



In action this week, Chinese robots at the world Humanoid Robot Games, with one beating the human 100m world record set by Usain Bolt! - although they haven't quite perfected their technique yet!



South Cotswold Team Ministry Sunday 30th August 2026

Clergy

Vicar: Rev'd Caroline Symcox – 01285 712467

Curate: Rev'd Vicky Falvey – 07356 234248

Priest – Pastoral: Rev'd Canon Denise Hyde

01285 713285

carolinesymcox@googlemail.com

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SERVICES

Sunday 30th August – 13th Sunday after Trinity

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.00am All-Age Worship Service

Coffee: Doug and Jean Crowley

6.00pm Healing Prayer Service with Holy Communion

Thursday 3rd September

10.30am BCP Holy Communion

Sunday 6th September – 14th after Trinity

8.00am BCP Holy Communion

10.00am Sung Eucharist

Sidespeople: Andy Wilkinson and Jill Connell

Offertory: Jane Easton

Prayer: Denise Hyde and Lucy Hodson

Readings: Stewart Benzie Intercessions: Val Trafford

Coffee: Sarah Bottomley and Carol Thompson

12.00noon Baptism of Billy Paul Cutler

6.00pm Prayer & Praise Service

From Rev'd Caroline – 01285 712467 – carolinesymcox@googlemail.com

Readings for Sunday: Jeremiah 15.15-21; Romans 12.9-end; Matthew 16.21-end

As many of us were, I'm sure, this week I was saddened by the news that Dolly Parton had died. Perhaps it wasn't too much of a surprise, per se. She had been ill for a while with cancer, after all. But there is a very particular feeling around iconic people in the world, that for some reason you think they'll keep going forever, and then one day, suddenly, they do not. In the aftermath of the sad news, however, there has been the most glorious outpouring of stories and reminiscences about who she was, and the things she had done, which have certainly warmed my heart. Everyone from the rapper Eminem to the Royal Family have taken time to share a word about a woman who lived out her Christian faith so strongly and well.

What has shocked me, although perhaps I shouldn't be shocked, given the way the world works, have been the odd social media posts and 'hot takes' deciding to take this moment to try to attack Dolly and her legacy. People criticising her for not doing enough, for supporting and loving the wrong people, for encouraging the wrong activities. What a strange and wrong-headed thing to do! Here is someone who transparently did all she could to live out Christ's love in the world, and yet all that is not enough for these keyboard warriors!

But then I took a moment with our readings for this Sunday, and was reminded of a vitally important word from the Lord. First, that none of us is perfect, and our very best and fullest efforts will end up being insufficient and imperfect. Even Jeremiah felt defeated and unheard, and returned to the Lord in frustration and pain. Even Peter, who moments ago had been praised by Jesus for recognising the amazing truth that he was the Messiah, could immediately misunderstand Jesus, and end up needing to be rebuked. He moved from "you are the rock on which I will build my church" to "get behind me Satan!" in the space of about twenty minutes! But of course, that wasn't the end of the story. If we make mistakes, Jesus is always ready to pick us up and set us on the path again, just as he did with Peter.

It will always be possible to pick holes in what we try to build and do, because we are human. Our challenge is to accept that, and to keep going anyway. To hear God's word that we are to be people of perseverance, accepting our limitations, and striving all the same. People may criticise us, pull us down, deliberately ignore us... but the work is worth doing and the words are worth sharing, nevertheless. We deny ourselves, our egos, our desires, and instead take up our cross day by day.

This week I hope we will be uplifted and encouraged by the stories of the lives of people of faith, the wonderful Dolly Parton among them, and be diligent in prayer as we ask for God's same strength and perseverance to be in our lives, as we seek to follow him.

Rev'd Caroline

Join us for Morning Prayer via Zoom on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday at 9am every week. Click below for the week starting 31st August.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87416436680?pwd=byYRJ1syRXxd5ak2WVMJ6YbHpQ6gO5.1>

Meeting ID: 874 1643 6680

Passcode: 551660

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Please remember the following in your prayers:

Those who are ill: Sheila Hughes, Grace Slack, Hannah, Tabi Berry

Those who have died: Maureen Partington, Dawn Dodds, Sheila Benfield.

Community Prayers - *Not Monday 31st August, due to the Bank Holiday*

All are welcome to come and pray together for the world, the nation and our community along with any prayer requests that are placed in our prayer box. We meet every Monday at 5pm for 30 minutes in the Chancel. Please use the north door. *(Please also note we do not always meet on Bank Holidays, please check the notice above for clarification).*

For further details please contact Rev'd Denise on 01285 713285 or denisehyde15@gmail.com.

Prayer Requests

Would you like us to pray for you? If you have a particular need or concern, please complete a prayer request slip and place it in our prayer request box it will then be included in our Community Prayers every Monday for a month.

Both the prayer request box and prayer request slips can be found on our new prayer table by the pulpit in the Nave or contact Rev'd Denise.

From Ann Nicholls

PUT OTHERS FIRST

Be Blessed by blessing other people.

Lord Jesus, help us to follow your example of love and mercy, so that all that are lost have an opportunity to find their way to you.

We praise you for all that you have given us, thank you for the way in which worship blesses and strengthens our lives.

Thank you for the privilege of prayer, help us to place it at the centre of our lives and help us to be more encouraging day by day.

We pray in Jesus' name and for his glory. AMEN

Friday Bible study group

The Friday Bible study group meets fortnightly, 10:30-11:30am at Janet Edward's house.

The group will be taking a break from meeting in September but would be delighted to welcome any new members when it restarts in October.

For more information, please speak to Revd Caroline

Prayer Ministry at St Mary's

Prayer is such an all-encompassing word - it takes in so many different forms, ideas, practices, emotions and traditions.

The term "prayer ministry" can also be interpreted quite broadly. Generally, within the Christian church context, it's taken to mean an organized effort within a church or faith community where a group of trained individuals intercede for others, provide personal one-on-one prayer, and support spiritual healing.

A prayer ministry team has been a fixture of St Mary's since the 1990's, when Rev John Willard was instrumental in setting it up - we thank the Lord that it's still going strong (in large part thanks to the committed witness of some of the original members who are still at St Mary's).

It's now a natural part of our weekly services - two prayer ministry team members offer to pray with and for people during and after the period set aside for Holy Communion. The monthly Healing Prayer Service also offers the opportunity for this kind of personal prayer.

Have you ever wondered what happens in the Lady Chapel when you come for prayer? Perhaps you have occasionally thought about coming for prayer but been a bit uncertain about what you might be expected to do or say.

Well, you don't have to do or say anything specific!

What often happens is that the person asking for prayer gives a brief explanation of their reason for seeking support in prayer – sometimes the prayer team members might ask few very short questions just to understand more.

Prayer needs may be for others or yourself, for healing, for small or big problems, or sometimes to give thanks. The team members then usually ask if it's ok to hold hands or rest hands on shoulders (it's perfectly all right to say no, you would rather not!). And then we quietly pray as we feel led by the Spirit, to ask for God's

blessing, healing, guidance, forgiveness... Wonderfully, sometimes we feel given a word or a message that can have special meaning, even if we don't know it.

If you come for prayer, the prayer team will pray very much alongside you and with you – but you can keep silent, say amen, or join in spoken prayer as you wish. Or you can just tell us about something you would like prayers for and go away. There's no right or wrong way!

It's very important for people to be assured that everything that is said during the time of prayer ministry is fully confidential. The needs are not spoken of outside the prayer time.

We sometimes ask if we can also refer the prayer need to the Monday Community Prayer Group, which keeps a rolling list of prayer needs - either with specifics or anonymously.

All members of the Healing Prayer Team are DBS checked and have had safeguarding training; we have also had Diocesan Prayer Ministry training.

Another thing to emphasise is that prayer ministry is about healing and support – it's not a time to ask you to say or do anything you feel uncomfortable with. We also don't give advice! In fact, we as the prayer team don't really give anything of ourselves but rather try to be a channel for God's healing love.

I hope this might have helped one or two people feel a bit more confident about using prayer ministry. Perhaps you feel called to this ministry yourself.

If you would like to explore being a member of the prayer ministry team, please contact Rev Canon Denise Hyde.

Let me end with this quote from St Paul: *Philippians 4:6-7*

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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NOTICES

Music at St Mary's: An Update on Fundraising for St Mary's, Fairford

As many of you will know, one of the PCC's most important responsibilities, and one that occasionally keeps us awake at night, is raising the funds needed to maintain St Mary's and support its ongoing mission and presence within our wider Fairford community.

This is no small task. As a large church, we contribute a significant proportion of our income to support the wider needs of the Diocese. These funds help smaller churches to thrive and provide admin, housing, training and support for our clergy.

You may have noticed a new sign above the donations box and a new viewing window in the Good Box on the desk. These simple changes have already made a difference, with visitors giving more generously than before. Many are genuinely touched by the welcome they receive from our stewards and are often surprised to learn that it costs almost £450 every day to keep St Mary's open, maintained and serving the community.

A major part of our fundraising activity centres on music. When we organised the Carducci Quartet concert a few years ago, we realised that St Mary's had something very special to offer: outstanding acoustics, excellent facilities and the ability to bring world-class music to Fairford. Music has always been an important part of worship and a powerful way of connecting with God, so it felt entirely appropriate to create a dedicated concert programme. From that vision, ***Music at St Mary's*** was born.

Our aim is to host no more than three concerts each year, with every event offering something unique. We want these concerts to bring joy, inspiration and exceptional music to St Mary's and to all who attend. This year we have already welcomed *The King's Men* in April and the *North Swindon Big Band* in July. Both concerts were wonderfully well attended and received enthusiastic praise from audiences.

We are fortunate that many outstanding musicians are keen to perform at St Mary's, often bringing ambitious projects with them. Sadly, we have had to turn down some of the more ambitious proposals, including opera performances and a large orchestra, simply because of the practical challenges involved.

Our final concert of the year takes place on 19th September and promises to be a very special occasion. We will be hiring a grand piano for the event as *Adrian Partington*, Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral, joins forces with the gifted young violinist *Leora Cohen* for an afternoon of truly exceptional music.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who supports these events, and especially to the army of volunteers who generously give their time, talents and energy to make them happen. Every penny of profit from our concerts goes directly towards supporting the ongoing work and future of St Mary's. Quite simply, initiatives such as these play a vital role in ensuring the church can continue to serve our community for generations to come.

Please support our final 2026 *Music at St Mary's* Concert. Tickets for September's concert can be purchased online at Eventbrite (link on the website and the St. Marys Fairford page at A Church near You or in cash from the Opticians).

Looking Ahead

We are already planning next year's concert programme and would love to hear your ideas. We are considering more outstanding classical performances, something non-classical and maybe the return of one or two favourite acts. If there is something you would particularly like to hear at St Mary's, please let us know.

Thank you for your continued support.

Jane-Emma Peerless (on behalf of the PCC)

FAIRFORD BRIDGE CLUB

Bridge is a friendly and absorbing game.

Our local club, Fairford Bridge Club, offers a whole range of opportunities from absolute beginners through to competitive Duplicate Bridge.

Starting in October we will run another course for absolute beginners. These lessons are extremely friendly, and no prior experience is needed. All equipment is provided.

For more experienced players we offer online competitions every Tuesday and Friday evening. Details can be found by looking for Fairford Bridge Club on the internet and new experienced players are always welcome.

We also run twice weekly face-to-face Improvers Groups, which meet in Fairford Community Centre each Monday afternoon and Wednesday evenings. These are aimed at those with some Bridge experience, looking for tips to improve and to play some social face-to-face Bridge.

If you are tempted to give any of these sessions a try, please contact:

Steve Love at mallards.quenington@gmail.com Tel 01285 750359, or
margaretbishop308095@gmail.com

A New Arrival in the Holden Family

Many of you will remember Joanne Holden, previously Roberts and her lovely daughter Hannah.

Hannah did a lot with the Christian Children's groups in Fairford with her mother.

Joanne wants to announce that Hannah had a baby boy; Luke Robert, on Monday night at 10.30pm, weighing 7lbs 6oz. – mother and baby are well.

I know those of you who know them will be thrilled to hear her news...there's a lot of it about!

Michelle.

Coffee Rota: Volunteers Needed

We are currently a bit short of volunteers to serve coffee and biscuits after the 10 am service every week and would welcome a few new people on the list.

Currently our turn comes around about every two months. It's a good way to meet new people and is much appreciated.

The coffee and tea are provided, so only milk and biscuits need to be brought on the day.

If you are interested in knowing more, please talk to Sarah Bottomley.

From Lechlade with Fairford Mothers' Union – *via Denise Hyde*

Steve Hutchinson from Scripture Union has produced a booklet to encourage parents to share with their children before they start their school life. It is called GET READY TO GO.

We have brought some copies for our branch to give to the September reception classes at Fairford, Lechlade and Southrop Church of England primary schools, a card will be put inside to say that the books were bought by Lechlade with Fairford Mothers' Union.

Lechlade with Fairford Mothers' Union Project for HMP Eastwood Park

The prison, in Gloucestershire at Wotton-under-Edge, is for women aged 18 and over.

When the ladies are coming out of prison they have nothing. Giving them new bits and pieces can help them rehabilitate and give them dignity.

Apparently, the ladies really value the thought that someone cares enough to donate new things to help their re-entry back into society.

As a branch we are collecting for the next few months **sanitary products, face moisturiser, cleanser, cotton wool pads, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, small hairbrushes, combs, scrunchies, pants, bras, socks and coffee vouchers along with small holdalls or rucksacks.**

We would also appreciate your support as a congregation with this worthy cause.

If you are able to donate any of the mentioned items above, please leave them in the box provided at the back of the church, in the south aisle.

Thank you for your support.

5th September from 10am



**The
BIG RAKE
and the
BIG CAKE**



Help!

The longer grass in the churchyard has given us more insects, birds and bats, now for its annual haircut.

We need to rake up the hay

All ages welcome

Refreshments

Please bring a rake and gloves

Thank you!

St Mary's Eco Church Group





St Mary's Eco Church



invites you to

Chris Packham's film
PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY

BRIEFING



Tickets available from
www.tickettailor.com

Limited number available from Fairford opticians



**TUESDAY
15TH
SEPTEMBER**



**7.30pm
DOORS OPEN 7PM**



**FAIRFORD
COMMUNITY CENTRE**

People's National Emergency Briefing on Climate and Nature

A screening of this important national film is taking place in Fairford, hosted by St Mary's Eco Church, on Tuesday, 15 September 2026, 7 pm for 7.30 start. Our local MP, Roz Savage, has (so far) accepted our invitation to attend.

Attendance is free (donation for cost of venue and/or refreshments), but booking your place is strongly advised via this link

<https://buytickets.at/stmaryschurcheogroup/2286367>.

There is a national website which lists all the screenings taking place - you can see our showing clearly on the map at <https://www.nebriefing.org/>

We will have a few tickets available on the door but expect places to get booked up quite quickly - a similar showing planned in Cricklade the same week is already fully booked! There are also a limited number of tickets available at the opticians.

What is the NEB?

The National Emergency Briefing on Climate and Nature was first delivered to politicians and decisions makers in Westminster in November 2025. The Briefing pulled together key facts about the impact of climate change and nature depletion in the UK and a call to action, urging a wartime scale response to the climate and nature emergency.

A 50-minute film encompassing the contents of the NEB, fronted by Chris Packham, was compiled and launched in Summer 2026. A highly organised operation was launched to ensure that the film was screened as community events across the country to promote engagement and discussion (rather than just making it available online). St Mary's Eco Church responded to the call. The showing of the film is the first of our monthly autumn/winter eco-events of the season.

The film is hard-hitting in its presentation of the facts of climate change and implications for nature, food supply, economy, housing etc. However, people who have seen the film have called it alarming but encouraging at the same time; it shows that by working together we can deliver solutions.

Each screening of the film is followed by a chance to discuss the issues and next steps, with a range of materials and information provided by the national organisers. With huge thanks to Andy Miles for having arranged the screening, we are really proud that Fairford is now on the map as hosting a screening of what is already an historically important film.

Scientist and environmentalist Barbara Brockway – a Fairford resident - will help facilitate the discussion after the film.

There will be soft drinks and wine served from 7 pm.

We have invited not only the MP but representatives of a range of public service groups in the locality; and have had bookings already from others outside our normal eco-talk attendees. So do please book to secure your place.

The QR code should also take you to the booking site.

Chris Packham's words on the importance of protecting this beautiful Earth are moving and inspiring: "This is our home.... It's where we breathe, it's where we eat, we laugh, we cry, we love, we hate and as far as I know, together with all the other wonderful life on Earth, we are the only known life forms in the universe and we've got nowhere else to go".

MUSIC
• AT ST MARY'S •

CONCERT

ADRIAN PARTINGTON - PIANO
LEORA COHEN - VIOLIN



Church of St Mary the Virgin Fairford
3pm Saturday 19th September 2026

Timeless masterpieces for violin and piano from Bach,
Beethoven, Elgar and Gershwin
tickets £25/£20 (includes tea and cake)
via [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk) (fees apply)
or cash at Fairford opticians from 1st August (01285 713313)



Craft & Chat

COME ALONG AND GET CREATIVE!



LECHLADE
BAPTIST CHURCH



3rd September
7PM – 9PM



FAIRFORD
COMMUNITY CENTRE



Thursday 24th
7PM – 9PM

£10-

NO SKILLS NEEDED

*Come along and
get creative!*

MUST BOOK

Contact Mary Ann

 **07555738138**

MAKE
RESIN
PENDANTS
AND KEYRINGS



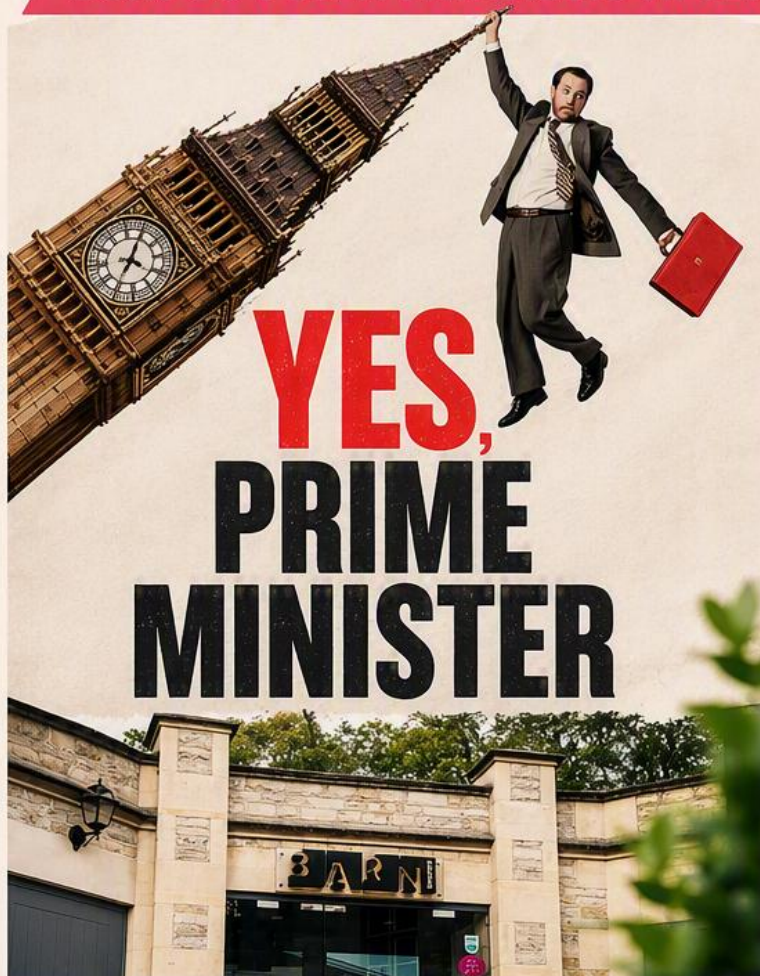


THE BARN theatre BUS



BARN THEATRE TRIP!

JOIN US FOR A FANTASTIC AFTERNOON AT THE BARN THEATRE



**YES,
PRIME
MINISTER**



**THURSDAY
3RD SEPTEMBER**



**1:15 PM
LEAVE LECHLADE**



**MULTIPLE
PICK UPS**



**RETURN
APPROX. 5PM**

A GREAT AFTERNOON
OF POLITICAL HUMOUR,
LAUGHTER & LIVE
THEATRE!



**FREE
TRANSPORT**



**FREE
TICKETS**



*Just bring your money for
refreshments during the interval!*

LET'S ENJOY A WONDERFUL AFTERNOON TOGETHER! ❤️



Blessed with a magical summer day on 24th August, Katie and Jeremy (Blake) generously sponsored and hosted our High Five **“Peekies and Pimms” Garden Party** at their home in “The White House”, with The Peekies singing duo from Stroud offering their services free of charge for the charities fund. The garden was beautiful, the music charming and relaxing, the food excellent, plenty of Pimms and tea flowing freely, and the weather was perfect. We would like to thank our wonderful helpers on the day, and all those who helped prepare the event beforehand and clear afterwards, our performers, everyone who came along to support the afternoon, and of course, Katie and Jeremy for their generosity and hard work. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful afternoon, and we raised a magnificent £920. Thank you so much. Linda, Jos, Hope and Meg.



Sunday 25th August gave our St Mary's church choir the opportunity to have their own summer afternoon event, and welcome associated guests from the church. Christine and Stewart (Benzie) offered their usual and much appreciated generosity in providing their lovely garden for our venue, and our regular barbecue was replaced with a bring and share buffet, plenty of Prosecco, tea and coffee, and an opportunity to chat and laugh together - time not usually afforded at rehearsals and events! The choir was pleased to thank Jean along with Barry for all their hard work in organising and running the choir and church music, and Jean appreciated a lovely bouquet in gratitude – best of all, we still have some Prosecco left for Christmas! Look out for the **choirs singing event coming up in the autumn** – everyone welcome.





A New Notification to our kind High Five Project donators

A big Thank You to everyone who has so kindly supported the events of our High Five Project so far in 2026; we hope you've enjoyed them all and found the variety a little different. Fundraising is going better than expected and we are so grateful for all your generosity and support. We have extended our original ambition to include St Mary's Church as well as the five charities named in January and are now ready to support two more children's charities this year, as we have several events already planned between September and December. One additional charity is Gloucestershire based, and the other is UK based:



The James Hopkins Trust

The James Hopkins Trust provides nursing respite care for Gloucestershire's life limited, and life threatened young children from babies up to the age of 6, whilst also supporting their families. Their free care can be received in the family home or at their purpose built multi-sensory centre at Kites Corner in Gloucester.

Read all about The James Hopkins Trust at: jameshopkinstrust.org.uk
Kites Corner, North Upton Lane, Gloucester, GL4 3TR. 01452 612216.



Transforming Lives for Good

Introduced to us by Hope Price, Transforming Lives for Good is a Christian children's emotional and mental wellbeing charity equipping local churches to provide trauma-informed counselling, coaching and safe community spaces. It supports children with their emotional and mental wellbeing.



Learn more about TLG at: TLG.org.uk

Transforming Lives for Good, National Support Centre, Hope Park, Bradford, BD5 8HH 01274 900373

We're looking forward to seeing you at our autumn events running from September to December. Thank you for enjoying our fundraising adventure with us and being part of the St Mary's supporting community. Linda, Jos, Hope and Meg.





High Five Project Events Coming Soon! Fundraising for Children's Charities & St Mary's Church



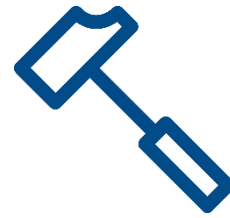
Dancercise for Mature Movers. Linda's fun and not-too-taxing group runs from 10.30-11.30am weekly at Poulton Village Hall from Tuesday 22nd September. £3 cash per session. All subs to High Five. Just turn up, any week. Call if you need more information 01285 672512.



A High Five Star Talk by local artist Jake Sutton, "An Artist's Studio". A survey of the traditional materials of the painter from early Renaissance to The Great War. Thursday 24th September at 7.15pm in the Farmor Room. Light refreshments. No ticket required. Retiring donations – cash only please.



Lechlade Occasional Choir Concert. Colin Dowdeswell and his amazing choir, previously so much enjoyed at St Mary's, return with their own special evening-. Monday 19th October at 7.00pm in the church. Doors open 6.40pm. Wine available on arrival. No ticket required. Retiring donations – cash only please.



Citizens Advice Column:

Q: I hired a company to install concrete fencing and a gate in my back garden. The quality of the work is poor, and the gate doesn't shut properly. What can I do?

When you put your trust in a trader and the work doesn't meet your expectations it can be frustrating. If a trader hasn't done a good job with 'reasonable care and skill', the **Consumer Rights Act 2015** entitles you to ask for the problem to be fixed or receive a refund.

Evidence is important. Take photos and make notes about what happened and when, including times and dates, and keep receipts or other proof of payment.

People can experience **different types of problems with traders**, and there is [specific advice available on the Citizens Advice website depending on the issue](#).

When you contact the trader, **explain the problem clearly and provide your evidence**. They should fix it within a reasonable amount of time and without causing you too much inconvenience. The law doesn't define exactly what is reasonable, so **you'll need to agree this with them**.

If they can't or won't fix the problem, you can ask for a **partial or full refund**, depending on how bad the issue is. It's a good idea to suggest an amount and explain why you think it's reasonable. Once a refund has been agreed, it should be paid within 14 days.

If you **can't reach an agreement**, there are other **options**. If you paid by card, you may be able to complain to your card provider. If the trader is a member of a trade association or quality scheme, this might help to take your complaint further, or you may be able to use an [alternative dispute resolution \(ADR\) scheme](#). If you've tried various things and the complaint remains unresolved, you may be able to complain to the [Financial Ombudsman Service](#).

Anyone experiencing problems with building work, decorating or home improvements can contact the national [Citizens Advice Consumer Service](#) on **0808 223 1133** for advice and support from a trained adviser.



Citizens Advice helps with a range of issues. For information and self-help guidance, visit citizensadvice.org.uk.

To speak to a local adviser in the Stroud and Cotswold Districts, visit citizensadvice-stroudandcotswold.org.uk to complete our **webform** or call us on **0808 800 0510**