

£2.00, free to members



Barkham Village Residents' Association

VILLAGE NEWS

Issue 157 Autumn 2026

BUMPER 28 PAGE ISSUE
New Look, New Name, Drought Special,
Wildfires in the Coombes, Thames Water
project and much much more!



Our next social event is the ever popular Quiz Night

QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 24th October

7:00pm for 7:30pm

Supper included

LICENCED BAR

£18.00 per person

Tickets from Gill Powell

Email: social@barkham.org.uk

Editorial



Welcome to this bumper 28 page issue of our magazine and to the new look and name! After over 25 years we felt it was time for a change and that **Village News** is now a more relevant title. See Page 9 to find out more.

We have also updated our website

<https://barkham.org.uk>



and Facebook



Turning to events in our village, I hope you are enjoying the new road surface along Barkham Road.

The Thames Water project continues to make its way along Bearwood Road. Find out more on Page 10.

In his column on Page 8, Adrian Betteridge, one of our Ward Councillors updates us on the Thames Water project and also on the Solar Farm which seems to be going ahead, with completion expected in September 2027.

While I have been assured that the solar farm installation vehicles will have little impact on traffic, my main concern is that Evendons Lane will need to be closed for quite a while while the electrical cable is installed underground from the solar farm to the substation near the Olde Leathern Bottel on Barkham Road, with much of the route being along Evendons Lane.

So, Barkham Road and Evendons Lane will be closed at the same time, but at least Bearwood Road should be open by then!

Sadly, rumours that the Bull would reopen later this year have been dashed. The team that used to run the White Horse in Easthampstead Road, south of Wokingham, were planning to take it over. As you might be aware, that pub was badly affected by the extensive road works in that area. It seems that the Thames Water project that will shortly fully close Barkham Road for many months has caused them to pull out, understandably.

Barkham Parish Council is going to be launching its own Newsletter shortly. It is going to be a four pager and its purpose is to keep us informed about Parish business and activities. It will be distributed to all homes in the Parish in the gap between issues of this magazine, probably starting in October.

Finally next year it will be

40 Years of the BVRA!

During the year we intend to include a number of articles about the events that led to its formation and some of the events of 1987 and other major ones in living memory. See Page 13.

Celebrations

We also hope to run a number of special social events so the village can join in our celebrations. In order to do this we need more recruits to our Social Team to help us to run these special events. See Page 13.

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Member Details

To provide or update your membership details go to

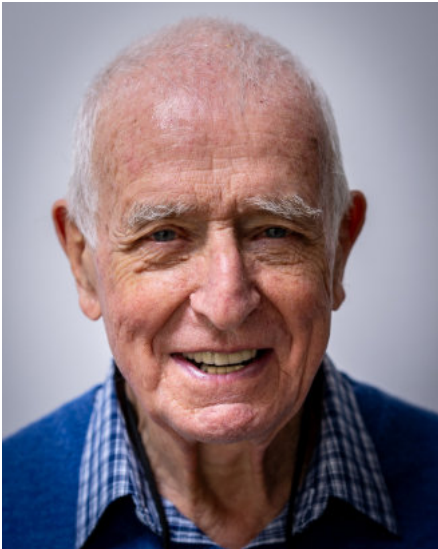
<https://barkham.org.uk/member-details>

or use the QR code below



We will confirm any request you send to us. Also to ensure you receive our emails please add barkham.org.uk to your safe senders list. If you are unsure how to do this, please email webmaster@barkham.org.uk for advice

DevWatch Update



Quite a lot has happened since the Summer newsletter as reported in online Development Alerts.

As we reported in our last Newsletter an application has been made for 660 houses on the land behind Barkham Square - but this did not include the adjacent land at Arborfield Studios which was also envisaged in the draft Local Plan. So this is likely to be in the pipeline for the future at some time.

No application for planning consent has yet been made for the anticipated Care Home adjacent to Bearwood Road and Highlands Avenue, nor for the possible (and very contentious) development by Bewley Homes on the land between Barkham Road and Edneys Hill.

The refusal of the very unpopular planning application to site 16 dwellings (including some flats) on the south-west junction of Edneys Hill and Barkham Road led to an appeal which has been rejected.

However a resolution to grant planning consent (subject to the usual planning agreements) for 135 dwellings has surprisingly been granted by the Borough's Planning Committee on the land at Ducks Nest, Eversley Road Arborfield despite the site not having been included in the draft Local Plan. Consent was also granted for 50

dwellings on the land on the north side of Langley Common Road opposite Biggs Lane and the Arborfield Green roundabout.

Despite an application for 60 dwellings having been refused on appeal earlier this year a fresh planning application has just been made - but not yet validated - for 42 dwellings to be built on the land at Limmerhill behind the Leathern Bottel with access on to Barkham Road through the pub's car park. When the application has been validated we will issue an Alert.

We hear that the draft Local plan is nearing approval: but the Borough has now started work on the next Local Plan 2045 coupled with an invitation to consider land for development in that plan.

DevWatch Alerts

If you would like to receive free email alerts then sign up using the link below:

<https://barkham.org.uk/keep-in-touch>



If you miss one of our DevWatch Alerts, you may view them on our website

<https://barkham.org.uk/devwatch/archive/listing>



Keep Mobile Needs Your Help – Rising Fuel Costs Impacting Local Transport

Keep Mobile Community Transport CIO has been proudly supporting residents across the borough for many years, providing vital door-to-door transport for older people and disabled residents who are unable to use public transport.

Our services are more than just transport - they are a lifeline. We help people attend medical appointments, go shopping, and most importantly, stay connected to their community, reducing isolation and loneliness.

However, like many organisations, we are now facing significant challenges due to the rising cost of fuel. Over recent months, our fuel expenses have increased substantially, placing real pressure on our ability to continue delivering services at the level our members rely on.

As a small local charity, we work hard to keep our fares affordable, but increasing costs mean we need support from the community now more than ever.

How you can help:

- Make a donation, no matter how small
- Support our fundraising efforts
- Spread the word about what we do
- Volunteer your time as a driver or helper

Every pound raised goes directly towards keeping our vehicles on the road and ensuring that no one is left isolated because they cannot get out.

If you would like to support us or find out more, please visit our website or get in touch:

admin@keepmobile.org.uk
0345 544 0850

Together, we can keep our community moving.



News from Barkham Parish Council

Chairman's Message

There are sometimes I feel that as a Parish Council our ability to effect change and make a difference is difficult. We are bound by legislation and rules and much of what we try to do is reliant upon other agencies. But now and again through the hard work and persistence of councillors and often with the help of local individuals we do make progress.

Barkham Road resurfacing rather than patching has had a positive impact to the community, although we can't claim that we had any influence to this.

On the other hand, we robustly objected to the proposed development at the corner of Edney's Hill and Barkham Road and I am delighted that the subsequent appeal that was made was last week dismissed.

I am looking forward to seeing the results from the survey regarding potential improvements to the Jubilee field. Pam managed to get Frank's bench reinstated recently.



A team of folk including local residents are working towards a plan of what best to do with the 8 acre field that we bought adjacent to the Coombes, known as Lot 2

at the end of Wood Lane. There are many diverse views but I expect an agreed consensus to emerge shortly and we'll let folk know as soon as we can via the BVRA and the Parish website.

The Coombes Woodlands has had arborists recently attending to essential works that were identified through our annual tree survey. The biggest worry I have had over the past few weeks has been the risk we carry with regards to the dry weather. Having seen the devastation there has been by fires in the UK and abroad.

We have engaged the local fire service for an assessment and advice as to how we best mitigate this. There is evidence that fires have been started off Coombes Lane and I would ask that any local residents who see any of this activity report to our Clerk, Ellen or Deputy Clerk Hannah.

We purchased an additional two Speed indicating devices that do have an effect on most speeding motorists, and the speed watch team have had further sites approved doubling the number of locations we can use.

We have an active programme of engagement with local Schools to see how we might work more closely; this is in addition to the outdoor learning area we funded jointly with Finchampstead PC for Nine Mile Ride school. A separate similar project has been funded by the Parish Council and the PTA for Farley Hill school. Farley Hill School celebrated its centenary recently and Ian Lawlor, who leads the school's liaison, and I were invited to their celebrations recently which was very well attended.

Next month we are holding a Family Fun Day at Farley Hill School on 19th September. **Ed:** See Page 6 for more.

The site for the new Community centre at Arborfield green is being cleared with demolition of the old building in progress.

Cllr Mike Barker

Planning

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is currently considering two significant planning applications within the Arborfield area. Application 261059 relates to land south of Langley Common Road, Arborfield Green, and seeks outline permission for a substantial mixed residential development. The proposal includes up to 660 new homes, alongside elderly care accommodation, with all matters reserved except access. The scheme would also deliver a range of supporting infrastructure, including open space, allotments, green and blue infrastructure, and a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), together with associated works.

Also awaiting determination is application 261175, concerning land at the junction of Palmer Place and

Park Lane in Arborfield. This is a full planning application for engineering works associated with upgrades to the local sewer network. The proposals include ground re-profiling, access covers and a ventilation column, as well as the temporary use of land during the construction period, after which the site would be restored.

Among the recently determined major applications, WBC has approved application 232490 for land off Langley Common Road, Barkham. The outline application sought permission for a residential development of up to 50 dwellings, together with areas of open space and related infrastructure. The application considered the means of access, while details relating to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale were reserved for future approval. WBC has now granted planning permission for this development.

Fire Safety in The Coombes Woodlands

Sadly, during this exceptionally dry summer, we have experienced a number of small fires within The Coombes Woodlands. At the time of writing, the Fire Brigade has been called out three times in three days to deal with incidents in the woodland. **Ed:** continued on Pages 6 & 7.

Junipers Play Area Improvement Survey

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey on improving the Junipers Play Area. The survey closed on 28 August, and at the time of writing we have received over 100 responses.

The Council will now analyse the results, which will be published on the Council's website in due course. The findings will be discussed at a future Council meeting, where Councillors will consider the feedback received and agree a plan for improvements to the play area.

The Parish Council will need to work with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), which owns the land, to deliver any upgrades. WBC has already indicated that it would be supportive of improvements to the site.

Next steps:

- Analyse the survey results
- Prepare a report and improvement plan for the play area
- Agree the proposed improvements at a Parish Council meeting
- Obtain WBC approval and work with them to deliver the improvements

Subject to Council and WBC approval, it is hoped that any improvement works can be carried out during the winter months, when they are likely to cause the least disruption to play area users.

Joint Neighbourhood Plan

Barkham Parish Council continues to work with Arborfield & Newland Parish Council on the preparation of a new Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (ABNP), which will help ensure local communities have a stronger voice in shaping future development.

Over the past year, community and stakeholder consultations have been completed, and the feedback is now being used to develop planning policies and proposals. Key priorities identified include protecting green spaces and settlement gaps, preserving local character and heritage, improving connectivity, supporting community facilities, and ensuring future growth is directed to locations where infrastructure can support it.

There is still a significant amount of work to do, and residents will have further opportunities to comment on the emerging Plan as it progresses through the consultation stages. Ultimately, the final decision will rest with local residents through a referendum before the Plan can be formally adopted.

Subject to the statutory planning process, the draft Plan is expected to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council in 2027.

Family Fun Day

Residents are invited to our Community Fun Day on Saturday 19 September 2026, at Farley Hill Primary School, Arborfield Green. This event is open to everyone and promises a great day out for all ages. Enjoy free entry, a range of free activities, browse stalls selling hand-made crafts, and food and drinks will be available to purchase.

New Crossing Outside Farley Hill School

The Parish Council has jointly funded a new zebra crossing outside Farley Hill School in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council. The crossing was installed during the first few weeks of the summer holidays, and we hope it will make it easier for parents and children to walk to school, while improving road safety for everyone crossing this busy stretch of road.





Fire Safety in The Coombes Woodlands

Recently we have experienced a number of small fires within The Coombes Woodlands. The fires appear to have been caused by campfires that were not properly extinguished, creating a serious risk to the woodland, wildlife, neighbouring properties and visitors. We are extremely grateful to the Fire Brigade for their swift response in preventing these incidents from becoming more serious.

In one incident, the fire had already begun to spread underground through roots and dry organic material beneath the surface. Thankfully, the Fire Brigade was able to locate and extinguish the fire before it spread further and became firmly established, which could have led to much more significant damage.

To help reduce the risk of further fires, we have installed wildfire warning signs throughout the woodlands and

ask all residents and visitors to follow the guidance below:

- Please do not discard cigarettes, matches or other smoking materials
- No campfires or open flames
- No barbecues
- No fireworks or sky lanterns
- Take all litter home, especially glass bottles or broken glass
- Do not leave any combustible waste in the woodlands

Even a small spark can quickly ignite dry vegetation during periods of hot weather. We ask everyone to help protect this valuable community space by remaining vigilant and reporting any signs of fire or suspicious activity immediately.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping to keep The Coombes Woodlands safe for everyone.

Ed: See Page 7 opposite for a more personal account by one of our residents living close to the Coombes.

JOIN US AT THE

Barkham and Arborfield Green

FAMILY FUN DAY

A FUN DAY OUT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

SATURDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER

1PM - 5PM

**Farley Hill Primary School
Arborfield Green**

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

FUN ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

COMMUNITY STALLS

FOOD & REFRESHMENTS

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

Coombes Wildfire Averted

We could so easily have had a catastrophic fire in the Coombes in August. Thankfully, a walker recognised the danger signs and took actions that prevented an abandoned campfire from developing into a wildfire. After the extended drought, such things had become a regular feature in the News.

Day 1:

It was a professional dog walker who made the first call for the Fire Brigade. A regular walker with her own two dogs had told him about three teenagers that she had seen leaving the woods, with backpacks and smelling of smoke, so she had gone to have a look. She discovered a campfire that had been left without being fully extinguished.

Day 2:

The lady with two dogs told the story to a couple out for their morning walk without a dog. On their return, one of the couple went to see if the campfire could be found. He didn't know at that stage whether the fire-crew had even found it the day before and wanted to see for himself what state it was in.

The site of the campfire was found, and rather disturbingly, there was smoke rising from one edge. The ground surrounding the smoke was too hot to touch. The fire was clearly spreading away under the ground from the original campfire. After piling some of the cooler ash from the campfire onto it and stamping it down hard, he headed home to phone 999 for the Fire Service.

As agreed with the call handler, the man met the Fire Engine and led its crew first to the closest that the vehicle could park and turn back from, and then on foot to the smouldering fire. Having assessed the situation, two of them were sent back to the Fire Engine for several buckets of water. These were used to douse the periphery of the fire, a large log that was still hot, and in particularly the subterranean hot spot. After the area was checked over with a Thermal Imaging Camera, the firemen were satisfied that they could return to base.

Day 3:

It was just as well that the man's curiosity compelled him to check on the campfire straight after an early breakfast. The original campfire site, huge charred log and even the extension that had been smoking the previous day had cooled down significantly. However, another offshoot from the original fire had developed and was smoking. Photographs were taken, cool ash stamped into the hot spot, as before, and he returned home to call the Fire Brigade again.



Again, several buckets of water were brought to douse the new hot spot and 12 minutes after their 15 hour shift was over, the crew made for the Engine to get home for some sleep. 'Any further trouble', they said, 'don't hesitate to call again – the day shift will be happy to come.'

So good night and let's hope this particular crisis has also been put to bed.

History Books

The "Barkham A History" book can be obtained from the BPC Clerk at £8.50 each or from Henry Street Garden Centre. These will make ideal presents for anyone who is new to the area and does not already own one.



Update from our Borough Councillors



Barkham Solar Farm is back on track. The project was initiated in 2021 but has been paused on two occasions due to changes from the national electricity system operator about readiness to receive the power it will generate. Updated forecasts are that the project will be able to generate green electricity as early as September 2027 and a contract for the build will be signed shortly.

The project will generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of around 10,500 typical homes. As well as contributing to decarbonising the grid and mitigating climate change, the project will earn revenue for the council which will fund local services over its anticipated 40 year life.

The solar farm stretches from the northern boundary of California Country Park up to north of St James's Church. Connection into the grid will be at the substation on Barkham Road via underground cables to be laid along Edneys Hill and Evendons Lane. Access to the site for construction will be via Barkham Street.

As a part of the solar farm build, an additional 2.7 hectares will be planted with trees to the south and a range of other landscaping and biodiversity improvements will be achieved, above and beyond the former use of the land for farming. A new path for walking, cycling and riding will be constructed through

the site, the first section of the new walking and cycling route between Arborfield Green and Wokingham that will follow-on. This will include a controlled crossing over Barkham Ride.



You can read more about the project on the council's website here:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/climate-emergency/barkham-solar-farm-project>



Closer to home, the Thames Water trunk main replacement project will move to Barkham Road in mid-September. There will be rolling closures between the junction with Bearwood Road and Arborfield Studios on Langley Common Road, through until June 2027 (latest Thames Water forecast). For full details on the project and how this will affect the roads, go to the Thames Water project webpage at

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/projects/improvements-in-your-area/arborfield-trunk-main>



We talk with Thames Water and the council's Streetworks team regularly to help ensure that traffic management plans reflect the local requirements and the impact of this unavoidable project is minimised. Thames Water will continue to run drop-in sessions for residents who want to know more, and we will share details via local social media when available.

Councillors Adrian Betteridge and Mohima Bose, Liberal Democrat Councillors for Barkham and Arborfield

Contact us at

adrian.betteridge@wokingham.gov.uk

mohima.bose@wokingham.gov.uk

A New Look for our Magazine!

I have been editing this publication for just over four years (from Issue 140), following on from Suzanne Trigg when she left the area. For the first couple of years I provided the content for Bob Bishop, who since the very early days, laid out the content on his computer for printing.

When Bob retired from this role, I took over the layout role too. During this time I have mostly followed the styles of my predecessors.

However, for some time I have wanted to make more serious changes and modernise it somewhat. For instance the name is no longer appropriate. The early issues were just four pages long, type-written on a conventional typewriter and then photocopied. It really was a Newsletter. As time passed it has expanded to 24 pages in full colour and has become a magazine, not a Newsletter. Consequently I felt it was time for a change of name. **Village News**



seems far more appropriate.

However I am not a graphics designer and it has taken me quite a while to find someone with these skills willing to help on a voluntary basis. Tim Marotto is local and has produced this new design including the logo and advised on changing the font and logo colour. Tim has an advert on Page 24 if you need some help.

So then we decided to take a look at the website to give it the same new look as the magazine.



Key points:

- Simplified menu structure, with no loss of features
- Improved presentation of our past Newsletters
- DevWatch alerts are now numbered for easy reference.

Check it out here

<https://barkham.org.uk>

I have asked one of my predecessors, Paul Steel, to provide some background to the previous design and the history of the look of the magazine. Over to Paul.....

Allow me to introduce myself – I am one of the predecessors of Alan Edwards, the current editor of this illustrious publication. My tenure ran from 1997 to 2006, covering issues 39 to 76.

In the 20 years since I handed over to Stuart Richardson, much has improved. The number of pages has increased, for example, and all of them can, and usually do, accommodate full colour pictures.

When I took over, photographs were not an option. We were able to add a single extra colour to the covers and the centre spread. If it was blue on the front, it was blue on the back and in the centre. This was a bit complicated to set up, so was only used to highlight special events.

In 1999, we gave the front cover a facelift. I had inherited a black and white format for the front page with a banner title at the top being...



Across the bottom of the front page was a panel with a faint historical map of Barkham, over which was written the main items of content for the particular issue.

The changes involved the revision of the wording in the title banner,

angling the Newsletter heading, adding a line linking the title block with the contents panel, and adding an extra colour. The Newsletter title became green, as did the line linking it with the contents map, which was also made green.

With the introduction of those changes was a request to the readers to submit their ideas for a new logo, using black, white and one other colour. No readers took up the challenge so I tried to get my children to design a logo. They were not forthcoming. I had to accept that I was going to have to come up with something myself, which was...



It was meant to capture the essence of our village and community. In the background is the church with its cedar tree (now gone). Residents are represented by a pair of people with a house and garden, and to link them to Barkham, I decided to add the ghost. Barkham's ghosts are legendary. The most famous spectres include a headless soldier riding a horse and a headless white lady on a white palfrey, both of whom were said to rise from the Rectory Marsh and ride along the Barkham Road.



One thing that amazes me is that the front page layout, complete with the 'new' logo, has continued to be used until now. The facelift, carried out when the Newsletter was a mere 12 years old, lasted until it was nearly 40.

Thames Water Project

From what I can see the project has been making good progress in the past few weeks. As the photo shows, the trench is some 5 feet (1.5m) deep.



Whereas the section from Highlands Avenue to the Lilacs was beset by problems, the section towards the end of Bearwood Road has progressed much more quickly.

However his work is currently stalled because there is still a problem near Highlands Avenue that is preventing the road being opened between The Lilacs and Highlands Avenue that would allow traffic to get to Winnersh and beyond.

On 19th August there was a team working on this part and they told me that they have had to excavate 5m deep! They gave me the impression that this issue will be cleared in the next week. We will then be able to drive direct to Winnersh again.

When this problem has been resolved they can continue towards the end of Bearwood Road.

When they held an open meeting in the Village Store car park a few weeks ago, they thought they might

reach the end of Bearwood Road by the end of the August, much sooner than the promised date of the end of September.

Then, they will turn right to progress down the hill towards the Bull. During this time Barkham Road is going to be fully closed. See Page 8 for more information.

The official diversion is:

<https://one.network/?tmi=GB45783920>

However I would treat it with a pinch of salt for I can see errors in the maps. For instance it currently states that the current full closure of Bearwood Road will continue until the middle of 2027! I have been assured that this is not the case!

So what about the bus service?

When I called Reading Buses, they said they have no plan yet for the inevitable diversion of the **Leopard 3** Bus route during the extended closure of Barkham Road. No doubt one will emerge in due course.

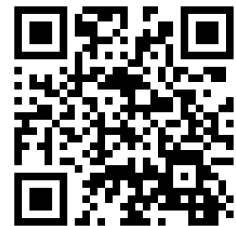
Reporting Road Defects

In the previous issue I showed two blocked drain gulleys by the tall wall adjacent to Barkham Manor.



I reported these shortly afterwards and received an acknowledgement that they would be dealt with in September.

We can all report road defects at <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roads/report>



Neighbours

Saudi Arabia is an oil-rich and increasingly powerful country that will host the football World Cup in 2034. It has borders with eight countries. Can you name them?

Answers on Page 23



St James' Barkham

One World, One Hope

So – 60 years and counting (still...)
At least it was fun while it lasted.
Mostly – at least!

For a few exciting weeks, billions of people watched teams from every corner of the globe compete for the honour of winning the 2026 Football World Cup. Different languages were spoken, different flags waved, and different national anthems sung. But, for 90 (or 120) minutes at a time, very different people shared the same hopes, joys, and disappointments.

Sport has always had a wonderful way of bringing people together. Complete strangers suddenly find themselves celebrating a goal together. Children who would otherwise never meet dream of lining up in the same team one day. The World Cup reminds us that, despite our many differences, we have so much in common.

The Christian faith has always held out an even bigger vision. When Jesus sent out His followers, He told them to 'go and make disciples of all nations.' God's invitation to find rescue in Jesus has never been limited by nationality, language, or culture. The Bible paints a beautiful picture of heaven as a place where people from 'every nation, tribe, people and language' worship God together.

I still remember the surprise I felt when, a few years ago, I read these words:

'Today, Christianity is the largest and the most diverse belief system in the world, with roughly equal number of Christians in Europe, North America, South American, and Africa, and with a rapidly growing church in China that is expected to outgrow the church in America by 2030.' (Rebecca McLaughlin, The Secular Creed)

I've been working for a church for years, but would never have guessed what Rebecca points out. It is always so easy to assume that the Christian faith is really only for certain people in a few parts of the world. But it turns out that diversity is not erased by following Jesus, but celebrated! Clearly he knew what he was doing when he sent his followers out on their world-wide mission. And heaven's glorious multi-culturalism is something we're beginning to see glimpses of in the worldwide church even today.

That's so exciting, I think. Even in a little and very ordinary church family like Barkham, our life together is wonderfully enriched by the presence of people from other parts of the world.

So, long after the last final whistle has blown and the trophy has headed on its way (alas not to London, but Spain), still God's invitation to find life in Jesus Christ rings out right around the world. He really couldn't be clearer: everyone is welcome.

So wherever you come from, you are always invited to join us at our Sunday services at Barkham Church. Whether you come with deep faith, honest questions, or just simple curiosity, there will always be a warm welcome waiting for you.

David Horrocks

<https://www.abch.org.uk>



The Quiz

Remember the famous drought of 1976? Well, let's find out what you know about events that occurred that year.

1. Concorde made its first commercial flight from the UK. What was its destination?
2. Who won Britain's first ever Olympic gold medal in ice skating?
3. Which famous war-time army general died in March?
4. Who won the Eurovision Song Contest and what was the title of the winning song?
5. Which retail chain opened its first branch in Brighton, going on to become very famous?
6. Who was appointed Minister for Drought during the summer?
7. Which prime minister appointed him?
8. In which city were the Olympic Games held?
9. Who was the Formula 1 motor racing drivers' champion?
10. Which company did Steve Wozniak help start.

Answers on Page 23

Where in Barkham?

Here is another road related feature you might enjoy trying to find.....

Answers on Page 23



Wild About the Coombes

As you probably know, most of the Coombes woodland is now owned by the Barkham and Arborfield Parish Councils and is heavily protected from development. I'd like to share with you a letter that was forwarded to me by one of the Barkham Parish Councillors. It says:

Dear Friends,

We speak to you not as individuals, but as a collective from The Coombes Woodland ~ a place older than your roads, older than your towns, older than the stories you tell around warm fires. We, and our ancestors, have stood here through eras you no longer name. We have grown, healed, fallen, risen, and woven ourselves into a living tapestry that has taken countless of your lifetimes to form.

When you chose to protect this land, you did more than purchase soil and timber. You safeguarded an ancient home shaped by time itself ~ sheltering lives woven into our roots, a sanctuary where the ground breathes slowly, where every fallen leaf becomes part of a future you may never see but we are already preparing.

Nature thrives because every part of our woodland community plays its role. We know how to heal. We know how to grow. We know how to endure. But while we can manage our own natural destroyers, we depend on you ~ the non-woodland dwellers ~ to protect what cannot defend itself from your world.

We ask only this:

Do not wander too deeply into the places where our work continues. Do not disturb the patterns we have spent lifetimes perfecting. Do not reshape what has already learned how to thrive.

Enjoy what you have chosen to save. Walk gently. Open all your senses to everything around you. Let your pride come not from what you build, but from what you choose to leave untouched.

Now that you have protected us, guide those living beyond our boundaries, your people, in how they can help us care for our home ~ so that you, and those who come long after you, can be proud of what you have done.

With ancient gratitude,

The Residents of The Coombes Woodland

Last year's summer was officially the warmest on record for the UK, according to the Met Office, and by the end of July this year, numerous climate records had already been broken again. Both May and June had reached higher temperatures than previously and July saw our longest recorded heatwave, reaching at least 30°C for 13 consecutive days. The previous longest heatwave had been a mere 6 days. This is the first year for the UK to have reached 35°C or more in May, June and July.

The climate is definitely changing and the general view is that the human race is in large part responsible for it. So how have the warmer conditions been affecting the Coombes?

The paths are much firmer to walk on than in winter, as is usually the case in summer.

There has been browning and shedding of some of the leaves on trees but on the whole the trees are surviving and will grow full sets of leaves again next year. Similarly, the widespread rhododendron growth is rather wilted, but on past experience, that will recover when (or if) we get some significant rainfall.



The stream that was flowing under a recently rebuilt footbridge has dried up. However, there is still some flow along a spring-fed stream that runs under the boardwalk nearby, so the animals are not without something to drink.



All in all, the Coombes has stood up rather well, and at the time of writing, thankfully, it has not been ravaged by wildfires.

Few would enter someone else's home and light a fire in it. I hope nobody ever goes into the Coombes and does anything that leads to the writers of that brilliant letter having their home burn down.

So walk gently and open all your senses so that you, and those who come long after you, can be proud of what you have done.

Joe Wild

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS of the BVRA in 2027

Do you want to be a part of the
special events next year?

Well, here is the answer: volunteer
to help organise them!

We need lots more volunteers, some
with young children, to help
organise and run family events.

We have lots of ideas, including a
Family Treasure Hunt, an Art
Exhibition, and possibly a summer
fete.

We don't expect volunteers to help
with every event, but if you can
share the load by being involved in
one of them it would greatly help.
We cannot do them without your
help!

So, if you are community minded
then please step forward and show
your interest.

Please contact Gill Powell if you
would like to help

social@barkham.org.uk



Photographs

Also to commemorate 1987 I want photos of major events
in the village that year or within living memory. Here is
one to whet your appetite.



Taken on Barkham Road by the Doles Lane junction
when a tree fell across the road, demolishing the lovely
old barn on the corner. The barn has subsequently been
restored beautifully and maintains the feel of earlier
years.

Old Village Hall

I am still looking for photographs of the old village Hall
in Barkham Street which was demolished c1983, as I am
still keen to produce an article about it.

newsletter@barkham.org.uk

KIMEL

COMMUNITY CAFE

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EMPLOYMENT PROJECT WITH
THE AIM OF HELPING
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BVRA Social



The Family Skittles evening was well attended and there were more children there than in previous years and some of them were very competitive!

We had two team rounds followed by a break for a ploughman's supper and then the 'killer' round. However, as usual, the compensation for being knocked out of the 'killer' round was a choc ice!

The team round produced a tie for first place between 'All Balls and no Glory' and 'From A to Z'. Each team had to select a volunteer and we ended up with a 'David and Goliath' situation with eight year old Amy bowling against a (much) older Shaun. The older man won but it was very tense!

So, the winning team was 'All Balls and no Glory'. They each won a packet of skittles. The highest score in that round was Emma from 'No Balls and all the Glory'. See the connection?

After a break for refreshments we had the killer round and that was won by Tara - also from 'No Balls and all the Glory'

The evening finished at around 10.15pm. Everyone had a good time, especially the team that won!

Ed: I hope the folk that run the hall don't notice the yellow warning sign on the wall!





The Summer event was the annual Distributors' BBQ held on Saturday 25th July at the village hall on a perfect sunny and warm evening.

This is our way of thanking the distributors, wholesalers, and all those involved in any way with the Newsletter - they all do a sterling job delivering the newsletters, and keeping members informed of things going on in the village and surrounding area.

Chefs, Peter J, Peter A, and Dave did a great job cooking all those drumsticks, beef burgers and sausages - thanks to them.

31 people, distributors and partners etc enjoyed these and tasty salads, and a few glasses of wine and beer etc.

Now for forthcoming events

On Saturday 24th October we are holding the very popular annual Quiz Night at 7.00 for 7.30pm at the village hall. There will be a Fish and Chip Supper, and a licensed bar, and the cost is £18 per person.

Tickets are available from Gill Powell by emailing social@barkham.org.uk

Teams are of 6 people, but if you don't have a team, don't worry, you can easily team up with others on the night.

This is always a competitive fun evening and tickets sell fast, so put the date in your diary and book early.

To round off 2026 our annual 'Family Carols in the Park' is booked for Friday 11th December at the Junipers Park. The Breakaway Brass Band will again play for us as we sing our favourite carols. It starts at 7pm at the junction of the Woodlands and the Junipers and continues to the edge of the park. After more singing, mulled wine, soft drinks and mince pies will be served.

This is a 'free' event, but there will be a bucket collection for the Band who so kindly give of their time to play for us.

This is always a lovely way to start the Festive Season, so make a note of the date now.

I hope to see many of you at these events, and if any of you feel you would like to, and have time to, help out with the Social Team we would love to hear from you.

Please contact Gill Powell on social@barkham.org.uk for more information.

Information about events can be found on posters around the village, on the BVRA website, and the Facebook page, so do please check these out.

Enjoy the Autumn when it comes, which could be early this year, and hopefully much cooler!!!

Shirley Warner

BVRA and Social Team Committee Member





Please secure your vehicle

Having your car broken into and losing your things to thieves can be very distressing.

Here are a few steps you can take to help keep your vehicle, and what's in it, safe.

Lock your Vehicle

Locking your vehicle, even when filling up or parked on your drive, greatly reduces the possibility of it being targeted by an opportunist thief. If you have electronically locked your vehicle, double check it. Many thieves will not hesitate to walk up your driveway and try the door handles to see if your car will open.

If your vehicle has wing mirrors that fold in automatically, ensure it is locked. Opportunist thieves and criminal gangs may look for vehicles like these where the wing mirrors are still out because it is clear that the vehicle is not secure.

Display and you will pay

Please don't tempt thieves - your mobile phone, spare coins, sunglasses, packs of medication or other items that can earn quick cash are irresistible to the opportunist thief. And it should go without saying that wallets, handbags, purses and credit cards should never be left in an unattended vehicle. Even an old coat or a plastic bag left behind can tempt a thief.

Keyless entry

Cars with keyless entry unlock automatically when the key comes within a short distance of the car. This can be from inside a pocket or bag. If you have to push a button on your car key to open your car, you don't have keyless entry.

Keyless car theft or 'relay theft' is when a device is used to fool the car into thinking the key is close by. This unlocks the car and starts the ignition. Thieves only need to be within a few metres of your car key

to capture the signal, even if it's inside your home. This means that even if your car and home are secure, thieves can still unlock, start and steal your car.

- Fit a steering wheel stop lock as a physical deterrent. Some models can link to pedals and gear sticks.
- Consider blocking your keyless car in with another non-keyless entry car if you have one.
- When at home keep your car key (and spares) well away from the car.
- Put the keys in a screened or signal-blocking pouch, such as a Faraday Bag.
- Re-programme your keys if you buy a second-hand car.
- Turn off wireless signals on your fob when it's not being used.

If you have seen anything suspicious, have CCTV or Dashcam footage of suspects, or any information regarding car crime in your neighbourhood, please report this by using the Thames Valley Police on line reporting portal at www.thamesvalley.police.uk or by calling the non-emergency number 101. If a crime is in progress, dial 999.

involve
MAKING A DIFFERENCE LOCALLY

Charities, voluntary & community groups, and other not-for-private-profit groups including community businesses: do you need information, bespoke support and advice to grow your group and your services? From how to start a new group and then run it efficiently, to funding advice, to volunteer and committee-member recruitment, plus general and specialist training, **involve Community Services** provide assistance to any local non-profit organisation in Bracknell Forest and Wokingham Borough.

Our charity also has a suite of wellbeing services that run across Wokingham Borough including a universal adult signposting service and a social and emotional support network for those impacted by cancer.

To find out more, contact us on 01344 304 404, reception@involve.community or 0118 228 0480, reception@vcshub.co.uk or look at and download information via <https://involve.community>

35 Years Ago

In Issue 17 we find that the social team were very busy - there was a Treasure Hunt and a Barn Dance with a Barbecue, plus a Family Bonfire party planned. I seem to remember that at some point that

the bonfire event ended owing to insurance issues. We continue to provide some social events but we are limited in what we can do, owing to the lack of volunteers. If you could help with any of the

events then please make yourself known.

Also a couple of planning issues are mentioned.



BARKHAM VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 1991

ISSUE 17

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

John Adams is on holiday so he has asked me to deputise for him in the introduction to this, our 17th BVRA Newsletter. This edition is up to its usual high standard, full of local colour about our village.

PLANNING

Barkham Manor The current owners of Barkham Manor have been in touch with us, but sadly there are still no firm plans to restart the conversion work.

Waste Transfer Station The application on behalf of Alan Hadley Ltd. to operate a waste transfer and recycling station at Silver Birches, Highlands Avenue is not now expected to come before Berkshire County Council Environment Committee until October at the earliest. It is understood however that the applicants may be submitting revisions to satisfy possible Highway Authority objections and, if so, this will delay matters further.

TREASURE HUNT

The latest BVRA social event arranged was a family treasure hunt, held on Sunday 8 September - one of the many very hot summer afternoons we've had towards the end of the season.

It was great to see such a good turn out. At 3 pm twenty four family groups set out on foot from the Village Hall car park with their clue sheets. Two hours later all the groups returned looking hot, thirsty, foot sore and curious to see the answers to those odd "impossible" clues - What was the potential of the field? and where was the horse chestnut tree? While the papers were being marked squash was handed out to quench the insatiable thirsts.

★ ★ ★
FAMILY BONFIRE PARTY
★ ★ ★
2ND NOVEMBER 1991
★ ★ ★
from 6 PM
★ ★ ★
BARKHAM VILLAGE HALL

An evening with a DIFFERENCE for the whole family. The evening will start with Halloween games for children.

BARN DANCE AND BARBECUE

The evening of the 13th July 1991 was fine and warm and the Village Hall was ready to open its doors for a lively evening.

At eight o'clock the Hall was filling with people, from the Bar came the tinkle of glasses, the barbecue was alight and the band Tamise was playing the sort of music that starts the feet tapping and getting the dancers onto the floor. Everything was set for a perfect evening.

It was a perfect evening and everyone present seemed to enjoy themselves and the Band, the Bar and the barbecue had been very busy all playing their part to make our 4th Barn Dance the success that had been the hope of all those who had worked to make the evening possible.

I wish to thank all the volunteers who manned the Bar and barbecue and helped at the end of the night to tidy the Hall leaving it ship-shape for the next event. Best wishes to all the committee members.

Alan's Patch

Every issue I comment on the extreme weather and this is no different. Since very early April there has been one week in early June when there was significant rainfall. This was while I was away and when I returned my nearly empty irrigation tanks were full again. Now they are bone dry and I have been able to perform some maintenance. This is the driest summer I remember, surpassing even 1976, for those of us old enough to remember. So how has it affected my patch?

Apart from a weekly watering of the plants in the greenhouse and freshly sown seedlings outside I resisted outdoor watering until mid July. Since early August I have had to water some outdoor crops a couple of times a week.

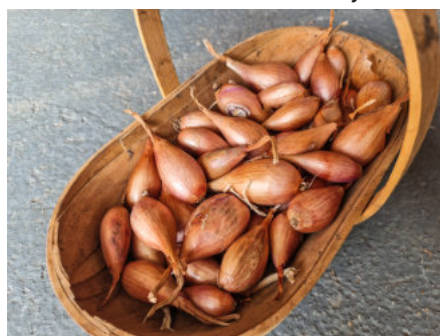
Last year was a bumper crop for most things but this year, with it being so dry, growth and some yields are down. Early fruit has been good with lots of sun and the ground still moist from the winter rain - strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, tayberries, rhubarb. After a bumper crop last year, apples and peaches are taking a well earned rest. Blackcurrants have produced a decent crop, as have the damsons, and one of my pear trees has a promising crop on it.

In the greenhouse, I had a disaster in the Spring when I neglected to keep the seedlings moist and many died. I had to resort to Henry Street to top up the tomatoes, as only one had survived, so I am trying new varieties this year, just to experiment. The fruits have been slow to set, despite spraying the flowers with water. Now they are cropping nicely. Cucumber has been a bit patchy, but enough for my needs and bell peppers and chillis are looking promising, courtesy of Henry Street!

With it being so hot I have left the greenhouse door open, even overnight to let it cool down as best it can. What could possibly go wrong? Well, a bird found the tomatoes to be rather tasty! Since then I keep the door closed.

Vegetables outside have done surprisingly well. Potato crops are a bit down, though I have yet to investigate my main crop variety.

Shallots have done well this year.



After a total crop failure last year, the broad beans have done really well, as have the peas. French, runner and Borlotti beans have been slow to fruit, probably owing to the air being so dry. They have come good now, but are looking really parched with leaves dropping off early. Cannellini beans have done well although the bean seeds are a bit small.

Although the plants have not grown as tall as usual owing to the lack of rain, the sweet corn cobs are big enough and the flavour and texture is fabulous. Even better, the badgers that normally rampage through them, to steal the crop, have not visited, so I guess they are none local now. The photos show a cob itself along with a close up. I love how the individual kernels jostle for position and ruin the pattern!

Another other big success is the butternut squash, they absolutely love these conditions as do the courgettes. I will show you those next time when they have matured.

For fun, I sowed a few sunflower seeds in among the tall vegetables.



See how tall this one has grown. It is over 2.2m tall and the solid part of the seed head is 300mm across and look what an irregular shape it is! I have never grown one this tall before. The variety of seed? Titan, it certainly lives up to its name! And the flower head is almost square!

Late July I hired a tractor and mower to cut the grass in the field. The grass had dried out and I was concerned that it was something of a fire risk. The following morning I spotted a fox in the middle looking bemused at the transformation. And later the deer returned with a couple of fawns.

This morning, I harvested the peaches. I am very satisfied with both the taste and size of the crop.

The ornamental part of my garden is not my forte! Most of the perennials



are doing okay including the roses in full sun and with no watering. Unfortunately some of the new plants and those I moved over the winter are suffering despite some watering.

Have you noticed how few wasps there are this year? I wonder if it has something to do with such a hot and dry summer.

I find it very surprising that most of the trees in the area are surviving well and that the leaves are still green. There must still be moisture in the soil a few metres down that they can access, the residue of the six months of rain we had during the wet season. It seems that we have just two seasons now - the wet and the dry!



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Girl Guiding In our Community

Girl Guiding was first founded in the UK in 1908 and now more than 100 years later in 2026, Guiding is still supporting girls and young women to be the best they can be. Girlguiding is the UK's largest youth organisation dedicated completely to girls.

The Guiding mission is:

"Through fun, friendship, challenge and adventure we empower girls to find their voice, inspiring them to discover the best in themselves and to make a positive difference in their community".

Girl Guiding is doing well in the Wokingham Division, we have just under 600 members spread across 24 units covering central Wokingham, Winnersh, Woosehill, Finchampstead, Arborfield and Barkham. Girls can join the Rainbows if they are aged 4-7, Brownies aged 7-10, Guides aged 10-14 and Rangers aged 14-18.

Girlguiding reports a 20% increase in young membership since 2021 and are seeking new adult volunteers to allow us to continue to offer spaces to as many girls as possible. Sadly, we do have some waiting lists for units in our area and would love to talk to you if you could spare a few hours a week and join one of our unit teams.

Volunteering for Girlguiding has many benefits, with opportunities to meet new friends, share and gain transferable skills and take a break from everyday routines to spend time having fun and be inspired by incredible girls and young women – making a difference to the lives of girls in their local communities.

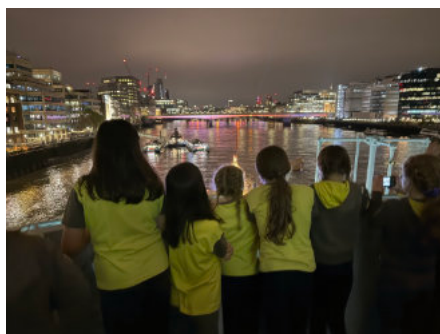
2nd Barkham Brownies meet in the Barkham Village hall, they are a friendly unit of 27 Brownies aged 7-10 – they like to have adventures, play games and enjoy working towards badges – We have recently

taken advantage of the great weather and have enjoyed doing some outdoor cooking, pitching and striking tents and having lots of water fun games. We also enjoy making the most of what is on our doorstep and have enjoyed fun sessions at Dinton Pastures, Wokingham footgolf and the Look Out Discovery Centre.

We love anything involving animals, we took part in the Great British Bird Watch which led to many of the girls doing one of the new interest badges Bird Watching. We also overcame our fears and have held snakes and birds of prey (not at the same time I might add).



The Brownies have also had the opportunity to go on several sleepovers – one on the HMS Belfast – we had a tour of the ship before spending the night sleeping in bunks, such a great experience followed the next day by a visit to the Tower of London.



Another hard to beat experience was a sleepover at Legoland, with early access the next morning



which we made the most of. For a few of our Brownies this was the first time they have been away from home – it's great to see the girls immerse themselves in the fully in these experiences.

We work hard to fulfil the Brownie programme and a number of the girls have earned their Gold Awards –



a fabulous achievement.

At Brownies, girls have the opportunity to try out new challenges and experiences in a safe and fun environment – brownies offers something for everyone.

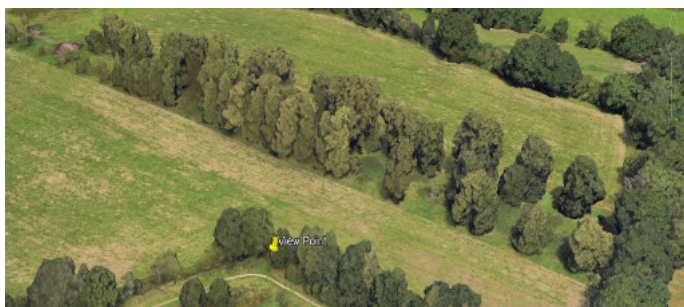
None of the activities and opportunities mentioned could be made possible without volunteers. Do you like the sound of these sorts of activities? Could you join our team? Do you have a skill or hobby that you would like to share with the girls one evening – We have Rainbow, Guides and Ranger groups as well - we would love to hear from you. Please email

girlguides.wokingham@gmail.com

and one of the division leadership team will contact you for a chat.

Tree-mendous Trees - Part 3

We have all heard of the splendid Wellingtonia Avenue of giant sequoia trees, but did you know about the Barkham Lime Tree Avenue? Possibly not, as it is a little out of the way and only visible from certain locations. One of the best spots to view it is from the North Eastern edge of Rooks Nest Wood: Map Ref SU 79051 66389. To find the viewpoint use the circular footpath that goes around the outside edge of the country park and at the northern most point look for a metal gate with a large sign that says "NO PUBLIC or DOG ACCESS



The avenue was planted in 1886 by John Walter the 3rd who was the proprietor of the Times Newspaper, and he lived at Bearwood House in Sindlesham which is now the Reddam Private School. The avenue consists of both large and small leaved lime trees.

This is an unusual avenue in that it once consists of a long row of Lime Trees that are four abreast rather than a normal avenue of just two rows of trees. Once it used to have a central track, but this has disappeared as the field that it is in has been used livestock pasture for many years. There are now about 80 trees or tree remains at the moment, but indications are that the avenue once continued much further to the North West and was possibly twice its existing length, so the avenue could have been up to 200 original trees when it was planted. It is thought that there is only one other lime avenue with a 4 tree width in the UK and that is in Wollaton Park, Nottingham.

Although, our lime tree avenue is still an impressive sight, unfortunately, many of the trees have either fallen or are in poor condition, particularly at the NW end of the avenue. This is probably due to a fungal disease called, *Phytophthora plurivora*, that limes are susceptible to, and it looks as if the disease is very slowly progressing down the avenue. The trees decline is not due to old age as Lime Trees can live to the ripe old age of about 800 years,

Derek Oxbrough

Tree Warden, Barkham

Email: doxbrough@hotmail.com

Tel: 01189 760578

<https://www.wdvt.org.uk>



New Tennis Courts in Arborfield Green

It is good to hear that the new tennis courts are now open for all to use. This is great news!

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/ArborfieldParkTennis>



**DO YOU HAVE A
HEAD FOR NUMBERS
AND A HEART FOR
COMMUNITY?**

Paid Treasurer position - small salary included.

Barkham Village Hall, a much-loved and well-used space at the heart of village life, is looking for a **TREASURER** to join its friendly committee. You'll be responsible for overseeing financial transactions, preparing reports, and attending committee meetings every other month.

To find out more, contact the Barkham Village Hall Committee on 07596 554654 or barkhamvillagehall@outlook.com.



The Barkham Ladies have had a busy few months of meetings with interesting speakers, and other events.

Our June speaker was Antony Munn, the son-in-law of one of our members, who gave a wonderful illustrated presentation of a very special subject - 'the Hidden World of Cell Biology'.

Antony and his scientist colleagues carry out biological and biotechnological work which is so important for the development of vaccines, for example, this is something which affects the lives and helps each and everyone of us in these present times.

Antony explained it so well that we could understand how it all happened !!

A truly wonderful meeting!

Our July meeting was a talk by Mike Luff on 'American Riverboats'.

This gave us an insight into how the first wooden boats were made and put to use on mainly the great Mississippi River, and continued through the ages and development to the present day Steamboats that we know now.



Our annual BBQ was held on August 5th on a perfect sunny warm evening, and there were 33 of us - the Ladies, some husbands and partners and a few friends.

We all tucked into a great BBQ of chicken, beef burgers and sausages, all expertly cooked by Jim, Laurence and Simon. The Committee Ladies had made some delicious salads and other things; wine, beer and soft drinks



flowed and all was rounded off with some tasty desserts. Many thanks to the chefs and the Ladies.

We were all outside on the terrace and grassed area till well after the sun had gone down - another great event enjoyed by all !!



Future speaker meetings in September, October and November are on topics on 'Biscuits of Reading', the 'Commonwealth War Graves Commission', and 'Tales of Cinderella' (a surprise).

The December meeting will once again be our Christmas Party, with a Secret Santa, Christmas music, and the usual wonderful buffet all provided by the Ladies, and mulled wine.

This will complete another very busy and very interesting year.

Our planned monthly walks in June, July and August did not take place as the weather has really been far too hot. Hopefully from April next year we will resume our walks.

We meet every 1st Wednesday of the month at the village hall, 7.30 for a 7.45pm start, with speakers and events commencing soon after 8pm.

Shirley Warner

0118 9789124 or 07949 234085

shirleyannwarner@gmail.com

Friendship Alliance

PROMOTING FRIENDSHIP IN WOKINGHAM BOROUGH



The Friendship Alliance: Helping Wokingham Borough Stay Connected

A friendly chat over a cup of coffee might seem like a small thing, but it can make a huge difference to someone's day.

Across Wokingham Borough, hundreds of residents are discovering new friendships, local activities and welcoming community spaces through the Friendship Alliance, a partnership led by The Link Visiting Scheme alongside Age UK Berkshire, Involve Community Services and Wokingham Volunteer Centre. Together, we're working to reduce loneliness and help people feel more connected to their communities.

One of our most popular initiatives is the growing network of Friendship Tables. Hosted in cafés, libraries, churches and community venues across the borough, these are informal spaces where anyone can drop in, enjoy a drink and a chat, and meet new people. There is no membership, no commitment and no pressure. Just a warm welcome and friendly conversation. The borough now has more than 65 Friendship Table venues, providing opportunities to connect every day of the week.

As one local resident shared: "It's not an exaggeration to say it's changed my life."

The Friendship Alliance also publishes a free newsletter packed with local events, activities, social groups, wellbeing opportunities and community news. Whether you're looking for something new to try, supporting an older relative, or simply want to know what's happening locally, the newsletter is a great way to stay informed and connected.



Friendship and community matter at every age. If you'd like to find your nearest Friendship Table, explore local opportunities or sign up for the newsletter, visit

www.linkvisiting.org/friendship-alliance



Because nobody in Wokingham should have to feel alone.

Quiz Answers

10. Apple Computers
 9. James Hunt
 8. Montreal
 7. James Callaghan
 6. Dennis Howell
 - Roddick)
 5. The Body Shop (Anita 'Save Your Kisses for Me'
 4. Brotherhood of Man
 - Montgomery (Monty)
 3. Viscount Bernard
 2. John Curry
 1. Bahrain
- lot it turns out.
What happened in 1976? Quite a

side.
and Barkham Road on the west
on the corner of Bearwood Road
helping their project. This one is
One of Thames Water's markings
Where in Barkham?

8. Yemen
7. United Arab Emirates
6. Qatar
5. Oman
4. Kuwait
3. Jordan
2. Iraq
1. Bahrain
they are:
neighbours. In alphabetical order
Saudi Arabia has eight
Neighbours



The Wokingham Men's Shed is one of several hundred Men's Shed's across the UK, and like others, our focus as a charity is to encourage typically retired men to become more socially engaged by providing a collaborative workshop in which they can meet and socialise. The idea of the Shed is to give our members a focus of attention on which to collaborate. In our case it is primarily woodworking projects, and we make small projects either for ourselves or for local schools and charities. In the past we've made everything from garden planters to potting tables, and from children's mud kitchens to large notice boards for local parks.

Each day that we're open, which is currently Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, we start with a sit down around our communal table with a cup of tea, and chat about anything that comes up, whether its the latest political news or maybe a particular project we're working on. There would typically be six to eight of us in the Shed on any particular day, and through regular interaction we've made friends among ourselves. We have an active WhatsApp group to help us stay in touch outside the Shed, and many of us have engaged in activities such as bike riding or other hobbies with each other beyond the Shed itself. We also have an active Facebook page to keep in touch with our local community.

By collaborating on projects in the Shed we help each other to learn new skills, to experiment with woodworking techniques, and of course to contribute to our local community. Many of our members have expressed how important the Shed is to their wellbeing and sense of purpose, as well as in some cases to just getting them out of the armchair and out of the house.

At last count we have about 48 members, some of whom come to the Shed every day that we're open, while others might come once per week or perhaps less frequently. Every summer we have a picnic set up for all members, and every Christmas the Shed hosts a Christmas lunch.

We've been established now for about six years, and are looking forward to many more years of working



together, having a laugh together and helping to support our wider community.

If you would like to find out more then please visit our website or email us

<http://www.wokinghammensshed.org.uk/>
chairman@wokinghammensshed.org.uk



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DESIGN FOR PRINT AND WEB
GO WITH THE MO!

CROWTHORNE Symphony ORCHESTRA

The orchestra's Summer Concert was a resounding success, with a capacity audience who were clearly delighted with our performance. It was a very hot day, but we survived the afternoon rehearsal and concert and many folk felt it was one of our best ever.

The new season of concerts is sure to be popular with orchestra members as well as our regular audience. In November we will be playing Dukas' 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice', which some people may recall from the 1940 animated Disney film 'Fantasia'. I'm old enough to remember seeing this lovely film in the cinema when I was a child, and the music certainly conjures up the scene of the young apprentice using a spell to enchant a broomstick to do his job of washing the floor – and of course it gets totally out of hand, as the apprentice has no idea how to stop the spell! Paul Dukas was a French composer (1865-1935) and a contemporary of Debussy. Although he composed many other works, it is this masterpiece for which he is chiefly remembered. I am sure we will have fun playing this.

We don't often find ourselves playing or listening to Mexican music. Danzón No.2 by Arturo Márquez was largely unknown beyond Latin America until it was made popular by the Simon Bolívar Youth Orchestra, when they performed it under their conductor, Gustavo Dudamel, during their tour of Europe in 2007. Márquez (b.1950) however, is widely recognised as one of the most important Mexican composers of his generation. Danzónes, as the name suggests, are Latin American dances and an important part of the folklore of the Mexican state of Veracruz, and

those by Márquez are used world-wide in ballet productions and Latin ballroom dancing. This piece is bound to be an audience pleaser!

It is rare for the tuba to feature as a solo instrument but 'Anton Lakes Pulse' by the talented Spanish composer Àngel García Martínez, was specially written for, and dedicated to, his friend Jonathan Hodgetts. This is not quite a world premiere, as although Jonathan is our regular tuba player, he is well known in the 'brass' community locally and beyond, and this beautifully melodic piece was first performed by the Beenham Wind Orchestra in April 2025. Anton Lakes is a nature reserve just north of Andover in the Test Valley and fed by the River Anton, and this lyrical symphonic poem captures the peaceful atmosphere in a delightful and unexpected way. I am sure we will all enjoy this unusual piece of music.

The other work in the concert programme is the popular 'Planets Suite' by Holst. As usual, tickets are available via our website.

The orchestra has more than 60 regular members rehearsing weekly on Mondays in term time from 7.45-10pm at St Crispin's School, Wokingham. If you would like to join us, do get in touch. Competent string players are always welcome and other players depending on vacancies.

Our website has information about concerts, and a link to the orchestra's eNewsletter which has more about us, our concert programmes and workshops, as well as special offers on tickets.

www.crowthorneorchestra.com

Chris Gadsby



**Wokingham
Choral Society**

Join Wokingham Choral Society for our thrilling 75th Anniversary Season. Come to our Open Rehearsal on Thursday 10th September 7.30 - 9.45pm at the Emmbrook Senior School, RG41 1JP.

This term we're singing the Stanford Mass in G and Rutter's Magnificat, in preparation for our first concert of the season at All Saints Church Wokingham on Saturday 7th November. Music will be provided at the Open Rehearsal.

membership@wokingham-choral-society.org

<https://www.wokingham-choral-society.org.uk/Visit-a-rehearsal>



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Thursday 9:30 & 10:45



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Newsletter Contributions

We welcome contributions to this newsletter either on a one-off basis, occasional or regular. We are keen to publicise any charity or events that may be of interest to Barkham residents. Please send them to the Newsletter Editor at newsletter@barkham.org.uk by the deadlines shown below.

Issue	Deadline	Distribution
Spring	13 th February	early March
Summer	8 th May	early June
Autumn	14 th August	early September
Winter	13 th November	early December

These are the second Fridays in February, May, August and November

Advertising

The newsletter is produced quarterly. The Spring issue is sent to 900+ households in Barkham, and the other three to the households who are paid-up BVRA members, which is currently 500+.

We offer four sizes of adverts which are shown in mm. The prices below are cover a whole year's advertising in our four issues.

Format	Advert size	Internal Pages	Back Page
Credit Card	60 x 50	£20.00	£30.00
Quarter Page	124 x 104	£50.00	£75.00
Half Page	190 x 130	£100.00	£150.00
Full Page	190 x 270	£200.00	£300.00

Please contact the Newsletter Editor to discuss your needs and supply your copy to newsletter@barkham.org.uk by the deadlines above.

Membership

Membership of the BVRA costs £3 per year and entitles you to receive four issues of this magazine.

To join please make your payment using one of the following ways:

1. By Direct Debit: set up using the link below

<https://barkham.org.uk/bvra/bvra-membership>



All direct debits are fully covered under the UK Direct Debit scheme.

2. By Bank Transfer: email us at membership@barkham.org.uk for details.
3. By cash, drop off your payment at one of our collection points around the village. Contact us at membership@barkham.org.uk for details.

Website

<https://barkham.org.uk>



BVRA EVENTS

Quiz Night - 24th October

Carols in the Park - 11th December

USEFUL CONTACTS

Barkham Parish Council

2nd Tuesday @ 19:30, no meeting in August
Held at Arborfield Green Community Centre
clerk@barkhamparish.gov.uk
<https://barkhamparish.gov.uk>

St James Church, Barkham

<https://www.abch.org.uk>

Arborfield Gardening Association

Jan Heard
janaheard@btinternet.com

Bearwood Primary School

<https://www.bearwood-pri.wokingham.sch.uk/web/>

The Bull at Barkham

Closed again!

The Coombes CE Primary School

<https://www.thecoombes.com>

Crowthorne Orchestra

<https://www.crowthorneorchestra.com/>
secretary@crowthorneorchestra.com

Finchampstead Flower Club

Fourth Monday @ 20:00
Held at California Ratepayers Hall
<https://bbandoflowers.org.uk/clubs/finchampstead/>

Loddon Valley Ramblers

Walks on Sundays, Tuesdays & Thursdays
<https://www.lvra.org.uk/>

Sing for your Self (term time)

Tuesdays @ 13:00
Arborfield Village Hall
www.singforyourself.co.uk

Trinity Concert Band

<https://www.trinityband.co.uk>

Please contact the editor to add or change the information on this page newsletter@barkham.org.uk

The **BVRA Privacy Policy** can be viewed at the foot of the Home page of the website, www.barkham.org.uk. Email addresses provided by members will be used only for BVRA communications or to provide a receipt of their annual subscription.

Contact the Webmaster to view the details we hold, to amend them, or opt out at any time. Email: webmaster@barkham.org.uk

The views expressed in this Newsletter, unless signed by a BVRA committee member, are not necessarily those of the Barkham Village Residents' Association.

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BARKHAM VILLAGE HALL

Bookings <https://hallbookingonline.com/barkham>

Art Class

Wednesdays @ 19:30
Kay Young - kaycatlady65@gmail.com
Jean Kidwell - jean.kidwell@outlook.com
0118 9629076, 07952 416383

Barkham Ladies Social Club

1st Wednesday @ 19:30
Shirley Warner 0118 978 9124
shirleyannwarner@gmail.com

Bonsai Club

2nd Wednesday @ 19:30
www.berkshirebonsai.co.uk

Brownies

Wednesdays @ 17:00 (term time)

CWC - Coombes Woodland Committee

clerk@barkhamparish.gov.uk

Dinton Walking Group Social

2nd Tuesday @ 19:30 (not June or December)
dintonwalkinggrp@yahoo.co.uk

Dog Training

Mondays @18:30
Lesley Slade 07885 899073

Home Educational Teens

Tuesday @14:00 - 16:00
Paul Bagley
Paulbagley@rocketmail.com

Martial Arts Class

Thursdays @ 19:00
Combat Academy UK
Andy Holmes 07783 206737
<https://facebook.com/CombatAcademyUKBarkham>

Pilates Class

Mondays @ 10:00 and
Thursdays @ 18:00
Vicky's Pilates 07729 783240

Beginners Pilates Class

Tuesday & Thursday @ 9:30 & 10:45
<https://www.pawprintspilatescake.co.uk>
hello@pawprintspilatescake.co.uk
Trudy 07503 746253

Rainbows

Tuesdays @ 16:30 (term time)

Simply Fit

Saturdays @08:30
Melissa Buckle
melissa@simplyfitberkshire.co.uk

The Sun Room Band

1st, 3rd & 4th Tuesdays @20:00
Keith 07771 974796
keith.hayden.uk@ntlworld.com
www.lemonrock.com/thesunroomband

Sunday Club

Sundays @ 09:00
Julian Bidgood
office@abch.org.uk

U3A Music Groups

Group 1: 2nd & 4th Mondays @ 14:30
Group 2: 1st & 3rd Mondays @ 13:30

Youth Club

Fridays @ 19:00
Rev Iain Lingwood
iain.lingwood@abch.org.uk

Arborfield Tree Care

The Tree Company Others Look ^{Up} To



office@arborfieldtreecare.org 0118 976 1000

Arborfield Log Supplies

The Household Name For Firewood



info@arborfieldlogsupplies.co.uk 0118 976 1156



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