

INKPEN AND COMBE BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026



CHURCH LETTER

My dear friends,

As we gather around the manger this Christmas, I'm struck by just how much has unfolded in 2025. We are all a year older (some of us more willing to admit it than others!), yet with that passing of time comes a deeper sense of who we are as a church and as a community.

Across our country, we've seen moments of change. A new Archbishop of Canterbury, Dame Sarah Mullally D.B.E., brings a fresh voice of faith and encouragement to the Church of England. Here in our diocese, our new Bishop, Mary Emma Gregory, guides us with wisdom and care, supporting parishes like ours as we grow in faith and serve our communities.

Here in our parish, we've seen signs of renewed life. New faces have joined us, familiar ones have stepped into new roles, and long-prayed-for ministries have begun to take shape. In our homes, life has unfolded in its own beautiful way: grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and even furry companions have brought fresh joy. These arrivals remind us that love is always coming into our lives, renewing and sustaining us.

Christmas itself brings a similar gift. The glow of lights, familiar carols, and well-loved traditions remind us of stories, people, and moments that shape us. Yet Christmas is not just about looking back—it's about Emmanuel, God with us now. In a world that often feels uncertain, the birth of Jesus anchors us in hope that does not fail.

As we step into January and the season of Epiphany, that hope invites us to journey further. Just as the wise men followed the star, we are called to follow the light of Christ into the world—bringing love, kindness, and hope wherever we go. This is a season of discovery, of noticing where God is at work, and of joining in that work with courage and joy.

So, as we enter 2026—older, perhaps wiser, and hopefully a little kinder—may we carry with us the message of the stable: that light shines in darkness, love is stronger than fear, and God's future is always bigger than we imagine. May our parish continue to grow in faith and community, and may God bless you and your loved ones abundantly in the year ahead.

Wishing you a peaceful, joyful Christmas and a bright, hope-filled Epiphany.

With love and prayers,

Your Vicar, Annette

NEWS FROM St. MICHAEL'S

We are very grateful to lay reader Andy Pain who led our **Remembrance Service** in November and to John Seabridge who preached with great emotion about memories of his grandfather's experiences in the First World War. The service was, as always, very moving as a candle was lit by Wilf Webb during the playing of Elgar's Nimrod. Thanks to David Thomas who lent the 1914/18 soldiers' candle holder which belonged to his grandfather while serving with the Royal Surreys.



The First Christmas by Ethel King Martin 1910, Inkpen Church

Our **Advent Services** begin with **Christingle and Puppets at 4pm on 7th December**. This is a candlelit service where the promise of oranges, sweets and puppets ensures a Church packed with children. Meg kindly invites any children (and adults too) to her house in Heads Lane to make the Christingles at 10 o'clock on Saturday 6th. Drop Meg an email to let her know you are coming megandtonyatkins@googlemail.com

The **Carol Service** is on Sunday 21st December at 6.30. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served from 6 o'clock to warm everybody up. There will be a small choir for this service and if anyone would like to sing in it, please contact Christopher Sears at treasurer.inkpenchurch@outlook.com

On **Christmas Day** we have our usual two-part service starting at 9.45 with a Family Service, followed, after a short break to release cooks and over-excited children, by a short service of Holy Communion.

Holy Communion at Home

We are now offering parishioners Holy Communion at Home. This might appeal to those who are unable to come to Church. Contact Annette 07708 823285
revannettes@aol.co.uk



CHURCH SERVICES FOR INKPEN AND COMBE

INKPEN

Sunday 7th December – Christingle with Puppets at 4pm

Sunday 14th December – Holy Communion at 8.30

Sunday 21st December – Carol Service at 6.30 pm with Mulled Wine and Mince Pies from 6pm

Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day Service at 9.45, Family Service followed by Holy Communion

Sunday 4th January – Compline at 4pm

Sunday 11th January – Holy Communion at 8.30am (Book of Common Prayer)

Sunday 18th January – Holy Communion at 9.45am

COMBE

Sunday 21st December – Carol Service at 3pm

Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day Service at 11.15am

WEST WOODHAY

Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day Service at 11.15am Holy Communion

Sunday 11th January – Morning Prayer at 11.15am

Sunday 25th January – Holy Communion at 11.15am

CHURCH CONTACTS

Benefice Administrator: Tamara Laing, part-time at the **Benefice Office** Email: wbb.office.contact@gmail.com **07359 327072**

Churchwardens:

Inkpen: Charlotte Bampfylde (inkpenchurch@outlook.com)

Combe: Tina Fiertz (tel. 668529), Katherine Astor (katherine@kirby-house.co.uk).

CHURCH SERVICES AT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HUNGERFORD

Our Lady of Lourdes, Priory Road, Hungerford RG17 0AF

Parish Priest - Fr Zbigniew Budyn 01635 40332

Sunday Mass - every Sunday at 9.00am

Weekday Mass - every Wednesday at 10.00am

Royal British Legion Poppy Collection

Thank you to all our house-to-house collectors, Inkpen School, The Crown & Garter pub and to all of you who donated to the poppy collection in Inkpen this year.

We raised £1,905.45 and then with those of you who kindly gave Gift Aid the total increased by £95 taking the total to £2,000.45 which is more than last year. A fantastic contribution to all the support the RBL offers those in need and much appreciated. I am so grateful for all the support from the house-to-house collectors and for all your generosity. Special mention must go to Meg Atkins who has for years done the collection on Heads Lane and seems to manage to get everyone to complete a Gift Aid envelope. Thank you to those who came to the Remembrance Service your donation of £635 helped make this year's total such an amazing sum.

I know many don't have cash and there are many other places to donate and get a Poppy, so this is a fantastic total for the village contribution to this important cause.

Stay safe and thank you.

COPY DATE

Please email aliedesforges79@gmail.com by **January 23rd** with all features, news and events for the February edition. Please note the Bulletin is also available on <https://www.inkpenvillage.co.uk/> and on the Inkpen Residents' Facebook page.

INKPEN PLAYING FIELD & PAVILION

The IMPFT (Inkpen Memorial Playing Field Trust) is pleased to host several regular clubs and societies as well as being available to hire for events (parties, work functions, luncheons etc.).

Please check for an up-to-date list of events / bookings under impft.inkpenvillage.co.uk



Activities and regular bookings:

NEW Art Classes	Every 2 nd Tuesday of the month @ 10am (Sept – Feb initially)	gilly.burrough@gmail.com
Climate Group	Sessions throughout the year	climate.inkpenvillage.co.uk
Cricket	Sundays during the season See calendar for fixtures	Inkpencricketclub.org Impft.inkpenvillage.co.uk
Daisy Chains	Every Friday 09:45-11:45 From 6 th June	clerk@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk
Football 5-a-side	Sunday Evenings	Chris Stapleton Mob: 07909 851968
Football (Juniors to U16)	Sunday morning from 10:30am during the season	HTJFCSecretary@outlook.com
History Society	Sessions throughout the year	History.inkpenvillage.co.uk
Netball	Monday evenings Juniors 6pm / Adults 7pm (excl. bank holidays)	Sally Mob: 07444 593 560
Pop in Café	Every 1 st & 3 rd Thursday of the month @ 10am	All welcome, just “pop-in”
Stargazers	Sessions throughout the year	Stargazers.inkpenvillage.co.uk
Tennis	Pay as you play / subscription (tbc)	clerk@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk
Yoga	Saturday 09:45 -10:45 pay as you go	Oliviaboydall@gmail.com Mob: 07554 446 502



INKPEN STITCH AND KNIT

The Stitch and Knit group will meet in Inkpen Village Hall on Wednesday 3rd December at 7.30 p.m. This month we are very pleased to welcome local independent florist, Kelly Louise, who will be showing us how to make our own Christmas wreaths. There may be one or two places available for those who haven't been to S&K before - please contact Stephanie on 07713 097609 if you're interested, as Kelly will need to bring additional materials. There is a charge of £35 for a small wreath, and £55 for a large one, to include all materials.

THE VILLAGE HALL



Inkpen Village Hall - Regular Clubs & Activity

www.inkpenvillagehall.org email:- inkpenvh@gmail.com, tel:- 07963 647087

Carpet Bowls	Thursdays	1.30-4.30pm	Sandy Wilson, tel: 01488 668336
Darts Social Club	Mondays Fortnightly	7pm	Mark, mob: 0756 828 4750
Guitar Tuition	Tuesdays	4-8pm	Russ Timms, mob:- 07860 830515
Pilates	Thursday mornings	11.45am	Caroline McCord, Mob: 07817 503546
Market	On hold - more volunteers required	10-12.30pm	Christine, Mob: 07767 480777 Email: Humphries.c@gmail.com
Stitch & Knit	1st Wed every month	7.30pm	Stephanie Pike, Mob: 07713 097609
Seated Exercise	Wednesdays	11.30am	Kate Wiggins, mob: 07706 357801
Table Tennis	Wednesdays	4pm-6pm	Linda Pateman, email: lindapateman@yahoo.co.uk Mob: 07774 775599
U3A Table Tennis	2 nd & 4 th Mondays	1.30-3.30pm	Linda Pateman, details as above
Yoga	Tuesday Thursday	9.30am 6.30pm	Olivia Boydall, Mob: 07554 446502



INKPEN SCHOOL / INKSPOTS

Here at Inkpen Primary School, we are getting very excited about Christmas. Although it is still November, rehearsals for our Infant Nativity "A Christmas Recipe" are well underway. The Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children are really looking forward to sharing this with their families. The older children are also enjoying their preparations for our school Christingle service and are enjoying rehearsing some traditional Christmas carols as well as some well-known modern classics.

As part of our festive preparations, our Pheasant and Red Kite children went to Yew Tree Garden Centre to select and dig our Christmas tree. Thank you to Yew Tree for donating this tree to us and for providing a great opportunity to our children.

On behalf of everyone at Inkpen Primary School, I wish you and your families a safe and peaceful Christmas.

THE INKPEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Thanks to Stephen Smallbone, the newspaper clips have been brought closer up to date. We're now covering the period from 1750 through to 1960. This is a huge piece of work that will be made available on our history website very soon.

We still have audio tracks to complete and photos to scan. We could do with some help scanning photographs and transcribing hand written text so please get in touch via inkpen-climate@outlook.com if you think you can help.

We will have another attempt at starting some proper archaeology, (a dig on an Inkpen site) in late March / early April 2026. The site that we are hoping to dig is thought to be a late Saxon, early Medieval site with links to the crusades. If you think you might be interested, please email us, as above, and we'll keep you posted. The dig is likely to last for a minimum of several weeks. We will try and get a trained archaeologist to organise the dig so that we don't damage the site.

Do keep an eye on the history group's website history.inkpenvillage.co.uk for the date of the next meeting, which is likely to be in February. Have a great Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

INKPEN POP-IN CAFÉ

Through-out October Pop-In café users raised £80 for Dementia UK. This has now been sent to them, and we are very grateful to all those that contributed. Do remember that if you need help with, or for, a dementia sufferer, just call [0800 888 6678](tel:08008886678), or email helpline@dementiauk.org. Admiral Nurses are there to help you. You are not on your own – just make that call!



We are now entering the exciting Christmas period. Special cakes, chocolates, and drinks, we might even run to a little sparkly Christmas tree. Do come and join us. If you haven't been before, don't put it off any longer. You will be most welcome and it's on your terms, just as you want it to be.

Here's what AI has to say about the café: *Socializing is important because it improves mental and physical health by reducing loneliness and stress, and it boosts cognitive function. It fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, helps in personal growth and the development of social skills, and can even contribute to a longer lifespan.*

The December dates are the 4th and 18th of December and the 8th of January. Just the one café in January because the first Thursday is also New Year's day. Put these dates in your diary and make sure you come and join us. See you at the café. Have a Happy Christmas and New Year.

STARGAZERS

At our November meeting it was cloudy yet again, so we improvised with a short talk about the fabric of space-time and a little bit about what Black holes might be. In December we will again hope for clear skies but just in case it's cloudy we'll be talking about the basics of telescope design – what the F number means, plus a short talk about how to spot the constellations in the night sky.

The December meeting is on the second Wednesday, which I think is the 10th. All are welcome. It's £15 for annual membership (June to June) or £3 per person for a single visit. The January meeting is on the 14th. Our aim is always to look at the night sky, but we seem to be rather unlucky in this respect.

We are noticing poorer and poorer conditions in which to observe the night sky. Anecdotally we believe this to be due to global warming/climate change. Well now we have been invited to join with Newbury Astro and Marlborough College to methodically measure these changes in sky quality.

At our November meeting there was unanimous support for our involvement with this. Now we must work out what we need in terms of equipment and what we need to do in terms of using it. This is really important work.

If you would like to come and join our group then please email us at inkpen-climate@outlook.com

THE LIBRARY BROUGHT TO YOU

Library services provide an amazing array of things that you can easily access at home. You can read the daily papers, journals and magazines, listen to audio books, and even read trending books online. If you haven't tried it, do give it a go. You'll need a library number and password I think but these are easy to get from the library and it's completely free.

On your laptop or tablet, go to westberkshire.borrowbox.com/eaudiobooks/featured.

If you're not on the internet but would like to give it a try, or you don't know how to set it up, come along to the Pop-In Cafe, and we'll help you get started. Or, you can ring West Berkshire Library on 01635 519900, email library@westberks.gov.uk. They'll be more than happy to help you get started.

You can also use the 'borrowbox' app.

This is an amazing resource which you are very likely to find worth your while trying. As there seems to be less and less worth watching on TV, what could be better than cosying up to an audio book on a dark autumn or winter evening.

VILLAGE LIFE

Carol Singing on the Green at Lower Green Thursday 11th December 6.30pm

Join us for Carol singing on the Green at Lower Green on December 11th at 6.30pm. Mulled wine and alcohol-free hot toddy provided to keep throats lubricated. We'll collect in aid of a local charity - more news soon. See you on the 11th.

Inkpen Common Phone Box Book Exchange



The book exchange in Inkpen Common is back in action as a community mini-library and book swap. We have given it a spruce up, and will continue to make improvements in the coming months, including more shelving, a richer range of books and books of the month. We would welcome some select, good quality donations, if you have a book or two you would like to share with other villagers! Please place these in the labelled box just inside the door.

You can find the book exchange just outside the Crown and Garter. Please do pop in if you're passing — have a browse, borrow a book, swap a book - and enjoy!

NEW ADULT BALLET CLASS FOR ALL BEGINNERS

If you would like to improve your posture, flexibility, strength and general fitness but have not had ballet lessons for many years or not at all, then this is the class for you!

Every Friday during school term time at 9.15 - 10.15am at the Coronation Hall, Kintbury.

INTERMEDIATES (For those with some ballet experience) at 10.30 - 11.30am.

Classes are taught by former professional ballet dancer with years of teaching experience and founder of Kintbury Ballet School.

For more information please email alex@kintburyballet.com.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Parish Council and Planning Meetings are displayed on the notice boards outside the Crown & Garter Pub and on the Lower Green Triangle and online on the Inkpen Residents Facebook page and at www.inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk. Both Council and Planning meetings are open to the public so please feel free to attend if you wish to raise any parish issues or have any comments on any village planning applications.

Parish meeting now has an open forum session which allows villagers to raise any issues, ideas, and questions.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 12th January 2026 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall.

The Parish Council would like to welcome councillor Steven Whittaker who was co-opted in November.

Parish Councillors:

John Corne - Parish and planning Chairman (john.corne@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk)

James Fisher – Parish Vice Chair (james.fisher@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk)

Brian Cox - (brian.cox@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk)

Mark Bates - (mark.bates@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk)

Clare Macinnes - (clare.macinnes@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk)

Steven Whittaker – (stevenwhittaker@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk)

Clerk to the Parish:

Angela Boyce (clerk@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk)

Upcoming Planning Applications:

If you have a planning application or wish to comment on a local application, then you can attend our planning meeting and comment online on the West Berks Planning Portal.

Useful Information:

Upcoming Roadworks:

Website: one.network – where you can set alerts of local road closures and planned works

Report a problem on a road or pavement:

Report a variety of problems relating to roads including drainage issues, potholes, streetlights and grass or trees that need cutting.

www.westberks.gov.uk/article/35980/Report-a-problem-on-a-road-or-pavement

or call 01635 551111

Fly Tipping:

Did you know you can report any fly tipping to West Berks Council using the online portal to identify the location of the rubbish.

www.westberks.gov.uk/report-litter-and-fly-tipping

Inkpen Parish Council can be contacted at clerk@inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk

Website: www.inkpenparishcouncil.org.uk

Merry Christmas everyone, from the Parish Council.

OCTOBER 'COVER COLOURING COMPETITION'

We were bowled over by the response to our 'colour the front of the bulletin' competition. Thank you to all three of you who sent your efforts into us. Tony Hart would have been tickled pink. After much deliberation, we chose Honor and Teddy Adams as worthy winners but thank all the other entrant for their superb effort. Prizes are on their way.

