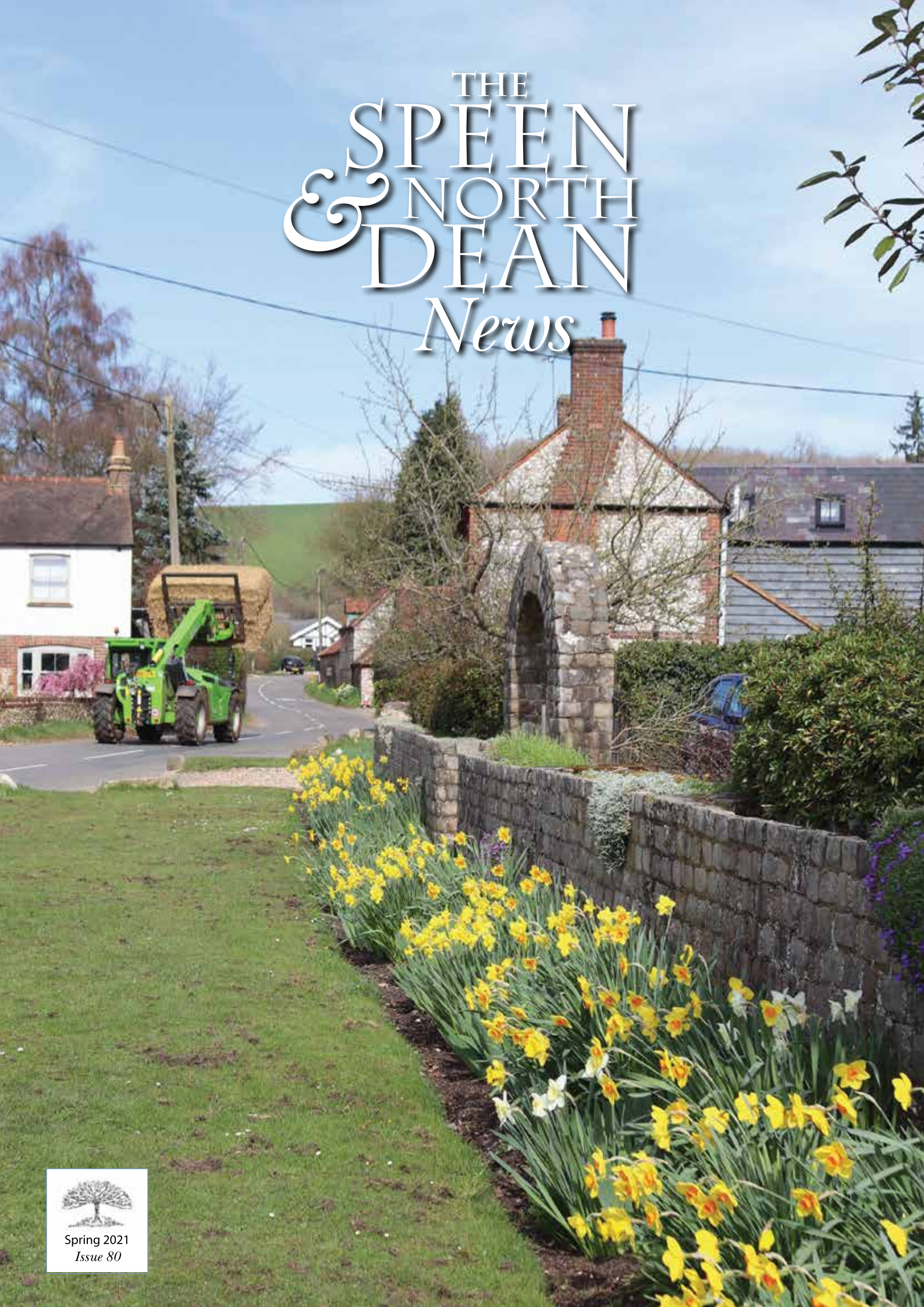


# THE SPEEN & NORTH DEAN *News*



Spring 2021  
Issue 80



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# Welcome!

to the 80th edition of The Speen & North Dean News.

Spring is in the air, hopefully many of you will have had one if not two vaccinations by now, and we are all looking forward to the world opening up and the opportunity to see friends and loved ones once more. Despite the pandemic and lockdowns, there's still been plenty going on in the villages, and there are several events to look forward to this summer, all Covid-compliant of course, and subject to no further restrictions being put in place. Let's get back to doing what we do so well! See the centre spread for a few 'Save the Dates' to get in the diary!

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## Next Edition

Copy for the next edition is **due by 25th June** with a planned publication date of Mid-July. Please send photos separately from text, together with captions and a consent form (downloaded from the SNDN website [www.speenbucks.org.uk](http://www.speenbucks.org.uk)) if any photos are of children. Please send to [editor.sndn@speenbucks.org.uk](mailto:editor.sndn@speenbucks.org.uk).

## With grateful thanks

To Hughenden Parish Council, Speen Festival, Speen Fete, Speen Stores Charity Committee, all our advertisers for their support of this magazine and all the volunteers who deliver it to your door.

## Welcome Packs

The Good Neighbours scheme was set up many years ago and is now run by Pat Richardson in Speen. The service is to provide new Speen residents with a Welcome Pack of village information, so if you know of anyone new to the area please call Pat Richardson on 01494 488627.

## Village News

If you are not already signed up to The Village Messenger do email [Village@SpeenBucks.org](mailto:Village@SpeenBucks.org) to be put on the mailing list, with the word 'include' in the subject line - they will keep you up to date via email on a monthly basis with all the latest village news and important dates.

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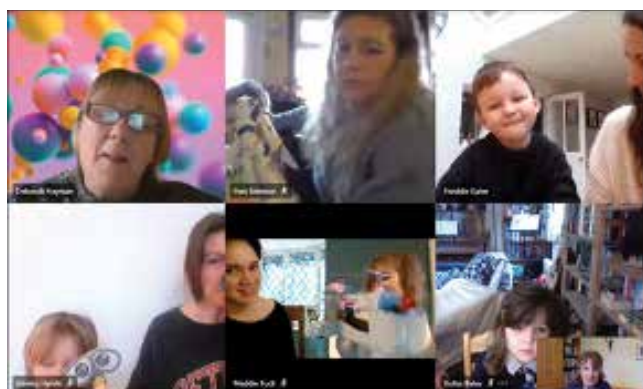




# SPEEN SCHOOL & LITTLE APPLES PRESCHOOL



Schools, staff and families have had to learn to be so flexible over the last year! Having been able to keep going with no Covid cases and our school 'bubble' not needing to close throughout the Autumn term, we were once more faced with a national schools lockdown at the start of January. Our teachers have been fabulous in developing new IT skills to bring as much variety as they could to home learning. Parents have been such super troupers in needing to take the role of 'teacher' to their young children.



Children enjoyed increased opportunities to cook and bake, with lots of measuring skills being worked out practically. We were delighted that all the children's learning from Forest School sessions at Speen School, continued at home too.



Keeping a skeletal key worker provision going and our preschool provision fully open, brought some sense of normality during lockdown within our lovely school site. Little Apples children were able to do a shape hunt in the village. They also had the joy of converting part of their classroom into a pet corner!

Our doors were flung widely open to welcome everyone back on 8th March and it soon seemed like we were never away! We are now welcoming new children to Little Apples Pre-School and some new pupils to the main school from house moves into the area.

For any enquiries regarding school places, please contact Mrs Moore at the school office: [office@speenschool.com](mailto:office@speenschool.com) 01494 488321.

Jacquie Coles  
Headteacher

## *Spring term news from Speen School PTA*

Whilst it has been a year like no other, the PTA have carried on working behind the scenes to come up with new initiatives and fundraising opportunities to continue to support our much-loved Speen school. As we approached Christmas, our plans for a wreath making course in groups of 6 quickly changed. However, we were not deterred, and we held the Christmas wreath making course virtually instead. Our lovely teacher for the night (Helen Davies) put together some fabulous wreath making kits and a number of parents and teachers joined together online to create some beautiful Christmas wreaths. Although it wasn't quite the same as being together, it provided some much-needed fun and festive cheer, after what had been a very challenging year.

In December we were unable to hold our annual Christmas fair, so instead we sold some hand painted Christmas plates, and we made some wonderful Christmas hampers which were raffled at school. Santa managed to have a socially distant visit with the children and bring them all a present and they also had a lovely Christmas party with lots of fun and games.

In January lockdown was announced again, and many of our plans for the beginning of the year were put on hold. In the background we have continued our recycling schemes, the latest being our textile recycling collection scheme. The previous one was a huge success, and we were very grateful for all donations received. You can also continue to support us through two online shopping portals, Amazon Smile or Easyfundraising, just search for Speen School PTA so we receive allocated donations from your purchases.

As well as raising valuable funds, the PTA is about creating fun opportunities for the children (and parents, when restrictions allow us). And with the return of schools on the 8th of March, the PTA are back in action planning some exciting Easter activities for the children, including an Easter egg hunt and some craft filled goodie bags. We are also looking ahead to the summer and hopefully some more exciting events are on the horizon.

Vanessa Samuels & Fleur Ridley  
PTA Co-Chair & PTA Secretary



## RENNIE GROVE HOSPICE CARE

Speen Helping Hospices have been a huge source of support to Rennie Grove Hospice Care over many years. In 2020 their annual donation was a staggering £4,500 which is an incredible achievement in such challenging times. To put this donation into perspective it could fund the cost of two weeks of care from a Healthcare Assistant, supporting patients with practical care to help them live independently at home for as long as possible. On top of this it would also fund the Night Team for two nights, giving essential care and support so that whatever time of night it is our patients and families are not alone, and finally a Complementary Therapist for two weeks, providing treatments to improve wellbeing for patients and carers.

The families we support tell us that having our nurses at the end of a phone, to be reassured or for us to plan a visit gives them the confidence to relax and enjoy the special moments that matter, together. It is more important than ever that we work together to keep families at home, where they feel comfortable and safe, and where we can minimise the risk of infection, if that's where they want to be. The support we receive from Speen Helping Hospices helps us to continue to be there for families 365 days a year, day and night.

As you can see, the money raised makes a very real difference to the patients and families we care for locally. Thanks again for your incredible ongoing support.

## FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE HOSPICE CHARITY

Like for so many charities and businesses, the impact of Covid-19 on Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity has been dramatic. Our doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals have continued working, caring for the most vulnerable of patients and their families throughout the year – a challenge made increasingly difficult and complex with the restrictions brought in to combat Covid-19.

These restrictions also forced our charity shops to close and cancelled much of our planned fundraising activity. The income in shortfall is expected to reach around £1 million, which is deeply concerning.

We would especially like to thank our fantastic supporters at Speen Helping Hospices. The group have supported us for many years but their efforts and enthusiasm over the past year have led to some amazingly innovative fundraising activity in exceptionally difficult circumstances, and raised an amazing amount of money for the Hospice for which we are truly grateful.

The Hospice was built over thirty years ago thanks to a huge local fundraising campaign and it is only thanks to the continued generosity of supporters and groups like Speen Helping Hospices that we have been able to extend our services and increase the number of patients we can support over the years. Thank you to everyone who has supported us – we could not do it without you.

Thank  
You

## HELEN & DOUGLAS HOUSE

We would like to say a massive thank you to Speen Helping Hospices for supporting us for the last 18 years. They have been so imaginative with their fundraising ideas through a hugely difficult year in 2020, resulting in their best fundraising year ever, raising an amazing £4,500 for our charity. In total over all the years they have supported Helen & Douglas House, the Speen Committee have raised an incredible £26,657, that has made such a difference to local terminally ill children and their families.'

This money has provided vital one-to-one respite care and end-of-life care to ensure our team take care of children's nursing and medical needs so parents can spend precious time with their children. It has been a tough year for everyone but particularly the families we support. Many are exhausted and isolated with limited support because of shielding so they need our help now more than ever through our community nursing team who visit families at home.

Helen & Douglas House is the world's first children's hospice. As a local charity, we rely on amazing supporters like you. So I would like to thank Speen Helping Hospices for their amazing ongoing support which has been incredible.

## SOUTH BUCKS HOSPICE

The support of Speen Helping Hospices has been invaluable to South Bucks Hospice as we continue to support people with long-term and life-limiting health conditions through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Through lockdown, our therapists and counsellors have had to adapt their ways of working to ensure that patients and staff are safe - sadly some services had to stop, but others were able to continue by telephone.

With the help of supporters like Speen Helping Hospices, South Bucks Hospice has been able to restart some face to face services, as well as running virtual art therapy sessions.

Everyone at South Bucks Hospice is grateful to everyone that has contributed to Speen Helping Hospices' record-breaking fundraising in 2020; from Carol Singing to donating items for sale and raffle prizes, and everyone that has bought a raffle ticket, purchased an item from the shop, made a mask, volunteered at an event or made a donation.



# SPEENHELPING HOSPICES

Gráinne Suter

## Looking Back on 2020

2020 has been an incredibly eventful year in so many ways, not least in the amount raised by SHH and YOU.

As you know we went online when we could not hold the Christmas Market on the Playing Field on 16th November. The final profit for the Christmas Market, which included not just the online shop but also the Christmas Hamper, Sassy Santa's and the Carol Singing, came to £6,448.69. Thank you to the Sassy Santas and the carol singers who joined us.

This brought our total figure raised for 2020 to **£17,604.68**, our best year ever and the overall grand total to **£106,577.28**.

Along with the cushion we started with at the beginning of 2020, the total in our account was £19,339.01. So we donated £18,000 to the four hospices, Helen and Douglas House for Children, Rennie Grove Hospice, Florence Nightingale and South Bucks Hospice Care this year, which was £4,500 each.

We try to keep overheads down to a minimum, in many instances smaller costs are absorbed by the committee themselves. Our overheads include public liability insurance, data protection fee, purchasing licences to sell alcohol for each event. Venue hire is our biggest cost and varies depending which village we are using and whether we use the marquee.

Initially, the Online Shop was to have been a temporary affair, but we feel it is worth maintaining and are currently exploring different ideas for its use and inviting new vendors to use the platform. If you would like to be involved, do please contact me on 07778 803260 or [grainnesuter@btconnect.com](mailto:grainnesuter@btconnect.com). The shop link is [www.shh-shop.org](http://www.shh-shop.org). We are just introducing some beautiful gift ideas and intend to expand this shortly. Please check it out!

Our first fundraising event in 2021 was a Valentine's Dinner raffle. This was a chance for two lucky couples to win a dinner for two delivered to their home on Valentine's Day. It included a cocktail, canapes, 3 course meal, chocolates, and champagne. The event raised £1,430. This will definitely be in the social calendar for next year. The second initiative, Afternoon Tea Boxes for March 14th, was very successful and demand more than reached our expectations. So much so that we had to draw on Jill Rogerson, Kate Vale

and Deryn Holland to help with the scones. The cost of the food was donated as a tribute to Jane Oury who was an enthusiastic supporter of the SHH. Look out for details of our June event - Sunday Afternoon Jazz in the Park.

The financial challenge the hospices are facing is worsening and the need for fundraising increasing. Helen and Douglas House alone needs to raise £3.6 million each year to run their service, and 85% of it comes from fundraising. We know that 2020 was an exceptional year as people were at home and there was more disposable income, however, we want to be equally ambitious for 2021 and with your help that is achievable. None of us know when we, or family members, may need these services and we have a vested interest in ensuring they survive and can deliver the range of services to meet a complexity of needs.

To our horror Ann James, a long-time member of the committee, put her house on the market and sold in February. Unreasonably, she has declined to cook and bake from Oxfordshire! We will miss her so much. Ann's contribution to SHH was enormous. She was a highly skilled quilter, mask-maker, crafter, cook, baker, leaflet distributor and incredibly efficient Treasurer. Above all, her energy, motivation and commitment to SHH will be long remembered.

SHH committee members are myself, Sally Codling, Christine Davies, Amanda Dobbs, Gloria Holmes, Judy Keen, Maureen Laing, Ceri Syner, Gracie Stickings and Rosemary Speight. We also have some very supportive volunteers, who although not on the committee, have given their time in many ways including baking, woodwork and helping us set up for events. We would like to say a big thanks to them and relay how much we appreciate their input.

We invited each of the hospices to submit pieces for this edition of SNDN which appear on the opposite page and we hope that this gives you a good insight and understanding of how your support makes a difference.

If you have an idea for a fundraising initiative, please contact us. We want to put on events that are of interest to you. If we achieve that, you will support us, and then everyone is a winner and we have fun!

Thank you Speen and North Dean and to an increasing number of supporters in the surrounding villages.



Rosemary presents cheque to South Bucks Hospice



Ann James at Christmas Market Pop Up



Sassy Santas Fun Run 21st December 2020



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anna.burnside@theburnsidepartnership.com

**Jacqui Birks** TAX DIRECTOR  
jacqui.birks@theburnsidepartnership.com

For further information, please contact:  
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# VILLAGE SPRING CLEAN

Gloria Holmes

Thanks in part to your help in the Village Clean Up in September, Buckinghamshire Council won the national award for the Great British September Clean 2020, for which they extend grateful thanks.

Join us on 6th June for the Village Spring Clean 2021, when we will be clearing the litter on the approach roads to Speen. Meet at Speen Village Hall at 2pm to collect your litter pickers and hi-vis jackets, which are provided by the Council, and to be allocated your route.

As usual, there will be delicious tea and cakes for all on your return.

# SNDN BACK EDITIONS

Jacqui Laing

Huge thanks to Philip Suter from all at The Speen & North Dean News for the immense job he has done tracking down, scanning and uploading every page of all but one back edition of the magazine to the village website, dating back to issue 1 in July 1994.

For some wonderful nostalgia visit [speenbucks.org.uk/speen-north-dean-news/back-issues-of-the-news/](https://speenbucks.org.uk/speen-north-dean-news/back-issues-of-the-news/)

The only one missing is issue 22, from Autumn 2000. If anyone has a copy buried in their attic do please let him know.

# SPREENCHURCH

Timothy Deller

## *Remembering Christmas Past*

During a time when many of the activities that dictate life's rhythm were cancelled, Speen Church, Speen School and families around the village came together to give some Christmas continuity in a time full of discontinuity.

They put together a Nativity trail – Follow the Star – that invited villagers and others to celebrate the greatest love story – God's coming down to live amongst us (John 3:16). The Nativity Trail shone as a symbol of hope and the path around the various "stations" was well trodden by a crowd – socially distanced and spaced out over a few weeks – who were challenged once again by the Christmas Story. They discovered that not everything had been cancelled during this abnormal "pandemic year" of 20/21.

FOLLOW THE  
+ STAR



### **"Not Everything was Cancelled"**

Not everything was cancelled...

The sun was not cancelled...

The snow was not cancelled...

Relationships were not cancelled...

Kindness was not cancelled...

Christmas was not cancelled...

**and that God's love for his people  
is never cancelled...**

This (re)discovery of continuity in discontinuity  
sparks and rekindles

HOPE

as we move into the novum  
of the beckoning future.



# Jeni Fairey

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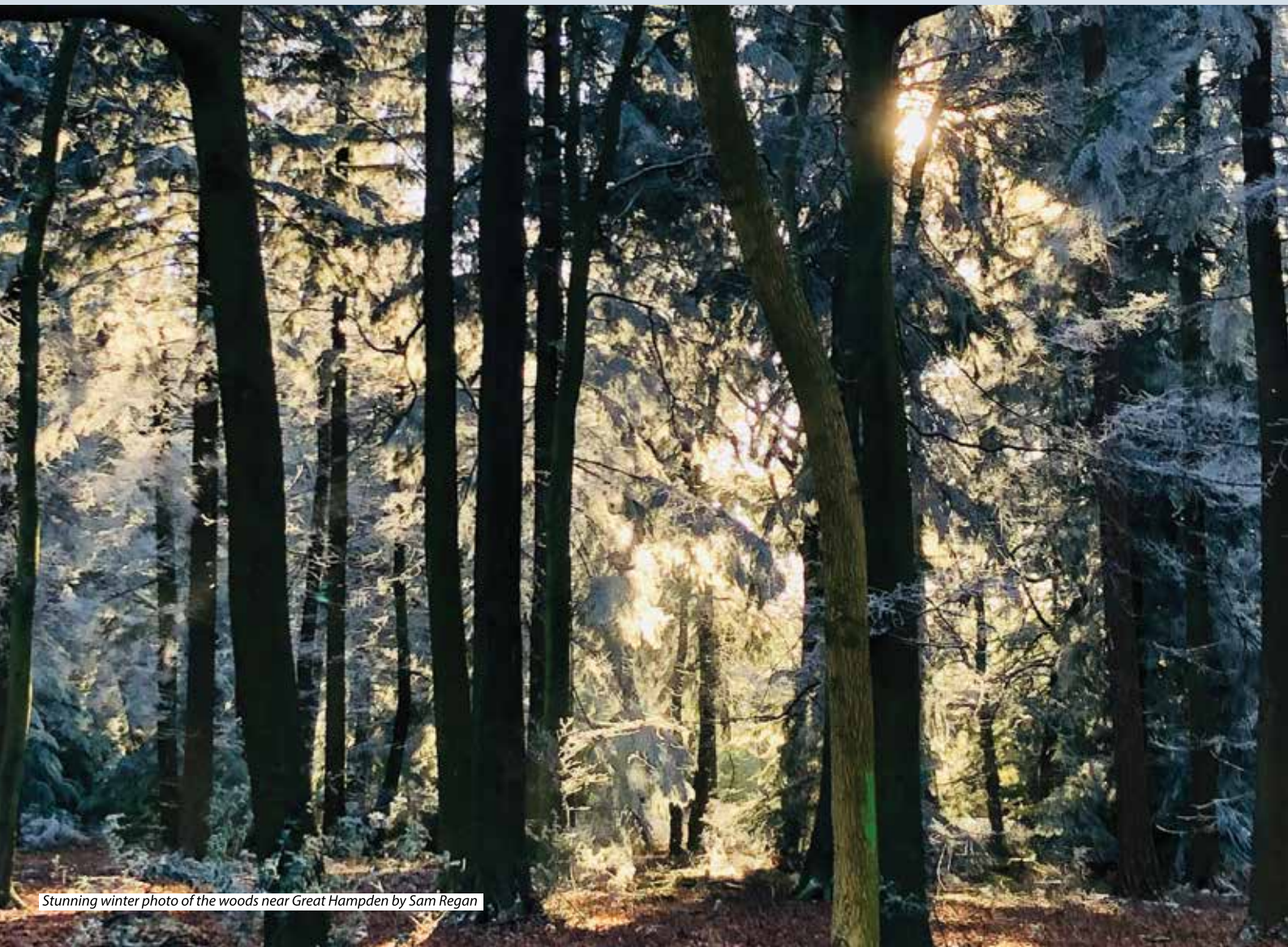


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*Stunning winter photo of the woods near Great Hampden by Sam Regan*



# UPDATE FROM AGAPE SCHOOL

James Entwisle

## *India in the shadow of Covid*

In March 2020 Covid-19 was rapidly becoming a household name worldwide. Two of us were in India for my 18th annual visit to the school that was founded by Speen Church and Chandra and Sekhar, our schoolteacher friends in India back in 2002.

Agape School is named for the Greek word roughly pronounced, ah gah pay, and meaning unconditional love – a word used often by and about Jesus. The school was inspired by seeing two boys rag-picking for a living on a rubbish tip (see old grainy photo on the left). It is funded through Speen Church (initially attracting supporters around the village and vicinity and gradually reaching supporters in other parts of the country). The hard work is done by Chandra and Sekhar and a wonderful team of teachers and ayas (helpers/classroom assistants/cooks etc).



Over the years many hundreds of children have benefitted from a good education, school lunch, uniforms etc. The school now has just over 300 students enrolled from nursery to the equivalent of GCSE level, and costs about £2,000 a month to run (approx. £7 per child per month).

The experience of visiting the school for the first time all those years ago is etched in my memory – where I had seen darkness and despair in children's faces on the rubbish tip, I now saw hope and light. The transformation continues to move me every time I visit.

Whilst we were in India Covid led to foreign nationals being (understandably) banned from entering. Just a couple of weeks later a nationwide lockdown was announced with just a few hours' notice, and a trail of economic and social disruption swiftly followed. The BBC reported that 122 million people became unemployed in India in April. And inevitably the burden fell most heavily on the poorest who have no reserves to draw on.

We had to close the school and most of our other projects out there, but committed to continue to pay all our Indian teachers and staff throughout. We couldn't home school as the children have no access to technology. Instead, we raised an emergency relief fund and provided food parcels



*Happy schoolchildren pre-Covid 19*

to nearly 200 local families guided by the teachers and local church as to who was in need. That need has diminished somewhat now but we still support around 60 families in this way.

Quite what my next visit will show remains to be seen, but rays of hope and light are emerging once again. The school

has reopened for Year 6 through to 10 from the beginning of March (pictured), and younger children will hopefully return in April (as temperatures head towards 40 degrees!)



Nearly a year of schooling has been missed. But having started from nothing less than 20 years ago, we are confident that our wonderful, resourceful and loving friends in India will find ways to help the children bridge the Covid gap and restore hope.

If you would like to know more about the charity, or indeed to support our work do look at the website [www.agapealiveinindia.org.uk](http://www.agapealiveinindia.org.uk) or get in touch with me. I love any excuse to talk about my 300 adoptive children in India, and Jesus' Agape love I see amongst them.

*James Entwisle*





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It is now one year since Speen WI last met at a Monthly Meeting. But this has not stopped us from staying in touch and supporting each other during this time.

In December, Christmas Gift Bags were delivered to all by members of the Committee and it was lovely to have a socially distanced doorstep chat with everyone.



As it became increasingly clear that face to face meetings were not going to be happening for a long time, it was decided to embrace Zoom. This meant the Committee being able to continue to plan for the future and keep in contact as a group. In addition meetings for members to 'have a virtual cuppa' were scheduled. Both the National and County Federations have also provided online speakers and activities to keep members in touch.

Now that Denman has closed, courses have also moved online and members and non-members can access the very best tuition in craft, cookery and lifestyle activities. The National AGM in 2020 had to be cancelled, but this year it is likely to be held virtually so that some semblance of business as usual is seen. It is hoped to add raising awareness of the signs of ovarian cancer to the many campaigns undertaken by the WI.

One such campaign concerns reducing food waste and March always sees Food Waste Action Week which helps to remind people of the need to preserve this very vital part of our lives for everyone. Suggestions include always using a shopping list for your meal plans, ensuring food is stored correctly and trying not to buy or cook more than you actually need. But also find all those recipes which use your leftovers, just in case. All the WI campaigns are available on the NFWI website at [thewi.org.uk](http://thewi.org.uk).

We are delighted to hear that our water tank for Ingwavuma is now on its way to installation. The annual rains should ensure it fills quite quickly and so make the lives of another family much easier and healthier.



I am sure we are all looking forward to a more normal Summer and our WI will be getting together again for all our usual activities just as soon as it is feasible. The company of others must surely be what we have all missed most during this last year.

## SPEENVILLAGE HALL

*Bill Groves, Chairman Speen Village Hall Management Committee*

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It is now almost a year since the Village Hall had to close its doors due to the Covid Pandemic. During this time we have managed to carry out some outside maintenance work including clearing the path at the rear of the hall, removing the old shed and tidying up the brickwork.

I am reminded that there are several newcomers to the village so just to let you know that when we are allowed to open, the activities that we cater for include WI, Bridge Club, Garden Club, Table Tennis, Pub nights and our popular Christmas Bazaar. We are also an ideal venue for parties, celebrations, meetings and even wedding receptions. There are discounted rates for villagers and village organisations so please bear us in mind.

The Hall was acquired by the village in October 1924 and has been at the centre of activities since then. During last year we lost the valuable services of Catherine Butler who had provided many years of excellent work for the hall as secretary, booking secretary, fire and safety officer and Trustee. If anyone would like to join the Management Committee please let me know - the work is not onerous. We are also looking for a new cleaner - 2 hours once or twice a month and is paid! - so please let me know if you are interested.

We would hope to be able to re-open during the summer and would be delighted to see you in the hall once again.



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# SPEENTENNIS CLUB

Philippa Lane

As we emerge from an extremely long winter of hibernation, we are finally able to enjoy the pleasures of outdoor tennis once again. At the time of writing, we are expecting to have reopened our court in accordance with government Covid-19 guidelines and we hope that as many of you as possible will take the opportunity to make use of our wonderful village facility situated at the top end of the playing fields.

The club is run by a volunteer committee of villagers, for the benefit of all residents of Speen and neighbouring villages.

Use of the court is restricted to members only, but there is no minimum standard required and all are welcome and encouraged to have a go. We are a club and, as such, there is a membership fee to join but we believe we offer extremely good value for money, whether at the family rate, junior rate or single adult rate, with membership offering unlimited use of the courts (subject to booking availability).



This year will be the first full season for our newly resurfaced court, which is looking splendid. The cost of the resurfacing was around £15,000 and the projected life of a tennis court is approximately 15 years. We base our membership rates on meeting this cyclical cost plus some small annual upkeep and maintenance.

We also offer an online booking system so everyone has equal access to playing time.

Whilst having only one court limits the opportunities to offer group activities, many of our members form their own playing groups amongst others of similar ability and enthusiasm.

The membership rates for this year will be posted on the Tennis section of the village website at [www.speenbucks.org.uk](http://www.speenbucks.org.uk).

In addition, every year until now we have organised a club ballot to allocate our share of tickets for the Wimbledon Championships. It remains unclear whether there will be a ballot this year. The All England Lawn Tennis Club is currently planning for various scenarios - full, reduced and no public capacity - for the tournament which is due to take place between 28 June and 11 July 2021. We will, of course, let all members know if we are asked to run a ballot again this year.

In the meantime, we hope that as many of you as possible will choose to join our club and enjoy the benefits of fun, enjoyable exercise that tennis offers. If you would like to know more about membership or the club, please feel free to contact one of the committee members listed on the village website or email Philippa at [lanetribe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lanetribe@yahoo.co.uk).

## Geoff “The Ref” Smith does The Chase

On 25th November last year I sat down to watch one of my favourite shows, ITV's **The Chase** to find that none other than our own Geoff Smith was on the team. After a few quick What'sApp messages, a good number of villagers were tuned in to watch Geoff, who appeared as contestant number four.

Questioned by Bradley Walsh in an impressive cash builder round, Geoff amassed £8,000. He went on to take on top expert “The Sinnerman”, Paul Sinha, at the table and sailed through to the final with his £8,000.

In the final a promising-looking team of four were jointly trying to win a total of £17,100 between them. Unfortunately the Chaser was on his game and he beat the team, who left empty handed.

However Geoff must have returned home with his head held high as top performer on the day.

Peter Symonds





# SPEENPLAYING FIELDS

*Clare Morris, Chair*

---

As this unimaginable year has evolved we have all come to appreciate the green spaces close to us and how fortunate we are to live in Speen. The playing field, bike park, play areas & Ridgley's field, despite no Fun Day, fete or fireworks have proved invaluable for many.

But what are Speen Playing Fields and who runs it?

Speen Playing Fields is a registered charity the ownership of which is vested with the Charities Commission. The Purpose of Speen Playing Fields is to allow the Fields to be used in perpetuity as playing fields and recreation grounds for the benefit of the inhabitants of Speen and, through active management, to ensure the future success of the Fields through fundraising and on-going investment. It is managed by a group of volunteer trustees who live in Speen who have a duty of care to act prudently in the interests of Speen Playing Fields. We aim for a mix of people as trustees to represent the needs of all villagers, young and old and are always looking for new volunteers.

As trustees we were very concerned that with no income from Bonfire Night, Fun Day etc there would be insufficient funds to maintain the main field and bike park. In fact, our mid-case assumption i.e., 50% loss of income, projected a zero-bank balance by mid 2021. Thank goodness we have been unbelievably lucky. Although we have had to cancel all events on the Field, you Speenies have continued to support the Playing Fields more than ever through both the Draw and Christmas Tree Recycling, with increased profits of over £850. Christmas gingerbread biscuits were made and delivered by trustees across the village as a recognition of our thanks for the support we have received. We also managed to secure grants of £1,500 from Sports England and £1,000 from Wycombe District Council plus a very generous one-off Covid Grant from Bucks County Council. We would like to thank all concerned for this huge financial lifeline which leaves us in a strong position as we prepare to come out of lockdown and the whole of Speen readies itself for a year of celebrations on the Fields.

It is worth remembering that our unique facilities are expensive to maintain and improve. Ongoing basic fixed overheads of grass cutting / strimming, insurance, utilities, mower servicing cost £5,000 per year. On average we also spend £10,000 every year on upgrading and maintaining facilities. 2019 was the year of the play area development where we spent a net £15,000 (over and above a grant £20,000 received from the Parish Council). Generally, we receive very little in the way of grants and the annual £250 from the Parish Council just about covers the costs of the statutory annual inspection for the health and safety executive. So far this year we have already spent

over £2,000 on bike park improvements and maintenance work plus renovation of the roundabout.

To help cover our costs we allow the hire of the Fields to Speen village groups and members of the Speen community, subject to their own insurance and agreement to the SPF Conditions of Hire. Since our windfall grant this year, we will waive any fees to charities using the Field. The Marquee does not fall within the remit of the playing field organisation but is hired out separately, on a self-financing basis, with a view to replacement every 12-15 years.

The actual work, including spreading of 20 tons of hardcore, replacing beams on the activity trail, repairing the toddler slide and of course the ongoing work to strip back, replace wooden slats, sandblast and repaint the roundabout, has mainly been done by the trustees. This work is near completion, and it is hoped that with a new safer base we will be able to unveil the rejuvenated centrepiece in late spring. Monthly, trustee's complete invaluable safety inspections, which are legally required, as well as weekly bin-emptying duties.

In Ridgley's Field the hedge, originally part of a boundary that was required to retain horses, has been reduced in height. The work was deliberately carried out in early December to avoid the nesting period. The hedge contained a lot of very old thick material, some of which was dead, as well as fence posts and barbed wire

The works to the hedge had a twofold purpose; Firstly, to reduce the height of the hedge to open up the view of the field which was bequeathed to the village "for the benefit of the children of Speen." SEAG are undertaking works to create a flower meadow on the main part of the field, and this will enhance the attractive views over the field in the fullness of time. Many local residents and villagers have commented about how nice it is to have the more open views. The works also help to improve visibility of children on bikes visiting the bike park and follow the earlier work to replace the hedging on the corner opposite Cherry Tree Close.

Secondly, to improve the shape and profile of the hedge for the benefit of wildlife by creating a topped A shape. With the presence of the posts, wire and thick old growth this shape could not be achieved using a tractor mounted flail. The only solution was an initial quite drastic cut to generate new thinner growth that can be shaped over the next two to three years to create the Topped A shape. The height will be more than exists at present but will be lower than the old horse enclosure.

# SPEENPLAYING FIELDS CONTD

Clare Morris, Chair

The bike park has never been more popular and has proved invaluable to many during lockdown. Despite involving users in the upgrade process the bike park has been subject to continued unauthorised alterations this year which has led to safety concerns and threat of closure. It is the Playing Field committee's responsibility to make sure all our play facilities are safe for all ages and meet our strict insurance policy requirements. Any alterations to the bike park, which have taken place as recently as early March, will be considered as vandalism. This is not acceptable and will be taken seriously, with involvement if needs be by the police. We are asking all parents and carers to please talk to your children and make them aware of the seriousness of this situation.



John & Gloria Holmes

One of the highlights of the year was presenting a plaque to John & Gloria Holmes to mark the re-naming of the pavilion after them. This is in recognition of their dedication and community service, in particular to the Playing Fields, over many decades and for which we are truly grateful. John remains a trustee and his knowledge is as valuable as ever.

We always need volunteers to help maintain the facilities, and it is a great way for everyone to contribute. The next work party is on Saturday 27th March so please do join us at the Pavilion from 1pm. If you have recently moved in it will be a great opportunity to meet people in a socially distant way.

Many thanks for your continued support. We are looking forward to seeing the fields come back to life again this summer hosting the Fete, Festival and Music Event.

## ONE CAN TRUST

The One Can Trust, the food bank for South Bucks, has said it's only been able to meet soaring demand this year thanks to the generosity of the local community, but they are concerned that there could be worse to come.

Like many charities, the organisation has had the most challenging year in its existence. The team, based in High Wycombe town centre, has had to rethink its whole operation to make it covid safe, manage an initial drop in volunteers and food donations, recruit a team of drivers to deliver food parcels and develop their own phone app to keep donations coming in.

Graham Peart, One Can Trust Chairman, says: "When Covid hit, we had to react and adapt at lightning speed. Demand has tripled at points over the last year, and is higher than ever right now, but we've managed to offer hope and relief in record quantities and continue to do so. It's all thanks to an incredible joint effort from our small but superb team of staff, our army of volunteers, including many new recruits, and the wider community, including residents, businesses, faith groups and partners.



While I wish we didn't need to be here, I'm thankful that we are and incredibly proud of what we've achieved

together. However, we know, with furlough due to end in September, there will be more families facing hardship. Some of those supporting foodbanks could well be the ones who start to need support too."

The food bank provided 9310 parcels to families during 2020. The number of people being helped each week, in the 12 months since the first lockdown, stands at an average of more than 500, compared to around 200 at the beginning of March 2020. However, this has recently increased further still, as more local schools identify families in need, and we are currently supporting more than three times more people than pre-covid times.

The big message from the One Can Trust team is thank you so much to every single person who has done something however big or small to help support so many vulnerable individuals and families, and to please continue to generously donate if you are able to.

[onecantrust.org.uk](http://onecantrust.org.uk)





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# TREE PLANTING AT DARVILLS HILL FARM

Charlotte Downing

A great deal has happened in everyone's lives since November 2019, when 60 friends and family helped us plant 2,200 trees at our small farm on Flowers Bottom Lane. However, in the life cycle of the trees we planted, it has been just one growing season which started with relentless rain in early 2020, then the long, hot, dry spring and summer. So, it has proved to be a challenging year even for the trees. We continued on our tree planting mission over the last year and have added a further 1,000 trees, including 150 oaks from the 'Save the Oaks' campaign ([www.savetheoaks.org](http://www.savetheoaks.org)) and we aim to continue planting more trees each year.

We have been mulching the saplings during February and March, to keep the grass from competing with them, and doing a check on their health at the same time. It has been amazing to find that about 95% of the trees have taken root



and, although early in the season, some are already starting to bud. We would welcome anyone who would like to come and check in on the trees they planted.

We are now planning to expand our carbon sequestering enterprise beyond tree planting, diversifying the farm's ecology at the same time. We will be improving the

hedgerows by in-planting towards the end of the year and during this grass growing season we are undertaking holistic planned grazing with our small flock of 40 Soay and Herdwick sheep. This process allows the sheep to use their natural ability to manage grasses to improve the farm's soil organic content, capturing more of that pesky carbon in the process.

We are slowly immersing ourselves in the world of regenerative farming and would love to hear from anyone interested in this approach to improving our community ecosystem.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### *Monkton Woods Footpaths*

I am astonished and upset to find that a walk I have enjoyed for over 45 years through this wood has been sealed off, presumably by the new owner. I wonder why this is necessary and who are the new owners?

The sign on the gate leading into the wood from the Hampden Road reads "Private Land. No public right of way".

This may be so but to actually try and stop local Speen residents from using this well worn footpath seems unkind and unnecessary. Having used the footpath for as long as I have without any problem or criticism, it would have been good to have had some explanation on the reasons for closing it off.

#### STATUTE LAW

The lack of clarity in common law as to what constitutes a 'sufficient period' of public use led Parliament to enact a law about presumed dedication. The law is now set out in section 31 of the Highways Act 1980, which says that if a route is enjoyed by the public for 20 years or more, as of right and without interruption, the path is "to be deemed to have been dedicated as a highway", unless there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention during that period to dedicate it.



The route from Speen, through the wood and across to Grubbins Lane and back via Moses Plat Lane to Speen is a convenient circular 30 minute walk for brief exercise and away from traffic. What possible harm can it do to the landowner? He or she would surely have known of the used footpaths through the wood before buying the land from the Hampden Estate, so it

won't have been a surprise or some recent development that has just happened.

It will be said that there is a marked footpath alongside the wood and the fields for public use but as walkers will know this path is very muddy and slippery making it almost impossible for the elderly at this time of year.

I have noticed very little change in Monkton Wood over the years and shared the peaceful environment with friends from Speen quite apart from the muntjacs, foxes, squirrels, wood pigeons and others! Yes, I'm astonished and upset and maybe others are too.

*David Clay, Studridge Lane, Speen*



# SPEENFESTIVAL2021

SEPTEMBER 2021

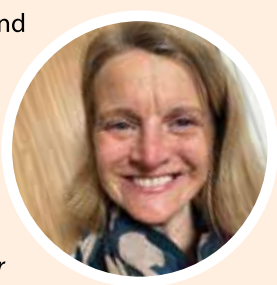
## *Just what the doctor ordered!*

How would you describe Speen Festival to the new villagers? It's a celebration, it's madness, it's eclectic, it's created by volunteers, it reflects the talents and passions of the village, it's musical, it's arty, it's outdoorsy, it's for everyone, it's across the village, it's up to you, it's got a great bar! In 2019 we donated over £10,000 to number of local organisations and charities.

Our hilltop celebration of local creativity started in 2000 for the Millennium and now has become a biennial feature of the Speen social calendar. Whilst some events have become regular fixtures the Festival very much reflects the changing community; maybe this year things will have to look a bit different to usual, but I am excited to hear any ideas and suggestions you all may have.

However, its not just ideas I need, the whole event is created and run by volunteers. The core Festival team curate the ideas into a programme; create the box office and ticketing, the publicity and marketing, the marquee, the tech and the bar and create the framework for event organisers to deliver their events. The volunteering can be for your CV or DofE or even your sanity and it really is a lot of fun. I'd love to hear from you.

*Cat Cook, Festival Coordinator*



## LOCKDOWN FREEDOM PARTY!

**Big Ian and his band return to Speen**



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# REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL!

*Things to  
look forward to  
this summer  
(fingers-crossed!)*

## SAVE THE DATES!

Here are a few events we are hopeful will be able to take place this summer. Please be assured that every event will be carefully planned to be fully compliant with Covid regulations and with your utmost safety the primary concern.

★ **SAVE THE DATE** ★ **SAVE THE DATE** ★

**SPEEN**  
VILLAGE  
**FETE**

**SATURDAY 3RD JULY**  
SPEEN PLAYING FIELD  
2pm

**FAMILY FUN GAMES • HOME-GROWN ENTERTAINMENT • BBQ • BOUNCY CASTLE •  
CHILDREN'S COMPETITIONS • PLANT STALL • BAR & MUSIC 'TIL LATE and much more ...**

Let's decorate the village to **CELEBRATE**, so get creative and design your own masterpiece.  
Best decorated house winner will be announced at the Fete.

**This year, more than ever, we need your help.  
To volunteer please email: [fete@speenbucks.org.uk](mailto:fete@speenbucks.org.uk)**





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# OBITUARIES

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## *John Turner* 30th August 1926 – 18th October 2020

Mr John Turner passed away at his home in Speen age 94 surrounded by his surviving family; daughter Amanda and her husband Michael, Ben and Sally, granddaughter Sarah and great grandchildren Dylan and Evie.

John was married to the daughter of one of the founding families of Speen, Mary Rixon, who died in 2006. He was a son and brother, a veteran and protector, a husband and father, a grandfather and great grandfather, a colleague and friend, a mentor and teacher, but above all he was his own man, a very private person with a high moral compass and a wicked sense of humour, who touched the lives of everyone he met.

John was a keen footballer and played semi-pro football in Ireland before joining the RAF where he served in the Special Investigations Branch (SIB) in both Cairo and Canada. On leaving the RAF he returned to the UK and continued his football career with the London Irish, and settled in High Wycombe to work in the furniture industry where, after training, he oversaw teaching the apprentices. This started his lifelong passion for teaching. John lectured at Wycombe college for 39 years and was much loved by his students, he also lectured and gave talks at stately homes around the country and numerous private groups, was used as a reference by authors and famous antique dealers and advised on specialist furniture and repair for Windsor Castle, Buckingham Palace, Chatsworth House and the Palace of Versailles, to name just a few. Teaching and furniture were literally his life.

---

## *Jane Oury* 29th March 1939 - 5th February 2021

Jane Oury's sudden death on 5th February came as a great shock to her many friends in Speen.

Jane moved here in 1997 and enthusiastically supported all the village activities and fundraising events. She was a founder member of the popular Speen Garden Group, and was a very familiar figure, to be seen walking her beloved miniature dachshund Meggie around the village most days.

She had been an air hostess in the days of BOAC, and later a ski instructor. She was also a keen botanic artist, and she created lovely hand painted designs on children's' furniture. She is greatly missed.



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## *Ted Janes* 1925 - 2021

Ted Janes, former Chairman of Lacey Green Parish Council passed away on 17 February 2021, he was 96. He was born in Speen and moved to Lacey Green in 1951. He was a Parish Councillor for 34 years and was the Chairman for 27 years. He was involved with many organisations including the Twinning Association and was a magistrate.

As he had been resident in both Speen and Lacey Green he had a desire to bridge the "Flowers Bottom" gap between the two villages. As parish council chairman one year he was asked to open both the Speen fete and Lacey Green village day, and so felt that maybe that was a sign of partial success.

---

## *Margaret Jones* 1927 - 2021

Margaret Jones, who previously lived for 60 years in Thatched Cottage, Hampden Road - the old timber building that used to be next to Cherry Tree Close - passed peacefully away at Cherry Tree nursing home on 8th February 2021, just days after her 94th birthday.

She used to be a regular walker with her dog Teddy, and her husband David used to run the bike road safety sessions at the school.



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## Spring 2021

With the main winter period behind us my best sighting was a Stoat within my own woodland in early January. From its size I think it was a female still in its summer coat of orange fur with a black tip to the tail. Stoats are predominantly nocturnal but this midday sighting was my first in some 20 years. Other animals become more apparent in the winter as their search for food in the wild becomes more difficult. Henry Lane reported badgers looking for worms under his back lawn whilst security cameras in Archway recorded two foxes rummaging for food in one back garden. Glis glis (or Edible Dormice) remain an increasing problem as do rats which have apparently done very well during lockdown. Glis glis are classed as a Destructive Introduced Species and must not be released into the wild if trapped.

Local deer also become more apparent with Katherine Matthews and Craig Watson reporting small groups of Roe deer in North Dean numbering five and seven, respectively. These small groups are mobile and have also been recorded in Speen. Unfortunately one young female Roe deer was found dead on Ridgleys Field after one particularly cold night in mid-February. Muntjac tend to be resilient. Breeding on a seven month cycle, young can be seen at most times of the year. Miles Awdry reported a tiny fawn in his garden in late November. It remained there for several days relying on its camouflage for protection.



Similarly certain local gardens have attracted large numbers of winter birds. Ros Darnton reported 20 Redwing feeding on fallen crab apples whilst Catherine Butler reported up to 20 Siskins on their bird feeders. Further afield groups of 14-20 Crossbills have been recorded at Hampden House in November and January. Larger numbers may also be seen away from gardens with 150 Fieldfare, 40 Redwings and 40 Blackbirds noted in February in the Moses Platt orchard on 11 February.



In my own garden 5 moorhens have been present over winter including four of the young reared here last year. However the adult male bird has subsequently returned to the garden and driven the young birds from his territory and is preparing to breed with the resident female. Mallard have returned to the village in numbers and are now seeking out safe nesting sites often in gardens. In Abbotswood last year two successful nests were in vegetation right up against the walls of the houses. A new floating island has been added to the Studridge Lane pond but further work is needed here later in the year to try to improve the water level.

Much rarer birds are also about in the wider local area. Dick Seekins has reported on satellite tagged White tailed Sea Eagles as close as Princes Risborough possibly on their way back to their release site on the Isle of White. A Peregrine falcon was reported in Bryants Bottom and a Merlin was noted in Prestwood in early January. A Jack Snipe was present in Lacey Green and 6 Mandarin ducks were seen in Great Hampden. A male Sparrowhawk made a successful attack on a female Blackbird in late February right outside our kitchen window, taking the struggling bird into the hedge to pluck it before flying off.

Local frogs are now returning to the spawning ponds. One garden pond in Studridge Lane had spawn in mid February. Spawn has also been reported from shallow water filled ruts in Monkton Wood but these are likely to dry out before any tadpoles can mature. Other colder ponds may not yet have their frogs breeding yet.

Please let me know of any interesting sightings on 488016 or [psymonds590@gmail.com](mailto:psymonds590@gmail.com).





*"Ashridge is run by super people who are caring, thoughtful about needs, courteous and respectful. The two carers we have worked with are themselves delightful people who have made a huge difference to our father's life. Both are calm, warm, helpful people who do not patronise and have provided our father with excellent care and company."*

## Better at Home

Live-in home care is a real alternative to residential or nursing home care.

**T**he pandemic has had a catastrophic impact on care homes with residents and their loved ones often having to endure terrible tragedy and hardship whilst separated from each other. Unlike many countries, here in the UK, residential care homes are the go to option for caring for elderly people; there are over 400,000 people living in care homes and in comparison only a small number have opted for live in care in their own home.

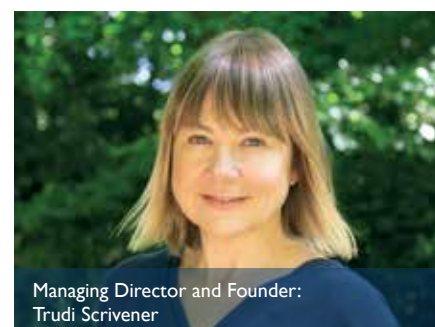
During the last year Ashridge Home Care have seen a great shift in people choosing to go down the live-in care route rather than opt to go into a care home, in fact. There is a rising feeling that perhaps the default option of putting an elderly relative in a care home is not the safest option. Live in care provides one to one care, one carer living in the client's home means much less risk of infection and is safer for both carer and client.

Ashridge Home Care, recently announced a major recruitment drive to help take care of its growing number of clients. Since April last year, Ashridge Homecare has seen a 75% increase in its client base and hired an additional 30 carers. With further growth projected for 2021 they are actively looking to hire over 100 more carers this year to join their 90 strong team.

Ashridge Home Care Founder, Managing Director and Speen resident, Trudi Scrivener, who is passionate about making sure all clients can maintain their independence and grow old with dignity. "Live in care has shown time and again that it is beneficial from both a physical and mental wellbeing perspective. It allows people to stay in the comfort of their own home, amongst their own possessions and memories, yet receive comfort, companionship and professional care as they need it."

Recently voted Best Employer in Buckinghamshire, the team at Ashridge are always looking at how they can improve the quality of life for their clients and have introduced some great new innovations, such as appointing a head chef to help mentor other carers to learn how to cook simple, nutritious meals. They even produced their own recipe book with the help of TV chef and nutritionist, Janet Brinkworth from the BBC's Saturday Kitchen! Other creative ideas include developing a 10 minute yoga routine that carers can do with clients to keep them moving and arranging for a footcare practitioner to teach basic footcare to carers via online sessions.

This innovative approach to providing the very best care has meant that the team have been able to achieve positive outcomes for their clients.



Managing Director and Founder:  
Trudi Scrivener

For more information about care options:  
Please give us a call on 01494 913447  
or visit [www.ashridgehomecare.co.uk](http://www.ashridgehomecare.co.uk)

# BEECHDEAN DOWN ON THE FARM

Gill Kent

Since selling the milking cows, life on the farm has been much more relaxed. The winter has been particularly cold and wet, but we now have enough barns to house all our cattle, making life better for the animals and for those looking after them. In April, walkers on the foot paths will notice little change except that the cattle are a different colour and none of our fields will be growing maize.



In future, instead of annual subsidies on an acreage basis, the government will be making payments for 'rewilding'. This means planting more hedges, trees and grassland and using less fertiliser. We will definitely be cutting back on the fertiliser but before planting more hedges and trees, one must consider the viability of the farm which is obviously of paramount importance.

Our biggest problem, at the moment concerns TB infected badgers which are infecting our cattle. 55 were compulsorily slaughtered last year and a further 5 taken last week.

No one wants to "eliminate" badgers but some control of infected wildlife is vital. Carrie Symonds has persuaded the government to halt all badger culls just when real progress was being made in the West

Country. She obviously doesn't think about all the hedgehogs and bumblebees which the badgers kill, not to mention all the cattle they are still infecting. Muntjac, roe and fallow deer are now all grazing our fields; when they become a real problem will Carrie prevent us from controlling them?

## SPEEN HERITAGE GROUP

Peter Symonds

### *Scooter Bus LT 1076 -Update*

The last edition of the Speen and North Dean News included an article about an old bus that had been spotted at the London transport Museum in Acton, where the display details referred to its presence in Speen prior to 1990.



A request was made to readers for further information regarding the whereabouts and history of the bus and long term Speen resident, Don White has duly obliged.

Evidently the bus was located on the south side of the village beyond the current school grounds. (Approx. grid ref 995841). It reached this site from the gate almost opposite the caravan park access. There was a second bus slightly further along, closer to the stile above Guy's Spring Wood. The second bus was in a worse condition and was apparently cannibalised for spares before being scrapped. Metal remnants of this bus may still be present to this day.



It was used as a holiday retreat from about 1955 until 1987 by a lady who was an employee of the BBC. She had access to the bus from the driveway of George Farm which was owned by Dr and Mrs Dixon at the time. They

allowed her to park her VW Beetle there and use the toilet facilities at George Farm. No services were laid on to the bus. There was some very basic furniture inside apparently and a Rubberoid roof was fitted to keep it watertight

The bus was removed from its site on 18th November 1989 and parked overnight outside the old Speen Stores. The owner of the Cryers Hill Garage, who was evidently a bus enthusiast, was involved with the transportation off to Kent, where it was restored to pristine condition and full working order prior to going on display at the Transport Museum.

Thanks to Don White for the above information.





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# KING WILLIAM IV UPDATE

We hope everyone is keeping safe and well and as we progress out of lockdown looking forward to having a pint outside or inside a local pub very soon! Lots to report since our last update, alas we have still not been able to buy our "village pub" and we are working on this harder than ever.



## KEY INSIGHTS

The Key Insights from the survey are as follows;

- With a 44% response rate the research is highly representative of the views of Speen villagers and indicated a strong level of support for the re-opening of the King William IV as a community pub.

Firstly, the moratorium on sale of the KW4, as part of the Asset of Community Value (ACV) designation for the pub expired on 3rd March. We made another offer, and this was not accepted but we are in a continued open dialogue with the owner to try and find a solution.

We have formed a Community Benefit Society (CBS). A legal entity with sole purpose of taking ownership of the pub for the benefit of the community. One of the objectives of the CBS was to consult with the community about the need for a community pub serving their needs. The results of the survey are summarised below.

Seeking support and lobbying, we have been actively engaging with the Bucks Council Localism team, the office of our MP Rob Butler and also an active community group in Ley Hill who are trying to buy The Swan. This group has a local resident, Gareth Williams who is also the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health, Buckinghamshire Council and so we have made another valuable contact and supporter. We also remain in continuous dialogue with the Plunkett Foundation who are supporting us and sharing information about similar projects and groups up and down the country.

The recent budget contained some good news regarding a new £150m Community Ownership Fund to help communities take ownership of community assets. As always there is little detail available presently, but we are seeking what information we can to see how this could help. You can read the press release from the James Alcock, CEO of Plunkett here; [plunkett.co.uk/plunkett-responds-to-150m-community-ownership-fund-announced-in-todays-budget/](https://plunkett.co.uk/plunkett-responds-to-150m-community-ownership-fund-announced-in-todays-budget/)

## CONSULTATION SURVEY

Residents of Speen over the age of 18 were invited to complete an online survey between December 10th 2020 and January 9th 2021. People in surrounding villages were also able to participate if they became aware of the survey, but the survey was not actively publicised to this group. In total 253 people completed the survey, 214 of whom were from Speen, the remainder from surrounding villages. For the Speen residents, this represents a very encouraging 44% response rate for the survey.

- The people answering the survey were regular pub attenders both for a casual drink as well as for dining and it was very clear that the closing of this village pub has adversely affected the community.

- It was interesting to note the marked uplift in people likely to attend the King William IV for a drink, compared with pre-pandemic activity, which would seem to indicate that people are more likely to frequent the pub on this basis if they have access to a pub that is within walking distance of their home.

- This also ties in with the fact that one of the key insights from this research was the need within the village for a community hub. The lack of social facilities was seen as the key limitation of living in Speen and there was extremely strong backing for the pub to act as a meeting space for community events, and community groups and to aid social inclusion.

- All the feedback gained via this survey suggests that if the pub is well run, with a good quality dining offering, it will not only be a viable business but will also offer a much needed social village hub greatly enhancing the lives of those who live in Speen and the surrounding villages.

We have shared the research with key interest groups and stakeholders, our potential investors, survey respondents, Buckinghamshire Council, Plunkett Foundation and other community groups up and down the country striving to achieve the same result in their communities.

The full Consultation Survey Report can be found to download at [www.savethekingwilliam.org](http://www.savethekingwilliam.org).

If you have any questions about the survey or any other comments please email [admin@savethekingwilliam.org](mailto:admin@savethekingwilliam.org).

That's all for now and we will keep you posted on any developments over the coming months.

*King William IV Rescue Group*





## Classic Hummus Recipe

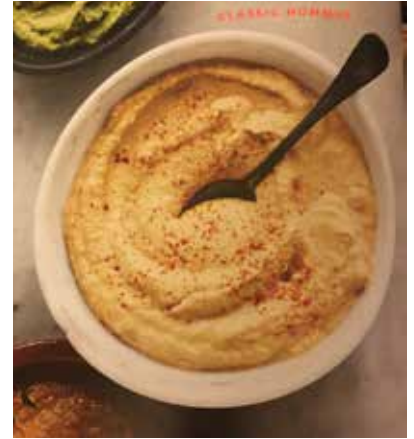
Making your own hummus is inexpensive and nutritious, with the added advantage of not buying plastic containers. If you want to create different flavours try adding beetroot, basil, coriander, sundried tomatoes or cumin for example.

Drain the chickpeas. Peel the garlic. Put all the ingredients into a food processor, whizz to a smooth paste and serve.

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*Recipe is taken from BOSH! By Henry Firth and Ian Theasby  
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1x 400g tin chickpeas  
2 small garlic cloves  
2 tbsp tahini  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp salt  
4tbsp water  
2  $\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp lemon juice  
2 tbsp olive oil



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## SEAG: Village Pond Tidy Up

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*Elsie Rogers (8) in association with SEAG*

Studridge Pond is important for our village as it can support a large range of British wildlife, but unfortunately it had become overgrown and ducks or frogs are no longer living there. With help from lots of volunteers, we planned to carry out a big tidy up before Christmas, but had to delay this when the water levels rose too high due to a water leak and lots of rain.



during winter so we didn't interrupt the breeding cycles of frogs, ducks and insects that we hope will return this year. Please stop by and take a look next time you are passing and for those of you wishing to have a closer look, Daisy Regan and I have created a pond "spotters sheet" which is free to collect from the village shop. SEAG would love to hear of any interesting sightings!

With another lockdown in January we had to change our plans with a smaller, socially-distanced clear up before the weather got too cold, and I hope you will agree it looks much better now. We have even seen a pair of ducks visiting and really hope that they will stay. We are very grateful to Peter Symonds who led the clear up, and has also built a duck platform with the help of Duncan Wilson (thank you!). Peter explained that it was important to do this work

*Note: Studridge Pond is the responsibility of the local parish council. SEAG approached them to request permission for this tidy up, and this was authorised by the council. We hope everyone will enjoy seeing more productive ecosystems in and around the pond this year, and that the tidy up will become an annual event to maintain rich biodiversity.*

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## In Praise of Ponds

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*Di Rainbow*

Our small two-year-old pond is quite the most exciting feature of the garden. Throughout the year it is always interesting; birds visit to drink, bathe and squabble - though I did once see a pigeon and a magpie splashing happily together.

In early Spring, frog spawn appears overnight, tadpoles emerge some three weeks later, at the same time as the magnificent yellow Marsh Marigolds. Soon after, the first iridescent red or blue Dragonflies and Damselflies arrive and can still be seen darting about as late as October. Throughout the Summer, plant life is abundant; there are reeds and rushes of all sorts, together with the flowering waterlilies, purple loosestrife, water forget-me-nots, and so much more. Strange beetles and exotic snails can be seen underwater while water boatmen skim the surface.

## *Committee Update*

It is now over a year since we held our first public meeting and despite the pandemic and restrictions, we have continued to meet virtually and work at those aspects of environmental concern that the people at our general meeting highlighted. We have supported many environmental petitions nationwide and shared these with our mailing list to encourage government to put Climate Change at the top of their agenda.

Our Veg Patch Pals initiative will be up and running again this year and sharing not only seeds and equipment but also advice and knowhow (*contact Monica Dent 07511733199*). Our wildflower meadow at Ridgley's Field will be blooming soon, all being well, and we encourage everyone to take part in the No Mow May campaign to support pollinators in our gardens. Over the Spring and Summer look out for our campaign to help us all reduce our carbon emissions at home and as we travel around. Check out your own Carbon footprint on the WWF website - <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>

SEAG is affiliated to Bucks Climate Action Alliance. Please access the website; [bucksclimateactionalliance.org](https://bucksclimateactionalliance.org). Here you can see a considered response to this strategy and the work of a wide variety of groups around Buckinghamshire.

Any comments, thoughts and ideas or to join our mailing list please email [seag@btinternet.com](mailto:seag@btinternet.com).

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## *Pond-ering a garden project?*

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*By Jamie Harland, Wildlife gardener and Jeni Fairey (SEAG)*

It is widely accepted by conservationists that the single most effective thing you can do for wildlife in your garden is to install a pond. Below is a list of good reasons to have your own:

- They draw in a huge variety of wildlife: amphibians, small mammals and birds, many of which are predators for greenfly, slugs and snails.
- They are a wonderful way to teach children about all manner of scientific and biological processes, allowing them to observe nature at close quarters.
- They add another aesthetic level and focal point to the garden, reflecting their surroundings, ever changing throughout the day.
- They are a small part of the solution to flood mitigation, taking overflow from water drainage and also water conservation- you can soak your newly planted pots in the pond and fill your watering can rather than wasting precious tap water.

- They open up a whole new selection of plants for the keen gardener.
- As shown in the Japanese garden-style they can be used as a source of tranquillity and relaxation.

A small pond is easy and inexpensive to create, requiring little more than a sheet of pond lining, a preformed pond, or even a container such as an old sink or wooden barrel (making sure that there is a way for smaller creatures to access the water). A successful wildlife pond needs very little space, but it is important to create it with sloping edges; this is because most aquatic wildlife actually lives in the shallower water. The centre of the pond should be at least 50cm deep to help maintain a steady temperature during the summer months and create a refuge during winter freezes. Once a pond is in place, it doesn't take long for all manner of life to find it!





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# CHANGING TO A GREEN ENERGY SUPPLIER

Tom Dent, SEAG

**Summary:** The greenest providers include Ecotricity and Good Energy, but they are relatively expensive.

Outfox the Market, Octopus Energy and Avro Energy are cheaper suppliers of 100% renewable power but, some say, less environmentally attractive.

If the UK is to hit its climate goals, we need to increase the use of renewable electricity, both to reduce dependence on gas-fired power stations and to replace the output of the nuclear stations due to retire before 2030. This is where we can all help.

The UK electricity market is made up of generators who produce the power, suppliers who sell it to consumers and consumers who use it. They are joined together by the National Grid, so the electricity that you use always comes from a mixture of generation methods. But consumers can switch suppliers and tariffs, increase demand for renewable power and help tilt the market in a sustainable direction. Switching is easy and often saves you money.

**What tariff should you choose?** There are three types to consider, using a home-grown typology:

- **Bright green:** A few suppliers generate their own renewable electricity and others buy it directly from renewable generators. This is the greenest approach, because it provides the most support to the renewables industry. Increased consumer demand for bright green power is most likely to mean more new wind and solar farms are built. *Examples of bright green suppliers are Ecotricity and Good Energy.*
- **Paler green:** This is a bit complicated, so bear with me. When a megawatt of renewable electricity is generated, the generator is issued with a renewable energy guarantee of origin (REGO) certificate - like a birth certificate for a chunk of green power. *Examples of paler green suppliers at the top of Which's rankings are Outfox the Market, Octopus Energy and Avro Energy.*

Bright green suppliers buy the certificate with the electricity from the supplier. However, the generator is allowed to detach the REGO from the power and sell it separately. Paler green suppliers buy their electricity from renewable and non-renewable sources but then procure enough REGOs to cover the non-renewable power. They are then allowed to sell all the power as renewable.

- **Brown:** Brown suppliers buy power mostly without REGOs and mostly from non-renewable sources.

**How green is green enough?** Paler green suppliers point out that by paying for REGOs, they stimulate demand for them and reward generators who sell them. Bright green suppliers call this green-washing; they claim that the reward effect is trivial because there is such an excess

of REGOs. The price of REGOs has tripled since 2017 but is still only about £1.50 for the electricity consumed by an average household each year. REGOs are so cheap because the amount of renewable electricity generated – a third of the total in the UK now, mostly offshore wind – vastly exceeds demand for certified renewable power. This supports the separation of the REGOs from the power, which is sold to suppliers or industrial consumers who don't want the REGOs.

**What about price?** Bright green electricity can be more expensive. Ecotricity and Good Energy are exempt from the regulator Ofgem's price cap because their higher prices are directly due to the support they give to expanding the generation of renewable electricity. Some paler green tariffs are among the cheapest on the market.

## So what should I do?

- Reduce your electricity consumption. Even bright green electricity generation causes carbon dioxide release – think of the manufacturing and construction of an offshore wind turbine.
- If you want to give maximum support to renewable generation, even if it costs you more, select a bright green supplier such as Ecotricity or Good Power.
- If you can't afford this or just want to know there was renewable generation to cover your consumption, choose a paler green one such as Outfox the Market, Octopus Energy and Avro Energy. You could spend the money you save in other ways, such as buying an electric car, offsetting or planting trees in your garden. You could install solar panels on your roof or invest in companies which build and operate solar and wind farms.
- Please consider moving off a brown tariff. People on brown tariffs are doing nothing to protect others from the effects of global heating. People who never shop around for electricity usually pay more than those who do. So use a price comparison website to reduce costs and make your electricity greener.

If you would like help moving to a greener electricity tariff, please email us ([seag@btinternet.com](mailto:seag@btinternet.com)).

- Remember it's not just greenness and price that matter. Customer service and the accuracy and clarity of bills vary between suppliers.

## Useful websites

[which.co.uk/news/2019/09/how-green-is-your-energy-tariff](http://which.co.uk/news/2019/09/how-green-is-your-energy-tariff)

This webpage includes information on the greenness of various providers, but is several years out-of-date.

[goodenergy.co.uk/greenwash](http://goodenergy.co.uk/greenwash)

[switch.which.co.uk/energy-suppliers/energy-companies-rated.html](http://switch.which.co.uk/energy-suppliers/energy-companies-rated.html)

[energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk)





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## *Arrears of Pay and War Gratuities*

WW1 ended in 1918. In 1919 the Government awarded a War Gratuity to all those, living or dead, who had given at least 6 months' continuous military service from 4th August 1914, the day that war was declared.

**Harry Dean** had nominated his father, Samuel J Dean, as his next of kin. Harry died, horribly, of gas poisoning, in May 1915. In September, his father – who by then was living in Speen – was sent a Money Order for Harry's arrears of pay of £26.0s.11d. As all rates of Army pay were expressed in £s and shillings, charges ending in 1d must have been deducted. Even allowing for the fact that Harry was a Cpl in a cavalry regiment – who was paid more than a Cpl in the Infantry – that is a huge amount of money. At Harry's rate of 2/= a day, £26 is 260 days' pay. How is that possible?

We know from the Regimental History that the 18th Hussars were taken out of the line, exhausted, in November 1914 and, whilst their losses of men and horses were being made good, small numbers of men at a time were granted 72 hours' Leave in England. They would have been paid something then, probably a round sum, in pounds, rather than an exactly calculated amount. Thereafter, being highly mobile, they were sent to fill gaps in the front line, here there and everywhere, in the ferocious fighting around Ypres. Evidently - for the next six months - there was no time to hold a formal pay parade ( the way that soldiers were paid in those days ) and no opportunity, in the trenches, to spend any cash anyway. In May 1919, his father was sent Harry's War Gratuity of £5. That seems very little, but it is correct.

The Army found it difficult to calculate what **Harry Saunders'** next of kin should receive. As his body was never found, he was first declared "missing", and then "presumed dead; between 21 and 23 March 1918". Two money orders were sent to his "widow" Elsie: one on 3 May 20; another on 25 May 20, totalling £12.13.5d. Clearly, some charges had been deducted from his arrears of pay. A War Gratuity of £10 was Included in that figure. That was correct: he was a Cpl; he died overseas;



he had given 20 months' service. Harry had nominated George, his father, as his next of kin; George was no longer living with Harry's mother, Sarah. Presumably Elsie was George's widow. She was not Harry's.

**Frank Randall** died with Harry Saunders. His body was never found, but eye-witnesses confirmed that he was killed on 23 Mar 18.

Much later, on 18 Sep 19, his father Owen Randall, was sent £9.1.1 being arrears of pay (minus charges) of £2.1.1 but including a War Gratuity of £7 indicating that Frank had given 16 months' service.

In 1917, two of the 3 Gibbons boys were killed within four months of each other. Neither had lasted long. **William Gibbons** died on 28 Feb 17; his body was never found. His father, George, was sent his arrears of pay of £6.9.0d on 9th June 1917. (Sidney, his elder brother, died the same day.) On 15 Oct 19, George was sent William's War Gratuity of £3, for at least 6 but no more than 12 months' service. **Sidney Gibbons'** widow, Sarah, who was living in Speen, received £1.18.3d; his arrears of pay, minus deductions. On 14 Nov 19 she was sent his War Gratuity of £3.10/- for his 13 months' service.

**Norman Simmonds** died on 4 Oct 17. Sorting out his pay was not done well. On 14 Jan 18 his father was sent his arrears of pay, minus deductions, which left £5.11.3d. Another 3/6d was sent on 26 Feb 18. On 10 Nov 19 – when, as Pastor of the Speen Chapel, he had erected the lychgate memorial - his father was sent a substantial War Gratuity of £8.10/= representing his son's 21 months' service.

**John Rixon's** mother had borne 13 children, one had died, he was the 10th. He was killed, in the Dolomites, on 26 Aug 18 but it was not until July 1920 that his sister, Daisy – who was the 9th child – received his arrears of pay (less charges) of £6.4.11d and his huge War Gratuity of £22.10s. The family must have been amazed, but that calculation was correct; John was a Cpl; he died, overseas, in August 1918; he had enlisted, as a volunteer, in November 1914 so he had given nearly 4 years' service.



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North Dean Village Hall - Chair	Dick Pooley	01494 269615 North
Dean Village Hall - Bookings	Jeremy Mudie	07880 785983
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• 130ml Beechdean Farmhouse 'Spoon in Lid' Tubs •  
Vanilla, Double Chocolate, Strawberry, Salted Caramel, Mint Choc Chip,  
Honey & Ginger and Lemon Sorbet

**Special Offers Available in-store!**

- 1 Litre Beechdean Farmhouse Tubs •
- 2 Litre Beechdean Farmhouse Vanilla Tubs •

**Hughenden Village Store and Coffee Shop**  
Coombe Lane, Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe HP14 4NX

 @HughendenValleyShop1



    
@BeechdeanGroup



**Opening Hours: Monday to Friday : 7.30am – 6pm, Saturday : 8am – 4pm, Sunday : 8am – 3pm**



A photograph of a garden path leading through a rose archway. The path is made of light-colored gravel and is bordered by a low, neatly trimmed green hedge on the left. The archway is covered in dense foliage and numerous red and white roses. In the background, a white building with a glass door is visible through the trees.

# Homes of Distinction

If you are looking for a very special property or have one that would benefit from our award winning marketing then we are ready to act on your behalf.

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