

The Mouthpiece

Culham's Newsletter
November 2025



Dates for your Diary

Fri 7 Nov	7.30pm	Ladies of Culham – Board Games	TBC
Sun 9 Nov	10.45am	Remembrance Service	St Paul's Church
Sun 9 Nov	11.00am	All Souls Service	St Paul's Church
Wed 12 Nov	2pm-5pm	Ladies of Culham and Kids	St Paul's Church
Wed 12 Nov	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting	Culham Pre-school/Nursery

Talking point by Revd Jo Allen

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Matthew 5:9

November nights draw in fast and the darkness settles in early. We love to come in from the cold, snuggle under a blanket with a cup of coffee and watch our favourite series. There's nothing like crisp winter nights. Soon, however, the atmosphere will change and the skies will be full of fireworks, brief, brilliant flashes of light.

Bonfire Night has its odd mix of celebration and caution. We gather round the flames to remember history, to enjoy a bit of spectacle, and to share hot chocolate with neighbours. For one night, darkness is pushed back, not by floodlights or technology, but by sparks, laughter and a sense of belonging. A single spark is enough to draw people together, and it's a reminder that light and warmth often start small.

I've been thinking about that as I follow the news from Palestine and Israel. I'm not sure where we will be by the time this comes to print, I hope at peace. The suffering caused by this war is beyond words. Ordinary families are caught in something vast and violent, and the images on our screens can leave us feeling helpless. But “Blessed are the peacemakers,” said Jesus, not the powerful or the perfect, but those who, in whatever way they can, bring calm where there is anger and hope where there is despair.

Jesus showed what that looks like in practice, bringing light into dark places, crossing boundaries, and loving those everyone else had written off. His way of peace wasn't loud or forceful, but steady and kind, like the glow of embers that refuse to go out.

Most of us can't change global politics, but we can tend the small fires of peace in our own patch: listening before judging, speaking kindly when it's easier to sneer, forgiving when it costs us something. Peace making begins close to home, at the kitchen table, in the village hall, at work, at school, even online.

Bonfire Night itself began with division, gunpowder and plots and the failure of understanding between neighbours. Centuries later, perhaps it can remind us to do better: to be sparks of peace, not sparks that ignite more conflict.

So as we wrap up warm and watch the fireworks this month, perhaps we can pause for a moment. Between the bangs and bursts of colour, look around at the faces beside us, friends, strangers, the whole muddle of humanity gathered for warmth and wonder.

May we each, in our own small way, be lights in the darkness and peacemakers where we are planted, following the one who first lit the way.

Rev'd Jo Allen

TEAM NEWS

ABBEY CONCERT MANAGERS REQUIRED- ARE YOU INTERESTED?

The demand for Events to be held in the Abbey has been steadily increasing this year and we need to increase the number of volunteer Concert Managers who play a vital part in helping to make the events run smoothly. This is an opportunity to find out more about what goes on behind the scenes, meeting interesting artists, hearing lovely music and being the welcoming face of the Abbey to the audience.

Training will be given. For further details please contact the Office Manager, Dorchester Abbey, Samantha Turner; sam@dorchester-abbey.org.uk and 01865 340007 (Mon, Wed and Fri mornings)
Events in the Abbey

Saturday 08th November - Illuminated Orchestra Present A Tribute to Hans Zimmer & Film Favourites. Two show times 17:45 (SOLD OUT) & 20:30. An immersive tribute to Hans Zimmer and cinema's most iconic music with a live chamber orchestra illuminated by light! 1 hour jam-packed including • Avatar• Dune• E.T• Gladiator• Harry Potter• Inception• Indiana Jones• Interstellar• James Bond• Jaws & many more! Tickets from £37+ www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/tribute-to-hans-zimmer-film-favourites-illuminated-dorchester-abbey-tickets-1364285307079?aff=oddtcreator

***Please note at time of going to print show one is already Sold Out – Tickets remain for the second show* For all ticket & event enquiries visit www.illuminatedorchestra.co.uk**

Sunday 09th November Abingdon Remembrance Concert 7pm Musicians of Abingdon School will perform a concert at Dorchester Abbey commemorating those lost in conflict. Performance of the Fauré Requiem by the Chapel Choir will be the central item in the programme but the concert will also include further choral items alongside reflective chamber music. All Welcome. Tickets: £6/£4 www.abingdon.org.uk/sports-and-leisure/performance/remembrance-concert-2/

Saturday 15 November 7pm Orchestra of St John's RAVEL AND STRAVINSKY with JENEBA KANNEH-MASON Ravel Mother Goose Suite

Ravel Piano concerto in G - Stravinsky Pulcinella complete - Jeneba Kanneh-Mason piano -Suzzie Vango soprano- Dominic Bevan tenor - Alex Jones bass - Orchestra of St John's Tickets £15 - £30 <https://www.osj.org.uk/osjevent/ravel-and-stravinsky-with-jeneba-kanneh-mason-7pm-at-dorchester-abbey/>

Free tickets available for NHS workers and for the disabled. Please email admin@osj.org.uk

Thursday 27 November 2025 - RAF Benson Charity Christmas Concert. Doors open 5:15pm, event 6:30pm -9pm. Join the Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment for an evening of festive music in the magnificent setting of Dorchester Abbey, in support of the RAF Benevolent Fund. This is a Free ticketed event fundraising for RAF Benevolent Fund. Donations can be made at the venue on the day via cash or card/electronic. Pre-registration is required Tickets <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/raf-benson/t-lnyvoqr>

For all above ticket links and for further information on all events including full listings for November, December & Christmas at the Abbey please visit: www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/whats-on/ #DorchesterAbbeyEvents

TEAM EVENTS

A Team Service for the 5th Sunday of November (30th November), Advent Sunday, will be held at the Abbey at 10:30am with Archdeacon David Tyler. At 5pm there will be a special service of watching and waiting in the Abbey which all are welcome to attend.

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, CULHAM

A service of remembrance

REMBRANCE SERVICE

9th November

10.45am



WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, CULHAM

A service of reflection and remembrance

ALL SOULS SERVICE

9th November

11am



Names of those we love who are no longer with us will be included in the service. To include yours, they can be added on the day or email Revd Jane Manser janeclaremanser@gmail.com

Culham Village Community WhatsApp Group

Please scan the QR code below to join now!



To engage with your local community, please join the **‘Culham Village Community’** WhatsApp group.

To scan the QR code above simply open up your ‘photo’ app and hover it over the QR code and join the relevant group that interests you.

Culham Village Defibrillator



The Culham Village Defibrillator is located at the Culham Village Nursery & Preschool on an external wall facing onto the Glebe.

Village News

Village website: www.culhamvillage.org.uk

Culham Parish Council – October 8th 2025 Summary of Meeting

The meeting was attended by five councillors, the Parish Clerk, and members of the public. The meeting opened at 7:35PM and started with public participation, continued with the Parish Councillor's report, the County Councillor's report, the Clerk's report, plus the general meeting.

Public Participation:

Several members of the public joined the meeting, primarily to discuss development plans relating to Europa School, plus access and road-safety issues relating to the site. Members of the public expressed concerns relating to the location of the proposed new building, plus discussed site safety and potential light pollution relating to plans due for planning submission this month. Concerns were noted by the Parish Council, who will follow up with the school.

Following the success of recent path-clearing work on Tollgate Road, a request was made regarding access to funds to purchase equipment for the village. The public discussion also included suggestions for an alternative location for school parking, plus presented ideas to use the school playing field as a safer route to school.

District Councillor's Report

Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye discussed the recent request by planning inspectors to South and Vale District Councils to withdraw their local housing plans, following disagreements over how many new homes were required. Sam also highlighted that garden waste permit holders were entitled to additional collections from 27 October to 7 November 2025.

Summary of County Councillor's Report

Cllr Robin Jones' report is available in full on the Parish Council website but included the following points.

On September 8th, local Green Party councillors hosted senior Oxfordshire County Council leaders — CEO Martin Reeves, CFO Lorna Baxter, and Adult Social Care Director Karen Fuller — for a tour of Wallingford, Benson, and nearby areas to highlight key local concerns such as road safety, flooding, and infrastructure pressures from projects like HIF1 and gravel extraction. The following day's Full Council meeting saw debate over motions on both opposition party funding and the ongoing crisis in Gaza, with the latter motion regrettably defeated despite strong support. The Councillor Priority Fund is now open for community group applications until November 2026, offering £10,000 over two years for projects that deliver local benefits. Meanwhile, long-awaited A4074 safety improvements have been completed between Berinsfield and Shillingford, reducing dangerous overtaking opportunities. Finally, residents are encouraged to stay engaged with the Council's developing OxRail 2040 strategy for the future of rail in Oxfordshire.

Parish Clerk's Report

The Clerk confirmed that the PC accounts were reconciled and a template for a village Emergency Plan was shared to the PC and is available on the website.

General meeting:

HIF1 Major Infrastructure Scheme - Public Consultation events

Culham was not included in the recently announced HIF1 public consultation process, and the PC will follow up to request a presence in future. However, members of the public are invited to events, the closest of which is in Sutton Courtenay Village Hall, Oct 22nd from 2:30 - 8PM.

Speed monitoring and Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS)

The first of the SIDS poles have now been installed, with the second one due soon. The PC will purchase the initial SIDS devices this month, for installation this Autumn.

Recreation Ground and Community Orchard:

The PC has received confirmation from the land owner that an unused area of the recreation ground can be used for a community orchard. The PC has contacted a local surveyor, to prepare a feasibility study for the recreation ground.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.

The next PC meeting is scheduled for 12th November, 19:30.

Further details and links to documents referenced in these notes can be found on the Culham Parish Council website.

<https://culham-pc.gov.uk/>



ARTISAN CHRISTMAS MARKET WEEKEND AT THE ABBEY

**SATURDAY 29TH & SUNDAY 30TH NOVEMBER
11AM - 6PM**



The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, OX14 4AF

Come join us for a range of activities
including bath bomb making, needle felting,
fairy gardens, poetry, aromatherapy and
singing, plus boardgames and bring biscuits
or cake for a sharing pot luck snack

Ladies of Culham and Kids

Sunday 16th
November 2-5pm
in St Paul's
Church
£5 per family

Ladies of Culham Next Dates:

4th July - perfume making with Gaynor

1st August - social walk

5th September - cyanotype printing with Jo

3rd October - sewing / sewing machines /
needle felting with Laura

7th November - board games

5th December - Wreath making

Thank you so much to everyone who's run
sessions this year, it's been successful so far..

We look forward to lots of workshops, shared
experiences and socializing as the year goes on.

To be added onto the LOC WhatsApp group, or
any questions, please email us

Email ladiesofculham@gmail.com

SODC District Councillor's Report – October 2025

Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye – Sandford & Wittenhams ward

Draft Local Development Plan

The Joint Local Plan has been recommended to be withdrawn by the government inspectors.

Many of you will know that the Council has been working on a new Joint Local Plan with Vale of the White Horse Council. This was submitted to the government Inspectors and there was an inquiry in public last spring.

These inspectors have written to the Council to say that they believe that the 'Duty to Co-operate' with Oxford City has not been fully demonstrated and have recommended the Council withdraws the whole of the Joint Plan. This plan has been in the making for over four years. All councillors received a briefing on the Council's options last week, none of which are very positive in my opinion.

I am deeply disappointed by this response by the Inspectors, and I know many residents will be too, as well as being concerned about the uncertainty in which this leaves the two Districts. Speculative planning applications for houses and industry will likely become more common – as demonstrated by the recent application at Chalgrove.

I am very supportive of the progressive and climate & nature friendly policies in the draft local plan. Oxford City had already had their own plan rejected over their housing needs assessment so this recommendation from the Inspectors seems bizarre and contradictory to me. The Councils have written back to them after taking legal advice, pointing out errors and inconsistencies, but has not made any decision yet on whether to withdraw the Plan or not.

Cost of living grants

Food and Warmth Grant, previously known as the Household Support Fund, is now open for applications to help residents who are struggling with the cost-of-living pressures. Voluntary and community organisations and town and parish councils can apply to support those who need help this winter. Organisations can apply for up to £2,000 if un-constituted, £2,000–£5,000 if constituted, and up to £10,000 for collaborations between three or more not-for-profit organisations led by a constituted group. The application window **closes at midday on 6 November 2025**. There are more details about the eligibility and how to apply on our website: [Food and Warmth Grant Scheme 2025/2026 - Now open - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

Cornerstone events

Cornerstone Arts Centre invites you to embrace the “eerie” this November with two spine-tingling performances. On Thursday 6 November, experience [Nosferatu on their big screen](#), as composer Chris Green brings Murnau's 1922 vampire classic to life with a haunting mix of live electronics and acoustic sounds.

Then, on Wednesday 12 November, [Bark Bark](#) blends puppetry, cameras, and diorama sets to tell a darkly funny, unsettling story from a dog's point of view. From acclaimed live-cinema company Buzzcut Productions (from Oxford), this Edinburgh Fringe hit is a 'must-see' (and I have already booked!)

Please email me for queries/if you need some assistance: Sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk

Other News



November News – Winter Wildlife

Bees in Winter

Heading into the cold winter months, we need to be even more considerate to our local bees than usual. In winter, honeybee queens remain in their hives with the exception of particularly sunny days. Bumblebee queens may also emerge from hibernation if prompted to by mild weather. Solitary bees will leave their nests once ready to mate. When bees do emerge during winter, they need to have access to nectar, or they risk dying of starvation. In order to help these pollinators survive the winter, we recommend you plant winter bloomers in your garden. These include single flowered Hellebores (the open face gives great access to pollen and nectar!), Crocuses (make sure to plant them in an area with lots of light so they fully open), Snowdrops and Aconites. Ivy also works well as a late nectar source as well as shelter from any harsh conditions. If gardening isn't your thing, you can make natural spaces bee friendly by creating twig and leaf piles (which can be as easy as not raking your garden when fallen leaves drop!) and caring for wayward queen bumblebees by either carefully relocating them to flowers or offering her a 1:1 sugar and water solution.

Tips for looking after our hedgehogs this winter



- Always move your burn piles before you light them as hedgehogs and frogs often use them to sleep in. This is, after-all, how hedgehogs were once upon a time cooked to be eaten! Thankfully it is now illegal to eat this endangered species.
- If you find a sick or injured hedgehog, or one that's up and about during the middle of the day, call either Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue centre on [07549322464](tel:07549322464) or [Tiggywinkle's wildlife hospital on 01844 292292](tel:01844292292).
- Leave some areas untouched! Messy log piles, long grass and fallen leaves are great for hibernating hedgehogs. Please leave a wild area in your garden so our hedgehogs can hibernate in peace - nice and cosy and safe.
- Put out a shallow dish of water or make sure your ponds are easy to get out of for hedgehogs, so they have water to drink. Sometimes hedgehogs come out of hibernation to eat and drink, especially in warmer weather, so even at this time of year, putting out water can help.
- Avoid using pesticides or herbicides as this will make hedgehogs very ill. Find out more at www.hedgehogrescue.org.uk

To find out more about Hedgehogs head over to the Wild Oxfordshire website at www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk and have a look in guidance for mammals.

Rhiannon Young – Wild Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Engagement Officer
<https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/>

Planning for safer communities

My work as Police & Crime Commissioner is not just about working alongside the police. There is collaboration with other blue light emergency services; each county has a body called a Combating Drugs Partnership which is a collection of police, NHS and public health and a huge overlap into the world of local councils, such as the work of Youth Offending Teams who will become involved when children are arrested by the police.



Although not a statutory consultee, there is a particular involvement in the planning process that many people are not aware of. Thames Valley Police employ Crime Prevention Advisors who are consulted on planning applications and major developments. Small changes, such as making sure parking areas are overlooked by neighbouring properties or that alleyways are well lit can help to both reduce crime and make people feel safer.

Sometimes this involves commenting on major projects such as the safety plans at the long awaited new stadium for Oxford United, or seeking to secure funding for policing when significant new housing developments add to local infrastructure needs.

Ultimately these planning decisions are for local councils to make, but it is important that local people have their say and that safety concerns and issues raised by the police are taken into account. This is why I have recently raised the potential risks of turning off many of the county's street lights. In a large number of our smaller villages, including mine, we do not have street lights, and no-one is arguing to introduce them, but even those of us who are happy without lighting in more rural locations will want to see well lit streets in our more urban areas. It was a significant win to ensure that parish and town councils will now have to agree to any proposals to turn off street lights as a result of public pressure.

The Mouthpiece

Please note that any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors. We accept contributions and advertisements in good faith and cannot be responsible for errors therein.

Please send contributions for the December 2025/January 2026 issue of The Mouthpiece by **November 15th** to:

generalmouthpiece@gmail.com

The Mouthpiece Team

We always welcome new volunteers to join the team whether you enjoy editing, marketing or distribution – please contact Anne or Gordon directly if you are interested in joining us



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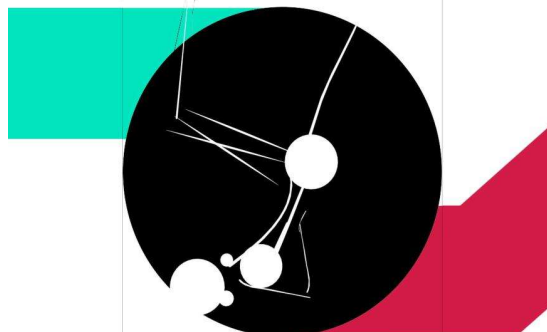
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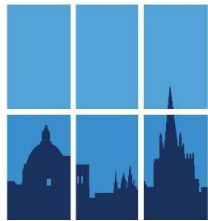
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