

The Letcombe Register



Issue 208

December 2022

VILLAGE DIARY

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1 Ladies Pilates 9.30am Village Hall Yoga w Diana 11.15-12.30 Village Hall Book Buffs 8.00pm Greyhound Inn	2 Men's Pilates 9.30am Village Hall	3 <u>Tennis Cardio</u> 9-10am Junior Tennis Coaching 10-2 Football 12 (or 2 pm depending on World Cup)	4 <u>Tennis Mixer</u> 10.am <u>Riding Club</u> Jump Clinic & x country taster 10 & 11 am
5 Evensong 3pm Voices of the Vale 7.30-9 pm Village Hall	6 <u>Yoga w Beth</u> 0945-1045 Village Hall (please book) <u>Riding Club</u> Meeting & Drinks 6.30pm SSC RG&VH Trust Meeting (WR) 7.30pm Village Hall	7	8 Ladies Pilates 9.30am Village Hall Yoga w Diana 11.15-12.30 Village Hall	9 Men's Pilates 9.30am Village Hall <u>Yoga w Beth</u> 'Merry Restmas' Session 7 - 8.30pm Village Hall (please book)	10 <u>Tennis Cardio</u> 9-10am Junior Tennis Coaching 10-2 Christmas Fayre Richmond 11.00-3.00pm FREE ENTRY Football 2pm	11 <u>Tennis Mixer</u> 10.am Holy Communion 10am St Andrew's (Bishop Gavin) Greyhound Inn Xmas Quiz Night Big Dave 8 pm
12 Evensong 3pm Voices of the Vale 7.30-9 pm Sports Pavilion WI - Christmas Social 7.30pm Village Hall	13 <u>Yoga w Beth</u> 0945-1045 Village Hall (please book)	14 Film Club 'To Kill a Mockingbird' 8pm FREE ENTRY Village Hall	15 Ladies Pilates 9.30am Village Hall Yoga w Diana 11.15-12.30 Village Hall	16	17 <u>Tennis Cardio</u> 9-10am Junior Tennis Coaching 10 Nature Reserve Work Party 1.30-4.30 Football 2pm Carol Service 6pm St Andrew's	18 <u>Tennis Mixer</u> 10.am <u>Riding Club</u> Christmas Fun Ride 10am
19 Evensong 3pm	20	21	22	23	24	25
					Holy Communion 3pm St Andrew's	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Register Deadline						

* Events in the Diary depend on organisers keeping me up to date. They may require booking and are underlined if a link is available for an email address or website.

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Issue 208

Message from the Parish Council

The PC met on Monday 21 November in person at the village hall, and we were delighted to welcome a villager to the meeting. You are all welcome to attend and our next meeting is scheduled for 7pm – please note the change of time from 8pm to 7pm - on Monday 16 January , in the Warborough Room, at the Village Hall.

Plans are already beginning to shape up for a Coronation Celebration Event and a date has been fixed for Monday 8 May. This is a date for your diary, and details will be communicated through the Register in the coming months. If you would like to be part of the planning group then please contact the Parish Clerk. We welcome any thoughts and ideas you may have.

With the current increases in basic costs and materials the Parish Council is seriously having to consider a rise in the precept. We have not had to raise this for the past six years, but we may need to look to this for the coming year. Currently we are revisiting our budget to see where savings, if any, can be made. With around 700 homes in the parish, the amount we are looking for in general terms would be around £2 per household. We are concerned that this will be an addition to already rising cost of living and remain committed to keeping any increase as low as possible. The final budget discussion will take place at our next meeting, so please let us have your views. Contact the Parish Clerk if you wish to comment but are unable to attend.

It was good to see so many enjoying the Firework Night run by the VH and RG Trust, and the PC would like to express its thanks to all those involved in making it such a fun evening, in spite of the weather.

It has been a very busy year once again, but Christmas will soon be upon us, perhaps giving a chance to relax and enjoy the company of friends and family. So many of you have been actively volunteering your time this year to keep our Parish such a wonderful place to live, so thank you all, from litter pickers to conservation volunteers, from scone bakers to Millennium Green Volunteers, from interest group organisers to Register editing, and of course all of you who just quietly contribute.

Parish Council would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful, and Healthy New Year.

Jeanne Lapsley
Chairman
Letcombe Regis Parish Council.



[Click HERE for website](#)
[David Johnston MP](#)

Cost of Living Support




We know this winter will be a challenging time for residents across Oxfordshire. As a county council, we've introduced a number of initiatives to help local people – particularly the vulnerable – as they face the combination of inflation and the rising cost of energy. More information about these can be found on our website.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help/>

But on a practical level, we recognise that for many, it's hard to know where to turn – and they need support in knowing whether they need local, county or even national advice. We're working with city and district councils to help signpost residents – so they can access the services and organisations that can help.

On [our dedicated cost of living page](#), residents can find out the latest national and county advice and the organisations that can help, as well as information on key district and city support.

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Mrs Jones

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COMPUTER PROBLEMS? CONVERSION TO WINDOWS 10?

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Issue 208

Richmond Christmas Fayre

Saturday 10th December 11am-3pm

Richmond Villages Letcombe Regis, South Street,
Letcombe Regis, Oxfordshire OX12 9RG

Join us at our Christmas Fayre for an afternoon of festive fun

Gift and craft stalls including pebble art, knitwear, charity Christmas cards, Scentsy, Body Shop, quilted items, jewellery, handbags and the country market with cakes, jams and other delicious treats

Mince pies, mulled wine, and refreshments

Plus a charity raffle in aid of the Richmond Villages Letcombe Regis nominated charities.

For more information:

 www.richmond-villages.com/letcombe/richmondletcomberegis



Interesting & Useful Links

Free Parking Saturdays days in run up to Christmas -

Wantage on 3rd, 10th and 17th December.

Faringdon on the same dates as above and **Abingdon** on just the 3rd and 10th

Further details on parking can be found here: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/carparks

Some more links with information you may find useful:

1. Foster Carers needed in Oxfordshire - oxfordshire.gov.uk/fostering
2. Oxfordshire Community Land Trust Launches Crofts Court Community Share Offer. For more on the Trust's work: <https://www.octl.org.uk/> For information on the Share offer: www.octl.org.uk/crofts-court. To invest: www.ethex.org.uk/invest/OCLT

Ridgeway CE Primary School



The Ridgeway CE Primary School in Childrey is looking for a **lunchtime supervisor** (term time only) from 11.15am-1.15pm.

Please contact the school office on 01235 751254 for more details.



'Merry Restmas' - Yoga with Beth

Beth Trotter is running a 'Merry Restmas' session – an evening of Gentle Yoga & Relaxation' on Friday 9th December from 7.00 – 8.30pm. All welcome. After class there will be healthy festive nibbles and drinks ([please book](#))



Jaqueline and Neil McLaurin send
Their best wishes to all their friends and
neighbours in the village
a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



Ruth Manning would like to wish
all her friends and neighbours
a very Happy Christmas
and Best Wishes for 2023

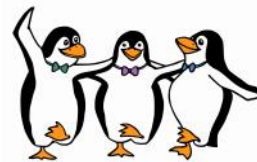


Merry Xmas and a
Happy New Year
From
Ken & Liz Peach,
Troon

Jane and Patrick Cable - Alexander
wish everyone
a very happy Christmas
and a happy New Year.



Ann Seth sends
Christmas greetings to
all her friends and
neighbours in
Letcombe Regis



Iain and Vivi McCoubrey
wish all their friends
Merry Christmas and a
Happy and Healthy
New Year

Jean English wishes her Letcombe
friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy
and Healthy New Year



Surprise, Jan Allsop is returning
to live at Richmond very soon,
maybe before Christmas.

I send Christmas greetings to
all friends, maybe I will see
some of you, fairly soon.



Mike and Loretta wish all their
friends and neighbours a
Happy Christmas and
good health in the New Year

Jeanne and Stephen and Family
wish all of our friends in
Letcombe Regis a
Very Happy Christmas and
Peaceful and Healthy New Year



Ceci and David Allchin
wish their village friends
and neighbours Health
and Great joy at
Christmas and the
New Year

Judy Vaughan-Williams
wishes Letcombe friends
a Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year.



Clive and Alison Phillips
wish you a
Joyful Christmas
and a
Happy New Year



KEN & FREDDIE TROTTER
SEND
CHRISTMAS GREETINGS
TO ALL OUR FRIENDS IN
LETCOMBE

RIPARIAN OWNERS' GROUP



Letcombe Brook Project

**NEWSLETTER No. 4
AUTUMN 2022**

LETCOMBE BROOK ON TV

The Letcombe Brook recently caught the attention of programme makers from Channel 5 who were filming a series—*The Cotswolds and Beyond*, with local poet and lover of the countryside, Pam Ayres.

Our Project Officer, Mark, spent the day exploring the brook with Pam, who was particularly interested in the water vole population, and coverage was included in episode 1, broadcast in September.

If you missed it, you can still find the show on Channel 5's catch up station, My5.



A LOAD OF RUBBISH



Depressingly, we've been finding more and more rubbish in the brook lately. In the spring, we took part in the Great British Spring Clean event, which resulted in 18 sacs of rubbish and a bike being removed from the brook over the course of one day.

Our volunteer group members always take litter pickers with them when they meet for their monthly practical conservation tasks and their tally so far this year is a whopping 52 sacs of rubbish, not to mention several shopping trolleys.

In September, we took part in 'PlasticBlitz' with Thames 21 and the Rotary Club and volunteers pulled out another 6 sacs of rubbish with most of it being plastic drinks bottles, sweet wrappers, crisp packets and cans.



Hot spots for litter are Willow Walk, around Limborough Road and Smiths Wharf in Wantage and some areas in Grove next to the new housing developments.

Perhaps it is inevitable that as the population in the area grows, so too will the amount of rubbish dropped by careless individuals, but it is a cause of concern for us, not only from an aesthetic point of view but because of the harm litter can cause to wildlife.

We are working closely with nine local primary schools and hope that the more children learn about the importance of caring for our precious chalk stream and the flora and fauna it supports, the less likely they will be to turn into litter louts as they get older.

FLOOD RISK ON THE BROOK?

Although the brook is still running very low, things can change quickly and flood risk is still a concern. Quite a few properties flooded in 2007 and flood risk increases with the intense rainfall predicted to result from climate change. Now is a great time to check there is nothing on your land that might obstruct flow and increase flood risk. Please do have a look at the "Flooding" and "Advice" sections of our website and consider having a flood plan for your property.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SATURDAY 8th APRIL 2023 — LBP's 20th ANNIVERSARY

Where have 20 years gone?! The Letcombe Brook Project was incorporated as a charity in 2017 but it was set up as an informal group many years before that, in 2003.

Its formation came about in response to a worrying report by the Environment Agency about the deteriorating condition of the brook, which prompted our partner organisations (Vale of the White Horse District Council, Wantage Town Council, Grove Parish Council, Letcombe Regis Parish Council and East Hanney Parish Council) to take action to protect and improve it.

We're planning to celebrate our 20th birthday and the many achievements of the project on Saturday 8th April next year. More details will be publicised nearer the time and all members of the Riparian Owners Group will be invited to attend.



A CHANCE TO SUPPORT US AND WIN SOME MONEY!



The Vale of the White Horse District Council has set up a Community Lottery to help good causes in the District. Players can choose which local good cause(s) they want to support when they purchase tickets and prizes range from free prize draw entries to a £25,000 jackpot.

For every £1 ticket sold, 50p goes to registered good causes, 10p goes into a general fund to support the voluntary sector and 20p goes to the prize fund. (17p goes to the external operator and 3p to VAT)

To support the Letcombe Brook Project, please click on:

www.whitehorselottery.co.uk/support/the-letcombe-brook-project

JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Our Facebook group (Letcombe Brook Project) continues to grow in popularity, with membership having recently reached over 1,000 people. We're really pleased that so many members are using the site regularly to post photographs and videos of flora and fauna they spot in and around the brook. We have some extremely talented photographers in the group, whose images are so sharp that the most intricate details of their subject species can be seen clearly.



We also post regularly on Twitter (@LetcombeBP). Both social media accounts can be accessed via our website – www.letcomberook.org.uk

The Police & Crime Commissioner has launched an anonymous online survey, giving residents an opportunity to share their views and experiences of policing and crime.

The survey asks for views about how safe residents feel in their local area, their experience of both crime and the police as well as questions on the future funding of policing.

Matthew Barber said: "Part of my role is to ensure there is a clear focus on the priorities that matter most to the public. I want to gain a real understanding of how crime is affecting communities, whether it is direct experiences of crime or issues that may be causing you concern in your local area. I also want to hear your feedback, whether good or bad, on policing; what the police are doing well and areas you think could be improved.

"To help me build up a picture across the Thames Valley, the survey will be available on my website all year round. It will provide an ongoing mechanism for people to share their views and keep me informed. Whether or not you have directly experienced a crime, I would encourage you to use the survey to share your feedback and tell me what is important to you. Your views will help shape the future of policing in the Thames Valley."

To complete the survey, please visit the [PCC webpage](#).

If you are not able to complete the survey online or need support in doing so, please call the Office of the PCC on 01865 541957 or email opcc.comms@thamesvalley.police.uk.

The survey will remain open for responses throughout the year. Responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

Letcombe Football Club



Letcombe's amazingly successful season continued throughout November with progress in three different cup competitions and in the league. We beat Didcot Town development 6-0 at home in the Chairman's cup for Hellenic League Division Two teams. We then made the long journey to Stonehouse Town in the Hellenic Challenge Cup, and although they are in a higher league than us, we won 4-2. An away match against Wargrave in the Berks & Bucks cup resulted in a 5-3 victory, a great performance against a team who are third in the Thames Valley League Premier Division. We returned to league action with a home game against bottom of the table Wroughton development which we won 16-0 in a very one sided game. We also received the good news that Highworth Town reserves had beaten Swindon Supermarine development, our main league rivals. We are now second in the league, but would overtake Swindon Supermarine if we won our two games in hand. We play them away on 17th December in a game which will have a big influence on the league title.

Our reserves have been less successful, losing their last three games, and are 7th of 10 teams in North Berks league division 2.

Home games in December are :

Saturday	3 rd	Letcombe	v	Shortwood United reserves	12pm or 2pm★
Saturday	10 th	Letcombe reserves	v	Compton	2pm
Saturday	17 th	Letcombe	v	Swindon Supermarine Development	2pm

★ Start time for game on Saturday the 3rd is dependent on the World Cup televised fixture.

200 Club Draw — No 9			December 2022
Christmas Prize Draw			
114	Oliver HORRIDGE	£100	
101	Margaret STOCK	£50	
193	Dominic LAMB	£25	
11	David GOODCHILD	£15	
15	Clive & Alison PHILLIPS	£10	
100	Brian MONNERY	£5	
Special Draw:			
33	Doreen LEVY	£50	
189	Frances RHODES	£25	
170	Sue WAKELING	£20	
212	Noel TAYLOR	£10	
94	Jan HACKWORTH	£10	
42	Peter BATTEN	£10	
70	Ian MEAD	£10	
64	Des WILLIAMS	£10	
New Numbers Draw			
135	Riana OESHER	£25	
249	Jaqueline COOK	£5	



Letcombe Regis Village Hall,
Wednesday 14th December

FREE ENTRY Doors open 7.30pm
Film starts at 8.00 pm

Refreshments on sale - Wine, Beer and Tea/Coffee

Recreation Ground & Village Hall Trust



Despite the wettest Firework Night in living memory, the support from the village, Trustees and visitors made for an excellent evening. As ever the generosity of everyone ensured significant funds can now be reinvested in the Trust facilities. Thank you everyone who made this year's Firework Night such a success.

Work is continuing on apace with the planned playground improvements, and whilst we have put aside some funds we are still looking for more. If you think you can help with donations or contacts please contact Gill Gwalchmai at gwalchmai@gmail.com, who is leading on this project.

After a period of failure we are pleased to report that heating in the Village Hall is once again operational, just in time for the winter weather. Other maintenance improvements will be carried out during the week of the 20th February 2023, when the hall will be closed. We plan for this to be an annual closure, so that ongoing works can be done to keep our excellent hall in good condition.

Finally the Trustees would like to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas, and a Healthy, Peaceful New Year.

Jeanne Lapsley and Mike Light
Joint Chairmen.



St Andrew's

The first special event in St Andrew's in November was the Armistice Day Service on Friday 11th November. The Rev Mary Harwood officiated with Gill Thompson, our Anna Chaplain. Ian Robertson, the Village Manager at Richmond, laid a poppy wreath by the altar. As there was no electricity - a prearranged power cut - the church was lit by fairy lights which made for a particularly moving atmosphere. The service was well attended and being able to remember those who lost their lives for our country on Armistice Day itself was much appreciated.

During the rest of the month although the regular prayer group and evensong services took place, there were no Sunday services until Holy Communion on 27th. On Saturday 26th there was the Annual Gift Day and also the Churchyard clear up. On a bright and blustery morning Rev Mary Harwood with our church warden, Debbie Leek, and treasurer, David Allchin, was in the church to greet everyone. Refreshments including warm mince pies were enjoyed and it was an opportunity to catch up with friends in a happy and relaxed atmosphere. David will be writing to our generous donors to thank them and to tell them how their money will be spent early in the New Year.

As you all know a candidate for Rector was not appointed in September but three candidates are going to be interviewed on 6th December and it is hoped an appointment will be made then.

During most of December Prayer Group at 10.30am and Evensong at 3pm on Mondays will continue as usual. But there will be no Prayer Group or Evensong on 26th December or 2nd January. On Sunday 11th December Bishop Gavin, the Bishop of Dorchester, is coming to preside at our service of Holy Communion at 10 am. The Carol Service takes place at St Andrew's on Saturday 17th December at 6 pm. There will be the familiar lessons and carols and Joe Barber is coming to play the organ. On Christmas Eve, Saturday 24th December, there is going to be a Holy Communion service at 3pm and the first service of the New Year is Holy Communion on Sunday 1st January at 10 am. Details of all these arrangements can be seen in The Signpost.

As has been the practice for some time the collections at the Carol Service and other Christmas services will go to CRISIS and The Children's Society. Of course, our support for charities is not only financial and as in previous years we hope to provide:

- (1) Gifts of good quality children's clothes and toys for needy local families. If you gift-wrap your presents it would be very helpful to indicate the age range for toys and sizes for clothes.
- (2) Gifts for The Porch in Oxford. Warm clothes or small items such as toiletries which would be appreciated by the homeless who have nothing. Again some indication of size/man/woman/child would be useful if gift-wrapped.
- (3) Wantage Food Bank - non-perishable items only, please.

All these can be left under the Christmas tree in church in the week before Christmas.

With best wishes to everyone for a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Letcombes Women's Institute



We had an interesting demonstration of Origami at our November meeting. Peter Buckam-Symonds brought some amazingly complex paper models, and then showed us how to make some reassuringly simple ones.

Our December meeting will be our Christmas Social. Members are reminded to bring a plate of food for a "Bring and Share" supper.



Issue 208

Letcombes Gardening Club

Topical Tips

We've nearly reached the end of another year and this one has turned out to be unusual for different reasons!

I won't load you up with tasks this month, as I'm sure you're all looking forward to a busy time over Christmas.

One very important job that you must get done is to prune acers and vines if you have any. They will bleed sap if you leave them any later than the end of the month.

You should have got rid of most of the dead leaves by now but if you haven't then finish this job. It's particularly important to remove any dead leaves that are covering alpines, if you have them, as alpines will quickly rot if they are too damp.

If you have some plants in pots that you leave outside permanently then it is a good idea to wrap the pots in bubble wrap to protect them from cracking in the frost. This will save you money in the long run as big pots are not cheap!

Keep an eye open for botrytis (grey mould) on perennials and if you see any swiftly clear away the debris and put it in the brown bin. This will prevent it from spreading elsewhere. Remember that a lot of fungal diseases overwinter in the soil and in plant debris. They will also persist in compost heaps.

You can start pruning apple trees now. Leave any wall-trained specimens though. It is not the time to prune these.

If the weather is OK and you feel like a bit of quiet time in the greenhouse then what about trying your hand at some hardwood cuttings? Berberis, buddleja, salix and rubus are examples of shrubs you can try. Many climbers, like lonicera for example, will also strike from hardwood cuttings. Remember that you need to be patient though as they can take up to a year to get going.

I'm going to put in a little plea here for houseplants. Don't be too enthusiastic with the water. You can quite easily kill a houseplant by overwatering and they don't need as much water through the winter. Check before you slosh!

I'm not going to say anything about veg this month apart from suggesting that you reflect on the difficult time we had this year due to lack of water and think about what you can do to improve the situation next year if the same weather conditions prevail (eg. collecting water). If that is too depressing then let's be more optimistic and just browse the seed catalogues and get ordering! See if you can find something in there that you have never grown before and give it a go!

I think that's all for now so I'd like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas from the topical tips lady and her husband!



THE GREYHOUND INN

LETCOMBE REGIS · OXFORDSHIRE

Merry Christmas to all our customers!

**Our Festive Menu is available
1st-24th December**

**Christmas Quiz Night
Sunday 11th December 8pm
Don't forget to wear your Christmas jumper!**

**Join us for drinks on Christmas Day
We are open 12-2pm**

**New Year's Eve Celebration Dinner
For groups of 4 or more
Call or email to book
Bar open to all until 1:30am**

www.thegreyhoundletcombe.co.uk
email: info@thegreyhoundletcombe.co.uk
Tel:01235 771969



The Letcombes Conservation Group

Four short, fascinating radio programmes compiled as a team of conservationists followed Scotland's ospreys migrating south on their journey to West Africa, ([BBC Radio 4 - Flight of the Ospreys - Available now](#)) demonstrated the interconnection of wildlife across the globe and how guardianship of the environment in the UK has impacts worldwide. Take a moment to reflect on the wider impact of our Christmas celebrations and to consider making them eco-friendly as well as sustainable. The following are just a few suggestions from various wildlife trusts (see [How to have an eco-Christmas | The Wildlife Trusts](#)) and from the BBC wildlife team (see [How to have a sustainable and wildlife-friendly Christmas | Discover Wildlife](#)). Perhaps it is not too late to put a few of these into action in December.

Giving gifts brings joy and many villagers will have been busy on those special hand-crafted presents, perhaps using foraging recipes or creating wildlife-themed gifts like a bug hotel. For those with less time, many charities offer wildlife-related gifts meaning your purchase supports several causes. Think about sustainable gifts with as little packaging as possible if an object is desired, though some people skip the material aspect and gift an experience such as theatre tickets, a course or activity, a charity donation or subscription. To remove the environmental cost of manufacturing new items, why not visit charity and antique shops possibly with a view to up-cycling.

Then there is the wrapping. Apparently each Christmas in the UK we create 30% more waste than normal including 227,000 miles of wrapping paper and 114,000 tonnes of plastic packaging. Shiny, foil or glitter paper cannot be recycled, unlike traditional papers so choose those made from recycled paper or FSC certified sources. Tie paper creatively with paper tape, coloured string or ribbons to avoid plastic tape. Previous year's Christmas cards make lovely gift tags. You might try your artistic skills at making Christmas cards from suitable materials, re-purpose ones you have received previously or send some e-cards.



Many of us have sparkly decorations from childhood days that bring back pleasant memories each year and won't be thrown out. When they do need replacing, or adding to, there are many natural alternatives to flimsy decorations made of un-environmentally friendly materials. Add crab apples, rosehips, pine cones and sprigs of spruce or bay leaves to traditional holly, ivy and mistletoe or make garlands from shapes cut from dried citrus peel or segments. There are plenty of recipes for edible tree decorations which are fun to make, hang and then eat. If you are making a Christmas wreath, why not also create a fully compostable one full of berries and seed heads for the birds. Simply switching to LED Christmas lights will use 75% less energy than alternatives and last 25 times longer, and consider how many outside lights you put up.



Finally, according to the Soil Association 'food is the single most important, everyday way for people to reduce their own environmental impact' because food production is a major source of greenhouse gases, and a driver of climate change, deforestation and biodiversity loss. Not only is 80% more food consumed over the Christmas season than normal, but a massive £1 billion worth of food is thrown away. So plan the Christmas menus meticulously, shop locally including some organic produce, and enjoy fun and flavour with left-overs.

Even small lifestyle changes add up to make a big difference but to be of lasting importance, continue into 2023 and beyond. The Wildlife Trusts have issued a festive nature challenge over the 12 days of Christmas - from 25 December to 5 January, complete one wildlife-related action each day; recycle the Christmas tree, feed the birds, explore winter wildlife, admire the beauty of the environment in winter or admire a winter sunset (see [12 Days Wild | The Wildlife Trusts](#)). Something for the children to do after the excitement of presents; you can even get them a certificate for their efforts.

Have a very merry, wildlife-friendly Christmas and an environmentally-focussed 2023.



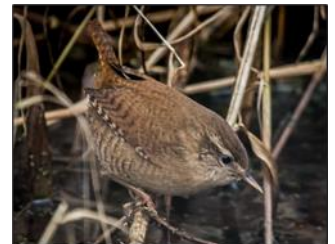
Friends of the Letcombe Valley Community Nature Reserve

The final work party of the year is on Saturday, 17 December from 13:30 to 16:30 in the Community Nature Reserve. Please meet near the lake notice board by 13:20 for the tasks and safety briefing. The normal 'winter' tasks include scrub clearance alongside paths, fence repairs, pond digging and general maintenance. Tools will be provided, and refreshments mid-afternoon, but do wear your own work gloves, nettle-proof clothes and boots.

Animals often represent important cultural references and this is especially true for the winter\ Christmas season. Robins are a common sight in woods and gardens during winter in the UK, their bright red breasts



bringing a welcome splash of colour and associated with the red jackets of early postal workers delivering cards, photo credit: Christine Matthews (CC BY-SA 2.0). The bird with a role in celebrations in Ireland, Wales, the Isle of Man and some European countries was the Eurasian Wren, hunted and paraded through towns to collect money for the festivities, photo credit: Jamie Manktelow (CC BY-ND 2.0). The only member of the *Troglodytidae* family found in Europe, it is the UK's third-smallest



bird, the Goldcrest and Firecrest being smaller. Boxing Day is still known as 'Wren Day' in some regions though today, thankfully, an imitation bird is used and both wrens and robins are low on the list of birds of conservation concern.

Sheep are another familiar animal in the Reserve where their grazing breaks down tough grasses in their complex digestive systems and returns organic compounds to the soil. They are hoofed mammals of the subfamily *Caprinae*, like goats. In the Gospel of Luke, angels announce the birth of Jesus to shepherds tending to their flock, hence this domestic animal, closely associated with this area's chalk downlands, is a traditional part of the Nativity scene. Elsewhere in northern Europe, the 'Yule Goat' plays a part in Christmas celebrations. Goat ornaments are placed under the Christmas tree in Scandinavia, and are often part of a town's decorations.



Some residents may remember Eileen Nedelev Turner's donkeys that grazed the terrace above the Letcombe Brook just a little south of the Reserve. A member of the horse family *Equidae*, donkeys were first

domesticated around 3,000 years ago and are a subspecies of the African wild ass, a critically endangered species found in deserts and other dry regions in East Africa. Donkeys are used still as pack animals in many countries. Mary travelled to Bethlehem with Joseph and undoubtedly the 80 miles from Nazareth included popular transport of the time, possibly a horse, donkey or cart draw by an animal, but the Gospel of Luke does not actually mention the donkey of folklore. Oxen are also domesticated, in this case from cattle, probably over 10,000 years ago for transporting goods and pulling ploughs and, though it is unlikely that Jesus shared his 'manger' with these animals, both are part of the traditional Nativity scene, their presence alluded to elsewhere in the Bible including in the Book of Isaiah.



Camels, both the single-humped dromedary and the double-humped Bactrian, were also domesticated to be used for transport and as pack animals. The wild Bactrian camel found in Asia is critically endangered. It belongs to the family *Camelidae* which also includes llamas and alpacas (now local, even if camels are absent!). The Magi, those wise astronomers or astrologers, may have travelled by camel, though again this is supposition, but since their visit elicits the massacre of Holy innocents aged under two, they noted the star's ascent in the East rather than followed it and arrived with their three types of gifts (possibly not even three Magi) probably at least a year later than the birth of Jesus. Nevertheless their presence in the Nativity scene encapsulates the wonder of mankind and animals at the birth of God's son in human form. Christmas has varying symbolism across many cultures but, despite the differences, the universal need is to share and acknowledge the most wondrous things: love, family, nature and faith.



Wishing everyone joy through the Christmas Season and in the New Year.



Issue 208

Riding Club Newsletter

As 2022 ends and hopefully COVID with it, we are gradually seeing a welcome increase in activity at the riding club.

The committee have been working hard behind the scenes to provide a pleasant and peaceful environment for our members to train and exercise their horses and enjoy our beautiful downland environment.

The year started with a bang of energy, repairing and painting jump stands and lots of poles. It was quite a daunting task, and we would like to thank Allan Lancaster for all his help in getting the job done and for his contribution to the never-ending list of jobs!

We held monthly jump and pole work clinics with event rider Ryan Hawkins which were well attended by both members and non-members. These fun, informative and informal clinics are open to members and non-members and their horses to improve and practice their skills.

Throughout the year the committee regularly remove all equipment from the school, roll and level it so that the surface remains in tip top condition. In the summer we set up and maintained an area for dressage practice, kept a close eye on the recently planted hedges, maintained the boundary fences and improved the selection of cross-country jumps. We will continue to add and enhance the cross-country course. This will be an asset for the eventers to practice over and for pre-hunting and fun ride enthusiasts. There will be jumps for all levels and abilities and some wide enough to indulge in pairs jumping and with the good going ground, to train for team chasing.

Towards the end of the summer, our new Instructor, Fiona Dowding, provided some amazing pole and jump clinics in the arena working the horses and riders to high standards.

We finished off the Summer with a bumper Tack Sale and had many exhibitors selling saddles, bits, winter rugs and much more to a well-attended horsey fraternity. A morning of fun was had by all as well as quite a few bargains!

Halloween was our next highlight as members and friends gathered for nibbles and a glass of port before setting off with our committee member, Lucinda, to discover the sheer beauty of our surrounding countryside. Wading through the old watercress beds, up the hills in extended trot, 'jockey style' to the ridgeway where the riders and horses cast caution to the wind and galloped over the rolling hills. All riders returned with beaming smiles and signing up for the next outing.

A big bonfire in the field and fireworks were enjoyed by the village on November 5th along with a delicious BBQ.

DIARY DATES

Sunday December 4th 10 am and 11 am

Jump clinic with cross country taster for riders who want to experience something new under the guidance and instruction from Fi Dowding. Slots bookable via our website. letcomberegisrc.co.uk. Members and non-members welcome.

Tuesday December 6th

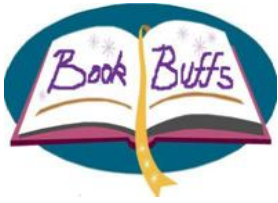
Committee meeting at 6.30pm in the Sports and Social Club, followed by festive drinks at 7pm for all members of the riding club.

Sunday December 18th

A Christmas Fun Ride with mulled cider and mince pies lead by Lucinda. The ride will leave the field at around 10am and will last approximately 2 hrs. Bookable via the website. letcomberegisrc.co.uk. Members and non-members welcome

Everyone is welcome to come along and watch our clinics and see the festive fun ride off!

With best wishes and happy Christmas to all.



Issue 208

Book Buffs

Apologies for the confusion over dates last month. Remember it is always the first Thursday of the month so our next meeting will be held on Thursday 1st December in the Greyhound at 8pm.

We shall be reviewing *'Power'* by Naomi Alderman and *'The Song of Achilles'* by Madeline Miller.

The new library book is *'Girl with a Pearl Earring'* by Tracy Chevalier, the alternative for January being a personal choice of a book received this Christmas

(The error in the Diary was a stupid mistake by me and I will try to do better in future. I am very sorry and I hope you were all far too bright to be fooled for long - Francesca)

Film Club

Weds 14 December

To Kill a Mockingbird



With record attendance of over 70 people coming to see “Operation Mince meat” in November, we wanted to follow up with an equally good film for December. This time we have gone for **“To Kill a Mockingbird”**. Based on the Pulitzer Prize winning book by Harper Lee published in 1960, the film was released on Christmas Day in 1962 and has become one of the all time great, classic movies, regularly featuring on ‘top 10 film’ lists.

The story is set in Alabama during the Great Depression, where respected lawyer Atticus Finch defends a black man accused of raping a white woman. Atticus has two children, Jem and Scout, who he is trying to raise with a strong moral code in a place where racial prejudice is part of everyday life.

The film was nominated for 8 Oscars in 1963 with Gregory Peck deservedly winning a Best Actor award for his iconic portrayal of Atticus Finch. We also see a very young Robert Duvall make his screen debut playing the reclusive neighbour, Boo Radley.

The legend of this film has lived on for many years, with a poll by the American Film Institute in 2003 voting Atticus Finch as the ‘top film hero’. This is a great film, with a strong message that is still relevant today, so if you haven't seen it, or if you have seen it before in the dim and distant past, come along and watch it again!

As a treat for Christmas and to say thank-you to all our regular film goers, we will be showing this film for free. So come along to the village hall, enjoy a glass of mulled wine, a mince pie, good company and watch a classic film.

Doors open 7.30, film starts at 8pm.

Hope to see you there!

Main Christmas Greetings are on page 6

Merry Christmas to all our
readers, contributors and
advertisers.
With very best wishes for a
prosperous New Year





Letcombe Sports and Social Club

With Christmas fast approaching, we have got the Christmas Tree and decorations up.

Darts continues to go from strength to strength, with all 3 teams doing well in their respective divisions.

The Football team are also riding high in Hellenic Division 2 South.

Club opening days are still on Thursday, Friday, Saturday after football and most Sunday afternoons/evening. If you want to know more about the Club, then please contact the Secretary. Details of additional Christmas opening times and New Years Eve will be emailed out to those on the membership list.

Richard
Secretary, Letcombe Sports and Social Club



Race Night

Huge thanks to all the villagers that supported our main fundraising event .last Saturday (held every 2 years in the Village Hall). Over a 100 came to our Buffet followed by 8 filmed horse races, all races being sponsored by local companies including:- Maundrell, The Grey Hound and White Horse Feeds Ltd. The attendance was 12% higher than our last Race Night in 2019, where we raised £1300 towards essential maintenance.

2022 AGM Report

In July 2010 the Village Hall Trustees advertised that £25k that had been negotiated towards a Tennis Court, from the developers of Richmond, was about to be lost, because nobody on the trust could to take on the project, so 3 of us took over. Anne Jones, Val Yates and Ro Jelinska joined the committee and we got an agreement with Virginia Lewis and Sophie Fitzpatrick, to use their courts temporarily.

By 2013 we had raised £60k to build the 2 courts, this was achieved with considerable help from villagers, especially:-

- 👂 Graham & Gillian Swift and their friend (who anonymously donated £13k), plus Derek Maurice (Parish Council Clerk) who negotiated the money and VAT relief, all of Richmond.
- 👂 Henry Hallwood who helped source grants.
- 👂 10 members who guaranteed a £10k loan from the LTA.
- 👂 Vale district council with a £5000 grant.

12 years on we have a £28k maintenance provision, 161 members and 5 weekly coaching sessions, for up to of up to 30 juniors.

Focussing on our mission ("Through the provision of Tennis for everyone, encourage greater enjoyable exercise and community spirit"), by not just **providing a quality tennis facility** but to **improve** community spirit.

To this end we have had some success; however 60% of members rarely mix in, preferring to play randomly with their family and friends.

In line with current strategy we have:-

- 👂 Insisted that everyone attending coaching become members
- 👂 Failed to get volunteers to run junior tournaments.
- 👂 Failed to get enough interest in weekly junior supervised sessions.
- 👂 Organised more social events (a Village treasure hunt, Wine Tasting, Wimbledon Finals Party and next week's Sold out Race night)
- 👂 The Adult Tournaments and Winter Warmers have had record attendance,
- 👂 Indoor sessions are having good support
- 👂 Members over 18 are now automatic members of the Sports & Social club.

Overall we are making gradual progress, getting villagers playing and socialising!

Coaching Classes

The rest of the Year Free with code **ROYF22** , also a two week free pass and 50% off their first months coaching for new or returning players with code **FIFTY4U**, go to <https://nationaltennis.org.uk/locations/letcombe/> . to join

2023 goals :

Increase the number of adults/juniors participating in group coaching to between 30-35 weekly players.

Increase competitiveness within the clubs juniors.

Increase players attending Team Challenge tennis camps during school holidays.

The views expressed in the Register do not necessarily reflect the view of Letcombe Regis Parish Council

To submit an article please contact:

Francesca Engelmann,
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OX12 9LD

Register@oldstableyard.co.uk

01235 769310

Past Registers are available to view,
along with much more information,
on the Village Website:
www.letcomberegispc.org

TO RECEIVE YOUR EMAIL PDF COPY OF THE
LETCOMBE REGISTER, PLEASE CONTACT
LIZ JENKINS, THE PARISH CLERK:
LETREGISPC@GMAIL.COM

(FOR GDPR REASONS - THE LETCOMBE REGISTER
HAS NO ACCESS TO THE VILLAGE EMAIL LIST)

Deadline for inclusion is the 27th of each month.
Items will generally appear in the order they were received

December Waste Calendar

Click [Here](#) for full details

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Green recycling Food waste Brown Garden Waste			Grey Landfill Food waste Christmas Collection change			

Please remember that garden waste collections are suspended over the holiday period to concentrate on Christmas waste collections. Collections resume in January 2023. For more information, please see the garden waste page on our [website](#).
Find out more about recycling tips and waste collections over Christmas and New Year on the website www.morerecycling.co.uk
Information about any disruption to waste collection services will be posted on the VOWH websites and social media sites.
Our call centre is open for queries from 9am – 3.30pm on 23 December, 9am - 5pm on 28, 29 and 30 December on 03000 610610.