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December/January 2025



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Dear Reader

In this season when we're all encouraged to be jolly, let me start this last issue of the year by asking you a question. Do you ever feel your little won't make much of a difference? I'm certainly not financially rich, so I don't have lots of money to give away, and I suppose I'm one of those people who believes I don't have much at all to give in the way of talents or skills. Yet the truth is we can all make a difference if we choose to.



Shiroh was only three years old when we were first introduced. The photograph handed to me showed a little girl wearing only a grubby hand-me-down dress. She was hungry and uncertain. Now aged nine I see Shiroh is growing into a girl full of confidence, health and self-assurance. The photograph of her in my hand today shows a young girl wearing a school uniform and a smile that time has gradually grown.

As a family we have the privilege of supporting Shiroh, who lives in Kenya, through the Compassion project, by providing a relatively small monthly sponsorship towards her education. With additional gifts we have

sent to Shiroh and her family they have been able to buy a herd of goats (the milk they provide helps sustain and feed the family), a mattress for the children to sleep on, and they've even been able to extend their simple home.

Our little has made a big difference.

We can't all help a child in Africa, I understand that, but we can all take what we've been given – whether it be time, talents, personality, finances or skills – to enrich someone else's life. As community together we have the extraordinary opportunity to make a difference simply by being ourselves. The greatest gift we can ever give to anyone is the understanding that we see their value; and whilst we use Christmas as an opportunity to spread a message of joy and peace it can be a lifestyle which lasts all year long.

Why not set yourself a challenge in 2025 to make a positive difference to other people? And, if nothing else, remember that your little is beyond price.

Lachael

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Thursday 5 December
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7.30pm
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Highworth Choral Society will be
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CHRISTMAS
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Conductor
Jen Bamford
St. Michael's Church,
Highworth
Sunday 8th December 2024
6.30pm
Accompanist
Jane Smale
Tickets £10, under 12s free
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available from Visit Highworth, members or contact
hcssecretary2019@gmail.com
website:- www.highworthchoral.co.uk

Front Cover image: kartub from Pixabay

One Act of Kindness a Day

Doesn't a year pass quickly? Advent, Christmas, New Year, seem to appear more swiftly each passing season.

This is a time of year about which I have mixed feelings. It is a season of great joy to many as some await the coming of St. Nicholas in all his Coca Cola decked finery. Others celebrate the first and second coming of their Saviour; God made man and the culmination of the Father's long-awaited plan for his creation. Both are important to me.

For eight years I was privileged to serve as Papa Noel in a special school, visiting hundreds of children and bringing smiles and hope to those who see the world differently. Although I struggle, as many do, with the commercialism of Christmas, the opportunity to serve those whom we are told by Christ to become like and



bring them joy was wonderful.

Both Christmas and New Year are also a place to reflect on new life; beginning again and a new start.

Whether you are a Christian or not, take this opportunity to decide this coming year to commit to bringing joy to those around you. Maybe look for one act of kindness a day: A smile to a stranger; greet someone on the bus; offer to mow a lawn; or make way for someone in a queue. The gift

of kindness is not limited to Christmas.

God bless you and a joyful Christmas to one and all.

*Rev. Phil Goodey
St. Michael's Church Highworth*

Christmas Funds for Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust

The annual Christmas Fair at Bowood Hotel Spa and Golf Resort is once again raising money to support the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust.

Christmas shoppers will have the chance to browse unique gifts from craftsmen and women amid the atmospheric surroundings of Bowood at the Bowood Festive Food and Gift Fair on **Monday 2 December and Tuesday 3 December**. Whether you're looking for stocking fillers, leather goods, festive food, inspiration for important family members or just to spoil yourself, you'll find all you need at the fair.

The annual fair is a showcase for the best in local producers whilst also raising funds for the Bobby Van. Director Jennie Shaw explains:

"The charity works in partnership with Wiltshire Police with three operators who are former police officers; visiting homes across Wiltshire and Swindon, to offer free practical home security measures and fire safety assessments for people over 60, those at risk of domestic abuse, or over 18 with a registered disability. It also has a team of Stay Safe Online volunteers who visit older and vulnerable people in their homes and

give talks to groups about preventing online fraud.

"The fair is such a lovely event because, within the setting of Bowood's hotel with the music, carols and the buzz of everyone shopping, you really get a sense of the season. It's such a joyous time but it also helps us to think of those who need our help all year round. The money raised by the fair will go such a long way to continuing to support the safety and joy of those vulnerable people and will allow them to enjoy the festive period too."



The Monday evening's preview event runs from 4pm to 8pm at just £15 per ticket. Visitors will be greeted with a glass of wine and canapes, as well as atmospheric music and carols in the Kerry Suite. The fair is open again between 9am and 3pm on the Tuesday providing another chance to meet up with friends to shop, share Christmas plans and enjoy the festive atmosphere.

Tickets are available online at www.wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk/future-events with a special two-for-one offer on £5 tickets for Tuesday 3 December.

An Update from Highworth Community Cider Project



Zara and Cecilia present cheque to Root and Branch

We have had a year of events, shows and, of course, lots of cider!

We attended our regular events, such as Highworth's May Day Festival and Fairfield Steam Classic and Retro Show, but this year we added a few new events to our calendar such as Follyfest (Faringdon), Battle for Black Cat (Sevenhampton) and Gloucestershire Vintage and Steam Rally (South Cerney). These were all fantastic family events where we were warmly welcomed and had fun sharing our cider and our community ethos with new and familiar faces!

Due to all our summer events, we are delighted to say we sold lots of cider and donated money to: Root and Branch; Highworth Community Shed; Highworth Community Larder; Highworth Scouts and Highworth Forget-Me-Not. It was also lovely to meet so many of you at Highworth's Volunteer Expo.



Look at the diversity of apples we have in and around Highworth!

This autumn we collected over 30 different varieties of apples, started growing our own mother to make our own raw Apple Cider Vinegar and, of course, we have continued to make cider!

To all our cider fans, apple donators and our volunteers, we thank you for making a difference to our community by sharing your time, money and apples with us. If you are interested in joining us, please see our Facebook page (scan the QR code), and we look forward to seeing you at Coleshill Christmas Craft Fayre and Highworth's Christmas Lights Switch-on and festive market.

Wishing you all a lovely 2025 from the Highworth Community Cider Project.

Cecilia Johnson

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

I thought people who didn't get to the Highworth Artists' Society's exhibition last month might like to see this painting by Joan O'Rourke. It is a scene from the Old Golf Course where the Society based one of their painting days.

Mirian Sirrelle



UTRNTA

Dear old Bill King is to address the Upper Thames and Ridgeway National Trust on 16 January at 2:30pm on the subject of 'The River at War', this time at Lechlade Memorial Hall.

You would be so welcome to join us.

Phil Eagle

Scouts Christmas Post

It's that time of year again and stamps for the Scouts Christmas Post are currently on sale at our new outlet, The Highworth Emporium, which is open Monday to Saturday from 9am until 4:30pm (4pm on Saturdays). The post box is also situated there.



We are grateful to Aga and her team for helping us, and they are looking forward to seeing lots of you as Aga explains:

"We are really excited to be supporting the Scouts in their service to our wonderful community. At the Highworth Emporium we have a vast

selection of Christmas cards, so it just makes sense to offer the Scouts stamps as well, all under the same roof. We hope to see many of you Highworthians popping in to choose from our wide range of Christmas cards and gifts and purchasing some Scout Stamps at the same time."

The stamps still cost a bargain 35p each and the last day for posting is **Tuesday 10 December at 4pm**. Delivery will be the following weekend. We politely ask you to check the delivery area and note we do not deliver to Faringdon or Lechlade. Please contact David Roblin on 07887 847952 if you need more information.

Looking ahead, we will again be running the Scarecrow Trail over the Easter holidays next year. All details, including the theme, will be in the February issue of LINK Magazine. Also, next year's quiz will be on **Friday 25 April**.

We would like to thank everybody who has supported the group in any way over the past year by helping us financially, supporting our fundraising events, or just showing an interest in our activities. We continue to provide quality scouting every week (and sometimes at weekends) for around 140 youngsters. None of this would be possible without a fantastic leadership team, to whom must go the biggest thanks of all.

David Roblin



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Highworth Climate Talks

We welcome **Ashley Smith** on **17 December**, the founder of **WASP** or **Windrush Against Sewage Pollution** – a local charity that has had national influence through the quality of its data analysis and investigations into the water industry and regulators. His talk is entitled '**Privatised Water: Three Decades into Monopoly Ownership**'.

Ash decided that people had to fight back if we are not to lose our precious waterways to profiteering monopoly businesses. The group is made up of a core team and a wider group of volunteers and supporters. Ash is very knowledgeable and has the information and photos to back up all his data!

And you're welcome to join us again on **21 January** to hear an inspiring talk from **Dr. Halid Abu Bakar** from the University of Cambridge Institute of Sustainability Leadership; who is an international expert working towards the idea of a circular economy.

Will some of our waste plastic end up in the sea, endangering wildlife? Will our defunct digital items end up smouldering with toxic fumes in some distant country's waste mountain? What if our world was redesigned so that materials never become waste and nature is regenerated? The good news is that, on the international scene, scientists have a plan to make that happen – the idea of a 'Circular Economy'.

It's great that Weigh It Up is now in the heart of our town, making it easier for us to avoid plastic waste. Far too much of what we buy comes encased in plastic!

All our talks take place at Highworth Methodist Church, Vicarage Lane, Highworth SN6 7AD. Doors open at 7pm for refreshments and talks begin at 7:30pm.

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Ask AMS

Tax rules for Christmas parties

The rules around tax relief for Christmas parties are fairly generous so long as the party is open to all employees and not just directors/management.

- Party costs (including travel etc.) are fully tax deductible if they are no more than £150 (inc. VAT) per head (including guests).
- Be careful. If, say, £200/head is spent, then the Employer will need to pay PAYE and National Insurance on the total party cost of £200/head – not just on the excess £50/head.
- The £150 is an annual limit so would cover a Summer Party and a Christmas Party in the same tax year. But, if the costs of multiple parties exceed £150/head, then an Employer could use the £150/head limit to cover the most expensive party, and only pay PAYE/NI on the other one.

Peter Bromiley ACA

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Halo Swim School

at Highworth Recreation Centre

Keep your little ones swimming and learning a valuable life skill by signing them up to our Halo learn to swim programme.

Group Swimming Lessons: Children can learn to swim within a friendly instructor lead group session. Lessons take place Monday-Saturday.

One to One Private Swimming Lessons: These lessons either follow the Swim England national plan or they may just be to work on specific areas of weakness for a short period.

All of our lessons are 30 minute sessions and run weekly all year around (apart from two week break at Christmas). Our Halo Swim School lessons are taken by approved Swim England qualified teachers.

www.haloleisure.org.uk

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halo

Prospect Hospice's Light Up a Life Remembrance Service

Prospect Hospice invites the community to join its annual Light Up a Life remembrance service, honouring and celebrating the lives of loved ones who are no longer with us.

Last December, Pippa's husband Tom passed away after a battle with bowel cancer. Reflecting on the care provided by Prospect Hospice, Pippa shared, "The team from Prospect Hospice were like a light in the darkness. Tom wanted us to spend our last precious moments together as a family and, thanks to Prospect Hospice, we could."



Pippa, Tom, Edie and Charlie

Charity Christmas Choral Concert

Shrivenham Ladies' Choir and the Defence Academy Military Wives' Choir will be performing on Friday 6 December, 7pm, in St. Andrew's Church, Shrivenham SN6 8AQ.

Tickets are £10 (tickets for under-16s are £5) and are available from Shrivenham Post Office, online (www.st-andrews-shrivenham.eventbrite.com) and on the door. There will also be a bar and raffle.

In aid of St. Andrew's Church Restoration Project, Pennyhooks Farm Trust and military charities.

This year's service will be held on **Sunday 8 December** at 4pm at the hospice in Wroughton. It offers a special opportunity for families like Pippa's to gather, share memories and light a candle in remembrance. The event will feature heartfelt readings, musical performances, a candle-lighting ceremony and a remembrance tree for personal dedications. Attendees will also have time for reflection and connection over refreshments.

As the festive season approaches, this service provides a comforting space for those feeling the absence of a loved one. By dedicating a light you can help support families facing similar journeys this Christmas.

For more information or to donate, please visit www.prospect-hospice.net/lightupalife

Gold Earth

NURTURE by nature

My name is Samina, and I'm the founder of Gold Earth Hair Essence, a natural hair care product handcrafted right here in Highworth. I wanted to reach out to share my personal journey.

After going through menopause and experiencing significant hair loss, I found little help from doctors, despite trying numerous expensive hair care brands. It was my mother, drawing from knowledge passed down from generations, who advised me to turn to natural remedies. Inspired by this, I created Gold Earth Hair Essence, a blend of 30 natural oils, spices, and herbs that has transformed my hair – and now the hair of many others.

As a beautician and hairdresser with over 20 years of experience, I've seen firsthand how nature can provide the best solutions. I would love the opportunity to share this story with our local community and spread the word about a product crafted in Highworth, deeply connected to its heritage and natural surroundings.

Come and see me at Highworth Market 8am - 2pm – Saturday's only



[goldearth.co.uk](https://www.facebook.com/goldearth.co.uk)



[goldearth.co.uk](https://www.instagram.com/goldearth.co.uk)

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Highworth Twinning Association

Quiz night - January 30th

Council Community Room, Gilbert's Lane. Tickets with be available at 'Visit Highworth' in early January.

Also

Visit to Pontorson

By coach and ferry

29th May to 1st June

Approximate cost £220 per person

If you would like more details, please contact Richard Pearce on 07513 009044 or rjpearcehta@gmail.com

CAP Says Farewell to Eoli



We would like to say 'farewell' and massive 'thank you' to Eoli Pieri who has been an amazing supporter of CAP in Highworth as both Life

Skills Manager for nine years and a Debt Coach for seven.

We join with the hundreds of people in Highworth and the surrounding areas who Eoli has worked with and helped; to thank her for making such a difference in their lives, often in the darkest of times.

Eoli said, "It has been a huge privilege to walk alongside clients as they have journeyed out of debt. I have found it very emotional to look back over the years remembering numerous CAP friends, especially those whose lives have been radically changed. Some have remained in contact, wanting to grow in themselves and in Christian faith."



Eoli (front row, second from the left) and the CAP team

We wish Eoli well as she steps into her next season in life!

Claire Titcombe

Highworth CAP Debt Centre Manager

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a debt help charity. If you are struggling with your finances, you can find out more about the services CAP offers in your area by visiting www.capuk.org/help or calling 0800 328 0006 free of charge.

Winter Arts and Crafts with u3a

Do these cosy winter evenings leave you feeling you want to do something creative? Well the u3a could be for you. We have twenty different groups to inspire you to take up a new art or craft or pursue an existing one.

If you are handy with a needle there are plenty of groups which would welcome you; such as the Dressmaking group or the Sewing for Pleasure group. The Crochet and Knitting group make items to help local hospitals and charities and enjoy each other's company and ideas. All abilities are welcome at the Embroidery and Needlework group and there is always someone to help if you need it. You can also enjoy embroidery and cross stitch or whatever craft you are doing at the time in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Patch and Chat offers hand and machine quilting and suggested projects. A small library will give you ideas for your work.

Or perhaps you prefer to paint? The Easy Painting, Painting for Fun, Painting Together and Painting, Pastels and Mixed Media groups all provide a friendly, relaxed and encouraging environment for those who enjoy painting – with whatever medium you like and however good (or not!) you are.

If you would like to express yourself with flowers the Flower Arranging group will help you under the leadership of a creative tutor. Members bring their own flowers and foliage and create arrangements ranging from traditional to modern.

The Cartonnage group enables you to make your own bespoke fabric covered boxes. Make a pen pot, a set of drawers, a gift box or a box with a magnetic lid. Card is covered in fabric and glued. No stitching is needed. We also have upholstery and refurbishing groups, paper crafting groups and even a scrapbooking group where you can work on your own project or join a mini-workshop.

Exchange knowledge and experience in the creation of photographs with digital cameras in the Digital Photography group. This is in Liden with Zoom meetings every four weeks.

The u3a is for people no longer in full-time employment. To learn more visit www.swindonu3a.org.uk, telephone the office on 01793 614629 between 10am and noon on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, or visit our Facebook page.

A Great Year for Highworth Forget-Me-Not

At Highworth Forget-Me-Not we can reflect back on a fantastic 2024: Running our monthly Musical Memory Café; weekly drop-in at Friendship Friday's; twice-monthly Sandwiches and Sing-along sessions, and Love To Move seated exercise sessions, together with developing our allotment too!

We have been blessed with some amazing performers at the monthly cafés and we're always looking for others to bring music and joy to the room. We have sadly lost some of our regulars over the course of the year, but we raise a cuppa to them and will never forget any of our loved Forget-Me-Not family.

We feel hugely honoured that Mayor Julie Murphy chose Forget-Me-Not as her charity of the year. We look forward to supporting her events together. Thanks also to all our supporters, including: Highworth Town Council, for our regular venue and allotment; Highworth Lions, for providing transport and other support; Wiltshire Community Foundation, for providing ongoing financial support; Wincanton, for their support with the Forget-Me-Not allotment and

funding; and to our Community Partners at the Coventry Building Society for providing a grant to support specific events like this year's panto visit and a fish and chips lunch.



Also a big thank you to our local fundraisers throughout the year. Thank you to The Old Bakery and Bloomfields (and John and Jane especially) for our fabulous sandwiches, and Dumbledart's and Fung Yee for our delicious monthly cakes and savouries. Finally, a huge thank you goes to our amazing team of volunteers who turn out week after week, month after month, to ensure that their fellow Highworth residents who are either living with dementia or seeking friendship have a regular opportunity to meet-up and have a great cuppa; a warm welcome and a good time out.

Looking forward, we are planning to continue all of our regular activities and maybe some more irregular ones too; and our new year kicks off with a special Friday's lunch at The Saracens and a welcome to Charmaine for our January monthly café.

Visit Highworth this Christmas

After all the excitement of the switching on of the Christmas Lights, Santa will be in his grotto in Visit Highworth on Saturday 7 December from 9am to 2pm. Our grotto is small and, as visits are pre-booked, it is ideal for children who prefer something a little more low key. Priced at £3.50 your visit also includes a gift. Please drop in or call on 01793 764440 to book a slot.



We are now fully stocked with an amazing range of gift items, Christmas cards and decorations all made by incredibly talented local craft artists. If you didn't make it to the craft fayre in St. Michael's Church, some of the artists have their work in our shop so please pop in and

have a browse. We may even have a few Highworth Calendars left featuring events and scenes around Highworth, priced at just £8.



Please note that we will close at 3pm on Saturday 21 December and re-open at 10am on Thursday 2 January.

If you feel that you have overindulged over the festive period and need to blow away the cobwebs, taking a Town Tour with one of our guides could be just the ticket. The cost is £5 per person and, as well as some light exercise and fresh air, you may well learn some very interesting facts about the town!

As an information centre, we can (hopefully) answer any questions or queries you may have about Highworth, as well as provide information on a range of attractions both nearby and further afield.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all the Volunteers at VHL. We look forward to seeing you in 2025!

The Generation Game

Are you baffled by the generation jargon: Baby boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z and so on? Wikipedia, the online encyclopaedia that wiped out Britannica, offers a neat classification by years of birth of all the population of Highworth.

Born 1883 to 1900: The Lost Generation. The first generation to mature in the 20th Century, many engaged in WW1. Perhaps 'Lost' owing to the huge human losses in the war?

Born 1901 to 1927: The Greatest Generation. They were shaped by the Great Depression and were the primary generation enlisted in WW2.

Born 1928 to 1945: The Silent Generation. Coming of age in the post-war era, Silents tended towards conformity and traditionalism. The term 'silent majority' started here.

Born 1946 to 1964: The Baby Boomers. I'm a boomer. We arrived in the post WW2 baby boom. Ours was a time of economic prosperity and rapid technological progress.

Born mid-1960s to late 1970s: Generation X. Gen Xers were sometimes called the 'Latchkey Generation', which stems from their returning as children from school to an empty home. And still happening?

Born early 1980s to mid-1990s: Millennials. As the first generation to grow up with the internet, Millennials have been described as the first global generation.

Born mid-1990s to early 2010s: Generation Z. Having grown up with access to the internet and mobile phones, Gen Zed's are the 'digital natives'. The negative effects of screen time are most pronounced in adolescents.

Born early 2010s to mid-2020s: Generation Alpha. Named after the first letter in the Greek alphabet, Gen Alpha is the first to be born entirely in the 21st Century and the third millennium.

Of course, these definitions are rather loose, so look out for a baby boomer checking his messages in the High Street. He may trip over you.

Adrian Young



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A National Trust Year of Numbers

Wow! What a year! Here's our whirlwind twelve months in numbers.

At the Heritage and Rural Skills Centre over 260 people took part in 33 courses. A new partnership with Bishopsland Educational Trust brought silversmithing courses, and we've been delighted to welcome green woodworker Rob Thorpe, weaver Scarlet Oliver and the Future Trees Trust to the Skills Centre community in the Sheep Yard (only two units left now). We held our first conference with over 80 delegates and demonstrators – keep an eye out for the 2025 programme as it will be on our website (www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit) and on our Facebook page 'Heritage and Rural Skills Centre NT'.

Over 800 people came to one (or more) of our Open Days with 300 coming in September for Heritage Open



Day – that was a busy one! The mill ran for a short while before low water levels stopped play, many visitors discovered the underground bunker for the first time and many more visited the bookshop. Farm history tour guides shared the stories with over 250 people.



Over 3200 students came on school visits. 416 Year 5 students found out ways to save the planet at our Earth Summit. Duke of Edinburgh students tidied up the orchard and created a lovely display in the bookshop. Young people from alternative education came for a series of blacksmithing workshops. We launched a weekend club for 16 young people as part of the National Saturday Club. Our family workshops and tracker packs have been a hit with younger visitors. We also made time to be a part of the Highworth Volunteer Expo – it was so lovely to meet many of you.

None of what we do is possible without our brilliant volunteers and we thank them all for their time, their enthusiasm and their generous spirit. We wish them a peaceful and restful festive season – every one of them deserves it.

*Sarah Hannis
Senior Volunteering and Community Officer*

ADVERTORIAL

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What does the word 'Chiropractic' mean to you? Did you know that there are over 50 different schools and 200 different adjustments?

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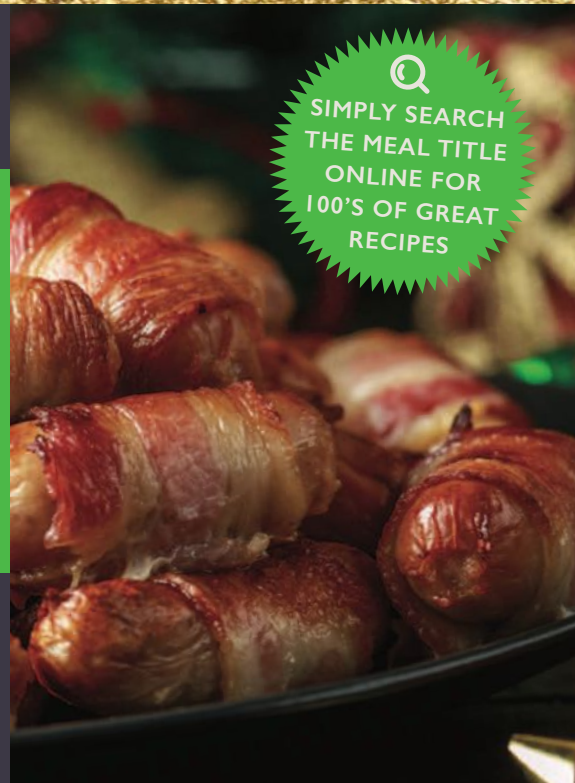
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We are a friendly group with speakers, refreshments, raffle, luncheon club, outings and social events.

We meet on the **first Wednesday of the month** in the Council Offices in Gilberts Lane at 2.15pm.

New members are always welcome.

Contact: Margaret 07843 967260 / Ann 07789 360514

Your Surgery Needs Your Views!

We are extremely fortunate in Highworth to be part of one of the best medical practices in the Swindon area, but the partners of the practice know things are not perfect. Rather than moaning to your friends (which may well raise your blood pressure!) the best way to express your praise or concerns is to talk to the Patient Participate Group (PPG).

We welcome all your feedback and want a balanced view on the performance of the practice so that we can bring about positive change.

The Government expects every medical practice to have a PPG to enhance the communication between the surgery and the patients. In Highworth this group has operated through an online group and also through a face-to-face group.

Several times a year, the PPG issues a survey to patients who have joined the group and the results of this survey are looked at carefully; any actions identified from the survey are put to the team at the surgery. The group aims to challenge and encourage the practice in their work. Their comments are guided by the information that comes through the survey and from contacts with patients as they go around the town.

Issues covered by the group include: Communication between the practice and the patients; access to appointments; telephone call waiting times; organisation of large events, e.g. 'flu and covid vaccinations; contact via reception; and future

provision at the surgery to cope with the growing population of Highworth. The more feedback the PPG receives the more effective the group can be in representing the interests of the patients.

The group is also consulted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection team when they visit the surgery.

I would like to encourage as many patients as possible to sign up for the online group, but even more important is the need to increase the size of the face-to-face PPG. It would be great if we could increase the diversity of the group so that we are even more representative of patients; and membership of this group only involves attending around three meetings a year.

If you are interested in joining the VPPG (online) group and taking part in our surveys, please go to www.westropmedicalpractice.nhs.uk, and click on 'patient info'. There you can fill in the form to join the online (virtual) group. If you are unable to access the form online, please speak to Reception at the surgery and they will register you for the group.

To join the face-to-face group, please contact Amy Kitchener, the Highworth Operations Manager, via Westrop Highworth Surgery.

*Phil Baker
Chair of Highworth PPG*

Join Highworth Historical Society in January

Our Society does not meet in December so we will be back on Wednesday 22 January when our speaker will be Bill King.

Bill will be taking us further along the 'Thames Path' in his talk; this time past Reading towards Marlow. The walk contains some of the most beautiful and historic parts of the Thames Valley – just right to forget chilly January and think of spring.

We now meet in St. Michael's Church. The entrance is through the south door, off the High Street. As usual the doors open at 7pm for a 7:30pm start. Visitors are always welcome, with a charge of £3 (cash only) at the door.

Tea/coffee is available and our publications about the town's history are for sale, along with some second hand history books. If you would like to become a member, £12 covers our nine meetings each year.

For more information, contact Chris on 01793 764811, or visit our website at www.highworthhistoricalsociety.org.uk.

Chris Suter

To advertise in The Highworth Link contact

advertising@highworthlink.co.uk
or visit www.highworthlink.co.uk

Ending the Year With UTRNTA

And so the year winds to its end. Two months' time and I'll be putting up my pillowcase... noting it is the one from last year and it didn't do all that well then.

Since my last contribution our group, the Upper Thames and Ridgeway National Trust Association, has been to Chedworth on a private visit, where we enjoyed the undivided attention of our personal guide. The place is so remarkable it seems the Romans are still there and any minute a bloke in a skirt will appear out of the trees and demand to know (in Latin of course) who the heck we are? The location, at the head of the valley, is so incredible it seems that it should be brought out nearer to civilisation for the 21st century to appreciate it better.

At our last committee meeting we discussed next year's visits and the general area of our annual 'holiday' in 2025. I can reveal that it will be in Suffolk and in the area of Bury St. Edmunds. No more details yet but we'd love to hear from you if you wish to accompany us.

In the meantime, it may not be too early to wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Phil Eagle

South Marston Gardening Club

Join us for our final meeting of the year on **Monday 2 December for our Christmas Social with food and a quiz, from 7:30pm to 9:30pm at South Marston Village Hall, Old Vicarage Lane.**

Come and meet Gardening Club members and learn more about us. We're a small, friendly group eager to welcome new members. We'll have tea and coffee available, but feel free to bring something a little stronger and a plate of food to share. Prizes await the winning quiz team!

Our 2025 Programme will be in February's issue. Annual Membership is only £15 or, as a visitor, £5 on the door.

Please contact Angela on 07789 068340 for more information.

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Santa Visits with Highworth and District Lions Club

We have been very busy prepping Santa's sleigh ready for our upcoming sleigh events and you will find us at the following locations in December:

- **Saturday 7 December**
9am till 4pm, at Orbital Retail Park
- **Saturday 14 December**
8am till market closing, the Highworth Podium
- **Sunday 15 December**
9am till 4pm, Tesco Extra, Ocotal Way, Swindon
- **Wednesday 18 December**
5pm, Blunsdon and Abbey Farm visits
- **Thursday 19 December**
5pm, Tadpole Garden Village and Oakhurst visits
- **Friday 20 December**
9am till 4pm, Highworth Co-Op
- **Sunday 22 December**
10am till 4pm, Asda Wallmart, Orbital Retail Park

Please come along and see Santa and his cheeky elves at any of the above locations. We look forward to seeing you there!

We are pleased to say we have had some new shop volunteers start in our charity shop. However, we still need a few more volunteers to cover some hours each week so please get in touch if you are interested in helping us.

We also need more members to join the Club side of the charity to help out with its running. If you can spare a few hours a month then please get in touch for more information on volunteering with us.

We have recently supported:

- Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal = £300
- Christmas CAP Hamper and Dinner Appeal = £600
- Walking Football for seniors (purchase of footballs and shin pads) = £250
- Highworth Brownies Transport Appeal (for trip to Longleat) = £1,000
- Highworth Brownies (neck tie donation) = £200
- Pinehurst Forget Me Not (teas, coffees and biscuits donation) = £360 for the year

Melanie Davenport
secretaryhighworthlions@gmail.com





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News From The Grove Trust



Happiness at Eastrop Infant School

This term has been a really busy one and we know next term will be too! We have enjoyed learning many new things.

We launched our first Developing Mathematics Research Group in partnership with the Mobius Maths Hub. Led by our Primary Maths Specialist, Mr. Maz, the group aims to support a diverse range of schools across the Swindon and Wiltshire areas, helping them unlock the full potential of every teacher and student. Teachers in the group engage in continuous professional development through collaboration, reflection and active learning. This includes attending workshops, observing live maths lessons, advancing their qualifications, peer mentoring and participating in professional learning communities. Effective professional development for mathematics is hands-on, deepens content knowledge and connects learning to real-world applications. We are proud to be able to offer our expertise and support to other school settings and foster positive contributions to education locally.



This term the staff and children have also had opportunity to focus on the importance of mental health and well-being through the Hello Yellow Day that we held. Across the classes we have been looking at a variety of books and activities that help us to recognise the variety of emotions that we experience and how that might make us feel, recognising that we all feel differently at different times.

We looked at books such as 'The Jar of Happiness' and this enabled us to create our own jars of happiness. We thought about which colours match our feelings and



looked at the book 'Happy'. This book is all about different fish that represent different feelings and we had a go at drawing our own.

Julie Warburton,
Executive Headteacher



Southfield Junior School Wombles

It has been lovely to read in the LINK Magazine the number of organisations around our town that have been involved in organising litter picks. Inspired, a team of children from Southfield Junior school decided they should help too.



Our children enjoy litter picks; it makes them feel proud and gives them a huge sense of achievement. Keeping Highworth tidy whilst helping to protect our wildlife – what's not to like? They were quite upset by the amount of broken glass around the grass area by the Co-op that they had to remove, a place where young children run in the leaves and animals come for a sniff. So please do your bit... don't drop litter, convince your friends not to do it and, if you get a chance, join a community litter pick!

Whilst wandering, we spoke of the Wombles and Mrs. Law created a wombling poem for the children to enjoy. We hope you enjoy it too!

*Out the gate, along the street wombling free,
The wombles of Southfield Junior School are we.
Picking up rubbish and bits that we find
Things that ordinary folks leave behind.*

*Come on be a womble and don't drop your stuff.
Chucking it on the road, that don't make you tough!
Throw it into a bin when you throw it away,
To make it safer for children and animals to play.*

*Back to school a different way – still wombling free.
Looking for litter wherever it may be.
Bin bags into the skip with a bang when they land,
Then off to the toilet to scrub at our hands!*

Kimberley O'Sullivan, Head of School

TinyBugs Yoga

Welcome to TinyBugs Yoga, bringing yoga and mindfulness to mums, children, and families in Highworth!



Created by a local mum and experienced preschool leader, at TinyBugs we believe in supporting you and your little ones to cultivate emotional wellness through yoga, breathing exercises and fun bonding games!

So pop by our weekly yoga classes for mums and babies, or toddlers and preschoolers, and help your 'minibeast' find peace – for a moment at least! You could also celebrate the season with the whole family in our Festive Family Yoga; or gift yourself a much needed rest with a restorative mums-only yoga night – the perfect respite from this busy time of year!

Join us for some cosy, winter magic – reserve your peace at www.tinybugsyoga.co.uk, or contact Beth at @tinybugsyoga on instagram.

WI Carol Service

Highworth W.I. would like to invite anyone (not just ladies) to join them at their annual Carol Service on Wednesday 4 December, 6:45pm, in Highworth Methodist Church on Vicarage Lane. Coffee and mince pies will be served.



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Local Author Publishes First Book

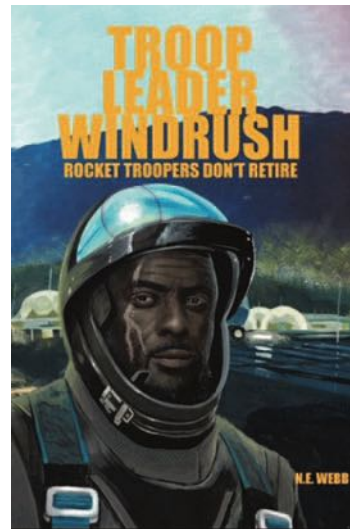
Nathan Webb is a local Highworthian and is excited to announce that he's recently published his first book. He explains:

"All my life I've been imaginatively creating stories in my head but finally, after many years of procrastination, I decided it was time to actually start writing these stories.

"I began writing a story outline in the notes section on my phone whilst I was on a bus journey. The story had a start and an end but was really missing something. I downloaded a book on Audible all about story structure (apparently Jane Austin is the gold standard of story structure) and once I'd learned how to create a well-rounded story I set about actually writing it. I still wrote on my phone as it was super convenient and it stopped my pointless doom scrolling and checking social media.

Forty thousand words later and I'd got a manuscript which I passed round all of my friends to read and offer feedback and spell check.

(Thank you, thank you to everyone who helped me). I also happen to be pretty good at art so creating a front cover that could entice readers was achievable.



The next hurdle for me to overcome was to work out how I'd get a book published and it turns out it's really not as hard as you'd think. Using Amazon Kindle and their print on demand service it took just over a week to get published so I was very relieved."

'Troop Leader Windrush: Rocket Troopers Don't Retire' is available now to purchase at

<https://amzn.eu/d/imBMbiB> and would make a fantastic Christmas gift.

Celebrate Christmas with Your Local Churches



Highworth Methodist Church

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER

4pm Carol Service

CHRISTMAS DAY

10am Christmas Morning Celebration

10:15am Holy Communion

Highworth Community Church

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER

10:30am Christmas Celebration
(at Warneford School)

CHRISTMAS DAY

10am Christmas Morning Celebration

Highworth United Reformed Church

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER

4pm Carol Service

St. Michael's Church, Highworth

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER

6pm Carol Service

FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER

4pm Christingle Service

CHRISTMAS EVE

4pm Crib Service

11:15pm Holy Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY

8:45am Holy Communion

10:15am Holy Communion

St. Leonard's Church, Stanton Fitzwarren

CHRISTMAS EVE

3:30pm Walking Nativity with procession
and carols in Church Lane

7pm Carols by Candlelight (inside St.
Leonard's)

CHRISTMAS DAY

10am Holy Communion (at St.
Margaret's, Stratton)

St. Leonard's, Blunsdon

SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER

4pm Christingle Service

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER

6pm Carol Service

CHRISTMAS EVE

3pm Crib Service

11:15pm Holy Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY

10am Holy Communion

St. John the Baptist, Inglesham

SATURDAY 14 DECEMBER

2pm Carol Service

St. James' Church, Sevenhampton

WEDNESDAY 18 DECEMBER

7pm Carol Service

CHRISTMAS DAY

9am Holy Communion

St. John the Baptist, Hannington

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER

4pm Carol Service

CHRISTMAS DAY

10:30am Holy Communion

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Saturday 21 December, 5pm

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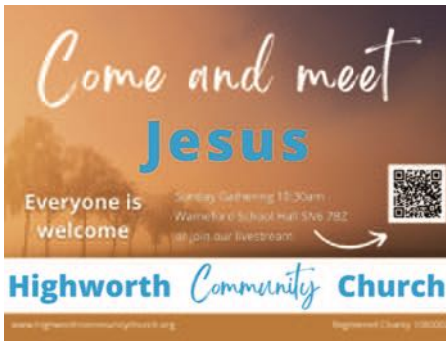
Hi, I hope you're all ok. I can't believe 2025 is so near! It's been a really busy year, not just for me, but for the community, with lots of events, business changes in the High Street, and not forgetting all the roadworks!

We are lucky to have four schools in Highworth: Westrop Primary and Nursery School; Eastrop Nursery and Infant School; Southfields Junior School, and Warneford School. One thing they all have in common this year is that they all have been super busy and seen some big changes! Eastrop and Southfields have an Executive Headteacher over both schools, and Warneford has joined a Trust and has a new Principal.

I will be contacting all the local schools between now and January to give you further details, facts, and information about these changes – I hope they talk to me!

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sophie Nolan



Festive Wordsearch

It's nearly Christmas time everyone – so let's have a bit of fun and see if you find all these words in the jumble of letters. They're forwards, backwards and diagonal.

Have a great holiday time and I'll catch up with you all in 2025!

Constance

s	s	t	o	c	k	i	n	g	g	n	i	d	d	u	p	l
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ADVENT
BAUBLE
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CANDY CANE
CARDS

CAROLS
CHOCOLATE COINS
CRACKERS
HOLIDAY
HOME ALONE

MARKET
MISTLETOE
NOEL
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Answers on page 39

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Highworth Artists' Society Autumn Exhibition Success

It seems a while since our Autumn Exhibition in October, but we wanted to thank everyone who came, browsed, admired and purchased some of the artwork on display. We welcomed almost 500 visitors over the week and had some lovely feedback.

Our winners of the week were artists John Sirrelle, with his painting 'Concentration' (pictured below with the Rev. Phil Goody, who opened the exhibition), and Joan O'Rourke's 'Golden Path' which won the public vote for favourite painting over the course of the week. John is now the proud holder of the Bill Bartrop trophy for the coming year! Congratulations to both; and to first time exhibitors who (to their surprise but not ours!) had successes in compliments as well as sales.

Our next exhibition will be in the spring during the May Day celebrations – we are still busy though! An excellent watercolour demonstration from local artist Kate Wade was well attended and a great source of new tips and inspiration for success. A trip to Bristol Royal West of England Academy took place on 20 November and was very popular with members and non-members alike.

We have had lots of enquiries about whether we teach painting skills as a group. We have held several successful Saturday sessions for those wanting to try out the idea of painting – the latest of these was held last month with a focus on watercolour. For a more in-depth look at watercolour techniques, member Hilary Sinclair will be offering a course in the new year; perfect for the winter months and to kickstart 2025 with a new project. Please see the poster in this edition



Gold Path by Joan O'Rourke



Concentration by John Sirrelle

for more details, our Facebook page (search Highworth Artists' Society), or the HAS website at www.highworthartistsociety.com.

From all at HAS, we wish everyone a peaceful festive season and a prosperous New Year.



Rev. Phil Goodey with John Sirrelle

Come and Join Lechlade Art Society



Dreams of Arabia by Ann March

It's been another successful year for the Lechlade Art Society, culminating in the popular and well-attended Annual Exhibition in August, and the staging of a third Pop up Art Sale at the end of November.

The Society has an active membership and a full programme of events. The monthly meetings are well-attended and often result in a follow-up workshop covering many media. About 25% of the membership also meets on a Thursday morning in the Pavilion to work on projects in a sociable environment. This is a great time to share hints and tips and keep up motivation. A full calendar of events can be found on the website (www.lechladeartsociety.co.uk) along with reports, photographs and details of how to become a member.

We look forward to seeing you next year.



Ann March receiving the annual Oscart Award at the October AGM

Margaret Hing

New Year with Highworth Community Cinema

Highworth Community Cinema doesn't show a film in December so we will commence the spring half of the season in January 2025 with a film based on the true story of a hate mail scandal in Littlehampton in 1920 during the UK suffragette movement, starring Olivia Colman and Jessie Buckley.

Join us at 7:45pm on **Friday 24 January** for 'Wicked Little Letters' at Highworth's United Reformed Church, High Street SN6 7AG.

A 1920s English seaside town bears witness to a dark and absurd scandal in this riotous mystery comedy. Based on a stranger than fiction true story, 'Wicked Little Letters' follows two

neighbours: Deeply conservative local Edith Swan and rowdy Irish migrant Rose Gooding. When Edith and fellow residents begin to receive wicked letters full of unintentionally hilarious profanities, foul-mouthed Rose is charged with the crime. The anonymous letters prompt a national uproar and a trial ensues. However, as the town's women, led by Police Officer Gladys Moss, begin to investigate the crime themselves, they suspect that something is amiss and Rose may not be the culprit after all.

Certificate 15, the doors open at 7:15pm and there is no membership fee, just £6 on the door. 50p for tea / coffee and biscuits.

For more information see our website (www.highworthfilms.org.uk) or email us at highworthfilms@gmail.com.



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Highworth Camera Club

The end of the year has been a busy time for the Camera Club.

We had a visit from an external judge, Lee Spencer-Fleet, who came to critique our images from several months of club competitions. Lee gave valuable feedback, scored them and selected her favourites.

The Club's annual exhibition of members' pictures in the Council Room saw a good number of visitors. I hope everyone enjoyed the display of pictures and the collection of vintage cameras and equipment. If you were inspired, do come along to our monthly meetings in the new year on the second Tuesday of



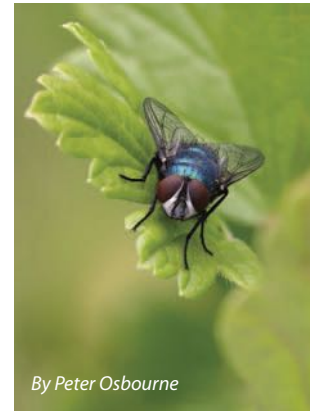
every month.

We also celebrated the end of 2024 with a Christmas party and the annual awards presentation evening.

We now look forward to 2025 with a new programme. The aim will be to challenge ourselves and perhaps learn a new approach or technique in different aspects of photography. Everybody has a unique way of looking at the world and it will be good to explore this together through our images.

Come and join us to share your view of the world in pictures and experience, and perhaps learn something new. Our first meeting for 2025 will be **Tuesday 14 January** at Highworth Community Centre. For any further information please email highworthcamclub@gmail.com.

Hilary Beach



Two Arts Lectures this Winter

The Arts Society Upper Thames is pleased to invite you to our talk on **Thursday 12 December at 2:15pm (but please arrive a few minutes earlier)** where we will be 'Celebrating the Centenary of Winnie-the-Pooh' with **James Campbell**.

2024 to 2028 marks 100 years since Winnie-the-Pooh was introduced to children of all ages in the four iconic books created by A. A. Milne and E. H. Shepard. First seen in 'When We Were Very Young' (1924), Winnie-the-Pooh and the characters of the Hundred Acre Wood had their own adventures in 'Winnie-the-Pooh' (1926), with 'Now We Are Six' (1927) and 'The House at Pooh Corner' (1928), giving us more wonderful poems and stories which include the introduction of both Tigger, Kangaroo and Poohsticks. This lecture tells the story of how these much loved books were created by the genius of Milne's and Shepard's groundbreaking collaboration and why they remain embedded in our national identity.

Then on **Thursday 9 January at 2pm** (but please arrive a few minutes earlier) we will hear from Alexandra Epps

on 'Tamara de Lempicka-Art Deco Diva'.

Tamara de Lempicka's story is one of self-invention. From her early beginnings as an aristocratic fugitive from the Russian Revolution to later taking Paris by storm as a successful artist living on her own terms, she has become an icon of the Roaring Twenties. Few artists sum up an epoch quite so completely – a true art deco diva.

Please pre-book either lecture by email at info@tasupperthames.org.uk and pay £7.50 cash on the door.



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Prudence Anne Hardie (Pru), 1938-2024

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Prudence Anne Hardie (Pru) was held at St. Michael's Church on Monday 10 June and conducted by the Rev. Alison Williams. The service was very well attended by friends and relatives.

After many years serving in the RAF flying around the world, Pru and her husband John chose Highworth to settle down. In 1980 Pru became a Tupperware dealer and when John left the RAF they both set up a business called The Lace Place, which they ran for around 20 years and where they sold the finest Nottingham lace tablecloths.

Pru wanted a stable childhood for their children, Graham and Alison. They attended the local school and came home every day for tea.

Pru had a strong faith and became very involved in St. Michael's Church, as a Sidesman and other duties.

She always threw herself into everything with complete commitment, whether it was the Windrushes Gliding Club, u3a Fair Weather Walkers, book club, the RNLI and RBL Poppy Collection, Neighbourhood Watch, or Pilates.

After John passed away with Alzheimer's disease, Pru



decided to raise money towards the Alzheimer's Society. At the age of 78, Pru organised, through a friend in the Royal British Legion, to take to the sky once more this time to do a parachute jump with the London Parachute School. She paired up with a highly-experienced paratrooper and they jumped in tandem whilst being filmed. She absolutely loved it and raised thousands of pounds for the society.

Pru will be greatly missed by all her relatives, friends and all the organisations she belonged to in Highworth.

Mair Huband

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The inaugural class of '84

Highworth Running Club

Happy 40th Birthday! It's amazing to think that the aspirations of two hardy runners back in 1984 led to the formation of Highworth's first running club on the 1 December. The club's original purposes were to promote an interest in running, foster a spirit of fellowship, offer mutual encouragement and provide opportunities to take part in competition events for runners of all ages and abilities. 40 years on and I don't think those purposes has waned one bit. Obviously the membership base itself has changed; the committee has been in a continual and natural state of flux ever since, but the heart of the club hasn't skipped a single beat thanks to each generation inspiring the next.

As a club we've always affiliated ourselves to the UK's over-arching governing body; to both enable us to host quality events for everyone to enjoy and also support the grassroots investments made by the governing body at a national level. This has always been an important part of the club's DNA, but so too has the social aspect of our gatherings. Sports clubs generally face a really difficult public relations challenge as anyone interested in joining often puts themselves off with the supposition that clubs are only for the super-good. In most cases, and certainly in our case, this couldn't be further from the truth. Overhearing a statement of self-reflection recently, one of our current members described himself as a beer drinker with a running problem, which got a sympathetic round of applause from many who were thinking the same. It's this very ethos that has kept the club going when so many others have soared then fizzled out. We're proud to steal the anecdotes of new members who say they'd tried other clubs but knew straightaway this was the club for them. A social running club is what we are, have always been, and always hope to be.

As we now enter our fifth decade, we can reflect on the successes of the four that have gone before. We've hosted too many races to count and have clapped literally tens of thousands of runners across our many finishing lines, each grimace hiding a well-earned smile of achievement. These races have enabled us to make charitable donations to countless local charities, all of which have helped our community in their own special way, and we very much look forward to being able to continue to do this. We've provided opportunities for hundreds to launch their running hobby from scratch and we are already planning a 'Couch-to-5k' programme in 2025 to encourage more to do the same.

And of course, with every anniversary must come celebrations. On **Saturday 14 December at 9am** we invite anyone who has ever run with us to join us for a retake of this photograph 40 years on, again outside The Rec. If you still have any HRC branded kit of yesteryear to wear then even better. Our current crop of runners will thereafter be heading out for a little Saturday saunter so anyone still with twitching in their toes should feel most welcome to join us. The club will be planning other celebrations throughout 2025 and we look forward to sharing updates of these with you. The HRC can be followed on social media and via its website for anyone keen to find out where we're meeting and what we're up to.

We couldn't possibly end without thanking those original two hardy runners who started us off forty years ago. Please know that HRC will be raising a glass to Brian Legge and the late Bob Wood.

Jason Daniels
www.highworthrunningclub.co.uk



Wrag Barn Golf Club

During the last week, for ten months of the year, I receive an email from Jason asking if there are any stories to share for Highworth's LINK Magazine and, at times, he's even offered to write the entry if the facts are supplied. Looking through most of the 2024 magazines the breadth of sports covered is huge, including: golf; running; walking football; croquet; football; bowls; cricket; motorcycling, and tennis. There's something for everyone! Additionally the magazine features information about the Halo Leisure Centre and numerous clubs, so the opportunities to take up a new hobby are extensive. Thank you Jason for giving your time to compile all our stories (and in my case correcting the spelling and grammar) month in, month out so that anyone thinking of taking up a new sport as part of their New Year's resolutions can discover what's on offer in the community.

The news from Wrag Barn is that we're looking forward to celebrating Christmas with a series of golf competitions and festive parties. Our greenkeeping team are planning their winter maintenance schedule and hoping there isn't too much disruption from named storms.

We welcome visitors to enjoy our clubhouse which is an ideal venue for parties, conferences, or simply a coffee. Our 11-bay driving range is open to all and offers covered practice facilities. In addition, our golf professionals will be offering golf lesson vouchers as Christmas presents: The perfect present for anyone looking to improve their game. For more information please visit our website.

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Swindon Croquet Club

Blue skies and warm sunshine welcomed the Swindon croquet team to the south coast for the championship final of the Level Play (5+) League against Budleigh Salterton. It all pointed to a classic encounter, with Budleigh on a 100% win record and Swindon only losing one match all season. With the score level, both teams had everything to play for in the final round of four games. To win the match, either team needed to win three of the last round of games to lift the trophy and title of Champions. The Swindon players strode to their respective courts with the encouragement of their travelling supporters ringing in their ears and confident that victory would be theirs. The final result was an 11-9 win for Swindon; the winning team (pictured L-R) was Colin Brain, Martin Briggs, Dave Booth, Beverly Briggs, Terry Clements, Clive Smith, and Steve Hares. At the trophy presentation an emotional Swindon captain, Terry Clements, said, "I am so proud of not just today's team but all those who contributed to our success throughout the season. It is 20 years since Swindon Croquet Club has won a title and I'm determined it won't be 20 years to the next."

Although it would be unfair to single out individuals, it should be noted that Steve Hares ended the day with a 100% record.

If you would like to join a championship winning team, or just enjoy gentle exercise in a friendly, welcoming environment, come visit us at Moredon Sports Hub or contact me using the details below.

Wendy White
07733 271607
croquetwindon@gmail.com



Swindon & District Motorcycle Club

Following a week's worth of October rain, those setting up the Jack Croston Trial down at the old Hannington Railway Station were treated to a brief but welcome reprieve in precipitation. This, however, was short-lived and the following day, when 51 motorbikes arrived, the sky was leaking again – a lot. Thankfully the course had been designed to sympathetically avoid the swollen Bydemill Brook but its greasy banks and drainage gullies were more than available.

After a rain sodden rider's brief, each rider departed to find their designated starting section and to match the weather's propensity for rain with their own for fun. This, everyone knew, would get messy.

With each rider asked to complete ten sections, ideally without putting their foot down (and then repeat this three more times), the course devolved lap by lap. Factor in the rain that, at times, was coming down like stair rods and turning ditches into fast-flowing streams, the best line through a section on lap one was quite different by lap four.



Mud, glorious mud

But this gave the riders new challenges to tackle, with no section looking the same from the lap before. Despite the mud, the rain and the wind, there were plenty of smiles and good-hearted banter to keep everyone going with bonus encouragement from the valued and cheery observers keeping score.

In a perverse twist, the rain appeared to abate as bikes were being loaded up for the journey home and, unsurprisingly, no one proffered a penalty-free score card. Those who fared best were David Maslin, Ben Wilmore, Martyn Wilmore, Brad Burgess, Wayne Hutton, and Thomas Plank, who effectively won their respective categories by incurring the least penalty points.

Thanks must be offered to the hard working organisers who set up, marshalled and administered the day, and I'm sure every participant will be looking forward to the Klindt Trial that takes place on **Sunday 12 January** at the same place. If interested, please do take a look at the website for more information.

Jason Daniels
www.sdmcc.org.uk

Highworth Town Walking Football Club

October and November saw the various age groups competing in league games in the Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, and Thames Valley Leagues. We are always looking for new players to join our recreational sessions and it is a great way to get some fitness while having some fun. Pictured here are some of the Friday guys after another good recreational session at The Rec.

If you are interested in playing social walking football, men's sessions are held on **Thursdays and Sundays**, both at Grange Leisure in Stratton and a **Friday** session, 11:30am to 12:30pm, held indoors at The Rec in Highworth. The ladies meet **Monday** evenings at New College Swindon from 8:30pm to 9:30pm, and for those who want a more competitive game there are teams in the over-50s, 60s, 65s categories, and a Ladies competition.

All sessions are Pay and Play, meaning men over the age of 50 and ladies' over the age

of 35 are welcome to come and play. Thursday and Sunday sessions cost £4 and Fridays cost £3.20, with Ladies' Monday sessions costing £3 per session all payable by credit/debit card only (no cash) direct to the sports centre. Please get in touch for more details.

Graham Seeley
07769 703702
highworthwfc@outlook.com



Men Fridays

Shrivenham Park Golf Club

At the time of writing (October), thoughts of Christmas are very much about. From shops to winter weather, the autumnal leaves remind us at Shrivenham Park of all the wonderful and varied trees that we have. A nightmare at times for players but even more so for the greenkeeping team on whose shoulders the collecting of them falls. No sooner has one area been cleared than overnight they appear again!

In all sections of the club, special seasonal activities are planned for December. We have a musical morning with entertainment provided by Graham Wiltshire and the Parkies Pals choir which everyone is welcome to, before our Social Putters group embark on their three-course Christmas lunch, including many gathering villagers. The Parkies Pals group themselves will be holding their Christmas party at the usual time as their monthly meeting (**first Tuesday of December** 10am to 12 noon). Never to be overlooked, our Junior Golfers will have their Christmas party between 11am and 2pm on **21 December**. The club's annual Christmas Texas competition will be on **14 December** this year, whilst the Senior Men's section will have their competition on **20 December**, hopefully joined by the Ladies for their Christmas game.

Unaffected by the oft-removed leaves, October produced some noteworthy results. The Birdy Cup accolade was taken by Denise whilst the Pam Wright Trophy was won by someone of the same name, but no relation! The Ladies Jim Howe competition and the Angela Bassett singles knockout was won by the same person but tongue-in-cheek modesty prevents me from revealing whom. In the Men's Section, Steve Durham and Steve Dawson were tied (points wise) for first place in the Men's Jim Howe competition, with the former winning on count-back with 35 points. The Jim Howe competitions are played with the entry fees and donations being given to all the hard working staff of the club in appreciation of their efforts throughout the year and for this we give a LOUD applause; thank you all very much. Finally, Richard Edmunds (with a score of 34) bested both Richard Charles and John Welstead in the Stableford competition by five points.

We would wish the LINK Magazine producer and editor a pleasant Christmas and thank them for producing our reports throughout the year. Best seasonal wishes to all the readers, visitors and, of course, our members. See you in 2025!

Carole Lee

League Table

Pos	Team	P	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Hartpury University	17	12	3	2	32	39
2	Roman Glass St George	17	11	4	2	27	37
3	Highworth Town	18	10	3	5	13	33
4	Fairford Town	16	9	5	2	11	32
5	Sporting Club Inkberrow	18	9	5	4	11	32
6	Royal Wootton Bassett Town	17	10	1	6	14	31
7	Corsham Town	19	10	1	8	1	31
8	Mangotsfield United	15	8	6	1	15	30
9	Westfields	19	8	5	6	20	29
10	Worcester Raiders	19	6	10	3	11	28

Highworth Town Football Club

October saw two wins, a draw and a defeat in league games, with another draw on the first weekend of November cementing third place in the league table.

A 6-0 win in the Wiltshire Premier Shield (against Downton) set up a last eight home tie against Swindon Supermarine and with an FA Vase tie versus Sherborne Town to look forward to, it'll be a busy few weeks. Please look us up on social media to keep up with our latest news.

Derek Lloyd

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News from Our MP

As the Christmas season approaches and we head into New Year, I'd like to reflect on some of the work I, as your local MP, have been up to since being elected.

I've had the absolute pleasure of meeting many Swindonians, including residents of Highworth, supporting you in solving individual cases relating to issues ranging from Thames Water issues to concerns around flooding or housing. Over 60 cases were raised and solved in Highworth in October alone and I'm proud of my team for going above and beyond, on occasion leaving the office to physically support members of our community. We are a small team but utterly devoted to the people of Swindon North.

I know there have been some tough decisions taken by the government that may be affecting you this winter and so I wanted to make you and your families aware of some local initiatives that may be able to support you in the colder months.

The Household Support Fund is designed to support the most vulnerable in Swindon as well as having



£400,000 assigned for those who may just miss out on the Pension Credit limit. You can find out more about this by looking at the Borough Council's website (www.swindon.gov.uk under the tab 'Benefits and Money Matters'), or you can gain some advice from The Bridge Centre on Sheep Street, Highworth. The Live Well team also offer a number of services from financial aid to health advice, social prescribing and support. Again you can find more support on Swindon Borough Council's website.

In the New Year, I look forward to continuing to support residents of Highworth and Swindon North as your MP. If you need anything from me or have concerns or questions about the government, please do email me at Will.Stone.MP@parliament.uk.

Finally, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Will Stone MP

To advertise in The Highworth Link contact
advertising@highworthlink.co.uk or visit
www.highworthlink.co.uk

Answers to Wordsearch puzzle from page 26

Message from the Town Clerk



As we approach 2025, it's a good time to reflect on the past year in Highworth. Our events, including May Day, D-Day, Skate Park event, the Fireworks display, and Christmas celebrations, were once again a tremendous success, drawing in strong community participation. We were fortunate to have several local companies sponsor these events, making them even more special. I also had the pleasure of speaking at the volunteer celebration event held in St Michaels Church in October.

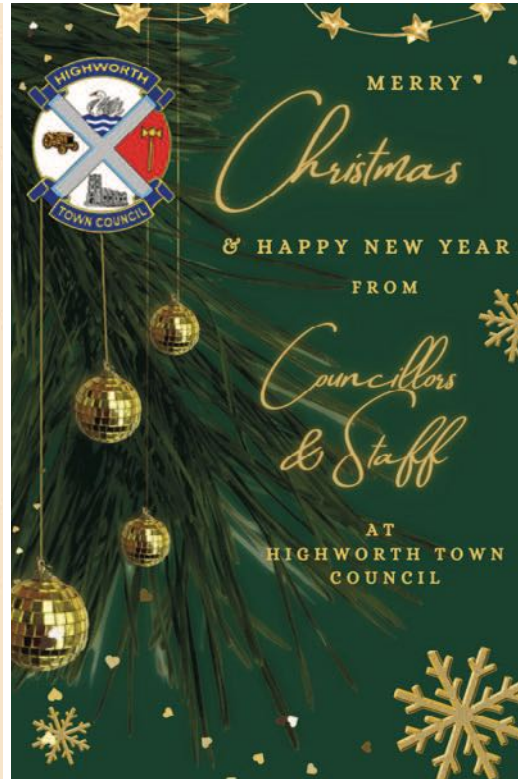
A significant highlight of the year was the opening of the North View Play Area, which was warmly welcomed by the community. Plans are already underway, with new equipment set to be installed at Barra Play Area in 2025. In addition, we saw the installation of new flagpoles on the podium, enhancing the town's appearance.

The ongoing debate regarding the future of the Old Golf Course continues, with hopes of a resolution in the new year.

A phenomenal amount of work has been carried out this year on the review of the Neighbourhood Plan which is now at Regulation 16 stage, the Plan is vital to a community as it gives local residents a direct say in shaping the development and future of the town. A special thanks to Councillor Julie Murphy who has worked tirelessly on progressing the Plan.

As the year ends, I'd like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Deanne Fox
Town Clerk



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ANNUAL CIVIC SERVICE

*Join us as we give thanks & celebrate our valuable
volunteers who serve our Community*

at

ST MICHAELS CHURCH HIGHWORTH

Sunday 2nd February 2025

2 PM



More details to follow



News from Highworth's Mayor



As we approach the end of another year, it's incredible to think how quickly time has flown! I hope you enjoyed the Christmas lights switch-on and festive market; events like this remind us of the wonderful community we have in Highworth.

This past month, I had the pleasure of attending the Volunteer Expo hosted by Rachael Laing Smith, editor of LINK Magazine. Speaking with all the exhibitors, I was struck by the challenges many community groups face in recruiting volunteers to keep their initiatives thriving. Volunteering is deeply rewarding, so if you have some time to spare, please reach out to me for a chat on admin@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk.

November is a time for reflection. It was an honour to represent Highworth at the Field of Remembrance in Lydiard Park and to lay a wreath at the Highworth Remembrance Service. It was truly moving to see so many from our community come together to pay their respects.

In support of my chosen charity, Highworth Forget-Me-Not, I've organised several fundraising events and, to really push myself I've decided to take on a tandem parachute jump! This is certainly out of my comfort zone, but I hope to raise awareness and funds for this important cause. With your help, I hope to reach supporters beyond our local area as well.

Mark Your Calendars for 2025:

- **2 February:** Civic Procession followed by a service at St. Michael's Church at 2pm where we'll again be celebrating our fantastic volunteers.
- **28 March:** Mayor's Charity Event at Wrag Barn (tickets available soon!).

Throughout December, I'll be at the Saturday market offering mince pies and mulled wine for a donation. I'd love for you to stop by!

I wish everyone a joyful Christmas and good health in 2025. Looking forward to reconnecting with you all in February.

Warm regards,

Mayor Julie Murphy

HIGHWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

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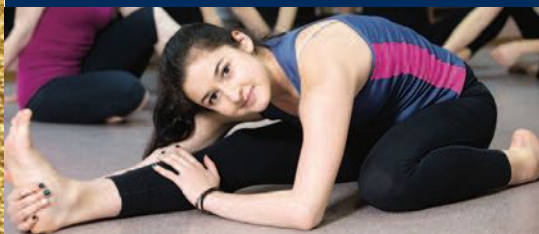


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January 15th January 29th
February 12th February 26th
March 12th March 26th

For further details, materials and booking info please email highworthartistsociety@gmail.com.
To see Hilary's work and more about the society visit our website www.highworthartistsociety.com

St. Michael's Church Highworth

The church is open daily for private prayer.

10:15am Sunday Service

We meet in St. Michael's Church and groups for children and youth (term time) are held during this service, with refreshments being served after the service.

The service is streamed live at www.twitch.tv/stmichaelshighworth or on YouTube by searching 'St Michaels Church Highworth'.

Morning Worship is held on the **first, third and fifth Sundays of the month**. Holy Communion is held on the **second and fourth Sundays of the month**.

8:45am Holy Communion

On the **first and third Sunday of the month**. Please note: no Holy Communion on 15 December.

10:15am Midweek Communion

On the **third Wednesday of each month**, from 11am. Coffee and cake will be served from 10:15am.

Prayers

Tuesday Prayers from 9am.

Friday Blessings from 9:15am.

The **second and fourth Mondays** is Prayer Hour in the Church Room at **7:30pm** (excluding bank holidays).

We remember those who we love and miss

Wendy Pontin

Jean Ashton

We welcome in Holy Baptism

Penny Fortesque-Smith

We congratulate on their Marriage

Conor Hornibrook and Abigail Willcocks

Praying for the roads in the town

01 Dec Wessex Way and Westhill Close

08 Dec Westrop and The Willows

15 Dec Windrush and Wrde Hill

22 Dec The Archers and Arran Way

05 Jan Barra Close and Beech Grove

12 Jan Biddell Springs and Blandford Alley

19 Jan Blandford Mews and Botany

26 Jan Brewery Street and Brookfield

Highworth Methodist Church

celebrating 60 years of Worship at Vicarage Lane

Angel Festival

December

Saturday 14th: 10am-3pm
 Sunday 15th: 11am-3:30pm

Join us for a Carol Service
 Sunday 15th 4pm - all Welcome!

A display of hand-crafted Angels made by Groups and Individuals from Highworth (some for sale - just in time for Christmas)

Refreshments, live music & crafts for children throughout the weekend.



★ What's on in December? ★

Sunday Morning Worship at 10.30am

- 1st Café Church & Gift Service
- 8th Holy Communion – Rev Shirlyn Topplin
- 14th & 15th Angel Festival (see above for times)
- 15th Carol Service at 4pm
- 22nd Morning Worship
- 25th Christmas day Celebration @ 10am
- 29th Morning Worship

Refreshments served after each service

Café Church
 Sunday, December 1st
 at 10.30am



Do you believe in Angels?

Every Saturday
 Coffee Morning
 10.30 – 12 noon
 Coffee and cake




Every Friday
 9.30-11.15 am

J&M CLUB



Craft Group


Tuesday, 3rd & 17th
 10am-1pm



Vicarage Lane, Highworth SN6 7DG
 Tel: 01793 764544
 Website:
www.highworthmethodistchurch.org.uk
www.facebook.com/HighworthMethodistChurch

3Cs – Coffee, cake & chat

Wednesday, 11th
 2.30pm



St. Leonard's Parish Church Stanton Fitzwarren

- 1 December** Morning Praise, 9:30am
Advent Team Service, 6pm
- Saturday 7 Dec** Come and decorate the Christmas Tree, 2pm
- 8 December** Family Christingle, 11am
- 15 December** Team Service at Coleview Community Centre, 11am
- 22 December** Holy Communion, 9:30am
- 5 January** Morning Praise, 9:30am
- 12 January** Family Service, 11am
- 19 January** Team Service at Stratton Methodist Church, 10:30am
- 26 January** Holy Communion, 9:30am

Please see the Church Christmas Services (page 24 and 25) for details of our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.

This month's Stanton Coffee Morning will take place on **Wednesday 18 December** with the theme of 'Carols, Stories and Memories'. On **Wednesday 15 January**, PC Josh Hillman will be our speaker. We meet at 10:15am for coffee and chat prior to hearing our speaker at 11am; we finish no later than 12 noon.

VISIT HIGHWORTH 2025 CALENDARS



FOR SALE

£8

The church building will be open every Wednesday in school term time from 10am to 4pm, or you can telephone Liz and Roger (01793 762935) to organise for the building to be left open for you to visit. Please go to www.stantonchurch.info for updates.



With thanks to all those who have sponsored the floodlighting of St. Michael's Church



We would like to offer our sincere apologies to Brian Moody's family for the inaccurate dedication printed in the November issue of the Link.

29/11/24

Brian Moody

Sadly missed by Chris, Dawn, Simon, Emily, Alfie, Katie, Harry, Barbra, Rich, Amy, Harry, Molly

14/12/24

For our lovely grandchildren.

Matt and Freya – so loved and missed.

15/12/24

Michael Page

*On this, the fifteenth year, remembering our dear son Michael as we do each and every day.
Love Mum and Dad.*

25/12/24

Remembering our lovely Mum and Dad Time and Joan Peapell. We miss you.

25/12/24

Graham Arrondelle

Missed so much by Sylvia and Donna.

25/12/24

Martin Hall (2/9/21)

Happy heavenly Christmas.

Loved always, missed so much.

Love Mum, Sarah, Gina, Kathy and Judy xxx

31/12/24

Gordon, loved, missed and you remain in our hearts always.

Sue, Liz, Hannah and Alex xx

Floodlighting forms are available from St. Michael's Church office, Vicarage Lane, or the Church website at www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk/floodlighting. Your dedication will appear in this magazine.

All submissions to the Church Office by Friday 22 December for the February 2025 publication.

E: office@stmichaelshighworth.co.uk • www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk

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Swindon Borough Council	01793 463000
Streetsmart	01793 445501

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Elm Tree Surgery, (Shrivenham)	01793 782207
Great Western Hospital	01793 604020

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Opinions expressed or implied in any contributions are not necessarily those of the editor or management committee.

No responsibility can be accepted for any error of fact in the magazine or website. Please inform the editor of any errors so they can be rectified.

Contributions:

May be published in the magazine and/or the web. Make clear any limitations you have about what, how and when we may publish your contribution.

Email is preferred; otherwise deliver to The Bridge Centre.

Make sure you are writing for a general audience, not just your own organisation. News stories should not exceed 150 words. If it's too long we will ask you to cut it. Articles

may be longer but get in touch first to save the inconvenience of a rejection. Photographs and advertising artwork should be clear, with good contrast. JPEG electronic format is preferred. The print process requires images ideally to be 300dpi for best results. Low resolution images, that appear clear on screen, will print blurred depending on the size and resolution of the image supplied.

Make sure any people in photos agree that the photo can be published in the magazine and on the web. Get parental consent in the case of minors.

We reserve the right to edit contributions and to not publish any contribution or advertisement that is either unsuitable for our format or is inconsistent with our editorial policy.

Submission Deadlines:

1st of the month before publication – news, articles, advertising and letters.

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