

JANUARY 2026

BENTWORTH, LASHAM, AND SHALDEN PARISH MAGAZINE

**St. Mary's Bentworth; St. Mary's Lasham;
St. Peter and St. Paul Shalden**

Dear Friends

Jane and I have been living in Alton for just over five years, and we feel so at home here. The town and our church community have made us very welcome. We also brought with us a lifetime of experience which we offer. One key part of our lives is our membership of the Community of Aidan and Hilda.

This is one of the new monastic communities, taking inspiration from and being inspired by the Christians who shared God's love in our land in the fifth and sixth centuries. This was a time when there was great turmoil. Christendom as then understood seemed to be under threat. Our forebears adapted the timeless faith to the needs of their own generation.

The Community of Aidan and Hilda are a dispersed community of people, lay and ordained, married and single, living in different places and associated with our local churches. We are linked by a common understanding based on the three monastic virtues of Simplicity, Purity and Obedience. Each of us seeks to live by a Way of Life, paying attention to each of the following Waymarks for the journey of life:

1. Lifelong Learning – reading the bible and the saints of the past
2. Spiritual Journey – meeting with a Soul Friend, retreats, pilgrimage
3. Rhythm of Prayer, Work and Recreation
4. Praying for God's Will in God's World
5. Simplicity of Life-Style
6. Care for Creation
7. Healing Fragmented People and Communities
8. Openness to God's Spirit
9. Unity
10. Mission

Many churches and organisations do some of these well, but I was excited to meet a group of people seeking to follow Christ, who thought about all of these factors. The Community does not replace the church, but helps me as a church member to better follow Jesus.

At the Benefice of the Resurrection there is so much going on that connects with all of these Waymarks for the journey. We worship, we pray, we serve practically, we care for creation, we engage in mission as individuals and corporately through Alpha.

The turn of the year is often a time of taking stock and new resolutions. Forming a Way of Life is not a quick fix; it is not "instant spray discipleship". Rather, we take little steps to bring our lives into line with God. Very often we are building on our existing

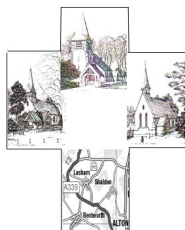
spiritual walk and making small adjustments.

May you be blessed and be a blessing in all of your life throughout the coming year!

With every blessing

Revd Bruce Nicole

<https://aidanandhilda.org.uk/>



THE VILLAGER

the editor

Please send copy for the **February** Magazine to
tinailsley1@gmail.com or your Village Correspondent
by 9am on Wednesday 14th January 2026 .

So much already happening in the New Year, do look through the event posters starting on page 24. And we have an advertiser come back to us – Louie's Yoga. Happy New Year to all.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER

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to 31 Christmas Lego Trail

2

Holybourne Church open 9 -4pm P 35

JANUARY 2026

3	Curtis Museum: Curtis Craft Club-seasonal crafts between 11am – 3pm	Page 14
5	Bentworth Muck In Coffee Morning restarts 10.30 – 11.30am	
6	Alton Organ Society Recital by Joshua Simoes St Lawrence 8pm	Page 15
7	Roedowns WI: Line Dancing Wiltshire Room Village Hall 7.30pm	Page 17
9	Beech Screen by the Green: <i>Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale</i>	Page 26
10	Alton Farmers' Market High Street 10 – 2pm	
13	ASA: Talk by Anthony Russell: <i>The Virgins of the National Gallery</i>	Page 16
14	Villager deadline for the February magazine by 9am please to Tina Ilsley	
16	Bentworth Film Night: <i>Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale</i> Jubilee Hall 7.30pm	P 27
17-14 Feb	Library: Expressive Watercolours 10am – 12pm	Page 28
17-14 Feb	Library: Art For Wellbeing 2 - 4pm	Page 30
17	Deer Management St Mary's Church Lasham 6.30pm	Page 29
19-16 Feb	Library: Creating a Still Life in Watercolour 10am – 12 noon	Page 30
20-17 Feb	Library: Beginners Origami 1 – 3pm	Page 32
23-20 Feb	Library: Step into Sculpture 10am -12 noon	Page 33
24	Beech Screen by the Green: National Theatre Live: Hamlet	Page 34
29	Fresh Start Course begins Alton Maltings 10.30am – 12 noon	Page 35

FEBRUARY

2	Lasham Coffee Morning	
3	Medstead Gardeners Club: Christian Dupont <i>Water in the Garden</i> 7pm	
3	Bentworth Parish Council Meeting Jubilee Hall	
4	Roedowns WI: Aromatherapy Wiltshire Room Village Hall 7.30pm	Page 17
7	Library: Emergency First Aid course 9.45am – 4.45pm	Page 36

BENTWORTH

BENTWORTH CARE GROUP

Jackie Crawford

We wish all our 'clients' a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

The members on duty for medical appointments in January are:

Susie Greenwood 07971 223 976; Robert Good 07714 246 735;

Norah Pepper 07539 356 265.

We are also happy to do shopping and pick up prescriptions for those unable to do so themselves.

THE MUCK IN COFFEE MORNING

Happy New Year! But as you will have this magazine before Christmas, just a reminder that there will be no Muck in on December 29th. So we hope for everyone to come on January 5th to celebrate the New Year, and tell all your Christmas stories! 10.30 – 11.30am in Parsonage Farm barn. £1 for coffee / tea and biscuits (sometimes cake!) and good company.



BENTWORTH CHURCH SERVICE OF LIGHT

Cathy Dumelow

St Mary's Church, Bentworth was plunged into darkness on Sunday 30 November as we celebrated Advent Sunday with a candlelit Service of Light. Rev Bruce Nicole led us through the lighting ceremony as he reminded us that Advent prepares us for the coming of the Light at Christmas.



With a congregation of 40 from Bentworth, Lasham, Shalden, Medstead and Alton we joyfully sang the glorious Advent hymns including *Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending* and *Love Divine*, accompanied by our talented organist, Patrick Busby. While Wendy Busby was on hand to lead the singing with her beautiful soprano voice.

Ali Tollemache and her team decorated the church with great artistry and thanks also go to all those involved in the staging of the service.

It was a moving and joyous beginning to this special season.



Details of
all our
services
can be
found in
The Villager

Friday 16th January – Jubilee Hall

We are pleased to announce the screening of "**Downton Abbey – The Grand Finale**" on Friday, 16th January. When Lady Mary finds herself in a public scandal and the family faces financial trouble, the household grapples with the threat of social disgrace. The Crawleys must embrace change with the next generation leading Downton Abbey into the future.

"With a profound embrace of the changing times and clever winks at Downton devotees, writer Julian Fellowes and director Simon Curtis deliver a heart-swelling conclusion." "The Grand Finale" is thoroughly fun, stunning to look at and aptly emotional as the iconic brand's swan song."

"Just like the previous film, this is a solid send-off for the whole Downton saga, with everyone — upstairs and downstairs — getting their moment to shine, leaving you with a tear in your eye and a warmth in your cockles." Empire

Perfect for a bit of escapism in January? Please join us to support your local film night, watch an excellent film, and catch up with friends!

Doors open at 7pm with the film showing at 7.30pm.

Tickets £5 on the door (Small Notes and change for entrance fees, drinks, and ice cream, very much appreciated). This is a social event open to all, please feel free to bring friends along too.

Small Notes and change for entrance, drinks, and ice cream, very much appreciated!

FUTURE DATE FOR YOUR DAIRY – we can announce that we will be screening "**I Swear**" on **Friday 13th March 2026** (further details to follow in the March edition of the villager)

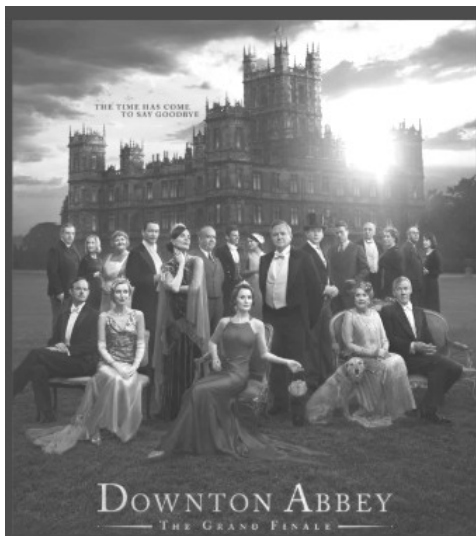
The true-life story of John Davidson. Diagnosed with Tourette's at 15, targeted as insane by his peers, he struggled with a condition few had witnessed. Campaigning for Tourette's as an adult, he was awarded an MBE by the Queen in 2019.

This film has great reviews

"A terrifically warm, generous film." The Guardian

"It is a drama with three-dimensional people, facing three-dimensional problems and dealing with them... I absolutely loved it." Mark Kermode

"Just lovely. Tourette syndrome has not been afforded its cinematic dues, but what an affable, funny character to explore it with in John Davidson -- and what a performance from Robert Aramayo." Empire



WELCOME TO BENTWORTH

Jackie Crawford

We welcome Robert, Harriet, their daughter Isabel, and Bella their friendly dog to our lovely village. They moved from Bentley into High View opposite The Sun (how convenient!) a few weeks ago and we hope to see them joining in our village activities and of course supporting our wonderful pub! I forgot the cat but sorry I didn't get its name!

BENTWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Louisa Thomson
Bentworth Parish Clerk

The next Council Meeting Dates 2026

January Meeting to be scheduled, if required.*
February 3rd

* * *

LASHAM

LASHAM CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Anthea Del Mar



Father Christmas made an early appearance in Lasham for our Christmas bazaar. He sat in a shed to meet the children, and then popped out to draw the raffle.

It was a very happy occasion, thanks to Sarah and Kevin Miskella, who very kindly opened up their house and garden to provide a wonderful and central venue. It was a complete miracle (well, we were raising funds for the re-ordering of the church) that, in spite of wind and rain on both Saturday and Monday, Sunday 30th November brought sunshine and blue skies.

The kitchen brigade, led by Antonia and a team of elves, produced warming drinks, including mulled wine, and all sorts of goodies - particular mention to Sandra for some sensational sausage rolls.

The McClandish/Goor (plenty of elves there) had the tombola wheel spinning, and the raffle top slot, a very generous case of Berry Bros red wine, was won by the we-never-win-a-affle Chesterfields.

Cate and Ken had a loaded produce table which seemed to vanish remarkably quickly. Father Christmas managed to get Catherine Grassi's cake - lucky lad. Cate and Ken reflected on the inexplicable way donations vary. Last year you couldn't move for green tomato chutney, while this year there was a wonderful selection of marmalade. Kevin's venison, sold straight from his game larder, was, deservedly, very popular.





Newcomer of the year was Lizzie Shaylor with her fabulous wool. By the end of the morning most people were wearing so-cosy lambs wool mittens.



Katrina and Alice kept the Christmas atmosphere up with decorations and wonderful handmade Christmas cards. And Caroline manned a stall selling her sister's very clever cushions and toys.





A huge thank you to Kevin and Sarah, to all the generous donors, to all those who came along to welcome in Christmas. The event raised close on £2,000 for the church - so much generosity.



LASHAM COFFEE MORNING The next will be on February 2nd.

There is no January coffee morning in Lasham.

* * *

SHALDEN

MICHAEL CAMPBELL. MBE DL.

Ian Champness

Memorial Service at Winchester Cathedral 17 November

Along with many residents from Shalden, representatives of HRH The Princess Royal, and HRH Prince Michael of Kent, Loraine and I joined over 800 other attendees at Michael's memorial service.

What a tribute and magnificent setting to commemorate and celebrate his life and so many achievements. Eulogies included one from one of his oldest school friends followed by a fellow ex-Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron: both regaled us with stories from his school days to his very forward thinking changes and tenure as Commodore. And then wonderful and moving family eulogies from his three children, Ali, Jamie and Laura, with readings from his grandchildren. An incredible service for a man who was loved and will be missed by so many.



St PETER & St PAUL GUILD OF MARTHA

Kirsty Ennever

January 2026

3 Jane Shirvell / Lin Baxter
10 Karen Saponaro / Lynne Hignett
17 Michele Rankin / Kirsty Ennever
24 Rozanne Wilson / Rosalind Ommanney
31 Debbie Todd / Silvia Blake

February

7 Jane Shirvell / Lin Baxter
14 Karen Saponaro / Lynne Hignett
21 Michele Rankin / Kirsty Ennever
28 Rozanne Wilson / Rosalind Ommanney

SHALDEN FETE THANK YOU DRINKS PARTY

Peter Rankin

It has been our tradition in recent years to hold an event in Christmastide to thank ~ 50 villager volunteers who make Shalden Village Garden Fete such a successful event. Looking back over the last 10 years (excluding Covid) the generosity of our visitors to the fetes from all over the Alton area and afar have helped us raise £41,220 to donate to 31 local good causes.

Our celebration this year was held in the village hall on Saturday 6th December where a glass or two and some delicious homemade nibbles were shared and a toast was made to this year's hosts, David & Louise Lancaster.



The Fete Committee with this year's hosts



Representatives of the Good Causes





The Fete Committee were thanked for organising a lovely event last summer and it's good to hear that they are already thinking about next year's fete.

Thank you Shalden

SHALDEN QUIZ NIGHT!

Helen Hilditch

The second Autumn quiz of 2025 was held on Friday the 21st of November, with another bumper turnout of forty-three people in seven teams. With much chatting and laughter, the village hall was abuzz, and the prize table held an array of alcoholic and chocolate goodies.

Everyone dug into their evening feasts and drinks as the picture round of Traditional & National Costumes was handed out to begin the night.

Four rounds of Art & Literature, General knowledge, Sport & Leisure, then finally Science & Nature, gave the teams plenty of scope to use everyone's specialist knowledge.

At half time, only four points separated the teams, with



The Bee Team and The Real Shaldenistas taking the lead, followed by Joysten Vasey in third.

After the final marking of rounds three and four, the picture round answers caused many groans and 'ahhh's'. In third place the Real Shaldenistas, in second The Bee Team and taking the winning slot Team Hamalay!



The October wining team of Crumble Corner came last in a shock defeat!

After the prizes were collected, the closing game Heads or Tails for the losing teams members ended with Wai-Man O'Connell taking home the consolation of a bottle of fizz and box of chocolates.

We raised a fantastic £122 for the Salvation Army Christmas Appeal, kindly made by the village hall.

The first quiz of 2026 will be on Friday the 20th of March, following the traditional and brilliant music Quiz in January and Tap Room on Friday 20th of February.

The more teams, the more prizes there are on offer!

Please contact Helen to book your table or if you would like to join a team;

T: 07947 881 464

E: helen_hilditch@hotmail.com

SHALDEN GARDEN CLUB

Ian Wigg

Dear fellow gardeners.

For the forthcoming season starting at 10.30 am on **7 March 2026**, I will be combining forces with Mark Ommanney and David Lancaster neither of whom, like myself, pretend to know much about gardening but, like me, are determined that our much loved club continues to thrive.

As a team we have a series of ideas and initiatives to make our meetings slightly different, livelier and more instructive. Weather permitting, we shall meet in three local gardens as well as in the village hall. We will have short talks on interesting, relevant topics together with the usual sale of plants.

There will be a competition for the largest vegetable to be revealed later (we will produce and distribute the baby plants, you supply the magic) and the early autumn lunch will be provided by a group of us and held on a date yet to be decided, that does not clash with the Harvest Supper weekend.

We are open to and welcome ideas from others so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Meanwhile, Happy New Year

Ian, Mark & David

* * *

CHARITIES



HAMPSHIRE MEDICAL FUND

The charity buying tomorrow's equipment today

Jo McGivern

**Supporting Local Hospitals,
Supporting Local Families**

We all hope we will never need serious medical treatment, but when we do, we want to know that our hospitals have the very best equipment and technology available. The Hampshire Medical Fund is a local charity dedicated to ensuring our local NHS hospitals have exactly that. It raises funds to purchase cutting-edge medical equipment for the hospitals in **Basingstoke, Winchester and Andover** — equipment that falls beyond what standard NHS budgets can cover, but which can make a life-changing difference to patients, helping to ensure that patients at our local hospitals receive world-class treatment close to home.

Each year, hospital staff put forward requests for equipment that would transform the way they diagnose or treat patients. The charity then creates an annual "Wish List" and funds raised go directly towards purchasing those specific items — meaning donations are turned into impact very quickly.

Over the last decade, the Hampshire Medical Fund has funded **more than 165 pieces of cutting-edge equipment worth over £5 million**, bringing faster diagnoses, less invasive treatments and better outcomes for local people of all ages.

This equipment doesn't just treat illness — it keeps families together, restores independence, and offers hope where there might otherwise be uncertainty. It also helps our local hospitals attract and retain the very best doctors and specialists, ensuring our community has access to outstanding care without needing to travel far afield

By supporting the Hampshire Medical Fund, you are supporting the hospitals that care for you, your neighbours, your family and future generations. It is a local charity making a local difference — and every contribution helps.

To learn more, get involved, or make a donation, visit

www.hampshireremedicalfund.org

COMMUNITY INFORMATION



Colin Aiken

New Year, New Lower Membership Fees, then it's time to join the u3a

Would you like to learn, laugh and live? Do you have spare time that you would like to fill? Would you like to meet and make new friends? Your local Alton u3a has over 75 different activity and interest groups to choose from such as, Art and Craft, Dance and Fitness, Games, History, Literature and Music. We also have social, cultural and weekend activities too. Full details are on our website at <https://alton.u3a.site.uk>.

Most of our activities take place at the Alton Community Centre, and we do have some outdoor activities such as cycling and walking. Our monthly talks and coffee mornings are open to all.

New members are always welcome, and January is a great time to join because our membership fees are reduced until the end of May. Depending on what you would like to do*, you can join from as little as £7 up to £38. You may join online via our website or by completing a membership application form that is available from the Alton Community Centre.

You may pick up a copy of our Annual Programme from the Alton Community Centre, Alton Library, the Allen Gallery and the Curtis Museum. If you would like to find out more about a particular group, then you can contact the Group Leader via our website. For general membership enquiries, please contact the Membership Secretary at alton.u3a.members@gmail.com.

*Subject to a space being available in the group.

* * *

EVENTS

THE CURTIS MUSEUM

Jill Line

OPENING TIMES Tuesday to Saturday 10am – 4.30pm 01420 82802

www.hampshireculture.org.uk/curtis-museum

Rediscovering the Allen Gallery

Alton's Allen Gallery is an intimate setting for one of the nation's most outstanding collections of ceramics. Since autumn 2022, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Hampshire Cultural Trust has been working to rediscover the Allen Gallery for the

people of Alton and the surrounding area, building partnerships with local organisations, hosting workshops, talks, films and undertaking auditing and research to tell the stories of the objects on display.



Packing up

*at the Allen Gallery -
several thousand items go
into store until the re-
opening.*



The Gallery closes at the end of 2025 for a major refurbishment and is expected to reopen in early 2027. When it returns, visitors will find revitalised galleries, a welcoming community space, and fresh ways to experience our nationally and internationally important ceramics collection.

During the closure, the community programme will continue to run from the nearby

CURTIS MUSEUM 2026

Upcoming events for January and February include:

Curtis Craft Club, Thursday 3 January 2026:

seasonal crafts at the Curtis Museum, drop in 11am - 3pm, £2 per child (run every school holiday, ask for a stamp card and get your 5th session free).

Stepping Stones Young People's Programme, Saturday 14 February - Saturday 21 March, 10.30 - 12.30.

Regular free Saturday workshop supporting wellbeing for young people aged 11 - 14. Spaces need to be booked in advance. Please visit the website for details - <https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/curtis-museum>

Sewing workshop for adults (age 16+) with local artist and maker Sachiko Mason, Saturday 21 February, 11am - 1pm. Stitch a beautiful toile de jouy style fabric bag, inspired by the Allen Gallery Collection. Book online at <https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/curtis-museum>

TALKS - Change of Venue

The Friends of the Curtis Museum and Allen Gallery have a full programme of talks during 2026.

Starting in February, (no talk in January), Friends talks will be held in **Room 7 of the Alton Community Centre, Amery Street, Alton GU34 1HN**. Alton Community Centre is located on one side of the car park in Amery Street (sat nav GU34 1HN). <https://www.altoncomcen.org.uk>, telephone number 01420 85057.

The first talk takes place on **Thursday 12th February**, when **Tony Cross** will speak about Aspects of Alton's History. Doors open at 7pm for 7.30 start.

Donations welcome from Guests.

Trails are always on hand in the Curtis - please ask at Reception for the latest.



ALTON ORGAN SOCIETY

Elsbeth Mackeggie Gurney

On December 2nd Peter Wright, formerly Organist & Director of Music at Southwark Cathedral delighted the audience with a varied programme including two huge bangers of the organ repertoire.

Before this Peter played Georg Muffat's "Toccata duodecima et ultima", a piece heavily influenced by Italian music being written at the same time as this composition – Muffat studied with Corelli. "Tierce en taille" by de Grigny followed, an improvisation on words from the Mass, in this case the Gloria, a lyrical, contemplative piece which contrasted well with the Toccata which preceded it.

J S Bach's glorious Prelude & Fugue in E minor (BWV 548) "The Wedge" is a monumental piece of virtuosic writing which requires extreme dexterity and musicality to play & these qualities were delivered in spades. This was followed by a charming Scherzo (suite Modale) by Flemish composer Flor Peeters, one of Peter Wright's teachers.

Elegy by Richard Popplewell followed. Richard, another of Peter's teachers & former Organ Scholar at Kings, Cambridge & Organist of St Michael's Cornhill wrote this piece in memory of Harold Darke, one of his predecessors. The piece began quietly & solemnly, building to a glorious climax before returning to a quiet ending.

The recital ended with the wonderful "Piece Heroique" by Cesar Franck – the title says it all & it was beautifully executed on the fantastic instrument at St Lawrence which throughout demonstrated the colours & tones required of it.

Peter offered as an encore "Aria", a lyrical & well known piece by Flor Peeters which, like the rest of the programme was much appreciated by the audience.

Date for your diaries:

January 6th – Joshua Simoes – organist & assistant Director of Music at His Majesty's Chapel Royal, Hampton Court. Joshua's programme ranges from Baroque music composed by Buxtehude & Bach to 20th century compositions by Messiaen and others.

Refreshments are available from 7.30pm & the recital starts at 8.00pm. Tickets cost £12;

We look forward to welcoming you on January 6th – a treat for New Year.



THE SCREEN BY THE GREEN

Joanna Curtis

at Beech Village Hall

Friday 9th January

Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale

7:30pm (Doors 7pm)

Bookings: beechvillage.org.uk/events

Saturday 24th January

National Theatre Live: Hamlet

2pm and 7pm (Doors 1:30pm and 6:30pm)

Bookings: beechvillage.org.uk/events

Downton's Grand Finale Comes to Beech

Say farewell to the Crawleys as Downton Abbey reaches its elegant conclusion at the Screen by the Green on Friday 9th January.

Set in 1930, scandal threatens Lady Mary while financial ruin looms over the estate. As stewardship passes to a new generation, Julian Fellowes delivers lavish costumes, spectacular balls and the heartfelt closure devoted fans deserve—all before WWII's shadow falls.

The perfect January escape: witness the end of an era in comfort and style.

Friday 9th January, 7:30pm | £7 advance, £8 door. Book: beechvillage.org.uk/events

Cabaret seating • Licensed bar • Free parking

Beech Village Hall, 1 Wellhouse Road, Beech, Alton GU34 4AQ

To Be or Not To Be... in Beech

Shakespeare's ultimate existential crisis comes to the Screen by the Green when National Theatre Live presents Hamlet on Saturday 24th January.

Olivier Award-winner Hiran Abeysekera stars in Robert Hastie's sharp, stylish and darkly funny contemporary reimagining. Four centuries on, the Prince of Denmark still has plenty to say.

Two chances to catch theatre's most famous question: matinee 2pm, evening 7pm.

Saturday 24th January | £14 advance, £16 door. Book: beechvillage.org.uk/events

Cabaret seating • Licensed bar • Free parking

Beech Village Hall, 1 Wellhouse Road, Beech, Alton GU34 4AQ

* * *

CLUBS

ALTON

ASA

Vanessa MacMahon

Forthcoming Lecture:

Tuesday 13th January 2026 Anthony Russell: *The Virgins of the National Gallery*



THE ARTS
SOCIETY

The National Gallery has an extraordinarily rich collection of images of the Virgin Mary, especially for a nation that formally broke the ties with the Church in Rome. It is sometimes argued that the presence of an omnipotent matriarch has always been important to this island's culture. This is an opportunity not only to enjoy these images for their great beauty but also to consider their varied intention and impact.

This lecture will be held at Wessex Arts Centre at Alton College commencing at 7:30pm (doors open 6:45pm)

MEDSTEAD

HAMPSHIRE FEDERATION OF WI – ROEDOWNS

Diana Constantine

Our December meeting was all about the festive season. We enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies while making our Christmas table centre pieces and door wreathes, with fresh greenery and pretty decorations. A productive evening and opportunity to sit and chat with each other.





We had a successful day at the Medstead Craft Fair where we had a stall selling festive themed craft items, cakes, jams, chutneys and fudge. All kindly crafted or made by our members.

We have participated again at the St Andrews Church Christmas tree festival.



The day after the tree was put up and decorated there was a storm but luckily it remained unscathed afterwards !

Forthcoming meetings

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 7th January | Line dancing |
| 4th February | Aromatherapy |
| 4th March | Easter themed evening |

Roedowns WI meet in the Wiltshire Room, Medstead Village Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 19.30hrs. Guest speakers, outings and good company. Tea/coffee, biscuits, raffle and gift voucher prize at each meeting. Visitors and new members are very welcome. Contact Secretary on roedownssec@hampshire.org.uk
Or President Jill Kerr 01420 564116.

MEDSTEAD GARDENERS CLUB

Caroline Daniels

'Gardening adds years to your life and life to your years' Unknown

It was the last meeting in December of the year and we held our AGM and Christmas social. There was a wonderful raffle and a festive quiz. David Kent is continuing as Chairperson for another year and most of the committee are staying on to run the club with meetings and great events in 2026! MGC decorated a Christmas Tree for St Andrews Tree Festival which looked very festive.



The first speaker of 2026 will be in February -Christian Dupont talking about 'Water in the Garden' The date for this is Tuesday 3rd February at Medstead Village Hall.

Doors open at 7pm.

Come along and join a new club and learn about the world of gardening.



MEDSTEAD GARDENERS CLUB

PROGRAMME 2026

www.medsteadgardenersclub.org

Meeting at Medstead Village Hall. Doors open 7.00pm ready for 7.30pm start

Membership February to December 2026 - £12pp

Guest £3pp (max 2 visits)

MONTH	DATE	EVENT
JAN		No meeting
FEB	Tuesday 3 rd	Water in the garden Christian Dupont
MAR	Tuesday 3 rd	Tree planting and aftercare Pamela Holt
APR	Tuesday 7 th	Fuchsias Carol Gubler
MAY	Tuesday 5 th	Pests and disease control Alan Horgan
MAY	Saturday 16 th	Plant sale – Opens 1030am until 12noon Medstead Village Hall
JUN	Tuesday 2 nd	Sustainable and wildlife gardening in our changing climate Beverly Exall
JUL	Saturday 11 th	Medstead Fete – Medstead Green
JUL	Saturday 18 th	Summer Show – Medstead Village Hall
AUG		No meeting
SEP	Tuesday 1 st	Planting for Autumn colour Antony Powell
OCT	Tuesday 6 th	Ferns and grasses Chris Bird
NOV	Tuesday 3 rd	Getting the most from your garden Speaker to be confirmed
DEC	Tuesday 1 st	AGM and Christmas Social (Members only)

Correct at time of printing and maybe subject to change without prior notice

Summer Social and garden visits – TBC

Gardening jobs for January- Clear away dead and soggy stems from perennials, deadhead winter pansies, move shrubs that you want to relocate, prune climbing roses while dormant, winter prune apple and pear trees, prune gooseberry and redcurrant plants, cover rhubarb with a terracotta pot for an early crop. Start to plan the crops you want to plant in spring and where in your garden.

Medstead Gardener's Club wish you all a very happy and healthy 2026 with lots of wonderful times gardening,

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

NORTH HAMPSHIRE NATIONAL TRUST CENTRE (NHNTC) Hugh Bethell

Report of a talk given on 13th November to the NHNTC by Andrew Negus -

“Bishops, Buildings and Bones, Part 1. Winchester BC to 1100 AD”

Andrew Negus gave us a highly entertaining, light-hearted and somewhat impious talk neatly illustrated by his diverting slides. He told us how and why the city grew from a collection of Iron Age huts into the splendid and artistic capital of England. He introduced us to a colourful cast of characters, including Saints Birinus and Swithun, kings Alfred, Canute and The Conqueror, and most exciting of all the irrepressible Queen Emma! And he told us about the rich and crafty bishops who created magnificent buildings, including two minsters, two abbeys and the longest cathedral in the world. The afternoon finished with tea, cakes and a fervent hope that Andrew will regale us with Part 2 in the near future.

The NHNTC organises monthly visits in the summer and monthly talks in the winter. New members are always welcomed — apply through the website: <https://www.nhntc.co.uk>

CLUB CONTACTS

Medstead Bowls: Secretary Dennis Church 01420 564475
dennis@windhamhill.plus.com

Medstead Players: Tania McCullough chairman@medsteadplayers.co.uk
or Secretary Julia Halls 07747 665 968 ; or publicity@medsteadplayers.co.uk

Medstead Tennis: www.medsteadtennisclub.org.uk

Alton Rotary: Roy Roberts 07768 070 572 Mike 07808 093 953

* * *

REGULAR FEATURES

Kim Ottridge

Broadlands

Equine Therapy & RDA



We Did It!

At the start of 2025 we pledged to raise an extra £30,000 in celebration of our 70th anniversary year — and thanks to your generosity, we reached £31,500! This wonderful achievement has already enabled us to buy two of the three ponies we hoped to welcome into our herd, and we're still keeping our eyes open for the third. Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who contributed and supported us along the way.

(PTO for picture)



Looking Ahead to 2026

Plans for our 2026 events are already underway. Our annual quiz night, wine-tasting evening, the Wivelrod Barn talks, and even next year's wreath-making afternoon are all beginning to take their place in the calendar.

We'd also love to hear from you if you have contacts who might make inspiring speakers for our Wivelrod talks, or if you have any fresh fundraising ideas. Please get in touch with Kim at kim@broadlandsgroup.org.uk.

As we write, the ponies are looking forward to a well-earned rest over the festive season. They'll be back in early January, ready to welcome both familiar and new faces—whether for regular riding sessions or simply to spend time on the yard grooming, feeding, and enjoying the peaceful, caring environment that makes Broadlands so special.

For us—staff, trustees, and volunteers alike—the end of the year is also a chance to pause. And it's made even more meaningful when we open an email like this one from the family of a participant:

*"My daughter began her time with Broadlands * months ago and in that time has grown and flourished.*

The gentle, warm approach, tranquil yard and calm pace have provided a safe space for her to develop new skills and confidence. With the right support and understanding, she has discovered a passion for learning and is once again able to absorb and put into practice new skills at the yard. New opportunities have opened up, and a desire to work towards a future career has been made possible by Broadlands.

Paige and the team of staff, trustees and volunteers are true heroes in our eyes for making this possible."

May we take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support throughout 2025. We wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year!

HAMPSHIRE FARMERS MARKETS

Alton Saturday 10th January 2026

Sunday 4th January Petersfield 10am -2pm

Sunday 11th January Winchester 9am – 2pm

The full calendar is not yet available, but more information can be found on the website:

<https://hampshirefarmersmarkets.co.uk/>

My dog is chased by sheep, and the lack of wind.

The rainfall total for November was 103mm (4.17 ins) meaning that the rolling annual rainfall has effectively stayed the same at 742mm (30ins). December has started with frequent showers totalling about 35 mm (0.3 ins) in the first 8 days. It would be great to have some clear days with bright blue skies and a drying wind. It is very soggy when walking on the footpaths and tracks – hopefully they will improve in time for some Xmas family walks.

The arable work is effectively finished for the year – the fields are much too wet for any vehicles to travel on the crops without making huge ruts and damaging the soil structure. Work tends to focus upon servicing and repairing the machinery so that it is ready for next year – there is nothing worse than having a long quiet spell then taking a machine out to work and finding that there is a problem. Grain prices are still at a low level – about £163 per tonne for feed wheat and milling wheat is about £190 tonne. The much publicised food inflation is a consequence of the costs within the supply chain increasing (due to Budget decisions) rather than increasing raw material costs.

Milk producers have been notified that the ex farm price is to be reduced again for the second month running. The average price milk producers have received ex farm for the last 12 months is about 43 pence per litre or about 24.4 pence per pint. There are of course processing, transport and store costs to be added but the majority of the work has been done in producing the milk – which the dairy farmer is not paid sufficiently for. When compared to other products such as beer at £4 - £7 a pint then milk is ridiculously cheap and much healthier for the consumer. When I moved to Bentworth in 1983 there were farms producing milk at Wellers Place, Ashley Farm and Hall Farm had stopped only a few years before. In Medstead milk was produced at Roe Downs and Soldridge. Lasham had 2 dairy farms and Herriard had 2 dairy farms one of which still has dairy cows. This has happened all over the UK – it is not a local situation. The closure of so many dairy farms in the last 40 years has been because of the pressure on prices, a huge increase in regulation, the difficulty in finding staff willing to work long and antisocial hours and a move to produce milk in areas of the country that grow a lot of grass – the wetter west and north. Larger specialist dairy units that have economies of scale are the only way to meet the current legislative requirements and financial pressures.

The lambs are now receiving concentrate nuts to improve their body condition before being marketed. Sheep usually take little persuasion to start eating the nuts but there are 3 reluctant feeders this year – they just stand and watch the others feeding. I am going to increase the number of troughs in the hope that the timid feeders do eventually start eating the nuts. Sheep have good waterproof woolly coats but they do not like wet weather so their condition has not yet improved much – more nuts needed! At the market the grader has been changed and the new guy is looking for better fleshed animals which is reflecting what the buyers need. However grading animals in market is always subject to debate and discussion – it can make quite a substantial difference to the price at the point of sale.

Many have been observing that the badger population numbers have been increasing over the few decades since this species became legally protected since 1973. This can be seen by the number of badgers killed on the roads by vehicles which are the only predator of badgers. The badgers did need protecting but we have now reached a position where the numbers are excessive and their feeding habits are causing a severe decline in hedgehog numbers and ground nesting bird species. A hedgehog is pretty safe when it rolls into a ball – most hedgehog prey will find an easier less prickly source of food. Badgers however have the ability to use their paws to gut and kill the hedgehog which is why their numbers have fallen dramatically. The massive damage done to

other species by badgers has now been recognised by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT). New research by these organisations has identified that badgers are the “biggest predator of rare species such as curlew and lapwing”. The conclusion is that killing badgers may be necessary for vulnerable species survival. The Director of research concludes that “non-lethal control methods, such as temporary electric fencing, can be effective but not practical” and therefore control of predators (badgers) should be considered in future. This would require a change in the law so is not going to happen for many years but meanwhile the survival of vulnerable species will be threatened. This is despite other management practices that are changed to improve their habitats and encourage survival.

The UK Government has now amended its forecasts of how much electricity can be generated by wind farms to a more realistic level. The official UK Government figures have massively cut the “load factor” of wind generation – the amount of time that turbines actually generate electricity from 61% to 43.6% for offshore turbines – this is a massive correction and has enormous implications. For onshore turbines the amount of time that they will be generating electricity has dropped from 48.7% to 33.4% - so only about a third of the year night and day. **Essentially this is because the wind does not blow as much as had been modelled.** Now that many turbines have been built the theoretical generation output has not materialised and the real output of these monster machines is known. The financial viability of these turbines is now very questionable because the construction costs are still huge but the output is much less therefore the costs per kilowatt are much higher. I find this really scary in that as a nation we are heading to a future which is dependent upon wind power for much of our electricity generation – but it does not work well according to the **UK Governments own figures that were released in late October 2025.**

Electricity generation from solar panels has an even worse efficiency and output level than was expected. Solar panels do not work at night – pretty obvious – but what has surprised me is how much effect the winter days have on generation – day length - but equally importantly the low angle of the sun drastically reduces output.

Finally picture the previously mentioned lambs grazing peacefully in the field. One morning I quietly filled the troughs with the concentrate nuts and then set off with the dog to bring the lambs to their feed. The dog almost reached the flock and as one they realised breakfast had arrived. I then saw the dog being chased across the field at top speed by 17 hungry sheep on their way to breakfast – I just wish that I had been quick enough to video the dog being chased by sheep.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - ALTON LIBRARY

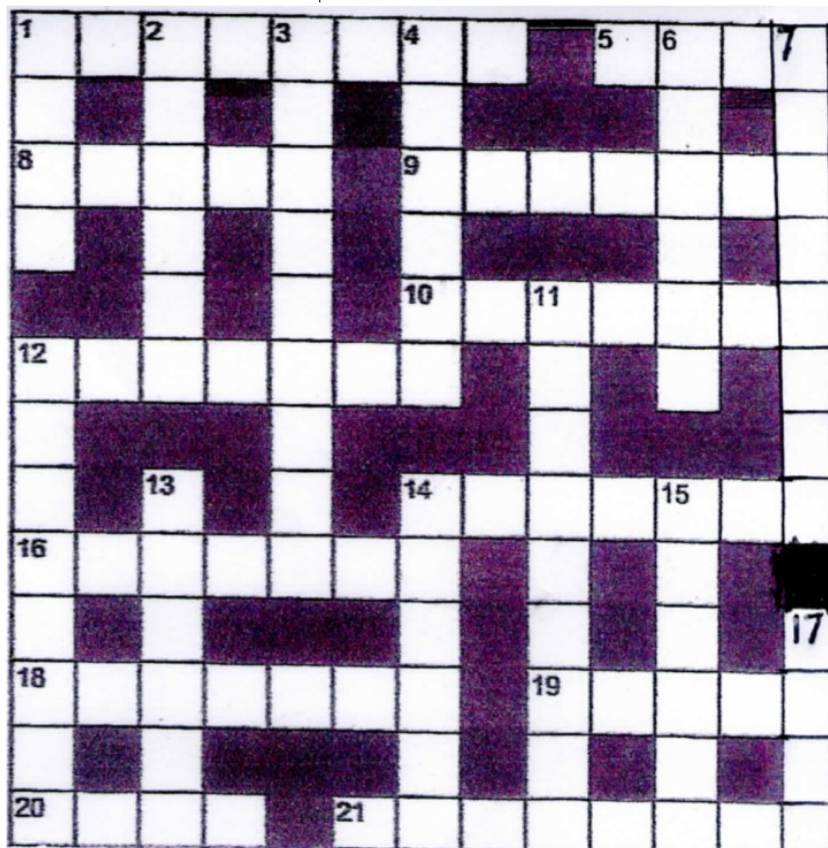
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9.30am to 1.30pm	9.30am to 5pm	Closed	9.30am to 5pm	9.30am to 5pm	9.30am to 5pm

Do look at pages 28, 30 – 33 and 36 for the new opportunities at the Library

BUS TIMETABLE run by Cresta Coaches of Alresford (01962 773236) only on Tuesdays and Fridays (NOT Saturdays) - **SERVICE 208**

Alton High Street	9.35	11.35	13.35
Beech Well House Road	9.43	11.43	13.43
Medstead War Memorial	9.49	11.49	13.49
Bentworth The Star	9.55	11.55	13.55
Alton High Street	10.09	12.09	

CROSSWORD



Clues Across

1. Unconscious
5. Continent
8. Phone Company
9. Rangers
10. Falls
12. Spanish Sausage
14. Vie
16. Whirlwind
18. Stupidity
19. Accusation
20. Cease
21. Curiosity

Clues Down

1. Pine Fruit
2. Japanese Emperor
3. Fleeting
4. Sth African Township
6. Odours
7. Aided
11. In the Interim
12. Drapes
13. Shrewish Woman
14. Wax Pencil
17. The One After



EVENTS

Alton Natural History Society Programme Jan to Mar 2026

TALKS are open to non-Members but please consider a donation to the Society of £3 per head or whatever you can afford. Held in Garden Room, Alton Community Centre, Amery St, Alton GU34 1FE. [What3Words ///instructs.spreads.viewing](#). Pay-and-Display car park adjacent. Tea, coffee and biscuits available for a small donation.

Membership queries Email altonnathistsoc@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/altonnaturalhistorysoc>
General and Membership queries: altonnathistsoc@gmail.com

UNDER 18s welcome but please bring an adult with you (sorry, this is to comply with our insurance).

Sat 10 Jan 2pm-3.30pm	Geological Evolution of the Surrey-Hampshire Border Country Dan Bosence , Emeritus Professor of Geology at Royal Holloway University of London and an expert on sedimentology, will explore the origins of the sand, clay and chalk that form the landscape between Farnham and Alton, creating the wide diversity of habitats in our area.
Sat 24 Jan 2pm-3.30pm	Tales of British Butterflies Francis Kelly , retired journalist and editor of 'Butterflies of Surrey Revisited', will entertain us with his quest to photograph 58 of Great Britain's regular species of butterfly, plus a few irregulars.
Thu 5 Feb 7.30pm-9pm	Wildlife and Conservation on the Windsor Estate Des Sussex Windsor Great Park and Forests are known for their ancient and veteran trees. Des Sussex, the Crown Estate's first Biodiversity and Conservation Manager at Windsor, will tell us about these special trees and many other habitats and species at the 6500 ha estate. He will also outline the diversity of conservation projects being implemented there for nature conservation and recovery, under the stewardship of the Ranger, His Majesty King Charles III.
Thu 5 Mar 7.30pm-9pm	Natterjack Comeback – The Success Story of one of Britain's Rarest Amphibians Olivia French , Project Team Leader for the Wealden Heath Special Protection Area, will tell us about the Wealden Heath SPA, focusing on current efforts to protect and increase Natterjack Toad populations and the challenges these rare animals face.
Thu 19 Mar 7.30pm-9pm	Mysteries of Bird Migration Keith Betton Why do birds migrate? How do they navigate? How do we know? Keith Betton, Chair of Hampshire Ornithological Society and a former trustee of both the RSPB and the British Trust for Ornithology, will unravel these mysteries for us.

Screen by the Green

BLACK BAG



**Sat 27
Dec**



beechvillage.org.uk

Saturday 27th December

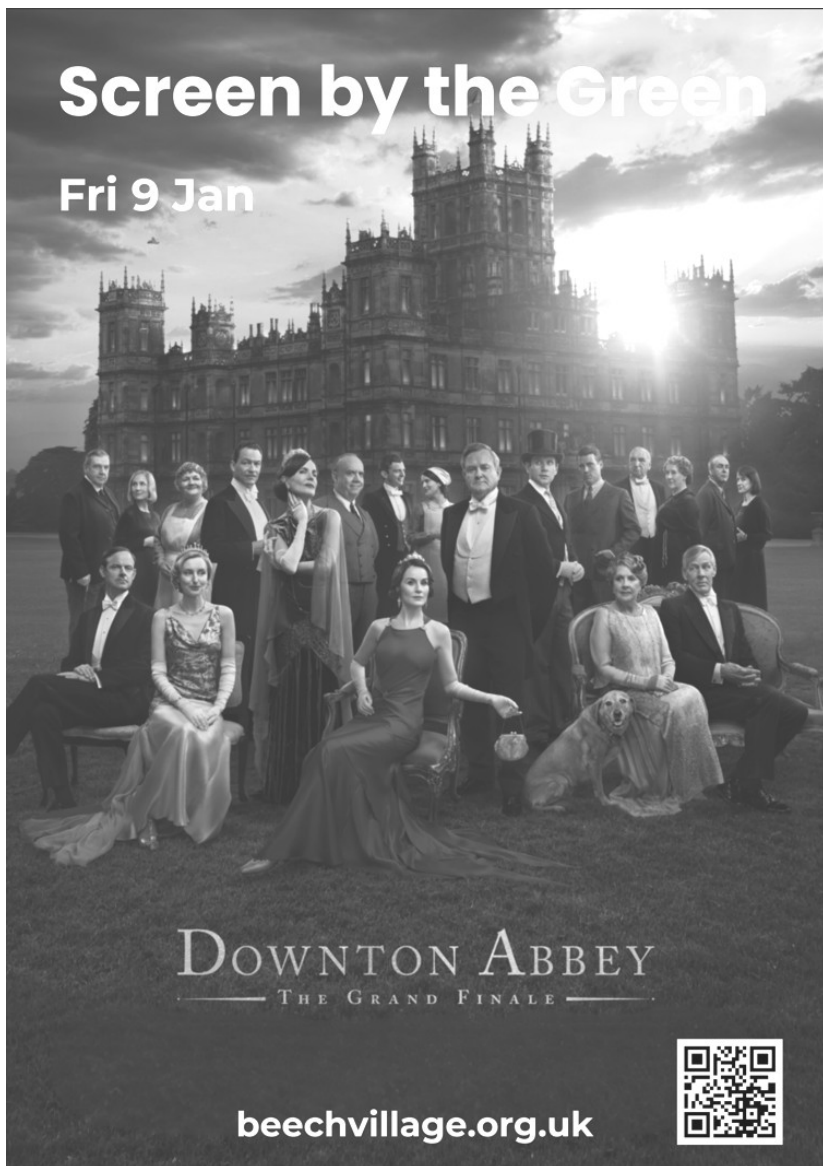
(15) Black Bag

7:30pm (Doors 7pm)

Bookings: beechvillage.org.uk/events

Screen by the Green

Fri 9 Jan



DOWNTON ABBEY

— THE GRAND FINALE —

beechvillage.org.uk



Friday 9th January

Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale

7:30pm (Doors 7pm)

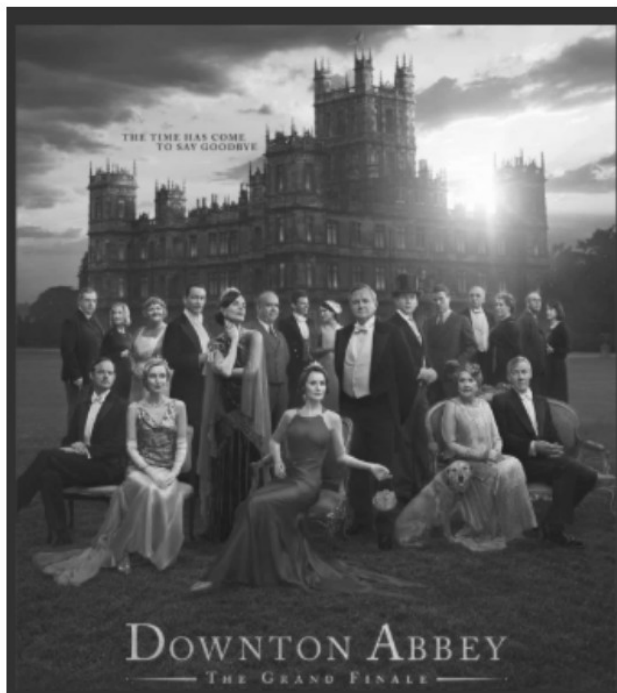
Bookings: beechvillage.org.uk/events

BENTWORTH FILM NIGHT

will be screening

DOWNTON ABBEY – THE GRAND FINALE

on Friday 16th January
at the Jubilee Hall, Bentworth.



Doors open at 7pm for drinks, with film showing at 7.30pm.
Tickets £5 on the door.

Ice Creams in the Interval

This is a social event open to all local villagers,
please feel free to bring friends along too.

*Small Notes and change for entrance, drinks and ice cream, very
much appreciated!*

Future Dates and Films to be announced



Hampshire
County Council

Library Service



Expressive Watercolours at Alton Library

Saturdays 17 January - 14 February 10am - 12pm

Free tuition, £10 materials payable to tutor

Booking is essential, please visit

<https://shop.hants.gov.uk/collections/library-courses> to book
your place. If you have issues booking online please contact
branch staff or call 02392 232957



**BACK BY POPULAR
DEMAND**

DEER MANAGEMENT



IN THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

Saturday 17th January @ 6:30pm
St Mary's Church, Lasham

FUNDRAISING EVENT

HOSTED BY:



Ticket Price: £10.50

Includes: Venison

Burger & Brew

(tea, coffee, soft drink)



TOPICS INCLUDED:

Deer Species • Why Herd Management
Venison Outlook • HAD Police Volunteer

BUY YOUR TICKET AT:

<https://buytickets.at/stmaryschurchlasham/1940555>

All proceeds to St Mary's Church, Lasham





Hampshire
County Council

Library Service



Art for Wellbeing at Alton Library

Saturdays 17 January - 14 February 2pm - 4pm

Free tuition, £10 materials fee

Booking is essential, please visit

shop.hants.gov.uk/collections/library-courses to book your place. If you have issues booking online please contact branch staff or call **02392 232957**

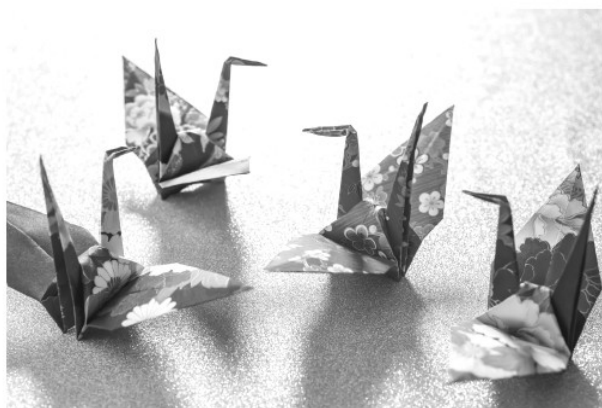






Hampshire
County Council

Library Service



Beginners Origami: Fold Your Way to Wellness Alton Library

Tuesday 20 January - 17 February 1pm - 3pm

FREE

Booking is essential, please visit

shop.hants.gov.uk/collections/learning-in-libraries to book your place. If you have issues booking online please contact branch staff or call **02392 232957**





Hampshire
County Council

Library Service



Step into Sculpture

Alton Library

Fridays 23 January - 20 February 10am - 12pm

FREE tuition, £15 for materials

Booking is essential, please visit

shop.hants.gov.uk/collections/learning-in-libraries to book your place. If you have issues booking online please contact branch staff or call **02392 232957**





National
Theatre
Live

Hamlet

by William Shakespeare

Sat 24 Jan

Screen by the Green

beechvillage.org.uk



Saturday 24th January

National Theatre Live: Hamlet

2pm and 7pm (Doors 1:30pm and 6:30pm)

Bookings: beechvillage.org.uk/events

harvestchurch



LIFE-CONTROLLING HABIT?

SMOKING

GAMBLING

SHOPPING

OVER-EATING

DRINKING

SOCIAL MEDIA

ETC...

**Fresh
Start**

**Support to help you
discover freedom.**

Join a friendly group and learn the
skills you need to change your habits
for good.

Next course starts Thursday 29th January, 10:30-12:00 at Alton Maltings

Book your free place by contacting Mark
07769 030913 freshstart@harvestchurch.uk



www.harvestchurch.uk
connect@harvestchurch.uk



Hampshire
County Council

Library Service



Emergency First Aid

Alton Library

Saturday 7 February 9:45am - 4:45pm

FREE tuition, optional £25 certification fee

Booking is essential, please visit

<https://shop.hants.gov.uk/collections/learning-in-libraries> to book your place. If you have issues booking online please contact branch staff or call 02392 232957



Unpack the Christian faith together.



Meet new people and explore the Christian faith together. **Alpha** is for anyone who's curious. No judgement, no pressure. Each session unpacks a big question of life, faith, and purpose, and is designed to spark conversation. Come along, see what you think.

Starts **Monday 19 January - 7pm** at **Alton Mattings**.
(includes a free meal)

To find out more email alpha@harvestchurch.uk or go to harvestchurch.uk/alpha to book your place.





The Animated LEGO Christmas Trail

Come to Holy Rood Church,
Holybourne, between 7th and 31st
December to see the
Lego Christmas Trail.

Church is normally open 9 am til 4 pm

Bring a smartphone to scan the QR code and
watch the animated LEGO figures tell you the
story in 5 parts.

And see the models built by Lego Church to
show the story.



MEN'S BREAKFAST

Every last Saturday of the month, we meet for a
delicious Full English Breakfast at the White Hart
Pub in Holybourne. The breakfast costs just £10.

We enjoy each others company and listen to a
different speaker each month.

If you have not attended the breakfast for a
while, or have never attended we would love to
see you. Please contact Tim Codling at

tim.codling@hotmail.co.uk or

01420 80388





Church 4 Everyone Let Your Light Shine



New Year, New Start! You are warmly invited to our refreshed ministry & services for children and families of all ages from January 2026.



Family Church Service – St. Lawrence Church
(Bacon rolls & refreshments served after the service)
1st Sunday each month.
Starting 4th January, 9.30am

Church@4 – St. Lawrence Parish Centre
(Song, craft, Bible stories, fun, games, food & drink)
2nd Sunday each month.
Starting 11th January, 4pm

Church
@ 4



Family Morning Worship – St. Lawrence Church
(incorporating The Lighthouse for all children aged 0-11)
3rd Sunday each month.
Starting 18th January, 10.30am

LEGO Church – Holybourne Church
(Bible stories, pizza & LEGO building)
4th Sunday each month.
Starting 25th January : 4pm

LE T'S BUILD
GO D'S STORIES

All our leaders are DBS checked.

www.resurrectionbenefice.org

SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2026

BENTWORTH LASHAM MEDSTEAD SHALDEN

4th January – THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS - EPIPHANY White

Holy Communion (CW)		10.00a.m		
Holy Communion (CW)			11.00a.m.	10.00a.m
Parish Communion (CW)				

11th January – THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST White

Holy Communion (BCP)			8.00a.m.	
Holy Communion (CW)	10.00a.m.			

18th January – THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY White

Holy Communion (CW)		10.00a.m		
Parish Communion (CW)			11.00a.m.	
Evensong				6.00p.m.

25th January-THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY Conversion of Paul W

Holy Communion (CW)	10.00a.m.			
Café Church in the Church Hall			11.00a.m.	
Family Service in the Church Hall			4.00p.m.	

1st February - THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY - CANDLEMAS White

Holy Communion (CW)		10.00a.m		
Holy Communion (CW)			11.00a.m.	10.00a.m.
Parish Communion (CW)				

POTR Services for January 2026

4th January

8am BCP Holy Communion	St Lawrence
9.30am Family Service	St Lawrence
10.30am POTR Altogether	St Lawrence

11th January

9.15am Communion Service	St Peter's
9.30am Morning Worship	Holy Rood
10.30am Communion Service	St Lawrence
3pm Afternoon Worship	All Saints
4pm Church @4	Parish Centre
6pm Evening Prayer for Vacancy	St Lawrence

18th January

9.30am Communion Service	Holy Rood
10.30am Communion Service	All Saints
10.30am Family Morning Worship	
	St Lawrence
3.30pm Choral Evensong	St Lawrence

25th January

9.15am Communion Service	St Peter's
10.30am Communion Service	St Lawrence
4pm Afternoon Worship	Holy Rood
6pm Evening Worship	St Lawrence

Every Wednesday 10am All Saints Holy Communion