PARISH MAGAZINE



St. Mary's, Herriard



All Saints', Turworth



St. Mary's, Upton Grey



St Lawrence, Weston Patrick

December 2025

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BENEFICE MAGAZINE – December 2025
Edition for the Parishes of Herriard with Winslade, Tunworth, Upton Grey and Weston Patrick

Letter from the Benefice Ministry Team

Welcome to this season of Advent!



Advent is a great time for preparing, and I wonder what preparations for Christmas are already filling your mind? I know that our household is already caught up in a whirlwind of preparations! Preparing for who's coming for Christmas, who will sleep where, who's cooking which meal… are we still having stockings on Christmas Eve… is everyone still happy to *Jingle Bells* as we hang the stockings up… do we think we should get our tree again from that place we got it from last year… do the fairy lights still work… will our Christmas crackers have better jokes in… (check out some of my favourites at the bottom of this letter)... and so the list goes on!

The word 'Advent' literally means 'coming', and so this season is a time of both hopeful anticipation for our joyful celebration of Jesus' birth, and also a time of reflection on his second coming in the future.

It's a time of expectation, of waiting and watching, of getting ready. It is indeed a time to prepare, to make preparations. In the very first chapter of Mark's gospel, we're given a great reminder of what we should be preparing for in Advent, in these words: *'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him'*. A sense of 'good news, he's coming, get ready!' So how might we prepare ourselves this Advent?

Firstly, we can remember what this good news is. At Christmas we **remember** that God himself has drawn close to us in the person of Jesus, to remove the barrier between all of humanity and Himself, caused by all the mess we so often make of things - our sin. In dying on the cross, Jesus took all our sins - all the weight of that barrier - upon himself, so that as we put our trust in him we might be forgiven, and our relationship with God might be completely restored. This is certainly good news!

Secondly we can **respond** to this good news ourselves. In that first chapter of Mark, Jesus says '*Repent and believe the good news*'. 'Repent' literally means changing our mind, turning around, and following Jesus - going God's way - the best way! - rather than our way. So part of our preparations needs to be responding to this good news - by repenting and believing afresh in Jesus, in whom we find salvation and the promise of new and eternal life.

And thirdly we can prepare to **recount** this good news to others. So how might we recount the good news of Jesus to others? There are so many exciting things happening in all of our churches here in the North Hampshire Downs this Christmas. And there are lots of ways in which people can hear afresh this good news of God's love for each one of us, and that in Jesus he has drawn near to us. Ways for us all to hear afresh that there is hope in this dark and confused world. And that this hope is found in Jesus. All we have to do is invite others along to hear this good news - who might you invite to church this Christmas?

So, as we enter Advent, we begin this season of waiting and preparing - preparing the way for the Lord, as we prepare for his coming at Christmas, and indeed as we prepare for that day when he will come again. Let's use the time wisely to prepare. Let's remember what this good news of Jesus is all about. Let's respond to this good news ourselves, by repenting and believing once again in our Saviour, who loves us so much that he was willing to come and die in our place. And let's recount this good news to others, that they too might know the love, the joy and the peace that Jesus alone can bring.

With best wishes, Chris **Rev'd Chris Dudgeon**

Rector, North Hampshire Downs Benefice

(*our network of twelve local churches in Greywell, Herriard, Long Sutton, Mapledurwell, Nately Scures, Newnham, Odiham, South Warnborough, Tunworth, Up Nately, Upton Grey, Weston Patrick)*

chris@moretolife.church ● www.moretolife.church ● 01256 702918

P.S… Here's a few of my favourite Christmas cracker jokes - please do email me yours, and we'll print a few in the next Parish News…

How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizza?
Deep and crisp and even!

Why is it getting harder to buy Advent calendars?
Because their days are numbered!

How does Rudolph know when Christmas is coming?
He refers to his calen-deer!

What do you get if you cross a Christmas tree with an iPad
A pineapple!

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms: Felix Smith and August Wildsmith at St Lawrence Weston Patrick on 2nd November

DECEMBER MAGAZINE COPY DATE

As usual in December, the magazine copy date has to be earlier to accommodate printers' Christmas closures. This year it is **12th December**.

CHURCH NEWS

Vicars' welcome

Dear all

As Advent begins and the countdown to Christmas gets under way we have lots going on across our churches to help you to make the most of the season, find some time to reflect, and prepare for the joy of Christmas when we celebrate Emmanuel - God with us.

Alongside our regular host of Advent and Christmas Services, designed to appeal to all ages, this year we will also be holding a weekly Advent reflection in St Mary's Upton Grey. This short 45-minute midweek session is ideal for anyone who wants to find some space to be still and to reflect and think. We'll share a piece of music, some reflective prayer and silence.

The Barn Nativity in Herriard returns this year, and if you've not been then do try it. It's a fantastic and immersive nativity service with real animals. Christingles and Carol Services take place across the four parishes and this year our Midnight Communion service is at Upton Grey.

We look forward to sharing the season and our services and events with you. **With love from Simon, Linda and Suzanne**

Christmas drop-in refreshments

For a long time now the churches and communities have been holding regular coffee/cake drop-in sessions but, being Christmas, the arrangements are different in December.

- **St Mary's Upton Grey** is not holding its usual Monday morning sessions, but on **Tuesday 9th December** there will be a 'Christmas Special' from **2.00 to 3.30 in the Village Hall**. Tea, festive food & drinks, Christmas music. **All welcome from the four local villages**, no need to book, just drop in.
- **All Saints Tunworth** are holding their usual first-Thursday coffee & cake in the church porch, 10.30am on **Thursday 4th December**.
- **St Lawrence Weston Patrick** is not holding its usual fourth-Wednesday coffee morning in December, but the monthly sessions **restart on January 28th** - 11.00am in Weston Patrick Village Hall.

- In addition, the weekly coffee mornings at **Herriard Village Hub** continue in December - **10.00-12.00 each Thursday, except Christmas Day and New Year's Day**.

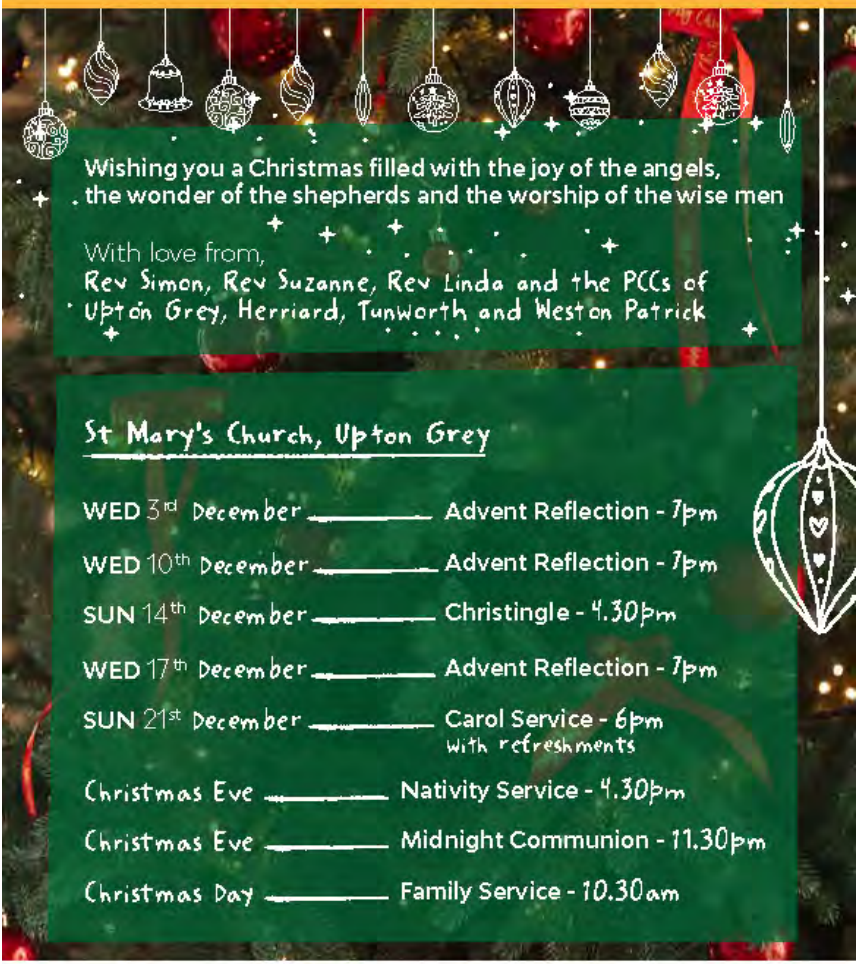
CHURCH SERVICES

Wednesday 3rd December
7.00pm Upton Grey – Advent Reflection
Sunday 7th December
9.00am Tunworth – BCP Holy Communion
10.00am Herriard – BCP Holy Communion (said)
10.30am Upton Grey – CW Holy Communion
Wednesday 10th December
7.00pm Upton Grey – Advent Reflection
Sunday 14th December
10.00am Weston Patrick – CW Holy Communion
10.30am Upton Grey – Morning Worship
3.30 for 4.00pm Herriard – Christingle
4.30pm Upton Grey – Christingle
5.00pm Tunworth – Advent Evensong
Wednesday 17th December
7.00pm Upton Grey – Advent Reflection
Thursday 18th December
10.00am Herriard – BCP Holy Communion (said)
Friday 19th December
6.00pm Weston Patrick – Carol Service
Sunday 21st December
9.00am Tunworth – 1662 Morning Prayer
6.00pm Herriard – Carol Service
6.00pm Upton Grey – Carol Service
Wednesday 24th December
4.30pm Upton Grey – Nativity
11.30pm Upton Grey – Midnight Holy Communion
Thursday 25th December
10.00am Herriard – Family Service
10.00am Weston Patrick – Family Service
10.30am Upton Grey – Family Service
11.00am Tunworth – Carol Service
Sunday 28th December
10.30am Long Sutton – Benefice CW Holy Communion

Christmas 2025

more+

In Upton Grey, Herriard, Tunworth & Weston Patrick





admin@moretolife.church
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KidsZone

Hi Everyone!

Please don't judge me – but as I write this in mid-November, I'm already listening to Christmas songs… No, I have a good excuse, really! I'm sure you all know one of my favourite songs: Great Big God. It's written by a band called Rend Collective, and I'm really excited, because they've just released their Christmas album – "Christmas in Belfast". There are loads of well-known Christmas songs on it, done as only Rend Collective can, but I'd like to introduce you to my new favourite: "**Room at the Inn"**. Follow this link / QR code to see it on YouTube:

https://youtu.be/s5EdoJKIw4U?si=SZE1O8uQvI2UY9Lj

Room at the Inn - A Christmas Story With a Big Welcome

Have you ever been in a nativity play or heard the Christmas story told like this: *"Sorry… there's no room at the inn."*? Most nativities I watch begin with Mary and Joseph knocking on doors, only to be turned away again and again. But this song reminded me of something wonderful: with Jesus, there is *always* room. No one is turned away. God's heart is wide open!

The "no room at the inn" part of the Christmas story shows that Jesus didn't arrive in a fancy palace or even a comfortable guest room. Instead, He came into a messy, ordinary stable. It wasn't perfect – but it was enough for God to use it for something amazing.

Rend Collective sing about how Jesus welcomes everyone - no matter where you're from, how you look, or what you've done. Their song flips the usual nativity idea on its head.

Instead of "no room", Jesus says **"Come on in! There's room for you!"** And that's the heart of Christmas:

- Jesus came for shepherds in fields - poor and forgotten.
- He came for wise men from far away - curious travellers and those who cannot be in their homeland this Christmas.
- He came for Mary and Joseph - ordinary people with extraordinary faith.
- And He came for **you**.

Whenever you feel left out or not good enough, remember the stable. If there was room for Jesus in a place like that, then there is definitely room for *you* in God's family. He made sure the door is always open.

Christmas Craft: Make Your Own "Welcome Star"

Create a star to remind you - and everyone who sees it - that Jesus welcomes all. You'll need:

- Paper or thin cardboard
- Scissors
- Something to decorate with (markers, stickers, foil, glitter)
- A ribbon or string



Steps:

1. Draw a big star and cut it out.
2. Write across the front: **"There's Room for You!"**
3. Decorate it as brightly as you can.
4. Punch a hole at the top and tie a ribbon through it.
5. Hang it on your tree, door handle, or bedroom wall.

Each time you see your star, remember the message of "Room at the Inn": Jesus welcomes everyone - and that includes **you**!

Have a great Christmas and see you next time!

Helen



Helen Chatfield
Children & Youth Outreach Pastor
youth@moretolife.church
075540 140228

NEWS FROM THE VILLAGES

Farming News

With early winter starting to set in, the farm is certainly looking better prepared for the long nights and usually wet days than it did this time last year. This was down to the kind autumn weather, allowing us to plant our winter sown crops in some of the best seedbed conditions we have seen for some time. Along with warm soil temperatures this has allowed the seed to germinate quickly and get out of the ground in rapid time.

Last year we were planting in extremely wet soils which were basically mud. The soils were cold as a result which meant that the seed just sat in cold, wet mud. I can't therefore blame it for not having much enthusiasm to grow! We ended up with very patchy fields and completely bare patches along woodland and under tree lines where the soil was so wet that the seed never did germinate and just rotted in the ground. You can understand why farmers in our parish, are feeling more relieved heading into this winter.

Even our over winter cover crops are looking great. This is the mixture of plants that we plant to help retain and build soil nutrients. The shepherd has moved his sheep on to the crops to start grazing them now as they have such a large biomass. We want it to be grazed whilst it is still leafy and palatable to the sheep because if it grows too tall it becomes stalky and less appealing for them to eat.

Talking of sheep grazing, we are trying something new to us this year which is using a growing crop of oilseed rape as grazing. I have wanted to do this for some time but the extremely wet winters we have had and with poor autumn crop establishment, it was not a viable option. So now the stars have aligned with a strong autumn establishment and a relatively dry spell, we have gone for it. The aim is that the sheep will graze off roughly 30% of the biomass which will mainly be the leaves. This will shock the plant acting like a natural growth regulator. The plant will force its roots out deeper into the soil and hopefully they will access more of the natural reserves in soil nutrients.

We are also hoping that the sheep will be eating the leaves that currently have fungal disease in, please don't worry as this doesn't affect the sheep but we hope that we can reduce a fungicide spray on this crop. A bit of a 'win-win' for everyone, some extra feed for the sheep and a natural growth regulator and fungicide for us. If only it was this easy all the time.

Some not so good news, we have entered ‘flockdown’ again for the chicken. This is down the avian flu returning with a vengeance. We were getting daily updates of small outbreaks, all mainly in the eastern counties and in coastal areas, but the updates have slowly been getting more frequent and eventually they have put the whole of England into lock down for the foreseeable future. The idea is to prevent as many flocks as possible from getting infected, which is understandable, but the frustrating side is that there are so many wild birds that carry avian flu as well, so it does sometimes seem a bit pointless. However, those are the rules, and we are having to deal with them the best that we can. We have equipped our sheds with plenty of enrichment toys to keep the hens entertained but with the longer nights and less pleasant weather they may be happier to be inside.

This just leaves me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year from us all at Hyde Farm. **Will Cheyney**

Long Sutton Christmas Trees

The PTA at Long Sutton Primary School are selling Christmas trees again this year to help raise much-needed funds for our wonderful school. You can head to our new and improved website to order yours now! Available for delivery or collection. The trees are top quality Nordmann fir from a trusted supplier. A range of sizes are available and prices start at just £33.

For more details and to place an order, please head to our website: www.longsuttonpta.co.uk. Thank you for your support!

UPTON GREY NEWS

www.uptongreychurch.co.uk
www.uptongreyvillagehall.co.uk
www.uptongreyparishcouncil.co.uk
facebook.com/uptongreyvillagecommunity

Upton Grey Village Hall November 100 Club winners
Congratulations to November's winners:
First Prize (£100) Vorhees
Second Prize (£40) B McGowan

Christmas drop-in refreshments - Tuesday 9th December 2.00-3.30
Upton Grey is not holding its usual Monday morning Coffee & Cake sessions, but on **Tuesday 9th December** there will be a 'Christmas Special' from **2.00 to 3.30 in the Village Hall**. Tea, festive food & drinks, Christmas music. All welcome from the four local villages, no need to book, just drop in. Hope to see you there!

Messy Church
A reminder that Messy Church takes place most months in Upton Grey Village Hall - craft, food, games and music. For school years R to 6. From 3.30 to 5.00pm on **Wednesday 17th December**.

George & Ray's Send Off – Friday, 31st October
We received a total of £940 in donations from around the village and the Hodd was packed with well-wishers on Friday, 31st October.

It was a great testament to George's popularity within the village and of course "behind every great man there is a great woman!"

From the donations we treated them to 2 free meals and drinks at the Hodd, a voucher for 3 visits to wine and dine at El Costello's in Odiham, 2 visits to the Red Lion and a Christmas menu at the Bell & Dragon. Even that did not use up all the donations, so we also gave them a significant float to top up their vouchers, if necessary, and to further explore Odiham's culinary and liquid delights.

Mary and I visited them in their new home shortly afterwards and it is a very cosy 2-bedroom terrace that suits them well. George couldn't stop himself having fun going up and down on the house's chair lift – even though he doesn't need it yet. Ray is still somewhat overcome with the number of boxes to unpack.

George reported that he can get to the Red Lion within 10 minutes, but he is going there every day to bring this timescale down! Their new address is 16 Seymour Place, Odiham, RG29 1AY, telephone 01256 701040 and they would delighted to welcome any visitors. You may care to send them a Christmas card to their new home. **Roger Clark**

Upton Grey Autumn Festival 2025

We had a good display of Guys and Jack O'Lanterns around the village with the Swaine family's Wednesday Ash-dams winning our Guy Fawkes cup and Carole Plant's "Clifford Creepies" again winning our Jack O'Lantern cup. Congratulations to all who entered.

Many thanks to all sponsors, helpers, attendees and all those who made Guys and Jack O'Lanterns for supporting this year's Autumn Festival. Special thanks to Marcel van Poecke for the use of Hoddington Park and David and Robbie Janaway and their team for their great efforts preparing the bonfire, preparing the two fields, providing tractor and trailer and Guy Fawkes straw. Thanks also to Michael Church's Bell Ringers and, of course, Merlin's spectacular fireworks.

The staff at the Hodd also put in a superb effort coping with all the crowds that poured in.

The huge bonfire lit very quickly and was followed by another fantastic firework display – which many thought was the best yet.

All the events were very well attended, and this resulted in the profit of over £1,500 being donated to St. Michael's Hospice.

For those of you interested in our finances please go to www.uptongreyautumnfestival.co.uk **Roger Clark**

Congratulations and huge thanks to Roger for organising both the Autumn Festival and the send-off for George and Ray.

Save the Date!

- Upton Grey Reels Night Saturday 28th Feb 2026
- Saturday 14th March 2026: Upton Grey Safari Supper at 7.15pm.
- St Mary's Church Fete, Upton Grey, Sat 6th June 2026 2.00-5.00pm

HERRIARD AND WINSLADE NEWS
www.herriard-pc.gov.uk
www.herriardvillagehub.co.uk
Herriard Village Group on http://www.Facebook.com

Christmas Bingo at Herriard Village
Saturday 13th December, 6.30pm for 7.00pm start - £10 a book of six games, includes raffle tickets and cash flyer. Filled rolls for sale £1 at half time. Phone Jenny on 07801 238200 to book a table. **Jenny Falconer**

WEEKLY COFFEE MORNING IN HERRIARD

Every Thursday at the Village Hub
except for Christmas Day and New Year's Day

Open any time between 10.00 and 12.00

Good coffee and fresh baked cakes

Donations from £2.00 each to cover costs

Do come and join us – everyone welcome !

Christmas drop-in refreshments - Tuesday 9th December 2.00-3.30
Residents of Herriard & Winslade are warmly invited to Christmas tea & cake at **Upton Grey Village Hall** from 2.00 to 3.30pm on Tuesday 9th December. Festive food & drinks, Christmas music. All welcome from the four local villages - no need to book, just drop in.

North Hampshire Downs Churches – Herriard Youth Hub
The Youth Hub meets as usual from 6.00 to 8.00pm on the 1st & 3rd Sundays in December, at The Herriard Hub. (Please note the earlier start time of 6.00pm from October.) For more information, contact Helen Chatfield, youth@moretolife.church

Herriard and Tunworth Lunch Group
The Lunch Group normally meets once a month on a Friday from 12.00 to 1.30pm at the Herriard Hub, to look at a Bible passage with a focus on practical Christianity. As usual there is **no meeting in December.**



Christmas at St Mary's Church
Herriard with Winslade

Sunday 30th November - Advent Carol Service - 6.00pm
A candlelit service of moving liturgy, music and readings.
followed by refreshments

Sunday 7th December - BCP Holy Communion by candlelight - 10.00am (said)

Sunday 14th December - Christingle - 3.30pm for a 4.00pm service
Come to St Mary's from 3.30pm to build your own Christingle orange, followed by a half-hour service at 4.00pm
Come and meet Cherry and Blossom the Christmas ponies who will welcome you to Church!

Wednesday 17th December – Carol Singing & Barn Nativity
5pm meet at The Herriard Hub, finishing at Hydes Farmhouse
Enjoy a festive evening with animals, carol singing and refreshments as we celebrate the nativity story

Sunday 21st December - Carol Service - 6.00pm
The story of the birth of Christ through traditional Bible readings and carols

Christmas Day – Family Service - 10.00am
Our informal Family Service to celebrate the joy of Christmas morning



Everyone is very warmly invited to join us.

more
St Mary's Herriard and Winslade

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Harvest Festival 12th October and Harvest Supper 15th October

Thank you to everyone who came along to join us for our Harvest Festival - it was a wonderful service and the Church looked and smelt amazing with all the flowers, vegetables and fruit! The food donations brought up to the Altar during the service were very gratefully received by The Camrose Centre. Thank you to Suzanne for making it a very special Harvest Festival Service, and thanks also to our organist Andrew Hinde.

Our Harvest Supper on the Wednesday evening was a brilliantly fun evening! After a truly delicious supper, Peter and Adrian got cracking with auctioning off the various items donated - thank you to everyone who so generously bought along auction prizes. As always the auction was thoroughly entertaining with lots of hilarious banter from Peter and Adrian!

What is staggering about the Harvest Festival and Harvest Supper is the number of people who help to make it all happen - we are so fortunate to have such an amazing team! From flower arranging in Church right through to sweeping out the hall at the end of the supper, and not including everyone who helped stack the tables and chairs, over 50 people gave their time and to them, and to everyone who came to join us for our Harvest Festival and Harvest Supper, we give our heartfelt thanks.

Adrian and Fiona
Churchwardens - St Mary's Church Herriard with Winslade

And the journey of a Harvest Wheatsheaf: Made especially for St Mary's Herriard by a baker in Southampton, paid for and brought up to St Mary's by car (thank you Colin), pride of place for our Harvest Festival, taken to The Herriard Hub and auctioned off. Given to Rev. Suzanne who took it up to Little Meadows Nursery - after listening to a harvest story and singing some songs the children looked at the loaf and were fascinated about how it was made. The loaf then went on further travels to Long Sutton Primary School and to each class. The children had lots of questions to ask about Harvest Festival and about the loaf.

Remembrance Sunday Service at St Mary's Herriard

Thank you to everyone who came along to remember and honour those who have served, and are serving, in our armed forces, the bravery and resilience of those remaining at home (keeping the 'home fires burning'

during times of conflict and peace), and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

As Suzanne said in her sermon:

"Remembrance Sunday remains the time when we meet together to recall sacrifice, service and dedication and these memories cause us to give thanks and reaffirm our admiration of the bravery of those who put others before themselves. Some of the events and people we remember are stories told to us and are not things we have experienced. At this time of year, I recall my own family who offered themselves to serve their country. A family photo taken in 1914 shows the family of seven children and yet at the end of World War 1 the photo would have been very different as the oldest, Jack, was killed, the husband of Susannah died in the trenches after only 12 weeks in service and the two other brothers Bert and Bill were both injured. This is a story that was replicated across the country."



And our heartfelt thanks to Pat Pegg who for quite a number of years co-ordinated Herriard's Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and stood down from the role last year.

Pat – you have done an amazing job over the years – and even kindly took the time this year to liaise with the new co-ordinator to ensure it all happened like clockwork as it always has on your watch! Thank you!

Herriard Prayer Group
If you or anyone you know would like to be included in our prayers, please contact suzanne@moretolife.church or fiona@ashmeadow.co.uk.

Foodbank at St Mary's Herriard with Winslade
We have a box in the Church for any food donations you would like to contribute. If you can't make our Sunday service, you can always leave donations on a Saturday/Sunday at the vestry door at the back of the Church. If you would like to sign up for the Camrose Centre's newsletter, to keep up to date with the work the centre is doing and get an updated list of the many items they so desperately need, please visit www.thecamrosecentre.org. They also have an Amazon Wishlist – the list is regularly updated:
https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/printview/FY45O4AC8JKM?target=_blank&ref_=lv_pv&filter=persistent_all&sort=default

The Camrose Centre is a drop-in centre for anyone who is sleeping rough, homeless or vulnerably housed within Basingstoke and Deane.

TUNWORTH NEWS

Prayer Hour: Thursday 4th December 9.30am
The monthly Prayer Hour, which used to be held on the first Saturday of the month, is now on the first Thursday. We meet and pray in the church for everyone in the parish.

Coffee & Cake: Thursday 4th December 10.30am
On the first Thursday of the month, we meet for coffee and cake in the church porch. Please do join us if you are at home and fancy taking a break from online work.

Christmas drop-in refreshments - Tuesday 9th December 2.00-3.30
Residents of Tunworth are warmly invited to Christmas tea & cake at **Upton Grey Village Hall** from 2.00 to 3.30pm on Tuesday 9th December. Festive food & drinks, Christmas music. All welcome from the four local villages - no need to book, just drop in.

Tunworth Home Group
The Tunworth Home Group usually meets once or twice a month on Wednesdays from 7.00 to 8.00pm at The Orangery, Hackwood Park, to study Bible passages and Biblical themes. In December there is just one meeting, on **Wednesday 10th**. If you would like to know more about the group, or to join, please contact Gabrielle.

Village Carol Singing on Thursday 18th December at 6.00pm
Please contact Caroline Petre for details.

Herriard & Tunworth Lunch Group
The Lunch Group normally meets once a month on a Friday from 12.00 to 1.30pm at the Herriard Hub, to look at a Bible passage with a focus on practical Christianity. As usual there is **no meeting in December.**

WESTON PATRICK & WESTON CORBETT NEWS

Our very special 'In Loving Memory Service' at St. Lawrence Church was a beautiful and poignant service led by Linda Scard.

Rev'd Linda will also be in our church for prayers for our community from 9.00 am for 30 minutes or so on Friday 5th December. If you would like to join her, Linda would be very pleased to see you there. Alternatively, if you have a particular person or situation to that you would like her to pray for, please email her beforehand on linda@moretolife.church

St. Lawrence's next service will be Holy Communion on Sunday 14th December at 10.00am and then the **Village Carol Service** will be taking place on **Friday 19th December at 6.00pm** followed by drinks in the Village Hall to which all are invited.

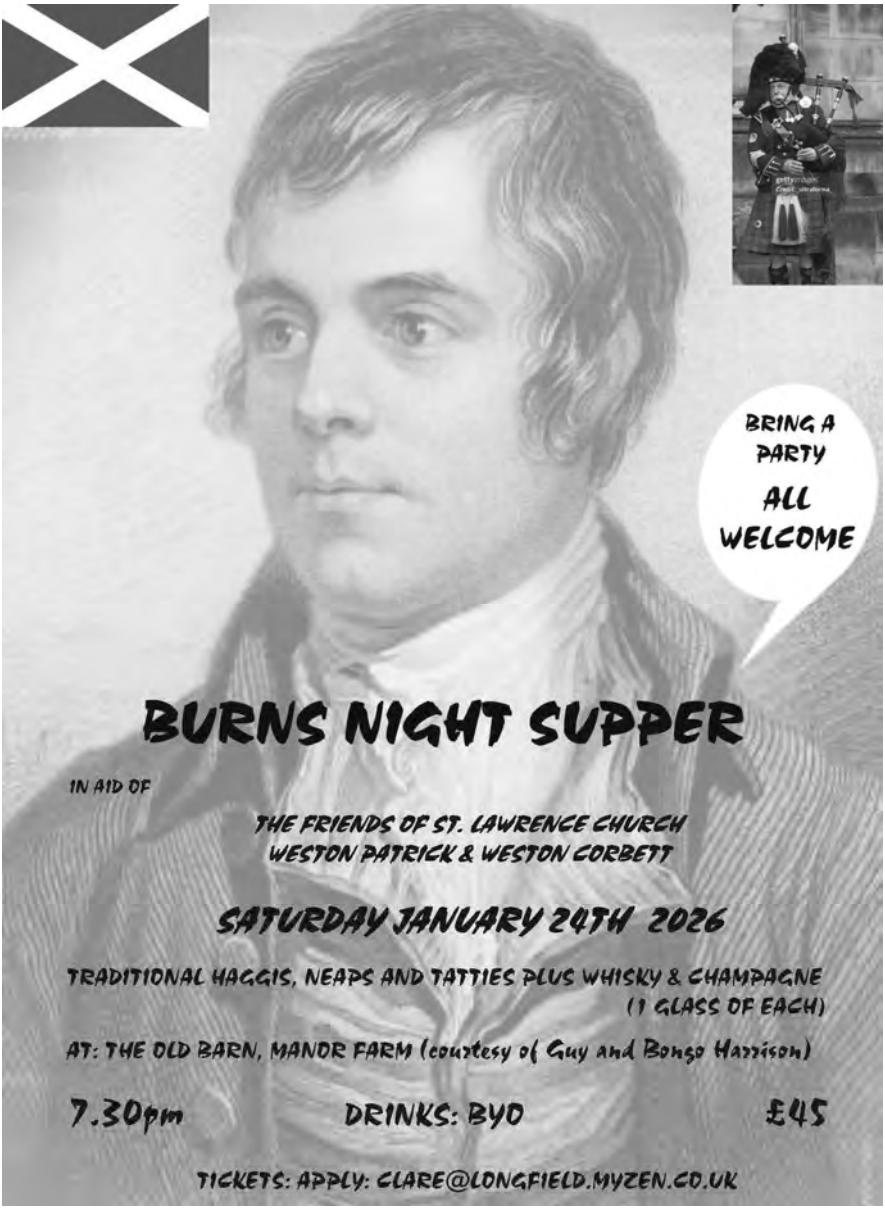
We will be holding a **Christmas Day Family Service at 10.00am** and you are invited to wear your Christmas jumpers!

The Mothers' Union is an organisation offering Christian care to families across many and varied projects, and sometimes in very challenging family situations. The MU in Winchester Diocese supports women and children who have had to flee their homes in a hurry and find themselves in a Refuge, with our Benefice branch supporting the refuge in Basingstoke in particular.

Would you like to bring these women and their children a bit of good cheer this Christmas? When you come to our Lessons and Carols service on 19th December or to the Family service on Christmas Day, perhaps you'd feel able to bring a little wrapped gift for one of these women or for a child. Just a little something that someone who had to leave everything behind would find special at this time of year (toiletries, beauty products, make-up, scarf, posh biscuits or chocolates, etc.) and/or a new toy for one of the children. (Please note that the children tend to be quite young.) Please label the wrapped gift 'woman' or 'boy aged 3' etc. Part of the delight is in the unwrapping, isn't it? Any gifts you leave at St Lawrence's will be delivered to the Refuge on Boxing Day.

There will be **no coffee morning in December**, but we will be back on the fourth Wednesday of the month on January 28th, 2026, at 11.00 in the Village Hall. Meanwhile, on **Tuesday 9th December r**esidents of Weston Patrick & Corbett are warmly invited to **Christmas tea & cake at Upton Grey Village Hall** from 2.00 to 3.30pm. Festive food & drinks, Christmas music. All welcome from the four local villages - no need to book, just drop in.

Weston Patrick and Weston Corbett's Women's Home Group welcomes any women who would like to come along. This is an informal fellowship group exploring faith and how faith relates to our daily lives. Please contact Linda Scard for further details on:
01256 703294/07801 039717 or linda@moretolife.church



OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

Carol Service in aid of St Michael's Hospice
The Friends of St Michael's Hospice are again hosting the popular and festive Carol Service on **Tuesday 9th December** at All Saints, Odiham, with music by Schola Cantorum of Oxford and a reading by Ed Chamberlin. Doors open at 6.00pm and the service starts at 7.00pm with canapes, wine and mince pies. Tickets can be purchased from Katherine Jane, High Street, Odiham or at www.stmichaelshospice.org.uk/events. We look forward to seeing you.

Christmas Spectacular, Sunday 14th December 3.30pm & 7.30pm, All Saints Church, Odiham
Get your Christmas off to a flying start by joining the Jubilee Choir and the Odiham Church Choir for a fun-filled festive concert of classics old and new, accompanied by our Festival Orchestra. Matinee performance at 3.30pm, evening performance at 7.30pm, with a licensed bar. Tickets range from £15 to £25 and are available from www.jubileechoir.co.uk.

North Warnborough & District Garden Club
We do not meet in December and look forward to seeing members and guests in January 2026. Visitors are always welcome at monthly meetings for a small charge of £3.00.

We send all our members best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. For more information view our website: https://www.nwdgc.org.uk.

Hampshire Medical Fund Celebration of Christmas – Friday 12th December 7.30pm
We are delighted to be returning to Winchester Cathedral for our annual Celebration of Christmas carol service. This promises to be an excellent festive event, providing guests with a wonderful evening of readings, carols and beautiful music. We will be joined by some special guests and outstanding musical talent. Contact office@hampshiremedicalfund.org

u3a learn, laugh, live Odiham District

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas!

…but what about planning for those empty days in January.



December is always busy, lots going on, and that's true at the u3a as well. We start the month with one of our favourite speakers on 3rd December, Tony Harris helping us guess the meanings of little-known Words & Phrases – with lots of chocolates!

But what about January, festivities over, the need to get fit. We are looking to start a second walking group next year, so if you are a keen walker (about 5 miles) and like pub lunches you might want to join in the fun.



If you want to stay out of the cold, you might prefer our Line Dancing classes, we now have three groups, including one for absolute beginners. Who knew it would be so popular, lots of fun to banish those January blues.

Our monthly talk in January is Tales of the Unexpected, going behind the scenes of this long-running TV thriller series with the sinister twisted endings.

If you are not already a member, joining is only £20 for u3a membership for the year. To see the full programme of our Monthly Meetings and group activities, please visit our website www.odihamu3a.org.uk

North Hampshire Downs Mothers' Union

Our November meeting discussed how we can better support our local Women's Refuge and we are planning to provide Christmas gifts for the families who are living there. Please pray for all the families affected by domestic violence which is shockingly common in our society.

In December the branch members will meet for coffee and mince pies on Monday 8th December.

In 2026, Mothers' Union will be celebrating its 150th Anniversary, which is a tremendous milestone. We will have a number of celebrations during 2026, including a special evensong at Winchester Cathedral on Sunday 9th August 2026 when we will particularly remember the founder of Mothers' Union, Mary Sumner. We hope to continue for many more years working to end poverty, to end injustice and to end violence.

In our local branch we will start 2026 with a Wave of Prayer service on Monday 5th January at the RAF Chaplaincy Centre at 7:30pm. Mothers' Union divides the year into 3-day periods when we pray for the members and projects of a particular group of dioceses. Winchester diocese has its turn in January along with our Diocesan Links in Mauritius, Nandyal (South India), Kericho (Kenya), Katsina (Nigeria) and Kumasi (Ghana). We are very grateful to the RAF for allowing us to use their hall for our meetings.



I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and share with you a photo I took at an exhibition in Guildford Cathedral of the stunning textile art of Jacqui Parkinson.

If you want to find out more about Mothers' Union or our branch, please contact Sue Murphy on 01252 845011 or suemurphymubranch@outlook.com.

Christmas Concert for Cardiac Health at St Lawrence in Alton

Hart Male Voice Choir is helping Cardiac Health (formerly known as Cardiac Rehab) welcome in the festive season with a charity Christmas Concert on **Wednesday 3rd December**. The choir, who 'put the fun into fundraising for local charities and good causes' will be singing seasonal favourites from 7.00pm in the Church of St Lawrence in Alton. Mince pies and mulled wine will be served during the interval.

Cardiac Health has been part of the local community for nearly 50 years, and thanks to the generosity of our supporters continues to offer specialist-led services across the region. In our purpose-built facility, exercisers regain confidence, stay active and take control of their health. By working closely with healthcare professionals, we reduce pressure on public services, track measurable progress, and ensure patients benefit from safe, effective, results-driven exercise. It costs nearly £800 a day to provide this service to the local community and we do not receive funding from the NHS or government.

This is a ticketed event, please book ahead to avoid disappointment. Tickets cost £15.00 for adults and £5.00 for children. Tickets can be purchased from Cardiac Health, in Chawton Park Road, or on the charity's website: https://cardiac-rehab.co.uk/events/

Do you like to sing?

Do you know that singing is good for you? It can reduce stress, improve lung function, and boost mood by releasing feel-good chemicals like endorphins and dopamine. Singing in groups fosters social connections and promotes well-being. Recent research suggests that group singing can even reduce symptoms of postnatal depression, providing both emotional support and a sense of community.

Two members of Hampshire Harmony, Susan Booth and Margaret Allen, are proof that singing works for happiness friendship and health. When Susan and Margaret joined our choir in October 1970, like some of our current members, they were young mums looking for a weekly opportunity to leave cares and worries behind and have an evening of joy and of just being themselves. And 55 years later, they are still firm friends, singing well and taking on responsibilities.

Our fabulous MD, Clare Oliver, said, "Margaret and Susan are living proof of the benefits of singing. Their voices are amazing, and they still perform and learn new repertoire, all from memory. They are a true inspiration to us all, and we are so proud to have them still singing with us, with their wealth of experience and knowledge."

If you're interested in finding out if singing is for you, book a place at our new year Open Evening on January 5th 2026 via our website hampshireharmony.org. There will be two opportunities to hear the choir before then, at the Costello School Basingstoke at 3.00pm 29th November - tickets via the website - and also at the Mayor's Carol Service 6.00pm on 6th December at St Michael's Church, Basingstoke. We look forward to meeting you.

Rustles in the Leaves

As autumn brings misty mornings and crisp evenings, one of our most familiar garden visitors - the European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) - is preparing for its long winter sleep. These round, brown mammals, famously covered in around 7,000 yellow-tipped spines, are a much-loved feature of Britain's wildlife and an important part of our natural heritage.

Often called the gardener's best friend, hedgehogs are expert nocturnal foragers. They emerge at dusk to snuffle through long grass, flowerbeds, leaf litter, and vegetable patches in search of worms, beetles, slugs, and other invertebrates, making them natural pest controllers. Hedgehogs have a keen sense of smell and a remarkable ability to remember the location of abundant food sources.

Mostly active from April to October, they thrive in a variety of habitats, including woodland edges, farmland, parks, and suburban gardens, wherever shelter and food are plentiful. Solitary creatures for most of the year, they roam several miles each night in search of food and mates, coming together only during the breeding season in late spring and early summer.

By this time of year, hedgehogs are busy feeding as much as possible to build up fat reserves before hibernation begins. As temperatures drop in November, they retreat to sheltered spots such as under sheds, log piles, or dense shrubs, creating a nest of leaves and twigs known as a hibernaculum. Inside, their heartbeat slows dramatically, and their body temperature drops, allowing them to survive for months without food.

Sadly, the familiar hedgehog is now facing real challenges. Once a common sight in gardens across the UK, numbers have declined sharply over recent decades. Habitat loss, pesticide use and busy roads have all taken their toll, leaving hedgehogs struggling to find safe places to feed and hibernate.

Fortunately, small actions at home can make a big difference. Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust recommends leaving areas of

long grass, creating safe corridors between gardens, and avoiding harmful chemicals all help provide the refuge hedgehogs need. Every connected green space can become part of a larger, life-saving network for this cherished species. With a bit of care and community effort, we can help ensure hedgehogs remain a welcome part of our gardens for generations to come.

Find out more about hedgehogs on the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust website: hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/mammals/

Helen Skelton-Smith
Communications Officer – PR & Media
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust



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North Hampshire National Trust Centre

Last week, the **North Hampshire National Trust Centre (NHNTC)** hosted a successful recruitment event at **The Vyne**, combining a cream tea with a special 'Regency Tour' of the property guided by volunteers. The tour highlighted the house's two-part history. The Vyne was originally built as a vast **Tudor palace** by **William Sandys**, Lord Chamberlain to **Henry VIII**, and was large enough to host the King, Catherine of Aragon, and Anne Boleyn. The Tudor Chapel and the Long Gallery survive from this era.



The house was radically changed in the 17th century when it was acquired by **Challenor Chute**, a lawyer and later Speaker of the House of Commons. He demolished much of the Tudor structure and added a **classical portico**, giving the house its Georgian look. A later Chute added the grand Palladian staircase. The property was a local social hub and was frequently visited by novelist **Jane Austen** during the Regency period.

The recruitment event has attracted 17 new members. The NHNTC, with nearly 300 supporters, runs monthly events - winter talks and summer outings - and donates surplus funds to the National Trust for projects, primarily at The Vyne. New members are always welcome at just £8 per person or £13 for couples but membership is currently offered half price until the end of the financial year. To join go to the Centre's website: nhntc.com

SMALL ADS

Christmas at NEAR WILD HEAVEN
We're sisters Hannah & Laura, and this festive season we've filled our Odiham boutique (at the restored old post-office) with organic skincare, hand-poured candles, artisan gifts, festive hampers and even sustainable wrapping paper & cards. Thoughtful, planet-friendly presents wrapped up with love – find a little everyday magic with us.

WANTED - Storage Space for 1937 valuable and rare vintage car
for up to nine months while a buyer is being sought. The seller is in the Netherlands and wishes to sell it in the U.K. Secure and dry conditions are required with regular access available for viewing and road testing. If you do have space, please contact Athlone53@outlook.com or 07834 762330.

HALLS FOR HIRE

Upton Grey Village Hall can be hired at a basic rate of £14 per hour. Tables and chairs are also available to hire. There are kitchen facilities, including china, cutlery & glasses, central heating, sound system, stage and disabled access. If you don't know the hall, we would be happy to show you round. To book, or if you have any questions, please contact Jane Hanbury on 01256 862681
or email bookings@uptongreyvillagehall.co.uk
or visit our new website www.uptongreyvillagehall.co.uk.

The Herriard Village Hub, Herriard, available for hire: wedding receptions, functions, parties, meetings, and events. Fully licensed bar, full kitchen facilities, garden, tables, chairs, sound system, disabled access, central heating, pool table and darts. To reserve, please see booking form found at www.herriardvillagehub.co.uk or email bookings@herriardvillagehub.co.uk.

Disclaimer: Please note that the views expressed in this magazine are the contributors' personal opinions and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – DECEMBER 2025

NB: All Church Services are listed under CHURCH NEWS near the front of the magazine

DECEMBER DATES

3rd Dec	Wed	Advent Reflection, St Mary's Upton Grey	7.00pm
3rd Dec	Wed	Cardiac Christmas Concert, St Lawrence Church, Alton	7.00pm
9th Dec	Tues	Christmas Drop-in at UG VH – all four villages invited	2.00pm
9th Dec	Tues	Hospice Carol Service, All Saints, Odiham	7.00pm
10th Dec	Wed	Advent Reflection, St Mary's Upton Grey	7.00pm
13th Dec	Sat	Christmas Bingo, Herriard Village Hub	6.30pm
17th Dec	Wed	Messy Church, Upton Grey Village Hall	3.30-5.00pm
17th Dec	Wed	Carol Singing & Barn Nativity – from Herriard Hub	5.00pm
17rd Dec	Wed	Advent Reflection, St Mary's Upton Grey	7.00pm
18th Dec	Thur	Tunworth Village Carol Singing	6.00pm
19th Dec	Fri	Weston Patrick Carol Service, St Lawrence Church	6.00pm

ADVANCE DATES

24th Jan	Sat	Burns Night Supper, Old Barn, Manor Farm W Corbett	7.30pm
28th Feb	Sat	Upton Grey Reels Night	
14th Mar	Sat	Safari Supper, Upton Grey	7.15pm
6th June	Sat	St Mary's Church, UG Fete	2.00pm

REGULAR EVENTS

Each Mon/Thur	Odiham book exchange, Bridewell, Odiham	2.00pm
Each Sat	Odiham book exchange, Bridewell, Odiham	10.00am
Each Mon	Prayer group, 4 Little Hoddington	9.30–10.15am
Each Thur	Prayer group, 4 Little Hoddington	5.00–5.45pm
Each Thur	Coffee, Tea & Cake Morning, Hub, Herriard	10.00am
Every 1st Thur	Prayer Hour, All Saints Tunworth	9.30am
Every 1st Thur	Coffee & Cake, Tunworth church porch	10.30am
2nd & 4th Mon	Coffee Morning, Upton Grey Village Hall	11.00am
2nd & 4th Tues	Upton Grey 'Get OWT', UG Churchyard	10.00am
Every 4th Wed	Coffee Morning, Weston Patrick Village Hall	11.00am

PARISH MAGAZINE COPY DEADLINE

The copy deadline for the January issue is 12th December 2025. Note earlier date due to Christmas.

Please send news and contributions to uptongreymagazine@gmail.com. Your editors for the December issue were Sheila Stranks and Nick Willmer. The editor for the January issue will be Sheila Stranks (with Nick Willmer – church).

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