

# THE WATERSHED MAGAZINE



**ST PETER'S CHURCH, RODMARTON**

**MARCH 2026**

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841462

*The Thameshead Benefice*

*St. Matthew, Coates: All Saints, Kemble: St. Michael and All Angels, Poole Keynes: St. Kenelm, Sapperton with St. Luke, Frampton Mansell: St. Peter, Rodmarton with St. Osmund, Tarlton: All Saints, Somerford Keynes with All Saints, Shorncliffe*

# PARISH NEWS

## FORTHCOMING SERVICES IN THE BENEFICE

### **1 March Second Sunday in Lent**

- |       |                  |   |
|-------|------------------|---|
| 9.30  | Coates           | Morning Prayer                                |
| 10.00 | Kemble           | Morning Prayer with Source Seekers (streamed) |
| 10.00 | Poole Keynes     | Morning Prayer                                |
| 11.00 | Frampton Mansell | Holy Communion                                |
| 11.00 | Rodmarton        | Morning Prayer                                |
| 11.00 | Somerford Keynes | Morning Prayer                                |

### **8 March Third Sunday in Lent**

- |       |              |                         |
|-------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 10.00 | Poole Keynes | Benefice Holy Communion |
| 11.00 | Rodmarton    | Morning Prayer          |

### **15 March Mothering Sunday**

- |       |                  |                          |
|-------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 9.30  | Coates           | Morning Prayer           |
| 10.00 | Kemble           | Morning Source – all age |
| 10.00 | Poole Keynes     | Morning Prayer           |
| 11.00 | Frampton Mansell | Morning Prayer           |
| 11.00 | Rodmarton        | Holy Communion           |
| 11.00 | Somerford Keynes | Morning Prayer           |

### **16 March**

- |       |        |  |
|-------|--------|--|
| 19.00 | Kemble | Licensing service for Rev Dr Steve Bullock |
|-------|--------|--|

### **22 March Fifth Sunday in Lent**

- |       |                  |                           |
|-------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 08.00 | Tarlton          | Holy Communion BCP        |
| 10.00 | Frampton Mansell | Combined Benefice Service |
| 18.00 | Rodmarton        | Evening Prayer            |

### **29 March Palm Sunday**

- |       |           |  |
|-------|-----------|--|
| 9.45  | Sapperton | Benefice Palm Sunday walk ending with a short service at St Luke's, Frampton Mansell |
| 11.00 | Rodmarton | Liturgy of Palms Procession (from village hall)                                      |

**Wild, Messy and Church**  
**Good Friday**  
**Friday 3 April 2pm**  
**All Saints Church, Somerford Keynes**



**Fun, games, craft, refreshments and worship  
both indoors and outdoors for everyone**

Please contact Liz Collins for further details

[e.collins@farming.co.uk](mailto:e.collins@farming.co.uk)

07774104990

**Bringing the light and joy of Christ into our communities;  
that all may flourish**



# O TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD

## PSALM 34: 8

Our taste buds apparently change every 7 years, so foods that we once disliked may one day become our favourite thing to eat!

Many of us though, insist we don't like something (and not just food) without ever trying it. I wonder why that is – what are we afraid of?

Psalm 34 is an invitation by David for us to personally experience God's goodness.

Tasting and seeing the Lord's goodness is learning to trust Him, love Him, seek Him, and look to Him for guidance, protection, and provision.

David knows by experience that those with faith are blessed by God, and he concludes verse 8 with the words "blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."

During Lent, we are encouraged to focus on prayer, self-discipline, self-reflection or serving others as we prepare for Easter, remembering Jesus' time in the desert.

It may not seem the time to 'taste and see' if we are giving up chocolate or other luxuries, but if we take up something instead – read our Bibles, spend more time in conversation with God (prayer) or try out some of the Lent groups or services (details on the website or in the magazines) we may find that we do indeed taste God's goodness for ourselves.

In the Thameshead Benefice we are blessed with having a wide range of different worshipping styles – from the formal Prayer Book style services to the very informal café church style and most things in between.

If you haven't been to church for a while – or perhaps you've never been to a service – why not 'taste and see'. Perhaps there is a worshipping style that you have never experienced (and you think you won't like!) – why not go along and see for yourself – you never know, your taste buds may have changed!

God is faithful and once we have a taste of His goodness, we will want more of it.

With love and prayers

Liz

(Licensed Lay Reader)

# NEWS FROM COATES

## Coffee, Cake & Chat



**“Delicious sweet & savoury home-bakes, proper coffee & a selection of teas at this community event”**

**Gluten-free & decaf options available.**

**10.30am - 12.00pm Tuesday 17 March**

**3rd Tuesday of every month @ Coates Village Hall**

**Choice of 2 home bakes & bottomless tea/  
coffee £5**

**Bottomless tea/coffee £2**

**Well behaved dogs welcome.**

**Contact us 07794 678 928 / 01285 770 596**



# QUIZ NIGHT

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**FRI 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

7pm to 9pm • £5pp  
Food and drink available

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Coates Village Hall, GL7 6NW

Transfer to Friends of Sapperton School  
Sort code: 30-92-06 Acct Num: 00711959

Message Charlie on 07718 251952 with how many tickets you would like

## The Village Club — COATES —

### Everyone Is Welcome!

- ✿ The bar is open 8pm to 11pm, Friday and Saturday.
- ✿ Keep an eye on the Village newsletter and Facebook page for last minute event details. Email [coatesvillageclub@gmail.com](mailto:coatesvillageclub@gmail.com) for more information or to join the mailing list.

### England Six Nations Games

The bar opens 15m ahead of kick-off



### Darts Doubles Tournament

**Saturday 21st March – 6:30pm**

£2.50 entry per person

Bar opens at 6:30pm for a 7:00pm start.

All entries to [paulophonut@gmail.com](mailto:paulophonut@gmail.com)

### Big Village Quiz

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March – 6:30pm onwards**

Quiz starts at 7pm. £2 per person. Teams of up to six,

or we can add you to a team. Book with

[vigorhardwicke@btinternet.com](mailto:vigorhardwicke@btinternet.com)

# COATES CINEMA CLUB



The new season continues on Thursday 12 March doors open at 7pm screening at 7.30pm.

Members are given a choice of films for the next two months to vote for and the film with the most votes is screened at the following month.

Annual membership is £40, guests' tickets £5 on the night.

Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery is the third instalment of the Knives Out franchise.

More information please contact Simon Large at [simon.large@sky.com](mailto:simon.large@sky.com)

07714 220 558



DISCOVER A HIDDEN GEM IN THE COTSWOLDS

Sapperton Church of England Primary School

## SAPPERTON PRESCHOOL

THE PERFECT PLACE FOR 3-4 YEAR OLDS

- ✓ Experienced Teacher-led EYFS staff
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 Sapperton, Nr Cirencester  
 GL7 6LQ

To nurture faith, to inspire success



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

# DRAW NEAR

LIFE-GIVING HABITS FOR LENT

Thameshead Benefice

## LENT COURSES

**In-person at Kemble House:**  
 Wednesdays during Lent at 7.30pm  
 from 25<sup>th</sup> February  
 Following the 24/7 prayer lectio 365 Lent material.

**Online via Zoom:**  
 Thursdays in Lent at 7.30pm  
 from 19<sup>th</sup> February  
 Following the Church of England's 'Draw Near' Lent material. To join, please visit:  
<https://thamesheadchurches.org.uk/all-together/lent-course/>

All are welcome across the Benefice. Please contact Toto Walls for further information:  
[office@thamesheadchurches.org](mailto:office@thamesheadchurches.org)



## **NEWS FROM SAPPERTON AND FRAMPTON MANSELL**

### **A PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW**

The meaning of life is to be found in relationships. It is not to be found in the medium of technology; although the increasing use of social media on mobile phones would seem to suggest this is what many people believe to be the case. Mobiles are a valuable means of communication, but they cannot replace the meaningfulness of direct human interaction.

Typically, many mobile phone users can now be seen mindlessly scrolling on social media or endlessly playing games while missing the beauties of Nature all around; or they are plugged into earphones listening to thumping noise that drowns the delights of bird song. This is not living in the real world; it is a denial of the wondrous capabilities of the human mind.

Recently, my wife and I were out for dinner and the young couple on the next table were each grossly engaged with their own mobile phones and avoiding any personal conversation with each other. Have they forgotten how to relate, or is the unsocial 'social media' more important? Life is too short to waste on mindless activities; it's far better to pursue mindful living with love and prayer because these are the ingredients of joyfulness. All too easily, excessive time spent on social media can become the thief of real socialising.

We need to ask ourselves what are healthy and fulfilling relationships; they are compassionate, loving, and are enriched by reciprocal giving and sharing. A true friend is someone in whom you have complete trust and 'on whose shoulder you can cry' when in need of comfort. As it states in Proverbs [17:17], 'A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.'

Enjoyable relationships are those in which gratitude is mutually expressed and received. Lasting and happy relationships are not just based on feelings but require a continuing choice of actions as a loving compromise. There is no weakness in compromise when it is an act of compassion for the greater good – although some politicians seem reluctant to acknowledge this truth.

There is a marked difference between true friendships and the multitude of contacts on social media that people claim as 'friends'. While the typical human personal social network contains about 150 relationships of varying emotional intensity, the average number of close friends for adults is about 5; these are the people to whom we

turn to for support, sympathy, and advice when in need. It is these cherished friendships that makes us happier and healthier and help us to live longer. By comparison, the average number of contacts that a person has on social media is about 500; a figure with which we can have very limited emotional connection.

There are many instances in the Bible where we read that friendship is characterised by loyalty, support through adversity, and shared wisdom. But, while we are responsible for the actions of our friends, particularly when they err in their ways, we need to be prepared to ask ourselves, how do we relate to those who manifest greed, selfishness, and hatefulness. What does it mean to love your enemies and those who hate you? We can start by considering the advice of St. Paul to the Galatians, [6:2-3], 'Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfil the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.'

Adrian R Hill

## Craft Group



**Whatever your craft: knitting ~ crochet ~ tapestry ~ sewing ~ felting ~ embroidery**

**Whatever your skill level: beginners to professional crafters – all welcome!**

Please come along with your crafting project and join us! Share ideas and knowledge, and have a chat and a laugh over a cuppa with home-made cakes and biscuits...and hopefully make some new friends and progress on your project too!

for info contact: [thowes51@gmail.com](mailto:thowes51@gmail.com)

 Frampton Mansell Village Hall

 2nd Wednesday of the month

 10:00AM- 12:00PM



## SERVICE AND COFFEE

We hold a said communion service, followed by coffee on the first Tuesday of the month. The next one will be on **Tuesday 3 March** at

Woodstock in Frampton Mansell. The service will start at 11am with coffee and a natter at 11.30am. We would love to see you for either or both.

Want to know more?

**Need a lift? Phone Pepita or Paul on 760211**



# UPCOMING EVENTS 2026

## FRAMPTON MANSELL VILLAGE HALL

### CAFE CLUB

Open: 9:30am - 12pm

Serving locally roasted coffee & a selection of teas with home-made bakes to eat in or take-away. Free high-speed internet. Artists & Crafters. Meet old friends & new. Everyone welcome!

MAR 17TH



MAR 17TH

### FILM CLUB: "I SWEAR" & FISH 'N' CHIPS SUPPER

Open: 6:45pm - Supper 7pm - Film 7:30pm

£4.00 on the door. Refreshments available!

SUPPER: PRE-ORDER & PAYMENT by Mon 16th

CONTACT: Lucy 07866 447725



### VILLAGE SHOWCASE & AGM

Sat. 18th April 10am - 12pm, AGM at 11:30am

Meet local makers, producers and businesses with their hearts in Frampton Mansell.

Find out about village groups and classes

Join us for a coffee and chat

- refreshments sold in aid of the Village Hall

APR 18TH



MORE INFO: [WWW.FRAMPTONMANSELL.UK](http://WWW.FRAMPTONMANSELL.UK) 07752 373 651

FRAMPTON MANSELL VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE INVITE YOU TO OUR

# VILLAGE SHOWCASE AND AGM

SATURDAY 18TH APRIL 10AM-12PM

#### LOCAL MAKERS



#### WHAT'S ON

Join us for a coffee, & chat with your fellow villagers.

Meet local makers, producers & businesses with their hearts in Frampton Mansell.

Find out about groups & classes in the village.

Check out the new playground equipment!

#### VILLAGE GROUPS



AGM will take place at 11:30am

FREE ENTRY - REFRESHMENTS will be sold in aid of THE VILLAGE HALL

To be in our showcase contact Kayleigh 07752 373651



Tuesday 17th March 2026



Scottish set comedic biopic inspired by the life story of John Davidson. Diagnosed with Tourette's at 15, targeted as 'insane' by his peers, he struggled with a condition few had witnessed. Campaigning for better understanding and acceptance of the condition of Tourette's as an adult, he finds his life's purpose and accepted his MBE from the Queen in 2019...

(Yes, this superb 6 x BAFTA nominated film, DOES contain bad language!)

Why not enjoy a

Fish 'n' Chips Supper before the film!

Served at 7pm

PRE-ORDER & PAYMENT by Monday 16th March

Contact: Lucy 07866 447725



### Frampton Mansell Village Hall

Doors open 6:45pm - Supper 7pm - Film starts 7:30pm

Tickets: £4 on the door - Refreshments available

# Frampton Mansell Village Hall Café Club

Serving locally roasted coffee & a selection of teas with delicious home-made bakes!



Tues  
9:30am-12pm  
17th Mar

ENJOY A CUPPA (& CAKE)...

BRING YOUR OWN MUG & TAKE-AWAY OR STAY &

INDULGE YOUR INNER ARTIST (OR CRAFTER),

MEET FRIENDS (OLD & NEW) JUST FOR A MATTER,

MAKE USE OF OUR FREE HIGH-SPEED FIBRE INTERNET

...AND SUPPORT YOUR VILLAGE HALL!

[WWW.FRAMPTONMANSELL.UK](http://WWW.FRAMPTONMANSELL.UK)

## **SAPPERTON AND FRAMPTON MANSELL PC**

The Parish Council has recently applied to GCC Highways, for a seasonal closure of the byway that runs along the valley floor from the Daneway to Whitehall Bridge, and then up to Trillis to the north and Frampton Mansell to the south. 4x4s and trail bikes have churned up the track to such an extent that it is unfit for other users and vehicles are now damaging private land. Barriers and Notices about the closure were erected by GCC Highways but were immediately destroyed by vehicles determined to continue to use the byway, so tree trunks have now been put in place to prevent further damage. We are very grateful to residents for monitoring the closure and providing video footage of vehicles' continued use. The public footpaths in the vicinity were closed for a short time but are now open. Please be aware that if vehicles continue to circumvent the barriers and use the track, the track may be closed for good and that could include the track below the Level Crossing in Frampton Mansell, on grounds of public safety. As a Parish Council we know residents value this public right of way and we are working hard to ensure it remains open. We are very lucky to live in an area designated one step down from 'dark skies' and that is something residents tell us they are keen to preserve. So, the Parish Council has been looking at developing a 'Dark Skies Policy' as other parishes have done. We, and Cotswold District Council, are well aware of premises in the area that create significant light spill and we continue to campaign to have this addressed. The policy will simply be a way of saying that we value our dark skies and encourage us all to think about the amount and type of external lighting we need, to prevent it affecting neighbouring properties, and to ensure that it is turned off when not in use. We are also very excited to report that the Parish Council has been busy organising the refurbishment of the children's playground in Frampton Mansell having secured £19,800 in funding from the National Lottery. Work on replacing the swings and installing a new piece of equipment is due to begin on March 2nd. The playground will be closed for approximately two weeks for the work to be done and we do apologise for the disruption. Frampton Mansell Village Hall will remain available as usual which is good news for our next Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 10 March at 7pm. All welcome to attend!

## **COATES GARDENING CLUB**

If you would be interested in reforming the Gardening Club to meet once a month in Coates village hall please contact [Lorrainehackett12@btinternet.com](mailto:Lorrainehackett12@btinternet.com) or call on 07840 739456. If sufficient interest is shown then we will hold a short meeting to decide dates and ideas for meetings. Thanks. Lorraine



**Sapperton  
Church of England  
Primary School**

The new school year at Sapperton School began with a purposeful and inspiring focus on our vision: Nurture Faith: Inspire Success. We dedicated the first week of term to exploring what

they truly mean for our whole school community.

Throughout the week, children and staff reflected on our core values of love, honour and trust, and how these shape the way we learn, play and grow together. Collective worship, classroom discussions and creative activities encouraged children to think deeply about spirituality - developing a sense of wonder, gratitude and reflection in everyday life.

Children explored how we show love through kindness and inclusion, how we demonstrate honour by respecting one another and celebrating achievements, and how trust builds strong friendships and positive relationships. It was a powerful way to begin the year, setting the tone for the months ahead.

This term has already been filled with memorable experiences that bring our vision to life. Our choir enjoyed a truly fabulous trip to take part in Young Voices, joining thousands of children in an unforgettable arena performance. The energy, teamwork and joy on display were incredible, and the children represented our school with confidence and pride. Pupils also showcased their creativity and enthusiasm at a local dance festival.

We were delighted to welcome an ambulance crew into school, giving children the opportunity to learn firsthand how emergency services help and protect us. The visit sparked thoughtful questions and inspired many pupils to think about how they might serve and support others in the future.

Years 3 and 4 were thrilled to attend an author event with Guy Bass, whose energetic and imaginative presentation was hugely inspiring. His visit ignited excitement about reading and writing, encouraging children to see themselves as storytellers.

Safer Internet Day reminded pupils of the importance of respect, responsibility and trust in the digital world. Through discussion and activities, children reflected on how our school values extend beyond the classroom and into their online lives.

It has been a vibrant and inspiring start to the year. As we continue to nurture faith and inspire success, we are proud of the many ways our children live out our values each day — in the classroom and within the wider community.

**Mrs Helen Cooper Executive Headteacher**

**Sapperton and Powell's C of E Primary Schools**

## **NEWS FROM RODMARTON, TARLTON, CULKERTON AND HAZLETON**



# **RODMARTON PRIMARY** UPDATE

It's been a lively and enriching month at Rodmarton Primary School, with pupils taking part in a whole host of learning experiences both inside and beyond the classroom.

Acorn Class welcomed a visiting dental nurse, who spent time teaching the children all about keeping their teeth healthy. The session was hands-on, engaging, and left the children grinning from ear to ear!

Sapling Class took a step back in time on a visit to Chedworth Roman Villa. Exploring ancient mosaics, Roman home life, and archaeological wonders brought history vividly to life, with pupils returning full of awe and inspiration.

The school choir travelled to Meysey Hampton Church to take part in a wonderful choral event organised by Meysey Hampton CofE Primary School. They sang alongside pupils from other schools including Southrop CofE Primary, Hatherop CofE Primary, and Down Ampney CofE Primary. The sound of so many young voices filling the church created a truly uplifting moment of community harmony.

The whole school took part in the NSPCC Speak Out, Stay Safe assembly, helping children understand how to recognise worries and seek support when they need it. Older pupils also benefitted from a dedicated online safety session with PC Leah Davis, who equipped them with tools and knowledge needed to stay safe and confident in the digital world.

Pupils were further inspired by a visit from a parent who works as a hydrologist. Her fascinating talk about water systems, fish migration on the River Severn, and how hydrologists help protect our environment had the children soaking up knowledge at every turn.

To round off the end of term with a little sparkle, pupils enjoyed the Valentine's Disco kindly organised by our Friends of Rodmarton PTA group. It brought plenty of fun, friendship, and heart-shaped excitement; a lovely way for pupils to celebrate kindness and community.

February also saw three of our talented pupils, Evie, Dylan and Skye,



# RODMARTON PRIMARY

## UPDATE

superbly representing Rodmarton Primary School in the local heats of the *Look Who's Talking* public speaking competition. They spoke with confidence and enthusiasm, and the whole school is incredibly proud of how brilliantly they represented our community.

Meanwhile, pupils across the school are being encouraged to unleash their creativity by entering the Gloucestershire Young Photographer of the Year 2026 competition, as well as submitting artwork for the Royal Academy of Arts Young Artists' Summer Show. With so much talent and imagination shining through, we can't wait to see what they create!

### **RODMARTON, TARLTON, CULKERTON & HAZLETON NEWS AND EVENTS**

#### **DATE FOR THE DIARY**

Dates for the diary:

Saturday 8 March, Quiz Night in aid of the church. Tickets and information from Jane 01285 770401

Friday 15 May, May Ball with the George Buchanan Scottish Dance Band.

George Buchanan's message: "Jane Marlowe is once again holding a May Ball in Rodmarton. The events she organises are always very well managed, lighthearted and happy occasions. The proceeds from the events support Rodmarton and Tarlton parish churches. It is a picnic, so invite a few friends and conspire together to create a stupendous feast!"

Please let me know if you would like more information:  
[janemarlowe1@gmail.com](mailto:janemarlowe1@gmail.com)

Sunday, 7 June, Big Lunch festivities, live music, food and friends, and Dog Show, in aid of the church. More to follow next month.

#### **FOOD BANK COLLECTION POINTS**

There are collection boxes in both St Osmund's, Tarlton and St Peter's, Rodmarton.

# OATES NOTES FROM CULKERTON

## GARDENING TIPS FOR MARCH

This winter has been extraordinarily wet, and often grey, with a few breaks of azure skies and calm sunny spells. Temperatures have been warm enough to keep plants growing, small hardy cyclamen have flowered throughout, totally rain hardy. More sensitive bulbs to winter wet do much better in pots and containers. Iris reticulata varieties are in bloom exactly on time as usual, in shades of blue, purple, pale yellow, and white. Early flowering Daphnes are full of wonderful perfume, and this year thick with blooms, an effect of last year's sunshine.

All the early spring bulbs are pushing through well, the main daffodil season could be quite glorious.

Will March live up to its reputation as the windy month and dry the ground up, ready for cultivation? Fingers crossed. As so much rain has fallen in recent months feeding plants is recommended. Tomarite is good for flowering and fruiting plants, including shrubs and trees. Seaweed liquid feeds are excellent for leafy vegetables, in particular.

If you are quick, use a Rhubarb pot or similar to blanch stems which become more tender and sweeter. I notice my main Rhubarb patch is already growing, so do this as soon as possible.

This month prune roses, remove dead, diseased and crossing stems; for modern hybrids generally hard prune to just below knee height, look for outward facing buds and cut with sharp clean secateurs. Climbers, floribundas, and shrub roses generally need lighter pruning to remove last years rose hips to thicker stems at least the width of a pencil. Ideally this pruning is best done while the roses are still dormant or just about to come into growth; after pruning give them a rose fertiliser feed.

Check greenhouses for general maintenance and clean the glass; this allows much more light into the space and warms the space more efficiently. Start seed of all sorts under glass, keep an eye out for slug and snail damage, it will be likely only one individual, so find and expel, look underneath seed trays or pots. A beer trap set well away from your seedlings is much better than slug pellet which are toxic to other wildlife.

I have found a mystery seedling in the garden, thistle like with very silver leaves, I'm hoping it will be an Onopordum acanthium, Giant Cotton Thistle, just as the name suggests it can grow very tall and multi branched with flowers, which pollinators love. The leaves

## **OATES NOTES FROM CULKERTON (cont)**

fabulously textured silver grey and spikey. I used to grow this and possibly an old seed in the ground has germinated.

For some years a seedling yellow tree peony has been gaining height and vigour. Could this be the year of first flowers? Anticipation is exciting for gardeners.

A new addition from end of season plant sales is a compact *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Groundbreaker Greeny', obviously not chosen for the name, but as a good low growing shrub for a large pot.

Growing 60 cm tall and wide with green heads of flowers which fade over time to cream.

Sally Oates

### **RAIN STOPS PLAY...**

Half a century ago the – don't laugh – autumn and winter rains failed. That March, our Met Office announced that the previous eleven months had been the driest in southern England's 200 year meteorological history. Ground water levels were worrying low, reservoirs too - and in that era many farms and rural communities were not on mains water. The great drought of 1976 was brewing. I told you not to laugh.

Doubtless, this summer will once again see hose pipe bans. You may now laugh, ironically, for these bans will not so much be due to water shortage, as wastage (through burst pipes etc) and poor water quality (sewage and run off).

Suffice it that Culkerton's autumn rainfall total this time around was 383mm – that's a lot; the winter total is on course to beat it, albeit narrowly – more irony here, as February is often one of our driest months of the year. It remains to be seen when this incessancy of rain will cease. If it continues, plant rice. Sadly, the February half-term has been one of sog and bog.

Yet temperatures have been decidedly mild, apart from a chilly spell at the year's start. This means that Spring is coming ridiculously early. Most salient here is the fact that the Forsythia had finished flowering by mid-January, when it normally starts. Also, the woodland bluebell foliage carpet was well advanced by then, absurdly early, and the Mirabelle plum blossom was starting before mid-February, a month early.

## **OATES NOTES FROM CULKERTON (cont)**

My first butterfly of the year appeared on a rare sunny day at February's start, a Red Admiral. Now, that's the 11th time this century I've opened the butterfly season with a 'Red Ad'. Conversely, in the last 27 years of the 20th century my butterfly season opened with a Red Ad just twice – winters were so cold that few Red Ads managed to overwinter here, and we relied on fresh immigrations each spring. Candlemas, February 2nd, dawned soggy and glowered throughout. Normally, that's when to look for the first Skylark ascending over the wheat fields – but I'd done that over Christmas! But look to the Rooks, they normally begin building around St Valentine's Day – and they know. This year they started on February 11th, bang on time. Once the Rooks are nesting, and the Blackbird sings at dawn, we are Home. We just need the rain to moderate.

Matthew Oates

# **AARDVARK**

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### **GET YOUR WATERSHED BY EMAIL**

If you would like to receive a copy of the parish magazine by email I am very happy to add you to my list of those who do. This may not replace your delivered copy but you would get it earlier and with some colour! Just let me know by email at [watershedmag@gmail.com](mailto:watershedmag@gmail.com)

## **FINDING BALANCE AS THE LIGHT RETURNS**

March always feels like a new beginning.

For me, this year began with a day shadowing a crew at Cirencester Ambulance Station, seeing up close the calm, careful work our frontline teams do every day. It wasn't dramatic - just steady professionalism, moving from call to call, helping people when they needed it most. It struck me how much good outcomes depend not on rushing, but on clarity and composure.

And outside, the light is returning.

After the long months of winter, mornings brighten and evenings stretch out. When we "spring forward" and set our clocks an hour ahead, the days suddenly feel fuller. It's a small shift, but one many of us feel keenly - as if life is nudging us to move faster, to catch up, to begin again.

That change in light can bring a sense of urgency. It's the season of fresh plans and renewed energy. Gardens are tended, cupboards cleared, diaries filled. There's a feeling that things must now move forward. But March also brings something quieter, and perhaps more important.

The spring equinox marks the moment when day and night are almost equal. Light and dark in balance, even if only briefly. I find that symbolism especially meaningful this year.

Across the South Cotswolds, people tell me the same thing: the world feels fast-moving and uncertain. Families are juggling higher bills. Farmers face changing rules and tight margins. Our NHS and councils are under real pressure. Everyone wants progress, and quickly.

I share that desire. Standing still isn't an option. Whether it's cleaning up our rivers, strengthening local health services or helping communities prepare for floods and extreme weather, we need practical solutions and the courage to act.

But the equinox is a reminder that moving forward doesn't mean moving recklessly. Growth isn't a sudden leap. It works best when energy is matched with care, and ambition with reflection.

That's what I saw with the ambulance crew. Even when time mattered, they stayed methodical and focused, making careful judgements based on training and teamwork. Speed alone isn't enough; steadiness saves lives.

I see the same grounded wisdom in our charities, volunteers and community groups - people quietly supporting neighbours, running local projects and solving problems together. Progress built on cooperation, not haste.

That is how I try to work as your MP: carrying those local voices into national conversations, pushing for change while making sure it is thoughtful, realistic and rooted in what communities actually need.

As the days lengthen and the season shifts, I hope we can all take something from this moment of balance. Spring invites us forward, yes - but also to pause, listen and move with intention.

Light is returning. With it comes both energy and calm. And in that balance, there is real hope.

Warm wishes, Roz

*By Roz Savage MP, South Cotswolds MP, South Cotswolds*

*Constituency Office Watermoor Point Watermoor Road Cirencester  
GL7 1LF. Tel: 01285 300555 Email: [roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk)*



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## **KEMBLE DISTRICT RBL WOMEN'S SECTION**



A very interesting afternoon is coming up on Saturday 7 March in Kemble village hall. Martin Robins will be giving a talk all about Sir George Dowty, a globally recognisable engineer particularly in aeronautics and his significant contribution during WW11. Martin served in the Dowty Group Finance Office. A statue was unveiled in 2024 at Glebe Farm, Lower Stanton St Quinton, Wiltshire of Sir George. Another is being erected later this year at the Bomber Command Centre, Lincoln.

Free entry to the talk but cash will be needed for refreshment donations and for raffle tickets, the proceeds going towards Legion and Poppy appeal funds. All welcome to go along to this but could you kindly advise for catering purposes! Thanks.

Pat Ayres 770385 [ayrescares50@gmail.com](mailto:ayrescares50@gmail.com)

## ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - KEMBLE AND DISTRICT BRANCH



### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The first talk of 2026 has been arranged. A joint meeting has been arranged with the Women's Section starting 2.30pm on Saturday 7 March 2026 in Kemble Village Hall.

The speaker Martin Robbins will talk about Sir George Dowty, who was a globally respected aeronautical engineer. The Women's Section has kindly offered to organise refreshments for this event.

If you would like more information about our RBL Branch, please contact me for details or check out the British Legion website:

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/things-to-do/membership/become-a-member>

Ian Czapiewski – Branch Secretary – 07711 015168

### KEMBLE AND EWEN WI

Please come along to the Tavern function room on Thursday 19 March at 3pm when William Reddaway will tell us about a Ride round Britain - One man, a horse and 2,700 miles. I am exhausted just thinking about it!

A warm welcome is extended to visitors with delicious cakes and hot drinks served during 'chat' time. Further details from secretary.

Pat 770385 [ayrescares50@gmail.com](mailto:ayrescares50@gmail.com)



### ADVERTISING IN THE WATERSHED

If you wish to advertise in our parish magazine please e-mail Watershed magazine at [watershedmag@gmail.com](mailto:watershedmag@gmail.com). Advert a third of a page cost £17 for a single issue or £68 for 6 months. Adverts half a page cost £25 for a single issue or £100 for 6 months. The magazine is published 10 times every year; July/August and December/January are joint editions.

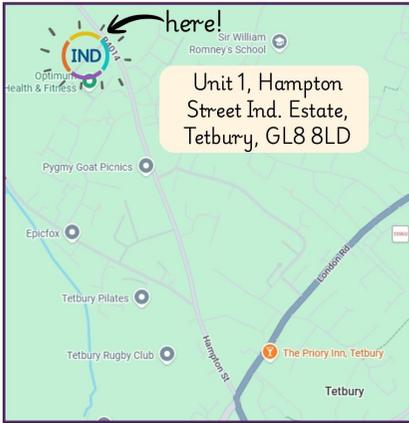


Copy for next month's magazine to be with me by the 12th of the preceding month.

### CLOSING DATE FOR THE MAGAZINE

Contributions should be sent by e-mail to the Watershed magazine at [watershedmag@gmail.com](mailto:watershedmag@gmail.com). The editor reserves the right to edit any articles. **Articles should be submitted by the 12th of the preceding month for inclusion in the next month's issue.**

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## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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Watershed Treasurer	Janet Loines	841578

### COATES

Coates Parish Council Chair	Robbie Whitfield	07872 027100
Coates Parish Council Clerk	Alan Moorcroft	641375
Coates Village Club secretary	Tara Davidson	07948 966957
Coates Tree Warden	Simon Large	07714 220558
Coates Village Hall	Bookings	07818 192587
Coates Neighbourhood Watch	John Dobson	07808 095553
Coates Snow Warden	Peter Tugwell	770314/07860 718209

### FRAMPTON MANSELL

Frampton Mansell Village Hall	Bookings	07710 878987
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### RODMARTON

Rodmarton & Tarlton PC Chair	Paul Drake	<a href="mailto:rpcchair@outlook.com">rpcchair@outlook.com</a>
Rodmarton & Tarlton PC Clerk	Roz Morton	<a href="mailto:clerk@rodmartonparishcouncil.gov.uk">clerk@rodmartonparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>
Rodmarton School	Matthew Smith	841284
Rodmarton Village Hall	Jasper Biddulph	770230

### SAPPERTON

Parish Council Chair	Sarah Osborn Smith	07836 512538
Sapperton and FM PC Clerk	Barbara (Babs) Maloney	07958 116 794
Sapperton Snow Warden	Mark Franklin	760226
Sapperton Village Hall	Bookings	07771 006848
Sapperton School Head	Helen Cooper	760325

### OTHERS

Watershed RDA	Kathy Mottershead	07979 853907
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### COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Ermin Ward	Julia Judd	07853 383874 <a href="mailto:julia.judd@cotswold.gov.uk">julia.judd@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Kemble Ward	Mike McKeown	07785 362573 <a href="mailto:mike.mckeown@cotswold.gov.uk">mike.mckeown@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
GCC Councillor	Ian Watson	07830 867356
Member of Parliament	Roz Savage MBE	01285 300555
Cirencester Hospital		0300 421 6200
Police non emergency (24hrs)		101

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### MARCH

Tuesday 3	11am	Service and Coffee at Frampton Mansell
Saturday 7	2.30pm	Joint meeting of the Royal British Legion Men's and Women's Branch
Thursday 12	7.30pm	Coates Cinema Club
Friday 13	7pm	Quiz Night Coates Village Hall
Tuesday 17	10.30am	Coffee, Cake and Chat in Coates
Tuesday 17	9.30am	Café Club Frampton Mansell Village Hall
Tuesday 17	6.45pm	Frampton Mansell Film Club
Thursday 19	3pm	Kemble and Ewen WI meeting
Saturday 21	6.30pm	Darts Doubles Tournament Coates Village Club
Saturday 28	6.30pm	Coates Village hall Big Village Quiz

### APRIL

Sunday 3	2pm	Wild and Messy Church
Saturday 18	10am	Frampton Mansell Village Showcase



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