

# WOODSTOCK & BLADON *news*

January 2025

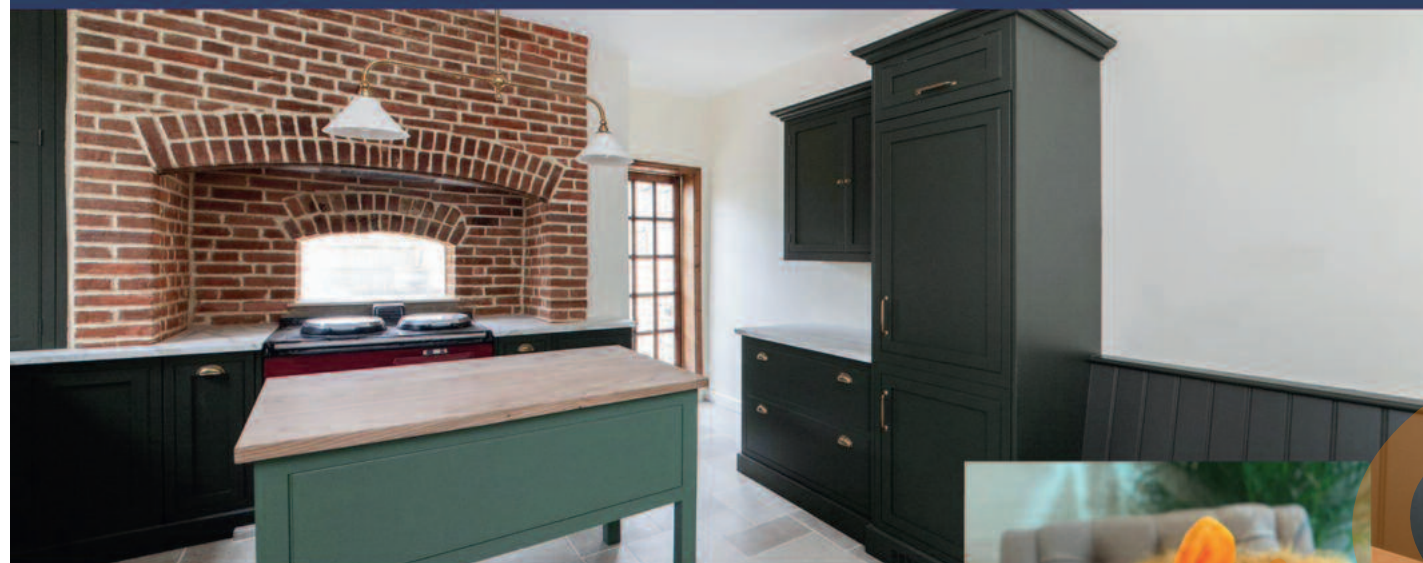
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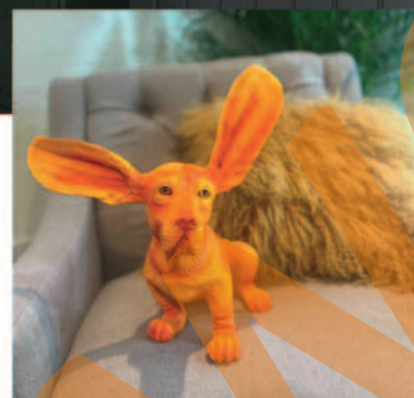
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## Editorial

We are now into 2025, and I hope all our readers and their families have enjoyed their Christmas and New Year celebrations.

The Town Council is holding an election on 15 January - you can find details of all four candidates on Page 28. To cover this, we decided to publish a January issue, and then a Feb/March issue which will be printed in the middle of February.

Please read the article on Page 13 about the British Transplant Games that will be coming to Woodstock for the opening ceremony on Thursday 31 July 2025. They are looking for volunteers for the afternoon; so please come to the talk and entertainment in St Mary's at 7.30pm on Thursday 13 February to learn about the event, where you can sign up as a volunteer.

Talking of volunteering, please do write letters to the magazine. It's important that you share your thoughts and opinions. And we also need more writers, so articles about history, sport, and nature are always welcome. In particular, we are looking for someone to write the 'Keep It Local' articles that I started in September. Get your pens out please, or perhaps I should say, 'tap those keys'!

And if anyone would like to assist with distribution - particularly in the town centre - please get in touch.

In this issue, the talented Johnny Parkes from the award winning 'Back Lane Tavern', has brought the Recipe back. We are very lucky to have such a popular and successful pub/restaurant in our town. Exciting news: they are expanding by merging with the Summertown Wine Bar and forming a new restaurant called OXTWO at the end of February.

With many thanks again to our contributors, to our distributors, to our advertisers, and of course to our readers and subscribers.

**Nick Manby-Brown, Editor**

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There are many other reports and notices from local clubs and societies

## Subscriptions

The magazine costs £2 per issue, or £20 per year.

It can be purchased locally at Blenheim Palace, Mary and Martin's Newsagent, Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock Bookshop, Woodstock Grocers, and Wootton Stores. It can also be delivered to your door on a monthly basis - please contact Nick (editor@wobl.news) for Woodstock, or Lucy for Bladon.

For bank transfer, please pay to Woodstock and Bladon News Limited - 04-29-09 - 81754981, and use the first line of your address as the reference. To pay by cheque, please make cheque payable to N Manby-Brown (the business account does not accept cheques) and send to 51 Plane Tree Way, Woodstock OX20 1PE.

An online version can also be purchased. Please send an EMail to editor@wobl.news

## Please do write for our Magazine

Send your contributions to: editor@wobl.news

The next copy deadline is Sunday 2 February 2025 for the February/March issue.

We aim to be balanced and inclusive, and welcome new contributions that are of interest to our readers.

### Printed by Windrush Press, Witney

Woodstock and Bladon News is printed on 100% sustainable paper which helps promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

Front Cover Photograph of the Column of Victory at Blenheim Palace, courtesy of Trisha Marie

**Answers to December Crossword** - The South African geographical feature was 'Table Top Mountain'  
**Across:** 7. Mould, 8. Stopwatch, 10. Lessons, 11. Forbade, 13. Emporium, 14. Ingest, 16. Eke, 17. Scourge, 19. Inn, 22. Urge on, 23. Solution, 25. Novelty, 27. Exhaust, 29. Worsening, 30. Stain.  
**Down:** 1. Moneymaker, 2. Glasgow, 3. Sty, 4. Upcoming, 5. Cabbage, 6. Acid, 9. Anti, 12. Impulse, 15. Sink or swim, 18. Constant, 20. Release, 21. Straits, 24. Luxe, 26. Oboe, 28. Ink.

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WOBL Around The World



Thank you to all the readers who have allowed their photos to be published

Above:  
Abdul is in the Atlas Mountains  
Rick (and Jane) are in Hollis, New Hampshire, USA  
Katja is outside the Christiansborg, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Rachel and Fraser are in Kasbah Tamadot, Morocco

Opposite page  
Fraser, Jay, Tim, Saffs, Caroline, Rachel (with Martin and Nick not in photo) are having a Christmas dinner at The Kings Arms, Woodstock  
Alexander and Elizabeth are in Vietnam, Sue is at Brisbane airport

Editors Note: Please think about packing a copy of WOBL in your suitcase for the next journey, and then take a photo to show us where you have been.

**TOMMASO STARACE QUARTET**

Friday 31st January  
Doors open 7:00pm  
Show starts 7:30pm

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Chris Nickolls - drums

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At Christmas in Woodstock, with air crisp and clear  
Five Christmas trees appeared last year  
Each one a modest green, red and gold  
But their price tag? A tale to be told.

At nine hundred pounds for each festive delight  
They shimmered by day (but no sparkles by night)  
Soon whispers arose, from Back Lane to Town Hall  
“Do our Christmas trees outprice them all?”

For nearby stands Blenheim, expense all around  
A palace of splendour, opulence to be found  
Yet its treasures aren’t daylight robbery  
Except for the golden loo, gone in a spree)

“Oh, what irony!” the townsfolk did cry  
“These trees cost more than that loo’s golden ply!”  
At the night of a Thousand Candles  
The talk was of the council’s spending mishandles.

As trust in the council was thinner than frost  
For plans they concoct often came at a cost  
Watermeadows flooded and budgets unclear  
Funds with questions marks with no answer near.

At No. 5 Park Street, shoppers discussed  
“These trees cost more than a holiday for us!”  
While at Zuleika, the art lovers mused over paintings  
how the price of the baubles could cause many faintings.

The Co-opers wondered with shelves neatly stacked  
Could these funds have kept potholes intact?”  
At Louisa Maybury, so chic and refined,  
Ladies wondered “Perhaps this council’s lost its mind!”

The Crown displayed its superior sparkles  
Its guests wondered ‘have the councillors lost their marbles?’  
Yet the trees weathered the storm, a sight to behold,  
In their windswept glory of red and gold.

So we wonder what will next Christmas bring?  
Will we have a stage for the choir to sing?  
Will the council invest the town’s funds better?  
Or will the watermeadows get even wetter?



# Sixteen Market Place

aka Levo, National Westminster Bank, National Provincial Bank, The Angel, The Bull



16 Market Place, photo courtesy of Trisha Marie

In 'Ten Woodstock Families of the 16th and 17th centuries', Pat Crutch has revealed the life of Thomas Bradshaw using the Borough records. He ran The Bull possibly from 1580 when he joined the Borough Council until his death in 1613. He was at various times Chamberlain, Mayor and Justice of the Peace. At one time he held office at the licensing sessions and appears to have denied a license to a rival. On another occasion Hiorne, the Clerk, recorded that 'Mr Bradshewe did say in open court that he would "keep dancing and piping in his house at ten and one o'clock in the night hereafter."' This sounds as if he thought he was above the law.

As the owner of a large stable, he took charge of strayed or forfeited horses.

Bradshaw's probate inventory in 1613 gives us a concise social history of his time and illustrates the rise of the middle class. His property included satin doublets, silk stockings and three cloaks. He had hoods and bells for his falcons. Several rooms in the inn are named including the 'cofferer's room' which presumably commemorated its use by Thomas Parry. Forty pairs of sheets and fourteen dozen napkins give us a measure of the activity in the inn.

It was Bradshaw's death that gave rise to the trial of the widow Joyce Coles for witchcraft. The details are in 'Ten Woodstock Families'.

In the early 18th century the inn was smaller in size and was called The Angel. It became a stage-coaching inn in the heyday of this transport after the development of the turnpike roads.

From 1810 to 1918 it was owned by Hall's Brewery. The fortnightly livestock market spread into the Angel yard until it closed in 1934.

The Inn was demolished and rebuilt in 1918 as the National Provincial Bank which became the NatWest. We all know what happened to that.

The building is now occupied by Levo, the marketing company.

Robert Edwards

Sixteen Market Place is representative of the history of Woodstock. It was probably one of the original plots provided by King Henry II for hostleries to accommodate the court. It was called The Bull by 1499.

By 1554 when Princess Elizabeth was imprisoned at Woodstock Palace, The Bull was spread out over numbers 10 to 16 on Market Place and was probably Woodstock's largest inn.

Because Thomas Parry, Elizabeth's cofferer or financial controller, was shut out of the palace he set up her household at The Bull. 'The History Of Parliament' records that he kept up to forty retainers there in his own livery as well as the Princess's servants. Where did the money come from? Parry came from Wales where his surname had been Ap-Harry meaning that he was the son of a gentleman called Henry Vaughn. As a young man he had been one of Thomas Cromwell's team who demolished the monasteries so perhaps some ecclesiastical belongings had stuck to his fingers. His wife, Ann, had retained property including fifteen hundred sheep that had belonged to a previous husband who had been executed by Richard III.

As soon as she succeeded to the crown Elizabeth knighted Thomas, made him a Privy Coucillor, Comptroller of the Household and Treasurer of England. He was one of her two most powerful advisers and held two of the four great Offices of State. He was however losing influence to Cecil when he died in 1560.

# The Arts Society Cotswolds

Lecture on Wednesday 12 February 2025

Velasquez and Goya: Traditionalists or Modern Masters?

This lecture charts Velasquez' approach to bodegones while still in his native Seville ("he is the best" - Francisco Pacheco) to his meteoric rise to prominence in the Madrid court of Philip IV, where he broke new ground in the modern treatment of official royal portraits and sympathetic renditions of the horrors of war.

Almost 200 years later Goya began as a jobbing painter in the provinces before moving to the Bourbon court where he worked for powerful court officials as well as the royal family. He was fearless in his approach, presenting unflinching images of war. He tackled the nude at a time when it was frowned upon by the Inquisition and experienced first-hand their persuasive methods of interrogation.

## About the speaker:

Alice Foster has lectured for Oxford University Department of Continuing Education since 1998. She lectures regularly at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and at the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock. Her busy freelance career includes organising History of

Art study days with colleagues, and regular weekly classes in Oxfordshire and Worcestershire. Currently, Alice is a residential tutor at the Argyll Hotel on the Isle of Iona, specialising in Scottish art. In 2010 she was elected President of Banbury Fine Arts Society.

This hybrid lecture will be held at the Warwick Hall, Church Green, Burford, OX18 4RZ at 11am and via Zoom. Please be seated by 10.50 for notices of upcoming events. Numbers are no longer restricted but booking is recommended to reserve a place via our website or please call Lisa Etheridge on 01285 711805 for a booking form. Non-members are welcome (space permitting) at a charge of £10.

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# Letters to the Editor

## I like Christmas

In fact, it's one of my favourite times of the year. However, I was shocked to read the Woodstock Town Council (WTC) minutes of the 12 November meeting when "the Clerk reported that to enhance Woodstock's Christmas lights, five fully decorated 7 foot Christmas trees will be delivered, at a cost of around £4,500".

WTC has bags of money but to spend this amount of money on five Christmas trees is outrageous and a waste of public money. Judging by the number of comments on 'We Love Woodstock', there are many other people who share my point of view.

It would be fascinating to know more about the buying decision process carried out by WTC including how many quotes were obtained (three is standard practice), testimonials from satisfied customers and whether the chosen supplier is local and environmentally friendly.

At the same meeting on 12 November, another decision was made by WTC that also shocked me. This time it wasn't about how much money was spent for so little, but how little WTC donated to a charitable cause. A request from the North Oxfordshire Food Bank for support for Christmas parcels for Woodstock had been received. The total

cost would be £250 and the Council proposal was to provide £115. After discussion it was decided that £100 would be donated. I find it hard to believe that a discussion was even needed; surely £250 should have been proposed and seconded without further ado – perhaps double the original request. It's good to know that the Christmas spirit is alive and well amongst the current WTC councillors!

Yet again at the 12 November meeting, the subject of the much needed repair and replacement of the town's bus shelters was discussed. It was acknowledged that waiting for S106 money from the development of Hill Rise would take many years. The possibility of asking Blenheim to contribute to the Hensington shelter was also discussed. As I mentioned above, WTC has bags of money so why is it even considering asking Blenheim for a contribution or mentioning S106 money? In my view, it could easily afford to pay for the bus shelters out of its own money.

And when I say bags of money, as at 31 March 2014 WTC had £363,000 in its bank account. By 31 October 2014, this amount had risen to £464,000! So, in just seven months, an increase of £122,000 or over £17,000 per month. I appreciate that WTC needs to keep something in reserve, but it needs to get its priorities right and start spending for the good of the Woodstock community.

Nick Stewart

# Letters to the Editor

## Botley West

It's the final straight for the Botley West Solar Farm.

On Friday last, 13 December, the Planning Inspectorate formally accepted their Application for an 'array and connection structure' from Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP) on behalf of SolarFive Ltd. In doing so, the Inspectorate thereby declined to uphold claims, including one in admirable detail from Stop Botley West, that PVDP's public consultation was faulty.

The Pre-examination stage for this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project has therefore begun during which you will be able to have your (further) say. You will, though, need to register as an 'interested party' within 28 days after the invitation to do so appears on the Inspectorate's website. With your registration, you will need to include your summary comments on what main issues and impacts of the project you wish to challenge.

Once the registration period closes the examination proper begins. If you have registered, you will then be able to submit more information in support of your summary comments.

The full Examination period can last no longer than six months and is therefore likely to close by the end of August this year. The Inspectorate's recommendations then go direct to Secretary of State, Ed Milliband, for a final decision.

For further information and updates go to the Planning Inspectorate website; then click on 'Find a

National Infrastructure Project'; click on 'English Projects'; then search for 'Botley West'.

The Application consists of about 250 documents and thousands of pages of sometimes technical detail. A comprehensible way into it, and into writing your summary as an interested party, is to read – and in my opinion to challenge – PVDP's arguments in support of their Application as seen in their Planning Supporting Statement. Follow this link to it in the 'Other Documents' section of the Application: <https://search.app/ozynMu6FWLsRCXQv6>

Stop Botley West will also be setting a lead on issues arising from the Inspectorate's examination of this project on <https://stopbotleywest.com>

Giles Lewis

## Christmas Lights

It was hugely disappointing to return from New Zealand in December, anticipating all the beauty and style of the Christmas season in Woodstock, to find the trees had been butchered – there is no other word for it – and our lovely Christmas lights had been replaced by gaudy trees in pots. The RHS suggests late winter/early spring as the best time to pollard trees, and advises not to pollard in autumn as this increases the risk of decay fungi entering pruning cuts. If this brutal approach to Woodstock's trees must be taken in preference to regular, more subtle tree maintenance, surely it could wait until after Christmas.

Sophy Clough

## Singing for Fun

Now at St Mary Magdalene Church every 1st Monday of the month at 2pm

Due to the closure of Woodstock Social Club, our Singing for Fun sessions have relocated to St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock, beginning on Monday 4 November at 2pm.

Please come and join us for an enjoyable and friendly hour where we chat, have a cup of tea/coffee, and sing our way through one of our large print songbooks. Don't say 'I can't sing' - it doesn't matter what your voice is like, we sing for fun! Most of our regulars are between 60 and 100+ but everyone is welcome and sessions are free.

We would like to say a big thank you to the Social Club for hosting us so warmly and generously for 8 years. Also to Andy Graham for helping us obtain a Councillor Priority Fund grant for the church heating costs. And thank you, St Mary Magdalene, for making this new chapter possible.

Tessa Hall and Paul Ralph

## Club Together

Save the Old Woodstock Social Club



Whilst I was typing this update on 19 December, we received email notification from Plunkett UK, that we have had our application ACCEPTED by the FCA!

We are also now, Woodstock Community Benefit Society Limited.

In 2025 we intend to start trading as num44.

In January you will receive a quick questionnaire either by post or online, please complete and return to us, there will also be a link to our brand-new website.

This will go a long way to ensuring that 2025 is a very Happy New Year for the Old Club.

Help us to save and be part of Woodstock's last great community space!

Thank You All and Happy New Year

The Management Team

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# A Visitor's View of Woodstock

## Some Danish Students



Christian (Right) and his two Danish friends

Hello! My name is Christian, and this summer, I visited Woodstock with two of my good friends. While I'd been there before, it was their first time experiencing this charming part of England - and they absolutely loved it.

With clear skies and perfect summer weather, we explored Woodstock's cozy streets, admired its beautiful architecture, and, one day, embarked on a pub tour to try out all the local spots. It was a fantastic way to meet the warm and welcoming people, who were eager to chat and share stories at every stop. Coming from Denmark, where people are often a bit more introverted, we found this openness to be refreshing.



We also visited Blenheim Palace, which was a true highlight of our trip. Running around its stunning grounds gave us the chance to enjoy the breathtaking scenery and connect with the beautiful nature that surrounds Woodstock. Between the peaceful trails and the grandeur of the palace, it was easy to see why this area is so special.

Of course, no visit to this part of England would be complete without taking in the Cotswolds. With its rolling hills, charming villages, and picture-perfect countryside, it felt like stepping into a storybook. For my friends, who had only seen the bustling streets of London before, this was an entirely different side of the UK - one that's slower, more connected to nature, and undeniably charming.

Woodstock is peaceful yet full of life - a place where you can meet new people, enjoy the beauty of the surroundings, and truly feel part of the community, even as a visitor. If you think you've seen it all in England, take a trip to Woodstock. It might just surprise you.

## Woodstock Community Christmas Lunch

Once the congregation had left St Mary's after the 11am Christmas Day Eucharist service, a group of volunteers worked to set up a wonderful square table filled with crockery, cutlery, glasses, wine bottles, and Christmas crackers.



At 1pm, about 20 of us were welcomed and were then served with a wonderfully cooked Christmas meal with all the trimmings, followed by Christmas Pudding and custard, with coffee and tea. We all pulled the crackers and wore hats, and Andy entertained us with his renditions of songs from the 60s.

The food was provided by Blenheim Palace, and was wonderfully cooked and served by Jack Butler from Blenheim.

With many thanks to the Benefice of Woodstock and Bladon for allowing us to eat in such a wonderful setting, to Jack and Blenheim Palace for their very generous contributions of food, drink, and time, and to Gemma Ferrier to organise this annual event. Everyone had a wonderful time - thank you.

**Nick Manby-Brown**



## British Transplant Games comes to Woodstock Summer 2025

On December 5th at Blenheim Palace, we launched the British Transplant Games which is taking place throughout Oxfordshire next summer.



Transplant recipients of all ages from 4-90 will congregate in Woodstock on Thursday July 31st 2025, for the Opening Ceremony of the 46th British Transplant Games. The Transplant Games is a multi-sport event at multiple venues throughout Oxfordshire. Heart transplant recipients as young as 4 will race each other in a 25 m track race as part of a full day of athletics track and field events. There are 24 different



sports ranging from pétanque at the Great Court at Blenheim to Volleyball at the University of Oxford. The Opening of the Games will commence at the Town Hall in Woodstock with a parade along Park Street of over 1000 competitors to the Great Court at

Blenheim Palace. On the same day there will be an archery competition in front of the Palace on the South Lawns, and on Saturday August 2nd a 2.5 and 5 km Donor fun run in the grounds at Blenheim. Come along and join in this Donor run and help raise awareness about the benefit of organ donation in Woodstock and Bladon.

The Games are a fantastic opportunity to showcase the life-saving and changing impact of organ donation and transplantation. It is an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of all types of organ donation.



We would like to encourage all the residents of Woodstock and Bladon to be part of this key event. Please consider becoming a volunteer particularly for the daily events at Blenheim throughout the Games. Come along to a celebration evening to learn about the impact of organ transplantation from Oxford Transplant Consultant Paul Harden, and hear from kidney Transplant recipient Adam Isaac (Voice Quarter Finalist: singer songwriter) and enjoy listening to his live music.

**This special evening is at St Mary's Parish Church, Woodstock, on Thursday February 13th at 19:30 with Drinks and Snacks.**

# Woodstock Town Council Meetings

## 26th November 2024

Six Councillors and five members of the public attended. Apologies had been received from Cllrs Lancaster, Addis, Spencer Churchill. The proceedings were audio recorded.

Declarations of interest were declared by Cllrs Cooper and Poskitt (WODC) with Councillor Banbury declaring an interest in the planning application for the redevelopment of the Old Police Station. No members of the public spoke.

Minutes from three previous Council meetings were presented for approval. There were a few misrepresentations of discussions to be adjusted and typos were noted one by one, for amendment.

The Mayor reported that the Town Meeting on 21 November to discuss the future of the Doctors Surgery was very well attended. Following three resignations from the Town Council she confirmed that there will be an election to fill the vacancies on the WTC on 16 January 2025.

The Town Clerk's report elaborated on the upcoming election explaining that if more than three nominations were received, the election would be contested. If only three nominations for the three vacancies it would be an uncontested election. If less than three nominations those nominated would be duly elected and another election called to fill the remaining vacancy.

The outcomes of the recent traffic consultation by OCC were noted with additional double yellow lines in Rectory Lane, Cockpit Close and New Road and dual-purpose parking bays in Cockpit Close. The Woodstock Parking Review results were not considered by OCC.

The consideration of planning applications included a request to demolish and develop the Old Police Station site into retirement living accommodation. Lack of parking spaces in the plans was a concern, also that the design was considered ugly, not least because the proposal is for a three storey build, and the rooms looked small on the plans. It was questioned why another 29 places for the over 55's were needed, on top of Rye Grass, Caroline Court and Upper Brook Hill. It was concluded that this was an inappropriate use and an over development of the site. Concerns were raised about the proximity to the Bear Close flats and potentially any building on the site would inevitably precede any construction of a Doctors Surgery. There was concern that the plan would isolate the library site, casting doubt on whether the library would in fact ever be rebuilt if the development went ahead.

The Budget for 2025/2026 was approved with a 3% increase, to £314,215 expenditure for the year. £11k has been earmarked for Projects (to be decided). The Precept is to remain the same as last year.

Councillors briefly discussed the current relevance of polling cards delivered prior to election day which cost an additional £3k (mostly postage). A majority voted in favour of their continued use.

The Town Meeting about the Doctors Surgery held on 21 November in the church, but no conclusion was reached. The Mayor announced that the town's pressure group will have the support of WTC. There was concern that the various petitions circulating have political party affiliations but this shouldn't be a political issue. ICB to be asked to clarify what criteria they are stipulating when considering a 'health centre' site, this would help understand why the Old Police Station site was considered not suitable. Confusion re whether Blenheim has any intention of building a surgery on the Cherwell site within the 500-house development planned between the Woodstock and Bladon roundabout. Previously 'community space' has been included in both the Hill Rise plan and the Banbury Road development. WODC to be asked to question what is going to be built in the areas designated as such. Be aware the general development of Begbroke and Yarnton is likely to be the new focus for infrastructure development in the future.

The Botley Solar Farm Update reported that delegates from eight parishes will negotiate with the developers on behalf of all 11 affected parishes. There is still no indication of how much would be paid as community benefit. A Government inspector will now decide whether to take the project forward for further consideration.

The Town Hall will be closed from 23 December to 1 January incl. with an emergency contact system.

Due to restrictions of space, not all Council business has been included. Refer to the Town Council website for agendas and minutes. But there was still no update from the Council regarding the recent Civil Case. There was no discussion furthermore of the intended change of office visiting hours (Friday 9am to 1pm only)

**Annie Cripps**

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### 12th December 2024

5 councillors and 13 members of the public attended in the Community Centre. In the absence of the Town Clerk, the Responsible Finance Officer took the role. The meeting was recorded.

Three members of the public spoke. Former Mayor Nick Manby-Brown noted that the previous Town Council had formed a grants working group with a new policy and increased funding. The new Council proposes to revert to the old system, what reasons are there for this? A Bens Close resident then spoke. He was very upset after the recent flooding and being forced into temporary accommodation. He had contacted the Town Council and had no reply. The communication between all parties had been very poor and upsetting for the residents. There are now 12 empty houses in Bens Close and the resident asked what was being done. Councillor Parnes has written a report which is on the meeting agenda. Ed Creasey, a Brook Hill resident, then spoke, also about flooding and communication with the Town Council. Following the flooding of 5 years ago the residents of this area had been ignored. It was agreed that logs and debris needed to be removed from the Water Meadows to prevent the screens being blocked, one of the causes of flooding of the area. The Town Council had been warned about maintaining the Water Meadow, it being their responsibility, but flooding has happened again. What is being done? The Mayor answered that the Council has asked two companies to look at the Water Meadows management and that the screen has been cleared.

Inspector Ball from Thames Valley Police spoke about the deployment of a CCTV camera outside of the Bear Hotel to target anti-social behaviour in and around Market Square. There has been a total of 483 incidents reported to the police in Woodstock in the past 12 months. This is a joint action between Thames Valley Police and West Oxfordshire District Council and the camera will not be installed indefinitely.

Councillor Parnes then reported on the flooding in Bens Close, outlining the distress of and impact on the residents, the parties involved and the lack of communication. Councillor Parnes proposed a motion to communicate the report to all parties stating the Town Council's substantial concerns and disappointment in relation to the difficulties faced by the residents of Bens Close. This was amended for the Clerk to write to West Oxfordshire District Council for action to prevent further flooding and Councillor Poskitt asked for Hensington Close to be added following the 3 houses flooded there. The motion was passed.

In the Clerk's report, Oxfordshire County Council will send a report following their monthly inspection of Woodstock's streets. The barrier at the corner of

Shipton Road and Randolph Avenue has been reported.

Under Finance, the current balance of the Town Council's account is £462, 254.

There has been a RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) inspection and report for the Water Meadows. The main recommendations are to continue with the arrangements indicating when access is not advised through clear signage and conducting an inspection post flood, to check the condition of the pathways and bridges. The Council agreed to address all 11 items brought to their attention in the report as soon as possible.

The Council agreed to donate £100 to the British Legion Poppy Appeal to pay for the wreaths for Remembrance Sunday. The Council also agreed to pay for the road closure charge (£151.75) that occurred on the 'Night of a Thousand Candles', organised by Wake up to Woodstock.

The Town and Palace dialogue meetings will be reintroduced with Deputy Mayor Sarah Williams chairing and setting the agenda. The first meeting will be on Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 2pm at the Town Hall. The public are encouraged to attend and suggest items for the agenda.

Policy and guidance for Town Council grants was then reviewed and returned to the previous schedule of 1 application per year. The application form will be available from 1st January, deadline 31st January 2025. Councillor Poskitt asked for it to be a requirement for reports to be submitted on how grants were previously used as well as how many residents were actually involved in using the previous grant award.

The town bus shelters have been surveyed and action was agreed to repair and paint where necessary. Resident Stan Scott was thanked for his help. A new bin for the Park View bus stop was also agreed. The Council will look into placing speed indicators to remind drivers of their speed through the town, the Council will seek advice on their positioning.

Finally, Councillor Williams gave an update on the possibility of a new surgery for Woodstock. From a meeting on 11th December it was heard that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) are happy to consider any proposals put before them. What is required by them is what the GPs need and where Blenheim can help. The Town Council is favouring the new Banbury Road housing development site.

Due to restrictions of space not all Council business has been included. For full details please refer to the Town Council website for agendas, documents and minutes.

**Graham Brown**

# Woodstock Mock Mayor

## Old Woodstock Mock Mayor Tradition continues to enrich Woodstock Community

The Old Woodstock Mock Mayor tradition isn't just about being silly, dancing and throwing people in the river. While that's certainly important, the organization continues its serious work of making an impact across the community.



At a presentation ceremony at The Star on 3 November, the committee presented £1,000 to local charities following their successful summer elections. The Woodstock Lunch Club received £500 to fund their Christmas lunch and gifts for diners, while Tuesday Tots at the Woodstock Methodist Church was awarded £500 to improve their play area's accessibility.

On 2 December, the Mock Mayor committee presented £2,000 to The Marlborough School to establish an enrichment fund. Nick Tonks presented the cheque to Andrew Hanlon, Head Teacher, during a Year 12 and 13 assembly. The young people were treated to an early-morning local history lesson from a man wearing a Top Hat, blanket, and curtain rings - a tough gig by any measure!

The community impact of these donations is already evident. Alex Wilkinson, Enrichment Lead at the school, has worked with the Mock Mayor team to establish the program. This initiative ensures students from all financial backgrounds can participate in educational experiences, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and school trips. The fund has already supported 23 students, demonstrating its immediate impact on the community.

Sue John, Treasurer of the Woodstock Lunch Club, expressed her gratitude: "We look forward to giving our diners a special Christmas lunch with entertainment and a small Christmas gift for each person. They are always so appreciative of anything we do for them, and hopefully we can keep the Lunch Club going for many more years."

Ann Leck from Tuesday Tots highlighted their group's significant role in supporting parents. During the pandemic, they supported 100 families through an otherwise isolated period. The group is now celebrating a remarkable milestone - their first 'grandchild', as they've been operating long enough for former attendees to have their own children.



Nick Tonks, the current Old Woodstock Mock Mayor, commented, "These donations will make a real difference to people across our community: toddlers, young people, parents and retirees. None of this would be possible without our amazing community, generous sponsors, local businesses, and our dedicated volunteers who make the Mock Mayor elections such a success. It's wonderful to see a centuries-old tradition continuing to benefit Woodstock residents today."

Local charities seeking support, or anyone interested in joining the Mock Mayor committee or volunteering for the Lunch Club, can get in touch via email at [owmm1786@outlook.com](mailto:owmm1786@outlook.com).

Ed Creasey, on behalf of the Committee



# Woodstock Literature Society 2025 Inaugural Lecture

## 'John Donne: Poet and Preacher'

The society's annual programme will start on Saturday 18 January at 3.00pm in the Church of St Mary Magdalene with an illustrated lecture by Professor Peter McCullough, Professor of English in the University of Oxford and Fellow in English Renaissance Literature at Lincoln College.

Professor McCullough is an expert on the poetry and prose of John Donne. He has also served a term of office as a Lay Canon at St Paul's Cathedral.

This will be the first of three talks to be offered in 2025 by the WLS in the Church, the second on Wednesday 18 June on John Ruskin, and the third on Oscar Wilde's Stage Plays on Friday 17 October. We are particularly pleased to confirm that the Oscar Wilde talk will be illustrated by excerpts performed by some students from the Oxford School of Drama. The rest of the year's programme also offers a wide range of topics to cover all tastes, from spy fiction to Muriel Spark, Miguel Cervantes to Daphne du Maurier. Plus, throughout the year we will hold Open Book Groups in the Town Hall for anyone to come along and join the discussion.

Visitors and new members are always welcome. Advance booking is available by emailing: [enquiries@woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk)

## Fog & Beech

This morning's walk around Queen Pool in the grounds of Blenheim Palace was cold and foggy, but exquisitely beautiful as well. There weren't many people out – if there were, they were unseen, hidden in the white as if phantoms. I was alone swathed in the milky satin.

I walked in through Woodstock Gate and ahead, just across a faint stretch of grass was a huge beech tree. I knew that the backdrop would be a long and steep slope down to the lake's edge – but again this was lost to the eye.

Mesmerising in it's austerity, the delicate filigree of tiny branches showed thousands upon thousands of likewise tiny bulges where leaf buds were beginning to swell in anticipation for the warmth of spring to come, together with remnants of masts left from autumn gone.

Sounds were muted as I walked on, even it seemed, the sound of my own footfalls. The smell of damp earth and grass, though so cold were distinct.

Clare Poole



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*"The team is superbly put together, showing professionalism and personality in equal measure"*  
*Legal 500, 2024*



## The 7-Year Rule: Why You Can't Just Give It All Away

Ah, the 7-year rule. Sounds like something out of a relationship advice column, doesn't it? "Give your cash away, survive seven years, and you're golden!" But no, this one's far less romantic. It's about money, taxes, and the government's relentless quest to snatch a chunk of your hard-earned cash.

You probably thought you'd just gift everything to your kids, nieces, or your favourite cat rescue centre and avoid paying inheritance tax altogether. Genius, right? Just give it all away and avoid the taxman completely. Well, slow down, Robin Hood. There's a little thing called the 7-year rule that's going to make sure that doesn't work quite as smoothly as you'd hoped.

Here's the basic idea: you can give away as much as you like in your lifetime, and if you survive for another 7 years after handing over that cash, congrats! No inheritance tax. Your kids get to keep it all, and the taxman gets nothing. Sounds perfect, doesn't it? But - and this is a massive but - if you pop off before the 7 years are up, HMRC is coming for their share. And they're coming fast.

Now, don't think for a second that the government would make this simple. Of course not. It's Britain. We love a good bit of paperwork and a confusing set of rules. So, here's how it works: if you die within 3 years of making that gift, it's treated just like any other part of your estate - bang, full inheritance tax at 40%. Yes, 40% - nearly half of what you thought you'd generously passed on is now lining the Chancellor's pockets.

If you manage to last a bit longer, say between 3 and 7 years, you get what's called 'taper relief', which sounds nice, but is really just a way of making you feel better about still having to pay tax. The rate reduces a bit, year by year, until you finally hit 7 years and your gift becomes tax-free. The closer you get to that magic 7-year mark, the less your heirs will have to fork over, but until then, it's a game of financial Russian roulette. But here's the kicker: this taper only applies to a gift that becomes taxable. It's a taper on the tax itself, not on the gift. So unless you're planning to hand over vast sums of money - enough to actually breach the inheritance tax threshold - you're not going to see a penny of benefit. In other words, for most people, taper relief is about as useful as a chocolate teapot.

Now, before you start thinking about gifting everything to everyone you know and hoping for the best, let's be clear: you can't just give away your house, your savings, or your priceless collection of antique toasters and still live comfortably, expecting to skate through

inheritance tax duty. Oh no. The taxman has thought of that, too. In addition to the 7-year rule, there's something called a 'gift with reservation of benefit', which, in plain English, means if you're still using or benefiting from what you've given away - like gifting your house to your kids but continuing to live in it rent-free - it still counts as part of your estate. So much for outsmarting the system.

But wait, there's more! You've probably heard that you can give small gifts each year without them being hit by inheritance tax. That's true. You can give away £3,000 a year tax-free, and that's on top of the 7-year rule. You can also give away £250 to as many different people as you like each year, which might cover a couple of nice dinners, but it's hardly going to fund anyone's mortgage.

And if you're really feeling generous, you can even give away up to £5,000 to your child and £2,500 to your grandchild as a wedding gift without worrying about inheritance tax. Because nothing says 'congratulations on your marriage' like a tax loophole.

The 7-year rule is a clever way to reduce your inheritance tax bill, but it's not the silver bullet people think it is. You've got to plan it out properly, make sure you actually live those 7 years, and most importantly, not fall into the trap of thinking you can dodge the taxman just by handing over your assets.

So, the moral of the story? Start early. Plan properly. Speak to a solicitor. And for the love of all things sensible, don't saunter into the world of inheritance tax with a last-minute plan that involves gifting your way out like you're the David Blaine of finances. Because HMRC has seen it all - and they won't fall for it.



Anna Boucher, Senior Associate

Anna Boucher is an inheritance tax, wills and probate specialist solicitor at The Burnside Partnership (Combe office). Each month, Anna will share helpful tips on inheritance law, mixing humour with practical advice. If you have any follow-up questions, you can email her at [anna.boucher@theburnsidepartnership.com](mailto:anna.boucher@theburnsidepartnership.com) or call the Combe office on 01865 987781 and ask for her secretary, Bev.

# Oxford Centre for the National Trust

**Lecture 18 February 2025**  
'The Happy Journey: The Ffennells of Wytham ',  
Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street,  
Oxford. All welcome, coffee 10.30, lecture 11am-  
12noon, £7.00 members, £10.00 non-members.

**Lecture 18 March 2025**  
'The Stephen Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities'.  
All welcome, 10.20 coffee, 10.45 AGM, 11am lecture,  
£7.00 members, £10.00 non-members.

## Woodstock 50+ Cinema Club

This Club shows films on the fourth Friday of every month at the Woodstock Methodist Church in Woodstock.

Please come and spend a relaxing morning for a get-together, watch a film, and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, and biscuits.

Jessica, 07384 511698

## Bladon Snippets from the Past

Water had been collected in buckets from The Lince - 2 buckets were managed by a wooden frame on the shoulders. No water was ever collected on the Sabbath Day, a strict Sunday observance. Some folks did have their own well.

Hand operated pumps were then installed, one in Lamb/Heath Lane, the second in place at the Pump House, near to the controlled crossing on the Woodstock Road.

After WWII mains water was brought to Bladon.

Mary F. Sitch

## Green, red, golden brown beech leaves

Green, red, golden brown beech leaves glow on mid-October trees gilded by the rising sun in flickering shafts as day has come.

They fall in still autumnal chill as from the trees they loosely spill and all that's heard, almost no sound, is dew's drip, dripping on dried ground.

Red, golden leaves reflect the sun bathed in orange light now come to fill the morning sky with light beckoning day, now pass the night.

Mason Beah,  
Poetry Society, Chipping Norton Stanza group

# Meme of the Month





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# Woodstock Exhibition Foundation

(Grants for Woodstock young people)

## A Royal visit 450 years ago

In 1575 Elizabeth I visited and stayed for an unprecedented five weeks in Woodstock Manor, which was more like a palace. Today there is nothing left of the Manor but its site is marked by a small stone across the Glyme from the present Palace.

Every year Elizabeth went on a Progress around southern England for one or two months but the 1575 Progress was the longest during her whole reign and lasted 4½ months. She left London in late May and travelled via Theobalds, Hatfield, Grafton, Kenilworth, where she stayed for 18 days, Lichfield, Stafford, Worcester, Sudeley arriving in Woodstock on 29 August. She did not leave Woodstock for Windsor until 3 October.

Her objective was to show herself to her people and promote loyalty from her subjects. She either rode on horseback or in an open litter to be seen by the people who flocked from the countryside and lined the roads. She treated the trips as a holiday from the royal residences in London and recorded that she enjoyed her progresses.

Her officials were less enthusiastic about Progresses! They involved tremendous preparations as in addition to the personnel there were hundreds of carts bearing the baggage which included furnishings for often bare houses, which had to be got ready for the royal visits. The carts had to travel on poor roads which became bad after prolonged rain. Often there was insufficient accommodation for all the Queen's followers, and someone had to ensure that sufficient food and drink was available. Unhelpfully the Queen would often change her mind about the itinerary at the last moment.

In 1540 only four Great Houses could accommodate the whole Court: Whitehall, Greenwich, Hampton Court and Woodstock. These were the only houses owned by the monarch, which had a Great Hall in which the entire Court of up to 600 people could be fed. In fact Woodstock Manor had two Great Halls.

Where was the food sourced? The Park was a source of venison and other game. Anglo Saxon kings regularly hunted from Woodstock and had owned an estate of some 7,000 acres at Bertone, now Barton, which they kept in hand for their own supplies. Barton means literally 'Barley Farm' or 'Corn Farm'.

Running north from Kidlington to Banbury is a main road. Dornford Lane runs straight wide and parallel for 4½ miles from Woodstock northwards. It is between ten to fifteen yards wide. The conclusion must be that the lane was used as a cattle road to bring food south from the Barton estates to the monarchs' hunting ground in Woodstock. There are also ancient fish ponds at Barton Abbey, which may have supplied fish to Woodstock Manor.

By Elizabeth's time the Crown's holdings in Barton were much reduced, but Dornford Lane could well have still been used as a supply route.

To mark the anniversary, on Monday 30 June Dr Alexandra Gajda will be giving a talk in St. Mary Magdalene Church entitled 'Elizabeth I on progress: performance, politics and popularity' to raise funds for The Woodstock Exhibition Foundation. Dr Gajda is the John Walsh Fellow in History at Jesus College and Associate Professor of History at the University of Oxford.

Please make a note of the date in your diary.



The Ditchley portrait of Queen Elizabeth I  
Courtesy of The National Portrait Gallery

# The Oxfordshire Museum

BIRDP

Photographer of the Year



Exhibition Open

11 January to 23 February 2025



Image: Heavenly Elegant Flight by Nicolas Groffal

Our new exhibition runs from 11 January until 23 February 2025. Photographers from all over the world entered more than 23,000 images into the competition. Photographers competed in 8 different categories in the adult competition: Best Portrait, Birds in the Environment, Bird Behaviour, Birds in Flight, Black and White, Urban Birds, Conservation, and Comedy Bird Photo. There is also a separate award for Young Bird Photographer of the year.

Each year, the winning images are exhibited together and embark on an international tour. The exhibition features 70-80 winning photographs accompanied by detailed captions. Free Admission.

## Workshops

We have finalised an exciting series of workshops for 2025 which are available to book online. In January and February, we have Watercolour Painting, Photography Courses, Mosaic Workshops and more. We also have a 5-week Yoga course starting on 16 January with our coach Jess.

For a full list and to book please visit our website: [oxfordshire.gov.uk/museumworkshops](http://oxfordshire.gov.uk/museumworkshops)



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# Woodstock Then and Now

The postcard of Oxford Street was posted in 1905. The recently taken photograph shows the change in the transport and road furniture, but that the buildings and skyline have hardly altered.





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# Panniers

## Everyday cycling in Woodstock and Bladon

Do you have room for one more New Year’s resolution? Most New Year’s goals involve improving health - getting fit, losing weight etc. So in tandem with those worthy aims (forgive the pun) how about resolving to make at least some local journeys by bike?

For those who are able, cycling is a great choice for short journeys, reducing reliance on the car and benefiting the environment and our health. As the Dutch say: 'If it can be done by bicycle, do it by bicycle.'

In Woodstock and Bladon we are lucky to have a great range of shops and services within easy reach - the perfect 15-minute neighbourhood - and getting things done on two wheels will free up car parking spaces for those who really need them.

Most trips are relatively short. However, a government survey in 2023 showed that 38% of trips under two miles in the UK were made by car or van. Those can easily be achieved by bike, or even on foot.

It’s also easy to turn every bike ride into a 'joy ride'. A trip to the post office or the Co-op can include a meandering circular route through Blenheim Park (on paths where cycling is permitted) or an exploration along quiet residential roads.

There is a lot to look forward to on the active travel front in 2025, not least some progress on the county council’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for our area. Some of us will also be stepping up the campaign for an off-road walking/cycling route from Old Woodstock.

Happy New Year and happy utility cycling!

David Walker is a member of Sustainable Woodstock, the Village Travel Network and is a qualified Bikeability instructor



Many local journeys can easily be done by bike

# The Woodstock Society

Doctor Robert Edwards gave the November talk to the society. Robert needs little introduction because he is so well known in the town.

He qualified as a doctor through Cambridge and St Bartholomew’s hospital in London and became a GP at the Woodstock Surgery in 1965. He served the community in this role for over 30 years.

He joined Woodstock Borough Council in 1970 and served on this council for over 30 years too. He was town Mayor 1976 and 1988. He was elected as an Honorary Townsman in 2008.

His talk was entitled “Frank Bevan’s Woodstock in 1932”. Through his slide presentation, Robert described Frank Bevans’ account of prewar Woodstock – who owned the shops, who provided the utilities, who supplied the coal and importantly who was on the town council. It was interesting to see how many more electricity wires crossed out streets then and amusingly how many of the town centre trees were pollarded.

We would like to thank Robert for such an informative talk.

Bob Frost

THE WOODSTOCK SOCIETY

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Sally & Tony Hope



Both are retired medical doctors

Both are authors

Both are authors of a blog on Agatha Christie’s whodunnits

Agatha Christie: Plots, clues & misdirection

8 pm

St Mary Magdalene Church

Park Street, Woodstock OX20 1SJ

VISITORS’ FEE £8.00

Please see [www.woodstocksociety.org](http://www.woodstocksociety.org) for further information on membership and this season’s programme

# Wake Up To Woodstock

## Supporting local businesses and helping our town

As we enter 2025, Wake Up to Woodstock (WUTW) is proud to support local businesses, by creating connections and helping Woodstock be the community and destination its proud of.

2024 was a great year for our association, as we showcased Woodstock’s charm, from its boutique shops and award-winning hotels to its quality restaurants, cafes, and landmarks.

Our valued partnerships with Experience Oxfordshire, Cotswold Tours and OXLEP as well as the ongoing support of Blenheim Palace have helped Woodstock’s profile immensely, which it will continue to do.

As an association, we strive to support our members through our business social and networking mixer events at local venues, where we provide opportunities to share ideas, collaborate, and build stronger connections. Supported with a social media presence which helps to promote our businesses.

In 2024, we were thrilled to welcome several new members, diversifying our business community. This involvement is what makes Wake Up to Woodstock an important collective which we will continue to grow.

Central to our work are the annual events the Woodstock Festive Fayre and A Night of a Thousand Candles, which add a joyful sense of community within the town. We are also proud to promote and support local favourites including Woodstock Live, Mock Mayor and Salon Privé, and the nationally popular Blenheim Game Fair, where we worked to secure discounted tickets for residents in 2024.

Doing more than encouraging visitors from near and far, they enhance connection and belonging.

Looking ahead, 2025 promises to be another good year, as we build on last year’s success by working closely with organisations, expanding our support for members, and enhancing the events that make Woodstock a fantastic place to visit, to live, and to run a business.

To all our members, committee members, and supporters we thank you.

We’d like to welcome our most recent and returning members:

S&J Catering, The Topsy Palace, The Punch Bowl, The Feathers Hotel, Cyrus Mower Photography and the White House Community Pub Bladon.

If you’re a business within the OX20 postcode, we have a membership bracket to cater for all including home working sole traders that could benefit from the support.

A personal thank you from the Chair of Wake up to Woodstock, goes to the committee that works tirelessly and voluntarily to keep this long-standing Woodstock institution going, while running their own businesses:

Here’s to a prosperous 2025 for us all.

Nickie Rogan, Chair of Wake up to Woodstock

## Woodstock Probus Club

We enjoyed an English wine tasting organised by Robert Edwards with the Topsy Palace and held in the Assembly Room at the Town Hall. Desks were laid out all facing our Tutor, Josh, as we were going back to school. We started with a Sparkling number from Woodchester Valley, in the Cotswolds, definitely bubbly and appley. Then JOJO’S from the Chilterns, predominately made with the Bacchus grape giving us a full fruity flavour. A classy rose followed from Devon vineyard Sharpham, almost a blush in colour but fruity with a good level of acidity to remind us of summer. This was voted the best wine. Then finally from our Tutor came a red Pinot Noir called Oasthouse from Kent. Interestingly a lighter red wine with berry flavours including we were told baked peach which was so subtle I missed it. English wine has come a long way in the last 40 years from the early days of imported grape juice to supplement poor harvests, although we were told that way back, the Romans also made wine on our shores. Wonder what that tasted like?

At our Monthly meeting we continued our education in the drinks industry with Richard Sharpe talking on 'Hops, the key to Beer’s flavour'. Richard was a scientist and dazzled us with the brewing process of barley, water, yeast, and hops.

Hop varieties are continuing to be improved and still grown in England, predominantly in Kent. One of my favourite varieties was mentioned - the Golding Hop often associated with a lighter beer with a subtle flavour. We also heard that InBev produce 28% of the worldwide beer production under many different labels while Heineken produce 13% under their single brand. Guinness, which is still UK owned by Diageo, comes in at 1.3%.

Our last event of the year was our Carol Service held in the parish church and organized by John Banbury. We were delighted to once again have the Witney Town Brass Band provide the music to the familiar carols and readings with the service taken by one of our past Presidents, Reverend Dr Stephen Pix.

We are looking forward to 2025 when we are due to hear about The Jet Engine and its Development.

Michael Bowles, Past President



# Woodstock Literature Society

## CALENDAR 2025

**Saturday 18th January 3.00 p.m**  
**John Donne: Poet and Preacher**  
**Professor Peter McCullough**  
**St Mary Magdalene Church.**

**Saturday 15th February 3.00 p.m**  
**From Stage to Page: The Literary Journey of Miguel de Cervantes.**  
**Professor Jonathan Thacker**  
**Woodstock Town Hall.**

**Saturday 22nd March 3.00 p.m**  
**The Dictionary People**  
**Dr Sarah Ogilvie**  
**St Hugh’s Centre.**

**Tuesday 22nd April 8.00 p.m**  
**New Light on Daphne du Maurier**  
**Dr Laura Varnam**  
**St Hugh’s Centre.**

**Thursday 22nd May 8.00 p.m**  
**Muriel Spark**  
**Peter Kemp**  
**Woodstock Town Hall.**

**Thursday 18th June 8.00 p.m**  
**John Ruskin:**  
**A Victorian for our Times**  
**Professor John Holmes**  
**St Mary Magdalene Church**  
**Preceded by our summer party from 7.15 p.m).**

**Thursday 18th September 8.00 p.m**  
**The Spy, the Novel and Ourselves**  
**Philip Gooden**  
**Woodstock Town Hall.**

**Friday 17th October 7.30 p.m**  
**Oscar Wilde on Stage**  
**Professor Sos Eltis**  
**with the assistance of students from**  
**The Oxford School of Drama**  
**St Mary Magdalene Church.**

**Saturday 22nd November 3.00 p.m**  
**The Medieval Christmas in Literature**  
**Dr Helen Appleton**  
**St Hugh’s Centre.**

**Membership: £30 (join at any meeting)**

**Visitors: £8.00**

**Further information:**

**[enquiries@woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk)**

**[www.woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk](http://www.woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk)**

## 1st Woodstock Beavers, Cubs and Scouts

It's been a busy autumn term for our group as we continue to thrive and grow.

Our Beavers started the term working on the Disability Awareness badge which made us all really appreciate the achievements of the Paralympics 2024 athletes. Working on the Personal Challenge Award allowed everyone to tackle something they found difficult and with the International badge they learned about food, flags and language from around the world. We've learned about naval flags used by sailors in the past and visited the Soldiers of Oxon Museum, finding out about how to use morse code. Both of these so very different from using our mobile phones today. All this learning was liberally sprinkled with lots of fun Beavers games.

At Cubs we've been having lots of fun this term completing our Emergency Aid badge with a visit from Woodstock's Police Community Officer which was very exciting, an evening of practising first aid skills (with lots of fake blood!) and talking about how we can manage emergency situations such as what to say if we have to phone 999. Alongside this we've explored Remembrance Day with a visit from Melanie from the Woodstock Branch of the British Legion to prepare for our Remembrance Day parade and had lots of fun making special Diwali cakes to celebrate this important Hindu festival. Lots of fun has been had by all!

Scouts have been working hard to develop our outdoor camping and survival skills with a weekend camp to Hill End near Cumnor at half term. The Scouts achieved their Chef badge during the camp being in charge of planning, buying, cooking and eating their own food for the weekend. Everybody ate well and things even tasted really nice! With dark nights drawing in we're working towards our Astronomer and Astronautics badges exploring the night sky and how humans are exploring space. We had a fun evening creating meteor craters in sand with different sized rocks at different forces, and working out what conditions might be required for extra-terrestrial life across the universe.

Our group is run by a small number of really committed volunteers who deliver a great program of activities. Every now and again we need a little help from the outside. We're on the hunt for a new board member to help us manage our (very limited!) finances. If you have some financial knowledge and can offer us time for four meetings a year and a bit of input with our leaders then contact me, Helen Fina, at 1stwoodstocktrustees@gmail.com. I'd be happy to have an informal chat.

**Helen Fina**

## Woodstock & District u3a

At the Woodstock & District u3a December meeting our speaker was Gloria Camino, who spoke of the history, culture, significance, and beauty of Machu Picchu. Her talk was illustrated by many slides, a number of her own but also historic images from 1911, as well as others. Our January meeting will see Yanto Evans tell us of his experience as he served with the Parachute Regiment and now heads up the Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal.

Our speaker meetings take place at St Hugh's Woodstock on the first Thursday of the month at 2pm – with our February meeting still following a military tack as William French talks about his Life as a butler to royalty and the stars. As a young gunner serving in the Falklands war William French could hardly have dreamed that he would end up on the Royal Yacht Britannia working for the late Queen and her family – an excellent speaker – do save the date – Thursday 6 February – visitor fee £2

Of course it's not just talks - we have many active groups, from Art, through Board Games and Photography, to Walking - full information can be found on the website <https://woodstock.u3asite.uk>. A new innovation is our blogs – which give a better idea of our activities – we look forward to welcoming you into our association.

**Sue Blackshaw**, Chair, Woodstock & District u3a



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## Churches Together in Woodstock and Bladon

'Blue Monday' apart from being the title of a cracking tune by New Order, is the name given to what some have classified as the most depressing day of the year. With dark nights, generally dismal weather, the joy of Christmas and the New Year in the rearview mirror, and the prospect of the bills for the seasonal celebrations arriving; the darkness can feel like it is deepening in our lives as well. 'Blue Monday' this year is due to be the 20th January.

I don't know what frame of mind you will be in come that day. I don't know the pressures you will be facing. The dark clouds that may seem to be looming over your life. In many ways none of us can know the burdens we each bear, but I do know we don't need to bear them alone.

We can walk through life together. So, find someone to share your 'Blue Monday' with if you are feeling burdened and down. Talk, do something you enjoy, eat well, enjoy nature.

You will not be surprised, given the title of this column, to find that I believe there is one person in whom we can find some respite from the 'blues' this January, and that is Jesus, the one who said this:

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

So come the 20th January this year and if the feeling of 'Blue Monday' creeps up on you, consider turning to the one whose promise has endured two-thousand years, and in which many have found a deep reassurance and hope to comfort and sustain each and every day.

**Rev. Andy Mills, Minister of Woodstock Baptist Church**

## Combe Community Cinema

Combe Community Cinema at the Hub, Park Road (next to the playing field), Combe

On **Friday 17 January** we are showing 'One Life', based on the true story of Sir Nicholas Winton, a young London broker who, in the months leading up to World War II, rescued 669 predominantly Jewish children from Nazi Germany. The film stars Anthony Hopkins as the older Nicky Winton in an award-winning role and Helena Bonham-Carter as his formidable mother, Babette. If you haven't seen it, the film is a must. If you have, you will relish it all the more the second time around.

Doors and bar open 7.30pm, screening at 8.00 pm. Tickets £5 on the door. Subtitled.

Further information: [combecommunitycinema@gmail.com](mailto:combecommunitycinema@gmail.com)

## Woodstock - be more Sustainable?

If new to Woodstock, you may not have heard of Sustainable Woodstock ... or perhaps you've heard of us but that's about it. So, who are we? Established in 2008, we are a Community Action Group (CAG) and one of 110 plus CAGs that make up the Oxfordshire CAG Network ([www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk)). Our aim is not just to be aware of climate breakdown and nature caused by human activity but to encourage everyone to do something about it, take action ... as an individual, a family, business, school, church, an organisation, your workplace ... or if you're a landlord considering their tenants. In a nutshell ... we think it's important to be 'meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardising the ability of futures generations to meet their own needs'.

Not everyone has the means or circumstances to make big changes to their lives or homes to lower their carbon footprint and consequently feel they are left out of the conversation with fewer choices. But there are choices and small changes have a collective and positive effect when others join in. Using reusable flasks or cups and not choosing or offering plastic single-use drinks may seem insignificant but the message is clear to business practice. Engaging with the clean energy project (Botley West) in a constructive way, ensuring the process of investment is fairer to the community is important for the future.

So ... we encourage reducing your footprint and reducing greenhouse gases as soon as possible (cause of climate breakdown), promote biodiversity and engage with building a zero-carbon future for everyone now and for those who come after us.

With 64-70% (depending on age and other factors) really wanting more to happen to reduce rapidly greenhouse gases, it's helpful to be involved in positive groups who are not just talking. Take action by supporting local groups like Sustainable Woodstock but there are many more groups. We have no subscription fee and you can simply sign up to our newsletter that will help you stay informed of the activities in our area. There are opportunities to volunteer and feel more involved ... and no matter what your abilities, interests and available time are, there are ways of doing something for climate, nature action and the future. You can start by writing to Woodstock Town Council ([clerk@woodstock-tc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@woodstock-tc.gov.uk)) and ask them to represent the 64-70% and 'declare a climate and nature emergency'. Hope you're ready to take some (or more action) ... and ready to add to your New Year's resolutions? Happy New Year everyone.

Subscribe by emailing that you'd like to add your name to the mailing list [sustainablewoodstockuk@gmail.com](mailto:sustainablewoodstockuk@gmail.com)

**Hilary Brown**

# Woodstock Town Council Election - Thursday 16 January 2025

An election has been called due to the resignation of the three Councillors who joined the Council in May 2024, and resigned about six months later. No reason has been given for their resignations, and we all hope that the new candidates who are successful have better fortunes. The magazine has invited all four of them to say how they think they can contribute to the well-being of the town.

## Maurice Connolly



I feel privileged to have lived in our wonderful Town for 32 years. My family grew up here with my daughter Carys attending Marlborough School, and now, my granddaughter attending Woodstock Primary.

My career has always been within I.T., with my role at retirement being Senior Technical Architect (at Unipart).

My hobbies include travel, theatre, chess, walking and quizzing. My quiz team, Woodstock Social Club, has won the Oxfordshire Quiz Championship for the last two years.

I have attended around 50% of WTC meetings over the past five years and have a particularly good understanding of the issues facing WTC and the Town.

It is plainly obvious that WTC needs to improve its communications, and become far more open and transparent. If elected, I would seek to address these issues urgently.

WTC/WODC have been at fault for not getting adequate community infrastructure for our three large developments, particularly Park View. In comparison to Long Hanborough, we missed a Medical Centre (?), GP Services (£270,124), Sports Hall (£130,330), Swimming Pool (£142,870), Hub (£200,000) and Skate Park (£118,592).

However, I personally obtained the following commitment from WODC's Finance Director - "from communication with the leisure team, they have assured me that all monies secured from developments in Woodstock will be allocated to projects in Woodstock; for example improvements to Woodstock Outdoor Pool and also recommendations to support playing pitches in the town, as set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy."

Recently, I was delighted at being invited to join the committee of the Campaign to Protect Old Woodstock.

If elected, I believe that I can make a very positive contribution to WTC. My election promise is to represent the views of all residents conscientiously and selflessly.

## Nick Melliss



Local health campaigner Nick Melliss calls on fellow residents to join him in turning the Town Council around. Nick Melliss is a key organiser amongst the thirty people who signed a request to force a Town Council election in

January. He tells us what he loves about Woodstock and why it's time for change.

I love Woodstock and believe its residents deserve a strong and active Town Council. There are some problems here that have been going on far too long - like the lack of a decent GP surgery. We need an active Town Council that is focussed on change not infighting. I understand somehow the Council has just spent £4,500 on five 7ft Christmas trees, hardly a good use of residents' money.

Court cases, sudden resignations, rowdy meetings. Our local council has a poor reputation; it's time for a fresh start.

Three Town Councillor seats are vacant. Let's fill them with people who want to work and will work for change.

### What I love about Woodstock.

The pubs are excellent, I like the restaurants, there's a good butcher, a good barber so I can get my haircut at anytime. I even managed to buy my carpets locally. But, like many people with mobility needs or with push chairs, I can barely get into our doctors' surgery. The doctors tell us the service is at breaking point and many opportunities have already been lost to sort it out. Woodstock deserves better. I won't stop campaigning until we've got a new surgery fit for the 21st century.

A better GP surgery is top of my list - but there's a lot more to do. The public library is pitifully small, that needs replacing, and we must improve local democracy so that people can have their voices heard and get the services they need.

## Gergo Szabados



My name is Gergo Szabados, though many of you may know me as Gary. I have had the pleasure of living and working in Woodstock for most of the past 16 years, in our wonderful pubs and restaurants, as well as spending over a decade at Owen Mumford.

I'm excited to announce that I'm running for Town Councillor in the upcoming election on

January 16th, and I would be truly grateful for your support and vote.

I would like to get involved in local projects and initiatives like the OWL, the Water Meadows, and the Community Woodland, as well as creating new ones that engage our children and bring our community together. I believe the Council should focus on what residents want to see, pursuing projects that are both achievable and reflect strong community interest. Ideas like an Outdoor Gym, Community Garden, Litter-picking Days, a Skate Park, or additional sports facilities could all help make Woodstock an even better place to live.

As a parent I also feel that support for the younger generation has been lacking, with too few spaces, opportunities, and activities available to them. We should provide more ways for young people to get involved in sports, try new activities, and learn about nature and its preservation. After all, they will be the ones supporting us in the future, so it's crucial that we help raise well-rounded, responsible individuals.

With all the new developments happening around Woodstock, change is inevitable, even though many locals may resist it. It's important that we find the right balance between progress and preserving the character of our town for its residents.

I hope to have the opportunity to serve you, and I look forward to working together to build a brighter future for Woodstock!

The election will be held on Thursday 16 January 2025 between the hours of 7am to 10pm; voting will take place for all registered local government electors at:  
JN/JP - Blenheim Estate Office, Park Street; JO/JQ - Woodstock Bowls and Tennis Club, Cadogan Park.  
The Counting of the votes will take place at the Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, on Friday 17 January 2025.

# Woodstock Town Council Election - Thursday 16 January 2025

## Barry Wheatley



Some of you will know me, but most will not, I am Barry Wheatley and am standing for election to the Woodstock Town Council on January 16th. If elected, I am looking forward to the opportunity to contribute to the community that has been home to me and my wife and daughter for almost 35 years.

Although my background is in chemical and environmental engineering, I have many years of management both in academia and innovation services and feel that I have the skills and experience to help the Council discharge and improve its responsibilities and services to the local community. Over five decades of professional activity, I have ended up specialising in helping researchers and entrepreneurs grow their projects and business, often overseas. On the way I spent several years as Chair of the Oxfordshire Federation of Small Businesses and its policy chair for the Thames Valley.

Over the recent years I have been active with the Green Party in the County where I am Chair and Treasurer.

I am now winding up my consultancy business and as I move into 'retirement', I'll be spending much less time travelling abroad and I would like to contribute to the well-being of the town that I love.

If elected, I would, amongst other things:

- Do my best to ensure that residents get the best value for money from the Council.
- Add a strong voice to the call for an immediate action to establish a much improved GP's surgery in the near future.
- Support the Town Council in its objection to the Hensington Road Old Police Station being converted to retirement homes.
- Push for infrastructure improvements ahead or alongside of building developments, rather than afterwards (e.g. water supply, sewage treatment, schools, medical services etc).

# Bladon Parish Council News

## New Parish Councillor Sought

Bladon Parish Council is looking to co-opt a qualified volunteer to fill a recent vacancy on the council.

Bladon Parish Council consists of six councillors and a part-time, paid Clerk. We have an average age of 40-ish, come from diverse backgrounds, and are looking for anyone who could bring a little extra to our team. PC meetings are held every second Thursday of the month in the evening, except December and August. If you have an interest in local matters and think you can help, please contact the Clerk or visit our website at [bladon-pc.gov.uk](http://bladon-pc.gov.uk) for an application and more information.

## Responding to the Botley West Solar Farm Application

Like the Parish Councils of all the affected villages, BPC is a statutory consultee to the application and will be responding if, as is likely, the application to PINS is accepted. Residents are also able to comment in a personal capacity but will need to register on the Planning Inspectorate website once the application has been accepted.

Details, as we receive them, will be available to view on the Bladon Parish Council website at [bladon-pc.gov.uk](http://bladon-pc.gov.uk), and sent out to subscribers to our news items. You can subscribe on the front page of our website.

## Information on Blenheim Events that May Impact Bladon

We have added a page to our website where we publish any notices we have received regarding large events held at Blenheim Palace. This page, [bladon-pc.gov.uk/blenheim-events/](http://bladon-pc.gov.uk/blenheim-events/), is regularly updated and includes information regarding traffic management, fireworks and other noise, dates of events including any setup and breakdown, as well as notes on who to contact with any concerns regarding those events. We will also endeavour to post any information we receive onto the Bladon Community Facebook page and send alerts out to users who subscribe to the e-mail update service available through our website.



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# Wootton Village Hall Talks

## Our next speaker at 7.30pm on Friday 17 January is Crispian Steele-Perins

Crispian is an internationally-acclaimed trumpeter who has played with many of the leading ensembles and is renowned for his wit and enthusiasm as a raconteur. He has a large range of antique trumpets from the late 18th century to the 1920s - and he will be talking about (and playing) some of them at his talk.

Receiving critical acclaim over four decades for his purity of tone and subtlety, Crispian has played with the London Gabrieli Brass Ensemble, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English Baroque Soloists, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and the Kings Concert - among many others.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Crispian played a key role in the growth of historically-aware trumpet playing, using a collection of more than a hundred pre-1900 mechanised and 'natural' trumpets to bring a brighter, clearer sound to Baroque performances. In 2015, BBC's CD Choice programme selected his recording of Joseph Haydn's Trumpet Concerto in Eb with the English Chamber Orchestra as the best available recording of the work.

Crispian has also accompanied some of the world's greatest singers, recording Handel's Let the Bright Seraphim with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Eternal Source of Light Divine with James Bowman and Elin Manahan-Thomas. His more recent performances alongside Emma Kirkby, Lynn Dawson, Carolyn Sampson, Bryn Terfel and Lesley Garrett have cemented his international reputation as one of classical music's great ambassadors.

In addition to his work with classical orchestras and period instruments, Crispian has worked in television and film - perhaps most famously he played the theme tune for Antiques Roadshow.

Entry is £10 in cash - and includes free food. Wine and soft drinks are available for a modest donation.



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# Blenheim Palace Visitor Attraction 2024 Report

What a year it has been! Despite the unpredictable weather, we've managed to keep our visitor numbers steady. We've seen a rise in group visits, especially from our friends in the US, although there was a slight drop in annual pass revisits. Overall, our revenues matched our budget, with strong spending in our retail and catering sectors.

We kicked off the year with the Icons of British Fashion exhibition in the Palace, a dream project for our Head of House and Collections, Kate Ballenger. Given Blenheim's history of glamorous parties and fashion shows, this exhibition was a perfect fit. It started small but went viral, reaching a global audience of 6.3 billion! We showcased the work of eleven iconic designers, including Vivienne Westwood, Christian Dior, and Zandra Rhodes, which helped drive strong visitor numbers, even during the rainy season.

In October 2023, we received an initial enquiry from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to host a European Political Summit in March 2024. After a period of silence, the Summit was confirmed for 18th July 2024, leading to an intense period of preparations. This involved 120 working group meetings, 50 roof recces, and countless briefings. We worked closely with the Flower Show, Food Festival, Nocturne Music Festival, The Game Fair, Salon Prive, and numerous hospitality events to ensure everything ran smoothly. With 47 European leaders in attendance this is by far one of the most iconic events Blenheim has ever hosted.

The Game Fair, held from July 26-28, saw an attendance of about 137,000 people over three days. Thanks to excellent traffic management plans, we received minimal adverse comments.

Since taking catering in-house in January 2023, we've seen significant growth. The Orangery, now with a new solid roof, is thriving, and we're excited to supply salad vegetables from the Walled Garden to our outlets. We are very proud to have provided the catering for the European leaders, 500 delegates, 185 close protection officers, and over 700 press members during the European Summit. Local volunteers have been a fantastic addition to the vegetable garden team.

Our new 'Palace and Play' pass, offering unlimited access to Adventure Play, has been a hit with families renewing their annual passes.

Filming resumed after the 2023 writers' and actors' strike, with projects like The Diplomat and an Amazon series, which involved us closing the Palace for several days recently, bringing in substantial income

for our restoration funds. We've also featured in Channel 5's Behind the Grandeur and had Alan Carr filming Interior Design Masters, attracting significant attention.

We've had activities running throughout the year to celebrate 150 years since Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace. Last month, we unveiled a new bronze statue of Winston by Paul Rafferty on the South Lawn – it's magnificent and worth a visit.

Halloween activities, including the Halloween Trail through the gardens, drew strong visitor numbers this year. The Headless Horseman promo in Woodstock was a success. Blenheim at Christmas which opened on the November 17, is bigger and better than ever before. With Neverland in the Palace, an amazing Light Trail, ice-skating rink, big wheel, and the Christmas Market. We are adding £1 to every Neverland ticket and Afternoon Tea as a charitable contribution to Great Ormond Street, who were gifted the rights to Peter Pan by JM Barrie in 1929. Numbers are strong although the weather has not been kind with the high winds and flooding.

We have continued to work with Wake up to Woodstock and other community groups throughout the year with our quarterly e-shots to our Annual Pass holders promoting businesses in the town, sponsoring events, and supplying staff to help set up and dismantle events or to marshal road closures.

Looking forward to next year, we're embarking on our biggest restoration project yet: an 18-month roof restoration that will see a huge white shroud over the main palace roof. The project involves not only repairing the roof, but also significant stone repairs and adapting the roof to cope with the changing climate including the torrential rain pours that we have been seeing. April 2025 will be the 75th Anniversary of the Palace opening to visitors, coincidentally this was also with the aim to raising money to repair the roof.

Exciting times ahead! We're planning new experiences to keep our visitors engaged during the roof works, including turning parts of the basement back into Victorian kitchens, opening more rooms in the Private Apartments for our State Rooms Tour, and creating a roof experience for visitors to see restoration work in progress and enjoy views of the park. Our regular events like the Food Festival, Nocturne, and Flower Show will continue, although the Game Fair will return to Radley Hall next year.

We have busy times ahead and are looking forward to making 2025 another memorable year for Blenheim Palace and our visitors.

Thank you all for your continued support. Let's look forward to another fantastic year ahead!

**Heather Carter**

Recipe of the Month - Johnny Parkes's Wild Mushroom Arancini



Johnny’s childhood was spent growing up in Studley Priory hotel, which at that time was under his father’s ownership. Hospitality runs through his veins. With well over twenty years of experience, Johnny has become one of Oxfordshire’s most highly regarded chefs. His major strengths are writing menus that are exciting, on trend, and delivered to the highest standards. He has also successfully built and retained an exceptionally strong kitchen team during the most challenging time this industry has arguably ever experienced. Johnny has run some top kitchens in Oxfordshire, including The Mole, The Killingworth Castle, The Mole & chicken. Johnny has cooked for the late queen, other royals and the Rothschild’s. Johnny has worked in France, Switzerland and Thailand hence the diversity of his menu and has travelled all over the world. Fun fact: Johnny can make fun from any situation and his Grandad is Ben from Ben’s cookies in Oxford (although his name is Gordon).

Ingredients

- For the risotto base:**  
Tbsp good quality olive oil  
20g butter  
3 cloves of garlic  
1 large banana shallot  
4 sprigs of thyme  
150g arborio risotto rice  
200ml white wine  
1l veg stock
- To finish the risotto:**  
100g grated Parmesan  
1 tsp truffle oil  
300g Wild mushrooms (cooked and chopped)  
150g Chestnut mushrooms (cooked and chopped)  
100g cubed butter  
20g finely chopped chervil/tarragon
- For the crumb:**  
3 x eggs  
40g plain flour  
100g panko breadcrumbs

Method

Heat oil and butter in a saucepan. Add the finely chopped banana shallot, gently cook for 5 minutes. Grate in 3 cloves garlic, add the 4 sprigs of thyme. Add the risotto rice and toast in the pan, constantly moving it for 2 minutes. Add your white wine, cook for 3 minutes. Add the remaining stock, a ladleful at a time as the rice absorbs the liquid, stirring, until the rice is cooked through (this should take about 20-25 mins).

To finish the risotto, add the cubed butter, Parmesan, mushrooms and chopped herbs.

Taste and season to your liking. I like to add white pepper but that’s up to you!

Pour onto a baking tray and put into the fridge until chilled.

Roll the risotto into bite-size balls and pan  /breadcrumbs them. Flour then eggs then breadcrumbs - don’t forget!

Deep fry at 170 degrees until golden brown.

I like to serve mine with a lemon cr  me fra  che but be adventurous with anything you fancy! Please enjoy.

Oxford Bus and Morris Motors Museum

January: a quieter month

We have no events in January after the New Year’s Day running, but the volunteers will be busy working on the restoration projects in the workshop, cleaning the museum and completing the new 1950s garage scene in the Morris Motors museum.

The museum will be open as usual on Sundays and Wednesdays from 10am until 4pm with the last entry at 3 pm.



The first vehicle visitors see on entering the main building is OFC 205. It lies dilapidated in a scrapyard and shows the state in which buses arrive. Thousands did end up as fodder for scrap merchants, but the museum has never acquired a bus from a scrapyard.

Together with 204 and 206, OFC 205 was delivered new by South Midland in March 1950 in red, white and black livery. It was one of South Midland’s 24 AEC/Duple fleet of coaches, which were used on express services, excursions and coach holiday work.

In the early 1950s South Midland operated daily services to London and Worcester throughout the year and summer-only services to Southsea, Margate (jointly with East Kent) and Brighton (jointly with Southdown).

The company also ran eight-day extended tours to:

- Tintern and Wye Valley based in Tintern
- Symonds Yat & Wye Valley, based at Symonds Yat
- The Royal Forest of Dean & Wye Valley, based at Newnham-on-Severn
- The Welsh coast, centred at Porthcawl and North Devon, based at Collingwood Hotel, Ilfracombe.

On 1 January 1950 Red and White sold out to BTC and South Midland was placed under the control of Thames Valley Traction Company.

In 1951, BTC dictated that coach livery should be all-over light cream, relieved only by mudguards painted in the appropriate fleet colour.

OFC 204-206 were sold in January 1959.

Woodstock Lunch Club

Another fulfilling year of sociable and delicious lunches has come to a close. The AGM report at the end of November was very encouraging. We currently have 29 members and served an average of 23 meals at each meeting this year.



During our final get together the members present put together a Christmas tree, with snowflake lights and doves of peace. The doves were decorated with messages of hope, love and kindness. It will be on display at the Woodstock Methodist Church until the 5th of January as part of their Christmas Tree Festival.

Woodstock Lunch Club hopes you had a very merry Christmas and wishes everyone a happy 2025. We welcome new members.

If you would like to find out more please contact Pauline or James on 07756 938559 or 07889 655012.

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# The Marlborough C of E School

## The Marlborough School Senior Citizen Christmas Party

The annual Senior Citizens' Christmas afternoon tea took place on Wednesday 4th of December. We invited local Senior Citizens to Marlborough for a festive afternoon tea, complete with a variety of tempting sandwiches, scones, cakes and traybakes. Our incredible choir treated us to some Christmas carols, which were sung acapella and in four part harmony.



After their performance the guests and student volunteers joined with the choir to sing some more Christmas carols and songs. Finally, after a last cup of tea, the raffle was drawn by Mr Hanlon, and reluctantly we drew the event to an end.

The tea could not have taken place without the sterling work of the Duke of Edinburgh volunteers and the Community and Social Action Group. They helped to make decorations to create a festive atmosphere in the hall, planned the menu and served the tea to our guests. They also took the opportunity to chat with the Senior Citizens whilst Ed, one of our Sixth Form students, played festive tunes on the piano.

We have received many thank you letters from our Senior Citizens with very positive comments about how much they enjoyed the event and the exemplary manners of our students. They also complimented the incredible scones with clotted cream, which were definitely a big hit!

The students who helped are already planning next year's event so if you know of any relatives or neighbours who you think may like to be invited please do let us know by emailing us.

### Shoe Box Appeal

The Year 9 Duke of Edinburgh (D of E) volunteers worked really hard this year to pack 50 shoe boxes with toys, toiletries and stationery items for children in Romania. These children were unlikely to receive any Christmas gifts without these boxes.

The students led a virtual assembly, having recorded an article about the appeal, which was watched by all Marlborough pupils and everyone was invited to donate gifts for the shoe boxes.



The D of E volunteers were overwhelmed by the generosity of Marlborough students, with every tutor group contributing to the appeal. Their excitement when packing the shoe boxes was lovely to watch as they ensured each box contained a pencil case, full of school supplies, and a wash bag, holding a variety of products, as these were the basics that they felt each child should receive. They ensured all boxes also contained a Christmas card with a personal message from The Marlborough School wishing the child a Merry Christmas.

Watching them live out our school values whilst undertaking this project was wonderful as they demonstrated respect, ambition and perseverance. The project was completed in November but definitely helped to get everyone into the Christmas spirit.

## Friends of St Martin's Bladon

The first Patron of the Friends of St Martin's was Lady Mary Soames, the daughter of Sir Winston Churchill, who is buried in our Churchyard. When Lady Soames died, we were delighted when Lady Henrietta Spencer Churchill agreed to take her place.

The role of a Patron is to support the organisation but they are not part of the formal structure running it. On Saturday 25 January 2025 at 2.30pm, it will be obvious to anyone coming, how Lady Henrietta is supporting us. She has agreed to give an illustrated talk on her latest book which covers the history of Blenheim Palace. After the talk, tea and home-made cake will be served and Lady Henrietta's book will be available for sale. The event will be held in the Church Room, Bladon, with parking in the Bladon School playground. Tickets priced at £10, which includes the tea and cake, are available from Mollie Hance in Woodstock (Tel: 01993 811354) or Chris Corser (Tel: 01993 813071) and Robin Jones (Tel: 01993 811484) in Bladon, or from the Woodstock Bookshop.

## Permitted Development and Home Extensions

I am often asked by people who are thinking about extending their property and have assumed that, because the extension that they are considering falls within the limits of permitted development, no planning approval is required and that they can just get on with it.

Permitted development applies to the enlargement or other alterations to a dwelling, provided that it is not listed or located in a conservation area, a national park or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or Site of Special Scientific Interest for larger homes, and only applies to houses and not maisonettes, flats, or other buildings. There may also be other restrictions known as Article 4 directions applying to a particular property.

Extensions to the front of the property do not fall within permitted development, but some side extensions may be permitted development. Verandahs, balconies and raised platforms are not permitted development and will require planning permission, although Juliet balconies, where there is no platform and therefore no external access, would normally be permitted development.

Permitted development rights apply to specific types of dwellings, and this is where it can get a bit complicated. Single-storey rear extensions must not extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by more than 3 metres if it is a semi-detached or terraced house or no more than 4 metres if a detached house. Original house means the house as it was first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948 (if it was built before that date). Although you may not have built an extension to the house, a previous owner may have done so. In 2015 planning legislation was amended to increase these limits to 6 metres and 8 metres respectively.

Whilst it is correct that Planning Approval is not required if the proposed extension falls within the relevant permitted development criteria, a different kind of approval is required from the local planning authority, confirming that the proposed work is indeed permitted development. For extensions of up to 3 metres for semi-detached or terraced houses and up to 4 metres if a detached house, a Lawful Development: Proposed Use application is required. For extensions under the 2015 planning legislation, a Prior Approval: Larger Home Extension application is required, and will include consultation with neighbouring properties. In both scenarios, the local planning authority must be notified with the relevant application before the development commences. Supporting information in the form of existing and proposed plans and elevations of the proposed extension must accompany the application.

If the local planning authority decides that the work does not fall within permitted development limits, then a Householder Planning Application will be required for the work. If an extension has been built without either a Lawful Development Certificate or a Prior Approval Notification, the local planning authority can require a Householder Planning Application to be submitted for approval. If planning approval is not obtained for an extension already built, and an Appeal against the decision is dismissed by the Planning Inspector, the local planning authority can issue a Planning Enforcement Notice against the construction of an illegal building, requiring it to be demolished at the householders expense.

Permitted development doesn't just apply to extensions and includes the installation of solar panels or other alterations to the roof of a house such as dormers or the alteration or replacement of a chimney, as well as outbuildings, swimming pools and even LPG or oil containers.

So as you can see permitted, development isn't as straightforward as it appears. The technical guidance runs to 50 pages! If you're thinking about a project and would like some guidance, I would be happy to help - see the contact details in my accompanying advertisement.

Jan Liberadzki BA Arch (Hons), MSc

### JLDA

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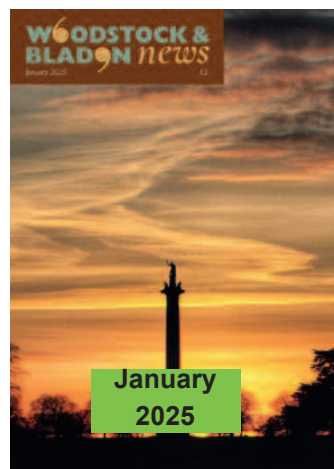
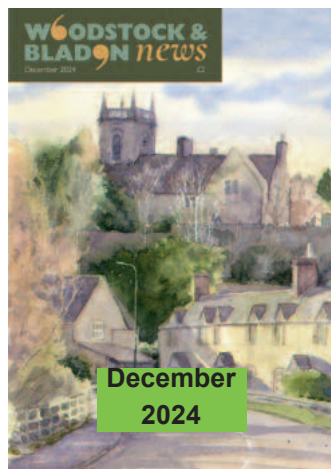
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The first five issues of this year's magazine have been blessed with wonderful front covers, showcasing the quality of talented artists that Woodstock and Bladon have to offer. The Editor's thanks goes to:

Rod Craig (Sept 2024); Pete Seaward (Oct 2024); Caroline Gibson (Nov 2024); John Somerscales (Dec 2024); and Trisha Marie (Jan 2025)

Who is going to be showcased in the next issue? If you would like to suggest some artwork or photographs, please Email [editor@wobl.news](mailto:editor@wobl.news). The main criteria is that the image has to be based on Woodstock, Bladon, or Blenheim Palace.



## Regular Events

This is a new section where regular events will be listed. If you would like your event included here, please send an email to [editor@wobl.news](mailto:editor@wobl.news).

### Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

The Friends hold regular talks and events, which will all be listed in What's On

### Kings Arms / Mandolirium

Listen to our local group in our local pub, usually every second Thursday at 6.30pm

### Singing for Fun

This takes place at St Mary Magdalene Church every 1st Monday of the month at 2pm

### Woodstock Lunch Club

Lunches are held in the Community Centre every 2nd Wednesday, starting from Wednesday 15 January

### Woodstock 50+ Cinema Club

This Club shows films on the fourth Friday of every month at the Woodstock Methodist Church.

### Woodstock Jazz

These events are usually monthly, on the last Friday of each month. The actual events will be listed in the What's On section.

### Woodstock Literature Society

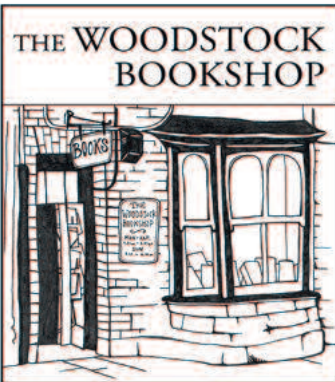
This well established society hold regular talks and events, which will all be listed in the What's On section

### Woodstock and District u3a

All events are listed in What's On

### Wootton Village Hall Talks

These take place monthly, and will be listed in What's On



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## What's On

For the latest information, please click on the Events link at [www.wobl.news](http://www.wobl.news).

If you would like your event included here, please send an email to [editor@wobl.news](mailto:editor@wobl.news).

### Thursday 02 Jan 2025, 14:00

Woodstock and District u3a - Talk  
Yanto Evans of the Royal British Legion, will talk of his experiences in the Falklands War in 1982, where he served with the Parachute Regiment.  
St Hugh's Centre

### Wednesday 08 Jan 2025, 19:30

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk  
'Chef to 4 Prime Ministers'. Speaker: Alan Lavender  
Coach House, Oxfordshire Museum

### Wednesday 15 Jan 2025, 11:30

Woodstock Literature Society - Open Book Group  
Discussion of 'Staying On' by Paul Scott  
Woodstock Town Hall

### Saturday 18 Jan 2025, 15:00

Woodstock Literature Society - Talk  
Professor Peter McCullough on 'John Donne: Poet and Preacher'  
St Mary Magdalene

### Friday 31 Jan 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music  
Tommaso Starace: Tremendously exciting 'saxophony' - in Italian!  
St Hugh's Centre

### Wednesday 05 Feb 2025, 19:30

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk  
'The Life and Achievements of Lord Nuffield'.  
Speaker: Frank Collingwood  
Coach House, Oxfordshire Museum

### Thursday 06 Feb 2025, 14:00

Woodstock and District u3a - Talk  
William French - Life as a butler to Royalty and the stars  
St Hugh's Centre

### Saturday 15 Feb 2025, 15:00

Woodstock Literature Society - Talk  
'From Stage to Page: The Literary Journey of Miguel de Cervantes': Professor Jonathan Thacker  
Woodstock Town Hall

### Friday 28 Feb 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music  
Hugh Turner Band: Jazz Gets Funky with Guitarist Hugh Turner & Pianist Maff Potts  
St Hugh's Centre

### Thursday 06 Mar 2025, 14:00

Woodstock and District u3a - Talk  
Robert Brewer: The Roles of a TV/Film Extra.  
St Hugh's Centre

STOP PRESS

**Bereavement Cafe:** The next Bereavement Cafe at St Mary Magdalene Church will take place on 17 January at 3pm and will provide a space to talk about the pain of loss and to find mutual support and encouragement.

**Town Council Elections:** Please don't forget to vote on Thursday 16 January - details of the candidates and where to vote can be found on Pages 28 and 29.

**WOBL:** The next issue will be a Feb/March issue and will be published on Friday 14 February 2025

**OXTWO:** The Back Lane Tavern is opening a new restaurant called OXTWO in Summertown Wine Bar at the end of February, with executive chef Johnny Parke at the helm, with a tapas style sharing plate menu largely cooked over charcoal. The venture is a 50/50 collaboration between Summertown Wine Bar and Brewmish (who run The Back Lane Tavern and The Duke).

**The Feathers:** Will be closed until mid January due to the building of an extension to the bar/conservatory. And let's hope their electricity supply issues get sorted soon so that the noisy generators can be removed from the front of the hotel, and that the town can recover much needed parking spaces which have been lost for about a year.

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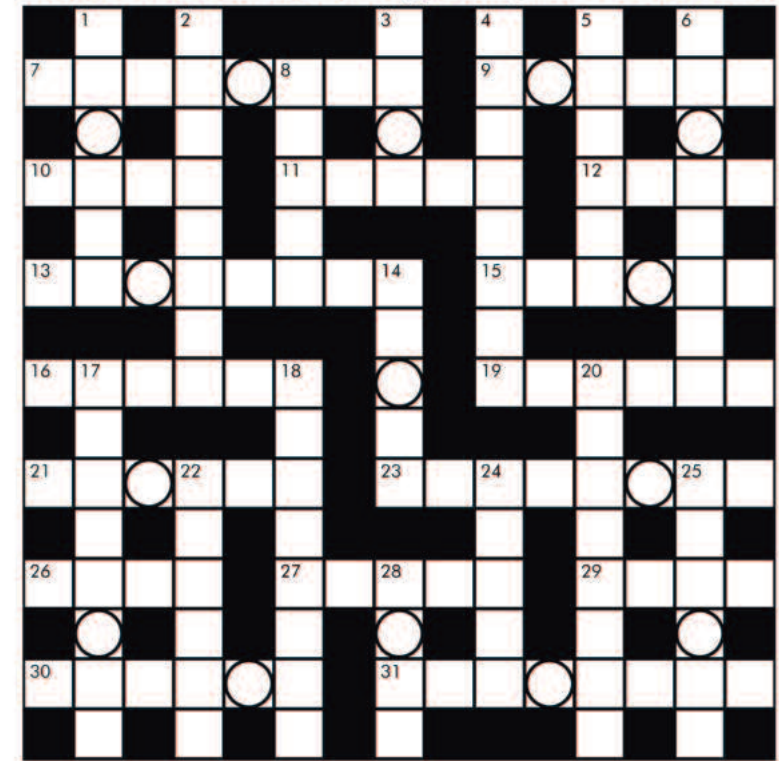
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Solve the clues to this straight crossword. Read through the letters in the marked squares to reveal an event that is happening in Woodstock on 31st July 2025.



- Across
- Down
7. Counter-argument
1. Fatalities
9. Shown
2. Fungal growth
10. Engrave
3. Bone of the forearm
11. Mental picture
4. Magnificent
12. House servant
5. Usual
13. Betrothal
6. Pause
15. US currency
8. Branchlets
16. Postage marks
14. Cargoes
19. Excavator
17. Simple shape
21. Movie theatre
18. Stop flowing
23. Fellow feeling
20. Protector
26. Ignore
22. Set out on a ship
27. Spiteful
24. Civic official
29. Herb
25. Head protector
30. Purplish-red colour
28. Strongbox
31. Abandoned

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