

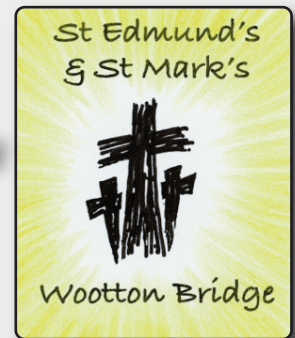
DECEMBER '25 & JANUARY '26

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THE CHURCH PARISH MAGAZINE OF WOOTTON

The Bridge

Building Bridges in the Community



SURPRISE, SURPRISE

For most of us, surprises are an essential part of Christmas. But Christmas itself is not a surprise. It dutifully comes round on December 25th each year, though that date is part of a calendar that did not exist until long after the event that the festive season commemorates. And of course we don't know the actual date of Jesus' birth; the early Church simply decided that the midwinter festival which humankind had celebrated for thousands of years was a good time to mark the moment when our Saviour came among us.

Christmas may not come as a surprise to us now, but the events surrounding Jesus' birth came as a whole series of surprises, not all of them pleasant, to the people caught up in them. King Herod had a particularly bad day at the office when the Wise Men turned up and told him that there was a new King in town, and he responded as vicious despots have acted down the ages and to this day, with horrifying violence. Contrast that with Mary's response when the angel tells her that her life will be turned upside down; she simply accepts the news as the will of God and readily accepts the call to be the mother of Jesus. It comes as a surprise when we realise that the story of Jesus' birth is not cosy or comfortable, but tough and challenging. For those of us brought up with Christmas carols and the traditional Bible readings, 'the story' itself is a bit of a surprise. You might expect that the Gospel writers would make a big deal of Jesus' birth, but Mark and John don't actually mention it at all. Although we can see the story as a single, coherent narrative, the incidents that are in Matthew are mostly not in Luke and vice versa. Matthew has the Wise Men and King Herod, while Luke has the shepherds, the angels and the manger. But the names of Jesus and his parents, the places (Bethlehem and Nazareth) and the Virgin Birth are mentioned in both Gospels. No specific animals appear in either account.

Of course, none of these surprises undermine our traditional view of Christmas as God made human bringing the Salvation to come, as a time of light in the darkest part of the year, and as a moment when families and friends can renew their belonging to each other. We wish you many joyous surprises this Christmas, and every blessing for the New Year.

David Bennison 

For December '25 & January '26 services, please see Page 3



'Every Child Can Achieve Success'

I often share how proud I am to be the Headteacher at Wootton and this continues to be the case. The children at Wootton continue to amaze us with their progress and attainment in the classroom as well as our extra-curricular activities. This term in particular has been a significant highlight for our girls football team.



*Mrs Jane Wilford
Headteacher*

Girls football has a greater prominence across the world now following the incredible success from womens football over the last few years. We have seen this so much in school and we are so proud that our inclusivity and engagement reflects our school mission statement 'Every child can achieve success.' Several girls on the team openly share how they find some classroom work tricky, yet give them a football and a pitch and they are outstanding!

Mr Billington has worked hard with the girls and has achieved an incredible result with us ending the 3rd top school for girl's football. The girls played a series of games in the Pokémon Cup, this being a National competition, playing against all sizes of schools. Quite frankly the team are superstars! Reaching the Island finals day of the Pokémon Cup was already better than any U11 side team has done before at Wootton, but to reach the semi-finals was incredible!

They travelled to Cowes Enterprise College and played on their 3G pitch under floodlights against Greenmount and Hunnyhill in the group stage of the competition. Their first game against Hunnyhill was

end-to-end with neither team really dominating. It made an exciting, but nervous watch. The girls started the game positively and with energy, which is not always easy. Especially against a side, that has already played their first match of the afternoon. It was perhaps fitting that it ended 0-0.



Wootton Primary U11's Girls Football Team

Against Greenmount, Wootton had to avoid defeat and score at least one goal to progress to the semi-final. It was another close game. Greenmount did manage to score and it meant the girls had to find a way of scoring to have any chance of progressing. In the dying minutes of the game, they managed to squeeze a shot past the keeper and it just crossed the line! A dramatic way of keeping the team in the competition. Both sides could have snatched a winner, but in the end, the game finished 1-1.

The semi-final was against Carisbrooke. They were a very good team and the girls found it tough to get a foothold in the match. Carisbrooke regularly threatened and ended up winning. Despite it being tough, it was great to hear the encouragement the girls gave to one another. They never gave up and tried right until the end.

Reaching the semi-final ranks them as the joint 3rd best U11 girls' team on the island currently, out of the 39 schools that could have entered. It is a huge achievement and the girls should be incredibly proud. Interestingly, across the Island, only 25 schools entered the girl's tournament compared to 32 boy's teams, let's hope that gap continues to narrow and we build on the success for girls in the world of sport!

Along with the fantastic children at Wootton, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to sharing many more exciting successes in 2026!



For Your Diary ... What's On Extra ...

(see more events on Page 5)

What's On at The Old School Centre

Supporting community wellbeing, please let us know if you are a community group or activity looking for a quality venue to hire! Christmas Wreath Making - Join us on November 29th 2025, time TBC, suggested minimum donation (to help cover costs) Buzzy-Bean Cafe Tuesdays & Thursdays 11am - 3pm Crafty Cafe Tuesdays 10am - 12pm £3 all material inc. Move & Stretch Thursdays 11am - 12pm free/donations Supermarket Surplus Food Project Thursdays from 1:15pm. Tel: 01983 882820 Email: hello@theoldschoolcentre.org

Ali's Fitness Fusion

Thursdays at Wootton Bridge Community Centre - 5.30pm is Rockbox Fitness (A stress busting, therapy session. Punch, kick, and smash sticks to classic and modern rock tunes, 6.30pm is Fitsteps (Strictly Inspired Dance Fitness Class). Classes also at Binstead Community Centre on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Contact ali_ontheisland@yahoo.co.uk or www.alisfitnessfusioniow.com

Christmas Wreath Workshop Church Close Community Centre, Wootton. 2nd December 6 – 6.30pm start £30pp (£10 non-refundable deposit) using fresh foliage & decoration. Please bring an apron & scissors. To book contact Jules 07875778534 or email rob.jules_hobbs@hotmail.com

Short Mat Bowls Every Tuesday in the Wootton Community Centre at 10am. It is £5 per session to include tea & biscuits and finishes about 12.30. Please contact Colin on 882588.

"Sounds Lively"

Hello all of you singers. We are a mixed singing group, and always open for new members. Our choir leader is a talented musician and we sing in a range of musical styles: Traditional, folk, and international songs, and always focus on harmony. There are no auditions or a need to read music. Although we do take our music seriously we have fun too. We are: A friendly bunch and stop mid-session for tea/coffee. Where: Newport Scout Hall, Woodbine Close, Newport. When: Wednesdays 10:30am – 12:30pm. Cost: £5 per session (term time only). Contact: Alison 07731 933 286.

Friends of St Edmund's Christmas Concert - Saturday 6th December 7pm at St Mark's. Come and sing all your favourite carols with the Wight Sax, St Mark's Choir and ReBuked Ukulele Group. Free entry. Donations for the St Edmunds Church Building Trust.

Church Services in Wootton during December '25 & January '26

ST EDMUND'S

December 2025

Sun 7th	8am Holy Communion Service
Wed 10th	9.30am Holy Communion Service
Wed 17th	9.30am Holy Communion Service
Wed 24th	No 9.30am Holy Communion Service. 11.30pm Midnight Mass
Sun 28th	No 5pm Evensong
Wed 31st	No 9.30am Holy Communion Service

January 2026

Sun 4th	8am Holy Communion Service
Wed 14th	9.30am Holy Communion Service 5pm Evensong,
Wed 21st	9.30am Holy Communion Service
Wed 28th	9.30am Holy Communion Service 5pm Evensong

ST MARK'S

December 2025

Wed 3rd	11.15am Café Communion Service
Sun 7th	9.30am Sunday Brunch Service
Sun 14th	9.30am Holy Communion Service 5pm Carol Service
Sun 21st	9.30am Morning Worship
Wed 24th	4pm Christingle
Thu 25th	10am Family Communion Service
Sun 28th	9.30am Holy Communion Service

January 2026

Sun 4th	9.30am Sunday Brunch Service
Wed 7th	11.15am Café Communion Service
Sun 11th	9.30am Epiphany Holy Communion Service
Sun 18th	9.30am Morning Worship
Sun 25th	9.30am Holy Communion Service



The Upside Down Kingdom **The beginning of something new!**

Over the last few months I've been sharing with you some of the commands Jesus left us.

As we have seen, His words were frequently radical;

- The command to "love your enemies"
- The command to "forgive those who hurt you" and,
- The command to financially "give to the poor".

Some people have asked me where they can find more of these words of Jesus, and I have referred them to the eye witness accounts of Jesus' life, as found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

If, however, you'd prefer to read a summary of Jesus' teaching, then read His 'manifesto' of beliefs, as found in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew Chapters 5–7.

Jesus' manifesto calls for an entirely new way of living that sounds contrary to the views of His day, and that was because Jesus took the values of His time and literally turned them 'upside down', and that was because He had come to usher in a new kingdom, His kingdom, the kingdom of God.

At Christmas we remember how Jesus came into our World quietly and humbly, born in a mere stable, and that shows us that from the very start of His life, Jesus was going to be different!

To Christians, Advent and Christmas mark the beginning of the new Christian year, and although none of us knows what 2026 has in store, Christians take enormous comfort from knowing that whatever they face in the future, they won't face it alone because Jesus has promised to be with them, and support them through the ups and downs of life.

If you want to enter 2026 with that deep sense of peace and reassurance, then why not consider joining any of our local churches, and hear more about out the radical 'upside down' kingdom of Jesus, and how you could be a part of it.

Whatever your plans this Christmas, I pray that the reality of Jesus will dawn afresh in your life and give you His perfect peace.

With every blessing,

Revd Sandra Matthews
Rector
East Medina Plurality

Wight Sax

Christmas Concert

Saturday 6th December
7.00 pm
St Mark's Church,
Station Road, Wootton Bridge

Come and sing all your favourite Christmas Carols
Wight Sax St Mark's Church Choir
ReBuked Ukulele Group

Free Entry
Donations for
St Edmund's Church
Building Trust

tb



For Your Diary ... What's On ...

(see more events on Page 3)

KEEP ACTIVE MOVE MORE CLASSES. BINSTAD COMMUNITY CENTRE ON TUESDAYS AT 11.20am AND WHIPPINGHAM VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAYS AT 9.45am, 11am, 12.15pm, 1.30pm, 4pm. AND FRIDAYS AT 10.10am at ARRETON VILLAGE HALL. Go at your own pace exercise program to help improve strength, stamina and balance. CONTACT: **ANDY SAVAGE 07779 616189**

KEEP ACTIVE RELAX MORE (K.A.R.M.) CLASSES. SANDOWN BROADWAY CENTRE ON MONDAYS AT 4.15pm AND WHIPPINGHAM VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAYS AT 2.45pm. A gentle movement program to calm and relax the body that is easy to learn and based on Tai Chi principles and can be done seated or standing. CONTACT: **ANDY SAVAGE 07779 616189**

BREATHE EASY ISLE OF WIGHT SUPPORT GROUP FOR ISLANDERS LIVING WITH CHRONIC LUNG CONDITIONS. MEETINGS HELD AT ARRETON VILLAGE HALL ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH FROM 2PM TO 4PM. FOR FURTHER INFO GO TO [HTTPS://BREATHEEASYIOW.ORG](https://breatheeasyiow.org) OR CONTACT: **ANDY SAVAGE 07779 616189**

PARKINSONS UK ISLE OF WIGHT HAVE REGULAR WEEKLY EXERCISE CLASSES AT ARRETON VILLAGE HALL ON FRIDAYS AT 11.15am, 12.25pm and 2pm SPECIFICALLY SUITED FOR ANYONE LIVING WITH PARKINSONS. FOR FURTHER INFO CONTACT **ANDY SAVAGE 07779 616189**

Elephant Club - A social group for people living with memory loss, their carers and friends, just wanting an afternoon of good company.....and cake. If someone you care for has memory problems, the ELEPHANT CLUB will be meeting at St Mark's Church between 2-4pm on the second Thursday of each month. If you would like good company and laughter, and to exercise "the little grey cells" whilst eating cake, do come and join us. We would love to see you. Each month's programme is different so we hope there will be something for everyone to enjoy. Next sessions: Thursday December 11th & January 8th.

C.A.M.E.O. Wootton Together - The Living Well & Early Help Service has now launched its Wootton Together sessions under the new name of C.A.M.E.O WOOTTON TOGETHER held at the CHURCH CLOSE COMMUNITY CENTRE, CHURCH CLOSE, WOOTTON PO33 4QD. Weekly sessions every Monday from 2pm - 4pm. Please come along for a cuppa and chat with your neighbours and access information and guidance from a range of visiting organisations and support from the LWEH team. For more information please see the Living Well & Early Help Service Facebook page, look out for the flyer being posted to local addresses or check the noticeboard at the community centre. **Free to attend**, we really look forward to seeing you there. Bring a friend if you can. Michelle 01983 240732.

WOOTTON BRIDGE COFFEE MORNING - This is held every Monday between 10.00 - 12.00 at Wootton Methodist Church Hall. Come for coffee and a chat, we even have a corner shop. Parking is available in the Steam Railway car park. Everyone welcome.

Pilates and Yoga with Jo (Wootton Bridge Community Centre)

Monday & Wednesday mornings. More details from Jo at joannemunt@yahoo.co.uk, also on 07726215526

Mark's Brothers Breakfast/Brunch Gathering - This group meets on the second Wednesday of the month (Wednesday 10th Dec & 14th Jan) at 10.30am - 12 noon in St Mark's coffee lounge. The opportunity for the men of the village who would like to sort the world to rights over just a coffee (if you're not a fan of bacon) or include the bacon butty too. Please let Harry Kirby know if you will be attending. A small, voluntary, contribution towards costs always appreciated. 07814809083 or harryskirby@btinternet.com" The group is very friendly and welcoming.

The "Crafty Ladies" - We meet on Wednesday afternoons at the Church Close Community Hall, Wootton, from 1.30pm 'till 4pm. We would like to welcome new members to our friendly group, who get together to enjoy a variety of different crafts, no experience necessary. Come in and join us for a natter and a coffee/tea as well. Age is no barrier! It's now £3 a session, with the first one free. Please call Jan on 882381 for more details

Wootton Table Tennis Club - Friday mornings at Brannon Way Community Centre, from 9.30-12.00. Cost: £3.00 per session (first week is free). Equipment provided. Friendly group catering for all abilities. 07894169706. Just come and try it.

CREEKSIDE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (WI) - A warm welcome awaits you on the second Wednesday of the month (except August) at the Methodist Church Hall, Station Road, Wootton. We meet at 7.15pm. Come and see what we get up to & make new friends. Visitors & new members are always welcome. Free parking in the Steam Railway Car Park opposite. Come along & have some fun. Contact: Marlene 01983 685266.

Creekside WI Activities for December

Dec 4th	Bath Christmas shopping
Dec 10th	Members' meeting, Christmas party and American supper. Lots of fun and games.
Dec 16th	IW College Christmas lunch
Dec 19th	Visit to the Apollo theatre Christmas Show

And for January - Happy New Year

7th Jan	Ten pin bowling
14th Jan	Main Meeting, have fun with Peoples Bingo
21st Jan	Amble
23rd Jan	Coffee morning at Quarr Abbey
28th Jan	Fun and laughter at the Games Evening

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Friends of St Edmund's Christmas Concert

Saturday 6th December
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Chaplain is defined by the wants and needs of
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accordingly.



For more information please contact Hilary by:

Tel: 07769588644

Email: annachaplain@cofeparishofwoottonbridge.org.uk

Website: <http://www.cofeparishofwoottonbridge.org.uk/anna-chaplain/>

Military Whist Drives

Teams of 4 are welcome to the drives held in
the Methodist hall (parking in Station car park).
The next meeting will be on December 12th &
January 16th and 30th. £2.50 per person.

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Please phone for a full information pack.

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Pop into Parkside Pavilion, Vectis Road, East Cowes, PO32 6HN, to meet some of the team 01983 296592.
www.communityspirited.com



For fun, adventure and skills for life, come and join 1st Wootton Scout Group

Reg. Charity 1005194

Beavers 6 – 8yrs Monday 6.15 – 7.30pm
Cubs 8 – 10½yrs Wednesday 6.30 – 8pm
Scouts 10½ – 14yrs Tuesday 6.30 – 8.30pm
Explorers 14 – 18yrs Thursday 7 – 9pm

All sections open to boys and girls.
Adults welcome to train as Leaders.

Contact Rachael on 07593 700985 for further details

 **Solent Property Care**

General maintenance services and Carpentry
Specialist woodwork repair – tired windows or doors?

Don't replace them – repair them!
Bespoke wardrobes, cupboards, sheds & fences etc.
Call John Davey on 07402 516 745
solentpropertycare@gmail.com

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28 Years Experience

Home: 01983 528720
Mobile: 07967531576




IWUFT Wootton Bridge History Group

We meet on the first Friday of the month in the Scout Hall within Wootton Park/doorstep green. Doors open at 2pm. The speaker/ presentation is from 2:30pm until 3:30pm, followed by refreshments. Charge for 2026 will be £3 per person for I.W.U.F.T members, to cover hall hire, speaker fees and refreshments. £4 per person for non members, friends and guests.

Friday, 2nd January "Beneath the Floors of Newport Minster" ~ Ruth Waller.
A truly fascinating glimpse into the many discoveries made during the recent refurbishment. For those of you who toured the minster with us last summer, don't miss this.

Fri, 6th February ~ "A History of I.O.W. Pubs" ~ Mark Earp
Popular local speaker and a favourite of the group returns to us to take us on a 'virtual pub crawl' back through history.

All welcome

WOOTTON SCOUT HALL FOR HIRE.

Hall including modern kitchen, central heating, rear garden etc. Reasonable rates.

Contact Peter on 883385 or peteflow@uwclub.net for bookings.

Please let our advertisers know that you saw them in *The Bridge*



WOOTTON BRIDGE METHODIST CHURCH (Station Road)

Minister: Rev Gina Hoff

Sunday Morning Service 10am

Evening Services as announced

Minister's Message

As we approach Christmas there are lots of things to entertain us, catch our eye and draw our wallets and purses out of the dark into the light to relinquish the contents of our bank accounts.

Along with the anticipation and fun of Christmas, the promise of good cheer and peace to all people, the preparation and season of good will often has its disappointments. We sometimes hear the phrase 'we are missing the real meaning of Christmas these days'. Some Christians have said 'let's keep Christ in Christmas'. This of course is only true if you have any connection with that kind of Christmas, sometimes the closest we might get is a school Nativity, complete with the innkeeper, angels and various animal costumes.... Or the occasional Xmas card with a long-ago scene in a stable: a baby cradled by his mother in blue and his father looking on relieved, the family surrounded by farm animals, a few shepherds, three kings and a shining star.

To celebrate this festival there are a reasonable number of gatherings in churches over Christmas, carol services, bands playing, special events, mince pies and mulled wine (often non-alcoholic to include everyone). These events are advertised around the village and in magazines letting us know what's on.

In these buildings there are group of folk who meet most Sundays, gather for coffee mornings and friendship, all encouraging each other and supporting one another in practical and prayerful ways. This Christmas they would

love to see you, to meet you; ok, it's a difficult thing crossing over the threshold of a church if you haven't been before, however, the people are friendly. There is a sense of purpose and belonging, just people, like everyone else, looking for answers, having troubles, up against it. There is unity in their hope and belief of a better life, one promised by knowing that baby in a manger, all grown up into the man Jesus. So, this Christmas, perhaps take a chance on something different this Christmas time, pop in and meet us. 'For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace'. Isaiah 9: 6



Wootton Bridge
Methodist Church

Reverend Gina 

Carol Concert - corrected date

Methodists Church, Station Road, Wootton, will be holding a Carol Concert on **Sunday 14th December** at 3.00pm, led by the Salvation Army Band and choristers. Families are welcome.

Light refreshments
will be served



**FOR FUN, FRIENDSHIP
AND FOOD.
COME ALONG AND JOIN US.**

WOOTTON BRIDGE TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD

**WE HOLD OUR MEETINGS ON THE 3RD
FRIDAY OF THE MONTH.(not Aug) START 2PM
AT THE METHODIST CHURCH, STATION
ROAD.**

**FREE PARKING IN THE STEAM RAILWAY CAR
PARK**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET TOGETHER WITH A
GROUP TO TRY NEW THINGS, FOR FRIENDSHIP AND
HAVE FUN.**

COME TO OUR NEXT MEETING.

**OR IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT SUZETTE
suzetteemccoll@gmail.com**



WHAT'S ON AT THE OLD SCHOOL CENTRE

TUESDAYS	WEDNESDAYS	THURSDAYS	SATURDAYS
Buzzy-Bean Cafe 11am - 3pm	Heartcare Wight Cardiac Rehab *GP referral required	Buzzy-Bean Cafe 11am - 3pm	Crafters Group 2 nd & 4 th Sat of month £7 contribution
Sarah's Crafty Cafe 10am - 12pm £3 materials included	If you are a community group or activity looking for a quality venue to hire, we look forward to hearing from you!	Move & Stretch 11am - 12pm free / donations	Planned New activities for 2026! Cognitive Therapy <i>Peace in a Frantic World</i> Afternoon Tea Dance Mindfulness Meditation Self-Esteem Enhancement Confidence Through Drama Mindfulness Gardening Rhyme Time Group
Afternoon Quiz 1:15pm free to join in	Please complete our booking request form via https://theoldschoolcentre.org/facilities-hire/	Adult Beginners Ballet 4:30pm - 5:30pm Adult Beginners Tap 5:30pm - 6:30pm *£8.50 per class or £15 for both!	
Parish Council Meeting 7pm Tue 9 th Dec Jan returns to 7pm every 3 rd Tue of month	We would like to wish everyone a very MERRY CHRISTMAS & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!	Surplus Food Project Please check updates for when this lovely initiative will return	

The Old School Centre, New Road, Wootton, IOW, PO33 4HX
hello@theoldschoolcentre.org
01983 882820 or visit our website theoldschoolcentre.org

*Correct at the time of printing, please visit our social media or website for updates



PARISH COUNCIL information

Meetings:

Meetings: usually third Tuesday in every month (except August) at 7pm in The Old School, New Road - details at HIC, on village noticeboards and on website.

Parish Councillors:

Linda Pitcher, *Chair*
Sarah Redrup, *V.Chair*

John Roberts

Jane Allen

Ian Yeo

Kim Massey

Lee Lemon

Jon Smith

Vacancy

Vacancy

Liz Kingston, *Clerk*

Lorna Morey, *Assistant Clerk*

All can be contacted at the HIC on 884555.

Office opening times:-

PARISH COUNCIL

Mon. 9.00am-2.00pm;

Tues. 9.00am-2.00pm;

Wed. 9.00am-2.00pm;

Thurs. 9.00am-2.00pm;

Fri: 9.00am-2.00pm

BEAT OFFICER

First Tuesday in month

10am - 12 noon or messages can be left for the Police.

WOOTTON BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

5 Joanne's Walk, Brannon Way,
Wootton Bridge, Ryde, IW
PO33 4NX

tel: 884555

email: clerk@woottonbridge-pc.gov.uk

website:

www.woottonbridge-pc.gov.uk

Full details of all facilities available at the HIC can be obtained from the Parish Clerk or on the website.



Wootton Bridge
PARISH COUNCIL

Report from Liz Kingston, Clerk – Wootton Bridge Parish Council.
Telephone: 884555. Email clerk@woottonbridge-pc.gov.uk
IOW Councillor for Wootton Bridge, Sarah Redrup
Email sarah.redrup@iow.gov.uk

Wootton Bridge Parish Council has a Facebook page – please “like” – which displays all the latest information and you are welcome to comment on any topic.

**Wootton Bridge Parish Council wishes everyone in the village
a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**



New Councillors Needed

Wootton Bridge Parish Council would like to thank Councillors Rebekah Jones and Cat Couzens for their time on the Parish Council and we wish them well. We currently have two vacancies which will either go to election or co-option which will probably to be held in January but please check updates.

Book Swap

We have started a book swap at the office. Bring your pre-loved book(s) to the Wootton Parish Council office and exchange for a different one to take home! If you don't have a book to swap, don't worry, feel free to pop along and choose a book. There are also books in the Post Office area as well. We are at 5 Joannes Walk, Brannon Way, Wootton (by the public toilets and car park) Monday – Friday 9am – 2pm. We now have lots of books so please pop in and have a look.

Village Survey

Thank you so much to everyone who completed the Wootton Bridge Village Survey to help us gain more insight into what is important to the residents of the village. 7% of the Wootton population completed the survey. The results showed a clear focus on improving community facilities and local services, particularly the play park, toilets, and recreation ground. The answers also demonstrated a strong community pride and support for visible improvements that enhance village life and wellbeing. There were some great suggestions offered, and we have discussed the results at the Parish Council meeting, which in turn will help with 2026/27 budget setting in January/February 2026

Devolution

At the Extraordinary Full Council meeting in October, the Isle of Wight Council voted in favour of joining with Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council to create the Hampshire and Solent Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA). This new partnership will give our region more control over funding and decisions currently made by the central government.

If you have any areas of concern, or want to report any incidents, please either visit the Parish Office in Brannon Way, or contact us by phone (01983 884555) or email clerk@woottonbridge-pc.gov.uk

Liz Kingston – Clerk **tb**

Christmas in Israel



When my husband and I lived in Jerusalem, we used to spend our occasional days off just walking around what's called 'The Old City', as that's the part of

Jerusalem most closely associated with Bible stories and Bible events.

In the 'Old City' you can walk down the roads that were thoroughfares back in King David's time (3,000 years ago!!), or if walking a bit further on, can sit on the Mount of Olives under olive trees that are 2,000 years old, wondering if perhaps Jesus Himself sat in that spot.

On one particular December morning, we'd just come out of the Church of the Sepulchre (this is where Jesus is believed to have died and been buried), and we decided to walk a new way home from the church. What we didn't expect to see, were huge crowds trying to squeeze through a tiny door into a tiny building we'd never seen before. And above the tiny door of that tiny building there was a plaque saying 'Jerusalem Santa'. In the most Holy and fought over city in the world, we discovered on a chilly Saturday morning in mid-December, Santa's 'Jerusalem house', and it was swamped with crowds trying to get in, just in case Santa was 'home', (he wisely wasn't).

The next day in church, rotas went up asking for volunteers to bake Christmas cookies and gingerbread to give away with coffee on Christmas Eve. I asked the organiser how many cookies they needed. The reply? 3,000-4,000!

Now assuming I'd mistranslated the number I thought I'd heard, I asked the organiser to say the number in English for me, and it remained 3,000-4,000. The organiser saw my look of shock and explained "the Jewish people love Christmas". Taking a few moments to process this bizarre answer, I asked why? The

reply?, "the Jewish people love how Christians get together in churches, and at Christmas dress up in costumes to act out the story, and then sing beautiful carols, and eat yummy biscuits and fruit cakes".

So I said, "but Christmas is a Christian festival, and I've never seen any Jewish believers attending Christian holy days before". The final reply? "yes, but the Christmas festival is a very happy one, and many Jewish people on Christmas Eve like to go to church, watch the drama retelling of the nativity story, and then eat the Christmas cookies".

And they were right! That Christmas Eve, over 2,000 people attended the afternoon Christmas play and sang advent carols. Then in the evening, another 2,000 people attended Christmas carols and midnight mass. And when I looked at the surrounding Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, and Orthodox churches, they were all attracting thousands of worshippers into Christmas Eve services too. And they're right too!

Christmas is indeed a VERY happy festival, that is filled with lights, carols, rich foods, and above all else, a message of HOPE, LOVE and JOY. Put like that, what's not to love?!?! For Christmas is all about God showing His love for ALL people across the world. It's about God saying "I'm with you, I'm for you, you're not alone"

The apostle and friend of Jesus called John famously wrote in his Gospel account of the life of Jesus, "FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON, THAT WHO EVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NEVER DIE BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. FOR JESUS DID NOT COME INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN IT, BUT TO SAVE IT" (chapter 3 vv16-17). Whatever your Christmas plans are this year, know that God loves YOU!!!!

Every blessing

Revd Sandra Matthews

Rector of East Medina Plurality

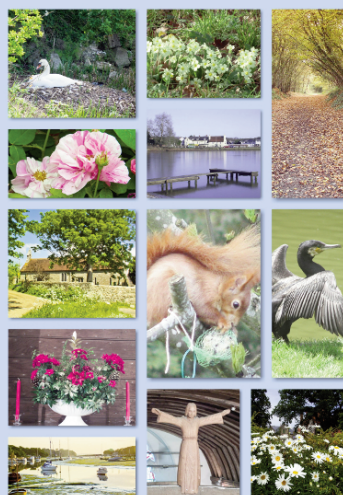
15

Wootton Calendar 2026

Calendars, Poetry &
Photo Boots of
Wootton throughout
the year.

Orders now being
taken.

Please call Doreen
on
883126



St Mildred's Church Christmas Tree Festival



The Christmas Tree Festival at
St Mildred's Church in
Whippingham will run from 11am-3pm on
Thursday 18th, Friday 19th, and Saturday 20th
December, & also from 1pm-3pm on Sunday
21st December, followed by a Carol Service at
4pm.

The café will be open.
We would love to see you there!



'The Bridge'

is delivered free
to over 1,750 homes and
businesses in Wootton

Note to 'Bridge Deliverers'
the February '26 issue will be avail-
able to pick up from the Churches on
FRIDAY 30th January 2026

Solution - November Sudoku

3	9	8	1	4	6	7	5	2
2	7	5	8	9	3	1	6	4
4	6	1	7	2	5	3	9	8
1	5	6	3	7	4	2	8	9
7	2	4	9	1	8	5	3	6
8	3	9	5	6	2	4	7	1
9	8	7	4	3	1	6	2	5
5	1	2	6	8	7	9	4	3
6	4	3	2	5	9	8	1	7

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areas of concern, or want to
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either visit the Parish Office
in Brannon Way, or contact
us by phone or email

Telephone:
01983 884555

Email:
clerk@woottonbridge-pc.gov.uk

Christmas

L T R X O F R O S T Y I G V C C Z Z W W
Y H Q N G Q Z N E R U V H R P N Y W K A
V P U J X B F G N F M C W N X Z T K D W
K J D O I N P N L S D Z F A W K C L A F
Z A Q G B E Z U L K M K N M Z P T H U C
K Y N L T E W K J V M I G V G K Y Q T D
I X F O T L L M W O G J S N H K T O O D
G R E E T I N G S T R Y F G T L F N B G
K L H C W B D Y H H O Y M J E D F U K W
D E Z K X U C L H E L A U G N Z E Y U K
W O I M D J V P T B F B H D O Q F N K C
Q N P Q W Y W A A T L H O E O C C W A K
V H N B C A R D S V S C L P S Y Z N P P
G G F B M B B Q A K I R I P K K D O A X
F L Z F E B E J Y D V K D L E L S J Y K
E E X L R V L V T A Z F A O E Y L I V C
P E E Y R E L U Y A P Y Y S X B Z O E R
R C O T Y N S P S E A O B K D T I Y J L
K Q I A Q D J Z G P D K B L J Y L Y H M
P V O O Q M S K A M F C K P U J A I E G

BELLS
CELEBRATE
HOLIDAY
NOEL

CANDLES
FROSTY
JUBILEE

CARDS
GREETINGS
MERRY



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ST EDMUND'S and ST MARK'S CHURCH

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stedmundsandstmarks@gmail.com or leave a message on 01983 301880
(we will respond as soon as we can)

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