



# The Window

Match 2026



## Early Homer Spring

Homer Lane has awakened after its winter sleep. A herald of Spring: we have lovely displays of snowdrops; they have boldly grown through the cold winter months and now their delicate flowers bring such joy.

James and Cathy at Homer House kindly let us photograph theirs, which cover large areas of the garden and into their wood. James commented that he thought this year's snowdrops were better than in previous years and I am inclined to agree. In among a particularly large group on the farm a random hellebore stands proudly; where it came from is a mystery as are the first snowdrops which appeared a long time ago.



We will soon be seeing signs of bluebells which adorn the woods all around, competing with new leaves on the trees, showing off their splendour. Daylight hours are gradually increasing, with British Summer Time beginning on 29 March.

It is some 16 years since we stopped milking cows. In 1944 Francis Grenville Jackson came to Homer and started milking Shorthorns, then Red Polls. Over the years Friesians were introduced and then Friesian/Holstein cross.

Giles bought an Aberdeen Angus bull which meant the cows had smaller calves, making calving easier for them. Cows have a

*Continued on page 2*

## **Early Homer Spring (Continued)**

hierarchy with the same cows coming in to be milked in strict order. There were generally three groups; the enthusiastic, the not so keen, followed by "okay, we will be milked if we have to so let's get on with it!" Not so if Hamish was there. He stood firmly at the parlour door so that no cows could get in. In order to proceed, he was let in where he placed his front legs on the step, being too large to get all four on, and waited for some cattle cake to be served. He obligingly then left having tucked into several scoops of food.

It was a sad day when we decided to give up milking. Having been "shut down" for three years with failed TB tests, a decision was made to give up altogether. TB is an ever-present enemy. A test involves a vet visiting every 60 days to take blood and a skin test; any reactors are culled with the farm shut down until there are two clear tests. By shut down, there is no buying or selling of animals, which greatly affects a farmer's income. It was a great consolation that the whole herd (TB free) were sold together to a farmer living in North Oxfordshire, ironically replacing his whole herd which had been culled because of TB.

There is much controversy as to how the disease is spread but to see cows leaving a herd because of TB is extremely upsetting and much research is being done with, hopefully, a preventative vaccine in the not too distant future.



We never take for granted the beauty that surrounds here in The Chilterns but hope one way or another, to share with others as we go through life's journey.

**Diana Jackson**

## **Church Lane Spring Flowers**

Thanks to David Coldwell, who was out in Church Lane with his camera earlier in February.



## **Spring Bingo Night**

Bingo is back at Ipsden following the hugely popular event last year. The next session will be on Saturday 21 March at Ipsden Village Hall. Doors will open at 6pm, with "Eyes Down" at 7pm. All ages and abilities are welcome!



Pay on arrival – cash or card.  
£10 for 6 cards, £5 for 3 cards, or £1 for one card. There will also be a pay bar, and prizes, and a raffle.

**Clare Davis**

## **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**

## **“The Top of the World”**

The children at Early Days have had a very busy first half term of the year! In January we learnt all about Winter and the Polar Regions. The fact that it was rather cold at the start of the year provided us with some wonderful hands-on experiences. One of our favourite places to go is where the children call “The Top of the World,” and what you will all probably know as the War Memorial! One of the children named it this a while back on a particularly clear day and it has rather stuck; you can see for a long, long way after all! There is a photo taken from this spot (see below, bottom left); we love to take the parachute up here, share stories and spot the surrounding villages we know - with a little support from the adults. We have also enjoyed watching many a winter sunset whilst listening to stories from our beautiful window.



Owls Class have had some very important decisions to make recently. Our lovely teacher Louise explained that we had some money from our mummies and daddies buying the cards we had made for Christmas, and that because we're very lucky at nursery to have all the toys and crayons and books we could ever ask for, it might be nice to give that money to someone else. She showed us some containers that were a bit like the ones at Tesco and Waitrose, and some of us remembered that you put a counter in them. Louise had put a picture of Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary on one, Wallingford Food Bank on one and Braziers Park on the other. We then chose where we would like to put our counter (representative value of about £1 each - amazing!). The children waited beautifully for their turn and thought very carefully about where they would like their £1 to go!

Christmas having gone doesn't mean we stop having magic moments at Early Days! One of the grown-ups explained she'd found a very very small key outside and just wanted to check with the adults if it was theirs. All the grown-ups looked and said it was far too small to be their house key. We talked about who it might belong to. It was tiny, so we thought maybe a baby? A mouse's

*Continued on page 5*

## **"The Top of the World" (Continued)**

car? We had lots of suggestions! We took it outside and it wasn't long before we located a tiny little door, with a sign on it that read: "Fairies". It also had a lock. We tried the key and it FITTED! It was so exciting and we spent ages finding little things to leave the fairies - including a live ladybird which unfortunately didn't seem as keen to stay for tea ...

A few weeks later, we fell in love with the story Tell Me A Dragon, inspiring our adults to see if they could track down a real dragon egg for us. Fortunately, our adults have some contacts in the dragon world and we looked after a nest for some time. One morning we walked into our classroom to find our grown-ups looking puzzled. The window was unlocked, there were giant white footprints through the classroom, on the table and the windowsill, and the giant egg we found had hatched ... and was empty! We talked lots about what we thought had hatched, what kind of dragon it might be, how it might have got out, where it went, how we might catch it ... the children's critical thinking blew us away! This continued long into the day, even leading to the children preparing food for the baby dragon and leaving it outside so it could be seen from the air!

We have felt beyond privileged to have been asked to trial and feedback on The Good Morning Club's Feelsville TM. This is a program for very young children designed to bring emotional literacy and regulation to life for young children through Feelsville - an incredible little world where songs, dances, stories and play illustrate what feelings are and how they feel in the body. This has been a real 'pinch-me' moment for some of our staff team and one we certainly won't forget in a hurry.

We have continued to enjoy many process art opportunities. We provide the children with materials and let them do the rest; what you see is far more lovely and more 'felt' than anything we could have ever directed them to do. Children are born creators; they see multiple opportunities in every material they are presented with. Each time we trust them in this process we are richly rewarded.



We finished the term by making lots of Valentines-themed gifts for our families, and enjoying pancake-themed fun to mark Shrove Tuesday. Next term we'll be talking about Lunar New Year, marking Holi and World Book Day alongside learning about Traditional Tales and Life Cycles. Here's to lots more learning and hopefully a little less rain!

**Rebecca Fern**

## **Local Council Changes**

Residents urged to respond to government consultation on once-in-a-generation opportunity to change local councils. The government has launched a consultation on options to reorganise local councils across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

Local Government Reorganisation is a government-led reform to change how councils in two-tier areas are structured, replacing county and district councils with single unitary structures responsible for local services.

The upcoming consultation asks residents for their views on each of the three proposals put forward for Oxfordshire. This consultation will inform the government's decision later in the year on which proposal to implement. The change in council structures provides an opportunity to transform how councils work to deliver services, drive economic growth and support local communities.

In late 2025, a clear consensus emerged when five councils in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire formally supported a proposal for two new, innovative, responsive and locally accountable unitary authorities to address current inefficiencies, enhance services, and save millions.

These councils agreed that the two-unitary model offers the best outcomes for local residents and have urged the government to adopt it when making its decision later in the year.

The government intends to decide on which structure is implemented in Oxfordshire before the government's summer recess in July. The preferred model is expected to be fully operational in 2028, replacing the current councils.

Residents can take part in the consultation by visiting <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/oxfordshire>

The consultation is open from 5 February to 26 March 2026. Respondents can either take part in an online survey or write directly to government with their views.

The proposals can be found at:

Single unitary proposal – [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oneoxfordshire](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oneoxfordshire)

Two unitary proposal – [www.twocouncils.org](http://www.twocouncils.org).

Three unitary proposal – [www.oxford.gov.uk/three-councils](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/three-councils)

See also on the Notices page on the Ipsden Village Website at <http://www.ipsdenvillage.co.uk/page-12/>

**Ipsden Parish Council**

## **March Events at Braziers Park**



3pm Thursday 5 March - 4pm: Braziers Park Self-Led Residency: Spring Writers' Retreat  
10am-5pm, Sunday 8 March 2026: Spring Tea Day with tinyteahouse  
4pm Friday 13 - 4pm Sunday 15 March 2026: SOUL Wider Community Gathering  
4pm Friday 27 - 4pm Sunday 29 March 2026: Life Drawing & Mindfulness Weekend: The Art of Presence  
10am-5pm, Saturday 28th March 2026: Demystifying Menstruality  
10am-noon, Sunday 22nd March 2026: Kids Go Wild!

For more details and booking visit [www.braziers.org.uk](http://www.braziers.org.uk)



DatTTTTes **for Your Diary**

Wed 11 March	Ipsden Coffee Morning	
Fri 20 March	Police Visit	See page 13
Sat 21 March	Cholsey Repair Cafe	See page 13
Sat 21 March	Spring Bingo Night	See page 3
Sun 29 March	British Summer Time Starts!	
Sun 29 March	Easter Services Commence	See page 9
Wed 8 April	Ipsden Coffee Morning	
Sat 30 April	IPC Meeting	See page 3
Sat 16 May	Cholsey Repair Cafe	See page 13

*There are also several events planned for March at Braziers Park—  
please see page 7 for further details*

**Ipsden Village Lottery Winners**

17 January	Liz Yates	7 February	Ann Hemmings
24 January	Pauline Silvey	14 February	No winner
31 January	Jenny Bain	21 February	See next issue

**Ipsden Village Lottery Tickets**

There are numbers available for the Ipsden Lottery, which helps fund our Village Memorial Hall. A ticket is £1 per week, payable in 10-week blocks, with the winning number worth £25 each week. The winning number is the Saturday night bonus ball number in the National Lottery. If you are interested in joining, please talk to Shirley in the shop to arrange payment and to choose your number.

**Clare Davis**

**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 March please.**

## March, Easter and April Church Services

Both churches are open daily for visits and private prayer

<b>Date</b>	<b>Ipsden</b>	<b>North Stoke</b>
<b>Sun 1 March</b>	<b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>
Wed 4 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 8 March</b>	<b>10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)</b>	
Wed 11 Mrch	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>15 March Mothering Sun- day</b>	<b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>
Wed 18 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 22 March</b>	<b>9.30am Morning Prayer</b>	<b>11am Morning Prayer</b>
Wed 25 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 29 March Palm Sunday</b>	<b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>
Wed 1 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>2 April Maundy Thursday</b>	<b>7.30pm TEAM SERVICE: St Leonard's Woodcote</b>	
<b>3 April Good Friday</b>	<b>12 noon WORDS FROM THE CROSS: St John the Bap- tist, Mongewell</b>	
<b>Sun 5 April EASTER DAY</b>	<b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>
Wed 8 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 12 April</b>	<b>10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)</b>	
Wed 15 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 19 April</b>	<b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>
Wed 22 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
<b>Sun 26 April</b>	<b>9.30am Morning Prayer</b>	<b>11am Morning Prayer</b>
Wed 29 April	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	

## View from the Vicarage

### **Lent in Springtime**

Lent arrives each year just as the world is stretching, yawning, and deciding whether it's brave enough to be spring. Snowdrops appear like small white prophets, announcing hope before anyone else dares. Birds begin their morning choir practice. Even the garden, which has spent winter impersonating a swamp, suddenly remembers its responsibilities. And into



this scene of renewal comes Lent, with its reputation for seriousness, self-denial, and the annual question: "What are you giving up?"

It can feel like a cosmic joke. Just as the shops begin to whisper, "Go on... buy the hot cross buns... they're practically medicinal," the Church gently suggests restraint. It's a spiritual tug-of-war between the stomach and the soul, and the stomach is not known for its diplomacy.

But Lent in springtime is not a contradiction. It's a partnership. The natural world becomes a living parable of what the season is meant to do within us. While the earth is busy greening, budding, and shaking off winter's heaviness, Lent invites us to do the same spiritually. The prophet Joel calls us to "*rend your hearts and not your garments*" - a reminder that God is more interested in inner renewal than outward performance. Spring, in its own way, agrees.

The theology of Lent is not about misery; it's about making space. Jesus' forty days in the wilderness were not a divine endurance test but a time of clarity, preparation, and deep listening. He stripped away distractions so he could step fully into his calling. Lent gives us a chance, however imperfectly, to do likewise. It's less about giving things up and more about giving God room.

Of course, our Lenten efforts can be variable. Many of us have boldly declared, "*I'm giving up chocolate*," only to discover that chocolate has an extraordinary ability to hide in cupboards, leap into shopping baskets, or appear at coffee mornings with a look of innocent charm. Others attempt to give up complaining, only to find themselves complaining about how difficult it is not to complain. Lent, it seems, has a sense of humour and is not above using it.

Yet beneath the gentle chaos of our good intentions lies something deeply hopeful. Lent is not about achieving spiritual perfection; it's

*Continued on page 11*

## View from the Vicarage (Continued)

about turning, again, towards God. The early Church called this *metanoia*: a change of heart, a re-orientation, a fresh start. And springtime, with its stubborn insistence on new life, becomes a daily reminder that transformation is possible.

The greyest branches can blossom. The coldest soil can warm. The most stubborn habits can soften. And even if our Lenten discipline is more "*wobbly attempt*" than "*spiritual triumph*", God's grace has a way of turning small beginnings into surprising growth.

So, as you notice the daffodils brightening the verges and hear the birds tuning up for their spring concert, let them be companions on your Lenten journey. They echo the same message that Lent proclaims - **new life is coming**. Prepare the ground. Lighten the load. And walk towards Easter with hope, and perhaps just a little humour, along the way.

*Blessings to you all,  
Canon John*



AT THE  
CROSS

**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST  
MONGEWELL  
12 NOON**

GOOD FRIDAY

## **Report Those Potholes!!!**



Ipsden Parish Council (IPC) is very concerned, as are we all, about the number and severity of potholes on all access roads to Ipsden. The Parish Council is not permitted to make any alterations to the roads because they are managed by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

OCC should fix reported potholes based on the risk that they pose to all road users. Therefore, these potholes need to be reported to OCC with specific mention of those risks. IPC is aware that many reports have already been made and can only request that more reports are made, with photographic evidence and copies of invoices for repairs to damaged tyres and wheels.

To report a pothole:

- go to [fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- Enter the postcode, street name or area, or use what3words
- Click on the map to report the exact location of the pothole
- Upload a photo of the pothole
- Enter message detailing
  - the length, width and depth of the pothole
  - damage caused to your tyre/wheel
  - invoice details of repair costs
  - the risk posed to other road users, cars, bikes, walkers and horses
- Next, enter your name and email address
- Click SUBMIT

Ipsden Parish Council has also been in direct contact with the Highway team at OCC regarding the potholes at Brockendon Bottom - what3words - VIDEOS.SCOUTED.ANGLE, Church Lane, Ipsden OX10 6AE and have received the following reply: "To address your concerns, I have prioritised the Dragon Patcher to attend to this matter as soon as possible to ensure the safety of all road users."

**Cllr Dilys Beaumont  
Ipsden Parish Council**

## **Cholsey Repair Café**

The ever popular café opens its doors again at The Cholsey Pavilion from 10am until 12.45pm on Saturday 21 March. Talented fixers have a good track record of helping to repair domestic items of all sorts and this includes tool - and knife sharpening, bicycles, small electrical appliances. The idea is to reduce landfill, conserve raw materials and pass on repair skills. As ever, repair help and advice are given free but a small contribution to operating costs is welcome. You can find helpful information at [www.cholseyrepaircafe.com](http://www.cholseyrepaircafe.com). There will be another café, also at the same place from 10am until 12.45pm, on Saturday 16 May.

**Ian Wheeler**



## **Police Visit Ipsden!**

Don't worry! It's just that PCSO Sarah Jones from Thames Valley Police will be coming to The Post Office on Friday 20 March 2026 at 9am. It is an opportunity to meet with our local police and raise any concerns or questions that you may have. So please pop in on the day.

**Mandy & Martin Small.**



## **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, all the contents must come from those in the villages. That's you!

You might be surprised: what seems mundane and everyday to you may be interesting and new to others. We are now in that wonderful time of the year when there are many events and much wonderful scenery. Please don't be shy and leave it to the "regulars"! Just let us know if you need help or guidance. Send your contributions to [ipsden.window@gmail.com](mailto:ipsden.window@gmail.com) or me [peter.bennett28@btoopenworld.com](mailto:peter.bennett28@btoopenworld.com)

**The Editor**

## **Please Take Part in a Litter Pick!**

Spring has finally arrived! And with it comes a burst of new life into our green spaces. So, what better time to help give nature a fresh start by taking part in The Great British Spring Clean, the UK's biggest mass-action environmental campaign, running from 3 to 29 March 2026. You can pledge to pick up however many bags you choose from Friday 13 February.



Why Litter Picking Matters: Giving our shared spaces a little TLC helps wildlife, keeps our communities clean, and brings neighbours together. And while it can be tempting to think "a little bit of rubbish won't hurt", small pieces quickly add up. Litter can harm mammals like hedgehogs and birds like swans, who are frequently injured after getting caught up in waste. A short hour spent litter picking makes an immediate and satisfying difference, and if you don't have much time on your hands as the months get busier, it's one of the simplest actions we can take.

### Tips for Safe and Wildlife-Friendly Litter Picking

- Complete a risk assessment before you start.
- Wear gloves and sturdy shoes.
- Use a picker if you have one.
- Avoid disturbing piles of leaves or logs.
- Keep dogs close by, especially near roads or thick scrub.
- Report instances of danger, such as fly-tipping.
- Don't forget to sort and separate what you've collected for recycling.
- Tie bags securely and dispose of them appropriately.

Wash your hands after you've finished.

**Jessica Bower**

## **The County's Military Heritage in a New Exhibition**



**Soldiers of  
Oxfordshire  
Museum**

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, the county's military history museum based in Woodstock, will open a brand-new exhibition entitled *Oxfordshire's Military Heritage in 50 Objects* from 21 March to 30 April 2026. The collection of objects going into the exhibition combine highlights from the museum's permanent displays from the past 10 years with recently donated items on show for the first time.

The objects have been selected from the 14,500 items preserved in the collection of SOFO Museum to give a glimpse into the story of Oxfordshire's military heritage. These objects tell the stories of residents of the county and the soldiers of Oxfordshire's regiments who have been impacted by, and influenced, conflict across the centuries.

Oxfordshire's military story stretches back nearly 2,000 years, from the earliest named soldier in the county, Lucius Valerius Geminus, a veteran of the Second Augustan Legion who was buried at Alcester in 79AD. The county's regiments played roles in shaping the most significant conflicts of the last 200 years, from Waterloo to pivotal battles of the First and Second World Wars.

Throughout history, Oxfordshire soldiers have led the charge, at the forefront of world-changing events. A 19<sup>th</sup> century shako cap and Waterloo Medal highlight the 52<sup>nd</sup> (Oxfordshire) Regiment of Foot's role in Napoleon's defeat at the battle and encounter with his Imperial Guard.

The exhibition will include a collection of objects first uncovered by a French farmer in 2013, alongside the remains of an unidentified officer. Scraps of a uniform, badges, buttons, a pocket watch and trench whistle provided some clues which helped museum volunteers narrow down his identity to one of a small number of candidates, including Osmond Bartle Wordsworth, a collateral descendant of the famous poet, William Wordsworth. However, it was a chance encounter with a visitor to the museum, who knew another descendant that enabled DNA testing, through the Ministry of Defence, Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), which finally confirmed his identity.

Alongside the exhibition, the museum will be expanding its outreach programme by taking a package of talks themed around *50 Objects* on the road, offering to bring selections of objects with an expert speaker to clubs, societies and organisations across the county. Talks and speakers are now bookable by contacting the museum or visiting our website.

**Duncan Parsons**

# **Snowdrop Season at Braziers**



Braziers Park began the year with its annual Snowdrops Open Days on the weekend of 7 and 8 February, welcoming a great number of visitors to explore the grounds and admire the thousands of snowdrops blooming across the estate. Families took part in creative activities, friends gathered in the (in)famous Tea Room for homemade cakes and hot drinks, and the house and gardens felt full of life. It was a joyful start to 2026, and Braziers Park extends heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined and made the weekend so special. With thanks to Caroline Vitzthum for the photographs.

