

# Soberton & Newtown

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

February - March 2026



West Street from Church Meadow  
Cover design and photo: Jonty Sherwill

[www.sobertonchurch.org.uk](http://www.sobertonchurch.org.uk) [www.newtownchurch.org.uk](http://www.newtownchurch.org.uk)

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

For details of Benefice and other local church services, please refer to page 4

For any enquiries, please contact the following:-

### **Benefice of Soberton, Newtown and Hambleton**

The Reverend Liz Quinn

Associate Priest in the Meon Valley Parishes.

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

revliz7@icloud.com

07518 247637

### **Barn Church**

Emma Andersen, leader of Barn Church

Associate Priest in the Meon Valley Parishes [emma.barnchurch@gmail.com](mailto:emma.barnchurch@gmail.com)

### **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

Hambleton 11.00 am & 6.00 pm

## **MAGAZINE COMMITTEE & PRODUCTION TEAM**

Chairman	Perry Abbott	02392 632338	<a href="mailto:cpgabbott@hotmail.com">cpgabbott@hotmail.com</a>
Editor	Gill Gray	07711 058760	<a href="mailto:gill.hightcroft@btinternet.com">gill.hightcroft@btinternet.com</a>
Advertising	Kate Buttriss	07801 441998	<a href="mailto:kate.buttriss@gmail.com">kate.buttriss@gmail.com</a>
Circulation	Pete Woodacre	01489 877768	<a href="mailto:petewoodacre@gmail.com">petewoodacre@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Jerry Lipscombe	07899 862235	<a href="mailto:lipscoj3@gmail.com">lipscoj3@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Paula Hobbs	07469 258022	<a href="mailto:paulajhobbs@live.co.uk">paulajhobbs@live.co.uk</a>

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Please e-mail copy for the April / May magazine to  
[gill.hightcroft@btinternet.com](mailto:gill.hightcroft@btinternet.com)

**NEXT COPY DATE - 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (17:00)**

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

**Services**

**February 2026**

**March 2026**

*Holy Communion is also celebrated at Soberton at 09:30am every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday (before coffee and cake)*

*... and at Hambledon every Wednesday at 09.30.*

*Subject to change,  
sometimes at short notice*

<b>February</b>				
1 <sup>st</sup>		0800	Holy Communion	Hambledon
		1000	Holy Communion	Newtown
		1030	Short Family Service	Hambledon
8 <sup>th</sup>		1100	Holy Communion (Sunday Club)	Soberton
		1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon
15 <sup>th</sup>		1000	Holy Communion	Newtown
		1100	Morning Worship	Soberton
		1100	Service of the Word	Hambledon
		1830	Evensong	Hambledon
18 <sup>th</sup>		1900	Corhampton Ashes	Corhampton
		1930	Holy Communion and Ashes	Hambledon
22 <sup>nd</sup>		1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon
		1800	Holy Communion	Soberton
<b>March</b>				
1 <sup>st</sup>		0800	Holy Communion	Hambledon
		1000	Holy Communion	Newtown
		1030	Short Family Service	Hambledon
8 <sup>th</sup>		1100	Holy Communion (Sunday Club)	Soberton
		1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon
15 <sup>th</sup>		1100	Holy Communion / Mothering Sunday	Soberton
		1100	Service of the Word / Family Service	Hambledon
22 <sup>nd</sup>		1100	Holy Communion	Hambledon
		1800	Holy Communion	Soberton
		1830	Passiontide Service	Hambledon
29 <sup>th</sup>		1000	Holy Communion / Palm Sunday	Newtown
		1100	Holy Communion and Palm Procession	Hambledon

**EVERY Sunday, 9:30am - Soberton Guide Hut, SO32 3QH**



**BARN CHURCH**  
Meon Valley Parishes

Join us for lots of fun, faith and community, as we gather together every week for a new style of worship in the Meon Valley Parishes.

**Come as you are, all welcome**

**9:30am** Pastries, Coffee and Bouncy Castle

**10am** Gather together for a short interactive service



[@barnchurch.uk](http://@barnchurch.uk)  
[www.barnchurch.uk](http://www.barnchurch.uk)

## ***Foreword ... an introduction, and welcome, to Rachel Houlberg***

Happy new Year! My name is Rachel, I live in Hambleton and started last September training to be an LLM Reader to serve the parishes of Soberton Newtown and Hambleton. This article is some of my journey to this point.

As the old year turns into the new we often turn our minds to ways of improving ourselves. I always promise myself I will get fitter physically, take more exercise, eat less chocolate, complete dry January. However improvements can come at anytime, and my spiritual revelation and resolution to improvement started in the autumn of 2024 when I started talking to Liz about the calling I had been ignoring to LLM (Licensed Lay Ministry or Reader).

I had been encouraged to start this process during a conversation with Bishop Jonathan, I could not ignore that, so started to talk to Liz. She was amazingly supportive, encouraging and affirming of my faith. She arranged for me to talk to those in our diocese who support and select candidates both for Lay and Ordained ministry. To my surprise all those I spoke to seemed to affirm the faith Liz had perceived that I did indeed have a calling to be an LLM. In May last year I found myself with eight others from this diocese at a discernment panel for LLM training. Following successful selection, I started training at Sarum College in Salisbury in September as a trainee LLM Reader. The first weekend was disorientating. I felt a strong fear that I was an imposter and was sure others would notice, but also a stronger call that I was starting something exciting and God given that I could and would achieve to bring back to this community.

Training involves weekly online tutorials with up to 10-12 hours additional study to supplement the tutorials. Modules last for 10 weeks at the end of which we produce two assignments, for this module a theological reflection and an essay on Pastoral Care both 2500 words. We attend Saum for a weekend once a module for face to face training, this is always a highlight, a chance to meet with tutors and receive lectures as well as get together with the new friends and colleagues from across 4 dioceses. We are assigned to work within formation groups for the duration of the course. This is effectively a tutorial group a chance to learn in groups and support to each other. We also arrange a Local Learning Group, this is a group made up of parishioners that meets twice during a module to help reflect on the learning often related to our assignments and keep the training grounded in the locality. It is an opportunity to lead and facilitate a small group and to benefit from different perspectives and wisdom through the learning journey. Additionally I meet with the LLMs from this diocese also going through training, both from my cohort and the year above. This is a good forum for informal worship, conversation and support.

So having taken a large step out of my comfort zone I am enjoying the challenge of going back to college and learning something new, in the hope of bringing that learning back to the parishes and bearing fruit for the furthering of the Kingdom of God. All being well I will be licensed as a Licensed Lay Minister in June 2027.

*Rachel*

## **POP IN FOR COFFEE AND CAKE**

*at ST PETER'S CHURCH ROOM, SOBERTON*



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

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

## Pride in Newtown and Soberton Update (PiNS)

Thank you very much to the 37 donors who gave £830, a record amount, for their names to be printed in the Christmas 'card' on the back page of the Parish magazine.

Last year we spent £426.61 on a few projects. The arm on the fingerpost on Hambledon Lane was repaired, a new rowan tree was bought and planted on the junction of Ingoldfield Lane and Maybush Lane and new clips were purchased for the Soberton sign at Webbs Green, when the sign mysteriously disappeared and then reappeared, but needed to be secured back on the posts!

If anyone has any ideas of ways to enhance the look of the villages, please let us know.

Jane Masterman

jane.masterman@icloud.com



### What a great time we had at Messy Church on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January!

For the first time, Messy Church, Soberton and Newtown met on a Friday after school from 15:30 – 17:00 at Holy Trinity, Newtown.

The children arrived to a 'treasure hunt' followed by a drink and some biscuits to keep the end of week energy levels up – it worked!

The topic of this Messy Church was Epiphany, the coming of the Kings to visit the baby Jesus. Through some fun worship, the children learned about the Kings and their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

And then some crafts – making crowns, decorating crown biscuits and creating some moving Kings with paper plates. Great fun all round – the noise levels in Holy Trinity raised all our spirits!

The session was rounded off with some quiet recapping and worship followed by a yummy sit down tea for the children and cake and tea/coffee for the grown ups.

What a great time we had with parents and children alike keen to come back for the next Messy Church! Thank you all for coming!

A big thanks to the organisers and helpers – you were amazing!

Watch this space – the next Messy Church date will be announced soon!





**TWO IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!**

## **NEWTOWN CHURCH FETE**

**Saturday 23rd May 2026**  
**at MEONWOOD - 2pm**

*Fete to be opened by Commander Charles Wylie OBE*

If you are new to the village and would like to help at the fete, or would like to get involved in 2026 for the first time, we would be delighted to hear from you!

**Fete Planning Meeting**  
**Tuesday 10th February 7:30pm at Meonwood**

**Open to everyone -- all new, bright ideas welcomed!**  
**Please contact any of the Fete team or join us on 10<sup>th</sup> February!**

Stuart Doherty	07734 200144	stuartdoherty4@gmail.com
Gill Gray	07711 058760	gill.hightcroft@btinternet.com
Matt Rees	07793 219705	matthewjrees@hotmail.com
Sue Wells	01329 834130	sjwells@meonwood.co.uk
Mike Guy	07984 802635	mike.j.guy@btinternet.com
Steve Scott	07783 738655	sascott200@gmail.com

## James Stevens Curl - a long Soberton connection

Distinguished architectural historian, died aged 88.

His burial was held at St Peter's, Soberton, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

James Curl was a truly distinguished and notable architectural historian with numerous honours, who had no hesitation in strongly expressing his views. His obituary in the Times describes him as being 'untroubled by self-doubt'. He did not mince his words especially when critiquing modernism: 'Much architecture in the West, regrettably, has become empty, uncouth, trashy....and in artistic terms, worthless'.

Prof Curl was born in Belfast in 1937 where he obtained his degree, later moving to Oxford School of Architecture and throughout his working life was a prolific writer both of research articles and books, church architecture often featuring. He returned to Queen's University, Belfast as Professor of Architectural History in 2000. In 1995 with a colleague, Susan Wilson, he revised the Oxford Dictionary of Architecture, with over 6,000 entries, described as 'a considerable contribution to scholarship'. That all sounds rather serious, but he was also described as being 'tremendous fun', his 'coruscating comments' were often amusing, he dressed eccentrically, and was a bit of a gourmand – his favourite meal was, apparently, three dozen snails washed down with a bottle of red wine.

He planned his own funeral with care, his funeral stone has been carefully designed, as he often said that he wasn't going to have a modern mass-produced tombstone, free from any aesthetic merits or artistic qualities – they added 'new terrors to Death', no 'cultural atrocity' over his head!

But why was he so insistent that he be buried at St Peter's? Well, he is a descendant from Bishop Walter Currell, Bishop of Winchester in the 1640s during the Civil War; who was in his palace at Bishops Waltham when surrounded by a Parliamentary army and had to escape (it is said) secreted in a dung cart, to stay with his sister in the Manor House of Soberton. He died some 3 years later of natural causes (an achievement for Bishops at that time) and is buried in the church. There are memorials to the Currell family in the south transept at St Peter's and it is still called the Currell Chapel. So a nice touch, a distinguished church historian's final resting place being so close to his famed ancestor of over 350 years ago. Do visit the church and see the Currell memorials, most notably the fabulous Scheemaker memorial displaying the Bishop's sister's maiden name.

Duncan Colin-Jones

*Quotes taken from James's obituary in the Times.*

## Children's Sunday Club

Second Sunday of each month 11am – 12 noon

Please join us for fun, learning and friendship.

All children welcome, any age!



# EASTER WORKSHOP

Good Friday 03 April  
Holy Trinity, Newtown  
10 - 12 noon



Egg trees

Please do join us to celebrate  
Easter at our children's activity  
workshop at **Holy Trinity**

Donation of £2 welcome

More info from **Granny Hedgehogs** aka **Sue Wells**  
[sjwells@meonwood.co.uk](mailto:sjwells@meonwood.co.uk)

07850 011820

Kids under 5 must be  
accompanied by an adult



Easter Garden      Easter Frieze

## Spring into the Adventure, with Guides



Starting back after the New Year has its challenges: it's dark, mostly wet and cold! But it is also exciting! As Leaders we are excited to see which badges the Guides will choose, which adventures they will want to try out, and which games are the favourite this term!

The adventurous choices we're offering this term are: a unit Campfire, a Division Silent Disco - celebrating 100 years of 'World Thinking Day', and a national adventure in Portsmouth 'Cityscape'- where groups of girls travel round the city to predetermined locations and complete different activities.

Well, our Guides are definitely up for the challenge and have booked places for everything!

As for the Leaders, we are looking forward to the adventures, but we are also looking forward to a little treat to start the year, an afternoon tea at Foxlease Park with the other Leaders from the Division. No-one said Leaders can't have their own adventures.

Guides are Girls age 10 to 14 years and we have space for a few more. If your daughter is interested in joining us, do get in touch. We meet alternate Mondays during term time at our own Guide Hut on Soberton Recreation Ground between 6pm and 8pm. Our email is : SobertonNewtownGuides@gmail.com

What will your adventure be this Spring?

*Caroline Rogers*  
Unit Leader for Soberton & Newtown Guides

## Soberton & Newtown Local History Society



We start a brand new year of exciting talks and visits in 2026 with something for everyone. In January the Society had its' annual New Year lunch at the Lysses Hotel in Fareham, and once again, the Hotel provided a lovely meal and it was a happy, sociable occasion and well supported by the members.

Our next talk will be on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February at 2.00 p.m. given by Adam Sinnott and titled "The Swing Riots in the Meon Valley." This will be preceded by a short AGM.

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2 p.m. "Droxford Memories" by Rev. Canon Anthony Hulbert  
All meetings take place at Rookesbury Hall, Church Road, Newtown, unless stated otherwise.

Guests always welcome at £2



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AND A GOOD  
GIGGLE**

**PLEASE COME WITH YOUR  
FRIENDS TO OUR MACMILLAN  
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## Ring out the Bells!!

We are so fortunate in Soberton to be able to hear the bells as they ring for our Sunday services and special occasions.

Well, the Soberton Ringers rang out beautifully over the Christmas period. Ringing not just for Sunday service, but for the Children's Nativity Service and the midnight service for Christmas Day.



You will also hear us ringing on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at our practice night, as we develop our skills and learn new methods (or tunes, for non-ringers). Ringers from other Churches also visit at various times, more normally in the warmer months and we also host District ringing events.

As you can see Ringing is also a social occasion, an opportunity to meet many different people. And Christmas was no exception, as 30 ringers from our district met for a Christmas drinks, dinner, and a quiz, at The White Lion. A great evening, full of fun and laughter.

Ringing is not an instant art, it can take a while to learn and then a life time to master. It's great fun, challenging but very rewarding when it all goes to plan. If you are interested in seeing how we do it, do get in touch and we can arrange a short taster session.

Until next chime...

Caroline Rogers  
Tower Captain  
sobertonringers@gmail.com

## Soberton & Newtown Ladies' Group

At the December meeting we were all given some great ideas for sustainable flower arranging.

The NY party was a most convivial evening spent in the White Lion, due to the smaller number of attendees this year.

The meeting on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February, at the usual time of 8pm, will take place in St Peter's Church Room, Soberton. Natasha Solomon will be telling us about Nutritional Therapy and its advantages for our health.

On 4<sup>th</sup> March we will hear about 'Hampshire Search and Rescue – A different type of volunteering' Venue Rookesbury Hall, Newtown at 8pm.

New members are always welcome. Further details from

Liz Whales 01489 877712 lizwhales@aol.com  
Helen Stranks 01489 878270 helen.stranks@btopenworld.com

## **World Day of Prayer Service 2026**

2pm, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March

St Barnabas Church,  
Swanmore SO32 2PA

The World Day of Prayer is an International inter-church movement led by Christian women which enables us to hear the aspirations, issues and prayers of women from all the world, and we would love you to join us at this year's service.

This year's World Day of Prayer has been created by the women of Nigeria reflecting some of the geographical, political and social challenges they negotiate in their daily lives. It will travel across 120 countries beginning in Samoa before returning there 38 hours later.

Please join us for this enlightening service, followed by afternoon tea. We look forward to seeing you there. Women, men, children are all welcome.

# Ukrainian egg painting course

## Soberton, Hampshire



To be held at St. Peter's Church Rooms, Soberton, this one-day course will take place on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March, 10-5pm. You will learn the traditional art of hot wax egg painting taught by Jilly Wise who trained using this technique and has been painting eggs for many years. The cost is £70 to include all materials, tools and teaching. Tea and coffee are provided plus a light soup lunch.

To reserve your place please email Jackie Hunt: [jack@swallow2.plus.com](mailto:jack@swallow2.plus.com).

**Happy New Year to you all** in this idyllic Meon Valley setting. Just a brief update on our Spring term but first news on the close of our Autumn term. This ended with two successful Christmas church services and one wonderful Christmas fair in school.



Many parents filled the church to witness our Year 3 / 4 children present a joyous service ending in a raucous, audience participation of '12 Days of Christmas'. Back in school a week later our FODS led Christmas fair had children organising their own stalls with the school hall and classrooms packed with visitors. We raised nearly £1000 which will be used to fund enjoyable enrichment activities like author visits and Young Shakespeare Company theatre production.



This Spring term our children will be visiting the Gilbert White House study centre as part of their Geography topic – Pole to Pole. Later in the month children from across the school will be attending a classical concert in Southampton whilst learning about orchestras and associated musical instruments. Finally, around Easter we will be hosting another community Spring Dig Day (April 19<sup>th</sup>) and our Easer fair just before we break up for the Easter holidays.

I would finally like to end this communication by thanking the William Collins Trust who have supported the school children once again. This time with generously donating enough funds in order to buy 10 new iPads; charging cables and appropriate charging cabinet and protective cases for the valuable technology. This incredibly generous donation means we can replace some very old but useful IT equipment the children use everyday in their learning. This benefits all children – especially those who don't have the opportunity at home.

With best wishes

Matthew Dampier  
Headteacher

# Need Transport to Medical Appointments?

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[www.soberton-pc.gov.uk](http://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.



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# DAD'S ARMY

by JIMMY PERRY  
and DAVID CROFT

**26<sup>TH</sup> 27<sup>TH</sup> 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026**  
**SOBERTON VILLAGE HALL**

**SATURDAY NIGHT GALA**  
**“FISH & CHIPS SUPPER” SHOW**

**FOR MORE INFO & TICKETS**

**[www.sobertonplayers.co.uk](http://www.sobertonplayers.co.uk)**

**[tickets@sobertonplayers.co.uk](mailto:tickets@sobertonplayers.co.uk) | 07866 931487**

This amateur production of “Dad’s Army” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd.  
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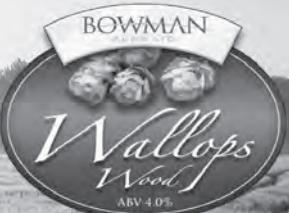


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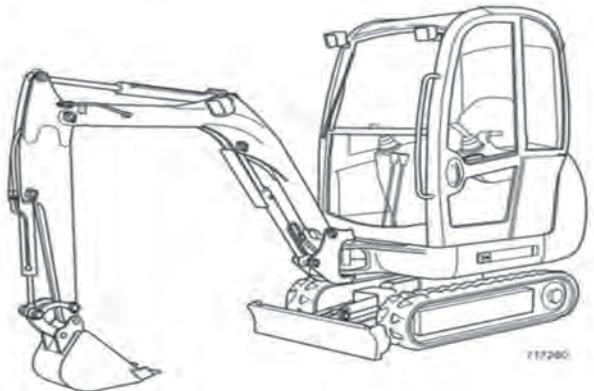
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Our vision is to bring this cherished pub back to its former glory, transforming it into a vibrant hub for the community. We plan to host events, support local businesses, and foster greater community engagement. We're working closely with our Executive 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.

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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."

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.



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# What's on

Month	Date/day	Event / group	Time	Details
February	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Stitch & Chatter	14:00	Page 47
	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup>	U3A	14:00	Page 40
	4 <sup>th</sup>	S&N Ladies Group	20:00	Page 12
	5 <sup>th</sup>	BW Photographic Society	19:30	Page 38
	10 <sup>th</sup>	Newtown Church Fete 2026 Planning Meeting	19:30	Page 7
	11 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup>	Pop in for coffee and cake at St Peter's	10:00	Page 5
	12 <sup>th</sup>	Local History Society	14:00	Page 10
	24 <sup>th</sup>	Meon Valley Carers Group	14:00	Page 45
	27 <sup>th</sup>	Macmillan Coffee Morning	10:30	Page 11
March	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Stitch & Chatter	14:00	Page 47
	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup>	U3A	14:00	Page 40
	4 <sup>th</sup>	S&N Ladies Group	20:00	Page 12
	6 <sup>th</sup>	World Day of Prayer	14:00	Page 12
	9 <sup>th</sup>	Ukrainian egg painting course	10:00	Page 13
	9 <sup>th</sup>	RBL	18:30	Page 37
	10 <sup>th</sup>	Wickham Society	19:30	Page 40
	11 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup>	Pop in for coffee and cake at St Peter's	10:00	Page 5
	12 <sup>th</sup>	Local History Society	14:00	Page 10
	16 <sup>th</sup>	COPY DATE FOR FEBRUARY / MARCH	17:00	-
	21 <sup>st</sup>	Meon Valley Garden Club Spring Show	13:30	Page 34
	24 <sup>th</sup>	Meon Valley Carers Group	14:00	Page 45
	26 <sup>th</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup> , 28 <sup>th</sup>	Dad's Army - Soberton Players	-	Page 15
	27 <sup>th</sup>	Meet&Eat	12:30	Page 47
Hold the date	3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Easter Workshop	10:00	Page 9
	7 <sup>th</sup> May	Soberton Parish Council Elections	-	Page 41
	23 <sup>rd</sup> May	Newtown Church Fete 2026	14:00	Page 7

Regular meetings/ events	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	Stitch & Chatter	14:00	Page 47
	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	Soberton & Newtown Ladies' Group	20:00	Page 12
	2 <sup>nd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Weds	Pop in for coffee and cake at St Peter's	10:00	Page 5
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday	Soberton & Newtown Local History Society	19:30	Page 10
	1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	Meon Valley U3A	14:00	Page 40
	Last Friday	Meet&Eat	12:30	Page 47

## Between Frost and Bloom

February holds the frost in her palm,  
quiet as breath on glass.

March scatters rain like seeds,  
coaxing green from the soil.

Between them,  
the earth turns over in its sleep—  
dreaming of spring.

Please e-mail copy for the April /  
May magazine to the Editor

[gill.hightcroft@btinternet.com](mailto:gill.hightcroft@btinternet.com)

**NEXT COPY DATE**  
**16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (17:00)**



# Spring Show

Where:

Meon Hall, Pound Lane  
Meonstoke, SO32 3NP.  
Admission £1.00 under 16s free

When:

Saturday 21st March  
2026 at 13.30 - 16.30

Displays of:  
Flowers, Vegetables,  
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baking

For Schedule & entry forms for adults &  
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## *In your garden ... a bumper crop – that's the tip*

Most of my January has consisted of pruning roses and soft fruits like apple and pear but now all that hard work has been completed, we are left in the hands of Mother Nature and more specifically her erratic frosts!

Most soft fruits, with the exception of figs (we'll get to that one soon) are very hardy whilst dormant over the winter months. However, in early spring -or even late winter these days – the new growth and blossom can be easily damaged by a severe frost – protection in the guise of a garden fleecing (available in most local garden centres) is recommended for up to two weeks after the emergence of flowers if said frosts threaten. Even if you can only protect a branch or two it is better than most banks have been able to achieve!

Apricots, peaches and nectarines are more abundant in the Meon Valley than you would first of imagined. Most are cordon or espalier trained to a south facing wall and produce fantastic fruits when the buds have been protected from our occasional deep frosts. Even more impressive, I am aware of a large peach tree in Corhampton which over the years I have been working in the garden, produced fist sized, juicy peaches that would rival any Mediterranean town.

One soft fruit which I have already briefly mentioned and appears in many gardens is the fig.

In all of my research over the years on various plants and practises, I have never come across one with more contradictions of how to treat it: 'hard prune in the winter months'; 'tip prune in the spring'; 'restrict the roots'; 'only play it Cliff Richard!'

The main problem occurs due to the fact that in warmer climes the fig has two fruiting seasons. The first one is in summer where a pea sized fruit has over wintered but not succumbed to frost and then been able to grow slowly and ripen in the English summer. The second season starts where the fruit begins to form in spring and develops into a green fruit but by the time it is large enough to ripen the weather has eased into autumn so it remains as a firm green fruit.

With this in mind we can now prune with discretion, the shoots of which we do not require to fruit in early to mid spring. We can then prune in summer those shoots which have produced fruit. It is quite the balancing act to ensure the plant remains compact, contained and protected at all the right times.

In March, we should hopefully be starting to have a few days that make us feel like spring is around the corner. In preparation for this we can start cutting back herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses. Once this is done, you can clearly see if they need to be divided – this is normally every three years. It is a great way to rejuvenate a border and produce additional plants for some of those empty spaces.



## **Local History ... Clues to the Past all around us**

Walking around the parish these days we are most likely to be on our guard for traffic and other hazards and not have time to stand and stare. However, a moment to pause and reflect can be very rewarding and inform us about the Soberton of bye-gone days.

The obvious clues are provided by the Council in the shape of road name signs. Station Road, Chapel Road, Forester Road for example, still have buildings which gave the name to the road in which they are situated. However, it may not be long before the Methodist Chapel, like the National School on School Hill, will no longer be obvious especially if the property has a name change.

Reminders of some of Soberton's public houses are preserved in the names of property so The Hurdles, originally known as The Station Hotel, The Falcon by the War Memorial and The Plough in Forester Road (but no longer associated with Plough Lane, (did the powers that be not know the derivation of its name?) Other connections are lost such as The Royal Oak in Liberty Road, The New Inn and The Cock and Bottle in the High Street and maybe others we do not know about.

The Old Police House on Heath Road is a reminder of the last house used by the village policeman although the policeman had been housed elsewhere within the village in earlier times. The majority of shops have become residential properties and are harder to distinguish.

Kiln Hill may not have a kiln but you may notice man's intervention on either side of the road. It is not a natural landscape, clay has been removed for brickmaking. Elsewhere in Newtown there is further evidence of brickmaking with Clamp Farm and Clamp Kiln Farm. In the northern part of the parish one can see evidence of chalk pits where chalk has been removed 'to lime' heavier ground, an early form of soil improvement.

Not all of the hollows have been made for the benefit of the local community, one large bomb crater, now a pond exists not far from West Walk car park in the forest. The large pond on the corner of Chapel Road and lesser ones near to the corners of former common land may well have been man made. In the past when estates and farms had rights to pasture animals on common land and in forests the entrances and, more importantly the exits, were often funnel shaped so that the animals could be brought together and more easily controlled. Water at these points was a necessity if the animals had been, or were about to be, driven a distance.

It is just about possible to make out the slope to the pond at the junction of Chapel Road and Horns Hill where farm carts could be backed down while containers could be filled up with water for use in the stockyard and possibly for domestic use too. Running water did not arrive until after World War Two although certain properties belonging to the Lay Family and Newtown School and Vicarage had been supplied with drinking water since the 1930's from an artesian well at Clamp Kiln Farm. Up until that time Sobertonians relied on wells and springs for drinking water.

The Meon river also was a vital resource for water, especially on the chalklands. When walking the disused railway one realises the number of bridges that had to be constructed over or under the railway line to allow access to the river. It is also possible near St. Clairs Farm to see the remains of a water wheel constructed early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to pump water up to Cott Street.

The need to transport water and other heavy loads by horse and cart presented other problems and the steepness of the hills was paramount. Going uphill was hard enough on the horse or horses but the carter or his assistant could be ready with a block of wood or stone to put behind the wheel of a laden cart. Going downhill created a different problem with the laden cart trying to overtake the horse(s). On the left hand side of Horns Hill large stones were set at intervals so that the carter could get the wheel of the cart behind the stone and give the horse(s) a rest. As the road surface has got higher so these stones have got almost lost but with careful prodding they can still be found.

The parish does not have too many pavements but a few feet can still be seen outside of Linden Villas in the High Street there only function could have been to attract possible customers to stop on a safe paved area to view the shopkeeper's window display.

Another feature still visible in places dates to the preparation for the D-Day when our roads sheltered, beneath their trees, vehicles in a variety of shapes and sizes. Tanks, however were not designed for narrow

country roads and so the roads had to be adapted for them. Consequently, at several road junctions it can still be seen that the road has been considerably widened and in places the hardstanding which replaced the original verges.

Perhaps a little harder to be seen but still visible a few years ago was evidence of former 'agricultural' practices. The Meon did have its watercress beds and its osier beds although it was always worthwhile noticing where the cattle were grazing and watering before gathering the watercress. Traditionally cattle were kept on the clay lands of the south of the village so the beds near St. Clairs Farm may have been relatively safe.

The hedgerow near St. Clairs was also one place where it was possible to find a few hops growing. Although hop growing did not appear to form an important crop in Soberton some must have been planted and used by the local small scale beer makers. Much more noticeable fifty years ago were the daffodils growing close to the hedgerows in fields which had been used by market gardeners. Daffodils provided a catch crop before the fruit was ripe for taking to the town markets and it is understood they were frequently grown on the edges of the fields where the plough turned. The Newtown School log book referred to children picking violets and flowers for market.



## **Droxford & District Branch**

**founded on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1920 as Comrades of the Great War**



On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March at 1900 in Droxford Village Hall, Major Hugh Frere-Cook, Army Intelligence Corps will present "*Cyber – the new domain in today's armed forces*". A cash bar will be available from 1830, but we are unable to offer supper on this occasion. Non-members are very welcome to attend. The talk itself is free of charge but donations to the RBL are always welcome.

From early days of telegraphy and wireless communications, the evolution of technology has brought new challenges for armed forces across the globe. In recent years, cyber has emerged as a critical and distinct domain, fundamentally altering the landscape of both military operations and national security.

Cyber warfare refers to the use of digital attacks by one nation to disrupt the computer systems of another, often with the aim of causing damage, stealing information, or influencing behaviour. Unlike traditional combat, cyber operations can be conducted remotely and anonymously, making attribution and retaliation more complex. The increasing connectivity of military infrastructure and reliance on digital communication systems have made the armed forces particularly vulnerable to cyber threats. Unlike some conventional domains, cyber operations are characterised by rapid technological change and a constantly evolving threat landscape. Armed forces must contend with sophisticated adversaries, including hostile states, criminal groups, and hacktivists. The anonymity of cyber attackers complicates attribution, making it difficult to identify the source of an attack and respond effectively. Furthermore, the interconnectivity of military and civilian systems means that vulnerabilities in one area can have cascading effects.

Modern armed forces are increasingly integrating cyber capabilities into their overall strategy. This includes investing in specialised cyber units, training personnel in digital defence, and developing doctrines that address the unique challenges of the cyber domain. Collaboration with international partners and private sector experts is also essential, given the global nature of cyber threats and the need for shared intelligence and best practices. As technology continues to advance, the role of cyber in military operations is set to grow. Artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and the proliferation of connected devices will introduce new opportunities and risks. To remain effective, armed forces must adapt quickly, embracing innovation while maintaining robust security protocols.

Hugh Frere-Cook commissioned into the British Army in 2011. He has completed two operational tours in Afghanistan and staff appointments have included 16 Air Assault Brigade and in the Ministry of Defence. He is currently assigned to the Permanent Joint Headquarters, part of Cyber & Specialist Operations Command, since September 2024, where all overseas military operations are planned and controlled. He is tasked to understand relevant global activity in the cyber and electromagnetic domain and emerging threats to communications and information security, to support the Chief of Joint Operations and forces deployed around the world.



*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](mailto:robmunroscott@aol.com) or 01489 877800. [www.soberton.org/rblweb](http://www.soberton.org/rblweb).*

## Winter on the riverbank

Even in the heart of winter, rivers, streams, and ponds are teeming with life – including with one of our most endearing and much-loved mammals, the water vole.



**Hampshire &  
Isle of Wight  
Wildlife Trust**

Known affectionately to generations as “Ratty” from *The Wind in the Willows*, water voles are Britain’s largest vole, roughly the size of a guinea pig, with a rounded body, blunt nose, small ears, and a furry tail. Their thick, chocolate-brown fur often appears almost black when wet, and their whiskered faces give them a gentle, inquisitive expression. Unlike rats, which they are often mistaken for, water voles have shorter tails, smaller ears, and a much more compact shape. They are excellent swimmers and can often be seen paddling confidently through the water or perched on the bank nibbling vegetation.

Water voles were once a common sight along riverbanks and wetlands. Sadly, habitat loss and predation by invasive mink caused numbers to plummet. However, thanks to dedicated conservation work, these charismatic creatures are slowly returning to our waterways.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is helping water voles through the Watercress & Winterbournes scheme. This partnership, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, focuses on restoring chalk streams, improving water quality, and managing riverbank vegetation to create safe habitats for water voles and other wildlife. Volunteers play a vital role in maintaining these habitats, monitoring populations, and controlling non-native predators like mink. The scheme doesn’t just benefit water voles – it supports a wide range of species, including fish, invertebrates, amphibians, and birds that rely on healthy, well-managed rivers.

Winter can be a surprisingly good season to spot them – if you know where and how to look. Even though they are less active than in spring or summer, their presence is betrayed by clear signs along the banks. Keep an eye out for neat, nibbled patches of grass with characteristic 45° angled cuts, small burrows tucked into riverbanks, and tiny droppings along the water’s edge. It’s essential to keep dogs away from the water so these sensitive mammals aren’t disturbed.

With leafless trees and shorter vegetation, riverbanks and wetland edges are more visible in winter, making it easier to spot burrows, tracks, and signs of feeding. Quiet walks along streams, ponds, and winterbournes – particularly in early morning or late afternoon – offer the best chance of glimpsing these secretive mammals. For more information, visit the Trust website: [hiwwt.org.uk/watercress-and-winterbournesabout](http://hiwwt.org.uk/watercress-and-winterbournesabout)



## Bishop's Waltham Photographic Society

If you have recently acquired a new camera or want to re-kindled 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](http://www.bishopswalthamphotosociety.co.uk) or drop an email to [info@bishopswalthamphotosociety.co.uk](mailto:info@bishopswalthamphotosociety.co.uk) for information on the dates of our meetings.

Member presentation – Paul Harknett  
Panama wildlife and a taste of Venice

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 7:30pm

“The rainforest wildlife in Panama with some images of a recent visit to Venice”



Our own Paul Harknett will give a presentation of his photographs of the rainforest wildlife in Panama. As a contrast, Paul will also conclude with a selection of images from a recent visit to Venice.

St Peter's Church Hall, Free Street, Bishop's Waltham, SO32 1EE  
Non-members are welcome (entry fee £5).

[www.bishopswalthamphotosociety.co.uk](http://www.bishopswalthamphotosociety.co.uk)

Bishop's Waltham Photographic Society

# Our drinking water needs you!

New Year bulletin from Newtown & Soberton Community and Flood Action Group

Protecting our local water quality starts at home and thanks to community action surface water quality has improved in areas of Soberton Parish with less sewage evident in ditches – but even so there will be hotspots that still need attention.

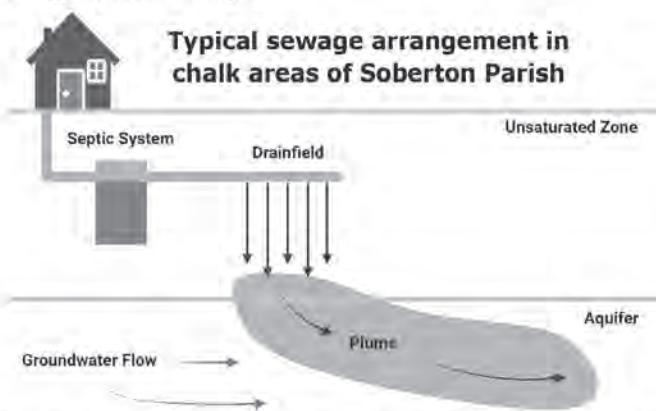
## How Water Moves Through Our Parish

Surface water from our roads and in our ditches drains to the River Meon or the River Wallington, and then onward to the Solent.

Soberton Heath and Newtown sit on clay, where more surface water flows directly into local watercourses. By contrast Soberton village and the surrounding area sit on chalk subsoil with high infiltration, effectively a big sponge and it's also where drinking water is abstracted.

Because of this, what goes down our drains matters because poor sewage and chemical management can pollute groundwater and our rivers. Old style soakaways, as illustrated below, may be illegal in some locations so check with the Environment Agency (EA) that your sewage system is legal.

### Typical sewage arrangement in chalk areas of Soberton Parish



Aquifers are undergoing significant changes due to climate change and overuse, affecting groundwater levels and recharge rates. Changing rainfall patterns, heavier rainfall events, fewer low-intensity rains, and more frequent droughts are reducing groundwater recharge with over-abstraction leading to subsidence and contamination of freshwater wells. These trends threaten the ecosystems that depend on groundwater, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable water management. We can all do our bit to reduce pollution - find out whether your property lies above a chalk aquifer or within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone - check DEFRA MAGIC maps: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Produced by the Newtown & Soberton Community and Flood Action Group with Environment Agency guidance. Please note that this message is provided as signposting information only and should not be used as a substitute for professional advice, which should be sought where appropriate. N&SCG makes no warranty of any kind, expressed or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability or availability with respect to the information contained, for any purpose. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.

## What goes down your drain matters - Do's and Don'ts - some Quick Reminders

### Do:

- Use non-biological, low-phosphate products
- Spread washing through the week
- Flush only toilet paper
- Service and empty systems as required

### Don't:

- Flush wipes, sanitary products, nappies or cotton wool
- Use antibacterial or harsh chemical cleaners
- Dispose of fats, oils, medicines or chemicals down drains
- Discharge large volumes of water at once

## Small changes at home make a big difference - use less water:

- Don't leave taps running
- Use full loads in washing machines and dishwashers
- Reduce water used for cleaning
- Consider buying second-hand or upcycling - most water use is linked to producing new goods
- Report water main leaks—always

### A Sobering Fact:

Every 10 days our parish uses and discharges the equivalent of an Olympic-sized swimming pool of water.

### Solutions:

For areas built on clay soil and with non-soakaway closed cesspits, many households have invested in a sewage treatment plant or retrofit cesspit system. These pumped air systems eject clear water but ideally need a running watercourse to carry it to a river catchment - seek advice from the EA. While requiring occasional desludging, regular annual maintenance is essential, plus a strict regime of what not to put into it - see above.

Working together we can all reduce water usage, cut pollution in our rivers and ditches, and protect nature.

*If a ditch near you is smelling of sewage then something is wrong - talk to your neighbours to identify the problem and to agree a solution*



All previous NEWSCAG newsletters are available online at: <https://newtownsobertoncommunitygroup.wordpress.com/> or scan the QR Code above



Hello again.

Meon Valley U3A is delighted to offer you once more lectures for February and March 2026. We meet every first and third Tuesday at 2pm

On 3/2 Allan Abbott is talking about the **Mayas** after his recent trip to explore their history.

On 17/2 Professor Duncan Colin - Jones will be talking about **the history around the Solent**.

On 3/3/26 Geoff Watts lectures on **William Cobbett's Botley**. Geoff is an experienced lecturer with the ability to talk for one hour without notes!

Lastly we offer 17/3/26 Alan Matlock talking on **Building Spitfires without a factory**. This lecture covers the fascinating history of wartime Southampton.

Please note that we have changed our venue to **Our Lady Queen of Apostles Church Hall at Martin Street Bishops Waltham SO32 1DN**.

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. Do come along, please.

Lyndon (programme organiser)

Contact-07881991763

Or [lyndonplmr@gmail.com](mailto:lyndonplmr@gmail.com)

Web site-: [southeast.u3asite.uk](http://southeast.u3asite.uk)



## Wickham Society Spring Programme 2026

Meetings are held at the Wickham Community Centre starting at 7.30 pm.

Membership is £8 per annum or £2.50 for an occasional visitor. New members and visitors are always welcome.

**10 March 2026**

**Hampshire Search and Rescue**

A voluntary organisation that supports the police to search for vulnerable missing people

Trevor Vidler, Vice Chair

**14 April 2026**

**Wickham in Bloom**

Learn how our entry achieved Gold in 2025 and the plans for 2026!

Heather Reid,

Chair of Wickham in Bloom

**12 May 2026**

**Wyches Vineyard**

Hear about the rewards and challenges of running a local vineyard

Tony Burton,

Director of Wyches Vineyard

For more information visit our website or contact

[wendy.greenish@gmail.com](mailto:wendy.greenish@gmail.com) or 01329 833583

[www.wickhamsociety.org.uk](http://www.wickhamsociety.org.uk)

# SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL *Chairman's notes*

Follow us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SobertonParishCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/SobertonParishCouncil)  
Website - [www.soberton-pc.gov.uk](http://www.soberton-pc.gov.uk)



## Mayoral Elections and Local Government Reorganisation

The local government elections, including those for Soberton Parish Council, will be held on 7th May 2026. These elections will not include the election of a Mayor for Hampshire which has been delayed to May 2027.

**Local Government Reorganisation:** proposals by Hampshire County Council, the District Councils and Unitary Authorities across Hampshire have been submitted to central Government. There was a further agency consultation (this includes from the Parish Council) during December 25 /January 26. The decision as to how Hampshire will be divided and governed will be made by March/April 2026 by central Government. The new authorities will hold elections in May 2027 with the new authorities shadowing the existing District Councils/Unitary Authorities until April 2028 when the new authorities will take over all services (when the current District Councils /Unitary Authorities will cease to exist). At present these proposals do not impact Parish Councils.

## Soberton Parish Council Elections 7th May 2026

It is important that the Parish Council (PC) evolves and attracts new councillors. If you live or work in Soberton Parish (or live within three miles of the parish boundary) and are of voting age you may complete a nomination form. Please contact Cheryl Gosling the parish clerk ([clerk@soberton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@soberton-pc.gov.uk)) who will have the nomination papers for distribution in February/March '26. By being a parish councillor you help decide on the priorities and policies of the PC, how we distribute funds (small grants), oversee the maintenance of our open spaces, comment on planning applications and plenty more. The PC has a number of functional duties and in addition can also be an extremely effective pressure group.

The Parish Council meets once a month on a Tuesday evening (except August), alternating between Rookesbury Hall and Soberton Village Hall. If you are interested please speak to the Parish Clerk or a councillor. It is important to have more nominations than seats available on the PC as this will generate an election. This allows residents through the ballot box to choose who represents them as a Parish Councillor.

The Parish of Soberton is divided into two polling areas:

- XU Soberton (Newtown) which elects 8 parish councillors. It comprises the central and southern part of the Parish of Soberton including High Street Soberton, Webbs Green, Selworth Lane and Tapland's Corner; Soberton Heath which includes Maybush Lane, Chapel Road, Heath Road, Forester Road; Newtown which includes Liberty Road, Church Road, Lodge Hill, Ingoldfield Lane and Dradfield Lane; plus other areas such as Martins Corner, One Hundred Acres, Hoe Gate and Kingsmead.
- XT Soberton (Soberton) elects 3 parish councillors. This area comprises the northern part of the Parish of Soberton which includes West Street, Long Road, School Hill and Station Road, plus Brockbridge, Wallops Wood and Grenville.

For clarity, the polling boundary does not follow the National Park boundary.

## CIL applications from SDNPA

Two applications for CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds have been made to the South Downs National Park Authority. The trustees of Soberton Village Hall have applied for funds to install Solar Panels with Battery storage and the PC has applied for funds to upgrade the areas of the recreation ground outside the football pitch to including an all weather circular path and add a young children's (3-13 years old) play area, and other items such as seats, picnic tables etc. The online survey issued in December 2025 will guide decisions as to the infrastructure that will be delivered at the Recreation Ground. Both applications will be considered by the National Park Authority in the spring.

## Drains and Watercourses

Road drainage is generally dealt with across the Parish by Hampshire Highways, all other drainage albeit foul or surface water is the responsibility of the land owner/ tenant. It is incumbent on us all to allow free drainage across our land. There are many watercourses in the Parish and any blockages may effect others upstream. It is therefore important that water flows freely. In many cases this includes the ditches adjacent to roads and lanes where blockages can occur, particularly where driveways and tracks cross roadside ditches. If you are impacted by a blocked drain Hampshire County Council's Flood and Water management team can assist and can be contacted via the parish clerk.

*John Hyland  
Chairman  
[chair@soberton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:chair@soberton-pc.gov.uk)*

# Local Democracy at a Crossroads: What Local Government Reorganisation Could Mean?

Danny, Malcom and Suzanne

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is the Government-led process of replacing the current mix of councils with fewer, larger unitary authorities. Alongside this, a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) is a new regional body led by an elected Mayor, taking on some strategic powers such as transport and economic development.

As LGR moves from theory to reality, it is worth considering what this may mean for Central Meon Valley settlements. Scepticism is not a refusal to modernise; there are legitimate questions: who benefits from change, and who might be left carrying unintended costs?

Local democracy has long depended on deep local knowledge. District councillors know their patches — flooding lanes, pressured land and planning issues, and the subtle social geography of village life. LGR, with fewer councillors covering much larger areas, risks weakening that connection. More services delivered at scale, and more decisions taken further away, could mean less direct representation and a reduced sense of place.

There are potential benefits. Larger unitary authorities may be better placed to tackle challenges that ignore parish boundaries: climate and nature resilience, infrastructure and housing delivery, and adult and children's social care. An MCCA could also bring strategic focus on "big ticket" priorities such as transport, skills, and investment. With local government finances under sustained pressure, consolidation may help protect essential services that might otherwise be cut.

The challenge is ensuring that efficiency does not come at the expense of local voice. Continuity of representation will change. How democratic engagement at parish level is strengthened — rather than sidelined — remains an open question. Will parish councils become more influential partners in shaping place, or will they be left managing rising expectations with fewer levers and limited support?

Another tension lies in alignment. District priorities rooted in local character will need to be merged with wider unitary agendas covering larger and more diverse areas. At the same time, parish-level concerns must still cut through and influence decisions at scale. A "One District" mindset does not automatically become a "One Unitary" community unless relationships, trust and communication are actively maintained.

This also lands on residents. Digital platforms, online consultations, and automated services can be convenient and empowering, but they can exclude those who are less confident online. Technology (including AI) may help translate local insight into large-scale decision-making — or it may further distance power from people if transparency and accountability are weak. Supporting the vulnerable, elderly and digitally excluded will be a critical test of success.

Your District Councillors will closely scrutinise the LGR process as it begins in 2026, including the first Programme Board in February, ahead of the Government's March decision on the LGR model to be implemented across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight by May 2028. An MCCA will be implemented at the same time.

LGR is not just an administrative exercise. It is a test of whether we can embrace change while keeping democracy rooted in place. Asking tough questions now is not resisting progress — it is how we make sure progress works for our communities.



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



## Help for Adults to Live Safely at Home

Hampshire County Council is caring for more adults than ever before in the comfort of their own homes, enabling people to live independently at home for longer. According to latest figures, over 40,000 residents in Hampshire now benefit from a range of tailored support – from telecare to Meals on Wheels, and from respite care to help recovering following a stay in hospital.

Some of the services that are making a real difference to achieving these aims are: Technology Enabled Care (TEC) – Hampshire is leading the way in care innovation. From falls detectors and GPS trackers to smart speakers, TEC helps people live safely at home. Over 14,300 residents now use TEC, and more than 47,000 have benefited over the past 12 years, making Hampshire one of the UK's largest providers

Meals on Wheels - delivering 120,000 meals annually, combining nutritious food with welfare checks to help prevent hospital admissions and reduce reliance on carers

Carers Support Service – nearly 6,000 referrals in nine months, offering vital help to those caring for loved ones.

Occupational therapy and reablement – with a 99% satisfaction rate these services help people regain independence and reduce longer term social care costs



Extra Care – 974 self-contained apartments designed to support independent living whilst offering the security of care and support on-site, and reducing the need for more expensive residential care

Over 125 Fall Prevention Classes are delivered every week, helping to prevent slips, trips, and falls.

For anyone starting to plan for later life, a good place to start is Connect to Support Hampshire

<https://www.connecttosupporthampshire.org.uk/> the County Council's online hub for advice and local resources. With over 425,000 visits to the website last year, it is the go-to place for information about staying independent and finding support in your community.

## Connect Winchester

Connect is a Community Transport scheme that is here for you when traditional buses are not viable due to mobility issues or the bus stop is just too far away.

- **Your choice for pick-up and drop-off** – We can come and get you from home or your chosen pick-up spot and take you where you need to go.
- **Fully accessible** – All our vehicles are wheelchair accessible. Need any assistance? Our safety-trained drivers are ready to help you board and with anything else you need on your journey.
- **An affordable option** – Our fares are similar to local bus services and a lot cheaper than taking a taxi.
- **Helpers ride for free** – Let us know when you register if you need to bring an essential companion with you.



The Winchester Connect service provides travel on weekdays 9.15 am to 2.45 pm. £9.00 per return journey.

The central urban Winchester area is covered Monday to Friday and the outer rural Winchester areas are serviced on the schedule below.

## Rural Winchester Operating Schedule

**Thursdays** – Bishops Waltham Ward, Whiteley & Shedfield Wards and Swanmore & Newtown Area into Fareham Town Centre.

**Fridays** – Southwick & Wickham Ward, Denmead Ward and Droxford, Soberton & Hambleton into Fareham Town Centre.

Registration and Bookings - the office team is here to help you register and book your journey. Simply contact them and they can send you a registration form, or you can download the Registration Form at -  
<https://www.cfirst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Connect-Membership-Form-2024.pdf>

Get in touch with them for registration, bookings, and enquiries using the details below:

Email: [transportaroundwinchester@cfirst.org.uk](mailto:transportaroundwinchester@cfirst.org.uk)

Telephone: 01962 852602

Address: Connect Winchester, Upper Parking Level, The Brooks Shopping Centre, Winchester SO23 8QY

Borrow a blood pressure monitor from your local library for free. Hampshire residents can now borrow a blood pressure monitor from their local library alongside books and magazines. It is a simple, no-cost way to stay informed about your health and gives you the opportunity to measure your blood pressure in the comfort of your own home.

High blood pressure (or hypertension) affects more than one in four adults and often goes unnoticed, yet can lead to serious health issues such as strokes, heart attacks and kidney disease. By knowing your numbers, you can take the necessary steps to maintain or improve your health.

#### How it works

- Join your local library for free, either online or in Branch.
- Borrow a monitor for up to 14 days at a time, available on a first-come-first-served basis.
- Follow the easy-to-understand instructions included with each device.
- Return the monitor when your loan period ends.



With each blood pressure monitor there is a handy user guide which explains how to use it, as well as how to understand the results.

#### Support for Parents and Babies

Your local library is a hub of support for new parents and babies during their first twelve months and beyond. There are free drop-in sessions which are perfect for parents and carers with newborn babies. You will meet other parents of babies (up to crawling age) and support each other as your children grow. There will also be a range of sensory equipment to explore with your baby.



#### Citizens Advice at Waterlooville Library - Every Wednesday 1 pm to 3 pm

Citizens Advice volunteers are there for you every Wednesday to try and help you with any legal, consumer, housing, or other issues you might be facing. No need to book, just drop in. There are also many Clubs eg Whist, Scrabble, Needlcraft, Chat About and Health Wellbeing Clubs.

#### Home Library Service

If you can't get to the library due to ill-health, disability or caring responsibilities the library can come to you. We can arrange for you to have your library books delivered to your home on a regular basis. We offer books in standard and large print and also have a wide range of audio books in different formats. If you would like to borrow a particular title from Hampshire's stock, we can get it for you.

*This service is free.*

After you have completed the enquiry form we will contact you by phone or email to assess your eligibility. We deliver the service through a team of Library volunteers. We will match you with someone and make them aware of what you like to read. They will visit you and exchange the items you have borrowed usually at least once every 4 weeks. Visit <https://www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/services/access-for-all/homelibraryservice> for more information.

#### Discounts on Reusable Products

As part of the fight to reduce single use plastic in the county, Hampshire County Council, in partnership with Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils, has worked with suppliers to provide residents with a minimum discount of 15% on purchases of reusable nappies, period and incontinence products with a range of suppliers.



For more information see <https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/smartliving/discounts-on-reusable-products>

#### Unwanted junk mail

Direct advertising mail can be a great way to find out about special offers, but if you would like to reduce the amount you receive, there are a couple of services which can help you.

- Royal Mail's Opt-Out Service - <https://help.royalmail.com/personal/s/article/How-to-opt-out-of-advertising-mail> - stops all unaddressed mail being delivered to you. Please note that these services will not stop mail addressed to "The Occupier", mail from companies you have previously done business with, or information from central or local government bodies.
- The Mail Preference Service - <https://www.mpsonline.org.uk/> - lets you choose which companies can contact you through addressed mail.
- Avoid generating unwanted mail by checking small print carefully and not inadvertently opting to add your name to any 'third party' mailing lists when filling in forms or making online purchases.
- Your local council - <https://www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office> - holds two versions of the electoral register – a compulsory register which is used for polling, and an edited version. The edited register is available for purchase by mailing companies, but you can choose not to be on it. If you don't want your details to appear on the edited register, you must tick the box on the voter registration form to be excluded.
- You can print your own - <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/waste/No-Junk-Mail.pdf> - 'No Junk Mail' stickers.
- Citizens Advice has more information on how to reduce the amount of junk mail you receive - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/post-and-parcels/stop-getting-junk-mail/>

## Countryside Researcher

Looking to take on a volunteering job that's a little different. Have you thought about becoming a Countryside Researcher for Hampshire County Council? The purpose of this role is to carry out research into the social and natural history connected to all of HCC's countryside.

Typical tasks could include

- Research into the social history
- Recording people's stories
- Research into the natural history
- Going through and organising collected history

Training - No previous experience is needed. Existing volunteers and staff can give training on surveys and research. See - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/jobs/volunteering/volunteeringopportunities/researcher>

And finally, don't forget that I hold surgery on the first Saturday of every month, 10.00 am – 12 noon, The Heath Room, All Saints Church, Denmead. No appointment necessary.

Patricia Stallard

Hampshire County Councillor

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

[patricia.stallard@hants.gov.uk](mailto:patricia.stallard@hants.gov.uk)



## MEON VALLEY LIONS CLUB

### Santa out and about in the Meon Valley

The run-up to Christmas has always been a period when the Lions are extremely busy, whether it be fundraising with our Santa Claus trips through the local villages or distributing charity to those in need in the local community.

Our Christmas collections with Santa out in his new sleigh, started in earnest in December - thanks for ALL your donations, it makes a big difference to people's lives in the Meon Valley.

In addition to helping Santa with his Sleigh the minibus has been busy taking revellers back and forth to their various Christmas celebrations relatives attending the Early Birds Pre-School in Newtown.

### Supporting the unsung heroes of the Meon Valley

The Food Bank are some of the unsung heroes in our area providing essential help when people need it, often when they have nowhere else to turn. We were proud to provide them with boxes of Chocolates to give to local people with a note from the Club asking that if anyone needs help, they should get in touch.

Meon Valley Lions Club, following consultation with Age Concern, provided hampers to local needy residents. It was our great pleasure to give just a little Christmas cheer to the loneliest and financially pressed residents of our area.

As you can imagine these hampers are well received and make a huge difference, especially at this time of year; without the support of the Lions and all the local people who support us we wouldn't be able to do this so we would like to say a special thank you to everyone for the generous support throughout the year.

## Meon Valley Carers Group

For carers of someone with Dementia

Receive support, information and signposting

Meet and talk to others carers in similar situations

4th Tuesday of each month 2pm - 4pm

at The Paterson Centre, Church Road, Swanmore, SO32 2PA

The programme for these meetings is varied with speakers ranging from necessary, interesting, factual information to more lighthearted subjects.

Built into the group meetings are arts and crafts, musical afternoons and games suitable for those living with Dementia.



You will be given a  
warm welcome!



### Tea coffee and biscuits provided

Free parking in the car park opposite the Paterson Centre

For more information, please contact

Allison McNally

tel: 07771 895370

e-mail: [allison.mcnamara1968@gmail.com](mailto:allison.mcnamara1968@gmail.com)



[www.meonvalleybus.co.uk](http://www.meonvalleybus.co.uk)  
[info@meonvalleybus.co.uk](mailto: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
1006	Soberton Heath Chapel Road 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			LOCAL CLUBS AND INTEREST GROUPS				
<b>Good Neighbours Group</b> offers transport to medical appointments (see page 14) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Kate Harvey on 07843 496852</li> <li>❖ Kate Chesters on 07710 716664</li> </ul>			<b>Brownies</b>	SobertonNewtownBrownies@gmail.com			
<b>Community Support Officer</b> Gary McCulloch ACSO			<b>Guides</b>	SobertonNewtownGuides@gmail.com			
<b>Doctors Surgeries</b>	Wickham Droxford Denmead Bishops Waltham	01329 833121 01489 877588 02392 239630 01489 892288	<b>Stitch &amp; Chatter</b>	Louise McEwen Sandra Henderson	01489 877448 01489 877978		
<b>CAB Adviceline</b>		0800 144 8848	<b>Local History</b>	Lyndon Palmer	07881 991763		
<b>Meon Valley Carers Group</b>		01264 332297 (option 3)	<b>Soberton Utd FC</b>	Steve Norris	07853 292881		
<b>Age UK Advice Line</b>		0800 678 1602	<b>Soberton Players</b>	Susan Hyland	01489 878724		
National Gas Emergency National Power Cut Helpline Portsmouth Water emergency line Southern Water emergency line BT Priority Fault Repair Scheme Home-Start		0800 111 999 105 02392 477 999 0330 303 0368 0800 800 150 0330 124 2095	<b>Table Tennis</b>	Pete Woodacre Adrian Hunt	01489 877768 01489 878141		
<b>LOCAL FACILITIES</b>			<b>Ladies Group</b>	Liz Whales	01489 877712		
<b>Soberton Village Hall Booking</b>	For SVH booking, please use e-mail address below		<b>Conservation Group</b>	Phil Bergin	02392 632551		
	<a href="mailto:sobertonvillagehall@googlemail.com">sobertonvillagehall@googlemail.com</a> <a href="http://www.sobertonvillagehall.co.uk">www.sobertonvillagehall.co.uk</a>		<b>Meet&amp;Eat</b>	Sue Musselwhite	<a href="mailto:sue@poppyhill.net">sue@poppyhill.net</a>		
<b>Rookesbury Hall Booking</b>	Jenny Doney	01329 834392	<b>DISTRICT COUNCILLORS</b>				
	<a href="mailto:Bookings@rookesburyhall.co.uk">Bookings@rookesburyhall.co.uk</a>		<b>Central Meon Valley Councillors</b>	Malcolm Wallace Danny Lee Suzanne White	See page 42 for contact details		
<b>Guide Hut Booking</b>	Caroline Rogers	01489 877430	<b>County Councillor</b>	Patricia Stallard	02392 251484		
	<a href="mailto:guidehut@soberton@gmail.com">guidehut@soberton@gmail.com</a>		<b>SOBERTON PARISH COUNCIL</b>				
<b>CHURCHES</b>			<a href="http://www.soberton-pc.gov.uk">www.soberton-pc.gov.uk</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/SobertonParishCouncil/">https://www.facebook.com/SobertonParishCouncil/</a>				
<b>Newtown Church Warden</b>	Fra Wells	01329 834130	<b>John Hyland Chairman</b>	<a href="mailto:chair@soberton-pc.gov.uk">chair@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Soberton Church Wardens</b>	Malcolm Chapple	01489 877151	<b>Neil Findlay Vice-Chairman</b>	<a href="mailto:vicechair@soberton-pc.gov.uk">vicechair@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
<b>PCC Secretary(N)</b>	Malcolm Padgett	01329 834684	<b>David Cleeve</b>	<a href="mailto:Cllrcleeve@soberton-pc.gov.uk">Cllrcleeve@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Parish Secretary Contact (St Peter's)</b>	Jackie Hunt	07940 649691	<b>Sam Marland</b>	<a href="mailto:Cllrmarland@soberton-pc.gov.uk">Cllrmarland@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Capt. Of Bells(S)</b>	Caroline Rogers	01489 877430	<b>Paul Henderson</b>	<a href="mailto:Cllrhenderson@soberton-pc.gov.uk">Cllrhenderson@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Churchyard Keeper (S)</b>	John Lester	01489 878557	<b>John Russell-Smith</b>	<a href="mailto:Cllrrussell-smith@soberton-pc.gov.uk">Cllrrussell-smith@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Parish Safeguarding Officers</b>	St Peter's, Soberton Jackie Hunt	Stpc.safeguarding@gmail.com	<b>Jonty Sherwill</b>	<a href="mailto:Cllrsherwill@soberton-pc.gov.uk">Cllrsherwill@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
	Holy Trinity, Newtown Caroline Barfoot	htn.safeguarding@gmail.com	<b>Vicki Weston</b>	<a href="mailto:Cllrweston@soberton-pc.gov.uk">Cllrweston@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
			<b>David Buttriss</b>	<a href="mailto:Cllrbuttriss@soberton-pc.gov.uk">Cllrbuttriss@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
			<b>Kate Buttriss</b>	<a href="mailto:Cllrkbuttriss@soberton-pc.gov.uk">Cllrkbuttriss@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
			<b>Carol Williams</b>	<a href="mailto:Cllrwilliams@soberton-pc.gov.uk">Cllrwilliams@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>			
			<b>Clerk and Proper Officer</b>				
			<a href="mailto:clerk@soberton-pc.gov.uk">clerk@soberton-pc.gov.uk</a>				

Please e-mail copy for the April / May magazine to  
[gill.hightcroft@btinternet.com](mailto:gill.hightcroft@btinternet.com)

**NEXT COPY DATE - 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (17:00)**



The wedding of Philippa of Lancaster and John I of Portugal

Above -The Newport family were Lords of the Manor of Soberton in the 15C & 16C and played an important part in the development of the village. The Manor was leased to Richard Newport by Beaulieu Abbey in 1411. Richard had been highly thought of in Royal circles and was charged with escorting John of Gaunt's daughter to Portugal to marry King John of Portugal in 1387 (above) Below - the Newport tomb in the Lady Chapel of St Peter's (Curll Chapel) The second Richard Newport was a lawyer employed as a Royal servant, recommended by Bishop Beaufort, whose stained glass coat of arms can be seen in the chancel. His son, John Newport, was Lord of the Manor 1477 - 1521 but died childless. He built today's Church Tower and donated 2 church bells which are still rung today!



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