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February 2026



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**Link** Magazine exists to be of service to the communities of Oakley, Deane, Newfound, Malshanger and Wootton St Lawrence. The sentiments expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editorial team. The editors take no responsibility for the accuracy of the contents of submissions.

With the exception of trade ads all other items for publication may be made free of charge. Please submit articles by the date given below for publication the month following. The **Link** editors reserve the right to decline or edit any contributions.

**Link** web-site [oakleylink.org.uk](http://oakleylink.org.uk)

Please e-mail copy to: [editor@oakleylink.org.uk](mailto:editor@oakleylink.org.uk)  
or post to 8 Caithness Close, Oakley, RG23 7NG

**Deadline for February 2026 issue: 15 January**

### Editorial

Link sends its condolences to the Oakley family and to everyone involved in the aftermath of the terrible accident on Oakley Lane on the evening of 14 January.

*Chris Wassell*

### Advertorial

2026 is the year of Phillips Law's 40th anniversary of being in business. We have been helping businesses, families and individuals in Hampshire and the surrounding area with their legal needs for four decades. Founded in 1986, the firm has grown into a well-established regional legal partner to many of the area's leading employers and businesses. Today, we are recognised for our client-centred approach and long-standing commitment to strengthening the local community. As part of its anniversary, Phillips Law will be launching a series of community-focused initiatives throughout 2026.

*Zoe McLaren*      Website: [www.phillips-law.co.uk](http://www.phillips-law.co.uk)

*Thank you, Julie Thompson, of Jubiloaks, for our lovely front cover photo*

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## Oakley Community Care

**Supporting your needs for transport to medical appointments**

We offer transport by car to anyone in need, mainly for visits to doctors, hospital appointments and prescription collection. Wheel chair users must be able to transfer to the car unaided.

Oakley Community Care is made up of friendly volunteers who are unpaid, however a donation by the passenger to cover fuel and other costs is appreciated.

*New volunteer drivers always welcome*

**Please give us a call, we may be able to make life easier for you.**

**07376 574412**

Oakley Community Care is a Registered Charity (No. 1141330)

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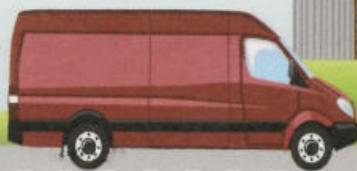
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## Oakley & Deane Parish Council

The Parish Council is currently reviewing the condition of benches and seats throughout the village to ensure they remain clean, safe, and well maintained for everyone to enjoy.

We are reaching out to relatives and friends connected to memorial benches within the parish. If you or someone you know has a family link to a bench with a memorial plaque, we would love to hear from you.

Your input will help us ensure these special places are cared for with the respect they deserve.

Please contact the Assistant Clerk on:  
[assistantclerk@oakleydeane-pc.gov.uk](mailto:assistantclerk@oakleydeane-pc.gov.uk) or 07951 415229



### Report from the Parish Council

We are pleased to report that the budget for the new financial year has now been agreed. Careful financial planning and a continued focus on value for

money mean that our parish precept will decrease to just 4% this year. This reduction reflects our commitment to managing costs responsibly while still delivering important improvements for residents.

A number of key projects are planned for the year ahead. Work will begin on the provision of public cricket nets, creating a valuable new recreational facility for local residents and clubs. Further details

will be shared as the project develops. At Beach Park, work is expected to begin soon on a new enclosed dog training field, providing a safe and secure space for dog owners and their pets.

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place in April, with the exact date to be confirmed shortly. This meeting provides an important opportunity for residents to hear updates, ask questions, and share their views.

We are in the process of checking benches across the village, with repairs and cleaning carried out where needed to ensure they remain safe and welcoming. In addition, older open waste bins will be upgraded to newer closed-lid bins to improve cleanliness and reduce litter-related issues.

*(Continued on page 7)*

Parish Council  
Coffee & Chat

Newfound Sports Pavilion

Every Thursday  
10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Enjoy refreshments with fellow community members and take the opportunity to talk with your parish council.

OAKLEY & DEANE PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS CHAT – COME SAY HELLO!

Tuesday 3 February

1 pm – 2 pm

Jolly Olly's

We want to hear from YOU! Whether its ideas, suggestions, concerns, or questions — come along and have a friendly chat with your Parish Councillors.

Talk to us about what matters to you:

- ✓ Local improvements
- ✓ Community events
- ✓ Village issues
- ✓ Your ideas for Oakley & Deane



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### Pie Night Mondays

Available from 5pm

Every Monday join us for any of our delicious pies for just £11.



### Lunch with us

Beat the January blues with our midweek lunch deal. Enjoy a selection of sandwiches, wraps and classics paired with a drink for just £12.



### Functions

Our function area is the perfect spot for gathering family and friends all year round. Whether you're hosting a family get together or a big birthday, we've got a great space. Speak to a member of the team to find out more.



Barley Mow | Oakley Lane | Basingstoke | RG23 7JZ | 01256 636 635

Follow us on social to see more of what we've got planned this season. @BarleyMowOakley

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# Village



In the next few months, the Parish Council Community Survey will be launched. This new annual survey will help us better to understand community priorities and guide our work in the years ahead. Over time, the results will support the development of 3 to 5 year plans. While the survey will be available digitally, a printable one-page version will also be provided in The Link, allowing residents to return completed surveys directly to the Parish Council.

We look forward to keeping residents informed as these projects progress and thank you for your

continued support.

*Kelly Green -  
Assistant Clerk*

## COFFEE & CHAT MORNINGS

Every Wednesday

10 am – 12 noon

at

East Oakley Village Hall, the  
Green Hut, Hill Road

Coffee or Tea (incl refills) plus  
cake or biscuits £1

All Welcome

## Pause For Thought



Last month (January) is often seen as a time for new beginnings. The New Year starts and resolutions are made. For those in the church, the New Year is also a chance to stop for a second or two and to try to recover from the events of Christmas!

According to the shops we are definitely done with Christmas and are now getting ready for Valentine's Day and Easter. We will soon be in Lent, which is a season of waiting and preparing for the exciting and happy time of Easter. I've always thought that Lent was a rather sober sad time of the year. A time of waiting, and waiting, and waiting for something better to happen. Life often seems as though it's full of waits - like waiting for a bus, or a train, or for the post. It seems that we can be waiting forever. Especially if you miss a once an hour bus out of Oakley!

Lent is another one of those 'waiting times'. It can often appear that we go through this long, somber, and melancholy journey while waiting for the new beginnings of Easter. I'll admit, I have on occasion

thought that Lent seems to be a time of standing still. We aren't filled with excitement while we wait, as we might be at Christmas and Advent. But it's not a time to stand still.

I'm sure you all know that, during Lent, we are encouraged to give something up. But we could also take something on... If, like me, you have failed your New Year's resolutions, why not take this chance to do something new. We can use this opportunity of waiting to have a new beginning on something. As we wait for the excitement of Easter we can start afresh. Take up something new. And get ready for the good news and excitement that is Easter.

*Alfie Wells, Ministry Intern, Oakley with Wootton*

## Church News

### Oakley Methodist Church

All welcome at the Methodist Church coffee morning on Tuesday 10 February and 24 February from 10:30 am to 12 noon. £1.50 for a bottomless cup of tea or coffee and biscuits. Come and meet old friends and new. The charity for the year is Dementia UK. We look forward to welcoming the Woodland Well-being Walkers at the end of their walk.

*Patricia Kinchington*

### Oakley

### Methodist Church

Services at 10:30 am

February 1	Anna Chaplains - talk about their work
February 8	Rev Jenny Dowding Communion
February 15	Peter Frank
February 22	John Dawson

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[www.bhbcircuit.org.uk/churches/oakley.html](http://www.bhbcircuit.org.uk/churches/oakley.html)

# Bygone Oakley



## 60 Years Ago – from Link February 1966

Much of Link magazine was taken up with Church news. It contained a request for sopranos, contraltos, tenors and basses who would be prepared to join the Church choir, to augment their numbers, as they were planning a recital of Stainer's *Crucifixion* during Holy Week. A group of hand-bell ringers, who rang carols in a variety of homes before Christmas, were congratulated. They had raised £11 towards providing heating in the church belfry. St John's Sunday School had produced a Nativity Play of a very high standard. A Diocesan Pilgrimage to Canterbury was being planned for May, transport by train from Basingstoke station!

Elsewhere in the magazine, (which was priced at sixpence - *old money*) there was a report from Oakley and Deane Women's Institute (only one WI in the village at this time). The Parish Council had agreed to pay half the cost of fixing the village seat, collected for by the Institute to commemorate Jubilee Year. (Only one village seat? Was this a reference to O&D WI up-coming Golden Jubilee in 1968?) They were given a talk about a holiday in Sicily, which helped them forget the snow outside, and they held a competition for *the best hat from the kitchen!* Next month's competition would be for *the best edible necklace.*

## 50 Years Ago – from Link February 1976

This edition included the first part of an article by Commander Kirby, of Oakley, on Oakley in the 1840s. The parish of Oakley then covered 3300 acres (just over five square miles) and contained 1 mansion (Malshanger), 23 houses, 46 cottages and 23 tenements. Nothing about the distinction between them. So less than 200 households, although there may have been more than one household in some dwellings. The village was built on three roads radiating from the pond: Rectory Road, Oakley Lane and Hill Road.

It was reported that the collection made by the Parish Council during carols round the Christmas tree at the pond would be used to provide a seat on Hill Road. Previously the funds had been used to provide free chimney sweeping for pensioners.

A New Year's knockout football competition at Kennet Way Playing Field had been organized by Oakley Scouts to also raise funds for a seat for senior citizens on Hill Road. Four teams took part with the Bitter Brigade and the Barley Mow teams being eliminated in the semi-finals. The Scout Group won the final against the Croftfields Rabble, £25.40 had been raised and it was decided to make this an annual event.

## Feature



### News From Jolly Olly's Coffee Shop

Happy February! We are looking forward to seeing a few bulbs appearing in the garden planters outside and providing a warm welcome to you all inside, this month!



### Teenage Cancer Trust

So far, customers and the Jolly Olly's Team have raised a total of £519.08 for Teenage Cancer Trust (with a collecting jar still to be counted). We are hoping to get close to £600 as our final total. Thank you so much to everyone who has donated in any way. Special thanks to the Jolly Knitters, Bob Porter, David Trangmar and Verna Kinda who all went the extra mile to help us reach this fantastic total.

We continue to wish the Rawlings Family, all the very best and luck with reaching their target total.

### Councillor Chat

Representatives from the Parish Council will be joining us on Tuesday 3 February between 1 and 2

pm. If you have any issues that you would like to discuss with them they will be hear to listen and talk.

### Half Term Fun and Games!

Join us on Wednesday 11 February between 2:30 and 4 pm for our Board Games Bonanza! Why not put the phones away and join us for some good old fashioned family fun.

We'll provide a variety of games and jigsaws and will have plenty of drinks and cakes on offer too. Booking is essential, but is free for customers who purchase at least one drink per person as you play!

### Monday Opening - Reminder

We are now open on Mondays. We look forward to welcoming you.

Jo

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# Health Matters

## Watership Down Health

### Flu & Covid Update

**A**s flu viruses continue to circulate, please consider a vaccine if you have not already had one. You are still eligible for a vaccine if you are either over 65, or under 65 with an underlying health condition. You can also call 119 which can provide you with details of vaccine availability at your community pharmacy.

### New Self-Check-In Screens

New check-in screens are currently being installed in Kingsclere, Oakley and Overton which should be operational by mid-February 2026. There will be times when the screens may not yet be fully set up, so please check in with the reception team and accept our apologies for any inconvenience whilst we get our systems functioning.

It is really important that the practice has your updated contact details to keep you informed about anything affecting your health and well-being, so any necessary changes to your information can be made through the practice website using the form available at: [watershipdownhealth.com/services/changing-your-contact-details/](http://watershipdownhealth.com/services/changing-your-contact-details/)

### Walk-In Help for Appointments

We continue to upgrade our online triage system for all incoming requests but are very aware that it doesn't suit those who have no access to our online services. If that is the case for you, you are welcome to visit the reception at your surgery and a triage submission will be made for you by one of the reception team - they are happy to help!

### Notifications via the NHS App

As more services are being made available to patients via the NHS App, it is important that patients switch on the notifications setting so you can be kept up to date with managing your health and well-being. In the NHS App (iOS & Android) open the NHS App. Tap the Account icon (person icon) in the top right-hand corner or 'More' and then 'Account and Settings'. Select Notifications (or 'Manage notifications'). Tap 'Go to Device' settings.

For iPhone: Go to Settings > Notifications > NHS App and ensure 'Allow Notifications' is switched on.

For Android: Go to Settings > Notifications > App settings (or similar) > NHS App and ensure notifications are allowed.

Should you need any further assistance, both the reception team can help or can put you in touch with the PPG who can provide further support.

*Heather Bronks*



ANNIE'S Oakley Charity Shop

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## Coeliac UK North Hampshire Group

### Want Some Help With Your Gluten Free Diet

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### Next meet-up

Next meeting Saturday 21 February 10:30 am to 12 noon at Waitrose Café, Basing View

### Contacts:

To contact the Local North Hants Group, please email [northhampshire@coeliac.org.uk](mailto:northhampshire@coeliac.org.uk)

Join our Facebook page Coeliac UK North Hampshire Local Group, or see our events on the North Hampshire Coeliac UK website page [coeliac.org.uk/local-groups/north-hampshire](http://coeliac.org.uk/local-groups/north-hampshire)

*Dave West*

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# Feature



## Hampshire County Council Councillor Report - Candovers Oakley and Overton Division County Councillor Grants

The County Councillor Grant scheme is operating once more, with a lesser amount of £5,000 and new criteria as follows. I have already had a number of applications, but some funding remains.

### Hampshire County Councillor Grants – Updated Criteria

Following a comprehensive review, Hampshire County Council has revised its County Councillor Grants Scheme to reflect budget constraints and improve effectiveness. Key changes include:

| Reduced Allocation: Each County Councillor now has an annual grant budget of £5,000, down from £8,000.

#### | Eligibility Restrictions:

- o Grants are only available to organisations, not individuals.

- o Organisations cannot apply for the same project in consecutive years.

- o Applications must demonstrate community benefit, especially if from religious or statutory bodies.

#### | Funding Limits:

- o A maximum of £1,000 per project is now in place.

- o Grants for seasonal or time-specific events must be awarded before the event date.

#### | Transparency and Branding:

- o All funded projects must acknowledge County Council support in promotional materials.

#### | Application Assessment:

- o Previous grant awards (from the last two years) will be considered during evaluation.

- o Preference may be given to organisations without access to other funding sources.

These changes aim to ensure the scheme remains fair, transparent, and aligned with the Council's strategic priorities while managing financial pressures.

### Securing a Greener, Healthier Hampshire

Last week we launched Hampshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy — a shared blueprint for restoring and protecting the natural environment that makes our county such a special place to live.

Like the rest of the UK, Hampshire has seen a significant decline in biodiversity over the past 50 years. This strategy brings together the expertise of partners across the region and sets out practical steps to reverse that decline and ensure that at least 30% of our land and sea is secured for nature by 2030. I'm incredibly grateful to all the organisations, landowners, community groups and residents who

helped shape this plan. It reflects the views and ambitions of people right across Hampshire.



As part of our Hampshire Pledge, we're committed to looking after and enhancing our rich natural environment — and making sure our countryside remains open and accessible for everyone to enjoy. But this is something we can only achieve together. Making nature-friendly choices at home. Getting involved in local conservation. Simply spending time outdoors and valuing the landscapes around us. Every action, big or small, helps build a greener Hampshire.

This strategy will guide land-use decisions, support planning, and encourage investment in nature-based solutions to challenges like climate change and flooding. Most importantly, it gives us a clear, shared path to restoring habitats, reversing wildlife decline, and protecting Hampshire's natural heritage for future generations. If you'd like to read the full strategy, you can find it here: [hants.gov.uk/nature/hampshire-strategy](https://hants.gov.uk/nature/hampshire-strategy)

Together, we can make Hampshire a place where nature thrives and people thrive with it.

### Reporting Highway Problems

Links to report road issues are here:

Potholes: [hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes](https://hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes)

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When reporting an issue, you'll be sent an email confirming a reference number for the report. If you would like me to follow this up for you then do please forward that message to me and I will chase for you.

### Election Postponements message from HCC Leader Cllr Nick Adams-King

Two successive reports of election postponements in the last month.

"You may have seen reports suggesting that next year's Mayoral elections will be postponed for two years, until 2028. It is massively disappointing. It's



important to note that this does not affect the County Council and other local elections which will still go ahead on May 7, 2026. It is important to separate two distinct issues here. While the election of a Mayor may be delayed, the creation of the Combined Authority — and the transfer of powers and funding from Westminster that comes with it — remains vital. Hampshire County Council Leader, Nick Adams-King, has been reassured that this process will continue as planned, and that the delay to the Mayoral election will not affect the establishment of the Combined Authority, the commencement of devolution, of Hampshire's ability to begin exercising those powers for the benefit of Hampshire and the Solent.

### From Cllr Nick Adams-King

"Of course, it is disappointing that the Mayoral election has been postponed — not least for those candidates who have already declared. But the real prize here is devolution, and that must be delivered next year. I therefore await confirmation in the coming days of both the statutory instrument to create the Combined Authority and the announcement of the infrastructure funding that will underpin it."

"Where the delay to the Mayoral election intersects with the creation of the Combined Authority is in our ability to influence national policy. The Mayor would normally sit on the Council of Nations and Regions. Given the size and importance of Hampshire and the Solent, it is vital that whoever chairs the Authority should take that seat until such

time as a Mayor is elected."

"Our economy contributes as much to the UK as Wales, and our population is comparable to Northern Ireland. We deserve — and must have — that influence and voice at the national level as soon as possible. While it is deeply regrettable that this role will not initially be exercised by a directly elected Mayor, the council leaders who will form the Combined Authority board are equally capable of representing our area until the election is held.

"And then, the Government suggested Councils should consider whether the local elections scheduled for May should proceed, given Labour's plans for Local Government Reorganisation. I'm sure you are by now as bored of this merry go round as I am. For clarity, my statement in response to today's announcement is this:

"I have been clear that County elections are vital for local democracy and accountability. They ensure strong local representation for our 1.4 million residents across Hampshire in how we use over £3 billion of public funds to serve our local communities each year. The Government have set the timeline for Local Government Reorganisation, it is they who need to decide whether their plans can be delivered to that schedule. I have not, and will not, ask for an election postponement. We are working towards our elections taking place, as planned, in Hampshire on 7 May 2026."

*Juliet Henderson*

## Citizens Advice Basingstoke

### Are you worried about someone's gambling?

Dealing with someone's gambling problem can be very stressful. Their behaviour can affect your wellbeing - it's normal to feel anxious, angry or hurt and you can get support from the charity GamCare [gamcare.org.uk](http://gamcare.org.uk)

If you're a woman affected by someone else's gambling, you can get support through GamCare's 'Way Forward' support group for women: [gamcare.org.uk/news-and-blog/blog/way-forward/](http://gamcare.org.uk/news-and-blog/blog/way-forward/)

It can be difficult to talk to the person about their gambling problem. You might want to tell them how their behaviour is affecting you and ask them how big the problem is. You can also let them know they can get help. You can find out how to talk to someone about their gambling on the GambleAware website: [gambleaware.org/advice/for-family-and-friends/helping-someone-who-gambles/](http://gambleaware.org/advice/for-family-and-friends/helping-someone-who-gambles/)

If the person who gambles makes you feel anxious or threatened, it might be domestic abuse and you can get help. You can find out more about domestic abuse here: [citizensadvice.org.uk/family/gender-violence/domestic-violence-and-abuse/](http://citizensadvice.org.uk/family/gender-violence/domestic-violence-and-abuse/)

You can get support to help someone with their gambling problem, including advice on how to limit how much they gamble, deal with debt and get mental health support here: [citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/gambling-problems/get-help-with-gambling-problems/](http://citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/gambling-problems/get-help-with-gambling-problems/)

For more information and to check if you're responsible for debt or to get help to pay for living costs if you don't have enough money to live on, please go to: [citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/gambling-problems/if-youre-worried-about-someones-gambling/](http://citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/gambling-problems/if-youre-worried-about-someones-gambling/)

Citizens Advice Basingstoke is an independent local charity providing free, confidential and impartial advice for local people, whatever their enquiry involves. Anyone wishing to speak to an adviser should call the free Advice Line on 0808 2787829. For details of the weekly drop-in advice sessions across Basingstoke or if you would like to send in your enquiry online please go to: [cabasingstoke.org.uk](http://cabasingstoke.org.uk)

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# Young Oakley



## Are you a DAD/MALE CARER

Why not try "WHO LET THE DADS OUT" It's a chance for Dads/Male Carers and Younger Children to meet up over a breakfast of coffee/tea, bacon butties, pastries and fruit but with plenty of time for the Dads to chat while the children can have some fun. Sochi, our local Youth Worker, also comes along to supervise a Play Station with Older Children.

We meet on the 2nd Saturday of the Month at St Leonard's Centre in Rectory Road, Oakley from 10 to 11:30 am. Come when you can!

Next dates - 10 January, 14 February, 14 March, 11 April, etc.

Meanwhile – MUMS – your time's your own!

If you would like to know more, contact the Church Office on [office@oww.church](mailto:office@oww.church)

## St Leonard's Preschool

### How high?

At the start of February we are having a week on building inside and outside, using a variety of different construction materials- Duplo, large wooden blocks, wooden bricks, foam bricks and cardboard boxes. The children will be given different challenges e.g. how high can you build your tower? Can you make a castle for us to sit in, etc.

After the February half term we will be celebrating the Chinese New Year. We will have a Chinese restaurant in our role play area for the children to prepare dishes with woks, chopsticks and wool noodles. We will be acting out the naming of the

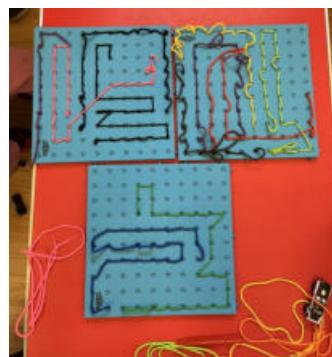
Chinese

New Year using the twelve animals in their water race. We will be using a very long piece of green material to



do dragon dances. To celebrate the year of the horse we will be having horse races on our hobby horses.

In our photos you can see the children mark making in saving foam and developing their threading skills.



If you would like to know more about the preschool, please contact us on 07772 378265 or email [preschool@oww.church](mailto:preschool@oww.church) or look at our website [stleonards-preschool.co.uk](http://stleonards-preschool.co.uk)

We look forward to hearing from you.

Caroline Edwards

## Cuckoo Meadow Pre-School

The festive season seems like a distant memory now, but we couldn't resist showing you our visit from Father Christmas and his ponies! The children sang to him beautifully and showed lovely manners when receiving their presents.



We have been excited to continue show and tell by bringing in our toys, belongings and, sometimes, random household items (!) for each letter every week. It has been fun coming into pre-school in the snow, but we are also looking forward to some Spring weather for some more outdoor play.

Georgia Hawken, Cuckoo Meadow Pre-School Secretary

About Cuckoo Meadow Pre-School: We are a small and friendly pre-school located in the Rathbone Pavilion of North Waltham. The children who attend come from many areas including Oakley, Dummer, Hatch Warren, Kempshott and Beggarwood. They all agree that the location and wonderful, caring staff mean it is more than worth the short journey. To find out more, please contact Jo or Fiona on 01256 398 172.

## Oakley Scout Group Beavers

The Beavers enjoyed a wonderfully festive run-up to Christmas, with a cheerful campfire full of songs, toasted marshmallows, and plenty of s'mores. They threw themselves into Christmas crafts and created beautiful handmade cards for the

# Young Oakley



residents of Oak Lodge, spreading a little extra joy throughout the community. Their Christmas treat was a thrilling climbing session, where every Beaver showed fantastic bravery and enthusiasm.

The rest of the term was just as exciting, with a fun visit from Basingstoke Tae Kwon-Do, a litter pick, a sleepover at the hut and, of course, lots of crafts and games.

We're looking forward to the term ahead, with plenty more adventures planned and lots of badges to be earned. All of the Beavers have been working incredibly hard, and we're extremely proud that eight of them have achieved the Chief Scout's Bronze Award – the highest award a Beaver can earn.

A huge well done to them all!

If you have any questions about Oakley Scout Group or want to join, please email [oakley@bwds.org.uk](mailto:oakley@bwds.org.uk)

*Helen Meyer*

## News from Cranbourne

We've had a busy start to the New Year at Cranbourne, with Parents' Evenings, the Intermediate Maths Challenge and an exciting trip to Birmingham to see Strictly Come Dancing Live. Our annual Curry and Revision Night took place for Year 11 students, where they enjoyed a tasty curry cooked by our fantastic Canteen team and spent time with their core subject teachers learning the best ways to revise for their upcoming GCSE exams.

Performances of our 2026 Production of 'Guys and Dolls Jr' are fast approaching and set to rock the boat from Tuesday 10 February. This year, after the immense amount of talent seen at auditions, we've got 2 incredible casts ready to take to the stage - Cast A will be performing Tuesday and Thursday, with Cast B taking over on Wednesday and Friday. The cast are busy polishing dance routines and perfecting lines and can't wait to deliver a showstopping performance!

We were delighted to be the first secondary school awarded with the EAL Excellence Award at Diamond Level, validated by the Ethnic Minority and



Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS).

The award requires schools to complete one aspect of Community, Collaboration and Contribution – Cranbourne excelled in all three areas. A huge thank you to Ms Corrigan for all the hard work that goes into ensuring every child in our Cranbourne Community whose first language is not English receives the support needed to achieve their full potential. We are truly proud of our diversity and being recognised by EMTAS for such a prestigious commendation is an honour.

*Chloe-Mai Parfitt*

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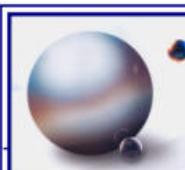
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# Conservation



## Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

### Winter on the riverbank

Even in the heart of winter, rivers, streams, and ponds are teeming with life – including with one of our most endearing and much-loved mammals, the water vole.

Known affectionately to generations as “Ratty” from The Wind in the Willows, water voles are Britain’s largest vole, roughly the size of a guinea pig, with a rounded body, blunt nose, small ears, and a furry tail. Their thick, chocolate-brown fur often



Water vole—Terry Whittaker 2020VISION

appears almost black when wet, and their whiskered faces give them a gentle, inquisitive expression. Unlike rats, which they are often mistaken for, water voles have shorter tails, smaller ears, and a much more compact shape. They are excellent swimmers and can often be seen paddling confidently through the water or perched on the bank nibbling vegetation.

Water voles were once a common sight along riverbanks and wetlands. Sadly, habitat loss and predation by invasive mink caused numbers to plummet. However, thanks to dedicated conservation work, these charismatic creatures are slowly returning to our waterways.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is helping water voles through the Watercress & Winterbournes scheme. This partnership, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, focuses on restoring chalk streams, improving water quality, and managing riverbank vegetation to create safe habitats for water voles and other wildlife. Volunteers play a vital role in maintaining these habitats, monitoring populations, and controlling non-native predators like

mink. The scheme doesn’t just benefit water voles – it supports a wide range of species, including fish, invertebrates, amphibians, and birds that rely on healthy, well-managed rivers.

Winter can be a surprisingly good season to spot them – if you know where and how to look. Even though they are less active than in spring or summer, their presence is betrayed by clear signs along the banks. Keep an eye out for neat, nibbled patches of grass with characteristic 45° angled cuts, small

burrows tucked into riverbanks, and tiny droppings along the water’s edge. It’s essential to keep dogs away from the water so these sensitive mammals aren’t disturbed.

With leafless trees and shorter vegetation, riverbanks and wetland edges are more visible in winter, making it easier to spot burrows, tracks, and signs of feeding. Quiet walks along streams, ponds, and winterbournes – particularly in early morning or late afternoon – offer the best chance of glimpsing these secretive mammals.

For more information, visit the Trust website: [hiwwt.org.uk/watercress-and-winterbournes](http://hiwwt.org.uk/watercress-and-winterbournes)

Helen Skelton-Smith

### Oakley Woodlands Group

This should be peak time for a bit of Galanthus spotting.

Galanthus nivalis are more commonly known as snowdrops, and they are one of the first flowers to herald the arrival of a new season of renewal and growth. The name Galanthus comes from the ancient Greek, gala meaning milk, and anthos meaning flower, aptly describing the delicate white blooms. Although they are reasonably widespread around the village, there are virtually none in Cowdown Copse and only a few in St John’s Copse. However, the best display in St John’s is just beyond the gate in the left of the main ride, making them easy to find.

This small group has slowly expanded over the last decade or so, and makes a regular showing at the end of January and early February. The non-native flowers are just the first of the many that will appear in the copses in the coming months. So, when you take a stroll, why not pop into the woods and see what



# Conservation



you can spot. You can easily make a circuit of St

John's in twenty minutes. The Woodlands Group is still coppicing and happy to welcome new volunteers. You will find us in St John's Copse at the dates and times below.

Work party dates: Saturday 7 and 21, Wednesday 11 and 25, 10 am to 1 pm in St John's Copse, St John's road. Email: [oakleywoodlands@gmail.com](mailto:oakleywoodlands@gmail.com)

*Alan Merry*

## Jubiloaks

**J**regular walkers will have noted the substantial coppicing work undertaken by Basingstoke & Deane Borough rangers and the mountain of wood chippings being barrowed by our volunteers to top the access path loved by children and the not so young!



We have been fortunate to get mainly sunny days to work on the multi-user path - a lovely rainbow photo taken by one of our volunteers, Julie Thompson (*see front cover*).

*The Jubiloaks team, [www.jubiloaks.org.uk](http://www.jubiloaks.org.uk), [jubiloaks@btinternet.com](mailto:jubiloaks@btinternet.com)*

# Feature



## Volunteers Needed to Support Older People in Hampshire

As we start 2026, Age Concern Hampshire is inviting compassionate individuals to volunteer and support older people across the county. With Hampshire's ageing population continuing to grow, the charity is seeking additional volunteers to help maintain and expand its vital services.

Age Concern Hampshire is an independent charity dedicated to improving the well-being of older people through its Care and Wellbeing Centres, Foot Care clinics, Hospital to Home support, and community initiatives. Volunteers are essential to ensuring older residents feel valued, supported, and connected.

Volunteering with Age Concern Hampshire provides an opportunity to build meaningful connections, gain new skills, and contribute to the local community. Whether you can spare an hour a week or more, every contribution helps maintain independence, provide companionship, and enhance quality of life for older people and their carers.

### Volunteer opportunities include:

- **Trustees** – contribute to the strategic direction and governance of the charity.
- **Foot Care Receptionists** – welcome clients and support smooth clinic operations.

• **Administrative Support** – assist with office tasks to ensure services run efficiently.

• **Support at Care and Wellbeing Centres** – help with activities, social interaction, and day care services.

• **Social Group Volunteers** – Help older people stay connected while enjoying a friendly, rewarding role that brings fun, conversation, and community to your week.

• **Hospital Ward Support** – Make a real difference to patients' recovery while gaining valuable experience and becoming a supportive, friendly face on local rehab wards at Petersfield, Gosport and Alton.

• **Form-Fillers** – provide practical support to help older people complete forms, access benefits, and navigate essential services.

Age Concern Hampshire also welcomes partnerships with businesses through employee volunteer programs and joint campaigns to extend the charity's reach and impact.

To make a difference in 2026 and become part of this work, contact Age Concern Hampshire at **01962 868545** or visit: [ageconcernhampshire.org.uk/volunteer-hampshire/give-time-by-volunteering/](http://ageconcernhampshire.org.uk/volunteer-hampshire/give-time-by-volunteering/)

*Sarah Jacobs*

Graham Brown

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# Letters

**Dear Editor,**  
**Bull Bushes Wood - demise of official footpaths and trails**

I would like to bring to your attention and our local community the environmental and footpath damage that has resulted from the logging extraction of ash and beech trees in Bull Bushes wood. This is a private wood but around, through and within the wood there runs three official footpaths and trails enjoyed and regularly used by the community and dog walkers namely:

- Wayfarers walk
- footpath through the wood and connecting to Wayfarers Walk
- Bull Bushes Woodland Welcome linking to Wayfarers Walk

During December logging contractors moved in to remove ash and beech trees from Bull Bushes wood. The resulting heavy vehicle activity on very soft ground has made it impossible in many places to walk the footpaths and trails safely within the wood. There is also evidence of damage to the footpath fencing caused by tree removal. The very recent hard frosts have turned the deep gloopy chalk into rock hard tracks revealing the extent of the damage to the footpaths.

The environmental damage caused by the extraction of the ash and beech trees from Bull Bushes wood will take many years to recover at a time when climate change is affecting our seasons and we all know the importance to be able to walk and enjoy this wood through the seasons.

Ken Robson

**Dear Editor,**  
I'm Joe Robson, a 19 year old Computer Science student born and raised in Oakley, now studying at Lancaster University. This year I decided to sign up to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in August of 2026 to raise money for Teenage Cancer Trust.

My inspiration to take on this challenge comes from my dad, who climbed Kilimanjaro with his friend in 2013 (*picture above right*)- I'd love to follow in his footsteps while raising money for a good cause.



My fundraising goal is £5,000 and, so far, I have managed to raise £1,215 through posting weekly video updates on social media (@joerobson22) and hosting a couple of pub quizzes with the other students taking on the challenge.

I plan on doing a number of events in 2026, like running a half marathon or a 12 hour treadmill challenge with some of the others doing the challenge.

All donations, big or small, make a big difference to help teenagers with cancer live normal lives, and are all really appreciated!  
Link to the fundraiser: [justgiving.com/fundraising/uk-kilimanjaro-25th-august-2026-student-chooseachallenge-690bb7a6c56d6?utm\\_medium=FR&utm\\_source=CL](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/uk-kilimanjaro-25th-august-2026-student-chooseachallenge-690bb7a6c56d6?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL)

**Dear Editor,**

You hear of some trying times actually being able to talk to a doctor, even worse, getting to see one, but just recently suffering for the very first time from seriously itching legs, serious enough to make sleeping difficult, I called our doctor's surgery.

Surprise, surprise, for a start I was 'number one in line' and actually talking to a lovely receptionist within minutes. After going through the facts with her I was told a doctor would call within the next three hours. Again, a doctor called half an hour later. With a thorough 'on-line' chat and, unable to offer any suggestions of rashes, soreness or roughness of the skin, guess what? I was offered an appointment to go and see her within the hour.

With all the stories getting publicity of how impossible it is to get medical help I felt that it was only right to say this proves it wrong. And the service offered here in Oakley is amazing.

Graeme Hewitt

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# Ladies Societies



## Oakley Afternoon WI

### December 2025 Meeting Report

In December Oakley Afternoon WI had two Christmas events. The Christmas Lunch at Test Valley Golf Club was attended by nearly all the members and was a lovely festive occasion. This was followed by the annual Christmas Party.

The speaker this year was PC Andy Jones, a local Police Officer, who gave us a talk on how to avoid becoming a victim of scams. He outlined all the various scams, frauds and other fraudulent tactics currently being used by criminals to try and get money from the public. These include pressure tactics, targeting people with mental health issues, doorstep fraud and identity fraud to name but a few.

One in five people fall victim to scams. There followed a question-and-answer session, after which Janet gave a vote of thanks.

After the talk members enjoyed a table quiz and tea and Christmas food. The Secret Santa presents were given out, and the lovely flower arrangements were won by some lucky members. Rosemary thanked the committee for all their hard work this year and finally the raffle was drawn.

Our monthly meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month at East Oakley Village Hall (the Green Hut). Visitors are made most welcome at the meetings and are also invited to come along to the coffee mornings held at the Barley Mow on the last Monday of the month.

Janie Vickers

 **2026  
gig dates**

<u>24<sup>th</sup> JAN</u>	<b>ALICE ARMSTRONG</b>
<u>7<sup>th</sup> FEB</u>	<b>JON AMOR TRIO</b>
<u>7<sup>th</sup> MAR</u>	<b>GUY TORTORA</b>
<u>25<sup>th</sup> APR</u>	<b>BACKBONE BLUES BAND</b>
<u>23<sup>rd</sup> MAY</u>	<b>RICHARD CLARKE</b>
<u>20<sup>th</sup> JUNE</u>	TBC
<u>19<sup>th</sup> SEP</u>	<b>REXFEST 2026</b>

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Profits to Asthma + Lung UK - Charity number 326730.

## Oakley Afternoon WI -January 2026

Our speaker this month was a volunteer from Hampshire and IOW Search and Rescue. This is a registered charity which was set up in 2003. It has 138 volunteers at present. In 2011 this charity received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service. This being the team version of the individual MBE. It provides Hants and IOW Constabulary with qualified Search Teams. It covers the whole of Hampshire and adjacent counties, who also have similar teams. These teams help and support each other. The volunteers undergo comprehensive training which takes four to six months to complete.

After the talk there followed a question-and-answer session. Carol then gave the vote of thanks, and this was followed by tea and cakes.

Our next meeting is on 16 February and the speaker is Nic Groom whose talk is entitled 'Charity Step by Step' .

Our monthly meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month at East Oakley Village Hall (the Green Hut). Visitors are made most welcome at the meetings and are also invited to come along to the coffee mornings held at the Barley Mow on the last Monday of the month.

For further details please contact Janet on 01256 782734.

Janie Vickers



### Journeys in Biology III: DNA and Who You Are

Darren is Senior Lecturer in the School of Biology at Portsmouth University. His research area is Biochemistry



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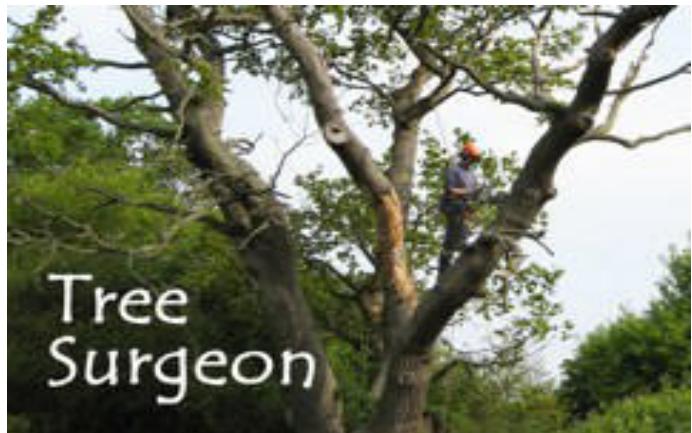
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# Local News



## Whitchurch Silk Mill News

Whitchurch Silk Mill invites visitors to celebrate heritage and craftsmanship during National Lottery Open Week with free entry on 7–8 March. Explore the Georgian building, Victorian looms, bobbin-winding machine, and waterwheel, then enjoy refreshments in the award-winning café and browse the shop.

### Workshops and Events

Building on last year's success, the Mill offers an expanded programme of creative workshops for adults and young people:

- Weave a Wall Hanging (12 February): Learn traditional weaving techniques and create your own piece. (£60)
- Knitting Workshop (14 February): Beginner-friendly session with expert guidance. (£45)
- Portraits that POP! (17 February): A fun Pop Art-inspired family workshop linked to Jane Sanders' exhibition. (£6 per child)
- Young Makers Weaving (18 February): For ages 11 – 16, using Louet looms to craft wall hangings. (£60)
- Beginners' Braiding (27 February): Create decorative cords and trims. (£35)
- Warping Workshop (6 March): Make a three-metre warp with expert help. (£60)
- Embroidery Workshop (7 March): Nature-inspired keepsake with Abigail Rose Creative. (£65)

Tickets are available via the Mill shop or website.

### Special Tours and Exhibitions

On 3 February, an exclusive Silk Production Tour (£25) offers behind-the-scenes access to Britain's oldest working silk mill, showcasing machinery in action and stories of past weavers. Sensible footwear required; pre-booking essential.

Until 22 February, the Mill hosts Visible Threads, an exhibition by textile artist Jane Sanders. Using a 1960s Singer sewing machine and mixed media, Sanders creates vibrant stitched portraits of iconic musicians. Free with Mill admission.

### Flower Festival – 19 to 21 June 2026

The Mill will bloom with handmade floral displays during its Flower Festival, replacing the Open Gardens event. Contributions are invited from knitters and crocheters to create a "cottage garden" of daffodils, tulips, sunflowers, roses, and more. Patterns are available on the Mill's website. Children can join by making pom poms—aiming for 8,000 flowers and 1,000 pom poms. Finished items can be dropped off or posted to Whitchurch Silk Mill. Workshops for children will run closer to the event.

### Stay Connected

Follow Whitchurch Silk Mill on social media or subscribe to the newsletter for updates. Contact: [info@whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk](mailto:info@whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk), [whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk](http://whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk), 01256 892065.

*Sue Tapliss*

## Probus Hears About a Life in Nuclear

Retired nuclear scientist and Basingstoke resident, Suzanne Fletcher-Mallinson gave an outline to the Probus Club of Basingstoke of her working life in the nuclear industry.

Gaining a MSc at the University of California, Berkeley, she joined the American nuclear



research facility at Livermore which designed nuclear systems like those at Los Alamos as well as delivery system testing in Nevada. At that time the USA had around 70,000 nuclear devices across 65 types. Suzanne described field testing a 6-inch diameter device using Nato guns. Next was President Reagan's 'Star Wars' project to create a dome of defence using nuclear-driven x-ray lasers to knock out incoming missiles. Moving to AWE in Aldermaston she married in January 1989 which qualified her for British citizenship five years later.

Following roles including managing the remaining reactor at Aldermaston, she became the Technical Assistant to the Director of Research & Applied Science. She attended conferences at Nashville Tennessee, Lucerne in Switzerland, Kyoto in Japan and London.

After a career break following the birth of her third child in 2003, she joined Serco 2007 – 2012 as a Nuclear Safety Consultant. Based at Harwell in Oxfordshire she also covered AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield as well as Winfrith in Dorset. Suzanne rejoined AWE as an Internal Regulator in 2012 covering many of the facilities at AWE A & B sites. Moving to the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) as a Nuclear Safety Officer her remit included Sellafield in Cumbria and submarine building at Barrow in Furness and Devonport. Moving to Security Regulation included many nuclear sites as well as assessment of two Small Modular Reactors (SMR) at the design assessment stage of Licencing.

Suzanne retired in October 2024.

Today her interests include being a square dance caller across southern England and being a member of the Ladies' Probus Club of Basingstoke.

For more information about the Probus Club of Basingstoke see [probusbasingstoke.club](http://probusbasingstoke.club) or phone their secretary on 07814 937202 for an informal chat.

*Paul Flint*

# Local News



## Overton Choral Society

We resumed on 5 January and started straight away on the music for the Hampshire Choral Festival on Saturday 9 May in Thornden Hall where we will be performing Rossini Petite Messe Solennelle.

Thank you to all who supported our annual Carol Concert which was attended by the Mayor, Cllr Colin Phillimore and Ian Elkins, representing Overton Parish Council. Such was your support; we ran out of both chairs and orders of the concert and we raised over £600 for St Michael's Hospice.

We are also rehearsing for a wedding and will soon start to think about music for our event on Saturday 20 June in St Mary's hall. More information soon. We meet every Monday in St Mary's Hall at 7:45 pm. Please feel free to just listen and see if you would like to join us.

*Lyn Hardy, Chair  
Overtonchoralsoc@gmail.com*

# Sport



## Bramley 20/10 Road Races

This well-established community running event takes place on Sunday 15 February at 10 am, starting from Bramley Primary School (RG26 5AH).

### Community Impact & Charity Support

Organised entirely by volunteers from Reading Roadrunners, our event operates on a not-for-profit basis with surplus funds donated to our 2026 charity partner: S.A.F.E. (Saving Abandoned Fly-Grazing Equines), a local charity rescuing abandoned horses ([safe-horses.co.uk/](http://safe-horses.co.uk/)). We also support local youth organisations with donations for their water station volunteering.

Award-Winning Event with 25+ Year Heritage

- Gold BARR (British Association of Road Races) award 2025
- Silver RaceCheck award with 4.72/5 star rating
- English Athletics affiliated with accurately measured course
- SheRACES accredited (commitment to gender equality in racing)

### Event Details

Two race distances:

- 10 miles (single lap)
- 20 miles (two laps)

Inclusive & Accessible:

- Generous 4-hour cut-off time for 10 miles - ideal for newcomers to distance running
- Mostly flat road course

## Mr. Flaherty's Private Theatricals

Mr. Flaherty's Private Theatricals is a local theatre group that will be performing "Dad's Army" on 16 to 18 April at Central Studio in Basingstoke

Following Mr. Flaherty's Private Theatricals' sell out success "The Vicar of Dibley" we are thrilled to bring you "Dad's Army" by Jimmy Perry & David Croft. This lovingly recreated stage show brings to life two of the BBC sitcom's most beloved episodes, featuring all your favourite characters – Captain Mainwaring, Sergeant Wilson, Corporal Jones and the rest of the Walmington-on-Sea platoon – in a hilarious tribute to classic British comedy.

Join us for a memorable evening of laughs at Central Studio, Queen Mary's College, Cliddesden Rd, Basingstoke RG21 3HF, 16 to 18 April.

Tickets £15 - [privatetheatricals.ticket-office.co.uk](http://privatetheatricals.ticket-office.co.uk)  
*Paul Davies*

- Perfect timing for spring marathon/half-marathon training

- Attracts both competitive UK athletes and recreational runners

New for 2026: First male and female 70+ age category prizes, responding to runner feedback and our inclusivity commitment.

Participant Benefits:

- Finish medal for all competitors
- Team and individual age category prizes
- Free race photos for download

### What Makes Us Special

Runners consistently praise our cheerful, enthusiastic volunteer marshals. We've built a strong reputation across local running clubs for combining competitive racing with an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere that reflects Reading Roadrunners' club ethos. After weather-related cancellations (2020 - 2022), we've implemented course mitigations and successfully delivered the event from 2023 to present.

### Resources Available

Event website with previous race photos: [readingroadrunners.org/races/bramley/](http://readingroadrunners.org/races/bramley/)

- Facebook: [facebook.com/share/16gEgjpmcx/](https://facebook.com/share/16gEgjpmcx/)  
*Dan Rickett, Deputy Race Director*

## Oakley Bowling Club News

Throughout December, members played indoor bowls at our two local bowls clubs and our own



# Sport



short mat sessions, held at Malshanger, on Monday and Thursday afternoons, continued to be well supported. We were also busy with social events. The festive season began with a Christmas Quiz and was followed by a Coffee Morning.

Next up was our Christmas Dinner at the Basingstoke College of Technology (BCOT). It was our third visit and again the college and its students excelled themselves. The food was exemplary gaining a huge number of compliments.

The final social event for 2025 was THE GRAND DRAW. There was an excellent turnout even though some members were on a trip to see the lights of Kew Gardens. President Diane handed out the prizes as Kay spun the wheel and with Ric organising the Christmas music our first Grand Draw evening was voted a great success. We now look forward to a Burns Night Celebration at BCOT, to our Presentation Dinner at Malshanger and to the club's mini tour to Dorset in February.

In just a couple of months we shall be back playing outdoors. Our greens volunteers have been

**Bramley 20/10 Road Races**

The Bramley 20/10 Road Races is fun, fast, (mostly!) flat course which comes at the perfect time for those training for a spring half marathon or marathon event! With Water stations along the route, enthusiastic volunteers cheering you on, energy drinks out on the course, and a delicious array of refreshments available at the race HQ - this is a must-do event on your 2026 race calendar! All race profits go to charity

**Sunday 15 February 2026**  
Bramley, Hampshire  
10:00am Start

**10 Mile Road Race**  
£36 Affiliated  
£38 Unaffiliated

**20 Mile Road Race**  
£41 Affiliated  
£43 Unaffiliated

busy tending the green and from mid-April we shall be open for play. Information about what is happening at the Club can be found at

[oakleybc.org.uk](http://oakleybc.org.uk). Alternatively, phone Spencer on 01256 780418 or Diane on 01256 781465. They will be happy to show visitors the facilities and explain all we have to offer.

*Spencer Kerley*



## Free Ads



All entries should be sent in writing to Maureen Dallaway, by the 15 February 2026 for inclusion in next month's Link. Entries may also be sent by e-mail to [freeads@oakleylink.org.uk](mailto:freeads@oakleylink.org.uk) Please include an address or telephone number.

IKEA oak-effect bookcase 202 cm high x 20 cm wide x 17 cm deep, £20. Tel: 07941 077928

Cello TV 18" . £20. 01256781965

Car axle stands Pop rivet gun. Metric tap/die set. Hot air blower. Offers for any items: Mike Elsworth Tel 01256781965.

Trolley jack hydraulic offers? Tel 01256781965

# Walking



## Oakley Ramblers

**D**ecember was a busy month for the Oakley Ramblers. On Wednesday 10, after much recent rain, we set off from Upton Grey on a dry morning. Initially on road, we soon headed onto a mix of footpaths, woodland paths and byways, interspersed with sections on quiet roads. Some great views and a low level of mud, considering recent weather. With lots of chat and a moderate pace, we returned to our cars, just over 2 hours later, ready to enjoy a tasty lunch in the Upton Grey Village shop & cafe.

On Sunday 28, we had our post-Christmas walk, and welcomed new walkers, Evelyn & Wendy to our

Mow for a well-earned drink, a tasty Sunday lunch and time to catch up with friends and look forward to 2026. Excellent service from Barley Mow staff - thank you, we will be back!

Oakley Ramblers is a friendly and sociable group; and always welcome visitors who can try us out before joining. Our planned walk dates for February are Wednesday 11, and Sunday 22. Details of all our walks are always published on our website a week before the walk takes place, why not come along and try us out in 2026?

Find us on Facebook or visit our website for more information. [oakleyramblers.org](http://oakleyramblers.org).

*Corrine Thomas*



group. We headed towards Malshanger, then along the footpath towards Winter Down Coppice, with views over the fields. After climbing over the stile to the path alongside Tangier Park we could see that grapevines look to be growing well on the slope. The track through Manydown Park brought us back to A3400 in Newfound, where traffic proved heavy, but we were soon back onto footpaths across fields to the multiuser path via the railway crossing.

After a good 5-mile, we arrived at The Barley

 RAMBLERS

**WELLBEING  
WALKS**

Basingstoke

## Woodland Wellbeing Walks—February

Come and enjoy scenic walks around our local

woods and fields. 2nd, 3rd & 4th Tuesdays finishing with a sociable cuppa @ Methodist Chapel.

### Start Point for Walks:

Tuesday, 10 Feb. at 10 am - Village Pond  
[social walk, as no official Ramblers Leader]

Tuesday, 17 Feb. at 10 am - St John's Rd lay-by R

Tuesday, 24 Feb. at 10 am - East Oakley Village Hall [aka The Green Hut] B

### Other Details:

Start time: 10 am

Pace: gentle

Duration: 1 hour approx.

Routes: varied

B = Barbara led

[07722757057] R =  
Richard led [07549  
021174]

*Barbara Robson*



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# Feature



## Step By Step

### Could You Open Your Home to a Young Person Locally?

Life in Oakley, Deane, Malshanger and Wootton St Lawrence is built on neighbourliness – from village events and clubs to the everyday ways people look out for one another. It's a strong community to be part of. But even in villages like ours, some young people need extra support at important turning points in their lives.

Step by Step, a local charity working across the Basingstoke area, supports young people who are leaving care or facing difficult family circumstances. Many simply need a safe home and a trusted adult while they find their feet. Local people help in two main ways.

Supported Lodgings supports young people aged 16 – 21, offering a spare room, stability and encouragement as they take steps towards independence.

Fostering provides care for children and young people up to the age of 18, offering the consistency and security of a family home when it's most needed. Both roles come with full training, ongoing support and financial allowances. People are carefully matched, and no one is expected to do this alone.

As the year gets underway, Step by Step would love to hear from anyone in Oakley and the surrounding villages who might be curious about opening their home – now or in the future.

Find out more at [stepbystep.org.uk/open-my-home](http://stepbystep.org.uk/open-my-home)

*Sally Britt, Marketing and Communications Executive*



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