



The Window

April 2026



Homer Spring Has Sprung!

*Spring has sprung, the grass is ris,
I wonder where the boidies is
The boid is on the wing
But that's absoid
From what I hoid
The wing is on the boid*

"Spring Has Sprung" or The Brooklyn National Anthem, c 1940. Best repeated in a New York accent!

Homer snowdrops which have been a joy have tucked themselves away, with Hawthorn dropping its blossom like confetti. We eagerly await cherry blossom, but celandines and violets are making a show along with primroses and cowslips.

Last year we purchased a very handsome Black Welsh Mountain Ram who we put to five ewes, the descendants of which are from Elizabeth's flock that she brought here so many years ago. Due to lamb in April, they are in a paddock near our garden so that we can keep a watch as they lamb. Soon to return to a conservation area on the farm is the ram and his companion. a wether (castrated ram).

Elizabeth always kept a wether with her ram for company; one she called Mr Silver because he had the most beautiful silvery fleece; a gentle creature, he lived at Homer for many years. Because they are castrated the wethers do not produce much in the way of horns; our ram boasts some beautiful examples which gracefully curl around his head. We have to be careful that the horns do not penetrate the face or eye; in the past with Elizabeth's flock we have had to trim the ends off.



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Homer Spring Has Sprung! (Continued)



Giles is busy fencing around the farm, which has been delayed due to wet weather earlier in the year. Cutting back overhanging branches is also necessary while in woods around the farm; dead cherry and ash trees have been cut down, some of which were near the Ipsden Heath road and so were a risk to traffic.

Hedging stopped on 1 March to make way for nesting birds. Hedges have to be cut back every three years in rotation, with each field hedge numbered, and the cutting submitted to Natural England, who randomly ask for photographic evidence.

A nesting box long abandoned in the garden looks as if it may have an inhabitant this year with a blue tit busily popping in and out. We feed birds all winter, mostly sunflower hearts, with dried mealworms, suet pellets and fat balls. Robin soon tells me if I am late with the suet pellets! Pretty goldfinch are regular visitors, along with most of the tit family to mention just a few species. Although I have read that it is not ideal, I feed in the summer; not much is consumed, but I do think the adults may be glad of the occasional snack, as they busily feed their fledglings.

And so another Summer of farming begins. The days will lengthen, and probably by the time you read this, British Summer Time will have begun on 29 March. With thanks to Francesco for the photographs!

Diana Jackson



50 Ways (well not quite 50!) to Support the Local Food Bank

We are a group of villagers from Ipsden and North Stoke who take it in turns to stack and pack food for clients in the area. We work in twos on Thursday mornings at Christ the King Church in Sonning Common generally, it takes an hour or so to pack the food which is then delivered to local families.



We are supported by Shirley Small at the Ipsden shop with money and food donations, and we collect food donations from the boxes in our two village churches too. This month we are also very grateful to the St Mary's Players, who recently donated money to the foodbank via Shirley; huge thanks to those performing in the local panto, and to those who attended - they all raised the funds!

We are pleased to have new faces join our "happy packers".
Contact me if you are interested vcstretch@aol.com

Vicky Stretch



Ipsden Parish Council

The next Parish Council meeting will be at 6.30pm on Thursday, 30 April 2026 in Ipsden Village Memorial Hall. All are welcome.

Ipsden Parish Council

Upcoming Events at Braziers

Saturday 4 April, 10am – 5pm: Beginners Carpentry for the Terrified

Sunday 19 April, 10am – 12 noon: Kids Go Wild!

Saturday 2 May - Monday 4 May and Friday 8 May - Sunday 10 May: Oxfordshire Art Weeks

Monday 4 May, 11am – 4pm: Braziers Park May Fayre

Sunday 10 May, 11am – 1pm: Braziers' Glaister Lecture

Friday 22 May, 4pm - Monday 25, 4pm: SOIL Wider Community Gathering

Sunday 10 May, 10am – 12 noon: Kids Go Wild!

For more information on each of these events, and how to book them, please visit our website www.braziers.org.uk



Caroline Vitzthum

Charity Frog Racing

Join us for an exciting and fun packed Charity Frog Race evening on Saturday, 9 May 2026 at Woodcote Village Hall.

Get ready to cheer as the jockeys race their look-a-like amphibians down the course, hopping (*and hoping!*) to reach the finishing post and victory. It's harder than you think! Why not bring your friends, make up a table, and enjoy an hilarious evening filled with opportunities to back the best jockeys and their frogs. Better still, experience the thrill of the race first hand and participate in this exhilarating and fun showdown. Want to be a race owner and/or jockey? Don't delay, slots *now up for sale!* Also available for local traders, 1/8th advertising slots in the race card.



Doors open at 7pm for exciting racing, tote betting, bar and raffle. Tickets £15 (inc. supper).

To purchase race owner, jockey slots, advertising or tickets contact Robsan.evans@btinternet.com or text 07715 136326. Proceeds raised will help to install toilets and upgrade facilities at St Leonard's Church, Woodcote.

Cholsey Repair Café

Saturday 16 May will be the date of the next Cholsey Repair Café at the Cholsey Pavilion. Doors will be open from 10am until 12.45pm and you can bring along all manner of domestic items, including bicycles, for the expert attentions of our volunteer fixers, who will do their best to help you repair them. If the session is busy, you can make the wait more pleasant with a good “cuppa and cake” from Cholsey Community Café, right next door. We are one of the longest-running and most respected repair cafes in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. More detail can be found at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com.

Ian Wheeler



The Window Needs You!

Thank you to all those who contribute and help to make The Window inclusive to those who dwell or work in Ipsden and North Stoke. We always need articles. And that's where all of you can help. We don't have any reporters, most contents must come from those living in the villages. That's you!

You might be surprised: what seems mundane and everyday to you may be interesting and new to others. And don't forget to include news about forthcoming village events. Please don't be shy and leave it to the “regulars”! Just let us know if you need help or guidance, and send your contributions to The Window, ipsden.window@gmail.com or me, Peter Bennett, peter.bennett28@btopenworld.com

The Editor

View from the Vicarage

Alleluia! Christ Is Risen

I always love writing those words each year, because they remind me that Easter is not just a date in the diary but a declaration of hope - hope stubborn enough to roll away stones, mend what's broken, and coax life out of the most unpromising ground.



Speaking of unpromising ground you may notice the photograph accompanying this article – tied to a drainpipe in Wallingford. I had intended it to be a serene pastoral scene, perhaps something suitably uplifting for the season - lambs, daffodils, a sunrise, that sort of thing. But as most of you will know, Ipsden is currently accessible only by faith, four-wheel drive, or a very forgiving suspension system. So, the photo could have, just possibly, featured a pothole or two. Or three. Or a crater large enough to qualify for its own postcode.

I promise this is not a covert campaign. Well... not entirely. Let's call it an "*illustrated parable*". Because Easter is, in many ways, God's great road-repair project. Not the quick patch-up that lasts only until the next frost, but a deep, transformative renewal. The risen Christ steps into all the ruts and fractures of our lives - those places we'd rather avoid, or can't seem to navigate, without damage - and fills them with grace. Resurrection doesn't pretend the cracks aren't there; it restores us from the inside out.

And perhaps that's why I find myself smiling, even as I dodge the latest pothole on the way to North Stoke. It's a reminder that the world is always in need of mending, and that God is always in the business of doing just that. Sometimes through miracles, sometimes through community, sometimes through the parish council with a very large bucket of asphalt.

So, as we celebrate Easter this year, may you know the joy of Christ's risen life - lifting you, steadying you, and smoothing the way ahead, even if the literal road into the village remains a bit well character-building!

Wishing you a blessed, hope-filled, and gently bump-free Eastertide.

Alleluia. He is risen indeed.
Canon John



From the Rectory

Starting to Pray

It is OK to pray. If you've wondered now and then about praying and then didn't because you weren't sure about the what or the when, or the how, here's a few tips to help you.



- Prayer is something between you and God. Find a quiet spot where you can get away from all the distractions of the day and be by yourself. Put your phone on silent and ideally leave it somewhere else. God rarely uses the phone.
- Don't worry about what you will say. You don't need words. Just be quiet for a few minutes. If something comes to mind, look at it carefully, but then deliberately put it down. If it sticks with you – perhaps it is a worry, or concern, see if you can hold it up before God. Show the matter to him, and look at it together.
- Remember prayer is as much about you being still, and listening, and looking at the world, as it is about your giving God a long shopping list of your own needs. God knows your needs. He wants to know you better. And you are so much more than your needs. Time spent listening is never wasted.
- As a guide, you should talk to God about what is on your heart, whether that is as personal as a family member's ailments, or as large as global war and peace.
- Some find it helpful to write down their prayers in a journal or diary. The act of writing can sometimes help us clarify what we mean.
- If home is too busy, or noisy, it is OK to pray outside. It is OK to pop into church for a quiet time, too. Everyone is welcome to do this. It is your church, after all. (You would be surprised how often I find people doing just this – sitting quietly in a pew, remembering, giving thanks. It is a sacred place, and the prayers of those before us have soaked the building with love. The air has been softened there, and it in turn softens our hearts to God's love and mercy.)
- If your day is full to bursting, and you really can't get a moment away from all the jobs, prayer is still possible. There are always "autopilot" tasks which lend themselves to prayer whilst doing them. Doing the ironing, mowing the grass, making the train journey home, for example. Set your body into "remote", while you talk to the pilot.
- There are other settings for prayer, too, which are "corporate" in that they happen with other people. For example, prayers in small groups or prayers in a church service. These are different ways of praying, and tend to be more structured just so that everyone can follow what is happening.

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From the Rectory (Continued)

You can pray for any number of reasons – you might be upset or joyful, sad or angry, or simply overwhelmed by everything that is going on. However you are feeling, and whatever the reason for your prayer, it is important to remember that God sees, hears, and “gets it.”

Start gradually. If you ask God to draw near to you, He will.

May the blessing of the risen Lord Jesus Christ be with us all this Easter time.

***With my best wishes
Rev'd. Kevin Davies***

Dates for Your Diary

Fri 3 April	Good Friday Service	See page 9
Sun 5 April	Easter Day Services	See page 9
Wed 8 April	Ipsden Coffee Morning	
Wed 15 April	Games Club	See page 11
Sun 19 April	Contributions for May Issue	
Tue 21 April	Bridleway Public Inquiry	See page 10
Thurs 30 April	IPC Meeting	See page 3
Sat 9 May	Frog Racing	See page 4
Wed 13 May	Ipsden Coffee Morning	
Sat 16 May	Cholsey Repair Cafe	See page 5

See also page 4 for events at Braziers Park

Ipsden Village Lottery Winners

21 February	Elaine Allen	14 March	No winner
28 February	Fiona Hayward	21 March	Colin Hives
7 March	Elaine Allen	28 March	See next issue

This newsletter is edited, published, printed and distributed by the churches of Ipsden and North Stoke. The copy deadline for the next issue will be 19 April please.

Church Services for April and May

Both churches are open daily for visits and private prayer

Date	Ipsden	North Stoke
Wed 1 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
2 April Maundy Thursday	7.30pm TEAM SERVICE: St Leonard's Woodcote	
3 April Good Friday	12 noon WORDS FROM THE CROSS: St John the Baptist, Mongewell	
Sun 5 April Easter Day	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 8 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 12 April	10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Wed 15 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 19 April	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 22 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 26 April	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Morning Prayer
Wed 29 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sunday 3 May	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 6 May	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 10 May	10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Wed 13 May	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 17 May	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 20 May	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 24 May Pentecost	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Morning Prayer
Wed 27 May	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 31 May Trinity Sunday	10.30am Team Service at Ipsden	

St Mary's Players Travel Again!

March saw a few of St Mary's players take this year's pantomime production of Robin Hood to Millcroft care home where our Jesse-May works. The residents had previously had the chance to watch the whole panto on TV (Thanks Damian) and, thanks to some nifty script writing from the very talented Lottie Rundall and the very eloquent story telling from Kate Moberly, we were able to perform a much-shortened version of the show.



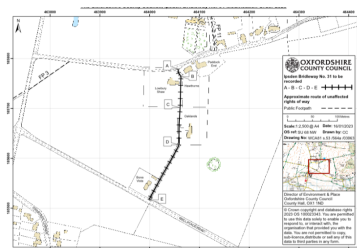
We sang some of the songs and it was lovely to see the residents and carers joining in, especially the Monkees' number at the end. Thanks, Steve Daniels for the prompts! As in previous years it was hugely enjoyable and we very much hope to perform again, maybe another Murder Mystery to Millcroft and other homes in the area.

Siobhan Bennett

Public Inquiry to Determine Bridleway No. 31 Modification Order 2023

There is going to be a Public Inquiry in Ipsden Village Hall commencing at 10am on Tuesday 21 April 2026 to determine Ipsden Bridleway Modification Order 2023. Full details are on the Ipsden Village website on the Notices page and on the Ipsden Parish Council notice board outside the village Post Office.

Ipsden Parish Council



Games Club!

Bored with sitting on your own, playing Solitaire on your phone or staring at the telly? Come to Games Club! Starting in April, we are organising a monthly afternoon of games: from Dominoes to Scrabble, from Beetle to Bananagrams, play your old favourites or learn something new.

Games will be provided, and there'll be refreshments too. All free of charge, courtesy of a council grant!* The first Games Club will be on Wednesday 15 April from 3pm to 5.30pm at Ipsden Village Hall.

We plan to rotate the club round different local villages in subsequent months, but you don't have to wait for your village's turn: if you're in North Stoke or Checkendon, for example, we would love you to come to Games Club in Ipsden. Any questions? Email Kate Moberly, katemoberly@hotmail.com

Kate Moberly, Lottie Rundall & Jesse-May

**Funded by the Connected Communities Fund, delivered in partnership by Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action and Community First Oxfordshire for Oxfordshire County Council.*

Thames Valley Community Police Visit

Thames Valley Police Community Support Officers Sarah Jones and Arron Carter visited Ipsden at 9am on Friday 20 March for a "Have your say" visit, and as arranged they based themselves outside the village shop.



On this occasion no one came along specifically to pass on any concerns. Robert Booth did confirm that we were a close-knit community that kept each other informed if there were any suspicious activities in the parish. The main concerns at the moment were highways related, with potholes being top of the list. Although not a police matter, the Community Support Officers said that if they did note anything of concern they would report it. The Community Support Officers left shortly after 9.30am for a drive around the parish before departing.

Ipsden Parish Council

The Threat to Wildlife River Corridors



Wildlife corridors are living tapestries woven together to produce a natural passage connecting fragmented habitats. These vital tapestries allow animals to safely migrate, find food, reproduce, and adapt to environmental changes while keeping our landscape functioning as a single, connected system rather than a scatter of isolated fragments. Thus, migration is the key behavioural adaptation that allows nature to thrive.

But with increased development of land, through housing, road building, and agricultural activity, the mobility of wildlife has become restricted, areas isolated, and the genetic diversity of our ecosystems reduced. And this extends to our rivers and waterways. These waterways, which are so key to providing vital habitat for freshwater wildlife, now find themselves confined and carved apart by human pressures. Strengthening both land and river corridors restores the weave of the landscape. It rebuilds the very connections that allow ecosystems to function, species to thrive, and nature to adapt in an ever-changing environment.

The call for wilder river corridors: At the Evenlode Catchment Partnership (a collaboration of over 20 organisations and many more individuals, united by a shared commitment to improving the water environments within the Evenlode catchment, hosted by Wild Oxfordshire), we value the role of these corridors as lifelines that connect segregated habitats, while championing the benefit to communities when local green and blue spaces are cared for.

We have developed innovative approaches to river restoration, such as the creation of wetlands, ponds, and fish passages, alongside natural flood management efforts like the installation of leaky woody dams and storage bunds. These interventions not only restore natural habitats but also reduce flood risks, benefiting local communities.



Evenlode River near College Farm, Bledington, and the Dorn River Restoration

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Wildlife River Corridors **(Continued)**



Additionally, intensive farming practices rely heavily on fertilisers and pesticides, and that dependence comes at a financial cost to farmers, poorer water quality, and shrinking space for wildlife. When fields are pushed to produce more, the landscape loses the complexity and breathing room that rivers, insects, birds, mammals, and soil organisms need to function well.

Sustainable farming offers a different path. Across Oxfordshire and the Evenlode catchment, farmers are being supported to adopt approaches that work *with* natural processes rather than against them.

Jessica Bouwer

Gardening Tips for April

Spring has officially sprung; dandelions, primroses, and crocuses have all shot up from the once frosty soil! And you'll be pleased to hear that April marks the start of the sowing season - this is where the fun begins! Here are some top tips on how to bring more wildlife (and a splash of colour while you're at it) into your garden, community green space, or any outdoor patch you can get your hands on - big and small, there's always a job to be done!

Plant for pollinators: Now is your time to start planting native plants, flowers, and more. Planting nectar-rich flowers attracts these winged beauties, such as butterflies and bees, and provides a vital food source later in the year. Try plants such as Snake's Head Fritillary, Forget-Me-Not, or a climber like Honeysuckle, which will also attract moths and bats in the summer.

Provide water sources: Don't just feed the birds, give them something to drink! Water features are a must-have for any wildlife-friendly space.

From birdbaths to ponds, water sources provide essential habitats, hydration or even a bath for your feathery (and not so feathery) guests.



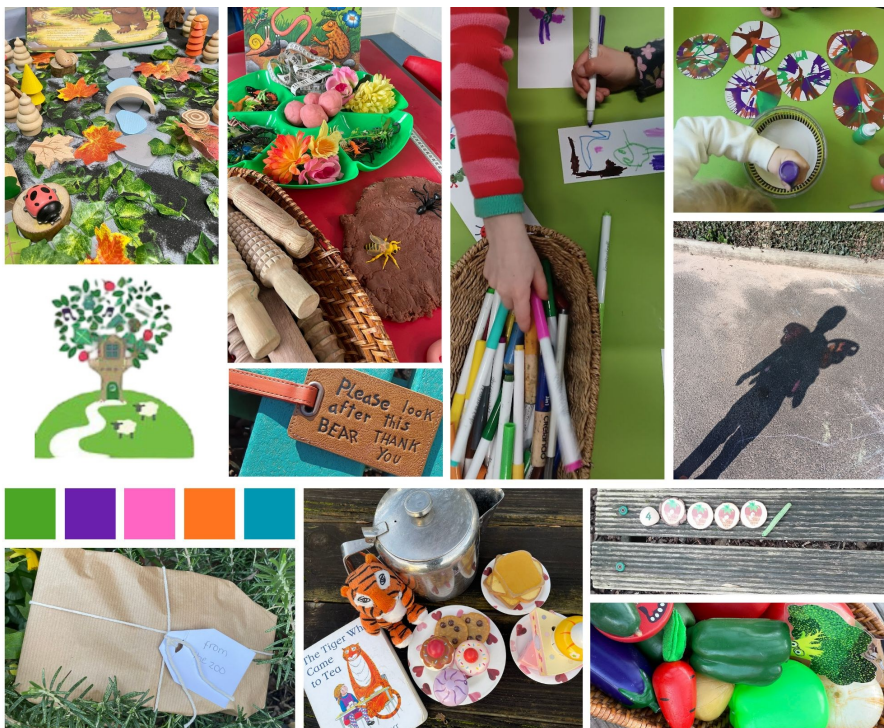
The Festival of Colours

Here at Early Days Nursery we have had a very busy half term, as this time of the year prompts lots of celebrations and occasions for us. We thoroughly enjoyed Shrove Tuesday, making our own pancakes and taking part in our own pancake races. In celebration of Lunar New Year, we practised writing different numbers in Mandarin and made lanterns, talking about how red is a lucky colour in some parts of the world.

We also marked Holi and learnt that it is often called The Festival of Colours. We talked about how people who are Hindu celebrate the colours and how it is Spring. We looked at photos of people across the world celebrating Holi and the children were fascinated by one photo where multiple dishes of gulal / abir were being used to create patterns. We then made our own.

World Book Day is "World Book Week" at Early Days Nursery, to allow all our children to enjoy this wonderful celebration of reading and books themselves. Our week was filled with story hunts, sensory trays, art experiences and imaginative play prompts all based around some of our favourite texts of the year so far.

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The Festival of Colours (Continued)

The children were also very grateful to receive a donation to buy some more books for their classroom with a very kind donation from Ipsden Book Club. Trefor Llewellyn and Susie Williams came to present this donation alongside a beautiful photograph of Heather Llewellyn, whom the donation has been made in memory of.

As part of our learning around People Who Help Us, we met a nurse and a train driver! We love meeting people who work within the community at nursery and always have many, many questions to ask.

We enjoyed taking part in the RSPB Big Birdwatch: the children did some amazing spotting, then counting, then writing down: we were so proud of them! We saw three pigeons, a magpie, a blackbird and 15 crows! We spotted a red kite and the children added this to the checklist - how remiss of RSPB to not include them! Our grown-ups explained that now there are lots of red kites near us, but not everywhere. We decided we would add them to the list as a footnote!

As the weather warms up our attention will turn to celebrating Eid before we then start completing Easter Egg hunts and talking about all the life cycles we see during Spring. We are excited to spot lambs, find blossoms and generally enjoy the longer warmer days in the garden. Here's hoping for sunshine!

Rebecca Fern



Supporting Ukraine

I'm sure most of us are aware of the amazing work Guy Hildred and his team are doing, taking supplies, transport, etc out to Ukraine.

I recall in the earlier days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine being asked if I knew of any unwanted medical supplies and equipment we could donate and thinking, "yep, I'm sure we may have a box or two." Time moved on

I had not reckoned on the force that is "wonder woman", aka Teresa, one of our senior admin colleagues at Wallingford Community Hospital, who set about contacting other hospitals and departments in Oxford Health to see if they had anything.

The response, I am thrilled to report, was huge, to say the least. I would estimate that I receive an e-mail at least weekly from someone wanting to send us equipment.

What used to be the hairdresser in the hospital is now a storage area, packed with boxes containing a wide variety of medical equipment ready to go to Ukraine and which otherwise would likely have gone to waste, in accordance with NHS regulations.

As you can see, Guy and some of his team came to the hospital to collect some equipment a few weeks ago (I think Eddy is in there somewhere!). Again, our staff (pictured below left to right, Joanne, me, Teresa and Jaqueline), stopped being very busy and became even busier helping load everything into the trucks.

It is so good to be a small part of what Guy, and many others, are doing for Ukraine.

Also, I have got to say, I am so proud of my colleagues at Wallingford Hospital. They are awesome.

Siobhan Bennett

