

HighworthLINK

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



February 2026



Discover brand new homes

Honeymans Helm is a vibrant new development featuring energy-efficient 3 to 5 bedroom homes, nestled in the scenic town of Highworth



Honeymans Helm is a vibrant development of three, four and five bedroom homes, set within the charming market town of Highworth, Wiltshire. Surrounded by ten acres of green space and just a short walk from shops, pubs, and restaurants, it offers both convenience and community.



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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader

Happy New Year and a very warm welcome to your first LINK Magazine of the year! A new year, a fresh start!

And so, as we turn the page to a brand new year, I'm delighted to bring you this latest edition packed with stories, news and events from across our vibrant community. Whether you're a long-time resident or have just joined us, I hope you find inspiration, entertainment and a sense of connection within these pages.

This magazine is made possible by the enthusiasm and contributions of local volunteers, organisations and neighbours like you. From celebrating community achievements to highlighting upcoming projects and sharing local voices, our aim is to strengthen the bonds that make our area such a special place to live.

Catch up on some of the festive fun from 2025 by hearing from our local schools and community groups before planning ahead for 2026. Be encouraged by all that's happening to make our towns and villages better places for us all. I'm not one for New Year's resolutions, but I'm all in favour of setting goals and trying fresh

things. How about participating in a new activity or group this year?

If nothing else, I encourage you to get involved with us – share your stories, send me your event details, let me know about someone making a difference, or volunteer by joining our delivery team.

Together we can make this magazine a true reflection of our diverse and dynamic community.

Side note: I am a year older than I was when I last wrote. Another year older, another year wiser? I think it's too soon to say, but if wisdom shows itself through the appearance of silver strands of magic in one's hair, I'd say my wisdom is growing by the day!



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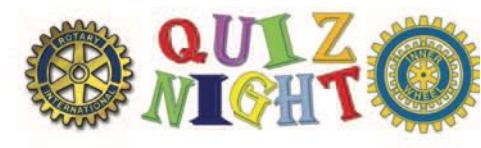
Passionate about your neighbourhood in Shrivenham and South Marston? Do you have a couple of hours to spare each month? Join us as a volunteer to deliver LINK magazine! Help share local stories, events and resources while connecting with your neighbours.

Why Volunteer?

- Make a difference in your community
- Flexible delivery times
- Meet new friends and enjoy community spirit!

Interested? Contact us at keith@xcrosskeys.co.uk or editor@highworthlink.co.uk

Let's spread the word together!



CHARITY QUIZ AND PLOUGHMAN'S

A fund-raising Quiz with a Ploughman's Supper of bread, cheese, pâté, celery, tomatoes, pickles, chutney & butter followed by a selection of delicious home-made desserts

FRIDAY 13 MARCH 2026

**Supermarine Football Club
Swindon, SN3 4BZ.**

6.30pm for a prompt 7pm start

Enter a team of 4 to 6 people

Prizes for the winning team and the runners up

Tickets: £17.50 per person

Bar with a limited selection of drinks
Note - cash needed for the bar and the raffle
Raffle with lots of prizes

For more information and tickets contact
Ken Winslow

Email: rotaryswindonnorth@gmail.com
Phone: 07710 228697

An event organised jointly by the Rotary Club of Swindon North and Thamesdown and the Inner Wheel Club of North Wiltshire. All the proceeds will go 50/50 to the Roxi Foundation (Reg charity No. 1212326) which is dedicated to supporting children and families impacted by autism and ADHD; and to CALM, Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Movement, (Reg charity No. 292318) which helps families that have a child receiving treatment at the Great Western Hospital in Swindon.



Front cover image: Peacock by Hilary Beach (see page 28)

www.highworthlink.co.uk

FIRST THOUGHTS

A Season of Renewal

February brings with it the beginning of Lent and the start of the journey toward Easter. Lent is a season that invites us to pause, reflect, and consider what truly matters in our lives.

Traditionally Lent has been associated with giving something up – often after one last feast on Shrove Tuesday! But the deeper question is not *what* we give up, but *why* we do it?

Lent is not meant to be a spiritual version of a diet plan or an exercise in willpower alone. Instead it offers us a chance to reflect on our daily habits: what we use, what we consume, and what we may take for granted. In recent years we have become increasingly aware of how overconsumption has damaged our environment and shaped a culture that measures value primarily in financial terms. Lent gently challenges us to step back from this mindset.

This season encourages us to take stock and ask ourselves what really gives life meaning. Jesus said



that he came to give life in all its fullness, and Lent offers us the space to reflect on what that gift of life means personally. What nourishes our spirits? What distracts us from what truly matters?

In more recent times, many people have been encouraged not only to give up something for Lent, but also to take up something. This might be a daily commitment to pause, to listen, and to

give thanks. Even setting aside just two minutes a day for quiet reflection or gratitude can be deeply life-transforming. These small moments can reconnect us with ourselves, with others, and with God.

As we journey through Lent together, may it be a season of renewal, awareness and hope – a time to rediscover what brings true life.

Have a blessed Lent.

Rev. Ian Mead, Highworth and Shrivenham Methodist Churches

Forget-Me-Not in 2025

2025 was an exciting year for the Forget-Me-Not Memory Café! We became a registered charity and were also awarded National Lottery funding to secure our mid-term future.

We particularly want to thank Mayor Julie Murphy for her fantastic support over the year. It has been nothing short of amazing. We also want to thank the Coventry Building Society as we have been their Community Partner for three years now and they have raised over £4,500 for us!



The year finished in style with a Christmas Café and Friendship Friday before Christmas, some pictures of which are below.

We would like to thank all our attendees for their support over the year, and particularly our amazing team of volunteers. We wouldn't be able to do what we do without you. Here's looking forward to 2026!

Kevin



Fitzwarren House Celebrates 20-Year Anniversary

There was plenty to celebrate at MHA Fitzwarren House care home following its 20th anniversary, as well as a combined service of more than 160 years among ten staff members.

Residents, staff members and loved ones were present, and the home was decorated with bunting and two flags, one inside and one outside, and there were plenty of refreshments, including bucks fizz and cupcakes.

Not only is the care home rated Outstanding by the CQC, but it also houses a collection of prints donated by Quentin Blake. The gifts were made at the suggestion of Blake's friend and biographer, Lady Ghislaine Kenyon, who is a friend of one of our residents.

The Mayor of Highworth, Councillor Julie Murphy, attended the celebrations and presented ten staff members with their long-service awards.

Colleagues were presented with their 10,15 and 20 years' service awards, which totalled 165 years.

Speaking after the celebrations, home manager Sue Smith said, "What a wonderful day we all had. It was a



Winners of long service awards pictured with Mayor Julie Murphy (centre)

pleasure to have Julie, the Mayor of Highworth, with us to present the long-service awards.

"For me the success of the past 20 years is down to the caring and dedicated team, with five staff members being here from the start and many have stayed over ten years.

"What makes Fitzwarren House so special is its sense of fun which supports residents to enjoy every day. The team at Fitzwarren House is its strength. I am so fortunate to have such a strong team. They are all experienced, loyal and caring and I am extremely proud of them all."

Mary Jones

HALF TERM ACTIVITY DAY

2-4pm Thursday 19th February
In St Michael's Church

Craft, activities, cake-free but donations welcome

Refreshments
Messy church celebration



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Highworth Historical Society

On 25 February, Bill King will be back to take us along the Thames from Marlow to Runnymede. In his talk we will also be visiting Cookham, Maidenhead and Windsor along the way.



For those new to the town, we meet in St. Michael's Church. The doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. To help with funds we hold a raffle, and there is a second-hand bookstall. Visitors are always welcome at our talks for a charge of £3 – cash please.

Our new book, *More Stories from Highworth's Rich Past*, priced at £6, is available at our meetings, and is also for sale in Highworth Library and Visit Highworth.

For more information contact Chris on 01793 764811.

Chris Suter

COMMUNITY

Gould for Gold

In 2026 my daughter and I will be taking on the London Marathon together, and we're doing it for a cause that means a lot to us: The Cinnamon Trust.

The Cinnamon Trust is the only specialist national charity that supports elderly and terminally ill people by helping care for their beloved pets. From dog walking and fostering to long-term pet care, they make it possible for people to stay connected to the animals who bring them comfort, companionship and love.

We chose The Cinnamon Trust because we've seen how powerful the bond between people and pets can be. Pets are family, and for many older or seriously ill people they're a lifeline. Knowing that The Cinnamon Trust steps in when people need help most is something we really admire and something we want to support.

Running a marathon will be one of the biggest challenges we've ever taken on, but we're excited to be doing it side-by-side. Every mile we run will help make sure that no one has to give up their pet when life gets difficult.

If you're able to support us by donating, sharing our page (www.2026tclsondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/jeanette-gould) or cheering us on, it would mean the world to us and all those needing your help.



The Goulds

Jez Lowe Live in Concert



Jez Lowe

Highworth's White Horse Folk Club are proud to announce that the award-winning singer/songwriter and novelist, Jez Lowe, will be appearing live in a special concert organised by the Club on Saturday 7 February, 7:30pm, at the Highworth United Reformed Church SN6 7AQ.

Jez Lowe is one of the busiest and most admired performers on the UK folk circuit today. His songs have been covered by the likes of Fairport Convention, The Dubliners, The Unthanks, The Young Uns, The Tannahill Weavers, Megson, Liam Clancy, Cherish The Ladies, and many, many more! Folk superstar Richard Thompson has hailed Jez as "the best songwriter to come out of England in a long time".

Jez has also written songs specifically for various radio shows. Maybe you've heard one of the 50 or more songs Jez wrote for the award-winning BBC Radio Two series The Radio Ballads. He has also used his experiences of life in north-east England to inspire him to publish four novels that are rich in the history and lyrical storytelling of the area.

Tickets, priced £15, are available from Visit Highworth on the High Street, as well as www.wegottickets.co.uk. For further information, contact Colin Curtis on 07756 642616.

Colin Curtis



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Milestone Year for The Roxi Foundation

Founded in 2024, The Roxi Foundation was set up to help the NHS by supporting individuals to privately access the assessments for neurodiverse conditions they desperately need.

By funding private assessments, The Roxi Foundation not only ensures children receive timely diagnoses but also frees up NHS capacity for the next person in line. In this way, the charity supports both individuals waiting for assessments and the NHS itself.

Since receiving full charity status last year, our feet haven't touched the ground. The need is greater than ever and we have been working hard fundraising to help as many individuals and families as possible.

Since 2024:

- We have received 19 enquiries for funding and have funded 12 assessments for either Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) or Autism/ADHD (AuDHD).
- We have held or attended 45 fundraising events and raised over £15,000.
- And we have supported over 100 families through advice and information.

The Foundation has built momentum through inclusive community events such as sensory-friendly cinema screenings, music fiestas and networking evenings. These activities not only raise vital funds but also promote understanding and acceptance of



neurodiversity across Swindon and Wiltshire.

We are looking to individuals and businesses to join our mission. From hosting fundraising events to

sponsoring initiatives, local partners can make a direct impact on families in need. Supporting The Roxi Foundation isn't just about giving back – it's about being part of a movement that's changing lives, with local people supporting local charities and seeing the difference in their communities.



With 12 assessments already funded and ambitious goals set for 2026, we are determined to transform even more young lives in the years ahead.

If you need further information or wish to support us in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us.

*Matt, John and Rachael
The Roxi Foundation*

Snowdrops at Cotswold Farm

Join us for our special Open Weekend on 14 and 15 February, 11am to 3pm, and also every Monday throughout February.

Come and see this beautiful Cotswolds Arts and Crafts garden in a stunning location, overlooking a quiet valley on descending levels with terrace designed by Norman Jewson in the 1930s. We have an established snowdrop collection with over 90 varieties, named and naturalised, in the borders and along the woodland paths, and a winter step

garden with scents and textures leads down to the magical bog garden with streams and waterfalls.

£7.50 entrance (cash or contactless), children can enter free with an adult. Light refreshments are available, and we have bulbs for sale.

Find us five miles NW of Cirencester on the A417, at Cotswold Farm, Duntisbourne Abbots, GL7 7JS. Contact 07845 122165 for more details, or see our website at www.cotswoldfarmgardens.org.uk.

Kathy Folkestad

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FROM ANCHOR

COMMUNITY

Local Giant Partners with Small School

Staff from Maranatha Christian School in Sevenhampton joined Amazon to help pack 'Back to School' bags and fun-filled activity boxes.

Dozens of boxes and about 30 bags were packed. Some equipment has already been enjoyed by current students and the rest will be gifts of pens and equipment to new students when they join the school.

Pupils have also been making the most of the beautiful school grounds. They've been enjoying frisbee sessions on the spacious field and brightening up the playground with their colourful chalk artwork – it's been a joy to see their creativity shine!

Maranatha Christian School is an independent school



for children aged 3 to 16. Did you know that our Early Years Setting welcomes children aged 3 and 4, and families can use the 15 or 30 hours of free childcare through the government scheme? Attending our Early Years Setting is a wonderful introduction to school life, and there's no obligation to continue into the main school.

If you'd like to find out more, please get in touch to arrange a visit, or register for the open day which is on **Saturday 16 May** by emailing reception@maranathaschool.org or earlyyears@maranathaschool.org. Everyone is welcome!

Justine Gardner, School Business Manager and Examinations Officer



Learn, Laugh, Live with Swindon u3a

Are you feeling creative? Do you want to share your interest with new friends in a relaxed, supportive group? Well, the u3a could be for you. We have many 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. You can make a garment of your choice at the Dressmaking Group which includes all levels of ability. If you want to make personal items for yourself, your family or your home – from cushion covers to bags and clothes and much more – Sewing for Pleasure is for you. 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.

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.



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.

Three craft groups (one in Highworth) give you the opportunity to share skills and learn from each other whatever your craft and level. Craft as You Like enables you to learn different crafts such as beading, card making and kumimono.

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 about it and all the other activities it offers, 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.

Sue Mazzoleni

Community Awards

Shortlist

In no particular order

Simon Rose

Oliver Johnson

Laila Rhodes

Katie Martin

Keith Smith

Chelsea Millard

Maggie Evans

Sarah Whitaker

Salvation Army Gloucester House

Root and Branch

Highworth Scouts

Blunsdon Community Shop

Highworth Forget Me Not Cafe

Highworth Link

COMMUNITY

Highworth United Reformed Church and Amnesty

Once again our members took up their pens before Christmas and sent greetings to some friends across the world selected by Amnesty International as persecuted or imprisoned for their reasonable belief.

Specially commissioned 'dove of peace' cards went to places as diverse as Cambodia, Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan, Honduras and Ecuador. We know that, with other supporters, the mail can often amount to thousands, enough to bear weight on authorities even if they will not grant their delivery to the prisoners themselves.

This little action, as a small deed in an often darkening world, perhaps rather typifies our thoughtful and welcoming congregation – as we say, "Faithful people, searching for God's guidance, trying to follow the way of Jesus."

Keith Salway, Treasurer

Lechlade History Society

You do not need to travel far to see evidence of our industrial past. A short tour around your home will reveal an abundance of industrial archaeology without having to brave the elements on a dig.

Why not join us on **Monday 16 February** at Lechlade Memorial Hall, 7pm, for a talk by Bill King on *Industrial Archaeology in your Garage, Shed and Attic*. Bill will take us on a light-hearted trip in the average home to tell us about the industry that was once in Britain.

Ros Godden



Highworth Climate Talks

Cycle paths in Highworth Consultation

Swindon Borough Council wants to know your views about cycling and walking and are undertaking a consultation ending on 20 February 2026.

Cycling has been a prominent topic in Highworth and the consultation is a chance to make your views known. Swindon is committed to enabling more cycling in the borough and has a bold vision to improve Swindon's local cycling and walking infrastructure. The Swindon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has a lifetime of approximately ten years and consists of 25 scheme proposals, which are subject to feasibility investigations, wider consultation and funding availability. Exploring connectivity to and within Highworth feature amongst these 25 proposals.

That's why on **Tuesday 17 February** Highworth Climate Talks is hosting a discussion about the consultation. There will be an overview of the Swindon LCWIP from Swindon Borough Council's Transport Planning Team. Please come along, find out about Swindon's aspirations and have your say. We're moving to an alternative venue: United Reformed Church, 26 High Street, Highworth, SN6 7AG. Doors open at 7:15pm for a 7:30pm start.

John Ranford

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Tracey Kassulke

Teresa Triggs and Tracey Kassulke are celebrating 3 years of developing Barton Court Therapies. The centre has grown from their own counselling practices to now also offering a range of therapeutic services with other practitioners.



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Prim



Teresa
Udell



Ed
Hopgood



Zoe Dixon-
Saunders



Susie
Richards

Therapists offer a wide variety of counselling therapies for all ages - including children (11+ years), young people, adults, and couples - as well as hypnotherapy, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), and nutrition support. This comprehensive approach ensures that every client receives the right kind of help, in the right way, at the right time.

Visit our website for further information and contact details
www.bartoncourt-therapies.co.uk

COMMUNITY

Coleshill and Buscot National Trust



National
Trust

As you may know, Coleshill is home to the Heritage and Rural Skills Centre and there is a wide array of exciting courses to choose from this year.

New and exciting courses include ropework, Suminagashi ink marbling, European marbling and leatherwork, heritage decorative finishes and a five-day woodcarving summer school, delving into the history of Misericords, all in addition to the usual courses. On 14 February you can make a Valentine's gift with a course on silversmithing. Please see our website to learn more.

Looking further ahead, the National Trust's long-term focus for the Coleshill and Buscot Estate is to Restore Nature. The nature-first set of goals will help our local environment and the wildlife that calls it home. Keep up to date with progress through our monthly updates which are posted to our website under 'Project Diary'.



View of Coleshill Park

Another part of our programme to Restore Nature is the option to Adopt-a-Plot. Buscot and Coleshill Estate plots will be helped through these donations to develop wetland habitats such as pools, ponds, reedbeds and floodplain meadows. Your donations will go towards developments that increase biodiversity and reduce flooding. Prices start at £8 a month.

Check back in the coming months to find out what is coming up in spring.

Christmas Celebrations at Westrop Primary School

During the last weeks of December, Key Stage 1 children at Westrop Primary School performed their *Big Little Nativity*, whilst Years 3 and 4 put on *Lights, Camel, Action*. The performances were fantastic and we are so proud of all the children who took part.



Claire Kruse



COMMUNITY

Very Successful Year for the Highworth Lions



What a fantastic December we had! In fact, 2025 was rather spectacular in that over £35,000 was donated during the year which will go towards benefiting so many groups and those in need.

Father Christmas with his elves and sleigh created fun and laughter for children and a great time was had by everyone. Thank you to all the businesses and volunteers who assisted us, from the storing of the sleigh for events to helping us raise funds for those in need this coming year. Our volunteers collected over £1,500. A huge thank you to everyone who donated – this will be distributed, as always, to those most in need.

We are a small team of people who rely solely on volunteers to help run our charity shop, along with other Lions projects; this enables us to raise funds for the local community as well as national and international disaster support. If you are interested in joining us and able to give some of your time, skills and knowledge, please do get in touch. Visit our shop with your details or email sue@highworthlions.co.uk.

We are also in need of volunteer drivers for our very popular community minibus. Please email details if you have a few hours to spare: transport@highworthlions.co.uk.

Our January sale has done very well thanks to the help of our volunteers and recycling heroes – winter coats, jackets and warm clothing ready for those frosty, cold days.

The shop's Valentine's Day window display is ready, together with some lovely bargain gifts that have been put by specially for the occasion. Come in and take a look before they are all gone!

Recent donations and pledges:

- OAP Christmas vouchers: £5,400
- Santa sweets for children: £200
- Local family appeal: £240
- Foodbank: £400
- Boxes of Hope through the local church and schools: £600
- Philippines flood disaster (Lions International): £1,500
- Delivery of Christmas presents to orphaned children in Ukraine, coordinated through Swindon (SHAP)

Sue Subow, sue@highworthlions.co.uk



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COMMUNITY

1st Highworth Scouts Need Your Help!

We're looking for a new Group Lead Volunteer (GLV) and enthusiastic helpers for all of our Beaver, Cub and Scout sections to keep our thriving Group running smoothly.

Volunteering with us is a chance to make a real difference in young people's lives, develop new skills, and be part of a supportive community. Whether you can give a little time or take on a bigger role, your help matters. If you're passionate about adventure, teamwork and fun, we'd love to hear from you!

Please contact phil.kruse@highworthscouts.org.uk



Nora Enderby

Highworth Scouts Fundraising Success

Thanks to all of you who bought stamps and encouraged others to use the Scouts Christmas Post.

Sales of stamps were unfortunately down, but deliveries were very similar. However, the increased cost of stamps meant we raised nearly £1,600 for the Group, easily our biggest fundraiser of the year. None of this would have been possible without the enthusiasm and support of Aga, Loraine, Amy, Ele and Ebony at Highworth Emporium – thanks, ladies!

Look out for all the details of our Scarecrow Trail and Annual Quiz in the next issue of LINK Magazine. The Scarecrow Trail will be, as usual, over the **Easter school holidays** and our ever-popular quiz will be held on **17 April**.

David Roblin, 1st Highworth Scouts

Bags of Hope

St. Michael's Church would like to say a huge thank you to all who helped pack and carry bags and to those who contributed financially to our Bags of Hope appeal, and to Andrews Butchers for providing gift vouchers at a reduced cost as well as the Highworth Lions for providing both financial assistance and transport.

We were only able to provide these gifts due to the amazing volunteers who turned up to put in some hard labour to make it happen – thank you. Thanks to Bella, Stephen, Jill, Ray, Norman and Richard who made the whole process run smoothly this year.

The weather was particularly poor on delivery day, and everyone set about loading the vans with amazing spirit (and speed!) to ensure they were delivered to the schools in good time before the Christmas break.

88 Bags of Hope were distributed anonymously through the schools and contained meat vouchers, fresh products and store cupboard essentials, plus a small present for each family.

This is the eighth year St. Michael's Church has been involved in providing these bags to families and we continue to feel blessed for the help and support we receive every year.



Southfield School Plants Poppy Garden



In the days leading up to Remembrance Day, Southfield Junior School teamed up with award-winning housebuilder Backhouse and the Royal British Legion (RBL) to create a moving poppy memorial garden at the front of the school.

The garden was officially unveiled on Thursday 6 November, with pupils joining Head of School Kimberley O'Sullivan, Gerry Evans (Chairman of the Highworth & District Branch of the RBL) and Emily Adams from Backhouse, to mark the occasion.

In preparation for the event, every child at Southfield Junior School made their own poppy windmill, provided by Backhouse. The school also welcomed Gerry Evans for a special assembly where he spoke about the importance of Remembrance Day and shared stories from his 18 years of service in the Royal Air Force. He highlighted why it remains vital to honour those who have served and to support



veterans and their families today.

The collaboration has not only created a meaningful focal point for the community but has also helped young pupils gain a deeper understanding of remembrance and the sacrifices made by past generations.

One child said, "I learned a lot more than I expected in the assembly with Gerry. It was interesting." Another enjoyed the poppy making and shared, "I felt excited to make my poppy. It made my heart feel full. It filled me with joy planting it because it looked so beautiful."

Kimberley O'Sullivan said, "Every child in our school had the opportunity to assemble their own poppy windmill and place it outside our school. This project not only helped our children understand the significance of remembrance but also encouraged them to think deeply about the sacrifices made by

others. We are grateful to Backhouse for their support and very proud to contribute to the RBL's Poppy Appeal £242.12 from our school council selling poppy merchandise."

Kimberley O'Sullivan, Head of School

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Close Encounters for Eastrop Infants School



Last year was an exciting adventure for our children at Eastrop Infants School as their learning leapt off the page.

In Term 2, our topic 'Go Wild' involved a thrilling hands-on encounter with the animal kingdom. Our children from Nursery to Year 2 had the chance to meet some incredible creatures up close, including chameleons, snakes, owls, and even a tarantula! The Animal Encounter visit sparked curiosity and wonder, giving the children the opportunity to learn about habitats and adaptations in a truly memorable way.

We also launched our 'Space' topic. One of the highlights was a visit from the Explorer Dome: an interactive experience that transported the children



beyond Earth's atmosphere. Inside the dome, children explored the planets and stars.

By bringing topics to life, we have created experiences that will inspire, educate, and stay with our children for years to come.

Julie Warbuton, Executive Headteacher

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COMMUNITY

Remembering Robin Pope and Christopher Openshaw

If you've never had reason to visit The Highworth Clinic – tucked above the gents' hairdressers on Sheep Street, Highworth – you may not have met Robin Pope (Osteopath) or Christopher Openshaw (Chiropodist/Podiatrist).

Together Robin and Chris ran The Highworth Clinic for over 35 years, serving the residents of Highworth and welcoming patients from across Swindon and the surrounding areas, some even travelling long distances for their care.

Whether it was a broken leg, a toothache, a heart scare, or something more serious, the clinic's door was always open. Robin and Chris were known for their dedication, once even opening up on Christmas Day so Robin could treat an emergency patient.

Those who did meet them will have their own fond memories: perhaps Chris, with his very dry wit, cheeky humour and unmistakable belly laugh, or Robin, whose gentle bedside manner and quiet charm put everyone at ease. Both men lived in Highworth for many years before later moving to Shrivenham.

For years, Chris had tried to persuade Robin to slow down and consider retirement, but Robin loved his work and the people he met through it. Eventually, over Christmas 2023, the pair agreed they would begin to wind down in the New Year.

In April 2024, while at work, Robin suffered a mild heart attack. After a short stay in hospital, he returned

home to recover. Sadly, in August he was again taken ill and passed away peacefully in hospital with Chris by his side.

Following Robin's passing, Chris, who had retired in May, spent his time settling Robin's estate and caring for his beloved dog Oscar, who was also in the later stages of life. When Oscar's health declined further, Chris made the heartbreaking decision to have him put to sleep.

Just a few weeks later, on the first anniversary of Robin's funeral, tragedy struck again. While tending Robin's grave, Chris suffered a massive heart attack and died there beside his lifelong friend.

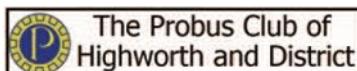
Both men received well-attended funerals and now rest side by side in Shrivenham Cemetery. Highworth has lost two devoted, compassionate and much-loved members of its community. May they both rest in peace.

The Highworth Clinic remains open, now under the care of Miles Holloway (Osteopath), who worked alongside Robin and Chris for 16 years following his graduation in 2009. With an expanding team of podiatrists and massage therapists, Miles is committed to continuing their legacy of care and support for the people of Highworth and the surrounding areas for years to come.

*Memories and thoughts by Miles Holloway,
Richard Buttery and family.*

Highworth and District Probus Club

We meet at The Cold Harbour in Blunsdon on alternative Tuesdays at 10:30am. We welcome retired professional and business men with no upper age limit, and we welcome visitors as guests at any of our meetings.



On 3 February Dacre Watson will be giving a talk about *Flying in the Andes*, and on 17 February David du Cruz will be talking about *Marlborough Castle*. Geoff King will join us on 3 March to give a presentation on *Thomas Jefferson*.

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

George North



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COMMUNITY

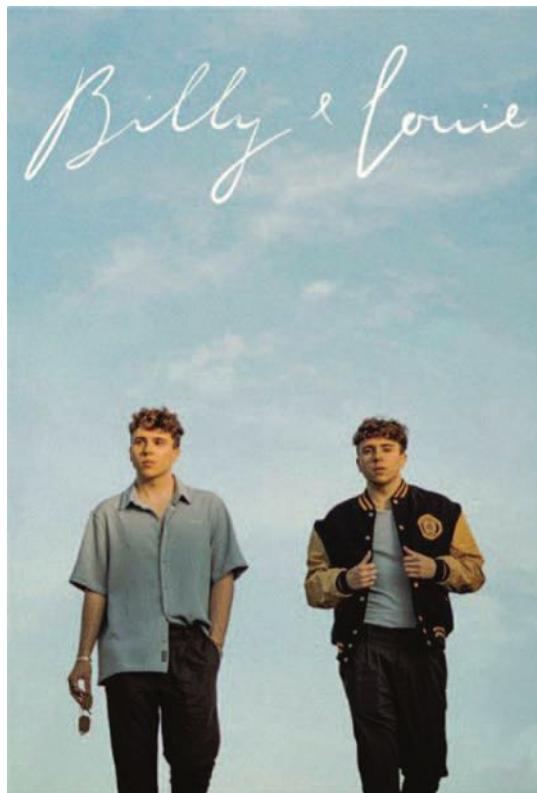
Big Highworth Community Foundation

2026: a new year, a new chapter. Can you believe we are already into our second month of the year, and it's all systems go here at Big Highworth. With our Community Awards for 2025/26 just a few weeks away, we're looking forward to a prestigious evening on Saturday 28 March at Wrag Barn Golf Club.

Our Community Awards honour and celebrate those nominated as your Citizen, Young Citizen, Community Team, Volunteer and Charity of the Year. We would like to thank all our judges – Fiona Scott, Dave Southby, Mike Land, Aga Marsdon, John Lewis and Howard Smith – for their time and support. And a big thank you to all of those who made nominations in 2025. The judges certainly had their work cut out getting the nominations down to the shortlist.

Those businesses supporting our Community Awards this year include:

- Our Bronze table sponsors: The Care Show Ltd., Love All Hounds, Shreeve Care services, Black Nova Designs, Empowered VA Services, Hanley's Highworth and Birddog Catwalk.



- Our Silver individual award sponsors: Hilliers Funeral Services, Wal Finch Care, Filestream Ltd. and Barnes Coaches.
- Our Gold entertainment sponsor: The Big Highworth team extends its sincere appreciation to MyMarket for their valuable support of our Community Awards.
- Our Platinum award sponsor: We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to Wiltshire Windows for being our Platinum headline sponsor of our Community Awards for the second consecutive year.

Swindon's Billy and Louie, finalists from ITV's The Voice, will be performing. There will also be games and a raffle. If you can donate raffle prizes, please contact us.



To follow Big Highworth, volunteer and/or support our journey, you can follow us on Facebook or you can donate via www.localgiving.org/charity/big-highworth-community-foundation.

Alison Cross-Jones

Any questions contact Alison Chair of Big Highworth Community Foundation on 07903871140 or email BHCF2023@outlook.com

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Bridge Volunteers Nominated for MPs Award



Will Stone MP (centre) with volunteers from The Bridge Centre and CAP

At the tail end of last year, The Bridge Centre hosted a series of visits from local politicians. In recognition of their hard work and dedication to our local community, The Bridge Centre team received a certificate of recognition from Will Stone MP. The team was nominated via a poll of local residents carried out by the MPs office.

Will came and presented the award and held a constituency surgery at The Bridge Centre. We were also privileged to host two mayors – our own Highworth Mayor, Julie Murphy came to tour our facilities, as did Fay Howard, Mayor of Swindon, who wanted to understand how she could support all that is going here for the local community. It was great to welcome both of them. Each was extremely impressed by how much we manage to cram into our relatively small space!

In December, we went out and about delivering brochures and spreading Christmas cheer to some of our newest Highworth streets. We were highlighting the work of the local churches, Christians against Poverty (CAP), and The Bridge Centre to raise awareness of these initiatives and offer to pray for people.

At The Bridge Centre we believe that Hope is alive and his name is Jesus. Regardless of background, we offer friendship through our drop-in, Swindon Food Collective referrals, hosting CAP Highworth and District, and giving all a warm welcome. We run a range of events for children, young people and the wider community too.

The Bridge Centre is open to the public weekday mornings. For our full calendar and opening times, check out our website www.highworthcommunitychurch.org.

Jon Hares

We invite you to join us...

MAYOR'S CIVIC SERVICE

Sunday 8th February 2026
at 2pm

Join us as we come together to give thanks and celebrate our local volunteers, as well as the dedicated members of our armed forces, emergency services, and the NHS who serve our community.

The procession will gather at Brewery Street car park from 1.15pm with a departure time of 1.40pm followed by the service at 2pm.

Following the service, light refreshments will be served in the church by The Royal British Legion

www.highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

COMMUNITY

Visit Highworth

Whilst we are still feeling the winter chills, spring is not too far away, and it is perhaps time to start thinking of taking a Town Tour to blow away the cobwebs and discover interesting facts about this amazing medieval town we have the privilege to live in.

Visit Highworth continues to promote our town and the many individual retailers and hospitality venues. We are also continuing our programme of *Meet the Maker* sessions where you can see some of our local crafters in action and have a chat about their work and what inspires them.



For those of you who are feeling creative, look out for our workshop programme coming up in March with a *Paint and Prosecco* evening (what animal or bird will be painted this time?) as well as some other craft events.

Looking ahead, we have a Craft Fair in St. Michael's Church as part of the May Day festivities, and the HALF – Highworth Art and Literature Festival – in June!

See more about what we have to offer by checking out our website: www.visithighworth.co.uk.

Iona Sadler, Chair of Visit Highworth

Visit Highworth

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COMMUNITY

Highworth Flower Club

We ended the year with an excellent Christmas demonstration by Arnaud Metairie. He gave us wonderful designs and filled the stage with 17 arrangements by the end of the evening. His fabulous flowers, wit and talent for engaging his audience created a fun and festive atmosphere.

The committee has put together a full programme this year with good demonstrators and workshops which are always popular. We meet on the **first Thursday of the month** at Warneford School where there is plenty of parking, and doors open 7pm for 7:30pm start. We are a friendly club and welcome new members, so if you enjoy flowers do come along – we would love to see you.



The next meeting is on **Thursday 5 February**, 7:30pm at Warneford School with a floral demonstration by Jo Fowler.

Visitors welcome at £7. Please contact Michele on 07798 817249 for more information, or see our website: www.highworthfloralarts.co.uk.

Highworth Camera Club

The club started the New Year with a look at macro photography: how to take photos of some tiny things or a closer look at big things! We considered what equipment could be used and ways to go about it.

This year the club is setting up some special interest groups, picking subjects that members have expressed an interest in learning more about or refreshing knowledge from the basics to particular genre of photography. These groups will run independently of club nights.

This month some members will share their insights to aspects of photography. In March there will be a session on portraits and lighting.

If you have an interest in photography as a beginner or experienced picture taker, do come along to our club meetings. The club nights are on the **second Tuesday of the month**, 7:30pm, at the Community Centre, The Dormers, Highworth. For more information see our website: www.highworthcameraclub.com or email: highworthcamclub@gmail.com.

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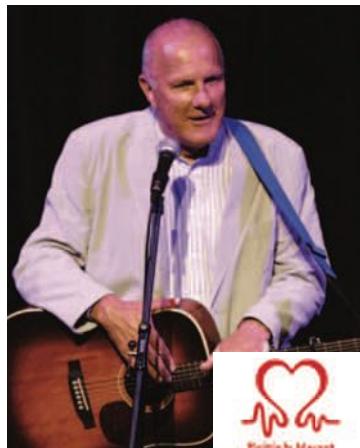
An Evening with Richard Digance

Richard is again coming to Highworth!

Come along and join in the fun at Highworth Community Centre on **Saturday 18 April**, 7:30pm. Doors open at 7pm. Tickets are available from Joan Webb on 01793 762853 or from Visit Highworth, 7 High Street, Highworth, priced £15 (cash sales only).

A bar will be available (cash sales only). We will also be holding a raffle during the evening. All proceeds are for British Heart Foundation.

Joan Webb



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As a local tradesman, Russell values the relationships he builds within the community. His business is built

largely on word-of-mouth recommendations and repeat customers who appreciate his reliability, professionalism and honest approach.

From the first consultation to the final finishing touches, Russell maintains a strong commitment to customer satisfaction. He takes pride not just in the quality of his craftsmanship, but in delivering results that stand the test of time. His extensive portfolio showcases a diverse range of work, all reflecting his skill, care and dedication to the craft.

Whether you're planning a small home improvement or a large-scale renovation, Russell Barnfield is a trusted choice for carpentry services. With over two decades of experience and a strong local presence, he combines traditional values with expert workmanship to bring your ideas to life.

For more information call 07970 402696 or see Russell's website: www.cotswoldcarpentry.com.



Lechlade Art Society

We enjoyed fundraising at several events last year. We had donations of art materials and beautiful books that members were happy to purchase knowing that the proceeds were for Prospect Hospice.



By far the biggest fundraiser was at our Annual Exhibition where members produced 'Little Gems' – 8" x 8" works of art that sold for £25 each. They proved very popular with visitors to the exhibition as truly affordable works of art.

The last event of the year was the Pop-Up Art Sale on Saturday 6 December which was a success, albeit with light footfall – this could well have been due to challenging wind and rain. However, another £47 was raised with donations for refreshments.

If you would like to know more about LAS, have a look

at our website (www.lechladeartsociety.co.uk) or just drop in to the Pavilion in Lechlade on a Thursday morning. A good number of the membership come along to chat, share ideas and create artworks – oh, and there's coffee and biscuits too!

Zoë Hing



Highworth Community Cinema

On Friday 27 February we are showing, for the first time, a Bridget Jones film. This is the fourth film in the series and is based on the third book by Helen Fielding, published in 2013.



The film stars Renee Zellweger (of course), Chiwetel Ejiofor, Hugh Grant and Colin Firth. If you are a Bridget Jones fan, this may be the one to come and see.

We would love to see you at the United Reformed Church, High Street, SN6 7AG. Doors open at 7:15pm for a 7:45pm start. (124 mins, Cert. 15.)

In *Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy*, Bridget is alone once again, widowed four years ago when Mark was killed on a humanitarian mission in the Sudan. She's now a single mother to nine-year-old Billy and four-year-old Mabel, and is stuck in a state of emotional limbo, raising her children with help from her loyal friends and even her former lover. Bridget struggles to find her place in the world but realises it's time to get back out there.

Step forward two potential new suitors: the impetuous Roxster (Leo Woodall) and straight-laced teacher Mr Wallaker (Chiwetel Ejiofor). Can Bridget make it work with either of them?

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

Highworth Arts & Literary Festival

We are delighted to announce the exciting return of the Highworth Arts and Literary Festival (HALF) on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 June 2026.

Four local and international authors have agreed to take part, and we will be announcing their names next month. We are also planning a range of workshops, plus exciting activities for children.

In the meantime, we want to ensure that the Festival represents the best in local talent and will be looking for your short stories, your art work and your poetry.

Book your weekend at home now.

Keith Smith, Chair of HALF



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Keep Calm!

It's February and getting near to spring. I find the winter is always long and tiring, so I thought I would write about ways to stay calm and relax when things get tough.

What I like to do when things get stressful is to stop whatever I am doing and draw. But other ways to calm down could be:

- Reading a book.
- Colouring. (I have an amazing book which lets you practise different patterns.)
- Spending time with your pet. (If you do not have a pet, why not offer to walk a friend's dog or go for a walk in nature?)
- Watching programmes from your childhood also helps calm you down as it evokes nostalgia that helps you to relax.
- Why not sit out in the garden and listen to nature – use all your senses?

Sometimes when I am at parties, I find they get a bit overwhelming. So what I do is take ear buds with me that dim the sound, and go to a quiet room to have a

minute by myself. Here are a few things to do if you get overstimulated by too many things going on:

- Find a quiet space to go and unwind.
- Take headphones wherever you go in case there are loud noises.
- Go outside to get fresh air – this helps to clear your mind and helps you calm down.

Mental health is very important, so make sure you find times to do what you love.

This is my last article for the LINK Magazine. I am so sad – it has been five years since I started, and it has been so much fun. But because I'm doing my GCSEs next year I'm going to be revising like crazy, and even now I am struggling to find time to write for the magazine. I wish the next young journalists as much fun writing for the LINK as I have had!

Constance Davenport

Rachael says: If you would be interested in writing for the magazine, we're always on the lookout for new talent. Contact me at editor@highworthlink.co.uk to find out more.

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Highworth Running Club

We're now only a month away from the town's annual running race and you, the reader, are invited to join in. On the morning of **Sunday 22 March**, Shrivenham Road will be festooned with colour as runners, joggers and plodders show off their moisture-wickable fabrics and trampoline-inspired running shoes. Ahead of them is one lap of five undulating miles that culminate with an ascent up Eastrop Hill before finishing back at Warneford School whence they came.

For their efforts, each finishing participant will receive a chip-timed race position, a race memento and, of course, will have earned the right to be considered in the overall prize giving. Refreshments will be on sale at Warneford School for runners and relatives alike; homemade cakes and hot drinks will be in abundance.

The volume of entrants in years gone by often flirts with the maximum allowed, so to avoid disappointment please enter online at your earliest convenience using the link found on our website. Last



All smiles in the 5-mile

year we were able to make a number of donations to local charities thanks to your support, and we'd love to do the same again this year. Here's to seeing you in March!

Jason Daniels, www.highworthrunningclub.co.uk

Highworth Town Walking Football Club

On the last Friday before Christmas we had 18 players turn up to The Rec which kindly allowed us to have an extra-long session. We had three teams of six and held a mini tournament where each team played against each other twice in 15-minute games. After the winning team received their trophies, we all went to The Rose and Crown to celebrate Christmas and the fact that we are all still playing football, enjoying great camaraderie and keeping fit!

If you want to lose those extra Christmas pounds and

join a fun group, why not come along and give it a try? There are indoor sessions on **Fridays** from 11:30am to 12:30pm held at The Rec in Highworth. Alternatively there are outdoor sessions held on **Thursdays and Sundays** from 11am to 12pm, both held at Grange Leisure Centre in Stratton on their 3G pitches. All sessions are Pay and Play, meaning anyone over the age of 50 is welcome to come and play. £4 payment per Thursday and Sunday sessions and £3.50 per Friday session, all payable by credit/debit card only, no cash, direct to the sports centre. Contact Graham Seeley for more details.

*Graham Seeley, 07769 703 702
highworthwfc@outlook.com*



Highworth Town Junior Football Club

HTJFC unveils its exciting fundraising events for 2026 – just the start of an action-packed fundraising calendar that aims to bring the community together whilst raising vital funds to support the club's growing youth programme. With more players joining each season, the club is committed to providing high-quality coaching, equipment and facilities, and this year's events promise to play a big part in making that happen.

On 11 April the club will hold a special Dinner and Dance, offering an evening of great food, entertainment and celebration. The event aims to bring together sponsors, parents, supporters, coaches and friends of the club for a memorable night while raising funds for future development.

30 May will see the return of the club's football tournament, welcoming teams from Highworth and surrounding areas. The tournament is set to be one of the highlights of the year, giving young players the chance to showcase their skills in a fun and competitive environment.

Throughout the year the club will host four Sunday car boot sales (31 May, 28 June, 26 July and 23 August), giving local residents the chance to clear out unwanted items, pick up bargains, and enjoy a lively community atmosphere with food and drink available from The Hatch too. Pick up a bacon sandwich and a cuppa, and wander around the car boot stalls whilst the kids run around on the field.

Additional events, including kids' discos, Easter egg hunts and a sponsored walk, will

be announced throughout the year ensuring there's something for everyone to enjoy. HTJFC looks forward to another fantastic year of community spirit, football and fundraising. All information and options to buy tickets, book tournament places or book a car boot pitch can be found on our website.

Kelly Preston, htjfcKelly@gmail.com
www.highworthtownjuniorsfc.co.uk



Shrivenham Cricket Club

The season for our 1st XI starts with disappointment this year after our promotion aspirations were thwarted. Having finished last season a solitary point off top spot, our hopes of being promoted out of Wiltshire Cricket League's Division 5 were stumped when we learned our pitch/square, despite its average of over 400 runs per game last season, didn't conform to the expected standards of Division 4. With little-to-no time to appeal or find alternative league opportunities, our 1st XI will once again campaign in Division 5 for 2026.

Conversely, our 2nd XI, who of course play on the same pitch (in Division 10), will be promoted this year, as was their right, and will enjoy a season playing in Division 9.

If you are interested in cricket, please do look us up on social media or see our website and get in touch.

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

Wrag Barn Golf Club

We had a busy and cheerful Christmas at Wrag Barn with festive parties in the clubhouse and a full programme of competitions on the golf course. Our Juniors enjoyed a night-golf competition which proved so popular that club professional Richard Scarrott has now added it to the calendar as a permanent fixture. Christmas jumpers were very much the dress code for a range of competitions held across all sections, including a Bottle Bash, Greenkeepers Texas Scramble, Senior Captains Treat and an Adult Cadet competition.

The Ladies Christmas celebrations brought twinkling lights and a real sense of sparkle to the course. Lady Vice Sue Pritchard and her team of Alison Jenkinson and Sarah Prall took



first place in the 'Reverse Waltz' 9-hole competition, with Alison Talbert, Alison Carter and Kris Whinney finishing second. Third place went to Chris Eaton, Margo Campbell and Molly Barby. Pass the Parcel provided plenty of laughs thanks to some inspired prizes followed by a memorable rendition of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' complete with actions. Lunch was thoroughly enjoyed with traditional Christmas favourites alongside other options for those who had already had enough turkey.

With the festive season now at a close, we look ahead to some spring golf and longer days on the course. We would like to wish all our members and visitors a very Happy New Year.

*Verity Manners,
www.wragbarn.com*

Shrivenham Park Golf Club

The new year is here: Happy 2026! Christmas activities were amazing at the club and thanks to everyone who made them possible. Whilst Parkies Pals and the Social Putters enjoyed their Christmas get-togethers (the latter seeing Graham on the keyboard), the Juniors (pictured) played a Texas three-ball team event, each team consisting of two juniors plus a parent, grandparent or adult member, over 9 holes followed by a meal. The winning team was Tom Gristwood with his two sons, Albert and George. Our ladies also enjoyed their Christmas event with a lovely traditional Christmas lunch, and our Lady Captain kindly gave everyone a gift; it was lovely to see everyone there. Our annual trophies were presented at the club's Texas Christmas gathering, presented by our club Captains Jim Boyes and Pam Bannister. Many thanks to Adi and Sandra for flourishing in their roles as competition secretaries.

Our Parkies Pals and Social Putters are already up and running this year with the next dates in their calendars being **Tuesday 3 February**

(Parkies Pals) and **Fridays 6 and 20 February** (Social Putters). Our doors are always open to new people, and during the winter months we meet between 10am and 12pm with drinks available for a small charge.

Club membership is renewed in April and we're always looking for new members, particularly ladies, so if you are interested please contact us on the number below for details. Whether you're a prospective new member, a visiting society or just a visitor in need of a coffee, we look forward to giving you a warm welcome.

Carole Lee, 01793 783 853

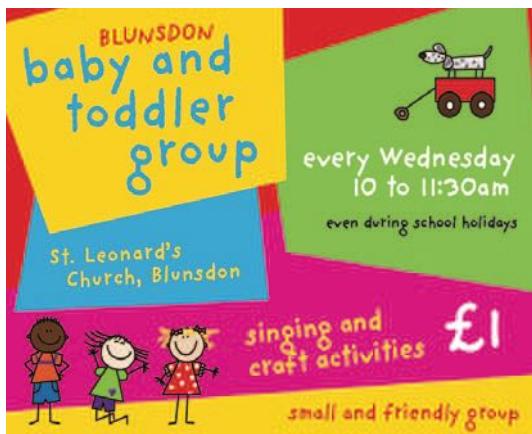
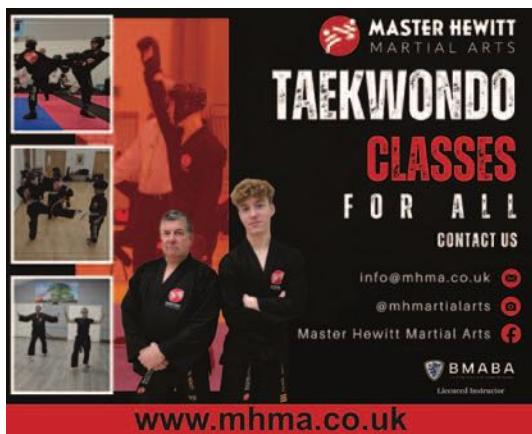


Gathering at the first tee

Master Hewitt Martial Arts

Ever thought about learning a martial art? MHMA offers high-quality taekwondo training for children and adults in a friendly, welcoming environment. With a strong history rooted in traditional taekwondo, our club proudly upholds core values such as respect, discipline and perseverance, while adding a modern twist to keep classes fun, engaging and relevant for today's students.

Led by Master Peter Hewitt (7th degree black belt), a highly experienced taekwondo instructor with many years of coaching and competition experience, MHMA provides structured, professional tuition suitable for



complete beginners through to experienced martial artists. Master Hewitt is assisted by Mr. Tom Smith (3rd degree) who teaches the children's classes, delivering lessons in a fun, interactive and engaging way. Training includes traditional techniques, patterns, self-defence and fitness, all taught in a supportive atmosphere where students are encouraged to progress confidently at their own pace. We train at Swindon's East Wichen Primary School, a convenient local venue that is easily accessible via a number of main driving routes that makes finding us easy.

Taekwondo offers a wide range of benefits for both children and adults, including improved fitness, strength and flexibility, increased confidence and self-belief, better coordination and balance, enhanced concentration and focus, plus valuable social skills through teamwork and making new friends. Children gain discipline and confidence in a positive setting, while adults enjoy improved fitness, stress relief, motivation and the opportunity to meet like-minded people. Whether you're just starting out, returning after a break, or already have experience and are looking for a new challenge, your taekwondo journey awaits. Anyone interested can book a trial lesson by visiting the website and take the first step today.

Jayne Smith, www.mhma.co.uk

Highworth Town Football Club

Highworth Town ended 2025 on a four-game league and cup unbeaten run and well clear of the two relegation places. Progress has also been made in the Challenge and Floodlit Cups with away trips to Hereford Pegasus and Alcester Town to come. Only a handful of games remain to be played on the grass at the SaveOnTyres Stadium, since work on the ground refurbishment is planned to start in March. Keep an eye on social media for updates.

Derek Lloyd

To advertise in The Highworth Link contact

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For those with dementia, we offer understanding, friendship, craft activities and music.

We meet on the 4th Monday of the month from 1.30 - 3pm and we are hosting an

Open session on 23rd February 2pm – 3pm for anyone to pop in to learn what we offer, for themselves, a friend or a family member.

All sessions are free, including tea and cake



Open day in the Farmhouse Garden in 2021

For further information / to let us know you are hoping to visit us, please contact Stantonparkbarn@gmail.com or call: 07796 530560



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THURSDAYS 9AM - 12PM

ROVES FARM SN6 7QG

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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 3G PITCH

Highworth Town Council is delighted to announce funding has formally been approved for the construction of a new state-of-the-art 3G stadia pitch at the Highworth Town Football Club site, thanks to investment from the Premier League, The FA and Government's Football Foundation alongside contributions from Highworth Town Council, Swindon Borough Council and a number of other funding partners. With both funding and planning permission now secured, this landmark project long envisioned by generations of local volunteers, players, and community leaders can now move forward to delivery.

The new all-weather 3G pitch represents a major investment in Highworth's sporting infrastructure and will significantly expand access to high-quality, reliable playing facilities for the whole community. Designed for year-round use, the pitch will support junior and senior football, school sport, women and girls' development programmes, recreational leagues, disability-inclusive sessions, and wider community activity, regardless of weather conditions.

"This is a tremendous day for Highworth," said Councillor Julie Murphy, Mayor of Highworth. "At long last, thanks to the tireless work and partnership between our local football clubs and the Football Foundation, we have secured the site, planning permission and the funding to make this 3G pitch a reality.

To read the full press release visit our website: www.highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk



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Our renewals are currently underway but we anticipate there will be allotments available to new tenants.

Get in touch by calling or emailing us with your name, address, telephone number, email address and your preferred allotment site.

admin@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Old Golf Course

Swindon Road

Park Avenue



HIGHWORTH EVENTS 2026

02 MAY	HIGHWORTH MAY DAY	
13 JUNE	SKATE PARK EVENT 11AM TO 2PM	
13 SEPT	SKATE PARK EVENT 11AM TO 2PM	
06 NOV	HIGHWORTH FIREWORKS GATES OPEN 6PM FIREWORKS 7.30PM	
08 NOV	HIGHWORTH REMEMBRANCE SERVICE	
28 NOV	HIGHWORTH CHRISTMAS EVENT & LIGHT SWITCH- ON	

REPRESENTATIVES

News from Highworth's Mayor



As we welcome February, I'm delighted to share some exciting progress since last writing, as I am pleased to confirm that our new Barra Close Play Park is open and already being enjoyed by families and children across the town.

It's wonderful to see so many smiling faces using the equipment and enjoying this bright new space. We are now planning a formal opening event in the spring – date to be announced soon – so watch this space. I look forward to celebrating with you all.

In other great news, we have secured substantial financial backing from the Football Association, and with planning approval now successfully in place we are moving forward with the delivery of a new 3G all-weather pitch on the site of the senior football club. This fantastic facility will support year-round play for players and groups of all ages and contribute significantly to local sport and wellbeing.

Since my last update, I've had the pleasure of attending a number of memorable events across Highworth. These included our joyful Christmas Light Switch-On, the inspiring Highworth Camera Club Awards, and the beautiful first part of Handel's *Messiah* performed by the Highworth Choral Society. I also represented Highworth at the County of Wiltshire Carol Service in Devizes, and enjoyed sharing mince pies and mulled wine with residents during the three Saturday charity fundraisers at Highworth Market before Christmas.

Thank you to everyone who has supported these events. I am deeply grateful for your continued support and community spirit.

Dates for your diary:

- 8 February:** Mayor's Civic Service in St. Michael's Church. All welcome. (Procession from 1:30pm, service at 2pm.)
- 25 April:** Mayor's Charity Evening at Wrag Barn. (Tickets available from Highworth Town Council Offices or by calling 01793 762377.)

With warm thanks,

Julie Murphy, Mayor of Highworth

HIGHWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MAYOR & CHAIRMAN

Julie Murphy, Rosedene, Ingleshamb SN6 7RA
07803 602568 julie.murphy@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

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HIGHWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

New Funding for Community Defibrillators

Highworth Town Council is pleased to announce the addition of several new community defibrillators across the town, thanks to the generous funding provided by the Highworth & District Lions Club.

New devices have been placed at Sevenhampton, Barra Close Play Area and the Highworth Recreation Centre, strengthening the network of lifesaving equipment available to residents and visitors. All devices are available 24/7.

The Council wishes to extend its warm thanks to the Lions for their continued dedication to community wellbeing. Their financial support, made possible through donations and the hard work of volunteers at the Lions Charity Shop, has enabled the purchase of these vital devices.

Highworth Town Council has taken on responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and regular checks to ensure each device remains fully operational and ready for emergency use. We would also like to give special thanks to Halo Leisure for facilitating the placement of a new defibrillator on their building at the Highworth Recreation Centre.

As part of our ongoing review of defibrillator coverage, the Council has identified that the west of the town

would benefit from the installation of an additional device. However, finding a suitable location, ideally one with access to a power supply, has proved challenging. One practical solution currently being explored is the installation of a unit at the cemetery, positioned on the outside of the chapel, to provide accessible coverage for this part of Highworth. The Council recognises that this is primarily a space for remembrance, but also acknowledges that it is one of the few viable locations that could safely accommodate the equipment while serving the wider community.



Highworth Town Council values its strong partnership with the Highworth & District Lions Club, and this project is a clear demonstration of the impact that collaboration and volunteer-led fundraising can have on local resilience.

The Council is also exploring opportunities to offer community defibrillator awareness and training sessions in the future, and further information will be shared should this progress.

To view the full defibrillator map and locations, please visit www.highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk.

Deanne Rose, Town Clerk



CHURCHES

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

First, third and fifth Sundays are Morning Worship, second and fourth Sundays are Holy Communion.

The live service can be found on YouTube by searching 'St. Michael's 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 at 9:30am.

Friday Blessings from 9:15am.

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

We remember those we love and miss

Matthew Pratley

We welcome in Holy Baptism

Aoife Campbell

Praying for the roads in the town

4 January	Barra Close and Beech Grove
11 January	Biddell Springs and Blandford Alley
18 January	Blandford Mews and Botany
25 January	Brewery Street and Brookfield

St. Leonard's Parish Church Stanton Fitzwarren

1 February Morning Worship, 9:30am

8 February Family Service, 11am

15 February Team Service at St. Margaret's Stratton, 10am

22 February Holy Communion, 9:30 am

Stanton Coffee Morning will meet on **Wednesday 25 February** at Stanton House Hotel. We will get together at 10:15am for coffee and chat, then Alison Bosher will talk about being *A Woman in a Man's World*.

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.



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



25/12/2025

Les Skinner

Thinking of you this Christmas. Miss you and love you.

Love from Vi and all the family xxxx

25/12/2025

Knight

Thinking of you both as always this Christmas.

Miss you lots and love you.

Lyn, Ruth, Patrick and all your family xxxx

31/1/2026

David Cox

Remembering a dearly loved husband and father.

Shirley, Nicola and Neil

9/2/2026

*Remembering my dear husband, Clive Angood,
on his birthday.*

Still loved and missed by Christine

6/1/2026

Cyril Knight

Missing you so much on your birthday, Dad.

Sending big birthday hugs.

Love you, from Lyn, Ruth and all your family

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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Electricity	Emergency	105	Pest Control	Non-Emergency	07789 781151
Water	Emergency	0800 3169 800			

BUSES

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Thamesdown Transport	01793 428400
Dial-a-Ride	01793 616050
Community Transport	01793 617828
Traveline	0871 200 2233

COLLEGES

Cirencester College	01285 640994
New College Swindon, Queens Drive Campus	01793 611470
North Star Campus	01793 491591

LAW & ORDER

Crimestoppers	0800 555111
Victim Supportline	0808 16 89 111
Action Fraud	0300 123 2030

COUNCILS

Highworth Town Council	01793 762377
Swindon Borough Council	01793 463000
StreetSmart	01793 445501

FIRE SAFETY

Home fire safety check	0800 038 2323
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NON-EMERGENCY

DOCTORS AND HOSPITALS

Highworth Surgery	01793 762218
Elm Tree Surgery, (Shrivenham)	01793 782207
Great Western Hospital	01793 604020

LIBRARY

Highworth Library	01793 463500
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RECREATION

Highworth Rec	01793 762602
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PHARMACIES

Highworth Pharmacy	01793 762220
Home Farm Pharmacy	01793 861392
Jones Graham Pharmacy (Shrivenham)	01793 783336

PRESCHOOL/NURSERY

Eastrop Nursery	01793 763772
Westrop Nursery	01793 762897
South Marston Pre-school	01793 823379

SCHOOLS

Eastrop Infants	01793 763772
Southfield Junior	01793 762210
Westrop Primary	01793 762897
Warneford Secondary	01793 762426

TAXIS

Veezu	01793 701701
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TRAINS

National Rail Enquiries	03457 484950
Great Western Railways	03457 000125
Disabled and Assisted Travel	08001 971329

OTHER SERVICES

Citizens Advice Bureau	08444 994114
Trading Standards (business)	0207 830 6000
Trading Standards (consumers)	03454 04 05 06
Alcohol and Drug Service	01793 695405
Samaritans	01793 537373
Women's Refuge	01793 610610
Root & Branch (Mental Health Therapeutic Centre)	01793 782999

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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 200 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.

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First day of the month preceding publication.

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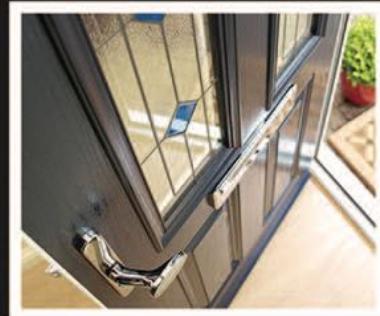
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