

Putting the Love of Christ in the Heart of our Community



Signpost

Winscombe, Sandford and Churchill Parish Magazine



February 2026

FREE

Who's Who in Winscombe, Sandford and Churchill Churches

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Parish Safeguarding Officers	Jo Claridge (St James's & All Saints) safeguarding@winsandchurches.org.uk Pauline Hurst (St John's) stjchurchill.safeguarding@outlook.com	07986 665618 01934 852784
Churchwardens St James the Great, Winscombe	Derrick Claridge winscombechurchwarden@gmail.com Beth Cutmore bethwayside@gmail.com	07941 202768 07486 549030
All Saints, Sandford	Diana Williams sandfordchurchwarden@gmail.com Simon Crew smg.crew@yahoo.co.uk	01934 852449 07960 151717
St John the Baptist, Churchill	Tricia Avery averyfarm@cpsmail.co.uk <i>One vacant post</i>	01934 852360
Pastoral Care Team	Reverend Pauline Nixon revpolly@gmail.com	07511 935860
Churchill Methodist, Minister Pastor	Reverend Andrew Bell Ken Young	01934 852314 01934 852686
Lynch Chapel Pastor/Minister	David Jewell The Lynch, Winscombe, BS25 1AR davidjewells@aol.com	07443 907454
Sidcot Quakers Meeting House	Oakridge Lane, Sidcot, BS25 1LT	01934 843065
Roman Catholics	Our Lady Queen of Apostles, Cheddar	01934 709224

How To Find Our Churches - If you need directions to:

- St James the Great Church, Church Lane, Winscombe, BS25 1BX
- All Saints Church, Hill Road, Sandford, BS25 5NY
- St John the Baptist Church, Church Lane, Churchill, BS25 5QW
- Church Centre, 52 Woodborough Road, Winscombe, BS25 1BA

Please use your Satnav with the postcodes, or visit the website www.achurchnearyou.com

This magazine is one of the ways we are fulfilling our Vision

reach**ing**
wel**com**ing
c**ar**ing
se**rv**ing
Teach**ing**

Putting the love of Christ in the heart of our community.

Wherever the road leads next ...



As I prepare to leave this parish, the story that has been returning to me again and again, is the story of the Exodus. For those who may not know the biblical reference, Exodus is the Old Testament account of God leading the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, through the wilderness and towards a new future in the promised land. It is a story about leaving, about trusting God in times of change, and about hope unfolding step by step.

It might seem an unusual choice for February, when the days are still short and the fields still look more brown than green, yet Exodus is not only a story of departure, it is also a story of promise, of God at work in the space between what has been and what is yet to come. That makes it feel very fitting for both this season and this moment of my farewell.

The people of Israel did not leave Egypt because everything was neatly tied up. They left because God called them onward. They stepped out into uncertainty, trusting that the God who had been with them in slavery would also be with them on the road ahead. Exodus reminds us that faith is often lived in the middle, between the familiar and the new, between comfort and hope.

As a curate, I arrived here in July 2022 with much to learn, and I have learned it in church services and social encounters, at gravesides and moments of quiet grief, as well as times of joy filled weddings and baptisms. Like the Israelites setting out with what they could carry, I take with me many memories, lessons and friendships that I will treasure. I am deeply grateful for your patience, encouragement and generosity along the way.

February also brings the first hopeful signs of spring. Snowdrops appear, not because winter has gone, but because new life insists on pushing through. Spring comes gently in small hints and promises. Exodus is like that too, the promised land was not reached overnight, but God was present in daily bread, guidance and unexpected provision along the way.

It's a particular joy to know that this benefice is beginning its next season with the recent arrival of your new vicar, Revd Dr Julian Davies. I leave knowing that you are in good hands, and I hope Julian's ministry among you will be marked by laughter as well as prayer, by good cups of tea and plenty of cake!

So, this is not simply goodbye, but a cheerful blessing for the journey ahead. May this season of early spring be full of growth, kindness, and the occasional surprise. May your parish life continue to flourish, and may God lead you forward with hope, joy, and a smile. Wherever the road leads next, for me, and for you, may we walk it knowing that the God of Exodus still goes before us.

Revd Jacqui Keir-Bucknall

Signpost - The Parish Magazine

Welcome to February's edition of Signpost. The magazine aims to serve and reach out to the local village communities of Winscombe, Sandford and Churchill and in doing so, provide opportunities for the residents to become more aware of activities across all Christian denominations and within our villages. We hope you enjoy reading this month's edition.

Next Month's Magazine

The deadline for March's edition is Sunday 15th February. Please submit items, which should be no longer than 400 words, as Word documents to parishmag2@gmail.com. If you include photographs, please ensure that you have the permission of anyone appearing in the photograph for them to be published in this magazine. Please supply high resolution photographs as jpegs.

The Editorial Team reserves the right to amend and/ or reformat submitted articles.

Signpost – paper copy

We produce a limited number of black and white printed copies of Signpost that are available from some local shops, each of our churches and the Church Centre.

Signpost – via email

We encourage as many people as possible to receive their full colour copy of Signpost via email. If you would like to receive future editions by email, please send your email address to parishmag2@gmail.com. If you are unable to receive your copy via email, please contact one of the Churchwardens giving your full name and address.

Our website: www.winsandchurches.org.uk

Our website is the 'go to place' for information about our Churches and activities. It is regularly updated with the latest news and information.

- ❖ Home Page: latest news, monthly service plan
- ❖ Our Vision: find out about our plans for the future
- ❖ Church Life: our activities and groups
- ❖ Our Podcasts and Videos: a library of Church services to watch or listen to
- ❖ Signpost Magazine: download the latest copy and find out how to contribute
- ❖ Hire A Venue: how to hire our Church Centre, Churches and meeting rooms

SIGNPOST - DONATIONS WELCOME

It costs approximately £600 per annum to produce the magazine, based on current prices for materials and ink. Volunteers give their time freely to distribute the magazine.

We are always grateful to supporters who choose to make a donation, and those that place a paid for advert, towards the on-going costs of the magazine. Donations can be placed in an envelope marked 'Signpost Donation' and posted in the letterbox at the Church Centre in Winscombe.

If you wish to place an advert, please contact the Editorial Team at parishmag2@gmail.com.

Many thanks to all those who have already made a donation; your generosity is very much appreciated.

Welcome to Reverend Julian



We have been eagerly anticipating the arrival of our new Vicar, Reverend Dr Julian Davies for several months, and are delighted that he has now joined us here in the Benefice of Winscombe and Sandford with Churchill.



Reverend Julian was licensed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells at a special service held at St James the Great Church, Winscombe on Thursday 15th January. Over 100 people attended the service including the Bishop, Archdeacon and Area Dean together with clergy from the local area. Friends and colleagues of Reverend Julian were also there to support him, together with members of our congregations.



The service was followed by a welcome reception in the Church Centre.



On Sunday 18th January, Reverend Julian celebrated his first service with us; Benefice Holy Communion at the Church Centre. At the end of the service, he was presented with a hamper of local produce to welcome Julian and his family to the area.

We are all looking forward to a positive future working with Reverend Julian in our church and local communities. He is looking forward to getting to know us over the coming weeks.

Reverend Julian's contact details can be found on the 'Who's Who' section of this magazine (page 2).





WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2026

“I will give you rest, come”

Matthew 11: 28-30

Friday 6th March 2026

**Everyone is welcome to join us at the
Lynch Chapel, Winscombe ~ 12.30 to 2 pm**

The World Day of Prayer is an international, women-led, ecumenical movement that shares the hopes, concerns, and prayers of women from around the globe. This year, the women of Nigeria have created a service that speaks to our need for peace and solace, drawing on their faith and experiences, in a world filled with struggles and anxieties. We give thanks to the Christian women of Nigeria for this service and pray that their stories will encourage and inspire women throughout the world to unite as one people in both prayer and action.

This year's artwork has been created by Gift Amarachi Ottah, a final-year Mass Communication student at Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike in Ebonyi State, and draws inspiration from her home state of Abia in Nigeria.

Gift's artwork depicts the daily reality of rural Nigerian women whose lives are marked by endless labour from sunrise to sunset. These women traverse treacherous paths to their farms, often carrying both their harvest and their children – a toddler strapped to their back, a heavy load balanced on their head while guiding other children along

unmaintained roads through thick bush.



The artwork also shows three women sitting together, their different traditional attire representing Nigeria's diverse cultures. Though they come from different ethnic groups, their shared experiences unite them. To meet their basic survival needs, these women carry burdens and traumas that are physical, emotional and spiritual.

Yet these burdens become bearable when we respond to Jesus' invitation to come and find rest in him. When we bring our weariness to Christ and support one another in community, we find rest and strength to continue our journey.

For further details visit: <https://wwdp.org.uk> .



Supporting Your Local Foodbanks



Our churches support the **Cheddar Valley Foodbank** and the Foodbank based at the **For All Healthy Living Centre** in Bournville, Weston-Super-Mare.

We are pleased to be able to deliver non-perishable foods to the Foodbanks and continue to make a significant contribution.

There are collection baskets for each village in each of the Churches and at the Church Centre.

The foodbanks also appreciate cash donations which can be used to buy items in particular need or provide vouchers that can be spent on food in local supermarkets.

Cash donations can be placed in the post box at the Church Centre in Winscombe. Please label to show whether your donation is for the Cheddar Foodbank or the For All Healthy Living Centre.

These are some of the items that can be donated and are always gratefully received.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ❖ Soup – packet and tinned | ❖ Tinned vegetables |
| ❖ Instant mashed potato | ❖ Tinned fish |
| ❖ Cereals | ❖ UHT milk |
| ❖ Sauces – tins and jars of pasta sauce | ❖ Main meals in tins (not Fray Bentos pies please) |
| ❖ Custard – tinned or instant | ❖ Squash |
| ❖ Long life fruit juices | ❖ Paper goods – toilet roll, kitchen roll etc. |
| ❖ Desserts – tinned fruit, rice pudding, sponge | ❖ Tinned cold meats – corned beef, spam |
| ❖ Pasta, rice, instant noodles | ❖ Tea bags, coffee, hot chocolate |
| ❖ Sugar | ❖ Biscuits |
| ❖ Personal items – soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste | ❖ Men's and ladies' toiletries |
| ❖ Confectionery | ❖ Snack bars and crisps |

Safeguarding

Our churches are committed to promoting a safe environment and culture. The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a priority. Further information about our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures can be found on our website <https://winsandchurches.org.uk/safeguarding/>.

Details of how to contact one of our Parish Safeguarding Officers can be found on page 2 of this magazine.



CHURCHES TOGETHER

LENT LUNCHES 2026

Come and join us for our **FRIDAY Lent Lunches**
with guest speakers at the Church Centre, Winscombe (except 27th March)
12.30 – 2 pm

FRIDAY 27th FEBRUARY	Cheddar Foodbank hosted by Sidcot Quakers
FRIDAY 6th MARCH	World Day of Prayer (no Lent Lunch – see page 6 for full details) Lynch Chapel, Winscombe
FRIDAY 13th MARCH	Read Easy hosted by Lynch Chapel
FRIDAY 20th MARCH	inHope Charity, Bristol hosted by All Saints, St James's and St John's
FRIDAY 27th MARCH	Guide Dogs for the Blind hosted by Cheddar Catholics at Cheddar Catholic Church, Tweentown, Cheddar

Donations for each charity will be most welcome

COFFEE MORNING



Every Tuesday at 10.30 am
Church Centre, Winscombe
All Welcome





After our Christmas break, it was good to meet together again for the first of our planned nine breakfasts in the year ahead. This was an open meeting for all, so our number was well up, particularly as our guest speaker was Steve Reed. So well-known in the village and the surrounding area, Steve had agreed to share some of his life story, his long career with the Post Office, his epic walks and other interests. He interspersed his presentation with clips of music related to various times and events. For the future, we look forward to more members of the group relating aspects of their life, their interests and their faith. A free breakfast is on offer for any of our speakers.

Our next breakfast together, for men only this time, will be on **Saturday 14th February**. Please do let me know at least a week in advance if you will be coming as I will need to let the Woodborough Inn know an estimate of our numbers for the Saturday. As usual, I will send reminders to all on the mailing list. Do consider joining us if you have not been before, or invite friends too, as we have capacity for more at the Woodborough Inn. The price of a small English breakfast is £11.50; the vegetarian option is £10.50.

Other breakfast options will be available, but these *do need to be pre-booked*.

To book your place for the February breakfast contact Tim Harland on 01934 843248.

Shipham, Rowberrow & Star History Society

There is no meeting in February - next meeting date:

Tuesday 10th March

Speaker: Allan Middleton

**Talk entitled: *The Refurbished Axbridge Station*
at Shipham Village Hall, BS25 1SG**

Refreshments: 7.15 pm Members: £2, guests £4

For further details contact: Jan Taylor 01934 260784

All Saints Church Community Café

Thanks to everyone who, despite the bitterly cold weather and post-Christmas blues, came along to support January's Café which raised £300.22 (including Gift Aid), towards Church funds.

Our next café date is:

SATURDAY 7th FEBRUARY 2026

10.30 am – 12.30 pm

All Saints Church, Sandford



A variety of coffee, teas and soft drinks along with homemade cakes, biscuits and soup is served

We look forward to seeing you ~ **EVERYONE WELCOME**



Churchill Reading Room

Saturday mornings 10 am - midday

Come and join us for a friendly chat over coffee at the Reading Room on Front Street
(just behind the Clock Tower)

We have a lending library and jigsaw exchange plus tea, coffee, cake and bacon baps on offer.

A chance to catch up with friends and neighbours.

Hope to see you there!





QUIZ EVENING

Saturday 21st February
Sandford Village Hall
7.00 for 7.30 pm

**Teams of
up to 6**

Raffle



**Bring your own
drinks and nibbles**

Tickets: £4.00 per person
(Call - 823484)

***(In aid of All Saints Church
Building Fund)***

Sandford Helpline

This is a car scheme offering transport to all Sandford residents who do not have family or friends to take them to health-related appointments including hospitals, dentists or opticians.



**We have a small pool of volunteer drivers
BUT URGENTLY NEED MORE!!**

Regular commitment is not necessary, and mileage allowance is paid - please contact: Chris Noble on 01934 903145 or email: mrs.noble@gmail.com

Looking for a local venue for a
regular class or group?

Church Centre, Winscombe could be just perfect



- ✓ fully accessible – all on ground level
- ✓ spacious facilities
- ✓ free parking
- ✓ kitchen
- ✓ large fully equipped hall
- ✓ hourly rate from £12
- ✓ central to a thriving village

Interested in finding out more? Call: 01934 352696 or

Email: admin@winsandchurches.org.uk



We would like to let customers know that as from **Monday 16th February 2026**, Winscombe Post Office will be reducing its opening hours to **four mornings a week**:

Monday: 9 am – 1 pm

Tuesday: 9 am – 1 pm

Thursday: 9 am – 1 pm

Friday: 9 am – 1 pm

This decision hasn't been taken lightly. Over the past couple of years, we have reduced our hours slightly and have been trying to sell the business, but without success. As time has gone on, we have found the current hours increasingly difficult to sustain.

Rather than close the Post Office altogether, and lose this valued village service, we felt that reducing our hours further was the best way to keep the Post Office open and continue serving the community for the foreseeable future.

We know how important the Post Office is to many people in Winscombe, and we have carefully considered the impact this change may have. We hope the revised hours will continue to provide a reliable and accessible service, particularly for those who depend on it locally.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone for their continued support, kindness and understanding. We are very grateful to be part of the Winscombe community and hope you will continue to support the Post Office under the new opening hours.

Sue & Steve Reed
Winscombe Post Office



Folk ... Yes, but all kinds of music and verse
Fourth Tuesday each month 7.30 to 10.30 – just £2

Upstairs Bar, Winscombe Club, 7 Sandford Road - a quiet and respectful acoustic space for performers and audience.

Further information from Nigel Carson: 07551 197685 or winscombefolkclub@gmail.com - also on Facebook

we ♥
CREATE! Sunday

Free

WINTER FUN & PANCAKES

Sun 22 February
4-6pm @Churchill Methodist

BS25 5NG

FAMILY FUN 0-99Y

CRAFT & GAMES INDOORS

TOTS TO TEENS

STORY & BUFFET TEA

ALL WELCOME



Churchill Methodist Church
churchillmethodistchurch.org.uk
churchillmethodistchurch@gmail.com



BRANCH MEETING

The first RAFA-MSB Event of 2026 was a Branch Meeting on Monday 5th January starting at 11:00 am in Wells Golf Club. Our Branch President, Group Captain Dick Whittingham, gave a fascinating presentation; *'History of a Belgian Spitfire Pilot'* called Bobby Laumans, whom he met during his RAF career. This was followed by a discussion about the Branch's plans for activities during 2026 and ended as normal with an optional lunch and drinks from the club's menu and bar.



FUTURE PROGRAMME

The next RAFA-MSB Event of 2026 will be a Branch Meeting on Monday 2nd February starting at 11:00 am in Wells Golf Club, Blackheath Lane, Wells, BA5 3DS. There will be a presentation; *'Part 2 - A Belgian Spitfire Pilot after the War'*, by our Branch President Dick Whittingham, followed by preparations for the Branch AGM and finalisation of the Branch's plans and programme for spring and summer activities. The meeting will end with an optional lunch and drinks from the club's menu and bar.

The third event for 2026 will be the formal Branch AGM on Monday 2nd March which will review the activities and accounts for 2025 and appoint the Committee for 2026. This will be an important meeting, so all members are requested to attend in order to share their comments and feedback. There will be a raffle and optional lunch and drinks from the club's menu and bar.

RAFA-MSB covers BS25, BS26, BS27, BS28, BA4, BA5, BA6, BA16, TA10 and TA11 postal areas. The Committee welcomes RAFA members, current and Ex-RAF personnel and reserves, current and Ex-Commonwealth Air Forces personnel and reserves, members of the RAF family, and members of the public that support the RAFA's aims and purposes who live in this area, to join us for all our 2026 events.

For further information, contact the Branch via email at rafa.midsomerset@gmail.com or telephone the Secretary on 01458 224057.

February Word Search

Tuesday 17th February is Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day. There are 20 words associated with this special day hidden in the grid below. Circle the words as you find them - they may be found across, down, diagonally, and backwards and can overlap with each other. The hidden words are listed beneath the word search.



ASH WEDNESDAY
BATTER
BOWL
BUTTER
CATCH

EGGS
FAT
FLIP
FLOUR
FRYING PAN

LEMON
LENT
MARDI GRAS
MILK
PANCAKES

RACES
SHROVE TUESDAY
SUGAR
TOSS
WHISK

Answers can be found on page 38



Conducted by Andrew Tyrrell
Accompanied by Lochrian Ensemble
with
Claire Alsop - Organ
Nick Perry - Trumpet
Jeremy Little - Percussion

My soul, there is a country

Choral music by Purcell, Parry and Vaughan Williams
about life here and hereafter.

Including Purcell's 'Funeral Sentences', Parry's 'I was glad' and
'Songs of Farewell' and Vaughan Williams 'Let all the world'.

Saturday March 14th 2026

7.30pm

All Saints Church
All Saints Road
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 2NL
www.trinitysingers.co.uk

Tickets £12.50
Accompanied under 18 free



Churchill Music Programme of Events 2026



Artist	Venue	Date & Time	Price: Champions	Price: Non-Champions
Aquinas Piano Trio: Martin Cousin, Ruth Rogers & Katherine Jenkinson	St John's Church, Churchill, BS25 5QW	Sunday 22 nd March at 3pm	£15.50 Under 18 £1.00	£19.50 Under 18 £1.00
London Mozart Players	All Saints Church, Wroughton, BS40 5LF	Sunday 26 th April at 3pm	£15.50 Under 18 £1.00	£19.50 Under 18 £1.00
Royal Marines Association Concert Band	Churchill Recreation Field, Ladymead Lane, Churchill	Saturday 27 th June at 3pm	Free	Free

Website: <https://churchillmusic.org.uk/>

Tickets: ticketsource.co.uk OR holly@churchillmusic.org.uk

Call: Holly Greenwood-Roger on 07442 672805

Churchill & Langford Village Fund

QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 21st Feb



Churchill Memorial Hall

7pm for 7:30pm

Tickets: £7 pp
Licensed Bar

Teams of up to Eight
Nibbles provided

All Welcome — Support Your Village

Tickets available from:

www.thevillagefund.org.uk



All Saints Church, Sandford

At 8 o'clock on Christmas Eve, a record number of over one hundred people gathered at All Saints for the Village Carol Service. There was 'no room at the Inn' only standing room; the service was taken by Reverend Ann Ogram.



The Sandford Handbell Ringers played at the beginning and end of the service. After the welcome, the service began with Churchwarden Simon Crew lighting the four red candles on the beautiful Advent Wreath, representing Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.



The service contained seven well known carols and also included readings covering the prophecy of the Messiah's birth, the Angel Gabriel visiting Mary, the birth of Jesus Christ, and the shepherds going to the manger. Ann read the Christmas Gospel John 1:1-14, The Word of Life, and gave a short reflection on this Gospel reading. Also included were the poems 'BC:AD', by U A Fanthorpe, and 'The Gift' by Judith Searle, and a Christmas paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13.

After the Christmas Prayer and the carol, 'O Come, All Ye Faithful', we fast forwarded to Christmas Day, by lighting the centre candle in the wreath to celebrate the birth of Jesus. A young girl and her mother laid the baby Lord Jesus in the crib at the foot of the Christmas tree.

The congregation then joined in the blessing:

May the humility of the shepherds, the faith of the wise men, the joy of the angels and the peace of the Christ Child, be God's gift to us, and to everyone, this Christmas and always. Amen.

Refreshments of mulled wine, juice, tea, coffee and star shortbreads were served to all.

We wish you a happy and peaceful 2026.

Churchwardens Diana Williams and Simon Crew, and the All Saints Team

Come for a Cuppa!



**Tea and Cake
in the afternoon**

LAST Saturday every month!

Toy Corner available

LYNCH CHAPEL

2.30pm - 4pm



NEXT: Saturday 28th February

Come for a Cuppa!



**Knit, crochet, macramé,
sew or simply natter!**

**Any age and all abilities
welcome.**

**Tea and coffee
provided.**

Knit & Natter

**Second and fourth
Wednesday each
month**

2pm - 4pm

at LYNCH CHAPEL

(Just over the bridge on The Lynch)



FEBRUARY 11th & 25th

MARCH 11th & 25th

APRIL 8th & 22nd

AID FOR UKRAINE

Your help is needed **NOW** more than ever. The people of Ukraine are desperately in need of the following items:

- Warm winter clothes
- Tents
- Wheelchairs
- Camping equipment
- Sleeping bags
- Mobility aids
- Kitchen utensils
- Crockery and cutlery
- Medical supplies
- Blankets and bedding

Can you help?

Need items collected? Contact Martin Spiller on 01934 852295 or drop off to Angela Morris at 81 Green Hill Road, Sandford, BS25 5PF or call 01934 852327

The Ornamental Garden

Any congested clumps of **snowdrops** can be lifted and divided up now while they are still in the green; replant them at their original depth.



If you have not already done so, remove leaves from **hellebores**, cutting them back to ground level. This will not only expose the flowers to their best advantage but also reduce the risk of the plants becoming infected with any fungal disease. New foliage will be produced soon after flowering.

Any dead foliage or flowering spikes can be cut back to ground level to allow bulbs to emerge and manifest themselves. The only plants to leave at the moment are **penstemons** (as they still need protection from frost), and the spent flowering heads of **hydrangeas** which should be left until late March or April.

Final pruning can be carried out during February while the bare branches reveal the structure of the plant and before new shoots start to emerge in March. Pruning enables you to maintain the shape of the plant and induce it to produce new more vigorous shoots. Plants suitable for pruning at this time of the year, are those that form their buds on new growth and flower in the second half of the year. Spring and early flowering shrubs should be pruned after flowering.

Clematis that flower in the first half of the year, should be lightly pruned, and those that flower later in the year, cut back to 15-30cm from the ground. After pruning, apply a mulch of well-rotted manure or garden compost.

Buddleja, **Sambucus** and **Fuchsia** can all be cut back hard now, the harder they are cut back the more they will flower.



Cornus, which are grown for their coloured stems during winter, can also be cut back hard, although it's better to only remove the older stems and reduce the plant by 25%.

There is no mystery to pruning **roses** as there is little you can do from which they will not recover. Firstly, remove all damaged and crossing stems, then cut back hard any stems which are too weak to carry flowers. Finally, remove any old stems that are crowding the plant. Most shrub roses do not need any other pruning, but they can be reduced by a third by clipping evenly. Hybrid Teas, Floribundas and China roses, need to have all their remaining healthy shoots cut back by two-thirds.

Apply a mulch of well-rotted manure or garden compost to the borders, this will help to suppress weeds and conserve moisture, as well as providing nutrients to the plants.

Supporting and Protecting Our Natural World

Who was Ratty?

Every so often my cat, Pandi, proudly deposits a dead vole on the porch floor. She seems to find them quickly and easily from the nearby garden, and yet I have never seen a live vole. I was therefore surprised to read that the most common mammal in the UK is the field vole. There are at least 75 million of them, more than the human population!

Field voles are diminutive, with grey/brown fur above and pale grey underneath, with a short stumpy tail (so not a mouse). Voles like to keep a low profile, moving along the ground through a network of well-used runs in long grass that eventually lead to their underground tunnels and dens.

Field voles are extremely elusive, living quiet lives, mainly underground in a family colony of perhaps 2 adults, juveniles and a nest of babies.

They are highly preyed upon; an important food source for others such as foxes, stoats, weasels, shrews, cats(!), plus birds of prey, particularly owls and kestrels.

Despite massive predation field voles are not a protected species; the UK Red List describes them as of 'least concern.' A licence is not even needed to trap them. To maintain their numbers, voles are active by day and night. They do not hibernate and may produce 3 to 6 litters of up to 7 young annually, plus undergo a population boom every four years. Their lives consequently are very short perhaps only 2 to 6 months but there is constant replacement.

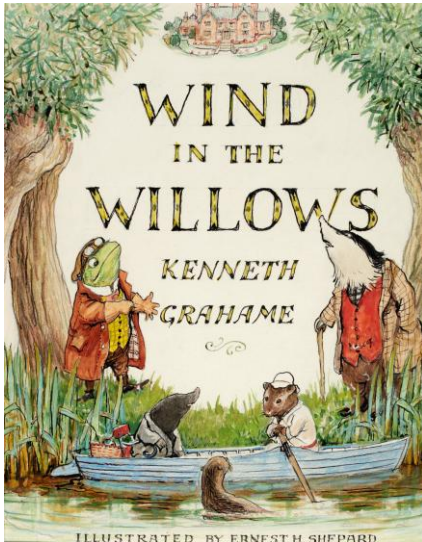


There are 2 other species of native vole in the UK - the bank and water vole, both are tiny and peaceful.

By contrast, the water vole is critically endangered, having suffered a population decline of 90% since the 1970s caused by loss of habitat and huge predation by American farmed mink, that have either escaped or been deliberately released from fur farms by activists. These deliberate releases highlight a conflict between animal welfare concerns for farmed mink, and conservation efforts to protect native species from escaped mink, that

can easily enter water vole burrows and take both adults and young.

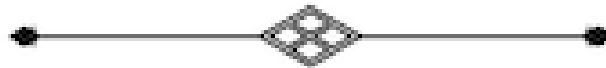
Now efforts are happening to help endangered voles. Conservation focuses on tackling their main threats using strategies like **habitat restoration** (improving riverbanks for burrows and cover); extensive **American mink control** via smart rafts (baited cages trap mink which are then taken away and humanely killed); releases from **captive breeding schemes** plus **public involvement** in surveys, sightings and land management, all coordinated by wildlife trusts and other national bodies.



Being so elusive there is little folklore and few stories about voles.

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame, is the beloved story of four characters - Mole, Ratty, Toad and Badger. Ratty is really a water vole! He is highly respected, modest and ready to help.

As in real life, when voles do appear in fiction, they often represent humility, community, family life and resilience.



February Quiz



It's St Valentine's Day this month when red roses are a traditional gift. So, this month's quiz is all about '*Things Called Red*'.

- 1 By what nickname was World War 1 fighter ace Manfred von Richthofen known?
- 2 Which British band is led by singer and songwriter Mick Hucknall?
- 3 In the book of Exodus, who held out his hand and divided the waters of the Red Sea?
- 4 Behind Coca Cola and Pepsi, which Austrian creation is the world's third most valuable soft drink brand?
- 5 Ailurus Fulgens is the scientific name of which reddish brown, ring-tailed, white faced small mammal native to the eastern Himalayas and southwestern China?
- 6 The 'Red Shield' is the symbol of which international Christian charitable organisation with its headquarters in London?
- 7 What is Manchester United's nickname?
- 8 Referring to the emotions she felt during its production, 'Red' was the 2012 fourth studio album by which singing superstar?
- 9 Which is by far the most common type of star in the Milky Way and also the name of a science fiction comedy programme first shown in the late 1980s?
- 10 Tobey Maguire portrays 1930s jockey, Red Pollard in which 2023 film, named for the horse that Pollard rode which was voted American Horse of the Year for 1938?

Answers can be found on page 43

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from birth to 4 years
and their parents/carers

Toys

Drinks &
Snacks

Stories
Both Bible &
traditional

Singing

Craft Activities

Games

Thursdays 9.30am - 11.30am
(term time only)

February 5th, 12th & 26th
March 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th
April 2nd
all at the Church Centre

The Church Centre, 52 Woodborough Road, Winscombe. BS25 1BA



Thatchers Community Orchard Project 2026

Closing date: 2nd February



Community groups across Bristol and Somerset are being encouraged to apply for free apple trees through Thatchers' Community Orchard Project. The family-owned cidemaker will donate 10, carefully selected apple trees, to 50 organisations, plus everything they need to establish and tend to a small orchard, as well as a commemorative plaque. Their aim is to help local communities sow the seeds for their own thriving orchards, transforming outdoor spaces and bringing people together through the power of nature.

Thatchers is looking for community groups who are making a difference. So, whether you're growing fruit and vegetables for those in need, supporting people with limited access to green spaces, using nature to boost mental health, or simply want to bring more trees into your neighbourhood, this is your chance to get involved and make a lasting impact, but don't delay.

CLOSING DATE: MONDAY 2nd FEBRUARY 2026 at 8 AM

Martin Thatcher, explains; *"From a single apple tree to a community orchard, it can make such a difference to people's well-being. We believe orchards are special places that have the power to give communities a place to come together, to learn, to share, to connect with nature and reflect on the world around them, all while contributing to biodiversity and creating new habitats for wildlife."*

Visit: www.thatcherscider.co.uk/thatchers-community-orchard and complete the application form, telling Thatchers how an orchard could benefit your group or community.



**Save the
Children**

***You can help children in distress
all around the world***

**SAVE the CHILDREN
LUNCHES**



**Save the
Children**

Fridays 6th and 20th February - 12.30 pm in Shipham Village Hall

Everyone is welcome to join us for soup, locally baked bread, cheddar cheese, pickle, homemade biscuits, tea or coffee.

Children under 5 will be given a free lunch

£5.50 (pay at the door) - all profits support Save the Children



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AT CHURCHILL METHODIST BS25 5NG



churchillmethodistchurch@gmail.com

churchillmethodistchurch.org.uk

DIARY – FEBRUARY 2026

SUN 1 4th SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY – PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

See opposite page for details of Services

TUES 3	10.00am	Midweek Communion - All Saints Church Room
	10.30am	Coffee Morning - Church Centre
WED 4	10.30am	Midweek Informal Service - Lynch Chapel
	7.15pm	Choir Practice - St James's
THURS 5	9.30am	Scramblers - Church Centre
	10.00am	Communion in the Community - Dunster Court
	7.30pm	Bell Ringing - St James's
SAT 7	10.30am	Community Café - All Saints Church

SUN 8 5th SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

See opposite page for details of Services

TUES 10	10.00am	Midweek Communion - All Saints Church Room
	10.30am	Coffee Morning - Church Centre
WED 11	10.30am	Midweek Informal Service - Lynch Chapel
	2.00pm	Knit & Natter - Lynch Chapel
	7.15pm	Choir Practice - St James's
THUR 12	9.30am	Scramblers - Church Centre
SAT 14	9.30am	Refreshmen+ Mens Breakfast - Woodborough Inn

SUN 15 LAST SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

See opposite page for details of Services

TUES 17	10.00am	Midweek Communion - All Saints Church Room
	10.30am	Coffee Morning - Church Centre

WED 18 ASH WEDNESDAY

See opposite page for details of Services

	2.45pm	Communion in the Community - Sewell House
THURS 19	7.30pm	Bell Ringing - St James's
SAT 21	7.00pm	All Saints Church Quiz - Sandford Village Hall

SUN 22 LENT 1

See opposite page for details of Services

TUES 24	10.00am	Midweek Communion - All Saints Church Room
WED 25	2.00pm	Knit & Natter - Lynch Chapel
	7.15pm	Choir Practice - St James's
THUR 26	9.30am	Scramblers - Church Centre
	11.00am	Communion in the Community - Winscombe Hall
	7.30pm	Bell Ringing - St James's
SAT 28	2.30-4.00pm	Come for a Cuppa - Lynch Chapel

Church Service Times

Opportunities to Worship in February

(only funerals are taking place at St James's Church due to issues with the heating)

Sunday 1st February	8.00 am 10.00 am	St John's Church Centre	BCP Holy Communion Benefice Sunday Celebration
Sunday 8th February	11.00 am 11.00 am	All Saints St John's	Morning Worship Holy Communion
Sunday 15th February	10.00 am	Church Centre	Benefice Holy Communion
Ash Wednesday 18th February	7.00 pm	St John's	Benefice Imposition of Ashes
Sunday 22nd February	11.00 am 11.00 am	All Saints St John's	Holy Communion Morning Worship

Midweek Services

Every Tuesday 10.00 am Holy Communion at All Saints

Special Services in December


Sunday 1st February 11.00 am Holy Communion at Sandford Station
 Thursday 5th February 10.00 am Holy Communion at Dunster Court
 Wednesday 18th February 2.45 pm Holy Communion at Sewell House
 Thursday 26th February 10.30 am Holy Communion at Winscombe Hall

We remember the family and friends of:

Joan Alen whose ashes were interred in the Churchyard of All Saints Church, Sandford on Tuesday 3rd February 2026.

Pamela Murphy whose ashes were interred in the Churchyard of All Saints Church, Sandford on Wednesday 25th February 2026.

BIBLE READINGS FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday 1st February 1 Kings 17: 8-16 Psalm 36: 5-10 1 Corinthians 1: 18-end John 2: 1-11	Sunday 8th February Genesis 1: 1-2: 3 Psalm 136 <i>or</i> 136: 1-9, 23-end Romans 8: 18-25 Matthew 6: 25-end	Sunday 15th February Exodus 24: 12-end Psalm 2 <i>or</i> Psalm 99 2 Peter 1: 16-end Matthew 17: 1-9
Ash Wednesday 18th February Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17 <i>or</i> Isaiah 58: 1-12 Psalm 51: 1-18 2 Corinthians 5: 20b-6: 107Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21 <i>or</i> John 8: 1-11		Sunday 22nd February Genesis 2: 15-17, 3: 1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5: 12-19 Matthew 4: 1-11

TESCO SUPERMARKET COLLECTIONS IN DECEMBER – THE RESULTS

As reported in January, during December, Branch members conducted RNLI bucket collections at three TESCO Supermarkets. On Saturday 6th December at TESCO, Wells members including, ‘*Stormy Stan and Stormy Sonny*’ collected £747, and on Friday 12th at TESCO in Nailsea, members collected £716, then on Christmas Eve at the TESCO Shepton Mallet store members including, ‘*Stormy Stan and Stormy Juniors*’ collected £1,232. Thus, the TESCO December bucket collections raised a grand total of £2,697 by our members standing quietly, smiling at, and talking to the shoppers. Thank you.



VOBSTER SANTA DIVE – SUNDAY 14th DECEMBER

The Vobster Quay Activity Centre hosted their Charity Santa Scuba Diving event on Sunday 14th December to raise money for the RNLI and Help for Heroes. A host of divers dressed in Santa suits with fluffy white beards, hit the water en masse. Financial results are not available yet.



RNLI MENDIP BRANCH ANNUAL SUPER QUIZ – SATURDAY 31st JANUARY 2026

RNLI Mendip Branch held its first event of 2026 our Annual Super Quiz on Saturday 31st January in Shiphams Village Hall. The quiz was for teams of six and included the usual ‘mega ploughman’s supper’, a bar and a multi-prize raffle. At the time of copy submission, twenty teams had registered so the event was shaping up well. Financial results and photos will be available for the March edition.

RNLI MENDIP FOLK CONCERT FEATURING MARK WAISTELL SATURDAY 21st FEBRUARY



RNLI Mendip Branch will present a Folk Concert by the singer and musician Mark Waistell starting at 8:00 pm (doors open 7:15 pm) on **Saturday 21st February** in St James's Church Centre, 52 Woodborough Road, Winscombe, BS25 1BA. Mark is a singer songwriter based in Devon. His music is folk acoustic based, but draws on many influences including classical, traditional, ragtime and rock.



Tickets costing £12.50 are obtainable from James Barattini at winscombe.folk@gmail.com or by calling 07703 538861. There will be a bar selling beers, ciders, wine and soft drinks, plus a raffle in aid of the RNLI.

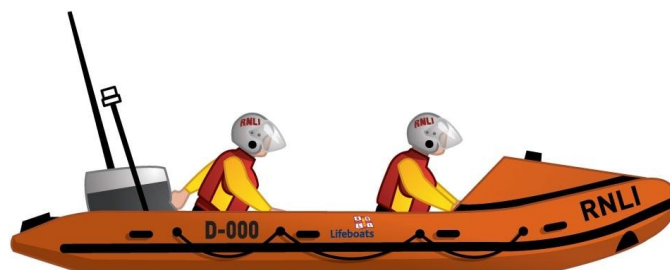
RNLI MENDIP ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING – THURSDAY 12th MARCH

RNLI Mendip Branch will hold its Annual Review Meeting (previously called AGM) on Thursday 12th March at 7:00 pm in the new Winscombe Community Hall; members of the public are welcome to attend

DECEMBER SHOUTS

In December there were 6 'shouts' between two of our four Somerset Lifeboat Stations (Portishead – 1, Weston-super-Mare – 5).

Weston-super-Mare Lifeboat crews received five shouts over the Christmas period (26th, 28th twice and 30th twice); all were for persons entering the water and potentially missing. On Sunday 28th December, crew were paged at 12:26 am by the HM Coastguard to assist police in the search for a missing person. The D Class lifeboat was launched and joined the National Police Air Service helicopter which was already searching. The Atlantic 85 lifeboat was prepped as a back up to the D class but was not required as the person was located inshore by the police. Both lifeboats were stood down and returned to service at 1.15am, ready for the next call out.





Monday 16th February 2026 starting at 2.30 pm

Winscome Community Centre, BS25 1JA

Speaker: Alan Noble

Talk entitled: 'Cameron Balloons: Pleasure Flights and Round the World'

Doors open at 2 pm for refreshments

Members £2 ~ Visitors, very welcome £3.

Visitors are also welcome to join us for coffee mornings which take place at the same venue on the first Monday of the month from 10 am to 12 midday

Churchill and Langford Ladies Lunch Club

We meet on the first Tuesday of each month

at The Churchill Inn, Churchill at 12.30 pm for 1.00 pm

£17 per head for a 2-course lunch with coffee

Pre-booking is essential

Contact Margaret Avery on 07725 056051 for further details

Please note that the lunch is limited to residents of the two villages or those that have moved away but wish to stay in contact with friends

WINSCOMBE W.I.

There is no meeting in February, our next meeting is:



Wednesday 11th March 2026

at 7.15 pm for 7.30 pm start at a ***NEW VENUE***

Community Centre (Meeting Room), 11 Sandford Road, BS25 1JA

Speaker: John Smith **Talk entitled:** 'The Roman Life on Mendip'

refreshments available - find us on Facebook



Wrington Vale Rotary Club

Wrington Rotary gave over £9,000 to local causes; thank you for a most successful year.



You supported our events: Jazz in the Orchard, the Classic Car Fest, Frog Racing at Shipham Hall and the Weekend Festival at the Mendip Outdoor Centre. Then over Christmas you gave generously to our Carol Singing in the pubs and the Winscombe Street Collection.

All of the money raised went to local charities and needs.

We made donations to:

Water Survival Box	£1,000	Friends of Bristol Eye Hospital	£500
Shiva Nepal	£1,000	Children's Hospice Charlton Farm	£1,000
Churchill Music	£500	Great Western Air Ambulance	£2,500
Community Farm	£500	Somewhere to Go WSM	TBA
Global Sight Solutions	£1,000	Wrington Village Digital Archive	£500
Bristol Oncology Centre	£500	Sandford Village Hall Community Café	£500
Cheddar Valley Foodbank	£500 approx	Youth activities in local schools	£3,000 approx

Vans and Medical equipment for Ukraine - our own Bob Preedy has driven 5 vans to Ukraine loaded with essential survival kit

In addition, most Rotarians give to Rotary International which has contributed over \$2.9 billion to the global polio eradication effort, through its PolioPlus programme including matched funding from the Bill Gates Foundation. 2.5 billion children vaccinated!

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: FROG RACING 28th FEBRUARY at Shipham Village Hall

Further information from Angie Biggs 07790 400718

Pastoral Care Team



Do you know someone who is feeling lonely, isolated or in need, for any reason?

Or perhaps you have a prayer request?

If yes, please get in touch - our Pastoral Care Team is on hand to offer support.

If you do need support or would like further information,
please contact Reverend Pauline Nixon
07511 935860 or email revpolly@gmail.com

Cruse Bereavement Care



Cruse is a national charity that provides advice, information and support to anyone who has been bereaved (children, young people and adults), whenever or however the death occurred. The service is provided by trained, experienced volunteers, and is confidential and free.

Cruse provides face-to-face, telephone, email and website support both post- and pre- bereavement. We have a national helpline, and local services throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our sister organisation Cruse Scotland provides services in Scotland.

We offer:

- Someone to talk to face-to-face or on the telephone
- Online support
- Groups – some bereaved people find it helpful to talk to others in similar circumstances
- Information – about many aspects of bereavement and other sources of help and support
- Face-to-face, telephone helpline and online support for children and young people

For help and support details contact your local Cruse Service

- Visit our website at www.cruse.org.uk
- Telephone our national helpline freephone on 0808 808 1677
- Email us at helpline@cruse.org.uk

Children and young people can

- Telephone our young people's freephone helpline on 0808 808 1677
- Visit 'Hope Again' – our website designed by and for young people- at www.hopeagain.org.uk
- Email Hope Again at hopeagain@cruse.org.uk

Brief Encounter!

Sitting in our local café the other day, a couple were at the next table with a very young baby who was just beginning to take in the world around him, (or possibly her), and we couldn't help but wonder what life had in store.

Throughout January, we have been marking the **Epiphany**, not a single Sunday, nor a hangover from Christmas, but a season of readings recounting some key events in Christ's life. It started with arrival of The Wise Men, not kings, number unknown and from somewhere vaguely described as '*The East*'. Originally, this was not part of Epiphany! Fast forward thirty years and we read about Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan, the calling of his first disciples, and the first miracle he performed at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. The Epiphany is really all about the manifestation or revelation of the adult Jesus as the Christ.

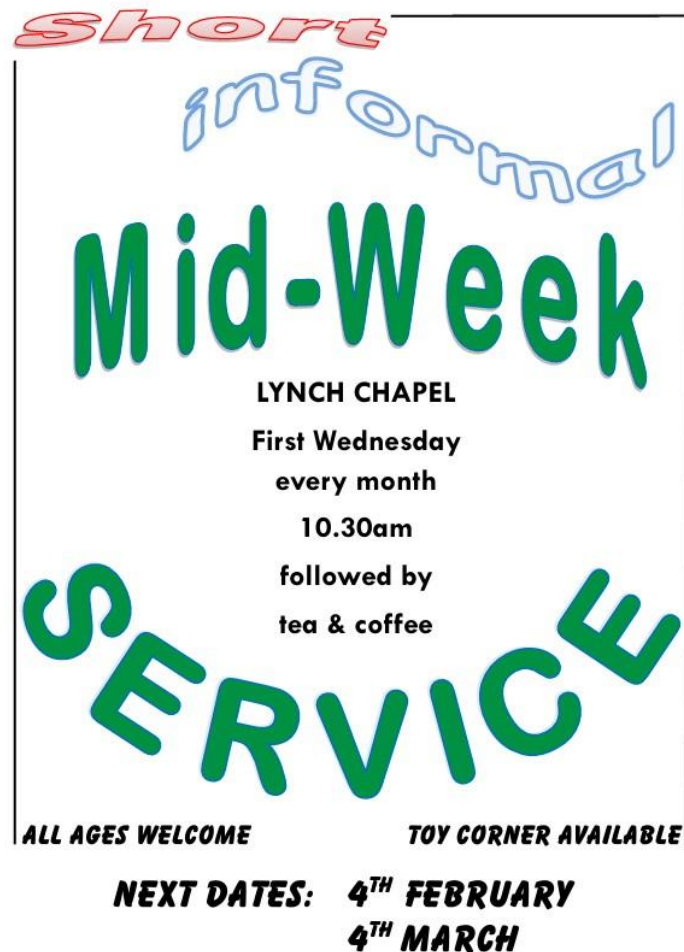
Finally, we return in our readings to the time of Mary and Joseph's visit to The Temple with the baby Jesus. According to Hebrew law, the first-born male belonged to God and they could reclaim him 31 days after his birth by making an appropriate sacrifice to God in the Temple. Furthermore, child birth was deemed to render a woman ritually unclean, so Mary must present herself to a priest in the Temple on the 40th day after giving birth, for ritual purification. Only then can she return to sit with the women in the synagogue.

Having satisfied all the law's requirements, the couple are about to return home when suddenly a very old man called Simeon comes up to them and takes the baby Jesus from their arms, praising God with those now immortal words for Christians; '*Lord now let me depart in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all people to be a light for a revelation to the gentiles and for the glory of your people Israel.*'

Simeon had been a faithful Jew all his life but must have found it very hard living under the Roman occupation, governed by a cruel and paranoid king, and subject to a priesthood who were obsessed with rules and regulations rather than the spiritual welfare of their people. There had been talk of a leader, a kind of second Judas Maccabees, who would rise up and overthrow their enemies, but this was not going to happen. Simeon was now too old to do anything but pray and watch, so it will be for the future generation - suddenly he sees the baby and realizes this is what God has planned and all will be well!

When I feel despondent about the state of our present world, the sight of a new-born or very young child, makes me realise there is always hope for the future, not in the way Simeon did, but nonetheless hope, and I secretly offer a prayer for that child.

Shaun Darley



LYNCH CHAPEL, WINSCOMBE, BS25 1AR

Church Administrator



Lynch Chapel is looking to appoint an administrator to support the church with a range of organisational tasks, including keeping financial records and producing reports of payments and receipts. The role will initially be for 2 hours per week and carried out at home.

You need to be well organised and a confident computer user, a good communicator, in sympathy with the Christian faith, and used to working independently, but also as part of a friendly team who will support you in your role.

The successful candidate will be subject to a DBS check; we follow the URC advice on safer recruitment.

Please email alison.waite5@btinternet.com for further information and a copy of the job description – application is by CV.

Closing date: 28th February 2026. Intended start date March 2026.



WELCOME

Thursday Lunches

5, 12, 19 & 26 February

12.30pm Churchill Methodist BS25 5NG



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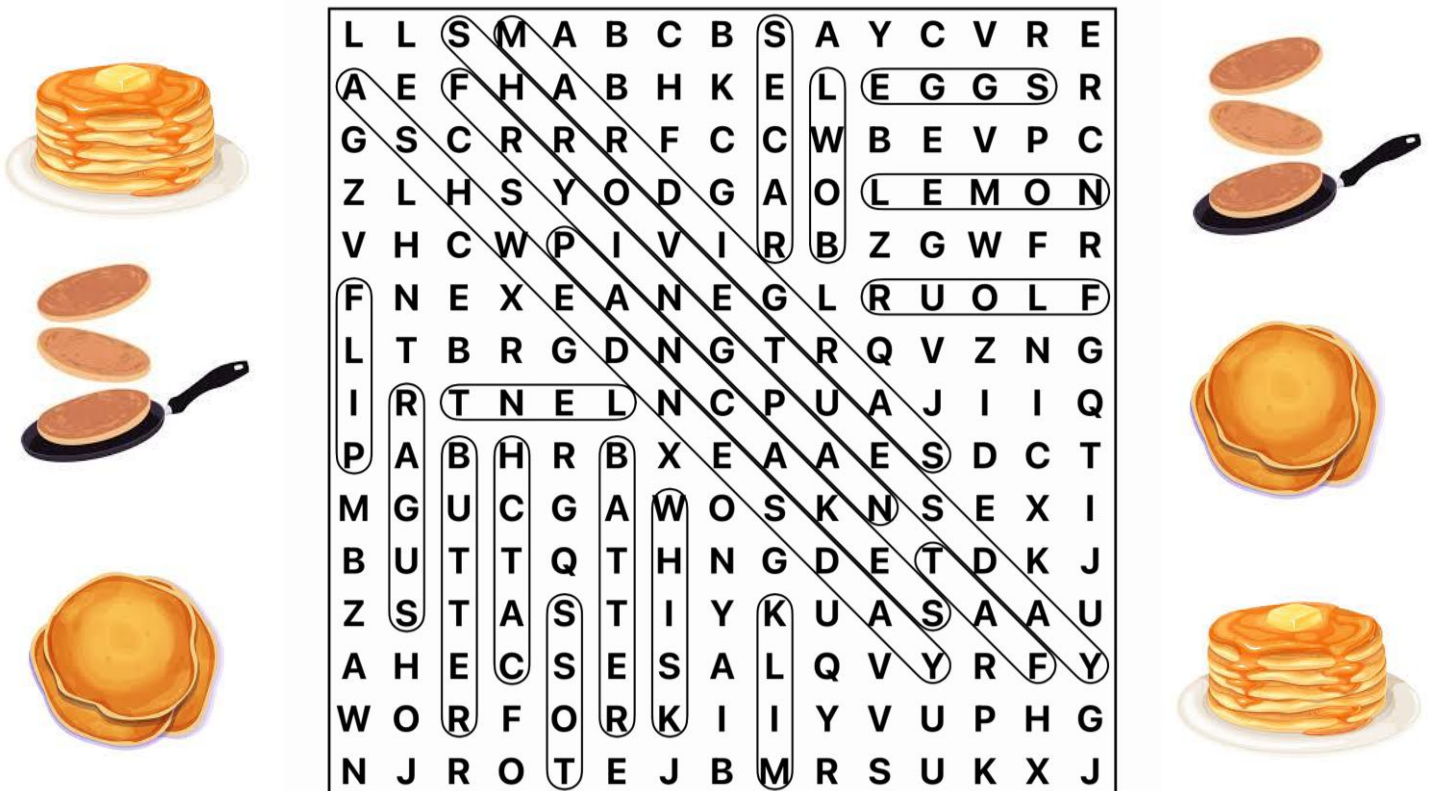


Churchill **Methodist** Church
churchillmethodist.org.uk



February Word Search

Hope you solved this month's word search and that you have the opportunity to enjoy some pancakes too!



If you love singing we'd love you to join us
WINSCOMBE COMMUNITY SINGERS



Tuesdays 7.30 - 9.30pm

Winscombe Community Centre

Musical Director: Josh Newport



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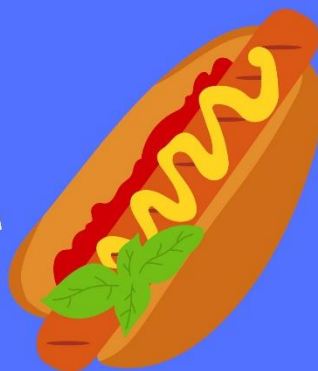
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 Simon Page 07900 693783

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Winscombe Community Association
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Sandford

Pullman Restaurant (Sandford Station Retirement Village)
Thatchers Cider (Main Reception and Hive Staff Office)
Railway Inn
Sandford Primary School

Churchill

Memorial Hall, Ladymead Lane
Pro-Heating, Langford Road
Touts Supermarket and Petrol, A38



Defibrillators are designed to be as easy as possible to use. The defibrillator will tell you how to use it, so even if you've never had the experience of using one before, you should try your best and give it a go - you could save someone's life.

Emergency Bleed Kit Now Available at Churchill Memorial Hall

We're pleased to share that a Bleed Control Kit is now installed at Churchill Memorial Hall, Ladymead Lane, Langford providing lifesaving equipment in case of a serious emergency.



These kits are designed to help control severe bleeding before emergency services arrive and can be the difference between life and death.

They are easy to use and accessible to the public in case of a critical situation.

Location: Churchill Memorial Hall - available 24/7

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In Winscombe

The Church Centre (with kitchen)

St James's Church



In Sandford

All Saints Church (flexible seating)

Meeting Room (with small refreshment area)



For further information or to make a booking visit our online booking system

<https://hallbookingonline.com>

In Churchill



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Thursday morning

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February Quiz Answers



Hope you didn't 'see red' whilst solving this month's quiz!
Just in case, here are the answers.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------|----|--------------------|
| 1 | The Red Baron | 6 | The Salvation Army |
| 2 | Simply Red | 7 | Red Devils |
| 3 | Moses | 8 | Taylor Swift |
| 4 | Red Bull | 9 | Red Dwarf |
| 5 | Red Panda | 10 | Seabiscuit |



Winscombe Village Market

It is with a heavy heart that I have made the decision to step down from running the Winscombe Village Market. After four wonderful years filled with connections and cherished memories, personal reasons have led me to this difficult choice.

I want to thank every one of you who has traded at the market over the years; your support has been truly special. A shout-out also to the many volunteers who have dedicated their time and energy to make the market a success. And, of course, a huge thank you to the many people who have visited the market and supported our traders by buying their locally made crafts and produce and perhaps enjoyed a chat over a cuppa and a bacon bap.

On a brighter note, St James's Events Team will be organising seasonal community events. Keep an eye out for more information about the first of these events that is due to be held at the Church Centre on **Saturday 28th March** – details in next month's Signpost.

Tina Blunsdon

Organiser, Winscombe Village Market

Generations Growing in Faith Together



Our extended family recently got together for a celebration. We were nine adults aged from 24 - 68, one toddler, and one dog, and it was glorious! The joy was simply in being together, whatever our age.

I sometimes wonder what would happen in the life of our churches if we could adopt the same outlook there? Each generation glad that the other is there. Each generation contributing something to the whole. Each generation looking to the interests of the others, making sure there was something that spoke to the others, even if not to them.

The writer of the Chronicles records (something you could miss if you weren't looking for it), in 2 Chronicles 20, when Judah was facing attack from Ammon and Moab, King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast, and summoned the people. This is what it says in verse 13: *'All Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.'* At a time of great peril, when the King was seeking the LORD, all generations came together to pray.

We often think of intergenerational meaning as us older ones passing on wisdom to the younger ones, and that's certainly part of it. But a truly intergenerational family, which the church is, means all generations welcoming one another, valuing one another, learning from one another, and praying with and for one another. It's not a one-way thing.

Our younger generations are ambassadors from the future, with wisdom to give us about their culture, and how to share the timeless truths of the gospel with their peers. They are leaders and learners, just as we all are.

What might it look like across our diocese if we committed to making room for other generations? What might it look like if, like the people of God in ancient times, we came together in our year of especial focus on prayer - adults, young people and little ones - and sought the power and wisdom of God together? I have a feeling we'd be surprised!

Fiona Gibson

Who will become Bishop of Taunton on 8th February 2026



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or

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S.M.H

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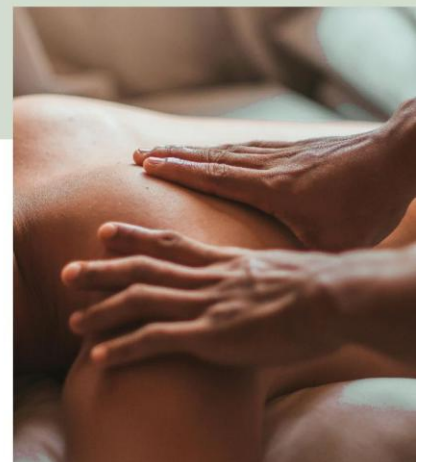
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