

Village News

in Swindon Village, Cheltenham

Your local newsletter sponsored by the Parish Council and delivered by volunteers.

December 2025 and January 2026

Edition No.519



DECEMBER

Saturday 6th **Wreath Making** Swindon Village Hall. Pre-booked only
Bring and Buy Sale St Lawrence's Church 2pm

Monday 8th **Parish Council meeting.**
7.30 Swindon Village Hall, bar area.

Friday 12th **Carols in the Hall.** Swindon Village Hall 7pm

Sunday 14th **Community Afternoon Tea.** Swindon Village Hall 2pm

Wednesday 17th **Carol Singing.** Meet at the Rectory 6.30pm

Thurs 18th & Fri 19th **Santa's Grotto.** Swindon Village Hall

JANUARY

Mionday 12th **Parish Council meeting.**
7.30 Swindon Village Hall, bar area.

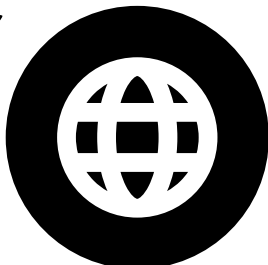
Wednesday 14th **Swindon Village Society.** 7.30pm.
The AGM followed by a short talk on some of those buried in our graveyard given by Eileen Allen. Members only but you can join on the night.

Sunday 25th **Litter Pick.** Start 10.30 Village hall

A Connected Community!



Using your phone's camera to hover over each QR Code square below for direct link access.



Parish Council Website

For full, detailed information from and about the Parish Council visit www.swindonparish.org.uk



Parish Council Facebook Page

A public page for live information and news updates from the council:
www.facebook.com/swindonparish



Swindon Village Facebook Community Group

A private group for the discussion of local issues, sharing and requesting help in the local community.



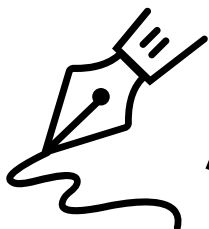
Anti-Social Behaviour

If you have any concerns about anti-social behaviour do not hesitate to contact the police.



Ring 101 (you may be charged for this phone call)
email101@gloucestershire.police.uk
<https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/ro/report/>

NB: Get an INCIDENT REPORT NUMBER and let the parish know about it. If the police are not made aware of the problem THERE ISN'T A PROBLEM.



A Note From The Editor

As we approach the festive period, the Parsons family are looking forward to a rather busy Christmas Day and currently we are expecting fourteen around our table. We've always embraced big family Christmases, but I think the most we've had has been eleven and that was before Covid restrictions. I won't bore you with the guest list, but the youngest is seven and the most mature (!) is eighty-one. It's going to be fun!

One of our traditions, is that although we start lunch on Christmas Day at one (ish), we have a break after the turkey, (always turkey in our house, no substitutions) and have small gifts that Father Christmas leaves in a basket by the table. These are then handed out by the youngest member present. We open these one by one. Often, they are silly so everyone waits to see what is hidden under the wrapping paper (FC does have a good sense of humour – Ho ho ho) and then, we play a few small games. We finally get around to dessert around three. By that time, we all have room for the Christmas pudding and the various accompaniments. Always custard for my brother, extra thick cream for most others, but for me it's got to be brandy sauce. Yummy!

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of my regular contributors for getting their pieces to me on time so that putting the Village News together takes a lot less effort. I'd also like to say thank you to you all for reading it too, especially my ramblings! That only leaves me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. See you all in 2026!

Karren





Swindon Parish Council

Swindon Parish and Community Website: <https://swindonparish.org.uk>

The change to a unitary authority continues to be debated. All of the county's borough, city and district councils will disappear in the biggest reorganisation of Local Government for many years. The County Council favours a unitary authority covering the whole county rather than an East-West split. There has been a consultation but it attracted little comment. It is hard to form an opinion when the pros and cons of the different options are unclear.



Some of our paths get very muddy as we move into winter, especially the path through Old Mill Way and the footpath extending beyond Stantons Drive out into the fields towards Elmstone Hardwicke. Last month I spoke about dressing the path through Old Mill Way with woodchips generated by felling a dead willow tree. National Grid have now tackled the hedge in Stantons Drive where there was a danger the hedge could grow to interfere with a power line.

Local hero Bill negotiated to retain the generated woodchip and has spread it on the footpath which can become all but impassable in wet conditions. A massive thank you to Bill.

We have had a contractor clear the Village Hall car park and trim the hedges. Everything now looks clean and tidy. The next step will be renewing the car park markings.



Swindon Parish Council

Our litter picks continue to be a huge success and really make a difference. We have decided to give everyone a break in December and will resume on the last Sunday in January. I have to say that, as expected, we are seeing an increase in fly tipping following the closure of the recycling centre.

I became Parish Clerk in 2012. I was finishing full-time employment and wanted a part-time job to keep my brain working and to give me a new experience. I learnt on the job and studied for the relevant qualification (Certificate in Local Council Administration or CiLCA). The people I have interacted with over the years have been lovely, so I feel it worked out really well for me and hopefully I've made a contribution.

We have reached a stage where the parish is growing considerably in size and changes in legislation make the job ever more demanding. I don't want to commit more hours and have informed the council that I wish to either step back or step down to enable me to continue with other interests.

In a small Council the position that we generally refer to as Clerk often combines the role that is formally known as the Proper Officer and the role of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). In large councils these two roles are separate.

I could reduce the scope of my role to that of the RFO (with reduced hours) and we could take on someone as the Proper Officer. Alternatively, we could take on someone new with more hours and I could step away.




Swindon Parish Council

We are going to advertise the job and the route that we take depends on the skills and experience of the successful applicant. If any of you wonderful readers are interested in the role please let me know. Anyone who doesn't hold a CiLCA would need to be prepared to work towards gaining one.

And that's it for another year. Thank you to all the volunteers associated with the allotments, the Village News, the Village Hall and the litter picks. A big thank you to our Parish Councillors who contribute so much. See you in February. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all. Be kind, be safe.

Shaun Cullimore
Clerk to Swindon Parish Council
parish.clerk@swindonparish.org.uk





Swindon Village Hall
CHRISTMAS GROTTO

*Father Christmas invites you to the
Swindon Village Hall Christmas
Grotto on the 18th and 19th December*

Each booking costs £10 per child and includes fun Christmas activities whilst you wait, hot chocolate, and a gift from Father Christmas.

There will also be mulled wine and mince pies for the adults.

Bookings available between 4-7pm via:

bookwhen.com/swindonvillagehall

Father Christmas



St. Lawrence's Church

RECTORY REFLECTIONS - REV JACQUELINE

I really enjoy watching action films with characters such as James Bond, Jack Reacher, Indiana Jones. Films where for a short space of time, I can be immersed into a world of subterfuge, secrets and heroes. Nothing too gory – something which seems a bit far-fetched and imaginative. Daring stories of espionage have captivated generations of ordinary people who, just for a while, can be part of something bigger.

Christ's Mission was three-fold. He was sent to redeem humanity, to prepare our way to eternal glory and to close all the windows and doors to evil. This was no easy task; indeed, we might have considered it to be Mission Impossible. As we approach Advent, a season of waiting in anticipation, we might reflect on what has drained us over the last year. We are all weary of the gloom and doom in the news; the ever-increasing cost of living, the pressure on our hospitals or the horrible things that people sometimes do to each other and their communities. Good news can feel in short supply.

Advent is a season where we look forward to new beginnings and put some things behind us. Sometimes it's very beneficial to draw a metaphorical line under something and move on. God is the beginning and the end of all creation – the Alpha and Omega. We could use this time anticipation of Christmas to prepare for our own new growth and to prayerfully work out where we fit into the bigger picture. It is often the case that how we perceive ourselves might not be what God wants for us.



St. Lawrence's Church

I would like to suggest that our Mission, (if we choose to accept it) is to bring the message of hope to at least one person this Advent, even when our own lives feel difficult. These verses from Isaiah 43 give a message of hope at a time when we might need some encouragement to look forward.

*Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert. (v 18-19)*

Go well into Advent and I wish you a joy-filled and peaceful Christmas.





Services at St. Lawrence – December 2025

Sunday 7th December	9:30am	Family Holy Communion
	5pm	Evensong
Sunday 14th December	9:30am	Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer
	9:30am	Holy Communion
Sunday 21st December	6pm	Carol Service
	3pm	Nativity Service
Christmas Eve	11pm	Midnight Mass
	9:30am	Family Holy Communion
Christmas Day	9:30am	Family Holy Communion
Sunday 28th December	10am	Benefice Holy Communion



Christmas Services at St. Lawrence

Friday 12th 7pm Community
December Carols in the Hall

Sunday 21st 6pm Carol Service
December

Christmas 3pm Nativity – Come
Eve dressed as your
 favourite Nativity
 Character!

11pm Midnight Mass

Christmas 9:30am Family Holy
Day Communion



St. Lawrence's Church

We are taking a break from the Christmas Tree Festival this year but you'll still have a chance to acquire some lovely gifts and decorations, and to chat over a cup of tea/coffee, at our Bring & Buy event on 6th December. There will be a raffle too.

Admission is free but we hope you'll be generous with your shopping and donations!

We have a large quantity of baskets for sale – ideal for making up hampers for family and friends – and some lovely scented candles. Donations of good quality items will be welcome.

See you there!

Karen Evans (01242 241678)

St. Lawrence's Church

Chatterbox

Every Tuesday

10.30am to 12noon

Pop in for coffee/tea and biscuits
and a good old chat about
anything and everything.



Everyone's welcome, old or new. (It's free!)



ST. LAWRENCE'S
CHURCH

CHRISTMAS BRING & BUY

SATURDAY 6TH DECEMBER
2PM - 5PM

Gifts Decorations Candles
Cakes Baskets
Refreshments
Raffle

Free admission



St. Lawrence's Church

St. Lawrence's Church is part of the



Enquiries about baptisms or weddings

If you would like to enquire about baptism (also called christening) or would like to book a wedding in St Lawrence's church, please contact Karen in the Team Office on **01242 244373** or **admin@northchelt.org.uk**

You can contact the Team Vicar, **Rev. Jacqueline Henson**, by email: **revjacquelinehenson@gmail.com** or by phone: **01242 220053** or via the office as above.

Quiz & Supper Evening - Thank you!

The village hall was packed for the annual quiz and supper evening. Judging from the laughter I think people enjoyed themselves. It was a close-run competition with the winners beating the second-placed team by just half a point! We had another spot question ready just in case of a draw.

Thanks to everyone's generosity – our participants and our cooks – we raised a fantastic £1,070 for church funds.

Huge thanks go to a whole band of helpers, including a little team who came just to do the washing-up!

Here's to next year!

Karen Evans.



Swindon Village Carol Singing!

Wednesday 17th December at 6:30pm

Meeting at **The Rectory, Rectory Lane** for mulled wine, hot chocolate and mince pies beforehand.

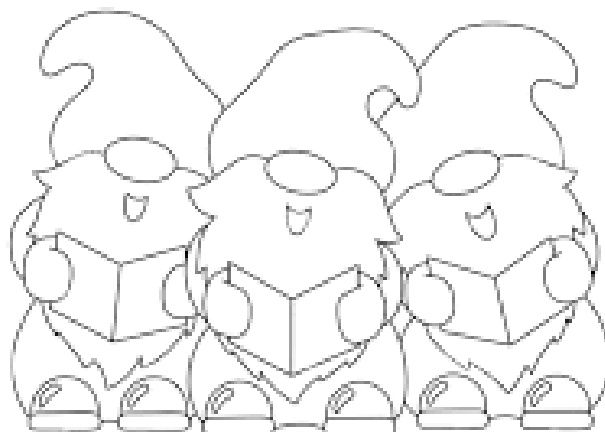
You must be mobile as we will be walking around the village.

A torch is advised.

Song lyric sheets will be supplied, so no need to know the words!

All ages are welcome just bring your best singing voices and lots of festive cheer!

All welcome!



Any donations in aid of St. Lawrence's Church

It's all about Christmas!

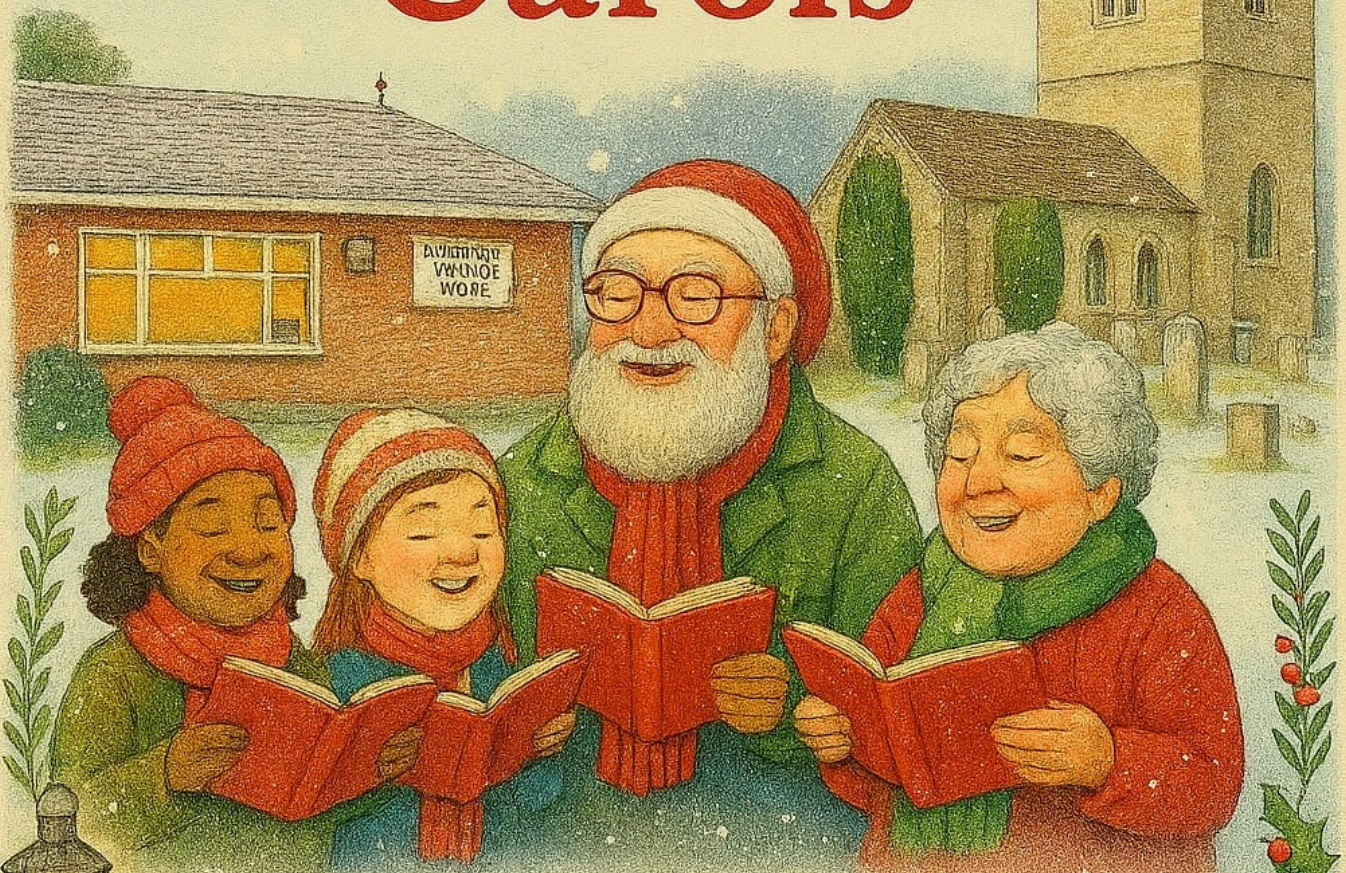
1. Charlemagne's coronation on Christmas Day, 800 CE marks the start of which era?
2. Who resigned as President of the USSR on Christmas Day, 1991, marking the end of the Union?
3. Which Apollo mission broadcast from space on Christmas Eve, 1968, as the first crew who orbited the moon?
4. The passengers on which ship came ashore at Plymouth Massachusetts, on Christmas day 1620?
5. Which country did the USSR invade over Christmas in 1979?
6. What TV show had an audience of 28.8m on Christmas Day, 1977?
7. On Christmas Day, 2009, a Nigerian man attempted to detonate explosives on Northwest Airlines Flight 253 to Detroit; where was he concealing the explosives?
8. Which world leader was executed on Christmas Day, 1989?
9. In which year was the UK's first King's Christmas Message broadcast?
10. What was the Christmas number one 50 years ago?





The Village Hall Committee &
St. Lawrence Church invite you to

Community Carols



Join us for mulled wine, mince pies
and a Christmas sing-along

Swindon Village Hall
on Friday 12 December at
7pm





The Swindon Village Society

First, just in case I can catch a new eye or two before we get on to our talks, I would like to welcome anyone reading this who has recently moved into the new development to our west. The Society members are the Nimbys (Not in my Back Yard) for the Village and so we fought against the development you are now living in. Four thousand houses around us in the green belt; of course we did, it's our job. However, we lost. And we are aware that we all live in houses too. Many of them were built in the great developments of the 1950s and 1960s before which Swindon probably had no more than a hundred dwellings in total. And we still do all we can to keep the core of the old village a pleasant place to live in and a pleasant place for you to visit and walk around. The village was here more than a thousand years ago in Anglo Saxon times so we take a keen interest in its history and over thirty years have documented much of it. So, if that sort of thing interests you, do come and join us. You will be welcome; you are now part of that history yourselves.

So what was our last event? It was a talk on Hailes Abbey an ancient ruin some fifteen miles north of us. It was once a place of some note and held a phial of Christ's true blood, authenticated by the Pope. Or, maybe it was not all that authentic, as we were told in the talk. Like many such relics its major use was as a visitor attraction which brought pilgrims and their money to the Abbey. The Abbey itself was a fine collection of buildings but was laid low by Henry VIII as were so many. Of course the ruins still exist and are interesting. Sadly, though, the site has now been closed to day to day visitors although it can be visited by booked groups. If you do go there you can still see much of the site from outside the perimeter, you can visit the small church, St Christopher's outside which is older than the Abbey and has ancient wall paintings and you can get a cuppa just up the road at the fruit farm.



The Swindon Village Society

So that is it for this year. There is no meeting in December and so the next meeting we have is the AGM on Wednesday 14 January. With luck this will take no more than half an hour and will be followed by a half hour talk on some of the more prestigious residents in our graveyard given by Eileen Allen. There will be tea and biscuits. Being the AGM it is members only but if you are not now a member you can join at the door and will be welcome. £10 for a single and £20 for a pair or family covers all of next year. As I write this in November we are underway assembling a programme of talks, a garden visit a guided visit to a town, Cirencester, and the infamous garden party. Roll up, roll up.

Barry Simon



CHRISTMAS WREATH WORKSHOP

SWINDON VILLAGE HALL

6 DECEMBER
10 - 12.30 PM

£60 PER PERSON

INCLUDES ALL EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS
AND LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

TO BOOK EMAIL: swindonvillagehall@gmail.com

Merry Christmas Gardeners! This year has flown by for us, lots of projects on the go throughout.

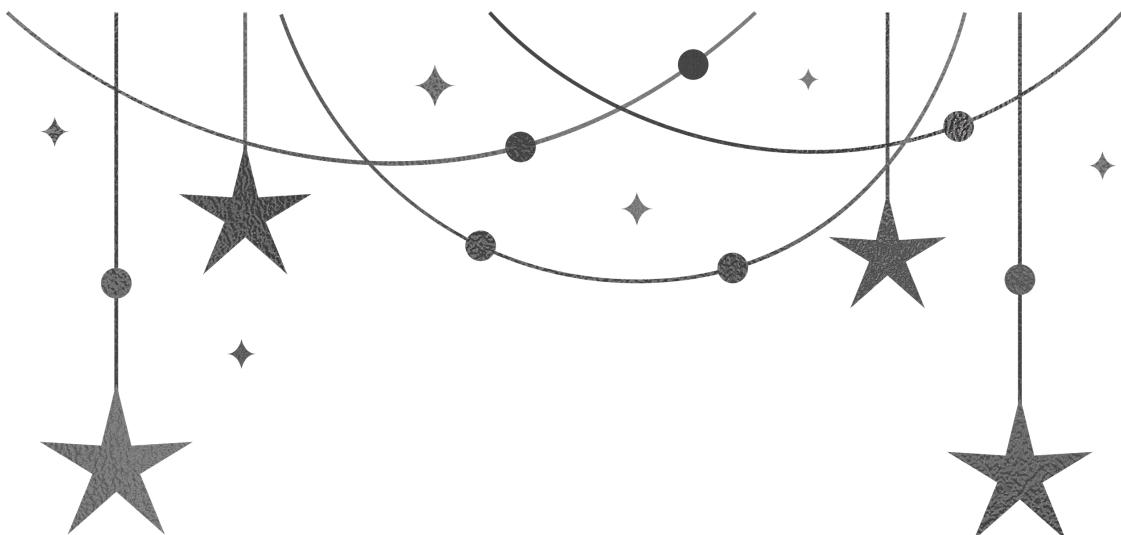
Winter time is always a time of planning for me in the Garden. Next year I'm planning to have more 'Polyculture' beds, a mix of both edibles and flowers in the same bed, hopefully with year long interest. I've already started but they're looking a bit bare with just Spinach & Strawberry plants at the moment!

My favourite thing this time of year though, is to go to Garden Centres, amongst the overkill Christmas decorations, there's deals to be had. Only last weekend, at time of writing, we went to Webbs to discover a huge section of Dahlia's on sale for £5 each! All for the same reason, they're not flowering at the moment. But my wife picked out two beautiful ones to store in the Greenhouse until next Spring.

On the subject of Dahlia's, an expert tip to get them going again early next year, is to put the bulbs in as small a pot as possible, in very well drained compost, and store in a Greenhouse or cold frame. This means they'll establish a few small roots, ready to rocket away when you plant them outside come May next year.

Until next year, enjoy the holidays. Thanks for reading.

Dale.





Community Christmas Afternoon Tea Party

Sunday, 14 December 2025

**from 2pm until 4pm at
Swindon Village Hall, Church Road,
Swindon Village, Cheltenham, GL51 9QP**

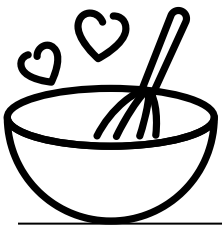
We are holding a free charitable Community Christmas Afternoon Tea Party through Re-engage, formerly Contact the Elderly. The idea behind Community Christmas is so that older guests can get together to celebrate the festive season.

The afternoon will include entertainment and a free raffle.

If you are, or know of, an older person who would like to attend, then please call Ali on 07449 019830.



Merry Christmas



Cook with Dawn

Fruit and vegetables in season for December...

Fruit: Apples, Cranberries, Pears

Vegetables: Beetroot, Brussels Sprouts, Carrots, Celeriac, Celery, Chestnuts, Chicory, Jerusalem Artichokes, Kale, Leeks, Mushrooms, Onions, Parsnips, Potatoes, Pumpkin, Red Cabbage, Swede, Swiss Chard, Turnips, Watercress, Winter Squash

January... most of the above , plus spring greens and spring onions

For December.. a hot, hearty breakfast is what we need as the mornings get colder..

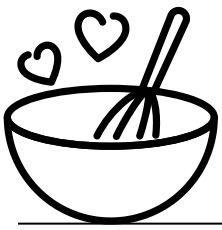
Breakfast Oats with Apple and Blueberry Tray Bake

Ingredients

- 160g plain jumbo oats
- 2 eating apples, peeled and grated
- 175ml milk
- 1tsp each ground cinnamon and nutmeg
- 150g blueberries plus extra to serve
- Pinch of salt
- 500ml water

Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 190°C /fan170°C/gas 5
2. Place the oats, apples, milk, spices, blueberries, salt and water in a bowl, mix well
3. Pour into a small baking dish or tray and bake for 20-25 minutes or until the oats are soft and have absorbed most of the liquid
4. When baked, scatter over a few fresh blueberries to serve



Cook with Dawn

January.. After the indulgence of Christmas, here's a nice refreshing salad packed with goodness.

Clementine Salad with Greek yogurt dressing...

Ingredients

- 2 Clementines, or satsumas or small oranges
- 1 Ruby-red or pink grapefruit
- 1 small red chicory head torn into small pieces
- 50g rocket leaves
- 100g baby beetroot, cooked or from a jar cut into small wedges
- Half small fennel bulb, trimmed and thinly sliced

Dressing

- 150g greek yogurt
- Half tsp dried mint
- Grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1tbsp of the lemon juice
- Seasoning, salt and pepper

Method

1. Peel and segment the citrus fruits
2. With a sharp knife remove as much of the white pith and skin as you can (or leave on if preferred)
3. Scatter the chicory and rocket on a large serving plate and arrange the fruit segments , beetroot and fennel on top so it looks beautiful
4. Mix the dressing ingredients in a bowl, season to taste and drizzle over the salad to serve

As always... enjoy..!

Christmas Treecycling



Recycle your real Christmas tree this January.

Our reliable and friendly team

of volunteers will collect your real Christmas tree directly from your front door, front garden or driveway.

Search **Sue Ryder Christmas Treecycling** to reserve your collection today

Reservations close 6th January 2026.

We'll be collecting from 12th to 16th January 2026

from the following postcodes:

GL2 0, GL2 8, GL2 9, GL3 1, GL3 2, GL20 5, GL20 6, GL20 7, GL20 8, GL50, GL51, GL52, GL53, GL54 1, GL54 2, GL54 4, GL54 5, GL55 6, GL56 0

With an optional donation, your Christmas tree could become the gift of expert care and support for seriously ill people and their loved ones.



For more information:

email: leckhampton.fundraising@sueryder.org

call: 01242 246 270

Kindly supported by:



Because no one should face death or grief alone

To end the year I leave you with these lovely scenes of our beautiful church by Anne Emery





Ever Clean

Domestic & Commercial Cleaning Services

JennaEverClean@gmail.com

07905 030343



Please contact me to arrange a quote

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Answers:

1. The Holy Roman Empire
2. Mikhail Gorbachev
3. Apollo 8
4. The Mayflower
5. Afghanistan
6. Morecambe and Wise
7. In his underwear
8. Nicolae Ceaușescu (Romania)
9. 1932
10. Bohemian Rhapsody (Queen)

SWINDON PARISH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Footpaths	John Heathcott	527753
Scouts, Cubs, Beavers		info@ 1sv-scouts.co.uk
Rainbow Guider	Hannah Butler	07464 784155
Village Hall Chair	Jana Bridger	07913 911930 swindonvillagehall@gmail.com
Village Hall Bookings	Jana Bridger	swindonvillagehall@gmail.com
Village News Distribution	Hugh Evans	241678
Play Group	(Playgroup hours)	690479
	For Sept 24 admission	07949 352507
School Headteacher	Geraint Mills	690016
Friends of the School		chairfosvps@gmail.com
Art & Crafts Club	Lynne Mumford	07515 461876
Swindon Village Society	Barry Simon	521723
Mary Godwin Under 5s	(Playgroup hours)	mgu5@hotmail.co.uk
Marle Hill W.L.	Sara Jefferies	07477894639 / 692500

Please inform the editors of any changes to the contact details for village organisations.

Deadline for the next issue of the Village News is the 16th January 2026

Please send contributions to the editors via Karren Parsons
at 29 Dark Lane or e-mail village-news@swindonparish.org.uk

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr. Alison Berry (Chair)	07754 006634
Cllr. James Cornish	07950 196709
Cllr. Sharon Collicutt	07884 184423
Cllr. Natalie Blankley	07725 948935
Cllr. Lynne Allen	07979 890134
Cllr. Tom Harcourt	07963 581371
Cllr. Ruth Hudson	07850 185871
Mr Shaun Cullimore (Clerk to the Council)	07833 089435
	parish.clerk@swindonparish.org.uk

There are currently two vacancies. Please get in touch if you would be interested.

Cheltenham Borough Councillors

Springbank Ward (south of Tewkesbury Road)

Cllr. Peter Jeffries	07717 493686
County Cllr. Suzanne Williams	01242 230648

Swindon Village Ward (north of Tewkesbury Road)

Cllr. Flo Clucas	01242 255844
Cllr. Frank Allen	07402 011272
County Cllr. Ian Cameron	ian.Cameron@gloucestershire.gov.uk

ST.LAWRENCE'S CHURCH

Part of the North Cheltenham Team Ministry

Team Vicar:	Revd. Jacqueline Henson	revjacquelinehenson@gmail.com 220053
Churchwarden:	Hugh Evans	241678
Tower Captain:	Hugh Evans	241678
Organist:	John Collins	511950

North Cheltenham Team Ministry Office 244373 admin@northchelt.org.uk

The office is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.00am to 1.30pm, and on Friday from 1.30pm to 4.00pm.

Outside these hours please leave a message on the answer-phone.

The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors or the Parish Council.