

Challow News

~ FEBRUARY ~

2024



St. Nicholas Church

East Challow. OX12 9SH

Parish Eucharist

Sundays - 11.00 am

Weekday Eucharist

Thursdays - 10.00 am

(30 minute said service)

Associate Vicar: Rev Alec Gill

07739 563894

Email: vicaralec@valebenefice.org.uk

Licensed Lay Ministers

Sue Powditch

01235 768141

Email: llm@valebenefice.org.uk

Sarah Shackleton

07587 776609

Benefice Office: Grove Parish Church,

Main Street, Grove. OX12 7LQ

Open: Mon - Fri 10.00 - 12.00

Tel: 01235 771479

Email: office@valebenefice.org.uk

St. Nicholas Church

Churchwarden

Mrs Liz Belcher: 01235 763966

Deputy Churchwarden

Dr. Jeff Penfold: 01235 763173

Churches of the Vale Benefice

St. Johns - Grove

St. James - West Hanney

St. Nicholas - East Challow

St. James - Denchworth

Weddings ~ Baptisms

Blessing & Thanksgiving

For further information please contact:

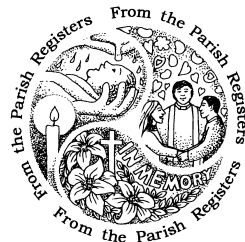
Vale Benefice Office

Grove Parish Church, Main Street, Grove.
OX12 7LQ

Monday - Friday 10.00 - 12.00

01235 771479

Email: office@valebenefice.org



INFORMATION

It is only Baptisms,
Weddings, Thanksgivings
and Funerals
which have taken place at
St. Nicholas Church
which are recorded here

All Information / Details are held as Public
Records within the Vale Benefice

Pause for Thought

I have always liked the new year, and enjoyed new beginnings - and especially so since we have moved to the Hanneys and are enjoying making new friends.

But this new year feels a little different. I am aware of several recent bereavements in this village, and on a personal level conscious of the loss of friends both in the village and beyond. And then there are the continuing tragic bereavements in Israel, Gaza and Ukraine – we are very conscious of conflicts that still continue.

Our hearts go out to those suffering bereavements at this time. And I would have to add my admiration at the way those I know keep going through the hardest of times.

J K Rowling, in the Harry Potter stories, identifies grief as a sign of love – perhaps even as the cost of loving. So it is Harry's grief in losing his godfather that shows the strength of his love. I am sure she is right.

Of course there are lesser bereavements we experience as well – not of the same order, but still enough to make us feel a little bleak during those long winter nights – for example losing a job, or losing your health or your independence.

In February, the season of Lent begins. Lent is not only a time when we are reminded of Jesus fasting and praying for forty days in the wilderness – it is also the time when we remember his journey to the Cross - travelling to Jerusalem, undeterred by increasing hostility and suspicion from those in authority.

It must have been a difficult journey, knowing the suffering and death that would come at the end. To me this shows his solidarity with us in whatever hard times we may go through. He has been there. For me this means that whatever we go through, he goes through it with us.

His journey ends with Easter, just as our journey through winter ends in the joy of Spring. For me the resurrection message of Easter tells me that light will ultimately overcome all darkness, love will overcome hatred, and hope will overcome despair.

Whatever times of darkness we may go through, I hope that we will find comfort, companionship and reassurance on the way. And I hope that you may also find that light, love and hope are undiminished, and are stronger than any darkness.

May we all experience something of that light, love and hope in our lives.

Charles Draper

(retired church minister living in East Hanney)



INFORMATION

You can now find details of all the Services and Festivals
on the St. Nicholas page of a "Church Near You" website

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5811/>

you can also view and download

Church Rotas, Service Information and also this issue of the Challow News

St. Nicholas Church - Rotas

Date	Sides Person	Sacristan	Reader	Prayers	Organist
February 4 th	Frances & Nigel	Philip	Alan / Ruth	Philip	Ruth
February 11 th	Linda & Noel	Mary	Graham	Mary	Ruth
February 18 th	Liz & Jeff	Jenny	Jeff	Jenny	Graham
February 25 th	Tricia & Sue	Nigel	Clare / Nigel	Paul	Graham

Date	Coffee	Flowers	Cleaning
February 4 th	Mandy	Heather	Linda / Liz
February 11 th	Jan & Hillary	Mary	Linda / Liz
February 18 th	Val & Barbera	LENT	Mandy
February 25 th	Linda & Janet	LENT	Mandy

~ If you are unable to attend please arrange cover for your week ~

Thursday Sacristan	
February 1 st	Mary
February 8 th	Jenny
February 15 th	Heather
February 22 nd	Mandy
February 29 th	Nigel



St Nicholas Church 11.00 am Sunday Services Information

4 th February	2 nd Sunday before Lent White	Rev Robin Lapwood	Proverbs 8: 1 + 22 - 31 * Colossians 1: 15 - 20 <i>Gospel Reading ~ John 1: 4 - 14</i>
11 th February	Sunday before Lent White	Rev Alec Gill	2 Kings 2: 1 - 12 * 2 Corinthians 4: 3 - 6 <i>Gospel Reading ~ Mark 9: 2 - 9</i>
14 th February	Ash Wednesday Lent Purple	Rev Alec Gill	Communion Service 7.30 pm
18 th February	Lent 1 Purple	Bishop Gavin	Genesis 9: 8 - 17 * 1 Peter 3: 18 - end <i>Gospel Reading ~ Mark 1: 9 - 15</i>
25 th February	Lent 2 Purple	Rev Alec Gill	Genesis 17: 1 - 7 + 15 - 16 * Romans 4: 13 - end <i>Gospel Reading ~ Mark 8: 31 - end</i>

*Denotes alternative 1st Reading

Churchyard Grass Cutting

For those who regularly visit the churchyard to remember relatives and loved ones we try to keep the churchyard tidy and well groomed.

From March to October a dedicated team of volunteers cut the churchyard grass every two weeks or so, and generally keep the churchyard tidy.

But we do need more volunteers, as the work rests on a smaller and smaller group of volunteers. If you could help and be on the rota it would be a great help to us and would be much appreciated. It would only involve helping us out 3 - 4 times throughout the year at the very most.

We provide all the equipment that is needed.

**If you could help please contact Jeff Penfold on 01235 763173
jeffpenfold8548@gmail.com**

St. Nicholas Church

Coffee Morning



**10.30 - Midday
Thursday 1st February**

If you would like some refreshments
or just like to sit down and have a
chat with friends
you are most welcome

Challows Royal British Legion

Opening Hours

Monday - Friday 7.00 pm - Close

Saturday - 12.00 am - 12.00 pm

Sunday 12.00 am - 10.30 pm



Sunday Night Bingo

(Eyes down at 8.00pm)



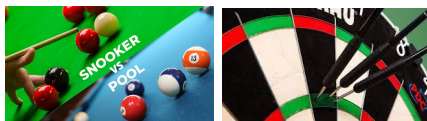
Monday Night Poker



Challows afternoon Club

meet monthly on every 3rd
Thursday from 2.00 pm

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the Club has to offer

Socialise over a drink from
the Bar or a game of Darts,
Snooker or Pool

Jimmy Lees

Rock n Roll Party

17th February 7.30 pm

Tickets £10.00

Pay on the door and includes a Butty & Crisps

~ Non Members welcome ~

Entertainment Dates 2024

10th February - Buddy Holly Tribute

16th March - Ukey Dukes

20th April - Locarno Beat

18th May - Move It

22nd June - Blue Dayz

13th July - Fraud Squad

10th August - Miss Brodie

14th September - Mr Rock n Roll

5th October - Music Box

9th November - Aaron Cook

£10.00 ~ Cash on the door

Planning an Event or Party

our Main Hall with kitchen facilities
are available to Hire

01235 763430

20 years of Facebook

Twenty years ago, on 4th February 2004, Facebook, the social media networking platform, was launched.

Originally known as thefacebook.com, it was intended by Mark Zuckerberg and four other Harvard students – Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes – to create “a directory of information for college students”, but it soon expanded, and each of the five co-founders developed different roles. All except Moskovitz are now not part of the Facebook empire, but all are extremely rich.

A year after it was launched, Facebook lost the “the” from its name, and the following year it got rid of its students-only restriction. In its new form Zuckerberg, from an early stage the main man of Facebook, said the original aim was for Facebook users to take their online identities with them around the internet without having to register individual accounts for each website or app.

The swift development of Facebook, which went public in 2012, has involved Zuckerberg in many lawsuits, and he has demonstrated a wide-ranging ability to win people over. He is also extremely clever. He has never revealed his own political affiliation or voting history, and is hard to pin down. He was raised as a Reform Jew, went through a period when he espoused atheism, but more recently has said he “believes religion is very important”.

In September last year his net worth was estimated at not far short of £50 billion, but he receives a one-dollar salary as CEO of Facebook, and he and his wife Priscilla Chan give away huge amounts of money, some of which goes to fighting antisemitism and backing educational and community initiatives. Facebook is banned in China.

As of late September 2023, Forbes estimated Zuckerberg's net worth at about \$64.4 billion, making him the 16th-richest person in the world.



14th February is the start of National Nestbox Week

Now an established part of the ornithological calendar, it aims to encourage people to help

out the birds in their gardens each Spring. Everyone is invited to put up more nest boxes in their local area, and a very helpful website gives full instructions on how to do this.

More details at: <https://www.nestboxweek.com>

The cost of parking at your local hospital

Have you been a patient or visitor to a hospital this past year? If so, you are not imagining it: the cost of parking there has skyrocketed. In fact, parking charges for hospital patients and visitors have leapt by £50 million in a year.

Recent NHS accounts show that hospital trusts made nearly £146 million in income from patients and visitors in 2022-3. That is a whopping 50 per cent increase from the £97 million received the year before.

There has also been a major jump in the amount hospital staff have to pay to park. In 2021-22 the staff members paid just £5.6 million, which increased to £46.7 million in 2022-23. These latest figures have been met with criticism from Royal College of Nursing, which has slammed the growing cost of parking for staff.

Who is hiding in your car?

You may not be the only one enjoying the comfort of your car this winter.

According to recent figures from the RAC, if you have left your car standing alone for even a week, then anything from rats, squirrels, mice, foxes and even snakes may have moved in.

A squirrel stockpiling nuts in a car air filter, ten mice nesting under a windscreen, rats living in engine bays, and foxes chewing brake hoses, are only some of many culprits listed this year as having caused a breakdown. There was also the baby python found behind a wheel trim.

In all, last year the RAC responded to over 300 incidents of vehicle damage caused by animals. That's a 55 per cent increase from the 196 recorded in 2018. Alice Simpson, spokesman for the RAC, said: “Finding a rat or mouse in your car is not only a nasty shock, but often the cause of very expensive damage.

“Our best advice is to make sure no food is left inside. Also, check for unusual smells in the vehicle, and be mindful of any dashboard warning lights that don't disappear after a minute or two.”

I hope you are having a very happy, if slightly used new year, by the time you read this.

While Christmas seems a long time ago there is a lot to report on, starting with our Carol service at Saint Nicholas, it was beautiful, it was led by John Durant, it was good to see so many people enjoying singing together both the old favourite carols, and some new ones. We were also given an insight into Open Doors from Nick Page, an organisation which helps persecuted Christians in the world today. After the service we enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies and were able to have a chat together.

The village event of Carols on the Green was really successful, the weather, although a bit cold and blowy was dry, about seventy people turned up and we enjoyed singing traditional carols together. Afterwards there was mulled wine to warm us, stollen and chocolates, that kind people had brought to share, which made it a proper village occasion and ended it beautifully. Thank you to everybody that turned up, and to those who shared their goodies with everyone. It really is becoming a reinstated East Challow tradition. Next year will be even better I hope, so please get ready to lubricate your vocal chords, wrap up warm, grab your torches, and join us the same time this year.

On Christmas Eve we had our Carols around the Crib service. It had a wonderful attendance and was led by a very enthusiastic Alec Gill who really made it exciting for the children. This is a yearly event that has been established for over thirty years and is enjoyable for both adults and children alike. Thank you to all those people and especially the children who participated.

The Midnight Mass service was also well attended with new faces as well, which is always good. So altogether Christmas at Saint Nicholas Church was wonderful. With all the dreadful things going on in the world at the moment it is heartening to see so many people united in prayer. It was our lovely vicar John Durants last service at Saint Nicholas so it was just a little bit sad. We do wish John and Sally all the best for the next stage in their journey through life, so God Bless you both.

The collection over Christmas, which will be donated to The Children's Society raised £197.00 I think that is marvellous so thank you.

I will report on the Service of Memories in next month's issue.

13th February is Shrove Tuesday it is the feast before the start of Lent. Shrove comes from the word shrive which means to give absolution after hearing confession. Traditionally pancakes are eaten on this day, which was to use up eggs, milk, butter, and sugar before starting the 40 days of fasting in Lent. Hence Pancake day. In America it is called Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday, as well as Pancake day.

Ash Wednesday follows which is the actual start of Lent.

Lent marks the time when Jesus spent fasting for 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by the Devil before entering Jerusalem before Easter.

We had some pretty wet and windy weather to end 2023 but Meg still wants and needs her walks, whilst out I often pick up tins and bottles that have been thrown down by the previous nights revellers. I hate the thought of any animal or person getting hurt on them. I have on occasions got some very strange looks from people as they see some mature woman with a walking stick, accompanied by a dog, carrying several empty beer bottles or cans first thing in the morning. I haven't been drinking them I am just tidying up, honestly.

Hopefully by the time of print, the book share facility in the old phone box will be back up and running, I for one have really missed it, so thank you Sue for all your work on it.

I hope everything is well with you and your friends and family and as always stay safe for yourself and others.

Torvill and Dean - and the Bolero that made Olympic history

Forty years ago, on 14th February 1984, figure skaters Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean won the gold medal in ice dancing at the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo. They scored the first perfect 6.0 in Olympic history.

Both are from Nottingham and, despite the obvious chemistry between them, they have never been romantically involved with each other. Jayne is married, and Christopher is in a long-term relationship. Jayne was originally an insurance clerk and Dean a policeman, and they built up their ice partnership while working full-time – though they eventually received a grant from Nottingham City Council that enabled them to concentrate on their skating.

This was much like a full-time job. Christopher later described it as “obsessive...almost like being in a monastery. It was a religion in its own way”.

At Sarajevo they became the highest scoring figure skaters of all time for a single programme, which they skated to Ravel's *Bolero* (it came in just within the time limit) and were awarded 12 perfect 6.0s – including a 6.0 from every judge for artistic impression – and six 5.9s. In 2002 this performance was voted into eighth place in a Channel 4 poll of the 100 Greatest Sporting Moments.

The pair turned professional after Sarajevo and won the world professional championships five times. Their innovations had a lasting impact on the sport, and in 2000 they were made OBEs for their outstanding contributions to skating and to British sport.

The National Ice Centre in Nottingham is now accessed through Bolero Square; a housing estate in the Wollaton area of the city contains a street named Torvill Drive and an adjoining one called Dean Close.



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Monthly Draw

December Results

£100 - N° 143 - Mrs A. Venners

£50 - N° 130 - Mr G. Handley

£20 - N° 54 - Mrs L. Rowe

£10 - N° 40 - Mrs C. Page

~

January Results

£50 - N° 21 - Mrs H. Smith

£20 - N° 141 - Mrs M. Dillon

£10 - N° 81 - Mrs C. Andrews

~

Would you like to join?

For further information please contact

Tricia Shand - 01235 764222



the.shandies@btinternet.com



"Next Sunday I think I'll do a new take on the Parable of the Virgins and the Oil."



Do you suffer with back, neck
or joint pain, headaches, sports
injuries or arthritis?

Main Clinic, East Challow
and
Wantage Health Centre

01235 821 800

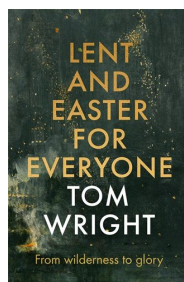
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Book of the Month



Lent and Easter for Everyone

By Tom Wright

Join Tom Wright on a
transformative journey through
the Gospels, as he explores the life
and impact of Jesus. Offering
seven weeks' worth of daily
readings and reflections, the book

enables you to relive Christ's journey - from His
temptations in the wilderness to the darkness of the
cross and beyond, into the glory of Easter.
Whether used individually or in groups, *Lent and Easter
for Everyone* can be a trusted companion, encouraging
spiritual growth, deepening understanding, and
fostering a renewed sense of hope and purpose in your
Christian journey.

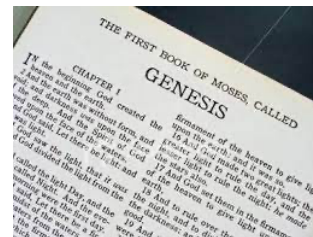
Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham begins a new series - What's the Big Idea?

An Introduction to the Books of the Bible

This is the first of a new series aimed at providing an overview of the Bible.

This month we consider the first book

Genesis



As the title suggests, Genesis is primarily about beginnings. In chapters 1-11, it records the creation of the heavens and the earth and human beings; marriage and family; sin's effect on society and the world. The following chapters record God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and their families. In this story of the Patriarchs we see God

establishing a people called to bless the world, as He blesses them.

The book of Genesis is key to understanding the whole Bible. It is supremely about relationships; the relationships between God and the created order, God and human beings, and between human beings themselves. Fundamentally man has been created in the image of God, so that he can relate to God in a personal way: *'God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them'* (1:27). However, Genesis plots how this relationship was broken by sin, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, resulting in the fall of human beings and the created order. By creating people with free will, God risked the possibility that they might reject Him. This is inherent in His love for human beings.

In Genesis, God enters into covenants with the world (the rainbow following the flood) and with Abraham and his descendents (circumcision), pledging His love and faithfulness to them and calling them to respond to Him in faith. It reminds us that God is fundamental to living.

Without a sense of the centrality of God's place in our lives, we can never get our lives right.

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When bigger is not better

Women have added almost three inches to their waistlines over the last three decades.



A recent mass survey across England has found that the average woman now has a waist span of 35 inches. That is up from an average of just over 32 inches in the 1990s. A 'very high waist circumference' is defined as being 34.6in or above.

Male waistlines have also continued to grow, but at a slower rate. 36 per cent of men are now classed as having a 'very high waist circumference' - which is 40in (102cm) or above. In the Nineties, just 20 per cent of men were this big.

The data comes from the Health Survey of England carried out in 2019, when waistlines were last measured. Tam Fry, from the National Obesity Forum, said: "The figures are alarming - too many of us are eating as though it is Christmas every day."

Draft guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) urges everyone to regularly measure their waistline. It should be less than half their height.

A recent study by the University of Oxford has found that every extra inch on the waistline increases the risk of heart failure by 11 per cent.



Life on a spin

Many years ago, at the Pleasure Beach in Blackpool, there was a certain 'ride' or amusement that was strictly for the physically fit. It consisted of a flat wooden disc about 20 feet in diameter and set at an angle of 45 degrees in the floor. When it began to rotate, the aim was to get to the centre where there was a pole. As the disc rotated faster and faster, everyone who failed to get to the pole got flung off. Nowadays there's probably a European Community regulation banning it as far too dangerous!

The principle of the game was a basic law of physics. When any wheel rotates, the outer rim moves fastest of all. Half way to the centre and you are moving a lot more slowly. And, at least theoretically, at the absolute centre will be a point which is totally still. That's why anyone who reached that pole could stand there quite comfortably.

We have just started the Church's season of Lent. It's generally thought of as being a time for giving up chocolate, wine, whatever. But it's really a time to remind us that in our own rapidly spinning world, God is the still centre.

All around God is motion, sound, change and decay – galaxies circling, seasons and years rotating, life developing and decaying. And at the still centre, where there is no variableness, is God, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Only about seven weeks ago Christians worldwide were thinking of God getting involved in a special way in the ever moving and changing life of the world. And one great characteristic of Jesus was His stillness. Busy, harassed, injured people found someone with neither clever chat nor idle gossip, neither vulgar boasting nor loud opinion. His life always seemed to rotate round a still central point, which gave Him balance and authority.

"Be still then and know that I am God" wrote the Psalmist. Lent is a time for us to try and do just that – to find the still centre of God in our own individual lives.

Of course, we're all of us very much in the world, and must live our lives in all of its busyness. But it may do none of us any harm to be a little more silent than we often are – quick to listen and slow to speak. And the more silent spaces we give ourselves, the more we'll give that still, small voice within each one of us the chance to be heard.



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Remembering Clarice Cliff

If you like ceramics, and enjoy colour, then you are bound to be familiar with the work of Clarice Cliff. Her glowingly vibrant plates, cups, teapots, and vases are world famous – and still loved.

She was born 125 years ago, on 20th January 1899, in Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent. Clarice's father worked in an iron foundry, and her mother washed clothes to help feed their seven children.

Clarice left school at 13 to work in the potteries. She so enjoyed the work that at 17, she moved on to the factory of A J Wilkinson in Newport, Burslem, to gain more experience. Soon she was modelling figurines and vases, keeping pattern books, and learning to hand-paint ware.

Clarice's talent was noticed, and then encouraged by one of the factory owners, Arthur Colley Austin Shorter. As the years went by, he enabled her to go to the Royal College of Arts and then study in Paris. He gave her own studio, and later he married her.

Clarice's use of colour was immensely popular. Her brilliantly coloured plates, cups, vases, and teapots helped cheer people up during the Depression. Clarice's shapes were also eye-catching: sometimes 'Modern', with angular and geometric lines; sometimes 'Art Deco' – with abstract and cubist patterns.

By 1930, Cliff was Art Director at Newport Pottery. She went on to have a worldwide impact, as her patterns, shapes and colours sold in large quantities in many countries.

Her most famous quote was: "Having a little fun at my work does not make me any less of an artist, and people who appreciate truly beautiful and original creations in pottery are not frightened by innocent tomfoolery." After Clarice's death, Wedgwood came to own the Clarice Cliff name. The world record price for a piece of Clarice Cliff is held by Christie's in London, who in 2004 sold an 18-inch (460 mm) 'charger' (wall plaque) in the *May Avenue* pattern for £39,500.

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Welcome to the New Year

and the New ECVH Management Committee!



Now we have a new team, watch this space for exciting new events in your local village hall.

Here's how we started:

Village children enjoyed the snow as they entered the hall for the first Christmas disco of many years.... OK so it was a snow foam machine cheat but still fun! Inside they (and their parents) danced to the tunes of DJ Phil from the White Horse Roadshow Disco, won prizes and munched on

home made goodies and sweets with help from Mum's of St Nicholas C of E School PTA whose advice and guidance was much appreciated as was their enthusiasm about blowing up and creating a balloon moon. Thanks again Tara, Vicky, Emma and Emma. We wouldn't have pulled it off without you.

On New Year's Eve over 50 adults and children gathered to share nibbles, drinks and conversation to welcome in the New Year. Thanks to Tom Mouat for providing and setting up of the projector and IT for a screening of the midnight countdown almost glitch free ☐ using the free WiFi available at the hall (shameless plug)

Cold weather and a hall clear-up party meant the well intentioned New Year walk was abandoned. Huge thanks to Committee Members' family who helped make what seemed like a daunting task pretty easy! Special mention to Mervin, chief balloon popper amongst many other important functions and David for the deep floor clean - true heros.

We have installed a new fridge and microwave as part of our on going program to update the kitchen. If anyone has connections with catering equipment suppliers we'd love to hear from you as an overhaul is long overdue.

We should not go gallivanting into the brave new world without sincerely thanking those that went before. In latter years the Village Hall was run by a skeleton committee so a big "Thank you" to Helen Davison, Denise Knight and Mandy Perkins who decided to stand down from the position of Trustee but we hope will still be on hand to share their knowledge and experience. Thanks also to Vanessa for staying as the Parish Council liaison representative.

We are aiming to provide a vibrant, thriving community space for people in East Challow to inspire volunteers and make happy memories. Along the way we hope to embrace new technology and support ambitions to be more environmentally friendly.

The hall can be hired by any individual or group on a regular or one-off basis.

Visit our new Facebook page "East Challow Village Hall - ECVH" for more details or contact

Ruth Caplen by email bookings.ecvh@gmail.com or mobile 07827 042978.

Hope to see you soon!

From The Committee.

Kiera Bentley- Committee Chair. 07799-414600

Ruth Caplen - Bookings

Naomi Merritt - Treasurer

Vanessa Bosley - Council Liaison Rep

Members - Ian Crump, Jude Knight, Katie Thomas

Date for you Diary - 24th February - VILLAGE HALL OPEN DAY

- Questions to tell us about this month -

What, if anything should be done about non hall users taking up car parking space?

Do we need a clothes recycling bin in the Village?

Should we consider installing an electric car charging point?



Challow News article for February 2024

Open Doors and the persecuted church

"I will speak of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame." - Psalm 119:46

Do you love a list? I do, whether it's by using Microsoft To Do, or any other app, or good old pencil and paper. There's just such joy in ticking things off! Churches love them, too. We just call them rotas, instead.

Open Doors, through its research team, produces a list at the beginning of each new year. It's called the World Watch List, and it ranks the 50 countries where it's most difficult or dangerous to be a Christian. Top of the list, for the majority of the last 20 years, has been North Korea, where children are often trained by their teachers to inform on their parents if they see signs of Christian faith. However, countries from the Islamic world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and the Gulf, are also frequently in the top ten. In 2023, they included Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Sudan. By the time you read this, the new list for 2024, will have been revealed. What will it look like? You'll have to go to the Open Doors website to find out!*

So, how does Open Doors know which countries are the greatest hotbeds of persecution for Christians? The research involves asking key contacts in each country a set of 100 questions that cover private life, family life, community, national life, church life, and violence. Questions like: What freedom does a Christian have to worship? Is conversion to Christianity allowed? Can Christians live without harassment and discrimination in their local communities? Other questions ask: Are Christians allowed to meet together? Can they build churches? Are Bibles freely available? How does their faith affect their education or employment? In some countries, such as Nigeria, the smash of violence is very much part of the picture, but in others, such as China and some other Asian countries, the squeeze of persecution is silent and sinister.

In January each year, the new list is launched at a meeting for MPs and government officials, in parliament, where Christians from countries on the World Watch List (this year, Nigeria and India) bear witness to the effects of persecution on their lives. Please pray for our MP for Wantage, David Johnston. In a year that marks the 75th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, pray that, whether he attends this meeting or not, he will, "Speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute." - Proverbs 31:8.

**You can find out more about the World Watch List 2024, and the countries where persecution is most extreme, at www.opendoorsuk.org. There are also some excellent resources on the World Watch top 50, including a booklet, a map, a Prayer Passport for children, and a family pack.*

(If you need help accessing resources or the website, just ask Nick or Claire Page.)



www.opendoorsuk.org

On why rural church-goers like to freeze in church

The Rectory

St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Winter certainly exposes the difference between those of you who live in cities and us rural folk. While you bask in your centrally heated flat, and complain about the half an inch of slush outside, we country folk wear overcoats in our houses, open all doors and windows to let the heat in and battle through snow drifts, measured in feet, to get the morning paper.

Colonel Wainwright has acquired a new toy: a snow blower, of sufficient power that I believe it could clear the Antarctic. He kindly volunteered to clear the paths around the church. Working outwards from the church door, the path to the church soon became snow-free. Unfortunately, he only realised when his job was complete that the blown snow then formed a ten-foot drift under the lych gate.

Miss Margison, ever helpful in the worst sense of the word, decided to unfreeze the pipes in the church hall. A blow torch was not the ideal solution, although the resulting burst did make some rather attractive ice sculptures round the kitchen equipment. The village badminton team that uses the hall has now temporarily changed sport to ice hockey.

Inevitably, congregations have soared. There is nothing like adversity for making people want to prove they have the moral fibre to overcome it. Much satisfaction seems to be obtained on discovering who has not dared venture out, which is taken as judgement on their strength of character. The Prentices upstaged most people by arriving on a sleigh. Mr Prentice was warmly wrapped in a travelling rug, while his wife pulled it. As they both explained, they couldn't possibly let the pony work in such conditions.

What I momentarily thought was applause during my sermon was merely people keeping their hands warm and the hymns were drowned out by the stamping of feet. Our organist complained that the cold made his fingers so numb that he couldn't play properly – although I didn't notice that things were much different from normal.

No, my dear nephew, a few flakes of wet snow may close your car park for health and safety reasons, but we shall continue to triumph heroically over adversity. We return home after Mattins, knowing we have proved our Christian commitment in being utterly uncomfortable.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



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Food shortages are 'likely' this year

You might find some supermarket shelves empty in the coming months.

A combination of global conflicts, climate change and transportation issues are making it harder for food producers to get their products out of the field and onto your plate. And as at the end of last month (January), it got even more complicated, with the introduction of new checks on the goods coming from the EU into the UK.

Professor Chris Elliott of Queen's University Belfast is a food security expert. He explains: "It'll be about affordability but also availability, and the likelihood of empty shelves, particularly fresh produce shelves, in 2024 is alarmingly high."

Professor Elliott said: "We are virtually totally dependent on other countries for most of our fresh produce, our fruit and our vegetables. We were reasonably self-sufficient in dairy, we were reasonably self-sufficient in poultry and eggs. But that's also on the decline now, as a result of the collapse of some sectors of the food industry in the UK."

According to the gov.uk website, just under half of the actual food on our plates is produced within the UK.

Why buying your lunch at the Train Station is not a good idea

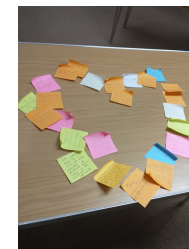
When commuting to work, it is easy to grab a sandwich and drink at the station before catching your train.

It may be easy, but it comes at a price. Commuters buying their lunch at a train station pay around 10 per cent more for food and drink than they would on the high street.



The Office of Road and Rail (ORR) has found that on average food retailers are charging premiums of up to 34 per cent for goods in stations, when compared with the same outlet elsewhere.

Grove and Wantage Schools Prayer Group 2023/24



Come and join us to pray for our local schools.

We meet from 4.00-5.00 in the St John's Rooms at Grove Parish Church on the last Wednesdays of September, January, and April.

- 27th September 2023
- 31st January 2024
- 24th April 2024

Please do advertise these dates in your own churches and fellowships. As you know, we are glad to welcome any Christians who wish to pray for our local schools.

John Wilson
johnwilson2012@gmail.com

Helen Harwood
andrewandhelenharwood@yahoo.co.uk



Editor: The Revd Dr Jo White continues her series on the meanings in church buildings.

Reflecting Faith: God's Acre

I thought we'd spend a few months at the start of this New Year considering the outside of a church building, and the gardens around it.

For many churches this will include a churchyard, though not necessarily. If your church does stand in a churchyard, then it may be what is known as a 'closed' one, meaning that burials and interments no longer take place other than within an existing family grave. An 'open' churchyard is one where burials and interments are still able to take place.

The maintenance for open churchyards is the responsibility of the church, whilst once closed (which, for Church of England churches, has to be agreed by Parliament) the maintenance is passed to the local or parish civil council.

These days, with the many financial cutbacks, Councils often try to refuse to take on a churchyard. But as it is a statutory obligation, they have no choice, and many will simply reduce the number of grass-cutting sessions to fit their slimmed budget.

Churchyards have not always looked as they do today, with memorial stones of varying shapes and sizes. Originally, they were simply left grassed and in towns this became one of the few green areas. People were buried there without any permanent marker being placed, nor any other official record of placement kept.

The thinking was that their life here on earth had ended and the person was now with God in heaven. Only those people in 'God's kingdom' would be allowed to be buried in the consecrated grounds, so anyone who had taken their own life, or unbaptised babies, would not be allowed.

Church buildings are usually built facing east - the place of the rising sun - and the people's entrance is on the south wall. This gives access to the churchyard from the south, and in European countries that means your first experience of entering the churchyard and the building is on its sunny side.

It was common practise to bury to the south of the church, as this was the lighter and warmer side. The richer and more influential folk would request to go as near to the altar - the Holy of Holies - as possible; even if that was outside the building itself.

Over the course of time folk wanted - and richer folk could afford - a marker for where their loved one lay. This idea of having a permanent marker reflected the attitudes at the time, of visiting the place of rest specifically marked. Not just to know where to visit and even bring a picnic for the family on a good weather day, especially in working busy town areas; but also, to recognise the importance of their loved one's life.



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Abandoned and Helpless

If February is the month of love, shouldn't that include some compassion for animals?

The RSPCA reports that animal abandonment incidents have reached a three-year high.

Latest figures for 2023 reveal more than 20,000 reports of animals being simply dumped by their owners.

Dermot Murphy, RSPCA inspectorate commissioner, says: "Behind these shocking statistics are thousands of vulnerable animals. Each one is a valuable life in urgent need of our help."

He goes on: "The combined effects of the pandemic and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis has created a perfect storm, and means we expect more animals than ever will need our help this year."

Yet many rescue centres are already full to bursting, "so we are facing an unprecedented winter crisis. Our rescue teams are busier than ever. We need animal lovers to donate to help us be there for animals in desperate need."

Good preparation for our death

"Thank you" - "I'm sorry" - "I forgive you" - "I love you".

These are the most common words spoken by people in their last moments of consciousness before dying. That's what Dr Kathryn Mannix tells us, and she should know, having spent her whole career working alongside dying people, and learning from them.

Her YouTube video, *What Happens As We Die*, has been viewed more than a million times, and her book

With the End in Mind: How to Live and Die Well is a bestseller.

When the Church of England Book of Common Prayer was first published in 1662, infant mortality rates were high, and the average life expectancy was about 40 years. So the BCP gave precise instructions to the Vicar when visiting sick people: pray with them; exhort them to forgive all who have offended them, and to make a Will. Even in 1901, men could not expect to live beyond 45 on average, with 49 years for women.



Today, less than half of UK adults have made a Will, and even fewer have discussed their funeral arrangements with those closest to them. This leaves the

next-of-kin floundering when the funeral director asks for instructions. It can also cause family arguments at the very time they need to support one another in their grief.

Unlike our predecessors, we shy away from death and even use a special language for it. Instead of dying, people 'pass away'. They are not dead, but 'lost' or 'departed'. Dr Mannix says, "We have no cure for death. We're getting better at postponing it, but sooner or later it comes to us all". When we face up to the process of dying, which isn't nearly as bad as many imagine, it allows us to plan ahead, and to talk openly to our nearest and dearest, instead of avoiding the issue.

Our last conscious days can be very precious. We can shed many of the things which preoccupied us and rediscover what really matters.

In the end, it will be love....



Why you might want to eat 8 strawberries a day

Strawberries are better for you than you probably know. They provide 100 per cent of the recommended daily vitamin C amount in a single cup serving, and they also contain heart-healthy nutrients such as folate, potassium, fibre, phytosterols and polyphenols.

A recent study has found that eating about eight of them a day for three months can improve your mood, help your memory, and lower any symptoms of depression.

The study was carried out at the University of Cincinnati's Academic Health Centre.

A simple way to reduce your risk of a heart attack

This is so easy that most of us can do it at home: simply climb about five flights of stairs a day.

So says a recent study, published in the journal *Atherosclerosis*. It found that climbing stairs on a regular basis may reduce the risk of strokes, blood clots, and heart attacks by as much as 20 per cent.

Climbing stairs is also good for burning fat. This is because you use your largest muscle groups, and so burn more calories. For example - stair climbing burns 23 per cent more calories than running; 250 per cent more calories than swimming, 63 per cent more than cycling, and a staggering 400 per cent more than walking at about three km/h.

As one biomechanics coach explained: "You can take the steps as fast - or slow - as you like, and still see benefits. That's because the muscles are contracting and shortening under tension as they push the floor away."

Climbing stairs is easier on the knees and hips than running, because there is less shock through the body.

A simple way to help cut your risk of diabetes



A recent study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* has found that your risk of diabetes falls for every kilometre per hour faster that you walk on average.

Put simply, if you walk at a pace of 3km per hour (1.86 mph) you may lower your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by at least 15 per cent. If you can walk briskly at a speed of 5km to 6km an hour (3.1 to 3.7mph) than you may cut the risk by 24 per cent.

A lack of exercise and being overweight are among the factors that increase the risk of



OUR WINTER OFFERING

Bar opening times through this period will generally be

Monday	CLOSED
Tuesday	CLOSED
Wednesday	4pm – 8pm
Thursday	4pm – 8pm (10pm when Darts match is on)
Friday	4pm – 8pm
Saturday	CLOSED
Sunday	11am – 3pm

The clubhouse is available to hire for a range of events through the 'Close Season' either during the day or in the evening, and makes a superb setting for your Birthday, Anniversary, Christening or Wake. Please contact us to discuss your function requirements, we will always look to do whatever we can to make your event a success.

If you would like to join the club as a member it's just £20 for the year, you can do so via our website.

We also require bar staff to cover some of our bar openings both during the weekday evenings and occasional outside events when the clubhouse has been hired on weekend evenings.

For full details and rate of pay please e-mail us in first instance.

Remember that everyone is welcome at Challow, membership is not required to enjoy the facilities, although it does mean we can keep you up to date with news and events at the Club.

www.challowcricket.co.uk

admin@challowcricket.co.uk

01235 763335

Cornerstone News – January 2024



Staffing

Many of you will know we have a new part time cook – James who started two weeks before Christmas. James is working Wednesdays but he will also be working Saturdays from the end of January. We are still in the process of recruiting to cover the Kitchen manager position and we are also expecting to need to recruit one more part time cook. Thank you all for your prayers.

Thank you

Thank you to all our customers for your generosity over the past year and for your loyal custom, particularly in the bookshop where we have sold a lot of items.

Dishwasher

Many thanks to all those who have responded to our request and made donations towards the cost of the new dishwasher, we are nearly a quarter of the way towards the total with further pledges that mean we will be able to consider booking the replacement in the next couple of months.

Volunteers

Our Saturday rota for the coming year has a number of gaps on it - if you are able to help out on a monthly, fortnightly or ad hoc basis, we would love to hear from you. We are particularly in need 10-12 and 2-3pm on the counter and in the wash-up.

We welcome young people aged 14 and above, it's great to put volunteering on your CV and can count towards your DofE awards.

Community Fridge

The community fridge has started up again and is here from 4-5pm every Thursday.



Make and Bake

We started up again after the Christmas break on Tuesday 9th January. Open to all children under 5 and their parents/carers. £2 per child – no need to book.

Hot Meal Special

Our hot meal in January will be Salmon with seasonal vegetables. Numbers are limited so we are taking bookings ahead. It will be Wednesday 31st at 12.30pm.

Prayer breakfasts

Our monthly prayer breakfasts continue on the second Saturday of each month. The next one will be on **Saturday 13th January** at 8.30am and I look forward to you joining us for croissants, tea, coffee, prayer and fellowship.



Cornerstone Christian Centre

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Tel: 01235 772280

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www.facebook.com/pages/Cornerstone-Christian-Centre-Grove/125696620782712

<https://www.instagram.com/cornerstonegrove>



PUBLIC NOTICES

Chris Nugent

1953 - 2023

Back in November Chris Nugent passed away, it was very sad, and of course our thoughts and prayers are very much with Olwyn, who had been with him for thirty-three years, and Chris's family.

Chris was very much a larger than life character, both in nature and stature, he was known to many as C J. I knew him personally from the age of eleven at Segsbury School, where we were in the same house and form. We had been friends ever since.

He was born and bred in Challow his father "Big Chris" was Irish, and his mother Bet, came from a large village family.

Although he moved away for a while he came back to the village. He was a keen, and very good cricketer and played for Challow and other local clubs.

The Wake was held at the Cricket Club and was attended by a great many people who were able to reminisce and exchange anecdotes about him.

He will be missed a lot

RIP Chris.

The above notice was submitted for inclusion by Mrs Belcher

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All entries for the **March 2024**
Issue of the Challow News
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Cllr Dr. Paul Barrow

 **Vale of White Horse District Council**

Report from District Councillor for February 2024

Airband poles

A number of residents from Field Gardens, Hedgehill Rd. and Reynolds Way met on December 20th with representatives of Airband, the relevant County Council Officer and myself to discuss the poles which Airband have erected around the estate and for which a (retrospective!) planning notification has now been submitted to the Vale. Two particularly annoying poles were erected (i) right outside two houses in Field Gardens. We had hoped that this might be moved to the end of the road but the distance was greater than the 75m maximum span. There is also no ducting in the road which might be used although there is some along part of Hedgehill Rd. (ii) immediately adjacent to a large sycamore at the junction of Hedgehill Rd. and Reynold's Way with a risk of cable damage – Airband have taken responsibility for this.

The problem is that (a) The govt is pushing full-fibre roll-out and have introduced competition since Openreach might not have got this all done themselves (with the basic aim of keeping govt. investment costs down). So, companies like Gigaclear, Airband etc have moved in for the competition. (b) Utilities (electricity, gas, communications) do not require planning permission to install infrastructure - they just need to inform the Vale. This includes new companies like Airband. However, with Openreach you can have any internet provider you want. With Airband you must use Airband. So, the whole set up is much less than ideal.

Flooding

By the time that you read this I hope that the 11-week-long flood near Mellor's will have been fixed (the under-road culvert carrying Childrey Brook will be unblocked completely and roadside drainage and ditches will have been cleared out. At least two people pointed out the potential problems at this site in the last few years to the county council and someone said that it was only really done well last in 1949. The flooding led to extensive business loss by Mellor's and other small companies on the W&G. I am really concerned about how potential problems like this should be reported if warning messages go ignored?? The improved drainage on the A417 near Haynes has also been far from perfect. I will be discussing future arrangements with the District and County once the current mess (blocked culvert and ditches, silt on road and road surface repair) has been cleared up.

Speeding amelioration

I have submitted a formal application to County Highways for reductions in the speed limits on the B4507, Silver Lane and A417 (B4507 40mph stretching from the 30mph sign nearest Wantage to 50m to the west of the turning to West Challow; Silver Lane to West Challow also 40mph; the A417 from the 30mph sign entering East Challow to 100m west of the turning to West Challow also 40mph; Silver Lane, West Challow 30mph from the A417 to the 20mph sign entering the village).



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Hamilton Drive

Residents of Hamilton Drive on the Childrey Park Estate are fighting to have their road adopted by County Council Highways. Many new housing developments make independent arrangements with private management companies which can involve very high extra costs for residents despite them paying full council tax for Highways. It is a very unsatisfactory arrangement but cheap for county councils!

Wantage Hospital - update

A public meeting was held on January 11th to discuss the options for the future of Wantage Hospital. A presentation was made by Dr. Dan Leveson, Oxford Lead on the Bucks, Oxon, West Berks Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Dr. Ben Riley of Oxford Health. The presentation included the preferred option of an expanded range of out-patient clinics together with the prospect of additional services sometime in the future including a minor injuries unit and improved end-of-life care. The ground floor of the hospital will need refurbishment and Wantage housing development (CIL=Community Infrastructure Levy) money (ca. £600K) is available for health and will be used for this purpose.

Long term changes to National Policy mean that community beds are required much less than previously and the in-patient beds at Wantage will finally go. There is a huge clinical literature (some of which I have read) which shows that discharge from hospital to residents' own homes (with appropriate support!) results in faster recovery than if they stayed in bed. As might be expected the discussion was lively but indicated that few had read the detailed report (to be honest it is 32 pages long).

This was then discussed again the next evening by Wantage Town Council Health Sub-Committee and afterwards by Wantage Town Council. All this was necessary because HOSC (county health scrutiny committee) has been monitoring these arguments closely and has to decide on whether the loss of the in-patient beds, whether there has been sufficient public engagement and whether this will all result in improved health care, is regarded as a substantial and unsatisfactory change. If the co-production has been regarded as unsatisfactory and the changes regarded as substantial, HOSC can refer to the Secretary of State but this could delay the changes and the CIL money could be lost. By the time you read this HOSC will have made a decision on this and I will update via Facebook.

Wantage Town Council voted unanimously to recommend that HOSC does not make the referral but they would also like to see a commitment by the ICB and Oxford Health to continued co-production leading to improved services in the future including a minor injuries unit and improved palliative care.

Review of Primary Care

We all know how difficult it is for us to get a GP appointment. A proportion of GPs are part-time. A number do private work. So how many FTE (Full Time Equivalent) GPs do we have at Mably Way with our growing population???? We need to understand what is happening but even then, things may not change as quickly as we would like. What is at the bottom of what has become an unsatisfactory service in the last few years? At least the ICB understands that Primary Care (mainly GPs but also dentistry, pharmacies and optometry - eye care) needs to improve.

The ICB has launched the 'Primary Care Conversation' asking the public to share their views on primary care services via an online survey which can be found here <https://yourvoicebob-icb.uk/engagementhq.com/hub-page/primary-care> and is open until 31 January 2024

Your views will inform the strategy they are developing.

See <https://www.bucksoxonberksw.icb.nhs.uk/news/posts/bob-icb-news/november-2023/join-the-primary-care-conversation-to-help-transform-services/> for more detail.

Childrey Way

The surfacing of Childrey Way between Cornhill Farm and Silver Lane (Whiteland's Rd.) is now complete – looks nice! There are also two large bollards at the Silver Lane entrance to prevent motor traffic using it as a cut-through. Access to the Farm is via East Challow. The stretch from the road to Childrey has also been cleared and cut by Highways (it is a Bridleway and had become much too narrow.

Recycling

A talk on the ins-and-outs of recycling will be held in our village hall on February 26th at 7pm. The talk will be given by Clara Legallais-Moha, the Vale Waste and Recycling Officer, and should be very interesting as so many of us are confused as to what can and what cannot be recycled, what happens to it all after it leaves your bin and how the guidance has changed. This talk is open to all the seven villages in the ward so make sure you get there in good time for a seat!

SIDs (Speed Indicator Devices for the A417 in the village)

We are expecting and are still waiting for our SIDs and also for the poles on which they will be placed. The sites for these have been marked – albeit faintly so I have remarked them. Don't hold your breath. This is taking a pathetically long time despite chasing but we are now told that these will be in place by 23rd February.

Vicarage Hill HGV

We still have HGVs coming down Letcombe Hill – guided by SatNav? There is a small "Unsuitable for HGVs" notice at the entrance to Vicarage Hill so I have now asked for a larger sign or maybe two before traffic enters Vicarage Hill from the west and east.

County Councillor

Some of you may know that our county councillor, Yvonne Constance has been ill for a few weeks. In her absence, Cllr Bethia Thomas Bethia.Thomas@oxfordshire.gov.uk, who covers Faringdon, will deal with county issues.

Cllr Dr. Paul Barrow

If you have any issues/problems please feel free to contact me

Paul.barrow@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Mob: 07557 953862

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Cllr-Dr-Paul-Barrow-104943001583284>

Instagram: [Dr Paul Barrow](#)

EAST CHALLOW ~ PARISH COUNCIL

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New Councillor....

East Challow Parish Council welcomes Ian Crump as a newly co-opted Councillor.


Carols on the Green....

Thank you to all the Villagers who gathered on the Village Green to sing Christmas Carols, it was great to see so many people there.

Christmas Lights....

Many thanks to the Villagers who put up Christmas lights and displays; it was much appreciated.

Waste & Recycling Information

Normal Collection Day	Which Bin	
Tuesday 6 th February	Black + Food	
Tuesday 13 th February	Green + Food + Brown	
Tuesday 20 th February	Black + Food	
Tuesday 27 th February	Green + Food + Brown	

Please ensure your Waste & Recycling Bins are placed on the kerbside before 06.00 am to ensure your bins are emptied

Please return your bins to your property ASAP after collection to ensure they are not blown onto the road causing an obstruction or damage to other vehicles

Please take any Large Waste Items to the Recycling Centre at Stanford in the Vale

The Next Parish Council Meeting

will take place in the Village Hall on

Wednesday 14th February at 7.30pm

All villagers are invited to attend Parish Council meetings as observers and there is a 10 minute public discussion time early in the meeting when you can raise any matter you wish with the council.

The minutes of each meeting are available on the website.



Parish Councillors

*Paul Barrow, Vanessa Bosley,
Ian Crump, Andy Gregson,
Trevor Hayes, Bryan Miller,
Frances Webb*

Clerk to the council - Jane Smith
clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk

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Parish Council Website

<https://www.eastchallowpc.co.uk/>

The minutes of all the Council Meetings can be found here

<https://www.eastchallowpc.co.uk/the-parish-council/minutes-and-agenda/>

Archived copies of the Challow News can be found here

<https://www.eastchallowpc.co.uk/local-information/challow-news/>

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