

Soberton & Newtown

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

October - November 2025



Sunshine between the showers
11th September at midday
Photo by Jonty Sherwill

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

Front cover design: Jonty Sherwill

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

Benefice of Soberton, Newtown and Hambledon

The Reverend Liz Quinn

Associate Priest in the Meon Valley Parishes.

Particular focus on the Benefice of Soberton, Newtown and Hambledon.

revliz7@icloud.com

07518 247637

Our Lady Queen of the Apostles, Roman Catholic Church

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

Father Mario Toma 02380 612430

Parish Office 02380 273882

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, please 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 December / January magazine to
gill.highcroft@btinternet.com**

NEXT COPY DATE - 17th November 2025 (17:00)

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

Services

**October 2025
November 2025**

*Holy Communion is also
celebrated in Hambledon
every Wednesday at 09.30.*

*Subject to change,
sometimes at short notice*

October

5 th	0800	Holy Communion	Hambledon
	1000	Holy Communion	Newtown
	1030	Short Family Service	Hambledon

12 th	1100	Joint Harvest Festival	Soberton
	1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon

19 th	1000	Holy Communion	Newtown
	1100	Service of the Word	Hambledon
	1100	Morning Worship	Soberton
	1830	Evensong	Hambledon

22 nd	0930	Holy Communion	Soberton
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26 th	1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon
	1800	Holy Communion	Soberton

November

2 nd	1000	Holy Communion	Newtown
	1030	Short Family Service	Hambledon
	1800	All Souls	Soberton
	1830	Evensong for All Souls	Hambledon

9 th	1050	RBL Remembrance Service	Droxford (see page 35)
	1100	Remembrance Service	Hambledon

16 th	1000	Holy Communion	Newtown
	1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon
	1100	Morning Worship	Soberton
	1830	Evensong	Hambledon

23 rd	1000	Stir up Sunday and Christ the King	Newtown (see page 10)
	1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon
	1800	Holy Communion	Soberton

26 th	0930	Holy Communion	Soberton
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30 th	1100	Benefice Communion	Soberton
	1830	Service of Light	Hambledon



Messy Church!

**Keep an eye on
Soberton Echo for
dates and location!**

Don't miss out!

Fun for all the family!



**POP IN FOR COFFEE
AND CAKE**

*at ST PETER'S CHURCH ROOM,
SOBERTON*

**POP IN FOR COFFEE & CAKE ON THE 2nd &
4th WEDNESDAY EACH MONTH
10am – noon**

**MEET FRIENDS, MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND
HAVE A CHAT!**

Foreword from Rev Liz Quinn

As I write, children and young people are settling in to schools, colleges, universities and new employment. In our benefice churches we are starting the new term with our regular Messy Church in Soberton and Newtown; and Green Shoots in Hambledon.

Messy Church is for primary age children and their carers. We enjoy lots of messy activities, food, friendship and worship. Green Shoots is an outdoor church for primary age children and their carers. We enjoy God's creation through outdoor activities such as butterfly counts, building giant nests for our picnic and making harvest bread and homemade butter! We celebrate our beautiful world in a time of outdoor worship. Please look out for further details in the magazines, the churches' weekly email news sheet and Soberton Echo. We're really looking forward to welcoming you!

And something new... in our benefice we will be starting an Alpha Course. It's an informal opportunity to explore life, faith and meaning. More details will be advertised soon.



And finally, as most of you will know, Louise McEwan has stepped down from her role as Church Warden at St. Peter's. At a recent service we thanked Louise for her invaluable ministry and service to the church and our wider community. We wish Lousie well as she makes time for new adventures in her life.

With love and blessings to you all
Liz



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.

For more information, call:

Kate Harvey on 07843 496 852 or Kate Chesters on 07710 716 664



**GOOD
NEIGHBOURS
NETWORK**

www.soberton-pc.gov.uk

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.

I Spy ... Children's Week 2025

With 55 children, 17 teens and up to 20 adults a day, this year's Children's Week was 4 days of Fun, Fun, Fun all under the banner of I SPY...



We started setting up on Saturday 26th July and a few dedicated volunteers lifted and shifted tables, gazebos and sofas, sorted resources boxes and set out the craft and games equipment that we would need throughout the week.

I Spy... started on Monday 28th July, with Fun! A full day of inflatables, bouncy boots, circus workshops, badge making and the always popular dance mats.

Each group rotated round the activities, with lots of drinks breaks in between.

Tuesday was: I Spy... Nature. The morning dedicated to the giant magnifying glass craft and mini beast decorated biscuits. The afternoon was clay and natural crafts, bugs themed games, a bug hunt, a barefoot walk, Den building and, unexpectedly, a bit of rain dodging.

Wednesday was our Trail day at Meonwood, starting with some traditional games and after an early lunch straight into the trail themed around the I Spy books. Of course, cooking sausages over a campfire was involved and the 'not to be forgotten' cake decorating and eating. Thank you to Sue & Fra Wells for allowing us to invade their gardens.

Thursday was our last day and we spent the morning finishing our craft and practicing our presentations for the evening service.

The afternoon was actioned packed with a range of games and despite the thunder storms we soldiered on, adapting as needed and finished on time, albeit a bit wet!

We concluded the week with a short church service in the evening at Holy Trinity, Newtown, where the children performed their presentations to their parents and we all sang the songs we had practiced throughout the week.

A huge **Thank You** to all the adult and teen volunteers. It really is not possible without them all and they worked so hard to make it such a success!

This year we struggled to get adult volunteers and only just had enough to lead the 7 groups. Many of our volunteers doubled up in helping with planning, running activities and helping in the kitchen, but we really need more adults to make the week work smoothly. You may only have a few hours to spare in the lead up, but as we start in January with the planning, whatever you have to offer would be brilliant. Maybe, you can offer to help run an activity for one of the activity days, or just be there to move the equipment around, it will all be so helpful. You don't need to be helping in a group, there are so many jobs in the lead up to the week and even in the clearing up afterwards, every little helps and many hands, make many children, very happy. Look out for our notices after Christmas or send us your email and we will keep in touch.

In the meantime – Have Fun!

Children's Week email - SNCWeek@gmail.com



Photos: John Earle

PiNS (Pride in Newtown and Soberton) ...

... has for many years, with your generous contributions via the Christmas Card, been able to carry out various projects within the villages.

Most of our expenditure this year has been on the repair and repainting of various Fingerposts in the Parish. We have also bought, and have planted, a rowan tree at the northern end of Ingoldfield Lane. Finally, although BT told us that the phone box on School Hill was beyond repair, they have subsequently restored it to full working order.

If you would like to support PiNS's work in the Parish and send Christmas greetings to your local friends and neighbours, saving the cost of cards and stamps, please send us your names as you would like to see them in the magazine and a donation. Also, if you have any suggestions for other projects you would like considered, please let us know.

All you need to do, before **Saturday 25th October** (so that there is time to prepare the card in time for the magazine copy date), is to send your donation to the PiNS bank account and an email to **helen.stranks@btopenworld.com** with details of how you would like your names to appear and how much you are donating.

Please note that we have a **new bank account** (and can no longer accept cheques):

Account Name : PiNS which is a Business Community Current Account

Sort Code : 23-05-80

Account No. : 55903344

With your name as a reference

Only if you cannot pay by BACS, can we accept cash as it is difficult and costly for us to process. Please enter the names as you would like to see them on the 'card' on the slip below. Cut out the slip and put it, together with your donation, in an envelope and put it through the letterbox of Helen Stranks, Ashley House, High Street, Soberton, Southampton. SO32 3PN

✂-----

Names to Go in the 'Card' :

Contact Telephone Number or Email Address :

Donation :

Other

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



Local History ... The Archaeologists came to Soberton

Fifty years ago the people of Soberton were reading about the exciting dig carried out in the parish during the previous summer. However, it is misleadingly referred to as the Droxford excavation, the site being close to 'Droxford' railway station and quite close to the siding where Winston Churchill and other war-time leaders discussed plans for D-Day in 1944. Such a lot of history within a small area of our parish.

It was the building of the Meon Valley Railway line and the station complex that led to the discovery of the burial site in 1900. The discovery of a human skeleton whilst digging a cutting meant work had to stop to allow the police to investigate a possible murder scene. It was soon established that the bones were very ancient however it did cause some disruption to the building programme along with the usual factors of weather and manpower.

A Southampton antiquarian, William Dale, visited the site several times despite the problems he faced making the journey to Soberton which included long walks. Having uncovered a few more graves, he collected sufficient bones and grave objects to send to the British Museum where it was confirmed they were from the early Anglo-Saxon period.

The position of the burial ground fitted a popular theory that the Anglo Saxons buried their dead on the edges of the parish and often where two or three parishes met, in this case Meonstoke, Soberton and Droxford.

Dale continued to visit the site but as he wrote in 1902 "I was fortunate in enlisting the help of a couple of navies who were more intelligent than is usual for their class, and who had a keen eye for business, so that they were able to obtain almost everything of importance". It is recorded that graves were found over a stretch of about 100 yards as a cutting was made through the chalk and the graves contained weapons as well as skeletons. However, he failed to publish a detailed report although two papers did appear in antiquarian journals.

Many years later Fred Aldsworth came across Dale's notes including those published in the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club. He managed to get sufficient grants to carry out a dig with the help of Graham Johnson and volunteers mainly from the South Hampshire Archaeological Rescue Group (SHARG) under the direction of Mike Hughes. The five week dig began in July 1974 with a local contractor removing the two feet of top soil making it much easier for the team to locate forty or more graves within the cleared area. Several local people were involved.

Most of the graves fully excavated contained skeletons lying in a west to east position facing the rising sun, a traditional pagan position. As each grave was opened meticulous recordings were made including drawings to scale showing the position of the skeleton and other artefacts before anything was removed for examination later at the university. Many graves contained objects indicating warriors with their knives by their hips and spearheads close to their left shoulder, and several contained shield bosses. Some graves showed feminine objects such as beads and spindle whorls.

There were several items which had connection with Roman lifestyle which led Fred Aldsworth to conclude that the graves belonged to the period soon after the withdrawal of the Romans and that it could be one of the earliest Saxon (Jutish) settlements in Hampshire.



Rookesbury Hall are proud to present an evening of music and food on Saturday 8th November 2025 at 7pm

Moscow Drug Club

Transcendent Troubadours of World Jazz & Folk

"Absolute Knock Out Performance!" "Evocative, Beautiful & Inspiring!" "Best Music Entertainment We've Ever Seen!" "Headly & Intoxicating"

Back by popular demand, we hope you will be able to join us for this exciting evening. Doors open at 7pm. Tickets cost £25 inc food. Food served at 7.15pm. Please bring your own drink.

To book tickets please email events.rkhall@gmail.com



SobertonPlayers

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

THE PANTO?



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NOVEMBER 27TH 28TH 29TH @ SOBERTON VILLAGE HALL

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noda
Be inspired by amateur theatre



Come and have a Big Stir on **Stir-up Sunday** **Sunday 23rd November**

Holy Trinity, Newtown 10.00

led by Reverend Ruth Schofield

Come and have fun at Christmas Cake Making

We will be creating cakes one for Holy Trinity and one for St Peters in church for sharing with the church and community.



People will be asked to bring along particular ingredients to make these Special Cakes, then they will all go into the bowl for one big stir-up during the Service! The baked cakes will be returned to the churches for a celebration taster at the Carol Service at Soberton and on Christmas Day at Newtown

All enquiries to Sue Wells: 01329 834130 sjwells@meonwood.co.uk



We are delighted to announce that Droxford Junior School has achieved the School Games Platinum Mark Award for the 2024/25 academic year.

The School Games Mark is a Government-led award scheme, facilitated by the Youth Sport Trust to acknowledge a school's PE & School Sport provision. The Platinum accolade is awarded for schools that have consistently demonstrated high standards by consistently achieving the Gold award over several years. It is the highest standard achievable in this national scheme, only a handful of schools hold this award.

Platinum status reflects a school's commitment in ensuring the quality of the provision and opportunities within PE, School Sport and Physical Activity. Therefore, creating a positive and engaging experience for all students.

The award is a testament to the hard work of the whole school community and we are incredibly proud of all of our students. As a school we are looking forward to maintaining and building upon what we have achieved so far.

Duncan Banham
PE and Sports Coach
Droxford Junior School



A Wonderful Start to the Year at Newtown Soberton Infant School!

The new academic year has begun with great energy and enthusiasm at Newtown Soberton Infant School. Our new Year R pupils have settled in beautifully, quickly forming friendships and embracing school life with confidence. Meanwhile, our Year 1 and Year 2 children have made an excellent start to their learning, diving into their topic on Captain Scott and his Antarctic expedition. A particular highlight has been their recent visit to Gilbert White's House, where they explored the challenges of Scott's journey and learned about the rations used during his expedition.



We were also delighted to receive the published report from our recent Ofsted inspection, which took place in the final week of the summer term. The school was graded across five key areas: Leadership and Management, Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We are incredibly proud that the inspection team recognised strong practice throughout the school, awarding a **'Good'** rating in four areas and an **'Outstanding'** rating for EYFS.

The report highlights the nurturing and high-quality provision in our Early Years, noting that:

"Children in the early years make a very positive start to school. Staff are very caring and help them develop their communication and language skills. There is a real buzz of excitement as children learn."

The report is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our entire team. It goes on to say:

"Staff know them (the pupils) very well and care about them deeply," and

"Pupils are proud to attend this school. They are eager to live up to the high expectations that the school has for them."

We were especially pleased with the recognition of our inclusive approach to supporting pupils with additional needs:

"The school is quick to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils access adapted resources and additional support. This helps to ensure that pupils with SEND can learn the curriculum well. Consequently, pupils with SEND thrive."

Following the intensity of the inspection, the school community came together to enjoy the School Council Summer Festival at Meonwood. We are incredibly grateful to Sue Wells (affectionately known to the children as 'Granny Hedgehogs') for generously hosting the event in her beautiful gardens. With the support of our wonderful FONS (Friends of Newtown School) and FOMS (Friends of Meonstoke School) teams, the School Council organised a fantastic afternoon featuring live music (a huge thank you to *Soul Purpose* for performing free of charge), a BBQ, bouncy castle and obstacle course, pony petting, glitter tattoos, and hair braiding. It was a joyful celebration and a lovely way to bring the Newtown and Meonstoke communities together before the summer break.

Looking ahead, we're excited about the learning and events planned for the Autumn term. Staff are already preparing for the Nativity and the much-anticipated pantomime trip in December. Before that, FONS will be hosting a Spooky Disco to raise funds just ahead of the half-term break.

We look forward to sharing more news and highlights in the next edition!

Amy Randell
Executive Headteacher



Meon Valley Federation Open Days

If your child is due to start school in September 2026 applications open via Hampshire County Council School Admissions on November 1st 2025.

We would welcome you to join us for one of our open events

Meonstoke Infant School

9th October 2025 10-11am
12th November 2025 1.30-2.30pm
4th December 2025 10-11am
9th January 2026 1.30-2.30pm

Newtown Soberton Infant School

7th October 2025 10-11am
10th November 2025 1.30-2.30pm
2th December 2025 10-11am
8th January 2026 1.30-2.30pm

Fungi and the dark side

Well we are heading deeply into the season of a lot of mist and possibly some fruitfulness. Not much is springing into action at this time of year of course except...drum roll...only the most significant bit of life (arguably) that has ever existed. Step forward fungi. This is their time of most flamboyant exhibition. The good and delicious, the very bad and the extremely ugly are all emerging, ready for their autumnal parade and neatly leading us to Halloween and the darkest of winter months ahead.

I used to think that mushrooms were the entire organism – but they are not. They are rather like looking at a periscope and not realising there is a whole submarine underwater. Mushrooms have extraordinarily complex communication and reproductive networks underground. To read about them is mind blowing, which is what happened to me when I dipped into Merlin Sheldrake's best selling fungi book, *Entangled Life*. The most extraordinary subterranean and invisible world opened up. The interconnectedness of fungi and the rest of life is truly astonishing. Fungal communication is nature's far more sophisticated version of the most high tech fibre optic Broadband line. The synergy of humans with fungi has been recognised for centuries in both ancient folklore and modern medicine.

A couple of years ago I found myself on a fungi foray. This was not a fashionable porcini hunt or indeed a truffle hunt, it was quite simply a slow and quite forensic exploration of how many forms of fungi, edible or indeed extremely deadly, are growing around us at this time of year.

Initially we seemed to be just strolling over a lawn. But no. Our fungi expert made us stop and really look at the ground. Amazingly beneath our feet were a number of very small but unmistakably mushroomy looking growths. And that was the small stuff. We entered a wild wood passing by huge puffballs. Enormous, wave shaped fungus cascaded down rotting tree stumps, converting the tree into goodness for the ground. It was like fairyland. Bright egg yolk yellow Chicken of the Woods and spikey Hedgehog Fungus looked like cartoon versions of themselves. Of course there were a few rather boring ones but then we met the Gothic horror that is the Hairy Curtain Crust which particularly likes devouring decomposing oak and even bleeds a red, blood like liquid when scratched!

There is no doubt fungi are spooky. But maybe we instinctively feel this because we are so closely related (sorry but it's true!). Human beings have always tapped into this association. Step beyond the cheerful and straightforward field mushroom and their names become distinctly menacing and otherworldly.

Take the rather revoltingly named Brown Rollrim, a bland, beige toadstool that has a complex reputation. Eaten by some but described in the Dorling Kindersley *Pocket Nature Guide to Fungi* as being 'implicated in a number of serious poisonings'. The facing page of this particular guide enjoys describing a cluster of what could be mistaken for humble chestnut mushrooms the like of which you might find in a greengrocer which is in fact the 'Funeral Bell' fungus described as 'seriously poisonous and even deadly'. Oh dear. On a more whimsical note I like the fairyland quality of some of the 'prettier' 'toadstools' the Fly Agaric, the classic white stemmed red capped with white spots variety. But even that fungus has a sting or rather stink in its proverbial tale, (sic!), you think it is a possibly rather nice thing to have decorating a harvest tablescape, but be warned, it smells appalling.

Here are some extraordinary statistics: there are between about 2.2 and 3.8 million species of fungi in the world, which is, according to Sheldrake, six to ten times the estimated number of known plant species. Their health benefits are both a whim of fashion and serious medical fact. Penicillin, arguably the most significant medical discovery, was derived originally from fungi. The mechanism that defends the fungi from bacterial infection works effectively defending human beings too. In fact we are more like fungi than plants. A cursory dabble on the internet throws up volumes of miraculous fungal 'cures'. Remember Jeremy Clarkson on *Clarkson's Farm* and his horrifying elephantine over-production of Lion's Mane mushrooms to help the ladies of the Gloucestershire with their health and wellbeing. Visit a health shop and you can hardly move for mushroom related supplements and goodies.

And so inevitably, it brings us to picking our own. My basic feeling when it comes to foraging oneself is the principle of 'if you don't know what it is, you don't know what it is.' If you have to look it up before putting it your salad, frying pan or mouth, then shut the book, or the phone and enjoy a shop bought button mushroom instead. Having said that, the other day, we fried up some delicious field mushrooms with butter and garlic. It seemed the perfect way to herald in the new season.

Sarah Barclay

Author of *Eden's Keepers* publ Clearview Books



CHRISTMAS COFFEE

MORNING

Saturday 29th November 2025

10.30 – 12.00

St Peter's Church Rooms
Soberton



Bring and buy, Raffle &
Produce Stall

In aid of St Peter's Church Restoration Fund

Soberton & Newtown Ladies Group

We started our new programme in September and heard about Hampshire and IOW Air Ambulance. It was fascinating to hear how much the service has advanced since our last talk about 12 years ago.

On Wednesday 1st October at 8pm Keston Williams will be talking to us about 'The World of Fresh Produce and Modern Farming Methods'. We will be hearing about food production here and abroad. The venue is St. Peter's Church Rooms, Soberton.

The meeting on 5th November is in Rookesbury Hall, Newtown at 8pm. Steve Morton will be discussing 'Cyber Crime' and giving us ideas for security in this internet age.

Our December meeting (3rd) will be a demonstration of Sustainable Flower Arranging by Pauline Walters and Sandra Glen in St. Peter's Church Room, which will be accompanied by a festive tippie!

New members are always very welcome - just come along or contact either Liz or Helen to find out more details.

Liz Whales 01489 877712 lizwhales@aol.com

Helen Stranks 01489 878270 helen.stranks@btopenworld.com

SOBERTON FETE

YOUR VILLAGE NEEDS YOU!



Following the 'retirement' of Wendy Prangnell after 5 successful years as Chairperson of the Soberton Fete Committee, a successor is urgently sought. It's not just about chairing meetings; you will be pivotal to seeking volunteers, sponsorship and ensuring the event runs smoothly on the day. You need good leadership, interpersonal and organisational skills, a flair for innovation and getting results, and a keen sense of community spirit.

Whilst the position is unpaid, the satisfaction of bringing villagers and visitors together for a happy occasion and raising funds for your parish church, and local charities will reap rewards.

If you think you have the qualities required, please contact Sobertonfete@gmail.com

WILL YOU TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE?



**Ukraine
Relief**



Soberton &
Newtown
Ukraine Group

Christmas BAGS OF LOVE

Step 1

Request a bag and label from Sam Dunlop /SNUG. You can have as many bags as you/your friends can realistically fill.

Step 2

Fill each bag with **unwrapped** gifts/items suitable for a chosen gender/age and then complete the label to identify this - e.g. girl/boy, aged 5-8, adult female/male/unisex etc.

Step 3

Contact Sam Dunlop/SNUG to return the filled and labelled bag(s) which will then be taken to Ukraine Relief for urgent distribution in Ukraine.

Bag filling ideas: new or very good condition items such as cuddly toys, dolls, small games, sweets (no chocolate, as it melts), biscuits, books, colouring books, pencils, pens, toiletries, soaps etc. Items must not be gift wrapped. Please avoid fragile/glass items and battery/electrical items.

If you are unable to fill a bag, then you can donate funds and Sam Dunlop/SNUG will buy items and fill bags on your behalf.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Sam Dunlop 07720 305613, 01329 833268,
samandmattdunlop@btinternet.com



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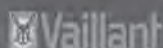
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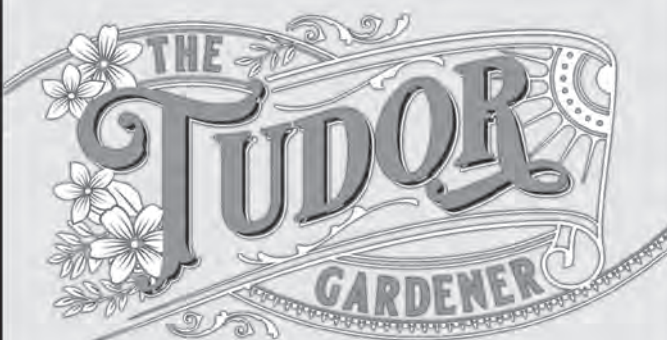
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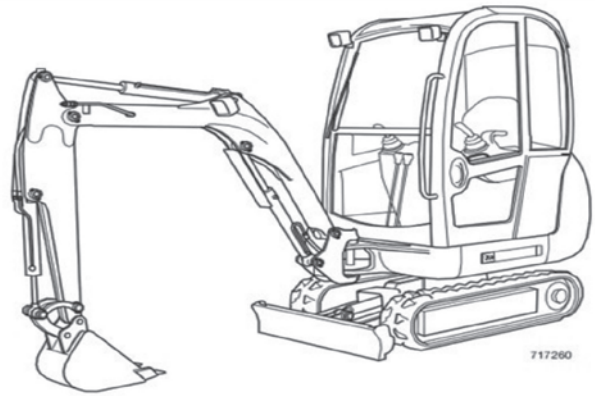
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MATT & MORGANA WELCOME YOU TO THE BOLD FORESTER IN SOBERTON HEATH!



We are thrilled to have recently taken over this beloved pub and are excited to embark on a journey of restoring its charm through essential maintenance and improvements.

Morgana, who grew up in this beautiful village, has spent a significant part of her life working at The Bold Forester, and it holds a special place in her heart. To us, it's always been more than just a place to grab a drink—it's a community gathering spot for friends, families, and neighbours. We cherish the countless memories of laughter, celebrations, and the strong community spirit that have filled its walls over the years.

Our vision is to bring this cherished pub back to its former glory, transforming it into a vibrant hub for the community. We plan to host events, support local businesses, and foster greater community engagement. We're working closely with our Executive Chef, Martin Dawkins, and his team to reimagine the restaurant, using fresh, locally-sourced seasonal produce, so our menus will evolve throughout the year.

Together, we can breathe new life into The Bold Forester and create a place where new memories are made. We eagerly look forward to welcoming you all and hearing your thoughts on how we can once again make this pub the cornerstone of our community once again.

Tel: 01329 832620
office@rusticenterprises.co.uk



Warm Regards,
Matt & Morgana



goodcents.io/TheBoldForester
Scan > Order > Enjoy

Journeys of faith for discerning Christian travellers

£50 off*
any Fellowship
Tour for
all readers!

For over 40 years we've arranged pilgrimages for churches. In the last decade, we've developed our Fellowship Tours – designed for individual travellers who want to deepen their faith, explore places of Christian significance and share the journey with like-minded companions.



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- ✚ Journeys to key biblical sites and Christian heritage locations
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- ✚ Daily worship and reflection led by an experienced McCabe leader
- ✚ Fellowship with other like-minded travellers

More than just travel, McCabe Fellowship Tours offer opportunities to grow, reflect and connect in some of the most inspiring places on earth.

*£50 off per person on any new booking for a McCabe Fellowship Tour made by 31st December 2025. Quote code 'PARISH50' when booking. Offer valid for new bookings only, cannot be combined with other discounts and is not transferable or redeemable for cash.

For more information:

 www.mccabe-travel.co.uk
 **01252 226133**



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PILGRIMAGES

SOBERTON STORES

Soberton Welcomes New Village Store at The Bold Forester.

Soberton, Hampshire – The heart of Soberton is beating a little stronger this month as residents gathered to celebrate the grand opening of Soberton Stores, a brand-new community shop based at The Bold Forester pub.

The opening was marked with a lively village BBQ, drawing in families, friends, and neighbours eager to explore the store's offering. From fresh local produce and everyday essentials to artisan goods, the shop aims to provide both convenience and a boost to the region's small suppliers.

For many villagers, the arrival of Soberton Stores represents more than just a place to shop. It's a return of a cherished amenity, ensuring residents can pick up what they need without travelling further afield.

"It's fantastic to see Soberton Stores up and running," said one local visitor at the launch event. "It feels like the community has gained a new hub – not just a shop, but a place to meet, connect, and support local businesses."

QUALITY PRODUCE. SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

Housed within the historic Bold Forester pub, the store blends tradition with practicality. The pub itself has long been a focal point in the village, and the addition of a store strengthens its role as a centrepiece of community life.

The launch event showcased the store's range, with a warm welcome from staff, tastings of local produce, and family-friendly activities. Early feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with villagers praising both the convenience and the community spirit behind the venture.

As Soberton Stores settles into daily life, it's expected to play a vital role in keeping the village connected and self-sufficient. Whether it's popping in for milk, picking up fresh bread, or discovering Hampshire-made treats, the shop looks set to become a firm favourite among residents.



Forester Road,
Southampton.
SO32 3QG



Homemade
Produce

Warm
Welcome

Convenient

Community
Focused

Local Produce

Friendly Staff

SATURDAY 8th November 2025 ... 10am – 1pm

Back by popular demand, Karen Dalmeny is returning to Rookesbury Hall, Church Road, Newtown, PO17 6LE on Saturday 8th November 2025 from 10am to 1pm

One of ITV's Most Popular Antique Experts...

Happy to arrange home calls by appointment
karen@dalmeny.co.uk

For enquiries please call:
07712 545 700

KAREN DALMENY

BEST CASH PRICES PAID FOR:
Gold & Silver Jewellery & Antiques
Including: Watches, Medals, Bronzes, Oriental Ceramics, Quality Antiques, House Clearance/Insurance Valuations

She is especially seeking to purchase gold, silver, jewellery and antiques. We had many happy customers last time.

Avoid online scams and heavy auction fees.

Drop in between 10am and 1pm, there will be free tea and coffee

£5.00 per person entry (up to five items).

CASH ONLY ACCEPTED FOR ENTRANCE

What's on

Month	Date/day	Event / group	Time	Details
October	1 st	S&N Ladies Group	20:00	Page 13
	4 th	Autumn Plant Sale - Meon Valley Garden Club	10:00	Page 41
	7 th	Stitch & Chatter	14:00	Page 47
	7 th and 21 st	U3A	14:00	Page 36
	8 th and 22 nd	Pop in for coffee and cake at St Peter's	10:00	Page 4
	9 th - 10 th	BW Photographic Society 20265 Exhibition	09:30	Page 37
	14 th	Wickham Society Autumn Programme	19:30	Page 38
	25 th	PiNS Christmas Card response date	-	Page 7
	31 st	Rookesbury Hall AGM	18:30	Page 35
	31 st	Meet&Eat	12:30	Page 47
November	25 th	Bishops Waltham GIVE AND TAKE	10:30	Page 36
	4 th	Stitch & Chatter	14:00	Page 47
	4 th and 18 th	U3A	14:00	Page 36
	5 th	S&N Ladies Group	20:00	Page 13
	8 th	Value / sell you valuables with Karen Dalmeny	10:00	Page 32
	8 th	Moscow Drug Club at Rookesbury Hall	19:00	Page 8
	9 th	RBL Remembrance Sunday	10:50	Page 35
	11 th	Wickham Society Autumn Programme	19:30	Page 38
	12 th and 26 th	Pop in for coffee and cake at St Peter's	10:00	Page 4
	17 th	COPY DATE FOR DECEMBER / JANUARY	17:00	-
	22 nd	Makers Market at Rookesbury Hall	11:00	Page 35
	23 rd	Stir up Sunday at Holy Trinity	10:00	Page 10
	28 th	Meet&Eat	12:30	Page 47
	27 th - 29 th	Soberton Players - A Christmas Carol The Panto?	-	Page 9
	29 th	Christmas Coffee Morning at St Peter's	10:30	Page 13
Hold the date	3 rd	S&N Ladies Group	20:00	Page 13
	9 th	Wickham Society Autumn Programme	19:30	Page 38

Regular meetings/ events	1 st Tuesday	Stitch & Chatter	14:00	Page 47
	1 st Wednesday	Soberton & Newtown Ladies' Group	20:00	Page 13
	2 nd /4 th Weds	Pop in for coffee and cake at St Peter's	10:00	Page 4
	2 nd Thursday	Soberton & Newtown Local History Society	19:30	Page 47
	1 st /3 rd Tuesday	Meon Valley U3A	14:00	Page 36
	Last Friday	Meet&Eat	12:30	Page 47

Great news - a new village store at The Bold Forester

Every village needs a store and Saturday 9th August saw the grand opening of the new village stores, **Soberton Stores**, located at The Bold Forester on Forester Road. The opening brought together a large number of local residents to take their first look around ... and enjoy a village BBQ!

The store will be open daily, Monday - Saturday 9am until 6pm and Sunday 9am until 4pm.

For more details, see advert on opposite page.



Road Report

Edited by Jonty Sherwill this feature has aimed to raise awareness about what we can each do to encourage more considerate driving with benefits for all road users whether on foot, horseback, cycle or behind the wheel or reins. The views expressed are personal and based on 50 years of driving. Friendly feedback always welcome.

See and be seen

The outcome of the study by TRL on behalf of the DfT to understand more about the causes of modern headlamp glare and its impact on drivers is still to be published, but of equal concern arguably is the poor state of lights on many vehicles. Perhaps with fewer police patrols the risk of being pulled over has reduced to a point where no one cares, although sometimes I wonder when one sees a failed headlamp whether the driver is actually aware of it or not because the other light is so efficient!

Opportunities for checking lights without the help of a second person are there even in daylight - reflection in a supermarket window is a handy check, but look out for car park traffic.



Being able to see is important but so is being seen - a vehicle with just nearside headlamp working could be mistaken for a motorcycle, and faulty tail lamps or brake lights invites a rear shunt. Although reflective number plates were a big step forward in road safety they are only useful when kept clean, essential when leaving a car parked on an unlit road as here in Soberton parish - and dare I say that's rather more important than leaving them dirty to avoid a speeding fine on the motorway.

The grand tour?

By a chance miscuing on the TV remote I found myself watching a 2009 edition of Top Gear with a youthful looking Jeremy Clarkson testing an Aston Martin Vantage on the open roads of some glorious rural spot. With the exquisite rising exhaust note of

its 6 Litre V12 engine he rues the imminent demise of beautiful cars like this one to forthcoming legislation on exhaust emissions. But was he right about that?

Here we are today, 15 plus years on and not only do we see more supercars on our roads but there are rumblings in the motor industry about reining back on quotas for electric car production. In another 15 years how interesting it will be to see what the smart set are driving - probably all electric or just possibly a new iteration of the internal combustion engine?

Will cars still be as great?

It is something of a tragedy that the century long development of internal combustion, conceived and inspired by intuitive engineers is now reaching a plateau of perfection with the help of computer aided design, but also condemned to history because of its contribution to global warming, at least for passenger vehicles.

Since motoring began the conversation piece invariably has been the engine not just the car, the throbbing heart and focal point of those more iconic creations, sometimes with a famous racing history behind it. For us Brits perhaps the Bentley 3 Litre or Jaguar XK straight six are the nostalgic epitome - of course others brands are available to challenge that!

As we move towards an all-electric future I guess the next generation will look back and sneer at the 'petrol heads' but they should not forget that what's on offer to them is part of an evolution driven forward using fossil fuel, but I wonder if the smell of a hot rotor will ever quite have the same appeal as a hot engine - they might never know unless the Festival of Speed is allowed to continue - surely yes!

Feedback

Space in this lovely magazine is precious and while this bimonthly rant has been a great pleasure to write for the last nine issues and the occasional feedback has been nice to receive I think this column has run its course. So unless there's an outcry for more (not expected!) then it is time to say - finito.

It was inspired by my hope of achieving a reduction in antisocial and at times dangerous speeding through our villages, but our local authorities need to engage fully with parish councils in a structured process to make our roads safer for all, but so far that seems not to be forthcoming. At the time of writing this even Heath Road remains in poor condition.

During the soon to arrive cold dark winter months I wish you safe journeys - keep focussed on good driving and try to avoid getting riled by others - you may never encounter them again and all that really matters is getting home safe.

Au revoir, Jonty



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Droxford & District Branch

founded on 26th March 1920 as Comrades of the Great War



A SOLDIER OF THE GREAT WAR
- KNOWN UNTO GOD
(FLANDERS)

This year's RBL Remembrance Service will be held at 1050 on Sunday 9th November at St Mary & All Saints Church, Droxford. After the National two-minutes silence at 1100, the Roll of Honour for Corhampton, Droxford, Exton, Meonstoke, Newtown and Soberton will be read to commemorate the lives of those from these parishes who died in the service of the British Empire and Commonwealth during the two great wars of the 20th Century and other conflicts. Short services and wreath laying ceremonies at Soberton and Newtown war memorials will follow at approx 1230 and 1250 respectively. A further National two-minutes silence will take place on Armistice Day (Tuesday 11th November) at 1100.

Earlier this year, the nation commemorated the 80th Anniversaries of Victory in Europe (VE Day) on 8th May and Victory over Japan (VJ Day) on 15th August. The latter finally signalled the end of the

2nd World War, enabling nations to take stock of the tragic loss of life that had occurred. It is estimated that some 70-85 million people (Service and civilian) died between 1937 and 1945; of these, USSR lost more than 30 million and China over 20 million. British Empire losses approached 500,000. Despite the attrition of trench warfare, the Great War (1st World War as it later became known) losses were some 15-22 million with the British Empire accounting for nearly one million of these. None of these figures include those who suffered life-changing physical and mental injuries or who died from wounds or disease as a result of hostilities.

Geopolitical changes since 1945 and nuclear deterrence have, so far, prevented a 3rd World War. Former Axis powers, Germany and Italy, are now staunch allies and fellow members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). This has enabled peaceful coexistence of Western European nations with the conventional might and nuclear arsenal of the United States helping to contain the threat from Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), now the Russian Federation. In the Indo-Pacific region, Japan is also a strong ally against the threat from China and North Korea. Small wars and conflicts have continued unabated and there has not been a single year since 1945 when there has not been armed conflict somewhere. The ongoing war in Ukraine is an example, if needed, of the tragedy of war; so far Ukraine has lost some 50,000 killed and 400,000 wounded while Russian losses have exceeded 250,000 killed and 800,000 wounded. At the time of writing, it remains to be seen whether a peace deal can be brokered between Presidents Trump, Putin and Zelensky. Meanwhile, conflict in the Middle East - Israel/Palestine, Syria, Yemen and Iran - and ongoing civil unrest in various parts of Africa continue to cause human suffering, especially among innocent civilians and children.

In remembering the lives of those who died in the service of this country, we should also reflect on the horror and futility of war. After each of the great wars and other major conflicts, the overwhelming aspiration has been to prevent it happening again. In keeping remembrance alive, the Royal British Legion aims to reinforce this while ensuring that the sacrifices made by our armed forces are remembered and that surviving dependants and veterans are given the support that they need.



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.

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Friday 31st October at 6.30pm 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 the hall.

**We are holding a Makers Market on
Saturday 22nd November 11am - 2pm
at Rookesbury Hall, Newtown. Free entry**



A variety of sellers including local honey, glass ware, cards, quilted goods, handmade bags, candles, art, books and more

Meon Valley communities – lots going on!



Hello again.

Meon Valley U3A offers you once more 2 lectures for October and 2 for November. We meet every first and third Tuesday at 2pm at the Wickham Community Centre during the lecture season.

First we have Glen Duggan talking on “Why 10 Kings and Queens visited Titchfield Abbey” on 7th October.

And on 21st October it is me lecturing on “How St. Swithun lost his head.” If you believe he was never decapitated you had better come along to find out!

Next, on 4th November Graham Soffe will talk on “Hayling Island: The discovery and excavation of the Unique Iron Age Roman Temple.”

Finally on 18th November Bobbie Darbyshire ‘s lecture on “A beginning, a Muddle and End. Where do Novelists get their ideas from?”

Everybody is welcome. Guests will get an especially warm welcome. (Guests pay £2 to defray speaker costs.) Tea and biscuits are provided after the talk, and we always have pre-loved books for charitable sale.

I look forward to seeing you all again.

Lyndon (programme organiser)

Contact – 07881 991763 or lyndonplmr@gmail.com

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

NEW MEON VALLEY LIONS PRESIDENT



Every year the Club changes officers. A new Lionistic year sees a new face at the helm. Pete, now ex-president, hands the reins over to new president Eddie. Faces may change but our dedication to helping our community where, when and however we can, remains the same.

Lions International is the World’s largest volunteering service organisations with over 1.3 million members, in over 47,000 local clubs, throughout the World.

The Meon Valley Lions Club is your local Club. We raise money with our barbeques, Christmas collections, fete stalls and other charity fund-raising activities throughout the year – last year we raised over £30,000, supporting mainly local individuals and young people as well as the Lions International Disaster Fund; we also updated our minibus. 100% of monies raised goes to charitable causes.

For the Club to remain successful we would like to attract new members. It’s not all work, we have plenty of fun too! So if you’d like to join, giving as much or little of your time as you can commit, please get in touch. Tel: 07443 753780 / Our website: <https://www.meonvalleylionsclub.org.uk>





GIVE & TAKE

BISHOP'S WALTHAM

Help us to reduce waste in our town!

25th October 2025 - 10.30am to 2.30pm

St George's Square, Bishop's Waltham

A FREE EXCHANGE STALL

YOU CAN GIVE, YOU CAN TAKE,

OR YOU CAN GIVE AND TAKE.

Halloween & Christmas Items








Brought to you by
The Bishop's Waltham Town Team

With support from

Bishop's Waltham Photographic Society

Members have enjoyed a vibrant and eventful few weeks, taking part in competition and engaging with visiting speakers. A recent club competition was a special documentary category. Members challenged themselves to capture not only technically strong images, but also to tell meaningful stories through their photographs. Congratulations go to Andrew Mills ARPS, who won the Best Documentary Award in this digital image competition held at the end of August. Andrew's entry depicted an everyday scene on a Manhattan Street, showing skill in composition and timing. The competition drew a diverse selection of entries, highlighting scenes of everyday life both from far-flung destinations and right here in our community. Critique and feedback were generously provided by Rob de Ruiter, whose comments helped all participants reflect on their creative choices and technical execution.

In addition to celebrating our members' successes, the guest speaker for September was our very own Chris Morris ARPS, a long-standing member of the Society who delivered a thought-provoking presentation entitled 'What Makes a Good Photograph?' Chris invited the audience to consider the idea that, in a world saturated with images, certain photographs consistently attract deeper appreciation and admiration. What sets these exceptional photographs apart? Are there qualities—such as composition, emotion, or storytelling—that elevate a picture above the ordinary? "Chris gave an insightful commentary on 'iconic' pictures taken over several decades by well-known photographers. For instance, he explained how a simple composition can evoke powerful emotions, citing Dorothea Lange's 'Migrant Mother' as an example of storytelling through imagery." The evening was much appreciated by members with one saying, "Last night's talk by Chris was a significant and refreshing departure from the more mainstream type of presentation we are used to hearing".

We encourage our members and readers alike to ponder: What do you think distinguishes an exceptional photograph from an everyday snapshot? This ongoing conversation lies at the heart of our society and continues to inspire both new and experienced photographers to see the world through a creative lens. We invite you to explore this question firsthand at the Society's annual exhibition, taking place at the United Free Church from October 9-12th, 9:30 am to 5 pm. Come see for yourself what makes a photograph truly exceptional.

If you have recently acquired a new camera or want to re-kindle your hobby or even find out how to improve your skills using a camera phone, Bishops Waltham Photographic Society will welcome you and help you with your photography. Why not come along to one of our meetings, (free of charge) as a taster.

We meet once or twice a month at St. Peter's Hall, Free Street, Bishops Waltham. Always on the first Thursday, then other Thursdays depending on our calendar. Please take a look at our website at www.bishopswalthamphotosociety.co.uk or drop an email to info@bishopswalthamphotosociety.co.uk for information on the dates of our meetings.

BISHOP'S WALTHAM PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



2025 EXHIBITION

United Free Church
Basingwell Street,
Bishop's Waltham
SO32 1AL

Thursday 9th –
Saturday 11th Oct

9.30am-5pm



Harbour House by
Sue Vaisey-Moore

Kindly supported by



MVARA – In the Footsteps of Kings (and Queens)

The Meon Valley Active Retirement Association (MVARA) continues to endeavour to expand its range of activities for the benefit of its members.

Following on from a very successful visit to Exbury Gardens in May, members were treated to something closer to home, with a private tour of Bishop's Waltham Palace ruins and visit to Bishop's Waltham Museum led by Roy Stainton, the Chair of the Museum Trustees.



Roy's introductory remarks set the Palace its context as:

- one of the finest residences of the Bishops of Winchester;
- a key factor in the medieval economy of Bishop's Waltham;
- a significant disrupter of the lives of the population.

Members were asked to imagine how much 'waste' was created when Henry VIII, with his thousand + followers met Charles V, with an equal number of retainers, in July 1522 for the signing of the Treaty of Waltham – and they only stayed for a week!

Roy also explained how the Palace was not built in one go. A succession of bishops from Henry of Blois in the 1130's through William of Wykeham in the 14th century and Henry Beaufort and Thomas Langton, built, added to (and knocked down) and adapted the Palace to suit their comforts and the fashions of the time.

Largely destroyed by Parliamentary forces and fire during the Civil War, the Palace continued its influence on the town – mainly as a source of building materials.

And a little titbit, which may be true. William of Wykeham had a liking for pink stone and used it extensively in his 'upgrading' of the Palace. The stone was imported from France and transporting and working the stone became a significant local industry. Unfortunately, the dust, over time changed the colour of the workers' skin. They became PINK – hence a local family name!

Following the tour of the ruins, during which Roy was able to point out the solid evidence, including former roof lines, of the evolution of the site, as well as evoking a real feel of what it must have been like to 'use' the buildings during the Middle Ages, the party explored the Museum with its collection of artifacts from the local area. This year the museum commemorates the 200th anniversary of the first passenger train with a major exhibition on the Bishop's Waltham to Botley Railway, including a display of 70 year old model locomotives and rolling stock, some of which actually still worked (some of the time!)



The Museum is open 12.00 – 4.00pm at weekends during the summer months. For more visit www.bishopswalthammuseum.com. The visit concluded with a convivial lunch at the Crown, before the heavens opened and everybody got just a little wet. Even Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, when they visited the Palace couldn't control the weather.

The next MVARA visit is to Bucklers Hard in September. For more information about MVARA and its activities visit www.mvara.co.uk. MVARA welcomes new members (membership is just £5.00 per annum) and new ideas.

There are vacancies in the following MVARA activities:

- **Intermediate Spanish** – please contact Roger Wingrove rogersjw634@gmail.co.uk
- **Scrabble** – please contact Alison Hume hume.alison76@googlemail.com

Wickham Society Autumn Programme 2025

Meetings are held at the Wickham Community Centre starting at 7.30 pm. Membership is £6 per annum or £2.50 for an occasional visitor. New members and visitors are always welcome.



14 October 2025

Street Pastors Portsmouth - hear about how this organisation helps to keep people safe
John Palmer, Resource Manager

11 November 2025

M27 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme

Michael Spoor, Principal Project Manager of the Implementation Team, Hampshire County Council

9 December 2025

A Magic Lantern Show

Victorian Humour with Alan Brindle

Revisit a time when magic lantern slides thrilled and amazed their audiences

A joint meeting with Wickham History Society

For more information visit our website or contact
wendy.greenish@gmail.com or 01329 833583 www.wickhamsociety.org.uk

Independent audit praises safeguarding in diocese and cathedral

INDEPENDENT auditors today praised the “substantial and positive transformation in the safeguarding culture” of the Church of England’s Diocese of Portsmouth.

An audit report, by independent organisation INEQE Safeguarding Group, also praised the “considerable advancements” in the safeguarding culture at Portsmouth Cathedral.

Auditors examined 360 documents, received 642 anonymous surveys, interviewed 130 people, and held six focus groups during the audit. The process began earlier this year and included a week-long visit in June. It is part of a series of audits by INEQE across the whole of the Church of England.

Their report, which was published today (Sept 17), recognises the enormous changes that have taken place in both the diocese and the cathedral over recent years, including the recruitment of a diocesan Head of Safeguarding and an experienced professional team, who have put into place appropriate policies and training programmes.

Its wide-ranging survey indicates an overwhelming majority of respondents – both inside and outside the Church – recognise these improvements, believe that a robust safeguarding culture has been established, and express confidence that they could raise concerns.

And its report recognises that the diocese gives safeguarding the highest priority, largely because of the clear and committed leadership of the Bishop of Portsmouth, the Rt Rev Jonathan Frost. It described him as “an exemplar” on this issue.

The report said: “His unwavering commitment, explicit prioritisation of, and tangible investment in safeguarding have played a crucial role in integrating safeguarding principles throughout the diocese’s operational and spiritual fabric.”

The report also recognises the hard work of the network of Parish Safeguarding Officers – volunteers in each parish church on the frontline of making sure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are kept safe during church activities. It praised the diocese for organising annual Safeguarding Conferences to sharpen development in this area.

It also praised the cathedral for the “strong set of preventative measures” it had put in place, and the positive safeguarding culture around choristers, who are supported by experienced staff, consistent supervision, and strong pastoral awareness.

The INEQE report also includes a number of recommendations to help both the diocese and the cathedral to improve further.

Bishop Jonathan said: “I’m pleased that the report’s conclusion is that there has been this transformation in safeguarding culture, but we will not be complacent. We always have more to learn.

“I want to pay tribute to our Head of Safeguarding, Emily Hassan, and our dedicated diocesan safeguarding team, which includes those with substantial experience in social services, the police and other statutory agencies – as well as our network of Parish Safeguarding Officers. They have enabled this transformation.

“This report recognises that we give safeguarding the highest priority – we need to get that right before we do anything else. And that’s not just a one-off, that’s an ongoing process to make sure we listen carefully to the voice of survivors and we continue to change our culture as needs be.

“It also sets out recommendations to help us continue to strengthen our approach. We are committed to taking these forward. Some recommendations have already begun following their visit and some will need further exploration. That means you can feel confident about joining in our toddler groups, our Sunday services, and our youth groups.

“I want to thank all those who took part in this audit. And I can assure you that we will not rest on our laurels in this diocese and in our cathedral. We will do all we can to make sure the Church of England in this area gives safeguarding the priority it deserves.”

You can read more about the audit and our bishop and dean’s responses to it here:

<https://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/news/2025/09/17/independent-audit-praises-safeguarding-diocese-and-cathedral/>

SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL *Chairman's notes*

Follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SobertonParishCouncil
Website - www.soberton-pc.gov.uk



Governmental Changes to Local Government

There are Government proposals regarding how our local County and District Councils (Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council) are to evolve in the next two years. In short, the County Council will be replaced by a mayoral strategic authority, and District Councils will be reorganised into four or five unitary authorities across the county (including the Isle of Wight). Consultations by both the County Council (HCC) and the District Council (WCC) have taken place over the summer on initial proposals, and final proposals will be sent to Central Government this autumn (these proposals have all been published - see links below). As previously noted in this column as far as it can be determined by the published data available, Soberton Parish boundaries remain unaffected. We are advised that the Government decision is likely to be announced in spring 2026, with the new authorities coming into being in 2027/2028.

<https://ourplaceourfuture.commonplace.is/>

www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/governmentinhampshire/future-hampshire-solent

Parish Council Elections May 2026

There will be elections for the Parish Council this coming May, this will allow all residents of the Parish of Soberton to both stand as Parish Councillors and vote. For those of you who are new residents the Parish of Soberton is split between two polling areas; these are XT and XU, the split / polling boundary runs East-West across the northern part of the parish crossing High Street Soberton where it becomes Cole Hill. In early 2026 we will be calling for nominations for Parish Councillors. The Parish has eleven Parish councillors split 3/8, North/South.

Those who are interested to find out more about being a parish councillor should in the first instant contact the Parish Clerk, Cheryl Gosling - clerk@soberton-pc.gov.uk

Soberton Recreation Ground

The specialist sports field contractor has completed the first stage of work restoring the field of play and will progress to their second stage of work, which includes seeding the newly graded surface, in late September/early October. The new grass sward will establish in the autumn and early spring. The objective is that the pitch will be playable for local teams, including Soberton United, for the football season commencing August/September 2026. In the meantime the PC will be looking at internal decorations of the pavilion.

Hedges and Ditches

Many of the road drainage culverts have been cleaned out by HCC Highways, please report any blocked road drains directly to Hampshire Highways, visit hants.gov.uk and follow the link to Transport and Roads/Highways. For those who own/manage hedges adjacent to roads/lanes it is imperative that these are pruned for pedestrian and traffic safety.

Parish Design Statement

The draft Parish Design Statement has been submitted to both planning authorities (South Downs National Park Authority and Winchester City Council) for their comments. Once these are received and the draft is amended the PC will issue the document for public comment. During this 6 week consultation the PC will organise public open evenings at Rookesbury Hall and Soberton Village Hall. Dates for the public consultation will be advertised widely via this magazine, the PC website, PC notice boards and social media.

High Street War Memorial

The memorial requires some restoration work. Whilst the stone cross remains sound and in good order the paved area and the surrounding grass banks require attention. Councillor David Buttriss has carried out an initial cleanup and the PC will instruct a contractor to re-lay and point the paving area.

Droxford 'Splash-way'

There has been much discussion about the use by motorbikes and large 4x4 vehicles using the ford which follows and crosses the river at Droxford Mill. The River Meon is the Soberton Parish boundary with Droxford in the north west of the parish. There is concern that the river bed is being damaged by vehicles driving along it for some 30/40m. This together with the arising silts are impacting on the ecology of this nationally protected river. It is hoped that Hampshire Highways will redefine the route to preclude motorised vehicles.

Planning

If you have any any planning related queries please don't hesitate to contact the Parish Clerk who will be able to direct you through the correct channels. Should you be concerned about a breach of planning controls you can contact www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-enforcement/report-a-suspected-breach-of-planning-control

Meon Valley Community Bus

The community bus runs weekly trips to Winchester, Petersfield and Fareham (see published timetable) it is also available for private hire. This local resource is maned by volunteer drivers who pick up from designated bus stops across the Parish and the wider Meon Valley, those with a bus pass travel free, there is a nominal charge for all other passengers. At their AGM held in September at the West Meon Hall it was clear that funding was tight and financial support in the form of annual grants from the Meon Valley's Parish Council's are fundamental to maintaining this service. The other matter of concern was the recruitment of the volunteer drivers, anyone with a driving license can be trained to qualify to drive the bus, if you feel you can be added to the monthly drivers rota the parish clerk can direct you to the appropriate person.

John Hyland
Chairman
chair@soberton-pc.gov.uk



Meon Valley Garden Club Plant Sale at *New Venue*

**Where:
Meon Hall
Pound Lane,
Meonstoke
SO32 3NP**

**When:
October
Saturday 4th
10.00 - 11.30**

**Great place to
buy a variety of
plants & some
produce, all at
competitive**

Autumn News from Winchester City Council District Councillors

Local Government Reorganisation continues at pace

Following consultations in the summer, further progress was made in September towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) as the various local authorities across Hampshire submitted their final proposals for the new larger unitary councils to the government. Looking forward, the expected timeline is as follows:

- November 2025 – Government-led public consultation on the options
- March 2026 – Government announcement of new Local Authority structure in Hampshire and the Solent
- May 2026 – Mayoral election, plus elections to existing County & District Councils
- May 2027 – Elections for new Unitary Authorities (shadow elections)
- April 2028 – Anticipated go live for new Unitary Authorities (closure of existing local authorities, including Hampshire County Council & Winchester City Council)



Food Waste Recycling collections- Coming soon!



Winchester City Council's new weekly food waste recycling collections are starting in phases from October 2025 until March 2026. You can find out when your collections start at: winchester.gov.uk/foodwaste

However, you will receive notifications to inform you of the start date of your collections as well as information about how the collection will work. Expect your pack to arrive with everything you need for the new collections in the three weeks before your collections start. This will include a kitchen caddy to collect food waste in, a small, grey outdoor bin as well as a leaflet with

information on how to recycle food waste. The recycled food waste will be used to generate green energy and a soil improver and help reduce carbon emissions.

My Home Made better - free, impartial home energy advice

As the weather turns colder, you may be thinking about how to improve your home's energy efficiency to save on bills and stay warm this winter. A new project, **My Home Made Better**, offers Hampshire residents free, independent advice on making their homes more energy efficient. The project helps you:

- **Save money** by lowering energy bills.
- **Improve comfort** with a home that stays warmer in winter and cooler in summer.
- **Lower your carbon footprint** to help the environment.

With so many options available, My Home Made Better provides impartial one-to-one advice to help you understand which solutions are best for your home, from insulation and heating to new technologies.

The project is run by local charities and is not affiliated with any commercial installers. For more information or to book a free advice call, visit myhomemadebetter.org or call 0800 804 8601.



Small District Grants now available



The Winchester District small grants scheme is now open for grants of up to £3000 for local voluntary and not-for profit organisations. The grants can fund one-off expenditure on projects or equipment that align with this year's funding priorities of 'healthy communities' and 'greener faster.' Last year, 'The River Meon Conservation Volunteers' were one of the local organisations supported with a small grant to enable them to buy start-up equipment and tools for their river monitoring and habitat management work.

Councillors:

Cllr Malcolm Wallace (mwallace@winchester.gov.uk)
Cllr Danny Lee (dlee@winchester.gov.uk)
Cllr Suzanne White (swhite3@winchester.gov.uk)



New Primary School

The buildings are complete, classrooms are equipped, and the grounds are landscaped – Hampshire's three brand-new primary schools are all set to welcome pupils, marking the county's largest expansion of school places in recent memory. The new primaries – Hounscome Fields in Basingstoke, Stanhope in Aldershot, and Newlands, west of Waterlooville – are located in areas experiencing significant housing development and population growth. Their openings, initially to Year R pupils, signal the successful completion of the first phase of Hampshire County Council's ambitious three-year £502 million investment in school buildings, which aims to deliver 10 new schools and 3,175 additional school places by September 2028.



Of that total investment, £390 million is allocated to new schools and expansions, contributing a total of 19,260 new school places since 2014. The programme also includes three new special schools, three school expansions, and 11 projects to enhance provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), adding 114 new places. The new schools which opened this September all included eight-place SEND units from 2026.

Further projects funded by the capital programme will focus on improving accessibility, modernising existing school buildings, and upgrading facilities for children's social care and early years education. The new schools have been designed to high environmental and energy efficiency standards.

Flag Flying

Flags are very emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities, strengthen community cohesion and mark civic pride. However, there are regulations governing their use, some flags require formal consent [permission] from the local planning authority, whereas others, like the Union Flag, do not. If you are uncertain about whether consent is required for flying a flag see Government guidance document at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide>: Flying Flags: a Plain English Guide.

Hampshire Faces Major Funding Cuts Under Government's 'Fair' Funding Review

There is a risk to Hampshire from the Government's review of local government funding. Essentially this takes money from rural areas in the South and passes it to urban councils, particularly those in the North and Midlands.

Hampshire County Council has now responded to the Government's Fair Funding Review 2.0—and is sounding the alarm. The proposed changes to how councils are funded could leave Hampshire significantly worse off, with many councils across the county facing real-terms cuts.

The new formula underestimates Hampshire's needs and overestimates how much we can raise through council tax. It risks deepening our financial deficit and reducing vital services.

The numbers speak for themselves. Hampshire County Council: funding drops from £338.9m in 2025/26 to £291.1m in 2028/29—a loss of £47.8m.

East Hampshire: down £1.3m / Eastleigh: down £1.6m / Hart: down £1.4m / Test Valley: down £4.4m / Winchester: down £2.1m.

Even councils seeing small increases—like Fareham (+£2.1m) or Havant (+£1.3m)—won't escape the pressure, as overall resources shrink and demand grows.

The County Council is calling for

- Fairer service formulas that reflect real demand, especially in rural areas.
- Use of actual council tax levels—not national averages—when calculating funding.
- Reform of the New Homes Bonus to support infrastructure for growing communities.
- A funding floor that protects councils from falling below sustainable levels, indexed to inflation and population.

Why it matters: Without urgent changes, Hampshire's councils could struggle to deliver essential services—especially for vulnerable residents. We are urging the Government to rethink and deliver a formula that is truly fair for all.

Reporting Highway Problems

Useful web pages to report problems.

Potholes - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes>

Tree/hedge problems - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/treehedge>

Flooding/drainage issues - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/flooding>

Pavement problems - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/paving>

Broken or missing signs - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/brokensigns>

Faulty street lights - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/streetlight>

Faded or missing road markings - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/road-markings>

Problems with rights of way -

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/reportaproblem>

When reporting an issue, you will be sent an email confirming a reference number for the report.

Winter Fuel Payments – No Need to Apply!

There have been reports from Hampshire Police about scammers posing as officials trying to “help” people access their Winter Fuel Payment. Let's set the record straight:

- If you're eligible, the payment is AUTOMATIC
- No one needs to contact you, and you don't need to give out any info
- Check the official details here: gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment

Be scam-savvy:

- Learn about current scams: BBC Article | Watch the video
- If you have shared financial information, call your bank on 159
- Forward suspicious texts to 7726 and emails to report@phishing.gov.uk

Need support?

- Victim Care Hub – free, confidential help: hampshireiowvictimcare.co.uk / 0808 178 1641
- Report anonymously: crimestoppers-uk.org / 0800 555 111
- In emergency: call 999

Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum

The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Hampshire has decreased. As of May this year, there were 1,739 children in care in total, including 161 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children under the age of 18 years. Many of these children are fleeing war-torn countries, such as Sudan and Afghanistan.

Over the past 12 months, the number of children in care in Hampshire has remained stable, with a gradual decrease in the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children [UASC]. As of June last year, a total of 275 UASC were being looked after by the council – the highest it has been. Previously the number of such children had been increasing – from 67 in 2020/2021 to 106 in 2021/2022 and 228 in 2022/2023. There has now been a decrease of 114 in the past 12 months.

Applications for Secondary School Places

Parents with children due to start secondary school next year can now apply for their child's school place, until **11:59 pm on Friday, 31 October 2025** for pupils moving up to year 7 in September 2026. To improve chances of getting into a preferred school, parents/guardians should remember to name three schools on their application and to submit it on time.

The Admissions Team work incredibly hard to meet parents' preferences as far as possible. Last year they received more than 14,000 on-time applications and of those, the team offered over 13,900 families a place at one of their three preferred choices. Parents can support this process by making sure they submit their applications on time and naming three preferences. This will give your child the best chance of being offered a place at one of your preferred schools. Some parents mistakenly believe that naming just one school will increase their child's chance of securing the place they want, but this can in fact mean they miss out on a place in a nearby school altogether, particularly in areas of high demand.

If it is not possible to offer a place at any of the named schools, the County Council will offer a place at the catchment school (if places remain) or the nearest school with available places. Assistance with transport may be available if you meet the eligibility criteria and have named your catchment school as one of your preferences. You can use the County Council's school catchment area finder - <https://maps.hants.gov.uk/SchoolCatchmentAreaFinder/> to check your catchment school.

Waiting list: If your child is not offered a place at any of the preferred schools, they will be added to a waiting list for the next available space. Spaces often become available as families move or choose different schools.

Appeals: If you are unhappy with the allocated place, you can appeal the decision. Details are shared as part of the application process.

How to apply ...

Online applications: Submit your application online at - <https://educationonlineportal.hants.gov.uk/EducationOnlinePortal/en> An electronic application form can also be requested by emailing admissions_team@hants.gov.uk. You can log back in to amend your application any time before the closing date on 31st October 2025. Remember to resubmit after making any changes.

Notification

Applicants with email address will be notified of the outcome on 2nd March 2026.

Applicants without an email address will receive a letter two to three working days later.

Local Government Reorganisation [LGR]

Following public and stakeholder engagement held this summer, the full County Council will meet on 24th September to consider final proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Cabinet is expected to confirm the final proposal on 26th September, before it is submitted to Government.

Hampshire's current proposal, developed in partnership with East Hampshire District Council, recommends creating four new unitary councils: three on the Hampshire and Solent mainland and one for the Isle of Wight.

Once the County Council's preferred option for LGR across Hampshire and the Solent area is submitted on 26th September, the Government is expected to consult the public later this year, with a final decision due in spring 2026.

We propose that Hampshire and the Solent area has four councils: three councils on the Hampshire and Solent area mainland, and a standalone Isle of Wight council.

They would be organised into the following areas:

North and Mid Hampshire

Incorporating Basingstoke and Deane, East Hampshire, Hart, Rushmoor and Winchester.

Population of around 656,000.

South-West

Incorporating Eastleigh, New Forest, Southampton, and Test Valley.

Population of around 707,000.

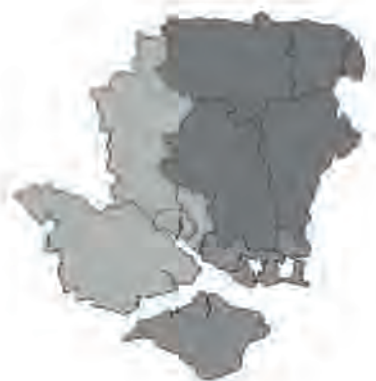
South-East

Incorporating Fareham, Gosport, Havant and Portsmouth.

Population of around 533,000.

Isle of Wight

Population of around 141,000.



Councillor Surgery

There is a Councillor Surgery on the first Saturday of every month, 10.00 am – 12 noon in The Heath Room, All Saints Church, Denmead. No appointment necessary.

Patricia Stallard

Hampshire County Councillor

Winchester Southern Parishes



www.meonvalleybus.co.uk
info@meonvalleybus.co.uk

Timetable from July 2025

Mondays West Meon to Fareham

0930	West Meon Thomas Lord PH
0933	Warnford Village Hall
0938	Exton The Shoe PH
0940	Meonstoke PO & Stores
0944	Meonstoke Pound Cottages
0951	Droxford Square
0955	Brockbridge The Hurdles
1000	Soberton Village Hall
1003	Webbs Green War Memorial
	Soberton Heath Chapel Road
1006	Pond
1008	Soberton Heath Bold Forester PH
1010	Newtown Rookesbury Hall
1015	Hundred Acres
1027	Fareham Library
1032	Fareham Station <i>Drop off only*</i>
1039	Fareham Sainsbury's
Return:	
1230	Fareham Sainsbury's
1235	Fareham Library

Wednesdays Soberton to Petersfield

Including all request stops on A32 Droxford- West Meon

0930	Soberton Village Hall
0934	Brockbridge (The Hurdles)
0939	Droxford Square
0946	Meonstoke Pound Cottages
0951	Corhampton
0954	Warnford George and Falcon
1013	Petersfield Station <i>Drop off only *</i>
1017	Petersfield Square
1022	Petersfield Tesco
Return:	
1225	Petersfield Tesco
1230	Petersfield Square

Fridays Soberton to Winchester

0930	Soberton Village Hall
0934	Brockbridge The Hurdles
0939	Droxford Square
0945	Meonstoke Pound Cottages
0949	Meonstoke PO & Stores
0951	Exton The Shoe PH
0956	Warnford Village Hall
1016	Winchester Broadway
1023	Winchester Station <i>Drop off only*</i>
1030	River Park Leisure Centre
Return	
1225	River Park Leisure Centre
1230	Winchester Broadway

No service on other days or public holidays. £6 return, £3 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.



USEFUL INFORMATION

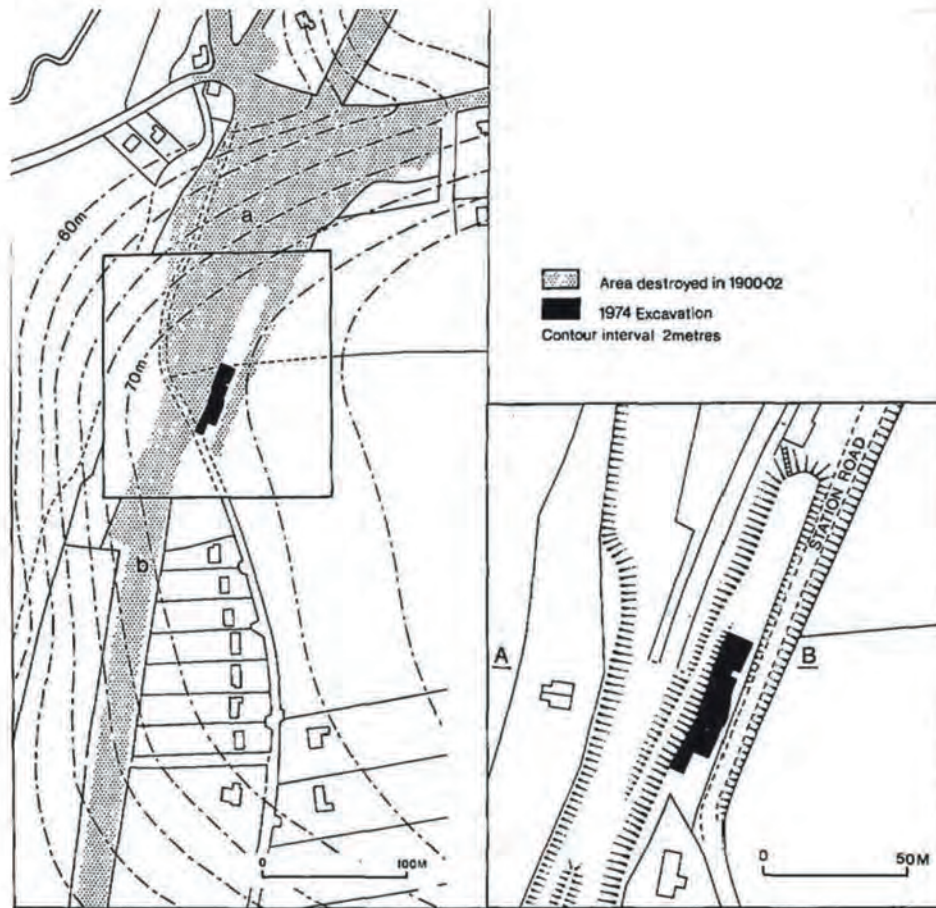
Any additions or changes, please contact the editor

USEFUL NUMBERS		
Good Neighbours Group offers transport to medical appointments (see page 5) ❖ Kate Harvey on 07843 496852 ❖ Kate Chesters on 07710 716664		
Community Support Officer Gary McCulloch ACSO		07442 156124 acso@swanmore.org.uk
Doctors Surgeries	Wickham Droxford Denmead Bishops Waltham	01329 833121 01489 877588 02392 239630 01489 892288
CAB Adviceline		0800 144 8848
Meon Valley Carers Group		01264 332297 (option 3)
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 Priority Fault Repair Scheme		0800 800 150
Home-Start		0330 124 2095
LOCAL FACILITIES		
Soberton Village Hall Booking	For SVH booking, please use e-mail address below <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
<i>guidehutsoberton@gmail.com</i>		
CHURCHES		
Newtown Church Warden	Fra Wells	01329 834130
Soberton Church Wardens	Malcolm Chapple	01489 877151
PCC Secretary(N)	Malcolm Padgett	01329 834684
Parish Secretary Contact (St Peter's)	Jackie Hunt	07940 649691
Capt. Of Bells(S)	Caroline Rogers	01489 877430
Churchyard Keeper (S)	John Lester	01489 878557
Parish Safeguarding Officers	St Peter's, Soberton Jackie Hunt	Stpc.safeguarding@gmail.com
	Holy Trinity, Newtown Caroline Barfoot	htn.safeguarding@gmail.com

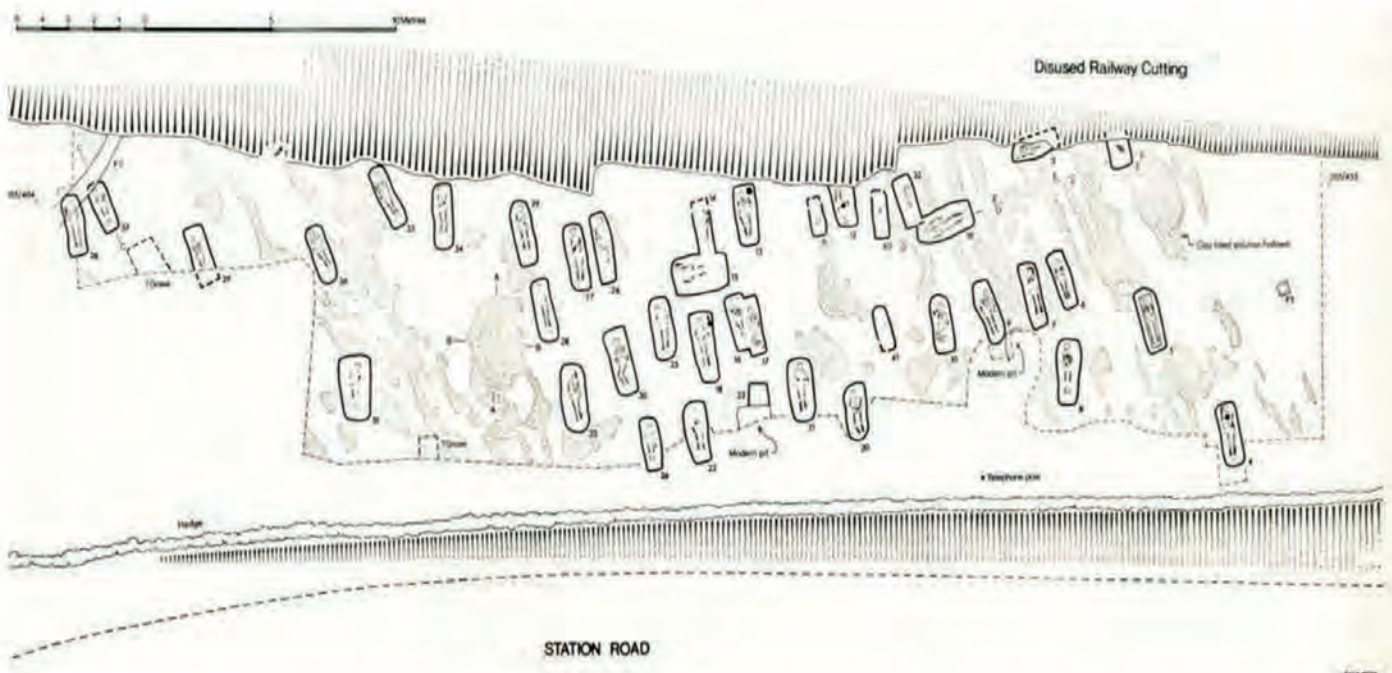
LOCAL CLUBS AND INTEREST GROUPS		
Brownies	SobertonNewtownBrownies@gmail.com	
Guides	SobertonNewtownGuides@gmail.com	
Stitch & Chatter	Louise McEwen Sandra Henderson	01489 877448 01489 877978
Local History	Lyndon Palmer	07881 991763
Soberton Utd FC	Steve Norris	07853 292881
Soberton Players	Susan Hyland	01489 878724
Table Tennis	Pete Woodacre Adrian Hunt	01489 877768 01489 878141
Ladies Group	Liz Whales	01489 877712
Conservation Group	Phil Bergin	02392 632551
Meet&Eat	Sue Musselwhite	sue@poppyhill.net
DISTRICT COUNCILLORS		
Central Meon Valley Councillors	Malcolm Wallace Danny Lee Suzanne White	See page 42 for contact details
County Councillor	Patricia Stallard	02392 251484
SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL		
<i>www.soberton-pc.gov.uk</i> <i>https://www.facebook.com/SobertonParishCouncil/</i>		
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Neil Findlay Vice-Chairman	vicechair@soberton-pc.gov.uk	
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Clerk and Proper Officer clerk@soberton-pc.gov.uk		

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

NEXT COPY DATE - 17th November 2025 (17:00)



Above - The maps show the location of the Anglo Saxon burial ground at Brockbridge, just south of Droxford station, on top of the railway embankment and adjacent to Station Road. First discovered during railway excavations in 1900, it wasn't until 1974 that an archeological dig took place, headed by Fred Aldsworth. **Below** - Site map of the dig showing graves orientated east-west. At least 41 graves were found, thought to be early post-roman, belonging to men, women and children with a wide variety of grave goods, including spears, shield bosses and jewellery. More information on page 8 of the magazine!



(from the Archives of the Soberton & Newtown Local History Society) any additional information is always welcome.
Please Contact lyndonplmr@gmail.com or petewoodacre@gmail.com.