

West Ilsley News

DECEMBER 2024

www.westilsley.org

Editors

Andrea Cook
☎ 281224

Liz Dray
☎ 07766 413174

Email: westilsleynews@westilsley.org

Deadline for the next publication is:
5 pm on Wednesday 25th December

EDITORIAL POLICY

We are editors (though we don't edit unless we have to) – we are not reporters, so we only write something if we want to. We rely on villagers to contribute news and information and welcome updates from groups, committees and businesses to let the village know what is going on in their area of interest. We are always happy to receive feedback about WIN so please get in touch if you have anything to say.

DISTRIBUTION

If you have received a paper copy of this newsletter but have access to email, please join the email distribution list by contacting westilsleynews@westilsley.org – help to save paper and shoe leather!

What's on in West Ilsley

DECEMBER

7th Lighting of the village hall Christmas Tree and Christmas Jumper Party

JANUARY

11th Nutrition talk from Steve Cole – village hall

FULL COUNCIL MEETING DATES

7.30 in the VILLAGE HALL

Tuesday 4th February 2025 7:30 pm

Tuesday 20th May 2025

7:00 pm Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

8:15 pm Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes

Draft minutes of the November PC meeting are on the website – or click [here](#)

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS IN THE WIN

Thank you to everyone who has donated to church funds and put their greeting in WIN. We've raised £550 this year, very many thanks to all.

My very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy, healthy New Year to all friends and fellow villagers in West Ilsley. Wendy x

~

Happy Christmas and very best wishes for the New Year from Tom, Jane, Adam, Tash and Reuben

~

Wishing all the merry villagers of West Ilsley a joyful Christmas and a very happy 2025! Love from Will, Alexandra, Henry and Charlie (and Folie 🍪🍪) X

~

Merry Christmas to everyone in West Ilsley. We hope you have a wonderful festive period and a peaceful and joyous New Year Roger, Flick, Hugo & Emilia Lucas

~

A very happy healthy Christmas and New Year to all my friends in both East and West. Janice and Sadie.

~

A very happy Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year to everyone in West Ilsley Joe and Carol

~

Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year, Best wishes Denis, Barbara & Charlie and All at Keeper's Stables

~

Happy Christmas and New Year to all those in the West Ilsley Community. Love from Kristie, Will and David.

~

Christmas greetings from Shrewsbury! Hope you all have a great time and wishing you all the best for 2025. Love Sue and Andy xx

~

Wishing all our friends and fellow Villagers a very Merry Christmas and A Happy, Healthy New Year Avice & Alan

~

To all our lovely friends, neighbours and fellow
dawn dog walkers, a very happy Christmas and
waggy new year. Love from
Sean, Carmel and Teddy the Golden Retriever
xxx
~

Wishing all of West Ilsley a very Merry
Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous
2025!
Rachel, Dan, Annabelle and Henry Hudson
~

From The Banks'
Do hope you all have a very enjoyable
Christmas and New Year.
Here's to a happy and healthy 2025!
~

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy
Christmas and New Year, Love from
Liz, Adrian, Hannah, Matt and Ben Dray x
~

Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year
From Bryan and Karen, Bakery Cottage
~

Merry Christmas & a happy and healthy 2025
from Andrea and Mel
~

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a
Happy and Healthy New Year.
With love, Ian & Kay xx
~

Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and a
happy New Year!
With love and best wishes, Ed, Anna, Caspar,
JJ, Jonty and Peggy. xxx
~

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a
healthy and Happy New Year. With love from
Justin, Rosanne, Georgia and Honor Pilditch xx
~

A very merry Christmas to all in West Ilsley and
best wishes for 2025 from The Knight Family
~

Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and a
happy and healthy new year.
Best wishes and seasons greetings from
Vicki and Brian at Downside Cottage.
~

Happy Christmas West Ilsley!
Love Dries, Amanda, Mae & Hugo Hagen xx
~

Wishing all of our friends in West Ilsley a Very
Merry Christmas and Our Best Wishes for a
Peaceful, Happy and Healthy 2025,
Graham, Rachel, Tegan, Lily and Benji
~

To all our Friends and Neighbours,
Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a
Happy New Year Best wishes
Nigel, Alison, Sophie & Adam xxx
~

To all our friends & neighbours Wishing you All
a very Merry Christmas & a Happy & Healthy
2025 From The Beaumont Family x
(Shoehorn Cottage)
~

Wishing everyone a fun and festive Christmas
and a Happy New Year lots of love
Richard & Sandy xx
~

Wishing all our friends and neighbours a very
merry Christmas and a happy 2025!
The Taylors, Bakery Mews
~

VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Fireworks

Thank you so much to all of you who came along
to West Ilsley Fireworks and thank you for your kind
donations. We hope everyone enjoyed the display.

This lovely event wouldn't be possible without the
amazing team of volunteers who helped organise and
run the event. So, a massive thank you to everyone
who helped but particular thanks go to a number of
people:

Big thanks go to the team of Pete KP, Jonny, Lois and
Justin for the spectacular firework display.

Thank you so much to the Carlisle family for the use of
their field to set off the fireworks.

The BBQ team were busy throughout the entire event
feeding hungry mouths with tasty hotdogs and
burgers. Thank you Dewi, Nigel, Roger, Alan Beaumont
and Alan Bloor.

Louise B, Amanda and Jo were busy selling tickets for
the BBQ and Jo also made the delicious toffee apples
that sold out in no time! Thank you and thank you to
the Woods family for supplying the apples!

The Cricket Club bar was run by Adrian, Colin, Matt D
and Suzanna - thank you so much for making sure
everyone stayed hydrated.

Thank you to our bucket shakers - Matt Y, Pauline,
Vicki, Steve and Tegan who all did a brilliant job of
collecting all of the generous donations given on the
night.

Thank you to the Fete Committee for their generous donation.

Thank you again to all of those who supported the event.

Geoff's talk

Thank you to the many villagers who braved the cold on Friday 22nd November and joined us in the village hall for a wonderful and enthralling talk on the woodcock. This native crepuscular bird, with its ambiguous camouflage also has a migratory population which demonstrate incredible endurance in their flight paths travelling as far as Mongolia.

We also learnt from Geoff that the woodcock has a unique bone and muscle arrangement which allows it to independently open and close the top third of its upper beak whilst it is in the ground to enable it to grasp prey such as worms, as well as many other interesting facts.

If you're lucky, you may be able to spot these beautiful and elusive birds in our local area, particularly at Snelsmore Common. Your best chance would be at dusk in the springtime as the males perform 'roding' displays to attract females.

Sadly, this extraordinary bird is on the red list of the 'UK Birds of Conservation Concern'. The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust do great work in helping to protect these amazing creatures.

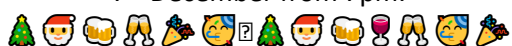
A big thanks goes to those who had a drink at the bar, you have all helped raise £77 for the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust!

Thank you, Geoff, for your informing and engaging presentation.

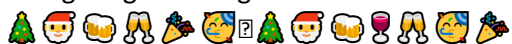
Christmas Jumper Party



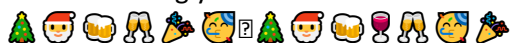
It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas (well almost!) so get searching for those Christmas jumpers and come and join us at the village hall on Saturday 7th December from 7pm.



We will have a licensed bar, retro nibbles and a chance for some village Christmas cheer! We will also be lighting the village hall Christmas tree!



If you would like to join us, please email the village hall at village.hall.accounts@westilsley.org to purchase tickets. Tickets are priced at £5 per person including your first drink free!



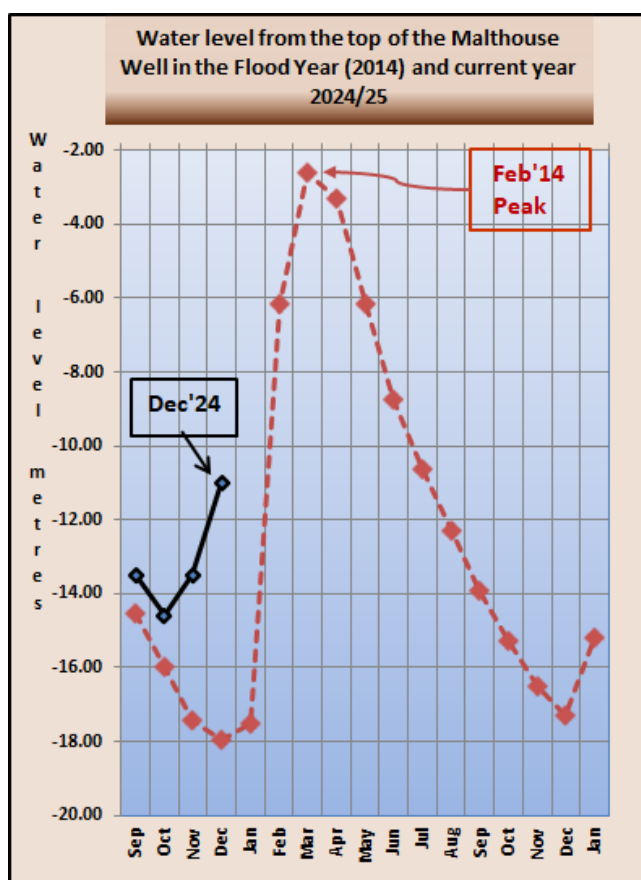
Thank You,
West Ilsley Village Hall Management Committee
(Amanda, Jo, Louise, Matt, Pete and Tegan)

MALTHOUSE WELL

Well we've had a few weeks where the weather has been kind to us, and we were doing well in November until Storm Bert arrived with a bang and dumped around 70mm rain late in the month to give a rainfall monthly total of around 100mm. This is yet another month this year where we have had an above average amount of rain and the Malthouse well level rose by about 2.5 metres over the month to currently stand about 11 metres below ground level.

Looking back to the flood year 2014, the graph below shows that compared to then we are now ahead of the curve. We really need the next few months to be kind to us weather-wise to prevent a repeat of 2014.

For those of a historical bent, we have records for the Malthouse well from 1964 onwards, and these showing an interesting trend. For 26 years from 1964 until 1990 the data show that the Malthouse well level was never higher than 6.0 metres below ground level and so ground water flooding was never an issue back then. However, the situation since 1990 presents quite a different picture. In the 35 years since 1990, the Malthouse well level has peaked above 6.0 metres on 11 Occasions. This gives rise to the big question: is this a demonstration of climate change or just natural weather variation? Either way the results are the same for us in West Ilsley.



DECEMBER AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Sunday 1st Family Service at 11.00am
Sunday 8th Communion at 8.30am
Sunday 15th Carol Service at 6.00pm
Sunday 22nd *No service in All Saints'*
Christmas Day Family Communion at 9.30am
Sunday 29th *No service at All Saints'*

Please look on the notice board in the lychgate or on the East Downland website:

<https://www.eastdownland.org.uk/news-and-notice/this-week> for other services in the benefice during December or see the Benefice Christmas card, which will be coming through your door soon.

Café in All Saints' Church

Our next monthly cafe will take place on Sunday 8th December between 10.00am and 11.00am. Donations go to a different charity each month. Everyone is welcome to join us for coffee, cake and a chat!

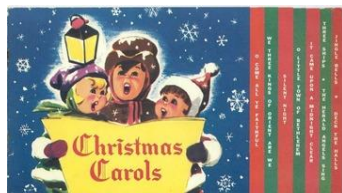
Working Party Tidy Up for Remembrance Day

Many thanks to those of you who kindly gave up an hour or two of your Saturday morning to help tidy the church and churchyard ready for Remembrance Sunday. All Saints' was made even more lovely by the beautiful flower arrangements.

Remembrance Day Service

A lovely service, taken by the Revd Douglas Dales, was enjoyed by a good number from the village and beyond. A cheque for £429.10 was sent to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Christmas Services



There will be numerous services around Christmas in all nine churches in our benefice, including All Saints', and you are

warmly invited to any of these. Our Carol Service will be held on Sunday 15th December at 6pm and, as always, will be followed by mulled wine and mince pies. This year the collection will go to **Home-Start West Berkshire Baby Bank** and items, such as clothes, nappies and wipes, can also be brought to the service. Our Christmas Day Family Communion Service will be at 9.30am and everyone is very welcome.

Christmas WIN Greetings

A huge 'thank you' again this year to those of you who have given so generously with the Christmas greetings and of course a particular thank you to Andrea and Liz for kindly donating the total amount to All Saints' Church.

5th Sunday Service

As at the end of December we have an extra Sunday, there will be a United Benefice Communion at Peasmore at 9.30am. Everyone is very welcome.

Food Bank

If you like to support the West Berkshire Food Bank, the East Downland website has details of special ideas for Advent and Christmas. There is a collection point at St Mary's Church, Chieveley as well as most supermarkets.

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 19th January 2025 at 4pm - Confirmation Service at St Lawrence's Church, Hungerford. Do go along and support our candidates if you are able.

Sunday 2nd February 2025 at 11am - Christingle Service
Put these dates in your diary and come and join us!

Private Prayer

All Saints' will continue to open on Saturdays and Sundays for private prayer between 9.30am and 6pm.

Pastoral

If you would like prayer (or other support) for you or someone else, please get in touch. We are happy to be contacted by phone or email using the details of contacts shown below.

If anyone needs help or would just like to chat, do contact the wardens or clergy who will do their best to help.

To subscribe to the weekly pew sheet, which contains readings, prayers and notices about church events in the benefice, please [go](#) to the East Downland website (see above)

Contacts:

Churchwardens: Ian – 01635 281625; Alexandra – 01635 281306

Rector: Revd John Toogood – 01635 247566 or 07748 822336 - edownlandrector@gmail.com

Associate Priest: Revd Douglas Dales – 01635 247404 – revdjdals@gmail.com

East Downland Benefice Office: 07957 458107 - eastdownland@btinternet.com – Usually manned on Thursday & Friday mornings between 9am and 1pm.

Kay and Ian Fewtrell-Smith

COUNTRY NOTES

In Whiteshute Row a fleeting glimpse of something white, weaving fast between the trees, a large bird, a raptor, a goshawk. In the distance a pale patch on the dark track, greyish white feathers strewn on dead dark leaves, the remains of a freshly plucked wood pigeon. Small gobbets of pink flesh stuck to a grey banded tail feather, fluffy white down adheres to a dead dock stem, a prayer flag for the pigeon's soul. Are these the remnants of the goshawk's meal?

At the junction of Whiteshute Row with Furze Lane stands the truncated trunk of an old oak, three feet in diameter, thirteen feet tall, the height of two coffins. Hollowed out by fungi, open to the air on its southern side, it's interior walls are lined with rectangular, reticulated blocks of dead and decaying heartwood, they resemble a nineteenth century cork life jacket that has been turned outside in. Where the low

midwinter sun enters, the blocks glow a rufous red. I can just squeeze inside, peer out, enjoy an owl's eye view down the track that runs south to Wickslet. Encased in this vertical tube of decaying oak I recall the stories told to me by the chatelaine of Finca el Moro in the Sierra de Aracena, tales of the peasants who fled from the village of Fuenteheridos to the sanctuary of the woods to hide, in the hollow trunks of chestnut trees, from Franco's soldiers during the Spanish Civil war, fed at night by their wives when the coast was clear. This seemingly dead oak still clings to life, from the left-hand pillar of the entrance sprouts a single branch, six inches in diameter, reaching skywards in a bid for life giving light. Geoff Wond

S. MARY'S, EAST HENDRED & S. PATRICK'S, EAST ILSLEY

CHRISTMAS 2024

TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER	THE VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS (CHRISTMAS EVE) 4pm Vigil ("Crib") Mass <i>The first Mass of Christmas.</i> 8pm Mass during the Night
WEDNESDAY 25TH DECEMBER	CHRISTMAS DAY 9.30am Parish Mass 11.15am Mass <i>at S. Patrick's</i> 6pm Mass
SUNDAY 29TH DECEMBER	THE HOLY FAMILY 9.30am Parish Mass 11.15am Mass <i>at S. Patrick's</i> 6pm Mass
TUESDAY 31ST DECEMBER	S. SILVESTER'S DAY (NEW YEAR'S EVE) 6pm <i>Te Deum & drinks</i> <i>To thank God for the past year.</i>
WEDNESDAY 1ST JANUARY	MARY, MOTHER OF GOD 9am Mass

S. MARY'S,
 ST. MARY'S ROAD,
 EAST HENDRED,
 OX12 8LF

S. PATRICK'S,
 OLD STANMORE ROAD,
 EAST ILSLEY,
 RD20 7JZ

Merry Christmas from all the team at the Harrow,
 We look forward to celebrating the festive season with you all. We would like to Thank you all for another year of support!
 We may be fully booked Christmas Day but we still have availability for our festive party Menu throughout December.
 Dates for the diary:
 07/12/24 - Breakfast with Santa
 24/12/24 - Christmas carols & Santa visit
 31/12/24 - New Year's Eve party

From our house to yours merry Christmas and a healthy happy new year 2025!

THE ILSLEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL

At the end of last term, the children had a Halloween disco, which included: squash, hotdogs and some chocolate cake. Every year, the children do a pumpkin carving contest and a costume contest, the winners got some sweets for their amazing efforts. Before everybody left, they all got given a Halloween bag with some Haribo and a pencil inside.

At the start of November, all classes had a Diwali Dance workshop. The children had a professional theatre performer come to the school and teach them the story of Rama and Sita. After they learnt the story, the children created a dance about the tale of Rama and Sita. They all danced in sync to create the best performance they could.

On Wednesday 6th November, Arctic Class went on a school trip to Milestones. As their new topic is toys, they looked at lots of different toys throughout the years starting from the 1900s to the 1990s. The children visited a teddy museum; they all really enjoyed the trip and want to go back again.

On Tuesday 5th November, Atlantic Class also went on a school trip! They went to Charterhouse in London. When they arrived, the children walked for 3-4 minutes to arrive at their destination. As they entered the building there were two tour guides, one went outside with them, to talk about factual information on the Black Death. The second tour guide introduced timelines of when the Black Death started. The

children made a bag full of different herbs/ posies to resemble how the plague doctors used to fill their masks with herbs and posies. They all loved the trip and wish they could go back again!

Two weeks ago, the Year 6s sold poppies to raise money for the Poppy Appeal as part of Remembrance Day. At the end of the week, the children had an assembly to remember those that have sacrificed their lives for our safety. When the assembly came to an end, the classes had a 2 minute silence. In our classes, everyone made their own poppies, then the children decorated them and created a wreath.

Last week, the children had an action packed week for Anti-Bullying Week! On Monday, the Year 6s prepared an assembly for the younger classes. This year, the theme was 'Choose Respect' and the Year 6s demonstrated what being unkind is and what bullying is. On Tuesday, the children had Odd Socks Day and they decorated their own pair of odd socks. On Wednesday afternoon, the Year 6s went into different classrooms and played different games involving bullying and banter. It was then Thursday and the school purchased an online theatre production for all the classes to watch. Finally, on Friday, it was Children in Need Day and everyone came in non-school uniform with Pudsey themed headbands and badges.

On Tuesday 12th November, the children had a Parent Welcome and their parents came to look at their children's books to see their progress from the start of the school half term to now.

On Thursday 14th November, some of our Year 3s and Year 4s took part in a cross country festival. They went to Woolhampton and ran a relay race, they said it was really fun and want to do it again next year.

On Monday, some of our Year 5s went to do a Maths Challenge. They went after lunch and arrived back at school around 3:20. When the children got back they told us that they had an amazing time learning some new maths tricks and skills, focusing on multiplication! We wish you all a lovely Christmas, and take some time to relax and enjoy yourself!

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Written by 2 Year 6 pupils

WHO TO CONTACT

DEFIBRILLATOR is outside the village hall - code: C159

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR – Carolyn Culver 07976 374146
Carolyn.Culver1@westberks.gov.uk

PARISH COUNCIL

Council members are:

Alan Bloor alan.bloor@westilsley.org

Katy Morris katy.morris@westilsley.org

Tim Pearey timothy.pearey@westilsley.org

Graham Woods graham.woods@westilsley.org

07905 558884

Rachel Hudson rachel.hudson@westilsley.org

Johnny Rayfield jonny.rayfield@westilsley.org

Sarah Marshman – Clerk clerk@westilsley.org

PATIENT REPRESENTATION GROUP rep is Joe Clerkin
(01635) 281150 or joeclerkin@georgeweb.co.uk

PRESCRIPTIONS are delivered from Compton on Tuesday mornings at 8.30. Please collect yours from Ann Barnes, 3 Morland Close on **Tuesdays only between 2 pm and 4.30 pm**. Repeat forms can be posted through the letter box at any time before Monday evening for the following week's delivery.



Book Tennis

TENNIS COURT "Pay & Play" is available to non-members for £10 per hour. Non-members can book up to 24 hours in advance. To book the court please use <https://westilsleytennis.jezzam.com> or scan the QR code! For all enquiries, please contact the

Tennis Committee via

<https://westilsleytennis.jezzam.com/contact>

VILLAGE HALL

Bookings & enquiries:

Any new bookings should now be done via the village

Website: <https://www.westilsley.org/>

Any booking enquiries please contact Louise by email: village.hall@westilsley.org

Anyone without access to the internet can leave a message on: 01635 281762

Rates: £12/hour for villagers and £15/hour non villagers.

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL – REPORT A PROBLEM:

<https://westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem>

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL – REPORT SPEEDING:

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/speedingtraffic>

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL – REPORT DOG FOULING:

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/36781/Report-Dog-Fouling>