



Badger Farm and Oliver's Battery COMMUNITY NEWS

Spring 2026

The Chat-Tea Café celebrates their 7th year



On Monday 23rd February 2026 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the Chat-Tea Café opened the Battery Room doors at the Badger Farm Community Centre in a celebratory mood.

The Café celebrated its 7th year anniversary in the company of over 60 Café guests, including:

The Mayor and Mayoress of Winchester (who helped cut our '7' celebration cake);
Winchester Radio (Anna O'Brien Derek & Jeremy) who spent time talking to us and doing interviews;
Dan from the Winchester COOK shop, (who have generously donated a cake every month since 2022).

ALSO our fantastic, volunteer team (see photo below); who give their time, provide delicious home-baked cakes, serve countless hot drinks and always have the time to chat and listen to your stories.



The idea of a Café at the Badger Farm Community Centre was the 'vision and initiative' of Debbie Deeney, who, back in late 2018, recognised that the Centre would provide a perfect community spot and hub to set up a café that would be completely free and welcoming to the elderly and everyone who is feeling socially isolated both in Winchester and its surrounding communities.

We open once a month, on the last Monday of the month, in the Battery Room at the Badger Farm Community Centre from 2-4pm.

As you come through the door - our wonderful team of volunteers will be ready to greet you. They will find you a seat and introduce you to other people, who like you, have come to enjoy some companionship in a safe and relaxed place.

It is a chance to talk and make new friends. You may discover that you have similar interests, such as knitting, reading, sewing, walking, board games, going to the Cinema, gardening - amongst many, many other hobbies; which if shared, can give you something to look forward to together, as the months go by.

Are you a lover of knitting or crochet - then do come along to our next Café on Monday 30th March - and ask about our recently announced '**WOOL PROJECT**'. We are looking for help with knitting/crochet squares which we will turn into blankets. These will be donated to locally based charities.

We are hoping to 'build a community - square by colourful square', while having a hot drink, slices of cake and plenty of 'yarns' and laughter.

The Chat-Tea Café Team



News from the Centre

So Much to Celebrate!

After a whirlwind of changes, improvements and upgrades, we're finally pausing to catch our breath — what a fantastic few months it has been! The Centre is looking better than ever, all with one goal in mind: making it the very best space for you, our community.

Growing Our Team

We're delighted to welcome two new trustees. Their enthusiasm and experience are already making a difference. That said, we're always on the lookout for more volunteers to join us. If you've ever thought about getting involved, now is the perfect time. We'd also love to hear from anyone interested in helping to distribute the Community News — it's a brilliant way to get some fresh air and a few extra steps in.

Milestones Worth Celebrating

A huge congratulations to **Chat-Tea Café**, which has just celebrated its **7th anniversary**. For seven wonderful years it has brought friendship, warmth and, of course, excellent cake to our community. Long may it flourish!

Not to be outdone, **Weight Watchers** are celebrating an incredible **25 years at the Centre** — proving that friendship (with just a *little* bit of cake!) is the perfect recipe for success.

The **Repair Café** is celebrating its **4th anniversary** saving cherished items from landfill and bringing people together. And we're excited that **Borrow It** is launching — giving everyone the chance to borrow those occasionally needed tools and items for a small fee. It's practical, sustainable and wonderfully community-minded.

"All provided by volunteers from welcome to repair to cake!"

Community Spirit

Although we're sorry that Oli B won't be able to run their Easter Egg Trail this year, we are hoping their amazing volunteers and supporters will be back with their usual magic next year.

Supporting Health & Wellbeing

We're proud to continue hosting the **NHS** for diabetic eye screening, diabetes prevention services, and respiratory clinics. These essential services make a real difference.

Meanwhile, **Winchester Basics** and **Food Bank** remains at the Centre, working tirelessly to support anyone in our community who may need a helping hand.

Move, Make & Meet

From pilates, yoga and tai chi to arts, crafts, dance and martial arts, our timetable is packed with activities for every age and ability. Many New Year's resolutions are now in full swing — and we're delighted that for so many Centre classes have become a vital and enjoyable part of weekly routines.

Whether you're looking for something aerobic, educational, creative or simply sociable, there's a group here ready to welcome you.



Looking Ahead

The developer for **Bushfield Camp** has resubmitted their outline planning application, to be considered by the Council on 27 /3/ 26. The application is again for access only with everything else reserved. We encourage everyone to stay informed with developments and visit the campaign website at <https://savebushfieldcamp.com/> where you can subscribe and even donate to the campaign if you wish.

There is so much happening at the Centre — friendship, fitness, fun and fantastic milestones.

Thank you for being part of it. Here's to another year of community spirit, shared smiles and (occasionally!) shared cake.

Alison Cochrane, Centre Manager

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 Foster 07929 624526
Body in Harmony Pilates	Monday 5.30-6.30pm	Catherine Thomas info@bodyinharmoniypilates.com 07818 038912
Gentle Seated Pilates	Monday 2.00pm	Catherine Thomas info@bodyinharmoniypilates.com 07818 038912
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
Dance for Parkinsons	Friday 2.00-3.00pm	bryettdanceschool@gmail.com
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 Barguirdjian SarahByoga.net
Slimming World	Saturday 8am and 9.30am Thursdays 6:30pm and 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 Scott info@winchestertkd.co.uk
Wyeth Yoga	Monday 9.30-11.30am	Chris Wyeth c.wyethnobil@gmail.com

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 website winchesteru3a.co.uk
Chess Course for Adult Beginners	Thursday 7.00-8.00pm	Lukasz Piecha 07711804361 chesshood@chesshood.com chesshood.com
Repair Cafe 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

OLDER ADULTS

Chat-Tea Cafe	Last Monday of the month 2.00-4.00pm	info@chat-tea.co.uk
Vital Life Fitness	Thursday 10.15-11.15am	Abby O'Connell abby@vitallifefitness.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 6pm-7pm	southernkarate.org
Winchester Junior Chess Club	Thursdays 6pm-7.00pm	Lukasz Piecha chesshampshire@gmail.com chesshood.com

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).

learn. We even had an unexpected treat on the first Monday with a light covering of snow, which the children thoroughly enjoyed out on the field. Alongside the excitement, they have settled quickly and made a productive start to the term.

Before Christmas, the children enjoyed a busy and festive few weeks. We were delighted to take the whole school to the Theatre Royal to watch Puss in Boots, enjoyed our Christmas lunch in our jumpers, and managed to hold our outdoor Christmas Concert to the delight of families. Our Nursery and Year R children also performed their wonderful Nativity for parents and grandparents.

We are fortunate to have pupils from St Swithun's visit weekly to lead Hockey and Art sessions and listen to our Year 1 and 2 readers. The children are also back in the edible garden, full of plans for planting vegetables and flowers.

There are many exciting trips and events ahead. Year 1 will visit the Science Centre during Science Week, Year 2 will explore the

It was lovely to welcome everyone back after the holidays and see the children return eager to

local park, and after Easter our Year 5 pupils will head off on their residential to Ferny Crofts. Our football teams have already played several matches, and the girls' team is through to the Hampshire Schools Cup Quarter Final!



Our Friday morning bike buses continue to grow, and it's wonderful to see the children becoming increasingly confident cyclists.

The children have also extended their learning outdoors by planting disease-resistant elm trees kindly donated by Winchester Rotary Club.

If you or someone you know has a child starting school in September, we still have places available. Miss Vittle, our Headteacher, would be delighted to offer a tour.

Our Nursery Hedgehogs class is extremely popular and takes children from two years old. We offer both 15- and 30-hour funding. Please contact the school office if you would like to arrange a visit.



oliversbatteryschool



www.oliversbatteryprimary.com



Oliver's Battery Primary and Nursery School

Austen Avenue

Winchester SO22 4HP

Telephone: 01962 869496

Headteacher: Miss Sarah Vittle B.Ed (Hons)

Email: admin@oliversb.com





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6-7 PM



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Scan for info

REBIRTH OF NATURE
SPRINGTIME IS HERE!

First glimpse of Spring. Different dimension. Rebirth of Nature, Heaven's infinity. Springtime a dream, now a reality.

Snowdrops and crocuses colours delight. Daffodils' smiling faces brighten heart.

Pure wonder of sights, blossoms and scents. Feeling of happiness. Always remembered.

Heralded by Nature, new season dawning. Springtime is with us. Symphony of joy.

Enjoy every precious moment!

SIMON LEVER




A Warm Welcome from Kitchen Dancers WI

Welcome to Kitchen Dancers WI

We relocated to Badger Farm from St Cross last year and now hold our meetings at Badger Farm Community Centre. We have a diverse membership of professional and retired ladies and we meet on the third **Monday of the month at 19.00 hrs.**

We are a modern WI preferring to be relevant to today's woman rather than the traditional "jam and Jerusalem" image. Indeed, we have even been known to enjoy a glass or wine as an alternative to a cup of tea at meetings

Our next meeting on 20 April will be a talk on styling and colour advice, just in time for wardrobe updates for the summer.

In Feb we had a fascinating demonstration on Getting to know your Air Fryer, tips and tricks for the latest must have kitchen gadget.

In January, traditionally our night for board games we were eyes down for Bingo. We had some very competitive members who some of us to the skills of Bingo.



In November, we had a most informative talk from an expert in Scam awareness. We all thought we were too savvy to be caught but we were wrong. However, we went home reassured

In October, back by popular demand was our Pudding evening.

Members brought their favourite pudding along with the recipe (if they were willing to share family secrets) or stories that related to the pudding.

As well as our monthly meetings we have an enthusiastic book club, an extremely accomplished craft club who and a fledgling garden club

We have many more events planned for this year including a hugely popular summer party.

Don't be a stranger, come to a meeting where you will be made most welcome.

Badger Farm Community Centre is a great location with easy transport links and plenty of parking.

We look forward to seeing you in 2026

CHRIS WILSON (KDWI Secretary)

<https://hampshire.thewi.org.uk/find-wi/kitchen-dancers>



Fun, Friendship and Forward Thinking

Olivers Battery WI continues to provide interesting meetings with talks, demonstrations, social time. Apart from our monthly meetings we offer Book Group, Craft Group, Walking Group, Knit and Natter, Lunch Group, these give time to meet members in a more informal setting.

Our December meeting was used as a social event with food, mulled wine, quiz and a snowman drive (variation off Beetle Drive) which was enjoyed by our members.

February saw us meet at the Abbots Mitre Pub in Chilbolton for a post Xmas lunch. 38 members enjoyed a lovely lunch and a good time to catch up was had by all.

At our January, we learnt about the history of Piers around the country though painted pictures. A fascinating talk by a Hampshire Artist.

Our Plant sale on 4th May is now an Annual event and a great fundraiser for us so please put date in your diaries. We sell plants, cakes and sell refreshments.

If you think the Olivers Battery WI is for you do come along for a visit. We are a very friendly group and happy for visitors to come along and see what we offer.

We meet the 3rd Monday of the month at St Marks Church Olivers Battery, doors open 19.15 for 19.30 start,

Future meetings:

March 16th - Life in the Police force using quilts to illustrate her career.

April 20th - Professional Vocalist—our 26th Birthday meeting.

June 15th - Life before and after sight loss.

For more information contact oliversbatterysec@hampshirewi.org.uk

Cathy Winter (OBWI Secretary)

Little Fishes Pre-School – places available from September

Little Fishes offers a warm, secure and welcoming environment for our pre-school children to learn and explore. It is based on the St. Peter's Primary School site in a large and sunny purpose-built room with an extensive outdoor area, which is used every day whatever the weather.



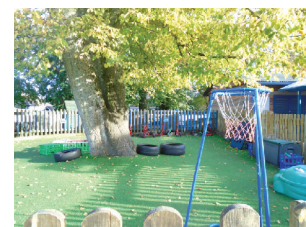
The Little Fishes team works alongside the Early Years teachers to provide the EYFS curriculum.



Have a look at the Little Fishes page on the school website for a virtual tour and information on session times, funding/charges.

Visits and how to apply:

<https://www.stpetershants.co.uk/little-fishes-pre-school>



WINCHESTER GARDENING CLUB

The cheerful sight of daffodils and other early flowers has been heralding the arrival of Spring for some time and it is a great pleasure to watch our gardens wake up after the dreary and soggy winter months. It will be good to get back to working in the garden regularly and to carry out all the many jobs that need doing out in the fresh air or in the greenhouse. However, once a month, on the second Wednesday, we down tools and head for St. Mark's Church Hall in Oliver's Battery to spend a couple of hours listening to interesting and stimulating talks by visiting speakers, and to socialise with fellow gardeners. We also run a couple of in-house Mini Shows in March and August and organise outings to private gardens.

Our programme for the next few months covers the following topics:

Wednesday, 8 April 2026 We look forward to welcoming local expert Charles Jennings who will introduce us to the fascinating and controversial topic of **Planting by the Moon**.

Wednesday, 13 May 2026 Jacqueline Aviolet will pay us a visit to delve into the chequered history of Spices and to give us advice on which ones we can grow successfully in our English gardens.

Wednesday, 10 June 2026 Belinda Allen will be sharing some of her extensive knowledge of the benefits of **Companion Planting**, particularly in the vegetable garden.

All our meetings take place at St. Mark's Church Hall, Oliver's Battery Road South, Winchester SO22 4EZ. Please join us for one or all of these talks. We would be pleased to welcome you. Visitors £5.



For more information visit our website:
www.wingardenclub.weebly.com

IN ADDITION - We will be holding our **Annual Plant Sale** in the courtyard of the Badger Farm Community Centre on: **Saturday, 9th May, 12am - 2pm**. We will be selling flower and vegetable plants lovingly grown by our members to raise funds for the Club.



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Tuesday Yoga at The Badger Farm Community Centre



Join Sarah & a wonderful group of Winchester locals of all abilities & ages for friendly, weekly Yoga classes

Choose from 2
one-hour classes
9.15 am or 7.30 pm
every Tuesday

Details
sarahbyoga.net/badger

Email
info@SarahB Yoga.net



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.

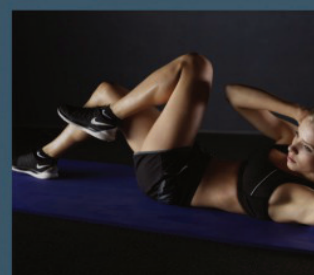
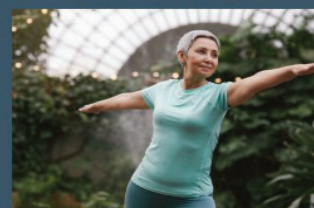
These classes comprise of a thorough warm-up routine and then move onto cardio, strength, conditioning, balance and chair/mat work all with a view to working at your own pace.
The classes run on a 5-week basis.

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).



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nbest1919@gmail.com

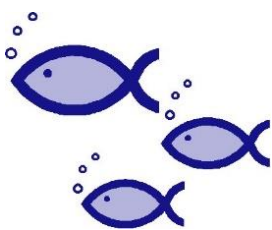
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For help with anxiety, depression, low mood, self-esteem, relationship issues, bereavement and more

bacp professional standards authority
Registered Member 405886
MBACP



Association for Outdoor Therapy



Little Fishes Pre-School

St. Peter's Primary School, Oliver's Battery Road N, Winchester, SO22 4JB

Open Monday to Friday
during term time, with
a variety of session
times available

Providing childcare
from 2 years 9 months
to 5 years

For 25 years, Little Fishes has provided a warm, secure and welcoming environment for children to learn and explore

"Children attending the school's Little Fishes Pre-School make a strong start to their education" Ofsted



Have a look at the school website www.stpetershants.co.uk or telephone 01962 852820 for more information and to arrange a visit

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



**my home
made better**




Chat-Tea Café

Held in The Battery Room
at The Badger Farm
Community Centre
from 2-4pm

Chat-Tea Café - run
by the Community
for the Community
- since 2019




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.

More information at:

 www.chat-tea.co.uk

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

 info@chat-tea.co.uk

2026 CAFÉ OPENING DATES

Monday - 30th March	Please note - we are NOT OPEN in AUGUST
Monday - 27th April	Monday - 29th September
Monday - 18th May	Monday - 27th October
Monday - 29th June	Monday - 23rd November
Monday - 27th July	Monday - 21st December



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 **Free contraception and emergency contraception services at Badger Pharmacy**
You can now arrange to get your supplies of emergency contraception (the morning after pill) or oral contraception (the pill) free, direct, and in confidence from Badger Pharmacy **without the need to contact your GP.**

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Closed Between 12:00 - 13:00
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Update from Hampshire County Councillor, Cllr Jan Warwick

Highways and Winter Road Conditions

As we move through winter, many residents will have noticed the impact prolonged rainfall and freezing temperatures have had on our roads. Since Christmas, repeated freeze-thaw conditions have led to more potholes and surface defects across Hampshire.

Hampshire Highways has repaired more than 62,000 defects since the start of the financial year. Additional patching gangs and specialist Jet/Dragon patching machines have been deployed, and some repairs will be temporary at first to keep roads safe.

Badger Farm Road, from the junction with Meadow Way to the Pitt Roundabout, was scheduled for repairs from 16 to 21 March. Staff will be onsite to assist with access, and quieter thermal heating methods will be used to reduce disturbance.

Extra jetting units are operating across the county to address blocked gullies and localised flooding, while an additional white-lining crew is tackling worn road markings where visibility and safety are a concern.

Residents are reminded that highway issues, including potholes, flooding and damaged signage, should be reported via the Hampshire County Council website or through the "Our Hants" app.



Hampshire is also experiencing a high level of utility works. Planned works can be viewed on the [one.network](#) website.

Education and SEND Provision

The County Council has approved significant investment to expand specialist provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

A further 157 specialist places have been agreed in the latest phase, contributing to a wider ambition to create 1,000 new specialist places by 2030. This forms part of a £633 million capital programme supporting schools, SEND facilities, early years provision and family hubs across Hampshire.

We are also asking residents to help promote fostering in Hampshire. Foster carers from all backgrounds are urgently needed. Full training, financial allowances and professional support are provided to those who step forward to make a difference in a child's life.

Finance

Finally, we recognise the ongoing financial pressures facing households. Hampshire County Council continues to face significant budget challenges, particularly in adult social care, children's services and SEND provision. Rising demand and costs mean difficult decisions must be made, even with council tax increases kept within government limits. We remain committed to protecting essential services while delivering value for your money.

Thank you for your continued support and for playing your part in keeping Hampshire moving safely.

Jan.warwick@hants.gov.uk

Cllr Jan Warwick

Winchester City Councillor and Deputy Leader of Hampshire County Council

Many musical moments at St Peter's School

This year the parish community of St Peter's Church is celebrating its centenary of its beautiful building in Jewry Street. One of the main events was a pageant made up of music, narration, dance, scripture, and contributions from many parish groups. The pageant brought to life the story of St Peter's - its history, its people, and its place at the heart of Winchester for 100 years.

The children of St Peter's School told the story of Catholics and the persecution they suffered in history, and how many become martyrs, dying for their faith. The children then went onto the more joyous event of the design and building of the church in Jewry Street.

The children worked hard learning the choreography for their various dances, attending many practices after school. Their efforts were worth it as their performance during the pageant was very moving and impressive. We hope they now have so many 'forever' memories from this event.



Meanwhile, it's not just dance that the children excel in at St Peter's. The school remains one of two Lead Schools for Music in Hampshire under the skilled direction of Miss Owens, who has introduced busking on the playground for families at the beginning of the day. Busking gives the children a relaxed

opportunity in which to perform, helping them develop their skills and confidence in this very important area of music-making. And of course the children think it's great fun! 'I enjoyed performing to such a big audience in the playground. They were all clapping along.' Parents have been very generous, donating nearly £200 to date, which will go towards providing equipment for our fledgling St Peter's Rock Band. A group of Year 6 boys have already started to put together a couple of band pieces including a fantastic rendition of Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit*.

The boys will put on their debut performance at St Peter's annual Spring Concert, alongside our School Band, St Peter's Singers and soloist items.

We have also introduced informal Class Concerts at St Peter's this year for children in Year 3 upwards. We had a wonderful array of different instruments on show including saxophone, cello, drumkit and guitar. These concerts provide a valuable first step into the world of performing for our pupils and also

offer their classmates a great introduction to a whole host of instruments, inspiring others to start learning too! As one of our participants said, "Class concerts are really fun and they give a chance to bring happiness to the class."

Thank you to everyone from our parish and our own staff, including Miss Owens who ensure the children have such wonderful experiences.

Submitted by St Peter's School

Benches, Chats and the Power of a Simple Hello



There's something quietly wonderful happening on benches across the country. Many of our historic properties across England have recently introduced designated benches designed especially with parents in mind — gentle invitations to pause while children play and, if they wish, strike up a conversation with another grown-up. It's a simple but thoughtful idea: making it easier for people to connect.

But you don't need a formal scheme to create moments of connection for everyone. Here in Badger Farm and Oliver's Battery, our benches may not have signs, sliders or official labels — yet they serve a similar purpose in the most natural way possible. They are simply there. Waiting. Ready for tired legs, walkers, parents, or any of us enjoying a slower moment. And that's often all that's needed. At Badger Farm, benches around the pathways and green spaces quietly support everyday life. Parents sit while children burn off energy. Neighbours pause during a stroll. We rest with shopping bags at our feet. And in those moments, something wonderful happens — a nod, a smile (they are infectious!), a quick "hello!", sometimes even a proper chat about the weather, pets and wildlife, the school run, or what's happening locally or otherwise. Over in Oliver's Battery, it's much the same. Benches around the Green, next to the Church, and the recreation ground become casual meeting points. Not organised. Not scheduled. Just a natural place where people cross paths. Sometimes it's a longer conversation; sometimes it's nothing more than a shared smile.



But those small exchanges bring our community together and lift our spirits.

What makes our local benches special is precisely that they aren't part of a formal "chat scheme". There's no expectation. No pressure. Just opportunity. You can talk — or not. You

can linger — or simply wave as you pass. The connection is gentle and naturally human.

In a world that feels increasingly hurried, stressed and digital, these simple seats quietly encourage real-life interaction. They remind us that community doesn't always need a programme or a policy. Sometimes it just needs a place to sit.

So next time you pass a bench in Badger Farm or Oliver's Battery, take a moment. You might rest your feet. You might meet a neighbour. Or you might just exchange a smile that brightens someone's day.

And that's more powerful than it sounds.

By Alison Cochrane



Let's Tidy Badger Farm – Join the Community Making a Real Difference

Badger Farm is a wonderful place to live — and thanks to a growing group of friendly local volunteers, it is getting cleaner, greener, and more welcoming every month. We are the Tidy Badger Farm litter picking community, and we would love you to join us.

We meet on the first Saturday of every month at 10:30 am, gathering at Davis Kickabout before heading out for the pick. Our sessions last around an hour, sometimes a little more, and they always depend on the weather — but we post updates on our Facebook group (*Tidy Badger Farm*) and on our WhatsApp chat (*Tidy BF Pals*), so everyone stays in the loop.



What makes litter picking special is not just the difference it makes to our neighbourhood, but the difference it makes to us. It is a chance to get outside, breathe fresh air, stretch your legs, and do something genuinely good for the community. It is surprisingly uplifting — a small act with a big impact. And because we do it together, it is also wonderfully social. You will meet new people, catch up with familiar faces, and enjoy the easy, relaxed conversations that happen when you are walking and working side by side.

Over the years, we have collected everything from sweet wrappers and bottles to the truly unexpected — fireworks debris, old clothing, paint buckets, even a 52-inch television abandoned in the bushes. Every session brings a surprise, and every bag filled is a visible reminder of what a small group of volunteers can achieve.

Our group is steadily growing, and we now have a regular team of six to ten volunteers. Many bring their own equipment, but we always have spare litter pickers available. All we ask is that you let us know in advance if you need one, so we can bring the right number without carrying unnecessary gear.

Whether you come once, occasionally, or every month, you will be warmly welcomed. Families, children, newcomers, long-standing residents — everyone can help, and everyone makes a difference. We would also love to expand our efforts further into Oliver's Battery, and we are always happy to support anyone who would like to help coordinate that.

So why not give it a try? Come along, meet your neighbours, enjoy the outdoors, and help keep Badger Farm (and Oliver's Battery) a place we can all be proud of.

Join us, and let's tidy Badger Farm together.

Jo, James and Mike

Staying Stronger for Longer

Staying Stronger for Longer:

The Benefits of Functional Fitness over 50

As we navigate life after 50, it is natural to notice physical changes. We naturally lose muscle mass and function with age, which can lead to a loss of independence and an increased risk of injury. Everyday movements—like lifting grandchildren, carrying shopping from the car, or reaching for a high shelf—can start to feel more challenging. However, targeted movement can reverse these effects, making it one of the best investments for your longevity and quality of life.

This is the philosophy behind functional fitness. Rather than focusing on appearance, functional fitness is designed to help you perform better in the real world. It mimics the actual movements we perform daily to build a body that is capable and resilient.

The Critical Role of Balance:

A key focus of this training is balance and stability, which are vital for preventing falls. Functional workouts target the whole body, engaging the core and stabiliser muscles that keep us upright. For instance, exercises like "loaded carries" (walking with weights) improve posture and stability, whilst squats build the core strength needed to move confidently. By training these patterns, you are teaching your body to handle day-to-day activities safely and reducing the risk of injury.

Movements for Life:

Functional fitness prioritises "movement patterns" over gym machines:

Squats: These mimic the motion of getting in and out of chairs or kneeling to garden.

Hip Hinges: Bending correctly from the hips protects your back when picking things up.

Push & Pull: These movements strengthen the muscles needed to open heavy doors or lift groceries.

Rotation: Life rarely happens in a straight line. Rotational exercises prepare your core for twisting motions, such as reaching for a seatbelt or loading the washing machine.

Lunging & Stepping: Every time you climb stairs or step over an obstacle, you are lunging. Strengthening these movements ensures you stay steady on your feet and can navigate uneven ground with ease.

Why It Matters:

By integrating these movements into your routine, you aren't just exercising muscles in isolation; you are training your body to work as a coordinated unit. This "joined-up" strength translates directly to improved confidence and independence, ensuring you can say "yes" to life's activities without hesitation.

This is where Vita Life Fitness can help.

We hold exercise classes for the local community. Our classes are designed to support these goals in a friendly and safe environment along to Badgers Farm Community Centre.

Contact Abby O'Connell:

Tel: 07791 155 901

Email: abby@vitallifefitness.co.uk



Bio-diverse Badger Farm



If you have lived in Badger farm for any length of time you will probably be aware of how much nature and wildlife there is living around us. We are really privileged to live here, not many other communities in Winchester have the abundance of wildlife we have. The trees, shrubbery and grassy areas as well as our gardens provide homes for an array of wildlife from bee orchids to serotine bats.

There are approximately 23 million gardens in the UK and when you add to these, parks and playing fields you are talking about an area far bigger than all our nature reserves. Wildlife is really suffering in the wider countryside

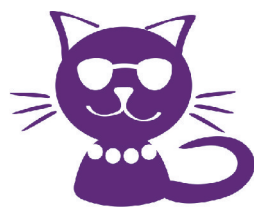
because of habitat destruction, fragmentation and use of chemicals. Among other things this has resulted in a 46% decline in butterflies between 1976 and 2017 and 41% of insect species are now threatened with extinction. Therefore gardens, parks and verges are becoming increasingly important. Healthy natural eco-systems are fundamental to our own survival but more than that, they bring delight and joy. Walking into the local area and seeing wildflowers, hearing birdsong and finding wild creatures like hedgehogs and butterflies is life affirming.

For a number of years there has been a small group, linked to the Parish council, dedicated to protecting some of our grassy areas for the benefit of wildflowers and the wildlife that depends on them such as pollinating insects. More recently we have linked up with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Naturalists Trust to make our group part of their Team Wilder initiative which seeks to bring more nature into local communities.

Last year we maintained and surveyed four or five main sites in Badger Farm. We were keen to know what wildflowers were growing and to find out how we can improve these areas for pollinators. We also planted over two hundred native plug plants within these sites both to increase biodiversity and to make them more attractive to people and pollinators. This year we will continue to survey the sites and, with the agreement of the Parish and City Councils, will look for other areas to develop. If you are interested in joining us and maybe take part in surveys, planting or community engagement we would love to hear from you. You may have new ideas for helping other species such as hedgehogs or swifts. If so, please get in touch. Please contact us by emailing biodiversebadgerfarm@gmail.com or through our Facebook Group, Biodiverse Badger Farm.



Scrap to Snap: Brilliant Crafts from the Unloved and Unrecyclable



Funky Cat Design

jeans, and those half-used balls of yarn from long-forgotten projects.

Crafting does not have to be expensive, complicated, or reliant on brand-new materials.

Some of the most delightful, imaginative creations begin with the bits we usually bin: scratched-up CDs, bottle caps, plastic rings, worn-out

projects.

By turning “unrecyclables” into something beautiful, we are not just saving money—we are saving materials from landfill and discovering the joy of creative reuse.

Let’s start with old CDs.
Add a scrap of denim from



a pair of jeans past their prime, and you’ve got yourself a great coaster, a funky fridge magnet, or even a wall organiser.

Bottle caps and their rings? Wrap them in leftover yarn or crochet around them to make cheerful keychains, Christmas tree ornaments, or sun-catching mobiles. No yarn? No problem. Winchester’s charity shops are full of donated craft supplies—and the cancer charity shop in town even stocks brand-new wool. You can also swap or request materials on the “I Need a Whisk Winchester” Facebook group. One crafter’s clutter is another’s treasure.

Reclaimed denim is another hero material. It is sturdy, stylish and endlessly useful. With just scissors and some fabric glue, you can whip up pocketed wall hangings, coasters, desk organisers or even embroidered bracelets. No sewing machine required—fabric glue holds brilliantly and makes these projects accessible to complete beginners.

Even tricky-to-recycle items like jar lids can be transformed. Their rubbery inlays make them landfill-bound, but with a little imagination, they become mini coasters, festive frames, or sturdy bases for needle-felted ornaments.



new skills, and make something meaningful.

Best of all? Every time you reuse, repurpose or upcycle, you are doing your bit for the planet—and supporting local charities when you source your materials second-hand. It is a great way to reduce waste and rethink what we throw away.

But crafting is about more than just making things—it is about making connections. Getting creative boosts your mood, sharpens your mind, and builds confidence. And when you craft with others, you share ideas, laughter, and a sense of community. Crafting is a joyful, hands-on way to relax, learn



If you would like to explore these ideas hands-on, keep an eye on the crafting workshops at the Badger Farm Community Centre. The next sessions are on 20th and 30th March.



To find out more, contact Jo:

jo@funky猫design.co.uk

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Borrow it Winchester is a community library where you can borrow items for a small fee, rather than purchasing and storing items that are only used rarely / occasionally.

hello@borrowitwinch.org.uk

www.repaircafewinchester.org/borrow-it-winch

We must put an end to the water industry's dirty business



Our beautiful and unique chalk streams are a really important part of what makes our countryside so special. They're amongst the rarest habitats on Earth and a true natural treasure. Only around 200 chalk streams are known to exist worldwide, with the vast majority of them in England. That includes the river Itchen and Meon here in Hampshire. They support more plant species than any

other English river type and provide a vital habitat for threatened wildlife like the Atlantic salmon. Some say they're just as important to the environment as the Great Barrier Reef.

These ecosystems are under threat. All while paying out billions in dividends and bonuses for CEOs and piling up debt, water companies have been dumping untreated sewage into these precious waterways. But it's not just costing us money. As Channel 4's new 'Dirty Business' TV drama shows - it's costing us lives too. Contaminated waterways hugely increase the risk of infection to wildlife, to livestock and humans too.

Already in just the first two months of 2026, there's been unprecedented dumping of untreated sewage into our waterways by Southern Water - 404 hours of dumping into the Itchen, 705 into the Hamble, and 767 into the Meon.

That's why I've been supporting the Chalk Streams Bill in Parliament introduced by my Liberal Democrat colleague Pippa Heylings. I also signed a letter urging the government to begin the

formal process of nominating our chalk streams for UNESCO World Heritage status.

Fewer than a dozen chalk streams currently benefit from legal protection as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). World Heritage Site designation would formally recognise chalk streams as sites of outstanding universal value, strengthen long-term protection, and help unlock funding, research and public engagement to support their recovery.

We also need to act now and strengthen planning protections for chalk streams and ensure that fines from polluting water companies are reinvested directly into restoring these irreplaceable rivers.

Ultimately, to fix this broken system, we need bold action. This government should scrap Ofwat and replace it with a new regulator actually given the powers to hold water companies to account. It should properly ban bonuses for company bosses. It should transform every single one of the water companies into Public Benefit Companies with environmental experts on their boards, forcing them to meet strict environmental standards. Warm words will not clean up a single river. Strong regulation will. I do hope ministers watch Dirty Business. It makes one thing unmistakably clear - This scandal was allowed to happen. And it can be stopped.

If there is anything I can help you with, please get in touch.

Danny Chambers MP
danny.chambers.mp@parliament.uk



Q&A with Jackie Porter, Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan, Winchester City Council

We're seeing lots of developers pushing hard to build houses on sites like South Winchester Golf Course. How can the council respond to speculative development?

To meet Westminster's housing targets, Winchester City Council has a robust forward land supply, which is identified clearly within its current emerging Local Plan. This supply and robust local plan are both vital for our public to have confidence in our planning system – ensuring that developers and residents know exactly where they stand.

Speculative development is any proposed development that is not identified by policies of the council or the land allocations in the Local Plan. Simply, our response to speculative development is to reject it.

Can you provide an example of this?

A good one is the controversial proposal to build up to 188 homes on land off Lanham Lane in Winchester. This was dismissed on appeal by a planning inspector in December, after attracting hundreds of objections due to its location in the countryside and traffic concerns. The developer's effort to appeal was strongly defended at the examination in public by the council's strategic planning team - and our thanks to residents who made their case

to the inspector. The inspector agreed with Winchester City Council that it does have a 5-year land supply and that the application didn't comply with the local plan or the emerging local plan policies either.



In this case, the Local Plan and clearly evidenced land supply were key to refuse a developers' speculative appeal.

Hopefully, this has sent a clear message to other developers considering the same process: As a council, we are prepared to do this again to reject speculative and especially inappropriate development. This is vital to ensure confidence in the local planning system.

How does this apply to speculative efforts such as the recent one by Bloor Homes at South Winter Golf Club?

It's really important to have an up-to-date Local Plan so that we have a land supply that we can point at to fight against speculative proposals such as South Winchester Golf Club. We know that developers will try to go for the easy targets – local authorities that don't have this amount of certainty. We intend to make sure we are not an easy target! Companies like Bloor Homes have a lot of land holdings in all sorts of places and there are easier targets than us.

*Cllr Adrian Brophy, WCC
ABrophy@winchester.gov.uk*



Badger Farm Parish Council

Firstly, I would like to thank all the residents that completed the recent Community Governance Review survey. The initial proposal was to include Badger Farm in the new Town Parish Council this would have meant higher precept charges and less representation. Along with representations from the Parish Council, it has been decided to drop the plan to amalgamate us and leave Badger Farm as an independent Parish.

Looking to the future we plan to work more closely with our neighbouring Parishes, Olivers Battery, Compton and Shawford and Otterbourne. We do not know what the new Unitary Council will bring in the way of changes to funding but hopefully there will be little change.

If you have had your council Tax bill you will have noticed we have not increased the precept this year. This was due to careful financial management, we could see no reason to inflict more tax increases on our residents.

After several years of having no Pharmacy on Badger Farm it is good to see Badger Pharmacy opening at the surgery.

We are still supporting the 'Stop Bushfield' development groups. This development is now in the emerging Local Plan and the City Council seem determined to push it through despite much local objection. This development along with one thousand houses proposed for the South Winchester Golf course, will totally change the nature of this part of our area.

Finally, with the unexpected elections coming up in May, it is not too late to apply for a postal vote.

*Cllr. John Godbold
Badger Farm Parish Council*

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



3rd Winchester City Rainbows and Brownies

Hello again!

Spring 2026 brought with it some leadership challenges for the girls in 'Leadersheep!', we explored the world around us through looking

at Girlguiding through the years and took our teddies on their travels with their very own passports. The girls had some fun designing and building a mini golf course out of recycling for 'Hole-in-One' and we made some Scandinavian hearts in our Winter Olympics session. The hearts looked simple, but definitely tested our resilience!

Wendy Bramall, Oliver's Battery's very own artist and illustrator, led a calming session teaching us how to use watercolours. I've never heard them so quiet!!! We've purchased paints and brushes and left them with Wendy to use with other community groups rather than them get lost in the activities cupboard. Please contact me if you are interested in using them. We're happy to share.

This week Jan and her 'flower friends' visited us to show the girls how to make a beautiful flower arrangement and learn about the language of flowers. The girls were tasked to use these in 'an act of kindness'. The girls thought about family, friends, neighbours and teachers. I wonder who received them?

We look forward to a visit from Helen and Martin from the Olivers Battery Countryside Group later this month and will be solving a *chocolate heist* in time for Easter.

Girlguiding Winchester Division are busy planning a summer festival for all members at Pinsent campsite. We're looking forward to having fun with our friends and making some new ones.

Look out for us as we go out and about a bit more in the sunshine. Visit : <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/>



Best Wishes to you all.

Kate Fletcher, Brown Owl.

3rdwincitybrownies@gmail.com

A Better Start in Life at Badger Farm Preschool

The introduction of the Governments new strategy "Better start in life" confirms and cements the practice that has always been at the heart of Early Years.



Here at Badger Farm Preschool, we deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage through a play-based curriculum where we strive to give every child a better start and reach their full potential.

Following on from our Christmas activities, this term we have made new friends, and looked in detail at Winter/Weather where we have explored ice, rain, and snow. We have looked at the trees outside and wonder what has happened to the leaves?

Attention and listening we have found out is especially important for all of us to learn! If we listen, we hear and understand instructions, stories and our friends and family conversations. We can plan games, explore role play and ask questions to further our knowledge.

During a busy term we have had a visit from the Window Cleaner! The children have great fun watching the water run down the windows. Thursday and Friday mornings bring great excitement as we await the Waste Bin and recycling collections. It shows us that everyday occurrences both at home and at the setting bring endless opportunities for your child to learn and progress.

"What you do together can make a huge difference – every smile, Every cuddle and every chat help to build our children's brains."

Our ethos at Badger Farm Preschool is one of delivering all the above in a family setting, where relationships with the children, families and the wider community are paramount.

Spaces are available at our Preschool, so please drop in, telephone or follow us on Facebook.

Denise - 07771 798474



Wishing you well Back on the Menu! Real Food Is Making a Comeback

By Amanda Turner

Something is shifting, and it's a joy to see. Real food is finding its way back onto menus, into conversations, and across social media feeds. The message is refreshingly simple: steer clear of ultra-processed foods when you can, and enjoy meals made from real ingredients that our grandparents would recognise. It feels like a collective exhale — a return to food that actually nourishes us.

More medical opinion leaders are stepping forward too, sharing practical tools that may support better metabolic health.

If you're curious, these are well worth exploring:

- **What Not to Eat** on Channel 4, with Professor Tim Spector and GP Dr Kandi — a clear, engaging look at how food affects our bodies. <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/what-not-to-eat/on-demand/77641-002>
- **Healthshelf**, a free charity website from NHS GP Dr Campbell Murdoch, offering a no-cost 28-day metabolic health plan. You could follow the rapid results programme or build your own personal plan. <https://healthshelf.org/>
- **Freshwell Low Carb Project**, created by NHS GPs at Freshwell Health Centre. Their free, NHS-accredited food plans include vegetarian options, plus a handy app for quick access to recipes. <https://lowcarbfreshwell.com/>



growing, picking, or preparing at home. Think fresh vegetables, good-quality proteins, natural fats, herbs, and spices — nothing complicated, just food that supports your body rather than confusing it.

This isn't about perfection or strict rules. It's about rediscovering the pleasure of eating food that tastes good and makes you feel good. When you focus on real ingredients, meals naturally become more satisfying, more colourful, and often more affordable too.

And you don't need a restaurant to join in. Your own kitchen is the perfect place to start. A pot of soup, a tray of roasted vegetables, a simple stir-fry, or a batch-cooked chilli can carry you through busy days without relying on packets or powders. Small steps like these may build confidence, save money, and help you find new favourites that fit easily into everyday life.

Real food is back on the menu — not as a trend, but as a return to something we've always known. Your body will thank you for it.

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).

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Oliver's Battery Parish Council

New Clerk

I am pleased to announce that James Sheehy has been appointed as the new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for the PC.

James is a very experienced and qualified Clerk and has already made many positive contributions.

Parish Council Meetings

The next PC meeting on 19 May is proposed to be a combined Annual General Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting. Please note this is a week later due local elections taking place on 7 May.

Speed Monitoring Device

The PC has ordered a new Speed Monitoring Device, which is solar powered. The Handyperson Group will install the device.

Bus Shelters

The PC has submitted a grant application for the refurbishment of all bus shelters in Oliver's Battery, including the no 5 stop on Badger Farm Road. Watch out for further updates.

Local Plan (LP) Update

Proposed Development at the South Winchester Golf Course (SWGC)

Bloor Homes "consultation" on plans to build up to 1,200 homes on SWGC closed on 22 February.

It was reassuring to hear back from Cllr Jackie Porter (WCC Cabinet Member for Place and the Local Plan), that Bloor Homes' consultation is not specifically endorsed or sponsored by WCC.

Cllr Porter advised that both she and Adrian Fox (Strategic Planning Manager) have been overwhelmed by the number of emails on the proposed Manor Parks.

Even though Bloor Homes made a strong representation to the Inspector of the emerging LP, the Inspector was not persuaded that SWGC should be included in the emerging LP.

It is important that the WCC Planning team are aware of local views but at present strategic planning are concentrating getting the emerging LP approved, which will help ensure greater certainty for Parish Councils and residents.

Watch out for further updates on the above.

New SHELAA List – Survey of Residents' opinions on potential development

Consultation on the SHELAA sites will take place from July to September. However, as WCC's priority is finishing the emerging Local Plan, these timings may slip.

The PC will organise a survey of residents' opinions on possible development sites in the new SHELAA List.

It is essential that as many households as possible complete the survey to send a powerful message to WCC before selected sites are included in the subsequent consultation for the next Local Plan.

The Save South Winchester Group (a private Facebook Group), oppose large scale building on the green fields of south of Winchester, including SWGC. If you are not already a member, you may want to request to join that group.

Community Governance Review – Winchester Town Area

Further details will be published when available.

Cllr David Kirkby
Chair Oliver's Battery Parish Council

Enjoy Film Nights with OBC Film Club

We are a small volunteer led Community Film Club showing a mixture of mainstream films and National Theatre Live productions on the third **Wednesday of each month in St Marks Hall**. We currently have the following film left from our current season:

- 15th April - The Choral (Starring Taylor Uttley, Ralph Fiennes and Emily Fairn)

Full details for the above films can be found on our website:

www.obcfilm.co.uk

where you can keep in touch with all our latest news by signing up to our newsletter.

Please come along and support us!



How Can I Organise My Computer

I'm often asked, "How can I organise my computer?" Today I'm going back to basics to share simple tips to help you manage your files and make finding your documents and pictures faster and less stressful.

Think of File Explorer as your digital filing cabinet. Instead of drawers, you've got four main folders:

Documents, Pictures, Music,

Videos. Many people dump everything into Documents, but that quickly becomes chaotic. It's better to have a clear structure, like

Documents > House > Utilities or Pictures > Holidays > 2025 > Cornwall. Creating a folder is easy: just choose the **Folder** option in the **New** menu on the top left of the File Explorer. Use as many folders as you like – whatever makes sense to you! It takes a few extra clicks but pays off when you're trying to find something later.

Moving files around is less obvious since Windows 11 dropped the Move To button, but there are still two options. To **Cut & Paste**, right-click the file you want to move, choose **Cut**, navigate to the new location, right-click in the folder, then choose **Paste**. For **Drag & Drop**, click on the file, hold the mouse button, move across the screen to the new location, then let go. If you drag to a



different type of storage, like the cloud, it makes a copy instead. To avoid this, hold down **Shift** while dragging and it will go to the new location without leaving a duplicate behind.

My tricks to make life easier? • Hovering over folders on the left-hand pane reveals their subfolders automatically, making navigation quicker.

• You can drag files to the folder names in the top address bar. • To move a group of files, click the first one, hold **Shift** and click the last. Sorting files by name, date, type or size by clicking the column headers makes this even easier. For scattered files, hold Ctrl and click each one individually. • There's no need to open files to see what's inside; turn on

the **Preview Pane** from the **View** menu to get a peek at their contents. • If you're doing a lot of rearranging, it helps to open two File Explorer windows side by side – just right-click a folder and choose **Open in New Window**.

One special folder deserves a mention. The Downloads folder is where files you download from the internet (images, documents or apps) are automatically saved, often without you even realising. It can fill up, so declutter it regularly. If you're deleting something sensitive, use **Shift + Delete** to remove it permanently, bypassing the Recycle Bin.

Take a few steps today towards getting organised and you'll feel calmer, happier and more in control.

<https://winchestercomputertutor.co.uk/file-organisation-tips/>

St Swithun and the Legend of Forty Days of Rain



St. Swithun's Day, if thou dost rain, For forty days it will remain:

St. Swithun's Day, if thou be fair, For forty days 'twill rain nae mair.

Each July, that old verse echoes in Winchester's air, as familiar as the Cathedral bells. But who really was St Swithun – the man behind the rain?

Born in Winchester around 800, Swithun grew up in a land of shifting Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the first Viking raids. Yet, despite the times, he was not a warrior or a statesman, but a gentle, practical churchman whose quiet presence helped shape Wessex.

His path ran from cloister to classroom to cathedral. As a monk in Winchester, he became tutor to the young prince Æthelwulf. When Æthelwulf became king, he appointed Swithun Bishop of Winchester in 852. Swithun's influence continued as Æthelwulf's son, Alfred the Great, held Court *"by the tranquil waters of the Itchen ... with his friend, adviser, and tutor, St. Swithun"*; later historians credited much of the glory of Alfred's reign to the bishop's wise counsel. But writers portray a surprisingly down-to-earth man. One describes him as *"zealous for the instruction and edification of the people, and for improving their domestic condition"*

– a bishop remembered not for pomp or politics, but for education, welfare and the everyday life of ordinary families. Another simply calls him *"a treasury of virtues, but those for which he was most distinguished were his mildness and humility."*

The people of Winchester welcomed his appointment and he proved tireless in working for the good of the city. He provided the materials and workmen for the first stone bridge over the Itchen at the East Gate, roughly where City Bridge stands today. One day, a labourer there knocked over a poor woman's basket, smashing her eggs. Swithun is said to have restored them, whole and unbroken – a small miracle in keeping with a man remembered for kindness rather than grandeur.

The rain legend, however, belongs to the centuries after his death in 863. According to later accounts, Swithun asked to be buried outside the Old Minster so that *"the feet of passers-by might tread upon his grave and the rain from heaven fall upon it."*

When his relics were moved indoors on 15 July 971, heavy rain reportedly followed and from that downpour grew the belief that the weather on his feast day foretold the next forty days.

Yet behind the folklore stands a real man: a bishop formed in uncertain times, a teacher of kings and a quiet benefactor of the city's people. Rain or shine, on 15 July, Swithun's legacy endures in the city he nurtured and the quiet kindness that still echoes through Winchester.

Nature Notes
Spring 2026

It is Saturday 28th of February, officially the last day of winter and we can look forward to continuing hours of daylight and warmer weather. This winter has been one of the wettest on record with very little sunshine which makes the recent warm spell a welcome change, encouraging the flowering of some of our spring favourites. A nearby friend's garden prompted me to sketch the lawn awash with purple crocus, snowdrops and daffodils all growing under a majestic oak tree. Now two weeks later the cherry trees are starting to blossom and the birds are becoming more active and singing early in the day. I had two beautiful yellow Brimstone butterflies in my garden and several bumblebees on the winter honeysuckle. I continue to feed the small birds using a squirrel proof bird feeder and making sure that it is cleaned every time (to help prevent disease). I refill it with sunflower hearts and mealworms. The squirrels have now given up on raiding it which is a relief as the last feeder would inevitably end up on the floor with seed scattered everywhere. As well as my usual robins, sparrows and blackbirds and the occasional black cap and great tits, my garden is often invaded by two or three magpies. I first of all hear them noisily chattering on the



roof before descending onto the grass with their unmistakable, confident swagger. I can't help but admire their beautiful plumage which on first glance appears black and white but when the light catches, shows off a rich and iridescent blue, green and mauve. Magpies, Pica pica, are from the corvidae family and mate for life. In Roman times they were seen as a symbol of intelligence and good fortune, unlike the Christian Church which saw them as evil. This probably stems from their habit of scavenging on carrion and the myth that they steal shiny objects. There are many versions of the rhyme: "One for sorrow, Two for joy, Three for a girl, Four for a boy, Five for silver, Six for gold, Seven for a secret never to be told, Eight for a dream, Nine for a wish." which is thought to have originated in the 18th century to accompany a fortune telling game. If you come across a solitary magpie is customary to raise one's hat and address it with "Good morning Mr Magpie". Something I vividly remember my mother doing. And an old country custom was to raise one's hat to the magpie and spit three times over the right shoulder whilst pronouncing "Devil, Devil, I defy thee. Reference for magpies from : Birds Britannica by Mark Cocker and Richard Maybe

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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