

Goring Gap News

EVENTS, PEOPLE, BUSINESS, ARTS AND SPORT IN GORING AND STREATLEY

Snowdrops welcome the New Year



Snowdrops blooming on Elvendon Road from 31 December

Photo: Helen Turner

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Photo: Gary McDonagh

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Goring Gap News

Winner of The Queen's Award

for Voluntary Service 2004

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Website www.goringgapnews.co.uk

Editor Gill Haigh

07979 686288 goringgapnews@gmail.com

Arts Editor: Rosie Mortimer

ggnarts@gmail.com

Business Editor Jo Pereira

ggnbus@gmail.com

Diary Editor David Slarks

ggn diary@gmail.com

Sports Editor Jonny Russell

07825 552009 ggnsports@gmail.com

Advertising John Williams

ggnadverts@gmail.com

Invoices Colin Ratcliff

ggninvoicing@gmail.com

Production Pauline Garrett, Mavis Law,

Hazel Preston-Barnes

Proof Reader Janet Hurst

Postal Subscriptions Tim Cox

01491 872980 timothycox939@btinternet.com

Distribution Victoria Brandon

ggn distribution@gmail.com

Chairman Jeremy Spring

ggn chair@gmail.com

Company Secretary Ian King

ggn secretary@gmail.com

Treasurer Anne Parkinson

07500 890373 ggn treasurer@gmail.com

Media contributions

News and articles of local interest, original poems, drawings and photographs are invited for the Editor's consideration. Articles and digital picture files (at as high quality as possible - at least 1.5MB for colour) can be sent to goringgapnews@gmail.com or submitted on memory stick, along with any handwritten or typed material, via the post box for Goring Gap News in Inspiration, 1 The Arcade, Goring, RG8 9AY, by courtesy of the proprietors. See website for more details.

Deadline for next issue: 5 February

Distribution

We aim to deliver copies of the GGN to all households in Goring and Streatley.

February 2025 weekend of 22/23

March 2025 weekend of 22/23

April 2025 weekend of 19/20

If your copy has not arrived after five days contact Victoria Brandon. (See above.)

Extra copies can be purchased from Inspiration and Westholme Store.

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GRAPEVINE

Community Centre appeals for volunteers

Goring and District Community Centre would like to recruit new volunteers for its transport, lunch club, building administration and other community services. Volunteers can give what time they have available to fit in with their other interests and to an extent that they would be happy with.

For more information on any of these, please contact the trustees:

Derek Robinson at derekdrobinson@btinternet.com 01491 872857 or John Boler at jbolser@btinternet.com 01491 873481

This is a very open-ended request for help and an invitation to come and talk to the trustees and the current volunteers.

The Community Centre, a registered charity housed in Goring's old school building in Station Road, organises several established, valuable and well used services. These include transport to and from medical appointments, a lunch club twice a week for elderly people and the free provision of medical support equipment, such as rollators and crutches.

The Centre also hosts the offices of Goring Gap News and Goring-on-Thames Parish Council and the archive of the Goring Gap Local History Society. It has a large meeting room and dining room with ancillary kitchen for hire on a regular or occasional basis at competitive rates.

Chairman's GGN Report for January 2025

In 2024 the Goring Gap News Association received three applications for a donation from its Award Fund to local community groups.

The Association was pleased to make the following awards:

£500 to the Goring & Streatley Young Musicians Trust, to assist in supporting education and music-making opportunities for young people in our communities.

£1,000 to the Withymead Nature Reserve, towards the costs of essential surgery for willow trees which had suffered storm damage.

£235 to The Hub, for the purchase of a replacement printer.

Since 1991 the Goring Gap News Association has allocated more than £163,000 to local groups and organisations. Past beneficiaries include: parish councils, churches, schools, pre-schools and playgroups, scout groups, Goring Library, sports clubs and societies, halls and meeting rooms, MIGGS, the GAP Festival and Goring on Thames in Bloom.

The Award Fund accumulates surpluses generated by GGN over the year; these arise as a result of the extremely generous voluntary efforts of all those who edit, produce, distribute and provide governance for the magazine.

Awards may be made, in accordance with GGN's awards policy, to any local non-commercial organisation or, in certain circumstances, to an individual aged under 25. In general, approval for an award is given to:

- charitable and benevolent associations
- people under 25 who are performing voluntary service
- one-off projects, but not to those requiring recurring funding
- projects which do not compromise the impartiality of GGN

Further details are available at www.goringgapnews.co.uk/information

Applications for an award should be submitted to ggn chair@gmail.com; all applications will be considered at the quarterly committee meetings.

There have been a few recent changes to the volunteers whose invaluable help ensures that GGN is produced, printed and delivered to all properties in the parishes of Goring and Streatley:

Anne Parkinson has replaced Derek Robinson as Treasurer.

Victoria Brandon has replaced Julie Rees as Distribution Manager.

Geraldine Grayson has replaced Diane Paddick as the Distributor for Streatley.

We welcome the new incumbents and offer our grateful thanks to those whom they have replaced. It is only because such volunteers are willing to offer their assistance that everybody receives their GGN each month.

I wish you all a happy and healthy 2025.

Jeremy Spring
Chairman



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Goring CofE Primary School inspection

The governors of Goring Primary School are pleased to share news of our Ofsted inspection, which took place at the end of last term.

We were told at the outset that this inspection would be an ungraded one, which means that its purpose is to confirm whether the school has maintained the 'Good' standard found at the previous inspection in 2019. In fact, our inspector not only confirmed this, but found that in all areas our school would be graded 'Outstanding' if this had been a graded inspection. This means that we will be likely to have a further inspection in the next couple of years, to allow these improvements to be formally recognised.

The inspector's comments to the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team were extremely encouraging. Most notably, she said she was unable to find any areas for improvement. More specifically, she found the pupils to be happy and excited to learn. She was particularly impressed by the ethos and values of the school, mentioning the responsibilities pupils are encouraged to take on in school through the numerous pupil groups, and also the opportunities to represent the school externally. In terms of teaching and learning, the inspection revealed the curriculum to be 'rich, ambitious and well-designed', and taught by highly skilled teachers. The leadership of the school was found to be 'highly effective', with particular note being made of how well the merging of year groups had been managed when pupil numbers had dipped.

This is a remarkable assessment, especially given the funding challenges the school has had to face in recent years. We believe this verdict is well deserved as a reflection of years of hard work by our Executive Headteacher, Mrs Wheatcroft, and her excellent staff team, to whom we give our heartfelt thanks.

Henry Fay
Chair of Governors



GPS pupils celebrate OFSTED results

Local thermal image surveys to identify heat-loss

Excess heat loss from homes can occur in many ways. Examples include loss through poor construction, such as badly fitting doors and windows, and loss due to inadequate insulation of old pipe work and hot water cylinders. Identifying and preventing heat loss could improve the comfort of your home, reduce energy bills and reduce your carbon footprint.

One way to identify where heat is being lost is to 'see' where the building fabric is warming as heat leaks into the surroundings. Thermal imaging cameras can 'see' the heat radiating from surfaces and so they are a useful tool for identifying heat loss areas. They produce an image in which colour relates to the amount of heat radiating from surfaces.

As part of their 'Cosy Homes' initiative, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) have kindly provided Chris Rickards, a retired Civil Engineer living locally, with a thermal imaging camera together with tuition and instruction on how to use and interpret the camera's results. Thermal imaging needs to be carried out in cold weather, with central heating switched on, in order to highlight the difference between indoor and outdoor temperatures. On a voluntary basis, Chris is offering a free external survey to households in Woodcote and Goring between January and February.

During the survey Chris will use the camera to record thermal images of your home which he can interpret for you and can be emailed for reference afterwards. A survey takes up to an hour.

Chris is helping to raise money for a new cloakroom area at St Leonard's Church, Woodcote. This iconic 19th century church is in urgent need of toilet facilities which will require the reconfiguration and upgrading of the current kitchen area. The provision of a social and communal space for both adults and children is also planned.

Although the thermal survey is offered free of charge, donations towards this project would be very much appreciated. For further information or to book an external thermal image survey of your home, please email HeatlossRG9@gmail.com or pick up an application form from St Leonard's Church, Woodcote RG8 0PG.

Should a survey not be required, but you would like to support the new cloakroom facilities at St Leonard's, please make donations to: Woodcote Parochial Church Council, sort code 40-52-40, account 00036585

Chris Rickards





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Christmas at Goring Unplugged

At the end of December, Goring Village Hall was packed for the special Christmas edition of the popular Goring Unplugged. The audience sat at tables, and as usual, brought their own food and drink, but in the Goring Unplugged Christmas tradition, audience members were treated to glasses of mulled wine and mince pies, which really set the mood!

Popular group The Mysteries opened the show with some well-known pieces and the audience quickly joined in. This group's singing is spot on and the drummer, who perhaps should be called the percussionist, played a variety of rhythmic instruments, including the xylophone.

Harlequin is a group formed by Chris Hawes and Jonathan Clifton in 1965, while still at school, and they have been successfully writing songs, and music for stage and screen ever since, while Chris was also known as a creative engineer and inventor, and Jonathan has enjoyed a successful career as an actor and broadcaster. More recently they were joined by Ukrainian artist, Anya Goldenberg, who also teaches the highly popular children's art classes after school in Goring. The audience enjoyed their three-part harmony, and Anya sang a sad but beautiful solo in Russian about lost love.

Pete Orton is a singer and comedian, and the audience loved his off-beat ditty about landscape artist Capability Brown, and his hilarious performance on the home made flute comprised of flowers and stems!

Dolly McPherson is a popular singer, and accompanied only by guitar and bass, her beautiful voice and poignant songs delighted the audience. But that's not all. Dolly recently used her musical gifts in concerts to raise money for the Air Ambulance Service. The show ended with some Christmas carols and songs played by Baum, Cox-Smith and Taylor on various string instruments, including guitar, mandolin and violin, which the audience loved, especially when Andy Taylor danced around the stage, playing his fiddle! A truly accomplished musician. The new 2025 season of *Goring Unplugged* begins on Friday 28 February at 7.30pm, Goring Village Hall, doors open at 7pm. For a mere £5 admission, (cash or card at the door) and bringing your own food and drink, you can make new friends, enjoy a lovely evening of music from top performers, at little cost and without leaving your local area!



Andy Taylor

Goring and Streatley Concert Band, supporting Wallingford Emergency Food Bank

Over the Christmas period, Goring and Streatley Concert Band and its Clarinet Ensemble were very pleased to support the local community in raising £450 for Wallingford Emergency Food Bank.

The Clarinet Ensemble provided Christmas entertainment at three local care homes, who in return very generously donated £300 to the food bank. Homes visited were The Grange in Goring, The Old Vicarage in Moultsford and Waterside Court in Wallingford. Both residents and staff enjoyed joining in with the carols and appreciated the Christmassy tunes from the Ensemble's repertoire, all ably introduced by band member David Cole. Care Assistant, Blerta Cesula at Waterside Court commented: 'Thank you so much for joining us here at Waterside Court, it was an amazing and unique performance and everyone really enjoyed it. We had a fantastic time.'

On the wet and windy morning of Saturday 21 December, fifteen members of Goring and Streatley Concert Band entertained Christmas shoppers in Wallingford town centre with a number of popular carols. Many shoppers stopped to listen and contribute to a bucket collection for Wallingford Emergency Food Bank. The band was delighted to have collected £147.58.

To find out more about your local concert band and its small Sax Group and Clarinet Ensemble, all of which are available to hire, please visit www.goringandstreatleyband.co.uk Perhaps we could enhance your planned inside or outside event this spring/summer with some appropriate entertainment.

If you would like to join us as a musician, we are currently particularly keen to hear from any potential brass players, either to our Starter Band or Main Band. We have great fun rehearsing on Monday evenings and we'd love to hear from you. Why not send us a message via 'Contact us' on the website to find out more.



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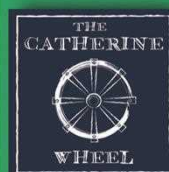
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MUSIC and ARTS continued

Adam Bloom – Gap Comedy

Goring Village Hall was full of festive cheer on 21 December, as Richmond's Adam Bloom performed for the first time. A cheerful, high-energy performer, Bloom had done his research and calculated that, with a packed hall, one in nineteen residents across Goring and Streatley were in the audience! There was something for everyone in this two-hour programme, from Banksy to Buddhism, and from funerals to fishnets.

It was Bloom's audience participation that made him stand out. Despite feeling like he was in a 'cult' in a slightly homogeneous audience, he was chatty and personable throughout. After the interval, he even invited us to suggest words for him to riff on, and we were treated to sharp on-demand segments about shoes, watches, shampoo, holidays and even the English language itself.

There was a great deal of introspection and openness from Bloom. Opening up about his OCD and hypomania, his performance was dynamic and honest. He was frank about his divorce (amicable – at least between his wife and her family) alongside the challenges of trying to re-enter the dating world. Bloom is certainly one of the more philosophical comedians we've had – reflecting on God and the nature of existence, and, as the evening came to a close, he quipped how 'comedy is someone on anti-depressants trying to cheer up a group of people who are already happy'. Occasionally profound, at times frantic and always fun, Bloom's set was an entertaining end to another successful year for Gap Comedy.

Max Kibble



Orchestra of St John's (OSJ) concert in Dorchester Abbey on New Year's Eve

I am fortunate to have been to these wonderful concerts for the last few years and this one was as uplifting as ever. Although not as large as the famous Vienna New Year's Day orchestra, to me they sound just as good, and judging by the quotations in the programme, *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Sunday Times* and several music publications agree. The OSJ was founded half a century ago by the inspirational and accomplished singer and conductor John Lubbock. Simon Rattle described him as 'one of our most musical assets – a thoughtful perfectionist and a musician of total integrity.' He gave us an excellent, varied and totally absorbing programme, featuring eight of the best Strauss pieces, but also works by Sarasate, Rachmaninov, Gershwin, Veracini and Leroy Anderson, so 18th to 20th centuries.

One of the more unusual features of the OSJ is their work with noble causes. John Lubbock and his wife Christine, a famous mezzo soprano, founded Music for Autism over 20 years ago, inspired by the effect music has on their own severely autistic son. They take music into special educational needs schools, in this country and abroad, without charge, reaching some 6000 young people each year. They also run a 'Serenading' programme to increase the wellbeing and mental health of patients and NHS staff in the Oxford area with classical music performances.

We listened to four soloists who are differently abled, Derek Paravicini who is blind and an international piano performer since he was nine years old, another much younger blind since birth pianist Ashleigh Turley, who also plays drums, organ, guitar and saxophone, a wonderful young violinist Poppy McGhee who is currently studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and Lydia Kavina playing the theremin. She was born in Russia in 1967 and at the age of nine began learning to play with a cousin, Leon Theremin himself. It was absolutely amazing to listen to. Most of us only know the Doctor Who theme, but she could play anything!

Do look at the website for more details: www.osj.org.uk and better still, go to one of their concerts, there are many at Dorchester Abbey and in Oxford, throughout the spring. Alexander Armstrong will be speaking about his fascinating life at the Sheldonian on Tuesday 8 April, with his choice of music played by the OSJ.

Rosie Mortimer





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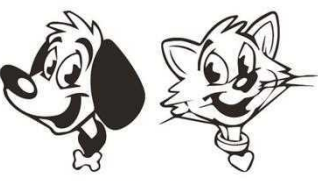
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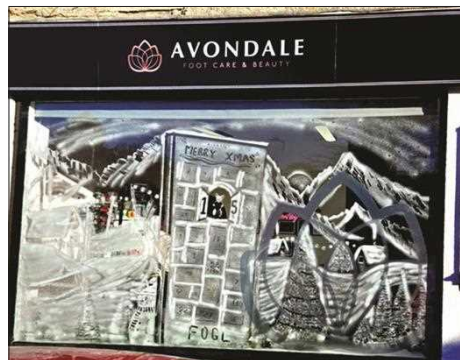
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Festive fun at the Library

This Christmas, the Library was brimming with festive cheer and creativity! Volunteers and customers came together to create beautiful handmade bunting, featuring knitted, crocheted, and crafted designs. This year's theme was presents and joined our tree, stars and snowmen from previous years. The colourful display added a warm, welcoming touch to our space.

We hosted free drop-in craft sessions where visitors could make their own Christmas baubles—always a hit with families. On the special shopping evening, we set up a table for decorating (and enjoying) gingerbread hearts. A fun trail through the Library challenged visitors to find hidden gingerbread characters, delighting children and adults alike.



Our popular Adventure Windows trail returned this year with a snowy theme, featuring 24 magical windows to discover (see P42). Visitors voted for their favourites, and the response was fantastic. Avondale Foot Care and Beauty Salon were the clear winners.

It has also been wonderful to hear such positive feedback on the new Library layout. We're thrilled it's working well and creating an inviting space for everyone.

Thank you to all who joined in the fun—we can't wait to do it all again next year!

Jacqui Gray

Chair, Friends of Goring Library



Goring Craft Fair – Children's Art Competition

In November, children from Goring Church of England Primary School were invited to design the front cover of the Craft Fair Programme.

As you can imagine, there were some wonderful submissions. After much deliberation by Dee Singleton, owner of Reeds Art and Framing, it was decided that Anna Nadtochii from Year 5 would be the winner. She painted a beautiful landscape watercolour that truly captured the essence of Goring. In the words of the budding artist herself: 'I really enjoyed spending my weekends painting this picture. It took me about four hours, and I am really proud of it. I am very excited to have won!'

Congratulations also go to the runner-up, Annabella, from Year 3. And, of course, a big well done to all the other entrants—you worked so hard and your submissions were fantastic. You should all be very proud.

Special thanks go to two local businesses that have supported this competition for many years. Reeds Art and Framing not only judged the competition but also framed the winning entry and displayed it prominently in their window until the Christmas Arcade Fair. Thanks also to Inspiration, Jeanne, Kevin, and the team, for generously providing prizes for both the winner and the runner-up this year!



Anna Nadtochii, 10 years old

Kelly Harrison

Festive fun at the Free Church

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph... not too sure who's who, but these little ones joined in the dressing up fun at Goring Free Church Baby Group Christmas party on Tuesday 17 December.

A good time was had by all and, lots of photos were taken to remember their first Christmas experience or maybe their second!

The previous week Goring Free Church Kids group saw around 35 toddlers and accompanying adults enjoying festive fun with a range of activities from craft, ball pit, toys and puppets to Christmas snacks and singing.

Baby Group runs each Tuesday anytime between 10 and 12noon and is for non-walking babies.

GFC Kids Group runs each Friday from 9.30-11.30 and is for preschool children aged 0-4 years.

These groups operate during term times only. For more information, please visit www.goringfreechurch.org.uk/children-youth/preschool/

Yvette Gordon-Potts



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Goring Late Night Shopping Evening 2024

With Christmas trees lit above the shopfronts of Goring High Street and signs dotted around the village, the beginning of December 2024 ushered in the much-anticipated annual Late Night Shopping Evening on Friday 6 December.

'It was cold and wet—but the local people came out in force!' Rose Isaac at the Goring Grocer told GGN. Rose, who did the festive flower displays for the shop, added: 'It was very busy, a fun event, as always.'

Kate Cheng of Goring Library commented on how good the turnout was for them, saying: 'We had about 80 people in.' The library set up a table for decorating (and enjoying!) gingerbread hearts, and also set up a trail for visitors to find hidden gingerbread characters.

As locals will also know, Father Christmas always makes an appearance upstairs at Inspiration card and gift shop. This year was no different. Owner Jeanne Hunter expressed her appreciation for everyone (big and small) who popped in to see Santa Claus: 'We want to thank everyone who came out!'

Gary Smith, of Goring Village Butchers, cooked the hog roast which was for sale in the Arcade. 'It was really great,' he told GGN, 'we sold out!'

Ruth Cordle, of Goring Free Church, highlighted just how good the numbers were this year: 'We did just under 100 hot chocolates, nearly all of the cakes went, and I had 20 lovely people baking me cakes.' The church, which also had activities for children, used up nearly all of their 100 quiz sheets for younger and older children.

The Village Cafe also kept its doors open late and had food stands outside their shopfront in the Arcade. Betsy Brown, who worked that evening, explained: 'We sold hot chocolate, we had a barbecue outside. It was nice – just the atmosphere – the whole village getting together and having all the little stalls selling things.'

She added that Punch and Judy also made an appearance, saying 'It was a lovely evening really.'

As well as good numbers and a hearty consumption of food and drink, it's clear that all the businesses and groups that took part were really happy seeing their efforts pay off. Ruth at GFC said 'It was just a really nice happy vibe where I just felt everybody was really welcomed and seemed to be enjoying it.'

Jeanne said: 'It's such a good evening and it's for the community – it's a lovely way to kick off Christmas.'

We hope everyone had a good Christmas season and all the best for 2025!



Shopping evening activities at the Free Church

Rehab to fitness online Pilates programme to achieve a back without pain

I am an APPI Clinical Pilates Instructor and Cancer Rehab Instructor based in this beautiful village of Goring. In 2022, I created a new business called Three Pillars of Health after being part of a Clinical trial for MacMillan, called SafeFit, during COVID-19. I was privileged to support eight women with breast cancer over Zoom with exercise, nutritional advice and emotional support. In addition to teaching 1:1 from my studio online and in-person, I teach several group clinical Pilates classes in and around Goring.

My personal story about a back injury began 12 years ago. I had a physical job as a sports and remedial massage therapist – on my feet five hours a day, leaning over a massage table. I was attending a weekly Pilates class to keep my body in check but still ended up with a prolapsed disc in my lower back. I couldn't sit, stand, drive, walk, roll over in bed or leave the shower without pain. Two years later, I qualified as a Clinical Pilates Instructor. Three years later, I was pain-free. Five years later, I stopped having recurring episodes of back pain. I discovered that being an instructor was the only way to truly understand how to have a safe and effective Pilates class.

My Rehab to Fitness Programme is designed to allow anyone (beginner/experienced) to train their body in the same way a Clinical Pilates Instructor can with the same skill set and knowledge. By following the programme step-by-step, you'll get as close as possible to being back pain-free, preventing recurring episodes, and creating a good life habit.

Continued on Page 15.



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Why do this programme?

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- Engaging your core: In the APPI philosophy the client engages the appropriate muscles that they need for the task at hand. The 'intensity' of the connection to the 'core' muscles will alter as the load alters. A bent arm or leg is easier than a straight one. This avoids unnecessary 'bracing'.
- Lateral breathing: How we breathe matters with the end goal being a smooth, fluid, flowing movement with the least amount of muscle activity in that given task. It takes skill to not compromise your back by letting go of your core while inhaling and exhaling.

To feel energised: Pain is tiring. It feels great to do something about it, especially if it makes you feel better for doing it.

To reduce anxiety and depression: It helps you keep a healthy weight, and improves confidence.

To improve muscle strength and balance: Exercise the main muscle groups with resistance two days a week and incorporate mobility daily as recommended by the UK Chief Medical Officers.

Who benefits from the programme?

Anyone with back pain or who wants to prevent the recurrence of back pain.

This Rehab to Fitness programme has been a labour of love. I want you to feel empowered to learn how to train your back to be stronger and ultimately pain-free with a very simple to follow and affordable online exercise programme.

Where do I start?

Sign up for the programme using this link with a monthly or annual membership:

www.threepillarsofhealth.co.uk/12-week-rehab-to-fitness. Please get in touch with vanessa@threepillarsofhealth.co.uk if you'd like more information.

Vanessa Mansergh

Goring Hardware - What we do differently

From plastic-free products to refillables and responsibly-sourced wood, here's what your local hardware shop is doing to be more sustainable...

'It's key, it's key going forward, for the younger generation.' That's Danusia McDonald, owner of Goring Hardware, speaking about why she pursues sustainability as a business goal. She showed me around her shop, eager to give GGN readers an insight into what she's doing to reduce the environmental impact of her business.

'We've recently introduced Faith in Nature and Ecover. Faith in Nature is UK-based and offers plastic-free body care products. We've also introduced a whole eco range with cleaning brushes. With compost bins, you've got your plastic ones, but now I've moved away from that and they're recyclable or made of bamboo. Another example: our shopping bags, lunch boxes and cups come from Eco Chic, a UK company. Their products contain recycled materials and they try to be more sustainable. We also sell bamboo socks, which have a lower synthetic content.

'It's very much in the forefront of my mind,' she says, 'and also trying to support UK-based companies.' Danusia tells me there's a clear reason why she's so keen to do things differently: 'At the end of the day we've got to support each other.'

However, she's honest with me about the challenges they face in the sector: 'We stock over 10,000 items, so sustainability is difficult. A lot of manufacturers use plastics, supplies often come in plastic and tin; if they are chemicals, they have to be stored carefully to be chemically stable. We are limited. As and where we can, we introduce and change. However, an aspect of that is that it's probably more expensive because of the economics of recycling.'

When it comes to customer service, Danusia says they try to reduce their environmental impact by using biodegradable bags at checkout, or by wrapping items like bird seed, nuts and fat balls in paper bags. She tries to nudge customers in the right direction by selling products like glass jars and bottles instead of plastic ones, and by making sure Goring Hardware supplies items like firewood from responsible sources only. But, she says, sometimes there just aren't any sustainable alternatives available on the market.

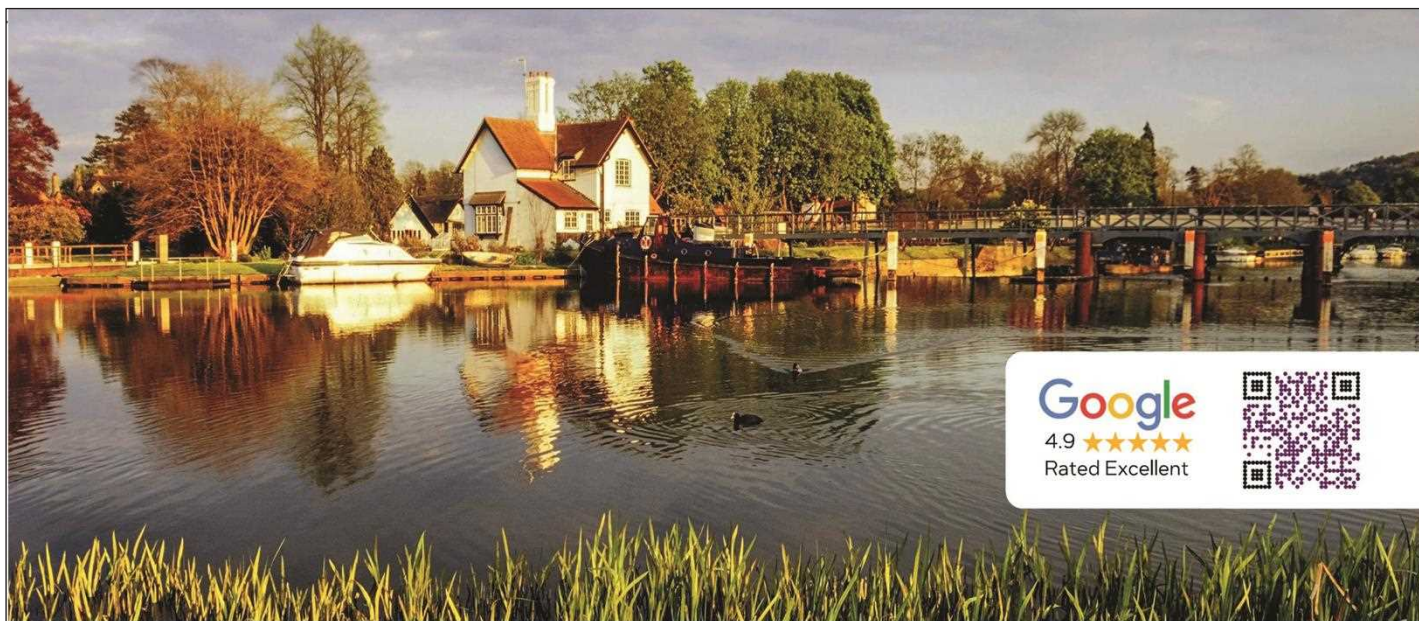
She'd love to sell some products, but sometimes suppliers have minimum orders that exceed the shop's capacity: sometimes sellers want me to stock thousands of units and I just can't do that, so it's economics of scale at the end of the day.' She also notes that matching online competition is also a factor she has to consider. 'I'm very open to customers making suggestions,' she says, adding that she particularly values what younger people think: 'I've got two boys and they are informing me all the time, saying 'have you looked at different ways of doing things?''

Dan Gordon-Potts



Danusia at Goring Hardware

See also Garden Design Company Award article on Page 39



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An evening with Kit Duffield (or is it Chris Russell?)

The Friends of Goring Library are very pleased that Chris Russell (or is it Kit Duffield?) will be giving a talk for us on Wednesday 5 February at the Village Café.

Chris Russell grew up in Goring, going to the Primary School and Langtree. He is now a published author, on the verge of completing his sixth book. Under the name Chris Russell he has written a popular trilogy of young adult novels *Songs About a Girl*. In 2024, his debut adult novel *Pretty Little Thing* was released under the pseudonym Kit Duffield, a creepy psychological thriller which became an instant Amazon bestseller.

Chris is also a founding member of pop/rock band The Lightyears, who formed at Langtree School and have gone on to tour the world, share a stage with members of Queen and The Who and perform at Wembley Stadium and Glastonbury – and of course Goring and Streatley's very own Gap Festival!

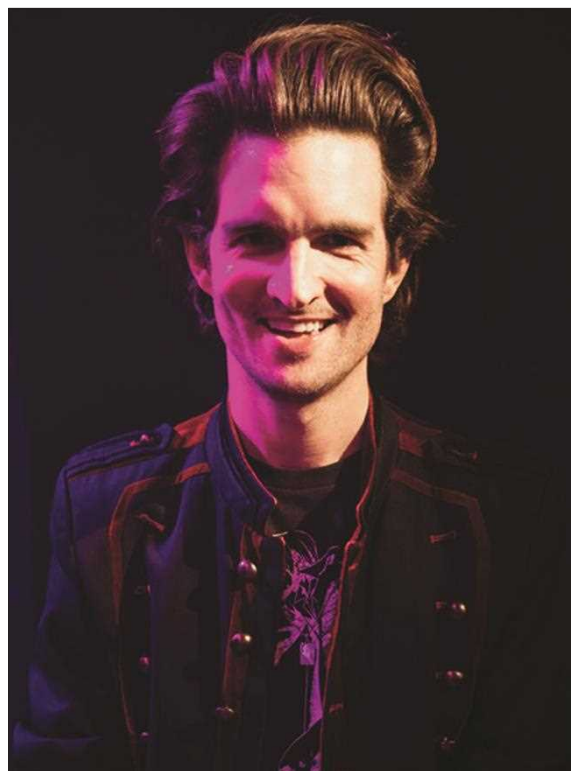
Tickets cost £8 and can be bought from the library or online at EventBrite (search Chris Russell). Doors open at 6.30pm with refreshments available to purchase. Talk starts at 7pm. All profits from the talk will go to the Friends of Goring Library.

Jacqui Gray
Chair, Friends of Goring Library

Rock star turned author to speak at Library event

Ahead of Chris's visit to Goring, I had the opportunity to talk to him about his new book, *Pretty Little Thing*, and delve 'behind the scenes'. As he shared his journey with me, his gratitude for all the opportunities his career has created shone through. Despite his covetable fame and success, he kept stripping it back to what is truly important. He talked about visiting schools and meeting children with the same spirited ambition he had at that age, the unbreakable bond with his bandmates, which has fuelled their music for 30 years and counting, and how much he values maintaining a connection with where he grew up.

Although Chris seems to have lived two lives, as a musician and as an author, everything appears to be interwoven. He always loved writing. After reading *The Hobbit* as a young boy, he proceeded to write a story called *The Dark Tower*, constructing it into a physical book, complete with a front cover and a barcode at the back. But it was choosing an alternative path which in turn drew him back to writing. After a few years touring the world and living the full rockstar experience as a member of The Lightyears, one of his bandmates turned to him and said: 'why don't you write a novel about all this?' Writing a novel about his adventures with the band had not crossed his mind but he grasped the idea with both hands. His first novel, *Mockstars*, was born out of his real-life tour diaries: a collection of both incredible memories and the sort of scrapes which may not be so funny at the time but end up being 'for the plot'. Describing ideas as simply popping into his brain, his second endeavour was a boy-



band-meets-girl trilogy, again drawing on inspiration from his musical career. He even wrote and released a song under the name of his fictional band, Fire&Lights.

His most recent novel, which he describes as 'Baby Reindeer meets The Haunting of Hill House', takes a very different direction. After sticking closely to what he knew with *Mockstars* and *Songs About A Girl*, Chris decided to try his hand at the blood-curdling thrillers he had always loved. Asking him where he drew his inspiration, he described his book as a marriage of the domestic noir of Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, a subgenre of crime fiction, and the gothic ghost story tradition of Shirley Jackson's

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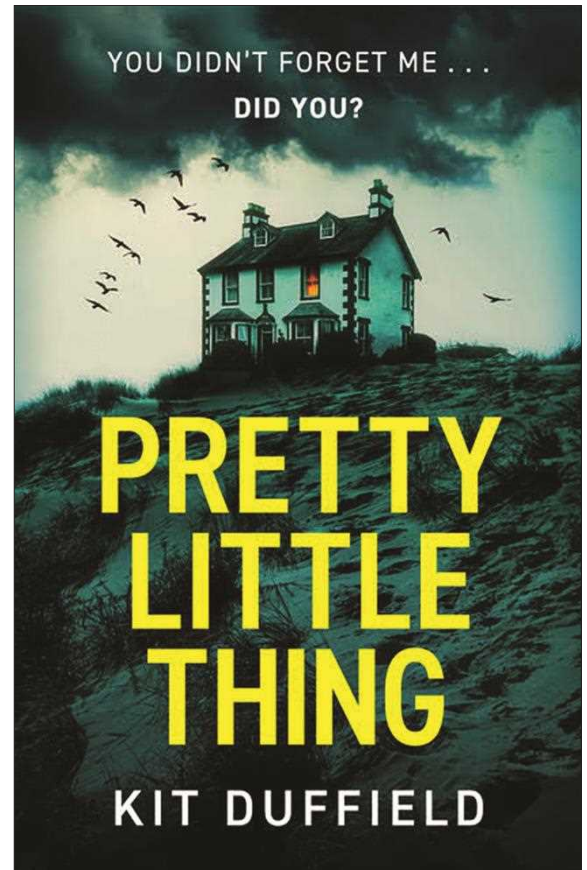
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novels. *Pretty Little Thing* follows the story of Beckett Ryan returning to her hometown to bury her parents, where she is met with coldness from all the inhabitants apart from one: a woman who she has never met before now claiming to be her childhood best friend. Naturally, I had to ask whether Beckett's 'childhood home' was based at all on Chris' own childhood home, but, as one would expect, Goring does not lend itself so well to a creepy, crumbling horror-story setting...

The change in genre was so remarkable he decided to publish under a different name. I was curious to find out whether Chris had needed to completely overhaul his approach to writing. He responded that, whilst adult fiction can be more complex, and thrillers are particularly unforgiving, as readers don't want a slow, meandering read, he was able to carry forward the lessons he learned from his previous books. The plot of his young-adult fiction is driven by the intense and unpredictable emotion of teenage love. This is not so distant from the compulsive and fast-paced storyline of a thriller, but the latter evokes a different emotion: fear. His aim was to write a story so disturbing you can't bear to read on, yet so gripping that you can't put it down.

It was a privilege to talk to someone who has not only worked hard for their dreams but achieved them. When asked what advice he would give to someone following their own ambitions, Chris confessed that there is no such thing as 'making it.' You always have to keep putting in the work, and that's exactly what Chris is doing. He is currently close to finishing his second thriller, which he plans to publish next Autumn, as well as constantly mulling over ideas for his next breakthrough.

Sophie Doornik



Going Forward Buses need you!

In case you're new to the village you may not know about Going Forward Buses. We are a not-for-profit Community Interest Company running scheduled bus services mostly in South Oxfordshire, established in January 2017, based in Goring. We have six 14-16 seater minibuses which can be driven by anyone with D1 entitlement on their driving licence. If you passed your driving test before January 1997 and are less than 70 years old you should already have it! We really need some help now to keep things going (forward!). Please have a look through the requirements below and contact us if you would like to know more. Initially the best way is via email to littlebluebus@yahoo.com

Drivers: We are always happy to have a chat with anyone who might be interested in joining our team of volunteers and paid drivers. We're particularly interested in the possibility of running services on Saturdays but this would need to be a regular commitment! We'd also love it if a lady driver would join our team.

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News from the 2nd Goring & Streatley Scout Group

Scout and wolf cub sleepover 2024

The wolf cub and scout annual sleepover is held in different scout huts or village halls each year. This November, the sleepover was held at Whitchurch Village Hall with 32 scouts and wolf cubs attending. In the afternoon, they gathered at the village hall before setting off on an eight mile hike up to Goring Heath, across the field footpaths to Upper Gatehampton, over hills and dells down to Gatehampton, then through Hartslock Wood back to Whitchurch, arriving back just as it started to get dark. Then into the hall to sort out their kit and prepare for a supper of fish and chips, delivered by Skip. The rest of the evening involved an indoor campfire and then two current popular films selected by the scouts and wolf cubs, complete with popcorn.

Then to bed, sleeping on the hall floor. Then up in the morning, exercises, breakfast and clearing away, hall thoroughly cleaned with parents arriving to collect the scouts and wolf cubs at 10am. They all had a great time and are looking forward to next year's sleepover.



Preparing for the hike

Bob-a-job 2024

The scouts, wolf cubs and beavers were busy doing bob-a-job during the autumn half term. Some exciting jobs were undertaken as the attached photo shows and some very complimentary comments were received from those who provided the jobs. Highest earner this year was beaver Oliver Kew who earned £99 doing 17 jobs for 13 different families; two wolf cubs earned £80 and £70 and sister and brother Grace and Teddy Armitage earned £66 each, all doing many jobs for different families in their neighbourhoods.

Bob-a-job has been running in scouting since 1916 and was the idea of Baden-Powell, to give the youngsters a work ethic, doing a good job for different families in their area. Bob-a-job is one of our Scout Group's main fund-raisers and, most importantly, it is our young members having to put in the effort for their Scout Group.



Bob-a-job

Active Beaver badge: singing and music making

For the Active Beaver badge, each beaver had to learn a song to sing to the other beavers, also to learn three traditional campfire songs, then they had to make a musical instrument. This year it was a box guitar, which came in all shapes and sizes, the elastic strings providing the strumming chords. Then at the beavers' Christmas Bash, the beavers formed the new boy band 'Beavers Aloud'. With only a very short practice they presented their version of *Jingle Bell Rock* to the parents and family members attending the Christmas Bash.

This concluded the Active Beaver badge and all beavers were awarded with their badge along with three recently joined beavers who had gained and been awarded their Safe Beaver badge. Well done to all the beavers.



Beavers and guitars



Beaver of the year

Photo: Donna Kew

The Beaver, Wolf cub and Scout of the Year competition 2024

The Scout Group winner of the 'Beaver of the Year 2024' was Beaver Lodge Leader Oliver Kew, who has attended all meetings, took part and supported all organised activities and church parades, gaining a total 87 points to be the winner. Second was Beaver Tom Farrell with 67 points and third was Lodge Leader Jack Tessendorf with 61 points.

The Wolf Cub of the Year was Six Seconder Evie Beagley and Scout of the Year Patrol Seconder Oscar Parkinson-Hill.

*David Cooksley
Group Scout Master*

2nd Goring & Streatley Scout Group [07789 938291](tel:07789938291)

Streatley Parish Council – 2024 Review

With full team councillor strength regained early in the year, together with a new clerk and West Berkshire Council (WBC) liaison by Laura Coyle, Streatley Parish Council has been busy addressing the variety of challenges to preserve and maintain the environment in which we enjoy our lives. Our firm mandate, to mitigate necessary change and conserve the assets which have been inherited from days gone by, means that most of the tasks have become routine, aside from necessary attention to the few unacceptable activities and any proposals which occasionally emerge.

Grey cabinets

A case in point is the recent installation of grey cabinets adjacent to the old bus shelter at the crossroads. Virgin Media are installing new fibre optic cables throughout the village as part of the government-backed initiative to provide competition in the fibre optic transmission business before data transmission via the old copper cables is terminated in 2027. Installation is therefore in our interest, although the colour and size of cabinets may be challenged. We are working with West Berkshire Council Highways (WBCCH) to reduce the impact of the connection cabinets as far as possible, whilst acknowledging that they are a necessary part of the new system. We understand they will be changed.



Gas mains

Through the summer school holidays, the gas mains sleeving work was finally completed. In summer 2023, the pipes under the approach roads to the crossroads were sleeved and new connections installed by Southern Gas Networks (SGN). Through the winter and spring months, Streatley suffered emergency closures of the High Street due to detected leaks sufficient to cause me to predict, at the Parish Assembly in 24 May, that we had ‘to brace ourselves for pipe sleeving along the length of the High Street at some unknown point to prevent further occurrences.’ The reduced traffic period in the 2024 summer holidays saw the work performed. Unfortunately, as these things happen, the surface to the crossroads, newly laid in March (due to excessive potholing), was re-excavated to accommodate the gas works. Hopefully there will be no more emergency closures by SGN, now that the upgrade has been completely finished.

Tip: When notified, SPC will publish advance notice but recommend viewing of the <https://uk.one.network> website map for upcoming road disruptions (typically in school holidays).

‘Scar’ on Holies

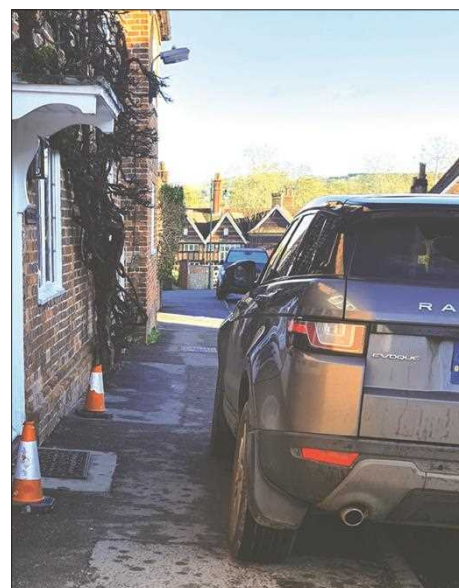
As I look up to the ‘scar’ across the Holies, caused by the need for SSEN to replace poles and cables, I do believe I can detect the softening of the edges as the vegetation grows back and surfaces weather – probably next growing season will see a return back to a more natural view. For those who like the cleared ‘footpath’, I recommend regular use to prevent a full covering once again, as it is unlikely to be regularly cleared.

As a parish council, we have no authority to prevent such utility work, indeed we need to be supportive if utilities are to be maintained or enhanced – I read of price reductions regarding fibre optic services for example. What we can do, is ensure our views are considered to minimise the impact of the intrusive works and installations.

Parking

Working with WBCCH, the culmination of multiple surveys conducted over several years provided evidence to support an adjustment to parking bay length at the west end of the High Street early in 2024. To date, the feedback has been positive with Goring-bound traffic now afforded a better view of uphill-bound traffic flow, enabling better decision making regarding whether to proceed. As through-traffic increases, reflecting the scale of housing developments to the north and south of Streatley, passage through the village is going to maintain a degree of frustration, balancing limited road width and the need for parking facilities. We will review as the years pass.

Meanwhile, a plea for drivers not to park on the pavements as this restricts the passage of pedestrians, especially people with small children and pushchairs.



Road speed and weight limits

Another traffic issue is speeding. The Parish Council has funded and supports the speed awareness initiatives, including signage and speed detection equipment operated by volunteers. In addition, there is support both for an 18T weight restriction and a reduced speed limit on the B4009, Streatley Hill, notably at the National Trust car park and golf course crossing point. We are in discussions with WBC Road Safety Department on these topics and will persevere to understand the overall most suitable proposals for adoption. We hear that WBC will be considering the proposals in the upcoming financial year.

Electric vehicle re-charging

You may have noticed the installation of EV charge points on the High Street, adjacent to the meadow. There will be two bollards enabling re-charging of four vehicles at a time. Charging is through a private company at commercial rates and we will observe with interest the extent to which the system is used.

Planning

Then there are the planning applications – a low number but all of which deserve the attention we provide. In this respect, the Parish Council fulfils the role of a neighbour, addressing the view from the public spaces and any imposition on the parish as a whole. Parish councils do not have the authority to grant or reject applications; that rests with WBC Planning Department with process auditing by the Planning Inspectorate. On the few occasions when the Parish Council raises objections, we always state reasons and offer suggestions as to solutions to overcome issues if possible. Most applications raise no issues which, we believe, is a reflection of the residents' desire to maintain the village's rural and historic image, thus underpinning the Council mandate.

Recreation grounds

Through this year, the Recreation Ground has received a degree of attention, with removal of a number of perimeter trees due to natural decay. After the summer growing season, the gaps are closed and adjacent vegetation flourishing. At the end of the summer, the old storage container was also removed. With no solid proposals for further use, the cabin departed. General maintenance was conducted to the fenced play area with weed clearance and fence replacement performed directly by councillors, and overall grounds maintenance arranged via contractors.

Other assets

Meanwhile, the routine business of managing the village common assets receives attention. We have 30 streetlights gradually undergoing replacement by lower-cost LED lamps, 12 roadside salt bins requiring replenishment, a small acreage of land, a bus stop shelter, phone box, benches gates and barriers all needing addressing – and dog bins do need emptying!

Although WBC addresses the road cleaning general services, there is always that last bit that seems to be missed. The last 5% of rubbish needs a detailed manual effort and only with the help of Streatley residents can this be achieved. Please be ready to volunteer this spring to walk the roadsides of our village to clear the final rubbish – you'll be amazed what items and volume is collected. We need more than the 12 volunteers who assisted last Spring!

Crime prevention

Fortunately, Streatley continued to be a low crime area in 2024 although there have been incidents of burglary, car theft and unacceptable behaviour reported to Thames Valley Police (TVP) over the year. The Parish Council liaises with TVP to share information and offer proposals when considered useful. Eyes wide open is a good policy for the community, observing, noting and reporting any strange activity. TVP have offered to provide a presentation on crime in the region, their efforts to curtail unwanted activities and what the public can do for prevention. We ask that you contact the parish council if you are interested in such a presentation.

Floods

Floods featured last spring following a number of storms filling the Thames upper reaches. The Parish Council owns a number of flood defence equipment items (pump, sand bags etc), available for use by residents in an emergency and supports the ongoing preventative initiatives with WBC and Thames Water to conduct works, adopt procedures and provide information regarding control of the river. There are no quick fixes but our voice is heard along with other riverside parishes, to assist adoption of best practices. This work continues.

Budgeting

So far this year we have maintained services and provisions marginally under budget – which reflects a degree of accurate estimating last year together with a limited number of incidents covered by contingencies. The underspend will be transferred to the funds put by to eventually replace assets, mainly on the Recreation Ground. Accounts were published in 24 April followed by a positive audit report.

Christmas

The torchlight carol service in The Meadow proved a success again at the end of 2024. All credit to Ian and the team, in which SPC played a part. We hope the funds will assist with the good works performed in the villages.

Has anyone admired the coordinated warm-white (ie yellowish) Christmas lights which the residents of our northern neighbours have adopted along the Wallingford Road? As a collective, the vision has become more magical as the displays have developed to a single common theme. A year ago, we raised a similar idea with residents adjacent to Streatley crossroads and continue to support the proposal.

...and so to 2025

No doubt the coming year will throw up challenges and opportunities for us but our ongoing mandate remains clear. As a voluntary organisation, the Parish Council conducts services for, and on behalf of, the community – approximately 850 residents. We get together for official monthly meetings and via all the usual communication facilities. We live in the village and share the common desire to maintain Streatley appropriately. Please feel free to raise concerns either by meeting attendance or via our website and emails.



EV charging point

Colin Smith

Chairman, Streatley Parish Council

How clean is our river in the Goring Gap? – the results

In the introductory article in GGN October 2024 Page 27 we reported some initial results from the Water Quality Monitoring study undertaken between May and September 2024. This article provides more results now we have analysed the data. We have studied the levels of pollution (two types of bacteria) and the correlation of bacterial levels with rainfall and river levels data, over the five-month period. Twenty local volunteers agreed to take part in this first local citizen science study to determine the level of faecal bacterial pollution present in the river. During this process, another environmental group, Thames21, discovered our plans and asked if we would join forces. They needed the same data we wanted from the Goring area and also our ready-made volunteer force. We agreed and the collaboration turned out to have considerable advantages as we benefitted from their experience of having done this type of work before in other areas. The principal goal of the Thames21 study was the assessment of water quality between Pangbourne Meadows and Goring, in order that Pangbourne Meadows could qualify for Designated Bathing Water Status (DBWS), a designation which could bring recreational benefits to the community, such as daily monitoring of the bathing conditions by the EA during their 'bathing season' of 15 May



Water sampling, Ferry Lane

Photo: Ron Bridle

– end of September. The two species of bacteria monitored for this purpose are those which have the most potential to affect human health, *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) and *Intestinal Enterococci* (IE) which are indicators of biological pollution recognised by the Environment Agency (EA) and, therefore, the bacteria GGeo had chosen to monitor.

On specific days, but different ones each week, for 20 weeks between 16 May and 24 September, water was collected from four local sampling sites. The first location (A) was upstream of the discharge pipe from Goring Sewage Treatment Works (GSTW) near Withymead Nature Reserve on the border of Goring and South Stoke. We selected this location to serve as a 'control' site to provide baseline data for pollution flowing into the Goring Gap from upstream. The other three sites were located downstream of GSTW (the Leathern Bottel car park – site B), Ferry Lane (C) downstream of Streatley STW and Beale Park (D) downstream of Lower Basildon STW (Thames21 recruited volunteers to monitor their two sites at Pangbourne Meadows and Sulham Brook, Pangbourne).

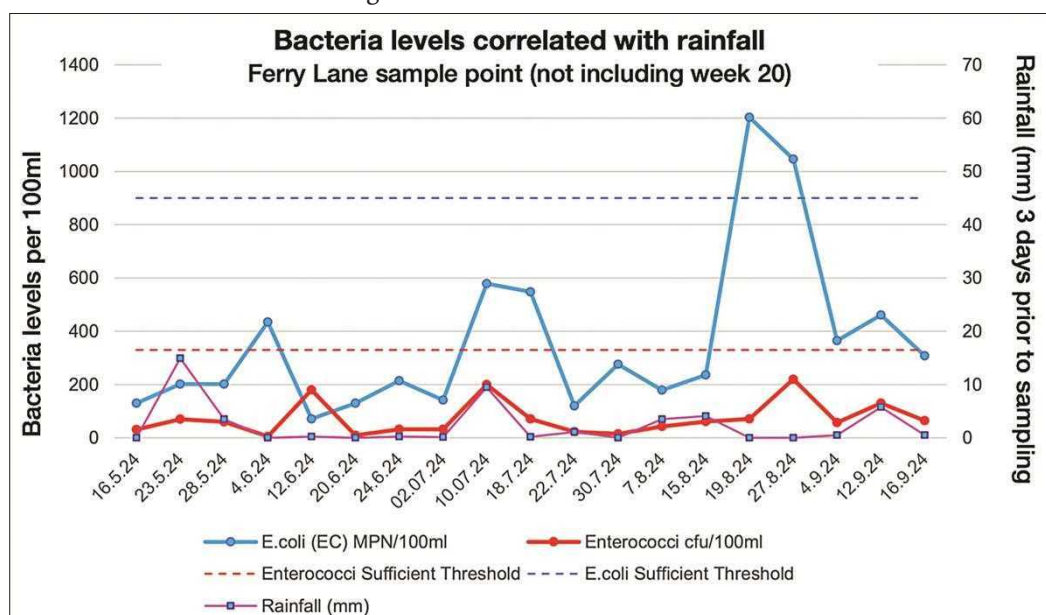
500ml samples were collected in sterile bottles using an aseptic protocol and stored in a light-proof cooler bag to avoid the samples deteriorating, which were collected by an overnight courier who delivered them to a UKAS government-approved microbiology laboratory for analysis the next morning.

There are three stand-out results:

1) When rainfall was at typical levels, water quality for both *E. coli* and *Intestinal Enterococci* met EA standards for 'Good' or 'Sufficient' water quality (see graphs).

The EA has the convention of presenting the various levels of bacteria in river water to the public as four band designations from 'Excellent' (the highest, cleanest water quality), 'Good' (generally good water quality), 'Sufficient' (water meets the minimum standard) to 'Poor' (does not meet the minimum standard). For *E. coli*, 'Good' is <1,000 bacteria/100ml and 'Poor' is >1,000. For IE it's different with 'Good' being <400 and 'Poor' >400.

2) Extremely heavy rainfall experienced two days before samples were taken at week 20 resulted in massive spikes of *E. coli* levels in all four sites which were up to 240 times higher than the average scores for all the previous weeks. This can be seen in the bar chart. The vertical axes had to be broken to change scales otherwise they would have needed to be about 80 times higher than they are here and this A4 page would have needed to be maybe 20 times longer to accommodate it. Interestingly, the highest



levels of *E. coli* recorded on that day was at site A, the green control location upstream of Goring STW, showing that the bacterial pollution didn't come from discharges from the overflow storm pipes at our two local treatment works downstream of this point. However, Cholsey STW, 4.5km upstream of sample point A, was spilling for 30.25 hours prior to sampling and Benson STW further upstream was spilling for 38.3 hours during the same period. The EA's Monthly Water Situation Report for September 2024 states that 'The Thames area experienced its wettest month since records began in 1871. Overall, the Thames area received 193mm of rainfall during the month and over a third of this fell on just two days, 22 and 23 September.' Also, the highest rainfall recorded during this period by the EA's Cleeve Lock rainfall monitor was on 22 September at 38.21mm, two days before the last samples were collected on week 20 on the 24 September. (Goring STW has one storm tank with a capacity of 345,000 litres. Streatley STW has no storm tank).

3) There were two significantly high spikes of *E. coli* during weeks 15 and 16 at site C, Ferry Lane, as seen on the bar chart, when there was no rainfall at all during the three days preceding these two sampling days. (NB: The rainfall line on the bar chart shows the average rainfall over the preceding seven days so doesn't show this three-day dry period).

The reason for these relatively high spikes is currently the subject of an investigation we have instigated with Thames Water. One possible explanation is that the samples were taken about 2m downstream from the footbridge over the confluence of the mill stream which runs past the Ferry Lane sewage pumping station (this is documented as having a discharge outlet, but unlike sewage treatment works, pumping stations are not fitted with real-time flow sensors which record the start and stop times of all spills). Later this year we are planning a follow-up study when we will periodically test the water quality up and downstream of this pumping station to check if we can prove if this is the source of the pollution or not. Overall, the rainfall for weeks 1 – 19 was generally unremarkable for this period of the year. Heavy rainfall has been shown to increase bacterial pollution in rivers and it also increases agricultural chemical pollutants, eg nitrates and phosphates, due to run-off, which is accentuated when the river runs through a valley. We, however, are unable to determine the source of bacteria we collected, although this is now possible with more sophisticated techniques.

At present, sewage is legally only treated to environmental and not public health standards under the conditions of the Bathing Water designation. Climate change is likely to continue to trigger extreme and sporadic weather events, such as heavy rainfall, so improvements to sewage treatment works and storm storage capacity are needed urgently (Goring STW is listed by Thames Water as being due to meet all government targets for storm overflows by 2035 – 2040. Streatley STW is not on the list).

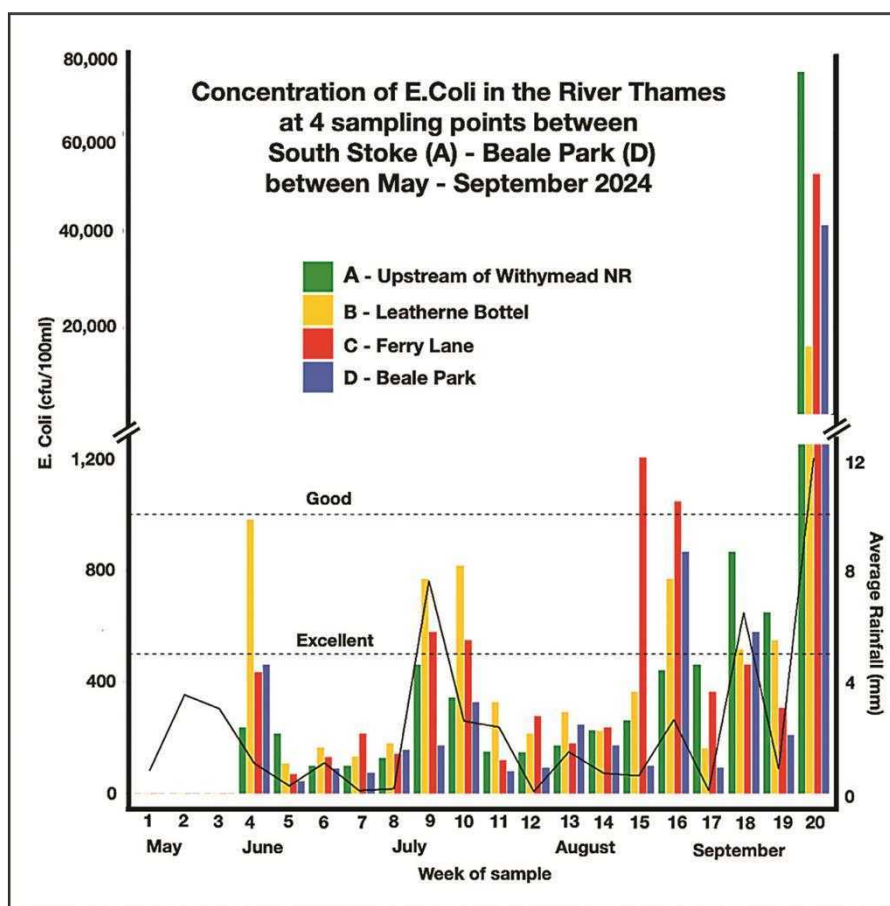
Acknowledgments:

This monitoring programme was part-funded by Mend the Gap and conducted in partnership with Thames21 led by Aggie Hodges, who has produced a 29-page technical report of the whole study. The trustees of GGEO would like to thank the 20 or so local volunteers who underwent training and collected 80 water samples over the five months, and particularly GGEO's scientific water quality team of Dr Lotte Meteyard, Jonathan Dewsbury and Steve Rock for undertaking the statistical analysis of the samples from GGEO's four sites and creating the bar chart.

Ron Bridle,

Trustee, Goring Gap Environmental Organisation

See previous article on P27 October GGN



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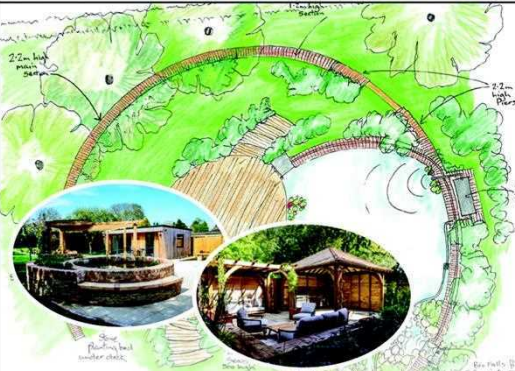
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Next Goring Repair Café – plus a new ‘Clothes Exchange’ event

Your next free repair service will take place in Goring Village Hall on Saturday 1 February 10am-12.30pm – and it's a special one this time!

Repair Café – Following the last-minute cancellation of the 7 December event due to the dangerously high winds of Storm Darragh, up to 18 unpaid volunteer repairers will be assembled again on 1 February. With their wide variety of skills, and each with their own work station and tools, they will try their best to fix anything you bring in. The Goring Repair Café has a success rate of about 70% of products fully working again after repair, or at least partially working, so it's well worth a visit. In addition to the repairers, there are ten support staff who will register your products and allocate them to the most appropriate repairer, as well as undertaking other tasks, including providing refreshments for you in Café Bellême.

All local residents and visitors from surrounding villages are welcome to bring in up to two items, eg bikes, buggies, lamps, fans, toasters, toys, vacuum cleaners, food mixers, textiles, computers, phones, other small electrical and non-electrical products, small leather and wooden items and small pieces of furniture, along with kitchen knives and other blades for sharpening. If you haven't been to the Repair Café before, there is a video, photographs and more information about what happens there on our website www.goringrepaircafe.info (When you open it, click on the logo to start the video – and check you have your sound on and click to see it full screen).

Clothes Exchange – This will be the first of a planned series of exchange events to take place at the back of the village hall in the Garden Room at the same time as the Repair Cafés. This first one is for 'clothes and accessories', but future ones may be focussed on other items that can have a useful second life, eg toys, bikes and buggies and books. So, if you would like to refresh your wardrobe with new clothing or accessories, and have any 'nearly new' clothing (lady's, men's or children's) and/or accessories you no longer need, bring them along between 9.00–9.30am on 1 February to exchange. (Please only bring clean items which are in good – excellent condition). As obviously we don't want anything left over at the end, the exchange idea only works on a one-in, one-out basis, and we cannot therefore accept bulk donations. Doors open to the public at 10am and details of exactly how this event will work, along with the T&Cs and FAQs are in the new 'Exchange' section of the Repair Café website www.goringrepaircafe.info

Why is this important? – Exchanging (swapping) is a well-established and sustainable way of acquiring good quality pre-used products. Like repairing things, this avoids unnecessary consumption and carbon emissions produced in the manufacture and transportation of new products. By exchanging clothes, for instance, you can save money, avoid waste and reduce demand for finite raw materials. Globally, the fashion industry is the second most polluting industry after the oil and gas sector and responsible for 1.2 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually, about 10% of the total emissions. The UK is one of the most wasteful countries in Europe, throwing away over 200,000 tonnes of textiles every year. The Goring Repair Café, and now these exchange events, are important environmental projects run by the local charity, Goring Gap Environmental Organisation (GCEO), to reduce waste, reduce climate change and increase sustainability.

If you bring along items for repair or take away items at the exchange event, we welcome any voluntary donations to cover the cost of the hall hire and other expenses. If you don't have anything to be fixed or clothes or accessories to exchange at this time, you are still very welcome to pop in to have a look at what happens in the village hall every other month – and you can enjoy having a chat and a sit down with a coffee or tea and some wonderful homemade cake. If you have any questions, that are not on the website or would like to help at these new exchange events, please email ronbridle@btinternet.com Thank you.



Ron Bridle

£60,000 available in grants for performing arts in South Oxfordshire

A new £60,000 Performing Arts grant scheme, run by South Oxfordshire District Council will open for applications on 3 February 2025.

The scheme is open to voluntary and community organisations in South Oxfordshire, who will be able to apply for a minimum of £500 and up to a maximum of £5,000 in funding for projects that improve community wellbeing across the district.

The grant aims to enhance the cultural landscape of South Oxfordshire by providing a financial boost to projects that help improve the quality of life of people living in the district, through projects that have a significant impact on the community.

The grant scheme closes at midday on 3 March 2025. More information about the grant scheme can be found on the council's website southoxon.gov.uk/grants and organisations can contact the Community Arts team by email performingartsgrants@southandvale.gov.uk for support.

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Access and safety improvements coming to Goring and Streatley

MIGGS expect three schemes to be completed early this year that will improve countryside access and road safety in Goring and Streatley. The schemes are designed primarily to help elderly and disabled people but will also benefit other pedestrians, especially parents with pushchairs and young children.

Station Road pedestrian priority lane

A 1m wide pedestrian priority lane, or 'virtual footpath', will be marked along the north side of Station Road between existing pavements at Red Cross Road and Bellême Mews in which pedestrians, when present, will have clear priority over all other road users. For this purpose, a 'pedestrian' includes a person in a wheelchair or mobility scooter.

The scheme is a trial that will be made permanent if successful. A date of 24 March has now been set for work to begin. It will last up to three days and a road closure and traffic diversion order will be in force. It appears the full width of the road will be reprofiled and resurfaced. This is good news for drivers and cyclists as well as pedestrians.

Following a formal public consultation by the highway authority, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) last spring, the existing two-hour parking spaces will be suspended to make way for the trial pedestrian lane.

New time-limited parking spaces will be created nearby, in Croft Road and Manor Road. Free parking will still be available on single yellow lines during the hours shown on adjacent road signs. When resurfacing work is completed, anyone may continue to park free for one hour in the Wheel Orchard car park and users of the Community Centre will still have access to its private car park, but only while they are present.

The OCC consultation followed two rounds of informal consultation, the first by MIGGS and the second by Goring-on-Thames Parish Council. MIGGS made a substantial contribution to the costs of the second consultation.

Gatehampton Road advisory pedestrian crossing route

A new, advisory pedestrian route across Gatehampton Road is awaiting surface repairs at the entrance to the station car park. This work will be undertaken by Great Western Railway, at the request of Goring-on-Thames Parish Council and MIGGS.

The advisory pedestrian route will be marked from the pavement at the station entrance/exit, across the car park entrance, to and from the least hazardous point for pedestrians to cross Gatehampton Road. A dropped kerb has already been installed at this point, paid for by the Parish Council. The crossing was requested by MIGGS, which has promised a substantial contribution to the Council's costs.

Streatley Meadow accessible gates

Wheelchair and pushchair accessible gates are being installed at Streatley Meadow, from Streatley High Street and Streatley recreation ground. A third accessible gate will be installed in the fence line that separates the main Meadow from the adjoining field. The first new gate, between the Meadow and the Rec, was completed in December (see picture). Completion of the other two is expected this month.

The improvements are being carried out by MIGGS with the approval of the trustees of Streatley Meadow and the support of Streatley Parish Council.

When completed, the new gates will facilitate a wheelchair- and pushchair-accessible (if bumpy!) circular pedestrian route from Streatley High Street to the Rec and back to High Street via Church Lane. When footpath 21 is fully open later this year, a longer pedestrian route will be accessible in normal (non-flood) conditions, back to The Swan hotel via the Thames Path.

Work on footpaths 21 is being progressed by West Berkshire Council as and when weather and nature conservation conditions permit. Footpath 21 will include two small, one-and-a-half metre-wide wooden footbridges over the watercourses that drain into the nature conservation site located on land alongside the river that is part of the Swan hotel estate.



New wheelchair and pushchair accessible gate between Streatley Recreation Ground and Streatley North Meadow

Photo Rhys Hamilton

John Boler

Chairman, MIGGS (Mobility Issues Group for Goring and Streatley)

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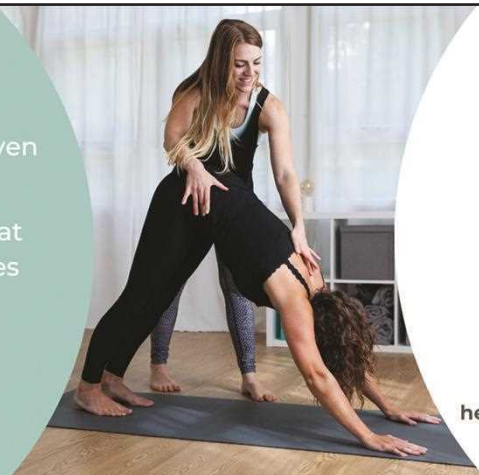
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Discovering The Living Rainforest

The Living Rainforest in Hampstead Norreys, 15 minutes' drive from the Gap, is home to over 850 plant and animal species from tropical rainforests, including rare and endangered species of global conservation value. Today, the centre welcomes around 90,000 visitors a year, including 20,000 children on its popular school visits programme. Visitors can experience the sights, sounds and smells of a lush rainforest environment and explore how plants, animals, human needs, economics and cultures are all linked.

Some of the most popular exhibits include Luigi, a yellow-knobbed curassow, and Cinnamon, a two-toed sloth – both of which roam freely in the largest glasshouse – plus dwarf caiman, Goeldi's monkeys, pygmy marmosets and a green iguana. For plant lovers, the orchid, aroid and bromeliad collections are not to be missed. There is a café to enjoy and for children there is the ever-popular playground.

We have an award-winning school visits programme at the centre, for students to see and appreciate the significance of the rainforest species. School visits are common on weekday mornings during the school term – these include guided tours and supporting educational resources. Schools normally leave by 2pm so afternoons tend to be quieter.

An exciting school holiday events programme is scheduled across 2025, offering free (mostly) learning activities for child visitors. Our annual ticket entitles visitors to return for free at any time for a year, to see their favourite species, spot some new ones and maybe try an activity.

Environmental education



Visitors looking at Lobster Claw plants

The Living Rainforest is part of the Trust for Sustainable Living (TSL), a

global educational charity dedicated to helping future generations build a more sustainable future. In addition to running the centre and providing education, the charity hosts the annual TSL International Student Competitions, providing a global platform for children and teachers worldwide to contribute to and debate sustainability solutions, with a new theme each year. To date, over 15,000 children and 3,000 teachers have participated from 120 countries.

TSL works to help close the sustainability learning gap which is hampering both national and international efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with over 70% of teachers in the UK reporting that training is inadequate to teach

kids about the climate and biodiversity crises and what exactly is needed to help transform our world (Teach the Future, 2021). TSL works with partners including the UK Department for Education, West Berkshire Council and universities such as Reading and Oxford, to help ensure that teachers have proper training.

Our own contribution to sustainable building, the 'Human Impact Building', was opened in 2006 and incorporates sustainable materials, low embodied energy, passive ventilation and passive solar gain. More recently in 2024, a new biomass boiler was introduced. Looking further ahead, we plan to rebuild The Living Rainforest to become the UK's first carbon neutral rainforest facility by 2030.

Winter warmth appeal

For those who are able, please consider supporting The Living Rainforest at this time of year. Gifts, no matter what size, have a real impact, and even more so during these cold winter months. Whilst the Trustees and Management have taken the important step to freeze ticket prices this season, we of course can't allow the rainforest, and its 850+ animal and plant species within, to freeze. With your kind and generous support, we can ensure that Cinnamon and Luigi and all their friends will continue to benefit from optimum tropical rainforest conditions every single day.

To donate, learn more and plan a visit, please see <https://livingrainforest.org/>



Children meeting Luigi, the yellow-knobbed curassow



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Executive Director
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Goring-on-Thames Parish Council

The principal points of the Goring-on-Thames Parish Council meeting on Monday 9 December 2024 are summarised below. The draft minutes are available, see www.goringparishcouncil.gov.uk

Brian McKenzie was unanimously co-opted onto the Council.

Approval was granted for new terms of reference for both the new Places and Assets Working Group and the Communications Working Group.

Approval was granted to rename Traffic Management Parking and Pedestrian Safety as the Travel and Transport Committee, to reflect a greater focus on 'active travel': walking, wheeling and cycling. This is in line with OCC's updated approach. For more about this, search for 'active travel' at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Approval was granted for upgrading the Playgrounds Working Group to a Committee. There will be a supplier meeting for prospective contractors at the Bourdillon in January, for the Bourdillon playground redevelopment. Work on the improved Bourdillon playground is expected to be completed by late summer/early autumn 2025.

Approval was granted for the precept request from the Finance Committee for the amount of £199,586 for 2025-26 to be submitted to SODC. This year, it was noted that rises in staffing costs and utility bills were significant. For comparison, the precept was £160,085 for 2022-23.

Approval was not granted for laying a hardcore surface on the extended car park at Sheepcot. The council resolved to seek other solutions for the problems created by the weather conditions

Approval was granted for Goring on Thames in Bloom to use the Rectory Garden without charge to hold its annual plant sale on Saturday 3 May 2025 from 9am-2pm.

Friends of Goring Library were granted permission to take responsibility for the old station plaque and display it appropriately.

Next meeting: Bellême Room, Goring Village Hall 10 February 7.30pm. See www.goringparishcouncil.gov.uk from 6 February for the agenda.

Streatley Parish Council – 09/12/24

The principal points of the above Parish Council meeting are summarised below. The official minutes can be seen at www.streatley.org or by contacting the Clerk at clerk@streatley.org

Planning applications

- 24/02561/FUL – Townsend Farm Bungalow Wallingford Road Streatley Reading RG8 9JX. Demolition of a terraced bungalow and a new two storey terraced house in the same location as the demolished house.
- 24/02543/HOUSE – 3 Stable Cottages, Wallingford Road, Streatley, Reading RG8 9JX. Three storey extension and front entrance porch alterations.
- 24/02564/FUL – Former Stables and Garage Adjacent 1-3 Stable Cottages, Wallingford Road, Streatley, Reading. Demolition of the existing stable and garage, and erection of a new single-storey 2-bedroom dwelling at The Stables at 3 Stable Cottages.
- 24/02380/HOUSE – White Hart House, 4 White Hart Yard, High Street, Streatley, Reading RG8 9JE. Proposed cart shed.

Decisions by WBC

- 24/01867/HOUSE – Thurle Beeches, Rectory Road, Streatley, Reading RG8 9QH. A series of minor internal and external alterations, including re-fenestration, bay window side extension, demolition of existing garden room and conservatory with replacement of conservatory and construction of electric gates at entrance to the drive. Approved 21/11/24
- 24/02024/HOUSE – Cleeve Court Cottage, Streatley, Reading RG8 9PR. Two storey side extension and internal alterations. Withdrawn 29/11/24
- 24/01689/OUT – Old Streatley Chalk Pit, Wantage Road, Streatley, Reading. Outline Application for construction of a self-build residential unit with associated infrastructure (resubmission of 23/02407/OUT). Refused 5/12/24

Next meeting

The next Council meeting will take place in the Morrell Room on Monday 10 February 2025 at 7.50pm. See www.streatley.org from 3 February for the agenda.

Santa's visit to Goring

During December, Pangbourne Rotary's Santa raised over £8,000 for good causes. Despite the cost-of-living crisis this princely sum was donated by the public to Santa during 12 street tours and in four static locations. The grand finale at Tilehurst Triangle with carol singing from the Churches of Tilehurst, mince pies and mulled wine, attracted over 500 people.

A Rotary spokesman said: 'Over £8,000 and even more happy faces is a fantastic result. Our two tours of Goring, organised by The Hub by Q1 Foundation, raised over £1,000.

'We would like to thank the public for their amazing generosity and all the volunteers who make this happen. Like many voluntary organisations we struggle to have enough helpers to maintain our fund-raising events, which enable us to donate over £25,000 to deserving causes each year. So, if you are interested in helping us, having fun and doing good why not consider joining Pangbourne Rotary?'

Contacts: membership@pangbournrotary.org.uk www.facebook.com/rotaryclubofpangbourne/
www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=1669



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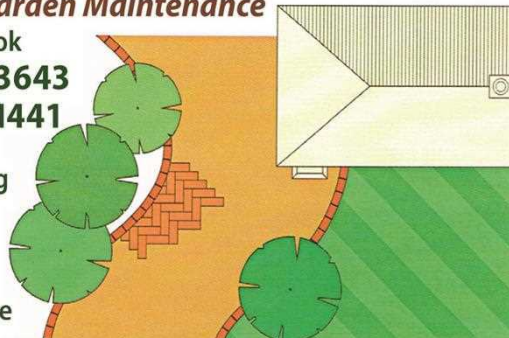
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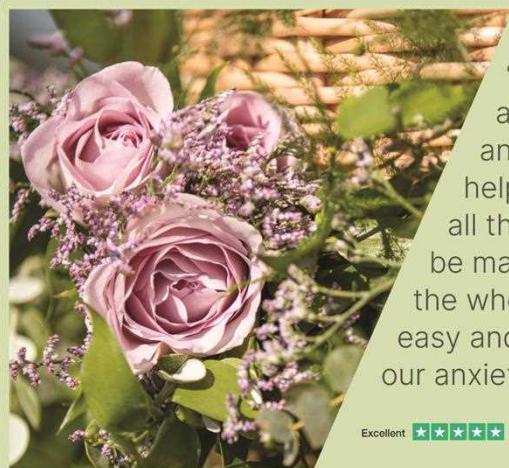
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Goring 10k – insights from the Finish Director

Race entries for The Goring 10k (9 March 2025) are now open and the volunteer committee are in full swing organising Goring Primary's biggest fundraiser.

With this in mind, Race Director Elkie Mace interviewed Simon Procter (pictured), Finish Director and committee member on his experience of the race over the last decade.

How did you first get involved?

Our son was starting his second year at Goring Primary in 2018 and I wanted to get involved in supporting the school. I also enjoy running and had run the Goring 10k a few times before we moved to the village. The race is the school's biggest annual fund raiser, so it was a great event to get involved with.

What is your role?

I am the race 'Finish Director', which sounds very grand, but just means that I'm responsible for setting up and managing the race finish on Bourdillon Field. This involves an early start on race day with a great team of volunteers who help to put up marquees and fencing, set up tables, the PA system and the water station. It also involves liaising with HSS Sports and Trail Med who provide our race timing and first aid support. Then after the race it's time to get everything packed away before a well-earned trip to the pub!

What do you love about the event?

The best part of my role is that I have a front row seat to see all of our amazing runners crossing the finish line! And it's always great to see the excitement of the school kids who hand out medals at the end. What I really love is how the whole community pulls together to organise the event from all of our volunteers on race day, to our many generous local sponsors, as well as the hard work of all the committee members.

What have been the highs and lows of the event?

The biggest low was when the race was cancelled due to snow in 2018. It was so disappointing that the event couldn't go ahead, but safety is always the first priority. It was also the year when I volunteered to join the committee and meant I didn't get to shadow my role on race day. Even though the race was cancelled a silver lining was the generosity of the many runners and sponsors who let us keep their entry fees and donations. Without doubt the biggest high for me each year is when we find out how much money has been raised for the school.

Any comedy moments from the race in the last decade?

In recent years we've moved to sustainable medals, so our race is more environmentally friendly. The medals are made from eco-board and hessian twine, which we hand thread in order to keep costs down so as many profits go to the school as possible. Twining 800 medals is rather time consuming though so we thought up 'Wine and Twine' an evening a few weeks before the event when many hands get together to help.

What advice would you give to new volunteers?

Firstly, well done for getting involved – the race wouldn't happen without volunteers like you! The other committee members are all fantastic and have lots of experience so if you're not sure about something there are lots of people to ask!

Please get involved in the race either as a runner, enter here www.goring10k.com or by volunteering. To get involved as part of the committee or helping out on the day, please get in touch with elkiemace@gmail.com

Elkie Mace



Simon Procter



Runners enjoying 2024 Goring 10k

Photo: Simon Booker – Stokerpix.com

Sport in the Gap – your local clubs in 2025 – part 1

The New Year is here and many of us will be thinking about getting more active, opportunities to increase our social network or to rekindle an interest in a past sport. So I am asking each of our local sports clubs some quickfire questions so that you can learn more about them and what is on offer. This is part 1 – if any club would like to feature in part 2 in February, please get in touch!

Goring Tennis Club

What was your club highlight in 2024? Getting people connected and out on court in all weathers and expanding what we offer to include sessions for all abilities and fitness objectives, such as: Walking Tennis (Weds 2-3pm), Cardio Tennis (Mon/Weds 9-9.50am) and Junior Social Play sessions.

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Why should newcomers get involved in 2025? As well as getting fit in the fresh air with a great bunch of fun and friendly GTC members, the club is planning to make improvements to the clubhouse and courts with further investment this year. Come along to our Open Day scheduled for 27 April to find out more about the club, coaching and our plans for 2025.

Where do I find information on giving it a try / joining your club? First stop would be the website <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/GoringTennisClub> where you'll find all the information you need. Alternatively, why not pop down to one of the club social play sessions and speak to some current members? Don't forget your racket as you would be welcome to join in; non-members can attend up to three sessions free of charge. Open sessions, for all standards, run on Tues and Thurs mornings 8.30-11.30am, Tues eve 6pm-9.30pm and Sun mornings 10am-12noon. If you are thinking of coming down, please let us know by emailing: membership.sec@goring-tennis.co.uk

An interesting fact about your club / sport? You don't have to compete at Wimbledon to feel the benefits of playing tennis. It is, of course, a great full body workout, building stamina, strengthening bones and improving balance, agility and reaction times. But did you know how good it is for your mental health? The combination of physical exertion and social interaction is a great way to reduce stress levels and get those endorphins flowing. In addition, tennis helps to sharpen the mind and improve mental agility both on and off court

Jessica Spearing

Goring Thames Sailing Club

Club highlight in 2024? Our late summer Regatta where parents, children and solo sailors competed in fun events throughout the day, with a fabulous BBQ, open bar and homemade cakes...all contributing to a fun, friendly, albeit competitive, day.

Why get involved? Water based activities are supportive of all ages and abilities and the club offers formal and informal training courses and supervision in a beautiful setting along the river Thames. With a packed calendar for 2025, including holiday clubs for our younger members, GTSC is a friendly club, offering a unique on-the-water experience, whether it be sailing, kayaking, SUPs or socialising with others enjoying natural surroundings and a well-equipped club house.

Where do I find more information? The GTSC web site www.goringthamessc.com contains information about the club, how to become a member and the upcoming events. Our Open Day, which will be held on Saturday 26 April, provides an opportunity to come down and get onto the water (more details in future editions of GGN). Alternatively, drop into the club on a Sunday afternoon once racing starts from 2 March onwards.

An interesting fact? GTSC has a fleet of 43 club craft which are available free of charge for members to use: 27 sailing dinghies, eight kayaks and eight SUPs.

Jill Marsden & Debbie Hedley

Goring Table Tennis Club

Club highlight? The club highlight in 2024 was our annual luncheon at The Highwayman in January 2024. This year's annual luncheon will take place in February at the same venue.

Why get involved? We are always keen to introduce new members to the club (four joined us in 2024) although the majority of our members have been playing since the new club was set up after lockdown in May 2021. We play every Tuesday (1.30-3.30pm) and Friday (3-5pm) at Storton Lodge in Goring.

Where do I find more information? If you are interested in playing, please contact Colin at colinlreeves@aol.com

An interesting fact? We have 25 members (15 male and 10 female), most of whom are retired with a range of abilities although our standard of play is improving, helped by occasional sessions with a coaching professional. On average, we have eight members attending every session and we play both singles and doubles. After every game we switch opponents to ensure that everyone plays with and against everyone else at the session.

Colin Reeves

Goring Gap Boat Club

Club highlight in 2024? Head of the Dart was amazing – Goring Gap Boat Club (GGBC) organised a race at the Totnes RC and although it had to be shortened because of river conditions, we were warmly welcomed at their club. Dinners were planned for us and even a bracing walk along the river, lots of chats and fun!

Why get involved? GGBC welcomes rowers of all abilities, there is an engaging 'Learn to Row' course with lots of willing volunteers. Plenty of friendly races to attend throughout the year and well-run land training exercises at least twice a week. The atmosphere at the club is incredibly friendly and everyone is encouraged to get involved as much as they want to.

Where do I find more information? All the information about joining can be found on the club website at <https://goringgapbc.org.uk>

An interesting fact? The club house, which is an impressive building, was built by the members who all volunteer their time to help out around the club. It is an amazing achievement and a testament to the camaraderie and community spirit of the club.

Debra Hutchings and Georgina Landrey

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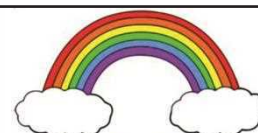
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This number is also available on the surgery answerphone. You may be asked to attend Abingdon Hospital, or Townlands Hospital in Henley. For the most up-to-date information see www.goringwoodcotemedicalpractice.nhs.uk

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Sunday 26 January, 4pm St Mary's Church.

Gary Jordan (classical guitar) and Seth Williams (piano), the Accorda Duo, will be giving a concert *Spanish Fantasia*.

The programme will include Joaquin Rodrigo's *Fantasia para Gentlehombre* and works by Tedesco and Marchelle.

Gary Jordan: Gary initially studied classical guitar with Gerald Garcia, Ray Burley and Fiona Harrison. He has since been fortunate to play in masterclasses for other inspirational guitarists including John Mills, Craig Ogden and David Russell. Gary was chairman of the Berkshire Guitar Society, based in SouthHill Park, for many years and now runs the Earley Guitar Ensemble which performs regularly in the Reading area. Gary's commitment to the guitar led him to leave a career in engineering in 2014 to concentrate on teaching and performing in the Reading area.

Seth Williams: As a postgraduate student at the Royal Academy of Music, Seth studied piano accompaniment with Malcolm Martineau, Clifford Benson and Michael Dussek. Subsequently, Seth worked in music outreach including for English National Opera, the New London Orchestra and Streetwise Opera. These days, Seth combines his time working in the City with a passion for music, and serving as a trustee of Berkshire Music Trust.

Tickets £10 full and £9 concessions on the door only. We will fit everyone in. Enquiries by text to [07762 339853](tel:07762339853).

COFFEE, CAKE, AND COMMUNITY

Saturday 8 February, 10am-12pm Bellême Room, Goring Village Hall

Join us for a community fundraiser in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. This wonderful charity provides practical, emotional, and financial assistance to those living with cancer, empowering them to navigate their journey with dignity and care.

Let's share a cup of coffee (or tea!) and a slice of cake while raising much-needed funds for a cause close to so many hearts. The space will feature a reflection area for anyone who

may like to write down a special story, memory or message for a loved one. For families – we'll have a game or two for the kids. And if you're unable to attend in person, you can still make a difference by donating to Macmillan Cancer Support: www.macmillan.org.uk Contributions of cakes, refreshments, or help on the day are also warmly welcomed.

For more details or to get involved, please contact Katie Barrett: katie.elizabeth.barrett@gmail.com.

Thank you for supporting this community fundraiser.

Further afield

BENSON GARDENING CLUB

Thursday 6 February. 7.15 for 7.45pm start, Benson Parish Hall. Dr Stephen Head will speak on *Garden Ponds for Wildlife*. Dr Stephen Head is a zoologist and ecologist who had a lecturing career before, amongst other things, helping to run the Wildlife Gardening Forum. He has also made radio and television appearances to promote wildlife gardening. (£2 for members, £5 for visitors – just turn up on the door, no need to book). Further information about this thriving club can be found on our website www.bensongardeningclub.weebly.com or please feel free to email bensongardeningclub@gmail.com

WALLINGFORD AND DISTRICT ART CLUB

Tuesday 18 February. 7.30pm. Join our friendly Wallingford and District Art Club at Centre 70 (off Goldsmiths Lane in Wallingford) for our AGM, where committee members will outline achievements in 2024 and plans for 2025. Following the AGM, professional artist, Julia Sorrell, will talk about her artistic life and her recent works. Her versatility is such that she can be developing an imaginative 'dreamscape' painting, move onto a straight drawing of plants, then follow that with a highly observed portrait in oil. Meetings are free for club members and £5 for visitors. If you would like further information about this event or other club activities, please visit the club website at www.wallingfordartclub.org.uk or email admin@wallingfordartclub.org.uk

The Garden Design Company wins again at BALI 2024

At the end of 2024, after much anticipation, Rob Jones and the team of The Garden Design Company Ltd were elated to discover that they had won yet another National Award from the British Association of Landscape Industries after much success in 2023.

The winning project was a design for a stunning manor house by in-house designer Sophie Green, whilst the award was in recognition of 'exemplary levels of professionalism, workmanship and client satisfaction that bring credit to the landscape industry'.

Members of the team and some key suppliers were thrilled to be invited to the awards ceremony at The Grosvenor Hotel in London on the 6 December. Company director Rob said 'It was fabulous to see images of our winning project on the big screen in front of over 1000 people. Having won three awards in 2023 and another last year, it's small wonder that we have work booked well into 2025, but crucially, these awards are helping us attract, recruit and retain the very best staff, ensuring nothing but the highest quality of workmanship for our clients'.



Designers Sophie Green and Hannah Smith with the award



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Sunday 26 January

Concert at St Mary's Church 4pm.
Gary Jordan (classical guitar) and Seth Williams (piano), the Accorda Duo, will be giving a concert *Spanish Fantasia*. See page 39.

Thursday 30 January

Goring Gap U3a 10.30-12noon, GVH.
Speaker: Dr Noel Snell: *Medicinal and Poisonous Plants*.

Monday 3 February

Goring Mobile Post Office 8-11am,
Westholme stores, Wallingford Road.
Open every Monday and Thursday. Note longer opening time.

Goring and Streatley Bridge Club

6.45pm, GVH. Duplicate Pairs Cup.
Meeting every Monday.

Coffee and Chat Drop-in 10.45-12.30pm, The Hub. All are welcome to drop in for tea, coffee, biscuits and good company. Every Monday. Suggested donation £3.

Puzzles and Pals 12.30-2.15pm, The Hub. All are welcome to do jigsaws and socialise over a cuppa and biscuits. Every Monday. Suggested donation £3.

Tuesday 4 February

Carers Support Group 10.45-12.30pm, The Hub. Peer support, talks and information for carers of a family member, friend or client(s). 1st Tuesday of the month. Suggested donation £3.

Book club GLiB 5-6pm, Library.
See library staff if interested – spaces available.

Wednesday 5 February

Art Activities, 12.30-2.30pm The Hub Come and join our fun art activities class which includes sketching and watercolours (materials provided). Suggested donation £5.

Goring Gap News Copy deadline for March events. News and articles of local interest to goringgapnews@gmail.com

Author Talk by Chris Russell 6.30 for 7pm, Village Café. Evening with local author Chris Russell (Lightyears fame) talking about his new psychological thriller *Pretty Young Thing*. Refreshments available to purchase. Tickets: £8 from library, Inspiration or online via EventBrite (search Chris Russell). See page 17.

Goring Village Green Fingers 7.30pm, SL. The ever-popular Ray Broughton will speak on *House Plants*. The competition is *Winter Wonders*. What's blooming in your garden today – one of each bloom on a plate.

Stay and Play 10-11.15am, Library.
Toddler Group and Rhyme-Time for pre-school children.

Thursday 6 February

Goring Mobile Post Office 8-11am,
Westholme stores, Wallingford Rd. Open every Monday and Thursday.

Storytime 10.30-11am Library. Drop-in. Every Thursday.

Friday 7 February

Social Scrabble 10.45-12.30pm, The Hub. All are welcome to play and socialize over a cuppa and biscuits. Every Friday. Suggested donation £3.

GSWS Wine Tasting 8pm, GVH. To open our 2025 season of Tastings we are pleased to welcome back Grape Minds of Wallingford to share with us a unique selection of boutique wines. Enquiries to: gswswine23@gmail.com

Saturday 8 February

Coffee, cake and community. 10am-12noon Belleme Room GVH.
All welcome. Raising funds for Macmillan Cancer Support. See Page 39.

Tuesday 11 February

Parkinson's Support Group 10.45-12.30pm, The Hub. Peer support, talks, information, coffee and chat for Parkinson's sufferers and/or their carer(s). Suggested donation £3pp/£5 per couple. Monthly on 2nd Tuesday.

Lego club 4.45 – 5.45pm, Library.
Please book in Library.

Wednesday 12 February

Genie News Copy Deadline Genie is published twice a month. Email us: news@genienews.org
Cleeve by Goring WI 7.30pm, SL. Julia Green: *Climate Evening*. Just come along on the night or contact Katrina Cooper, Tel: 01491 875334

Gap Textile Group 7-10pm, CR.
The Gap Textile Group has an exciting and varied programme of textile related activities at the monthly meetings. If you are interested in joining, please get in touch. Merete Hawkins, 07747 780158.

Friday 14 February

Greedies Library Book Group 10am, Library. See library staff if interested – spaces available.

Goring Community Jazz 7.30-10pm
GVH Saxophonist Jan Steele with the house rhythm section.

Monday 17 February

Goring Gap Local History Soc 2.30pm, GVH. Marie-Louise Kerr: *Oxfordshire in canvas*. Contact Janet Hurst, goringgaphistory@gmail.com

Tuesday 18 February

Dementia Support 10.45-12.30pm, The Hub. Peer support, talks and information for dementia sufferers and/or their carers. Suggested donation £3. Meets monthly on 3rd Tuesday.

Pilates 2-3pm, The Hub. Seated or standing exercises to improve strength, balance, flexibility and mobility. Weekly on Tuesdays. Suggested donation £5.

Social Scrabble 4.45 – 7pm, Library.
Drop-in and play. All welcome, with refreshments.

Wednesday 19 February

Coffee Morning 10.30 – 12noon,
St Andrew's South Stoke. Every 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Thursday 20 February

Pick a Flick 10.30am-2pm, CR.
Their Finest (2017). 1940, London, the Blitz; with the country's morale at stake, Catrin, an untried screenwriter, and a makeshift cast and crew, work under fire to make a film to lift the nation's flagging spirits and inspire America to join the war. Pick a Flick is held every 3rd Thursday. £5 per event including a light lunch. Please contact Sarah Fraser on 01491 871838 or Jenny Boyd on 01491 872109 to book in and to ask for transport if you require it. We look forward to hearing from you.

Wednesday 26 February

Genie News Copy Deadline Genie is published twice a month. Email us: news@genienews.org

Arts Society 11am and 2pm GVH.
Nicholas Merchant: *The Hanseatic League: Its Influence on Art and Architecture*. Visitors are welcome to attend for a maximum of three times before joining. £5 including refreshments. Full details of our activities and membership details can be found at www.artssocietygoring.org.uk

See more events on the Events Calendar at www.genienews.org

The following abbreviations are used:

Bellême Room	BR
Canterbury Room	CR
Free Church Hall	FCH
Goring Community Centre	GCC
Goring Social Club	GSC
Goring Village Hall	GVH
Morrell Room	MR
Storton Lodge	SL

Windows on the Advent Trail



Richard Wilson Long



Mary S Interiors

See P11

Frozen Goring



Field by Icknield Road

Photo: Mark McCall



Ice in Goring Lock

Photo: Gill Haigh

Christmas Eve Procession

The Committee would like to thank everyone who volunteered their time, expertise and services to help our community celebrate Christmas Eve together. The sight of the torches lighting up our village streets was a welcome one and the sounds of carols being sung in Streatley Meadows is regarded as the start of Christmas for many.

We estimate that the number attending was similar, if slightly lower, than last year but the attendees still raised several thousand pounds to be split between local charities; including Goring Primary School PTA, Streatley Primary School PTA, Streatley Pre-School, Morrell Room, Goring Hub and the Heart of Streatley Charitable Trust.

We couldn't have done it without all the volunteers on the evening, and the local pubs, businesses and organisations that support us in making the special evening happen for our community. Thank you all!

If you would also like to help in some way to run the event, or have any comments about the event then please get in touch by emailing the committee at gstorchlight@gmail.com

Special thanks to: Streatley Parish Council for enabling the event to happen, Heart of Streatley Charitable Trust for use of Streatley Meadows, The Morrell Room for their power supply for the band and lights, Production Power Systems for the loan of power equipment, the 40 marshals who turned out to help make the event safe, our local pubs: The Catherine Wheel, The Miller of Mansfield, The Bull and The Coppa Club/Swan at Streatley, Warmingham estate agents, Hazell & Jefferies, Sarah Brownlee, John Beacroft, Chequers Garage Aston Tirrold, Vicar Wendy Middleton, all those who contributed bonfire materials, Peter McDonald and all the staff at Goring Hardware, Jack and Varsha Patel of Westholme Stores, Goring and Streatley Concert Band, the drummer – Charlotte Binns, the piper – Josh West, West Berkshire Council / South Oxfordshire District Council, Thames Valley police, Goring fire crew and the First Aid volunteers, everyone who came back and helped with the Boxing Day clear-up.

Until next time...

The Committee (in alphabetical order): James Bartlett, Jason Black, Jo Butler, Pippa Byrne, Vanessa Cooke, Karin Ehrenberg, Ian Helmschrott-Bowden, Max Helmschrott-Bowden, Peter Indoe, Chris Jones, Tonia Sheldon, Colin Smith, Jeremy Waite, Anna Williams, Ben Williams



Josh West, who led the procession

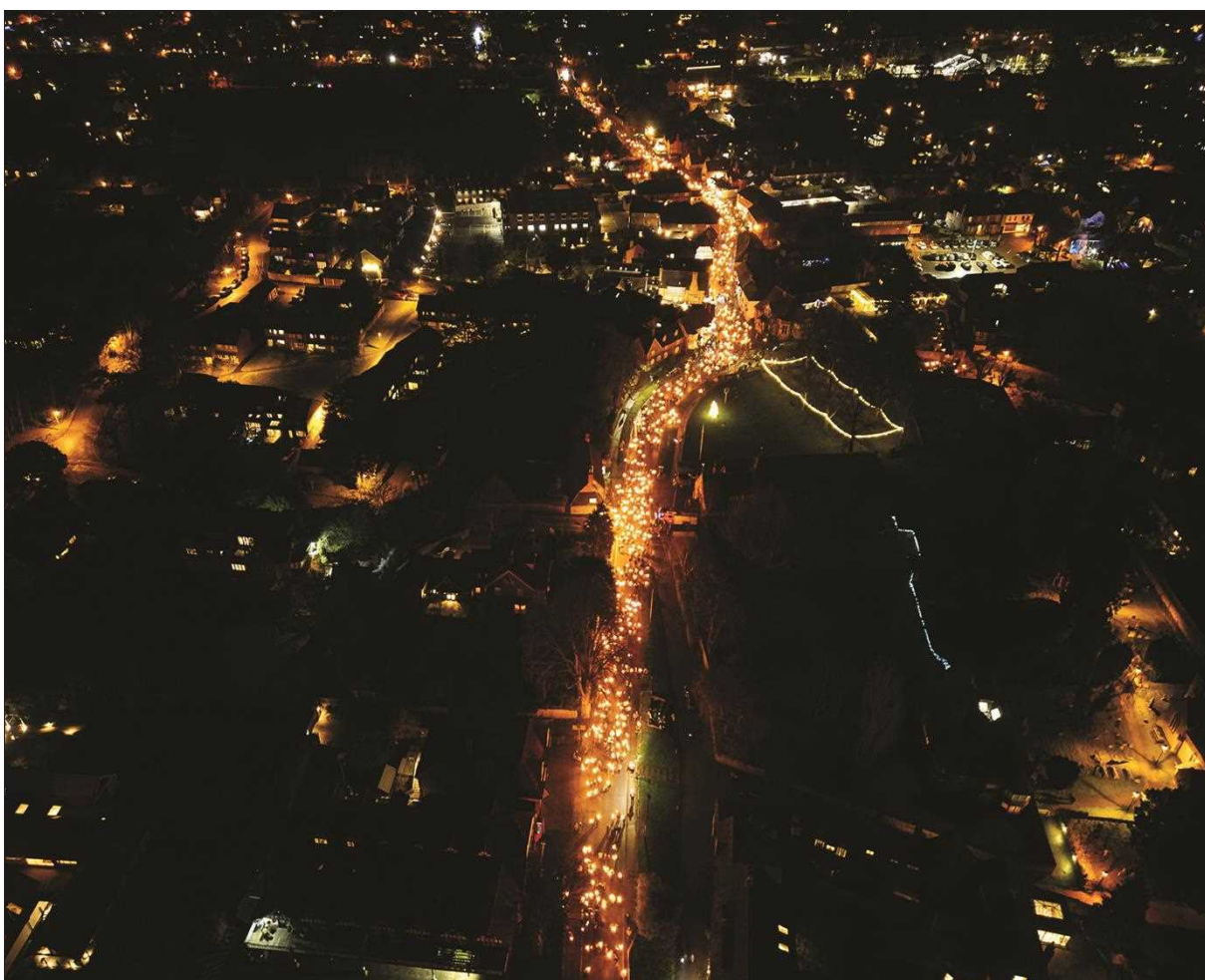


Photo: Dougal Thornton

The Torchlight procession from above



Photo: Dougal Thornton

In the field at Streatley



Photo: Ian Helmsrott-Bowden