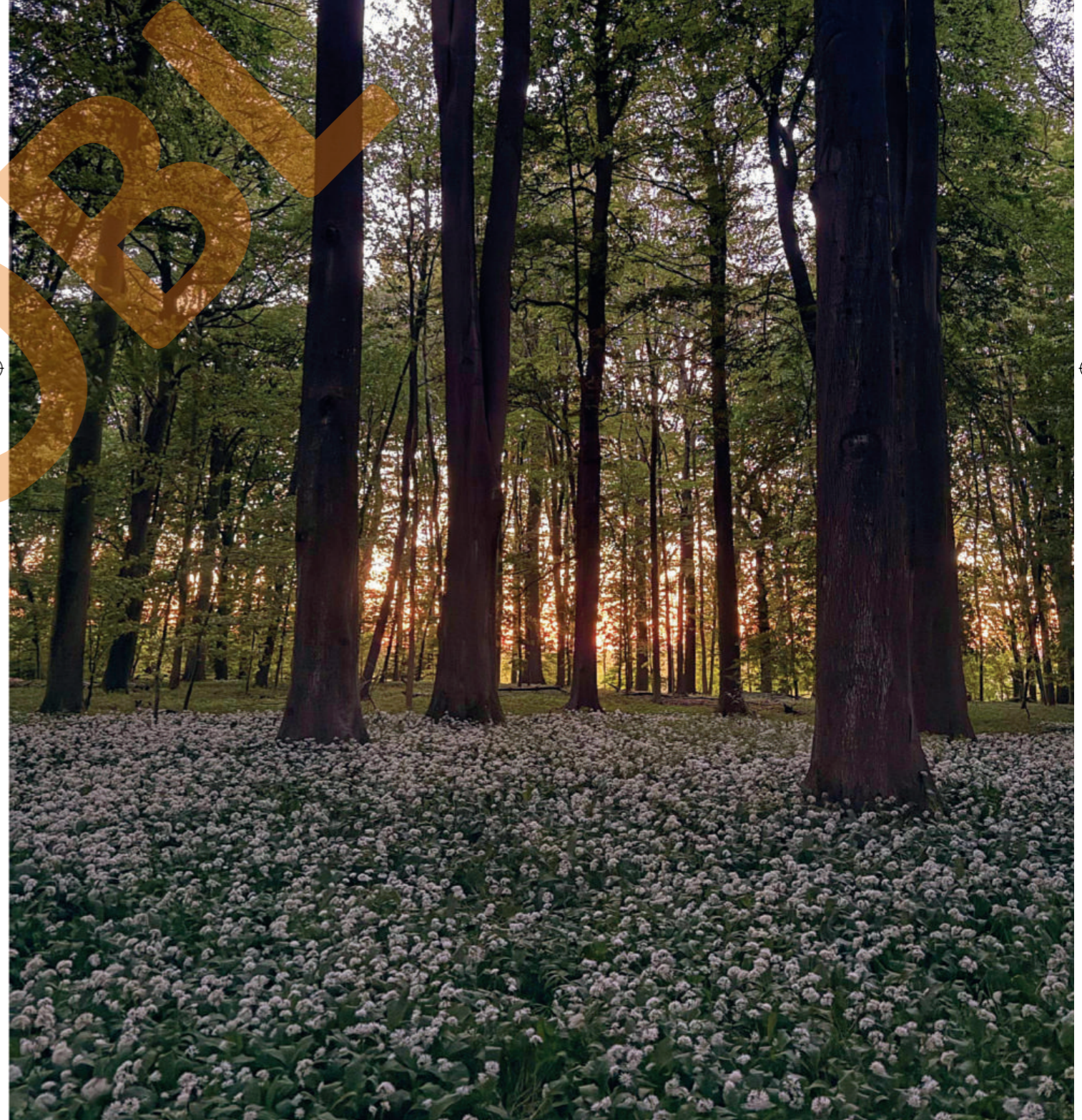


WOODSTOCK & BLADON *news*

June 2026

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Editorial

Well, I did promise not to write anything about my travels - oh dear, I've just mentioned it!

It's lovely to be back in Woodstock and I was here in time to help with the distribution of the May issue. I am very grateful to the many friends who have helped in the four issues while I was away - thank you so much. I won't name names, but I hope they are aware of my appreciation.

The June issue is the penultimate edition of the publishing year. During the summer break, I and the editorial team will get together to see what changes should be considered for 2026/27. It has been very rewarding to have heard many good comments about the magazine, and I am proud of how it now looks. But it would be nice to have some positive - or negative - feedback about individual items. I have decided to remove the *Fitness, Whats On* this month, mainly because of space but also because I have had no feedback despite not having made any changes to the content, and so I am not entirely sure that the information is correct. If anyone has any ideas for the future - on any subject - please send an email to editor@wobl.news.

Sadly, having said in the last Editorial that I was looking forward to the Concert For Rosie in the church on 15 May, I was out of Woodstock and wasn't able to attend. I have seen the pictures and heard it was a successful and well-attended event, so many congratulations to all involved. There is an abundance of music to look forward to during the summer - an eclectic mix of classical concerts and jazz. Blenheim are hosting an international music event in June, and we of course have Woodstock Live to look forward to at the August Bank Holiday weekend. Combined with the regular music taking place in pubs, we are very lucky.

I hope to see many of our readers and contributors over the summer. And on the subject of contributors - THANK YOU. Without you, this wonderful local magazine would not be possible.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor

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Subscriptions

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

It can be purchased at Blenheim Palace, Mary and Martin's Newsagent, Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock Bookshop, Woodstock Grocers, and Wootton Stores. 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. We are sadly now unable to accept payment by cheque.

For those who haven't paid for this current year, please pay as soon as possible.

Please write for our magazine

Send your contributions to: editor@wobl.news

If you have an interest that is not currently being followed by this magazine, please contact me.

The next (and final issue for the current year) will be a July one, and copy deadline is **Sunday 21 June 2026**, for publication on Friday 3 July.

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

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Front Cover Photograph of wild garlic on the Blenheim Estate taken by Trisha Marie



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Oxfordshire Artweeks



If you spent any time in Woodstock in recent weeks, you can hardly have missed our Artweeks activities.

Artists in Woodstock put together stunning exhibitions in St. Mary Magdalene Church and SOFO Museum - including painting, sculpture, ceramics, photography and jewellery.

Around the town was our Art Walk, where businesses hosted our work in their windows to showcase Woodstock's creative talents from both established and emerging artists.

The focus of the 2026 event has been to remember Rosie Butt, a dear friend and much loved member of our group who sadly passed away a year ago.

Rosie's inspired and beautiful photography was very much part of our exhibition again this year and sales from her work were a significant contribution to our fund raising effort in her memory.

A sell-out concert in the church with Woodstock's own Mandolirium and Rosie's sister Susie B was an emotional evening for many of us but also an uplifting way to celebrate Rosie's life. A fitting tribute to round off the week's events.

The total amount raised during the week for Mind and The Samaritans stands at well over £4000! This was mostly from concert ticket and art sales.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported us by attending the concert, for your generous donations and on a personal note, especially those of you who bought my paintings - all the proceeds of which went to the two charities.

Woodstock continues to be a popular destination for art lovers. We'll be back in 2027 with more art events and more music!

Rod Craig

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Politics

We seem to be living in a period of electoral turbulence at all levels of government in this country, the result of which is a general political uncertainty throughout our nation, let alone in Oxfordshire. This has led many people to a feeling of cynicism with politicians and organisations at all levels, irrespective of party affiliations. It has also resulted in a noticeable lack of respect being shown both to the institutions of government and to those serving within them.

'Change' seems to be the new buzzword in politics which is defined as 'to make or to become different'. We need change to happen.

At local government level within Woodstock and Bladon, we do have a change in representation. Congratulations and good wishes are due to our newly elected District Councillor, Hannah Stephanie Massey, who replaces Cllr Julian Cooper after many long years of his serving our local community. Thank you Julian.

Within Woodstock Town Council, we also have a change in leadership. We have a new Mayor, Cllr Sarah Williams. We also have a new Deputy Mayor, Cllr Barry Wheatley. I wish them well in their endeavours to serve our town and to effect some positive changes, both internally and externally, to benefit the lives of those who live here.

Why do we need significant change here in Woodstock?

The answer I submit, would be not only to benefit the lives of our electorate but also, in order to increase the level of respect due our town council and to individual town councillors, some (not all) of whom are hard working and none of whom are paid financially in their roles. They are volunteers seeking to represent us.

Respect, in the sense of 'thinking highly of' and 'valuing' someone or something, is an attribute most individuals and organisations seek but which has to be earned by the openness, transparency, conduct and integrity of individual Councillors as well as of the Town Council as a whole.

Within Woodstock, 11 local Councillors took office unopposed in May 2024. Their number was subsequently increased to 12. I am sure all our new councillors took office with the best of intentions to make a difference to the town. However, since that time, we have evidenced what can only be described as 'a merry go round' of councillor turnover.

My calculations, indicate that since May 2024, there have been no fewer than 7 Councillor

resignations. I believe that in several cases, these resignations were due to new members feeling their good intentions to contribute to Council were being thwarted by the existing powers of a few longer term Councillors, whose prior knowledge of procedures enabled the control of processes and decisions. This is unfortunate.

The high turnover of new Councillors discourages the introduction of fresh ideas in the management of town affairs, because power in decision making is retained by the few longer serving members.

'Knowledge is power', as the well quoted adage states. In my view though, there is a need for fresh thinking and a greater transparency and openness in the conduct of Council matters. This would increase the amount of respect shown to local government by an increasingly disillusioned electorate.

Within the membership, respect for the Council is also diminished by the activities of some individual town councillors.

So for example, where an individual Councillor decides to take legal action for damages against his/her own Council, would it not have been appropriate for that Councillor to step down from Council affairs pending the outcome of that litigation with the Council? Would there not have been a conflict of interest here? Many would think so.

Similarly, where an individual Councillor is accused of significant criminal offences and is bailed pending a Court hearing, surely decency would dictate to him/her that the individual Councillor step back from Council affairs pending the outcome of the Court case?

To continue as a member in such instances can surely do little to enhance the respect shown to fellow council representatives, nor to our town council as a whole?

There is also a glaring need for greater transparency, openness and accountability within Council. This is an essential requirement of democracy. The electorate should feel included and not disregarded by those purporting to represent it. For example, public participation should be properly reported within Council Minutes (as I believe is the case at District Council level), so that those not present at a meeting can read what matters have been raised by members of the public. Council should respond openly to any such concerns, rather than remain silent and muzzled at the time, which is currently the case.

In addition, to enable greater transparency, every effort should be made to publish all Council meetings well in advance. ETCs should indeed only be reserved for 'extraordinary' council meetings.

The public should receive advance information of all such meetings at the same time as Councillors themselves. Most interested people are every bit as busy as Councillors are. This is merely a matter of courtesy and mutual respect and indicative of a desire by the Council to include the public within its affairs.

To conclude therefore, I hope there will also be some positive changes within our Woodstock Town Council, to bring about greater inclusion and interaction with the electorate. Several Councillors work so hard on our behalf and to them we owe true thanks. However, with greater inclusivity, integrity and openness, our Town Council and particularly its individual councillors, will undoubtedly regain the respect which, to some extent, has been diminished by the recent conduct of one or two individuals and of recent Council affairs.

Jo Lamb

Editors Note: Jo was a Town Councillor from 2021 until 2024, and was Deputy Mayor for two of those years.

**PLEASE
DO NOT FEED
THE DUCKS!**



Ducks are in the town centre because people feed them. The ducks then wander into the road with the cars. Ducks in the road = DEAD DUCKS. Squished ducks or ducklings is not pleasant. If they are not fed they will return to their natural habitat.

BE KIND TO THE DUCKS... STOP FEEDING THEM.

Dear Editor,

Land east of Perdiswell Farm 25/01510/OUT
East of Park View, between the A44 and A4095, is a large field. A proposal for a development of 500 houses there, with 1254 residents forecast by Oxfordshire County Council, is under consideration.

Somewhat surprisingly, this land is not in Woodstock. It is actually in the parish of Shipton-on-Cherwell & Thrupp. This presents a number of challenges. The residents on that estate are likely to use facilities within the town, but their council tax to support those facilities will not come to the area.

These are some of the elements that may be of interest to local residents:

Where will the S106 money go?

Legally, any S106 contribution as mitigation for the additional development will go to Cherwell District Council. Active discussions are underway to try to establish that some of that money should come to Woodstock (e.g. to provide new sports provision at The Marlborough School, support the new GP surgery, enhance current library facilities).

Education

OCC policy is that the children from this development will be taken out of the catchment area for Woodstock Primary School. It is also anticipated that there will not be capacity for secondary school-aged children to go to The Marlborough School. OCC policy is unclear exactly where the children from this development will go to school in the short term.

Parking

On street parking will be controlled by a Residents Parking Scheme. Park View is already seeing increased on street parking with recent changes in Woodstock, will this lead to even more overflow parking?

Traffic

OCC recognizes a significant likely impact on traffic on the A44/A4095. New speed restrictions will be imposed on roads around the area, with other measures to mitigate/manage traffic. For example, a new traffic-light controlled junction is requested by OCC on the A44 where Cowells Road joins from Park View.

Affordable homes

It is currently proposed that these are allocated to Cherwell residents (who could currently live as far away as Banbury).

This proposal is likely to come to Cherwell Planning Committee sometime from July 2026 onwards.

Sam Dawson

Editors Note: Sam is a Parish Councillor for Shipton-On-Cherwell & Thrupp

Fifty Years On - 1976

Town Mayor of Woodstock - Dr Robert Edwards

Fifty years ago this month I had the honour to be elected Town Mayor of Woodstock. Our Town Council, now with the status of a Parish Council, was two years old following the abolition of the Borough Council which had been run with its own Town Clerk, Borough Surveyor, street sweepers, dustcart and sewage works. We were left with ownership of the Town Hall, Community Centre, Post Office, numbers 2 & 4 Market Street, two cemeteries and the New Road Playground. The Magistrates' Court paid to use the Town Hall where it had sat for two hundred years.



Remembrance day 1976. The 11th Duke of Marlborough and Robert Edwards with the Chairman of the County Council, Ann Cooper and John Whitlock.

Woodstock was still the town in which Ken and Viv Wiggins baked and delivered bread daily, Banburys thrived and the Co-Op had three aproned butchers in the shop. If we asked for cornflakes in Turrells, the grocers, Miss Fawdry would knock the packet off the top shelf with her broom. At Pitts, the fishmonger, we queued while Ken Pitts regaled us with tales of Pegasus Bridge on D-Day and winter in the Ardenne in 1945.

Our excellent part time Town Clerk was Ann Cooper ably supported behind the scenes by her husband Roy who did a great deal of pro bono work helping her with the accounts.

In the local election several new councillors had been elected. They recognized that they knew even less about local government than I did and were almost silent in meetings supporting almost everything that the Clerk or I proposed. Unlike more recent times there were no disputes so we tried to manufacture problems that might give rise to some lively discussion and make them feel that they were spending a useful evening. Quiet still reigned. At the newly invented Annual Town Meeting only two ratepayers attended.



The opening of new premises for Woodstock Social Club. Mary Bevan, Albert Henman, Robert Edwards, Charlie Brooks, Barbara Edwards, Flossie Budd.

As a council we were indeed naïve in the ways of local government. We thought that by asking for a bypass we were doing something useful. It took a few years before we understood that we were not even on the bottom rung of the County Council's capital works programme.

We were blithely unaware of the need for a Council to hold cash reserves in case of future crises. We thought that we had sufficient for the following year so we did not ask the ratepayers for any tax that year. Reality struck two years later when an architect reported terrible crumbling of the stone cladding on the Town Hall. This cost £120,000 at a time when many houses in Woodstock cost £5,000.

On the Water Meadows, as now, there were mill stream banks to be mended. I recruited Town Councillors, the PTA and the Natural History Society to clean up the meadows. We filled seven skips with scrap iron. We then sowed wild flower seeds which Terry Summers had been given by Miriam Rothschild. The result was a meadow full of sticky grass.

On several occasions I was invited to functions such as old peoples' teas and realized far too late that I was expected to give a speech. On the worst occasion the twenty first birthday of The Marquess of Blandford was being celebrated with a lunch for two hundred tenant farmers and their wives in the Great Hall at Blenheim Palace. When I sat down it became apparent that farmer Geoff Green of Coombe and I were joint guests of honour. I realized with a sinking heart that I would have to speak. Geoff made a fluent and witty speech. I then stumbled through about four sentences explaining that as Mayor I was the longest lasting tenant because for some long lost reason the town pays £4-6s-8d to the Marlboroughs. This was rent originally paid to Queen Elizabeth I for sundry chantry properties expropriated by Edward VI.



Receiving the new town flag from Miss Flossie Budd

The town flag with Woodstock's ancient coat of arms became ragged and torn beyond repair. With my dislike of spending other people's money I did not believe that the ratepayers should pay for a new one so I appealed for a donor. Flossie Budd the last survivor of an ancient Woodstock baking family generously bought the new pennant.

The Silver Jubilee of the Queen's Coronation came at the end of my year. I was press ganged by the 11th Duke of Marlborough into running a collection for the Prince's Trust which Prince Charles was starting as a focus for the Jubilee. Nobody had yet heard of the Trust or could see the purpose of it. Nobody 'had time' to help. I trudged round much of the town collecting coppers from door to door. I am relieved to see that this Trust has now helped countless thousands of young people to get a start in the world. I left it for thirteen years before taking on another turn as Mayor beside the day job.

Robert Edwards

Woodstock Probus Club

Our AGM was held on 7 May when John Titchmarsh was enrolled as the new President, taking over from Alan Holder who has led us so well for the last year.

Although we had no talk on the 7 May, we did have a memorable outing to Worcester Cathedral on 12 May, organised by Frank Collingwood. We had a comfortable train ride from Hanborough through

beautiful Cotswold countryside to Worcester. At the Cathedral, very well informed guides were waiting to show us around.

The centuries-old Cathedral is vast and steeped in history. The last battle of the Civil War was fought there in 1651, when Royalists under Charles II were heavily outnumbered and badly defeated. Charles fled to France and did not return to England for 9 years. Inside the Cathedral is the tomb of King John, an unpopular monarch who lost most of the land he had owned in France. He is famous for signing Magna Carta and his legendary conflict with Robin Hood. Although the Parliamentary forces did much damage to the cathedral, including destroying the stained glass windows, they did not vandalise King John's tomb, perhaps because he was a king. The windows were restored in the Victorian era.

In the afternoon we visited the library, one of the most important in the country, which has a fascinating collection of ancient books and texts. The manuscripts look remarkably crisp and neat, in part because the ink used (made from oak apple gall and iron sulphate) has weathered the centuries rather well. The writing is small but very well organised with interesting coloured diagrams inserted. Some of the texts were used by students and have annotations, and doodles to indicate passages that needed special study. Apparently, each year two monks were sent to what is now Worcester College to study. Thought to be one of the most important manuscripts in the Cathedral is the Antiphoner, a collection of music going back to the 13th century. Somehow it escaped the ravages of the Reformation and the Civil war. We also learned a new word- Incunabula. Look it up.

Thanks to Frank Collingwood for organising such a pleasant day out.

David Anderson, Past President

Keeping an eye on our Town

PCSO 9356 Helen Duffield, or just Helen as she is known to the locals, on her 'beat' in a new and flashy Kubota, outside Kingfisher Art's pop-up shop.



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, balanced, and accurate.

This month we report on 1 Extraordinary Town Council meeting, the Blenheim/WTC dialogue meeting, and the Annual Town Council Meeting. And as part of our regular section where we offer other Councils to provide copy, we have a contribution this month from WODC - supplied by Elizabeth Poskitt and our newly elected Councillor Hannah Massie.

Woodstock Town Council

Extraordinary Town Council Meeting on 28 April 2026

8 councillors and 6 members of the public attended the meeting. It was not clear whether the OWL recording device was working.

Public Participation: There was no public participation on the agenda.

Planning: There was no planning on the agenda.

Mayor and Clerk Reports: The Mayor said there would be a brief memorial service at the War Memorial on 7 May at 11am to mark the anniversary of VE Day. As the last Council meeting as Mayor, Councillor Grant thanked the Clerk and Deputy Mayor for their help over the 18 months she had been in post. The Clerk said he was approaching companies regarding Christmas lights for the town. Work in the **Water Meadows** was moved to the private session following the exclusion of press and public.

Environment Working Group: An extensive report was presented by Councillors Wheatley and Connolly bringing together the current position on trees, cemeteries, playgrounds, the Old Woodstock Line reserve (OWL), parking at Hensington Road car park, the Water Meadows and leisure and sport. Recommendations to Council were as follows. The Clerk was requested to arrange the overdue **annual inspection of trees** with priority given to the OWL reserve, the Water Meadows and the cemeteries. The Clerk was requested to bring forward a more cost-effective inspection regime for the **playgrounds**. Councillor Cooper suggested talking to Blenheim/Pye Homes with respect to their management of the Park View playground and upcoming Hill Rise and Banbury Road sites. The Council was asked to consider a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the **OWL reserve** and recognition given to the warden,

Bob Pomfret, and volunteers. The Clerk was asked to contact Oxfordshire County Council Highways regarding the culvert from the **Water Meadows** and West Oxfordshire District Council to address the blocked Brook Hill gully/trench. The Council agreed to Councillors Grant and Wheatley continuing their survey of **Hensington Road car park** and submit their findings to West Oxfordshire District Council.

The Clerk informed the Council that the resolution passed at the meeting on 14 April relating to the budget allocation of two benches for the OWL reserve was **non-compliant** with the Council's financial regulations and reserves policy and was therefore void and required reconsideration. In his report, the Clerk explained the budgetary process, where mistakes were made and his recommendations. The Mayor suggested the motion should be brought back to Council when unspecified items were being discussed at the meeting of 26th May.

Property: A reinstatement cost assessment report (valuation for **insurance purposes**) of the property owned by the Council was presented and passed by Council. Regarding the proposal for **solar panels for the roof of the Community Centre**, the Clerk has contacted Low Carbon Hub (LCH) to seek possible funding. LCH are happy for the Council to apply for their Green Fund but to be eligible they would need to carry out an energy audit of the property. The audit and report costs are covered by the LCH's community benefit fund. If successful, the LCH Green Fund would cover 25% of the project cost up to £10K. The Clerk is aiming for a meeting mid-May.

Council meeting dates for the next financial year were agreed and a suggestion on the reorganisation of Councillor roles by the Mayor was dismissed.

As a neighbouring parish, notification of the draft **Wootton Neighbourhood Plan** was given by the Wootton Clerk for consultation by Woodstock Town Council but no discussion took place at this meeting.

The Mayor and Councillor Cooper then discussed the rules regarding the Council going into private session which continued as the public was leaving the Mayor's Parlour.

For full details please refer to the Town Council website for agendas, documents and minutes.

Graham Brown

Letters are important for our Community
Please send letters to editor@wobl.news
The deadline for the July issue is
Sunday 21 June

WTC/Blenheim Palace Dialogue Meeting on 11 May 2026

Blenheim Palace were pleased to meet with Woodstock Town Council on Monday 11 May as part of their quarterly meeting programme. Meetings are public, held in the Town Hall, and advertised by Woodstock Town Council. In future, meetings will also be advertised on the Blenheim Communities Facebook page.

The extended Park View development by Pye Homes could be with the Planning Committee at Cherwell District Council in July 2026.

The children's playground at Hill Rise will stay open as long as possible, prior to building work, and then will be upgraded in its new position.

The Owen Mumford site is the strongly preferred option of the working party for the new Doctors Surgery (importantly, supported by the Doctors and the NHS). This site provides for the expansion of the surgery, as required for the granting of NHS funding, as well as adequate parking. Much work has yet to be done before the site can proceed to a planning application, but Blenheim will continue to work to facilitate a viable option and thank Calum Miller MP and others for their work on this project.

Blenheim has completed work at Benns Close to mitigate the flood risk in the area. This work should hopefully alleviate the concern residents feel until Thames Water and Oxfordshire County Council Highway address the underlying issues. Blenheim are also supporting other agencies, including Woodstock Town Council, on work near the Water Meadows.

Events at Blenheim remain the same as 2025. Blenheim has undertaken several measures to ensure spill over parking doesn't affect the Town, including adding parking to the ticketing bundle. More work can still be done, and Blenheim is committed to continuing to monitor and address parking issues, wherever possible.

A member of the public asked about dogs off the lead in the Park area. Blenheim representatives explained that there has been a three-week public education programme before and during lambing season, to highlight the dangers to livestock, of free roaming dogs. Responses to this were positive, with a drop in reported cases of dogs off their lead, and this will be replicated throughout the year to ensure the continued safety of the animals and birds who call the Park their home.

For a more detailed coverage of the meeting, please check Woodstock Town Council website, where the minutes will be posted in due course.

Merilyn Davies, Head of Community Engagement at Blenheim

Annual Town Council Meeting on 12 May 2026

The Clerk, 10 Councillors, and 10 members of the public attended the meeting. It was not clear whether the OWL recording device was working.

Election of Town Mayor: Two Councillors were proposed and seconded. Cllr Williams received 5 votes; Cllr Wheatley received 5 votes. Cllr Grant gave her casting vote in favour of Cllr Williams who was duly elected Mayor for the coming year, and took the Chair.

Election of Deputy Mayor: Two Councillors were proposed and seconded. Cllr Grant received 2 votes; Cllr Wheatley received 7 votes. So Cllr Wheatley was duly elected Deputy Mayor for the coming year.

Councillors considered that a change of leadership of the Council was needed.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Parnes

Public Participation: One speaker asked that more notice is given of upcoming meetings to allow members of the public greater opportunity to attend. Town Council meeting dates are set and published a year in advance but Extraordinary Town Council Meetings are being called and advertised at very short notice and far from being 'extraordinary' and special, they aren't. They are just extra, additional. In the case of the recent Town & Palace Dialogue meeting, which members of the public would have surely welcomed the opportunity to attend, the notice was posted on the WTC website at 6.40pm on Friday for a meeting happening at 4.30pm on the following Monday.

Minutes from ETC Meeting of 28th April 2026:

Passed, but noted the typo at 22/04/22, that the decision was made to carry forward the discussion re Roles to the Annual Meeting.

Planning to consider the Councils response to applications:

Three applications were discussed and approved, subject to one of them having no objection from the conservation officer.

Appointment of Councillors Roles

Finance - Both Cllr Dawson & Cllr Wheatley will work with the Clerk. While the Clerk in his dual role as RFO completes the required processes to monitor the budget it was felt that Councillors would like a close overview.

Property - Cllr Grant was elected unopposed.

Planning - the excessive ETCs are due to the amount of planning applications. Consideration will be given to ways that these can be streamlined.

Staffing - Mayor, Dep Mayor, and Cllr's Dawson, Muthoni and Parnes, although if unable to attend a particular meeting, any Councillor may be co-opted.

Environmental Working Group - this was considered to have too broad a remit and it was voted to disband it, in its current format. Instead it was agreed that three committees would sit: 1) Water Meadows and Nature Reserves made up of three councillors. 2) Sports, Recreation and Playgrounds with three Councillors and 3) Cemeteries with two councillors with each reporting back to Council.

The remaining Working Groups were assembled: Surgery, Remembrance Day, Christmas Lights, Mayor's Carols, Town and Palace Dialogue, WODC Liaison, Airport Consultation Group.

Social Media Working Group - it was confirmed that for insurance purposes any posted content must be controlled by the Clerk and paid staff. No Social platforms are currently engaged with by the Town Council, but there was a view that more effective means of communicating is necessary, beyond relying on notice boards and website. This discussion will be brought back to the next meeting.

The Twinned Town Working Group was disbanded for lack of activity.

The Botley West Working Group - this is currently in abeyance until a decision is made.

The Woodstock Exhibition Foundation - two representatives stepped forward.

Review of Professional Bodies engaged by the Woodstock Town Council: The Clerk reported that many of the professional bodies listed have five year contracts and therefore there would be a cost to changing contractor prior to expiry.

A Councillor requested a spreadsheet identifying each contracted professional body and when their contract expired. The Clerk mentioned that this would take some time to put together as not all records were available, but in the meantime, Councillors asked that when a contract is coming up for renewal, three competitive quotations are sought as a matter of course.

Re **property insurance**, the suggestion was made that on the conclusion of the revaluation process, a broker be engaged to find the best value policy for Council's needs.

Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and Financial Regulations: All adopted

Policies and Procedures: All adopted

The meeting closed at 20:06

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

Annie Cripps

West Oxfordshire District Council

Elections were held for one of our two District Councillor positions on Thursday 8 May. Julian Cooper, after 40 years of almost continuous service as our District Councillor, decided to retire and not stand again. We thank him for the years of service he has given to our residents. He will continue to work for our residents as a member of Woodstock Town Council.

The election results were:

Hannah Massie (Lib Dems)	772
Eric Sukumaran (Conservative)	463
James Gibbs (Reform)	261
Barry Wheatley (Greens)	246
Sammy McDonald (Labour)	101

One third of WODC wards (16) were contested leading to a distribution of political parties as:

Liberal Democrats	20
Conservative	16
Labour	8
Green	4
Reform	1

The Alliance (Liberal Democrats, Labour and Green) running Council has agreed to continue with Cllr Andy Graham (also County Cllr for Woodstock and Bladon) as Leader of the Lib Dems, the largest group, will continue as Leader of Council. Other Council roles will be decided at the WODC Annual Meeting on Wednesday 20 May. Constitution changes mean there is now one Planning sub-committee namely the Development Management sub-committee (instead of Uplands and Lowlands) and an overall Strategic Planning Committee (previously Development Control Committee).

These elections will almost certainly (barring by-elections) be the last for WODC. Next year's elections will be for 'shadow' members for the new unitary body/bodies coming into being in 2028. We do not yet know whether all Oxfordshire will be one unitary or divided between two, or even three, unitaries so the ward/division covered by each 'shadow' candidate is still unknown. Interesting times!

Consultations. The Draft WODC Local Plan 2043 is due for public consultation in July.

An active consultation seeking your input is the Draft Interim Policy for Community Benefit Contributions and Community Shared Ownership for Low Carbon Energy Projects (eg. solar farms). Government legislation on this will not be ready until after 2028 so this interim policy could bridge that gap. The consultation is open until 14 June.

WODC District Cllrs Hannah Massie & Elizabeth Poskitt

Portrait of the Month - Jane Topliss



Jane Topliss came to Woodstock in 2003 for work, knowing nobody. She remembers walking the streets and feeling, almost immediately, that this small market town might one day become home. More than twenty years later, it has.

Much of what has rooted her here is community, and particularly Artists in Woodstock, the informal collective that is showcased each May as part of Oxfordshire Artweeks. While the festival stretches across the county, Woodstock gives it its own intimate character: paintings in shop windows, sculptures beside café doors, conversations spilling out of St Mary's Church and onto sunlit street corners.

Alongside a busy working week and a range of other commitments (including the golf club committee) Jane has become one of the quiet forces holding the group together, welcoming newcomers, connecting people, encouraging ideas into existence. There is nothing showy about it. The spirit of Artists in Woodstock feels much like the town itself: warm, generous, and genuinely collaborative.

What strikes you most, talking with Jane, is her simple belief that art and community are not separate things. In Woodstock, creativity is just another way of getting to know your neighbours. Another way of saying, without any fuss: you belong here.

Portrait of Jane Topliss taken by fine art portrait photographer, Pippa Hetherington.



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BLenheim PARK CRICKET CLUB

Blenheim Park Cricket Club – Players & Vice Presidents Wanted for 2026

Blenheim Park Cricket Club, based in Woodstock and playing on the South Lawn at Blenheim Palace, is looking to welcome new players for the 2026 season.

With strong local roots and a history on the South Lawn dating back to the 1950s, the club offers friendly cricket in a unique setting.

We are also seeking support through our annual Vice Presidency (£100), which helps fund the running of the club. Vice Presidents are recognised on our website and fixture card.

If you are local and would like to get involved as a player or vice president, please get in touch.

Dave Hughes - Dihughes1986@gmail.com - 07769 110258
Chairman, Blenheim Park Cricket Club

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Woodstock Exhibition Foundation

On Saturday 4 July a local author, Professor Janina Ramirez, will be giving a talk in St Mary Magdalene Church entitled 'From Lady Godiva to the Foundations of Spain. How legendary women prop up Nations!'. Tickets will be on sale in Woodstock's bookshop, newsagent and greengrocers and on the door. The talk will start at 7pm sharp and be followed by a Wine and Nibbles Reception.



Agustina de Aragón at the Battle of Zaragoza 2 July 1808

Janina is not only a Sunday Times bestselling author, but also an international Number 1 best selling author with her books translated into over 20 languages. She

is a BBC broadcaster and researcher. She has published widely on medieval history, art and literature and has written both fiction and non-fiction for adults and younger readers.

She gave a lively and enthusiastic talk in St Mary Magdalene in 2022 on her book *Femina*, which went on to be a Sunday Times Bestseller.

Janina Ramirez is a British art historian, cultural historian, and TV presenter. She specialises in interpreting symbols and examining works of art within their historical context.

She is currently Director of Studies in History of Art at Harris Manchester College, Oxford and Visiting Professor in Medieval Studies at the University of Lincoln.

She has taught at Warwick and Winchester Universities, and is now Course Director for the Undergraduate Certificate in History of Art at the Department for Continuing Education, Oxford University.

The profit from the evening will be used to give grants to Woodstock young people, who go to university or enter an apprenticeship. In 2025 we distributed £12,325 amongst 29 students and hope to do something similar this year. Please help by coming to the talk.

Frank Colingwood



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Wootton Talks

Our next speaker at 7.30pm on Friday 12 June is **Tom Fort**, renowned witty and engaging speaker. He last spoke in Wootton about his book chronicling the time his daughter-in-law took over a century-old hardware shop in Oxfordshire - with unexpected results. It was a Sunday Times Book of the Week and Country Life marvelled at its wry wit

On this occasion, Tom will be talking about his book, *Lido Land*, which charts his journey around the UK's lidos past and present, proving that lidos can tell us a great deal about social trends, progress and political ideology. He laments the lidos we have lost but celebrates those saved by persistent community organising, as well as taking a frank look into their future.

Tom will detail the sole surviving lido in Wales, built in 1927 to help miners wash off their daily dirt. He journeys to the Portobello Pool in Edinburgh where Sean Connery was once a lifeguard, and samples iconic pools in the seaside towns of Blackpool and Weston-super-Mare where the loosening of Victorian moral standards could be measured by the shrinking of swimming costumes.

He will also delve into the beauty queens competing for the Miss New Brighton crown at the Merseyside lido in 1966, as well as the mayor who finished the Guildford opening ceremony by stripping off his robes and gold chain and diving headfirst into the water.

On Friday 3 July, we welcome **Nicky Shaw**, a multi-award winning international set and costume designer working around the world mainly in opera, but also in theatre, musicals, television and film.

Entry for events in St Mary's Church is £10 in cash - and includes free food. Children over 16 welcome. Cards can be used to buy speakers' books. To reserve seats, please contact us through our website www.woottontalks.co.uk.

Andy Morgan (01993 813016)

Bladon Snippets from the Past

50 years ago there were not any official road names in the village and names of residents held sway. Many people were located in the Dukes houses both old and new.

Officials, mainly Fire Service pushed for this state of affairs to change as it was potentially dangerous, and the problem was resolved. The problem of which street name was used where, fell in the lap of the Parish Council.

Mary F. Sitch

Feastock 2026

If you haven't noticed via their Facebook and Instagram social posts recently, Feastock host tickets for 2026 have launched!....time to book your babysitters and get the recipe books out.

For those of you who have not been before, this is an excellent Community safari supper event which has been running for 5 years now; with Woodstock residents numbers hitting 80+ and funds raised (typically £1000) go to local charities. It really is a lot of fun; as every now and again you will notice (occasionally tipsy) neighbours walking in every direction through Town, to get to their next feed.....The format essentially is meet for drinks (kindly sponsored again by the team at Breckon & Breckon) and find out whose home you will be dining at for Starter, Main and Dessert. This year, you pay 'zero' if you host 6 others for a 'main' course. The evening wraps with a post-drinks party at a local restaurant/pub venue, into the late hours.

The eventbrite link to sign up is here <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/feastock2026-wine-dine-and-wander-at-woodstocks-3-course-safari-supper-tickets-1987413234484?aff=oddtcreator>; and also on socials (above) - you can sign up as a solo Traveller or as a pair.



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Nature Matters

June brings that lovely moment in early summer when the Oxfordshire countryside feels lush, settled, and quietly abundant. Everything seems to be growing with confidence rather than haste, turning even an ordinary walk into something rich with life and possibility.



Oxfordshire wildflowers

Meadows are at their peak - a tall, colourful mix of grasses and wildflowers. Buttercups, red clover, knapweed and ox-eye daisies are still going strong, now joined by meadow vetchling, bird's-foot trefoil and the first scabious. These flowers draw in a wonderful variety of insects. Along hedge banks and ditches you'll find dog roses arching in pale pink, frothy meadowsweet beginning to open, and bramble flowers that seem to welcome every passing pollinator. Foxgloves stand tall in woodland edges and clearings, their spotted bells busy with bumblebees.

The hedgerows feel particularly lively. Families of great tits and robins dart between branches, whitethroats sing their scratchy little songs from hidden perches, and wrens suddenly burst into loud, bright notes from low cover. Skylarks still rise high above the fields, while swifts cut through the sky in energetic groups, their sharp calls carrying on the breeze.

Mammals are more noticeable now, especially at the edges of the day. Foxes trot along field margins at dawn or dusk, badgers follow their familiar paths with purposeful snuffling, and water voles make their gentle plops and leave neat little nibble marks along the banks.

Insect life is wonderfully varied. Meadow browns, ringlets, large skippers, small tortoiseshells and marbled whites drift through the longer grass, while commas, red admirals and painted ladies appear on warmer days. Dragonflies zip over ponds and streams in bright, purposeful loops, and damselflies perch delicately on rushes and water mint.

Down by the streams, pale mayflies rise in fluttering clouds above the riffles, often triggering those classic tight-ring rises from trout. Water boatmen, whirligig beetles and the occasional diving beetle add to the quiet activity on the surface.

Evenings are long and gentle. Bats emerge confidently, following their familiar hunting routes above hedges, fields and water. Moths take over from the daytime butterflies — you might even spot a hummingbird hawkmoth hovering at honeysuckle.

June feels calm, generous and wonderfully grounded. It's simply a month full of life, best enjoyed by wandering slowly, looking closely, and letting the countryside show you what it has to offer.

Mayfly Dun



This Boneshaker from the 1860s is one of our 50 historic cycles showing the development of the bicycle since its invention in 1817. The rider sat on a spring, hence the name. Come and see some of the inventions that failed the test of time.

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Blenheim Park Cricket Club



Blenheim Park is a unique cricket club and they play locally in Woodstock on the beautiful South Lawn directly in front of the Palace. As a club, we not only welcome all cricket supporters but anyone wanting a fun day out with their family. A perfect place for a family picnic or to enjoy a glass or two in the sunshine.

We thank our VPs and sponsors for their support and welcome them in watching any of our games or to just come along and enjoy the fantastic cricket teas, provided by local caterers.

If you are interested, as a new player or as a vice president, please contact David Hughes on dihughes1986@gmail.com or call 07769 110258.

Late May, June, and early July Fixtures

Sun 31 May	Home	West Wittering CC
Sun 7 Jun	Away	Turville CC
Sun 14 Jun	Home	Bibury CC
Sun 21 Jun	Home	Isis CC
Wed 24 Jun	Away	Middleton Stoney CC
Sun 28 Jun	Home	Exeter College
Sun 5 July	Home	Cricketers Club
Sun 12 July	Home	Checkendon
Wed 15 July	Home	Supporters Event
Sun 19 July	Home	Eynsham
Sun 26 July	Home	Islip

Please see website for latest up-to-date details

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A World of Music at The Woodstock Jazz Club

Woodstock Jazz Club, described by its founders Jayne and Paul Jefferies as “the town’s best-kept secret,” has hosted some of the jazz world’s top musicians - but owes its eight-year musical legacy to pure chance.

On a walk around Woodstock, Jayne and Paul noticed a new building being put up behind St Hugh’s Church in Hensington Road. “We hadn’t seen the building before, so we decided to be nosy,” said Jayne. “We immediately thought that it would be a great venue for live music, but the acoustics were terrible! We mentioned this to the woman in charge, then forgot about it. A month later she rang and invited us back. An acoustic engineer had worked wonders with sound boards, and we haven’t looked back since!”



Paul & Jayne Jefferies

The Witney-based couple now run two music operations - The Little Live Music Company (www.thelittlelivemusiccompany.co.uk), which stages monthly jazz gigs in Witney, Woodstock, Burford and Cirencester, and Music Box, which puts on blues and pop events in Witney, Burford and Chinnor.

Music didn’t immediately bring them together - Paul is a renowned jazz bass player and teacher, and Jayne appreciated classical and pop music, but disliked jazz. Her son, Ben Holder, is a highly talented violin virtuoso with a love of jazz, who started playing gigs with Paul on bass. “Through them, I started getting into jazz, which I now realise is one of the most satisfying of all forms of music. These musicians can play anything, and when they get together in a setting like the Woodstock Jazz Club, that’s when the magic starts,” said Jayne.

At the age of 50, Paul decided to switch from his business life equipping hospitals in developing countries to become a full-time professional bassist - a decision that led him and Jayne to start putting on live gigs in the Oxfordshire area.

So why choose Woodstock? “As well as finding the perfect venue by chance, we love the warmth, enthusiasm and sociability of what is mainly a very local audience,” said Jayne.

And what about the best ever evening at the Woodstock Jazz Club? “The Jake McMurchie Quartet, celebrating the music of Duke Ellington, the Denny Ilett Band with pianist Tom Kincaid, and the Ben Holder Quartet are among my favourites,” said Paul. “But as Jayne says - when the audience really enjoys the music, that’s the best gig!”



Catriona Bourne

That enthusiasm is shared by Catriona Bourne, a harpist and flautist who was the Woodstock Jazz Club’s star attraction at the end of May. “The audience was so lovely and supportive that I really enjoyed the gig, playing for the first time with what was basically a house band of fantastic local musicians.

“We had about 40 minutes of rehearsal to familiarise the band with my music and then we were off - a really great experience! I’m looking forward to more opportunities to play locally,” said Catriona, whose mother Sarah is Rector of Woodstock and Bladon.

The next Woodstock Jazz Club concert features the Ben Holder Gypsy Swing Band, inspired by Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli, at St Hugh’s Church on June 26, starting at 19.30.

John Orme



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Woodstock Literature Society

Review of April's Talk by Carolyn Kirby: A Georgian Journey

Carolyn Kirby opened her absorbing talk with an overview of her approach to writing, a process which can take years depending on the amount of research material available. Carolyn felt writing *Ravenglass*, set during the Jacobite revolution in 1745, had taken her on a journey of discovery. She consulted the travelogues of the time and the importance of 18th century travel within 18th century novels, which appealed to all readers regardless of gender. Were they memoirs or true histories as lines blurred between fiction and non-fiction?



Carolyn Kirby being introduced by Linda Glees

Daniel Defoe was an important reference. Defoe considered how man has impacted on the environment - people over topography. His description of Whitehaven; isolated, hard to get to, its wealth created by fossil fuels was an inspiration, anchoring it as Kit's hometown. From 1719-1724 Defoe wrote thirteen long letters, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, a Georgian tour of all counties in the newly created United Kingdom by the Acts of Union in 1707. Defoe referenced the construction site of Blenheim Palace and Park. He was particularly impressed by the single span bridge costing £20,000. This armchair travel was in fact a triumph of memory and imagination over a lifetime. When published the author was stated as 'by a Gentleman'. Defoe did not wish to be identified as the author as he was trying to create a brand of travel guides.

Travelogue authors had real life ripping yarns to tell. William Dampier's *A New Voyage Around the World* was a popular read. These adventures were as exciting to Georgian readers as the dawning of space exploration has been to our generation. One of the

most famous books blending fact with fiction is Robert Louis Stevenson's *Robinson Crusoe*, based on the real-life experiences of Alexander Selkirk a sailor marooned on an uninhabited island in the Pacific Ocean for over four years. The book contains perhaps one of the most dramatic episodes in fiction when Robinson Crusoe finds a single footprint in the sand - a masterpiece of the novelist's imagination.

The blurred lines of fact and fiction in travel writing and attitudes towards the slave trade arise in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko or the Royal Slave*. Olaudah Equiano's autobiography *The interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* is a phenomenal travelogue covering North America and the Caribbean. Although there is ambiguity whether he was born in slavery, here the truth is less important than the power of the story. Tobias Smollett's *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, telling of travels in France and Italy through a collection of letters, was one of Charles Dickens' favourite novels. Smollett's descriptions of Edinburgh influenced Carolyn's creation of Kit's Ravenglass world.

Modern attitudes towards fact/fiction blending was considered, looking at reactions to 'lies' and 'truth' in memoirs, citing *The Salt Path* by Raynor Winn, which the publisher claimed was unflinchingly honest BUT was not all it seemed and some readers demanded refunds. Carolyn was fascinated by the varying reader reactions. Why was it so important for it to be true? Conversely, the family of Karl Ove Knausgaard felt *A Death in the Family: My struggle 1* was too true.

The novel came of age in 1813 with Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* where character journeys evolve. A year later Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* became the most influential work in modern history of the novel, a coming-of-age story set in a similar mini world to *Ravenglass*, containing war as well as a romance providing equal appeal to men and women. Jane Austen was vexed by Scott's runaway success, on top of his poetry. However, *Pride & Prejudice* has stood the test of time so perhaps Jane Austen had the last laugh!

Julia Johnson

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Oxford Bus and Morris Motors Museums

Our 1948 Morris 10 Series M emerged from our workshop on Bank Holiday Monday 25 May after a major restoration. While in our workshop, we rebuilt the engine, attached a new clutch assembly, repainted and polished the bodywork, replated the chrome, upholstered the interior and reupholstered and refurbished the original seats.



1948 Morris 10 Series M with some of the restoration team

We know that the car was first registered on 31 March 1948 as HON 490. On 10 June 1961 it was transferred into the ownership of Dennis Flowers who lived near Coventry. Twenty years later the Flowers family donated the car to the Coventry Transport Museum from which the Morris Motors Museum acquired it in December 2011.

The Morris 10 Series M was launched in September 1938, a wholly rethought 10hp model with a four-cylinder 1,140cc engine.

The main new feature was the mono-construction that was both draught and sound insulated. This was a new way of building cars replacing a separate body mounted on a chassis. It was not aesthetically pleasing, but the body was Morris's first unitary construction. The design was up-to-date with a better-conceived front end than the competing Vauxhall model.

Morris put wood into the sills for further strengthening. To reassure customers that the new technology was safe, Morris carried out a demonstration in May 1939, crashing a new Morris 10 Series M into the previous Series II Ten of the old design. The Series M came out best.

The Second World War halted production of the Series M when the Cowley factory's output was diverted to war needs. Nevertheless 27,020 units of these cars had been sold by May 1941.

When the war ended, once permission was granted by the Government, production restarted not only in England but also in India and Australia.

There were two versions produced, one with a sliding roof at £305 plus purchase tax, and the other had a fixed head at £295 plus purchase tax. However, there were materials shortages and car manufacturers were directed to prioritise exports to gain scarce foreign currency. The Government also maintained a high rate of purchase tax to depress home demand. After the war, a few modifications were made to the Series M such as the bonnet grill which was rounder. Another 80,990 cars were sold before the Series M model was replaced.

There will be free heritage bus rides at 12.15 and 2.15pm on Sundays 7 and 21 June. The latter date is Father's Day when we shall give free entry to the museums to dads accompanied by their under-16 children. The dads will also be given a free bacon butty!

Frank Collingwood

Keep It Local Mushrooms

I have never felt so good about drinking coffee at Blenheim Palace! Or, indeed, eating their mushroom dishes. Because, did you know, a fun and innovative organisation called Tumblebug has created a regenerative circular food system based on the 400,000 cups of coffee consumed at Blenheim every year.

How does it work? Tumblebug combines spent coffee grounds with sawdust from Blenheim's mill to create a mushroom-growing substrate. Gourmet mushrooms are then grown on the regenerative farm Tumblebug has built on the Blenheim Estate, producing chef-grade varieties like Golden Oyster, Lion's Mane and Nemeko.

Mushrooms are harvested daily and used almost immediately. When running at full capacity, around 15kg goes to the Palace kitchens and gardens, with the remaining 85kg distributed through Oxfam Farm to Fork and delivered to local pubs and restaurants. By bike, of course.

It doesn't stop there. After harvest, the remaining substrate is turned into peat-free biochar compost and fertiliser, capturing carbon, reducing emissions and regenerating soil health. This is then used in Blenheim's no-dig vegetable beds in the walled garden and greenhouses. I can't think of a better way of keeping it local!

Tumblebug, by the way, is the friendly name for a dung beetle, those unsung ecological heroes that consume, bury and nest in manure, decomposing waste, recycling nutrients back into the soil and reducing pest populations.

Cheers, Vanessa Ayres



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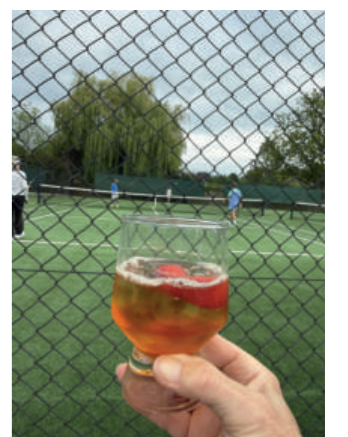
More details will be available in the coming weeks. If you would like to register your interest and receive further information, please email either Yoland Johnson or Simon Heighes
yolandmsmyth@btinternet.com
sjheigh@gmail.com

Tennis - A Game for all Seasons

Woodstock Tennis Club is always active all the year round, playing right through winter and summer alike. Woodstock enjoyed a successful Winter season this year in the Oxfordshire League, with [clockwise from top left] the Ladies A and Men's A teams both winning their divisions, the Ladies C being promoted from theirs, and the Men's team winning the Midweek League.



But although the club runs teams across a wide ability range, it's not just about team tennis. Social play is thriving likewise throughout the year, with friendly and inclusive club sessions three times a week, and sociable events like the tournament played at the start of May with a rolling handicap to ensure close games. A great atmosphere, with new members warmly welcomed, and played as one part competitive and three parts fun, the same ratio as the Pimm's and lemonade served with Wimbledon-esque strawberries while watching the Final. It's a club for all and a sport for all seasons.



For all club news and info, including membership details, just go to www.wbtc.org.uk


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Updates on 'Botley West'

Strongly worded letters from our MPs

Calum Miller, MP for Bicester and Woodstock and Layla Moran, MP for Oxford West and Abingdon both sent strongly worded letters at the end of April to Secretary of State (SoS), Ed Miliband's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

Layla's Letter

In her letter dated 29th April, Layla writes: "I am concerned by the sheer extent of the gaps in information highlighted by your formal response to the applicant on 14th April 2026 in relation to the Botley West Solar proposal."

"Many key issues remain unresolved and key parties are being cut out of the post examination process."

"Matters that were examined at length during the Planning Inspectorate's Examination, including alternative site selection, grid connection and deliverability, impact on Blenheim World Heritage Site, landscape and visual effects, ecological mitigation, flood risk, aviation issues, compulsory acquisition and Residential Visual Amenity Assessments have had to be revisited as evidence remains disputed or is incomplete."

"Your requests for further information from Botley West implicitly acknowledge wide ranging concerns. Given the clock is ticking on the 8 week timetable set out in the 26th of March statement, clarity is urgently needed on how this next stage will be conducted. Affected communities need the opportunity to engage so that confidence in the fairness and robustness of the process can be restored."

Read Layla's full letter at stopbotleywest.com

Calum's Letters

Calum's earlier letter dated 26th March criticised the SoS's delay of decision, arguing that "throughout the examination there were repeated and serious questions about the adequacy of the applicant's work" and asking "why was the application not refused and the developer invited to return with a more robust and properly evidenced scheme?"

His concerns were proved entirely justified in light of the unprecedented number of issues raised in the SoS's letter dated 14th April and its highly unusual call for a complete redesign at the decision stage after such a thorough examination.

In Calum's second letter dated 30th April he asks why he and Layla have not been included in the list of Interested Parties to whom the SoS's letter dated 14th April is addressed. He also asks for their promised but cancelled meeting with Michael Shanks (Minister in DESNZ department) to be reinstated. Read Calum's letters at stopbotleywest.com

PLEASE ACT NOW

Write to your MP expressing your support and concerns. This can be a very brief message of support or a longer letter detailing your concerns.

A large number of letters will provide evidence of the widespread concerns for our MPs to take to their meeting - if that happens - or for their future representations on our behalf.

The key questions are:

1. Given serious flaws in the design indicated by the large number of questions and calls for redesign in the SoS's letter dated 14 April, why was the application not refused outright, rather than the examination extended?
2. Why is there no clear explanation of how the affected communities can engage in this extension of the examination?
3. Why are MPs not included in the list of Interested Parties?

Please send your letters via email to:

Calum Miller: calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk

Layla Moran: layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

If you are a constituent - please include your full name and address including your postcode and personal email address in your letter.

WATCH OUT FOR...

Watch out for the Applicant's answers to the 70+ questions asked by the SoS, which are due by 9 June. Visit stopbotleywest.com to read the answers and other updates shortly afterwards - and to get the latest news on the application and decision.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Woodstock in Bloom

The standard treatment for daffodils is to allow the leaves to live on for six weeks after the flowers fade so that they store up enough energy in the bulbs ready for next year's flowering. Our new white multi-headed daffodils in the wooden plant holders were a late flowering variety. They consequently had to be lifted only two weeks after their flowers faded in order to make way for the Summer planting of pelargoniums (geraniums) and silver leaved senecio cineraria. If we are very lucky the bulbs will be large enough for planting again in October.

I am deeply grateful to Andrew Mills, the Head Gardener at Blenheim Palace, who was again very generously supplied the Summer annual plants and one again grateful to our faithful band of waterers.

Robert Edwards

Woodstock Literary Connections

Henry Woudhuysen, author and editor
Interviewed in Woodstock by Judd Flogdell



Henry Woudhuysen at The Feathers Hotel. Credit: Judd Flogdell

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet and interview Henry Woudhuysen at *The Feathers Hotel*. Henry and his wife moved to Woodstock after retiring from his position as Rector (head) of Lincoln College in Oxford. His research covers literature and descriptive bibliography (or the history of the book as a physical object).

JF: To set the scene, tell us where were you born and grew up, and how you came to live in Woodstock?

HW: My father was Dutch, but I was born in Fulham, went to school and grew up in London, before spending nine years in Oxford. I have lived in Woodstock since 2024. We wanted a different sort of house, and to live somewhere quiet, but with essential facilities and community life on the doorstep.

JF: Did you come from a 'bookish' background?

HW: My father worked in book design during the 1940s and '50s, and my great-grandfather was keeper of printed books at the British Museum (1919–24). Some of my work is related to my interest in the book as a material object, but now my great weakness is buying and collecting books.

JF: Tell us about a favourite book or books from your schooldays?

HW: My great-grandfather went on holiday to Davos, in Switzerland where he got to know Robert

Louis Stevenson who was there for the clean air, having suffered from Tuberculosis. Stevenson had a small, table-top printing press, or 'parlour press' on which he printed his poems and wood engravings. He produced a book of short poems called *Moral Emblems* and gave a copy to my great-grandfather, along with one of his handwritten poems.

JF: You have followed an academic career, beginning in Oxford. What did you study there, and how did it progress from there?

HW: I read English Literature at Pembroke in the 1970s, and then was a Junior Research Fellow at Lincoln College from 1979 to 1982, when I went on to work at University College London for 30 years. In 2014, I returned to Oxford as Rector of Lincoln College where I stayed until my retirement.

JF: In addition to all your other roles, I'm amazed you managed to find time for even more bookish things, including being a Curator of the University Libraries in Oxford for several years, and publishing about topics including Renaissance English Literature and the history of the book.

HW: I was invited by Oxford University Press, to meet Michael Suarez SJ, after which I agreed to edit *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (2 vols) with him. It took seven years to do, and contained over 5,000 entries and 1.1m words. Besides editing the essays I compiled the index of names; I worked out that its columns would fill 2 cricket pitches if laid end to end!

JF: In 2025, you became a Trustee of the Oxford Literary Festival (OLF), which was started by enterprising people in Woodstock. Can you tell us a bit more about how this came about?

HW: Whilst Rector at Lincoln College, I encouraged it to open its doors to host more external events, e.g. some of the OLF events. After I retired, I was invited to become an OLF Trustee by Sally Dunsmore and Tony Byrne, who I think have created a very good thing for the city and University - something that benefits everyone, given its broad scope and dynamic evolution.

JF: Do you any writing projects underway now?

HW: I have submitted a proposal for a six-volume edition of *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, for which I am General Editor. This will appear as volumes 17–22 of the Oxford Edition of the Writings of Alexander Pope.

I am also in the process of finishing a two-volume book on the reproduction in manuscripts and printed books of handwriting and printing in the British Isles from the Middle Ages to the 1860s.

JF: I hardly dare ask if you have time for any other hobbies and pastimes, or how you spend your leisure-time in Woodstock?

HW: I enjoy walking in the park and reading at the same time. Listening to music, spending time with my grandchildren and visiting art galleries, where I particularly enjoy art by late 19th- and early 20th-century artists, such as the one-time Woodstock resident and artist, William Nicholson.

JF: Finally, if you were on a desert island what would be your favourite book to have there with you, and why would you choose this?

HW: In addition to the Complete Works of Shakespeare, an edition of Milton's poems would keep me very happy whilst castaway. *Paradise Lost* made a huge impression on me when I read it for the first time at school, and I have never lost my love for it and the other, shorter poems.

Judd Flogdell

Curate's Log and Churches Together



As we continue through the church calendar, we have just celebrated Pentecost on 24th May. Pentecost is often called "the birthday of the Church," and is celebrated fifty days after Easter. It marks the moment when

the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus's disciples, giving them courage, hope, and confidence to go out into the world and share God's love. In the Bible story, people from many nations and cultures had gathered in Jerusalem. They spoke different languages, came from different backgrounds, and understood the world in different ways. Yet, through the Spirit, they found they could understand one another.

This is one of the most powerful and hopeful images in the Christian story, particularly for the world we live in today. Pentecost is not about everyone suddenly becoming the same. The miracle is not that the difference disappeared, but that the connection became possible despite the difference. Diversity remained, but fear and division no longer had the final word.

Many of us will know the experience of travelling somewhere where we do not speak the language. At first, it can feel unsettling and isolating. Yet often, despite the absence of shared words, communication still happens. A smile, a gesture, a look of kindness, shared laughter, patience, or a helping hand can communicate far more deeply than vocabulary alone. Somehow, our common humanity finds a way through.

Perhaps Pentecost reminds us that communication is about far more than words. It is about listening, understanding, compassion, and a willingness to meet one another where we are. In a world that can often feel increasingly divided, politically, culturally, socially, and even personally, Pentecost offers another vision. It reminds us that we belong to one another, and that difference need not lead to fear. Instead, differences can enrich us, broaden our understanding, and help us see the world through another person's eyes.

Meeting as 'Churches Together', the four churches in Woodstock and Bladon work across our community, and we see something of this Pentecost spirit in our own ecumenical partnership. Our traditions, styles of worship, and ways of expressing faith are not always identical, yet we are united by a shared desire to serve our community, care for those in need, and witness to God's love. We understand that unity does not mean uniformity. Working together is not about erasing differences, but about recognising that our differences can strengthen rather than weaken us.

Pentecost also reminds us that the Church was never meant to stay behind closed doors. The disciples moved outwards into the world, engaging with people where they were. The Spirit pushed them beyond fear, beyond familiarity, and beyond themselves. That challenge remains today. Whether through acts of kindness, supporting neighbours, listening to one another, or building community across barriers, we are all invited into the work of connection and reconciliation.

At its heart, Pentecost is a story of hope. Hope that people can still find ways to understand one another. Hope that communities can be built across differences. Hope that compassion is stronger than suspicion, and that love can still cross the boundaries we so often create.

Perhaps that is something our whole community can celebrate together, far beyond the walls of the church.

With every blessing, Gemma

Woodstock Literature Society Summer Events

On **Tuesday 16 June** at 8pm at the St Hugh's Centre, Professor Seamus Perry, Master-Elect of Balliol College, and biographer of Auden, will give a talk on *W.H. Auden: Early and Late* in which he will examine the Oxford beginning and end of Auden's career. Visitors welcome: £10 at door

For more information contact: enquiries@woodstocklitsoc.com or website: www.woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk

The Marlborough C of E School

Ski Trip to Les Deux Alpes

During the Easter holidays, 40 students from Year 9 through to Sixth Form, enjoyed an exhilarating week in the spectacular French ski resort Les Deux Alpes. Les Deux Alpes is home to the Mont de Lans Glacier, which is Europe's largest skiable glacier at over 3,200m, meaning that snow is guaranteed at whatever time of the year.



Les Deux Alpes - view from the ski lift

Accompanied by Dr Jones, Mr Minton, Miss Neville, Mr Flint, and Mrs Waterhouse, students arrived at the resort around dinnertime on the first day. On arrival, students were measured and fitted with their skis and equipment, before settling into the hotel which would be their base for the week.

The action-packed daily itinerary throughout the week ensured that students received the maximum time on the slopes. Following breakfast and a short walk to the slopes, each day commenced with a two-hour lesson led by professional ski instructors. Students would break for lunch and then return to the slopes for a further two-hour lesson. There was a wide range of abilities among the cohort, from complete beginners to competent skiers. Regardless of their starting point, every student made fantastic progress, guided by the patience and expertise of the resort instructors.

After a full day of skiing, students and staff returned to the hotel for dinner and some much needed rest and recuperation! The remainder of the evening was spent enjoying activities within the hotel, reflecting on the day, and sharing each other's company.

It was truly a fantastic week for students and staff, creating memories that will last a lifetime. We are exceptionally proud of our students who consistently displayed our school values of Respect, Perseverance, and Ambition throughout the trip!

Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Expedition

What a difference in weather conditions from their practice expedition, when 67 of our Year 9 Bronze DofE students had their practice expedition cut short due to a storm with high winds. On Thursday 23 April, the conditions could not have been more different; glorious sunshine shone down on them as they arrived in Abingdon, ready for their two-day assessed expedition.



Camping on the Bronze DofE Expedition

The transition from the 'Great Storm' of their training to this week's beautiful weather was a well-earned break from the elements, though the heat brought its own set of challenges for those carrying heavy packs! The teams showed impressive technical growth as they navigated through the historic streets and surrounding greenery of Abingdon. Beyond the physical trekking, our students truly embodied our core school values of Ambition, Perseverance, and Respect, throughout the two days.

A massive thank you to the staff and volunteers who made this possible, and well done to our Bronze adventurers!

Silver Duke of Edinburgh Expedition

Most of our Silver Duke of Edinburgh students have already completed their Bronze expeditions, as well as a practice expedition in the Cotswolds. However, for their assessed expedition, the stakes - and the hills - got significantly higher for our 57 Silver DofE students. They packed their hiking bags and set off for the rolling, expansive terrain of Marlborough, Wiltshire, to embark on a three-day expedition that tested their endurance.

Unlike Bronze, the Silver award requires an extra day of self-sufficiency. This means heavier packs, more complex meal planning, and an increased demand for mental fortitude. Over the course of the 72-hour trek, the students covered significant mileage, navigating the undulating landscape of the North Wessex Downs.

Completion of this Silver expedition is a significant milestone. These 57 students have shown they



Students on the Silver DofE Expedition

possess the resilience and technical skill required for independent travel in wild country. They return to school not just with tired feet, but with a newfound sense of capability and stronger bonds with their peers. Conversations are already starting about the prospect of doing their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award when they are in Year 12.

A huge well done to all the Silver teams - you've set a fantastic standard for those following in your footsteps!

This year we have 150 students in total participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. This cohort is made up of 70 students working towards their Bronze award, 58 students on Silver, and 22 students on Gold - a fantastic achievement! We are delighted to offer this experience to our students; the DofE is a really important part of our extra curricular offer here at Marlborough. Beyond the expeditions, the programme empowers students by building confidence, resilience, and life skills, whilst giving them the opportunity to contribute to the community through volunteering activities. We are exceptionally proud of the dedication, commitment and hard work shown by our students, as well as the staff that support them.

Sarah Fitchett, PA to the School Business Manager

Acorn Fencing

Fencing - Gates - Security Fencing
Decking - Garden Structures

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

Oxfordshire & Home Counties

Bladon Primary School OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning)

This year, Bladon Primary School has signed up to become an OPAL school. OPAL is designed to offer a creative and exciting alternative to the regular activities that take place on the playground. The aim is to ensure that all children have a brilliant break time by taking part in play, which has been initiated and developed by the children. With the number of children enjoying play outside at an all time low and with the increasing amount of time that children spend on screens, we felt that this was an important program for the pupils at Bladon.

We are only at the very beginning of our journey, but staff have already observed many positive changes, including increased desire to go outside, a reduction in first aid and behavioural incidents and more settled children when they return to classrooms.

Our children say:

"OPAL is freedom and you can do whatever you like with loads of different equipment."

"The main thing I like is the water. It's making me use my imagination and that's something I'd stopped doing for a while."

"You can push through boundaries. There are more ways you can challenge yourself and take risks."

OPAL relies heavily on the use of 'loose parts' to enable children to be creative, to problem solve, to collaborate and to take risks. The children have already worked together to build waterways from old guttering, they have helped to create a kitchen area with recycled pots and pans and they have enjoyed building dens from donated fabrics, tarpaulins and pegs.

In order for our project to develop further, we need your help! We still need:

- Crates
- Kitchen utensils, pots, pans, baking trays, sieves, colanders etc for the water kitchen
- Watering cans, buckets, wheelbarrows, guttering
- spades, trowels, gardening forks
- Wooden / scaffolding planks
- Small world creatures e.g. dinosaurs, farm animals etc.

If you have any of the following items, then please contact the school office on office.3146@bladon.oxon.sch.uk so that we can arrange for items to be dropped off or collected.

Many thanks!

Ellie Jenkins

Panniers

Everyday cycling in Woodstock and Bladon

Our cycle parking in Woodstock is under threat. One 'Sheffield' stand outside the Co-op has been hit by a car (or cars) and now leans at a crazy angle. Another rack of stands in the town centre has been filled with wheelie bins and planters.



The cycle parking is a vital part of the infrastructure we need to increase everyday cycling in and around Woodstock. There is no point creating safer routes around the town if there is nowhere for people to securely leave their bikes.

And without increasing cycling in the mix of transport options, we have more cars chasing a finite number of parking spaces, and more drivers deciding to go elsewhere.

I know some people will say that some of the stands are rarely used and therefore a waste of space. I have written in this column before about the Dutch 'fietsvlonder' (bicycle platforms) that temporarily replace single car parking spaces with parking for 8-10 bicycles, as a trial before permanent installation. If the rack remains empty, the platform is simply moved elsewhere.

County councillor Andy Graham told me that he was "very concerned" about the damage caused to the stand outside the Co-op and was contacting council officers to carry out the necessary repairs.

David Walker is a qualified Bikeability instructor



PAUL KAY HAIR SALON

41a Oxford Street, Woodstock

Tel: 01993 810810

paulkayhairsalon@gmail.com

Unintentional Road Art?

Residents of Old Woodstock are no strangers to things ageing gracefully, but this year's Oxfordshire Art Week has coincided with the rise of a rather more exposed local attraction: the now-famous pothole on Vermont drive



What began as a modest depression has, over many months, slowly widened and deepened into a striking formation of surprising character and confidence. The council, perhaps recognising its growing prominence, eventually arrived to outline the feature in fluorescent paint, carefully tracing every curve and contour with the delicate attention of someone documenting anatomy rather than asphalt.

The resulting shape - broadly L-shaped, with a particularly expressive lower lobe - has attracted considerable public interest. Several visitors initially assumed it was part of the festival itself.

"I thought it was modern art," admitted one resident. "Very raw. Very open."

Locals have meanwhile watched its steady expansion with a mixture of concern and admiration. Motorists tend to approach cautiously, while cyclists report the experience as "deeper than expected."

For now, the pothole remains proudly on display: outlined, admired, and quietly dominating Woodstock's cultural landscape like an ageing rock star refusing to shrink with dignity.

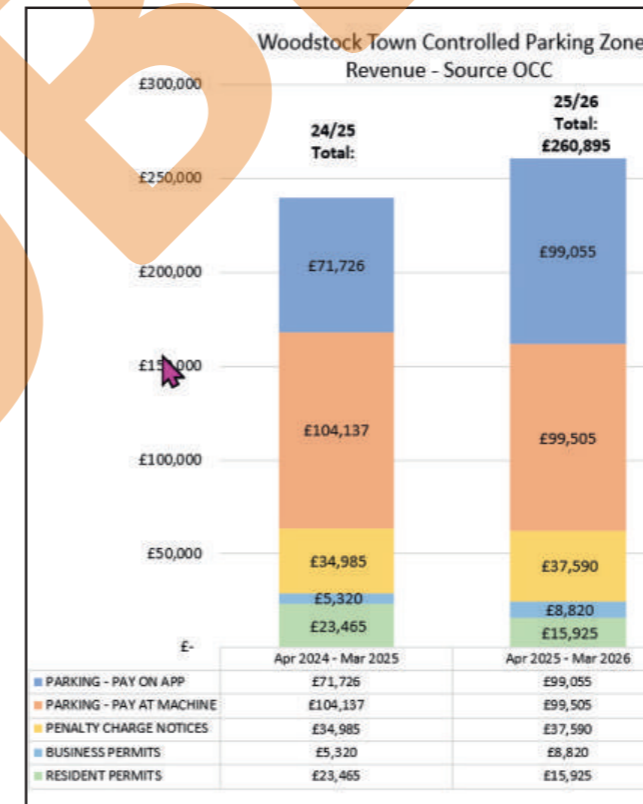
Woodstock Parking Revenue

A resident, who would prefer not to be named, has applied for information as to the amount of revenue that Oxford County Council has received from the parking charges that came into effect in Woodstock in 2023.

The data has been incorporated into a graph as shown below. The first few months of the scheme have not been shown because it they were not in a full financial year. Please also note that the data does not include fines from Hensington Car Park, which is controlled by WODC.

The resident has also requested information about the actual number of tickets sold, both via the parking meters and also through the app. We hope to publish this data in next month's issue.

In the meantime, how about writing a letter to The Editor?



Rejuvenate Aesthetics

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 Website: www.rejuvenate-aesthetics.uk
 EMail: admin@rejuvenate-aesthetics.uk
 Instagram: [@rejuvenate_aesthetics_uk](https://www.instagram.com/rejuvenate_aesthetics_uk)
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/Rejuvenate.Aesthetics.UK

Girlguiding Woodstock

Once upon a time, in a dark dark wood, a mouse took a stroll and 19 Brownies from Woodstock and Bletchington had a sleepover at the Oxford Story Museum! Settled for the night in the Whispering Wood after stories, exploring the museum, making origami dragons, masks and a yummy hot chocolate and cookie, we lumbered the night away. Everyone had a great time and were very excited to get sleepover, nights away and a special Every Book is an adventure badges. Thank you Bandicoot for taking us.

I Promise to do my best - we all promise this but our best is different for each person. We encourage you to try, it doesn't have to be perfect.

At Rainbows, Primrose is the first ever Woodstock Rainbow to work on and achieve the Eco Award - congratulations Primrose. Eliza has completed her Bronze Award and several Rainbows have worked on interest badges.

2nd Woodstock Guides have a varied few weeks with Stitcher, artist, code breaker and Express Yourself badge activities.

Woodstock Trefoil explored the area out geocaching, have shared puddings and completed STARS badges.

Our units are expanding and have waiting lists for girls to join us. We need you!

Adult volunteers and Young leaders have fun too, joining in challenges, learning new skills and inspiring our members. If you are interested in becoming a member register at www.girlguiding.org.uk or email us at girlguidingwoodstock@hotmail.co.uk

Rainbows for girls age 4-7 Wednesday
 Brownies for girls age 7-10 Monday
 Guides for girls age 10-14 Thursday
 Young Leaders girls age 14-18 can help at any unit.
 Volunteer unit helpers and leaders age 18+

Trefoil meets monthly for anyone age 18+. You don't need to be a member of Girlguiding.

Lorraine Wing

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Little Ones at Lincroft

Join us here at Lincroft Meadow on the 2nd Friday of the month at 10.30am for our intergenerational toddler group. Little ones are invited to enjoy stories, singing and plenty of playtime with our residents.

Attendance is free but booking is required.
To RSVP call 01865 950500 or email suzanne.morgan@porthaven.co.uk

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GOLF DAY



Following the success of the inaugural Woodstock and Bladon News Golf Day last year, we are now organising the 2026 competition for September. Prizes and trophies will be awarded, and more details will be announced in the July issue.

Please Email editor@wobl.news to register an interest

GOLF DAY

Friends of The Oxfordshire Museum

Summer Talks and Trips!

Our Monthly talks are free to Members and are also available on Zoom. Visitors welcome - £5 per talk. Talks take place in the Coach House, Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock

Wednesday 3 June 7.30pm

(The Talk will be preceded by the AGM at 7pm)

A Literary Waterways Tour: flowing words & 'liquid history'

Speaker: Mark Davies, Oxford local historian, author and tour guide

The waterways of 'river-rounded' Oxford feature in innumerable works of literature, from Chaucer's pilgrims to Jerome's 'Three Men' and Tom Brown's

higher education, via the children's classics of Alice and Wind in the Willows. Recently, Philip Pullman's 'gyptians' have joined this historically informative list; and Town & Gown affrays are inevitable!

Wednesday 1st July 7.30pm

Folklore - the Oxfordshire Museum Summer Exhibition.

Speakers: Angie Bolton and Nicole Perry-Bradford, Curators, Oxfordshire Museum service

An introduction to the Folklore' exhibition - exploring the curious tales, traditions and mythologies of the county.

Other members' events this summer

Sunday 14 June

Afternoon Tea in the Museum garden 3pm. Cost £12.00 pp. Book by 25 May.

Our popular summer Cream Tea. This year, Curator Angie Bolton will give a brief talk on treasure acquisition at the museum. Acquisitions are one of the important aspects that maintains the vibrancy of the museum, to which the Friends contribute some financial support.

Wednesday 8 July

Baroque walking Tour of Oxford 2pm. Cost £10.00 pp. Book by 15 June

We are lucky to be offered a brand-new tour in Oxford! A leisurely walk around parts of the city, learning about the special qualities of Baroque buildings.

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum Annual Membership: £20 (single) £30 (double). For an application form and full details of all our activities and benefits, see our website: www.friendsoftom.org.uk

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

Lee Miller: A Woman at War Exhibition

This is an Exhibition of war photographs by renowned photojournalist, photographer and surrealist, Lee Miller, which follows a major exhibition of her photographs at London's Tate Gallery.

During the Second World War Lee worked as a combat photographer with the US Army, creating a unique historical record.

The new exhibition will showcase her experiences of the time, covering her war correspondence work for Vogue from 1942 where she highlighted women's roles in the war effort, as well as the reality of life for women caught up in conflict across Europe. Her first wartime assignment for Vogue captured nurses at work at a then-US Army hospital in Oxford – Headington's Churchill Hospital. A number of these photos will feature in the exhibition, returning to the county in which they were taken, a look back at the earliest days of her war photojournalism.

Miller would become one of the few female photojournalists on the front line covering the Normandy invasion and the liberation of Paris. Her work in the newly-liberated concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dachau was sent to Vogue in 1945, accompanied by the caption 'I IMPLORE YOU TO BELIEVE THIS IS TRUE.'

Her background in surrealism often came to the fore especially with her photographs of the Blitz, and the iconic photograph of her bathing in Hitler's bathtub in Munich on the same day he died was heavy in symbolism, she wrote 'I washed off the dirt of Dachau in his tub'.

Her 60,000+ negatives and documents were discovered in her attic by her son, Antony Penrose, after her death, leading to her recognition as a pivotal 20th-century artist and photographer.

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum is thrilled to be exhibiting her groundbreaking work and are grateful to the Lee Miller Archives and Farleys House & Gallery Ltd for allowing us to bring you this exhibition.

Lee Miller: A Woman at War opens on the Cloister Gallery at Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock from 23 May to 13 September 2026. Admission prices apply, please see www.sof.org.uk for up-to-date admissions and visitor information, including prices, offers and opening times.

Please note: Our free entry offer for Blenheim Annual Pass holders does not include entry to the Lee Miller exhibition, but all other galleries are included.

The Oxfordshire Museum

Warneford 200

This year marks 200 years of mental health care at the Warneford Hospital in Headington, Oxford.

This exhibition traces the story of the Warneford Hospital from its early 19th-century beginnings to its role today at the heart of mental health care and research.

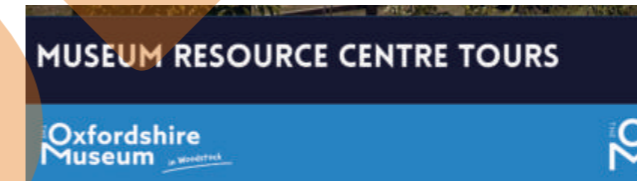
Through archival images, personal stories, and historic objects, Warneford 200 invites visitors to explore how the understanding and treatment of mental health have evolved and to meet the people who made that journey possible.

Presented by Oxford Health Charity, curated by the History of Science Museum, University of Oxford, and supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

To find out more about Warneford Hospital and other events taking place to commemorate its bicentenary, please visit: www.warneford200.co.uk.

Saturday 13 Jun 2026, 10am to Sunday 5 Jul 2026, 5pm

Museum Resource Centre Tours



We're offering a number of free 45-minute tours of our Museum Resource Centre near Standlake. If you've ever wanted to see behind the scenes at our custom-built facility which houses our vast county collection, then this is your chance! The tours will be taking place on the following dates:

Friday 19 June - 10am
Tuesday 28 July - 10.30am
Monday 17 August - 10.30am
Thursday 3 September - 11am
Monday 12 October - 11am

The tours are free, but due to limited spaces tickets are required. Please visit our website and check out our what's on page for full information and ticket booking links.

The OM Open Art Competition 2026

We are still accepting entries for our annual open art competition. To mark the Oxfordshire Museum's 60th anniversary our theme for this year is 'Celebration'. The competition is open to Oxfordshire residents aged 11 years and over and most media types are accepted. Closing date for entries is Monday 10 August. For more information please visit: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/artcompetition

The Arts Society Cotswolds

Lecture on Wednesday 10 June 2026 Wilde About Oscar, Famous for being Famous - and Infamous



This lecture examines the extraordinary life and dramatic times of Oscar Wilde from his Irish roots to his days as a student at Oxford and his meteoric rise to the heights of celebrity. We travel with him to the United States and examine his starring role within the artistic & theatrical worlds of late 19th century London. We visit his home in bohemian Chelsea and some of his favourite West End haunts. Finally, we learn how 'tired of being in the heights, he plunged into the depths' and became famous for being infamous.

About the speaker:

Simon Whitehouse is a (recovering) actor, lecturer, presenter, Alexander Technique and voice teacher and award-winning London Blue Badge guide. He has worked as a guide lecturer in house at Shakespeare's Globe, the Royal Opera House, the BBC and the National Gallery guiding both public and private tours. He is on the faculty of Ithaca College and also lectures for the Blue Badge Guide training course on the performing arts and English literature. Simon's specialisms and passions are theatre, literature, fashion and art history but whatever the subject, Simon will weave a wonderful story from it.

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. Booking is recommended: to reserve a place book online (www.theartsocietycotswolds.org.uk) or contact Lisa Etheridge on 07918 180895 for a booking form. Non-members are welcome (space permitting) at a charge of £10.

Bladon and Woodstock Flower Club

Hello readers. Well at last we are having some rain be it showers, but it is very welcome for all our plants especially the ones in containers.

On 11 May we welcomed Sharon Badger, a demonstrator new to us, with her title 'A New Lease of Life'. She gave us a very creative demonstration. Showing us some new floral designs that were foam free and used containers and packaging which we would normally throw away. Our members went home thinking about what they could use from the recycling bin! Her flowers and foliage were beautiful.

On 6 June we have our outing to the Windsor Flower show.

And on 13 July we have Andrew Key with his title 'May to September'. This is also the first time that Andrew will have visited us. It is always lovely to have new demonstrators visit us with their new and fresh ideas.

We meet on the second Monday of the month at the Bowls and Tennis Clubhouse, Cadogan Park, Woodstock, and the meetings start at 7pm. Our annual subscription is £45 and visitors are £10. Everyone is welcome and if you would like to know further about our Club, please contact me on 01865 376587. We are a very friendly club.

Margaret Lang

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The answers to the Crossword on Page 38 of this issue are:

Across: 1. electrode, 6. putin, 9. snooze, 10. bonafide, 12. peasants, 13. antics, 14. cambodia, 16. pine, 18. what, 19. netgains, 22. ordain, 24. exciting, 26. premises, 27. icarus, 28. aside, 29. interests

Down: 2. linger, 3. croissant 4. rhein, 5. debased, 7. unfit, 8. indecent, 11. niagara, 15. bananas, 16. penetrate, 17. chartres, 20. treason, 21. insult, 23. armed, 25. chive



WOODSTOCK MUSIC SOCIETY
CHOIR and CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
CONDUCTED BY PAUL INGRAM

FEEL THE SPIRIT

Karl Jenkins: Choral Suite from The Armed Man
Edward Elgar: Orchestral and Choral Gems
John Rutter: Feel the Spirit A cycle of spirituals
Lucy Gibbs: mezzo soprano

Friday 10th and Saturday 11th July 2026
St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock at 7.30pm
By kind permission of the Rector and Churchwardens
www.woodstockmusic.info Registered Charity No. 1035897

TICKETS

AT THE DOOR £16 (full-time students £5, accompanied children under 16 free)
IN ADVANCE £15 from The Woodstock Bookshop, 23 Oxford St. (cash and cheques only)
OR Contact concerts@woodstockmusic.info or <https://bookwhen.com/woodstock>

Meme of the Month



The answers to the Blenheim Palace events Quiz on Page 38 of this issue are:

1. Peter, Paul and Mary
2. John Vanbrugh
3. Cricket
4. Pete Tong
5. Blenheim Flower Festival
6. Raymond Blanc
7. Gifford's Circus
8. Michael Buble
9. Queen Victoria
10. Alanis Morissette

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 Literature Society

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

Woodstock Natural History Society

Second Tuesday of the month at St Hughs

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.

Singing for Fun

In St Mary Magdalene 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

Veterans' Coffee & Chat at the Museum

Between 10am and 12 noon every fourth Thursday of the month at SOFO

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

Cricket 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 to September and the indoor season from October 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 29 May 2026, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music

Dom Franks Quartet: Saxophonist Dom Franks presents his 'Round Midnight' show
St Hugh's Centre

Wednesday 03 Jun 2026, 19:30

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
Mark Davies: A Literary Waterways' Tour: flowing words & 'liquid history'

Coach House, Oxfordshire Museum

Saturday 13 Jun 2026, 14:00

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust - Talk
Brigadier (Retd) Ben Barry OBE: The Rise & Fall of the British Army 1975 - 2025

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock

Tuesday 16 Jun 2026, 20:00

Woodstock Literature Society - Talk
Professor Seamus Perry: 'W.H. Auden: Early and Late'

St Hugh's Centre

Friday 26 Jun 2026, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music

Ben Holder Gypsy Swing Band: The music of Grappelli and Reinhardt - Gypsy Swing Jazz with style!

St Hugh's Centre

Saturday 04 Jul 2026, 19:00

Woodstock Exhibition Foundation - Talk

Prof Janina Ramirez: From Lady Godiva to the Foundations of Spain: How Legendary women prop up Nations.

St Mary Magdalene

Friday 10 Jul 2026, 19:30

Woodstock Music Society - Concert

Feel The Spirit: Karl Jenkins, Edward Elgar, and John Rutter

St Mary Magdalene

Saturday 11 Jul 2026, 15:30

Old Woodstock Mock Mayor - Event

The Annual Mock Mayor Elections
Town Square

Friday 31 Jul 2026, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music

Greg Abate + Alex Steele Trio: One of the finest from USA, Greg is the stuff of legend!

St Hugh's Centre

Friday 28 Aug 2026, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music

Krissy Mathews & Stuart Maxwell Quartet: A Blues Special

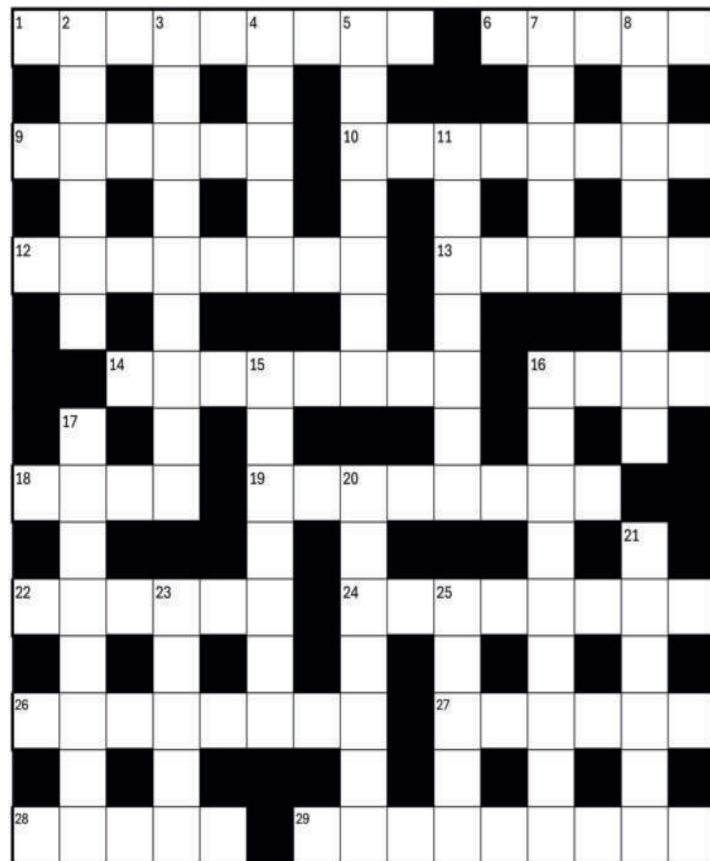
St Hugh's Centre

QUIZ - Compiled by Richard Stockwell

This month, the questions are all about Blenheim Palace Events. Answers can be found on Page 36.

1. The Jousting event, held over the first May Bank Holiday showcases this medieval custom and references the legendary achievement of St George, featuring their own Dragon, Smokey.
Which three people had a hit record singing about Puff, the magic Dragon in 1963?
2. The Blueprints of Power explores the vision and examines the relative success of which innovative playwright and architect?
3. During May, at which sport will Blenheim Park be competing against The Royal Household?
4. Which DJ's name, who is appearing at Blenheim this summer, is rhyming slang for things not going according to plan?
5. At which annual Blenheim event will Carol Klein be appearing in June?
6. Which chef, due to appear at The Blenheim Food Festival in May, began his career at The Rose Revived on the north side of The New Bridge over The Thames between Standlake and Kingston Bagpuize?
7. "We want our show to move something in you, and take you just a little while to recover from. We want it, wish it and mean it with all our hearts, because it is everything we believe about life and art and love." A heartfelt mission statement from which group of entertainers who will be returning to Blenheim Park again this Spring?
8. Which singer, appearing at Blenheim in July, had a hit with the song "Haven't Met You Yet?"
9. From July to September, within The Palace, will be exhibited the exhibition "Life through a Royal Lens." Which Monarch would be the earliest to be caught on camera?
10. In late June, who might be banging out a few numbers from "Jagged Little Pill?"

Woody's Cryptic Crossword No 004



Across

- 1 This conductor may have pluses and minuses (9)
- 6 Red leader (5)
- 9 Quick sleep so zone out (6)
- 10 Old Italian good faith (4,4)
- 12 Vegetables, insects, farmers (8)
- 13 Fun and games as Nigel takes in comedy show initially (6)
- 14 Country spy agency wraps around a doctor on drugs first (8)
- 16 Long tree (4)
- 18 Pardon with head covering (4)
- 19 A fisherman's profits? (3,5)
- 22 Invest in road works (6)
- 24 Thrilling old saying (8)
- 26 Place of business before girl holding drug (8)
- 27 Supersonic, a Russian reveals a high flier (6)
- 28 Digression as I deliberately concealed (5)
- 29 It resents altering hobbies (9)

Down

- 2 Hang around, all in German clothes (6)
- 3 Star icons cooked pastry (9)
- 4 German flower forever he intends to conceal (5)
- 5 Scattered bad seed and lowered quality (7)
- 7 A French angry reaction? Inappropriate! (5)
- 8 Filthy preposition of french coin (8)
- 11 Starts to nurture in a greenhouse and rises above this Canadian flower (7)
- 15 Crazy bunch (7)
- 16 Get into exercise and catch speed (9)
- 17 Toast very french city (8)
- 20 Senator involved in serious crime (7)
- 21 Offence discovered in sins ultimately (6)
- 23 Like an Octopus with a gun (5)
- 25 Plant four in Switzerland and Spain (5)

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