

Parish News

West Meon & Warnford

January 2025

New Year Hopes

Happy New Year

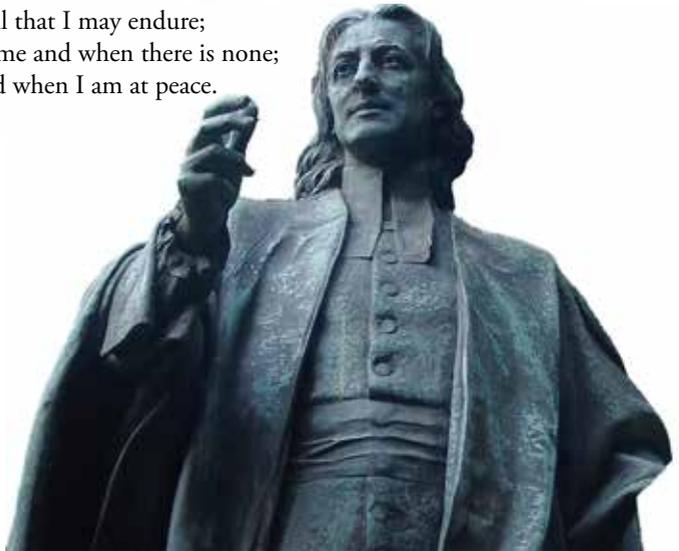
I was lucky enough to train for the Ministry alongside one or two Methodist students and with two wonderful Methodist academics on the College staff. Because of them, I was introduced to the idea of renewing our Covenant with God, each other, and his Church at the start of every year – a ‘holy New Year’s Resolution’ if you will.

Christians and Jews believe that God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to his steadfast love by finding delight in the law. Christians further believe that the covenant was renewed in Jesus, in his life, work, death and resurrection.

At the heart of our faith is a belief that, in him, all people may be set free from the power of sin and united in love. In the covenant, God promises us new life in Christ and for our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God.

The Methodist Covenant Prayer was first used in 1755 in London, with 1800 people present, and has often been used in Methodist services around the world, usually on the first Sunday of the year.

“I am no longer my own but yours.
Your will, not mine, be done in all things,
wherever you may place me,
in all that I do and in all that I may endure;
when there is work for me and when there is none;
when I am troubled and when I am at peace.
Your will be done



John Wesley statue, Melbourne, photo by Adam Carr, 2005, Public Domain wikimedia



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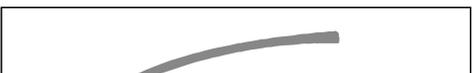
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when I am valued and when I am disregarded;
when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking;
when I have all things, and when I have nothing.
I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you,
as and where you choose.
Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
May it be so for ever.

Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven. Amen.” (www.methodist.org.uk).

When we met at West Meon on 29th December, we did so as generations had met before, and we too renewed the covenant ready for the New Year, which bound them and binds us to God. Our faith is practical and we are called, not just to a life of prayer and reading the Bible, but to following Jesus’ own example, by helping those in need, i.e. promoting social justice. The pandemic had many effects, for instance it exposed the fragility of some of the things we took for granted.

One area that was perhaps more fragile than we realised was access to services, such as modern technology, that many of us take for granted. In the pandemic we were encouraged to move online to meet and to worship. The lack of internet connectivity, online services and smartphones for some soon became apparent; before it was hidden. Just think about our access to medical services post-pandemic and how dependent we are on computers and the skills to access them securely. The recent debates about winter fuel allowances remind us that some people are unable to afford the fuel to heat and light their homes without having to scrimp on food.

Recent economic challenges continue to change the face of the church as an institution as well as hitting individual members of the congregations. As congregations are affected by having less available money, so churches have to face financial instability. The income to our parishes has dropped dramatically at a time when we have wanted to do more and support others all the more. The Covenant Prayer, I suggest, invites all churches to rethink and prioritise their ministries. Many in need are turning to the church and other charities for support but are now able to contribute less to them, and that applies to us.

How can we respond as a church community AND a wider community, together?

First, there are the immediate needs of people to which we can respond. But, let me say that the appeal for toys for homeless and displaced children who spent Christmas in the Roberts Centre elicited a heart-warming and meaningful response – thank you. Let me also record here that many local people from across the community provide items for our local Food Banks. In a relatively peaceful and affluent nation, we should be shocked that, not only is there a need for Food Banks, but they often struggle to meet the demand for food that they seek to address. Please be encouraged by knowing that you make a difference when you give. If you already donate, please encourage others to donate too, or donate a little more regularly, if you can, or consider what foods will make more of a difference.

Although we face some overwhelming challenges in the world, let us remember that we do not travel the road alone, we are sustained and empowered by the love of God. We can all take small steps and make a difference - even the greatest wonders of the world were begun with a single building block.

Fr. Tony

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Snowdrop events at Warnford Church - open on Saturdays in 2025

The organisers have decided that the Warnford Snowdrop events, held on Sundays in February for more than 50 years in aid of Warnford church, will be closed in 2025. There will however be a limited ticketed event open on Saturdays.

For more than 50 years a wonderful team of local volunteers have welcomed visitors to enjoy the remarkable display of Snowdrops in the woodlands around the church. Throughout this time it has been possible to park all the visitors' cars on the site – however in 2023 and 2024 the event appeared widely on social media and the number of visitors brought the traffic on the A32 to a standstill and blocked the local lanes with parked cars.

The Snowdrop Sunday events have never been advertised in the past however the advent of social media and visitors sharing information about their experience has created a level of interest that the current on-site parking arrangements cannot accommodate. The organisers have taken advice and have decided that the safest course of action to avoid the traffic problems that they have experienced is to close the Sunday events for one year.

Closing the Sunday events in 2025 will be disappointing news to everyone who has visited and supported the church in the past however there will be a limited opportunity to enjoy the Snowdrop display on Saturday afternoons in February using a ticketed system

with timed entry times. Details of how to purchase tickets for the Saturday opening will be available in due course on the Warnford Snowdrops website www.warnfordsnowdrops.org.uk - we would be grateful if you could share this information with your friends and family who have visited to see the Snowdrops in the past.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone who has visited our treasured Snowdrop Sundays in the past – we very much look forward to welcoming you on Saturdays in 2025.

Andrew Sellick

We are looking for volunteer stewards for both car parking and welcoming visitors. We ask for help for roughly one and a half hours on Saturday afternoons in February. If you are willing to help, please contact Angie Trenchard on 01730 829 545 or angietrenchard@gmail.com. You will be guaranteed a warm welcome.

Angie Trenchard



Snowdrops © by J Annabel

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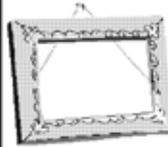


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West Meon CE Primary School

A New Year and a New Term at West Meon Primary School. The last few weeks of the autumn term were jam packed with celebrations and events for the children to take part in. We are back now, ready to take on what the Spring Term brings.

During the last weeks our infant class, Hedgehogs, performed their version of the Nativity in St John the Evangelist Church. Those that saw it agreed, it was an amazing event. Our thanks go out to the dedicated Hedgehogs team, without whose extra work, the production would not have happened. We all know the children in Hedgehogs are pretty special, but they have really pulled out all the stops to learn the songs, the lines to say, and then to have to remember where to stand or sit! An incredible group of young people. What was mentioned most was the confidence of the 4 to 7 year olds who have all benefitted from the small school setting of West Meon Primary.

The end of the term was all about children's performances and enjoying the performances of others. As a school, we attended the pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Winchester. With the support of the Touchet Trust, who help with transport costs, we were able to take part in (no one just watches a pantomime!) the Mother Goose performance. Visits like this enable our children to:

- gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama
- respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.
- provide enrichment opportunities and promote equality of opportunity so that all pupils can thrive together.

In our penultimate week, West Meon Primary Singers visited the Village Hall to sing to guests of Hazel Town's Xmas lunch. They delighted the audience with both traditional carols and songs from the Nativity which they had also learnt.



Of course Christmas in a primary school has many traditions and we were lucky enough to be included in Santa's pre-Christmas tour. The children were amazed to see Father Christmas himself travelling up the road on a tractor – the reindeer have a few weeks off before the big night I understand.

It won't surprise you to know that amid the festivities, children at West Meon Primary have been thinking of others. Our small school helped to raise money for Save the Children with our Xmas Jumper Day and contributed to Fr Tony's Toy Appeal for The Roberts Centre in Portsmouth who provide support to displaced children.

As we enter the New Year, heads full of new ideas and resolutions, West Meon Primary is looking forward to a term full of exciting learning opportunities and fun activities.

Applications for Reception Class places in September 2025 and Infant to Junior transfers (those moving on from KS1 to year 3) should be completed by 15th January 2025. We are currently supporting parents who wish to enrol their child for September 2025, please visit our website for additional information.

Julie Slamaker, Headteacher

MVARA Plays Petanque

When I think of Petanque my imagination takes me to a village square in a French village. I'm relaxing in the dappled sunshine outside a café with a nice glass of wine; the warm gentle breeze is rustling the leaves of the trees; there is the occasional clink of metal ball against metal ball.



Meon Valley
Active Retirement
Association

Shedfield in November wasn't quite like that, when a group of MVARA members arrived at Shedfield Petanque Club for a first taster session under the enthusiastic expert tutelage of Rod Bennet. What was warm was the greeting and hospitality of the Club, making everyone feel welcome.

So, what exactly is Petanque and why is it played in Shedfield?

The sport of Petanque, known in parts of France, and by tourists with discarded plastic sets in the backs of their sheds, as Boule, was devised in the South of France near Marseille and Toulon in southern France around 1907. It has developed in many countries so that there are now National and World Championships (but sadly no Olympic recognition) in addition to many clubs offering a social and recreational pastime. The aim is to toss a steel ball as close to a small wooden Jack to gain points, with the first to thirteen points being the winner. Petanque can be played as singles, doubles or triples and is very much a sport for the whole family in which men and women, old and young generations can compete on an equal footing. The sport welcomes people of all abilities and can be played purely for leisure activities or competitively at various levels.



Petanque came to Shedfield in 1974 when Maurice Abney-Hastings returned from a camping trip to Brittany. The family had been introduced to the sport by enthusiastic and welcoming French families and as a result had brought a set of steel boules back to the Sam's Hotel, where they began to play on the gravel drive of the recreation ground opposite and so Shedfield pétanque Club was born – not the first ever in the UK, but one of the first.

Such was the enthusiasm that the members of the club unilaterally founded the British Petanque Association (BPA). Approaches were made to French teams to arrange 'Twinning Matches' but Gallic bureaucracy struck.



This couldn't be done unless the BPA became a member of the Federation International de Petanque et Jeu Provençal (FIPJP). Not daunted, Maurice and his compatriots successfully presented the BPA credentials to the FIPJP AGM in September in Alicante in 1974 and a British

team was sent to Quebec to play in the World Championships.

Petanque is just one of the activities from which MVARA members can benefit. Also offered:

- Bishop's Waltham Reads – a Book Club;
- Bridge – an opportunity to play Bridge in a convivial social atmosphere;
- Table Tennis – social, friendly play, but with some members going on to play in local leagues;



- French – Advanced Conversation French to help maintain language skills;

- Italian – Intermediate level language classes;

- Spanish – intermediate level language classes;

- Scrabble – a fun way to tax the “little grey cells”;

- Keep fit – keep mobile; keep active; stay healthy;

- Tai Chi – at beginners, intermediate and advanced levels;

- Theatre visits – to Chichester, Southampton, and Winchester, including an upcoming trip to Hamilton;

- Lunches – monthly for members and an additional one for ladies;

- Visits to places of interest;

Annual Membership is just £5. For more details, please visit www.mvara.co.uk.

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West Meon Community Cinema

Winter/Spring Programme January-April

Come and celebrate the start of the 2025 cinema season on **Friday 10th January 7.45pm** with a hilarious comedy, **“Thelma”**, where a feisty 93 year-old grandmother is conned by a phone scammer and sets out on a treacherous quest across Los Angeles, accompanied by an ageing friend, to reclaim what she has lost. Tickets for this event are £10, to include the film and a selection of delicious canapés, and must be purchased by Wednesday 8th January either



<https://www.pluggedin.com/movie-reviews/thelma>

on line from Ticketsource or in the village shop (cash only). Doors open as usual at 7pm.

Friday 14th February (Valentine’s Day) 7.45pm – “French Kiss”, 1995, starring Meg Ryan as a jilted woman and Kevin Kline as a French petty thief, a Paris match made in heaven, in this adventure-filled comedy. A French themed supper will be available to purchase – details to follow!

Friday 14th March 7.45pm – “Small Things Like These”, based on the acclaimed novella by Clare Keegan which tells the story of life in small town 1980’s Ireland where the local convent is one of the infamous Magdalene Laundries. It is an absorbing drama telling a tale of hardship and self-sacrifice. Tickets £7 or see below for a double bill. If you feel you would like to be cheered up after Friday evening we have scheduled two performances of **“Paddington in Peru”** the next day **Saturday 15th March at 2pm**, Child and Parent Cinema with a break for a picnic tea in the hall. Ticket to be available in due course. **Saturday 15th March at 7.45pm**, bar open as usual at 7pm. Tickets either £7 for this film only or £12 for a double bill with “Small Things Like These”.

And finally, the film you’ve all been waiting to see. **Saturday 4th April 7.45pm – “Conclave”**, a gripping drama based on Robert Harris’s best-selling novel about a papal election where Cardinal Lawrence (Ralph Fiennes) uncovers a trail of deep secrets left in the dead Pope’s wake. Tickets available on line at Ticketsource, in the village shop (cash only) or on the door (except on occasions where catering is involved as we need 48 hours advance notice of numbers).

Rosemary Morrish



Services in 2025

5th January – The Epiphany

9am Mattins BCP - Warnford

10.30am Benefice Eucharist - East Meon

12th January – The Baptism of Christ and Plough Sunday

9am Service of the Word – Langrish - Plough Sunday

10.30am Benefice Eucharist - West Meon – The Baptism of Christ

19th January – Epiphany 2

9am Holy Communion (BCP) - Warnford

10.30am Service of the Word - East Meon

26th January – Epiphany 3 and the Conversion of St Paul

10.30am Benefice Eucharist - Langrish

10.30am Service of the Word - West Meon

2nd February – Candlemas

9am Mattins BCP - Warnford

10.30am Benefice Eucharist - East Meon



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Winchester City Council News

New accessible interpretation panels for Nunnaminster

Many Conservation and maintenance works have been carried out at a valued historic site in Winchester.

Nunnaminster, which was later known as St Mary's Abbey, is located in the heart of Winchester city centre beside Abbey House and Gardens.

Its original mounted interpretation panels have been replaced with freestanding panels at a lower level, offering better accessibility. The new panels also include raised detailing and Braille to assist those with sight loss and a QR code which links to a screen-reader friendly version of the text, a glossary of terms and links to further reading.

Weeding, sensitively tailored to the nature of the site, has also taken place.

The Nunnaminster site, which can now be seen below street level, was one of Winchester's three great Late Saxon royal monasteries. Founded by Queen Ealhswith, Alfred the Great's wife, in 903, it became one of the foremost centres of learning and art in England. Between 1981 and 1983, archaeological excavations carried out on the site revealed its extensive history.

The new panels have been installed with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Winchester City Council's Cabinet Member for Business and Culture Councillor Lucille Thompson said: "I am thrilled to see the new interpretation panels installed at the Nunnaminster site. The site is an important landmark in Winchester's history and the accessibility of these panels will ensure more people are able to learn more about its significance for many years to come."

Winchester City Council



The new panels at Nunnaminster

Gallops closed

The field north of West Meon recreation ground stretching in the direction of Marlands and known locally as the Gallops will remain temporarily closed so we can still control the pigeons. As before, the designated footpaths and bridleways will remain open and a further update will be issued next month..

Thanks everybody for your patience.

Graham Silk

Warnford Parish Meeting

Information relating to WPM can be found on its website which also has details of local facilities and services, village news and events. Please do sign up for 'Alerts' so you will be informed of forthcoming events, planning applications in the area etc. WPM has an email distribution list so that emails can go to parishioners (eg. relating to Parish Meetings, details of planning applications etc.) If you would like to be added to the list, please email the Clerk.

We are currently looking for a new Chair. Anyone who might be interested in this role should contact the Clerk to find out what it entails.

West Meon, Warnford, Winchester City and Hampshire CC Contacts

West Meon Parish Council

Vacancy, Clerk to WMPC
clerk@westmeon-pc.gov.uk

Hannah Davies, Chair WMPC

Virginia Burke, Vice Chair WMPC

Robin Gedye, WMPC

Graham Silk, WMPC

Tim Main, WMPC

West Meon Parish Council website
www.westmeon-pc.gov.uk

Warnford Parish Meeting

Chair: Vacancy
warnfordchair@gmail.com

Lucy Hutchinson, Clerk
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Save our Chalk Streams

Currently, only 11 out of 220 British chalk streams have any legal protections, and even these fall short of the measures needed to defend these rivers. England's chalk streams are one of the rarest habitats on earth! Their crystal-clear waters are home for salmon, water voles, white-clawed crayfish and kingfishers, making them our equivalent to the Great Barrier Reef or the Amazon Rainforest. A truly special habitat that we are so lucky to enjoy.

Yet many of our chalk stream rivers are now polluted, dirty and choked by pollution, threatening the wildlife that calls them home and the people that rely on them for their wellbeing. The Government must introduce specific protections for all chalk streams in their planning reforms, to ensure these unique habitats are conserved and put into recovery for future generations.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a set of planning policies, which informs the preparation of local plans and decisions on planning applications. By granting chalk streams better protections within this Framework, we can protect these unique rivers from direct and indirect harms associated with new development.

Within the Framework, we are calling for stronger protections for chalk streams as an irreplaceable habitat, and the introduction of 50-100 metre 'no development' buffers surrounding chalk streams and their catchments.

Over 700 people supported our call to protect chalk streams through planning and the NPPF. The consultation closed on the 24th September 2024. As the Government now processes the responses it has received, and considers its final response, we need to keep the pressure on so that our voice is heard, and our call to save our chalk streams cannot be ignored.

Guest blogger Melissa Wall writes on the Wildlife Trust website: "They remind us that water is a sacred entity and must be cherished at all costs, especially when it rises from a winterbourne chalk stream."



Mel and her husband at their handfasting ceremony at Bishops Sutton on the River Arle © Melissa Wall

Hampshire & Isle Wight Wildlife Trust

Rainfall report for November/December 2024

Rainfall in November was strange to say the least. It very dry up to the 15th of the month with only 0.6mms and then after that we only had 5 days when no rain fell. November ended with 108mms (4.25") and not particularly cold either.

December has seen more days with rain and in fact only 5 days with no rain but it has been very mild for December. The lowest temperature we recorded was -1.9C on the 3rd December. Up to the 15th we have recorded only 42mms (1.65") of rainfall.

Peter Short



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The Hampshire Cultural Trust

The Trust was founded to manage a wide portfolio of cultural activities and venues formerly managed by Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council. These include Museums like the Aldershot Military Museum, Winchester Great Hall, Winchester City Museum, Basingstoke Milestones and Rockbourne Roman Villa; Arts Centres like the troubled Fareham Ashcroft, Forest, Winchester Arc and Aldershot West Centre; Galleries like Gosport Museum and Gallery and the Basingstoke Willis and Sainsbury Gallery and even Costume Hire with the Hampshire Wardrobe.



The Arc, Winchester (Image: Hampshire Cultural Trust)

In the last year the Trust has faced deepening economic threats to funding of heritage and the arts following a cost of living crisis and the lingering social changes brought about by the pandemic.

Nonetheless they have welcomed 715,102 visitors, a 13% increase on last year including the pioneering 878AD in Winchester which has changed the profile of users to younger and family visitors.

At the Allen Gallery in Alton 2023-24 they saw the completion of a successful bid for a National Lottery Heritage Fund project rediscovering the ceramic collections at the gallery. A total of 7100 objects were inventoried or audited, 6000 object locations were updated and around 5500 objects were photographed to Art UK standards. In addition a widespread community engagement programme delivered 32 workshops, 2 potter forums, regular activity days, gallery tours and drop-in sessions, 6 film nights, 2 specialist ceramic workshops, 11 exhibitions, 21 vulnerable teenagers in Project Thrive!, 320 family workshop participants, 579 adult participants and also engaged 14 artists and facilitators. They were also awarded £75,000 for the second phase of the development which will enable them to increase the work and scope of volunteers and data story gatherers.

Amongst the Trust's future plans will be following Grayson Perry's Essex House Tapestries and the paintings of Rising Splendour: Fred Appleyard with the Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards and the self-curated exhibition Hans Coper: Resurface. New museum developments will include a 1960s themed room at Milestones Museum and expansion into adjacent green space on the site, assisting with creative arts with inmates of HMP Winchester and the Stepping Stones programme for promoting mental wellbeing. Becoming Roman - Silchester a Town of Change is touring the Red House Museum in Christchurch, Andover Museum, Reading Museum and Reading University Library. Plus currently on is Basingstoke's My Home - Local Stories with Global Roots. So there is plenty for staff and volunteers of the Trust to do and perhaps it is even more important in financially constrained times.

A Annabel

Diary Dates



Sunday 5th January Hampshire Farmers Markets 10am-2pm: The Square, Petersfield

Friday 10th January 7.45pm: West Meon Community Cinema – “Thelma” West Meon Village Hall

Friday 14th February (Valentine’s Day) 7.45pm: West Meon Community Cinema – “French Kiss” West Meon Village Hall

Friday 28th February 10:30-12:30: Macmillan Coffee Morning Rookesbury Village Hall

Care Group Co-ordinators

Nina Byles 829028/07778 679922
Virginia de Cosson 829362

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The Vicarage, Church Street, East Meon
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