

THE LINK

The Magazine of The Knightley Parishes



Charwelton History Day
Saturday 31st January

Photos, Videos, Documents & much more

Free Admission. Refreshments available

2 - 6pm at The Village Hall

January 2026

No. 413

Badby ☿ Newnham ☿ Charwelton ☿ Fawsley ☿ Preston Capes



THE KNIGHTLEY PARISHES

www.knightleybenefice.org.uk

An on-line version of this magazine in colour is available on the web site

Services for January 2026

	4 January	11 January	18 January	25 January	1 February
	I Christmas 2	II Epiphany 1	III Epiphany 2	IV Epiphany 3	I Candlemas
Badby	11:00 Holy Communion CW [CP]	11:00 Morning Worship [Lay SR]	10:00	11:00 Morning Worship [Lay HW]	11:00 Holy Communion CW [MB]
Newnham			United Benefice Service of Holy Communion CW at Newnham [+EC] NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE	10:00 Holy Communion CW [MB]	
Charwelton	09:15 Holy Communion BCP (Church) [CP]			17:00 Evensong BCP (Chapel) [GS]	09:15 Holy Communion BCP (Church) [MB]
Fawsley		11:00 Holy Communion BCP [GS]			
Preston Capes		09:15 Holy Communion CW [GS]		10:00 Morning Prayer CW [Lay GH]	

OTHER SERVICES

Tuesday 20 January

6.30 pm

Badby

ESOW

SUNDAY READINGS

Principal Service CW

- for other services see Lectionary

Date	Feast	OT Reading	NT Reading	Gospel
4 Jan	Christmas 2	Jer. 31, 7-14	Eph. 1, 3-14	John 1, 10-18
11 Jan	Epiphany 1	Isa. 42, 1-9	Acts 10, 34-43	Matt. 3, 13-end
18 Jan	Epiphany 2	Isa. 49, 1-7	1 Cor. 1, 1-9	John 1, 29-42
25 Jan	Epiphany 3	Isa. 9, 1-4	1 Cor. 1, 10-18	Matt. 4, 12-23
1 Feb.	Epiphany 4	1 Kings 17, 8-16	1 Cor. 1, 18-end	John 2, 1-11

FROM THE REGISTERS

HOLY MATRIMONY

at Badby
on 29th November 2025
Gemma Louise March
and
Andrew David Gardner
[by Rev'd Dawn Stokes]

at Fawsley
on 4th. December
Sophie Marie Morris
and
Sam Thomas Wood
[by Rev'd Stephen Burrow]



*Blessed are you, heavenly Father
You give joy to bridegroom and bride*

EDITORIAL

You may already have noticed that The Link has a slightly different layout this month. We have recently had a number of enquiries about advertising in the Link, and as a result it has been decided that we will enlarge the magazine from 20 pages to 24 pages, giving us 2 extra pages for advertising. The income from the extra advertising will then cover the cost of the extra sheet.

We are very grateful to the advertisers for their custom so please keep supporting them. And of course we are grateful to you our readers who patronise the various traders, and thus make advertising a worthwhile proposition.

The other 2 extra pages for editorial matter will allow our contributors to expand their entries somewhat if they wish, and also to add small graphics etc. from time to time. So please don't hesitate to ask about that when you submit your items.

But a special word of thanks is due to our invaluable Advertising Manager Penny Cory, who works very hard arranging all these things.

Now back to more routine matters! I can report that the hedgehogs continue to thrive! We have rarely before seen them out feeding so late (early?) in the year, and I hope that bodes well for a successful breeding season later. They seem to no longer be subject to marauding cats since we built a Fort Knox style barrier around the feeding station. Good riddance to the cats!

On an avian theme, the pair of kites living in the spinney are becoming more obvious; flying down low over the gardens presumably looking for the carrion on which they mostly feed.

Our regular Sudoku spot continues to be popular, and we offer thanks to Robin Baker for continuing to supply them (and their solutions!) so regularly.

And let's not forget Philip Turvil, our regular gardening adviser for his invaluable tips to keep our gardens in good shape throughout the year.

On which note all those of us on the production team wish you all a very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

David



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ruthmackman@btinternet.com or
<https://bookwhen.com/kindheartyyogawithruth>

PASTORAL LETTER

Can we follow Christ boldly?

As we step into 2026 together, I find myself filled with a deep and genuine hope for the year ahead. The season from January through Epiphany is an annual nudge to step into the light that Christ shines upon the world, this brilliant light that does not ignore the shadows, yet refuses to be overcome by them. Many will be familiar with the collects and prayers of Epiphany, of revelation, calling, and courage. They ask us not only to remember the star that guided the Magi but to look for the light that guides us now

I wonder what might it mean, in this season, to follow Christ boldly? Perhaps it begins with the quiet conviction that hope is not naïve but instead necessary. It may look like choosing generosity even when the demands around us feel a lot and our resources thin. It may sound like the steady, gentle words we offer when our communities are carrying more than they let on. It might involve stepping beyond what feels safe and comfortable to bless and encourage what feels new. Across our diocese, I delight in signs

of Christ's light: communities praying faithfully, clergy leading with compassion, and disciples of all ages and stages of life and Christian journey offering their gifts with humility and joy.



As we move toward 2026, may we boldly believe that God is not done with us, far from it, that a fuller, braver discipleship and relationship with God is possible for each of us. My prayer is that, in this Epiphany season, Christ will reveal again the paths we are called to walk and grant us the courage to walk them with hope. Amen.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky Dyball". The script is fluid and cursive.

*The Rev'd Becky Dyball
Bishop's Missioner*

BENEFICE PAGE

DRAFT PASTORAL SCHEME

for the proposed joining of Everdon with the Knightley parishes

The Benefice Council felt that this is something that should be brought to the attention of our readers

The Diocese of Peterborough has produced a draft Pastoral Scheme for the reorganisation of the existing benefices of Badby with Newnham etc., Heyford with Stowe-9-churches etc, and Weedon etc. into two new benefices. These would comprise:

1. Badby with Newnham and Charwelton with Fawsley and Preston Cape and Everdon (to be known as The Knightley Benefice),
2. Heyford with Stowe-9-churches and Flore with Brockhall and Weedon Bec and Dodford (to be known as The Upper Nene Benefice)

Full details of the proposals are now out for discussion until Midnight on Monday 19th. January 2026 and can be viewed on the Church Commissioners' website www.churchofengland.org/consultation, or a copy can be obtained from Sally Roberts, Pastoral Schemes Secretary, Peterborough Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee.

Anyone may make representation **for** or **against** all or any part of the draft scheme (please include the reason for your views) by post or, preferably, by email to reach the Commissioners no later than midnight on **Monday 19th. January 2026. Please send your representation to (e-mail: rex.andrew@churchofengland.org) or letter marked for the attention of Rex Andrew, Pastoral Division, Church Commissioners, Church House. Great Smith Street. LONDON SW1P 3AZ.**

Alternatively if you have questions or comments you may wish to speak to one of your churchwardens or PCC members who may be able to help you and/or provide you with a copy of the (lengthy) conditions surrounding the making of a representation for or against the proposals.

EVENING SERVICE OF THE WORD

This short lay-led service is held once a month on the Tuesday evening following the third Sunday at St Mary's Badby from 6.30pm to 7pm. The next services will be on 20 January and 17 February. There is always a brief talk about someone inspirational. All welcome!

BADBY AND DISTRICT FILM SOCIETY

Friday 16th January 2026: The Ballad of Wallis Island (2025)

Comedy-drama starring Tom Basden (co-author) and Carey Mulligan as a folk duo who reunite to perform for a wealthy fan on a remote Welsh island. "A sublime, adorable comedy [which]... hums along a sweet melody without lapsing into outright sentimentality, mining a great deal of warmth from its humble premise." [100 mins, 12 certificate]

Friday 30th January 2026: Lee (2023)

Biopic of American photographer Lee Miller, a fashion model who became an acclaimed war correspondent for Vogue magazine during WW II. She travels to the front lines to embark on a mission to uncover the hidden truths of the Third Reich. Kate Winslet stars in the title role, supported by Marion Cotillard, Andrea Riseborough & Alexander Skarsgård. Nominated for a BAFTA for Outstanding British Film. [116 mins, 15 certificate]



SUDOKU

[With thanks to Robin Baker]

130 - Mild

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131 - Difficult

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	8							
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				1		2	4	
				3		6		1

[Solutions on page 16]



PARISH NOTICES

BADBY

Correspondent - Geoff Pullin (gcsspullin@yahoo.com)
website: www.badby-pc.gov.uk

	Reader	Sidesman	Coffee
4 Jan	P. Wakeford C. Wakeford	F. Williams P. Wakeford	J. Hall
11 Jan	F. Williams G. Nelson	G. Morley G. Nelson	A. Syred
25 Jan	N. Shaw P. Wakeford	J. Hall C. Wakeford	G. Morley

CHURCH CLEANING ROTA FOR JANUARY

w/b 5: Gillie Morley, Ann Skinner, Helen Morris
w/b 12: Jan Cooper, Moira Cooper
w/b 19: Jo Hind, Judy Jordan, Gill Nelson
w/b 26: Ann Cotton, Monique Shortt, Ann Syred

CHRISTMAS THANKS

We are all grateful, particularly for the hard work of our flower arrangers but also for all who contribute in many other ways to keep our Church so welcoming – the musicians, cleaners, sidesmen, readers, intercessors, coffee-makers and, of course, the PCC. Thank you to all those, and especially to the Rev. Greg Shaw and to Susan Rose for keeping our services running while we wait for a new incumbent.

ST MARY'S CHRISTMAS FAIR

The fair in December yielded a total just over £1,000 for church funds. So many people in Badby are generous with their time (and cakes!) and it is thanks to them that we have raised this sum.

ST MARY'S QUIZ & SUPPER

We shall be holding a quiz, with fish and chips,

in aid of St. Mary's at the village hall on Saturday 28 February at 6.30pm. In the past we have asked you to buy your drink from the bar during the evening, which yields some profit to the Church. As an experiment this time we are going to try instead charging you corkage, with everyone bringing their own drinks with them. So the total ticket price will be £20 a head, to include the quiz and the fish and chips. Tickets from Frances or Judy (contact details at the back of the LINK).

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL

Collections in Badby amounted to £191.43. With thanks to all who contributed to the collection box at the Maltsters or the collection at St Mary's Church and others who gave so generously
CEW

BADBY BELLS

After a silent tower over Christmas and the New Year we fervently hope to see our bells back during February. Until then, our Wednesday practices will alternate between Staverton and Newnham.

RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY

The theme at the village hall on Tuesday 13 January, 2 - 4pm, continues our Journey through the Alphabet finding something by a composer or artist beginning with the letter Q. We have no open meeting in February as the group will be having its 'Christmas Meal'. Contact Pat Eaton on 01327 705326.

BADBY & FAWSLEY WI

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday 8 January in the Badby Village Hall. We will be having a return visit from the popular local speaker Kate Mawer. She will be telling us about the work of the charity Practical Action which helps developing communities to thrive in the face of climate change. A very

interesting evening in prospect.

New members very welcome. To arrange a free visit or for further information about this thriving and friendly WI, please contact Jan Cooper on jancooper2012@me.com or Jackie Peel on jackiepeel22@gmail.com

COFFEE MORNING

Our first coffee morning in St. Mary's for 2026 will be on Tuesday 20 January, from 10.30am till noon. We look forward to seeing you and to celebrating the New Year. The draw will be made as usual.

The winners in December's Church draw were: 1st: Pete and Christine Johnson, 2nd: Christine Richards, 3rd: Richard Piner. New members for the draw will be welcomed by Frances Williams.

VILLAGE HALL EVENTS

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Christmas Wreath-making, Festive Seasonal Singing or Santa's Grotto. And special thanks to Maxine Meacher and Robin Faulkner for leading the Festive Seasonal Singing.

We are holding our annual Burns Night Supper and Dancing on Friday 23 January. Celebrate with a meal of haggis, neeps and tatties (vegetarian options available) and an evening of Scottish and country dancing to 'Sleeping Moggy'. Drinks to be purchased from our licensed bar. Tickets £23 per head from Peter Cooper (peter.bvhmc@btinternet.com, 07792 165529).

T 4 U

Many thanks to all cake makers, tea servers and welcoming team. There will be no T4U in January but we will be back on Friday, 6 February.



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NEWNHAM

Correspondent - Ellen Henning
(ellen.henning@hotmail.co.uk)

NEWNHAM 200 CLUB

Christmas Draw

Alexander Edwards	no 90	£100
Lyn Wood	no 132	£100
Mary Hodges	no 6	£100

CLEANING ROTA

January 4th. Mr. and Mrs. J Wood
January 11th. Mrs. I Cooke and Mrs. Rees
January 18th. Ms. J Minor and Mrs. J Ferguson
January 25th. Mr. and Mrs. S Rees

SCHOOL NEWS

December is always busy and this year was no exception. It started with the Christingle service in the Church on 4th Dec. It was led by Mr Johnson and Susan Rose (a member of our Benefice Ministry Team) The children were joined by parents ,family and friends who had enjoyed refreshments at the back of the Church, courtesy of FONS. The Foxes read the prayers and the Otters the Advent poems,

A musical instrument performance featured Charley on French Horn and Amayah on guitar. This was followed by two performances of the Nativity Play on the 9th Dec. and a visit to the Pantomime on Thurs 18th Dec. It is rather sad to report that Mr Johnson has announced that he is to retire at the end of the school year, he is simply irreplaceable !

A CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Once again our Christmas Concert featuring the Knightley Singers was a sell out. The singers were in fine form and sang an eclectic mix of old and new popular seasonal favourites including a particularly powerful performance of Handel's Halleluia Chorus accompanied by John on trumpet. Special mention should be

made of youngsters Sophie and Imogen who sang "Santa Claus is comin' to town".

Joseph played two items brilliantly on the marimba (!) on what was his public performance debut, and Helen sang a simply lovely "O Holy Night". The marimba is a huge instrument and whilst it was being moved Helen challenged us to a seasonal quiz which was great fun. The audience sang the Carols heartily and after James (Milsop) had given a vote of thanks the evening concluded with the entire audience singing " We wish you a Merry Christmas" A huge thank you to Helen Swift (musical director), Jonathan French (accompanist), John Bickerdike (Trumpeter) and the whole Church Team.

NEWNHAM CHURCH IN DECEMBER

December has been a very busy month at Newnham Church and as I write this, the month has not yet finished. So far, we have had the District Guides Carol Service, the School's Christingle Service, the Angel Festival and the Christmas Concert. I would like to thank all the village organisations for their contributions to the Angel Festival. It was good to have everybody represented and we had some quite spectacular displays; all who came to view were impressed. A week after the Angel Festival there was the Christmas Concert by the Knightley Singers. The church was full, the music was very enjoyable and carols were sung with gusto.

We still have the Christingle Service at 4.00pm on the 21st. and Christmas Day Holy Communion at 9.15am, which will be taken by Archdeacon Richard Ormston.

MW



CHARWELTON

Correspondent - David Pound
(davidpound1939@talktalk.net)

	Reader/Sidesman	Flowers
4 Jan	David Pound	
25 Jan	Meryl Nicholls	
1 Feb	Fiona Spencer	

Chapel cleaning	
January	Fiona Spencer
February	Graham White

HISTORY DAY

Please put the Village History Day in your diaries!

This perennially popular event (the last one was in 2022) will be held on Saturday 31st. January from 2.00pm until 6.00pm in the Village Hall, and will feature the history of the Church, the railway, the village itself, and of people associated with the village over the last 800 years. There will be many photographs, documents, complete Census records from 1841 onwards, films (including film of the last train to run through the village, and of past village events and activities), and memorabilia. You will be able to see records of who has lived in your house before you - and much else. There will be tea, coffee and cakes available. There will be no charge, though donations towards the upkeep of the Church and the Village Hall will be much appreciated.

The exhibition will be open from 2.00pm until 6.00pm

We hope to see you there!

DP

WARM SPACES COFFEE MORNING

Warm Spaces Coffee morning returns to the Village Hall on Monday 05/01/26 and Monday 12/01/26 from 10.15 to 11.45pm
All Welcome please come along

CHURCH EVENTS

Busy weekends are a bit like buses: they tend to come in threes!

Charwelton's famous **BINGO** saw Christmas jumpers being taken out of mothballs, the bingo balls polished and the gargling completed by the bingo callers, with a full house in the village hall. Thanks to all who attended, donated prizes and helped in the kitchen or behind the bar to make it another great success, raising £800 for church funds.

No sooner had the dust settled in the village hall than the **HOLLY WREATH PRODUCTION** got underway. Thank you to everyone who



helped in whatever capacity, especially to the out-of-village helpers who mustered on all three days. Without them we wouldn't have completed on time. It was good to see the

'Trinity' wreath take shape - a new design by Graham White. The eagle-eyed amongst you will have spotted a Trinity wreath hanging proudly in Daventry High Street. A further £900 was added to the coffers.

The third weekend saw a packed chapel for the **CHRISTINGLE SERVICE**. Everyone - young, old and 'prefer not to say' - took part enthusiastically, with lots of hearty singing. It was good to hear cheerful voices disappearing into the darkness down Church Street and Chapel Lane, clutching their Christingles.

Twenty-four hours later the village was out in force at the **CAROL SERVICE** in the church, taken by Revd Greg Shaw. We were pleased to welcome Glynis Bliss, Chair of Northampton



Domestic Abuse Service (NDAS), who joined us again this year. Glynis said she loved the atmosphere of the church, the friendly welcome and generosity of all the villagers, represented by the 100+ presents gifted to those in NDAS's care.

We received a most appreciative letter from the NDAS Chair a couple of days later.



The combined generosity of attendees at both services will enable donations of £170 to be sent to the Children's Society and Katharine House Hospice.

100 CLUB

It's time to renew your subscription for 2026 if you haven't already done so. If you wish to continue or join, please let Norman Blenkhorn (3 Manor Close) have £12 for each number you hold (or would like to hold) - either cash or cheque payable to PCC of Charwelton - in an

envelope marked with your name and contact details. Subscribers are entered into the monthly draw for a prize of £50.



FAWSLEY

Correspondent - Vacant

CHANGE OF UBS VENUE

Please note that the UBS planned for Fawsley on 18th. January, will now take place at Newnham - other details remain the same.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Our Christmas Day BCP service will be taken at 11:00am by Archdeacon Richard

A BIG THANK YOU

A big thanks to everyone who has supported St Mary's Church during the past year. Also to those who supported the maintenance of the churchyard and contributed bulbs and other plants. We are looking forward to a good display in the Spring.

This has enabled us to make the church and churchyard welcoming places and to serve the community.

Also we thank Fawsley Singers with Charles Tarry for their festive Christmas Carol Concert.

We hope to see them both again in 2026.



PRESTON CAPES

Correspondent - Claire Hoare
caghoare@gmail.com

	Reader	Sidesman	Cleaning
11 Jan	Mireya Weaver	Gerard Hoare	
25 Jan	Bridget Whittaker	Peter Smith	

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL
THANK YOU

Firstly thank you to our Editor, David Pound, who puts together The Link every month. He does a great job, and keeps us all up to the mark.

Bell Ringers, nobly led by Graham White.

The Link Deliverers, Pauline Clarke, Christine Purcell, Sophia Maddison, Alan Bray and Gerard Hoare, who do the job each month without complaint.

Flower arrangers for the hard work keeping the church looking beautifully decorated all year round.

Church Cleaners for their dedicated work cleaning the church

Key holders, Anabel Lewis-Bowen, Maureen Franks, Rachel Hale, and new recruit for January, Peter Smith.

Thank you, one and all. New volunteers would always be welcome.

CHURCH ROOF APPEAL UPDATE.

In November we sent an Appeal letter to all houses in the village along with the December Link. We have over £60k gross to raise and it is tough going; grants are proving hard to come by and Vat is unlikely to be recoverable. We need all the generosity we can muster.

However the really good news is we have now raised £36k with this Roof Appeal making £1690 so far including two very generous gifts. We hope that much more may be contributed by the village for it is your church here, and it is felt most people wish to have ownership in some way of the excellent condition of the listed building at the heart of the village. Every contribution is gratefully received and treated in strict confidence. Please support the appeal now, with easy payment by BACS with Sort 30-96-09 , a/c no 00230188 and ref surname/Roof. *Churchwardens & PCC.*

CAROL SERVICE

Thank you to the readers who did a splendid job at the Carol Service. It ran smoothly, in spite of many being unable to come because of illness, and was most enjoyable. Followed by mulled wine and refreshments which was well received.

PCC MEETING

Friday 23rd January 17.00 at Old West Farm

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Our first meeting of the New Year will be held on Tuesday, 27th January, and our speaker will be Jessica Nash telling us *Tales from the Driver's Seat of a London Bus*. Prospective members and guests welcome – please email our secretary, Anabel Lewis-Bowen, at alewisbowen@btinternet.com if you would like to join us.

VILLAGE HALL COFFEE MORNING

This month's coffee morning will be on Friday, 23rd January, from 10.30am to noon (and thereafter on the fourth Friday of each month, unless otherwise notified). Come along and enjoy your morning coffee with friends and neighbours – all welcome!

VILLAGE EMAIL LIST

Our village email list is used to publicise news and events on behalf of the parish council, village hall, WI and PCC. Unfortunately, several email addresses are now “bouncing back” so if you have changed your address in the last year or so (and are wondering why you are now longer receiving notifications!) please contact the list administrator at PennyEves@aol.com.



DIARY

This diary records the proposed dates of any benefice, parish or village events. We hope that this will help those planning such events to know what else is going on and therefore be able to avoid any unhelpful clashes of dates. If you know, or become aware, of events which ought to be recorded please let David Pound, or your village Link correspondent, know.

Events known about so far are:

2026

January

- 5 Warm Spaces coffee morning Charwelton
- 6 Newnham PCC
- 8 B&F WI
- 12 Warm Spaces coffee morning Charwelton
- 14 Charwelton PCC
- 16 Film Soc.
- 20 Badby coffee morning
- 23 Burns Night BVH
- 23 PC PCC
- 27 PC WI
- 30 Film Soc.
- 31 Charwelton Village History Day

February

- 28 St Mary's quiz and supper BVH

March

- 3 Newnham PCC

May

- 5 Newnham PCC

June

- 13 Guitar concert Badby Church
- 20 District bellringers at Newnham 3.30pm

July

- 7 Newnham PCC
- 18 District bellringers at Badby 3.00pm
- 18 District bellringers at Charwelton 7.00pm

September

- 1 Newnham PCC

November

- 3 Newnham PCC



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Pots & Plans: what to do in your garden this winter

Philip Turvil

1. Love your houseplants

You may hear houseplants grumble in winter about less light and dry indoor air. They won't cast off all leaves like their outdoor counterparts, but their leaves will flop and curl if unhappy.

The trick to happy houseplants is stabilising the environment around them.

First, keep plants away from cold drafts. No one like a draft. Direct heat sources are bad too, like radiators, where sudden temperature spikes causes stress.

Next, move plants nearer windows to increase natural light. Rotate plants every week to give all the leaves a little sunshine. And even better, wipe dust off leaves so they can photosynthesise efficiently.

Then, increase humidity around your plants using a tray of water with pebbles. Ideally group plants together. This helps offset the drier air caused by heating. Although, still only water plants sparingly, and wait until spring to fertilise. Too much wetness or feed in winter can kill roots.

Finally, check for pests. Look out for little mites living under the leaves and others clinging onto stems. Regularly inspect your plants and treat issues promptly.

2. Planting time

January is a great time to add plants sold 'bare root' or 'root balled'. Coat on standby.

These are field-grown plants that are dug up when dormant, rather than container-grown. Roses are most common to find, along with fruit bushes, trees and hedging. You'll get a big selection and good prices, although plants will need a little care in their first year to establish, owing to some roots being cut. Bare root and root balled plants should also be planted without delay. Spade on standby. It's important the fragile roots aren't left exposed. In fact, even during planting, wait until the last moment before removing their protective plastic bags. I've been known to pre-dig holes, especially for trees and

hedges when soil preparation can take a while. If you can't add your new plants straight away, then plant temporarily in a spare corner in a shallow trench or hole ('heel in'). Ideally plant at a 45° angle to help protect plants from wind. This also makes it easier to cover roots and dig them up again. Garden on standby.

3. Happy garden tools

Winter is the ideal time to clean, sharpen, and pamper garden tools.

Check handles for cracks and repair or replace. Remove dried soil. Replace broken trugs. Sharpen blades using a stone and lubricant (or send off to be serviced). Wipe clean. Tighten bolts. Oil moving parts. Have a cup of tea. Repeat in summer.]

4. Love your clematis

Cut back late flowering Clematis to enthusiastic buds.

Look for healthy buds about 1-2ft from ground level. These buds are large and plump. Remove the debris and the plants will regrow long lovely shoots that'll then flower in summer or autumn. I like watching clematis climb up their framework or scramble between border plants.

However, if you have winter or spring-flowering Clematis, don't prune in winter as you'll cut off the flowering shoots. Rather, leave these plants alone. If they're getting too big, clip back lightly after flowering.

5. Duvet day

Just too stormy to go outside? Plan your garden instead. Is there enough space for fun and family? Is there year-round colour and safe access?

Get started by creating a scrapbook of garden ideas you love (and ideas you don't like). I like to tear out images from magazines and save digital images. You don't have to do the whole garden in one go. But try a new look in some spaces and see how it grows.

If you're interested in layout design or expert plant selection, please visit www.brightenmygarden.co.uk get in touch on 01327 604042 or philip@brightenmygarden.com

Right, back to my potting shed.

Happy New Year, and my best wishes to you and your garden

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Council Update

At the Council's last meeting on the 1st December the agenda covered updates on the ongoing flood prevention issue, church path maintenance, Christmas Music on the Green, the grass mowing contract, the budget for 2026-27 and a games area project on the playing field.

We finally have some good news to report regarding drainage works on Badby Road. Following extensive lobbying by the Parish Council and our WNC Councillors Rupert Frost and Charlie Hastie, the planned work has been carried out, so hopefully this will avoid a repeat of the flooding in November 2024. In addition, we had a great response to our request to clear leaves from gulleys with many residents taking part and some enthusiastically clearing blocked drains and ditches around the village.

In response to residents' requests, we cleared leaves from the path between the churchyard and Mounts Lane. This path traditionally gets very slushy and slippery when the leaves rot, and the path becomes dangerous, so to mitigate this, we cleared the leaves periodically, which prevented the surface becoming as slippery. Going forwards we will explore an alternative form of surface which is safer to walk on.

At the time of writing we are making arrangements for this year's Christmas Music on the Green. The song sheets are ready, as are the mince pies and the mulled wine is warming, so I hope the event is enjoyed by lots of residents as part of their Christmas celebrations. On the Christmas theme, we put lights in another tree around the Green this year and bought some new lights for the tree in the Church porch (thanks to Piers for decorating the porch tree).

The current three-year contract for grass mowing comes to an end this year. We have produced a slightly revised specification for the contract and are discussing the work with several interested contractors.

We had an initial meeting with the Primary School to explore the feasibility of installing a joint use, multi-purpose games area on the playing field. This would be available for use by the school during the day and by residents at other times. This type of facility could be used for activities such as football, basketball, tennis and netball. It is very early days, and there are many more stages to this project including attracting external funding but the first stage is obtaining permission from the landowner, West Northants Council, to proceed with the scheme.

We finalised the budget for 2026-27. The amount we will be collecting through the Parish precept (the Parish element of the Community Charge) will not change for the next financial year.

A reminder, if you wish to join the Parish Council email list,
email clerk@newnhamparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Finally, the usual reminder – we have a **vacancy for a new Councillor**. If you're interested, please feel free to contact myself or the Parish Clerk.

The **next Parish Council Meeting is Monday 5th January**, starting at **7.00pm in the Village Hall**. The agenda for this meeting, together with all minutes and agendas, is available on the Council website newnhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

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Lay Pastoral Minister: Graham White

Benefice Children's Officer Susan Rose (879053)

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Copy deadlines - Editorial, 20th of the month; Advertising 18th. of the month please .

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