



Challow

NEWS

~ March 2026 ~



Mothering Sunday

15th March - 11.00 am

Family Service of Morning Worship



Easter 2026



Palm Sunday - 29th March

Maundy Thursday - 2nd April

Good Friday - 3rd April

Easter Day - 5th April

'Challow News' is the Community Newsletter of St. Nicholas Church, East Challow



Main Street, East Challow.
OX12 9SH

Churchwardens

Mrs Liz Belcher: 01235 763966
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07739 563894

Email: vicaralec@valebenefice.org.uk

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vicarmiriam@valebenefice.org.uk

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Open: Mon - Fri 10.00 - 12.00

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Details of all Services and Festivals
can be found on the

St. Nicholas website page of

A Church Near You

[www.achurchnearyou.com/
church/5811/](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5811/)

East Challow Parish Council

clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk

Cricket Club - 01235 763335

R B L Club - 01235 763430

Village Hall - bookings.ecvh@gmail.com

Challow News - nigel.langford@me.com

Mably Way Health Centre

Church Street - 01235 770245

Newbury Street - 01235 639521

**Emergency Defibrillator
Locations**

The Old Red Telephone Box

The Village Green, Main Street. OX12 9SR



Entrance Doorway

Challow & Childrey Cricket Club

Vicarage Hill. OX12 9RR

3 - Digit Numbers

999 - Emergency

111 - NHS (non emergency)

101 - POLICE (non emergency)

105 - NATIONAL POWER CUT
SERVICE

Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday - the fourth Sunday of Lent - offers families an opportunity to honour the women who have nurtured them. Lots of different streams and traditions have come together to make today's Mothering Sunday the special day that it is.

In the Middle Ages it was an occasion for everyone to visit their 'mother' church - the place where they had been baptised. Later, an opportunity for those who worked away from home to visit their mothers became added to the mix of reasons to make it a special day.

Today we honour all women who have in one way or another been special to us, and in church this is usually signalled by small bunches of flowers for every woman present.

Treating mums and grans to Sunday lunch, chocolates and flowers is also part of the present mix. And will there be a simnel cake to be seen - a tradition from ages past - with its rich layers of marzipan, and eleven balls of marzipan on top, reminders of the 11 disciples who remained faithful to Jesus?

Not everyone has enjoyed a wonderful or enduring relationship with their mum, so lest we get carried away on a wave of love and sentimentality, there is usually space in the Mothering Sunday church service to reflect on and pray for those whose relationships with their mother were not all they might have been.

Also, there are the families blighted by the lack of, or death of a child; families remembering a mum who died tragically young; women who never had a child but would have dearly loved the opportunity; all these and more are a recognition of the imperfections of human love, human life.

These imperfections can be brought in prayer to the God who mothers us. In the Old Testament, Isaiah speaks of God comforting His people like a mother hen. In the New Testament, both Matthew and Luke bear witness to Jesus expressing His desire to gather His people as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings. Yes, God has strong maternal qualities which He invites us to discover and enjoy!

Have you discovered the mothering, nurturing, maternal qualities which God offers to all people? It's lovelier than flowers, more long-lasting than simnel cake, better than a visit from family, and it's free to everyone who wants it - it could be yours!

Next Parish Council Meeting

will be held in the Village Hall

Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 7.00pm

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

The minutes of each meeting are available on the website.

www.eastchallowpc.co.uk

Parish Councillor Vacancy....

We have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. The Parish Council represents and serves the whole community of East Challow and is responsible for maintaining the local environment and amenities. If you are interested in joining the team please contact the clerk for more information.

clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk

Volunteer Community Flood Wardens needed....

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) are looking for volunteer Community Flood Wardens across East Challow to build resilience to flooding events before they occur.

- Flood Wardens are the eyes and ears on the ground in your community to report flood risk issues.

- Flood Wardens can monitor blocked drains and culverts, ditches, tree branches or obstructions in rivers/watercourses, and anything else that may cause a flood risk and report them to the appropriate local authority.

You will receive full training and there's no set number of volunteer hours required.

If you are interested in becoming a flood Warden volunteer, please email floodmanagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Dog Fouling....

Dog fouling remains a problem in some areas of the Village including the recreation ground. An Environmental Enforcement Officer has attended East Challow and placed dog fouling enforcement signs around the Village reminding dog owners of the penalty involved for not picking up after your dog. The Parish Council would like to remind dog owners to pick up after their dog and thank the dog owners who are clearing up after their dog.

MUGA opening times....

Dear residents, the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) will re-open on the 30th March 2026 once the clocks have changed. The MUGA will be used by Challow Sports Netball for a weekly training session every Thursday from 5.30pm till 7.00pm. This is to provide a training area for school aged children year 3 and upwards in the village.

During these times the MUGA will be closed to the public.

East Challow Parish Council apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

Date change for a future Parish Council meeting

The Parish Council have changed the meeting date in April 2026.

The Parish Council meeting will now take place on the Wednesday 22nd April 2026.

Community Speed Watch Volunteers needed

Community Speed Watch is a volunteer-led initiative where residents work with Thames Valley Police to monitor and report speeding in their areas.

- Volunteers are trained to use speed detection devices and report vehicles exceeding the limit.
- The training will be online via a link supplied and will involve watching a few short videos and answering some questions.
- You would become part of a team; we estimate the ongoing time commitment will be 2 hours per month. The goal for drivers? Education, awareness, and long-term change – not punishment.

If you are interested and could be part of the CSW Team, please email clerk@eastchallowpc.co.uk

Resident's urged to respond to Government Consultation....

The government has launched a consultation on options to reorganise local councils across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. Local Government Reorganisation is a government-led reform to change how councils in two-tier areas are structured, replacing county and district councils with single unitary structures responsible for local services.

The upcoming consultation asks residents for their views on each of the three proposals put forward for Oxfordshire.

The consultation is open from 5 February to 26 March 2026. Respondents can either take part in an online survey or write directly to government with their views

Residents can take part in the consultation by visiting

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/oxfordshire>

Hello Everyone...

We are welcoming March In, but at the time of writing I have no idea if it came in like a lion or a lamb. I have been out and about with Roxy my dog, I can't say in all weathers because she isn't keen on rain, so we pick the times which suit both of us, but we definitely get out twice a day. She is settling down with us well now and is used to most of the walks about the village.

The snowdrops and crocuses around the area always look so cheerful after the gloom of winter. It is remarkable that they survive whatever the winter throws at them and appear every year. This winter has been very wet, I suppose there is still time for a cold spell, we will have to see what happens. I really look forward to the spring flowers appearing. I have been watching for the daffodils to appear in my back garden and throughout the village.

Daffodils are also known as the lent lily, the scientific name is Narcissus. There are over 50 species and more than 25,000 hybrids. They are native to both Europe and North Africa and have been seen as a sign of luck since Roman times.

The daffodil is a good early pollinator attracting bees which then pollinate other plants. All parts of the plant are toxic if ingested, so they protect themselves from garden pests and it also deters deer from eating them. The roots can stabilise soil making them useful as an erosion control on slopes. I love the fact that you can have a bunch of daffodils, put them in a vase, give them a jiggle and they arrange themselves beautifully. Because the sap from them is poisonous to other plants, they are better in a vase on their own.

Daffodils are the national flower of Wales; they are also the tenth wedding anniversary flower. Once established, the plant can last over fifty years and of course self-propagate, so very good value for money.

The next flower to look forward to is the Bluebell, I have quite a few in my garden, but the best way to appreciate them is to see them in woodlands growing under the trees they resemble beautiful blue lakes.

Then it won't be too long before the primroses will be filling the church yard with their wonderful delicate yellow blooms.

Walking with Roxy my dog gives me ample opportunity to look at the natural areas around the outskirts of the village, one of my observations has been watching the Long-tailed tits, they really are adorable, chubby little birds, and very acrobatic.

They are about 14cm in length, including its tail, which is about as long as its body, hence the name. It is cream, pale pink, purple, white and black in colour. In summer they can be seen swooping about, feeding in family groups eating grubs, insects and spiders, but when these become scarce in the winter months, they will eat seeds and berries, and can be tempted to feeders hanging around bird tables.

You can see them in small family flocks flitting about hedgerows and trees. Both male and female are alike, they lay eggs once a year laying a clutch of 6/ 8, in a beautiful nest constructed from moss, lichen, feathers and spider's webs.

Both parents feed and raise the chicks, which leave the nest about 2 weeks from hatching. If a pair of birds lose their nest, they will assist another pair of birds in rearing their brood.

On February 1st we held our annual Service of Memories in Saint Nicholas, it is a beautiful way to remember and honour friends and family that have passed away either recently or long ago. There was an opportunity to light a candle or place a prayer on the Prayer Tree in Church. It was a lovely, moving service led by Miriam our Associate Vicar. It is good to get together with others in the same position, and we were able to chat over coffee and cake afterwards which is always nice.

Lent, the season of renewal, started on Ash Wednesday on 18th February, and goes on until Holy Saturday just before Easter day. There are several Lent courses going on, over the Benefice. The Holy week services start on 29th March with Palm Sunday. They will be advertised on the Church notice board.

Although we are in Lent, we have Mothering Sunday on 15th March it is also known as Refreshment Sunday. This was a break in the middle of Lent when the fasting rules could be relaxed. It also meant that people working away from home could visit their families.

I hope you are able to join us at Saint Nicholas to honour the mother figure in your own life. As a child my siblings and I presented our own Mum with small gifts every year and made a fuss of her on this day. We went to church in the morning and visited grandparents after dinner.

At Saint Nicholas we like to present the ladies with a small posy on this special day.

I look forward to seeing you in the village when I'm out with Roxy.

But that's all for now, so as always stay safe for yourself and others.

SlimmingWorld

Monday - Wantage

5:30pm & 7:00pm

Comrades Club,
OX12 8DJ

Tuesday - Grove

4:00pm, 5:30pm & 7:00pm

Old Mill Hall, Dixon Suite,
OX12 7LB

Saturday - East Challow

7:30am & 9:00am

Challow & Childrey
Cricket Club, OX12 9RR

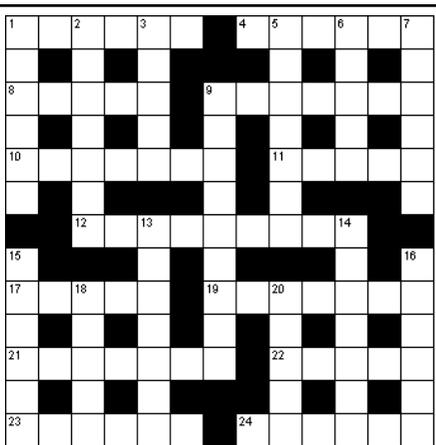
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Across

Down

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Licit (6) | 1 Deadly (6) |
| 4 Burrowing animal (6) | 2 Lashed (7) |
| 8 Attempted (5) | 3 Below (5) |
| 9 Gruesome (7) | 5 Very old (7) |
| 10 Clothing (7) | 6 Holy Writ (5) |
| 11 Force out (5) | 7 Pact (6) |
| 12 Devoted (9) | 9 Small particles (9) |
| 17 Term of respect in India (5) | 13 Doubtful (7) |
| 19 Generous (7) | 14 Beloved (7) |
| 21 Easily perceived or understood (7) | 15 Onto dry land (6) |
| 22 Bring up (5) | 16 Customer (6) |
| 23 Overindulgence (6) | 18 Mayhem (5) |
| 24 Instructed (6) | 20 Asian country (5) |



Why we should be like Donkeys

Are you a pet-lover? Many people own a dog, a cat or a

budgie, but most of us don't own a donkey! Yet in Bible times, donkeys were essential to daily life. They did everything from helping to grind corn, to ploughing, to carrying people, to transporting their belongings. Despite their small frame, donkeys are surprisingly tough. They are content with poor fodder like thistles and can travel an average of 20 miles a day.

There are two occasions in the Christian calendar where donkeys walk into the picture. At Christmas, Mary travelled the 100 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem on a donkey. And although a donkey doesn't get a specific mention in the manger story, that same one that transported her was probably there at the birth; where else would it have been?

On Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Jesus deliberately chose this animal rather than a horse. Why? In Bible times, the horse was associated with war, conquest and worldly might. But the donkey was a symbol of peace and humility. Jesus used this animal to show that He had come with the dignity of the King of peace. His entry into the Holy City also fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy concerning the Messiah.

Donkeys are hardworking and undemanding. They wait for their master to put them to the work he has chosen for them. And, remarkably, each one bears the mark of the Cross on their backs!

Two Donkeys

Two donkeys were walking the streets of Jerusalem. One said: "Just a few days ago I came down that hill carrying Jesus, and the people were all singing and shouting and throwing down their cloaks and palms for me to walk on. But today they don't even recognise me."

The other donkey replied: "That is how it is, my friend. Without Jesus, none of us amounts to much."

Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal 2026

as it celebrates 40 years



Throughout the month of March, the end-of-life charity Marie Curie will be holding its annual flagship fundraiser, the Great Daffodil Appeal.

There's only one chance to give someone the best possible end of life.

And one chance for you to help give care that makes all that possible. Care that protects someone's dignity – instead of leaving them alone or in pain. This Great Daffodil Appeal is that chance.

Now in its 40th year, the appeal raises vital funds to help Marie Curie provide end of life care and support in homes, hospitals and hospices across the UK. By donating and wearing your daffodil this March, you can help Marie Curie Nurses bring expert end of life care when there's no cure, whatever the illness.

Money raised also funds the charity's free support line and webchat which is available to anyone with an illness they're likely to die from and those close to them. It offers practical and emotional support on everything from managing symptoms and navigating care to financial information, including how to get help with energy bills and bereavement support.

Whether it's taking part in a fundraising challenge, organising a bake sale or volunteering your time to collect donations, every penny will help Marie Curie deliver quality care to those who need it most.

The Great Daffodil Appeal only happens once a year. This is your chance to make it count. For information and to donate visit: Mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil

**Earth Hour 2026
time to turn off your lights**



The Earth Hour 2026 takes place on Saturday 28th March, when at 8.30pm in their local time millions of people worldwide will turn off their non-essential lights for one hour. Organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the 20th anniversary of this global initiative will aim to raise awareness of the earth's climate crisis, and to encourage environmental action through sustainable, actionable lifestyle changes.

The first Earth Hour was held in Sydney, Australia, on 31st March 2007, and has since become a global movement. The 2025/26 theme is 'Giving an Hour for Earth' is encouraging people to adapt sustainable habits in their daily lives.

And while our lights are off for an hour, Earth Hour will encourage us to spend the time in nature, or stargazing, or engaging in environmental, educational, or sustainable activities.

More info at: <https://www.earthhour.org>

SKY SPORTS

SHOWN HERE

- LIVE -
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Sunday
Football**

Challows RBL Club



Call in and see all that
the Club has to offer

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

Opening Hours

Monday - Thursday

7.00 pm - Close

~ ~ ~

Friday - 6.00 pm - Close

Saturday 1.00 pm - Close

Sunday 1.00 pm - Close

Planning an Event or Party

Our Main Hall
with Kitchen
Facilities
are available to
hire

~ Contact ~
01235 763430

Hand Bell Ringers

10.30 am
Every Tuesday
New Members
Welcome
01235 763430
For more details

Saturday Night Entertainment

March

T. B. C.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

April 11th

MOVE IT

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

8.00 pm
Admission £10.00
[Cash on the door]

Sunday Night Cash Bingo



(Eyes down at 8.00pm)

Monday Night Poker



**Challows
Afternoon Club**
for all over 60's
we meet every month
2.00 pm
on the 3rd Thursday
**Everyone
Welcome**

The secret life of a busy mother

Not many years ago lonely mothers would head for each other's homes or to the local toddler group for coffee, sympathy, advice and general camaraderie. These days, most also switch on the computer.

For many busy mums, parenting forums and communities have long been their best friend/mother-figure/health visitor/schoolteacher, all lumped into one.

One young mum explains: "I can log on to a parenting site any time – when the children are in bed or watching TV – and ask for advice or reassurance on things I'd feel stupid asking a health visitor or that my friend does not know the answer to. Or – I can just log on for a good gossip. It ticks all the boxes in terms of what I need."

Some sites are getting millions of hits a month. Mums talk to each other through tonsillitis, homework, names labels that won't wash off, teething, bed-wetting and even bullying. One mum admits: "Occasionally, when I read what others have written, I realise my life is not so bad after all."

10 of the top UK parenting forums, communities, blogs and expert advice websites are:

Mumsnet: The UK's largest parenting network, providing candid advice and active forums.

Netmums: A major, supportive community offering local listings, and expert advice.

NCT: Leading charity on pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood, with classes & workshops.

Parent Talk (Action for Children): Offers free 1-to-1 webchat with parenting coaches.

Family Lives: Provides a 24-hour helpline and information on all aspects of family life.

NHS Website: Highly trusted, evidence-based health information for children.

Honest Mum: A blog which covers lifestyle, food, and parenting.

The Mummy Bubble: A blog offering tips, hacks, and advice for new parents.

DADinfo: The go-to site for fathers, providing forums and advice.

Which? (Family): Trusted, in-depth reviews for buying baby and child products.

Afternoon Tea, anyone?

Do you take afternoon tea? Ever wondered where it started? The custom seems to date back to the mid-19th century, and the seventh Duchess of Bedford, Anna Russell. The Duchess got hungry at about 4pm each day, calling it "that sinking feeling". As it was still four hours until dinner (at 8pm), she began to have sandwiches or a small cake with some tea. Her friends thought this was marvellous, and the idea spread quickly through (hungry) upper class circles.

Soon, it seems, everyone in England was looking forward to Afternoon Tea, and a great British tradition was born. Though, during the last century, the sandwiches and cake gave way to biscuits, still we reached for the teapot each afternoon. Not so much anymore, it seems. In the last five years, sales of tea and biscuits have dropped. Perhaps we are drinking coffee? The research was done by retail analysts Mintel.

Club Membership is NOT a requirement to attend any events here

Parish Church of St. Nicholas - Service Information & Rotas

Sunday	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel Reading
1st March Eucharist Rev Alec Gill Lent 2	Genesis 12: 1 - 4a	121	Romans 4: 4 - 1 - 5, 13 - 17	John 3: 1 - 17
8th March Eucharist Rev Dr. Miriam Jones Lent 3	Exodus 17: 1 - 7	95	Romans 5: 1 - 11	John 4: 5 - 42
15th March Eucharist Rev Alec Gill Lent 4	Mothers Sunday (see Clergy for alternative readings)			
22nd March Eucharist Rev Dr Miriam Jones Lent 5	Ezekiel 37: 1 - 14	130	Romans 8: 6 - 11	John 11: 1 - 45
29th March Eucharist Rev Alec Gill Palm Sunday	Isaiah 50: 4 - 9a	118 1 - 2, 19 - 29	Philippians 2: 5 - 11	Matthew 21: 1 - 11

	Date	Sacristan	Sidesperson	Prayers	Readings	Organist
1st Sunday	1st March	Ruth	Frances / Nigel	Linda	Ruth / Nigel	Ruth
2nd Sunday	8th March	Louise / Claire	Linda / Noel	Louise / Claire	Graham	Ruth
3rd Sunday	15th March	Jenny	Liz / Jeff	Jenny	Fiona	Graham
4th Sunday	22nd March	Nigel	Trish / Sue	Nick / Paul	Claire / Nigel	Graham
5th Sunday	29th March	Nigel	Liz / Jeff	Paul / Nick	Jenny	Graham

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

Thursday	Sacristan
5th Mar	Mandy
12th Mar	Jenny
19th Mar	Heather
26th Mar	Mandy
	Nigel

	Coffee	Flowers	Cleaning
1st Sunday	Mandy		Linda / Liz
2nd Sunday	Jan / Hilary		Linda / Liz
3rd Sunday	Val / Barbara		Mandy
4th Sunday	Linda / Janet		Mandy
5th Sunday	Sue / Trish / Frances		Sue / Trish

The Parish Church of

St Nicholas

Notices

- INFORMATION -

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Blessings and Thanksgiving services which have taken place at St. Nicholas Church, East Challow.



Baptism

Felix Hayden

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

THANK YOU

Gordon Handley would like to thank everyone at St. Nicholas for making him so welcome over the years.

He is now settling well into his new home and sends you all his best wishes.

Advance Notice

There will be NO Holy Communion Services at St. Nicholas on the following dates

Thursday 2nd April

Thursday 9th April

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

APCM

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 3rd May

12.30

after morning service

St. Nicholas Church



February

£50 - N° 169 ~ Mrs Day
£20 - N° 105 ~ Mrs M. Perkins
£10 - N° 57 ~ Mrs L. Shaw
~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Would you like to join?

For further information please contact
Tricia Shand - 01235 764222
the.shandies@btinternet.com

CHALLOW & CHILDREY



HERE COMES THE 2026 SEASON!!!!

With the Cricket square and outfield looking fantastic, we are now looking forward to another busy summer season.

The senior sides kick off their campaign with friendly matches from 18th April and the Youth training starts on Friday 24th April

see our website

www.challowcricket.co.uk or challow.play-cricket.com

for all our match details

As the club gets busier with a match or training taking place pretty much every day, the bar will be open everyday, again check our website for further info.

We always welcome new friends to the club, whether you want to play a game, grab a pint, or sit and relax with the stunning backdrop of the Downs.

If you would like to join the club as a member, you can do so via our website, and if you would be able to help us out in any capacity then we'd love to hear from you! We're always looking for players, umpires, scorers, coaches and of course anyone who can give us an hour or so occasionally to do the little jobs that keep the place ticking over

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

www.challowcricket.co.uk

admin@challowcricket.co.uk

01235 763335

♥ Staying Safe from Romance Fraud ♥

The Head of Fraud at Thames Valley Police is urging the public to be alert to the emotional and psychological manipulation used by criminals committing romance fraud. Although these crimes occur all year round, this time of year provides an important opportunity to highlight how offenders groom victims, build trust, and exploit them financially.

Romance fraudsters rarely begin by asking for money. Instead, they construct a detailed illusion of trust to draw victims in. They frequently share personal stories early in the conversation – describing their home life, work, ambitions, or future plans – to create emotional connection and credibility. Later, they reuse these same details as “evidence” to support fabricated emergencies or financial requests. This form of manipulation mirrors behaviours seen in coercive control, blurring a victim’s sense of what is genuine.

A common warning sign is manufactured urgency. Offenders often claim sudden illness, emotional distress or a crisis requiring immediate help. These stories are intentionally designed to distract victims from the underlying ask: money. If a victim hesitates, offenders may accuse them of lacking care or loyalty, applying deliberate emotional pressure to prevent them from seeking advice.

Another tactic is “**legitimate secrecy**,” where the offender encourages the victim to keep the relationship hidden under the guise of protecting something special. Statements such as “**People won’t understand us**” or “**Don’t tell anyone – it will ruin things**” are used to isolate victims from friends and family, limiting the chance for outside perspective.

Over time, this emotional dependency allows offenders to disguise financial requests within stories of hardship: a health crisis, problems at work, or situations only the victim can resolve. These requests may not always be direct. Fraudsters often hint at financial struggles - “**I’ll manage somehow**” or “**if only I had enough to fix this...**” - creating a sense of responsibility and prompting victims to offer money voluntarily.

Detective Inspector Duncan Wynn, Head of the Central Fraud Unit at Thames Valley Police, said: “Romance fraud is a form of emotional exploitation that can be deeply damaging, not just financially but psychologically. Offenders operate with patience, skill, and intent—they create a sense of closeness, then use that trust to isolate victims and apply pressure.

No genuine relationship will demand secrecy, urgency, or financial support. If something does not feel right, speak to someone you trust or seek advice early. Reaching out for help is not a sign of naivety—it is a vital step in protecting yourself.”

Thames Valley Police is encouraging members of the public to read [Staying Safe from Romance Fraud](#) booklet, which outlines practical steps to recognise red flags and reduce the risk of victimisation. The booklet was created in partnership with, Dr Elisabeth Carter, Associate Professor of Criminology and Forensic Linguist, Kingston University.

This booklet has been designed to demonstrate the clever tactics used by romance fraudsters with a view to empower the knowledge of our communities. It also dispels the myths of shame and embarrassment often associated with this crime by highlighting the link to coercive control.

Key Reminders:

- If someone online seems “perfect” very quickly, pause and reflect.
- Be wary of sudden crises or emotional appeals requiring fast action.
- Healthy relationships never rely on secrecy.
- Any financial request—direct or indirect—is a major red flag.
- Stay connected with trusted friends or family who can offer perspective.

For more information, visit the [A guide to spotting romance fraudsters | Thames Valley Police](#).

Please notify [Report Fraud](#) if you have been targeted with fraud where you may report online or by calling 0300 123 2040.

**53 more neighbourhood police officers
despite Home Office underfunding**

Back in December, the Government announced the funding settlement for Thames Valley Police - allocating nearly £9m less than they had previously indicated! The funding from central government will barely cover the costs of inflation and pay increases for police officers. In addition the Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood, confirmed at the end of January that the Government would only fund 40% of the cost of new police neighbourhood officers, putting more pressure on your local council tax bill and squeezing other parts of policing.

Despite these financial pressures, I am confident that we will be able to **deliver 53 more neighbourhood officers** this coming year, that's on top of the 218 extra officers delivered in the last three years.

This comes at the same time the Government has published a White Paper on Police Reform. It sets out radical changes including the regionalisation of policing into mega-forces that could see the abolition of Thames Valley Police. As well as plans for force mergers the document proposes the creation of a new National Police Force and suggests changing the law to introduce more direct control by ministers for the first time, risking the end of operational independence.

Despite some good intent around better sharing of information between police forces to tackle serious and complex crime, overall I am deeply concerned by these plans which will do nothing to deliver better policing locally and are likely to see less money available for the police in our area. I will continue to challenge the Home Office on these plans and stand up for policing locally.

Greater efforts on crime prevention, alongside more police officers, are making a difference, with crime falling across Oxfordshire. Locally the priority will always remain cutting crime and catching criminals despite the pressures imposed by the Government.

Matthew Barber
matthewbarber.co.uk



Shaun Guard
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Granny Retired?

You've got to be kidding....

The idea that grandmothers retire into an unburdened world of gardening and tea-drinking, golf and knitting is no more than a pleasant fantasy these days.

Instead, nearly 63% of grandparents provide some sort of childcare to their under-16-year-old grandchildren. That amounts to around seven million older people, aged mostly between 55 - 74.

As many as one in three is doing the school run. Nearly one in five is spending more than 10 hours a week giving other childcare.

America has a nickname name for them: the 'granny nannies.'

Granny nannies do it for good reason: to enable their own children to be able to work longer hours. But granny nannies not only care for their grandchildren, they may also be providing comfort for elderly relatives of their own – and hold down a part-time job at the same time.

Perhaps 'Super-Granny-Nannies' is the correct name for them!

All entries for the

APRIL 2026

Issue of the

Challow News

Must be submitted by

15th MARCH 2026

Email: nigel.langford@me.com



Vale Benefice LENT groups

MONDAY LENT COURSE

There will be a Lent course in Challow at the home of Claire and Nick Page starting on Monday 23rd February at 7.30pm.

It will be based on the Diocesan material 'Come and See: Discovering Jesus through the Eucharist'

For more information contact Nick, Claire or the Benefice Office.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LENT COURSE

7.30pm - 9.00pm: 'A Christian Look at the Environment'

Have you ever wondered what the bible says about caring for the natural world?

How does this fit in with our understanding of the Gospel?

Martin and Margot Hodson will lead this course for five evenings during Lent (25th February to 25th March) at their home in Grove.

For more information contact: Martin, Margot or the Benefice Office

THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY LENT GROUP

The Thursday Bible Study Group will meet weekly during Lent on 26th February, 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th March in St. Johns church, Lower Room from 2.00pm - 3.30pm

We will be using Paula Gooders course: Lent-wise (Spiritual essentials for real life)

For more information contact: Benefice Office

FRIDAY ONLINE LENT COURSE

Starting on Friday 20th February until 27th March (inclusive) 7.30pm - 8.30pm

with Rev Alec Gill and Anne Cheeseman.

We will be studying Jesus' final week. No course books are needed.

For the Online Link to join the course please contact: Rev Alec Gill

Dog walkers now face unlimited fines if pets chase livestock

As of the 18th of this month, The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025 will become law for England and Wales.

This means that police officers can seize dogs which pose a risk of repeated attacks on farm animals. It also means that dog walkers now face unlimited fines if their pets chase livestock.

Up until now, the maximum fine for worrying sheep, cattle and poultry was £1,000. But the fine is now unlimited, and also now protects llamas and alpacas.

Baroness Coffey, the Conservative former deputy prime minister, said the change was necessary. "Livestock worrying has devastating consequences, both for animals and farmers, and it can be horrific, causing brutal injuries that are tragically often fatal," she said.

Rachel Hallos, National Farmers' Union (NFU) vice-president, hailed the rule changes as "a huge step forward. This legislation will act as a real deterrent and will make a real difference to farmers and their livestock."

Farm animals worth an estimated £2.4 million were severely injured or killed by dogs in 2023, up nearly 30 per cent from the previous year, according to figures from the insurer NFU Mutual.

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Why big, wet licks from a dog can help a teenager's mental health

Teenagers who kiss their dog or are occasionally licked by their pet are happier, according to a recent study. They have even been found to have better mental health than those who do not have a dog.

Why should this be? It seems to all come down to the gut. Research has found that teenagers in homes with a dog have a specific gut bacteria constitution, known as the microbiome, which boosts mental wellbeing.

Gut bacteria samples from teenagers were analysed and the participants also underwent psychological assessment. Tests showed that those with dogs had healthier scores, and that their microbiome was rich in certain bacteria.

When the dog-influenced bacteria were injected into mice in a lab, even the rodents became more social and engaged more with other mice.

The study's author, Prof Takefumi Kikusui, of Azabu University in Japan, said that although dog ownership provides a sense of security through simple interaction, "the most interesting finding from this study is that bacteria promoting pro sociality, or empathy, were discovered in the microbiomes of adolescent children who keep dogs."

Community Notices



East Challow Community Warm Spaces

Join us for a Hot Drink and friendly conversation at Challow and Childrey Cricket Club from 11.00 am on any of the following dates.

Friday 13th March

Friday 27th March



KING ALFRED QUILTERS

Are you creative?

Do you like Hand Sewing or Machine Sewing?

Then come along to the King Alfred Patchwork and Quilting Group in East Challow. We don't just quilt we like to get involved in all sorts of needlecraft and are open to all age groups and all skill levels.

We meet on the 1st Wednesday evening of the month where we have speakers, or demonstrations. The 3rd Wednesday of the month is a sewing day where you can hone your skills and get advice and chat.

Wednesday 4th March, 7.00pm we have Sarah Fernandez Working with your Longarmer supplier (Rosehillquilts)

Wednesday 18th March 10.00am Sewing day.

Sunday 22nd March Workshop with Clemency Calkin (Seminole Cushion)

Booking for this workshop is essential please contact Helen on 07763 923000 for cost and more information you do not have to be a member to join this workshop.

Come along to see what we are about and join our friendly group.

Visitors are welcome at both events (fees apply).

For more information visit our website

www.kingalfredquilters.org.uk

Helen: 07763 923000 or Janice: 07786 333497

The Boys' Brigade launches alumni network to connect generations



The Boys' Brigade wants to get in touch with former members to celebrate more than 140 years of shaping young lives

The organisation wants to connect with previous members to share their stories of how The Boys' Brigade (BB) helped prepare them for their lives and careers. To do so, it has launched a new alumni scheme <https://alumni.boys-brigade.org.uk>

But the new scheme "isn't just about reminiscing about the past", the organisation states, "it is about giving you the chance to reconnect with us and help build a stronger future as The Boys' Brigade heads towards our 150th anniversary. "The Boys' Brigade (BB) was founded in 1883 and today works with 1,200 churches of all denominations.

For generations, BB has provided 'opportunities to learn, grow and discover', and this positive influence "is as important and as relevant today as ever."

BB trustee Andrew Baldwin says, "One of the things that always makes me smile is hearing stories of people's connections to the organisation. There is a huge BB community out there – across the UK and around the world." Former members are in every walk of life. We want to hear your stories, and the part that The Boys' Brigade played in your life. "The alumni scheme gives us the chance to reconnect and build a stronger future, as we head towards our 150th anniversary." As one former BB boy said: *'BB taught me how to become a leader, a good man and a better person. It pushed me to see what I was capable of. It gave me drive. I wouldn't be the person I am today if it hadn't been for The Boys' Brigade.'*



2025-2026

East Challow Village hall committee meetings

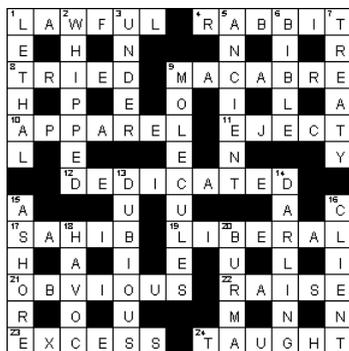
30th March

18th May

Start at 8.30pm

AGM - 27th July @ 7.30pm

Save the Date
> Community Day <
Sunday 7th June 2026



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PALM SUNDAY & HOLY WEEK

The events of Easter took place over a week, traditionally called Passion Week.

It began on Palm Sunday. After all His teaching and healing, Jesus had built a following.

On the Sunday before He was to die, Jesus and His followers arrived at Jerusalem. The city was crowded. Jewish people were arriving from to celebrate Passover. This commemorates how they had escaped from slavery in Egypt nearly 1,500 year earlier.

Jesus rode into the city on a young donkey. He was greeted like a conquering hero. Cheering crowds waved palm branches in tribute. He was hailed as the Messiah who had come to re-establish a Jewish kingdom.

The next day they returned to Jerusalem. Jesus went to the temple, the epicentre of the Jewish faith, and confronted the money-changers and merchants who were ripping off the people. He overturned their tables and accused them of being thieves. The religious authorities were alarmed and feared how He was stirring up the crowds.

On the Tuesday, they challenged Jesus, questioning His authority. He answered by challenging and condemning their hypocrisy. Later that day Jesus spoke to His disciples about future times. He warned them about fake religious leaders; the coming destruction of Jerusalem; wars, earthquakes and famines; and how His followers would face persecution.

By midweek the Jewish religious leaders and elders were so angry with Jesus that they began plotting to arrest and kill Him. One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, went to the chief priests and agreed to betray Him to them.

Jesus and the 12 disciples gathered on the Thursday evening to celebrate the Passover meal. This is known as the Last Supper. During the evening, Jesus initiated a ritual still marked by Christians – Holy Communion – which commemorates His death. Jesus broke bread and shared it and a cup of wine with His disciples.

Judas then left to meet the other plotters. Jesus continued to teach the others and then went outside into an olive grove to pray. He even prayed for all future believers. He agonised over what was to come but chose the way of obedience. The Bible book, Luke, records Him praying, **'Father if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done'**. Minutes later Judas arrived with soldiers and the chief priests and Jesus was arrested.

British Summertime begins....



Waste & Recycling Information



Tuesday 3rd March	Black + Food
Tuesday 10th March	Green + Brown + Food
Tuesday 17th March	Black + Food
Tuesday 24th March	Green + Brown + Food
Tuesday 31st March	Black + Food



Please ensure your Waste & Recycling Bins are placed on the kerbside before

06.00 am to ensure your bins are emptied

* * * * *

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

Please help to keep our Village Tidy and free from Fly Tipping

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

Faringdon Road, SN7 8LD

There is a Recycling Bin for Clothing situated in the car park off Canal Way

There is also a Recycling Bin for Shoes etc. at the Cricket Club on Vicarage Hill

Mowing Team

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

But we are in need of more volunteers to help us as the works rests on just a small group. If you could help us out and join the mowing team it would be very much appreciated.

It would only involve helping us 3 - 4 times during the mowing season at the very most.



We provide all the equipment that is needed. If you would be interested please contact

Jeff Penfold - 01235 763173

jeffpenfold8548@gmail.com



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