



The Window

**September
2026**



A Fitting Memory

We can safely say there were absolutely no fears about the weather being unkind for Ipsden's umpteenth annual Music at the Barn, which took place on the evening of Saturday 25 July. Held as ever in the scenic grounds of Ipsden Barns, with thanks again to Nick and Kate Miller of the Ipsden Estate, well over 100 people plus children gathered from the village and beyond to enjoy their picnics whilst listening to live performances from talented musicians who gave up their time to entertain us.



Aaron McRobbie kicked off proceedings by welcoming everyone and acted as Master of Ceremonies throughout. Thanks to Steve Daniels (long-time performer at previous events but unfortunately unable to be with us this year), and Aaron & Helen McRobbie for organising the performers. Entry was skilfully and calmly handled by Richard & Kate Moberly and Siobhan Bennett, all keeping lids (quite literally) on the cash received and the raffle tickets sold in the fairly stiff north-westerly breeze, welcome though it was to most of us

Aaron was joined by Helen (Aitch) on ukulele, with Simon Barker on guitar and Paul Birch on cajon drums to form "The Ironics", who played and sang many numbers, some new and some familiar favourites. This was then

followed by a few words from Alistair, son of Ken Fitt and a song from Terry, Gloria Fitt's son.

Siobhan then reminded us that this evening was dedicated to Ken Fitt, longtime stalwart of Music at the Barn, who performed, organised and compered for many years, and who sadly passed away in late May. It was lovely to see his wife Gloria and so many of their family present today.

Siobhan said that the proceeds from this year would go to the Bluebells Day Centre, a charity in Henley providing respite care for people living with dementia and actively supported by Ken for much of his life. It was therefore wonderful that so many members of the Bluebells team also were able to be here with us.

Wendy, Sophie and Pamela, who had all performed with Ken over the years, were then joined on stage by several volunteers to lead us in "Bring Me Sunshine" and "Sweet Caroline". Much enthusiastic audience participation



was observed whilst perhaps some of us quietly recalled Ken playing Sunshine during Clap for Carers, brightening up the somewhat sombre weeks of Lockdown, and also when he brought many a Music at the Barn to a close with his rendition of Caroline. Showstoppers, both of them!

Aaron then introduced Harlequin, a folk trio comprising of singers Chris, Jon and Anya accompanied by guitars. We then heard the winning numbers of the raffle, ably drawn by Helen and eloquently announced by Aaron, with winners' names in some cases necessarily being deciphered by Siobhan! Thanks to those who donated prizes, and congratulations to those who won them.

Back to the music as the evening was brought to a close by Cold Harbour: Nads, Mark and Trinity are a country trio, again accompanied by guitars. It was still just light as we packed up and left to reflect on a marvellous early evening. I suspect some revellers stayed a while longer.



The proceeds from the event totalled over £1,350 and has been forwarded to the Bluebells Day Centre. A final "thank you" is due to all those who sang and played for us, to David Coldwell and Damian Slack for the stunning photographs, and of course to all those who came along to contribute to such a relaxed, delightful and special Ipsden memory.

Peter Bennett



A Year of Dashed Hopes

After last year's disappointing harvest, like the true optimists that all farmers are, we thought that next year "things can only get better", to quote a former Prime Minister. Planting in autumn was perfect and the winter was generally kind, with plenty of rain in the early spring to wash the fertiliser into the rooting zone. Prospects were really very good and optimism high.



But as we all know Nature laughs at man's hopes and dreams. The rain stopped (30mm since March, compared to an average of 200mm+ over the same period) and the sun came out and has roasted everything ever since. Most of the crops that we grow in the UK are unable to cope with extended periods over 27°C as they can no longer photosynthesise efficiently and use water to keep cool. The heat also has the effect of speeding up the maturing processes in the plant, causing harvest to be close to a month early; perhaps perversely, this means that a whole month of sunlight has been lost when compared to the average.

All this has caused the worst harvest of my life, with yields down by 20-40% across the country, with the extending drought now causing heartache for cattle and sheep producers, for they are having to feed their winter forage in mid-summer. Our arable business model relies on the last 10% of average yields for a profit, from which we can pay ourselves and re-invest. So with increasing fuel and fertiliser prices (thank you DJT), as well as extra taxation for employing people, it is going to be a tough 12 months. No new tractors or shiny machinery, but maybe a new bicycle.

Will this cause prices for food to go up in the shops? Well, any rises are not likely to be coming from the arable farmers gate; currently the price of wheat has moved from 19p to 20p per Kg with any shortages being covered by imports. To put the cost of bread into context, 1Kg of wheat makes enough flour for nearly 2 large loaves; that's 10-11p per loaf. *(Editor's note: we would be interested to learn how 11p translates to the price of a loaf in the shops!)*



For potatoes and vegetables, the story is likely to be different as many farmers have run out of irrigation water and are not allowed to abstract anymore; so crops are having to be harvested before they fully grown. Imports of these crops are more problematic because Europe has been suffering just the same as the UK; supermarkets will have to go to different continents for produce.

We do grow one crop that enjoys the heat in the form of maize; this has a different photosynthetic pathway, but even that is now in trouble due to the lack of rain and will be harvested in the next few days rather than during September (it is early August as I write this).

What is the future of farming? In the short term there will be a lot more environmental cropping which the Government/taxpayer seems happy to pay for, but can this last for more than a few years before the money can no longer be found? Environmental cropping refers to agricultural practices designed to protect natural resources, enhance soil health, and minimize the ecological footprint of food production.



Left: One of grass paddocks in front of cereal stubbles. Looks like Australia! And right: all the fire extinguishers that we have used to stop field fires before they became big ones!

Is this year Climate Change or just The Weather? There are going to be more horses, less intensive cropping for niche high value products. Is this storing up trouble for the future by taking land out of food production? I don't know, but I do think that we are in danger of becoming totally reliant on imported food if we are not careful.

On a brighter note though next year really can "only get better"!

Guy Hildred

Farmer Clusters: **A Healthier Landscape**



Many of us probably don't think about our local farmers on a regular basis (except when we're stuck behind a tractor on a country road!), but they are the heart of our rural landscape, growing food, managing road hedgerows, as well as playing a vital role in supporting wildlife across the countryside. Agricultural land accounts for 71% of land nationally and 74% in Oxfordshire. And so, inevitably, the way farmland is managed will have a huge impact on the biodiversity that land can support, for better or worse.

Today, farmers and land managers play a vital role in maintaining, restoring and creating important habitats. Farmers are now joining forces in the form of farmer clusters (also known as farmer-led groups) to care for the landscape, creating space for wildlife and healthier soils, wetlands, and habitats.

These groups aim to facilitate collaborations between farmers and landowners to deliver landscape-scale conservation projects. They also act as support systems and social networks by giving guidance and advice and enabling the sharing of experiences and knowledge. Vitally, farmer clusters are designed to be farmer-led, meaning that members play a key role in the decision-making and direction of the cluster as well as giving them a sense of ownership.

At Wild Oxfordshire, we are proud to facilitate two Farmer Clusters: The Clumps Farmer Cluster, a group of 14 farms located around the Wittenham Clumps, covering just over 5,000 hectares, and the Ridgeway Farmer Cluster with a membership of 15 farms. Wild Oxfordshire is supporting these clusters to deliver workshops and events that meet the specific needs of local farmers. These workshops have covered a broad range of topics from soil health, biodiversity net gain, and hedgerow management, to understanding changes in government grants and farm diversification. *(Editor's*



note: Vaughan Williams tells me that Woodhouse Farm is in the Christmas Common cluster.)



The clusters are also delivering on-the-ground projects, including the Ridgeway Dew Pond Project, restoring dew ponds on the Chalk Downland, and a public engagement project where members of the Clumps Farmer Cluster have installed signs to help walkers understand what they can do to look after the countryside. Both clusters are collaborating with neighbouring clusters to further their impact, whether through shared training events or the Chalkland Revival Project, in which the Ridgeway Farmer Cluster is one of five clusters working together to support farmland birds and manage deer populations across the North Wessex Downs.

In addition, we are pleased to share that we have been awarded funding from the Rothschild Foundation, which will support long-term development and project delivery as well as empowering our members to continue to do their bit for nature in Oxfordshire.

How you can help? Follow the countryside code - leave gates and property as you find them, follow local signs, and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available. Protect the environment - take your litter home, always bag up dog poo, do not light fires, and only have BBQs where signs allow them (*Editor's note: probably best not at all at present!*). Always keep dogs in sight and on leads around livestock and during the bird breeding season. Enjoy the outdoors - visit your local farm shop, learn more about farming and share your knowledge with others, and submit any wildlife sightings to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre. And support your local farmers: buy local food where possible at farm shops and local markets.

Jessica Boucher



Fantasy Lands and Mythical Creatures

We had a wonderful summer at Early Days Nursery. The children adapted well to the warmer temperatures and enjoyed sunshine-soaked days playing in the garden, with lots of water play, outdoor crafting and stories in the shade of our gorgeous beech tree. They continue to care for their worms and to feed the bees. They have just started to reap the rewards of their growing garden: the broad beans, the first of the cucumbers and one admittedly small but delicious tomato have all featured on the nursery menu this month!

We had a beautiful graduation ceremony at Braziers Park for our school leavers at the end of term and had a wonderful time celebrating such a fantastic bunch of children before they head off on new adventures. They also enjoyed afternoon tea prepared by Amber in the last week of term and it was bittersweet watching them giggle, chatter and pour 'tea' for one another, all of a sudden so impossibly grown-up! Congratulations, Class of 2026!



Throughout the holidays we explored the topic of Fantasy Lands and Mythical Creatures, which allows many of our children to enjoy many of their favourite things in one month: dragons, unicorns, fairies and mermaids all feature! We will enjoy lots of magical stories, themed art activities and imaginative play activities around this. After a prolonged period away, we hear the fairies might be moving back into the village

During this quieter period we will be welcoming new children from Hedgehogs who are now ready to become Owls. We find that this is usually an opportunity for our now older children to look after these children as they settle: a role many of them relish.

Rebecca Fern



Mackerels Over Ipsden

It may not be an unusual sight, but we are always blown away by how beautiful a fleece-covered sky looks - and it looked pretty good one August evening. According to weather forecasters, a "Mackerel Sky" often indicates that the weather is about to change with an incoming warm front or moisture shift. Indeed, sailors used the old rhyme "mackerel sky, not twenty-four hours dry" (there are several versions of this, but all have a similar message) to warn that rain or a storm could arrive soon. Let's hope that's right! Thanks to **Shirley Hives** for capturing this sight over Ipsden so well.



Dates for Your Diary

Wed 9 September	Ipsden Coffee Morning	See page 14
Sat 12 Sept	Ipsden "Playtime"	See page 15
Wed 16 Sept	Ipsden Games Cafe	See page 17
Wed 16 Sept	Ipsden Parish Council	See page 18
Fri 18 September	Bridleway 31 Inquiry	See page 21
Sat 19 September	Cholsey Repair Cafe	See page 16
Sat 3 October	Corn Exchange Open Day	See page 14
Sun 4 October	Harvest Festival Services	See pages 10 & 19
Mon 12 October	Police Community Visit	See page 15
Wed 14 October	Ipsden Coffee Morning	See page 14
Fri 16 October	People's Emergency Briefing	See page 20
Sat 17 October	Ipsden Quiz Night	See page 22
Sun 8 November	Remembrance Sunday Service and Curry Lunch	See page 15

Ipsden Village Lottery Winners

25 July	Jenny Booth	15 August	Anne Atkinson
1 August	Pauline Silvey	22 August	See next issue
8 August	Lottie Rundall	29 August	See next issue

An Alternative View from the Vicarage

The Quiet Power of Listening (*in which the therapist borrows the vicar's pen and tries not to lower the tone*):



Every so often in my work as a therapist, someone sits down, sighs, and says, "I don't want to be a burden." It's usually said by a person who has been heroically carrying far too much for far too long, and who has decided that sharing any of it might cause the universe to wobble off its axis. I often reassure them that the universe is sturdier than it looks and that being listened to is not a burden but a blessing. And hearing or bearing witness is a privilege.

There's a line in James that captures this beautifully: "*Be quick to listen, slow to speak.*" It's one of those verses that sounds simple until you try living it.

But listening, real listening, is one of the most quietly transformative things we can offer each other. In therapy, I see how someone's whole posture changes when they feel heard. Their shoulders soften. Their breathing steadies. The thing they're carrying doesn't vanish, but it becomes slightly less sharp, less lonely, less like something they must battle alone.

And parish life, I've noticed, is full of these small listening miracles. A chat after the service where someone confesses they've sung the wrong verse and are hoping no one noticed. A neighbour pausing at the gate to ask how you're doing, even though they only came out to check whether the cat was tormenting the pigeons again. Someone lingering over the hymn books because they sense you might need a moment of kindness disguised as casual conversation.

Rural communities have a particular gift for this kind of listening. It isn't loud or showy; it's simply part of the way village life breathes. People notice one another. They take time. They weave care into the everyday: a conversation at the shop counter, a wave across the lane, a quiet awareness of who hasn't been seen for a few days. Where listening isn't a performance; it's a way of belonging to one another.

Churches, too, are one of the last places where listening happens in its old-fashioned form: face to face, without a screen, without rushing, and

often with someone offering you a biscuit, piece of cake a coffee (and on some lucky occasions even a glass of wine!). There's something beautifully countercultural about that. In a world that feels loud, fast, and full of opinions, the church remains a space where people can bring their whole selves and trust that someone will make room for their story.

And here's the thing: listening doesn't require theological training or therapeutic expertise. You don't need a collar, a clipboard, or a degree in deciphering human emotions (though I admit that last one does come in handy). You just need to be present. To turn towards someone. To let them know, in that gentle parish way, "I'm here. You matter."

But listening is not only something we offer outwardly. There is also the quieter, more elusive art of listening inwardly, to the small truths we carry, the needs we ignore, the feelings we rush past. In therapy, I often see how difficult it can be for people to hear themselves with the same patience they offer others. Yet inner listening is often where clarity begins: not in grand revelations, but in the soft recognition of what hurts, what hopes, and what longs to be acknowledged.

Listening, whether to another or to oneself, is less a technique and more a posture, a willingness to be alongside whatever is present without hurrying it along. It is a kind of hospitality of the soul.

John O'Donohue once wrote, "Listening is the oldest and deepest kind of kindness." And perhaps the deeper kindness is learning to listen not only to the stories others bring, but to the quiet truths within ourselves, the ones that surface when life slows down, when the village grows still, and when we finally give our own hearts the same patient attention we so readily offer every else.

Blessings All,
Fiona



Church Services for September and October

Date	Ipsden	North Stoke
Wed 2 September	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 6 Sept	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 9 September	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 13 Sept	10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Wed 16 September	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 20 Sept	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 23 September	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 27 Sept	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Morning Prayer
Wed 30 September	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 4 October HARVEST	6.30pm Harvest Festival with Harvest Supper	11am Holy Communion with Harvest Auction
Wed 7 October	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sunday 11 October	10am Service of The Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Wed 14 October	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 18 October	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 21 October	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 25 October	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Morning Prayer
Wed 28 October	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	

Church Opening Hours

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

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 9 September, from 10am until 11.30am. All are welcome!

Clare Davis

Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage?



The Corn Exchange in Wallingford is holding a Volunteer Open Day on Saturday 3 October from 10am to 2pm. This is your chance to see what goes on behind the scenes at the Corn Exchange - both the cinema and theatre.



Free guided tours are available, and volunteers will be on hand to chat you through the myriads of volunteer roles available. These include Front of house managers, Box office and bar staff, Ushers, Lighting and sound crew, Stage management, Projectionists, Set design, construction & painting, Acting, Directing and Producing (we do four plays and a panto each year), Costumes, Props/Set dressing, plus many other vital behind the scenes roles covering accountancy, HR, marketing, website, building maintenance and health & safety.

So, come along on 3 October to see for yourself. No need to book, just turn up on the day!

Nicola Webb

Sketches and Mystery



Ipsden 'Playtime' is at Ipsden Village Memorial Hall on Saturday, 12 September, doors opening at 5.30pm. Don't forget to buy your tickets for 'Playtime', a pre-supper show of theatrical sketches culminating in a mysterious murder for you to solve!

This will launch our "tour" of local care homes. Tickets are just £5 (including a drink and nibbles) from [TicketSource](#); and it's free for under-16s. If you can't do online, text me on 07974 804874 to arrange collection in person. Any profits will go to the Village Hall.

Lottie Rundall

Remembrance Sunday Service & Curry Lunch



FOR YOUR DIARIES

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The service this year is in St Mary's IPSDEN at 10.45am

8th NOVEMBER

And will be followed by

The CURRY LUNCH

In Ipsden Village Hall

(Tickets will be on sale in October)

Police Community Visit

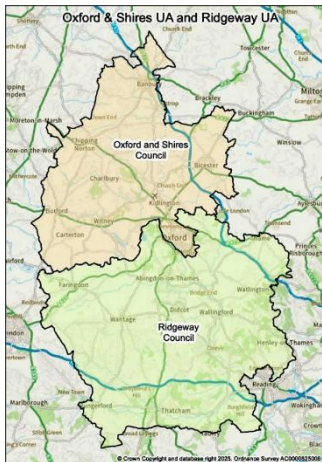
We plan to be outside Ipsden shop/post office again on Monday 12 October at 2.30pm for one of our 'Have Your Says'. We enjoyed our visit to the coffee recently too.

Sarah Jones

Police Community Support Officer



Local Government Reorganisation



On 16 July 2026 the government announced that, from 1 April 2028, the seven existing councils in this area will be replaced by three new unitary councils. The new councils will be:

- Northern Oxfordshire Council – covering most of the existing Cherwell and West Oxfordshire districts.
- Greater Oxford Council – covering Oxford and its immediate surroundings.
- Ridgeway Council – covering most of the existing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts, combined with West Berkshire.

Full details can be found at

<https://3councils.org/>

Ipsden Parish Council

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 or you can email repaircafe@cholsey.com

Ian Wheeler



Play the Game, Eat the Cake!

Games Café resumes on Wednesday 16 September at 3pm at Ipsden Village Hall. Thereafter always the third Wednesday of the month, from 3–5pm.

Lots of people have also expressed interest in coming to an evening Games Café, so we're launching this too on Wednesday 21 October, from 7–9pm! Come and meet your neighbours, and enjoy a cuppa and a piece of cake over a friendly game or two.



Feel free to email katemoberly@hotmail.com or thewordbird@yahoo.co.uk if you'd like any further details.

Kate Moberly, Lottie Rundall & Jesse-May

The Window Needs You!

Thank you to all those who contribute to The Window and help to make it inclusive to those who dwell or work in Ipsden and North Stoke. We always need articles. And that's where all of you can help. We don't have any reporters; most content must come from those living in the villages. That's you!

You might be surprised: what seems mundane and everyday to you may be interesting and new to others. And don't forget to include news about forthcoming village events; and photographs always add substance. Please don't be shy and leave it to the "regulars"! Just let us know if you need help or guidance, and send your contributions to The Window, ipsden.window@gmail.com or me, Peter Bennett, peter.bennett28@btopenworld.com

The Editor

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 September 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 [Ipsden Village website Home](#) and some paper copies are held in the Ipsden shop for individual collection.

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

Ipsden Parish Council Meeting



The next meeting of the Parish of Ipsden Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 6.30pm in Ipsden Village Memorial Hall. A copy of the agenda will be available approximately one week prior to the meeting.

Should residents wish to bring issues to the parish council's attention, please contact the clerk at ipsdenpc@gmail.com. Parish councillors and the parish clerk continue to address issues and carry out council work via email. Please check the website regularly for updates and/or join the (data-protected) Village Group Email by contacting the clerk at ipsdenpc@gmail.com.

Ipsden Parish Council

Harvest Festival

There will be services for Harvest Festival in both churches on Sunday 4 October.

The service at North Stoke will be at 11am. Please will people leave fruit/veg and other consumables including non-perishables (tins, cereals, cleaning materials, etc) in the church prior to the service.

Food where possible will be donated to the local foodbank in Sonning Common. As in previous years, the service will be followed by a "Harvest Auction", proceeds going to the foodbank too.



The service at Ipsden will be at 6.30pm. Again, non-perishable food donations for the foodbank are most welcome. The service will be followed by a Harvest Supper in the church, most probably a "bring and share" affair but please watch out for any further information or contact a member of Ipsden PCC.



Last November, ten of the UK's leading experts briefed an invited audience of over 1,200 politicians and leaders from business, culture, faith, sport and the media. The briefing set out the implications of climate and nature breakdown for health, food systems, national security and the economy.

A 45-minute film has been made from the event "The People's Emergency Briefing". It features Chris Packham, Jennifer Saunders, Deborah Meaden and members of the public, processing and making sense of information from the Westminster event. Many of us will have already heard of or seen the film elsewhere, but we are now showing it in Ipsden in the early Autumn. It is in Ipsden Village Hall on Friday 16 October at 7.30pm and will be followed by a facilitated discussion. Entry is free.

Please share details of the screening with your friends and local networks – the film has specifically been created to reach out to speak to everyone including people who are not already aware of the critical state of the climate and environment.

Why it matters now: Climate and nature breakdown will affect every constituency in the country, from health and food systems to infrastructure, security to economic stability. This crisis is more serious and immediate than many understand. There is strong evidence that bold, urgent action will improve lives and livelihoods, but the window of opportunity is narrowing as we delay.

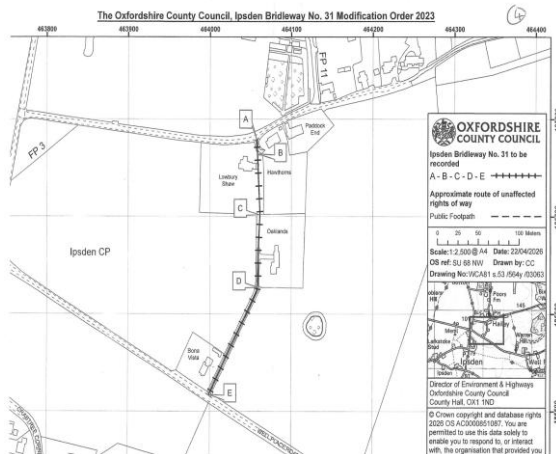
The 45-minute film combines authoritative scientific content from the Westminster event with reactions from members of the public and some more familiar faces – designed to help audiences process the information on a more human level. It will deliver the frank facts about the threats, but also the enormous benefits if Government leads genuine emergency action.

Many of those attending the event commented that, although the facts are alarming, they felt a sense of optimism about confronting the challenge together, seeing a pathway to a better future through planning for possible future problems such as water and power outages in our community.

Nina Thomas & Kate Moberly

Bridleway Revisited Again

Public Local Inquiry to determine the Oxfordshire County Council, Ipsden Bridleway No. 31 Modification Order 2023



The Public Inquiry that sat in Ipsden village hall in April of this year and was adjourned until Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) had arranged for the route from Hailey down to Well Place Road was reconvened online on Thursday 11 June.

The inspector adjourned the inquiry around midday to be reconvened in Ipsden Village Hall at 10am on Friday 18 September 2026.

Ipsden Parish Council



Quiz Night in Ipsden!

Could you pass the “Life in the UK” test? Come along or bring a team to compete at Ipsden Village Memorial Hall on Saturday 17 October 2026, from 7pm until 10 pm (doors open at 6.30pm).

Tickets £10 from Shirley at the Village Shop or £12 online (we're charged a service fee for online purchases) via [Ipsden Quiz Night! at Ipsden Village Hall event tickets from TicketSource](#). Children are welcome -- £5. Included is a 2-course supper and the quiz! All proceeds go towards Ipsden St. Mary the Virgin Church.



Tammy Nemeth

Trends in Local Farming

Farming in South Oxfordshire blends traditional large-scale arable production across the Downs and Thames Valley with a prominent shift toward regenerative agriculture, organic systems, and local food networks. Key locations like the Chilterns feature family-managed enterprises, conservation initiatives, and direct-to-consumer farm shops.

There are several key aspects of local agriculture. Arable and mixed farming is where large-scale cereal and crop production remains a primary land use, though many estates are balancing intensive methods with soil health improvements and cover cropping. There is a shift towards regenerative and organic farming, with local efforts in organic management, low-carbon food production, and restored biodiversity.

There are also diversification and moves into retailing. Many local holdings have expanded into farm shops, pick-your-own produce, and community-focused spaces. For example, the South Oxford Farmers and Community Market is a weekly market selling locally grown and produced food and non-

food goods. Regional groups and local councils actively encourage participation in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policies and Local Nature Recovery Strategies to protect chalk streams and wildlife corridors across the Chilterns.



Arable farmer David Passmore finished harvesting early on his 500 acres in Ewelme. He says this is a stark sign of an extraordinary and difficult year in the Southeast, which is in official drought status. Yields are roughly a third down after four heatwaves, with just one significant spell of rain that came too late to save some crops. Additionally, wheat prices have only moved by about 10 per cent, he says, nowhere near enough to cover the loss in output. He says this has again exposed what he calls a broken food system, where the farmers at the bottom are taking all the risk as processors and retailers still make money.

Tim Bamford, Country Land and Business Association Southeast regional director, echoes those frontline concerns. He says farmers are reporting this as "the worst harvest in years", insisting the Government must start planning for a more volatile, hotter and drier future. He said: "This is the third drought in five years. What was once extraordinary is becoming part of farming in Britain, and government must start planning for it. Farmers prove time and time again that they are adaptable and can provide the solutions, but they aren't invincible. They need to be valued now more than ever."

"After the Harvest"

Here are views of the fields around us after the combines have passed through our wonderful countryside, this year so much earlier than usual as explained in Guy Hildred's article and elsewhere in this issue. Thanks to Damian Slack for these brilliant photographs from the air above us.



"On the Beach"?



The effects of the Summer's heatwaves and drought are visible on this bleached landscape of the Berkshire Downs