

WOODSTOCK & BLADON *news*

August/September 2025

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23rd-24th 2025

WEEKEND LINE-UP

Friday 22nd

4:00-5:00pm Matthew-Jack - The Woodstock Arms
Daniel Moseley - The Back Lane Tavern 5:00-6:30pm
6:30-8:00pm Mandolirium - The Kings Arms Hotel
Tom Rogers - The Crown 8:00 - 10:00pm

Saturday 23rd

Jordan Bass, Children's Entertainer 12pm
The Marlborough School Bands 1pm
Alisa Apreleva 2pm
The Holy Fools 3pm
Mid Air 4pm
Harry and DNNY 5pm
Steady Habits 6pm
Balkan Wanderers 7pm
Marlia Rae 8pm
The Shakes 9pm

Sunday 24th

Jordan Bass, Children's Entertainer 12pm
Meadowsuite 1pm
One Trick Donkey 2pm
Tim Friers 3pm
Small Claims and Friends 4pm
Hannah Speller & Jamie Felton 5pm
Bankside 6pm
Papa Nui 7pm
What The Funk 8pm
Mambo Panthers 9pm



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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of my second year as Editor. We have a bumper issue - an extra 8 pages this month. There are many new features for you to enjoy, which I will leave you to discover for yourselves.

The front cover is unapologetically very similar to last month's - another painting of the alley between the Town Hall and Brothertons, this time from John Somerscales. I included it this month as it was a favourite of a good friend of many of us, Guy Rumsey, who sadly died on 21 July. It was the only painting that he took into his care home just before he passed away, and I am happy to dedicate its reproduction in the Magazine to the memory of Guy. He will be very greatly missed by his wife Leslee, and all his many friends.

I have also written a review of the British Transplant Games on Page 7. This was another inspiring event on our doorstep, with heroic stories of illness and recovery, and sadness and joy. Seeing an 8 year old running 5km with a donated kidney, and racing to the finishing line is a memory that will live with me for a long time. The Games highlighted the incredible skill and care that we are so lucky to have in our community with our surgeons, doctors, nurses, and carers.

There is quite a lot of feeling in the following pages - in the letters and articles. I think this is a good thing for our community. We may not agree with everything that others write, but I passionately believe that everyone should have a right to say what they think. We must learn to acknowledge and appreciate different view points.

With many thanks to all those who have put their heads above the parapet to contribute to our local magazine.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor

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This month's front cover shows a watercolour 'Cafe Culture' by John Somerscales.

To see more of John's work, please visit www.jdsomerscales.co.uk

Answers to the July Crossword - The event happening on Saturday 19 July was 'Mock Mayor Election'
Across: 1. strimmer, 5. oaring, 10. acorn, 11. grand duke, 12. threesome, 13. theta, 14. onus, 15. staircase, 18. energetic, 22. poor, 24. nyala, 26. stevedore, 27. giddiness, 28. idiot, 29. return, 30. cashmere.
Down: 1. Sparta, 2. Rio Grande, 3. monkeys, 4. engross, 6. auditor, 7. in use, 8. grey area, 9. favela, 16. apologise, 17. teenager, 19. glazier, 20. tossed, 21. Chelsea, 22. peevish, 23. centre, 25. audit.

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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, and the price will remain the same for 2025/2026.

It can be purchased at Blenheim Palace, Mary and Martin's Newsagent, Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock Bookshop, Woodstock Grocers, and Wootton Stores, and from this month from Alex's new cafe in Park View. It can also be delivered - 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.

For those who elect to have the magazine delivered, please renew as soon as possible.

Please write for our magazine

Send your contributions to: editor@wobl.news

The next issue will be an October one, and copy deadline is **Sunday 14 September 2025**.

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

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Woodstock Natural History Society

Celebrating 50 Years of Nature, Knowledge, and Community

The Woodstock Natural History Society (WNHS) marks its 50th anniversary - a milestone that highlights five decades (1975-2025) of sustained interest in the natural world among the residents of Woodstock, Oxfordshire. Established in 1975, we have maintained a consistent presence in the community, offering regular opportunities for education, observation, and engagement with local flora and fauna.

The society was founded to provide a forum for those interested in natural history, regardless of their experience. Over the years, it has evolved into an inclusive organisation that hosts a variety of activities designed to foster greater understanding and appreciation of the environment.

Regular Meetings and Talks

We hold monthly meetings from September to May, usually on the second Tuesday of each month at St Hugh's Hall on Hensington Road. These meetings feature illustrated talks by guest speakers covering a broad range of topics, such as conservation practices and pressures, local ecosystems and plants, bird migration, and species identification. The format is informal, yet informative, encouraging questions and discussion among attendees.

These evenings also provide a relaxed social atmosphere, where members can catch up over refreshments and share their interests informally. Membership is open to all, with a modest annual fee (£18) and a small charge for non-members who attend individual meetings. We aim to make natural history accessible to a general audience while retaining a commitment to accuracy and scientific relevance.



Guided walk at Gibbets Close, Wychwood Forest Trust Reserve

Walks, Field Visits and Special Outings
Beyond our indoor events, we organise field

excursions that offer direct engagement with nature. These outings typically take place during the warmer months and allow participants to observe our local wildlife and its habitats. Walks are not only opportunities to observe wildlife, but also to enjoy one another's company - many include a pub lunch or refreshments along the way.

We also coordinate outings to locations of ecological and educational interest, such as nearby nature reserves, woodlands, meadows, organic and alternative farms, and visits to various departments of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, and other museums and exhibits. These excursions provide additional context and depth for those looking to expand their understanding of natural systems.

Contributions to Biodiversity Recording

Traditionally, our society has played an active role in citizen science by collecting and submitting wildlife observations to national and regional databases. Members contribute data to the Oxfordshire Biological Records Centre and the National Biodiversity Network Atlas, as well as national recording schemes for birds, bats, plants and butterflies.

Key recording areas include the Woodstock Water Meadows, Blenheim Park, and several other nearby nature reserves and sites known for their ecological value. These records assist conservation organisations and local authorities in making informed decisions about land use, habitat protection, and species conservation.

Anniversary Activities in 2025

To commemorate our 50th anniversary, we are undertaking several community-focused initiatives. We are producing a nature trail pamphlet, supported by funding from the Woodstock Town Council, to guide residents and visitors through selected local nature sites and features. Additionally, we will be planting an anniversary tree in the grounds of the Oxfordshire Museum, symbolising our long-standing presence and commitment to environmental stewardship.

We are also planning an art exhibition titled 'Our Natural World' kindly hosted by St Mary Magdalene Church in Woodstock from Tuesday 28 October - Saturday 1 November. This event will feature artwork from pupils at Woodstock's Primary School, the Marlborough School, and the Primary School in Bladon, and will offer a creative interpretation of nature through the lens of younger generations.

Community Engagement and Fundraising

We are also known for our coffee mornings, which serve as both social gatherings and fundraising opportunities. These events typically include the sale



Guided walk at Hinksey Heights Nature Reserve

of homemade cakes, preserves, and plants, alongside a raffle, and a friendly chat. These sociable events help strengthen our sense of community, making new members feel welcome and long-standing members feel valued. Proceeds go to local environmental initiatives, reinforcing our commitment to supporting conservation at a community level. Over the years we have planted many trees both within and around the town, and we hope this will be a legacy for the society, and a meaningful contribution to our natural world.

Forward Outlook

Looking ahead, we intend to broaden our outreach efforts, particularly toward engaging younger

audiences and families. Talks for the remainder of the year include the ecology and care of orchids (Sept.), the life and death of the Great Auk (Oct.), and conservation in Arctic Greenland (Nov.). There are several outings planned, and the member's Christmas social includes a fun quiz. We are also planning to digitise historical wildlife records and enhance collaborative partnerships with other organisations. We are exploring technological tools, such as the eBird app, and digital databases, as a way of supporting ongoing biodiversity monitoring while preserving our traditionally low-tech, community-oriented approach.

We continue to serve as a local platform for environmental learning and community involvement. As we celebrate our 50th year, we remain focused on our core values: education, observation, and stewardship of the natural world. Our activities - from talks and walks to recordings and outreach - illustrate how a small local group can make a meaningful contribution to the broader effort of understanding and protecting nature. As always, we look forward to sharing both our knowledge and our companionship through these enriching activities. For updated information please see our regular column in WOBL, and several parish magazines, or email us at contactWNHS@gmail.com.

Adrian J Delnevo, Chair, WNHS



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architectural design

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WE HAVE MOVED TO MARKET STREET!

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The Editor's Review

Oxford, 31 July to 3 August, 2025

I first learnt of the British Transplant Games and the transplant world when I was invited to Coventry in July 2023, as Mayor of Woodstock. I attended the opening ceremony, and then went again in 2024 to Nottingham. The idea for 2025 was that the opening parade would start in Woodstock and finish in the Great Courtyard at Blenheim Palace; practicalities meant that the organisers sensibly decided to keep the event within Blenheim grounds.



*The Opening Ceremony in Blenheim's Great Courtyard
All photos credit: richardhallphoto.com*

This year, the opening ceremony was attended by 2,000 people, and was hosted by Susie Dent. Two performers sang for us - Adam Isaac and Blossom Martin - both with heart-wrenching personal stories of their illnesses and recovery. On Saturday, Blenheim again hosted the 'Donor Run' - 2,500 athletes of all ages and abilities. The sunshine was in abundance on both days, as was the joy of all who took part, and those who were there as volunteers or spectators.

The memory that will linger with me is the spirit of everyone - there was no sadness on display, just a feeling of quiet heroism, togetherness, and friendship. Despite what must have been thousands of individual stories of despair, sadness, death, hope, recovery - in fact every human emotion and condition possible - there was no sign of their medical conditions and travails on anyone's face. There was instead hope, thankfulness, and friendship amongst all who took part. It was truly life changing and put into perspective my own daily worries and concerns.



Adam Issac at the Opening Ceremony

Three of the aims of the games are to 'raise awareness of the importance of Empowering Transplant recipients to optimise their gift of life through an active lifestyle; to demonstrate the life changing and saving impact of organ transplantation; and to raise awareness about the transformative power of organ donation.'



The finishing line at the Donor Run in front of Blenheim Palace

Please visit the website to find details of how you can help this wonderful organisation that I was proud to be involved with over the past two years. And finally, please consider registering as a NHS Organ Donor.

On a local note, our own WOBL contributor David Walker came to the rescue and supplied the lead bike, and many thanks are due to Blenheim Palace, their events team and staff, and our own local volunteers.

Congratulations to all who took part - you are truly inspirational.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Climate Alarmism

In the last issue of this magazine an article from *Sustainable Woodstock* (Page 15, July 2025 issue) opened with quotes on climate change from Calum Miller MP and Prof. Alex Rogers respectively, which included the following:

'I regard it as probably the greatest generational challenge that our generation faces' (CM), and *'Climate change is a global emergency and the results of ignoring it will be nothing short of a calamity on the scale of a world war for humanity and for the environment'* (AR).

I am no longer surprised by wild overstatements of this kind on this subject. Climate alarmism has become an ideology, fervid and brooking no discussion, let alone dissent. But in my opinion, and the opinion of many more scientists than is generally acknowledged, statements such as these are not founded in science. They carry national economic risk and need to be challenged.

When I wrote an article for your magazine criticising Botley West in this vein (*Follow the Money*, Page 7, May 2023 Issue) I was requested by the previous Editor to supply all my supporting sources, which I did.

Perhaps this admirable rigour should equally be applied to expressions of climate alarmism?

Giles Lewis

Dear Editor

Yes to solar energy, but no to Botley West Solar Farm

The Woodstock and Bladon News has fulfilled a vital role in the debate over Botley West Solar Farm. Given the scale and frequency of catastrophic floods and fires caused by changes in the climate, virtually all those who oppose Botley West Solar Farm recognise the urgency of changing to green energy. The grounds for our opposition are that we have not seen a convincing case for destruction of the land we cherish around our homes. In July 2025, the excellent article by Professor Stephen Westaby focused on the risk that development poses to safe use of our local airport. But for me, what was most troubling, was this reported exchange:

Question to a representative of the Photovoltaic Development Partners (PVDP) at a village consultation event: 'Why cover thousands of acres of Oxfordshire green belt and agricultural land with solar panels given that there are abundant sites elsewhere?'

Answer: 'Because that's what Blenheim gave us'.

The private finance of Botley West Solar Farm means that the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has not been required to undertake option appraisal as required for public capital by the Treasury's Green Book (1). There has been no development of a long list, evaluation of to determine a short list, and evaluation of the short list to justify the recommended option. The Green Book requires these evaluations to identify constraints and dependencies and critical success factors and undertake social cost benefit analysis. That begins by evaluating options of criteria that can be quantified and given monetary values (e.g. costs of construction). But Green Book emphasises the importance of evaluation options of criteria where quantification is problematic and there are no direct way of giving them a monetary value: e.g., impact on enjoyment of the countryside. I could not find in the Green Book any recommendation for choosing a site because it was offered by a large local landowner.

Gwyn Bevan

Reference: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>

Dear Editor

Mock Mayor

Nothing could ever put a dampener on Mock Mayor celebrations, held this year on 19th July. Callum Miller, our local MP, was put into the dock of the mock court, where he dealt with good-natured charges with charm and humour. This, however, was not the highlight of the mock court proceedings.

The last defendant in the dock was a rather desperate-looking Christmas tree. It was accused and found guilty of extorting £5000 from Woodstock Town Council. What was most notable was not the tree as such, but the absence of a single member of Woodstock Town Council to speak on the matter. Despite a request sent in advance, no councillors volunteered to attend the mock court, even though at least one member was seen by many to be enjoying the proceedings. In the Town Council meeting held three days later the mayor said that she had messaged organisers of the Mock Mayor and expressed a hope that it wouldn't rain.

It didn't rain; and in fact the sunshine got stronger throughout the afternoon. Perhaps a sign that in matters of council spending and Christmas trees, more light should be shone on the issue.

Yours sincerely, Anonymous

Dear Editor,

Doctors Surgery

I assume that all residents have received a letter from Councillor Grant about the Doctors' surgery and asking us for our thoughts on locating it at the old Thames Valley Police (TVP) site.

I replied by receipt (2 August) about the content which, in my view, didn't disclose all the information needed for residents to provide a considered response. Here are my thoughts:

- You acknowledge that the landowner (Blenheim) does not support the use of this location following advice from a specialist consulting architect. What you failed to mention is that the TVP location isn't supported by the Doctors either - 'A further meeting with Dr Becker noted that he was strongly against this site' (as reported on page 14 of Woodstock and Bladon News July 2025). The TVP site was also ruled out at the first Town Meeting about the surgery held at the church in November 2024'.
- Another key fact, missing from your letter, is that the currently refused planning application for the TVP site is being appealed to The Planning Inspectorate. Coincidentally I received a detailed letter today about the appeal from McCarthy & Stone's advisors which anyone commenting on the plan will also have received. I opposed the original application and I will consider, with interest, the revised plans and the approach that is being taken to the appeal by McCarthy & Stone.
- Some of the points raised in your letter under 'Motion 1 a) to g)' have no supporting evidence and point d) ['the site is already on a bus route to accommodate the 60% of patients living outside the Town'] implies that all the outlying villages in the surgery's catchment are served by a bus to Woodstock. Even if they are, and many are not, getting a bus at a suitable time for an appointment can be very difficult as anyone living in a village can testify. Driving is already a necessity for many patients.

It appears that despite the Town Council either not understanding or explaining why the landowner, the Doctors and the wider 'Stakeholder Steering Group' are all opposed to the TVP site, the Town Council want to spend time (and presumably taxpayers' money) opposing it and encouraging us to do likewise. As noted above, there is also an appeal underway which, whether we like it or not, could be successfully determined in a matter of months making residents opinions irrelevant should it be successful for the Appellant.

I would personally love to be able to continue to walk to a surgery but, if the combined expertise of the Doctors, the Integrated Care Board, OCC, and WODC are opposed to the TVP site, then they

have my support in finding somewhere suitable for all the patients not just the 40% who live in Woodstock.

I very much look forward to the next Town Meeting (November 2025?) and to be able to hear from the Steering Group on what progress is being made.

Chris Coe

Dear Editor,

London Kidlington Airport close to Solar Panels

I am a Flying Instructor who has taught trainee pilots from Oxford Airport at Kidlington - an excellent training centre for novice pilots, many of whom go on to careers in commercial aviation. During my time instructing there, I was in no doubt that it is one of the safest learning environments for many reasons, not least the surrounding countryside that offers a reassuring choice of emergency landing areas in the event of any technical issues.

With safety in mind, I am dismayed to see that the Botley West developer proposes to install thousands of solar panels so close to an exceptionally active airfield with mixed traffic, from learner pilots in single engine aircraft to helicopters and the largest of private jets.

In response to a recent engine-related emergency landing in a field just beyond the end of the southerly runway, the developers have removed a 'wedge' of the proposed solar panels roughly in the direction that an aircraft would be pointing, with the aim of making any engine failure after take-off safer. While this is obviously a positive move, it unfortunately assumes that all such engine failure incidents happen in the textbook fashion, which unfortunately they don't.

The standard departure procedure for single-engined light aircraft is to climb to 1000 feet above sea level before a right turn along the railway line and continuing to climb to no higher than 2000 feet until the aircraft is at least 5 miles from the airport. During this take-off phase the pilot has to be aware of potential engine failure and be prepared to take very decisive action.

Most training aircraft can glide without the engine with a descent rate of approximately 500 feet per minute, giving a maximum time of approximately 3.5 minutes for the pilot to identify a suitable field, manoeuvre the aircraft safely towards the field, carry out essential security drills, potentially deal with passengers, and make Air Traffic Control aware of the situation.

This routine is practiced many times during training until it becomes instinctive, however the one thing the pilot has no control over, no matter how good the training, is the choice of available landing sites.

To cover so many fields close to the airport and the pilot training area with solar panels would severely restrict the options available in this situation.

I don't wish to overstate the risks of an engine failure as it is fortunately a rare event. However, options need to be available and should the unthinkable happen, I have always been satisfied as a Flying Instructor that those options exist at Oxford Airport.

Another important consideration - the physical effects of large numbers of solar panels close to the landing/take-off areas cannot be understated. In hot weather they can create serious turbulence and glare which can very easily upset the approach of a light aircraft, particularly for a student or low-hours pilot. I have instructed at other airfields close to solar farms, much smaller than the proposed Botley West plans, and have had to take emergency control from a student pilot as the invisible thermals suddenly disrupt a nice approach.

One final point: I have previously worked as a member of the emergency services and the thought of a rescue operation to retrieve injured people from the midst of a solar farm fills me with dread. I struggle to think of how it could be achieved without severe risk to all concerned, including the emergency responders.

Anonymous

Editor's Note: The identity of the anonymous letters, both local residents who wish to remain anonymous, have been validated by the Editor.

Bach in Bladon
A magical performance of Bach's cello suites in Bladon Church



On Sunday 13 July in Bladon Church there was a memorable performance of a selection of movements from Bach's suites for cello by Lynden Cranham. She has taught cello at Cornell University; and played with the leading groups celebrated for their sparkling performances of baroque music, including the

Academy of Ancient Music, the English Baroque Soloists, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Lynden played a German cello (circa 1750) and, for the final suite, a five string cello especially made for her by Shem Mackey.

Bach's suites are wonderful to listen to, but formidably difficult to play. They became famous from the classic recording of Pablo Casals. It is wrongly said that he discovered these for the first time in Barcelona in 1890, when he was 13 years old. Lynden's playing was illuminated by her son, Tom Parker, who has deep knowledge of these masterworks. He studied and played the cello at Lancaster University and now teaches and plays cello: he is a member of Chichester's consort of Twelve and the Orchestra of the City. He had stepped in at three hours' notice to stand in for his father, Roger Parker, the distinguished musicologist. Tom explained that there is no original score in Bach's hand. The two scores that are available differ so Lynden has to decide the music she wants to play. Tom explained that Bach's suites followed a similar structure, which after the introduction had movements after dances: e.g., Sarabande (slow) and Gigue (or Jig) fast - but this is not music to dance to.

All who were there on 13 July felt so privileged to have a great musician giving a magical performance one of the great masterworks in our local church enhanced by what we learned about the suites from Tom. We are also grateful to Lynden and Tom and as their concert raised nearly £600 for Bladon church.

You can hear Lynden play this great music as she has recorded the six suites on two CDs, in the beautiful small church of St Peter and St Mary in Fishbourne, West Sussex, with its warm, intimate acoustic. They are recorded by Willowhayne Records (Catalogue number: WHR075).

Gwyn Bevan



Blenheim Park Cricket Club thanks its supporters



The summer has come off the boil but it was a perfect evening on the south lawn of the Palace when the club gathered to thank its Sponsors, VPs and supporters.

Sports clubs struggle, so the generous donations from our sponsors: Volare, Gallagher, Bower&Bailey and The Back Lane Tavern are greatly appreciated. Equally so the contributions of our VPs from the town and the surrounding area who also financially support the club. With their help over the last few years we have been able to replace our aging essential equipment such as Roller and lawn tractor.



So, we were delighted, with support from our hosts the Palace, to be able to entertain the fifty attendees on a perfect English summers evening on the south lawn. The guests were treated to a free bar and fantastic catering from our Teas provider this year, Sally Brown at S&J Catering. What better way to spend a summers evening than with friends watching BPCC beating the Palace staff team in a friendly.

The club are actively looking to grow so if you want to play Sunday cricket in Woodstock please do come and talk to us.

David Hughes

The Woodstock Society

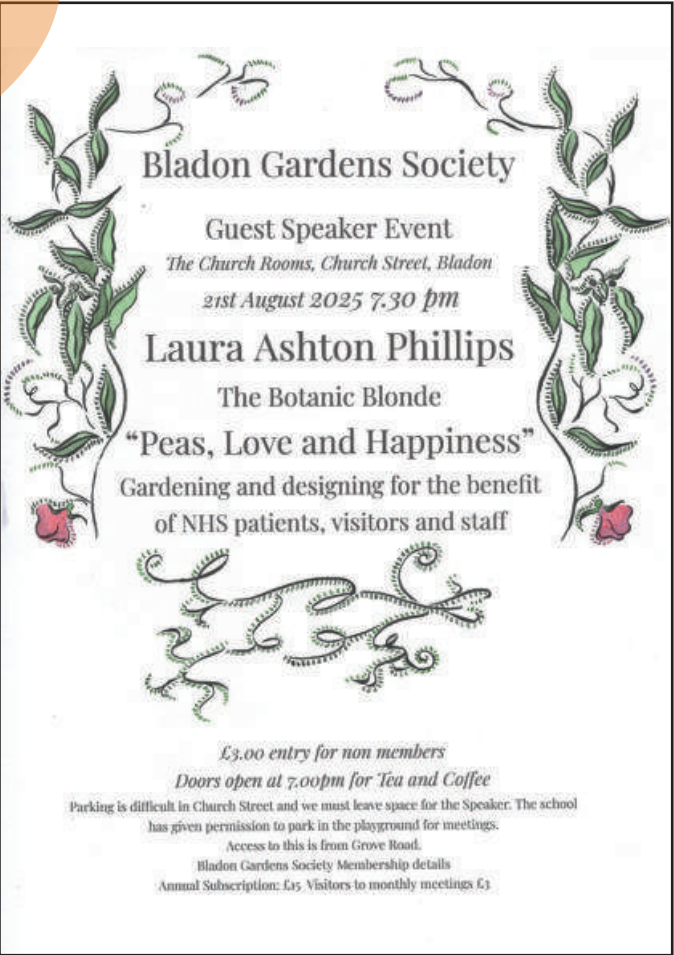
We have just completed a very successful season of nine talks which we trust members and guests have enjoyed. I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their hard work in organising and staging them.

We now turn our attention to the new season and we have a great programme planned. You can find details of the 2025-26 season's talks and how to renew your membership and join us for the season on our website (www.woodstockociety.org). We look forward to welcoming you. Visitors are of course welcome too.

They are all held on a Monday evening at St Mary's Church in Woodstock from 8pm but, if you would like to catch up with friends before the talks start, the church will be open from 7.30pm when the team starts setting up. The first talk is on Monday 22 September.

This will be the 60th year of the society and to celebrate we will be meeting at 7pm on 22 September for drinks and nibbles before the talk. There will be no charge for members and only a small charge for guests. We would love to see you there.

Bob Frost



Council Matters

This issue we have one report from the Traffic Advisory Meeting, and one Town Council report. On the following page, we have a report from Calum Miller, MP.

Woodstock Traffic Advisory Group Meeting

Held at 10am on Tuesday 22 July 2025

Ten members and representatives were present (including Andy Graham, Colin Carritt and Julian Cooper) with three members of the public.

Andy Graham (Oxfordshire County Council) was re-elected as Chair of the Group, and proceeded to chair the meeting.

The minutes of the Meeting of 14 January 2025 were approved.

Representatives of Blenheim Palace set out their proposed programme for the rest of 2025, to include Salon Privé, Horse Trials, Halloween Trail and the Christmas Event as in previous years. For all these events the representatives said they were working closely with the organisers regarding traffic and parking matters. Andy Graham said that there were ongoing discussions with the County Council regarding parking in the town, with the objective of improving the situation.

An update under **Highways Repairs** was given. The Walking and Cycling Plan shows what the County is trying to fund, but Andy Graham said that a more strategic funding plan was needed to take the matter forward. It should not be approached piecemeal. He called for costings to be produced.

On Bladon Chains, Andy said issues had been reported. He asked that the Group be informed as to what is going to happen.

The junction of the B4437 with the A44, at the Duke of Marlborough pub and Judd’s Garage, was being assessed for safety improvements. The works would not happen this year, but the planning and design would. They could include traffic lights.

The speed limit changes in the town are being reviewed, and will go to Cabinet to consider.

A member of the public raised the issue of the bollards in Market Street, outside the Woodstock Arms. They were damaged and needed repair. This was noted, and would be looked into.

The cobblestones outside the Town Hall remained an issue, with loose stones being a danger to the public. It was pointed out that this applied to both sides of the

Town Hall. A member of the public said that they must remain, however, as they were part of the character of the town.

On the **Hensington Road Car Park Stay Time**, a representative of Oxfordshire County Council reported that a review had been carried out, and the decision was to leave parking there free, but that only a shorter stay would be permitted. Andy said a difficult balance had to be struck, with a need to help the town's economy. There would be further work on this, especially as enforcement must be credible. A representative of OCC apologised for the hiccups with the parking meter machines in the town, and said that they are currently working on the problem.

On the **Planning Application to Cherwell District Council for 500 homes**, the highways issues were discussed. Andy Graham was not happy with the way the planning is developing. On schools, he said that though the current extension works at Marlborough School would be able to meet the additional pupil space required for the current building permissions, they would not be able to accommodate children from another development. He had brought this matter to the attention of Cherwell Council. Also, he had asked for a traffic feasibility study to be carried out. He said that WODC is going to object to the Application. A member asked whether there was a time scale on a Park & Ride project. Andy said that there was no time scale but that the matter should be looked into further, and he would ask a representative of Cherwell DC to attend the Group’s next meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.15 am.

Tony McHugh

Woodstock Town Council

Town Council Meeting - 22 July 2025

9 councillors and 13 members of the public attended the meeting. The meeting was audio recorded.

Public Speaking

Three members of the public spoke. Hilary Brown from Sustainable Woodstock spoke again on the community benefit offered for Botley West solar farm. Hilary referred to the Government Working Paper on community benefit which suggests annually £5000 per MW installed. This would translate to £4.2 million per year as opposed to the £440,000 currently offered by the developers and urged the Council to continue campaigning for a fair amount, especially to our MP Calum Miller. Nick Manby-Brown then spoke regarding item 18 on the agenda, ‘unauthorised publication’. Following email communication with Councillor Parnes, Nick assumed that this regarded the inclusion of Town Council minutes on the

Woodstock and Bladon News website in a single convenient searchable file. Having not seen the report from Councillor Parnes, Nick said he would have appreciated further communication before the meeting. Finally, I commented on the great progress being made on the solar panel installation on St Mary Magdalene’s roof and asked the Council if the Community Centre's solar panels were still being considered. Councillor Cooper confirmed it was in the Council’s property work programme and the Mayor agreed.

Councillors’ Reports

County Councillor Andy Graham reported that for improved road safety a new design of the junction at Judd’s garage was being prepared for consultation and welcomed the Council’s comments. Also a bus shelter was needed there and will be installed shortly. Councillor Graham has submitted objections to the Cherwell development next to Park View, saying it is isolated and there are concerns with the impact on the highways. The County Council will be looking at the place where a resident was recently struck and killed by a motorist near Brook Hill. The District Councillor’s report was not in the agenda pack.

Planning

The main discussion was regarding the planning application for 500 dwellings on land south of Perdiswell Farm (near Park View). This land is in Cherwell District Council. Councillor Wheatley had prepared a comprehensive formal objection to the planning application which was complimented upon and approved. This document can be found in the agenda pack for this Council meeting on the Council website. There were no objections to the Cromwells House and Feathers applications. The Council objected to the Union Street application on the grounds of a loss of a garage.

Finance

The current balance is £408,855. A number of allocations were made from reserve funds including Water Meadows maintenance and tree works.

New Doctors’ Surgery

The Council proposed 2 motions. The first that the Council agrees that the preferred site for the new surgery is the old Thames Valley Police site off Hensington Road and secondly the Council is not in favour of plans to site the new surgery outside of the town centre and there is profound disappointment with the way the Stakeholders’ Steering Group has been set up, run and not taking into account the views of the Town Council or residents of Woodstock. Both were passed, all in favour.

The Mayor, Councillor Williams and the Clerk then agreed to write a letter to all of the residents regarding the surgery.

There is a copy of the latest Stakeholders’ Group meeting minutes (19 June) on the Town Council website - found under Latest News on the home page. The Group has agreed to meet again before the end of July to discuss a public update. Also on the Town Council website under Latest News is a ‘Your Voice - Your Choice’ notice giving the Council’s position on a new surgery and encouraging feedback to the Town Clerk either through email or post.

Environment

The recommendations of the Environment Working Group meeting of 9th July were brought to Council. These included works on the cemeteries (Lychgate, path work, the front wall of the Lawn Cemetery and rat problems), playgrounds (upgrading), the Water Meadows (willow pollarding, management, riverbank stabilization and flood alleviation). Where quotes had been obtained, the Council agreed on the work to be carried out.

Other Business

From the Christmas lights working group report, an increase in budget was requested along with a suggestion of decorating the Town Hall with lights together with large decorated Christmas trees in town, similar to those put up by Blenheim at their Hensington Gate entrance.

Four new waste bins were recommended in a report but this was deferred to the September meeting as Councillor Poskitt was unable to attend the meeting.

The Council will object to the proposal from Oxfordshire County Council to the energy saving ‘part-night lighting’ framework.

Finally, following a report from Councillor Parnes, the Clerk will look into the possible ‘unauthorised publication’ of the Council’s minutes by a local publishing business.

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



**Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditors**

The Old Tannery, Hensington Road, Woodstock,
Oxon, OX20 1JL

01993 814590

info@kbdr.co.uk

Update from Calum Miller:
MP for Bicester and Woodstock



Calum Miller MP with local residents

I continue to work hard, with the support of my small team, to represent you in Parliament and to ensure that the issues you raise with me are addressed. Since setting up the office and hiring the team we’ve replied to over 10,000 email enquiries and closed over 5,500 cases. We have assisted flood victims, followed up with problems in housing, education and health to name just a few. My small team and I work to represent all the 102,000 people (approximately) across our constituency of Bicester and Woodstock. So far, our first year has been a privilege and a steep learning curve. One of the best things about my job is meeting more people in communities like Woodstock and Bladon, and elsewhere.

My team and I were heartbroken when we learnt the dreadful news that we had lost three members of our community in the fire at Bicester Motion. Firefighters Jennie Logan and Martyn Sadler and business owner Dave Chester were well known and loved in Bicester. My thoughts and prayers are with their bereaved families and the two injured firefighters.

At the request of the public meeting held last November, I chair a group of the local stakeholders who can help make a new GP surgery in Woodstock possible. The current premises is totally unsuitable: it has just 38% of the capacity that it should. I continue to press ministers on the wider question of funding for GP surgeries in our area, using Woodstock as an example.

Congratulations to all councillors elected to the County Council on 1 May. Oxfordshire now has a Lib Dem majority administration after they won 36 of the 69 seats. I know that your councillors are committed to working hard for the benefit of all in the county and I look forward to working with them.

Calum Miller MP



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OXFORD BUS MUSEUM
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Marlia Rae

Will be performing a selection of her new music, as well as classic party starters, at 8pm on Saturday 23rd August 2025 at Woodstock Live. Don't miss the debut of her own music with her brand new band!

marliarae.com

WOODSTOCK LIVE
Woodstockliveuk
info@woodstocklive.co.uk

Portrait of the Month - Louisa Maybury



In the heart of Woodstock, behind the folds of handwoven textiles, embroidery, tapestry and vibrant silks, Louisa Maybury quietly shapes a space that feels both rooted and far-reaching. Through her thoughtfully curated shop, she brings the beauty of global craftsmanship to our village, weaving stories of connection, culture, and care. Captured by fine art portrait photographer Pippa Hetherington, this portrait is the first in a new monthly series honouring the individuals who quietly enrich the soul of Woodstock.

“I’ve lived in Woodstock and been very happy here for almost 38 years. I had my children here, and now I’m happy to have my granddaughter visit me here as well. I’ve always been part of this community and have always been made to feel very welcome. I have a complete passion for textiles from the Middle East and beyond. I go to India twice a year to select beautiful kilims, which can come from anywhere - from Tunisia all the way to Afghanistan, and all the places in between, including Iran, Turkey, the Balkans, and Morocco. I lived and worked in India in the late ’70s for a high street store, and I’ve been buying jewellery, accessories, and bed throws for as long as I can remember. The shop is quite a jewel - I choose absolutely everything and curate it myself. And, as I say, I feel very comfortable here in Woodstock.”

Pippa Hetherington

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



How to talk to your parents about Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney without sounding greedy

Let's not sugarcoat it: talking to your parents about their Will is, frankly, one of the most uncomfortable conversations you'll ever have. Right up there with explaining Tinder to your gran or asking your dad to please stop forwarding conspiracy videos on WhatsApp.

Because no matter how well-meaning you are, as soon as you utter the words "Have you thought about putting something in writing?", you might as well have said, "So, when exactly are you planning to croak, and can I have the house?"

But here's the thing. If you don't have that conversation, someone will pay the price later. Probably you. Or your siblings. Or all of you in a Solicitor's office arguing over who gets mum's jewellery and who gets lumbered with the cat.

So, here's how to navigate this minefield.

Don't make it about money

This is rule number one. Possibly also rule number two and three. If, in your opening line, you sound like a Dickensian villain - "And what of the family silver, Father?" - you're doing it wrong. Frame it around them, not you. Try "I just want to make sure everything is how you'd want it to be." It's about their control, their wishes, and their peace of mind. Not your fantasy of turning the family home into an Airbnb in Devon.

Normalise the conversation

The British, by and large, would rather talk about anything else - war, dental surgery, even Love Island - than discuss what happens when we die. So treat it like any other practical matter. Just as you'd talk about renewing a passport or fixing the boiler, talk about Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney.

A good time to bring it up? When some celebrity dies without a will (they always do). "Did you see that Prince/Liam Payne died intestate? His estate's still in court. Absolute nightmare. Have you sorted yours?"

Understand what a Lasting Power of Attorney actually is (and explain it properly)

A Lasting Power of Attorney isn't just for "when we're 97 and babbling into the curtains." It's a legal safety net before you lose capacity - think stroke, dementia, or a nasty fall followed by hospital food and confusion.

There are two types: Property and Financial Affairs used for managing money, bills and property and Health and Welfare used for decisions about care, treatment, and even whether they live at home or in a care facility.

Without one, if your parent becomes incapacitated, you can't just "step in" and sort things out. You'll be dealing with the Court of Protection tied up in a process so slow and convoluted it makes filling out a tax return feel like a walk in the park.

Play the "I'm doing it too" card.

One of the best tactics? Lead by example. Tell them you're making a Will and sorting out your own Lasting Powers of Attorney. It shifts the tone from "You're old and you might die" to "This is just sensible adulting." You become the responsible one, not the vulture circling the bungalow.

Don't leave it too late.

People wait until there's a diagnosis, or a scare, or something dramatic. But by the time you're dealing with actual incapacity, it's often too late. A person must understand what they're signing. No mental capacity? No Lasting Power of Attorney or a Will. So have the conversation when everyone is still in control. Ideally while your mum's still beating you at Wordle.

In summary, keep the focus on them, not you - treat Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney like smoke alarms: essential, even if a bit dull. Lead by example by sorting out your own planning, and make sure they understand that this is about protecting their wishes, not relinquishing control. Start by dropping it into everyday chats and it will sound like responsible adulting, not asset-hunting. Most importantly, start early, before confusion - and hospital food - enter the chat. Before it is too overwhelming for them. Don't wait for a crisis - talk now, while they're still as sharp as they ever were.



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 or call the Combe office on 01865 987781 and ask for her secretary, Bev.

Uncovering the Past, Securing the Future: The Blenheim Palace Roof Restoration Project



Blenheim Palace is undergoing a once-in-a-generation restoration to secure its future for centuries to come.

You may have noticed that at the heart of this transformative journey is the restoration of a vast and vulnerable section of the Palace’s roof, a project that not only protects the building’s historic fabric but also the priceless artworks and stories it shelters.

Why now?

The roof above the Great Hall and Saloon, nearly an acre in size, has long been under strain. With only six downpipes to manage increasing rainfall and over 300 metres of gutter which are 300% under capacity, water ingress has become a persistent threat.

Until the scaffold was complete, we had 12 buckets collecting water leaks in the roof space, and occasionally one or two in the Great Hall itself, especially after snowfall.

The effects are visible: from structural movement and stone decay to mould growth and water damage to our beautiful ceiling paintings in the Great Hall and Saloon.

This £10.4 million roof project, which began in January 2025, is the culmination of over seven years of planning and 18 months of developed design with our specialist architects and structural engineers.

What we’re doing

The project’s objectives are ambitious and essential:

- Enhancing the environmental stability of nationally significant paintings.
- Mitigating health and safety risks posed by deteriorating stonework.
- Extending the lifespan of architectural elements by addressing decay.
- Addressing fire compartmentation measures in roof voids.
- Enhancing the capacity of roof gutters to minimize water ingress.
- Improving energy efficiency wherever feasible.

We have also been exceptionally fortunate in securing a further £1 million to conserve the extraordinary wall and ceiling paintings in the Great Hall and Saloon.

What’s happened so far

Since January we have constructed an epic scaffold, inside and out, costing >£2 million, in order to access the intricate and complex roofscape and paintings.

The roof coverings are being gently stripped - all lead is being melted and sandcast for re-use back on the building, and almost 60% of slates are suitable for re-use too - anything that doesn’t meet the required lifespan will be stored for patch repairs on other roofs that haven’t yet been restored. Timber substrates are being re-used wherever possible and the structure is looking solid, even after 300-years.

Thanks to extensive surveys and preparation, we’ve avoided major surprises (touch wood) but as with any conservation project of this scale, there are always challenges.

There is significant stonework to address, and some major repairs to our capitals require a highly sensitive conservation approach. The craftsmanship involved is extraordinary, and we’re fortunate to have a world-class team leading the charge.

A new perspective

Rather than hiding the scaffolding, we’re embracing it. The scaffold incorporates a visitor platform; 109 steps up (or a lift) to a view of the north of the park and over the roofscape.

Visitors are invited to join us on our journey, to witness the restoration up close and to see the Palace from new heights, gaining insight into the craftsmanship behind its conservation.

How you can help

Your visits, your interest, and your support are vital. Every ticket, every donation, every shared story helps us continue this essential work.

The platform is only open until 1 April 2026 so please make sure you get up and see the works for yourself.

Hello from your new Curate!



Hello, my name is Gemma, and I’m delighted to introduce myself as the new Curate serving the communities of Woodstock and Bladon. I work across both of our beautiful churches - St Mary Magdalene’s in Woodstock and St Martin’s in Bladon - and I’m really looking forward to getting to know you all.

I began my ordination training in September 2023, following five years of discernment - prayerfully exploring whether this was truly the calling I wanted to dedicate my life to. I trained full-time at Queen’s Foundation in Birmingham, where my week was split between academic study and parish placement here in Woodstock and Bladon. It was a bit like an apprenticeship: learning on the job while also writing essays and attending lectures in theology, all with the aim of discovering the kind of priest I felt called to be.

I was ordained on the 5th of July 2025 at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford, surrounded by family, friends, and fellow ordinands. It was a joyful and deeply moving day that marked the official beginning of this new chapter - serving as Curate under the guidance of the Rector, Revd Sarah Bourne.

In the Church of England, ordination comes in two stages. First, we’re ordained as deacons, and after a year, we’re ordained as priests. In this initial period, we serve a kind of apprenticeship as assistant curates (often just called 'curates'), working alongside a more

experienced priest - our Training Incumbent - while continuing to learn and grow in ministry. If you like analogies, it’s a bit like a junior doctor starting work in a hospital: qualified, but still in training.

There are many responsibilities that come with being a curate, but what stands out most to me is the call to serve the community I’ve been sent to. That means spending time getting to know Woodstock and Bladon, listening carefully to where the needs and hopes of the community lie, and discerning how the church can walk alongside people in all seasons of life.

Sometimes that will be through familiar moments - Sunday services, weddings, baptisms, and funerals. But it’s also about pastoral visiting, supporting local events, and simply being a listening ear - someone impartial and present - for anyone who might need it.

Please do say hello if you see me out and about. I’m always happy for a chat and a cuppa, and I’d love to hear what matters most to you about this wonderful place we share.

With every blessing,

Gemma, Curate, Woodstock and Bladon

Woodstock and Bladon Churches Together

Sometimes, we just listen. Prayer can be like that - just listening - and all our churches offer space for prayer in one way or another. At Woodstock Methodist, for example, we have half an hour on Thursdays from 10am.

This spring, while on sabbatical, I became anxious about the question I assumed people would ask me when I came back: “what have you done?”

Well. I listened to a cherry tree. I listened to birds and trains and people walking past and the incessant sea. I listened with my ears; I listened with the soles of my feet; I listened with my mind and without my mind. I heard echoes of my past. I made recordings of things. I played music and played with music.

But in the end I also listened to people who reassured me that it is not really about what I have “done”. In the end it was not about being productive. The life whose rhythm sabbaticals model is not about production. What we have to give is more than we produce, and what gifts we can receive are more than we could buy.

I don’t know how to measure prayer: it reminds me of the value of being as well as doing. And so I wonder too about a different question: not so much 'what have I done?' but 'who have I been?'

Paul Carter, Woodstock and Bladon Methodist Churches



THE WOODSTOCK BOOKSHOP

Blenheim, reflections in paint and poetry.

We recently hosted a launch event of a new book of original watercolour paintings by Rod Craig. The book features over fifty of Rod's paintings of Blenheim alongside poems and texts by his great friend and colleague Peter Adamson. Signed copies of this beautifully produced hardback publication are in the shop now for only £15.95.

Coming next

Summer Reads promotion, featuring reviews by staff and local readers!

We are also offering a £5.00 National Book Token voucher with purchase of any sale book OR to anyone who would like to come to the shop and write us a review! (Vouchers can be activated via the National Book Token website)

Check out our new sections:

Sports / Graphic Novels / Health and Wellbeing



We hope to see you soon! Nikki, Lesley, Helen, Michelle and Berne
The Woodstock Bookshop, 23 Oxford Street, Woodstock, OX20 1TH
info@woodstockbookshop.co.uk 01993 812760.

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Sustainable Woodstock

Plastic-free Woodstock

Thanks to those who have recently contacted us to organise a litter pick. Staff from Blenheim used their own time to pick parts of the A44 and others organised a litter pick in their workplace. Why do these people want to make a difference?

Woodstock is quite a long way from the sea but we're still connected through the arteries of streams, rivers and drains. Justifiably, we're concerned about sewage and sadly it's become the norm to see images of rivers, seas, beaches and our roadsides polluted with sewage, runoff chemicals and plastic. Single-use plastics are a significant contributor and a major environmental problem and we know particles of plastic have entered the organs of animals and us. Plastic Free July has just finished and is a global movement meant to encourage us all to reduce our consumption of single-use plastics ... but not just for July ... it encourages you to go on and develop new habits and make lasting changes to reduce plastic consumption and find alternatives.

We have registered Woodstock as a Plastic Free Community – this doesn't mean that we have achieved anything it means that we joining with others trying to do something about reducing single-use plastic in our town. A few years back I visited all the businesses and we sat and talked through what

changes might be possible – and back then, all bar one local business embraced the challenge. A few years have passed and we're encouraged by some offering top up water for people (and dogs), some veg and fruit not in plastic, some are used to carrying reusable bags but there is so much more we can do. Refill is the most effective change you can make. We rarely visit the washing powder aisle in supermarkets any more ... we are clean honestly ... we just refill our old containers and have them delivered to our doorstep or we visit an award-winning zero waste shop in Yarnton Garden Centre (The Village Refill). Whatever your business, or as an individual, Village Refill can advise how best to reduce and for you to become a Plastic Free Champion. For tips as an individual or interest in registering your business, school, etc go to www.plasticfree.org.uk.

Tips for Woodstock:

- Businesses – sweep up cigarette ends daily and dispose in grey waste (they contain plastics as well as toxic chemicals and make their way to the sea via our drains. And the town looks better.
- Co-op - say no thanks to their bags; they are biodegradable but why grow fields of plants, process them just for single use bags when there is an alternative?
- Organise a litter pick near you - Sustainable Woodstock can help

Honda comes to Woodstock



Residents and visitors alike have most likely spotted some new, very quiet two-wheel visitors in and around Woodstock these past weeks. Honda Motor Europe recently chose to use the picturesque town as part of the background for the European Press test of their all-new electric scooter, the CUV e.

Honda's second full electric scooter for the European market, the CUV e: offers customers zero emissions transport in a sleek, stylish and modern package thanks to the use of two Honda Mobile Power Pack e: batteries that can be charged easily and quickly using a domestic power supply.

With a top speed of over 50mph and a range of over 40miles from a single charge, the zero emission CUV e: is the perfect urban transport for those commuting into and out of Oxford City Centre.

The week-long event saw nearly 50 journalists from 13 countries across Europe visit Woodstock, which was chosen with help from a local Bladon resident who remains a key member in Honda's European Motorcycle events team, who brought with him extensive knowledge of the area, its unique charm and beauty.

Honda would like to thank all the residents and local businesses for their hospitality and support in helping Honda deliver this prestigious event.

More information about the Honda CUV e: and the rest of their exciting motorcycle and scooter range can be found online at Honda.co.uk, or you can pop down to Blade Honda in Abingdon to find out more and test the CUV e: for yourself.



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The Oxfordshire Museum

Ice Age: Mammoth Quest

It may be summer but in Woodstock we are time travelling our visitors back to the Ice Age! Our exhibition is proving to be a big hit with visitors of all ages, why not pop along and find out more about the animals and landscape during the Ice Age. We have Mammoth biscuits in the Café plus a selection of toys and gifts in the shop including fossil kits, wooden playsets and of course woolly mammoths!

The exhibition ends Sunday 31 August 2025.

Summer of Fun



Our ever-popular range of children’s activities are planned throughout the summer holidays. Many of our activities have been themed around our Ice Age exhibition and there’s everything from Ice Age Hut making to Fossil Jewellery workshops. For our full range of activities please pop in for a schedule or visit our website.

Our Ice Age exhibition and Summer of Fun activities are free entry, however we welcome a small donation.

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

Next monthly Talks at The Coach House at the Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock at 7.30pm

Wednesday 3 September

‘Oxfordshire Museum Highlights’

Speaker: Nicole Perry-Bradford

Nicole was appointed Curator of Social History at the Oxfordshire Museum in 2024 and she has chosen some key items in the Museum displays for her illustrated talk. This will be an excellent introduction to the Museum collection for those who haven’t explored it recently, plus a view of the collection through the eyes of a Curator.

Wednesday 1 October

Note: TALK CHANGED FROM ADVERTISED PROGRAMME to:

‘One Saturday afternoon on the Home Front – stories from an aerial photograph’

Speaker: Cathy Stoertz

A single frame from a run of aerial photographs taken by the US Army Air Force on 27 May 1944, centred on Moreton in Marsh, evokes stories ranging from the personal to the international. This single image encapsulates the impact of the European war on civilian life in an English market town and shows how aerial photographs can open a window on both individual experience and broader social and political history.

Wednesday 5 November

‘World War 1 - Paintings and Poetry’

Speaker: Alice Foster

A poignant evening with Alice Foster, our popular speaker on Art History. She will illustrate her talk with paintings by war artists such as Paul Nash, Stanley Spencer and their contemporaries and her images will be accompanied by poetry written at the time.

Membership of The Friends 2025-2026

Single £20; Double £30

Membership details and our full 2025-2026 programme are on our website.

www.friendsoftom.org.uk.



Woodstock Music Society 50th Anniversary Concert



The heavens were telling the glory of Haydn at St Mary's Church in Woodstock earlier this month as the Woodstock Music Society celebrated its 50th birthday in style with two performances of 'The Creation'. Haydn's masterpiece has some famous climactic moments which the choir delivered with great energy and clarity. The chorus ‘Achieved is the glorious work’ was an especially spinetingling moment. Equally arresting were the soloists' many contributions to the creation story. Eleanor Broomfield (soprano) combined sublime singing with an exceptional ability to dramatise Haydn’s words. Tenor soloist William Smith sang with power and

majesty, whilst Edward Robinson (bass) magnificently evoked the many creatures of the earth, from baaing sheep to roaring lions. The orchestra accompanied with sensitivity, with masterful string playing and exquisite solos in the woodwind. The conductor, Paul Ingram, clearly felt every moment of the lyrical and musical story, and steered the gathered forces with the passion and commitment that regular audience members have come to expect! All in all, it was an uplifting evening of music and a wonderful way to spend a summer’s evening.

Juliet Williams

Woodstock Music Society celebrates 50 years



On Saturday 12 July Woodstock Music Society celebrated 50 years of making music with a lunch party in St Mary Magdalene church. A delicious lunch was provided by the local business, EP Caterers.

After lunch, three long-standing members gave their reminiscences of the last 50 years. Evelyn Hendy as former Secretary, John Morris as former Chairman and Paul Ingram as Musical Director.

After the speeches, Paul Ingram cut a beautiful cake made for the occasion by Mary Clarke and a toast was drunk to Woodstock Music Society. There then followed a cabaret of five acts from enthusiastic members masquerading as *The Pirate King*, *The Odd Couple*, *Flying High*, *The Lamenting Altos* and *The Old Shavers*. The entertainment ended with the Pirate King leading the whole gathering in the rousing sea shanty *A Drop of Nelson's Blood*.

Updates on 'Botley West'

What's Happening Now?

We are currently in the Examination Stage which lasts 6 months until 13 November.

Throughout this time there will be a series of deadlines for making submissions. These could be answers to questions asked by the Examiners, written submissions on specific topics as they arise or responses to others' submissions. Deadline 2 passed on 1 July, Deadline 3 is 22 July and on 30 July the Examiners Second Written Questions will be issued.

Visit stopbotleywest.com for more information on 'What's Happening Now' including links to:

- Stop Botley West's (SBW) written submission and Community Impact Report,
- Joint Council's Local Impact Report,
- Answers to the Examining Authorities (ExA) first set of written questions,
- Responses from the Oxfordshire Host Authorities (OHA) comprising Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse District Councils plus Oxfordshire County Council and
- Responses from other important bodies e.g. Historic England, ICOMOS (UNESCO) and from other organisations you know and trust.

It is important to note that the Examining Authority will continue to accept responses until Deadline 7 on 10 November. You can continue to submit representations to the Examining Authority until this date.

Looking ahead, it is expected that the Examiners will visit particularly impacted properties close to the Botley West site boundary to see the settings for themselves in the week beginning 6 October. That week they will also hold the final important set of Open Hearings which any member of the public may attend. Watch out for more details in future updates from Stop Botley West.

On 13 November the Examination Closes and the Examiners will have up to 3 months to complete their deliberations and issue a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will then issue a final decision within a further 3 month period.

Following this, if the decision is to approve the proposal (or an amended version of it), the Applicant can implement the project in accordance with the approved Development Consent Order. If the decision is to reject, the Applicant can appeal.



Public Information Events

Stop Botley West recently organised 3 events where Professor Alex Rogers, Chair of SBW provided an update on the stage that we're currently at in the examination, what happens next, what SBW have been working on and how the funds raised so far are being used.

The two presentations from these events (an update from Prof Alex Rogers and Community Impact Report) are available at stopbotleywest.com

Fundraising Update July 2025

Thank you to everyone who attended our recent information events in Bladon, Cumnor and Cassington. These gatherings are part of our ongoing effort to keep the community informed with important updates, and to provide a space for us to come together in unity and shared purpose.

We continue to work towards our fundraising goal of £150,000 and have now reached an incredible £120,000! However, as the examination progresses, we are mindful that the cost of engaging a barrister, planning consultants and experts can fluctuate so please do continue to support the campaign if and when you can.

Please help with a donation

Please join us and make a donation to our fighting fund via stopbotleywest.com. If you are in a position to make a significant donation please contact our Chair: alex.rogers@stopbotleywest.com to arrange a personal meeting.

Visit stopbotleywest.com for more details including our Events Calendar, regular updates and other helpful information. Thank you for your support.

World Heritage Report 2025 - Offprint

Please see the following 3 pages

The following article was originally published in the 2025 World Heritage Watch (WHW) Report. WHW is a global pressure group that monitors the state of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and advocates for their protection through independent, expert-driven reporting. With the kind permission of WHW, we are pleased to reprint this important contribution by Adrian J. Delnevo and Andrew Rein. The paper was also presented to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and its advisory bodies at the WHW-UNESCO Dialogue Forum held in May 2025

The Paradox of Preservation and Development at Blenheim Palace: Threats from Within

Adrian J. Delnevo and Andrew Rein



Blenheim Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) since 1987, is celebrated not only for its grand architecture and historical significance but also for its picturesque landscape, designed by the illustrious Capability Brown. However, recent developments around and within its setting raise critical concerns about the preservation of its integrity. We previously documented three major housing developments within the setting of the Blenheim WHS¹. One of these initially failed to gain planning permission (in part due to their being within the Blenheim setting) but have subsequently been granted building permission following an appeal by the applicant (Blenheim) at a public inquiry. The other site was granted planning permission pending a mitigation agreement, which has not yet been agreed.

Since our previous paper to WHW, one of Europe's largest Solar Projects has been proposed on land owned by Blenheim and largely within the setting of the Blenheim WHS. Blenheim itself is the major land owner of the land for the solar farm, and is a major advocate of the solar project². This paper addresses the paradox of Blenheim's own housing development program combined with new and extensive plans for a vast Solar Project³, which together compound the substantial threats to the visual and aesthetic character of this iconic site, and its immediate setting. Even the UK Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, with reference to the Clean Energy Superpower Mission, said ... "We know that not all planning applications are good"⁴.

The Significance of Blenheim Palace

Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill, stands as a testament to the English Baroque style and represents a unique fusion of art, architecture, and landscape. Its setting—encompassing expansive grounds and vistas—plays a vital role in the heritage narrative of the site. UNESCO recognizes that the significance of a WHS extends beyond its physical boundaries, emphasizing the importance of its setting in maintaining the site's authenticity and integrity. Indeed, Blenheim itself recognises that ... "the conversion of significant areas of agricultural land for other purposes, or the large scale loss of woodland would detract from the distinctiveness of the setting"⁵. Blenheim is the promoter of extensive housing development and the major landowner promoting a massive solar project, and yet it acknowledges that ... "one of the key characteristics of the surroundings of Blenheim Park is that much of the setting lies within the wider extent of the Blenheim Estate", and that solar farms etc. - could detrimentally influence the character of the adjoining rural areas"⁵.

Threats from Housing Developments

Blenheim has purchased its own building company⁶ and has embarked on a housing development program, involving at least 730 housing units within the immediate environs of the WHS (Fig. 2). However, this initiative has raised alarm among conservationists and heritage advocates. The construction of so many residential units near the Blenheim WHS threatens to disrupt the historic landscape that has naturally evolved but hitherto has been meticulously preserved.

The visual integrity of the landscape, which was designed to evoke a sense of grandeur and harmony, is jeopardized when modern developments encroach upon these historical vistas. New housing developments can lead to increased traffic, noise, and light pollution, which adversely affect both the tranquillity, and visual aesthetics of the WHS. Furthermore, the potential for urban sprawl compromises the



Fig. 1: Aerial view of Blenheim Palace and Park.

Photo: Dreilly95

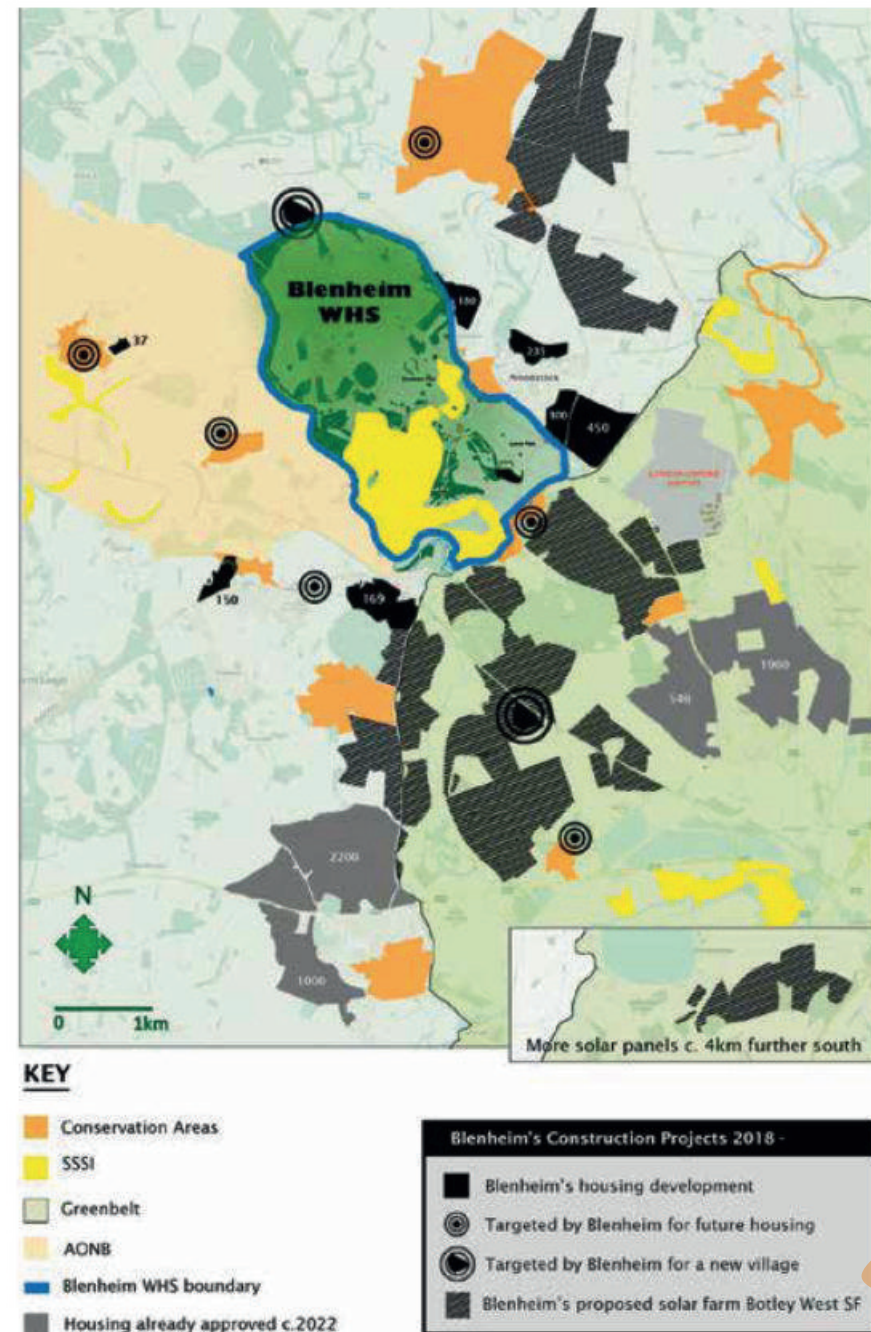


Fig. 2: Blenheim's housing and solar panel construction projects.
Map: Delnevo / Rein

2 million solar panels, and 110 km of security fencing. The solar panels will cover 45% of the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land, and 75% of this is on a designated 'Green Belt'^{8,9} (Fig.s 2 and 3). A significant proportion of the solar project will come within the setting of the Blenheim WHS.

The Botley West Solar Farm further complicates the preservation narrative. While the shift towards renewable energy is a commendable endeavour, the location and scale of this project within the setting of the WHS raises significant concerns. The visual impact of extensive solar panels within the landscape is profound, and these aesthetic impacts are incompatible with the historic landscape – as Blenheim itself has recognised in its own WHS revised management plan (Appendix III)⁵.

The site's OUV is rooted in its unaltered natural beauty and historical authenticity. The introduction of large-scale solar infrastructure would visually dominate the landscape, compromising the site's integrity and contravening the preservation objectives mandated by UNESCO. This juxtaposition of industrial installations against the backdrop of a Baroque masterpiece starkly contrasts with the WHS's character, pastoral charm and cultural significance. Moreover, the visual intrusion of the solar farm could diminish the experience of visitors, altering the way they

engage with the WHS. Heritage sites are not just about the physical structures; they are also about the experience and the connections they evoke. The aesthetic disruption caused by modern developments can detract from Blenheim Palace's historical resonance.

Balancing Development and Heritage Preservation

The challenges presented by housing developments plus the recently proposed development of a colossal Solar Project highlight a critical tension between development and heritage preservation. While the need for housing and renewable energy is undeniable, these initiatives must be carefully evaluated against their potential impacts on the WHS.

historical context of Blenheim Palace, detracting from its significance as a cultural landmark. The scale and proximity of these housing developments threaten the visual coherence of the landscape. Blenheim Palace's setting, characterized by meticulously designed parkland, contributes to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). New housing projects risk introducing incongruous elements that disrupt this historic landscape, thereby diminishing the site's aesthetic and historical integrity.

The Botley West Solar Farm: A Controversial Initiative

Blenheim Palace's own plan for one of Europe's largest solar panel projects, The Botley West Solar Farm⁷, will occupy 1,214 hectares of farmland, that is 18 km × 6.4 km, involving over

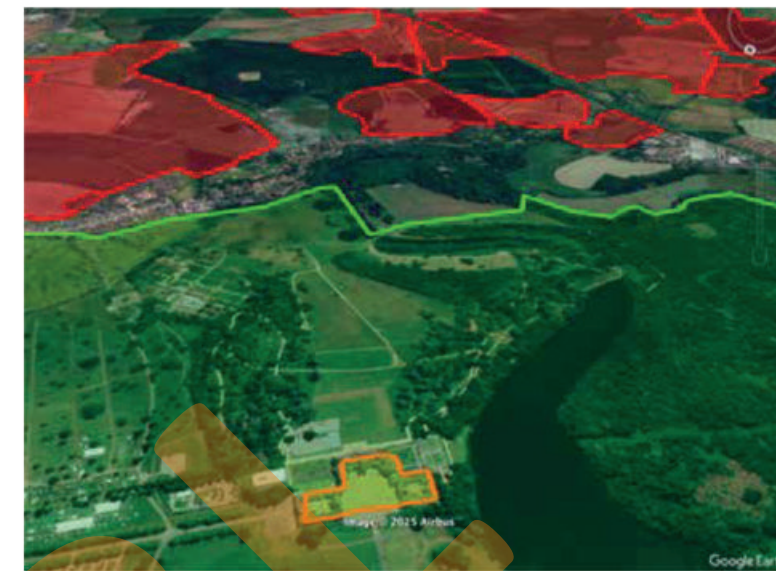


Fig. 3: Stylised view of the Blenheim WHS and part of the proposed solar project adjacent to the WHS, located within its setting. Blenheim Palace is in orange, and the WHS and boundary are in green. Proposed solar panel development areas are in red. Image: Delnevo/ Google Earth

Unfortunately, such protections have not prevented the proposed housing and are unlikely to prevent the construction of the huge solar project within the Blenheim Palace setting. Thus, the Blenheim WHS is in danger of contravening the WHS Operational Guidelines¹⁸.

The Blenheim WHS needs to ... "Ensure buffer zones are supported by appropriate protection and management regimes in line with the property's OUV, that build connectivity with the wider setting in cultural, environmental and landscape terms"¹⁹. We invite UNESCO to request that a buffer zone within the broader setting of Blenheim Palace is urgently

identified and ratified at the earliest opportunity. Without a buffer zone, Blenheim's own actions are seriously threatening the long-term sustainability of its own cultural heritage.

Acknowledgements

We thank Tony McHugh for his insightful comments,

Notes

- 1 Rein, Andrew 2022. Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site Under Threat. World Heritage Watch Report 2022. 217-221
- 2 <https://www.blenheimpalace.com/estate/strategy/landed-gently/solar-park/>
- 3 Botley West Solar Farm. <https://botleywest.co.uk/consultation.html>
- 4 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2024-07-18/debates/1B2ABC89-1455-4C86-8E2F-5E763B38E888/CleanEnergySuperpowerMission>
- 5 <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/nyadyxyu/appendix-3-blenheim.pdf>
- 6 <https://www.pyehomes.co.uk/news/pye-homes-acquired-by-blenheim-estate.html>
- 7 <https://www.blenheimpalace.com/stories/solar-farm-on-estate.html>
- 8 CPRE 2024. CPRE Oxfordshire Response to Botley West Phase 2 Consultation, February 2024. CPRE- Campaign to Protect Rural England.
- 9 <https://stopbotleywest.com/home>
- 10 UNESCO World Heritage Committee, State of Conservation Report: Blaenavon Industrial Landscape, WHC/20/44.COM/7B, 2020
- 11 UNESCO World Heritage Committee, State of Conservation Report: Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn, WHC/17/41.COM/7B, 2017
- 12 UNESCO World Heritage Committee, State of Conservation Report: The Dolomites, WHC/21/45.COM/7B, 2021
- 13 UNESCO World Heritage Centre, State of Conservation Report: Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Hadrian's Wall, WHC/20/44.COM/7B, 2020
- 14 UNESCO World Heritage Committee, State of Conservation Report: Kronborg Castle, WHC/21/45.COM/7B, 2021
- 15 UNESCO World Heritage Centre, State of Conservation Report: Pyrénées – Mont Perdu, WHC/18/42.COM/7B, 2018
- 16 UNESCO World Heritage Centre, State of Conservation Report: Aranjuez Cultural Landscape, WHC/18/42.COM/7B, 2018
- 17 <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/425/>
- 18 <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>
- 19 <https://whc.unesco.org/document/188949>

Conclusion

There are several WHSs where housing development poses a threat to either the site itself or its setting, for example, Blaenavon Industrial Landscape, UK¹⁰, Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn, Austria¹¹, and the Dolomites, Italy¹². Equally, there are several WHSs that have been or may be impacted by extensive solar panels and their infrastructure, for example, Hadrian's Wall, UK¹³, Kronberg Castle, Denmark¹⁴, and the Pyrénées – Mont Perdu, France/Spain¹⁵. We are aware of at least one WHS that is exposed to both housing and solar panel development: Aranjuez Cultural Landscape, Spain¹⁶. However, we are not aware of any WHS, other than Blenheim, where the custodians of the WHS (Blenheim) are the promoters of major housing developments and are also supporting a massive solar project on land within the WHS's setting.

It is ironic that the custodians of the Blenheim WHS who have the responsibility to preserve its unique heritage, which is more than its mere physical conservation, are the same persons who are compromising this cultural heritage by promoting major housing developments and one of Europe's largest solar projects within its setting. The challenges posed by housing development and extensive areas of Solar Panels underscore the urgent need for a balanced approach that considers contemporary needs with prioritised historical integrity. It is imperative that future actions taken by Blenheim Palace align with the principles of sustainable heritage management, ensuring that this remarkable site continues to inspire and educate generations to come. In navigating the delicate interplay between development and preservation, Blenheim Palace should be setting a precedent for responsible stewardship of cultural heritage in an ever-evolving world.

Regrettably, Blenheim Palace WHS does not have a designated buffer zone. UNESCO has stated that "The West Oxfordshire Local Plan contains policies to protect the property"¹⁷.

The Marlborough C of E School

Breaking Ground at The Marlborough School



The ground-breaking ceremony at The Marlborough School officially took place on Wednesday 25th June 2025. Work will now begin in earnest on the multi-million project to build a new two-storey teaching block, new changing rooms, new state of the art toilets, a refurbished and enhanced natural habitat area, as well as extended coach and car parking facilities at the side and front of the school.

We were joined for this special event by a number of guests. These included Jeremy Long, the Chair of Trustees of River Learning Trust, and Bishop Colin Fletcher, who is also a Trustee of River Learning Trust and a regular supporter of the school. Before the ground breaking ceremony, Bishop Colin and Mr Long officially signed the contracts to begin the work. Also representing River Learning Trust was Susie Morrissey, Transformation Director.

Also present were representatives from Thinking Buildings, the Architect firm who have designed the new building, Darren and Rachel Aspinall. They were joined by James Clarke, Director of SKP3, Michael Stopp, Project Manager with Edgar Taylor, and Henry Colver, the Associate Director of Edgar Taylor. Oxfordshire County Council, who are providing the funding for the project, were represented by Jenny Seddon, Strategic Liaison Manager at Oxfordshire County Council.

The school was represented by the joint Chair of Governors, Valerie Munro and Kate Pick and Sara Rowley, School Business Manager and Clerk to the Governing Body and Jon Townsend, Site Manager.

The work is scheduled to be finished by the end of the next academic year, in time to welcome an increased intake of 210 pupils in September 2026. The new build and improved facilities will allow more families from the local community to access our high quality educational provision.

Year 11 Leavers' Event

The 20th of June marked an unforgettable evening as the Year 11 Leavers' Prom took centre stage. It was a spectacle of elegance, laughter, and celebration, leaving an indelible mark on the memories of all who attended.

Students arrived in style, each making a grand entrance in an eclectic array of vehicles. From sleek sports cars to timeless classics, campervans, a car transporter and even a tractor! The arrivals set the tone for an evening filled with surprises and delights.

The MEC was transformed into the perfect party setting, staff were on hand at the mocktail station providing flavourful refreshments, whilst our very own Mr Minton and Mr Smith showcased their talents as DJ'S for the evening. A new addition to this year's prom included a pizza truck, serving delicious homemade pizza, and an Ice cream truck, providing the perfect sweet treat on a warm summer's evening!

For the staff and parents alike, witnessing the students stepping out of their usual routines and into the spotlight of this special night was a heart-warming experience, the most perfect occasion to mark the end of exams and for some, their journey with The Marlborough School. To the staff and parents who have supported and guided these young individuals every step of the way, we extend our deepest gratitude.



Year 13 Leavers' Ball

The evening of the 24th June saw the Year 13s marking their time at Marlborough at beautiful Blenheim Palace. There cannot be many secondary schools in the country that hold their leaving event in an actual palace, and a Unesco World heritage Site at that! It was a lovely formal evening of a drinks reception, speeches, lovely food and high quality performances from our fantastic A Level students. They have been an outstanding year group and we look forward to celebrating with them all over again in the summer.

Sarah Fitchett

Woodstock CE Primary School Celebrating the Success of Our School

Quad Kids: Oxfordshire County Finalists (vortex throwing, long jump, sprint and 600m run)



After success in the Woodstock Partnership Quad Kids event, to then progressing to the West Oxfordshire event, competing against many schools this amazing team of children qualified for the Oxfordshire County finals. This is a huge achievement and demonstrates not only their excellence in sport but also their determination, team spirit and hard work. The final took place last week at Tilsley Park Athletics in Abingdon on what was a rather hot day. This did not deter the children, and they gave it their all. We are very proud to share that they came 5th out of more than 200 Oxfordshire primary schools. We are proud of every one of the children who took part – they really are a credit to themselves and the school. We are also very thankful to the parents and school volunteer Leoni Leslie, who came along on the Quad Kids journey with us over the term, providing support and cheering the children along every step of the way. We really appreciated your support throughout.

Sport & Health Week

As we approach the end of term, our Sport Lead Mr McKay organised an incredible week of sport and PE for all of the children to take part in over the final week of term. Various sporting coaches from across Oxfordshire have given up their time to support the week, including Alex (Alternative Sports), Joe (Abingdon Eagles Basketball), Dave (Tennis), Kirk (Rugby), Kelly (Flair Dance), Ollie (Oxfordshire Cricket), Leslie (Marlborough Sport), Adam (OSAA Football), Gareth (RTC Football), Andy (Golf), Omar (basketball), Scott (NFL Football), Rachel (Bootcamp), Karate, and Hanniah (Gymnastics). All coaches are giving their time to the school which we are so fortunate and grateful for - Thank you! The children have thoroughly enjoyed the week.

Thank you Mrs Leslie

One of our fantastic long serving volunteers, Leoni Leslie, will be leaving us at the end of this term. Her time, commitment and generosity, not only as a volunteer but also serving as a Governor too has been invaluable. She has supported many adventures over the many years she has been with us including attending numerous sporting events, helping children with their learning and attending many residential. We wish you all the best and we will always have special place here for you - we will miss you very much!

Reception School Places are still available for September 2025 - please do get in touch with us asap, we would love to hear from you. Contact the school office by calling 01993 812209 or email office@woodstock.oxon.sch.uk

Anna Poole, Deputy Headteacher

Woodstock & District u3a

Our u3a branch is centred in Woodstock and attracts and welcomes members from the surrounding area. Are you recently retired or even longer retired? - the u3a can offer much and the website gives full information. www.woodstocku3a.uk.

If your favourite activity is not listed, please get in touch; perhaps you could offer to commence a group - so much knowledge and talent amongst our midst - is it time to share? Our newest and very popular group is Table Tennis on Tuesday afternoons at the Woodstock Youth Centre, and Photography and Cribbage commenced earlier in the year.

Monthly members' speaker meetings are held at St Hugh's, Hensington Road, Woodstock 1.45 for 2pm. We learnt recently from our speaker, Fred Dove, that the BBC World Service was launched in 1930. Who knew that the Foreign Office manages this contract but has no editorial say? Fred worked there for many years as an editor and presenter, his talk was illuminating and interesting. In early August we held our annual Social event - a time to demonstrate our interest groups and talk with group leaders, and understand how the association organises itself here.

September 4th sees our local historian Liz Woolley come to talk about Beer, Sausages and Marmalade - part of the history of Oxford. And in October we have Stephen Barker speaking on Indians at Oxford - are you wondering quite what that means, do come along and find out. Visitors fee is £3 to include refreshment. Annual membership is £20.

For all up-to-date information please take a look at our website - www.woodstocku3a.uk.

Sue Blackshaw, Chair

The History Forum



The History Forum enters Its Third Year with a Captivating New Season of Talks

Founded by local author and social historian Melanie King, The History Forum is about to embark on its third year of exploring the past in fascinating and accessible talks. Running from September to April, this online series features illustrated presentations by esteemed historians and experts, streamed via Zoom at 7 pm on Sunday evenings.

Our speakers - leading voices in their fields from the UK, the US, and Canada - cover an extraordinary range of historical topics. Season 2 (September 2024 - April 2025) offered a rich mix: from Paul Chrystal's deep dive into the history of the bubonic plague, and Dr. Ross King's compelling account of Italian unification, to American author Nancy Goldstone's riveting portrayal of the rebel empresses of Austria and France. One highlight was a 90-minute virtual tour of the Houses of Parliament, led by London-based historian and professional guide Loona Hazarika.

Season 3, launching on 7 September, promises to be even more exciting, with a bumper line-up of thought-provoking talks. Topics include:

- The social history of chocolate
- Daguerreotypes and Victorian traditions of photographing the dead
- A Minnesotan ghost story and a tale of hidden treasure
- The daring lives and surprising competence of female spies
- The untold stories of 18th-century female pirates

Among our expert speakers:

- Dr. Jim Harris, historian and teaching curator at the Ashmolean Museum, will explore the museum's fascinating history and significance.
- Dr. Roger White from the University of Birmingham will share insights from his archaeological work at Wroxeter, the Roman city in Shropshire.

- Dr. Phil Davies will unravel the origins and evolution of the Salvation Army.
- Dr. Alice Hunt (University of Southampton) will examine Britain's revolutionary decade (1649-1660).
- Dr. Ross King returns to tell the gripping story of the Sicilian mafia.

Participants can choose between signing up for a 10-talk series - at a reduced rate - or paying individually for the sessions they wish to attend. If you miss a live event, don't worry: most presentations are available as recordings for up to seven days afterward (unless otherwise specified).

To sign up for Series 3 or to learn more about The History Forum, visit: www.melaniekingbooks.com/the-history-forum/

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Oxford Bus and Morris Motors Museums

Last month two of our volunteers got married at the Bus Museum in the presence of 120 guests. The confirmation ceremony was held in the café with the partition doors open. The buses had been taken out of the running sheds so the guests could all sit round circular tables in the larger shed for a hot meal. In the evening there was dancing in the smaller running shed and a Barbecue in the yard. As far as we know, this was the first wedding reception to be held at the museum.

There are two events coming up. Our Heritage Skills Day is on Bank Holiday Monday 25 August when there will be talks and demonstrations on the restoration of buses at the museum.

As part of Open Doors, on Saturday 13 September we shall be running frequent buses around the City of Oxford. There will be no charge for passengers on the buses. We shall be based in Bonn Square opposite the Westgate centre and the circular route takes 25 minutes subject to traffic conditions.

Our 100 year old pedal car has gone into the wood workshop for an overhaul. It has been taken apart and the woodwork is being repaired or replaced as necessary, while the mechanical parts are being cleaned and repaired. We have bought tyres and inner



tubes to replace the perished ones. Indeed, one inner tube was missing and had been replaced by a length of garden hose!

The pedal car, which seats three, was built in the Cowley works during the 1920s for Arthur Rowse, who was the production director of Morris Motors, for his daughters. It seems likely that it was made by the apprentices of the time, although there is no documentary evidence to support this view.

It is propelled by two sets of pedals with cogs and chains, as used on a tandem bicycle. There is a hand-operated band brake on the rear axle. When new it had a 6-volt battery to run lights mounted alongside the bonnet and a rear number plate light.

Frank Collingwood

Moving Festival!

The ale trail

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Where Books Meet Community

The Story of Woodstock’s Literature Society by Melanie King

The Woodstock Literature Society (WLS) is one of the many cultural gems we’re fortunate to have in Woodstock. Since its debut in 2009, the Society has grown into a vibrant hub for lovers of literature. It offers thought-provoking talks by academic specialists, published authors, and literary journalists - always accompanied by a glass of wine, a cup of tea, and a slice of cake shared with like-minded attendees. With over 110 members, the WLS welcomes everyone: you don’t need to be a member to attend a talk, and under-18s can come along for free!



Linda Glees and Dr Laura Varnum, talking on du Maurier

A Revival of Literary Tradition

The inspiration for the WLS came from its founder, Linda Glees, who discovered that Woodstock once had its own Victorian-era literary institution. The original Woodstock Literary Institute ran from 1852 to 1894 from an upstairs room in what is now part of The Feathers Hotel. While researching this forgotten chapter of local history, Linda also uncovered a niece of the Pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Helen Rossetti Angeli, who lived with her daughter at 15 Park Street in Woodstock. They are both buried in the churchyard at St Mary Magdalene.

Linda read for a degree in English at King's College, London, followed by a Ph.D on the novels of Virginia Woolf, before re-training as a solicitor, specialising in Family Law and Mediation. After retirement, she moved to Woodstock in 2004 with her husband Anthony, who had grown up in the town. With her academic background she was ideally placed to lead a new literary venture.

From Idea to Reality

In May 2008, Rachel Phipps opened the Woodstock

Bookshop, and she kindly and enthusiastically backed the idea of leaving a questionnaire in the store that asked: Would people be interested in a literary society? What kind of talks would they enjoy? What should the membership fee be? The response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic and provided the momentum needed to establish the Society.

Feedback showed that locals wanted more than a typical book club - they were interested in a wide array of literary subjects. Topics ranged from translated classics (like Kafka, Chekhov, and Thomas Mann) to modern favourites in the crime and spy fiction genres.

Building the Society

Before the first event could be held, there was much groundwork to lay. A volunteer committee was formed, and a Constitution and Rules were established - these are available on the WLS website. The stated aim of the Society is:

‘To foster and share an interest and appreciation of literature in the Woodstock area.’

Linda Glees serves as Chair, with Caroline Priday and Trevor Caldecott as Vice Chairs. The wider committee - Steven Bliss, Steph Bliss, Julia Johnson, Sandra Noble, Anne Handsley, Caroline Wells, Gill Parker, and Tony McHugh - meets regularly to curate the annual programme. Member suggestions are always welcome.



Linda Glees and Professor Seamus Perry, talking on Coleridge, and pointing out the Woodstock stone plaque which refers to Coleridge

A Programme to Remember

Details of past talks can be found on the WLS website, and they include a wide variety of themes and speakers. A particularly popular annual event sees young actors from the Oxford School of Drama (OSD) performing scenes from selected plays.

This year, on Friday 17th October at 7:30 PM, at St Mary Magdalene Church in Woodstock, Dr Sos Eltis, a Professor of English and Theatre Studies from

Brasenose College, Oxford, will lead an exploration of Oscar Wilde’s plays, brought to life by OSD actors. If past events are anything to go by, this promises to be a captivating evening.

Tickets and further details are available at: www.woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk



Summer party in the churchyard

The Open Book Club

In 2022, the WLS launched an Open Book Club, welcoming anyone who wishes to join - no commitment required. Meetings are held a few times a year (details posted on the website), with a nominal £3 fee to cover costs. Those who wish to purchase the featured book can enjoy a 15% discount at the Woodstock Bookshop.

A Community Figure

Beyond the WLS, Linda Glees has contributed richly to Woodstock’s civic life. A former member of the Woodstock Town Council, and a former vice-chair of the Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum, she played a key role in commissioning the historical wall plaques that now grace buildings throughout the town. Created by Oxfordshire sculptor Giles Macdonald in 2011, these limestone plaques blend seamlessly with the Cotswold stone architecture, each one offering a vignette of Woodstock’s fascinating personalities.

www.woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk

Annual fee: £30; Visitors: £8.00

Panniers

Everyday cycling in Woodstock and Bladon

You may have read recently about the latest moves to reinstate a rail line linking Witney and Oxford.

The District Council sanctioned a survey to investigate whether the potential benefits of reinstating the rail link would outweigh the costs - an exercise otherwise known as a benefit-cost analysis.

The survey showed that the benefits were estimated to be 'more than double the cost of the scheme'. Good news for rail campaigners!

Similar surveys have shown that everyday cycling - using a bike for short trips and leaving the car at home - also offers great value for money. Studies have shown that any investment in new infrastructure such as cycle lanes and cycle parking brings benefits that vastly outweigh the costs.



Studies show high benefit-to-cost ratios for cycling schemes

A 2014 report from the Department for Transport found that for every £1 spent on cycling, the UK gained about £5.50 in social and economic benefits. Some cycling projects delivered returns as high as £35 for every £1 invested.

What benefits are we talking about? Health improvements, including reduced mortality from cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, accounted for more than 60% while much of the rest was efficiencies gained from less congested roads.

While much of the local debate about boosting local businesses hinges on the number of car-parking spaces, studies show that people using bicycles visit local shops more regularly. They spend more than users of most other modes of transport. Convenient and safe cycle parking generates five times more retail spending per square meter than car parking.

Also, towns optimised for walking and cycling can have a 'retail density' - spend per square metre - 2.5 times higher than a typical urban centre.

By investing in safe cycling networks, we maximise all these benefits, fostering a healthier, wealthier community.

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



Gosford Hill School Open Events

for prospective parents and their
children in Year 5 and Year 6

Open Evening
Wednesday 24th September
(6:00pm to 8:00pm)

Concluding with a presentation in
the Hall at 7:30pm.

Open Mornings
Monday 29th September
Tuesday 30th September
Wednesday 1st October
(9:15am to 10:15am)



Gosford Hill School, Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 2NT



www.gosford-hill.oxon.sch.uk/open-events



01865 374971

Making Our Town Accessible The Case for a New Pedestrian Crossing



The Zebra crossing on the A44 near the Black Prince

Prioritising safety and independence for the elderly and disabled

As our community grows and evolves, so too must our approach to making public spaces safe and welcoming for everyone. While technology and innovation continue to connect us in new ways, sometimes the most meaningful changes are those that happen right at our doorstep. One such improvement with the potential to transform lives is the creation of a dedicated pedestrian crossing - an essential step toward greater accessibility for elderly and disabled residents.

An Everyday Challenge

For many in our town, simply crossing the street can be daunting. Busy roads, fast-moving traffic, and a lack of designated crossings are daily obstacles faced by older adults and individuals with mobility challenges. Without safe places to cross, errands, social visits, and participation in community life become needlessly difficult, leading to feelings of isolation or dependence on others for basic needs.

Why Accessibility Matters

Accessibility is not just a matter of convenience - it is a matter of dignity, autonomy, and equal opportunity. As our population ages and more residents live with disabilities, the need for inclusive infrastructure becomes increasingly urgent. A well-designed pedestrian crossing, with tactile paving, clear signage, audible signals, and gentle slopes, ensures that everyone can move about town safely and confidently, regardless of age or ability.

Stories from the Community

As you might all be aware John Burden, a much beloved resident of Lower Brook Street sadly passed away last month after being hit by a car whilst trying to cross the road at the end of Browns Lane, after his

daily walk around Blenheim and his pint at the Star. John was 95 and needed walking aids, to get to the other two crossings in Woodstock would have been impossible for him to cope with. This is only one of many stories I am sure we can all share and with a retirement property just at the end of Upper Brook Street we think this is a necessity for all our elderly residents to benefit from.

The Benefits of Safe Crossings

- **Safety:** Proper crossings reduce the risk of accidents, protecting both pedestrians and motorists.
- **Independence:** Elderly and disabled individuals enjoy greater freedom to run errands, visit friends, and engage in community activities.
- **Social Connection:** Accessible infrastructure fosters inclusion, combating loneliness and promoting mental well-being.
- **Community Spirit:** Demonstrating care for vulnerable residents strengthens our collective identity and pride in our town.

Looking Forward

Let's prioritise projects that improve accessibility for everyone in our town. Installing a pedestrian crossing may seem like a small step, but its impact would be enormous - opening doors, bridging divides, and affirming our commitment to inclusivity. By listening to the voices of our elderly and disabled neighbours, and by working together as a community, we can create a safer, kinder, and more accessible place for everyone.

After all, a town's greatness is measured not by its size or wealth, but by the compassion it extends to every resident - at every crossing, on every street.

Please share your views with Woodstock & Bladon News and we will have a petition to sign at the Star Inn in Woodstock Town Square from next week

We would really appreciate your support and ask for any input for how we make Woodstock a safer place for all our residents

Sally Brown



PAUL KAY HAIR SALON

41a Oxford Street, Woodstock

Tel: 01993 810810

paulkayhairsalon@gmail.com

Num44

Woodstock Social Club



We are looking for volunteers who have experience in fundraising, local council grants and national community grant applications, fundraising events and so on. If this is you, please get in touch with us.

Exciting News

There are massive plans afoot. Now that WODC finally granted the Asset of Community Value status in May, we have been able to start work on and create our business plan and new vision for Num44.

There are plans being submitted to create multiple use community areas over a phased refurbishment, which will consist basically of (although not necessarily all in this order)

1. Renovate the hall area at the back, creating a separate soundproofed space (still accessible from the bar area) for use by daytime community groups, evening and weekend events and functions, a restaurant area and space for a possible pop-up gymnasium. A pagoda style patio area at the back and a separate access area from Union Street will ensure that the space can be available to all, at any time of day or night.
2. Refurbish the lobby area, new toilets and disabled toilet. A lovely welcoming entrance space to invite members and guests alike to explore the rest of our new building. A dedicated space for other functions / community drop-ins with possible area for a tea shop, snug or quiet space or other pop-up retail opportunities.
3. Revitalize the bar area, a new peninsula bar, extended commercial kitchen, additional 'daylight' and pool table, darts and multiple TV's for sports and other showings as you have all requested. We anticipate getting this vital part of the business completed first so that we can attract the right tenant and get operational again as quickly as possible.

We are actively talking to many local tenants who are keen to get a foot into our space in Woodstock, but this selection is extremely important to us and we want to get it right. If you, or anyone you know are interested in a commercial tenancy of Num44 please get in touch with the secretary.

MORE DETAILS and extended plans will be published in our business plan and share prospectus which will be available in the coming weeks.

We are aiming to raise a Minimum of £150,000 which should enable us to complete much of the work required and get customers in again.

The maximum we intend to raise is £500,000 from both share investment and from grant funding and this will ensure the survival of our fantastic space for the next 100 years (that is only just under £150 of investment from every resident in Woodstock people - we CAN all do this together!).

We have appointed a popular and well liked, local marketing and PR specialist to oversee our fundraising.

secretary.woodstocksc@gmail.com

The Arts Society Cotswolds

Lecture on Wednesday 10 September 2025

Lecture: Rembrandt: Family, Faces and Friends

Rembrandt (1606-1669) was the renowned Master of the Amsterdam School. It was at the cosmopolitan centre of a network of amazing international trading connections. Through looking at the circles of patronage of his art, we see the complex, fluid society of this commercial and cultural centre in its Golden Age. We see why his famous Night Watch was and is so much more than just a group portrait, as magnificent as it is: why has it become an icon of The Netherlands? Medics, lawyers, the powerful new bourgeoisie, burghers and men of religion were all Rembrandt's subjects, as were his family.

About the speaker: Hilary Williams is formerly a curator and Print Room Superintendent at the British Museum, now Art History Education Officer in the Department of Learning & National Partnerships at the Museum. Lectures for BM and Wallace Collection. Founding Artistic Director of The Arts Society of North Kent Evening. Specialist in 17th century art and has published on Rembrandt. Hilary has vast experience of giving gallery talks, of lecturing and of leading art history tours in UK, Europe, New York and Boston. For the Royal Collection Trust, she has guided Special Interest Private Tours of the State Apartments at Buckingham Palace.

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 (www.theartsocietycotswolds.org.uk). Non-members are welcome (space permitting) at a charge of £10.

Further information will be circulated via the newsletter and bookings can be made via the website (www.theartsocietycotswolds.org.uk) or please contact Lisa Etheridge on 07918 180895 for a booking form.

Improving Your Home Part 1

Loft Conversions

A loft conversion is one of the most effective ways to gain extra space and increase the value of your home. Whether you're after a new bedroom, a home office or simply more storage and flexibility, converting your loft can be a good investment. But it's also a major project that requires careful planning, good design and the right expertise to to get it right.

The starting point is assessing whether your loft is suitable. The key measurement is head height - ideally 2.3 metres from the top of the ceiling joists to the underside of the ridge beam. That allows for insulation, a new floor and comfortable movement. The type of roof is also important. Older properties with traditional cut timber roofs are usually more straightforward to convert, while modern trussed roofs will need structural alteration. You'll also need to carefully consider the staircase location—it must comply with Building Regulations and must not compromise the means of escape from fire for the existing rooms below, and that its wide enough for getting furniture in. Ideally, the loft should feel like a natural continuation of the house, with enough usable space for furniture and good daylight. Rooflights are simple and effective, while dormers make the room feel bigger and offer more layout options.

Many lofts can be converted under Permitted Development, which avoids the need for Planning Permission. However, this can't be assumed. If your home is in a conservation area, is listed, or if the design includes large dormers, balconies, or significant changes to the roofline, planning permission may be required.

Structurally, a loft conversion is demanding. The existing ceiling joists in the rooms below are designed to hold up plasterboard, not support the load of people, furniture and new finishes. New floor joists must be installed, typically supported by steel beams that transfer loads to structural walls. Trussed roofs may require new bespoke supports. A structural engineer must design the changes, and Building Control must approve them.

Building Regulations also cover fire safety. The loft room must have a safe escape route, usually through a protected stairwell leading to a final exit. You'll need interlinked, mains-wired smoke alarms on every floor, and in most cases, new or upgraded fire-resistant doors. The new space must be well insulated for both energy efficiency and sound separation, and you'll need proper ventilation to prevent condensation - particularly in bathrooms.

As I've noted previously, choosing the right builder is crucial. With loft conversions, experience matters. General building skills are not enough. Ask to see past projects, check references and ensure they carry insurance. Use a clear written contract detailing the scope of work, timescales, cost and what happens if things change. If you live in a terraced or semi-detached property, you may need to serve a Party Wall notice to your neighbours.

According to Nationwide (2023), converting a loft into a bedroom can add up to 20% to your home's value, depending on the location and layout. That can mean an uplift of £35,000 to £60,000 in areas of high demand, particularly across southern and central England. These estimates are based on 2024–2025 build costs and include VAT. Semi-detached and terraced homes are especially suitable, provided there is enough roof height. With typical costs ranging from £25,000 to £45,000, the return on investment can be strong - often 1.3 to 1.7 times the spend. The greatest value is gained when the conversion creates a third or fourth bedroom, and since loft upgrades can also improve insulation and help raise your home's EPC rating.

Jan Liberadzki BA Arch (Hons), MS

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Art Exhibition “Our Natural World”

Theme:
School-aged students are invited to submit your own artwork (pencil, pen, paint, charcoal, crayon) or photograph on the theme of ‘Our Natural World’. This is not a competition but an opportunity to have fun thinking about and painting/drawing etc., your view of our natural world.

Details:
One entry per person to be submitted on one-side of A4 paper. Write your name, school, and age on the back, and if you want it returned include the word ‘RETURN’.

Dates:
The work must be finished and taken to your school collection point by Monday 20th October. The work will be collected from the school and displayed at St. Mary Magdalene Church, Park Street, Woodstock from Tuesday 28th October until midday on Saturday 1st November.

Contact:
If necessary, you can obtain additional information at contactWNHS@gmail.com



Bladon Snippets from the Past

A secret request came to the Bladon Parish Council Clerk (me) regarding the Lamb Inn taking water from the spring flowing out from the wall in Lamb Lane, and placing it in a jug on the bar for customers. Could this be investigated and “Was this proper and safe?”

I checked with the Health Authority and it was reported “Yes quite pure - but best not anyway”.

Mary F. Sith

28th Macmillan Coffee Morning

Gwen Mason will be holding her annual coffee morning on Friday 26 September 2025 at 12 Plane Tree Way 10am till Noon.

There will be a raffle and Bring and Buy. Do come and join myself and my regular helpers.

There will be Cancer Research Christmas cards on sale.

Tel 811473 for any enquiries.

Girlguiding Woodstock

Rule number 2 - don't get Wombat wet!



We had a fabulous evening on what was the hottest day of the year so far at Blenheim Palace Adventure Play. The Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and leaders zip lined, swung, jumped, splashed and smiled their way to a great end of term. Thank you Blenheim and manager Sophie for joining in the fun.

The year has ended with badges, theme awards and Bronze, Silver and Gold awards in all sections.

Our Trefoil group are working towards Voyage Awards and lots of Challenge badges. Lorraine is joining the national Trefoil walking week in the Peak District in September.

We have spaces at some of our units and waiting lists at others so please contact us for details.

A huge thank you to our volunteer leaders who give up their time to run the meetings and so much more. Thank you Kate, Harriet, Rozz, Hannah, Louise, Clare and Lorraine.

Girlguidingwoodstock@hotmail.co.uk

Lorraine Wing

Woodstock Probus Club

We noted the death of a prominent member, Eric Winsor, a past president and long-time member, with a minute's silence.

The July meeting was not held in our usual venue because the church roof was being repaired but at the Bus Museum in Long Hanborough. Following lunch we had a ride on an old bus round some of the neighbouring villages followed by a tour of the museum led by Frank Collingwood. The museum seemed to have expanded considerably since I was last there. Frank is a wealth of knowledge, not just on motorised vehicles but also on the extensive range of bicycles from earliest times. It was also pointed out that most double deckers wouldn't get under the Botley road railway bridge, but by a clever change of

design to the upper deck a special version was designed which could.

Our outing for July was to Rousham House and gardens - deemed to be the most beautiful in England by no less a celebrity than Monty Don - see the Times 23 July. We had tea and cake on arrival and then a tour of the house by two very accomplished guides. There were so many interesting features; two that caught my attention were the portraits of James V and of Elizabeth Stuart, sister of Charles I who was born, in the Royal Palace in Dunfermline. It was through Elizabeth that the Hanoverians came to rule Britain.

Of all the times I've visited Rousham, I've never noticed the 'Folly' on the hill on the other side of the Cherwell from the house. See if you can spot it the next time you visit Rousham gardens. After a morning of culture we moved on to the The Jolly Boatman for lunch. Thanks to Frank Collingwood for organising a most enjoyable outing.

David Anderson, Past President

Bladon and Woodstock Flower Club

Hello everyone, as I write this report the sun is beating down outside and our poor plants are struggling. If only it would rain at night and the sunshine by day!! Well, we can but hope. We had a lovely evening on 14 July with Erica Cunningham and her title 'We're all going on a Summer Holiday'. Her arrangements were so colourful, and we went from Blackpool to the Northumbrian coast, Whitby and its Ferris Wheel, a coach tour ending up visiting a Manor house, with its Constance Fry arrangement in an urn and finished up in the Tropics.

On 11 August we have our Club Social Evening in a member's garden - this meeting is for members only. We look forward to a very happy evening with fun and delicious food.

On 8 September we have Daphne Grant with her title 'Have Containers will Travel' which sounds interesting. We will be back in our usual meeting place for this meeting, which is in the Bowls and Tennis Clubhouse, Cadogan Park, Woodstock. Our meetings start at 7pm. We welcome visitors and the charge is £10 including a raffle ticket. So why not come along for a taster. We are a very sociable club and have a very varied programme from workshops to demonstrations. Please contact Ann on 07701 000977 if you are interested. We are affiliated to the National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies, and we are part of the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Area. There is a website - www.bbandoflowers.org.uk showing photographs, club information etc. so do have a look.

Margaret Lang

"This is Democracy Manifest" Old Woodstock Mock Mayor - July 2025 - Part 1

The specific use of those words of the late, questionably great, Jack Karlson could not be more apt in describing the Old Woodstock Mock Mayor proceedings. (If you are unaware of Karlson's antics I strongly suggest looking him up for an amusing interlude, if you're unaware of the Mock Mayor proceedings then where have you been)?! As the newly elected Old Woodstock Mock Mayor it is an honour for me to be associated with and now integral part of the fabric of such an auspicious event. The weight of history is upon my shoulders but as I understand it there is a strong tradition of sedition on the North Bank which I shall endeavour to further and aim to treat the role in the manner in which my predecessors would have expected.



Following her election Rachel Faulkner prepared for her 'inauguration' at the former sheep wash - 2023

The Mock Mayor tradition is not specific to Woodstock per se, you can find several other iterations such as in Abingdon although theirs is the 'Mayor of Ock St' and so more an 'Ock Mayor' than a Mock Mayor! However ours here in Woodstock is one which goes back at the very least to 1786 according to the ceremonial mace but very probably much earlier, after all would you really construct an ornate mace on the first occasion of such an event?

The actions that led to the appointing of the New Woodstock Mayor, which the Old Woodstock Mock Mayor is designed to pillory, began some time before the first listed Mayor of New Woodstock in 1808. As the town was officially founded in 1279 with a Royal Charter given in 1453.



The 2025 Mock Mayor is drenched 'at' rather than 'in' the Glyme for the dunking ceremony due to safety concerns on the quality of the water within! Backs were still turned thereafter in line with tradition!

It is not clear when Old Woodstock locals decided their treatment at the hands of the 'establishment' was egregious, though this had included being unceremoniously turfed off their land by Henry I to make way to indulge his penchant for lions; leopards and camels, later being charged tolls to be able to sell their wares across the Glyme in the walled town above them. At some stage in all this they decided they had had enough and the tradition of the Mock Mayor of Old Woodstock was born. The logistics of which involve being that a Mock Mayor is elected and then thrown into the river, upon exiting the Glyme the back must be turned towards New Woodstock so as not to require any hand gestures. The whole group, Corporation, drenched Mayor and onlookers march up the hill to the Blenheim town gates where entry is demanded through the great

doors of the Town Gate. Upon arrival in the Market Square it is traditional for the New Woodstock Mayor to meet their electorally-older counterpart and a dance-off ensues. Sadly there appeared no one from the New Woodstock Council available in 2025 and so the newly-elected Old Woodstock Mock Mayor was forced to dance disco gingerly, with a stick, with the newly-convicted former Mock Mayor.



Former Mock Mayor Tonks is accused, and duly convicted, of Dereliction of Duty in 2025

As part of the event a Mock Court is established, using the original Woodstock town dock for authenticity, advance accusations are brought to the assizes and the audience are given further charge sheets for cases to be heard. A jury is appointed and justice is served. Acquittal is... uncommon! The court may be presided over by the serving Mock Mayor as Supreme Court Justice flanked by two other eminent justices formed of the Corporation. Self-defence is the norm or by advance liaison with one of the justices and upon arrangement of suitable fees representation can be permitted. This year a Christmas Tree was given representation on a pro bono basis facing charges of corruption but was acquitted when it became clear that it and its compadres had been trafficked by unnamed gangmasters into town. The serving Mock Mayor was convicted of failure to appropriately discharge duty to the Corporation and ordered to undertake Community Service for a period of 1 year.

It might seem a quaint anathema that what might be regarded as a twee 'edge of Cotswolds' town should

have a festival of such a clear anti-authoritarian bent. A town so dominated by a substantial monument to Britain's more feudal-like past, which one could perhaps say is less the past than one might like to think. The town functions very much on patronage, as indeed it has done since before the original inception of the Old Woodstock Mock Mayor and the actions of what may be thought of as the 'establishment' remain frequently ones of contention. The district and town councils often come under fire for what is perceived to be a tendency to ignore constituents, juxtaposed with what is seen as being deference to the wishes of the Palace on the hill, which owns land far beyond what one can see and intends ever more so to make use of the lucrative housing business on it. Yet all the while the town's infrastructure creaks, the bus services are reduced, the Drs surgery is over-capacity and the one supermarket routinely has empty shelves and still the once pleasant rural land around the town continues to be swallowed up by developments without a thought for wider impact. Lest one forgets



Corporation July 2023 - Mock Mayor Rachel Faulkner, brings to order for High Chancellor Ed Creasy, flanked by 'Serjeant-at-Arms' Vijay Mistry, Town Crier Karen Jones, Festivites Enforcer Sam Samra in the first New Woodstock Occupation

though what facilities that do exist are solely in New Woodstock. Standing up for the wishes of Old Woodstock seems now as relevant as it ever was.

Since the demise of the Black Prince the Mock Mayor Corporation have looked for ways to make the event true to its roots and to involve Old Woodstock, but in the absence of community premises or open communal spaces such as would be able to accommodate people who may then walk to the town as tradition dictates this became something that had to be put on hiatus, for the time being. The idea was

formed that the Old Woodstock Mock Mayor event would hijack New Woodstock, a rebellion against the extinction of Old Woodstock, its customs and status. ‘Occupy New Woodstock’ became a theme around which the corporation decided upon as being the best compromise to keep the custom alive whereby the walled town was to be derided and lampooned in a variety of ways. The difference is that it is treated as such that the mockery will, for the foreseeable time at least, take place from within rather than without. A Fifth Column as it were. Ideas are as welcome as to alternatives just as people who would like to join the Corporation to assist with the set up and running of the event, and the rather less popular clearing up after it!

Likewise the Corporation look to make it as inclusive as possible, we have had 2 female Mock Mayors in the last 5 years and 3 Junior Mock Mayors. However we have only had 1 Mock Mayor in the last 5 years who has lived on the northern side of the Glyme and this is something that needs rectifying so I am putting out the call to those in Old Woodstock to come and get involved, it is your event and we keep it going because we like it and we feel it continues to be important, we try to represent your voice as best we can but like Mock Court it is never better than when it

comes from you yourselves. Don’t forget if you have a problem and no one else can help maybe you can find the Mock Mayor and Corporation and tell us. See it. Say it. Sorted.

Dom Kingsmill-Stocker, incumbent Old Woodstock Mock Mayor 2025

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Meme of the Month

I ordered a book off the internet called 'How To Scam People' - It's been three months now and it still hasn't arrived



Fitness What's On

Exercise and movement classes in and around Woodstock. If you know of other classes please let us know and we'll add it to the list.

Monday

9am - Strength and Stretch with Rachel at St Hugh's Church Hall, Hensington Road (engergitraining.co.uk)
9.30am - Cardio Tennis at Woodstock Tennis Club
12pm - Age UK Stretch and Balance Class (open to all) at Woodstock Community Centre
7pm - Boot Camp at Tackley Playing Field with Energi Training

Tuesday

6pm - Hatha Yoga Flow with Inspire Studio at Woodstock Community Centre
6pm - Strength and Stretch with Rachel at St Hugh's Church Hall, Hensington Road (engergitraining.co.uk)
6pm - Jim's Fitness Bootcamp in Tackley (Jim Brown PT)
7.30pm - Zumba with Rhonda at Woodstock Youth Centre, New Road

Wednesday

9am - Boot Camp at Tackley Playing Field with Energi Training.
7pm - Pilates for Sport and Functional Activities at Woodstock Community Centre
8pm - Hatha Yoga with Kira at Pilates Studio on Hensington Road (07887 512523)

Thursday

6.15pm - Mountain Bike Club with Project Active
6pm - Strength and Stretch with Rachel at Woodstock Town Hall (engergitraining.co.uk)
7pm - Beginner Pilates Reformer class at Woodstock Pilates Studio, Hensington Road
8pm - Vinyasa Yoga with Kira at Woodstock Pilates Studio, Hensington Road

Friday

10am - Zumba with Rhonda at Woodstock Youth Centre, New Road
10am - SOMA Breathing Energised Meditation at St Hugh's Church Hall, Hensington Road

Saturday

8.15am - Blenheim Bootcamp with Project Active
9am - Bazza's Bootcamp at Kirtlington Village Hall

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Oxfordshire & Home Counties

Regular Events

This section tries to list regular events. If you would like your event included here, please email editor@wobl.news.

Culture

Bladon Garden Society

The 3rd Thursday of every month at 7.30pm, usually in the Church Room in Bladon

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

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

Woodstock 50+ Cinema Club

Monthly films hopefully starting again

Woodstock Literature Society

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

Woodstock and District u3a

All events are listed in What's On

Wootton Village Hall Talks

These take place monthly

Music

Kings Arms / Mandolirium

Listen to our local group in our local pub, usually every third Thursday at 6.30pm. Next date 24 July

Singing for Fun

For July, August, and September, this takes place at the Woodstock Baptist Church at 2pm on the 1st Monday of the month

The Crown

Live music every Friday nights from 7.30pm

Woodstock Jazz

Usually on the last Friday of the month at St Hughs

Social

Bereavement Cafe

The 3rd Friday of every month between 3 and 5pm at St Mary Magdalene Church

Ladies Coffee Morning

The last Tuesday of every month between 10am and 12noon at 10 High Street, Woodstock

Methodist Coffee Club

The Coffee Club meets every Thursday morning 10.30am to 12 noon in Woodstock Methodist Hall - all welcome

St Mary Magdalene Church coffee morning

First Saturday of the month between 10am and 12noon. All proceeds to our local food bank

Woodstock Lunch Club

Lunches are held in the Community Centre every other Wednesday at 12 noon. Next dates 16 and 30 July

Sport

Cricket at Blenheim Palace

The local team play on the South Lawn at Blenheim Palace most Sundays, and they are at home for the whole of May (starting on the 4th)

Woodstock Bowls Club

Every Tuesday from 6pm until 8pm. Beginners coaching for anyone who would like to try this sport. All ages welcome.

What's On

For the latest information, please click on the Events link at www.wobl.news.

If you would like your event included here, please email editor@wobl.news.

Thursday 21 Aug 2025, 19:30

Bladon Gardens Society - Talk
Laura Ashton Phillip: Peas, Love and Happiness - gardening and designing for the benefit of NHS patients, visitors and staff.
The Church Rooms, Bladon

Friday 22 Aug 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music
David Newton
St Hugh's Centre

Wednesday 03 Sep 2025, 19:30

Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
'Oxfordshire Museum Highlights'
Oxfordshire Museum

Thursday 04 Sep 2025, 14:00

Woodstock and District u3a - Talk
Liz Woolley: Beer, Sausages and Marmalade
St Hugh's Centre

Thursday 18 Sep 2025, 20:00

Woodstock Literature Society - Talk
'The Spy, the Novel and Ourselves': Philip Gooden
Woodstock Town Hall

Friday 26 Sep 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music
Andy Panayi Quartet: Multi award winning saxophonist plays 'Cannonball' & More
St Hugh's Centre

Wednesday 01 Oct 2025, 19:30

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
One Saturday afternoon on the Home Front – stories from an aerial photograph: Speaker: Cathy Stoertz
Oxfordshire Museum

Thursday 02 Oct 2025, 14:00

Woodstock and District u3a - Talk
Stephen Barker: Indians at Oxford
St Hugh's Centre

Friday 17 Oct 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Literature Society - Talk
'Oscar Wilde on Stage': Professor Sos Eltis with the assistance of students from The Oxford School of Drama
St Mary Magdalene

Saturday 22 Nov 2025, 15:00

Woodstock Literature Society - Talk
'The Medieval Christmas in Literature': Dr Helen Appleton
St Hugh's Centre

QUIZ - Compiled by Richard Stockwell

The Titfield Thunderbolt was filmed in Woodstock in the early '50s. Here are 10 quiz questions about the film. Answers next month.

- 1. Harry Hawkins, Steam Roller saboteur, was portrayed by Sid James, who found fame in the Carry On films, but, alongside Diana Coupland, he played a starring role in which ITV sitcom?
- 2. This film was one of a series of comedies produced by a studio taking its name from which London Borough?
- 3. The Titfield Thunderbolt was inspired by the restoration and running of the Talyllyn narrow gauge railway by volunteers in which part of the UK?
- 4. The Titfield to Mallingford line was threatened with closure by British Railways. The film was a prophetic warning of more closures, begun ten years after the film's 1963, overseen by which Doctor?
- 5. A legend in his own lunchtime, wealthy Walter Valentine is played by Stanley Holloway. In which classic musical film did he play Alfred P. Doolittle, alongside Rex Harrison, Wilfred Hyde-White and, of course, Audrey Hepburn?
- 6. A famous scene features two drunken men driving a Steam Locomotive through the streets of Woodstock may have led to the myth that which former Garage, now a Woodstock housing development, was used as the Titfield Station?
- 7. The films in this series often featured a theme of small groups of British people resisting the force of a powerful organisation. In Passport to Pimlico, independence from the UK, as part of Burgundy was declared, to get around which persistent restriction, lasting beyond the end of World War II?
- 8. The Thunderbolt was actually a locomotive called The Lion, which had operated on Britain's first passenger railway, running between which two northern cities?
- 9. Often depicted in fiction and mythology with Zeus striking from the peak of Mount Olympus, a Thunderbolt is created when what two phenomena occur simultaneously?
- 10. In The Titfield Thunderbolt, the volunteer Railway Company almost don't get their license because of going too quickly. Which bird set a world speed record on July 3rd 1938 of 126mph, on the LNER line, which still stands today?



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Felling

Planting

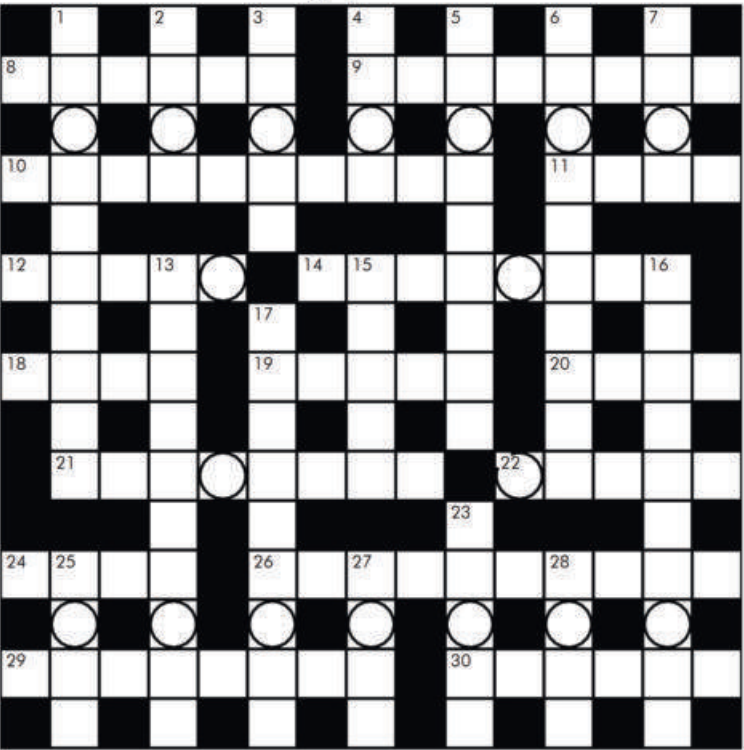
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Solve the clues to this straight crossword. Read through the letters in the marked squares to reveal an event taking place at Blenheim Palace in August. (5,5,8)



Across

- 8. In place (2,4)
- 9. Tidied
- 10. Sorry
- 11. Globes, balls
- 12. Literary genre (3-2)
- 14. Italian volcano
- 18. Big cat
- 19. Beneath
- 20. Righto!
- 21. Jotters, small computers
- 22. Sceptic
- 24. Reverberate
- 26. Guttersnipe
- 29. At the present time
- 30. Sound system

Down

- 1. Formal examination
- 2. Watch face
- 3. Swelling
- 4. Rope fastening
- 5. Haven
- 6. Storage space
- 7. Road-edge
- 13. Operable, working
- 15. Concluded
- 16. Steadied
- 17. Dodgem (6,3)
- 23. Cheer up
- 25. Chill
- 27. Blimey!
- 28. Complimentary

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