



Badger Farm and Oliver's Battery COMMUNITY NEWS

Winter 2025

Community News is Back!

Sometimes Christmas Wishes Come True!

We are delighted to welcome our new editor (and chief elf!) Lukasz Piecha who has stepped into the role to create this issue maintaining Ann's high standards. Thank you for bearing with us during our unfortunate hiatus. Your kind words and hopes for a rapid return made us that much more determined to find the right person to fill Ann's boots!

Lukasz brings his extensive technical and editorial skills as well as his local knowledge of both the area and the Centre to the role. Many of you will be aware he runs the outstanding Children's Chess Club and Camps at the Centre as well as being a stalwart of the Winchester Chess Club (adults) who meet at the Centre fortnightly. (For contact details please see our activities list).

For more news of events and activities at the Centre see our News from the Centre (p11) and Activities List (p3)

Get involved!

Community News

If you're local to our community and would like to get involved with Community News, we'd love to hear from you! Whether you'd like to submit an article, sponsor an edition, or lend a hand delivering the magazine, your support makes a real difference and helps keep our community connected.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year To Everyone!

The Community News is our local magazine written by our community for our community. We are so pleased to once again have your wonderful input for the magazine so we can share it with everyone. Do get in touch with any enquiries or suggestions including events or updates you want to share in future editions. The contact email address will remain the same – bfobrca.cnews@gmail.com so please continue to send all your contributions to that address. Lukasz is keen to ensure the community news remains a collaborative and informative asset for our community.

Become a Trustee or Volunteer for the Centre!

If you want to become more involved in taking our community centre from strength to strength and want to join our trustees or volunteer for our 40th anniversary celebrations, maybe help with our garden or other community events please contact Ali at bfobrca.manager@gmail.com

One of our trustees has said: "It has been a great experience to work with the other Trustees to make our Centre into a space for everyone. I had no idea at the start just how much satisfaction there is, helping the Centre"

Ali Cochrane, Community Centre Manager
bfobrca.manager@gmail.com

Tribute to Merv Hall (RIP) — see p. 2

What's Happening At the Centre?

As you will see we are overjoyed to have the Community News back up and running! We have finally finished installing acoustic panels throughout the Centre so you can talk up a storm and hear yourself think! We are excited to welcome some new hirers providing even more activities and events for you including more Fitness, Yoga and Pilates classes as well as a new session for Slimming World. Please see our Activities list for details our new and existing classes. Our Bridge and Chess clubs (see p11) are going strong with adult and children's classes and events. We are pleased that Winchester Rogue Traders 40k (winchesterrtt.com/) and Midlife Gaming (Website) tournaments who along with our regular Wessex Wargames continue to provide tabletop gaming for enthusiasts of all ages at the Centre. The Repair Cafe Winchester (repaircafewinchester.org/) are still helping us all to live more sustainably the second Saturday every month and Chat-Tea Café (website) open their doors the 4th Monday of the month for all to drop in for chat, tea and cake too! Badger Farm Preschool continue to provide amazing care and education for a gaggle of little children – to find out more about them see them on Facebook facebook.com/p/Badger-Farm-Preschool-100075770236273/



and don't let your little ones miss out on the fun (and learning!).

The new Artisan Market provides an ideal opportunity to find handcrafted items and gifts for yourself, family and friends for Christmas and beyond. Jo has launched new craft workshops; please see the Centre noticeboards or our website for more details. We continue to be proud to accommodate the NHS, providing essential services. We are also glad to be able to host Winchester Basics Bank, who provide for those in need of that little bit of extra help. As they are one of the few food banks able to facilitate self-referral, they are able to reach out to a wider section of our community in need.

Please see their website: winchesterbasicsbank.co.uk/ for details of what they do for you and you can do for them.

For more news about Bushfield please see: savebushfieldcamp.com/

Finally we are heartbroken to have lost Merv our former curmudgeon of a caretaker with a heart of gold. Please see below for our personal tribute. So pop in to see us and what goes on!

Remembering Merv

Sadly, Merv Hall our former caretaker passed away in late May. Merv was a fixture at the Community Centre for over 30 years. He and Charlie, his spaniel, were at the Centre every week.

With a gruff exterior, but a heart of gold he will always have a place in our hearts.

I would like to pay a personal tribute to Merv:

When I came to the Community Centre Merv was off recovering from Cancer, it wasn't until 4 months later I met him and Charlie, his spaniel. Both he and Charlie were fixtures in the Centre. Even when Charlie was coming to the end of his life Merv would carry him up the steps to the Centre. He always seemed hale and strong – made from the mould that you don't complain, you keep going and never admit to your emotions. Beneath the curmudgeonly exterior was a man who would do anything for you. He always delivered his affection for Jenny, his wife, through a flimsy façade of grumpiness, but his deep love and care for her shone through.

A natural green fingered wizard his garden was always lush and beautiful. He enjoyed nurturing plants and even set his magic on the Centre's rough and ready garden transforming it from a smokers' refuge to a walled sanctuary. I remember him bring in some cultivated plants that had self-seeded near his garden in for the Centre garden to providing vivid colour and a habitat for numerous caterpillars! Always he would give me tips on gardening, but I don't have his green fingers unfortunately.

At the Centre he would always find ways to fix things from what was lying around – sometimes a bit Heath Robinson but always immensely practical.

He delighted in railways and even had a miniature trainset permanently installed in his garage to enjoy with a beer cooled in his ornamental pond – an ingenious solution.

Merv was a ready font of information about the Centre always able to provide information historic and current and help keep the Centre running smoothly and I will always be grateful to him.

Rest in Peace Merv, we will all miss you greatly.

Ali



ACTIVITIES AT BADGER FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Aucott Karate	Thursday 6.45–7.45pm	Phil Aucott philaucott@gmail.com
Body Control Pilates	Every weekday except Tuesdays	Jenny Forster 07929 624526
Body in Harmony Pilates	Monday 5.30–6.30pm	Catherine Thomas info @bodyinharmoniypilates.com
Dance for Parkinsons	Friday 2.00–3.00pm	bryettdanceschool@gmail.com
Pique Dance Fitness	Friday 9.30–11.15am	Gemma Feeney hello@piqueschoolofperformingarts.co.uk
Glenda Davis Tai Chi	Wednesday 2.00–3.00pm Experienced 3.00–4.00pm Beginners	Glenda Davis 07504 533771 taichienquiries@gmail.com
Move with Mel	Tuesday 6.30–7.30pm	Melissa 07708 532210
Legs, Bums & Tums	Wednesday 11am–12pm	Catherine Jones 07990 513434
Line Dancing	Thursday 1.45–3.45pm	Brian Woodford 07511 876149 07761 327488
Sarah B Yoga	Tuesday 9.15–10.15am 7.30–8.30pm	Sarah Barguirdijan SarahBYoga.net
Slimming World	Saturday 7pm–8pm Thursdays 5:30 to 7pm	Suzi Buccheri suzibuccheri@hotmail.com
Weight Watchers	Wednesday 5.15–6.45pm Thursday 9.00–11.00am	Mary Blanchard mary.blanchard@ww.com Lorraine Small lsmall@ww.com
Winchester Tae Kwon-Do	Monday, Wednesday 6.30–8.30pm	Lucy ScoJ info@winchestertkd.co.uk
Wyeth Yoga	Monday 9.30–11.30am	ChrisJ ne Wyeth c.wyethnobili@gmail.com

OLDER ADULTS

Chat-Tea Café	Last Monday of the month 2.00–4.00pm	info@chat-tea.co.uk
Vital Life Fitness	Thursday 10.15–11.015am	Abby O'Connell abby@vitallifefitness.co.uk

GENERAL INTEREST

Badger Farm Art Group	Thursday 1.30–3.30pm	Sarah Zimmer snippycards@hotmail.co.uk
Friday Afternoon Bridge	Friday 2.00–5.15pm	see winchesteru3a.co.uk
Hampshire Calligraphers	Saturdays 10.00am–4.00pm	Caroline Harris 07549 760079 caroline_harris76@hotmail.com
Repair Café Winchester	2nd Saturday of the month 10.00am– 12.00pm	See website for dates repaircafewinchester.org
Wessex Wargames	Tuesday 7.00–11.00pm	Alan McFarlane 01962 864210
Winchester Chess Club	Wednesday 7.15–10.30pm	John Schonenberger schoneys54@gmail.com
Winchester Basics Bank	Mondays 10–12 pm	winchesterbasicsbank.co.uk

CHILDREN

Aucott Karate	Thursday 6.45–7.45pm	Phil Aucott philaucott@gmail.com
Badger Farm Pre-School Playgroup	Mon. Tues. Wed. 9.15am–3.00pm Thurs. Fri. 9.15am–12.15pm	Denise Tosdevine 07771 798 474 deniseinpreschool@hotmail.co.uk
Southern Karate	Friday 5.15–7.15pm	southernkarate.org
Winchester Junior Chess Club	Thursdays 6pm – 7.30pm	Lukasz Piecha cheshampshire@gmail.com winchesterjuniorchess.net

These are some of the regular activities that take place at the Community Centre. For more details see bfobrca.org/activities or contact the group's organiser.

If you can't find what you are looking for or would like to enquire about setting up a new group, please email bfobrca.manager@gmail.com (Monday to Wednesday only).



Oliver's Battery Parish Council

New clerk

Changes to the Parish Council Meeting Schedule and Structure

The PC has agreed to hold PC meetings every other month together with a Scheme of Delegation, Terms of Reference for a Planning Committee and for a Recreation Committee. The next PC meeting is 16 December.

New Clerk

Brendan Gibbs kindly agreed to rejoin the PC as a Locum Clerk, while a new Clerk was appointed.

Interviews will take place in early November. Hopefully, an appointment can be confirmed at the PC meeting on 16 December.

Local Plan Update

The new Local Plan (LP), which does not include the South Winchester Golf Course, is expected to be implemented early in 2026. However, WCC have had to start work on the next LP in order to meet the Government's higher housing requirements.

WCC envisage that the next Local Plan would be adopted in Quarter 4Q28. In my view this is very optimistic.

A Call for Sites for the next LP closes on 21 November. This will help the Planning Authority to create a new Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).

Of course, this does not mean sites put forward will be in the next LP or obtain planning permission.

The PC will continue to liaise with other parishes and local district Cllrs and will keep residents informed, including using the new Oliver's Battery Announcements WhatsApp channel.



Badger Farm Parish Council

News from Badger Farm Parish Council

As the dark nights are drawing in, this is an appeal to residents to make sure that their shrubs and hedges are cut back and not overhanging the pavements. Access for the elderly, disabled and those pushing prams is hampered by overhanging growth. Please make sure you are not making life difficult for others by allowing your boundaries to be overgrown. If you are unsure who is responsible for maintenance of a particular area, please contact our clerk for more information.

Work to upgrade the toddler play equipment at Central Playground has now been completed with extra play equipment and a new safety surface. If you spot any problems with any of the play equipment at Central or David playgrounds, please report them to the clerk.

As you may be aware, the Government's English Devolution White Paper (issued in December 2024) requires the re-organisation of local government (LGR), taking away our current two-tier system in Hampshire (Hampshire County Council as the upper tier and Winchester City Council as our district council). Winchester City Council has launched a

Community Governance Review – Winchester Town Area
WCC provided a PC briefing on 29 October, which confirmed that a consultation will launch on Monday 3 November. The slides from the presentation are on the PC website. An example question could be:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the potential change of boundary to include the existing Oliver's Battery Parish Council area in a new parish council for the Winchester town area?

Big Changes are proposed - you need to make your voice heard in the consultation, which closes on 22 December 2025. Further details will be published when available.

Oliver's Battery Announcements WhatsApp channel

The PC have created a new community announcement WhatsApp Channel. We know people prefer to stay up to date in different ways and we are keen to engage with people in the ways they find the easiest. The WhatsApp Channel is NOT the same as a group chat, it's essentially a 'broadcast' rather than a conversation.

We are planning to keep followers up to date with local news and events.

The WhatsApp Channel is private, other followers will not be able to see your name or number (unless they are already in your contacts).

You can find our channel under the updates tab in WhatsApp. You can unfollow at any time.

Scan the QR code to follow.

Cllr David Kirkby

Chair Oliver's Battery Parish Council



Community Governance

Review (CGR) asking residents their opinion on the formation of a new parish council to cover the area currently covered by Winchester Town Forum. Part of this review is looking at the future of parish councils on the edges of Winchester Town Forum area, like Badger Farm Parish Council, Olivers Battery Parish Council and Compton and Shawford Parish Council. It is very important that residents take part in this Community Governance Review. There is an online survey to complete, and the closing date is 22 December.

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/elections/community-governance-reviews/cgr-winchester-town-area>

There will be more information about this from us shortly. Please keep your eyes on our website and parish noticeboards.

Website

badgerfarm-pc.gov.uk

Cllr John Godbold, Chair
Badger Farm Parish Council

Social Media

facebook.com/badgerfarmpc

twitter.com/badgerfarmpc

Clerk Email

clerk@badgerfarm-pc.gov.uk

REPAIR CAFE

News from the Repair Café Winchester!

We're going from strength to strength — meeting every second Saturday of the month, 10am to 1:30pm, at Badger Farm Community Centre. Our next event is on 13th December, and we can't wait to see you there! *Together, we've saved over 2,669 kg of waste!* That's a fantastic achievement for our amazing community thank you to everyone who's helped make a difference. We had a brilliant time celebrating International Repair Day in October. One of the many perks of volunteering with us is the legendary bacon rolls we serve our volunteers that morning — so if you've ever thought about joining in, now's your moment! Whether you're a repairer, welcomer, baker, or behind-the-scenes organiser, your contribution makes our café thrive. Everyone is welcome — and everyone matters! So whether you've got something that needs fixing or you'd like to lend a hand, head over to our website: repaircafewinchester.org/

Welcome to Littleton Repair Café!

We're delighted to welcome Littleton Repair Café to our growing family. They've already hosted two brilliant sessions, and their next event will be on Saturday, 24th January 2026, 10am–1:30pm at Littleton Memorial Hall. You can book repairs for Badger farm and Littleton venues on our website: repaircafewinchester.org/

A big cheer for Upham Repair Café!

We're also delighted to celebrate the launch of Upham Repair Café! They're an independent group, find all the details here: uphamvillage.org.uk/upham-repair-cafe/

Repairing for a Better Future

Every single repair helps the planet, strengthens our community, and supports the global movement for a more repairable, sustainable world. Curious about what's happening beyond Winchester? Visit The Restart Project for inspiring stories and international repair news: therestartproject.org/



Coming Soon: Borrow it Winchester!

Exciting news! In the New Year, we're launching Borrow it Winchester — a Library of Things. Soon you'll be able to borrow tools, and more for a small fee instead of buying something you'll only use once in a blue moon.

We'll be running Borrow it alongside our monthly Repair Café events, so keep an eye out for launch details.

We can't wait to share more with you!

REPAIR
CAFE Winchester



Scan to
find out more



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Pilates class timetable

Monday

12.45 Twyford Village Hall

5.30 Badger Farm Community Centre

Wednesday

12.10 & 1.10 St Mark's Hall Oliver's

Battery

Gentle seated Pilates based
exercise class

Monday

2pm Badger Farm Community Centre

Wednesday

11.15 St Mark's Hall Oliver's Battery



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Tim Newcombe | 6ft 5"

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10am - 2pm



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Hampshire County Council

Community News: Road Safety, Local Grants & Travel Updates from Hampshire County Councillor Jan Warwick

Hampshire Police & Crime Commissioner's Road Safety Grants

Do you have an idea that could make our roads safer? Hampshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Donna Jones is inviting applications for **Road Safety Grants** – funding designed to support projects that help reduce harm and improve safety on our roads.

If you or your group have a project that could make a difference in our community, now's the time to apply!

You can find full details and joining information here:

👉 hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/funding/applyforfunding

County Councillor Grants 2025–26 Applications are now open for County Councillor Grants

a great opportunity for local groups to apply for funding for community projects.

Please note that grants cannot be used to support normal parish business or projects that could be funded through other means (such as precepts or the Community Infrastructure Levy).

Applications are open **until 27th February 2026**.

More information and application details can be found here:

👉 hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/county-councillor

Cllr Jan Warwick

Jan.warwick@hants.gov.uk

Deputy Leader Hampshire County Council

07717 104236



Winchester City Council

Have your say – A new parish for council for Winchester

There are big changes on the way in how local services will be delivered. The government is proposing the system of county and district councils is replaced by unitary authorities. In Hampshire, all services will be delivered by a several bigger combined authorities that in our city will replace Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council.

But as a result, there may have to be changes in how Winchester as a city is run. At present, the city has an advisory Town Forum made up of WCC ward councillors that fulfils many of the roles of a parish council. After WCC is replaced by a unitary council this most local level of governance needs to be replaced and there is a proposal transform the existing Town Forum into a Town Council/Parish Council - a statutory body.

This change would help preserve some of the local representation and control that might otherwise be lost under a unitary structure. Having a new parish council-style body will also help to retain the Winchester Mayoralty, the second oldest in the country - second only to the City of London.

This proposal is being consulted on by WCC as part of a legal process known as a Community Governance Review that gives residents and organisations an opportunity to share their views on what they feel is the most suitable way for their community to be represented.

Cllr Jan Warwick

jwarwick@winchester.gov.uk | 07717 104236

Cllr Adrian Brophy

abrophy@winchester.gov.uk | 07590 572405

Cllr Brian Laming

blaming@winchester.gov.uk | 07973 265028

Major M27 Closure – Plan Ahead for Christmas & New Year Travel

If you're planning to travel between **Southampton and Portsmouth** over the festive season, please be aware of a major closure on the **M27**.

The motorway will be **fully closed in both directions between Junctions 9 (Whiteley) and 11 (Fareham) from 8pm on 24th December 2025 until 4am on Sunday 4th January 2026**.

This closure will allow engineers to install a brand-new four-lane underpass – a major improvement that, thanks to an innovative technique, will save months of future disruption.

What you need to know:

- 👉 Full closure J9–J11 both ways
- 👉 Diversion via the A27 (expect delays, especially 10am–4pm daily)
- 👉 Exit points: westbound at J11 and eastbound at J9
- 👉 No westbound entry at J11 (towards Southampton) or eastbound entry at J9 (towards Portsmouth)

Please plan your journeys carefully and allow extra time if travelling during this period. Thank you for your patience while this essential work is completed!

Find full details here:

👉 hants.gov.uk/transport/M27-junction-10/christmas-closure



Although the focus is on the unparished areas of the city, these changes could also impact surrounding areas that do already have existing parish councils such as Badger Farm and Olivers Battery. That's why the consultation has a duty to also cover all surrounding areas and will be inviting residents in our ward to participate.

A key question will be whether residents living in areas adjacent to the city would like to be part of any new body or to remain under their existing Parish Councils. This matters as parish councils are the first tier of local government and do a vital job of delivering services and representing local communities on issues like development. A notable example is Bushfield Camp. This is currently split between Compton and Shawford parish and the town area - and the consultation will ask if residents are happy with the status quo or would prefer it included in the proposed new Town Council.

This consultation runs until Monday 22nd December. It aims to be open to all views – ensuring that, whether staying the same or seeking change, any outcomes or recommendation are guided by local voices.

To learn more or to participate in the consultation, visit:

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/elections/community-governance-reviews/cgr-winchester-town-area>

Cllr Adrian Brophy

From your MP

We are changing the law through our pressure on government

It's all too easy to become disillusioned with politics when it seems like nothing ever gets done. But after big wins earlier in the year with the passing of my Animal Welfare Bill and successful local campaigns to save recycling centres and care facilities from closure by Hampshire County Council, we've continued to secure change.

As the Mental Health spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats, it was fantastic to be able to secure some important policy wins this year. For too long, our country has been in a mental health crisis, and I've been determined to make a difference. Serving on the committee for the Mental Health Bill, I worked with my colleagues to put forward amendments to ensure the Bill was the best it could be. It is vital that we support carers, and close blind spots in our legislation that too often let down people caring for loved ones with serious mental illness. Thanks to the amendments my colleagues and I put forward, for the first time ever, young carers supporting parents with a severe mental illness will get the help they desperately need.

I've been outraged at the lack of care shown to our environment by Southern Water. But the campaigning pressure we've been putting on both the industry and government has been paying

off. It was announced that Ofwat will be replaced and there will be new powers to fine water firms committing environmental offences. It's important for us to ensure these initial steps do not become the last. We need to make sure whatever replaces Ofwat is fit for purpose and actually holds the companies to account. Ultimately we need to replace the water companies themselves with organisations that serve the public and our environment, not just their shareholders.

While our campaigning pressure has yielded success in some areas, we still need to keep fighting in others. Growing up on a farm, I know all too well the pressures farmers are put under. Inflation is still high, and we've just come through a record dry summer. The government's refusal to scrap its new taxes on

farms is just another kick in the teeth, and instead of hitting the super rich tax avoiders who use farmland as a loophole, it will just force real farmers out of business. Farmers are the backbone of our rural communities, and have been taken for granted for too long. It's now more important than ever that we back British farms.



If there is anything I can help you with, please get in touch at danny.chambers.mp@parliament.uk

Danny Chambers MP (Liberal Democrats)



Fun, Friendship and Forward Thinking

Oliver's Battery WI

At the Oliver's Battery WI Group we have had a fabulous and very full six months. With regular guest speakers at our meetings, book club, craft, knit & natter, walking group and lunch club, there has been something for everyone to enjoy.

We had a Silver Clay jewellery demo, which was amazing to watch the transformation of some clay to a beautiful silver pendant.

In May we held our annual Plant Sale and as always the local community supported us well, so a big thank you.

In July we held a CPR & Defibrillator training session, everyone who attended agreed they were more confident to deal with an incident.

We had a lovely summer garden visit to Houghton Lodge, an 18th century grade II listed cottage surrounded by trees and lawns sweeping down to the banks of the River Test, a haven for so many beautiful swans, and of course the visit was accompanied by tea, coffee and cake.

In September Alex from the Oliver's Battery Chiropractic gave us an insight of the job of a Chiropractor and taught us some easy exercises to improve balance and posture.

In October we had an incredibly interesting talk from a Newspaper Journalist who had covered so much in his long career.

There are so many more events lined up over the coming months and if you would like to come along visit and see if you would like to join us, you would be warmly welcomed.

We meet the 3rd Monday of the month at St. Marks Church Hall, Oliver's Battery. Doors open 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start.

Sandra Herron (OBWI vice president)

Andrew Harris

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Chat-Tea Café



A warm welcome awaits you at the Chat-Tea Café, so please 'drop in' for a free hot drink and slice of cake.

An opportunity to meet new people and enjoy companionship in a safe and relaxed environment.



**Badger Farm
Community
Centre**

2 - 4 pm

More information at:

 www.chat-tea.co.uk

 [www.facebook.com/
communitychatteacafe](https://www.facebook.com/communitychatteacafe)

 info@chat-tea.co.uk

Some 2026 DATES:

- 26th January
- 23rd February
- 30th March
- 27th April

Our Special Christmas Café is on:

**22nd December 2025
1.30 to 4pm**

LEGS, BUMS & TUMS

LEGS, BUMS & TUMS

Every Monday 9.30-10.30am at IBM Sports Hall and Tuesday 6.45-7.45pm at Stanmore Primary School Hall.

The Tuesday evening class is run on a rota basis to ensure everyone has enough room.

SENIORS EXERCISE CLASSES

Every Wednesday 11.00am-12.00pm in person (9.15-10.15am ONLINE option) at Badger Farm Community Centre in the Bushfield room.

These classes comprise of a thorough warm-up routine and then move onto cardio, strength, conditioning, balance and chair/mat work all with a view to working at your own pace.

The classes run on a 5-week basis.

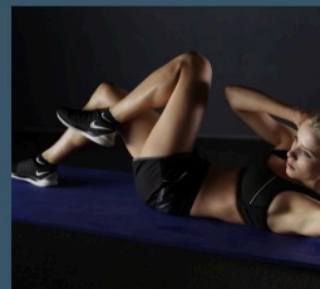
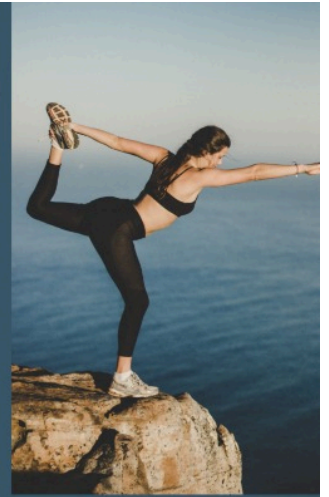
BOOTCAMPS

Every Sunday 9.30-10.30am (online), Wednesday 6.30-7.30pm (online) and Friday morning 9.30-10.30am (in person).

These are run on a half-termly basis.

Please contact Catherine Jones at cathjones@talktalk.net or call 07990 513434 for further information on any of the classes.

Catherine is a fully certified Exercise to Music Instructor/Older Adults Instructor/Bootcamp Instructor (member of CIMSPA).



Dementia Care

Caring for Our Community:

How Home Instead Central Hampshire is Helping People Live Well at Home. As the colder months draw in, many families start to worry about how their loved ones will manage at home. Whether it's keeping up with daily routines, getting out to appointments, or simply having someone to share a chat and a cup of tea with, a little extra support can make a big difference. We provide high-quality, compassionate care that allows people to remain safe, comfortable, and independent



At Home Instead, we understand that everyone's needs are unique. That's why we offer a wide range of personalised home care services, designed around each individual and their lifestyle. From companionship visits and help around the house to complex care for those with long-term conditions, our aim is to deliver care that's as unique as the people we support.

Our services include:

Home Help and Companionship: A friendly face to brighten the day, assist with household tasks, or provide company on outings and appointments.

Personal Care:

Dignified, respectful support with everyday needs such as bathing, dressing, and grooming.

Contact Us Today - Visit: homeinstead.co.uk/central-hampshire

Dementia Care: Specialist care designed to promote safety, familiarity, and routine, supporting both clients and their families through every stage of dementia.

Complex Care: Skilled support for individuals with advanced or ongoing medical needs, delivered by highly trained professionals.

Respite Care: Short-term care to give family carers a much-needed break, with peace of mind that their loved one is in safe hands.

Live-in Care: Round-the-clock support from a dedicated carer who lives in the home, providing continuity, companionship, and reassurance day and night. Every visit is tailored to the person receiving care. Unlike traditional home care, Home Instead's visits are never rushed; we offer a minimum of one-hour visits, with travel time between clients, ensuring our Care Professionals can give their full attention without feeling pressured.

At Home Instead Central Hampshire, care isn't just a service - it's a relationship built on trust, empathy, and respect. Whether you're looking for care for a loved one or exploring a rewarding new career in care, we're here to help. Home Instead also provide

Singing for the Brain

Winchester 11am to 12noon at St Peter's Catholic Church Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8RY - for more information see our website

Call: 01962 736681

Email: hants@homeinstead.co.uk

My Home Made Better, free, impartial home energy advice.

My Home Made Better is a new Hampshire wide project offering residents free and impartial advice relating to home energy, from insulation and heating right through to switching to new technologies, helping people to:

With many residents wanting to make their homes warmer and cheaper to run, but not sure where to start, My Home Made Better will help householders understand which options might be best for them. Experienced home energy advisers will be on hand to dispel myths and simplify complex information.

Alongside a dedicated project website, My Home Made Better will inspire residents with one to one advice, case studies, videos, online resources, open homes, events and webinars, all designed to help householders make more informed decisions about their properties.



The My Home Made Better project is being run by a partnership of local charities, who are not connected to installers or any commercial organisations. Winchester district is covered by Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis (WinACC) who also have lots of useful information about home energy at:

winacc.org.uk/take-action/sustainable-lifestyles/greener-more-sustainable-homes/

To find out more and to book an advice call visit myhomemadebetter.org.

Winchester Chess Club

If your interest in chess was re-kindled after watching the Queen's Gambit movie, or the recent Chess Masters TV series, why not check it out by coming along to one of our club nights.

We meet every second Wednesday (19:15 to 22:15), in the Community Centre's Whiteshute Room. Dates through until Xmas are November 5 and 19 and December 3 and 17

In addition to club nights, two teams compete in the Southampton Chess League, with match results counting for English Chess Federation grading purposes.

Annual fees for 2025/26 are £60, for those over 25, and £30 for those 25 or younger.

If you would like to give us a try, please turn up on one of the above Wednesday evenings (we regret we are unable to offer teaching for first timers).

If you would like more information, please visit our website (winchesterchess.uk) or contact the Membership Secretary, John Schonenberger, at schoneys54@gmail.com



Winchester Junior Chess Club



👦 Ages 6-16 all levels welcome

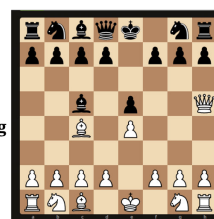
📅 Thursdays 18:00-19:30

👤 Learn chess through fun games

🎯 Train concentration, focus and careful decision-making

💡 Build confidence, planning and problem-solving skills

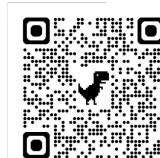
👯 Play with friends, have fun and learn skills for life



Badger Farm Community Centre
Badger Farm Road
Winchester SO22 4QB



BOOK NOW



<https://winchesterjuniorchess.net/JuniorClubWinchester>



Hampshire Junior Chess Association at Badger Farm

Hampshire Junior Chess Association (HJCA) is the main organiser of chess for children and young people aged 18 or under who live or go to school in Hampshire. It is affiliated to the Hampshire Chess Association and runs tournaments, training

days and county teams so that every junior can find the right level of challenge and fun.

Badger Farm Community Centre is now one of HJCA's regular homes. Recently HJCA ran a very successful junior tournament here, filling the hall with young players concentrating hard, making new friends and proudly collecting their trophies at the end. Building on this success, HJCA plans to return to Badger Farm with even more events and to increase the number of participants each time.

We would like to thank Dr John Upham, Maha Chandar, Kim Shek and the whole HJCA team for their huge amount of voluntary work in promoting junior chess across the county. John, an experienced International Arbiter and FIDE Instructor, has been especially active in developing high-quality events in Hampshire and beyond.

To find out more, including how to enter future tournaments, please visit www.hjca.org.uk

or www.facebook.com/groups/hampshirejuniorchess/?locale=en_GB

"Chess at Badger Farm Community Centre is growing in popularity every year. Children and adults enjoy learning and playing in a friendly atmosphere while building problem-solving, focus and confidence. Everyone is welcome – for more information about chess at Badger Farm or in Hampshire, please contact chesshampshire@gmail.com"

Lukasz Piecha



Chesshood app helps you learn and improve at chess with fun puzzles on your smartphone.

Download the app today and start your chess adventure!



OFSTED inspected in Dec 2023 with very pleasing results

For children from 2 years to school age.

OPENING TIMES (flexible)

Monday – Tuesday – Wednesday ~ 9.15 – 3.00
Thursday – Friday ~ 9.15 – 12.15

Spaces are now available!

All Government Funding options available.

Ideally situated in Badger Farm Community Centre next to Sainsbury's

Our staff are highly experienced and qualified. We ensure a high ratio of 1:6 for 3 and 4 year olds and 1:4 for under 3 year olds enabling plenty of individual time and attention.

"The friendly and nurturing staff build positive relationships with children and attend swiftly to their needs. This helps children to feel safe and secure. Children treat their friends with kindness and respect. Staff support children to develop their language and communication skills. Children are confident communicators" Ofsted 2023

The playgroup operates an open door policy so please feel free to call in at any time and see us or call the playgroup manager Mrs Denise Tosdevine on 07771 798 474 to arrange a visit. You can also see us in action and get more information on our website badgerfarmpreschool.co.uk and follow us on our Facebook page



Badger Farm Pre-school Playgroup

We returned to a new academic year in September to find over the holidays our giant sunflower had grown to 285cm!! The children were amazed at how tall it had got, and we incorporated this into our measuring of all children to watch them grow! Their challenge is to see who gets as tall as the sunflower! 🌻

The term continues with getting to know our new children and their families, celebrating the colourful Autumn. We have been able to re-organise our outdoor space to give us a new Discovery Area and a quiet Reading Area which the children are enjoying exploring and using.

We are now beginning to plan for our Christmas and look forward to celebrating with our annual Nativity and lots of sparkles glitter and glue!

Spaces are available in January so please contact by email, phone or just pop in!



Merry Christmas from all at Badger Farm Preschool.

Denise Tosdevine, Pre-school Manager

07771 798474

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Tuesdays 18:30.
Find out more, scan the QR code.

St Peter's Catholic Primary

Connecting with our neighbours.....

Children from St Peter's Primary School brought smiles and foot-tapping for the residents at St Catherine's View Care Home, Stanmore Lane during their annual summer concert for their neighbours. The pupils spent the afternoon playing their favourite pieces ranging from more advanced technical pieces, including Slow Air and Hungarian Melody from experienced musicians, to fun pieces, such as 'The Entertainer' and then to the residents singing along to 'Oranges and Lemons'. However, the highlight was residents joining in the pieces from the musical 'Oliver!' The audience, many of whom were visibly moved by the children's efforts and enthusiasm, clearly enjoyed the concert, with visitors commenting on how well the children had played.

The visit is part of St Peter's School's ongoing community initiative aimed at bridging the gap between generations and fostering meaningful connections. Over the past couple of years pupils have regularly visited the home. Sometimes visits include reading to the residents, completing jigsaw puzzles or even singing carols at Christmas. However, the relationship is also of benefit to the children too as they learn how our local community is made up of many different types of people and that we need to value everyone.

'It made me feel happy that people could listen to my music and enjoy it,' Jedidah commented.

Laura, the home's Companionship Team Leader comments, 'We have been having visits from St Peter's School every 2 weeks for the last few years. It has made a huge impact on our dementia residents bringing them joy and happiness watching the children and joining in with various activities. Our residents look forward to their visits, the children are also very excited when they visit

and have got to know the residents personally.'

Headteacher, Louise Buxton echoed the sentiment, noting how valuable the experience was for the children. "It's important for our pupils to understand the value of empathy and community. They've learned so by spending time with the wonderful residents and their carers."

Emelia, one of our regular pupil visitors said, 'I love being a Mission Ambassador and going to the care home, as I like how we can entertain them on all our visits and make them smile. At St Peter's we try to put other people first and these visits allow us to try to spread some happiness. We also spread a bit of love locally last 'International Kindness Day' when we went around the neighbourhood with bags of cookies and kind messages for locals to enjoy. By the end of the day all the cookies baked by the care home had been eaten!'

Following the success of our summer concert the school is inviting residents to our production of 'Oliver!' as we know they already love the tunes!



CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES.

THURSDAY 4TH DECEMBER - ST BARNABAS CLOSED - VINEYARD IS OPEN.

THEN

MONDAY 22ND DECEMBER - BADGER FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE AND VINEYARD CHURCH CLOSED.

TUESDAY 23RD DECEMBER - MILLAND ROAD OPEN FROM 10 A.M. TO 12.30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY 24TH DECEMBER - ST GREGORY'S CHURCH, ALRESFORD OPEN AS USUAL. 10 A.M. TO 12 P.M.

THURSDAY 25TH DECEMBER - ST BARNABAS CHURCH AND VINEYARD CHURCH CLOSED.

FRIDAY 26TH DECEMBER - MILLAND ROAD CLOSED

MONDAY 29TH DECEMBER - VINEYARD CHURCH CLOSED, BADGER FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE OPEN FROM 10 A.M. TO 12.30 P.M.

TUESDAY 30TH DECEMBER - MILLAND ROAD OPEN AS USUAL (10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.)

WEDNESDAY 31ST DECEMBER - ST GREGORY'S CHURCH, ALRESFORD CLOSED.

THURSDAY 1ST JANUARY - ST BARNABAS CHURCH AND VINEYARD CHURCH CLOSED.

FRIDAY 2ND JANUARY - MILLAND ROAD OPEN AS USUAL (10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.)

WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY 5TH JANUARY - ALL HUBS BACK TO NORMAL HOURS.

We are open for clients:

Badger Farm Community Centre, 2 Badger Farm Rd, Winchester SO22 4QB - Mon 10 - 12.30 p.m
21a Penton Place, Milland Rd, Highcliffe, SO23 0PZ - Tue & Fri 10-3pm
St Gregory's Church, Grange Road, Alresford, SO24 9HD - Wed 10-12pm
St Barnabas Church, Weeke, SO22 6EF - Thurs 10 - 12.30 p.m
Storehouse, Vineyard Church, SO23 9NR - Mon & Thurs 10-12pm

We are open for donations:

Gabare House, Winnall Valley Rd, SO23 0LD - Tue & Fri 9-3pm
Please note that we are not open on Bank Holidays

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01489 587052
fostering@hants.gov.uk



3rd Winchester City Rainbows and Brownies

This term we have welcomed some new members
and now have a full unit once again. Hurrah!

This means that we are able to hold whole group
activities or split into Rainbow and Brownie
groups in the same session. The girls were
excited to see the new badges launched by
Girlguiding over the summer. Megan has
already chosen two to complete - I think she's
trying to get all 36!



Perhaps the Rainbows
will complete their present maker badge with
Christmas fast approaching? The girls have
built brick dinosaurs without seeing the
instructions and also given nature a helping
hand through building bug hotels and
hedgehog houses. We've learnt some money
skills and mindfulness techniques then tested
Sparrowhawk and Brown Owl's cleaning skills

following a night of science and slime! We've even tried our hand at
vegan baking...

The rest of the autumn term includes sessions on decision making
skills, bubbles and christmas craft. We will be making decorations
for the Oliver's Battery Community tree and for the Hursley Christmas
Tree Festival. Will you spot them?

Next term's planning is already underway.
We're hoping to make pancakes with
residents at Westholme and have booked
some talented locals to share their
knowledge and skills. Do you have a hobby or passion
you'd be happy to share? Finally, a BIG thank you to Emily
(a.k.a Kingfisher) who has supported us all year as part of
her Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

We will miss you!

Visit <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/> if you'd
like to register a potential Rainbow, Brownie or volunteer
to help run the sessions.



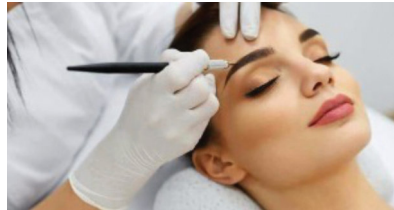
Those living on Olivers Battery,
Winchester Village or Badger Farm
do get priority for spaces but we are
currently holding a short waiting
list.

Best Wishes to you all.

Kate Fletcher, Brown Owl.



Look and Feel Beautiful,
Book an Appointment Today!



thBeauty Therapy
3 Treble Close, Olivers Battery,
Winchester, SO22 4JN
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theresa@thbeautytherapy.com
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theresa harrison

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Winchester Gardening Club

Hasn't it been wonderful to watch our gardens coming back to life and delighting us with an abundance of spring flowers and the fresh green of new leaves on trees and shrubs? As we head into summer there will be a lot more gardening to be done but hopefully, weather permitting, we will be rewarded with colourful borders and the prospect of homegrown fruit and vegetables later in the season. Much as we like tending our gardens, we also enjoy downing our tools from time to time, especially if it happens to be a second Wednesday of the month, when we hold our monthly meetings. There is always a visiting speaker sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm, a couple of friendly competitions to take part in and plenty of opportunities to chat with fellow gardeners. Our programme will cover the following topics during the next few meetings:

9 April SALVIAS AND OTHER SUMMER FLOWERING PLANTS A talk by Bryan Madders on some of his favourite plants.

14 May 2025 VEGETABLES ALL THE YEAR ROUND John Trim, former Head Gardener and author of 'The Root to the Top', will tell us how to achieve this seemingly impossible feat.

11 June HEAVENLY HOSTAS John Baker will pay us a return visit to share his unwavering enthusiasm for growing beautiful hostas.

9 July BHUTAN – KINGDOM OF RARE PLANTS Rosemary Legrand, one of our favourite speakers, will take us on a virtual tour of this interesting country. Do come along on any or all of these dates if you would like to.

IN ADDITION: On 10 May we will be holding our Annual Plant Sale at Badger Farm Community Centre, 10am–2pm. We will be selling flower and vegetable plants grown by our members, as well as homemade cakes.

HAPPY GARDENING!

Our meetings are held at St Mark's Church Hall, Oliver's Battery Road South, Winchester, SO22 4EZ, starting at 7.30pm.

Visitors £5. For further information please visit: wingardenclub.weebly.com.

City & Guilds
NPTC

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MEMORIES OF WINTER

Autumn's glorious colours gone, opening curtain, distance infinity. Fond memories visit heart; snow covering woodland, hills and vales. Snow clinging onto branches, reaching high. Swans blend with snow, on river banks almost invisible, disappear. Snow flakes adorn the sky, floating down creating a carpet of joy awaiting fun for all. Snow muffles sounds, feeling of quiet and calm. Snowmen, igloos, snowballs flying, children sliding down slopes on sleighs. Such fun! And adults' memories come to the fore. Snow creates a playful happiness as no other seasonal element can. Snow always falls on Christmas Day? Memories past come to the fore. Sunlight shines upon crystals unique. Glittering, sparkling atmosphere surreal. Snow on countryside and hills enliven heart, bringing joy to all. Embrace Mother Nature's gift; memories past, reality now.



* Wintertime! A joy for all!



Wishing you well

Struggling with food choices? By Amanda Turner

You're not alone. Many of us struggle with food cravings that feel hard to control. But recognising the pattern is the first step toward building a healthier relationship with real food.

It's easy to think junk food addiction is just about too many takeaways – but it goes deeper. Take a moment to consider what you're eating throughout the day: breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, drinks, smoothies... it all adds up. Craving a burger over an apple or raspberries? That might be a sign of ultra-processed food addiction. If you are looking to avoid addictive foods without the struggle, here are some resources which offer practical support and guidance.

The doctor-led UK charity Public Health Collaboration (PHC) is here to help with group work. Their mission is to empower people to make healthier decisions for better public health. One of their key initiatives is Liberate, a supportive group programme designed to help you break free from ultra-processed foods and build lasting, nourishing habits. Learn more: liberatetoday.org or read Dr Jenn Unwin's book, Fork in the Road [goodreads.com/book/show/57306964-fork-in-the-road](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/57306964-fork-in-the-road)

Want more personalised help? If you're ready to make a change, support is closer than you think. You can book online appointments with a registered Nutritional Therapist near you through BANT practitioner-search.bant.org.uk. Whether you prefer someone local or simply want the flexibility of online sessions, this is a great way to get personalised support that fits your life. These professionals don't just offer advice – they get to know you. They help you understand your personal

habits with food and tailor guidance that suits your lifestyle, preferences and goals. It's not about one-size-fits-all plans; it's about building sustainable, evidence-based habits that actually stick. In so doing, you'll also gain something that's hard to find in free resources: real accountability. With regular check-ins, you'll stay motivated, track progress and feel supported every step of the way. Investing in this kind of personalised care could make all the difference between short-term fixes and lasting change.

If your budget's tight right now, don't worry - BANT offers a treasure trove of free resources on their Food for Your Health page bant.org.uk/food-for-your-health/ .

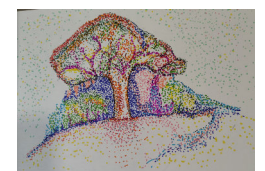
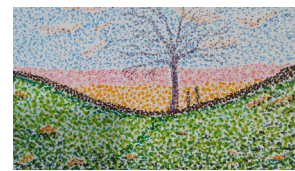
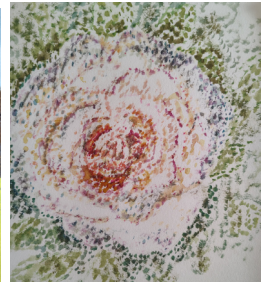
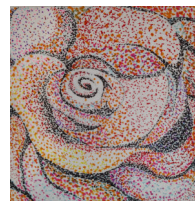
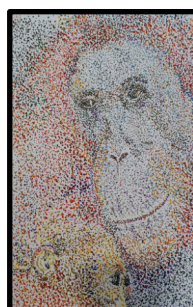
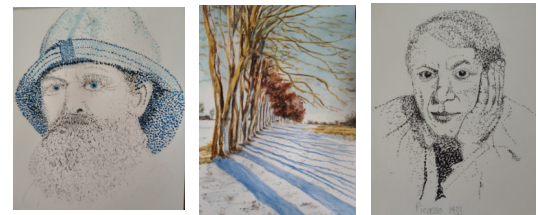
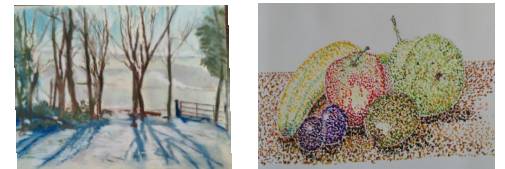
Start small. Make a few healthy swaps in the foods you already enjoy. You deserve to feel good about your food choices – and with the right support, you can. Let this be the beginning of a delicious relationship with real food.



This is general educational information only, not advice. As part of charity/community work, Amanda Turner Bsc (Hons) is a volunteer for the Public Health Collaboration. Amanda also has the MSc in Nutritional Medicine from Surrey Uni which is an AfN registered degree (Association for Nutrition).

Badger Farm Art Group

Badger Farm Art Group continues to thrive, having a mix of new members and people who have attended for years. We meet on Thursday afternoons, 1.30-3.30 in the Community Centre during term time. We have recently completed a project on Pointillism, looking at landscapes, portraits and still life. We've been discussing colour theory and using a variety of tones. We've also been looking at shadows, inside and outside of buildings, looking at their shapes and colours. If you like a little challenge and are keen to develop your art skills, why not come and join us? It's a very friendly and relaxed group, we enjoy a cup of tea and a chat, along with producing some super artwork. It's 'pay as you go', £10 per session, and your first session is free. Contact Sarah, snippycards@hotmail.co.uk for more details, or just turn up.



The Long-Lost Christmas: When Scotland Put Santa on the Naughty List

If you think your Christmas preparations get stressful, spare a thought for bygone Scotland – they weren't even allowed to celebrate it! For nearly 400 years, Scotland gave Christmas the cold shoulder. After the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, the newly reformed Kirk, inspired by John Knox, decided that the whole business of Christmas – feasting, gift-giving, and general merriment – was far too Popish for comfort. Out went the holly and the hymns, and in came a stern devotion to simplicity, sobriety, and sermons. In 1640, the Scottish Parliament made it official: "Yule" was abolished. The mince pies were rejected, the carols silenced, and the only jingling to be heard came from workmen's tools – because December 25th was now just another working day.

The Neighbours Join In

Meanwhile, south of the border, England and Wales followed suit. Oliver Cromwell didn't personally ban Christmas (as he's often accused), but he certainly approved when Parliament did it in 1647. The Puritans saw Christmas and other feast days as far too decadent and unbiblical – and Cromwell, ever the serious sort, made sure the ban was firmly enforced during his time as Lord Protector (1653–1658). Christmas cheer was not restored until the monarchy came back in 1660 – and presumably so did the pudding.

Hogmanay to the Rescue

Of course, you can't keep the Scots from celebrating something. With Christmas off the calendar, they poured all their festive energy into Hogmanay – New Year's Eve. The first-footing tradition, with gifts of coal, shortbread, and whisky, became the new way to show goodwill and bring in the year ahead. It's as if all the Christmas spirit got delayed by a week and came bursting out with fireworks and a dram.

The Slow Return of Christmas Cheer

Christmas slowly crept back into Scottish life through the influence of Victorian Britain – the age of Dickens, carols, and rather enthusiastic decorating. Yet, incredibly, Christmas Day didn't become an official public holiday in Scotland until 1958. That means some Scots alive today can still remember when December 25th was just another day to clock in at work! So next time you're singing "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" beside the fire, spare a thought for those stern reformers who preferred their winters long, quiet, and sermon-filled. Then raise a mince pie – or perhaps a glass of something stronger – to the resilience of festive joy.

After all, no law, not even one passed by Parliament, can quite stop Christmas from finding its way back into our hearts.



Free impartial home energy advice from an independent local charity

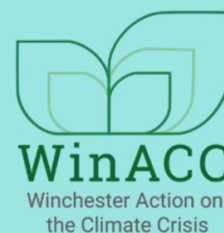
Want to make your home warmer
and cheaper to run, but not sure where to start?

We can give you free independent advice on:

- Insulation and reducing heat loss
- Solar panels and efficient heating

Book a free advice call at
www.myhomemadebetter.org

My Home Made Better is a partnership of four Hampshire based charities, delivered in Winchester District by Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis (WinACC)



Tech Talk

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house,

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse...

Or so you thought! While you're tucked in for the night, dreaming of sugar plums and waiting for St. Nicholas, your devices might not be quite as restful as you. Smartphones, tablets, laptops and even smart speakers will be humming along in the background, quietly taking care of their own business.

No need to worry – this background activity is not only normal, it's actually helpful! While you're sleeping, your devices are installing updates or refreshing apps automatically. These behind-the-scenes processes help fix security issues, improve how things run, check for new content and keeps apps up to date with the latest features. Sometimes, you might wake up to find an app looks a little different or some settings have changed. That's just your device doing its job. The good news is that most devices let you manage this easily to help you stay in control – just search for Background Apps and Data Usage in Settings.

For added reassurance, there are trusty apps like Avast or Bitdefender that keep watch for any unusual activity on both computers and phones. They quietly do their thing in the background, looking out for problems without bothering you unless something suspicious pops up, meaning you can relax knowing your devices are always being looked after.

Then there's syncing. If you've ever taken a photo on your phone and spotted it moments later on your tablet or in the cloud – iCloud, Google Drive or OneDrive – that's your device quietly

keeping things up to date. Syncing simply means your gadgets are working together to keep your photos, contacts and files consistent across devices – and safely backed up in case something goes wrong.

Smart assistants like Alexa, Siri and Google Assistant are quietly ticking over too. They're not recording everything, just waiting for their wake word so they can respond when needed. If that feels a bit too nosy (especially if you'd rather they didn't hear your rendition of Silent Night), you can check what's been stored or turn off voice activation entirely. Like other background features, they're designed to be helpful and the settings let you decide what stays private.

As the world stills, waiting for St. Nicholas to tuck surprises beneath the twinkling branches, your devices deliver their own gifts – updating, backing up, syncing and making sure your Christmas runs as smoothly as a sleigh ride through a starry winter night.



winchestercomputertutor.co.uk/background-magic

[\(https://winchestercomputertutor.co.uk/background-magic/\)](https://winchestercomputertutor.co.uk/background-magic/)

Winchester's Historic Christmas Market

Each winter, Winchester embraces the season of goodwill as visitors flock to the Christmas Market. Beneath the cathedral's spire, wooden chalets line the paths, offering gifts, festive food and warm drinks. The scent of mulled wine drifts through the air as families gather beneath twinkling lights. It feels timeless – and in some ways, it is.



Centuries earlier, in 1096, William II established Winchester's St. Giles' Fair by royal charter. Held on the hill that gave it its name, it grew into a trading powerhouse described as "one of the most famous English fairs." "Men of many nationalities were found there," their stalls laden with everything from wooden bowls and leather shoes to precious silver brooches, iron tools and even exotic animals. The fair was laid out in "streets, which were named from the commodities sold in them." In the Drapery, bolts of wool, linen and imported silks hung from timber frames. In the Pottery, buyers browsed oil lamps, cooking pots and tiles etched with saints or beasts. The Spicery was a place of marvels, thick with the scent of cinnamon, pepper and cloves, and coloured with saffron like sunlight, nutmeg like polished wood and rose petals like faded velvet.

For sixteen days each September, the Bishop of Winchester ruled the city. A 14th-century charter records how, on the eve of the fair, "the mayor, bailiffs, and citizens shall... deliver over to [the bishop's officers] the keys and custody of that gate." Within a seven-league radius (about twenty miles) "no merchant... shall sell, buy, or set out for sale, any merchandise in any place other than the fair." The bishop's officers tested weights and measures and "burned the false ones and fined the owners." They also fixed the official rates for bread, wine, beer and other provisions.

Like many grand traditions, it eventually faded. By the 1400s, foreign merchants were restricted, tolls increased and trade routes shifted. The fair shrank, then vanished. Today, St. Giles' Hill is quiet again. Yet the spirit of the fair lingers in the city.

As you wander the Christmas Market this winter, pause for a moment. The excitement, the voices, the sense of occasion recall a much older Winchester. Climb St. Giles' Hill, where merchants once gathered and the bishop held sway, and look towards the cathedral and the market below. On a crisp winter's evening, with lights glittering beneath the darkening sky, faint echoes of the old fair whisper in the frost, carrying the memory of centuries past.

Nature Notes

AUTUMN 2025

October started grey and dull with a definite chill in the air. The hedgerows and woods are now awash with colour as the leaves start to lose chlorophyll and turn red, yellow, orange and magenta, a veritable artist's palette. Berries too add to this, providing food throughout the winter for our resident birds and winter visitors. Small mammals also take advantage of the autumn harvest with many of them storing up their hoard of nuts for the winter.



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were often kept as pets in the 17th and 18th century. The adult starling's plumage on first encounter seems dull and black but in the sun turns a bright sheen of iridescent greens and mauves, dotted with white flecks whilst the young birds are a plain sandy olive with a white chin. They are probably most well known for their impressive murmerations which happen during the winter when resident flocks are joined by birds from Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Russia.

Despite the long warm summer, 2025 has been a disappointing year for butterflies. This is thought to be due to the very wet spring. Numbers were slightly up on last year but along with other insects, are still in decline.

The Yucca tree in my garden has flowered profusely this year with its heady often overpowering perfume smelling like vanilla and coconut. The large bunches have resulted in a host of small white-green berries. Usually, it is the blackbirds that make the most of the fruit but this year a flock of 45 to 50 starlings have discovered them. They gather firstly on the telegraph wires chattering noisily, then descend onto the bunches picking off the ripe ones before skittishly flying off at the slightest disturbance. The common starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) goes under several names depending on where you are in the UK/England. Starnel (Midlands) Shepster, sheppy, Stinker, Shitlegs (northern England), Scootie (Orkney), and Weezer -an old Norfolk- name suggesting the asthmatic breathing notes the bird makes. Starlings are great mimics of other birds and also other sounds from their environment and

This summer will be remembered in many places across the UK for the extraordinary scenes of clouds of ladybirds. One swarm even momentarily halted an England versus India cricket match at Lord's where people were reportedly seen running for cover to escape them. Experts have put the increase of numbers down to the intermittent rain and warm spells and the numbers of aphids which the insects feed off. You may even have them hibernating in large numbers in corners of your house this winter.

Starling reference was from 'The Bird Britannica' by Mark Cocker and Richard Maybey.

Wendy Bramall

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Badger Farm & Oliver's Battery Parish Council Meetings

Our parish councils meet every second month starting January 2026.

members of the public are welcome to attend.



Badger Farm Parish Council

meets at 7.30pm every second month starting January 2026 at Badger Farm Community Centre. For more information, please check the council website (badgerfarm-pc.gov.uk) or contact the clerk, Christine Howe clerk@badgerfarm-pc.gov.uk.

Oliver's Battery Parish Council

Please see the Parish Council website (oliversbattery.info) and Facebook page (@OliversBatteryParishCouncil) for information on the dates, times and location of future meetings.

Contact the locum clerk, Helen Symmons clerkoliversbattery@gmail.com.



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