

December 2021

# BASINGA



Debbie Filer



Old Basing and Lychpit Parish Magazine  
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## DECEMBER NOTES AND NEWS

The front cover picture was taken by **Debbie Filer**. The **Red-Legged Partridge** is sitting on her garden fence rather than in a pear tree, which would have made it an even better Christmas photograph!

With winter upon us there is plenty of advice to help us look after our gardens, birds and general wildlife – this can be found on **pages 36 and 37**.

During lockdown, when distribution of the magazine was going to be a problem, we at Basinga created a **Facebook page** in order to get our publication to as many people as possible. Since that was accomplished we haven't used the page as much as we could have done. As we have a growing following, almost 300, we will endeavour to use this medium of communication more effectively. To find us search for '**Basinga – The parish magazine of Old Basing and Lychpit**' and 'like' us to get updates on your Facebook feed.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BASINGA

We welcome both regular and occasional items for the Basinga. The very **last date for copy** to the Editor for the **January edition** is **6pm on Monday, 6th December**.

Please use the forms on the **Basinga website [www.basinga.org.uk](http://www.basinga.org.uk)** to get your dates, articles and letters to us (**see box on page 15 for further instructions**).

All advertising enquiries – classified, free adverts or inserts (flyers) can also be made via the website.

**Don't forget that we only accept articles with about a 300-word maximum and articles are only published at the Editor's discretion.**

## PHOTOS AND LOGOS FOR THE BASINGA

If any reader would like to offer a **photograph of the village environment** we would be happy to receive them, either for immediate use or to build up a portfolio of 'village views' that we can use. We now have a web form that you can use to send a photograph for the website archive and possible use in the magazine, go to **[www.basinga.org.uk](http://www.basinga.org.uk)** and the form can be found on the '**Contributors Submission**' menu. Should you wish to submit multiple photos, or a photo is too 'large', they can be emailed directly to the **Editor**.

This feature should **NOT** be used for Free Ads or article photos, which can be attached to their own forms. We welcome **club** and **society logos**, with the option to use them within articles. Please send graphics to **[editor@basinga.org.uk](mailto:editor@basinga.org.uk)**

## CHRISTMAS BIN COLLECTIONS

Unless bad weather affects bin rounds, there will be **NO CHANGE to your collection days over the festive break** this year as Christmas Day and Boxing Day fall at the weekend and we'll collect on the bank holidays.

Put out your grey bin on your usual day before **7am**, together with your green bin on your normal recycling week. For more information: **[www.basingstoke.gov.uk/bincollections](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/bincollections)**

## TONY GRAY

### FAREWELL TO THE BASINGA'S ADVERTISING MANAGER AND LAYOUT ADVISOR

The Basinga bids a fond farewell to its long-serving **Advertising Manager** and **Layout Advisor**, **Tony Gray**. Tony's involvement with the Basinga dates back over 40 years!

Originally the Basinga was run by the church as the St Mary's Parish Church Magazine. These were the days of the mechanical typewriter, wax stencils, hand folding and stapling. With the expansion of the parish it was decided that to continue to produce a free copy for every household, a dedicated team of people would be needed. To this end the church handed over the production to a group of church and non-church residents, properly constituted as the Basinga Management Committee, of which Tony was a founder member.

Under the guidance of the Management Team the magazine production has progressed using photocopiers, word processors to desktop publishing and commercial printing in no small part to the efforts of Tony in his role as Layout Advisor. In his other role as Advertising Manager, he has been responsible for attracting paid advertising to the Basinga, which as this covers the cost of production, has over the years ensured the magazine has been able to, and continues to be, distributed free of charge each month to households in Old Basing and Lychpit.

Tony (*top photo*) was presented (*lower photo*) by (left to right) the Basinga Editor (Colin Follett), Secretary (Graham Merry) and Assistant Editor and Layout Advisor (Lyn Caswell), with a gift voucher for £100. (Both photographs by Alan Morris.)

On behalf of the Basinga Committee I would to thank Tony for his outstanding service to the Basinga and wish him all the best in the future.

**Colin Follett** (Editor)

## ROTARY CLUB – GREENFINGERS PROJECT

The **Greenfingers** project has been established under the **Basingstoke Mencap Charity** for over three years and provides **Horticultural Therapy Services** and **Woodwork Development Training** on site which provides opportunities to develop skills and confidence offering a peaceful therapy setting or a possible gateway into voluntary or aid work.

Their trained gardeners run a **Community Gardening Service** in local and surrounding areas of Basingstoke. They offer garden maintenance, hedge trimming and seasonal jobs at competitive rates. Their new van helps them with this project and helps their clients access the wide variety of activities on offer. See their website [www.rcbd.org.uk](http://www.rcbd.org.uk) to donate or volunteer or simply for more information.





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### ANNUAL PARISH AWARD

Nominations for this award will be considered at the **Parish Council** meeting on **Tuesday, 7th December**, so it is still not too late to nominate a local community group that you feel is worthy of receiving a **£100** boost to its finances.

### BOXING DAY WALK

After many years of planning and leading the Annual Boxing Day Walk, **Tony Stoney** has decided to step down. This is an opportunity for someone else, possibly already a participant on the Boxing Day Walk, who is familiar with local footpaths to take over and lead the 2021 walk and perhaps those in future years. If you would like to take on this annual event, please contact the Parish Office to discuss how you wish to promote it.

### COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION

Following the resignation of **Richard Barker** we are seeking a **Councillor** to represent **Old Basing**. If you are interested and wish to support your community in this way, please contact the Parish Office.

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP EVENT

Due to the ongoing threat of Covid this event will **not now go ahead in December** as originally planned. Whilst we value the opportunity to meet with volunteers and group members, the health and well-being of those attending is our prime consideration.

### LOCAL DEVELOPMENT THREAT

In September Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council published an update to the Local Plan, covering the requirement for new housing developments. The Council claim there is a shortfall of 7,700 new homes across the Borough and identified various sites where these could be built. Three of their short-listed sites are in the countryside around Old Basing and Lychpit. These are:

- 1) **OLD001** Land on the western boundary of Old Basing and Lychpit (450 houses)
- 2) **OLD002** **Lodge Farm** – land next to the area above (900 houses proposed)
- 3) **OLD007** **Hodds Farm** – land on the southern boundary of Old Basing (800 houses)

Your Parish Council is firmly of the view that these developments will destroy large tracts of the parish countryside; cause significant infrastructure issues; damage the ecological environment; adversely impact water courses and drainage; and act counter to local and national climate change initiatives. It intends to strongly refute the proposals and will seek support from the community in the months ahead.

More details to follow soon. If you would like to register your concerns in advance, please email [blade@oldbasing.gov.uk](mailto:blade@oldbasing.gov.uk)

### PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The next two meetings are: **Tuesday, 7th November** and **4th January**, both at **7.30 pm**.

Parish Clerk: **Mrs Sandra Tuck** Deputy Clerk: **Mrs Kate Hope**

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## OLD BASING BOWLS CLUB – 2021 REVIEW

It was lovely to resume playing a “normal” summer season as lockdown restrictions were lifted.



During the winter of 2020/21 the Club made significant improvements to the Clubhouse and surrounds of the bowling green. Our marketing campaign to attract new members hit the right note with people wanting to return to new activities after the enforced winter lockdown and we attracted over 20 new bowlers for the summer season, taking our membership to a very healthy 80 plus members.

Our bowlers were able to take part in local league fixtures, weekend friendly matches against other Hampshire and West Berkshire clubs and have roll-ups between club members.

Significant success was attained at a Hampshire level with **Anita Christian** winning the **North Hampshire Ladies Singles** competition; **Stella Hayden** winning the **Ladies Two Wood Singles** at **North Hampshire level**; and our men's **Triple team** (*below right*) of **Malcolm Christian, Matthew Rixson** and **Martin Cullis** triumphing in the **Basingstoke and District Finals** held in Alton.

We are fortunate to have 15 of our own internal Cup competitions and it was very pleasing that 27 members made it to the finals of these in early September.

Over the winter close season members keep in touch via a number of social evenings held at the Clubhouse on the Recreation Ground in Old Basing.

**Malcolm Christian**

(Chairman, Old Basing Bowling Club)



**Ladies Singles finalists – Anita Christian and Claire Celand**







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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR – MISSING DOG

*I am writing to thank all the good people of Old Basing who tried to catch my niece's dog, who managed to escape from my garden while they were shopping in Basingstoke Town Centre. His name is Leo and he was obviously trying to find them as he was darting to all the places where we had walked. Thanks to all the people who tried to catch him and a special thanks to the lady worker in Olivers who tried to bribe him with a sausage, to no avail, and my neighbour Jeff who kept me informed of where he was on Facebook.*

*Special thanks to Sonia Carimando and friend who managed to capture him on the Common. Don't know how they managed it, and took him to The Barn, where I took my niece to collect him. You would think he would have been excited to see us, but no, he walked straight passed us all to his bowlfull of water and drunk the lot. He then flaked out on his bed till the following morning. He is now safely back home in Camden, London. A big thank you to you all.*



**Jeenie Reece**

## ODIHAM SURGERY PATIENT GROUP NEEDS YOUR HELP

We are currently recruiting new volunteers to our patient group. If you are a patient (or carer of a patient) of **Odiham Surgery** or **Old Basing Surgery** and want to help all patients get the best from our surgery and improve our collective wellbeing, then please join us. You can join us in two ways:

### PATIENT NETWORK

- Join our patient group network. We want enthusiastic, caring people to support our local GP practice by providing feedback and help when we have a particular health-related project.
- We need people from all parts of our community living in Old Basing, Lychpit or surrounding villages. We want both young and old, people who work in or attend local schools, care groups or voluntary agencies or charities. We would especially value those who have a different perspective – perhaps you are a carer or you have a unique insight due to disability or chronic illness.
- Volunteers with experience in communication, IT, health promotion, healthcare, marketing, PR, research would be great to have within the network.
- There would be no commitment to go to committee meetings but we would keep you updated and get your views.

### PATIENT GROUP COMMITTEE

- You may also join our committee. A much smaller group who will liaise with the surgery and other local groups. The committee will also decide which projects to focus on and how to do it.

It has been a really tough time recently and our GPs are really struggling. We want to support them to deliver a service that works for everyone.

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*Selection for Articles/Letters and Diary Dates will be found on the “Submissions” drop down and for Free Ads and Concession/Poster Ads on the “Advertise with us” drop down. Paid advertising enquiries can also be made from the same dropdown menu.*

*Submissions made via the forms now provide a common input for both the magazine and website and are automatically routed to the member of the team responsible for processing them. All submissions must be received by the 10th of the month (6th in December) previous to the magazine issue month.*

*If you have trouble finding the forms, you can of course contact us and we will advise.*

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### **CLEANER WANTED**

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### **CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

The **Wessex Chamber Choir** are holding a **Christmas concert** on **Saturday, 11th December, at 7pm**. The concert is named 'Together again for Christmas' and will be held at **The Spire Church**, opposite Sainsburys in **South Street, Farnham**. **Tickets are £12.50** and include wine and mince pies. They are available from choir members or on the door on the evening of the concert, by cash or cheque.

### **CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE**

A **Christmas Carol Service** will be held at **Basingstoke Crematorium** on **Thursday, 9th December, at 7pm**, raising money for Sebastian's Action Trust.

### **PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH**

**Ploughman's Lunch** at the **Parish Room, St. Mary's Church**, on **Thursday, 16th December, 12.30pm**. It is important to book in advance as numbers are limited.

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### NATIONWIDE AWARDS BASING ROYALS FOOTBALL CLUB £1,000 MUTUAL RESPECT GRANT

**Nationwide Building Society** has awarded £1,000 to Old Basing-based **Basing Royals** football club after it impressed judges in a UK-wide competition built around mutual respect within the grassroots game.

Britain's biggest building society have partnered with Football Associations across the UK in landmark three-year deals to help foster positivity and respect across grassroots football. The simple aim is to create a society that's built on mutual respect. The Society awards fifty £1,000-grants to grassroots football clubs who best demonstrated what mutual respect means. Over 600 applications received with clubs explaining what respect means to them.



## ST. MICHAEL'S LAUNCHES FIRST REINDEER RUN

**You'd better watch out, reindeer are coming to town!**

**St. Michael's Hospice** has launched its first **Reindeer Run** which will be galloping off from **Festival Place** on the Sunday before Christmas. Starting and finishing from inside the shopping centre, the festive runners will complete a 3-kilometre loop around Eastrop Park which will be fully marshalled to keep everyone safe.

There will be fun reindeer antlers for all the entrants, exclusive Reindeer Run medals for the finishers to proudly show off, activities such as face painting to enjoy, and plenty of tasty refreshments for everyone. The event kicks off at **9am** on **Sunday, 19th December**, and **sign-ups can be made on the Hospice website until Wednesday, 15th December, or on the day at the event.**

"We hope this event will be enjoyed by everyone and we are really looking forward to seeing lots of local children and families getting in the festive spirit and taking part in their reindeer antlers," said Megan Parry, St. Michael's Events Manager.

She continues: "We have had great support this year to help us to recover from the Covid crisis when we had to cancel our events and close our stores but we haven't made up for all the lost income so we are hoping this event will help us close 2021 on a really positive note. Everyone at the Hospice is looking forward to coming along too as it is going to be such a fun event."



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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR - SOLVE

*In reply to Tony Wright's letter in the November edition of the Basinga:*

*This letter could have been drafted by the Borough Council Leader. Officers must work within the rules, but this does not stop them challenging them. Unfortunately, this emerging Local Plan is using 7-year-old data (2014), when later data is available.*

*For information, SOLVE has recalculated the housing requirement using 2018 evidence and found the requirement is 342 hpa (homes per annum) as against the 900 hpa using 2014 evidence. We understand that CPRE's independently calculated figure agrees with ours.*

*Maria Miller MP has stated that Basingstoke and Deane has built more new homes over the last 40 years than any other urban area in the Southeast, yet Basingstoke and Deane's growth is set to continue to accelerate at a faster rate than is needed.*

*Basingstoke and Deane's current emerging Local Plan sets out a growth rate twice as high as both the UK and Hampshire's. This is unnecessary and speaker after speaker objected to this at the Housing and Planning Committee meeting and demonstration on 2nd September. Further, at the full council meeting on 14th October, the following was agreed unanimously – "This Council rejects 17,820 units as the housing figure in the Local Plan Review."*

*Despite this, the Council Leadership continue with their growth agenda and appear to be rolling over and accepting the obvious flaws in the housing requirement. SOLVE challenges this proposed housing requirement. It is inexcusable to use outdated data for the emerging Local Plan.*

*New Government planning rules and an Environment Bill are due soon. Climate Change action is urgent, and it would be hypocritical if the Government failed to give strong protection for the countryside.*

*You can donate to our campaign on our website or email [peterbloyce@btinternet.com](mailto:peterbloyce@btinternet.com)*

**Peter Bloyce (SOLVE)**

## ANNUAL XMAS GIFT APPEAL

Businesses and Communities working side by side to provide **Christmas presents to local children** in need this year:

**Tesco Chineham, Caritas and Spotlight** have come together again for the **Annual Xmas Gift Appeal** to provide presents to local families in need.

This is their sixth year of running and proving to be the toughest ever for families in our community with many making decisions to 'heat or eat' this winter. Every item or cash donation will be used to provide a gift to a child between 0 and 18 years of age and distributed via Children's Services to local families this Christmas.

They need unwrapped gifts to be donated to one of the various drop off points: **Tesco Chineham, Tesco Hook, The Raven Hotel in Hook, The Sweet Shop in Hartley Wintney, Tesco Fleet Express and Livingstones in Fleet**, who are kindly supporting the appeal. If you're a local business who would like to make a donation and support the appeal please contact [jeejo2000@hotmail.com](mailto:jeejo2000@hotmail.com)

**Jo Evans**

Dear friends,

As I write this, we are looking forward to being able to see loved ones at Christmas this year, after the strangeness of last year. We are pleased to be planning to hold our regular Christmas services in church, alongside our Christmas Tree Festival. We would love you to join us!

However, we also know that for some Christmas can be a particularly lonely and painful time. And so, alongside all the joyful celebrations there are also opportunities for quieter reflection and space to be at the church. One such opportunity is as part of our Christmas Tree festival to add the name of a loved one or loved ones that you wish to remember on the 'Memory Tree'.

In amongst the Carol Services and Nativity Services, you will also find our Blue Christmas Service. This service is held close to the longest night of the year (this year on Saturday 18th December) and is especially for those who find Christmas hard. It may be that you have lost a loved one and need to acknowledge the gap that they have left in our lives at this special time; it may be the pain of broken relationship, or the stresses of life leave you needing some "time out"; or it may be health concerns, for ourselves or someone we are close to that mean that we want a quiet space in which to be, and to hear God's message of hope in the darkness.



For at Christmas, and especially at our Blue Christmas service, we remember the hope and peace that the Christ brings, and are reminded that whatever we face we are not alone. At the heart of the Christian faith is the promise that God came to earth to be with us in both times of sadness and of joy. Whatever emotions Christmas brings for you this year, I hope and pray that in the midst of it you may know Christ's peace and presence with you.

With love and prayers,

*Reverend Heather*

## ST MARY'S CHURCH

The Church continues to be open **Monday to Saturday** from **10am to 4pm** and **Sunday** from **11am to 4pm**.

We continue to ask that you wear face masks when moving around the church (unless exempt), but you may choose to remove your face mask when in your pew if seated in the front part of the church at services.



### REGULAR SERVICES

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>8am</b>	<b>BCP Communion</b>
	<b>9.30am</b>	<b>Sung Eucharist with Junior Church</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>9.15am</b>	<b>Morning Prayer</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>10am</b>	<b>Holy Communion</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>9.15am</b>	<b>Morning Prayer</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>9.15am</b>	<b>Morning Prayer</b>
	<b>10am</b>	<b>Diddy Disciples (term-time only)</b>

If you have any prayer requests you can contact **Reverend Heather** – text or call her on **07745 731729**

### ADVENT TAIZE SERVICES

**Sunday 28th November (7.30pm)**

**Mondays 6th, 13th and 20th December (7.30 pm)**

A time of prayer with meditative music, readings and silence. This service is about 45 minutes.

### CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES AT ST MARY'S

We have recently launched a new group for **0 to 4-year olds, Diddy Disciples**, which is an opportunity to celebrate God's love through singing and storytelling, followed by stay and play. The group meets **every Friday** during term time in the **Bolton Chapel** from **10 to 11.15 am**. Just turn up – no need to pre-book.

**Junior Church** has now resumed during our **9.30am** service in the **Parish Room**. New members welcome!

### CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Please see the Christmas Card enclosed with this edition of the Basinga for details of our Christmas services. If you're planning on coming to a Christmas service you are encouraged to please book a place by contacting **Debbie Filer**, St Mary's Administrator, as capacity may be limited at some services for health and safety reasons.

Please keep an eye on our website **[www.stmarysoldbasing.org.uk](http://www.stmarysoldbasing.org.uk)** and our Facebook page **St Mary's Old Basing & Lychpit** for updates.

## CHURCHYARD CONSERVATION GROUP – PIOCC



This month's **working party** will be on **Saturday, 4th December** at **10am** – meet by the PIOCC noticeboard at the entrance to the Conservation Area. **There will be no Thursday afternoon working party in December.** We are now able to provide refreshments inside. We will continue our seasonal conservation work, including woodland management. We look forward to welcoming our regular

volunteers and also new participants. All are welcome.

Churchyard Conservation is a community project, not just for churchgoers, so please come along if you would like to be involved. Just turn up in gardening clothes and bring gloves. The tools are provided. Our **Saturday morning** sessions last about **three hours** (with a coffee break and chance to relax).

We will be displaying a tree at **St Mary's Church Christmas Tree Festival** on **Saturday, 11th** and **Sunday, 12th December**. This year's theme is 'Christmas Creatures'. Following their wonderful Nature Trail at the Summer Festival the PIOCC are designing a new Conservation Trail. This should be just as magical. We look forward to seeing you.

Now the holly berries are at their best, providing food for the birds especially the blackbirds. The WI seat continues to provide a quiet spot for a moment of reflection and peace. The Conservation Area is a community space for everyone to enjoy.

For further information please ring **Fay Farrant** on **01256 476863**.

**Margaret Carr** – [www.stmarysoldbasing.org.uk](http://www.stmarysoldbasing.org.uk)

## OLD BASING METHODIST CHURCH

**ADVENT REFLECTIONS** at Old Basing Methodist Church on Thursdays at 2.30pm

Session 1: **25th November**

**'On the Way to Bethlehem'**

Session 2: **9th December**

**'Beyond the Chocolate Window'**

Session 3: **16th December**

**'Walking backwards to Christmas'**



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### What can I say!

Thanks to the support of all our customers, we have reached, in fact exceeded our target, to raise enough money to install an **Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** in the church grounds. We are over the moon that since we reopened in September, you have been generous enough to enable the purchase of this life-saving device, thank you!

Once the device is installed, we will be offering training sessions to ensure people know how to use it correctly, should the need arise. We will advise of dates and venues via our Facebook page.

We have been so successful in this venture that our aim is to continue fundraising for another AED to be purchased and installed at the A30-side of the village to provide as much cover as we can so we will be incredibly grateful for your continuing support.

Since reopening, we have started a pre-order service which enables you to order your cake and pick up from us on a Friday afternoon, affectionately known as 'cakeaway'. This is very popular so don't miss out. You can choose from our weekly selection published on our Facebook and Instagram pages and we offer prepayment via Paypal or cash on collection. You are welcome to bring your own boxes or we will happily box for you. We are also providing takeaway drinks, again feel free to bring your own cup if you prefer.

The idea of the Village Café was to provide a friendly place where all members of our community could meet for a drink, cake and a catch up. This remains at our core but we understand that times have changed, lots of you are taking advantage of our "cakeaway" service and it is a pleasure to see you all on a Friday afternoon. We do still have tables inside, safely spaced for anyone who wants to pop in so please come and see us.



Personally, I would like to thank our team of wonderful volunteers for baking amazing cakes week after week and giving up their time to serve our customers. The café has grown from humble beginnings and without all of you, our success would not continue.

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## NATIONAL WOMEN'S REGISTER (NWR)

The National Women's Register (NWR) is an organisation for all women. Our style is informal and relaxed. Local group meetings are mostly held in members' homes, and all NWR events offer conversation, friendship and fun. Each of our 350-plus groups chooses their own programme. Our lively minded members are interested in everything and talk about anything. Besides **discussion meetings at 2pm on the first Monday of the month**, we meet up for a monthly lunch or occasional outings. There is also a **Book Group meeting at 8pm on the fourth Thursday of the month** and Pre-covid we also had short overseas trips.

In late October Chineham and Old Basing NWR visited nearby **Sandham Chapel** for a very interesting guided tour, followed by a pub lunch. In November we participated in the popular annual **NWR National Telephone Quiz**. The quiz has been running since 1995. It runs over four nights in November, led by one NWR group who set the questions and organise the all-important clue holders standing by their phones to accept answers and provide the next question in the sequence. It's fun, it's hectic and over 350 teams take part each year. In December we have our annual Christmas lunch prepared by members and held in the Old Basing Cricket Club Pavilion.

If you are unable to participate in a local group, you can join as an independent member to join in the many online activities. For more information look at **nwr.org.uk** or for our local group **www.basinga.org.uk/wp/national-womens-register** or contact our Local Organiser, **Karen Dann**, tel. **01256 328488** or email: **karen.dann@gmail.com**

**Sandie Tapping**

## OLD BASING WI



It is with great sadness that Old Basing WI reports the death of our past President **Chris Hall**. Chris joined the Old Basing WI in 2011 and was a very popular member of our group, being elected President for our Centenary Celebrations in 2019. She was instrumental in organising the planting of our Centenary Tree which is on the Recreation Ground. Chris will perhaps be best remembered for her excellent crafting skills and indeed she led our craft group for the past year or so. We will be making a donation to Treloars in her memory and Members were invited to donate to Chris's chosen charity which was the Dog's Trust.

We welcomed Deborah Wheeler at our November meeting to talk to us about the History of Christmas. Later in the month we took part in the Remembrance Day Parade and the successful Basing House Christmas Fayre. We also enjoyed tea and cake kindly laid on for us by the Village Café and presented them with a cheque for £50 towards their defibrillator fundraising appeal.

Our **December meeting** takes place on **Tuesday, 7th December**, at the **Parish Room, St Mary's Church**, when we will be entertained by Fiona Birchall who will tell us some Christmas Stories. The competition that evening will be a Christmas table decoration. Later this month we will again take part in the popular **Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church** where our tree will represent the '**Guardians of the Manger**'. We will also be having a lunchtime trip to **Avenue Nurseries** for a festive meal.

Details of the WI in Hampshire and activities can be found at **www.hampshirewi.org.uk**

If you would like to join our long-running and thriving group, please contact our President, **Sue Stewart**, by email at **oldbasingpres@hampshirewi.org.uk**



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How lovely to have the 'buzz' of December back this year and to be able to get creative with the children again after last year's lockdown. We've been making advent calendars, writing letters to Père Noël and packing boxes for the Food Bank, to name but a few of our activities.

Of course, there's also the **Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church** to prepare for! This year, the theme is '**Christmas Creatures**' and we're very excited about our exhibition. Last half term we looked at the story of Amal, a giant puppet representing the thousands of children displaced because of war by walking from Syria to the United Kingdom and we've decided to tie this learning in with the Christmas Tree Festival by decorating our tree with doves. And to connect it all to languages, we have found a beautiful book called *The Language of Doves*, by Rosemary Wells and beautifully illustrated by Greg Shed, which you can have a look at if you visit the **St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival on Saturday 11th or Sunday 12th December**.

This month, we're also going to be visiting Old Basing Village Nursery School to help promote cultural awareness from a young age. We shan't say any more here, but if you'd like to see some of what the children end up getting up to, do visit our or Old Basing Village Nursery's Facebook page.

Remember, if you'd like to join or would like to have your child join a language class, then we have lots to offer (French, German, Spanish, Italian, Mandarin and Japanese at various levels). Just email [info@linguatastic.com](mailto:info@linguatastic.com)

## SOLVE

We are reaching out across the Borough to establish common ground, in particular on the overall housing number and water quality which is of environmental concern and impacts everyone. In addition we are co-ordinating our responses to the Borough Council's many meetings and papers with the Parish Council.

It will be very interesting to see what specific deliverables emerge for the East of Basingstoke Natural Environment Plan, particularly for the Lime Pits, Basing Fen and the Mill Field. Unfortunately this project does not include any land downstream from Pyotts Bridge which seems something of an omission.

The Environment Bill has been passed but it is disappointing that the Duke of Wellington's amendment relating to sewage discharge into our rivers was watered down – unlike the sewage!

Hopefully you will have had the opportunity to talk to us at the **Basing House Christmas Fayre** (see page 32) or do get in touch through our website [www.solveloddon.org](http://www.solveloddon.org) where you can donate to the cause, or Facebook group **SOLVE: Save Our Loddon Valley Environment** – it would be great to hear from you.

### Poetry competition about the River Loddon

If you haven't penned your verse and are **aged 5 to 16**, you have until **Friday, 17th December** to enter the **Mayor's Poetry Competition 2021**. The topic is close to our hearts and the poem must be about the **River Loddon** (see page 35 for more details).

See you in the New Year restored and ready for action with the Local Plan Update Site Selection! In the meantime wishing everyone a very merry Christmas.

**Kate Tuck (SOLVE)**

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## NEWS FROM BASING HOUSE

**Winter** at **Basing House** means the site is **closed**, and we expect to reopen around Easter. Some events still happen, though.

To finish the year, **Saturday 27th** and **Sunday 28th November** see the return of the **Basing House Christmas Fayre**. We are fully booked for stallholders so the Great Barn will be crammed with stalls selling a tempting variety of goods: bags, books, cosmetics, pens, candles and gifts. Meanwhile our gardening volunteers will run their stall with Christmas greenery – holly, mistletoe etc – from around the Basing House site.

On the **Saturday**, **Mill Cottage Farm** will bring their animals to allow folk to enjoy them, while on the **Sunday** the **reenactors** of the **English Civil War Society** will be bringing their Tudor kitchen and talking about traditional cooking in the days when Basing House was in its prime.

Car parking for both events is in our car park near Bartons Mill. If you have to drive, please don't try to park in The Street – there just isn't room. The **Fayre** is **open** from **11am** to **4pm**. **Admission** is **£3.50** for **adults** and **£2.50** for **children**.

Fuller (and sometimes more up-to-date) details of these events and those at Milestones are on our website **[www.hampshireculture.org.uk/events?venue=6](http://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/events?venue=6)**

After that all goes quiet until the 2022 season starts. But in the meantime, work continues restoring the brickwork in the wall facing The Street and in other places around the site.

Many of our visitors ask about our 100-metre long, 1-metre high, tunnel, often remembering it from their childhood. It is still alive and well and was used for the first time this year when some brave souls crawled through it during the Halloween tours at the end of October. Some brickwork is being restored there, too.

**Andrew Howard**

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**Mrs Janet Cullinane, Chair of Governors;** email **[janetmcullinane@gmail.com](mailto:janetmcullinane@gmail.com)**) or

**Mr Martin Biermann, Vice Chair;** email **[m.biermann111@gmail.com](mailto:m.biermann111@gmail.com)**

We would ask that if you are interested please contact us before **Friday, 28th January, 2022**.



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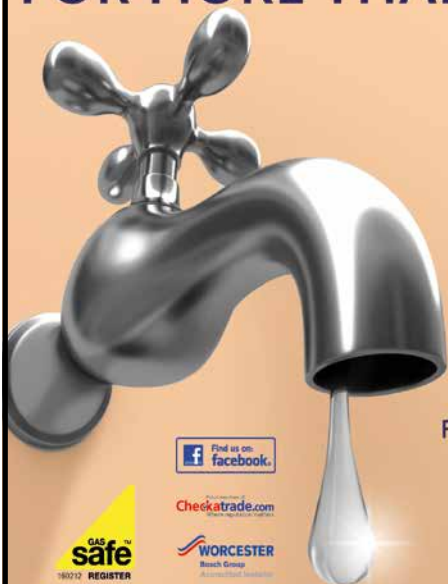
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## THE MILL FIELD CONSERVATION GROUP



### EVENT NEWS

Why not have a break from Christmas shopping and try out conservation work for a couple of hours at your local nature reserve on **Sunday, 5th December**, instead. We are completely dependent on volunteers to look after the Mill Field, keep the scrub in check for the wildlife and open up the views for the many

walkers who use the site every day. You don't need to book in advance just come along on the day, the more the merrier. No experience is necessary just wear appropriate clothes and footwear and we will provide tea, coffee and tools. You will find us on the middle path.

### WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR THIS MONTH

Considering it's December, it will be quite busy on the bird front, so binoculars to the ready: the numbers of Fieldfares and Redwings will build up with groups of Siskin and Goldfinches moving around. The Linnets should be grouping as they start to roost and if you are lucky you may see some lesser Redpoll, Brambling or the giant of finches the Hawfinch, all of which have already been spotted this autumn. Little Egrets will also be grouping in the evening by Bartons Mill pub, or you might see a Green Sandpiper or Snipe in the lower meadow.

**Anne Francis**

Tel. **07974 944439**

Email: [millfieldnature@gmail.com](mailto:millfieldnature@gmail.com)

Facebook: **Mill Field Conservation Group**

## MAYOR'S RIVER LODDON POETRY COMPETITION

Mayor's competition inspires young poets to celebrate the River Loddon. Young writers are being urged to follow in the footsteps of famous poets inspired to verse by the River Loddon in the **Mayor's Poetry Competition 2021**.

Basingstoke and **Deane Mayor Cllr Onnalee Cubitt** has chosen a celebration of the River Loddon as the theme for her poetry competition open to children aged 5 to 16 years old.

The River Loddon, which flows through the borough, is one of just 224 chalk streams in the world, many of which are in the south of England. Chalk streams are vital, a unique part of our biodiversity of plants and animals and need protecting and preserving.

Cllr Cubitt said: "Now we're asking the modern young poets of Basingstoke and Deane to write in celebration of our chalk stream. The aim of this competition is to bring children closer to nature and encourage them to treasure our beautiful local environment, a very fitting theme when the international focus is on climate change and preserving biodiversity."

There are **three age categories: 5 to 7, 8 to 11 and 12 to 16**. An iPad is up for grabs for the **winner in each category**, with **book tokens** for the **runners-up**. The three winners and three runners-up will be invited to a presentation ceremony hosted by the Mayor early next year.

The judges are looking for original work that expresses hope, fear, anger, joy or any other response to the River Loddon. Poems should be **no longer than 750 words** and must be submitted to [mayor@basingsstoke.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@basingsstoke.gov.uk) by the **closing date of Friday, 17th December**.

For more information see: [www.basingstoke.gov.uk/mayor-poetry-competition](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/mayor-poetry-competition)

## DECEMBER IN YOUR GARDEN

There is no reason to stop attending to the garden now as we enter the colder months. Being outside and engaging with nature is known to lower your heart rate and blood pressure while exposure to natural light boosts the immune system, improves mood and aids sleep. With the days shortening and temperatures dropping there has never been a better excuse to get out in your gardens.

I would suggest the first job is to check on any greenhouses, polytunnels and other outside structures through the winter to ensure that they are sturdy enough to withstand anything the weather can throw at them. While you are at it, it is also a good time to check the protection on tender perennials so that the cold doesn't creep in and destroy them. Pots should also be raised onto feet or bricks if you haven't already done so lest they become waterlogged. Any tubs or pots that are liable to cracking due to frost should be wrapped in bubblewrap, hessian or fleece to prevent this from happening.

Continue to clear flowerbeds of leaves and cut back plants that have gone over, unless you want to leave these as winter habitats for insects. It is particularly important that alpine plants are not left with decaying plant matter on them as they will die off if left damp for too long. You can mulch around them with gravel to help with drainage and for other plants that will suffer with mud splashes, and then bark-chip mulch can be used to keep them at their best. If your soil tends towards being heavy and claggy, or even filled with big lumps of chalk, then you can work in lots of composted organic matter to help improve it for next year. This will have the added bonus of keeping you warm with lots of digging!

Waterlogging can also be a problem on lawns, if you can't help walking on it when it is wet it will eventually die back and therefore it might be worth considering installing some stepping stones or a path to allow access to the areas you need to reach without causing damage to the grass in the process. If you lay the stones or pavers at a low enough level, they won't interfere with mowing, which might still be necessary if the weather stays above 41°F (5°C) or so as the grass will keep growing at this temperature. Damaged lawn patches can be repaired with turves cut from other areas of the garden and all lawn edges should be re-cut to keep them tidy and to save work next season.

If you have a pond heater, make sure you use it to keep the water from freezing over which can be fatal for fish and other pond life. If you don't have a heater, please don't be tempted to crack the ice as this can damage the fish. Instead, use a saucepan of hot water to melt a hole and allow an air hole. Foraging herons can be deterred using nylon strings at least 6ins (15cm) from the ground and in from the edges of the pond. If you would like to make your pond more wildlife friendly, now is a good time to do it in preparation for next season.

Now is the prime time to prune apple and pear trees that are in open ground (not against a wall). You are aiming to achieve a balanced, open goblet-like structure, but better to prune too lightly than too hard. There is always next year! Acers, birches and vines can also be pruned now, as they need to be done before Christmas to avoid bleeding. You can take hardwood cuttings of plants now if you need to increase your stock. You can also continue to plant deciduous trees and shrubs.

In this Covid-dominated world it's been a tough year for all of us but at least our gardens have blossomed due to the extra care and attention they have received. Let us make sure we keep it up.

Happy Christmas and hoping more than ever for a healthy, Covid-reduced new year.



## NATURE NOTES FOR DECEMBER

Hopefully, many of you who have nesting boxes in your gardens, either fixed to trees or screwed to the house or shed, did have some success during this year's breeding season. Now that there is no chance of any young birds or fertile eggs being present it's a good time to take the box down and clean it out of deteriorating debris. However, many small birds, particularly Blue Tits, use a box in which to roost (sleep) in during the long winter nights and they will also explore them to see if there are any bugs to eat and even prospect the box as a nesting opportunity next spring. So, if you do clean it out, remount it straight away and perhaps put a little dry grass or hay inside for any bird to cosy down in. Most days this week (w/e 5th November) we've seen tits clambering over several boxes within eyeshot here and Terry MacInish sent his photo (*right*) of one bird snuggled down in his camera box.



Another common bird that changes its behaviour somewhat in the autumn and winter is the Starling. Mostly overlooked as 'just another bird', the Starling has a gorgeous shimmering green hue to its speckled plumage and possesses a talent for getting the greatest variety of notes into its song. But its also a very gregarious creature and often joins hundreds if not thousands of other birds as dusk approaches, which is commonly known as a murmuration. You have probably seen on TV huge flocks sweeping around the sky until they all (somehow) agree to settle in a reed bed or on a remote structure for the night. Well, Old Basing has now for a couple of years had its own mini-murmuration and over the past week or two I've seen several small groups of birds seemingly 'picking up' others as they circle the area, ending up with perhaps 150 to 200 birds. Now about three years ago when I saw this happening, I tracked them down to a single conifer in Chalk Vale but does anybody know where they are roosting now? One would surely hear them if they were close to one's house as they make a right din until it's just about dark, then they clam right up until they fly off at daybreak. Please let me know if its you!

With safety in numbers being paramount to any we will soon be seeing gatherings of Redwings that have made their way down from Scandinavia as the winter deepens there. Already, up to half a million early travellers have made their way across the country heading down further south to France and Iberia but some are settling here already. This morning (9th November) I noted two flocks of approximately 150 birds travelling west, but with it being so mild currently these guys may also want to keep going. Berries are the Redwings 'thing' and as long as the wood pigeons don't clear them beforehand, you may be blessed to see these visitors, with their rust-coloured wing flashes and pale over-eye stripe or hear them chatting away on a Holly or Cotoneaster bush in your garden. Pictures please!

Finally, thanks to **Debbie Filer** for the splendid photo (*see front cover*) of a **Red-Legged Partridge** sitting on her garden fence. Waiting for the first day of Christmas perhaps?

**Rick Bourne**

Don't forget to send all your nature-related photos to [rickbourne@yahoo.com](mailto:rickbourne@yahoo.com) or [naturenotes@basinga.org.uk](mailto:naturenotes@basinga.org.uk) or ring **01256 321108** for news. For all your bird food requirements, order it from me at 'Bird Drop-ins' use the former email address or ring/text me on **07900 648675** to place an order or get a form.

## DIARY DATES FOR DECEMBER

For details of services and events at St Mary's Church please see page 23

### NOVEMBER

Sat 27 11.00am – 4.00pm Basing House Christmas Fayre (Great Barn)

Sun 28 11.00am – 4.00pm Basing House Christmas Fayre (Great Barn)

### DECEMBER

Wed 1 10.00am – noon CSRF – 'Story Tale Christmas' (Brookvale Village Hall)

Fri 3 10.30am – noon Ladies First Friday Coffee Morning (*see page 17*)

2.30pm – 4.00pm Village Café (Parish Room, St Mary's Church)

Sat 4 10.00am – 1.00pm PLOCC Working Party (meet at noticeboard)

Sun 5 10.00am Mill Field Working party (meet on middle path)

**Mon 6 6.00pm DEADLINE FOR JANUARY COPY TO EDITOR (*see page 3*)**

Tue 7 7.30pm Parish Council Meeting. The Pavilion, Recreation Ground.

7.30pm Old Basing WI Meeting (Parish Room, St Mary's Church)

Thu 9 7.00pm Christmas Carol Service (Basingstoke Crematorium)

Fri 10 2.30pm – 4.00pm Village Café (Parish Room, St Mary's Church)

Sat 11 11.00am – 4.40pm St. Mary's Christmas Tree Festival (St Mary's Church)

Sun 12 11.00am – 4.00pm St. Mary's Christmas Tree Festival (St Mary's Church)

Wed 15 7.45pm BDRS Christmas film *Night Train to Paris* and buffet.

Thu 16 12.30pm Ploughman's Lunch (Parish Room, St Mary's Church)

Fri 17 2.30pm – 4.00pm Village Café (Parish Room, St Mary's Church)

Sun 19 9.00am St. Michael's Hospice Reindeer Run (*see page 19*)

### JANUARY 2022

Tue 4 7.30pm Parish Council Meeting. The Pavilion, Recreation Ground.

Fri 7 10.30am – noon Ladies First Friday Coffee Morning (*see page 17*)

## BASINGA EXTRA

*This month we were unable to include every article that we received, or submitted long after the deadline. Content listed below is available on our website: [www.basinga.org.uk](http://www.basinga.org.uk)*

*Basingstoke and District Railway Society*

*Rotary Club Round-up*

*Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust*

*Basingstoke Voluntary Action*

*University of the 3rd Age*

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## **OLD BASING & LYCHPIT PARISH COUNCIL**

<b>CLERK:</b> Sandra Tuck	01256 462847
<b>OFFICE AND HOURS:</b> The Pavilion, The Recreation Ground Monday to Thursday 10am to noon	



## **CHURCH INFORMATION FOR THE AREA**

### **Church of England (Parish of Old Basing & Lychpit)**

<b>VICAR:</b> Rev'd Heather Leppard, The Vicarage, Church Lane, Old Basing Email: vicar@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk	01256 363612 07745 731729
<b>ADMINISTRATOR:</b> Debbie Filer	07541 698235

### **Regular Services at St Mary's Church, Old Basing**

**SUNDAY:** 8am Holy Communion; 9.30am Sung Eucharist and Junior Church

**OTHER DAYS:** Wednesday, 10am – Holy Communion; Monday, Thursday and Friday, 9.15am – Morning Prayer

*Changes to the regular service pattern and other weekday services are shown in the weekly news-sheet, a copy of which is displayed on the noticeboard in the church porch*

### **Old Basing Methodist Church**

<b>MINISTER:</b> Rev'd David Jenkins	0118 3271592 07973 195566
<b>SUNDAY SERVICE:</b> Morning Service 10.30am	

### **Roman Catholic**

<b>PRIEST:</b> Fr Dominic Adeiza St Bede's Church, Popley Way, Basingstoke	01256 465214
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### Tuesday's

19.15 - 20.15  
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Church Hall,  
Old Basing

### Sunday Morning Yoga

*This class is for all levels of ability and focuses on strength and flexibility.*

### Sunday's

09.15 - 10.15  
Lychpit  
Community Hall

### Sunday Night Satsang

*This is deep relaxation yoga. You will be led through a series of gentle yoga postures followed by an extended guided meditation.*

### 1st Sunday of the month

18.30 - 19.30  
Lychpit  
Community Hall



Contact Vicky on 01256 910108 or  
email [vicky@infiniteharmony.co.uk](mailto:vicky@infiniteharmony.co.uk)  
Don't forget to book your space.



For more information visit [www.infiniteharmony.co.uk](http://www.infiniteharmony.co.uk)



## Tree Surgeon

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07766 256788

[TreeSceneArb@gmail.com](mailto:TreeSceneArb@gmail.com)



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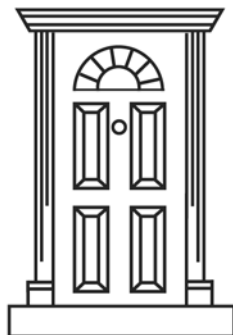
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