

BLUNSDON

VILLAGE MAGAZINE

December 2025

Photo by Debra Richardson



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SEASONED FIREWOOD



What's new in the Blunsdon Community Shop and Café?

Our new cafe counters look fantastic and our Christmas products are on sale from 10th November along with our festive lattes and cakes in the cafe.

We have Blunsdon Calendars and Christmas cards on sale in the shop from 1st November!



*Can you keep a secret.....Father Christmas is coming to Blunsdon
Community Shop & Cafe*

Important dates for your diary in December and January

Fri 5th Dec

FREE wine of the month
tasting from
5 pm

Fri 19th Dec

Meet Father Christmas
from 5 till 7 pm

Mon 22nd Dec

Children's Author
Lydia Seaward will be reading
her latest book 10.00 am

Fri 9th Jan

FREE wine of the month
tasting from
5 pm

***Follow us on social media to see
all our events***

Did you know we sell Gift Cards?

- Multiples of £5
- Great for gifts/stocking fillers
- Can be redeemed in the shop or cafe



**Shop opening times are: Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs, Sat: 8 am - 5 pm, Fri 8 am - 7 pm
Sunday: 8 am - 4 pm. Cafe closes 1 hour before the shop.**

1st Blunsdon Scout Group – Scouts' Christmas Post



- Scout Christmas stamps for sale in the village shop now – only 45p each **CASH ONLY**
- Special green post box in the village shop
- Last time for posting 4pm Tuesday 16th December.

Swindon Scouts can deliver your Christmas cards in Swindon and surrounding villages for just 45p each. Scout Christmas stamps are now for sale in the village shop – cash only please. Cards must be posted in the special green Scout Post Boxes and ours will be in the village shop from now until 4pm Tuesday 16th December.

Thank you so much to all those at the village shop for their help and support once again. For more information see <https://swindonscouts.org.uk/post/>

This is one of our major fundraising events and one that all our members, from little Beavers to big Explorer Scouts, can get involved with so thank you for your support.

We have nearly 90 children in our Scout Group and if you would like your son or daughter to join our waiting list, please get in touch.

- Beavers 6-8 – Alison Iles, Beaver Scout Leader 1stBlunsdonBeaverScouts@gmail.com
- Cubs 8-10½ – Nik Phillips, Cub Scout Leader planecrazy5@hotmail.com
- Scouts 10½-14 – Mark Tredgett, Scout Leader markanthonytredgett@gmail.com
- Explorers 14-18 – Tom Dent, Explorer Scout Leader ESUAthena@gmail.com

Steve Iles, Group Scout Leader, 1st Blunsdon, 07885 188079,
iles.swindon@gmail.com

We prepare young people with skills for life

Christingle 2025

Every year, St Leonard's Church holds a Christingle Service to raise money for **The Children's Society**. All are welcome. It is a magical candlelit service, very popular for starting off your Christmas season!

This year our service will be on **Sunday 7th December at 4pm.**

If you would like a collection candle, please look at the back of the church or email griff9999@btinternet.com

. FOOD FOR THOUGHT.
Outside Catering



**Mobile fish & chip van will be at Blunsdon, Blunt
Rise from 5pm**

Thursday 4th December

Thursday 15th January

**If you would like a copy of our menu please
email grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com
or WhatsApp 07515 288414**

**Pre orders welcome by WhatsApp or text 07515
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**Graham & Lizzy wish you all a very Merry Xmas
and a happy and prosperous New Year.**



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

From the Rectors Pen

When I was at college many years ago, I had to write a paper on sociological change, based on a book by A.H. Halsey. I can't remember what I wrote on the paper but I do remember the title,

"Continuity and Change in British society". We live in a society that continues to change, when I first studied computing, PCs had not been invented, TVs were black and white and phones were made of Bakelite.

But each year without fail Christmas would come around, presents would appear, and trees would be decorated. The contents of the presents would change, the people I celebrated it with would change, but Christmas itself was a constant.

As I approach a major change in my life; a knee replacement, I am learning value of faith in the consistency of God. No matter what is happening in the world or at home, I know that God sent his son into our broken world to bring peace, reconciliation and healing. Christmas is about continuity and change, God's everlasting love, and Christ coming to change for better our lives and his world.

This Christmas remember one of the names of Jesus, "Immanuel" God is with us, and pray for peace in the world and peace in your home, now and forever.

God Bless

Rev Phil Goodey



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!



BLUNSDON WI

Our talk this month was by the lively and fascinating Amanda Butler entitled 'More than Elephants: Volunteering in a Gambia Nature Reserve'. Beautiful pictures of Zambia and the orphan elephants nurtured to adulthood and life back in the wild funded by the charity game rangers international. The next book to be discussed shortly at book club will be 'The Women' by Kristin Hannah, and our next film club film under discussion in January will be 'Salmon fishing in the Yemen'

This month we have had trips to Everyman theatre and Kelmscott Christmas craft fair. Also trips to Dents glove factory and bauble making are in the pipeline. We have a Christmas lunch planned at the Prospect cafe in Wroughton. This is in addition to our annual Christmas dinner at the Heart in Hand who always provide a great spread. The Heart in Hand meal is our December meeting. Our first meeting in the new year will be on Wednesday 21st January at 7.30 in the large hall of Blunsdon village hall.

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



JOIN US

CREATE and CONNECT

EVERY FIRST WEDNESDAY
10:00-11:30 AM

AND EVERY THIRD FRIDAY
AT 5:30-7:00PM

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Unit 1 Blunt Rise , Broad Blunsdon
SN26 7DA



CREATE • CONNECT

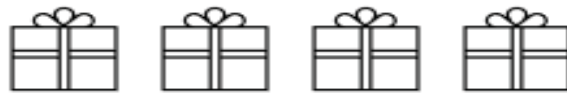
An opportunity to meet with others over a cuppa and cake to create. Whether you draw, paint, knit, crochet or simply colour, you can bring your own project, or you can use our materials. Or you can just come along for a chat!



St Leonard's Church, Blunsdon

Invites you to

“Something for Christmas”



A service on Christmas Eve at 3pm for all the family.

Come and choose a costume to wear or come in your own Christmas themed outfit.

Then take part in our Nativity story!



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.



ST LEONARD'S CHURCH



Christmas Services

Let's welcome the light of Christ this Christmas.

Sunday 7th December
10am Holy Communion
4pm Christingle

Christmas Eve
3pm Crib Service
11.15pm Holy Communion

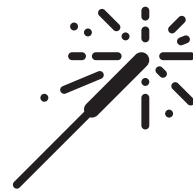
Sunday 14th December
10am Morning Worship

Christmas Day
10am Holy Communion

Sunday 21st December
6pm Carol Service

Sunday 28th December
10am Reflective Service





Parish Council News – December and January.

Thank you to Claire for her Parish update last month, so good I think she may have a future role!

It's that time of year again and the Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a healthy and hearty Christmas and New year. Where did that year go, I wonder?

You may have seen in our social media that the Parish Council was so concerned about the proposed quantity of housing (**2,705 dwellings**) that has been allocated, or will have a direct impact upon the Parish in the proposed **New Swindon Plan**, that I wrote to James Coulstock, (jcoulstock@swindon.gov.uk) the Corporate Director who is in charge of Planning. I received a reply and an offer of a meeting during December and we will report on the outcome in our social media subsequently.

We seem to be spending a lot of time fighting what residents and the PC have decided are inappropriate Planning Applications at the Borough Council Planning Committee, and I must say a huge thank you to residents, whose fears we have supported, for speaking up too. If you have planning concerns about applications, please let us know and we always take them into consideration when we discuss them.

Planning Applications this month

S/HOU/25/ Erection of a single-storey side and rear extension to existing garage.

Capella 103 Ermin Street Blunsdon SN26 8AA. The PC supported this application.

S/TWC/25/1330 Works to Tree within Conservation area. **Robin Hood Back Lane** Blunsdon SN26 7BJ

S/25/1300 Erection of 9 residential dwellings and associated infrastructure, landscaping and servicing. **Land Adjacent To Ermin Street** Blunsdon SN26 8AA. This is land highlighted for development in the Neighbourhood Plan

S/HOU/25/1395 Erection of 2 storey rear extension and part single storey part 2 storey front extension, conversion of garage into habitable space. **5 Berton Close Blunsdon** SN26 7BE.

S/ADV/25/1441 Proposed Double-sided digital Bus Shelter advertising displays to replace existing Double-sided Internally Illuminated 6-sheet Bus Shelter advertising displays. Proposed Digital displays to portray static advertising images that change every 10 seconds, in sequence. O/S Unit A Stephenson Road **Cricklade Road** SN25 5AX

Planning Decisions this month

S/25/1147 Demolition of garage, erection of 2no dwellings (Class C3), detached garage and associated works. **Longways Front Lane** Blunsdon SN26 7BJ. Permission Refused.

S/TWC/25/1224 Works to trees within a Conservation Area. **Orchard House Hunts Hill Blunsdon** SN26 7BN. Application Refused. The PC were not consulted on this application.

S/25/1163 Change of use of 9 parking bays to a hand car wash and associated works. **2A Unit 2 Hyde Road Upper Stratton** SN2 7SE. Application Granted

S/HOU/25/1045 Demolition of existing garage, erection of one and half storey side/rear extension (proposed). **17 Turnpike Road Blunsdon** SN26 7EA. Application Granted despite the PC's objection at Planning Committee.

S/25/1130 – Erection of 2no dwellings (Class C3), detached garages and associated works. Land To The West Of **Woodbine Cottage, Kingsdown Lane** Blunsdon. Application Granted despite the PC's objection at Planning Committee.

S/ADV/25/1164 Display of various illuminated and non-illuminated signage. **2A Unit 2 Hyde Road Upper Stratton** SN2 7SE. Application Granted.

Speedwatch

We have two new members for the Speedwatch team, **Mamie** and **James** who have undergone their training and will be out there doing their best to improve road safety across the Parish. Welcome and thank you for volunteering. Our hardy volunteers are out regularly helping with road safety in the Parish. This has led to many prosecutions by local Police for those abusing the law. The team will always welcome anyone who thinks they would like to join them in protecting the Parish.

| Date | Location | Vehicles | Speeding | % | Maximum | Speed Limit | Start | Finish | Area |
|------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----|---------|-------------|-------|--------------|------------------------|
| 25/09/2025 | Turnpike | 62 | 15 | 24% | 52 | 30 | 09:56 | 11:00 | Opp. No. 16 |
| 13/11/2025 | Turnpike | 40 | 9 | 23% | 43 | 30 | 09:00 | 09:40 | Opp. No. 16 |
| 14/10/2025 | High St | 107 | 20 | 19% | 32 | 20 | 16:00 | 17:00 | Heart in Hand |
| 11/11/2025 | Sams Lane | 90 | 11 | 12% | 32 | 20 | 08:00 | 09:00 | Junction with High St. |
| 07/11/2025 | Turnpike | 56 | 2 | 4% | 37 | 30 | 15:15 | <u>16:00</u> | Opp. No. 16 |
| 10/10/2025 | Ermin St | 241 | 8 | 3% | 44 | 30 | 14:55 | 15:55 | Minerva Heights |
| 24/09/2025 | Broadbush | 225 | 6 | 3% | 40 | 30 | 08:30 | 09:30 | The Shrubbery |
| 30/09/2025 | Lady Lane | 426 | 8 | 2% | 43 | 30 | 16:00 | 17:00 | Cycle Path |
| 15/10/2025 | Broadbush | 290 | 4 | 1% | 38 | 30 | 08:20 | 09:20 | The Shrubbery |
| 08/10/2025 | Lady Lane | 520 | 7 | 1% | 42 | 30 | 16:00 | 17:00 | Cycle Path |
| 05/11/2025 | Ermin St | 99 | 1 | 1% | 39 | 30 | 08:00 | 08:30 | Minerva Heights |

Ermin Street Landscape Project

Phase 1 of the project is now complete and we are pleased to say that we are moving towards phase 2 which is the Planting of significant trees. Our consultant, **Oliver**

Saunders of Bath Land Management has secured a grant to fund the planting and maintenance of the trees for the next 15 years. A major bonus for the Parish. Thank you, Oliver.

Golden Gatherings

We have had much success with the Golden Gatherings at the Community Shop and Cafe every other Wednesday afternoon. A lovely group of otherwise isolated residents have been gathered up and now meet in cheerful conversation and have been involved in fun activities. We have our fingers crossed that the Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation will offer us funding to keep this worthwhile project growing in the new year. A massive thank you to Hazel Wakefield and all the volunteers that have made this possible so far. If you know of anyone who might benefit from being collected and joining the drinks, chat and fun, please let us or Hazel (07974 150250 or email goldengatheringsblunsdon@gmail.com) know. We wish the group and volunteers a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

Caretaker Vacancy

The Parish Council are seeking a part-time caretaker to help keep our parish clean, safe, and welcoming.

- Hours: 10 hours per week, flexible
- Start Date: Immediate
- Locations: Parish facilities including the Village Hall, Pavilion, Recreation Grounds, Play Areas, Community Building, and MUGA

The caretaker will be responsible for the upkeep and care of parish facilities. Duties include:

- Cleaning and tidying halls, grounds, and equipment
- Opening/closing facilities and carrying out safety checks
- Minor repairs, maintenance, and liaising with contractors
- Helping ensure our spaces remain safe, welcoming, and well-presented for residents and visitors

Further details are available by contacting the Parish Clerk at [**debbie.braiden@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk**](mailto:debbie.braiden@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk)

Parish Office (at last!!)

By the time you read this we should be established in the new little Parish office in Linley Road, next to the new, and very popular MUGA. Until the Post Office register the address we will remain using the Village Hall post box for postal contact.

Parish Council Members

Our full Council should consist of **11 Parish Councillors**, we currently have only **8 members** to cover the whole of the Parish, and would welcome anyone who would like



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for Chelworth Industrial Estate to the left, take the 1st turning right
for the Nursery into Blakehill Business Park

to contribute a small amount of time to help the other volunteer councillors and our staff to run the Parish. Please just come along to a meeting or contact anyone of us to find out more. Thank you.

Parish Council Meetings

The regular Parish meetings for December and January will be on **Monday 1st and Monday 15th December 2025**, and **Monday 5th and Monday 22nd January 2026** at 19:30 in the Village Hall. If you want to come along, please let us know, details are on the Parish Council, notice boards, Website in the Blog section and on our Facebook page.

Ian Jankinson – ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk – 07702 684281

Parish contact details – Tel: 01793 705617 – clerk@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk

Coffee and Book Sales **St Leonards Church**

10-12noon

Saturday 20th December
Saturday 17th January

Search through a wide variety of Books
Relax with Coffee and Mince Pies



Notes from the Editor

The Magazine Committee wish all our readers a happy Christmas and healthy New Year.

A big **thank you** to our advertisers who have funded the printing and delivery costs of the Magazine. Thank you to our printers, ESP Colour Ltd for their hard efforts to keep things affordable, to Debra for our front cover photos and to all our contributors over the last year who provide the content.

A special thank you to our delivery boys and girls who ensure the Magazine lands on your doorstep regardless of the weather, the team are: -

**Adam, Aron, Cody,
Jasmine, Ryan,
Theo, Travis
with emergency cover from Samuel.**

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: A wintry scene on Burytown Lane.

Your February Magazine will be delivered from: 30th January

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Magazine issue | Deadline for items for inclusion |
| February | 21st January |

Community Messages

*** A massive thank you to everyone who tidied the churchyard in preparation for Remembrance Sunday. It was pristine by the time, children, parents, and leaders of the uniformed organisations in Blunsdon had worked so hard.

*** The Turners - Paul. Caroline and Rufus wish everyone in Blunsdon, especially our neighbours in Sutton Park and new arrivals a very happy Christmas and hope for a better and peaceful New Year...



*** Christmas Greetings from Blunsdon Parish Council

As 2025 draws to a close, the Parish Council would like to wish all residents a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

We hope the festive season brings warmth, happiness, and time well spent with family and friends.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in parish life throughout the year. We look forward to sharing more updates, news, and community developments in the 2026 editions of the Parish Magazine. With best wishes from all at Blunsdon Parish Council

***This January, Prospect Hospice will once again be offering a Christmas tree collection service across the local community – giving residents a simple and meaningful way to support hospice care at the start of the new year.

For a suggested minimum donation of £20, households can have their real Christmas tree collected and responsibly recycled. Every tree collected – and every donation made – helps Prospect Hospice provide vital care, comfort and support to local patients and families living with a life-limiting illness. Tree collections will take place across the following postcode areas: SN1, SN2, SN3, SN4, SN5, SN6, SN25 and SN26. Residents are encouraged to register their interest now and will be notified as soon as booking opens. For more information and to register, please visit www.prospect-hospice.net/treecollection



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Christmas at St Andrew's

As the festive season approaches, St Andrew's Church on Tadpole Lane, North Swindon, warmly invites the whole community to join a series of joyful and reflective services that celebrate the spirit of Christmas.

Set within the church's beautiful medieval walls, these gatherings offer something for everyone – whether you're seeking family fun, traditional carols, or something more contemplative.

Carols by Candlelight, Sunday 21st December 6pm

A traditional service with Bible readings and carols guiding worshippers through the story of Christ's birth. The service begins in candlelight and features St Andrew's Christmas Scratch Choir. All are welcome to stay afterwards for festive refreshments.

Children's Carol Service, Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24th December 10am

Families are invited to a lively and engaging retelling of the Christmas story, specially designed for children. With familiar carols and readings, this joyful service is a perfect way to begin Christmas Eve and share the meaning of the season.

Midnight Communion, Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24th December 11.30pm

This traditional service marks the birth of Christ with holy communion, offering a peaceful space for reflection amidst the festive hustle and bustle.

Christmas Day Communion, Thursday 25th December 10am

Begin Christmas morning with joy and connection. This uplifting service celebrates the heart of Christmas—God's gift of love and hope to the world. Come together with others to share in holy communion and the warmth of community.

St Andrew's Church aims to offer a joyful and inclusive Christmas for all the community. We hope you'll join us. You'll find a warm welcome here.

Reverend Sally Robertson, Vicar of St Andrew's.

Location: St Andrew's Church, Tadpole Lane, North Swindon, SN25 2DW (between Lyall Close and Abbey Caravan Park). Pedestrian access from Fontmell Close, Lyall Close and Tadpole Lane.

Please note: parking is limited and priority is given to disabled visitors.

Blunsdon Social Walking Group 2025

At the beginning of 2024 we started a Social Walking Group here in Blunsdon. The main reasons were to get a chance to meet new people, get some gentle exercise and learn a little about the beautiful countryside around our village. And if the Community Shop gained a little more sales, that would be an additional benefit. Starting at 10am, on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month we do a circular walk, starting and ending at Blunsdon Community Shop. Walks are between 3 - 5 miles, and the routes are tailored depending on the time of year and the weather... and the amount of mud!

So far in 2025 we've done 21 walks, added to the 24 walks completed in 2024, makes a total of 45! If you'd attended all 45 (no-one has!) you'd have covered a distance of over 165 miles.

We've walked a total of 937 miles this year, with 34 different walkers. The average number of walkers is 11, but this year it's ranged from 7 to 16. At the end of 2024, thirty brave souls defied the weather to see Blunsdon Advent Windows, which we hope to repeat in 2026.

The Social aspect is at the heart of our Walking Group; we walk and chat. And maybe the best bit... we finish at our Community Cafe for Coffee & Cake!

We'll be restarting in January 2026 so please join us! Jim Morris & Alex Kasperczyk



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| 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 |

Save the Date!

Blunsdon Open Gardens 2026
Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th June

Open Gardens
Breakfast and afternoon teas
Scarecrow Trail

Early expressions of interest welcome to
Judy drjudy_robbins_62@hotmail.com for the gardens,
and Lucy csturgess@btinternet.com for the scarecrows.
Formal entry forms will be published in February 2026 Village Magazine



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🎵 **Jingle bells, jingle bells** 🎵 The Rotary Sleigh is on the way.

This month our Sleigh will be outside some Swindon supermarkets seeking donations in support of several local charities. Last year our Christmas Appeal raised £5,525 which we distributed to 7 local charities. We are hoping we can top that figure this year.

Our Club President Mike Helyer says: *"Thanks to the generosity of our community, we're able to bring hope and assistance to those who need it most. Every donation, no matter what size, makes a real difference. 100%, every penny, of the money we collect goes directly to charity."*

Our Sleigh will be at Asda West Swindon, Morrisons in Dorcan and Sainsburys in Stratton. Donations can be made in cash or by card. People who are unable to come to the Sleigh can donate online on our website.

At Asda (Ashington Way side) our sleigh is there on Saturdays 6 and 20 December and Sundays 7 and 21 December. Then on Tuesday 23 December and finally on Wednesday, Christmas Eve.

It will be at Morrisons in Dorcan on Saturday 13 December and Sunday 14 December.

And Sainsbury's in Stratton on Friday 19 December.

Please pay us a visit if you can or make a donation online. Go to www.rotaryswindonnorth.org.uk for more information.

🎵 **O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree** 🎵

Our Rotary Tree is in the NSPCC Festival of Trees. Raising funds for the NSPCC, the Festival of Trees is in the foyer of the Wyvern Theatre from December 6 to January 5, during the run of the Wyvern's panto "Sleeping Beauty".

Happy Christmas everyone!

If joining Rotary interests you, please use the "contact us" link on our website above or QR code below.





A Recipe from CookFoodFan

Christmas Gifts

I watched a child come out of school, sit on a bench and open the tin she was carefully carrying. With a look of pride and a big smile on her face she devoured one of the cupcakes she had made. I could imagine the teacher telling the children to take them home for their parents to see but she decided to enjoy one

first. It did make me smile.

As we are about to enter the Festive Season I thought I would give you recipes for some Christmas food gifts. I used these last year as extra little presents for family members, as there is nothing nicer than receiving a home-made foodie gift for Christmas.

Peanut Chunkies

Wash and dry a bag of salted peanuts 300g chocolate
A drop of vanilla essence Sprinkling of sea salt (optional)
Melt the chocolate, add the vanilla essence and sea salt. Mix through the peanuts.
On a greaseproof lined baking sheet, spoon small bite size mounds. Leave to set in the fridge before storing in an airtight container.

Candied Spiced Nuts

(Keep 2-3 weeks) in a jar or freeze if making for yourself.
100g pecans, 120g walnuts, 20g melted coconut/olive oil, 24g brown sugar,
1 tsp cinnamon, 1 large **pinch** cayenne pepper, a few gratings of nutmeg,
¼ tsp sea salt, 2x 15g maple syrup
Preheat oven to 180c. Add pecans and walnuts to a (greaseproof paper) lined baking sheet. Top with oil, sugar, cinnamon, cayenne. Nutmeg, salt and **1 tbs** maple syrup. Toss to coat. Bake for 6 minutes, toss/stir the bake for another 6 minutes until golden brown. Remove from the oven, drizzle with the other **1 tbs** maple syrup. (Optional add a sprinkle of salt, cinnamon and sugar to coat.) Leave to cool completely, then place in jars/kilner jars.

Gingerbread Granola

DRY: 300g oats, 200g raw nuts (almonds, pecans, few walnuts), lightly chopped,
40g brown sugar, ¼ tsp salt, 1½ tsp ground cinnamon, 1 tbsp ground ginger.
WET: 60ml coconut or olive oil, 80g maple syrup or honey, 25g brown sugar,
1 tsp vanilla essence.
Preheat the oven to 170C mix the dry ingredients in a large bowl. In a small saucepan warm the oil, syrup/honey, sugar and vanilla extract.
Pour over the dry ingredients and mix well. Spread evenly over 2 baking sheets and bake for 18-22 minutes stirring halfway through. (Watch it doesn't brown too quickly.)
Remove from the oven and cool. Put into large jars/kilner jars.

Go to town on the presentation of your foodie gift using glass jars or cellophane bags tied with ribbons and of course Christmas tag.

HAPPY FESTIVE COOKING.



BLUNSDON FOOTBALL CLUB

Blunsdon are 5th out of 11 in the Swindon & District Premier League

Recent Results: Coleview– drew (away) 2-2 & won (home) 2-0

Blunsdon FC 2025 Wordsearch Horizontal & vertical and some reversed- **Answers on page 21**

1. This Kai shares his name with the highest wicket taking England bowler
2. Snooker ball of four points in value
3. Tucker in Australia
4. Fashion capital of Italy
5. When the snow lay round about, deep and ? and even
6. This city's football ground straddles the English, Welsh Border
7. Marries the bride
8. Twice Wimbledon Mens Champion
9. England's Flower
10. Surname of Bradley, Denise, Courtney and Ruby
11. 1970s impressionist called Mike
12. Youngs Ones and Bottom actor, Ade
13. Edson Arantes do Nascimento did it first

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Upcoming fixtures, Kick Off 2 p.m. Saturday, unless stated

| Date | Opponent | Venue |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 6th December | Cricklade Town | Cricklade Leisure Centre |
| 13th December | Cricklade Town | Sutton Park |
| 20th December | Swindon Rovers | South Marston Rec |
| 10th January | Shield & Dagger | Sutton Park |
| 17 th January | FC Abbey Meads | Moredon |
| 31 st January | Poulton | Englands Sports Ground, Poulton |

Merry Christmas and have a Happy 2026 from all at Blunsdon FC



OK....I'm coming in with some festive reads this month; if have you stepped in already; welcome! If not, put me down for a couple of days/weeks and come back when you are ready!

I'm easing in with a Copenhagen Snowmance by Pernille Hughes because whilst it does occur around Christmas it doesn't centre around it. I loved the travel element and reading about the Tivoli lights felt all kinds of warm and wonderful...and then I got to the food and drink; you will want to picnic by the fire with pastries and glogg. Anna and Jamie are thrown together when their plans are waylaid and they definitely make the most of it! Anna comes from a place of hurt, but day by day she learns that at least some of what she thought wasn't quite right; and she has Jamie to show her how they could look not just different but better. For the pairing, I'm going with the Rosé Mulled Wine from Marks and Spencer. It's a nod to what we know and love but with a twist...just perfect for Anna. It has the same warming smell but a slightly sweeter taste; it's winter berries instead of winter herbs; I wonder which will be more popular?

When you are ready to fully embrace the Christmas spirit, All Together for Christmas is this year's festive story from Sarah Morgan. We are treated to a full family Christmas from three points of view, twin sisters and their brothers new addition; there's love, celebrations, festive feels, all the food, all the spirit that Hayley would love to see as her very first real family Christmas; is it just like the movies or are there things going on behind the scenes? I loved the combination of two very different twins and the more we learned about them it was clear to see that actually; their similarities and differences are both reasons for celebrations. For this reason, I've gone with another classic with a twist; the Spiced Cranberry Bucks Fizz; it's premixed so you can open, pour and enjoy....or make it extra special; I added a cherry brandy liqueur and some cinnamon sticks for a warming glow but with celebratory bubbles. Perfect for a toast whatever your Christmas looks like.

For something completely different, look out for the new Alex Pine, Cold Blooded Killer; the latest release in the DI James Walker series. In a small village with more murders than Midsummer, DI James is once again planning a cosy family Christmas, but alas, there is a new murder for him to solve; this time the last dialled number on the deceased's phone is none other than his very own. Will he (or I?) figure out who, what and why before it really is too late? This whole series has me gripped and I can't wait to be unsuccessful in figuring it out again! Pair it with a Beaujolais for a cosy, full bodied warming afternoon of reading by the fire and be grateful that you live in Blunsdon where DI Walker is not required!

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas with books and wine galore; read and raise a glass to toast this wonderful time of the year. Reading by tree lights is something quite special just please remember to drink responsibly!



The Chatterbox Cobalt Blue

Wintertime is a challenge for small birds like us. We stay put, remaining for the duration in the UK and very often we live close to where we hatched. My name is Cobalt and I am a blue tit, born and bred in Blunsdon. I realise that I'm not your traditional winter bird; that accolade belongs to the robin – the feisty, territorial singers that grace your Christmas cards.

Us blue tits face each winter with equal measures of determination and trepidation. A little bird like me weighs around 11 grams. My appetite is voracious as I need to consume almost my whole bodyweight in food each day just to make it safely through each bitter night. The shorter days mean I've less time to search out food and lay down fat stores which help me when the temperatures plummet and frost glistens on the ground. Snowflakes may fill humans with wonder but believe me, for us blue tits it's a real battle for survival. Food is harder to find in winter, especially in the quantities we need and competition for a good source of food is high. You may see us squabbling noisily as we scramble for a perch at a bird feeder. We like nothing better than to find a reliable, frequently filled feeder offering fat balls, sunflower hearts, peanuts and mealworms.

At night we fluff up our feathers to prevent heat loss and cosy-up with other garden birds for warmth in a hedge or bush or even a birdbox should we be lucky enough to find one. Fresh water is also more difficult to find when sources become frozen so I am especially grateful if I find a nice, clean, frost-free water bath. My needs are quite simple and I hope I can get safely through this tough season so I can start thinking about a warm and cosy nest for me and my lady next February. I just need to get through the here and now, saving my energy when I can, and constantly searching every waking moment for something to eat.

Christmas Eve night, myself and 11 others huddle together in the beech hedge. 'Come closer, Cobalt,' Carol requests as she makes space on the branch. As the falling frost twinkles on her blue and yellow feathers, I think she looks magical. She is, by far, the prettiest bird in the hedge and sings the sweetest songs I've ever heard. One-by-one, the lights go out in Blunsdon and as silence surrounds us, snowflakes begin to fall as Carol and I instinctively move closer, sharing our warmth. Christmas Day dawns. We stretch, shake the snow from our tiny feathers and carefully watch as two humans in coats and boots make footprints in the pristine snow. Tap, tap, tap! A human nails a little wooden box on to the wall while the other watches on, smiling. There's a small, bird-sized hole in the front of the box. I nod in approval. 'And something for them to eat,' says the other human, hanging feeders filled with mealworms and suet pellets on the apple tree. 'Happy Christmas, birds!' shout the humans, as they stamp their boots free of snow and head back into the house. 'It IS a happy Christmas, indeed,' I think as I turn to Carol still snuggled up beside me.

Merry Christmas, people of Blunsdon, and may your festive season be full of warm cheer.

| |
|--|
| Answers for the Wordsearch: 1. Anderson. 2. Brown. 3. Bush. 4. Milan. 5. Crisp. 6. Chester. 7. Groom. 8. Murray. 9. Rose. 10. Walsh. 11. Yarwood. 12. Edmondson. 13. Pele. |
|--|



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