



Swallowfield Parish

Newsletter

Winter 2023



Experience the fruits of our labour

Several years ago Swallowfield Parish Council working with Connecting Communities in Berkshire received lottery funding to buy fruit trees which were planted by volunteers on the land next to the Riseley Team Room and Tennis Club creating our orchard. Now for the first time we are able to see and experience the fruits of our labour (no excuse for the pun). The orchard has produced fruit in the past, however, apart from the odd pickings, the majority were simply left. Enter Chris Morrissey of Pretty Green Landscapes who noticed that the orchard was going to produce a really good crop of

apples this year, but what do we do with them? Answer: Why not use the fruit to promote the contribution of the orchard to sustainability and at the same time promote innovative ways to reduce the food we waste (#stopfoodwaste – #StopWastingFood)?

Chris and his team got to work and harvested the apples, then took them to be professionally pressed, pasteurised, labelled and bottled. This experiment proved a great success and so he asked our communities through social media for any spare or unwanted apples – 420kg were donated!

These too were bottled, and the “suppliers” rewarded with a bottle of pure apple juice (no water or additives just the pressed juice from the apples). To recoup the costs involved, they are now being sold locally (Riseley Tea Rooms is one outlet). Is this the start of further community led harvesting initiatives for 2024? Only you can answer that, but Chris has proved this can work – One example of the responses received so far: “Very impressive PGL! Thanks for collecting my apples. Lovely to be part of a community effort and to meet you” well done sir!

News in brief

Introducing Paul Schulz: Swallowfield Parish Council

I moved to Swallowfield in 1996 to be in the countryside and proceeded to commute to work from the village for the next 25 years. Only once retired did I discover what a delightful part of the world this really is. It was then that I realised how much other people have done to keep it that way and I joined the Parish Council to help.

In my working life I specialised in behavioral modelling and ended up as Chief Data Scientist for a marketing software company. My retirement was perfectly timed (by accident, not design) as my role was being replaced by Artificial Intelligence (AI) software!

I am a very active cyclist with the Swallowfield Velo Club whose rides take in much of the beauty of Central & West Berkshire.

Paul Schulz
Paul.schulz@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk



Contents

- 2 News in brief**
- 3 Reflections from the Chair**
- 4 Parish news**
- 5 Facilities for hire**
- 6-13 Local clubs and groups**
- 14 Your Local Borough Councillor Update**
- 15-19 Local Support and Amenities**
- 20 Celebrating Christmas Together**

Communicating with Our Residents

We will be reviewing our communication strategy in 2024 and would like your feedback. This newsletter is one method, as is the website and our Facebook page, plus you can always contact the office or consult on a one-to-one basis with a Councillor. Our challenge: "Is this enough"? – "Is this what you want"? – "What else would be practical"? – "How can we improve"? Ideally, I would like to collect and collate thoughts and ideas for presentation in the next edition and to begin taking the next steps. Please submit your comments to the clerk preferably by email (clerk@swallowfieldpc.co.uk) and copy to me. Thank you.

Cllr John F McDermott
Lead Communications
John.McDermott@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

Reflections from the Chair

Welcome

First of all, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Paul Shulz who was co-opted onto the Council at our October meeting to fill the remaining vacancy. This brings the Parish Council back to its full complement of nine councillors.

The Autumn newsletter was the first edition to have been produced since David Lamont left the council and relinquished his role as the newsletter editor and coordinator. By all accounts it went exceptionally smoothly much to the relief of all involved.

I can bring you exciting news about the Council's project to make improvements to the Parish Hall. It is hard to believe that this project was initiated back in 2019 but subsequently held up due to COVID. Since then, the master plans have gone through several iterations after consultation with hall users and the project has been divided into phases to minimise disruption so that the hall can continue to function during the works. All being well, the tender for the first phase is due to be issued before Christmas (and I do mean 2023!). The aim is to be in a position to appoint a contractor to start work in March or more likely April next year. The works will include insulating the atrium so that it does not overheat in the summer or get too cold in winter. This will make it a much more usable space. A new corridor will be formed to link the atrium with the main hall so that the kitchen isn't used as a thoroughfare anymore and a new modern kitchen will be installed. The corridor will also allow easy access to the disabled toilet. Other improvements include a service counter which will be formed between the parish office and the atrium to provide improved security for council staff who are often working on their own. The main hall front entrance and atrium entrance doors are to be replaced with automatic sliding doors which will provide much improved wheelchair access and greater convenience generally. Later phases are planned to provide improved wheelchair access to the Davies Room and many other improvements.

The events of late summer and autumn seem a long time ago now. The Swallowfield Show was a great success and enjoyed fine weather. Sparks in the Park was less fortunate with the rain.

The community orchard at Riseley has at last produced a reasonable quantity of fruit and thanks go to Chris Morrissey for harvesting it and taking it to be professionally pressed, pasteurised and bottled. The bottled juice is now being sold locally.

Swallowfield Pre-school has made an excellent start to the new school year having extended its opening hours. They are keen to recruit new members to the enthusiastic committee team – you don't have to have school age children to support this deserving charity.

Preparation work has taken place in Van Demans field to prepare for tree and hedge planting which is due to take place starting in November.

The heavy storms in October and early November led to inevitable flooding as the ground became saturated and once again the sewers and pumping station were unable to cope with the volume of water.

By the time you receive this, Christmas will be almost upon us, so it only remains for me to wish all of you a joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Cllr John Anderson
Chair

john.anderson@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk



Parish Hall Improvements Project

It is hard to believe that this project was initiated back in 2019 but subsequently held up due to COVID. Since then, the master plans have gone through several iterations after consultation with hall users and the project has been divided into phases to minimise disruption, so that the hall can continue to function during the works. All being well, the tender for the first phase is due to be issued before Christmas (and I do mean 2023!). The aim is to be able to appoint a contractor to start work in March or more likely April next year. The planned works for this phase include:

- a)** Insulating the atrium so that it does not overheat in the summer or get too cold in winter, making this a much more usable space.
- b)** A new corridor will be formed to link the atrium with the main hall so that the kitchen isn't used as a thoroughfare anymore and a new modern kitchen will be installed. The corridor will also allow easy access to the disabled toilet.
- c)** A service counter which will be formed between the parish office and the atrium to provide improved security for council staff who are often working on their own.

The main hall front entrance and atrium entrance doors are to be replaced with automatic sliding doors which will provide much improved wheelchair access and greater convenience generally.

Additional improvements are planned for later phases of the project and will depend on funding availability. These include improved wheelchair access to the Davies Room.

Cllr John Anderson
Chair

Financial Planning

2024 PARISH BUDGET

Every year the Parish has to submit a spending plan for the ensuing year. The budget forms the basis for determining the precept and must be submitted to WBC in late January. The budget comprises income and operational expenditure and the topping up of existing earmarked reserves to fund planned project work.

LONG TERM PROJECT PROGRAMME – WE WANT YOUR SUGGESTIONS

To pay for improvements across the parish, your council uses "Ear Marked Reserves" (EMR), which essentially are pots of money that the council has created to pay for specific planned capital projects and non-routine maintenance. The EMRs are funded by the council setting aside part of its income (the precept, etc.) and its share of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is paid to WBC by developers when building new houses. CIL payments received by the parish must be spent on things that help to mitigate the impacts of the associated development. A further payment will soon be due from the Cove Homes development (as a result of the new houses being built off Trowes Lane). Three examples of such projects are the "Parish Hall Improvements" (see above article), the upgrade to the Riseley Tennis Club Pavilion and new play equipment. An example of non-routine maintenance was the re-painting of the play equipment in Farley Hill, Riseley and Swallowfield.

So, what improvements would you like the Council to consider for inclusion in the long-term project programme? Just to be quite clear, your suggestions will be discussed within the council but there can be no guarantee that they will be included once constraints such as feasibility, funding and priorities are taken into account. Sometimes the best improvements cost very little, so please include all your thoughts and ideas – it's never all about the cost, it is about the outcome to be achieved and the impact it can have. Please submit your suggestions to the clerk preferably by email (clerk@swallowfieldpc.co.uk) and copy to me.

Cllr John Anderson
Lead Finance
John.Anderson@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

LOCAL CONTACTS

All Saints' Church, Swallowfield and Nutbean Cemetery
0118 988 5923 or email office@loddonreach.org.uk

Citizens Advice (Wokingham) 0808 278 7958

Emergency Services 999

Farley Hill Primary School 0118 973 2148

Gas (Emergency) 0800 111 999

Keep Mobile 0345 544 0850

Lambs Lane School 0118 988 3820

Medical (Non-emergency) 111

Police (Non-emergency) 101

Reading Buses 0118 959 4000

Readibus 0118 931 0000

Riseley Village Tea Room 0118 99 67375

Royal Berkshire Hospital 0118 322 5111

SSE Electricity (Emergency) 0800 783 8866

Shinfield Voluntary Car Service 0118 9883400

Spencers Wood Library 0118 988 4771

Swallowfield Community Responders
0118 988 4384

Swallowfield Calico Trust 0118 988 4661
or 0118 988 2014

Swallowfield Parish Stores 0118 988 5138

Swallowfield Medical Practice
0118 988 3134 (general) or
0118 988 3473 (appointments)

Thames Water (Emergency) 0800 714 614

Wokingham Borough Council 0118 974 6000

Wokingham Hospital 0118 949 5000

24hr Floodline Service 0845 988 1188

DID YOU KNOW?

Our redesigned newsletter will result in a saving of up to 32,000 sheets of paper annually.

The Main Hall, Davies Room and Rose Room at Swallowfield Parish Hall are available for weddings, parties, clubs/groups, meetings and other events. Please call 0118 9885 444 or email finance_officer@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

For information on hiring Victory Hall in Farley Hill, please call 0118 324 6600 or email hire@victoryhalltrust.com

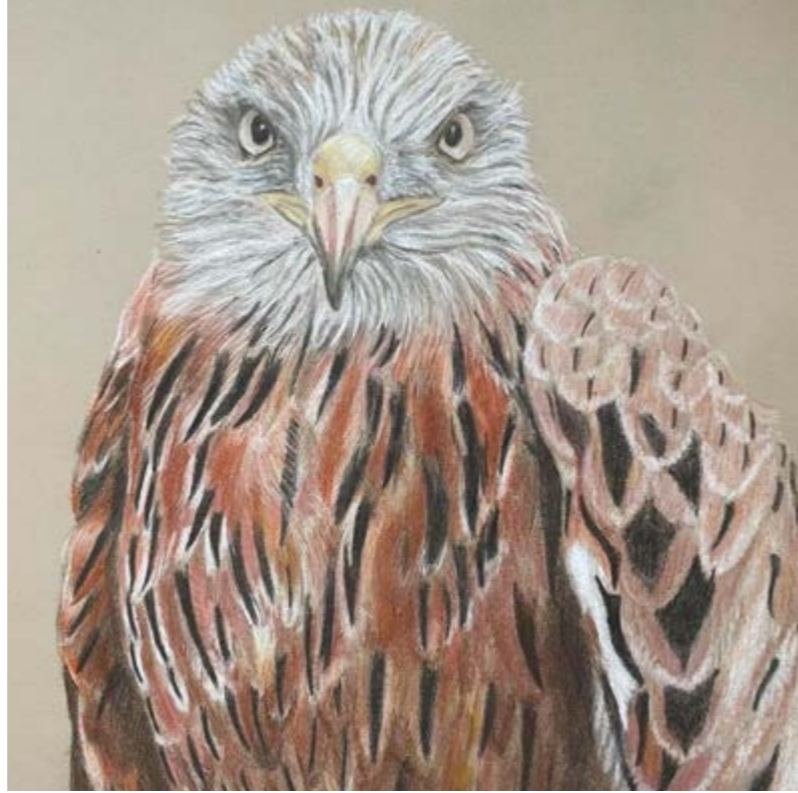
CONTACTING THE PARISH COUNCIL

Councillors can be contacted through Liz Halson, the Parish Clerk.

0118 988 5929
clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk
www.swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

Your Parish Councillors are: John Anderson (Chair), Mark Binns, Catherine Drew, Laura Edmonds, Ian Fullerton (Chair, Planning), John McDermott, Margaret McDonald, Paul Schulz and Simon Taylor.

Local clubs and groups



SWALLOWFIELD ART GROUP

Though the lovely weather for the Swallowfield Show is now just a memory, we are proud of our success in the art section of the horticultural competition, where members scored high places in several categories, including Best in Show in the human portrait section.

We also welcomed over 1,000 visitors to the Art Group marquee, 916 of whom voted for their favourite painting. Many people made favourable and complimentary comments on the high standard of work produced by a local amateur group.

This term we have spent a few weeks studying how to create realistic portraits of birds of prey, using artists' coloured pencils on a special paper called Pastelmat (pastelmat.com), produced by the French manufacturer Clairefontaine (www.clairefontaine.com/gb).

The paper is made using fine cellulose fibres, Pastelmat combines a smooth, velvety feel with an incredible ability to grab and hold multiple layers of coloured pencil or soft pastel. The technique requires extraordinary patience and hour after hour of work, as the artist builds up colours one after another to achieve a great degree of depth and subtlety.

Next, we shall be working on more seasonal pieces, some of which will no doubt be turned into Christmas cards.

If you are interested in joining the group, please contact us. We meet at Swallowfield Parish Hall on Mondays from 2pm to 4pm during term times.

Patricia Taylor



Contact: Jenny Boddington
t: 0118 988 5804



SWALLOWFIELD PARISH ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

It's been another productive few months down at the allotments. Our working parties have done a fantastic job keeping the site tidy, trimming the hedgerows, and preparing the smaller raised beds ready for planting.

We have had some landscaping work completed to improve drainage over the winter months, and our new pond is filling up nicely. We are looking forward to it attracting new and vibrant wildlife in the spring.

Things are winding down for winter, but there are still things to do in December:

- Late crops can be harvested, including parsnips, leeks and winter cabbages. These can all be left in the ground until you need them, to make warm winter dishes.

- russels sprouts can be harvested when they are around 1" in diameter. The plants will benefit from being staked as heavy plants can easily be blown over in strong winds.
- Clear away any old plants and add to your compost heap. Tidy the beds and cover them with manure or well-rotted compost to enrich the soil, then cover with cardboard or a membrane.
- December is a good month to winter-prune apple and pear trees to control their shape and size. Gooseberry and currant bushes can also be pruned.
- December is also a great time to plant bare-root canes and bushes, make sure you have plenty of compost around the roots.
- Before the first frost sets in, be sure to protect any tender plants with a cloche or fleece and be one step ahead of those

hungry pigeons by keeping your brassicas covered with netting. Ensure the netting is securely attached to the ground all the way round to prevent birds and other wildlife from becoming trapped inside.

- It's also not too late to lift and divide large clumps of rhubarb, replanting them in soil, enriched with leaf mould or well-rotted manure.

If you would like to know more about the allotments, take a look at our website or contact the SPAA Secretary, Linda Bradley.

The SPAA Committee wishes you all a very Merry Christmas!

Jane Scuffell, Plot-holder

Contact: Linda Bradley
e: secretary@swallowfieldpaa.org w: www.swallowfieldallotment.org



SWALLOWFIELD VELO CLUB

The hour change has happened, and SVC is now in its winter schedule. A later start (08:30) and shorter rides but always with a warming coffee stop at halfway to warm up and have a chat with friends. Winter is definitely an important time in the cyclists' calendar, as the old saying goes "Winter Miles Summer Smiles". So, if you haven't been out with us lately and you have big plans for 2024 then this winter is a great time to return to club cycling or even to give it a try.

Winter cycling comes with some added risks to cycling, so all cyclists (not just us Sunday riders) need to remember:

- Be seen – Wear something bright. MIB may be cool, but it can get you in the Royal Berks.
- Lights – high strength and at both ends.
- Waterproof – always have a lightweight one in your back pocket; it might be sunny when you leave but this is England and being soaked is miserable.

- Winter tyres – fit them now and (hopefully) avoid changing a puncture in a rainstorm.
- Hats & Gloves – it's cold out there on a bike, enough said!
- Drivers – Please Please Please keep an eye out for us and give us a wide berth.

Our rides depart from School Green, Shinfield every Sunday at 08:30 in winter. Winter rides are shorter, typically 40 to 60 miles, with a coffee stop in the middle, and run in 3 social groups based on your preferred speed and distance.

Ride details can be found on Ride With GPS and are published weekly on our Facebook page.

If you fancy joining us for a ride or would simply like to find out more about club cycling just contact us.



Contact: Paul Schulz
e: paul.schulz@mail.com **w:** www.swallowfieldvelo.club
f: www.facebook.com/groups/svcmembers



SWALLOWFIELD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

In near-perfect weather conditions, we welcomed over 8,000 visitors to the annual two-day Swallowfield Show over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

This year's Show was a huge success in all respects, and we will donate a record amount of money to local charities, with a list of recipients to be published later this year. Thank you to our wonderful team of volunteers, including several new people this year, who have enabled us to organise and grow this truly community-led event. Many thanks also to Lord and Lady Bearsted and the staff at Farley Estate for once again allowing us to hold the show in Swallowfield Park and for helping us with the show set-up.

In the main arena, visitors marvelled at the aerobatics of The Tigers children's motorcycle display team and were enthralled by Nick Gregory's gundog display and Ye

Old Red Tail Falconry. The Dolphin Marching Band and the Classic Vehicles parade added sound and colour.

The popular 'Village Green' provided an area where visitors could enjoy a drink from the bar and food from the wide variety of stalls, whilst enjoying a great selection of music and "Fred in the Shed", our children's entertainer. There were smiles all round for parents and children alike, who were enjoying the fairground rides, Lions' land train, football fun, go-karts and circus skills.

The Horse and Dog Shows were both able to run a full programme of events and welcomed large numbers of competitors, with classes to suit all levels.

You'll find more photographs and information on www.swallowfieldshow.co.uk.

There was an increase in the number of competition entries in the Horticulture marquee and well done to all those who entered and helped to maintain this traditional part of the show.

Membership of the Swallowfield Horticultural Society is now free and ensures that you will receive copies of our show schedules and newsletters, as well as being able to participate in the society's activities.

If you would like to become a member please contact secretary@swallowfieldshow.co.uk.

SWALLOWFIELD SHOW 2024

If you are interested in getting involved with this unique community event, please contact us.

Contact: Graham Stanley
e: chairman@swallowfieldshow.co.uk **w:** www.swallowfieldshow.co.uk

COFFEE CORNER

Coffee Corner moved out of our usual home in the Davies Room at the end of September to hold a Macmillan Coffee Morning, raising a fantastic £1,043. Together with £250 donated to ASD Family Support, Wokingham, last month, our charitable giving for the year is over £2,000, all from villagers dropping in for a cup of tea or coffee and indulging in a bit of cake!

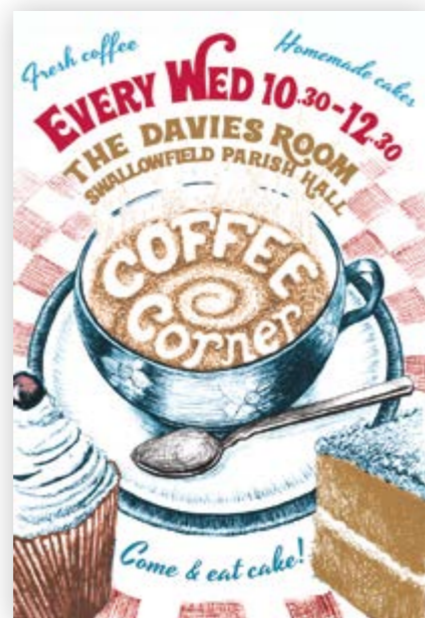
It wouldn't be possible without a great team of volunteers, ready to don an apron and do a bit of baking every few weeks. If you like to bake and have a little time to spare, we'd be happy to welcome you to the team.

We have a wonderful group of regular customers on Wednesday mornings, some arriving in their classic cars. You never quite know what special vehicle might turn up in the Parish Hall car park.

Regular or occasional visitor, you will get a warm welcome, a good cup of coffee and a delicious piece of cake whenever you drop in. Why not come along to our Christmas Special on 20th

December to sample never-to-be-forgotten Caribbean Christmas cake, proper mince pies and some chocolate indulgence?

The Coffee Corner Team



t: 0118 988 4920

MONDAY NIGHT

Mondays from 8pm to 10pm

Contact: Daphne t: 07745 180108
e: daphne_seamark@hotmail.com

THURSDAY NIGHT

Thursdays from 8pm to 10pm

Contact: Malcolm t: 0118 988 2736

SWALLOWFIELD LADIES' BADMINTON

Thursdays from 2pm to 4pm (except August)

Contact: Val Payne t: 0118 988 3594
e: valg.payne@btinternet.com



SWALLOWFIELD BADMINTON CLUB

Social badminton is a great way to keep fit through low impact exercise and a great way to make new friends.

We are a friendly group and attract members from the villages of Swallowfield, Riseley, Farley Hill, Spencers Wood and Shinfield.

We are also a non-league club (so no pressure), and our playing standards are quite varied. Whatever level you are or aspire to be, you will find us a friendly and accommodating group. Our season runs from September to the end of July, so why not come along to a free 'taster' session! We hope to see you soon.

There are three groups who meet at the Swallowfield Parish Hall. These are as follows:

History of Swallowfield, Riseley and Farley Hill



LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Before 1066 the manor of Swallowfield was held from Edward the Confessor by one Saxi. After the Norman Conquest it passed to a supporter of William 1st and remained in the gift of the monarchs until the mid-16th century. In the Domesday Book of 1086 Swallowfield (Soanesfelt) was worth £8 6d and had 18 labourers, a mill, a fishery, 12 acres of pasture, wood for 20 pigs and land for 7 ploughs.

Fluctuating loyalties and fortunes meant that possession of the manor passed through various families. It was just within Windsor Forest, which was a haven for robbers. In 1256 Sir John Le Despenser obtained the Pope's permission to build a Chapel at his manor of Swalefeld to avoid travelling further to Mass through the "bogs and brigands". An earlier Chapel seems to have deteriorated.

Contact: Mike Round
e: slhsoc@yahoo.co.uk w: www.slhsoc.org.uk

In the 14th century Edward III and his son, the Black Prince, had stables and a stud at the manor. Then in the early 16th century it was a dower gift to five of the wives of Henry VIII.

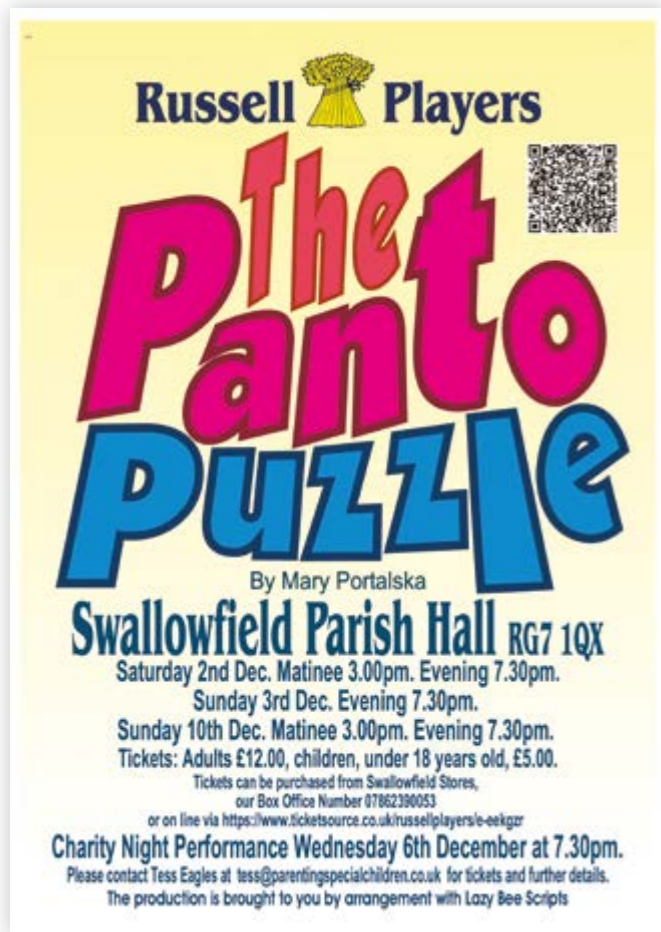
Swallowfield was sold by Henry's son so passed through many private hands, notably the Backhouses, the Hydes, the Pitts and from 1820 to 1965, the Russells. The Hydes built the present house in the park, Thomas "Diamond" Pitt built the bridge, and the Russell family were persuaded by Rev. Charles Kingsley to restore the church. They "updated" the main house, oversaw the removal of the settlement near the church, the focus shifting to the village known today and started the Swallowfield Show.

Riseley has an historic position, sitting at a point where the Roman route from Silchester and the West to London, the "Devils Highway", crossed the road from Hampshire to the North. Consequently, there were tradesmen, shops and amenities there well into the 20th century, with hostelrys doing good trade, The Bear, The Bull, The Dog and Partridge and The Sun being some names. Prior to the Romans there was an Iron Age settlement which preceded Silchester. The first record Miller at Riseley Mill was Francis

Belcher in 1792, he insured the mill for £100 and a nearby granary for £500. This suggests prosperity. Until 1844 Riseley was a detached part of Wiltshire, as were Sheepbridge and Farley Hill.

Farley Hill is a hamlet which since the 18th century has seen the development of large estates based around Farley Court, Farley Hall and Farley Castle, with local people mainly working for local landowners. Censuses reflect this and tell us that there were local services, for example a post office and a blacksmith. There were also small sand and gravel pits. Paupers at one stage complained of working long hours in the pits but were threatened with loss of benefits if they refused to work in them. Life for farm workers was still hard in the 1920s, with cottages having few amenities. From 1958 to 1988 Farley Castle was the site of the Hephaistos School for clever but disabled children, while Farley Hall in the 21st century has added livery and horse trials to its farming activities.

Jennifer Highwood
Archivist to the Swallowfield History Society



RUSSELL PLAYERS

THE PANTO PUZZLE BY MARY PORTALSKA, DIRECTED BY CHRIS PARTRIDGE.

Dame Dolly Mixture and Cheeky Charlie arrive at the theatre only to find that the pantomime has been cancelled for this year. The caretaker reveals that all previous pantomimes are stored in boxes when they are not in use. He agrees to show Dolly and Charlie the panto boxes, only to discover that someone has been tampering with them and three things are missing from Cinderella's box. A distraught Cinderella has been left a cryptic note which is the only clue to the identity of the thief and the whereabouts of the stolen goods. It is clear the villain is set on causing as much disruption to the pantomimes as possible. He or she needs to be stopped! With the help

e: russellplayers@gmail.com **w:** www.russellplayers.co.uk

CHARITY NIGHT WED 6TH DEC, 7:30PM

Tickets: £20 per person and includes a delicious two-course meal. A cash bar and raffle will also be available. Purchasing your tickets: Available from Tess Eagles, email: tess@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

Hosted by and in aid of: Parenting Special Children Parenting (PSC) A local Berkshire based charity providing specialist support services to families of children and young people with special needs and disabilities. Set up over 17 years ago, the charity has supported over 12,000 professionals, parents, and children. For more information: www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

The Russell Players would like to thank you for your continued support. We wish everyone (especially our members) all the best for the Festive Season and a Happy New Year.

Juliet Devon

of a rather surly emergency fairy, and some out-of-date fairy dust Dolly and Charlie visit the other pantomimes in their quest to identify the culprit and recover the missing items.

This production is brought to you by arrangement with Lazy Bee Scripts.

REVISED PERFORMANCE DATES

SAT 2ND DEC
3.00pm - Matinee
7.30pm - Evening

SUN 3RD DEC
7.30pm - Evening

WED 6TH DEC
Charity Night Performance
7.30pm - Evening

SUN 10TH DEC
3.00pm - Matinee
7.30pm - Evening

TICKETS

£12.00 for adults
£5.00 for under 18's

Available at Swallowfield Parish Stores

RP BOX OFFICE
07862 390 053

www.ticketsource.co.uk/russellplayers/e-eekgzzr



SWALLOWFIELD PITT BRIDGE LODGE

As we approach the Christmas Festivities we can look back on a year of solid achievement. Our numbers continue to grow from a waiting list of future Initiates and from joining members from other Lodges. All who come to our meetings have indicated how they were overwhelmed by the warmth of the welcome they receive and how much fun and enjoyment we have - and they have in our company.

Our next meeting is on Monday February 5th when we will be

Contact: Tim Double, Secretary
e: timpac5261@live.co.uk **t:** 07703 254 350
w: berkspgl.org.uk/craft-lodges/19970

Installing a new Worshipful Master. We will also be receiving a visit from the Assistant Provincial Grand Master in his official capacity as he wants to find out how we do things. Swallowfield Pitt Bridge Lodge do things slightly differently from other Lodges and he wants to see for himself the positive impact we have and whether this could be a blueprint for the future. I believe we may well be.

The reason that we do things slightly differently is because the Lodge was the brainchild of Dr Roger Jago, who was a very senior and forward-thinking Mason. Roger wrote many learned papers on all aspects of Freemasonry and had very firm views on the way forward for the Fraternity. We are all dedicated to keeping the Lodge the way he envisaged it.

Being a Swallowfield Lodge, we see it as part of our community duty to support local organisations whenever we can. Although we do

not have unlimited funds, if you are part of a local organisation in need of some assistance, please contact us and we will see what we can do for you.

The Lodge meets four times a year in the Marquee at the Mill House Hotel, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield. Meetings are on the first Monday in February (when we install our new Master for the year), then in September, November and the second Monday in May. If you are interested in being initiated into the Fraternity, or you are a local Mason who would like to join us, please contact us for further information. We offer a fascinating experience in our excellent local venue with warm fellowship and good food.

OTHER GROUPS/CONTACTS

Citizens Advice Wokingham

t: 0808 278 7958

w: citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk

Farley Estate

w: www.farleyestate.co.uk

Farley Hill Cricket Club

w: farleyhill.play-cricket.com/home

f: www.facebook.com/groups/farleyhillcc/

The Rainbow Trust

Contact: Natalie **t:** 07749 416062

e: Natalie.whitby-lear@rainbowtrust.org.uk

w: www.rainbowtrust.org.uk

Riseley, Swallowfield and Farley Hill Charitable Trust

f: www.facebook.com/RSFCharitableTrust

Riseley Tennis Club

w: clubspark.lta.org.uk/RiseleyTennisClub

f: www.facebook.com/groups/riseleytennis

Wokingham Libraries

w: www.wokingham.gov.uk/libraries

Your Local Borough Councillor Update

Changes To Postal and Proxy Voting

As a reminder, to vote at a polling station you are now required to bring a suitable photo or a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC). This will continue to be the case for all future elections.

- If you applied for a VAC last year, you do not need to apply again.

POSTAL AND PROXY VOTING

From 31st October, there are changes to the rules, as a result of national legislation (the Elections Act), which received royal assent in 2022.

As an elector, you will have the option of completing a postal or proxy vote application through a new Central Government system using the internet (If you are already a postal voter, there is no need to re-apply).

For security reasons, all postal and proxy vote applications (online or paper) will need to include a signature, date of birth and national insurance number. Postal vote applications will be valid for three years after which, they will have to be renewed.

Important: ALL electors with a "permanent proxy vote" for elections in England will need to re-apply for their proxy vote by 31st January 2024.

The Borough Council is keen that anyone wishing to vote by post applies sooner rather than later to avoid any undue delays. However, if an elector applying for a postal vote fails to verify their identity (and it is close to the deadline of an election), the application can be determined using the exception or attestation process up to and including polling day.



Bohunt Secondary School Increase Capacity

A NEW SIXTH FORM

Bohunt Secondary School the first in the Borough for over 50 years, will soon have a new sixth form allowing 300 students to finish their schooling locally and remain nearer home – Most students currently continue their education at other schools and colleges outside the Borough.

150 ADDITIONAL PLACES FOR YEARS 7 TO 11

The project includes more places for ages 11 to 16 and a commitment to further improve the school's facilities for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

FUNDING & COSTS

The estimated cost of the revised project is expected to total £10.5million.

- The Borough Council has approved £5.25million (to be funded through borrowing)
- Bohunt Education Trust has agreed to match the funding

As I write this brief update, Autumn is in full swing giving us some very wet and windy weather. I hope that you all have a good festive break, which is just around the corner.

Stuart Munro, Member for Swallowfield
stuart.munro@wokingham.gov.uk

Local Support and Amenities



• George Winter our very own D-Day veteran



ALL SAINTS CHURCH SWALLOWFIELD

Christmas is fast approaching, and you are warmly invited to the services handily listed on the back-page of this newsletter. Our singing at Carols by Candlelight (4pm on Sunday, 17 December) will be led by the Farley Singers, so expect a treat. The Crib Service (4pm on Christmas Eve) heralds Christmas for young and older alike, as we provide costumes for all the children and create the Nativity tableau, building parental memories which last a lifetime. This is followed by Midnight Communion (11.30pm) and the Family Service (10.30 on Christmas Day).

The Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Swallowfield war memorial was as memorable as usual and was a pleasure to meet some ex-Servicemen new in the Parish.

Contact: Barbara Stanley **w:** 0118 988 5923
e: office@loddonreach.org.uk **w:** www.loddonreach.org.uk/all-saints

We also had wreaths laid for the first time by Jasdeep, representing our much-appreciated Parish Stores, and children from the newly expanded Pre-School. Both being important institutions of our communities, which we in the church are always keen to support.

In other news, we recently had a 'Clear, Clean and Consider' morning at the church. We sorted a lot of the interesting 'stuff' and undertook a deeper clean, shining the brasses and removing some bees and spiders - but we happily left the swallow's nest high in the eaves. Thank you to all who took part. We took time to think and pray for the future of the Church. It has been here, in some form, for over 900 years. How do we as a community ensure its future? A question to ponder upon and return to in 2024.

Enjoy Christmas - and remember Who it was instituted to celebrate!

Barbara Stanley, Church Warden

SWALLOWFIELD PRE-SCHOOL

We have had a fantastic start to the new year at Swallowfield Pre-School. Thanks to support from staff, parents, and the Parish Council our new opening time of 8:45am until 3:15pm has been a great success. This success is evident from the smiles on the faces of the children as they play and learn.

We are very lucky to have such a fantastic setting and outdoor space. The children and staff have been outside enjoying our surroundings - something we've been doing come rain or shine. One of our favourite activities is going to the copse, pretending we're on a bear hunt, finding holes and making nests and collecting pinecones for arts and crafts activities.

Another favourite activity is cooking and baking. We aim to do at least one cooking activity every week. Whilst typing this I have the ingredients set out in the kitchen ready to make edible sparklers in time for bonfire night. We make a wide variety of different things, including cheese biscuits, cheesecake, fruit salad and courgette muffins.

This term we have also started offering sports lessons with Jenny at Sporty Little Stars. The children absolutely love learning new skills and taking part in different sporting activities such as athletics, football and basketball. One of my favourites was watching the children learn how to kick and throw a rugby ball, maybe we've got the next Owen Farrell or Courtney Lawes in amongst our group of children.

Looking forward to the next few weeks we have our Christmas party and performance coming up. This is always a lovely event for the parents to come and see what their children get up to at pre-school and watch as their children put on their first ever Christmas performance. As a parent myself, I can't wait to see my daughter sitting there singing her heart out!

Part of being a charity run pre-school means that we have a committee who support me in managing some of the aspects of the pre-school. We are always keen to welcome new members to our enthusiastic team. Over the course of the next academic year there will be openings for our officer roles, which require three to four hours of voluntary work a month. If you think you might be interested in joining our committee then please contact the chair.



Contact: Bridie Loudon
e: committeechairswfpreschool@outlook.com
w: www.swallowfieldpreschool.org.uk



RISELEY VILLAGE TEA ROOM

Here we are entering our 5th month at the tearoom. How quickly the time goes. We have served so many people and it's been incredible! Thank you all for your support, you're amazing and we are grateful.

We have had our first evening event with the amazing Steve Morano and Lawrie Wright, which was a great success, during which we found out that Karen is a mixologist extraordinaire – her cocktails were amazing!

We had a room full of guests who had a fantastic night, there was even had a bit of dancing!

If you would like to know about our events but don't use social media, please let us know. We can set up an e-mailing list or simply call in and ask us over a cup of tea and a slice of cake.

We have made a few changes to the tea-room including re-arranging the cards, jewellery and gifts along with original paintings – You just never know, what you're looking for could be on one of our shelves.

During the Christmas period (and maybe beyond), we will be selling Home-Made Fudge, Preserves, Jams and pure Apple Juice pressed from the apples grown locally in the Riseley Orchard (nothing added – just juice), all are great gift ideas and right on your doorstep.

Supporting local independent businesses is really important to us, so we now provide (specially made for us) our own sourdough and teacakes by "Your Davey Bread", they are incredible. If you don't know Davey, he is a local Baker based in Swallowfield!

Contact: Debbie & Karen
e: theriseleyvillagetearoom@gmail.com **t:** 0118 996 7375
w: www.riseleyvillagetearoom.co.uk
f: www.facebook.com/RiseleyVillageTeaRoom



Our Festive Tea menu will be available until we close on **22nd December** – In the final week before Christmas we will be open from **Wednesday 19th December**.

Saturday 9th December
– **Traditional Italian Cuisine Dinner**
A joint venture with our good friends "A Taste of Genoa", based in Spencers Wood. Seating is limited so please call and book your place; we look forward to sharing a great evening.

We will re-open on Thursday 18th January and look forward to getting to know more of you in the New year. We have lots of ideas for 2024 so watch this space.

If the board is out on the main road, just call-in, we would be delighted to see you. And remember, the tearoom is available for private bookings for any occasion, please call.

So, from Karen, Debbie and the rest of the team have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

SWALLOWFIELD MEDICAL PRACTICE

STAFFING

After nearly 20 years at the practice, Dr Prabhakar will be retiring in December. We will all be very sad to see him go however he will continue to be a Partner and will be back on a regular basis providing GP sessions on an ad hoc basis along with some remote working.

The Partners are pleased to confirm that Dr Gurung joined the team in August and is currently working 6 sessions. This is due to increase to 8 sessions towards the end of the year.

We have also had a new practice nurse join the team called Paige. She joined in October and is working 5 days a week.

w: swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk



ACUTE ILLNESS APPOINTMENTS

We are now well into our busiest period with lots of coughs and colds being seen. Please do remember to use the NHS website for more common ailments prior to calling as some of these can be treated at home or via the local pharmacy, which in turn eases the pressure on our acute illness team. The following links provide advice for coughs and colds.

- Coughs: www.nhs.uk/conditions/cough/
- Colds: www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/



THE CALICO TRUST

The Calico Trust is a long-standing local charity that provides financial help to people in need who live in Swallowfield Parish – the area covered includes Loddon Court Farm on the Beech Hill Road, Stanford End, Riseley, Swallowfield, Farley Hill and the surrounding rural areas.

The trustees all live locally and include a Church representative and two people nominated by Swallowfield Parish Council. If you, or someone you know, feel the Trust could be of assistance, please let us know. Information is held in confidence and enquiries are always welcome.

Contact: Celia Adams
t: 0118 988 4661 or 07946 654 424
e: celia8844@gmail.com

Contact: Ros Riddell
t: 0118 988 2014 **e:** ros.riddell@btinternet.com

MUSICAL MOVEMENT

SEATED EXERCISE FOR ALL ABILITIES,
DEMENTIA & WHEELCHAIR FRIENDLY

Thursday 11am-12:15pm

With tea, biscuits and time for a chat

£3 voluntary donation

Subsidised by Riseley, Swallowfield & Farley Hill Charitable Trust and Swallowfield Parish Council

JUST TURN UP

Or for more details call Coral on 07765681797



THE LINK VISITING SCHEME

ABOUT US

The Link Visiting Scheme is an award-winning charity dedicated to reducing loneliness in Wokingham Borough. For over 25 years, we've brought vital, life-enhancing social connections to older people through regular visits and local community activities. With the support of over 420 wonderful volunteers, we currently help around 570 people feel valued and connected.

w: www.linkvisiting.org

Giving the gift of friendship this Christmas

CHRISTMAS 2023

For many, Christmas Day is a day for family, for getting together and celebrating with loved ones. Sadly, however, for some people, it is a difficult day where isolation, loss and grief are even more keenly felt.

For the 12th year running, The Link Visiting Scheme are planning to change that story for older people who are alone. If you think you would benefit from some company on the 25th, or you know someone who would, we'd love to hear from you.

Our Christmas Day lunch is a shining example of what we do all year; providing good company and warmth and making a world of difference. On Christmas Day we also provide delicious food, treats, and gifts too! It's not to be missed. We want to help those who are housebound or those who would like to be with others in a local venue.

Our Community, is Thriving Celebrating Christmas Together



**ALL SAINTS CHURCH,
SWALLOWFIELD**

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2023

- Sunday 17th December, 4pm Carols by Candlelight
- Sunday 24th December, 4pm Crib Service
- 11:30pm Midnight Communion
- Monday 25th December, 10:30am Family Communion
- Sunday 31st December, 10:30am United Benefice Service at Swallowfield



**CHRISTMAS
CAROLS**

TUESDAY 12TH DECEMBER, 7:30PM

The Crown, Swallowfield

Mulled Wine & Minced Pies



RISELEY VILLAGE CAROLS

SATURDAY 23RD DECEMBER, 6PM

Followed by mulled wine and mince pies at The Bull

PLUS

A visit from a gentleman in red and his elves. Bring your jingle bells and join the fun

Switching on the Christmas Tree Lights – Will be posted in the group "Beautiful Riseley" on Facebook



Disclaimer Articles that have been submitted to Swallowfield Parish Council for inclusion in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Parish Council or individual councillors. Anyone wishing to comment on such articles should please contact those involved directly. Printed on sustainably sourced paper.