

# The Villager

**A Magazine for Avening,  
Cherington and Nags Head**

**February 2026**

*[editors@villagermag.online](mailto:editors@villagermag.online)*

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# February 2026

Welcome to the first edition of the Villager for 2026 - we are just about getting used to saying that date! We hope everyone had a wonderful festive season and also a good rest. There were certainly quite a few fun things going on in the villages over Christmas and the New Year season, as you can see from some of the photos in our centre pages.

Resolutions are a common theme at the start of a new year, and some of you may be thinking of getting more exercise by joining a gym, in which case you might be interested in what one of our new advertisers, Sportily, has to offer. We have welcomed a few new advertisers in recent months and we hope people will try to support them whenever possible. While we have help from organisations like the parish councils and churches, The Villager would not exist without the revenue we get from the advertisers, so do let them know if you contact them having seen their advert in the magazine.

Another resolution for some people might be to try to alleviate chronic pain, in which case a new initiative in the Community Café, called the 'Hope Café' may be for you. Run by two well qualified local practitioners, they are offering free consultations to anyone interested (see page 30 for details).

And remember, its only about 325 day to Christmas!

*The Villager Editors*

## The Villager Magazine

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## Photographs in The Villager Magazine

Many thanks to **Gillian Redpath** for our cover photo of a winter sunrise over the Avening stream. Please keep sending us your photographs, especially since all the images will be in colour in the downloadable version of the Magazine.

[editors@villagermag.online](mailto:editors@villagermag.online)

*The Editors do not guarantee the accuracy of the information contained in this publication or accept responsibility for errors or omissions or their consequences. Opinions expressed by contributors to this publication are not necessarily those of the Editors.*

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## VILLAGE & AREA WEB SITES

**Avening Parish Council: [www.avening-pc.gov.uk](http://www.avening-pc.gov.uk)**

**Cherington Parish Council: [cheringtonpc.org.uk](http://cheringtonpc.org.uk).**

**Cherington Village: [www.cheringtonvillage.co.uk](http://www.cheringtonvillage.co.uk)**

**Cotswold District Council: [www.cotswold.gov.uk](http://www.cotswold.gov.uk)**

**Facebook: Avening      Instagram: #aveningvillage**

# Avening and Cherington Churches



February often feels like a month suspended between seasons. Christmas is long past, spring still feels far off, and the world can seem grey and heavy. Yet in gardens, churchyards, and roadsides, small signs of change are already appearing: snowdrops, crocuses, and daffodil shoots quietly doing their work beneath the surface. Some first appeared in December; others are only just emerging.

These small green shoots remind us that hope does not always arrive loudly or all at once. Often, it begins almost unnoticed, growing slowly in the midst of ordinary days. Signs of emerging hope feel particularly fitting as I write this in January, in the aftermath of the devastating fires in Brimscombe and, just yesterday, Aston Down.

All of us have been touched by these events and their tragic consequences. Whether we knew the families personally or not, the news has rippled out through the local area. Yet even in the midst of deep grief and despair, I have seen signs of hope – green shoots emerging from frozen earth. These include the GoFundMe page raising £100,000 in a single day and, at the time of writing, standing at over £441,000; the many candles lit in Nu, Eve, and Ohner's memory at Holy Trinity; the crocheted flowers; and the charities and organisations working together to support those affected. These are signs of a community holding one another in care, and signs of hope we can hold on to in this time of grief.

In the church, February begins with the festival of Candlemas, when we remember Jesus' parents bringing him to the Temple to give thanks for his birth. It is a day when we celebrate the light of God's love shining in the face of a child. In the middle of winter's cold and gloom, Candlemas shines brightly, drawing us in just as the star once drew the magi to worship a newborn king.

Candlemas proclaims that hope is something we receive together. In the Temple, a tiny child is held by his parents, while two elders, Anna and Simeon, recognise in him the fulfilment of God's promise. The very young and the very old stand side by side, bound together by hope, gratitude, and faith.

As we light candles at Candlemas, we do not pretend that darkness has gone away. Instead, we affirm that light shines even within it – quietly, persistently, and often through one another. In this season, may we continue to notice the small signs of hope around us, and may we keep standing together, across generations, as bearers of light in a world that still longs for it.

With every blessing,

*Revd Natalie Jennings*



## Donations to Avening Church

Donations towards the upkeep and running of Avening Church can be made at any time either by using the QR code here or on the card machine just inside the church door.

## Church Services

	Avening	Cherington
Sunday 1st February	10am – Morning Prayer	10am – Holy Communion
Sunday 8th February	10am – Holy Communion	
Sunday 15th February		10am – Holy Communion
Wednesday 18th February	Ash Wednesday Services 8.30am – Holy Trinity Amberley 7pm – Holy Trinity Amberley 7.30pm – Holy Trinity Minchinhampton	
Sunday 22nd February	10am – Holy Communion	
Sunday 1st March	10am – Morning Prayer	10am – Holy Communion

Please note: there will be no Evening Prayer in Avening during the winter months

# ASH WEDNESDAY

18th February 2026



**8.30am**  
Holy Communion for  
Ash Wednesday  
(Common Worship)  
at Holy Trinity Amberley



**7pm**  
A Reflective Ash  
Wednesday Communion  
at Holy Trinity Amberley

*there will be an opportunity to receive the imposition of  
ashes in both services*

## Avening Village Notice Board

The village notice board, on the side of the Memorial Hall, is a good way of publicising village events and items of local information. Posters, ideally size A4 or A5, can be put up for you on this board. They can be delivered to John and Sandra Hetterley, 2, Orchard Field or given to them directly. They will be taken down once they are out of date. Other posters may be removed and recycled once they are faded or to make space for others.

# Gilian's Poem of the Month

## The Awakening Earth

Earth yawns, and opening drowsy eyes, sees sunshine shyly peeping,  
As all of Nature re-awakes from long, dark days of sleeping  
Sometimes pale sunshine catches a stray cloud passing by,  
And paints a shining rainbow to arch across the sky.

Sometimes the dull, dark skies are rent with cloudy billows sweeping  
Then, with skies now blue, sun, smiling through, bids rain clouds cease  
their weeping.

Gaunt, naked trees sway in the breeze, eager to don Spring dresses,  
As weeping willow leads the way with flowing golden tresses.  
And all the birds are busy too, gathering moss and sticks  
To build their nests, and lay their eggs, and rear their fluffy chicks.

From folds and fields across the land the new-born lambs are crying,  
Their plaintive calls borne on the breeze which round the trees is sighing.  
In winding lanes on hedgerow banks small buds and shoots appear,  
Shrugging-off thin coats of snow, knowing that Spring is near.

Snowdrop, primrose, celandine, and bulb's green spears are thrusting  
Up through the cold and wintry earth, the weak, soft sunshine trusting.

For Spring is waiting in the wings, ready to flower anew,  
To bring forth Nature's beauty, and turn grey skies into blue.  
It's a time for new beginnings, a fresh start for all the earth,  
As Nature re-awakens, and brings the Spring to birth.....

*Gilian Bulmer-Davison*

## Puzzle Corner

### Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contain all of the digits 1 - 9.  
If you use logic you can solve the puzzle without guesswork.

**Answers on page 34**

1				8			3
9		6		3			7
	5		7			1	
5				1	3		6
	9	4		5	7		
1	3	9				2	
	2		5	6			
9			3	6	7		
3		7				4	

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# Dates for your Diary

Come along and join in the fun at any of the events below - everyone is always welcome! Both the Memorial Hall & Social Club can also be hired for private functions

Date	Event	Location	Time
Monday 16th - Friday 20th February	School Half-term		
Monday 16th February	1st Lent meeting	See below	6:30pm
Tuesday February 17th	Hope Café in the Community Café (see page 30)	Avening Social Club	10-11am
Sunday June 7th	Church Fete	Holy Cross Churchyard	tba

## Avening Festive Windows



Avening Festive Windows was a huge success! Rectory Lane and beyond was a winter wonderland with so much creativity and sparkle. It's certainly brought some extra cheer and imagination to a walk around the village. Thank you to everyone who took part. If you have a picture of your window, please send it in to the Villager for the next edition for everyone to enjoy.

*Angela Smith*

## Lent Meetings

The days will be lengthening this month - a good time to get ready for Spring.

Everyone is welcome to join in the Lent Meetings being held on Monday evenings in the weeks before Easter Sunday. Do feel free to come to any or all of these special occasions. You do not need to be a churchgoer to be welcome at the discussions.

We will alternate between Cas in Nags Head or Elizabeth on Avening High Street.

The evenings begin with a simple supper and a glass of wine as we explore a path to a deeper understanding of our Christianity. It will be an opportunity to think outside the box and refresh our spiritual life.

The first meeting will be on Monday 16th February at 6:30pm. We will supply the booklets, and it would be a help if you let us know you are coming so we can prepare enough food. Please reply to Elizabeth ([buchanan.el@gmail.com](mailto:buchanan.el@gmail.com)) or text her on 07779799945.

# District Councillor's Report



My January newsletter is back to the more usual format following the 'excitement' of the Local Plan in December – thanks to those that attended the public event in Tetbury, and I hope everyone took the opportunity to complete the consultation document.

**Cotswold District Council (CDC):** There was no full Council in December, and I'm away for the January meeting, but the **Overview and Scrutiny (O&S)** meeting was quite lively! The Service Performance report for Q2 (July-September) made reasonable reading, but I asked for an update on progress in the Planning Enforcement team and their progress on reducing the backlog of cases – this will come as a written update to me. The Financial Performance Report was also good overall, largely thanks to the prudent hand of our Chief Financial Officer.

We then reviewed the Waste Fleet Replacement Report – There is an established need to replace the 31 ageing dustbin lorries in the next couple of years, as they are increasingly unreliable and cause 'service failures' (missed collections) when they break down. I had hoped that a review of the service would have been undertaken in good time to feed into the report, or at least some discussions in readiness for **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** so that we would at least be aligned with our neighbours, but unfortunately the way our rubbish and recycling is collected was covered off in a couple of sentences and will remain the same for the foreseeable future – so we are stuck with the grubby white sacks for plastics and the completely unsuitable blue bags for ever increasing quantities of card!

The bigger debate was around how to reduce carbon emissions from the fleet. The Cotswolds isn't suited to the current level of technology around electric vehicles, so other than one 'test' EV for Cirencester the rest will be diesel. The solution was to start using biofuels or HVOs. These are made from waste oils such as chip fat but often include palm oil or other specially grown crops. The latter were not palatable to many of us on the committee due to the environmental impacts and the loss of agriculture for food. As a result, there were only two votes in favour of adopting the policy, but the Cabinet will ultimately decide on any actions, or audit of the fuels supplied.

**Litter:** Litter is prominent at this time of year due to the lack of foliage in the verges, so in Avening I organised a small and targeted litter pick along the Nailsworth Road to collect the accumulation of bottles, tins, and especially lighter fluid bottles which have become a big problem lately. We achieved 12 dustbin bags full in an hour!



**Roads** are obviously suffering through the winter, so please continue to report potholes via Fix My Street. I continue to work with the local Highways Management to highlight areas of particular concern.

**Councillor Tony Slater**

Cotswold District Council, Representing Grumbolds Ash with Avening.  
email: [Tony.slater@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:Tony.slater@cotswold.gov.uk) Tel: 07793669930

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TOWN HALL NAILSWORTH

# Letter from Chairman of Avening Parish Council



**New Year already!** Best wishes to everyone in the village for 2026. From the perspective of the Avening Parish Council we are looking forward to continuing to improve the assets of the village with the aim of continually working towards making Avening a village that is both pleasant and serves the needs of the community.

**Proposed South Cotswold Local Plan:** Councillor Tony Slater will be publishing his update in a forthcoming edition of The Villager on the latest available decisions that will have been made at Cotswold District Council level plus any influencing directives from National Government that may be forthcoming.

**Local government Re-organization:** As I mentioned in the December edition of The Villager, the final decision rests with the Government and should be announced sometime in the months towards the Summer.

**Road Works and Temporary Traffic Lights:** The traffic lights at Longford's Mill are now working as they should, after what has been a lengthy period of uncertainty as to whether or not they could be trusted.

Elsewhere around the village there have been an assortment of temporary traffic lights operating whilst work was being carried out on repairing gas mains, burst and leaking pipes and drains as well as the inevitable reoccurring spate of potholes. The use of temporary traffic lights, particularly those that were on a four- way system combined with their accompanying 'Road Ahead Closed' 'signs added much turmoil to pre-Christmas shopping trips.

I have had a recent meeting with representatives from Highways to discuss the very poor standard of the work that has been carried out. Some of the work was carried out just prior to the Christmas break; the priority of the various contractors seemed geared to 'getting it done and home early for Christmas'. The net result is that some of the work will have to be revisited. Personally, I think it demonstrates that if contractors are continually employed from outside of the county, then quality of work suffers and value for money is non-existent and the job becomes secondary to the whims of the contractors.

**Public Parking:** It has been a policy of the local police to turn a blind eye to vehicles parked in a untidy or obstructive manner, on the premise that Cotswold villages generally have older narrower streets which are not best suited to the size and numbers of modern cars. The police at this present time do not have a statutory responsibility to prosecute offending drivers. However, there is a proposal afoot to change the law and come into line with Northern Ireland and Scotland where such antisocial parking is an offence punishable by fines and/or penalty points on licences. This change in legislation could be introduced in the next few months, so please spread the word that parking on, or partially on, the pavements should be avoided, and acknowledge the safety needs of pedestrians, especially those with prams and children, and wheelchair users. Similarly,

please ensure that any over hanging hedges are cut back before the nesting season has started.

**Memorial Hall:** After nearly three years of negotiations, we are on the verge of signing a new lease with the Athelstan Trust for the school to continue the use of the hall and kitchens. This will be welcomed by all parties involved as a positive move to ensure the future of the school and its valued presence in the village community.

**Playing Field:** The Parish Council have placed orders for new benches and tables to be in place in time to enjoy the better weather when it arrives.

A reminder: Signs will soon be in place to alert users that surveillance cameras are in situ. The aim is to ensure the field is a safe, clean and respected village amenity.

We are also arranging a safety inspection of the trees in the field to avoid any foreseeable accidents.

**Christmas Lights:** My thanks to Geoff for his work in putting up the Christmas tree and lights. Despite the very windy weather it was a good to see so many families turn out to join in the switching on of the lights accompanied by the Avening Singers.

**Patrick**

***Patrick Mulligan, Chairman, Avening Parish Council Tel 07713 068436***



## Church Floodlighting

The church was floodlit on the following dates :

### **16 December**

In loving memory of Richard Chapman whose birthday it would have been today. Missed but still loved by all who knew you. Kris, Rob, Kane, Eloise, Ralph & Margaret.

### **28 December**

In loving memory of a beautiful Mum, Grandma & Sister – Angela Kerry on what would have been her birthday. Missed so very much and loved every single day. Kris, Rob, Kane, Eloise, Ralph & Margaret.

### **11 January**

In loving memory of Derick Woodman. One year has passed since we had to say goodbye. Always loved – always missed – always remembered – today and always.

Love from Julie & family.

### **19 February**

In loving memory of Michael Powell. Though born a man of Kent, he was always grateful to Avening and the Holy Cross Church where he was married again and is buried. With undying love from Thelma, Kevin and Columba.

The church looks beautiful at night when floodlit. If you would like to have this in memory of a loved one, or to celebrate a special event, contact **Nicholas Winkfield on 07885 139275**. The cost is £10 for 2 hours.

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## Avening Church Fete and Dog Show

### June 7th 2026

The fete is back this year on **Sunday 7th June**, lots of old and new will be enjoyed on the day!

Calling all crafters/sellers, if you would like a table for the afternoon please contact [stephanie2432@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stephanie2432@hotmail.co.uk), the cost will be £20.



Along with the Dog Show there will be the Art Exhibition in the church, Duck Races, Raffle, Bottle Tombola, Cakes, and many other Stalls.

We welcome the WI and their wonderful afternoon teas and the Playgroup with much for the children to enjoy!



More info nearer the time but please **SAVE THE DATE** and keep anything that you might like to donate on the day. Offers of help are also encouraged, we are always grateful for all the help we receive.

*Stephanie Hamilton, Nick Winkfield, Steve Uzzell, Rev. Natalie.*

## A Bite to Eat?

**Afternoon Tea, Christening Party or other social event ?  
Arranging a Group Lunch,**

Avening WI 'Bite to Eat' scheme may be able to assist with your catering needs.



We can provide and serve a selection of freshly prepared sandwiches, scones and cakes; a fork or finger buffet; or a two course meal.

**For prices and any further details :**

Please telephone Liz on **01453 833803** or e-mail [lizknowles@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lizknowles@hotmail.co.uk)

# Avening WI

If you happen to pass the Memorial Hall on the second Thursday of the month between 7.30 and 9.30pm and hear a happy buzz of conversation or laughter, it may be that you would like to be part of that? Avening WI have been meeting there for the past 95 years and continue to provide a welcoming space for all women, with a host of different activities and stimulating talks. So let's de-bunk some of the myths that might hold you back:



## 1. Only posh, rich people join the WI!

**FALSE:** Members come from all social backgrounds, and our financial situations vary. Whether you are a posh millionaire or stony broke, you're welcome to join.

## 2. It's a religious group!

**FALSE:** The WI isn't political or religious. Everyone is welcome.

## 3. You have to make jam and cakes!

**FALSE:** but feel free to do so in the privacy of your home and members will enjoy your efforts.

## 4. It's cliquey!

**TRUE:** if cliquey means we look out for each other. We're one big group of friends. All our activities are open to all members.

## 5. It's for old people!

**FALSE:** It's open to all females over 18.

## 6. You have to pose naked for a calendar!

**FALSE:** so far, but if you're keen .....

Our enthusiastic committee have an exciting programme of talks, visits and activities planned for 2026 so come along and give it a go. Our next meeting is on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30 when Andy Cole of Vintopia will be guiding us through The World of Wines. Visitors and prospective members will receive a warm welcome.

In addition to our regular activities we support the local community in a variety of ways and recently we were approached by the National Trust to help with a community effort to craft snowdrops for a display at Newark Park during their 'Celebration of Snowdrops', which runs from 31<sup>st</sup> January



to 1<sup>st</sup> March. One of our talented members, Elizabeth Oliver, designed the patterns and members have been busy knitting and sewing snowdrops.

Following our successful Village Quiz we were able to donate £200 to Louise from Longfield Hospice and we collected a huge amount of Christmas gifts for Stroud Women's Refuge and the Food Bank.

For more information email [aveningwi@gmail.com](mailto:aveningwi@gmail.com) or check out our Facebook page Avening WI or website [aveningwi.wordpress.com](http://aveningwi.wordpress.com)

**Helen Haiselden** ( with thanks to Jacky Hoskins, Nailsworth WI, for some of the wording!)

For more information email [aveningwi@gmail.com](mailto:aveningwi@gmail.com) or check out our Facebook page at Avening WI.

# AVENING CINEMA CLUB



**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>  
February 2026**

Doors open 7pm. Film starts 7.30pm. Interval halfway  
Please feel free to bring refreshments

**AVENING MEMORIAL HALL**  
Admission £7



OLIVIA COLMAN      THE ROSES      BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MEET THE PARENTS AND THE WRITER OF POOR THINGS

THIS MARRIAGE  
AIN'T BIG ENOUGH  
FOR THE BOTH OF THEM



# Avening Art Show

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**SUNDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JUNE**  
**HOLY CROSS CHURCH**  
**More details to follow**



# Avening School

## New Beginnings at Avening School

The New Year has brought with it a new teacher. We said a fond farewell to our wonderful Mrs. Stafford at the end of last term and we have welcomed Miss Yarham to the Owls class (y5/6) and our school community. We wish her a wonderful experience teaching at Avening School.

While the rest of the school visited the theatre before Christmas, the Owls class have their trip to look forward to at the end of January when they will travel to Stratford upon Avon to watch the RSC stage adaptation of Roald Dahl's classic book, The BFG.

With a new term also comes new class topics. The Eagles are enjoying exploring traditional tales for their term topic, while the Kestrels are focusing on geography as well as history in their topic on Saints, Dragons and a Castle. Up in the Hawks, Rivers and Mountains is their focus for the term while the Owls will be travelling back in time in their exploration of the Mayan Civilisation.

After-school clubs this term include Ukulele, Recorder, STEM and Art as well as Tag rugby and Football club. The Year 6 pupils will also be completing their Bike-ability cycle training.

It is time again for the annual Oracy competition where children are encouraged to write speeches about anything they choose. Each class will then select a Star Speaker who will deliver their speeches in a celebration assembly in front of the whole school and also parents/carers, before going on to represent the school in the next stage of the competition.

Looking ahead, we are gearing up for World Book Day which takes place at the beginning of March. We also have our Young Voices concert to look forward to as it was rescheduled from the beginning of January due to heavy snow forecast for Birmingham.

If you have a pre-school child at home, join us on Friday afternoons in the school garden for our Fledgling's outdoor session 2-3pm. Contact the school office for more details. Please note these sessions are for children aged 0-4 and their parents/guardians.

**Alex Adcock**

*For more information about this busy place of learning, please see our school website:  
[www.avening.glos.sch.uk](http://www.avening.glos.sch.uk)*

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# New Term 'To Do' List

- Buy new uniform/work wear/shoes
- Pay for school trip
- New work diary
- New books!
- Arrange bus fares
- Laptop? > get necessary equipment!

**ACEEF!\***

\*The Avening Church of England Education Fund have the means to financially support the education of Avening residents up to age 25. To apply for a grant please contact 01453 833016 or email buchanan.el@gmail.com

**Have a look at the new website for the Avening Church of England Education Fund!**

**You will find information on the charity and what the grants include (and what is not included) at [www.aceef.org.uk](http://www.aceef.org.uk)**

# Christmas in Avening



**Christmas celebrations in Avening:  
The Church Nativity play, festive  
windows in Rectory Lane, carol  
singing in the Community Café and  
lighting the Christmas Tree**

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# Avening Community Café

Enjoy good company, crafts, delicious home-made cakes and a drink at your Community Café—Every Tuesday morning in the Social Club from 9 – 12 am. Mobile Post Office on site from 9:30 – 11:30.

Wishing all our customers a very Happy New Year!

The Café was buzzing with people enjoying themselves before Christmas. Wreath making with Wendy was very popular and produced a range of different designs – some no doubt on display around the village. We were also treated to Christmas carols by the Avening Singers and music from Mel at the Christmas Café.

We are grateful to Michael for creating some gorgeous rag rugs over the past few years and look forward to new ideas for smaller projects such as small rugs and cushion covers. We are also keen to promote other crafts or hobbies – perhaps a regular puzzle table, so any suggestions would be welcome.



Advance notice – the Café AGM will be held in the Social Club lounge on Monday 9th March at 6.30 for 7pm start. Enjoy a glass of bubbly, reflect on the past year and give us your thoughts for next year. All welcome.

## February Dates:

- 3rd: Art with Mark (£3 each, all materials supplied)
- 10th: “Bring a Friend” day. Free coffee for you and a friend or new neighbour today.
- 17th: Pancake Day with the WI
  - Art with Mark (£3 each, all materials supplied)
  - The Hope Café in the lounge 10-11am
- 24th: Theme: Chinese New Year 2026 – The Year of the Horse.

Monday 9th March – Café AGM 6.30 for 7pm start.

*John Hetterley  
For Avening Community Café*

## TONY'S CHARITY QUIZ NIGHTS

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## An Intrepid Journey

Ann Tarlton wrote to us, *Two friends of mine, Jeremy and Richard, took a converted Land Rover Discovery full of medical kit to Ukraine and here is their account of the journey.*

The illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia is approaching its 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the conditions are worsening in the war zone for those defending their country, as well as for the civilians caught up in a war not of their making. International aid cannot be guaranteed and so it appears that the need to provide help is growing rather than shrinking.

Many of us feel sympathy for the Ukrainians and want to help them but it isn't easy to know where to start. Front line troops are very stretched and back up medical resources are insufficient as the situation deteriorates, over 1,000 medical facilities have been destroyed so far!

Richard Mullings and I decided to deliver his 'mature' 17 year old Land Rover Discovery full of medical kit and netting to Lviv in Ukraine in early October where the Discovery would be camouflaged and converted into a field ambulance for use on the front line. The Ukrainians need more vehicles and international support from volunteers now more than ever before. Richard and I are obviously paying ALL our own costs and donating the Discovery and its cargo but all help with donations towards buying drones and converting the Discovery etc is vital.

My wife did the same trip last year as part of a convoy of 5 vehicles under the umbrella of Driving Ukraine which has so far delivered over 300 vehicles to Lviv where they are converted for front line use. All the vehicles are camouflaged using both repainting and netting to disguise them from drones. Drone warfare being new to me, I was fascinated by the resilience and creativity of those involved in the defence of their country. We were not in a convoy but driving out as a single vehicle.

Richard and I drove 2,000 miles (via several vineyards in different countries!) before reaching the Slovakian/Ukrainian border. Our arrival there surprised the customs officer, police border guards and security boys as they had not seen Brits entering Ukraine with a full load of rather curious cargo. We did not have the relevant passes to hand and so our 14 boxes were unloaded, opened and inspected before reloading and crossing no man's land – before doing exactly the same to enter Ukraine. After 4 hours we succeeded in entering the country. Crossing the country on our way to Lviv took another 3 hours via 2 more armed checkpoints before climbing the Tatra mountains and brushing the Carpathians. A relatively underpopulated, beautiful and predominantly agricultural part of the world.

Google maps navigated us to our hotel which we reached around 9.30pm having checked in we went into the town for a late dinner. Returning to the hotel we had well over 3 hours sleep before the air raid siren went off sending us down to the air raid shelter in the basement. After an uneventful hour we returned to our rooms just in time for the next siren to go off. Being extremely tired I took the view that my bedclothes were probably bombproof and stayed where I was and went back to sleep! In the morning we



met our 22 year old coordinator who said that the previous week had seen a 3 hour bombing raid on Lviv with a lot of damage and some loss of life. We weren't quite as cavalier after that!

Pauli our coordinator is a student reading engineering so no real surprise that he designs, creates and

flies drones to defend his country! The town is rather surreal as shops and markets are open with civilians and soldiers going about their normal lives – but the damaged buildings are very obvious. We were shown one of several cemeteries with over 2,000 fresh graves, each one flying a national or regimental flag and covered with fresh flowers. All incredibly moving. Our guide was a recently discharged 50 year old invalided out of the front line. Equally moving were the churches where funerals of local soldiers were being held whilst we were there.

We asked for a suggestion for a restaurant that evening which was a great success! Shots of vodka on arrival, more at our table in the cellars of an old house and yet more sent over by a neighbouring table of Swedes. They had just delivered some ambulances and fire engines – as they had done regularly since 2022. We asked them to join us and after many bottles of everything and raucous laughter we became firm friends agreeing to meet somewhere, sometime in the future! Other countries near the Russian border take the potential threat very seriously and support Ukraine to show Putin that there is serious resistance to his empire building.

Luckily no sirens that night!

We handed over the Discovery in the morning and were driven to the Polish border which took only 3 hours to cross, then apart from a rather offhand luggage check we were safely in Poland. The following day we flew back from Krakow.

The Ukrainians we met were all delightful and very appreciative of what we were doing. Understandably they are feeling rather neglected due to Gaza being in the headlines. Their determination to resist the Russians is humbling. Their fighting ability and creativity is extraordinary, particularly their skill and understanding of drone warfare – they lead the world!

With continued support, particularly from Nato and Trump, they can certainly win. I would happily do it again.

All fingers crossed!

*Jeremy Hill*



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# Letter from Roz Savage MP



## From Winter into Spring: The Quiet Work of Staying Connected

February often feels like a month on the move. Winter has not quite loosened its grip, yet the signs of spring are unmistakable. The light lingers a little longer in the afternoons, snowdrops and crocuses appear along lanes and in churchyards, and there is a subtle sense that the year is beginning to stretch and breathe again.

I have always thought of February as a time of transition rather than pause - a moment when we begin to look outward after the inward turn of winter. In the South Cotswolds, that shift is often reflected not in large events, but in the steady rhythm of everyday life returning. Walks become a little longer, conversations linger a little more, and familiar faces start to reappear after the quieter months.

Unlike December, with its Christmas lights and packed calendars, or the summer months of fêtes and festivals, February rarely announces itself. Yet it is often during this less celebrated season that some of the most meaningful connections are made. Over the winter, and especially in recent weeks, I have been focusing on smaller, regular ways of staying in touch with people across the constituency - holding advice surgeries, visiting villages without a parish event in the diary, and spending time door-knocking in places that can easily be overlooked.



These moments are not headline-grabbing, but they are deeply rewarding. Conversations on doorsteps or in village halls tend to be thoughtful and grounded. People talk about everyday concerns, but also about what they value; their community, their surroundings, and the simple desire to feel heard and connected. Again and again, I am reminded that strong communities are built not only through big gatherings, but through consistency and presence.

This mirrors so much of what sustains village and town life more broadly. The volunteers who turn up week after week, the local groups that meet regularly rather than occasionally, and the neighbours who quietly keep an eye out for one another.

As the South Cotswolds weathers the long tail of winter, it is those small, thoughtful acts of connection that help our communities grow stronger and more resilient.

Warm wishes,  
**Roz Savage MP, South Cotswolds**  
Email: [roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk) | Call: 01285 300555

## Volunteer Trustees Needed at your Local Foodbank



Bring your passion and make real impact as a Trustee at the Foodbank in the South Cotswold! Be at the heart of our ambitious mission to end local hunger. You'll use your skills to shape strategy, champion your community, and help people in crisis - all while developing your leadership and charity experience in a supportive team.

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- No prior trustee experience needed - diverse backgrounds and fresh ideas welcome!
- We're especially keen to hear from people with insight into food poverty or charity sector, but passion and commitment matter most.

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## Hope Cafe

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## FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS AT THE GOODS SHED

**February 1** **Sound Bath Experience:** Join Rosie from Rose Seeds Alchemy for a relaxing sound experience. Experience the powerful vibrations of the gong, accompanied by crystal singing bowls, drums and chimes. Tickets in advance £25. 7.15pm

**February 7** **James Morton's Groove Den:** Join saxophone player James and his band for an evening of soul, jazz, hip-hop and tough grooving beats. Tickets in advance £16.50. 7.30pm

**February 13** **Tango Calor and Dance Workshop:** Join us for a special Valentine's Day milonga – Latin music and dance night – with Bristol's own Tango Calor. The workshop at 7pm will teach you to tango for the milonga. Tickets for both in advance £30, workshop £15, Milonga £18.50 7pm and 8pm

**February 21** **Fail Fail Fail Win!** A fun family circus show for ages 3-10 with circus performers Mark and Loz. And you'll find it's okay to fail as long as you try! Tickets in advance £12 (family of four £40) 2pm

**February 28** **The Amy Experience. Back to Black:** A tribute to the often misunderstood and sadly missed Amy Winehouse. The show is modelled on her 2007 show 'I told You I was Trouble'. Tickets in advance £25. 7.30pm.

For more details of our other events including film, talks, exhibitions, and afternoon tea concerts and to book tickets visit our website:  
[www.tetburygoodsshed.co.uk](http://www.tetburygoodsshed.co.uk)

### Avening Singers

....are back rehearsing in February. We'll be singing at the Tenebrae service on Good Friday, but will be practicing some jollier numbers as well. We meet every Sunday afternoon at 4pm in Avening.

All are welcome to this friendly choir - no auditions and no previous singing experience needed.

Please contact Jane (07812 137161) or Derrick (07762 702982) for more details



# Avening Playgroup

It has been lovely to welcome the children back after the Christmas holiday and it was even more exciting with the snow on the ground. Unfortunately, there was not enough snow to make any snowmen! I would also like to say a big welcome to the new children who have started this term. We hope you and your families enjoy your time at our playgroup.

During our first week back, our main focus was TRANSPORT. We looked at how far different vehicles travelled, made boats, dipped vehicles in paint to make tyre tracks and made a construction site on the tray.



With the cold weather bringing the snow and ice, we have talked about winter and what kind of weather to expect. We have made snowflakes using salt and water, made snowman collages and looked at animals and birds that live in snow and ice. The children have been colouring in lots of winter pictures and playing the winter game on the laptop. They made bird feeders with Shannon, which they have hung on the tree in the playground, to feed the birds. They have also painted robins and made robin collages.

The children also enjoyed playing with the ice, using hammers to break it up and rescue the animals frozen inside.

A big thank you to everyone who helped in the preparation for the Avening Christmas Fayre and to everyone who came to support us on the day. We really do appreciate it as this is the Playgroup's major fundraiser for the year.



We have now registered Avening Playgroup with Easyfundraising, which means that whenever you shop online with any of the 8,000+ retailers, you can receive a free donation, courtesy of the retailer you shop with and at no extra cost to you or us. If you are able to support our playgroup with this please download the Easyfundraising App and search for Avening Playgroup.

Don't forget our Stay & Play sessions on Thursdays between 9.30 and 11.00 am only £3 for an adult and child and £1.50 for each additional child. Please note, we are closed week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> February for the spring half term.

*Angie Heslop*

If you would like to know more about the playgroup and our Thursday Stay & Play session or to reserve a place for your child, please contact us on 01453 832695 on weekday mornings or email [aveningplaygroup@gmail.com](mailto:aveningplaygroup@gmail.com).

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# Puzzle Answers

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4	9	8	6	1	3	5	2	7
6	3	5	2	7	9	8	1	4
5	7	4	8	2	1	3	9	6
2	6	9	4	3	5	7	8	1
1	8	3	9	6	7	4	5	2
8	2	7	1	5	4	6	3	9
9	4	1	3	8	6	2	7	5
3	5	6	7	9	2	1	4	8

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## Five Valley Sounds – who are we?

We've been going for over 40 years and we've used reel-to-reel tapes, cassette tapes, CDs, now USB sticks and online. We are Five Valley Sounds – Stroud District's Talking Newspaper and we need you to talk about us.

Over two million people in the UK live with some sight loss; 320,000 are registered blind or partially sighted; nearly 80% of them are over 64 and every day 250 people start to lose their sight. There are also many people who cannot read print for other reasons such as after a stroke, dementia, aphasia. Talking Newspapers are a vital way for people to keep in touch with their local community.

Each week a team of Five Valley Sounds volunteers read and record a cross section of articles and notices from Stroud News & Journal. We add short stories and features of interest from different magazines too so our recordings last about 90 minutes. The recording is duplicated onto USB sticks which are then sent out, and returned, free of charge. We provide a free player to listen to the USB stick, and we show our listeners how to use it.

Listeners call us "a lifeline" and have said "if I didn't have your recordings about the local community, what would I talk about to visitors?"; "my mother was an avid reader of the SNJ before her eyesight failed – without Five Valley Sounds she'd feel isolated from the community" and "thanks very much for your stories, news, tales and cheery voices".

Why do we want you to talk about us? Because we want more listeners, otherwise we're talking to ourselves. And of course the people we are trying to reach cannot read articles like these. If you would like to listen online it's <https://bit.ly/5VSListen>

We also welcome volunteers to join our team – to help record using our specialist software, duplicate the USB sticks or read for the recording. Full training is provided and you will only be volunteering every three to four weeks.

**Please** talk to anyone you know or care for who might like to receive our completely free service, and get in touch:

[Svalleysounds@gmail.com](mailto:Svalleysounds@gmail.com) or call 07882 672 647 and leave a message.

Thank you.

Registered Charity No: 900462

*Frances Culham*



## Planning Applications & Tree Works Since the Last Issue and Parish Councils Decision New Planning Applications

### December 2025

25/03705/FUL: 78 Sandford Leaze. Erection of garden room with a raised patio area with associated works. Demolition of conservatory - Support

25/03300/FUL: Avendale 2 High Street Creation of dropped kerb and parking area with access steps and ramp – Object. The Parish Council agreed that a driveway would be advantageous to the property but the on the grounds of the proposed position was unsafe as visibility would be poor.

25/03647/COMPLY: Rudgeway Barn Compliance with conditions 9 (Drainage) and 10 (EV Charging) of permission 21/02281/FUL - Conversion of agricultural barn into dwelling – It was noted that the Parish Council objected to this conversion and have no further comment.

### January 2026

25/03907/FUL: The Barns Star Lane Erection of front porch and x2 dormer windows to front and x1 dormer window to rear, alterations to first floor side facing window and installation of solar panels. - No Comment

25/03913/FUL: Vale Farm West End Construction of an equestrian manege and ancillary residential sand games court – No Comment

25/03823/FUL Minchinchampton Golf Club Replacement of existing cladding to existing workshop building, extension of lean-to canopy to one side, extension forming enclosed steel-frame metal-clad storage building over existing hardstanding and installation of photovoltaic panels to roof. – No Comment

25/04036/LBC: The Lodge The Old Quarries Dismantling and reconstruction of a curtilage listed garden wall. - Support

### Planning Correspondence and Decisions

25/02789/FUL: Plumtree Cottage 19 High Street Erection of two storey side extension and porch - Refused

25/02163/COMPLY: Old Quarries Rectory Lane Partial Compliance with conditions 3 (sample materials), 7 (sample panel - timber boarding), 13 (new windows), 14 (external woodwork), and 15 (timber garage doors to silver) of Phase 1 of development of planning permission 22/03666/FUL - Change of use of existing buildings from residential institution (C2 use) to residential (C3 use) to form a total of 11 no. dwellings, through demolition of modern extensions, internal alterations and extensions, demolition of modern institutional buildings and replacement with new dwellings, associated garaging, landscaping, construction of new wall in alignment of historic walled garden and associated works—Permitted

**Dog Fouling:** If you witness dog fouling not being picked up by the owner, please report by following the link below.

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/litter-street-cleaning-and-dog-fouling/>

**Roads and Footpaths:** Please report any issues on the footpaths or the roads, on Fix My Street. This is the quickest way to get highways to send an inspection team <https://fixmystreet.goucestershire.gov.uk> If it is an emergency please call 08000 514 514.

**Neighbourhood Policing Team:** Police Seargent Garrett Gloyn, PC Morley – Blackwell, PCSO Edmund Maina 101@gloucestershire.police.uk

*The Agenda and minutes of the last parish council meeting can be viewed at [www.avening-pc.gov.uk](http://www.avening-pc.gov.uk). The Parish Clerk can be contacted via email: [parishclerk@avening-pc.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@avening-pc.gov.uk)*

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# Regular Activities in the Villages

Would organisers please let us know if there are any changes or additions to these events

Event	Day	Time	Where	Contact
Avening Silver Band	Monday	7.00-9.00pm	Memorial Hall	<a href="mailto:aveningsilverband@gmail.com">aveningsilverband@gmail.com</a>
Avening Church bell ringing	Monday	8.00-9.00pm	Church bell tower	Andrew Lelliott 07726 345516
Community Café	Tuesday	9.00am - noon	Social Club	Gill Adams 07826 291759
Mobile Post Office	Tuesday	9.30-11.30am	Social Club car park	
Cherington PC	Tuesday bi-monthly	6.00pm	Cherington Village hall	Babs Malony 07958116794
Line Dancing	Tuesday	8.00 - 9.30 pm	Social Club	Social Club 01453 833760
Avening Churchyard tidy up	Wednesday	6.00 - 7.00pm	Holy Cross churchyard	Churchwardens
Avening PC	2nd Wednesday each month	7.30pm	Memorial Hall	Shani Baker 07415 039234
Avening Cinema Club	Last Wednesday each month	7.30pm	Memorial Hall	<a href="mailto:aveningcinemaclub@gmail.com">aveningcinemaclub@gmail.com</a>
Avening W.I.	2nd Thursday each month	7.30pm	Social Club/ Memorial Hall	Liz 01453 833803
Fledglings for pre-schoolers	Fridays during term time	2.00 - 3.00pm	School Garden	Avening School
Fun Skittles	Last Saturday each month	7.30	Social Club	
KNEAD Mobile Bakery	Last Saturday each month	9.45 - 10.30am	Memorial Hall	
Charity Quiz	1st Saturday each month	8.00pm	The Bell	
Avening Singers	Sunday	4.00pm	tba	Derrick Pierce 01453 835090

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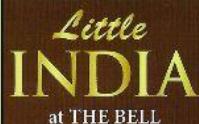
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