



**DOWNLEY
COMMUNITY**

SPRING/SUMMER/AUTUMN/WINTER

Village News

Issue 146/February 2026



**SUNDAY
10
MAY**

ROGATION SUNDAY FAMILY WALK 2pm

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Front Cover Photo: Some of the runners from the 2025 Downley 5K run, photo provided by the volunteer marshals.

Editorial

I would like to start by wishing all our readers a very happy new year! I hope 2026 will be a good year for you. I also hope you managed to get out and enjoy some of the festive events around the village in December, such as carols on the Common, decorating the Christmas tree, the Littleworth Road Christmas market, the children's pantomime in the Community Centre and, of course, the traditional lighting of the beacon on a very chilly New Year's Eve.

Following all that, this January seems to have gone on for even longer than usual for me! At the moment, it is cold, gloomy and wet, but by the time you read this it will be mid-February and hopefully bulbs will be coming out and the days will be getting noticeably longer. (I did see daffodils in full flower at Hughenden Manor in very early January, but to be honest that just seemed wrong!!)

Just a reminder that Downley Parish Council has received around £50,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy and **we need your ideas on how best to use this – otherwise the money will be taken back!** CIL money can't be used for everyday expenditure but has to be spent on the development of the local area through "the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure". Please think about how this money could be used to improve Downley and send your ideas to clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org.

Our next edition will be the summer one (hooray!), which will be out in mid-May. As usual, we will be delighted to hear from any organisation in Downley (or the surrounding area) with news or information. You can submit articles via the email address editor@downley.org. Copy deadline is **midday on Sunday 26 April 2026** but please get your copy in as early as possible as space is limited.

Anne, Editor • editor@downley.org

Jill - Tutor



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Resident in Downley, I am a science graduate, a qualified teacher and a mum.

To discuss your needs please text me;

Jill: 0773 860 99 44



Downley Parish Council

I know many people are concerned about vehicles speeding through the village and would like to see action taken to prevent this. Downley Parish Council have previously set up a Community Speedwatch Group to try to address these concerns and to do something on a practical basis.

We'd like to see that group back in action and are looking for volunteers to become involved. If you would like to take part and help your community, then please email me at the address below.

In the last edition I wrote that the Parish

Council have received roughly £50,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy and are asking the public how they think this money could be used to help develop Downley. Again, if you have views, you'd like us to consider then please contact me either by email or by letter.

Downley Parish Council
The Community Centre
School Close, Downley
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP13 5TR

Giles Tandy, Parish Clerk

Downley Parish Notice Boards

Notices for the Parish notice boards should be left at the Community Centre. Notices must be received one month in advance of the event. Notice boards are updated on the first Thursday of each month. Please post notices into the letterbox at the Community Centre clearly marked for the Clerks attention. Please notify the Clerk if you have posted a notice at the centre by emailing to clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org

All notices must be for local non profit organisations.
Please ensure that A5 size notices are supplied.

STREET LIGHTING

Please report all lighting repairs to the Parish Clerk

01494 25 77 11

email clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org

Include the street name and the nearest house number, lights cannot be reported without this information.

DOWNLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are held on 2nd Tuesday of the month at Downley Community Centre, School Close 7.30pm

Up to 30 minutes are allowed for public questions

Downley Parish Council, Community Centre School Close, Downley, HP13 5TR
The Clerk can be contacted on 01494 25 77 11 (office hrs 9am-1pm Monday – Friday)
E: clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org • www.downleyparishcouncil.org

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Downley Day News

It's 2026 and planning has started for this summer's Downley Day. As usual we will be issuing an application form for pitches in March – this will be available on the Downley Day web page (<https://www.downley.org/community/downley-day>).

Dates for your diary are:

19th June 7pm: Family Disco

20th June 12pm: Downley Day

28th June 10.30am: Downley 5K run

11th July 6.30pm: Concert on the Common

Due to some recent leavers, the committee has reduced in number and so we would like to extend an invitation for people to

join the committee. This entails coming to 3 or 4 meetings in the run up to Downley Day and perhaps a couple in the autumn and, more importantly, a willingness to get involved and organise some of the activities.

In particular, we are looking for a new treasurer to manage our finances. You don't need to be a qualified accountant but you should be good with numbers and have some understanding of book-keeping, perhaps through self-employment or similar.

Anyone interested in joining us, please contact Bill Thompson at info@downley.org

Downley Community Orchard

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who visited our stall at the Littleworth Road Christmas Market. We sold every bottle of apple juice made from our bumper 2025 harvest. The juice contained over 15 different apple varieties and everyone who tasted it was really impressed with its flavour. In fact, we have had many requests from people asking if we have more juice available – unfortunately we've completely sold out. The good news is we will use the proceeds from the sale to pay for items needed for the maintenance of the fruit trees, so thank you again to everyone who bought bottles of our delicious 'Downley Delight'. If you walk through the Orchard you may notice some new additions. We have put

up four nesting boxes in the surrounding trees to help attract tits and other species. We want to reduce caterpillar damage to the fruit trees and are hoping that the new residents will feed these caterpillars to their broods. Fingers crossed that the nest boxes will appeal to our feathered friends. We've now embarked on our schedule of winter pruning when we shape the trees to give them the right open structure. This means air can flow freely around the branches which helps to minimise disease and fungal infections. If you would like to learn more about maintaining fruit trees do consider joining our friendly band of volunteers. Email Andrew Flint for more details: trhaeditor@gmail.com.

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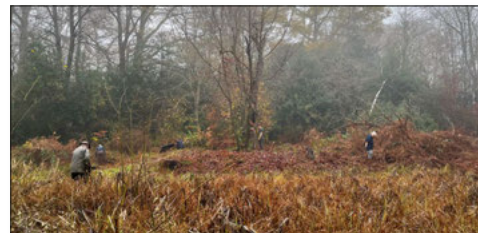
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Downley Common News



Following another successful bonfire night and the subsequent clear up of the site, we turned our attention to Mannings pond. We had organised a group a few years ago to come and remove a lot of overhanging branches. Those trees and bushes have now started to grow back and as a result there has been considerable leaf drop into the pond.

Trees can hinder plant growth in two ways: Shading reduces available light for plant growth and makes the pond surroundings a colder habitat, making it a less attractive site for creatures such as frogs. As a guide, problems tend to occur if more than 20% of the southern side of the pond is overshadowed by trees, or if more than 50% of the total pond edge is overshadowed. Trees add to the nutrients in the pond, especially tannins released from rotting dead leaves which acidify pond water – some species, such as oak and sycamore, have a more adverse affect on the quality of the water than finer-leaved species such as willow.

So December saw the cutting back of newly-grown overhanging tree branches and the removal of a good number of pond-side bushes as well as the ever-present willows that grow along the causeway that separates the north and south halves of the pond.

January was planned to be a time to clear some of the rushes that are accumulating within the pond but the ice was deemed



to be too thick for this to be practical. As a result, it was decided to make a start on haloing trees that are exhibiting excessive undergrowth. Haloing is a conservation technique for veteran specimen trees that involves removing younger, encroaching trees and vegetation from around them. This process reduces competition for light, water, and nutrients, which helps prevent the specimen tree from suffering from stress or dieback.

The tree in the photo is in the coppice area between the track to the dairy in the south and the cricket pitch to the north. The intention is to continue this process around selected trees in future work parties.

Back in November last year, we received a letter from the PayPal Giving Fund which claimed to want to donate £51.05 received from an unknown benefactor via PayPal, eBay, GofundMe or Facebook. The initial kneejerk reaction was that this was a scam intended to fleece us of all our money; a sort of conservation Nigerian letter. However, having independently set up an account with PayPal Giving Fund, it turned out that there was a bona fide donation waiting for us which is now safely ensconced in our bank account for which we would like to thank our unknown benefactor if that individual would like to make himself known to us at downleycommon@gmail.com.

Bill Thompson.

Downley Common Preservation Society

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**Several volunteers
have retired recently so
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Downley Voices **I Wish it Could be Christmas
Every Day (or not !!)**

It was nice to have a rest after a really busy Christmas period for Downley Voices, but we are now missing singing and really looking forward to returning to our meetings on Thursday nights.

We were asked to sing at a 'Light up a Life' service at St Andrews Church, Hatters Lane. This took place on an extremely wet Saturday afternoon, which possibly put some of the congregation off. Saying that though, it was an emotional event for us where the congregation lit a candle in remembrance of loved ones lost during the year. We performed 'Candle of Hope' which was an appropriate choice. Then we held our Christmas Concert, more about that later.

We were asked to sing at the Le de Spencer Arms alongside a brass band in their annual Charity Carol evening. This was held on yet another wet evening, so much so we had to sing indoors where we were packed into a very small space and some members had to duck to avoid the slide of the trombone. This was another charity event, raising money for the Teenage Eye Cancer Charity, a worthy cause, and we hope they raised a lot. This was followed by leading the customers in singing carols at St James Coffee Stop.

Then the crème de la crème..... Following this year's highly successful Christmas Concert we were able to make a substantial donation to Florence Nightingale Hospice. Those of you who

were there must have noticed a vast difference from previous years. Firstly, the buffet for the interval. Warm snacks rather than mince pies with drinks already laid out which cut down the queues. The raffle tickets were sold by volunteers going round the audience rather than being sold on the door, again cutting down the queues. As for the concert itself, we started with 'Candle of Hope' with all the lights out in the church and the choir holding candles which set a very atmospheric tone to the evening. The concert finished with 'Celebrate the Child', a very upbeat piece which hopefully sent the audience home in a happy mood, which is what we are all about.

We all felt really uplifted after our Christmas exploits and it's now back to learning some new pieces for the spring and summer season. We already have two concerts lined up, one at Flackwell Heath and our usual Summer concert at St James Church; more details to follow.

If you enjoy singing and making money for local good causes why not give us a try. We rehearse at St James Church, Plomer Hill, on a Thursday evening starting at 8pm. Have a look on our website downleyvoices.org then contact us via downleyvoices@gmail.com

Downley Theatre Group

By the time you read this, we will have already been to the West End to see “Les Miserables” in January and a jolly to “Come Alive! The Greatest Showman Circus Experience” is on the horizon in February. We’ve booked our third trip to the ABBA Arena for “ABBA Voyage” in June and “Paddington” in September; both these outings are fully booked with no spare seats.

We don’t operate a waiting list for cancellations, but join the mailing list to be notified of last-minute availability due to plans changing and for full details of our offerings.

We’re currently restricting new members to Downley residents, such is the

Group’s popularity - with 232 names on our mailing list it was becoming a bit unwieldy! We’re unable to advertise outings in Downley Village News due to tight time frames, so email us if you would like to be added to the mailing list. There’s no membership fee or obligation to go on any of the trips.

We’re happy to advertise local events by sending an email to Downley villagers; please submit the exact wording you wish to be mailed out so we don’t get anything muddled.

Alan & Claire Baker

*Downley Theatre Group, Established 2001
downleytheatregroup@gmail.com
01494 437552*

Up! Downley Festival 2026

The Festival Committee held its first meeting of the year in January to start planning for this year’s Festival.

In the diary are the usual favourites; Disco Bingo on Thursday 18th June, Comedy Night on Wednesday 24th June (two comedians are already pencilled in), Downley Voices on Thursday 2nd July, the newly titled Art & Craft Show from Saturday 4th through to Friday 10th July and the History Walk (date to be confirmed).

There are other events that will be new this year; a Sea Shanty group at the Le De Spencers Arms on Friday 3rd July plus an art creative workshop in the Community Centre on Saturday 27th June.

The traditional mascot of the Festival is a scarecrow and we will be encouraging more of these to be located around the

village in the run up, perhaps this year with a theme in mind.

This year we have made grants to both the local Scout Group and Downley Cricket Club.

The Festival has been financially successful over the years and I am pleased to report that we have agreed to use our funds to make a monthly contribution of £100 to a chosen charity – more about this to follow in the next Downley Village News.

If you are an organisation in the village that would benefit from a grant, then please ask for an application form. Please contact the secretary, Rachael Parkinson, at rachaelgledhill@hotmail.com

Fran Lazenby

Festival Committee Chairman

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Thank you.

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SEARCH Downley Community Library



NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Simply Walk, Downley



Simply Walk

Having had the benefit of the late autumn, our early winter has been wet with a vengeance. We haven’t had to cancel any walks in the run up to Christmas, but we have had to wash a lot of mud off our boots. However, a jolly Christmas Lunch after our Monday walk on December 16th raised the spirits. A few glasses of wine and a buffet, with Christmas songs, carols and some very enthusiastic singing of the 12 days of Christmas accompanied by Pat Gregor’s saxophone quartet soon cheered us up. The regular walkers were joined by two of our ‘retired’ walkers who still like to

come for the occasion and a few of our fellow walkers from the Hazlemere group. There’s room for plenty more if you want to join in next year.

Among our upcoming events in Downley is our usual Anniversary Walk which takes place in March when the daffodils are out at Hughenden Park. We chose this date to commemorate the start up of the Downley Simply Walk group and in memory of past walkers who are no longer with us. We chose the route to Hughenden Park (about 90 minutes) because it is a favourite and because it is an opportunity to get the best out of



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Jill

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Emma is always cheerful and positive, encouraging me by highlighting each little improvement, especially when my voice is not behaving as it should!

Patrick

Top Notes



SUNDAY
10
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Annual Rogation Sunday FAMILY VILLAGE WALK

The Annual Village Walk has become a new tradition for Downley, based on an old tradition from days past where the entire village led by local church officials got together to 'beat the boundaries' of the Parish. In the past this was held on Rogation Sunday (40 days after Easter Sunday), which this year is 10th May. In some areas, Downley included, the event involved up-ending small boys and tapping their head on the stone boundary markers. We don't do any of that these days. For us the event is all about walking with friends and family for the fun of it and to get out into the fresh air in our lovely woods and countryside.

Downley is somewhat bigger these days, and it would take too long to try and get round it all in one day, and the boundary in some places is hidden in the hedges or under farmland, so we have split the boundary up into three walks that include some of the parish boundaries which, coincidentally, all end up at the Le De Spencers Arms, where we are treated to

A reminder of our weekly programme
Monday 10.00 – 11.30 (Level 3)
Thursday 11.00 – 12.00 (Level 2)
Thursday 11.00 – 11.50 (Level 1)
All from the Community Centre
Jeanne Steward

cups of tea/coffee or fruit squash courtesy of Sarah and her team. Last year we headed towards Naphill, the year before it was West Wycombe and this year it will be towards Hughenden. The walk is about 90 minutes long and starts at 2.00 pm near the Memorial Hall on the Common. It will be led and back-marked by trained walk leaders.

If you would like to join in, here are the important points to remember. Make sure you wear good walking shoes or boots and carry a stick if you need it, and some water if it's a hot day. Well behaved dogs on leads are welcome. Meet before 2.00 pm, on Sunday 10th May outside the Memorial Hall near the Display Board on Commonside. No need to book, just turn up on the day with your family and friends and join in a fun walk in our beautiful woods and rolling countryside. Write it in your diary - if we're lucky the weather will be beautiful and the bluebells might be out!

Jeanne Steward

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Changes at the Pharmacy

I am writing to explain the recent change we have made regarding the delivery of repeat medication requests to the various GP surgeries in High Wycombe. This has always been a courtesy service, offered for no charge as it was in line with regular visits we made anyway.

Since we opened nearly fourteen years ago many systems have changed in life including the NHS. We no longer work primarily from green paper prescriptions but on electronically sent versions. This means there is no need for collection of prescriptions from surgeries on a daily basis. We communicate with GPs and the relevant surgery staff by secure email, or other electronic means, also reducing the need to make a physical visit to drop off letters and requests.

The universally preferred method of requesting repeat medication is now via the NHS app. This is easy to download to smart phones and, once identification is verified, prescription requests from personal authorised list is very straightforward. Some surgeries may have an online request system via their respective website or accept an email. The paper slips are very much the least use option with no clear audit trail.

However we, like the surgeries, do understand that not everyone is connected or digitally competent and therefore still need to use the slips. We are prepared to drop these slips to respective surgeries as and when we make a visit for ourselves, but this will only be on a very ad hoc basis, not same or following day from when handed to us. The turnaround time to when medication is ready will therefore

not be predictable and could lead to prescriptions not issued before supplies run out. Simply dropping the slip to us earlier is not advisable as GP systems prevent early issue from the supply interval, and the request could be lost and not done at all.

We are not reimbursed for the time or fuel involved in this service or in delivering medication to those who need, but feel it is a valuable service where folks have no suitable care support, family or friends that are able to help. We have removed the drop off box as a method of encouragement to individuals to change to preferred order options not as a complete withdrawal of the service. Those folk who we order for as they are vulnerable or housebound we will continue, with no charge made. For others it maybe that we introduce a fee similar to postage for each slip dropped to us although this will be a reluctant choice; however we cannot continue to give services for free when staff, fuel and vehicle costs all continue to rise alongside the squeeze in the fees paid for NHS services supplied.

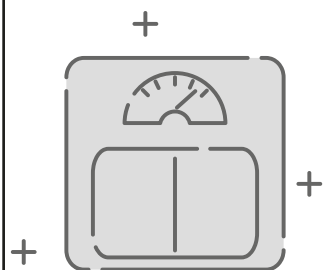
We will continue to send messages to remind when an order should be placed, and when medication is ready for collection. Prescriptions will be issued to us electronically.

The only thing that has changed is how repeat prescriptions should be requested.

Thank you for your continued support and praise for the help and advice we give. We hope to remain the first point for healthcare for Downley and beyond.

Fiona and all the team

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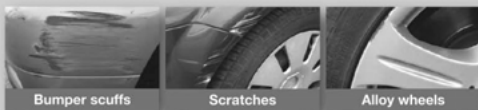
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J. Heartycough's Horticultural Hints Spring 2026



Wal, happy new year to orl you readers of my vital gardin and plot information guide, and any new readers of corse eh! Wal at the moment as I writes this there's snow on the ground and minus 3 in the gardin, and a big Atlantic storm about to crash in, but we've got a Mahonia in full blossom, a lovely pink flower on our big Camilia bush but no snowdrops yet. Sumwun sed that the daffs are out down at the manor, wal, maybe me and Mrs H can stagger down there to ave a look, it's orlways luvly a'goin through the woods and meadows, quite peaceful and sublime, the birds a'singin, you can orlmost imagine meeting Dizzy down there. "He's orf agin, can be quite poetic sum times, but then he starts moanin about climate change or summat else and spoils the romantic atmosphere" ses you knows who.

Anyway, wot about my hints you was about to say, wal, have you got yor seeds ready? (See paragraph below). Have you got any planted? Do you know when you've got a winder of opportunity to do that vital act, nothing will grow if you avvent done the sowin or plantin - wal it's amazin how the time whistles by. Wal, I've got broad beans up an inch or so in a seed box in the greenhouse, and sum French spinach and lettuce a'strugglin on, but at least that's summat on the go now, optimism rules the gardiner eh! And there's summat else you can do and that's get compost and manure spread and dug in. Wal I did get sum from a nice lady, I thinks it's from one of them 'manege's (that's a French word for them paddocks they trains horses in, so my French cousin Jean d'Artichoke tells me) or from a stable, anyway I reckon its pretty good for good ole Downley clay.

Wal, wot did you get for Christmas? Wal by hints and suggestions I got sum of my favourite seeds orl wrapped up in Christmassy paper. So talk about excitement, I tore orf the paper and lo and behold first out woz two cloves of Germinour violet garlic, actually a garlic that my French cousin grows by the hundred, he luves eatin em raw, wot with that and him smoking his home grown tobacco, wal, I don't need to tell you more... Then came climbing bean 'Carminat'-stringless deep purple beans, larst year they did just excellent growin up my rustic pyramid, they just kept a'croppin, we woz pikkin em for over a month. Then dwarf French beans 'Faraday', a luvly very productive green bean, agin we just kept pikkin em, grown in the gardin raised bed, just awesum wun of the grandkids sed! Then out from the wrappin came the squashes, the best for decorating was 'Turks Turban', just luvly to see. We've got one on the windsill where its bin for over a year, fabulous! And then the amazin 'Zucchetta Tromba D'Albenga', they grows like a tube, about 70 cms long and maybe 10cms wide, and the seeds are just at wun end, so the flesh is right through, and they keeps and keeps, just cut slices, fry em or boil em with herbs, they are...just awesum! Wal even Mrs H was impressed with those.."I admits they was amazin, and he was goin about whistling and hummin, orlmost human for a change!"

Wal that's it for now, just get a'sowin as soon as you can, its great to get summat cumin up to put a spring in yor step when you're up the plot or in the gardin, and for the ultimate treat, get a bonny on the go!

Cheerio and a'bientot,

J. Heartycough. Sent from my iSpade.

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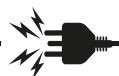
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Downley Community Centre

Christmas Tree Decorating outside the Community Centre

In December, children from Chiltern
Hills Montessori first helped Mrs Claus

decorate the Christmas
tree at the Centre. This
was kindly donated
again by Moyra
Lazenby and Wendy
Steneskog. On the way
to the Community
Centre the children
made a brief stop at the
post box where they
posted Christmas cards that they had
made for their families. Arriving at the
Centre, Mrs Claus greeted the children
and invited them to help her continue
decorating the tree, which already had
lights in place for the community's
enjoyment. This year Mrs Claus helped
the children hang their individually
named decorations onto the tree.

When finished the children were treated
to refreshments whilst Mrs Claus read
stories aloud.

So popular was
this event that in
return for their
good behaviour and
requests for more,
Mrs Claus obliged
with a third story!

After Christmas,
whilst the children
were out for a
walk, Miss Anisa
(Nursery Manager)

commented as they
passed by the tree
that they all excitedly
remembered that was where they met Mrs



Claus and decorated it.
The event is something
that they find quite
magical and will
always associate with
Downley.

The trustees greatly
appreciate this initiative
– a tradition in the
making, which started
last year and we hope will continue for
many years to come.

Pantomime – “Red Riding Hood”

What a fantastic time we had at Downley
Community Centre during our December
panto! We're so grateful to everyone who
came along to support it and helped make
it such a wonderful success.

A huge thank you to our talented
performers from Chaplins Panto,
dedicated volunteers, and everyone behind
the scenes who worked so hard to bring
the magic to life.

And of course,
thank you to our
brilliant audience
for your laughter,
cheers, and dancing
– you truly made it
special. We loved
sharing the joy of
panto with our
community!



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Craft Fair

Saturday 7th March 10am – 3pm

Join us for a fantastic Craft Fair at Downley Community Centre on Saturday 7th March 2026, 10am–3pm! Come along and support talented local stallholders offering a wonderful variety of handmade and homemade treasures, including beautiful crochet, delicious cakes, unique handmade jewellery, and stylish handmade bags. There'll also be mouth-watering Thai food available, perfect for lunch while you browse. A great day out for the whole community — don't miss it!

Check the Downley Community Centre's Facebook page for updates

Building

The renewable energy project is now operational following the installation of 16 solar panels and a storage battery. This investment is aimed at significantly reducing our ever-rising energy costs whilst contributing towards a reduction in our carbon footprint into the future.

During November the Community Centre benefitted from a 30% reduction in energy costs with less sunlight during winter. From March to October we expect to be a net exporter of energy.

downleycommunitycentre.org.uk

Downley Old School Management Association (DOSCA) committee



Cycling in South Buckinghamshire

Join your local Cycling UK groups this autumn

Cycling UK has a number of local groups in South Buckinghamshire:

South Bucks Midweek group offers a selection of rides every Wednesday from easy paced, moderate to rides that are faster and longer. Most rides meet at 9:30am from local start points including Wendover, Great Kingshill, Cholesbury and Beaconsfield. A stop is included for elevenses at a local café or garden centre followed by lunch before returning home. There are also coffee pots on Friday mornings and these include Princes Risborough, Chiltern Velo Café, West Wycombe and Bulbourne.

Chiltern Cycling offers led rides and coffee pots on Sundays with the focus on welcoming new members. Rides take place on quiet routes and include a coffee stop with most rides returning to the start point. There is a Zoom social on the 1st Thursday and Clubroom at Little Kingshill on the 3rd Thursday each month, 8pm to 10pm.

Thames Valley Cycling group offers led rides in the southern tip of the county and into Berkshire. There are led rides on both Wednesday and Sunday from local start points in Marlow, Bourne End, Maidenhead and Holtspur.

There is something for everyone of all ages and abilities with both pedal bikes and e-bikers welcome. Occasionally there is also a chance to do some off-road riding. Hope you can join us; you would be very welcome!

For more Information:

E-mail: publicity@southbuckscycling.org.uk

Web: www.southbucksmidweekcycling.org (Midweek Group)

Web: www.southbuckscycling.org.uk (Chiltern & Thames Valley Groups)

For general information about Cycling UK visit: www.cyclinguk.org

Bucks Vision

Do you know somebody living with sight loss?

Maybe a relative, friend, or perhaps yourself?

I live with sight loss and know how isolating and frustrating it can be as it becomes difficult to participate in everyday life.

Back in 2023 I joined Bucks Vision - Wycombe Division Social Club, and would encourage anyone who has an eye condition to join too. I have made many friends, both with other members and with our volunteers. It is nice to be amongst others with similar problems to mine, and to feel accepted, included and supported. I enjoy every meeting and wish I had joined years ago!

The club meets on alternate Thursday afternoons in Hazlemere. It offers a full and varied programme of entertainment including live music, guest speakers, outings, occasionally exercises (always seated - phew!) along with a Christmas

Lunch and a Carol Service. The remaining alternate Thursdays are filled with a Craft Club which is a smaller group which is very enjoyable but sometimes has a short waiting list.

Transport can be arranged for members who live in the Wycombe area and are able to walk to a car. All the drivers are fully trained and vetted.

Anyone wanting to join Wycombe Social Club should contact Bucks Vision Volunteer Richard Martyn on 07846 389981 or Julie Moore on 07447979519.

Do you have any questions or would like more information? Perhaps you know someone who would like a "taster" afternoon with us before taking the plunge? Phone me on 07704 276377 and I will help (but not on a Thursday!)

Irene Wright

THE DOWNLEY SCHOOL "Learning, Growing and Succeeding Together"

At TDS we are trying to be more outward looking by supporting those in our local community. Our community projects last term supported the local food bank and we visited The Heights Nursing Home, spending time talking, playing games and reading with the residents of our local care home. The children were absolutely brilliant, introducing themselves, engaging in conversation and bringing a lot of smiles to a lot of faces.

Last term we celebrated anti-bullying

week by all coming into school with our odd socks (*see overleaf*). This helps us to celebrate difference and recognise how we all have a place at TDS and in the wider world. We focused on using our 'Power for Good' to combat bullying by becoming an upstander and using our kindness to help combat unkind behaviour. Anti-bullying is a theme that is threaded throughout our school year as it is embedded through our values of teamwork, inclusion, resilience,



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responsibility, respect and integrity.

Our Year 5 children have enjoyed a trip to Ufton Court where they stayed the night and joined the bustling household of Lord Francis Perkins at Ufton Manor. Every year, for 2 days, our children become part of this working Tudor estate and are given a role from servant to steward facing challenges, secrets, and surprises along the way.

Our Maths and Science enthusiasts have joined forces and entered into the national Quiz club competition. They voluntarily use their lunch breaks to revise and are dedicated to doing their best for TDS. Our choir have also been singing their hearts out and entertained the crowds of shoppers for the 'Christmas Lights Switch On' event in High Wycombe and will soon be off to the Royal Albert Hall for Echoes and to Wembley Arena for the Young Voices event.

Our PTA has also been exceptionally busy and helped TDS continue to make a big bang in the local community by hosting our annual school fireworks display. So many local people commented on the success of the event so we have already begun plans for next year. We have installed a fence for our EYFS outdoor area and continue to develop our extensive grounds and play opportunities



for children at TDS. The mud kitchen is being developed so that all children will be able to enjoy this facility. Play is a big part of learning and it continues to evolve at TDS to ensure that there is always

something for someone to do. We make the best use of our impressive grounds to zone areas for football, basketball, cricket, bikes and scooters, wheelie toys, lego, construction, skipping and small world toys, muddy play and we still have plenty of space to run around and play tag or hide and seek!

As we have such great playtimes at TDS it means that our children are really focused on their learning in class and we are very proud of what they achieve by the time they finish their journey with us and move on to secondary school. Not only are over 90% of children reaching the expected standard in Y6 SATS but nearly 50% are also performing at a higher

standard,

If you are interested in joining the TDS community and want to learn more about our school please scan the QR code to visit our website which has been updated and now includes a 360° tour of our wonderful school. We will

also happily show you around so that you get to see the school in action.



Hillclimb Garage News

A Christmas Market to Remember and the 2025 Electric Car Sales Report



Christmas Market Review - Supporting Wycombe Food Hub



And just like that, all the Christmas fun is over and, as the long winter nights get behind us, we are looking forward to the wonderful season of spring, with lighter nights and warmer days ahead. Looking back across the festive season we were so proud to host the 6th Littleworth Road Christmas Market, and what a success it was..!



With a record number of stalls full of lovely Christmas gifts and treats, the market proved more popular than ever. The feedback has been so lovely and we cannot thank Shirley, her team of amazing organisers and the stall holders enough for all their hard work, and of course Santa and Rudolph. A huge thank you also goes to everybody that attended.

Your wonderful support helped local, community businesses and raised over £400 for Wycombe Food Hub!

Electric Vehicle Sales Grow in 2025 - But Miss Government Mandate Targets

DECEMBER					
	2025	2024	% change	Mkt share -25	Mkt share -24
Diesel	6,176	7,060	-12.5%	4.2%	5.0%
Petrol	57,607	59,455	-3.1%	39.4%	42.2%
BEV	47,139	43,656	8.0%	32.2%	31.0%
PHEV	16,868	12,716	32.9%	11.6%	9.0%
HEV	18,430	17,899	3.0%	12.6%	12.7%
TOTAL	146,249	140,786	3.9%		

YEAR TO DATE					
	YTD 2025	YTD 2024	% change	Mkt share -25	Mkt share -24
Diesel	103,906	123,104	-15.6%	5.1%	6.3%
Petrol	937,938	1,019,128	-8.0%	46.4%	52.2%
BEV	473,348	381,970	23.9%	23.4%	19.6%
PHEV	225,143	167,178	34.7%	11.1%	8.6%
HEV	280,165	261,368	7.2%	13.9%	13.4%
TOTAL	2,020,520	1,952,778	3.5%		

BEV - Battery Electric Vehicle; PHEV - Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle; HEV - Hybrid Electric Vehicle
Diesel and Petrol figures include Mild Hybrid Electric Vehicle (MHEV)

Total sales of new cars in the UK exceeded 2 million units in 2025 for the first time since the pandemic. Of these, 23.4% were Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV's), 13.9% Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEV) and 11.1% Plug In Hybrid (PHEV's), giving High Voltage powered vehicles 48% of the total car sales market. Petrol cars accounted for almost 1 million cars at 46.4%, with diesel continuing its steep decline, with just 5.1% of the market. BEV sales grew almost 24% in 2025, yet this was still not enough to hit the government mandate of 28% for Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) and, despite government grants to car owners and manufacturer discounts, it is possible

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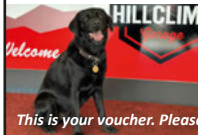
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the threshold of 33% for 2026 will also be missed. Together with BEV models becoming eligible for vehicle excise duty (Road Tax) in April this year, there are some concerns for the future of electric vehicles. However, almost all manufacturers saw record sales of electric vehicles in December, with BEVs accounting for 33% of all sales, exceeding the government mandate for the first time, and the forecast is for continued upward momentum.

Tesla again topped the best-selling models, with the Model Y and Model 3 first and second respectively. It will be interesting to see if Tesla can hold on to the top spots in 2026. Other manufacturers are starting to see significant increase in BEV sales in the UK, especially Chinese manufacturers, with BYD alone selling over 50,000 (BEV & PHEV) vehicles in the UK last year.

Lobbying of the government by industry bodies, such as the Society of Motor

Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), continues to push for an early review of the ZEV Mandate, which states manufacturers must produce 80% of vehicles with Zero Emissions by 2030. This lobbying includes further grant schemes for car sales and charging infrastructure and a review of the Mandate overall, which was conceived several years and several governments ago, since when, we have seen the ongoing cost of living crisis and significant increases in manufacturing costs since the pandemic. The current Government has said it will review the mandate in 2027, but the SMMT insists this must be brought forward! We will keep you updated. Source: SMMT/Auto Repair Focus

Finally a BIG thank you to our lovely customers for your continued support and encouragement of Hillclimb Garage. It really does mean the world to us all and we remain 'At your SERVICE'

DOWNLEY LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

How Downley Got Educated - part 1

Introduction

Downley's early educational history reflects the wider social and economic changes that shaped Britain before compulsory schooling. Class divisions, child labour, religion, and philanthropy all influenced who learned, what they were taught, and for how long. For most Downley children, education was limited, irregular, and often secondary to the need to work.

Education in the 18th Century

In 18th-century England, education was firmly class-based. Children of the upper classes were taught by private tutors or

governesses, or sent to elite public schools such as Eton or Harrow, where high fees deliberately reinforced social separation. Working-class children, by contrast, had little access to formal education. Many attended small, informal *dame schools*, run by women in their homes. These schools varied in quality and focus. Girls were usually taught domestic skills such as sewing or lace-making, while boys might receive basic instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Literacy levels remained low well into the 19th century, with around 60% of women and 40% of men unable to read or write.

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Industrial Change and New Opportunities

The Industrial Revolution placed further pressure on children's education. Long working hours in agriculture or factories left little time for learning. In response, the Sunday School movement, begun in 1780 by Robert Raikes, offered instruction on the only free day of the week. Using the Bible as a reading text, Sunday Schools aimed to teach literacy while also promoting moral behaviour and reducing juvenile delinquency. By the mid-19th century, attendance among working-class children was widespread.

Alongside this grew the voluntary school movement of the early 19th century, driven by religious and philanthropic groups seeking to improve social conditions. These schools charged small fees and received government support through building grants. Many used the *monitor system*, where older pupils taught younger ones, and some offered evening classes for boys working during the day.

Downley Before Formal Schooling

There is no known written evidence of organised schooling in Downley during the 18th century. Education for poorer families would have been extremely limited, relying on dame schools or religious instruction. For most children, work within the home or fields took

precedence over learning.

A Turning Point: Downley in the 19th Century

A significant change came with the building of the Wesleyan Chapel at Sunnybank in



1824, a building which became central to both worship and education. An article in the Windsor and Eton Express dated 7th July 1838 mentions that a wealthy, philanthropic lady by the name of Miss Carter established a school in Downley at her own expense 'for the free education of poor children', and although little is known of the location of the school it is likely to have been at Sunnybank. However newspaper records clearly record the official opening of a Sunday School at Sunnybank on 24 December 1861. A certified teacher from London's Normal Training Institution was appointed. The school operated morning and afternoon sessions, with longer hours in summer, and charged a fee of three pence per week. Families were encouraged to take advantage of what was described as a "cheap and efficient education."

The South Bucks Free Press reported on the school's opening in January 1862. The occasion included a sermon by Mr Sugden of the Wesleyan Training College, a communal tea, and a well-attended public meeting chaired by Henry Wheeler of Plomer Hill. Speakers emphasised the importance of religious instruction and the role of education in the wellbeing of the

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neighbourhood. One speaker noted that, while parents were responsible for educating their children, many were too occupied earning a living to do so without support.

National Picture by mid 19th Century

Despite local progress, the national outlook remained bleak. The Newcastle Commission Report of 1861 found that most working-class children received poor or irregular schooling. Overcrowded classrooms, rote learning, and lack of individual instruction were common, and many pupils left school unable to read or write. Girls were particularly disadvantaged, receiving limited academic instruction and inadequate practical training. Nearly half of all children did not attend school at all.

The Commission's findings strengthened the case for reform, paving the way for the Education Acts of the 1870s.

Looking Ahead

These reforms would transform education in Downley, bringing compulsory schooling, improved facilities and rising standards. Part II will explore how these changes reshaped village life and expanded opportunities for future generations.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!

Downley Local History Group

proudly present

'FURTHER TALES OF OLD DOWNLEY'

7:30 pm Saturday 13 MARCH 2026

Downley Memorial Hall

Tickets £5.00 (cash only) payable on the door. Refreshments included.

News from Sunnybank

At the beginning of a new year, we naturally look back on the year past and the year to come. We often start it with resolutions or promises, some that are spoken out loud and some that we keep to ourselves. We promise to do better, find a better work/life balance, be kinder, be more patient, to look after ourselves or one another. But if we are honest, we also carry into this new year an awareness of all the promises we have struggled to keep before. In the Methodist church we always begin our year with the Annual Covenant service, a service where we make promises to God but also remember and receive again what God promises us.

The Bible is full of the many promises that God makes us and, unlike us who struggle to keep promises, God always

keeps them. My favourite one that is repeated throughout the Bible is that God is always with us and will never leave us. The other is that however many times we make mistakes but are sorry, we can always return to God and be welcomed with open arms. If you would like to explore these promises for yourself you will always be very welcome either on a Sunday at 10am, or on a Monday morning when the chapel is open for prayer or just a bit of peace and quiet. You can also make a request for prayer, either for yourself or for someone or something else. Maybe this is the year to make a promise to explore what God might mean for you.

Happy New Year.

*Rev. Rachael
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Downley Gardening Society

October meeting - John Tyler opened our eyes to some wonderful photographs when he presented "The Countryside in Autumn". Several of them showed amazing seed heads such as dark mullein, common toadflax and scarlet pimpernel which produces whiskers on its anthers to stop climbing insects. Ivy starts to flower in autumn to provide the last meal of the year for ivy bees. These solitary but gregarious bees stock their burrows with pollen and nectar for their young to find when they hatch in the spring. John spoke about berries and surprised us with the perhaps little-known fact that the fleshy red part of the yew berry is not poisonous although the seed and every other part of the Yew tree is toxic!

November meeting - Carole Petipher talked to us about "Flowers in Folklore" at our November meeting. In centuries past, people would go to church to receive moral guidance from the vicar but for healthcare issues they turned to the "Cunning Folk." Their advice, both spoken and pictorial, made information available to the many illiterate people who needed help. Carole explained that many flowers were associated with sadness. For example, Cow Parsley was known as the naughty man's oat milk and it was said that if you brought cow parsley inside your home snakes would surely follow! In fact, the flowers resemble those of hemlock, so the folklore was to prevent people picking the wrong flowers. If you did not want to be troubled by unwanted visitors, you were encouraged to put primroses under your doormat. Bluebells were considered the favourite place that fairies slept and tales evolved to prevent children picking them as bluebell bulbs are poisonous. Some of the stories were ingenious - foxgloves are so called as the fairies would slip the flowers onto the paws of foxes so they could steal chickens! There was an audible murmur of discontent when

Carole said that it was believed that if you hung the prickly version of holly up first at Christmas, men would rule the roost! We all left with a new appreciation for flowers and thoughts of bewitching flower fairies.

December meeting - Michael Holland gave a very informative and jolly talk about the 12 plants of Christmas under the title "Wreaths, Raisins and Roasties". Michael is a Freelance Nature Educator and has worked in the Chelsea Physic garden. He talked about the earliest recorded celebration of Christmas which was in 354AD as birthdays were barely given any emphasis up until that point! He then took each of the plants and described the symbolism behind them.

We rounded up the evening with mulled wine and Alex's delicious mince pies

Dates for your diary:

February meeting - Monday, 16th February

- Billy Stott from Stott's Nurseries will talk about planting for late summer and autumn colour

March meeting - Monday 16th March - Rob Potterton from Potterton's Nurseries will talk about Alpines

April meeting - Monday, 20th April - AGM followed by John Hogarth talking about Aeroponics and Hostas

May meeting - Monday, 18th May - Dr Jill Eyres will talk about a Journey through the Chilterns

All our meetings are held in St James' Church Hall, Plomer Hill, Downley and start at 7.30pm

If you would like to become a member of the Gardening Society please contact Alison on downleygardeningssociety@gmail.com or Julia on 01494 447323. Membership costs just £5 single and £8 family per year. Website - www.downleygardeningssociety.com

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Downley Cricket Club



All here at Downley Cricket Club eagerly await the arrival of the new season and playing in a new league against many new opponents. We have joined the Thames Valley Cricket League, Division 8E, following the demise of the long-standing Mid-Bucks League. The new league will offer new opportunities and a number of different clubs to play against, sometimes on unfamiliar pitches and grounds. There have been various meetings which the very hard-working Fionn Napier and Graeme 'Aikers' Aitken have attended in preparation for this.

Boosted by a storming win-laden end to last season, in which Downley reeled off three emphatic wins in a row (over Lacey Green, Great Hampden and Winchmore Hill), turnout at indoor winter nets - which started as early as December - has been good. The very personable professional coach from High Wycombe Cricket Club, Obi (himself an 050s England player), has been putting us through our paces, often taking players aside on a one-to-one basis to emphasise strengths and gently correct faults.

Imran Hossain, whose fluent 90 in only his second game for Downley last season, has been keen to sharpen his all-round skills, the tall athletic Abu Faheem with his scintillating burst last season of 7 wickets for 8 runs, has been bowling like the wind, causing batters (including your correspondent) to choose the other net to face more friendly bowling. Meanwhile our captain Graham 'Boycs' Swales, after many weeks of hard graft in the nets, has been photographed chilling in a spa in the mountains outside Sofia, having survived

freezing Bucharest, on a memorable adventure all of us marvel at. A few newcomers have come along to the practices at John Hampden Grammar School, and indeed if you would like to join Downley Cricket Club, please visit our website, or just come along to the nets (Tuesdays 8:30 to 10pm) to introduce yourself and test your skill-level. You will find us a welcoming, inclusive club, with players of all levels of ability, with plenty of fun and laughter guaranteed during the season. Thirst is quenched at the Le De Spencer Arms after a hard day's play.

The AGM will be arranged for a date in February when those unable to come to nets so far will have an opportunity to participate in discussion about last season, elect club officials and look forward to the new beginning in the Thames Valley league.

All this would not be possible without the hard work of Den Cox and his small group of helpers in preparing the ground for play whatever the vagaries of the weather, and the selfless hours of scoring by Mandy Aitken, and John Hughes' excellent umpiring, both giving up many sunny summer Saturday afternoons to support the Club, for which we are all very grateful.

One other item of news is that club president and long-time player, Francis Braganza, has been selected to play for the Indian 070s World Cup squad in New Zealand in February/March.



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Truth or Folly

A brand-new free exhibition at Wycombe Museum by award-winning Fractured Land Collective! Opening in March

Back in 2024, a group of five artists, Fractured Land Collective, won the best exhibition award in the Bucks Culture Awards for their inaugural show at Discover Bucks Museum. Now - in what we could describe as a homecoming, given that three of us grew up in Downley - we are putting on a major show at Wycombe Museum, opening on 17 March 2026, called Truth or Folly.

As many Downley residents will know, Wycombe Museum is in what was once known as Castle Hill House, on Priory Avenue. Less well known is that this site is full of mysterious stories, such as the Saxon grave dug up by the gates in 1901. We know that grave goods from this find ended up in the British Museum, but the myth that there was a giant inside, whose bones turned to dust as soon as they made contact with the air is a persistent story adding magical elements to the tale.

In Truth or Folly, we are exploring both fact and fiction - social history blended with folklore - to make an exhibition of contemporary art; paintings, prints, photography, sonic art and sculpture.

A varied programme of workshops, talks, and film screenings runs alongside

the exhibition, with visitor-made work becoming part of the evolving show. All events will, of course, be advertised in advance on the Museum's website - and, thanks to the support of Downley Parish Council, we will be delivering a tailor-made creative workshop during Up Downley 2026. You'll all be the first to know about that one! The whole project is supported by Arts Council England and Opportunity Bucks, to whom we are very grateful.

We really want to hear from anyone who has a great tale to tell about High Wycombe or the surrounding area. It can be something that really happened, or more of an urban myth - both truth and fiction are welcome in this exhibition... If you have anything to share please do send it to fracturedlandcollective@gmail.com. The exhibition runs for nearly a year and will evolve as new stories emerge, and new artwork is added.

Truth or Folly runs at Wycombe Museum from 17th March 2026 - 7th March 2027. The exhibition and museum are both free to enter. See Wycombe Museum's opening hours and all associated events at www.wycombemuseum.org.uk.



CHAMELEON SINGLES GROUP

We started the New Year planning events at our AGM in January. There were a number of ideas to look forward to whilst our regular events will continue including the Lunch Club on the second Friday of the month, Pub Night on the last Thursday and a monthly

Zoom social where you can take part without even leaving home. All of these events are great places to meet other members and offer a special welcome to those new to the group.

The Christmas meal and disco was once again at the Spindle & Thread in High

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Wycombe. Members enjoyed a three-course meal before dancing the night away, a great way to celebrate the season. A Pub Night followed between Christmas and New Year and again was well attended.

For spring we are planning a trip to St Malo in France and for the summer will be looking forward to some days out in our local area and perhaps further afield too. Chameleon is looking at doing some walks that are more accessible this year. Aware that sometimes the terrain can be a bit difficult, we will be finding some routes that follow paved pathways which are better for those who are perhaps a little less mobile. Distances for these walks will be kept short and at the pace of the slowest walker.

Over the last few months Chameleon

members have enjoyed a number of social events including an “at home” supper, a visit to the Rebellion Brewery, Quiz Night at Widmer End and coffee and cake at a member’s home.

If you are single, 40-60’s, looking for new friends and a great social life why not give Chameleon Singles Group a try? There are no strangers at Chameleon, just new friends to be made. The group has several local people from Downley, West Wycombe, Sands, Bledlow Ridge and the surrounding areas and you would be very welcome too. To find out more call Terrie on 01494 445816, Trevor on 07879 332975 or e-mail: info@chameleonsingles.org.uk. Visit the group on-line at www.chameleonsingles.org.uk or search for us on Facebook and Nextdoor.



The **Downley 5K Family Fun Run & Walk** is back this summer, and we can’t wait to see everyone taking part once again! (see front cover photo)

If you started the year with intentions to get fitter, be more active, or simply spend more time outdoors, this is the perfect event to help keep that motivation going. Whether you’re running, walking, or just coming along for the fun, the Downley 5K is a brilliant way to enjoy some fresh air, get moving, and do something positive for yourself and our village.

It’s one of those special events that really captures the spirit of Downley – families, friends and neighbours all coming together to take part, support each other, and enjoy the buzz around the common. This year,

we’re hoping to see even more familiar faces (and maybe a few new ones too!) joining in and helping make it an even bigger celebration. The best part is that, while we’re all out enjoying ourselves, every step helps raise money to support our local community and the school PTA.

The run really is for everyone – whether you’re aiming for a personal best, enjoying a gentle jog with friends, or just fancy joining in by walking the dog. Even if you’re not taking part, come along to cheer on the participants and soak up the atmosphere – it’s great for all ages.

The **Downley 5K Family Fun Run & Walk will take place on Sunday 28th June 2026**, and **booking is now open!** Secure your place today at **Downley5.co.uk**, where you can also see past results – see if you can beat your friends! For updates and photos, follow us on **Facebook @downley5k**.

We’re also seeking volunteers and sponsors to help make this year’s event even better. If you’d like to get involved, please email downley5k@outlook.com – we’d love to hear from you!



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News from St James' Church



As I write, we are halfway through January, I have already seen snowdrops despite the alternating storms and ice, and here at St James we are thinking about the future, following the retirement of our vicar, Heather Graham, on 4 January. We are so grateful for what Heather brought to the church and to the wider Downley community.



We're currently looking at 1 Corinthians,



a letter Paul wrote to one of the first-century churches, to see what advice he gave them about living and working together when they were left without a leader. He tells them that they need to work together, each person using their particular gifts with care, recognising that "no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). As we begin to pray and talk about the future, we want to continue to live God's love in our community, our worship and our prayer – our mission statement.

It was wonderful to have so many families join us for our Christmas Eve nativity – we needed extra chairs! Several of those who took speaking roles are part of our Messy Church gatherings, which take

place on the last Sunday of the month, 4.00-5.30pm. Do come and join us for crafts, food, and 15 minutes of music, prayer and story.

Our regular services continue on Sundays at 11am and Thursdays at 10am. After the service on a Thursday, we're open till 12ish for coffee and tea, biscuits and chat – all welcome.

Events coming up

On Friday 27 February, 7.00pm we are hosting a quiz night with food. More details via our website: www.stjamesdownley.org

Easter 2026

During Holy Week, we will have a service every weeknight in the church at 7.00pm (see below). Then on Easter Sunday morning the churches together in Downley will come together for a Dawn Service on the Common, led by Rev. Rachael Prince, the Methodist Presbyterian, at 6.00am. The Easter service at St James will take place at our usual time: 11am.

Monday 30 March: Compline (a quiet 15-minute service that helps us wind down)

Tuesday 31 March: Compline

Wednesday 1 April: Compline

Thursday 2 April: Maundy Thursday Holy Communion

Friday 3 April: Tenebrae Service (gospel readings and candles, interspersed with music)

Finally, we pray that each of you reading this will know God's peace, strength and encouragement, wherever you are and in every situation.

Rowena Harrison, Licensed Lay Minister, on behalf of St James, Downley

Happy New Year!

We were delighted to support the Christmas Tree exhibition held in High Wycombe Parish Church. Our Tree was decorated with many messages from both new and established members who welcomed our work in the Community, particularly in helping to combat loneliness at this time of year.



u3a tree in High Wycombe Parish Church December 2025

We met for our Christmas Coffee Morning at Naphill Village Hall. The Antiques and Collectables Group staged a Panto based on the BBC's Antiques Road Show, followed by our Handbells Group ringing a series of Carols - accompanied by deafening audience participation. Other Christmas favourites helped the mince pies go down.

Many Groups used the opportunity to highlight the arrival of Father Christmas into our community with the Science, Geology and Computer Groups claiming credit for research into the authenticity of stories they told to their children and grandchildren. It was great fun. Missed it? Join us in 2026!

Discovering Art's day trip in December was to Birmingham Art Gallery and Library – so successful they plan to go again.

Buckinghamshire Council Update

Hope you've had a great Christmas and that the new year is treating you well.

With the bad weather we've been having, there are a lot of new potholes emerging all over Bucks, and definitely in Downley, that need proper repair. If you've got any along your road that need urgent attention, please do report them to FixMyStreet: <https://>

fixmystreet.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

With any FixMyStreet issue that gets closed without suitable comment, or is left unaddressed, please email or message me the report reference number and I'll be more than happy to follow it up. And I will send feedback on as well.



The New Year is getting off to a promising start with our interest groups (over 30) finalising their programmes for the year ahead. For example, our Local History Group is looking into the work of Sir George Gilbert Scott, born in Gawcott, near Buckingham. You may know him for his design of St Pancras Station and Saint Francis, Terriers

as well as Amersham Hospital, originally built as a workhouse. There are hundreds of architectural projects managed by Sir George and later his grandson Giles. Giles Gilbert designed the Red Telephone Box, rapidly disappearing from our streets.

If you are interested in walking, bird watching, quizzing, art, or photography (and much more) we have something to offer you. For further information and details see our website, or visit our Facebook page.

If you would like more information about your friendly, local u3a do contact me or Paul (gilliamph@aol.com).

Judith (Secretary)

hwwu3asecretary@gmail.com - 01494 562236

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I've taken up the offer by the neighbourhood police team to attend a ride-along at the end of this month, to learn more about their daily operations – this is in addition to regularly checking in with regards to asb/dangerous parking issues raised by residents. I'm also delighted that one of our police team's PCSOs has agreed to attend my next Councillor surgery on Saturday 21st February (2-4pm) in the library room at the Downley Community Centre so please do turn up if you want to talk through your concerns directly. And do keep reporting everything to 101, so that they build up a proper, documented list of issues in our ward.

Finally, people receiving parking tickets are

asking for the bays at Cross Court Shopping Parade to be repainted and it's down to the landowner to do this. I'm committed to pursuing this further. In the meantime, I would advise using an independent appeals service should any appeals with the parking firm fail, before paying the fine, if you believe it to be contestable. Citizens Advice Service have great advice on this: <https://citizensadvice.org.uk>

Please continue to contact me if there's anything I can do as your Councillor to assist you. I'm always more than happy to listen, and help where I can.

Hazel Arthur-Hewitt

Hazel.arthur-hewitt@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Mobile: 07985 468154

Top Notes

It's official, Top Notes Choir is ten years old! And, like all the best parties, we had balloons, bubbles, singing, laughter and more than a few happy tears at our Ten Year Anniversary Concert last September. In a packed-to-the-rafters St Andrew's Church, we not only sang our usual mix of showtunes, gospel and pop - all from our back catalogue - but also welcomed some very special surprise guests. Former Top Notes members from the past decade, seemingly only watching from the audience, stood one by one, adding their voices to a rendition of Carole King's "You've Got a Friend" before joining the singers on stage. Their inclusion in the concert was a complete surprise to everyone except our Musical Director, Emma Barr, who admitted afterwards that keeping the secret for so many months had sometimes been a difficult job!

As always, the concert aimed to raise money for an important local charity, which for 2025 was the lifesaving Thames Valley Air Ambulance. We set ourselves an ambitious target and we are thrilled to announce that

a combination of ticket sales, an online auction, and other fundraising efforts led to a staggering total of £5609.00 for TVAA's vital work. If you contributed in any way we sincerely thank you for making a difference, and supporting our goals.

And now, after a little rest, we've entered our 11th year brimming with excitement for our annual summer concert and with a renewed commitment to each other and the music we create in Top Notes. Save the date and join us on June 28th, at St Andrew's Church, for a show filled with music from across genres and decades. As at every concert, ticket sales will support a local charity and with so many varied songs in our concert line-up, there's sure to be something for everyone to enjoy.

Follow us on our social media channels (Instagram: [@topnoteschoir](https://www.instagram.com/topnoteschoir) & Facebook: Top Notes) for some behind the scenes fun and to keep up to date with all the info on upcoming concerts and ticket sales. And visit our YouTube Channel to hear us in action at previous performances. We're also here to answer any questions via our email: topnotestunes@gmail.com.

Hope to see you in June!

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The Woodland Preschool

The Importance of Being Outside in Nature

I'm sure most people are aware of the mental and physical health benefits of spending time outside in nature, for adults and children, but did you know there are also many benefits to children learning outside? Research conducted by the New Economics Foundation between 2003 and 2005 highlights that, as well as learning and honing new skills, outdoor learning can improve children's confidence, self-esteem, independence, ability to concentrate and their development in language and communication – which is a particular area that we at Woodlands have been focusing on for the last few years.

A recent study into the impact of learning environments on children's wellbeing and focus, also found that classrooms are often very noisy and overwhelming but when the learning was taken outside, as you'd expect, noise levels were lower, but interestingly so were the children's heart rates and at the same time their focus improved.

At Woodlands we've always recognised that some children are always on the go and need to be outside more, to run, climb, cycle or scoot. We are very lucky to have a large outside area with a brilliant climbing frame and slide surrounded by a barked play area, plus a tarmacked area for racing around on bikes or for playing running or ball games.

We now know that even the quieter or more sedentary children's learning increases when experiencing activities outside, particularly when it is structured and adult led. This is why, thanks to a Buckinghamshire Council grant, one of our staff is currently undertaking training to become a Forest Schools

Leader. If you've heard the name "Forest Schools" but don't know much else, they are "nature-based communities where trained practitioners nurture learner-led exploration and discovery, nurturing meaningful experiences for positive lifelong impacts" Children learn to assess risks as they explore the various textures and materials the woodland area has to offer, they safely experience using tools including hand saws, making fires, and have hot chocolate and biscuits round the fire.

Our woodland location and Nature Garden are perfect for Forest Schools Sessions and we are lucky to have the Common right on our doorstep for when we want to explore a larger area. Over the last few years many prospective families have asked us if we are a Forest School and, until now, we've always had to say, sadly we are not. However, we are aiming to offer Forest Schools Sessions from Summer 2026, which I think is very exciting!

Not everyone has the luxury of a Nature Garden or Forest Schools Sessions to go to, but the Wild Child website is a good place to go to for some outdoor learning activities you can do at home, or on the Common maybe if you are a resident of Downley. Whatever or wherever you do your outdoor learning, make sure you have lots of fun!

If you are looking for a nurturing, term time preschool where communication development is thoughtfully embedded into the curriculum, then come and see us at Woodlands. To book a visit or find out more please contact us at 01494 521953

admin@thewoodlandpreschool.co.uk

Downley Diary | Round-up of Regular Activities

DOWNLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE - SPRING 2026

Hall Bookings: www.downleycommunitycentre.org.uk

GROUP	DAY	TIME	CONTACT
Active Adults	Friday	13.00 - 14.00	katie.youngman@aitc.org.uk
Al-Anon Polish Group	Wednesday	19.00 - 20.30	Agatka 07935 789 041 hwradosc@gmail.com
Children's Dance Group.	Wednesday	16.45 - 18.30	Zoe.k.thompson@hotmail.com
Chipmunks Woodcarving	Wednesday	10.00 - 12.00	downleychipmunks@outlook.com
Community Library	Monday Thursday Saturday	10.00 - 12.00 15.00 - 17.00 10.00 - 12.00	enquiries@downleylibrary.org
C'lor Surgery - Downley Ward	3rd Saturday	14:00 - 16:00	hazel.arthur-hewitt@buckinghamshire.gov.uk 07966 159 791
Craft Group	1st Tuesday	9.30 - 12.30	Helen 01494 564 414
Creative Little Scientists	Alternate Mondays	13:00 - 14:00	Safina 07731 579 943
Crochet Group	Tuesday	19.00 - 21.00	woollywonkas@gmail.com 07833 910 238
Dance Classes (Ballroom & Latin)	Tuesday Wednesday	19.00 - 21.00 18.30 - 20.30	karen@comedancingwithme.co.uk 07873 53 8709
Downley Parish Council	2nd Tuesday	19.30	clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org 01494 257 711
Downley Wives	2nd Monday	14.00 - 16.00	cathyprice18@hotmail.co.uk
Downley Wine & Beer Club	2nd Wednesday	20.00 - 22.00	downleywinebeer@gmail.com
Indian Dance Classes for ladies of all ages	Saturday	09.30 - 10.30	Ananya 07840 288 292
Kingdom Dynamics Chapel	Sunday	10.00 - 12.00	Sharon 07961 822 347
Lace Making	Thursday	13.00 - 15.00	Frances 01494 524 835
Mondays Minis Playgroup	Monday Term-time	9.30 - 11.15	downleymondayminis@gmail.com 07724 385 895
M00 Music	Friday Term-time	10.50 - 12.40	elvan@moo-music.co.uk
Natalie Jane Dance School	Monday Term-time Friday Term-time	15.00 - 19.00 16.00 - 19.00	natalie@njdance.co.uk
Painting for Pleasure	Tuesday Term-time	10.00 - 12.00	Sue 01494 443 393 Sue 01494 443 393 dianacrabbe@btinternet.com
Pilates	Monday Thursday	19:30 - 20:30 09:30 - 10:30	Joseph 07983 159 678
Simply Walk (free)	Monday Thursday	10.00 - 11.30 approx 11.00 - 12.00 approx	Starts from the Community Centre simplywalks@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Soft Mobility Fitness	Tuesday	18:00 - 19:00	Kseniia 07710 000 256
Tai chi Shibashi	Monday monthly	18.00 - 19.00	Sheila 07737 581 664 44spag@gmail.com
Twins & Multiples Club	Friday Term-time	10.30 - 12.30	wendy@questcost.co.uk
Ukulele	4th Thursday	10.00 - 12.00	sylvia.chadwick@me.com
Wycombe Spiritual Centre	1st & 3rd Friday	18.30	ashleydarkwood@gmail.com
Zumba Gold	Wednesday	10.30 - 11.15	jennifer.morais.zumba@outlook.com

SUNNYBANK CHAPEL, MOOR LANE - SPRING 2026

Hall Bookings: margaretstagg75@gmail.com or call 01494 530 736

GROUP	DAY	TIME	NEW MEMBERS	CONTACT
Chiltern Hills Montessori	Weekdays	08.00 - 18.00	✓	admin@chilternhillsmontessori.co.uk 01494 514 544

GUIDE AND SCOUT CENTRE - SPRING 2026

Hall Bookings: margaretstagg75@gmail.com

Rainbows	Monday	16.45 - 17.45	✓	downley2ndrainbows@outlook.com
Brownies	Monday	17.45 - 19.00	✓	downley3rdbrownies@outlook.com
Guides	Monday	19.00 - 20.30	✓	downleygg@gmail.com
Rangers	Monday	19.30 - 21.15	✓	gill.lawrence@btinternet.com
Rainbows	Tuesday	17.30 - 18.45	✓	jansmith1611@gmail.com
Brownies	Tuesday	17.30 - 18.45	✓	jansmith1611@gmail.com
Guides	Tuesday	19.00 - 20.30	✓	margaretstagg75@gmail.com
Beavers/Cubs/Scouts	Wednesday	18.00 - 21.15	✓	gsl3rdDownley@gmail.com
Dog Training	Thursday	18.30 - 20.30	✓	suzannebullworthy@hotmail.co.uk
Beavers/Cubs/Scouts	Friday	16.30 - 21.30	✓	gsl3rdDownley@gmail.com
Dog Training	Sunday	10.00 - 12.00	✓	lisa@shunty.co.uk
Woodlands Preschool	Daily	08.00 - 15.30	✓	admin@thewoodlandspreschool.co.uk

ST JAMES CHURCH - SPRING 2026

Hall Bookings: admin@stjamesdownley.org.uk

Downley Evening WI	2nd Tuesday	19.45	✓	
St James Church Coffee Morning	Thursday	10.30 - 12.30	✓	
Top Notes Choir	Monday	19.45 - 21.45		
Chepping Wycombe Trefoil Guild	2nd Thursday	19.45		

ST JAMES HALL - SPRING 2026

Hall Bookings: admin@stjamesdownley.org.uk

Art Club	Thursday	09.30		
Coffee Stop	Monday	10.30 - 12.30	✓	christinelstyles@hotmail.com
Downley Gardening Society	3rd Monday	19.30	✓	
Downley Voices	Thursday Term time	20.00 - 21.30	✓	grannyandbobby@tiscali.co.uk
Dr Sue's Pilates	Monday	18.00 - 19.00		
Karen Pilates	Wednesday Wednesday	09.30 10.35	✓ ✓	karensynergypilates@gmail.com 07786 567 376 karensynergypilates@gmail.com 07786 567 376
Natailie's Meditation Class	Wednesday	20.30 - 22.30		
Philatelic Club	Alternate Thursday	19.30		
Sing and Sign Baby and Toddlers	Tuesday	10.00 - 13.00		
Sunaina Prolife Pilates	Saturday	08.00-09.00		
Tuneless Choir	1st and 3rd Tuesday	19.30 - 21.00		

DOWNLEY WAR MEMORIAL HALL - SPRING 2026

Hall Bookings: dwmh.bookings@gmail.com

Chiltern Hills Montessori	Weekdays	08.00 - 18.00	✓	admin@chilternhillsmontessori.co.uk 01494 531 565
Pilates	Monday	19.00 - 20.00	✓	karensynergypilates@gmail.com 07786 567 376
Yoga with Jenny	Tuesday	18:15 - 19:20		07904 438 411
Yoga with Jenny	Tuesday	19.30 - 20.40		07904 438 411
Fencing 1 to 1	Wednesday	17.30 - 19.30		
Yoga with Jenny	Thursday	19.30 - 20.40		07904 438 411
Yoga with Jenny	Friday	10.20 - 11.30		07904 438 411
Fencing 1 to 1	Friday	17.30 - 20.00		

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Life threatening or critical situations only

Telephone: 999
and ask for relevant service
AMBULANCE • FIRE • POLICE

HEALTH

NHS Direct 111
Downley Pharmacy 01494 513 060

POLICE - NON EMERGENCY

Report 101 or www.thamesvalley.police.uk

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COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr. Hazel Arthur-Hewitt
Hazel.Arthur-Hewitt@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

DOWNLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk clerk@downleyparishcouncil.org
01494 257711 (office hrs 9am-1pm Monday – Friday)

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editor@downley.org

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Downley Village News

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Any copy or photographs sent to this address may also be used on the downley.org website and facebook page: facebook.com/Downley.Community

Steering Committee: The Downley Communications Forum set up as part of the Community Plan, provides oversight to the Village News, the Village enews and the downley.org website.

Chairman: Bill Thompson; **Secretary:** Peter Loadman
Treasurer: Bob Cook; **Webmaster:** Mark Starkey

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"By far the best experience of dealing with an estate agent I've ever had. We recently purchased a house through them, James was honest, transparent, courteous, responsive and friendly throughout the entire process. Nothing slipped through the cracks and he did a sterling job of keeping the purchase smoothly on track, keeping everyone informed every step of the way. All my calls and emails were answered within minutes. I would highly recommend them and won't hesitate to work with them again in the future." - Jonathan (January 2026)



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jamesdonald@houseshaw.co.uk - 07949 890190

