

THE WATERSHED MAGAZINE



December 2025/January 2026

REV STEVE BULLOCK (DAY OFF FRIDAY)

Curate with responsibility

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760211

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SAPPERTON WITH FRAMPTON MANSELL

Rev Pepita Walker

760211

Church Wardens:

ST LUKE'S

Elizabeth Twinch

762897

John Thorogood

762861

Flowers

Pam Thorogood

762861

ST KENELM'S

Mark Hamer

760715

Rotas

Elizabeth Twinch

762897

Treasurer PCC

Charles Houldsworth

760300

RODMARTON AND TARLTON (Chapel of Ease)

Church Wardens

RODMARTON

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770401

Philippa Herbert

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TARLTON (Chapel Warden)

Jasper Biddulph

770230

Flower Team Leader

Alex Bransby

07981 793251

Secretary PCC

Jane Marlowe

770401

Treasurer PCC

Simon Biddulph

841462

The Thameshead Benefice

St. Matthew, Coates: All Saints, Kemble: St. Michael and All Angels, Poole Keynes: St. Kenelm, Sapperton with St. Luke, Frampton Mansell: St. Peter, Rodmarton with St. Osmund, Tarlton: All Saints, Somerford Keynes with All Saints, Shorncliffe

PARISH NEWS

FORTHCOMING SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE

7 December

09.30 Coates

10.00 Kemble

10.00 Poole Keynes

11.00 Sapperton

11.00 Somerford Keynes Holy Communion

11.00 Rodmarton

14.00 Poole Keynes

2nd Sunday in Advent

Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer with Source
Seekers (streamed)

Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer

Wild and Messy Church at Village Hall

14 December

10.00 Poole Keynes

11.00 Tarlton

3rd Sunday in Advent

Benefice Holy Communion

Christingle Holy Communion

21 December

08.30 Kemble

11.00 Rodmarton

14.00 Coates

16.00 Frampton Mansell

16.30 Somerford Keynes

17.30 Poole Keynes

18.30 Kemble

4th Sunday in Advent

Holy Communion

Carol service

Carol service

Carol service

Carol service

Carol service

Carol service

24 December

15.00 Somerford Keynes

16.00 Kemble

16.00 Frampton Mansell

17.30 Tarlton

23.00 Coates

Christmas Eve

Nativity

Crib service (streamed)

Crib service

Carol service

Midnight Mass

25 December

08.30 Tarlton

09.30 Coates

09.30 Somerford Keynes

10.00 Poole Keynes

10.30 Sapperton

Christmas Day

Holy Communion (BCP)

Holy Communion

Holy Communion

Holy Communion

Holy Communion

FORTHCOMING SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE

25 December	Christmas Day (cont)
11.00 Kemble	Holy Communion (streamed)
11.00 Rodmarton	Holy Communion
28 December	First Sunday after Christmas
11.00 Shorncote	Carols
4 January	Epiphany
10.00 Kemble	Morning Prayer with Source Seekers (streamed)
10.00 Poole Keynes	Morning Prayer
11.00 Frampton Mansell	Holy Communion
11.00 Tarlton	Feast of the Kings Holy Communion
11.00 Somerford Keynes	Morning Prayer
11 January	1st Sunday after Epiphany
10.00 Coates	Benefice Holy Communion
11.00 Rodmarton	Morning Prayer
18 January	2nd Sunday after Epiphany
09.30 Coates	Morning Prayer
10.00 Kemble	Morning Source – all age (streamed)
10.00 Poole Keynes	Holy Communion
11.00 Frampton Mansell	Morning Prayer
11.00 Rodmarton	Morning Prayer
11.00 Somerford Keynes	Morning Prayer
25 January	3rd Sunday after Epiphany
08.00 Tarlton	Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00 Somerford Keynes	Combined Benefice service
18.00 Rodmarton	Evening Prayer
1 February	4th Sunday after Epiphany
10.00 Kemble	Morning Prayer with Source Seekers (streamed)
10.00 Poole Keynes	Morning Prayer
11.00 Sapperton	Morning Prayer
11.00 Rodmarton	Candlemas Eucharist
11.00 Somerford Keynes	Holy Communion

FRONT COVER

Thank you to the children of Sapperton School who drew designs for our front cover. I particularly like the one I chose for the front cover which illustrated many features of Christmas.

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

As winter deepens and the days grow short, we find ourselves surrounded by darkness more than at any other time of year. This is the time of year you need a torch with you, especially when walking around our villages. It's precisely in these months that we fill our homes and streets with different forms of light, whether they are twinkling Christmas lights, glowing candles, or the gentle warmth of a fireplace. There's something about light that draws us in, lifts our spirits, and gives us hope.

Light is a powerful symbol, notably in the Christian faith. At Christmas time we think of hope coming into our messed-up world, as a baby, who is called Immanuel "God with us". Later, Jesus would declare about himself "I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

What does it mean for Jesus to be the Light of the World? Light reveals what is hidden, guides our steps, and brings warmth and life. In the same way, Jesus promises to do this and more, offering us a way forward, with his living presence alongside us, bringing clarity to confusion, hope to despair, and love to loneliness. His birth, celebrated at Christmas, is like a sunrise for a world longing for hope.

Sometimes this is hard to believe when we are worried about the uncertainty of the times, personal struggles, or the pain we see around us, but when we personally seek to connect to Jesus, we will find the light of his love and peace is there, ready to make a difference and light up our world.

But Jesus didn't just call Himself the Light of the World, He calls us to shine, too. Jesus was keen for his followers to put their faith into action and make a difference for good in this world. Our communities are full of people who do look out for others. Let's keep doing this, whether that is reaching out to an isolated neighbour, supporting local charities, volunteering, or simply offering a listening ear. Even small acts of kindness can brighten someone's day and help demonstrate the Light and hope we have in Christ.

Then as we move from Christmas into a new year, let's carry this theme of light with us. The world needs hope and we have the privilege of being able to celebrate this hope that we have in Christ and share it, through words and deeds. Whether 2025 has been a year of joy or challenge for you, know that the light of Jesus shines on, steady, faithful and true, for all to know and experience.

To know about this hope in Christ, the Light of the World, why not consider attending one of the advent groups we have running during

the first three weeks of December or come along to a church service near you, you would be most welcome.

Wishing you a bright and blessed Christmas and New Year!

Steve

Rev Dr Steve Bullock



Wild and Messy Church

Sunday 7 December 2pm

Poole Keynes Village Hall

Fun, games, craft, refreshments and worship for everyone

Please contact Liz Collins for further details

e.collins@farming.co.uk

07774 104990

**Bringing the light and joy of Christ into our communities;
that all may flourish**



A warm welcome for all at our Christmas services.

Coates

Carol service - Sunday, 21st December, 2pm

Midnight Mass - Christmas Eve, 11pm

Holy Communion - Christmas Day, 9.30am

Frampton Mansell

Carol service - Sunday, 21st December, 4pm

Crib service - Christmas Eve, 4pm

Sapperton

Holy Communion - Christmas Day, 10.30am

Rodmorton

Carol service - Sunday, 21st December, 11am

Holy Communion - Christmas Day, 11am

Tarltton

Carol service - Christmas Eve, 5.30pm

Holy Communion - Christmas Day, 8.30am



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



Advent Groups

All are invited to join our relaxed Advent groups. We will explore three key moments from the Christmas story through bible study, discussion and prayerful reflection. Those who have never attended such groups are especially welcome. Anyone from the Benefice can join any of the groups - choose one which fits your schedule.

Kemble

Hosted by Liz and George Collins
Thursdays 4th, 11th and 18th December, 7.30pm.

Somerford Keynes

Hosted by Susanne Lock
Tuesdays 2nd, 9th and 16th December, 7pm.

Frampton Mansell with Sapperton

Hosted by Frankie and Aileen Shaw
Thursdays, 4th, 11th and 18th at 11am.

Rodmorton and Tarltton

Advent reflections at St. Osmund's Chapel, Tarltton
Tuesdays 2nd, 9th and 16th at 6pm.

If you would like to join a group, please contact our parish administrator

Toto Walls for further information:
office@thamesheadchurches.org.uk or 07989 301120



NEWS FROM COATES

Coffee, Cake & Chat



**CHRISTMAS SPECIAL!!!
FESTIVE HOME-MADE FAYRE,
LUCKY DRAW & MORE!!!.....**

**Tuesday 16 December 10.30am-12noon
Coates Village Hall**

just £4

20 January 2026 our first event of the New Year.



COATES CINEMA CLUB



The new season continues on 11 December doors open at 7pm screening at 7.30.

Members are given a choice of films for the next two months to vote for and the film with the most votes is screened at the following month.

Annual membership is £40, guests' tickets £5 on the night.

December 1- The Roses¹⁵

with best of British actors: Olivia Colman and Dominic Cumberbatch

Life seems easy for picture-perfect couple Theo and Ivy: successful careers, a loving marriage, great kids. However, a tinderbox of fierce competition and hidden resentments soon emerge when Theo's career nosedives and Ivy's own ambitions take off.

January 8 - Bridget Jones: all about the boy¹⁵

Comedy starring : Renee Zelwegger, Jim Broadbent

Continuing the diaries of Bridget Jones in the fourth film charting the life of Bridget Jones: After jumping back into the dating pool, single mother Bridget Jones finds herself caught between a younger man and her son's science teacher.

More information please contact Simon Large at

simon.large@sky.com 07714 220 558

DISCOVER A HIDDEN GEM IN THE COTSWOLDS



Sapperton
Church of England
Primary School

SAPPERTON PRESCHOOL

THE PERFECT PLACE FOR 3-4 YEAR OLDS

- ✓ Experienced Teacher-led EYFS staff
- ✓ Play-based learning within a nurturing small group
- ✓ Beautiful village setting, surrounded by woods and Cotswold countryside
- ✓ 8am - 6pm - 5 days a week, less than 10 minutes from Cirencester
- ✓ Government funding available alongside very reasonable hourly rates.
- ✓ Nurturing children to develop confidence and Independence ready for school

Get in touch to book a visit and meet our experienced and passionate staff.



ENQUIRE NOW

01285 760325

www.sappertonprimary.org
admin@sapperton.gloucs.sch.uk

Sapperton, Nr Cirencester
GL7 6LQ

To nurture faith; to inspire success

frampton Mansell Village Choir

A fun community choir for all those who just love to sing!



Be part of it!

MONDAYs 7pm - 8:30pm
at The Village Hall
£5 per week

*Meet new people
No music reading skills necessary
Open to ALL ages, and ALL voices
Share the love of singing a wide range of music
No formal audition, no previous experience necessary*

FIRST SESSION is FREE!



Adult Beginner Piano Lessons

It really is NEVER too late!

If you've ever wanted
to learn to play...
give it a try,
the first lesson
is FREE!

CONTACT LUCY: framptonmansellvillagechoir@gmail.com 07866 447725

The Village Club — COATES —



Everyone Is Welcome!

The bar is open 8pm to 11pm, Friday and Saturday.

Keep an eye on the Village newsletter and Facebook page for last minute event details. Email coatesvillageclub@gmail.com for more information or to join the mailing list.

Christmas Squares

Saturday 20th Dec – 6:30pm onwards

Join us for the annual Christmas squares for prize giving. Draw starts at 7:30pm. Squares available for £1 until 7pm on the night.



New Years Eve

Wednesday 31st Dec – 8:00pm onwards

Come and join the party and see the new year in with a Disco!

Table Tennis Club

Saturday 10th Jan – 6:30pm until 9:00pm

All abilities welcome for a fun evening!



The Big Village Quiz

Saturday 17th Jan – 6:30pm onwards

Quiz starts at 7pm. £2 per person. Teams of up to six, or we can add you to a team. Book with coatesvillageclub@gmail.com

NEW EVENT

Supper Club

Saturday 24th Jan - Kevin's Chilli Night

The bar opens at 6:30pm for a 7pm sit down. Dinner and dessert served from 7:30pm. This is a ticketed event. Tickets are available for £8.50 **before** the night from the club bar or Lorraine (+44) 7840 739 456

Please make us aware of **ALL** dietary requirements when booking.

NEWS FROM SAPPERTON AND FRAMPTON MANSELL

IT TAKES A CHILD

The decorations were in place, the tree all ready, just one more day to go for Christmas Eve when the stockings could be put up at the bottom of the bed. A contented little girl slept well until the sound of shooting noises woke her. Almost immediately her mother came into the bedroom in the darkness, picked up her sleeping younger brother and whispered for her to get up quietly and quickly come! Following her into the internal hallway she joined her older brothers where clothes were handed out from the airing cupboard and they dressed themselves. Her father appeared at the doorway and gave instructions; follow each other without any noise and get into the car, we must leave, no fuss, just as quickly as possible do as he said and all will be well.

Dazed and confused all the children seemingly slept on and off during the journey which was slow and silent as the sun gently rose in the sky. When they came to a halt and were ushered from the car into a guardroom, it was clear that they would not be going back home again. Tea and toast were brought to them for breakfast, then much discussion of what was to happen to them next? The Charity staff were very kind, but finding accommodation for a family of seven including five children aged between 3-4yrs and 12-16yrs just before Christmas was no easy task. Being the only girl aged 7-8yrs, a family with just the one girl around the same age was where she was placed. Her mother made it clear that wherever the children were housed, the whole family was to be together at the Church closest to them on Christmas morning.

It was a strange experience, taking time to be alone on the morning of Christmas Eve she stepped outside into the courtyard garden and let her tears flow. Not knowing where her family were, she clung to the request her mother had made and did the only thing she could. She prayed The Lord's Prayer as taught at home, school and Church. The sunlight glistened through her tears and she felt a shadow pass over her giving a feeling of calm and strength.

Christmas morning and after her stocking and breakfast, she was taken to the Church where just in time before the service began the whole family were united. During the service a lady spoke who had heard of the evacuation and invited her family to join them for Christmas dinner, all seven of them, what generosity! Isn't that what Christmas does? In the midst of the worst situations and conditions it

can bring out the very best in people. The birth of a child far from home, exiled through danger to life, who changed the world through his life and teaching still has the power to touch and change our lives today. The child in each of us and in every child has the same choice and ability for sharing those gifts of kindness and hope. Jesus said, "Unless we have faith like that of a child we cannot enter the kingdom of God." May our actions this Christmas, however small, lead us all to peace and joy within and give hope through generosity of spirit for the New Year ahead.

With love to all,
God bless.

Craft Group



**Whatever your craft: knitting ~ crochet ~
tapestry ~ sewing ~ felting ~ embroidery**

Whatever your skill level: beginners to professional crafters – all welcome!

Please come along with your crafting project and join us!
Share ideas and knowledge, and have a chat and a laugh over a
cuppa with home-made cakes and biscuits...and hopefully
make some new friends and progress on your project too!

for info contact: thowes51@gmail.com

 Frampton Mansell Village Hall

 2nd Wednesday of the month

 10:00AM- 12:00PM



SERVICE AND COFFEE

We hold a said communion service, followed by
coffee on the first Tuesday of the month. The
next ones will be on ***Tuesdays 2 December and
6 January*** at Woodstock in Frampton Mansell. The service will
start at 11am with coffee and a natter at
11.30am. We would love to see you for
either or both. Want to know more?

**Need a lift? Phone Pepita or Paul on
760211**





Sapperton Church of England Primary School

I'm delighted to be the new Executive Headteacher of Sapperton Primary School, as well as being Headteacher of Powell's Primary School in Cirencester. It has been a pleasure to be in school and work closely with Mrs Crampton, head of school and all the staff.

It has been a wonderfully busy and inspiring start to the year, and I already feel incredibly privileged to be part of such a vibrant school and supportive community.

One of the many highlights so far has been welcoming families who are looking ahead to joining us in September 2026. Showing parents around our beautiful school—alongside our enthusiastic pupils—has been a real pleasure. Their excitement and curiosity remind me why Sapperton is such a special place to learn and grow.

We are also preparing for an exciting new chapter: the launch of our very own preschool, opening in January 2026. Setting this up has been a focus this term, and we are thrilled to be creating a nurturing early-years environment that will allow even more children to begin their education within our Sapperton family. Please do get in touch if you'd like more details.

Alongside this, the children have been busier than ever. The term started with a whole-school Arts and Values Week allowing every child to explore the themes that shape who we are as a community. Pupils have taken part in numerous sports competitions, embraced the outdoors at forest school, and enjoyed our very own Sapperton Literature Festival with a visit from the poet James Carter. We also had a memorable museum day led by the Wilson Gallery, who brought history and creativity to life in our classrooms.

Mrs Helen Cooper Executive Headteacher

Sapperton and Powell's C of E Primary Schools

www.sappertonschool.org admin@sapperton.gloucs.sch.uk
760325

To nurture faith; to inspire success

The Friends of Rodmarton School

Join us for an evening of festive fun with foliage!



WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP

7 PM - 9.30PM

RODMARTON VILLAGE HALL

TICKETS

£26

includes materials to create a festive wreath, soup, nibbles and a drink.

PAY BAR FOR ADDITIONAL DRINKS

PLEASE BRING:

secateurs/snips extra foliage
gloves and apron your favourite adornments

Book your space with Emily - 07974 910 458

Please be aware this event usually sells out quickly.

Carols & Christmas Crackers

Enjoy Hot Drinks, Festive Bakes & Mulled Wine at and in aid of

FRAMPTON MANSELL VILLAGE HALL
ALL WELCOME!

HALL OPEN 6PM - 8PM | FRIDAY 12TH DECEMBER

JOIN THE VILLAGE CHOIR FOR FESTIVE SONGS 6:30PM - 7:30PM

WWW.FRAMPTONMANSELL.UK INFO: 07866 447725

UPCOMING EVENTS 2025/26

FRAMPTON MANSELL VILLAGE HALL

CAROLS & CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

Hall Open: 6pm - 8pm
Serving Hot Drinks, Festive Bakes & Mulled Wine
Proceeds in aid of the Village Hall. Join the Village Choir for Festive Songs 6:30pm - 7:30pm
ALL WELCOME!

DEC 12TH

CAFE CLUB

Open 9am-12pm: Serving locally roasted coffee & a selection of teas with home-made bakes.
Eat in or take-away. Free high-speed internet.
Artists & Crafters. Meet old friends & new.
Everyone welcome!

JAN 20TH

FILM CLUB:

"DOWNTON ABBEY: THE GRAND FINALE"

Doors Open 7pm - Film 7:30pm
TICKETS: £4 on the door.
Refreshments available!

JAN 20TH

MORE INFO: WWW.FRAMPTONMANSELL.UK 07752 373 651

Join our school as a Governor!

Are you passionate about education and want to make a real difference in children's lives? We're looking for someone like you to join our school as a Primary School Governor!

What Does a Governor Do?

As a governor, you'll help guide the school's direction and ensure every child has the best possible education. You'll work with other governors and the headteacher to:

- Shape the school's vision and goals
- Support and challenge the headteacher to improve performance
- Ensure the school's finances are well-managed

What Are We Looking For?

You don't need to be an expert in education to be a great governor. We're looking for someone who:

- Cares about our school community and children's welfare
- Can work well in a team
- Is willing to learn and develop new skills

Can attend meetings and commit around 10-15 hours per term

What Are The Benefits For Me?

- Make a positive impact on the education of our children
- Learn new skills and gain valuable experience in leadership and governance
- Access training and support to help you in your role

CALL US TO FIND OUT MORE 01285 841284 clerk@rodmarton.gloucs.sch.uk

NEWS FROM RODMARTON, TARLTON, CULKERTON AND HAZLETON

RODMARTON, TARLTON, CULKERTON AND HAZLETON NEWS & EVENTS

Services are held every Sunday in Rodmarton or Tarlton, and please see the list at the front of the Watershed. Please note especially the following Advent and Christmas services, through to Candlemas.

14 December	11am	Christingle Holy Communion at Tarlton
21 December	11am	Carol service at Rodmarton
Christmas Eve	5.30pm	Carol service at Tarlton
Christmas Day	8am	BCP Holy Communion at Tarlton
	11am	Christmas Day Eucharist at Rodmarton
4 January 2026	11am	Feast of the Kings Holy Communion at Tarlton
1 February 2026	11am	Candlemas Holy Communion at Rodmarton

Advent Reflections - see the poster on p6.

Morning Office BCP – weekdays at 9.30am throughout Advent at St Peter's Church.

From A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, 1843, following the transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge from a "squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!" to "as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old city knew". "I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year". "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop, Hallo!"

Food Bank collection points are in St Peter's Rodmarton and St Osmund's Tarlton. Any donations are greatly appreciated. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR Saturday 6 December

Please let me know if you would like to be involved in any way with the running of the Christmas Bazaar, would like to donate a raffle prize, or if you would like a stall to sell your crafts. Also mulled wine, mince pies, crafts, a school stall, Christmas music. Enquiries: 07896 311882 janemarlowe1@gmail.com

RODMARTON & TARLTON CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Saturday 6 December, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

At Rodmarton Village Hall

All are welcome to enjoy this festive family event
in aid of the church.

Father Christmas will be there! Also mulled wine, mince pies, festive cakes and gift stalls, craft stalls, a school stall, children's workshop, grand raffle, Christmas music.

Please let me know if you would like to be involved in any way with the running of the Christmas Bazaar, or would like to donate a raffle prize, or have a stall to sell your own crafts.

Enquiries to Jane 01285 770401 or 07896 311 882



Rodmarton



Rascals



A new play group for little ones.

Babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers are all welcome!

Free play, stories and songs

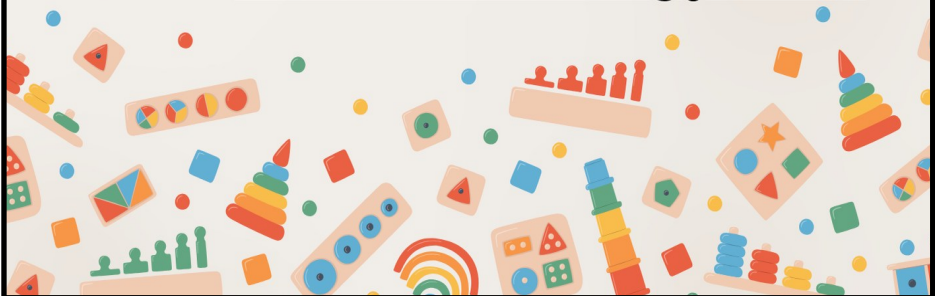
**£2.00 for a parent
and child
£1.00 for siblings
includes a drink
and snack**



**Tuesdays 9-10am
Term time only
Rodmarton Village Hall
GL7 6PE**

A chance to chat and drink a
hot cup of something?

contact : thefriendsofrodmarton@gmail.com





RODMARTON PRIMARY

UPDATE

It's been a busy and brilliant month at school, with a flurry of exciting activities keeping us all on our toes!

Firstly, a thank you to everyone who contributed to our Halloween non-uniform day and bake sale. We raised a fantastic £170 for the school!

Our rolling programme of career talks has continued to inspire pupils across the school. We've been privileged to welcome a host of fascinating speakers from our parent population; following huge interest in a talk from a software engineer working in music technology, and an orthopaedic surgeon, we were most recently visited by a parent working for a malaria charity. Their moving account of improving healthcare access in Africa and Asia left us all buzzing with admiration.

The darker evenings and wetter weather have not deterred our participation in sport this month, with a group of Year 3s taking up their foils for an introduction to fencing, held at Kingshill Secondary School. Sports Hall Athletics, Dodgeball and Table Cricket all featured in extra-curricular sporting activities.

Year 5 had a blast at Westonbirt's annual 'Earth and Space Day', joining forces with other local schools to explore the wonders of the universe. From hands-on experiments to starry-eyed science sessions, it was truly out of this world!

As we rocket towards December, the school remains a hive of learning and activity, with festive preparations adding a joyful sparkle to our days.

The whole school is quiver-ing with excitement, at the prospect of going to this year's panto to see Robin Hood. We're all set for a dazzling display of drama, laughter, and a few well-aimed punchlines!

Acorn and Sapling Classes are rehearsing their Nativity play with star-quality dedication - we can't wait to see their shining performances. Meanwhile, Oak Class will be raising their voices in harmony at our Carol Service in the Village Church.

For those feeling crafty, our Wreath Making evening on 3 is the perfect chance to get creative and support the school.

Wishing everyone a joyful and jolly lead-up to the holidays!

GARDENING TIPS FOR DECEMBER AND JANUARY

This autumn's colours have been delightful, with many weeks of display. Variations of gold have been the dominant hue, ranging from almost a lemon yellow through 'old gold' Oak trees, to vibrant yellow, changing to rich burnt orange of Beech trees, complemented by a scatter of deep burgundy shrubs. Some trees and shrubs have multi colour combinations due to the four heatwaves experienced this last year, lots of sun, high temperatures and the shock of drought.

Most established trees and shrubs have fared very well; deep roots unaffected by less rainfall, resulted in liberal branch growth. Our Judas Tree severely damaged and split apart during a storm last winter, now has a multitude of new two-meter lengths. Even shrubs in pots, left desiccated and looking quite dead have revived, showing positive signs of life with new leaf buds. Give dead looking plants and shrubs a chance to grow back.

For keen gardeners there is an event to look forward to next summer, the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) are holding a major show at Badminton, 8th to 12th July 2026.

Looking further into the future, during 2027 the National Garden Scheme will be celebrating a centenary year. In Gloucestershire there are a few gardens which opened in 1927 still open, raising funds for health charities. The NGS welcomes new gardens, not necessarily large, but with about 45 minutes of interest, for a gentle walk around and possibly tea with cake to follow.

This winter, my usual tips are to enjoy the cold weather inside with a good gardening book, tidy up your greenhouse and garden shed, check tools for some basic maintenance. Also, this is much best time of year to plant new trees and shrubs, including roses, prepare the ground. Staking might be advisable for taller specimens, especially if winter storms are forecast. During cold frost-free days, pruning apple and pear fruit trees is ideal, mostly this only needs a light touch of removing inward crossing branches, allowing easy access for picking and better air circulation.

Considering the beautiful autumn colours, I walked around a local garden centre with notebook in hand to see which might be on a wish list for good colour and winter interest. The first plant to catch attention was a *Pinus mugo* 'Carsten's Wintergold', with golden tips to growing points from October to April. This form is a slow growing, hugging the ground rather than being a tree, there are many named forms of this mountain pine tree, *Pinus mugo*, all slow growing of different shapes

OATES NOTES FROM CULKERTON (cont)

and heights, Another evergreen with golden highlights is *Taxus* 'Standishii', an upright yew, also slow growing, about 150cm tall in 10 years forming a neat column.

Mahonias produce beautiful, usually fragrant sprays of small yellow flowers during the winter months, 'Winter Sun' is a shorter at 120cm. *Euonymus fortunei* 'Emerald and Gold', has variegated foliage which turns pink and burgundy over winter, forming a leafy mound 40cm high.

Another to consider is a more exotic looking *Sophora microphylla* 'Sun King', with fern like foliage, producing clusters of yellow bell-shaped flowers in late winter, although hardy, this shrub appreciates a sheltered position in sun.

With all best seasonal wishes

Sally Oates

LOOKING FORWARD TO WINTER

Yes, I foolishly set myself the task of writing a piece under this title, having struggled with our darker months for well over half a cognizant century. Maybe I love spring and summer too much.

But winter paves the way to spring and once spring is sprung we quickly forget whatever it was that winter served up, especially the mild, soggy ones that characterise this modern era. Sooner rather than later, we will have to banish our fantasy about Christmas being a time of snow and frost, with ice fairs on the frozen Thames – and accept the reality of mud, puddle, vehicle splash and headlight glare. Snow scene Christmas cards are, sadly, becoming a trifle absurd.

Winter is a progression, a journey into spring, back into lightfulness. There are events that illuminate that journey, markers along the way. Christmas and New Year are obvious steps in that progression.

I look out diligently for the arrival of the Fieldfares, and track their flock movements through the winter. We live in high-grade Fieldfare terrain. This winter, there is a veritable surfeit of berries for them and their cousins, the Redwings. These birds arrived here late this autumn, delayed by – you've guessed it – mild weather.

Given the abundance of nuts, seeds and berries, this could be a tremendous winter for a whole bevy of winter visiting birds, hopefully including Hawfinches and Waxwings. Watch out too for unusually large (by modern standards) flocks of Wood Pigeons, especially around beech and oak woods. Time was when pigeon flocks

OATES NOTES FROM CULKERTON (cont)

blackened many a rural winter sky.

Another joyous sign of winter's approach is stepping on the first Woodcock of the season, off path, deep in the woods. This year, I flushed my first out on Armistice Day, under gloomy skies, whilst looking at the ending of a superb display of autumnal woodland fungi. Off it shot, zig-zagging through the hazel wands. "Welcome, Brother Woodcock!" I whispered, though of course it might well have been a female. Around here, Woodcock are winter migrants from continental Europe.

Best of all, is the coming of the hazel catkins, which transform whole landscapes with a mustard haze. The autumn gales exposed a massive crop of catkins, presumably stimulated by the hot summer. Some seem poised to flower ridiculously early, but poised they certainly are.

Best of all are the signs of advancing spring that star-stud the winter days: the first Great Tit calling, the first Snowdrop, and so on; and winter offers by far the best sunsets. As ever, the light shines in the darkness...

Matthew Oates

ADVERTISING IN THE WATERSHED

If you wish to advertise in our parish magazine please e-mail Watershed magazine at

watershedmag@gmail.com. Advert a third of a page cost £15 for a single issue or £60 for 6 months. Adverts half a page cost £23 for a single issue or £90 for 6 months. The magazine is published 10 times every year; July/August and December/January are joint editions.

Copy for next month's magazine to be with me by the 12th of the preceding month.



GET YOUR WATERSHED BY EMAIL

If you would like to receive a copy of the parish magazine by email I am very happy to add you to my list of those who do. This may not replace your delivered copy but you would get it earlier and with some colour! Just let me know by email at watershedmag@gmail.com

KEMBLE DISTRICT RBL WOMEN'S SECTION

The ladies of the Women's Section will join the men for the annual Christmas Dinner at The Thames Head on Friday 5 December. A festive raffle will be held which brings in some working funds for the branch.

It is hoped that the women can join forces with the men and organise an afternoon talk with tea sometime in February / March following the one held this year which was very successful and well supported.

Pat Ayres Secretary



KEMBLE BELLRINGERS

The team will be getting together for its Festive evening meal on Monday 1 December at The Thames Head. It would be great if the team could recruit some more members. Rick, our team captain, is very keen and supportive. Bellringing is good gentle exercise.

Come along any Monday evening from 7pm except the above date to Kemble Church Belfry and meet us and perhaps have a go! Or contact Rick for a chat on rick@applegates.uk

Pat Ayres

RBL - KEMBLE AND DISTRICT BRANCH DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 5 December – Christmas Meal – Thames Head Inn



This popular annual event has been arranged for the above date and members will be receiving more information about this event nearer the date.

If you would like more information, please contact me for details or check out the British Legion website:

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/things-to-do/membership/become-a-member>

Ian Czapiewski – Branch Secretary – 07711 015168

GET BOWLED OVER - SHORT MAT BOWLS IN CRUDWELL VILLAGE HALL

Now we are in Autumn/Winter season and gentle exercise outside might not be so inviting, how about having friendly company whilst building up the skills for a new active hobby? You don't have to commit to becoming a 'match player' just be part of a 'team player' for fun and exercise.

Want to know more please contact Anita anitahill.smith@gmail.com

PREPARING FOR WINTER

As winter approaches, nature rests and renews - and we too must prepare for seasonal challenges like flooding. From Purton to Poulton to Parliament, I'm working to strengthen local flood protection.

Earlier this month, I convened a Flooding Summit in Cirencester, bringing together councillors, parish leaders, and community groups to share knowledge and practical plans. The message was clear: local expertise and collaboration are key.

The Cotswold Volunteer Flood Warden Scheme - run by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and Cotswold District Council - shows this spirit in action. Flood Wardens help monitor waterways, share information, and keep communities safe.

Find out more at www.cotswold.gov.uk/floodwardens or contact rachels@grcc.org.uk. Even small actions - checking on neighbours or reporting blocked drains - can make a big difference.

Winter brings shorter days, but also an opportunity for community warmth, kindness, and care for our shared landscape.

Warm wishes,

Roz

MP, South Cotswolds

*Constituency Office Watermoor Point Watermoor Road Cirencester
GL7 1LF. Tel: 01285 300555 Email: roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk*

KEMBLE AND EWEN WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

On Thursday 18 December current members will gather for their Christmas Lunch at The Wheatsheaf in Crudwell. During the lunch we shall raise a glass or two to remember past members. Sadly, we have just lost Pam Stayte of Kemble who was a loyal member for many years. It is thanks to Pam and members like her that our WI has survived as she was dedicated and dependable. Always willing to help with refreshments the 'tea towel' was no stranger to her!



We look forward to another busy year in 2026 with speakers covering a wide range of topics and subjects to suit all tastes. The programme will be available by request to anyone who may like to come along for a taster! We are a happy and welcoming bunch of ladies. The January meeting will be held in The Tavern function room on Thursday 15 January at 3pm.

If you would like information about our friendly group contact the secretary details below.

Pat Ayres - Secretary 01285 770385

POPPY APPEAL 2025

Volunteers are the bedrock of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal! Kemble & District overseen by Poppy Appeal Organiser, Dr Rachel Roffe, includes Coates, Rodmarton and Tarlton and we have many longstanding and committed volunteers - Shelagh, John, Jackie in Coates, and Simon, Jane and Wendy in Rodmarton and Tarlton. As in other districts, we run door-to-door collections and our churches, also make a kind donation each year to the appeal.

Since taking over in 2023, I have expanded and grown the appeal by over 20% to £8.5k last year. I can confirm that we are on track for similar figure this year.

With the support of our villages and volunteers, the appeal goes from strength to strength.

Thank you to everyone, for all you do.

Dr Rachel Roffe



THAMESHEAD LADIES CONNECTION

Save the Date ... Tuesday 24 February 2026.

We are delighted that Annie Campbell will be joining us to talk about her work with the Grace Network.



WATERSHED ADVERTISING

Would you be interested in increasing the magazine's income from advertising? The income we receive from this is critical to our funding. We need someone to take on the issuing of invoicing and receipting advertisers but more importantly expanding the number of advertisers in the magazine. If you feel you can help please get in touch with me using the magazine's email address

watershedmag@gmail.com. I can give you more information about what is involved. This a voluntary role which should not take very much time.

CLOSING DATE FOR THE MAGAZINE

Contributions should be sent by e-mail to the Watershed magazine at watershedmag@gmail.com. The editor reserves the right to edit any articles. **Articles should be submitted by the 12th of the preceding month for inclusion in the next month's issue.**

LEE ABBEY VISIT

“On the spectacular North Devon coast in Exmoor National Park, Lee Abbey Devon is home to a Christian Community. A stay at Lee Abbey Devon is more than a Christian retreat or holiday; it is an opportunity to encounter Jesus through worship, teaching, ministry and Community which we pray will transform your life, relationships, community, environment and world” (from the Lee Abbey website.)

As a Benefice we have enjoyed several visits to Lee Abbey. We hope to return in June 2026 (26 – 28th). If you would like to join us, please can you let us know ASAP so that we can book our places - we can get a discount for group bookings.

For more information, please contact Liz or George Collins.

RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE AND HELP LONGFIELD HOSPICE – BOOKING OPEN NOW

Now is the chance to sign up to dispose of your Christmas Tree in the most eco-friendly way possible and raise money for Longfield Community Hospice.

In return for a voluntary donation, Longfield Hospice’s team of volunteers will collect your trees from your home at the end of the festive season and take them to be chipped to be reused locally, making this the most eco-friendly way to dispose of your tree.

Hoping to collect and recycle more trees than ever this year, Longfield in partnership with Just Helping, is aiming to raise more than £85,000, which could help fund over 1,000 hours of Hospice at Home care, or support free wellbeing, bereavement and counselling services for those in Gloucestershire. This is a huge operation for Longfield and last year an army of 180 volunteers collected more than 4000 trees over four days from households throughout Gloucestershire.

The scheme is endorsed by Stroud District Council and Gloucester City Council (working with Ubico) is also supporting the scheme.

To arrange collection of your tree, simply visit www.just-helping.org.uk/register-tree and enter your postcode, where you can make a voluntary donation to your local community hospice. Bookings can be made from 14 November until 6 January 2025

After costs, money raised helps to fund the hospice’s vital work supporting patients, families and carers across Gloucestershire.

The fundraising team are also looking for volunteers, vans to collect Christmas trees and tree chippers from Saturday 10 to Tuesday 13 January 2025. To volunteer either with your time or if you have a van or chipper, then please contact the team on 01483 886868 or email christmas.trees@longfield.org.uk



MERRY
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& Happy New Year
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and to place your order: 1emilyhudson1@gmail.com

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USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Watershed Editor	Bob Merrill	07866 972389
Watershed Treasurer	Janet Loines	841578

COATES

Coates Parish Council Chair	Robbie Whitfield	07872 027100
Coates Parish Council Clerk	Alan Moorcroft	641375
Coates Village Club secretary	Tara Davidson	07948 966957
Coates Tree Warden	Simon Large	07714 220558
Coates Village Hall	Bookings	07818 192587
Coates Neighbourhood Watch	John Dobson	07808 095553
Coates Snow Warden	Peter Tugwell	770314/07860 718209

FRAMPTON MANSELL

Frampton Mansell Village Hall	Bookings	07710 878987
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RODMARTON

Rodmarton & Tarlton PC Chair	Paul Drake	rpcchair@outlook.com
Rodmarton & Tarlton PC Clerk	Roz Morton	clerk@rodmartonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Rodmarton School	Matthew Smith	841284
Rodmarton Village Hall	Jasper Biddulph	770230

SAPPERTON

Parish Council Chair	Sarah Osborn Smith	07836 512538
Sapperton and FM PC Clerk	Barbara (Babs) Maloney	07958 116 794
Sapperton Snow Warden	Mark Franklin	760226
Sapperton Village Hall	Bookings	07771 006848
Sapperton School Head	Helen Cooper	760325

OTHERS

Watershed RDA	Kathy Mottershead	07979 853907
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COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Ermin Ward	Julia Judd	07853 383874
	julia.judd@cotswold.gov.uk	
Kemble Ward	Mike McKeown	07785 362573
	mike.mckeown@cotswold.gov.uk	
GCC Councillor	Ian Watson	07830 867356
Member of Parliament	Roz Savage MBE	01285 300555
Cirencester Hospital		0300 421 6200
Police non emergency (24hrs)		101

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER

Tuesday 2	11am	Frampton Mansell Service & Coffee
Wednesday 3	7pm	Wreath Making Rodmarton Village Hall
Friday 5		RBL Christmas meal
Saturday 6	2.30pm	Rodmarton Christmas Bazaar in the village hall
Wednesday 10	10am	Frampton Mansell Craft Group
Thursday 11	7pm	Coates Cinema Night <i>The Roses</i>
Friday 12	6pm	Carols and Christmas Crackers Frampton Mansell Village Hall
Tuesday 16	10.30am	Coffee, Cake and Chat Coates Village Hall
Thursday 18	3pm	Kemble & Ewen WI Christmas Lunch
Wednesday 31	8pm	New Year's Eve Disco at the Club Coates

JANUARY

Tuesday 6	11am	Frampton Mansell Service & Coffee
Thursday 8	7pm	Coates Cinema Bridget <i>Jones All about the Boy</i>
Saturday 17	6.30pm	Table Tennis Tournament Coates Village Hall
Tuesday 20	9am	Café Club Frampton Mansell Village Hall
Saturday 24	7pm	Kevin's Chilli Night Coates Village Hall