

HighworthLINK

HIGHWORTH'S COMMUNITY MAGAZINE BROUGHT TO YOU WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE CHURCHES OF HIGHWORTH



September 2025



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Dear Reader

It's with great pleasure and anticipation that we bring you this new issue of Highworth's LINK Magazine – a publication created to celebrate our vibrant community and to foster the connections that make Highworth and the surrounding villages such a special place to call home.

Whether you are a long-standing resident who cherishes the town's traditions, a newcomer discovering the charm of our local shops and warm community, or a visitor passing through, LINK Magazine is here to keep you informed and inspired.

Within these pages, you will find stories that highlight the achievements, creativity, and kindness of your neighbours. We aim to capture the essence of Highworth, from the peaceful beauty of our historic streets to the bustling energy of our markets and festivals. Our hope is that every reader finds something of interest, whether it's news on events,

insightful interviews, or features that spotlight the talents and passions that thrive within our community.

I don't say it often enough, but thank you for reading Highworth's LINK Magazine. We invite you to get involved, share your stories, and help us continue building the strong bonds that unite our town. Welcome, and happy reading!



Rachael



HIGHWORTH CAMERA CLUB EXHIBITION

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Friday 19th September 14.00 - 17.30
Saturday 20th September 09.30 - 13.00
Council Community Room
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COME AND JOIN OUR CHOIR!

Highworth Choral Society welcomes new members for their 2025/2026 season.

We are a friendly, welcoming and well-established choir with 50+ members, singing a variety of musical styles from classical works to musical theatre.

We welcome new singers of all voices to join our SATB choir from September 2025.

There is no audition and the ability to read music is not essential. Just add your voice and we will do the rest!

Interested?

Contact Jacki Pattenden (Musical Director) on 07972712446 or email secretary@highworthchoral.co.uk

The choir rehearses on Monday evenings in The Methodist Church, Lechlade Road, Highworth, SN6 7HG.

Autumn program to include Handel's Messiah Part 1 and Ralph Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on Christmas Carols.

www.highworthchoral.co.uk Registered charity 1096246

Front cover image: Sophie Hobbs and Daniel Wathen, married at St. Michael's Church.

Sunny Side Up



Apologies, but I am going to kick off with a bit of a rant.

I am fed up. Fed up of living under a cloud of negativity, pessimism, and cynicism. It's almost like being on the frontline of some bygone war, constantly bombarded by this darkness. The goal seems to be 'How discouraged, depressed and

anxious can we make people feel?' Whether it's the media, social media, or even those around me, we seem caught up in this river of sludge, where criticism, blame and judgment become the norm.

The one that has really got to me is my weather app. Like any meteorological forecast it will give you the next few days with a rough guide to what you can expect weather-wise. Now, being the summer it has roughly four icon choices: sunshine, cloud, cloud and sun, and rain. We can't change the weather, it will be what it will be, but why oh why have we got so depressed and so negative that an entire day will be

marked as rain when on closer inspection there is a mere chance of rain for an hour and the rest of the day they expect to be sunny.

How have we got to the place of being so down up in the dumps that even our forecasting is depressing and exaggerates the worst?

You may have heard the famous fable by Aesop concerning a competition between the North Wind and the Sun. Who was stronger? The challenge was to try and divest a weary traveller of his cloak. The North wind let loose its worst but the man only clung tighter to his cloak. The Sun just shone, bathing the traveller in warmth and he happily removed his cloak.

The Bible says in Thessalonians, "Encourage one another and build each other up." It means to constantly bring comfort, support and inspiration, and literally build up other people like a house builder. That is what I have committed my life to and I believe it's how we see real change.

Can I encourage you to not be like my weather app and instead be the sun to another human being today.

Matt Ford, Highworth Community Church

Christian Aid Week 2025

Thank you everyone who helped with, or contributed to, Christian Aid Week this year. You helped to raise £2 296.95, including £526 in our on-line giving page, during May.

Parent & Toddler Group

Every Monday from 10-11.30am.
(term time only and excluding Bank Holidays)

drinks and snacks included

No need to book
£1 per adult and 50p per child (over 1) suggested donation

St Michael's Church Highworth

The climate crisis is leaving parents fighting to feed their children, crops devastated, and entire villages displaced. Floods have destroyed communities in Nigeria. Wildfires have devoured homes in Greece. Cyclones have killed thousands in Malawi. Drought has left people hungry in South Sudan. And in every climate disaster, people living in poverty feel its impact hardest.



For 80 years, together with people like you, we've stood up and challenged those in power to make the world a more beautiful place. And we will do so again. Because we believe in the unstoppable power of hope, and know that when we stand united, we are stronger than ever.

You have made a difference.

Highworth Christian Aid Committee

Highworth Community Shed Renovation

During May and June this year, Highworth Community Shed was delighted to be asked to renovate a Model 61 (1930-1938) Lines Bros/Triang dolls house for Avril Davies.

Well used, as you would expect for its age, we took the house back to its original frame and rebuilt it using as much as possible of the original wood frame and cardboard roof. The process took time but the result was well worth it.

The whole construction was in thin ply with a moulded cardboard roof. The carcass was misshapen and needed stabilising. The old tin window frames needed reshaping, sanding and repainting, and the outside had been painted with a semi-gloss paint which needed removing. We rescued all of the windows, and whilst most will still open some are fused. And we were thrilled to reveal the original paint – a cream/buttermilk colour plus amazing flowers on the front middle section. The internal walls were re-papered and parquet-style paper used upstairs and downstairs.

We added a tiled path and overpainted the blue section to the front of the house with green to represent grass. The garage needed doors, so these were made and added. The outer walls were painted in cream paint and the decorative painted flowers were reinstated. The roof was made from formed cardboard,



A happy Avril Davies (r) is pictured with Sue Dodds (l)

warped over the years, and subsequent attempts to repair it with glue and tape had failed. We took the time to soak the sections and dry them between weights to reshape them. The damaged edges were covered with paper tape and extra strong glue was used to put the three sections back together. Once in place, we covered the roof with faux grey tiles.

Avril was thrilled with the end result, as you can see in the photograph.

Sue Dodds

New Stage for Highworth Choral Society

Highworth Choral Society are aiming high this year and marked World Music Day on 21 June by launching a project to raise £7,000 for a three-tiered choir staging platform system of their own.



The lightweight steel system of risers and magnetic boards will be made to order in Sheffield, it is easy to erect, and will be stored compactly and locally.

It will also be available for other groups to hire especially for use at St. Michael's Church.

The society are very grateful to have received a generous grant from The Thomas Freke and Lady Norton Trust to kickstart the project, and If you too would like to make a donation to support our forthcoming events around the town, contact secretary@highworthchoral.co.uk or visit www.highworthchoral.co.uk for BACS transfer details.

HCS Committee

Become a Rotary Member

Rotary has 1.2 million members worldwide and clubs like ours have long been making a meaningful impact in communities, particularly focusing on causes such as education, health, clean water, peacebuilding and economic development. For example, since 1988 Rotary's End Polio Now has seen a worldwide reduction in polio cases of 99.9%. Only two countries remain polio-endemic: Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Now, through its Corporate Membership initiative, Rotary is seeking small, medium and large businesses to join it in these efforts. Corporate Membership gives a company a unique platform for service, networking, and professional and personal growth, rooted within the local community.

As a corporate member of Rotary, a single membership for a company offers:

- A way to demonstrate the company's social responsibility by being part of the Rotary projects in the Swindon area
- Networking with other companies who share similar values
- An opportunity for members of staff to share and develop their skills in leadership presentation and team work
- An opportunity to expand and grow its network within the community

Rotary has had a presence in Swindon for one hundred



years and it has, for example:

- Supported the Prospect Hospice since its formation in 1980
- Contributed £1m towards the £3m Brighter Futures Appeal for a radiotherapy centre at the Great Western Hospital
- Organised seven Poppy Balls at STEAM, raising tens of £1,000s for charity
- Facilitated the Ridgway Midsummer Midnight Walk raising over £200,000
- Supported hundreds of small, local charities

For companies, particularly SME's, we're confident Rotary can help put their community impact plans into action. If your business or company shares Rotary's passion for making a difference and you would like to discuss Corporate Membership, please get in touch.

We'd also love to hear from you if individual Rotary membership interests you. See our website at rotaryswindonnorth.org.uk or email rotaryswindonnorth@gmail.com.

Ken Winslow

Lechlade History Society

On Monday 15 September at 7pm for 7:30pm in Lechlade Memorial Hall, Dr. Simon Draper will present 'Placenames and Archaeology in and around Gloucestershire'.

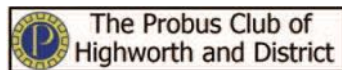
Dr Simon Draper will explore the origins and meanings of place and field names in our region with special links to archaeological remains, from prehistoric forts to Roman villas and Anglo Saxon meeting places. Come along and learn which names to look out for in your local landscape.

For more information call 07826114088.

Ros Godden

Highworth & District Probus Club

We meet at The Cold Harbour in Blunsdon on alternative Tuesdays



from 10:30am. We welcome retired professional and business men with no upper age limit. We also welcome visitors as guests at any of our meetings.

On **Tuesday 2 September**, Dr. Chris Scott will tell us about 'The Penruddock Wilts Rising of 1655' and on Tuesday 16 September we will be hearing from Dr. Nick Humphris about 'The Development of Concorde'.

For further information please email info@highworthprobus.co.uk or visit our website at www.highworthprobus1.wordpress.com.

George North



HIGHWORTH WARNEFORD SCHOOL

New Principal with over 20 years working in schools

School Vision

Highworth Warneford is a school with **ambition** for all, providing a **safe and happy** environment within which every pupil can grow to achieve their personal, social and academic success. To **inspire** pupils through our curriculum, and **nurture** their development through our pastoral care and character development curriculum. A school community that **values** and respects each individual, believes in **supportive, respectful** relationships and places a high emphasis on working hard to achieve.

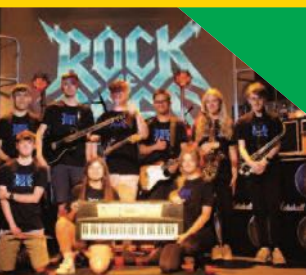
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- Open Evening - 18th September 5pm - 7.30pm (no booking required).
- Open Mornings - 15th, 16th & 17th October (booking required), please contact Mrs Lewis 01793 767083.
- For further information or if you would like to visit the school at another time, please contact us.

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Mayor Takes the Plunge (Literally)!

There were smiles all round at Highworth's Forget-Me-Not Café earlier this month as Mayor Julie Murphy presented the charity's trustees with a very large cheque – and we're not just talking about the cardboard!

Our incredible Madam Mayor handed over a whopping £7,943.80, raised over the course of her Mayoral year in support of her chosen charity. The lucky recipients? Highworth Forget-Me-Not café, a much-loved local organisation offering support and friendship to those affected by dementia.

The funds were collected through a variety of cheerful fundraising events including a glittering charity ball held at Wragg Barn Golf Club back in April. But the standout moment? Julie's daring sponsored skydive, proving once and for all that Highworth's Mayor is not afraid to go above and beyond!

The grand cheque presentation took place at the café's weekly Friendship Friday gathering, held at the Town Council Offices. As Julie unveiled the impressive total,



trustees and attendees alike were left wide-eyed and applauding, with one or two mouths visibly agape!

The charity's trustees beamed with gratitude, saying, "On behalf of Highworth Forget-Me-Not we cannot thank you enough for your support over this last year, and we are honoured that you are supporting us for another year. All donations make a difference, but a figure of this magnitude is truly unbelievable."

So, here's to Mayor Julie – a woman with a big heart, a brave spirit, and a parachute to match!

Gemma Toomey

Highworth Community Larder

Our new venture, a drop-in café, will be open on the third Wednesday in the month from 9:30am to 11:30am in the Council Room on Gilbert's Lane.

We will open for the first time during Volunteers' Week (15 to 20 September) on **Wednesday 17 September**. The café will provide a warm and welcoming space to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a relaxed chat with friends.

We will also be at the Volunteer Expo on **Saturday 20 September**. This is a really interesting day, giving people the chance to find out about all the different community groups in Highworth. We hope to meet you there.

These activities are in addition to our normal larder mornings when we distribute surplus food from supermarkets free of charge. The larder is open from 8am to 10am every Tuesday at Westport Primary School.

Highworth Flower Club

On Thursday 4 September, 7.30pm, at Warneford School, we will be holding our AGM and social evening.

We hope you will join us in the school hall to meet friends and hear about club events for next year. Doors open at 7pm with plenty of space for parking in the school car park. Visitors are welcome for £7. Please contact Michele on 07798 817249 or see our website at www.highworthfloralarts.co.uk.

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Supermarine Bowls Raises Funds for Prospect

Early in July I had a very enjoyable time watching the cheque presentation of £1,100 from Supermarine Bowls Club to Prospect Hospice. This was money raised on their Memorial Day for their charity of choice.

I have been involved as a (non-playing) friend of Supermarine Bowls Club for many years now, and I know how generous the members are at raising money for charity. I understand that they have already donated over £30,000 over the years to Prospect alone, not forgetting the other charities they support.

Many of you will have had personal experience, as I have had, of the care that the Prospect Hospice offers, both within the hospice and the community. Their kindness and support is amazing. You may not know that it takes nearly £10 million a year to keep it going, and after Covid it became difficult. However, with a new CEO at the head and a great fundraising team, they are now working hard at reaching their targets and raising money to enable beds to remain open, specialist nurses and carers both in the inpatient unit and out in the community.

At the present time, the government provides about 18% towards the cost of running Prospect. The remaining is raised through the generosity of its supporters who are playing Prospect raffles or lottery, donating to its shops, taking part in fundraising events and donating.

Prospect not only provides end of life care; it is the main centre with specialist nurses, for MND and Lymphoedema in this area. It provides palliative care training for many local organisations, including hospitals and care homes. But most of all it values both the patient and their family, providing a safe and comfortable death with respect and love.

I can only finish by saying well done to Supermarine Bowls Club and sending my love and support to you all at Prospect. You do a great job!

Ros Mitchell

200 is here!



Yes, at 10:45 am on Sunday 28 September, Highworth United Reformed Church will be celebrating 200 years of Zion Chapel – that's the building with a Georgian facade and a front garden, near the traffic lights. It is Grade II listed, and the congregation are proud to have the care of it.

The celebration will take the form of a thanksgiving service led by the minister in the presence of Highworth's Mayor and guests from many other local churches. There will still be room for more and we would be very happy to welcome you.

For more information about our church please see our website: www.highworthurc.org.uk.

Bryan Elkington



Supermarine Bowls Club presenting cheque to Sharon Greasley from Prospect Hospice

ADVERTORIAL

Ladies Kickboxing at Westrop

Our ladies-only kickboxing class is all about building strength, confidence, and connection – no egos, no judgment, and no experience needed.

We're super-inclusive and welcome all fitness levels, backgrounds, and abilities. Whether you're a total beginner or returning to exercise, you'll be supported every step of the way.

Each session combines fitness, kickboxing techniques, and a good dose of stress relief, all in a fun, friendly environment where women lift each other up (literally and figuratively!).

It's a great way to meet new people, challenge yourself, and feel genuinely empowered both physically and mentally.

Classes are led by an experienced instructor who tailors the training to suit you, so you can work at your own pace and still get a great workout.

Come join us every Monday at 7:30pm and discover what you're really capable of.

Please see our advert on page 34

JOIN OUR TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS!

Root & Branch is a social and therapeutic gardening and craft centre for adults who are experiencing mental health difficulties. We are located on an organic farm close to the Oxfordshire and Wiltshire border, in Watchfield.

We are currently looking for volunteer drivers to help transport participants to and from their session here on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Mileage expenses can be claimed.

Our wood workshop is also looking for experienced volunteers to teach and support participants – especially on Thursdays.

If you feel that either of these roles would suit you or you would like further information, please email us at office@rootandbranch.org.uk

www.rootandbranch.info

Charity number: 1143294

Ladies Lunch Club in Support of Cancer Research

We are a group of ladies who meet at Blunsdon House Hotel from October to March. Now in our 51st season, we are delighted to invite you to join us.

We meet once a month on a Tuesday for a three course lunch and then welcome our speaker to bring their talk. It is a wonderful way of meeting up with and making new friends whilst also raising money for a very worthwhile cause.

Last season we welcomed Paul Martin from TV's Flog It programme. Some of the topics for next season include a talk about Bletchley and another about the intriguing Salisbury poisoning.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Margaret on 07597 096519.

Margaret Groombridge

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(Another) New Kid in Town

Hi everyone. I'm Andy Bissex and I'm really excited to be the new curate here at St Michael's Church, Highworth. "What's a curate?" I hear you ask. Well, basically, it's 'on the job' training in order to become a vicar in the future.

Let me tell you a bit about myself.

I've lived in Swindon all my life, I'm married to Helen, and we have three grown up children. Most of my working life was spent with Bible Society in various management roles in the areas of fundraising and, latterly, sales. Bible Society's main goal is to help people engage with the Bible and I guess that's something I'd like to continue to do during my time here in Highworth. For me, the Bible points us to Jesus who brings us freedom from the past, peace in the present, and hope for the future.

I'm looking forward to meeting you over the months to come, so if you see me having a coffee and cake in one of Highworth great cafes please don't hesitate to come and say hello. Or you could always join us for worship at one of our services, of course – details are on our website (www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk) and in this magazine. We'd love to see you!

God bless you



Andy



**Join Us for
Tea & Cake**
in aid of **Prospect Hospice**
St Michael's Church Room (Behind the Church)
2nd Wednesday of every month
2.00 - 4.00pm



Highworth Climate Talks

Our speaker on Tuesday 16 September will be Andy Bentley, former North Swindon Green Party parliamentary candidate and current chair of the award winning Hreod Burna Forest Project in Pinehurst.

The Hreod Burna Urban Forest in Swindon was initiated in 2013 following the withdrawal of a housing development proposal for the land. A preservation group formed that year and began work on the urban forest, which had been negotiated with the council.

Andy will be talking about how the forest has developed attracting a wide range of wildlife and increasing the biodiversity of the area. The forest is maintained by a group of dedicated volunteers who show how much can be achieved.

Highworth Climate Talks take place in the **third Tuesday of the month** in the Highworth Methodist Church, and doors open at 6:45pm for a 7:15pm start. Refreshments are available and donations are very welcome. We look forward to seeing you there.

Helen Harris



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----- If you would like to know more about us or arrange a visit please contact us -----

Contact: Westrop Primary & Nursery School

Telephone: 01793 762897 **Email:** nursery@westrop.swindon.sch.uk **Website:** www.westropprimaryschool.co.uk

Bigger, Better Seasons at Wonky Veg Club

Every season is better than the last.

Last autumn we had a fantastic late harvest, particularly with our very popular tomatoes and mashed potato squashes. Over the winter we planned our year ahead ordering in new seed to be sown and building raised beds. We also did what we could to protect our polytunnels against the back-to-back storms. Then the warm dry weather in spring got us off to a great start so we could plant out garlic, salad leaves, broad beans, carrots, and beetroot nice and early.



We also hold multiple special events each year.



In March we had a fantastic turnout from existing and new volunteers in glorious sunshine to restore our main polytunnel with a new plastic cover after some winter damage. In June, Keyloop, a technology company from Reading, came along for a team-building activity day and sowed 2000 sweetcorn seeds in one day! Crowdys Hill sixth formers also now visit twice a week to learn new gardening and construction skills, teamwork, and task management.

The 1.2 acre site at Roves Farm, including three polytunnels, allows this volunteer-run community garden project to spend all year growing a variety of fruit and vegetables, using woodwork projects to build new equipment. Even now, amid harvesting what we have already sown this year, we are planting yet more crops for winter harvesting and starting construction projects for the autumn.

The group is open to everyone of all abilities, ages, and gardening experience, and we are always looking for new helping hands. We meet at the field on Thursday mornings and Sunday afternoons and always pause for a hard-earned coffee break!

Contact us at wonyvegclub@gmail.com and follow us on Facebook (search 'wonkyvegclub'), or come speak to us at the Volunteer Expo on Saturday 20 September!

Thomas Minney

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Barra Close Play Area Update

Redevelopment of the play area at Barra Close began on Monday 4 August, with the team from Highworth Town Council removing the old equipment and preparing the site for the contractors to begin installation of the new play facilities.

The final design, shaped by extensive community consultation, including input from local residents and visits to Highworth's primary schools, features an infant and junior play park, a zip wire, and a full-size Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA).

We understand that the timing of the works over the



summer holidays has been less than ideal, but this much-needed investment in our community's recreational space could not be postponed further. We thank residents, especially local families, for their patience and understanding during the works.

We anticipate the works on the Barra Close Play Area redevelopment will be completed in November and we look

forward to welcoming everyone back to the new space very soon. In the meantime, you can check on the latest updates by visiting our website:

www.highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk/play-area-barra-close



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Check out the July/August edition of
LINK Magazine for more information.

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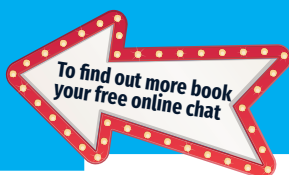
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Success for Prostate Cancer Testing Day

Did you know that a heatwave can affect blood tests? That's what we discovered on Saturday 12 July at the prostate cancer testing day at the Highworth Community Centre.

The heated environment, coupled with dehydration, made it very difficult to draw sufficient or stable blood samples. This was very frustrating for all who attended as it caused significant delays throughout the day. However, most of the men who attended considered the testing so important that they waited patiently for their appointment. Those who had to leave because of other engagements were followed up by the healthcare provider to ensure they would not miss out on being tested.

Incredibly, 92 men were tested on the day. Everyone received their results within a few days which underscored the critical importance of the day. The results were graded in terms of risk to health and with advice for follow up. While some of the results were graded as abnormal, they were approached with

sensitivity as a variety of factors come into play. What was clear, however, was that a few people needed urgent follow up with a GP and potentially more tests. This accounted for nearly 11% which is a higher than the average abnormal rate and suggests we should intensify screening opportunities in the future – but in cooler weather!

What I personally observed is that these men could have continued without testing and they would never have known they were at risk. People I have met who have experienced cancer firsthand have said to me they wished their own diagnoses had come earlier so their treatment would have been less aggressive.

At least here in Highworth your town council and the Lions took action to organise the event with the

priority of protecting men's wellbeing and future health. We thank also CHAPS and the healthcare provider Sirrka who managed the event on the day.

Dave Hazell, Highworth and District Lions



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Visit Highworth

We have been very busy over the summer at Visit Highworth, your town visitors' centre, welcoming many visitors from near and far, including a good number who are looking to move to Highworth; a sensible idea in our opinion as the town has so much to offer. We have also been planning lots of events which we hope you will enjoy.

Our Highworth Walks Book, containing eight walks around Highworth, has been updated and is on sale in Visit Highworth. It contains clear directions and indicates the level of difficulty by showing the gradient of the walk so no nasty surprise hills!

For a musically entertaining evening join the Brewery Street Buskers at the Community Centre on **Saturday 20 September**. Doors open at 7pm and there will be a bar and raffle. Tickets are priced at £10 and are available from Visit Highworth.



Iona Sadler (l) and Rosa Matheson (r)



Rosa Matheson will be in Visit Highworth on **Saturday 27 September** to launch her latest book, 'Great British Steam Locomotives'. Copies of the new book and her other published works will be available for sale and there will be a Q&A session.

It's time to unleash your inner creativity as local artist Christine Purdy will once again be leading a Paint and Prosecco workshop on **Wednesday 29 October** starting at 7pm. The cost is £35 and can be booked at the Centre. These are very popular and sell out quickly!

We're once again producing a calendar with photographs provided by Highworth Camera Club. It will be on sale in the visitors' centre and at the Christmas Craft Fair on **Saturday 29 November** but you can reserve your copy by calling in to see us.

Please check out our new website (www.visithighworth.co.uk) as it has lots of new features and information about Highworth, the artists who sell their work here, and local businesses and events.

And finally, we are supporting Highworth's Volunteers' Week and are always happy to welcome new volunteers. If you would like to join us, please call into Visit Highworth on the High Street have a chat with us.

Iona Sadler, Chair of Visit Highworth

Book Launch for Rosa

Many of you will know Rosa from her work in Nepal with the charity 'Friends of Angels Orphanage' as you may have supported many of its fundraising activities held in Highworth. Others will know her in a completely different guise: Dr Rosa Matheson, a historian who writes railway history books!



Rosa's railway writing started completely by accident with 'Trip: The Annual Holiday of GWR's Swindon Works'. The book sold well and was quickly reprinted and then followed by seven others, several about Swindon Works and its workers including one on women ('The Fair Sex – Women and the Great Western Railway') and later two disaster books.

Her ninth and latest book is something rather different – 'Great British Steam Locomotives That Made History: The Story of Britain's Railways'.

In this year of railway celebrations, the book explores the magic of steam through the stories of many notable and much-loved steam locomotives from 19th Century 'Penydarren', the one that started it all, to 21st Century A1 'Tornado', the one that started it again. It also tells of the Giants and lesser-known personalities, and how railways changed people's lives forever.

A book launch and sale will be held at Visit Highworth on **Saturday 27 September**. VHL Chair, Iona Sadler, says, "We are delighted to be hosting the launch of one of Highworth's resident's work in this historic railway year."

Book signing will take place from 10am until 1pm and a Meet the Author event will be held from 1pm onwards. Further details are available by emailing info@visithighworth.co.uk or by phoning 01793 764440.

Dr. Rosa Matheson

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New Eco-Friendly Shop for Shrivenham

Following the overwhelming success of the Sustainable Shrivenham Community Hub, a new local initiative is taking shape to push the boundaries of eco-conscious living even further.

The Refillery, a not-for-profit community refill shop, has just opened in Shrivenham offering affordable, packaging-free essentials to help residents cut plastic waste and shop more sustainably.

The new venture is a direct response to community feedback. The Hub was launched in 2023 with National Lottery support, and building on that engagement The Refillery will offer a range of plastic-free goods, including dry foods, personal care products, and refillable household cleaners. You can bring your own containers, making sustainable shopping more affordable and accessible to all.

Run as a non-profit venture under the Sustainable Shrivenham banner, the shop will reinvest any profits into local sustainability projects, educational outreach, and community initiatives. It also offers new volunteering opportunities, supporting local skill-building and social connection.

Volunteers have been at the heart of everything Sustainable Shrivenham has achieved – from running daily operations at The Hub to shaping and supporting this latest venture. Their energy, commitment, and creativity have enabled the organisation to thrive, and The Refillery will continue to rely on the spirit of community action that defines Shrivenham.

While The Refillery is housed in a new location (due to lease limitations at The Hub's current home) the opening marks a natural progression of Sustainable Shrivenham's mission. With the recent news that the premises currently housing The Hub have been sold by the landlord, the organisation is also actively planning for the future of the current activities held there.

Despite the changes, the group remains optimistic. We face challenges, but what's always defined Shrivenham is its ability to rally together and turn challenges into opportunities.

Find us online at www.sustainableshrivenham.com/the-refillery.

Steph Muir

Highworth Historical Society Returns

Welcome back to our 2025/2026 season! Our first meeting is on Wednesday 24 September. This is our very short AGM followed by a friendly quiz on Highworth and its history. If you are new to the town and thinking about joining us, this is a good way to start.

We meet once a month in St. Michael's Church, Highworth, with the doors opening at 7pm for a 7:30pm start. There is a raffle, a display of some items from our

archives, and a second-hand book stall. Visitors are always welcome for a charge of £3 cash on the door. Our full membership, which covers nine talks, is £12.

We look forward to meeting 'old' members and, hopefully, some new ones. If you need more information contact Chris on 01793 764811 or see our website: www.highworthhistoricalsociety.org.uk.

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Meet John Ranford

“A cohesive community is essential to adapt to climate change.”

If my childhood home were threatened by rising sea levels I'd be more than annoyed, and yet John Ranford seems surprisingly calm and level-headed about this existential threat to Funafuti. It's the main island in Tuvalu in the Pacific Ocean where he was raised by missionary parents. “It's where William and Kate chose to have their honeymoon,” he explained. But there's a dark side to this fairytale place.

Returning to Britain aged seven, John was educated initially at a boarding school then a secondary modern school – worlds apart from Tuvalu and, indeed, from each other. Nevertheless, it was a childhood that equipped him with the ability to analyse complex problems and develop workable solutions.

Before retirement, John did a lot of work with charities including the Bible Society, and he now focuses his energy on modifying his home to adapt to the apparently inevitable consequences of climate change. Arising from his extensive research he (together with his wife Hilary, Joy Corrigan and Helen Holly) started Highworth Climate Talks as a forum for residents to learn and adapt to the challenges of climate change. Over nearly two years there have been 18 guest speakers on climate-related topics such as cycling, wildlife, a sustainable food supply, fossil fuels, ‘green’ homes, sewage pollution, zero waste in a ‘circular’ economy, and e-waste.

Our conversation inevitably led to the so-called Paris Agreement of 2015 where the goal was to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels,” and pursue efforts “to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.” (United Nations Climate Change



Executive). Regrettably, the world's report card on climate change actions says “Could do better; needs to focus.” It's a complex formula, but many climate scientists think we're already at about 1.5°C and still rising. This is why John says we're going to have to think beyond just ‘climate mitigation’ (reducing its effects) to ‘adaptation’ (learning how to live with its effects). “We're the first generation to fully understand that we're impacting the climate, but the last generation that's going to be able to do anything about it.” Increasing local resilience is now a key priority.

John wants to see us nurture both local supply chains and connectedness in our community. “The Town Council will become more important because, you know, it's local.” Which is why we have Highworth Climate Talks and, of course, why our Highworth LINK Magazine will be more important than ever.

Adrian Young

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Fantastic Year for the Lions

Thanks to all our wonderful customers in and around the Highworth area for the donations we have received in the last twelve months.

This continuous help and support from our volunteers and Highworth Lions means we're able to keep our local Lions charity shop a pleasure to browse around.

This financial year alone we have been able to give away a massive £37,816! Some of the causes we have helped include:

- SHAPS: Help for Ukraine
- Heart for Philippines: books for schools and clothes
- Christians Against Poverty (CAP)
- Riding for the Disabled
- Overseas disaster aid through Lions Clubs' International



- Donation towards recent PSA testing day (A great success, although held during a heatwave!)
- Christmas vouchers for the elderly
- Outing to Weston-super-Mare
- Use of the minibus with volunteer drivers

Photos of our grateful recipients are shown above.

And just a quick reminder to those of you with children still needing uniforms for this new school term, we currently have some items still available in the shop.

Scouts Celebrate Gold!

Five Highworth Scouts from Northview Troop recently received their Chief Scout Gold award at the Wiltshire Scouts County awards night.

Alba, Freddie, Harry, Massimo and Simson all achieved the top award for Scouts by completing a full set of

challenge badges which covered everything from survival skills to volunteering, expedition camps to personal challenges.



The group were presented their awards by His Majesty's Vice Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Lt. Gen. Sir Andrew Gregory, and have now moved on to continue their adventures in Explorer sections in both Highworth and Stratton.

If you are interested in joining your local scout group, please see our website at www.highworthscouts.org.uk or come and meet us at Highworth's Volunteer Expo on **Saturday 20 September**.

Keiron Skillett



(l to r) Freddie, Harry, Lt. Gen. Sir Andrew Gregory, Simson, Massimo

Book Club Flourishes as a New Community Favourite

What began just five months ago as a small idea among local book lovers has quickly grown into one of Highworth's most popular community groups. The Highworth Book Club is now a thriving literary space where readers gather each month to share stories, ideas, and their love of books.

Since its launch, the club has gained 80 followers on Facebook and regularly attracts between 20 to 25 attendees to its monthly meetings, held at Weight It Up on Highworth's High Street – a warm and welcoming venue that perfectly complements the club's inclusive spirit.

Each meeting focuses on a selected book, with members engaging in relaxed, thoughtful conversation. July's session brought an exciting international element, as award-winning author Andromeda Romano-Lax joined the discussion via video call from Canada. Her novel, *The Deepest Lake*, was the club's July pick, and members were able to ask her questions directly about the story,

characters, and her creative process – a rare and inspiring opportunity for any book lover.

"It was an absolute treat to have Andromeda join us," said organiser Dan Head. "Her insights gave the book even more depth, and the group really appreciated the opportunity to connect with the author behind the story."

The Highworth Book Club isn't just about reading; it's about community. It provides a welcoming space for



people of all ages and backgrounds to come together, discover new authors, and build friendships through a shared passion for literature. Whether you're a lifelong reader or just rediscovering your love of books, the group offers something for everyone.

With plans to welcome more guest authors and expand into themed events or local collaborations, the future looks bright for this young but energetic group.

Dan Head

Busy Season for Westrop School Choir



It has been another amazing year for the school choir, with term 6 being the busiest for performances in the community and school.

The Key Stage 1 choir performed at The Goldfinger Tavern for the Lunch Together group, run by the Women's Institute. Singing in a pub was a first for the choir! And at the end of June, the choir was invited again to sing for the Forget-Me-Not group in the Highworth Community Centre.

On Saturday 5 July the choir gave up their day to sing at the Wrde Up Festival; this was probably the largest crowd they have had to perform to, and they excelled. It was lovely to see and hear the audience appreciate the hard work the school choir has put in. Everyone had a smile on their face.

At the end of each academic year the choir puts on a musical event to perform to family members all the songs they have learned throughout the year. The

The Heart of the Town

We've been shouting about it for a few months now – Highworth's Volunteers' Week (15 to 20 September) is finally here! Whether you're a retiree, student, parent, newcomer or you've called the place home for a long time, you all contribute to making Highworth such a welcoming and lively place to live.

Here, volunteering isn't just about clocking hours; it's about making friends, lending a hand, and weaving a stronger community. Whether you're helping organise a local festival, litter picking, or dropping by to see a neighbour, every little bit counts and helps to keep the town buzzing. Groups like the Highworth Historical Society or the Community Larder wouldn't be the same without these awesome volunteers.

I get it. Volunteering can feel like too much commitment in a world where we're already really busy. The truth is, if we all just did a little bit no one would have to do a lot. Volunteers' Week is an opportunity for you to try out volunteering with a local group that could really do with an extra pair of hands. From the Scouts group to the Visitors Centre, there's a huge range of things for you to try out. So be brave and contact me to see how you can get involved (editor@highworthlink.co.uk).



Schools and youth groups are getting stuck in too, along with local businesses and churches. By celebrating what volunteers do today, Highworth is making sure there'll always be a new wave of helpers and leaders tomorrow. Volunteers' Week isn't just a celebration – it's how Highworth keeps its heart beating strong.

Our High Street will be decorated for the week, and the whole thing will culminate in our **Volunteer Expo in St. Michael's Church on Saturday 20 September** where you can come and see many of the community and volunteer groups Highworth has on offer.

Get the dates in your calendar, contact me about how you can get involved, and I'll see you for Highworth's Volunteers' Week!

Rachael



programme is always varied with a mixture of traditional, musicals and pop songs, plus songs for the audience to shine! With so many musical singers within Year 6 it was difficult to choose a soloist and so all who were brave enough were given a chance to show off their beautiful voices.

Five pupils were presented with an award for their commitment having attended choir weekly since Year 1

and been a huge asset to choir. Well done to Daisy, Sophie, Katie, Amour and Kaitlin.

Donations were taken at the end of this performance and a total of £430.20 was raised towards Westrop's music fund.

The final performance this year took place at the Wyvern Theatre where the Key Stage 1 choir sang with several other schools while parents, along with headteacher Mrs. Acres, watched. They were all a credit to Westrop!

Mrs. Sam Humphreys

Ed: Mrs. Humphreys has been the guiding light for singing at Westrop for many years! This year she has retired from Westrop Primary School after more than 19 years. The school will really miss her and send her a big thank you for everything she has done.

Wrag Barn Golf Club Raises Thousands

31 teams took part in the event at Wrag Barn Golf Course near Highworth in June supporting the Children's Cancer And Leukaemia Movement (CALM). CALM has supported children and families in Swindon and the surrounding area – including Highworth – since it was set up by a group of parents in 1984.

This year's competition was CALM's 30th annual golf day and it was a huge success, raising more than £25,000.

The Deputy Mayor of Swindon, Councillor Neil Hopkins, performed a ceremonial tee off before the 124 golfers took to the course. Each team completed a 9 hole Texas Scramble in the morning, before an 18 hole Bowmaker in the afternoon.



CALM Challenge Team Champions with the Deputy Mayor of Swindon (l-r) Matt Mundy, Barry Cockwell, Cllr Neil Hopkins (Deputy Mayor of Swindon), Len Muscat, Alistair Hoadley

Ahead of the evening prize giving ceremony, 22 year old Ruby Coward from Swindon gave a heartfelt speech on how CALM supported her during her cancer journey. Ruby was diagnosed with bilateral retinoblastoma, cancer tumours in both eyes, 20 years ago when she was just 15 months old. She received chemotherapy treatment and care from consultants at The Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, Great Ormond Street Hospital in London, John Radcliffe in Oxford, and Swindon's Great Western Hospital. She is now fit and well and has managed to keep both of her eyes.

Much of the money raised came in the form of sponsorship with RPS Group, Imagine Cruising and First Choice Ireland being the headline supporters. Dozens of local companies sponsored individual holes or donated raffle prizes and auction lots.



A team from Muscat & Co, led by captain Len Muscat, won the CALM Charity Team Challenge Trophy and the top prize of a golfing holiday to Ireland.

Richard Crowley, the Chairman of CALM, said, "We're blown away with the support for our 30th annual golf day. To raise £25,000 in one day was beyond our

wildest expectations. The day wouldn't have been possible without the hard work of our CALM committee volunteers and the support of Matt, Nick and Newman Floyd. The money raised will support our convalescent holiday programme, allowing children to enjoy a holiday break with their family in between hospital appointments for chemotherapy, radiotherapy and other cancer treatments."

You can find out more about the Children's Cancer And Leukaemia Movement at www.calmcharity.org.

Richard Crowley, Chairman of CALM

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Triplets Meet for Twinning Event

I was delighted that 30 people boarded the Barnes coach for the ferry to Portsmouth on a Thursday morning in late May. We were off to Pontorson, France, 35 years after the charter was first signed.

Last year's visit to Wassenberg in Germany saw all three mayors representing the three twin towns at the same gathering, I believe for the first time, and a photo was published in Highworth's LINK Magazine. With funding from Highworth Town Council we have had three copies framed, and I was able to present one each to mayors André-Jean and Marcel this year in Pontorson, with the third copy now hanging in our own town council offices.

In October we will be welcoming about 30 guests from Wassenberg. The programme this year will include a coach trip to the Cotswolds on the Saturday and a dinner at Wrag Barn Golf Club on **Sunday 19 October**. Including hosts you can be sure 60 to 70 people will be at Wrag Barn on the night; you don't have to be hosting to be there, everyone is welcome, so please feel free to buy a ticket and join us. Tickets are £30 and can be purchased from Visit Highworth. Please see our advertisement in this issue for more details.



(l to r) Richard Pearce (Chair of HTA), Marcel Maurer (Mayor of Wassenberg), André-Jean Belloir (Mayor of Pontorson)

People in the past may have thought that Twinning was something local councillors did for a 'jolly'. This is certainly not the case – councillors pay for themselves. And you may also have heard that all we do is sit, eat and drink. Whilst that can certainly be part of it, just from the weekend in Pontorson in May you will need to add, sightseeing, horse racing and two evenings of entertainment which were far from staid!

Please consider joining us for a trip abroad, or come to one of our events in Highworth. Contact me for more information (07513 009044 or rjnppearcehta@gmail.com).

Richard Pearce

South Marston Gardening Club

On Monday 1 September, 7:30pm to 9:30pm, our speaker will be Stewart Linford will talk about 'Artisans of English Woodlands in Victorian Times'.

Step back in time as Stewart, master storyteller, takes us deep into the heart of England's Victorian woodlands. In this fascinating and visually-rich talk, Stewart uses historic images and authentic props to bring to life the once-thriving industries hidden within our native forests up to 200 years ago.

Discover the forgotten world of charcoal burners, chair-makers, and the legendary 'bodgers' of the Chiltern beech woods. With a compelling mix of history and personal insight, Stewart – himself an ancient woodland owner and custodian – shares his knowledge of traditional practices like coppicing, woodland regeneration, and sustainable tree planting.

Informative, inspiring, and highly entertaining, this is a rare glimpse into a vanished world and a timely reminder of the value of preserving our natural heritage.

We meet at South Marston Village Hall, Old Vicarage Lane, SN3 4SH. There is parking on Old Vicarage Lane, next to the school.

Whether you're just dropping in for the evening on a one-off visit and pay just £5 or considering joining us as a full member at £15 Annual Membership, you're very welcome! Enjoy a warm, friendly atmosphere with refreshments and delicious homemade cakes, great company, and inspiring talks that celebrate all things gardening and beyond.

For more information email angelanewton01@gmail.com or call or text on 07789 068340.

Angela Newton

Samaritans Matter

Every ten seconds, Samaritans respond to a call for help without judgement or pressure. There's no typical person who calls and no typical problem which is talked about. What matters is how life is making you feel.

Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy and Samaritans' vision is that fewer people

die by suicide. We hope by encouraging people to talk about suicidal feelings fewer people will make this choice.

We also know that many people who call us are not suicidal but are at a point where they feel they can't cope, where it all feels too much to handle, and there's no one to talk to. Sometimes feelings can become intense and overwhelming – a sense that there's no way out.

This is where Samaritans come in.

We offer people the time and space to talk through

whatever is troubling them and help to work through what's on their mind. We don't give advice, but listen with undivided attention and with empathy to help people to find their own way forward. When anyone is in crisis, talking to Samaritans may help to make someone feel calmer and more able to get through that moment.

As Gareth, a Samaritans caller, said, "I don't remember much about that call but what I do know is the person I spoke to showed me a lot of empathy and they didn't judge me... letting me talk and explain how I was feeling. That's what I really needed."

Please remember: Be kind to yourself today and every day, and if you're struggling to cope you can contact Samaritans free, at any time of the day or the night, 365 days of the year.

Call: 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org. For more information go to our website: www.samaritans.org



Shrivenham Primary School on the Run

Some of the staff at Shrivenham Primary School are going to take part in the Great South Run in Portsmouth this October. The race covers a distance of 10 miles (16km).

They are hoping to raise lots of money for more playground equipment that the whole school can use at break and lunch time. We can't wait!

If you want to know more and would like to sponsor our staff, please go to www.gofund.me/cd211cf8.

Tamzin and Connor, Year 5 sports leaders



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Highworth Community Cinema

We commence our 2025/26 season this month. For residents who don't know about us, we are an independent, voluntary organisation run by Highworth residents since 2006, which aims to bring world-class films to Highworth.

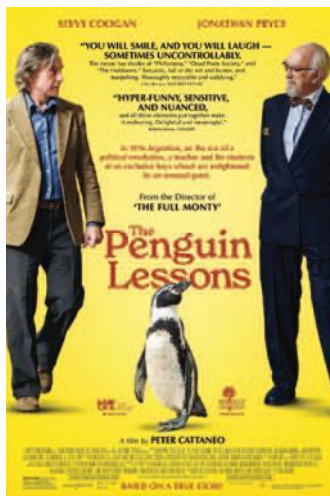
On Friday 26 September we will be showing *The Penguin Lessons* at the United Reformed Church, 26 High St, Highworth SN6 7AG, at 7:45pm. Doors open 7:15pm.

Tom Michell's 2015 memoir chronicles his experience as a disillusioned British teacher (Steve Coogan) as he travelled to South America to teach at a boys' boarding school in Argentina in the 1970s. Expecting an easy ride, Tom discovered a divided nation and

a class of unteachable students. When a bombing in the city called for students to be sent home for a week, Michell and Tapio, the school's science teacher, took a trip to Uruguay. However, after he rescued a penguin from an oil-slicked beach, Michell's life was turned upside-down when he took the penguin back to the school and it became a popular pet.

110 minutes, cert. PG. There is no membership fee. Admission £6 on the door. 50p for tea/coffee and biscuits.

For more information contact 01793 763907, email highworthfilms@gmail.com or see our website at www.highworthfilms.org.uk.



Inspirational Evenings for Highworth Camera Club

We have had an interesting summer at Highworth Camera Club with visits from Jack Lodge and the Highworth Amateur Dramatic Society.

We welcomed visitors to the club in July to hear our guest speaker, Jack Lodge. Jack, travelling to us from Dorset, is a professional photographer and his presentation was entitled 'Changing Woodlands'. Jack's passion for art was evident as he took us on a journey through some of his favourite places in his home county. He frequently returns to a number of different woodlands to capture the light and atmosphere at various times of the day; dawn to dusk and every season! We were treated to some truly beautiful and inspiring photography and the message that you don't need to travel far. Same place, different times of the day or year, you can find something new to capture! Check out his work at www.jacklodge.co.uk.

In August the club invited members of HADS (Highworth Amateur Dramatic Society) to bring along costumes for the club to do some portrait photography. We are waiting to see the results! In the meantime we have been busy planning the clubs' annual exhibition at the Council Offices. We hope that you will find time to call in and see the our members' work. We will be there from the **afternoon of Friday 19**

September to the morning of Saturday 20 September (see our advertisement on page 3). Visit our exhibition and the Volunteer Expo all on the same day!

If you would like to join the club monthly meetings are held on the **second Tuesday of the month** at the Highworth Community Centre in The Dormers, 7:30pm. For more information see our website www.highworthcameraclub.com or email highworthcamclub@gmail.com.

Hilary Beach

Pieces of poetry

Do you enjoy listening to, reading or writing poetry?

I am organising poetry sessions and would like to know if there is support for this.

If you are interested or would like more details, such as date, timing, venue, and so forth, please get in touch with Lynn Vardy on 01793 762521 or email bluedoorbowood@hotmail.co.uk.



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Our weekly volunteer drop in sessions are open to all. So if you want to come along then we would love to see you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK
OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WONKYVEGCLUB

Highworth Artists' Society

Summer is drawing to a close and although we'll miss the warmth (well – some of us will!) we've enjoyed the relatively quieter days of July and August. Regular Tuesday sessions have continued and lots of member birthdays = lots of cake!

Other members have met up to paint in local areas – we've been to Coleshill twice (one visit coincided with a Warneford school trip where it was good to meet curious students instead of the cows which thankfully stayed at a safe distance). We also met at Stanton Park where we painted by the lake. The weather has been kind to us, and we really like the coffee at Blakes in Coleshill!

After the challenge of painting a book title last year, we decided to invent a new version of the challenge to paint a song title. Here are two for starters. Painted by Keith Farmer and Lyn Armstrong. Can you guess the song titles? More examples can be seen on our website (www.highworthartistsociety.com).

The autumn exhibition will be taking place soon and we are hoping to see lots of visitors! We are open from **Saturday 4 October to Saturday 11 October**, from 10am to 4pm each day. As usual there will be new paintings available, refreshments, cards, and maybe some cake!



Painting by Lyn Armstrong

Donations received for refreshments will be donated to Highworth's Forget-Me-Not café.



Other events to carry us into autumn include a demonstration by popular Bristol artist Paul Weaver on **Tuesday 2 September**, and our annual London Trip to see the Royal Society of Watercolours exhibition on **Thursday 20 November**. Both events are open to non-

members so please contact us on highworthartistsociety@gmail.com if you would like to attend the London event. The cost is usually around £25 to £30 and you are free to do what you want once we have arrived... as long as you catch the coach for the return journey!

HAS member Hilary Sinclair will be taking part in Swindon Open Studios this year and will be opening her garden studio to the public on **20 to 21**

September, from 11am to 5pm. Hilary paints in oils and watercolours, and over the past year has painted scenes from Coate Water Country Park each month. All visitors are welcome, brochures will be available at various outlets in Highworth.

Hilary Sinclair



Painting by Keith Farmer

Shakespeare

Sonnets galore.
Human conditions
As you like it
Kicks in the imagination
Elongates the line
Satisfies the need for words
Points to our lives
Educates human behaviour
Animates our brain
Reminds us of our and other lives
Evaluates our humanity.

John Williams

Another Day

Have you ever seen an abandoned boat
That has been left to fade away,
With its ribs intact and shape still there
Just waiting for another day.
What fun it had when out at sea
Kissing tops of waves along the way
From Port to Port with friends on board
Enjoying another day.
Another day, another day
If only that could be,
But King Neptune said, "Enough's enough,
You have done your work for me."

David Holden

If Only

A fine Sunday morning while strolling out,
Every thing quiet, not many people about.
I turned a corner and what do I see,
a group of ladies running straight at me.
Suddenly thought all my dreams had come true,
Stepped quickly aside and let them pass through.
Lots of laughter and waving as they passed by,
I carried on walking, giving a very large sigh.
Oh again to be fit and able to run,
to join in the laughter to chat and have fun.
To jog to a finish would be heaven indeed,
A defibrillator is what I would really need.

Ray Wassall

Lechlade Art Society Printing Workshop



On Tuesday 13 May, Chair of Lechlade Art Society, Brian Britton, gave a fascinating talk and demonstration of monoprinting. This was well attended and Brian offered a follow-up one-day workshop on Thursday 12 June to experiment with this medium.

The method for monoprinting uses an inked plate and a piece of paper is laid gently on top. A design or picture is drawn over the paper, being careful not to



Trout monoprint by Zoe Hing

add unwanted marks. The paper is then removed and further colours and marks can be added. It is called a 'monoprint' as each print will be unique.

Twelve enthusiastic members and non-members attended and they had a terrific day using inks and rollers, and exploring the possibilities with this technique.

This is just one of many such sessions offered by LAS which has a full programme of events. See our website at www.lechladeartsociety.co.uk for lots of information. New members are always welcome.

Zoe Hing

Celebrating Creativity and Culture

Nestled in the heart of Wiltshire, Highworth's Art and Literature Festival (HALF) brings together artists, writers, and enthusiasts from near and far for a vibrant celebration of creativity.



June 2026 will see the town filled with colour and words, hosting exhibitions, performances, and author readings. Local venues will showcase works from emerging and established artists, while poets and novelists will share their voices through inspiring talks and interactive sessions.

Whether you are a passionate reader, an aspiring artist, or simply seeking inspiration, (HALF) promises a joyful, enriching experience in a truly picturesque setting.

Note **June 2026** in your diary, and be sure to join us for a most remarkable event.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Rachael

My name is Adam and I am the Sheltered Housing Officer for Newburgh House in Highworth. When we had our Easter Fun Day back in the springtime, we received great generosity from local businesses and I would like to thank them all.

Donations were given so willingly by our wonderful local shops. Thank you to: Londis; Dolphin Fish Bar; Tesco; The Old Bakery; Cabin & Cowshed; Weigh It Up, and Andrews Quality Meats Ltd.

Adam Henly

I am writing to you to thank the many Highworth residents who signed the recent petition asking Swindon Borough Council to restrict the use of the A361/Shrivenham road by very large HGVs, many from the South Marston industrial estate. The petition was signed by 621, which was comfortably more than enough to require SBC to formally debate the issue at a full council meeting. This took place on the 24 July, when as the petition sponsor I spoke in support of the petition. There appeared to be a recognition that there is an issue here which needs to be resolved although there is work which needs to be undertaken before any real steps are taken. For example, as the route ends in the Oxfordshire County Council area they need to be consulted.

On the 29 July, Phil Beaumont and I met with Will Stone MP and he also understood our concerns and undertook to assist in helping us to achieve the outcome we are looking for. May I also thank our Mayor, Julie Murphy, and our Borough Councillors for their support.

When we have further news of the steps to be undertaken by SBC we will provide an update.

Norman Jeffery

I'm sending you this picture of the small wildflower area on Roundhills Mead. This was started a few years ago by just letting the grass grow, cutting it once a year, raking off all the cut grass and seeing what happened. This year we have added a few seeds. Although this has produced some flowers, sadly the very dry summer meant the germination was not very good. We will try a few more this autumn and next spring.

As the picture shows there is much to admire in the grasses as well as the flowers. I encourage your readers to consider developing an area near where they live.

David Roblin



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School Recap

My previous school year was both exciting and daunting.

In February I had to decide what I wanted to do for my GCSE options. I went for subjects that I enjoy and that I am good at. I am so excited to learn new things about my GCSE subjects in the next two years, and I am looking forward to doing my mock exams in year 10 to see what it will be like when I do my real GCSEs.

During April I had fun in an art challenge group to prepare me for Art GCSE and we learned some different techniques to use when painting, such as using palette knives and making things look realistic with paint brushes. We started by using cameras to take pictures of different fruits and cogs and then printed off the pictures to begin painting. I had so much fun! You can see an image of my final masterpiece here. I am really proud of it, and I worked really hard trying to make it as realistic as I could.

In June I took part in a martial arts panel grading where I was going for my deputy black belt. It was on the hottest day of the year but luckily we didn't have



to do many exercises and we didn't have to do sparring (where you wear a special helmet, gloves, shin pads and boots) because it was so hot! All the people from my martial arts class passed which is great as we worked harder than usual in the tough temperatures.

Have an amazing September and see you next month.

Constance Davenport

hcc Highworth Community Church

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Experience the presence of God with us.

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community

prayer

spiritual encouragement



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Highworth Artists Society

Acrylics Workshop

For Beginners and Improvers (over 18yrs)

£20 to include materials & refreshments

13 Sept 2025

10am to 1pm

Community Room, Council Offices,
3 Gilberts Lane, Highworth SN6 7FB

Spaces limited - to book a place
email:
highworthartistsociety@gmail.com



Highworth Twinning Association

Dinner at Wrag Barn with visitors from Wassenberg

Sunday 19th October 2025

Everyone welcome

£30 per person for a 3 course carvery including fish and vegetarian options

Tickets will be available from Visit Highworth in October or please contact Richard Pearce on 07513 009044 or rjnpearcehta@gmail.com



Shrivenham Cricket Club

July saw our first XI play away to Swindon Hunters, but not before playing away to Spyre Park who play on an artificial surface. At Spyre Park we batted first and scored 247 all-out in only 40 of our allocated overs helped by Nanoj Perera (57 runs) and S Gunasekara (71 runs). In reply, they managed 209 for seven wickets in all of their 45 overs (Giridharan Vasudevan taking five wickets) and so a win for us by 45 runs and our fourth win in a row! Away to Swindon Hunters we scored 315 for eight wickets, with batting opener Thisara Gederagoda getting 175 runs and Adam Woods 47. Their reply finished on 256 all-out in 41.5 overs to give us a 59 run victory assisted by Naveed Akram taking four wickets.

Our second XI were also busy in July, hosting Beckington 2 and batted first to manage 235 for eight wickets in 40 overs with contributions from Pardeep Abeynayake (63 runs) and K Hettiarachomige (45 runs). They replied with 233 for eight wickets (Ibrar Shizad taking three) in 45 overs to lose narrowly by two runs in a very tight finish and leaving the team with five wins in a row; how long can this continue? Another home match, this time against Calne was scheduled but they unfortunately could not raise a team so had to forfeit. July ended with an away match against Royal Wootton Bassett who, batting first, scored a creditable 264 runs for five wickets. In our allotted 40 overs we managed 184 runs for nine wickets, assisted by Ben Nelson's 60 runs leaving us with a loss by 80 runs, but still top of Division 10 though!

Our mid-week XI travelled to play Knight Watchmen on their artificial surface on a rain threatened evening. Batting first we got to 126 runs for four wickets in 11.2 overs and were just getting into our stride when the rain struck and the game had to be abandoned. We look forward to the re-arranged game.

If you are interested in cricket, please look us up on our website and get touch.

Julian Stevens
www.shrivenham.play-cricket.com/home



Undefeated Fiona Hancock

Swindon Croquet Club

Swindon Croquet Club enjoyed an emphatic 16-4 (20 game match) victory over Broadwas CC in Worcester on the last Saturday of July. In the penultimate match of the season, SCC dominated each of the four rounds on the fast lawns of the home club. Team Captain, Clive Smith praised his sides efforts: "Congratulations to the rest of the team for adapting to the slopes of the lawns. We needed this win to maintain pressure on

league leaders Cheltenham as we head to the final game of 2025." Mention must be made of rookie Dave Norman who enjoyed two wins, Fiona Hancock and Martin Briggs who won all of their games during the day, not to mention the excellent support that was provided by Terry Clements and Colin Brain.

If you are interested in trying this game of skill and strategy please get in contact with me.

Wendy White (Club Secretary)
croquetwindon@gmail.com

Shrivenham Park Golf Club

Shrivenham Park has a new green keeper! Seb has worked hard on our greens, and throughout the lovely summer they were the greenest (pun intended) parts of the course! Enjoying the green greens, the ladies played a home match against Deanwood and drew in a very friendly match, and at time of writing an away match was scheduled at Radley which is always looked forward to.

Our juniors have had their Junior Open and will be thinking of returning to school. With juniors in mind, we are always happy to welcome new juniors to our coaching sessions on a Saturday, please do get in touch for more details. 'Jim the Coach' coaches juniors as well as adults and will coach individually. Social groups have continued to meet throughout the Summer: Parkies Pals on the first Tuesday of the month, and Social Putting group on various Fridays, reverting to 10am to 12pm in October where we'll be gathering round the fire.

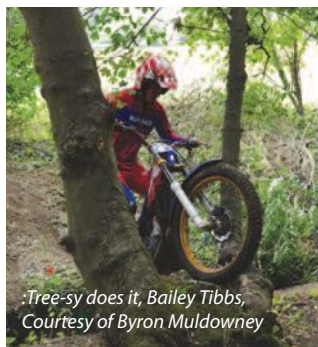
On **26 September** we will be raising money by hosting a Macmillan Coffee Morning, forming part of an all-day event that will also hopefully capture those attending our AGM in the evening whose contributions will be most welcome. Please do get in touch if you'd like to get involved in any way.

Carole Lee
01793 783853

Swindon & District Motorcycle Club

Not often the case for observed motorcycle trials, but July's Wooster Trial was held in very conducive conditions for riding motorcycles off-road. The grass was yellow, the ground cracked, and the only mud found was made by the knobbly tyres as they bit at the banks of Bydemill Brook.

70 riders from far and wide unloaded their steel horses, a good number of them now electric, to challenge themselves over four laps of ten sections cunningly designed to test skill levels. With fallen tree trunks, tumble-down walls, rocky water crossings, and gravel strewn railway embankments all getting between tyre and solid ground, the challenge was on. Sage advice



:Tree-sy does it, Bailey Tibbs,
Courtesy of Byron Muldowney

offered by an experienced rider to one in need was, "Take the wrong line at the beginning of a section and it makes the rest of it so much harder. Go slowly, you have more time than you think." Noted with thanks.

Conditions though lent themselves to finding a reasonable amount of grip, and those incurring the least amount of penalty points

for putting a foot down could rightly take a bow. Felicitation therefore goes to the following in their respective age or ability classes: Chris Wickham, Ben Wilmore, Ben Greenwood, Stuart Belcher, Michael D Maslin and Mark Elms (tied), and Thomas Plank.

Thanks as always are given to the observers (section scorers) and to the organisers for putting on another fantastic meeting thoroughly enjoyed by all. The bikes will be back at the Old Station Yard near Hannington for the Jack Croston Trial on **19 October** (10:30am start) for anyone interested in coming along.

Jason Daniels
www.sdmcc.org.uk

Highworth Town Football Club

With many of last season's players having moved to pastures new, manager Paul Braithwaite has been on a significant recruitment drive bringing in replacements, including Ryan King who last played for HTFC in the FA Vase semi-final team in 2014/15 before moving away.

A promising start was made with an away league draw at Fairford Town who salvaged a point in the second half's added time. Our fixtures are available to see on our website, as will updates on our application for a 4G pitch when we learn more.

Derek Lloyd
www.pitchero.com/clubs/highworthtown/

Highworth Running Club

As is now usual for HRC, the summer months saw our Wednesday evening training sessions relocate to various parts of the countryside to explore our local bridleways, towpaths, and woodland trails. With the best of the summer now regrettably behind us, the club will default back to meeting in Brewery Street each Wednesday evening at 6:30pm, from **17 September**. From this date until

spring, our favoured routes around the town will be adopted and as always there will be different abilities covering different distances each week. If you're interested in coming along and joining us, please pop along **any Wednesday evening**, ideally wearing something bright, reflective, or illuminated. We look forward to meeting you.

Jason Daniels
www.highworthrunningclub.co.uk



Wrag Barn Golf Club

Captain's Day 2025 was a nod to the Armed Forces and frying pans, bringing with it sunshine, spirit, and some serious style. Outfits ranged from army fatigues to land girl dresses to medical uniforms, and even a patriotic pup sporting a standout bandana. The heat didn't stop the fun, and neither did the frying pans!

The day kicked off with a 9-hole Texas Scramble in the morning, followed by a Stableford competition in the afternoon, but not just any Stableford—the course was peppered with quirky challenges! Play the 7th hole with only a 7-iron; tee-off on the 10th hole using a frying pan; navigate a putting competition, and use bright orange tees on a par-3. What seemed simple on paper quickly became a test of focus and balance. Anyone who managed a decent shot with a frying pan deserves a medal of their



(l-r) Karen, Kelly, Sophie and Mark

own! With temperatures soaring into the 30s, hydration was essential and we owe a massive thank you to Club Captain Mark Walker, his wife Karen, and their daughters Kelly and Sophie (pictured). From cold drinks to constant support, they kept everyone going all day long. The clubhouse team were equally on top form feeding and watering us with impressive speed between competitions and again after a full 27 holes.

The morning's Texas Scramble saw our 'front nine' winners emerge as Andrew Bright, Paul Lewington, Ed Evans and Chris Morton and 'back nine' as Sue Britton, Karen White, Valerie Agnew and Anita Morton. The afternoon saw Richard and Jacob Scarrott, Jack Bright, and Ross Loveridge victorious in the Stableford competition, with the Captain's Challenge winners unfolding as Ben Paines, Callum Holmes, Alfie Stone, and Adam Jelly. In the equally coveted 'Best Dressed' category, Michael Collins, Julian Winterburn, Peter Corrie, and Mike Loveridge took the team prize, with Zac the dog getting his paws on the individual accolade for outstanding bandana co-ordination.

Closing the awards, Steve Griffiths and Josh Loughrey went 'nearest the pin' whilst Ray Hughes won the longest drive with a frying pan. After the presentations, club President Steve Griffiths awarded Mark a hole-in-one tie and presented Karen with a medal in recognition of her excellent play the week before – a lovely way to round off the day.

Captain's Day 2025 was one to remember, full of camaraderie, creativity and cracking golf under blue skies. Huge thanks again to Mark and his family for hosting such a brilliant event.

Verity Manners
www.wragbarn.com

Highworth Bowls Club

Highworth Bowls Club hosted a spectacular Bowls Big Weekend at the start of the summer. The event was a wonderful success, drawing many visitors of all ages to the club. It was a fantastic opportunity for the community to come together and experience the joy of bowls, many for the first time. The event was marked by the enthusiastic participation of club members, who played a crucial role in ensuring everything ran smoothly. Their dedication to helping out on the green and in the clubhouse created a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all attendees. This spirit of camaraderie and support did not go unnoticed by the visitors who felt immediately at home. Such an inclusive and supportive environment has generated significant interest in the sport and the club itself. As a testament to the event's success, several guests have decided to join the club. Among the new members are four boys whose enthusiasm promises a bright future for the Highworth Bowls Club.

The event has undoubtedly laid the groundwork for future growth and engagement and the Highworth Bowls Club look forward to welcoming even more new members in the near future.

Kevin Brown
www.highworthbowlsclub.org



Big fun at the Big Bowls Weekend

Highworth Town Walking Football Club

We have had a very successful couple of months during which the Over-65's have won the South West Region of the National WFA Cup and this month progress to the National Finals in Nottingham. June saw us retain the Thames Valley Division 1 League title for the third season in a row, then on a sweltering day in July we were able to retain the Wiltshire League title for the second year in a row. Only days later we beat 13 other teams to retain the Thames Valley Annual Cup Tournament. Finally, representing the Thames Valley in the WFLA National League Champions Cup 2025 Grand Finals, we played at Coleshill Town's ground, near Birmingham, at the end of July. Being the only team to take a point from eventual winners Wakefield in a 1-1 draw, we managed to finish the day in a very creditable third place and still received an impressive trophy. All-in-all it has been a fantastic effort from the whole of the Over-65's squad.

If you are interested in playing social walking football, there are men's sessions held on **Thursdays and Sundays** (11am to 12pm), both outdoors at the Grange Leisure Centre in Stratton on their 3G pitches,



Over-65's Thames Valley Cup Winners

and a **Friday session** (11:30am to 12:30pm) held indoors at The Rec in Highworth for men over-50. The ladies over-35 meet on **Monday evenings** at Swindon New College (8:30pm to 9:30pm). Please get in touch for more details.

Graham Seeley
highworthwfc@outlook.com



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**Highworth
Remembrance Service**
Sunday 9th November 2025


Lest we forget

www.highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk




**Highworth Christmas Event
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SATURDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2025
10AM UNTIL 5.30PM

Our much-loved celebration returns
as we light-up Highworth
and launch the festive season.

**50 Independent Stalls, Bar, Food Outlets,
Live Music, Christmas Raffle, School Choirs,
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& more**


Check our social
media pages for
updates.

www.highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

News from Highworth's Mayor



I was deeply saddened by the passing of former councillor, Julia Bishop. Heartfelt condolences to Julia's husband Alan and their family. Julia's dedication to Highworth will not be forgotten.

I did it! A tandem skydive from 10,000ft, raising a final total of £7,943.80 for Highworth Forget-Me-Not. Thank you to everyone for helping make a difference.

In June, the Cabinet meeting on the former golf course drew a packed chamber as Swindon Borough Council moved forward with pre-planning advice for 700 houses, and despite community opposition the July Scrutiny Committee upheld the decision. Highworth Town Council will continue to challenge any development on the site.

Deanne Rose (town clerk) and I attended the Swindon's full council meeting in July to support a petition regarding the cessation of HGV's using Shrivensham Road and the delays implementing the 20mph limit in Sevenhampton. We continue to press Swindon Borough Council for action.

For updates on Highworth Neighbourhood Plan and Swindon emerging local plan visit www.highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk.

We have been working on our local youth provision and I hope our young people enjoyed the SMASH summer sessions and the skate park event.

On 15 August we commemorated VJ Day with a short service, two-minute silence, wreath laying, and a coffee morning kindly hosted by the Royal British Legion.

My recent mayoral engagements include:

- A trophy presentation at Highworth Junior Football Club
- Paul Tilling's retirement as groundsman with 30 years of service at Highworth Town Council
- Armed Forces Day Wootton Bassett
- RAF Air Cadets annual inspection
- Wrde Up Festival
- Warneford School's performance of We Will Rock You
- Southfield Junior School's and Eastrop Infant School's fete
- A visit to the Blunsdon Community Shop

Don't forget to drop in to our Volunteer Expo on **20 September** in St. Michael's Church, and pop in your diary our fireworks display on **7 November**, the Remembrance Service on **9 November**, and our Christmas Lights Switch-On event on **29 November**.

Thank you for your ongoing support. It's my privilege to serve this community.

Julie Murphy, Mayor of Highworth



HIGHWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

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St. Michael's Church

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 are held during this service, with refreshments being served after the service.

The live service can be found on YouTube by searching 'St Michaels Church Highworth'.

8:30am Holy Communion

On the **first and third Sunday of the month**.

11am 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** see Prayer Hour in the Church Room at 7:30pm (excluding bank holidays).

We remember those we love and miss

Paul Sheppard

Dorothy Hodgson

June Ruckert

Christopher Dunster

We welcome in Holy Baptism

Demi and Vincent Ince

Wren Clarke

We congratulate on their Marriage

Paul Gannon and Em Golding

Daniel Wathen and Sophie Hobbs

Praying for the roads in the town

07 September Queens Avenue and Redland Close

14 September Redlands Court and The Retreat

21 September Rivers Way and Roman Way

28 September Sevenfields and Sheep Street

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St. Leonard's Parish Church Stanton Fitzwarren

7 September Morning Worship, 9:30am

14 September Family Service, 'Noah and the Flood', 11am

21 September No service at St. Leonard's
We will join everyone at Stratton Methodist Church for a Team event at 6pm

28 September Holy Communion, 9:30am

Stanton Coffee morning will meet on **Wednesday 17 September** at Stanton House Hotel. We will get together at 10:15am for coffee and chat, then John Pearce will bring his talk at 11am entitled 'The Journey Beyond'.

Wiltshire Historic Churches Sponsored Ride and Stride is on **Saturday 13 September**. Would you like to walk, ride or sponsor to raise funds for St. Leonard's and other ancient church buildings? Contact Liz Hillman on 01793 762935 for details, forms etc..

The church building will be open **every Wednesday** in school term time from 10am to 4pm or telephone Liz and Roger on 01793 762935 to organise for the building to be open for you to visit.

Please see our website at www.stantonchurch.info for updates.

St Michael's Church Highworth

**SATURDAY MORNING
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13TH
SEPTEMBER**

Highworth Methodist Church



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Website: www.highworthmethodistchurch.org.uk
www.facebook.com/HighworthMethodistChurch

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Learn new skills
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Sunday Worship @ 10.30

7 Pam Mullin
14 Rev Ian Mead
21 Adam Longhurst
28 Rev Ian Mead

Refreshments
served after
the service

Afternoon Communion
Tuesday, 2nd @ 2pm

3Cs – Coffee, cake & chat

Wednesday, 10th at
2.30pm

Join us for a Chat, Cake
and a Cuppa (and some
singing!)



Just come along!



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



4-6/7/25

18 years have passed. We miss you every day.
Lindsay, Mark, Ben and Lucy xxxx

22-24/8/25

Frank Dean – Remembering you on what would have been your
95th birthday. Miss you every day, Jean, Beverley, Sharon and
families.

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 an issue of Highworth's LINK Magazine.

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Swindon Borough Council	01793 463000
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Root & Branch (Mental Health Therapeutic Centre)	01793 782999

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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, 8 Sheep Street, Highworth.

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:

First day of the month preceding publication.

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