

The Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay Newsletter

Harvest 2026 in the Baldons and Nuneham



**Scarecrow
Trail**



Apple Pressing



Harvest Service



**Bring and Share
Harvest Family Lunch**

September 2026

September: Harvest and New Beginnings

September is a month of change. Summer begins to fade, the evenings draw in, and there is a freshness in the air. Fields and gardens offer the fruits of months of careful work, while schools, colleges and universities welcome pupils and students to a new academic year. For many people, September feels more like a new beginning than January.

Harvest has long been one of the great celebrations of the Christian year. It reminds us to give thanks for the food we enjoy and for all those whose work brings it to our tables. Above all, it reminds us that every good gift comes from God. In a busy world, Harvest encourages us to pause and simply say, "Thank you."

Around the middle of the month we also experience the autumn equinox, when day and night are almost equal in length. It is a quiet turning point in the year and offers us an opportunity to pause and take stock. Like a farmer looking over the fields after harvest, we can reflect on our own lives. What have we achieved this year? What have we learned? What blessings have we received? Often, we notice what has gone wrong more easily than all the good that has quietly grown through patience, perseverance and God's grace.

September brings excitement and uncertainty for children and young people beginning a new school year. New classrooms, new teachers and new friendships can be both exciting and daunting. As a church community, we hold them, their families, teachers and support staff in our prayers, asking God to bless them with wisdom, confidence and kindness as they begin another chapter.

New beginnings, however, are not just for the young. Every stage of life offers opportunities to start afresh. We might begin a new hobby, volunteer in the community, deepen our prayer life, or reach out to someone who needs a friend. God is never finished with us, and each new season brings fresh opportunities to grow.

Harvest also reminds us that gathering the crop is not the end of the story. Farmers soon begin preparing the ground for the next planting. In the same way, we can use this season to think about the seeds we want to sow for the future—not only in our gardens but in our lives, our churches and our communities. Seeds of kindness, generosity, hope and faith often grow into blessings far greater than we expect. As autumn begins, may we give thanks for the harvest of the earth and for the many blessings in our own lives. And may we step into this new season with hope, ready to plant new ideas, nurture new friendships and trust God with all that lies ahead.

**Our vicar is Rev'd Vicky Burton who can be contacted at
revvickyburton@gmail.com / 07712 336540**

You can also contact the Dorchester Team Office on 01865 340007
or at admin@dorchester-abbey.org.uk

Our safeguarding officer is Sara McDouall: saramcdouall@gmail.com

You are invited to join in the **Inaugural Baldons Scarecrow Trail!**

To celebrate Harvest in the Baldons in 2026 we
would like to invite all households in the Baldons
and Nuneham Courtenay to take part.
26th September – 4th October

How to enter:

1. Think of the scarecrow you wish to create and give it a name
2. Register it at saramcdouall@gmail.com with your address (so that it can be marked on a map and duplication avoided)
3. Create your scarecrow weekend of the 26th September – please ensure it does not obstruct any public access / right of way
4. Pick up a map from the Seven Stars and go scarecrow viewing over the following week
5. Enjoy!

Some ideas....



VILLAGE APPLE PRESSING

SATURDAY 3rd OCTOBER

Due to the poor apple crop this year, we're offering a communal pressing for those with few apples, in addition to exclusive pressings for those with more apples. Everyone who brings an apple can take away a bottle of juice!

As usual, the café will be open - delicious, homemade coffee and cake.

£1 per bottle of juice

Cash payments only for juice and café

Proceeds divided between upkeep of the village orchards and the village churches

Opening times: 10.00 – 12.30 ... AND 1.30 -4.00 (last arrivals 2.30)

Book your arrival slot dianabelli@btinternet.com

10am : 11am: 1.30pm :2.30pm

Bring screw top wine bottles for your juice (these fit in the pasteuriser)

Some spare bottles available on the day.

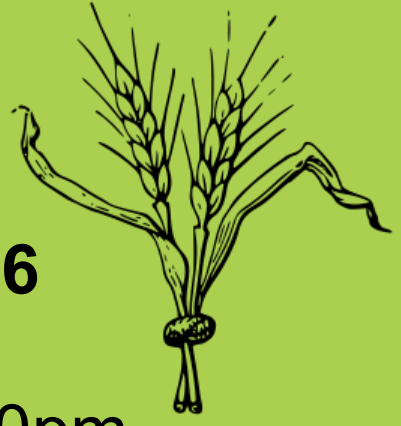
ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Items for the October 2026 newsletter
by **16th September** please

Any villager is welcome to send items for publication in the newsletter. Please send copy to Natasha Eliot: tashaandjames@btopenworld.com. Alternatively, I can be contacted on 343478 or at Baldon House East, Marsh Baldon.

For advertising queries, please contact Leanna Maggs on:
leanna.maggs@gmail.com or on 01865 340 521

**All are invited to a celebration of Harvest
in the Baldons and
Nuneham Courtenay**



Sunday 4th October 2026

Baldons Village Hall,

join us for lunch 12.30 – 2.30pm

Doors open at 12.

Bring and Share lunch – all very welcome;
whether you bring or not you are most welcome
to share

Wandering Family Quiz: Test your knowledge
about our villages and our world!

Prizes for all those who created a scarecrow
for the scarecrow trail

We will be collecting items for the local food
bank at this lunch and at church so please bring
any donations with you

Please contact saramcdouall@gmail.com if
you are planning on bringing food so we can
coordinate

LIFE GROUPS: EXPLORING FAITH, GROWING IN FAITH

Across the Dorchester Team, small midweek Life Groups meet in people's homes to explore faith, read the Bible, worship, and pray together. They are lay-led, friendly, and supportive — some even began as Lent courses that continued because they were so appreciated. These groups offer companionship and a meaningful way to grow deeper in faith.



We currently have groups in Dorchester, Berinsfield, Drayton St Leonard, and the Baldons. You're welcome to join any group, regardless of which village you live in. Meetings take place weekly, fortnightly, or monthly – and at the moment we have groups who gather on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Sunday evenings. From September, the Dorchester groups will study the New Testament letter to the Romans, and we hope to start a new daytime group in Berinsfield on Thursdays for six weeks from October.

Everyone is welcome. If you'd like to join a group or find out more, please speak to one of our clergy and we'll help you find a good fit.

ALPHA COURSE



Meet new people and explore the Christian faith together. Alpha is for anyone who's curious. No judgement, no pressure. Each session unpacks a big question of life, faith, and purpose, and is designed to spark conversation. Come along, see what you think. New course starting January 2027. Register your interest now:

admin@dorchester-abbey.org.uk



Wednesday 9th September 2026 - 7.30pm
Marsh Baldon Village Hall, OX44 9LL

This month we will be welcoming back our regular speaker James Nickols, the Filling Station Regional Consultant for the southeast of England. Through his biblically based talk, he always opens up God's word to a provocative message relevant to our present times and demonstrates through his ministry how the Lord speaks to us even today, as we give space to listen to Him.

Coffee/tea and cake from 7.30pm, worship at 7.45pm, a talk at 8.15pm, finish 9.15/9.30pm. You are welcome to come and go at any point in the evening.

The South Oxfordshire Filling Station is one of a network of Filling Stations nationwide (www.thefillingstation.org.uk), where Christians gather once a month to enjoy friendship, to build faith and meet with God. It is not a new church denomination; anyone of any denomination, any faith or no faith is welcome. Come and see! Contact Catherine Mason (01865 343503, mob. 07879 626828) or Tom Hunnings (07778 104806).

BALDONS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Wildfire preparedness

With the threat of wildfires increasing in and around our village, Ron Wells and Martin Delafield have prepared defences that should be called upon in the event of a fire in addition to calling the emergency fire services.

Martin has cultivated the edge of the fields in order to create a fire break. There are large water bowzers and tanks on standby at Durham Leys Farm and Parsonage Farm and a tractor with cultivator to create fire breaks if needed. It is vital that a fire is attended to quickly to prevent it spreading and the defences already here will help until the fire brigade can attend.

IN EVENT OF A FIRE, ANYWHERE IN THE VILLAGE PLEASE CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES, AND THEN EITHER RON OR MARTIN ON:

Ron Wells: 07940 319586

Martin Delafield: 07771 924521

We are very grateful to Ron and Martin for doing all they can to protect our village.

In any fire emergency, your safety is the clear priority. If you encounter a wildfire, please do not attempt to fight it - evacuate straight away and leave the response to the fire service.

Fire hydrants - keep them clear

We met with the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Community Safety Services officer last week to ensure that all fire hydrants in the village had been identified and were visible. If you have a hydrant outside your home, please ensure you do not park over it or restrict access. It is illegal to park over a hydrant and if necessary, the fire service have rights to break into a car to move it if they need access to the hydrant.

Gully and drain clearance

OCC highways are to return to complete the works that were not finished in February this year. The dates are 26th October to 4th November. They will be conducting CCTV surveys of suspected blocked drains and gullies and carrying out work to rectify the issues.

A Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) is being made to allow for the works and will operate between 09:30 and 15:30 on the days the work is being done. Details have already been circulated on Baldons info. We will include them again in the October Newsletter and on Baldons info nearer the time.

Work to Toot Baldon Bridleway

With the help of a small group of volunteers from Toot we have worked on the south side of the bridge on the bridleway leading from Baldon Row. This area has

been extremely wet over the last few winters and the stone used will hopefully help provide a more accessible surface. Thanks to Joe, Paul, Chris Ron and Phil

Speed limits and parking

We have had several reports recently regarding cars speeding around the Green mainly on the southern track. Some may be visitors to the village but as residents, please be considerate to other residents and users of the track and keep to the speed limit.

If you live around the green, please be reminded that you should avoid parking on the track to allow larger farm vehicles and refuse trucks to pass without driving on the green itself.

Nuneham Courtenay Solar Farm application refused

An application to build a 49MW Solar farm on land north-west of Nuneham Courtenay situated to the west of the A4074, opposite to the Cowley solar farm to the east, was submitted in April 2024. The Planning officer recommended approval in July this year, but this was not upheld at the committee meeting on the 3rd August and it was refused. This may now be appealed.

Government confirms three new unitary councils for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire in 2028

If you are not already aware, The Baldons are set to be included in a new unitary council called “Greater Oxford” The government has announced (on 16th July) that Oxfordshire and West Berkshire’s seven existing councils will be replaced by three unitary councils from 1 April 2028 as part of its plans for local government reorganisation (LGR).

The new councils will be:

- Greater Oxford Council – covering Oxford and its immediate surroundings.
- Northern Oxfordshire Council – covering most of the existing Cherwell and West Oxfordshire districts.
- Ridgeway Council – covering most of the existing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts, combined with West Berkshire.

The full details of the changes can be seen on the SODC website keys dates are:

- Government’s “minded-to” decision: 16 July 2026. The minded to decision is the government’s preferred, provisional decision before it’s put into law through a structural changes order (SCO).
- Structural changes order (SCO): Expected Autumn 2026. An SCO is legislation that will officially end the existing two-tier county and district councils in Oxfordshire. We expect the legislation to be laid and agreed at this point, but it won’t come fully into effect until vesting day.
- Elections: May 2027. After the elections shadow authorities will be created to plan the new councils, but they will not deliver services. It will focus on preparing for the future council.
- Transition period: Expected late 2026 – March 2028.
- Vesting day: New council begins 1 April 2028.

Learn more at: <https://3councils.org>

There is concern regarding the ambitions of the plan to release land from the greenbelt for more housing.

OCC was reported to be considering a challenge to the decision under judicial review, but we have no confirmation of that to date.

Parish Council Clerk vacancy

The Clerk is an essential employee for the council and also acts as responsible financial officer. The role is part time - a few hours per week. If you are interested in the position and wish to learn more or discuss further, please contact Tom in the first instance at clerk@baldonspc.org

Reminder - New website

Our new website can be found at www.baldonspc.org.

An archive section is currently being built to host a long list of links to old, historic newsletters for anyone wanting a trip down memory lane.

Let us know if there are any additions to the site that you feel would be useful for our community.

FUN ON THE GREEN

The sun did its bit for us this year. Saturday 11 July brought a scorching afternoon to the Green, and the village turned out in force for Fun on the Green. Lots of fun and games, lots of laughter, lots of picnics and bubbly and plenty of music.

This year's World Cup theme gave the day its colour, with flags and bunting strung around the marquee. A live band kept things going into the evening, and it wasn't long before children and grown-ups alike were up and dancing on the grass.



The games were as popular as ever. A constant stream of children (and a fair few grown-up children!) queued to try Welly-Wanging, Splat-the-Rat and the football game, which drew a long line of would-be strikers hoping to beat the keeper. *(Ed: huge credit to John Maskell, who painted the wonderful village football board).*

BEC would like to thank everyone who turned up on a very hot Friday evening to put up the marquees, and again on Sunday morning to take them all down. Thanks too to all the kind villagers who ran the games and kept the whole afternoon going. Same again next year. In the meantime, the next date for the diary is Fireworks and Bonfire Night on Saturday 7 November.

NUNEHAM COURTENAY VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Thanks to the grant we had last year, the Village Hall only lost £1000. Considering that we had several thousand pounds of repairs, replaced equipment, and ran a full program of events, this is a great achievement. Many of you have suggested activities and many have said advance warning would be helpful so here is a rough run down of events for the year:

- September 25th Pizza Night
- October 16th Quiz night 19:30
- November 13th Curry night
- December 4th Bingo, 12th Christmas Social and village advent calendar.
- January 22nd Film night
- February- Games night with darts and perhaps Wii bowling
- March- Chili night
- April- Bingo
- May- music night
- June- Tea party

These are in addition to book club, yoga, and Crafternoons.



Back by popular demand! The Village Hall will be transformed into a **Pizzeria!**
Friday the 25th of September at 6:30

We will be making dough to order so pre-book by stopping by The Old School House to pay in advance. Pizzas are £8 each. Bar with refreshments is available. Children and well-behaved dogs are welcome. Eat in or take away. Contact if you live in the village and need delivery.

Book Club

Book club meets the last Thursday of the month, although this varies to make time for holidays and lovely summer evenings. The current book is A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters. The next book club meets on the 30th of October. Contact Arooj via nunehamcourtenay.villagehall@gmail.com if you are interested in joining.

Yoga

Yoga celebrated 12 years in the hall this summer! We are a mixed ability group, doing a self-lead practice. Come along and give it a go. Sessions are only £3!

Community Bring and Borrow Library

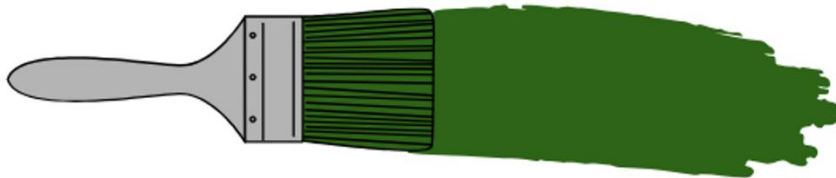
This continues to be a great success. The library is located on the front steps of the village hall. It includes books for all ages and interests, films, and puzzles. This is free so do continue to use it! It's looking so cute with the updates by the Eden family!

Bookings

The village hall is available to book! Contact via nunehamcourtenay.villagehall@gmail.com for more information.

Connected communities grant

The village hall has benefited from a connected communities grant this year. If you are able to complete a survey for them, that would be most helpful. I have requested a paper version from them and will let you know if they are willing to provide one. The survey can be accessed via the QR code here:



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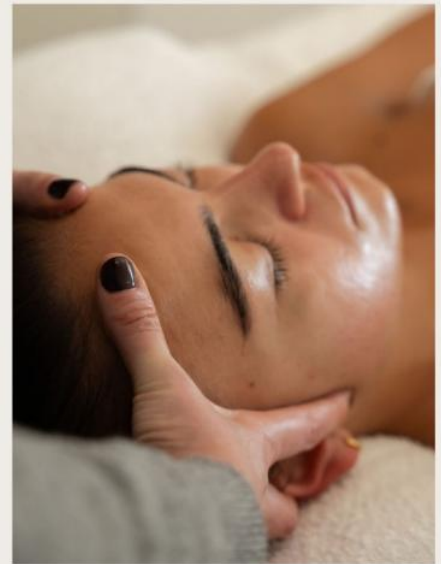
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EVENTS IN DORCHESTER ABBEY

Saturday 12th September- Come & Sing Fauré Requiem, 2pm-5.45pm, Performance 5pm

Join the Royal School of Church Music in Dorchester Abbey for a wonderful Come & Sing featuring Gabriel Fauré's much-loved Requiem. We are delighted to be joined by Alastair Mucklow, the 2025 BBC Young Chorister of the Year, and Belinda Gifford-Guy, the 2023 BBC Junior Young Chorister of the Year, as our soloists. The event will be accompanied by Jeremy Boughton, supported by a group of local young musicians, and led by RSCM's Deputy Director, Dr Paul Hedley. £15.00; Under 18s £6.50. Both fees include the RSCM edition of the score. <https://www.rscm.org.uk/events/come-sing-faure-requiem-dorchester-abbey/>

Thursday 17th September- Moving Music 11.30am- 12.30pm and 2pm-3pm

Moving Music concerts are presented by the charity Sound Resource, which promotes music for health and wellbeing. Hannah Davey and Victoria Newman perform songs from stage and screen. The concert includes sing-along songs for the audience to join as they wish. All are welcome, particularly people living with dementia, their family, friends and carers. Pay what you can (£8 guide) Reserve places in advance for your preferred concert time: movingmusicconcerts@gmail.com 01865 251305

Saturday 19th September- Sherri Lun plays Schumann 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Lili Boulanger's D'un matin de printemps is a brief, nuanced piece combining joyful high spirits with poignant introspection. Rejecting the flashy, empty virtuosity popular at the time, Schumann envisioned a new type of piano concerto – one where the piano and orchestra engage in a passionate, equal dialogue. Composed in just five weeks in late 1850, Robert Schumann's Symphony No. 3 "Rhenish" is a joyous, five-movement masterpiece inspired by his move to Düsseldorf and a trip to the Rhineland. Tickets £17.50 - £30 www.osj.org.uk

For Full Up to Date Event Listings & All Ticket Links:

www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/whats-on

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NUNEHAM COURTENAY SPORTS AND PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION

Association chairman John has met with the representatives of Creative Play for the initial survey of the site for placing the swings and the activity trail. The parish council has committed to buying the swings with funding from CIL money. The trustees have raised grant money for the trail. We are just waiting for an installation date, but it is likely to be November. These will be sited between the picnic tables and the green bench on the field, near the tree line.

Thanks to an enormous effort by the village, the three reclaimed benches have been put in place. The four benches were purchased with the funds from the charity event that John Taylor did just before Christmas. The parish council gave us a grant to pay for materials, and we thank them. This meant that this project has cost less than one of the picnic tables. John Peters was instrumental in planning the costs and materials that we needed for the installation, as well as leading the project.

Thank you to Simon Martin for supporting John and John with drilling holes! John Peters loaned a great deal of equipment including his cement mixer.



So many of the village gave up their weekend to help with this project. David Clibbon made the wooden supports for the benches and loaned his generator for mixing the cement.



Thank you to Simon, Tim, Simon, Luke, Charlie, Craig, Richard, John, Graham, and John. Thank you to the Eden family who brought down the 25 stepping stones from the original children who asked for the refurbishment of the field. These will be installed this autumn we hope. The benches will be painted and then the contemplation area will be complete. We are currently sourcing dedication plaques, as

requested by the community.

The playing field currently has no unrestricted funds. You are welcome to make a donation via the go fund me, linked here:

Nuneham Courtenay Sports & Playing
Field Association's JustGiving Page



UPDATE FROM OLLY GLOVER MP

As the Government undergoes many changes during the summer, I am grateful for the time I can spend in the constituency on my summer tour, as well as visiting many local organisations.

The summer tour is a wonderful opportunity for me to speak with constituents from across the constituency, listen to their local concerns and ongoing challenges, and better understand how I can represent their views in Parliament. So far, I have visited Sandford-on-Thames, East Hendred, Steventon, East Hanney and Childrey. If you were unable to attend a surgery, you can request an appointment at any time throughout the year by emailing olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk.

It has also been great to participate in summer events, including Letcombe Valley's Discovery Day and Didcot's Ed Fest. We are fortunate to have wonderful community cafés, including the Cornerstone Café in Grove and the Talking Shop Café in Sandford-on-Thames. Supported by volunteers, these are fantastic community spaces, and I enjoyed visiting them both.

I also met with SOFEA in Didcot to see its warehouse, where surplus food is distributed to community larders across Oxfordshire, and young people who have struggled at school or with social exclusion are assisted into the workplace. In addition, I met with the Orchard Centre management and Nexus to discuss reducing traffic congestion at Hitchcock Way and improving administration of car parking charges. I also visited the King's Arms pub in Sandford-on-Thames, to understand their business challenges, and to discuss the new support available from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils for pubs and rural businesses.

The proposed cuts to the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) risk job security and could hinder vital space and science research. I visited Diamond Light Source at Harwell Campus, where staff explained in greater detail the potential impact of these cuts on major collaborative projects and the possible loss of specialist research capabilities. Alongside my Liberal Democrat colleagues who represent constituencies with significant STFC-funded facilities, I have written to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, urging the Government to protect our vital science centres.

My team and I also welcomed three work experience students from local sixth forms for a week, giving them insight into the work of a constituency office and the role of an MP.

As always, if there is anything I can help with, please contact my team at olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk or leave a voicemail on 0207 219 7657.

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Fortnightly Quiz Night - 9 & 23rd September, 7 & 21st October

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CHURCH SERVICES FOR SEPTEMBER 2026

6 th September	10.30am	Marsh Baldon	Holy Communion
13 th September	4.00pm	Toot Baldon	Evensong
20 th September	9.30am	Toot Baldon	Holy Communion
27 th September	11.00am	Marsh Baldon	Holy Communion
4th October	10.30am	Marsh Baldon	HARVEST FAMILY SERVICE

CHURCH FLOWERS

Date	Marsh	Toot
6 th & 13 th Sept	Denice & Veronica	Linda & Elaine
20 th & 27 th Sept	Dinah	Vanessa & Tracey
4 th & 11 th Oct	Harvest – all help welcomed	Jenny & Jane

OTHER CHURCH DUTIES

Date	Sidesduty	Reader 1	Reader 2	Intercessions
6 th September	Claerwen	Catherine	Natasha	Veronica
13 th September	John & Catherine	John	Peter	-
20 th September	Sara	Sarah H	Tom H	Peter
27 th September	Peter	Claerwen	Veronica	Sara

THANK YOU TO THE CHURCH FLOWER ARRANGERS

Have you ever thought about the fresh flowers that appear in our churches throughout the year (with the exception of a few weeks in Advent and Lent)?

We are so fortunate to have two small groups of people who give their time, creativity, and imagination to bring the flowers and fruits of nature into our beautiful buildings.

Having been involved for many years in compiling the rota for St. Peter's, I just wanted to say a very big thank you to all those who arrange flowers in both Marsh and Toot Baldon, including those who may have ceased being actively on the rota. It is a joy to find lovely flowers in the church, whether you are attending a service or simply visiting – and I think many people would be surprised at the number of visitors we receive.

We would love to welcome more people to join the rotas in both churches. Do please get in touch if you are interested.



Veronica Sandilands
vsandilands@btinternet.com - 07793 528405