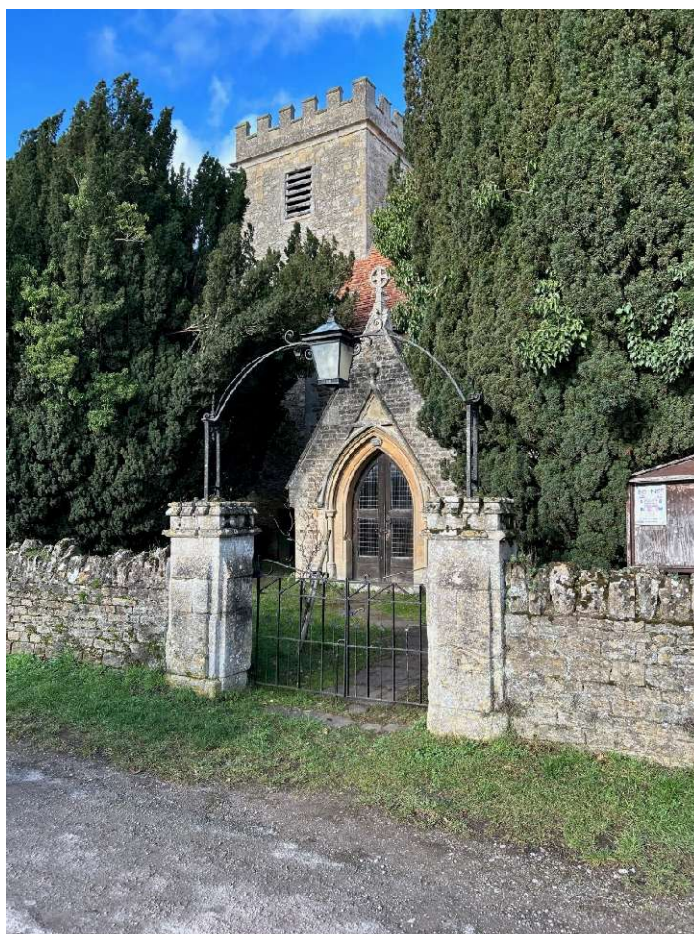


The Mouthpiece

Culham's Newsletter
February 2026



Dates for your Diary

Fri 6th Feb	7.30pm	Pot luck dinner	TBC
Wed 11th Feb	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting	TBC
Sun 22nd Feb	11am	Lent	St Paul's Church

Wishing a Happy New Year to all our readers

Talking Point by Revd Vicky Burton

Becoming More Contemplative

I hope that some of you already know this about me — that I'm very interested in listening to people and finding out about them. As my Grandma used to say, *"People matter."* Life is often about people, but I'm sorry, guys, because I want to be more interested in listening to the Lord than listening to you. I want to desire to know Him more — knowing who He is, what He's like, what He is thinking, saying, and communicating. And I think I need that more than I need to know other stuff.

So how about becoming more contemplative? When I think of biblical contemplation, I'm reminded that it's not about navel-gazing, nor is it about emptying my mind, or even about becoming more self-aware, though that may be a side effect. Nor is it about thinking more, or philosophising about things. Nor is it something I want to do because I'm middle-aged! Rather, Christ-like contemplation is, surely: *"Be still and know that I am God"* (Psalm 46:10). *"Renew a right spirit within me"* (Psalm 51:10). *Wow! God, you are totally awesome! (Me!).* It is surrendering myself unto Him. Absorbing Scripture; being in His presence; sitting at His feet like Martha and Lazarus's sister Mary; listening deeply; being attentive to the Lord.

Saint Augustine of Hippo, whose writings and theology have influenced the Church since the fifth century, wrote in his *Confessions*, *"You move us to delight in praising You; for You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You."*

But it's a struggle to be still. To rest in His presence. I find myself making excuses, thinking, *It's just the way I am.* There are so many distractions! Recently, I have been praying from Psalm 27: *"Teach me your ways, Lord."* And the same psalmist says, *"Wait on the Lord; be strong, take heart and wait..."* Having just rushed through Advent, I know I'm not good at waiting on the Lord.

Yet Augustine's phrase, *"Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You,"* rings true in my own experience. Have you ever been in the presence of God so as not to think about anything else at all, and indeed not to want to move on to any task or distraction? It is true rest (Hebrews 4:11). Oh, how Jesus must have longed to linger there with His Father, especially when so many things and people were yelling for His attention. In fact, Jesus must have spent hours and hours learning Scripture and being in His Father's presence before He even began His "ministry" at the age of 30.

Practising and forming good habits is perhaps out of fashion, but I remember when I was learning to play the cello. Some people put it all down to some sort of natural ability, but I wonder whether it was more about my deepest desire, because I spent hours and hours — firstly sitting at the piano and then later on with my cello — playing daily, alone and with others. Years of practice. I loved it because I desired it. Perhaps I need to ask God to give me more of a hunger and desire to be in His presence.

Think of the sunflower, whose nature it is to turn its head toward the light as it grows. Our Creator may have put that same habit into our hearts when He knit us together in the secret place — to habitually turn towards Him, the source of light and life. And yet I find myself again and again in the habit (well-practised, I'd say!) of turning away from His bright face towards other things. So pray with me, that our desire to spend time with Him will grow, that we may practise well these good habits, and so may we reflect His image more and more.

You might like to check out the Oxford Diocese website with regard to becoming a more Christ-like Church through being more contemplative, compassionate, and courageous for the sake of God's world.

Rev'd Vicky Burton

Team News

MOVING MUSIC Friday 06 Feb 11:30am & 2pm Two Performance Times 11:30am Pate's Grammar School musicians & 2pm Magdalen College School musicians. Moving Music concerts are offered by the charity Sound Resource, which promotes music for health and wellbeing. Instrumental & song performances by talented young musicians, with sing-along songs led by Hannah Davey. All are welcome, particularly people living with dementia, their family, friends and carers. Reserve places in advance for your preferred concert time: More information: www.soundresource.org.uk/whats-on/ Pay what you can at the door, guide £8
movingmusicconcerts@gmail.com 01865 251305

Saturday 07 February 6PM OSJ Music for Autism

Following the great success of this concert last year, another inclusive evening of inspirational music-making with Derek Paravicini and friends featuring young performers across the spectrum of neurodiversity. OSJ Music for Autism presents another inclusive concert, featuring amazing pianists Derek Paravicini, Ashleigh Turley and other young musicians across the spectrum of neurodiversity including five autistic Choristers from Litchfield cathedral. With Poppy McGhee violin and Hannah Davey soprano
Tickets £20 www.osj.org.uk

Saturday 14 February 7pm OSJ BEETHOVEN with RYAN WANG piano

Ryan Wang – BBC Young Musician of the Year 2024

The Overture of 1807 vividly shows Coriolanus's conflicted inner state through a fierce, rebellious theme in C minor representing the general and a tender, pleading theme in E-flat major for his mother. Piano Concerto No 1 of 1798 is a work of youthful energy and classical poise, demonstrating his developing Romantic style within the formal structure of the Classical period.

Symphony No 7, composed in 1812 at the peak of his powers, is an energetic, rhythmically driven masterpiece often described as the "Apotheosis of the Dance".

Tickets £17.50- £35 www.osj.org.uk

Saturday 28 February - LUMOS Experiences: A Vivaldi & Mozart Candlelight Experience

2 Performances: 1st Sitting: 5-6pm | 2nd Sitting 7-8pm

Entry: 1st sitting - Doors open at 4.15pm | 2nd sitting - Doors open at 6.30pm

Musical Theme: A Classical Vivaldi & Mozart Tribute

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This event is for eight year olds & above CONTACT Whatsapp For Any Questions # 07742686376 Tickets £20-£45 www.lumos-experiences.com

For all above ticket links and for further information on all events at the Abbey please visit:

www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/whats-on/ #DorchesterAbbeyEvents

Culham Village Community WhatsApp Group

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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

Summary of Culham Parish Council Meeting Held on December 10th 2025

Attendees: Denise, Chris, Caroline, Mike, Siobhan, Robin, Sam, Nacho

Apologies:

Members of public in attendance

Meeting Started 20:20, following Thames Water SESRO presentation

Shortened meeting due to Thames Water presentation

Culham Emergency Plan – Draft template was circulated during November to Councillors for their input with a reminder to ask residents for their input. Progress update from Councillors requested.

Diocese of Oxford and Community Orchard – The feasibility study for the recreation ground is due to start in December, with the Parish Council writing to the Diocese of Oxford to request an extended lease.

The Parish Council reviewed the latest HIF1 submission, raising concerns relating to light pollution and the proximity of the storage compound adjacent to Culham businesses and residential property.

The Parish Council approved a small increase in precept, accommodating increased insurance and village grounds-work fees.

Full reports can be found on the Culham Parish Council Website - <https://culham-pc.gov.uk/meetings/?view=all>

The meeting adjourned at 21:05.

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

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

Summary of Culham Parish Council Meeting Held on January 14th 2026

Attendees: Nacho (acting Chair), Mike (note taker), Sam, Caroline, Siobhan, Robin

Apologies: Denise, Chris

No members of public in attendance

Meeting Started 19:45 - after relocating from school to church

Nacho opened the meeting, starting with apologies from Denise and Chris

Summary of Parish Councillor's Report - Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye

Sam discussed the Joint Local Plan, confirming that the Council has written to the Planning Inspectors following the Minister's statement, asking them to resume hearings and continue the examination of the Joint Local Plan, with the aim of progressing it to adoption, which would help resolve the uncertainty the Plan has been facing.

Sam summarised a report regarding the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Commission. An interim report has been published, which focuses on the requirement for large numbers of homes without being clear what homes for whom, despite the fact we can see that private market homes are not solving the housing affordability crisis for those on lower incomes and young people.

Sam confirmed that Vale and South District councils donated working, but older laptops to SOFEA and Aspire, helping the 'getting people online' programme and supporting local people.

Summary of County Councillors Report - Robin

Robin has not updated his report since last month, as this covered November and December. In relation to SESRO (Abingdon Reservoir proposal), Robin confirmed that at the December 9 cabinet meeting a motion was passed requesting the OCC Leader to write to the Secretary of State seeking clarification on the reservoir emergency discharge process, and requesting that OCC be allocated appropriate resources to manage this before any consent is issued. Robin also confirmed that OCC have opposed the project in their response to the SESRO consultation. Robin also highlighted that OCC have adopted OxRail2040, confirming the Oxford Branch Line would be reopened, including stations at Cowley, Littlemore, Begbroke, Wantage and Grove and Ardley. Robin also emphasised that the public should use Fix My Street, to report potholes and other road/path infrastructure matters. The verge adjacent to the A415 falls into this category, as it is not a Culham Parish Council grass-cutting responsibility.

Clerk's Report - Nacho summarised the Clerk's report

General Meeting

Caroline has received feedback from Culham Science Center, confirming that they will review overnight lighting, aiming to switch off some parking space lights. The center has requested a copy of the Culham Dark Skies plan, which will be sent.

Community Orchard

Following an initial meeting regarding the pavilion feasibility study, the location of the community orchard has been confirmed adjacent to Tollgate Road in the Recreation Ground. Cllr Siobhan Sargeant will contact another village to discuss their community orchard plan.

Pavilion Feasibility Study

An initial meeting took place Dec 23rd 2025, to start the feasibility study process. LAPD Architects have a remit to provide an interim report early in 2026, with the goal of delivering a village update during the May Community Meeting.

SESRO - Abingdon Reservoir

The Parish Council and many residents have submitted feedback as part of the SESRO consultation process, with the deadline extended to Jan 23rd, following issues with the online form.

Grass Cutting

The village grass cutting tender is out, with a decision to be confirmed during the February Parish Council meeting.

SIDS - 20mph awareness camera on Tollgate Road

The Parish Council discussed the recently installed camera, which regularly shows cars driving over 20mph. The Parish Council will review the data capture from the SIDS later in the Spring.

Full reports can be found on the Culham Parish Council Website - <https://culham-pc.gov.uk/meetings/?view=all>

The meeting adjourned at 20:50.

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

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



Ladies of Culham Next Dates:

- 6th February – Pot luck dinner
- 6th March – singing (Anne)
- 10th April – paper flowers (Jo)
- 1st May – perfume making (Gaynor)
- 5th June – printing (Marianne)
- 3rd July – dyeing (Jo/Laura)
- 7th August – walk & social
- 4th September – decoupage (Marianne)
- 2nd October – McMillan Event / tiramisu (Melody)
- 6th November – pub quiz (Laura)
- 4th December – wreath making

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 – January 2026

Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye – Sandford & the Wittenhams

Sam.Casey-Rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk

New Leader for the Council

Cllr David Rouane has resigned after 4 years as leader of the Council and the new leader of the Libdem administration is Cllr Maggie Fillipova-Rivers. She has been in Cabinet since 2019. The whole council endorsed her nomination at the council meeting on 11th December; I think she will make a good leader who has relevant and wide-ranging experience and values, but it has to be said that the Libdems run the council and in the end, of course, it is their call as they have a majority. We now have a new chief Executive too, in Adrianna Partridge, whose appointment was also confirmed by all councillors. Adrianna has been deputy leader of the council for many years and having worked closely with her when I was on Cabinet, I have a great deal of confidence in her.

Also at the Council meeting, I seconded a motion on the Thames Water proposed reservoir, asking for an emergency plan to be made ahead of its construction. Currently the plan need only be made after the reservoir is ready to function. Many residents and businesses who would be affected by an emergency discharge from the reservoir feel this leaves them in a precarious position, not knowing what preparations they can or should make or where to go for support. The motion was passed unanimously. The leader of the council will now write to the Minister responsible requesting this.

Green Party councillor, Jo Robb asked two questions on how the council monitored actions taken by Capita as contractor on unpaid council tax bills and whether the Cabinet member was assured that actions were proportionate and fairly executed. The answers she received were detailed but not as reassuring as needed, but the questions did a good job of highlighting that the Council needs to constantly get assurance that vulnerable people are not being harassed, intimidated or being asked to pay unreasonable fees. Cllr Robb continues to follow up with the Cabinet member for further assurances.

I and my fellow Green Party Councillors supported a motion from Cllr Snowden (Con) on supporting the hospitality industry in the District as much as we are legally able to do, in this time of escalating costs. This motion was passed.

Information on the motions and questions in the meeting can be found on the website here: [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 11 December 2025, 6.00 pm](#)

SESRO consultation response

The Thames Water South-East Reservoir Option consultation is still open- **until the 13th of January**. South Oxfordshire District Council is compiling its response, but the council position remains the same in that it maintains its opposition to one huge reservoir as unjustified. I have read the draft response and have made some small suggested changes on the issues it presents for those living in our ward, including the emergency response plan (or lack of one).

Please consider responding yourselves here:

[South East Strategic Reservoir Option \(SESRO\) - Statutory Consultation 2025](#)

Waste Vehicles - disappointing decision

Despite careful and stringent scrutiny by the Joint Scrutiny committee, led by Green councillors, Kat Foxall (Vale) and Jo Robb (South), the Cabinet decided to go ahead with buying a new fleet of waste vehicles powered by fossil fuels. The committee was not clear how this decision had been reached, how it aligned with our carbon targets or why alternatives, such as leasing, were dismissed as not suitable.

Joint Local Plan update

Continuing the correspondence, the Council have written back to the Planning Inspectors requesting them to continue with the examination of the Joint Local Plan, after the Minister's statement. The Council have asked the Inspectors to resume the hearings and progress the Joint Local Plan through examination and, all being well, to adoption. The letter is published here: [LPA41 Councils' reply to the Inspectors' letter setting out how the Councils wish to proceed](#) . I hope this will mean the jeopardy that this Plan has been in will be settled and we can look forward to having it adopted this year.

Oxford-Cambridge Growth Commission

An interim report has been published - so far, so Oxcam growth deal. You can read it here: [Interim report of the Oxford Growth Commission](#) . The report still focuses on the requirement for large numbers of homes without being clear what homes for whom, despite the fact we can see that private market homes are not solving the housing affordability crisis for those on lower incomes and young people. Disappointingly, there is nothing new or innovative in the report at all.

Laptop Donation

Both Vale and South District councils donated the older laptops which still work but are no longer usable for South and Vale to SOFEA and Aspire for their 'getting people online' programme and supporting local people. They hoped to get many out in time for Christmas.

A new calendar for 2026 has been published with dates and campaign weeks that the council will campaign for or mark in some way.

[**South Oxfordshire 2025 Diversity and Social Campaign calendar**](#)

Other News



Since the last appearance in the Mouthpiece,

the local RSPB Local Group (Vale of White Horse) has enjoyed great talks on Turtle Doves (Dec) & Corncrakes (Jan). Just time to submit your Big Garden Birdwatch (23-25 Jan) results, and then our onward programme is as below. Membership for the remainder of the 25-26 season is now reduced to £10 for adults (whether or not you are an RSPB member), and free for under-16s. This gets you the talks and walks below, and a quarterly e-Newsletter. If you prefer to attend individual talks, you can do this as a non-member for £5 a time. You can join using the form on our website (under "Contacts"): www.rspb-vwh.org.uk.

* Mon 16th Feb: Filey International, Arrivals & Departures on the North Yorkshire coast (Mark Pearson) (7.30 pm Zoom only)

* Sun 22nd Feb: Radley Lakes walk

* Mon 16th Mar: Bringing a Boom to Middleton Lakes (Katie Thorpe) (7.30pm River Room, Sutton Courtenay) {and deadline for photo competition}

* Sun 29th Mar: College Lake walk

* Mon 20th Apr: Wildlife of the Chilterns (Jon Mason) (7.30pm River Room) (and photo competition results)

* Sun 26th Apr: Greenham Common walk

* Mon 18th May: AGM & Members' Evening (7.30pm River Room)

* Sun 31st May: Otmoor walk

Making best use of technology to help cut crime and catch criminals

Just before Christmas Thames Valley Police rolled out a live facial recognition operation in Oxford, aimed as much at explaining the technology to the public as well as catching criminals.

The use of live facial-recognition technology can bring great benefits to help cut crime and catch criminals.



Whilst the use of this technology is widely welcomed by most people, there are understandable concerns by some. I have worked closely with the police to ensure that all the necessary safeguards are put in place to protect privacy and the only people who should have anything to fear from the use of live facial-recognition are criminals seeking to target people and property in our community.

The system does not - and cannot - identify everyone that it sees, but instead is looking for those on a specific watchlist. Those who are either wanted by the police or have a warrant issued for them by the courts. Essentially it is very much like the screenlock that many of us will use on our mobile phones. It recognises the people the police are looking for, but simply doesn't recognise the rest of us.

It is important that the police explain the use of this tactic and ensure widespread consent from the public. The use of any technology just provides a tool to the police. It is still the men and women of Thames Valley Police who will use their professional judgment and put themselves in harm's way to protect the public.

The effectiveness of these operations will continually be evaluated, alongside other tactics the police use. With more officers in neighbourhood policing roles and overall crime falling, it remains important that the police are able to address the issues that matter most to the public. You can play your part by reporting any crimes or suspicious activity you see in your community on thamesvalley.police.uk or by calling 101.

On the first operation in Oxford eight arrests were made, several for domestic abuse offences. Dangerous people being taken off the streets to prevent crime.

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 March 2026 issue of The Mouthpiece by **February 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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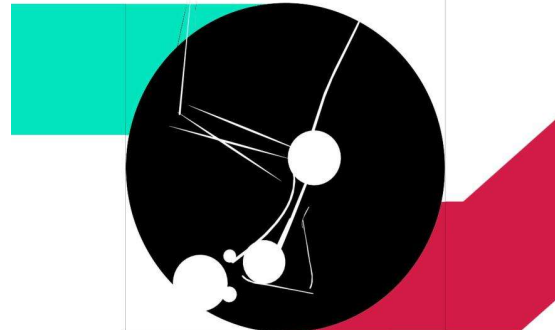
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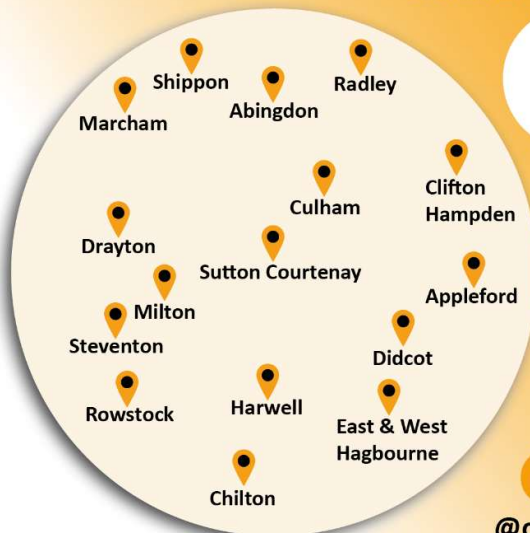


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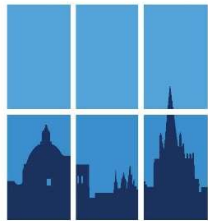
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Bar open Monday & Tuesday 14:00 to 22:00hrs
Wednesday to Friday 12:00 to 22:00hrs
Saturday 13:00 to 23:00hrs
Sunday 12:00 to 21:00hrs

Menu served (Please phone to book)

Monday & Tuesday 18:00 to 20:30hrs
Wednesday to Friday 12:00 to 14:30hrs
& 18:00 to 20:30hrs

Saturday 18:00 to 21:00hrs
Sunday Roast 12:00 to 14:00hrs

Phone 01235 528046

Email: info@railwayinnculham.co.uk

www.railwayinnculham.co.uk

WHO IS WHO IN CULHAM

CULHAM PARISH COUNCIL			
Chris Pritchard (Chair)	c.pritchard@culham-pc.gov.uk		
Caroline Baird	c.baird@culham-pc.gov.uk		
Sam Casey-Rerhaye	s.caseyrerhaye@culham-pc.gov.uk	3 The Burycroft, Culham	01235 635566
Nacho Gimenez	n.gimenez@culham-pc.gov.uk		
Mike Richmond-Cooper	m.richmondcooper@culham-pc.gov.uk		
Siobhan Sargeant	s.sergeant@culham-pc.gov.uk	(Yes – the email is misspelled!)	
CLERK TO PARISH COUNCIL			
Denise Corney	clerk@culham-pc.gov.uk		
DISTRICT COUNCILLOR			
Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Sam.Casey-Rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk	3 The Burycroft, Culham	01235 635566
COUNTY COUNCILLOR			
Robin Jones	robin.jones@oxfordshire.gov.uk		+44 7916 93681
ST PAUL'S CHURCH			
Associate Team Vicar:	Revd. Joanne Allen	revjoallen@gmail.com Dorchester Office: 01865 340007	
Ordained Local Minister	Revd. David Haylett	familyhaylett@yahoo.com	01865 407382
Hon. Treasurer:	Andrew Churchill Stone	21 High Street, Culham	01235533011
Churchwarden:	vacancy		
Hon. Secretary:	vacancy		
FRIENDS OF ST PAUL'S CHURCH			
Chairman:	Philip Owen	6 The Green, Culham	01235 555223
ST PAUL'S & CULHAM VILLAGE RE-ORDERING COMMTEE			
Philip Owen	stpaulsandculhamvillage@gmail.com	6 The Green, Culham	01235 555223
LADIES OF CULHAM (LOC)			
Laura Cooper	ladiesofculham@gmail.com	Also Jenny Williams, Jo Oughtred	
CULHAM POORS ALLOTMENT CHARITY			
Hon Secretary	Gordon Gibbs	32 High Street, Culham	01235 523679
POLICE			
Neighbourhood Policing Team		Non-emergency Phone Number	101
THE MOUTHPIECE	generalmouthpiece@gmail.com		
Editors:	Anne Churchill Stone	21 High Street, Culham	01235 533011
	Gordon & Joan Gibbs	32 High Street, Culham	01235 523679
Advertising Manager:	vacancy		
	advertmouthpiece@gmail.com		
Distribution:	Laura & Mike Cooper	9 Tollgate Road, Culham	