

The Chronicle

 Serving Cricklade & Latton

No. 605



December 2025
with January 2026

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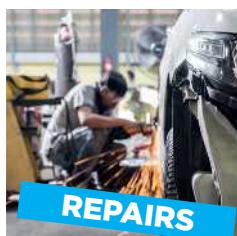
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From the Editor

We received quite a few comments on the last issue, the first with our new suppliers. Many were very complimentary, others not so. We are aiming to produce a magazine, still free to everyone in Cricklade and Latton, but which is affordable and friendly to the environment, the readers and the distributors!

One comment which we have addressed with this issue is whether gloss is appropriate. We checked with the Wiltshire Council and Hills websites that modern gloss papers are recyclable and the supplier tells us that it conforms with UK and EU standards.

However, we have ordered this issue on matt paper. Remember that we are still in a trial stage and, at the time of writing, I can only assume what the appearance of this issue will be! We are trying our best and will address all considerations raised. Thank you all for your input to this.

Certainly the content of this joint December-January confirms that Christmas is close! The cover reflects the Christmas Lights Switch-On ... admittedly this year it will be on 29 November but you should get your copy before then. See page 3 for road closures.



As we have done for the past few years, the centre pages show all the church services for December and January in a single listing. The Diary is also for the two months so we hope you kept your November copy for those events that occur every week.

We have launched a new website for *The Chronicle* chiefly as an online archive. See page 17 for details.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Chronicle team!

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The deadline for the February 2026 issue is Thursday 1 January 2026

Community contacts

all 01793 unless stated or emergency
This section is intended to give quick access to emergency and community help phone numbers. If you spot something missing, please let us know: RickDixonChronicle@gmail.com or 01793 759123.

Churches	see centre pages	Boots Chemist (100 High St)	750226
Cricklade Town Council	751394	Dentist (104 High St)	750388
Latton P/Council ...	clerk@latton-pc.gov.uk	Gas leak reporting	0800 111 999
MP (South Cotswolds)	01285 300555 roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk	Library (113 High St)	750694
Wiltshire Councillor	752501	Link Scheme transport	07421 018 499
Wiltshire Council hub	0300 456 0100	Open Door	07599 987 851
Emergency Services	999	Optician (82 High St)	750415
Non-Emergency: Police	101	Purton Vets (Bath Rd)	751698
Non-Emergency: NHS	111	Household Recycling Centre	778205
Doctors: Purton Surgery	770207	Samaritans	FREE: 116 123
Green Gables Surgery ...	752633	Schools: St Sampson's Primary	750452
Cricklade (De Silva)	750645	Cricklade Manor Prep	750275
		Bradon Forest	770570

Cricklade Town Hall

To book your event at Cricklade Town Hall, please contact our Bookings Secretary, Mrs Nicola Fry on 07977 758 389 (before 9pm please) or via email at crickladetownhall@hotmail.com for further details, or Facebook for photos and other information: www.facebook.com/crickladetownhall



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Richard Hickman, Chairman, Cricklade Jenner Hall Community Trust

Distribution Team

The Chronicle is pleased to welcome our new Distribution Coordination team: Pam and Miles King will be taking over from Nicky and Allan from the February 2026 issue.

We wish all our faithful distributors a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! As there is no separate January issue, they can all take a well-earned break over the holiday season.

We do however have a request for someone to take over a small round of 7 houses at Calcutt. Please let Pam and Miles know if you could help. 07724 759151, 07595 617071 or email p.mking@yahoo.com

Thank you also to those who responded to our recent searches for new deliverers.

Thank you from The Chronicle team!

Moon Phases

December 2025

4th

11th

20th

27th

January 2026

3rd

10th

18th

26th

Cricklade Town Council

Town Council Meetings

Monday 24 November	Premises and Finance Committee
Monday 1 December	Full Town Council
Monday 15 December	Planning, Conservation and Transport Committee
Monday 5 January	Community and Leisure Committee
Monday 12 January	Planning, Conservation and Transport Committee
Monday 19 January	Full Town Council
Monday 26 January	Personnel committee

All meetings commence at 7pm, and are held in the Council Chambers, 113 High Street. Press and members of the public are welcome and have an opportunity to ask questions at the beginning of each meeting.



Civic Awards

Do you know someone who goes the extra mile? Could you recommend a friend, relative or neighbour for their help or volunteering roles within the community. Please see our website for more information and an application form.

The closing date for applications is Friday 27 February 2026.

The Town Council is seeking nominations for:

Young Person of the Year

Cricklade Community Award Community Group of the Year.

Planned essential work happening in Cricklade in November and December

River bank work on Fairview Fields – A contractor has been commissioned to complete some work on the river bank erosion that is occurring. This will involve part of the car park being closed for a period of up to 2 weeks in November, with areas of the river bank being fenced off. There will be large machinery being operated at times in the area. Please respect the contractors who are working on behalf of the Council to prevent further erosion in the area.

Fairview field car park – A contractor has been instructed to complete surface improvement work of the long stay car park in Fairview fields. This will involve the whole car park being closed for a period of up to 3 weeks. Weather permitting this work is programmed to take place in December. If the car park is closed please consider suitable places to park and do not block the parking of local homeowners.

Christmas in Cricklade

A reminder that the Christmas lights event is planned for **Saturday 29 November** and the High Street will be closed from the Clock to Abingdon Court Lane from 3pm to 7pm. Councillors will be out judging the Christmas lights over the 2 weeks before Christmas, and the winners announced in the February issue of *The Chronicle*.



Bra Recycling Box

Cricklade Town Council now have the Against Breast Cancer Collection box for old or new unwanted bras that must be in a usable condition. These will be used to raise money for research into finding a vaccine for the women and men affected by this disease.

We also host blister pack recycling, digital devices (phones, tablets, laptops factory reset please), stamps, energy saving light bulbs, batteries and ink cartridges, all of which go to good causes. There is also a Malmesbury and Cricklade foodbank collection box available.

YOUR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE GROUP NEEDS YOU!

Cricklade now has a NEW Community Resilience Group made up of local residents eager to support our community in preparing for and responding to emergencies like floods, traffic incidents or major utility loss. A Resilience Plan is now live on the homepage under "Popular Links" on the Cricklade Town Council website for the public to use.



The group is supported by the Town Council and needs additional members to act as Community Resilience Volunteers (CRVs). Each CRV will take responsibility for a defined area within Cricklade and will carry out monthly checks and report on hazards and issues within the area e.g. blocked drains/ditches, empty grit bins, flood issues etc. CRVs may also assist during any significant incident within the town.

Time needed is modest, a few hours a month with plans to do a drill in spring of 2026 using the support of the Leisure Centre as an Emergency Community Hub. If you are interested to know more or to help the group, please contact or visit Cricklade Town Council as shown here: tel: 01793 751394 (office hours)

admin@crickladetowncouncil.gov.uk website: www.crickladetowncouncil.gov.uk

The Town Council and Tourist Information Point is open, except Bank Holidays:

Monday to Friday 10.00 - 16.00 hrs (Closed 12.30 - 13.30 hrs)

Closed Public Holidays: 25, 26 December, 1 January

Tel: 01793 751394 E-mail: admin@crickladetowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.crickladetowncouncil.gov.uk

Follow the Council @ www.facebook.com/CrickladeTownCouncil

Roz Savage MP

Roz Savage, MP for the South Cotswolds, holds regular constituency surgeries to support residents with their concerns. Following parliamentary advice, these surgeries are now by appointment only.

To book an appointment, email roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk or call her office on 01285 300555. If you have specific accessibility needs, please let the team know when booking.





Wiltshire Perspective

- Council Meetings
- Local resilience
- Christmas Shopping

Wiltshire Council is currently in 'No Overall Control', meaning all decisions are usually fairly close run things. When the last full council meeting was held, there was a wide range of items on the agenda, varying from the mandatory to the petty. It seemed that my decision, after twelve hours, to leave to go to other meetings was wrong, and others took advantage of both me and similarly minded members by using the chance to vote down a number of resolutions. It wasn't the council's finest hour and I feel that a number of members were played, including me. I apologised to the leadership team and will make sure to stay the course in future. My learning point was that running the county does involve awareness of others' mischief-making and isn't just potholes, planning applications and hedgerows.

Something a bit closer to home was prompted by a flood event where Wiltshire Council was criticised for not supporting local communities in times of emergencies. This is not because of laziness or unprofessional people, it's for two reasons. The first is that the council has to pay for other services such as adult social care and special educational needs, both of which are huge and rising costs, but the funding to support it isn't. The second is that when a disaster strikes it's often across an entire region, so resources are spread very thinly and priority calls are made to focus on where the greatest number of people can benefit from the resources that are available.

Having said that, I visited a depot where they have prepared for a harsh winter and their goal is clear: they were all determined to provide as much support as they can, no matter what the eventuality (including thousands of tons of salt to grit and treat our roads).

In our communities it's important to keep in touch with those around us and to plan what a scenario would look like and how it might impact you. Do you know where your insurance details are and who you would turn to for help if you had to leave the house? How would you get there and how might you support others?

Lastly December is often the time when we spend more time with loved ones and spend more than usual on each other with presents.

It may seem like a small thing, but the impact on where you buy your gifts from has a huge impact on the person selling them. Going to local shops to get cards, gifts, decorations and gift-wrap is one way to ensure that the money you hand over will remain in your community and will not go to huge companies in far off places to fund the hyper-wealthy.

Amazon will never be able to beat your High Street on delivery times if you walk there and pick it up immediately, and often they're at a better price. So please, at a minimum, make sure to get a couple of presents, your wrapping, cards, tape and ribbon from locals. Use it or lose it.

If you think I can help you with this or anything else, please let me know. If I am not immediately available my answer machine is monitored, so do get in touch and I promise to do my best.

Nick Dye, Councillor for Cricklade, Latton and Marston Meysey
Nick.dye@wiltshire.gov.uk or 75250

Latton 100 Club

As the festive season approaches, we want to say a huge thank you to all our wonderful members for your continued support throughout the year. Your contributions make a real difference to our community, and we're so grateful for your generosity and enthusiasm.

As we look ahead to the New Year, we'd love to welcome new members to join the Latton 100 Club! It's a fun and easy way to support our beautiful historic church with chance of a £100 prize quarterly.

If you're not already part of the club – why not make it your New Year's resolution to join? Together, we can make 2026 an even more exciting year for Latton! 😊

Wishing you all a joyful Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year. With thanks and festive cheer, from the Latton 100 Club.

Artist's Name Sought - can you help?

A local resident is planning to conduct a Silent Auction at a date in 2026 of a pencil drawing showing Concorde flying over St Sampson's Church. It is dated 1976, the inaugural year of Concorde's passenger flights. 2026 will be the 50th anniversary year.

There are only the initials JRM, to identify who that person was. We believe he or she was involved with the former Cricklade Show at that time. Can you help us identify the artist?

The proceeds from the Silent Auction will go to St Sampson's Church Refurbishment Appeal.

If you know who the artist was, please contact The Editor at rickdixonchronicle@gmail.com or 01793 759123.



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7pm

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The Chronicle

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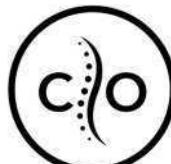
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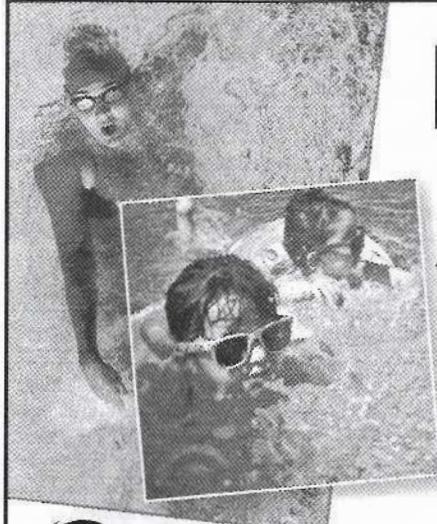
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Parent feedback May 2024

Parent feedback May 2024



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CRICKLADE CINEMA!

Our Autumn Season concludes on **Tuesday 16 December** at 8pm in the Town Hall.

The Ballad of Wallis Island (12A, 99 mins)

Charming bitter-sweet comedy about an eccentric lottery winner who books his favourite singer-songwriter to a remote British island to play what turns out to be a rather unusual gig. Starring Tim Key, Tom Basden and Carey Mulligan.

(contains: moderate bad language)

Tickets can be purchased in advance from The Town Council Offices at 113 High Street or on the door (subject to availability). Price £5.



We will be back in the New Year with our **Spring 2026 Season starting on Tuesday**

27 January. Tickets will be on sale from 19 December and the full programme will be published on our website by mid December.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting delivery of a new ceiling-mounted projector which we are confident will make your cinema experience even better. Our thanks go to Cricklade Town Council, Wayland Estates Charity and Wiltshire Area Board for their financial support; to Cricklade Town Hall for their help with the installation and of course to our loyal Cricklade Cinema audience, who come along each month and make it such an enjoyable night out. We couldn't do it without you. Happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in 2026.

More details about all the films being shown and information on Cricklade Cinema can be found on our website (www.crickladecinema.org.uk) so why not take a look?.

Email us at: cricklade@cricklade.org.uk

Check us out at Facebook Cricklade Cinema

New Chronicle Website Launched! ...

We wanted to keep the name simple and we decided on: **cricklade.org**

That's it. You don't need www in front of it, nor https:// – just that simple name.

We are aiming to provide a historical archive of the magazine, and one that can be downloaded anywhere in the world – say by relatives you have in New Zealand, the furthest away I can think of!

Because we boast that we deliver to every household in Cricklade & Latton, we want you to see it first, so you will continue to get your printed version sometime after the 24th of the month. The web version will be updated around 3 weeks later, so:

This December issue, delivered: from 24 November.

Web version published: around 15 December.

Archive copies from November 2025 have the adverts as in the paper version.

The Chronicle

**CINEMA
FOR ALL**

*Rick, Editor
Page 17*

Cricklade Garden Club

Meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month in the Town Hall Annexe. For our meeting on **Tuesday 9 December** we will be starting at 6pm. We will be having a social evening with refreshments and a lighthearted quiz.



The Garden Club is "put to bed" in January and February so our first meeting of 2026 will be on Tuesday 10 March 2026, which is also our AGM.

For information about the club , upcoming events and trips please look at our excellent website www.crickladegardenclub.org.uk

Membership is £25 p.a. We are affiliated to the Gloucestershire Federation of Gardening Societies (www.gfgs.org.uk)

Visitors welcome at £5 a session - come and give us a try

Queries to Bizzie 07876347973 or Janet 07765276534. We look forward to seeing you!

Scouts Christmas Post

It's that time of year again and the 2nd Cricklade Scouts are ready to collect your Christmas post and deliver it to your friends and family in the local area. Stamps are 45p each (cash only please) and can be bought from The Old Post Office, Spar at Culverhay or the Cricklade Town Council offices. Please check each location for their opening times. They will have maps showing our delivery area.



Please post your cards in the GREEN postboxes at the same locations from 21 November. These will be emptied by our volunteers ready for sorting and posting in December.

Stamps went on sale in November and the last collection will be 4pm on 16 December.

The young people of Cricklade want to thank you for your continued support with the Christmas Post.

Cricklade Historical Society 2026 CALENDAR

Our Calendar for 2026 is now on sale at the price of £10 each.

Copies are available from the Town Council Office and Scissors. We will also be selling them on the High Street in November and early December, so stop and have a chat with us.

The sale of the calendars is one of our two major fund raisers, so please help support us in the work we do in running the Museum.

A big thank-you to all who came and supported us at our recent Quiz Night. A good night was had and we raised just over £900. Also thanks again to all the Cricklade businesses who donated prizes for the raffle.

Cricklade Library is above the Town Council Office at 113 High Street. The entrance is through the gateway and there is a lift as well as stairs to the library level. Current opening hours are: *(Closed Bank Holidays)*

Mon:	2–4pm	Wed:	2–4pm	Fri:	2–5pm	Sun:	Closed
Tues:	10am–1pm	Thurs:	2–7pm	Sat	10am–1pm		

Cricklade Bloomers



Bloomers has once again been awarded Outstanding in The Royal Horticultural Society's *In Your Neighbourhood* Scheme. They commented on the thriving group and the high standards of planting and maintenance.

Special thanks this year must go to two of our members: Chris Atkins who has organised and replaced the covered area roof and rebuilt the compost heaps and to Barry Arthurs who has watered the community orchard for two summers ensuring the trees became established.

Another success story has been the sales cart outside The Walled Garden and for that we thank the Cricklade Community for purchasing locally grown plants in reused plastic pots in addition to supporting Bloomers. They also commented on Bloomers' wish that the group would continue to grow and take on new projects.

On that note, if anyone is thinking that all Bloomers work is very physical on the borders and not for them, there is always potting up at height-adjustable tables or the town planters that are at standing height. New members are always welcome.

Cricklade W.I.

Here we are at the end of another year. I'm sure the older you get the faster they go. Christmas preparations will be well underway when this issue hits your doormats.



Despite the long dark nights we still meet in the Town Hall Annexe on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. Our November meeting saw us enjoy a talk by the Bobby Van Trust entitled 'Staying Safe Online' which gave us invaluable information on how to avoid scams – there are so many! They also gave us many other hints and tips to avoid pitfalls. So everyone must be aware!

Our next two meetings, **2 December and 6 January**, are devoted to enjoyment. Members will be enjoying a delicious lunch at the White Hart in December. January will see us enjoy our annual New Year Party with scrumptious food and entertainment.

19 February 2026 sees us back on course with an Iris Folding Workshop, which I think is a method for creating beautiful greetings cards.

Upcoming events for 2026 include: Guards Behind the Scenes, a Day in the Life of the Victorian Divorce Court and Saxon Riding for the Disabled, with many other exciting events in the offing, as well as some interesting outings. So do think about giving Cricklade WI a look in 2026.

Coffee and Chat is of course open to everyone on the first Tuesday of every month at 11am in the White Hart.

If you are interested in finding out more about us and our activities please contact our secretary Viv Tomkins on 01793 752459.

May I take this opportunity on behalf of Cricklade WI to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year. We hope to see more of you ladies in 2026.

Cricklade Open Door

Christmas greetings from Open Door to everyone in Cricklade and surrounding areas. We wish you a happy, healthy, fun filled season with your families and friends and a good year ahead in 2026.



November was a quiet month at Open Door, mainly because we were closed for the first two weeks, to enable the coordinators and volunteers to have a well deserved holiday. The remaining two weeks were filled with all our usual activities, lunches, company and support for all our members and friends. Why don't YOU come along and find out if Open Door could be part of your weekly plans? Pop in for a chat and a coffee, or book lunch, or stay all day and enjoy our programme of activities. Our telephone number is 07599 987 851, if you'd like more information or a chat before coming along.

December will be a 'full on' month, starting with a wonderful Christmas Sing a Long with Sian and Rob, open to all – Monday 1 December, 10.45 - 11.45, with just donations afterwards towards Wiltshire Rural Music, who have sponsored Sian and Rob. There will be a served, excellent Buffet Lunch, after the Sing a Long, for £8.00, which does need to be booked beforehand – believe me, it's exceptional!

Open Door have been invited to watch Cricklade Manor Prep School's Nativity Play on Wednesday 3 December and we are very happy and pleased to go along. Cricklade Manor Prep School are great supporters of Open Door.

Open Door members have a Christmas Tea Party (with extras!) to look forward to at the Jenner Hall and a Christmas Lunch at the White Hart Hotel.

Open Door will finish for the Christmas break on Thursday 18 December and reopen on Monday 5 January and we look forward to welcoming current and prospective new members to come and enjoy 2026 altogether.

*Cricklade Open Door, The Jenner Hall, Bath Road
Every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 10.00 - 3.30 Tel: 07599 987 851*

Bounce and Rhyme

A group for parents, grandparents and carers who are looking after babies and/or toddlers - taking place on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 1.45pm to 3pm at the United Church hall in Calcutt Street. Coming dates are:

2 December 16 December (Christmas group)
6 January (First meeting of the New Year) 20 January

Come along for nursery rhymes, a story book , refreshments and a chat. There is no charge – we are pleased to welcome you.

Coffee Café

All are welcome to attend the weekly Coffee Café each Friday at Cricklade United Church Hall, Calcutt Street from 10am to 11.30am. Come along for a coffee and a chat.

A special Coffee Café with mince pies and carols will be taking place on Friday 19 December – do come and join in with the festive atmosphere.

Please note there will not be a Friday Café running on 26 December (Boxing Day)!

See you again on 2 January. Join us for a New Year coffee!

Churches Together in Cricklade & Latton

St. Mary's Catholic Church

Weekly Mass times 9.30am on Sundays
 10.00am on Fridays

For notices please see the noticeboard on the railings of St Mary's.

Parish website www.stthomasparishfairford.org.uk.

Father Michael Robertson can be contacted on 01285 712586 or by email
michael.Robertson@cliftondiocese.com

The Friends of St Mary's website with more details of the history of the church is at
www.crickladestmary.org.uk

Cricklade United Church, Calcutt Street, Cricklade

Minister: Revd Sarah Simpson, tel. 01666 826866, Email: sarahsimpson14@btinternet.com

As a United Reformed / Methodist Church, we are part of the URC North West Wiltshire Pastorate and the Upper Thames Methodist Circuit. Please have a look at our website for all the current information regarding our services, dates, times and other events.
crickladeunitedchurch.co.uk

Sunday morning services during November,

The Upper Thames Benefice

Cricklade St Sampson's, Latton St John the Baptist, Ashton Keynes Holy Cross and the Leigh All Saints

Contact details:

Vicar: Revd Canon Debbie Dewes - email: vicar@upperthames.org.uk tel: 01793 752718

Associate Vicar: Revd Shirley Danby - email: revdshirleyd@gmail.com tel. 07980 548844

Curate: Revd Sharon Gleed - email: curate@upperthames.org.uk tel: 07305 006693

Parishes Administrator: Jane Eyles - email: admin@upperthames.org.uk tel: 01793 979304

From the Registers of the Upper Thames Group of Churches

Baptisms

5 October	Rosie Valerie Francis <i>at St Sampson's</i>
12 October	Kingsley Spencer Kent <i>at St Sampson's</i>
19 October	Edward Samuel Cronin Jones <i>at Holy Cross</i>
19 October	Felicity Elizabeth Rose Jones <i>at Holy Cross</i>
19 October	Clemence Rose Green <i>at Holy Cross</i>
26 October	Henry Joseph Binfield <i>at St Sampson's</i>

Funerals

3 October	David Keefe <i>at St Sampson's & North Wiltshire Crematorium</i>
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Churches Together in Cricklade

30 November

Advent Sunday

- 8am BCP Communion at St Sampson's Cricklade
- 9.30am Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
- 10.30am North Wilts Deanery Holy Communion at Malmesbury Abbey
(includes all Upper Thames churches)
- 10.30am Morning Worship at United Church: Revd Sarah Simpson
- 4pm Christingle Celebration at Holy Cross with AK school choir

7 December

Advent 2

- 8am Holy Communion at St Sampson's
- 9.30am Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
- 10am Morning Worship at St Sampson's with the Music Group
- 10am Morning Worship at St John the Baptist
- 10am Holy Communion at Holy Cross (Christmas Tree Festival)
- 10.30am Morning Worship at United Church led by Katy Bell
- 6.30pm Evensong at St Sampson's

14 December

Advent 3

- 9.30am Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
- 10am Worship Together Communion at St Sampson's
- 10.30am Morning Worship with Communion at United Church led by Rev Andrew Francis
- 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight at St Sampson's

17 December

(Wednesday)

- 6.30pm Carol Singing at St Sampson's

19 December

(Friday)

- 10am to 11.30am: Coffee Cafe in the United Church hall, mince pies & carols

21 December

Advent 4

- 8am Holy Communion at St Sampson's followed by breakfast
- 9.30am Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
- 10am Morning Worship at St Sampson's
- 4pm Carols with Candles at Holy Cross
- 4pm Carols and Crib Service at St John the Baptist
- 4pm Carol Service at United Church led by Rev Sarah Simpson, with refreshments including mince pies served after the service.
- 6.30pm Evensong at St Sampson's



24 December

Christmas Eve (Wednesday)

- 4pm Crib Service at St Sampson's
- 4pm Crib Service at Holy Cross
- 6.30pm Carol Service at St Mary's R.C. Church
- 7pm Vigil Mass of Christmas at St Mary's R.C. Church
- 7pm Carol Service at All Saints, Leigh
- 11pm Midnight Holy Communion at St Sampson's
- 11pm Midnight Holy Communion at Holy Cross

de & Latton: over Advent & Christmas

25 December	Christmas Day (Thursday)
8am	Holy Communion at St Sampson's
9.30am	Dawn Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
10am	Christmas morning worship at United Church: led by the Worship Group
10am	Christmas Day Family Communion at St Sampson's
10am	Christmas Day celebration for all ages with Communion at Holy Cross
11.15am	Christmas Day Family Communion at St John the Baptist
28 December	Christmas 1
9.30am	Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
10am	Upper Thames Group Worship Together Communion at St Sampson's
10.30am	Morning Worship at United Church: led by the Worship Group
4 January	Christmas 2
8am	BCP Communion at St Sampson's
9.30am	Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
10am	Morning Worship at St Sampson's with music group & children's activities
10am	Holy Communion at Holy Cross
10am	Morning Worship at St John the Baptist
10.30am	Morning Worship at United Church: led by Phil Bunce
11 January	Epiphany or Baptism of Christ
9.30am	Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
10am	Upper Thames Group Worship Together Communion at St Sampson's
10.30am	Morning Worship at United Church: led by the Worship Group
18 January	Epiphany 2
8am	Holy Communion at St Sampson's followed by breakfast
9.30am	Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
10am	Holy Communion at St John the Baptist
10am	Morning Worship at St Sampson's
10am	'Around the Table' at Holy Cross
10.30am	Communion & Covenant Service, United Church: Rev Sarah Simpson followed by refreshments
6.30pm	Evensong at St Sampson's
25 January	Epiphany 3
8.30am	Holy Communion at Holy Cross
9.30am	Mass at St Mary's R.C. Church
10am	Holy Communion at St Sampson's
10am	Morning Worship at St John the Baptist
10.30am	Morning Worship at United Church: led by Rev Gerald England

Thursday mornings in **St Sampson's**: 8.30am for coffee & catch up, prayers from 8.45am.
Mass is also said at **St Mary's R.C. Church** on Fridays at 10am.

St Sampson's Church Refurbishment Appeal

Creating a Community Space for the Future



Quiz Night 7 February 2026

7pm for 7.30pm start

at St Sampson's School Hall

£12 per person / Max 6 per team

Hot supper included.

Drinks/Wine available for a donation.

Tickets from Sharon Smith 01793 751375

Wine Tasting 20 March 2026

Look out for posters!

The St Sampson's Church Appeal group
wish you all
a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year

St Sampson's Church 100 Club

The lucky winners of the October 2025 draw were Rob and Kate Crow who won £33.00. St Sampson's Church benefited by £33.00.

To join the 100 Club, contact Sharon Smith: tel. 751375 or email sharonjsmith54@hotmail.com

Donations to the Refurbishment Appeal

How to give: Cash or cheques (made payable to St Sampson's PCC No. 2 Account) in the donations box in church or send to Adina Grace (Church Warden and Treasurer), 24 North Wall, Cricklade, SN6 6DU. For further details please contact Adina on 01793 380583 or email janda.grace447@outlook.com



Online donations can be made by scanning the QR code (*right*) or visiting donate.giveasyoulive.com.

Cricklade Jenner Hall (Parish Hall) "Save It Club"

In the Monthly Draw held on 30 October the lucky winners were:-

First Prize	Christine Russell	£34.20
Second Prize	Mave Ells	£22.80
Lepper Hall Funds:		£57.00

To Join the Jenner Hall "Save It Club", please contact Paul Marley Tel: 752851.

The Subscription for the "Save It Club" is only £12 per year.

Subscribers are encouraged to pay a year's subscription of £12 by Standing Order.



Work at St Mary's Church

Some of you will be aware of the ongoing work in the church. Earlier this year a section of ceiling plaster in the South Aisle of the church fell down. Fortunately it happened when the church was closed. Other panels in the South and North Aisles were showing signs of potential failure and a decision was made to take the loose sections of these panels down and repair them at the same time.



Scaffolding was put up and a specialist lime plasterer worked on the repairs. The original laths have been made secure and then finished with layers of traditional lime plaster. This process has taken time as the layers of plaster needed to cure before the next layer could be applied and then completely dry out before painting with an appropriate conservation grade paint.

At the same time we had plans for the porch to be redecorated to help protect the timbers as part of our ongoing maintenance. By the time this goes to print we are hoping all this work will have been completed.

This essential work is funded by kind donations and subscriptions to The Friends of St Mary's. If you would like to make a donation or become a member please contact annewykehammartin@gmail.com and help to look after one of Cricklade's oldest buildings.

Cricklade Memory Café

We are already nearing the end of 2025, after a very good year for the café. We have had many interesting visitors and welcomed a number of new members. Sadly we have also lost a few members and they are sorely missed by us as well as their families.



In October our new little friends from Thames Pre School joined us for the first time. They looked so tiny but were such fun and we look forward to meeting them again next term. Cat Atwell from *Home Instead* brought music and dancing to another fun morning. November saw a useful and tasty demonstration by Jo from Wiltshire Farm Foods.

We are looking forward to the **December Café on 3 December** and our **Christmas Party on 17 December**. This starts at 11.30 with coffee and biscuits and entertainment by the marvellous Tony M, followed by a buffet lunch at 1pm and the draw of our annual Christmas Raffle at 2pm. Raffle tickets will be on sale from early November.

Wednesday 7 January 2026 is our first café of the New Year, and 4 February is our second birthday with, of course, a party to mark the start of our third year.

Vona, Margaret, our lovely volunteers and all our members wish you the residents of Cricklade and beyond a very Happy Christmas and happy and healthy New Year.

As ever for more information, contact Vona 07896 723 794 or Margaret 07976 620 089.

Bingo4U

Come along on Wednesday afternoons at the Jenner Hall – anyone welcome.

£2 entry. Eyes down at 2pm.

Contacts: Chris 07500 871 680 or Liz 07780 473 024

Cricklade Foodbank

Open every Friday 10am to 11.30am in the Jenner Hall, Bath Road



We are already into the season of Advent, which means that Christmas is just around the corner. For many of our clients this is a very challenging time. We are hoping to put a few extra things into the clients' food boxes to help tide them over the festive season.

Cricklade Foodbank will be shut on Friday 26 December (Boxing Day). If you are in particular difficulty, please call the Helpline (01666 826982) and speak to a volunteer. For those able to get there, Malmesbury Foodbank will be open on Tuesday 23rd and also on Tuesday 30th December. Please remember to ring ahead of your arrival, so they will be expecting you.

Cricklade Foodbank will be open, as usual, on Friday 2 January 2026.

If you're thinking of donating to the Foodbank this month, please remember that Christmas items will be much appreciated by our clients.

Our donation boxes are in their normal places: Tesco, pet shop, Culverhay Stores, Town Council Office, St Sampson's School (during term times) and the local churches.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us during 2025. Your support is much appreciated.

Merry Christmas from the Foodbank team.



Cricklade Scouts
Christmas Bingo

Tuesday 9th December
Cricklade Town Hall
Doors open at 6:30pm
Eyes Down at 8:00pm

Great prizes including a Mega Hamper (£100 of goodies!) plus lots of other festive delights

Come and join us for a night of fun, friendship and prizes!

Scouts

Cricklade Bowls Club

The Club wishes to thank Kavali Indian Restaurant for yet another wonderful fundraising evening on Monday 20 October.



The staff helped to make a great event for all of us and we give them our sincerest thanks.

The club continues with social evenings through the off-season, meeting on the first Saturday of each month from 7pm at the Bath Road club house, opposite St Sampson's school.

For more information please contact:
Roy Phillips (Secretary)
07751 201 793

Rick Dixon (Treasurer)
07743 274977

We hope to see you sometime soon..

The Old Police Station



Garden@91: We have been busy planting up the garden, focusing on establishing an evergreen framework complemented by spring bulbs, which we expect to deliver a burst of sunshine next spring. It is already looking much improved, thanks to our dedicated volunteers, generous donations of bulbs from Dobbies (with the help of Karen), bark from Tim and Julie, and the wonderful support of Christina and Alan at Chelworth Nurseries. They supplied most of the plants at a very reasonable cost and kindly donated a large quantity of compost. Their generosity has helped our budget stretch further. This will allow us to complete the remaining work – particularly in the nature area and with the seating, hopefully by early next year.

Thank You to Ruth: At our recent AGM, our Chair, Ruth Szybiak, stepped down from CDF. Ruth was a founding director of the Cricklade Development Foundation and the driving force behind the idea to purchase the Old Police Station. She brought together the group that went on to form CDF, turning that vision into reality. Her calm, wise leadership has guided us this far, and she leaves the organisation in a strong position for the future. We are delighted that Ruth will continue to be involved as one of our garden volunteers, and we extend our sincere thanks for all she has done – and continues to do – for Cricklade.

Membership: It is never too late to become a member of the Cricklade Development Foundation (CDF). A £50 community share gives you a tangible stake in your town and a vote at our AGM – or could make a thoughtful Christmas gift.

For members investing £2,500 or more, we have increased our interest rate from 2% to 3%, bringing it more in line with market rates and reflecting the near completion of the Old Police Station redevelopment. Note: the first £5,000 of your shareholding may also fall outside your estate for inheritance tax purposes.

Find Out More: AGM papers and financial accounts are available on our new website: Governance | Cricklade Development Foundation. For membership or general enquiries, please contact Terri Robertson on 07902 421 756 or email contact@crickladefoundation.org.uk.

A heartfelt thank you to all our members, volunteers, funders, and the wider community, for your continued support throughout the year – your involvement makes everything we do possible.

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone at CDF
Your Society, supporting your High Street.*

In Our Broader Area

■ The Wessex (male choir)

Christmas Concert at Christ Church, Swindon SN1 3HG

Saturday 13 December at 7pm (doors open 6.15pm), with Allegra Ladies' Choir

Tickets available from ticketsource.co.uk/wessex-male-choir
price £15 (u-16s £6.00)

■ Purton Amateur Dramatic Society (PADS) Pantomime

Cinderella at Purton Village Hall, SN5 4AJ

15 / 16 /17 January at 7.30pm ... 17 Jan Matinee at 2.30pm ... £10 adult / £6 child

Cricklade Band 'tis the season...!

You know the next bit – "...to be jolly!" We're all ready yet again with a tradition that's well over a century old as Cricklade's own band plays carols around and about Cricklade in a festive lead-up – apparently "Christmas starts when we hear the band" so I hope we'll add our own brand of seasonal jollity!



The lovely team in our Crew no longer go door-knocking, it isn't the way it's done now! Instead, we'll once again have our bright red buckets near the band for you to drop in some coins (or notes!) – and we're always geared-up with cashless payment facilities! Keep an eye on your phones, tablets or laptops too as we use social media to the full with rolling updates and pictures on our Facebook page

So that you know when and where to keep an ear out – and have your phones or cameras ready – join us for a while, bring your jingle bells, and sing too if you like – here's all the details:

Thursday 11 December, from 7pm – Heberden House - then Pittsfield, Deansfield and Bishopsfield - then crossing to Cliffords and Bath Road - with a couple of stops in Culverhay, at each end of Fullers Avenue - a bit more Bath Road then we finish up at Kennel Cottages.

Monday 15 December, from 7pm – all the estates off West Mill Lane – starting at Reeds, Middle Ground, Home Ground – then Jenner's Yard - on to Hallsfield, North Meadow Road – and then finishing up with couple of stops in Culverhay, at White Horse Road and Ladymead.

Tuesday 16 December, from 7pm – starting at Stockham Close and Stockham Gardens – followed by Carpenters in The Forty – onwards to Byre Close, Purton Road and Hitchings - and finishing by Giles Avenue.

Wednesday 17 December, that's our 'reserve' night, in case poor weather causes us to postpone one of the other nights!

Saturday 20 December – Cricklade High Street – from 9.30-11.15am.

Sunday 21 December – 'Christmas Present' the Christmas show, 7.30pm at the Town Hall – watch out for Facebook and poster announcements! Jonathan did it last year – it could be you this year – see if the golden cornet finds its way to you ... if it does, you get to conduct the band!

Not only that, this is when our magnificent Festive Raffle will be drawn – wonderfully supported by Cricklade's traders and businesses – tickets will be on sale wherever you see any of our band people from the beginning of December – just £1 a go!

Christmas Morning, with approximate guide times – High Street north 08.30, North Wall 08.50, Gas Lane 09.15, Abingdon Court Lane 09.25, Thames Lane 10.00, Manor Orchard 10.07, then to Calcutt Street 10.20, High Street south 10.40, Waylands 11.00, Pauls Croft 11.20, Portwell 11.45 – and a big finish at the Weighbridge by the Town Hall. Here's the really important bit: Keep going back to the band's Facebook page for all the pictures and news of what we're up to.

Can we all wish you a happy, peaceful Christmas – 'tis the season...!

And thank you, from Paul and everyone in The Cricklade Band 'family'



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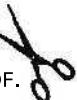
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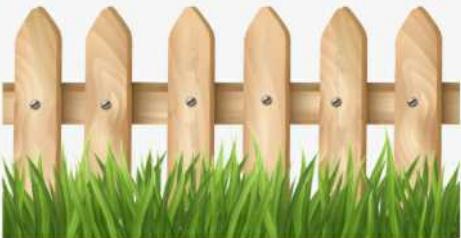


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After over 13 years trading as DPM Heating & Plumbing Ltd and prior to that 10 years as David Pressman Services, I have decided the time has come to retire.

Therefore I will no longer be available for plumbing and heating enquiries from the end of February 2026.

Lyn and I would like to thank our customers in Cricklade and the surrounding areas for your support and custom over the years. It has been very much appreciated.

We are now looking forward to this next chapter in our lives.

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- **Impetigo (Adults & Children aged 1 year and over)**
- **Shingles (Adults 18 years and over)**
- **Urinary Tract Infections (Women aged 16 to 64 years)**

So, if you or a family member have any of the above symptoms. Please come in and speak to our Pharmacist, who will be there to offer help, advice and possible treatment. There is no need to make an appointment.

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Cricklade Pétanque Club

Our pistes are at Cricklade Hotel and Spa, SN6 6HA

Like so many of us, we are looking forward to our Christmas meal and disco at the Cricklade Hotel and Spa on 19 December. If you would like to join us, please contact Barbara on 07515 472 052.



If you would like to come along and have a go you would always be welcome on any of our playing days as below. There is nearly always someone around to show you the ropes but better still there are Pétanque England DBS checked qualified coaches at our coaching sessions. These sessions are a combination of training and then playing a couple of games. Nothing too serious. It really is a lovely way to get a bit of gentle exercise and to meet new people.

Cricklade Pétanque Club wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Our playing days are: Mon 2 - 4.30pm

Wed 2 - 4.30pm Sat 10am -12.30pm

Coaching Sessions are: Wed 10 - 11.30am (ladies) Fri 10 - 11.30am (mixed)

Please arrive 10 minutes before start to avoid delays in play!

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Cricklade Camera Club

On **Tuesday 2 December**, 7.30pm in the Town Hall Annexe, our visiting speaker is Martin Fry FRPS giving his talk "Winter Wonderland". He will take us on a journey as he explores his passion for the landscape and culture of the festive season, from the rolling hills of Gloucestershire to the drama of the Cornish coast through images, music and prose. A leading exponent of audio-visual in the country, his passion stems from a love of photography and combining images through this creative medium.



On **Wednesday 10 December** at 7.30pm we are invited to join bh Photography Club in their Zoom meeting featuring Ken Scott Photography with his talk "Touching the light".

On **Tuesday 16 December** at 7.30pm Cricklade Camera Club is hosting a Zoom meeting which is Round 3 of the Southern Counties Photographic Federation (SCPF), league competition. A great opportunity to hear an independent judge give tips on how to improve images.

For more information contact: clubsecretary@crickladecameraclub.org

Two Budding Cricklade Authors Share Book Signing Event

Two Cricklade authors recently joined forces to promote their latest books at a combined Book Signing event at The Wild Fig café in Cricklade High Street.

Malcolm Brooks and Elisabeth 'Bizzie' White enlisted the help of Eric Cripps, Cricklade Town Crier to encourage potential buyers to pop in, meet the authors and buy a signed copy of their literary creations.



Malcolm (87) has lived in Cricklade for over 45 years with his wife Gill. His second murder mystery novel, *Murder on the London Underground* has now been published almost exactly two years after his first successful novel, *The Mediterranean Mystery*.

Bizzie, who has lived in Cricklade for four years, writes under the pen name of Lee Pennell, and her latest novel is called *Darkleigh*. It is a historical

fiction set in 1815 in a small Cotswold valley. *Darkleigh* is preceded by Bizzie's first novel: *Midnight at Lucas Bay* – an adventure story set in the Gower Peninsula.

A review of both authors' books was featured in the November issue of *The Chronicle*.

All the books: *The Mediterranean Mystery*; *Murder on the London Underground*; *Midnight at Lucas Bay* and *Darkleigh* can be found on Amazon.

Chris Roberts MBE (article and photo)

For more information, contact Chris Roberts MBE: 01285 712150, 0744 350 0744, chrisrobertsmbe@gmail.com

Saxons Pétanque Club, Cricklade Leisure Centre

Pétanque (or boules) is fun, it's sociable and it's very easy to pick up. Saxons Pétanque Club play on the gravel just in front of Cricklade Leisure Centre at 2pm on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and 10am on Saturday mornings with coaching sessions advertised on our notice board just inside the Leisure Centre.

You're welcome to come along, borrow some boules, and give it a go with no obligation to join the club. Just arrive about 15 minutes before the start time to get sorted out. Should you decide to join, annual membership is only £25.

We organise a few friendly club competitions throughout the year whilst some of our more competitive members play in the Cotswold Pétanque League and in various competitions in the Great Western Region (GWR). If you'd like to watch some matches, we will be hosting a round of the GWR Winter Doubles on 14 December at Cricklade Leisure Centre.

As I write this towards the end of October, 27 players from both Saxons and Cricklade Pétanque Clubs are just coming to the end of our annual pétanque holiday in Almuñécar in Spain, organised by a couple of Saxons members, where we play pétanque on the beach!

In November we enjoyed another of our skittles evenings at The White Hart in Cricklade, and our "Christmas" meal will be something to look forward to in January!

If you'd like to find out more about Saxons Pétanque Club, we're a friendly bunch so please come and say hello, take a look at our notice board inside the Leisure Centre, or visit our website at saxonspetanque.co.uk.

Cricklade & District Probus Club

We are looking forward to our forthcoming group meetings when the following talks will take place.

11 Dec	Geoff King:	Thomas Jefferson
8 Jan	Ron Jeffrey:	The Irish Civil War
22 Jan	Mike Aggleton:	The Fairey Swordfish 1932 - 1942



Meetings normally take place fortnightly on a Thursday meeting at 10am for a 10.20 start at the White Hart Hotel in Cricklade. Ours is a friendly group who enjoy keeping our minds active and socialising over a drink in the bar after the meetings. We are actively seeking to expand our numbers and look forward to welcoming new members to the Club.

For further information about our local club please contact the Honorary Secretary, Martin Chambers on 01793 751223. If you contact Martin and advise you would like to attend, which is free for the first few visits, you will be allocated a dedicated host who will introduce you to our members. Alternatively, just turn up on the day and you will be made welcome. For further details about Cricklade & District Probus Club and our scheduled talks for the year, visit our new website at probus.org.uk/cricklade

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Join us for coffee, cake and chat on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

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The volunteers team looks forward to seeing you there!

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The Chronicle

Are you a grandparent? Would you like to support your grandchildren's generation at your local rugby club? Then get in touch; we are

looking for volunteers to help with our Minis, Juniors and Committee. We are a friendly crowd and welcome new volunteers who want to join in at our local club.

Cricklade Rugby Club mourned the sad loss of our first Club Captain, Simon Osbourne (Ozzy), by holding a two minutes silence on 4 October before the Seniors' game. In September the RFU, under its new first female President, announced 25 'Female Pioneers'. We are proud to have Theresa Bickell (Pixie), our men's coach, named as one of those 'Female Pioneers' and celebrated by the RFU as a 'Trailblazer for English Rugby'.

However, we find ourselves in urgent need of new blood to serve on our Committee. Coincidentally a few Officers are retiring at the same time, after many years of hard work supporting Cricklade's Rugby Club to thrive and grow. If you are interested and would like to come along and support your local club, please contact Danny Lloyd, our Chairman, on 07979 864 279, or any other members of the Committee. We are also short of Senior men players, so we look forward to hearing from all you rugby supporters!

Come and join us and have some fun; Adults, Juniors and Minis. RUGBY – the sport that builds strength, teamwork and resilience. Senior men's training is on Thursdays 19.00 – 20.30 at Fairview Fields, no experience necessary; contact Captain, Nick 07542 021 692, or Coach, Pixie 07728 399 759, all are welcome. We are a friendly club and welcome new players and supporters. In October we won against Royal Wootton Bassett and lost to Devizes. On 6 December we play at home to Colerne, and away to Swindon College Old Boys on 13 December.

Our Minis section continues to grow and is open to boys and girls of all abilities. We aim to provide a safe environment where every player can enjoy rugby and develop their personal and social skills as well as a wide array of transferable multi-sports skills. Training is held at our Fairview Fields ground and new players from age 6 are always welcome (no experience necessary and 1st 4 sessions are free). Please contact Chris on 07595 764 878, email chris.lennon@hotmail.co.uk. We would also welcome any parents or grandparents who want to get involved and support the Juniors and Minis, so if you are interested please contact Chris.

Sing Four Four Community Choir

A huge 'Thank You' to everyone who joined in our 'Come and Sing Vivaldi's Gloria' event on 15 November. It was great to have so many people in the choir. What a wonderful sound we made. Thank you, also, to the audience, who were very complimentary about the performance.



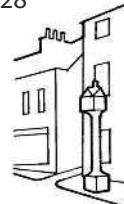
The choir's final outing for 2025 will be our Christmas Concert on **Sunday 14 December**. The venue will be St Mary's Church, **Purton** and the performance starts at 3pm: tickets £7 available from the Town Council Offices, Pips Cafe in Purton and on the door. Refreshments will be available after the concert. We will also be running a raffle, so please bring some cash to buy tickets.

For more information, please go to our website: singfourfour.org.uk. Alternatively, you can contact our musical director, Jen Bamford, on jenloubamford@googlemail.com

The Chronicle Diary - December 2025

1	M	10am	to 12 noon: Computer Club at Leisure Centre
		7pm	Full Town Council Meeting, Council Chamber
2	Tu	1.45pm	to 2.45pm: Bounce & Rhyme, United Church, Calcutt Street
		7.30pm	Camera Club at Town Hall Annexe
3	W	10.30am	to 12.30pm: Memory Café at Town Hall Annexe
9	Tu	6pm	Garden Club social and quiz at Town Hall Annexe
		6.30pm	Eyes down 8.30pm: Scouts Bingo at Town Hall, see page 26
11	Th	10.20am	Probus Club at the White Hart Hotel
13	Sa	7pm	The Wessex (male choir) concert at Christ Church, see page 27
14	Su	3pm	Sing 4 4 Christmas Concert at St Mary's Church, Purton
15	M	7pm	Town Council PCTC Meeting, Council Chamber
16	Tu	1.45pm	to 2.45pm: Bounce & Rhyme, United Church, Calcutt Street
		4pm	Last posting for Scout Post. See page 18
		7.30pm	Art Group at Town Hall Annexe
		8pm	Cricklade Cinema at Town Hall. Tickets from Council Offices
17	W	10.30am	to 12 noon: Parkinson's Café at Cricklade Hotel & Spa
21	Su		Winter Solstice
		7.30pm	Cricklade Band "Christmas Present", Town Hall, see page 28
22	M		Wiltshire schools Christmas break, (others may differ)
25	Th		Christmas Day – bank holiday
26	F		Boxing Day - bank holiday

January 2026



1	Th		New Year's Day - bank holiday
		end of day	Chronicle copy deadline – for February 2026 issue
2	F		Wiltshire schools resume, (others may differ)
5	M	10am	to 12 noon: Computer Club at Leisure Centre
		7pm	Town Council Community & Leisure Committee, Council Chamber
6	Tu	1.45pm	to 2.45pm: Bounce & Rhyme, United Church, Calcutt Street
		7.30pm	Camera Club at Town Hall Annexe
7	W	10.30am	to 12.30pm: Memory Café at Town Hall Annexe
8	Th	10.20am	Probus Club at the White Hart Hotel
12	M	7pm	Town Council PCTC Meeting, Council Chamber
15	Th	various	to 17th: PADS Panto, Cinderella, at Purton Village Hall, see page 27
19	M	7pm	Full Town Council Meeting, Council Chamber
20	Tu	1.45pm	to 2.45pm: Bounce & Rhyme, United Church, Calcutt Street
		7.30pm	Art Group at Town Hall Annexe
21	W	10.30am	to 12 noon: Parkinson's Café at Cricklade Hotel & Spa
22	Th	10.20am	Probus Club at the White Hart Hotel
26	M	7pm	Town Council Personnel Committee Meeting, Council Chamber
27	Tu		Holocaust Memorial Day
		8pm	Cricklade Cinema at Town Hall. Tickets from Council Offices

For Diary Events held Every Week, see your November issue!

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The Final Word ...

For many of us, Christmas is a very busy time of year – not only for the vicar! There are parties, gatherings, presents, cards, people to see, things to do, and all on top of our usual routines often right up until the last moment.

Christmas wears baubles and waves a cracker. It is colourful, possibly even brash with shops and pubs with Christmas playlists, reindeers leaping on jumpers, miles of tinsel and all that good will and good cheer.

For some of us, of course, Christmas is quiet and can be lonely or sad, but the public Christmas is big, bright and bumptious. Always and everywhere it shouts and wants our attention.

Whatever our reservations about Christmas we cannot deny that there is a real joy in finding just the right present for someone; there is a great pleasure in coming together with people we love but seldom see.

There is generosity in Christmas, there is joy, and I want to be a part of all that celebration, joining in with the shouts of Hosanna that the angels sang – ‘Hosanna (praise God), and goodwill towards all people’.

Right at the heart of it all there is something really small and brand new, something to stir our hearts and fill our eyes, a new baby.

Jesus came to be among us as a newborn – vulnerable, needing care, warmth, sustenance and love, all the things we ourselves needed when first born. Right at the heart of all the noise and joy and generosity, is this little baby, in earlier times called ‘heaven and earth in litel space’. The little space, this little body, heaven and earth in himself, born to change the world, born to change us if we will let him.

May Christmas be all you want it to be, and may you sing with the angels, and fill your hearts and eyes with Jesus who came to give us life.

Revd Canon Debbie Dewes, Vicar, Upper Thames Group

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