

THE Farncombe Villager

ST JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH



NEWS FROM BINSCOMBE SURGERY

SOME CHANGES – AND SOME NEW FACES

Many of you will know that general practice is always evolving, and the team at Binscombe is no exception. Over the past year we've seen a few changes to our medical team, alongside some lovely new additions, and we wanted to take a moment to keep you in the loop.

First, we say a very warm thank you and farewell to Dr Andrew Cook, who retired in November 2025 after many years of caring for patients at Binscombe. Dr Cook was a familiar and trusted face for so many people, and we know he will be greatly missed by both patients and colleagues alike. We wish him all the very best for a long and happy retirement.

There has also been a small change to Dr Jess Jameson's working pattern. Dr Jameson now works at the practice on Thursday mornings, where she continues to bring her experience and warm approach to patient care.

We're also delighted to welcome two new salaried GPs who have recently joined the team: Dr Lucy Holloway and Dr Ben Miles. Both

are already settling in well, working alongside the wider Binscombe team. They're enjoying getting to know patients and becoming part of the day-to-day life of the practice. Dr Hollway has an interest in care for older adults whilst Dr Miles is looking forward to developing his special interests in the future.

As ever, the doctors are supported by Binscombe's wider clinical and non-clinical team, including a new Practice Nurse Natasha Kill who has joined us recently and will be working on a Monday and Friday, developing her skills in general practice nursing.

Staff at the practice continue to work together to provide safe, thoughtful and responsive care. The practice remains proud of its strong team culture, its commitment to training and learning, and its focus on caring for patients as individuals, not just appointments..

Change is never just about saying goodbye – it's also about new beginnings. We hope you'll join us in thanking those who are moving on, and in warmly welcoming the new faces who are helping to shape the next chapter of care at Binscombe. **Emma Phillips**

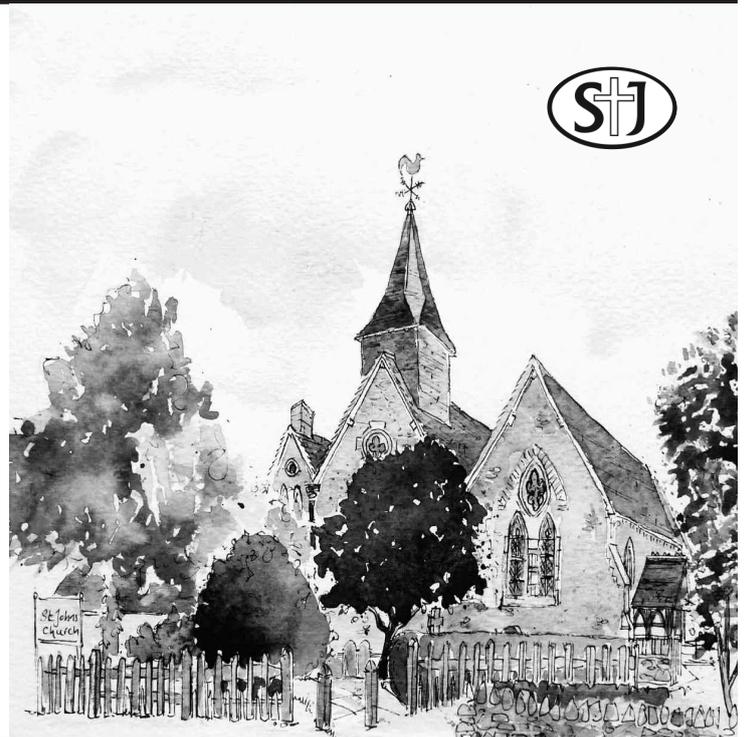
St. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH 2026

SPRING FAIR

WILL BE HELD IN
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From the Rectory



A friend of mine moved from the US and eventually became a British citizen. One of the things they appreciated was leaving behind a public culture where politicians seem to feel obliged to promote themselves as religious even if they really aren't, for one where nobody is that bothered. Still, my friend boggled at the paradox of living in a country which is very free and open religiously and yet where the signs of religion are all over the place. We went walking around St Paul's Cathedral in London and they noted the street names – Amen Corner, Paternoster Square, Ave Maria Lane. 'It's like being in the Vatican! And every other village has a saint in the name!'

Christianity indeed runs through the history of Britain, and the West as a whole, like 'Blackpool' through a stick of rock, and the Church of England looks after a lot of that. St John's relationship with our local infant school, for instance, is rooted in that history: it carries on as part of the arrangement made when Church schools were handed to the State to run in 1904. I think that knowing about that history is important: if you don't, you can't understand much about how the country works, or even work out what many artists and writers of the past mean. I am always delighted to help schools and anyone else who want to understand more!

But Christianity isn't primarily about culture or heritage, and has nothing to do with being British or even English. Britishness or Englishness is just a history, a continuity: it includes whatever the British or the English have been or done over the centuries. England, or rather the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that made it up, was pagan once upon a time, after all, and I have friends who would be very comfortable if it was again. But Christianity is about a relationship with a God you believe in. When I was curate in Weybridge, the church in Addlestone closed, and became a mosque. I disagreed

with the last vicar (who went to his eternal reward last year) when he expressed satisfaction that the building would continue to be used for worship, as though it didn't matter which religion it was devoted to, because I think the Christian and Muslim conceptions of God are very different. But I wasn't bothered that changing a church to a mosque meant Addlestone had become a bit less 'British' as a result, because national identity isn't the point of a church building. The point is Jesus Christ and what he means.

I have said before how reluctant I am to be very explicitly political, as I believe it's not the Church's role; but these reflections were prompted by Reform UK's new policies, announced just as I was thinking about what to write, to 'restore Britain's Christian heritage' by stopping churches being converted to other uses (including as places of worship for other faiths) and promoting a 'patriotic curriculum' in schools with Christianity 'at the centre'. True to my intentions, I'm not going to talk about that in any detail, but try to focus on a deeper principle, which is this: Christianity is not about nationhood, or any other sort of earthly identity. It doesn't exist to provide the 'glue' for our earthly societies, though it may do that in the same way any religious tradition might. Instead, because the Cross changes our relationship with God, it changes our relationship with other human beings: when the earliest believers reacted to the death and resurrection of Jesus, they created an entirely new, trans-national community of people who had come to see themselves as sinners on whom God had had mercy, and were therefore brought into solidarity with all living things. That community was called the Church. Christ is not culture, Christ is not heritage, Christ is salvation, and God is not a banner for our earthly politics.

James Rector

St John's Church, Farncombe

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March 8th – April 12th – May 10th
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www.farncombe.org.uk

!!!!!! The Villager !!!!!!

This paper you are reading is one of the things that pleases me most about the mission of St John's Church. When I arrived in Farncombe I was delighted to find the church had a newsletter that wasn't just available to the congregation and anyone who happened to come in through the door but went more widely around the community. That was a good thing for a parish church to be doing, I thought. There wouldn't be 'scoops' as such, but it fell under the heading of general community-building, of helping Farncombe understand itself, and that was very worthwhile indeed.

The Villager was put together by literal cut-and-paste technique until David Holt took over as editor and brought his professional abilities as a graphic designer to bear. This meant the paper has always looked

very good, even when it had to shrink down to a few pages for a Pandemic Edition during the first lockdown. David has handled much of the advertising and distribution too.

Now, after being at the centre of The Villager for many years, David has decided the time has come to step aside – by the end of the year at any rate. We can share some of the jobs around the congregation, but there's nobody immediately to hand who has the same design skills – so I mention it now, giving plenty of time perhaps for someone reading to think whether this is something they might be able to give to the community. We really want The Farncombe Villager to continue doing its work into 2027 and beyond – **does Farncombe want that too?**

James

GUILFEST RETURNS FOR 2026

We are so excited to be bringing GuilFest back to Stoke Park, Guildford again for 2026. It's an absolute privilege to have the unbelievable Sophie Ellis-Bextor headlining GuilFest on Saturday 4th July and legendary Scottish band The Proclaimers Headlining on Sunday 5th July. We're hoping you can all join us for the party of all parties!

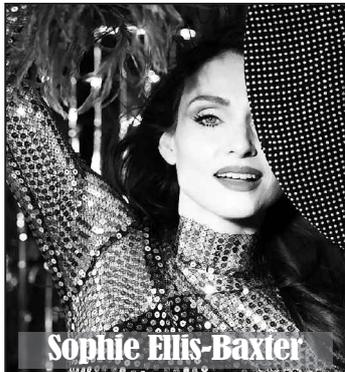
Super Early Bird tickets are available NOW! From our website, Super Early Bird tickets are limited in numbers and will only be available until they run out. These tickets do sell fast so grab your tickets while you can at the cheapest prices that they will be. Payment plans options are available.

Saturday's lineup will include: Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Rudimental, The Lottery Winners, ABC, Dutty Moonshine Big Band, Tiffany, Echobelly, Elvana, Old Time Sailors, Uncle Funks Disco Inferno, Phats and Small,

Rick Parfitt Jnr, Daft Funk Live, Tankus, Bob Marley Revival and The Rock Choir.

Sunday's lineup will include: The Proclaimers, Kula Shaker, Kid Creole & The Coconuts, Haircut 100, Heather Small, T'Pau, The Bootleg Beatles, Hugh Cornwell, The South, The Smyths, Letz Zep, The Dolly Show, Gavin Thomas and The Rock Choir.

In addition to the 7 separate stages of music performing many genres, fashions and sounds, there will be: The Comedy Tent, Dance Tent, Art & Craft Village with Brilliant Workshops, Street Theatre, Delicious World Cuisine, Huge Beer Tent, Literary Tent with Interesting Talks, Cocktail Bar, Singing, Dancing & Drumming Workshops and Sessions, Games Tent, Kids Area, Bushcrafts and Open Mic Sessions.



Sophie Ellis-Bextor



The Bootleg Beatles



The Dolly Show



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NEWS FROM FARNCOMBE INITIATIVE



Local Elections? Confused?

What's all this about "Unitary Authorities"? Those in the know seem to know but if, like me, you are confused, read on.

As our national government reorganises as locally, Surrey will split into two separate authorities: West Surrey and East Surrey. Over here in the west, six boroughs, like Waverley, will be swept up into the new West Surrey. It's all due to be set in stone in May 2027. So why are we voting now?

Well, there is to be a 'shadow council' that will oversee the change. The old council will keep things ticking over in the meantime until the new one takes over.

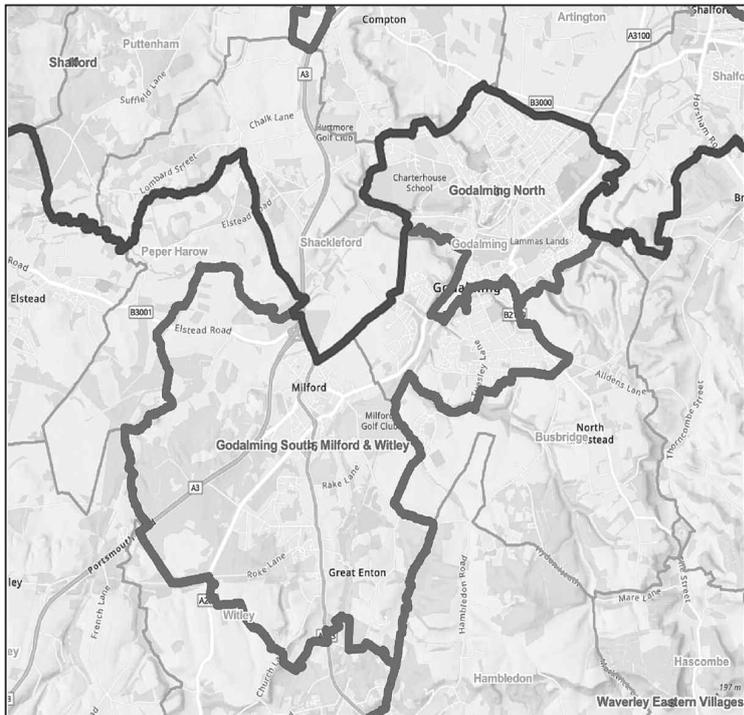
So far so good. Perhaps you knew all of that. But, when I vote this May, I'm wondering how many votes I will get, and which area the new councillors will represent? These questions don't seem easy to find answers for.

It turns out that the voting districts for Godalming will be the same as they were for the previous County Council. Godalming is split into two. Here, in Farncombe, we are in Godalming North. The map on the right shows the boundaries.

At the moment we have one county councillor but, under the new arrangement we get two. So, in the West Surrey elections in May, we will each have two votes.

That sounds good at first, but then I remembered that, come May 2027, the five borough councillors who currently represent Binscombe, Charterhouse, Farncombe and Catteshall will be no more. So, we will have two councillors instead of six. Of course,

while West Surrey is only half the size of Surrey it's a lot bigger than Waverley. Am I getting 'short changed' or 'value for money'? Maths was never my strongest point at school. Finally, it's worth noting that town and parish councils will remain in place so there will still be a Godalming and Farncombe Town Council looking after local needs like green spaces and community facilities. Now all I need to do is decide who to vote for. **Martyn**



Farncombe local Street Improvement Plan

In the Autumn of 2024 Surrey County Council carried out a survey among local people in Farncombe about what local street improvements they would like to see. This was one of a number of similar consultations across the county. Their comments were recorded on an interactive map. Over 800 people took part in this survey which was incorporated into what is called the Early Engagement Report and formed the basis of feasibility design proposals.

Draft proposals have been drawn up based on this and have been used for the Stage 2 Informal Engagement. This opened on February 2nd and two drop-in sessions have been held in St John's Church on Saturday 14th and Thursday 19th of February, allowing local residents to view the plans and to discuss them with officers from Surrey C.C. who were present on both occasions.

The response was very encouraging with over 200 people estimated to have attended the two sessions. The draft plans can be viewed on Facebook:

farncombelsi.commonplace.is
Here residents can post their comments on the overall scheme and on individual points of the draft proposal. Their comments will appear anonymously.

To ensure the survey is open to all, Surrey C.C. can also be contacted: By email: localstreetimprovements@surreycc.gov.uk
By phone: 032002001003 to request it in a different format.

The survey is open until March 15, so don't miss this opportunity to make your views known!

What happens next? Taking into feedback received, preliminary designs will be developed and presented for comment before finalisation.

Then, construction funding will have to be applied for. It should be noted that this will be distinct from funding for ongoing maintenance projects such as potholes.

A Surrey C.C. officer said it is hoped work could begin in 2027/8. **John Petty**

GET PLANNING & PLANTING FOR THE FARNCOMBE VILLAGE SHOW

St JOHN'S CHURCH ROOM - SATURDAY 22nd AUGUST 2pm JUDGING 11am PRIZE GIVING 3.30pm

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BYGONE FARNCOMBE

Jack Phillips of the Titanic

by **Clive Downes**



John George Phillips, better known as Jack, was born in Farncombe on 11th April 1887. His parents were Anne and George Alfred Phillips and they were in their mid-forties when John was born, previously having two daughters, Ethel and Elsie, both of whom were in their teens when John arrived. George Phillips was the manager of a branch of "Gammons" in Farncombe Street (there was also a shop in Godalming High Street) almost opposite what was Station Garage. The shop building has now been demolished.

As a very young boy, Jack had a private education at a house in Hare Lane, run by Miss Fanny Stedman and then sometime around 1893 went to school at St John's Street, next to Farncombe church. He later moved on to the Godalming Grammar school, which is now the private bar of the Fox and Finch public house at the top of Mill Lane, just off Godalming High Street.

Upon leaving school he obtained employment as a telegraphist at Godalming Post Office, just a short distance from the "Pepperpot", but in February 1906 he transferred

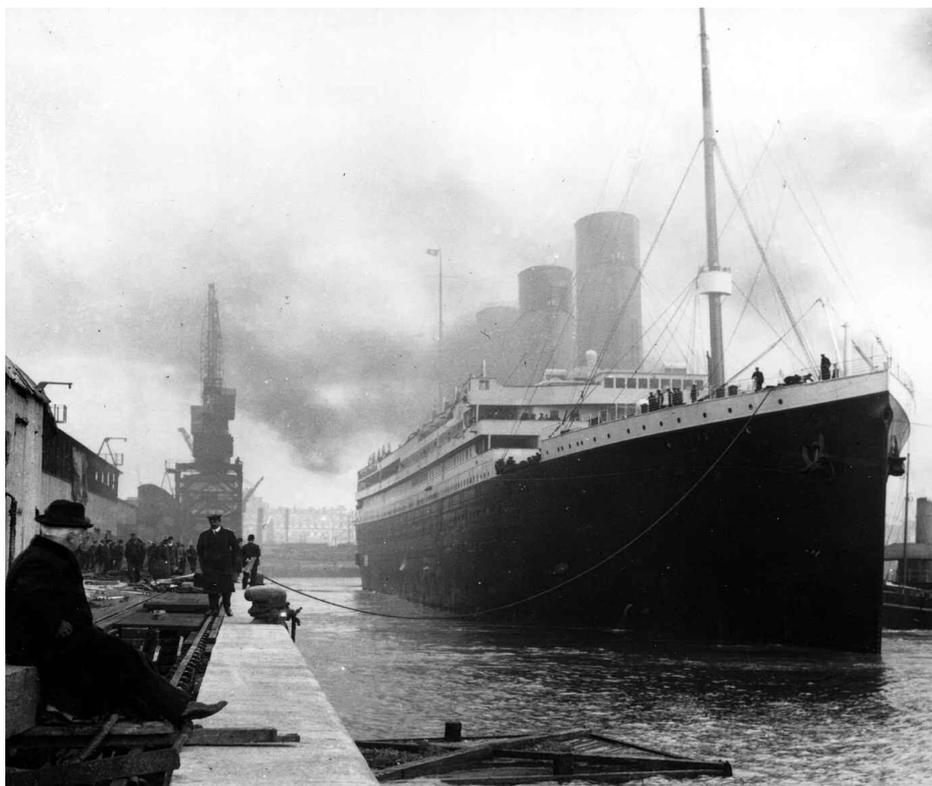
to "The Marconi International Communication Company Ltd" at Seaforth, north of Liverpool, with the intention of becoming a radio operator and travelling the world. In August 1906 he boarded the White Star liner, the "Tutonic", and later onto Cunard's "Campania" and then the "Corsican" and one or two others, until he received a posting at Marconi's powerful new land station of Clifden, County Galway on the west coast of Ireland, with only a very small town a few miles away.

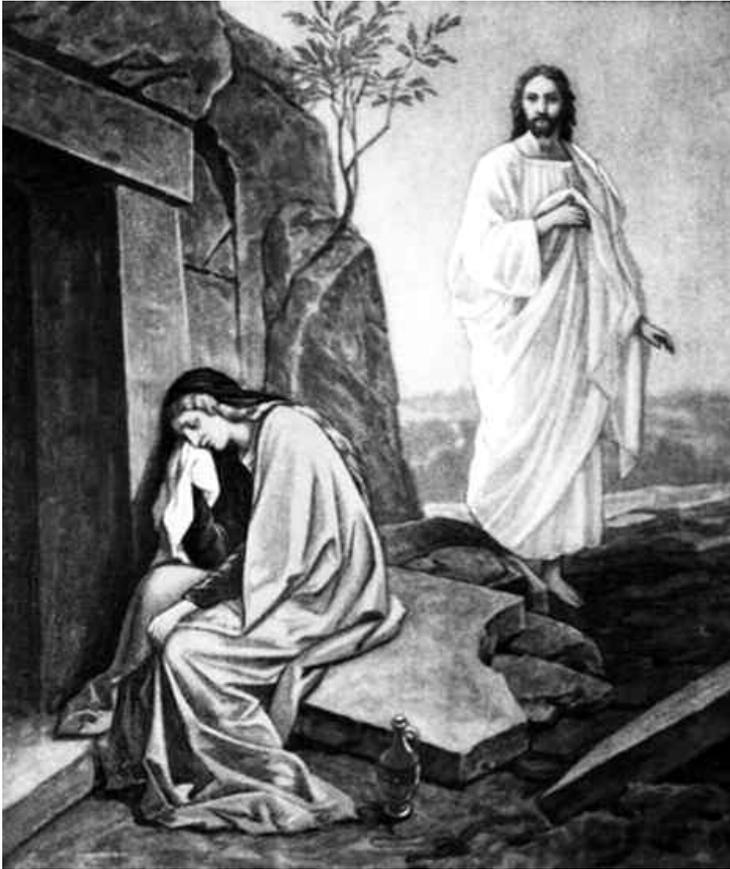
Although he enjoyed the work, there was little else for him to do and in time, Jack became bored. After about three years, in July 1911 he returned to the sea aboard the "White Star" liner, the "Adriatic". In April of 1912, he wrote home to inform his family that he was to become the Chief Wireless Operator on the maiden voyage of the "Titanic" under the Captain E.J. Smith. Jack Phillips and his junior operator, Harold Bride, tested the equipment by way of Liverpool and Malin Head, which were wireless stations, until the "Titanic" docked briefly at Southampton ready

for the ship's departure at noon on 10th April to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Jack and Harold Bride were not employed by the shipping line, but by Marconi, and they were both kept very busy, not only for shipping messages, but also for many wealthy passengers.

Famously, on 15th April 1912, the vessel hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic, and with the knowledge that they were sinking, Phillips was ordered to radio for assistance, while lifeboats were being lowered, and Bride put a lifebelt on him. Phillips continued to radio for help until the Captain ordered the radio room to be abandoned. Bride was saved, but Jack Phillips died in the cold, icy sea.

A memorial garden, designed by Gertrude Jekyll, with a cloister designed by the local architect Thackeray Turner, was dedicated to the memory of John George Phillips, and is situated by the parish church in Godalming. There is also a brass to his memory in the parish church in Farncombe where he sang in the choir. The graves of his parents are in the Nightingale Cemetery on the corner of Nightingale Road and Deanery Road and can be seen clearly, close to the railings.





Jesus is alive The Easter story

Towards the end of His life Jesus met together with His best friends. He told them many things about Himself and how much He loved and cared for them. Then they had a meal together. Later, after Jesus had prayed in a garden called Gethsemane, some soldiers came to take him away. He was brought before the important people in the temple. Because they hated Jesus they got the Roman governor, Pilate, to have Jesus sentenced to die. And on the hill called Calvary, just outside the city wall, Jesus died. Two days later, just as it was getting light, some of Jesus' friends came with spices and clean linen clothes for the body. "I wonder how we will roll that great stone away?" one of them asked as they got nearer the tomb. Imagine their amazement when they got to the tomb to find that the stone had already been rolled away! Inside the tomb, lighting up the darkness with his shining face and clothes, sat an angel. "Jesus has risen!" he said, "Go and tell his disciples." With great joy the friends rushed off to tell the good news. Meanwhile, Mary, one of Jesus' special friends, had gone to the tomb. She saw that the stone was rolled away and the tomb empty. She ran to tell Peter and they went back together. Tears filled her eyes as she walked slowly by the tomb. "Why are you crying?" said a man who she thought was the gardener. She told him about Jesus. "Mary," said the man. To her surprise and joy she saw that it was Jesus Himself!

Jesus has risen and lives forever!



COFFEE MORNINGS at ST JOHN'S

*all are welcome in the
Church Room*
Saturdays 10am -12noon
7th March 21st March
4th April 18th April 2nd May

Conservatoire Concerts

Spring is beckoning and music is in the air..... Just a quick reminder about our two March concerts

The first one is on Saturday 7th March with pianist Daphne Delicata and violist Iona Azzopardi. Both musicians are studying at Cambridge University and they have prepared a versatile and romantic programme for us all.

Booking for this concert is now open on our website
www.conservatoireconcerts.org.uk

The second concert, on Saturday 28th March features cellist Daniel Brandon who is currently studying in Germany. Daniel will be accompanied by pianist Julian Milford. Save the date for this one.
Booking will open shortly.

Looking forward to seeing you soon!



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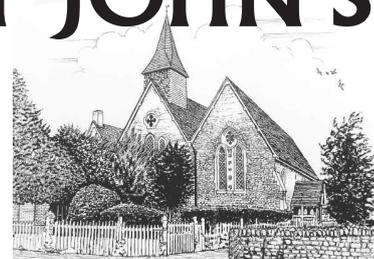
- 8am Holy Eucharist
- 8.45am Roman Catholic Mass
- 10am 1st Sunday in the month, Sunday Space
Other Sundays, Parish Eucharist
- 6.30pm 1st Sunday in the month, Sung Eucharist
- 7.30pm 2nd Sunday in the month, Compline over Zoom

TUESDAY

10.30am Holy Eucharist

FRIDAY

11.45am Last Friday in the month,
Toddler Praise



For all other information see our website: www.farncombe.org.uk

There is a Roman Catholic Mass every Sunday morning at St John's starting at 8.45am *all are welcome*

NEWS FROM LOSELEY



**19th June - 21st June
Summer Craft Show**

**17th July - 19th July
Salvage Show**

**07th August - 09th August
Live @ Loseley**

three unforgettable summer nights
at Loseley Park

**11th September - 13th September
Richmond Dog Show**

**The House & Gardens will open to the public on Sunday 3rd May – 10.30-4.30
Then Sundays to Thursdays until the end of August**

PARISH REGISTER

In Memoriam

Elizabeth Wilson Dot Richardson

Baptisms

Bailey Parkes Jea-Nyaiko Rabenjamina

STAMPS FOR CHARITY

Alan Hammond writes: 'I will have made up 6 boxes of stamps this year for the Mother's Union (the same as last year) mainly thanks to the generosity of Guilford stamp club. Could readers please save and put any foreign and British stamps and any postcards in the box in the Narthex at St John's for charity.'



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Mothers' UNION

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CELEBRATE 150/135 YEARS

On February 14th Mothers Union celebrated it being 150 years old worldwide and 135 years old in Farncombe. The celebration started with a service in church where the Mayor Penny Rivers and her consult Paul Rivers, MU Diocesan President Sylvia Taylor, members locally and from other branches joined us. It was good to be joined by friends, family, members who have moved away, and families of now deceased members. During the service our new branch leader Liz Esdon was commissioned. Also during the service we remembered the work of the Mothers Union both at home and abroad and remembered the events of the past.

After the service we had refreshments in the Room and we were able to look at memorabilia including a copy of the school log which showed that pupils were given the afternoon off so the Mothers' Union could be formed in Farncombe. Farncombe branch has now joined with Godalming branch and a warm welcome awaits you if you would like to come to our meetings.

Marjorie



The cake is being cut by Liz Esdon new branch leader and Sylvia Taylor Diocesan President



Open to God Open to each other Open to all SUNDAY SPACE

The informal Sunday Space service is at 10am on the 1st March and 3rd May and covers various topics

PRAYER FOR FARNCOMBE

A small group of pray-ers gather on the second Thursday of the month at 9am in the Lady Chapel to pray for Farncombe, its people, organisations, schools and businesses. Our next meetings are 12th March, 9th April and 14th May all 9am- 9.40 in the Lady Chapel. New members to our group are welcome, and if you have a concern that you would like us to include in our prayers, please tell us by emailing prayers@farncombe.org.uk.

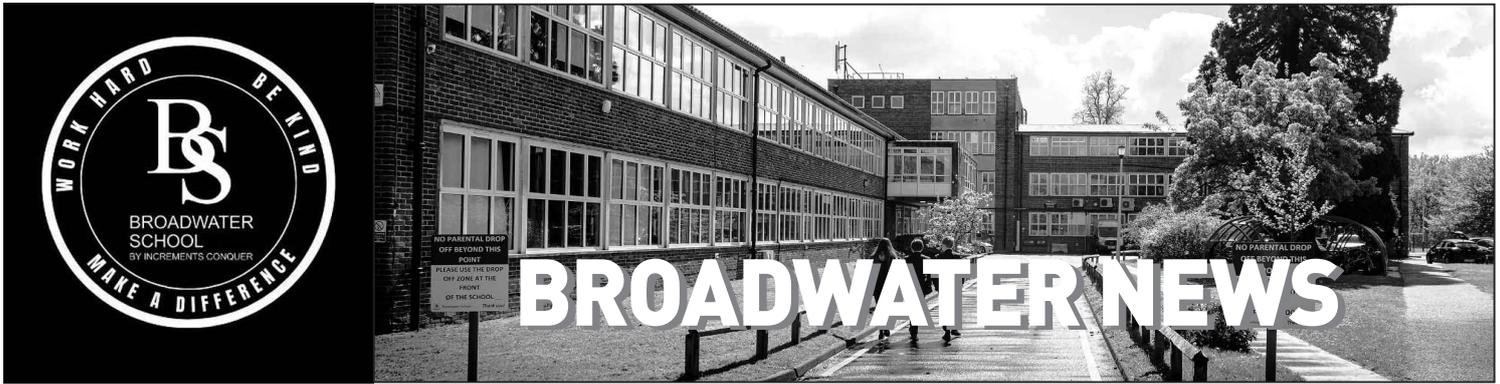


The Bible Studies group meet on the 5th and 19th March, 7.30 - 9.00. Venues tbc. We are reading the letter of James.

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STUDENTS VISIT FUTURES FESTIVAL AT PINEWOOD STUDIOS



Our Film Studies students had an unforgettable time at the Futures Festival at Pinewood Studios! They met employers and industry professionals, joined hands-on workshops, and attended inspiring panels and talks.

Set within the iconic home of super spies, superheroes and galaxies far, far away, students enjoyed a behind-the-scenes look at the huge range of careers in the screen industry.

They even got the chance to chat with Deadpool, get up close with Star Wars characters, act out scenes from some of their favourite movies and a visit to 007 stage to see behind the scenes stunts was a highlight of the day!

A truly inspiring day for our future filmmakers!

A BIT OF RAIN DIDN'T STOP OUR AMAZING YEAR 7

Last year, Broadwater School proudly planted 750 hedgerow trees – one for every student. This team, our new Year 7 cohort put on their wellies and raincoats to continue this fantastic tradition.

As part of Surrey County Council's 2030 initiative to plant 1.2 million trees and support the county's long-term climate strategy, our students planted 150 new hedgerow trees, representing our Year 7 community.

We are delighted to play our part in helping to create a greener future for Surrey.



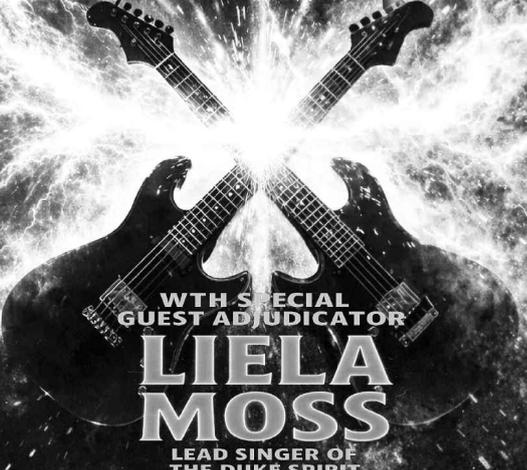
ECO HEROES IN ACTION!



A huge well done to some of our Eco Club members who gave up their Saturday – and braved the wind and rain – to take part in an organised beach clean at Southsea in Portsmouth.

Their enthusiasm and teamwork were brilliant to see! Together they filled around four full bin bags of litter and even uncovered unusual objects along the way. We're incredibly proud of their commitment to helping MAKE A DIFFERENCE to protect our coastline and our planet.

BATTLE OF THE BANDS 2026



WITH SPECIAL GUEST ADJUDICATOR
LIELA MOSS
LEAD SINGER OF THE DUKE SPIRIT

THURSDAY 19 MARCH
DOORS OPEN 7.15PM
SHOW STARTS 7.30PM
LIVE AT THE BEN TRAVERS THEATRE



CHARTERHOUSE Entrance free with ticket

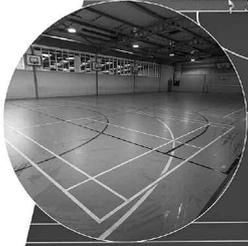
CHARTERHOUSE CONCERTS



Charterhouse Present
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LUNCHTIME CONCERT
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ST JOHN'S CHURCH FARNCOMBE
THURS 30th APRIL at 1.00pm
All donations to the Cheryl King Trust and St John's Church

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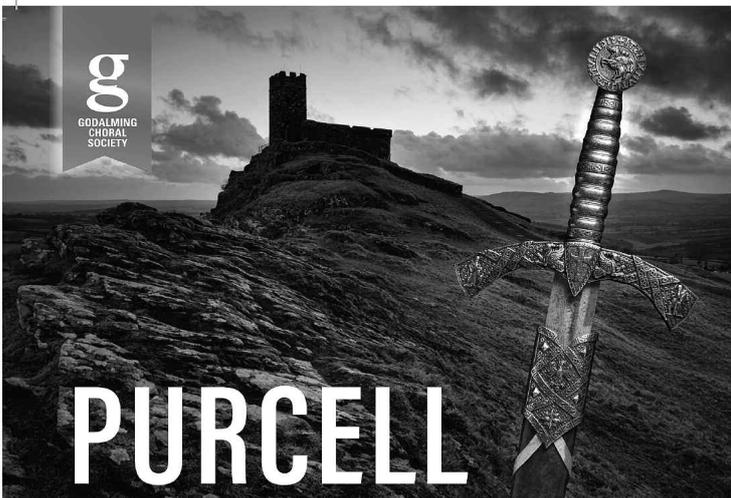


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PURCELL

KING ARTHUR

Saturday
18 April 2026
at 7:30PM

St John's Church
Farncombe, GU7 3EJ

Musical Director : George de Voil

Tickets £20 (free for under 18s)
available from Record Corner, Pound Lane, Godalming (CASH ONLY),
www.godalmingchoral.org.uk,
tickets@godalmingchoral.org.uk,
or at the door

Registered Charity No: 254800

KING ARTHUR

PURCELL'S MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH

An exciting new venture for Godalming Choral Society: directed by George de Voil, the choir will present the rarely-performed semi-opera King Arthur by Henry Purcell in St John's Church Farncombe on Saturday 18th April.

Conductor George de Voil comments

"We invite you to enter the world of Saxons vs Britons in our performance of this dramatic masterpiece. Pick a side... and follow the exploits of kings, magicians and evil spirits through the beautiful verse of John Dryden and the peerless music of Henry Purcell, one of our nation's most treasured composers. This is a work I fell in love with over twenty years ago performing it as a boy treble, and I am thrilled to bring its vivid musical colours, quirky and intriguing storyline, and larger-than-life characters to life with an orchestra of baroque trumpets, oboes, harpsichord and strings. They will be complemented with a star team of five professional soloists. This is a rare and unusual treat for our lovely Godalming audience, and I hope you will join us!"

George is a fantastic young conductor and organist, his evensong recently heard on BBC Radio3.

Come and be enchanted on Saturday 18th April in the Gothic (but comfortable) setting of Farncombe church!

Tickets, £20 but free for under 18s, are available from Record Corner, Pound Lane, Godalming, from www.godalmingchoral.org.uk or at the door.



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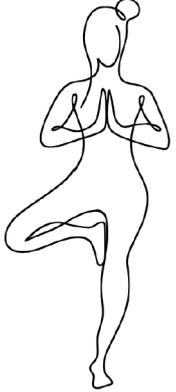



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Slimming World News

NO JABS, JUST THE JOY OF COMMUNITY: SOPHIE'S SLIMMING WORLD JOURNEY GOES BEYOND THE SCALES



Sophie Lee from Cranleigh, Surrey, lost 4stone 7pounds after swapping short-term solutions for lifelong change. Sophie says from the moment she joined her local Slimming World group, she instantly felt understood, lost more weight than she believed possible and gained benefits which went beyond the scales.

Sophie's story reflects new research showing members aged 18-34 who attend Slimming World groups are losing weight, gaining confidence, improving their physical and mental health and creating healthy lifelong habits.

She says: "I worried I wouldn't fit in, but I couldn't have been more wrong. Slimming World has given me so much more than weight loss. As well as reaching my target weight, losing 4 stone 7lbs I've built confidence and finally feel in control. Crucially, I've lost weight without missing out on life. I wasn't happy with the way I looked. I used to compare myself to others, people smaller than me. I felt disgusting and I knew I had to change. I hated the lack of confidence I had in myself."

Mentally and physically, I've never felt better. I go out confidently and don't worry that people may be judging me, staring at me or making comments. I love having my picture taken and feel confident in a bathroom selfie!

Going to my Slimming World group each week has been a lifeline for me – I feel motivated, healthier and happier. It felt like such a safe space – there was absolutely no judgement – and I learned to be kinder to myself. It's taught me how to make better and more informed choices knowing I can eat well. I'm so glad I found Slimming World in my 30's. Being part of a group where I feel truly supported changes everything. I've lost over 4.5 stone but more

importantly, I've gained confidence, better mental health and a sense of belonging I didn't know I needed. No matter your age, there are people you'll click with – I only wish I'd joined sooner."

Slimming World's unique approach combines a flexible, science-backed healthy eating plan with weekly group support. Members gain a deeper understanding of their personal barriers to weight loss and learn practical strategies to make lasting changes. Through shared experiences and encouragement, members are supported to navigate the ups and downs of weight loss while feeling part of an uplifting community.

Younger adults in Cranleigh are transforming their lives, says Vikki, who runs Slimming World groups in the area. Vikki says: "We're seeing incredible transformations – not just in weight loss, but in confidence and overall wellbeing. In a world dominated by screens and remote working, our weekly face-to-face groups feel like a breath of fresh air. This research confirms what we see every week in Slimming World groups across the UK and Ireland: our younger members are thriving. Whether they're new parents who've found friendship and support or professionals who've built confidence and resilience – they're finding real, human connection is powerful."

"When you're losing weight alongside others, the accountability and commitment you share, makes all the difference – it's what drives real, sustainable success. Slimming World doesn't just help people to lose weight – our members gain control, build confidence, improve their physical and mental health and find strength in a supportive community."

Vikki adds: "We spoke to more than 3,000 members aged 18-34 last January and Sophie's story mirrors what they told us – that when you join a Slimming World group, you step into a space where you're supported, encouraged and understood. Week by week, members turn small changes around food, drink and activity into lasting habits. The research speaks for itself – the vast majority (92 per cent) of the members questioned say they now feel part of a supportive community, 93 per cent feel supported to change their mindset around food and 72 per cent say they'd recommend Slimming World to someone their age.

"For more than 55 years, we've helped people of all ages lose weight and change their lives and that includes our younger members. They're not just following a plan; they're gaining a lifelong toolkit for healthy living."

Sophie



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This Month's Mystery Photo is?



The answer is on page 19

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SPRING GARDENING

As the days get longer, plants start to show signs of early growth and enjoy the lighter days, although it has been rather wet so far for any sunbathing! After the rain it will be useful to dig over the ground and add some compost before planting as the earth will be compacted by the amount of moisture. Try to make a plan of how you will be growing your various plants as some need special conditions.

If you have some new fruit bushes, make sure there is enough space for them to develop and that they will get enough light. It may be useful to check how accessible they will be when it comes to picking the crop! Strawberries will benefit from cloches once they start to grow as this protects them from rain and 'intruders'.

Seed potatoes need to be 'chitted' on a tray in a light position to encourage the new growth, they then have a good start in their growth and can settle in quickly to develop a good crop. We usually plant them in rows, but as they are underground it is useful to mark the rows with pegs in case we disturb them by mistake – once the leaves appear above ground things are a bit easier. Vegetable seeds such as cabbage can be sown in pots or trays to get them started, then planted out as small plants but check the instructions on the packets.

It is surprising how some plants seem to erupt into growth very suddenly so do keep an eye on all the areas of the garden and check for shrubs putting out extra growths which may get in the way of your other plants. Mowing is very weather-dependent and the grass will be growing quite rapidly when the weather gets warmer and drier so this could provide some regular gentle exercise.

Enjoy your garden John



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NEWS FROM THE TRACKS

On Saturday 13th June 2026, there will be another "steam-hauled" train passing through Farncombe in the "down" direction whilst, on this occasion, en route to Portsmouth Harbour.

This is a day trip organised by "Railway Touring Company" based in King's Lynn, Norfolk and runs from London Victoria to Portsmouth Harbour as "The Portsmouth Flyer". There is no mention at this stage of the steam locomotive which is likely to work this special service but the provisional timings suggest we should see it through Farncombe in the region of 10.15am. to 10.30am.'ish.

There will only be this one opportunity to witness the train at

Farncombe on that day, as the return journey is routed back to London via Winchester and Basingstoke.

You may have already heard about it from Richard Bennett, who I updated, when I popped in to "BL Vision" yesterday but I thought that you may wish to know as well, particularly if it presents an opportunity again for you to include another "Railway" related news item in a future edition of the "Farncombe Villager".

The 13th June 2026 is still some way off at present but we will keep you updated when we have further news of the steam locomotive booked to work the train on that date. **Robert Hills**

QUIZ TIME

1. What kind of fruit grows on a vine?
2. Which composer wrote '48 Preludes and Fugues'?
3. In which country is Stavanger?
4. From which country did Paddington Bear come?
5. What type of joint is the human hip?
6. Which special machine is used by a wood turner?
7. Which novel by Charles Dickens was based on his experiences of a northern industrial town?
8. 'Crested' and 'Willow' are varieties of which type of bird?
9. Which part of a calf's body is the first to come from the cow during birth?
10. What is the name of the Roman fort near the middle of Hadrian's Wall

Answers on page 19

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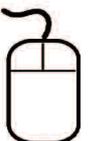
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Parkrun is a series of volunteer run, weekly, 5km timed runs around the world. In the UK they take place at 9am. Parkrun is open to everyone and it is safe and easy to take part. People of every ability are supported. Our Broadwater regulars range from babies in buggies to octogenarians; some complete the 5k in well under 20 mins, and some over an hour. All are welcome!



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The Mystery Photo is Wyatts Almshouses

THE SUMMER EDITION 2026 OF THE VILLAGER WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE 5th JUNE
COPY DEADLINE 20th MAY 2026

For articles and editorial please email: davidholtstudios@btconnect.com
If you would like details about advertising in The Villager please email David Preston at: djpreston@bcs.org.uk

- Answers: 1. Grapes 2. J S Bach 3. Norway 4. Peru 5. Ball and socket 6. Lathe
7. Hard Times 8. Tit 9. Front legs 10. Housesteads

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Here are top picks popular in 2026:

- Fitbit Charge 6 – A favourite all-rounder. Tracks steps, 24/7 heart rate, sleep quality and stress. Battery lasts up to 7 days; the free app shows clear trends and gentle move reminders. Great for beginners.
- Fitbit Inspire 3 – Lightweight and budget-friendly. Counts steps, monitors heart rate and basic sleep. Up to 10-day battery; ideal if you want minimal fuss.
- Apple Watch SE or Series 11 (for iPhone users) – Excellent heart

alerts like irregular rhythms or high/low rates, plus fall detection. Tracks activity and sleep; battery about 18–36 hours.

- Garmin Vivoactive 6 or Venu 3 – Accurate for walks, gardening, golf or light exercise. Long battery (5–14 days), recovery insights and GPS. Suits active lifestyles.

Pair it with free apps: the NHS App for GP links and prescriptions; Google Fit or Apple Health for phone-based steps; or Couch to 5K for gentle motivation.

Quick start tips: Begin with one feature (like steps). Wear consistently for trends. Local libraries often have free taster sessions.

These tools give peace of mind and small nudges to move more or rest better – many in their 50s say they feel more in control.

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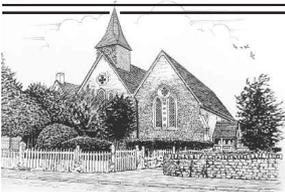
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