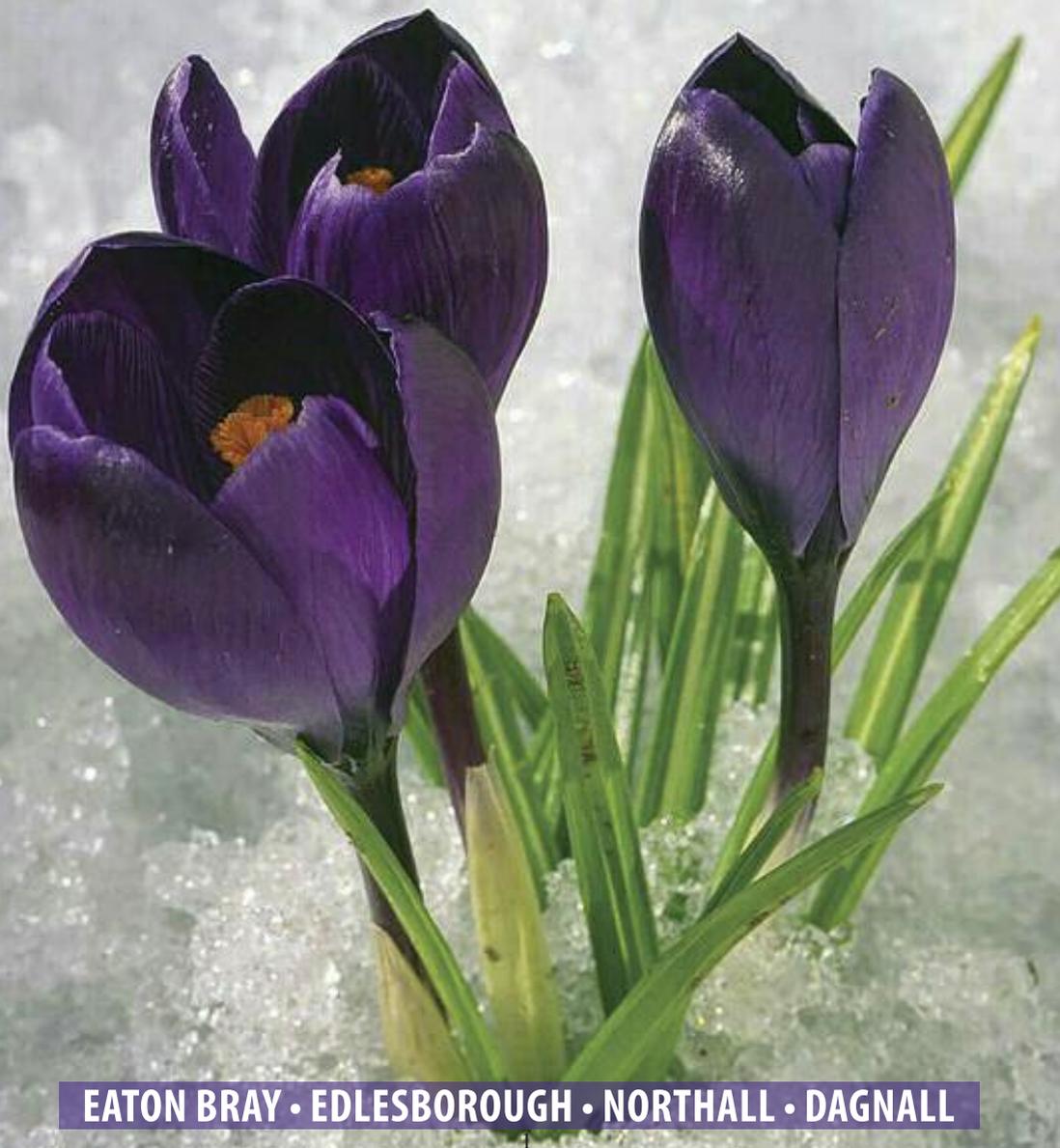


FOCUS

FEBRUARY 2026



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KINDLY NOTE

Articles and events for publication must be submitted to the Editor by the 10th of the preceding month. August/September and December/January are joint issues and articles must be submitted by 10th July and 10th November respectively. If an event falls in the first week of the month, it is advisable to submit the details into Focus a month earlier. The magazines are not delivered from the printers until the first of the month and it takes a few days for them all to be circulated throughout the villages by our volunteer distributors. ✍️ Editor

Focus accepts no responsibility as to the accuracy or content of any advertising or articles published in 'this' magazine, neither do they reflect the opinion of members of the Committee.

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DEFIBRILLATOR LOCATIONS

These units are registered with the Ambulance Services. To access them, please phone 999. You will be given the access code and the location of the unit will be confirmed. The defibrillator is easy and safe to use.

The units can be found on the outside walls of the following locations:

DAGNALL: Red Lion Public House & Munns Farm Shop

EATON BRAY: The Coffee Tavern

NORTHALL: The Swan Public House

EDLESBOROUGH: Edlesborough Memorial Hall, Baptist Church & Summerleys



EDLESBOROUGH SURGERY

01525 221630 www.edlesboroughsurgery.co.uk



The paper used for this magazine is sourced from sustainable forests and can be recycled



Focus is online at www.thefocusmagazine.co.uk

Village Info



EDAN COMMUNITY CAR SERVICE

CO-ORDINATOR: **Peter Williams** 01442 842506
Email: peterw500@aol.com



POLICE CONTACT DETAILS

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TEXTPHONE SERVICE: 18001 101

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T/Sgt 6268 Amy Ison Leighton Buzzard Community Policing Team
Duncombe Drive, Leighton Buzzard **TELEPHONE:** 01582 473408

THAMES VALLEY POLICE (EDLESBOROUGH, DAGNALL & NORTHALL)

PCSO Mike Coker Email: WingNHPT@thamesvalley.police.uk

TO REPORT NON URGENT CRIME: www.thamesvalley.police.uk

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Email: northallvhbookings@gmail.com Website: www.edlesborough-pc.gov.uk/nvh

EATON BRAY VILLAGE HALL: Norman Lee 07975 797202 & **Jane Taylor** 07852 586045

Email: bookings@ebvh.co.uk Website: www.ebvh.co.uk

COFFEE TAVERN: Julie Mahoney 07836 240467

Website: <https://eatonbray.com/coffee-tavern/>

DAGNALL VILLAGE HALL: Bev Way 07875 462128 & **Trish Owen** 07762 151364

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Email: manager@edlesborough-pc.gov.uk

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Email: booking@edthepav.org Website: <https://edthepav.org.uk/>

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACTS

EATON BRAY PARISH COUNCIL: 07931 479663

Email: clerk@eatonbrayparishcouncil.gov.uk Website: www.eatonbrayparishcouncil.gov.uk

EDLESBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL (including Dagnall & Northall): 01525 229358

Email: clerk@edlesborough-pc.gov.uk Website: www.edlesborough-pc.gov.uk

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MANNED PHONE HOURS: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

(An answering service is available for out-of-hours calls). Call us if you want help getting to the surgery/hospital and collecting prescriptions.

We help people of Eaton Bray, Edlesborough, Northall and Totternhoe.

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Pavilion Cancer Support Group

This group meets at the Edlesborough Pavilion on the first Thursday of each month from 2.30pm. A get together to meet and share friendship, information

**NO ONE
SHOULD FACE
CANCER
ALONE**

and mutual support. There will also be speakers and medical professionals to address members' questions and requests.

We are grateful to the Pavilion Trustees, Edlesborough Surgery and the Burghope Trust for their support.

No need to book just come along to the pavilion.

5th Feb, 5th March and 2nd April.

Edlesborough Community Sports Club
CIO Charity No. 1160939

WEEKLY

Mon-Sun	St. Mary's Edlesborough is open on Fridays to Sundays 10am-3pm and when the Friends are working on site - Please see Notice Board and Website.
Mon-Sun	Pavilion Gym Mon-Frid 6:30am to 9:30pm Sat/Sun 8am-8pm Email Gym@edthepav.org.uk
Mon-Sun	Pavilion open for members. M-T 6:30am-9pm, F 6:30am-10pm, S/S 8am-8pm Email: General.enquiries@edthepav.org.uk
Mon-Fri*	Eaton Bray Pre-school Eaton Bray Lower School, 01525 220468, admin@eba.ec
Mon-Fri*	Edlesborough Primary Academy Pre-School 01525 220431, epamanager@epa-primary.org
Mon-Fri*	Totternhoe Pre-school Totternhoe CE Acad 01582 662959 totternhoeoffice@tot.damat.co.uk
Mon	Pilates 10.45am, Totternhoe Memorial Hall, Lisa: 07832 230774
Mon	Dagnall Community Choir , Eaton Bray Academy LU6 2DT 7.30-9.30pm, w:dagnall-community-choir.co.uk 01525 220189
Mon*	Movement and exercise classes with a dance flavour, Northall VH 2-3.30. Jan 01442 864271.
Mon	Cubs (8-10 ½ yrs old), 6.30pm - 8pm, 1st Eaton Bray & Edlesborough Scout Hut, High Street, Edlesborough. Contact Liz Coates 01442 842550
Mon	Yoga 6:45pm, Edlesborough Memorial Hall, contact 07837 727302
Mon	Barre 8pm, Edlesborough Memorial Hall, contact 07837 727302
Mon	Eaton Bray Tennis Club 4-7pm mini / junior tennis coaching
Mon	Eaton Bray Tennis Club 7-8pm Adult Coaching 'Get Back Into Tennis'
Tues	Pilates 10-11am, Eaton Bray Village Hall, Nicky Roussou 07861 162680
Tues*	Totternhoe Baby & Toddler Group 9.30-11.15am, St. Giles Church Hall
Tues	Tap & Ballet Classes JoAnn Latus School of Dance, 4-8pm, Eaton Bray VH, 07800 518654
Tues**	Coffee Morning Bring & Buy, Table Top Sale, 10-11:30am, Salvation Army Hall, Booth Place, EB
Tues	Jazzercise 9:15-10:15, Eaton Bray Village Hall, Beth 07539 739136
Tues	Berkhamsted Taekwon-do Kids 5.45pm-6.30pm, Dagnall Village Hall, 07813 755785
Tues	Berkhamsted Taekwon-do Adults 6.30pm, Dagnall Village Hall, 07813 755785

Tues	St Judes Clinic. Moira's Therapeutic Pilates 9.45 to 10.45 and 11 till 12 noon, moira@stjudesclinic.com
Wed	Pilates 8pm, Northall Village Hall, Lisa: 07832 230774
Wed	Northall & Dist Age Concern Wed Club 10am-3pm, Northall Village Hall, Dee 07854 230243
Wed	Art Course online 9.30 -11.30am, contact Lorna Moore 07896 619660
Wed	Art Course Bellows Mill Eaton Bray, 2-4.30pm, contact Lorna Moore 07896 619660
Wed	Pilates 6-7pm, Eaton Bray V.Hall, Heather Holmes 07305 023077 pilateswithheather@mail.com
Wed	St Judes Clinic. Moira's Therapeutic Pilates 7 till 8 pm and 8.05 to 9.05 pm moira@stjudesclinic.com
Wed*	Stay & Play toddler group 'Musical Monkeys' Eaton Bray Village Hall, 10am 07944 891235
Wed	Knit and Natter 12-2pm Edlesborough Pavilion Di Hedges 07794 075269
Wed	Home League Weds 2:30pm – 3:30pm (weekly fellowship & activities including singing, quizzes, arts & crafts, bible thought & a prayer – predominantly for women although gentlemen are very welcome), The Salvation Army , Booth Place, Eaton Bray, LU6 2DR.
Wed	Champion's Club Weds 6:15pm – 7:15pm (2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Weds of the month, Age 5+, term time only – lots of fun including games, music, activities & bible stories), The Salvation Army , Booth Place, Eaton Bray, LU6 2DR.
Thur	KFPA Street dance classes Edlesborough Memorial Hall 4.15pm-6.30pm (4 years+) Contact Kiri 07988161043 or visit Facebook page 'KF PerformingArts/ KFPA' for info
Thur	Berkhamsted Taekwon-do Adults 6.30pm, Dagnall Village Hall, 07813 755785
Thur	Beavers (6 to 8 years old), 6.15-7.30pm, 1st Eaton Bray & Edlesborough Scout Hut, High Street, Edlesborough. Contact: ebebeaverleader@ebescouts.co.uk
Thur	Explorers Scouts (14-18 years old), 8pm-9.30pm, 1st Eaton Bray & Edlesborough Scout Hut, High Street, Edlesborough. Contact Simon Betts, simon_betts@hotmail.com
Thur	Jazzercise 18:30-19:00 and 19:00-19:45, Eaton Bray VH, Beth 07539 739136
Thur	Retro Line Dance Class 11.15am to 12.45pm. Eaton Bray Village Hall. Beginners welcome. www.jukeboxjunction.co.uk info@jukeboxjunction.co.uk 07864 212171

Thur	Eaton Bray Tennis Club 6.30pm - 8.00pm Social play for all adults	1st Tues	Sewing Class 7-9pm, Edlesborough Pavilion, <i>General.enquiries@edthepav.org.uk</i>
Thur	Eaton Bray Pickleball 6.30pm - 8.00pm Social play for all adults (weather permitting)	1st Tues	Jewellery Making 7-9pm, Edlesborough Pavilion <i>General.enquiries@edthepav.org.uk</i> (Dates can vary)
Thur	Adult Board Games 12-2:30pm, Pavilion 07740 197392 Email <i>Stevemunday1@gmail.com</i>	1st Tues	Dunstable & District Orbit (social & charitable) Club Dunstable Rugby Club, 8pm. 01525 222441
Thur*	Move Better, Feel Better Pilates 10-11am, Edlesborough Memorial Hall Contact Lesley Pickering, 07767 823202, <i>lesley@lesleypickering.com</i>	1st Wed*	Messy Church 6-7:15pm, Salvation Army, Booth Place, Eaton Bray, LU6 2DR
Fri	Tap & Ballet Classes JoAnn Latus School of Dance, 4-8pm, Eaton Bray VH, 07800 518654	1st Thur	Pavilion Cancer Support Group from 2.30 pm in Edlesborough Pavilion.
Fri	Jazzercise 9:15-10:15, Eaton Bray VH, Beth 07539 739136	1st Sat	St. Mary's Church Eaton Bray Coffee Morning, 10:30am - 12 noon (July held on 2nd Saturday)
Fri	Scouts (10½ to 14 years old), 7.00-8.30pm, 1st Eaton Bray & Edlesborough Scout Hut, High Street, Edlesborough. Contact Mark Owen, <i>ebescoutleader@ebescouts.co.uk</i> , 07899 892344	1st Sat	Book Swap at St Mary's Eaton Bray, 10:30am - 12 noon (July held on 2nd Saturday)
Fri	"Little Luvvies" baby ballet classes 10am- 11.30am, Northall Village Hall. Contact Emma Whittemore on 01525 376124	2nd Mon	Film Society Sept to June, 2pm, Eaton Bray Village Hall, Graham Chappell 07980 321977
Fri	Movement is Medicine Pilates 9.45-10.45am and 11 till 12 noon. Great Gaddesdon Parish Hall, <i>moira@stjudesclinic.com</i>	2nd Tues	Dunstable & District Local History Society meeting, 7.45pm, Methodist Church Hall, Dunstable
Fri	Food evening at The Pavilion Email <i>escstrading@edthepav.org.uk</i>	2nd Tues	Edlesborough W.I. 7.30 pm, Edlesborough Memorial Hall. Contact Jackie Flint 01525 221618
Sat	Jazzercise 9-10am, Eaton Bray VH, Beth 07539 739136	2nd Tues & Thur	Adult board games club 7-9:30pm, Edlesborough Pavilion, 07740 197392, email <i>Stevemunday1@gmail.com</i> ,
Sat	KFPA Musical theatre classes Edlesborough Memorial Hall 9.30-10.30am (4years+) Contact Kiri 07988161043 or visit Facebook page 'KF PerformingArts/ KFPA' for info	1st Thur	Girls' Night Out 7:30pm (1st Thurs of the month – for more details including where we meet & what we do each month, email <i>eaton.bray@salvationarmy.org.uk</i>)
Sun	Sunday Worship at 11am Edlesborough Baptist Church, Moor End, LU6 2FL. Contact: 01525 222064 or <i>edlesboroughbaptistchurch@gmail.com</i>	2nd Thur	Sewing Class 10:30am -12:30pm, Edlesborough Pavilion, <i>General.enquiries@edthepav.org.uk</i>
Sun	Karate for kids & adults 3-4:15pm & 4:30- 5:45pm, Eaton Bray VH, Contact 07500 007779	2nd Fri	Leukaemia Research Coffee Morning 2 Dunstable Road, Dagnall 10.30 a.m. all welcome. No meeting in September, June plant bring and buy, December Sherry & mince pies
Sun	Eaton Bray Tennis Club 10am -12pm Social play for all adults	3rd Thur	Edlesborough Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm, Edlesborough Pavilion or as stated in Edlesborough Parish Council News
Sun	Eaton Bray Pickleball 10am -12pm Social play for all adults(weather permitting)	3rd Sat	Junior board games club Edlesborough Pavilion, <i>General.enquiries@edthepav.org.uk</i> (dates can vary)
Sun	Sunday Worship Sun 11am – 12pm (weekly worship for all ages followed by tea/coffee/squash, biscuits & a chat), The Salvation Army, Booth Place, Eaton Bray, LU6 2DR. Edlesbray Bridge Club at Edlesborough Pavilion 07958 183133 or ted.mani123@btinternet.com	3rd Sun	Parish Lunch 11.30 to 2.00pm, Eaton Bray Village Hall, Chris Hewitt 222288
MONTHLY		4th Wed	Book club 7-10pm <i>General.enquiries@edthepav.org.uk</i> (dates can vary)
1st Mon	Eaton Bray Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm, The Coffee Tavern (except Jan-2nd Monday)	Last Sat	Coffee Morning 10:00-12 noon, Edlesborough Methodist Church
1st Mon	Eaton Bray W.I. 7.30pm. Eaton Bray Methodist Church Hall. Margaret Jones on 07478 061156		

EATON BRAY WITH EDLESBOROUGH ~ PARISH NEWS ~

Vicar: Rev'd Joy Cousans

The Vicarage, 11 High Street, Eaton Bray
Tel: 01525 220261

Church Warden & Pastoral Matters:
Catherine Hayden (01525 220527)

Reader: Gordon Gray (01525 220136)

Website: www.stmaryseatonbray.org.uk
Facebook: St Mary's Eaton Bray

Did you know that some of our everyday words are rooted in prayer? The word 'goodbye' comes from a contraction of the Medieval blessing 'God be with ye' which was said as a farewell. Prayer is intrinsic to most of the major religions. Jews and Muslims, for example, follow a pattern of daily prayer times. In Christianity, daily prayer times were observed by monastic orders and the church bell was rung. People heard the bell and said their own prayers wherever they were, working in the fields, or in the home. The industrial revolution changed work patterns and with it personal prayer patterns. For Christians, following the example of Jesus, prayer is an important part of their faith.

During Lent, the North Chilterns Group will be taking a fresh perspective on prayer through our Lent Course. This will be on Tuesday evenings at Totternhoe Church Hall, The Ride, LU6 1RH. I have called the course 'The adventure of Prayer' because praying doesn't have to be a duty; it can be considered an adventure. Prayer is our opportunity to communicate with God, the creator of the universe. What could be more exciting than that? Ghandi once said: 'Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied it is the most potent instrument of action.' If we believe that prayer makes a difference to the world, then it means we can all be involved in changing things for the better.

The Lent Groups will begin on February 24th, looking at the prayer Jesus taught us. Although short, the Lord's Prayer is rich and teaches us much about how we should pray, including thanks, praise, prayers for forgiveness, and our own needs. The following week, March 3rd, we will explore praying with spiritual gifts. St Paul writes often about the gifts of the Spirit and gives instruction on how those gifts can enable and deepen our prayer life. On March 10th, the

theme is praying with icons. This will be more familiar to those in the Orthodox tradition, but icons are used in other parts of the Christian church as well. This is a deep and fruitful way of visual prayer. We will explore praying with the Iona Community on March 17th. The Isle of Iona has been a place of prayer and pilgrimage since the 6th century. The present Iona community is an ecumenical Christian group. They produce material for worship with a particular emphasis on faith, peace and social justice rooted in the Celtic Christian tradition.

Our final session on March 24th is entitled 'Help! I'm too busy to pray!' This will address issues about why we can find it hard to pray and offer some practical suggestions, hints and tips.

All sessions start with refreshments at 7.30pm concluding with a short act of worship, ending by 9pm. Although it is good to be able to attend the whole course, each evening is a stand alone contribution led by different people. So if you can't come every week, don't let that put you off. Sessions are free, but we do take a retiring collection which will be given to charity. Anyone is welcome to come along.

I do hope you will be able to join us to find out more about the variety of ways of praying, whether you are just curious, or whether you have had a lifelong habit of prayer and would like to explore further.

Every blessing, **Joy Vicar** of Eaton Bray with Edlesborough



NCG Lent Course 2026



The adventure of Prayer

Join the North Chilterns Group on **Tuesday evenings** this Lent as we discover prayer is not a duty but an adventure!

- February 24th** The prayer Jesus taught us
- March 3rd** Praying with spiritual gifts
- March 10th** Praying with icons
- March 17th** Praying with the Iona Community
- March 24th** Help! I'm too busy to pray!

All sessions start with refreshments at 7.30pm concluding with a short act of worship, ending by 9pm.



**Totternhoe Church Hall, The Ride,
Totternhoe LU6 1RH**

FOCUS MAGAZINE 2026 ADVERTISING

I would like to thank all the advertisers who support the Focus magazine. Some have advertised with us for many years and I am delighted to welcome several new advertisers this year.

A thank you must go to all our readers who support the local businesses who advertise.

I hope that you find the advertisers index of the magazine, printed on page 73, useful when looking for services.

Sally Taylor
Advertising Manager

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CHAPEL LANE, NORTHALL

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For more information contact: **John Hazell 01525 218142**

Email: northallchapel@btinternet.com

Website: www.northallbaptistchurch.org

There has been a Baptist Chapel in Northall for more than 200 years. Today we continue to seek to worship God, serve him in our daily lives and support and encourage one another in the difficult and the joyful times.

SERVICES at ST. MARY'S CHURCH, Eaton Bray

SUNDAYS: 10am PARISH HOLY COMMUNION (apart from the third Sunday – see below)

On the **FIRST** and **THIRD SUNDAYS** of each month there is **HOLY COMMUNION** at **8am**

On the **THIRD SUNDAY** of each month there is **CAFE CHURCH** at **10am**, an informal service with coffee and croissants

WEEKDAYS: WEDNESDAY at **10am HOLY COMMUNION**

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Details and **ONLINE WORSHIP: www.stmaryseatonbray.org.uk**



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, DAGNALL FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 10.30AM
HOLY COMMUNION

FOR ANY QUERIES PLEASE CONTACT
PHILIP LEE ON 07977 234453 OR
DOROTHY GREEN ON 01442 843237



DAGNALL COMMUNITY CHOIR

We enjoyed a hugely successful Christmas concert at Eaton Bray Village Hall on Sunday 14th December, singing to what was probably our biggest audience to date. The hall was wonderfully full, creating a warm and festive atmosphere that made the afternoon truly special.

A large part of that success was thanks to the children's choir from Eaton Bray Academy, who joined us for the concert and sang beautifully. Their families and supporters helped swell the audience, and we were delighted to raise over £300 for the school as a result.

Although the size of the audience took us a little by surprise, we're pleased to report that we didn't run out of mince pies or mulled wine! Our sincere thanks go to everyone who came along to support us and the children—it was a fantastic way to round off the year.

We've started 2026 with plenty of enthusiasm and exciting plans ahead. One highlight will be a concert later in the spring featuring music from films and theatre, with more details to be announced soon. There are also other performances planned throughout the year, so do watch this space.

It was lovely to welcome some new faces at our first rehearsal of the year. If you've ever thought about giving singing a try, new members are always welcome and can join us at any time. We rehearse on Monday nights at 7.45pm at Eaton Bray Academy.

We're now nicely settled into our new rehearsal venue and are very much appreciating rehearsing in a warm, well-lit environment during the winter months. For more information, please visit our website www.dagnall-community-choir.co.uk or email dagnallcc@gmail.com.





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Organisation	Contact details		
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Age UK Bedfordshire Offers services for the over 50s such as benefit checks and assistance with filling in DLA forms etc.	01234 360 510 www.ageuk.org.uk/bedfordshire	Bedfordshire Fire Service Offers vulnerable customers Free Home Fire Safety Check	01234 845000 Or email our name, full address including postcode and contact number to safeandwell@bedsfire.gov.uk
Affinity Water	www.affinitywater.co.uk/contact Account information: 0345 357 2401 (8am to 8pm Mon-Fri and 8am to 2pm Sat) Emergencies 24-hour line: 0345 357 2407 (if you have no water or seen a burst water main)	Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity Good Neighbour Scheme	01234 832648 www.bedsrcc.org.uk
Anglian Water Provides water and environmental services to the majority of customers in Central Bedfordshire.	Bill and General Enquiries – 03457 91 91 55 (8am to 8pm Mon-Fri and 9am to 4pm Sat) Water supply and sewerage 03457 145 145 (24 hour – 7 days per week) Reporting a leak 0800 771 881 (24 hour – 7 days per week service queries and emergencies) For those experiencing financial worries please contact: 0800 169 3630 www.anglianwater.co.uk	Drugs and Alcohol Services Information, support and treatment for anyone who has a problem with, or is affected by drugs and/or alcohol use.	Path 2 Recovery 0333 332 4019
		Carers in Bedfordshire Providing services and support to carers	0300 111 1919 www.carersinbeds.org.uk



Take a book you want to read -
Leave a book you want to share

**The next Book Swap at
St Mary's Church will take place on
Sat Feb 7th from 10.30 – 12.00**

It was great to see old friends at the first Book Swap of 2026 at St Mary's church monthly coffee morning in January.

When Chris and I first started this project in March 2022, we were looking for a location where we could have could offer a free book swap scheme to encourage people to share books that they have loved so that others might also discover them as well. It required some bookshelves in a central place in the community where anyone could take a book to read and leave a book to share.

St Mary's offered us a space at their coffee morning, where we now regularly operate. We now have a community library, where books in good condition have been donated by locals for others to borrow, enjoy and return at their leisure.

The Book Swap is free, and there are no return dates and no fines, you also don't have to bring a book to donate in order to take one. We do encourage people to exchange books if they can as this will keep the shelves fresh and dynamic. You don't have to return the book you borrowed; you can keep it if you like.

You can bring and swap more than one book, but we do ask that you take as many books as you bring in, as we do not have the storage capacity for extra books. For this reason we also cannot accept bulk donations of books.

Our team look forward to meeting you as you choose a book while enjoying coffee and cake.

For more information about Book Swap please contact:

Chris Sanders

Email: chris.sanders45@gmail.com

Jenifer MacKenzie

Email: jenimackenzie@hotmail.com



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Love, Actually

February has arrived, bringing with it shorter months, longer evenings (just about), and shops becoming a battlefield of balloons and cards asking deeply personal questions like “Will you be mine forever?”

Yes, it's Valentine's season.

For some, Valentine's Day is a joy: a chance to celebrate love, commitment, and that rare miracle of finding someone who will still talk to you after you've eaten crisps in bed. For others, it's a slightly awkward Saturday that seems determined to remind you that you are single, widowed, divorced, or simply not that bothered. And for many of us, it's a curious mix of all the above.

The Christian faith reminds us that love is far bigger, and often far stranger, than Valentine's Day sometimes allows. In the Bible, love is not primarily described as a feeling, but as a way of living. At the heart of our faith is the conviction that God is love.

Real love isn't always candlelight and dramatic gestures. More often, it looks like putting the bins out when it's raining. It's remembering how someone takes their tea. It's sitting quietly together without the need to fill the silence. It's caring for neighbours, checking in on friends, and choosing forgiveness when we've rubbed one another up the wrong way. These small, ordinary moments are often where love is most clearly seen.

Love also comes in many forms. Romantic love, yes, but also the love of family, friendship, community, and neighbour. It's the kind of love Jesus spoke about when he told us to love one another and to love our neighbour as ourselves. It's the love that notices when someone hasn't been seen for a while. The love that drops off soup, offers a lift, or asks, “Are you alright?”, and genuinely waits to hear the answer.

And here's the counter-cultural truth at the heart of the Christian story: love isn't always easy. It requires patience, humility, and grace. It involves compromise. Love grows not because it is perfect, but because it is chosen, again and again, just as God continually chooses us.

So whether you're celebrating Valentine's Day with a partner, ignoring it entirely, or marking it with a quiet eye-roll and a discounted box of chocolates on the 15th, perhaps February can still be a month to notice love in its wider sense.

Notice the people who make these villages what they are. The volunteers. The neighbours. The ones who keep showing up. Notice the love that doesn't need a card to be real.

And if you do find yourself giving or receiving flowers, chocolates, or an awkwardly worded card this month, enjoy it. Love, in all its forms, is worth celebrating.

Happy February. And whatever your relationship status: you are more loved, more valued, and more connected than you might think.

Rev Tim Haines,
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EDLESBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Including Edlesborough • Dagnall • Northall • 2025 /26

Clerk: Miss Penny Pataky | Office Hours: Mon - Fri 10am – 2pm (exc Wed) | Email: clerk@edlesborough-pc.gov.uk
Website: www.edlesborough-pc.gov.uk | Facebook: www.facebook.com/EDANParishCouncil | 01252 229358

Thank You

Once again the Council contractors and volunteers in the Parish were busy making the villages festive for Christmas. EPC would like to thank the following people:

- ❖ MW Agri Ltd hanging the lights on Edlesborough Memorial Hall.
- ❖ MW Agri Ltd for providing and lighting the Christmas Tree on Edlesborough Green..
- ❖ Kevin Cabbage and Chris Woodcock for hanging the Christmas lights on the Northall Christmas Tree and village sign.
- ❖ Jane and Chris Woodcock for providing the power for the Northall Christmas tree and village sign lights.
- ❖ Kevin Cabbage for organising the Christmas lights at Northall Village Hall.
- ❖ Dawn and Damian Stuart, Kruti Patel, Bev Way, Sophie Stuart, Kim and Alan Green, Liz, Coates, Trish Owen and Nickie Jeffery for the Dagnall Village Hall and tree Christmas decorations.

East Bucks Community Board

The East Bucks Community Board report is available to view on the Council website alongside the January 2026 minutes.
2026 - Meetings & Minutes - Parish Council - Edlesborough Parish Council

Appeal for Variation of Tesco Opening Hours.

Appeal Ref: 25/00067/REF
Case Ref: 24/02589/VRC PI.
Ref: APP/J0405/W/25/3374676
TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
APPEAL BY: NMJ Motorhouse Ltd
SITE: 2 Pebblemoor Edlesborough
Buckinghamshire LU6 2HZ
REASON: Variation of Condition 10 (opening

hours) relating to 23/02966/APP (Change of use of existing vehicle service garage to retail convenience store including associated external alterations, plant equipment, parking and servicing area)

Buckinghamshire Council write to notify that the Informal Hearing into the above-mentioned appeal will start on 11th February 2026 in the Windsor Room, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF commencing at 10.00am.

They currently anticipate 1 sitting day.

Inspectors name: N Bromley BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

The powers enabling the Secretary of State or Inspector to determine the appeal can be seen in s79(1) and Schedule 6 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Parishioners are welcome to attend and may at the Inspectors discretion, give their views.

Copies of the appeal documents are available to view/download from the Buckinghamshire Council website at

<https://publicaccess.aylesburyvaldec.gov.uk/online-applications/> selecting the Appeals link and entering the appeals reference number shown above.

Once a decision has been made it will be published on the Planning Portal at <https://www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate> and on Buckinghamshire Councils website.

Small Grant Applications

Is your organisation looking for money for a specific project? Have you heard of the EPC Small Grant scheme?

The EPC Small Grant is a great opportunity for local groups, local charities, and local organisations to get a grant of up to £500 in this new scheme.

The main terms of the grant are very straightforward.

- The purpose for which the grant is made

EDLESBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Including Edlesborough • Dagnall • Northall • 2025/26

Clerk: Miss Penny Pataky | Office Hours: Mon - Fri 10am – 2pm (exc Wed) | Email: clerk@edlesborough-pc.gov.uk
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must be in the interest of Edlesborough Parish that covers the residents of Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall.



- EPC will determine the size of the award up to a maximum of £500.
- We will not award funds for activities that have already taken place.
- Any publicity covering the activity funded must mention EPC's involvement.
- Following the award, recipients must make a short presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting.
- All applications will be considered on their merits but in general, grants will be awarded for specific projects or events. The Council may support proposals for a project or event's first year running costs but generally will not give grants towards subsequent routine running costs, salaries, food, or drink unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Applications will be reviewed at any time during the year and awards to successful applications made in each quarter beginning in April of each year. The total funding available is limited.

Full details of the terms of the scheme can be found here on the EPC website www.edlesborough-pc.gov.uk/community-information/epc-small-grant-scheme/

Planning Applications

Each month the council considers planning applications submitted to Buckinghamshire Council for approval. Edlesborough Parish Council responses to applications are available to view on the EPC website under planning at <https://www.edlesborough-pc.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/>

All parishioners can comment on planning applications via <https://pa-csb.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Streetlights

Please report failed streetlights in Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall to the Clerk for repair via clerk@edlesborough-pc.gov.uk or 01525 229358

When making a report please ensure you provide the Clerk with the information displayed on the lamp post.

Salt Bins

The responsibility for filling these bins is with Transport for Buckinghamshire. When supplies are running low a refill request should be submitted via their website <https://www.fixmystreet.buckscc.gov.uk/> It is more appropriate if a parishioner living close to the salt bin makes the request but in practice anyone can make the request.

EPC Surgery

If you have a question or suggestion for the Parish Council the Clerk will be available on the first Thursday of December, March, June and September in Edlesborough Pavilion from midday – 2pm.

Council Meetings

The next Edlesborough Parish Council Meetings will take place on:

- **Thursday 19th February 2026 – Edlesborough Memorial Hall**
- **Thursday 19th March 2026 – Edlesborough Pavilion**

The meetings will commence at 7:30pm.

Parishioners are welcome to attend all Ordinary Parish Council meetings and may ask questions, raise issues, and give suggestions during the Open Forum before the formal start of the meeting. Council requests that where possible questions, issues and suggestions are submitted in writing to the Clerk by the Tuesday preceding the meeting.

The agenda and full minutes of previous Parish Council meetings are available to view on the website or from the Parish Clerk.



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EDLESBOROUGH PAVILION: The Beating Heart of Village Life

From early morning workouts to weekend matches, coffee catch-ups and community events, Edlesborough Pavilion is buzzing, and 2025 has been one of its strongest years yet.

The Pavilion is run by the trustees of Edlesborough Community Sports Club charity for the benefit of local residents. Its mission is simple: to create a welcoming space where sport, wellbeing and community life can thrive.

This year has seen a wave of improvements to the building. Club and meeting rooms have been refreshed, privacy film added to the gym, storage upgraded, lighting improved and the car park enhanced. Behind the scenes, volunteers have worked tirelessly on gardening, cleaning and maintenance, the unsung heroes who keep the Pavilion looking great and running smoothly. There is more to come, with plans in place for upgraded changing rooms, improved kitchen ventilation and new balcony awnings.

The Pavilion remains home to impressive local success stories. Edlesborough Cricket Club enjoyed a season to remember, becoming Four Counties League Champions and earning promotion. The Tennis Club continues to go from strength to strength, with 159 members, coaching for all ages, league teams and a busy social calendar. EB Lions Football Club now supports 21 teams and around 400 players, including female teams, bringing families together through football, celebrations and popular summer events on the Green.

The gym is also thriving, with around 260 active members. New equipment, improved privacy and a strong cleaning and maintenance programme ensure it remains a friendly, high quality fitness space for the whole community.

Membership of Edlesborough Pavilion is free for all adult parishioners and permanent residents of Edlesborough Parish which includes Dagnall and Northall. Adults who are members of ECSC affiliated sports clubs are also eligible for free membership, including EB Lions, Edlesborough Tennis Club and Edlesborough Cricket Club. Adults living in qualifying neighbouring areas such as Eaton Bray, or those permanently employed within the Parish, can also join for a modest annual fee.

But Edlesborough Pavilion is about more than sport. Throughout the year it hosts craft sessions, book clubs, board game clubs, IT support, community meetings, including cancer support and dementia support groups, and private hires, making it a true hub for village life. The bar, which is also managed by volunteers, plays a key role too, giving people a welcoming place to stay, chat and connect.

Find out more or become a member at edthepav.org.uk.





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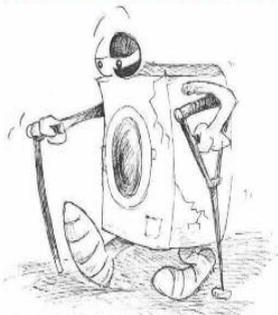
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EATON BRAY PARISH COUNCIL REPORT: JANUARY 2026

A hard copy of the draft minutes can be viewed on the Parish Council notice board at The Coffee Tavern.

A full copy of the minutes for Eaton Bray Parish Council can be found on our website:
www.eatonbrayparishcouncil.gov.uk

PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

To keep up to date with what is happening in your parish, you can get all Parish Council news and updates from the Parish Council website. The website has all Parish Council meeting agendas, minutes, financial documents and contact information as well as official sponsored events/initiatives and is the official council communications website. Visit it here:
www.eatonbrayparishcouncil.gov.uk

EATON BRAY FACEBOOK PAGE



Follow Eaton Bray Parish Council on Facebook, keep up to date with your Parish Council and what is going on in the parish:

<https://www.facebook.com/EatonBray>

EATON BRAY PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

A copy of the Parish Council's Finance & Annual Reports can be viewed on the Parish Council Website.

PARISH COUNCIL REGULATIONS/POLICIES

Copies of the Parish Council's regulations/policies can be seen on the Parish Council Website.

FixMyStreet

CBC have a reporting system to make reporting easier, quicker and more accurate. To report and track highways and environment problems go online/use the FixMyStreet app:

<https://fixmystreet.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/>

EATON BRAY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**HELD ON MONDAY 3RD NOVEMBER 2025,
from 7:30pm**

(Minutes ratified at the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 12th January 2026)

CBC CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Ward Councillor: Cllr Philip Spicer

Email: Philip.Spicer@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

CBC Website:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

CBC Email:

customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk -

CBC Customer Services: 0300 300 8301

- Leighton Buzzard by-pass: Streetlights into the slip road/Eaton Bray are now working, give-way markings outstanding. CBC are upgrading the by-pass, currently just as far as the roundabout. No current timings confirmed for the completion of the remainder of the work on the A505 between the new roundabout and Chalk Hill roundabout. Cllr Spicer speaking with CBC for updates.
- Community Governance Review 2025 (stage 2): CBC are proposing to reduce Eaton Bray Parish Councillor numbers from nine to seven, with CBC believing there should be elections for these roles to give residents a choice. However, an election incurs a cost to the Parish Council of around £3K, when the roles themselves are voluntary and no cost to CBC. The Parish Council has responded to this consultation concerned with the reduction in councillors numbers and the impact on the running of the Parish Council. The consultation notice has also gone out on the Eaton Bray website/Facebook page.
- Fix-My-Street reporting: Cllr Spicer wished to remind resident to report issues with parish roads, footpaths, streetlights on fix-

my-street. If issues remain unsolved residents can email Cllr Spicer with the fix-my-street reference number to enable him to look into these matters and chase CBC.

BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE

- General Assistance/recommended number: 101 - Emergency: 999
- Textphone service: 18001 101
- Follow local policing team on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/leightonbuzzardpolicing/>
- Crime Map for your area (details can be found on the Bedfordshire Police website) : <https://www.beds.police.uk/area/your-area/bedfordshire/central-bedfordshire/leighton-buzzard--rural/about-us/crime-map>

SCHOOL LANE RECREATION GROUND

- Noticeboard: A second noticeboard has been fitted in School Lane, next to the play area entrance gate. This is in accordance with playground regulations and the displaying of safety notices/emergency contacts in this location and accessible for all.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS/APEALS/ ENFORCEMENT NOTICES – NOV/DEC 2025

A copy of the Parish Council's response to planning applications can be seen on the Parish Council Minutes available on the Parish Council website or obtained by applying to the Parish Clerk.

VILLAGE COMPETITION: BEST DRESSED HOUSE AT CHRISTMAS 2025

Thank you to everyone who entered the Christmas competition. We enjoyed going around the village and looking at all the lovely Christmas displays.

The winner of the Eaton Bray Christmas bauble: 24 Greenways

Runner up: 23 Greenways

Congratulations to the winner and thank you to all who took part. We look forward to more great displays in 2026.



Photos of the winning house can be found on the Eaton Bray Facebook page.

WANTED/PARISH GARDENER:

The Parish Council are looking for contractors who would be interested in carrying out some small areas of gardening in the parish. If you would like to know more about this contract, please contact the Parish Clerk for further information.

VOLUNTEER: EB Bloomers



Who are EB Bloomers?

We are a group of volunteers who give up a bit of our time to add a bit of colour to the parish.

We look after and maintain Eaton Bray village flowerpots/troughs, with plants/flowers throughout the seasons. However, our numbers have decreased, and we are looking for more volunteers to join the team.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer and help to keep our village 'blooming' please contact the EB Bloomers team to find out more.

Contact: EB Bloomers (Eaton Bray Volunteers Group)

Email: gillian@gillysglamgardens.co.uk



PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (1st Floor, The Coffee Tavern, Eaton Bray)

Details can be obtained

from EBPC website:

www.eatonbrayparishcouncil.gov.uk

- Parish Council Meeting, Monday 2nd February 2026, from 7:30pm
- Parish Council Meeting, Monday 2nd March 2026, from 7:30pm

PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE (Ground floor)

10am-12noon at The Coffee Tavern, 18 High Street, Eaton Bray, LU6 2DP

(Open dates/times subject to change, please check the EBPC Website for updates)

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An illustration of the Eaton Bray Academy building, a large yellow structure with a brown roof and a modern glass extension. In the foreground, several children are playing on a grassy area. A large tree is on the right side. The sky is blue with a few birds flying.

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DAGNALL WEATHER STATION (AONB)

Weather Conditions for November & December

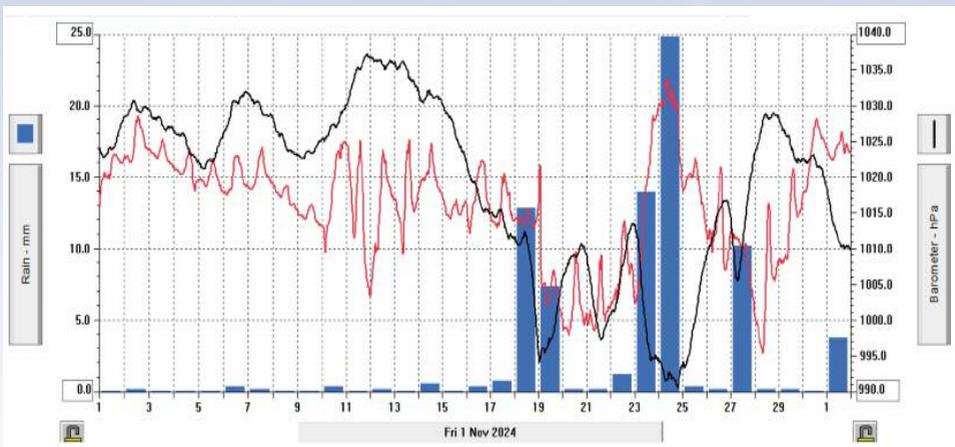
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November started on the warm side, and this lasted for a couple of weeks. The highest temperature recorded was on the 5th at 17.7°C, but unusually the day's lowest temperature was only 14.2°C as dawn broke, which was more like a summer's night. As we moved into the second half of the month, Storm Claudia brought northerly winds from the arctic and the temperature dropped to -2.6°C on the 20th. By the end of the month, the temperature rose to the monthly average 12.0°C. We recorded 25 rain days totalling 84mm, which was 109% of the monthly average. The wettest day was the 14th with 30mm of rain. The year's rain total by the end of the month was 515.1mm: 71% of the average. We had our first winter snow on the 19th.

November 2025

	High	Date/Time	Low	Date/Time
Temperature	17.7°C	5 Nov 14.30	-2.6°C	20 Nov 07.30
Mean Temp	9.0°C	Dominant Wind:		SSE
Humidity:	100%	6 days in Nov	58%	5 Nov 13.30
Barometer:	1027.5hPa	21 Nov 19.00	990.24 hPa	24 Nov 06.30
Wind Speed	32 mph	11 Nov 22.30	Months avg.	6.7 mph SSE
Wettest Day		14 Nov	30 mm	1.181 ins
Monthly Rain:	Total	November	84 mm	3.307 ins

November 2025 ~ Temperatures, Rain and Pressure



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If anyone has a question, comment or wishes to contact me please email: david@dagnallweather.co.uk or telephone: 01442 843883

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NORTHALL BAPTIST CHURCH - 200 YEARS AND STILL GOING



A little Church with strong local links.

Trust For the Future

We are at the beginning of a new year and usually this is a cause for celebration, new year resolutions and perhaps looking forward to, deciding on and booking a summer holiday.

We also look back over the last year and give thanks for the good things, new family members born and achievements. It's very uplifting to count the many blessings we have. A positive outlook improves our well-being.

However, our view may be negative when there are health problems, financial worries or uncertainty about the future. World affairs at the moment seems to be unstable. It is frustrating and we feel unable to influence things for the better. Social Media is often disturbing. What or who can we rely on when things are difficult? A Christian faith, trusting in a living Lord gives a reassurance.

the Last; His Spirit will guide us safe home: we'll praise him for all that is past and trust him for all that's to come.

However dark things are we can see that there is light. We can trust that all is under God's control, even when that doesn't always seem obvious.

We may currently live in difficult times, but this is not unique. There are some really difficult situations in the Bible. One of which is the story of Abraham when he was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac. It was a test to see if he trusted God. He did and God provided a substitute lamb for him to sacrifice instead of his beloved son. What trust Abraham had! How faithful God was.

Jesus was later the Lamb who was sacrificed for our sins and through God's power rose again and is now living at God's right hand. God is the one we should trust. We can pray and ask for forgiveness. God is always there, always available, night and day, when we need comfort, help or guidance. We can safely leave things in his hands.

Let's begin 2026 with a trust in the only one who is faithful, unchangeable and has limitless power. Matthew 19 verse 26 tells us that 'with God all things are possible'. Just trust him for all that's to come.

Join us for our regular Sunday services in the Church at 11 am. We'd love you to join us for our worship and song. You will get a warm welcome. For those unable to attend in person we also stream our services.

For those interested in the history of Northall Baptist Church, a free copy of the booklet, Rebels in Green Pastures can be supplied or downloaded from our website:

<http://northallbaptistchurch.org/>

Ruth Cox Tel: 07791 425625.

One of the hymns I have sung all my life is:

*How good is the God we adore!
Our faithful, unchangeable friend: His love is as great as his power and knows neither measure nor end.*

For Christ is the First and

*"Abram and Isaac"
– by Rembrandt.
The painting is at the Hermitage St Petersburg, Russia*





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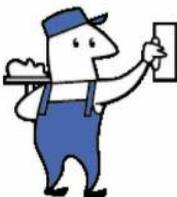
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OPEN GARDENS

~ 2026 ~

Since 2006, one of the social highlights of the year in our villages has been our **Open Gardens** event. We have had some wonderful afternoons enjoying gardens that have been opened by willing gardeners; both the gardeners and visitors enjoy the event which this year will take place on **Sunday 14th June 11.30 to 5pm**. People who have previously opened their gardens in mid-June may wish to show off an entirely fresh colour scheme this year. This is a really special event in our villages' calendar.

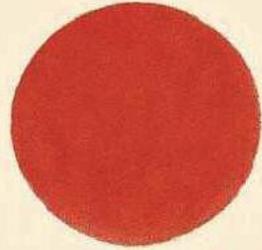
Now is the time to offer to open your garden. It can be large or small, newly designed or mature - all gardens have something to offer visitors and past experience suggests that those who open their gardens are delighted by the positive feedback they receive.

Would you open your garden for a few hours on a Sunday afternoon?

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Laughter is good for the soul

- Senenity RavenWolf



When I was in my younger days,
I weighed a few pounds less,
I needn't hold my tummy in
to wear a belted dress.
But now that I am older,
I've set my body free:
There's the comfort of elastic
where once my waist would be.
Inventor of those high-heeled shoes
my feet have not forgiven:
I have to wear a nine now,
but used to wear a seven.
And how about those pantyhose -
They're sized by weight, you see,
so how come when I put them on
the crotch is at my knee?
I need to wear these glasses
as the print's been getting smaller:
And it wasn't very long ago
I know that I was taller.
Though my hair has turned to gray
And my skin no longer fits;
On the inside, I'm the same old me,
It's the outside's changed a bit.

ADVICE AND INSIGHTS FOR KIDS IN THE GAME

Confidence on the Ball

A new year is a perfect time for young players to reflect and set fresh goals—not just for scoring more goals, but for becoming better teammates, learning new skills, or showing greater confidence. February can be tough weather-wise, but it's a great time to boost individual confidence. Focus on ball mastery and decision-making in pressure situations.

Coaching Tip: Encourage players to set one personal and one team-related goal. Write them down and revisit them mid-season to check progress. Use 1v1 drills and reward creativity. Remind players that mistakes are part of the learning process.



Daniel Piley
Coach for EB Lions
U11 Saturday Team



Last year I replaced all the windows in my house with those expensive, double-pane, energy-efficient kind. Today, I got a call from Home Depot who installed them. The man complained that the work had been completed a year ago, and I still hadn't paid for them.

HHHelloo.....just because I'm blonde doesn't mean that I am automatically stupid. So, I told him just what his fast-talking sales guy had told me last year... that these windows would pay for themselves in a year.

Hellooooo, it's been a year, so they're paid for, I told him. There was only silence at the other end of the line, so I finally hung up. He never called back. I bet he felt like an idiot!!!

Eaton Bray
Good Neighbours

Now we have
lengthening
days, the first
snowdrops peeping

through the grass and Spring round the corner. Is it just the right time to make a New Year resolution to engage with Eaton Bray Good Neighbours? Have you found it increasingly difficult to get to the GP, pharmacy or hospital? Has shopping become more of a problem? Getting out and about is important for better physical and mental health. Would you like to go to some of the events or groups advertised in Focus magazine but worry about getting there? For instance the monthly parish lunch or coffee morning at St Mary's Eaton Bray or the Cancer Support Group or Memory Cafe in Edlesborough? Perhaps you know somebody local in this position and could remind them of the services available? We can help with getting to medical appointments such as GP, dentist or hospital, some social groups, collecting prescriptions and shopping. You can order and pay at the local shops so we can collect and deliver.

We also need volunteers to help provide this service. There are many proven benefits of volunteering-

- Make a positive difference to people's lives.
- Feel a sense of purpose.
- Meet new people.
- Use your existing skills and knowledge
- Drive community improvements.

Eaton Bray Good Neighbours is part of a network of similar groups operating under the umbrella of Bedfordshire Rural Charities. Our local group covers Eaton Bray, Edlesborough, Totternhoe and Northall and has now been in operation for over ten years. Volunteers are not committed in any way. They can just opt into a job if it is convenient. Although we are volunteers, petrol is paid at a standard rate. If you don't want to be driving, we also have phone holders who are on a voluntary rota to organise volunteers as requests for help come in. EBGN is a service Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

**We look forward to hearing from you.
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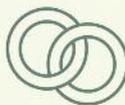
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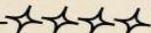
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Life Is What We Make It

By Edgar Albert Guest



Life is a jest; take the delight of it.
Laughter is best; sing through the night of it.
Swiftly the tear, and the hurt and the ache of it.

Find us down here; life must be what we make of it.
Life is a song; dance to the thrill of it.
Grief's hours are long, and the cold is the chill of it.
Joy is man's need; let us smile for the sake of it.
This be our creed: life must be what we make of it.

Life is a soul; the virtue and vice of it,
Strife for a goal, and man's strength is the price of it.
Your life and mine, the bare bread and the cake of it.
End in this line: life must be what we make of it.

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The Pilates Clam and what you should know about it.



St Jude's Clinic
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Helping you be your best self

The clam is a very commonly taught exercise in Pilates Classes. It's also one where precision of application will see the best results. Sadly, in my experience, it's also an exercise that can easily

go wrong, rendering it relatively ineffective.

Why it's a great exercise.

Lying on your side, keeping your feet together, knees bent to 90-degree angle and lifting the top knee away from your bottom knee, for those not familiar with the movement, works the deep buttock muscles. These have a significant role in keeping your hip in the right alignment as you take weight over your leg and you stride forward with the other.

'The hip bones connected to the knee bone' as the song goes and this means that it also helps to keep the knee in a good alignment too.

Foot alignment will also influence the position of the knee and hip (but that's another story!)

Another important reason for doing this exercise is bone loading. The neck of the femur is the bit of bone connecting the long thigh bone (femur) to the ball that goes into the hip joint socket. Bones respond to stress by making more bone, increasing their density.

The forces generated across the neck of femur when you are doing the clam therefore can help with or help guard against Osteoporosis or Osteopenia. In both, there is a lessening of that density but more so in Osteoporosis. This is also called "The Silent Disease" as bones often thin without any symptoms associated with this until a simple fall results in a fracture.

Sadly, it's a common area to be broken during a fall, in the elderly, particularly in women. Two to three times higher in fact than in men. There are numerous factors that can affect the density of the bone, but the hormonal changes of Menopause are of course one of them.

So do this exercise to help with biomechanical alignment of your limbs but also to offset, or help prevent Osteoporosis

BUT DO IT RIGHT - Anyone who attends my classes will tell you that APPI Pilates is about performing an exercise only in the range you can control and that I'm a Stickler for technique!

TIPS TO HELP For those of you who know the exercise and are already familiar with doing it, here are some pointers

1. Use your exercise mat as a guide - lie with your feet, bottom and back in a straight line along the long edge of your mat, with knees bent at 90 degrees.
2. Make sure that you are in 'neutral' (tail bone points down towards your heels)
3. Make sure your spine is in a straight line. For most, this will mean a small gap, or less pressure at our waist on the mat side. If you have a gap there, imagine a grape, or favourite chocolate under your waist and you don't want to drop your waist and squash it as you lift your top knee up in the exercise.
4. If you need to balance yourself with your hand just out in front of you. Have fingertips only on the floor, so that you are not over helping yourself. This gives a bit of help to your side abdominal muscles, that help control the rotation of your trunk in movement. If you wobble around and roll backwards, it all goes wrong. Conversely, when you can remain stable without your hand, it helps you work these side muscles.
5. Keep the inside borders of your feet squeezed together

The "Back Pocket". This is where you are aiming to feel the muscles tighten in where the back pocket in your jeans would be. If you don't feel it here, something is not quite right.

I often suggest a slight tip of the hips forward, to bias the movement a little to help achieve this.

These are just suggestions for those of you ALREADY practicing Pilates, with a good working knowledge of the basics.

If you would like to know more about Pilates, me, or the APPI way of teaching it, have a look at my website at www.stjudesclinic.com. Or contact me, moira@stjudesclinic.com, to see how movement really can be your medicine.

Moira D'Arcy Rehab Pilates teacher APPI Method and Chartered Physiotherapist



Royal British Legion Remembrance Service. We Remembered...



Once again, the sun shone for the Royal British Legion Remembrance Service which this year was held at the War Memorial at the top of the hill on the main road in Edlesborough. Around 300 people attended the service including the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts who had marched up the Hill carrying their flags. Everyone was able to stand safely and quietly in the road which was closed for the hour of the service. The names of the fallen were read, the two-minute silence was observed, and wreaths were laid.

We have many people to thank for making this possible, especially the group of amazing people who gave up time on their Sunday morning to stand for an hour at the manned barriers and make sure that no traffic was able to access the closed area. So, a big thank you to Bob Stilliard, Chris Edwards, Graham Chandler, Justin Hardy, Paul and Sue Brennan, Kevin Cubbage and Christine Yates who made sure that everyone was safe during the service. This task is not easy as there were several incidents of motorists being rude and abusive, and several local cars started journeys during the closure despite all the notices and messages in Focus and on Facebook.

All this would also not have been possible without the help of our local farmer Rob Pratt and his willing helpers Joe and Kempsey, who took the signs and barriers round early on Sunday morning and patiently put them exactly where they were required, and then spent another hour after the service

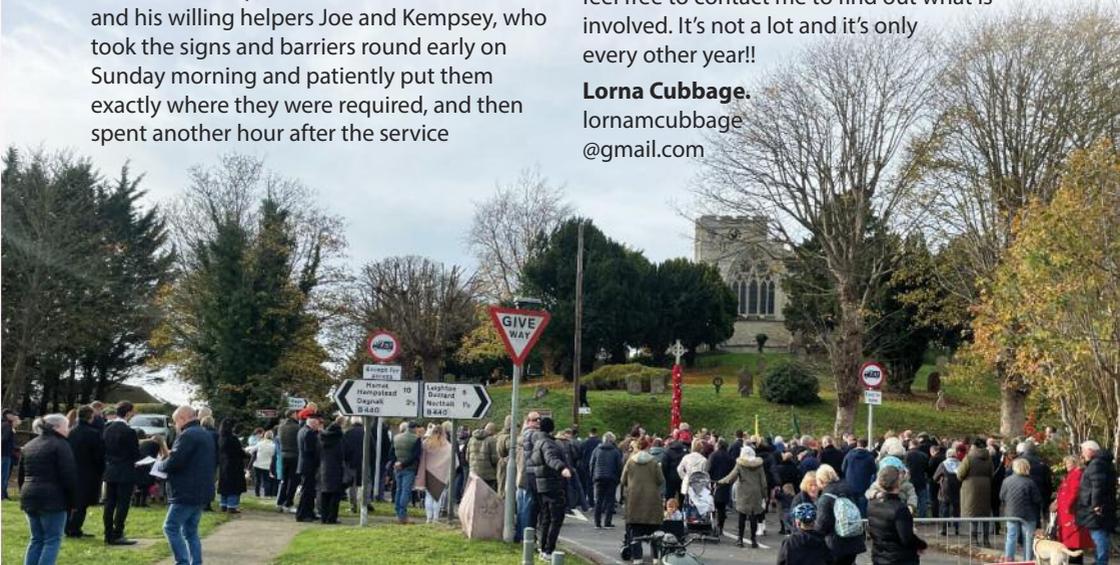
collecting everything up and taking it to storage. Thank you all so much. We couldn't have done it without you.

Finally a huge thank you to Penny Pataky, our Parish Clerk, for all her help and support over the past few weeks with obtaining the closure signs and providing liaison with Edlesborough residents and Facebook for me!

Next year the Remembrance Service will be held at the War Memorial in Eaton Bray. I met several people on Sunday from Eaton Bray who had expected the service to be held there. For anyone new to the area, the service is held on alternate years in Edlesborough and Eaton Bray. It is always advertised in Focus in November, but an easy way to remember where it will be is that Edlesborough do "Odd Years" and Eaton Bray do "Even Years"!!

The years pass! Some of us have been involved with the Road Closure since it was introduced in 2008 after many years of holing the service with the traffic thundering between the War Memorial and the pavements. I have been heavily involved with organising the closure during this time and now feel that it is time to stand aside and let someone younger and more "in touch" take over. So if you feel you could help with this – it is very satisfying to achieve the peace and quiet which comes with the closure – please feel free to contact me to find out what is involved. It's not a lot and it's only every other year!!

Lorna Cubbage.
lornamcubbage
@gmail.com



EATON BRAY WI



theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Our December meeting was the first to be held in the Salvation Army Hall in Eaton Bray and we would like to thank them for the cosy and welcoming atmosphere in the Hall, on such a very wet and miserable evening.

Christmas gifts for the Salvation Army appeal for disadvantaged children in the area, were placed under the beautiful Christmas tree and we were splendidly entertained by the Turf Tappers. The members enjoyed singing along to the many familiar tunes and they even had us all up doing the Hokey Cokey!

The Committee provided some light refreshments and we all left feeling as if the Christmas Season had indeed started.

The 5th January Meeting was cancelled because of the weather, so our next Meeting will be on the 2nd February where we will discuss the Resolutions and play Crazy Bag Whist.

At the March Meeting David Swain will talk to us about Shelterbox

Our new venue is the Salvation Army Hall in Booth place at 7.30 pm on the first Monday of each Month and ladies of all ages are most welcome.

Sue Tucker on 07772901816

EDLESBOROUGH WI

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Once again the last year seemed to pass in a moment and our December 2025 meeting comprising AGM followed by Christmas Lunch was upon us. The venue was Tilsworth Golf Club again as they always look after us so well and the meal never disappoints.

WI business was attended to first. Minutes of the November meeting were read and signed. The Annual Treasurer Report read and agreed. Committee members were voted in again. Regretfully, Sue Bingham resigned. Many thanks were made for her contribution to the Committee over the years. Sj Huxtable was unanimously voted in to continue as President and followed this

with a summary of the year's activities which were resoundingly approved by the members.

Our anticipated lunch followed. Tables were festively decorated, crackers pulled, our glasses charged and a delicious three course lunch, great conversation and good friends contributed to another successful end to a good year.

Our 2026 Programme commences on Tuesday 13 January with Bill Hamilton, speaking on his life as a BBC News Reporter and journalist.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at the Memorial Hall at 7.30 pm. New Ladies are always welcome.

Caroline Colleran

Whipsnade Zoo counts its animals in 2026 Annual Stocktake

Whipsnade Zoo kicks off ZSL's 200th anniversary with annual animal count, every paw and claw accounted for.



Rachel Melvin adds domestic Bactrian camels Issy and Sally to the stocktake and the newest addition, a baby southern white rhino (c) Dominic Lipinski_ZSL



EVERY ANIMAL, from mammals and birds to fish and invertebrates, are being counted in Whipsnade Zoo's Annual Stocktake, as zookeepers kick off ZSL's - the international conservation charity behind Whipsnade Zoo - 200th anniversary.

There are more than 245 species of animals at the UK's largest zoo, all of which must be accounted for.

With 2025 proving to be a bumper year for births at Whipsnade Zoo, the count features precious additions to global conservation breeding programmes - the most recent being a newborn Southern white rhino calf, born on New Year's Eve. The baby boy, who is yet to be named, was born to mum Jaseera and dad Sizzle and brings the conservation zoo's total to ten white rhinos.

This latest arrival joins two reticulated giraffe calves, Hattie the red panda cub and Ivor the domestic Bactrian camel, all born in 2025.

The tally also reflects important animal moves, with some group sizes adjusted as animals moved as part of international conservation projects. In April, Asian elephants Karishma and her daughter Beth moved to Chester Zoo as part of the European breeding programme, and more

moves will take place this year to support a genetically diverse insurance population of endangered species in zoos.

After surveys confirmed the boxer pupfish, a fish species endemic to Mexico, are likely now Extinct-in-the-wild, Whipsnade Zoo transported boxer pupfish and eggs to Vienna Zoo in 2025, to bolster the insurance population being cared for in zoos and save the species from the brink of extinction.

ZSL, the charity that runs Whipsnade Zoo, has been contributing to the global understanding of wildlife for 200 years – having been founded to advance our scientific understanding of animals. The annual animal count at Whipsnade Zoo is a requirement of its license, but also a vital tool for the zoo's contribution to conservation breeding programmes. Following the count, the conservation zoo will share the final numbers with zoos and aquariums around the world via Species360, an international database which helps conservationists to manage important breeding programmes for endangered species. Find out more about ZSL's two centuries of wildlife conservation at <https://www.zsl.org/200>

Whipsnade Zoo | A ZSL conservation zoo.



SEARED SALMON WITH ORANGE & FENNEL SALAD

Serves 2 For main meal

Prepare 15 minutes, cook 25 minutes,

Total time 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

1 tsp fennel seeds

¼ tsp chilli flakes

¼ tsp fine sea salt

2 skin-on salmon fillets (about 260g total weight)

2 Blush oranges

2 tbsp lemon juice

1 tbsp clear honey

2 tbsp olive oil

120g Merchant Gourmet Red & White Quinoa (or couscous)

30g rocket

1 small fennel bulb, trimmed and very thinly sliced (on a mandolin, if you have one)

1 tbsp capers

METHOD:

Put the fennel seeds, chilli flakes and salt in a pestle and mortar and pound to a coarse powder. Rub all over the salmon, then cover and chill until needed (up to 2 hours).

Meanwhile, using a small, sharp knife and working from top to bottom and around the

fruit, peel and remove the pith from 1 orange. Over a bowl (to catch any juice), cut between the membranes to release the segments. Put in a large bowl and set aside.

Juice the remaining orange and add to the juice bowl (you should have about 75ml in total). Pour the orange juice into a small saucepan along with the lemon juice, honey and a pinch of salt. Bring to a rapid simmer and keep on the heat for 6-10 minutes until the mixture has thickened and reduced to about 2½ tbsp. Set aside and keep warm.

Preheat the oven to 230°C, gas mark 8. Put 1 tbsp oil in a large frying pan (ideally ovenproof) and put on a medium-high heat. Add the fish, skin-side down, and fry for 6-7 minutes, turning to sear all sides. Transfer to the oven for 4 minutes until the fish is opaque and flakes easily with a fork (put it on a baking tray if your pan isn't ovenproof).

Meanwhile, prepare the quinoa according to pack instructions. Add the rocket, fennel, capers and remaining 1 tbsp oil to the bowl with the orange segments and season. Toss to combine, divide between 2 plates, then place a salmon fillet alongside each portion. Serve with the cooked quinoa, and drizzle over the orange syrup.

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Internationally we funded the installation of clean water supply to the small township of Antsampandrano in Madagascar.



This Christmas our club members, aided by their singing Santa Bear, were out collecting at ASDA to raise funds for charitable causes both at home and abroad. So if you saw us and donated, **thank you for your support.**





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AGE CONCERN

NORTHALL & DISTRICT



Charity No. 293080

Wednesday Club

Welcome Back

We are happy to say that all our Club events and activities in December got us in the festive mood - thank you to all the staff, volunteers, cooks, drivers, conductors, Committee, and trustees for their support in 2025,

For 2026 our diary so far :

- 14th January Chair Yoga in the morning
- 11th March Ukulele Band in the afternoon
- 8th July our Summer Trip tbc

QUIZ NIGHT

We are pleased to offer our first Quiz Night of 2026 ... Gordon has kindly agreed to set our

minds to task. Please keep the 13th March (yes it's a Friday!) earmarked to join us for the Quiz, tickets are £15 p/p which includes a hot 2 course meal. Please get your tickets ASAP via the usual channels - thank you

Thank You, as always to The Swan, Northall, team for welcoming us for our first meeting of 2026, with a lovely 2 course meal and a great start to the New Year.

Wednesday Club phone is not monitored daily so please leave a message or text the Club Phone no 07854230243, enquiries to join, offers of assistance, produce gluts etc. **thank you.**

Friend of Bucks



AGE CONCERN

NORTHALL & DISTRICT WEDNESDAY CLUB



Charity No. 293080

QUIZ NIGHT

with Gordon Gray

FRIDAY 13 MARCH 7.30PM START
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Two course supper
(Bring you own drink and glasses)

Tables of 8 ~ Tickets £15 per person
Contact: Beryl Bishop 01525 220868



THE FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL, EDLESBOROUGH



2026
EdleFest

UPDATE JUNE 5th/6th 2026

2026
EdleFest



All of the artists are now contracted to perform at our magical event on the Hill.

Regular EdleFesters already know what a great time is in store.

The “Early Bird” offer is now closed and tickets are selling well. We are now reverting to “Standard” at £19, £17 and £8 respectively. Remember that there is an extra bonus if you purchase tickets for both nights, there is a discount of £1 on each ticket.

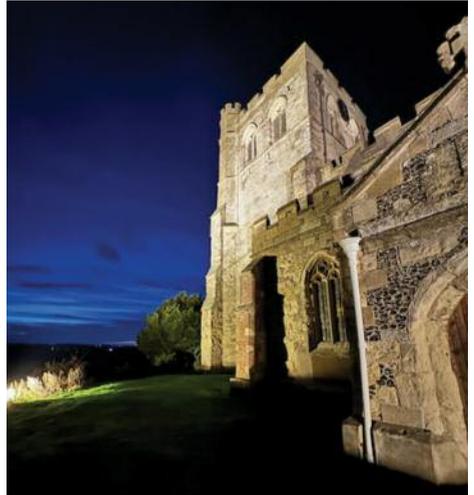
“On the Door” prices will be £21, £19 and £8, but as we are operating under Martyr’s Law, numbers are restricted and availability cannot be guaranteed.

We will start selling tickets through our very supportive and local ticket agency, **Janes Flooring**, from the beginning of April – **cash only here please**.

Full details of EdleFest are on our website edlefest.site123.me

OTHER NEWS

It was wonderful to have the Bells rung for Carols by Candlelight, and the Bell Captain, Mike Pearson had a great team working with him, this was the first outing of the new Bell Rope funded by the Friends group. We had an audience of about 110 who had a slightly different experience, in that due to vandalism we were unable to use the organ, so Stephen Axford and his wife led the singing in a cappella style. Donations of £285.25 were raised to support the work of The Churches Conservation Trust, and finally hearty Mulled Wine and mince pies and tray bakes were enjoyed.



The Church is now open to visitors most Fridays, every Weekend and Tuesday Mornings if we working in the Churchyards. We are expecting a magnificent display of bulbs this year.

Friends of the Church on the Hill

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EDLESBOROUGH WI



theWI INSPIRING WOMEN

Happy New Year to all from our Edlesborough WI group. Our group meets on the second Tuesday of every month in the Edlesborough Village Hall at 7p.m. We have another varied programme lined up for 2026 which we are all looking forwards to.

Our New Years programme kicked off with a talk called Good News Bad News by Bill Hamilton whose career path was in journalism and broadcasting. Bill is a phenomenal orator and has us gripped with his tales of a very interesting 60 year old career along with a slide show. Bill is from Scotland and that is where his amazing career path started. A lot of us of a certain age will have seen Bill reporting as much of his career was with the BBC although it started with the Fife Herald.

Bill who speaks with a lot of humour has reported on sport, the frontline of wars, interviewed many world politicians including Mrs Thatcher, weather disasters and many more. He told us a funny story of when Mrs Thatcher "hand bagged" him as she disapproved of his question. We saw

picture of the offending hand bag.

He also reported on the big blizzard in Scotland in 1978 that had so much snow that people were trapped in their cars and even a train was buried under this huge and rapid snowfall. Sadly there were fatalities but we were gripped by his story and pictures of the rescue operation.

Bill has written a few books and in 2010 his autobiography 'Man on the Spot' was published which sums up an amazing and fulfilling career. His career changed constantly with modern technology which changes with such speed that now journalists can if necessary do everything from a mobile phone. In the early years of his career they still had to find a red phone box, often vandalised making it quite a difficult job.

This was a wonderful start to our 2026 programme. Our evening ended with our monthly raffle and refreshments.

New members are always welcome to join us. We have a coffee morning in the village hall on 25th March at 11 a.m. All welcome.

Jane Jones

DOWN THE LANE

FEBRUARY 2026

Last autumn, I didn't have chance to tidy up the flower beds and shrubs in the garden, leaving lots of seed heads and shelter for the wildlife. Today, during the sunshine, I had a stroll round to see where the bulbs were coming up and what would need cutting back when the soil had dried out enough to venture on.



The Winter Jasmine has been flowering since the end of November. I planted it next to a north- west facing wall so it gets no winter sun but really brightens up a dark corner. I want to keep an open framework as flowers form on the previous summer's shoots. I will cut it back in the spring, immediately after flowering to keep it growing close to the wall and thin it out. If you want more plants, put low growing stems on the ground and cover part of them with soil. This is called layering. The stems soon grow roots. Cut the stem which attaches the new plant to the original and pot up the new plant or move it to the position where you would like it to grow. Winter Jasmine does need a support to grow vertically. It can sprawl, unsupported, over a bank or terrace but still needs pruning to prevent a build-up of dead wood.



Other flowers in the garden include Cyclamen, now spreading rapidly as they are well established, I love the markings on their leaves, Viburnum Tinus has pretty, white flowers. This year it seems to have escaped the attacks of viburnum beetles which devour the leaves. I have Winter Box near the front door and visitors often comment on its beautiful scent. Christmas Roses are just starting to bloom. I wish the flower heads were more upright so you could see the patterns on the petals and stamens. This one is a pretty creamy white colour.



The only insects I saw today were ladybirds, clustered together on a gate handle, which seemed an exposed place to me, but they were on the south facing side. There were lots of ladybirds in the garden in the summer which seemed to keep the aphids in check. I shall now sit down with my seed catalogue and work out what I need to order for the spring. I hope I have more success with growing some cut flowers this year than last when it was so dry and hot that many seeds didn't germinate. I need a seed planting timetable this year!

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Royal British Legion Poppy Collection in Northall, Edlesborough and Eaton Bray



This year my report covers all the villages again because no one came forward to help with the Poppy Collection in Eaton Bray. I was able to supply wreaths to the local organisations and provide a box of poppies to the Church but was unable to do more as I am covering the area on my own. Not that it made any difference! The residents of all the villages have once again demonstrated what generous people live around here! The working total I have at the moment, including some donations for wreaths, stands at £1,814.40 with some donations and cheques for wreaths still to come! This is an incredible amount for such a small area. Thank you so much to everyone who has donated to the Collection in any way. You are amazing!!

Thank you to everyone who supported the Collection. Edlesborough Newsagents went for the record amount in one tin - £270.76!! Edlesborough School actually beat their total with two tins, one £178.38 and the other £157.17! I still don't know what they do with all the snap bands! And they buy them every year....The school must be sitting on a mountain of them!!

Thanks to Edlesborough Pavilion (£87.59), The Swan, Northall (£71.47 and £58.76), Wednesday Club, Northall (£33.75) and Eaton Bray Church (£60.47) Thank you all so much for all your support.

The grand total also included an amazing donation of £600.00 from Eggington Shoot and they also supported the Collection with a tin (£179.10) and a box of poppies.

I will publish a final total in February edition of Focus which will include any final donations and also, hopefully, the amount raised by people using the QR codes on the tins and Poppy boxes.

In the meantime, if anyone in Eaton Bray feels that they could become involved with the Poppy Collection in the village please contact me. You won't be on your own as I will help and support where needed.

Lorna Cabbage.

lornamcabbage@gmail.com



Dunstable Probus Club

Dunstable PROBUS Club meets on the second Monday of the month at Tilsworth Golf Centre and membership is open to retired or semi-retired professional and business people.

The Club's main purpose is the promotion of good fellowship. Members enjoy some social activities and the occasional organised visit throughout the year and after their regular monthly lunch meetings are entertained by speakers who give talks on a wide range of topics.

If you are interested in joining the Club, please contact the Secretary, Philip Savage on 01582 662462.



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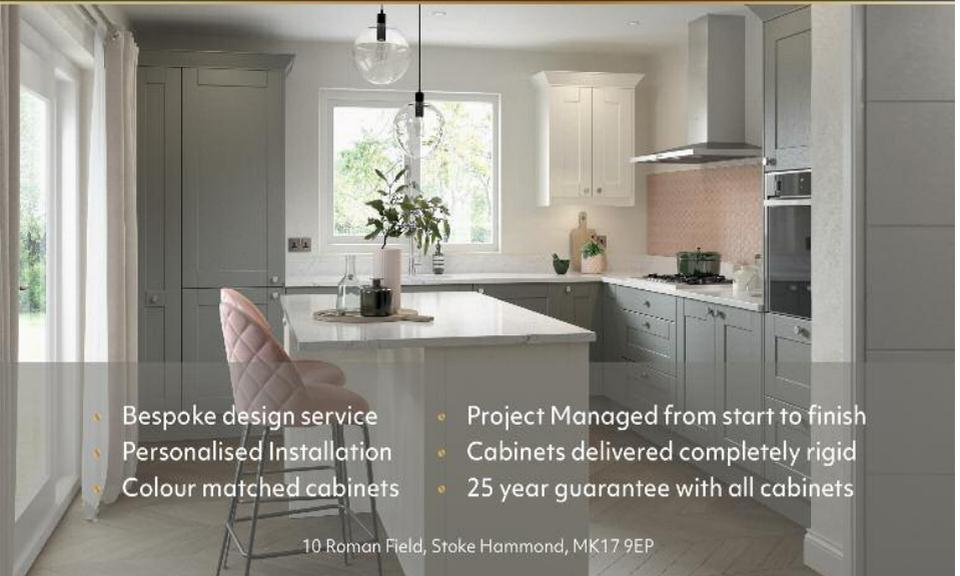
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Totterhoe GARDEN CLUB

February 2026

Our evening meeting on 13 November was the final meeting of the year. It was well supported and we were able to enjoy mulled wine and pre-Christmas fare of mince pies and sausage rolls.

Dr Primrose gave a very interesting, amusing, fascinating and well-informed talk on

“Poisonous Plants”. It was illustrated with historic drawings and photographs which kept us all enthralled. At the end of his talk, he offered to host a visit to his own garden which we should very much like to do - hopefully this year.

In the new year on 15 January, we are to be regaled by Andy Sands back on a return visit to show us some more of his superb photographs of wildlife. More on this talk in the next issue.

The speaker for 12 March will be Kathy Doyle telling us about sustainable or organic gardening. She was involved in designing the new garden outside the Methodist church and also very much involved in Dunstable in Bloom.

For more information about the Garden Club, e-mail **Joyce Murphy** at tgc@mothermurphy.co.uk or telephone **01582 667085**.

For membership queries contact Veronica Clarke by e-mail at r_vclarke@hotmail.com or telephone **01582 600764**. At the moment we have reached our limit of 130 members, but Veronica will be pleased to take your details and put you on the waiting list to join.

Margaret Jones - Secretary



Be Car Safe!

As the New Year begins, many people are embracing resolutions that involve getting outdoors, walking and exercising in the fresh air. Countryside car parks are popular starting points for these activities, but they can also be a target for opportunistic thieves. To keep your car safe, it's important not to leave valuables or new Christmas presents, such as phones, iPads, coats, or bags on display inside your vehicle. Even a small item left visible can attract unwanted attention, so taking a moment to store belongings out of sight or leaving them at home helps ensure your day out in the fresh air isn't spoiled by a break-in.

Your Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall Neighbourhood Policing team.



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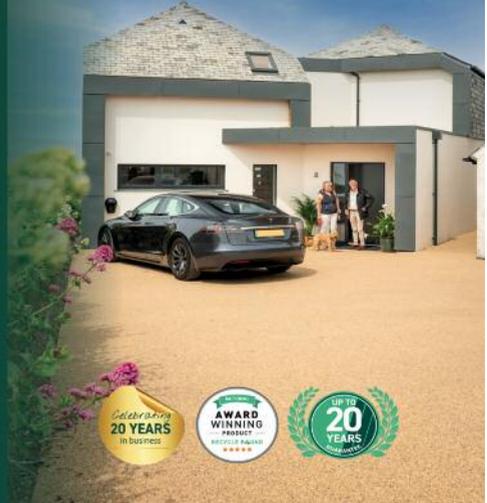
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or further meetings at the Pavilion if requested
Steve Munday ~ 07740 197392
Christine Hurst ~ 07398 246496

HELPFUL TIPS ON FINANCE

Love Your Finances

With Valentine's Day in the air, it's a good time to show some love to your personal finances — especially if you share them with a partner.

Couples should consider using the Marriage Allowance if one of you earns under the Personal Allowance (£12,570 for 2025/26). It could save you up to £252 in tax this year.

It's also a good month to check your wills, life insurance policies, and joint savings plans. Making sure your financial affairs are in order brings peace of mind for the future.

Tip of the Month: If eligible, apply for Marriage Allowance — it's quick, free and could save you money every year.

Daniel Riley
(Riley Accountants)



Ever spotted a deer on your travels?



Red deer

The counties of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, are home to a fascinating array of deer species. Whether seen at dawn in woodland and hedgerow edges or spotted silhouetted against open fields at dusk, deer have become an increasingly familiar part of the local countryside.

In the UK there are six species of wild deer - red deer, roe deer, fallow deer, sika deer, Reeves's muntjac, and Chinese water deer, but not all are equally common in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The roe deer is one of Britain's two truly native deer species and has made a

strong comeback across southern England over recent decades. These graceful animals are typically seen alone or in small groups, favouring woodland edges, hedgerows, farmland, and field margins. Their reddish-brown summer coats turn more greyish in winter, and males carry small, branched antlers.

In both Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, roe deer are becoming increasingly common, with sightings reported across mixed countryside habitats. Their adaptable nature helps them thrive close to human activity while still using woodland.



Roe deer



One of the most distinctive deer you're likely to encounter locally is the Reeves's muntjac, a small species introduced from China in the early 20th century — notably at Woburn Park in Bedfordshire. Since then, muntjac have spread throughout woodland, farms, and even suburban edges.

Muntjac are compact — about the size of a medium dog — and are often heard before they are seen. They make a sharp, dog-like bark, particularly during the breeding season. Unlike larger deer, muntjac breed year-round and often appear solitary. Their grazing habits can significantly affect woodland understory plant life.

Perhaps the most unusual deer in our region is the Chinese Water Deer, an introduced species notable for its teddy-bear appearance and prominent tusks instead of antlers. Originally brought here in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and established around Woburn and Whipsnade, water deer have persisted and spread across Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire's wetter countryside and farmland.

These deer favour wet grassland, marsh edges, and river corridors, and are particularly active at dawn and dusk. Although non-native, the British population now represents a significant portion of the global species, which faces declines in its native range in China.

Fallow deer are another non-native species that are widespread in England. They were introduced many centuries ago and are now considered naturalised in many parts of the country. While not as frequently reported specifically in Bedfordshire and

Buckinghamshire as roe or muntjac, fallow deer are present in woodland parks and large estates and may be seen especially where mixed farmland and woods.

Larger species like red deer and sika deer are generally less common in these counties, though isolated sightings or historical records exist. Red deer are more typical of upland and forested regions but do occasionally turn up on the edges of open land.

Deer have no natural predators in much of England, and changes in farming, woodland cover, and climate have allowed many species to expand their ranges. As a result, deer populations and sightings are increasing, which has both ecological and social impacts.

Locally, deer are prized by wildlife watchers and photographers for their beauty and grace. However, they also interact with agriculture and forestry, sometimes causing crop damage or impacting young woodlands through browsing. Responsible deer management is guided by laws like the Deer Act 1991, which protects deer but also regulates how and when they can be managed by landowners.

To see deer in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire: Early morning and late evening are prime times for deer activity. Look along woodland edges, hedgerows, and field margins. Soft ground may reveal deer tracks — smaller prints from muntjac and water deer, larger ones from roe and fallow deer. Deer are skittish — keep a respectful distance and move quietly.

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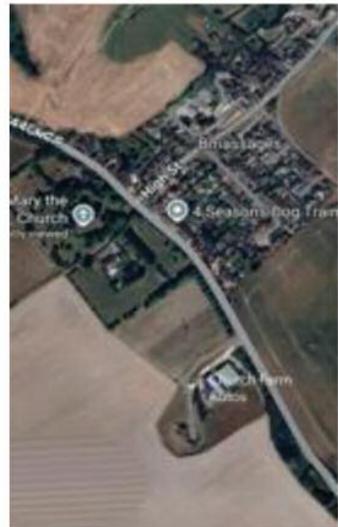
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APPLEDOWN RESCUE DOG OF THE MONTH



This cute little lad is Diesel! A typical active terrier who was born in May 2016 and is still lively and full of fun. Diesel loves people and walks well on the lead, but can be a bit shouty around other dogs so he will need owners willing to carry on his training. We think he would suit early retired owners who enjoy a good walk as much as he does. Diesel needs to be an only pet in a home where any children are 7+ .

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What to do in the garden in February

With winter finally behind us, find out what to do in the garden in February.

February feels like a turning point in the garden. It's still cold outside, but there are signs of spring's imminent arrival everywhere you look. Bulbs are slowly emerging from the ground, and the days are getting longer at last.

This month's garden jobs are mostly about getting things ready for the spring. But there are also some early **sowing and growing** tasks to do — if you want to get a head start..

Timely Tips



Clear your garden from perennial weeds, like dandelions.

Use February to get yourself properly prepared for springtime. The following jobs will set you up for your best growing season yet:

1. Prepare your seed beds. As long as the ground isn't frozen, you can cultivate beds and start to warm up the soil, with fleece, polythene or cloches, in preparation for sowing in the coming months.
2. Organise this year's seeds by sowing date. Get hold of a box with dividers, and file your seed packets by the month they need to be sown in. You'll be so glad of this effort in the weeks to come.
3. Check your tools are sound and your garden machinery is working. Give your tools and equipment the once over and apply a little TLC to anything that needs it. While you're at it, tidy your shed ahead of the imminent planting & sowing season - you'll thank yourself for a clean & tidy space later!
4. Blitz perennial weeds in your beds and kitchen garden. Dig them up, roots and all, to get a head start on the blighters before the weather warms up.

In the flower garden



Prune back old foliage from ornamental grasses for summer.

Here are your main tasks in the flower garden this month:

Pruning and tidying

- Prune wisteria now, cutting back summer side-shoots to 2 or 3 buds.
- There's still plenty of time to prune your **rhododendron** while they're in their dormant stage.
- Take notice of your **climbers**, as some may need pruning before the end of the month (such as group 2 clematis.)
- Cut back shrubs, such as **cornus** and salix cultivars (grown for their colourful winter stems), down to their bases.
- Prune summer-flowering clematis towards the end of the month, before active growth begins.
- Cut back the old foliage from **ornamental**

grasses before growth begins. Clip them to within a few centimetres of the ground.

- Prune overwintered fuchsias back to one or two buds on each shoot. .
- Prune winter-flowering jasmine (**Jasminum nudiflorum**) after flowering, to encourage new growth for next year's blooms. Cut back the previous year's growth to 5cm from the old wood.
- Trim winter-flowering heathers as the flowers disappear, to prevent plants becoming leggy.
- Prune winter-flowering shrubs such as mahonia and **viburnum x bodnantense** once their colourful display has finished.
- Remove faded flowers from winter pansies to stop them setting seed. This will encourage a flush of new flowers when the weather warms up.

In the vegetable garden



There are a few jobs to be done in the vegetable garden:

- Start chitting **early potatoes** — stand them on end in a module tray or egg box and place them in a bright, cool, frost-free place.
- Mulch perennial vegetables such as **asparagus** and **artichokes** with well-rotted manure or garden compost.
- Build raised beds now, before the growing season gets underway. Raised beds allow you to make an early start in the garden; the soil warms up faster and raised beds drain quickly too, so they're a great way to deal with clay soils.
- Prepare vegetable seed beds by removing all weeds and forking in plenty of compost. Cover prepared soil with sheets of black plastic to keep it drier and warmer in preparation for spring planting.
- Rake lime into acid soils.
- Continue controlling against slugs.
- Remove yellowing leaves from brassicas, including **Brussels sprouts**, to prevent brassica downy mildew and grey mould from spreading.
- Tidy up vegetable plots, removing any remaining plant debris.

In the fruit garden



Protect the delicate peach blossom from February frost.

Get into the fruit garden to protect and prune plants.

- Prune raspberry canes. It's your last chance to cut autumn-fruiting raspberry canes to the ground to stimulate new canes to fruit in the autumn. Cut the tips of summer-fruiting raspberry canes that have grown beyond the top of their supports; cut just above a bud. For more advice, check our raspberry pruning guide.
- Prune blackcurrant bushes, gooseberries and redcurrants to maintain a productive framework.
- Mulch fruit trees with well-rotted manure or garden compost, taking care not to mound mulch up around the trunk.
- Winter prune apple trees and pear trees while they're still dormant. This is your last chance to do so. For more advice, read our apple tree pruning guide.
- Leave plum trees, cherry trees and apricots until the summer as pruning these fruit trees now will make them susceptible to Silver Leaf disease.
- Protect blossoms on apricots, nectarines and peaches from frost, but make sure pollinating insects can still reach the flowers.
- Force rhubarb plants for an early crop.
- Cover outdoor strawberries with cloches to encourage an earlier crop.
- Top dress fruit bushes with a slow-release, potassium-rich fertiliser to feed plants for the forthcoming season.

Check stored fruit and remove any rotten fruit.

Looking after your lawn



- Remember to keep off the grass when there's a frost, as the blades are more susceptible to damage.
- With spring on the way it's worth preparing your lawn for the season ahead. Try installing lawn edging, which gives a neat and tidy appearance and makes maintenance easier.

Other jobs about the garden



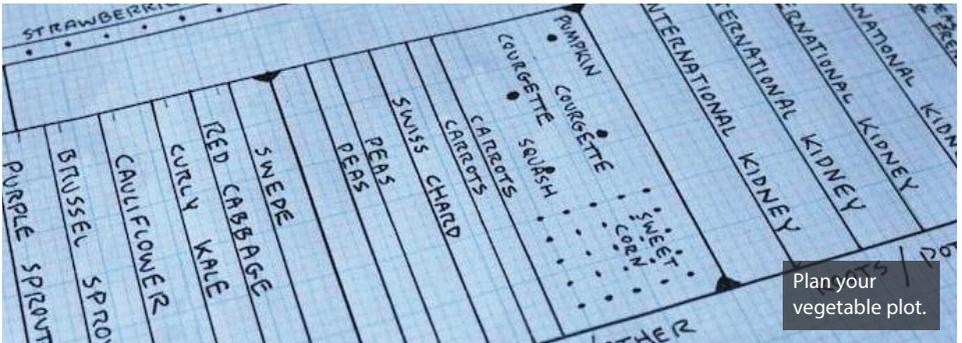
Here are some of the other jobs to do around the garden this February:

- Trim deciduous hedges before the birds start nesting.
- Cut back vines such as ivy, Virginia creeper and Boston ivy. Doing this now helps keep windows, gutters and roof tiles clear.
- Shred or chop any woody prunings before you add them to compost bins, as this will help speed up decomposition.
- Wash empty pots by scrubbing them with

hot water and a mild detergent. Rinse them well afterwards.

- Keep feeding the birds. The weather is still cold this month so hang fat balls and keep bird feeders topped up.
- Install water butts now ready for the summer. Rainwater is particularly useful for watering acid-loving, ericaceous plants (tap water is often slightly alkaline).
- Find out what type of soil you have. Invest in a soil testing kit to help you choose the right plants for your garden.

From your armchair



- Plan your vegetable plot for this year to ensure good crop rotation and prevent pests and diseases building up in the soil.
- Order **seeds** and **plug plants** online now. Having a garden plan drawn up will help you decide the quantities you need.
- Buy **onion sets** and **asparagus crowns** ready for planting in the spring.
- Order **flower bulbs** for summer colour, such as **lily-of-the-valley** and **gladioli**, in preparation for spring planting.
- Choose **fruit trees** now for planting in early spring. If space is limited in your garden try growing dwarf fruit trees, or edging vegetable plots with stepover apple and pear trees.

Edlesborough Memory Café

A new social group for those affected by dementia and age-related memory loss has opened at Edlesborough Pavilion.

Their first meeting was held the afternoon of July 9 and was very well attended by a mixture of family carers and those living with the condition. Edlesborough Memory Café is a social space for people to chat and play some fun games together. It has been started with the help of Tibbs Dementia Foundation, who are a specialist Bedfordshire dementia charity with over 12 years of experience in delivering social activities to those affected by dementia and memory loss.

The group is very inclusive and all are welcome, those with a formal diagnosis as well as those without. Family members are also encouraged to come along, either on their own or with their relative who is living with dementia/memory loss.

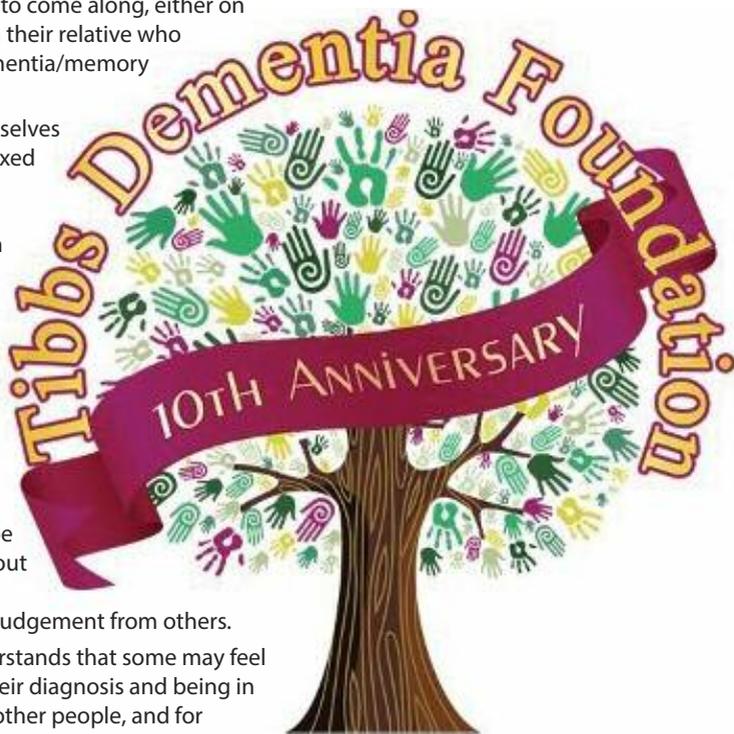
Tibbs pride themselves on offering a relaxed and stress-free environment, where clients can come and enjoy a cuppa, along with good company and some stimulating games and activities. It is a space where people can just be themselves without having to worry about stigma or judgement from others.

The charity understands that some may feel anxious about their diagnosis and being in the company of other people, and for

those with a cognitive impairment this can be a very normal reaction to the thought of socialising in a group. This is why they offer social activities just for those living with memory loss and dementia; an opportunity to be with others in a similar situation who understand the challenges people with this condition face. New people are encouraged to come along for a taster session to try it. No booking is necessary.

The group meets at 2.30pm every 2nd Wednesday of the month at Edlesborough Pavilion.

For more information, please contact **Louise Evans** at louise.evans@tibbsdementia.co.uk or via phone on **07483 951733**



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Firstly, Happy New Year, may I also take this opportunity on behalf of the families who have received gifts through our Toy Appeal 2025 to say a heartfelt thank you, your generosity was much appreciated.

As I ponder on the many gifts and parcels dealt with over the festive period, I am reminded of the spiritual gifts God gives to each member of the Body of Christ, to be used to develop the Church. I wonder how you will use your spiritual gifting in 2026 to work together so that God's will, will be done on earth and His Kingdom will come.

While writing this we have just celebrated Epiphany where we remember the journey of the Magi and of course the significance of the gifts they gave Jesus. In the final verse of the carol - In the Bleak Mid-Winter, the words speak of the gifts brought by the shepherds and the wise men yet challenge us to consider what can we give him - I wonder if 2026 will be the year you give God your heart and I guarantee you will receive the greatest gift ever.

Jacqueline

(The Eaton Bray Salvation Army Church Leader)

The Salvation Army

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Home League: Weds 2:30pm – 3:30pm

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Champion's Club: Weds 6:15pm – 7:15pm

(2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Weds of the month, Age 5+, term time only – lots of fun including games, music, activities & bible stories)

Messy Church: Weds 6pm – 7:15pm

(1st Weds of the month, term time only – a fun time for the whole family to explore bible stories through arts & crafts, & messy activities)

Girls' Night Out: Thurs 7:30pm

(1st Thurs of the month – for more details including where we meet & what we do each month, email eaton.bray@salvationarmy.org.uk)



For further information please call into our hall at any of the times above, telephone: 07796 980565 or contact us by email: eaton.bray@salvationarmy.org.uk

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