

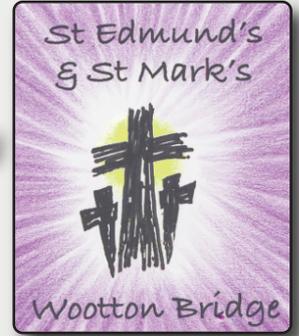
MARCH 2026

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THE CHURCH PARISH MAGAZINE OF WOOTTON

The Bridge

Building Bridges in the Community



Lengthening Days

With interminable rain and road closures everywhere, 2026 has hardly had a stellar beginning, here in Wootton or anywhere on the Island. I am writing on a day when the sun briefly made a fitful appearance, and, with the eye of faith, one could perhaps see a hint of very pale brightness in the white sky. Then the sun gave the whole thing up as a bad job, and now it's raining again ...

By the time you read this, we shall be in the season of Lent, which is, if people think of it at all in our consumer society, a time traditionally associated with self-denial, particularly in giving up things we like. Lent in the view of many people is long-faced and miserable. Some of this is, frankly, the fault of the Church itself. Just as much of our media operates on the basis that bad news sells better than good news, so the Church has often made pain and suffering seem somehow more holy than being thankful for the goodness and beauty of God's creation. I do not wish to belittle or trivialise the very real suffering people have gone through, and still go through, for their faith. But suffering is not the purpose and essence of life.

The word "Lent" or "Lenten" is a reference to the lengthening days at this time of year. It is also connected to "Lenz", the old German name for Spring. This is a season for enjoying the longer days and the early Spring flowers as we reflect on and prepare for the coming season of Easter next month. In fact, it should help us tune ourselves into the goodness of God, which we will experience at Easter in all its fullness.

Read any newspaper or news website, and you can easily convince yourself that our world is mostly mad, bad or both combined. But consider this. Upwards of three thousand people live in Wootton Bridge. If each of those people, each day, does three good things - acts of kindness, consideration for others or just honest good sense - that is ten thousand acts of goodness. In one day. In one village. Think of what you did today. It might have been a friendly greeting, letting someone into the traffic queue, or making sure that your elderly neighbour was well. These small acts add up to a lot. Goodness is not newsworthy because it is not news. Goodness, more than the noisy news headlines, makes us what we are. Long may it be so.

David Bennison 

For March services, please see Page 3



More Areas to Our Learning



Mrs Jane Wilford
Headteacher

Each week in our Friday celebration assembly, we share a 'word of the week' with the children. The children are then challenged to use this word in their writing. Often these words are complex/unusual words to enhance and develop children's acquisition of language and also to improve their writing. We try to link these words to themes and topics so that they 'make sense'. An example of this was during February when all the children engaged with 'Childrens' Mental Health Week.'

We began by exploring the word 'overwhelmed' and how everyone at times can feel like this and how important it is that we all have strategies to manage these emotions when they surface. One strategy the children have learnt is the importance of 'slow breathing'. The children were taught to imagine they are holding a mug of hot chocolate in their hand, then take a long sniff (breath in) of the imaginary chocolate and then blow the hot chocolate colder (breath out). This has been a really useful technique for the children to use.

Another element of the week was to explore the impact that computing can have on our mental health and wellbeing. Whilst the development of computing is mostly positive, for young children in particular, navigating the many different sources and interactions can be challenging and in particular knowing when to keep safe online. Children face many pressures when accessing a range of websites and sources and can often get caught accessing inappropriate materials. Whilst parental controls are available, information given to parents can be vague and often lead to family arguments! Fortunately, teaching children to keep safe online is an integral part of our curriculum. We ensure that all lessons begin with reminders of how to keep safe, however we also seek to show children other resources and to know what to do.

An example of this was a live lesson that our Year 3 children took part in with the BBC on Safer Internet Day. The children learnt about the importance of knowing when AI can be used correctly. They so enjoyed the session that they sent a comment to the BBC which was shared on their website.



“
We all loved the Live Lesson and have spent time since, designing our own AI themed information poster.
KS2 at Wootton Community Primary School,
Isle of Wight

Screenshot of the comment
sent to the BBC.

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

(see more events on Page 5)

Fun, local, physiotherapist-led, Pilates based movement and balance classes. Wednesdays 4.30-5.25 or 5.30-6.25, St Marks Church Coffee Lounge. Flexible terms: no need to pay ahead - you only pay for the classes you attend. For more information and spaces contact Anna on aqphysio@outlook.com

What's On at The Old School Centre (T) 01983 882820 (E) hello@theoldschoolcentre.org

MoJo Yoga Mondays 6pm-7:15pm contact Jo at 07435955506 to book on the next 6-week course. Sarah's Crafty Café Tuesdays 10am-12pm £3 inc. materials. Afternoon Activities Tuesdays 1:15pm free. Sarah's Crochet-Along Thursdays 10:30am-11:45 £2. Move & Stretch with Suki Thursdays 11am-12pm free/donations. Knit & Knatter with Kate Thursdays 1pm-3pm instructor available 2nd / 3rd Thu of month free/donations, donations of wool/knitting needles will be gratefully welcome. Adults Beginner Ballet with Suki Thursdays 4:30pm-5:30pm £8.50. Adults Beginner Tap with Suki Thursdays 5:30pm-6:30pm £8.50. Special offer for both ballet & tap classes £15. Wootton Crafters Group 2nd & 4th Sat of month 10am-4pm £7. Confidence Through Drama 3-week funded course starting Monday 13th April 2pm-5pm contact us to register your interest. Paracise with Helen Tuesdays 12:30pm-1:15pm £9 (session special offers available). Are you a community group or activity looking to hire a venue? – complete our booking request form via www.theoldschoolcentre.org to enquire.

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

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.

Mary Hill Miniature Artist - See her miniature watercolours as part of I Love Wight's Spring Exhibition at Quarr Abbey Thursday 5th - Tuesday 10th March 10am-4pm daily. Free entry/parking. Road access possible from the Ryde direction.

QUARR ABBEY EVENTS



06 March '26
10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Quarr Photographic Exhibition

05 - 10 March '26
10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Mary Hill Miniature Watercolours
(Normal access to Quarr from the Ryde direction during the roadworks).

Church Services in Wootton during March 2026

Sun 1st 8am Holy Communion Service at St Edmund's
9.30am Brunch Service at St Mark's
Wed 4th 11.15am Café Communion Service at St Mark's
Sun 8th 9.30am Holy Communion Service at St Mark's
5pm Evensong at St Edmund's
Wed 11th 9.30am Holy Communion Service at St Edmund's
Sun 15th 9.30am Morning Worship at St Mark's
Wed 18th 9.30am Holy Communion Service at St Edmund's
Sun 22nd 9.30am Holy Communion Service at St Mark's
5pm Evensong at St Edmund's
Wed 25th 9.30am Holy Communion Service at St Edmund's
Sun 29th 11.15am Palm Sunday Plurality Holy Communion Service at St Mildred's

Plus:

Tue 31st March
Wed 1st April
Thu 2nd April
Fri 3rd April
Sun 5th April

Holy Week Services

7pm Plurality Stations of the Cross at St Mark's
11.15am Café Communion Service at St Mark's
Maundy Thursday
7pm Plurality Holy Communion at St James'
Good Friday
10am Interactive Family Service reflecting on the events of Holy Week and Good Friday at St Mark's
11am Walk of Witness starting opposite Albert Cottage, walking to Waitrose Square for a short Service.
2pm Reflective Service at St Mildred's
Easter Sunday
10am Holy Communion at St Mark's
9.30am Holy Communion at St James'
11.15am Holy Communion at St Mildred's

Weekly Prayer Meetings During Lent

You are invited to join our weekly Prayer Meetings in St Mark's Coffee Lounge from 9.30am every Tuesday during Lent for 30 minutes starting on Tuesday 24th Feb. During this time we will be praying for our church, plurality, leaders, new minister, community and our Island. All welcome to come. Coffee will be served afterwards.



What Next?



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

On February 25th 2026 Reverend Sandra Matthew's role in Wootton and the East Medina Plurality came to an end. It was on that day that she took up her post in the Meon Valley, in the village of Swanmore.

So, where do we go from here? How do we go about finding a replacement Priest for our parish, St Mildred's Whippingham and St James' East Cowes? When we advertised for a priest last time each parish produced a profile of its aims, its service arrangements, its lay (non-ordained) support etc. This was then collated and details of plurality-wide aspirations and activities were detailed. The resulting document was then used to advertise both locally, in neighbouring Dioceses, and also nationally.

Each of the three parishes identified two representatives to be involved in this procedure and eventually to shortlist and interview any applicants. All three parishes have to agree on the suitability of the candidate. Once this is done the Bishop will be advised to make the appointment.

As we enter this new interregnum (a time when a parish is "between priests") Wootton's Parochial Church Council has identified its two representatives. This time your Churchwardens, myself Harry Kirby, and Steve Beynon have been given that responsibility and privilege.

We will now update our Parish Profile which involves seeking the views of our congregations. At first that seemed a relatively easy task as the last profile was only done about eighteen months ago. Not so.....a lot has happened during Reverend Sandra's time with us. We have moved on. Different systems have been established, especially as regards Safeguarding procedures; service arrangements and the use of

certain resources in services; Churchwardens of the plurality meeting on a regular basis; the use of PTOs (retired clergy with Permission To Officiate) etc.

Next, we will liaise with our partner representatives from the other two parishes to update and highlight the progress we have made as a plurality. When we advertised last time the Bishop of Portsmouth had just established us as a new plurality. In the same way that this parish has moved on, so has the plurality, even though there is still much to achieve. Churchwardens now collate cross-parish services; if there is a fifth Sunday of the month, then there will be only one service in the plurality and the other churches will attend that one, there is a single form of Communion Service across the parishes; certain officers share roles across the parishes etc.

Hopefully, by the end of this month we will have the Parish and Plurality profiles ready to go to the Diocese for its attention before the advertisement is published. How long before a priest is appointed? How long is a piece of string? There may well be a priest aware of the situation here and would like to be part of our journey; the Bishop may have someone in mind that he could recommend to us; it could be a national advertisement which may attract an individual. Who knows what the future holds for us? However, we are all convinced that God is preparing the right individual to come to us. Even if they themselves are not yet aware of it!!

Harry Kirby and Steve Beynon
Churchwardens

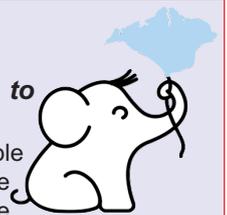


ELEPHANT CLUB

No! It's not a rather rudely titled slimming club nor is it a club for wildlife enthusiasts.

Elephant Club is a safe space for people living with dementia, and those who care for them, to enjoy themselves.

On the second Thursday of the month (2-4pm) in St Mark's Church coffee lounge you will find a group of people laughing. The cause? A craft project which is usually slightly silly; some songs from way back when we were teenagers (or even beyond), a quiz (together with tea and cake) and board games. All of this is to encourage people to chat, remember and just have a good time. Everyone is enabled to take part in whatever way is suitable for them. One of our members has recently gone into residential care but his carer enjoyed herself so much at Elephant Club that she continues to come! You may not have memory problems but if you would like an afternoon of good company, then do come – we would love to see you. Contact us at stedmundsandstmarks@gmail.com or by leaving a message on the church answerphone (01983 301880). We will get back to you as soon as is possible.



Elephant Club

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

(see more events on Page 3)

KEEP ACTIVE MOVE MORE CLASSES. BINSTEAD 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 session: Thursday March 12th.

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) - Various classes on Monday morning and Wednesday morning/evening. 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 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. Next meeting Wednesday 11th March.

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. Plenty of free parking in the Steam Railway Car Park opposite. Come along & have some fun. Contact: Marlene 01983 685266.

Creekside WI Activities for March

4th March	Ten Pin Bowling
11th March	Finding out about air fryers with Petra from The Footprint Trust
12th March	Book Club
18th March	Amble
20th March	Coffee morning
25th March	Kurling social evening

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The UK Cyber Security Centre continues to warn that we should all expect increased cyber, scamming & phishing attacks. Don't open unexpected emails or click on suspicious links, and keep devices updated. Please remain vigilant!

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For more information please contact Hilary by:

Tel: 07769588644

Email: annachaplain@cofeparishofwoottonbridge.org.uk

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

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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

EXTRACTA CLEANING
For all your cleaning requirements
Carpets & Upholstery - Sofa/Rug Cleaning
End of Tenancy Cleaning - One off Deep Cleans
Hoarder Clean Ups - Environmental Cleans
Free Estimates - Fully Insured
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.

Fri, 6th March ~ "S.S. Great Britain" ~ Paul Bradley. Come and learn all the facts and enjoy a beautifully photographed tour of one of the most famous ships in the world.

Fri, 3rd April ~ "Ancient Egypt" ~ Edward Nash. Ed, from 'Time Jump Histories' will be presenting this, and will as usual be fully costumed and with many fascinating artefacts, each with a story.

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.

WOOTTON BRIDGE METHODIST CHURCH (Station Road)

Minister: **Rev Gina Hoff**
Sunday Morning Service 10am
Evening Services as announced

Minister's Message

World Day of Prayer 6th March 2026



The World Day of Prayer (WDP) is a global, ecumenical Christian movement led by women, celebrated annually on the first Friday in March, where women from different countries create a service to share their spiritual journeys and call for prayer and action for peace and justice, creating a "wave of prayer" across the world as the day moves across the world. Its motto is "Informed Prayer & Prayerful Action," highlighting that prayer and action are inseparable.



Wootton Bridge
Methodist Church

The 2026 World Day of Prayer materials from Nigeria bring us a powerful invitation drawn from Matthew 11:28-30:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

At a time when people worldwide are carrying heavy burdens, our Nigerian sisters offer profound insights into finding rest in God.

Through their exploration of different kinds of burdens - shame, systemic oppression, religious persecution, poverty and despair - the writers help us understand both the weight of human suffering and the depths of divine rest. Their work shows us that true rest isn't just about physical relief, but about transformation through God's grace and community support. There is a service at Bembridge Methodist Church (plenty of parking). If you would like to join them on 6th March at 2.00 pm everyone is very welcome.

<https://worlddayofprayer.net/index.html#>

Reverend Gina



**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
suzettecoll@gmail.com



**THE OLD SCHOOL
CENTRE**

NEW RD | WOOTTON BRIDGE | IOW | PO33 4HX

Supporting community wellbeing & inclusion

- A **diverse timetable** of creative & wellbeing activities
- Enjoy light refreshments at **The Buzzy-Bean Café**
- **Join community** gatherings, workshops & events

See 'For Your Diary' in *The Bridge* or our website for details



Welcome
Buzzy-Bean Café
 Tues & Thurs 11am-3pm

KEEP IN TOUCH

Sign up for free membership & stay updated!



Complete our short online
membership form at
www.theoldschoolcentre.org

hello@theoldschoolcentre.org | 01983 882820

**please visit our social media or website for updates or changes*

Check our **What's on** page at
www.theoldschoolcentre.org
 for the latest activities, prices,
 & timetable information...



together



**Looking for a
venue?**

Complete our booking request form
 at www.theoldschoolcentre.org

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
Sophus Magill
Don Willsmer
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

Please see Facebook when the Beat Officer is in the office or messages can be left/passed on by staff in the office.

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.

Spring Tidy Up

We are looking at this taking place on Saturday 25th April 2025 from 10am – 12pm. All are welcome - you can either tidy round your own street or come to the office where we will be coordinating the Clean-Up and can give you an area to clean. Equipment is provided. We also have equipment in the office if you wish to borrow it at another time. We really appreciate the kind residents that give up their time to help keep our village looking its very best!

New Councillors

The Parish Council had 2 vacancies which were filled at the January meeting. A warm welcome to our new councillors Sophus Magill and Don Willsmer.

Village Survey

Over half of the comments from our Village Survey in 2025 referred to the need to upgrade and modernise the recreation ground play park, adding that they would like to see:

- Toilets and accessible paths for wheelchairs and prams.
- Toddler-friendly equipment and inclusive facilities for disabled children.
- New equipment like climbing frames, monkey bars, and wooden play structures.
- Better maintenance and cleaning of the play area.
- Many felt it should be a priority investment for the parish.

We have been working alongside the Isle of Wight Council to plan and deliver Play Park improvements. Below is a proposed suggestion for the type of equipment we could install, which would be hard-wearing and low maintenance. We would love your views on it and if you have any suggestions, please email us at clerk@woottonbridge-pc.gov.uk or pop into the office on Brannon Way.



The cost of the equipment is very expensive, so we have been seeking advice from other parish and town councils who have been successful in gaining grant funding and we are currently investigating this option.

We are also investigating the feasibility, costs, and practical considerations of installing a toilet block on the recreation ground however we don't think this is going to be cheap.

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 

New Archbishop of Canterbury

The Most Rev Dame Sarah Mullally has become the first woman in the Church of England to be the Archbishop of Canterbury, after a service held in St Paul's Cathedral on 28 January 2026. She is the 106th Archbishop following in a long line from the first Archbishop of Canterbury, Saint Augustine, who was enthroned, over 1400 years ago, in the 597 BCE. Dame Sarah will be formally installed in Canterbury Cathedral on March 25th.

Dame Sarah is a nurse by profession. She began her career as a cancer nurse before being appointed, aged 37, as the NHS Chief Nursing Officer (the youngest ever in this post). She was made a Dame in 2005 for her services to nursing and midwifery. Dame Sarah was ordained as a priest in 2002 and became the Bishop of Crediton, in the Diocese of Exeter, in 2015. She was appointed Bishop of London in 2018, the third most senior position within the Church of England.

It is interesting to note that Dame Sarah is the second Archbishop in succession not to have begun her professional life as a priest. Justin Welby, her predecessor began his career in the commercial world



Dame Sarah on the day of her appointment as Archbishop on 28 January 2026. (Bishop Johnathan (Portsmouth) is on the far left)

before being ordained. She is also not the first woman to become an Archbishop with the Anglican Communion. There have been five previously with the most recent (and the only other within the United Kingdom) being the Most Rev Cherry Vann, Archbishop of Wales, enthroned in 2025.

Steve Beynon 

What are your hopes for The Future?



The Coat of Hopes

On Monday 9th February, I stood at the wet end of Ryde Pier, looking out watching The Fast Cat arriving from Portsmouth. A group of people were waiting in the spring sunshine to welcome 'The Coat of Hopes' that had left Portsmouth Cathedral the day before and was arriving to spend several weeks here on the Island.

The Coat was created by Barbara Keal, an artist from Lewes in Sussex. The coat is designed to carry people's hopes for the future of our planet. It started out patch-less, but along the way people have sewn into the fabric their hopes

for the places where they live. It now carries 700 patches and has already walked 2,000 miles around the mainland. We were able to accompany The Coat down the pier, singing as we went, up Union Street, to the 'Department', the cultural centre in Cross Street. The Coat was to stay on display in 'Department' for the week. During this time people were invited to 'meet, wear and stitch' The Coat.

In 2021, The Coat began its journey and was taken on a nine-week walk from Newhaven in Sussex to the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow. Since COP26, it has travelled across Britain, collecting patches and inviting all who encounter it to wear it, and feel 'the future of the planet is on all our backs'.

The Coat includes The Isle of Wight patch, showing an image of the Island and a white-tailed eagle, which was sewn by Helen Bradstock from St Helen's Church, Nettleton. Helen from the St Helen's Eco Church Group, says: "We're really excited that The Coat has finally come to the Island. We hope that many Islanders will want to meet with, walk with, and stitch their hopes for our Island into this Coat while it is here."

The Coat of Hopes will be at **St. James Church, East Cowes** on **Thursday, 5th March 9-5pm**: and again, on **Friday, 6th March 9-1pm**: There will be a chance to meet, wear, and stitch into The Coat. **All welcome**. If you miss The Coat at East Cowes, there will be many opportunities to see, wear and make your own sewn contribution to The Coat, which will be travelling around The Island until Sunday 15th March, when it leaves to journey on to Hilfield Friary in Dorset. For more details see <https://www.coatofhopes.uk/no>

Erica Hall



ST JAMES' CHURCH EAST COWES

Calling all Jigsaw Puzzle Fans!

Could you be part of our Team making up Jigsaws for our Jigsaw Puzzle Festival in August?

We will supply the jigsaws and boards. We will deliver and collect.

For more information please call us on 07779 018693

'The Bridge'
 is delivered **free**
 to over 1,750 homes and
 businesses in Wootton
 Note to 'Bridge Deliverers'
 the April '26 issue will be available to
 pick up from the Churches on **FRIDAY**
 27th March 2026

Solution - February Sudoku

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

If you have any particular
 areas of concern, or want to
 report any incidents, please
 either visit the Parish Office
 in Brannon Way, or contact
 us by phone or email

Telephone:
 01983 884555

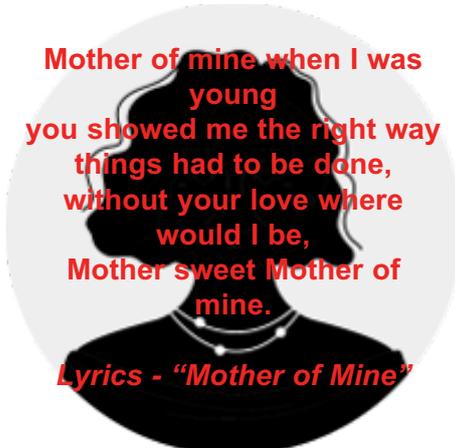
Email:
 clerk@woottonbridge-pc.gov.uk

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

SUDOKU

Fill in the grid with digits in
 such a manner that every row,
 every column and every 3x3
 box accommodates the digits
 1-9, without repeating any.

Mother's Day
 March 15th



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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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 please telephone
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 882783, or the
 Churchwardens.

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