

The Sandford Link

Winter 2025 Issue 179

www.sandfordonthames.org.uk

**Making
Christmas
Wreaths**
with Nathalie
See page 6



GIFT DONATIONS

Just in time to help
local families at
Christmas See page 5

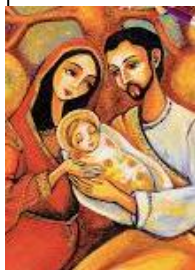


Filming
in the wild

See page 7

**Childrens theatre
comes back
to the
Village Hall**

See page 9



ST ANDREW'S
See page 3

**CHRISTINGLE
MIDNIGHT
MASS
CHRISTMAS
COMMUNION**



**CHRISTMAS
CAROLS**

see page 3

**CHRISTMAS
FOOD
MARKET**

See page 10



**First steps
in cha cha**
with
Sue Douglass

See page 7

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

www.sandfordchurch.org.uk

John Findon (*associate priest*) 01865 434256

john.findon@jesus.ox.ac.uk

Bob Morgan (*associate priest*) 01865 748848

robert.morgan@theology.ox.ac.uk

Teresa Morgan (*associate priest*)

Church Wardens: Christian Bradley; Clive Tasker

Director of Music: Christian Bradley *Organist:* Sunil Manohar



Sunday services

Every Sunday: 10.0 a.m. Parish Communion
6.30 p.m. Evening prayer

Every Wednesday: 11.0 a.m. Holy Communion (BCP)

Last Sunday of the month:

10.0 a.m. a more informal Westward Communion service

SUNDAY CLUB

meets at 10.0 a.m. on the first Sunday of
the month in the Harris Room, next to the church.

CHOROS CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Saturday 13th December at 2.0 pm

We are delighted that the well-known Oxford choir

Choros Consort

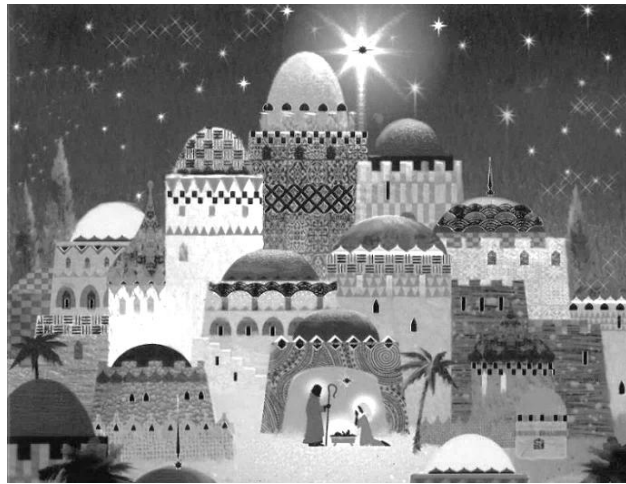
will be with us again to sing Christmas music in

St Andrew's on Saturday 13th December at 2.0 p.m.

Free 45-minute informal performance – donations invited for church

Bishop Steven retires

In a letter announcing his retirement next summer the Bishop of Oxford, Steven Croft, repeats the call of God for churches to be more Christ-like, to be the Church of the Beatitudes, more contemplative, compassionate and courageous, and for the C of E to teach the Christian faith confidently and well to the people of England, seeing new disciples formed in Christ.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

CHRISTMAS EVE:

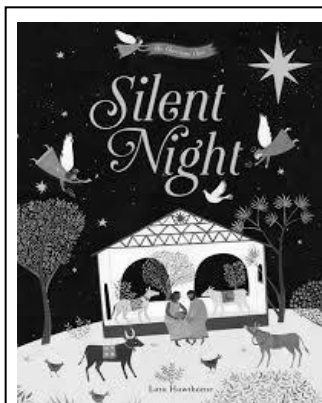
4.30 p.m. **CHILDRENS' CRIB AND CHRISTINGLE SERVICE**
for parents, grandparents, children, friends. Actors and actresses invited

11.30 p.m. **MIDNIGHT MASS**

CHRISTMAS DAY:

10.0 a.m. **CHRISTMAS COMMUNION**

6.30 p.m. Evening prayer



St Andrew's
**Carols by
Candlelight**

A traditional
carol service
on Sunday
the 14th
December
at 6.30 p.m.

Join St Andrew's choir
for

**CAROLS AT THE
KING'S ARMS**

Wednesday 17th
December
at about 7.0 p.m.

John Findon writes:

Some of you will know Ursula Fanthorpe's Christmas poem '*BC : AD*' which ends beautifully with this thought about the birth in Bethlehem, the shepherds and the three kings:

This was the moment
When a few farm workers
And three members of an obscure Persian sect
Walked haphazard by starlight,
Straight into the kingdom of heaven.

It makes the point that our experience of human beings is capable of having a significance that is ultimate – 'the kingdom of heaven' in her words. One of Tolstoy's characters says at a time of great stress in '*War and Peace*' that 'nothing is certain except the unimportance of everything within my comprehension and the grandeur of something incomprehensible but all-important'. The sense of something 'incomprehensible but all-important' has been part of my own experience for as long as I can remember, and I guess may be familiar to many of you.

Christmas says to us that such significance is to be found in human beings. Its effect on us should therefore be disturbing. For, if this birth, then every birth may speak of the kingdom of heaven. 'Have yourself a merry little Christmas' would be so cosy as to be nauseous: this festival above all should shake us out of complacency and point us to the ultimate importance of every human child. That was what Ebenezer Scrooge learnt from his three ghosts. Most of us are lucky enough to have people who belong to us; if we are very lucky, they are people whom we find it easy to love. But that could only be the beginning: Christmas tells us that our life's work will be to widen and deepen that love in response to the love of God for us all.

THE CRIB AND CHRISTINGLE SERVICE will begin on Christmas Eve at 4.30pm. We shall set up the Crib and light the Christmas candle. There will be a collection for the Children's Society and christingles will be distributed for you to take home and light again at Christmas lunch. Children (and any courageous others) are welcome to come dressed as Nativity characters. It will be dark when we come out of Church, and of course by Jewish reckoning the new day begins at night-fall.

THE CHRISTMAS SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS will take place on **Sunday 14th December** at 6.30 pm. We look forward to welcoming everyone for an hour of joyful singing.

LAST CHANCE

to help someone have a happy Christmas



Bible study recommencing.

If interested contact Bob (748848)

The Global Retreat Centre

at Nuneham Courtenay has regular guided meditation courses, included a 30 minute weekly Zoom meditation session. More information on <https://www.globalretreatcentre.org/>

Do you have a child under 18-months-old?

Oxford Brookes Babylab is looking for monolingual, bilingual and trilingual children for a study investigating how babies learn.

For more information contact babylab@brookes.ac.uk or 01865 483676

Sandford-on-Thames Village Hall

Community events



This year's photography competition saw a considerable increase in the number of entries, and we were delighted to welcome many over 18s too. Steve Edmunds very kindly offered to adjudicate again this year and also gave feedback on the winning entries while awarding the prizes. The four winning entries are now on permanent display in the Village Hall. We are very grateful to the PC for funding the prizes. Other events this Autumn have included another successful advice session on IT, a brilliantly creative miniature clay session led by Nanda Rodrigues as well as an introduction to the complexities of bridge and we are looking forward to a repeat wreath-making masterclass with Nathalie.

We are always keen to welcome new people to lead sessions on a skill, art or craft of their own, or if you feel you have something to offer.

If you would like to take part in any of the SACas sessions, it's helpful for numbers if you are able to email us before the day. Or to be added to the email list to be kept informed, please email Edward on sandfordhallevents@gmail.com



Make your own Christmas Wreath

Natalie will bring along the basic materials (cost £3) and you can bring some secateurs and any greenery or 'extras' you'd like to add.

Thursday 18th December 6.0 – 7.30 pm in the village Hall

SACaS Events confirmed for the Spring:

Thursday January 15th



6-7.30pm

Filming in the wild

An illustrated talk by the distinguished wildlife cameraman Paul Stewart.

Saturday January 24th

See overleaf for booking information

3pm **Children's Theatre Event**

Whatnot Theatre return with their new show

Tea-Time with Hatter and Hare

Thursday February 19th



6-7.30pm

First steps in Cha-Cha

Sue Douglass leads novices in learning how to cha-cha (with possible further sessions if wanted)

No previous experience necessary – just a commitment to enjoy yourself.

Thursday March 19th



6-7.30pm

Gardeners' Questions:

Spring into Summer

After the success of last year's event, please bring along your questions for a panel of local experts.

Thursday April 16th



6-7.30pm

Learning to draw

with Rosemary McKisack

(There will be a charge of £3 for materials for this session)

Welcome to the world

to **Cleo Alice**, born 21st October to Helen and Tom and a sister to Casper and 3rd grandchild to Jackie and Simon of Rock Farm Lane.

Oxfordshire news

Link readers have helpfully drawn attention to the Oxford Clarion, a weekly independent newsletter put together by a small writing team who work for free, with no funding from anyone. Among them are people with backgrounds in journalism, communications, and community media.

If you don't know it take a look at oxfordclarion.uk

The next Quiz Night

will be on Saturday 21st March'

Look out for more information on the church website sandfordchurch.org.uk

Try an e-bike?

Cyclability in Horspath Road provides adult cycling facilities, with qualified cycling instructors to help you get started; bikes to try out, including electric bikes; adaptive cycling experts and mechanics to troubleshoot issues. Extremely helpful and informal atmosphere. www.cyclability.org.

Littlemore Community CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH



1-4PM, DECEMBER 25

FOOD * BINGO * RAFFLE * CRAFT TABLE
AT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN ACADEMY
GRANGE ROAD, LITTLEMORE
Transport and vegetarian option available

SUGGESTED DONATION
£2.50 ADULT £1.50 CHILD

TO BOOK OR TO HELP CONTACT:

admin@littlemorechurch.org
or phone 07398 599430



* Christmas Fare * Cakes & Goodies * Mulled Wine *
* Food * Handicrafts & Christmas Decorations *
* Pre-loved Gifts * Tombola * Raffle *
* Music * Santa in his Grotto *

Saturday 6th December

11am - 2pm

Raffle will be drawn & prizes awarded just before 2pm in the church





Please use the following link or QR code to book:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/sandford-on-thames-village-hall/t-dkaezyv>

Did you get your invitation?

The table is laid, the cake in the oven and the tea brewing. Hatter and Hare are ready for their tea party, but wait, where are all the guests?

The Mad Hatter and March Hare take audiences on an adventure through Wonderland to meet some of everyone's favourite characters in this fun outdoor performance for all.

Audiences take their seat on their own personal picnic blanket as Hatter and Hare take the stage. An original piece using excerpts from the traditional script with a twist.

Games, competitions, audience interaction and a little bit of silliness for all the family.

On sale at the Talking Shop (see back cover)

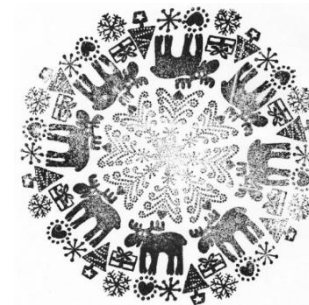
A really beautiful 'Green Sandford' 2026 calendar with photos from this year's photography competition. £5

Postcards of Tom Hughes' stunning drone photograph of the 'Green Heart' of Sandford. 50p each

A MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL AT TALKING SHOP!

Christmas and New Year opening hours

- ❄ Saturday 20th December: last Saturday market of 2025
- ❄ Talking Shop closes at 4pm on Tuesday 23rd December
- ❄ and we reopen at 9.30am as normal on Friday 2nd January 2026



Christmastime events at Talking Shop

Afternoon Tea: Wednesday 3rd December, 2-4pm

Christmas Food Market: Saturday 6th December, 9-12

Community Lunch: Wednesday 10th December, 12.30-2pm



For more details see our Facebook page TalkingShopSandford, or our website at <https://sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk/ts-home/>

Still looking for a great Christmas present?

We have a range of really beautiful and unusual gifts: tea towels, great mugs, aprons, chocolates, gift sets, as well as art works, tote bags and cards by local artists and craftspeople. Or why not give a Talking Shop Voucher?

... and a **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Why not try something new in 2026?

Volunteering offers a great opportunity to meet more people, learn new skills and revive old ones, while helping to support a much loved and valued community resource.

**Do as much or as little as you want,
in the shop or kitchen or other roles behind the scenes.
There are many ways to get involved,
and one of our managers or another experienced volunteer
will help you learn what you need.**

Come into the shop for a warm welcome and to find out more, or contact us at volunteering.talkingshop@gmail.com

Are you preparing your tax return for the January deadline?

It's a great time of year to support Talking Shop with a donation!

We are not run for profit, but we need to make ends meet, and in these tough times of rising prices it can be difficult. For a quick, secure and easy way to make a donation you can go to our Local Giving page <https://localgiving.org/charity/talkingshopsandford/> or contact the Treasurer, Dawn McGinness, on treasurer.talkingshop@gmail.com.

We are thankful for all donations, large and small, which go towards the valuable work of providing a community shop and cafe, purposeful and enjoyable volunteering opportunities, and a welcoming place to go.



Sandford-On-Thames WI Winter 2025



Meeting in the Village Hall
at 7.30 pm on 2nd Thursday in the month
(not August), social events for members in August and at other times
during the year, some just for members, others to include family and friends.

The Women's Institute is a membership organisation. Membership subscription is due on 1st April (2025 year's subscription was £51). Half of the money remains with the local WI and the remainder being shared between the National and local Federations. Our money is used for hall hire, speakers and a variety of activities for members. We are also fortunate to receive donations from members in a variety of forms.

Most of our members are now on WhatsApp. Members do try to share information with the people not on this, so everyone is included. Contact varies by phone, email and face to face. Every effort is made to keep all members fully informed of our activities and they are able to make suggestions and share in a variety of ways.

In September we enjoyed a talk by Liz Woolley on Beer, Sausage and Marmalade with refreshments to match.

In October our members' artistic talents came to the fore with a brush painting evening. All members able to attend took home their own interpretations of a kingfisher which were colourful and impressive. November saw members crafting decorations for our Christmas tree for St Andrew's Church.



Sandford-on-Thames WI Programme 2025/6

**11th December - Christmas celebrations and decorating Christmas cakes
(members only)**

8th January – Film night (members only)

12th February – Talk on Retired Greyhounds (to be confirmed)

12th March – Annual Meeting followed by social (members only)

9th April – Indian block printing

14th May – Swishing evening

You are very welcome to come and sample a meeting except for those meetings marked members only. We are a friendly group of ladies of a variety of ages and interests. You do not have to be an able craft person, as there are many ways that you can participate. You may come along alone, you do not need to be a guest of a member, but of course you can come with a member. On the second visit we will appreciate a donation of £5 or join SOTWI the joining fees will be displayed. You do not have to live in Sandford - On - Thames to join us.

I should like to thank my Committee for all their hard work and enthusiastic support that they have given me over the past months. To the membership as a whole thank you for helping to make Sandford-On-Thames WI a flourishing Institute.

We would like to wish everybody a very happy Christmas and peaceful and prosperous New Year.

*President Jill Love 01865 716557/jpappslove@hotmail.com/
07900 907477 (text is best as signal poor)*



a chiropractic health centre in Nuneham Courtenay
www.continuum-chiropractic.co.uk
at The Old Smithy, Yew Tree Courtyard.
Online booking available.

SOMETHING THAT NEEDS FIXING?

Clive Shorter can help with painting and decorating/
Gardening/DIY and more

07765 666625 commius@hotmail.com

The Science Park.

You may have seen media articles about the Ellison institute's expansion plans over the next decade involving an increase to 7,000 employees. In the plan, the Sandford side of the Science Park will be utilised with some or all the existing buildings except the 3 new buildings under construction being demolished to make way for a Norman Foster designed unified "Campus". The 7,000 employees will replace those already working there and not be in addition however it's not known if there will be an overall increase or decrease. The investment is apparently £10 billion over at least 10 years and the current pause in the construction of the three separate new buildings is related to their redesign which in the architect's model, shows them connected and part of a much larger complex of buildings.

Whether this near total redevelopment plan will survive as currently proposed is anybody's guess but a £10 billion investment by the world's second richest man and designed by Norman Foster, is unlikely to face serious opposition. The recently confirmed Cowley train service stations etc will also be designed by Foster and partners.

The Parish council is having meetings with the contactor, Laing O'Rourke, to discuss problems related to the construction in Littlemore and also separately with EIT and the Science park management to discuss possible benefits to and cooperative projects with Sandford. If you have any suggestions yourself, please send them to:

clerk@sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk

Please check the website under "What's on / News" for this article and a photo of the architect's model.
The Parish Council

Computer or Wifi problems?

The Link has had one very good report of help supplied by
bongoit.co.uk, based in Littlemore

WHEATLEY FOOT CLINIC for podiatry and foot health
For friendly and professional foot care, contact Lynn on
07793 813382 or lynnfootcare@gmail.com



Map of the proposed development of the Science Park:
For full colour version see <https://www.sandford-on-thames->

Ozone Reimagined

To keep track of the re-developments of the Ozone,
see [ozonereimagined.com/](https://www.ozonereimagined.com/)



We are a family-run garage in Henley Road, Sandford on Thames

MOT testing ♦ Servicing all makes and models ♦ General repair ♦

Cambelt replacements ♦ Air con regs/Servicing ♦

Precise diagnostics ♦ Suspension repair/Tracking

www.tjhallandson.co.uk

facebook.com/tjhallandson/

Current regular activities at your Village Hall

You can now book Village Hall rooms online
via the Parish website

<https://sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk>.

For further information, see the website

or contact Robert on 07759 890696

or sandfordvillagehallbookings@yahoo.com



- Monday* **Sandford Toddler Group** 10am to noon
Sandford Table Tennis Club 7-9pm
- Tuesday:* **Junior Tae Kwon-Do** 5.30-6.30pm
Ballroom and Latin American Dance 7-9.30pm
- Wednesday:* **Pilates** 10-11am
Afternoon Tea 1st Wednesday – 2-4pm
Sandford Community Lunch
2nd Wednesday 12.30-2pm
- Thursday:* **Sandford Womens' Institute** 2nd Thursday of
the month (not August) – 7.30pm
- Friday:* **Junior Tae Kwon-Do** 5.30-6.30pm
- Saturday:* **Saturday Market** 9am-noon
- Sunday:* **Oxford Guitar Society** 2nd Sunday, 7-10pm



SANDFORD COMMUNITY LUNCH

A delicious meal at Talking Shop using
perfectly good food that would otherwise
go to waste –

a family friendly event, with children's play area, to which all are
welcome, no need to book! Turn up and pay what you can.

Second Wednesday of each month –
see facebook.com/TalkingShopSandford

Rest in peace

Margaret (Peggy) Harris b.28 January 1939, d.30 August 2025, aged 86

Peggy moved into Kiln Close with her husband when those new houses were built, downsizing when her three children had grown up, and continued working at Magdalen College and then Rye St Anthony school until she reached 70. In retirement she was happy with her friends, family, garden, and books, and remained an avid reader during some years of deteriorating health. Always cheerful, with a smile for us all but with a strong will and sense of humour, she will be fondly remembered, and we offer condolences to her son Steve and daughter Jane (a frequent visitor from California) and their families, with memories also of Kevin, her son, who sadly died a few years ago, on the loss of a lovely mother, grandmother and great grandmother. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Alan Northcott b.24 April 1951, d. 2 November 2025, aged 74

Alan and Liz left River View in 1992 for Phoenix, Arizona, having contributed to the choir and generally at St Andrews. Soon after settling in the USA Alan led the Sandford walk down and up the Grand Canyon – a great treat. His modest and assuming manner will be missed by all who knew him and appreciated his friendship. We offer our sympathies to Liz and their family.

His ashes will be placed in the Garden of Remembrance here after a short service on 18th December.

Rex Duckett, of Main Avenue died on 4 September at the age of 95.

His move to Sandford was into familiar territory; he had been a willing errand-boy for his grandparents at the Isis Farmhouse Hotel during his school holidays. After National Service he spent 38 years working at the Morris factory, and moved with Lil to Main Avenue in 1997. You never saw him without a smile, and he learned to be a very competent and willing head cook as Lil became less able to stand for long in the kitchen. During his last months she cared for him as his health failed, and has since moved to a nursing home in Didcot. Neighbours will miss their kindness and cheerful sociability. May he rest in peace.

Jennie Barnett died on 25 October at her home in Kiln Close, where she had lived since 2002. The limitations that came with increasing age and loss of mobility were heavy for her to bear: she missed being able to drive, and to look after her garden. More recently the death of her neighbour Peggy Harris (see notice above) was a heavy blow, and although she was very aware of being loved and well cared for, she was ready for her life to end. She had always kept busy, proudly dictating recently a list of her seven successive jobs, ending with 29 years as contracts director for Williams Cleaners until over the age of 80. She and George had met while working on the buses as conductress and driver. They leave a son and daughter. George died in 2000, but Jennie lived a full life in the following years, and was in her element as a grandmother, finding words that were to-the-point but always kindly. She was thankful to live to meet her first great-grandchild this year.

AFTERNOON TEAS

in the Village Hall on first Wednesday of the month 2.0– 4.0
A community event for over 18s – homemade cakes and teas, and a raffle on the day. Cost £4. Join us by booking with Prue Reynolds on prue.reynolds96@gmail.com



Say it with flowers

Whether you have a wedding, a funeral, an anniversary, a dinner party or just want to cheer someone up I'm available to help. I'm just an enthusiastic amateur who loves to work with flowers, so email me at Caroletasker27@gmail.com or give me a call 07876 701151 .



HILLSIDE EXOTIC GARDENING

is a Sandford business run by Nicky and Lewis, with a wonderful range of exotic plants – see their website at hillsideexoticgardening.co.uk



The Parish Clerk

Lynne Bustin has unfortunately had to resign as parish clerk due to other commitments. She had a very positive impact on our operations during her 18 months as clerk and we were very sorry to lose her. She is kindly helping with the transition to our new clerk, Anita James, and we wish her well in future.

Anita started on November 1st and is starting to get to grips with the work of the PC. She is a qualified clerk and for the time being is clerk to 2 other local councils so has a lot of experience. She is a long-term resident of Wheatley and has friends in and other long-term connections to Sandford-on-Thames. We would like to welcome her to the role and look forward to working together.

Peter Addyman, Chair, Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council

PeterA@sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk

<https://sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk/>

Talking Shop Apple pressing day 2025.

Arguably the best apple pressing day to date!! This year was a "Mast" year because the collective term for a bumper crop of tree and shrub fruits, nuts, and seeds is "mast", an old English word. These events occur periodically and provide a significant food source for wildlife, which is why the phenomenon is important for ecosystems.

We had so many apples we ran out of time even with two presses on the go. Our new apple "Scratter" did the job, efficiently pulping apples (and some pears) before going into the presses and then onto the bottlers who had trouble keeping up. In a few more years, the community orchard should provide enough to keep us going for days!

All this produced about £250 for TS and having our own equipment saved a further £40 in hire fees so a great community effort with a very useful contribution to TS funds.

Hope to see you in 2026. (A Mast year is often followed by a low crop year so we may need everybody to step up their fruit donations in 2026).

The Power of Poetry

At Vale House, we have discovered that reading poetry to residents who are no longer mobile and cannot speak allows for special communication between us as they listen to the old, familiar words.



"Poetry is like music without the instruments", someone said to me once. The music is in the words and how they come together, with the rhythms and, sometimes, but not always, the rhymes. The "instrument" is the human voice. Poems tell stories, share emotions and feelings, express thoughts. At Vale House, there is a battered, old copy of "I wandered lonely as a cloud and other poems you half remember from school" edited by Ana Sampson.

Perhaps that is where the power of the poetry lies. So many of the poems are half remembered. "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" by Keats, "This is the night train crossing the border" by Auden, Masfield's "Sea Fever", Shakespeare's sonnet "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day" and dozens of others . . . the residents listen quietly.

Nothing compares, however, with the effect of lyrical Chinese poetry from the 8th to the 12th centuries - poets such as Tu Fu, Lu Yu, Chu Hai, Hau Chao, Su Tung and the woman poets Li Ch'ing Chau and Chu Shu Shen. Here we enter a world of wild swans, chrysanthemums and plum blossom, of the East and West winds, of loneliness, of drunkenness (a lot of wine is drunk in these poems), of long journeys, of quiet times, of retirement, of waiting for a lover to return, of greying hair, of sadness and loss.

Some of the poems are as short as four lines or a couple of four-line verses. Others are much longer. Often each line is a sentence with no direct connection to the next line. The last line may be a question, or half question: "Misty, indistinct, the shadow of a lone wild goose?" (Su Tung). In translation there are usually no rhymes. The apparent simplicity hides complex thoughts about the human condition. I can read twenty Chinese poems one after the other, and the residents will still want more.

Sometimes they open their eyes and nod their heads. And when I ask if they would like me to visit them again, most of them indicate that they would.

Carol Wills, Volunteer Reader

Bits and pieces

Oxford Science Park

If you are interested, there is a video by Magdalen College about the development of the Science Park at [youtube.com/watch?v=KeoFyrybvkq](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeoFyrybvkq)

Temporary congestion charge

Six congestion charge points for those travelling by car in Oxford city are now in place. Sandford residents can apply for 25 passes per car (bad luck on car sharers), and other groups, such as blue badge holders, are exempt from the charge.

See: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/oxfordshire-temporary-congestion-charge-cars/congestion-charge-permits>.

Have your say on the future of the fire service

The County Council is reviewing how our fire and rescue service operates to make sure it's fit for the future, and want our views. The consultation is open until 20 January 2026. See:

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ofrs-consultation>.

Or join an online event to find out more, ask questions, and share your views on 12 December - book your place at:

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ofrs-event-booking-form>.

Charging electric cars: Oxfordshire residents without off street parking can apply for a scheme that allows them to charge an electric vehicle (EV) outside their own home. More information on [oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk).

Indices of deprivation

The English Indices of Deprivation 2025, updated every 3-5 years, has been published, and shows that while 21 of Oxford's 83 neighbourhoods are in the 10% *least* deprived areas in England, of our near neighbours two areas in Northfield Brook are in the top 10% *most* deprived areas in England, and four (2 in Blackbird Leys, 1 in Littlemore, and 1 in Rose Hill) are in the top 20%.

Independent Oxford

is a network that supports & promotes independent businesses in Oxfordshire, with a fascinating directory of small businesses of all kinds.

[Independentoxford.co](https://independentoxford.co)

Oxfordshire's councils are voting through rival plans for local government reorganisation.

The county's existing councils have not been able to agree on a way forward - meaning three different proposals will be submitted to the government by its deadline of 28 November.

One unitary council

Oxfordshire County Council is backing the idea of having one unitary authority. It estimates the initial set up costs will be £21.9m and the change would generate savings of more than £63m a year.

Two unitary councils

Five councils have backed plans for two unitary councils across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. There would be one authority to the north - the Oxfordshire and Shires council - covering Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire. The second authority would be further south - called the Ridgeway Council - and cover South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire. The transition cost is estimated at £30.4m, with savings anticipated to reach £59.8m a year.

Three unitary councils

A proposal for three unitary councils is being put forward by Oxford City Council. It would include a Greater Oxford Council, which would extend the city's boundaries out into the green belt (and would take in Sandford). Similar to the two unitary option, it would also include a northern Oxfordshire council covering the rest of Cherwell and West Oxfordshire. Plus there would be a southern Ridgeway Council including West Berkshire. The transition cost is estimated at £36.2m, and it is anticipated savings would reach £48.5m annually after five years of operation.

What happens next?

Once the three proposals are submitted, the government says a consultation could be launched in early 2026. That is likely to last until the local elections in May 2026. Government ministers will then decide, subject to parliamentary approval, if any of the proposal will be implemented, with or without modification. It says it will take into account representations and consultation responses - with a final decision announced before summer 2026. That would allow for elections to the new unitary authority, or authorities, in May 2027.

The new structure would then "go live" in April 2028.

Notes on the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 1st September 2025

Full minutes can be viewed on the Parish Council website:

<https://sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk/>

*Members of the public are very welcome to attend any Parish Council meetings: please submit any agenda items to the Parish Clerk, Lynne Bustin, at least 10 days prior to the meeting at **Clerk@sandford-on-thames-pc.gov.uk**.*

Present: Peter Addyman (Chair), Dan Tarzey, Michael Whitlock, Luke Young, Lewis Barrett, Paul Bradbury, Mark Baseby, 2 MOP

1. Public participation: to receive questions from members of the public relating to items on the agenda, in accordance with the Council's code of conduct and standing orders

- a. *Replacement of WW1 100 year anniversary tree:* Parish Council agreed to replace the tree and source a tree guard.
- b. *Photographic competition:* Request from VHC for £250 towards prizes. VHC will ask entries for permission to use photographs on Parish Council website. Parish Council agreed to fund the prizes.
- c. *Parishioner question about 20mph zones.* There are ongoing safety concerns with the speed of the large lorries entering the Laing O Rourke site. The Parish Council will ask for more visible 20mph signage, including road painting and replacement of the sign at the Grenoble Road. The Parish Council will also ask OCC about the possibility of road narrowing (priority in/out) to slow down traffic. There is a 30 painted on the dual carriageway end of the Henley Road which needs updating. There is a current request with LOR to fund speed Indicator devices for the parish. Parishioner noted that in Cornwall there are SIDs that record the car registration and are very effective. The Parish Council will investigate the funding currently available through Thames Valley Police for road safety measures.

2. Minutes: Approved and signed the August minutes

3. Clerk's report notes as follows:

- a. The Parish Council advised that unless vehicles are parked illegally there is nothing they can do
- b. The Parish Council will investigate responsibilities and ownership of the waterways in the parish
- c. Parish Councillors to review recent report of a blocked right of way, and a report of a missing kissing gate
- d. Issues with parking outside the Catherine Wheel pub reported. The Parish Council will ask for guidance from Road Traffic officers and Highways team. Noted that the parking bays have faded paint lines.
- e. The recent cleaning works carried out by District Council workers only reached halfway down Church Road (on the recreation ground side). Several residents reported issues with drains. The Parish Council will request the District Council return and complete gully/drain clearance works throughout the parish.
- f. Parish Councillors will inspect salt bins in the parish and inform the Clerk if more salt needs to be ordered for this winter.
- g. The Parish Council are obtaining quotes for replacement bollards along the roadside edge of the Wharf, and to move the gate to the tarmac area (with a 'do not obstruct' sign to be added to the gate). The Parish Council will ask OCC if the bollards can be moved closer to the roads edge to prevent vehicles parking on the grass.
- h. The Parish Council will install 'no bicycles' signs at each end of the path that goes through the Community Orchard due to recent reports of damage to the path surface.
- i. The Parish Council will investigate the legal status of the strip of ground by Broadhurst Gardens and OPT ground. Is there a covenant, wayleave or similar across this land? There is currently a 'no dogs' sign at the playground end, which will be reviewed once the designation of the land is confirmed.
- j. The hedge at the property on Henley Road severely affects the use of the pavement and no response to PC communications. The Parish Council to ask the District Council for assistance.

4. Parish Matters

- a. Parish Council to ask contractors to crown lift tree at the end of Yeftly Drive
- b. Parish Council to ask for a quote for Brick Kiln Lane verge to be included in regular cutting schedule, and all the areas of grass up to the end of Henley Road. Parish Council to ask OCC which authority is responsible for the verges up to the Science Park roundabout.

- c. Parish Council noted Wharf grass was still not cut, but the gate has now been shut due to unauthorised camping. Brambles are coming back round the edge..
- d. Parish Council agreed that all areas of grass need cutting before the end of August including the wildflower designated areas.
- e. Parish Council noted the footpath adoption at the A4074, and asked about the railings in place at the end of Heyford Hill Lane, Parish Clerk to ask whether there is scope to move them.

5. Community Orchard

f. The Parish Council will send the apple press invoice to the College for reimbursement. Parish Clerk to check how much balance is left in College funds for the Community Orchard. Councillors discussed the purchase of an electric trimmer and battery.

6. IT: Parish Clerk to make sure the new council website has clear contact details for the village hall listed

Notes on the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 6th October 2025 at 6.45 pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Peter Addyman (PA) Chair, Mark Baseby (MB), Paul Bradbury (PB), Lynne Bustin (Clerk), County Cllr Robin Jones, 1 x MOP

- 1. Minutes:** Approved and signed October minutes
- 2. Clerk's report actions:**
 - a. Clerk to report blocked drain/gullies on Church Road
 - b. Parish Council to consider ornamental boulders for grass verge adjacent The Wharf
 - c. Parish Council to speak to Catherine Wheel pub about parking
 - d. Clerk to chase speed monitor survey
 - e. Clerk to request parish road resurfacing for 2027
 - f. Clerk to continue to engage with Laing O'Rourke over community contributions

3. Village Hall & Talking Shop

Councillors discussed garden access for hall hirers when Talking Shop is closed. Agreed that separate gardens for each venue would be beneficial.

4. Community Orchard: Very successful apple pressing day

5. IT: See Clerk report – hybrid meeting technology options discussed. Initial quote from Cloudy IT considered too high. C/F this item to next meeting

Notes on the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 3rd November 2025 at 6.45 pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Peter Addyman (Chair), Cllr Michael Whitlock (Vice-Chair) Cllr Dan Tarzey, Cllr Paul Bradbury, Cllr Mark Baseby, District Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye until 7.10pm, County Cllr, Robin Green until 7.20pm.

District & County News

We heard that South Oxfordshire District Council has been asked to withdraw its Local Plan and that a legal challenge is underway. Cost-of-Living Grants are open until 6th November.

At county level, councillors are seeking reassurance on emergency plans linked to the reservoir, and the Oxford Cowley Line upgrade has been approved, including two new stations and regular services to London.

Around the Village

A few practical improvements are coming: new swing seats for the playground, better cycling signs, new parking and gate signage at the Wharf, and a missing 20mph sign will be replaced. Highways have cleaned Church Road and will clear the drain soon. The council is also waiting to hear back about a possible community noticeboard at Park Homes.

The 20mph team is still looking at extra markings and possible road-narrowing.

Other Updates

- Councillors will attend a community meeting with Laing O'Rourke.
- Football traffic issues seem to be resolved.
- A meeting is planned with the Catherine Wheel landlord to discuss parking.
- Website issues at the Village Hall/Talking Shop are being followed up.
- The Community Orchard received funding for an apple press.
- Quotes are being gathered for equipment to help run hybrid meetings.

No new planning applications this month.

This Link magazine is published by the Link Committee and this issue is edited by Prue Sykes, Lower Farm, Sandford-on-Thames (748848). Anything for inclusion should be sent to Lower Farm or e-mailed to robert.morgan@theology.ox.ac.uk.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

December 6th	Last date for Christmas donations (p5) Christmas Food Market (p10)
December 10th	Community lunch (p16)
December 13th	Christmas concert (p2)
December 14th	Carol service (p3)
December 17th	Carols at the King's Arms (p3)
December 20th	Last Saturday market (p10)
December 23rd	Talking Shop closes for Christmas (p10)
December 24th	Christingle (p3) Midnight Mass (p3)
December 25th	Christmas Communion (p3) Littlemore Christmas Day Lunch (p8)
January 2nd	Talking Shop reopens (p10)
January 14th	Community Lunch (p16)
January 15th	Filming in the Wild (p7)
January 24th	Whatnots Childrens' Theatre (p9)
February 4th	Afternoon Tea (p18)
February 11th	Community Lunch (p16)
February 19th	First Steps in Cha Cha (p7)
March 4th	Afternoon Tea (p18)
March 11th	Community Lunch (p16)
March 19th	Gardeners' Question Time (p7)
March 21st	Village Quiz Night (p8)
April 1st	Afternoon Tea (p18)
April 5th	Easter Sunday
April 8th	Community Lunch (p16)
April 16th	Learning to draw (p7)



Sandford calendar 2026



The Green Heart of Sandford postcard