

Soberton & Newtown

PARISH MAGAZINE For all the community, delivered FREE to over 700 households

December - January 2024

Tilly's picture and the
letter from the King
See page 9



Cover design: Jonty Sherwill
Photo by John Earle

www.sobertonchurch.org.uk
www.newtownchurch.org.uk

St. Peter's, Soberton and Holy Trinity, Newtown.

For details of CHURCH SERVICES, please refer to page 4

For any enquiries, please contact the following

Vicar of Soberton, Newtown and Hambledon

The Reverend Andy Davis been appointed Priest in Charge to minister to the new expanded parish, consisting Newtown, Soberton, Hambledon, the Bridge parishes and Swanmore. Reverend Andy will be licensed on **19th February 2024.**

Licensed Lay Minister (Reader)

Norman Chapman, Meadow Cottage, West Street, Soberton 01489 877378

e-mail: norman@soberton.org.uk

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Our Lady Queen of the Apostles, Roman Catholic Church

St. Martin's Street, Bishop's Waltham, SO32 1DN

Father Bruce Barnes (brucebarnes01@gmail.com) **01489 890947**

6.00 pm Saturday (First Mass of Sunday)

9.30 am Sunday

There are Sunday evening services in Winchester and in Fareham.

For further information contact Anthony McEwen 01489 877448

The Methodist Circuit. Services in the area are as follows:-

Shirrell Heath 10.30 am & 6.00 pm

Waltham Chase 10.30 am

Bishops Waltham 10.30 am

Swanmore 10.30 am & 6.00 pm

Hambledon 11.00 am & 6.00 pm

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**Please e-mail copy for the February / March magazine to
gill.highcroft@btinternet.com**

NEXT COPY DATE - 15th January 2024

**The Benefice of
Soberton,
Newtown &
Hambledon**

Services

**December 2023
January 2024**

*Subject to change,
sometimes at short notice*

DECEMBER

3rd December Advent Sunday

0800	Holy Communion	Hambledon
0930	Holy Communion	Newtown
1030	Short Family Service	Hambledon
1100	Morning Worship	Soberton
1830	Advent Service of Light	Hambledon

10th December

1100	Holy Communion & Sunday Club	Soberton
1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon
1600	Christingle	Hambledon

17th December

0930	Holy Communion	Newtown
1100	Nine Lessons and Carols	Soberton
1830	Carol Service	Hambledon

24th December

1800	Goodnight Service	Hambledon
1800	Nativity / Carol Service	Soberton
2300	First Communion of Christmas	Hambledon
2300	First Communion of Christmas	Soberton

25th December Christmas Day

1000	Holy Communion	Newtown
1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon

31st December

1100	Joint Benefice Holy Communion	Hambledon
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JANUARY

7th January

0800	Holy Communion	Hambledon
0930	Holy Communion	Newtown
1030	Short Family Service	Hambledon
1100	Morning Worship	Soberton

14th January

1100	Holy Communion & Sunday Club	Soberton
1100	Holy Communion & Sunday School	Hambledon

21st January

1100	Morning Worship	Newtown
1100	Service of the Word	Hambledon

28th January

0930	Holy Communion	Newtown
1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon
1800	Holy Communion	Soberton
1630	Evensong	Hambledon

Holy Communion is celebrated every Wednesday at 0930 at Hambledon.

Foreword ... at Christmas

After all the wet and miserable weather over the last months, I am sitting in my study with the sun shining through the window and my mood has been uplifted by the sunshine.

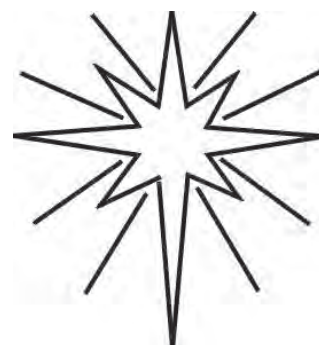
I am delighted to be returning to the Magazine Forword at such an important time. This coming Sunday is the 2nd Sunday before Advent, a point in time leading up to the celebration of Christmas, and our welcome to the newly born baby Jesus.

Before we reach that time there is lots to do, not just in the church but for you, the reader of this magazine, as you prepare for Christmas in your family. All those lists of presents expected, decisions about menus for Christmas day and beyond, finding a suitable Christmas tree and decorating it. No doubt there will be lots of excitement as the days go by; of course, it's not just the children who can't wait for Christmas Day!

When we think of Christmas, I would ask us all to remember those in our community who may find it difficult to provide for themselves and their families. Some may feel lonely a smiling face and a few words may assist.

On the opposite page, you will find details of services in December and January and I particularly want to

draw your attention to the Nine Lessons and Carols at 11am on the 17th December at Soberton - this will be a good opportunity to sing your favourite Carols and hear those wonderful readings from scripture.



On Christmas Eve at 6 pm at Soberton the now annual Nativity service when all the family can join in – adults watch the children tell the Christmas story. Sing Carols as we bless the Crib - Lots of excitement for everyone (see page 16).

Two other events are the Grand Christmas Coffee morning and bring and Buy Sale on Saturday 2nd December 10.30-12 in St Peters Church Room (see page 15) and, on Thursday 21 December at 7.30pm in St Peters there will be Carols by Candlelight sung by ESPRIMO (see page 14).

On behalf of all of us at St Peter's and Holy Trinity Churches, I wish you all a safe, peaceful and Happy Christmas.

Norman Chapman
Lay Minister



**The Parish Magazine committee
wishes all our readers,
advertisers and supporters a very
Merry Christmas and a peaceful,
safe and Happy New Year!**

News From the Pews (of St Peter's)

New Vicar Appointed

Great news. The Reverend Andy Davis, who previously served as the Rector of Bishops Waltham, has been appointed Priest in Charge to minister to the new expanded parish. This, as announced in the last parish magazine, will consist of Newtown, Soberton, Hambledon, the Bridge parishes and Swanmore. His previous knowledge of the area will help him bed down the new organisation.

Reverend Andy will be licensed on 19th February 2024 and the plan is for him to be based in Swanmore with "house for duty" priests accommodated in the other local vicarages/rectories. These incumbents will minister at Sunday services and spend 2 days a week on other parish duties.

Harvest Festival

The church looked lovely for the traditional Harvest Festival service which took place on 8th October. It was followed by a delicious lunch in the Church Room. Perhaps news of the super food had got out – the service was well attended!

Remembrance

This year's Royal British Legion service was held at the church of St Mary and All Saints, Droxford. It was well attended with plenty of participants from both Soberton and Newtown. Droxford School and the Girl Guides presented wreaths in addition to those of the Legion and the Parish Councils.

After the church service in Droxford short services of commemoration were held at both the Soberton and Newtown War Memorials. These were led by Norman Chapman the Last Post was sounded prior to the 2 minutes silence and this was followed by the traditional lament "Flowers of the Field" played on the bagpipes by Ollie Thomson. Both the Parish Council and Royal British Legion laid wreaths which will remain for the year as a reminder of our continued thanks for the sacrifices made on our behalf.

Thanks also to Mrs Elizabeth Parker for the beautiful floral arrangements based around poppies in St Peter's.

New Memorial in St Peter's

Many readers will be familiar with the "Twynam Memorial" in St Peter's. The brass plaque records the tragic loss in the First World War of 4 brothers and a son in law of a local family (whose descendants remain in the village).

The wreath which used to hang above this most moving memorial has been replaced by a frame containing 5 of the ceramic poppies which formed part of the display at the Tower of London in 2014. It is a fitting, more enduring and very personal reminder of their sacrifice.

Louise & Anthony



POP IN FOR COFFEE

at ST PETER'S CHURCH ROOM, SOBERTON



POP IN FOR COFFEE & CAKE ON THE 2nd AND 4th WEDNESDAY IN THE MONTH
10AM – NOON

MEET FRIENDS, MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND HAVE A CHAT

A buzz of enthusiasm at the Soberton and Newtown Climate Café

There was a vibrant atmosphere at Rookesbury Hall on 21st October as residents gathered to chat about living in Soberton and Newtown over tea, coffee, and biscuits. On four different discussion tables around the themes of food, transport, energy and waste prevention, personal experiences were shared on a whole range of issues, including transport problems in a rural area, difficulties with recycling hard plastics, what to do with surplus food or how to make old houses more energy efficient. The lively conversations resulted in many positive and creative ideas and solutions to consider for our area in the future.

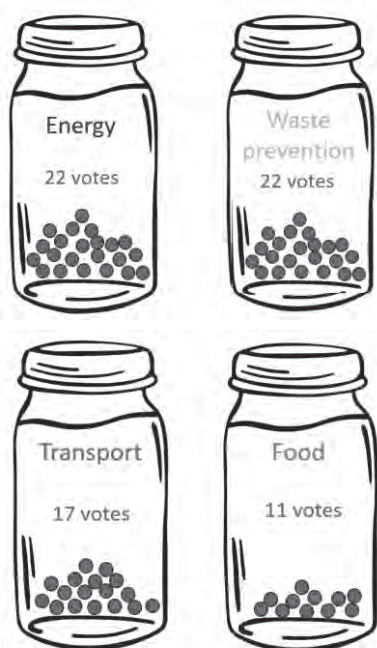


Several local 'green experts' were on hand to get the discussions started, including Cllr Danny Lee (Winchester district councillor), Stuart Mills from Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis (WinACC), Dave Morton from Winchester Food Partnership and Nigel Foster from Hambledon Greening Campaign. People were, also, invited to vote for what they considered to be the priority area of concern for our villages as well as their favourite project ideas that other groups in the district have undertaken (see some of the results below).

A big thank you to everyone who came along and contributed to the success of the event and thank you to Soberton Parish Council for support and funding.

At a follow-up meeting, the hope is to form a group and, having looked at all the ideas from the event, to decide on one or two local projects to get us started. We will keep you posted...In the meantime, to keep up to date with our local projects and for information about sustainable living, follow our Facebook page at the following link: www.facebook.com/sobertonnewtownclimate/

What do you think is the priority area of concern for Soberton and Newtown?



Suzanne White, Jane Masterman,
Phil Bergin and Stan Evans

Some favourite project ideas.



Dig Day at Droxford Junior School

Thank you all those who attended during the day (including children - over 60 people on site!) - we achieved so much. Lots and lots of spring bulbs planted which we will see in February brightening the site; a huge amount of leaf and plant clearing; pruning of trees and shrubs and the willow dome; a complete clearance of the wildlife area and pond of ponds; removal of lots of bind weed on the astro steps and in the courtyard and lots of great work in the allotment including an amazing new compost bin!

Thank you all again - the site is looking amazing for the winter and will be ready for spring and summer plans.



Lucy Strange wows children in a recent visit to Droxford!

The wonderful author of children's books, Lucy Strange, travelled from Kent to spend the day with our children.

She enjoyed the day as much as our children! She shared all of her experiences of being an author and enthralled the children with her new spooky stories.

She signed many books for delighted children on the day.



Soberton & Newtown Ladies' Group

Richard Bell Davies gave us a fascinating account of the flying exploits of his grandfather during WW1, including original photos and old films. The November meeting was well attended despite the inclement weather. Zam Baring told us about the origins and continued growth of the business of producing English Sparkling Wine at The Grange. This included tasting samples!

On Wednesday 6th December at 8pm, Zoe Phillips will help us make a Christmas Decoration. We will start the festive season with mulled wine and minced pies. Venue for the meeting is Rookesbury Hall, Newtown.

The New Year's Party is on 13th January 2024. This is open to husbands, partners or a guest.

Liz Whales 01489 877712 lizwhales@aol.com

Helen Stranks 01489 878270 helen.stranks@btopenworld.com

3P's Barn Dance – a good night had by all!

A great time was had by all who attended the Barn Dance at Soberton Village Hall on Saturday 7th October. Organised by the local social group the "3Ps", live music was skilfully provided by the Woodsiders Ceilidh & Barn Dance Band, a three-piece comprising accordion, guitar and fiddle. The band was complimented by an enthusiastic caller who got everyone to their feet for a series of routines that were enjoyed by all.

Guests brought their own drinks and snacks, and this was supplemented by free ice creams in the interval to cool off! All for a £10 entry fee, so look out for future fun 3Ps events and join your neighbours in a relaxed social evening.

Busy, busy, busy at the Meon Valley Federation!

(Newtown Soberton Infant School and Meonstoke CE Infant School)

It has been an incredibly busy start to the half term at the Meon Valley Federation (Newtown Soberton Infant School and Meonstoke CE Infant School.) The children in our Year 2 classes – Snowy Owls at Meonstoke and Squirrels at Newtown Soberton – have been learning all about Owls as part of their literacy learning. They have been reading 'The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark' by Jill Tomlinson and last week they had a fantastic visit from 'The UK Owl and Raptor Centre'! Dan, the Raptor Centre representative brought in 3 owls for the children to meet - Zazu, the Southern White-Faced Owl, Scarp, the Burrowing Owl and Haze, the beautiful Barn Owl. All of the adults were so impressed with the incredible knowledge of the children and the excellent questions they asked Dan.

Then, last Friday all of the children at both schools had moments of remembrance. The pupils at Newtown Soberton held a small service of remembrance and held a 2 minute silence at school while the pupils of Meonstoke went to church and heard from Captain Pett, an ex-naval officer. They also held a 2 minute silence at the Meonstoke War Memorial. It was humbling to see how seriously all of the children took the service and how well they held the silence.

This week we have had our Children in Need events. The pupils have all been invited to come into school wearing spots and to take part in sponsored 'on the spot' events. The children of Hedgehogs (Year R) were working hard on their exercise circuit for their sponsored event – I was exhausted just watching them!

We are now heading into the Christmas season and excitement is already building for the many events we have coming up, including: shop and wrap events, carolling with the community, magical steam train rides, the Christmas Fair (to be held at The Meon Hall on Saturday 9th December from 10am) and of course our whole federation Christmas Nativity! This year the children will be performing 'Baarmy Bethlehem' – I will make sure I include some pictures of these wonderful events in the next edition.

Thank you so much to everyone in the community that continues to support the federation – it really feels like we are working as one big family and that makes it a wonderful place to be for staff, parents and most importantly, our children.

Have a fabulous Christmas,

Ms O'Toole
Executive Headteacher,
Meon Valley Federation

Tilly's picture and a letter from the King!

Earlier in the year, Newtown Church Fete held a competition, in conjunction with Newtown and Soberton School, to design the front cover for the fete programme. The theme was very current for the early summer i.e. The Coronation! There were many fantastic entries and the winner was Tilly (year 1)!

In order to recognise Tilly's efforts, Mrs Sue Wells shared the picture and details of the fete competition with the King who replied with a lovely letter thanking Tilly and all the other children who had entered.

The front cover of this edition shows Tilly and her class teacher, Mrs Kirsten Barton, with her picture and letter from the King.

Well done Tilly - what a lovely memory for you to keep!



Bob a Job – a Job Well Done!

Thank you Thank you Thank you!

I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who supported me in my 'Bob a Jobs' around the villages. This was very successful fund raising for my Explorer Scout European road trip in the summer. I had three amazing weeks, visiting three countries in Europe. Needless to say, I had an absolutely fantastic time!

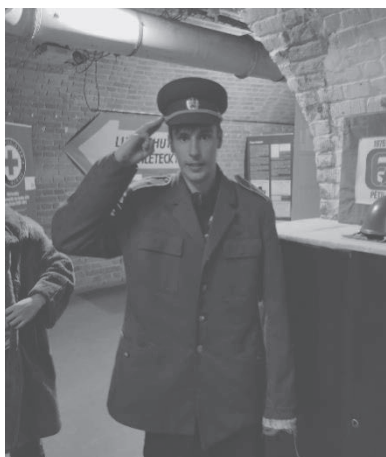


Of course, being Scouts you can't stop us camping and doing adventurous things but we also visited several cities and had some cultural experiences too. The trip was offered as an alternative to those unsuccessful in gaining a highly sought after place on the four yearly World Scout Jamboree. As I'm sure you all know this year it was in South Korea and unfortunately hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons - lucky for us we had no such bad luck.

After a year and a half of fund raising it all began with four coaches departing the Park and Ride car park in Winchester. 29 long hours later we were very glad to arrive in Munich for a stop over. We visited the city before carrying on to our first camp site in Austria, where we enjoyed the usual scout activities such as rafting and lake-swimming and many a camp-fire. Dressed like forensic scientists in white suits we also went down a Salt Mine and discovered that you could cross the border into Germany without a passport! Who would have known that there were actually slides in the mine and we reached speeds of 24 mph.

Then it was back on the road to our next stop over - Vienna. We visited the castle where they filmed High School Musical, as well as the palace and zoo and we certainly enjoyed the luxury of a Hotel after camping. Next it was off to our camp site in the Czech Republic, where there were more scouting favourites such as hiking and high ropes, and we also visited some amazing caves on foot and by boat. A lesson on traditional hunting methods with a 3D cardboard cutout of a mammoth was also certainly a new experience!

Back on the bus and back on the road - Prague was the next stop. Such a cool city with so many cool experiences: a science museum, an escape room, crazy golf, and an illusions museum which was great fun. A restaurant where your dinner was delivered not by waiters but by a network of mini roller coasters was amazing and we enjoyed indulging in



the traditional Chimney Cakes (pastry chimney case filled with cream chocolate etc).

My absolute personal favourite though was visiting a cold War bunker – the old-fashioned technology was fascinating, as was the stories of espionage and spying. Then finally it was off to Germany for the last few nights. Our camp site this time was in the grounds of a castle. Not too much roughing it as we took turns sleeping in the castle itself – luckily no ghosts were spotted. In addition to the usual dose of scouting activities such as rope courses, archery and testing your raft building skills using planks, tyres and ropes, we also tested our nerves at a theme park - such adrenaline rushes!

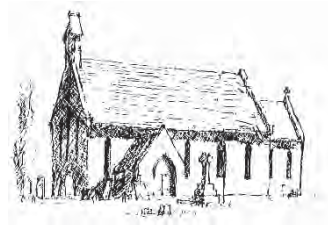


A wonderful, fantastic three weeks with so many great memories and experiences. I made new friends, learnt how to be more independent and as a bonus for my mum I can now wash my own clothes!

Thank you again!

Angus Walton





IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!

NEWTOWN CHURCH FETE

Saturday 25th May 2024

at MEONWOOD 2pm

Planning for the fete is already in progress, so if you are new to the village and would like to help at the fete or would like to get involved for the first time, we would be delighted to hear from you. It is always a very enjoyable occasion and provides a good opportunity to get to know people in the village as well as supporting local good causes.

All new, bright ideas welcomed! Please contact any of the Fete team or bring them to the

Fete Planning Meeting: Tuesday 20th February 7.30 pm at Meonwood

To find out more and keep up to date with Fete news, please visit our Facebook page.

John Barfoot	07974 232296	johnbarfoot1962@gmail.com
Stuart Doherty		stuartdoherty4@gmail.com
Gill Gray	07711 058760	gill.highcroft@btinternet.com
Matt Rees		matthewjrees@hotmail.com
Sue Wells	01329 834130	sjwells@meonwood.co.uk

Hot off the press!

The fete is to be opened by Reverend Andy Davis, our new priest in charge of Swanmore, Newtown, Soberton, Hambledon and the Meon Bridge Benefice.

We are so pleased that Andy will be opening the fete and offers a great opportunity for all in our parish to meet him.

Rookesbury Hall Management Committee would like to invite you to join us at our

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Friday 8th December at 7.30pm at Rookesbury Hall, Church Road, Newtown

Join us for some light refreshments and there will be an opportunity to hear about the hall and share new ideas for its use.

RSVP to gregory.cathryn@gmail.com



**Ukraine
Relief**

Dnipro Orphanage Project



A big thank you to everyone who attended our 'Back to the 40's & 50's' night with entertainment from the fabulous jazz and swing artist, Amy Baker. Compered by Mr Ben Bracken, it was a wonderful evening with a transformed Soberton Village Hall, some great outfits from the era and a full dance floor!

The final numbers are just in and from ticket sales, raffle proceeds and other very generous donations we are thrilled to have raised a grand total of £3,500!



Many of our local Ukrainian guests also came along to support the evening, and friends and family all helped with advertising, decorating and tidying-up. So a big thank you to them too!

Not only that but some people who were unable to attend, plus some local organisations, made very generous financial donations to support our fundraising. We are so grateful for their kindness.

We have both been completely overwhelmed by the support and generosity of everyone!

We are also now in touch with Ukraine Relief to discuss how the funds will be spent. We will report back to you all with information and photos of the much needed items being delivered direct to the orphanage.

With lots of love and heartfelt thanks

Sam Dunlop & Lorraine Paxman





5 pages of Christmas and New Year events in Soberton and Newtown! See you there!

The 3Ps are delighted to welcome you to our Christmas event:

‘CAROLS & CHEER’

An evening of carols, minced pies, a warming Wassail Cup and general seasonal merriment!



All welcome
Thursday, 14th December 2023
7.00pm
Soberton Village Hall



Please bring your own cup so we can reduce single use plastic

There is no entry fee but silver donations are gratefully accepted to cover our costs.

What is Carols and Cheer all about?

At Carols and Cheer we get together to sing carols, be entertained by talented musicians and singers, drink and eat a minced pie or two and generate some Christmas Cheer in a relaxed, non-commercial community event. Suitable for young and old – we finish by 9.00pm.

Who are the 3Ps?

The 3Ps organise events for all in Newtown, Soberton and Soberton Heath. The aim is for everyone to have fun, not to raise money or support a particular organisation or cause.

A Christmas Wreath Workshop on Friday 1st December

at The Guide Hut from 7:30pm

£25 to include all materials, a glass of mulled wine/punch and a mince pie/cake

And if you can't make the workshop but would still like to support us – you can place an order for a wreath for £20 for collection from 3rd December.

Tickets and Orders can be placed via email: GuideHutSoberton@gmail.com
or ring Caroline Rogers on 01489 877430

Proceeds towards the Guide Hut



ESPRIMO CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER 2023, 7.30
ST PETER'S CHURCH, SOBERTON

Tickets £12

Interval refreshments available
<https://tinyurl.com/yh75yspt>
esprimotickets@gmail.com
School Hill, Soberton, SO32 3PF



Christmas Coffee Morning

Saturday 2 December 2023

10.30 - 12.00

St Peter's Church Rooms



BRING AND BUY STALL

HANDMADE CHRISTMAS
DECORATIONS, CARDS AND GOODIES

CHRISTMAS COSTUME DROP-OFF

What's on (Village Diary)

Month	Date/day	Event / group	Time	Details
December	1 st	Guide Hut Christmas Wreath Workshop	19:30	Page 13
	2 nd	Christmas Coffee Morning	10:30	Page 15
	5 th	Stitch & Chatter	14:00	Page 51
	5 th	U3A - Beginners Guide to DNA	14:00	Page 42
	6 th	Ladies Group - making Christmas decorations	20:00	Page 8
	9 th	FOMS Christmas Fair	10:00	Page 40
	9 th	Botley Choral Society Christmas Concert	19:30	Page 50
	10 th	Sunday Club @ St Peter's	11:00	Page 37
	12 th	Wickham Society - Tales from the Tower of London	19:30	Page 47
	13 th and 27 th	Pop in for coffee and cake at St Peter's	10:00	Page 6
	14 th	3Ps Carols and Cheer	19:00	Page 13
	18 th	Children's Christmas Craft Workshop	10:00	Page 17
	21 st	Carols by Candlelight with Espresso	19:30	Page 14
	24 th	Crib Service	18:00	Page 16
	31 st	New Year's Eve get-together at Rookesbury Hall	21:00	Page 17
January	2 nd	Stitch & Chatter	14:00	Page 51
	8 th	RBL - National Security	20:00	Page 43
	10 th and 24 th	Pop in for coffee and cake at St Peter's	10:00	Page 6
	13 th	Ladies Group - New Year's Party	20:00	Page 8
	14 th	Sunday Club @ St Peter's	11:00	Page 37
	15 th	Trip to Westminster	08:00	Page 39
	15 th	COPY DATE FOR FEBRUARY / MARCH	-	
	16 th	U3A - History of the Meon Valley railway line	14:00	Page 42
Hold the date	25 th May 2024	Newtown Church Fete	14:00	Page 11
Regular meetings/ events	Tuesday	Sobertots	10:00	Page 42
	2 nd Sunday	Sunday Club @ St Peter's	11:00	Page 37
	1 st Tuesday	Stitch & Chatter	14:00	Page 51
	1 st Wednesday	Soberton & Newtown Ladies' Group	20:00	Page 8
	2 nd /4 th Wednesday	Pop in for coffee and cake at St Peter's	10:00	Page 6
	3 rd Monday	Meon Valley Investment Club	19:30	Page 51
	2 nd Thursday	Soberton & Newtown Local History Society	14:00	Page 51
	1 st /3 rd Tuesday	Meon Valley u3a	14:00	Page 42



Due to the Festive period, some regular meetings / events may not take place.

Check before you leave home!



***** Important update *****

The Meon Valley Food Bank has changed its Bank Account Details.

Please ensure that all your donations / subscriptions for this very worthy cause go to the right / new account.

The new account details are as follows:

Account name: The Meon Valley Food Bank

Sort code: 20 – 11 – 43

Account number: 93501973

Christmas Colouring page



Soberton and Newtown Young Voices

Jokes

Who delivers Christmas presents to pets?

Santa Paws!

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Tinselitis!

What do monkeys sing at Christmas?

Jungle Bells!

Recipe: Rice Krispy snowman!

Remember to ask an adult for help!

1. Melt 125g unsalted butter and 300g white marshmallows in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water and stir gently until melted, or melt in the microwave.
2. Stir in 250g Rice Krispies cereal, carefully coating every piece.
3. Take a small handful of the mixture and roll into a ball with your hands, then place onto a tray. This is your snowman's body!
4. Next you can make the head by making a smaller sized ball and gently pressing it on the top of the body.
5. Decorate your snowman! You can use strawberry laces to make a scarf, chocolate chips for eyes or buttons, or try using some jelly tots!
6. Keep in the fridge until they have set.

Diary Dates

Sunday 10th December- Sunday Club @ St Peter's, Soberton.

Monday 18th- Christmas Craft Workshop @ St Peter's, Soberton. 10-1.

Sunday 24th- Crib Service. Join us in costume at 5.30 for 6.

Sunday 14th January- Sunday Club @ St Peter's, Soberton.

Brain Teasers!

Previous answers: a clock, few!

What has cities, but no houses; forests, but no trees?

What is harder to catch the faster you run?

Sunday Club

Sunday Club meets during the family service at St Peter's Soberton on the second Sunday of every month at 11. New faces are very welcome!

Got a joke or comment to share? Email them to: luciehjones@btinternet.com.

Local History ... Meeting Places

During the next few weeks some of you, many I hope, will be meeting up with other Soberton inhabitants at one of the meeting places within the parish for some Christmas or seasonal event in time honoured tradition.

For centuries St. Peters Church would have been the only public meeting place suitable for the whole family and it wasn't just used for religious purposes. Many of the traditions, albeit most based on religious days, took place wholly or partly within the church grounds.

By 1850 there was a church at Newtown built due to an increased population particularly in the southern half of the parish and there was also a Methodist Chapel at Soberton Heath. However, they were places for worship, they were meeting places still but one feels they may have lost the 'fun' element. We can probably blame the Victorians for this wave of religious fervour and the idea that churches were ultra serious places where one behaved 'very proper' and spoke in whispers unless of course taking part in prayers and hymn singing. Sundays were holy days, church or chapel days, when children were expected to attend not only Sunday School but services with their parents.

Times have changed. The Methodist Church is now a private house, St. Peters and Holy Trinity share services with Hambledon but they play a different role. Concerts, coffee mornings and other events make them once more meeting places for the community.

The other traditional meeting place within the parish was the inn or public house although this was very much a male preserve. The White Lion, The Bold Forester and The Roebuck have long histories. There was probably an inn on or near the Church Green long before the White Lion existed where the occasional visiting trader or administrator was housed. The fact that in 1564 the plague appeared in the house of one Twynam who was a victualler. The inn would have had its own brewery and would, over the centuries, have provided the Church with the traditional Church Ale and ale for wakes.

The Bold Forester had a blacksmiths shop alongside, the publican also the farrier, so useful when waiting for a horse to be shod.

The Traveller's Rest although no longer functioning had a long life and was very popular with its skittles and darts teams. The Station Hotel, later The Hurdles, was built when the Meon Valley Railway opened in the early days of the 20th century. Being opposite the station it was a convenient place to rest whilst waiting for a train or a carriage, later a taxi, to carry travellers to their destination. Although being a hotel it attracted visitors exploring the Meon Valley as messages on old postcards suggest.

The High Street had at one time or another, three public houses or beer houses. The oldest was probably the Cock and Bottle, later Yew Tree Farm and then became The Buttery. At the junction of Selworth Lane and the road to Taplands Corner stood the Falcon. Midway between was the New Inn. These three were definitely licenced premises but perhaps just for beer. Two public houses on the heath, The Plough in Forester Road and The Royal Oak, were probably beer houses.

The high-principled Victorians were very anti these latter establishments where they considered working men spent too much time and money to the detriment of their families and to their employers if they were unfit to work the next day. To be fair to the men where else could they socialise after a hard days work. The typical farm workers dwelling was certainly not suitable especially if they had a large family. Some might have a garden or a few an allotment where they might meet in good weather but a beer house with a good fire would have been much more attractive.

The answer to the beer house was the Working Men's Institute and Reading Room, this fitted in with the other belief of Victorians, that of self - improvement. Both Rookesbury and Soberton Village Hall had their roots in this belief. When Soberton School outgrew its premises on the bank in the High Street and moved to a new schoolroom in Upper Street, (now School Hill), the old school building may have been used as a barn or remained empty. The new young curate, the Rev. Morley, probably earmarked it as a potential meeting place but first he had a church in a very neglected state of repair to attend to. Once that was attended to the Morley family set about raising at least £50 to "putting in order" the old schoolroom and in 1892 the Coffee and Reading Room was officially opened and in the evening a Temperance Meeting was held there. A collection of two pounds and eleven shillings went towards the outstanding debt of twelve guineas. There was a bar but it sold coffee and presumably other soft drinks and it is documented that the 'library' held three hundred volumes as well as newspapers, magazines etc.

It is not clear how long the 'coffee' part of the title lasted but by 1904 it is being referred to as The Soberton Reading Room, run by a committee chaired by the Rev. Morley and with Mr. Putman as secretary. An advertisement states "The Reading Room is open every night for young men from 6pm." There are monthly social "At Homes" with concerts and talks to which 'visitors from Newtown and neighbourhood' were sometimes invited. The following year a ten-day course on butter and cheese making took place there. Ladies must have been allowed to use the Reading Room and not just when they were needed to see to refreshments at socials.

Over time, the Reading Room functioned as a village hall but retained its name as Soberton Reading Room but as the structure deteriorated and the parish population grew a new village hall was urgently needed and the Reading Room was sold in the mid 1960's. The last edition of the parish magazine featured Tony Evans who was instrumental in seeing the new Soberton Village Hall materialised.

Newtown's meeting place had a similar although slightly later start. It was in the spring of 1891 that the inaugural meeting took place at the instigation of Rev. Edward Allen, Vicar of Newtown, and the Rev Rashleigh of West Lodge. Rules for membership were drawn up and it was open to men over the age of seventeen with an annual subscription of four shillings. Twenty-one men joined and Rev Allen became chairman with Mr. Page, the Newtown schoolmaster, its secretary. The Rashleigh and Allen families appear to be heavily involved and I think may have been responsible for providing many of the books that were donated and possibly a little dated. Maybe it was Miss Allen's influence that made it possible for ladies to use the library although they were not permitted membership until much later.

As well as the educational aspect men were able to play cards, draughts and bagatelle. Unfortunately, the room of the original house, known as Hawthorn Cottage, was too small for the cues to be used correctly and Miss Allen paid for an extra room, with two rooms above, to be added to the house so that the game could be played and a piano housed there. Concerts occurred at regular intervals so that whole families could be entertained. The Reading Room flourished, particularly during the winter months but outgrew the premises.

In 1914 Mr. W. Stares purchased the piece of land from Mr Bollen the grocer adjacent to his shop. (Now Wick House) for a new meeting place. The hall was built with local help and completed before the First World War took many young men away from the village. For some years it continued to be run on a membership basis and under that umbrella there were several different sub groups or activities the most important being the billiards. Billiards was played in an additional room to the main hall. Originally there were outdoor toilets and basic lighting within the hall and billiards room. Electricity and running water were not available until mid 20th century. Towards the end of the 20th century the hall committees had to turn their attention towards the demands of the Disability Act and for Rookesbury this meant a complete reconfiguration of the building.

Both halls are now flourishing with a wide variety of activities due to the time and care given voluntarily by dedicated people who deserve the thanks of the whole parish.

A trip to Westminster?

Coach trip to Parliament

It is very important that local people have the chance to visit the heart of our democracy and understand how it works.

This is why I organise regular trips to Westminster for constituents to see both Houses of Parliament, to enjoy the history and grandeur but, most importantly, to get a flavour of how MPs do their work and how our laws are passed.



Monday 15 January 8am-6pm

Venue

Pick-up point, Waterlooville Town Centre, PO7 7EH

To reserve your seat

☎ 0207 219 8018

@ flick.drummond.mp@parliament.uk

The coach that has a toilet will leave at 8am from Bishops Waltham with the return journey from London beginning at 3:30pm.

After the tour you will have some free time in London before heading back.

Demand for the tours has been high following the pandemic so if you are interested please contact me at: flick.drummond.mp@parliament.uk to book places.

Hosted by Flick Drummond MP

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This is why I organise regular trips to Westminster for constituents to see both Houses of Parliament, to enjoy the history and grandeur but, most importantly, to get a flavour of how MPs do their work and how our laws are passed.

I have teamed up with local coach company Lucketts to offer these trips. This is something I make no profit from and the cost of £21 is great value.

The next trip is Monday 15th January. The coach that has a toilet will leave at 8am from Bishops Waltham with the return journey from London beginning at 3:30pm

After the tour you will have some free time in London before heading back.

Demand for the tours has been high following the pandemic so if you are interested please contact me at: flick.drummond.mp@parliament.uk to book places.

Friends of Meonstoke Infant School Fundraising Update

The academic year 2022/2023 was a busy one for the Friends of Meonstoke School (FOMS). The Committee would like to thank the whole community for helping us to raise an incredible £3393.

Our fundraising goal was achieved by putting on larger scale events such as our popular Pub Quiz held at the Bucks Head and our very successful online Festive Prize Draw, for which we were lucky enough to have been supported by lots of local business generously donating prizes. We also raised money through selling refreshments at events, the Droxford Fair, School Discos and dress down days to name a just a few.

The money raised has been used to fund improvements to the extensive outdoor learning area at the school including a new construction area, welly storage area and wildlife area. We were also able to subsidise school trips and provide learning resources for the classroom amongst other things.

For the coming year, our primary fundraising goal will be towards refurbishing the school library to create a beautiful space where children love to go to read and choose their next literary adventure. Please see our library book appeal poster adjacent for details of how you can help.



FOMS have also teamed up with The Valley Preschool and Meonstorks toddler group to bring back the Christmas Fair to Meonstoke to be held on 9th December from 10.00 to 12.30 at the Meon Hall. As part of this event, we are holding an online Festive Prize Draw giving you a chance to donate to the three charities and have the opportunity to win fantastic prizes donated by local businesses such as The White Lion and Exton Park. Please scan the link below to enter:



www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/meonstoke-charity-festive-prize-draw

We will be hosting a variety of other events throughout the year. If you'd like to be kept informed of our events, please check our socials www.facebook.com/FOMSmeonstoke or Instagram @foms_meonstoke or email us FOMS.Meonstoke@gmail.com.

Gill Parratt

FOMS Secretary

Meonstoke CE School
Love and Respect

**Meonstoke CE Infants
Book Appeal!**

Meonstoke CE School
Love and Respect

We need your help!
At Meonstoke CE Infant School, we are refurbishing our school library and we would love to have some beautiful new books to put in it! However, as you may know, school budgets are very tight and we are therefore limited in what we can afford. This is where we hope you can help.

Scan Me! ↓

As a staff team, we have put together an Amazon wish list of some of our favourite books for children. If you would like to purchase one of these books for our school, you can follow the link or scan the QR code and it will show you the books we would love to have. You can purchase books directly from the list and have them delivered straight to school – your name will be put into the book so that your generous gift is recorded for pupils now and in the future.

Any and all donations would be very gratefully received. Thank you in advance.
Ms O'Toole
Executive Headteacher

Copy and paste me into your browser: <https://amzn.eu/6JpCkoS>

In the Garden ... December / January

The wet autumn has delayed many garden tasks, such as planting bulbs, trees and shrubs. If you have bare rooted trees waiting to be planted make sure that the roots don't dry out, either by heeling them into the ground or potting them up until they can be planted.

Early December is the last chance to plant most spring flowering bulbs and you may still have to give the lawn a final cut.

Now is the time to have a final browse through the seed catalogues for next year before ordering, and in some cases, sowing seeds.

Vegetables Sprouts, leeks and winter cabbage can be harvested but keep the vegetable plot free of weeds and debris that can shelter pests. If you have not already done so you can still sow broad beans suitable for autumn sowing.

Prepare the site for next year's runner beans by digging a trench and incorporating some well-rotted manure and shredded paper before replacing the soil. This will retain moisture in the soil and hopefully avoid the need for watering when the crop is developing.

In January first indoor sowings of early cabbage, cauliflower and lettuce such as Little Gem can be made.

Fruit Cut back newly planted bushes and canes of soft fruit such as raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries and red currants.

Carry out winter pruning of established apple and pear trees and soft fruit bushes, currants and gooseberries. But do not prune stone fruits such as cherries, peaches, and nectarines, plums and damsons in order to avoid fungal attacks such as silver leaf and canker.

Herbaceous border Now is the time when you can cut down the old flowered stems of perennial plants such as Rudbeckia, Echinacea, Michaelmas daisy, phlox and golden rod.

Do not be tempted to cut down penstemons as they can be vulnerable to frosts if the crown of the plant is left unprotected; leave it until late April to do this job. Divide and replant larger clumps of perennials.

Trees and Shrubs Prune Wisteria and shrubs grown for their foliage colour such as Sambuca and Cotinus. Prune deciduous trees to shape.

Plant bare rooted roses, if you have not already done so. Cut back very tall buddleia, roses and lavatera by about a third to avoid wind damage over the winter months. Final pruning should be delayed until spring.

Protect roots of tender perennials such as canna, dahlia etc. that have been left in the ground to overwinter with well-rotted manure or coarse compost.

In the greenhouse Take care of overwintering plants by keeping them fairly dry, clearing up all fallen leaves and dead flowers, and keeping a constant watch out for pests and diseases, particularly fungal rot and mildew.

January is the time to sow chillies and peppers, which need a long growing season.



John Owen

Our thanks to John for all his excellent gardening hints and tips in 2023!





Meon Valley u3a

Good day all and a rather premature Merry Christmas!

Once more I set about informing you of the December and January meetings of the MVU3A, which we hold on a Tuesday at 2pm in the Wickham Community Centre.

Everybody is welcome. Guests will get an especially warm welcome. So come along, please! Guests pay £2 to defray speaker costs, and our annual sub. is now £15. We also have lots of books that we sell cheaply for charity.

On Tuesday 5/12 Professor Duncan-Colin Jones, a well-known local and expert lecturer, **is talking on "Beginners guide to DNA" and on Tuesday 19/12 our own Glynn Edwards is offering us a Christmas quiz as part of our Christmas party.**

January unfortunately, brings us cold weather, but a really interesting talk on **16 Jan 2024 on the History of the Meon Valley Railway Line** by **Edwin Grimshaw**. Edwin is a local authority on this subject.

Our meetings are always lively with lots of laughs.

So why not come along and expand your knowledge of these topics.

Lyndon (Chairman)
Contact 07881991763
Or lyndonplmr@gmail.com

Web site - u3asites.org.uk/meon-valley



EVERY TUESDAY: 9:30AM - 11:00AM
SUGGESTED DONATION: £3.00

SOBERTON & NEWTOWN GUIDE HUT,
HEATH ROAD, SOBERTON

FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY



SOBERTOTSPLAYGROUP



Although formal Branch activities for 2023 concluded with our Annual General Meeting on 13th November, business continues over Christmas and New Year through our Local Link organisation. While contacting those former Service personnel and their families known to be unwell or infirm with a Christmas card or small gift, the Local Link exists as a first 'port of call' to provide help using RBL resources and/or local facilities. Local Links are as follows:

Droxford: Janet Melson (01489 878728)

Soberton & Newtown: Louise McEwen (01489 877448)

Exton: David Frere-Cook (01489 877838)

Meonstoke: Gerry Northwood (07952 866117)

If you're unable to contact your designated Local Link, any of the others will be pleased to help.

Next year's programme will include four meetings with speakers open to both RBL members and non-members. These will normally be followed by our popular curry suppers provided by the former landlord of the White Horse and now proprietor of Krishna's Indian Restaurant Gosport. Bookable in advance, supper - which includes a non-curry alternative - is available at £15 per head payable in cash on the night. Talks for 2024 are currently scheduled as follows:

8 Jan "National Security" by Admiral The Rt Hon The Lord West of Spithead GCB DSC PC

18 Mar "Rowing the Atlantic in HMS Oardacious" by Lieutenant-Commander Hugo Mitchell Heggs RN

3 May "Lionel (Buster) Crabb – Cover Up Ministry of Secrets" by author Giles Milton with Commander Julian Malec OBE RN

9 Sep "Small Island, Twelve Maps which Explain the History of Britain" by author Philip Parker

Please contact the Branch Secretary at robmunroscott@aol.com at least a week beforehand to check there have been no changes and to book supper.

We look forward to seeing you. In the meantime, our President, Chairman, Committee and Members wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.



The RBL Droxford & District Branch is always looking for new members, both Service and civilian, to help keep remembrance alive and support our Servicemen and women, veterans and their families. For more information or to join us, please contact the Secretary – Cdr Rob Scott RN at robmunroscott@aol.com or 01489 877800. www.soberton.org/rblweb.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL 2023 NEWTOWN



The house-to-house collection in Newtown raised the magnificent total of **£713.00**.

A big thank you to Steve Cooper, Jenny and Andy Yates, David Smith, Kerry Georges, Sarah and Andy Walton, Claire Marnham, Alison Blume and John Morgon, our collectors. Particular thanks and congratulations to Ms Amy O'Toole and Newtown Soberton Infant School, who raised £103.41. Thank you to all in the village who supported this worthy cause.

A wonderful result. Thank you.

Sue Wells

SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL - *Chairman's notes*

www.soberton.org

inc Newtown, Hundred Acres, Hoegate, Soberton Heath, Kingsmead, Brockbridge and Soberton

Website <https://www.soberton.org>

The Parish Council (PC) has launched a totally new website, this has been designed and developed by Councillors Cole, Henderson and Marland. The new site is currently in its early form and being populated with further information and links regularly. The website is a total step change for the PC. The website was launched with a Facebook page which the PC will use as an information board. I would urge you to visit the site. Contributions and comments can be sent to the clerk@soberton.org

Remembrance Service 12/11/2023

The Royal British Legion (RBL) organised the Remembrance Service at St Mary and All Saints Church, Droxford. The Parish Council was represented by myself and Cllr Salmon, with Cllr Buttriss the standard bearer for the RBL. Following the service of Remembrance wreaths were laid at the War Memorial in Soberton High Street and at the Lychgate, Holy Trinity Church Newtown. These ceremonies were attended by members of Droxford RBL, with the bugle played by Jan Zawada and bagpipes played by Olly Thomson. In addition, it was nice to see a number of members of the public attending each of the ceremonies.

Planning Applications

As noted in the last Parish Magazine the Parish Council are a consultee on all planning applications. The PC's planning group comment on applications when appropriate, everyone can view planning Applications you just need the address. If you want to search quickly for a planning application then these are the links:

Simple Search (winchester.gov.uk)

Simple Search (southdowns.gov.uk)

Just type the address in which you are interested in the box and press search.

Once you have viewed an application it is simple to make a comment either positive or negative.

Planning Enforcement

If you are concerned that activity is happening on a site or land which doesn't have planning consent you can report this to the Enforcement team on either the Winchester CC or South Downs National Park via their websites. After a report the Enforcement team will view the site, check the planning history, advise if there is a breach of planning and if they need to take further action.

There are a number of Enforcement actions across the Parish, some of which from the outside look as if nothing is happening however, in most cases legal work is being progressed. This takes time as the enforcement and legal teams most follow the correct processes to ensure a positive outcome. If you have any queries on a particular site, email the Parish Clerk

who may be able to assist, or if not, send an email directly to the appropriate planning authority.

Parish Design Statement (PDS)

The next stages to progress the PDS will be to analyse the responses from the consultation and then commence the writing of the document. There will be further consultations and announcements as the process moves ahead. Everyone's input is welcomed, please speak to/email the clerk if you are interested in assisting.

Soberton Heath Recreation Ground and Children's Play area

The Parish Council has been looking for some time to improve the facilities on the Recreation Ground. Councillors are looking at a Sport England's grant to renovate the playing surface in order that Soberton United can return to their home ground and encourage further youth teams to use the facilities. The Children's Play area is due an annual inspection at which time the PC will consider the work required, albeit repair or replacement of equipment and possible cost.

Hedges

The PC reminds those who are responsible for roadside hedges to prune them this autumn/winter. This action is both good for the hedge encouraging growth, and clearing sightlines allowing road users, riders, cyclists and walkers better visibility, making our roads/lanes safer for all. It is particularly important to clear hedges around the traffic speed limit signs (including the small repeater signs) in order that road users are reminded of the speed limits. If you are struggling with this work or to contact a specialist contractor our clerk may be able to assist, contact email clerk@soberton.org

Ditches and Culverts

Open ditches and culverted must be maintained to avoid upstream ponding, we've had a considerable amount of rain in the past two months. On-going maintenance will prevent unnecessary flooding and the damage that may cause. Road drains are maintained and cleared by the Hampshire County Council Highways team; you should report blocked road drains directly to HCC.

Sewage Systems (private drainage)

As previously noted, we all have 'private drainage' to deal with our foul water discharge albeit a cesspit, septic tank or a small treatment system. It is our individual responsibility to avoid an overflowing system which is both bad for the environment and our health.

Climate Café

The Climate Café took place on 21st October at Rookesbury Hall and was well attended. Please see page 7 for further information.

**South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)
Local Plan Review 2023/2024**

The PC has completed and uploaded to its website (www.soberton.org) a questionnaire called the Planning Priority Statement (PPS) for the Parish of Soberton. The PPS was approved at our October PC meeting. The PPS was required to be completed by the end of October, by all parishes who are within or partly within the National Park Authority (NPA) area. It

should be noted that only areas within the National Park will be reviewed. The PPS will not replace the PDS in any way - it is to help the NPA with their Local Plan review for the National Park area which is being carried out during 2023/4.

**John Hyland
Chairman**

Soberton & Newtown Brownies and Guides

This term has been filled with a whole variety of activities for our girls.

We have been working on our skills builders for our 'Know Myself' theme alongside an Inclusion challenge badge and celebrating the Trefoil section 80th birthday.

Our units went on holiday to PGL's Little Canada on the Isle of Wight. A weekend of adventurous activities and team building for the leaders as well as the girls! Thank you to Cllr Stallard for support us with our travel costs.

We have also attended the Royal British Legion Remembrance Service in Droxford, where we presented our unit flags, attended a Guiding only showing of the new Disney film WISH, and the Guides had a Bounce session with 4th Bishops Waltham Guides. Oh, and we celebrated Christmas with a joint party!

It's another busy term almost over but we are already planning for the Spring term next year, and that's crammed full of fun as well. ☺

We do have spaces at both Brownies and Guides, so if your daughter would like to join us, do get in contact.

We meet alternate Monday evenings during term time at Soberton & Newtown Guide Hut on Soberton Recreation Ground, Heath Road, SO32 3QH

Brownies aged 7 to 10 years one week and Guides 10 – 14 years the next.

There is a Rangers unit in our area at Bishops Waltham for girls aged 14 to 18 years; they meet alternate Tuesday evenings at the BW Guide Hut.

Our emails are : SobertonNewtownBrownies@gmail.com for Brownies and SobertonNewtownGuides@gmail.com for Guides, or you can call me, Caroline Rogers, on 01489 877430 for further information.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



The benefits of autumn leaves and winter survival

Carpets of colourful leaves are one of the signature signs of autumn, as deciduous trees prepare for the long winter ahead. Whilst they may be done with their leaves for the time being, other wildlife is busy taking advantage of this new leafy blanket.

Leaf litter (which is made up of fallen leaves, small twigs, seeds, and other woody debris) provides a variety of species with a warm, safe place to shelter from the elements with.

Hedgehogs use leaf litter to build their nests. They spend the winter hibernating, surviving off their fat reserves. During this time their breathing will slow, and the heart rate and body temperatures will drop, and leaf litter will provide essential warmth to help them survive the cold. Depending on the weather, hedgehogs will emerge from March onwards.

Common toads also rely on leaf litter and will spend the majority of winter living under a blanket of deep leaf litter, conserving as much energy as possible. They re-emerge for the mating season in early spring, migrating back to the pond in which they were spawned to reproduce.

Whilst some species of butterfly, like the painted lady, may migrate here in summer, others stay with us year-round. They overwinter in their egg, caterpillar, pupal or adult form depending on the species. During winter, leaf litter provides the perfect place to remain concealed until the spring. The most common way for butterflies to spend their winter is as a caterpillar, some will even continue to feed whilst its mild, but as temperatures drop most will enter a temporary state of dormancy known as 'diapause'.

As well as warmth, leaf litter also provides an important source of food for detritivore and decomposer species. Both are incredibly important as they help break down the leaf litter and recycle nutrients back into the soil.

Detritivores, such as woodlice, ingest and digest decomposing plant matter such as fallen leaves. Closely related to crabs, lobsters and shrimp, woodlice are mainly active at night and breathe through their knees! There are thirty different species of woodlouse in the UK including pill, common rough and common shiny.

Decomposers, such as fungi, directly absorb nutrients through chemical and biological processes. One of the most recognisable species to find at this time of year is the amethyst deceiver. These bright purple fungi should be easy



Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

to spot against the red and brown leaf litter that it loves to grow in.

Woodlands are the ideal location to discover trees going through this change. Find your nearest Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust woodland reserve on the Trust's website: <https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/nature-reserves>

Nature at home – Don't tidy your garden

Autumn is traditionally the time to tidy up your garden, but leaving your garden messy can have a range of benefits for nature and wildlife.

Instead of sweeping up or burning fallen leaves, it's much better to let them decay naturally. This feeds the fungi and micro-organisms in the soil and recycles nutrients into the grass and trees. If you do clear areas of your garden, pile the leaves into heaps so they can decay naturally. These will also offer places for wildlife to hibernate.

Don't be too tidy with your flowerbeds either. Dead-heading everything removes valuable resources; seed heads provide food for small birds and shelter for insects.

Think ahead to the possibility of freezing weather – float a football in your garden pond to prevent it becoming totally frozen and allow oxygen to circulate.

For more information on welcoming wildlife to your garden visit: <https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife-gardening>



Garden Hedgehog_(c)_Tom_Marshall

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL – District Councillors

After an unseasonably warm Autumn followed by storms, for many, it is a case of wondering what's in store as we approach Winter.

Set against our local changing climate there is a backdrop of many national, and international challenges which don't need any expansion on here if you are following the dismal News headlines. We perhaps need many more effective human anthropologists to fathom out the best way forward for a harmonious world without conflict – what a challenge!

From a local perspective, all we can do as Councillors, is to find the best enablers for solutions to our problems closer to home.

There is no better place to start than with the key challenges for our Nature emergency, which are highlighted in the latest 'State of Nature' report, using the latest and best data collated by the incredible work of thousands of skilled people, most of whom are volunteers. Thankfully, the value of nature, including its role in tackling climate change, making our lives better and the need for its conservation among the public and policymakers alike is now getting higher visibility. The full report is available from www.stateofnature.org.uk.

In September 2023, Winchester Council declared a Nature Emergency with a number of resolutions to be taken forward alongside an updated district Carbon Neutrality Action Plan. The similar call to action from South Downs National Park (SDNP) can be read at www.southdowns.gov.uk/south-downs-national-park-responds-to-state-of-nature-report-with-a-strong-call-to-action/

Thankfully, Planning is also catching up with these much-needed actions to address the Nature crisis. In January 2024 the much-vaunted new planning Biodiversity Net Gain regulations will apply to all new developments – including solar farms - so that a project leaves biodiversity in a better state than before.

Some other current and future enablers to enhance our quality-of-life which readers may wish to know about are listed below:

- Water and Sewerage - Southern Water Five-Year Business Plan has been submitted to Ofwat. It includes a £7.8 billion programme with major improvements in water resilience, wastewater treatment, and customer service, as well as enhancement and protection of our precious environment. Ofwat will publish their final

determination on the submission in December 2024. This may mean higher water bills, but most vulnerable customers will be protected with up to 45% discount on bills. More info - www.southernwater.co.uk/our-story/our-plans/our-plans-2025-30

- Waste processing - Changes are being proposed that will significantly increase household recycling and reduce waste across the district. Brilliant news for our ambitions of becoming a greener district. Please contribute your views to the survey- www.winchester.gov.uk/recyclingsurvey
- Chemicals in the Environment - There are growing concerns about the risks to the health of people and pets plus to our natural habitat and wildlife from the use of chemicals in our environment. If you have a concern, please contact Cllr Danny Lee.
- Energy – For paying bills, keeping homes warm and energy efficiency advice – see www.winchester.gov.uk/cost-of-living/energy. More information is also available from 'The Hampshire Environment Centre' - enquiries@environmentcentre.com or by phone 0800 804 8601

All the best,
Cllr Danny Lee

Winchester District Councillors



Danny Lee, 07896 644504, dlee@winchester.gov.uk
Malcolm Wallace, 07739 050224, mwallace@winchester.gov.uk
Frank Pearson, 01489 892822, fpearson@winchester.gov.uk

Wickham Society Autumn Programme 2023

Meetings are held at Wickham Community Centre starting at 7.30 pm. Members, old and new, and visitors are always welcome.



12 December: Tales from the Tower of London Anthony Strafford, retired Beefeater

www.wickhamsociety.org.uk



New Parking Arrangements

From the 1st October 2023, responsibility for the on-street parking enforcement returned to Hampshire County Council from Winchester City Council. This



now means that all aspects of on-street parking, across Hampshire, are now under the direct management of the County Council, as the Highway Authority.

On-street parking enforcement will continue, but the frontline enforcement staff, known as Civil Enforcement Officers [CEOs], will be employed by a specialist parking services provider, NSL, working in partnership with the County Council. CEOs won't be constrained by district or borough boundaries.

Residents are now able to report a parking contravention, apply for a disabled parking bay, arrange parking suspensions and pay a Penalty Charge Notice, all via the County Council's Parking pages on the HCC website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/parking>

Reading Challenge

More than 19,000 Hampshire children signed-up for this year's Summer Reading Challenge - up 11% compared to 2022 - and read over 73,000 books.



Renewed commitment to Hampshire's Armed Forces

Hampshire County Council has underlined its commitment to the Armed Forces, by renewing its



pledge that serving and veteran members of the Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged when accessing public services such as education and healthcare.

The County Council was selected some 12 years ago to be among the first to sign the Armed Forces Covenant, because of its strong track record and significant beneficial work it does with its military partners. Hampshire has a historic and long-standing close relationship with the Armed Forces and has military facilities from all three services. Some 72,000 households in Hampshire include someone who has served in the UK armed forces.

Armed Forces Personnel and their families can find other sources of support through the County Council's Armed Forces.

webpage [<https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/armedforces>] and Connect to Support Hampshire

[<https://www.connecttosupporthampshire.org.uk/>]

External grants are available to support Hampshire's Armed Forces Community, for example the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

[<https://covenantfund.org.uk/>] which has several different grant streams open each year.

Future Plans

In the face of one of the biggest budget shortfalls in its history, the County Council must close a £132 million funding gap by April 2025 - the result of years of underfunding of local government services by central Government, rising costs from inflation and growing demand for core services like social care for vulnerable children and adults. Proposed budget measures could start to see all non-essential spending being withdrawn after April 2025 and the Council limiting future spending on just the delivery of minimum service levels, required by law.

The full County Council accepted recommendations on proposals, at its meeting on 9th November 2023 and some options will be subject to further, more detailed public consultation in the New Year.

Pick your Top Three School Preferences

Hampshire parents and carers with children due to start school in Reception Year or move to Year 3 at a junior school next year, can now apply for their child's school place for September 2024. School applications are open until 15th January 2024. Parents are being reminded to name three schools on their applications, to give them the best chance of being offered a place at one of their preferred schools. Parents can apply online –

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions/applicationprocess/yearendyear3>

Residents Hosting Ukrainian Families

Hampshire County Council has recently announced that it will be paying an extra £200 per month to all Hampshire residents hosting Ukrainian guests as part of the Government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme, until the end of March 2024. This takes the monthly payment to £700.

Conservation Funding to save UK's Rarest Orchids

Hampshire County Council has secured a £98,000 funding boost to help rare helleborine orchids to thrive. The conservation project aims to create protected habitats for the endangered plants at sites in East Hampshire.

The chalkland areas of the East Hampshire Hangers and nearby woodlands already provide a home to some of the UK's scarcest helleborine orchids, but their numbers have been in decline. This project will put in place measures to protect these fragile locations and nurture the threatened helleborine orchid back from the brink of extinction. Conservation work such as this is a key priority for the County Council enabling us to preserve our precious natural landscapes for wildlife, develop resilience to climate change, and ensure that the delicate ecosystems can spread and survive.

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust will take part in the project focusing on orchid preservation at a nature reserve east of West Meon. Last June, the County Council was appointed by the Government to prepare a Local Nature Recovery Strategy' for Hampshire, including the areas of Portsmouth and Southampton. The aim is to work with organisations and communities to improve the environment, protect wildlife, and combat climate change, now and in the future.

Emergency Contact Numbers

I would like to draw attention to a helpful new page on the HCC website which lists emergency contact numbers for a range of different organisations: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/contact/emergency> The contact number for the HCC Emergency Planning Team is 01962 846 846

Useful Information

- National Express offer a Senior Coachcard for over 60s and a Disabled Coachcard for those who are registered disabled at a cost of £12.50 plus £2.50 postage and packaging, per year. The concessionary passes entitle the traveller to one-third off their travel on most National Express coach services. Call 0871 781 8181.
- If you struggle to keep your home warm, and live in the County of Hampshire, visit the Hitting the Cold Spots web page at www.hants.gov.uk [search "cold spots"] or call the advice line on 0800 804 8601
- For small repairs, find a reliable local trader through Hampshire Trading Standards Buy with Confidence Scheme. All the businesses in this scheme have been vetted and approved by Trading Standards to ensure that they operate in a legal, honest and fair way. Search for a trader or

business online at www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk or call 01392 383430 [10.00 am – 3.30 pm Monday to Friday] for a free directory.

- Household Emergencies – who to call:
 - National Gas Emergency number – 0800 111 999
 - National Power Cut Helpline – call 105
 - Portsmouth Water emergency line – 02392 477 999
 - Southern Water emergency line – 0330 303 0368
 - BT has a free Priority Fault Repair Scheme for people who rely on the telephone for health or mobility reasons, call – 0800 800 150

Patricia Stallard
Chairman

Hampshire County Council
Division: Winchester
Southern Parishes



[Denmead, Newlands, Boarhunt,
Southwick, Wickham, Knowle, Soberton, Newtown]



Need Transport to Medical Appointments?



SOBERTON AND NEWTOWN Good Neighbours Group

We are here to drive local people, of all ages, to hospitals, GP surgeries, dentists, opticians and other health practitioners. Our friendly volunteer drivers use their own cars, are all DBS checked and fully insured. A donation towards fuel costs is requested.

CAN YOU HELP US?

If you would like to join our driving team, we would love to hear from you. All our volunteer drivers decide which journeys they can offer, and are reimbursed for their mileage.

For more information call:

Sue on 01489 877 282 or 07974 754 214
Phil on 02392 632 551 or 07976 983 181
or email: sngoodneighbours@gmail.com

GOOD
NEIGHBOURS
NETWORK

www.soberton.org/goodneighbours

Meon Valley Community Bus Association

*** Timetable ***



As from 31st October 2022

Meon Valley Community Bus Association

An all volunteer service

Mondays, 2 nd and 5 th Friday to FAREHAM	
0900	West Meon Thomas Lord PH
0903	Warnford Village Hall
0908	Exton The Shoe PH
0910	Meonstoke PO & Stores
0914	Meonstoke Pound Cottages
0921	Droxford Square (PARK & RIDE)
0925	Brockbridge The Hurdles
0930	Soberton Village Hall (PARK & RIDE)
0933	Webbs Green War Memorial
0936	Soberton Heath Chapel Road pond
0938	Soberton Heath Bold Forester PH
0940	Newtown Rookesbury Hall (PARK & RIDE)
0945	Hundred Acres
0957	Fareham Library
1002	Fareham Sainsbury's
Return:	
1200	Fareham Sainsbury's
1205	Fareham Library

3rd Friday Each Month to HEDGE END	
0900	West Meon Thomas Lord PH
0903	Warnford Village Hall
0908	Exton The Shoe PH
0910	Meonstoke PO & Stores
0914	Meonstoke Pound Cottages
0921	Droxford Square (PARK & RIDE)
0925	Brockbridge The Hurdles
0929	Soberton Village Hall (PARK & RIDE)
0933	Webbs Green War Memorial
0935	Soberton Heath Chapel Road pond
0938	Soberton Heath Bold Forester PH
0940	Newtown Rookesbury Hall (PARK & RIDE)
0945	Hundred Acres
1007	Hedge End Marks & Spencer
Return:	
1200	Hedge End Marks & Spencer

4 th Friday Each Month to WATERLOOVILLE	
0900	West Meon Thomas Lord PH
0903	Warnford Village Hall
0908	Exton The Shoe PH
0910	Meonstoke PO & Stores
0914	Meonstoke Pound Cottages
0921	Droxford Square (PARK & RIDE)
0925	Brockbridge The Hurdles
0929	Soberton Village Hall (PARK & RIDE)
0933	Webbs Green War Memorial
0936	Soberton Heath Chapel Road pond
0938	Soberton Heath Bold Forester PH
0940	Newtown Rookesbury Hall (PARK & RIDE)
0957	Waterlooville Waitrose
1005	Waterlooville Sainsbury's
Return:	
1200	Waterlooville Sainsbury's
1205	Waterlooville Waitrose

1 st Friday Each Month to WINCHESTER	
0900	Soberton Village Hall (PARK and RIDE)
0904	Brockbridge The Hurdles
0909	Droxford Square (PARK and RIDE)
0915	Meonstoke Pound Cottages
0919	Meonstoke PO & Stores
0921	Exton The Shoe PH
0926	Warnford Village Hall
0946	Winchester Broadway
0953	River Park Leisure Centre
Return:	
1155	River Park Leisure Centre
1200	Winchester Broadway

Leave	Wednesdays to PETERSFIELD	Return
0900	Soberton Village Hall (PARK and RIDE)	Petersfield Tesco 1155
0904	Brockbridge (The Hurdles)	Petersfield Sq 1200
0909	Droxford Square (PARK & RIDE)	Warnford George and Falcon 1221*
0916	Meonstoke Pound Cottages	Corhampton 1224*
0921	Corhampton	Pound Cottages 1229*
0924	Warnford George and Falcon	Droxford square 1236*
0945	Petersfield Square	Brockbridge (The Hurdles) 1301*
0950	Petersfield Tesco	Soberton Village Hall 1305*
Note: Includes all request stops up to and including West lodge (Church lane)		* Drop off only and approx dependent on passenger numbers.

No service on other days or Public holidays. £5 return, £2.50 single any journey. Bus passes accepted . Under 16 half fare. Under 5 free.
Dogs allowed subject to driver discretion. Timings are strict, bus will not wait after scheduled time. All enquiries to : mvcb1985@gmail.com

BOTLEY CHORAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS CONCERT

CAROLS OF COMFORT AND JOY
Wassail!
Alexander L'Estrange
and other carols

SATURDAY DECEMBER 9th 7.30pm
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH BOTLEY
Tickets £15 (under 16s free)
www.wegottickets.com/botley
botleychoralsociety@gmail.com 07387 274446
Reg Charity number 1085408



Santa's sleigh may be coming to a village near you!

Meon Valley Lions Club are busy organising the Santa Collections throughout December so look out for updates on social media for routes and dates.

It takes a lot of time and effort helping Santa over the three-and-a-half week period and we are always grateful for extra Santa Helpers, so if you Are able-bodied and fancy helping us out as a volunteer, we'd be grateful to hear from you.



USEFUL INFORMATION

Any additions or changes, please contact the editor

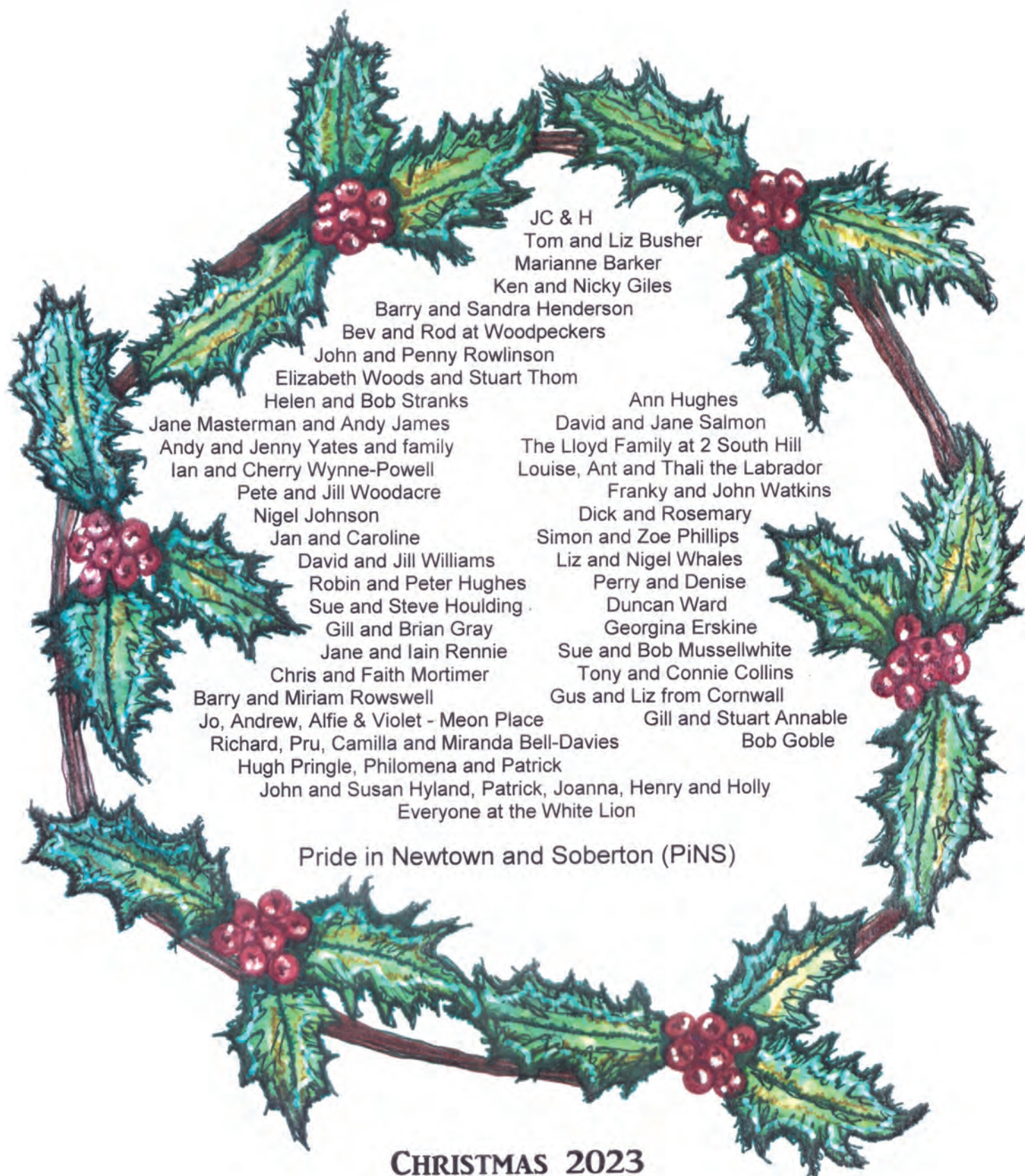
USEFUL NUMBERS		
Good Neighbours Group offers transport to medical appointments (see page 49)		
❖ email sngoodneighbours@gmail.com or call		
❖ Sue Mussellwhite 01489 877282 or 07974 754214		
❖ Philomena Bergin 02392 632551 or 07976 983181		
Doctors Surgeries	Wickham Droxford Denmead Bishops Waltham	01329 833121 01489 877588 02392 239630 01489 892288
CAB Adviceline		0800 144 8848
Carers Helpline		0808 808 7777
Age UK Advice Line		0800 678 1602
National Gas Emergency		0800 111 999
National Power Cut Helpline		105
Portsmouth Water emergency line		02392 477 999
Southern Water emergency line		0330 303 0368
BT has a free Priority Fault Repair Scheme for people who rely on the telephone for health or mobility reasons		0800 800 150
LOCAL FACILITIES		
Soberton Village Hall Booking	Katie Flannagan	07850 569548
<i>sobertonvillagehall@googlemail.com</i> <i>www.sobertonvillagehall.co.uk</i>		
Rookesbury Hall Booking	Jenny Doney	01329 834392
<i>Bookings@rookesburyhall.co.uk</i>		
Guide Hut Booking	Caroline Rogers	01489 877430
CHURCHES		
Newtown Church Wardens	Fra Wells Barry Rowsell	01329 834130 01329 834671
Soberton Church Wardens	Louise McEwen Malcolm Chapple	01489 877448 01489 877151
PCC Secretary(N)	Barry Rowsell (acting)	01329 834671
PCC Secretary(S)	Norman Chapman	01489 877378
Capt. Of Bells(S)	Noel Evans	01489 877271
Churchyard Keeper (S)	John Lester	01489 878557
Church Safeguarding	Lucie Jones	luciehjones@ btinternet.com

LOCAL CLUBS AND INTEREST GROUPS		
Brownies & Guides	Caroline Rogers	01489 877430
Stitch & Chatter	Louise McEwen Sandra Henderson	01489 877448 01489 877978
Local History	Duncan Colin-Jones	01489 877237
Soberton Utd FC	Steve Norris	07853 292881
Soberton Players	Susan Hyland	01489 878724
Table Tennis	Pete Woodacre Adrian Hunt	01489 877768 01489 878141
Ladies Group	Liz Whales	01489 877712
Sunday Club	Lucie Jones	luciehjones@ btinternet.com
Conservation Group	Phil Bergin	02392 632551
Sobertots	Matilda Curtis	07411 129303
Meon Valley Investment Club	Hugh Pringle	02392 632551
DISTRICT COUNCILLORS		
Central Meon Valley Councillors	Frank Pearson Malcolm Wallace Danny Lee	See page 47 for contact details
County Councillor	Patricia Stallard	02392 251484
SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL www.soberton.org		
John Hyland Chairman	chair@soberton.org	
Neil Findlay Vice-Chairman	vicechair@soberton.org	
David Salmon	Cllrsalmon@soberton.org	
Sam Marland	Cllrmarland@soberton.org	
David Cleeve	Cllrcleeve@soberton.org	
Rachel Cole	Cllrcole@soberton.org	
Jonty Sherwill	Cllrsherwill@soberton.org	
Vicki Weston	Cllrweston@soberton.org	
Paul Henderson	Cllrhenderson@soberton.org	
David Buttriss	Cllrbuttriss@soberton.org	
Vacancy		
Clerk and Proper Officer clerk@soberton.org		

Please e-mail copy for the February / March magazine to
gill.highcroft@btinternet.com

NEXT COPY DATE - 15th January 2024

WISHING ALL OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



CHRISTMAS 2023