

DECEMBER
2024



First the waiting and then the reward!

I do not know how patient you are, but December for most Christians is a time of waiting in eager anticipation for the 25th of December when we celebrate the birth of Jesus into the world as 'Emmanuel' - which literally means 'God is with us'. We call that special time of waiting "Advent" which means the arrival (or anticipated arrival) of someone or something special, but most of us probably associate it with Advent Calendars, with which we count down to that all important day and enjoy perhaps, one of the sweets or chocolates hidden behind each of the windows which mark the twenty-four days leading up to Christmas. I have always found it strange however, that our Advent Calendars contain such calorific delights, as the origins of Advent lie in the 'fast' - or period of self-denial which Christians used to observe in December to prepare themselves spiritually, mentally, and physically for the arrival of Emmanuel - God made manifest in the person whose birth in Bethlehem we celebrate at Christmas.

Advent, or in other words, the whole of December was a time of delayed gratification when like Lent which precedes Easter, people gave something up so that they could appreciate more the feast of our Lord's birth when it finally came. Today however, there is very little difference between Christmas and Advent, as the pressure to buy more and more begins earlier each year, and the pubs and restaurants start to fill up with revellers and work-parties from late November onwards. It has, in many respects, ceased to be a time of prayer and fasting, and has become instead, a forerunner of the holiday marked by lavish spending and early celebrations to such an extent that many of us are tired of our Christmas trees long before Twelfth Night; and we find ourselves desperately searching the empty shelves for a box of Roses on Christmas Eve to replace the one we bought back in October which has long since been eaten.

The anticipation of Christmas is of course an exciting time, and it is not surprising that we try to spread the joy earlier and earlier when the nights are drawing in, the news on our television sets becomes ever more distressing, and we feel powerless to do anything about it. Christmas offers us a temporary escape from the rigours and realities of daily life, and genuinely makes us feel happier, but when the tree-lights are packed away and the discarded wrapping paper bulges from our recycling bins, a surfeit of Christmas escapism can make the harsh realities of January, and our burgeoning credit card bills much harder to bear.

There is however, another way to experience the true joy of the season, and that joy can be found in the one for whom people of faith watch and wait in quiet hope and eager expectation throughout the dark days of December until that day when we celebrate the true Joy which came into the world, bearing the light and life of Christ in a world which sometimes I feel, needs him more now than ever.

Revd Steve O'Connor

There is no Focus in January. February issue out around 31 January.
Advertising and copy deadline for next issue : 15 January 2025.
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Church Times

All services at 11.00 unless stated otherwise.

Dr Stephen O'Connor
 rector@winslowbenefice.org.uk
 www.winslowbenefice.org.uk

Church Wardens:
 Ian Lamberton 715968
 Carolyn Bayliss 715814

December

- 1st **Holy Communion** - First Sunday in Advent
 8th **Come and Praise** - Second Sunday in Advent
 15th **Creative Communion** - Third Sunday in Advent
 22nd **Holy Communion** - Fourth Sunday in Advent
NINE LESSONS and CAROLS at 18.00
 24th **NATIVITY and CHRISTINGLE at 16.30** - Christmas Eve
Benefice MIDNIGHT MASS at St Laurence Church Winslow at 23.00
 25th **Holy Communion at 11.00** - Christmas Day
 29th **Benefice Holy Communion at St Laurence Church Winslow at 09.30**

January

- 5th **Holy Communion** - a traditional communion service with hymns (1 hour)
 12th **Come and Praise** - a more informal service the live instrumental music to enhance our worship (45 minutes)
 19th **Creative Communion** - an informal communion service
 26th **Holy Communion** - as above

CHURCH KEY: David Moore - 713281 (December) Ian Lamberton - 715968 (January)

Nativity and Christingle

We look forward seeing the church full of village families once again for this moving service as we build up the excitement towards the big day!

Our scratch (unrehearsed!) Nativity welcomes any children who would like to join in.

Come as a shepherd, king, angel or animal if you have a costume, otherwise we will have a few available.

The collection will be split between Great Horwood School and The Children's Society.

Christmas Preparations at St James'

On Friday 20th between 3pm and 6pm we will be cleaning and decorating the church for Christmas. All those with either polishing or creative skills, or both, are very welcome to join us and will be rewarded with festive refreshments!

GREAT HORWOOD AND SINGLEBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL

We are beginning to see an uptake in bookings in the Hall for Children's parties which is encouraging as it is a sign of more community involvement which is what the Village Hall exists for. As Christmas approaches, we are looking forward to seeing how the new interior will look with the addition of decorations! It is an ideal location for family gatherings and we have one family returning for a second party already!

On behalf of the Hall Committee, we wish all our current and future hirers a very enjoyable Christmas and good New Year.

Ian Lamberton

Chairman and Bookings co-ordinator

07973 225428, ianlamberton@aol.com

THANK YOU TO OUR DELIVERERS

The Focus team would like to so say thank you and wish a Happy Christmas to all the volunteer deliverers that make sure you receive your copy of Focus.

GREAT HORWOOD & SINGLEBOROUGH WI

Winter months can feel particularly isolated for those living alone, but in Great Horwood and Singleborough this needn't be the case. The WI, which meets in the Village Hall in Great Horwood every second Tuesday of the month starting at 7.00pm, offers friendship and support. Our members enjoy a year long calendar of events all from your village doorstep.

Plans for our 2025 programme of events are now well underway. As well as our monthly meetings with a varied programme of interesting speakers, we organise visits to places of interest, practical craft days and theatre outings. We also enjoy weekly walks on a Monday and Wednesday exploring the beautiful north Buckinghamshire countryside.

If you'd like to join our friendly group or would like more information, please contact Ann Biggins - annieqqmk@gmail.com / 07961 960802

CHURCH TOWER LIGHTING

The Tower was lit on the 14th of November to mark living without Mary Mallett for 30 years from Kath, Liz and Berdie.

Focus is your voice to whole of Great Horwood and Singleborough.

Let everyone know what's happening at your about your club, society or event - even people not on social media!
editor@ghfocus.com

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GREAT HORWOOD CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

Dear Focus readers,

RE: Consultation to make a significant change to a characteristic at Great Horwood Church of England School

Following discussion, trustees of the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST) as the admission authority for the school, and the local governing body (LGB) are consulting to make a significant change to an open academy characteristic at Great Horwood Church of England School. In line with the DFE guidance 'Making significant changes to an open academy' October 2024 we are proposing to lower the age range for our nursery pupils from three years old to two years old.

Consultation

The trustees from ODBST and governors at Great Horwood School are consulting with the following stakeholders:

- Buckinghamshire Council
- The Trustees for Great Horwood School
- Oxford Diocese Board of Education
- Parents of the children who attend Great Horwood Church of England School

- Primary, secondary and special schools in the area
- Parents and other people in the local area

This consultation will run for 4 weeks from **Monday 18 November 2024 until Monday 16 December 2024.**

Further information about the proposal can be found on the school website: Nursery Consultation November 2024 | Great Horwood Church of England School.

Comments

If you wish to make any comments regarding the consultation and proposal, please send them to this email address office@ghw.odbst.org marked for the attention of the Headteacher, Paula Shaw.

Responses to be received at the latest by **12.00pm on Monday 16th December 2024.**

Thank you for taking the time to read the information and respond positively to the proposal. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Paula Shaw

Headteacher

GREAT HORWOOD SILVER BAND

Another Christmas is fast approaching and after playing at numerous events over the summer, including our Concerts on the Green that we will hopefully repeating in 2025 and more recently taking part in the Winslow Remembrance Parade and Remembrance service in Preston Bissett, the Band's sights turn towards our busy

Christmas period.

By the time the Focus is printed, we will have already taken part in at least 3 Christmas events including the light switch on in Buckingham and Tingewick.

A full list of our Christmas engagements is below, with our free annual Christmas concert in Great Horwood Village Hall on the 8th of December at 3.30pm. We will be holding a raffle, and refreshments will be available with all proceeds being donated to the British Heart Foundation and Parkinsons UK. Please come along to support

these fantastic causes and enjoy an afternoon of festive music to get you in the Christmas mood. There may also be some audience participation required.

Our traditional Christmas Eve carol playing around Great Horwood is also happening again this year and if anyone is available to help us with collecting money on the 24th of December, please contact the Band. Any help for any length of time is very much appreciated from our start time of 4pm until we finish.

The other tradition of playing to wake you on Christmas morning is also on our calendar and we know that there are many villagers that look forward to hearing the Band to start their Christmas celebrations.

The Band are always looking to attract new members and if you would like to join us please contact us for details. We welcome players of any age or ability,

offering free tuition and the use of an instrument. We rehearse on a Wednesday evening, our training band playing from 6.30pm until 7.00pm and then the Main Band from 7.15pm until 9.00pm.

Please contact us by:

Email: ghsbsecretary@gmail.com

Website: greathorwoodband.com

Or through our Facebook page

Upcoming engagements:

Saturday 7th December – Manor Farm Festive Market, Buckingham 10.00am until 2.00pm

Sunday 8th December – Annual Christmas Concert Great Horwood Village Hall 3.30pm start

Friday 13th December – Carols on the Green Little Horwood 6.30pm to be confirmed

Saturday 14th December – Carols at Watermead Aylesbury 6.00pm start

Thursday 19th December – Carols around the tree Adstock

Friday 20th December – Carols at Slapton – Slapton

Saturday 21st December – Manor Farm Festive Market, Buckingham 10.00am until 2.00pm

Monday 23rd December – Carols at Clarendon House Care Home Buckingham 6.00pm until 7.00pm

Tuesday 24th December – Carols around Great Horwood 4.00pm start Townsend Great Horwood

Wednesday 25th December – Carols around Great Horwood

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BREAKING NEWS FROM NOOK PARK

Hot off the press today (15th November) we had an email from Bucks Council saying that Joe Burns Manager Bob Tester has been refused the Fit and Proper Person Status. This was after Joe Burns was refused by both Bucks Council and the First Tier Property Tribunal. So, this causes a problem for Joe Burns as we understand it is a criminal offence to run a park without someone with this status. If they appeal again well that will be yet another tribunal.

Did you Know!

The big topic around the country now is the 10% commission that goes to the Site Owner when a Park Home is sold. What this means is that when a park home is sold 10% of the purchase price goes straight into park owners bank account for doing nothing. When you think that some park homes can be sold up to as much as £500k well that would be £50,000 straight to park owner, in our case Joe Burns. You can't get a mortgage to buy these homes as they must be your main address and yes, we pay council tax, our pitch fees plus all our normal bills. This then is your hard-earned cash and less inheritance for your family. Now that's where it hurts.

I'll go more into park homes in the next Focus.

It just leaves me to say have a Wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year from us all on Nook Park.

Liz Phillips

CASTLEFIELD'S (POOR'S ALLOTMENT) VILLAGE CHARITY

Each year, just before Christmas, this long standing and traditional Great Horwood village charity distribute a small cash sum to village residents who have reached state retirement age and who have requested to be included on the distribution list.

In order to ensure that we do not overlook anybody, please let me know if you have reached state retirement age and wish to be included, or if you know of somebody who qualifies but has not previously been included and now wishes to be added to the distribution list.

If you have previously received a payment but now feel that it is not appropriate for you to continue to benefit from this charity, then please also contact me to arrange for your name to be removed from the list.

Please contact me by email to clerk@greathorwoodpc.org.uk or telephone 01296 715803 (please leave a message) by 7th December 2024.

Sarah Biswell - Charity Correspondent

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WINSLOW AND DISTRICT ART SOCIETY

By the time you read this we will have held our Art Exhibition which we very much hope you enjoyed. We had a craft stall, different types of media paintings, beautiful greetings cards, fun-filled children's corner, raffles, delicious refreshments and much more.

Of course, we continue to enjoy our Tuesday art mornings at Padbury Village Hall and our Thursday mornings in Winslow Bowls Club both from 10am to 1pm.

If you would like to join us why not give us "a try", you would be very welcome. We very much welcome new members, it's great to chat and support each other.

Those of you who attended a recent workshop led by Jan Munroe felt very fortunate to learn how to make better use of our acrylic paints, favourite collage pieces, stencils etc. which was fascinating and very satisfying and resulted in some beautiful pictures.

Then at the end of October we were very lucky to enjoy a demonstration evening by Anne Blankson-Hemans. Watching her achieve a beautiful vibrant picture with the use of oils and an under-painting of acrylic was both informative and inspirational.

Please consider joining us for these monthly demonstrations at 7pm at the Winslow Bowls Club. Cost of admission is only £5 which includes light refreshments.

I have included the dates of the next few events below.

Evening Demonstrations.

Thursday 30 January

Jan Gaska Topic and medium T.B.C

Thursday 27th February

Jo Harris Topic and Medium TBC

Thursday 27th March

Susan Gray Acrylics for landscapes/seascapes

Chair : Cheryl Wilyman 01296 640755

Treasurer : Jackie Chambers 01296 713607

Secretary : Monica Gilbey 01296 711915



Shaun Guard
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Aylesbury Market Bus - runs every Friday and Saturday morning -- from Winslow, through Gt Horwood, Little Horwood, Mursley and Swanbourne, arriving in Aylesbury just after 10am and departing 12.15pm. FREE with a bus pass, otherwise only £4.50 return. Drop offs at Sainsburys and Broadfields on request.

Winslow Market Service 54abc - runs every Wednesday morning.

This service picks up in the surrounding villages and then into Winslow, (Swanbourne, Mursley, Great Horwood, Whaddon, Nash and The Claydons). Pick up times vary according to village. Bus passes accepted, otherwise £3.00 return.

Buckingham Bus Service - Picking up in Winslow and surrounding villages. 1 hour in town then 1 hour in Tesco, or 2 hours in Tesco. Door to door service. Bus passes accepted, otherwise £4.50 return.

Tuesday 3rd December

Tuesday 7th January 2025

Westcroft Shopping - Picking up in surrounding villages. Morrisons, Boots, Aldi, etc. Bus passes accepted, otherwise, £4.50 return. Ring to book.

Thursday 12th December,

Thursday 9th January 2025

Thursday 23rd January 2025

Asda - Bus passes are not accepted on this trip and will cost £5.00. Picking up in Winslow and surrounding villages Asda Shopping with the option to drop at Stadium MK1 for M&S, Primark, Next and more. Drop off at Westcroft on request.

Monday 23rd December

Monday 27th January 2025

Please contact the WDCB Coordinator for more details.

Timetables can be found online www.winslowbus.com

On notice boards outside the Town Council offices,

Winslow Library or calling the

WDCB Co-Ordinator 07483 336440

Timetables can be found online
www.winslowbus.com

PARISH PUMP

NEW COUNCILLOR

I am pleased to report that Mr Zain Daniels was co-opted in at the November 2024 meeting to be a Parish Councillor with immediate effect. The Parish Council look forward to working with him. If you think you might be interested in volunteering to serve your local community in this way please get in touch..



Great Horwood
Parish Council

WELCOME PACK

If you are new to the village and have not yet received a Welcome Pack please email as shown below with your address and I will drop one off to you.

PICNIC BENCHES IN CHERRY LEAS

The Parish Council have received a couple of suggestions for utilising the Open Space in Cherry Leas with picnic benches for everyone to use - this has now been approved by Councillors at the November meeting, and these will be purchased and installed in the coming weeks.

FUNDS FOR LOCAL CAUSES

Following the Parish Council meeting on the 11th November 2024, it was approved by the Parish Council to award a Worthy Causes Grant to the following Great Horwood organisations - Football Club, Cricket Club, CofE School, Scouts, Rainbows/Brownies, the Silver Band, Winslow and District Community Bus and the Arts and Crafts Club - Congratulations to you all - presentation of the award and the Certificates will take place at the next Parish Council meeting on 9th December 2024.

FIX MY STREET



Just a reminder to everyone that "FixMyStreet" is an online facility where anyone can make a public report for things like graffiti, fly tipping, broken pavings slabs, and potholes that they see in the Village. This information gets passed to Buckinghamshire Council for them to action. The website address is: <https://www.fixmystreet.com>

FOCUS ONLINE

Did you know that there is an online edition of Focus with every copy from February 2012?

So, if you have mislaid your copy and can't find the information you need, just log onto

<https://e-voice.org.uk/ghpc/focus-magazine/>

NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The next meeting will be held on Monday 9th December 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

There is always a public participation period when members of the public can have their say - please feel free to attend. The Notice of the meeting is advertised on the Parish Council website and the noticeboard in the High Street. Minutes of meetings can be found on the noticeboard and the Parish Council website.

Cllr. John Gilbey : Chairman of the Council
johnwgilbey@gmail.com



Great Horwood Parish Council would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Great Horwood
Parish Council

GREAT HORWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

Useful contact details

Members of the Parish Council:

Please note that councillors now have a dedicated Parish Council email address. This is in order to comply with UK Data Protection Regulations 2018. From 1 January 2021 this is now referred to as the UK GDPR. It is good policy to keep council emails separate from private emails.

John Gilbey	Chairman	01296 711915	johnwgilbey@gmail.com
Caroline Cousin	Vice Chairman	07903 549339	carolinecousinghpc@gmail.com
Jackie Goss		01296 713135	jackiegossghpc@gmail.com
Jonathan Evans		07470 298324	jjevans.ghpc@gmail.com
Thomas Lee		07901 944996	tlee.ghpc@gmail.com
Zain Daniels		07544 595906	zaindanielsghpc@gmail.com
Clerk to the Council			
Mrs. Sarah Biswell		01296 715803	clerk@greathorwoodpc.org.uk
Parish Council Website			www.e-voice.org.uk/ghpc/
Great Horwood Village Hall Bookings		01296 715968	
Winslow and District Community Bus		01296 715786	
Community Police Officers			
PCSO Andy Piotrowski		Tel: 101	Andrew.Piotrowski@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

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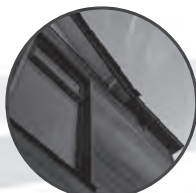
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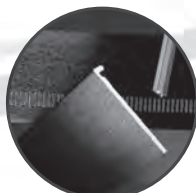
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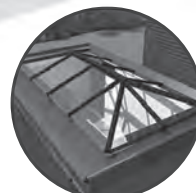
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Come and join us for our traditional Nine Lessons and Carols Service at 6pm on Sunday the 22nd of December.

Hear the promise of God's coming and welcome Emmanuel (God with us) with your favourite carols!

Followed by some seasonal refreshment.

6pm at St James' Church Great Horwood.



O come all ye faithful...

To our candlelit Nativity Service

with Christingles at

4.30 pm in St James Church,

Great Horwood.

Experience the wonder of the Christmas story, take part in our scratch nativity play, join in with your favourite carols, and collect your Christingle as we celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve