

# The Villager

February 2020 Volume 49 No 1

The community newsletter for Mapledurwell,  
Up Nately, Newnham, Nately Scures & Greywell

## Great War Commemoration & The Woodland Trust

The Parish Council has invited me to put this plan into The Villager so that everyone has a chance to see what is proposed in respect of our Great War Commemorative Wood. Please do send me your suggestions and comments as it is important that, in turning a small part of Frog Meadow into a wood, there is a general consensus amongst us all.

This project fits rather neatly into the call by The Woodland Trust for 1 million people to plant trees with a campaign slogan "Help tackle Climate Change one tree at a time". The Trust indicates that reducing carbon emissions will not be enough and they are actively encouraging a UK – wide patchwork of newly grown trees, woods and hedgerows.

Our seed plantation has enough saplings to make a start on planting sometime in the spring but with no thanks to the deer who have been spotted grazing on it from time to time!

But to thicken it, the Trust has advised me that I can expect more than 100 bare roots corresponding to a 'medium wood' to be delivered to my address in late February. I suspect that number will be too many for infilling in the plan I have made. Which means there will be a number of saplings 'up for grabs' for anyone who would like to plant a tree in their garden. At this stage, I haven't a clue what type of trees we shall receive but if you would like to be on the list please let me know.

John Maclean,

Tree Warden to Up Nately and Mapledurwell

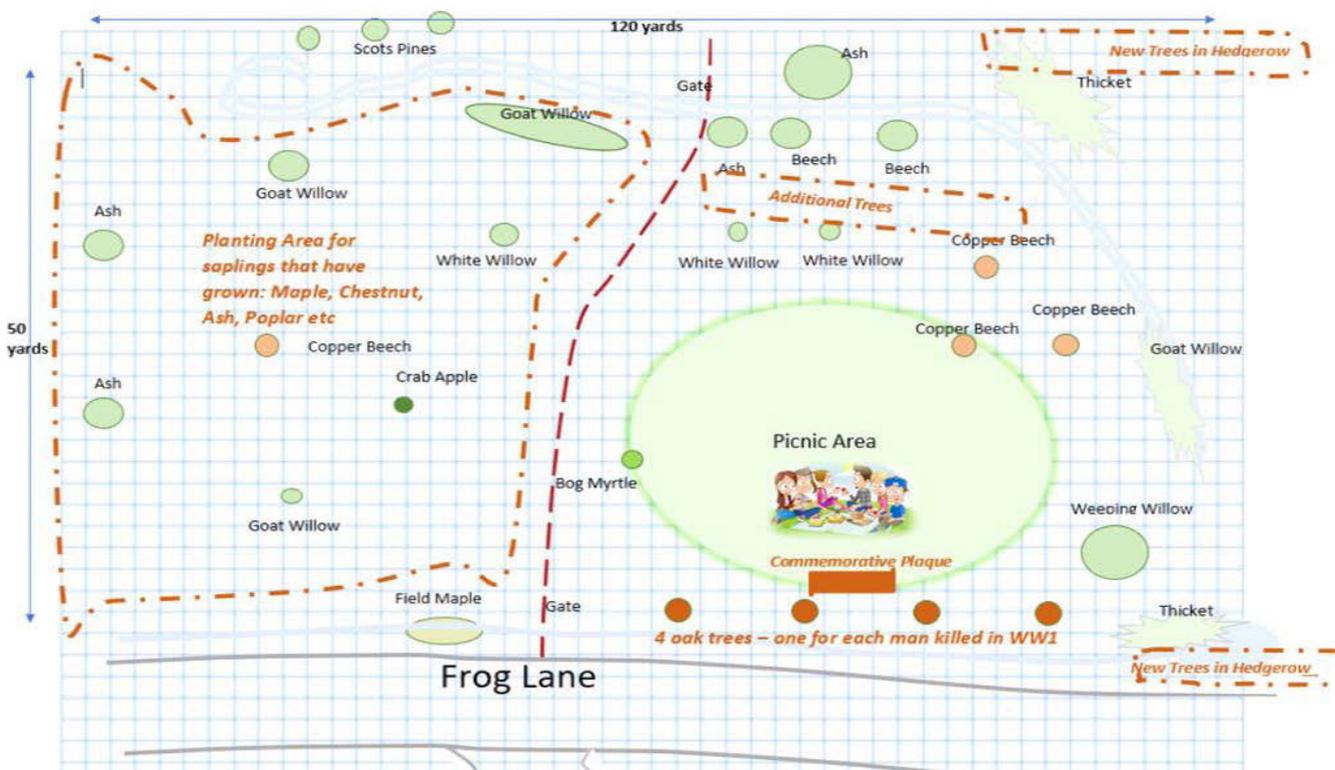
Jkmaclean1@btopenworld.com 01256 460707

## Diary dates

### February

- 4 Holy Dusters, St Mary's, Mapledurwell
- 4 Church Cleaning, St Mary's Greywell, 11am
- 14 Up Nately Coffee Morning, Lealands, 10-12
- 25 Greywell Cafe, Village Hall, 3-4pm

### WW1 COMMEMORATIVE TREE PLANTATION ADJACENT TO FROG LANE



# Mapledurwell & Up Nately

## Up Nately Coffee Morning



In the past year, the ladies at the monthly coffee mornings have collected £250, this has been donated to the Odiham Cottage Hospital.

The next gathering will be on Friday 14th February, 10-12, at Lealands, for directions or more information call Jane on 762891. As always, everyone is welcome at any time during the morning.

March 13th will be at Eastrop Cottage. April 10th is Good Friday, venue to be decided.

There will be no coffee morning on 8th May, this is a Bank Holiday to commemorate 70th anniversary of VE day

Richard and Hazel Hackney Wedding at St Stephens Church on 7th December 2019

We wanted to thank our Vicar, Reverend Helen O'Sullivan for making our Wedding Service so special. All of our guests commented how warm and personal it was.



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## Holy dusters 2020

Revised cleaning dates for your 2020 diary

Feb 4<sup>th</sup>      Apr 7<sup>th</sup>      Jun 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Aug 4<sup>th</sup>      Oct 6<sup>th</sup>      Dec 1<sup>st</sup>

Contact: [suzie.coull@btinternet.com](mailto:suzie.coull@btinternet.com)



Dear Residents

I am seeking any information in relation to the following crimes that have taken place since the New Year in the area of this magazine.

At 10:45 on January 5th 2020, The Conkers Garden Centre near Mapledurwell was broken into by two white men, one had a beard and spectacles, tall and of slim build. I am aware they cut the gate padlocks and drove their vehicle into the car park of the centre, I ask if anyone was passing and may have seen a vehicle in that area at that time, if so please call. Overnight of January 10th and 11th a yard in Tunworth Road, Mapledurwell was broken into and diesel from a tractor was stolen after the vehicle was damaged. The following evening of January 12th and 13th gates were rammed at a house in Crown Lane in Newnham village and an outbuilding was broken into. Again I ask if anyone was in the areas of these crimes and saw anything untoward to please give me a call direct, as always all calls treated in strictest confidence.

As promised below is the chart for reported crime in yours and neighbouring parishes for 2019. It is important to stress that this is reported crime, sadly a great deal of crime goes unreported, so the figures provided are only those using actual crime recording. For such reasons it is important that if you are a victim of ANY crime, you should reported it via 101 or if an emergency 999, we need to know as it may be part of a trend, linked with other crimes or particular criminals who may have just moved into an area or perhaps passing through, but we need to know.

Parish	2018	2019
Newnham	14	21
Mapledurwell	16	12
Up Nately	6	3
Nately Scures	11	13
Andwell	5	9

Across the whole of the area that I police, actual homes being broken into remained the same and low with five being reported over a 75 sq. mile area, however for burglary to sheds and outbuildings rose from 36 in 2018 through to 79 in 2019, as such I continue to urge all residents to please make sure their outbuildings and sheds are secure, please record serial numbers of expensive machinery and mark with your postcode, if possible take photographs of expensive items and especially jewellery.

Many thanks for your continued support as always

Andrew Reid

Local Constable,  
01256 389 050 Mob 07768 776 844  
[andrew.reid@hampshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:andrew.reid@hampshire.pnn.police.uk)



## MAPLEDURWELL & UP NATELY VILLAGE HALL

### HIRE THE VILLAGE HALL

Contact Caretaker Jayne Norman on 474432  
or check out the website at [www.mapledurwellvillagehall.com](http://www.mapledurwellvillagehall.com)

### VILLAGE HALL NEWS:

**Over the Christmas period, the toilets have had a facelift and apart from a few things still to be done they look good.**

**The committee intend to arrange more social events, not just a Quiz, watch this space!**

## Mapledurwell & Up Nately Parish Council News

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**Next Parish Council meeting** Wednesday 11th March 7.30pm, Village Hall meeting room.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Parish Planning Applications

20/00153/FUL (validated 24 Jan) Elmwood, Heather Lane, Up Nately. Demolition of outbuilding and erection of one 5-bedroomed detached dwelling with associated access and landscaping.

20/00013/FUL (validated 03 Jan) 21 And 25 Elder House, The Hollies, Mapledurwell Replacement of existing two-storey oriel bay window structure with new two-storey oriel bay window structure.

20/00009/PIP (validated 03 Jan) Nunnery House, Tunworth Road, Mapledurwell. Application for Permission in Principle for conversion of an agricultural building to one dwelling.

19/03365/HSE (validated 23 Dec) 1 Blaegrove Cottages, Blaegrove Lane, Up Nately. Erection of a car port with cycle shed.

T/00550/19/TCA (validated 20 Dec) The Gamekeepers, Tunworth Road, Mapledurwell. Application for works to trees growing in a conservation area. PROPOSAL: T1/T2 Eucalyptus: Fell. T3 Cypress: Fell. T4 Cherry: Fell.

19/03328/HSE & 19/03329/LBC (Validated 11 Dec) Mead House Heather Row Lane Up Nately RG27 9PS Erection of a two storey rear extension.

18/03675/FUL (granted 10th Dec) Parrotts, Greywell Road, Mapledurwell. Change of use and extension of agricultural building to form one 2-bedroomed dwelling.

19/02833/HSE and 19/02834/LBC (granted 6th Dec) Mead House, Heather Row Lane, Up Nately. Replacement of existing garage with a double garage and play room/hobbies room above.

19/01711/FUL (granted 29th Oct) Blaegrove Barn, Blaegrove House, Blaegrove Lane, Up Nately. Conversion of barn to dwelling and erection of cycle and bin store.

19/02594/FUL (validated 27 Sept) The Egg Yard, Greywell Road, Mapledurwell. Erection of two 3-bed dwellings.

19/01693/FUL (validated 27 June) Lyde Boarding Kennels, London Road, Old Basing. Erection of a three-storey building consisting of 20 flats with associated parking, following demolition of dwellinghouse and associated kennels.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Notices

Please report potholes to Hampshire County Council on Hantsweb at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems>

To report a problem on a public right of way please go to Hantsweb at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/reportaproblem>

Local Elections All borough councillors - and all five Mapledurwell & Up Nately Parish Council positions - will be up for election on Thursday 7th May 2020. Although several parish councillors joined relatively recently, they joined in mid term, or rather towards the end of the statutory four year term which ends in May this year. BDBC will shortly issue election information and guidance for applicants. For further information please contact the clerk at [clerk.mapledurwellupnately@parish.hants.gov.uk](mailto:clerk.mapledurwellupnately@parish.hants.gov.uk)

A30 speed reduction and consultation - please see Newnham pages.





# Newnham & Nately Squires

## NIGEL DOWNES

We learnt with great sadness that Nigel Downes died on the 23rd of December in Frimley Park hospital. He had been in ICU for some two months and just before Christmas it was discovered he had an auto-immune disorder with underlying lymphoma but unfortunately it was too late.

Nigel and Angela moved to Newnham in 1996 as a convenient berth between her job in the City and his with the Ordnance Survey in Southampton. Together with Angela, Nigel was a keen walker and runner - an outdoor person. He and Angela regularly cycled far and wide, went sailing and skiing.

In about 1998 Nigel became the Parish Footpaths Warden, which duty he fulfilled to the end. He was also much involved in helping to run Newnham Clubroom from about 2000 besides delivering the Villager and lately circulating it to all other distributors.

Nigel was a man with a neat sense of humour, he usually preferred beer to wine, a practical man and a great participant in what was needed in the village, but with no ostentation. He quietly did much for all of us - often unnoticed - and we will miss his contribution, indeed he leaves a real gap.

Nigel Bell

## NOTES FROM THE JANUARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**Nigel Downes** The Parish Council recorded the sorrow felt by everyone at the death of Nigel Downes and its condolences to Nigel's wife Angela. He will be greatly missed in the Parish by many, and for the many ways in which he was always ready to help and contribute. This included his 'formal' roles but also being ready to lend a hand with any village task, be it a litter pick or clearing the pond. Nigel may prove irreplaceable considering the amount of work he did for the Clubroom, including maintenance. As Footpaths Warden he could be found scheduling the priority cutting list, liaising with HCC Countryside

Services (HCCCS) over problems or obstructions, or righting a footpath sign with a bag of ready-mix.

**The Strings boardwalk** Nigel had been in discussion with HCCCS re rebuilding the boardwalk, which had been scheduled for this summer. With part of it collapsing and the whole structure now gone, Countryside Services have rescheduled construction for mid-March with the help of volunteers from the Ramblers Association. HCCCS are responsible and so liable for 'structures' on public rights of way. Any volunteer attempt to rebuild would need to be assessed and signed off by a HCC engineer and would be dismantled if it fell short of safety requirements.

The Parish Council will be looking for another footpath or village project to complete in Nigel's memory.

**PC Reid** PC Andy Reid as always attended the Parish Council meeting and presented an update on incidents and crime affecting the Parish. His Area presently extends over 22 parishes and plans are afoot to extend this further by including Bramley. Newnham will be joining other Parish Councils in Andy's 'Candover' beat area to oppose this.

**Pond and Willow clearing - thanks to all volunteers** Thanks are due to all who contributed to the two weekends' work at the Newnham Green Pond to remove much of the fallen Willow and then starting to clear the invasive *Crassula Helmsii*.

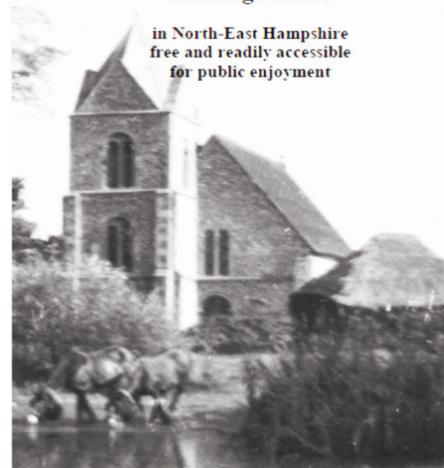
**Newnham Village Green and Pond Project** Thanks due to Peter James for drafting a 'pond project' to be used as a basis for further work and grant applications. The aim is to enable improvement of the natural conditions of the pond and also lay down a long term improvement and management plan. Bearing in mind this has to be achieved within the guidelines for working in a habitat which is home to protected species.

**Church Path: Hook to Newnham** Nigel Bell presented his newly published study on behalf of the Friends of Church Path. The present day public rights of way - Newnham FP3 and HookFPs 25a&b (plus the feeder path Hook FP26 from St Johns' Cottages) retain the 'feel' of its historical rural landscape connection.

## Church Path Hook to Newnham

An irreplaceable  
Heritage Asset

in North-East Hampshire  
free and readily accessible  
for public enjoyment



Church records show tithes for 'servicing' St Nicholas' church from 1129. It is likely the church was there way before that. (It is known there were Romans in Newnham, axheads are still being found dating from Roman times.) Church Path has over centuries been well-used by church goers - families and pall bearers alike would have walked the path. This was when Hook was but a small part of the wider Newnham Parish.

Church Path is a heritage asset due to its historical significance, unique status and the level of continued cultural importance. Importantly it continues to be well-used by people. It also has local importance or its wildlife, not rare but retaining considerable biodiversity.

Newnham Parish Council agreed unanimously that: 'The Friends of Church Path have its full support in their request to Historic England that this historic, cultural, heritage asset should receive graded status throughout its length.'

**Climate Emergency** Paul Gaskell reported on the December BDBC Community, Environment and Partnerships Committee meeting which considered a draft report on addressing the declared Climate Emergency. It was suggested that the Parishes be involved.

Pauline Hedges noted that a PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE ACTION TO CUT DOWN ON EMISSIONS IS NOT TO HAVE CARS STANDING WITH THE ENGINE IDLING.

The 14 Newnham Carol Singers of 2019 would like to thank everybody we visited around Newnham Green, Newnham Road and Kingsbridge Copse, for joining in and donating generously for the Wessex Cancer Trust crisis appeal, and St Nicholas Church, Newnham. Chris and Donna at the OHAH gave us a delicious stew at the end of our singing and then donated the cost to our collection, so we were able to give £152.50 to each of the 2 charities.





## A30 SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION AND CONSULTATION

Hampshire County Council (HCC) has agreed to some speed limit reduction on the A30 through Nately Scures. This was initiated by residents' proposals - and then meetings and deputation - supported by Newnham Parish Council and County Councillor Elaine Still. The reductions have been considered as part of a wider review of *Traffic Management and Road Safety issues along the A30 between Basingstoke and Blackwater*. The full report is on the HCC website at:

<http://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=706&MIId=6032>

The *Report* recommends reducing the speed limit to 60 both ways through Water End from west of the Y-Knot to east of Crown Lane, and to 50 both ways from the bottom of the hill to the existing 50mph limit at the top.

The recommendations were agreed at a HCC 'decision day' in November, again with representation from residents and the Parish Council. Despite best efforts it was evident that there will be no move for greater reductions now, though the situation will be monitored and further review possible. Traffic police - not local police, but specialist traffic officers - will not agree to a speed reduction much below current speeds. Measures must be taken - via traffic calming - to reduce the 'natural speed' of the road.

HCC now has a final 'consultation' to confirm the proposals. Given that Councillors and Officers have confirmed no possibility at this stage of lowering the limit further, the Parish Council will respond to welcome and appreciate any speed limit reduction, but to stress that a maximum 'safe' speed limit on the A30 through all of Nately Scures and Water End is 40mph. Also to express concern that the varying speed limits and changes between numbers of lanes encourages inconsiderate driver behaviour, and that ongoing monitoring and review is needed.

This is to look towards a next step of further speed reduction in the future and to this end the Parish Council would urge everyone to respond.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/publicnotices/publicnoticedetails?id=10472>

The consultation ends on Friday 7th February.

## JANUARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING cont

### A30 traffic calming measures

Parish initiatives are to focus initially on Village Gateways and support for a Water End A30 crossing as a safety priority.

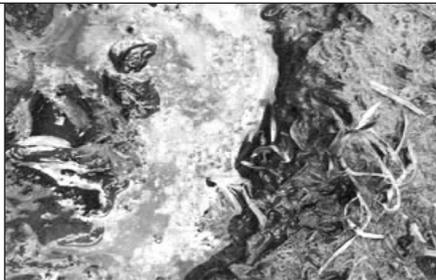
**Newnham Clubroom** Chris Alliston confirmed the Clubroom Committee's wish to contribute to a Project in memory of Nigel Downs.

To note that the Clubroom storage extension is almost complete.

**Old House at Home** Donna and Chris have arranged a new lease with Red Oak Taverns and will be free-of-tie. Plus work is underway to extend the Ladies' toilets, and then refurbish the Gents'.

**Local Elections** All borough councillors - and all six Newnham Parish Council positions - will be up for election on Thursday 7th May 2020. BDBC will shortly issue election information and guidance for applicants. For further information please contact the clerk at [clerk.newnham@parish.hants.gov.uk](mailto:clerk.newnham@parish.hants.gov.uk)

**Next Parish Council meeting** Wed 4th March 7pm, Clubroom.



## NATURAL OIL SHEENS ON WATERLOGGED GROUND

Fields to the north of Newnham Road have been very wet of late and showing an oily film on surface water.

Advice has been sought from BDBC's 'Contaminated Land Officer'. This is naturally occurring and is common in waterlogged ground, or on water bodies in the autumn. The sheen is derived from plant matter broken down by microbial action.

It can look similar to oil sheens from a pollutant, but lacks the typical petroleum smell. Also and particularly, if the water is disturbed, a natural surface film will fracture into pieces and stay dispersed, whereas a petroleum based sheen will move with the water and then reform.

## Parish Planning Applications

T/00021/20/TPO (Validated 14 Jan)  
8 The Baredown. Horse Chestnut in front garden: reduce in height by up to 1.5m leaving an approx finished height of 10m and crown spread (radius) of 7m, crown raise by up to 5m.

20/00046/HSE (Validated 7th Jan)  
St Bernards, Scures Hill. Erection of a single storey rear extension with glass balustrade above.

19/03372/HSE (Validated 13 Dec)  
Applecombe Cottage, Newnham Road. Erection of a single storey rear/side and a single storey front extension.

19/03245/RET (Validated 13 Dec) Land West of Hunters, Newnham Lane. Erection of a detached dwelling (amended scheme to that approved under 17/03705/FUL).

19/03224/LDEU (Validated 29 Nov)  
Manor Farm, Crown Lane, Newnham. Certificate of lawfulness for the continued siting of a caravan used as a farm workers dwelling.

T/00484/19/TCA (Granted 9 Dec)  
Newnham Edge, Tynley Lane, Newnham. T1 Cedar: prune back from house to give a 2m clearance, remove snapped hanging branches & deadwood.

19/02992/HSE (Granted 23 Dec)  
1 Kingsbridge End, Old School Road. Single storey side and front extensions.

T/00468/19/TPO (Granted 12 Dec)  
Middlewood, 7 The Baredown. Horse Chestnut: Prune to leave the tree no smaller than 15m in height, with finished canopy spread of no less than 10m.

19/02310/HSE (Granted 7 Nov) Kedron, Newnham Road. Erection of front porch.

19/02613/HSE (Validated 24 Sept)  
Chapel House, Newnham Road, Newnham. Erection of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension following demolition of existing garage and side extensions.

19/01832/HSE (Granted 5 Sept)  
Roshbearton, Blackstocks Lane. Erection of first floor to form two-storey dwelling with annexe accommodation and extensions to the front and rear.

19/02070/ROC (Pending, Validated 12 August ) Land To The Rear Of Nately Place, Scures Hill. Variation of condition 1 of 17/00619/FUL to amend the plans.

19/01977/FUL (Pending, Validated 22 July) Land Adjacent To Nately Towers, Scures Hill. Erection of one 5-bed dwelling with double garage and creation of a new access.

16/03282/RET (Pending, Validated 15 Sep 2016) Manor Farm, Blackstocks Lane. 'Change of use from solely agricultural to mixed agricultural use to include the diversification of farm open days for no more than 100 days in a year with ancillary tea room and associated car parking.' Consultation on new description only. This application will be decided by Development Control Committee, date tba.



# Greywell



**VILLAGE HALL**  
**To hire the Village Hall**  
 please contact Mike O'Neill  
 mjnoneill@gmail.com.

## Parish Planning Applications

### Registered:

**20/00015/CA** The Island Deptford Lane Greywell Hook Hampshire. Conservation works including pollarding of willows across marked area.

**St Mary's**  
 Thank you to those who joined us at Christmas. Over £100 was raised for the Children's society.

Our new Informal Service this month is 16th Feb 11am.

The Greywell Book Exchange will be restarting at the back of the church this month.  
 Do come along  
 Take a look  
 Pick up a book

Church Cleaning will happen at 11am on the following days  
 4th Feb 12th Mar 9th Apr 12th May 18th June and 14th July.

**GREYWELL CAFE**

**Tuesday, 25 February, between 3.00 and 4 pm**

**Wednesday, 25 March between 11 am and 12 noon**

**Tea or coffee, and biscuits will be provided for a small charge of £1 per person, any profit going to Village Hall funds.**

**Should anyone require transport to the Hall, I am sure we will be able to arrange it.**

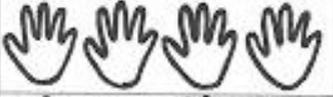
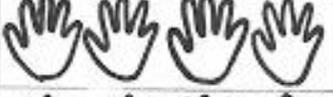
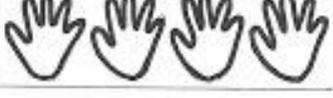
**Libbie (702978) and Jackie (702859)**

## Kidzone

What is the thing we think about most during February? With Valentines Day just around the corner, love might be on our minds – the love of our family, our friends, and of God. But what does love even mean? Love means something different to all of us. It might mean being cozy with a hot chocolate and a film with our family, it might mean big hugs to all our friends when we go back to school, or it might mean that fuzzy feeling we get inside when we just feel special.

In the Bible, Jesus shows us what love means to him by healing the sick, being kind to everyone and spending time with his friends, who are sometimes called his disciples. He even says that's how people we know we are His friend, if we love others! What's special about Jesus' love is that he asks us to love those who don't love us or who we don't even know... Now, that's not quite as easy!

# Helping Hands

Give a friend a hug when they are upset	
	
	
	
	

Everytime you help someone else like the good Samaritan did, you can colour in a helping hand on your chart!

Jesus told the story of The Good Samaritan, where someone was hurt at the side of the road, and all the people who should have stopped to help were too busy. Finally, the man from a different country passed and stopped to help – even paying for the injured man to be looked after at the local inn. I wonder if, this month, each of us can find a way to follow in Jesus' footsteps and show people what love means through our actions.

Fill in this chart during the month, with ways you've loved people like The Good Samaritan did!

### Events for your diary:

Wednesday 5th February – All Saints After School, All Saints Odiham, 3:15 – 4:30

Thursday 13th February – Long Sutton School Messy Church, Long Sutton School Hall, 3:15 – 4:30

Tuesday 25th February – Pancake Feast, All Saints Odiham, 3pm – 6pm (£3 per plate – all the pancakes you can eat!)

# Church Notices

'Journeying together, we worship  
God and serve the community'  
[www.united-parish.org.uk](http://www.united-parish.org.uk)

## From the Parish Registers:

### Funeral

19th December, Basingstoke  
Crematorium, Martin Hay  
*May he rest in peace.*

### Wedding

14th December, Up Nately,  
Richard Hackney and Hazel  
Ivory  
*We wish them every happiness  
in their life together*

## Church Services

### February 2nd

9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	Mapledurwell
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### February 9th

9.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Mapledurwell
11.00am	Holy Communion (CW) with Archdeacon Richard Brand	Newnham

### February 16th

9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	Up Nately
11.00am	Informal Service	Greywell
5.00pm	Evensong	Nately Scures

### February 23rd

8.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Newnham
11.00am	Holy Communion (CW)	Greywell

## Mid-Week Holy Communion

We next meet in the warm and welcoming home of Lady Nell at The Dower House in Greywell on Thursday 6th February at 11 am. This small friendly group would love for you to join us to enjoy a traditional service with a chance to discuss the gospel reading and offer our own prayers followed by coffee, cake and conversation. If you would like a lift, please contact Rev Helen O'Sullivan

## Special Church Services & Notices

### Sunday 9th February, 11am, Newnham

We have our Archdeacon, Richard Brand coming to preach and lead our service of Holy Communion. It would be lovely to see you there.

# more+

### New Church Website is launched...

We have recently launched a new website for our local network of churches, which includes All Saints Church, Odiham. The web address is [www.moretolife.church](http://www.moretolife.church). Do take a look!

The new website address has been created as we are operating more and more as a network of 12 local Anglican churches across the area (the 'North Hampshire Downs Benefice'), and so we need a web address that is more overarching.

We have chosen an address that we feel reflects our vision of 'more to life'. Jesus said that he came that we might have life - and life in abundance. Our hope is that everyone across the North Hampshire Downs would discover Jesus and come to know him more - and that as we follow him, we will discover new and abundant life in him - life in all its fullness.

This focus on abundant life - that there is 'more to life' than we might have imagined - is what we have drawn on for the new visual identity for the network - and why the logo is 'more+'. It reflects our desire to know Jesus more, to discover together more of the love, joy, peace, kindness, purpose, hope, that we find in God, and to make more of a difference in our community. Hopefully you will begin to see the 'more+' logo increasingly around the area.

Have a look at our new website, where amongst other things you'll find details of all our church services, so do come and join us on Sundays - you'll be really welcome!

Revd Chris Dudgeon  
[chris@moretolife.church](mailto:chris@moretolife.church)



## Letters from Reverend Alison Brown & Reverend Mary-Beth Hawrish

Dear Friends,

This is my last letter to you as Parish Priest of All Saints and it is written to you all with the emotions of both gratitude and sadness.

Sadness because I will be leaving the parish I have loved living and working in.

Gratitude for all the friendships and fellowship I have with so many people. For the sensitivity and support that was shown to Steve and I when we lost our son.

The start of any new year is a new journey. No-one can be sure how it will be, and as with most journeys we can expect the mix of the predictable and unexpected, excitement, scary, funny, happy or sad moments.

The perspective we have as Christians is to know we do not travel this journey into the future on our own, we have the assurance that Jesus, the light of the world is with us, beside us, and always there on our journey through life. As a theologian said 'the safest place to be in life is close to Jesus'.

My prayer for all at the start of this new-year and decade is this.

Our Father and our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of Your presence and Your guidance as we face the future.

We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us—but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges.

So help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives.

AMEN

With my love to you all,

Alison

Like Alison, I now find myself a retired parish priest. It's time for reflection and to give thanks.

I'd like to share with you one of my favourite passages from the Bible, taken from the book of Numbers in the Old Testament :

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make his face shine upon you,  
be gracious to you;  
and give you peace

This blessing is often used during worship services in Church. If you've ever come for a blessing at the Communion rail, you may have heard me pray this over you... or , perhaps, for the whole congregation, at the end of the service.

So as my ministry closes here in North Hampshire, I want to wish God's blessing upon you all.

Here is my modern version:

May God keep you safe in every way. May he look after you and provide for your every need. May He bring you peace which goes far beyond the peace of the world.

May His peace bring good health and well being to each of one of you. And may His peace bring social and physical health to the whole community, bestowing holiness upon all.

Blessings are truly wonderful because they're so reciprocal—they're both given and received.

God blesses us and we receive His blessing.

As Christians, God blesses us in many ways, but especially through the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, whom we have the great honour to receive by taking Jesus into our hearts. I hope He has found a permanent home among us.

From my husband Len and me, our thanks for all your love and support in the past three years of my ministry. You have been our blessing.

It's been a privilege to serve in our church network, especially in Long Sutton and South Warnborough where I've been the parish priest.

May you receive God's wonderful, abundant blessings in the years ahead.

Rev Mary-Beth Hawrish

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