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Link Magazine exists to be of service to the communities of Oakley, Deane, Newfound, Malshanger and Wootton St Lawrence. The sentiments expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editorial team. The editors take no responsibility for the accuracy of the contents of submissions.

With the exception of trade ads all other items for publication may be made free of charge. Please submit articles by the date given below for publication the month following. The *Link* editors reserve the right to decline or edit any contributions.

Link web-site oakleylink.org.uk

Please e-mail copy to: editor@oakleylink.org.uk

or post to 8 Caithness Close, Oakley, RG23 7NG

Deadline for April 2026 issue: 15 March

Editorial

Link has a new Community page (page16) with useful information if you are looking for help with health (including mental health), budgeting, companionship, well-being, etc. Please send in any information you have which could be added in here to help fellow villagers. Thank you. *Chris Wassell*

Advertorial

£15,056 raised for The Pink Place

We were proud to conclude our Charity of the Year partnership with **The Pink Place**, having raised £15,056.93 throughout 2025. These funds will help support women affected by cancer across our local community.

Charity of the Year 2026: Victoria's Promise

Victoria's Promise is our Charity of the Year for 2026. Victoria's Promise is a local charity providing compassionate, practical support to women living with cancer and their families. Throughout 2026, we will be fundraising and raising awareness to help support their vital work. *Zoe McLaren* Website: www.phillips-law.co.uk

Thank you to Oakley Woodlands Group for the cover photo of snowdrops in St John's Copse

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New volunteer drivers always welcome

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07376 574412

Oakley Community Care is a Registered Charity (No. 1141330)

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Report from the Parish Council

We are pleased to share that our very first community survey has now been published. You will find a copy included within this issue of the Link magazine, on page 10. Simply cut it out and post it through our letterbox at Newfound Sports Pavilion. Alternatively, the survey is available to complete online via our website and Facebook page.

Your feedback is incredibly important to us. By taking part, you help us understand what matters most to residents and where we can improve. Working together as a community allows us to identify priorities, celebrate what we do well and focus on areas where we can do better. We encourage everyone to take a few moments to have their say.

APM – Wednesday 22 April

Our Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Wednesday 22 April at Oakley Junior School, commencing at 7 pm. All residents are warmly invited to attend. We will be joined by guest speakers from Watership Down Health, our local Hampshire police officers and more. This is a great opportunity to hear updates, ask questions and get involved in local matters.



Report it!

We would also like to say well done and thank you to everyone who continues to report issues within the village. Whether it's potholes, flooding at the bridges or antisocial behaviour, these concerns need to be reported via the Hampshire County Council website. Without reports, it can appear that there are no problems in Oakley. To beat it, we have to report it.

You can report issues using the "Our Hants" app or online at: hants.gov.uk/report.

Polite Notice – Hedgerows and Public Paths

We have recently received several reports of hedgerows and bushes obstructing public footpaths and roads. Overgrown vegetation can reduce visibility for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers and may pose a safety risk. We kindly ask all residents and landowners to ensure that hedges and bushes bordering public paths and highways are trimmed back appropriately to allow clear and safe visibility.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

*Kelly Green - Assistant Clerk,
assistantclerk@oakleydeane-pc.gov.uk*

A poster for Parish Council Coffee & Chat. It features the Oakley & Deane Parish Council logo at the top. The text reads: "Parish Council Coffee & Chat", "Newfound Sports Pavilion", "Every Thursday 10:30 am - 12:30 am", and "Enjoy refreshments with fellow community members and take the opportunity to talk with your parish council." The background is dark red with orange brushstrokes on the right side.

A poster for Our Oakley Community Market. It features a logo with a tree and a carrot. The text reads: "Our Oakley Community Market", "Saturday, 28th March 12 PM - 3 PM", "Barley Mow, Oakley", and "More info: ouroakley.uk". Below the text is an illustration of a market stall with a striped awning, displaying a pink ice cream cone, a yellow teddy bear, and a yellow gift box. The stall sign says "Treats | Toys | Gifts | Arts & Crafts". At the bottom, it says "Organised by: Barley Mow, Oakley Neighbourhood Watch & Craft Kits N Bits". The background is light blue and yellow with a faint tree illustration.



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Lunch with us

Beat those midweek blues with our wonderful lunch deal. Enjoy a selection of sandwiches, wraps and classics paired with a drink for just £12.



Mother's Day

Sunday 15th March

Bring the family together to celebrate Mum with our three-course menu for £33 full of roasts with all the trimmings, and all your favourite dishes. Book your spot now.



Easter Weekend

3rd-6th April

Join us this long weekend for a beautiful Easter surrounded by friends and family. We've got a three-course set menu for the Easter Sunday featuring lamb rump for the special occasion. Plus, we've got the perfect spot to gather the group all weekend long with a pint in hand.



Barley Mow | Oakley Lane | Basingstoke | RG23 7JZ | 01256 636 636

Follow us on social to see more of what we've got planned this season. @BarleyMowatOakley

www.barleymowatOakley.co.uk

Village



Oakley Village Show 2026

We hope you have enjoyed looking at some of the show classes that appeared in January Link and have found one you might want to enter.

We particularly want to encourage writers to put pen to paper or, these days, fingers to keys, as it would be good to have a good variety of entries. We try to choose a title for the poem and short story that is open to interpretation and we always ask our judge, Mike Hollow, for his thoughts. (Mike is the author of the "Blitz Detective" series which has had critical acclaim from Lee Childs, so his opinion is much valued!)

We hope this year's title, "The Voice" will get those creative juices flowing. Alternatively, you might want to entertain us with a witty limerick on your chosen subject. Five lines, set rhyming sequence and number of syllables per line. What could be simpler? So, if you have not entered a writing class before, perhaps this is the year to have a go.

If you have any queries, feel free to email me anndavis48@hotmail.com

Ann Davis on behalf of the show committee



Produce from 2019 Village Show

Fund Raising



OAKLEY & DEANE WI

Charity No 299043

We are holding a

Vintage & Jumble Sale

On Saturday 28th March 2026
At East Oakley Village hall (the Green Hut), Hill Road, Oakley. RG23 7JJ

Doors open 1.45pm
Entrance fee 50p for adults

Vintage and used, clothes, books, toys, linens & Bric-a-brac. Also a Tombola, Raffle and refreshments.

Donations of goods accepted at the Hall from 10am (no large furniture items please)

Enquiries to the Secretary by email to oakleydeanewi@gmail.com



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Church News



Oakley Methodist Church

All welcome at the Methodist Church coffee morning on Tuesday 10 March and 24 March from 10:30 am to 12 noon. £1.50 for a bottomless cup of tea or coffee and biscuits. Come and meet old friends and new. The charity for the year is Dementia UK. We look forward to welcoming the woodland well-being walkers at the end of their walk.

Trish Kinchington

World Day of Prayer

We invite you to come to the Oakley World Day of Prayer service on Friday 6 March 2026, at St Leonard's Church between 10:30 and 11:30 am. There will be refreshments after the service. Do join us. Everyone is welcome!

For your information, World Day of Prayer (WDP) is an international, inter-church, Christian movement which enables us to hear the thoughts, concerns and hopes of women from all parts of the world. This year's service focuses on Nigeria. Its Christian women, who have prepared it, are calling everyone to come closer to God and find rest in him. Their service reflects Matthew 11: 28 - 30 – I will give you rest, come.

We give thanks for this service, which has been prayerfully made ready and finally, on 6 March 2026, people around the world, in their native languages and different locations, will gather to follow it and take part. We hope and pray that the ladies' stories will inspire us all to unite as one people in Christ in both prayer and action.

An open space to unpack life's big questions for anyone who's



CURIOUS

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Try Alpha 

Oakley

Methodist Church

Services at 10:30 am

March 1	Mr Peter Frank
March 8	local arrangements
March 15	Rev Jenny Ellis Communion
March 22	Rev Barbara McIntivey
March 29	Sarah Whithorn Palm Sunday

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10:30 am to 12 noon

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www.bhbcircuit.org.uk/churches/oakley.html




*Horatio Nelson:
Life and Loves* by
Dr James Taylor



Learn about the extraordinary life and loves of Vice-Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson through period paintings, drawings and prints, presented by Dr James Taylor, a former curator of pictures at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

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Oakley & Deane Parish Council Residents Survey

Our aim with this survey is to understand how familiar Oakley & Deane residents are with the work of the Parish Council and to gather your feedback on how we're performing and what our priorities should be going forward.

1. Before receiving this survey, how well would you say you understood what the Parish Council does?

- Very well Quite well A little Not at all

2. Which of the following do you believe best describes the Parish Council?

- Part of local government Part of the church
 A community/volunteer group Not sure

3. Where do you usually get information about the Parish Council? (Select all that apply)

- Parish Council Website Facebook/Social Media
 Parish noticeboards Local magazine/newsletter
 Word of mouth

4. How effective do you think the Parish Council is at keeping residents informed about its work?

- Very effective Somewhat effective Neither effective nor ineffective Somewhat ineffective
 Very ineffective

5. Have you ever contacted the Parish Council directly?

- Yes No

6. If yes, how easy was it to get a response?

- Extremely easy Somewhat easy Neutral
 Somewhat not easy Extremely not easy

7. Overall, how would you rate the Parish Council's performance in serving the village?

- Excellent Good Fair Poor Very poor

8. What are the top three things you think the Parish Council could do better?

9. Which of these areas should be the Parish Council's top priorities in the next 3 years? (Please choose up to 3 options)

- Roads & Traffic Public spaces (greens, playgrounds etc) Safety & security Local environment & sustainability Community events & activities Working with local businesses/groups

10. How satisfied are you with the general upkeep of the village (e.g. green spaces, footpaths, litter,

maintenance)?

- Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

11. What one thing would make the biggest positive difference to village life for you?

12. If the Parish Council could fund new projects, which would you most like to see? (Select all that apply)

- New or improved playgrounds More benches/communal seating Better walking/cycling paths
 Village hall improvements Support for youth groups Support for older residents

13. If Oakley grows in the next 5–10 years, what would you most like the Parish Council to focus on?

- Transport links Facilities for families Facilities for older residents Protecting green space
 Supporting local businesses/groups

14. Would you like to be more involved with Parish Council activities?

- Yes – through volunteering Yes – by attending meetings/events Yes – by being kept more up to date No, happy with things as they are

15. Is there anything else you'd like to tell the Parish Council?

(Optional) About You

16. Age Group

- Under 18 18–24 25–34 35–44
 45–54 65 and over

17. How long have you lived in Oakley?

- Less than a year 1–5 years 5–10 years
 10–15 years 15 years +

Please return your completed survey into the black post box at the entrance of the Newfound Sports Pavilion: *(Continue on an additional sheet of paper if insufficient space here for your comments)*

Oakley and Deane Parish Council, Newfound Sports Pavilion, RG23 7HH, Phone: 07983 500 372
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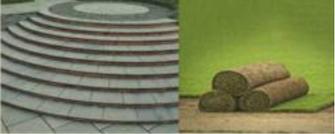


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Ladies Societies



Basingstoke Ladies Probus Club "Elementary, dear ladies!"



The Basingstoke Ladies' Probus Club kicked off their first meeting of the year with a fascinating talk by Dr Stephen J Goss, a former lecturer in history at Queen's University Belfast, a published academic lecturing in history and politics at City Lit and an expert tour guide at the Imperial War Museums. As a life-long admirer of Sherlock Holmes, Stephen explained to his very attentive audience how Arthur Conan Doyle drew from his experiences and the tumultuous events of his time to craft the adventures of Sherlock Holmes, a character who embodies logic, deduction and justice.

Doyle came to writing after studying medicine in Edinburgh from 1876, signing on as a ship's doctor on a whaler in 1880 for a year, which he thoroughly enjoyed. He was subsequently a GP in Southsea and ultimately an eye specialist with a Harley Street address, as well as a renowned sportsman. Having married in 1891, the same year as his first Sherlock Holmes short story *A Scandal in Bohemia* was published, he gave up medicine and wrote full-time, which he found more remunerative. Tragically, after just two years of marriage, his wife died of consumption while they were on holiday in Spain. But his stories kept coming.

More than just mysteries, Stephen showed how the tales of Messrs Holmes and Watson delve into politics, history, morality and human nature, making them relevant even today.

If interested to know more about BLPC membership and the upcoming programme of future speakers, contact: The Admin Secretary - reverendjane@hotmail.co.uk - 07754 296994

Annie Vicars

Oakley & Deane WI

Oakley & Deane WI members came to their February meeting expecting to hear about alpaca farming but, unfortunately, the speaker's car broke down on her way to Oakley. So instead we held a quiz. It was a fun evening and we were kept busy as there was lots to organise for future events. These include an activity afternoon with cream tea, a lunch at the Barley Mow, a jumble sale, a theatre trip to see *Dad's Army* at Central Studio, defibrillator training, the buffet for our birthday meeting in April and the member-organised meeting in July. The next few months are quite busy. Oakley & Deane also have a walking group and a Scrabble group too.

Our meeting in March is on Tuesday 10 March 7:30 pm at Oakley Village Hall, Station Road, Oakley, when we hope to hear from Tom McNulty

about Guide Dogs for the Blind; he will be accompanied by his guide dog.

Any ladies who would like to find out what we do are always welcome at our meetings and entrance is free for your first two visits. Forthcoming events and reports on past activities can be found on our website oakleydeanewi.weebly.com and on our facebook page facebook.com/oakleyanddeaneWI. We can also be contacted by email oakleydeanewi@gmail.com

Oakley Afternoon WI

Our speaker for February was Nic Groom whose talk was entitled 'Charity Step by Step'. Nic explained how this charity takes a stand against youth homelessness. The charity believes that young homeless people need more than just a roof over their heads: they need guidance and support as well, and this is what the charity provides. In 2027 'Step by Step' will celebrate 40 years of providing this help. The charity can accommodate 47 young people and offer supported lodging to others. A question-and-answer session followed the talk.

The next meeting is on 16 March and the theme for the afternoon is 'Easter Bonnets'.

Our monthly meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month at East Oakley Village Hall (the Green Hut). Visitors are made most welcome at the meetings and are also invited to come along to the coffee mornings held at the Barley Mow on the last Monday of the month. For further details please contact Janet on 07905279702.



Dogs for autism – man's best friend proved again

At the January gathering of the Rookdown Revellers WI, the group welcomed both four-legged and two from the Alton-based dogsforautism.org.uk, the first charity exclusively providing autism assistance dogs, at no cost, to autistic people of any age, anywhere in the UK. These amazing dogs, principally labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, cavapoos and their crossbreeds, are trained in specific task abilities to enhance the lives of applicants and bolster their independence.

Training in core skills begins at eight weeks old when the puppy is placed with "puppy parents", who expose it to many diverse environments to ensure important socialization. At 14 months the puppy will go to training school all day, progressing to more intricate and practical task work. Subsequently, the remaining portion of the dog's advanced training is tailored to suit best the specific needs of its future partner. The dog will undergo an assessment and then be carefully matched with an applicant.

Ladies Societies



When placed with those living with non-verbal autism, the skill of these dogs will be an important factor in helping their partners to remain calm in difficult, and possibly over-stimulating, situations such as noise, crowded rooms, etc. As such environments can sometimes lead to a meltdown, the dogs are trained to observe carefully and, if sensing an oncoming difficulty, will exert a deep pressure through leaning or lying on their partner, helping to alleviate anxiety or sensory overload. They can also provide emotional support during periods of anxiety and respond in emergencies by pressing alarm buttons, retrieving phones, or seeking help from

others within the home.

700 people applied last year for such a dog, the training of each costing £25,000, with money provided by grants and trusts, donations and fund raising. Each dog works on average for five years, after which they are retired and re-homed unless the autistic person has asked to keep it as a pet – after all, their special pooch is by then one of the family.

For further information, including if interested in being a puppy raiser, email contact@dogsforautism.org.uk or call 01420 629390

Annie Vicars

Letters

Dear Editor

Manydown

The building of 3500 houses to the side of Roman Road on the outskirts of Basingstoke has been a major project in planning for many years and is currently about to get under way. A recent colourful document *The Manydown Lowdown* brochure shows the immense area in divisions of purple and green - indeed, very welcoming but not a single house is shown on the drawing. It goes on, in a paragraph titled *Creating new habitats*, the plan is that all the excavated chalk - and building homes on chalk-based sub-soils is complex - but all that chalk, instead of being removed from the site, the plan is to create mountains – well, hills - of chalk all over the site. In their words, "Any excess materials will be carefully reused to create a mosaic of new habitats across the site - a sustainable solution that helps us to bring nature to the fore." It will also save the developers a fortune in not having to dispose of this "excess".

Already, in the early stages of the development, great white mountains of chalk are beginning to appear - and on these hills little can be grown, though they suggest in this brochure, "The first of these sculptured features will mimic chalk grassland conditions, allowing specialist wild flowers to flourish attracting butterflies, bees and other pollinators. Their warm, sheltered forms will create valuable niches for reptiles and invertebrates adding life to the landscape." The new home owners will have these mounds to look out on.

3500 homes may well create 10500 new vehicles at three to a property. Recent areas of new building - if you are lucky - may allow two cars at the side of a house, in tandem (totally unacceptable) and the width of roads hardly allows for "on road" parking, of

which at weekends there will be plenty.

Roman Road running along the side of this enormous development, currently a great North/South and well-used traffic access, would benefit from being made a dual carriageway, now being the perfect opportunity, but this seems to have been overlooked, with current areas of the road creating long hold-ups due to temporary red lights.

So all in all, this grand new development has not been terribly well thought out and at the end of the day will be, and already is, a disaster.

Graeme Hewitt, former Planning Chairman for Oakley Parish Council

Editor's note: You can read more about Manydown on page 31)

Dear Editor

British Legion Poppy Appeal 2025

I am pleased to report that the sum of £1538.16 was raised for the Poppy Appeal in the village. My thanks go to the Oakley Infant and Junior schools, One-Stop, Co-op, Jolly Olly's, Barley Mow, Beach Arms, Oakley Parish Council, Geoff Aubrey Butchers and especially to Carol Oliver, Jenny Banks and Scott Minton for door to door selling. A special mention must be made to the Barley Mow which raised £120 by holding a meat raffle and to George and Jean Elkin who donated the proceeds from selling apples from their garden.

Finally, a request: are there any willing volunteers to undertake door to door collection for the 2026 appeal in late October/early November? If so, please contact me nearer the time on 782395. Thank you to all the good people of Oakley for your generosity.

Ian Warner

Pause For Thought



Hope

How important is hope?

In our culture, the concept of “hope” is somewhat anomalous. We know we all need it, but it can be tentative. A person may be said to have “*some hope*” (not living in reality), *hopeful* (possible but unlikely) or *hopeless* (useless); but if we are “without hope” we can lose the will to live.

For the Christian, hope is an essential ingredient. It is part of the very nature of God and he has made it a part of the very nature of man. In the Bible, it says, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

An everyday illustration of this may be in the picture of an overgrown garden. Someone has a hope that this will one day become a beautiful place of plants and flowers. But if he simply scatters seeds today, little will grow. By faith, he laboriously clears the stones and the weeds. His hope keeps him at the task. He then digs the soil and fertilises it. At this point, he has a cleared garden prepared and ready, but still no flowers.

However, when those seeds of life are now dropped into the soil, they will quickly take root and spring forth.

As a young man, I had a dream (hope) that, one day, I might serve God in India. I did not know if it would ever happen but I learned everything I could about the formation and history of this great nation. Then, in 1987, despite having two young children and no money, the opportunity arose for Diane and me to go to India to visit a mission hospital in a remote village in the state of Orissa. We grabbed the chance and, although the trip was physically exhausting, we were hooked! I even wrote an article about it for Link



India 1987

magazine.

Over the succeeding years, we have returned many



India 2026

times, most recently just a few weeks ago. We have built relationships with many remarkable people and been involved in some amazing projects, including the development of an orphanage and school in a town on the outskirts of Mumbai and the building of a brand-new hospital in Tilda, Chhattisgarh. We are so grateful for the adventures on which God has taken us – and all beginning with that spark of hope in a young man.

Andy Taylor, Hope Community Church

Community

Need Help?

Some ways to access help and support, both on-line, by phone and face to face.

Watership Down Health

Sections on the web-site include Services ⇒ Referrals ⇒ Self Referrals. Options here include: Drugs & Alcohol; Health & Well being; Mental Health.

There are Social Prescribers who could help you (see ad on the right). They deal with referrals from GPs, Health Care assistants, district nurses, community response teams and with self-referrals. Watership Down also have a Mental Health team.

You can also contact the surgery on 0333 034 1033 or go to the Surgery Reception desk and explain what help you are looking for.

Oakley Community Care can help with transport to medical appointments (see ad on page 3 of Link).

Coffee & Chat in Oakley

There is a **Community Café in Oakley**: a monthly time for tea, coffee, cake and chat in St Leonard's Centre between 10:30 am and 12:30 pm on the first and third Wednesday of each month. (Except in August).

See ads in Link also for Parish Council Coffee & Chat on Thursdays (page 5); Coffee & Chat at East Oakley Village Hall on Wednesdays (page 7) and Coffee Mornings at Oakley Methodist Church on alternate Tuesdays (page 26).



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We provide up to 12 weeks social support for our patients. This could be someone that is lonely and isolated.
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Someone that needs reconnecting back into the community.
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We can refer and signpost to the right support you need
Please email or call the surgery to request to speak with us.



Tracey



Stephanie

Signpost Connect Engage Empower!



Our Oakley Wellbeing Forum

Come along and share ideas to improve wellbeing

Individuals
 Businesses
 Voluntary Groups
 Community Organisations



Working together to support our village community

Every other month on the **4th Wednesday**

25th Mar, 27th May, 22nd July
4 PM - 5 PM

St Leonard's Centre
 Rectory Road, RG23 7ED

More info: ouroakley.uk

Organised by:
 Multiple Oakley Organisers



Basingstoke Foodbank

Together with Trussell

Visiting the Foodbank

Before you visit the Foodbank, speak to any of our 150 partner agencies who can let you know about support available, as well as issue a 3 day foodbank voucher. You can then come along to any of our centres within the following 7 days to choose food and other essential household items. During your visit, you will be offered refreshments, can speak to Citizens Advice, and chat to our volunteers about other local help.

Foodbank Centre Locations	Address and Days
Brighton Hill	Basingstoke Baptist Church, Gershwin Road, RG22 4HL 10.30-12.30 Wednesdays
Town Centre	St Michael's Church, Church Cottage, RG21 7QW 10.30-12.30 Mondays
Sarum Hill	Hope Community Church, Sarum Hill, RG21 8SR 10.30-12.30 Thursdays
Tadley	Tadley Common Methodist, Newchurch Road, RG26 4HN 10.30-12.30 Tuesdays
Buckskin	Buckskin Church, Chiltern Way, RG22 5BB 10.30-12.30 Fridays
Winklebury	Church of the Good Shepherd, Winklebury Centre, RG23 8BU 12.30-2.30 Tuesdays
Popley	St Gabriel's Church, Tewkesbury Close, RG24 9DU 12.30-2.30 Fridays

basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk
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Young Oakley



Hello from St Leonard's Preschool

Have you read a good book recently? At preschool we are having a week celebrating and sharing our favourite books. The children will be encouraged to bring in their favourite story to share with their friends. If anyone wants to, they can dress up as their favourite character. We will be making displays of our favourite characters on our trolley boards. The children will take home a paper plate and, with parental involvement, they will draw their favourite book characters. The plates will then be hung up in the preschool room for everyone to see and talk about.

We will end the spring term with an Easter week. We will be reading and acting out parts of the Easter story. The children will ride into Jerusalem on a donkey to the cheers of their peers. They will be building an Easter garden with a range of natural materials. We will be having an Easter egg hunt with some mini chocolate eggs to eat!

Our photo was taken during sensory week and is of the children exploring cornflower and water.

If you would like to know more about the preschool, please contact us on 07772378265 or email preschool@oww.church or look at our website stleonards-preschool.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Caroline Edwards, St Leonard's Pre-School Manager

Cuckoo Meadow Pre-School

Spring is here and for the children, that means one very special holiday – Easter! The pre-school



**Cuckoo Meadow Pre-school
Easter Raffle**
£5 per ticket

Amazing prizes from Wellington Country Park, Pop-up Play Village, Basingstoke Sports Centre, Alexamazing Nails, Tumble Tots, Millers Ark, Easter Hampers and lots more!

Tickets available to purchase from Cuckoo Meadow Pre-school, please speak to Jo or Fiona. All proceeds go towards the general upkeep of the preschool and activities for the children. Thanks for your support.
Registered Charity no. 937915

is holding what is shaping up to be an AMAZING raffle with some truly fantastic prizes. Please pop into the pre-school or contact us on 01256 398 172 to buy £5 tickets for this brilliant draw, which will take place on Wednesday 25 March. We are truly grateful for your support to fund fun activities for the children.

*Georgia Hawken, Cuckoo Meadow Pre-School
Secretary*

About Cuckoo Meadow Pre-School: We are a small and friendly pre-school located in the Rathbone Pavilion of North Waltham. The children who attend come from many areas including Oakley, Dummer, Hatch Warren, Kempshott and Beggarwood. They all agree that the location and wonderful, caring staff mean it is more than worth the short journey. To find out more, please contact Jo or Fiona on 01256 398 172.

Oakley Infant School

This year we are celebrating the Year of Reading at Oakley Infant School. We started our events with a creative opportunity to make a book character using a toilet roll. We have been amazed at the variety of characters from Superworm to Stickman, from Paddington to Goldilocks and many, many more. It really got the creativity going.



We have also held our first reading café where parents joined us in school to share stories before the end of the school day. The teachers have also shared their favourite books for the children to try and we have taken part in the first author focus day which focused on Annemarie Anang. We have many other reading opportunities planned for the rest of the year for the children to take part in.

We are BIG readers at Oakley as the headteacher is a very firm believer in reading being the building block for all learning. Each week our children compete as classes to win Harvey the Reading Bear. The more the children in each class read, the more likely they are to win Harvey for their class to look after and read to during the week.

In February the children took part in NSPCC's number day where Harvey Bear challenged the children to complete various mathematical challenges as he "visited" various places in the village. A lot of fun was had by all.

The school is a busy place and we are currently looking for lunchtime supervisors to join us. If you would like to be involved in a busy school environment for a few lunchtimes a week please give the school office a call.

Equally if you would be interested in joining the

Young Oakley



governing body, we are always open to support from the local community and would love to hear from you.

If you would like to find out more about either of the opportunities, please email the office on adminoffice@oakley-inf.hants.sch.uk or call us on 780445.



Niamh Hutchings, Headteacher

News from Cranbourne

We've had a busy start to the Spring term at Cranbourne, filled with enriching school trips, performing arts events and our annual Cluster Conference.

In the first week of term, we welcomed Ofsted Inspectors to Cranbourne. The dedication, hard work and resilience of our staff, students and families shone through and we are incredibly proud of our Cranbourne community. The inspection report is now available to read on our school website.

We hosted our annual Cluster Conference with this year's theme being "Disconnect to Reconnect". Students from our cluster primary schools were encouraged to explore a smartphone-free world through various exciting activities and considered how we can use our communication skills to connect with each other – without using screens.

The cast of *Guys and Dolls Jr* (shown below) performed a sensational run of shows at the end of February, working like true professionals, putting in



an incredible amount of effort and showing extreme dedication to their craft.

Our annual Spring concert saw students bravely take to the stage for a night of extraordinary talent. The confidence and showmanship displayed was truly exceptional and it was fantastic to see so many first-time performers get involved.

Year 10 have begun to think about their prospects for life after Cranbourne, as they prepare for their upcoming work experience placements in April. They attended the "Get Inspired" event hosted by EBP South, where local businesses, training providers and educational



Young Oakley



institutions shared insight into their sectors and discussed potential job opportunities.

We're looking for businesses and employers from a wide range of sectors to inspire our students at our annual careers fair on Tuesday 23 June. If you're interested in getting involved and supporting our learners, please contact Mrs Pope on a.pope@cranbourne.hants.sch.uk

Chloe-Mai Parfitt

Who let the dads out?

Are you a dad/male carer?

Why not try *Who let the dads out?*

It's a chance for dads/male carers and younger children to meet up over a breakfast of coffee/tea, bacon butties, pastries and fruit, but with plenty of time for the dads to chat while the children can have some fun.

Sochi, our local youth worker, also comes along to supervise a PlayStation with older children.

We meet on the second Saturday of the month at St Leonard's Centre in Rectory Road, Oakley from 10:00 to 11:30. Come when you can!

Next dates - 14 March, 11 April, etc.



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Friday 3 April 2026
10.30am-2.00pm

Just follow the clues around Oakley!

Download your answer sheet from
www.ocaoakley.org.uk
or pick up a sheet on the day from
OCA table in Barley Mow car park

Claim your Easter treat from the
OCA table in Barley Mow car park
before 2.00pm on the day!



OCA
Oakley Community Association
Charity No. 1165256

Meanwhile, mums, your time's your own!
If you would like to know more, contact the
Church Office on office@oww.church

Tim Saunders



Hampshire Choral Festival

Saturday 9th May 2026
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7.30pm

**Rossini
Petite Messe Solennelle**
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Conducted by David Burgess

Tickets £20 [a booking fee may apply]

- From Thornden Hall booking office
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- 023 8024 6555
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- or scan



RCN 295128 hcfonline.org.uk/concerts

Conservation



Oakley Woodlands Group

Only a few weeks left of the coppice season before we leave the woods to the birds and bugs for their shenanigans. As usual at this time of the season, we are preparing traditional woodland produce for sale, these being bean poles and pea sticks. The amount we are able to produce depends on the quality of material in the area coppiced, which this year has not been as good as we would like, so supplies may be limited.



However, we will still have material available, and it is best to order in advance. They can then be picked up from St John's copse on our collection morning of 4 April between 10:00 and 13:00 or at other times by agreement. Prices are £5 per bundle of 10 beanpoles, or 20 pea sticks. You can order by phoning Alan on 07501 140401, or by email to the address below.

If you volunteer, you can have your bean poles and pea sticks for free!

Other news: Our AGM will be held at the Newfound Pavillion on Tuesday 17 March at 7:30 pm.

Work party dates: Saturday 7 and 21, Wednesday 11 and 25, 10:00 to 13:00 in St John's Copse, St John's road.

Email: oakleywoodlands@gmail.com

Alan Merry

The winter life of the wren

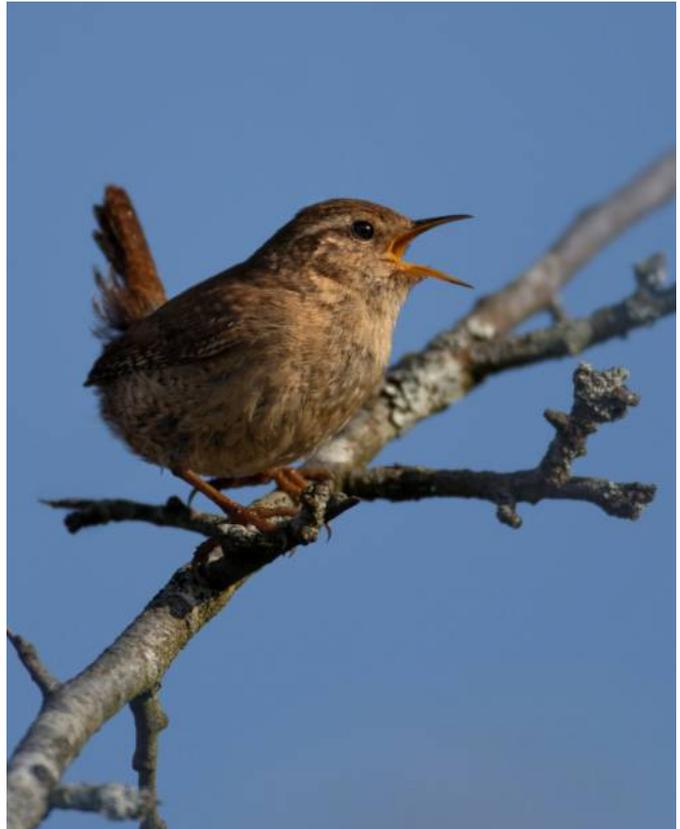
One of Hampshire's most familiar birds is also one of its smallest. The wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) may be tiny but, during the winter months, this charismatic bird proves that size is no barrier to survival. In fact, the wren is the most common breeding bird in the UK, with an estimated 8.6 million breeding territories — a remarkable success for such a small species.

Barely larger than a ping-pong ball, wrens are instantly recognizable by their warm brown plumage, delicately barred wings and tail and their habit of holding that short tail cocked upright. Look closely and you'll spot a fine, pale eyebrow stripe and a slim, slightly curved beak, perfectly designed for probing into crevices for insects.

Despite their modest appearance, wrens have one of the loudest songs relative to body size of any bird in the UK — a surprisingly powerful burst of sound that can be heard on crisp winter mornings. Their sudden bursts of song are thought to help maintain territories and may also play a role in strengthening pair bonds ahead of the breeding season.

Wrens are found across a wide range of habitats.

They favour places with plenty of cover, including hedgerows, woodland undergrowth, scrub, gardens, reedbeds and even coastal habitats. In winter, dense vegetation becomes especially important, offering protection from cold winds and predators. You might also spot wrens around log piles, compost heaps or garden sheds, where insects and spiders shelter from the frost.



Wren ©Jon Hawkins Surrey Hills Photography

Winter is a challenging time for wrens, but they have developed remarkable survival strategies. On the coldest nights, they may roost communally, huddling together in old nests or sheltered spaces to conserve warmth. Historical records describe dozens of wrens squeezing into a single nesting box — an extraordinary sight for such a fiercely territorial bird during the breeding season. Nests are also distinctive structures: domed and carefully woven from moss, twigs and leaves, with a small side entrance that helps retain heat.

Its diet in winter consists mainly of small invertebrates, including spiders, beetles and larvae. Wrens are relentless foragers, constantly flicking through leaf litter, moss and bark to find food. Their fast metabolism means that they must eat almost constantly during daylight hours, making short winter days especially demanding.



Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

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Helen Skleton-Smith

*Jubilooks volunteers strengthening the hedgerow at Peter Houseman Sports Ground.
Photo Eric Askew*

Gardening



Oakley Gardening Club

Oakley Gardening Club's meeting for February was a talk by Claire Mitchell. Claire is a very knowledgeable lady who spoke on *A plant a month* and how we can make our garden plants

We meet on the first Monday of the month in St Leonard's Hall in Oakley and, for £3 for visitors plus coffee/tea and a biscuit, you must agree that is good value. Contact me, Maureen Dallaway, on 01256 780788, for more information,



Members' competition

survive in these changing climates. There are many plants that will happily accommodate our hot summers, like grasses, evergreens, and rockery alpines.

Claire took us through the year, making suggestions as to what to grow when. She said that, to find the right plants, you should go to a garden centre and see what is on display at the time, also visit gardens, e.g. Wisley and Kew Gardens.

Claire showed us some slides of plants and brought along some for us to buy. It was a very interesting talk which gave us lots to think about in how we can choose our plants and keep our garden looking good all the year around.

Diane Green



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Feature



News From Jolly Olly's Coffee Shop

Happy Springtime everyone!

Teenage Cancer Trust

Last month we shared our total to date raised for the Teenage Cancer Trust during November and December. After a final count, including our collecting tin, a total of £613.88 was raised. Many thanks to all who contributed.

New at Jolly Olly's



A very kind regular customer, Lesley, has donated a lovely box of homemade cards which she would be pleased to sell for charity. At the moment we are collecting for Basingstoke Young Carers. The cards are beautiful.

You can find them on our community stand at the rear of the shop.

Mother's Day – March 15

If you are looking for gift ideas, don't forget that we sell vouchers for £5, £10 or £20. We also sell vouchers for cream teas and afternoon teas.



New Facebook Page

We are very pleased to have been invited to join a new Facebook Page – Local Business Ads: Oakley, Overton and Whitchurch - which is “a dedicated advertising space for local businesses to promote their products, services, events, and special offers to residents in and around Oakley, Overton, and Whitchurch”. I have been amazed at how many local businesses there are in our area, offering all kinds of services.

Do take a look and please think about supporting small local businesses who all need your help to keep surviving and growing. Very many thanks to Carl Jeffreys and the team for providing this opportunity.

Monday Opening - Reminder

We are now open on Mondays. Sam and Janet hope to see you soon.

32 Oakley Lane, Oakley RG23 7JY (Tel 01256 782658)

Find us on Facebook, Trip Advisor and Instagram.

Health Matters



Age Concern Hampshire announces new foot clinics to boost confidence and mobility for older people

Age Concern Hampshire is set to open new foot care clinics in Kingsclere, Farnborough, Lymington and Bordon, helping older people stay confident, active, and mobile.

Healthy feet are key to balance and independence, yet many older adults struggle to reach their toes due to arthritis, impaired eyesight, or reduced mobility. Age Concern Hampshire's clinics, run by qualified foot health practitioners, provide toenail cutting and basic foot health checks, helping prevent discomfort, falls and injuries.

Michele Ralph, foot care coordinator at Age Concern Hampshire, said, “Our foot clinics are about more than just foot care - they help older people feel confident on their feet and maintain their independence. We're committed to making this vital service accessible to everyone who needs it.”

Clinics are available across Hampshire, including Alton, Andover, Basingstoke, Dibden/Hythe, Havant, Hedge End, Locks Heath, New Milton, Odiham, Overton, Petersfield, Ringwood, Tadley, Winchester and Yateley. The new clinics in Kingsclere,

Farnborough, Lymington, and Bordon will open soon.

To book an appointment, call 01962 868545 or visit their website for more information: ageconcernhampshire.org.uk/our-services-hampshire/footcare/.

Founded in 1985, Age Concern Hampshire provides services to the older community of Hampshire. The charity currently delivers support at their care and wellbeing centres throughout the county, as well as foot care clinics, help at home, information via their information hub, hospital to home services, community information volunteer services and a variety of other activities. Its mission is to help people “Age well and Live well”.

Coeliac UK North Hampshire Group Gluten-Free Easter Treats List at Coeliac UK Website

No need to be left out with Easter just round the corner. Search to download a huge list of the latest ready-made GF Easter treats, from pistachio & milk chocolate eggs to loaded hot-cross buns and Peppa Pig snacks. Includes branded and supermarket and convenience stores own brand items.

(Continued on page 28)

Graham Brown

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On the Coeliac website coeliac.org.uk search for “2025 Easter list”.

Common Myths

“A breadcrumb won't hurt someone with coeliac disease.” Even very small amounts of gluten can be damaging to people with coeliac disease. Therefore, taking sensible steps to avoid cross-contamination with gluten is important.

Top tips to avoid cross contamination

- Keep cooking utensils separate during food preparation and cooking.
- Avoid frying food in the same oil that has previously been used to cook foods which contain gluten like beer-battered fish.
- Use a clean grill, separate toaster or toaster bags to make gluten free toast.
- Use separate bread boards and wash surfaces thoroughly.
- Use separate condiments like jam, butter, mustard and mayonnaise.

Next meet-up

Next meeting Wednesday 18 March 10:30 - 12:00 at Waitrose café, Basing View

Contacts

To contact the Local North Hants Group, please email northhampshire@coeliac.org.uk

Join our Facebook page Coeliac UK North Hampshire Local Group, or see our events on the North Hampshire Coeliac UK website page coeliac.org.uk/local-groups/north-hampshire

Dave West



Vaccine Update

The influenza vaccine is still available for those over 65 and for those under 65 with an underlying health condition up until 31 March 2026. The Covid Spring booster will be offered from 13 April 2026.

From 1 April 2026, the eligibility for the respiratory syncytial virus vaccine (RSV) will include patients 80 years and over and all residents in care homes for older adults and is a single dose which can be given at any time.

Team Update

We welcome several new GPs to our team, Dr Alex Copping, Dr Jake Lockard and Dr Rome Candy. We also welcome our new treatment room nurse; Miss Rhianna England and we are sadly saying goodbye and happy retirement to Mrs Heather Blair who retires middle of March 2026.

New Self-Check-In Screens

The new check-in screens have now been installed in Kingsclere, Oakley and Overton. Any patients who need to update their patient details will still need to do this through the practice website. For patients aged 16 years and over, please make sure that you confirm you contact details with the practice.

NHS App Help Drop-in Clinic

The PPG will be running an afternoon drop-in session at the Kingsclere practice for anyone needing help with the NHS App on Monday, 16 March.

Heather Mann

Feature



Cllr Juliet Henderson Report—Candovers Oakley and Overton Division

🌨 Winter Weather and Our Roads

Since Christmas, the combination of freezing temperatures and relentless rain has taken a real toll on Hampshire's roads. The constant freeze-thaw cycle is exactly the kind of weather that accelerates potholes and surface deterioration, and we've seen a sharp rise in reports as a result.

Despite this, Hampshire's Highways Team has already repaired more than 62,000 defects since the start of the financial year — an enormous effort given the conditions.

To keep pace with the extra demand, Highways have secured additional crews and machinery, even as councils across the country compete for the same resources. You'll now see more Jet/Dragon Patchers

out on the network, extra patching gangs already working since early January, and further teams joining in the coming weeks.

Alongside pothole repairs, winter weather is also putting pressure on drainage systems. Extra jetting machines are now available to help manage localised flooding, and a dedicated team is responding to drainage issues as they arise. We've also added an extra white-lining crew to tackle worn markings at smaller sites.

Given the sheer volume of defects, some potholes will need temporary infill repairs to keep roads safe while permanent repairs are scheduled. It's not ideal, but it's the quickest way to manage safety risks during peak demand.

(Continued on page 31)



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How you can help

The best and most effective way to report potholes or any highway issue is through the Hampshire County Council website or the *Our Hants* app. Clear locations and photos are helpful, but not essential. Reporting via email or social media can actually slow things down, as it bypasses the system our teams use to prioritise safety defects. Please see links below:

Potholes: hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes

When reporting an issue, you'll be sent an email confirming a reference number for the report. If you would like me to follow this up for you then do please forward that message to me and I will chase for you.

Tackling Problem Pavement Parking in Hampshire

Pavement parking is one of the issues I hear about regularly — and for good reason. When cars block pavements, it can be dangerous and deeply unfair to people who rely on clear, safe routes: wheelchair users, those with sight loss, older residents and parents with buggies and prams.

The Government has now confirmed that new legislation is on the way to give councils like Hampshire County Council far greater control over pavement parking. Under the new proposals:

Local transport authorities will be able to prohibit pavement parking across their areas, rather than dealing with it street by street.

A new regulatory framework will allow councils to tailor solutions to local needs, including accessibility and disabled parking.

From 2026, councils will also be able to enforce against unnecessary obstruction of pavements as an interim step, giving us more ability to act where parking is clearly causing problems.

Most drivers are considerate, but the small minority who park without thinking create real barriers for others. These new powers will help us protect vulnerable residents, keep pavements clear, and prevent the sort of verge damage that blights too many neighbourhoods.

More Specialist SEND Places Agreed for Hampshire Schools

Hampshire County Council has approved a major package of new investment to expand specialist support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) across the county. The number of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) continues to rise sharply, and around 40% need a specialist place. These decisions move us another step closer to our ambition of creating 1,000 new specialist places by 2030. Here's what's been agreed:

157 new specialist school places across Hampshire

A mix of new resourced provisions and refurbishments to support pupils with autism, SEMH needs and other complex requirements

This is a significant step in making sure children get the right support, in the right place, as close to home as possible — reducing travel times, strengthening inclusion in mainstream schools where appropriate, and ensuring families can access the help they need.

Local News



The Manydown Lowdown

A new gateway to Manydown

Work is now underway on the first residential gateway into Manydown. This first main entrance will feature green spaces, a large pond, and new homes, creating a welcoming arrival to the site.

Alongside this, a new four-way signalised junction on Roman Road is being built, including pedestrian and cycle crossings to support safe access. While early work took place within the site, activity has now moved onto Roman Road. Traffic management is in place to allow work to continue safely, and any future overnight closures will be shared as soon as details are confirmed.

Things are gathering pace, and we want to keep everyone informed about what's happening.

In early March, we'll be holding drop-in sessions where you will be able to see our ideas and plans for Manydown, from the first neighbourhoods, primary school and the countryside park to routes around the site and community spaces.

Plans sharing more detail on the design of the first gateway and open spaces will be available to see at the events and will also be on Basingstoke and Deane's planning website once submitted.

Event dates & locations:

Friday 6 March, Newfound Sports Pavillion from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

Email us at: manydown@urbanandcivic.com

All comments on submitted planning applications should be directed to the [local planning authority](#)

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Local News



Overton Choral Society

We have a busy few months ahead of us. Sadly, we have had to turn down an invitation to sing at the Overton Music Festival due to so many commitments.

We will be singing in the Hampshire Choral Festival in a new venue this year: Thornden Hall in Chandlers Ford on Saturday 9 May. We are looking forward to experiencing singing in this venue. The piece we are rehearsing is *Rossini Petite Messe Solennelle*.

We will also be singing at our Musical Director's daughter's wedding, (he has four!) also in May.

Then a new venture for us: we will be holding a summer concert in St Mary's Hall on June 20 with tea and cake. We will sing a variety of music and we will shortly be telling you how to buy your ticket, etc. Save the date in your diary. We have some superb bakers in our singers, so something to look forward to.

Lyn Hardy, Chair, overtonchoralsoc@gmail.com

Overton Gets Wyrd: Witches, Chaos and Live Theatre

Overton Dramatic Society proudly presents *Wyrd Sisters* by Stephen Briggs, adapted from the beloved Terry Pratchett novel.

Three witches. One kingdom. A story that refuses to behave. When a royal murder goes slightly wrong and the crown ends up on the wrong head, the witches find themselves reluctantly meddling in destiny itself.

Expect actors braver on stage than off it, a duke and duchess with entirely the wrong ideas about power, and plenty of interference from Narrative Causality, which insists that stories should behave properly whether anyone likes it or not. Full of fast-paced humour, memorable characters, and just enough common sense (mostly supplied by the witches), *Wyrd Sisters* is a gloriously clever

comedy that proves theatre - like magic - is never entirely predictable.

St Mary's Hall, Overton
13 – 16 May 2026, 7:30 pm
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tickets.overtondramatic.co.uk



Tickets



Probus Hears About Military Medical Care

The presentation to the Probus Club of Basingstoke

by David Wiggins, curator of the Museum of Military Medicine, traced the evolution of military medicine from the 17th century to the present day, showing how advances in weapons technology continually forced improvements in medical care. It began with Oliver Cromwell's establishment of the Savoy Hospital in 1642 after recognising that the previous system of camp followers tending the wounded no longer suited the new types of injuries caused by firearms.



Early progress was slow, with many soldiers surviving initial wounds only to die from disease. More formal organisation began during the Peninsular Wars, and the Crimean War exposed the catastrophic impact of poor sanitation - 4,600 combat injuries contrasted with 20,000 deaths from typhus and typhoid. Florence Nightingale's reforms reversed these trends, influencing later conflicts such as the Boer War.

World War I marked a turning point, with industrialised warfare creating new types of trauma. Innovations such as casualty clearing stations, motorised ambulances, many made by Thornycroft of Basingstoke, hospital trains, X-rays, blood transfusions and the Brodie helmet reduced fatalities by 80%. Medical officer Harold Gillies pioneered plastic surgery, treating facial injuries at Park Prewett Hospital in Basingstoke where thousands of Canadian casualties were treated.

World War II advanced frontline care further through field surgical units and the introduction of penicillin, by another medical officer, Alexander Flemming, described as a "game changer." After 1945, helicopters transformed casualty evacuation, famously depicted in the Korean War's MASH units. Air mobility remained vital in later conflicts including the Falklands and Afghanistan, where rehabilitation



Park Prewit No 4 Canadian Hospital Basingstoke WWI



centres like Headley Court near Birmingham became known for prosthetics.

Military medicine has peacetime roles, from humanitarian missions to responses to Ebola and Covid-19. In 2024, three historic corps - the RAMC, RADC, and QARANC - merged into the Royal Army Medical Service to deliver integrated medical and dental care matching NHS standards.

See www.probusbasingstoke.club for more information.

Paul Flint

Whitchurch Silk Mill

National Lottery open week – free entry

We're delighted to offer free entry to Whitchurch Silk Mill on 7 and 8 March and 10 to 15 March as part of National Lottery open week. Come and explore our heritage: the three-storey Georgian Mill, Victorian machinery, bobbin winder, waterwheel and our weavers at work. Afterwards, relax in our award-winning cafe or browse the mill shop. Full details and conditions are on our website.

Family Easter trail – 31 March and 2 April

Join us during the Easter holidays for a family-friendly trail through the Mill and its riverside grounds. Children receive a trail sheet and everything needed to make bunny ears and can enjoy themed checkpoints and activities along the way. A chocolate treat awaits at the end (allergen-friendly options available). £7.50 per child; one accompanying adult free.

2025 highlights – A record year

Volunteers donated an incredible 3,016.5 hours. We are enormously grateful. If you'd like to volunteer, we'd love to hear from you.

Become a patron in 2026

We're launching a new patron scheme to help support the Mill's future. For £3 a month or £30 a year, patrons receive exclusive quarterly behind-the-scenes content and enjoy free entry for 12 months. Your support helps safeguard specialist heritage weaving skills. There are only five silk ribbon weavers in the UK and two of them work right here at Whitchurch Silk Mill.

Why your support matters

We train up to three heritage skills students each year, helping preserve rare weaving knowledge. Income from admissions, silk sales, the cafe and shop doesn't fully cover our running costs, so your support makes a genuine difference in protecting this national treasure.

Upcoming events and workshops

Warping workshop – 6 March, 10 am – 1 pm

Create your own three-metre warp with guidance

from our weaving team. £60 per person.

Embroidery workshop – 7 March, 10:30 am – 1 pm

Craft a nature-inspired piece with Abigail Rose Creative. Suitable for all levels. £65 per person.

Beginners' crochet workshop – 14 March, 11 am – 2 pm

Learn basic stitches and make granny squares in a friendly, supportive session. £45 per person.

Silk Production Tour – 24 March, 11 am – 12 pm

A behind-the-scenes guided tour with our weaving team, including active Victorian looms. £25 per person.

The story of Levi Strauss & Co – 24 March, 6:30 – 8 pm

A special talk by Levi's historian Tracey Panek, exploring the origins of denim and its cultural legacy.

Booking and contact

Tickets for all events are available from the mill shop or via the events page on our website.

Stay up to date by following us on social media or subscribing to our newsletter.

info@whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk –

www.whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk – 01256 892065

Sue Tapliss



SATURDAY 7th MARCH

GUY TORTORA

'Perfect voice for blues' - Blues in Britain, Dec '24

Born & raised in Pasadena, California, Guy Tortora is currently based in London, in the UK. What he does as a songwriter and performer is what people like to call Americana these days – a hard term to define as it seems to mean different things depending on who you're talking to. But if to you it means original songs, well constructed and well performed, in some of the various musical idioms that originated in the USA – blues, jazz, folk and roots – and also interpreting the work of other writers in these genres with depth and feeling, then you should check out his work if you haven't already.

Guy is a guitar player of some accomplishment and a distinctive songwriter. On both acoustic and electric guitars he plays finger style, and is a fine bottleneck and slide player. His playing is not the flashy guitar-slinger style beloved of bluesrockers everywhere, but understated, and leaves room for the songs to make an impact.

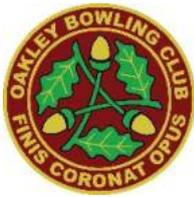
LIVE AT

Central Studio @ Queen Mary's College
Basingstoke, RG21 3HF

UPCOMING 25th April: **Backbone Blues Band**
23rd May: **Richard Clarke**

Full details & tickets at basingstokeblues.co.uk

All welcome! Doors 7pm. Tickets £12 in advance.
Profits to Asthma + Lung UK – Charity number 326730.



Oakley Bowling Club News

We have been busy socially. We celebrated Burns Night twice. First we went to BCOT, where the students provided us with a superb six-course traditional dinner. Who can forget the "Irn-Bru sorbet made with girders"? Next night we had a Scottish themed evening at the club with Scottish music and quizzes.

Our presentation dinner was, for the first time, held at Malshanger. It was memorable. The meal was excellent and we were entertained by our favourite vocalist Kate Aherne (*right*). President Diane proposed the toast to our guests with county secretary Hazel Marke responding with the toast to the club.



Jamie Colman then amused us with a speech about bowls, before presenting the trophies to the 2025 winners.

Partying did not affect our indoor players. The evening after the dinner saw Oakley teams taking on Basingstoke town sides in the Ambler Fuller Trophy at Loddon Vale. A win for the "A" team saw them into the semi-finals whilst the "B" team's victory moved them into second place in their section with one match remaining.

Our twice-weekly short mat sessions at Malshanger continue to be well supported. These are organised by Marion and Keith Bringes who accompanied Ric Newson on a trip to St Michael's

Hospice to present a cheque for £1,383 raised during Ric's presidential tour and from the spoon drive and short mat afternoons. Oakley bowlers have now raised over £16k for the hospice and the 2025 total was the highest yet.

Soon we shall be back playing outdoors. The green is looking good and, from mid-April, we shall be open for play. Information about what is happening at the club can be found at www.oakleybc.org.uk. Alternatively, phone Spencer on 01256 780418 or Diane on 01256 781465. They will be happy to show visitors the facilities and explain all we have to offer.

Spencer Kerley



Walking



Oakley Ramblers

On 14 January, seven walkers went out on a clear, crisp morning to enjoy the first ramblers' walk of the year. Starting in Oakley, we went towards Deane and enjoyed amazing views



in the sunshine. We then picked up the Wayfarers Way and made our way to Bulls Bushes Copse and then on to Puzzle Corner. Here, those who preferred a shorter walk took the road back into Oakley, whilst the rest of us continued along Fuzzy Drove until we reached Kempshott where we turned north, walking to the Basingstoke end of the multiuser path and back to Oakley. By keeping to better paths after the recent heavy rain, we had a great 7.5 mile walk without

getting too muddy.

Late in January, three members of the group went off to Austria to join a snowshoeing trip organised by the Austrian Alpine Club. We had a fabulous week in Obernberg exploring the local area and learning how to walk with snowshoes. It was lots of fun.

On 11 February we enjoyed a circular walk from Bentworth church, near Alton. Despite recent terrible weather and a poor forecast for the day, three walkers enjoyed a lovely winter walk of just under six miles on mostly farmland, footpaths and byways. Mud was promised and we were not disappointed!! We were rewarded with no rain, a glimpse of blue sky and a rainbow in the distance.

Oakley Ramblers is a friendly group; we always welcome visitors, who can try us out before joining. Our planned walks for March are on Wednesday 11 and Sunday 22. Details of our walks are published on our website a week before the walk takes place. Why not come along and try us out in 2026? Find us on Facebook or visit our website for more information: www.oakleyramblers.org.

Corrine Thomas

Woodland wellbeing walks, March

Come and enjoy scenic walks around our local woods and fields,

2nd, 3rd & 4th

Tuesdays,

☉ finishing with a sociable cuppa @ Methodist Chapel ☉



Start point for walks:

Tuesday 10 March @ 10 am - Village Pond ☉ B

Tuesday 17 March @ 10 am - St John's Rd lay-by R

Tuesday 24 March @ 10 am - East Oakley Village Hall [aka The Green Hut] ☉ B

Other Details:

Start time: 10 am

Pace: gentle

Duration: 1 hour approx

Routes: varied

B = Barbara led [07722 957057]

R = Richard led [07549 021174]



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Free Ads



All entries should be sent in writing to Maureen Dallaway, by **15 March** for inclusion in next month's Link. Entries may also be sent by e-mail to freeads@oakleylink.org.uk Please include an address or telephone number.

SEBO Upright Vacuum Cleaner newly serviced. Offers considered. Margaret Jones 01256 781725

A change of printer means **Epson inkjet multipack cartridges (orange)** available at under half price . 1 set of 5 at £25 2nd set (minus photo black) at £20 Tel 01256780894

Computer, Desktop (column style) Acer Aspire XC-780, 8 GB RAM, 1 TB HDD, DVD writer, 2 HDMI outputs, audio i/o, SD socket, Windows 11, £90. Contact 07784 118374

Compact cassettes. C60 and C90, unused, still wrapped, free to anyone with a use for them. Contact 07784 118374

2 Reclining chair metal frame **foldinggarden sun loungers** dark grey £35. Tel 01256780134

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(A DBS Check will be completed during the Course).

INTERESTED?

Contact us:-

Tel: 01256 242500

Email: info@hsbd.org.uk

Website: www.homestart-basingstokedeane.org.uk

BECAUSE CHILDHOOD CAN'T WAIT!

LOCAL INFORMATION

Oakley Community Association

Secretary - Eve Askew, www.ocadoakley.org.uk,
OCAoakley@live.co.uk

Councillors & Politicians

Member of Parliament, Basingstoke

Luke Murphy - luke.murphy.mp@parliament.uk 01256587093
Belvedere House, Basing View, RG21 4HG

Parish Councillors:

Fred Bullions	Dave Condliffe
Sherrie De Kiguchi	Ian Ellison
Jayne Grant	Amanda Hayman
Carl Jeffreys	Vince Kitley
Ken Krafer	Steve Neems
Alex Rowley	
Gary McAllister (Chair)	
Trevor Green (Vice Chair)	

Parish Clerk : Nicola Beere, 1 Station Road, Oakley

clerk@oakleydeane-pc.gov.uk or 07983 500372

Assistant Clerk: Kelly Green

assistantclerk@oakleydeane-pc.gov.uk

Borough Councillors:

Paul Gaskell Cllr.Paul.Gaskell@basingstoke.gov.uk 07812 894479

Hannah Golding 07305 123671

cldr.hannah.golding@basingstoke.gov.uk

Julian Jones Cllr.Julian.Jones@basingstoke.gov.uk 0794 6475700

County Councillor: Juliet Henderson

juliet.henderson@hants.gov.uk 862413

Estate Agents

Brockenhurst Estate Agents, 6 Rectory Rd 700280

Police - 101 or 999 in an emergency

Gas Emergencies 0800 111 999

Health (111 or 999 in emergency)

Defibrillators (Call 999 first) are located at:

The Fox

The Barley Mow

The Green Hut (Hill Road)

The Infant School,

The Cricket Club

Peter Houseman Field.

The Andover Road Village Hall

The St Leonard's Centre

Doctors' Surgery 0333 034 1033

Out of hours call 111

CHURCHES

Church of England
St Leonards (Oakley)
St Lawrence (Wootton)
All Saints (Deane)

Website: <https://www.stleonards-church.co.uk/>

Church Office: St Leonard's Centre,
Rectory Rd, Oakley
Tel 782724 9:00 am -1:00 pm weekdays
office@oww.church
Revd Ben Kautzer ben@oww.church
01256 420903
Contacts for Deane:
Deidre Coles - Warden Tel 781495

YouTube channel: Search St Leonard's Church Oakley for Church@Home and Kids@Home services.

Methodist
Chapel by the pond

Website:
<https://www.bhbcircuit.org.uk/churches/oakley.html>

Hill Road adjacent to the village pond in East Oakley
Revd Claire Simpson
revclaire72@btinternet.com
Tel: 01256 323103

Roman Catholic
St Joseph's and
St Bede's

Website:
www.stjosephsbasingstoke.org.uk
171a St Michael's Rd, Basingstoke, RG22 6TY
Fr Paul Leonard,
Parish Office -Tel: 323595
office@stjosephsbasingstoke.org.uk

Community Church

Websites:
www.lifespringcommunitychurch.org
or www.hopebasingstoke.org
St. Luke's Hall Overton
or Sarum Hill Centre, Sarum Hill, Basingstoke
Contact: John and Wendy Thurston (780135) or
Paul and Ann Davis (07810316413)

Village Shops

Annie's Oakley - Meon Road	
Cakes by Maze - Rectory Road	07349 888237
Coop - Oakley Lane	780857
Craft Kits N Bits - 4 Rowan Tree Road	020 3488 5499
Hair Beauty - Meon Road	780745
Honeysuckle Interiors - Meon Road	780831
Lara's Beauty Workshop - Meon Road	07726 207203
One Stop - Oakley Lane	780227
Geoff Aubrey and Sons - Butcher - The Vale	01256 373297
Village Café, Jolly Olly's - Oakley Lane	782658
Village Pharmacy - The Vale	782381

Oakley Scout Group

TBD

oakley@bwds.org.uk

Oakley Girlguiding

Caroline Lloyd

c451lloyd@outlook.com

VILLAGE HALLS

East Oakley Village Hall ("Green Hut") - Hill Road

Booking Secretary 07788 423252 or email: booking@oakleygreenhut.co.uk
Website: www.oakleygreenhut.co.uk

St. John's Centre - St. John's Road

Contact Church Office: 782724

Oakley Village Hall - Andover Road

Contact: 781229

St Leonards Centre - Rectory Road

Contact Church Office: 782724

NOTE: If you wish to add an item or correct any entries, please send an email to: john@oakleylink.org.uk Last amended: 12/2/2026

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