

Eynsham News is published by a local, not-for-profit voluntary group.

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Eynsham

Winter

By Sarah Medina

Who says
that winter is
bleak,
dark,
empty?

Look!

There's life a-plenty
in the depths,
the heights,
the leaves,
the breeze.

There's light abounding
in the frost,
the ice,
the snow.

Look!

Photo by Andrea Langton





Calum Miller—our MP

An update from Calum Miller

Calum Miller has been busy in our community. Here's what he has to say.

‘Over the summer months, I really enjoyed spending more time with businesses, charities and individuals in our community. I returned to Parliament full of admiration for the many volunteers who serve others across our area. z’Many people spoke to me about the level of development proposed for our area. At Salt Cross by Eynsham, in Yarnton, Begbroke and Kidlington, and in Bicester, thousands of homes are already planned. Some have been held up by the underfunding of new road connections. Challenges in getting connections and service for energy, water and telecoms are also real constraints—and we know that we need more doctors, dentists and health services alongside childcare and school places.’

Calum mentioned ‘Football in Mind’ as a valuable community event. ‘Every Friday evening, 7-8pm, a group of men meet up to play football in Eynsham at Bartholomew School. Will James set up ‘Football in Mind’, in memory of his former teammate Dan Johnson, to offer a chance for men to open up and talk. It is a great example of a valuable community social event.’

Free Park & Ride journeys

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is spending some of the income from the temporary congestion charge scheme to provide free Park & Ride bus journeys in Oxford for an initial period of three months from 29 October. Up to two adults and three children with a valid Park & Ride

parking ticket can claim free travel to and from Park & Ride sites in the city. The tickets will be valid on any Stagecoach or Oxford Bus Company bus that visits an Oxford Park and Ride site, not just named Park & Ride services.

Oxford’s temporary congestion charge for cars

This came into effect on 29 October. Eynsham residents can apply for a permit to receive 25 free day passes. Other permits are also available. Find out more and apply for your permit here: bit.ly/4nUjBjV.



Wendy with cousin Jane

Making the A40 safer

by Jane Tomlinson

Earlier this autumn, Wendy Daniels, Head of Biology at Bartholomew School, was struck by a car while crossing the A40 from the footpath that leads from Spareacre Lane to Kingsley Cafe/Tesco.

Wendy suffered a catastrophic complex open fracture of her right ankle and lower leg. Thankfully, paramedics and trauma surgeons at the JR managed to save her foot. Wendy is now recovering from her life-changing injuries but will need to learn to walk again.

‘There is little to warn traffic that pedestrians may be crossing at that point,’ Wendy says. ‘Improvements to the A40 are planned, but how long will that take? Something needs to happen now: perhaps lowering the speed limit on that section of road, installing lighting and belisha beacons at the crossing, and a sign to warn traffic that there may be pedestrians.’

Wendy will be using her recovery time to lobby the authorities to make the crossing safer now. She urges all Eynsham people to ‘Please take extreme care and wear hi-vis or carry a torch, if you can.’



Harvest Collection

Eynsham Food Bank says ‘thank you’

by Bob Thiele

A big thank you to all our supporters who enable us to continue to provide food to households which are struggling. Whether you help via standing order commitments or by leaving food donations in the collection points in our local shops, we are very grateful. Thank you also to the organisations who have provided financial support. The way the Eynsham community has rallied to assist those in need confirms the signs as you enter the village—this is ‘a great place to belong’.

Recently, we had the pleasure of Eynsham Primary School’s harvest collection of produce being donated to the food bank. As the attached photo shows, we were ably assisted by the Head Girl and Head Boy!

If you wish to support the Food Bank or need support, we can be contacted on 07450 328530.



Carnival missing committee members

by Peter Feakes

Eynsham Carnival is still looking for a few people to fulfil three roles on the committee:

- Carnival administration (arranging various licences and road closures)
- Ticket sales and advertising
- Treasurer (the current treasurer would like somebody to shadow her for the 2026 Carnival, with a view to taking over for the 2027 Carnival and beyond)

Full support will be given for all roles. If you are interested and would like more information, please email peterfeakes@btinternet.com.

Merry Christmas 
from the EN Team! 



Help save our fire station!

By the Eynsham Firefighters

Eynsham fire station is in a central location in the county, surrounded by planned new developments and a growing population. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has launched a review to improve the safety, efficiency and resilience of the service. This includes a proposal to close Eynsham fire station, which has existed in the village since 1936.

The Eynsham fire crew is currently 15-strong (with four new members since 2024) and they are busier than ever with 25 call-outs in the past two months (Sep–Oct 2025), and at the recent Open Day, several brave villagers stepped up to begin their recruitment journeys! We look

forward to welcoming them to our crew.

If you want to consider joining, visit oxfordshire.gov.uk/oncallfirefighters or contact Laurence on 07540 925022. Every new firefighter makes a difference.

Please join the public consultation on the future of the Fire Service and express your views here: letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ofrs-consultation. Find us on Facebook to see some of the community work we do. Thank you for your support.

Editor—of course, there are other aspects to the Fire Station question. Go to Eynsham Online and in the News there you will find a report from Cllr Dan Levy.

He says, “This proposed change is driven by significant changes in the demand for their (Fire) services and in the availability of staff. There are many fewer fires than there used to be (for lots of reasons including the reduction in smoking and safer electrical goods) so most work now is related to fire prevention and to Road Traffic collisions. It is also harder to get

on-call fire staff, which means that the on-call stations like Henley and Woodstock are sometimes not crewed.

“That means that there is a plan to focus more on the full-time stations, like Witney, and ensure that they are in the right place “to cover the demands on their time”. Dan says he will be very interested to hear the views of residents because the fire station, crewed by local firefighters, has been part of our community for a long time.



News from Eynsham Museum

by Steve Parrinder

Nearly 350 people visited Eynsham Museum over the five weekends it was showing its new permanent exhibition. There were special viewings for six groups from the primary school on 14 and 21 October, and for the CEO of West Oxfordshire District Council, Giles Hughes, and his colleagues.

The museum is now closed for the winter months. When it reopens in spring 2026, yet more will have been added to the permanent exhibition. There may even be a Grand Opening.

Village Sports



U9s squad

Kicking it out of the park!

*Focus on Eynsham football,
by James Clark*



Generous sponsor becomes good luck charm

The U9s were thrilled to be contacted by Mervyn Harris of Abbey Properties this summer. It is so very rare for a business to approach a football club with sponsorship opportunities—because usually it's the club that approaches the business! Mervyn spent many years involved in grassroots football and recognises the positive contribution it makes to the community.

James says, 'We are delighted to have Mervyn and the Abbey Properties team as matchday kit sponsors for our U9s. The Black and White squad look very smart on match days, and the Black squad have yet to drop a point in their new stealth strip—down to that lucky Abbey Properties sponsorship, perhaps! If you are looking for a local independent estate agent, then look no further than the Abbey Properties team, who are beacons for the spirit of our Eynsham community.'

Men's football goes from strength to strength

The Men's 1st football team continue to establish themselves as formidable opponents in the Witney and District League. Their new management team, now in their second season, have been committed to developing the next crop of local footballing adults. Their approach has been refreshing - building a squad of experience, but bringing through senior youth footballers to have their first taste of open-age football. Home

games are Saturday afternoons down at the Oxford Road Pavilion. Come along to proudly support our football team.

Eynsham Youth show the sky's the limit

A youth team explosion has taken place in our village, and this has gained the attention of our surrounding neighbours: Cassington, Barnard Gate, Stanton Harcourt and Sutton. Saturday mornings see 1x U7 team, 2x U8 teams, 2x U9 teams and 2x U10 teams represent Eynsham Youth Association Football Club in the Oxfordshire Youth League. If you are interested in getting your child involved, contact us through the website eynshamfc.co.uk.

Thank you to all our youth sponsors

The Youth Football Club would like to thank all of its youth team sponsors this year: Argyll Stonework, Parkers, Pheasant Retreats, Talmage's, Monsieur Jardin Design, Howe and Co. Fish and Chips, Taylor's Cotswold Construction, Studio PT, Sartorelli's, Abbey Properties, Penny & Sinclair, Classique Bespoke and SAS Scaffolding. We could not and would not survive without generous team sponsorship. Thank you for giving so many of our young people the chance to fall in love with the great game that is football.



Eynsham Roadrunners

Run with us in 2026

by Jane Garton

Eynsham Roadrunners welcomes runners of all abilities. If you want to improve your times and compete in races—or just meet some friendly people to jog and chat with once a week—we'd love you to join us!

We meet at the Eynsham Pavilion every Wednesday at 6.30pm for a social run of four to six miles, with faster and slower groups, so nobody

is left behind. On Tuesdays, we have a more structured training session (location varies), suitable for everyone. There's a varied calendar of running and social activities through the year, with a great range of local races and team events.

New to running or making a comeback? Look out for our next 'You Can Run' couch-to-5k programme, designed especially for new and returning runners. Find out more at eynshamroadrunners.org.uk or just come along on a Wednesday evening. Email us at eynsham.err@gmail.com.

Village Youth



Jamboree on the Air

by David North

On 18 October, 1st Eynsham Scouts successfully ran its second Jamboree on the Air, or JOTA. JOTA is an annual event where Scouts and Guides from all over the world communicate using radio and other media, and take part in lots of fun activities.

Our JOTA was enjoyed by around 70 young people from Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Guide groups from Eynsham, Witney and surrounding area. We set up an amateur radio station with call sign GB1ESG, and everyone had the chance to speak over the airwaves to lots of different people, including amateur radio enthusiasts and young people from 11 other JOTAs happening across the UK. The furthest message we received on the day was from Ukraine!

Other activities on the day included setting up our own telephone exchange (including a rotary phone!), sending and receiving Morse code messages, experiments with acids, alkalis and indicators, making potato batteries and lighting up LEDs, extracting DNA from strawberries and

bananas, and using an oscilloscope to see what sound looks like. It was a truly enjoyable—if hectic—event. Thank you to Bartholomew School for allowing us to erect our radio masts on the field. And if you are interested in volunteering with the Scouts, please email pinkhillscouts@gmail.com.

Local experts help Bartholomew students learn skills for life

by Katrina Wood

Year 8 students at Bartholomew School enjoyed a Drop Down Day, packed with practical workshops in careers, health and wellbeing.

Highlights included a Careers Detective challenge with 27 local employers, CPR training with the South Central Ambulance Service, a healthy eating session with Abbott Diabetes, dance workshop with Studio Fit and a creative wellbeing art project with the school's Art Department.

Headteacher Craig Thomas said, 'I couldn't be prouder of our students or more thankful to everyone who helped to make this day a success. It was a great team effort—and a brilliant reminder of what this community can do when it comes together.'

Local employers interested in future events or work experience placements can contact Mrs Linda Williams, Careers Lead: careers@bartholomew.epatrust.org.

Eynsham Youth Network

by Carl Rylett

Eynsham Youth Network are working to provide young people in Eynsham with safe spaces to socialise, with professional support when needed. If you would like to get involved in supporting the development of a Youth Club and in improving youth facilities in the village, see bit.ly/4kDaMIL, or contact Carl Rylett at eynshamyouthnetwork@outlook.com or on 07887 543455.

Village Habitats



Black poplars

Did you hear the programme on BBC Radio 4 a few weeks ago on how rare

black poplar trees are? (Find it here: bit.ly/3J0ve9F.) Eynsham has three superb specimens in Hazeldene Close —although the tree people think they may be hybrids, so less rare.



Female black poplars are unpopular because they produce lots of white, fluffy seedheads in spring, which smother everything and get into people's homes. Everyone in Hazeldene knows that at least one of ours is female as we have to put up with all that fluff! They are the three large trees behind the houses in the photo.

Climate winners

by Anna Parrinder

Eynsham's Nature Recovery Network, alongside Long Mead Foundation, were winners in the Oxford Climate Awards. The network was recognised in the Biodiversity and Environment Category for the Thames Valley Wildflower Meadow Restoration Project.

Anna said, 'Since 2018, we have connected over 250 hectares of ancient and restored meadow along the Thames upstream and downstream of Eynsham Lock. All the work has been done by our network of local members, experts and partners. If you'd like to get involved, you can join our next event: hedge planting on Sunday 14 December. Check the website for more details: nature-recovery-network.org'

GreenTea Food Group

by Les Swarbrick

For the third year running, as part of the Peace Oak's Apple Day, the food group ran a competition to produce a savoury or sweet plant-based dish. There were a lot of wholesome entries which, after the judging, were consumed with relish by people at the

Apple Day. There was nothing left over!

The competition winners were:

- 1st: Apple Tray Bake—Catherine Chapman
- 2nd: Creamed Spinach—Andy Swarbrick
- 3rd: Roast Beetroot Pesto—Sarah Couch

All our recipes from the competition and all previous tastings are available at shorturl.at/Aqtet.

Eynsham churches Special Christmas Events

Sunday 30 November

Baptist Church, 10.30am Gift service to gather warm clothing for the homeless via Gatehouse and donations to Asylum Welcome

St Leonards Church, 7pm Choral Advent Service

Sunday 7 December

St Leonard's Church, 4pm Christingle

Sunday 14 December

St Leonard's Church Hall, 2pm Christmas Around the World

Sunday 21 December

Baptist Church
3pm Christmas Messy Church
4pm Carols at Twilight! (family-friendly and safe!), followed by tea



St Leonard's Church, 7pm Carol Celebration

Wednesday 24 December

Christmas Eve
St Peter's Catholic Church, 5pm Mass

St Leonard's Church
5pm Crib Service
11.30pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day! 25 December

St Leonard's Church
8.30am Holy Communion
10am All-age Celebration



Baptist Church
10am A short celebration of Christmas for all the family. Children (and grown-ups) are invited to show and tell what was in their Christmas stockings!

St Peter's Catholic Church, 10am Christmas Day Mass

Who we are



Councillors and Officers that make up the Parish Council

After a few months of change at Eynsham Parish Council, we'd like to (re)introduce the whole team to our residents so you know who your Councillors and Officers are. They all work hard to support the community and protect the lovely Parish we call home.



These pages have been supported by Eynsham Parish Council.
Contact: epc.comms@eynsham-pc.gov.uk
or visit www.eynsham-pc.gov.uk
Find us on Facebook, X and Bluesky.

Councillors

In 2025, we've acquired five new Councillors and one returnee, taking our numbers up to 14, with just one vacancy remaining. The team is led by Ross Macken, our Chair, supported by Vice Chair Sue Brown. Both have been on the Council for many years and work hard (alongside their 'real' jobs) to guide the team and support the community.

Our other Councillors are Milly Chen, a working mother who is active with the local school, and Sue Osborne who leads on much of the Open Spaces activities, such as maintenance at the Fishponds. Tricia Crowley is our transport enthusiast, while Carl Rylett wears two hats (he's also a District Councillor) and Andy Mosson, who first joined us in 1993, chairs our Planning Committee.

Ann Partlett joined in 2022—she was born in Eynsham—while Nick Relph (a former Chair) re-joined us earlier this year. Our newest recruits are Charles Amos, Annika Ramen, Jon Crowe, Jovan Lee-Roles and Peter Magoolaghan.

All Councillors live locally but have diverse situations—some are retired and some working, some are new to the village and others have lived here their whole lives. We have a good balance of genders and ages. This diversity is ideal to reflect our diverse community.

Officers

Parish Council staff are known as Officers. We currently have five and most work part time. The team is led by our Clerk Michelle, who joined us from Wheatley Parish Council in January 2025. Her Deputy is Richard, who has been with us four years and is also our Room Bookings Clerk. Sarah R is our Communications Officer—she has been since 2021—and Dave is the Caretaker. The newest employee is Sarah B, who is our Responsible Financial Officer and joined us in September.

More information about the whole team can be found on our website. Everyone can be contacted by email and please say hello if you see us out and about! If you're interested in taking up the final Councillor vacancy, email us via epc.comms@eynsham-pc.gov.uk.

*Dates for
your diary*

Full Council Meetings:

Tuesday 16 December 7.30pm

Tuesday 20 January 7.30pm

Tuesday 17 February 7.30pm

All meetings are held at the Village Hall. Public attendance welcome, in person or online via a link within the agenda. Check the website.

A Note from the Chair



I'd like to explain more about how the planning process works as we've been asked about it recently.

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications in our parish. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) is West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and they determine the planning applications.

Our planning committee meets monthly and decides whether to support, remain neutral or object to each application. We usually add comments to support our decision.

Typically, residents will find out about an application via the yellow planning notices placed close to the application site, via our Planning Committee meeting agendas (on our noticeboards or our website), or via updates from the District Council (if residents have registered for these). Once the notice appears, there is usually 2-3 weeks to respond.

Residents can respond directly to the District Council or attend one of our Planning Committee meetings to let us know your views—or both!

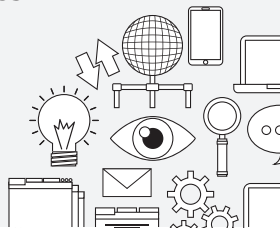
The majority of planning applications have little impact on the community and usually result in a neutral or supportive response. There are some that raise a lot of concerns with residents, such as the recent EV charging station on Hanborough Road (refused). Others are very complex and can extend to thousands of pages of documentation (such as the A40 bus lane, which is still being considered by the County Council).

We work hard to understand planning applications and the potential impact on our community, but it's complicated. Residents' views help us in this process so please come along to a meeting.

Ross Macken, Chair.

Contact me anytime with your concerns on ross.macken@eynsham-pc.gov.uk

From the Clerk's Desk



One of the most crucial priorities for my work, as well as my fellow Officers and Councillors, is clear communication and transparency. We want everyone in Eynsham to understand how we make decisions and how we spend public money.

To that end, all meeting agendas are published at least three days in advance on noticeboards and on our website, where you will also find supporting documents or reports.

All our meetings—full Council and committees—are held in the Village Hall (normally on a Tuesday evening) and public attendance is welcome. Come in person or watch the meeting from home via a Microsoft Teams link.

After each meeting, we produce minutes, the official record of the decisions made. A draft version is shared on our website as soon as possible after the meeting. This is then formally accepted at the next meeting, with a paper copy signed by the Chair and filed.

Our website is a great source of information about how we operate. You will find each year's annual budget, precept (our income collected through your council tax), and any expenditure/payments. We also publish our Annual Governance and Accountability Return, audit reports, and asset registers. There are details of our committees and our Councillors and officers, with Q&As to help residents get to know the team better. There is also a news page, regularly updated, and we send out a monthly newsletter.

There may still be information you can't locate so we encourage residents to contact us anytime with questions or comments. We're your Parish Council; we want to make sure you know how it all works!

Michelle Legg, Clerk.

T: 07956901622

E: epc.clerk@eynsham-pc.gov.uk

Would a grant help?



It's that time of year again... we're accepting applications for our Parish Council grants and would like to hear from local groups and organisations who need some financial support to continue their brilliant work in our community.

We support a diverse range of groups and projects each year. Last year, we were able to give grants to a mighty mix, from the local Nature Recovery Network and community bus service First and Last Mile, to community radio station WRFM. Grants also went to our community website, Eynsham Online, and two brilliant local events: Eynsham Village Show and the Oxfordshire Play Association's Play & Activity Day, a popular—and free—family fun day in Eynsham each summer. The local film club had some money, too! We were also able to give a grant to Eynsham Museum to help towards installing new lighting in the upstairs of the Bartholomew Room, where they are based.

If you're doing good things in, for and with our community, we'd encourage you to apply for a grant this year. The money might help when purchasing equipment, arranging an event or helping cover costs incurred when carrying out your activity.

All the details about how to apply—including who is eligible—are on the website. On our site you will also find the application form which needs to be downloaded and submitted to us before the deadline in the new year. We'd like to know how much you need and what it will go towards, as well as the anticipated date of the project/activity. If you are unsure about the process or have any questions, please contact us via epc.comms@eynsham-pc.gov.uk. Good luck! We look forward to reading your applications.



Church bells waiting to be rehung

Ring out the bells!

Most of us love to hear the church bells ring out in our village—not just on a Sunday morning, but to mark a wedding or a funeral. St Leonard’s Church has six bells, plus one little bell that is like the ones used more than 1,000 years ago, when churches only had a single bell that rang to summon people to church or to encourage them to stop to say a prayer in the fields.

Only very gradually did the number of bells increase from the small single one. The number of bells in churches varies, with six or eight being more usual. Evidence shows that St Leonard’s had its current six bells by 1708. Over the years, though, they fell into disrepair and needed to be recast several times. In 2024, Eynsham’s bells were removed for renovation and retuning. Silent for several months, they were rehung in July 2025. (To see a video about their refurbishment, go to bit.ly/46Y3r3a.)

From the 1600s, bells in England began to be fixed to wheels. This meant that as the bell reached its upper limit, it could be paused before it rang again. This opened the way for bells to be rung in different orders, creating distinct patterns of sound, such as we normally hear in Eynsham. The name for this is ‘change ringing’. The pattern of sound the bells make can be very complex—and is somewhat mathematical. Each pattern has a different name and is called a ‘peal’. A peal can be as short as five minutes or as long as four hours.

Story of a St Leonard’s bell ringer

by Helen Rhodes

Because my husband is a bellringer,

I’d been up in the belltower at St Leonard’s Church quite often, especially on New Year’s Eve. Bellringing seemed to mean good camaraderie, some arcane language—and quite a few safety procedures to protect people from getting tangled in fast-moving ropes. It was a little bit daunting and as I didn’t know anything about it at all, I didn’t imagine I could ever learn. But then I was offered an opportunity, around 10 years ago, to learn alongside some young lads before the main Monday practice, so I went along.



Helen and her husband Paul bell ringing

Basically, you learn to pull a rope that turns a wheel with a massive, heavy bell attached to it. At first, the bell seems like a wild thing and it’s quite frightening. I’ll admit that I stopped learning for a while because I was a bit afraid, but then, after lockdown, I went back to learn with a couple of friends. The extra (female) company and the fact that the bell, by then, wasn’t completely unfamiliar made it easier and, gradually, I got the hang of it. I learned that if you stop fighting the bell—by consciously relaxing and learning how to ‘feel’ it—it calms down and you can use just a light touch to get it to do what you want. Once you’ve mastered the bell physically, you can start to learn methods, which is quite mind-bending, but also fun and really satisfying when it goes well.

In Eynsham, we’re a pretty relaxed tower, which means that sometimes our ringing is good and occasionally it’s a bit shambolic (sorry, village!), but the vibe in the tower is usually happy, often quite funny, and definitely supportive and friendly. For me, that makes it a pleasure to help keep this tradition alive—and I am now well and truly hooked!

We practise every Monday, 7.30–8.30pm, and regular Sunday bell

ringing is 10–10.30am. We do need more bellringers, so please come and join us! If you are interested, call Pete Butler on 01865 881690.

Poinsettia: the ‘most beautiful spurge’

by Nick Clapton

Over eight million poinsettias are sold in the UK every Christmas, making it our most popular seasonal indoor plant. This all began with one Joel Roberts Poinsett (1779–1851), the first US Minister to Mexico from 1825 to 1829, who had an avid interest in botany.

He was much taken with specimens of the ‘Flor de Nochebuena’ that he saw growing south of Mexico City. This ‘Christmas Eve Flower’ had got its name from a legend of a poor girl on her way to Midnight Mass who had no money to buy an offering. Instead, she picked roadside weeds, which burst into flame-coloured flowers as she laid them at the feet of the Christ-child’s image.

Poinsett sent samples back home and, within a decade, poinsettias were being grown commercially in the USA. More than 70 million plants are now sold there annually. The red form remains the most popular, but over 100 varieties are registered, including many in white and pink.

The brightly coloured ‘flowers’ of the poinsettia are actually bracts. First taxonomically described in 1834, the poinsettia is *Euphorbia pulcherrima* (‘most beautiful spurge’—a spurge being a type of herbaceous plant). Like all members of that family, its latex-like ‘juice’ is an irritant, sometimes causing allergic reactions, vomiting and diarrhoea (the Aztecs used the plant as a medicine against fever, and one of its chemicals is now under investigation in the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease).

It is remarkable that the transient beauty of this plant has overcome all the problems of its cultivation, as anyone who has tried to keep one going after Christmas will attest! It needs bright light, no draughts, a constant temperature (around 15–20 degrees C), spare watering, regular spraying of bracts and leaves, and

pruning back hard in the spring. And then, from November onwards, it needs putting in a dark cupboard for 12 hours a day to encourage new bracts to form...Not my kind of gardening!

Editor's note: Never heard of a 'bract' before? It's a modified plant leaf, with a flower or flower cluster in its stem. Bracts are sometimes larger and more brightly coloured than the true flower, as in poinsettia.

Do you ever wonder about 'Good King Wenceslas'?

A rethink, by Robin Mitchell

It is night, frosty, with snow lying about 'deep and crisp and even'. The King looks out and sees a 'poor man' out in the snow, 'gathering winter fuel'. He calls to a page to identify him. The page gives the precise coordinates of where the peasant lives: 'a good league hence'. How on earth could such a young lad know all this?

Incredible new scholarship has shone a sinister fresh light on this

Christmas tale. The page, it transpires, was not a page at all. He was Hieronymus Payge, a notorious medieval spymaster—who knew everything about everyone.

The King decides to take food, wine and 'pine logs' to the peasant, and instructs Payge to gather everything and go with him. But what is the peasant really doing out there in the snow and 'cruel frost'? How likely would it be that 'winter fuel' would be available or even visible in such circumstances? And would any peasant be so foolish as to risk hypothermia for such a pointless endeavour?

It is clear: this is no peasant. He is one of Payge's agents, desperately trying to deliver an urgent message to the spymaster! As the King is blissfully unaware of this, the unfortunate implication is that Payge is a double agent, possibly conspiring against the King.

Payge does everything he can to avoid the King and peasant meeting. 'The night is darker', he says, and 'the

wind blows stronger'—and he 'can go no longer'. But his plans are foiled when the King produces his trump card: if Payge 'treads boldly' in the King's own footsteps, 'his blood will freeze less coldly'. Payge has no choice but to carry on.

What happened when the three of them finally met, we are (perhaps fortunately) not told...

Editor's note: 'Good King Wenceslas' was written in 1853 by Anglican priest John Mason. It's a touching story, with no firm basis in history. Wenceslas was a duke, not a king, but he did have a reputation as a good ruler until he was killed by his own brother! The story is a touching example of Victorian imagination!

Eynsham Advent Trail

From 1 December, as you walk around the village, see if you can find the knitted and crocheted Advent calendar panels made by the Eynsham Yarn Bombers.

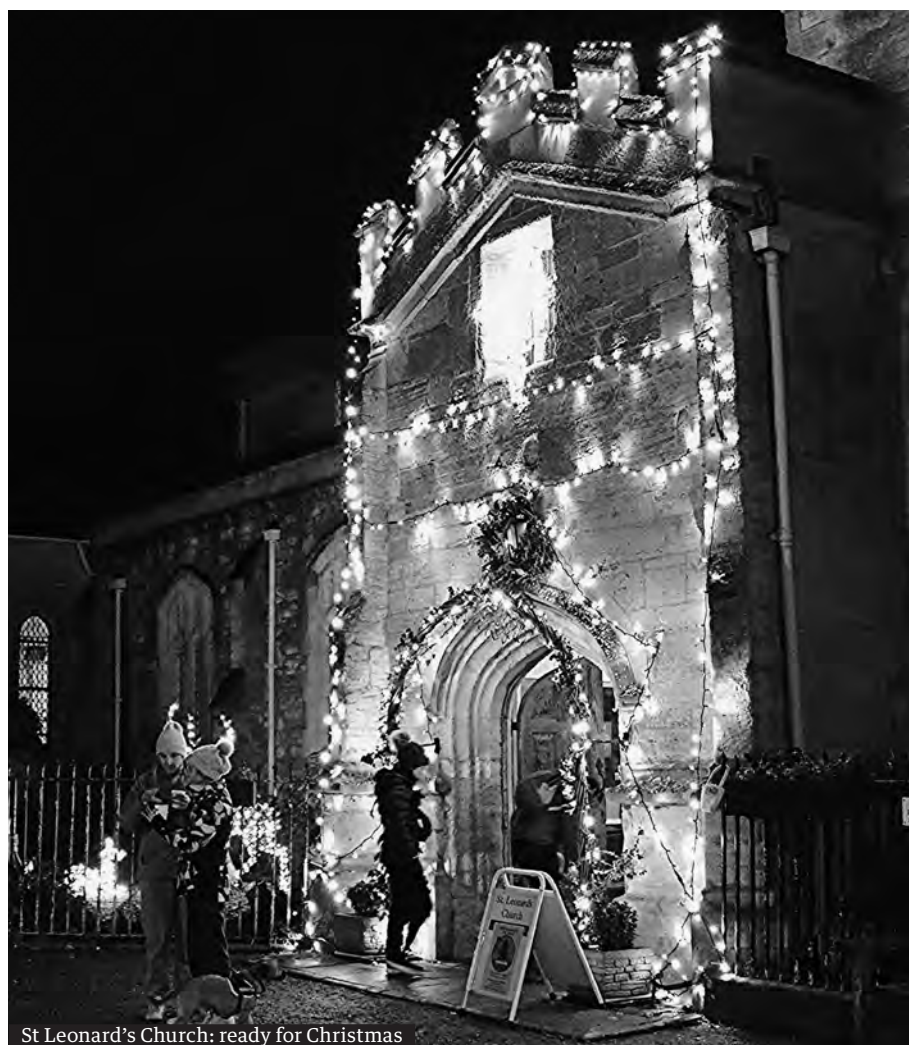
If you like, you can pick up a worksheet to complete from Eynsham Library or from the Market Garden/Cherry Tree Cafe.



Each panel has a number for a day in the month running up to Christmas. Tick the numbers as you find them, or even draw the picture you see on each Advent calendar panel on the worksheet.



See if you can complete all 24 days? *Note: Parents and caregivers, do ensure that younger children are accompanied by an adult whilst doing the Advent Trail.*



St Leonard's Church: ready for Christmas

Eat, drink
and be merry!



Stock photo

Try this tasty alternative over the holiday!



Ingredients:

1 medium butternut squash
(about 1-1.2 kg), peeled and
cut into 2cm cubes
3 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp maple syrup or honey
(optional, for roasting)
2 large leeks, sliced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
150g curly kale, stems removed,
roughly chopped;
150g Medjool dates,
pitted and chopped
100g blue cheese (Stilton,
Oxford Blue or similar), crumbled
50g toasted walnuts or pecans
(optional);
1 tsp fresh thyme leaves;
1 sheet ready-rolled puff pastry
(about 375g);
1 egg, beaten, or milk for glazing;
Salt and pepper



Lucy's Cosy Christmas Wellington

by Lucy, Cherry Tree Cafe

A homely, sweet-savoury festive bake with golden pastry, creamy blue cheese and tender roast squash wrapped up with garlicky kale and caramelised leeks. Perfect as a vegetarian Christmas centrepiece.

Method:

1. Roast the squash—Preheat oven to 200 °C / 180 °C fan / Gas 6. Toss the squash in 1 tbsp olive oil, salt and pepper, and roast for 25-30 min until tender and caramelised. Brush with maple syrup or honey for the last 10 minutes, if you'd like a festive glaze.
2. Cook the leeks & kale—Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large pan. Add the leeks and cook gently for 10 min until soft. Stir in the garlic, then the chopped kale. Cook 3-4 min until wilted. Season well.
3. Add the sweet bits—Stir in the chopped dates, thyme and nuts. Cook another minute just to warm through, then remove from heat and let cool slightly.

4. Assemble—On a lightly floured surface, unroll the pastry. Spoon a line of the kale-leek mixture down the centre, layer roasted squash on top, crumble over blue cheese, then top with remaining kale mixture. Fold the pastry over the filling to form a log, sealing the edges with a little beaten egg or water. Turn seam-side down on a parchment-lined tray.
5. Decorate & bake—Brush all over with beaten egg. Cut a few small steam holes and, if you like, decorate with pastry leaves. Bake 25-35 min until crisp and golden brown.
6. Serve—Rest 10 min before slicing. Serve with roasted veg, cranberry sauce and vegetarian gravy.

Tips:

- Can be made vegan by swapping the cheese for a vegan blue, using a plant-based milk for glazing and ensuring the puff pastry is vegan
- Roast the squash and prepare the filling up to two days in advance. Assemble on Christmas Eve and bake fresh on the day. Leftovers reheat beautifully.

A Chilean condiment: Pebre

by *Francisco, a village resident*

Chile being in the southern hemisphere, our Christmas lands at the start of summer, when fresh coriander and chillies are abundant. Chilean pebre (pronounced peh-breh) is a traditional, flavourful condiment with these ingredients at its heart. Often served with meats, soups or bread, it is fresh, fragrant and made for sharing. Chileans enjoy pebre all year round—and it comes into its own served with the roast meats and leftovers of Christmas time.

Ingredients:

1 medium white or yellow onion, finely chopped; 4 medium ripe tomatoes, finely chopped (optional); 1 bunch of coriander, finely chopped; 2-3 cloves of garlic, minced; 1-2 green chilli peppers or Hungarian yellow wax pepper, finely chopped (optional, for heat); white or red wine vinegar; juice of 1 lemon or lime; 2-3 tbs vegetable oil; salt to taste

Method:

1. Put the onion (and tomatoes, if using) into a large glass bowl. Add a pinch of salt, a splash of vinegar and the lemon juice. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.
2. Add the coriander, garlic, chilli peppers and vegetable oil. Mix everything together thoroughly.
3. Taste and adjust the seasoning. You can add more lemon juice or vinegar for acidity, and more salt, if desired. A splash of water may be added, too, if the pebre is very thick. It should pour smoothly from a teaspoon.
4. Let the pebre sit for at least 30 minutes before serving, to allow the flavours to meld together. Serve with roast or grilled meats (or leftovers), or with soups and fresh, crunchy bread. It would go nicely with Lucy's Cosy Christmas Wellington, too!

Cooking your Christmas turkey

by *Stuart and Jason, Cricks Butchers*

We are often asked about cooking times for the Christmas turkey, so we have put together this guide for you. You can pick up a copy at the shop, too.

What I'm drinking with meals and nibbles this Christmas!

by *Oli, Eynsham Cellars*

Breakfast: Christmas Day is a rare day in the year where it is socially acceptable to pop some bubbles to 'break your fast'! I would opt for a white, dry, traditional method sparkler with lovely crisp fresh fruit, such as the Cuvee Francoise Blanquette de Limoux Brut Nature. Lovely with some smoked salmon!

Aperitif: I like to go for a bone-dry Manzanilla or Fino Sherry whilst snacking on savoury, salty nibbles when making dinner! Some, such as The Fabulous Diatomists Manzanilla, come in handy half bottles.

Christmas dinner: For me, it has to be a full bodied red, ideally with a bit of age to soften the tannins—something from the Rhone or Bordeaux, perhaps, such as the Chateau Grandis 2011. A white can work just as well, but it needs some weight. I'd recommend a traditional white Burgundy, such as the wonderful Domaine Madone white Beaujolais!

Dessert: A Tawny port would be a classic companion to a traditional Christmas pudding. As an alternative,

you could try a delicious dessert wine, such as the Australian Rutherglen Muscat—sweet, with dried fruit, hazelnut and orange peel flavours.

Mince pies: I always go for a sweet Madeira with a mince pie (or two!). One of my favourites is the Henriques & Henriques 10-year-old Malvasia (Malmsey).

And for the drivers and non-drinkers?

Alcohol-free wine is certainly improving, but it hasn't yet reached the fabulous quality of 0% beers (there are some wonderful Bavarian lagers and local pale ales available). As an alternative, I highly recommend sparkling teas, some of which, including the Real Range from Waddesdon, really look the part in attractive sparkling wine bottles. They are not too sweet—and you feel as if you are enjoying a properly 'grown up' drink.

For something completely different, how about trying Cotswold 'Gin Essence' with some tonic. Although not alcohol free (it's basically 10x concentrate gin), it comes with a pipette, and you only need a few drops!



Turkey Roasting Guide

Serving	Weight	Stuffed	Unstuffed
4 to 6	10-12lb (4.5-5.5kg)	3½ to 3¾ hours	3 to 3¼ hours
8 to 10	12-16lb (5.5-7kg)	3¾ to 4 hours	3¼ to 3½ hours
12 to 16	16-22lb (7-10kg)	4 to 4½ hours	3½ to 4 hours

Tent turkey with foil. Roast in 325°F (160°C) oven, removing foil for last hour, until thermometer inserted in thickest part of thigh reads 185°F (85°C).

Merry Christmas from Cricks Butchers

Tel. 01865 682260

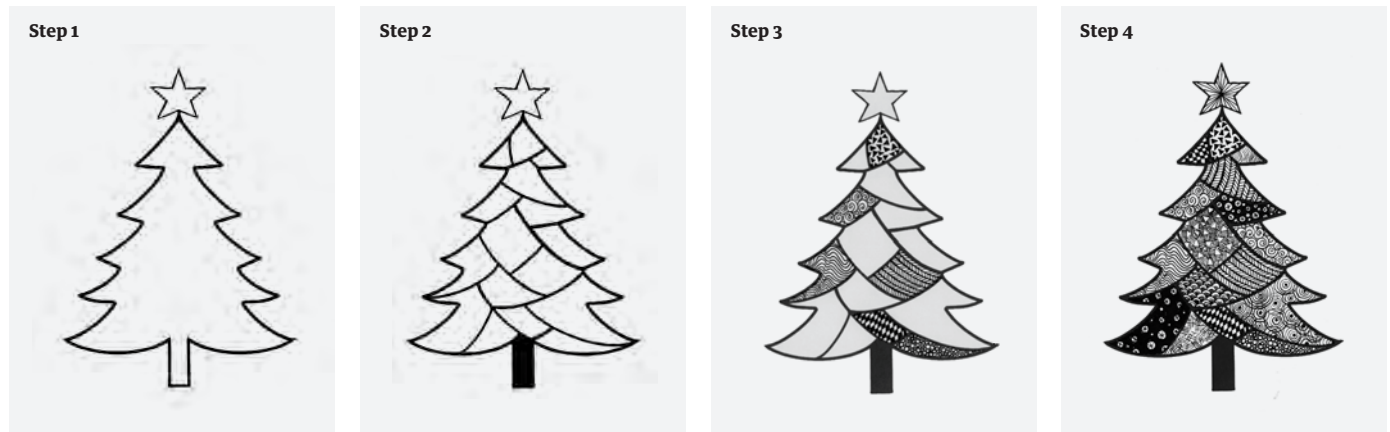




Make your own Doodle Christmas Tree card

by Alice Davies

Why not try out this idea for a unique handmade Christmas card? **You will need:** Paper (any kind; you can fold a sheet of printer paper in half and half again for a ready-made card, if you like); a pencil; a pen (felt-tip, biro or fine liner); an eraser



Step 1: Draw out the outline for your design using a pencil onto paper. A5 (148 x 210 mm) is a good size. You could copy the Christmas tree below, or use another festive shape (like holly, a star, a stocking)? You can draw your design by hand, too, or go online to find different templates. When you are happy with your outline, go over it in pen using a strong black line.

Step 2: Divide the space inside your shape with more strong black lines to create different areas to add your doodles.

Step 3: Start to fill in each space with a doodle /pattern. Start simple and, as you get more practice, you can start trying more complex doodles. Lines (wavy or zig zag) are good, as are circles, triangles, stars, leaves—anything you can repeat. If you are feeling bold, you can do this stage straight in with a fine-liner pen or biro, but it's also fine to have a go with pencil first. Try to do a different doodle in each space, but it also looks good to repeat

the same doodles spaced out across a few sections.

Step 4: Keep doodling until every section inside your shape is full of lovely patterns. If you used pencil, erase the pencil lines when the pen is dry. You could even try this idea using silver and gold pens on black paper.

If you would like some help with making your card, why not drop in to Mill Street Arts Studio on a Wednesday from 10am to 12pm.

This invitation is for anyone who would enjoy time for art and would appreciate some creative company, inspiration and guidance. There is no need to book—just turn up! Find out more about the classes, workshops, groups, exhibitions and events happening at millstreetarts.co.uk.

If you enjoyed making the Christmas tree card, why not try another design, too? Here are a couple to inspire you!





How to make mandala pebbles

by Julie Sailing-Free

Julie is an established artist, and a member of Eynsham Arts Group, who has lived in Eynsham for 27 years. She creates beautiful floral and landscape paintings—and paints intricate mandala designs onto pebbles, too. She says, ‘I first started painting mandala patterns about five years ago, after viewing a YouTube tutorial. I then started to develop my own designs, which are never planned and are mostly made up as I go along! The only initial choices I make are for which colour palette I will be using. I find it very therapeutic and a total distraction from the daily stresses of life.’ Here, Julie shares the method she uses for pebble painting, so that you, too, can have a go at making your own.

You will need:

A smooth pebble, preferably without lumps or cracks*; a white pencil; acrylic paints; a paint palette; mandala dotting tools; varnish spray
*Pebbles can be bought from garden centres or landscape supply retailers. They can also be sourced from beaches and rivers, with approval.

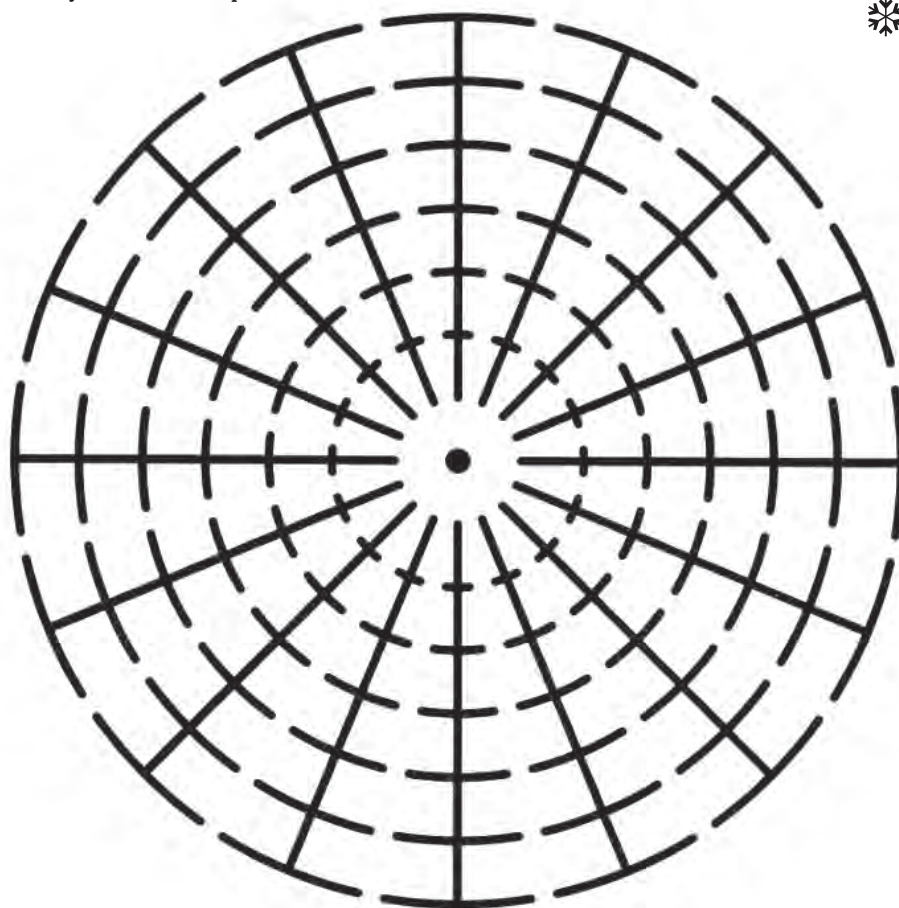
Step 1: Draw a mandala stencil. You can copy or trace the one here, or search online for pattern ideas.

Step 2: Find the centre of the pebble and use the stencil to draw a guide, using a white pencil.

Step 3: Think about the colour palette you would like to use. Start by placing a large dot in the middle of the pebble. Then work your way out along the stencil, varying the dotting tool size (usually starting small and getting larger) and using colours within your colour palette. Be careful! The paint takes a fair while to dry, so be careful not to smudge. Small mistakes can be cleaned up with a wet cotton bud.

Step 4: Leave to dry for a day or so and seal with a spray of varnish.

Here is your stencil for Step 1



Tools you will need



Step 3



Step 2



Step 4



Try something new in 2026—join the Bartholomew Players!

The Bartholomew Players members range in age from 18 to 84 years and come from all walks of life. They bring a huge set of skills to the group—painting, dressmaking, scenery construction, public relations, hair and make-up, to name just a few.

We will be meeting in January to read plays and carry out auditions for our May 2026 production. Why don't you come along to see if you want to get involved? We meet from 7.30pm until 10pm on Wednesdays at the Village Hall in Back Lane. Contact Denise Santilli at bart.players@gmail.com for more information.

Christmas Events



Light Up Eynsham is back!

by Becky Coyne-Crocker

(on behalf of Eynsham Youth Network).

Bring your Christmas cheer and join us in the Market Square from 5.30pm on Friday 5 December to celebrate the switching on of Eynsham's beautiful Christmas lights. You can expect Father Christmas, carols in St Leonards church, mulled wine, mince pies, BBQ, bar and more!

This year's event is brought to you by the Eynsham Youth Network, in partnership with the Jolly Sportsman and Eynsham Parish Council. All proceeds will go towards setting up the Youth Network, so please give generously.



Sustainable Arts and Crafts Market—and cake!

There will be two days of bustling stalls with local artists and makers on 6-7 December from 10am-4.30pm at Mill Street Arts. Eynsham's baking queen, Renata Swatek, will be selling freshly baked cakes throughout the weekend. Not to be missed; stay a while and enjoy!

Christmas at Kingsley Cafe

by Eloise Cartwright

Get cosy and join us for a Christmas Movie Night on Thursday 11 December, featuring the holiday classic Elf! The film starts at 6.30pm. And on Sunday 21 December from

4.30pm, come along for a heart-warming Christmas Carol evening. Richard Snow will play classics that make Christmas truly magical.



'Sing we all Noel!'

by Sarah Medina

Eynsham Community Choir present 'Sing we all Noel!', a concert for winter and Christmas, on Saturday 13 December, 7.30pm, at St Leonard's Church. Beautiful songs and inspiring readings, with a glass of wine or a soft drink and nibbles included in the entry fee (£10 for adults; £5 children). Tickets from Evenlode DIY from 1 December (cash only). Also available on the door (cash or card). All profits will be divided equally between The Friends of St Leonard's and the Eynsham Food Bank.

Christmas Choral Concert

by Liz Bickley

Christmas music with Eynsham Choral Society at St Leonard's Church on Saturday 6 December at 7.30pm.

The main piece is by 19th-century composer Josef Rheinberger, 'The Star of Bethlehem', but there will also be carols and some Christmas songs by Rheinberger's contemporary, Max Bruch.

Tickets are available in advance via choir members, by email

(eynshamchoral@gmail.com), or from Evenlode DIY; £15 per ticket, including a programme.

We welcome singers to join us in January 2026 (Tuesday evenings) as we start rehearsals for a season of Mozart and Beethoven. You can come and try before committing! More details available at eynshamchoral.org.

Eynsham Country Market

by Jane Dyson

Eynsham Country Market is holding a special Christmas Market on Saturday 6 December in St Leonard's Church, 9.30am-12pm. Before 11 December, pick up a list of items you can order in advance for the festive season. Our last market of 2025 will be on 18 December, when all Christmas orders will be available for collection. Our first market in 2026 will be on Thursday 5 February. Email eynshamcountrymarket76@gmail.com. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram or Eynsham Online.

Eynsham Library gets festive!

by Jane Bruder

Come along to our festive events at the library!

- Saturday 13 December, 10am-12pm: Christmas Crafts
- Friday 19 December, 5-7pm: Readings from selected festive books. Hot drinks and mince pies will be served.
- Saturday 20 December, 11-11.30am: Children's Christmas Storytime. The library will be closed from 5pm on Monday 22 December to 1pm on Friday 2 January. Witney and Botley libraries will be open between Christmas and New Year.

Christmas quizzes

by Jon Young

December sees themed quizzes in the village raring to go! Details on Eynsham Online or on the Eynsham Quizzers Facebook page.

- Rich's White Hart Quiz: Wed 3 Dec & 7 Jan, 8pm
- Red Lion Pub Quiz: 8 Dec and 12 Jan, 7.30pm
- Kingsley Cafe Entertainment Quiz: 18 Dec and 15 Jan, 7.30pm
- Community Quiz at the Swan Hotel: 22 Dec and 26 Jan, 7.30pm

Other Events



A note from the Editors:

To include your event listing in the next issue, please email editor@eynshamnews.org.uk by Sunday 11 January 2026. For regular events, please submit new copy for each issue, so we don't print out-of-date details. If you do not have access to email, you can also write to us. Just label your envelope 'Eynsham News' and drop it off at Eynsham Library

Pilgrims of Hope Poetry Exchange

Wednesday 3 December, 5-7.30pm

(first Wednesday of every month)

At the Red Lion

Theme for the month: coincidence, happenstance, serendipity

Old Forge Pottery Christmas Fair

Saturday 6-Sunday 7 December,

10am-4.30pm

At The Old Forge Pottery,

33a Newland Street

Eynsham Acoustic Club

Sunday 7 December, 8pm

At The Swan Hotel

Eynsham WI Christmas Party

Tuesday 9 December, 7pm

At The Swan Hotel

Bartholomew School Christmas Carol Concert

Thursday 11 December, 6-7pm

At St Leonard's Church

Nature Recovery Network Hedge Planting

Sunday 14 December 10am-3pm

Meet at Long Mead Wildlife Site

Oxford Bus & Morris Motors Museum

Sundays 14 and 21 December, 10am-3pm

Santa will be at the museum, along with the Oxford & District Model Railway Club. VisitEngland has awarded the museum its 'Quality Assured Visitor Attraction' status!

Carols at the Queen's Head, Eynsham

Tuesday 23 December, 8-11pm

Singing to be led by Eynsham Morris

Age UK Lunch Club

Friday 19 December, 12-1:30pm

At The Red Lion

Oxford Bus & Morris

Motors Museum

New Year's Day, 11am-3pm

Heritage bus rides followed by a free-to-enter competition for 'The Best Christmas Jumper'

Eynsham Acoustic Club

Sunday 4 January, 8pm

At The Swan Hotel

Eynsham WI

Thursday 8 January, 7.30pm

Eynsham Scout Hall

Russell Cherry: The Thames from its Source. Competition: An item beginning with R.

Visitors welcome; £5 contribution

Eynsham Repair Cafe

Saturday 10 January, 2-4pm

At the Village Hall

Drinks and cakes while you wait.

Check Facebook page for types of repairs available

Nature Recovery Network Hedge Planting

Sunday 11 January 10am-3pm

Meet at Long Mead Wildlife Site

Eynsham Art Group

Thursday 26 February, 7.30pm

At Mill Street Arts

Featuring sculptor Fiona Hunter; non-members £5

Warm Welcome Wednesday

Wednesdays, 10.30am-12pm

At St Leonard's Church

Eynsham Community Choir

Thursdays, 7.15-9pm

At Baptist Church Hall

Friendly, fun community singing. All welcome!

Eynsham Ukuleles

Twice weekly: Sundays 12pm &

Wednesday 8pm

At The Swan Hotel. Beginners

welcome, wide repertoire, sometimes playing gigs at carnivals, fêtes, day centres, care homes. No charges; just a contribution towards room hire

Combe Mill

Combe Mill is closed until March, but the tearoom is still open on Wednesdays (except 24 and 31 December), 10.30am-3pm

Soup maker?

Would you like to join the group of Eynsham soup makers who provide soup for the Gatehouse in Oxford once a year? We will collect our next contributions in February 2026.

For more information, please contact Christine Cox at christinedeborahcox@gmail.com or Margherita Pierini at margherita@pierini.co.uk.

Need, hardship or distress?

The Eynsham Consolidated Charity can make money grants or help to provide items or services for those in financial need. The Bartholomew Educational Foundation makes money grants to people under 25 for books, equipment, travel, etc. To enquire, in absolute confidence, email the Clerk, Catherine Barton: eynshamcharities@gmail.com

Eynsham Churches



Eynsham Baptist Church

Main Sunday event at 10.30am

Lombard Street, Eynsham
OX29 4HT

eynshambaptistchurch.co.uk

01865 882203, eynsham.baptists@gmail.com To book the church hall, call 07554012535 or rccarley@outlook.com

St. Leonard's CofE

Main Sunday event at 10.30am

On the Market Square

stleonardseynsham.org.uk

Church Administrator:

Louise Parker 01865 883325

stleonards_stpeters@btconnect.com

The Church Hall can be booked for events

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church Sunday Mass at 10am

Abbey Street, Eynsham OX29 4HR

stpeterseynsham.org.uk

01865 881613. The 'Tolkien Room' is available for hire 01865 423655



Eynsham Good Neighbour Network

EGNN exists to support anyone in need in the village. It has three branches:

Good Neighbours
07443 564516

Eynsham Car Scheme
07469 764174

Eynsham Food Bank
07450 328530

Contact us, if you need help.

For more information, go to: bit.ly/4aiNohD

Eynsham News is published by a local, not-for-profit voluntary group, set up solely to produce a community newsletter of broad general appeal. Free delivery to every household is arranged by volunteers. Local stories, snaps and snippets are always welcome—and corrections! Items submitted may or may not be included and edited. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the News Group. Inclusion of an advertisement does not imply endorsement of the product, service or event.

This newsletter is 100% recyclable in your normal recycling bin. It is printed on Carbon Capture paper which contributes to the Woodland Trust's tree planting programme.

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The deadline for copy for Eynsham News issue 78 is Sunday 11 January 2026. Email editor@eynshamnews.org.uk Details of all events were correct at the time of going to press but may change. Please check with the organiser before attending.



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1 Abbey Street, Eynsham OX29 4TB.
01865 884400 / pellmans.co.uk

Beech Court Nursing Home

"A home from home" for your elderly relations. 37 Newland Street, Eynsham, OX29 4LB. 01865 883611

Rotary Club of Eynsham

is a friendly group who are determined to contribute to both local and international wellbeing. If you'd like to do more for your community, please come and join us.

Contact: tessajhammond@gmail.com

Zetica Limited

Geophysics on your doorstep. Check our website for details. zetica.com / zeticarail.com zeticauxo.com

Paton Financial Planning

Your local wealth manager—we specialise in pension planning, investment planning and protection. Fiona Paton Loader, fiona.loader@sjpp.co.uk, 07780 566468 / patonfinancial.co.uk

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