in
its 200th year. With a maritime theme,
including “Captain Noah and His
Floating Zoo”. See flyer on page 35.

Easton Pantomime - Jack and the Beanstalk

**Wednesday 11 to Saturday 14
December.** See flyer on page 35 for
times and booking details.

A Ceremony of Carols

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New Chair Yoga in the Itchen Valley Spring 2025

Gentle Years Chair based Yoga class
launching at Martyr Worthy Village
Hall, Spring 2025. Beginners welcome.
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Jocelyn,

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Save the Date

Michael Lunts (of *Flanders and Swan*
and *Coward at Sea* fame) will be at St.
Mary's Church Easton on Saturday 4
October 2025 to perform *Quirkish
Delights*. All proceeds to St. Mary's
Church repair fund.

2024 Poppy Appeal

May I thank all
those in the
Valley of all ages
who have
supported the



Poppy Appeal again this year.

The total raised by the Door to Door
collectors, schools and business
collecting boxes was **£4,303**.

The Poppy Appeal Collectors, Schools
and the Valley businesses are to be
congratulated for their part in raising
this magnificent total from your
generous donations.

Of particular note is the Ride to
Remembrance fundraiser held by The
Cricketers Inn in Easton which
raised the additional and remarkable
sum of **£3,500**. This gives an overall
total for The Itchen Valley
Poppy Appeal of over **£7,800**.

Gavin Edgerley Harris

Poppy Appeal Organiser

Ride to Remembrance at The Cricketers pub Easton

At 11am on Friday 8 November The
Cricketers Inn began an ambitious
challenge: cycling continuously for 72
hours to support the Royal British
Legion's Poppy Appeal. The goal was
to ride through to the Armistice,

ending with a two-minute silence to honour those who have served.

To achieve this, we divided the ride into 30-minute time slots, inviting participants to donate £10 per slot. At first, the scale of the challenge felt daunting. Could we fill every slot? Would we have the support needed to keep the wheels turning? But slowly, and then with growing momentum, the bookings began to roll in. The community rallied together, spreading the word and encouraging friends and family to join in. We ended up filling every available slot, which we had anticipated would account for the majority of our donation.

Over the course of three days, we cycled an incredible 1,527 km, the equivalent of travelling from Land's End to John O'Groats (and then some!) and climbed a staggering 18,645 metres, which is greater than the height of Mount Everest,



twice over!

As we approached the final ride, the pub was buzzing with encouragement and upon reaching 11 o'clock we all observed two minutes silence. In the days that followed we collected our final donations and with the incredible generosity and support of our community, we raised an amazing **£3,500**.

This achievement wouldn't have been possible without the commitment of everyone involved. Whether you rode, donated, or simply came to show support, we want to thank you for helping to make this event a success. It's a true testament to the strength and spirit of our community.
Andrew, The Cricketers Easton

Easton Fireworks Display



The fireworks and bonfire at Easton cricket club on 2 November was a



brilliant evening, writes resident Helena Martin. She is sharing her photographs with us here. *Editor*

Winchester Fireworks display and procession

I had to be in Winchester on 9 November, the night of the Winchester fireworks. I have never seen so many people pouring into the town! They were going down North Walls or along Jewry Street in equal numbers, so I asked a policeman where the fireworks were and he said on the Recreation Ground and they were expecting 20,000 people for the event. The procession must have started somewhere near the Guildhall and came up the High Street and along

Jewry street. It certainly felt as though the world and his wife and children were all there, enjoying themselves I hope. Many of them had



expressions of intense concentration rather than jubilation - holding a naked flame in the middle of a large crowd needs care, but the atmosphere was happy and relaxed. *Charlotte Appleby*

Gospel Collective Alresford at St. Mary's Church, Easton

There were several familiar faces performing at this wonderful concert in St Mary's, Easton. The exuberance and enthusiasm of the choir under their charismatic leader and conductor, Tim Uffindell (with his bright pink shoes!), gave the audience a wonderful evening. The songs were fun, well performed, and the intervening chat by Tim, gave us all food for thought. This was the

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Gospel Collective's first concert - I hope it's not their last. Do go and see them if you have the chance.

The concert raised over **£2,050** for St Mary's - money of which we are desperately in need for structural repairs to the church building. A very big thank you to all the people who helped behind the scenes (and there were lots!), and to all the lovely people who supplied delicious canapés making this a very special evening.

Elaine Labram and Chris Ellis (Church Wardens)

The Valley Quiz No.31

1. Every year at Christmas, a 20-25 metre-high Norwegian spruce tree is erected in Trafalgar Square, London. Who provides it and why?
2. Who was the BBC Sports Personality of 2023?
3. Whose body lies in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral directly below the middle of the dome?
4. What do the Lakes Tana (Ethiopia) and Victoria (Uganda) have in common?
5. What is the largest bird in the world?
6. Which European city lies further East, St Petersburg, or Istanbul?
7. The feature film "A Bridge Too

Far" tells the story of the Allies attempt to expedite the breakout from France and the Low Countries and into Germany after the Normandy landings in 1944. The Germans held their position at Arnhem in the Netherlands and stopped the advance. What was the name of the bridge that was too far?

8. What does a Luthier make or repair.

9. You can catch a train direct from London and travel direct to the station at Corroul in Scotland. This station has two unique features that makes it totally different to any other station on the national rail network. What are they?

10. John, Susan, Titty and Roger crewed one boat while Nancy and Peggy were in the other. What were the boats called?

John Lang

Answers on Page 37

Charities combine to bring Christmas cheer

Local family support charity Home-Start Winchester and Districts is working with renowned Winchester artist, teacher and mental health charity founder Daphne Vaughan, to bring a little Christmas magic into our lives again this year. Home-Start Winchester has used Daphne's wonderful illustrations for its cards in previous years but this year Daphne has made a substantial grant towards the charity and they have combined to produce this year's special card called *Santa has lost his sleigh*.

Daphne founded the charity *Know Thyself* five years ago after the tragic death of her son and she works to "help people overcome stress and

anxiety in the workplace, raising funds for our partner charities, as well as raising awareness of mental health issues ourselves.”. Home-Start Winchester has recently highlighted the levels of stress, depression and loneliness felt by young parents struggling to keep on an even keel. “Our work is vital in the early years of a child’s life to help shape the adult that they will become,” said Home-Start Trustee Chrissie Barlow. “Our charities share common aims and it is a delight to be able to work with Daphne on this year’s charity Christmas card.”



Home-Start Winchester Trustee Chrissie Barlow with artist Daphne Vaughan show off this year’s charity Christmas card ‘Santa has lost his sleigh’.

Packs of 10 cards, retailing at £5 will be available from the Cards for Good Causes shop in The Brooks, Wells Bookshop and Warrens from the 4 November. More information:

<https://www.knowthyselfcharity.com/>
<https://home-start-winchester.org.uk/>

Have you ever thought about being a school governor?

We are looking for Co-opted Governors from our community to join our enthusiastic and committed group of people at Itchen Abbas



Primary School. We need people who are interested in the education of our young people; who will have the commitment to being involved and attend the school regularly for meetings and other activities. You do not need a background in education, and we welcome Governors with a diverse range of skills and experience. You will be provided with training and a mentor from the Governing Body who will take you through the different aspects of governor work (and the educational jargon and acronyms!).

If you are interested, please contact admin@itchenabbas.org.uk to discuss next steps or find out more about the role.

Rachael Cowling

Co-Chair of Governors, Itchen Abbas Primary School

Plant of the month - Mahonia

You might think the photo overleaf is a souvenir of summer but it was taken in November. After a fortnight of leaden skies the sun came out and so did bees, and even some butterflies, to feast on nectar. Although most shrubs have evolved to flower in spring and set seed in autumn, some like mahonia have found a niche feeding the few

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pollinating insects that come out in winter. Chosen carefully you can have some garden flowers and bees in all seasons of the year.

Simon and Dorothy Broadley

Martyr Worthy's youngest bellringer



Marmalade with Ambition

Classical music is dying out! The typical member of an audience at a classical concert is over 60 years old. So, in 40 years' time, give or take, there'll be none left so the argument goes. Fortunately there's a flaw. On average 900,000 people turn 60 every year in the UK so there is a constant flow of new concert goers. I think much the same argument can be applied to marmalade makers. All the indicators are that marmalade making is alive and well in the Itchen Valley.

But it's probably true that many of the home marmalade makers are, how should we say, getting on a bit. As you get older you find you have more time. How many men reaching retirement suddenly feel the urge to bake bread? And make marmalade? How many women whose busy lives have meant they couldn't find the time, now enjoy the opportunity? One of the persuasive things about marmalade making is that it's an annual event, controlled by the availability of the Seville oranges. You might feel after all the effort of making a batch that you might not bother again, but by the time the year comes round the enthusiasm is back and you look forward to it. Perhaps the real threat to marmalade making is for the children and grandchildren of the marmalade makers as marmalade often has no place in their diet. But perhaps, like the concert goers, they will discover the pleasure in later life and production and consumption will continue.

I've eaten marmalade all my life. When I was a child, my mother made it. She was terrible at it. We never knew when a jar was opened whether what it contained would be liquid, solid, or anything in between. My father was very critical. He was an analytical chemist and very sceptical of the vague weights and measures found in recipes. My mother told him if he didn't like her efforts he should do it himself and so he did. He measured everything to the nearest microgramme and tenth of a degree centigrade. He was absolutely precise. The outcome was no more consistent than my mother's. He

gave up in disgust.

When I retired I took up bread making. And marmalade making. I started with Delia Smith's recipe and as I gained confidence, adapted it to exactly what I wanted. I learned that once you have settled on the recipe and the cut, the only important variable is the boil time which determines the consistency of the product. Too short and the marmalade will not set. Too long and the taste deteriorates. Delia recommends the saucer test. You put some saucers in the freezer and start testing the mixture after 15 minutes of boil. If it sets on the saucer, it's ready. Some people go by temperature. The mixture initially boils at 100C but as the water evaporates the temperature creeps up and at 104C it will be ready. Both systems work but with experience the most accurate test is how it feels to stir. When you feel the mixture begin change and become more viscous, that's the time to stop. I was pleased with my marmalade but always wanted to know how it would be judged independently. I discovered the Dalemain World Marmalade Awards. Dalemain is a stately home in the Lake District where the family has been making marmalade for generations. In 2009 the lady of the house, Jane Hasell-McCosh invited local marmalade makers to submit their efforts to be judged. There was a small entry fee. All the proceeds went to charity and all the marmalade went to hospices. It was a massive success. Now she runs the annual World's Original Marmalade Awards which attract over 3,000 entries from all over the globe. There are many categories to enter. All must include oranges but in addition to classic Seville marmalade there are classes for any citrus fruit, Gardeners' marmalade with home-



grown ingredients from the garden, Merry marmalade with any additional alcohol, and Marmalade with a Twist containing any ingredients that take your fancy. There are categories for a range of marmalade makers: Children's marmalade, Man-made marmalade, and Octogenarian and upwards marmalade. There's a class for campanologists and a "Marmalashes" competition for English and Australian cricket teams. (The Australians usually win.) There used to be an establishment Class for Bishops and Judges and their equals who were assumed to be enthusiastic marmalade makers in their spare time. I first entered the competition five years ago and got a bronze. I hasten to add that this did not mean I came third out of 3,000 entries. Each entry is awarded marks for appearance and colour, texture and set, flavour and aroma. A maximum of 20 points are available with 16 achieving bronze, 18 silver and 19 gold. I've since managed silver but never gold. If you are a marmalade maker you might want to give Dalemain a try. The entry date for the 2025 Awards will be in February, about three weeks after Seville oranges appear in the shops. Find out more at www.dalemain.com.

Michael Smith

Russell Hellier 1933 -2024



Russell and Margaret Hellier lived at Willowmead, next to the church in Easton, from 1975 until 2011, before moving to Chilbolton, near Stockbridge.

Russell was born in Wareham, Dorset, where his father, Cecil, had set up a local garage after serving in the Army in the 1st World War. One of his father's most regular customers was T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), whose motorbikes he looked after for many years. Coincidentally, they died within days of each other in 1935.

Russell's career, with many moves, took him all over the UK. He was called up by the RAF for his national service in 1951 and after four years joined International Harvester (IH) as Area Sales Manager in Perth, Scotland, where he enjoyed the opportunity of visiting farms and the dealers who sold agricultural machinery. It was in Kendal that he met Margaret. Married life began in 1959 in Chester; Sue was born in Worcestershire and their other daughter Jo was born in Kent. When

Russell moved to the IH head office in London he commuted from Sevenoaks and then Tunbridge Wells. In 1975 he joined Eli Lilly in Basingstoke, which prompted the move to Willowmead. Russell then rejoined IH, which took him for an enjoyable year in Paris, followed by a move to Doncaster in 1982, during which time Willowmead was rented out. Russell decided to move back south so he got a job with Scats and returned to Willowmead in 1984. Russell continued working until he was 85, working for Bartholomews Agri Food for his final 27 years of work. Unfortunately Margaret died in 2020 after 61 years of marriage.

Russell and Margaret were always much involved in community activity in Easton - St Mary's Church, the Village Hall, WI, the annual fete and pantomime (Russell was once a dancing girl in 'Aladdin!'). Russell loved his large garden and field running down to the River Itchen. He had grown up on a Dorset farm and had always wanted to be a farmer. After buying the field below the church, he grew vegetables, fruit and later chrysanthemums to sell at the WI market. The family grew up in Easton and both Sue and Jo were married in St Mary's Church. Russell and Margaret became grandparents in 1985 and great grandparents in 2011, they have five grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

In 2019 Russell and Margaret, accompanied by Jo and Alan, enjoyed a walk past Willowmead, peering over the hedge at their home of 37 years, which held so many fond memories. They walked around the churchyard speculating about where their graves would be and indeed they were just about right. R.I.P.

Joanna Montague-Dennis

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From our MP

We need a better Budget for Winchester

In advance of Rachel Reeves' Budget I called for a boost to NHS funding. So I was pleased to see major funding commitments included. However we can't truly save the NHS without investment in social care too and we only saw small funding boosts there. My big problem with the Budget however is that the tax rises will affect GPs and other healthcare providers. It seems counter-productive to increase health spending with one hand, only to take it away with the other. We should be taxing the big banks, oil and gas industries and the hugely profitable tech companies to get our public services working.

I grew up on farms and, as a large animal vet, I've spent a lot of time working with farmers around Winchester and the Itchen Valley. After Conservative betrayal with dodgy trade deals, many of them are really struggling. This government must scrap their disastrous farm-tax immediately! As the colder months set in, I have also not forgotten the injustice over Winter Fuel Payments. I've heard from people throughout the Itchen Valley worried about their loved ones this winter, so I'll continue to do what I can to ensure the issue remains on the agenda and we stand a chance of having the decision reversed.

Finally, it was a great honour to attend Winchester's Remembrance Sunday proceedings to remember all those from Winchester who joined many others from across the country and the world to stand up against tyranny. We must also never forget those who

fought in recent conflicts and the veterans who live on. They did their duty, so it is our duty to ensure we take care of care of them and their families in every way we can.

If you have any problems or issues, please contact me at danny.chambers.mp@parliament.uk. My team and I will do our best to help.



Danny visiting the Two Hands sandwich shop.

Danny Chambers M.P.

Christmas Cracker

Q: How did Mother Goose keep her goslings quiet?

A: She told them yolks!





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Itchen Valley Churches December Services

Sunday 1 December

10am Advent Parish Communion - St Mary's, Easton
4pm Advent Café Church - Itchen Abbas Village Hall

Sunday 8 December

8.30am Holy Communion - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy
10am Morning Worship - St John's, Itchen Abbas

Sunday 15 December

10am Parish Communion - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy
4pm Christingle - St John's, Itchen Abbas

Sunday 22 December

10am Parish Communion - St Mary's, Avington
6pm – Traditional Carols - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Christmas Eve

4pm Crib Service - St Mary's, Easton
11pm – First Communion of Christmas - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Christmas Day

10am Family Communion - St John's, Itchen Abbas

Sunday 29 December

10am Parish Communion - St Mary's, Easton

**Please check our website in case of any
unexpected changes to our services:
www.itchenvalleychurches.org**



Itchen Valley Churches January Services

Sunday 5 January

10am Parish Communion - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy
4pm Café Church - Itchen Abbas Village Hall

Sunday 12 January

8.30am Holy Communion - St Mary's, Easton
10am Valley Worship (and Ark) - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

Sunday 19 January

10am Parish Communion - St Mary's, Easton
6pm Ecumenical Prayer Service - St John's, Itchen Abbas

Sunday 25 January

8.30am Holy Communion (said) - St John's, Itchen Abbas
10am All Age Worship - St John's, Itchen Abbas
6pm Evensong - St Swithun's, Martyr Worthy

**Please check our website in case of any
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revd.peter@itchenvalleychurches.org 01962 588313

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IVN Christmas Competition



Take advantage of the Christmas break to rope in family and friends to complete the IVN Homophone Quiz. Each question has two answers—words that sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings.

PRIZE for the best effort is a **£50 voucher** towards a meal at the Chestnut Horse in Easton (£25 from the IVN and £25 generously donated by the Chestnut Horse).

Either take out these two pages and post your entry to Itchen Valley News, 1 School Lane, Itchen Abbas, SO21 1BE or copy your answers and email to Itchenvalleynews@gmail.com

Deadline for entries to be received is **Monday 6 January 2025**. The winner's name will be announced in the February 2025 issue together with the answers

Example:

Snapshots of royalty

Prints

Prince

Homophone Quiz

Compiled by Michael Smith

	<u>Ist Word</u>	<u>2nd Word</u>
1. Policemen in the wood		
2. Condescend to a Scandinavian		
3. A rule or merely tradition		
4. Bird sent down a mine		
5. Rating turned ashen		
6. Officer was a bit of a nut		
7. Again for the soothsayer		
8. Grieving before lunch		
9. A spooky nest		
10. One swearing at screen feature		
11. Glance at small dog		
12. Shortened wedding vow on Lewis or Iona		
13. Indicator of distress level		
14. Weapon for favoured man		
15. Wine store proprietor		
16. Moisture expected		

	<u>Ist Word</u>	<u>2nd Word</u>
17.	Character of steel perhaps	
18.	A crack angler	
19.	Lazy role model	
20.	Menial small rodent	
21.	Add a bit	
22.	Helps the gullible	
23.	Measured walk through water	
24.	Rogue in a church passage	
25.	The shortest line across this stretch of water	
26.	Marquees are imperfect maybe	
27.	Itinerant cyclist	
28.	Military muster	
29.	Agree to climb	
30.	Plunders musical instruments	
31.	A sense of place	
32.	Indulge a large furry animal	
33.	This time belongs to us	
34.	Produced essential foodstuff	
35.	Guidance for the Parish	
36.	Drag from passageway	
37.	Distant parent	
38.	Use leverage to obtain trophy	
39.	Bouquet dispatched	
40.	Finely chopped sweets	
41.	Purchaser for a farm building	
42.	Cajole a relative	
43.	Contributes a woodworking tool	
44.	Disturb an important Arab	
45.	The directors are fed up	
46.	Suggest some jewellery	
47.	A hoard of money	
48.	Opportunity for some singing	
49.	Grilled vegetable?	

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Jackie's County Corner

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I know it's a busy time and replying to consultation is the last thing on your mind in December but please at least do this first one!



Everyone has a view about the NHS. Now is the time to give that view. To respond to the NHS 10 year plan consultation go to <https://change.nhs.uk/en-GB/> or simply type in change.nhs.uk into google or www.gov.uk . Deadline 22 December.

What are the barriers to Cycling and Walking for you? This is a new survey on behalf of HCC and WCC to aid work on the Council's Movement Strategy . Deadline 22 December. Go to www.hants.gov.uk/barriers-walking-cycling

A route has been agreed for the next (southerly) section of the Worthy Down cycle path from the Harestock water treatment works to Wellhouse Lane, due to be completed Spring 2025. I have asked for some maintenance on the whole route, following heavy rainfall.

School Transport. In late October, the County Council were proposing changes to the education transport, but withdrew plans at the last minute. School transport costs the Council over £85million a year, and the cost is rising, so this is one area where HCC wants to reduce the revenue budget. I have written in more detail on my website, but National Policies continue to be discriminatory against children in rural areas attending their local school which may be a bus ride away from their own village.

Parents also tell me they believe the 'walk to school' ethos is impossible to achieve for working parents. What do you think? Getting it right is important for the whole community because school traffic is a huge proportion of the morning and afternoon congestion we face. Please look out for the consultation, and I will remind you in a future 'County Corner' . To be useful, I have asked HCC to seek responses from parents of children 'yet to travel' as well as those already travelling.

The proposed budgets cuts to 'Lollipop staff', Buses & Alresford HWRC (Waste & Recycling Centre) were not agreed.

Kings Worthy has a school crossing patrol, which was one of the services threatened in the cuts. It was agreed that these wouldn't be removed as proposed. I am asking schools to include Parish and Town Councils when they update their school travel plans to support all additional safety measures near to the school.

The 75, 6, 64 and 67 buses will continue, and the 240 and 95 seem safe for now. The KBI minibus is now running 6 days a week, funded for two years to October 2027.

The Alresford HWRC is saved! Volume collected is at 24th out of 24 sites, so please use it often!

County Councillor Grants

So far this year I have supported nine projects with small grants. Organisations which haven't had a grant from this fund before and are keen to support children and greening projects this year are welcome to apply, but it is a limited

pot of money so closure for applications may be before the official deadline next February. Please contact me first to check availability . In October, we shared our usual Councillor Surgery spot on West Street, and we were pleased to meet the Trustees of Bailey House who were explaining their role to residents. Bailey House in Alresford is unique with bedroom and bathroom , importantly with day to day companionship, and currently with vacancies. It's a really friendly place and



following on from my last County Corner, when I was asking you to consider volunteering I promised to thank them for their work as Trustees via the photo above!

We continue to hold local Councillor surgeries: but please contact us by email or phone if you think we can help.

Clr. Jackie Porter

Website: www.jackieporter.co.uk

Tel/text: 0797369085,

email jackie.porter@hants.gov.uk./

Answerphone: 01962 791054.



Christmas Black Forest Trifle

I love Christmas pudding, but not everyone in our family agrees. This has been the alternative solution: Defrost a bag of frozen black cherries. In a lovely glass bowl, put a layer of shop bought plain chocolate sponge cake (can be gluten free). Shake over a couple of tablespoons of brandy and/or sherry to moisten it. Mix a tin of cherry pie filling with the defrosted cherries and make that the next layer. Let it stand for an hour or so to allow the flavours to mingle. Then smooth a tub of excellent quality vanilla custard over the top. Finish with whipped cream and a grating of dark chocolate curls.



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From the Rectory

After so many weeks of living under what the weather reporters were calling an 'anti-cyclonic gloom', it was such a relief to wake up on Monday 11 November and to see a pale yellow ball in sky. Oh, to see the sun again! At last the full glory of the autumn colours could be enjoyed, and many of our flagging spirits were revived.

Living 'under a cloud' is a painful thing: perhaps we've been under the cloud of suspicion in the eyes of others, or we've felt cast down by clouds of depression. And, given all the uncertainties in our international world at this time, many of us on occasions can feel that there are heavy clouds of confusion - and indeed clouds of great anxiety - hanging over all our heads.

At such times there is comfort to be found in the words of Jesus: "I AM the Light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life" (John 8:12). He was standing in Jerusalem's Temple at the annual feast of Tabernacles, when a vast candelabra was hoisted high and was then set alight - being visible for miles around. Jesus was claiming to be an even greater light - a light lighting the *whole* world - in other words, just like the sun we all see in the sky.

If so, Jesus was claiming to be in the spiritual world what the sun is in our material world - a source of light and warmth, and something which can pierce through the clouds we so often feel shrouded by.

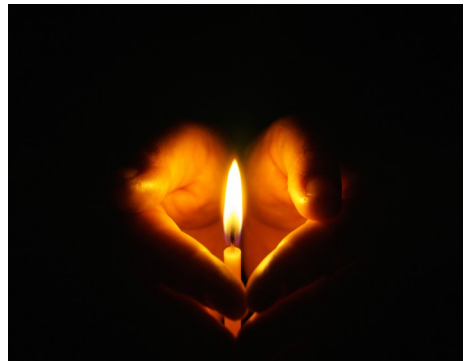
That's part of what we celebrate at Christmas - the entrance of light into

a dark world. And that's why the date of Christ's birth (which probably took place in the summer, when sheep were allowed by shepherds to go into the harvest fields and eat the 'left-overs') was transferred to 25 December - the first day one can see the sun rising a little bit earlier in the northern hemisphere. Winter will not last forever: the sun will bring us another summer!

In this way the early Christians were making precisely this same claim for Jesus: he is the real 'light of the world', the true sun in the universe. So, if you find this helpful or want to be part of the celebrations, do please join us at some of our various Christmas services (as described on page 18). On dark and cloudy days, it's always good to remember that - even when we cannot feel it or see it - there is still a sun somewhere up there in the sky!

Let me close by wishing you all, as residents in the Itchen Valley, and on behalf of Georgie and myself in the Rectory, a very Happy Christmas and a light-filled New Year.

Revd Peter



Itchen Abbas School News

During the last month we have not only been thinking of our own community but also the wider community and how we can help them. We have spent time talking to the children about how we stay safe in school (which is one of our three school rules). We had a great discussion about all the people who keep us safe and why it is important to walk when inside, for instance. The children were great at identifying the reasons for this.

The School Council have met and discussed, amongst other things, the Shoebox Appeal. What a response! This year we have collected 46 boxes - a huge increase on the 31 we were able to send last year. These will make a massive difference to children across the world this Christmas and our children should be so proud of themselves for thinking about others - being true global citizens! Well done and thank you to everyone who took part.

We also took part in anti-bullying week, and began by thinking about the theme this year – respect. This is also our focus value this half term, so the children were excellent at sharing ideas about how we can show respect to each other in school and online. We also explored this theme further, when I went with the EARA group to Nightingale Primary School in Eastleigh, where we discussed the UN Convention on Rights of a Child with other schools - and shared our work in school on promoting equality.

The EARA Group also met with me



to discuss the winners of their poster competition (see above). They chose four winners from across the school. The mission they set was for everyone to think about what 'equality' means to them - which encouraged lots of discussions and helps promote the understanding of inclusion across the school.

This month we also supported Children in Need, and the children have been learning in assembly all about why we support the work of this charity, and how they can get involved. The School Council this year chose to hide 'Pudsey Spots' around the grounds for each class to find - which everyone enjoyed!

We are now looking forward to December and all the fun of the Christmas season. Our KS1 Christmas production will take place in St John's Church, Itchen Abbas on Thursday 12 December and the school will then congregate the following Tuesday for a whole school musical Christmas Concert. We will also be visiting Cameo (lunch club for the over 65s) to sing them our Christmas songs and to have a chat with them which is always enjoyed by young and old alike.

Rob Bogan, Head Teacher

From the Parish Council

Progress is being made. The majority of your Parish Councillors now have their new councillor email addresses up and running. Please note they are similar to the previous ones; they start with the councillor's initial and then are the same as before but end in '.gov.uk' instead of '.org.uk'. Please use these new ones. Once the few remaining old ones have changed the move to our new website will take place and will include current news items, Parish Council minutes for the past three years and accounts for the previous five years. Finally other Parish Council archive material will be moved over.

Five sites for Green Multipurpose Bins have been agreed and are being applied for but from experience it will be some before they appear. One other site in Easton is still to be looked at and it has been decided to leave looking at a potential site in Avington until plans for the Pumping Station are more advanced.

Application is being made for supply and installation of three poles, and one extension pole to go on an existing road sign, so we can have more places to put up the Speed Indication Device (SID). All are on the B3047. Two are near the junction with Easton Lane in Martyr Worthy. Both are in the 40mph area. One will face east bound traffic and the other west bound traffic. The other two are in Itchen Abbas; one facing west on Station Hill and the other facing east just before the bend near the Plough. There is good statistical information that SIDs are more effective at slowing traffic down if they are moved on a regular basis.

Percolation tests are being carried out at Couch Green. These will give an indication as to how well the ground drains are functioning as they are an essential factor that has to be considered when designing the new football pitch. Meanwhile rough cutting of the grass in the large field will be carried out at intervals.

Cutting of the grass in the small field will continue as normal. Installation of security cameras has been considered again for the Couch Green car park. However taking into account cost, previous discussions with the police, and the projected extended car park with improved sight lines to the play area it has been decided not to take it any further.

Two pieces of news regarding Southern Water. The pumping station for the Avington to Easton sewage pipeline is still in the design stage. The aim is for the work to be carried out next spring and early summer but so far no planning application has been seen. The planning application for a temporary pipeline between the Candover Springs and the trout farm in Itchen Abbas has been withdrawn. It is now a case of wait and see as to what, if anything, is proposed in its place. It is with regret to have to announce two resignations. First Denise Rosewell is retiring as a Parish Councillor after being with us for five years. In that time she has worked hard and made an enormous difference to the Valley, arranging the lengthsmen's work, getting funding for and organising contractors to resurface the muddiest footpaths and, aided by Chris Jeffes and, on occasion, the Ramblers, kept more of our footpaths and bridleways clearer



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than ever before. The whole Valley and those who walk, ride or cycle in it, owe her a very big thank you. Therefore in the New Year there will be a vacancy for someone to join the Parish Council. To maintain a representative balance across the Valley the ideal would be to have someone from Easton but it is open to any resident over 18 who lives within the Parish. If you are interested please contact any member of the Parish Council.

The second person who is resigning is Richard Doughty. He has been our Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer for over two years. Now having become a Town Clerk and being Clerk/RFO to another Parish he does not have time to work for us as well. As our Clerk he has worked hard for us and has streamlined many of our administrative processes. We thank him for his work and wish him well. We are therefore also looking for a new Clerk/RFO. It is paid, part time, home based work, 20 hours a week with attendance at our Full Council Meeting one evening a month. It would be really good if we could have someone who lives in the Valley, so if you would be interested and wish to find out more please let me know.

And finally as your Parish Council we wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Patrick Appleby IVPC Chairman

Comings and Goings

We welcome Allison Ingham and Carl Taylor to the annexe of Beck House, Easton. They have been here since October 2024, having moved from South Africa. *Jude Mezger*

Alan Lovell at the Upper Itchen Valley Society 's AGM

Alan Lovell's first slide would have been a picture of Gunner's Hole, the bathing place in the river Itchen used for swimming when he first went to Winchester College - it would be called wild swimming nowadays - and he regards it as the start of his long love affair with the Itchen.

Unfortunately, there were technical issues so we could not see his slides. However, what he said was so interesting that it held the audience rapt even without illustrations.

He became chairman of the Environment Agency in 2022 and summarised its role as working to create better places for people and wildlife. Flood defences are another large part of their responsibilities, and they receive £1 billion from the Government for this and another £1 billion in revenues from the charges levied on those whose activities they regulate. As those figures indicate, flood defence is a major aspect of their work. Alan said that they are good at it – while admitting that they are not good at everything. Flood defence takes place both short term at a local level, for example providing steel door sills to prevent flood water entering houses, and on a longer term and larger scale, such as the Thames Barrier, which it is estimated will need replacing in 2070 but is already under review. Over the last few years some 250,000 homes have been protected, and if this rate of improvement can be maintained there will be a decent outcome.

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However, protecting farmland is less good, in areas like Norfolk where much

farmland is below sea level for example, and there is the question whether some farmland should be given up and used for flood storage – but food security is also an issue.

He said that the Environment Agency is now very good at coastal surge and rivers, but flash flooding is harder to manage because one cannot tell where they will come. A National Flood Risk Assessment will be published shortly, and we have to expect a huge increase in the risk of flash flooding, especially in London. Combined Sewage Overflows are a problem – developers are still allowed to direct the water run-off from roofs etc into the sewage system for new builds.

Water shortages are an even bigger problem for the future. A five billion litres per day shortfall is predicted: setting this in context current usage is 30 billion litres per day. It is anticipated that two billion litres will come from investment such as in recycling waste water, with possible objections from the public who don't realise that this already happens, and in desalination, but this uses a lot of energy. One billion can come from reduced leakage and it is hoped that two billion can be saved by reducing demand. Currently we use on average 140 litres per day each and this needs to be reduced to 110 litres per day. At the moment planning permission for new house building can be given

anywhere including places such as Cambridge where there is simply not enough water. There is a national plan for flood protection, but not for the provision of water, either in terms of quantity or quality.

However, realistically, and of particular concern in this neighbourhood, increased extraction from rivers will be needed. The chalk streams such as the Itchen and the Test are precious endangered habitats of world importance. England has 85% of the world's chalk streams, only 17% of them are of good quality but the Test and Itchen are quite good by comparison with the rest of the country. A big problem is the lack of investment since Victorian times and Alan said that OfWat and Governments have made a big mistake in prioritising keeping prices down, to an average of £1.30 per household per day (50p per person) so that for less than the cost of a small bottle of water we get unlimited water and sewage removal. Another problem is the lack of trust in water companies, and the publicity given to pollution incidents results in even the well behaved companies being disliked. There are nine water companies and four had 43 serious pollution incidents between them, whereas the other five had only nine between them. Long term pollution effects are a problem – the UK Government has inexplicably allowed the continued use of neonicotinoid pesticides, which are banned in the EU. Agriculture is responsible for more environmental damage than sewage and while Alan can talk to the CEOs of the nine water companies, he cannot talk to the thousands of farmers who have not

yet changed their ways – “it is very hard to go green when you are struggling to get out of the red”. However, there is now a permit system enabling the Environment Agency to regulate intensive pig and poultry industries, and he hopes that dairy and beef farming, which are the most damaging, will be brought into it soon. Nitrates are a time bomb, on soils that drain into the chalk the nitrates now being put in will wash through in 100 years and it is predicted that the nitrates in the Itchen will continue to increase until 2055 from what was spread in the past, whatever is done now. But the current government is nervous about taking on farmers, especially in view of the IHT changes announced.

However, some things are getting better. There is a significant reduction in the level of phosphates and invertebrate data show a good increase in population Alan is aware that the experience of fishermen is very different from the reported data, and he said he does not understand why this is the case. The water industry is transforming itself: there are more boots on the ground and better IT; and more enforcement – last year there were 4,500 inspections, next year it will be 10,000. A Special Measures Bill will enable imposition of quicker penalties and the requirement for prosecutions, which until recently had to reach the criminal standard of proof, now to meet the civil (and thus lower) standard of proof will help. Nevertheless, some of the water companies are talking a good game but not doing much. Alan questioned whether it is useful to prosecute companies now for incidents six years ago or whether it would be better to focus on the present. Alan was asked a

number of penetrating questions after his talk, to some of which his answer was that it is Natural England’s remit, not the Environment Agency’s (loss of insect life and ‘nature depletion’). He said that Southern Water were looking at schemes to upgrade septic tanks and agreed that this was important. We were grateful to him for taking time to talk to us, and glad to hear that he is enjoying this challenging job.

Charlotte Appleby

Christmas Wreaths....



You will have admired the wreath featured on the front cover so here are some more to bring a festive

feel to the run up to Christmas.

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Editor



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A colorful illustration for a pantomime. On the left, a green beanstalk grows from a green hill, reaching up to a white cloud where a castle with red-roofed towers sits. The background is a dark blue night sky with stars and a crescent moon. On the right, a wooden signpost is attached to the beanstalk. The sign contains event details. In the top right corner, there is a logo for 'Easton Players PRESENT' featuring two theatrical masks.

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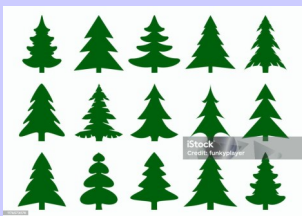
Is weight loss medication safe and effective?

As weight loss medications become more popular, many people are turning to them as a way to help shed the pounds. But while these treatments can be effective, it's crucial to understand how to use them safely and in conjunction with healthy lifestyle changes to keep the weight off long-term. Weight loss medications come in both tablet and injection form and work in various ways to assist with weight loss. Some medications mimic hormones that help control hunger, making it easier to eat less. Others boost metabolism, which can increase fat burning. Sharron Gordon, founder of The Secret Garden Clinic Winchester (just outside Easton) is a consultant pharmacist, Harley Street-trained and Ex Deputy Chief Pharmacist at UHS. She said: "These medications can be particularly beneficial for people who have struggled to lose weight through diet and exercise alone. They can reduce cravings, improve appetite control and help individuals kick-start a healthier lifestyle. "Losing weight too quickly can be harmful. Medications should be used in the short term, under the supervision of a healthcare professional, to help you reach your goals in a safe, sustainable way. "All medications can have side effects, but they are generally well-tolerated. Your prescriber will guide you through any potential risks and monitor your progress." For those looking to lose weight with or without the help of medication, Sharron also advises simple dietary changes, including eating unprocessed fibre-rich foods, healthy fats like Omega3 fatty acids, anti-inflammatory spices such as turmeric and cinnamon and having a varied diet to support good gut health.

For more advice, visit The Secret Garden Skin Clinic in Winchester:
thesecretgardenwinchester.co.uk.

Valley Quiz Answers

1. The tree is a gift from the people of Norway to London, in thanks for Britain's support in World War II. It is selected from the forests around Oslo.
2. Mary Earps. The England women's football team goalkeeper.
3. Viscount Lord Nelson who was killed at the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21st 1805.
4. They are both sources of the river Nile. Lake Tana is the source of the Blue Nile, while Lake Victoria is the source of the White Nile. The confluence of the two rivers occurs at Khartoum in Sudan. The Nile then flows northward for about 1588 miles before discharging into the Mediterranean.
5. The Ostrich. The largest flying bird is the Wandering Albatross.
6. St Petersburg. (Longitude 30° 36'E. Istanbul 28°58'E)
7. The John Frost Bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem.
8. A person who makes or repairs musical instruments with strings.
9. Corroor is Britain's most isolated railway station and, at 1,340 feet above sea level, is the highest on the national network. It lies on Rannoch Moor on the West Highland line and has no road public road connection to anywhere.
10. Swallow and Amazon.



Local monthly information

Collections: Usually Tuesdays for Easton and, Avington, and Wednesdays for Abbots Worthy, Itchen Abbas and Martyr Worthy.

Please check your calendar as the dates / days appear to be different from the usual pattern for December and January

Hampshire Nov. Market in Winchester Second and last Sundays of every month, 9am - 2pm.

Full Parish Council Meeting:

Thursday 5 December at 7pm at Itchen Abbas & Avington Village Hall

Thursday 9 January 2025 venue tbc

Bus information



67 Bus operated by Stagecoach.

To Winchester:

Monday to Friday

Sch 8:20 NSch 8:23

9:23 12:43 15:43 17:23

Saturday 08:23 11:23 14:23 17:23

From Winchester bus station

Mon- Fri 10.20 13.20 15.00 16.55 17.50

Saturday 9.00 12.00 15.00 17.50

To Alresford:

Monday to Friday

10:39 13:39 15:19 17:14 18:09

Saturday: 09:19 12:19 15:19 18:09

From Alresford Perrins school

Mon- Fri 8.11/14 9.14 12.34 15.34 17.14

Saturday 8.14 11.14 14.14 17.14

No Sunday or bank holiday service.

Key: Sch School days only

NSch School holidays only. All times shown

are at Itchen Abbas. Times are 5 minutes

later (or earlier) at Easton



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