

The Kingsclere Tower



February 2021

Your Village Magazine

The Kingsclere Tower

EDITORS:	Nicki Lee, Sarah Hewitt & Mike Stokoe	
ADVERTISING:	Brian Elborn b.elborn345@btinternet.com	☎ 298704
DISTRIBUTION:	Brian Elborn	☎ 298704
ASSEMBLY:	Andrew Kitch	☎ 299743
PRINTERS:	Kingsclere Design and Print	
LAYOUT:	Claire Harris	

Once again we find ourselves in lockdown, with disturbing statistics reported in the news, and, inevitably, more events cancelled. The notices in this month's magazine reflect the situation, and we have supplemented with local articles of interest where we can. Sadly there are also gaps in our advertising pages, with local businesses unable to continue in these uncertain times.

Having just returned from a long crisp, sunny (but very muddy) walk it's lovely to see snowdrops emerging, busy birds gathering their bits of twine and twig (in the words of Mary Poppins), and many other walkers out enjoying their exercise in the beautiful countryside that surrounds us. Vaccines are rolling out across the country, and we are all looking forward to being able to see our friends and families at some point in the coming months. Stay safe.

The Editor

Neither the Editor nor the Management Committee accept responsibility for the opinions expressed or the goods and services advertised in the Kingsclere Tower magazine.

COPY DEADLINE for March 2021 issue: 12 February 2021

Send copy to the editors at 3 Blue Meadow, Garrett Close, Kingsclere or
email: [**kingscleretower@gmail.com**](mailto:kingscleretower@gmail.com)

All contributors MUST include name, address, phone number and/or email

Kingsclere Parish Council



Chairman: Cllr John Sawyer (297221)

Email: clerk@kingsclere-pc.org.uk (297634)

Office: 37 George St, Kingsclere RG20 5NH

Public Opening: The office is currently closed please use the contact details above.

Welcome to the new Clerk who joined the Parish Council at the start of January. She comes to us highly recommended with a background in local government and good local knowledge. Although current restrictions mean residents cannot visit her in the Parish Office, she can be contacted by phone or email in the usual way. We look forward to working with her.

THANK YOU – Although the Christmas lights will be long gone by the time this issue is published, we would like to express, to all involved, our thanks once again for the lovely display of lights in the trees and the star projection on the Church wall. This added some well needed festive cheer to our village, from the end of November through to January. Working under the restrictions we are all currently faced with made the display even more appreciated than normal.

GREEN WHEELY BINS & GLASS RECYCLING – the collections dates are 10th and the 24th February.

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – will be at 7:30pm on Monday 22nd February 2021. This meeting will almost certainly be held virtually please see the Agenda on the Parish Council Website for the Invitation link should you wish to attend the meeting.

OUTDOOR LEISURE EQUIPMENT - As you would maybe expect BDBC has been forced to close the multi-use games area at the Fieldgate Centre. Play parks remain open at this point but usage should be fully in line with the current government guidance and we would advise a high level of precaution with regards to hand sanitising after contact with the equipment and avoid mixing with others in the play areas.

COVID SUPPORT – On 4 January, the Prime Minister announced that England would enter a new national lockdown to prevent the spread of the new COVID-19 variant and protect NHS services. (At the time of writing this the lockdown is in place until review on the 29th January 2021).

Support is available for residents across the borough who need help with access to food, medicine and support services during the national lockdown. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council is working with Basingstoke Voluntary Action and Hampshire County Council to provide assistance to residents in need of support with the help of local community organisations.

Residents with an increased risk of illness (clinically extremely vulnerable) are being asked to begin shielding and advised to stay at home at all times, unless for exercise or medical appointments. Those who are advised to shield are encouraged to use priority slots provided by supermarkets for shopping, prescription delivery services and support from family and friends.

However, residents who do not have this support are being encouraged to register for help at www.gov.uk/coronavirus-shielding-support or by calling the **Hampshire Coronavirus Support and Helpline on 0333 370 4000**. The helpline is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm, 9am to 4.30pm on Fridays and between 10am and 3pm at weekends.

SCAM ALERT – COVID 19 VACCINATIONS – Please be aware there are scams going around in which people receive texts from scammers offering the Covid 19 vaccination. The texts ask the recipient to click on a link which takes them to an online form where they are prompted to input personal and financial details. In some cases, the online form has looked very similar to the real NHS website. The NHS will never: ask for your bank account or card details; ask for your PIN or banking passwords; arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine; ask for documentation to prove your identity, such as a passport or utility bills. Remember, the vaccinations are free of charge and you will not be asked for a payment.

The Parish website www.kingsclere-pc.org.uk



@kingsclerepc



facebook.com/KingsclereParishCouncil

RECYCLING CENTRES AND CLOTHING BANKS - With charity shops closed, the clothing banks are not currently being emptied. Please store your unwanted items at home rather than leaving items at the recycling site. Clothing left next to textile banks often ends up wet and in a poor condition. Residents who are using the glass banks at BDBC recycling centres are being asked to first check if the containers are full. If they are full please take your glass home with you and store until your next glass collection. It should not be left on the floor at the site as this is classed as fly-tipping and you could face a fine. An additional glass recycling box for your kerbside collections can be requested at www.basingstoke.gov.uk/replacement-bin

NUISANCE BONFIRES – There have been reports of bonfires in the village that are causing disruption to neighbours. If you have a bonfire, please be considerate of your neighbours. For guidance on bonfires or to report nuisance bonfires go to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's website at <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/bonfires>

Accident in the Village

As many of you will be aware, villager Andy Soper was involved in a serious accident in Swan Street on New Year's Eve leaving him with life changing injuries.

Jaime Christian has organised a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds to enable well-wishers to help Andy and his family financially whilst they adapt to the changes and challenges ahead of them.

Donations can be made by going to gofundme.com and search for Andy Soper (Jaime Christian)

Editor's Note: The Tower has a policy not to include fund-raising requests, however, on this occasion we feel it appropriate to make an exception.



The Fieldgate Centre is run by Kingsclere Community Association, a charity (No 1168366). All residents of Kingsclere over 18 are automatically members of the association, an organisation that relies on volunteers to run it. Be part of it, your support makes a difference.

The Fieldgate Centre is currently closed to the public but some necessary maintenance work will be taking place in the next few weeks. The Fieldgate team of volunteers continues to work, within Covid 19 rules, to ensure that our community centre will be ready when activities can resume.

Kingsclere's Got Talent – Christmas Show 2020

Congratulations are certainly deserved for the team which put together the Christmas Show just two weeks after the end of the November lockdown. Anyone who saw the show would agree that it was a great example of the community working together. Kingsclere Players, The Kingsclere Singers and Kingsclere Community Association were the prime movers in the project but there was heart- warming input from all those who took part in the talent show and from many members of the community who sent greetings messages or who allowed their pictures to be disguised as Father Christmas! The team which ensured that the show went out to the community using Zoom, with barely a hitch, deserve particular thanks.

Undeterred by the present situation, the committee and volunteers of Kingsclere Community Association are already making plans for community events later this year. If you would like more information about what is going on at your community centre or to help plan for the future, then you may be interested in the notice below.

Please note that we are still responding to emails, messages and phone calls.

Annual General Meeting of Kingsclere Community Association Wednesday 17th February 2021at 7.00pm

The meeting will be held virtually using Zoom. Please contact the office to request a link to attend. All Welcome

fieldgatecentre@outlook.com Telephone - 01635 298497
www.thefieldgatecentre.co.uk

Kingsclere CE Primary School



We hope that everyone is keeping safe and well during these unsettling circumstances that we find ourselves in! The children have been incredibly resilient this term, continuing to demonstrate our core Values of Love, Courage & Respect in abundance! At the point of writing, we have launched fully into our Remote Learning for many of our pupils and reinstated our provision in school for our Vulnerable and Critical Worker children.

We have received copies of many letters sent to Ofsted highlighting the excellent work of our school staff. The support from the local community has been incredible, thank you all so much for everything!

Each day the children are exploring English, Maths and an Enquiry project based learning activity using our learning platform Seesaw as well as accessing Collective Worship, 'Rise & Shine' class meetings & other key teaching & learning live via Zoom. We love seeing the children's faces each morning and seeing them make progress & engage in their learning, albeit many from home. Here is an example of one of our KS1 Explorers!

Keep safe,
Mrs Melrose
Headteacher

My name is Explorer Adriel!

I am off to find a fruit bat in the rainforest which is called the giant golden-crowned flying fox. I heard that they are the largest fruit bat in the world and that they can only be found in the Philippines!

I am wearing a camouflage outfit to blend in and a sturdy hat to protect my head from bad weather and falling things from the sky. I am also bringing my binoculars to see the bat up close.



Kingsclere Village Bunnies Baby and Toddler Group

As we are still unfortunately closed, we are again sharing some ideas for entertaining your bunnies, this month with pancake day!



- 140g plain flour
- 4 eggs
- 200ml milk
- sunflower oil, for cooking (Basic recipe from BBC Good Food)

To make the batter, tip the flour into a bowl and beat in the eggs until smooth. Gradually add the milk and carry on beating until the mix is completely lump-free. Ladle some batter into the pan heated with oil, cook for about 30 secs until golden, then flip over and cook on the other side.

Toppings/flavours: ham and cheese, bolognaise, chocolate & marshmallow, banoffee, blueberry and lemon, chocolate chip and peanut butter...

Shapes: use fruit to make faces or animals, use metal cookie cutters to make pancake shapes or go freestyle with your own ideas.

Colours: Rainbow pancakes - add some food colouring to make rainbow coloured treats, Zebra pancakes – swirl vanilla and chocolate mixtures together

Please share pictures of any pancakes that you make on the Bunnies Facebook page. We hope to see you soon! villagebunniestoddlergroup@gmail.com



Kingsclere Community Library



Our landlords, The Village Club, recently circulated a document about the library. Whilst we disagree with many of the statements made, we have no desire to engage in further dispute and are therefore drawing a line under this.

Please be assured that the library volunteers are all committed to maintaining the library in Kingsclere and we are all working hard to achieve this.

If you wish to support us, our fund raising appeal to 'Save Kingsclere Library' continues. Any amount will be very gratefully received. Go to www.gofundme.com/f/save-kingsclere-library

At this time we do not know when we will reopen, but if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us using our phone or email below. One of the committee will have the phone.

Stay safe and well, and we look forward to welcoming you back in what will hopefully be the not too distant future.

Nicki Lee, Kingsclerelibrary@gmail.com 07899 623872

200 200 200 200 200 200 200 200 200 200 200 200 200 200 200

Entries drawn first week of each month, various village venues

St Mary's 200 Club Winner December 2020, No 82, **Jane Royle**
Well done, Jane!

KINGSCLERE VILLAGE CLUB

As we all continue to be in difficult times, Kingsclere Village Club is finding ways to offer activities without contact. Check out our website or Facebook page for the latest information.



For details of our Zoom **Yoga classes** contact Tracey on 01635 291248, education@kingsclerevillageclub.co.uk

Fancy getting crafty? We have arranged for **Crafts U Make** to hold a fun online Zoom workshop making felt flowers on Saturday 13th March at 2pm. Kits will be sent direct at £15 per person, with glue gun included for £19. Further information can be found on Facebook, by calling 07921 953735 or email craftsumakebookings@btinternet.com

Do you have an idea for a 'remote' activity? Please contact us – we are always looking to expand what we offer!

Helen 297390 or events@kingsclerevillageclub.co.uk



A belated happy new year to all our members. Let's hope that 2021 gives us the opportunity to watch films together at the Village Club.

We will be in touch as soon as we are able to go ahead. In the meantime, we are happy to lend DVDs to members for home viewing. We revisited both the Paddington films over the Christmas period and, more seriously, greatly enjoyed the Uncle Vanya with Toby Jones, broadcast on BBC4. It is on iPlayer for the next few months.

Please stay safe and stay in touch.

John Sawyer (Chairman) 297221 or jrsawyer@hotmail.co.uk

Kingsclere Duke of Edinburgh Open Centre Bronze Award Applications

The Kingsclere DofE Open Centre is inviting applicants to apply for a place on the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award Scheme starting this April. The Kingsclere Open Centre operates under Hampshire County Council DofE Centre rules. There is currently space in this first intake for **6 young persons** who are currently in School Years 9 or 10. Further Bronze intakes will happen later this year.

In applying for a place on the Bronze Award, a young person will need to commit to spending at least one hour of their time per week within three separate areas of “Skills”, “Volunteering” and “Physical” over a period of 3 months with an additional 3 months spent in one of those areas of their choice. In addition, they will also take part in an overnight expedition towards the end of the scheme.

If you require more information about the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme then please go to <https://www.dofe.org/>.

There is a cost for a place on the scheme of £35 and there may be a small charge by the Kingsclere Open Centre to cover costs for the expedition. Grants may be available to assist with those costs.

If you wish to apply for a place then please **email: kingscleredofe@yahoo.com** with your name, current age, contact details of a responsible adult and a paragraph about yourself and why you wish to do the scheme.

If we have more applicants than places, then you and your responsible adult may be asked to come for a chat and discuss your application.

The Church Pages

Kingsclere Food Bank

Kingsclere, Ashford Hill & Headley churches' food donation scheme has been running since the start of the first lock down.



It was originally started to help some village families who were struggling to have enough food and couldn't access the foodbank in Basingstoke. As the lockdown was extended and more donations came in, it has been expanded. From just two people the volunteer group has now increased to eight people putting boxes together, delivering and organising the incoming donations. We have been supported by the Community Food Link, an organisation in Basingstoke that collects food from supermarkets that is discontinued or going out of date. They re-distribute it to local food banks and so we get a delivery from them each week. That helps as we can include fresh food in the boxes we send out each week too.

Over Christmas with the support of a grant from the Tower magazine, as well as generous donations from many people in the village and church, we were able to deliver two special Christmas boxes to our families. One was delivered in early December and had things in like cards, decorations, wrapping paper and lots of "goodies" that would last the month such as mince pies, a Christmas pudding, chocolates, crackers and other treats. The second box contained all the ingredients for a Christmas dinner.

Groceries are donated at services on Sundays and each Thursday and Friday at 11.30 a stream of lovely people drop off more groceries at the Kingsmill Room at St. Mary's in Kingsclere. The tins and packets are topped up with some fresh bread and vegetables from supermarkets in Basingstoke. Each Thursday our volunteers sort, pack and deliver boxes to families in Ashford Hill, Headley and Kingsclere. Currently we are helping 17 families. Families we deliver to are short of food and basics for many reasons; suddenly unemployed, struggling to cope on a limited budget or health issues. We have made over 300 deliveries and the number of families we are delivering to has increased recently. We are so pleased to be able to offer vital support at this difficult time. As a church we are motivated to do this because of our Christian faith and are thrilled that people in the wider community have been enthusiastic with their donations and support.

If you or someone you know needs food, toiletries or basic household items please email us or contact Emma Rivers on 0779 0934972.

If you have anything to donate, please bring it to the Kingsmill Room on Thursdays or Fridays at 11.30am. We send out by email a list of things that we need each week which might help when you're shopping! Please email administrator@stmaryskingsclere.co.uk to be added to the mailing list.



Worship in our Churches

FEBRUARY

Worship

As of 4th January we entered another national lockdown and here in Kingsclere, Ashford Hill and Headley churches, we have taken the decision to close our buildings for public worship at the moment. Please do join us as we worship together on Zoom each Sunday at 10.30am. If you do not have internet access it is possible to join in by phone. Please contact Emma (details below) for joining information.

We are keen to be back worshipping in person when we feel it's possible, so keep an eye on our website www.clerewoodlands.org.uk or sign up to our newsletter to get the most up to date information.

Private Prayer

St Mary's Kingsclere is still open for Private Prayer on Thursdays between 10am and 4pm for those who would like to visit individually or with members of their household. There are measures in place to keep everyone safe

Prayer and Friendship

We have a team of volunteers who have offered to be available to speak to those who might need a phone call. Perhaps you are isolating at home alone and just want to speak to someone occasionally? Perhaps you would like someone to pray with? If so please contact Emma (details below) who can put you in touch with someone.

We are here for our community now, as always.
Please do get in touch if there is anything we can help with.

Contact Us

Emma Rivers (administrator): 07422 6887125 or
administrator@stmaryskingsclere.co.uk

www.stmaryskingsclere.co.uk

Lighting up St Mary's

The sight of St Mary's Church when it is floodlit is truly beautiful. Many people sponsor these lights (£12 per evening) to celebrate an occasion, such as a birthday, wedding, anniversary, christening, or some other special day in their lives.

To book contact Emma, our Church Administrator on **07790 934972**



December

15th	Paul Read. Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us everyday. Unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed and very dear. "Always", Alyson, Eleanor, and James xxx
------	---

January

14th	For Eileen Soper - on the anniversary of your death dearest Eileen. Remembering you always with love. Anne xx
30th	In loving memory of Gloris Olariu-Stead born sleeping 30 January 2019; always in the hearts of Oana, Michael, Emily, Vasile, Cornelia, Gina and Andrew.

February

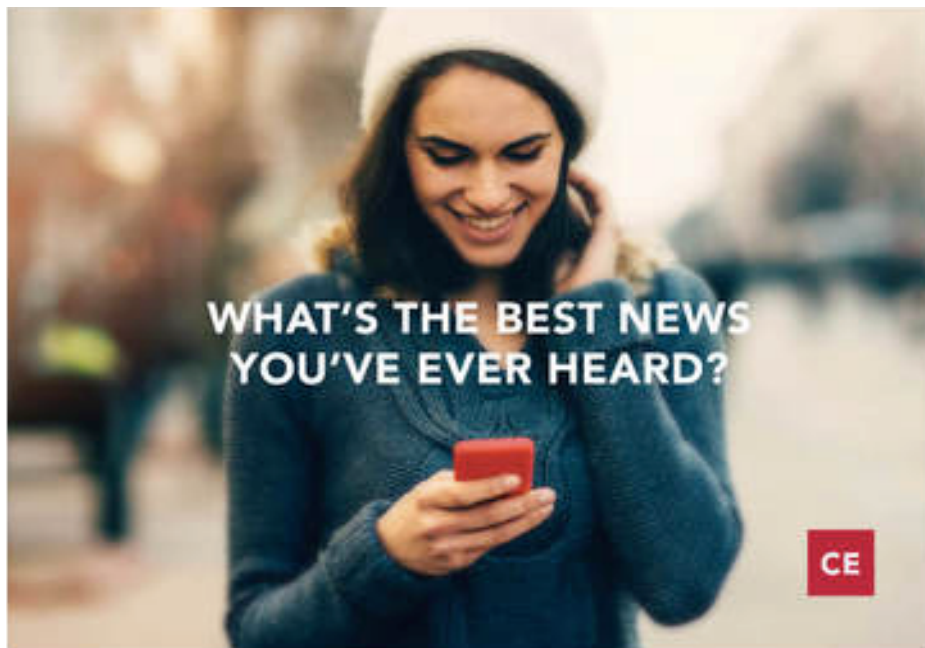
20th	Remembering John David Wesson on his birthday. With love Karen and Paul x
------	---

Kingsclere Methodist Church

Sadly we once again have to inform you that our Church is to remain closed for Worship until further notice.

We sincerely hope that the closure will not be in effect for too long this time and we look forward to welcoming you back to join us as soon as possible. Stay safe and warm and take care.

God Bless,
Wendy (Senior Steward)



Christianity Explored is an informal and relaxed 7 week course. It's for anyone who wants to think about the meaning of life. It's run by local Christians and is free. You don't need to know anything about the Bible, and you won't be asked to sing or pray. You can ask any question you like, or you can just sit and listen.

As we're currently in a national lockdown, we will be running this course online (via Zoom) on Monday evenings in February & March.

For more information, or if you'd like to join in, please contact Rupert Shelley on 07956 914123 or rupert@stmaryskingsclere.co.uk

Sylvia Evans

The past few months, at the end of a very difficult year, have seen the death of several village stalwarts with a strong connection to St Mary's Church. Sylvia Evans, who passed away in the middle of December aged 94, was one of these.

Sylvia lived in the village for 45 years and was an active member of the church community for as long as her health would permit. For several years she served as verger, and organised and arranged the church flowers, particularly enjoying arrangements for weddings and the church Festivals. For many years she was involved with the monthly Kingsclere Care Group lunches and as a member of St Mary's Guild she efficiently organised the twice yearly group outings.

Sylvia was a very private person with a strong sense of duty and expected the same of everyone else. She was a loyal friend and will be greatly missed by all who knew her well.

Janet Sturgess

Goodbye to the Telephone Box!

In case you thought something was missing.... the telephone box outside The Crown was removed on Monday 4th January. Apparently it had been used only 6 times a month on average, and was not paying for its upkeep.

The model removed was a type KX300, presumably from the 1980s. The original telephone box in this location was a white/red concrete type K3 (cheaper to construct than the all metal type 2s used in London), and dated from c1930.



Thank you to Gareth Martin



COVID-19 Keeping in touch - What next?

The committee hope that everyone is keeping well and safe during this third lockdown, which again makes it more difficult to keep in contact with friends, family and other U3A members. The committee continues to meet regularly via Zoom meetings and recently discussed an offer from Old Basing and Basingstoke U3As to join their monthly talks, also via Zoom. The great thing is that you can then listen to the talk or take part in a meeting from the comfort of your home which is a real plus during wintry weather! The first of these talks was given in January.

Last summer the committee tried to plan opportunities for members to meet up within the social distancing guidelines, but it proved difficult as the Government guidance was constantly updated in response to the changing path of the virus. A risk assessment at St Mary's Hall confirmed that holding monthly meetings was not feasible but that small, informal gatherings at the hall maybe. However, the introduction of the 'Rule of Six' and the arrival of the second wave meant it was not sensible to go ahead. Some of our groups did meet in leaders' homes, and those who felt it safe to attend enjoyed the opportunity to meet with other members.

Making future plans is so hard at the moment. Indeed, any meetings, except 'virtual' ones are going to be impossible for the foreseeable future, especially when the majority of our members fall within the vulnerable category. On a more positive note, the light at the end of the tunnel is the vaccines that are now being rolled out and developing our use of internet meet ups such as Zoom, so doing our best to Learn, Laugh and Live!

If you have any queries about Overton and District U3A or think that we may be able to help you during these unprecedented times, please **email:**
enquiries@overtonu3a.org.uk

Whitchurch Silk Mill

Against All Odds

Despite the difficulties experienced in 2020, nearly 15,000 people visited the Mill and enjoyed all that we offered, from Winter Lights in January to the successful Great Wishing Tree of Whitchurch in December. What's more, we had our first commercial order for ribbons for many years, which gave our weavers the chance to create something not only beautiful but guaranteed to be money-making. During the year our trainee weaver completed her training and is now working for us full time.

Covid-19 Update

At the time of writing, restrictions mean the Mill, café and shop are closed to the public. It's impossible to say when we'll be able to open the Mill buildings; updates will appear on our website. In the meanwhile, the Mill team and the weavers are working hard, and we'll continue our digital programme of talks and virtual group tours and social media and blog posts. Our online shop offers a free local click and collect/delivery service.

Ripping Yarns

A new series of our popular online 'Ripping Yarns' is planned. These explain how some common expressions derived from the language of weaving. Previous Yarns can be found on our Facebook page. You can look forward to finding out more about the phrase 'cloth ears'. It first originated in the industrialised mills of northern England during the 1800s. The noise generated by the machinery was quite literally deafening, and the build-up of cotton dust in the workers' ears added to the problem. As one former employee, born in 1920, put it: 'You was overwhelmed at the roar of noise, and for about three days all you could hear was the roar in your ears. But after that, you became part and parcel of it and you could talk quite normally. Although you didn't realise it, you were doing a lot of lip reading.'

A Look Back in Time

Have you been watching the most recent series of The Crown? If so, did you know that in 1980 the Mill played a vital role in the creation of Diana's wedding dress? The raw silk used to weave the cloth for the dress was wound on to bobbins on our winding frames. It wasn't until after the job was done that the Mill Manager, Ted Moss, told his staff this exciting news.

Contact: info@whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk – 01256 892065
www.whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk

February In The Garden

As in January, this month can still have frosts, so continue to give protection to vulnerable plants. Thank goodness the days are getting longer; it's a good time to check over your garden tools before the busy season starts, also get rid of old chemicals etc that have been on the shed or garage shelves far too long.



Continue planting bare rooted trees and shrubs, weather permitting, digging a large enough hole to give the plant a good start. Conifer branches can be damaged with wind and snow: tie some branches in, because if they break off, or need cutting down, that can leave rather an ugly gap.

Time now to trim winter flowering heathers: if left the plants can become untidy. Feeding the plant afterwards will promote new growth. Hardy evergreens that have become overcrowded or badly out of shape can be trimmed. Some evergreens that flower in the Spring are best left until after flowering to be tidied up. Late flowering shrubs can be given a good prune now. If you are brave enough they can be cut right down. Most shrubs recover really well, usually giving a much better show of flowers. Prune late flowering clematis. Jackmannii is one variety suitable to pruning later in the month.

Snowdrops that give so much joy in the winter can easily be divided when finished flowering; do this while the leaves are still green, more reliable than planting bulbs in the autumn. Winter aconites are another lovely plant to grow in the garden for winter, not always easy to grow, but worth it if you can find the right spot.

Plenty to do in the vegetable garden: lime the plot that will be used to grow brassicas, these are happiest grown in alkaline soil; sow peas & keep on a windowsill, watching that they don't go leggy, or place the tray in the greenhouse, no need for heat, but will take longer to germinate. Plant shallots, pushing the bulbs well into the soil. The birds love to pull them out if they are too shallow. Prune autumn fruiting raspberries, also a good time to plant new canes.

The Hellebores are in flower now, cutting off the old leaves enables us to enjoy the full effect of the flower. It's a joy to see the daffodils and narcissus flowering - a sign of spring.

Enjoy your garden in these difficult times.

Denise Allen

Kingsclere Gardening Association

Disappointing as yet again this year there is no prospect of a return to normal. I think we can say no Spring show in April once again. What chance of one in August? A big 'maybe'! It seems our hopes now rest with the vaccine. I am booked for one on Jan 14th. As Betty is housebound at the moment we wait for news of a home visit. Perhaps by next month all over 80s will have had theirs.

If anyone is planning to grow vegetables this year I suggest they buy seeds early; once the weather gets better there may be very little left to buy judging by last year. Very doubtful that seeds will be available in the village shops as they were once. Wilkinsons always have a good selection, or Homebase, and garden centres if they are open. Bedding plants are usually available at supermarkets. They often need a little care to make decent plants, usually by planting on in larger containers for a while with some protection.

By next month the spring flowers will be showing. At the moment just winter flowering shrubs; the first cyclamen and anemones just showing, and the yellow crocus will follow fairly soon, and what few snowdrops I have. I have just pruned the redcurrants and blackcurrants and plan to move the autumn fruiting raspberries. Unfortunately the horse that used to supply manure has passed away so where the heap was will revert to a fruit bed.

Sad to hear that Ivor Noakes has passed away, The Noakes family were a major part of the garden club once and those of us who went to their house for committee meetings will always remember Ivor's clocks that he had made all going off on the hour with whatever sound he had put in: cuckoo, drums and several other musical treats. Seems a long time ago.

John Eckton 01256 850017



Basingstoke & District Disability Forum

BDDF are excited to announce dates for the next **Chineham and Sherfield Park Scarecrow Trail Summer 2021!** Last year's event was hugely popular and raised vital funds for BDDF. The event will take place over the first week of the school holidays, **24th to 30th July 2021**, with map sales available over the first weekend.

We would welcome volunteers to help with the planning, organisation and execution of the event. Virtual meeting will take place on **Thursday 18th February at 7pm**. If you have skills to offer or time available to help us run this event, or simply a passion to get stuck in, please get in touch!

BDDF's services. Our weekly seated exercise for mobility and wellbeing; and Friday Teabreak club; are both free and take place online. Our Walking Club will resume once it is safe for us to do so; as will our courses to help people use their personal IT devices. If you are interested in registering for any of these activities, please get in touch.

Disability Awareness Event. BDDF are preparing to host our annual Disability Information & Awareness Day virtually this year. If you are a charity who would like to be represented at this online event; or if you are a key speaker on issues affecting disabled people because of Covid.

Disability Signposting Services. Have a disability related issue or question? Don't know which way to turn? We will do our best to point you in the right direction, just let us know.

Get in touch & Keep up to date Please get in touch with regards to any of our updates via email info@bddf.org.uk or via Facebook Messenger.

We offer regular newsletters via email, or paper version is available by post if you do not have internet access. To be added to our postal mailing list please call 01256 423869 leaving your home address, name & telephone number.

Information on all our free services is updated regularly on our **social media** and **website**. Keep up to date by liking our page on Facebook [@BDDForum](#), Insta [@BasingstokeDisabilityForum](#), via our website www.bddf.org.uk, or tweet us [@BDDForum](#).

From Amanda, Sarah, Ani & the team of Trustees

Nature Notes

Generally, ducks can be divided into two types of feeders, dabblers, who tip themselves up in the familiar backsides in the air position and are limited to browsing the shallows depending on their neck length and divers-who can flip themselves beneath the water surface and swim deeply to forage. Mallard are dabblers aren't they?

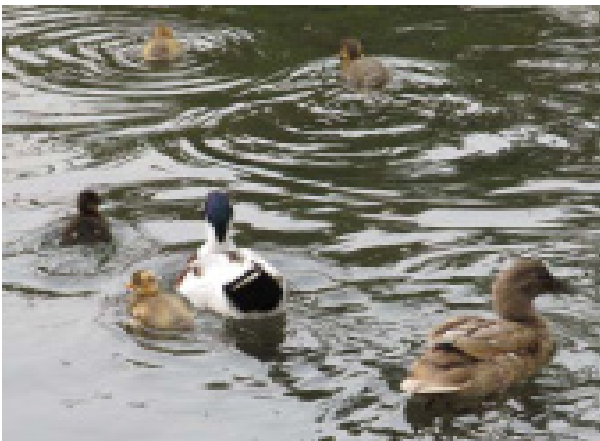
Well, after watching our motley collection of ducks on our local lake, we are not quite so sure. There were roughly twenty birds milling around in their usual fashion when we became aware of three, two ducks and a drake breaking the surface and swimming near the bottom, only a few metres but visible in the clear water. This action was repeated several times and is something that we have not noticed before.

Ash dieback has been around for a few years now but we have not been aware of its impact locally until we visited Bowdown Wood in November. Ash is one of the dominant trees there and it was alarming and sad to see just about every tree condemned to felling and marked with a blob of pink paint. Ash has very useful timber but all infected ash must be destroyed. A huge task ahead and a significant change to the Wood's appearance and biodiversity.

In the same location we noticed a long series of pits dug into the very fibrous and root bound soil, possibly the work of badgers clawing out acorns buried by jays and squirrels.

Very few goldfinches are coming to the niger seed so far this Winter but marsh tits are taking advantage of this feeding opportunity.

Diana Tait and Rod Eldred



Kingsclere & Headley Woodlands WI

The venue we hope to return to when conditions are more favourable:

Kingsclere Village Club, 35 George Street



2021 - finally. Have to say that there were times when . . . but let's not go one millimetre further with one more negative thought. Better to be inspired by the practicality & optimism of our speaker whose services were originally booked for this month of February but sadly cancelled:

Jenny Mallin, local resident and author of "A Grandmother's Legacy" & winner of "Best in World Cookbook" 2017, would have entertained us with her presentation 'My British Raj Family' on Wednesday, 10th of this month - a talk we plan to rebook as soon as conditions allow.

We've kept in touch with Jenny and she confirms that her talks have always been a real pleasure for her - especially given the opportunity to mingle with her audience at closure but she explains how, from the first national Lock-down, she was forced to consider other methods of communication if she was to continue as a 'speaker' or 'presenter' - i.e. via Zoom, the multi-screen process we now see used on so many TV programmes. "And," she says, "I am amazed and delighted at how valuable Zoom has become for me, for other speakers and for people / audiences previously unable to meet because of potential speakers' round-trip driving restrictions. Mine was a comparatively lengthy 80-miles!"

A good example of Zoom's contact-range is Jenny's exciting link-up recently with a group of enthusiastic members of a 'heritage group' in Bangalore, India: "All from the comfort of my own home," she enthuses and adds: "No visa required, no 'jabs' and of course, no airline tickets necessary!" She then adds: "However, I will be genuinely pleased when the time comes that we can once again hold group meetings for everyone and do so in person."

Wouldn't it be fun if we at Kingsclere W.I. could now sing out loud: ". . . and so say all of us!"? Most practical thing?: We will do what we can to make those meetings come about once more.

Nova Saunderson - Tel: 299570



For all homing, fund raising and volunteer enquiries;
Telephone: **0345 260 1501** or Email: sylvia.cp@outlook.com

To view cats currently for adoption www.andover.cats.org.uk

This gorgeous mog is Suki. She is about 18 months old and has just finished rearing a litter of four kittens. She is very friendly and loves her food. Suki is looking for her new family to give her lots of attention. She has had her vet check and is now ready for rehoming. Please get in touch if you could offer Suki a suitable home.



As of December 31st we have homed 84 cats in 2020 despite being in lockdown for many months. We are really pleased with this figure as we are only a small branch of the Cats Protection. Thanks goes to all the hard work of the fosterers who completed the training to allow us to carry on homing whilst maintaining strict social distancing measures.

A Zoom Haiku

You are muted Steve
Yes we can all see your screen
You are still on mute
