

West Ilsley News

APRIL 2025

www.westilsley.org

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Deadline for the next publication is:

5 pm on Friday 25th April

EDITORIAL POLICY

We are editors (though we don't edit unless we have to) – we are not reporters, so we only write something if we want to. We rely on villagers to contribute news and information and welcome updates from groups, committees and businesses to let the village know what is going on in their area of interest. We are always happy to receive feedback about WIN so please get in touch if you have anything to say.

DISTRIBUTION

If you have received a paper copy of this newsletter but have access to email, please join the email distribution list by contacting westilsleynews@westilsley.org – help to save paper and shoe leather!

What's on in West Ilsley

APRIL

- 12th Easter Church and Churchyard tidy up 10am
13th Café in All Saints' Church 10 am
18th Good Friday Walk 9 am starting Beedon Church

MAY

- 20th PC meeting and annual assembly

JUNE

JULY

- 4th Pre fete party
6th Fete

FULL COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Tuesday 20th May 2025

7:00 pm Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

8:15 pm Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes

Draft minutes of the February PC meeting are on the website - click [here](#)

MESSAGE FROM OLIVIA BAILEY MP



Thank you to the more than 400 constituents who have filled out my survey about the dangerous A34 slip roads at East Ilsley and Beedon. Many of the stories that people

shared were harrowing, from car crashes and near-misses to residents fearing for the lives of their children when using the roads. This has led to people having to take much longer routes to avoid using the slip roads at busy times, and many people have been telling young drivers in their families to avoid the junctions entirely.

As part of my campaign to make these junctions safer, I recently met with the South East Regional Director from National Highways in Parliament. I shared the strength of feeling among local people about the danger of these junctions and highlighted specific testimonies from my survey to make the case for action. It was encouraging to hear that they are aware of the problems with the A34, and that they are hoping to conduct a full review of its safety. I am looking forward to my upcoming site visit to show National Highways the problems first-hand and will also shortly be meeting with the Roads Minister.

I am continuing to work both in Westminster and in the constituency to secure much needed protections for our precious chalk streams including the River Pang. Earlier this year I held a roundtable in Parliament, with local and national environmental groups as well as environmental law experts from the University of Reading.

Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting with Professor Mike Wilson to hear about, and see in action, the citizen science project that he is running with Action for the River Kennet testing water quality in the River Pang. As well as a range of chemical tests they have also been testing microbes and bacteria, including coliforms and E. Coli. Their results from five sites along the Pang show high levels of microbes and bacteria and over a quarter of the samples had concentrations of E. Coli that would be classified as poor.

I am so impressed at the incredibly valuable work that Mike is carrying out, which shows again the poor state of the River Pang and I am determined to continue to work with ARK and other stakeholders to ensure that the Pang, Kennet and other chalk streams get the protection that they need.

One of this government's main commitments was to bring down NHS waiting lists, and it's brilliant news that we're already making progress. Data just released shows that since the election the government has delivered two million extra NHS appointments within

seven months. This exceeds our promise to deliver two million extra appointments within a year. It's also welcome that data shows waiting lists are falling as a result, now down for the fifth month in a row.

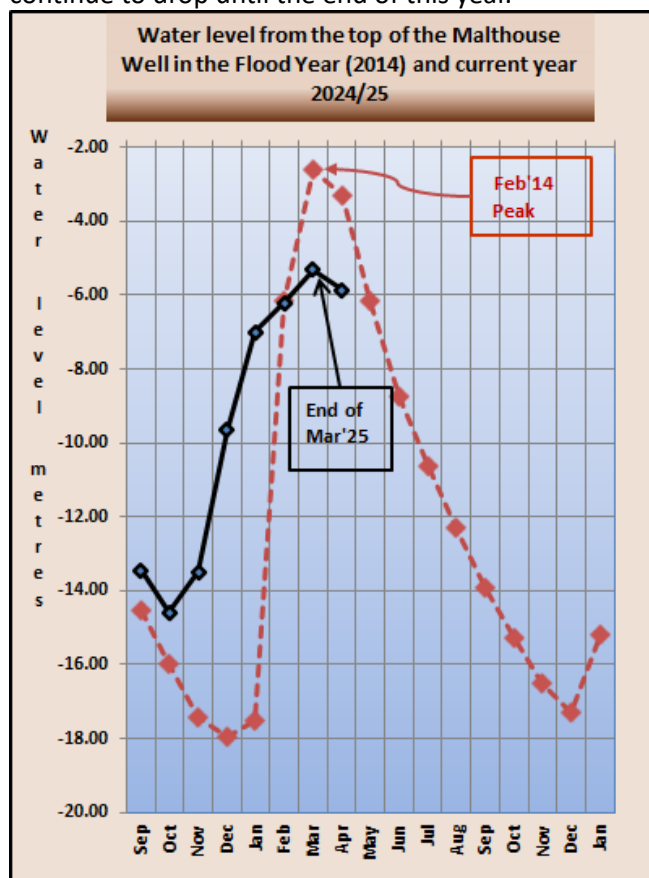
If you want to get in touch with me or book a surgery appointment you can email me at olivia.bailey.mp@parliament.uk or by writing to me at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. If you want to keep up to date with what I am doing in Parliament and in the constituency I send out a weekly email newsletter to constituents. If you would like to receive it, you can sign up at:

<https://shorturl.at/qgoHw>.

MALTHOUSE WELL

For Malthouse well-watchers there is finally some good news. As the mild weather continued into March the groundwater level peaked in the middle of the month at 5.17 metres below ground level. Since then the level has dropped by about a further 0.6 metres and at the end of March it stands at about 5.85 metres below ground level.

Now, with everything starting to grow in the oncoming Spring, and barring any disasters, the level should continue to drop until the end of this year.



FLOOD WARDEN REPORT

Firstly, the good news is that water levels have been consistently dropping over the last two weeks, losing almost half a metre.

There is a good posse of flood wardens in the Pang Valley who communicate regularly to share information & ideas, ask questions and hear reports from each parish; this has been invaluable as some of the members have many years of experience. One key point of discussion has been ensuring that street gutters, ditches and drains are kept clear of blockages and understanding that the responsibility for that task lies with the adjacent property owner i.e. where a boundary (front wall/drive) meets the road. It is *not* down to the various state agencies, the Borough or even the Parish Council to do this work so don't bother asking them to and failure to keep said drains and gutters clear can lead to enforcement orders against the property owner.

Now you know.

Since early December, I have been recording figures from several data points around the village to get perspective into the likelihood of ground water reaching critical levels in or near our location. Most of these datapoints are Environment Agency boreholes that take readings automatically every hour with values recorded as the *elevation* of the water surface in metres i.e. relative to mean sea level.

Example - Hodcott 2 borehole (located at the bottom of Hodcott Down gallops)

Typical Low: 104.88m

Typical High: 117.75m

Max on record: 121.78m - 9th March 2014

This season, Hodcott 2 achieved a high of 119.77m on 10th March and while that is only 2 metres below the max. recorded 10 years ago, it is still almost 10m below the low point (street level) of the village. Obviously the elevation and rate of change would oscillate with the inclement weather but the typical rate of change when it was upwardly mobile was approx. 2cm a day with a peak of just under 7cm in 24 hours at the end of January.

If Hodcott 2 were to achieve critical levels, it is likely that surface water would be seen traversing the fields between West Ilsley Stables and East Ilsley which thankfully has not happened this season.

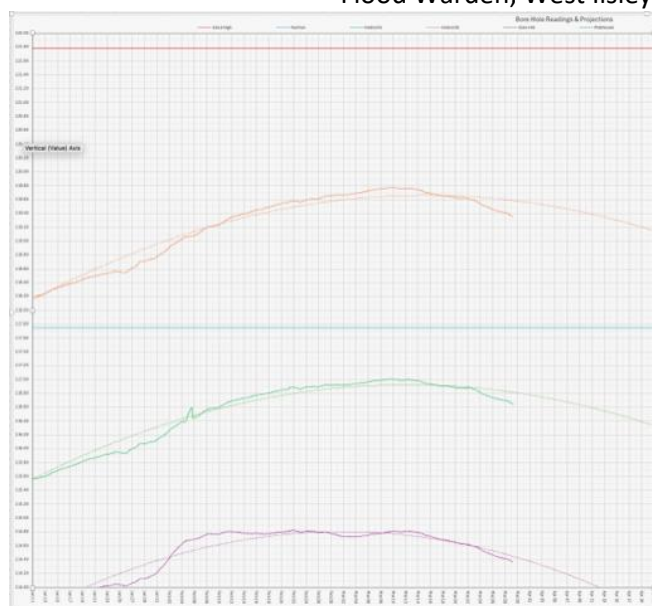
Drone photos reveal a historic scar of the water path heading east from the stables but have also shown the nearest surface water to be along the Abingdon Road in East Ilsley and between East Ilsley and Compton, both of which are still prominent, although it has been suggested that this is more to do with poor drainage as water remaining on the surface no longer corresponds to the steady drop in borehole readings.

The graph below shows the three nearest boreholes of Hodcott 1 (green), Hodcott 2 (orange) and Gore Hill (purple) with the Hodcott 2 typical high in blue and the max high in red. The levels of three boreholes close together are different simply because the ground water level across the Pang Valley isn't uniform like a big lake but varies according to the various pockets of water held within the chalk.

Finally, one item of concern yet to be resolved is the pond at Keeper's Stables where branches and other arboreal detritus have fallen in as the result of a storm. I have been monitoring the pond each day and while happy to note that it continues to drain successfully, there is a risk that a blockage will occur possibly resulting in water backing up into the village and nobody wants backwash from stables! Chateau de Cheval 2025... There has been a long quest to find the party responsible (it is *owned* by The Crown Estate but leased) in order to get it cleared - this is in hand with the Parish Council and hopefully a few steps closer to resolution so that action can be taken ahead of the pond's refill at the end of the year.

If all else fails, paddle faster - I hear banjos!

Justin Pilditch
Flood Warden, West Ilsley



APRIL AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

- Sunday 6th Family Service at 11.00am
- Sunday 13th Communion at 8.30am
- Monday 14th Service of Compline at 8pm
- Good Friday 18th Service of Prayer at the Cross at 2pm
- Easter Sunday 20th Family Communion at 9.30am

Sunday 27th No service at All Saints'
Please look on the notice board in the lychgate or on the East Downland website: <https://www.eastdownland.org.uk/news-and-notice/this-week> for other services in the benefice during April or see the Easter card which will be posted through your letterbox soon.

Café in All Saints' Church

Our next monthly cafe will take place on Sunday 13th April between 10.00am and 11.00am. Donations go to a different charity each month. In March, £100 was raised for Berkshire Women's Aid refuge for a new blender/food processor. Everyone is welcome to join us for coffee, cake and a chat!

Lent Groups

These are for anyone in the benefice to attend and continue on 9th April at 10.00am at St Mary's Church, Chieveley before an Easter break. The last two meetings will be on 30th April and 7th May. This year the focus is on The Nicene Creed. Everyone is very welcome to join the group.

Saturday 12th April – Easter Church and Churchyard Tidy-up at 10am.

As usual we hope you can spare a little time to help with cleaning, cutting and trimming so bring your gardening implements or dusters and polish and help make the church shine for Easter.

Holy Week 14th - 17th April

There will be short reflective services twice a day at 12 noon and at 8pm during Holy Week at different churches in the benefice – a time to sit quietly and bring a period of calm to our usually hectic lives. Details of all serices will be on the Easter card. West Ilsley will be holding a Service of Compline with reflection on Monday 14th at 8pm.

Good Friday Walk

This year the Good Friday Service will take place here at All Saints', West Ilsley at 2pm after the walk, which will again be led by Lesley Chandler. We will start at Beedon Church at 9am, arriving at Peasmore around 10.15am. Continuing to Farnborough, picnic lunches will be eaten there around 12 noon and we leave there around 12.40pm to arrive in West Ilsley in plenty of time for the 2pm service. All times are approximate apart from the start time and you can join or leave the walk at any time. Don't forget your packed lunches! For further details please ring Lesley on 07767 355435. Easter Day Service - 20th April



All are very welcome at the Family Communion Service on Easter Sunday at 9.30am and we hope to see you there.

Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 6th May – All Saints' Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 7.45pm

Sunday 18th May – Rogation Walk from 11am after bacon butties and coffee

Sunday 7th September – Pet Service at 11am

Private Prayer

All Saints' will continue to open on Saturdays and Sundays for private prayer between 9.30am and 6pm.

Pastoral

If you would like prayer (or other support) for you or someone else, please get in touch. We are happy to be contacted by phone or email using the details of contacts shown below.

If anyone needs help, do contact the wardens or clergy who will do their best to help.

To subscribe to the weekly pew sheet, which contains readings, prayers and notices about church events in the benefice, please [go](#) to the East Downland website (see above)

Contacts:

Churchwardens: Ian – 01635 281625; Alexandra – 01635 281306

Rector: Revd John Toogood – 01635 247566 or 07748 822336 - edownlandrector@gmail.com

Associate Priest: Revd Douglas Dales – 01635 247404 – revdjdales@gmail.com

East Downland Benefice Office: 07957 458107 - eastdownland@btinternet.com – Usually manned on Thursday & Friday mornings between 9am and 1pm.

Kay and Ian Fewtrell-Smith

THE ILSLEYS NEWSLETTER

Recently, as the new term has started, two new students have joined our school in Year 1 and 3. You will be happy to hear that they are settling in nicely and have already made themselves lots of new friends in our lovely school!

Eco Club have taken part in the Big Schools' Birdwatch. One of the students that took part said it was a really fun experience, and one that they had never done before. Surprisingly, we got two special certificates for taking part and the children were very shocked to see one of them signed by Sir David Attenborough!

Some children have taken part in the Curridge Year 5 and 6 Maths Challenge. There were lots of different questions that challenged all of the children in the competition but The Ilsleys still thoroughly enjoyed it. Not too long ago, we took part in World Book Day as a school. The children could all either come in our pyjamas or dressed up as our favourite book character but, whatever they chose, they still had to bring in a book. All of the students really enjoyed doing this fun event. Near the end of the day, a few people in each class shared a bit about their favourite book.

Last week, some students took part in the Year 4, 5 and 6 cross country at Elstree School. The children had to go on some challenging terrain over 1 kilometre. This race was a relay race so we had 3 teams of 4. We didn't win but at least all of the children enjoyed this wonderful event.

Recently, Atlantic Class have been on a school trip to the Imperial War Museum in the capital city of London. When we had arrived at the museum, we were told where to meet a lady who was going to give us a challenge a bit later on. Whilst Hampstead Norreys were doing their challenge, The Ilsleys walked to the gift shop where the children could buy anything in their budget. Once we had finished looking around the World War Two exhibits, it was time to have lunch. After that, it was finally time to do the really fun part of the trip. The children were very excited when they were told that they were going to do mini documentaries! They got to share all of their favourite parts of the museum on a screen. There were different positions to do which were clacking a board, filming and most importantly, presenting.

On March 17th, some KS2 students took part in a netball tournament against some other schools. This

took place at Kennet School. They played very well against all of the other schools. All of the children thoroughly enjoyed this event even though they did not win. Overall, it was against quite a lot of other schools that were much bigger.

On March 21st, most of the Year 5 children took in part in the Level 1 Bikeability which took place on the playground. Here, they learnt how to indicate, stop in an emergency and many more things. All of the students really enjoyed this and did not want it to end as it was great fun! Now they have all received their badges and they are very proud of themselves. This day was also Red Nose Day so all the children could come to school in non-uniform.

We look forward to sharing more news with you next month.
Written by a Year 6 and a Year 5

COMPTON POP UP LIBRARY

Dear Residents of West Ilsley,
West Berkshire Council recently piloted a Pop-up Library at Compton Village Hall, operating fortnightly on a Thursday from 10am to 12pm. To continue this service, West Berkshire Council has requested that Compton Parish Council fund its provision. If approved, the library would run once a month at a cost of £1,475 from parish council funds.

Compton Parish Council is seeking feedback from residents of Compton and the surrounding villages - including Aldworth, East Ilsley, West Ilsley, and Hampstead Norreys - to determine whether this service has sufficient support. You are invited to share your views by completing the survey.

The online version of the survey can be found at:

bit.ly/ComptonLibrarySurvey

Many thanks,

Compton Parish Council



April 5th, 2025

10:30am to 3pm

St Bartholomew's School
Newbury RG14 6LP

www.wbge.org.uk/greenfest.html

Saturday 5th April

Aldworth village hall

(RG8 9SE)

10.30 to 12.00

In aid of

ALEXANDER DEVINE

CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Stall selling handsewn/knitted baby & young children's clothes, soft toys & many other gifts.

Refreshments

Community-run, weekly Saturday market with fruit & veg, groceries, greeting cards etc.

Free TABLE TENNIS

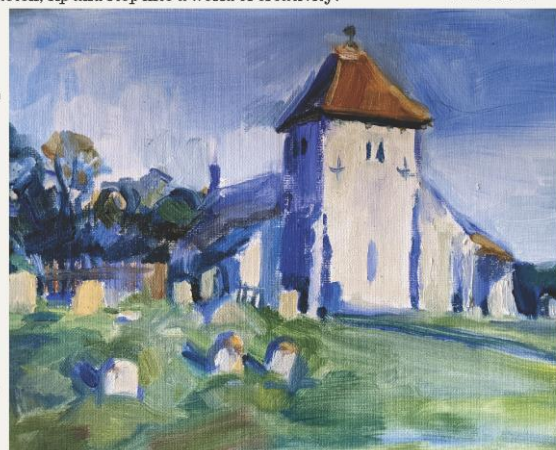
Details: 01635 578090

Oxford Art Week

with ST. MARY'S CHURCH
ART GROUP

Sketch, sip and step into a world of creativity!

Join us for a week of art and inspiration.



Aldworth
SATURDAY 10TH MAY UNTIL SATURDAY 17TH MAY

Explore a beautiful collection of artwork by local artists, with pieces to admire and purchase. Enjoy delicious homemade cake, fresh coffee and tea served all day.

🌱 Browse the plant stall.

🎨 Join our morning open sketching sessions - paper & charcoal provided! (10.30 - 12.30 daily).

ST MARY'S CHURCH, ALDWORTH, RG8 9SB
FURTHER INFO: 01635 578791 WWW.ARTWEEKS.ORG

Open
10am-5pm

WHO TO CONTACT

DEFIBRILLATOR is outside the village hall - code: C159

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR – Carolyne Culver 07976 374146
Carolyne.Culver1@westberks.gov.uk

PARISH COUNCIL

Council members are:

Alan Bloor alan.bloor@westilsley.org

Katy Morris katy.morris@westilsley.org

Tim Pearey timothy.pearey@westilsley.org

Graham Woods graham.woods@westilsley.org

07905 558884

Rachel Hudson rachel.hudson@westilsley.org

Johnny Rayfield jonny.rayfield@westilsley.org

Sarah Marshman – Clerk clerk@westilsley.org

PATIENT REPRESENTATION GROUP rep is Joe Clerkin
(01635) 281150 or joeclerkin@georgeweb.co.uk

PRESCRIPTIONS are delivered from Compton on Tuesday mornings at 8.30. Please collect yours from Ann Barnes, 3 Morland Close on **Tuesdays only between 2 pm and 4.30 pm**. Repeat forms can be posted through the letter box at any time before Monday evening for the following week's delivery.



TENNIS COURT "Pay & Play" is available to non-members for £10 per hour. Non-members can book up to 24 hours in advance. To book the court please use <https://westilsleytennis.jezzam.com> or scan the QR code!
For all enquiries, please contact the

Tennis Committee via

<https://westilsleytennis.jezzam.com/contact>

VILLAGE HALL

Bookings & enquiries:

Any new bookings should now be done via the village

Website: <https://www.westilsley.org/>

Any booking enquiries please contact Louise by email:

village.hall@westilsley.org

Anyone without access to the internet can leave a message on: 01635 281762

Rates: £12/hour for villagers and £15/hour non villagers.

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL – REPORT A PROBLEM:

<https://westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem>

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL – REPORT SPEEDING:

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/speedingtraffic>

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL – REPORT DOG FOULING:

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/36781/Report-Dog-Fouling>