

February 2026

The

BRAMLEY

FOR BRAMLEY AND LITTLE LONDON

Magazine



- **Ice skating champion**
- **A tree for the Clift brothers**
- **Village Community Showcase**

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The Bramley Magazine

for Bramley and
Little London

February 2026

Chairman of Steering Group:

Rhydian Vaughan MBE
chairman@bramleymagazine.org.uk

Joint Editors

Rachel Barclay Smith
Holly French
editor@bramleymagazine.org.uk

Schools Editor:

Emily Sykes

Advertising:

Rick Askin
bram.mag.adverts@gmail.com

Rector:

Rev'd Mark Anderson
revmarkanderson4@gmail.com
07480 067756
www.stjamesbramley.com

Churchwardens:

Dave Knights
07552 616105
davefrondeg@gmail.com

Rachel Barclay Smith
01256 541251
rbarclaysmith@gmail.com

Bramley Parish Council

Clerk: Maxta Thomas (07810 692486)
parishclerk@bramleypc.co.uk
Chairman: Anthony Durrant
www.bramleypc.co.uk

Artwork and Printing

Greenhouse Graphics
Unit 8, Cufaude Business Park,
Cufaude Lane, Bramley,
RG26 5DL
01256 880770
www.greenhousegraphics.co.uk

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Editorial

Welcome to the first Bramley magazine of 2026. It's a bit late to say Happy New Year so how about Happy February? I imagine a lot of you will consider that a contradiction in terms as February has a reputation for being the most depressing month of the year. In Old English, February was called *Solmonath*, which translates to "mud month," reflecting the wet weather conditions typical in England during this month. I'm taking a more positive view of February though and prefer the Saxon name for it: "Solmōnāþ" which means "cake month". Apparently the Saxons would offer cakes to the gods during February, but nowadays it could reflect the number of birthdays: I have more birthdays on my calendar for this month than any other – although I guess that is more of a reflection on May.....

The days are still short in February, which is a problem for our local toads as you can read on pages 24 and 25, but they are gradually getting longer. I'm not sure I agree with the last part of the quote below; we have more than an extra quarter of an hour of twilight to enjoy by the end of the month. On 1st February the sun sets at 16.49 but by the end of the month it will be 17.38, nearly an hour later. With the sun rising earlier too, the day will be 1 hour 39 minutes longer by the 28th. Lots more time to walk the dog or follow the example of Bramley school and take part in some sports.

There is a lot going on in February: if you are concerned about the construction of the solar farm you can speak to the project team on Thursday 5 February (page 13); a few days later on Saturday the 7th, the Parish Council is running a Community Showcase where you can discover more about the groups that make our village thrive (Page 10); Pancake Day falls on 17 February this year so don't miss the traditional pancake race at Cross House (page 7). If you live near the school be aware that the Bramley Road Races are taking place on Sunday 15 February – details on page 19.

If you would prefer to stay indoors during February, then turn to page 23 to find out about a new craft group. You could also watch the Winter Olympics which take place between 6 and 22 February. Who knows, Sebastian Poon, featured on page 15, may be taking part in the next one!

So try and enjoy February and, if it is all too much, you can take comfort in the fact that it is a short month. The Welsh, aren't wrong in calling it "y mis bach," meaning "little month."

Best wishes

Rachel

Joint Editor

"The shortest day has passed, and whatever nastiness of weather we may look forward to in January and February, at least we notice that the days are getting longer. Minute by minute they lengthen out. It takes some weeks before we become aware of the change. It is imperceptible even as the growth of a child, as you watch it day by day, until the moment comes when with a start of delighted surprise we realise that we can stay out of doors in a twilight lasting for another quarter of a precious hour."

Vita Sackville-West

Cover Photo: Barn Owl © Paul Sterry/Nature Photographers Ltd

Material for the March issue to be sent (preferably by email) to the editor no later than 14 February 2026. PLEASE NOTE EARLIER DATE.

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Benefice Services

February...

1st	4th Sunday of Epiphany
9.00	Sunday@9 – Cross House
10.30	BCP Matins – St James
8th	2nd Sunday before Lent
9.00	Sunday@9 – Cross House
10.30	Holy Communion - St James
15th	Sunday before Lent
9.00	Sunday@9 – Cross House
10.30	Morning Worship – St James
18th	Ash Wednesday
20.00	Holy Communion with ashing
22nd	1st Sunday of Lent
9.00	Sunday@9 – Cross House
10.30	Holy Communion – St James

1st	4th Sunday of Epiphany
10.00	Holy Communion – St Leonard's, Sherfield
10.00	Family Service – St Mary's, Stratfield Saye
10.30	BCP Morning Prayer – St Mary's, Hartley Wespall
8th	2nd Sunday before Lent
10.00	Café Church – St Leonard's, Sherfield
15th	Sunday before Lent
10.00	Holy Communion – St Leonard's, Sherfield
10.30	Family Service – St Mary's, Hartley Wespall
18th	Ash Wednesday
10.00	Holy Communion – St Leonard's, Sherfield with ashing
22nd	1st Sunday of Lent
10.00	Family Service – St Leonard's, Sherfield

...and into March

1st	2nd Sunday of Lent
9.00	Sunday@9 – Cross House
10.30	BCP Matins – St James
8th	3rd Sunday of Lent
9.00	Sunday@9 – Cross House
10.30	Holy Communion – St James
15th	4th Sunday of Lent – Mothering Sunday
8.00	BCP Holy Communion
10.30	Morning Worship – St James

...and into March

1st	2nd Sunday of Lent
10.00	Holy Communion – St Leonard's, Sherfield
10.00	Family Service – St Mary's, Stratfield Saye
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8th	3rd Sunday of Lent
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15th	4th Sunday of Lent – Mothering Sunday
10.00	Mothering Sunday – St Leonard's, Sherfield
10.30	Family Service – St Mary's, Hartley Wespall

From the Registers

Funerals

George Edward Woods	2nd December 2025 St James Church
Gillian Batley	4th December 2025 St James Church
Peter Dodé	23rd December 2025 St James Church

SAVE THE DATE!

After seven months away we are delighted to say that the bells will be returning to St James' Church on Friday 6 March. They will be blessed by Rev. Mark Anderson during the 10.30am service on Sunday 8 March and the two-week process of re-hanging the bells will commence the next day.

Hopefully the bells will be ringing out for Easter!

News from Clift Surgery and the Patient Participation Group

Clift Surgery Dispensary and Online Pharmacies

Did you know that NHS rules mean Clift Surgery patients cannot use our dispensary for repeat prescriptions if they live within one mile of a local pharmacy? This is under review nationally, but for now remains in place.

Local access to your repeat prescriptions remains available from the Clift dispensary and pharmacies.

Recently, we have noticed an increasing number of patients are being encouraged to sign up to and use nationwide online pharmacy services, such as those offering postal delivery services. If this option genuinely suits you, that's absolutely fine. However, some patients have joined without realising. If you think this may have happened to you, please contact our dispensary team for advice.

When prescriptions are processed through an online pharmacy, our dispensing team still need to coordinate your prescriptions on your behalf. This creates extra work for the surgery, without any of the NHS funding that would normally support this time.

If you are eligible and collect your repeat prescriptions directly from our dispensary, the surgery receives the NHS payment, helping us continue to provide local services.

Remember, Clift Surgery also offers the **Pharmabox**, allowing eligible patients to collect prescriptions 24 hours a day over a three day window. This is especially helpful if you can't visit during normal opening hours.

Using the dispensary means your queries can be answered quickly by a real person.

Where possible, please support the Clift Surgery Dispensary. In a semi-rural community, we are fortunate to have this service.

It Takes a Team: Who You Might See at Your GP Practice

When you contact your GP surgery, you won't always see a GP — and that's a good thing.

Modern GP practices are made up of **many different health professionals**, all working together to help you get the right care as quickly as possible.

Why things work this way

Different health problems need different kinds of expertise.

By matching you with the best person for your needs, the practice can:

- Help you sooner
- Reduce waiting times
- Make sure you get specialist care straight away

It really does take a team.

Who might help you?

- **GPs** are experts in diagnosing and managing a wide range of health conditions. You'll see a GP when you need their specific medical expertise.
- **Nurses & Advanced Nurse Practitioners** are skilled clinicians who can assess, diagnose, treat, and prescribe for many conditions.
- **Clinical Pharmacists** are experts in medicines. They can review your prescriptions, help with side effects, and support longterm conditions.
- **Physiotherapists** specialise in muscle, joint, and movement problems. They can assess, diagnose, and provide treatment plans.

OUR COMMUNITY

- **Paramedics** are trained to assess urgent but non-emergency issues and provide fast, effective care.
- **Mental Health Practitioners** support emotional wellbeing, anxiety, low mood, and other mental health concerns.
- **Social Prescribers & Health Coaches** help with non-medical needs like loneliness, housing, lifestyle changes, and community support.

What happens when you contact the surgery?

When you call or use online services, the team will ask a few questions. This isn't being nosy — it's to make sure you're booked with the right professional. You'll always be directed to the person best placed to help you.

The message to patients is simple

You may not always see a GP — but you will always see the right person.

Everyone in the team is trained, qualified, and working together to support your health.

The Patient Panel

If anyone is interested in becoming part of the Patient Panel, please email ppgclift@gmail.com for further details. We are particularly looking for a parent with younger children and a 16 – 25-year-old.

The surgery would like to extend its thanks to all the patients who brought in gifts and cards at Christmas and the staff wish you all a happy and healthy 2026.

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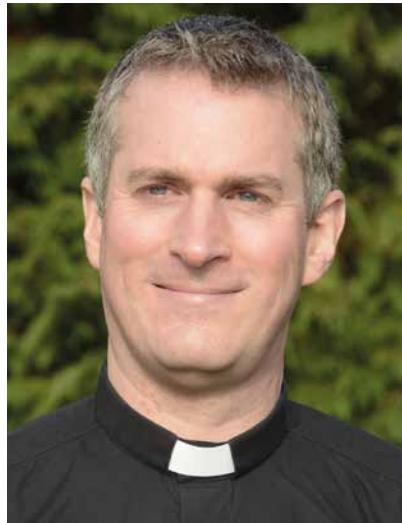
Do you have a plan?

If you're of a certain age and watched the A-team when it was on TV longer ago than I can remember, you will know at least one person who loves it when a plan comes together. I too love it when a plan is fulfilled, and that's the only thing I have in common with Hannibal, leader of the A-team.

This is the time of year when many people make plans. Some call them New Year's Resolutions and some of those plans aren't always completed in the way we had hoped they would be. This is also the most popular time for making plans to go on holiday by making a booking or two for that far away place we sometimes dream about. I am writing this on 6 January, which is the time (in the church) we call

'Epiphany' and it's when we remember those wise men (aka Magi) whose travel plans didn't have a known destination but they believed something significant was happening. Their plan probably didn't amount to more than packing up the camels and making sure they had enough food and, of course, gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to present to the one they found by following the star all the way to Bethlehem.

God has a plan. God is at work in this world often in ways unseen by most and unreported in the scrolling media channels and social media. Yet God intervenes, when we accept the divine invitation to allow God's ways to become our ways. In the same way since ancient times, God works in



Rev'd Mark Anderson

humanly impossible ways with unlikely people. When we pray the prayer Jesus taught us (the 'Our Father') we pray 'your kingdom come, your will be done'. We're praying for good things to happen for others and for ourselves.

If you read the Bible (as I have) you will come across many people who had the same dreams, needs, desires and problems as we do. They made similar mistakes in human ways, as we do. What we read is how ordinary people asked God to intervene in their lives and as God answers those prayers, we are drawn into God's plan to make all things well. I remember reading about Hannah who was past childbearing age but still prayed for a child. God answered her prayers and her son became the prophet Samuel who counselled the leader of his nation

to do the right thing, despite opposition. I remember reading about Ananias who was praying. He was used by God to bring healing to someone who would then go on to bring healing to many more people.

So as we continue to make plans for all sorts of things in this coming year, I wonder what could you and I pray for this year? Perhaps for something good to happen in the life of another, which in God's plan could become more significant than we may ever know.

Rev'd Mark Anderson

Vicar, St James Church, Bramley



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Shrove Tuesday

Pancake Party

Tuesday 17th February 2026
Cross House, St James' Church, Bramley
4.30 - 5.30pm

Games, activities, a bible story and
lots of Pancakes to enjoy!



A free event for children and their parents and carers
Please bring a frying pan for the pancake races
for more details contact: admin@stjamesbramley.org.uk

The rain didn't dampen the spirits of those who gathered to plant a tree in memory of John and William Clift

On the weekend of 22 November 2025, the last remaining descendants of the Clift Family congregated in Bramley to plant a Memorial Sweet Chestnut Tree.

They brought with them soil from their current homes to nourish the Hampshire soil, and bulbs to flower in Springtime.

On a desperately wet and miserable Saturday morning, the proceedings were overseen by Mark Anderson (Rector of St James' Church), Tony Durrant (Bramley PC) and Graham Auld (Clift Meadow Trust). The tree was sourced and planted by Tom Mason Trees. After heartfelt words from members of the family, bulbs were distributed for all to plant, and then refuge was provided in the Clift Meadow Pavilion where coffee and cakes were served, and there was an opportunity to discover more about the Clift family from the many documents and photographs that the family had brought with them.

The poem was written by Sally Lawton, one of the descendants of the Clift brothers.

The time of the Clift Family in Bramley has run its course, but their legacy of open space and the provision of village amenities for no personal gain, is apparent to us all.

A POEM TO MARK THE PLANTING OF A SWEET CHESTNUT TREE

on Saturday 22nd November 2025

In sixteen hundred & seventy-five
John Clift, a farmer, first arrived
Farming in Bramley was the first sign
Of what became his family line.

Today, in this place we plant this tree
A memory to the Clifts for all to see
To all the people who lived here before
Their roots and stories will endure.

From the trunk the branches will quickly grow
Each one stretching, with love to show
Leaves shining bright like names from the past
With the deepest of roots that always last.

When the sun shines or the rain descends
The tree stands firm like a family friend
A living link to days gone by
Under Bramley's sun and sky.

And one day when the chestnuts fall
We pray that people will recall
The good that flowed through every year
Bringing great joy to families here.



1. Members of the Clift family join villagers at the tree planting ceremony
2. Tony Durrant, Rev Mark Anderson and Caroline Campbell
3. Tom Mason and his colleague planting the tree
4. Some of the memorabilia brought by the Clift family





Christmas Lights at Clift Meadow

The heavy rain didn't deter villagers from turning out for the Christmas Lights switch on at Clift Meadow on 5 December. Those who attended were treated to warming mulled wine, mince pies and other treats. Bramley School choir sang to us and then the Tadley Concert Brass played a selection of Christmas carols and songs, with Dr Jane Setter leading the singing.

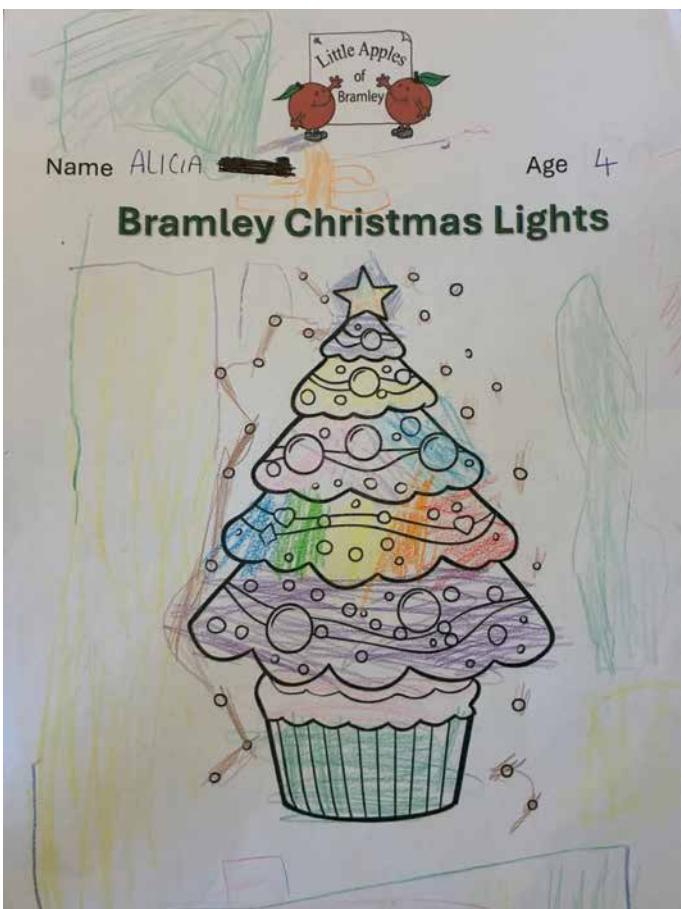
Children from Bramley School, Little Apples and Butter Daisy entered a competition to design a poster for the event, and the winning designs are below.

Thank you to the Clift Meadow Trust for organising this event and putting up the lights.

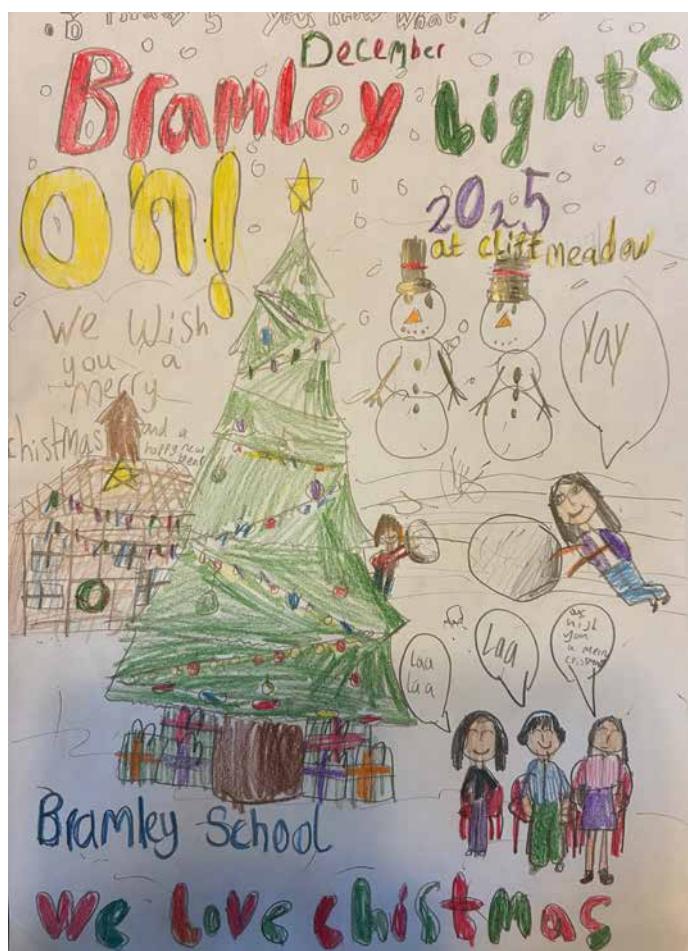
Rachel Barclay Smith



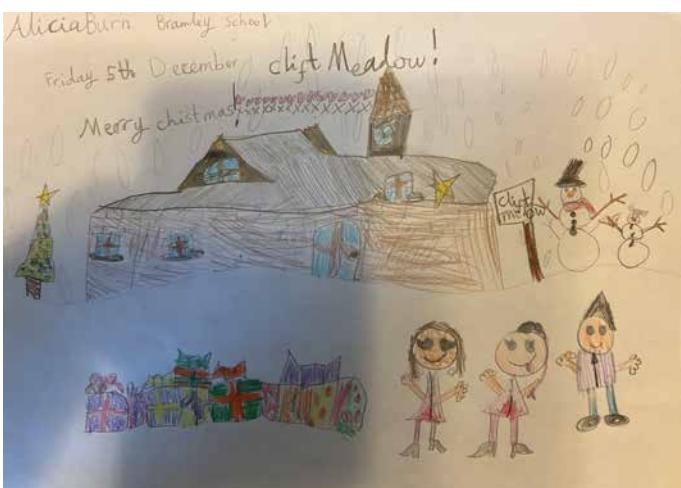
Alyssa from Butter Daisy Nursery



Alicia from the Little Apples Playgroup



Lily from KS1 Bramley School



Alicia from KS1 Bramley School



BRAMLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Community Showcase

Discover the groups that make our village thrive

Come along to an informal drop-in event celebrating local organisations and groups that have received Parish Council support in recent years.

Venue: Clift Meadow Pavilion



Date: 7th February 2026



Time: 10:00am - 1:00pm

Refreshments available

- Browse posters and displays from local groups
 - Chat to organisations about what they do
- Meet your Parish and Borough Ward Councillors in a relaxed setting
 - Find out about volunteering

Everyone is welcome - whether you are new to the village or have lived here for years



Web: www.bramley-pc.gov.uk

Email: clerk@bramley-pc.gov.uk

This month's update from Bramley Parish Council is brought to us by **Cllr Jan Wright**

I'm writing this in January, following a spell of harsh cold weather that has now given way to milder temperatures, rain, and the looming threat of Storm Goretti. With that in mind, it feels like a good moment to reflect on 2025 and all that Bramley Parish Council has been involved in over the past year.

As spring arrived, we were rewarded for our rather late bulb-planting sessions organised by the Parish Council in November 2024. Lane End, Bramley Green and the surrounding areas were transformed into a sea of yellow, with over 1,000 daffodils bursting into bloom. They created a wonderful welcome to the village for residents and visitors alike, and we are already looking forward to even more colour as spring 2026 approaches.

As the year progressed and the weather warmed, we enjoyed the return of many of our much-loved annual events, including the Reading Road Race, the Village Litter Pick, Chase the Sun Bike Ride, the Bramley Show, the Village Fete and the Easter Egg Hunt.

During one of the hottest summers in recent years, work also continued on the Bramley Village Green at Longbridge Road, with the creation of a new pathway, grass area and wild flower area. This culminated in the installation of a new bridge, improving access to and from The Smithy and providing a safe route through the village that avoids the main road. Bramley Squirrel Scouts were commissioned by the Parish Council to plant bluebells and poppies around the Village Green, which they did with great enthusiasm. We should start to see the results of their hard work in the coming months.

The year ended with more familiar highlights, including the Bramley School Firework Display, the Clift Meadow Christmas Light Switch-On, which was a huge success despite the weather, and of course, our annual visit from Santa, kindly supported by the Loddon Valley Lions. And how can we forget the amazing Christmas Light Display in Walsh Road, which brings pleasure to so many, young and old alike.

There are so many positive things happening in Bramley, thanks to the dedication of volunteers and community groups, alongside the work of Parish Council members, all helping to keep Bramley a village we can be proud of. It's true that Bramley has faced challenges recently, from roadworks and potholes to new developments and an increasing number of planning applications. Parish Councillors continue to work hard to navigate these issues and to achieve the best possible outcomes for our community within the limits of our role. Elsewhere in the magazine, a separate piece has been written to help residents understand how best to comment on planning applications, whether you are for, against, or simply wish to share a view. However, we shouldn't let these external pressures distract us from all that makes Bramley such a great place to live. The events mentioned here represent only a small proportion of the activities that take place weekly, monthly and annually, and sincere apologies if your event or organisation hasn't been mentioned.

Behind many of these events, the Parish Council has

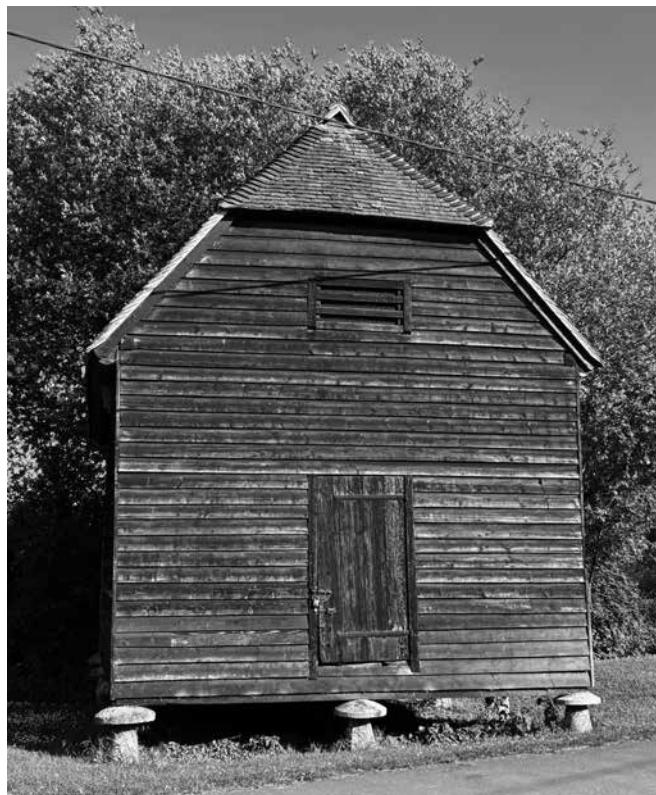
been supporting volunteers and organisers by providing funding to help ensure everything could go ahead as planned. With this in mind, we are now planning a Village Community Showcase on Saturday 7 February, from 10am to 1pm, at the Pavilion Hall, Clift Meadow. Organisations that have benefited from Parish Council support are being invited to come along to celebrate their successes and to talk to residents about what they do. This is a public event, and everyone is very welcome. Please look out for our flyers on noticeboards and social media for further details. We would love to see you there and it's a great way to put a face to your Parish Council.

The February meetings of the Parish Council are as follows:

- Planning Committee – Tuesday 10 February, 8.00pm, Bramley Village Hall
- Full Council – Tuesday 17 February.

Full details of both meetings will be on the Bramley Parish Council website nearer the time of the meetings.

Wishing all of the Bramley Community a happy and prosperous 2026.



Contacts

Bramley Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Maxta Thomas: clerk@bramley-pc.gov.uk,
07810 692486

Bramley PC website: www.bramley-pc.gov.uk

Bramley PC Facebook page: www.facebook.com/BramleyPC

Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

www.basingstoke.gov.uk, 01256 844844. Good for reporting fly tipping issues and issues with local playgrounds.

Planning portal: <https://publicaccess.basingstoke.gov.uk/>
online-applications

Hampshire County Council

www.hants.gov.uk. Good for reporting highways and footpaths issues (including potholes), broken street lights, parking issues and flooding issues.

Bramley SpeedWatch

Many car drivers unintentionally exceed the speed limit without realising it. Modern cars are so powerful and comfortable they give drivers little sensation of their speed. It is too easy to creep above the limit, and many drivers believe it is difficult to drive a modern car at no more than 30 mph on a road with a 30-mph limit. Drivers are responsible for the speeds at which they choose to drive, but if they find it difficult to stay within speed limits, there are some simple and practical things they can do to help themselves:

1. Check your speedometer regularly, especially when leaving high speed roads
2. Know the limits – look for signs, especially at junctions
3. Assume lamp posts mean 30 mph, until signs say otherwise, but remember it could be 20 mph
4. Remember, speed limits are a maximum, not a target
5. 20's plenty when kids are about – and may even be too fast
6. Try no higher than 3rd gear in a 30 mph limit
7. Recognise what makes you speed - keeping up with traffic, overtaking or being tailgated
8. Concentrate – distracted drivers speed
9. Slow down when entering villages
10. Give yourself time – there's no need to speed and you won't get there quicker.

Ref: ROSPA

Camera Data December 2025:

Verified speeders (=>35mph)	Highest number of offences committed by one vehicle	Fastest hour	Illegal vehicles
469*	4	3pm	17

* Note: The street was closed to traffic for 5 days during December.

Some not-so-fun facts from SpeedWatch 2025

During 2025 the camera recorded 7709 vehicles exceeding 35mph. That is a lot of speeding! Did you contribute to that number?

If the camera was an enforcement camera it would have raised more than £0.75 million and several people would have likely lost their licenses.

The SpeedWatch team spent 35 hours undertaking road-side checks during the year, during which the speed of 4389 vehicles was checked. 278 vehicles were found to be exceeding 35mph and reported to the police. Help these numbers decrease for 2026: slow down.

Recent Local SpeedWatch Activity:

Two manned deployments were undertaken during December. Three vehicles were reported to the police from the 307 vehicles checked. In general, we are seeing fewer offenders on our deployments and the recordings on the camera are also down. Let's hope

that this downward trajectory continues in 2026.

The police have paid visits to vehicle owners who have been recorded speeding multiple times on the camera. Don't be on the list for a visit next month!

We need your help! If you're interested in becoming a member of the SpeedWatch Group and contributing to making Bramley roads safer, please reach out to Bramley SpeedWatch at bramleyspeedwatch@yahoo.com. Your support is crucial for the scheme to continue functioning. Don't worry, full training will be provided by Hampshire Police. Thank you for considering joining us!

If you have any questions/concerns regarding SpeedWatch please email: bramleyspeedwatch@yahoo.com speedwatch@hampshire.pnn.police.uk or visit: www.hampshire.police.uk

Keep Safe and Watch Your Speed
Graham White, Bramley
SpeedWatch Co-ordinator

SID Data – December:

SID Location	Days deployed	Traffic direction	% of vehicles exceeding 30 mph	No. vehicles exceeding 60 mph
The Forge*	31	West bound	67%	22
Farriers	31	West bound	39%	3
The Street Beaurepaire	31	East bound	40%	2

* The data from the SID at the Forge is only using data from vehicles leaving the SID; vehicles will all be within the 30mph zone

The Bramley Show News

We would like to extend our good wishes to you all for 2026

We are working towards the next Show on Sunday 13 September. The classes will be available next month but rest assured, there will be the old favourites as well as something new.

As the village continues to grow, it is important to keep the old traditions and this is the probably the oldest in Bramley, being in its 38th year. Gardening and growing may not have changed but the increasing interest in crafts as seen on TV, such as pottery, sewing, baking and knitting, illustrates there is an appetite to become more creative, which helps with our physical and emotional wellbeing.

There will be more news next month. Let's work together as a community to support such community events.

BRAMLEY WI

The guest speaker at our Christmas party in December was Jonathan Large, who is a bell ringer at St James' Church here in Bramley.

It was a most entertaining evening; we all had a go at ringing hand bells which was good fun, and Jonathan also explained about the history of the bells including those at St James', which are hopefully coming back in February.

We then had a light buffet and drinks, and ended the evening with the raffle.

Our January meeting was the usual lunch made by the committee: a collection of soups and crumbles. We always have a lunch time meeting in January due to the unpredictable weather, which proved itself this year.

The next meeting in February is a 'Questions and Answers' evening where we are having representatives from the Sherfield Gardening Club.

Jane Matthews

Come and talk to us

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Thursday 5 February 2026

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More information:
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Sue Locke

On 15 January, many family and friends came together at St James' Church to say goodbye to Sue Locke who died in December, just seven months after her beloved husband, Fred. Sue and Fred had been married for 69 years, spending the majority of that time in Bramley, and it was a blessing that they didn't have to be apart for long.

Sue played an active part in Bramley life during her 56 years in the village. She was a member of the WI and the quilting group and attended Keep Fit and flower arranging classes. She was also a faithful member of St James' Church, getting involved in everything from singing in the choir and helping at Harvest Suppers to cleaning the church and making new kneelers. I'm sure there was a fair amount of baking involved too! She always ran a stall at the church and village fêtes and for some years was secretary to the then vicar, Ken Holden.

During her working life Sue was secretary at Chineham Park Junior school where, along with her secretarial duties, she acted as school nurse, agony aunt and provider

of tissues for upset children. Her secretarial training sometimes found its way home when Sue would slip into shorthand when leaving rushed notes to her sons, Howard and Stephen. Needless to say, the dots and squiggles didn't mean much to them!

When she retired, her love of children prompted her to help at the Bramley 0-5s club and I was one of the many grateful parents to benefit from her cups of tea and coffee.

As someone who had only known Sue for around twenty years, I was surprised to learn that she suffered breast cancer in her 40s, undergoing extensive surgery and chemotherapy. What isn't surprising is that as soon as she had recovered, she volunteered at the breast unit, supporting other ladies through their treatment.

As Rev Mark Anderson said in his address, Sue was full of the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. All those who knew her benefited from these attributes, as well as her wisdom, encouragement and sense of humour.

Rachel Barclay Smith



Bramley teenager Sebastian Poon crowned British Figure Skating Champion

Sebastian became the British Basic Novice Boys Champion following an outstanding performance at the British Figure Skating Championships held at Ice Sheffield from 26–30 November.

His triumph is especially remarkable given that just over a year ago he was left without a home rink after the closure of Basingstoke Ice Rink — the place where he first learned to skate and trained daily. Determined not to let this setback hinder his progress, Sebastian and his family made the difficult decision to relocate his training to the National Ice Centre in Nottingham, travelling long distances each week while he continued his full-time education in Hampshire.

His success has been made possible through the support of his coaching team — Phil Harris, Clair Ben Zina, Debbie Wright, and Sophie Shoebridge — along with the encouragement of the local skating community who have followed his journey from Basingstoke to the national stage.

During the Championships, Sebastian also had the rare opportunity to witness

British ice dance stars Lilah Fear and Lewis Gibson make history by securing their eighth consecutive national title. Experiencing elite competition up close has further strengthened his motivation and aspirations.

With the Championships now behind him, Sebastian will continue along the Advanced Novice pathway, aiming to achieve the qualifying score for next season and build on this pivotal national title.



New Defibrillator

Bramley now has a new defibrillator – at Cross House next to the church. Beth Pinnock and other members of St James' Church thought it would be beneficial to have one in this area as it attracts a lot of visitors and walkers. Nigel Alderman led the project and obtained a grant from Barratt Redrow Southern Counties, who are developing Stocks Farm. Their contribution covered the cost of the defibrillator which was then purchased from the British Heart Foundation and installed by Dave Knights, churchwarden, and Jordan Smith.



Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest affects 100,000 people a year in England and it is estimated that defibrillators save around 30,000 lives a year. The machines deliver a high energy, electric shock in an attempt to restore a person's heart rhythm; they automatically detect the abnormal heart rhythm and tell the user when a shock



The defibrillator is on the corner of Cross House nearest to the car park

is needed. The devices are designed for use by members of the public with no training or clinical background, before the arrival of the emergency services. All you need to do is call 999 and follow the instructions.

Thank you to all those involved in this project: your time and generosity could save lives.

Rachel Barclay Smith

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Did you know...? You can use any of our opening hours for EYE grant funding! Whether your child is eligible for the 15 or 30 hours per week funding (ages 2-4), check what funding you can access at www.gov.uk/get-childcare

News from the Village Hall

The second half of 2025 was a busy one for the Village Hall. We completed maintenance work on the roof of the main hall and the Bramley room, funded by a generous grant from the Parish Council; further roofing works will be scheduled for late Spring/early Summer this year. A project got underway to install new IT infrastructure across the building to improve WiFi access with enhanced security. This work was undertaken by Stevens IT Solutions and was supported by a grant from the Bramley Solar Community Benefit Fund, a charitable concern funded by Cero Generation, the company installing solar panels at the site on Minchens Lane.

Like many other community facilities, the Village Hall faces some serious challenges in ensuring it has sufficient income from hirings to meet its expenditure to keep our doors open. Over the past few years our insurance premiums have gone up, utility charges have increased and, with modernisation of our IT infrastructure, we will have to pay a higher service charge this year. Hall hire charges last went up by 10% in October 2022 for party hirers and by 10% for our regular users in April 2023. We've managed to hold those rates since then, but we have seen our costs go up each year for the past three years and we can't continue to absorb them; an uplift in hiring charges of around 7% will be necessary. That means the cost per hour for the Main Hall will be £23.60, the Bramley Room hourly rate will increase to £14.20 and the Frith Room to £12.00 per hour. The new charges for party hires took effect on 1 January 2026 and for regular users charges will go up from 1 April 2026. Our regular users were informed of the proposed changes at the end of October last year, giving them six months' notice of a change in rates. We have taken soundings of other village halls in this part of Hampshire and we continue to assess that our rates remain competitive, especially with the regular user discount we can offer.

Despite increasing our charges, we intend to continue with a scheme we have been running for the past five years to encourage community groups in Bramley to take full advantage of the Hall's facilities; we recognise that finding the right size space at the time you need it can be a challenge for some groups, especially for those starting-up with ambitious plans but bearing the risk that they may not achieve the numbers they hope for. We are prepared to help new community groups in these circumstances, to provide them with a suitable meeting space with no charge for the first three meetings and a discounted rate for room hire for three meetings after that. We can offer advice and support for those organisers seeking to apply for grants and other funding to help their group get off the ground. And we have access to the network of community groups across Hampshire and can try to put you in touch with others focussed on similar issues. If you have ideas for new groups, your Village Hall can help! Please email bookings@bvht.org.uk to discuss your ideas.

Sadly, two of our longest serving Trustees, Richard Beale and Jennifer Begent, stood down from the Trustees Committee in January. Both Richard and Jenni have been involved as Trustees since 2017 and Richard, in particular, has done a terrific job as our Treasurer, ably assisted by Jenni. In response to our posting on the Bramley Community Facebook page, we have three volunteers who have stepped forward to join the Committee and they have now been elected as Trustees: Raghavendra Vaishampayan, Mark Lund and Peter Dziwior. In due course Raghavendra will succeed Richard as our Treasurer. We extend a warm welcome to all three as new members of our team.

Gareth Jones

Chairman, Bramley Village Hall Trustees

Chairman@bvht.org.uk

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Sports at Bramley School

At Bramley Primary School, we firmly believe that an active body leads to a healthy mind. That's why we encourage our children to participate in sports and enjoy being physically active. As a school, our key principles are:

- To provide a range of opportunities for physical activities
- For children to enjoy being active and taking part in team games
- To develop the fundamentals for physical activity
 - agility, balance and coordination

We are proud of our school provision for PE not only to develop the children's ability to lead healthier lifestyles but also to understand the positive impact being active and playing with others can have.

Competitive Sports

In addition to the physical activities we offer in school, we also value the opportunity for children to take part in competitions to put their skills into practice. At the end of each term, we hold the House Games where each year group works together in a range of team games to earn points for their house. The House with the most points from all the friendly competitions across the whole school wins the House Sports Cup! It's a fun way to apply the new skills they have been learning all term within a safe competitive atmosphere.

Representing our School

Many adults through the school also lead sports clubs for those with a keen interest, to develop their skills but also to build a school team for local competitions. For the children to wear the school kit and to go out on the minibus to represent our school is a great experience and a real privilege.

So far this year, we have taken part in:

Skipping – it is great fun for our KS1 children to take part in the local skipping competition. Having practiced in school, they try out their speed skipping, backwards skipping and even paired double-dutch skills to earn points for the school. A friendly event that develops individual skills in a fun competition environment.

Tag-Rugby – each term our tag-rugby team, made up from girls and boys in Yr5&6, takes part in mini tournaments

against local schools. The points from each event are tracked in the district league. In the summer term, they then take part in a full tournament day where they get to put their skills to the test against many schools in north Hampshire. In school, training helps to develop the key skills and teamwork needed in each tournament.

Netball – our netball team, also made up from girls and boys in Yr5&6, have started the season well. They are also in a local mini league where the top schools in the league go forward to the district and then county tournaments.

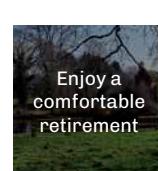
Gymnastics – we take children from KS1 to the Active Life Centre in Basingstoke to take part in a district gymnastics competition. There is a set routine to learn and to perform for the judges, as well as individual activities on the apparatus. Again, a great way to start out and build confidence in competitions.

Football – The main competitive matches take place for the Yr5&6 boys' team and girls' team within local mini-leagues. We have also set up many friendly matches with our collaboration schools to help develop confidence and opportunities to put skills into practice.

In the summer we also have a range of fantastic opportunities for the children to be active and further develop their skills through athletics, cricket and rounders events for a range of age groups. This all adds up to encourage our children to lead healthy lifestyles and to develop key physical activity skills.

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READING ROADRUNNERS

- Bramley 20/10 Road Races: 15th Feb '26

Reading Roadrunners is organising the Bramley 20 and 10 mile road races to be held on Sunday 15th February 2026. The course consists of a 10 mile loop which is run twice for the 20 mile race. These races are a popular feature of the local and national racing calendar and over the years have raised thousands of pounds for charity. The 2026 races will continue the success of previous years and will be an enjoyable event for all participants.

Bramley Primary School will be our race HQ and the races will start and finish outside the school. The races will start at 10:00 (half an hour earlier than last year), and the runners will congregate on the start line on Bramley Lane prior to this. The course will remain open until 14:00, and we expect to be out of the school by 16:00. In order to provide all the facilities for the runners, the school will open at 08:00 to enable us to get ready for the event and to build the start / finish area in the school entrance.

Traffic restrictions will be as follows:

1. Bramley Lane will be closed at 08:00 from the southern end of Moat Close all the way north to the junction with Olivers Lane. This is a new extended closure for 2026 and so the north exit from Moat Close will be closed. All traffic must leave via the south exit and go south towards the level crossing.
2. If Bramley Lane / Moat Close residents need access within the affected road closure area they must approach from the level crossing end of Bramley Lane and liaise with the marshals for access. Please do not drive through the start/finish area.
3. At the start of the race (10:00) there will also be a short road closure on Sherfield Road between Bramley Lane and Folly Lane until all runners are through; about 10-15 minutes.



It's not too late to take part...

To enter either the 10 mile or 20 mile race please go to our website:

<http://www.readingroadrunners.org/bramley>

If you would like further information, please see the website or email me at:

bramley@readingroadrunners.org

Yours faithfully,

For and on behalf of READING ROADRUNNERS,

Gill Manton

Race Director



Probus Hears About a Life in Nuclear

At the Probus Club's last meeting, retired nuclear scientist Suzanne Fletcher-Mallinson, Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, gave an outline of her working life spent in various sections of the nuclear industry.



Probus President Stephen Thair with speaker Suzanne Fletcher-Mallinson

After earning her MSc from the University of California, Berkeley, she joined Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California, an institution known for designing nuclear systems comparable to those developed at Los Alamos National Laboratory. She facilitated nuclear and delivery system testing in Nevada, and certified LLNL systems at more than seven production sites.



An underground explosion in the Nevada desert

By 1990 the USA had produced approximately 70,000 nuclear devices across 65 types. Suzanne described field tests of a 6-inch diameter device using NATO guns. Next was her involvement in President Reagan's 'Star Wars' Strategic Defence Initiative, a project to create a dome of defence using nuclear-driven x-ray lasers to knock out incoming nuclear missiles.

Moving to AWE in Aldermaston, she married in January 1989, which qualified her for British citizenship five years later.

Following various roles, including being physicist and manager of the remaining reactor on the Aldermaston site, VIPER, she became the Technical Assistant to the Director of Research & Applied Science.

Throughout her career she also performed research alongside her engineering roles. This led to her attending conferences at Nashville Tennessee, Lucerne in Switzerland, Kyoto in Japan, and London.

Following a career break after the birth of her third child in 2003, she joined Serco from 2007 – 2012 as a Nuclear Safety Consultant. Based at Harwell in Oxfordshire, she also covered AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield (A and B) as well as Winfrith in Dorset.

Suzanne rejoined AWE as an Internal Regulator in 2012, ensuring the safety standard and compliance of many of the facilities on the AWE A and B sites.

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) snapped her up as a Nuclear Safety Regulator in 2016. Here her remit included various facilities at Sellafield in Cumbria and two defence sites associated with nuclear submarine building and maintenance at Barrow-in-Furness and Devonport.



Sellafield Cumberland site

Partway through her time with ONR she shifted from Safety Regulation to Security Regulation. The ONR work included many nuclear sites as well as assessment of two Small Modular Reactors (SMR) going through the Generic Design Assessment stage of Licencing. She retired in October 2024.

Today her interests include being a square dance caller across southern England, being Secretary of the Square Dance Callers Club of Great Britain and being a member of the Ladies' Probus Club of Basingstoke. For more information about the Ladies' Probus Club of Basingstoke email their secretary at reverendjane@hotmail.co.uk or phone her on 01256 471193.

For more information about the Men's Probus Club of Basingstoke see www.probusbasingstoke.club or phone their secretary on 07814 937202 for an informal chat.



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Planning Process

It is unlikely that anyone in the village is unaware of the number of planning applications Bramley has been subject to in recent months. These vary in size and potential impact, and most people will have a view on them. The question is: how can those views reach the decision-makers?

The planning process can feel confusing, particularly when applications include 50 or more supporting documents, each several pages long. Understanding what a proposal might actually mean for the village can be daunting. This article aims to explain the process, how you can comment, and — most importantly — how to make your comments count.

Why comments matter — Local planning authorities welcome comments from residents. These help planners understand local conditions and the potential impacts of a proposal. However, planning decisions must be made in line with planning law and policy. For this reason, what you say matters more than how strongly it is expressed.

What planning officers can and cannot consider

— Planning decisions are based on practical, policy-based issues linked to how a development affects an area.

Matters that *will* be considered include:

- Traffic levels, road safety, parking, and access
- Flood risk, drainage, and water capacity
- Pressure on schools, GP surgeries, and other local services
- The size, height, layout, and design of buildings
- Impact on neighbouring properties (for example, loss of privacy or light)
- Environmental effects such as noise, lighting or impact on wildlife
- Whether the proposal fits with the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan policies
- The type and mix of homes, including affordable housing

Matters that *cannot* be considered include:

- Personal circumstances or distress
- General opposition to development
- Loss of a private view
- Effect on property values
- Opinions about the developer or landowner

Even if widely shared, these points must be disregarded.

What does “affordable housing” mean?

It is worth explaining what “affordable housing” actually means, as developers often highlight that a proposal includes, for example, 40% affordable or social housing. This percentage is normally a policy requirement, not a concession.

Affordable housing may include:

- Affordable rent homes (below typical market rent)
- Social rent homes (usually lower still)
- Shared ownership homes
- Discounted homes for first-time buyers

Comments can help highlight whether a proposal meets local housing needs and reflects local policy.

How to make a planning comment

Most comments are submitted through the council’s planning website <https://publicaccess.basingstoke.gov.uk/online-applications/>. They do not need to be long or written in technical language.

When commenting:

- Quote the planning application reference number
- Say whether you are supporting, opposing, or simply commenting
- Focus on practical planning issues
- Use clear examples from local experience
- Keep the tone factual and polite
- Submit your comments before the deadline

Even a short, clear comment can be helpful. For a guide on using the Planning Portal, please see the Bramley Parish Council website <https://bramley-pc.gov.uk/planning-applications/submitting-comments-on-planning-applications/> or scan this QR code



A final note — The Parish Council does not decide planning applications, but we encourage residents to take part in the process. Comments that focus on planning issues and local evidence are the most useful and are more likely to influence how applications are assessed.

If you find the process difficult, please remember that clear, simple points are perfectly acceptable, your local knowledge matters.

Further information is available on the Parish Council website www.bramley-pc.gov.uk, including the most up-to-date details on current proposals and guidance on how to comment.

It also worth remembering that, whilst Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council are currently the decision makers on planning applications, with larger developments they must be guided by Government legislation. This is very much in favour of building more houses, which in turn has led to landowners putting forward land for development. The issues are not just a Bramley problem, or even a Basingstoke & Deane problem — it is national.

Finally, while commenting on social media can feel therapeutic, it does not reach the decision-makers. There are often far more comments online than are ever submitted through the council’s official planning system. If you want your view to count, Basingstoke & Deane’s Borough Council’s planning website is the place to share it.

Bramley Parish Council

The Force Crime Prevention Team

Subscription Scams

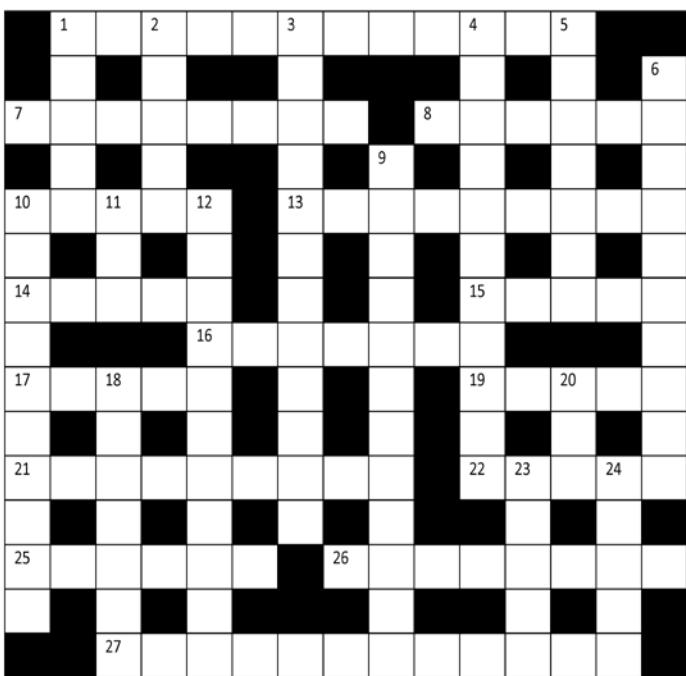
More than 20 million UK adults have signed up to a subscription without realising it, and of these, 4.7 million are still paying for a subscription they didn’t ask for, according to new figures released by National Trading Standards. The data reveals the widespread impact of so-called ‘silent scams’ that involve low value but high-volume thefts.

Silent scams can include ‘subscription traps’, where consumers are automatically signed up to regular payments after making a single purchase or agreeing to a free trial, as well as one-off purchases based on misleading information where the item is of poor quality and not as expected.

Due to their relatively low value, these payments often go unnoticed, unchallenged and unreported. We encourage people to report all scams to: 0300 123 2040 <https://www.reportfraud.police.uk/>

Cryptic Crossword No: 95

See page 30 for the answers.

**Across**

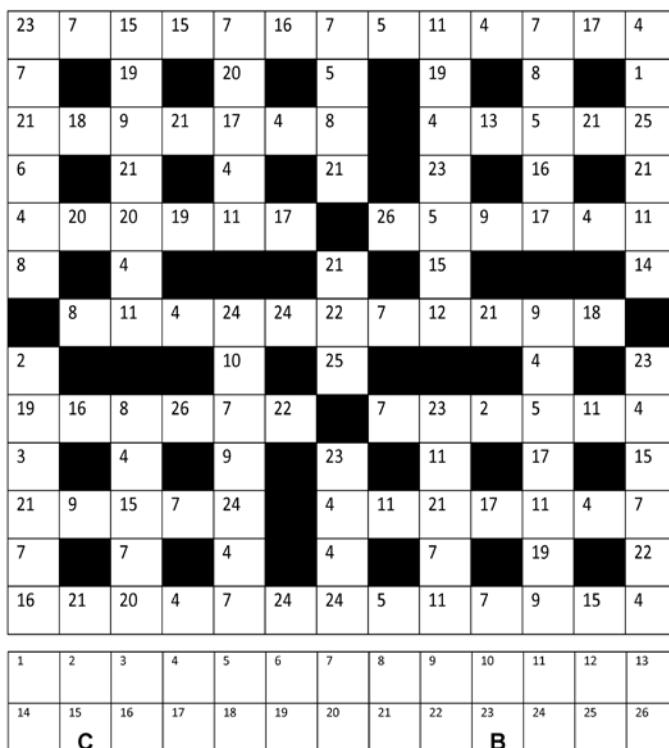
- Rattle a swine designed for Shakespearean play. (1,7,4)
- Gas with solid chap makes something for ventilation. (8)
- Energy u-turn turned into something false. (6)
- Economic resource held by collector perhaps. (5)
- Seen rages that create a keen feeling. (9)
- Actions speak louder than words for example. (5)
- Change religious object on the radio. (5)
- Get full pay when fond of games. (7)
- Light beams heard, just lift. (5)
- Country found in diametric opposite to Central America. (5)
- Poetically sweet. (9)
- Fabled creatures, yet is it possible to find them here? (5)
- Pleads new arrangement when no longer valid. (6)
- Moves downwards, hopefully ending in a soft landing. (8)
- Latte added to TT title for gossip. (6,6)

Down

- Sign beginning a rather interesting entertaining story. (5)
- Permeate or inspire. (5)
- Modify, see and french classic book. (12)
- Irregularity born tail may develop. (11)
- Sincere man perhaps? (7)
- Breads sped into places of rest. (10)
- Important time of life. (3,2,7)
- I ring madly, in other words, adoringly. (10)
- Number discovered in vital information. (3)
- Character or mettle. (11)
- I nip tic becoming first words in a book. (7)
- Do try to find this essential item in morse code. (3)
- Electronic duct for occasion. (5)
- Independent producer discovered from in diesel car. (5)

CodeWord No: 81

See page 30 for the answers.



Each number represents a unique letter from the alphabet and all 26 letters are used. Two letters are given to make a start.

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News from Butter Daisy

We ended the year with a special visit to the Clift Meadow coffee morning, where the children delighted the local community by singing Christmas carols they had been practising. They thoroughly enjoyed performing, and it was a lovely opportunity to spread some festive cheer and connect with our community.

Butter Daisy Nursery was bursting with excitement throughout the festive season as we celebrated with the children. We wrapped up the year with our much loved Christmas Activity Week, which gave the children the chance to pull crackers, bake festive treats, dance and sing, and even snuggle up for cosy stories in their pyjamas.

The New Year brought fresh beginnings as we welcomed new children into the setting. The excitement continued when snow settled on the ground, inspiring the children to build snowmen—and, of course, Olaf! Since returning from their Christmas holidays, the children have been eager to share stories of their own adventures and discoveries at home.

We wish everyone a fantastic year ahead and look forward to all the learning opportunities this year will bring.

If you would like to hear more about Butter Daisy Nursery, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01256 882515 or email butter@mydaisynursery.com.



New Craft group for Bramley

Bramley has a new Craft Group that meets on the fourth Friday of each month in the Bramley Room of the Village Hall.

Anyone who enjoys craft is welcome, whether you are a novice, an intermediate or an expert. It is an opportunity to share knowledge, to learn, to make friends, to be part of a community and to enjoy refreshments and biscuits.

The sessions are informal. We work on one craft during the session but if you want to do something else, you are welcome to do so.

We ask for a donation of £5 to cover the materials. For more information, please contact:

Anne-Marie Jones

07922 528155
anajonesuk@yahoo.co.uk



Bramley Bakery

Along with many others in the village, we were very sorry to see the Bramley Bakery close in January. St James' Church would like to thank everyone who worked at the bakery for all the mince pies, hot cross buns and Harvest loaves they supplied to us over the years. They were delicious and much appreciated. Thank you too for your contribution to our village over the last 25 years.

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A Wilder Winter from Wilder Bramley

Winter birding

Winter is a great time to go bird watching and there has been much chatter and photos on our Wilder Bramley Facebook page about an amazing starling murmuration that can be seen most evenings at dusk (4-5pm) over the lake at the Vyne, viewable from the bird hide off Morgaston Road. Other winter birds seen have included wigeon, teal, shoveller, gadwall and even a sparrowhawk in pursuit of the starlings! Go enjoy ...

ToadTalk

Did you know that the Cufaude Lane Toad Patrol manages to save the lives of around 700 toads a year? Our recent talk by Andrew Cleave MBE demonstrated the power of volunteers. Every February-March over about 6 weeks our nationally significant population of toads undertake the perilous journey across the lane in the dark and during rush hour, following an instinctive urge to return to their ancestral ponds to breed. They are helped by loyal volunteers who turn out with high-vis jackets, torches and buckets to try and reduce the inevitable slaughter. In many parts of Britain there are no longer any toads, so it is all the more important that we do all we can to save ours.

Butter Daisy visit

We were delighted to be invited by Butter Daisy Nursery to go and talk with the children about wildlife conservation, in support of their learning for World Wildlife Conservation Day. Committee member Jane Hatter (who is herself a



Butter Daisy visit. Jane Hatter, sitting at front of classroom, said: 'The children loved a poem about woodland animals'

teacher) took along a wormery and a bug hotel, reading a poem about a walk in a wood and a garden, to talk about what different animals from different habitats need: 'The owl will eat the blue tit and the blue tit will eat a snail, but they all deserve to be given some space, somewhere quiet – and sometimes a bit of untidiness to help them survive.' The children were interested to see cutouts of animals such as foxes and ladybirds and joined in enthusiastically. Jane reports that they were very well behaved – often better than some of her sixth formers!

Alliums galore

The Bee Garden volunteer team are now enjoying a well-earned rest until March, however we could not resist the urge to plant some more spring bulbs. Over 30 allium bulbs have now been planted at the Bee Garden in Clift Meadow. In addition to those planted by the Cubs last year, they should create an even more striking display in late spring-early summer. Of course, they are also great for bees and other pollinators.



Alliums in the Bee Garden: An even better allium display is coming!

Events

Saturday 7 February: Village Community Showcase, 10-1 Clift Meadow Pavilion. Come and say hello to us at this Parish Council-run celebration of local groups.

Thursday 23 April: Our AGM. Details TBC but do save the date if you're interested.

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In the first of a new series, **Paul Sterry**, bestselling author and wildlife photographer, considers the impact of development on local wildlife.

The recent spell of cold weather may not be to our liking, but it is good news for hibernating animals in the Bramley countryside. The last thing that Hazel Dormice, bats and amphibians need is a mild winter because, to avoid starvation, they have evolved to enter a temperature-induced state of torpor at a time of year when no food is available. A warming climate, and increasing likelihood of unseasonally warm winters, spells potential disaster for these animals.

Even during harsh winters, as the days lengthen and the warmth of the sun increases, air temperatures inevitably rise. With spring just around the corner hibernating creatures are forced to wake up sooner or later. Sooner in the case of amphibians, which in late winter head from terrestrial habitats, where they spend the vast majority of their lives, to ancestral breeding ponds.



Common Toads migrating across Cufaude Lane
©Paul Sterry.

From mid-January to the end of March many of my evenings are spent on Cufaude Lane where I have volunteered for the past decade on toad patrol. The road is an obstacle that migrating amphibians (Common Toads, Common Frogs Great Crested Newts and Smooth Newts) have to cross on migration when moving from terrestrial habitats on the east of the road to breeding



Barn Owl, one of many open countryside species impacted by development on Cufaude Lane
©Paul Sterry.

ponds on the west at this time of year. The Cufaude Lane Amphibian Rescue Group (CLARG) operates to save as many migrating animals as possible from being killed by cars.

In my youth Cufaude Lane was a rural byway, one used by just a handful of cars each day and where grass grew down the middle of the road. Now it is a major rat-run cut-through from Bramley to Chineham with hundreds of cars on the move each hour.

Amphibian migration takes place from mid-January to the end of March, with the bulk of animals on the move at dusk – 5 to 7pm. Sadly, this coincides with rush hour and despite the best efforts of CLARG volunteers, around 30% of migrating amphibians are still killed – that's hundreds each season. Every year the traffic gets worse as more and more rampant development is permitted at either end of Cufaude Lane.

Over the years, the wildlife of Cufaude Lane has been subjected to piecemeal habitat destruction and degradation and insensitive land use. As if that were not enough, two massive housing estates (500+ houses) are set to alter the landscape of Cufaude Lane forever, replacing wildlife-rich open countryside with concrete bricks and tarmac. The estates lie at the southern end of the byway; although in essence they are extensions of Chineham, they sit in Bramley parish.

As it stands, these housing developments will deal a catastrophic blow to migrating amphibians and open countryside wildlife across the

board. That is why I am supporting Natural Basingstoke (the umbrella organisation that works alongside Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and represents local conservation groups) in its efforts to promote their Cufaude Lane Nature Protection and Enhancement Proposal. This would create a safe haven for Cufaude Lane's beleaguered wildlife. Visit Natural Basingstoke's website for more information about this inspirational concept, which would not impact housing numbers but would make a real difference for the natural world.

<https://naturalbasingstoke.org.uk/cufaude-lane-nature-protection-enhancement-proposal/>

The project has the support of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. However, for it to succeed it also needs the involvement of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, developers Taylor Wimpey and Croudace Homes, and landowner Hampshire County Council. So far, the response from these interested parties has been silence.

As residents of Bramley, what can you do? You can express support for the Cufaude Lane Nature Protection and Enhancement Proposal and Natural Basingstoke's campaign to influence the borough's new Local Plan. As currently worded, the latter waters down what little environment protection the previous Local Plan offered the natural world. For more information, visit <https://naturalbasingstoke.org.uk/local-plan-campaign/>

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This month's update from **Councillor Rhydian Vaughan**, begins with a New Year's Message from **Nick Adams-King**, Leader of Hampshire County Council

As 2026 gets underway, I want to begin with a simple thank you. Public service is a team sport, and nothing we achieve in Hampshire happens because of one person, one department, or one council chamber speech. It happens because residents, volunteers, community groups, officers, councillors, and countless unsung heroes quietly get on with the business of making our county a better place to live. If there's a theme that ran through 2025, it was that Hampshire works best when Hampshire works together.

Last year we opened new school places, expanded support for children with special educational needs, and continued the long, patient work of improving the services families rely on. We pushed forward on infrastructure—sometimes celebrated, sometimes cursed when it involved roadworks—but always with the aim of keeping our county moving. This is best illustrated by the fantastic work to build the new underpass at Junction 10 of the M27 in Fareham. Standing watching the work was a reminder that progress is rarely glamorous, but it is always worth it.

Of course, 2025 wasn't without its challenges. Local government continues to face financial pressures that would make even the most seasoned accountant reach for a strong drink. Yet despite the strain, we kept our focus on what mattered: delivering essential services, protecting the vulnerable, and planning responsibly for the future. Hampshire has a long tradition of resilience, and 2025 proved once again that we don't shy away from difficult decisions when they are the right ones.

In 2026 we will continue to push for sustainable funding for local government, because residents deserve services that are secure, reliable, and fit for the future. We will keep investing in the infrastructure that underpins daily life. And we will carry on championing the values that make Hampshire a place people are proud to call home.

But perhaps most importantly, we will do all this together. At a time when national and global debates can feel increasingly polarised, and as we enter what I very much hope is an election year for the county council, it is worth restating something I have said many times: no one enters politics to do harm; we simply disagree about how we should do good. That belief has guided me throughout my years in public life, and it remains the foundation of how I try to lead—collegiately, respectfully, and with a sense of humour whenever possible. (If you've ever tried explaining local government reorganisation and devolution on Facebook, you'll know humour is sometimes essential.)

Division is easy. Unity takes work. But Hampshire has never been afraid of hard work. In 2026, let's continue to choose cooperation over conflict, shared purpose over pointscoring and kindness over cynicism. If we do that, I'm confident the year ahead will bring not just progress, but pride."

M27 J10 update

Great news to start the New Year. The M27 between Junctions 9 and 11 reopened a full 24 hours ahead of schedule, at 4am, Saturday 3 January – an extraordinary achievement after one of the most complex engineering operations Hampshire has ever delivered.

Over ten days, around 130 people worked day and night through the Christmas period to install a brandnew underpass at Junction 10 using an innovative “box slide” technique. A 60 metre concrete structure – weighing 8,500 tonnes – was slid 65 metres into place with millimetre precision, avoiding months of lane closures and disruption.

We wish to pay particular tribute to:

- Our outstanding Hampshire County Council highways and engineering teams
- The main contractor, VolkerFitzpatrick
- The many skilled local subcontractors who brought their expertise, machinery, and sheer determination to the job

Their professionalism, teamwork, and relentless effort – in all weathers, at all hours – are the reason the motorway can reopen earlier than planned.

This phase of work is a major milestone toward the new, free-flowing, all-moves Junction 10, which will support the Welborne Garden Village development and strengthen Hampshire's infrastructure for years to come.

Election Postponements

You may have seen reports suggesting that this year's Mayoral elections will be postponed for two years, until 2028. While this is massively disappointing, it's important to note that this does not affect the County Council and other local elections which will still go ahead on 7 May 2026.

It is important to separate two distinct issues here. While the election of a Mayor may be delayed, the creation of the Combined Authority – and the transfer of powers and funding from Westminster that comes with it – remains vital.

We are reassured that this process will continue as planned, and that the delay to the Mayoral election will not affect the establishment of the Combined Authority, the commencement of devolution, or our ability to begin exercising those powers for the benefit of Hampshire and the Solent.

Where the delay to the Mayoral election intersects with the creation of the Combined Authority is in our ability to influence national policy. The Mayor would normally sit on the Council of Nations and Regions. Given the size and importance of Hampshire and the Solent, it is vital that whoever chairs the Authority should take that seat until such time as a Mayor is elected.

Our economy contributes as much to the UK as Wales, and our population is comparable to Northern Ireland. We deserve – and must have – that influence and voice at the national level as soon as possible. While it is deeply regrettable that this role will not initially be exercised by a directly elected Mayor, the council leaders who will form the Combined Authority board are equally capable of representing our area until the election is held.

Cllr Rhydian Vaughan MBE

Calleva Division
Hampshire County Council
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Mondays	
Badminton	Village Hall
Petite Dance	Village Hall
Hipp Pilates	Clift Meadow Pavilion
NHS Health Visitor	Village Hall
Pregnancy Yoga with Sam 6pm	Clift Meadow Pavilion
Beavers 5-6pm	Brocas Hall
Fitness Pilates 6pm (from 5 January 2026)	Cross House
Pilates for Sport 7pm (from 5 January 2026)	Cross House
Yoga with Sam 7.30pm	Clift Meadow Pavilion
Classical Pilates, 6.45-7.45pm	Village Hall
Cubs 6.30-8pm	Brocas Hall
Trail Runners 7.30pm	Clift Meadow car park

Tuesdays	
Parish Council Meetings 3 rd Tuesday of the month	Bramley Room, Village Hall
Badminton	Village Hall
Bell Ringing 8pm	St James's Church
Petite Dance	Village Hall
Short Mat Bowls	Village Hall
Body Control Pilates 9.30-10.30am	Village Hall
Bramley 0-5s 10am – 11.30 am	Clift Meadow Pavilion
Scouts 7-8.30pm	Brocas Hall
Hipp Pilates 7-9pm	Clift Meadow Pavilion
Table Tennis – 7pm	St Stephen's Hall, Little London

Wednesdays	
Wednesday Club 10am to midday	St Stephen's Hall
1 st Bramley Rainbows	Village Hall
1 st Bramley Brownies	Village Hall
1 st Bramley Guides	Village Hall
NHS Health Visitor	Village Hall
WG Pilates 9.15 – 10.15am and 12.30 – 1.30pm	Cross House
Bramley Tea and Coffee morning 10-11.30am	Clift Meadow Community Cafe
Squirrels 5-6pm	Brocas Hall
Trail Runners 7.30pm	Clift Meadow car park

Thursdays	
Bramley & Romans Floral Society 1 st Thursday 1.30 - 4.00pm	Sherfield on Loddon Village Hall
Dance Club	Primary School Hall
Pilates	St Stephen's Hall
WI 2 nd Thursday	Village Hall
Bath Babies 10.30 & 11.30	Village Hall
Friendship Walks, 10.30	Clift Meadow Pavilion
Dance Vibes - adult fitness class 5.30-6.15pm	Cross House
Perform 5.45pm	Clift Meadow Pavilion
Hatha Yoga 6.30-7.30pm	Cross House
Classical Pilates - 6.30-7.30pm	Village Hall
Walking 4 Fitness & Friendship 6.40 for 6.45pm (April-Sept)	Clift Meadow car park
Petite Dance	Village Hall
Hipp Pilates 7-8pm	Clift Meadow Pavilion

Fridays	
Meditation Circle session 10.15- 11.30 (from 9 January 2026)	Cross House
WG Pilates 12-1pm	Cross House
Craft Group (4th Friday) 1pm-4pm	Bramley Room, Village Hall
Hipp Pilates 1.30-2.30pm	Clift Meadow Pavilion
Perform 3.30pm	Clift Meadow Pavilion
Youth Club 5pm	Brocas Hall

Saturdays	
Petite Dance	Village Hall
Tennis (age 7-13)	Clift Meadow
HIPP Pilates 9.30-10.30am	Village Hall
Karate 11.00-12.00pm	Primary School Hall

Sundays	
See page 5 for Church services at St James's Bramley	

**Do you have a listing on this page? If so, please can you check that the details are correct and let me have the timings if they are missing.
Any corrections or additions can be emailed to editor@bramleymagazine.org.uk**

THANK YOU

Contact Details for Village Clubs and Organisations

Organisation	Name	Tel No	Email	Remarks
Parish Council	Maxta Thomas	07810 692486	www.bramley-pc.gov.uk clerk@bramley-pc.gov.uk	Not for bookings
Clift Meadow	Bookings Team	01256 260270	bookings@cliftmeadow.org.uk	Bookings
Cross House	Anne Smith	01256 880327	admin@stjamesbramley.org.uk	Bookings
Village Hall	Catriona Hayward	07464 749997	Bookings@bvht.org.uk	Bookings
School Hall	Alison Tarrant	881339		
Activ8 Youth Club	Ed Ives	07964 069390		
Badminton	Jane Matthews	881647		
Bath Babies	Katie Loosley	07921 158495	info@babyserenity.org	
Bell Ringers	Jonathan Barclay Smith	541251	rjbarclaysmith@gmail.com	
Bramley 0-5s	Jo Weineck	07717 340985		
Bramley and Romans Floral Society	Stephanie Cornell	07808 078188	s.cornell@aplin.plus.com	
Bramley Craft Group	Anne-Marie Jones	07922 528155	anajonesuk@yahoo.co.uk	4th Friday of each month
Bramley Tea and Coffee morning	Jane Kettridge		jk.cmcc@btconnect.com	
Bramley United FC	Mick Walsh	07802 912615/ 01256 881241	michael.walsh59@outlook.com	
Bramley Volunteer Drivers		07787 166924	Visit us on Facebook	
Brownies	Katie Slater	07545 319342	bramley.brownies@gmail.com	
Classical Pilates	Naomi Baker		naomi@nbkpilates.co.uk	
Clift Meadow Youth Cricket (Old Basing CC)	John Huntingdon		John.Huntingdon@turbex.co.uk	
Clift Meadow Youth Football (Loddon Sports)			loddonfcsecretary@outlook.com https://www.loddonsportsfc.com	
Dance Vibes	Louise		misslouise74@gmail.com	
Friendship Walks			ppgclift@gmail.com	
Guides	Viv Salem		firstbramleyguides@yahoo.com	
Hipp Pilates	Jo Kemp Williams	07557 412400	jo.kemp-williams@outlook.com	
Little Apples	Jo Whatley & Sian Davies	07598 588460	manager@littleapples.org	
Meditation	Jennifer Duke	07764 293757	jennifer2duke@gmail.com	linktr.ee/jennifer_duke
Naturally Yoga with Sam	Samantha Webber	07713 349227	www.naturallyyoga.co.uk	sam@naturalnook.co.uk
NHS Health Visitor	Nicola Jones		Nicola.Jones@SouthernHealth.nhs.uk	
Perform	Gemma Payne	07825 916496	gemmapayne@perform.org.uk	
Petite Dance	Louise Pain	07877 890673	misslouise@petiteschoolofdancing.com	
Pure Performance Pilates	Hannah Travers	07711 206043	info@performanceuk.com	www.performanceuk.com
Body Control Pilates	Heather Lewis	07785 254313	hsfitnessuk@mac.com	
Pilates (WG Pilates)	Wendy Gill	07961 102535	wendygill44@yahoo.co.uk	
Rainbows	Christina Wilson		bramleyrainbows@gmail.com	
Royal British Legion	Rhydian Vaughan	07774 681516		
Short Mat Bowls	Judy Foyle	881821	stevefoyle@hotmail.co.uk	
Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts	Jodie Saunders	07818 280041	jodie@bramley-scouts.org.uk	
St Stephen's Hall	Doreen Quilter	850394	doreen.quilter@btinternet.com	Bookings
Tennis (Clift Meadow)	Simon	07904 340004		
Thula Mama	Rebecca Cooch	07971 798945	rebecca.cooch@gmail.com	
Trail Runners	Richard Perkins		richardperkins@yahoo.com	
Walking 4 Fitness & Friendship	Facebook		See Facebook: Walking 4 Fitness & Friendship	
WI	Pat Cole	881715	gpcole37@gmail.com	
Wilder Bramley		07503 155669	wilder.bramley@gmail.com www.wilderbramley.org or Facebook	
Yoga	Mark Golding	07969 890722	goldingsyoga@gmail.com	goldingsyoga.com

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

Cryptic Crossword No: 95 Solution

Jordan Rollinson resumes his historical fiction series on **19th June, 1644**

“Filth!” Paulet spat, his cheeks burning and his chins quivering. “Pretenders and thieves and invading heathens!”

Paulet's tirade had been going on for a number of minutes now. James, the man who had been misfortune enough to have given the Marquess such abhorrent news as to the Holy Ghost Church's sacking, was trapped in the room with his master's seething hatred. James lent against the doorframe, acting cool, but his guts were a mess. His fingers itched to wrench open the door and excuse himself, claiming one of a million burning reasons why he simply must be anywhere else. Instead, social etiquette had him pinned to a wall, nodding profusely at whatever vitriol spewed from the Marquess' mouth.

“My ancestors are buried there!”

“Yes, Marquess.”

“They shall not harm a blade of grass on that blessed site!”

“No, Marquess.”

“But yet they have! Stolen the very ceiling tiles from the poor pastor!”

“Yes, Marquess.”

“Don’t just say yes and no!” Paulet shrieked, shoving a bottle of aged (and likely very expensive) wine from his closet’s table. It shattered to the floor, spilling a near never-ending flow of red between the artistried floorboards. “I need ideas! Vengeance!” Put on the spot rather suddenly, James pursed his lips, chewing on his sudden and unwelcome responsibility.

Paulet's burning hatred gave him an idea.

Samuel was rudely awoken by panicked hammering on his lodging. Rising suddenly enough to see stars, he raced to the door and wrenched it open. Everything became orange. Smoke filled the air, cinders spiralled and moved through black smog like stars in a night sky. Men panicked, dogs barked. Fear spread through the small dwelling estate like, well, wildfire. Roundhead occupiers and strong-armed residents alike ran to and fro trying to put out fires where they could, or merely tried to escape the blaze. Samuel was in the former group; rallying with a number of fellow Roundheads with a bravery he wasn't sure he had possessed before the flames. Yellowing tongues licked at his legs as Samuel pulled the nearest closer to him.

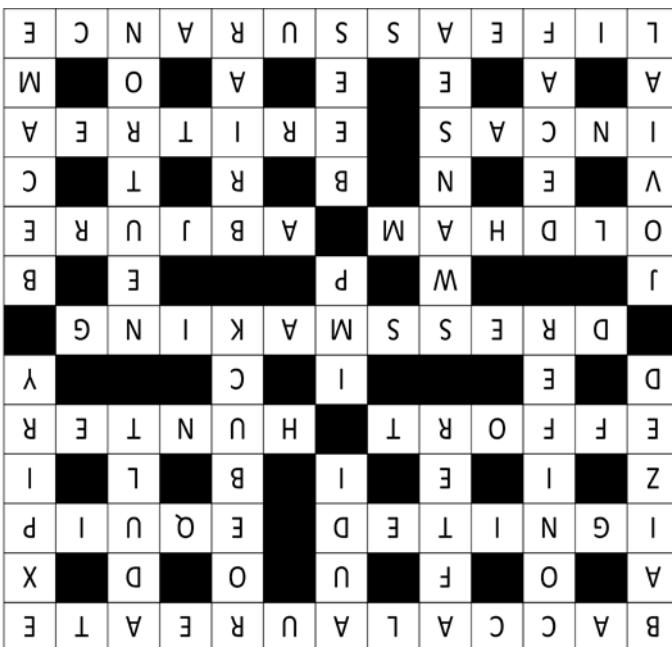
"Water. Sand. Anything will do. Now!" Samuel didn't wait for the young man's panicked nods, accepting a bucket of human waste from a wide-eyed woman, and flung the sludge over the nearest burning woodwork. Sizzles preceded the grey smoke of an extinguished fire. Having set an example, Samuel's fellows rushed to mimic. He took a spare musket and ran for the nearest building not presently aflame.

Shapes moved in the smoke. At a distance it was impossible to tell who were erstwhile victims and who were their arsonists. Musket loaded, Samuel kept his eye down the barrel of the firearm. A silhouette of a man appeared. It stepped closer, and raised its arm. A flash, followed by a crack, and the wall next to Samuel's head coughed dust and grit. His assailter did not live to fire another shot from his pistol, having been felled by the return shot.

Smoke trailed from Samuel's weapon, joining the rising smoke.

1	ACROSS	DOWNS	A WINTERS TALE	AIRBRICK	UNTRUE	ECCLIESIASTES	ABNORMALITY	EAGERNESS	MAXIM	PLAYFUL	RAISE	SIX	INDIA	NECTAREAN	INCIPIIT	TEMPERAMENT	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27		
2	IMBUE	3	ARIES	4	ASSET	5	EARNST	6	BEDSPREADS	9	AGE OF CONSENT	10	ADMIRINGLY	11	SIX	12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22	
3	ECCLIESIASTES	4	ABNORMALITY	5	EAGERNESS	6	BEDSPREADS	9	AGE OF CONSENT	10	ADMIRINGLY	11	SIX	12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22			
5	EARNST	6	BEDSPREADS	9	AGE OF CONSENT	10	ADMIRINGLY	11	SIX	12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27		
6	BEDSPREADS	7	AIRBRICK	8	UNTRUE	9	AGE OF CONSENT	10	ADMIRINGLY	11	SIX	12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27
7	AIRBRICK	8	UNTRUE	9	AGE OF CONSENT	10	ADMIRINGLY	11	SIX	12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27		
8	UNTRUE	9	AGE OF CONSENT	10	ADMIRINGLY	11	SIX	12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27				
9	AGE OF CONSENT	10	ADMIRINGLY	11	SIX	12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27						
10	ADMIRINGLY	11	SIX	12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27								
11	SIX	12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27										
12	TEMPERAMENT	18	INCIPIIT	20	DOT	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27												
13	EAGERNESS	14	MAXIM	15	ALTER	16	ADMIRINGLY	17	RAISE	18	INCIPIIT	19	INDIA	21	NECTAREAN	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27		
14	MAXIM	15	ALTER	16	ADMIRINGLY	17	RAISE	18	INCIPIIT	19	INDIA	21	NECTAREAN	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27				
15	ALTER	16	ADMIRINGLY	17	RAISE	18	INCIPIIT	19	INDIA	21	NECTAREAN	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27						
16	ADMIRINGLY	17	RAISE	18	INCIPIIT	19	INDIA	21	NECTAREAN	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27								
17	RAISE	18	INCIPIIT	19	INDIA	21	NECTAREAN	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27										
18	INCIPIIT	19	INDIA	21	NECTAREAN	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27												
19	INDIA	21	NECTAREAN	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27														
20	DOT	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27																
21	NECTAREAN	22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27																
22	YETTS	LAPSED	DESCENDS	TITLE TATTLE	27																		
23	EVENT	24	INDIE	25	LAPSED	26	DESCENDS	27															
24	INDIE	25	DESCENDS	26	DESCENDS	27																	

CodeWord No: 81 Solution



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Your Local Cats Protection Branch Needs You!!



Basingstoke Cats Protection is currently
inundated with cats on our waiting list
who we so desperately want to help...
but with all our current foster homes
full of felines there is little we can do.



We are looking for fosterers in the
Basingstoke area, either indoor or in an
outdoor enclosure which is provided by
Cats Protection (approximate size 13ft x
4ft or 4m x 1.2m). Full training will be
provided and all expenses are covered
by Cats Protection – food, litter, bedding and electricity.

Fostering is an incredible experience guaranteed to give you an
extreme sense of joy, achievement and pride. The days spent in a
loving foster home make the world of difference for our cats and
kittens, setting them up for a lifetime of happiness 😊

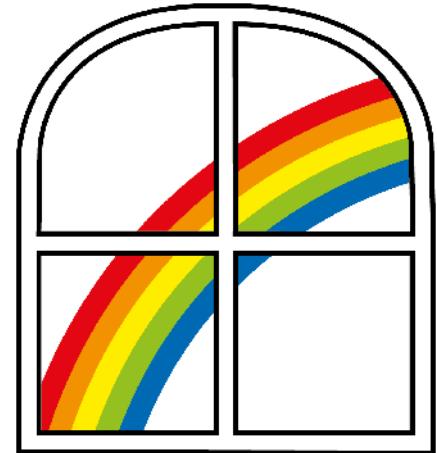
PLEASE consider opening your home and heart to a cat in need; if
you cannot foster, please spread the word to anyone who may be
able to help us.

If you're interested in finding out more, please contact Lynne at
welfareteamleader@basingstoke.cats.org.uk or call our enquiries
line on 01256 584544.

**34 Years
serving the local
community**

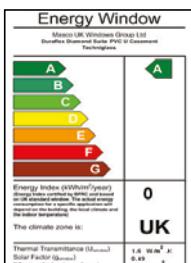
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