

BLUNSDON

VILLAGE MAGAZINE

July 2026



Photo by Debra Richardson



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Parish Council Update – July 2026

As we move into July, it's been lovely to enjoy some truly hot days since May, bringing the village to life with colour and activity around the local parks and walkways. The Open Gardens and the wonderful array of scarecrows dotted around Blunsdon were a real joy to see — so many creative ideas and thoughtful displays that brought smiles to everyone passing by. It has also been wonderful to see so much activity from the preschool this term, with the children enjoying hands-on visits to the community allotment, watching their egg hatching project come to life, and taking part in a lively and joyful sports day. Their enthusiasm has brought a real buzz to the village, and it has been lovely to see them exploring, learning, and having fun together. We hope to see changes soon at St Leonard's Church, following its successful completion of the multi-agency process required to 'Reorder'. This approval will allow a minor reshaping of the Church's internal layout, enabling it to operate as an additional and much needed Village Community Space. These improvements will bring extra facilities to local people and support a wider range of community activities within this much loved historic building.

Planning Highlights

The parish council's role is to provide local knowledge, raise concerns or objections, and represent the views of the community. Its comments are only considered part of the decision-making process. Members of the public can view applications, read parish council comments, and submit their own feedback on the Swindon Borough Council website.

Applications Received

Planning Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0603

Description: Erection of detached garage to rear garden.

Site Address: Land Adjacent to Fairview Plot 3, Kingsdown Lane, Blunsdon SN25 5DL

Decision by BPC: Objected

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0562

Description: Erection of a two-storey side/rear extension and associated works.

Site Address: Streetside, Front Lane, Blunsdon SN26 7BJ – Decision by BPC: Agreed to Support

Decisions Made by SBC

S/TWC/26/0604 - SBC decision notice (Tree Works) - Approved

S/TWC/26/0488 - SBC decision notice (Tree Works) - Approved

S/HOU/26/0409/HAPA - 2 Kingsdown Lane, Blunsdon SN25 5DL – Erection of single storey side extension – SBC decision notice - Approved

S/HOU/26/0428/WOODCL - 3 Anvil Street, Blunsdon SN26 7BT – Erection of single storey rear extension – SBC decision notice - Approved

S/LDP/26/0443/WOODCL - 12 Sams Lane, Blunsdon Swindon - First Schedule: Certificate of Lawfulness (Proposed) for the erection of a box dormer to the side elevation. - SBC decision notice: Approved

S/TWC/26/0492 - The Limes, 49 High Street, Blunsdon, Swindon - Works to trees within a Conservation Area. SBC decision notice – Approved

Rivan Update – Blunsdon Parish Council continues to support the objection to the proposed Rivan development. We encourage residents who notice any areas of concern or potential breaches of planning conditions to report them directly through the **Swindon Borough Council Planning Portal**. The **Blunsdon Against Rivan Gas** Facebook page can also be used to share views and gain support from others in the community. Parish councillors will remain vigilant in the area and will report any concerns in the same way.

Lower Burytown Farm / Hannington

You may have heard that the owners of Lower Burytown Farm have offered the land that they own between Blunsdon and Hannington, to Swindon Borough Council (SBC) as an option to add to their emerging Revised Local Plan. Following a residents meeting in Hannington demonstrating their opposition to this proposal, Hannington Parish Council contacted SBC to establish their view on the proposal and expressed their objections. Subsequent to that contact Hannington Parish Council recently made the following Resolutions: *The Council RESOLVED unanimously that the following response will be made to the Swindon Borough Council Local Plan in relation to further documents received as part of Regulation 18.*

The Parish Council notes that representations relating to the promoted strategic site known as “Lower Burytown Farm” (HELAA reference S0500), including submissions made on behalf of Knight Frank, do not appear to have been visible or clearly identifiable to the Parish Council at the time the Council prepared and submitted its Regulation 18 consultation response on 28 September 2025.

Whilst noting that the HELAA identified the site as “not suitable” and “not deliverable”, with substantial concerns identified in relation to landscape impact, heritage impact, archaeology, ecology and overall strategic appropriateness, the Parish Council was not aware at the time of preparing its comments, that this strategic-scale site of approximately 482 hectares was continuing to be actively challenged within the Regulation 18 process. Given the scale and significance of the S0500 proposal, together with the fact that representations relating to the site were not clearly identified within the principal consultation material, the Parish Council is concerned that consultees may not have had a fair or meaningful opportunity to review and comment upon the proposal during the consultation period.

In light of the above, the Parish Council requests that: Any future consideration of S0500/Lower Burytown Farm be subject to clear and transparent consultation. Consultees and affected parish councils be directly informed should the site progress further within the Local Plan process. The Parish Council reserves the right to submit further comments should the site progress into Regulation 19 or any subsequent allocation process.

The Council RESOLVED unanimously that a meeting with Mr T Thomas (Lead Planning Officer at Swindon Borough Council) will be arranged and that subject to availability, Cllr Stewart, Cllr Hartley, and the Parish Clerk will attend on behalf of the Council to discuss HELAA S0500 and the Local Plan. The rest of the councillors may also attend should they be available on the date arranged. An update will be provided via email to the Council following the meeting and recorded at the next available meeting.

The Council RESOLVED unanimously that delegation is given to the Parish Clerk, in consultation with all councillors via email, should action be required between meetings at any point during the remainder of the Swindon Borough Council Local Plan process, to make any comments, responses or representation to the Swindon Borough Council Local Plan on behalf of Hannington Parish Council. Where necessary (if time permits), public meetings will be called, or support given to the village action group to call them.

The Council RESOLVED unanimously to recognise the newly formed Hannington Action Group, to support them in their campaign to oppose the inclusion of Lower Burytown Farm HELAA, and where possible, work in collaboration with them. Cllr Stewart will be the liaison link between the Parish Council and the village action group. The Council will also work with neighbouring town and parish councils on any action required to oppose the inclusion of this site.

Blunsdon Parish Council fully supports Hannington's Resolutions and will join their meeting with Tim Thomas later this year to fully investigate and object to any consideration of this land to be added to the emerging Local Plan.

Annual Parish Assembly

Thank you to everyone who joined us in May for this year's Annual Parish Assembly on 21st May. It was a positive and well supported evening, with residents hearing updates on parish projects, local services and the work carried out over the past year. We were also pleased to welcome representatives from the Community Shop, the Police, Golden Gatherings, Blunsdon Football Club, and several other local groups who contribute so much to village life. Their updates highlighted the wide range of activities, support and opportunities available within the community. The Assembly remains an important chance for open conversation between the Parish Council and residents, and we are grateful to all who took part.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Parish Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) meeting is held each year to formally review and approve the council's financial records and governance arrangements. This includes examining the year end accounts, bank reconciliation, variances, and internal audit report, as well as completing the statutory governance statements that confirm the council has followed proper financial procedures throughout the year. Once approved, the AGAR is signed by the Chair and Clerk and published alongside the Notice of Public Rights, giving residents the opportunity to inspect the accounts during the legally required period.

Speed watch Update

During the summer months our Speed Watch volunteer numbers naturally drop, as many of our regular helpers are supporting school-holiday cover or taking well-earned breaks. This means we have fewer people available to help keep our village roads safe. If you have a little spare time and would like to support the community, we would be incredibly grateful for new volunteers to join the team. Even one session a month makes a real difference. Speed Watch is friendly, straightforward, and a great way to help keep Blunsdon safe for everyone. If you are interested in offering some time, please get in touch.

Village Update

The Parish Council will soon be installing an additional bin at the Recreation Ground, following an increase in litter and concerns raised by residents about the existing bin overflowing during busy weekends. We also want to let residents know that the bench near the Cold Harbour area will shortly be relocated to another spot within the village. This section of land is scheduled for vegetation clearance as part of future plans for the area. The Parish Council has again stepped in to complete grounds maintenance that does not fall under our responsibility, vegetation at the Sams Lane junction had become so overgrown that drivers' vision was restricted when pulling out onto the main road. To prevent accidents, the area has now been cut back. We are pleased to share news that the parish has recently been fortunate to co-opt four new lady councillors onto Blunsdon Parish Council. Welcome Hazel, Lesley, Jo and Vanessa, their combined experience, enthusiasm, and local knowledge will help strengthen our work, increase our presence around the village, and provide additional support in areas of ongoing concern. We look forward to introducing each of them in more detail over the coming months

Meet Your Councillor / Staff Member

Meet Ian – Chair

How long have you been a member of Blunsdon Parish Council?

I joined the Parish Council in 2003 and was elected Chair in 2014

What are the main things you get involved with as part of BPC?

I guess as Chair I get to put my fingers in most pies! Although my colleague Councillors do a great job in taking responsibility for their Working groups.

How long have you lived in the village?

I first moved to the Village in 1987

What do you enjoy most about the village?

I love the strong sense of Community in the Village. We get feedback from the Parishioners about what we do and often this helps us to improve/modify our plans.

What is your favorite spot in the village?

I love the 'buzz' around the Village Hall and the Community Shop and Café. The views of the Thames Valley are spectacular, and the Midvale Ridge National Character Area from the A419 east down towards Stanton Woods also have a great vista.

What are you currently working on or supporting within the parish?

At present I am working hard to try and reduce the onslaught of development allocated to Blunsdon in the Revised Local Plan. My success has been minimal, but we will keep the pressure on Planning to minimize the impact.

Is there a fun fact or interesting skill you would like residents to know about?

I carried the Olympic Torch in 2012 and still have it. I was one of an enthusiastic group of Blunsdon Morris Men. (still have my stave and bells!)

Would you like to share a short quote about what serving the community means to you?

I love my community and will always do the best I can to support the cohesion and positive development of the Parish, often frustrating but always rewarding.

Dates for Your Diary

Parish Council Meetings – The next two meetings for the Parish Council will be on:

Full Council Parish Meeting will be on Monday 6th July at 7.30 pm

Finance Parish Meeting will be on Monday 20th July at 7.30 pm

Ward Surgery will be on 4th July at 11:30am, at the Village Shop

Golden Gatherings on 1st & 15th July at 3pm, at the Village Shop

Did You Know?

In July, Blunsdon's historic Castle Hill is at its most visible and accessible, with the summer growth revealing the outline of the Iron Age hillfort that overlooks the village. Castle Hill is a scheduled ancient monument and one of Blunsdon's oldest features, with origins dating back to the Iron Age

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St Leonard's Church
Blunsdon
Connecting with God, each other
and our community

From the Rector's pen

In the UK, summer is a great time to spend outside, walking and enjoying nature, maybe sunbathing or having a BBQ.

As I read through the gospels Jesus spent most of his time out of doors. Preaching, teaching and walking from place to place.

Remember the Sermon on the mount, the journeys around the lake of Galilee. But for him it was also a sanctuary, a place of prayer and an opportunity to escape from the crowds. He would regularly take himself off to a quiet place to be alone with God. The forty days in the wilderness, praying in the garden of Gethsemane. Are you looking forward to the summer months. Will it be time to join the crowds at a festival or an opportunity to go somewhere quiet?

Psalm 46.10 reminds us to "Be still and know that I am God". Jesus saw nature as a classroom; many of his parables used examples from the fields and hedgerows he passed to explain what the Kingdom of God was all about. He spoke about the Birds of air and lilies of the fields. Let us use this summer as a time of rest and reflection and ask God to teach us about being still. Let us open our hearts and minds to what we can learn about God from the great outdoors.

To finish I'd like to remind you of a verse of this wonderful Swedish poem (hymn)

"How great thou art"

When through the woods and forest glades I wander

And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,

When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,

And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:

How great thou art! How great thou art!

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:

How great thou art! How great thou art!

Carl Boberg (1885) translated by Stuart K Hine (1949)

Rev Phil Goodey

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Mon	3.10pm - 4.40pm	3pm-6.15pm
Tues	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am - 12.15pm
Weds	4pm - 7.10pm	3pm - 7.15pm
Thurs	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am - 12.15pm
Frid	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am - 12.15pm

St Leonard's Church Fundraising Update June 2026

St Leonard's Church officially launched their fundraising appeal in church at the end of April. As you may know, our appeal is called "A SPACE FOR ALL" as we work to modernise our church and futureproof it from closure. Eventually, it will be a space for groups in the area to use and the income from this will ensure the upkeep of the church. Look out for the logo below – you will see it regularly from now on!



Please look out for our fundraising thermometer that will soon appear outside church. It will have a QR code for you to use to donate!

Look out for our concert series- three separate concerts just this year.

Enquiries to events@stleonardsblunsdon.com

Leaflets will be posted to every house in the village to tell everyone of our plans. We will need volunteers to deliver these, so if you are interested.....

enquiries@stleonardsblunsdon.com

There will also be 400 limestone floor tiles for sale, £25 each. Please consider buying one to support us or use it to mark a family connection with St Leonard's? Were you married in church or sang in the choir? Eventually, a framed commemorative diagram will record who gave which tile.

The carpet and floorboards will go, and a beautiful limestone floor will replace it, improving accessibility with a level floor across the church.



St Leonard's Church
Blunsdon
Connecting with God, each other
and our community



OUR REGULAR EVENTS AND SERVICES AT ST LEONARD'S

- Baby & Toddler Group every Wednesday 10am–12pm
- Lego Club 1st Saturday 9.30–11am
- Men's Breakfast 2nd Saturday 9am in the shop
- Coffee & Book Sale 3rd Saturday 10am–12pm
- Community Prayers Monday 10–10.30am Fortnightly
- Bell Ringing every Friday 6–7pm
- Communion Service 1st & 3rd Sunday 10am
- Morning Worship 2nd Sunday 10am
- Breakfast Church 4th Sunday 9am (with breakfast!)



Everyone welcome!



theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

BLUNSDON WI

June's talk by the very entertaining John Jameson-Davis was about forged signatures. He described it as a crime scene and then went about describing the detective work of finding the truth. We never knew how many clues you leave as soon as you put pen to paper.

The trips this month have included a guided tour of the Swindon railway cottage and heritage trail on a swelteringly hot day. It was the one time the ideal place to be was in the tunnel under the railway, the old access route to the railway works.

A trip organised by Wilts WI was to the science museum at Wroughton. What a treasure trove and eclectic mix of exhibits. Well worth a visit should you get the opportunity. Highly recommended.

We have another busy month ahead of trips planned. A visit to Hidcote is proving popular especially amongst those who already NT members. A last chance trip to Quenington fresh air sculpture park as it's in its final year. Our lunch outing is being very kindly hosted by our wonderful Hazel and we hoping al fresco in the garden.

We are reviewing "Remarkably Bright creatures" on Netflix at our film club and our next book is "The Frozen River" by Ariel Lawhon.

Blunsdon WI meet in the large hall of Blunsdon Village Hall on the third Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm

To find out about our WI call Anna on 01793 706392 or visit our website jackie707.wixsite.com



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for the Nursery into Blakehill Business Park

Notes from the Editor

The magazine is run by volunteers from the village. All your ideas, comments and contributions will always be welcome.

Blunsdon Village Magazine is available to read online at Blunsdon Parish Council website: blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk

EDITOR: Please email all items for the magazine to blunsdonmagazine@gmail.com

Arlene tel. 07493 978388

ADVERTS: For advert enquiries please contact Penny on 01793 722073

Front Cover: Corner of High Street and Holdcroft Close

Your August Magazine will be delivered from: 24th July

Magazine issue	Deadline for items for inclusion
August	15th July

Community Messaging

Blunsdon Scarecrow Trail 2026 - at the time of writing this we are still a week away from the big weekend but I know that so much work has gone into making the trail a success and I want to take the opportunity to THANK all the wonderful scarecrow makers. It's you guys who make this such a success. I do also need to thank the wonderful bee makers who have embraced this extra project. I hope you all enjoyed the day. And lastly a massive thank you to Judy. Without you this event wouldn't happen. (Lucy – WI)

***Social Walking from
Blunsdon Community Shop***

**2nd and 4th Thursday of every month
starting at 10:00am at the Community Shop**

**We always start and finish at the shop... coffee and cake
afterwards isn't mandatory, but it is highly recommended!**

Any queries, please message Alex on 07554 811779

New walkers are always welcome, and welcomed



*****Blunsdon Baby and Toddler Group*****

We meet every Wednesday morning in St Leonards church from 10 to 11.30am, term time and holidays.

The group includes foster carers, parents and grandparents, so a good mixture and plenty of experience if you wish to pick people's brains!

We ask £1 per session to cover costs, and this includes hot drinks and biscuits.

There might be singing and craft sessions as well so come along and see who we are.



A Recipe from CookFoodFan

Garlic

There are some foods that evoke a smell in your memory, make your mouth water or are just comforting. For me garlic is like that. I went to a restaurant once where their main dish was chicken and potatoes, it was so popular that you had to book to get a table and the queue for takeaways was long! This recipe combines chicken, potatoes and garlic, three basic ingredients put together for deliciousness. The garlic butter adds a rich flavour to enhance the chicken and potatoes beautifully; the recipe is straightforward and all in one pan. Ideal with a salad in summer, or warming with vegetables on a chilly evening. If you want more garlic serve with garlic bread on the side to mop up the juices.

One Pan Garlic Butter Chicken (serves 4)

4 chicken breasts
500g baby potatoes (or large potatoes cut into small, even size pieces)
2 crushed garlic cloves well mixed into 4 tbsp butter
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp paprika
Salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 200C (180C fan), gas mark 6. Wash the baby potatoes and cut some to make them all of fairly even size.
2. In a large bowl, toss the potatoes with olive oil, salt, pepper and paprika until evenly coated. Spread the potatoes in an even layer on a baking sheet or large roasting tin (they need space to roast).
3. Season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper. Place the chicken among the potatoes.
4. Melt the garlic butter and drizzle over the chicken and potatoes, the butter will seep into the chicken and potatoes.
5. Bake in the oven for 25-30mins or until the chicken is cooked through and the potatoes are tender.

Tip: get all this ready beforehand and leave covered in the fridge until ready to cook.
Add more garlic or some fresh herbs for extra flavour.
You can also freeze the cooked dish as a ready meal.

ENJOY

Hi, I'm 
Lydia 
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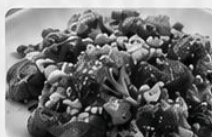
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**TICKETS £10 (Cash Bar also available)
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events@stleonardsblunsdon.com**

**Proceeds to support the 'A Space For All' project
In our historic and beautiful church**

Golden Gatherings

Fancy a cuppa and chat?



Dates for July: Wednesday 1st & 15th from 3pm
Dates for August: Wednesday 5th & 19th from 3pm

Blunsdon Community Café

A warm welcome awaits you.

**Come along to meet fellow Blunsdon residents,
enjoy good company and make new friends.**

Dial-A-Ride transport is available for both journeys.

**If you are interested for yourself or someone you know, please email
Hazel Wakefield at goldengatheringsblunsdon@gmail.com**

Golden Gatherings update –

The first Wednesday in June saw 14 older residents come together for a fun game of ‘silent’ bingo in the Community Cafe. This was our 15th session and to commemorate this, we were kindly donated a voucher for a free drink and a cake from the Cafe which was won by Pam Morgan.

A group of 16 then met up again on the third Wednesday to enjoy each other’s company and participate in a quiz organised by Karen Jankinson, one of the Golden Gatherings’ volunteers. A warm welcome is always guaranteed at our Community Cafe from staff and volunteers alike. Friendships are developing and participants express their delight to have the opportunity to meet up regularly with friends old and new.

We also welcome any ideas for activities from Blunsdon residents. During another recent session participants enjoyed a photo quiz of Blunsdon sights that had been organised by Richard Walker, local resident and retired professional photographer, which was much enjoyed by the participants and volunteers alike!

Since we always have space around the Cafe tables for new members, if you know anyone who would benefit from being out and about and enjoying the company of others, please encourage them to make contact with Hazel, on 07974 150250 or email her on goldengatheringsblunsdon@gmail.com. We also have participants who live further afield but have connections with Blunsdon and others who are accompanied by family members and all are very welcome.

Enquiries are encouraged from anyone who is interested to know more about our regular get-togethers, with transport available via Dial-A-Ride too.



BLUNSDON CRICKET CLUB

Recent Results – sixth (out of ten) Wiltshire League Division 6

Bathford – lost by 19 runs, with three wickets apiece for **Phil “The Welsh Wizard” Jones** & **Harish “The Windmill” Kumar**.

Nationwide – lost by 10 runs, despite another three wickets for **Harish “The Windmill” Kumar** and 85 runs for **Arul “Mr Average” Ramasamy** and an exact half century for **James “Mary” Shelley**.

Spye Park – No Play. It had rained the night before. More rain was forecast. It rained all the way there. It rained while we waited to play. It was raining when the game was abandoned. At least the whites stayed clean for next week.

Burbage – lost by two wickets, with a quickfire 35 from opener **Dean “Deano” Tomlin** and skipper **Harry “Mystery” Roke** who bamboozled three Burbage batters.



Skipper Roke is a Little Teapot

Upcoming fixtures – Saturday. Play begins at 1 p.m. Home Ground, Sutton Park

4th July – away to Keevil at The Manor

11th July – home to Chippenham

18th July – away to Blue Brigade at Moredon Sports Hub

25th July – home to Bathford

1st August – away to Nationwide at the Pipers Way HQ



I've taken inspiration from the village again this month as I was thinking about some of the fabulous open gardens.

Starting some beautiful book recommendations, and *The French Gardener* that is one of those beautifully heartbreaking books that you know is going to make you an emotional wreck but that we love anyway. It's a dual

timeline that showcases two sets of marriage and families in the same house but at different times. The current owners have arrived with the flash designers and perfect vision of village life; however, it doesn't quite go to plan. Miranda sets herself on a mission to find out more about this history of the house and in turn, settle then more into village life- particularly for her tricky son, Gus; he might be my favourite part of the story. On her journey of discovery, she finds a diary and this becomes her go to comfort blanket and guide to life. We read along as the world of Ava comes to life in a secret but classic love triangle. She is beyond happily married with her beautiful home and infamous garden however the arrival of Jean Paul throws that all into complete disarray and everything that made sense, no longer does. Whilst the story focuses on Ava's two great loves, there is a shared interest in restoring the once well-known and celebrated gardens, of which there are many to look at in Blunsdon. Other options could be a childhood classic and favourite of mine, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett- after no mow may, I imagine there are some glorious wild areas for children to dream of as a magical land. Or for some dreamy escapism, try the new Heidi Swain, *Walking on Sunshine*; a lovely tale about falling in love with nature and the outdoors.

When it comes to wine, there are so many lovely wines that can be enjoyed outdoors; try the Ormarine Picpoul de Pinet that is having a real moment in the wine world, and beyond; see a glorious version on my Instagram page [@reading_with_wine](#) From the Languedoc region, It is a fresh tasting wine with notes of sea salt; giving you the perfect taste of where it comes from and what that means, the flavours of white flowers and a hint of grapefruit that combine to make it absolutely joyous outside and the reason is from the love of the producers. Ormarine are proud to be leading the way in sustainable wines and are the only Tera Vitis certified producers of Picpoul. This month is the launch of the lightweight bottle; what a great way to support our planet and the great outdoors.

For a truly glorious wine link, have a look at the special Kew Wines range from Laithwaites. It is a collection of beautiful labels, inviting you to try rare and delicious grapes and the bonus, money is donated from each bottle to support the Royal Botanical Gardens and the sustainability of winemakers around the world. The Albillo is a lesser known grape but one that Laithwaites are rightly championing. It's perfectly on brand with aromas of beeswax that round off the peach flavour. Planting wildflowers amongst the vines means that the grapes are grown with the best natural pollinators in the world; the stunning scenes are also then captured for the labels to really complete the package.

I wish you time to sit in the outdoors, or at least to escape to the outdoors in book form over and over again but please drink responsibly- and share those beautiful pairings with me please!

Reading with Wine

The Chatterbox – How's the Weather with You?

The months of the year seem to be rolling by at lightning speed and, as we reach the half-way point, I hope you've all had a good year so far. The weather has been so topsy-turvy that one day I'm struggling to sleep because the bedroom feels as though I'm lying in Death Valley and then other days we're back to being dressed up like Polar explorers. And then we have storms – bizarre purple lightening that seemed to be trapped in a cloud and not a clap of thunder to be heard. Then the rain! There have been moments when I wouldn't have been surprised if a hippopotamus had stuck its head out of the muddy swamp that used to be the garden. It's no wonder we like talking about the weather when it's so changeable. It's the simplest way to open a conversation with a stranger, to talk about the weather. "Isn't it a lovely day?" is always a good starter. We can talk about how warm it is, how wet it's been, how cold we feel, did you see the storm last night? It's an ice-breaker – no pun intended. If ever there was a more benign subject, I doubt we could discuss it for so long as we can the weather. It's polite, uncontroversial and not likely to cause offence to anyone. And we all experience it and suffer its consequences whether we are soaked to the skin, chilled to the bone or burnt to a crisp (not recommended – please use appropriate sunscreen!).

As well as talking about the weather, the summertime does have many positive aspects for us to enjoy. Many of the delights of the day can be found outside; a walk in natural surroundings, sitting quietly and listening to birdsong. Watching sparrows having a wash in the birdbath. Witnessing a beautiful sunrise as the world begins to wake up and watching a sunset full of reds, pinks and caramel tones as the darkness slowly begins to fall. The smell of freshly cut grass and the scent of damp earth after refreshing rain. Leaves shimmering as the breeze teases them. Drinking an ice-cold glass of water on a hot, hot day. Listening to the blackbirds singing at dusk or the busy buzz of a bumblebee searching each flower for something delicious. Most plants and trees are in their full, glorious state at the moment with incredible colours and scents for us to enjoy. All of these things are simple, abundant and there if we just stop and take a moment to notice them.

Winter, too, has its wonderful weather effects on us, nature and our world but, since we're in July, I think it's probably best to stick to summer for now and we can always revisit what winter has to offer later in the year. Let's not jump too far ahead.

I hope that you're having a wonderful summer so far, enjoying the warmth, colours and energy that it brings and hopefully you have holidays to look forward to as well. I must confess, however, no matter how many sparrows I watch in the birdbath, I still can't abide boiling hot days when the temperature gauge in the car suggests we're living in somewhere like Egypt rather than Blunsdon. On days like that, you'll find me hanging around the frozen food sections in the supermarkets.

Keep cool and enjoy July!



Rotary

Club of Swindon North & Thamesdown

Registered Charity No: 1023031

Website: rotaryswindonnorth.org.uk

Email: rotaryswindonnorth@gmail.com

July marks the start of a new Rotary year, and as we plan our programme for the year ahead, we reflect on what we have achieved in the past 12 months.

Our annual Swimathon at Highworth Recreation Centre was a great success once again. Proceeds this year are expected to reach £6,500, half of which will go to the Swindon charity Phoenix Enterprises, and the other half to the various charities chosen by the swimmers themselves.

Our Christmas appeal, mostly held outside Asda in West Swindon, raised just under £6,000. We have distributed the funds to the Swindon Alzheimer's Society, the Swindon & North East Wiltshire Community First Responders, Change Lives No to Knives, Wiltshire Treehouse, Headway, Big Breakfast Plus and Threshold.

£1,600 was raised by our ever-popular quiz with the Ploughman's supper and homemade desserts provided by the ladies of the Inner Wheel Club of North Wiltshire. £800 went to the Roxi Foundation, and CALM (Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Movement) was presented with £800 by the Inner Wheel Club.

We continued our support for young people by staging mock interviews for Year 11 pupils at Highworth Warneford School and holding a Student Chef competition for students at Swindon College.

Altogether, the year's events highlight a sustained commitment to practical local action, charity fundraising and community partnership.

As for the new year, our first fundraising event will be a Cyclothon at Moredon Sports Hub on Sunday 26 July. It's for cyclists of all ages and abilities and entry is free. All we ask is that every participant raises as much sponsorship as possible as the overall aim is to raise funds for Limitless, the charity which enables cycling for all.



Scan the QR code for full details including the entry form and an online sponsorship collection facility.

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- Book your place on the open evening and mornings using the QR code:
- Open Evening – Thursday 17th September 2026 4:30pm - 7.30pm.
- Open Mornings – 14th, 15th & 16th October 2026 – 9:30am.
- For further information or if you would like to visit the school at another time, please contact us.



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55 million suspicious emails reported by the public

Members of the public have reported 55.7 million suspicious emails to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS). The free service was created by the UK's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) in 2020 and since its launch has resulted in the **removal of 250,000 scams across 443,000 malicious websites.**

Why you should report phishing scams

'Phishing' is when criminals use scam emails, text messages or phone calls to trick their victims. The aim is often to make you visit a website, which may download a virus onto your computer, or steal bank details or other personal information.

The NCSC is a UK government organisation that has the power to investigate and take down scam email addresses and websites. Reporting a scam is free and only takes a minute. By reporting suspicious emails, messages and calls, you can:

- reduce the amount of scam communications you receive
- make yourself a harder target for scammers
- protect others from cyber crime online

How to report suspicious emails and text messages:

If you've received an email or text message that doesn't feel right, **STOP!**

- **break the contact** – don't reply, click on links, call any phone numbers or make any payments
- **check if it's genuine:** contact the organisation directly using an email address or phone number you know is correct, e.g. from your utility bills, via a search engine, on the back of your card or by calling 159 for banks
- Report suspicious **emails** by forwarding them to: **report@phishing.gov.uk**
- Report suspicious **text messages** by forwarding them to: **7726 (no charge)**

How to report suspicious phone calls:

If you've received a phone call that doesn't feel right, **STOP!**

- **hang up**
- **check if it's genuine:** contact the organisation directly using contact details you know are correct, such as those on a utility bill, official website, the back of your card or by calling 159 for your bank
- **don't trust the Caller ID** display on your phone – it's not proof of ID
- **report it** by sending a text to 7726 with the word 'Call' followed by the scam caller's number

If you have been a victim of cyber crime or fraud, tell the police at **www.reportfraud.police.uk**.

For advice and guidance on what to do if you have been a victim of fraud, please visit: **<https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk/recovery-from-fraud/>**

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