

The Oaks



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Bucklebury Parish Chairman's Letter

If you thought it seems to have been quiet about the 2,500 house development at NE Thatcham you would be right. West Berks Council agreed to adopt the Local Plan Review in mid-June last year and with it the Planning Inspector's requirement that there needed to be a year's masterplanning before any planning application could be made. WBC published an indicative timetable which would have seen us at this time in the midst of public consultation with key stakeholders, such as your Parish Council, and public engagement. However progress so far has been negligible because it appears the consortium of the site's 4 developers/ owners cannot come to an agreed position to begin meaningful dialogue with WBC. This delay raises the real possibility of Central Government intervention and the spectre of direction for a planning application to be submitted forthwith to speed things up. This worrying situation has been drawn to the attention of the Leader of WBC.

We try and keep on top of litter and fly-tipping with the PC's bi-annual litter picks. For safety reasons we cannot clear up the approach to Upper Bucklebury via Hart's Hill Rd. The verges here are currently strewn with litter creating a poor impression. We have asked WBC to get their waste contractor to deal with the situation.

Anyone walking on the south side of Broad Lane approaching the garage and Peach's cannot but have noticed several potholes at the road junction of Long Grove and Broad Lane. These are a real hazard for pedestrians especially when it's dark and the potholes are filled with water. We are pressing WBC to remedy the situation.

Some of you will have attended the splendid November farewell tea party for Hash and Chan who had run Peach's Stores for 27 years. The new managers, Meet and Happy, have settled in well, extending the opening hours and continuing with welcoming smiles to provide the level of service we have become accustomed to.

The cows have now been on the Common for several months and appear to have settled in. The cow warning road signs are now closed up in areas of the Common the cows are not grazing.

Our MP has asked for more information on poor mobile phone coverage in her constituency so she can lobby WBC and the relevant Minister of State. The PC has replied having asked all councillors to canvass views across the parish. Feedback was that coverage was patchy at best with many areas bordering on the Common reporting non-existent coverage. The point was made that for the Princess of Wales' wedding no less than 4 temporary masts were erected so that the media could get their stories out.

The Upper Bucklebury Memorial Hall is in need of some improvements and maintenance in the short term. In the longer term the toilets need refurbishing and there is a desire to install roof solar panels. The PC is working with the Hall Committee on a funding plan which has already benefitted from over £1,000 in donations from the departing Hash and Chan and the proceeds from the Christmas Cemetery Carol Concert.

We are planning another beacon lighting get-together on Chapel Row Green. It will be to celebrate May Day and appropriately be on the evening of Friday 1st May. As

Parish Council Chairman:
Barry Dickens

Parish Council Clerk:
Helen Pratt

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with last year's VE celebration there will be live music, hot food and traditional games. There may well be Maypole dancing and participation from local schools.

Cllr. Barry Dickens,
Chairman, Bucklebury Parish Council

News from the Parish Council

Traffic

The Parish Council has two teams of excellent volunteers who deploy the Parish Speed Indicator Device (SID) and the Community Speed Watch (CSW) equipment. Both are used to educate motorists and are encouraged by both WBC and TVP as local community action to address the menace of the 11% of motorists that drive at 40mph and above in our 30mph zones.

We now have records of over 1.37 million vehicles on our roads from SID and have deployed CSW 24 times. Two new locations have been added for SID at Hillfoot. Since last reporting we have sadly recorded a vehicle exceeding 100 mph in Burdens Heath on a Tuesday morning so the reckless minority continue to blight our roads. TVP have so far issued over 500 letters through CSW to educate drivers exceeding the recording limit in your Parish and advised us that 10 of these vehicles had no MOT and 5 had no Tax.

These community actions do make a difference to your safety and the volunteers are doing a great job in conducting these activities throughout the year on your behalf. We welcome new volunteers to join us at any time so please contact the Parish Clerk if you wish to find out more.

We have visited a local Parish to see an automated CSW recording system as we look for more ways to help deliver this service. In addition the Parish Council have applied and been awarded over £6,000 to purchase a permanent SID for Scotland Corner in Chapel Row. This project is currently held up as the WBC policy on such items has not been released and has been in production for some time.

We were consulted at short notice by a consultant from WSP in Glasgow acting for WBC regarding the roll out of 20mph zones in the Parish ahead of the public consultation. Sadly it appears our feedback resulted in no changes and these BPC discussions were shared with those most impacted in response to a public request for the parish

Council's view. The findings are due for release mid-February 2026. Sadly virtually all of the proposals will have no impact on the speeding issue our community faces on its through roads that BPC are prioritising.

Cllr. David Southgate—Bucklebury Parish Council

Grit Bins

The Parish Council has maintained the Grit Bins in the Parish since 2019 and have so far distributed over 5 tonnes of Rock Salt (BS 3247) over that period. Bins were topped up using all remaining BPC stocks ahead of the recent snow and ice. More stocks have been ordered. A small handful (around 20g) can treat about 1 square meter although more might be required for heavy snow or freezing rain. The material is only for public road and footpath use please. If you use or live near a grit bin please report any that are under half full to the Parish Clerk.

Cllr. David Southgate—Bucklebury Parish Council

Bucklebury Parish Council

Common Clearing and Parish Litter Pick

Come to help clear litter from the paths
of **Bucklebury**

Saturday 28th March 2026

Meet Bucklebury Memorial Hall

2.00pm

Equipment will be provided

SKIP at the Memorial Hall

Free refreshments afterwards

“Keep Bucklebury Beautiful”

Bucklebury Meadows & the Hockett Field

Nearly all the planned maintenance of the very well-used meadows is now complete. Last year all the trees that needed removal of dead limbs and some pruning were attended to, and most of the fencing has been repaired with only the western boundary of the large meadow still needing to be reinforced. New posts should be installed in the early spring.

We welcomed the West Berkshire Countryside Volunteers back to the Meadows in December. They did a fantastic job of cutting back a lot of the brambles at the entrance to the meadows from Mortons Lane and around the kissing gate between the large meadow and the one to the north. They also tidied up around all the edges of the large meadow. We really do appreciate their hard work and are fortunate they visit us regularly.

The Volunteers were due back at the end of January to trim the hedgerows around the Hockett field which was last done two or three years ago; hopefully they had good weather and that work has been completed.

Cllr. Graham Pask—Bucklebury Parish Council

Bucklebury History Group

Do you recognise these buildings?



Dr Nick Young will talk with us about the 'Historical Houses of Thatcham'

Come and hear more about the history and the myths!

Tuesday
24th February 7.30pm
The Oak Room
Bucklebury Memorial Hall



Do come along, we ask for a £5 cash donation on the door
sandranicholls64@outlook.com



WBCS Volunteers working on the Hockett Field.

Planning

A few statistics! Since the last edition, produced in mid September, BPC has been consulted on 15 applications, 12 applications have been approved (one of which was in Cold Ash), no applications have been refused, no applications have been determined on appeal and no applications have been taken to appeal.

Helen Pratt—Clerk to Bucklebury Parish Council.

| Reference | Description | BPC Status | WBC Status |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|-------------------|
| 24/00701/FUL | <u>Ivinghoe, Stanford Dingley (Adjacent Parish)</u> Demolition of Existing bungalow and replacement with a new dwelling and landscape enhancements. | Object | Awaiting decision |
| 25/00900/FUL | <u>Beenham Hatch, The Avenue.</u> Erection of a barn to house sheep and store hay. | Object | Approved |
| 25/01010/FULMAJ | <u>Tall Pines, Chapel Row.</u> A 1 ½ storey replacement dwelling of an existing bungalow, including provi- | No Objection | Approved |
| 25/00912/FUL | <u>Appletrees, Chapel Tree.</u> Erection of two standalone supported living units, staff facility, elevational external alterations to an existing building, and ancillary works associated | No Objection | Awaiting decision |
| 25/01614/HOUSE | <u>The Farmhouse, Westrop Farm (Cold Ash Parish).</u> Proposed single storey extension, new front porch, amendments to external treatment and fenestration. | No Objection | Approved |
| 25/01597/MDOPO2 | <u>Former 5-10 Paradise Way, Chapel Row.</u> Request to modify/discharge a section 106 planning obligation dated 4 May 2023 between (1) West Berkshire District Council and (2) Sovereign Housing Association Limited (the Section 106 Agreement) in accordance with Section 106A(1)(a) of the Town and | No Objection | Awaiting decision |
| 25/01860/FUL | <u>The Barns, Manor Farm.</u> Restoration and conversion of redundant agricultural buildings into one | No Objection | Awaiting decision |
| 25/01790/FUL & 25/01791/LBC | <u>Picton Farm, The Slade.</u> The repair and conversion of existing outbuildings to ancillary residential use. The repair and extension of an existing storage outbuilding following demolition of small existing store. Installation of replacement surface water and foul water drainage. Replacement entrance gates, form new parking area and path to Farmhouse. Definition of the residential curtilage associated with Picton Farmhouse which is listed at Grade 2 | No Objection | Approved |
| 25/01913/HOUSE | <u>Shepherds Heath, Chapel Row.</u> Erection of 1 ½ storey side extension and upward side extension, with asso- | No Objection | Approved |
| 25/02084/LBC | <u>Ryders, The Avenue.</u> Removal of existing roof tiles, with all sound tiles retained and reused where possible (estimated salvageable proportion < 20%). Replacement of failed/damaged tiles with handmade clay roof tiles of matching size, colour, and appearance. Renewal of ridges, hips, and associated roof details on a like-for-like basics, using appropriate traditional methods. Retention of the existing roof structure with no alterations to its form, profile, or pitch. Replacement of two small dormer windows on a like-for-like basis, matching original scale, detailing, and materials. Incorporation of bat access tiles. | No Objection | Approved |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|----------------------|
| 25/02057/HOUSE | <u>Red Hill House, Briff Lane.</u> Erection of a swimming pool and changing rooms and associated works. | No Objection | Awaiting decision |
| 25/02219/HOUSE | <u>36 Broad Lane.</u> Rear and Front extensions and alterations. | No Objection | Approved |
| 25/02294/HOUSE | <u>Bucklethwaite, Scotland Corner.</u> Demolish existing double garage/store & room above and replace with Oak framed building with Double garage / store/ workshop with Annex above. | No Objection | Approved |
| 25/02263/HOUSE | <u>Red Hill House, Briff Lane.</u> Section 73 Application to vary conditions 2 (Approved Plans) of approved 23/00280/HOUSE. To change the drawing numbers to reflect some minor amendments to the scheme. | No Objection | Approved |
| 25/02225/FULMAJ | <u>Bucklebury Farm Park, Bucklebury.</u> Section 73A – vary condition 4 ‘landscape works’, 5, ‘arboricultural watching brief’ and 6 ‘ecology condition’ of approved application 19/02108/COMIND: Retrospective application for 7 glamping units and associated development for perennial use. | No Objection | Awaiting decision |
| 25/02487/HOUSE | <u>Rivendell, Briff Lane.</u> Replacement of existing conservatory with single storey extension and part conversion of garage to utility room and extension of garage, addition of solar panels for family providing special needs care. | No Objection | Approved |
| 25/02516/HOUSE | <u>Ashdown House, The Slade.</u> Proposed garage conversion with internal alterations and changes to external fenestration, including a new rear pergola. Proposed replacement porch and enhancements to the external appearance and energy efficiency of the dwelling. | No Objection | Approved |
| 25/02574/HOUSE | <u>Ladywood, Long Grove.</u> Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, porch to the front, veranda, addition of windows and solar panels. | No Objection | Awaiting decision |
| 25/02544/PACOU | <u>Glendale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane (Bradfield Parish).</u> Application under General Permitted Development Order (England) Order 2015 (as amended) – Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Change of use of existing agricultural building to B8 storage and distribution. | No Comment | Awaiting decision |
| 25/02832/HOUSE | <u>Rushdens Cottage, Bucklebury Road (Stanford Dingley Parish).</u> Section 73: Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of planning permission reference 24/01284/HOUSE (Single storey rear extension, following demolition of a small plantroom. Clay tile hanging to frontage and side elevations to replace existing upvc cladding with new windows a new bay window and a new tiled roof front porch. Associated internal and external alterations). Amendment: Substitute approved drawings to allow a larger side extension to be built. | No Objection | Awaiting decision |
| 25/02959/HOUSE | <u>Kolumbine, Tylers Lane.</u> Two storey rear extension and remodelling of existing bungalow with solar panels to roof. (Relates to preapp 25/02247/PREHH) | No Objection | Awaiting decision |
| 26/00001/HOUSE | <u>Middlewood House, Carbinswood Lane.</u> The partial demolition, alteration and erection of 2 storey and single storey extensions and associated landscaping. | | Awaiting decision |
| 26/00038/HOUSE | <u>Smithincott, The Avenue, Bucklebury.</u> New multi fuel burning stove and associate external flue. | | Awaiting decision |
| 25/01643/CERTE | <u>Fairchilds, Sadgrove Lane, Bucklebury.</u> Residential garden curtilage in continuous use since 2013. | | Awaiting decision |

Sustainable Bucklebury

On the 19 January 2026, a group from Sustainable Bucklebury visited Bucklebury Primary School to give an introductory talk about sustainability to the children. The talk highlighted what sustainability is and how important it is that we do what we can to take care of our planet and its resources – our water, air, fuel, plants, and animals - so that there's enough for everyone, now and for future generations.

We also talked about Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. We can all work on reducing our use by only buying what we need and choosing products with less packaging, avoiding single use items. Reusing items multiple times or finding new purposes for them reduces the need to buy more. Reduce and Reuse make the biggest impact. When an item can no longer be used, recycling ensures it stays out of landfill and allows its materials to be transformed into something new.

A demonstration hive was brought into the assembly, and we discussed the importance of insects. Bees, hoverflies, moths, butterflies, wasps, beetles, and flies all carry pollen to enable plants to produce seeds, fruits, and new plants. Pollinating insects are vital for the food chain and essential for food crops such as strawberries, apples, beans, peas, tomatoes, tea, coffee, and other plants that become food for cattle. Honey bees not only pollinate plants but they produce honey, wax and propolis (healing). Bees work very hard indeed and one honey bee makes about 1/12 teaspoon of honey in its lifetime. We are lucky to have several local honey producers in our parish – buying local is best!

Our autumn meeting included a presentation by James Bywater, and information boards on the “zero hour” campaign. The campaign aims to increase support for the Climate and Nature Bill that commits to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. James also presented on the Eco Church project and our local churches’ achievements within that. Our local churches continue to work to progress within the scheme with St Marys in Bucklebury village achieving the silver award and All Saints in Upper Bucklebury the bronze.

Our next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 24 February 2026** in the Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury, from 7.45pm. There will be tea, coffee, and cake and hopefully a great turnout of people looking to get involved and contribute some ideas!

Bucklebury Repair Cafe

After the success of our first Bucklebury Repair Cafe in October last year, we are running our second event on Saturday 31 January at All Saints Church in Upper Bucklebury. Hopefully by the time you read this we have had another well attended event and will be planning for the next. We will be posting future Repair Café dates on our website, so please check dates and let us know if you would like to come along with an item for repair, or if you would like to get involved as a repairer.

Repair Cafes are community events that can be used to get help fixing items you own without having to dispose of them, reducing waste, and saving money. If you have an item such as a small appliance, a piece of clothing, or a faulty computer then you can bring them along to get help from a volunteer repairer. Your item can be assessed, and a volunteer will work with you to attempt a repair. There is no charge to bring your item, but donations are appreciated to pay for the venue, small parts, refreshments, and insurance costs.

We want to make the Sustainable Bucklebury group an enjoyable community endeavour, whether you want to simply access more information, occasionally join a project for a couple of hours or get more involved. If you have time, ideas, comments, or energy to spare, or just want to know more, please get in touch.

For more details, please visit our website, join our Facebook group, or find us on Instagram.

Tom Peddie, Nina Peddie, Graham Loader

contact@sustainablebucklebury.org.uk

www.sustainablebucklebury.org.uk



Community Orchard

We are delighted to announce that the council have been awarded funding by Vieola for a Community Orchard consisting of around fifteen fruit trees. We would like to hear from anyone who can assist in the planting and general care of the proposed trees.

The actual location has yet to be formalised, but the initial intention is somewhere on the Parish Meadows.

The orchard will consist of apple, pear, plum and gauges. We would also be delighted if anyone would like to donate a tree in memory of a loved one.

Cllr. Jason Allum—Bucklebury Parish Council

Lest we forget

Following the Service of Remembrance at St Mary's in November I have been approached by several members of the parish asking why Bucklebury has not got a War Memorial. There are over 100,000 war memorials in the United Kingdom, some dating back to the seventeenth century, but most were constructed after the First World War.

It has always been understood that following the wars villages chose whether to build a Memorial or a Hall in remembrance of the fallen. It would appear that Bucklebury chose the latter route. However, many of adjacent and neighbouring parishes have both village halls and war memorials so there does not appear to be precedent.

The Victory Room was constructed after the Kaiser's War (1914-1918) utilizing the old parish chapel from Frilsham. The "new" Memorial Hall was not constructed until the 1960s, adjacent to the old hall which was situated on the current location of the tennis courts.

There are inscribed plaques in St Mary's Church for all those that lost their lives during both conflicts and we have three war graves within the parish.

We need your feedback as to whether we progress with a memorial and if so in what form and where?

To extend the debate, perhaps we should consider remembering the combined efforts of all the parish that were involved in these and subsequent conflicts. Those who served in the Armed Forces, the Civil Services, Home Guard, Land Arm, farmers and those who were co-opted into other services and vital factory work. For example, I

know there are villagers that served in the Special Operations Executive, Bletchley Park, built Spitfires in Newbury and Aldermaston or looked after Italian prisoners of war.

This doesn't diminish the importance of remembering those that paid the ultimate sacrifice of laying down their lives for their country and their beliefs. Most of the fallen were only between 19-22 years old—the same age as my daughters. That really brings home just how young those lads were.

The conflicts shaped so many lives in our parish and indeed the Common itself. It also set standards of respect and behaviour which are now sadly declining.

A couple of ideas that have been mooted so far:

- To erect a plaque to the fallen on the external walls of both halls relevant to each of the conflicts.
- A simple wooden (oak) cross inscribed "To those of the Parish that gave us our Freedom" .
- To erect, temporarily, black silhouettes of soldiers at key points in the village during the week of the Armistice.

We just require your feedback. We are not asking for donations - the parish have already supported and gifted generously for the Armed Forces charities during D-day and VE/VJ celebrations.

Any ideas please, let us know your thoughts.

Cllr. Jason Allum—Bucklebury Parish Council

A Plea for the Postie

If you are reading this rag, then it will have been delivered by a volunteer as the circulation reaches about 800 properties within the Parish. It is during the delivery of this magazine that it has come to our attention that there are lot of properties without suitable letterboxes or obvious facilities for couriers dropping off parcels.

Please could members of the parish with electric gates and intercoms make this task easier for all concerned. We all appreciate that security is now a necessity, but it shouldn't take a delivery driver ages, in all weathers and sometimes in poor visibility, to work out how to enter to deliver your correspondence/package.

Cllr. Jason Allum - Bucklebury Parish Council

Cemetery Carols

Cemetery Carols, as it is affectionately known, has taken place for roughly the last eighteen years on the last Monday of December before Christmas. It takes place in the Cemetery off Byles Green in Upper Bucklebury. Each year the Chapel is decorated with holly, ivy and other winter greenery as well as lots of nightlights in jars. These are also hung on the trees lining the pathway to the Chapel, and put on the walls and some on the memorial markers. As the years have gone by and more people come, we have had to add other forms of lighting which are dependent upon a generator, but the atmosphere remains very traditional.

Mulled wine, made locally during the afternoon is wheeled in just before the event starts and everyone enjoys mince pies and mulled wine. Traditional carols are sung with a suitable introduction from the compere for the evening.

This year, we need to thank:

- Dominic and Theo for bringing their French horns; they played at the beginning and during the event,
- Lindsay for being such a marvellous compere and always coming up with new snippets of history about the carols and the festive season,
- Andy for bringing and playing his keyboard so ably, and with such good spirit,
- Sarah for the making the mulled wine,
- David, Barry, Georgina, Graham and all the mince pie makers,
- Penny and Lilian for serving the mulled wine and mince pies,
- Bucklebury Guide leaders for cleaning the Chapel before the event,
- Anne, Maria, Jason, David, Barry, John and everyone else who help make the event a success.

This year we were pleased to raise just over £500 for the much-needed work on the Memorial Hall.

We'll look forwards to seeing everyone on Monday 21st December this year!

Helen Pratt—Clerk to Bucklebury Parish Council.

Thursday Coffee Mornings

The Parish Council has been organising a coffee morning for the last few years in the Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury, to enable parishioners to get together over a cuppa and enjoy delicious homemade cakes.

We regularly have 30-40 people who come along to meet up and have a chat but more people are always welcome to join us on the last Thursday of the month between 10.30am and 12noon.

Please come along to meet old friends and make new ones...

You'll find confirmation of the dates on the back cover of The Oaks in the parish diary, we look forward to welcoming you!

Cllr. Graham Pask—Bucklebury Parish Council

Thursday Coffee Mornings

**Last Thursday of the month
Bucklebury Memorial Hall,
Upper Bucklebury
10.30am – 12 noon**

Thursday 26th February 2026

Thursday 26th March 2026

Thursday 30th April 2026

Thursday 28th May 2026

Thursday 25th June 2026



All Welcome – come and enjoy a cuppa!

If you need a lift, please call

Helen on 01635 863581

District Councillor's Report

I think we can all agree that since I wrote my last article for The Oaks there has been quite a bit of rain. It has been good to see the leaky dams installed by Bucklebury Estate on the Common do their job in slowing water down and hopefully reducing the flood peaks in Bucklebury village and beyond to Pangbourne. Also, the sharper-eyed amongst you have pointed out to me the interesting little micro-habitats that the dams have created. I am sure they will develop further over the years.

It has been really good to see on-going environmental maintenance of the Common, particularly the improvements around the Medieval Fish Ponds near Pease Hill. Also the benches that have been installed by the Estate are a perfect place to sit, absorb the atmosphere and really appreciate how lucky we are to have this wonderful asset just a stone's throw away for many of us in the parish.

Great to see all the dog walkers on the Common even during this wet weather. I regularly meet all sizes of dog ranging from Yorkshire Terriers to Golden Retrievers and even a gentle giant Irish Wolfhound on the western part of the Common where I mainly walk. If the cattle are about, please keep your dogs on a lead, and, particularly if your dogs are hunters, please do not let them disturb the abundant wildlife in the area. As the Countryside Code says: "Always keep dogs under control and in sight."

This means you must ensure that your dog:

- Stays close (or keep the dog on a lead)
- Doesn't disturb people, livestock or wildlife
- Must reliably come back when called

When walking our dogs I do occasionally note dog poo bags left beside paths or even hanging on trees. If you do notice someone doing this, please ask them if they could take them back to the official car parks where there are bins that can be used for bagged dog poo, or they can be taken home and put in your own residential black bin. If someone has forgotten their bags and their dog does make a mess on the path if they can use the stick-and-a-flick method to at least clear it off the path and then it will break down naturally in the undergrowth.

Several residents have written to me about the nuisance of a few motor biker groups on the Common. I find that most users of the Common abide by the bylaws and statutes and are courteous of other users, but it does appear that a number of bikers choose to race their bikes on the byways

and do not have clearly displayed number plates. Micro-fonts, no plate at all, incorrect spacing or even stylised fonts can be illegal and may result in a fine or an MOT failure. If you do witness bikers not being courteous on the byways of the Common (or even "off-roading" across the Common) please take a picture, if safe to do so, and report to the police. Please also raise with me so I can track with Public Protection regarding anti-social behaviour.

If you would like to talk to me about any council services, then I run a District Councillor Surgery for each of the parishes in the ward monthly. For Bucklebury parish this is the 3rd Saturday of each month, 9am to 11am at All Saints Church on Broad Lane.

Finally, if anyone has any concerns about West Berkshire Council services please reach out to me. Also please remember you can order extra recycling bins and bags at <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/askaboutbins>. Do not forget that if you spot anything which needs addressing from potholes, to fly-tipping, bins, or even works carried out by a utility company, please visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem> and log the issue, and if need be also raise with me. If the issue is an emergency (immediate danger, etc.) please call the 24-hour emergencies line 01635 55111.

Stay safe everyone!

District Cllr. Chris Read

Bucklebury
Annual Parish Assembly
Friday 8th May
7.30pm
Come along and find out what's
been going on in the Parish.
Memorial Hall,
Upper Bucklebury.
All parishioners welcome!

Hash and Chan and Bucklebury

Prior to Hash and Chan's final departure from Bucklebury, Shane McGarvey interviewed Hash, and this is what he found out...

The decision by Hasmukh and Chandrika Shingadia to sell Peach's Store and move to Slough came as a surprise to many villagers, but for them it was a long time in the planning.

"We had a long discussion, Chan and I, and we feel that we ought to make a move and do other things while we've still got our health," says Hash.

"We'd been thinking about it for a while, but the opportunity to sell actually came when the chap who has bought it — I didn't really know him but we used to see him at Spar meetings — said he had a shop near Gloucester and was looking for another one. And I said, 'well, come down and have a look'. So our Spar rep brought him along and had a look around and he said, 'yeah, that's fine. I am quite interested in buying it'.

"As Meera, our daughter, will be going back to work after maternity leave, we'll be closer to help her look after the grandchildren, Sophia and Lara.

"For the 27 years we've been here we haven't really had a chance to have a proper holiday. So this way we'll be able to get away without worrying about having to rush back and it also gives us a chance to spend some time with my brother."

Do you believe in fairytales? One with a young couple who travel the land to find their fortune, have a Goldilocks moment and then have to fight off a "wicked witch" (aka the Post Office)? The one we are about to tell you even has a royal wedding...

The road that brought Hash and Chan to Upper Bucklebury was a long and sometimes bumpy one. We are standing in the storeroom of their shop when Hash takes up the story. "Chan and I moved to Ireland in 1997 because a friend of mine who used to live in Dublin rang me up and said there was an Indian restaurant going for sale so would I be interested?

"I said 'we'll come over, I'll work with this chap for a while and see if it's a viable proposition'. But it wasn't.

"So I started working at Dublin Airport but we then decided to come back in 1998. We started living in Crawley and I was working at Gatwick Airport. I was doing nights and Chan was doing days so we could look after Meera. I would come in the morning from work, stay for a little while, take her to school, pick her up from school and then Chan would come in the evening and I would go off to work.

"There was a Spar shop underneath the flats we were living

in. I was talking to the chap there one day and he said, 'well, why don't you run this business for me?'

"I said it would be better for us because we'll be at home all the time and we could look after Meera.

"After a little while I approached him and I said to him 'would you mind selling the business to me?' When he said no, I said to Chan 'let's look for something for ourselves which we can both run. We can be home when Meera comes home from school'.

"We looked at over 50 different shops, we were driving all over the place. But the thing was, in a lot of places the shop was good but the living [accommodation] was rubbish or the living was good but the shop was rubbish."

When Hash and Chan arrived in Upper Bucklebury 27 years ago, in 1998, it was, for them, that 'Goldilocks' moment.

When they decided here was 'just right'.

Eventually the agent rang Hash to tell him about Peach's.

"I'd never heard of Upper Bucklebury before," says Hash.

"Didn't know where it was but we arranged to come and see it.

"We came here about one, went to the pub, had a bite to eat and then saw the owner at 2 o'clock and we were still here at six in the evening. He showed us around the shop and everything felt right. So we said, 'let's go for it'. We moved here on the 27th [of October].

"The following year our second daughter was born, Maya.

"So the daily routine began", continues Hash. "I get up at half past five. Come down here about quarter to six and then open at seven for the customers.

"On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday we have a delivery coming between half past five and six in the morning so we have to be up for that. On Sundays we open at half past eight and it's the only day of the week which gives us a chance to have breakfast together. It's been hard work. We do probably close to 100 hours a week."

And when Covid struck, Hash and Chan stepped up: "We stayed open as much as we could, really trying to make sure that people had all the supplies they needed and making deliveries to the vulnerable."

There cannot be many of us unaware of the nightmare visited on Hash and Chan by the Post Office, when sub-postmasters all over the country were falsely accused of fraud on an industrial scale as a result of catastrophic errors in the Horizon accounting software. Some went to prison while others, such as Hash, received a suspended sentence after being advised to plead guilty — to something he didn't do — just to avoid jail.

Hash takes up the story: "It was out of the blue. They [Post Office investigators] came in, they wanted an audit and they

did the audit and they said, 'you know that you're showing at least £16,000 short'. I said there's no way I'm taking the money.

"But they said the computer is right, you're wrong and even though I said, listen, you know, I haven't taken the money but if you say I have, then I'm more than happy to pay you. So I paid them the £16,000, some from ourselves, some I borrowed from Chan's sister.

"But they said, 'no, no, no, I'm sorry, we're going to prosecute you', and they wouldn't have it any other way. And the hardest bit for me was when I went to see my solicitors, Gardner Leader in Newbury, and the chap I saw said to me, 'Hash, you know I've got to let you know that this sort of accusation carries a custodial sentence'.

"When I came back I couldn't tell Chan what he told me. It took me a few days before I could tell her, 'listen, you know, that if it goes to court I might be going to jail'. I mean, the thing was, it would not only affect me, it would affect my two daughters, it would affect everybody else.

"I was a magistrate, so I had to give that up, which was really hard.

"That they [the Post Office] would think that suddenly hundreds of sub-postmasters all over the country would suddenly become criminal rather than oh, it might be a mistake. They knew, they knew all along, yet they decided to prosecute because they prosecute it themselves. If you go to CPS, maybe, then they would be triggered to ask why are there so many?

"I went with my representative of the Federation of Subpostmasters, to the interview with the Post Office at Newbury to explain what happened, right? And he came with me. I was there for nearly six hours for the interview and he didn't say a damn thing.

"And when we came out, I said to him, 'why didn't you say anything for me? We sat there for six hours and not a word from you'. 'Well,' he said, 'as far as I'm concerned, it's your Post Office and you have to deal with it. I said, 'you are supposed to be my representative'. And he just got in his car and said, 'I'm sorry, it's your Post Office' and he drove off.

"A lady from Southall rang me up and said, 'I've been reading in the paper about how you're going to be prosecuted. Don't worry, you're not the only one. There are lots of people who have been prosecuted'. So that's when I heard of JFSA, the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance, through Alan Bates. So I got in touch with them to say, listen, what's going on? And that's when I found out there's lots of others.

"I got a suspended sentence of eight months. The banks closed my accounts because I got a criminal record. So it was tough going for a long while, but luckily a lot of local people supported me. There are others who didn't really,

because they read the paper and they think it's true. But how many people can you convince?

"When the High Court ruled that Second Sight could actually go in and look at the Post Office records and everything else, that's when it came out that they knew there was a flaw in the system.

They [the Post Office] knew all along something was wrong with the system.

"Eight or nine years ago, I told Chan I was going to destroy all my Post Office paperwork. I didn't think something was ever going to come out of it. But she said to me, 'hang on to it just in case'. So it's a good job I did.

"There were 24 of us on the day I went to the Royal Court of Justice in the Strand. I think 12 got the conviction overturned, but 12 had to go back for more questions to be answered for various reasons. When they called my name out in the court and they said you've now been cleared you know at last it's over I burst into tears knowing the nightmare had at last ended."

In the midst of the Post Office nightmare, Hash and Chan received the best boost possible, an invitation to the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton, for Hash to be recognised by the Royal Family as an honest man. "It was phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal, he says.

"I thought, my god, you know, here we are, invited to the royal wedding by Kate and the family. They must think highly of us, really, to [invite] the local shopkeeper. I think it was Kate's idea really, to have her friends and local people; people she knew. People she grew up with. The funny thing is, on the day when it was announced on the radio she had got engaged to William, she was actually in the shop at the time. So she then picked her stuff up and went off home and all the media were waiting outside.

"Crazy time it was, yeah. Yeah, absolutely crazy. For us, it was lovely. It was a wonderful day to be part of, to be part of the whole thing. The whole thing was amazing, absolutely amazing. You think this day is never going to happen again. Not in our lifetime."

Shane McGarvey

After the tea party (see page 17), Shane cleverly produced a "Mock-up" frontpage which was framed and later presented to Hash and Chan—pto for a copy.



Tea and cakes all round as Hash and Chan say goodbye to Bucklebury after **27** eventful years

WHAT A CHAR PARTY!

Hash and Chan with the plate commemorating 27 years of service to the people of Bucklebury and (above) with family members who came to support them at their farewell party.
Pictures by Ben O'Connell



By MAHATMA COAT SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THERE wasn't a dry glass in the house as Hash and Chan Shingadia bid a tearful farewell to Bucklebury 27 years after they arrived to take over Peach's store.

The Victory Room was packed as hundreds of villagers turned up to make sure they actually left (*I think you mean... give them a rousing send-off - Ed*).

Parish council chairman Barry Dickens paid tribute to the hard work Hash and Chan put in to serve the parish, especially during Covid, when they really stepped up.

He told the couple's friends, family and ex-customers: "Hash and Chan have been at the heart of the community.

"We have been very fortunate to have Hash and Chan at Peach's for so long. We thank them wholeheartedly for all they have done for us and wish them a contented and healthy retirement."

And he added: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times (*no he didn't, that was Charles Dickens - Ed*).

As well as running the shop with Hash, for many years Chan cooked homemade takeaway Indian dishes which were enjoyed by many people, among them local girl Catherine Middleton. As a thank-you, they were invited to her wedding to HRH Prince William, although she was a bit disappoint-

ted that they didn't turn up with a thousand onion bhajis and some poppadoms.

Grateful villagers, sad to see the couple leave for Slough (*it's Langley, actually - Ed*) presented them with a commemorative plate (pictured right), a bunch of flowers (*it was a bouquet, how many time do I have to tell you? -Ed*) and a big cheque (no, really, it was massive, about three feet wide). But Hash and Chan stunned everyone by immediately donating the entire amount to the fund set up to repair the Memorial Hall.

In an emotional speech Hash, who said Bucklebury was their home and threatened promised to come back, revealed that he had worked out the numbers and calculated that he and Chan had clocked up almost a quarter of a million hours working in the shop — and that was just last week!

But he added: "Retiring wasn't an easy decision, it took us a while to decide this was the time, while we can both do things together.

"We'll miss you all very much but we'll keep in touch."

The feeling is mutual, Hash and Chan. From all your friends and in the words of the great Mr Spock - Live long and prosper.

FREE! CHAN-ESE TAKEAWAY FOR EVERY READER See Page 27 T&Cs apply

Family



Since November, 1st Bucklebury Guides and Rangers have packed a huge amount into our programme, with a mix of tradition, adventure and plenty of laughter.

In preparation for Remembrance Sunday, we continued our annual tradition of making poppies before joining the Remembrance parade in Bradfield Southend. The same weekend we also had a big sleepover with 40 other Guides and Rangers at Flip Out Basingstoke where we bounced for hours in the evening and then again first thing before breakfast the next day!

The Rangers got stuck into 'Skills for My Future' part of the Ranger programme and shared clever life hacks as well as having a go at the Japanese art of kintsugi. They have also completed their creative writing and fandom interest badges. Music has filled our meetings this term as the Guides worked towards their music interest badge. They shared their favourite songs, put together playlists, designed album covers, and, most impressively, wrote their own songs!

At the beginning of December, we joined Compton Guides for a big party to celebrate their 50th birthday. The Guides and Rangers had great fun playing a range of party games and of course danced to Christmas music.

To celebrate Christmas we spent an evening making tree decorations, listening to Christmas music and playing some games with a Christmas twist. To finish the term the Guides baked and decorated Christmas biscuits whilst the Rangers made and sampled chocolate truffles.

We started the spring term with a games night and a giant quiz testing our knowledge of things that happened in 2025! One of the highlights of the darker evenings at this time of year is always a night hike around Upper Bucklebury. So we had our fingers crossed for dry(ish) weather for our second week of the term and over 40 of us from local units splashed through puddles and mud, listening for the sounds of the woodland at night and enjoying the excitement of trekking together under torchlight.

Every week at Guides and Rangers is full of opportunities to try new things, make friends and have fun. If your daughter would like to join us, or if you'd like to arrange a free taster session, we'd love to hear from you! Our unit is always open to new members and there are adventures waiting for everyone.

To find out more, email buckleburyguides@gmail.com. We hope to welcome you soon!

Vicky Pratt—1st Bucklebury Guides

Bucklebury Community Bus

Can you spare an hour or two a month? Can you help with basic admin or fundraising or finance or can you help by driving the minibus as part of the emergency cover team?

Bucklebury Community Bus charity is looking for committee members.

This small but vital local charity, provides a daily term time home-to-school transport service for local children attending Kennet School in Thatcham.

It was established by members of the community in 2017 to provide a "not for profit" transport facility for the residents of Bucklebury Parish.

We rely on volunteers and fundraising and are urgently looking for a few committee members. Please email buckleburybus@gmail.com for more information.

Thank you!
www.buckleburybus.wixsite.com/buckleburybus

Men's Breakfast

21st February 2026, 8:30am

**Bucklebury Farm Park Café,
Pease Hill, RG7 6RR**

Come and enjoy a friendly, convivial get-together of male conversation, support and a full English breakfast, at one of our regular breakfast gatherings.

It is held, on average, every two to three months and all local men are welcome.

The cost for the breakfast is £11.00.

For any enquiries or to book a space, please contact David Tipton on [01189 712148](tel:01189712148) or email drptipton37@gmail.com

Bucklebury Primary School

Spring 2026: Faith, Momentum, and "Impact!" at Bucklebury

The spring term is the fulcrum of our school year at **Bucklebury C of E Primary School**. It is a season where our pupils gather pace in their learning, building on the foundations laid during the autumn. While it is our shortest term, it is often the most vibrant as we see our core values in action.

Our Core Value: Faith

This term, we are focusing on the value of **Faith**. We believe every child should know the strength of a living faith. Through collective worship and daily classroom life, we consider how crucial belief is—whether that is belief in ourselves, in each other, or in God. As Henry Ford famously said, *"If you think you can, or think you can't, you're right."*

The Power of "YET"

We continue to embrace the message of **"The Power of YET,"** a concept rooted in the gospel value of faith. It serves as a vital reminder that just because we cannot do something today, it doesn't mean we never will. This mindset fosters the **resilience** our children strive to show every day, from science lessons to the dinner hall. By nurturing values of truth, humility, and service, we aim to help every child shine as a capable, confident, and curious young person.

A Decade of Discovery: The 10th Anniversary Spotlight

This January marks a landmark milestone as we celebrate our **10th annual Community Learning Week**. What began a decade ago has become a cornerstone of our spring calendar. To lead this special year, our 2025-26 school captains, **Everleigh and Pippa**, have chosen the theme: **"Impact! – Forces in action on earth and beyond"**

From **Monday 26th January to Friday 30th January 2026**, our pupils will explore the forces that shape our world. We are eager to welcome visitors—either in person or via technology—to share their professional or personal experiences with "forces". Whether you are an engineer, a scientist, or someone with a unique story to tell, your "impact" can inspire our pupils.

A Call to Our Community

Learning is a "risky business" that requires courage and the readiness to accept we are not there *yet*. As we move through the mysteries of Easter, we will be aiming high and working hard, remembering that excellence is never an accident.

Can you help? If you can deliver a workshop or a short talk, please contact the school office. With faith in ourselves and one another, we know that together, **we can**.

**Mr. Andy Higgs—Headteacher,
Bucklebury C of E Primary School**

Second Bradfield Brownies

What a busy term we had! We completed the Guiding Glow badge which involved looking at the history of Guiding and our unit. It is always exciting for the Brownies to hear that HRH The Princess of Wales was a member of our unit! We also looked at some wonderful mementos from years gone by.

The Brownies all had a go at climbing and bouldering – they absolutely loved this activity and they were all very good at it, reaching the top of the wall. We also attended the Remembrance Parade in Bradfield and made paper poppies. The term ended with Christmas craft and a collection for the West Berkshire Foodbank.

We also had an entry in the Bucklebury Christmas Tree competition – the Brownies had a great time decorating baubles for our Australian themed tree. As part of the preparation, we made contact with the Region Commissioner for Melbourne who gave some ideas and also a little bit of an insight into her life, including the kangaroo who visit her garden!

We are looking forward to the next term and will be starting our Skills for my Future Theme Award and completing our Games Master badge. We are also attending the South West Region Thinking Day event at Milestones in Basingstoke and also holding our own event a week later.

Girlguiding has lots of benefits for both girls and women. It helps build self-belief, independence and leadership skills through fun, hands-on activities and teamwork. We are a welcoming community where girls meet new friends, feel supported, and belong to a safe space where they can be themselves.

Girls are encouraged to speak up, share opinions, and take part in decisions that matter to them—building confidence to use their voice in the wider world. Girlguiding inspires girls to help their communities, support causes they care about, and develop a strong sense of social responsibility. It's about enjoyment, laughter, and memories that last a lifetime.

At Second Bradfield Brownies, we have spaces for new Brownies and would love to see some new members aged 7 to 10 years old. We would also love to see some adult volunteers! Remember one evening a week can change a girl's life – and yours! By volunteering with Girlguiding you can grow your skills, and have fun!

Whatever your age, there's a place for you in Girlguiding – join us, volunteer with us, grow with us!

Visit our website for more information about enrolling your daughter or becoming a volunteer - www.girlguiding.org.uk

Vicki Beesley—Second Bradfield Brownies

West Berks Ballet School

What an incredible term we had at our dance school! We are so proud of every student for their dedication, growth, and enthusiasm in the studio.

Our anniversary show - the “Golden Gala” - was a true celebration of 50 years of hard work and creativity. From beautiful ballet pieces to high-energy musical theatre and tap routines, the confidence and stage presence our dancers displayed was inspiring. Thank you to our families and friends who came along to support — your encouragement means the world to our performers.

We are also delighted to share the fantastic results from our recent ballet examinations. Every student approached their exams with focus and professionalism, and their success reflects the commitment they bring to class each week. Congratulations to all our dancers on their wonderful achievements — we couldn't be prouder!

As we look ahead to the new term, we can't wait to start rehearsals for “Cinderella” our next ballet production as we as continuing to build skills, confidence, and a love of dance in every class.

✿We offer classes in Ballet, Musical Theatre, and Tap for ages 3 years through to adults — new students are always welcome! ✿

We look forward to another exciting term full of progress, performance, and passion for dance.

Warm regards, The WBBS Team

Lucie Wilson

Principal WBBS

Email: wbbsslucie@gmail.com

<http://www.westberkshireballetschool.com/>

Organisations

Bucklebury Walkers

We are a mixed group of walkers who meet on the first Thursday of each month at 10.00 a.m. and walk for about 3 – 4 miles or 10.30 a.m. for a shorter walk, about 2 miles. You are welcome to join either group

We had a mixture of walks again last year in all sorts of weather! Usually enjoying a coffee and lunch at The Cottage Inn afterwards.

In December we participated in the Bucklebury Christmas Tree Festival in the Victory Room. Bridget and Margaret organised our tree and received the Green Welly Award at our Christmas meal. This award is awarded each year to a member who has done something notable during the year. In the past it has gone to people who have ended up covered in mud, led us through VERY muddy paths, stepped up at the last minute to help out etc. A little bit of fun. Thirty members enjoyed the Christmas meal at The Cottage Inn.

Please contact me for more details or just turn up at any of the walks – the diary is in The Oaks and on the village website.

Please note that these are social walks and you are responsible for your own safety.

Helen Relf,

01635 867619. grannyrelf@btinternet.com

Tuesday Ladies Club (TLC)

Our group surpassed itself by producing the most delicious plates of snacks for our annual Christmas Party. The combination of wine, good food and excellent conversation made for a great evening.

We have, as usual, a very varied programme this year, from talks on “Life as a Pilot”, “The history of Pop on the Box” and “Blind Man with a Backpack”, to name just a few and in March, Oz returns for a cookery demonstration and tasting of her delicious Middle Eastern Food.

We meet in the Oak Room in the Memorial Hall at 7.15pm on the second Tuesday in the month. There is no membership fee, only a charge of £3.00 per person per evening to cover expenses. New members are always welcome.

Wynne Frankum

Bucklebury & Marlston Horticultural Society

The mild tail of last autumn encouraged our plants to keep flowering, and resist withdrawal into winter hibernation. Now, in January, the dull, damp, dreary and short days do not raise enthusiasm to go outside and tidy up the garden. As a Society we are also behind programme, but several changes are being introduced to improve our efficiency. The new 2026 schedule is now electronically produced in full colour, we will be distributing these and collecting fees soon. Members will find all the details of this year's activities within its pages. We are encouraging members to pay by bank transfer (details in schedule), and make use of our web-site. In time the web-site will develop and make easy access to our activities. However we will respect our traditions, and continue with show entries, cash collections, membership and Century Club as normal. The schedule will also be posted on the website to keep all members informed of current events. It is simple to find, just type "Bucklebury Horticultural Society" in the heading of your browser page and it will pop up on your computer.

The first of this winter's events is presented by Ray Broughton, who returns to give more gardening advice. This may have passed by the time you are reading this article, but you are welcome to come along to enjoy two talks at the Memorial Hall on Friday 20th March and Friday 10th April. Both starting at 8pm. The first will give help in growing superb dahlias, and the second is a personal account from the manager of the Growing2gether nursery near Kingsclere.

Aconites and Hellebores are in flower, and snowdrops popping through, but will the daffodils hang on for our Spring Show on **Sunday 29th March** at the **Victory Room** down in the Village? Entries are staged from noon until 13.00, once judging is complete, all are welcome to view the display and enjoy the fragrance of spring flowers from 2.30pm until 4pm. Entry is free, parking easy, and refreshments will be available. The show is brought forward this year to avoid the Easter weekend, let us hope the weather cooperates. Please note that the classes for daffodils have been completely reorganised to reflect current trends.

The Summer Outing this year, as in previous years, is a collaboration with Bradfield Gardening Club. Details on the back page of the schedule and on the website, members wishing to join this trip will need to liaise with Tony Powell. Reduced price visits to the RHS Gardens at Wisley are possible using our Affiliated Society 50% discount card, which is held by Wynne Frankum.

The Summer Show is on **Saturday 4th July** in the Victory Room and our Autumn Show at the same venue on

Saturday 5th September. Full details are inside the schedule. Take a look and see if you can plan to produce a few entries. Visitors are welcome during the afternoon.

The Century Club is flourishing and helps our finances and keeps subscriptions low. Draws are monthly and the annual fee is £12.00. If you would like further details, please contact Margaret Grannum on 0118 9713944. Last year's Social at The Cottage Inn was successful and it is hoped to repeat a similar event this autumn.

The position of Treasurer remains unfilled and a volunteer would be graciously received. New members are always welcome, bring a friend to any of our meetings. If you feel you have the energy to improve the Society, why not join our small and friendly committee or offer assistance for specific events?

Happy Gardening
Derek Matthews (0118 9712587)

St. Martin's Club

Our meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month. We hold indoor meetings at The Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury during the winter months, February, March and November, commencing at 14.00. Visitors are welcome at a cost of £3.00.

In February we have a talk by local poet June Eggleton and in March David Southgate will tell us about the local Repair Café.

Our November meeting was a talk by Sarah Somerville on Historic Houses, including Highclere Castle. The meeting was, as usual, very well attended.

Along with many other societies and individuals we took part in the Bucklebury Christmas Tree Festival in the Victory Room. Fay decorated our tree and chose Canada as the country represented.

December saw 60 members enjoying a lovely Christmas lunch at the Cottage Inn where we were well looked after by Gary and his team.

Coach trips begin in April of each year and, if there is space on the coach, we welcome visitors at the full cost of the outing.

The committee are busy working on next year's programme, which will be available ready for the February meeting. Please contact me if you would like more information about the club or would like to be put on the waiting list.

Helen Relf,
01635 867619 grannyrelf@btinternet.com

Bucklebury History Group

There is so much to look forward to in this New Year! (Just because we like history does not mean we only think backwards!)

February 24th, Dr Nick Young talks about 'Historic Houses of Thatcham' at 7.30pm in the Oak Room, Upper Bucklebury.

April 30th Sue Ellis presents 'Not all Beer and Skittles' at 7.30pm at The Victory Hall, Bucklebury Village

11th May sees a tour of Englefield House with Lord Richard Benyon. Tickets are limited so please book with Sandra sandranicholls64@outlook.com or 0118 9712555. This is now FULL.

26th September Catherine Sampson explains 'Living through the Civil War' at 7.30pm at The Victory Hall, Bucklebury Village.

We ask for a donation of £5 at our talks to cover costs but it is just a donation and it could be more, less or even nothing should you wish.

Just in case you missed us last year here is little look back over previous talks. We had interesting discussions about Shaw House and the local area, as well as further afield to the Falkland Islands! We enjoyed dressing up and taking part in the VE Celebrations as well as meeting people at the Summer Fun Day. One very special event was a wonderful walk through The Dell Gardens, an afternoon to remember forever.

Our last talk of 2025 was about the Old Bluecoat School in Thatcham. Mark Thomas, a Trustee of its current Charity, outlined this history from a Chantry Chapel (then Wayside Chapel) and School through to the current day. It was a privilege to meet family members of William House, who attended the school 1890-1893. He was a notable pupil and awarded the V.C. during the Boer War in 1900. More of this talk is available on our website.

Added to this the History Group won a prize in the Victory Room Christmas Tree Festival. We produced a Scots Pine (often used as Christmas Trees in the past) and chose 1800s France as our theme, with Montgolfier balloons, splendid fashions and wine bottles aiming to bring the past alive as we hope our meetings do!

Sandra Nicholls

Bucklebury Events

In conjunction with the Parish Council, on 16th November, we held, in the Victory Room, a tea party to say farewell and thank you to Hash and Chan Shingadia, They had run Peaches Stores for 27 years and become very valued members of the parish. The hall was packed with well wishers. Hash generously donated delicious samosas and grateful friends and customers provided an amazing array of cakes.

Following a very successful collection, Hash and Chan were presented with a cheque and a plate commemorating their years in Bucklebury. They will be greatly missed.

Bucklebury Christmas Tree Festival .

After a few years absence, we held the Festival in the Victory Room on 14th December.

The theme was " A Country" and there was a wonderful display of 13 trees, decorated by parish groups, families and neighbourhoods. Imagination had run riot, so we had a traditional Scots Pine decorated by the History Group, from St. Martins, a Canadian tree celebrating the Canadian people who served in the two World Wars, with maple leaves in abundance and the " Give it your Max" tennis charity for children, decorated, not surprisingly, with tennis balls, the country being "England"

Prizes of £25.00 were given to the three winners. Mulled wine, mince pies and sausage rolls were among the refreshments served and a steady flow of visitors voted for the winning trees. It was a very enjoyable start to the Christmas festivities.

Wynne Frankum



Bucklebury History Group's Christmas Tree.

Halls

The Victory Room

We hosted a successful quiz evening in November with 78 people joining us and Phil Laybourne as the quizmaster. Everyone enjoyed a lasagne supper and homemade desserts provided by our committee. We made a profit of nearly £200 on our raffle that will be donated to Newbury Food bank and Soup Kitchen.

The trustees will be meeting in early February to decide what events we may host this year. One of the items on that agenda will be whether we hold a Beerfest in 2026. The date this year will most likely be Saturday 29th August. This event relies heavily on volunteers over the weekend and if you would be willing to be part of the organising committee, please let me know. We will be holding our AGM on Thursday 26th February in the Victory Room at 7.30pm.

Sadly, we have lost one of our regular evening bookings with the demise of Bucklebury Scouts, Cubs and Beavers which means we now have a regular booking slot available on Tuesday evenings.

We do have a new Martial Arts group starting on Friday evenings in February. If you are interested in learning more about the group, drop me an email and I will forward your details to the organiser.

If you want to find out about all the activities held at the Victory room they are on our website: www.buckleburyvictoryroom.com

John Brims

Chair of the Trustees of the Victory Room

0118 9713308 or 07799 348451

jbrims@outlook.com

Country matters

Bucklebury Commoners Association

A meeting will be held at the Victory Room in Bucklebury Village on 10th March 2026 at 19:30 to elect a new committee for the Bucklebury Commoners Association (BCA) as the current post holders are stepping down.

This meeting is reserved for the owners of the 126 properties with registered common rights who are eligible members of the BCA and also for the representatives of Bucklebury Estate.

Nominations for the four committee member posts of the BCA will be taken on the night or can be registered before by email by providing a proposer and seconder who are independently eligible to be BCA members. Candidates will be expected to introduce themselves at the meeting.

Any nominations or questions should be sent to David Southgate at djsouthgate99@gmail.com.

West Berkshire Countryside Society

The Society exists to promote the understanding, appreciation and conservation of the West Berkshire Countryside.

The events below give you an opportunity to come out on practical tasks, learn new skills, meet new people and, above all, enjoy yourself. You are welcome to stay for as long as you wish. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear, bring work gloves and make sure you have refreshments for your day. All tools will be provided. Grid reference and "What Three Words" listings locate the meeting point. Please check the WBCS website for updates.

Tuesday 24th February 10.00am—Bucklebury Common.

Heathland management. Felling and clearing trees and shrubs to create new haloes around important trees. Meet at the Crossroads, SU556691 ///bedspread.rainfall.text

Tuesday 10th March 10.00am—Rushall Manor Farm.

Continuing woodland conservation management tasks. Meet at the Black Barn off Back Lane between Stanford Dingley and Bradfield, SU584723 ///telephone.brink.crate

Sports

Bucklebury Badminton Club

Happy New Year from all of us! We hope everyone had a fantastic festive break. We're all really excited to be back on the courts for an action-packed 2026.

Back in December we saw one of our busiest Christmas socials at The Rowbarge, Woolhampton. As always, it was a great evening filled with festive spirit, wonderful food and service and provided the perfect opportunity to catch up off-court before the holiday break. Our Rudolph's Raffle was, once again, a huge success with members winning over **20 incredible prizes** of local restaurant vouchers, experiences, food and drink, and so much more. It was also an opportunity to say a HUGE thank you to Linda Cross who is stepping down as Club Secretary after an impressive 19 years in the role!

With the festivities behind us, we are hitting the ground running. We have a packed schedule with **32 matches** to squeeze in before the end of the season in June. It's going to be a competitive and busy few months for our league teams - and we are all raring to go!

If you are looking to get active in 2026, there is no better time to join us. We play every **Tuesday from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM** at the [Elstree School](#), Woolhampton. We are always looking for new recruits to the Club but especially **female members**, we are a super friendly and inclusive club! We are looking for those who already have some badminton experience, but you do not need to be a pro or perhaps you are looking to return to the sport. Either way feel free to come along and try a session.

For more information or to let us know you're coming, please visit our website at buckleburybadmintonclub.com.

See you on the court!

FC Cougars

Since our last update in the Oaks, we are pleased to confirm that our new Under 6s are up and running with regular Saturday morning training sessions, and they will begin development matches later in the year. It's not too late to get started in our newest team if your child would like to start playing regular football locally. There are also opportunities to get involved in our Under 7s and Under 8s, which we may expand with an extra team in each age group if there is enough demand from players and adults keen to lend a hand to manage the teams on match days.

Although we are a club for all abilities, and our emphasis is

fun and inclusion above results, we do have some recent successes to report! All our younger teams play small sided development matches in line with the Football Association's model, with small, short competitive trophy events for primary school aged children. Our Under 9s have won their first trophy event this winter finishing top out of 5 local sides.

Youth football turns fully competitive at the Under 12 stage, with teams entered in season long league competitions. Our Under 12 Black team have just finished an excellent FA cup run. After wins against Sandhurst and Wallingford & Crowmarsh, Bucklebury Cougars eventually bowed out of the FA County Cup against Aylesbury United at the quarter final stage, which is a fantastic achievement.

With spring soon on the way our teams will return to midweek training at Bucklebury Recreation Ground. Our youngest teams have continued to play their Sunday morning matches at Bucklebury Primary School. This winter and early spring will also see the club complete its FA Accreditation for another year, which confirms our status as a club offering a consistent standard on and off the pitch and creating the ideal environment to nurture players, coaches, and volunteers.

There is a long way to go until the end of the current season, but we will soon be looking ahead to starting a new youngest team as our players move on an age group. This will open more opportunities for both young players and new volunteers as we keep building the club.

Although most of our older teams now have waiting lists for places, please get in touch with any enquiries for any age player and hopefully we can get your child pulling on a red and black striped shirt soon!

Graham Loader—graham@fccougars.com
www.fccougars.com

Contributions

Material to appear in The Oaks should be sent neatly typed for scanning or as a MS word document, attached to an e-mail and sent to "clerk@bucklebury-pc.gov.uk". Don't worry about layout as it will be re-formatted to the house-style. Please supply any pictures or artwork as separate files, and don't forget to include captions for the pictures.

All contributions appertaining to the Parish are very welcome but the Editor reserves the right to adapt or omit submissions.

Barry Dickens

Parish Diary Dates

February

| | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 5th | Bucklebury Walkers | 10.00am/10.30am | The Cottage Inn, Upper Bucklebury. |
| 9th | Bucklebury Parish Council | 7.00pm | The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall. |
| 10th | Tuesday Ladies Club | 7.15pm | The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall. |
| 21st | Men's Breakfast | 8.30am | Bucklebury Farm Park Café, Pease Hill. |
| 23rd | Bucklebury Planning Committee | 7.00pm | The Victory Room, Bucklebury. |
| 24th | Bucklebury History Group | 7.30pm | The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall. |
| 24th | Sustainable Bucklebury | 7.45pm | The Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury. |
| 26th | Community Coffee morning | 10.30am | Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury. |

March

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|------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 5th | Bucklebury Walkers | 10.00am/10.30am | The Cottage Inn, Upper Bucklebury. |
| 9th | Bucklebury Parish Council | 7.00pm | The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall. |
| 10th | Tuesday Ladies Club | 7.15pm | The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall. |
| 10th | Bucklebury Commoners Association | 7.30pm | The Victory Room, Bucklebury |
| 23rd | Bucklebury Planning Committee | 7.00pm | The Victory Room, Bucklebury. |
| 26th | Community Coffee Morning | 10.30am | Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury. |
| 28th | Common Clearing/litter pick | 2.00pm | Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury. |
| 29th | Horticultural Society Spring Show | 12noon /2.30pm | The Victory Room, Bucklebury. |

April

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|------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 2nd | Bucklebury Walkers | 10.00am/10.30am | The Cottage Inn, Upper Bucklebury. |
| 13th | Bucklebury Parish Council | 7.00pm | The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall. |
| 14th | Tuesday Ladies Club | 7.15pm | The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall |
| 27th | Bucklebury Planning Committee | 7.00pm | The Victory Room, Bucklebury. |
| 30th | Community Coffee Morning | 10.30am | Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury. |
| 30th | Bucklebury History Group | 7.30pm | The Victory Room, Bucklebury. |

May

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|------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 7th | Bucklebury Walkers | 10.00am/10.30am | The Cottage Inn |
| 8th | Annual Parish Assembly | 7.30pm | Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury. |
| 11th | Bucklebury Parish Council | 7.00pm | The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall. |
| 12th | Tuesday Ladies Club | 7.15pm | The Oak Room, Bucklebury Memorial Hall. |
| 28th | Community Coffee Morning | 10.30am | Bucklebury Memorial Hall, Upper Bucklebury. |
| 25th | Bucklebury Planning Committee | 7.00pm | The Victory Room, Bucklebury. |

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By Bucklebury Parish Council.

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