

January 2026

BASINGA



Sully Williams



Old Basing and Lychpit Parish Magazine
www.basinga.org.uk

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JANUARY COVER PHOTO, NOTES AND NEWS

This month's topical cover photograph, **A Kingfisher at Barton's Mill** was taken by **Sully Williams**. In his words: *'I am 14 and love going out and about taking photos of wildlife and try to get as many photos in my spare time as I can. I like to be outside more than in! I use a Nikon D3200 with a 420-800mm manual focus lens. I only use my 18-55mm kit lens for photographing people or berries etc. (up close shots).'*

One very important day, and one not to miss, is the **deadline** for objections to the potential development of **1500 houses at Whitemarsh Lane and Lodge Farm on Saturday, 23rd January**. There are so many things to object about, from environmental concerns to road safety. Guidance, and further details, can be found in **OBLEC's** poster on page 10.

Basinga is managed and distributed by volunteers. Our advertising fees cover the cost of production. When you are looking for a plumber, electrician, roofer, builder or anyone/ anything else, please look in the Basinga first and let them know where you found their advert, as this helps us too!

Our advertisers are well-established and most of them have been with us for a long time, are reliable and would welcome your custom. In order to maintain the production and free distribution of this magazine, we need to maintain our base of advertisers. If you know of any business wishing to promote themselves in this area, please suggest they get in touch and advertise with us.

Our website **www.basinga.org.uk** has a list of our advertisers, either alphabetically or by page: from the home page choose 'OUR ADVERTISERS', then select 'CONTRACT ADS' to list our advertisers alphabetically. There are no Free Ads this month. Obviously, everyone is keeping hold of their unwanted items until well after the Christmas break! For **Free Ads** visit **Basinga Extra** and fill out the form under 'Advertising with us'.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BASINGA

The **very last date for copy** to the Editor for the **February** edition is **6.00pm on Saturday, 10th January, although we do welcome copy in advance of this date**. Please use the forms on the **Basinga** website **www.basinga.org.uk** to get your dates, articles and letters to us. **Don't forget that we only accept articles with about a 300-word maximum: articles may be edited and are published at the Editor's discretion.**

Our Privacy Policy is available to read on the website which includes the GDPR requirements for publishing photographs. Contact names, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for all our volunteer 'managers' are listed on page 34.

All advertisements in the magazine and website are inserted in good faith and the Basinga Management Committee accepts no responsibility for any statement, omission or errors made by the advertisers; nor does it endorse the products or services advertised. The views and opinions expressed in the Basinga are those of the organisations, individuals and authors concerned and not necessarily those of the Basinga Management Committee.

PHOTOS AND LOGOS FOR THE BASINGA

We now have a web form that you can use to send any photograph for the website archive and possible use in the magazine: go to **www.basinga.org.uk** and the form can be found on the '**Contributors Submission**' menu. Should you wish to submit multiple photos, or a photo is too 'large', they can be emailed directly: **editor@basinga.org.uk**

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VILLAGE VIBES COMMUNITY CAFE



Happy New Year - here's to a year filled with wonderful times and places, great friendships and family time, unforgettable travels and lots of cake!

Over the past year, Village Vibes has established itself as a friendly, welcoming place and we are all grateful for the amazing support shown by our customers every week. We are a community cafe, which means all money we raise is reinvested back into worthy causes that help many in our local area. Since our opening in late November 2024, we have raised almost £6,500 and we cannot thank you all enough for making this happen.

During our first year, we were proud to make donations to Basingstoke Breastfeeding Support, Limelight and the Ark Cancer Trust. We also made a donation to St Michael's Hospice after sadly losing one of our lovely bakers, Ann, and held a lovely cafe afternoon to celebrate her. We became aware that the marvellous group who organise the Big Turkey Lunch annually were struggling for funds in 2025 and, thanks to you all, we gladly made a donation of £500 towards the costs of this event, which I'm sure many of you attended.

We partnered with Basingstoke Community transport in the latter part of 2025 to fund a bus that runs from Tesco, Lychpit, picking up at various points around the village and bringing those who have had difficulty joining us in the past to the cafe once a month, and then doing the return trip. This has proved very popular and the service has now been extended to February this year at the least.



A new year brings a new fundraising venture and we are now supporting the Basing Royals Under 7s football club. We hope to be able to help the team during the winter months with the cost of their training sessions as they rely totally on fundraising and volunteers.

At the moment, we are still operating our winter opening times, so dates for your diary are: **January, 12th and 30th; February, 13th and 27th**

We return to weekly opening in **March**, dates are: **6th, 13th, 20th and 27th**.

We look forward to welcoming you all and to another year of Friday afternoons spent amongst friends.

BASINGSTOKE AND DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

Basingstoke & District



Railway Society

We resume our regular twice-monthly programme of meetings on **Wednesday, 14th January** when Society member Terry Foulger and his son Justin will show **Classic and Modern Images** from their collections accompanied by some background stories.

The second meeting of the month on **Wednesday, 28th January** will be our AGM. Do come along to find out what makes the Society tick and what we have been up to over the last 12 months. The AGM will be followed by a presentation by our Secretary, Tony Wright, on **The Railways of Porto and the Douro Valley** as seen in September 2025.

Our meetings are held at **7.45pm** at **The Wote Street Club**, which has a licenced bar, in **New Road in Basingstoke town centre, RG21 7NG**, and visitors are most welcome. More details are on our website at www.bdrs70d.com or call the Secretary on **07837 320790**.



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As we welcome a new year, the Parish Council would like to extend warm wishes to all residents of Old Basing and Lychpit. January offers a natural moment to pause, reflect on our community, and look ahead to the year to come. We are grateful to residents, volunteers,

and partner organisations whose ongoing contributions and support help make our Parish a vibrant and thriving place to live.

Old Basing & Lychpit updated Neighbourhood Plan

The Old Basing & Lychpit Parish Council will be running a public consultation in January 2026 on the update of its Neighbourhood Plan. This plan is a long-term framework that guides how land in the Parish is used and developed, helping to shape housing, infrastructure, community facilities, and the local environment. It gives residents a real opportunity to influence decisions that affect the character and future of our community. Everyone is encouraged to review the proposed updates and share their views during the consultation, so the final plan reflects local priorities and ensures Old Basing and Lychpit remain a vibrant, well-planned Parish for years to come. **PLEASE LOOK OUT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THIS CONSULTATION ON PARISH NOTICEBOARDS AND THE PARISH WEBSITE IN JANUARY.**

Parish Council Award 2025



Gill Moore (*pictured left with Parish Council Chairman Murray Campbell*) was awarded the **Parish Council Award 2025** in recognition of her exceptional and long-standing voluntary service to Old Basing and Lychpit. Gill has dedicated countless hours to gardening at St Mary's Churchyard and Basing House, participating in Citizen Science initiatives on the River Loddon and assisting with Rights of Way maintenance. She plays key roles as Secretary to both the Lychpit Community Residents Association and OBLEC, leads planting schemes across several parish locations, advocates for the enhancement of Broadhurst Grove Village Green, supports the Good Neighbours group, and has recently joined the Carnival Committee. Gill's contributions are so extensive that it is likely some

have been unintentionally omitted from this note. However, what is clear is her wholehearted dedication to the Parish and its residents. Her tireless efforts across environmental, social, and civic spheres make her a truly deserving nominee for a Parish Award, presented at the Community Partnership Evening on 8th December.

CIL Funding Allocations

Old Basing & Lychpit Parish Council has now completed its latest round of **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** allocations, following a thorough and carefully-managed process designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and the best outcomes for the Parish. Councillors undertook a detailed due diligence process, meeting applicants face-to-face to understand proposals in depth, reviewing supporting evidence, and assessing each project against CIL regulations and community needs. In total, requests for funding amounted to more than twice the value of the CIL funds available, meaning the Council was faced

Continued on page 8

with some very difficult decisions. Every application had merit and offered something positive for the Parish, but limited resources meant that not all could be supported this year. Councillors spent considerable time weighing the relative benefits, feasibility, and long-term impact of each project before reaching final recommendations.

At the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd December 2025, the Council approved a number of projects for CIL funding. Successful applications included both infrastructure improvements to Parish-owned assets and initiatives from local groups that demonstrated clear and wide community benefit. The Council extends its thanks to all applicants for their time, enthusiasm, and commitment to improving Old Basing and Lychpit.

The Parish Council will continue to review CIL income annually and expects to invite further applications in future rounds, as funds become available. In the meantime, the Council remains grateful to all organisations and volunteers who support community life and help deliver a vibrant, well-connected Parish.

Winter Safety & Preparedness

As we head into the colder months, the Parish Council encourages all residents to take a few simple steps to stay safe and prepared this winter. Please ensure pathways around your home are kept clear and well-gritted in icy conditions, check that vulnerable neighbours are warm and supported, and report any urgent issues such as fallen branches or damaged street furniture to the Parish Office. It's also a good time to review emergency items at home – torches, batteries, blankets, and essential medications—and to take extra care when driving on wet or frosty roads. By looking out for one another and staying winter-ready, we can help keep our community safe throughout the season.

Get Involved in 2026

The Parish Council warmly welcomes residents who wish to take part in parish life – whether by attending meetings, joining volunteer groups, or simply sharing views on local issues. Council meetings are held monthly and open to the public, with dates and agendas published on our website and noticeboards. If you have ideas, concerns, or simply want to learn more, please do get in touch. Working together helps ensure Old Basing and Lychpit remain vibrant, well-cared-for places to live, work, and enjoy.

Meetings for January 2026

The Full Parish Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday, 6th January at 7.30pm**. There will also be meetings of the Facilities Management Committee on Tuesday 13th January and the Planning & Development Committee on Tuesday 20th January (both at 7.30pm). Please let us know if you wish to attend but you are unable to manage the stairs to the meeting room, to enable us to make alternative arrangements.

Dates for all future meetings are detailed on our website and noticeboards.

Parish Clerk: **Mrs Kate Hope**

Address: **The Pavilion, Recreation Ground,
The Street, Old Basing, RG24 7DA.**

Office Hours: **Monday – Thursday 10.00am to noon**

Telephone: **01256 462847**

Mobile: **07507 514498** (emergencies only)

Email: **clerk@oldbasing.gov.uk**

Website: **www.oldbasing.gov.uk**



PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHOTOGRAPHS

We would like to take this opportunity to showcase the work some of our most recent photographers. We welcome photos of the village environment, people and places. We do try to vary the subject and photographer on our front cover. Fans of Jim Andrews can always find his excellent wildlife photos on the Mill Field report and often in Nature Notes.

The most recent **Village Show** digital photo first prize winner was **Anne Layland**; her snow scene (*right*) has been waiting for the village to be inundated to make the front cover, but rather than wait, we print it here.

Looking ahead to the **Village Show on Sunday, 6th September**. The Basinga is again awarding prizes for digital photographs. Our deadline is **Wednesday, 2nd September at 6.00pm**. Please arrange the digital files with a name and title. It makes judging so much easier!



'This photo was recently taken, I have used the same technique as my "Where the Fallen Rest" photo last year. The technique is called Light Painting. The camera is locked down on a tripod and the church was in complete darkness. The shutter was opened for 60 seconds and that gives me time to paint with light with a torch or flash gun to the areas that I want to be seen by the camera. I have to take several photos to cover all areas and then they are blended together.'

Alan Johnston



Denise Adams (below left) and Paul Kirby (below) both spent time on the Common this summer. David Slater took the lovely night shot. We have also received a stunning photograph of the moon from Juliette Keyte; it looks like it was taken in close-up and will be appearing in Basinga soon.





**A New Year's Resolution that really matters:
speak up on 'Land at Whitmarsh Lane'
*before 23rd January 2026****

As the New Year begins, we think about our personal goals - getting fitter, weight loss, travelling or learning something new. However, this year, our community has an opportunity to make a resolution together, one that could protect our village and environment.

Every single voice strengthens our community's ability to protect what makes this place special.

Old Basing and Lychpit are at a crucial moment as the **Local Plan** proposes a 1,500 housing development next to, and on, Lodge Farm - included in the Land at Whitmarsh Lane site. While the need for new homes is understandable, this site raises concerns that we cannot ignore.

Key reasons why residents are being urged to oppose the development are:

- 1. Flood Risk & Water Impact.**
- 2. Sewage & Odour Problems.**
- 3. Health Risks from the Incinerator.**
- 4. Wildlife & Biodiversity.**
- 5. Heritage Damage.**
- 6. Unsafe Access & Traffic Impacted**

Send an email to:

cllr.paul.harvey@basingstoke.gov.uk or cllr.andy.konieczko@basingstoke.gov.uk

or a letter to:

Head of Planning, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke RG21 4AH

**Resolutions are about Positive Change.
Let this be our New Year promise to act and speak up!**

For more information, visit **www.basingstoke.gov.uk/dlp-have-your-say**

***When the Public Consultation period ends.**



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OLD BASING AND LYCHPIT CARNIVAL 2026



The **Old Basing and Lychpit Carnival** to be held on **Saturday, 20th June 2026** would not be the same without the number of wonderful stalls which surround the cricket square.

You can now book your stall for this great event by visiting the website **obalcarnival.org**. To reserve your spot click on 'Get Involved' at the top of the home page and then scroll down and click 'Book a Stall'. We also need to recruit volunteer helpers, even at this early stage.

The stalls categories are:-

Charity

Craft

Commercial (resell products rather than make)

Ice Cream Vendor (Van)

Ice Cream Vendor (Artisan stall)

Calling all owners who live locally and may have either a Classic or Vintage car/motor bike, or a modern vehicle of interest. This is your chance to show off your pride and joy. We would love to see you at the Old Basing Recreation Ground as part of the Carnival. The static display of vehicles always attracts a large crowd and is very popular with all members of the family, old and young alike. The proviso is you would need your vehicle to be on site from 8.30am on the morning of the event and stay for the duration of the day (4.00pm). If anyone is interested in bringing their vehicle(s) to the Carnival and would like more details please get in touch via the following email address **oldbasingcarnival@gmail.com**

It just remains to wish everyone **A Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year** from the Carnival Committee.

Graham Merry Carnival Committee member

THE VILLAGE SHOW



Happy New Year to everyone from the Show Committee. We were pleased to exhibit a tree again, as seen in the accompanying photo from the St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival in early December.

The Committee will be meeting in the next few weeks to prepare the 2026 Show Schedule which will be published in the spring. In the meantime, keep an eye on the website, **www.oblvs.org.uk** where there will be a summary of any changes or additions to classes that will be made for the 2026 Show. In particular, we'll be looking at ways to encourage more children's entries as well as replacing some of the less popular classes.

Please get in touch via committee members or the contact link on the website if you have any suggestions for changes to the schedule this year and if you would like to help out with the organisation of the Show – we are always happy to have new members with new ideas.

Steve Layland



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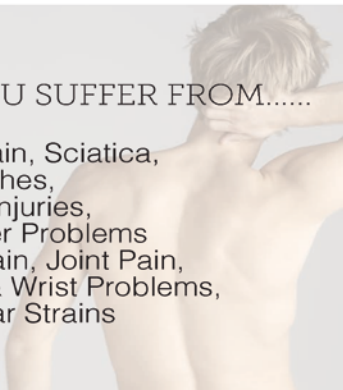
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- 7th MAR GUY TORTORA
- 25th APR BACKBONE BLUES BAND
- 23rd MAY RICHARD CLARKE
- 20th JUNE TBC
- 19th SEP REXFEST 2026

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MILL FIELD CONSERVATION GROUP

Happy New Year! Why not take time out for a breath of fresh air and have a healthy “workout” at our **working party**, on **Saturday, 10th January**. No special skills are required, but volunteers are asked to bring their own gardening gloves and wear appropriate clothing and footwear. It could well be muddy! Tools will be provided as well as refreshments. We will meet at the playpark by Bartons Mill at **10.00am** and work for around two hours.



You may have seen from our Facebook posts that there has been quite a lot of activity in the nature reserve. The Ranger Team from the council have been using a robo-mower to clear



a large area of scrub and dogwood on the reserve. As pretty as it is, dogwood is a real problem for us. It is extremely invasive and is trying to take over our field. It shades out our native plants and makes maintaining the field very time consuming and laborious. Hopefully the robo-mower will make a real difference. Only time will tell, so watch this space!

What to Look out for this month: If you are out walking the dogs at dusk, you may see Linnets, Reed bunting and Yellow Hammer going to roost most nights.

Redwing, Fieldfare will be shifting round with the chance of a Water Rail, Snipe or Jack Snipe or maybe a Bittern or Waxwing if the weather becomes harsher. Siskins and Lesser Redpoll can be seen along the wood edge and flocks of Long tailed Tit will be moving through the field mixed with the occasional Chiffchaff or Goldcrest.

Please refer to our Facebook page www.facebook.com/share/MillfieldLNR for further updates, or email: millfieldnature@gmail.com

Karen Macklin

THE WELCOME TEA ROOM



What an eventful first year we had with our new venture – and how fortunate we have been to have your encouragement and support. It is a great privilege, as a team, to be able to make a contribution to our community and to welcome new faces as well as our regular visitors.

In addition, the “well-behaved dogs on leads” have also played their part by encouraging their companions to stop for refreshment during a walk! We look forward to greeting you on **Friday, 16th**

January, 2.00pm to 4.00pm as we embark on our second year and we will then continue with our first and third Friday afternoons.

We would like to wish you all a happy and peaceful year. With best wishes from the team of the Welcome Tea Room.

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BASINGSTOKE DEANE ROTARY PRESENT – HIS MAJESTY'S ROYAL MARINES AT THE ANVIL

Sunday, 25th January at 3.00pm

They're back! We've been lucky enough to host the incredible Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines before; this time we welcome the Portsmouth Band to The Anvil for another unforgettable afternoon of music. Don't miss the chance to see these world-class musicians in action. The full concert Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines, the Corps of Drums and everyone's favourites, our very special guests - **The Chelsea Pensioners**, will again make this a fantastic event. So much more than just a military band! In recent years the programme has ranged from the sweeping drama of James Bond themes to the epic power of Star Wars arrangements—and finishing with a rousing, proudly patriotic finale—it's an afternoon of music that will leave you buzzing with excitement... and still home in time for tea!

Tickets sell fast, IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO BOOK - get yours from the Anvil Box Office

BASINGSTOKE CONCERT BAND.

We are especially excited to share that a **50th Anniversary Celebration Concert** will be held at the **Haymarket Theatre, Basingstoke** on **Sunday, 20th September**, where we look forward to welcoming all who have supported or been part of BCB over the years. More details will follow soon.

Thank you, one and all, for your continued support. We look forward to entertaining you – and meeting many of you – in 2026

PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCHES

Ploughman's Lunches take place in the **Parish Room of St. Mary's Church** on the third Thursday of the month, except August when we have a break. **Booking is required** by phoning: **07946 596778**. **Doors open at 12.25pm** and there is no end time. This month's lunch is on **Thursday, 15th January**, and the following lunch on **Thursday, 19th February**.

NEWS FROM THE POPPY APPEAL



It is with great pleasure that I can announce that the amount raised for the **Old Basing and District and Hook Poppy Appeal** and remembrance time is **£50,011.09**

I cannot thank everyone enough for making this amount possible.

There is much planned for this year, including a visit to The Poppy Factory in Richmond in April as it is their Centenary. Please contact me using the email below to register your interest **by the end of January** so I know how many to cater for.

Hon Poppy Appeal Organiser Tim Russell – tim.russell1888@gmail.com

REFLECTION

Our Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve is always such a joyful time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and placed the nativity figure of him in his crib alongside Mary, Joseph and the shepherds under the altar. This week we mark Epiphany and the nativity tableau will be complete as the figures of our wise men, having travelled all the way from the back of the church, will take their place beside the crib, bringing their gifts and worship to the Christ-Child.

I love TS Eliot's poem Journey of the Magi - it's a reflection by one of the wise men on their long and arduous pilgrimage to Bethlehem and the lasting effect it had on them. Eliot uses their journey as a metaphor for the journey of faith (he had just converted to Anglicanism). In the poem, Eliot explores the idea of spiritual awakening in terms of dying and being born into a new awareness. For the wise men, encountering the Christ-Child changed everything: they felt radically different themselves and the way they related to the world upon their return.



Often, the start of a New Year prompts us to take a fresh look at ourselves and our lives: some of us adopt resolutions or make intentions to change. Part of this process involves turning our backs on the way we've done things previously, so we are free to embrace a new way of being and living.

In our search for Christ, Christians can see our life of faith as a journey of continual learning and growth. Like the wise men, we all face a mixture of hardship and joy on the way, but the encounter with Christ is the thing that changes us.

In Matthew's account of the Magi, he writes that as the star stopped over the place where the child was 'they were overwhelmed with joy' – all the trials and difficulties of their journey had been worth it – it was pure delight for them to present their gifts, and their very selves.

May God give us grace this year and the courage and perseverance we need to continue along the path of renewal and rebirth, which brings its challenges, but is ultimately a pathway to the joy and wonder of spiritual encounter with God, in which we see ourselves, our community, and our world, with fresh eyes.

Happy New Year to you all!

Rev Helen (St Mary's, Assistant Curate)

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

REGULAR SERVICES

Sunday	8.00am	BCP Communion
	9.30am	Sung Eucharist
Monday	8.45am	Morning Prayer
Tuesday	8.45am	Morning Prayer
		<i>live streamed via St. Mary's Facebook page.</i>
Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion
Thursday	8.45am	Morning Prayer
Friday	8.45am	Morning Prayer

St Mary's
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All are welcome to join us – please just come along. If you'd like to join the **9.30am Sunday Service** from home, you can do so via St Mary's Facebook page. You can keep up to date with services and events at St Mary's via our website: www.stmarysoldbasing.org.uk

ST. MARY'S CHURCH – CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

A huge Thank You! to everyone who attended St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival, helping to make it a truly enjoyable and successful event. Your support not only raised valuable funds for St Mary's but also launched our festive season in wonderful style.

We were delighted to welcome performances from:

Old Basing Infant School, **St Mary's C of E Junior School,**
The Royal British Legion Corps of Drums, **The Basing Singers**

– all of whom brought festive cheer to the weekend.

A special thank you to the local businesses who generously supported the festival:

Lane, Monnington & Welton, **Oliver's Restaurant,**
The Street Bakeshop, **Spencer & Peyton.**

We now turn our thoughts to our next big community celebration – **The Flower Festival and Open Gardens** in May. If you would like to take part or find out more, please contact us at admin@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk



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FRIENDS OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH – PANTOMIME

A huge thank you to everyone who came along to see **Snow White and the Seven Dwarves** at **Old Basing Village Hall** — once again, our panto was a real triumph! The atmosphere was fantastic, and it was so heartening to see our audiences enjoying every moment. Well over 400 people attended, and more than 70 cast and crew worked behind the scenes to make it happen. It was a wonderful local event — and thanks to your support, we're raising much-needed funds for the restoration and upkeep of St Mary's Church.



We're also excited to announce the relaunch of our monthly lottery as the **"50:50 Club"**. For just £2 per entry, your name goes into the hat and each month one lucky person wins 50 per cent of the total pot — so the bigger the pot grows, the bigger the winner's payout can be. If you haven't joined yet, please consider signing up. It's easy: just visit fosmc.org, click on the "50:50 Club" page to download the application form, and return it to the post box at St Mary's Church.

Looking ahead, we'd love your support at our upcoming events. On **Saturday, 28th February** we're holding a **Quiz Night** at **Lychpit Hall** — an event that's always great fun. (We'll add full details and a sign-up link to the website shortly.) And following the success of last September's barn dance, we're planning another one for 3rd October at the Village Hall — so do pencil that in to your diary!

Your continued support helps us care for our beautiful Grade 1-listed Church building, and keeps our community events alive and flourishing. The aim of our charity is to raise funds to help preserve the building of St Mary's Parish Church in Old Basing. We are not a religious organisation. We organise various events around the parish to have fun, create a sense of community and to raise much needed funds for a beautiful and historic landmark in our village.

The annual subscription is just £10 per year (£15 for joint/family membership) and a simple membership form to fill in. Forms are available in the church lobby and at all our events. If you would like to know more, please head to our website at www.FOSMC.org

OLD BASING SCOUTS



Happy New Year! At Old Basing Scout Group we're all terribly excited for the start of 2026. But first a flashback to the end of last year.

In December, we celebrated Christmas the only way we know how – spreading Christmas Cheer. Our first act of Christmas Cheer was decorating a Christmas Tree for St. Mary's Christmas Tree Festival.

The Beavers and Cubs put a lot of effort into their handmade decorations and it came out fantastically. Our Squirrels, Cubs and Scouts followed this up with our Christmas Light Hike where we posted Christmas Cards through the doors of everyone in our community with awesome Christmas Lights. We were all incredibly impressed by the quality of the decorations. Meanwhile, our Beavers were spreading



Christmas Cheer in their own way with an exclusive concert for the residents of Basingfield Court – featuring all your favourite Christmas classics. Finally we all met together for our annual disco which is always an evening filled with merriment, too many sweets and very loud music – it was a blast!

So that brings us to 2026... we have tons of exciting adventures planned for our Young People over the upcoming year from camps to activity days, water sports to scouting skills and sports to new adventures. Combine that with the launch of our new Scout Troop Roundhead Scouts and there's no better time to get involved with the group as either a Young Person or an Adult volunteer as we have spaces open to join immediately at a couple of our sections. If we can promise one thing it's going to be an abundance of fun!

We are always looking for new people to join in the fun – young and old! If you're interested or want more information, then contact us by email group@oldbasingscouts.org.uk. You can also find us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn at 'Old Basing Scout Group' where we post regular updates on what we get up to.

Danny Evans

THE GHOST OF THE FIELDS

If you've ever caught a glimpse of a pale, silent shape drifting over a Hampshire meadow at dusk, you may have been lucky enough to witness one of the region's most captivating residents: the barn owl.

Barn owls are perfectly engineered for life as nocturnal hunters. Their feathers are soft and velvety, specially adapted to silence the sound of their wingbeats. This allows them to float through the air almost noiselessly as they quarter the fields in search of prey. Their hearing is so acute they can pinpoint a mouse rustling beneath vegetation in complete darkness, guided by the asymmetric placement of their ears and their iconic facial disk, which funnels sound like a satellite dish.

Across Hampshire's farmland, river valleys and downland edges, barn owls favour a mosaic of rough grassland where field voles, shrews and mice live. A single pair can consume

thousands of small mammals each year, making them one of nature's most effective forms of pest control. They nest in tree cavities, old barns and quiet outbuildings - hence their name - and will often return to the same nesting site year after year. When conditions are good, they may raise two broods in a single season.

With their heart-shaped faces, ink-black eyes and ghost-white plumage, barn owls possess an almost supernatural beauty - one that has long inspired folklore across the countryside. Throughout history, barn owls have been known by many different nicknames, such as 'ghost owl', 'church owl' and 'screech owl'. But the name 'demon owl', in particular, illustrates how they were considered by some rural populations - something not so difficult to understand when you hear their piercing shrieks and hissing calls.



But despite their resilience, barn owls face mounting pressures. They have been impacted by loss of rough grass habitat where they hunt their prey, nesting sites, organochlorine pesticides such as DDT in the 1950s and 1960s and road collisions.

Nature reserves managed by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust offer great opportunities to observe barn owls in their natural habitat. Hockley Meadows in Winchester is a known hotspot for these beautiful birds, where visitors can watch them glide over the meadows and hunt in the early morning or late afternoon. Farlington Marshes near Portsmouth is a must-visit for birdwatchers, with the reserve attracting not barn and also short-eared owls.

For more information visit our website: hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/birds/

Helen Skelton-Smith Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Picture: Russel Savory

NATIONAL WOMEN'S REGISTER



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NWR provides a wide range of talks and activities in small local groups typically less than 20 members. Each is unique, arranging activities and meetings to suit their members.

Chineham and Old Basing NWR meets at **2.00pm** on the **first Monday** of the month in each other's houses. We enjoy

getting together to research and talk about different topics, rather than an outside speaker, as well as meetings involving food and drink.

There is usually a monthly lunch at various local venues on different days of the week, as well as a **Book Group** which meets at **8.00pm** on the **fourth Thursday**.

The National Office also arranges Zoom talks on a range of topics for no extra cost.

For more information please visit www.nwr.org.uk or if think you would like to join our friendly group, please contact our local organiser, Dusty Brough at dmbc86@gmail.com or telephone on **01256 357276**.

CHURCHYARD CONSERVATION GROUP (PIOCC)



Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed St Mary's Christmas Festival last month and took the opportunity to visit the Conservation Area. This month's working party will be on **Saturday, 3rd January at 10.00am** – meet by the PIOCC noticeboard at the entrance to the Conservation Area. There will be no Thursday afternoon working party this month. We will continue our seasonal conservation tasks

and woodland management. We look forward to welcoming our regular volunteers and also new participants. Everyone is welcome. We look forward to seeing our regular volunteers and also new participants. Churchyard Conservation is a community project, not just for churchgoers, so please come along. Just turn up in gardening clothes and bring gloves. The tools are provided. Our Saturday morning sessions last about 3 hours (with a coffee break and chance to relax in the warm). Perhaps your New Year resolution could be to join us, we'd love to see you.

The **2026 Big Garden Birdwatch** is over the weekend of **23rd - 25th January**. We will be surveying the Churchyard's Conservation Area on **Saturday, 24th January 8.30-9.30am**. All are welcome to help us find as many birds as possible.

Already the days are lengthening and signs of spring appearing. Despite the cold, the snowdrops are raising tiny white buds, the catkins lengthening and the birds starting their spring songs. The WI seat offers a calm spot for reflection and relaxation. You are very welcome to visit. The Conservation Area is for everyone to enjoy.

For further information please email Tim Carr, Chairman: tim@tmcarr.net.

Margaret Carr www.stmarysoldbasing.org.uk

OLD BASING WOMEN'S INSTITUTE



What a busy couple of months it has been for the Old Basing WI. Hopefully you had an opportunity to visit our stall at the Basing House Christmas Fete. It was lovely to see so many of you, even if you just popped by to say "Hello".

Members have had visits to The West Green Illuminations, and Holme Grange. We visited the Chocolate Frog, The Dome, for our Christmas lunch, and The Crown for the Craft Group Christmas Lunch. We were also busy making decorations for our Christmas tree at St Mary's Church. Our speaker for the December meeting was Chris Perkins, who gave a very interesting talk on Military History, and we had wine and mince pies.

We have collected items for the Basingstoke Women's refuge and the ladies, who are looked after by Camrose Homeless centre. We have managed to collect and purchase many items that we hope will make life a little easier for these ladies.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members a Happy New Year, and we look forward to seeing everyone at our meeting on the **6th January**, when our speaker will be Lindsey Norwik. We meet every **first Tuesday** of the month **7.30pm**, at the **Parish Room, St Mary's Church**.

All are welcome to our meetings. Guests are offered two free meetings, so if you are interested, come and see. If you would like to join our long-running and thriving group. Please contact our President by email at oldbasingpres@hampshirewi.org.uk

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GARDEN TASKS FOR JANUARY AND 2026

There is always something to do in a garden and as well as listing some basic jobs for this month, it might be worth looking at the tasks that will occupy the keen, or not-so-keen gardener for the year. Whatever your level of enthusiasm, enjoy the rewards that working even the smallest plot will bring.

January: Check overwintering plants and protect from frost. Ventilate greenhouses on mild days. Prune apple and pear trees. If it snows, remove from evergreen branches to prevent damage. Start planning your vegetable plot seed orders in the comfort of your lounge. Check house-plants; reduce watering and increase humidity by moving them to a warm place with water in the saucer. Look for pests like fungus gnats and scale. Sharpen tools: pruners, loppers, mower blades. Service equipment: clean and tune lawnmowers, trimmers, irrigation filters. Composting: add high-carbon material (leaves, cardboard) to balance kitchen scraps.

February: Start early seeds indoors: chillies, aubergines, tomatoes (late February). Cut back winter shrubs like dogwood (Cornus) for brighter stems next winter. Begin warming veg beds with fleece or cloches. Divide snowdrops after flowering.

March: Seed potatoes: plant early varieties. Sow hardy vegetables outdoors: broad beans, peas, carrots, parsnips. Scarify and feed lawns. Mulch borders before weeds get started. Prune roses.

April: Plant main-crop potatoes. Sow tender crops indoors: courgettes, pumpkins, cucumbers, sweetcorn. Protect fruit blossom from late frost (we often get a cold snap at Easter). Plant herbaceous perennials.

May: be certain that there is no longer a danger from frost: harden off tender plants. Plant tomatoes, beans, pumpkins outdoors after frost. Cutting back certain perennials by about one-third to one-half in late May or early June – this pruning method stimulates bushier growth, helps prevent flopping in taller species, and often extends flower numbers on bushier plants. Deadhead spring bulbs but keep foliage to ripen.

June: Water deeply during dry spells if we are lucky enough to get fine weather. Tie in climbing roses and sweet peas. Start harvesting early crops. Sow biennials (foxgloves, wallflowers) for 2027 flowering.

July: Prune wisteria (first prune: reduce long shoots to 5–6 leaves). Deadhead roses & summer annuals to extend flowering. Harvest soft fruit: currants, strawberries, raspberries. Continue watering pots and veg beds.

August: Prune trained fruit trees (espaliers, cordons). Take cuttings of lavenders, salvias, pelargoniums.. Prepare beds for autumn planting. Keep feeding tomatoes and flowering containers.

September: Sow green manures. Plant autumn veg crops: spinach, winter lettuce, pak choi. Divide perennials. Begin planting spring bulbs (except tulips).

October: Plant tulips now to reduce disease. Lift & store tender bulbs (dahlias, cannas) if frost threatens. Clear leaves from lawns. Last chance to lay new turf.

November: Plant bare-root roses, trees, hedging. Protect pots from water-logging or frost. Clean and oil tools for winter.

December: Prune climbing roses (light tidy). Check stored produce (squash, apples). Review garden successes and plan 2027 crops.

NATURE NOTES FOR JANUARY

Has it really been 12 months since I last wrote, 'Happy New Year' to all my readers? Apparently so but it feels as if I've only just got used to writing 2025! Regardless, I do hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year's Eve celebration.

Due to the very cold snowy conditions outside today, I've started my January's column on an incredibly early 20th November but isn't yet supposed to be actual winter. My frost-zapped dahlias and most of the bedding plants say otherwise as they all look a sorry state, when a day or two ago they were still in beautiful bloom. Very sad.

Now, I have a challenge for you all, and that is to have a look around the garden on any sunny winters day and see if you can spot a Red Admiral butterfly. About 10-12 years ago, I remember writing that one of these had been seen at some point every month during the winter and as I spotted one in November and young Pat Brace opposite me in Cavalier Road saw one today (2nd December): the hunt is on! Please let me know.

The theme of January's notes happens to focus on water-dwelling birds. I received a very nice email a week ago from Brenda Duckels who lives at Bridge Farm where the old trout farm existed so has a garden view of the waters. A big white bird suddenly appeared, facing off a heron and it was the comparative size plus a yellow bill that positively identified it as a Great Egret. Most of us will have probably seen one of the now quite common Little Egrets either flying over or feeding in the fields next to the Water End Brewery but this chap is pretty rare in this part of the UK. Their origins are southern Europe, Asia and Africa but they have been increasingly seen in East Anglia, south-west England and actually bred on the Somerset Levels in 2012. Brenda wasn't able to photograph it but here's one I have 'borrowed' from the internet (*above right*).



Someone who did take a great picture though was Sully Williams who spotted this Kingfisher ready to dive into the water from its perch at Bartons Mill (*picture right and Front Cover*). This bird is frequently seen in that area but you've got to be lucky, or very patient, to get a snap like this. Superb!



Though not particularly local, I must mention the seven Spoonbills Stephen Thair noted whilst visiting Lymington Harbour. There is a lagoon there that attracts all manner of waders and seabirds in the winter so, as with the Egret, this is another bird that now sees the UK as its home. Stephen also saw a number of Kingfishers in the area, some quite close so budding photographers, you have choice. Be patient on the Loddon or be fairly sure of seeing one on the south coast.

Rick Bourne.

Don't forget to send all your nature related stories and photos to rickbourne@yahoo.com or naturenotes@basinga.org.uk For all your bird food requirements, order from me at 'Bird Drop-ins' use the former email address or ring/text me on **07900 648675** to place an order or get a form.



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PROBUS CLUB AT RNLI CALSHOT SPIT

A bright but chilly day saw members and families of the Probus Club of Basingstoke visit the RNLI station at the very end of Calshot Spit on the western side of the Solent.



Until it closed in 1961, Calshot Spit had been the site of RAF Calshot, which was the primary seaplane/flying boat development and training unit in the UK. Hampshire CC then opened an activity centre on the site where it was regularly asked by HM Coastguard to use its boats to rescue people offshore. Eventually, in 1970, an RNLI lifeboat station was established on the site.



The RNLI operates 238 lifeboat stations around the UK and Ireland and is independent of Coastguard and government and depends on voluntary contributions and legacies to maintain its rescue service.

Various all-weather lifeboats have seen service at Calshot over the years but these days Calshot is designated as an Inshore lifeboat station with a responsibility extending from the River Itchen

bridge in Southampton, all the way down the Solent to the Isle of Wight. Calshot is at present equipped with both 'D' and 'B' class lifeboats.

The 'D' class lifeboat is considered the work horse of the service having a crew of three and is primarily used for surfer/swimming incidents as well as assisting in cliff or mud bank rescues. Fitted with a 50 HP outboard engine it can travel at 25 knots.

The much larger 'Atlantic 85' B-class lifeboat is a fast inshore rescue craft, named after the Atlantic College in South Wales, where it was designed. Having a crew of 3 or 4 it can be deployed in shallow waters as well as handling challenging, open sea conditions. It is equipped with twin 115 hp Yamaha outboard engines reaching a useful 35 knots.

An appreciative Probus Club presented a cheque to thank the Calcot lifeboat staff for a really interesting exposure to the experiences of their voluntary crews.

For more information about the activities of the Probus Club of Basingstoke see their web site www.probusbasingstoke.club or phone their secretary on **07814 937202** for a chat.

GIFT CARD FRAUD

Criminals use gift cards to commit fraud in a variety of different ways: You may receive an email purporting to be from a friend asking you to send a gift card; You might buy a gift card from a legitimate retailer and a criminal has pre-registered the gift card so your gift goes into their pocket; You might be targeted in an employment fraud and asked to pose as a mystery shopper buying gift cards from a supermarket; You might be communicating with someone online, believing them to be genuine, and they ask you to buy gift cards so they can come and visit you. **Remember – always Stop! Think Fraud** before sending gift cards, money or valuables to anyone. If you've received unwanted phone calls or texts from people you think are trying to scam you, but you haven't engaged with them, please forward the text/phone number to **7726**.

DIARY DATES FOR JANUARY 2026

For details of services and events at St Mary's Church please see page 19

December

Fri 26	10.30am	Boxing Day Walk. Meet in Riley Lane car park.
Tue 30	noon	Big Turkey Pie Christmas Lunch at OB Village Hall

January

Sat 3	1.00am – 1.00pm	PIOCC Working Party. Meet at Noticeboard.
Mon 5	2.00pm	NWR Meeting. See page 23 for details and contacts.
Tue 6	7.30pm	Full Parish Council Meeting. Recreation Ground. Page 8.
	7.30pm	Old Basing WI meet in the Parish Room, St. Mary's Church.
Thu 8	7.30pm	RBL Branch meeting in Jack Morris Hall, plus a talk by Mike Leaming on local Commonwealth War Graves.
Fri 9	7.15pm	Talks@Lychpit Hall. See December's Basinga for details.
Sat 10	10.00am – noon	Mill Field working party. Meet at playground, Barton's Mill.
	6.00pm	Deadline for February Basinga Copy to Editor. See page 3.
Tue 13	5.00pm – 6.30pm	Young Creatives, ages 7 to 18 at the Rucstall Community Centre, Holbein Close.
Wed 14	7.45pm	BDRC meeting. Classic and Modern Images. See page 5.
Fri 16	2.00pm – 4.00pm	Welcome Tea Room at St. Mary's Church Parish Room.
Fri 23	4.00pm	Deadline for Objections to Further Development. See OBLEC's poster / article on page 10.
Sat 24	8.30am – 9.30am	Big Garden Birdwatch. Churchyard Conservation Area.
Sat 24	7.00pm	Basingstoke Blues Club – Alice Arnold. Central Studio.
Wed 28	7.45pm	BDRC meeting. AGM and Porto and Duoro railways. P 5.
February		
Tue 3	7.30pm	Full Parish Council Meeting. Recreation Ground. Page 8.

BASINGA EXTRA

Have you ever tried looking at the online version of the Basinga? **Basinga Extra** is found at www.basinga.org.uk and has all you find in the printed version but even more local information and articles. You can find old editions of the Basinga going all the way back to 2018! The following articles, that we unfortunately couldn't find room for in this printed version of Basinga, can be found there.

Anvil Arts – January Events

BDBC – Wildflowers

Young Creatives Poster – 7 to 11

BDBC – Low Carbon Taxis

Creative Teens Poster – 12 to 18


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● BASINGA

EDITOR: Lyn Caswell, 1 Lingfield Close, Old Basing, RG24 7ED 07909 962141
SECRETARY: Graham Merry, 40 Linden Avenue, Old Basing, RG24 7HS 07723 022707
TREASURER: Andy Grove, 30 Pyotts Copse, Old Basing, RG24 8WE 07918 644187
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Jeff Smith – advertising@basinga.org.uk 07775 885741
ADVERTISING ASSISTANT: Alan Renwick, 3 Almond Close, Old Basing 01256 326155
DISTRIBUTION:
Old Basing Area: Peter Watson, 19 Priory Gardens, Old Basing, RG24 7DS 07790 279954
Lychpit Area: Andrée McLean, 6 Pimpernel Way, Lychpit, RG24 8SS 01256 819006
WEBMASTER: Alan Morris, 29 Lingfield Close, Old Basing, RG24 7ED 07816 659189

● OLD BASING & LYCHPIT PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK: Kate Hope 01256 462847
OFFICE AND HOURS: The Pavilion, The Recreation Ground
Monday to Thursday 10am to noon

● CHURCH INFORMATION FOR THE AREA

Church of England (Parish of Old Basing & Lychpit)

ASSISTANT CURATE: Rev'd Helen Holley 07541 698235
email: curate@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk
ADMINISTRATOR: Debbie Filer email: admin@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk 07541 698235

Regular Services at St Mary's Church, Old Basing

SUNDAY: 8am Holy Communion; 9.30am Sung Eucharist
OTHER DAYS: Wednesday, 10am – Holy Communion; Monday, Thursday and Friday, 8.45am – Morning Prayer
Changes to the regular service pattern and other weekday services are shown in the weekly news-sheet, a copy of which is displayed on the noticeboard in the church porch

Old Basing Methodist Church

MINISTER: Rev'd Claire Simpson 01256 323103
email: revclaire72@btinternet.com
SUNDAY SERVICE: Morning Service 10.30am

Roman Catholic

PRIEST: Fr. John Lee 01256 465214
St Bede's Church, Popley Way, Basingstoke
SUNDAY MASSES: 9am, 11am and 6pm



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