



# The Window August 2026



## **The Local Foodbank Needs You!**

Our friendly group of packers, organised by Vicky Stretch in North Stoke, is always happy to have new volunteers. The packing is done weekly at the church of Christ the King in Sonning Common, on a Thursday. Once a fortnight we also deliver some of the bags we have packed to clients in Woodcote and Ipsden. You would only usually do one session a month.



We start off by collecting the bags of donated items from Ipsden Post Office, Shirley's Shop ... Shirley does a fantastic job, following the shortages at the Foodbank via WhatsApp messages and making up bags

from stock or items ordered in. This is paid for by cash donations collected by Shirley.

This is the other way that you are needed. Please give whatever you can afford, on a regular basis, to Shirley. She can then buy and sort what is needed.

This is much more efficient than leaving random items at the church. We have no way of delivering surplus pickled walnuts, jars of chillies or out of date sweets, however well-intentioned are the donors.

So, please support our Foodbank by volunteering 🧑🏻 🧑🏻 🧑🏻 or donating. [Davidkelley1957@gmail.com](mailto:Davidkelley1957@gmail.com) and WhatsApp/SMS 0776 256 6195. Many thanks.

**David Kelley**

## **"Of Mice and Homer"**



We have always owned cats, from ones which we have chosen as kittens to ferals who have decided to stay and become part of our family.

Tom arrived with two others several years ago; we first saw a pair of ginger ears peeking out from a straw bale. From the beginning he was friendly and quickly made Homer his home, readily living indoors, unlike the others who preferred to be fed outside.

There is an unwritten law here for cat residents - "no birds, no mice or baby bunnies". To catch any, the perpetrator has a hefty telling off. I can say then that we do not get "gifts" left at our door and give them the benefit of the doubt.

However, there is always the exception, like recently, when Tom jumped through our bedroom window in the early hours complete with Samuel Whiskers in his mouth and very much alive.

One leap at Tom ... and he dropped mousey, who then disappeared just as quickly. Cat was shut out of the bedroom much to his disgust. Having saved a tiny life, we continued our broken sleep. In the morning it was obvious that mouse was hiding out in a wardrobe. Not having a humane trap, I left food out for it and water; I can confirm, Mousey didn't like fruit cake, or apple, but loved chocolate biscuits and grated cheese.

Eventually we bought a humane trap which happened to coincide with our son and granddaughter, Grace, coming on a "Mouse Hunt" (as opposed to Bear).

They soon found the small rodent hidden in a roll of Christmas wrapping paper which it had been munching away at - which was probably why it ignored our humble goodies. Grace was very excited "I have never seen a mouse" she exclaimed, before it was released outside.

A happy ending.

**Diana Jackson**

## **"Wellness Corner"**

When we bought our 1970s bungalow, the plan was to extend the house and convert the loft, but like so many renovation projects, the costs quickly spiralled. We'd bought a shipping container as temporary storage, and instead of letting it sit there, we decided to turn it into something much more useful. Today it's our garden office - a creative hub for my photography and content creation plus a DJ booth for Matt.



We did almost everything ourselves, reusing materials wherever we could and trying to create something that felt in keeping with our countryside home. The biggest transformation came from replacing the industrial container doors with black aluminium doors, which completely changed the feel of the space and brought the garden inside. I love walking just a few steps from the house to work each morning, especially with the gorgeous Ipsden views!

Since then, the project has grown into a little wellness corner of the garden. Matt built our oak-clad sauna by hand, and the plunge pool was made from the property's old oil tanker, which we couldn't bear to throw away when we had the updated version fitted. Looking back, it's amazing what we've managed to create with a bit of imagination, plenty of DIY and a lot of weekends spent working together. It's proof that some of the best projects start completely by accident. It's also given us some breathing space in the house, allowing us time to save for the larger renovation project dream!

**Abbie Newton**

## **Making Room for Nature**

You may think nature thrives only in big reserves. But it also squeezes into the cracks and corners of our urban environments. So, whether that's a garden, a balcony, a windowsill, or just the wall of your home, there's always room for a splash of green amongst the urban landscapes.



In ecology, a "microhabitat" is a small area with its own unique environment that differs from the surrounding habitat. But you may know them by a different name. Mini ponds, bee hotels, and even bird boxes, each creating a quiet refuge for the creatures sharing our built landscape (just remember that bird feeders in warmer months increase the risk of disease in birds). These small sanctuaries carry real ecological weight.



Never underestimate the power of cumulative effect: each species, no matter how small, has a part to play in all ecosystems. The key benefits of micro habitats include attracting insects that play a role in pollination, storing moisture and regulating temperature , and breaking down organic matter.

Urban walls can host a surprising range of ecological functions. Living walls are particularly beneficial to local wildlife. These vertical green sites, formed of flowering climbers and wall mounted planters, can attract bees, hoverflies and other pollinators. Micro planters and crevice habitats, which are small pockets of soil, stacked tiles, logs with holes, stone crevices or even swift bricks attached or built into walls, create nesting and overwintering sites for solitary bees and beetles.

Water sources such as ponds or streams with natural features are ideal, though rare in highly urban areas. But artificial water sources such as

birdbaths or rainwater pools/ponds can still support amphibians, insects, birds, and mammals while contributing to local microclimate regulation. For example, a recent study in the [Journal of Urban Ecology](#) found that urbanised aquatic microhabitats, such as water-filled tree holes and other small standing waters in cities, create “unique but inconspicuous” breeding habitats for a range of insects.

Gardens are probably the first green space that comes to mind when discussing microhabitats. And that’s because even small spaces can support many microhabitats due to the varying environments and features which can be created within them. Gardens are a mosaic of interconnected micro-ecosystems within one space.

But when discussing our urban environments, rewilding towns and cities might sound like something left to greater powers, such as your local council. In fact, urbanisation doesn’t need to mean a loss of biodiversity. You don’t need a large rural garden to support nature – small and urban gardens are becoming vital passages in our increasingly fragmented country.

These small patches of green can become a wildlife sanctuary surprisingly easily: try growing as many different types of plants as you can, including



native species, and provide natural food sources. And importantly, let nature do its work! Sometimes, the best thing you can do is simply step back and leave a corner (or two!) undisturbed. For example, fallen or stacked logs and retaining piles of leaves and wood chip can serve as habitat for insects, fungi, amphibians, reptiles and small mammals.



Create a home for bats in your garden over the summer and put up bat boxes in large trees or buildings. Place them high up (at least 3 to 4 meters), sheltered from the wind, and exposed to the sun for most of the day. See the guidance on the [Bat Conservation website](#). Bat boxes can be bought from various stores and websites, or if you’re feeling crafty, you can make them yourself.

**Jessica Bouwer**

## **Dates for Your Diary**

|               |                       |                               |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Wed 12 Aug    | Ipsden Coffee Morning | See page 10                   |
| Sat 22 August | Cholsey Village Show  | See page 12                   |
| Wed 9 Sept    | Ipsden Coffee Morning | See page 10                   |
| Sat 12 Sept   | Ipsden "Playtime"     | See page 11                   |
| Wed 16 Sept   | Ipsden Games Cafe     | See page 10                   |
| Wed 16 Sept   | Ipsden Parish Council | Ipsden Village Hall at 6.30pm |
| Fri 18 Sept   | Bridleway 31 Inquiry  | Ipsden Village Hall at 10am   |
| Sat 19 Sept   | Cholsey Repair Cafe   | See page 11                   |

## **Ipsden Village Lottery Winners**

|         |              |          |                 |
|---------|--------------|----------|-----------------|
| 27 June | Rosie Holmes | 18 July  | Shirley Merrett |
| 4 July  | Brian Herron | 25 July  | See next issue  |
| 11 July | Andy Holmes  | 1 August | See next issue  |

## **The Window**

The Window is edited, published and distributed by the churches of St Mary's Ipsden and St Mary's North Stoke. The deadline for contributions to the next issue is 19 August please.

Thanks to Vaughan Williams and the team of volunteers who deliver paper copies to homes in Ipsden, Mongewell and North Stoke. The Window is also available on the Ipsden village website and some paper copies are held in the Ipsden shop for individual collection.

## **View from the Vicarage**

### **Humidity, Humility, Humanity**



To set the scene for you - I'm starting to write this in the hotel bar, hiding from a heatwave that could fry an egg on the bonnet of the car. My room's air-conditioning has failed, the windows barely open, and sleep will be a distant rumour. I'm frazzled, and praying that the fan will be sufficient to aid sleep .....

August arrives with its familiar trio: long days, warm evenings, and that curious stickiness in the air that makes even the most patient among us sigh, *"It's a bit humid today."* Humidity has a way of slowing us down, softening our edges, and reminding us that we are not quite in charge of the weather, or much else, really.

And perhaps that is where humility begins. Not in grand moral gestures, but in the simple recognition that we are creatures who wilt slightly in the heat, who become irritable when the air stands still, who must drink more water than we remembered to bring.

Humidity does strange things to us. It frizzes hair, wilts clergy collars, and makes even the saintliest parishioner slightly irritable. So, perhaps August's clammy embrace offers us a spiritual nudge. Humidity, after all, is a close cousin of humility, both reminding us that we are not quite as in control as we like to think – we are human!!

There is, tucked away in language itself, a delightful connection between our three August companions, humidity, humility, and humanity. They sound related, and in a quiet way, they are. All three wander back through Latin to words about the earth (*humus*), with echoes of Genesis: humanity formed from the dust, called to humility, living in a world shaped by humidity. The language reminds us that our creatureliness is not a flaw but a gift, a grounding, a belonging, a reminder that God meets us not above the earth but in it, among its heat, its dust, and its ordinary holiness.

Scripture has a habit of doing this too. In Philippians 2, Paul urges us to *"in humility regard others as better than yourselves."* It's a verse that sounds noble when read in a cool church on a crisp morning. It feels more challenging when you're stuck in a checkout queue behind someone who can't remember their PIN, while sweat trickles down your back. Humility is easier in theory than in humidity.

Humility is not weakness; it is the strength to relinquish self-importance for the sake of love. It is not about thinking less of ourselves but thinking of

ourselves less. It's the gentle art of stepping back, making space, and remembering that the world does not revolve around our comfort levels, even when the weather seems determined to test them. Humility is choosing kindness when we're hot, bothered, and one degree away from becoming a cautionary tale.

And this leads us to humanity, that wonderfully complicated mixture of grace and grumpiness. Heat reveals our humanity in ways central heating never does. We become more honest. More porous. More likely to say things like, *"I'm sorry, I'm just a bit warm."* In these moments, we glimpse the truth that God works, not through polished perfection, but through ordinary people doing their best in sticky circumstances.

Jesus understood humanity in heat. He lived in a climate where dust clung, sweat dripped, and shade was a precious commodity. His ministry unfolded not in air-conditioned comfort but in the open air, among crowds, under relentless sun. And yet he met people with patience, compassion, and presence. He washed their feet, he fed the hungry, he noticed the overlooked, he embodied humility in the midst of humanity's messiness. Perhaps August invites us to do the same. When the heat rises, tempers shorten, and the dog refuses to go for a walk because the road on Church Lane or The Street is too hot, we can choose small acts of grace. A cool drink offered. A fan shared. A smile given to someone who looks as though they're melting. These gestures are tiny sacraments, visible signs of invisible love.

Humidity may make us uncomfortable, but it also softens us. It slows us down. It reminds us that we are creatures, not machines. And in that slowing, we may find space to notice God's quiet presence: in the neighbour watering their drooping plants; in the child chasing bubbles across a sun-baked lawn; in the parishioner who brings ice lollies to the PCC meeting because *"we all need a bit of cooling grace."* (What an image!!)

Heat strips away pretence. Humility grounds us. Humanity connects us. And August, with all its sticky unpredictability, becomes a month where God gently whispers: *"You are held. You are loved. And you are called to love others, even when you're glowing rather more than you'd like"*. May this humid, humorous, human August be one of kindness, patience, with the sort of humility that grows best not in cool comfort but in warm, ordinary life.

*Blessings All,*  
*Canon John*



## **Church Services in August and September**

As well as for services, the churches at Ipsden and North Stoke remain open during daylight hours for private worship and visits.

| <b>Date</b>          | <b>Ipsden</b>                                                                             | <b>North Stoke</b>         |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Sun 2 August</b>  | <b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>                                                              | <b>11am Holy Communion</b> |
| Wed 5 August         | 5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129<br>(Please wait to be admitted)            |                            |
| <b>Sun 9 August</b>  | <b>10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)</b> |                            |
| Wed 12 August        | 5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129<br>(Please wait to be admitted)            |                            |
| <b>Sun 16 August</b> | <b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>                                                              | <b>11am Holy Communion</b> |
| Wed 19 August        | 5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129<br>(Please wait to be admitted)            |                            |
| <b>Sun 23 August</b> | <b>9.30am Morning Prayer</b>                                                              | <b>11am Morning Prayer</b> |
| Wed 26 August        | 5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129<br>(Please wait to be admitted)            |                            |
| <b>Sun 30 August</b> | <b>10.30am Team Service: Songs of Praise at Stoke Row</b>                                 |                            |
| Wed 2 September      | 5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129<br>(Please wait to be admitted)            |                            |
| <b>Sun 6 Sept</b>    | <b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>                                                              | <b>11am Holy Communion</b> |
| Wed 9 September      | 5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129<br>(Please wait to be admitted)            |                            |
| <b>Sun 13 Sept</b>   | <b>10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)</b> |                            |
| Wed 16 September     | 5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129<br>(Please wait to be admitted)            |                            |
| <b>Sun 20 Sept</b>   | <b>9.30am Holy Communion</b>                                                              | <b>11am Holy Communion</b> |
| Wed 23 September     | 5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129<br>(Please wait to be admitted)            |                            |
| <b>Sun 27 Sept</b>   | <b>9.30am Morning Prayer</b>                                                              | <b>11am Morning Prayer</b> |
| Wed 30 September     | 5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129<br>(Please wait to be admitted)            |                            |

## **Rector's Reflections**

God is not:

- Limited by your preconceptions or theories
- Impatient. He's got the time, if you have
- Happy when we hurt each other
- Unmoved by your prayers
- Mocked
- Giving up on you
- Deceived. So be honest
- Far from each one of us. Wherever.
- Afraid of silence. So, go find some.

Wishing you all a restful and recreational August, with prayers for our communities, inward peace and spiritual renewal.

(Revelations 3:14-20: *God is, not for want of knocking, waiting at the door.*)

***With my best wishes  
Your Rector, Canon Kevin Davies***

## **Ipsden Coffee Mornings**

A huge thank you to the many people who take it in turn to run the coffee mornings, and to the many others who donate their delicious cakes. Everything is free and it's a wonderful opportunity to catch up with neighbours. Ipsden Coffee Mornings are held in the Memorial Hall on the second Wednesday of each month, the next one is on 12 Augusty, from 10am until 11.30am. All are welcome!

**Clare Davis**

## **Ipsden Games Café**

Games Café is having a summer holiday and will resume on Wednesday 16 September at 3pm at Ipsden Village Hall. Thereafter always the third Wednesday of the month, from 3–5pm. We're also planning an evening Games Café starting in October! Look out for the date in the September issue of The Window. Feel free to email [katemoberly@hotmail.com](mailto:katemoberly@hotmail.com) or [thewordbird@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thewordbird@yahoo.co.uk) if you'd like any further details.

**Kate Moberly, Lottie Rundall & Jesse-May**

## **Cholsey Repair Café**

The next Cholsey Repair Café will take place on Saturday 19 September at the Cholsey Pavilion. Doors open at 10am and close at 12.45pm.



Talented fixers offer help and advice free of charge, to get a wide variety of broken household items back into working order, although donations to cover operating costs are always appreciated. Excellent refreshments are available next door, in the Cholsey Community Café.

Further details can be found at [www.cholseyrepaircafe.com](http://www.cholseyrepaircafe.com) or you can email [repaircafe@cholsey.com](mailto:repaircafe@cholsey.com)

**Ian Wheeler**

## **Ipsden "Playtime" – Save the Date!**

That's 12 September: You've heard of pre-theatre suppers? We bring you pre-supper theatre – with an apéritif of fizz and nibbles! Please join us for a little show of little plays, all devised by the (also little) cast and culminating in a not-so-little murder for you to solve.



As with our murder mysteries of recent years, we plan to take our show on a 'grand tour' of local care homes, providing entertainment (we hope!) to residents. We will launch our tour at Ipsden Village Hall at 6pm on Saturday 12 September.

Tickets are just £5 (including a drink) from [TicketSource](http://TicketSource); it's free for under 16s. If you can't do online, text Lottie on 07974 804874 to arrange collection in person; any profits will go to the Village Hall. You can apply for tickets online at [www.ticketsource.com/ipsden-playtime/](http://www.ticketsource.com/ipsden-playtime/) from 22 July onwards.

**Lottie Rundall**

## **Cholsey Village Show**

You are welcome to enjoy an afternoon of family entertainment at this year's Cholsey Village Show on Saturday 22 August, from 12pm until 5pm at Cholsey Recreation Ground. As well as hundreds of exhibits in the Flower Show Marquee, we will have Falconry Displays, Roger Blighty Comedy Act, Wallingford Morris, Cholsey Silver Band and a Fun Dog Show.



There will also be a Car Boot Sale, Vintage Vehicles, Children's games and lots of stalls including bar, lunches, Mr & Mrs Park's butchers, tea and cakes, and of course ice creams. Entry (from Station Road) to the showground and to the car park are free.

**Kate Thornton**

## **Ipsden Village Lottery Tickets**

There are numbers available for the Ipsden Lottery, which helps fund our Village Memorial Hall. A ticket is £1 per week, payable in 10-week blocks, with the winning number worth £25 each week. The winning number is the Saturday night bonus ball number in the National Lottery. If you are interested in joining, please talk to Shirley in the shop to arrange payment and to choose your number. Good luck!

**Clare Davis**