BLUNSDON

VILLAGE MAGAZINE

November 2026



Photo by Debra Richardson

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SEASONED FIREWOOD

Blunsdon Community Shop & Cafe

We said goodbye to Daisy in October from our Weekend Team and welcomed Hannah. Good Luck Daisy with your new role you will be missed on Sundays!

Can you believe it is less than 7 weeks till Christmas! We are hosting a Shareholder RSVP Christmas Preview Event on the 9th November and then our Christmas Products will be available for sale from Tuesday 10th November.







Buy your Blunsdon Christmas Cards and 2027 Limited Edition Blunsdon Calendars

<u>Dates for your diary</u> - follow us on social media for up to date event news.

Mon 9th Nov Shareholder Christmas Preview Event – 8 pm Email/RSVP **Mon 30 th Nov** Advent Window Maps go on sale at £2 each	**Tues 10th Nov** Bill King Tea & Talk – History of the Poppy - 2.30 pm Tickets £6 **Thurs 10th Dec** Wine Tasting 7 pm Tickets £20 **Friday 18th Dec** Lions Santa Visit with Carols 4pm	**Frid 27th Nov** Gin Tasting Tickets £25 **Sun 13th Dec** Children's Christmas Crafters Tickets £7.50 3.30pm and 5pm

Interested in Volunteering? We are a friendly team and if you can spare 1 hour or more a week we would love to hear from you. Please contact Angela via <u>volunteering@ blunsdoncommunity shop.co.uk</u> for more details or just pop in and speak to a member of our amazing team.

Opening times are: Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs, Sat: 8am – 5pm, Fri 8am – 5pm. Sundays: 8 am – 4 pm. Café opens at 9 am and closes 1 hour before the shop.

Blunsdon Village Quiz 2026

Friday 20th November Blunsdon Village Hall

7pm arrival for 7.30pm start

Do you know the capital of Kazakhstan?
Can you identify a 1980s one hit wonder?
Do you have a friend who insists they "would have got that" after every answer is revealed?

Then this is the night for you!

- **Teams up to Six**
- **Raffle prizes**
- **Bring your own drinks and snacks**
- **Friendly competition**
- **Unfriendly competitiveness by Round 8!**
-

Come and pit your knowledge against the finest minds in Blunsdon whilst raising some invaluable funds for St Leonard's Church

£5 per person, £30 for a max team of 6. Cash only please.

Please complete and deliver the below form to: 4 The Ridge, Blunsdon SN26 7AD

Lead Contact

_____

Email address

_____

Phone number

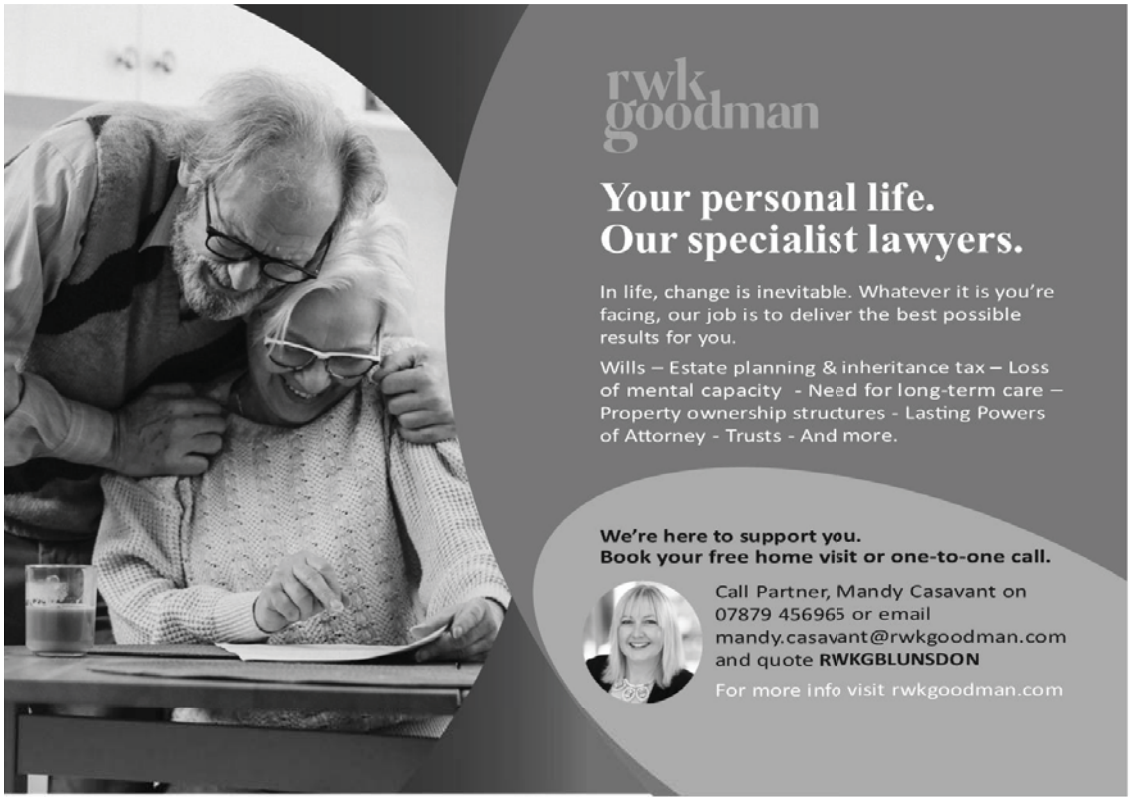
_____

Address

_____

Team name_____

Number of participants_____ Money enclosed £_____



. FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

Outside Catering



Mobile fish & chip van will be at Blunsdon,
Blunt Rise from 5pm
Thursday 5th and 19th November
If you would like a copy of our menu
please email grahamrowcliffe58@outlook.com
or WhatsApp 07515 288414
Pre orders welcome by WhatsApp or text 07515 288414.

Blunsdon Parish Council

Parish Council Update – November 2026

As November arrives, the clocks have gone back, the nights have drawn in, and there's definitely a chill in the air. That can only mean one thing... it's time for fireworks, woolly hats and toasted marshmallows!

Whether you're heading to a local Bonfire Night celebration or simply enjoying the glow of a garden fire pit, we hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable start to the month. Please remember to be considerate of neighbours, pets and livestock, as loud bangs can be unsettling for some of our four-legged friends.

Although the evenings are darker, there's still plenty going on in and around Blunsdon. Keep an eye out for local events, community gatherings and festive activities as we begin the countdown to Christmas. They are a great way to catch up with friends, meet new faces, and enjoy everything our village has to offer.

With darker mornings and evenings now part of daily life, we'd also encourage everyone to take a little extra care when walking, cycling or driving around the parish. A reflective jacket, a bike light or simply a little extra caution can make all the difference.

As always, if you spot anything around the parish that needs attention, whether it's fly tipping, damaged signs, overgrown vegetation or graffiti, please let us know at clerk@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk. Your reports help us keep Blunsdon looking its best.

Thank you to everyone who helps make Blunsdon such a friendly and welcoming place to live. Stay warm, stay safe, and enjoy a November filled with fireworks, marshmallows and community spirit!

Planning Highlights

The Parish Council is consulted on planning applications and helps represent local views by highlighting any concerns, support, or local knowledge that may be relevant to the decision-making process.

Changes to Planning Application Call-Ins

From 31 October 2026, new national planning rules will change how planning applications are considered across England, including in Swindon. Under the new National Scheme of Delegation, many smaller and routine planning applications, such as householder extensions and minor developments, will be determined by planning officers rather than being referred to a Planning Committee. This means that the existing process allowing ward councilors to "call in" certain applications for committee consideration will be significantly restricted or removed for many types of application. Residents will still be able to view and comment on planning applications, and local councils will continue to be consulted, but the number of applications considered directly by elected planning committees is expected to reduce, with committees focusing on larger, more significant or contentious developments.

SBC Decisions
Application Number: S/26/0892/BURGES - Granted Permission
Proposal: Erection of 4 no. Dwellings in lieu of the 5 no. Conversions approved by Application S/PAG2R/25/1059.
At: Stubbs Hill Farm, Broad Bush Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7ES

Application Number: S/TPO/26/0859 - Granted permission
Re: Works to BOS TPO 2007-01 G1 8 Lime trees (No.7).
At: 17 Pontings Close, Blunsdon, Swindon, SN26 7AH

Application Number: S/HOU/26/0917/JP - Granted permission
Proposal: Erection of a detached timber garden workshop and storage building.
Site Address: Maple Tree Cottage, 17A Turnpike Road Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7EA

S/RES/26/0873 - Granted Outline Permission
Proposal: Reserved matters application (following planning application S/OUT/23/1499) for details of appearance, landscaping and layout.
At: Little Rose Farm, Lower Village Blunsdon SN26 7BJ

NEW applications deposited from Swindon Borough Council for comment by BPC

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/1126
Description: Single storey side extension to form new bedroom and associated works
At:: 47 High Street, Blunsdon, Swindon SN26 7AG
BPC comment : BPC have no reason to object

Application Ref: S/LBC/26/1127 (additional conservation area planning application to 1126)
Description: Single storey side extension to form new bedroom and associated works.
At: 47 High Street, Blunsdon, Swindon SN26 7AG
BPC comment : BPC have no reason to object

Application Ref: S/26/1143
Description: Erection of 9 residential dwellings and associated infrastructure, landscaping and servicing.
Site Address: Land Adjacent to Ermin Street, Blunsdon, Swindon SN26 8AA
BPC comment: BPC have objected, details available on SBC portal

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/1191
Description: Garage Conversion to habitable accommodation and associated works.
Site Address: 15 Sutton Park, Blunsdon, Swindon SN26 7BB
BPC comment : BPC have no reason to object

Application Ref: S/26/1194
Description: Erection of a dwelling (Removal of condition 1 - agricultural occupancy condition from permission
Site Address: Happy Acre, Kingsdown Lane, Blunsdon Swindon SN25 5DL
BPC comment : BPC have no reason to object

Have Your Say on the Swindon Local Plan 2043

Swindon Borough Council has published the proposed Local Plan 2043 and residents now have the opportunity to submit comments as part of the formal Regulation 19 consultation stage.
The Local Plan will help shape future housing, employment, transport, infrastructure and environmental policies across the Borough up to 2043. This consultation represents the final opportunity for residents, businesses and organisations to comment before the Plan is submitted for independent examination.
Comments can be submitted until 12 November 2026 via the Council's consultation portal or by emailing swindonlocalplan2043@swindon.gov.uk. Further information, supporting documents and details on how to submit a representation can be found on the Swindon Borough Council website. Residents can view the consultation and submit comments via the Council's Local Plan page: Swindon Local Plan 2043. [swindon.gov.uk]

Speed Monitoring and Road Safety

We are pleased that temporary speed tubes (counters) are approved at several locations throughout the village. This is a welcome development following ongoing concerns about vehicle speeds in some areas of Blunsdon. We hope the data collected will be available soon, enabling discussions with the relevant authorities and helping to identify the next steps towards making our roads safer for all users.

SBC has provisionally approved three locations with further site surveys to be carried out before finalising those positions. These devices will be used to collect data, monitor vehicle speeds and increase driver awareness, encouraging motorists to check their speed and comply with the limits. We look forward to seeing the positive impact these measures will have on road safety within our community.

Speed Enforcement Summary – 15th October 2026

A speed enforcement session was conducted on Thursday 15th October 2026, between 09:05 and 09:25, at Ermin Street, Minerva Heights, Blunsdon. During this operation, 3 vehicles were recorded exceeding the posted 30 MPH speed limit. The highest recorded speed was 37 MPH. Following initial checks:

- 3 drivers will be offered a Speed Awareness Course.
- 0 drivers will receive a £100 fine and 3 penalty points.
- 0 drivers met the threshold for a court summons.

Further administrative processes are now underway to ensure appropriate outcomes for each offender. This includes checks for MOT compliance, valid insurance, and whether any individuals are totting up points. Captured footage will also be reviewed for additional offences such as seatbelt non-compliance and mobile phone use.

This information has been provided by the Speed Enforcement Officer, Specialist Operations – Roads Policing Unit

Parish Update

Thank You, RRT and Volunteers

A huge thank you to the RRT team (Plymouth Brethren) and all the residents who took part in the Blunsdon Litter Pick at the end of September. Thanks to everyone's hard work and enthusiasm, a significant amount of litter was collected from around the village, helping to keep our community looking its best. Events like this demonstrate what can be achieved when residents come together for a common purpose. We hope everyone who joined in enjoyed the experience and felt the strong sense of community spirit that makes Blunsdon such a special place to live. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated, and we look forward to seeing even more residents involved in future community events.

Golden Gatherings Celebrates Its First Anniversary

October marked the first anniversary of **Golden Gatherings**, a wonderful community initiative held at the Blunsdon Community Café. Over the past 12 months, the group has provided a welcoming and friendly space where residents can enjoy a chat, make new friendships and spend time together over a cup of tea or coffee. The group has become a valued part of village life, giving residents the chance to meet new people, catch up with friends and enjoy a friendly afternoon together. The group also welcomed a visit from the Mayor of Swindon, Neil Hopkins, who praised the volunteers and organisers for the positive difference they are making to people's lives and for creating such a warm and inclusive environment. For those who may have difficulty getting to the café, a Dial-a-Ride service is available to assist with transport, helping to ensure that as many residents as possible can take part. Congratulations to Parish Cllr Hazel Wakefield, in reaching this milestone, and a huge thank you to the volunteers whose dedication has made Golden Gatherings such a valued and successful part of our community. For further details contact: goldengatheringsblunsdon@gmail.com

Residents' Feedback and Updates

We regularly receive comments, suggestions, and concerns from residents. Here are a few recent topics that have been raised, along with updates on the actions being taken.

Front Lane / Back Lane Water Seepage

Reports of ongoing water seepage in the Front Lane and Back Lane area have been raised. This issue will be reported once again and followed up through our Ward Councillor to help ensure it remains on the relevant authority's radar.

Garage Areas and Weed Maintenance
Many of the garage blocks across the parish are privately owned, meaning their upkeep is the responsibility of individual owners. If you own a garage, we'd be grateful if you could help keep the area around it tidy by removing weeds and unwanted vegetation where possible. A little maintenance can go a long way in keeping garage areas looking neat, preventing overgrowth from spreading, and ensuring easy access for everyone. By working together, we can help maintain a cleaner, smarter and more welcoming environment for all residents.
Thank you to everyone who takes the time to look after their garage and surrounding area. Your support is greatly appreciated.

MUGA Ball Control
We've received comments regarding balls leaving the MUGA during play. To help keep balls within the compound, the Parish Council will be looking at possible improvements in the future and reviewing options that may reduce this issue.

Holdcroft Parking and Access
Residents have highlighted that Holdcroft can be challenging for larger vehicles to access when parking is restricted. We will be contacting Highways to see whether a traffic management assessment of the road can be carried out, although this can be a lengthy process. In the meantime, we'd ask residents to be mindful of where they park, particularly on bends and narrower parts of the road, to help ensure access remains available for larger, emergency and refuse vehicles

Sutton Park Match Day Parking
Parking associated with football matches at Sutton Park continues to be raised by residents. The football club actively sends parking reminders each week to players, parents and visitors, with clear instructions on where and how to park responsibly. While the club works hard to encourage considerate parking, it cannot be held responsible for the actions of every individual visitor. We encourage everyone attending matches to park thoughtfully and respect local residents and access routes.

Access to the Proposed Cemetery Extension
A couple of residents have suggested that a pedestrian gate or access point should be provided from the new housing development located behind the land allocated for the proposed cemetery extension.
This suggestion will be considered as part of the future planning application to change the use of the land to cemetery use. The Parish Council will review access arrangements and any feedback received during the planning process before any decisions are made.
Thank you to everyone who takes the time to raise concerns and share feedback. Resident reports help us identify issues, prioritise projects and continue working towards improvements across the parish.

Dates for Your Diary

Parish Council Meetings – The next two meetings for the Parish Council will be on:
Full Council Parish Meeting will be on Monday 2nd November at 7.30 pm
Finance Parish Meeting will be on Monday 16th November at 7.30 pm
Ward Councillor's Surgery will be on 7th November 11:30am, at the Village Shop
Golden Gatherings on 4th and 18th November at 3pm, at the Village Shop

Did You Know?

When you're watching fireworks this November, you're looking out over a landscape that has been inhabited since at least the Iron Age. People have been gathering on the high ground around Blunsdon for thousands of years, although their celebrations probably involved a few more bonfires and a few less fireworks!

Saturday 21st November
Book and Craft Sale
St Leonards Church
10-12noon

If you would like to have a craft table
Please contact: jane_ockwell@hotmail.com
for more details



2026 Blunsdon Advent Windows

It's ***CHRISTMAS***! Well, it isn't yet, but it will be soon! Every 2 years we celebrate the approach of Christmas with our Advent Windows Trail: ***will you be involved?***

We need at least 24 households to decorate and illuminate a window, which can be seen from the street. Each day in December up to 24th a window is lit: ***a Village Advent Calendar!*** Show-time is from 5pm so little-ones can see them before bedtime.



For details, or to volunteer, please contact me on:

- **drjudy_robbins_62@hotmail.com**
- **07962 318087** ***(text or WhatsApp preferred)***
- ***Closing date for entries 15th November***

Judy Robbins (Blunsdon Xmas Elf!)



Save the Date!

Christmas Crafties



Wednesday December 2nd 2026

Where: Blunsdon Village Hall 7-10pm
Tickets: available from
Sunday 1st November at the Community Shop

Book early to avoid disappointment-mince pies,crafts, mulled wine and lots of fun guaranteed.

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BLUNSDON WI

Our October meeting was a talk by Bill King on “The history of Blunsdon during the war”. It was a very interesting and informative talk. Blunsdon was very rural then, and Swindon itself was only about a third of the size it is now with a population of about 65,000. The rail works dominated the town.
Bill talked about the introduction of identity cards, rationing and air-raid wardens assigned to every street. The Home Guard met in the local pub!
In North Meadow Cricklade anti-tank blocks were laid to prevent gliders landing – and the blocks are still visible today. We thanked Bill for an interesting glimpse into our areas recent past.
Earlier this month some of our members went on a trip to the Swindon Amazon Distribution Centre. Our Book Club and Film Club continue to thrive.
The meeting next month is “The RNLI History and Today’s Operations” which is on the 18th November. In December we will have our usual Christmas meal.

Blunsdon WI meet in the large hall of Blunsdon Village Hall at 7.30 on the third Wednesday of the month.

To find out about our WI call Anna on 01793 706392 or visit our website jackie707.wixsite.com



Christingle 2026

Every year, St Leonard's Church holds a Christingle Service to raise money for The Children's Society. All are welcome. It is a magical candlelit service, very popular for starting off your Christmas season!

This year our service will be on Sunday 6th December at 4pm.

All ages are welcome! If you come along to church the day before, while Lego Club is on, you can make your own Christingle and bring it back the next day to the service.



St Leonard's Church
Blunsdon
Connecting with God, each other and our community

From the Rector's Pen……

November is a month of changing seasons. The bright colours of autumn begin to fade, the evenings draw in, and the landscape around us becomes quieter. Yet November also invites us to pause and remember.

For many of us in Highworth and Blunsdon, Remembrance Sunday is an integral part of November. We remember those who have given their lives in war and conflict, and we think of the families and communities who have carried the consequences of those sacrifices.

Remembering is an important part of the Christian faith. The Bible repeatedly calls God's people to remember: to remember God's faithfulness, to remember those who have gone before us, and to remember the things that truly matter.

But November is also a time to look forward.

Christianity also encourages us not to live only in the past. The Christian hope is that death does not have the final word. The resurrection of Jesus stands at the centre of that hope: a promise of life, renewal and God's presence even in the darkest circumstances.

There is something reassuring about the rhythm of the seasons. Trees let go of their leaves; gardens become dormant; daylight diminishes. Yet we know that winter is not the end of the story. Beneath the apparent stillness, life continues, and eventually spring will come again.

It is also a good month to notice the people around us. As the weather becomes colder, a simple act of kindness can mean more than we realise—a conversation with someone who is lonely, an invitation for a cup of tea, checking on an elderly neighbour, or simply taking the time to listen.

So, as November unfolds across our communities, perhaps we can make space for three things: **remembering with gratitude, caring for one another, and looking forward with hope.**

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."
— John 1:5

God Bless
Rev Phil Goodey

*****Blunsdon Baby and Toddler Group*****

We meet every Wednesday morning in St Leonards church from 10 to 11.30am, term time and holidays.

The group includes foster carers, parents and grandparents, so a good mixture and plenty of experience if you wish to pick people's brains!

We ask £1 per session to cover costs, and this includes hot drinks and biscuits.

There might be singing and craft sessions as well so come along and see who we are.

Notes from the Editor
The magazine is run by volunteers from the village. All your ideas, comments and contributions will always be welcome.
Blunsdon Village Magazine is available to read online at Blunsdon Parish Council website: blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk
EDITOR: Please email all items for the magazine to blunsdonmagazine@gmail.com
Arlene tel. 07493 978388
ADVERTS: For advert enquiries please contact Penny on 01793 722073
Front Cover: Blunsdon War Memorial, Cemetery
Your December Magazine will be delivered from: 27th November

Magazine issue	Deadline for items for inclusion
December	**18th November**

****BLUNSDON SURGERY Tel 01793 721254****

Phone lines are open to book appointments from 8am Tues, Thurs and Frid and from 3pm on Mon and Weds. EMERGENCIES – Call NHS 111 (outside surgery hours)

Day	Doctor Times	Reception
Mon	3.10pm - 4.40pm	3pm-6.15pm
Tues	8.30am – 10.40am	8.45am – 12.15pm
Weds	4pm – 7.10pm	3pm – 7.15pm
Thurs	8.30am - 10.40am	8.45am – 12.15pm
Frid	8.30am – 10.40am	8.45am – 12.15pm



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to include seasonal refreshments – limited numbers, so make sure to book early!

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♪ *Christmas Raffle* ♪

St Leonard's Church, Blunsdon
Saturday 5th December at 7.30 pm



A Recipe from CookFoodFan

Try my 'Fakeaway'

This is such an easy recipe which you can make instead of ordering a takeaway. I think it is delicious, because it has peanut butter in it. Start your meal with some shop bought onion bhajis or samosas, and serve the curry with rice, Bombay potatoes or naans. On the side add your favourite mango chutney, pickles or sauce.

Easy Chicken and Vegetable Curry (serves 4)

500g chicken breasts (or skinless chicken thighs), cut into bite sized pieces
1 tin coconut milk, full fat
1-2 tbsp curry paste
½ -1tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp oil
1 tbsp peanut butter
1 red pepper, cut into thin strips
1 packet green beans, end trimmed and cut into thirds
2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into thin matchsticks
Fresh coriander, optional

1. Prepare all the ingredients. If serving with rice, put on to boil.
2. In a large sauté pan, heat the oil and add the chicken. Season with a little salt and pepper and cook until the chicken is no longer pink on the outside.
3. Stir in the coconut milk, curry paste, peanut butter and soy sauce.
4. Add the green beans, pepper and carrots. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer covered for 10minutes (until the vegetables are just tender). Take the lid off and simmer for 5 minutes.
5. Thicken with cornflour, if you want.
6. Serve sprinkled with fresh coriander (optional).

You could try serving your curry with the next recipe instead of rice.

Bombay Potatoes (serves 4)

4 tbsp oil
2 pinches chilli powder
350g potatoes, boiled and quartered
¼ tsp mustard seeds
¼ tsp turmeric
Salt to taste

1. Heat the oil in the pan on a medium heat setting.
2. To check that the oil is hot enough sprinkle in a few mustard seeds. (They will pop if hot enough.)
3. Add the remaining seeds, chilli and turmeric powders and salt to taste. Fry for 1 minute.
4. Add the potatoes, fry until the potatoes are smothered in spices and have crispy edges (about 4/5 minutes) . They should look quite yellow in colour. Cover the pan and on a low heat, cook the potatoes for a further 5 minutes.
5. Serve immediately. These are very moreish!

Enjoy

BLUNSDON FOOTBALL CLUB

Blunsdon currently lead the Swindon and District Premier League

Recent Results

Marlborough Town	won	3 – 1	
Bassett Bulldogs	won	4 – 0	Wilts FA Cup Round Two
Purton Kingsdown	won	3 – 0	
Abbey Meads	lost	1 - 2	

The cup run continues thanks to a convincing win against Bassett Bulldogs, with a strong second half performance and goals from Lee Toomey, Jay Scanlon and a brace from Caden Greensides.

There was also an impressive goalkeeping display from Sams Lane's finest, Ryan Hart. Ryan's presence when closing down on rushing forwards was reminiscent of another Sams Lane gloveman from the 1980s, Ian "Chip" Smith. Chip would simply just have to growl at an opponent to make them scuff their shot in fear.

Blunny suffered their first defeat of the season at home to Abbey Meads. It was a very competitive match, great tackles and played in good spirits. Far more entertaining than the fare being served up at the County Ground and completely free to watch.

For anyone driving to Sutton Park for home games, please park responsibly and not block resident access in the nearby houses. There is parking available near the MUGA behind the school, just a short walk away.

Upcoming fixtures, Kick Off 2 p.m. Saturday, unless stated

Date	**Opponent**	**Venue**
31st October	Westbury – Wilts FA Cup – Round 3	New College
7th November	**Coleview**	**Sutton Park**
14th November	Bassett Bulldogs	Beversbrook, Calne
21st November	FC Abbey Meads	Moredon

Come and support the Amber & Black at The Theatre of Trees & beyond



Hello! October was fun with lots of birthdays to celebrate and lots of wine recommendations and the 'ber' months mean I have the perfect books to cosy up with while you escape a little of the grey skies.

My first recommendation is inspired by the Blunsdon Walking group's Sunrise 5k to raise money for the Samaritans; the walk was fantastic, even if the 'sunrise' was little more than a dot behind the clouds but most importantly, they raised £255 to donate which will make an incredible difference…and it is the perfect link to 'Walking back to Happiness' This book is a pure cuddle so if you need a bit of a lift as the nights draw in this is for you. Juliet has been painting a brave face on but when she finally faces up to the truth it opens a world that she never even thought of. Her Mum has run out of verbal advice but insists that she needs Juliet to walk her dog…Coco pulls her out of a cloud in a way that her Mum's words just couldn't…and so another dog follows, this time Damson and his owner also brings something quite unexpected to her life! As her first winter alone appears on the horizon, Juliet wonders what else is there hiding behind the clouds? I loved this story in so many ways and it's a perfect serendipity that my Mum lent me the book and recommended the walk to me! As walking in this weather is going to get chilly, my matching wine is going to be a winter warmer; the range of Mulled Wines this year is looking fantastic but I think let's ease in with the Mulled Apple Cider Wine; it's warming, it's fruity and its autumn in a glass.

I seem to have fallen for cosy, autumnal reads and can recommend Falling for You by Heidi Swain and Kindling by Bonnie Woods. Both have that fall vibe but without the scare factor. Skylar loses her job and her home and moves into Nightingale Square; a community that celebrates life together and the Autumn festival sounds just brilliant. Kindling follows Harper to Scotland in search of a new her- the life and self she finds is both brilliant and warming! Both these books have cosy titles, covers and stories within. I would pair with an oaky Chardonnay to give that fresh white feeling but a deeper taste of autumn. The Redheads Harmonie Rox Chardonnay from Laithwaites would be my top pick; a female led production that are making their own way in the industry; perfect for both Skylar and Harper!

If you want a darker read to go with the darker nights, pick up You Let Me In by Lucy Clarke or The Tenant by Freida McFadden…both filled with twists, turns and terrors lurking in corners, of homes and minds. Get a deep Syrah; a deep dark wine with hints of pepper just perfect for these books that will really make you think; my pick would be the Secret Cellar Shiraz from Waitrose as there are certainly a lot of secrets hiding between these pages.

Read as much as you like, scare as much as you like, but please drink responsibly. And share with me your cosy finds!

Reading with Wine

The Chatterbox – The Land of Make-Believe

My great-nephew is eighteen months old and is full of life, full of mischief and full of curiosity for everything he encounters. Inanimate objects have to be picked up, shaken, sometimes taken apart and played with but he seems to enjoy inventing new uses for those objects. The footstool is turned upside-down and becomes a tractor and my mother's wheeled stroller is a cage for his animals. He's a typical child with an active imagination.

I feel quite sad that our sense of imagination and ability to exchange reality for a make-believe world diminishes as we get older. As children, in an instant the living room can become a raging, stormy sea with gigantic waves that toss a pirate ship about whilst giant squid attack the crew. Then your Mum calls you for tea and the whole scene disappears as quickly as it was formed. After tea, you can either return to the pirate ship or maybe an adventure with dragons and knights might materialise. The bounds of a young imagination are the only limits to those games and adventures.

Then, the sensation of being in another world and experiencing all manner of exciting possibilities is one day left behind and the need to be there instead of in the real world becomes less powerful. Perhaps it's the creeping feeling that make-believe games are 'childish' that make us reluctant to escape once more or possibly our imagination becomes less fertile when more grown-up thoughts begin to dominate us such as the clothes we wear, music we listen to, and the people we gravitate towards. Suddenly, the idea of appearing childish to our peers is hugely embarrassing, even before we've reached our teens.

I wonder if authors, playwrights and screenwriters have managed somehow to keep a connection to their inner child which is still bursting with a vivid imagination and endless stories? How are they able to come up with incredible, complex plots and magical tales when sometimes all that's in my head is the small shopping list which I instantly forget the moment I've walked out of the door?

I'd really, really love to write a novel but it's a crying shame that I can't think of one plot, never mind a whole series of them so I'll just have to wonder and watch in awe as the stories in their minds translate into books and films. Maybe in another lifetime, my name will be Jane and I'll write something timeless and wonderful that'll be studied for decades, serialised and made into a film with all the best actors starring in it.

Until then, I'll remain, The Chatterbox and I wish you all a great month of November.

Meetings held at the Blunsdon House Hotel www.rotaryswindonnorth.org.uk
Email: rotaryswindonnorth@gmail.com
Tel:07710 228697(Ken) or 07712 078942 (Chris)

We've sent £1,500 to the ShelterBox Nepal Flood Appeal

On 26 August 2026 a major flash flood struck northern Nepal after a glacier collapsed near the Nepal–Tibet border. Mud, ice and rock surged into the Bhote Koshi River, destroying homes, roads, bridges and other vital infrastructure. More than 85,000 people have been affected. As of 9 September 2026, at least 1,375 people had been killed and more than 5,000 remained missing.

Rotary in Nepal

Working with *Islamic Relief Nepal* and other partners, ShelterBox has already supplied families with emergency shelter materials and essential household items And Rotary members in Nepal have helped ShelterBox understand local needs. They've connected it with affected communities and coordinated support in some of the hardest-hit areas. ShelterBox is now delivering the next phase of its response in partnership with *People in Need*, extending support to a further 1,000 households. Strong local partnerships help ensure assistance reaches the people who need it most, combining local knowledge with global resources to support recovery.

ShelterBox was founded by a Rotary Club in Cornwall

ShelterBox was founded in 2000 by the Rotary Club of Helston-Lizard. In the years since it has grown into an independent international disaster-relief organisation, providing emergency shelter, essential items, tools and technical assistance to people affected by disasters. Its support is tailored to each community and delivered in collaboration with local people, supporters and partner organisations.

If Rotary interests you…. Get in touch to learn more about what we do, meet our members, and discover how you could be part of making a positive difference, locally, nationally and internationally.

Golden Gatherings Turn 1!

On 21st October, participants, volunteers and guests of Golden Gatherings gathered together to enjoy Cream Teas at the Community Cafe to celebrate our 1st anniversary.

The Cafe was busy, with plenty of chatter and laughter as we came together for the second time in October. We welcomed a number of new participants and Shirley Ludford, Station Manager at Swindon Community 105.5 Radio, recorded numerous personal stories.

Looking forward to November, on Wednesday 4th, Golden Gatherings have a Thames Water community officer visiting the group to explain about their Priority Service. Then, on 18th, we will have the Swindon Bobby Van joining us to focus on home security and living safely.

On Wednesday, 2nd December, we will be having a one-off change of venue and Golden Gatherings will be meeting in St. Leonard's Church, where we will have a festive singalong and all our welcome.

Wiltshire Farm Foods will also be present offering everyone a tasting of their festive foods. Finally, for our last 2026 get-together on 16th December, we hope to have a visit by Santa!

If you know anyone who would like to join our group, or you would like to join yourself, to enjoy the company of other local residents, contact Hazel Wakefiecl, via goldengatheringsblunsdon@gmail.com or just come along and join us to see for yourself what we are all about.




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