

BLUNSDON

VILLAGE MAGAZINE

April 2026



Photo by Debra Richardson



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We hope to see you over the Easter Break in our shop and cafe whether you are catching up with family over a coffee or picking up last minute treats/gifts for visitors. Why not have a go at our “Guess the Mini Eggs Competition” too!

Have your say about our Blunston Community Shop & Café



Now that we are 3 years in our new shop it is time to review our Retail Strategy to make sure we are catering for all customers. Did you know that Blunston is the most affluent area in the SN26 area? We will be launching our survey during April in the shop to collate feedback to feed into our Retail Strategy. If you are a shareholder you will receive the survey via email.

With the increase to National Minimum Wage our cafe prices and some shop pricing will be increasing slightly during April 2026. We are extremely grateful for our volunteer team, as without them our salary costs would be unsustainable - thank you!



Give a Little – Online Donations

Have you spotted our new online donation posters in the shop and café? Hover your phone camera over the QR code and it activates our Give a Little donation page. We appreciate any donations whether they are online or via the till in the shop/café – thank you

Dates for your diary - follow us on social media for up to date event news.

Tues 7th and Mon 13th April:

Books and Brews –
Children's Story Time in the
cafe at 9.30 am

Wed 1st and 15th April:

Golden Gatherings 3 pm

Thurs 28th May 7 pm:

Wine Tasting with Arkell's
Grape & Grain. Tickets are
available now in the shop for
£20 per person

Shop opening times are: Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs, Sat: 8 am - 5 pm, Fri 8 am - 6 pm Sunday: 8 am - 4 pm. Cafe closes 1 hour before the shop.



Parish Council Update – April 2026

As April arrives, spring is now fully taking hold across the parish. The lighter days, fresh growth, and renewed activity in our shared spaces bring a welcome sense of energy and momentum. It's a month where many of our plans begin to move forward, and the parish feels noticeably more alive after the winter months.

This edition shares updates on ongoing work, early progress on new initiatives, and the priorities guiding us through the spring season. Whether or not you're able to attend parish meetings, we want everyone to feel connected to the decisions shaping our community. Thank you to everyone who has already responded to confirm their interest in renewing their allotment agreement. Invoices will be issued in early April. If you do not wish to renew your plot this year, please get in touch so we can offer it to someone on the waiting list. For those continuing, April is an ideal time to start preparing beds and planning your planting as the growing season gets underway.

Planning Highlights

A parish council is a *statutory consultee*. This means Swindon Borough Council must notify the parish council about planning applications; the parish council does not have the power to make the final decision to approve or refuse them, that decision is made solely by Swindon Borough Council. The parish council's role is to provide local knowledge, raise concerns or objections, and represent the views of the community. Its comments are considered part of the decision-making process. Members of the public can view applications, read parish council comments, and submit their own feedback here: https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20268/planning_applications/380/view_or_comment_on_a_planning_application

Applications Received

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0268. Description: Proposed Rear Extension and raised ridge. Site Address: 95 Ermin Street, Blunsdon, Swindon SN26 8AA. BPC Decision: The PC have no reason to object.

Decisions Made by SBC

Application number: S/HOU/25/1662/WOODCL. Proposal: Amendment to roof construction of previously approved single storey side/rear/ extension REF: S/HOU/25/0099/WOODCL. Site Address: 93 Ermin Street, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8AA. SBC Decision: Approved
Application Number: S/25/0570/JP. Proposal: Erection of 2no detached self build dwellings (Class C3) and associated works. Site Address: Land At 26 Turnpike Road, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7EA. SBC Decision: Approved

Application Number: S/HOU/26/0115/JOPL. Proposal: Erection of part two storey and part single storey rear extension, front porch and bay windows with canopy, new roof tiles, conversion of garage to habitable and associated. Works. Site Address: 89 Ermin Street, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8AA. SBC Decision : Approved

The Rivan application was granted planning permission for the proposed development, subject to a detailed list of conditions. The Parish Council held an Extraordinary Meeting in February to consider residents' views on whether we should challenge the decision. Following that discussion, we commissioned professional legal advice to understand the strength of any potential claim, the likely costs, and the chances of achieving a successful outcome.

Although the legal advice so far indicates that our grounds for challenge are not strong and success is unlikely, the Parish Council has agreed to proceed to the next stage of investigation. While this update is disappointing, the advice clarified that Judicial Review is not a mechanism for re-evaluating the merits of a decision — it is solely concerned with identifying legal error. In this case, no such error seems to have been found, but we are nonetheless pursuing further legal exploration. You can view the full list of planning conditions on the Swindon Borough Council website.

Parish Council Annual Financial Information

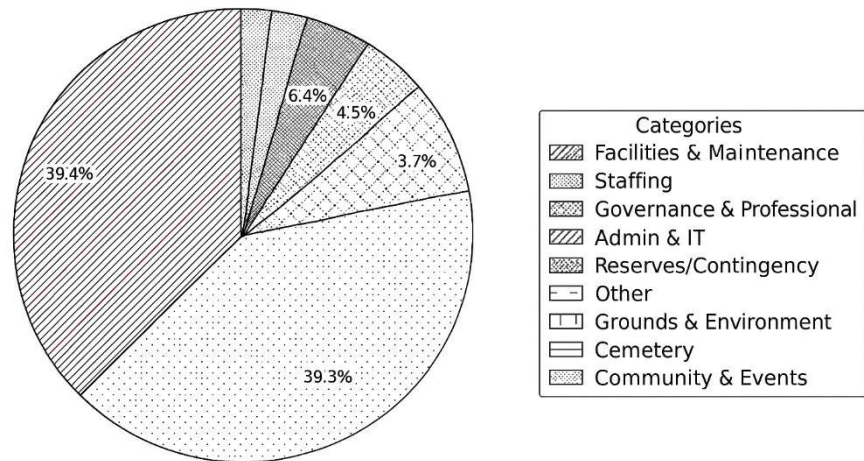
Each March, the Parish Council must publish a set of financial documents to show how public money is managed and to meet national audit requirements. These include:

- **Asset Register** — a list of everything the council owns, such as land, play equipment, benches, and other community assets. This ensures we keep track of what we are responsible for and that items are properly insured and maintained.
- **Approved Budget and Precept** — the budget sets out expected income and planned spending for the year ahead. From this, the council sets the *precept*, which is the portion of Council Tax that funds parish services. The pie chart shows how our 2026–27 budget is allocated across key areas.
- **Precept Request** — the formal notice sent to the borough council confirming the amount the parish needs to raise through Council Tax. This document shows how the precept figure is supported by the approved budget and forms part of the public audit trail.

Producing these documents is an important part of good governance. They show how decisions are made, how money is used, and how we plan for the future on behalf of residents. All of these documents are available to view on the Parish Council website.

Alongside these documents, the Parish Council also carries out regular internal control audits, overseen by one of our councillors. These checks ensure that our financial processes are robust, transparent, and compliant throughout the year. In addition, an independent accountant completes an annual external audit to provide further assurance that public funds are being managed correctly.

Spend by General Category (Budget 2026-27)



Speed watch Update

Speed Watch Data Table (Jan 2026 and early Feb 2026)

Date	Location	Vehicles counted	Exceeding limit	Maximum Speed mph	Speed Limit	Start	Finish	Area
09/02/2026	Broadbush	129	1	38	30	10:30	11:30	The Shrubbery
16/02/2026	High St	160	3	29	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand
17/02/2026	Sams Lane	15	4	29	20	08:00	08:30	Junction with High St
18/02/2026	Lady Lane	430	4	37	30	15:30	16:30	Cycle Track
23/02/2026	Ermin St	173	16	49	30	16:00	17:00	Minerva Heights
25/02/2026	Ermin St	207	2	46	30	15:50	16:50	Minerva Heights
26/02/2026	Turnpike	26	2	41	30	14:20	15:05	Opp. No 16
02/03/2026	Broadbush	398	5	42	30	10:00	11:00	The Shrubbery
03/03/2026	High St	175	31	36	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand
04/03/2024	Ermin St	198	18	47	30	15:55	16:55	Minerva Heights
05/03/2026	Turnpike	77	8	49	30	16:00	17:00	Opp. No 16

The monitoring shows generally good compliance across most locations, with only 3.7% of vehicles exceeding the limit. However, several areas stand out as concerns. Ermin Street, High Street, and Turnpike show repeated high speeds, including maximums of 49 mph in 30 mph zones and significant non-compliance in 20 mph areas. Other locations such as Broadbush and Lady Lane show low levels of speeding despite high traffic volumes. Overall, the data highlights a few consistent hotspots where targeted enforcement or further measures may be needed. If you have a little time to spare and would like to support this work, please get in touch at ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk.

Challenges and areas of focus

This month's update offers a few brief glimpses into current projects. Whether it's resolving infrastructure issues, reviewing policies, or pushing for improvements, we're committed to making progress and being open about the challenges we face along the way. We hope these snapshots give you a clearer sense of the effort and care that go into even the smallest decisions. As always, we welcome your questions, ideas, and feedback.

Car Charger: Several months ago, the electric car charger at the village shop was damaged. Since then, one of our councillors has worked persistently with Charge My Street to resolve the insurance claim and arrange a replacement. We're now a few steps further along in the process and hope to receive an installation completed in April.



Path repairs: Several path repairs have been reported around the village, not all of these are receiving the prompt attention that we would like, but we continue to report. If any residents would also like to report path issues, then this can be done directly to Swindon Borough Council, the QR code provides a link. (www.swindon.gov.uk)

Garages: Last year we raised concerns about the condition of several council-owned garages around Blunsdon, many of which had fallen into disrepair. Swindon Borough Council has since carried out an assessment and is now working through the list to contact tenants and arrange the necessary repairs. If you currently rent a council garage that needs attention, or if you no longer require it, please get in touch with SBC at garages@swindon.gov.uk so they can update their records and plan any required work.

MUGA: We are currently reviewing options for a new access-control system for the MUGA. The aim is to allow people who have booked the facility to unlock it themselves, without needing a caretaker on site. We hope to have this in place over the next few months. With the warmer weather on the way, it would also be great to see more summer sports making use of the space. The tennis courts, in particular, would be ideal for a regular group or team to use.

Back Lane: Concerns have been raised on the road damage in Back Lane due to heavy lorries turning into Blunsdon Sewage Farm, we have reported this to SBC.

Grounds maintenance: With April marking the start of the growing season, our grounds maintenance schedule will be underway. Regular grass cutting, strimming, and general upkeep will begin across the village, including play areas, open spaces, and verges, all in line with the agreed areas of our maintenance contract. As the weather warms, this routine work helps keep shared areas tidy, safe, and enjoyable for everyone.

Meet Your Councillor / Staff Member

Each month, we'll be introducing you to the people working behind the scenes at Blunsdon Parish Council.

Role on the Parish Council:

Russell joined the Parish Council in December 2025 in a part time caretaker role. This job can be wide ranging and one day is never the same as the next. His focus is on keeping the village facilities in a safe and well maintained condition.

What Russell gets involved with:

Russell spent over 30 years in Facilities Management and is familiar with the management of buildings and grounds from both a practical and documentation perspective. Having spent many years in the "office", on retirement, he sought something more practical and outdoors, to keep him active and connected to people.

His role is varied and some degree of flexibility is required. He is often involved with the following.

- Opening and Closing Village facilities
- Minor repairs and poster replacement
- Compliance inspections of our sites
- General sweeping and tidying
- Advising on health and safety matters, where his previous experience is welcomed

His connection and what he enjoys about the village:

Russell has lived in Stratton St Margaret for many years and so, is only a stone's throw away from the village. Having worked here now for three months, he is enjoying the beauty and tranquility of the surroundings and the spirit and friendly nature of the team he is working with. As time goes by, he looks forward to meeting and chatting to village residents for just general conversation or any improvements or ideas they might suggest.

A few words about Russell:

Aside from his work career, Russell has always had a keen interest in sporting activity. He is heartened by the different and extra pastimes and activities that are booked out in the Village Hall and will probably take a keener interest in the football and cricket teams, now that he has some duties around Sutton Park pavilion. He also thinks the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is a great recent addition and is impressed with how well used and popular it has become.

Parish Council Elections – Could You Be Our Next Councillor?

Parish elections are just around the corner, and this year Blunsdon has three vacancies on the Parish Council. It's a fantastic opportunity for residents who care about our village to get involved, bring fresh ideas, and help shape the future of our community. If you're considering standing for election, the deadline for new applications is 9 April. No previous council experience is needed — just enthusiasm, a willingness to learn, and a desire to make a positive difference. We'd love to welcome some **new faces** onto the team. If you have any questions, please contact ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk

Thank You to the Rapid Relief Team for Supporting Blunsdon

Many residents will have seen the Rapid Relief Team (RRT) out and about recently, helping to keep our village looking its best. We'd like to extend a warm thank you to their volunteers for the fantastic litter-picking effort from Blunsdon Hill to Turnpike. Their hard work has made a real difference to the appearance of our local area.

For anyone unfamiliar with the organisation, the Rapid Relief Team is a volunteer-led charity founded by members of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church. RRT provides practical support in communities across the UK and internationally, offering help during emergencies, community events, and local improvement projects — including the kind of environmental work we've recently benefited from here in Blunsdon.

Dates for Your Diary

Parish Council Meetings – The next two meetings for the Parish Council will be on:
 April's Full Council meeting to be held Tuesday 7th April at 7.30pm
 April's Finance meeting to be held on Monday 20th April at 7.30pm

If you want to come along, please let us know. Details are on the Parish Council notice boards, Website and FB page. **Contact: Ian Jankinson – ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk – 07702 684281**

April 11th: Ward Surgery Meeting at The Village Shop (11:30am) If you haven't been before and would like an informal update on what's happening locally, you're welcome to drop in to the ward councillor meeting at the shop. It's an easy way to catch up on current issues and speak to councillors face-to-face.

Easter this year falls on Sunday 5 April 2026, with Good Friday on 3 April and Easter Monday on 6 April.

Easter has become a broad seasonal celebration of spring, lighter days, and community time, marked by school holidays, family gatherings, and local events. Many traditions—like egg hunts, spring crafts, and shared meals—reflect themes of renewal and new beginnings, rather than religious observance alone. Easter shifts annually because it's set according to the first full moon after the spring equinox, which means it can fall anywhere from late March to late April. This is why some years feel early and others much later. St Leonard's Church usually hosts a range of seasonal community activities during this period—family-friendly events, reflective moments, and spring gatherings—so it's worth keeping an eye on their notices and updates as the holiday approaches.

Did You Know?

A striking “lost Blunsdon” fact is the story of Blunsdon Abbey, once one of the area's most prominent country houses. The grand building was destroyed by fire in the early 1900s, leaving only fragments of its structure behind. Today its surviving ruins sit quietly off Tadpole Lane, a ghost of a much larger estate that shaped the landscape long before modern housing developments grew around it.

Prospect Hospice

Prospect Hospice launches 18th annual Starlight Walk

Prospect Hospice is delighted to announce the launch of its annual Starlight Walk.

On Saturday 27 June, the community is invited to come together for a special evening of reflection, connection and celebration, all while raising vital funds for hospice care. With the choice of a 10km or 15km route, participants will be guided by twinkling lights and glowing lanterns.

“We're so excited to be launching our 18th Annual Starlight Walk! It's always such an incredible event, as people from our community come together to celebrate life, remember loved ones and support local families. We really hope that even more people will join us this year, as we light up the night for hospice care.” – Sarah, Community and Events Fundraiser at Prospect Hospice

Early bird tickets are now available for just £15 until the 31 March, and can be purchased online at prospect-hospice.net/starlight.

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Outside Catering



**Mobile fish & chip van will be at Blunston,
Blunt Rise from 5pm
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St Leonard's Church
Blunsdon
Connecting with God, each other
and our community

From the Rector's Pen.....

April is a strange month, it falls in the middle of Spring, but it has changed its place many times. Before the introduction of the Julian Calendar by Julius Caesar in 46BC which fixed its current position, prior to that the months and dates would move around depending on the whims of Pontifex Maximus and the college of Pontiffs.

April the 13th it is National Scrabble Day, and the 14th is National Moment of Laughter Day. Americans celebrate National Librarian Day on the 16th and in Holland they celebrate Bloemencorso Bollenstreek, a week long celebration involving decorating floats with massive numbers of flowers to mark the end of World War II.

Here in the UK Easter will pass unremarked by most, except by people receiving chocolate eggs and by Christians gathering inside and outside of Church buildings to celebrate the most important event in history. The repercussions of Christ's resurrection from the dead continues to echo through the world even two thousand years on.

I intend to celebrate Christ rising from the day, very early on morning of Sunday 6th and continuing throughout the day, not with chocolate, eggs or flowers but by acknowledging that Christ is Lord of my life and the world and worshipping him.

God Bless

Rev Phil Goodey

NOTE WE WILL JUST MEET ON THE FIRST WEDNESDAY
DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

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*****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
Blunston
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!



Social Walking from Blunston Community Shop



Community Shop & Café

— BLUNSDON —

serving the community

**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

Golden Gatherings

Fancy a cuppa and chat?



Dates for April: Wednesday 1st & 15th from 3pm

Blunston Community Café

A warm welcome awaits you.

**Come along to meet fellow Blunston 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 goldengatheringsblunston@gmail.com**

Golden Gatherings update

As growth and colour begins to re-appear in our gardens and the sun's warmth begins to be felt again, so our bi-monthly gatherings continue to expand in numbers. Golden Gatherings have now existed for 6 months in our village and give older residents the opportunity to leave their homes, be transported to the Community Cafe and enjoy each other's company.

If you are someone or know someone who would like to get out more and socialise with other local residents over a cuppa & delicious cake, as well as have some fun together doing quizzes and playing table-top games, we encourage you come along and join in. Alternatively, for more details how to secure community transport to and from the Community Cafe, make contact by calling Hazel on 07974 150250 or via email goldengatheringsblunston@gmail.com. Wheelchair users can be accommodated too.



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



BLUNSDON WI

We meet in the large hall of Blunston Village Hall on the third Wednesday of the month.

Last month we had a fascinating talk by the very dapper Jim MacLeod on the history of the traditional Toastmaster. We were reminded of the final line to something new, something old, something borrowed something blue.... A silver sixpence in her shoe. A group of us went for lunch at the Star Bistro during Pie week which we highly recommend especially their special of lemon meringue pie.

There is also a very active book club (next book 1984 George Orwell) and film club (next film on Netflix The Six Triple Eight).

The next meeting on April 15th is about "the first celebrity Chef Alexis Soyer" by Ali Warren

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

BLUNSDON SURGERY Tel 01793 721254

Phone lines are open to book appointments from 8am Tues, Thurs and Frid and from 3pm on Mon and Weds. EMERGENCIES - Call NHS 111 (outside surgery hours)

Day	Doctor Times	Reception
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

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: Easter Wreath on Holdcroft Close front door

Your May Magazine will be delivered from: 24th April

Magazine issue	Deadline for items for inclusion
May	15th April

Community Messages

*******Blunsdon House Hotel - Firework Notification**

Occasionally we are asked to host firework displays, usually for wedding parties. We appreciate this may cause distress to some pets so would like to give you advance notification that fireworks will be set off on Saturday 11th April at approximately 8.30pm for 10 minutes. Please note this may be subject to slight variation on the evening.

Thank you for your understanding.

Blunsdon House Hotel

*******Lovely Black Cat - Appeal for Owner Query**

We have had medium/ large black coloured cat who is constantly in our garden in the High Street in the rain / snow/ wind etc. It's there when we leave for work and return.

Around a year ago we saw a similar cat with a collar on with the name " Salem" on it and believe it to be the same feline.

It's recently been coming through our cat flap; it's been cold and also believe it's eating our cat's food.

We would like to know if this animal has an owner or is a stray.

If you can help me with any information on this cat, please email me at jeremy.burdall@gmail.com



Rotary

Club of Swindon North & Thamesdown

Registered Charity No: 1023031

Website: rotaryswindonnorth.org.uk

Email: rotaryswindonnorth@gmail.com

We run a fundraising Swimathon on an annual basis. This year it's on Sunday 17 May, from 10am to 2pm, and as always, it's in the pool at the Highworth Recreation Centre, SN6 7DD. The way our Swimathon works is that small groups of friends and family are invited to enter as a team, then collect a load of sponsorship on themselves and swim in relay for an hour. It's completely free to enter.

Entrants can raise funds for their favourite charity

Phoenix Enterprises, a local charity which supports people suffering from mental health issues and learning disabilities, has been chosen by us as the main beneficiary but, actually, the Swimathon gives the teams the opportunity to raise some funds for a charity or organisation of their choice.

It's not a marathon or a race

It's a fun event for swimmers of all ages and any ability. There'll be no prizes for swimming the fastest or the most lengths. What it does provide is a means for people to raise money for a charity of their choice by getting lots of sponsorship.

But there will be prizes for collecting the most sponsorship

Each team member should collect as much sponsorship as they can for their team. We will give Amazon Vouchers to the three swimmers who collect the most.

The Mayor of Swindon, Councillor Fay Howard, is coming this year and she will present every entrant with a medal and a certificate of achievement.

Entry Forms and Sponsor Forms can be downloaded from the Swimathon 2026 page on the Club's website. Entries can be submitted online and sponsorship can be collected online too. Visit www.rotaryswindonnorth.org.uk

The Rotary Club of Swindon North and Thamesdown welcomes enquiries from people who would like to know more about membership of Rotary. Send an email to: rotaryswindonnorth@gmail.com



A Recipe from CookFoodFan

Easter Tradition Pudding

I was discussing with my daughter the flavours of hot cross buns for sale in the shops, including 'Extremely Cheesy'. I wonder who dreams them up. Definitely not for me, I'm very happy with the traditional fruit ones, although I am addicted to mini hot cross buns.

If you have bought too many hot cross buns or managed to pick up some reduced price ones why not have a go at making a take on a bread and butter pudding but using hot cross buns. Delicious with ice cream, cream or as my husband always has to have, custard.

Hot Cross Bun Bread and Butter Pudding

6 hot cross buns	3 large eggs
150ml milk	150ml double cream
2 tsp vanilla essence	4 tbsp caster sugar
60g unsalted butter	

Optional: mini eggs or 70% dark chocolate chopped or leftover easter eggs (haha!)

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/gas 4.
2. Crack the eggs into a large bowl, add the milk, cream, vanilla extract and 2 tbsp sugar, then whisk until smooth.
3. Grease a 24cm oven-proof dish.
4. Slice each hot cross bun into 3 rounds and butter on one side. Dip into the custard mix and layer into the bowl, filling in any gaps. Sprinkling in the chocolate between each layer. If you slice horizontally keep the cross slices for the top of the pudding.
5. Pour over the remaining custard mix, sprinkle the remaining chocolate and sugar, leave to soak for at least 10mins.
6. Bake for 25 mins, or until set. Allow the pudding to rest for 10mins before serving.

Tips: this can be made and left a few hours/overnight in the fridge until ready to bake. Also delicious cold.

I have also made a version of this pudding using marzipan cubes, or add a grating of nutmeg on top.

ENJOY



BLUNSDON FOOTBALL CLUB

Blunston are 6th out of 10 in the Swindon & District Premier League

Recent Results

Abbey Meads	Drew 1 – 1
Marlborough Town	Won 3 – 1
Bassett Bulldogs	Won 2 - 0

Improved form has seen Blunston jump up a place in the league with a cracking win in the murky weather at Marlborough thanks to a brace of goals from **Lee Toomey** and a stunning strike from **Ryan Thomas**. This was followed by a solid home win in the spring sunshine against the side that beat us in last year's cup final, Bassett Bulldogs, with goals from **Harry Porlock** and **Joshua Kaliroy**.

As the season draws to a close, hopefully Blunny have been victorious in the cup semi-final against Chiseldon, which could spell another Cup Final appearance at the Wembley of East Swindon, The Webbwood Stadium, Supermarine.

Upcoming fixtures, Kick Off 2.30 p.m. Saturday, unless stated

Date	Opponent	Venue
28th March	Old Town Athletic	Commonweal School
4 th April	Cricklade Town	Cricklade Leisure Centre
11 th April	Poulton	Englands Sports Ground
18 th April	Cricklade Town	Sutton Park

Come and support the Amber & Black at The Theatre of Trees & beyond

Heart in Hand Saturday 4th April

Join us as we celebrate five great years at the Heart in Hand with a family fun day party for everyone to enjoy.

The celebrations will feature live music from bands 'Busy Fools' (3pm till 5pm) and 'Burn The Midnight Oil' (6pm till 8pm). There will also be face painting, an Easter Bonnet competition for the children, garden games, tasty food and sweet treats, with plenty more fun throughout the day.

Come along and celebrate with us – we would love to see you there.

The Rule Family



Spring has sprung and it is glorious!

I'm flipping the narrative for this month as there has been an exciting launch in the Blunsdon Community Shop; you can now buy Reading with Wine glasses! They are currently on a special launch offer for 2 for £15; the perfect way to spend these lighter evenings.

Whilst you are there, also check out the range of wines from local brewery Arkells. All bases are covered from red, white and rosé to Sparkling and Spirits; it's a one stop shop and always a positive to support the local community. My recommendations are the Argentinian Malbec; featured on my page for Mother's Day. It's easily recognisable from its Messi logo on the label; another of life's legendary number 10's; easy pairings would be autobiographies from Lionel Messi, Jonny Wilkinson, Ella Toone or you could go political with previous prime ministers from behind that famous black door. If you prefer a fictional escape, match the wine with a story that is well rounded. The flavours of plum, blackberry, black cherry with a touch of sweet cocoa and vanilla lend itself to a cosy read but potentially with high stakes. I recommend Alexandra Potter's *One Good Thing*, a story about life gone wrong but finding the small wins to lead back to happiness. Liv moves from London to a new village and finds herself with a most unlikely collection of new friends from 6 year old Noah to elderly Stanley; it's a story that finds the joy in daily life but also deals with the intensity of real life, it's got highs and lows but ends with a lovely well rounded finish; just like the Malbec.

My second recommendation is the Domaine La Colombette, a Demi Muid Grenache rosé and a gorgeous pink colour that is absolute perfection for sunny drinks in the garden. It's a French pale rosé, from Beziers. Located on the edge of the river Libron, the flavours of the coast come through with vibrancy. It's fresh, fruity and full of personality, paired with a flirty summer romance such *I'm Still Standing* from Collette Coleman or *Love Me Do* from Lindsey Kelk or any one of the fabulous books from fellow wino, Helen McGinn. Get the girls together, sit in the sunshine and discuss *The Tenko Club* by Elizabeth Noble. Four friends met by chance at university and we meet them years later when they have been through weddings, divorces, children and loss together but never breaking the pact that friendships come first, even when tested. As all of the characters are so different the story took an array of different directions, from London to New York and everything in between.

My final recommendation is the Viognier Chardonnay blend and for this I recommend something with a clear dual perspective. Combining two strong grapes could have a different outcome but, in this instance, pairing these in a blend has elevated both grapes and the result is a fresh tasting wine with depth. I find that books with dual perspectives also give the same vibe. You understand so much more about the characters looking at them from their own, and someone's else's perspective, you could go for *Someone Else's Shoes* or *The Thursday Murder Club* or *After the Fire* by G.D Wright. One man runs into a burning house and saves a baby; he's automatically hailed as a hero. However, as the story goes on we find a whole different side to his character, a dark side that would definitely not qualify him as a hero, in fact the exact opposite. You will find yourself questioning whether you on his side or whether his past is too much to get over... Buy the glasses, explore the wine range and let me know what stories you discover!

Reading with Wine

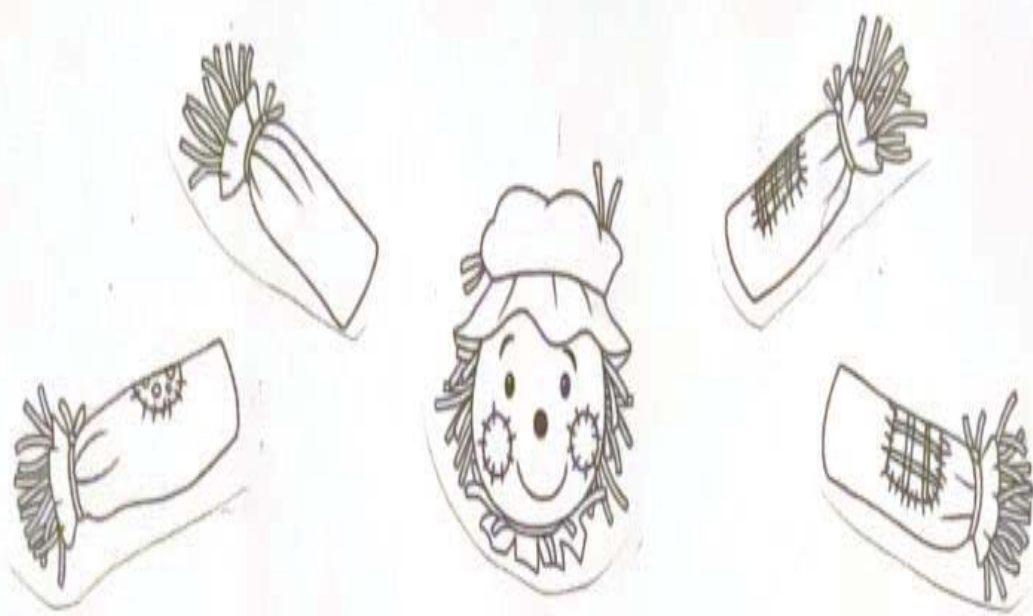
The Chatterbox – In Need of Urgent Care

Quite recently I had the need for out-of-hours medical care and, although it was an ‘interesting’ experience, I was incredibly thankful for the service and the people who were there to give it. After calling 111 and being phoned back within 10 minutes, I was told to go to the Great Western Hospital where they’d be expecting me. It was straightforward and reassuring so far. Inside Urgent Care, however, it looked more like the departure lounge of an airport experiencing significant flight delays than a hospital department. I’d describe it as ‘heaving’, although that might be the normal amount of people for all I know! There were large groups of people that looked as though they were waiting to go on a family holiday. There were some individuals taking up three seats so they could lie down. Some were dressed in pyjamas while others looked as though they’d come straight from a nightclub. There were patients who looked frail and sick and young children who were getting bored and fractious while parents tried their best to keep them out of mischief. Over the course of the night there were also a lot of police present in various capacities.

I took my trusty green, plastic bowl, fondly referred to in our household as ‘the sick bowl’ which I’d felt a bit embarrassed about taking with me. However, as I watched other patients come and join the growing crowd, I saw plenty had brought their own receptacles – a washing-up bowl, something that looked like a vase and numerous Tupperware containers. A person came in with a severe nosebleed and they’d brought a small, glass dessert dish. Desperate times, desperate measures!

Roughly speaking, the patients seemed to fall into two categories; those who were waiting patiently and those who weren’t. Nobody wants to wait when they feel unwell, but the fact is sometimes there’s no alternative. The display screen had shown the average wait was three and a half hours but this increased several times until it said six and a half hours. Some made multiple visits to the reception to ask how much longer they’d have to wait but, of course, nobody could answer that. With just two doctors seeing patients, and each patient deserving the same care and attention, it seemed some found the wait difficult to accept. One person left at 1am declaring that they couldn’t wait any longer as they had to be up for work at 6am, which did make me think about how the service is used. I eventually left eleven hours later.

As we usually sleep through the night, thoughts of Accident and Emergency or Urgent Care departments rarely enter our minds until we’re in need of them. Thankfully, when we do, the doors are open, the lights are on and there are staff there to see us. By the time I left, I’d been seen by a doctor who was 10 hours into her 12-hour shift and her manner was nothing but kind and caring. I’d had blood tests, an urgent scan, medication and a plan going forward. I couldn’t have been more grateful. We may complain and feel dissatisfied with our NHS from time to time and I’m not disagreeing that sometimes there are serious failings and understandable grievances but, on this occasion, in the dead of night when I was in pain and needing help, I couldn’t fault the care I received. The sick bowl is back in the cupboard, hopefully for a long time! Wishing you a healthy, happy month of April.



Do you wanna build a scarecrow? Come on join Blunsdon's trail

The theme is the letter T

Trail date is the weekend of 27-28th June

We are looking for your help by making a scarecrow to show outside your house to make this an enjoyable and successful event.

For more information contact Lucy on 01793 705040 or csturgess@btinternet.com

Proceeds from the scarecrow trail will go to St Leonard's church and Prospect Hospice

Save the date!

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Music at St
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Saturday 25th July

Support your local church - we're raising funds to
create a comfortable space for the community to enjoy!

More details next month



Last week, Wiltshire again demonstrated the strength of a united South West approach to tackling organised crime. Operation Scorpion brought together all five regional police forces, Police and Crime Commissioners, SWROCU and British Transport Police in a coordinated effort to disrupt drug supply and protect vulnerable people from exploitation. With Wiltshire Police leading this phase, the focus was on Class A drug supply and its clear links to missing children and child criminal exploitation.

Across Wiltshire, officers arrested 26 individuals, safeguarded 24 people and visited 52 cuckooed addresses, removing around £380,000 worth of drugs and more than £22,000 in cash from criminal networks. These results are more than enforcement statistics - each reflects harm prevented, a vulnerable person supported, or an organised crime group disrupted.

I was pleased to welcome Policing Minister Sarah Jones MP to Trowbridge during the week of action, where she saw firsthand the professionalism of Wiltshire Police as they executed a warrant linked to County Lines. As I said at the time, this phase of Operation Scorpion shows the real impact of a coordinated South West approach. Wiltshire's leadership has delivered strong results and vital safeguarding.

The week also highlighted why locally rooted forces matter. Wiltshire Police acted quickly and precisely because of the strong relationships it holds with communities and partner agencies. Enforcement was only one part of the work. Officers visited schools across the county, speaking to nearly a thousand young people about exploitation and how to seek help. This early intervention plays a crucial role in preventing criminal networks from gaining a foothold in young people's lives. Alongside this, teams worked with hotels, police cadets and local services to raise awareness of exploitation and identify those at risk.

Protecting vulnerable people remains at the heart of this work. Organised crime groups rely on fear, silence and manipulation. By increasing awareness and supporting early reporting, we make Wiltshire a harder place for them to operate. Operation Scorpion shows again that our region is strongest when it stands together, and we will continue working to keep our communities safe.

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