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January 2026

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SERVICES AT ST MARY THE VIRGIN, FREELAND

Sunday	21st December	10.00am Morning Praise
Sunday	Christmas Eve 24th December	5:00pm Christingle Service at St Mary's
Thursday	Christmas Day 25th December	10.00am All Age Whole Benefice Communion at St Peter & St Paul
Sunday	28th December	10.00am Arrangements TBC
Sunday	4th January	10.00am Communion
Sunday	11th January	10.00am Morning Praise
Sunday	18th January	10.00am Morning Praise
Sunday	25th January	10.00am Communion
Sunday	1st February	10.00am Morning Praise

The above information is correct on the date published (**14/12/2025**). Should any changes be necessary, the up-to-date information can be found on our website below.

St Mary the Virgin is open seven days a week from 9am to 5pm/dusk. Please enjoy the space to look around, for prayer or for quiet reflection. See our website at www.stmaryfreeland.org.uk or the Benefice website www.hfchurch.org.uk

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCHYARD

The Churchyard is now closed for burials unless previously reserved by faculty. A faculty indicates a space that has already been reserved under the Church of England rules.

The churchyard does still have space for the interment of ashes.

For further information or to contact the church, please see our website at stmaryfreeland.org.uk or use the QR code.



St Mary the Virgin Parochial Church Council

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Useful contact details

Rector: Revd Dr Steve Stewart
01993 881270

The Rectory, Swan Lane
Long Hanborough OX29 8BT
Email: rector@hfchurch.org.uk

Curate: Position Vacant

Parish Worker One day a week, usually
Friday: Matt Cripps
Email: cripps@hfchurch.org.uk

Licensed Lay Ministers:

Clive Berry 01993 882080 and **Hugh Dalton *Emeritus*: 01993 881742**

Churchwarden: Position Vacant

Flowers in the Church:
Janet Dalton 01993 881742

Weddings: Revd Dr Steve Stewart rector@hfchurch.org.uk and
01993 881270 administrator@hfchurch.org.uk

You will find all sorts of interesting information about St Mary's on the "A Church Near You" website: www.achurchnearyou.com/5863. You can see a virtual tour of St Mary's on Google Street View at: <http://goo.gl/g53NJH>.

Thank you to Nikhilesh Haval for allowing the use of the images.

Children's and Youth Work - families are really welcome at all our services. At St Mary's the **first Sunday of the month is a Family Service** where everyone stays in Church, and everyone joins in with the all-age service. At the other **10am** services, children and youth can take part in games, discussion, art, and other activities in small groups close by. Come and give it a try!

Bible Fun Club

The next Bible Fun Club will be in the February half-term in 2026, but before then do join us at the Christingle service on **Christmas Eve at 5pm**. Please see the poster on **Page 8 overleaf**, and as always check our website www.stmaryfreeland.org.uk.

To join our email list for news about these upcoming events please send your details to administrator@hfchurch.org.uk.

The above information is correct on the date published. Should any changes be necessary, the up-to-date information can be found on our website www.hfchurch.org.uk.

Thank you to Bruce Hammersley for the Front cover photograph.



CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT HANBOROUGH AND FREELAND

Special services and events...



St Mary the Virgin, Freeland

Christmas Eve 24th December 5pm

Christingle service for all ages



Christ Church, Long Hanborough

Christmas Eve 24th December 4pm-4:40pm

All-Age Family Crib Service, with sweets, carols,
Nativity scene, and Roger the Dog!



St Peter and St Paul, Church Hanborough

Sunday 21st December 6pm

Nine Lessons & Carols with mulled wine

Christmas Eve 24th December 11:15pm

Midnight Communion



Christmas Day 25th December 10am - All-Age Family service of Holy Communion
for all in the benefice of Hanborough and Freeland
(children welcome to bring favourite present to show)

LETTER FROM OUR RECTOR, REVD DR STEVE STEWART

Christmas: True or False? ...

With Christmas only just round the corner, I thought it could be fun to prepare ourselves for this special time of year, in which we remember and celebrate Jesus Christ coming into the world, to have a little “True or False” quiz for Christmas. Something to help us understand what the Bible says – and does not say – about the birth of Jesus Christ. So here we go (all questions are based on the birth and infancy narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in the Bible).

True or false?

1. Mary and Joseph lived in Bethlehem before Jesus was born.
2. The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary before she was married to Joseph.
3. While watching their flocks at night, the shepherds were told about Jesus’ birth by an angel.
4. The wise men visited Jesus on the night he was born.
5. The star that the wise men followed stopped over the house where Jesus was.
6. King Herod asked the wise men to tell him where Jesus was so he could worship him.
7. The baby Jesus was placed in a manger because there was no room in the inn.
8. Simeon and Anna both met the baby Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem.
9. Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod’s plan to kill the child.
10. The Gospels say there were three wise men.

The answers are on the page 9. How did you get on?

I love a good school Nativity play as much as the next person: it’s all part of the joy of Christmas. Nonetheless, it’s also important to recognise that the Gospels in the Bible present themselves very much as historical accounts. Therefore, at the very least knowing what the Bible does and doesn’t say about Jesus’ birth is important.

Here are a few deconstructed common myths about the birth of Jesus with which you can bore your friends and family with this Christmas 2025:

There were three kings at the manger:

The Bible never says there were three, nor that they were kings. Matthew simply mentions “wise men from the East” (Greek *magoi*) who brought three gifts — gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The number of visitors and their royal status are later traditions.

Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem on the night Jesus was born:

Luke’s Gospel says only that “while they were there, the time came for her to give birth” (Luke 2:6). It does not suggest a last-minute arrival. They may well have been in Bethlehem for some time before the birth.

Continued....



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Christingle Service



Join us for a Family Christingle Service

St Mary's Church, Freeland.

5:00pm Christmas Eve.

Service for children and families telling the story of Christmas, along with the Christingle and favourite carols

Gifts of oranges with sweets for

all children and ending with

candle-lit singing

**Supporting the
Children's Society**



Continued ...

Jesus was born in a stable:

The Gospels never mention a stable. Luke says only that Jesus was “laid in a manger” (2:7), which could have been inside a house — many first-century homes in the region had a lower area for animals, complete with a feeding trough.

The angels sang to the shepherds:

Luke 2:13–14 says the angels “praised God, saying” — not singing. The idea that they sang (“Glory to God in the highest”) comes from Christian tradition and carols, not from the text itself.

There was an innkeeper who turned Mary and Joseph away:

The “innkeeper” is never mentioned. Luke says there was “*no room in the kataluma*” (a Greek word that can mean guest room or lodging space). It may have been a family home that was too full, not a public inn with an innkeeper.

Fun for all the family! But of course, the big question is not whether one can answer a True or False quiz on the specific details, but whether the whole thing is true or false! Is it true that Jesus Christ, “God with us”, was born into the world a couple of thousand years ago; or is it all just false? What answer would you give to that question: true or false?

To find out more – and to enjoy a lot of fun as well – join us at any of our Christmas events this year.

With much love in Christ Jesus and every blessing for Christmas,

**Revd Dr Steve Stewart,
Rector, Hanborough and Freeland**

If you would like to learn more about church and what it means to be a Christian, simply join us at any of our churches on a Sunday morning (see hfchurch.org.uk) or contact me for a chat at rector@hfchurch.org.uk

True or False quiz answers

1. False (they lived in Nazareth before going to Bethlehem - (Luke 2:4)
2. True (Luke 1: 26-27)
3. True (Luke 2: 8-9)
4. False (They came later, to a “house” - Matthew 2:11)
5. True (Matthew 2:9)
6. False (He said that, but secretly wanted to kill Jesus - Matthew 2:8-13)
7. True (Luke 2:7)
8. True (Luke 2: 25-38)
9. True (Matthew 2: 13-15)
10. False (The number of wise men is not given - only that they brought three gifts)

FOUND AT THE SANTA RUN, 13TH DECEMBER

At the Chapel Courtyard / registration point, a pair of gloves, a woolly hat and a bottle of water, as pictured. If these are yours, please email Freeland Community Benefit Society at freelandvillagehub@gmail.com to ensure a speedy and safe repatriation!



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SERVICES AT ST PETER & ST PAUL, CHURCH HANBOROUGH

Sunday	21st December	6.00pm Whole Benefice 9 Lessons & Carols.
Wednesday	Christmas Eve 24th December	11.15pm Midnight Communion
Thursday	Christmas Day 25th December	10.00am All Age Whole Benefice Communion at St Peter & St Paul
Sunday	28th December	10.00am Arrangements TBC
Sunday	4th January	No service (see services at Christ Church or St Mary's)
Sunday	11th January	10.00am Communion
Sunday	18th January	10.00am Morning Praise
Sunday	25th January	10.00am Communion
Sunday	1st February	10.00am Morning Praise

SERVICES AT CHRIST CHURCH, LONG HANBOROUGH

Sunday	21st December	10.00am Communion
Wednesday	Christmas Eve 24th December	4.00pm Crib Service
Thursday	Christmas Day 25th December	10.00am All Age Whole Benefice Communion at St Peter & St Paul
Sunday	28th December	10.00am Arrangements TBC
Sunday	4th January	10.00am Morning Praise
Sunday	11th January	10.00am Morning Praise
Sunday	18th January	10.00am Communion
Sunday	25th January	10.00am Morning Praise
Sunday	1st February	10.00am Morning Praise



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CHANGES TO RECYCLING CENTRES COMING IN 2026

Non-Oxfordshire residents will face a **£15 charge** if they want to use recycling centres in the county from January onwards. People will also have to **book in advance** and will need to provide **proof of address** on arrival. The changes aim to address the issue of people from outside the county using recycling centres in Oxfordshire at the cost of the taxpayer for people to access the centres. See the website for more details:

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/changes-to-how-household-waste-recycling-centres-operate-are-approved/>



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ST MARY'S BELL RINGING REPORT

The bells will be rung at the following times:

Wednesday 24th December 4.30pm - 5.00pm Christingle Service

Sunday 4th January 2026 9.30am - 10.00am

Sunday 25th January 9.30am - 10.00am

Weekly Monday practices will commence at 7.30pm and finish at 9.00pm.

Please contact the Tower Secretary, Michael Probert (**01993 882687**) should you wish to discuss any bell ringing matters.

HANBOROUGH METHODIST CHURCH

Contact Gill Brakespear **Tel: 01993 883914 Email: gillbreakspear@btinternet.com.**

All services are in the chapel. A warm welcome awaits you all.

Sunday 21st December 6.00pm Candlelight Carol Service

Led by Revd Sue Jacobs, all welcome

Thursday 25th December 10.00am Christmas Day Family Service

Let's celebrate the birth of Jesus together

Sunday 28th December No service today

Sunday 4th January 10.00am Revd Stephen Bywater

Sunday 11th January 10.00am Revd Sue Jacobs Covenant Service & HC

Sunday 18th January 10.00am Mrs Julie Biggs - All Age Worship

Sunday 25th January 10.00am Mr Andrew Maisey

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST PETER, EYNHAM

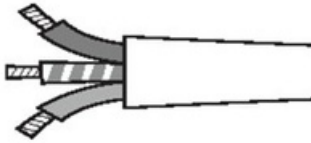
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THE PARISH PRIEST: Father Mark Lagorio can be contacted by phone on **01865 881613** or email **stpeterschurcheynsham@gmail.com**

Address: Abbey Street, Eynsham OX29 4HR Phone: 01865 881613

Website: www.stpeterseynsham.org.uk

THE CHURCH IS OPEN for Public Masses on **Saturday at 5pm** and **Sunday at 10am**. For any Weekday Masses, please see the webpage.



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Parish Councillor Opportunity

We still have a vacancy on the Parish Council and would welcome another member for our team. The more councillors there are, the more can be done for the village. Please drop our clerk, Fay an email if you are interested and would like to find out what is involved.



Play Park

The new installation has all been ordered with the work due to start in the near future, subject to weather conditions. We are sorry if parts of the park will need to be closed for the works to be carried out.

Council tax

Freeland Parish Council has decided not to increase the council tax precept this year, which will remain at £72,001 for the 2026–2027 financial year. However, as the tax is based on Band D-rated properties, and some residents receive discounted rates, the actual amount collected may fluctuate slightly.

Fix My Street

Please continue to use the Fix My Street App to report any highway issues to the County Council, such as potholes, overgrown hedges, damaged footpaths, or kerb, as well as grass cutting on the A4095. Additionally, if you would like to become a super user to help speed up the process in which things can be repaired, then email Clerk@freelandparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Defibrillators

We are very lucky to have 2 defibrillators in our village. One is located by the Primary school in the old telephone box. The other is located to the lefthand side of the village hall porch. If these are used for an emergency please let me know asap on Clerk@freelandparishcouncil.gov.uk so the pads can be replaced. We hope that they aren't needed but it is good to know they are there just in case.
<https://www.defibfinder.uk/>

Planning Applications

All planning applications can be viewed online via the WODC website at www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning and at Woodgreen Council Offices. Alternatively you can contact the Planning Team at WODC on 01993 861420.

The next meeting will be on **Monday 12th January 2026 at 7.30pm in the Newell Room**. If you wish to contact the Parish Council about a particular matter and have access to the internet, please have a look at the Council website where lots of useful information is held. The website can be accessed via **<https://freelandparishcouncil.gov.uk>**. You can also follow us on Facebook (@freelandpc). Alternatively, please contact me between 9.00am-4.00pm, Monday to Friday – Fay Friend, Parish Clerk on 01993 357851 or email: **clerk@freelandparishcouncil.gov.uk**

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SPEEDWATCH

Unfortunately, we have had to close down the Speedwatch activity in Freeland for the current time due to an insufficient number of volunteers coming forward. This is despite several announcements made that more people are required to enable us to continue and operate successfully.

If you would like to join us and help with this important activity – particularly with regard to the introduction of the 20mph speed limit in the centre of the village, please do contact us. If we receive a sufficient number - we need a minimum of nine more people, we will try to restart the activity.

Andy Murray. andykmurray@btinternet.com



CHRISTMAS DAY

Community Dinner

This year will be hosting a FREE community Christmas Day dinner in Freeland Village Hall.

Our aim is to and provide a festive experience for those who may find it difficult to cook or those who would spend Christmas Day alone.

There will be festive music as well as other entertainment.

This event is open to anyone from
Freeland, Long Hanborough or Church Hanborough.

Guests are invited to arrive from 2pm for dinner at 3pm

The day will be run by volunteers from the Oxfordshire STARS and Julie Stuart-Thompson (the organiser of previous Christmas events) will also be helping on the day.

Volunteers to help with transport will be needed.

To offer your support or to reserve a place please contact

Nicky Clargo on 07754 271831
or email oxfordshire.stars@gmail.com



Donations towards the day will be warmly welcomed.

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NEW WEST OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT **411 BUS SERVICE FROM MONDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER** **MONDAY - FRIDAY (NOT BANK HOLIDAYS)**

West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT) are pleased to announce that from September 1st 2025, we will be operating the services 411/s/418 formerly operated by First & Last Mile. Oxfordshire County Council have written the timetable for the route which we are happy to publish. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions regarding the new services.

MyBus ticket	Day	Week	The tickets are available now in addition to the usual £3 one way ticket. Bus passes are still valid.
Adult	£6.50	£25.00	
Young Person (5-18)	£3.50	£14.50	

Eynsham - Long Hanborough via Freeland

Eynsham Church (o/s)	08.45	10.25	12.25	14.25	17.25
Eynsham o/s Surgery	08.50	10.30	12.30	14.30	17.30
Freeland o/s St Mary's Church	08.56	10.36	12.36	14.36	17.36
Long Hanborough, opp. New Road	09.02	10.42	12.42	14.42	17.42
Long Hanborough on Station Forecourt	09.05	10.45	12.45	14.45	17.45

Long Hanborough - Eynsham via Freeland

Long Hanborough, on Station forecourt	09.10	11.05	13.05	14.50	17.50
Long Hanborough, adj New Road	09.13	11.08	13.08	14.53	17.53
Freeland opp St Mary's Church	09.19	11.14	13.14	14.59	17.59
Eynsham o/s Surgery	09.25	11.20	13.20		18.05
Eynsham Church (opp)	09.29	11.24	13.24	15.09	18.09

Buses should stop anywhere along Wroslyn Road where it is safe to do so.

RAIL CONNECTION TIMINGS

FREELAND / HANBOROUGH / OXFORD & return

411 Bus	Freeland, Village Hall*	08.56	10.36	12.36	14.36	17.36
411 Bus	Hanborough Station	09.05	10.45	12.45	14.45	17.45
Train	Hanborough Station	09.18	11.19	13.19	15.17	18.14
Train	Oxford Station	09.30	11.29	13.29	15.27	18.32
<hr/>						
Train	Oxford Station	08.44	10.46	12.45	13.44	17.23
Train	Hanborough Station	08.53	10.55	12.54	13.54	17.33
411 Bus	Hanborough Station	09.10	11.05	13.05	14.50	17.50
411 Bus	Freeland, Village Hall*	09.19	11.14	13.14	14.59	17.59

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woct.org.uk 01993 630124



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Freeland Village Hall -----	10.00 am
Little Free Library – 138 Wroslyn Rd ---	10.05 am
Nash Lane -----	10.05 am
Freeland Primary School -----	10.05 am

With drop off at:

Waitrose car park, Witney
Sainsbury's supermarket, Witney

Return pickup:

Sainsbury's supermarket, Witney -----	BY REQUEST
Waitrose car park, Witney-----	12.30 pm

With drop off by request anywhere along Wroslyn Road

INFORMATION

For more information or to volunteer as a driver or helper please contact:

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FREELAND ENERGY GROUP (FEG)

‘Happy New Year’ What’s on your new year resolution list – you know the resolutions which you really want to keep? How about starting by signing up for a thermal image taken of your house? Contact us, so when the weather is just right – cold, but not wet we will know where to point the camera.



Do you want to find out about insulation, and not sure where to start? FEG has a list of neighbours happy to share their experience – do get in touch. Or how about joining FEG? We are a small group and more hands would be very useful. Currently we meet up monthly, fairly informal. **The next meeting will in the Newell Room, Tuesday 6th January 11.00am - just pop in.** (And yes, some of us will have been to the Cake Café first). Maybe even join us on zoom if that works for you, do get in touch.

Do you organise meetings for your group? Would you like an expert on better insulation, house retrofit or managing heating bills to talk to your group? We can link you up to that expert - do get in touch. Coming up in the New Year within the CAPZero will be a series of monthly meetings for local businesses: January’s meeting hosted in Eynsham,



will be on sources of funding to help green your business; February will be in Freeland (At the Yeoman on 25th 5.30pm); March will be a practical workshop. Get in touch for further details.

Thank you to the local residents who dropped by our table at the Village Fayre on 22nd November. There was a good spread of information leaflets and free samples to take away and the energy expert on hand too. Do get in touch if you would like to host this kind of table at your next event.

freelandenergygroup@outlook.com

“MEMORIES OF LIFE IN FREELAND”

It is my desire to create and (eventually) publish a collection of “Memories of Life in Freeland” and also possibly set up a history group within the village to preserve any photographs, maps, leaflets etc that may exist.

I have already spoken to a number of villagers about this and found a positive and willing response. If you are interested in submitting material, or being involved in any way, please contact me by phone or email or just call in for a chat!

Graham Lay : 07460 223048 or grahamlay4@gmail.com, 139 Wroslyn Road

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WITNEY MUSIC SOCIETY

Witney Music Society's opening concert in the New Year will be an all-Beethoven recital given by the acclaimed British pianist Mishka Rushdie Momen. **The concert is at 7.30pm on Friday 9th January at High Street Methodist Church, Witney.**

Tickets (£18, £1 for under 19s) will be available on the door from **7pm** or in advance online. For more information please telephone **01993 898020** or by the website **www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk**

Jean Richards, Chair, Witney Music Society

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY NEWS

Thank you to everyone that came to the Christmas lighting event at the Village Hall on the 5th December: it was great to chat to you, and we enjoyed giving away so many Christmas books. We save them up during the year especially to give away at this event. See you there next year!

Thank you as always to our dedicated team of volunteers who work hard all year to keep the Little Free Library tidy and well-stocked. Sue, Fi, Jenny and Caroline: you are amazing, and all your help is greatly appreciated.

We're looking forward to seeing which books come and go in the new year as you all make room for the new books that you received as Christmas gifts. The Little Free Library is an easy way to pass on your pre-loved books so that other people can enjoy them, too.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and all the best for the coming new year.

Matthew and the Little Free Library volunteers, (Sue, Fi, Jenny and Caroline)

ruddlem@gmail.com - 138 Wroslyn Road 01993 359 543

THAMES VALLEY FARMERS' MARKET COOPERATIVE

Witney 08.30 - 13.30 Friday 23rd January 2026
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www.tvfm.org.uk 01235 227266





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tel: 01993 881258 | email: manager.freeland@minstercaregroup.co.uk

NORTH LEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month in North Leigh Memorial Hall, OX29 6SA at 7.30pm (doors open at 7pm).

All welcome. Members **£20** per year, visitors **£5** per talk. Further details are available from **Diana Power (01993 882301)** or **Robert Kyte** at kyterobert@gmail.com and **01993 880368**.



4-7 years



7-10 years



10-14 years



14-18 years

As the seasons are changing the **Brownies and Rainbows** are doing more indoor activities. They have made firework bonfires on biscuits, designed firework posters, played card games and started their girl guiding sparkle badge. We also celebrated our new girls making their promise.

The **Guides and Rangers** have been doing upcycling of clothing and doing a clothes swap as part of their thrift badge. You would have seen us at the fireworks on the gates and the light up toys stall. We also took part in the Remembrance Sunday parade.

If you need to get in touch, please email freelanddistrictguiding@btinternet.com



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FREELAND COMMUNITY HUB UPDATE

A quick update this month, just to pass on the wonderful news that we have secured Charitable Status, and so Freeland Community Benefit Society (FCBS) will now be known as “Freeland Community Hub”, which is simply the charitable version of FCBS.

Regarding the purchase of the Chapel, all we’re waiting for is to agree the contract then we can issue the Share Offer in the New Year. While we are waiting for this, we are taking the opportunity to renew the permission for the Chapel to become a Community Hub. Watch out for more news early January.

In the meantime, we had 85 runners/walkers turn up for the inaugural Freeland Santa Run, organised in support of the Chapel renovation fund. Pictures below and on p31. Donations totalled **£654.12**, and congratulations to **Nathan Bean**, who won the Little Elf 2.5km course in a time of **19 minutes 20 seconds**, and **George Stanley** who won the Full Santa 5km course in an incredible time of **21 minutes 51 seconds!**

Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year; 2026 will be a BIG year for Freeland’s new Community Hub!

All in the Freeland Community Hub (formerly FCBS) Management Committee



YEOMAS 2025

'THE HALL STAGE'

15:00 - SWIMWEAR

16:30 - THE HONEY BADGERS

18:00 - THE YEOMEN

19:30 - DOUBLE PARKED

'THE PUB STAGE'

15:45 - KAIMANA

17:15 - OLLY PUDDLE

18:45 - THE FRAUD SQUAD

21:00 - *TBC*



Freeland Village Hall & The Oxfordshire Yeoman

DONATE



**172 Wroslyn Road
Freeland, Witney**

OX29 8AQ



**Marie
Curie**

**SUNDAY 21ST
DECEMBER 3PM-11PM**



More photos: from Freeland's inaugural Santa Run, organised by Freeland Community Hub (formerly Freeland Community Benefit Society) to raise funds for the Chapel renovation...



FREELAND CRAFT GROUP

We meet each Wednesday afternoon from 2:00 – 4:00pm in the Newell Room at the back of Freeland Village Hall every Wednesday from 2:00pm – 4:00pm . There is usually a subscription of £1 per meeting to cover hire costs. For further information, or someone to go with, please contact: Helen **01993 882305** or Margaret **01993 881316** (marglwright52@gmail.com)

Margaret

SEATED EXERCISE CLASS

It is hoped to start a new class in Freeland in January 2026. If you are interested or would like to try this class out, please contact:

joyceyoung37@gmail.com

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7/12/2025

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone who has joined us on a Ramble this year.

Our next Ramble will be on
Sunday 4th January at 10.00am
from the bus shelter opposite the
Oxfordshire Yeoman Pub.

All are welcome



FREELAND WINE CLUB

The wine club met for the annual free social on the 28th November, with festivities preceded by the AGM. The annual and financial reports were accepted and the committee re-elected for the ensuing year. A decision was made to distribute some excess funding to local charities / voluntary organisations and maintain membership costs.

The evening which was enjoyed by 48 people continued with a great spread of food provided by the members and a selection of wines provided by the club. Entertainment included a raffle, a great quiz and a Guess the Corks game. All washed down with wine and flowing conversation.

The next event for your diary is on the **Friday 30th January at 7.30pm** in Freeland Village Hall. Entitled Italian Wines from Undercover Italy given by David Burlton of Winetradersuk.

Bookings at **FreelandWineClub@gmail.com**

BECOME A COACH FOR NEW YATT RIDING FOR THE DISABLED

At New Yatt Riding for the Disabled we are looking to recruit and train new Group Coaches (riding instructors) to support us in introducing more weekday sessions to help us to reduce our current waiting list. We are looking for applicants who can commit to a weekly session, are ideally confident and experienced around horses and good communicators. Please email nyrda-volunteers@googlegroups.com

TABLE TENNIS

If you are retired and would like to join a group playing Table Tennis each week please contact:

Nick and Sue Rous **01993 883944**

or email suerous47@gmail.com

Venue - Freeland Village Hall

Every Friday, 3.15pm - 4.45pm



NORTH LEIGH FILM NIGHT, MEMORIAL HALL

Saturday 17th January 2026 **The Ballad of Wallis Island**, Starring Tom Basden, Carey Mulligan and Tim Key. Doors open **7pm**, Film showing **7.30pm**. Refreshments available. Entry **£5** (cash or card).

Please join us for a lovely, offbeat and very British comedy.



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FREELAND GARDENING CLUB PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

2026

26th January	KATHY SLACK	Grow Yourself Happy
23rd February	JO WORTHY-JONES	Gardening with Wildlife in Mind
23rd March	-	RAFFLE AND QUIZ
27th April	ANNIE THOMPSON- LYNCH	Earthworms – the Unsung Heroes
18th May	MARION STAINTON	For the Love of Blue Poppies. What have the Himalayas ever done for us?
22nd June	COLIN ROBERTS	Salvias, my favourite varieties and how to care for them
27th July	ROBERT LONGSTAFF	The Oxford Garden project
28th August	-	SOCIAL EVENING
28th September	ANDREW HOWARD	Heritage Apples through the Seasons
26th October	-	To be confirmed
23rd November	-	To be confirmed

Garden visits - to be arranged



HANBOROUGH FORGET-ME-NOTS

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FREELAND WI

As 2025 draws to a close it is a good time to reflect on another busy year for Freeland WI and look back on some of the activities that took place. We have been fortunate to have had a wonderful variety of events for our members to enjoy, one of which was participating in a 'whodunnit'? play written and performed by author Peter Tickler supported by a few of our ladies, which resulted in some very interesting and humorous deductions to the perpetrator of the crime.



In August we spent a beautiful summer's evening learning how to play a traditional game of croquet at Eynsham Croquet club. Following patient and detailed instructions, several games were played which did get rather competitive.

Other memorable evenings included a practical session of origami as a form of relaxation, creating beautiful Autumnal floral designs guided by flower tutor Chris Pearce, as well as several speakers delivering talks on subjects such as the history and etiquette of afternoon tea, and the decline of the Evenlode river and hope for its restoration. We were entertained by magician Steve Wilkinson who left everyone mystified with magic and mind reading and in November, a lively cookery demonstration creating canapes for Christmas. A truly enjoyable year with fun and friendship along the way.

Our exciting 2026 programme will be in the February edition of the Grapevine and on the Village Hall notice board.

On **Monday 12th January** there will be a New Year party for all our members. For our meeting on **Monday 9th February** starting at 7.45pm, we will be teaming up for a Jigsaw Race.

Finally, on behalf of all the members of Freeland WI, we would like to wish everyone a peaceful Christmas and best wishes for the New Year. We look forward to seeing you in 2026.

Freeland WI meet on the second Monday of the month in the Village Hall commencing at 7.45pm. The meetings usually consist of a speaker or activity followed by a raffle and refreshments. A copy of our 2025 programme was included in the January edition of the Grapevine (available on the Freeland Parish Council website) and on the Village Hall noticeboard. Visitors are always welcome to join us for an evening for a suggested donation of £5.

Freeland WI is a fun and friendly group of ladies who enjoy a wide and varied range of activities. For more information check out our Facebook page @Freelandwi or contact our secretary **Rosie James** on **01993 881997** or **freelandwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk**.

Anne Marvin Freeland WI

COMBE MILL RIVERSIDE TEA ROOM

WINTER MENU



OPEN *Wednesday's* ONLY (closed 24th & 31st December 2025)
(WINTER 10.30 until to 3 pm)



Homemade Soup & Crusty Bread £5.00
Soup & Cheese Scone or Filled soft roll £6.00
Baguettes £5.00

(Ham, corned beef, cheese or tuna mayo (with salad or pickle)

SOFT ROLL £3.00

SCONES (Homemade)



Plain or fruit with butter only £3.00 or
Plain or fruit with jam and cream £3.50
Cheese scone with pickle and cream cheese £3.50

Homemade Cakes: £3.50 per slice



Tea £1.50 (Speciality Teas : £2)

Coffee : £2.00

**Hot Chocolate £2.00 (With Marshmallows
& Cream £2.50)**

Diet Coke/Rio/7 Up : £1.50

Fruit Shoots/Bottle Water: £1.00

Apple Juice : £1.00

Various Ice Creams/Lollies

WORRIED ABOUT COSTS?

Are you worrying about how to manage the cost of living? Or do you know a neighbour or relative who lives in the Parishes of Eynsham or **Freeland** (Ancient Parish of Eynsham) who is struggling to make ends meet? Eynsham Consolidated Charity provides small to medium sized grants to local residents who are in need of financial help.

Please apply in total confidence via the Clerk, Catherine Barton, by emailing **eynshamcharities@gmail.com** or by writing to the Trustees, via the **Clerk, c/o Bartholomew Room, The Square, Eynsham OX29 4HW.**



Are you recently retired and looking for local social activities around interests you have already or would like to pursue a new interest? Our U3a branch is centred in Woodstock but welcomes people from the surrounding areas. Our interest groups develop when someone is willing to run them – maybe you have something that you can offer? If so please make contact with us through the website: www.woostock.u3a.uk. We would be delighted to hear from you. Monthly meetings are held on the **first Thursday of each month at St Hugh's Centre, Hensington Road, Woodstock, OX20 1JL. 2.15pm for 2.30pm.**

December's speaker, was Anna Beer an author and historian, who gave a fascinating historical talk about Beth Throckmorton known as Bess, the wife of Sir Walter Raleigh. She was a remarkable woman and the force behind Sir Walter Raleigh's achievements. When Queen Elizabeth found out about their secret marriage and the birth of their son, they were both imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Our January speaker on **8th January 2026** will be Anna Boucher from the Burnside Partnership, who will talk about **wills and probates**. Visitors **£3.00** to include tea and biscuits.

The speaker on **Thursday 5th February will be Timothy Walker** a lecturer, botanist, author and gardener. The talk is entitled **How to be a 21st Century Gardener**. Visitors **£3.00** to include tea and biscuits.

Please note that in 2026 there will be a **change to the meeting time. Our new meeting time will be 2.15 pm for 2.30 pm speaker.** All welcome.

Sian Wallworth Press Secretary

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COMBE MILL - Blenheim Palace Sawmills, Combe OX29 8ET

We would like to thank all the visitors who came along to support Combe Mill during 2025. All are welcome back again for 2026, looking forward to seeing you all again.

Our Riverside Tea room will be open every Wednesday from 7th January, 10.30am to 3.00pm, why not call by and enjoy a slice of cake and a cup of Tea. You will be most welcome.

Sunday 15th March: 'Themed Mill in Steam' day when Combe Mill will be opening again to welcome all to our late 19th Century Grade II Listed Building, which in its day was the workshop to Blenheim Palace Estate. There will be a BBQ and Tea Room open.

Entry: Adults £9.50, Seniors £7.50, accompanied children under 15 free.

OXFORD BUS AND MORRIS MOTORS MUSEUM

A New Vehicle acquired with a view to restoration

After the excitement of the New Year's Day running event with the Christmas Jumper Competition, January is a quiet month for visitors. However, the workshop volunteers are busy. Restorations continue and our South Midland minibus is having a new engine fitted in preparation for the 2026 season. Our 1948 Morris 10 Series M's full restoration is nearing completion and it should emerge from the workshop in 2026.

Some museum volunteers have clubbed together to buy and therefore save, a 1944 Morris Post Office series Y van, GXK 685. It arrived at the museum on the 8th October to be stored until restoration starts. The first task is to fit four new tyres so it can be moved more easily.

The Morris series Y 100 cubic foot vans were first used for postal work in 1939, when two were purchased. They had an 11.9hp side -valve engine and a 10cwt semi-forward-control with an all-steel construction. Interestingly, the engine was positioned to one side, allowing the driver to sit beside it with no room for a passenger.

GZK 685 is a Cowley-built Series Y van and one of a batch of 350 supplied in 1944 to Royal Mail. We understand that it spent its early years in rural Cumbria before being sold to a carpenter in Nottingham where, it is believed, it was used in his business for the transportation of coffins. It was last used in 1964.

About twenty years ago, GXK 685 was purchased by a local collector with the desire to save it, because it is thought that only two other Royal Mail versions of this type have survived. On learning that it was still awaiting restoration, a syndicate of seven museum members have joined together with the aim of restoring it to its original condition for the Museum. Watch this space!

Frank Collingwood



A 1945 Y type postal van, GYW 973, photographed on Dulwich Common, which worked for the Post Office from May 1946 to August 1960.



CLUES FOR CROSSWORD #6 JANUARY 2026

ACROSS

1. Artefact held by sombre licentiate.
4. Semolina producer ends upriver in receding mud.
7. Concur with a grand timeless tree.
9. $5+1+5+1+5 \times 100$ is brilliant.
10. Note that heart of Eve is consumed by unrestrained fire.
11. Cases of rash Indian with love for horned beast.
12. Lager confused with something big.
15. Spooky, it is said, nest.
18. Reablement prime case for kingdom.
19. Germ starts very infectious rash undermining society.
21. Apprentice is a scoundrel and alien.
24. Burnt ruins discovered in The Wash Estuary.
27. Say, I sing about cake topping.
28. River losses right bank with first tide, a bolt for the ship.
29. Dam embankment.
30. Unicorn initially left swirling deluge for cliff hugging walkway.
31. Save about a litre of cream.
32. Finger licking Yankee follows Transits intermittently.

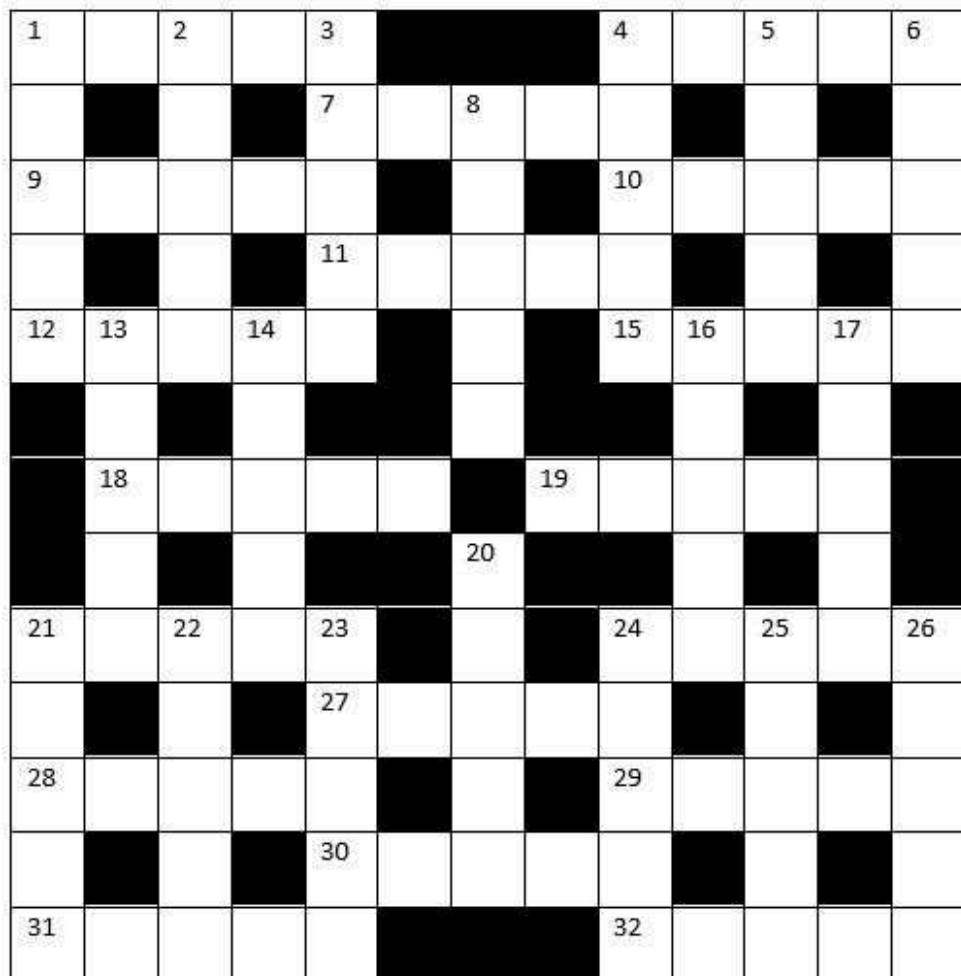
DOWN

1. Foe gone viral.
2. Brown wire roasts principle internal organ.
3. Tumbling Cedar shades small group.
4. Initially Dame Edna's first enemy wrote about island life.
5. Beginner's rising includes late HRH with less than a half a dozen in the middle of a water body.
6. Join in summer get-together.
8. I I lost tail with energy from river.
13. Vessel is part of flotilla or task force.
14. Pleased with echo in woodland clearing.
16. WWI place hides deathly presence.
17. Matter of child.
20. Us, me and hungry redhead are strange.
21. Zelenskyy "does not have any" chards without heat.
22. Lived riotously with a fallen angel.
23. Small bird with the French name.
24. Silver left little green man on end of shoe lace.
25. Sushi Vesaki found in buzzing places.
26. To observe dingy extremes is sleazy.

If you would like to find out how the answers to this cryptic crossword are solved, this QR code to take you to a website that explains how to solve the clues, but beware - it also gives the answers.



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD #6 JANUARY 2026



ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH, CROSSWORD #5

ACROSS

1. SHIP OF THE DESERT, 6. ET, 7. ARISTOCRATIC, 10. HEROD, 12. SIN, 13. SI,
17. RED NOSE, 19. ANGELS, 20. AIR, 22. PLATES, 24. YOMPING, 27. AT, 28. HID,
30. JESUS, 34. FRANKINCENSE, 35. GO, 36. FATHER CHRISTMAS

DOWN

1. SHEPHERD, 2. PIANO, 3. TASTY, 4. EARRING, 5. EATS, 8. OR, 9. CRIB, 11. RUDOLF,
14. US, 15. MARY, 16. PLAINS, 18. EAST, 21. AGISTORS, 23. TWINKLE, 25. OX,
26. CALF, 29. CHEER, 31. EVENT, 32. SALT, 33. ON

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

West Oxfordshire District Council submits a proposal for 2-Unitary Councils in Oxfordshire

The government is facilitating a programme to move away from the current two-tier system of district and county councils, and replace them with single 'unitary' councils responsible for all local services in an area. Earlier this year, the Government invited all councils in two-tier areas, including Oxfordshire, and small unitary authorities, to simplify the way services are delivered and make the system clearer for residents.

The government assigned a set of criteria that the new proposals should meet. The proposed councils should serve populations of around 500,000, be financially stable, deliver high quality services, be responsive to the needs of communities, and support positive growth across the region.

Four Oxfordshire District Councils, Cherwell DC, South Oxfordshire DC, Vale of the White Horse DC, West Oxfordshire DC and West Berkshire have worked together to create a proposal for two new, innovative and locally accountable unitary authorities for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. They would cover the following geographical areas:

- **Oxford and Shires Council** would comprise all the existing district areas of Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire.
- **Ridgeway Council** would be made up of the whole of West Berkshire Council's area and all of the existing district areas of South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse. For more information, see: <https://news.westoxon.gov.uk/news/five-councils-launch-ambitious-plan-for-local-government-reform>

The two other proposals are: **"One Council: One Oxfordshire"**, put forward by the Oxfordshire County Council,

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/plans-performance-policy/OneOxfordshireProposal.pdf>; and **"Greater Oxford"**, put forward by the Oxford City Council, proposes the formation of three unitary Councils, <https://greateroxford.org/our-proposal/>

The 2-Unitary Authorities proposal is designed to tackle existing inefficiencies, improve services, and support local communities. It has the potential to save the most money of all the options, with possible savings reaching **£58.9m** a year. It would create authorities that are big enough to be efficient, stable and reliable, but local enough to care and be responsive to communities.

The three proposals were debated at the Full Council meeting in mid-November. The 2-Unitary Councils proposal received widespread support from Councillors across the political spectrum and was recommended for submission to the Government later in November.

Contributed by
Cllr Lidia Arciszewska

lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk

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THE CAKE CAFÉ, FREELAND

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jane.cakestudio@gmail.com **2nd December Christmas Cakes and Bakes**

CATKINS

Genuine Cat Lover available for home visits whilst you are out or on

holiday. References available. **Debbie: 07805 583 419 or Janice 07896 990 801.**

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Weds	24 Dec	Green Week: recycling + food waste + garden waste
Weds	24 Dec	Christingle Service, St Mary's Church, Freeland 5pm
Thur	25 Dec	Christmas Day - MERRY CHRISTMAS!
Thur	25 Dec	Whole Benefice Communion, St Peter & St Paul 10am
Weds	31 Dec	Grey Week: household rubbish + food waste collection
Sun	4 Jan	UFL Ramble 10.00am from Bus Shelter opp Oxford Yeoman pub
Tues	6 Jan	The Cake Cafe, Village Hall, 9.00am - 11.30am
Wed	7 Jan	Green Week: recycling + food waste + garden waste
Frid	9 Jan	Witney Music Society Concert, High St Methodist Church 7.30pm
Mon	12 Jan	COPY DEADLINE FOR JANUARY 2026 GRAPEVINE
Mon	12 Jan	WI New Year Party , Village Hall, 7.45pm,
Mon	12 Jan	Freeland Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm Newell Room
Weds	14 Jan	Grey Week: household rubbish + food waste collection
Sat	17 Jan	North Leigh Film Night, Memorial Hall 7.00pm for 7.30pm start
Weds	21 Jan	Green Week: recycling + food waste + garden waste
Weds	28 Jan	Grey Week: household rubbish + food waste collection

ABOUT THE GRAPEVINE

The deadline for articles or adverts for the **FEBRUARY 2026** Grapevine is **Monday 12th January**. The edition should be online at <https://freelandparishcouncil.gov.uk> and www.stmaryfreeland.org.uk from about Tuesday 20th January with the print copies in the church porch and elsewhere from Friday 23rd January.

We welcome handwritten or typed articles and adverts. However, if at all possible, please send by email, formatted to fit an A5 magazine-it will certainly help to reduce the number of our mistakes! The font we use is Gill Sans MT at 10 point. If submitting electronically please use Word, **not PDFs**. Photographs should be **JPGs or PNGs**, again not PDFs. The cost of a Small Advertisement 25p per word. Payment for all advertising by BACS, details can be obtained from Jane Duff and any other costs for adverts. 1/3rd page size is 60mm high x 127mm wide, 1/2 page size is 90mm high x 127mm wide.

Adverts: grapevineadverts@gmail.com

Articles: freelandgrapevine@gmail.com

Or phone: 01993 880623 (Jane Duff)

Note: Please put your name and telephone number on any submission in case we need to contact you. These will only be printed if requested by you.

The editor reserves the right to edit all copy.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information, liability cannot be accepted for any errors or omissions in compiling this magazine.

Neither the Church, the Editor nor the Printer assume responsibility for any effects arising therefrom.

The presence of an advertisement in the Grapevine does not constitute a recommendation by the editors regarding the goods or services advertised.

We are not able to publish any correspondence between tradespersons or other organisations placing adverts in the Grapevine and their customers in the event of dispute. We do not endorse any articles, reports of suggestions in the Grapevine,

THE OXFORDSHIRE YEOMAN

WINTER MENU 2025-2026

KITCHEN OPENING TIMES (For Winter Menu)
 Wednesday & Thursday: 12:00-14:30 & 17:30-20:30
 Friday & Saturday: 12:00-20:30
 Sunday: 12:00-16:00 (separate menu)

v - Vegetarian
 ve - Vegan
 gfa - Gluten Free Available

STARTERS

Scotch Egg with mustard mayo and salad - **£7.50**
Soup of the Day with wholemeal mini loaf (v) (gfa) - **£6.95**
Traditional Prawn Cocktail - **£8.95**
Halloumi Fries with sweet chilli dip (v) (gfa) - **£6.95**
Ardennes Pate & toasted ciabatta - **£7.95**
Baked Honey Camembert with crusty bread (to be shared) - **£12.95**

MAIN COURSE

Giant Yorkshire (filled with Chicken, stuffing, seasonal veg and gravy) - **£16.95**
Traditional Sausage & Mash, peas, and onion gravy (gfa) - **£14.95**
Bad Santa Burger with house festive chips - **£17.95**
Pie of the day, mash and peas with gravy (v) (ve) - **£17.95**
Scampi, Chips and peas with tartare sauce - Large **£13.95** / Small **£10.95**
Ham, free range Egg & Chips (gfa) - **£14.95**
Rump Steak with chips, mushrooms, tomato and peppercorn sauce (gfa) - **£19.95**
Butternut Squash with cranberry, red onion tagine and rice (v) (ve) - **£12.95**



V-VEGETARIAN
 VE-VEGAN
 GFA-GLUTEN FREE AVAILABLE

WINTER LIGHT BITES

Bacon, Brie & Cranberry Baguette - **£7.95**
Christmas Loaded Chips with Bacon, Stuffing and Cheese - **£6.50**
Turkey, Stuffing & Cranberry Baguette - **£8.25**
Pulled Pork Baguette - **£8.25**
Margherita Pizza (gfa) - **£10.95**
Festive Pizza - Traditional Pizza sauce, Mozzarella, Pigs in Blankets, Cranberry and Chicken (gfa) - **£14.95**
Chicken, Bacon & Mayonnaise Baguette - **£7.95**
Fish Finger Baguette - **£7.95**
Garlic Flatbread (v) - **£4.95**
Soup of the Day (gfa) - **£6.95**
Chips (ve) (gf) - **£3.50 + cheese - £1**





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2025



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AND **THE CHRISTMAS MARKET IN THE GREAT COURT**

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blenheimpalace.com/christmas

