

SPRING EDITION



Old Basing & Lychpit

Parish Council Community Newsletter

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SPRING 2024



Old Basing resident, Katherine Antrobus (far left of the photo), and colleagues celebrating the end of their epic journey from the Canaries to Antigua.

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Please support local businesses

A big thank you goes to all the local businesses that have advertised and supported this newsletter thereby enabling the Parish Council to produce this quarterly publication at no cost to our residents.

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Chairman's Report – Spring 2024

Starting with some good news

The Local Plan Regulation 18 proposals were issued just prior to Christmas and Lodge Farm is not included as a preferred housing site. Details elsewhere in this issue.

Taking Responsibility

As a community we all have a duty to behave responsibly for the good of all. Two examples where some fall short with their behaviour are –

- Bad Parking: a constant menace which, despite everything, continues.
- Thoughtless dog owners: see my report in our last Newsletter.

The Parish Council Recreation Ground is a marvellous amenity which is open to all residents and is treated with respect by most people.

However, there are a few simple rules for your safety and enjoyment.

Firstly, dogs are not permitted on the recreation ground – Oliver's Battery, where dogs are permitted, is just a few steps away.

The front of the Recreation Ground is a general recreational area and we ask that this is not used for organised club training or matches such as football, whether for senior teams or children.

Others use this area for picnics etc. so, for reasons of safety and to prevent conflict, please, no organised activities here without permission.

Parish Council insurance may not cover unauthorised use of the ground for organised activities, so continuing to ignore this is not only irresponsible but puts yourself and others at risk.

More good news

The Bolton Arms has reopened after a 14-month closure. This is a well-liked local pub, and we wish Andy, Ali and Sebastian every success. Pubs are under pressure as never before, so it is good to see the Bolton Arms buck the trend. The highly successful opening night was fantastic but remember, use it or lose it – local businesses need our support.

Cllr Peter Bloyce
Parish Chairman

Meeting & Party Venues in Old Basing & Lychpit

Old Basing & Lychpit has a number of venues suitable for evening and weekend hire for all types of parties and meetings and other group events. For information or to enquire about availability please contact the individual venues as shown below.

Lychpit Community Hall and Old Basing Pavilion Tea Room

Email deputy.clerk@oldbasing.gov.uk

A calendar showing regular events and hall availability for parties can be found on the Parish Council's website www.oldbasing.gov.uk
01256 462847

Old Basing Village Hall & Frank Goddard Room

If you would like to enquire further please contact the Booking Secretary, Heulwen Norfolk on 07544 289932 or bookings@oldbasingvillagehall.co.uk

The Beddington Centre

For children's parties and meetings of up to approx.50. Cat via email beddingtoncentrebookings@gmail.com

Old Basing Cricket Club

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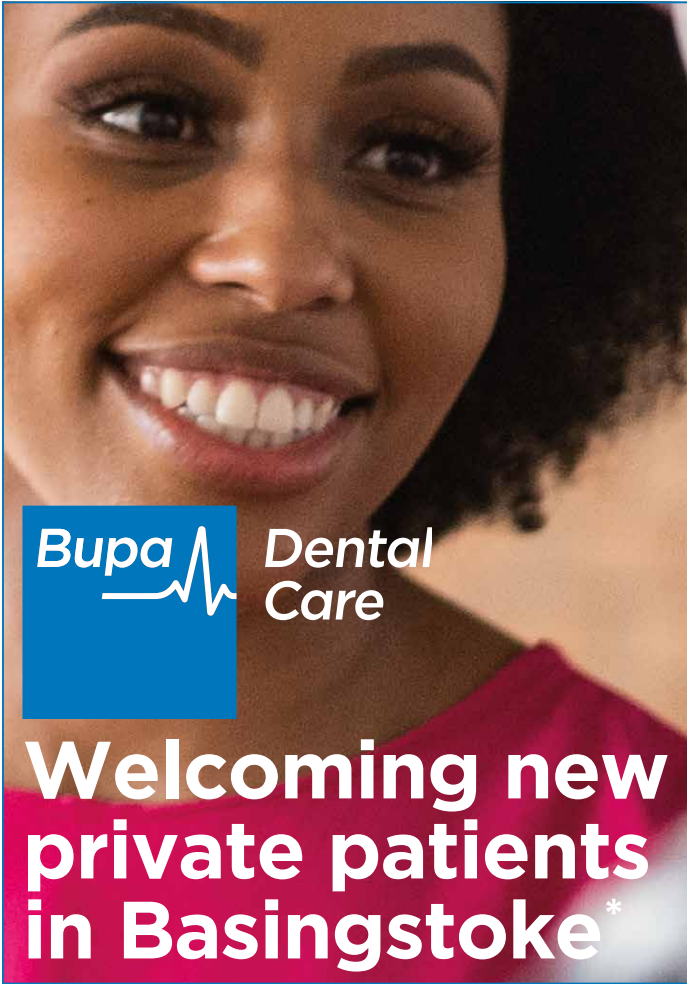
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County Councillor Elaine Still – Spring 2024



Highways Information – 20mph policy introduced by HCC.

Last month the Universal Services Select Committee scrutinised both the departmental budgets for next year and the proposals for a 20mph policy.

Their comments about the latter were helpful and I was happy to agree to there being a self assessment process created to help communities decide whether an application to introduce a 20mph limit would be right for their area, and also to ensure that we undertake a full review of the policy and its impact in a year's time.

I therefore agreed to the policy, taking into account the comments from the Select Committee meeting.

The new policy confirms two things; firstly that we will continue to consider 20mph zones in areas where they are deemed appropriate and there is a proven safety need for them – outside of schools for example.

More importantly the decision will introduce a policy which allows communities to request the introduction of 20mph zones in their own area. There will be a number of criteria any community led application will need to meet:

Firstly, and most importantly, there must be clear evidence of community support. Too often we have seen the introduction of 20mph zones elsewhere in the country where there has been little support, resulting in conflict and division in communities. I am determined that should not happen in Hampshire.

Communities will need to fund the introduction of the schemes they request themselves. This should be possible through the use of Community

Infrastructure Levy or other forms of developer contributions. You will no doubt have seen the posts elsewhere about the financial challenges facing the County Council. There is therefore no possibility of funding to help bring these schemes forward I'm afraid.

The introduction of 20mph zones would need to be accompanied by measures to reduce speed. The implementation of Speed Indicator Devices for example, those that show the speed a vehicle is going with a happy or angry face. The police have been clear that they do not have resources to enforce any new zones, so communities will need to find ways by which they can encourage compliance themselves.

There has been a vocal campaign by campaigners who want a blanket introduction of 20mph zones across the county, similar to that introduced recently in Wales. While I have sympathy with their argument, which highlights not only the safety benefits of lower speed limits, but also the impact on the environment and health budgets, for me there remain two issues impeding that consideration.

The first is finance, such a move would cost £20 million, that funding would need to come from highway repair budgets, reducing them by almost 50% for a year. The second being public support, it is clear from Wales, from other parts of England and from my inbox that there is far from universal support for 20mph zones, consequently best that communities decide for themselves whether a zone is right for them.

Cllr Elaine Still

A tribute to Don Grassi – former chairman of Old Basing Village Hall

Don Grassi, who was involved in building and managing Old Basing Village Hall until recently, sadly passed away on 5th January 2024, aged 88 years.

Old Basing Village Hall is a registered charity which is run by volunteers for the good of the local community.

Don and his wife Sheila became involved with the village hall in 1977, becoming part of the steering group, and put a tremendous amount of effort into raising funds to build the hall. This eventually led to the hall being opened in 1982.

Don was involved with other members of the committee in many aspects of the construction of the village hall including the wooden floor, which is still in use today, and constructing a steel

walkway in the roof for maintenance access plus many and varied other projects over the years.

Don provided an outstanding contribution to building and maintaining the hall over the last 40 years. He was a great engineer and could always be called upon for sound advice and help when needed and he will be missed greatly by all on the committee and regular users of the hall.

Don was born and grew up in Old Basing and his many friends and family will miss his sense of humour and many anecdotes about village life in days gone past.



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Old Basing & Lychpit Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan

The Update



Thank you to every household that responded to the Questionnaire

With over 500 replying by the end of January, a high rate of return.

We have begun analysis which will take several weeks and will keep you abreast of the results through the website and Newsletter.

Initial indications are that we have identified the issues that matter to Old Basing and Lychpit, and your views on them.

Now Basingstoke has issued its draft Local Plan and the government has clarified some of its aims, we can work to ensure our Neighbourhood Plan is updated to maintain the landscape, environment and character we value so highly, and to help manage development, traffic problems and climate challenge.



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Parish Notes

FIRSTLY, CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

We must offer huge congratulations to local resident, **Katherine Antrobus and her two Vodafone colleagues in breaking the world record as the fastest group of three women to row from La Gomera in the Canaries to Antigua in a race known as "The World's Toughest Row"** – what an incredible achievement!

Katherine and her colleagues raised money for WWF and UNHCF with donations being match-funded by the Vodafone Foundation. Our cover photo shows Katherine and colleagues arriving in Antigua.

We must also congratulate the Basinga on achieving Overall Fourth Place and Best Edited Magazine in the National Parish Magazine Awards. When you consider how many parish magazines are published, this is a great achievement.

CHRISTMAS AT THE REC

And now to thank all those that came together to make the first CHRISTMAS AT THE REC such a success. Admittedly we were very lucky with the weather which, although very cold, was at least dry!

Our Master of Ceremonies, Johnny Hammond, provided the sound system, and put together a selection of Carols; our grounds contractors, Larkstel, headed by Stephen Richardson ensured that the grounds were lit with thousands of fairy lights, and a team of ladies from the Village Café provided a wonderful selection of bakes to compliment the mulled wine and hot chocolate provided by the Parish Council.

Lastly our thanks must also go to Hampshire County Councillor, Elaine Still, for a generous grant towards costs involved in putting on the event, enabling us to also offer funding towards the Lychpit Community Christmas event earlier in the month. It is likely both events will go ahead this year with the CHRISTMAS AT THE REC event again taking place on the last Friday before Christmas – 20th December – so for those who missed it in 2023, put the date in your diary now.

WORKSHOP BREAK-IN

On a more sober note, the workshop at the recreation ground was broken into – yet again – in January. The usual items were targeted (strimmers, hedge-cutters etc.) and, unable to penetrate the doors the thieves this time smashed a hole through the wall at the rear of the building! Police and our security company were on site in less than 8 minutes of the alarm activating but those responsible had disappeared. Just before Christmas we had installed an automatic security gate at the entrance to the recreation ground but for some reason on that particular night it does not appear to have been working.

We do have good CCTV images of those responsible and these have been passed on to the police to enable them to build up a profile of these incidents (we are not the only target) and, hopefully, eventually catch them.

ALLOTMENTS

During the winter Larkstel carried out a huge amount of clearance work at the allotments including removal of very old trees following storm damage and clearance of several larger plots that had been given up. This has meant we have been able to clear our wait-list and now have plots available if anyone is thinking about taking on an allotment. Spring is the ideal time of year to start and the plots will have been strimmed ready for someone to take over and start planting. If you are interested, please contact Kate Hope, our Deputy Clerk, on: deputy.clerk@oldbasing.gov.uk

FINALLY, A "FAREWELL"

After almost 12 years of taking care of the Parish Council's finances our Finance Officer will be leaving at the end of May. Advance notice of this part-time contractor role was in the February edition of the Basinga when we invited interested applicants to contact the Clerk. We are now ready to actively start the recruitment process and if you have a good knowledge of Accounts (preferably Sage) and Excel spreadsheets and think this may suit you, please contact the Clerk at: clerk@oldbasing.gov.uk

Parish Council

PARISH OFFICE



Sandra Tuck (Clerk)
clerk@oldbasing.gov.uk



Kate Hope (Deputy Clerk)
deputy.clerk@oldbasing.gov.uk

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Swifts: spectacular visitors to our parishes that need our help

The skies of our parishes are now quiet. Nearly all the Swifts that hurtle overhead in groups in early summer, thrilling and exhilarating us with their speed and screams, leave the UK in early August.

It will be early May before they return here to breed. For the rest of the year, they are in Central and Southern parts of Africa.

Swifts are supreme flyers. They are perfectly adapted to a life spent almost entirely in the air. They sleep, feed and mate on the wing. They only land to breed. When a Swift chick leaves its nest, it will spend the next three to four years in constant flight. Swifts do not land on the ground or perch on buildings, trees or telephone cables. They have short legs and small feet with very sharp claws that are perfect for clinging to vertical surfaces, but unsuitable for perching.

Radar tracking has shown that at night, swifts routinely fly as high as 10,000 feet. By the early hours they will have drifted down to near the ground and then have to fly up to altitude again. They can navigate through different wind speeds while sleeping, making automatic adjustments to their flight to avoid drifting from their desired course.

Swifts eat flying insects, such as aphids, mosquitos, small beetles, flies and tiny spiders floating on the air. These insects are most numerous between May and August. That determines how long Swifts can spend in the UK during their breeding season as they need huge numbers of these insects to feed their chicks. Unlike Swallows and House Martins that can have two or three broods of chicks during the summer, Swifts have just a single brood of usually two young.

2000 years ago, Swifts nested in holes in trees or in crevices in cliffs. Now that is very rare. Swifts have become entirely dependent on buildings for their nest sites. They look for small gaps or holes high up in buildings where they can access a flat space to nest, such as under tiles, in gaps under the eaves or under soffits. The nest is invisible from outside. Modern building techniques mean that houses built in the last 30+ years or so very rarely have any gaps or holes, so most Swift nest sites are in older buildings. Thousands of Swift nest sites are lost each year when buildings are demolished, re-roofed or renovated, or when plastic soffits and fascias are installed to replace the original timber that would shrink or rot over time.



Swifts are faithful to their nest site, so once a pair find a site, they will return to it year after year. If they return and find their nest site has been destroyed or is no longer accessible, they may not breed that year unless a new nest site is easily available nearby.

Swifts are in deep trouble. They are undergoing a catastrophic decline. In 27 years from 1994 their population had declined by 62% in the UK as a whole and by 70% in the South East, including Hampshire. Loss of nest sites is the overwhelming major factor. House Sparrows and Starlings are also experiencing steep declines in numbers. They too rely on buildings for places to nest.

Preserving existing nest sites and providing new nest sites is crucial to reverse the decline of Swifts in the UK. Thousands of new nest sites are needed each year to halt the decline. Hampshire Swifts is a charity set up in 2016 with the aim of stopping the downward trend of this special bird and increasing their numbers. We give free advice on all matters related to Swifts. We supply and install swift boxes – £40 for a single box, £75 for a double box. We also advise on creating permanent homes for Swifts using Swift bricks. We work to persuade local councils and developers to help Swifts by installing Swift bricks in new buildings.

How can you help Swifts? Preserve existing nest sites, put up nest boxes, encourage your neighbours to put up nest boxes, record where they are nesting on the Hampshire Swifts survey website

www.hampshireswifts.co.uk/swift-survey, and write to your local councillors about the importance of making the installation of Swift bricks in new developments a condition of planning approval.

Swifts are amazing and beautiful birds. The sound and sight of them racing, screaming over our rooftops is exhilarating and an essential part of summer. Let's make sure that continues.

Tim Norriss, Trustee of Hampshire Swifts

Our web site is www.hampshireswifts.co.uk

For advice or if you're interested in having swift boxes on your house, email us on info@hampshireswifts.co.uk

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Friends Of St Mary's Church

The Friends of the Parish Church of St. Mary's, Old Basing and Lychpit Charity 10512020 was set up in 1995 to 'beautify and assist in the maintenance of the fabric of the Parish Church of St. Mary's, Old Basing in the Diocese of Winchester.

Membership is open to all who are interested in furthering the work of the Friends and who have paid the annual subscription as laid down by the Executive Committee (Currently £10 pa; Family £15 pa, Life Membership £150; Joint Life Membership £200). You do not need to be a member of the church congregation but to care about the preservation of this historic building. As our current Chairman, Ian Kershaw, told a meeting of those interested in December 2023, the day to day running expenses of the church (lighting, heating etc.) total approximately £10,000 p.a. Recent work on drainage cost £2,933.11 which the Friends provided. We are shortly due for the next five-yearly inspection of the church fabric which will be much more costly. Our last major contribution was for £80,000.

Our current funds are £86,000.

Saturday November 25th 2023 saw the return of the F.O.S.M. Pantomime after an extended break during the Covid pandemic. The script was written by Rowena Hackett, Rosemary Kershaw and Tim Shaw and the profit from the production will go towards the maintenance of St. Mary's church.

The Tail of Dick Whittington

Wandering Minstrel, Steve Donnelly, welcomed us, then Narrator, Joan Cole, told the tale. Appropriate music, from cries of Old London to sea shanties, from Music Director (Stuart Hicken) and the Basing Singers accompanied the events.

Dick Whittington (Kerry-Ann Chamberlain) left Old Basing for London where his opposition to the crooked Lord Mayor (Alan Turton) impressed Fitzwarren (Nick Harris), a wealthy merchant and his wife (Kate O'Neill), and he joined his household. Fitzwarren's business, the Crispy Crust Café run by Mme Cholet (Ian May-Miller) and Sous Chef Susie (Kate Medhurst) and impeded by Idle Jack (Ali Smee). The Mayor's officials Dot It (Katie Heydon) and Cross It (Fiona Wright) threatened the café with closure and Dick befriended Tabby (Susan Webb) leader of some delightful street cats (Charlie O'Neill, Jess Croxon and Lottie Jarrett).

He soon fell in love with Fitzwarren's daughter, Alice (Harriet Brannam). But King Rat (Tim Shaw), the corrupt Mayor's henchman, framed Dick, who was exiled. After many adventures at sea, and an encounter with desperate pirates, captained by Steve Donnelly (in another hat), Dick was wrecked on the Isle of Wight, suffering at that time from a plague of rats (mischievously played by Evelyn Hilton, Scarlett Hanvey Meyer, Poppy Ramsden, Millie Rudman and Ellie Taylor under evil King Rat).

Dick and Tabby eliminated those rats and, rewarded with riches, returned to London where King Rat's lies were exposed, the Mayor thrown out and Dick became Lord Mayor and married Alice.

We are delighted to say that three new volunteers have joined our committee and we are busily engaged in devising a programme of fund-raising events to ready us to respond to any request arising from the Quinquennial Inspection. So keep an eye out for posters advertising these events, book your tickets and bring your friends, and if you would like to join the Friends, go to our website:

www.friendsofstmaryschurcholdbasing.org

Look for us on Facebook as well.

Jane Whiter





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Old Basing WI Newsletter Spring 2024



Old Basing WI has been running for 105 years this year, and currently has over 40 Members from Old Basing and Lychpit, the surrounding villages and beyond.

We provide a selection of speakers throughout the year at our monthly meetings as well as taking part in community activities, social activities, quizzes, coffee mornings, lunches and evening meals, trips and craft sessions.

15 Members visited the Houses of Parliament for a guided tour at the end of last year as guests of our M.P. We particularly asked to see the mural fresco by Charles West Cope in the Peers Corridor in the Palace of Westminster, and our guide duly obliged, providing us with detailed knowledge and facts relating to the history of the building. We caught a glimpse of Michael Portillo as we walked round and some Members were able to witness Lord Cameron's maiden speech in the House of Lords. The photo of us all even featured on the front cover of the Hampshire Federation WI magazine!



Houses of Parliament

Our participation in the Basing House Christmas fair the following week was most successful and we thank both our keen makers and bakers for their contributions and help, and to Basing House for letting us participate in the event.



Basing House
(Linda Frawley)

We then turned our attentions to supporting St Mary's for their Christmas Tree festival, again with great support from our Members, in making and decorating our tree.

The committee has also been planning for 2024; a year in which we will be celebrating our 105th birthday. We have a party taking place in March

attended by the Mayor of Basingstoke and with musical entertainment provided by the Belle Canto Trio. We are proud to be one of the oldest WI's in the County, being founded less than a year after the Hampshire Federation of Women's Institutes were formed in May 1918.

In late January, 26 of our Members enjoyed a lovely evening meal at Barton's Mill where we were all extremely well looked after by the staff. It was nice to get out and socialise over great food and a drink as the dark month of January drew to a close.



Barton's Mill (Debbie Hastings)

In late Spring we are planning an educational trip to Jordan's Flour Mill in Bedfordshire to find out how the famous cereal is produced and the committee has many other ideas in the pipeline for later in the year.

The WI Committee will be changing at our General Meeting to be held in May, with some members of the committee standing down after a good number of years in the role, for which we thank them. The new committee will pick up the reins of a well-oiled machine and they look forward to leading the Old Basing WI onward towards our 200th anniversary!

We meet on the first Tuesday of every month at the Parish Rooms at St Mary's, The Street, Old Basing and welcome new Members. If you would like to know more then please contact our President at oldbasingpres@hampshirewi.org.uk

Basingstoke and Deane free energy efficiency surveys by the Green Team

I tend to think that my house is fairly well insulated with double glazing and fairly thick fibreglass in the loft but when I found out about the Green Team, I thought it was certainly worth getting a second opinion.

Shortly after contacting them by email, I was able to book an afternoon slot which they tightened up in a subsequent 'phone call.

On the day of the appointment, Beth, the surveyor, contacted me by phone to confirm again half an hour before she was due to arrive. She first asked a series of question about when the house was built, standards of insulation etc and then used a thermal camera to check that the radiators were functioning correctly. She also took measurements of the window sizes and visually checked the boiler. What she wasn't allowed to do was to check the loft insulation by using a ladder.

A couple of days later, I received my report by email, complete with an energy efficiency report. The email gives straight forward suggestions about how to improve things to prevent energy loss and offers a follow up service to discuss things further.

Basingstoke and Deane Council don't change for this service and they can't recommend particular contractors for improvements though they can give contact details. Altogether, a useful service pleasantly carried out, especially since it's free, which could help you save money if you follow up on recommendations. I think that my next major step will be looking at solar cells and possibly a storage battery.

You can get in touch with the Green Team through a form on Basingstoke & Deane Council's website. Just search for "The Green Team". The team are also attending centres in the area to talk informally about what they do and you can find details of these on the same webpage.

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Old Basing & Lychpit Environment Campaign

Good News!

In December 2023 we received details of the draft Local Plan Update from the Borough Council. Happily, Lodge Farm (OLD002) and Hodds Farm (OLD007) were not listed in the allocated sites and the Cabinet meeting of B&DBC on 9th January 2024 ratified that position. So these two sites have been removed from the Local Plan Update. The Site Selection report gave the following conclusions as to why this is the case:

Lodge Farm: Conclusion: The site is quite constrained and whilst some of the constraints may be addressed by combining the development of this site with OLD001 (East of Basingstoke) and through mitigation, there remains a number of constraints particularly due to the site's proximity to the river Loddon, the sewage treatment works and heritage assets. Therefore, this site is not proposed for allocation.'

Hodds Farm: Conclusion: The site was initially considered as a shortlisted site for potential allocation. However, as was flagged at that stage, the site is considered to have a number of notable constraints and was one of the most constrained sites that was shortlisted for further consideration. While the highlighted constraints may be able to be mitigated to some extent this has not been established at this stage, and given that there are other more suitable sites, it is not proposed for allocation.

The Local Plan Update lists the Land East of Basingstoke (was OLD001 - now SPS5.6) as a development site remaining inside our Parish boundary. (This site is part of the Local Plan agreed previously in 2016.) Originally, the housing number was 450 but Hampshire County Council wants to bring forward a further 450 houses, thus making the housing number 900.

Regarding OBLEC and Parish Council activity in 2023, it is worth noting that, in a note to Parish Clerks on 18th December, the Borough Council stated: 'The Spatial Strategy - the Council has listened to the comments made at the Economic, Planning and Housing Committee (EPH) meeting in September and has removed three of the sites from the Spatial Strategy: Lodge Farm, the land west of Upper Cufaude Farm and Skates Lane. The former Portals site in Overton has been included as a proposed allocation and the number of new homes in the town centre has increased.'

Alastair Rudman, Nick Harris and I each addressed the EPH Committee meeting at B&DBC on 7th September 2023. We were listened to then. The views we expressed were also listened to again, when Borough Councillors Paul Harvey and Andy Konieczko visited the Parish Council on 31st October 2023.



May we express our grateful thanks to all those supporters who turned out for the OBLEC demonstration outside the Borough Council offices on 7th September.

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Both the Parish Council and OBLEC made representations on the Local Plan Update to the Borough Council in February under what is known as Regulation 18.

www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/4126.pdf

NEXT STEPS

We have to accept that some houses are likely to be built on the Land East of Basingstoke site. However, we shall continue to represent grave concerns about several matters: The issues of odour from the Sewage Treatment Works, noise from the incinerator, heritage, valued biodiversity and flood risk (Flood Zones 2 and 3a). Having built the facilities away from housing it cannot make sense to bring as many as 900 homes near to the facilities now.

The Regulation 18 public consultation on the Local Plan Update ended on 4th March and Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council will now be looking at all the representations received.

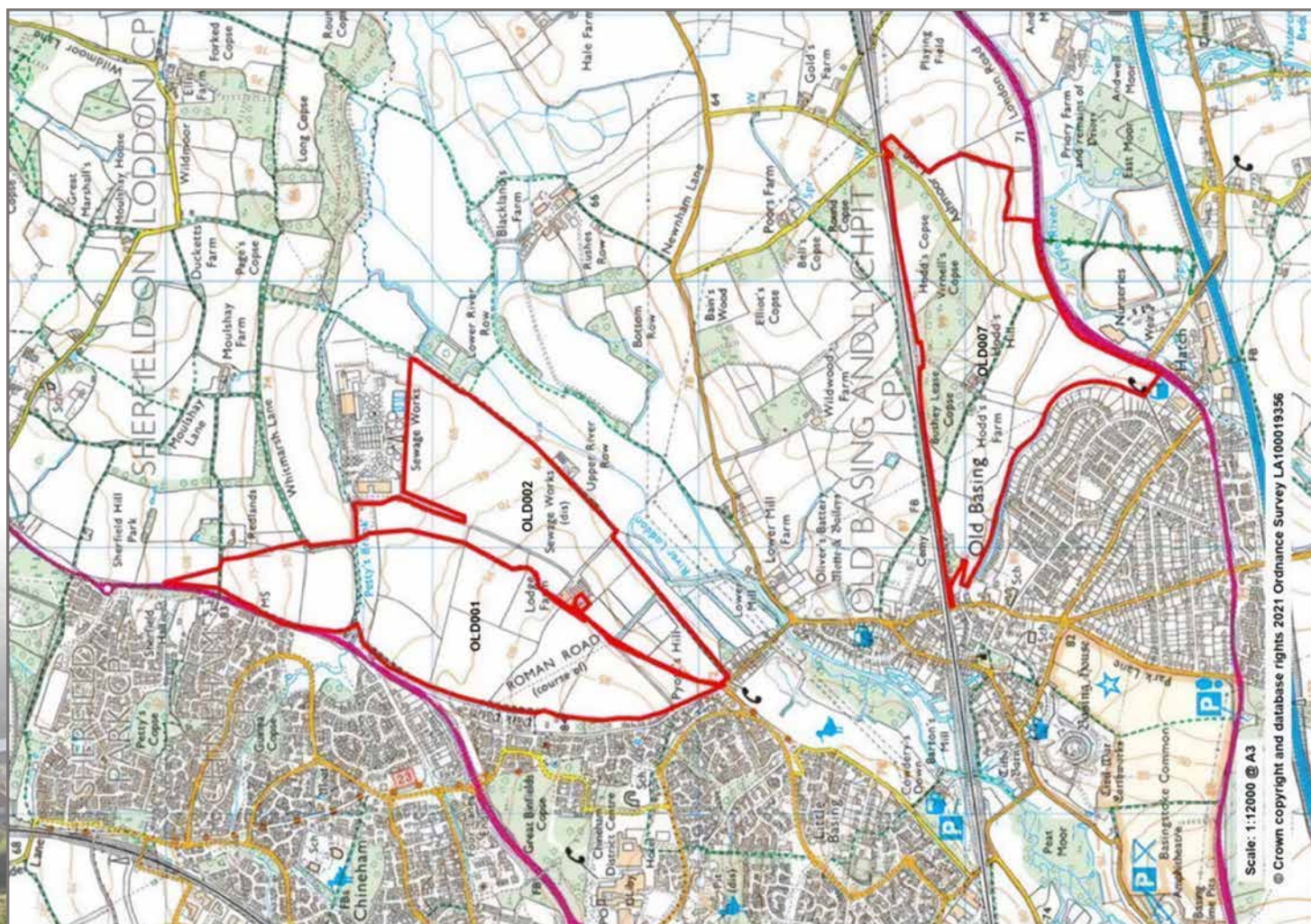
What comes next is the publication of the Submission Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) during the Winter of 2024/2025. This involves the publication of the Plan in a form which the Borough Council believes to be sound and which it intends to submit for examination.

** This stage includes a further six week consultation period; comments made then must specifically relate to the legal compliance and soundness of the Plan.*

Alan Renwick

For the OBLEC Committee

** Eventually to the Secretary of State in what is known as Regulation 22.*





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Water Vole Reintroduction Project

Local enthusiasts have joined forces to create Biodiversity groups in the Parish, primarily to find and report on as many reasons why development should not occur here on greenfield sites.

At the same time, we are helping to protect areas of specific interest and value, and to encourage wildlife to thrive.

One such effort is that nature lovers and walkers around Old Basing from say, around 20 years or more ago, would surely remember seeing Water Voles paddling across the Loddon or will have 'ahhhd' at a little flotilla of baby ducks or Moorhens dabbling in the weeds. We would like to try and make these days return.

Sadly, these sights are all too rare nowadays, and although waterfowl chicks are seen in Spring, invariably most of these fluffy babies don't make it to maturity. The main reason is predation and whilst this unfortunate end is a natural occurrence in nature, in the case of 'our river' its because of the unnatural presence of American Mink. For those unfamiliar as to how this creature came about locally, thousands of animals were illegally released by Animal Welfare groups across the UK decades ago who were protesting about the animals being raised for their fur. It does seem quite alien now that that is what 'we' used to do as a trade but the resultant chaos that these released killers has caused, is far worse than the fate they would have met in captivity.

If that sounds a contradiction, then you should read on. Whilst Mink have wiped out huge numbers of indigenous water dwellers and on the face of it seem to be thriving, the truth is that many struggle to exist and only relatively small numbers live into maturity. Their in-bred part domestication does not lend itself to do well in a wild environment, leading to suffering in many ways including disease or a slow death by starvation. Having said that, enough Mink do manage and then breed which starts the whole cycle again of hungry predators eating anything that moves.

Thus, enthusiasts around the country have set up groups to tackle the Mink that do survive by way of monitoring areas for their presence and to ultimately trap and humanely destroy them. Thanks to a residue of funds within the SOLVE organisation, a grant has been made to the Loddon Valley Biodiversity group to purchase three 'Smart' traps enabling a programme of capture to begin. The Smart system provides a phone app which notifies users of a 'sprung trap' which mean that animals are dealt with promptly and saves the need for daily inspections.

Furthermore, the source of the equipment, a charity called the WATER RECOVERY TRUST, require us to freeze animals caught and to send to them for research. This way, facets such as age, gender, health condition and their DNA can be checked and used to map what is happening across the country.

Clearly, this programme will take at least 2 years to fulfil to be sure that no Mink remain and after that, Hampshire Wildlife as one example, can assist us with a plan to reintroduce Water Voles in selected areas of the Loddon.

This would be a major victory for Hampshire, a county which has been hit hard by the Mink invasion but with great progress already seen in the Home Counties and East Anglia especially, we know that our hard work can pay off.

Finally, we could really do with YOUR help. Over the years there have been many Mink sightings, especially in the vicinity around the Viaduct footpath of Paddockfields and Riverside Gardens but what we could really do with now is up-to date information.

So, if YOU see a Mink or think you've evidence that they are around, please do contact me on the number or email below, as this could be invaluable in the relocation of a trap closer to that area and the eventual quicker eradication of this invading villain!

by Rick Bourne

Loddon Valley Biodiversity Group

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The Old Basing and Lychpit Carnival

The Old Basing and Lychpit Carnival is the much celebrated traditional event at the centre of our Parish's summer activities.

In 2023 we celebrated its 50th anniversary, and brought together many of the active groups that support and do so much in the local community to revel in a fun-filled summer festival and celebrate with residents of all ages from the very young to the much older, young at heart.

With tightening finance for everybody, this year's Carnival committee is focused on bringing the community together with a cost-effective event delivering traditional games, fun activities, historical displays and interactive sports workshops along with a range of food and beverage-based offerings. We all need to work together to keep these important traditions from fading away.

Keeping sport and outdoor activities at the forefront, this year's Carnival's goal is to introduce attendees to new activities and help you to meet the many of the support groups that are available to you in the Parish.

The Carnival suffered a hiatus following the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdowns during which a number of long-standing committee members decided not to continue. Bringing it back to life was quite a challenge and an attempt in 2022 had to be abandoned. After a herculean effort, the 2023 team finally managed to re-start the event and pulled off one of the most successful Carnivals for many years.

This year's Carnival committee sees a majority of new faces and, after a delayed start to planning activities, the committee reformed under a new Chairman and an enthusiastic team consisting of existing and new members. Building on the efforts of our 2023 predecessors the 2024 team are equally as determined to deliver a successful Carnival this year.

More volunteers are needed on the day and on the committee to help with the many tasks organising an event like the Carnival entails, so if you can spare some time and would like to get involved please contact us. Volunteering is a great way to give back to a cause you care about, while also gaining valuable experience and personal satisfaction. You can choose from a variety of roles and activities, such as planning, fundraising, administration, mentoring, tutoring, campaigning, and more.

Do you want to make a difference in your community? Do you have some spare time and skills to share? Do you enjoy meeting new people and learning new things? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you might be interested in joining the great team organising the Old Basing and Lychpit Carnival 2024. Drop an email to oldbasingcarnival@gmail.com or reach out through our Facebook page **#Old Basing & Lychpit Carnival**.

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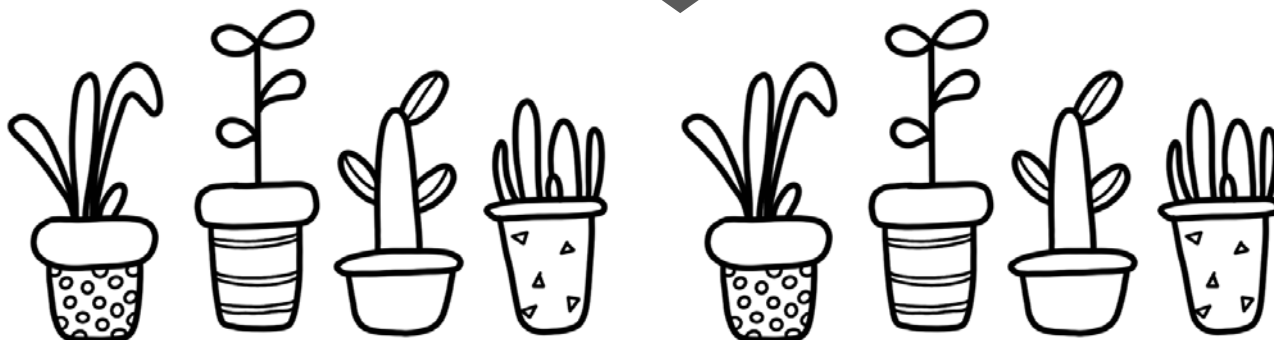
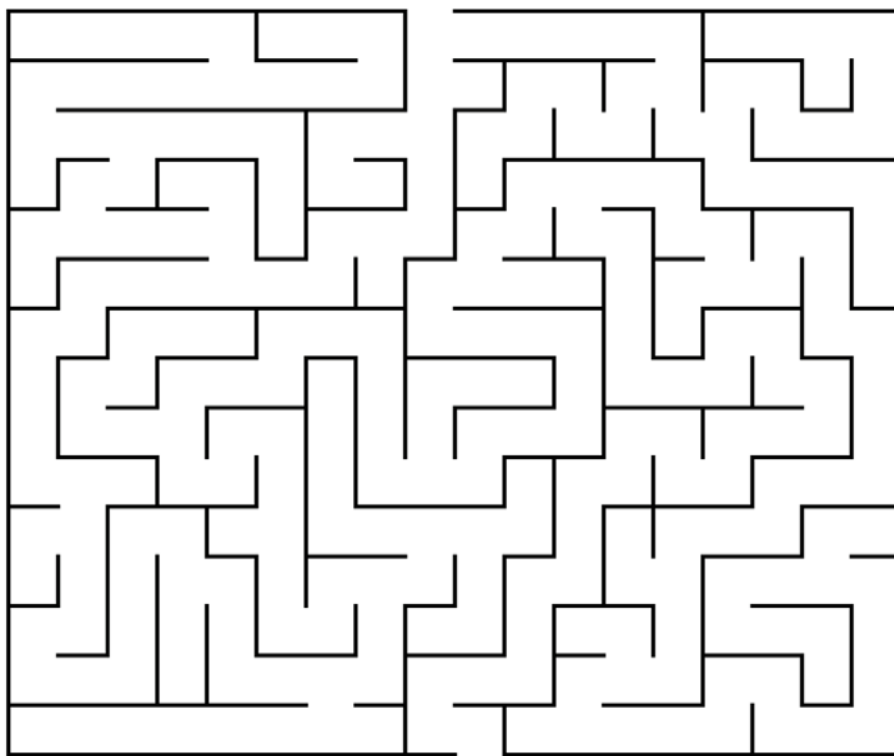
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Letters from a Longbow Archer

Tucked away in the corner of the Recreation ground for the last 56 years, you'll find a real gem of a club, Old Basing Archers.

Whilst we are a relatively small club in the pantheon of national and international archery, we certainly do shoot above our weight. We've had members who have shot at the Invictus games and others who are but a few steps away from Olympic trials. For many years we have hosted an international record status shoot called the Siege shoot, so named in honor of those royalists who held out against the Parliamentarian forces who laid siege to Basing House in the 1640's. The Siege shoot was part of the circuit for high profile archers to compete at the very top of the game. You may have seen this on occasion during the first weekend of September in previous years. The archery took over the entire recreation ground and attracted the best international archers and many Olympians on both the Saturday and Sunday. Sadly, due to the Covid epidemic, we were not able to hold this event and one of the people who is a major driving force in arranging it, has been away with work. But, we remain hopeful that in the not too distant future, that we will be able to bring this back.

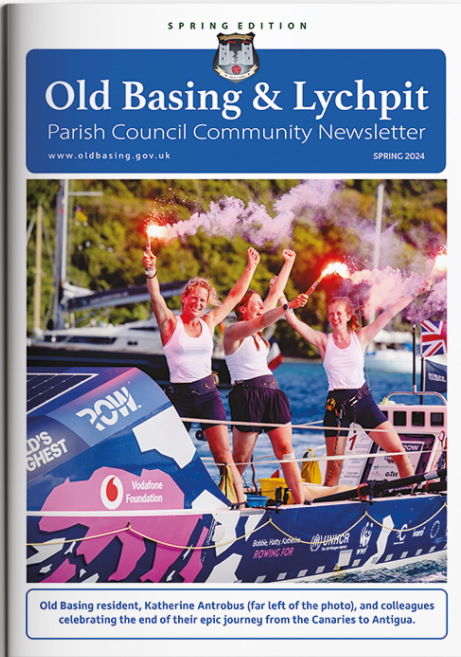
OBA, however, still run a number of internal shoots and friendly competitions with other clubs further afield. In April, we will be celebrating St. Georges day with a round specifically created and named for this very day. It's an opportunity for a bit of light hearted competition with prizes, bacon butties and for the more exhibitionist, fancy dress. In August we celebrate our 57th anniversary with the Club birthday shoot. September sees the club championships and the siege shoot this year being run as a local interclub event, again with butties and general silliness. The last competition we shoot within the club is the Boxing Day shoot which is so much fun. We shoot at targets ridiculously close with posters of baubles, bows and bells. The scores for each image is not known until they are drawn from a hat, ranging from +9 to -9. And depending on what number is drawn first, the highest positive or lowest negative can win the day. There are, of course, many other opportunities to shoot at competitions around the country and you could do so every weekend of the year if you desired. A number of our members belong to more than one club and shoot more than one bow style.

Within our club we have a thriving community of archers who shoot compound bows (think Rambo bows); recurve with sights and without; the latter is called barebow (think Hunger games) flat bows that are part of the traditional bow style, often made of wooden laminates; and longbow (think Robin Hood). There is some good natured ribbing that goes on between the styles, longbow archers will tease the compound archers that they take so long and the compound archers call the longbowers worm stabbers! There is no animosity and it is all in jest and taken in good spirits, This is testament to what a lovely group of people we have in the club and the support we give to each other. When one person has been away for a while, or has been poorly, there is certainly a pastoral care element with members checking to see if people are okay. It is something that seems to have slipped away from general society, I personally, am so glad that it persists here, good old fashioned neighbourly care. It is always lovely to meet new people and you are always welcome to come to the gate for a chat about archery or have a look at our website for dates when we run beginners courses.

by Penny Jubin



Penny Jubin



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The Village Café

Spring is definitely in the air, with flowers blooming and the trees in bud, I am hoping my garden will be as colourful this year as it was last.

Over the past year, the cafe has flourished thanks to the support of our customers and we have been able to support a number of local community projects. We have made donations to the Village Hall nursery school, a community group in Lychpit who keep the pathways and foliage under control, St Michael's Hospice and most recently, our local junior school. We are currently fund raising for the Infant school to provide a Communication board to help all children feel at ease in communicating their feelings and needs.

Last year we provided an afternoon tea for the Ivy Club members and this is something we will be doing again this year. It's fabulous for us to be able to support all members of the community and one of the suggestions we've had from our customers, is to help those who organise the Big Turkey lunch. We are currently looking at the best way we can do so with the organisers.

The Village Café is back to weekly opening, as from the 1st March. We will be in the Parish room on Friday afternoons from 2 – 4pm and would love to see you.

Our dates for your diary, up to the end of May are: 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd March.

We will then have a two week break for Easter, re opening on 12th April.

Opening dates for April and May :

12th, 19th and 26th April.

3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th May.

As you know, here at the cafe, we love a party and I'm sure there will be a special afternoon or two coming up for our customers – watch this space!

Our volunteer team are always happy for new members to join us and over recent months, we have welcomed a few new bakers and baristas.



If anyone is interested and has time to spare, please get in touch, you would be very welcome. As we operate on a rota basis, you do not need to commit every week but can choose dates that fit in with you.

I cannot end this article without mentioning one of our volunteers, Helen Armstrong, who I am also lucky enough to call my friend. Helen has recently retired after 36 years nursing with the NHS, and her passion was always emergency medicine and helping those patients in their most vulnerable hours. Helen has made a difference to hundreds of lives during her career and I am sure, will be greatly missed by colleagues and patients. Thank you Helen, for your incredible dedication, compassion and proficiency. Helen was a fountain of knowledge and information for us when we were raising funds for the AED's now installed in the village and arranged the highly informative training sessions for residents. I am sure there are many more adventures ahead for you Helen, enjoy every minute.

Deborah Thorne

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No job too small

Old Basing Infant School

It's been a busy but exciting half term in Year R at Old Basing Infant School.



We have thoroughly enjoyed our topic about transport, learning about a wide array of different vehicles and the possible journeys they may take. The highlight of our topic was catching the bus around the village. Each class eagerly waited at the bus stop outside our school for the arrival of the bus and our adventure to begin. Once we had taken our seats, the excitement rose as we spotted the different landmarks around our village with the playpark being a particular highlight with the children.

Our bus journey ended at Oliver's Fish and Chip Shop, where we began our walk back to school. The children were disappointed to find that fish and chips were not on the menu for lunch and they would have to walk back to school for lunch. We hope that those members of the public we met on the bus and during our walk enjoyed being part of our adventure. We had a great time exploring our local community and hope to meet more of you soon.





Things are happening at Alton School



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What to do in the garden in March

By mid-March, we're ready to welcome the start of spring, hopeful, happy time for us gardeners.

There's lots to be done outside, now the slower winter months have passed. Read about this month sowing and growing tasks here. Or find what other gardening jobs there are to do in March:

Timely Tips

1. Fertilise your beds. Once your soil is workable, dig a 5cm (or more) layer of compost or well-rotted manure into your beds to prepare for the growing season ahead. You can also work in a general-purpose fertiliser, such as pelleted chicken manure, or fish, blood and bone.
2. Put supports in. If any of your garden plants or climbers need supporting this year, put them in now, so plants can grow up through them. Adding supports afterwards is trickier and often looks unattractive.
3. Move deciduous trees or shrubs. Now is the time to do this task, provided the soil isn't frozen or waterlogged.
4. Resurface paths before plants start to grow and smother them.

In the flower garden

- Feed trees, shrubs and hedges with a slow-release fertiliser by lightly forking it into the soil surface.
- Feed roses with special rose feed or balanced fertiliser as they come into growth. Prune roses now to encourage strong new growth.
- Finish cutting back dead foliage from perennials and ornamental grasses to make way for new growth.
- Deadhead any winter pansies, daffodils, and hydrangeas.
- Plant native hedges to encourage wildlife to your garden.

In the vegetable garden

- Dig in green manures grown over the winter. Do this while stems are still soft.
- Dig compost, well-rotted manure or green waste into your vegetable beds to prepare for the growing season ahead. Dig in a 5cm (or more) layer when the soil becomes workable. Weed vegetable seed beds before adding the layer.
- Cover prepared soil with sheets of black plastic to keep it drier and warmer in preparation for planting.

- Weed and mulch asparagus beds. Asparagus has shallow roots so weed by hand to prevent damage.

In the fruit garden

- Cut autumn-fruiting raspberry canes to the ground to stimulate new canes, which will fruit in the autumn.
- Mulch fruit trees with well-rotted manure or garden compost. Take care not to mound mulch up around tree trunks.
- Cover outdoor strawberries with cloches to encourage earlier fruiting.

Other jobs about the garden

- Recut any lawn edges if necessary.
- Get rid of slimy patches on patios and paving by scrubbing with a broom or blasting with a pressure washer.
- Install water butts for the season ahead. Position them under a downpipe to make the most of rainfall.
- Begin weeding as the weather warms — it's easier to control weeds if you remove them while they're still young.
- Build a compost bin before the growing season gets underway. If you already have one, check to see if there is any compost ready to use on vegetable beds.

Gardening tips supplied by Thompson & Morgan. For a full list of what to do in the garden in March and beyond please visit their website:

www.thompson-morgan.com/in-the-garden-this-month





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The National Garden Scheme – In Hampshire

NGS TO HAVE A SHOW GARDEN AT CHELSEA 2024

The National Garden Scheme is thrilled to announce that it will have a show garden at the 2024 RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May. Designed by eight times RHS gold medal winner, Tom Stuart-Smith, and sponsored and fully funded by Project Giving Back, the garden will exemplify the joy and associated health and wellbeing benefits of garden visiting that have been at the heart of the National Garden Scheme since 1927.

Following the show, it will be relocated to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, to become part of the garden of a new Maggie's Centre for people undergoing cancer treatment.

Tom Stuart-Smith, who last designed a show garden for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2010, says: "The National Garden Scheme is a wonderfully unique charity, and I am proud to have opened my own garden in aid of it for nearly 30 years. It's a very special honour for me to be helping bring the National Garden Scheme to an even wider audience through this new garden, that has been made possible with Project Giving Back support."

IN 2023 THE NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME DONATED £3.4 MILLION TO OUR BENEFICIARIES.

This is a record breaking amount. Here in Hampshire we raised £190,261.00 a 12.5 % increase on 2022.

The income from our By Arrangement Gardens was also up by just over 7.5%. Thus making Hampshire the second highest County – Nationally – for By Arrangement Garden income, so many many thanks to all those Groups, be it organised groups or groups of friends, who chose to visit one of our By Arrangement Gardens for a more personalised and leisurely experience.

To view all our By Arrangement Gardens, simple click on the link

<https://ngs.org.uk/hampshire-by-arrangement/>

So why wait – don't delay, get your visits booked now !!

The distribution to our beneficiaries for 2023 is as follows:

Marie Curie	£450,000
Macmillan Cancer Support	£450,000
Hospice UK	£450,000
The Queens Nursing Institute	£425,000
Carers Trust	£350,000
Parkinson's UK	£350,000

The balance goes to several smaller charities. You can find details of all our beneficiaries on the link <https://ngs.org.uk/who-we-are/beneficiaries/>

The 2024 Hampshire County Booklet is now available in all Libraries, and many Garden Centres. Sherfield Garden Centre have a good supply and sell reasonably priced plants.

If you have a problem locating the booklet we have produced a flip-book edition – simply click on the link https://issuu.com/levelcreative/docs/hamps_iow_2024_flip_book

Now to some of our gardens opening in and around our area in April and May.

BEECHENWOOD FARM

Hillside Odiham RG29 1JA



Opening: Wednesday 27th March 2pm to 5pm AND every Wednesday until 22nd May.

Admission: £5.00 children free. Cashless Payments available.

Refreshments: Home-made teas.

ALSO OPEN BY ARRANGEMENT – MARCH TO MAY contact the owners direct **07944 162419** OR beechenwood@gmail.com

Opening for the 40th year – this 2 acre garden has many parts. Lawn meandering through woodland with drifts of spring bulbs. Rose pergola with steps, pots with spring bulbs and later aeoniums. Fritillary and cowslip meadow. Walled herb garden with pool and exuberant planting. Orchard including the white garden and hot border. Greenhouse and vegetable garden. Rock garden extending to grasses, ferns and bamboos. Shady walk to belvedere. 8 acre copse of native species with grassed rides.

<https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/8569/beechenwood-farm>

NEW FOR 2024**LORD WANDSWORTH COLLEGE****Long Sutton, Hook RG29 1TB**

Opening: Saturday & Sunday 13th & 14th April 11am to 3pm.

Admission: £3.50 children free. Cashless Payments available.

Refreshments: Home-made teas.

Lord Wandsworth College is set in 1200 acres of rolling farmland and wooded valleys. The main college campus is set around formal lawns with mature paper bark maples, cedar trees, cherry trees, and magnolias. The herbaceous borders are planted with an array of tulips, daffodils, and alliums. A South African inspired border runs the full length of the new science centre.

<https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/46319/lord-wandsworth-college>

OLD THATCH & MILLENNIUM BARN**Spratts Hatch Lane, Winchfield RG27 8DD**

Opening: Sunday 14th April 2pm to 6pm.

Admission: £5.00 children free. Cashless Payment Available.

Refreshments: Home-made teas.

This chocolate box thatched cottage has featured on film and TV and is a smallholding alongside the Basingstoke Canal (unfenced). You can enjoy a succession of spring bulbs, a profusion of wild flowers, perennials and homegrown annuals pollinated by our own bees and fertilised by the donkeys, who await your visit. There are over over 30 named clematis and rose cultivars. Sometimes lambs in April and donkey foals in the summer. Weather permitting, you may get a ride on a John Pinkerton Barge from the car park across from the Batley Mow, along the canal, to the garden.

<https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/20927/old-thatch-the-millennium-barn>

SOMETHING BRAND NEW FOR HAMPSHIRE**STREAMSIDE TREES – BONSAI EXPERIENCE****43a Basingbourne Road, Fleet GU52 6TG**

Opening: 9th & 25th May. There are two 1 1/2 hr sessions per day. 10am and 1pm.

Admission: £20.00 p/p All tickets should be pre-booked.

Click on the link below then click on yellow box BOOK.

Included in the price: Tour of the garden, detailed demonstration on producing a Bonsai Tree from a suitable starter plant, (see opposite) tea, coffee and cake.

Something different! Visits start promptly at 10am and 1pm with a guided tour around a 140ft garden with stream, azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, pond and many wildlife habitats. There is a display of bonsai in development and the tree nursery.

Then enjoy an informal bonsai demonstration from Julia, an enthusiast who also holds 'Create a Bonsai' hands-on experiences and is a member of bonsai societies. Q&A and refreshments.

<https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/46991/streamside-trees-bonsai-experience>

For any clarification contact Pat Beagley (Publicity) pat.beagley@ngs.org.uk

I hope you find this article of interest and manage to visit a garden or two – or maybe treat a friend or loved one to a demonstration of the mysteries of Bonsai.

Old Basing Tennis Club awaits you with open arms!

Was one of your new year's resolutions to enjoy the countryside more and take up a new sport?

If so, why not try us out at the Old Basing Tennis Club? We are a friendly club and welcome people of all abilities; you can play as little or as much as you like to suit your timetable. We're looking forward to a fabulous summer with long hot sunny days that we can all enjoy hitting a few balls and enjoying the beautiful Old Basing scenery.

At Old Basing Tennis Club we offer:

- Free access to four high quality courts all year round for members.
- A Pay and Play option for non-members.
- Regular coaching sessions for juniors aged 5-14.
- Individual coaching and drills sessions for adults.
- Social club sessions all year round on Sunday at 10am, Wednesday at 2pm and on Tuesday and Friday evenings at 6pm from April to October when you just turn up and there will always be others to play with.
- Basingstoke & District League matches against other clubs for the more competitively minded.
- Year-round social events with barbecues in the summer.

Our facilities include:

- A refurbished clubhouse on site with tea and coffee facilities.
- Free parking.
- A beautiful location overlooking the Old Basing Recreation Ground

Want to find out more and make new friends?

Why not visit us or take a look at our website clubspark.lta.org.uk/oldbasingtennisclub or simply email obtc.information@gmail.com for more information. Also see us on Facebook.

Where are we?

Old Basing Tennis Club is located on Riley Lane, Old Basing RG24 7DH opposite the newly reopened Bolton Arms pub; the car park is on the right and the tennis courts are 50 metres up on the left. You will be assured of a friendly welcome.



Old Basing Cricket Club Update

Founded in 1815, Old Basing CC has been a cornerstone of our village's history for over two centuries. In the spirit of progress and growth, we're thrilled to share the positive strides we've made in the past five years.

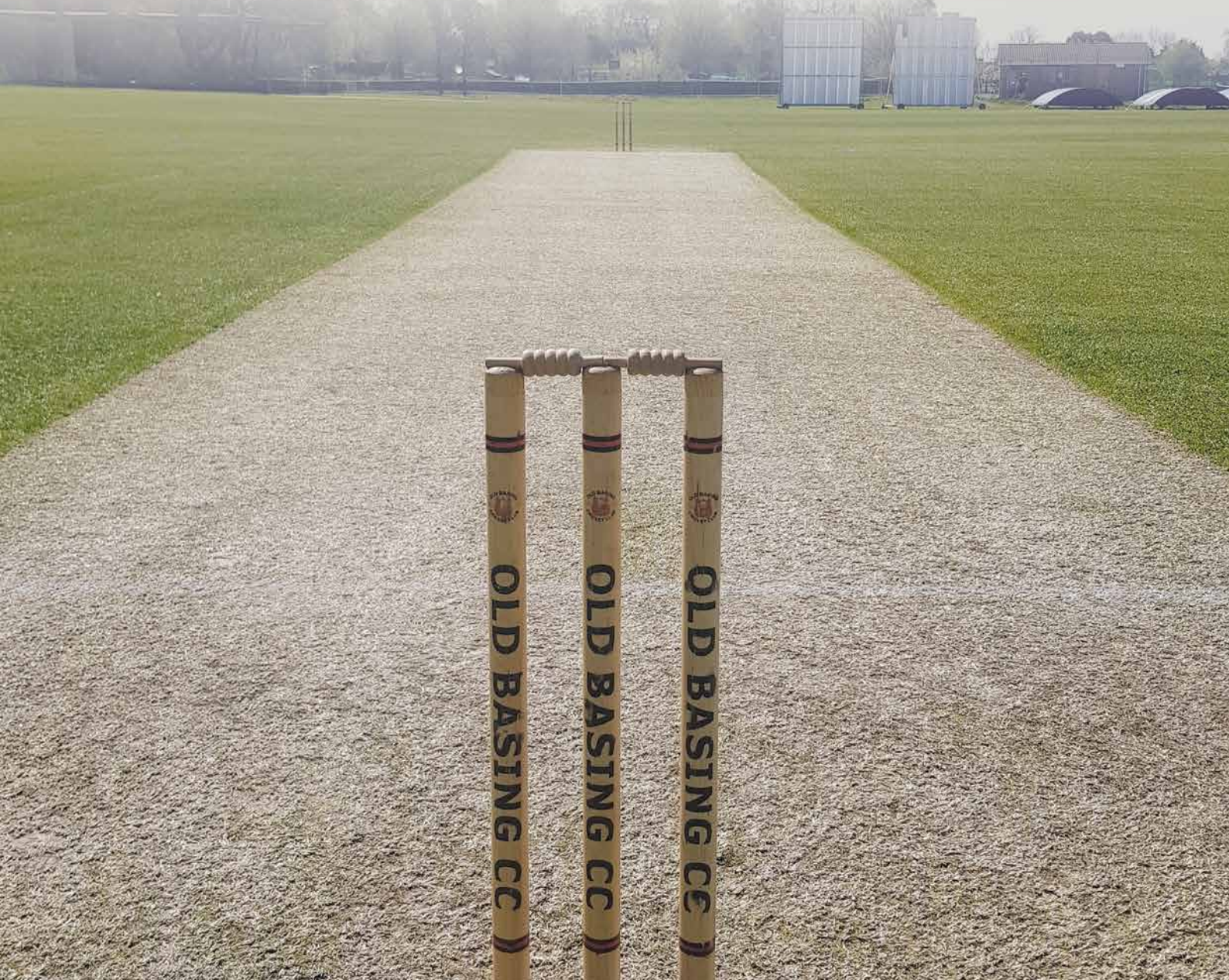
We have evolved into a dynamic club; boasting five senior sides, including three competing in the Hampshire Cricket League on Saturdays, one in the midweek North Hampshire Cricket League, and a Sunday Friendly XI. Our commitment to nurturing young talent is evident through a thriving colt's setup, spanning from U9s to U17s, and the successful launch of Girls Cricket for 7–12-year-olds last year.

The culmination of our upward journey materialised on the cricket field, with the 1st XI making a remarkable appearance in the Guy Jewell Cup final against the formidable Basingstoke. This marked a significant milestone for the club, as it was our first final since securing victory in 2009. While we fell short of triumph, the dedication and effort of our team were truly commendable.

Beyond the cricketing arena, we're excited to share news of our clubhouse renovation project. Envisaged to enhance accessibility, the project includes provisions for disabled access, a new scorer's area, and improvements to the bar. This undertaking reflects our commitment to not only elevate the club but also contribute positively to the local community.

If you're intrigued by our upward trajectory and want to be part of our journey, we invite you to join us. Reach out to our club secretary at obccsecretary@outlook.com and discover the joy of being part of a community that celebrates both success on the field and camaraderie off it.

Whether you're returning to the game or seeking a local club to join, now is the perfect time to get in touch! Winter nets have already kicked off on Monday nights at Dummer Cricket Centre.





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