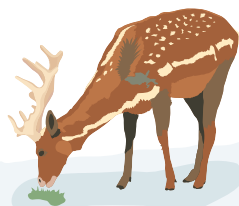


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February 2024



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Kindly Note

Articles and events for publication must be submitted to the Editor by the 10th of the preceding month. August/September and December/January are joint issues and articles must be submitted by 10th July and 10th November respectively. If an event falls in the first week of the month, it is advisable to submit the details into Focus a month earlier. The magazines are not delivered from the printers until the first of the month and it takes a few days for them all to be circulated throughout the villages by our volunteer distributors.

✍️ Editor

Focus accepts no responsibility as to the accuracy or content of any advertising or articles published in 'this' magazine, neither do they reflect the opinion of members of the Committee.

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Defibrillator Locations

These units are registered with the Ambulance Services. To access them, please phone 999. You will be given the access code and the location of the unit will be confirmed. The defibrillator is easy and safe to use. The units can be found on the outside walls of the following locations:

Dagnall: Red Lion Public House & Munns Farm Shop

Eaton Bray: The Coffee Tavern

Northall: The Swan Public House

Edlesborough: Edlesborough Memorial Hall &
Baptist Church, Summerleys

Edlesborough Surgery

01525 221630 www.edlesboroughsurgery.co.uk

Village Diary



Weekly

- Mon-Sun St. Mary's Edlesborough opening times are currently very limited
Please see notice board and website
- Mon-Fri (term) Eaton Bray Pre-school, Eaton Bray Lower School, 01525 220468, admin@eba.ec
- Mon-Fri (term) Dagnall Under 5's, Dagnall Village Hall, 9.15am - 12.15pm, Mrs Ann Tobin 07816 358342
- Mon-Fri (term) Edlesborough Primary Academy Pre-School, 01525 220431, epamanager@epa-primary.org
- Mon-Fri (term) Totternhoe Pre-school, Totternhoe CE Academy, 01582 662959, totternhoeoffice@tot.dsamat.co.uk
- Mondays Pilates, 10.45am, Totternhoe Memorial Hall, Lisa: 07832 230774
- Mondays Dagnall Community Choir, All Saints Church 7.45-9.45pm, w:dagnall-community-choir.co.uk
- Mondays (term) Movement and exercise classes with a dance flavour, Northall VH 2-3.30. Jan 01442 864271.
- Mondays KFFPA ISTD ballet classes, Edlesborough Memorial Hall 4pm-6.30pm (4years+)
Contact Kiri 07988161043 or visit Facebook page 'KF PerformingArts/KFFPA' for info
- Mondays Cubs (8-10½ years old), 6.30pm - 8pm, 1st Eaton Bray & Edlesborough Scout Hut, High Street, Edlesborough. Contact Liz Coates 01442 842550
- Mondays Yoga, 6:45pm, Edlesborough Memorial Hall, contact 07837 727302
- Mondays Barre, 8pm, Edlesborough Memorial Hall, contact 07837 727302
- Mondays Eaton Bray Tennis Club - 4-7pm mini / junior tennis coaching
- Mondays Eaton Bray Tennis Club - 7-8pm Adult Coaching 'Get Back Into Tennis'
- Tuesdays Pilates, 10-11am, Eaton Bray Village Hall, Nicky Roussou 07861 162680
- Tuesdays Totternhoe Baby & Toddler Group, 9.30-11.15am, St. Giles Church Hall, Ruth Allen, 01525 222468 or 07796 265174 or email ruthallen002@gmail.com
- Tuesdays Tap & Ballet Classes, JoAnn Latus School of Dance, 4-8pm, Eaton Bray VH, 07800 518654
- Tuesdays Coffee Morning, Bring & Buy, Table Top Sale, 10-11:30am, Salvation Army Hall, Booth Place, Eaton Bray
- Fortnightly Jazzercise 9:15-10am, Eaton Bray VH, Annis, annisjazzercise@gmail.com 07447 409666
- Tuesdays Eaton Bray Tennis Club - 6-7.30pm Social play for all adults
- Tuesdays Berkhamsted Taekwon-do Kids, 5.45pm-6.30pm, Dagnall Village Hall, 07813 755785
- Tuesdays Berkhamsted Taekwon-do Adults, 6.30pm, Dagnall Village Hall, 07813 755785
- Tuesdays Movement is Medicine Pilates, 1:30-2:30pm, Billington Hall, moira@stjudesclinic.com
- Wednesdays Pilates, 8pm, Northall Village Hall, Lisa: 07832 230774
- Wednesdays Northall & District Age Concern Wednesday Club, 10am - 3pm, Northall Village Hall, Contact Dee on 07854 230243
- Wednesdays Art Course online 9.30 -11.30 am, contact Loma Moore 07896 619660
- Wednesdays Art Course, Bellows Mill Eaton Bray, 2-4.30pm, contact Loma Moore 07896 619660
- Wednesdays Jazzercise 7:30-8:30pm, Eaton Bray VH, Annis, annisjazzercise@gmail.com 07447 409666
- Wednesdays Eaton Bray Tennis Club - 5-6 pm 9-11 years old tennis coaching & U16 Beginners tennis
- Wednesdays Pilates 6-7pm, Eaton Bray Village Hall, Heather Holmes, 07305 023077 pilateswithheather@mail.com
- Wednesdays Movement is Medicine Pilates, 7-8pm, & 8:05-9:05pm, Billington Hall, moira@stjudesclinic.com
- Wednesdays (term) Stay & Play toddler group, 'Musical Monkeys' at the Eaton Bray Village Hall, 10am, £4.50 for one adult and child, £1 for extra children/adults, 0-6 months free
- Wednesdays Edlesborough Knit, Knatter & Crafting group, 11.30 – 1.30, Edlesborough Pavilion. Contact: e-mail pavilionknitters2023@gmail.com
- Thursdays KFFPA Street dance classes, Edlesborough Memorial Hall 4.15pm-6.30pm (4 years+)
Contact Kiri 07988161043 or visit Facebook page 'KF PerformingArts/ KFFPA' for info
- Thursdays Berkhamsted Taekwon-do Adults 6.30pm, Dagnall Village Hall, 07813 755785
- Thursdays Beavers (6 to 8 years old), 6.15-7.30pm, 1st Eaton Bray & Edlesborough Scout Hut, High Street, Edlesborough. Contact: ebebeaverleader@ebescouts.co.uk
- Thursdays Eaton Bray Methodist Church Social Afternoons, 2 - 4pm, All Welcome

Village Diary

Thursdays	Explorers Scouts (14-18 years old), 8pm-9.30pm, 1st Eaton Bray & Edlesborough Scout Hut, High Street, Edlesborough. Contact Simon Betts, simon_betts@hotmail.com
Thursdays	Retro Line Dance Class. 11.15am to 12.45pm. Eaton Bray Village Hall. Beginners welcome. www.jukeboxjunction.co.uk info@jukeboxjunction.co.uk 07864212171
Fridays	Tap & Ballet Classes, JoAnn Latus School of Dance, 4-8pm, Eaton Bray VH, 07800 518654
Fridays	Jazzercise 9:15-10am, Eaton Bray VH, Annis, annisjazzercise@gmail.com 07447 409666
Fridays	Scouts, (10½ to 14 years old), 7.00-8.30pm, 1st Eaton Bray & Edlesborough Scout Hut, High Street, Edlesborough. Contact Mark Owen, ebescoutleader@ebescouts.co.uk , 07899 892344
Fridays	“Little Luvvies” baby ballet classes, 10am-11.30am, Northall Village Hall. Contact Emma Whittemore on 01525 376124
Fridays	Movement is Medicine Pilates, 10-11am, Great Gaddesdon Parish Hall, moira@stjudesclinic.com
Saturdays	Jazzercise 9-10am, Eaton Bray VH, Annis, annisjazzercise@gmail.com 07447 409666
Saturdays	KFPA Musical theatre classes, Edlesborough Memorial Hall 9.30-10.30am (4years+) Contact Kiri 07988161043 or visit Facebook page ‘KF PerformingArts/ KFPA’ for info
Sundays	Sunday Worship at 11am, Edlesborough Baptist Church, Moor End, LU6 2FL. Contact: 01525 222064 or edlesboroughbaptistchurch@gmail.com
Sundays	Karate for kids & adults, 2:30-4pm & 4:30-6pm, Eaton Bray VH, Contact 07500 007779
Sundays	Eaton Bray Tennis Club - 10am -12pm Social play for all adults

Monthly

1st Monday	Eaton Bray Parish Council Meeting, 7.30pm, The Coffee Tavern (except Jan-2nd Monday)
1st Monday	Eaton Bray W.I. Meeting, 7.30pm. Eaton Bray Methodist Church Hall. Contact Margaret Jones on 01525 220991
1st & 3rd Tues	Dunstable & District Orbit (social and charitable) Club meet at Dunstable Rugby Club at 8pm. For details contact 01525 222441 or 01582 755147
1st Saturday	St. Mary’s Church, Eaton Bray Coffee Morning, 10:30am - 12 noon (July held on 2nd Saturday)
1st Saturday	Book Swap at St Mary’s Eaton Bray, 10:30am -12 noon (July held on 2nd Saturday)
2nd Monday	Film Society, Sep to June, 2pm, Eaton Bray Village Hall, Graham Chappell 07980 321977
2nd Tuesday	Dunstable & District Local History Society meeting, 7.45pm, Methodist Church Hall, Dunstable
2nd Tuesday	Edlesborough W.I. Meeting, 7.30 pm, Edlesborough Memorial Hall. Contact Jackie Flint 01525 221618
3rd Thursday	Edlesborough Parish Council Meeting, 7.30pm, Edlesborough Pavilion or as stated in Edlesborough Parish Council News
2nd Friday	Leukaemia Research Coffee Morning 2, Dunstable Road, Dagnall 10.30 a.m. all welcome. No meeting in September, June plant bring and buy, December Sherry & mince pies
3rd Sunday	Lunch club 11.30 to 2.00pm, Eaton Bray Village Hall, Chris Hewitt 222288
Last Saturday	Coffee Morning, 10:00-12 noon, Edlesborough Methodist Church

This Month’s One Off/Annual/Irregular Events

10th	Cafe Community, 11am - 1pm, Eaton Bray Methodist Church
23rd	Age Concern Wednesday Club Quiz Night, 7:30pm, Northall Village Hall, £10 per person, bookings: Beryl 01525 220868
24th	Repair Cafe, 9:30am - 12:30pm, Pitstone Pavilion

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Focus is online at www.thefocusmagazine.co.uk

Village Info



EDaN Community Transport
Peter Williams: 01442 842506

Police Contact Details

making neighbourhoods safer together

General Assistance (Recommended Number): 101 Emergency: 999

Bedfordshire Police (Eaton Bray)

T/Sgt 6268 Amy Ison, Leighton Buzzard Community Policing Team, Duncombe Drive, Leighton Buzzard, Telephone: 01582 473408

Thames Valley Police (Edlesborough, Dagnall & Northall)

PCSOs Tina Hobson & Megan Dean

Charlotte Cottage, 73 Leighton Road, Wing LU7 0RD

Email: greatbrickhillwingivinghoenhpt@thamesvalley.police.uk

To report non urgent crime: www.thamesvalley.police.uk

Village Hall Booking Contacts

Northall: Lorna Cubbage Tel: 07857 318696 www.edlesborough-pc.gov.uk/nvh

Email: northallvhbookings@gmail.com

Eaton Bray: Norman Lee 07975 797202 & Jane Taylor 07852 586045

Email: bookings@ebvh.co.uk Website www.ebvh.co.uk

Coffee Tavern: 07836 240467

Dagnall: Bev Way 07875 462128 & Trish Owen 07762 151364

Email: DVH_Bookings@outlook.com

Edlesborough Memorial Hall: Penny Pataky, Tel: 01525 229358

Email: manager@edlesborough-pc.gov.uk

Edlesborough Pavilion: booking@edthepav.org

Parish Council Contacts

Eaton Bray Parish Council: 07931 479663

Email: clerk@ebpc.co.uk Website: www.ebpc.co.uk

Edlesborough Parish Council (including Dagnall & Northall): 01525 229358

Email: clerk@edlesborough-pc.gov.uk Website: www.edlesborough-pc.gov.uk



Helpline: 07930 987064

Manned phone hours: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
(An answering service is available for out-of-hours calls)

Call us if you want help getting to the surgery/hospital, collecting prescriptions, minor errands or d-i-y jobs, form-filling, walking your pet, on-line shopping support etc. or if you would welcome our befriending service.

We help people of Eaton Bray, Edlesborough, Northall and Totternhoe

February 14th is your last chance to get discounted EdleFest tickets

It seems a little while yet until the return of summer, but we’re already getting ready to host our annual village music festival on June 7th and 8th. It won’t be long now before we can enjoy a glass of something in the sunshine at the stunning venue of the Church on the Hill, overlooking Aylesbury Vale, before sitting down (or even dancing in the aisles) to two evenings of fabulous live music.

In the meantime, don’t miss out on your last chance to buy discounted early-bird tickets, as tickets return to full price this Valentine’s Day on February 14th. Maybe they’d even make a nice romantic gift for that special person!

Come June, we’ve got an incredible line-up of blues, swing, americana, country, folk and indie-pop for you this year. You can check out the full schedule by searching online for *EdleFest*, or visiting edlefest.site123.me



Rob Heron and the Teapad Orchestra – western swing at its best



Jaywalkers – stunning bluegrass



Simeon Hammond Dallas – contemporary blues and soul

On top of the early-bird discount, you can get a further reduction by booking for both nights at the same time. Remember to scroll down to the bottom of the page to complete your booking. You can get your discounted tickets from edlefest.site123.me, by calling 07974 921923, or by email to EdleFest@gmail.com.

See you in the summer!

Eaton Bray with Edlesborough Parish News

Vicar: Rev'd Joy Cousins

The Vicarage, 11 High Street, Eaton Bray - Tel: 01525 220261

Associate Priest: Rev'd Stephen Burge

Church Warden & Pastoral Matters: Catherine Hayden (01525 220527)

Reader: Gordon Gray (01525 220136)

Website: www.stmaryseatonbray.org.uk Facebook: St Mary's Eaton Bray

It doesn't seem that long ago that we were all preparing for Christmas, but the Church year is gearing itself for moving into the season of Lent, the time of year when we reflect on our own relationships with God. Many of us choose something to give up during Lent, by denying ourselves something, we are able to remind ourselves of all the good things that we are able to enjoy. By giving things up, we are also able to remember that in life we need to focus our attention on spiritual, rather than material, things. Many of us also choose to take something up during Lent instead, such as praying the Lord's Prayer every day, reading the Bible more, or devoting a bit more time in our busy lives to God during the week. Whatever it is that we choose to do, whether we choose to give or take something up, the season of Lent is a good time for us to recharge our spiritual batteries and to reconnect ourselves with God.

In our daily lives, it can sometimes be a struggle to find and make time for God. Much of us have many things to do, whether looking after loved ones and family, or going to work, or whatever it may be. The Church has, for many centuries, encouraged those who feel called to a life of prayer and the religious life to move away from the hectic world to find time to pray and worship from the quietness of the cloister. But we are not all monks and nuns and find ourselves in the midst of busy lives! The calling to a religious life is a special calling, but we can still be inspired by those living the monastic life to devote a small part of our daily lives, however small, to God.

This year, the North Chiltern Group of Churches (of which St. Mary's Eaton Bray and All Saints' Dagnall are a part) is running a Lent Course which will be exploring the world of another kind of spiritual being devoted to the praise and worship of God: the angels. Angels are very dear to my heart. As well as being a priest in the Church of England and an Associate Minister at St. Mary's, I also engage in academic research and the study of angels in Judaism, Christianity and Islam has been a focus of my work for a number of years.

Angels are fascinating creations of God and they appear in many guises: as beings announcing the news of the birth of a special, just as we remembered over Christmas in the appearance of Gabriel to Mary in the story of Jesus's birth; as beings with strange supernatural features worshipping God in heaven, as we can see in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel; and as beings who explain the mysteries of heaven, which we can see Gabriel doing in the visions of heaven that the prophet Daniel had. During the Lent Course we will be exploring many of these aspects of angels in the Bible, but we will also be exploring the way in which we can model our own spirituality on the life and worship of angels. I am really looking forward to being able to share some of my own insights into the depictions of angels in the Bible.

The course will be running on Tuesdays from 20th February – 19th March 2024 in Kensworth Church Hall, starting at 7.30pm and lasting around 75 minutes. We begin with tea, coffee and biscuits and end with a short period of prayer. Please do consider coming along, it would be great to see you there.



✉ Rev'd Stephen Burge

SERVICES AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH, EATON BRAY

SUNDAYS: 10am PARISH HOLY COMMUNION
(*apart from the third Sunday - see below*)

On the First and Third Sundays of each month there is
HOLY COMMUNION at 8am

On the Third Sunday of each month there is a
WORSHIP SERVICE FOR EVERYONE at 10am, a shorter less formal service

WEEKDAYS: Wednesday at 10am HOLY COMMUNION
EVERYONE IS WELCOME AT THESE SERVICES

Details and ONLINE WORSHIP: www.stmaryseatonbray.org.uk

Dagnall Church Services



Sun. 18th Feb. 10.30 am Holy Communion

For any queries, please contact:

Philip Lee on 07977234453 or Dorothy Green on 01442 843237

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Edlesborough Parish Council News

Including Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall

Thank You's

Once again volunteers in the Parish were busy making the villages festive for Christmas. EPC would like to thank the following people:

- Cllr Alan Williams, Steven Sweeby and Penny Pataky for hanging the lights on Edlesborough Memorial Hall.
- Kevin and Lorna Cabbage for hanging the Christmas lights on the Northall Christmas Tree and village sign.
- Jane and Chris Woodcock for providing the power for the Northall Christmas tree and village sign lights.
- Bev Way and Izzy Lee for decorating the tree in Dagnall.

Speeding in the Parish

Many parishioners have concerns over the speed at which vehicles travel through our villages.

EPC is aware of parishioners concerns and would like to share information about what it is doing to help combat this and what parishioners can do to support EPC and the Parish.

Once a concern has been raised about speeding various things come into play. The escalation procedure is:

- Install a Movable Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS – flashing 30) or a Speed Indicating Device (SID – smiley face indicator)
- Speedwatch
- Police Camera Van
- Re-engineer the road to reduce speed.

A reminder to those that speed. Please do not ignore the MVAS/SID, and/ or Speedwatch camera and/or the Police Camera Van. They are there for a reason.

SID (Speed Indicating Device)

There are two SID devices in the Parish. One in Northall on the Leighton Road as drivers enter the 30mph section of the Leighton Road. The second is located on the Dunstable Road in Dagnall.

The purpose of SID is to educate drivers about the speed limit of the road they are driving on.

MVAS (Movable Vehicle Activated Speed Devices)

This is primarily an educational tool. Apart from advising you of either the speed limit or the speed that you are travelling at, the devices are counting vehicles, their speed, etc. and the statistics can be used by the police to instigate the use of the camera van. No actual data is captured of vehicle registration numbers, etc.

EPC has three MVAS devices that can be used at fourteen approved locations across Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall. The locations are shown on the next page.

Please visit the Traffic Calming page on EPC's website for the latest MVAS Data www.edlesborough-pc.gov.uk/community-information/traffic-calming-in-the-parish/



EDLESBOROUGH	DAGNALL	NORTHALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Street, near Tythe Barn • High Street, near the junction with Cow Lane • Moor End, near the junction with Eatongate Close • Leighton Road, near the entrance to Sparrow Hall Farm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studham Lane • Dunstable Road • Main Road North, near the village sign • Main Road South, near Munns Farm Shop • Main Road South, as drivers enter the village. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South End Lane • Eaton Bray Road • Leighton Road as drivers enter the village from Edlesborough • Leighton Road, near Knolls View • Leighton Road, near Jack O'Walls.

EPC Surgery

Do you have a question or a suggestion for the Parish Council?
 EPC will be holding its first EPC Surgery of 2024 on **Saturday 10th February** in Edlesborough Pavilion from 10am – midday.
 All parishioners are welcome to pop in and speak to the Clerk or a Councillor about local matters at this surgery.



EdleFest 2024

The EdleFest dates for 2024 have been confirmed as 7th and 8th June. More information and tickets are available via the EdleFest website <https://edlefest.site123.me/>

Salt Bins

The responsibility for filling these bins is with Transport for Buckinghamshire. When supplies are running low a refill request should be submitted via their website <https://www.fixmystreet.buckscc.gov.uk/> It is more appropriate if a parishioner living close to the salt bin makes the request but in practice anyone can make the request.



Council Meetings

The next Edlesborough Parish Council Meetings will take place on:

- Thursday 15th February 2024 – in Edlesborough Pavilion
- Thursday 21st March 2024 – in Edlesborough Pavilion

The meetings will commence at 7:30pm.

Parishioners are welcome to attend all Ordinary Parish Council meetings and may ask questions, raise issues, and give suggestions during the Open Forum before the formal start of the meeting. Council requests that where possible questions, issues and suggestions are submitted in writing to the Clerk by the Tuesday preceding the meeting.

The agenda and full minutes of previous Parish Council meetings are available to view on the website or from the Parish Clerk.

Clerk: Miss Penny Pataky Office hours Mon – Fri 10am – 2pm (Excl. Wed)

Email: clerk@edlesborough-pc.gov.uk 01525 229358 Website: www.edlesborough-pc.gov.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EDANParishCouncil

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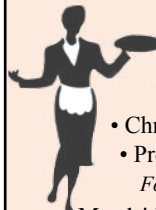
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EATON BRAY PARISH COUNCIL

Eaton Bray Parish Council Focus Report December 2023-January 2024

A full copy of the minutes for Eaton Bray Parish Council can be found on our website: www.ebpc.co.uk. A hard copy of the minutes can also be viewed on the Parish Council's notice board at The Coffee Tavern.

The Late Helen Chubb

The Parish Council wished to express their condolences to friends and family of ex-Parish Councillor, Helen Chubb. The council wished to thank her for her contribution to the Parish Council and her work with the parish Defibrillator. She will be dearly missed.

Parish Council Website

To keep up to date with what is happening in your parish, you can get all Parish Council news and updates from the Parish Council website. The website has all Parish Council meeting agendas, minutes, financial documents and contact information as well as official sponsored events/initiatives and is the official council communications website. Visit it here: www.ebpc.co.uk

Eaton Bray Parish Council Accounts

A copy of the Parish Council's Finance & Annual Reports can be viewed on the Parish Council Website.

Eaton Bray Facebook Page

Follow Eaton Bray Parish Council on Facebook, keep up to date with what is going on in the parish. <https://www.facebook.com/EatonBray>

FixMyStreet

CBC have a reporting system to make reporting easier, quicker and more accurate. To report and track highways and environment problems go online/use the FixMyStreet app: <https://fixmystreet.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/>

*****Final Reminder*** Parish Allotments: Allotment Tenancy Renewals 2023-2024**

Allotment tenancy renewals payments to be made via one of the following two options:

1. Bank transfer (if this is your chosen method, please email the Parish Clerk for details)
2. Cash or cheque (cheques made payable to Eaton Bray Parish Council): cheques can be posted to the Parish Clerk or hand delivered to the Parish Clerk at the Parish Council open office - for dates/times, please visit the Parish Council website <https://www.ebpc.co.uk/parish-council-surgery/>

Eaton Bray Parish Council Meeting

Held on Monday 6th November 2023, from 7:30pm

(Minutes ratified at the Parish Council Meeting on 4th December 2023)

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC)

Your Ward Councillor: Cllr Philip Spicer

Email: Philip.Spicer@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

CBC Website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

CBC Email: customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

CBC Customer Services: 0300 300 8301

- Bus Stop: Bus stop in Totternhoe Road (near Market Square) to be relocated to the bench. Works planned 2024.
- Match funding: Cllr Spicer has received some applications for funding, there is still some available money and if anyone is interested in applying to get in touch with Cllr Spicer.
- Highways: Repairs to Wallace Drive have been carried out, Cllr Spicer is speaking with CBC about getting the road surface dressed.
- Rough Sleepers: There is a designated team at CBC who will be working with local groups. CBC is putting together a reporting process for people to make contact.

Bedfordshire Police

- For general Police contact/enquiries: non-emergency call **101**
- For emergencies: call **999**
- No major issues have been reported to the police in the parish.
- There have been some incidents in School Lane recreation ground which are being monitored.
- Reminder to parishioners: If non-emergency the quickest response time to get through is to use the web portal/on-line reporting system. Phone lines can be busy and take a while to get through. If an incident is happening at point of call [serious risk of harm] to call the emergency line, 999.

Planning Applications & Appeals - October/November 2023

A copy of the Parish Council's response to planning applications can be seen on the Parish Council website or obtained by applying to the Parish Clerk.

Recreation Ground

- Lighting: An environmental survey is to be conducted in the proposed location.
- Seating: The Rye – the installation of two benches has been approved.
- Parish Playgrounds: The Parish Council have taken on a playground maintenance inspector to carry out regular checks of the parish play equipment.
- Damaged play equipment: The Parish Council are in the process of organising repair of the unit.
- Zip-Wire: A strip of groundworks (under the length of the zip-wire) to be replaced with hardwearing flooring on this high impact area.

Mill End Close/Waterside

The IDB [Internal Drainage Board] are proposing to start work to the river end November/December.

*UPDATE (04/12/2023): The Parish Council has chased IDB, there have been delays at their current job/location, waiting for confirmation of start date for Eaton Bray.

War Memorial: The Parish Council to install bespoke rails for the front and sides to display wreaths.

Monthly Payments - October/November 2023

A copy of the Parish Council monthly payments can be seen on the Parish Council website or obtained by applying to the Parish Clerk.



Heidi Head, Parish Clerk

Email: clerk@ebpc.co.uk – Telephone/Text: 07931 479663 – Website: www.ebpc.co.uk

Parish Office: The Coffee Tavern, 18 High Street, Eaton Bray, Beds, LU6 2DP

Postal Address: 14 Pavilion Gardens, Aston Clinton, Bucks, HP22 5FG

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EATON BRAY PARISH COUNCIL

Eaton Bray Parish Council Meeting

Held on Monday 4th December 2023, from 7:30pm

(Minutes ratified at the Parish Council Meeting on 8th January 2024)

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC)

Your Ward Councillor: Cllr Philip Spicer

Email: Philip.Spicer@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

CBC Website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

CBC Email: customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

CBC Customer Services: 0300 300 8301

- Bus Stop: The bus stop [Totternhoe Road, opposite The White Horse] works planned February 2024.
- Knights Close/Greenways: Two informal consultations are being carried out for Knights Close and Greenways in Eaton Bray. This is to gauge support for proposals to re-provision the green space in these locations for additional parking. Letters have been hand delivered to residents in the respective locations with proposals.

Bedfordshire Police

- For general Police contact/enquiries: non-emergency call **101**
- For emergencies: call **999**

Planning Applications & Appeals - November/December 2023

A copy of the Parish Council's response to planning applications can be seen on the Parish Council website or obtained by applying to the Parish Clerk.

Recreation Ground

- Playground repairs: Works to deal with defects raised in the recent Play Inspection Report are to be carried out. Date for repair work to be confirmed.
- Zip-Wire: To raise the height of the users on the equipment, some links from the current seat position are to be removed as it is currently too low and causing damage to the playground surface.
- Bowed fencing: To leave the fencing as is and monitor the situation.

Mill End Close/Waterside

The IDB [Internal Drainage Board] visited the site to assess the situation. The Parish Council are waiting for confirmation of start date.

Highways:

The S.I.D.s [Speed Indicator Device] are now collecting data from vehicles regarding speed/times.

Christmas 2023

Christmas trees and lights were displayed at Market Place and Three Corners.

Christmas wreaths displayed along the parish roads.

The Heath Band to play on the evening of Wednesday 20th December 2024, from 7:15pm.

Monthly Payments - October/November 2023

A copy of the Parish Council monthly payments can be seen on the Parish Council website or obtained by applying to the Parish Clerk.

Parish Council Meeting (1st Floor, The Coffee Tavern, Eaton Bray)

Details can be obtained from the EBPC website, www.ebpc.co.uk

- Monday 5th February 2024, from 7:30pm

Parish Council Open Office (Ground floor)

10am-12noon at The Coffee Tavern, High Street, Eaton Bray
(Dates/times subject to change, please check the EBPC Website for updates)

- Tuesday 13th February 2024.



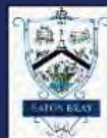
Heidi Head, Parish Clerk

Email: clerk@ebpc.co.uk – Telephone/Text: 07931 479663 – Website: www.ebpc.co.uk

Parish Office: The Coffee Tavern, 18 High Street, Eaton Bray, Beds, LU6 2DP

Postal Address: 14 Pavilion Gardens, Aston Clinton, Bucks, HP22 5FG

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New Year

I am the New Year ...

I am an unspoiled page in your book of time.

I am your next chance at the art of living.

I am your opportunity to practice
what you have learned about life
during the last twelve months.

All that you sought
and didn't find is hidden in me,
waiting for you to search it out
with more determination.

All the good that you tried for
and didn't achieve is mine to grant
when you have fewer conflicting desires.

All that you dreamed but didn't dare to do,
all that you hoped but did not will,
all the faith that you claimed but did not have -
these slumber lightly,
waiting to be awakened by the touch of a strong
purpose.

I am your opportunity to make all things new.

I am the New Year!

✍️ Author unknown.

*Have you penned a verse with local
interest that we could publish in Focus?
We would be happy to accommodate any
budding poets.*



Plant Swap

The daffs are all over in Eden
The poinsettia's already dead
The dahlias have all gone to heaven
But cosmos still bloom in the bed

The kindling's been replaced by Kindles
The Christmas tree this year is...pink
Autumn went by so fast that I missed it -
Am I getting old do you think?

But pensioners now are so frisky -
Divorcing at sixty no less
And garden groups use 'secret' language -
What they mean is anyone's guess

It started with dry prairie gardens
The message was plain to see -
If it's hot for the willow grasses,
Then it'll be *hot* for you and for me!

So bored of dreary old turkey?
Then make your life go with a swing
Put two pampas grass in your window -
And just see what Christmas will bring!

✍️ by the late John Hockey



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New Year, Resolutions and Looking Forward

We hope that you've managed to keep those New Year resolutions but... if you've not yet got around to acting upon your intentions ... we've a number of prompts for you ... Thinking of a voluntary role or maybe joining us as a member? Why not arrange a visit to find out more? Pop in to say "Hello" and we'll happily chat over the options, stay for a cuppa and meet the Team.

Confirmed Dates for the Diary 2024

Friday 23rd February - Quiz Night - please see advert in Focus for details

Here's a (not so) brief roundup of our activities since the last issue 2 months ago:

Members Christmas Trip - 15th November 2023

We took a Motts coach to visit Bicester Garden Centre, a chance to see their Christmas displays, browse the shops for gifts and enjoy the 2-course meal. The Restaurant was very busy, but as Dee had pre-booked and organised us all so we were able to take over their private dining room - ensuring we could all eat, rest and chat away. Thank you to all staff and volunteers for ensuring another great outing.

Outside In Floral Creations - 22nd November 2023

Jo showcased her artistic floristry, skills and knowledge just in time for some Seasonal Inspiration in our "Share Your Wares" slot. The members thoroughly enjoyed Jo's visit and it was a great opportunity for our members to support a local business. The hand tied centre pieces provided for the tables were most prized for the raffle. It was lovely to see the members interactions and to host such an event, strengthening our community links and supporting local businesses. If you'd like to embrace an opportunity to showcase and sell your creations, during a club session in 2024 please message Jane to join the waiting list for future slots. Thank you.

Tea/Coffee Afternoon with Cake - 29th November 2023

Once again, our community felt the love of our visitors and supporters for this busy afternoon - we held a bumper Sale Table, many donations of items were gratefully received from a plea on local Facebook groups. I believe a mystery donor rounded up the raffle and sales table takings to £300, which is amazing! We look forward to seeing you all for our next date in 2024.

Dagnall School Visit - 6th December 2023

The members thoroughly enjoyed their visit for the dress rehearsal of the children's Christmas performance. Invitations to these are always received with great enthusiasm from the members. We are blessed to have this established contact within our community forging connections between the young and not so young, thank you to all at Dagnall School.

Members Christmas Lunch - 13th December 2023

We welcomed our members to the hall with an array of festive decorations, refreshments

and a fine dining experience. The Christmas crackers were pulled with vigour, sherry sampled with good cheer, and each table decoration was rehomed to the lucky winners. We all enjoyed wearing our festive attire of jumpers, tops, socks and jewellery. Once again the team of volunteers, committee and staff made the day a very special one - Thank You All.

New Year - 3rd January 2024

The teams at The Swan, Northall hosted us all for a fantastic 2 course meal, with 25 of us making it on the day! It was quite a turnout and a much appreciated Welcome to 2024 for all of us. Thank You to all that made the day possible.

Reports For Next Month ... Quiz Night - Tea/Coffee Afternoon

Becoming a Club **Member**? Simply contact us on **07854 230243**, leave a text or message including your contact details, and our leader Dee will get back to you ASAP with a date to visit, our availability or the option to join the waiting list.

Volunteering with us? We're always delighted to welcome inquiries and offers of support from our community. Whether a regular commitment, a one-time contribution, there are various ways to get involved.

Regular Rota Volunteers: If you have a passion for lending a hand, we have opportunities in the kitchen or as minibus drivers/conductors. Your consistent support working as part of a team keeps our activities running smoothly.

One-Off Volunteers: Entertain us with your talent for singing or playing music ... want to practice in front of an appreciative audience to brighten their day?

Donations of goods can go a long way to support our activities: We gladly accept and appreciate regifting and items for fundraising, plus those seasonal fruits and vegetables enhance our homemade meals.

For the latest updates, information, and any last minute announcements, be sure to follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/WednesdayClubNorthall/> It's a great way to stay connected with our wider community.

It's not all about Red Roses

There are so many blooms to choose from when it comes to expressing ourselves with the gift of flowers. The Victorians sent small posies as a kind of silent dialogue to convey sentiments or messages that couldn't be spoken aloud. They used a Floriography book which detailed these coded sentiments, feelings, and emotions. Each bloom with its unique colours and characteristics carries its own story. For instance, Lillies can signify purity, Tulips express perfection and Orchids can represent rare and delicate beauty. Red Carnations, among others, speak volumes of admiration. The Ranunculus symbolises charm and attractiveness and is one of my own personal favourites. Of course, the meanings and traditions associated with flowers have changed over time, and culture also plays a part, with the assigned meanings and messages. Florists understand the language and numbers of flowers. They carefully handcraft displays of the chosen blooms to convey that personal expression. So, for "love" or "admiration" on St. Valentine's Day or other occasions maybe Red Roses are not the only option, as beautiful as they are.

✍️ Jo Reay

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Take a book you want to read - Leave a book you want to share

**The next Book Swap at St Mary's Church will take place
on Saturday February 3rd from 10.30 – 12.00 noon**

It was great to see so many old friends and some new ones at the first Book Swap of 2024 at St Mary's church monthly coffee morning in January.

When Chris and I first started this project in March 2022, we were looking for a location where we could offer a free book swap scheme to encourage people to share books that they have loved so that others might also discover them as well. It required some bookshelves in a central place in the community where anyone could take a book to read and leave a book to share.

St Mary's offered us a space at their coffee morning, where we now regularly operate. We now have a community library, where books in good condition have been donated by locals for others to borrow, enjoy and return at their leisure.

The Book Swap is free, and there are no return dates and no fines, you also don't have to bring a book to donate in order to take one. We do encourage people to exchange books if they can as this will keep the shelves fresh and dynamic. You don't have to return the book you borrowed; you can keep it if you like.

You can bring and swap more than one book, but we do ask that you take as many books as you bring in, as we do not have the storage capacity for extra books. For this reason we also cannot accept bulk donations of books.

Our team has expanded to include Janet, Rosalyn and Rosie and we all look forward to meeting you as you choose a book while enjoying coffee and cake.

For more information about Book Swap please contact:

Chris Sanders Email: chris.sanders45@gmail.com

Jenifer MacKenzie Email: jenimackenzie@hotmail.com

St Mary's 100 Club

The lucky prize winners are:

December 2023

1st prize – Victor Courtice

2nd prize – Roger Wilkinson

3rd prize – Margaret Jones

January 2024

1st prize – Sheila Banks

2nd prize – John Plater

3rd prize – Anne Hendricksen

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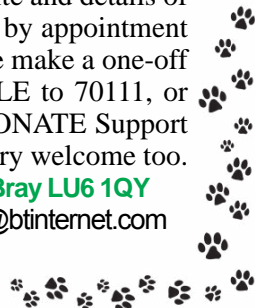
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01525 220383 (10am-1pm & 2-4 pm) E-mail: appledown.kennels@btinternet.com

Website: www.appledownrescue.co.uk

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Eaton Bray Good Neighbours is part of a network of similar groups operating under the umbrella of Bedfordshire Rural Charities. Our local group covers Eaton Bray, Edlesborough, Totternhoe and Northall. Our telephone number, 07930 987064, is with a volunteer Monday to

Friday 9am to 5pm with an answerphone available outside of these times. Volunteers support people who find it difficult to get out and about or to use public transport to do shopping, collect prescriptions or get to medical appointments. We also have a befriending service for people who would like a visit or telephone chat. We are always looking for new volunteers so do give us a ring if you would like to help. If you have a friend or relative not in our area who you think might benefit from a similar service, you can search the internet under Good Neighbours to see if there is a volunteer group near them.

Another project we came across recently is the "Message in a Bottle" scheme run by GB Lions which helps emergency services find important information in case of an emergency in a house where the resident might not be able to help. This is a container holding medical information and next of kin details kept in the fridge which has a sticker on the front to say it is there. This is very helpful for police or ambulance personal who might need to access the house in an emergency. If you have a friend or relative who could benefit from this scheme, you might be able to get the "Message in a Bottle" kit from your local GP or pharmacy otherwise you can contact Lions directly on 0121 441 4544.

Dagnall Community Choir



Following a wonderful end to the year, with three lovely Christmas performances and an enjoyable social get-together, the choir has made a great start to the new year. We have welcomed some new members and are busy putting together our programme for 2024.

December was a successful month for the choir. We sang carols at the Five Bells in Stanbridge to celebrate the start of the festive season, and held a carol concert at Dagnall Village Hall, where we managed to raise almost £350 for our nominated charity, the Ovarian Care Fund. We also joined Luton Brass Band and the Vauxhall Luton Male Voice Choir for a concert at the Square Methodist Church, Dunstable, which was a thoroughly enjoyable event, raising £1480 to be shared between the children's charity CHUMS, and other charities supported by the church.

We are moving on now to learning and perfecting our two pieces for the Milton Keynes Music Festival which takes place in March. The prospect of having to sing without the music in front of us, as required for the competition, is always a bit daunting, but we always manage it, and have come away with awards and medals in the past!

As we move into spring, we are keen to welcome new members to our choir. We meet on Monday evenings 7.45pm - 9.45pm in Dagnall Church. We sing a variety of music and welcome all voice parts - we are particularly interested in meeting new tenor voices. For more information about the choir, please visit our website www.dagnall-community-choir.co.uk.

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Dunstable Probus Club

Dunstable PROBUS Club meets on the second Monday of the month at Tilsworth Golf Centre and membership is open to retired or semi-retired professional and business people. The Club's main purpose is the promotion of good fellowship. Members enjoy some social activities and the occasional organised visit throughout the year and after their regular monthly lunch meetings are entertained by speakers who give talks on a wide range of topics. If you are interested in joining the Club, please contact the Secretary, Philip Savage on 01582 662462.

February at the Grove



Film

Ferrari - 3 Feb

Comedy

Ed Byrne: Tragedy Plus Time - 14 Feb

Beauty & The Big Beast: Adult Pantomime - 15 Feb

Encore Screening

Skylight - 6 Feb

Manon: The Royal Ballet - 11 Feb

Vanya - 22 Feb

Children's Shows

Dinosaur Adventure Live: Trouble on Volcano Island - 17 Feb

Musicals

Rare Productions: We Will Rock You - Young@Part - 24 Feb

Variety

Circus Spectacular - 4 Feb

Psychic Sally '24 - 7 Feb

Popular Music

Michael Starring Ben - 1 Feb

Fastlove- A Tribute to George Michael - 2 Feb

The Magic of the Bee Gees - 8 Feb

The American Four Tops - 10 Feb

Carmen - 13 Feb

The Ultimate Classic Rock Show - 16 Feb

ELO Show - 18 Feb

Total Pop Party - The Scream & Shout Tour! - 25 Feb

The Best of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons Starring Gareth Gates - 28 Feb

Rock For Heroes Presents Time of Our Lives - 29 Feb

Ticket prices vary; for more information or to book, call the Box Office on 01582 60 20 80 or visit the website at www.grovetheatre.co.uk.

Mustard Salmon with Beetroot and Lentils

Cook a delicious gluten-free dinner in 20 minutes. Our Scandi-style salmon is served with beetroot, lentils, pumpkin seeds, capers, mustard and dill.

Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
½ tsp honey
2 salmon fillets
250g pouch ready-cooked puy lentils
250g ready-cooked beetroot, cut into wedges
2 tbsp crème fraîche
1 small pack dill, roughly chopped
1-2 tbsp capers
½ lemon, zested, cut into 2 wedges to serve
2 tbsp pumpkin seeds, toasted
rocket, to serve (optional)



Method

Step 1 - Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Mix together 1 tbsp oil, the mustard, honey and some seasoning. Put the salmon fillets on a baking tray and spread the honey and mustard mixture all over. Tip the lentils and beetroot into a casserole

dish, toss with the remaining oil and season well. Put both in the oven for 10 mins until the salmon is cooked through.

Step 2 - Stir the crème fraîche, dill, capers and lemon zest through the lentils. Serve alongside the salmon with the pumpkin seeds scattered over and lemon wedges for squeezing, with a rocket salad on the side, if you like.

Self-Saucing Jaffa Pudding

This intense chocolate orange sponge bake with thick sauce is about as indulgent as a good pudding gets.

Ingredients

100g butter, melted, plus a little extra for the dish
250g self-raising flour
140g caster sugar
50g cocoa
1 tsp baking powder
zest and juice 1 orange
3 eggs
150ml milk
100g orange milk chocolate or milk chocolate, broken into chunks
single cream or ice cream, to serve

For the sauce

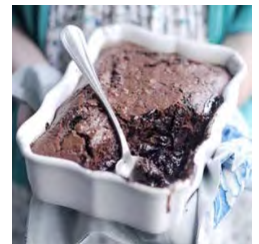
200g light muscovado sugar
25g cocoa

Method

Step 1 - Butter a 2-litre baking dish and heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Put the kettle on. Put the flour, caster sugar, 50g

cocoa, baking powder, orange zest and a pinch of salt in a large mixing bowl. Whisk together the orange juice and any pulp left in the juicer, the eggs, melted butter and milk, then pour onto the dry ingredients and mix together until smooth. Stir in the chocolate chunks and scrape everything into the baking dish.

Step 2 - Mix 300ml boiling water from the kettle with the sugar and cocoa for the sauce, then pour this all over the pudding batter – don't worry, it will look very strange at this stage! Bake on the middle shelf of the oven for 30 mins until the surface looks firm, risen and crisp. As you scoop spoonfuls into serving bowls, you should find a glossy, rich chocolate sauce underneath the sponge. Eat immediately with vanilla ice cream or single cream.



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Mini Red (ages 4-8 years old)

MONDAY 5:00pm - 6:00pm
Under 16 Intermediate (ages 11-16 years old)

MONDAY 6:00pm - 7:00pm
Under 16 Beginners (ages 11-16 years old)

ADULT COACHING

MONDAY 7:00pm - 8:00pm
Get Back Into Tennis

These sessions can be booked online VIA our website by scanning the QR code below.

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TUESDAY EVENING 5:30pm - 7:30pm

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To book your trial session please contact Dermot on 07957 461921 and he will be able to organise meeting you at the club for your first session.



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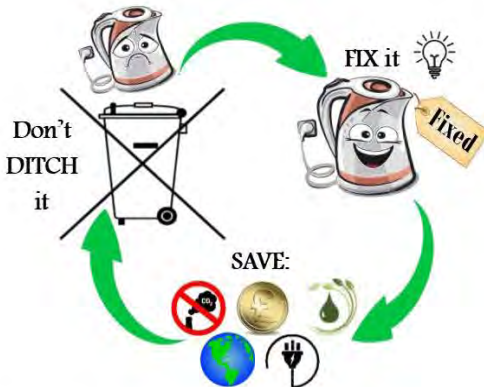
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SHOULD HAVE, WOULD HAVE, COULD HAVE

JOSEPH PILATES SAID "IT'S THE MIND THAT SHAPES THE BODY"

We all do it, make those resolutions to get to the gym, lose weight, take up a hobby that we've wanted to do for ages.

And then there's an awful lot of us who then say, I should have booked it, I would have gone to the gym more often, or I could have lost weight, but

By changing the mind-set for next time, it might get easier to stick to these plans.

"Should have, wraps you up in guilt and an acceptance that you failed. Instead turn it around to be a little more **you** centred and say "I need to do" for my wellbeing, which will in turn make me happier and those around me will also benefit from this.

I'm not saying only ever think of you, but if you are someone who regularly puts yourself at the bottom of the pile, and you recognise what I'm saying here, then maybe it's time to think again.

I've see this, over the years more and more with Pilates rather than Physio, probably because the client can see the need for treatment when they are in pain, but by doing something that may help to keep it at bay, well they just can't fit that in! Some clients book their assessment, feel the benefit of getting started, but then can't follow through to classes or 1:1's because of time.

Guilt fits nicely into the glue of "I should have" whereas I need to do it for my wellbeing, health, happiness is not so inclined to hide itself away.

Joseph Pilates also said **"CHANGE HAPPENS THROUGH MOVEMENT AND MOVEMENT HEALS"**

So if you know you have a need to look after your core or your health, and are interested in being more stable and more able, and think I will, rather than I should - book a Pilates Assessment with me. More information can be found at www.stjudesclinic.com Moira's Therapeutic Pilates

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EDLESBOROUGH
PRIMARY ACADEMY

Ofsted Rate Edlesborough Primary Academy 'Good' with 'Outstanding' Features

Following an Ofsted inspection on 19th and 20th September 2023, Edlesborough Primary Academy (EPA) has been judged as 'Good' with 'Outstanding' features.

The report of the visit contained high praise for EPA which had been rated 'Inadequate' in January 2020 as Edlesborough School, before it joined the Knowledge Schools Trust (KST).

The inspectors were particularly impressed by pupils' behaviours and attitudes, rating this as 'Outstanding'. They stated: "Pupils behave impeccably well. They are polite and show kindness and respect to all. Learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils have a firm understanding of the school rules and what adults expect of them. They support each other exceedingly well."



Jenny Peel, Headteacher at EPA, commented, "The comments in our recent Ofsted inspection summarise what an incredible journey the school has been on. The hard work and dedication of the EPA team, the thirst for learning from our pupils, the support of the Trust and the partnership with our parents is something which I am incredibly proud of."

The report went on to highlight how pupils enjoy coming to school each day and love many aspects of school life. They show exemplary attitudes and speak confidently about what they are learning. One Ofsted Parent View summed up the views of many: "I'm very grateful for such a good school for my children to walk to, thrive in and feel that they belong to."

Inspectors recognised the introduction of the school's ambitious curriculum that enables all pupils to achieve well. They praised the absolute priority given to reading and the expert teaching of phonics and commended the staff for their enthusiasm for teaching and inspiring pupils.

The support received from KST and local governing body was marked as a strength within the school: "Trustees and the local governing body provide appropriate support and challenge. They do this with knowledgeable insight and rigour. Trustees make sure that all delegated responsibilities are carried out diligently. Trust leaders enable the school to drive improvements well."

Laura Lund, Director of Primary Education at KST, added, "We are thrilled with the well-deserved inspection result at Edlesborough Primary Academy. The glowing report reflects the hard work, skill and dedication of all the staff and the support of the Edlesborough parents and carers. Of course, most importantly it is also a huge credit to the pupils especially the 'Outstanding' judgement for behaviour and attitudes."



Nigel's Thoughts

Dear Friends,

This year Lent begins, as always on Ash Wednesday, 14th February. You might like to join us the day before to celebrate Shrove Tuesday, with prayer singing and pancakes, at 6pm on Tuesday 13th February at Eaton Bray Methodist Church. You would be most welcome.

Lent is, of course a time of preparation to help us to better recall and engage with the events of Holy Week and Easter.

You will perhaps know the stories? Maybe not, but can I ask you -

What would be good news for you?

What would enable you to feel more satisfied, whole and alive?

What are the questions that you yearn to discover answers to?

These are dark days, and I'm not talking primarily about the weather. It seems as though we have lost the ability to live respectfully, in community with one another. Individuals and families are getting hurt by everything from the cost of living, to the way in which it is so easy to destroy one another on social media. Extremism seems to have gained a new acceptability, along with selfishness and a lack of care for others.

It doesn't have to be like this, we are better than this, and we are our sister's and brother's keeper.

As Christians we cannot claim to have all the answers. Nonetheless we do promise to engage seriously with your questions and to seek with you God's very best for your life, the life of our communities, and the whole of creation.

Why not let us know the yearnings of your heart (anonymously if you wish) so that together we can hammer out the beginnings of some answers?

You can pop these into the church letter box, outside the front door at Eaton Bray Methodist Church or you can contact me personally at revdnigel@gmail.com should you wish. We will really look forward to hearing from you.

God bless,

 Nigel



Whats on at Leighton Buzzard Theatre

<https://centralbedfordshire.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows>

Comedy

Barnstormers Comedy - 3 Feb

Event Cinema

Dear England - 1 Feb

Kinky Boots The Musical - 6 Feb

Manon - 13 Feb

My Favorite Things - The Rogers & Hammerstein 80th Anniversary Concert - 20 Feb

Vanya - 29 Feb

Family Theatre

The McDougalls - Toyland - 20 Feb

Film

One Life - 7 Feb

The Boys in the Boat - 8 & 28 Feb

The Holdovers - 9 Feb

Poor Things - 28 Feb

Music

Artesian Quartet - 10 Feb

The Players Theatre Company

Tonight at 8:30 by Noel Coward Week 1 - 15-17 Feb

Tonight at 8:30 by Noel Coward Week 2 - 22-24 Feb

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Book Review

The Parisian by Isabella Hammad



You could call Isabella Hammad's 550-page novel a sprawling, sweeping historical epic. It does chart a turbulent period of Palestinian history, from the end of the Ottoman empire and the First World War, through British rule and mass immigration of Jews as the Second World War looms. But this is also a highly personal story, based on Hammad's own great-grandfather. The Parisian of the title is Midhat, whom we meet as a young man travelling to

Montpellier and Paris to train as a doctor, and journey with through to middle age, marriage and familial duty at his family's home town of Nablus in Palestine.

Throughout, Hammad has an exquisite control on her subject: this is precise writing, measured, and careful. It doesn't sprawl; it pins. And it doesn't get swept up in generalisations or making characters mouthpieces for the march of history; rather, her detail makes you feel the homes and cities she takes us to, and the people that inhabit them, are as multifaceted and mysterious as those of real life. Hammad's presentation of a politically contentious time, the after-effects of which are still felt today, is also complex and demandingly layered – as it should be.

All of which would be an achievement for any novelist, but for a debut by a 27-year-old, it's quite remarkable. The Parisian is not flashy or splashy: indeed, at times it can feel too staid, taking its time to tell the story with a rather unfashionable 19th-century realism. But there's a tremendous assurance to it; you do really believe this story, these people.

The Parisian is also – crucially, thankfully – a love story. In Montpellier, the graceful Midhat falls for Jeanette, the daughter of his host. This early section is utterly lovely in its tracing of the trembling anticipation, tenderness and insecurity of a first romantic encounter, and occasional moments of high emotional intensity crash through the otherwise even pacing, leaving you clutching your own heart. The desire for Midhat and Jeannette to be together veins painfully through the rest of the book.

Hammad's real concern, however, is how Midhat is torn between two cultures: "He was always marked by his difference." The imprint of imperialism may trouble individual identity as much as national identity. In France, Midhat brutally realises that he will always be seen as the outsider, the other. The less "civilised". Yet in his own culture, his European sheen makes him extra refined. The fact that he's adopted the ways of a country that is a colonial oppressor in their region becomes prickly, however. And having fallen in love with France's personal and intellectual freedoms, Midhat also struggles against the more rigid, prescribed familial and cultural expectations in Palestine.

The Parisian considers how a preoccupation with the self occurs even in the most dramatic of historical occasions: while his country convulses, Midhat undergoes his own internal revolt. He must work out who he is, come to terms with the shape and limits of his life. The novel also allows a wistful look at how life rarely works out as we hope, how the past may cloud and colour the present. Time is even more difficult to traverse than geographical distance. And there's no going back.

Much of the pleasure of the book is to be found in Hammad's often strikingly clear, original imagery: umbrellas "sprouted" in the rain and orange zest "spat at his dust-covered hands"; women in a steam bath reveal fat that "draped down over the hips in thick rolls like layers of cream". She also provides many canny shifts in focus, from a cinematic, establishing wide-shots of a location, deftly sketched, to zooming in on the tiniest, most intimate detail (I loved the description of a hole in a petticoat "with its little harp of exposed fibres"). It is Hammad's sustaining of both perspectives, the minutiae that make up an individual life and the macro political upheavals that change a country forever, that makes *The Parisian* so impressive.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Edlesborough W.I.

In November we had a speaker Evan Willison who worked for 30 years at the Charlie Ross Auction House in Woburn located at the Abbey. It closed in July 2020. It was evident from Evans entertaining talk that he was passionate about his job and all the people he worked with as he told us many of the comical situations he had encountered. Dealing with some 360-400 auctions, house auctions and clearances of around 1500 houses he was very experienced in valuations and spotting the authentic from the fake. He said in a very jovial fashion he had seen countless 'genuine Haywain paintings' as the general public would all like to think that the bargain they bought at the car boot sale turned out to be a masterpiece!!! He also brought along some examples for our estimated valuation. We weren't too bad but it's definitely best left to the experts. Evan was very amusing and really held our attention with his relaxed and humorous talk. I am really pleased to say he is coming back during the year to tell us some more of his very interesting and witty tales.

Also in November we had a trip up to London to see the Christmas lights with a visit to a restaurant for a fish and chip meal.

✍️ Jane Jones

The last meeting of 2023! Our December meeting was a combined AGM and Christmas Lunch. The venue, Tilsworth Golf Club.

Committee business first. Minutes of November meeting were read and signed. Birthday cards and plants handed to the lucky ladies. New Committee members were voted in and grateful thanks for long service were given to those stepping down. Special mentions to Maureen Shipway who has been helping in one capacity or another since she was a young woman and Sue Bingham who is leaving for pastures new far away from Edlesborough.

At 1pm sharp lunch was served. Crackers pulled and glasses clinked. A three course meal comprising starter, traditional turkey meal or alternatives followed by dessert and coffee. All very tasty, hot and served beautifully by the Tilsworth staff. The lunch was a perfect ending to the year. A very convivial time flashed by and before we knew it 3.30 pm was upon us and we started to take our leave. It was deemed such a success Christmas lunch has been booked for next year.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at the Memorial Hall at 7.30 pm. We warmly welcome new members please come along and join us.

✍️ Caroline Colleran



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Hope and Encouragement

Have you broken your New Year resolutions yet?

Or have you stopped making New Years resolutions as you can't keep them anyway?

Popular initiatives after New Year are to join a gym or take up walking, cycling or running. We are constantly reminded that we need to be more active. But why are we trying to improve our fitness even though we usually don't succeed. What are we hoping for?

Perhaps one of the reasons people make them, is a hope to make us feel better, stronger or more attractive. And we all need some encouragement to keep up with a challenge. Then what happens? Things in life seem to get in the way. We are busy, it is raining and more.

So, we are up and down, not happy with things as they are, but seemingly don't have the ability to move on.

When we make a true commitment to follow Jesus there is a complete change in our lives. We feel better, stronger, happier and therefore more attractive. That would be the best New Year's resolution.

St. Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, was a very determined person. He had goals which he pursued relentlessly. He travelled around to fulfil the commitment that he had made. Unfortunately, his goal was to destroy as many of the followers of Jesus as he could. And he had been quite successful at that.

However, something got in his way. It was an encounter on the road to Damascus with the very Jesus that he was so against. In an instance, Saul or Paul was himself challenged. This was the point that he needed some help, hope and encouragement. Did he accept the challenge? 100%. The help came initially from those travelling with him as they had to lead him into the city as he had been made blind. And was blind for three days. What a scary challenge for someone so vibrant and determined.

The *hope* came from a man called Ananias who was sent to cure the blindness. He was actually able to address him as a brother, despite his fears about this man Saul whom he had heard bad things about.

The *encouragement* came a little later when Barnabas found and encouraged Paul as he became known. His mission was to help in the work of spreading the gospel of Jesus, the very person he was trying to stamp out the memory of. Paul was now better, stronger, happier and his message was very attractive to those prepared to have Jesus as their Saviour.

We all need a helping hand but if you accept the challenge, there is hope and encouragement for you. This New Year's resolution will last for ever. Jesus said in Matthew 28 v 30 'I am with you always'.

Our Sunday services are in the Church at 11 am. We'd love you to join us for our worship and song. You will get a warm welcome. For those unable to attend in person we also stream our services.

For those interested in the history of Northall Baptist Church, a free copy of the booklet, Rebels in Green Pastures can be supplied or downloaded from our website: <http://northallbaptistchurch.org/>

✉ Ruth Cox Tel: 07791 425625



Receiving hope and encouragement on the road to Damascus

Down the Lane



As I write this at the beginning of January the garden is waterlogged so the only place to work is in the greenhouse when the sun is out.

There is a surprising amount of colour in the garden – cyclamen with their beautiful pink flowers and variegated leaves, several evergreen shrubs, lots of self-sown hardy annual seedlings and winter jasmine which was in flower before Christmas. This needs pruning when the flowers have finished, in spring, as the new growth produces next year's flowers. This also prevents a build-up of old woody growth which just looks untidy. It's a very easy plant to propagate – just bend a stem down to the ground and peg it or cover part of it with soil and it will root itself. I often find shoots that have rooted themselves when they reach the soil.

I think the wet autumn encouraged lots of fungi to grow. I have two pictures of ones I found in the garden. Some small white mushrooms came up in the grass. They were not edible field mushrooms because they had white gills. As you can see in the picture some creature had been nibbling it; I have no idea what the creature was!

The other fungi were large brown flat ones which pushed up the stones in the gravel as they grew. I think that they are part of a large organism that is mostly below the surface of the drive. These appear every year.

I couldn't identify either species. There is a free app called Champignouf which you can put on your phone. My photos weren't good enough to identify the species but the app explains how to get the detail needed for identification. The app has lots of warnings about not poisoning yourself!

✍️ Sally Taylor





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Soft Play Sleepovers at Whipsnade Zoo



The UK's biggest Zoo is inviting kids to live out their dreams and spend the night at soft play, with the launch of Hullaba-snooze – a brand new overnight experience at Whipsnade Zoo's Hullabazoo indoor play.

Spending the evening within roaring distance of the Zoo's amazing animals, groups of 20 or more can bed down in the heart of the Bedfordshire-based conservation zoo.

After the Zoo has closed to the public, young guests can run wild in Hullabazoo soft play before joining an entertaining ZSL host for an animal themed treasure hunt. Groups will wind down with colouring and a craft activity making a souvenir of their stay, before settling down on their camp beds with a bedtime story and a cosy night inside the Zoo's huge soft play area.

After a good night's sleep, visitors may be woken by roars from across the Zoo signalling it's time to enjoy a breakfast buffet of juice, pastries, yoghurt and fruit.

Animal lovers will start the day racing around soft play before setting off on a morning tour to spot the earlier risers, guided by dedicated hosts, before the Zoo opens to the public for the day. Lucky guests will be the first to see the Zoo's flock flamingos, coalition of cheetahs and pride of African lions.

Whipsnade Zoo's Visitor Experiences Manager, Catherine Howes said; "Whipsnade Zoo is a magical place to spend the night and what better way that to have exclusive access to our soft play area all evening and book a Hullaba-snooze experience. We're offering large groups of families and friends, school groups, or cubs and brownies the opportunity to exclusively book the overnight experience. As part of the special experience, we're pleased to offer tailored tours to meet the specific interests of the group or help complete a badge that Uniformed Groups are working towards."

The most unique way to support international conservation charity ZSL, families and groups enjoying the Zoo's soft play sleepover are in turn supporting ZSL's vital conservation work around the world.

To find out more or book your tickets visit whipsnadezoo.org.

One, Zoo, Three

Zookeepers at Whipsnade Zoo kicked off the New Year by counting every mammal, bird, reptile, fish and invertebrate in January, as part of the conservation zoo's Annual Stocktake. There are more than 245 species of animals at the UK's largest zoo.



2023 saw the arrival of many new animals to the conservation zoo including Sabre, a male scimitar horned oryx. Also being counted for the first time were otter pups Dali, Cahya and Lalita by zookeeper James Ford. They were the second set of otter pups born to Mum Carole and Dad Ernie in 2023. The species are threatened in the wild by habitat loss and pollution. Zookeeper Thomas Maunders made sure every Mangarahara cichlid in the aquarium was added to the list, while the African lions' tally-board was turned into a fun enrichment toy – scented with spices to stimulate the big cats' strong sense of smell.

The annual stocktake is a requirement of the Whipsnade Zoo license. Following the count, the ZSL conservation zoo will share the final numbers with zoos and aquariums around the world via Species360, an international database which helps conservationists to manage important breeding programmes for endangered species.

Eaton Bray Cricket Club



It's been a long winter but the 2024 season will soon be upon us. So its time to get the kit out of storage and dust it off.

It's a new era for the club as we join the Herts League and the club is looking forward to our new challenge.

Senior nets start Wednesday 24th January at Dunstable CC 8-9 pm.

Junior nets start 1st February to the end of March at Vandyke School.

Wednesdays 6-7 Under 13. 7-8 Under 15. Thursdays 6-7 Under 9s & 11.

Ladies matches and training on Monday evenings. Dates TBA.

Eaton Bray Cricket Club are always looking out for new players of any age or ability.

We run 2 senior teams in the Herts League and a senior side in the Beds Sunday League.

5 Junior teams at aged U9 U11 2xU13 U15 and a Ladies Softball team. If you

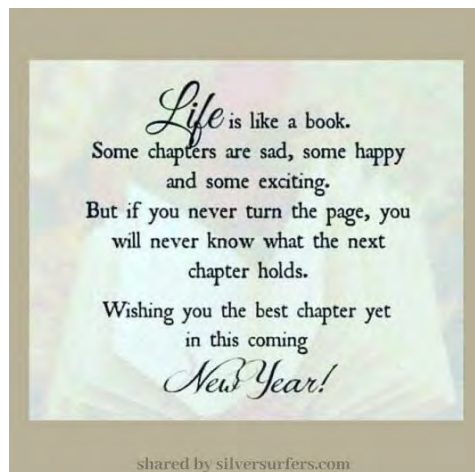
would like to join a progressive family friendly club pop down to the Rye Gardens or

get in touch via Facebook or X @EatonBrayCC.



The club would like to thank our sponsors Meadow Marquees, The Westrope Butchery, Fine & Country Homes, Prestige Kitchens and the Focus Magazine for their continued support.

Please enjoy your cricket with Eaton Bray in 2024.





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Home League	Weds 2:30pm – 3:30pm
Champion's Club Age 5+ (term time only)	Weds 6:15pm – 7:15pm
Girls' Night Out (1 st Thurs of the month)	Thurs 7:30pm

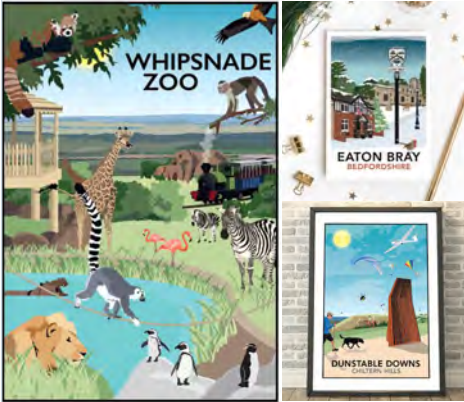
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Eaton Bray History

The Plough Inn Eaton Bray (courtesy of the Bedfordshire Archives)



The Plough about 1910

The Plough Public House: corner of Harling Road and Tring Road, Eaton Bray

The former Plough stands a long way from the village of Eaton Bray on Tring Road, also known as Icknield Way, in an area known as Valance End. According to the countywide licensing register of 1876 the Plough first opened in 1830. It is certainly not listed in the earliest surviving countywide registers which date from 1822 to 1828. It probably started as a beerhouse because it is first listed by name in a directory of 1864, those of 1847, 1852, 1853 and 1862 do not list it – directories at this date listed public houses by name and beerhouses simply by the name of the proprietor with the listing “beer retailer” or “beer seller”. As there were a number of beerhouses in Eaton Bray at the time it is not possible to say who the licensee was before 1864. If the Plough is not listed by name in 1862 but is listed in 1864 this suggests that it became a fully licensed public house in one of those years or in 1863.

The owner in 1876 was Ivinghoe brewer Roberts and Wilson. They were still the owner listed in the countywide register of 1891 but were then leasing the Plough to Dunstable brewer Benjamin Bennett, for £22/9/- per annum. The publican, the appropriately named John Farmer, was evidently the sub-tenant.

By the time of the countywide register of 1903 Roberts and Wilson were leasing the Plough directly to the publican again and the rent was £12 per annum. The place was, according to the register, “clean and in fairly good repair”. It was 1 mile, 352 yards to the next licensed premises and the pub had one front and one back door with a side gate to a yard.

In 1922 Frances Wilson of Belmont Lodge, Stanmore, Middlesex, widow [of Roberts and Wilson] surrendered 31 perches of land in Street Furlong. The description of the land, which cannot have changed for over half a century, still refers to the Plough as a beerhouse and states that it was “formerly erected by John Varney” and had been formerly in the occupation of John Scott junior, then Joseph Wallace then James Pratt. Pratt was the licensee in 1876. We might infer from this that Varney was the first licensee but, of course, he may have built the premises which only became a public house at a later date.

The Rating and Valuation Act 1925 specified that every building and piece of land in the country was to be assessed to determine its rateable value. Eaton Bray, like most of the county was assessed in 1927. The valuer visiting the Plough found it still owned by Roberts and Wilson. He commented: "Rough cast. Kept exceptionally attractive". The brick and slate building comprised a tap room ("very nice"), living room and smoke room combined, a kitchen and pantry. Three bedrooms lay upstairs. Outside stood a brick and slate shelter by the house ("can be closed as store) as well as a stable for two horses ("disused"). There were also three weather-boarded and slated barns used as stores and a large weather-boarded and corrugated iron barn used for lumber. The landlord also rented two grass fields – of 1.5 acres and 4.002 acres and an orchard of 3.994 acres.

The valuer commented: "Takings everything"; they amounted to £20 per week in summer but very little in the winter. Sales were a barrel and a half of beer per week in summer and about one per month in winter. Nine dozen half pint bottles of beer a week were also sold in summer along with twelve dozen bottles of minerals. Sixteen gallon of spirits were sold in the year 1926-1927 along with eighteen gallons of port. The valuer commented: "Takings include quite a lot of teas, minerals etc." and "No village trade – all trade in summer from motorists etc."

The landlord had "Been here just a year, working up a connection and Lounge. Tap room has only just been altered to its present state. A later valuer noted: "Now a tea place. No trade in winter. Lawn set up with tables, sheds for cycles"

Benskins Watford Brewery took over Roberts and Wilson during 1927 and Benskins was, itself, taken over by Ind Coope of Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire in 1957 when the Watford brewery closed. In 1961 Ind Coope merged with Ansells of Birmingham, Warwickshire and Tetley Walker of Leeds, Yorkshire to form Allied Breweries.

By 2008 the Plough had closed and become, like any number of pubs in the county, a restaurant. In this case the restaurant is Indian and called Elachi, the name being a type of spice. Later it became the New York Diner which after it closed was gutted by a fire. It is now the Floss and Smile dentist.



The former Plough Inn as an Indian restaurant 2008



Above - The Plough Inn as the New York diner and later after the fire

Left: Now as the Floss & Smile dentist



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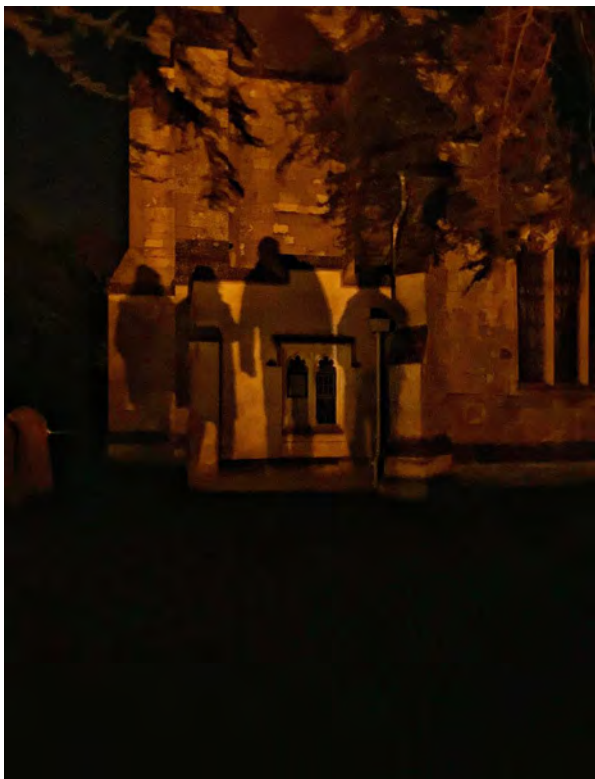
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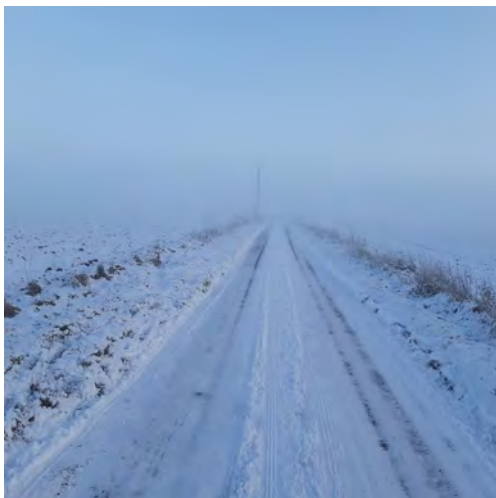
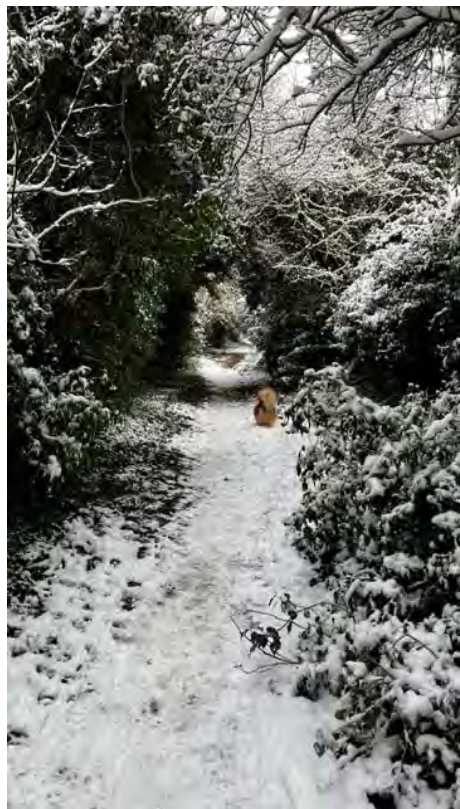


Frosty morning by Jane Jones

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What to do in the Garden in February

February feels like a turning point in the garden. It's still cold outside, but there are signs of spring's imminent arrival everywhere you look. Bulbs are slowly emerging from the ground, and the days are getting longer at last.

This month's garden jobs are mostly about getting things ready for the spring. But there are also some early sowing and growing tasks to do - if you want to get a head start..

Timely Tips



1. Prepare your seed beds. As long as the ground isn't frozen, you can cultivate beds and start to warm up the soil, with fleece, polythene or cloches, in preparation for sowing in the coming months.
2. Organise this year's seeds by sowing date. Get hold of a box with dividers, and file your seed packets by the month they need to be sown in. You'll be so glad of this effort in the weeks to come.
3. Check your tools are sound and your garden machinery is working. Give your tools and equipment the once over and apply a little TLC to anything that needs it. While you're at it, tidy your shed ahead of the imminent planting & sowing season - you'll thank yourself for a clean & tidy space later!
4. Blitz perennial weeds in your beds and kitchen garden. Dig them up, roots and all, to get a head start on the blighters before the weather warms up.

In the flower garden

- Prune wisteria now, cutting back summer side-shoots to 2 or 3 buds.

- There's still plenty of time to prune your rhododendron while they're in their dormant stage.
- Take notice of your climbers, as some may need pruning before the end of the month (such as group 2 clematis.)
- Cut back shrubs, such as cornus and salix cultivars (grown for their colourful winter stems), down to their bases.
- Prune summer-flowering clematis towards the end of the month, before active growth begins.
- Cut back the old foliage from ornamental grasses before growth begins. Clip them to within a few centimetres of the ground.
- Prune overwintered fuchsias back to one or two buds on each shoot.
- Prune winter-flowering jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) after flowering, to encourage new growth for next year's blooms. Cut back the previous year's growth to 5cm from the old wood.
- Trim winter-flowering heathers as the flowers disappear, to prevent plants becoming leggy.
- Prune winter-flowering shrubs such as mahonia and viburnum x bodnantense once their colourful display has finished.
- Remove faded flowers from winter pansies to stop them setting seed. This will encourage a flush of new flowers when the weather warms up.
- Lift and divide snowdrops still 'in the green', if you want to move them or create more plants.



- Move any deciduous trees or shrubs that need repositioning now, provided

the soil is not frozen or waterlogged.

- Look out for hellebore leaf spot (rounded brown spots on the leaves) and remove any leaves that are affected.

In the vegetable garden



- Start chitting early potatoes - stand them on end in a module tray or egg box and place them in a bright, cool, frost-free place.
- Mulch perennial vegetables such as asparagus and artichokes with well-rotted manure or garden compost.
- Build raised beds now, before the growing season gets underway. Raised beds allow you to make an early start in the garden; the soil warms up faster and raised beds drain quickly too, so they're a great way to deal with clay soils.
- Prepare vegetable seed beds by removing all weeds and forking in plenty of compost. Cover prepared soil with sheets of black plastic to keep it drier and warmer in preparation for spring planting.
- Rake lime into acid soils.
- Continue controlling against slugs.
- Remove yellowing leaves from brassicas, including Brussels sprouts, to prevent brassica downy mildew and grey mould from spreading.
- Tidy up vegetable plots, removing any remaining plant debris.

In the fruit garden

- Prune raspberry canes. It's your last chance to cut autumn-fruiting raspberry canes to the ground to stimulate new canes to fruit in the autumn. Cut the tips of summer-fruiting raspberry canes that have grown beyond the top of their supports; cut just above a bud.

- Prune blackcurrant bushes, gooseberries and redcurrants to maintain a productive framework.
- Mulch fruit trees with well-rotted manure or garden compost, taking care not to mound mulch up around the trunk.
- Winter prune apple trees and pear trees while they're still dormant. This is your last chance to do so.
- Leave plum trees, cherry trees and apricots until the summer as pruning these fruit trees now will make them susceptible to Silver Leaf disease.
- Protect blossoms on apricots, nectarines and peaches from frost, but make sure pollinating insects can still reach the flowers.



- Force rhubarb plants for an early crop.
- Cover outdoor strawberries with cloches to encourage an earlier crop.
- Top dress fruit bushes with a slow-release, potassium-rich fertiliser to feed plants for the forthcoming season.
- Check stored fruit and remove any rotten fruit.

For more tips and further information visit the website:

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Everyone is welcome to our Sunday worship each week between 11am and 12.30pm including tea/coffee and time to talk together.

For more information contact:

John Hazell 01525 218142

Email northallchapel@btinternet.com

Web: www.northallbaptistchurch.org

There has been a Baptist Chapel in Northall for more than 200 years. Today we continue to seek to worship God, serve him in our daily lives and support and encourage one another in the difficult and the joyful times.

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Drinking from My Saucer



I've never made a fortune and it's probably too late now.
But I don't worry about that much, I'm happy anyhow.
And as I go along life's way, I'm reaping better than I sowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.
I don't have a lot of riches, and sometimes the goings tough.
But I've got loved ones around me, and that makes me rich enough.
I thank God for his blessings, and the mercies He's bestowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.
I remember times when things went wrong, my faith wore somewhat thin.
But all at once the dark clouds broke, and the sun peeped through again.
So God, help me not to gripe about the tough rows that I've hoed.
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.
If God gives me strength and courage, when the way grows steep and rough.
I'll not ask for other blessings, I'm already blessed enough.
And may I never be too busy, to help others bear their loads.
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

✍️ by John Paul Moore

*Have you penned a verse with local interest that we could publish in Focus?
We would be happy to accommodate any budding poets.*

TIPS FOR DRIVING ON ICY ROADS

When driving in icy or snowy weather:

- drive with care, even if the roads have been treated
- keep well back from the road user in front as stopping distances can be ten times greater than on dry roads
- take care when overtaking vehicles spreading salt or other de-icer, particularly if you are riding a motorcycle or cycle
- watch out for snowploughs which may throw out snow on either side. Do not overtake them unless the lane you intend to use has been cleared
- be prepared for the road conditions to change over relatively short distances
- listen to travel bulletins and take note of variable message signs that may provide information about weather, road and traffic conditions ahead.

Drive extremely carefully when the roads are icy. Avoid sudden actions as these could cause loss of control. You should:

- drive at a slow speed in as high a gear as possible; accelerate and brake very gently
- drive particularly slowly on bends where loss of control is more likely. Brake progressively on the straight before you reach a bend. Having slowed down, steer smoothly round the bend, avoiding sudden actions
- check your grip on the road surface when there is snow or ice by choosing a safe place to brake gently. If the steering feels unresponsive this may indicate ice and your vehicle losing its grip on the road. When travelling on ice, tyres make virtually no noise.

Source: The Highway Code

Feeding Wild Birds

Courtesy of The Woodland Trust www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Winter can be a difficult time for wildlife. Temperatures plummet and food becomes difficult to find. Insect-eating birds turn to alternative foods, some species travel far and wide, and foraging behaviour adapts, but we can lend a helping hand by providing a welcome source of extra food for birds to turn to in leaner times.

What to feed

Different birds are attracted to certain foods, often reflecting their special adaptations for natural food types. Offer a variety of tempting morsels to maximise your bird table's wow factor.

- Goldfinch, siskin, redpoll – smaller seeds like nyjer
- Greenfinch, tits – sunflower hearts
- Sparrows, woodpigeon, collared dove – large grains
- Woodpeckers, tits, starling – fat balls and peanuts
- Robin, thrushes – mealworms and live foods
- Thrushes, waxwing – windfall fruit



Where to feed

It's not only the types of food that tickle particular birds' fancies, but also where they're fed. You may have noticed that dunnocks and wrens shy away from bird tables and hanging feeders.

Sprinkle crumbled fat balls and seed beneath shrubs for secretive and ground feeding birds. Smear fat mixtures into the cracks and crevices of branches or bark for treecreepers, nuthatches and woodpeckers. And don't forget to clear feeders and feeding areas of snow after fresh falls as smaller birds can struggle to get through it.

If you can, it's also worth moving bird tables and feeders around the garden every now and then. Not only does this reduce the build up of mess, it can also help prevent ambush predators like cats and sparrowhawks from becoming too familiar with the likely location of unwary prey.

Planting for birds

One of the most satisfying and hassle-free ways to feed birds in winter is to plan ahead and let nature provide.

Rowan produces a lasting crop of berries that in bumper years can see birds through for several months. They're a favourite of mistle thrushes which will guard them jealously from other hungry visitors. Ivy is also a good plant to encourage, its late-ripening berries offering food through the colder months and its evergreen leaves provide the perfect larder for wrens to search out hibernating insects. Blackbirds, fieldfares and redwings appreciate windfall apples left for them and will turn to crab apples and other hard fruits too. Lucky gardeners may even tempt waxwings. Fruits can also be an important winter food for blackcaps – warblers which usually migrate to warmer climes, but which are increasingly overwintering in southern parts of the UK.

A range of ornamental shrubs also provide berries into early winter, and don't discount the value of nectar. Small birds such as blue tits and even blackcaps seek out these



energy boosts from early or late-flowering mahonia – a firm favourite.

Keep them watered

Providing clean, fresh water alongside food is very important, particularly for seed specialists such as finches. They need to drink regularly to counterbalance their dry diet – all that seed grinding is thirsty work.

Sub-zero temperatures are of course a problem in winter and limit all wildlife's access to sources of water. Help keep bird baths and ponds ice free by floating a small football on the surface to disturb the formation of ice sheets. Or in really cold weather, fill a metal or ceramic dish with water and set it on bricks over a tea light candle.

Keep it up

Once you start feeding birds, try to keep regular in your topping up habits. While most visitors will adapt and move to new feeding grounds when natural food gradually runs out, a sudden drop off in feeding puts them on the hop. In winter when alternative food sources are already scarce, this could mean the difference between life and death for some.



Keep things clean

While feeding birds in your garden can help see them through the winter, it also has its down sides. We're encouraging large numbers of birds to share the same small area, putting them at higher risk of passing disease to one another. Trichomonosis for example, a nasty bug that can be fatal for finches and pigeons, is passed from bird to bird through saliva. Sick birds have difficulty feeding and will regurgitate food, contaminating feeding stations and spreading the contagion.

Scrub your bird feeders regularly with hot soapy water and give them a good rinse. Sweep away any accumulations of droppings or spilled seeds and keep feeders free of wet or mouldy foods.

The beauty of making your own feeders from recycled cartons is that they're cheap and easy to replace when they get mucky.

Bird Cake

This quick and easy treat is packed full of energy to keep birds going, especially important in cold weather. Design your own recipe or use whatever's to hand.

Ideal ingredients

sunflower hearts
peanut pieces and other bird seed mixes
dried fruits softened with water
crumbled or grated cheese
cooked rice and other leftovers
breadcrumbs

Things to avoid

uncooked rice
salted nuts or other foods
whole nuts or fruit which could choke

Method

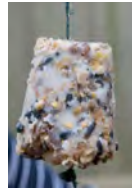
Combine your chosen ingredients in a bowl and add softened lard or dripping.

Mix together into a firm paste.

Make a hole in the bottom of a yoghurt pot and thread through a length of twine or string, then pack the pot with your warm fat mixture, to make fat balls.

Place your fat balls in the fridge overnight to set, then cut through the pot and peel it away. Tie a big knot at one end of the twine to secure the ball.

Hang the fat ball in a tree or shrub and wait for the birds to come and feast.



Dagnall Weather Station (AONB)



Weather Conditions for November & December 2023

Elevation: 450 ft - Latitude: 51° 50' 13" North - Longitude: 0° 33' 34" West

November 2023

	High	Date/Time	Low	Date/Time
Temperature	15.3°C	18 Nov 13.30	-3.4°C	30 Nov 03.30
Mean Temp	7.8°C	Dominant Wind:	W	
Humidity:	99%	5 Nov 01.30	60%	24 Nov 14.30
Barometer:	1030.5 hPa	12 Nov 00.00	956.4 hPa	2 Nov 07.30
Wind Speed	39 mph SWS	13 Nov 12.00	Months avg.	6.3 mph W
Wettest Day		2 Nov	15.80 mm	0.622 ins
Monthly Rain:	Total	November	82.4mm	3.244 ins

November began as October finished, wet and windy but mild. It remained unsettled up to the 19th with continued Atlantic weather systems coming from the west following each other bringing the rain. The second half of the month brought high pressure giving us a settled spell with some sunshine and colder days. Temperatures were slightly higher for the month with a high of 15.3°C. There were 3 days at the end of the month where we recorded early morning frost, dropping down to -3.4°C on the 30th. The monthly rain at 82.4mm was just above average.

November's Temperature and Rain

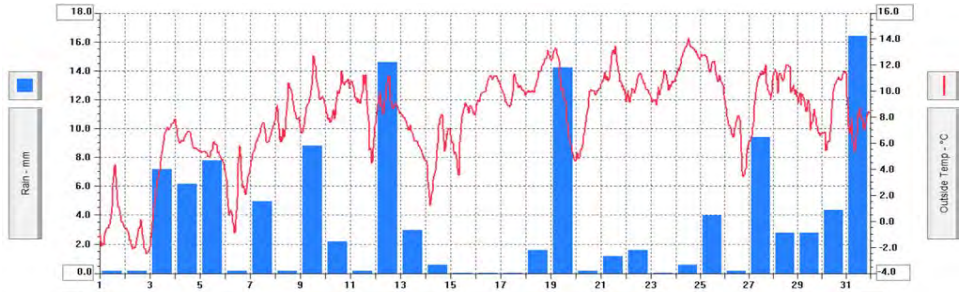


December 2023

	High	Date/Time	Low	Date/Time
Temperature	14.1°C	24 Dec 12.30	-2.5°C	2 Dec 20.30
Mean Temp	7.9°C	Dominant Wind:	W	
Humidity:	99%	6 Dec 11.30	70%	21 Dec 13.30
Barometer:	1038.4 hPa	1 Dec 10.00	983.4 hPa	30 Dec 05.00
Wind Speed	42 mph W	9 Dec 20.30	Months avg.	8.2 mph W
Wettest Day		31 Dec	16.41mm	0.646 ins
Monthly Rain:	Total	Dec	115.8mm	4.543 ins

December was wet and windy but mostly mild. The first few days were calm, then the rain began with Atlantic depression after Atlantic depression bringing generally mild weather with very wet and windy conditions. We recorded rain on 27 days totalling 115.4mm 150% of the 16 year average for December with the wettest day being 31st with 16.41mm. The temperatures were much higher than the December norm reaching 14.1°C on Christmas eve. The only frosts were on the 1st and 2nd and then it only went down to -2.5°C. It was also a very windy month with an average 8.2.

December's Temperature and Rain



Annual Climatological Summary for 2023

Temperature

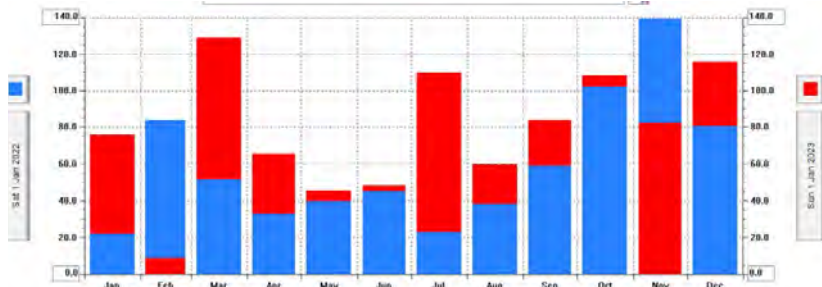
Precipitation

Wind Speed

	High Temp	Date	Low Temp	Date	Mean Temp	Rain Day Max	Date	Month Total	Wind Gusts	Date	Avg	Dom Dir
Jan	13.7°	4 th	-6.0°	17 th	5.3°	13.8mm	14 th	76.2mm	38.0	7 th	6.4	W
Feb	15.8°	15 th	-4.1°	8 th	6.5°	3.2mm	23 rd	9.0mm	34.0	17 th	5.4	W
Mar	16.1°	30 th	-3.4°	11 th	7.6°	25.8mm	31 st	129.0mm	41.0	13 th	6.7	SSW
Apr	20.7°	29 th	-1.5°	4 th	9.3°	12.6mm	10 th	65.7 mm	39.0	12 th	5.6	SSE
May	23.1°	28 th	4.7°	16 th	13.3°	14.0mm	9 th	45.6 mm	31.0	12 th	5.0	NNE
Jun	32.6°	11 th	8.1°	3 rd	18.5°	21.0mm	20 th	48.6 mm	31.0	12 th	4.7	NE
July	29.8°	7 th	7.3°	26 th	17.3°	21.2mm	4 th	109.8 mm	37.0	15 th	6.2	W
Aug	27.7°	10 th	9.2°	31 st	17.3°	11.4mm	2 nd	59.8 mm	28.0	12 th	4.1	NW
Sep	33.4°	7 th	8.7°	23 th	18.1°	42.6mm	20 th	84.0mm	33.0	20 th	4.6	SSE
Oct	25.5°	9 th	0.3°	16 th	13.1°	28.8mm	13 th	108.4 mm	30.0	13 th	4.9	SSE
Nov	15.3°	18 th	-3.4°	30 th	7.8°	15.8mm	2 nd	82.4 mm	39.0	13 th	6.3	W
Dec	14.1°	24 th	-2.5°	2 nd	7.9°	16.4mm	31 st	115.8 mm	42.0	9 th	8.2	W
	YEAR	TOTALS										
Lows /Max	34.3°	July	-6.0°	Dec	Avg 11.9°	Total Rain	Year	934.5 mm (36.791ns)	Wind 42.0 mph	Dec	Wind 5.7 mph	W Year avg
	Max	Min										

2023 Highlights: 2023 was a very warm and rather wet year. The most notable features high temperatures in June 32.6°C but to beat that the unusual high temperature in September 33.4°C extending the summer by month. With 934.5mm (36¾inches) of rain it was a wet year, 122% of the average. I was expecting to write that December was the wettest month but March was the wettest with 129mm and February was the driest with only 9mm.

Rain Comparison for 2022 - 2023 Blue 2022 719.8mm Red 2023 935.4mm



For weather data 24 hours a day, updated every 15mins, this site forecast and much more, visit: www.dagnallweather.co.uk and http://bit.ly/weather_dagnall. If anyone has a question, comment or wishes to contact me please email: david@dagnallweather.co.uk or telephone: 01442 843883. Dagnall weather now has an app for your iPad & iPhone! Just go to the apple store, search for Wunderstation and follow the instructions to Dagnall Weather Station. Now updated every minute.

Church Bloopers

The Fasting & Prayer Conference will include meals.

Sunday at 5pm. Prayer and medication to follow.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

This evening at 7pm there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10am. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B. S. is done.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy. Potluck supper

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

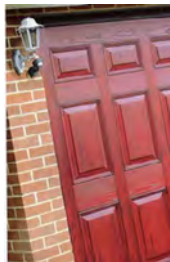


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