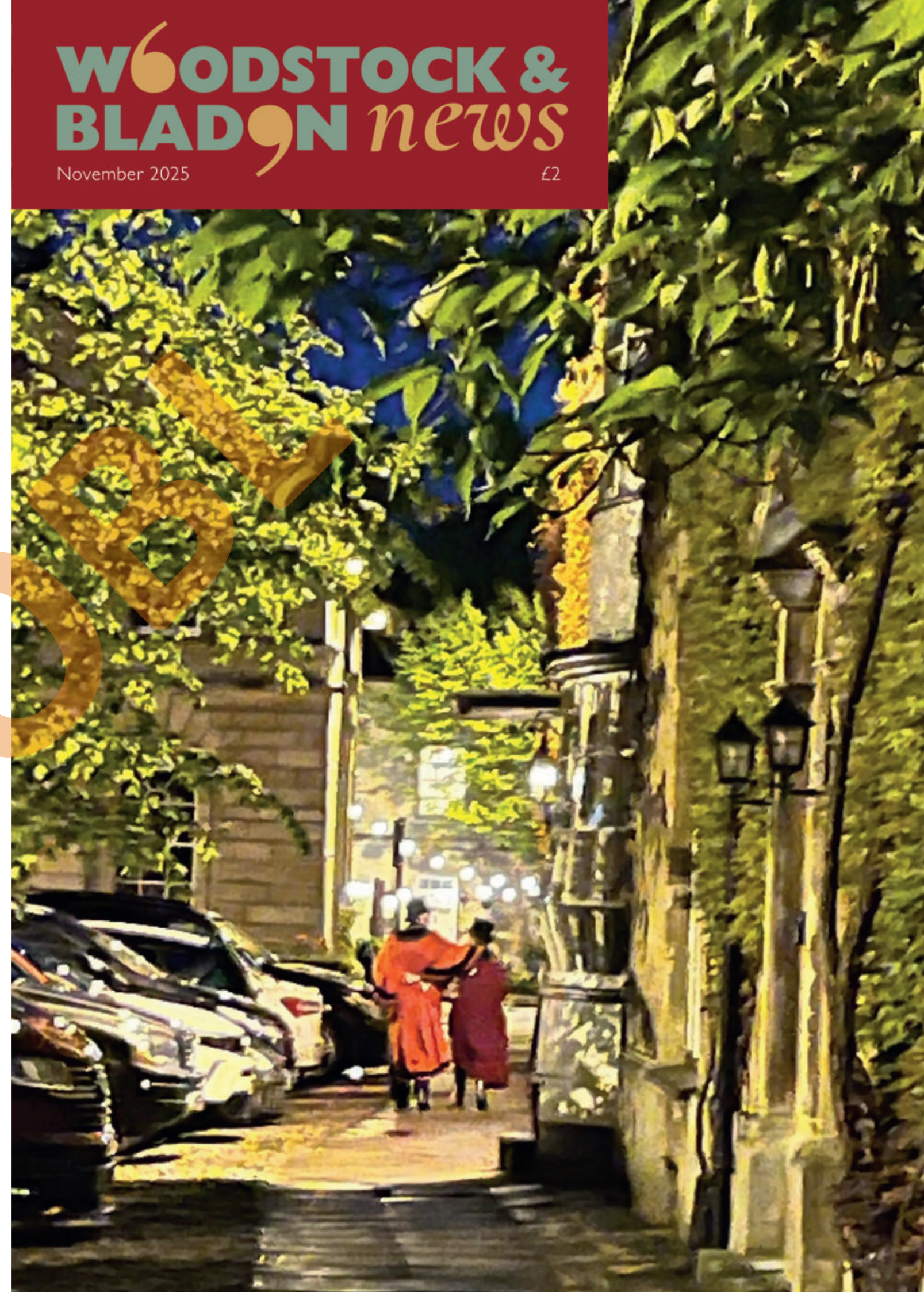


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November 2025

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Autumn is well and truly upon us, and I have tried to reflect the season in this month's front cover. It is a picture of the then-Mayor (myself) and Mock Mayor (Rachel Faulkner) taken 2 years ago after the opening of an 'Artists in Woodstock' event in the early evening. We're not quite sure how the photograph looks so much like a painting, but it does! The feeling I come away with is that despite all our differences (a lot of the history of the Mock Mayor has recently been published), we can, and should, embrace each other for the sake of friendship and our community. Or am I reading too much into a single moment in time?

This month is back to the usual 40 pages, and we return to the theme of Woodstock around the World with an article about Woodstock in Queensland. This was written by a friend of mine, and an ex-resident of our own Woodstock, when she just happened to pass through our namesake in Australia. There are still a dozen or so other Woodstocks to report on. Should any reader happen to visit one of them in the USA or Canada, please do report on it. And please do take your magazines on holiday or business travel to send pictures in for 'WOBL Around the World'.

I had been planning to restart the theme '*Keep It Local*', which began with a flourish last year and then ran out of steam. Recently, I gained inspiration from one of the stalls at our wonderful local Saturday market and then ran out of time for this issue. Are there any budding writers out there who want to take this on?

I am grateful to Matt Donnelly who has joined us in writing articles - this month about Woodstock Football Club. We also have a new Crossword writer, and I will be alternating this cryptic version with our usual monthly crossword, starting in this issue. And I hope you are enjoying the quiz.

I am extremely grateful to all those who contribute; and I welcome new ideas, articles, and letters.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor

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Page Item

- 4 Woodstock around the World
- 6 Letters to the Editor
- 10 Council Matters
- 17 Can ChatGPT Write Your Will
- 24 Botley West
- 26 Schools
- 32 Woodstock Town FC
- 33 Park Street
- 36 Quiz and Crossword Answers
- 37 Regular Events and What's On
- 38 Quiz and Crossword

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

The magazine costs £2 per issue, or £20 per year, and the price will remain the same for 2025/2026.

It can be purchased at Blenheim Palace, Mary and Martin's Newsagent, Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock Bookshop, Woodstock Grocers, and Wootton Stores, and from this month from Alex's new cafe in Park View. It can also be delivered - please contact Nick (editor@wobl.news) for Woodstock, or Lucy for Bladon.

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

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

Please write for our magazine

Send your contributions to: editor@wobl.news

The next issue will be an November one, and copy deadline is **Sunday 16 November 2025**.

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

PLEASE NOTE: The answers to last month's quiz and crossword are on Page 36

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

This month's front cover is a photograph taken by Nickie Rogan

Woodstock around the World

Woodstock, Queensland, Australia



Woodstock, Queensland (ringed in red in top right corner of Australia)

Gosh, how life can change... In 2014, you would've found me living a very comfortable and happy life in Woodstock, Oxfordshire. Now I am travelling around Australia - for an extended period of time - in a thumping great Winnebago motorhome.

Starting in Melbourne, Victoria, one of the most southerly cities on the continent (with exception of those in Tasmania), I am now heading towards Northern Queensland - which is the second largest State behind Western Australia. Having travelled up the eastern seaboard from the Brisbane region, I spent several days in Townsville, the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. Temptation to aim for Darwin at the top of the Northern Territory was very strong but it is a bit late in the season. "The Wet" will be upon the northern reaches of the land in a few short weeks and that is not an advisable time to travel here. For about three months, monsoonal weather pervades. Humidity is extremely high and every day sees massive rainfalls and thunderstorms with dramatic lightening displays. Hard to believe in England but houses here do not have guttering because the torrential rain pours down the rooftops and straight out about three feet to fall crashing to the ground. This is the reason why people rarely have loved and nurtured flowerbeds and gardens close to their houses.

I digress... Leaving the coast at Townsville and heading inland on the route that would take me towards Alice Springs in 'the Centre', I travel towards the city of Charters Towers. This was once the second largest city in Queensland. Founded in 1871 when the first nugget of gold was discovered there, the gold rush attracted people from countries far and wide, including England.

About 200 kilometres inland, the road was long, in places straight, and undulating with periodic rough patches where bad flooding about a year ago had undermined the tarmac. Road-trains are ever present, and mostly 'triples' with some 'quads'. These can be 50 metres long, and quite disconcerting when they overtake one. Use of the UHF (CB) radio is invaluable when negotiating a safe place for them to pass.



Along this road, a sign suddenly caught my attention. 'Woodstock' it announced. Woodstock - out here, in the middle of nowhere?! This was followed shortly by a tall pillar sign with the name proudly emblazoned vertically. Hurriedly showing down, I took a right-hand turn in the indicated direction and followed a single lane sealed road for about two kilometres, wondering what on earth a Woodstock here would comprise. Yes, a clearing of some sort in the trees... Another sign 'Woodstock State School' indicated a town large enough to have the number of children required to populate such an institution.

Continuing along this small road for a further kilometre or so took me to some housing. Somewhat less than salubrious as can be seen by the photo, it did not qualify as even a shadow of its namesake in England. A left-hand turn led to the school, the gateway of which was quite impressive, well signed and reasonably freshly painted. I wondered where the community was that gave rise to the pupils but further travels around the roads and adjoining streets gave



rise to only a few houses in the same vein as those seen initially. A long way from any other town or community according to the map, perhaps this school accommodated children from grades 1 through to 12 - the entire age group from primary right through to completion of secondary school. This is not unusual in Australia where numbers are low and composite classes abound.



A sign at the entrance of a dilapidated hall of some kind proudly announced the activities of the local 'CWA'. This is a nationwide network of the Country Women's Association. As the name suggests, activities range from fund-raising, morning teas with scones, jam and cream, to orchid shows and garlic festivals - something akin to the Women's Institute of Great Britain.

In exploring the surrounding streets - if one could call them streets - it was very hard to imagine from where the school children and women would hail. Finally a paddock (a field of any size in the Australian vernacular) with white electric fence tape around it came into view. One chestnut horse therein, no other livestock appeared present. Along the roadside of the paddock was a stand of trees. As can be seen, rough and dark coloured bark grows up to about five feet from the ground, above which the tree trunks are smooth and light in colour. This is the Moreton Bay

Ash. Nature is a wonderful thing. Fire, a very common event in Australia can catch these trees and the rough tough bark can burn, protecting the tree from irrevocable damage.



A little further along the roadside, a very rusty old truck advertised the yard and business of some absent owner employed presumably in some sort of mechanical capacity.

There was absolutely no sign of human habitation in this community. No women at the CWA hall, nor children in the school. The 2021 Census describes a population of 270 inhabitants with a median age of 45, 55.4% male and 44.6% female.



Unlike its beautiful and thriving namesake in Oxfordshire, this ghost-town's similarity could only have been with the souls and spirits of those past who walk the streets and houses of the beautiful five hundred or so year old sandstone homes.

This Woodstock was founded in 1863 by Mark Watt Reid, the Station Manager for John Melton Black. Named after the Woodstock Pastoral Run, and formerly the homestead, there is no record of the origin behind this. It would be more than fair to speculate that John Melton Black had his origins in the beautiful Woodstock that readers love and cherish so much.

Clare Poole, former resident of Woodstock, Oxfordshire.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Woodstock Town Council

The letter from former Town Councillor Nick Melliss in the last magazine has prompted me to write to you.

On 15th September 2004 I resigned from Woodstock Town Council and I give you a quote from my letter.

"For the last twelve years I have always been referred to as a Councillor and Mayor for the people of Woodstock. On Monday evening the people of Woodstock voted overwhelmingly for four motions put to them at the Town Meeting. Last night the Council ignored all the motions thereby treating the electorate with contempt. Therefore I feel I can no longer carry on as a member of a Council that is failing to carry out the wishes of the people."

I believe after twenty one years nothing has changed on the Town Council, and I can see why so many new councillors have resigned.

Gwen Mason, Former Councillor and Mayor

Dear Editor,

Climate Change

I refer to Jonathan Ford's letter in the October edition of WOBL, which was in turn a response to mine in the August/September edition.

I note that Jonathan feels 'called by God to get involved in responding to climate change'. It is therefore possible that I might face the same difficulties as did Charles Darwin in deploying rational and scientific arguments, particularly as climate alarmism often assumes some unwelcome aspects of religiosity. For many, it is a moral issue, described in appropriate terms: 'sacrifices' must be made; a 'climate denier' is 'evil' and a 'heretic' and should 'recant'. The language used is eerily reminiscent of witch hunting in the sixteenth and seventeenth century when crop failures caused by climate cooling following the Medieval Warm period were blamed on malign human intent.

Jonathan assumes that his God wants us to fight climate change when the world's climate has been changing since He first made it. After the Medieval Warm, temperatures fell far enough in the 17th and 18th centuries for frost fairs to be held on the frozen Thames in London.

We must, of course, look to science not religion to try and understand climate change. But by its very nature, science - particularly climate science - is not settled. I can point to many eminent scientists, including Nobel prize winners and those from

disciplines as varied and relevant as meteorology, physics, atmospheric physics, geology, palaeontology and oceanography, who do not think that warming attributable to anthropogenic CO2 is anywhere near apocalyptic.

Some serious scientists think that the demonising of CO2 is delusional. The world has undoubtedly and significantly greened recently due to rising levels of CO2. Some think that in fact we are heading for a cooling cycle. [This recalls those scientists in the 1980s who warned of imminent catastrophe due to the dawn of a new ice age!] These 'dissident' scientists may be breaking with consensus but the greatest scientists are great because they broke with consensus. "There is no such thing as consensus science. If it's consensus, it isn't science. If it's science, it isn't consensus." [Michael Crichton, CALTEC lecture, Jan 2003.]

Climate change is a very big subject; it's almost absurd to even consider arguing parts of it in the Letters pages. What I intended in the letter that provoked Jonathan's response was to try to cool the alarmism which is currently bringing damaging consequences. Look beyond the environmental harm that would stem from the Botley West Solar Farm at the broad insanity of the UK's net zero targets which are driving that development. They came out of institutional and governmental panic and virtue signalling rather than rational debate and careful planning.

Giles Lewis



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Portrait of the Month - Rick Brownshill



Part of Woodstock's fabric - framing the moments, memories, and masterpieces of local life - Rick is the creative force behind Renaissance Picture Framing. "I've been in Woodstock about fifteen years, working with local people, local artists, artists in a wider spectrum, businesses, and I just love framing," he says. "I've been framing probably twenty-five years now. I'm passionate about it; each piece is different to the next - that's how it is."

Step into Rick's workshop and you'll find a treasure trove of mouldings, artworks and the comforting scent of freshly cut wood. It's less a studio and more an Aladdin's cave for art lovers - every frame a story, every piece awaiting its perfect partner.

Rick's craft is as much about conversation as it is about carpentry. With a twinkle in his eye and a dry wit to match, he recalls framing everything from portraits of mayors to photographs of Her Late Majesty and Winston Churchill. "Every piece is different," he adds. "That's what keeps it exciting...I just lose myself in it, whether Taylor Swift or Eric Clapton's on the radio."

Entirely self-taught, Rick has honed his artistry, learning from fellow framers and artists along the way. His work graces walls from local cottages to collectors abroad. In Woodstock, everyone seems to know Rick - and with his quiet passion and easy humour, it's easy to see why.

Portrait of Rick Brownshill taken by fine art portrait photographer, Pippa Hetherington.

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Council Matters

Woodstock and Bladon News has reported on Council meetings since at least 2022, and all reports are available to view on our website - wobl.news/council-matters. The magazine endeavours to remain professional and accurate. This month there are three Council meetings to report on, and our regular (every 4 months) summary from Cllr Andy Graham from Oxfordshire County Council.

Woodstock Town Council

Extraordinary Town Council meeting held at 7pm on Wednesday 24 September

Attending were eight Councillors and six members of the public.

Starting the Meeting, the Mayor, Councillor Grant, read out a letter of resignation received from **Councillor Szabados**.

One member of the public wished to speak, Mr. Ray Morris. At the behest of the Council he had recently attended a meeting in Kidlington regarding **Campsfield House Immigration Detention Centre**. It is scheduled to re-open in November/December 2025. It will be run by the same company as had been running it when it was closed. It will initially house upwards of 200 failed asylum-seekers, and others.

The only item on the Agenda was consideration of the Council’s response to the Appeal being brought by McCarthy and Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd. against the refusal by West Oxfordshire District Council of their Planning Application to build retirement living accommodation on the **Old Police Station site in Hensington Road**, Woodstock.

Opening the discussion Councillor Cooper pointed out that the decision by WODC was that of the appropriate officers, and not of the full Council committee. He ran through some of the objections to the proposed development, but also pointed out that he had re-read the West Oxfordshire **Local Plan** and had discovered that the Plan had actually envisaged a surgery on this site. Woodstock Town Council should ask why this was not mentioned in the officers' decision.

Councillor Poskitt then went through many of the objections to the proposed development, highlighting problems of access and car-parking, as well as the need in the town for affordable housing.

The question was then discussed as to what sort of representation the Council wished to have at the hearing. It was decided to employ **professional legal representation**. The cost was not yet known, but it was agreed to put this item on the Agenda of the

following week's Council Meeting, by which time it was to be hoped the cost could be known and agreed.

Confidential Matters then followed, from which the press and public were excluded.

Tony McHugh

Extraordinary Town Council meeting held at 7pm on Wednesday 1 October

Declarations of interests were debated; and no members of the public wished to speak.

Two items of planning were discussed - the first was the planning appeal by the **Feathers Hotel** against the refusal by WODC for their flags on the front of the building - the Council agreed to write supporting WODC's original refusal.

The second item concerned the forthcoming appeal by McCarthy Stone against the recent refusal of planning permission at the **Police Station site** - at last week's meeting, it was agreed to try to find a professional to represent the Council, and the Mayor reported that they had only had one reply from a local solicitor. She outlined their proposal, and it was agreed to ask Mallams to represent the Council both in writing and in person at the appeal, for a cost of £6,500 plus expenses. It was proposed that a cap of £10,000 was imposed, and the motion was carried. A paper showing the Council's arguments against the proposal was circulated and it was agreed to delegate to the two Councillors who had written it, to make some amendments and then send it to the barrister.

The Clerk reported that WODC requested that **town centres need to be cleaned up**, especially with regard to unsightly bins. There was discussion about where the problems were located, and the Clerk would send pictures back to WODC. There was also talk about **cigarette bins**, which WODC were offering, but the **Town Council** decided against them.

One Councillor left the **meeting** at 7.20, leaving four Councillors attending. The **Council** then moved on to **polling cards** for the upcoming **election**, which the Mayor reported cost £3,000 last election. It went to a vote and 1 Councillor voted for them, with 2 against, and 1 abstention. The meeting then moved to a discussion of the location of the **polling station**, which was either the Town Hall, or the Blenheim Estate Office. There was a split vote, and it was decided to ask Blenheim if they were happy to host it, in which case it would stay there.

It was agreed to allow the Clerk to do a CILCA Qualification for a cost of £820.

The meeting closed at 7.31.

Nick Manby-Brown

Town Council meeting held at 7pm on Tuesday 14 October

8 councillors and 10 members of the public attended the meeting. The OWL recording device was not in use. The Town Clerk was unable to attend, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor shared the duties.

Public Participation

There were 3 members of the public wishing to speak. Firstly, Woodstock resident Claire Pink spoke on behalf of her son, Ellis. Claire read out a letter Ellis had written to Calum Miller MP requesting help and advice on how to get a **skate park for Woodstock**. He stressed the lack of activities for 12-16 year olds and listed the benefits of such a facility in Woodstock. The Mayor took a copy of the letter and said it was timely as the **Council** has a meeting planned with West Oxfordshire District Council that includes leisure and sports **facilities**. I then spoke about **community benefit for Botley West** solar farm having attended the recent **hearings** in Oxford. I had been told the **forum** of local **parish** councils had suggested a figure of £500/MW per annum to Oxfordshire County Council. I believe this is still far too low and asked if there was a vote on this and did the **Council** agree on this figure? The Mayor had not heard from the **Council’s** representative at the meeting but said **she** would ask. Finally, Annie Cripps spoke regarding a **letter** submitted to the Council on 29 August containing 40 names asking for information about the expenses due to be paid to the Council from the **civil claim** brought against the Council by Councillor Parnes. This had been requested several times during the past year and she had not received a reply from the Council, that it was in the public interest and requested a reply from the Council urgently. The Mayor noted that the Council did not reply to this letter as only names were submitted, not signatures and contact details which would then elicit a response. There was no further comment.

Clerk, Mayor and Councillors’ Reports

The Mayor gave the Clerk’s report which stated an election request for the 2 vacant Councillor seats had been triggered. If there are more than 2 candidates the election will take place on 13 November. The Mayor’s report included a number of dates for town events which included a thanksgiving service at St Mary Magdalene for the new roof on 3 November, the Remembrance Parade on 9 November and the Mayor’s Carols on 13 December.

The report from the District Councillors was not received in time to be included and County Councillor Andy Graham was unable to attend.

Finance

The current balance is £434,497.

Flag request from Woodstock Live

A request from the organisers of the weekend music festival to fly a Woodstock Live flag from the Town Hall during the weekend had been received. Councillor Parnes outlined the restrictions for this and the Mayor stated that following the rules would mean that planning permission from West Oxfordshire District Council would be required.

New Doctors’ Surgery

Councillor Williams had met with Calum Miller MP and heard that 3 sites had been identified for the new surgery, none of which were the former Thames Valley Police station on Hensington Road. She was told the footprint of the building will be under 1000 m2 and Councillor Connolly requested the plans for the proposed building.

Environment

No date has been set for the upcoming meeting with West Oxfordshire District Council regarding leisure and sport amenity. Councillor Connolly reported that the S106 monies from the Banbury Road development had not yet been assigned. He then gave a list of potential funding for local projects from S106 funding from Park View and Hill Rise developments, this list is available on the Town Council website. These projects included work on the outdoor swimming pool, a 3G football pitch and cricket pitch.

Other Business

Councillor Parnes proposed a motion, in light of the absence of documentation stating that a surgery could not be built on the Hensington Road site, for the Council to write to Thames Valley Police expressing its dissatisfaction and asking for an explanation as to why the site could not be used for the purpose it was sold. Councillor Cooper also stated this site was identified for a surgery in the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan. The motion was carried.

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

Graham Brown

LATEST NEWS

Congratulations to our new Town Councillor, Cynthia Muthoni, who was announced as a new Councillor on 20 October for the unncontested election for 13 November 2025.

As there is still a vacant seat, WODC will call for candidates to stand for a further election, and details will be published on the Town Council's website.

Assuming that more than one person puts their name forward, there will be another election at a future date.

Park n Ride

Oxfordshire County Council has agreed that the park n ride facility at the Pear Tree roundabout, will enable free travel on buses to and from the City from 29 October for the cost of a parking ticket. For example 2 adults and up to 3 children parking a car for up to 16 hrs is £2.50 with free return travel on the bus. This trial is for 3 months to 28 January 2026, keeping our roads less congested and our air cleaner. Just turn up at the park n ride, park your car, pay for your parking at the machine, keep your tickets and show it to the driver for both trips!

Woodstock Surgery

I continue to work with the doctors and attend action focussed meetings with the ICB, Callum Miller MP, Blenheim Palace and the District Council to progress to reality the much needed doctors surgery/health centre which is being planned and has been reported elsewhere.

Parking and Flood related issues - Brook Hill

I attended a site visit recently at Brook Hill in the vicinity of Glyme Close to investigate ongoing flooding issues and have corresponded with the Mayor of WTC, and officers both at WODC and OCC. It has been agreed that the ditch area is the responsonsibility of WODC and will be cleared out imminently and drains cleared. This will be kept under review.

Other issues

Parking issues related mainly to Blenheim Xmas events in the Cadogan Park area, following a survey in that area, is work in progress and will be reported next month alongside the design of new traffic modelling at Judds Garage.

Woodstock Surgery: Update

Editors Note: The following report was written by the Doctors Surgery Steering Group led by Calum Miller, MP. It was sent by EMail to patients and local media at the beginning of October.

Summary

- Real progress has been made towards delivering a new surgery for Woodstock.
- The GPs have developed a specification for a new surgery building, which the NHS has approved in principle.
- An in-principle commitment has been secured from the NHS to provide finance for the running and operation of a new surgery.

- Three potential sites have been identified on Blenheim owned land for a new surgery, with the Hensington Road site ruled out because it does not have the expansion potential to cope with the anticipated growth in patient numbers.
- Work is underway to draw up outline plans for the surgery.
- Viable funding models to deliver the new surgery are being reviewed and finalised.
- If progress is maintained, we could expect planning permission by late summer 2026 and a new surgery to be opened by the end of 2028.

Why is this an issue?

In June 2024, the GP partners at Woodstock Surgery wrote to all patients warning that the surgery might have to stop accepting new patients due to its longstanding capacity constraints. According to NHS guidelines, the current surgery is only 38% of the size it should be for the number of patients on the current roll. The GP partners would like to hire more doctors and healthcare professionals to support patients but are unable to as there is no space. There have been efforts to develop a new surgery for a decade or so, yet none has been delivered due largely to funding constraints.

Who has been working on it?

In November 2024, a public meeting was convened by the Town Council to discuss the future of Woodstock Surgery. The panel was made up of those organisations that have the decision making capacity and resources to deliver a new surgery: the GPs, the local NHS health board (the BOB Integrated Care Board, ICB), Blenheim Estates, Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. Calum Miller MP undertook to convene these parties in a steering group to deliver by summer 2025 a plan for a new surgery. The steering group has met regularly since November and minutes of those meetings have been shared on each occasion with the Town Council and interested residents.

What is required?

The GPs have worked with the ICB to agree the requirements for a new surgery. This will provide new accommodation of a more appropriate size for the existing doctors and staff with additional space for a further doctor’s consulting room and other treatment rooms for patients so that a wider range of primary healthcare services can be offered.

Where can it be located?

Many residents at the meeting in November raised the Hensington Road site. The steering group reviewed the history of this proposal at its first meeting. In 2017, Blenheim Estates developed a proposal for a surgery on the old Thames Valley Police site, but the proposal was not prioritised by NHS England and no

funding was allocated to the scheme. In 2022, the site was revisited but the GPs and Blenheim found that it did not comply with the new NHS standards for surgeries setout nationally. In particular, it did not have the expansion potential to cope with anticipated growth in patient numbers. For this reason, the Hensington Road site remains unviable.

The steering group has identified three options for a new surgery, all on Blenheim land.

1. The Owen Mumford site. Blenheim purchased this building recently and intends to repurpose it over time. Preliminary designs are being drawn up for a surgery in one of the buildings on this site so a full feasibility assessment can be carried out.
2. Banbury Road. Blenheim have planning permission from WODC for a development on this site. They have identified a location on the site where a surgery could be built.
3. Land south-east of Park View development. Blenheim have applied to CDC for permission to develop this site. If planning permission is granted, an area within the site has been identified where a surgery could be built.

The principal criteria that the steering group used to consider sites were:

1. Viability: is there suitable land or a suitable building that could be developed to provide a surgery that meets the national requirements?
2. Affordability: can this be built and operated with the funding available?
3. Adaptability: does the site allow for expansion to reflect future demographic change and population growth?
4. Immediacy: how quickly could a surgery be delivered on this site?

How will it be funded?

There are two elements to the project: the capital investment to secure land and build (or adapt) and fit-out a surgery; and the ongoing revenue to pay for the building. The ICB does not provide capital. **It is important to note that the project cannot proceed without an organisation willing to invest capital to build the surgery and without the ICB’s agreement to fund the rent and operational costs of the surgery.** The proposal for a new surgery building is based on the assumption that agreement can be reached for Blenheim Estates to provide land and build (or adapt) a surgery, that the ICB will give approval to fund the rent and operational costs of the surgery for a long period (e.g. 25 years) and that an appropriate planning consent is secured.

The ICB has made a decision in principle to provide funding for the running and operation of a new

surgery building subject to value for money and affordability assessments. To make the project affordable, the ICB has to be willing to meet the rent required to make a commercial return on the capital investment. The ICB will be guided in this by the District Valuer (DV - an agent of the Valuation Office, a government agency) who will determine their view on a valuefor-money rent. However, in other surgery projects, this value has proven to be an obstacle as the DV has historically been very conservative in its assessments, resulting in rents being proposed below market rents (and so below the required return of investment), making it a challenge for the capital investment to be justified.

The steering group has identified two alternatives that could help to bridge a gap between the rent approved by the DV and that required by the capital investor to show an economic return. First, it might be possible to inject some 'section 106' money held by the district council from previous developments in the area that is ear-marked for health. This would reduce the amount of capital that Blenheim has to invest, and therefore the amount they needed to recover through rent. Second, Blenheim might ask WODC to reduce the number of affordable homes required on its other developments so that it can make a higher return from market-value homes;Blenheim would then off-set the lower rent for the surgery against this higher return from house sales.

What happens next?

The project will follow these steps:

- Blenheim Estates, the ICB and the GPs are assessing whether the sites meet the viability test.
- If they do, preliminary designs will be drawn up (in order of immediacy) and costings will be developed.
- The proposal (design and funding) will then be submitted to the DV for their consideration.
- Once a financial arrangement is agreed, the proposal will go to the ICB for approval.
- A detailed planning application will be prepared and submitted.

The goal is to obtain planning permission by late summer 2026.

If this is achieved, it should be possible to proceed to complete a new surgery by the end of 2028.

The Steering Group will continue to work to achieve this goal and to share information regularly with the Town Council and other interested groups. The GPs will continue to consult their Patient Participation Group on the developing plans. If you have feedback or views on the proposal, you can share these with Calum Miller MP: calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk

Woodstock Stroke Club

Your questions answered

(Q) When and where do you meet?

(A) We meet every other Tuesday between at 10:15 am and 1 pm at Woodstock Community Centre, New Road, Woodstock, OX20 1PB.

(Q) What facilities does the Centre have?

(A) There is a large, recently refurbished hall with a large kitchen all at ground floor level. There is good wheel-chair access as well as audio equipment and staging.

(Q) Who is permitted to join your Club?

(A) Any stroke survivor and their partner and/or helper or friend

(Q) What is the joining fee?

(A) There is no joining fee.

(Q) What activities do you support?

(A) We invite a variety of interesting speakers on varied subjects, musical groups or individual instrumentalists. We occasionally have a friendly quiz competition. A two-course lunch is provided by volunteer helpers at minimal cost.

(Q) How many members are there at present?

(A) We regularly achieve an attendance of 15 to 18 which includes spouses carers and catering staff. We are currently seeking another volunteer helper to assist with the catering duties.

If you would like to join our Club, help with the provision of the lunch or have more information, please contact: Mike Shipway (Sec/Treasurer) on 07432 704042 or email: mikeshipway71@gmail.com

Bladon and Woodstock Flower Club

Hello everyone - sad to see that the weather is changing and there is quite a lot still do to get the garden all neat and tidy for the rest of the autumn and winter. They are still full of wonderful reds and oranges, and I find little bits to cut and make into a small arrangement. It is the time that we flower arrangers collect seed heads and leaves to preserve and dry and use in arrangements, which brings me on to our October meeting when we had a member in the club who is excellent at using these items in arrangements. Ninon showed how she had made wonderful swags and pictures using nuts, acorn cups, leaves and dried roses which she had sprayed gold or silver. She ended her evening with a beautiful arrangement in gold adding three large baubles all in readiness for Christmas.

Our meeting on 10 November will be Angela Edmonds with her title 'Gardens from Afar'. This is

not the original demonstrator as she is now unable to come, but we will welcome Angela who is a newly qualified demonstrator in this area.

On 8 December we have a social evening plus we will make a Christmas arrangement and of course we will enjoy mulled wine and mince pies. We do not have a meeting in January but start back on 9 February with Alison Gillott and her title 'A Pocket Full of Posies'.

We meet on the second Monday of each month in the Bowls and Tennis Clubhouse, Cadogan Park, Woodstock. The meeting starts at 7pm with the doors opening at 6.30pm. Visitors are always welcome with a charge of £10 which includes a raffle ticket. If you would like to know anything further about us, please contact Ann on 07701 000977.

Margaret Lang



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Can ChatGPT Write Your Will?

The answer, technically speaking, is yes. But then again, technically speaking, my toaster can be used to warm socks. That doesn't mean it's a good idea.

You see, ChatGPT is a marvel of modern engineering - it can produce text that looks convincing, sounds authoritative, and might even pass muster at a glance. But when it comes to something as legally delicate as your Will, appearances are not enough. In fact, they're dangerously misleading.

The Legal Landscape

Under English law, a valid Will must meet certain formalities. These are not optional. They are not "guidelines" or 'best practices'. They are rules. And if you break them, your Will could be as useful as a chocolate teapot.

For starters, the Will must be signed and witnessed correctly. That means two independent witnesses, present at the same time, watching you sign the document. AI cannot supervise your signing, nor can it verify whether or not your cousin Nigel shouldn't act as your witness.

Then there's clarity of intent. Your Will must make it abundantly clear what you want to happen to your estate. If it's ambiguous - say, you leave 'my house' to someone, but you own three - then you're inviting a family feud worthy of a soap opera. AI, for all its cleverness, doesn't know your life. It doesn't know your assets, your relationships, or the law's fondness for precision. It guesses. And guessing is not a good legal strategy.

The Risks

Let's look at the risks of using ChatGPT to write your Will. They are many, and they are serious.

- Omissions and ambiguity: AI might forget to include your pension or your holiday home in Devon. It might muddle your intentions or misinterpret your instructions. The result? Confusion, disputes, and possibly costly litigation.
- Misleading confidence: ChatGPT has a habit of sounding very sure of itself. It will tell you things with the confidence of a pub know-it-all, even when it's completely wrong. And unless you're a solicitor, you will not spot the errors.
- Invalid signing: As mentioned, AI cannot witness your signature or make sure your Will is executed properly. This alone can render the Will invalid.
- Jurisdictional errors: ChatGPT is trained on global data. It might default to American law, or Canadian law, or Martian law for all we know. Unless you're paying close attention, you could end up with a Will that's legally meaningless in the UK.

- No safety net: If your AI-generated will goes wrong, there's no one to blame. No professional indemnity insurance. No regulatory body. Just you, your grieving relatives, and a costly legal mess.

When AI Might Be Useful (But Only Just)

Now, I'm not saying AI is entirely useless. That would be unfair. It can be helpful in certain limited circumstances.

- If you're trying to understand basic legal terminology, AI can explain things in plain English. It's like having a friendly paralegal who never sleeps.
- If you want to explore your options before speaking to a solicitor, AI can help you think things through. It's a bit like sketching out a route before you set off on a long drive.

But - and this is a big but - AI should never be your sole source of legal advice.

When You Absolutely Must See a Solicitor

There are times when DIY simply won't cut it. If any of the following apply to you, put down the chatbot and pick up the phone:

- You own property or assets in more than one country.
- You have children, dependants, or vulnerable beneficiaries.
- You're divorced, separated, or part of a blended family.
- You want to exclude someone from your Will.
- You're trying to minimise inheritance tax.
- You're worried about your Will being challenged.

Solicitors are trained to spot problems before they arise. They draft watertight clauses. They ensure proper execution. And crucially, they're regulated and insured. If something goes wrong, you have recourse.

Final Thoughts: Don't Leave It to Chance

ChatGPT is a clever bit of kit. It can explain things, simulate conversations, and even write a passable sonnet. But it cannot replace a solicitor. Not for something as important as a Will.

For most people, especially those with anything more complex than a goldfish and a savings account, seeing a solicitor is the safest, most cost-effective way to ensure your wishes are honoured.

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

Woodstock Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival

Trees wanted: From 13 December 2025

Following the success of last year's Christmas Tree Festival and in response to public demand, Woodstock Methodist Church are holding their Christmas Tree Festival again! This is a great opportunity for different clubs and societies to raise their profile within the community, raise money for our two new church charities - Bridewell Organic Gardens and All We Can, and have some fun!

If you are part of a club, society or organisation, and you would like to take part and decorate a tree please contact Debbie on 01993 812325 or email stewards@woodstockmethodists.org.uk.

A few things to note:

- You provide the tree; it can be a traditional one or made of something different e.g., paper, cardboard, branches, etc. It needs to be under 3ft or lie flush to a wall (as our church is not too big).
- You can use your imagination on the decorations and theme as you like but we are an Eco Church and so please bear sustainability in mind.
- You provide a small poster advertising your group to go alongside your tree including your group's name; what it does, when and where it meets, etc.

- Tree setting-up will be Friday 12 December between 4 to 6.30pm (or can be dropped off before for us to set up for you), ready for the Festival open afternoon on 13 December and Sunday service on 14 December.
- The Trees will be displayed over the Christmas period so they can be viewed at weekends, and on other days when the church is open
- It is free to take part.

The church has limited space so please book early. Below are a some of the trees from last year for inspiration. We hope to see an abundance of trees of all types, shapes and sizes again this year - what will you do?



Curate's Log

Hello, it has been lovely meeting different people over the past two months who have recognised me from my picture in the August/September issue of WOBL. Please do say hello if you see me around.



All Souls' Service

Most of us are familiar with the term Halloween, but did you know that this festival is part of the Allhallowtide season? This three-day period includes All Hallows' Eve (Halloween) on 31st October, All Saints' Day on 1 November, and All Souls' Day on 2 November. All Souls' Day, also known as The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, offers us a special opportunity to remember and give thanks for those we love but see no longer.

While we don't need a particular day to remember our loved ones, however, All Souls' Day provides an opportunity for us to come together as a community for a service of remembrance and prayer. St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock, will be holding an All Souls' Service at 7pm on Sunday 2 November.

In the two weeks leading up to the service, a list will be available at the back of St Mary Magdalene Church in Woodstock and St Martin's Church in Bladon for you to add the names of those you would like to be remembered. These names will be read aloud during the service. You are warmly invited to add names to the list or to email them to me at curate@woodstockandbladon.com.

Bereavement and Grief

Continuing on the topic is Bereavement and Living with Grief. For the past year, St Mary Magdalene Church has been running a Bereavement Café on the third Friday of each month from 3 to 5 pm. This café, also known as 'Living with Grief,' is a place for individuals who have lost loved ones, whether recently or in the past, and for those whose loved ones are living with conditions that have altered their relationships.

Members of the Pastoral Team make tasty sandwiches, and Blenheim Palace kindly provides delicious cakes. The Bereavement Café is a space where people can gather to share conversation and eat together. Some weeks, there is no talk about grief or bereavement, while other weeks, there may be. There is no pressure to talk about anything; it is a place of community and an opportunity to spend time with others.

Living with Grief Workshop

I recognise that sometimes it can be helpful to think

about grief in a more supported way. Therefore, I am organising a one and a half hour workshop on 'Living with Grief' on Tuesday, 2 December, from 6:00 to 7:30 pm at St Mary Magdalene's Church. Lizzie Pickering, a very experienced Grief Educator, will lead the workshop. This workshop is free, but spaces are limited. To book your place or to find out more information, please email curate@woodstockandbladon.com or phone 07971 529242.

Lizzie's workshop is open to anyone over 18 who is living with grief after a bereavement, regardless of when the loss occurred or the age of the person who died. The session explores various aspects of grief, including its emotional and physical effects, how we communicate our grief to others, and what factors help or hinder healing. Topics include cumulative and anticipatory grief, finding purpose after loss, the role of community and relationships, and ways to maintain continuing bonds with loved ones. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on judgment in grief, building resilience, and using creativity as part of the healing process.

Lizzie is a Grief Educator, Author and Film Producer. www.lizziepickering.com

With Every Blessing - Gemma

Wootton Talks

Our next speaker at 7.30pm on Friday 7 November is **Tom Heap**, one of the country's leading environmental writers and broadcasters - often featuring on BBC One's Countryfile, specialising in investigations and Radio 4's Costing the Earth, as well as the anchor on The Climate Show on Sky News.

Tom has also worked on the Today programme and presented editions of Panorama covering food, energy and the environment. He is also the anchor of Radio 4's new Rare Earth series and was the creator and presenter of BBC Radio's flagship climate-change podcast, 39 Ways to Save the Planet

In Wootton, Tom will be talking about his latest book, Land Smart - in which he discusses how we require land for so many of our expanding needs, such as food, renewable energy, carbon storage and housing. Traditionally, he says, we've stolen it from Nature, but this has led to a mounting toll of extinction and pollution that is now punishing us. So, as there's no land left to take, Tom asks - how do we get more from the same space?

Entry for this event in St Mary's Church (with an upgraded heating-system) is £10 in cash - and includes free food. Children over 16 welcome.

Andy Morgan



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Bladon Gardens Society

Guest Speaker Event
 The Church Rooms, Church Street, Bladon
 20th November 2025 7.30 pm

Harriet Rycroft
 Gardener and Plantswoman
 "A Warm Welcome"

Making your garden path more appealing with containers.



Parking is difficult in Church Street and we must leave space for the Speaker. The school has given permission to park in the playground for meetings.
 Access to this is from Grove Road.
 Bladon Gardens Society Membership details
 Annual Subscription: £15 Visitors to monthly meetings £1



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Woodstock Literature Society

Review of a talk by Professor Sos Eltis on Oscar Wilde, with students from the Oxford School of Drama

Held on Friday 17 October 2025.

"Art", declared Oscar Wilde, "is the supreme reality", and in her fascinating and lively talk, Professor Eltis showed us how Wilde was not just a master of wit, but someone who really questioned the assumptions of society. The talk was focused on two of Wilde's most well-known plays from the 1890s, *A Woman of No Importance* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, brilliantly supported by dramatized readings from 3rd year students at the Oxford School of Drama.



On one level, *A Woman of No Importance* is a morality tale about a wronged woman, but in the scene where "Mrs Arbuthnot" confronts the father of her son Gerald, we were encouraged to see Lord Illingworth as a rational voice who can offer Gerald a better life than his mother can. And while Hester Worsley may seem right to condemn Illingworth, she also condemns fallen women, and as an heiress herself is guilty of hypocrisy for condemning the English aristocracy. As Wilde famously said, "The truth is rarely pure and never simple". It is also very funny; the outrageously vague Lady Hunstanton, musing on a woman rejected by Lord Illingworth, mutters "I believe he said her family was too large. Or was it her feet?" Again, there's truth here: background and appearance do matter, even today.

Professor Eltis moved on to talk about *The Importance of being Earnest*, which she described as a play about young people creating identity and performing themselves, and they do so in startlingly cynical fashion; Cecily explains that she was engaged to Jack, or rather Earnest, long before they met, while Algernon dodges the interference of his formidable aunt with the aid of his mysterious friend "Bunbury".



We were treated finally to an excellent performance of the famous 'handbag' scene. Familiarity only makes this scene more deliciously witty, and it was interesting to hear that Wilde worked hard to create these effects, writing eight drafts of the play before he was satisfied with it. Lady Bracknell is a monstrous and unfeeling snob, of course, declaring "You can hardly expect our only daughter...to marry into a cloakroom and form an alliance with a parcel!", but her questioning of Jack Worthing reveals an interesting preference for new money over the wealth of the landed gentry - even Lady B proves something of a radical here.

This was a stimulating and very enjoyable evening, obviously warmly appreciated by a packed audience.

Anne Handsley

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The Oxfordshire Museum

Craft Guild Winter Exhibition 2025

We are delighted to welcome back the Oxfordshire craft Guild for their annual exhibition. The Craft Guild seeks to promote quality of making and design in a wide range of crafts. All of our members have had to go through a selection process, so visitors to our exhibitions can be assured of finding a range of quality handcrafted items to enjoy, and those looking to find unique Christmas gifts will find a wealth of beautiful objects to choose from.

The exhibition opens Saturday 15 November until Sunday 28 December.

The OM Open Art Competition 2025 Winner

This year we had a wide range of entries from artists across Oxfordshire. The judges have a tough time picking a winner, but eventually first prize went to ‘Shetland Ram’ by David Farrer. Congratulations to David and all the other artists who helped make this an incredible exhibition!

Wreath Making

We have the last few tickets available for our annual Christmas wreath making workshops. Oxfordshire florist and tutor, Sandra, will guide you in constructing the design using seasonal foliage, natural decorations, and materials. Make a sustainable wreath that your door will be proud of. Mince pies are included in the course price as are all floral materials and tuition. Book early as places are limited. Ages 18+. You will need to bring with you a pair of strong scissors or secateurs. Please visit our website for booking information and ticket prices.

Saturday 6 December (morning and afternoon sessions available)

For details on all our workshops please visit our website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/museumworkshops

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Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

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

Wednesday 5 November

World War 1 - paintings and poetry

Speaker: Alice Foster, Art historian and lecturer

Poignant images from WW1 artists such as Paul Nash and Stanley Spencer will be complemented by poetry from the trenches.

Wednesday 3 December

William Turner of Oxford and Shipton-on-Cherwell

Speaker: Colin Harrison, Senior Curator of European Art, Ashmolean Museum

Discover the Victorian artist and architect William Turner, who was instrumental in the reconstruction of Shipton-on-Cherwell parish church.

Membership of The Friends 2025-2026

Single £20; Double £30

Membership details and our full 2025-2026 programme are on our website. www.friendsoftom.org.uk.

Membership gives you free access to all our talks which take place in the Museum in Woodstock but are also available on ZOOM. Non-members are very welcome at these events for a fee of £5, payable on the evening.

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Our Annual Membership runs for 12 months from 1 April. Membership details and our full 2025-2026 programme are on our website www.friendsoftom.org.uk.

Membership gives you free access to all our talks which take place in the Museum in Woodstock and they are also available on Zoom.

Non-Members are very welcome at these events for a fee of £5, payable on the evening or via email: friendsoftheoxfordshiremuseum@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Woodstock Probus Club

On 11 September the club had a visit to the Pendon Museum, near Long Wittenham, followed by lunch at the Barley Mow. The museum has an amazing representation of life in the 1920’s and 30’s, depicted in various vast model tableaux. Although the actual scenes do not represent any particular place, all the figures, houses, trains etc are accurate reconstructions. There were multiple trains all running on very complicated rail layouts. The museum is largely staffed by well-informed volunteers who ensured we had a most enjoyable outing.

Our speaker at the lunch on 2 October was Pete Seaward, a well-known local photographer, who was Travel Photographer of the year in 2011, having worked for Lonely Planet for a number of years travelling to many parts of the world. He started with a history of photography, going back to Henry Fox-Talbot and the museum at Laycock Abbey. (I recommend you read about Fox-Talbot as his contributions to science are very wide ranging). We were reminded of the famous photos by Ansell Adams of Yosemite National Park and of the one by Robert Doisneau that sold recently for £130,000, of a young couple kissing in the street at the end of the war. He spoke of the joy and frustrations of being a photographer.



He showed us a variety of intriguing photos he himself had taken covering wild life and travel venues. He discussed the hardship of photographing at -26C in the Gobi desert, which needed heating at the back of the camera and the joys of photographing interesting places, showing a whole range of photos, many from his various commissions, some of wild life needing three days to get the perfect shot.

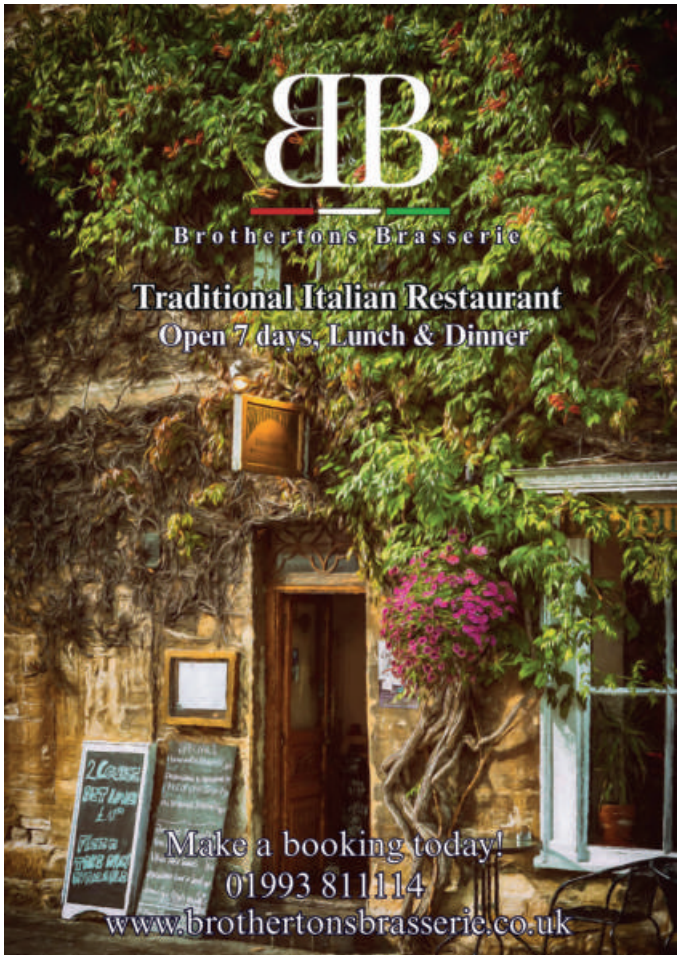
The last part of his talk was about his work in Antarctica and his trips to South Georgia where he attended the interment of Frank Wild. Frank’s contribution has only recently been properly recognised; he served as second in command to Ernest Shackleton on a number of occasions, most



notably on the 1914-17 Trans Antarctic Expedition when Shackleton’s ship the Endurance was crushed by ice and sank in the Weddell Sea. Frank was left on desolate Elephant Island for four months in command of most of the crew while Shackleton rowed with 5 others to South Georgia to seek rescue. Recently Frank’s ashes were interred to the right of Shackleton’s grave on South Georgia with the epitaph that ‘he was Shackleton’s right hand man’.

It was a fascinating talk with a wide range of photographs - two of which were penguins in South Georgia and a local lady in front of the Taj Mahal, but suggest you look at www.peteseaward.com for a more comprehensive appreciation. Photographs are courtesy of Pete Seaward.

David Anderson, Past President



Updates on 'Botley West'

Final chance to make your voice heard

The Evenlode river has flowed through Oxfordshire for many centuries. This beautiful river together with the many springs arising from Spring Hill near Begbroke provided the water which drew people to settle here. People lived and worked here, built beautiful houses and glorious churches, grew their food and raised their children. They walked the footpaths and enjoyed this countryside. They cared for the heritage, wildlife and landscape around them.

Today, over 22,000 people call this area home but it retains its rural feel, thanks to Oxford's Green Belt, planning rules and other regulations which safeguard it against over-development. The Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site Revised Management Plan 2017, overseen by a steering group including UNESCO, Dept of Culture, Media & Sport and West Oxfordshire District Council protected the setting of Blenheim Palace.

Until that is, in November 2022, when an infamous yellow booklet landed on our doormats and we were plunged unwillingly into the Botley West Solar Farm proposal which ignores all these safeguards, and has the potential to devastate this unique area with little regard to its impact on landscape, heritage, food security or people.

For the past 3 years many in the affected communities, whilst in favour of sensible renewable energy schemes, have actively opposed this ill thought out and poorly designed proposal - not blindly or loudly - but in a well informed, measured and responsible way at consultations, meetings and events. SBW's Community Impact Report explains the impacts of the proposal on local residents and businesses. The Forever Fields book records, in the work of over 100 local artists, the cherished countryside that could be lost.

Over 1000 residents registered as Interested Parties and have engaged seriously in the examination. We would like to express our thanks to the Examiners who have listened carefully to us and read all our submissions. We are delighted that so many key stakeholders have joined us in raising serious concerns about many aspects of the proposal. We are horrified by the Applicant's unwillingness to answer the Examiners in writing or at the hearings and by the number of still unanswered questions and incomplete surveys or agreements.

The greatest frustration is that, while the Applicant has finally - as required - carried out some archaeological digs and surveys of birds and bats,

they have consistently refused to carry out a survey of people!

I have personally met 100s of the most impacted residents in their homes and understand the dreadful consequences for them if the proposal went ahead. The Applicant has largely ignored these people, visited none and offered a buffer zone of just 25m and oppressive hedging to obliterate their outlook. **This is totally unacceptable.**

In contrast, the Examiners have made numerous visits to the site and to key properties to see the situation for themselves.

The Applicant's failure to carry out a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment despite repeated requests was discussed yesterday and we were not surprised to hear the Examiners expressing their disappointment on this matter. **The Applicant simply cannot be trusted.**

But we do trust that the Examiners will give very serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or even safe to recommend approval of this application for the many well argued reasons given during the Examination. I would just ask, on behalf of the many local people who I'm now proud to count as friends in our common cause, please don't forget those whose residential amenity would be so seriously compromised and the many who, like myself, would not live to see the restoration of this historically beautiful and productive land.

By Rosemary Lewis (adapted from an address made to the Examining Authority on 10 October)

HOW SHOULD YOU RESPOND?

See stopbotleywest.com for the latest Examination news and key issues.

Send your final comments to the Examiners by 10 November (Deadline 7) including any remaining concerns.

On the SBW Home page (www.stopbotleywest.com) there is a DIRECT LINK to the Inspectors' 'HAVE YOUR SAY' page for sending your final comments to the Examination.

PLEASE HELP WITH A DONATION

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



Sustainable Woodstock

Negotiations are Happening Now - Important to Write Soon!

Whether for, against, indifferent or passionate about a particular aspect of Botley West Solar Farm, your help is needed to campaign for our local communities to see and feel benefit for the next 40 years from hosting the largest solar farm in the UK.

Last month I wrote that I planned to attend the Botley West Hearings. At this final part of the Examination stage, it was crucial to hear the updated concerns of our community representatives, responses from the Inspectors, from PVDP (the developers) and their specialist consultants and this time there was input and response from the STOP Botley West barrister and his team.

No surprise to those who know Sustainable Woodstock, I planned to speak on the very low amount of community benefit currently being negotiated by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). On Thursday 9th the hearing agenda included discussions on specific topics including flood risk, ecology and biodiversity, heritage, landscape, traffic, noise, etc. Unfortunately, as a result of these lengthy discussions, the agenda overran and the item on socio-economics that included community benefit was cancelled. Consequently, we had to wait until the Open Floor Hearings on the following day when all registered speakers were given 5 mins on their subject of interest. It was however disappointing that there was no representation from PVDP at the table (despite some PVDP presence in the audience) and also no offer of discussion by the Inspectorate team (as in the first Examination hearings in May).

There was however an opportunity to speak with a few of the OCC representatives and the chair of the parish /town council steering group who was representing the affected parishes with respect to community benefit. We had recently received a phone call and email from OCC in response to our anxieties on the level of benefit ... and they confirmed at the meeting they hadn't yet reached an agreement. However, they have written since saying the councils will continue to negotiate the final package with the developer. We understand there are many challenges for all councils and acknowledge that negotiation is not straightforward especially when there is no mandatory process ... but there is much to argue for a higher community benefit for this project (for example size of project, proximity to houses, Green Belt use, good agricultural land use). Through our research, we are convinced that OCC should fight harder for the communities - communities could miss out on £millions.

Even if you want the proposal stopped or are indifferent, please help all communities by taking the time to write to the following urging them to continue negotiating benefits related to Botley West. This is not a Woodstock or Bladon specific request - please tell all your friends and/or family who live in the communities near Botley West to write to:

- 1) Calum Miller MP calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk
- 2) CEO of OCC Martin Reeves. ChiefExecutive@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

If you'd like to hear/read what I and others said at the recent hearings, search for Botley West on the Inspectorate website (transcripts have multiple typos).

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/project-search>

Hilary Brown, Sustainable Woodstock

Combe Community Cinema

National Theatre Live on Friday 28 November - Mrs Warren's Profession

New life is breathed into George Bernard Shaw's moral classic with a brand new staging of the drama centred on the contentious relationship between Kitty Warren and her daughter Vivie. Everything changes in their relationship when Vivie, a successful Cambridge graduate, learns exactly how her mother earned a fortune to pay for her education.

Mrs Warren's Profession stars real-life mother and daughter, four-time Olivier Award-winner Imelda Staunton (The Crown) and Bessie Carter (Bridgerton). Joining them to complete the cast are Kevin Doyle, Robert Glenister, Reuben Joseph and Sid Sagar. Classification 12.

"The script's intellectual restlessness is still enlivening too; the mother-daughter battles are excellent, twisting and switching our sympathies. Kitty, by turns, seems selfish and honest, Vivie puritanical and moral" (Guardian review)

"I had the immense pleasure of seeing Mrs Warren's Profession in the West End, featuring the formidable Imelda Staunton and her daughter, the equally compelling Bessie Carter. This production was nothing short of a theatrical triumph – exquisitely acted, emotionally layered, and profoundly resonant" (Audience review)

Doors and bar open at 7.15pm for performance at 8pm. Running time 117 minutes; no interval.

Tickets: On the door, if available: £12.50; Online: £13.01 (including booking fee 51p). For details go to combecommunitycinema@gmail.com

The Marlborough C of E School

The Marlborough School Charity Week Presentation Assembly

A presentation Assembly was held on Wednesday 24 September, to present cheques for monies raised on behalf of our three nominated charities from last academic year: New Yatt Riding for the Disabled (local), Young Minds (national) and Solar Aid (international). Mrs Hoyland, who led last year's Charity Week, was delighted to confirm the final amount raised from last year's events - a phenomenal £14,703.

Representatives from New Yatt Riding for the Disabled spoke at the assembly, thanking students for their outstanding work, and providing an insight as to how the money raised will directly support the work they do. A personal, heart-felt thank you message was also read out on behalf of Young Minds and Solar Aid. We are so very proud of our Community and Social Action Team, who also spoke during the assembly, for their incredible work throughout the year, particularly during Charity Week back in March. To all of our students who took part and contributed, you have all been amazing, a shining example of our school vision: Let your light shine.



Charity Week Presentation

Following the assembly, cheques were presented to each charity for the sum of £4,200. The remaining monies raised will be used to host our Senior Citizens Christmas Party and other charity events.

We are overwhelmed by the generosity and support of each student, and want to thank our parents and carers who have supported their children and the school throughout the year. Without every pupil's passion to be: respectful, ambitious and persevering, we would not have raised such a grand total.

The Marlborough School Open Events

25 September saw our annual Open Evening event, an opportunity for prospective pupils and their parents to visit our exceptional school as they begin to look forward to the next stage of their educational journey - secondary school. The evening attracted over 500 visitors, filling the MEC (Marlborough Enterprise

Centre), with our Principal, Mr Hanlon, opening the event with an introduction and welcome to the school. Visitors were then split into groups for a tour of the school site and our fantastic facilities, guided by staff members. This also provided an opportunity for visitors to talk with staff, current students and other families.



Open Evening Pictures

During the event, four of our students - Rosen and Sophie (Year 12), and Molly and Zach (Year 8) - took to the stage to deliver a heartfelt and engaging speech on their personal experience of being part of the 'Marlborough family'. Each student spoke with such confidence and really connected with the audience, they truly are outstanding ambassadors for our school. It was a great evening and we were thrilled to see so many prospective pupils and parents attend. We hope the evening provided an insight into how proud staff and pupils are to be part of our school.

In addition to our Open Evening, we held two Open Mornings in October, a further opportunity for prospective parents and pupils to experience the school and lessons in action. Tours of the school were provided by Year 8 pupils, who were unfailingly polite, helpful, and represented the school really well. Marlborough School will be welcoming even more pupils into Year 7 next year, as the multi-million pound expansion projects will be completed for September 2026. Exciting times ahead!

Woodstock CE Primary School

A New Adventure for Our Youngest Learners

The youngest children in our school have a brand-new outdoor space to explore, play, and learn in - and it's already proving to be a huge success. The Nursery and Reception classes are now sharing an Early Years Garden that has been specially designed to meet their needs and spark their imaginations.

The transformation is striking. At the heart of the garden is a calming water feature, where children can pour, splash, and experiment, developing both fine motor skills and an early love of scientific discovery. A new construction area offers endless opportunities for teamwork, problem-solving, and creativity, while the dedicated creative space encourages children to express themselves through art, music, and role play.



Active play is well supported too. The new outdoor climbing equipment challenges children to test their balance, strength, and bravery in a safe environment, while the soft ground space makes running, rolling, and playing together safe and fun. The bikes and scooters are a clear favourite, giving children the freedom to zoom around, building both confidence and coordination.

One of the most exciting additions is the canopy over the sandpit, which now means children can dig, build, and play whatever the weather. And of course, the much-anticipated mud kitchen is already buzzing with activity, as little chefs mix, stir, and serve up their imaginative creations.



The garden isn't just beautiful - it's been designed with real thought and care. The Early Years team spent months planning each detail to make sure the space would bring joy while also supporting the children's learning and development. Their vision has

created an outdoor environment that feels inviting, stimulating, and above all, fun. Parents, staff, and visitors alike have commented on how incredible the new area looks, but it's the smiles and laughter of the children that tell the real story. This garden is already becoming a special place where our youngest learners can grow in confidence, make discoveries, and share adventures together.

Admissions to our Reception Classes September 2026

Are you looking for a Reception place for your child in September 2026? We would love to invite you to visit our school and see our Reception classes in action. Our tours are the perfect opportunity to experience the welcoming atmosphere, meet our staff, and explore the fantastic learning spaces - including our brand-new Early Years outdoor area.

Upcoming tour dates include Thursday 13 November at 9.15am, Tuesday 2 December at 10am, and Wednesday 7 January at 1.15pm.

To book a place, please contact the school office or visit our website at www.woodstock.oxon.sch.uk.

We look forward to welcoming you and showing you what makes our school such a special place to learn and grow.

Anna Poole, (DHT, DSL & Curriculum Lead)

Bladon C of E Primary School



The children at Bladon Primary School have been busily preparing for the exhibition inspired by our natural world, which is taking place in St Mary Magdalene Church in Woodstock during half term. Some classes went on Autumn walks to observe the seasonal changes happening. It has been wonderful to see such a range of subjects and materials being used, the development of the children's skills from our youngest to oldest pupils and their creativity too.

They are all looking forward to seeing them displayed!

Ellie Jenkins, Acorn Class Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher

Woodstock Exhibition Foundation

The trustees wish to thank everyone who came to our coffee morning on 20 September, brought produce for sale or helped. We raised just under £500. In addition, we also thank those who made cash donations.

The trustees have since met to decide the 2025 grants to young people of Woodstock who have gone to university or entered apprenticeships. 29 applications were approved and a total of £12,325 is being distributed. Applications in 2024 and 2025 were almost double those in earlier years. Sadly this has meant that we have had to reduce the amount given to each applicant.

The courses being studied range from criminology and forensic science to fitness for sport. The successful students have gone to educational institutions across the country from York to Plymouth including many top universities such as Cambridge, University College London, Bristol, Manchester and Exeter. We also have students studying more locally at Oxford Brookes and Abingdon and Witney College.

We can always do with more help, so if you are prepared to assist with our two fund-raising events a year, please contact our Clerk, Joanne Onions via Woodstock Town Hall.

Frank Collingwood



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The Woodstock Bookshop

Christmas is coming to The Woodstock Bookshop

We are feeling very festive as we bring out our seasonal stock and decorate the shop for Christmas. This year we will be selling festive books, masses of cards, wrapping paper, stunning advent calendars, 2026 diaries and calendars, some gorgeous notebooks and many excellent fiction and nonfiction books, including some very attractive special editions of classic novels, that would make great gifts. Watch our window display throughout November and December for inspiration as we feature our favourites.



First Snow at Blenheim by Rod Craig as featured in the book Blenheim - reflections in paint and poetry (available from The Woodstock Bookshop) and on our new gift tokens

This year, to offer an easier option for gift buyers, we have produced a new range of gift tokens that will be valid to spend in the shop. Local artist, Rod Craig, has kindly allowed us to use his original artwork on the tokens, including two designs especially for Christmas. They are available to buy from the shop in denominations of £10, £15 and £25. Incidentally, Rod will be attending an event and book signing at the Bookshop before Christmas to promote the *Blenheim - reflections in paint and poetry* including Rod's watercolours and poetry by Peter Adamsom, date tbc.

We will be open for late night shopping until 8pm on Friday 28 November. If you're attending Woodstock Festive Fayre that evening, do please pay us a visit.



**Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditors**

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

01993 814590
info@kbdr.co.uk

Oxford Bus and Morris Motors Museums

Bus seats donation

Richard King has given the museum some bus seats, which were originally on an Oxford Renown, CFC 356C, and have been stored in the loft of his garage for the last 40 years!

This AEC Renown was new to City of Oxford Motor Services (COMS) in December 1965 seating 38 upstairs and 27 on the lower deck.



Photograph credit: Grahame Wareham

It was originally painted in Oxford's traditional livery. Then, in about autumn 1970, it was repainted red all over, except for the lower deck window area which was painted duck egg green (as illustrated).

After nationalisation the bus was repainted into NBC poppy red, which was its final livery in Oxford.

Richard and his cousin bought CFC 356C direct from COMS in 1978. They converted it so it could be used as a holiday van in Europe with bunk beds and a mini kitchen. It travelled around France and Italy.

In 1980 it was in England and was hired for a promotion to the Portsmouth Evening News, whose driver took it under a low bridge in Porchester with the usual result! The seats were extracted from the wreckage and stored.

Initially, it was planned to restore the bus, but it never happened and CFC 356C was scrapped.

Forty years later we have been given the seats and may be given the frames in due course. We have recently had some seats for another bus reupholstered because the leather sides had deteriorated. If the moquette on the seats of very old buses fails it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain replacement moquette with the right design. Spares seats may come in useful in the future.

Frank Collingwood

Woodstock Lunch Club

Tours, Tales and Teas at Blenheim Palace

Woodstock Lunch Club's outings to Blenheim Palace in September were a great success. We were delighted to arrange guided buggy tours for most of our members, taking in the beautiful scenery around the Queen Pool and the formal gardens, followed by a splendid afternoon tea in the recently refurbished Orangery.



As we had such a large number of members wishing to take part, the visit was arranged over two days. The first group braved a rather wet afternoon, but everyone stayed dry and cheerful in the electric buggies provided. The second group enjoyed much kinder weather, with sunshine brightening their entire visit.



The drivers were extremely knowledgeable and provided an almost non-stop commentary, pausing at many of the landmarks to share detailed stories and historical insights. Although many of our members have lived in and around Woodstock for years, some even having worked on the Blenheim Estate, there was still plenty for everyone to learn and enjoy.

After touring the Water Terraces, Rose Garden, Cascades, Temple of Health, and Italian Garden, we gathered in the Orangery for a most enjoyable afternoon tea.

The members of Woodstock Lunch Club would like to extend sincere thanks to The Duke of Marlborough who made it possible, and the staff at Blenheim Palace for their warm hospitality and for making both afternoons so memorable.

The Arts Society Cotswolds

Lecture on Wednesday 12 November 2025

Rescuing Zeugma from the Floodwaters of the Euphrates

In Spring 2000 an archaeological drama began to unfold on the banks of the Euphrates river in Turkey, close to the border with Syria. A small team of French and Turkish archaeologists found a Roman city on the banks of the river, with mosaics and wall-paintings finer than those of Pompeii. However, just beside them was the almost completed Birecik Dam, and the Turks had begun to flood the great reservoir behind it, taking the city under water.

About the speaker: Louise Schofield is an archaeologist who was Curator of Greek Bronze Age and Geometric Antiquities at the British Museum from 1987-2000. Her book, The Mycenaeans, was co-published by the Getty Museum and the British Museum in 2007. She now writes, lectures and runs international archaeological projects - previously in south-eastern Turkey, Greece and Albania and currently in Ethiopia. And rather wonderfully she has just been appointed Visiting Professor of Archaeology at the American University of Rome.

This hybrid lecture will be held at the Warwick Hall, Church Green, Burford, OX18 4RZ at 11am and via Zoom. Please be seated by 10.50 for notices of upcoming events. Numbers are no longer restricted but booking is recommended to reserve a place (www.theartsocietycotswolds.org.uk). Non-members are welcome (space permitting) at a charge of £10.

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

To learn more about The Arts Society Cotswolds and to see what lectures, Special Interest Days and other activities are planned for the future, please log into the website www.theartsocietycotswolds.org.uk

Or contact Alison Morgans on 07771 817050

Woodstock & District u3a

Our u3a branch is centred in Woodstock and attracts and welcomes members from the surrounding areas. Are you recently retired and looking for local social activity around an interest that you already have or seeking something new. Interest groups develop when someone is willing to run them - maybe you have something you can offer. Is there a Ukulele group leader out there, or fluent foreign language speakers? If so please do make contact through the website

www.woodstocku3a.uk. We would be very pleased to hear from you. Monthly members' speaker meetings are held at St Hugh's Centre, Hensington Road, Woodstock OX20 1JL - 1.45 for 2pm speaker.

The October speaker was Stephen Barker whose subject Indians at Victorian Oxford gave us an insightful story of the history connecting Oxford to the first arrivals of Indian students to our university in 1871 and our strong links since then.

Our next speaker meeting is on Thursday 6 November at St Hugh's, when we have Jessica Bouwer from Wild Oxfordshire coming to talk about Hedgerows. Hedgerows have become essential wildlife corridors in an increasingly fragmented landscape, yet they also have many benefits for us too. Jessica will talk about why hedgerows are so important and how you can manage them correctly to ensure they stay healthy and persist within the landscape. On 4 December we return to history with our speaker Anna Beer talking on Bess - The Life of Lady Raleigh - Wife to Sir Walter. Visitors £3 to include tea and biscuits.

Sue Blackshaw, Chair

28th Macmillan Coffee Morning

My Macmillan Coffee Morning on Friday 26 September raised £848. I also made £100 for Cancer Research from the sale of their Christmas cards.

Gwen Mason

Bladon Snippets from the Past

One shilling a week (the equivalent of 5p) was collected from your door, starting in October 1969 and continuing until November 1972. This provided Membership and a lucky draw each week in the Woodstock and District Swimming Pool Fund.

The pool was built in hopeful and altruistic times.

Mary F. Sitch

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History: The Woodstock Toilets

When we spent our pennies

On 11 September, the Oxford Times reported that West Oxfordshire District Council cannot afford to maintain the Public Toilets in Woodstock (and elsewhere in the District). The Town Council will be given a choice - either they take them over or they will be abandoned, causing perhaps excruciating suffering to tourist and shoppers.

This brings to mind the situation in 1970 when Woodstock Borough Council owned the Brown's Lane lavatories. Vandalism was a regular problem but Martin Sawyer (the Town Clerk), Fred Swinson (the Borough Surveyor), and Mr Darvill (the Foreman) all took great pride in keeping their facilities in working order. The most important time was Royal Ascot Week because, before the construction of the M40, crowds from the West Midlands would funnel through Woodstock towards the racecourse. Several coaches stopped in Woodstock for coffee and other refreshment every morning; six or eight coaches lingered here each evening on the return journey.

The penny in the slot machinery to open the cubicle doors had to be working for that week above all others. The spending of pennies added up very usefully.

When I joined the Borough Council in 1970 I sought to enliven debate at the Public Health Committee by proposing that we install the newly invented condom vending machines in the men's lavatory. Such things were never the subject of polite conversation in those days so not one of the councilors dared to speak for or against the motion, hence it passed. Dorothy Higgins, our Health Visitor, then demanded sex equality so the Borough Surveyor gladly installed a vending machine in the Ladies where it sold many more items than the one in the Gents.

In 1974 the toilets passed into the ownership of WODC. They decided that because there were no condom vending machines in the other towns, ours should be scrapped. Our valiant District Councilor, Pauline Jerrams, mounted a spirited defense with the result that dispensers were provided throughout West Oxfordshire. Woodstock led the way!

Robert Edwards

Letters are important for our Community

Please send letters to editor@wobl.news
The deadline for the December issue is
Sunday 16 November

Panniers

Everyday cycling in Woodstock and Bladon

I often run Bikeability courses at schools across Oxford and have been amazed by the increasing number of parents who arrive on electric cargo bikes.

A year ago you might have seen one or two but at some schools nowadays there can be quite a number at drop-off time.

I say "amazed" but the trend is hardly surprising given the city's congestion problems. Many families have obviously found that e-cargo bikes can easily replace many everyday car trips.

An e-cargo bike has the convenience of a "normal" bicycle while overcoming its limitations in carrying children, pets, groceries and other heavy loads.

John and Lewis at Velospeed in Yarnton have a good selection of e-cargo bikes to try out

In a recent study by Oxford University researchers, 49 British households in three English cities, including Oxford, were loaned e-cargo bikes for shopping, family outings, school runs and other everyday trips.

The families said that using the bikes to replace car journeys made them feel more connected to their local communities. Being less dependent on their car also meant they had a more active and low-carbon lifestyle.

E-cargo bikes are not something that I have seen a lot of around Woodstock. But they could be a game-changer for families who need to access our schools, shops etc but find the walk too far.

They are not cheap! However, Velospeed at Yarnton garden centre has a good selection to try out and lots of expert advice on schemes that can make them more affordable.

Happy cycling!

David Walker

30

31

The Merger That Made Woodstock Town FC

On a misty, autumnal Saturday afternoon at New Road, the sound of boots on damp ground and bellows from the touchline carries the same energy it has for over a century. Although I am sure it is not exclusive to this country, it is a scene which feels, to me, unmistakably English. It is all too easy to walk past Woodstock Town FC and fail to appreciate the remarkable story contained within the pitch boundaries – a tale of rivalry resolved, success achieved, dreams destroyed by bureaucracy, and a club at the heart of a community.



The story actually begins with two clubs; not one. For a significant portion of the 20th century, Woodstock and Old Woodstock were separate clubs and town rivals, each with their own proud pedigree. Woodstock Town could trace their lineage back to 1911, when they claimed the Witney & District League title in their debut season (quite the statement of intent). This was followed by eight Oxfordshire Senior League championships over the coming decades. Old Woodstock, founded in 1920, carved out their own legacy with two Witney & District titles before joining their neighbours in the Oxfordshire Senior League in 1970.

In 1998, differences were discarded as the two clubs merged to form Old Woodstock Town FC, quickly proving to be a wise move. The pooling of talent from independently strong setups immediately bore fruit, with the newly unified force securing the Oxfordshire Senior League title in their first season, earning the club a promotion to the Hellenic League Division One West.

What followed was a golden era that saw the club scale heights neither predecessor had reached alone. By 2008, they were runners-up in Division One West, earning promotion to the Hellenic Premier Division. The 2010-11 season resulted in a 9th place finish in the Premier Division and, most memorably, an FA Cup debut.

Here comes the bitter twist in the story. Despite that respectable league finish, Woodstock, failing to meet the new ground grading requirements due to a lack of floodlights, were demoted back to Division One West. This was to become a recurring nightmare for the club, with consistently strong performances being met with consistent, unjust disappointment.

In 2011-12, they again finished runners-up, but were denied promotion due to the same technicality. The 2012-13 saw the club reach the third round of the FA Vase, only to be forced to pull out of the competition when their ground was deemed unsuitable and a proposed groundshare arrangement fell through. Time and again, success on the pitch was undermined by the so-called red tape, creating a task that was now Sisyphean in nature.



2016 saw the club officially become Woodstock Town FC and in 2023, both senior teams moved back to the Oxfordshire Senior League, where they currently compete in Divisions Two and Three respectively.

Although now competing at a more modest level than their days in the Hellenic Premier League, Woodstock Town FC's community roots run deeper than ever. The club has now expanded and runs multiple youth teams: Under-9s, 11s, and 12s, who all compete in the Oxfordshire Youth Football League. There are even plans to put out a team to compete in the U7s league next season, with Woodstock currently recruiting players of U5 and 6 age for training sessions.

For fixture updates and results, residents can find the club's information readily available online, and their progress will be featured regularly in the Woodstock and Bladon News. In the flesh, Woodstock Town FC can be found on the aforementioned New Road. With the season running until halfway through the next calendar year, there is plenty of football to enjoy, aided by the presence of a fully-stocked bar and friendly faces.

Matt Donnelly

Park Street The Great Georgian Makeover

This Street was originally laid out and occupied circa 1285 AD by the mighty King Henry II because he needed hostleries to accommodate the overflow of hangeron when he was at his Woodstock Palace.



Typical Park Street sash windows

What we now see is the result of a craze for new sash windows in the 18th Century. Their great advantage was that they were larger and admitted much more light into the house than had been possible with the previous outward opening type. These windows slid up and down in vertical runners. Their heaviness was relieved by lead counterweights hidden within the outer frame and attached by cords and pulleys to the top of the window.

The older frontages in Park Street were replaced in the new style in the 18th and early 19th centuries. There are typical sash windows at the Town hall, built in 1766, and on the 'new' block of The Bear built in 1762. The resulting stately town houses would have been occupied by the lawyers, doctors and wealthier tradesmen and their families. Servants were housed on the top floors and horses were stabled behind Park Street in the back lanes.

The second new feature was the introduction of sawn rectangular blocks of ashlar masonry on the front facades. This indicates a significant level of wealth in the Borough at this time. It would have been cheaper to have the sash windows while retaining the roughly coursed rubble walls that can still be seen at the backs of some houses such as Fletcher's House which contains the Oxfordshire County Museum.

Our Georgian time capsule is completed by the Church tower which was built in 1784 using an architectural plan originally drawn for the church tower at Wheatley and recycled by George Townsend. His building company later developed into Knowles & Sons who recently still had those drawings.

Bay widows were another 18th century fashion. The highway, owned by the Borough Corporation, extended right up to the front walls of Woodstock's houses so permission was required and a ground rent of one shilling per year was regularly charged for these modest extensions such as the one to be seen at number 25.

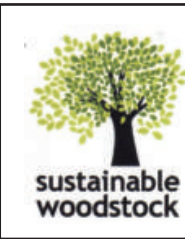
Why does Park Street have its fine set of knobbly cobbles? One theory is that horses hate to walk on them so they were introduced to keep these animals away from the houses.



The trees twelve months after annual pollarding

The trees in Park Street were being annually pollarded when Mr Taunt took his post card photographs one hundred and twenty years ago and had probably been in that style for a long time beforehand. I can remember when these trees had high metal guards around the trunks left over from the livestock market which ended in the 1930s. Somehow they were missed by the iron railing snatchers in World War II.

Dr Robert Edwards



Sustainable Woodstock AGM
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at 19.30
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1st Woodstock Scouts, Cubs, and Beavers

1st Woodstock Scouts

We've been very busy this term with a group of our older Scouts preparing for their Expedition Challenge Award. The whole troop has taken part in learning about cooking for camps, putting their skills and ideas into action with an evening cookout where we had some excellent risotto and pasta dishes created. We've also been learning to plan routes using maps and compasses and have used these new skills on practice hikes.

Five of our Scouts applied all of this experience to take part in the County Expedition Challenge; this involved planning two days of hiking routes and camping independently at Youlbury Scout Camp in late September. The Scouts had a great time and managed to not get lost and to cook their own food for two days! With all the activities we've done our younger Scouts are now well equipped to follow in their footsteps in future years.



Cubs crate stacking at Youlbury camp

Cubs

This summer our Cubs and older Beavers enjoyed camping at Youlbury on a very hot weekend in July. Great fun was had by all as they took part in activities including crate stacking, fencing, campfires and learning how to survive in tents!

We are currently working towards our Air Activities badge by building and testing model planes and learning all about flying - including interviewing a real-life pilot in a few weeks' time!

Beavers

Beavers had a fun spring and summer exploring their Space badge and learning about the natural world.

Join our team!

We're on the look-out for enthusiastic volunteers to join our team of committed leaders. Changes to



Cubs Local Knowledge badge - posters advertising Woodstock and surrounding villages

Scouting in recent years means we now take a whole team approach to running a unit, making sure that alongside our fantastic leaders we have a broad support team. After three successful years our Beaver group has temporarily closed as our two main leaders have moved on to new adventures. We'd love some new adult volunteers to join us and help re-start the group in January.

Scouting is a very supportive organisation; if you'd like to see how you can get involved, please contact Kate and Nigel at: 1stwoodstocktrustees@gmail.com.

Helen Fina

Girlguiding Woodstock

Girlguiding Woodstock returned in September with lots of new Rainbows, Brownies and Guides joining us. It's great to have so many members in our units.

This does mean that all units are nearly full so it is important that if you are interested joining us at any time in the future then please register at www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus.

Guides have been having fun working on the Potato challenge badge, we've made crisps, wrapping paper decorated with potato prints and earned the badge. In patrols, the Guides have chosen and organised their badge work for the term with first aid, make change, and communicate activities being done.

Rainbows have been giggling their way through the new laughter badge with jokes and funny gifts. One of our favourites as told by a 5 year old "why did the chicken cross the road?" - "to get a coffee".

Our Trefoil group for adults age 18+ decorated rocks and are looking forward to Halloween! Lorraine joined the national Trefoil walking week in the Peak District.

To find out more about any of our groups and activities then email us at girlguidingwoodstock@hotmail.co.uk.

Lorraine Wing

Improving Your Home Part 3

Rear Extensions

Rear extensions are a practical way to add value to a home and are generally more cost-effective than moving when factoring in stamp duty, legal fees and moving costs. A ground floor extension can turn a cramped ground floor into modern, open-plan living space, typically a kitchen-diner, whilst a 2-storey extension can add a bedroom and more. Because extensions add floor area, it targets the factor buyers value most after location, which is size.

Single-storey rear extensions fall under Permitted Development rights, although you will need a Lawful Development Certificate confirming that the proposed extension complies with Permitted Development guidelines. Detached houses can extend up to 4 metres beyond the rear wall under permitted development, while terraced and semi-detached properties are limited to 3 metres. For single storey extensions the limits are increased to 8 metres if a detached house and 6 metres for any other housed, a Prior Approval: Larger Home Extension application is required. The extension must not exceed 50% of the original property's surrounding land area. Extensions must not exceed the height of the original roof and should use materials that harmonise with the existing structure. These regulations exist to protect neighbourhood character while enabling reasonable development.

Building Regulations approval will also be required. Structural elements require load-bearing calculations, and foundations and roof structures to comply with Building Regs. Steel beams are often needed to create open spaces. Insulation standards require extensions to achieve high levels of insulation and energy performance, potentially improving the overall property's EPC rating. This not only reduces running costs but enhances market appeal as energy efficiency becomes increasingly important to buyers.

Successful rear extensions should harmonise well with the existing property, maintaining proportional relationships and architectural coherence. Consider the orientation for natural light optimisation, particularly for kitchen and dining areas that could benefit from morning and afternoon sunshine. Open-plan designs combine kitchen, dining, and living areas to create flexible family spaces, with large glazed openings onto the garden. Built-in storage, adequate provision for modern technology, electric vehicle charging provision and renewable energy integration help to future-proof the property. Simple single-storey extensions can typically take 8-16 weeks once work begins, while two-storey extensions can take 16-26 weeks.

Build costs are calculated by the square metre, and current guidance from Homebuilding & Renovating suggests £2,200-£2,500/m² (ex VAT) for a straightforward single-storey extension. High-spec projects can run to £3,000+ per m². 2-storey extensions cost per square metre are usually lower because you're spreading the cost of foundations and roof over twice the floor area. However a 2-storey extensions can add twice as much space for 50-70% more cost than a single-storey extension, according to SDL Property Auctions. For design and approvals allow typically 5-15% of the build cost depending on scope and add a 10-12.5% contingency for unexpected costs. The ROI for a rear kitchen-diner extensions can be 10-15% when well executed; more if they enable a superior layout or an extra bedroom in a 2-storey scheme, according to Ideal Home, but can be more in higher-value locations or where the design transforms usability. If you can stretch the budget, a 2-storey extension is the better option, providing addition space and a better return. However before committing check with local estate agents for before/after comparables, then run a calculation of projected sale value - (current value + all-in project cost). If the margin isn't comfortably positive and you're not valuing the lifestyle benefit, then rethink the scope or spec.

Jan Liberadzki BA Arch (Hons), MSc, JLDA

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Helping You Create a Better Home

Answers

The answers to the Hanover Street Quiz in the October issue are:

1. The Monty Python sketch was the 'Ministry of Silly Walks'
2. The song associated with Christopher Plummer was 'Edelweiss'
3. The emergency service was 'Fire'
4. The TV comedy was 'Allo, Allo'
5. The Great Train Robbery happened in '1963'
6. The film was 'Working Girl'
7. The Monopoly link was 'Mayfair'
8. The 1945 film was 'Brief Encounter'
9. The restaurant was 'Brothertons'
10. The iconic musician was 'John Lennon'

The answers to the October Crossword are:

William Morris became 'Lord Nuffield'

Across: 1. tarantula, 6. gusto, 9. ensuing, 10. patrons, 11. batter, 12. deviates, 14. iron, 15. California, 18. grassroots, 20. abet, 23. macaroni, 24. sailor, 26. Punjabi, 27. chorizo, 28. piste, 29. education.

Down: 1. trembling, 2. risotto, 3. noises, 4. urge, 5. appreciate, 6. get rid of, 7. shorten, 8. oasis, 13. mayonnaise, 16. afternoon, 17. username, 19. accents, 21. Bellini, 22. pagoda, 23. mop up, 25. ecru.

Acorn Fencing

Fencing - Gates - Security Fencing
Decking - Garden Structures

trevor.acornfencing@live.co.uk
Tel: 07949 511182

Oxfordshire & Home Counties

Meme of the Month

First week working
at the bicycle
factory and they've
already made me
the spokes person.

Fitness What's On

Exercise and movement classes in and around Woodstock. Please report errors and discrepancies.

Monday

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

Tuesday

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

Wednesday

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

Thursday

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

Friday

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

Saturday

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

Rejuvenate Aesthetics

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Based between Woodstock & Combe
Website: www.rejuvenate-aesthetics.uk
EMail: admin@rejuvenate-aesthetics.uk
Instagram: @rejuvenate_aesthetics_uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/Rejuvenate.Aesthetics.UK

Regular Events

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

Culture

- Bladon Garden Society**
The 3rd Thursday of every month at 7.30pm, usually in the Church Room in Bladon
- Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum**
The Friends hold regular talks and events, which will all be listed in What's On
- Woodstock 50+ Cinema Club**
Monthly films hopefully starting again
- Woodstock Literature Society**
This well established society hold regular talks and events, which will all be listed in What's On
- Woodstock and District u3a**
All events are listed in What's On
- Wootton Village Hall Talks**
These take place monthly

Music

- Kings Arms / Mandolirium**
Listen to our local group in our local pub, usually every third Thursday at 6.30pm. Next date 24 July
- Singing for Fun**
For July, August, and September, this takes place at the Woodstock Baptist Church at 2pm on the 1st Monday of the month
- The Crown**
Live music every Friday nights from 7.30pm
- Woodstock Jazz**
Usually on the last Friday of the month at St Hughs

Social

- Bereavement Cafe**
The 3rd Friday of every month between 3 and 5pm at St Mary Magdalene Church
- Ladies Coffee Morning**
The last Tuesday of every month between 10am and 12noon at 10 High Street, Woodstock
- Methodist Coffee Club**
The Coffee Club meets every Thursday morning 10.30am to 12 noon in Woodstock Methodist Hall.
- St Mary Magdalene Church coffee morning**
First Saturday of the month between 10am and 12noon. All proceeds to our local food bank
- Woodstock Lunch Club**
Lunches are held in the Community Centre every other Wednesday at 12 noon.
- Woodstock Stroke Club**
Every other Tuesday between 10.15am and 1pm at the Community Centre

Sport

- Crickets at Blenheim Palace**
The local team play on the South Lawn at Blenheim Palace most Sundays during the summer
- Woodstock Bowls Club**
The outdoor season runs from April through to September and the indoor season from October through to March.

What's On

For the latest information, please click on the Events link at www.wobl.news.
If you would like your event included here, please email editor@wobl.news.

Friday 31 Oct 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music
Denny Ilett Band: An 'American Songbook' special from one of the best in the business!
St Hugh's Centre

Wednesday 05 Nov 2025, 19:30

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
World War 1 - paintings and poetry. Speaker: Alice Foster
Oxfordshire Museum

Thursday 06 Nov 2025, 14:00

Woodstock and District u3a - Talk
Oxfordshire Hedgerows: With Jessica Bouwer
St Hugh's Centre

Monday 17 Nov 2025, 20:00

The Woodstock Society - Talk
Malcolm Brecht - Culturally Aware Leadership
St Mary Magdalene

Thursday 20 Nov 2025, 19:30

Bladon Gardens Society - Talk
Harriet Rycroft: "A Warm Welcome": Making your garden path more appealing with containers.
The Church Rooms, Church Street, Bladon

Saturday 22 Nov 2025, 15:00

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

Saturday 22 Nov 2025, 19:30

Oxford Fiddle Group - Concert
An evening concert performed by the Oxford Fiddle Group
St Mary Magdalene

Thursday 27 Nov 2025, 19:30

Sustainable Woodstock - Annual Event
Sustainable Woodstock AGM
Woodstock Baptist Church

Friday 28 Nov 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music
Fraser Smith's BeBop Quartet: An All-Star Lineup for this fabulous tenor sax specialist
St Hugh's Centre

Wednesday 03 Dec 2025, 19:30

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
William Turner of Oxford and Shipton-on-Cherwell. Speaker: Colin Harrison
Oxfordshire Museum

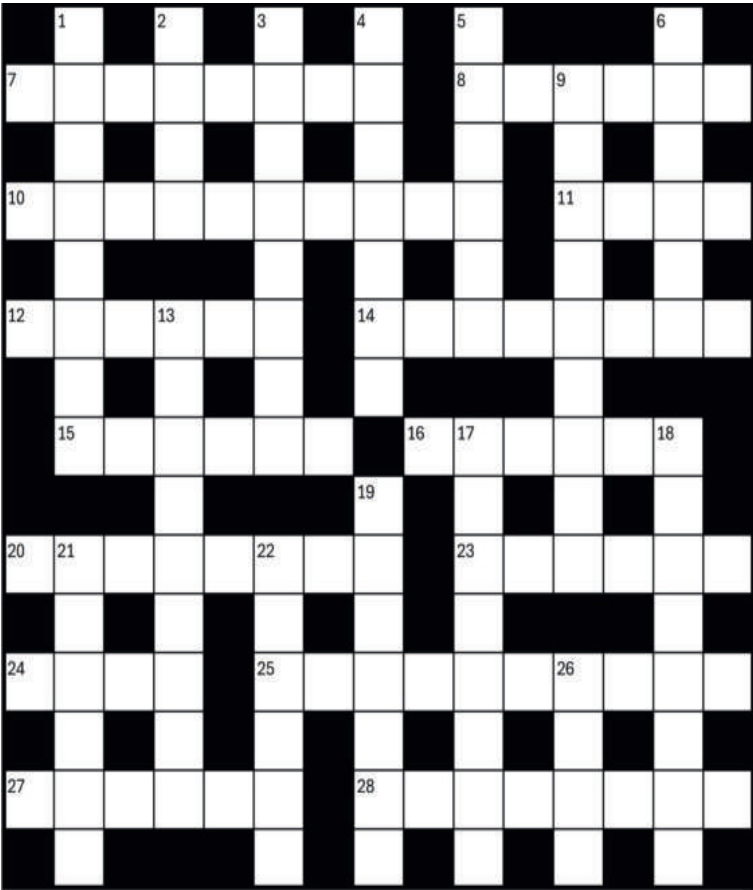
QUIZ - Compiled by Richard Stockwell

Cemetery Junction was partly filmed in Woodstock in 2009, despite there being no credits on imdb.com. Here are 10 questions based around the film - answers next month.

- 1. Felicity Jones almost won an Oscar for her role in The Theory of Everything, but in which Heart of England radio soap opera did she play a young Emma Carter?
- 2. Cemetery junction is described as a ‘coming of age’ drama. If, in Britain, this were to be recognised as coinciding with the age of consent, at which birthday would you ‘come of age?’
- 3. A character in Cemetery Junction is nicknamed Snork. Which American children’s series, running from 1968-70 featured the characters ‘Fleegle, Bingo, Drooper and Snork?’
- 4. The working title of the film was ‘The Men at The Pru,’ referencing which Insurance Company?
- 5. The plot of Cemetery Road is inspired by which Bruce Springsteen lyric, where The Boss is trying to persuade his girlfriend Mary to go away with him? The final line of the song is, “So Mary climb in, it’s a town full of losers, I’m pulling out of here to win.”
- 6. Cemetery Junction’s soundtrack includes “All the Young Dudes,” by Mott The Hoople. Backing vocals featured which music icon, who also wrote the song?
- 7. Cemetery Junction is where the main road divides into The Wokingham Road and The London Road in which British City?
- 8. Actress Emily Watson played Mrs Kendrick in Cemetery Junction. She also appeared in Gosford Park and The Theory of Everything, as well as playing classical musician Jacqueline du Pre in Hilary and Jackie. With which instrument was Jaqueline du Pre famously associated?
- 9. Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant created which Sky One travel programme, featuring Karl Pilkington?
- 10. Which cast member is famous for his roles in Schindler’s List and The English Patient, as well as playing Lord Voldemort?



Woody's Cryptic Crossword



- Across

 - 7 Relate to upset, but put up with it (8)
 - 8 Rant I trade all over the place (6)
 - 10 He gets none around monument (10)
 - 11 Cut off national flower (4)
 - 12 Straight line as required (6)
 - 14 These celebritys can't really do anything! (8)
 - 15 Ale men sorted paint (6)
 - 16 Fight soldiers in old Greek state (6)
 - 20 Rare slug confused soldiers (8)
 - 23 Breakfast included in home letting? (6)
 - 24 Roost seen in American estate (4)
 - 25 Swap animals? Bargain! (5-5)
 - 27 Winter salt (6)
 - 28 Different Princess's Island (8)
- Down

 - 1 Make up mixed cover with tin (8)
 - 2 In home and average (4)
 - 3 Arrows he shot from here? (8)
 - 4 Catlike number after sign (7)
 - 5 Setter changed road (6)
 - 6 Respect when a swamp engulfs 500 in old Italy (6)
 - 9 Change bruise with me for pay back (9)
 - 13 Considers costs (9)
 - 17 Inclined verse surrounds writer (8)
 - 18 One acted around short story (8)
 - 19 Take a step and sit on a horse (7)
 - 21 Prime side (6)
 - 22 Capital, as covered afterwards (6)
 - 26 Unusual right before age goes up (4)

FRI. NOV 28TH 19:30

FRASER SMITH
QUARTET

The talk of London' - award winning saxophonist - a bebop & swing master - with Rob Barron (piano), Paul Jefferies (bass) & Steve Brown (drums)

St Hugh's centre, Hensington Rd, Woodstock, OX20 1JL - This is a 'bring your own' snacks & drinks event

WOODSTOCK JAZZ

SAT. DEC 20TH 19:30

BEN HOLDER
QUARTET

Phenomenal violinist / vocalist & pianist - Ben presents his CHRISTMAS CRACKER with Jez Cook (gtr), Paul Jefferies (bass) & Nick Millward (drums)

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Ticket prices include VAT

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