Hambleden VALLEY

Group Magazine



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Dec 2026

The Hambleden Valley Group of Churches
"To see our lives and communities transformed by the love of God"



Cover: All Soul's Service, Frieth, photo Paul Marston-Weston. This page: The 12 days of Christmas, Medmenham, floral arrangement and photo Jackie Macdonald.

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Weekday Services

Wednesday - 9.30am, Zoom

Daily Prayer - 10.15am, Holy Communion, Turville

Emergencies:

If you are unable to contact the Group Priests, please get in touch with your churchwarden. (see pages 26 and 27)

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All contributions are welcome, to the Editor, Penny McLeish

hambledenvalleyeditor@gmail.com

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Medmenham SL7 2HB
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Please keep articles within 350 words. Copy deadline is 15th of the month.

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May you have a peaceful Christmas

As we enter the month of December, so we leave behind November, the remembering month.

December looks forward. It is full of the anticipation of Christmas. The season of Advent is so-called because advent means 'the coming'. It patently means looking towards the coming of Christ, ie Christmas Day. Our Advent calendars count down to that single, most anticipated day. However, Advent was not a season only to look forward to that first coming of Jesus. Advent is a season in which we are actually supposed also to be looking forward to Jesus's second coming.

This year my theme for Christmas will be peace, for three reasons. Firstly, it is the peaceful way in which Jesus arrives, both in the nativity story, but also in our own lives. Secondly, the current global political climate is unsettling. The hope of peace eludes us as wars continue and international relations deteriorate. We long for a message of peace in our time. But thirdly, the ultimate mission of Jesus was to bring peace between humanity and the world. And that peace will not be fully realised until Jesus comes again.

Casting our minds back to November, that time we particularly look back on our world wars, we remember that with a successful D-Day came the proof that the allies would win the Second World War. From then on, it was a mopping up operation, and only a matter of time before Hitler finally surrendered and the peace of VE day arrived.

So, Jesus's first coming involved the conquering of sin and death on the cross on Good Friday, so that both would lose their power. That was like D-Day. But the first coming did not rid the world of the presence of sin and death. In these last days we still suffer from sin and death as we wait for the second coming. That will be the day of final victory.



This Advent, remember not only to look forward to celebrating Jesus's first coming, in that most extraordinary and understated setting of the Bethlehem stable; but let us also look forward to Jesus's second coming, when the world will be redeemed, healed as it were, and sin and death finally extinguished. Then the planet will be restored, and peace between humanity and God will be complete.

May the gift of Christmas be peace.

Andy

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GROUP NOTES

All Souls' Service at St John the Evangelist, Frieth



This year's All Souls' Service for the Hambleden Valley was held at St John the Evangelist, Frieth, on Sunday 25th October at 3pm. The service provided a cherished opportunity for people to come together to remember and honour loved ones who have died. The moving ceremony included prayers, hymns, Scripture readings, a poem and the lighting of candles.

Around 50 people from across the valley and beyond attended the service, which was led by Rev Jonathan Wilmot and supported by Rev Andy Storch. During the service, the names of departed loved ones were read aloud, and candles were lit in their memory, creating a poignant and reflective atmosphere.

The afternoon was marked by a deep sense of peace, remembrance, and hope, and was greatly appreciated by all who attended. As part of the service, Rev Andy Storch, delivered the address, offering words of comfort and encouragement to those gathered.

Paul Marston-Weston

My child died suddenly, Max Harper – forever 18

My son Max was killed instantly on his motorcycle on 11th September 2024 at



15:29 in The United States; Max was just 18 years old.

As I travel through my lifelong grief journey and try to live with the devastating loss of my son, I understand that I am carrying the greatest love and personal hardship that only a parent who has lost a child can fully understand.

This is a club no one wants to belong to.

I have learnt so much about life, loss and spirit over the past 2 years. Today I was involved with the University of Southampton study 'Two Times Tragedy' combined with the 'Centre for Sudden Death', which aims to improve the support for people in my situation. The study tackles all areas that bereaved parents face, including employment/workplace, doctors' surgery, the church, community, family and friends support after losing a child.

The very fact that this research has been commissioned helps identify that community as a whole does not know how to support or behave with bereaved families. I believe that most people are terrified to acknowledge death, especially that of a child, and I hope by sharing our family's story since losing Max it may help others that will face this reality.

I have attended two services in our local church since Max died: the Footprints and the All Souls. There is some comfort that services like this provide for us the living –

Continued on page 7

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to honour and remember our loved ones.

I do believe that my son is waiting for me and that we have continuing bonds after his death.

This is a nod to my boy, whose soul is free, and to the love we share with him, a bond invulnerable to the winds of time and space.

Sarah Harper



Service of Remembrance

On Sunday 8th November, over 150 villagers gathered in St Mary's, Hambleden, to join in a Service of Remembrance. Outside, the weather was cold and dank; inside the atmosphere was sombre. We entered the Church to organ renditions of JS Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* and Vivaldi's *Nulla in Mundo Pax Sincera*, and the slow movement from Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto* played on the trumpet by Chris Preston.



The service began at 10.50am with an introduction from Rector, Andy Storch, and the singing of the traditional Remembrance Day hymn, *O God, our help in ages past*.

The Exhortation was read sensitively by Erica Ferguson. Her voice could be heard throughout the Church.

'They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.'

At 11 o'clock, the exact time on 11th November 1918 that the armistice came into effect, we all bowed our heads for Two Minutes Silence. The Silence was preceded by The Last Post, and broken by The Reveille. Both pieces were crisply and beautifully played by Chris Preston.

The poem *'In Flanders Fields'* was movingly and emotionally read by Richard Kenning.

'We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.'

The choir sang Laurence Binyon's anthem *For the Fallen.*

'They went with songs to the battle, they were young,

Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.

They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;

They fell with their faces to the foe.'

Prayers of Intercession invited us to reflect not only on the service men and women who died for their country in the violence of war, but also for all those who suffer as a result of conflict, including civilian women, children and men whose lives are disfigured by war and terror.

The Rolls of Honour were read for each village in the Parish. It caused us to wonder how our tiny parish had coped with the loss of so many lives.

Chris Howgego read from 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 13-18. *'But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.'*

In his address, Rector Andy reminded us of the sacrifice of those who have died in war, those injured, traumatised, and the families left bereaved. He asked us to remember those who continue to serve, protecting our freedom and preserving peace. But on Remembrance Sunday, he wanted us to



remember another sacrifice: that of Jesus Christ, who gave His life for the whole human race. Through His death and resurrection, He overcame sin and death and promises us eternal life with God. This, the Rector said, is our Christian hope: death is not the end. Whatever age we die, we can look forward to new life in Christ. In conclusion he picked up the line from the Reading *'We do not grieve like those who have no hope'*

The National Anthem was sung with vigour.

As the service in church ended Erica Ferguson rose from her seat loudly to declaim the Kohima Exhortation, an inscription found on the Memorial of the 2nd British Division at the Kohima War Cemetery in Nagaland, India.

'When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today'.

We filed out of the church to the tune of the RAF March Past, and regathered by the War Memorial. The final blessing was preceded by the laying of wreaths and a repeat of the Kohima Exhortation.

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So concluded a moving and thoughtful Service of Remembrance. A true community gathering, in which we were able to express our gratitude to all those young men and women who gave their lives so that we are able to live peaceably in our lovely valley.

Chris Whitehead



Photo Teresa Russ

Max, of the Royal Marines (Judy McAlpine's Grandson) talking to Walter Good, 100 years old (Teresa Russ's dad) who was in the Coldstream Guards in WW2. His Father was in the Royal Marines in WW1.

Community Matters report

Recently two of our volunteers attended a meeting with Red Kite, the Housing Association who are responsible for the majority of social housing in Lane End. The meeting, which included several other charities, met to explore how they can best serve their tenants and share their own resources with each other. We are so grateful that all along, Red Kite has shown itself to be an organization that genuinely cares for its tenants; and as a consequence, we have a very good relationship with them.

We have had two new families referred to us for support recently, they were able to come to our latest foodbank and will remain with us for as long as they need us. As the winter approaches the colder days and nights return and we know that families will again need to turn to us for help with the ever-increasing costs of heating. We never want anyone to have to choose between heating or eating and, because of the generosity of so many of you, we feel confident that we will be able to respond to this vital need.

Our next foodbank will be in December when we will be giving as much support to our families for Christmas as possible, we will keep you all posted!

Thank you all as always for all your kindness and generosity.

Judy Taylor

The People's Emergency Briefing

Chill weather in the Hambleden Valley and a chilling message from the People's Emergency Briefing documentary, shown by Hambleden Parish Council at Hambleden Village Hall with the support of The Cinema Club. It was a chance to join with thousands of other UK communities who had already viewed this stark warning for the human race.

The film focuses on the testimony of a range of experts who addressed an 'emergency briefing' in Westminster, their words commented on in the documentary by a mix of celebrities and 'OMPs' (ordinary members of the public). The evidence

presented on climate change made crystal clear that a failure to address the causes adequately will have (and I use my words carefully) the direst, most catastrophic consequences for the continuance of human life as we know it. And soon - food/water supply, biodiversity, public health, law and order, international relations…not to mention the entire world economy - all would suffer the most appalling breakdown. For sure. Not 'a matter of opinion'. That's IF we continue to pump carbon dioxide into the atmosphere at current rates.

'IF'. The key word. 'IF'. Clearly, all the speakers at the Westminster event had been encouraged to emphasise that we have it in our power - at the local, national and international level - to make changes that can stabilise this situation. That includes you and me. Here in the Hambleden Valley.

Following the showing of the documentary, a panel - including Professor Kate Heppell (Chilterns Conservation Board), Chris Merchant, (Professor of Ocean and Earth Observation at the University of Reading) and Will Lacey (he and his twin brother our much-admired Lane End farmers) gave a local perspective. What are the particular challenges in our area? How can we tap into and support cross-country co-ordinated action to pressure politicians? It was depressing to hear Chris Merchant suggest that too many MPs still aren't reacting to the gravity of the situation. Gratifyingly, the





Giles Trendle, Kate Heppell, Chris Merchant, Kate Oldridge and Will Lacey, photo Mike Hopkins

'Greener Henley' organisation (represented on the panel by Kate Oldridge) is doing a great job in mobilising local action and tapping into the national movement. We in the Hambleden valley can keep abreast of this via **https://greenerhenley.org.uk**

Thanks to HPC and the Cinema Club for setting up this event, not least our indefatigable campaigners, Amanda Hopkins and Charles Hussey.

Andrew Green

WILDLIFE

In Praise of Nature's Helpers

I want to praise all the wonderful volunteers sometimes working in perfect weather conditions but also in heat waves, pouring rain and freezing cold, pretty much every day of the week, all year, all over the Chilterns and beyond to the benefit of the Natural World. Many of you may be reading this, so thank YOU. They toil on areas of our precious Earth's crust, thankfully safe from merciless mowing, summer strimmers, glysophate sprayers and autumn leaf blowers, to help boost populations of thousands of beetles, butterflies, bees and other valuable insects playing a vital role in the ecosystem of Britain's wildlife. These volunteers are often organised, inspired and motivated by individuals who

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CHURCH SERVICES AND EVENTS

From The Registers

Baptisms

Oct 11	Lily Angharad Page Rollings	Hambleden
Oct 25	Bradley Charles Jones	Frieth

Rest in Peace

Nov 3	Christopher Hearn	Burial of Ashes, Frieth
Nov 4	Margaret Spratley	Funeral and Burial, Fawley
Nov 11	Alexandra Casserley	Burial of Ashes, Hambleden
Nov 13	John Wood	Burial of Ashes, Medmenham



Hambleden Valley Prayer Group

We have formed a contemplative listening and confidential prayer group, forming a circle round the valley with God at the centre. If you would like prayer please send a request to the email below:

hambledenvalleyprayergroup@gmail.com

Hambleden Valley Tea Club



Tea Club is for anyone over 50 looking to make new friends whilst playing board games, watching a film, listening to a speaker or going on the occasional outing. We finish off with delicious tea and cakes.

The meetings are 2.15 – 4.30pm, every Tuesday afternoon at St Katharine's, Parmoor or Frieth Village Hall and transport can be provided.

If you would like to join us please contact:
Wendy Duerden on 01494 638297 **wendy.duerden@tachademic.net** or
Sue Dawkes on 07787111993 **susandawkes@icloud.co.uk**



CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2026

Pattern of Worship December 2026

Please see below for Sunday services. There will also be Zoom services at 9:30am on Wednesdays with Churchyard Prayers at Fawley at 12noon on Fridays. The 10.15am midweek Holy Communion on Wednesdays is at Turville. Since we are short staffed while awaiting a new Associate Priest it may be that not all services will go ahead. Please check our website **www.hambleden-valley-churches.org.uk** for latest updates or contact our administrator Jenny Neagle on 07769 599616 **hambledenvalleyoffice@gmail.com** with any query.

Sunday Services

	Fawley	Fingest	Frieth	Hambleden	Medmenham	Turville
29th November Advent Sunday			8am BCP Holy Communion	6pm Advent Candlelit Service	11am Holy Communion	
6th December	10am Group Service 4pm Railway Nativity – Fawley Hill					2pm Church Sandwich, Northend
13th December	4pm Carol Service	9am Holy Communion	6pm Carol Service	11am Holy Communion		5.30pm Carol Service
Fri 18th December			6pm Christingle			
20th December		4pm Carol Service	9am Holy Communion	8am BCP Holy Communion 6pm Carol Service	6pm Carol Service with Tamesis choir	
Mon 21st December				6.30pm Carols at Skirmett		
Thurs 24th December Christmas Eve				5pm Christingle Service 11.30pm Midnight Mass		3pm Crib Service 11.30pm Midnight Mass
Fri 25th December Christmas Day	11am Family Communion	9am Family Communion	9am Family Communion	11am Family Communion		
Sun 27th December		10am Holy Communion				
Sun 3rd Jan 2027					10am Group Service	

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are volunteers themselves and to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for their drive to encourage others to come and help so more is achieved in the time available. There are many organisations, Butterfly Conservation, BBOWT, the Chiltern Society, the Chiltern National Landscape and the Chiltern Rangers to name five, who welcome volunteers all year round with open arms and your every visit will be a win for nature. These groups are delighted to see an extra pair of new hands for an hour or several. The jobs are varied, trees/hedge planting, footpath maintenance, scrub clearance, the raking up of debris, wildflower plug planting and many other tasks; no particular skills required. If you're unable to volunteer, a spontaneous donation is always extremely welcome for anything from machinery or tools, to new trees, posts and fencing to protect those trees from deer damage and plenty of other expenses in between. Become a member of one of the aforementioned, you are valued and your annual membership fee put to good use for nature. It doesn't feel as if the government is doing enough to bring biodiversity back from the brink so it's down to members of the public who care, to do whatever they can. Sadly, Great Britain is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world and needs all possible help to improve this standing. Next summer as you wander happily through our (hopefully) green and pleasant land, perhaps marvelling at and taking a photograph of a beautiful butterfly perched on your path, give thanks for the volunteers, landowners and generous individuals all over the Chilterns and beyond, putting considerable time and effort into your enjoyment. Thank you for reading this. If you have any questions, please email sarahronan575@gmail.com

Sarah Ronan

HAMBLEDEN

Hambleden Cinema



Please join us with all the family on Saturday 5th December for a matinee screening of *101 Dalmatians* (1996) rated PG, a live-action Disney comedy adventure film starring Glenn Close as the glamorous and villainous fashion designer Cruella de Vil. When she schemes to steal a litter of Dalmatian puppies (and many more) to make a spotted fur coat, the dogs and their animal friends race to stop her. Part of the filming took place in our picturesque village of Hambleden in Buckinghamshire, see if you can spot the scenes!

Doors open 2pm, programme begins 3pm. Tickets £8 each can be bought from **https://www.hambledencinema.co.uk** and from Hambleden Village Stores. There will be a bar selling soft drinks,

wine, beer and tempting delicious cinema snacks! Also mulled wine and mince pies! In aid of raising funds for Hambleden Village Hall Registered Charity 300275.

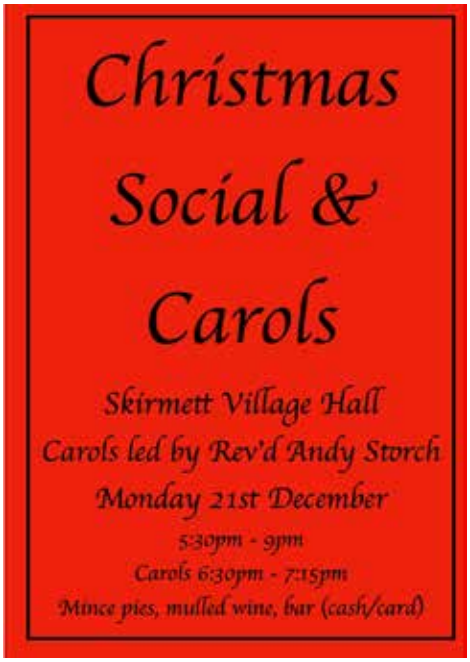
Hambleden Cinema Team

Remembrance hedge, Pheasants Hill



Photo Chris Howgego

SKIRMETT



FAWLEY

Trick or Treating and Fawley Halloween Light Party 2026!

Trick or treating was a bit different this year it started off at Lower Woodend Farm and made its way to Anne Cottage and then to the village green and the post-box then to the nursery and finally the Church and some children rode on ponies too!



The SPOOKY pumpkins were grown in the village. There were so many of them. The pumpkin carving competition was won by Elodie Nadel!



Continued on page 21



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3. Avoid Harsh Cleaning Products
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The Halloween Light Party in Fawley was a big celebration and the whole village was involved. It took place in the churchyard; the decorations were outstanding.



There were skeletons buried in dirt, there were witches holding cauldrons, there were even ghosts hanging from trees and spiders clinging on to cobwebs.

The lights in the churchyard were SPECTACULAR and they were all different colours! there was lots of food and, of course, sweets and all the children had an AMAZING time!!!!!!!



Edie Wilkinson (aged 9)

FRIETH

Frieth School Science Week

Science Week was a fantastic success, sparking curiosity, excitement and enthusiasm throughout the school. Pupils took part in a wide range of engaging, hands-on activities, including exploring the wonders of space in a visiting planetarium, competing in a paper aeroplane championship, experimenting with different bubble solutions, building and launching rockets, and designing and racing their own cars to investigate forces and movement.



The week created a real buzz around the school and provided many opportunities for children to think creatively, solve problems and develop their scientific understanding through practical exploration. It was wonderful to see such enthusiasm and participation from pupils across all year groups.



A special thank you goes to the parents who generously gave up their time to lead workshops and share their expertise with our children. Their support helped make the week even more memorable and provided pupils with valuable real-world insights into science and related careers.

Ospreys Trip

Ospreys class had a fantastic trip to Maidenhead Mosque, where they learnt about the building's features and its importance within the local community. They were congratulated for their excellent behaviour and thoughtful questions. We discovered just how interconnected the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths are, exploring the similarities they share.

Football

Our football teams have faced some tough opposition recently and, while the results haven't gone our way, we couldn't be prouder of how the children have represented our school.

They have showed determination, resilience and excellent sportsmanship throughout, and it was great to see so many smiles on faces. A huge well done to everyone for their effort, teamwork and positive attitude!



Martin Gosling
Headteacher





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Need your chimney sweeping or stove installed? If so, then please contact Terry - a member of the National Association of Chimney Sweeps with over 30 years of experience working in the Hambleden Valley - on 01494 564321 or mobile 07850 196616.

Tip Top Dog Training. Puppy School is held on Saturday mornings at Lane End Youth and Community Centre followed by Dog Club which is open to graduates of Puppy School or following 1:2:1 assessment. www.tiptopdogtraining.co.uk 07711 807109 melanie@tiptopdogtraining.co.uk.

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CHURCH AND VILLAGE ACTIVITIES AND CONTACTS

HAMBLEDEN VALLEY GROUP OF CHURCHES

Rector: The Revd. Andy Storch, 07811 430898, Revandystorch@gmail.com

Director of Music: Jo Hutchins 07909 608654 johutchins27@gmail.com

Children's Worker: Joe Spratley, 07824 506903, joespratley@hotmail.co.uk

Group Treasurer: Stephen Sidders, 01491 639271 stephensidders@sky.com

Group Administrator: Jenny Neagle, 07769 599616, hambledenvalleyoffice@gmail.com

Weddings and Blessings: Jenny Neagle, 07769 599616, hambledenvalleyoffice@gmail.com

Tea Club: St. Katharine's, Parmoor, Tuesdays, 2.15 - 4.30pm
Wendy Duerden, 01491 638297
wendy.duerden@techademic.net
Sue Dawkes, 07787 111993,
susandawkes@icloud.com

Barney's Toddler Group: Frieth Village Hall, Currently suspended

Hambleden Valley Garden Club:
Meetings October-March on the first Tuesday of the month, Frieth Village Hall.
Clair Honnor 07773 387195

Website:
www.hambleden-valley-churches.org.uk

FAWLEY (ST MARY THE VIRGIN)

Churchwarden: Vacant
Contact: David Napier
david_napier@btinternet.com

Village Hall Booking:
David Burton - davidburtn83@hotmail.co.uk

FINGEST (ST BARTHOLOMEW)

Churchwardens:
Brian Barnes, 01494 882613,
brianbarnes346@gmail.com
Jill Dean, 01491 638678,
jill@sundawn.uk.com

FRIETH (ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST)

Verger: Judy Hunt, 01494 882227,
ajh.claypit1@btinternet.com

Village Hall Bookings:
website www.friethvillagehall.org
email friethvillagehall@gmail.com
Tel 01494 880737

Frieth Natural History Society:
Mary 01494 881501, Andy 01494 881586,
FNHS2023@gmail.com

Frieth Village Society: Caroline Walker 01494 882333

Frieth Cricket Club: Ben Smiley
friethcricket@btinternet.com

Frieth Lunch Club: meets on last Friday of the month at the Yew Tree Pub.
Judy Hunt, 01494 882227
ajh.claypit1@btinternet.com

Body Control Pilates Classes: Village Hall, Wednesdays, 9:30am and 10:40am.
Lauren Owen www.pilat-ease.co.uk

HAMBLEDEN (ST MARY THE VIRGIN)

Churchwarden: Vacant
Contact: Jill Steward
jillsteward@hambleden.com

Bell Ringing: Fri 6.45pm practice,
Jon Boughton, 07818 455285 ,
hambledenbells@mycomputer.email

Village Hall Bookings: Jamie Baker, 01491 410669, www.hambledenvillagehall.org

Bridge Club Barbara Pooley
hambledenbridge@gmail.com

Pilates: Mondays 11 – 12 Fran Presho, 07951 019594

Hambleden Social and Sports Club:
Open Mon, Tues, Wed and Fri from 4pm (closed Thurs) Sat open from 7.45pm
Pat Eldridge 01491 576067

Tennis Club: Heather Symons, 01491 577344, heathersymons16@hotmail.com

Tennis Coaching: Chris Marshall, 07801 999230, chrismarshall20@hotmail.com

MEDMENHAM
(ST PETER AND ST PAUL)

Churchwarden: Vacant.
Contact: Angela Magee
angela.magee@yahoo.co.uk

Village Hall Bookings: Emma Tentori, 07759 014396

Uniformed organisations:
1st Danesfield Scouts, Cubs and Beavers: leader Nick Currie, enquiries@danesfieldscouts.org.uk

Medmenham News:
medmenhamnews@icloud.com

SKIRMETT

Village Hall Bookings:
Bookings via the website:
skirmettvillagehall.org
Other enquiries:
skirmettvillagehall@gmail.com

TURVILLE (ST MARY THE VIRGIN)

Churchwarden: Vacant
Contact: Caroline Sants
turvillechurchwardens@gmail.com

Bell Ringing: Wed practice, Rachel Wallace, 01494 883025
rachel@markjwallace.com

Artists' studios: Turville Studios open the first Sunday of every month 11am-4pm. Angela Fois turvillestudios@aol.com
www.turvillestudios.co.uk

Reformer and Matwork: Pilates Studio, Private and semi-private sessions available, weekdays.
Lauren Owen www.pilat-ease.co.uk

TURVILLE NORTHEND

Village Hall Bookings:
David & Susan Faragher 01491 638960 or 07563 903678, davidfaragher@fastmail.fm
smfaragher@fastmail.fm

Yoga: Tuesdays 7pm, Esther 07792 943601, hello@estherabreyyoga.com

Body Control Pilates Classes: : Village Hall, Mondays, 12noon. Lauren Owen
www.pilat-ease.co.uk

Parish Council Contacts

Hambleden: Parish Clerk Lorna Coldwell 01494 881483, clerk@hambleden.org.uk, www.hambleden.org.uk

Medmenham: Parish Clerk Carole Burslem 01494 449215, mpc.clerk@gmail.com

Turville: Parish Clerk Lorna Coldwell, 01494 881483, turvilleparishcouncil@gmail.com, www.turvilleparishcouncil.org.uk

Fawley: Clerk to Fawley Parish Meeting Ross McDonald, 07769 971252
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