

THE Rabbiter



Issue 328
May 2026

The Community Magazine for Kempshott Rise, Hatch Warren, Beggarwood and Kempshott Park



All the regular features plus

- **LOCAL ELECTIONS**
- **DELIVERY MANAGER**
- **CLIDDESSEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

and much more

FROM THE EDITOR

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EDITORIAL

In any community, a comparatively small group helps to build its spirit and identity. Would you like to be part of ours?

'The Rabbiter' depends on volunteer effort and, when the time comes for key players to stand down, we anxiously look for new blood to keep up the good work. This is one of those times.

Iain Crawford is looking to stand down as DELIVERY MANAGER after years of service, for which we thank him. Details of the role are on Page 7.

We also have need of DISTRIBUTORS in six areas. Details are on Page 19. Volunteering to help 'The Rabbiter' will not mean you writing a blank cheque on your leisure time, but it will help to maintain this important part of our community life. A large team, each doing a little, is much better than a small one!

Editor



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LOCAL ELECTIONS

Elections to the County Council and Borough Council will take place on 7th May. You can find details of the candidates on the Borough Council's website at <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/county-borough-parish-elections>.


If you are registered to vote, you should have received a polling card: if you haven't you can still vote by identifying yourself at the polling station.

Please note that under the terms of the Elections Act 2022, it is now necessary to show photographic proof of identity when voting. Commonly used proofs are passports, driving licences, Identity (PASS) cards and bus passes, but there are others. A full list of the acceptable proofs is available on the Borough Council website at <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/voter-id>



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CLIDDESSEN PRIMARY SCHOOL ISSUES CALL FOR MEMORIES TO MARK 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Cliddesden Primary School is proud to announce it will be celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2026. To honour this landmark milestone, the school is launching a community-wide appeal for past pupils and staff to share their stories, photographs, and memories of life at the school over the decades.

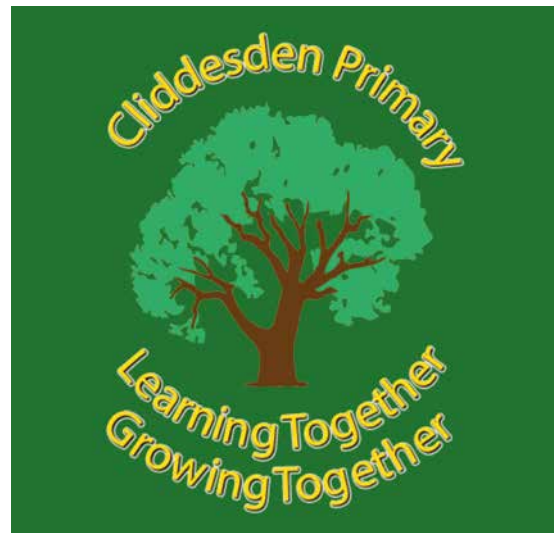
First opened in 1876 to serve the local village, the "school on top of the hill" has been a cornerstone of the Cliddesden community for a century and a half. From the days of Victorian slates to modern digital classrooms, the school has seen thousands of children pass through its doors.

"We are incredibly proud of our long history and the role we play in the lives of local families," said Mrs Larissa James, Interim Headteacher at Cliddesden Primary School. "As we prepare for our 150th celebrations, we want to hear from those who were there—whether you attended in the 1950s or the 1990s. We hope to compile these memories to show our current pupils how school life has changed and stayed the same."

The school is particularly interested in:

- Old photographs of the building, playground, or class groups.
- Personal anecdotes about favourite teachers, school dinners, or playground games.
- Memorabilia such as old school reports, certificates, or uniforms.

Submissions will be used as part of a special anniversary exhibition and shared with current students to bring the school's rich history to life.



How to get involved:

Past pupils and staff can send their stories and scanned photos to adminoffice@cliddesden.hants.sch.uk or by post to the school address below. Please include your name and the years you attended, and what you are currently doing now, so that pupils can have an understanding of where their education can take them! Alternatively, scan this QR code:

Email: adminoffice@cliddesden.hants.sch.uk

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COUNCILLOR UPDATES

Stephen Reid

County Councillor: Basingstoke
South West 07976 310206
stephen.reid@hants.gov.uk

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM (LGR): The Government has announced its preferred solution for introducing unitary authorities, replacing Hampshire County Council and the Borough Council. In this area it has chosen the option of putting together the Basingstoke and Deane, Hart and Rushmoor areas. Next year's elections (May 2027) are therefore likely to be for a 'shadow' North Hampshire unitary authority which will take power in May 2028.

LGR IMPLICATIONS: There are many issues to be resolved by this time next year, not least how many Councillors there will be and the wards they will represent. Apparently some flexibility is being allowed in terms of how many voters each Councillor will represent: at the moment they have to be the same, plus or minus 10%. That is being widened to plus or minus 20%. After that will come the challenges of setting up departments that do not currently exist in the district Councils such as Adults' Social care, Children's Services and Public Health. It will be a busy time!

KEMPSHOTT LANE: I was disappointed with Thames Water when they published a letter giving vague details of their intended road works in Kempshott Lane – it raised more questions than it answered. I therefore attended a meeting on site with their contractors, Barhale, who were very co-operative. They told me that the work is to expand sewer capacity on the west of Basingstoke to cater for the many thousands of new homes being planned. They will be laying an additional pipe alongside the existing one, which is operating at near-full capacity. This is actually quicker than replacing the existing pipe. The work will be undertaken in sections as they work their way down Kempshott Lane. Sadly, the sewer pipes are located near the centre of the road, so a road closure and diversions will be needed. Barhale agreed that, if they can, they will go for single lane closures in some sections, but no promises on that.

PUBLIC MEETING: Barhale also agreed to hold a public meeting at St Mark's Church in Homesteads Road.

RESURFACING: I also invited the Leader of the County Council to view Kempshott Lane and stressed to him the need for the road to be resurfaced. It was in the programme three years ago, but these major sewer works caused it to be delayed.

BMX TRACK ISSUES: I have had meetings on site to look at the problems at the BMX track in Down Grange Park. The Borough Council made changes to the track and, in the space of a two weeks, there were three serious accidents. I have called for the changes to be reviewed.

EMERGENCY ACCESS: The problems at the BMX track were made worse when the NHS Incident Unit and ambulances found that they couldn't get to the track. The gate from Homesteads Road was locked and the newly constructed road was not wide to take their larger vehicles.

OLD DOWN: Having called for it for many years, I am delighted that Old Down is to be granted Local Nature Reserve protection. I was pleased to join some of the volunteers in March, planting native wildflowers to strengthen the varieties that can be found there.

DIGESTATE SPREADING: There was more Digestate spreading from the Anaerobic Digester in April, with some noticeable odours across Hatch Warren and Beggarwood.

REPTILE SURVEY: You may see metal plates on the ground in Beggarwood Park and Old Down at the moment. My understanding is that they are there to attract reptiles, which will then be counted as part of a survey.

CAR MEETS: I took the opportunity to speak with our local beat team at the Community Lunch about loud cars and motorcycles racing on our roads again, now that the better weather is here. I was assured that the Police are constantly seeking advance intelligence of car meets so that they can take action. The speed limit is to be reduced to 40mph from the Hounsome Fields roundabout to the Hatch Warren roundabout near Sainsbury's.

ROAD REPAIRS: I am pleased to see that the 'blockwork' sections of Woodbury Road, near to the chicane, have been improved. The road had sunk, making for a dangerous ride, especially for two-wheeled vehicles.

A30 ROAD WORKS: There will be lane closures to allow the installation of a signalised pedestrian crossing just north of the Hounsome Fields roundabout. The work is scheduled to start on 18th May and complete in October.

CLIDDESSEN LANE CLOSURE: The stretch of Cliddesden Lane that goes past the Portsmouth Arms is scheduled to be closed from 1st June for a week, to enable road works to take place.

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP: I continue to attend the meetings of our PPG with the surgeries' management team. The PPG is publicising the importance of social prescribing. This is where people are connected to activities that can improve their health and well-being in ways that go beyond medication. One example is the Forever Singing Memory Choir.

CLIDDESSEN LANE: A road traffic accident just beyond the junction with Danebury Road has severely damaged the traffic calming 'build out'. The demolished bollards have been replaced with temporary signs. Until it is repaired, it is worth exercising greater caution.

BLOG: I post about these issues, and others, on my blog at ReidAboutBasingstoke.co.uk

Best wishes - Stephen



Stacy Hart

Borough Councillor.

Email casework: cllrstacy.hart@basingstoke.gov.uk

Facebook, BlueSky & Insta: @allinpartyUK, TikTok: @all_in_party

Monthly resident e-newsletter: www.allinparty.org.uk

Dear Hatch Warren and Beggarwood residents – I hope you had a lovely Easter!

CAMROSE, GILLIES, HACKWOOD AND BEGGARWOOD

SURGERIES: I know many of you are expressing concerns around appointment availability again, which I am monitoring as part of the CGHB Patient Participation Group. There was a change in October last year in which NHS England now requires all practices to keep online request forms open all day, which has led to a huge rise in appointment demand, with over seven million requests a month across England. This has driven a capacity issue because there has unfortunately not been a commensurate increase in funding and staffing. There are some positives to the change – the 8am phone rush is now no longer needed – but the PPG is aware

of these concerns, raising them regularly with practice staff and having ongoing conversations with wider health leaders. You can read more on the PPG newsletter on cghppg.weebly.com/news.

OLD DOWN WILDLIFE GROUP AGM: As I outlined last month, the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) administration has announced that Old Down has been put to the top of the list for Local Nature Reserve status. I was delighted to attend the ODWG AGM where we heard more from Council Officers about how this process will unfold, as well as hearing about the brilliant work the wildlife group have done over the past year and see a beautiful presentation on locally-spotted butterflies. My congratulations to the ODWG on a brilliant year's work – 712 volunteer hours were logged in 2025, 417 of which were work parties helping to maintain the site!

CARER CAFE: The new monthly Carer Café initiative will run its pilot session on Sun 26th April from 10am to 12pm at Beggarwood Café, for any person doing unpaid care to come along for a brew and a breather in a safe and welcoming space. The goal is that this will become a monthly event to provide a social outlet with carer peers to find community and mutual support with other residents doing this vital and often unrecognised work. If you have questions ahead of the session, please do contact me.

VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION: I went to the town centre walks and an event in Festival Place held by Basingstoke Police as part of their commitment to tackling violence against women and girls. Uniformed and non-uniformed officers met local people and students from both QMC and BCOT, and we walked into town to discuss what we can do to make our streets safer. I also met the founder of Ignite Your Power CIC to discuss similar issues: IYP is a brilliant organisation who run all kinds of self-defence, protection and empowerment projects locally.

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION AT BDBC: As part of ongoing behind-the-scenes work I'm doing to increase accessibility and engagement for local people with the Council, I met with the Service Director who organises Officer and Councillor training. I went through the ways I think Council paperwork could be vastly easier to understand – after all, this is your taxpayer money being spent and meeting reports are too often written in bureaucra-speak that laypeople (including me!) cannot easily understand. We also talked about Councillor training and making it easier for those from non-traditional backgrounds to stand for office, to increase Councillor diversity and representation of all communities.

As a follow on to this, I was asked to meet with South East Employers who provide this sort of training for Council employees in Local Authorities across the area to give feedback. This feedback session became a recording which will be used in training across the South East, hopefully assisting more Authorities to become more accessible to all.

OTHER EVENTS: The regular Listen Up music festival run across town centre venues by BDBC was another fab free day of local artists – look out for the next one in September.

I visited the Island View residential community to hold my bi-annual chat about any issues residents have and received my usual warm welcome with a cuppa and biscuit along with their list of queries!

COUNCIL NEWS: At the Resident Services Committee meeting on 18th March, we heard a great report on the drafting of BDBC's new Anti-Poverty Strategy. Given the current climate, as more and more of us are finding it difficult to make ends meet, BDBC

has decided this is a necessary document and is currently doing engagement work with stakeholder partners and anyone with lived experience who wishes to contribute. I know, of course, it's a very difficult thing to discuss and so trained community researchers are doing this work. If you have thoughts or experience to offer and would like to be put in touch to contribute, I can send you some direct contact details.

Additionally, we heard about the new Best Start For Life family hubs being rolled out by the Government – Basingstoke will be included in the next round of these which are due to open by March 2027. Info is currently limited but these sound very similar to the Sure Start Centres closed by a previous Government, and Hampshire County Council has indicated it will work with partners, including BDBC, to identify the best location here. I also fed back some thoughts and ideas for the strategy around better employment policies on health matters and long-term-sickness policy.

Lastly, we heard about the new policy on Housing Standards and Civil Penalties, which is to keep BDBC in line with the new Renters' Rights Act - it looks like the team are well prepped to enforce this new legislation.

CANVASSING AND COUNCILLOR SURGERY: As I write this mid-April we've just finished one canvassing circuit of the ward, having knocked every door in Hatch Warren & Beggarwood over the last year. For the data-curious among you: we can call on about 80-100 doors per person over a six-hour day, and only between 20-30% people answer the door. With around 4,320 homes in the ward, you can see why it takes about twelve to fifteen months to do a single round! Which is why I also schedule 'Ask Me Anything' Councillor Surgeries for those that miss us when we call or have issues in between. The next one will be on Monday 8th June at the Holly Blue pub, and I hope to see some of you there.

Here's hoping your May is marvellous and your bank holidays sunny!

Thanks always – Stacy.

CAN YOU HELP?



The Rabbiter is looking for a new **DELIVERY MANAGER** by the end of the year – but we would like a period of 'parallel working' if that is possible.

The job involves maintaining a list of deliverers, letting the printers know where volunteers are needed if someone gives up, taking delivery of boxes on the last Thursday of each month and distributing them to the volunteer deliverers with the help of the another volunteer. If a deliverer is away or has given up, there is a need to deliver those either with another volunteer or themselves!

The current delivery manager, **Iain Crawford**, is stepping down after many years of holding this important role and we are indebted to him for his service.

If you can help, please contact Stephen Reid on 07976 310206 or sreid17786@aol.com

Camrose, Gillies, Hackwood and Beggarwood Patient News

Your Have Say Patient Participation Group

April 2026

- Update on Appointments
- Health & screen time for under 5s
- New Ehlers Danlos syndrome/ joint hypermobility syndrome support group
- Free theme park tickets
- Strong women, long lives

Access to Appointments – What’s Really Going On

Many patients are finding it harder to get the appointment they want. We understand these concerns and want to explain what’s happening. Since October 2025, NHS England has required GP practices to keep online request forms open all day. This has led to a major rise in demand—over 7 million requests per month across England.

The key issue is capacity. While access points have increased, staffing and funding have not kept pace. GP practices receive around £160–£170 per patient per year to cover all core services, limiting how quickly additional clinicians can be recruited. This creates a difficult balance. Funding is linked to patient numbers, so increasing registrations can help employ more staff—but also increases demand.

National picture:

- 74% of practices report increased workload
- Over half say patient care has been affected
- Many have reduced face-to-face appointments
- Routine appointment waits remain long

Locally, GP teams are handling far more requests than before. Every online form

still requires review, triage, and often follow-up. In simple terms, more doors have opened—but the number of clinicians hasn’t increased at the same rate.

There are positives—such as avoiding the 8am phone rush—but this hasn’t yet improved waiting times for less urgent care.

Health & Screen Time for Under 5s – New UK guidance (March 2026)

Under 2s: avoid screens except shared interaction

- Ages 2–5: limit to around 1 hour per day
- Choose slow-paced, simple content
- Avoid fast, overstimulating videos

Keep mealtimes and bedrooms screen-free, and encourage reading, play, and conversation instead. Children learn from adults, so reducing your own screen use also helps.

Screens should not replace sleep, activity, or family time. More advice: <https://beststartinlife.gov.uk>

Support Group Ehlers Danlos & Hypermobility

Spotlight UK is launching a support group for children and families affected by:

- Ehlers Danlos Syndrome (EDS)
- Joint Hypermobility Syndrome (JHS)

The group offers advice, peer support, and resources. Referrals: louisa@spotlightuk.org

Free Theme Park Tickets

Spotlight UK is again offering free tickets to Merlin theme parks through Scarlett’s Smiles programme.

Who can apply?

Children aged 2–18 who:

- Have a serious illness or disability
- Are in foster care or recently adopted
- Are young carers
- Have experienced bereavement or domestic abuse

Families who haven’t received tickets before are eligible. Nominate a family using the form online <https://forms.gle/vFMngHx3s9PBeTij9>

Strong Women, Long Lives

New research highlights the importance of muscle strength in women’s health and longevity.

Key findings:

Stronger grip strength linked to ~30% lower risk of death

- Faster chair-stand ability linked to similar reductions
- Results independent of activity levels or body size

The study followed over 5,000 women aged 63–99 for around 8 years.

What this means:

- Strength matters as much as general fitness
- Aim for strength training at least twice weekly
- Simple measures (like standing from a chair) are strong indicators of health

Maintaining muscle strength supports independence, mobility, and long-term wellbeing. Local exercise options on our website at www.cghppg.weebly.com/exercise-for-health

The in depth version of this news is online at www.cghppg.weebly.com and there is also a ‘Self Help A-Z’ of Health and Wellbeing information, fast track treatment options, support groups and local contacts. Citizens Advice 0808 278 7829 can access the A-Z if you cannot use the internet. Membership of the PPG is open to all patients of the practice. If you are interested, find out more or apply at www.cghppg.weebly.com/join-the-ppg. Email: cghb.surgeryppg@btinternet.com.

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Late spring, and bumblebees are now very busy buzzing about on Old Down. Sadly, the bumblebee is struggling to survive countrywide and also, despite the plethora of wildflowers rich in nectar, this includes Old Down. Bumblebees are negatively affected by paved gardens, modern

practices in agriculture and gardens and of course our changing climate. There are 24 bumblebee species found in the UK (over 250 different types of bees). Bumblebees are hairy and this gives them insulation and the ability to cope with cold mornings. They pollinate many crops and flowers and without this 'service' many flowers and ecosystems which depend on them could decline dramatically. We need bumblebees. Therefore, please think about the flowers you have in your garden – although very pretty, many ornamental bedding plants produce very little pollen or nectar so are of no use to bumblebees.

In early spring the queen bumblebee emerges from hibernation. She searches out nectar-rich flowers and looks for a suitable site for her nest to rear her eggs. The first batch of eggs develop into sterile female workers. Towards the end of summer the

queen produces male offspring along with queens which leave the nest to find a mate. The nest then dies off naturally. It is the new fertilised queens that will hibernate in the ground over winter.

Just some of the bumblebee species found on Old Down are: *Buff Tailed, White Tailed, Red Tailed, Early and Common Carder* (the latter not having the typical bee markings of black and yellow stripes).

Work Parties: We meet outside Old Down Hall every Thursday 10-12noon (but not in the rain!). Please come along and join us – doesn't have to be every week. Check our website and Facebook for further information and/or contact us by email.

Website: Old Down Wildlife Group
Facebook: Old Down Wildlife Group
Email: old.down.wildlife@gmail.com



White tailed



Red tailed



Common Carder

HATCH WARREN WI

Bystanders can be lifesavers.

One of the WI campaigns calls on members to work together to increase public confidence and training in the delivery of CPR and to work with local organisations to help improve access to defibrillators in their communities.

Our group met this challenge in our April meeting when we invited St John Ambulance to demonstrate how it is done.

We learnt that people would be uncomfortable using a defibrillator, particularly on a woman, as its pads must be placed on bare skin in the chest area. This requires the removal of a woman's bra.

We were also informed about the 'Good Samaritan Law' which offers protection to bystanders who act in good faith to provide reasonable help to an injured or ill person. May 7th is our AGM.

You can find more information about us from our website

<https://hampshire.thewi.org.uk/find-wi/hatch-warren/about-hatch-warren-wi>



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Quiche Wednesday
Community Meal Deal
12-2pm

Weekly Thursday
Beggarwood Babies group
11.30-12.30

Friday
Friendship Friday
Chatty cafe
10.30-11.30

Wednesday 6th May
BVA Wellbeing Walk
Meet at 11am Outside the Café
Fun, free, and supportive walks led by trained volunteers

Community Lunch - 12.15-1.15
Join us and the community for a great value lunch

Friday 8th May
Card and a Cuppa - 10-1pm

Wednesday 20th May
Beggarwood Bookworms Evening Group discuss *The Names* by Florence Knapp 7.30 - 9pm

Friday 22nd May
Beggarwood Bookworms daytime group 11.30-12.30

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To book or find out more:
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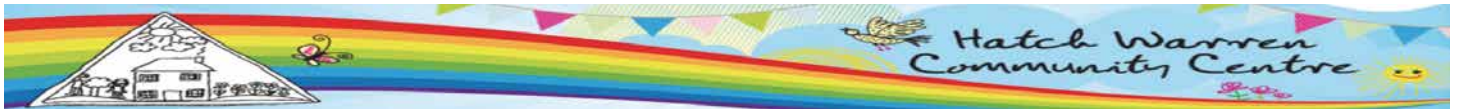
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We are a registered charity run by volunteers - working to make Hatch Warren and Beggarwood a great place to live!



Café in the Park
Beggarwood Community Centre
Eroadmere Road, Basingstoke, Hants. RG22 4AQ

NOTICE OF AGM

Hatch Warren & Beggarwood Community Association (HWBCA)

Date & Time: Wednesday, 3rd June | 7:00 PM
Venue: Beggarwood Community Centre
Refreshments: From 6:30 PM

Come and Support Your Community Association!

You are warmly invited to attend the **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** of HWBCA.

Our charity exists to run and manage the Hatch Warren & Beggarwood Community Centres, providing welcoming community spaces to:

- Reduce isolation
- Promote wellbeing
- Create a sense of belonging for people of all ages and backgrounds
- Improve the lives of residents in RG22 and RG23

At the AGM, we will share:

- Our achievements from the past year
- Plans for the future of our community centres
- How you can support and get involved

Reserve Your Free Place with this QR code



Your Attendance Matters

To hold the AGM, we need at least **25 members** present to achieve quorum and vote. **Please don't assume someone else will attend – we need YOU** to help keep our community association running.

Membership

- £10 per family per year
- Your membership helps support the development of community services and the continued running of **two vital community facilities** for local residents.



AGM
Annual General Meeting

Registered Charity Number 1161117
find us on | **facebook**
Hatch Warren Community Centre

Hatch Warren Community Centre
Long Cross, Linn, Hatch Warren, Basingstoke, RG22 4XJ
Tel: 01256 811262 Web: www.hatchwarren.org
Email: office@hatchwarren.org Follow us on Twitter @hatchwarren

Prosecco, Wine, Ale & Cider too!

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HATCH WARREN COMMUNITY CENTRE

LAGER FESTIVAL

SATURDAY 6TH JUNE 7-11PM

Tickets £7.50
www.hatchwarren.org
£4 for members with a valid membership 01256 811262

Tickets available via the QR code

This event is supported by **SCOTT MORLAND RESIDENTIAL exp**

This event is being held as a fundraising event for HWBCA Charity #1161117
Tickets non-refundable

We are looking for volunteers to help with our upcoming events, please email office@hatchwarren.org for further information.

FREE ENTRY FAMILY FUN DAY

SUMMER FESTIVAL

SATURDAY 11th JULY

HATCH WARREN COMMUNITY CENTRE FIELDS - 12 to 4PM

FREE PARKING ON SITE - INSIDE & OUTSIDE SEATING

ST KITTS VETERINARY PRACTICE FUN DOG SHOW
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SUPERB 'BOUNCE4FUN' EVENT INFLATABLES
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THURSDAY 17th September at 7.30PM
Novello Theatre, LONDON

Good Stall seats
Tickets cost £80 per person
(INCLUDES RETURN COACH)

Payment plans are available, please ask for more information when booking

Coach will depart at 4pm from our car park
This trip is open to all members of the public
Tickets are non refundable

To book your place email OFFICE@HATCHWARREN.ORG or call 01256 811262

38 seats must be sold for trip to go ahead
This event is being held as a fundraising event for Hatch Warren & Beggarwood Community Association Charity No 1161117

This event is supported by **SCOTT MORLAND RESIDENTIAL exp**



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the Warren

FREE ENTRY

10-13 year olds

THE WARDEN

EVERY FRIDAY

6-7:45 PM

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Find us on Facebook to book a space!

HATCH WARREN COMMUNITY CENTRE
 LONG CROSS LN, BASINGSTOKE RG22 4XF

CHARITY NUMBER: 1161117
 email: Warren@hatchwarren.org

Monday night is Link2 Club Night

6pm-8.15pm



WE HAVE SUCH FUN!
 Manager - Dilys Buchan 07939532667

LINK2, supported by Hatch Warren & Beggarwood Community Association, is a family orientated group for young adults (16-30) who may need a little support. LINK2 is run by experienced staff who aim to develop a relationship with all members with learning disabilities and their families to get the best outcomes for their future. We support them on a path to growing independence, as they move into adult life.

Improve general Life skills and finding their full potential through sports opportunities

Provide experiences to promote Resilience and self esteem

Boost confidence and support for independent travel

Maintain and develop our access to work programme



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BLACK BROADCASTING – THE SECRET WEAPON OF WWII

Members of the Probus Club of Basingstoke were treated to a fascinating slice of little known wartime history when speaker Guy Caplin explored the covert world of “black broadcasting” during the Second World War.



Probus President Stephen Thair with Guy Caplin

Most people recognise the chilling call sign “Germany calling, Germany calling,” made infamous by William Joyce—better known as Lord Haw-Haw—who broadcast Nazi propaganda in English from Germany. Joseph Goebbels,

one of the most senior figures in the Nazi Party, understood the power of radio, and his propaganda machine was relentless. In response, Winston Churchill authorised Britain to develop its own clandestine broadcasting operation.

The BBC already produced German language programmes but refused to engage in subversive work. As a result, a secret unit was formed under the leadership of Dennis Sefton Delmer. Born in Berlin to an Australian professor, Delmer was fluent in German and had worked as the Daily Express newspaper’s foreign correspondent. His close contact with rising Nazi figures—including a 1931 interview with Hitler—made him simultaneously suspected by the Germans of being a British spy and by the British of being a German one.



Sefton Delmer broadcasting to Germany

Delmer’s acquaintance with Commander Ian Fleming, then deputy head of Naval Intelligence and later creator of James Bond, likely helped secure his role. Delmer’s mission was to broadcast in German, blending accurate news with carefully crafted misinformation designed to sow doubt and anxiety within the German military.

A Network of Deception

The first of several covert radio stations was established at Wavendon Towers near Bletchley Park. These stations mimicked genuine German broadcasters with remarkable skill, using up-to-the-minute news, recordings of Hitler’s speeches, and snippets of local detail supplied by agents to create an air of authenticity.

At Fleming’s request, a dedicated station was created to target the German navy and Uboat crews operating in the North Atlantic. Styled after prewar commercial stations like Radio Luxembourg, it played popular German songs, British orchestras performing German music, and American dance band tracks—much to the irritation of German authorities but to the delight of listeners. Interspersed among the entertainment were subtle pieces of misinformation.

One of the British operation’s greatest advantages was speed. German broadcasts were slowed by layers of internal checks, while British stations could leap ahead, airing news before the enemy could. Agents even supplied local football results, and a popular presenter known as “Vicki” took music requests, further enhancing the illusion of legitimacy.

Influencing the Axis

Fleming also oversaw the creation of Radio Livorno, an English-run but Italian-language station. Its propaganda proved so persuasive that, fearing the British advance through southern Italy, the Italian navy surrendered its fleet to the British in Malta.

Another major asset was the Aspidistra transmitter at Crowborough in Sussex. Named after the Gracie Fields song, it was the most powerful medium-wave transmitter in the world at 500 kW. Its ability to switch frequencies instantly allowed it to replace German stations knocked off the air, convincing listeners they were still tuned to their local broadcaster.

Unusual Tactics

The British also experimented with more unconventional methods. The RAF dropped boxes containing homing pigeons and questionnaires, encouraging civilians to send back information—though many pigeons, sadly, ended up as food during shortages.

A daily newspaper summarising the previous day’s broadcasts was also printed and dropped over Germany, reinforcing the disinformation campaign and gradually eroding public confidence.

After the War

Following Germany’s defeat, Sefton Delmer was sent to help rebuild the German newspaper industry. With little support, he eventually returned to the Daily Express. In recognition of his wartime service, he was awarded the OBE in 1945, being described as a section head in the Foreign Office.

For more information about the Probus Club of Basingstoke, visit www.probusbasingstoke.club or contact their secretary on 07814 937202 for an informal chat.



British printed German language newspaper



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Wednesday 20th May

The Names
Florence Knapp



Wednesday 24th June

When the Cranes Fly South
Lisa Ridzen

7.30-9.pm

Tickets £3.00
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Café in the Park

LADIES PROBUS – THE ELEGANT AVIAN SCAVENGER

If it wasn't for the fact that this area is so used to seeing this giant bird in our skies these days, the title 'Return of the Red Kite' might reference some miscreant in a spy service; however it was the title of the talk given to the Basingstoke Ladies Probus Club by Keith Bretton – writer, lecturer and occasional broadcaster and an absolute authority on the life and times of the Red Kite.

In medieval times the bird was very common over London but by 1875-1900 it was extinct in many countries other than Wales and the north of Scotland. Its proliferation in Hampshire has been relatively recent but dramatic, given that in 1990 there were just 5, but by 2020 this had increased to 4,031 and by 2025 a staggering 6,500.

This magnificently graceful bird of prey is unmistakable with its reddish-brown body, angled wings and deeply forked tail and is said to symbolise freedom and resurrection, while also representing successful ecological conservation and resilience. Notwithstanding its 1.5m wingspan it is remarkably light at just 1-1.5kg, the female - who can breed from 2yrs.old – being heavier than the male. Both are highly manoeuvrable and both can live up to 29 years of age if, as sadly happens, they have not been poisoned or shot.

Despite negative and inaccurate publicity, the kite is physically incapable of lifting heavy prey, including lambs or small children as has been suggested, as they cannot lift much more than a small rabbit or squirrel. What they are proficient in however is removing small items of clothing from a washing line with which to furnish the nest to add to the more commonly used material of sheep's wool. And that nest might have been previously the dwelling of another, as the kite will steal the nest of, for example, the crow or sparrowhawk. For food they will swoop down to grab food from both ground and water and have smartly learnt to follow tractors during harvesting, which can reap much upturned sustenance.

Keith is heavily involved in bird monitoring in Hampshire, where he is Chair of the Hampshire Ornithological Society. He has been a Council Member of both the RSPB and British Trust for Ornithology. If interested to know more about BLPC membership and the upcoming programme, contact: The Admin Secretary – reverendjane@hotmail.co.uk – 07754 296994





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part of the Parish of Basingstoke Down

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Parish Office- 01256 840502
find us on Facebook and Instagram!



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65s, under 16s and f/t students
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Thu 14 May, 7.30pm, The Anvil,
Tickets: £35, £30, £25

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Tickets: £37.50. Under 16s £26

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Sat 30 May, 7.30pm, The Anvil,
Tickets: £49, £44, £34
Suitable for: ages 10 and over

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Sun 31 May, 12.30pm, The
Haymarket, Tickets: £21. Under
16s £20



Sounds of Summer

A concert by the Basingstoke Male Voice Choir

7:30 pm on Saturday 6th June

All Saints Church, Southern Rd, RG21 3EA



Doors open at 7:00 pm

Tickets £12:00 from Ticket Source:
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more



Saturday July 18th 2026 at 7pm

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Basingstoke Choral Society

Conductor Jordan Theis

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<https://www.basingstoke-choral.org.uk/summer26>



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SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

One of the sure signs of spring is hearing the dawn chorus in the morning. And I wonder if you felt that it seemed a long time for Spring to arrive this year. Winter seemed to be hanging around forever.

Then all of a sudden, the crocuses, snowdrops and daffodils arrive.

The clocks go back, we have longer days, lighter evenings and trees burst forth with life and burgeoning leaves. The early blossom looks like confetti or a light snow fall.

The sound of the dawn chorus made me think of how joyful birds sound each morning, singing it seems without any care or worry.

Worry, anxiety and stress seem to have become our constant companions. Issues that are taking place on our world stage can be incredibly worrying.

We see the result of war and conflict, the destruction of livelihoods, the loss of democracy and the erosion of human rights. These feel overwhelming as they are unveiled through our TV screens or via social media. We may have opinions about those who are in leadership but have absolutely no power to change it ourselves. And events taking place in far-away places impact us globally, nationally and personally.

Over recent years, we have been able to discuss anxiety, stress and mental health issues more openly. We can name our worries and try to understand our emotions and responses to stress. Worry is a deeply human emotion and it's a natural reaction to want to protect ourselves and those we care about.

Sometimes we may realise the impact of our worries and seek support from others. But sometimes we can't see it, as it clouds our judgement and interferes with any joy in the present moment.

Perhaps, one of the ancient books of the Bible, the Song of Songs can help us a little with a sense of perspective.

See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone.

Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land (2:11-12)

This isn't an instruction to "just get on with it" and "feel better already" but to lift our heads up and see everything that life has on offer - perhaps changing our perspective by just spending a moment in calmness and reflection.

We find in the New Testament, that Jesus also took time and space away from people – even from his closest friends.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed (Mark 1:35)

I have often found that a walk outside, even on one of those grey, wintery days gives me an opportunity to take a breath and gain a sense of perspective. And as a Christian, I find that prayer helps too. Perhaps if you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed, a moment of quiet contemplation may help you too?

Kim Robins

Associate Minister

IT WAS 30 YEARS AGO TODAY

There was a five month break in the publication of the Rabbiter in 1994, but it reappeared in its familiar format - four green pages - with the headline 'We're Back!' in November, under the supervision of a new Editor, Phil Thomas.

The local Police had written that reported crime was down 20% from the same period in 1993, with no burglaries of dwellings and two thefts of motor vehicles. Nevertheless, they were asking for public vigilance and would be welcoming the Neighbourhood Watch bus into the Sainsbury's car park. Today neighbourhood watch groups still exist, using social media and the use of video doorbells has significantly increased.

The Local Government Commission had recommended new unitary authorities based on Southampton, Portsmouth and the New Forest. The first two happened but the New Forest idea did not find favour with the government of the day. Today, Local Government Reorganisation is on the agenda again, with Unitary Authorities being proposed across the whole county including one for North Hampshire.

The Confederation of Hatch Warren Residents' Groups wrote a detailed article on its intention to comment on the Borough's emerging local plan. It had five areas of concern: the planned 800 homes in Beggarwood, a planned Motorway Service Station (which never happened), a local centre and sports barn at the top of Woodbury Road (which never happened), a new Household Waste Centre (which never happened) and a proposed Basingstoke 'Outer Ring Road' which would have affected Hatch Warren (but never happened). This shows how infrastructure ideas are much less likely to be delivered than new homes!

Today there are proposals for a new Motorway Service Station at junction 6, and calls for a western by-pass to cater for the thousands of new homes being planned on the west of Basingstoke. Beggarwood Park has outdoors fitness equipment.

Also reported was that planning permission was being sought for a pub with 84 parking spaces on the site of the old Hatch Warren Farm. This would be the Portsmouth Arms, which quickly became an important and welcome part of our community life. Today there are plans to build flats on part of the car park.

Stephen Reid

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DAVE'S NATURE SPOT

May is here and nature is in full swing. So much is happening it is hard to keep up with the pace.

Wildflowers are racing to establish their own little space, butterflies and other insects are in abundance and most of our feathered friends are either sitting on eggs or feeding young and some young may have already fledged.

Beggarwood and Old Down, our local wildlife havens, are beginning to look their best. *Small Blues* (the UK's smallest butterfly species) will be starting to show.

Old Down is recognised by Butterfly Conservation as being one of the prime sites in Hampshire for this scarce species. The main reason for Old Down being a prime site is the prolific presence of Kidney Vetch which is the sole foodplant of the *Small Blue* larva.

Recent surveys by Old Down Wildlife Group have recorded a total of 33 butterfly species on Old Down. When you consider that there are only 59 butterfly species in the UK with 44 of those recorded in Hampshire, the fact that we have over 50% locally is quite special.

Wildflowers to look out for locally in May are the orchid species which can be seen on both Beggarwood and Old Down. The orchid species found on both sites are *Common Spotted*, *White Helleborine*, *Pyramidal*, *Bee* and *Fragrant* which can all be seen a little later in June. Beggarwood has the *Broad-Leaved Helleborine* later in the year. *Ox-Eye Daisies* will be starting to show and many other wildflowers will be adding their rich colour to the area.

With the wildflowers come the insects, such as bees all busy collecting pollen and stocking their various homes. We have over 260 bee species in the UK, 24 of which are the Bumble Bee species. Most bee species are important pollinators as are hoverflies and moths and even some wasps.

The *Cockchafer Beetles* (May-bugs) are starting to emerge and take to the air in their lazy lumbered flight and even more haphazard landings often tumbling over and ending up upside down.

If you are walking by a river in May you might be lucky enough to encounter the *Mayfly* hatch. Their hatching is a truly a spectacular event with many thousands appearing at the same time. The *Mayfly* nymphs live in the river or waterway for 1 to 2 years. The adult insect emerges with non-functioning mouth parts and thus cannot eat and will only live a few hours, a day at most, giving it just enough time to mate then die.

This is when *Trout* are supposed to be easier to catch as they rise to the thousands of dying *Mayfly* landing on the water surface - it is known in the angling world as "Duffers Fortnight".

May is probably the best month to make the effort of getting out of bed before sunrise and venturing out to hear the wonderful dawn chorus. Half an hour either side of sunrise is the most productive time. Birds sing to let others know not to venture into their territory.

If you do not like the idea of early rising at this time of the year, new life is everywhere any time of day and May heralds the warm sunny days of summer. So get those walking shoes on and get out into the countryside and celebrate the wonder of "Nature".



Small Blue



May Bug (Cockchafer)



Kidney Vetch (small blue larval food plant)



Bee Orchid

ROTARY ROUNDUP

Our Fundraising Focus

HAMPSHIRE HOSPITALS CHARITY
at The Festival of Transport
CTG MONITORING MACHINES

We launched our fundraising focus for this Rotary year in January. This important project is also the heart of our fundraising at the Festival of Transport. Partnering with Hampshire Hospitals' Charity to buy one or more if possible, new **Cardio Tomography machines (CTG)** for the **Maternity department at Basingstoke Hospital**. They play a vital role in monitoring pregnant women and women in labour and the health of their unborn child. The current machines are outdated and can't be upgraded, so replacing them with modern, data-rich, fully updatable equipment will make a real difference. These state-of-the-art machines will help make childbirth safer for



local families. We will also continue to support other local and some international charities.

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LOCAL
HISTORY
SNIPPETS

OAK APPLE DAY

After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, May 29th was declared a national holiday. That day marked the entry of Charles II into London following his return from exile, and it was also his thirtieth birthday.

Oak Apple Day referred to Charles' escape from parliamentary forces following his defeat at the Battle of Worcester during the civil war. Legend had it that in order to avoid capture, he hid in an oak tree at Boscobel House in Shropshire. To celebrate the day, people were encouraged to wear oak apples – the wooden galls caused by wasps which are found on oak trees. Churches were decorated in oak branches and bells were rung. In Hampshire the day was also known as Shick Shack Day. Shick Shack is a local name for an oak gall.

Charles had many connections with Hampshire. He married his Queen, Catherine of Braganza, in Portsmouth. Meanwhile the story goes that he visited his favourite, Nell Gwynn, at Avington House near Alresford. In Winchester, Christopher Wren began the construction of what had been planned as a great palace to rival royal residences such as Versailles. What little remains is part of the Peninsula Barracks and military museums.

Nearby to Hatch Warren and Beggarwood, the Farleigh estate also claims links with Charles II. Robert Wallop, the owner, had taken the side of Parliament during the civil wars. With the restoration, Wallop was tried for treason and lost his lands and house. Shortly afterwards, the house burned down with rumours that the King had been responsible. A new house was built there during the next century..

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Hoursome Court and
Maslen Mews**
- 4. Whitgift Close**
- 5. Chatsworth Green**
- 6. Bronze Close**

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HATCH WARREN UNDER FIVES

We are now into the final full term at Hatch Warren Under Fives, and are enjoying many more sunny and dry days. We have recently had the excitement of finding out which schools our older children are going to... So this is the term when 'school readiness' begins for our older children.

Now that the weather is better; we are spending lots more time in the garden and will be looking for mini-beasts; we link this in with a life cycles topic. We have mini a mini-beast shed in the garden where we have identification posters. The children love hunting for snails, worms, beetles and even spiders and they use magnifying glasses, binoculars, clip boards and pencils.

Our older children are busy with 'school readiness' activities. We begin to introduce lots of independence skills to prepare the children for school, for example, can the children change into their PE kit by themselves? Can they independently wash their hands and open the food in their lunchbox? We also start to focus much more on numbers, health and self-care and communication and language. School readiness is described in the foundation stage as 'Children reaching a good level of development in the prime areas and literacy and mathematics'.

Some of the expected characteristics that should be displayed by a child to show school readiness;

- Independent in toileting
- Able to dress themselves
- Understands expected levels of behaviour
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Can take turns and share
- Can sit still for a short period
- Can separate from parents/carers
- Communication and language skills needed to communicate needs and listen to others
- Can actively learn and think creatively and critically

We have a few spaces remaining for our next academic year in September 2026. Why not book a visit to look around and meet the team? If you'd like to learn more, please contact us on 01256 322788, or email preschoolmail@aol.com.

We also manage another lovely preschool, Kempshott Under Fives, located a short distance away at St. Mark's Church in Kempshott.

Read more about our preschools at www.hatchwarrenunderfives.co.uk

DANDELIONS PRE-SCHOOL

It does not seem possible that we are halfway through the academic year already. We still have so many things to look forward to over the coming weeks.

We would like to say a huge thank you to Dashwood Manor for popping down to see us to share Easter Eggs with the children. They had so much fun searching the garden for eggs and meeting the bunnies. Recently our older children have found out which schools they will be going to in September. We will be continuing



to support the children in preparation for this transition. At Dandelions we have developed a bespoke six week school readiness programme which will include taking small key groups and focusing on independence, literacy and mathematics. As part of this we will be attending St

Mark's School and the year 5 students will be spending time reading the children's favourite stories to them. This will be such a wonderful opportunity for the children joining St Mark's to build relationships with their potential Buddies. To further enhance this, we provide school readiness packs to all of our families to build upon what we have learnt at Dandelions within the home environment.



It is planting season and we will be planting herbs and vegetables in the garden. Once our plants have grown, we will be encouraging the children to taste and smell them to enhance their senses. The children will be taking a sunflower seed home in a pot to grow. We are very excited to see whose grows the tallest! We will

be learning about the life cycle of plants and by how planting a seed and caring for it by giving it water and sunlight, will encourage it to grow.

Leading on from this we will be learning about the lifecycle of a Caterpillar and the four stage process from egg to larva to chrysalis and on to butterfly. We will have our very own eggs here so the children can follow the stages step by step. We have limited spaces available for September 2026 therefore if you are considering Dandelions for your child's early years, please contact us for a registration form or to arrange a visit on Tel No: 01256 818857 or alternatively email: info@dandelions-preschool.org.uk Our waiting lists for 2027/2028 are now open.

CUCKOO MEADOW PRE-SCHOOL

We certainly had a Spring in our step last term when we made some yummy crispy cakes, long legged chickens and cute pop up rabbits. We were even lucky enough to get a visit from the Easter bunny!

After a nice break with our families, we are excited for the Summer term for lots more opportunities to learn and play in the sunshine.



To find out more, please contact Jo or Fiona on 01256 398172

Georgia Hawken

Cuckoo Meadow Pre-School Secretary

CANDOVER VALLEY PRE-SCHOOL

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BEGGARWOOD Wildlife Group

Maintaining Beggarwood Park for the Benefit of
Wildlife and the Community

Our volunteers paid a second visit to Down Grange in late March to assist the Kempshott group with clearing and tidying fallen branches, bramble cutting and blackthorn popping. After a few hours, quite an area was covered.



Blackthorn popping in action.

Work Party Tuesday 7th April: A gloriously sunny morning greeting our volunteers as one group headed west towards a mass of brambles that were threatening to take over an area of grassland.

A splinter group broke off to head south and clear another area where the brambles were preventing wild flowers from breaking through, which would impact on both butterflies and bees. Several butterflies were spotted including a *Brimstone*, *Large White* and what may have been a *Common Blue*.



Brimstone Butterfly

Our second group headed to the south of the park to clear an area of dogwood, which, being as invasive as bramble, can also take over an area and prevent wild flowers from breaking through.

Our next work parties will be: -

Tue 5th May and Tue 2nd June

We typically meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 9am at the Cafe in the Park (Community Centre)

For more information or to let us know you plan to join us on a work party, please email us at contactus@beggarwoodwildlife.uk

Pets Corner

Send your photos to editor@therabbiter.biz



Kingsley – James



Luna – James



Freddo - Mini Lop – Courtney



Nellie - Mini Lop – Courtney



Oxley - Mini Lop – Courtney

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CHECK IF YOU CAN SAVE MONEY ON OIL, LPG, COAL OR WOOD TO HEAT YOUR HOME

If you use oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) or coal or wood to heat your home, check below to see if you can save money.

If you use oil

It's worth getting at least 3 quotes from UK and Ireland Fuel Distributors Association (UKIFDA) suppliers.

Before you order, check for extra fees or service charges. Order a few weeks in advance but make sure you have enough oil in the tank but don't let the oil level get too low as the system could get damaged and need expensive repairs. It might be cheaper to order a larger amount of oil, instead of several smaller orders.

You might be able to save on oil costs by joining an 'oil club'. This means you buy your heating oil at the same time with other people in the area.

If you use liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)

If you have a storage tank, you'll usually be tied into a 2-year contract. Ask your supplier when your contract ends. You might be able to find a better deal with another supplier. Most suppliers will let you keep your old tank. If they want to fit their own tank, they must pay for this – you can't be charged for the removal of the old tank.

If you use coal or wood

It's usually cheaper to buy your coal and wood in bulk. Look around for deals regularly. You might also want to look into using different types of coal or wood. Some might be more energy efficient than others, which could save you money.

If you use alternative fuels to keep your home warm, you might be able to get extra help if you can't afford to buy fuel. Please see more details on: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/help-with-bills-if-you-use-alternative-fuels/

Anyone in need of help can call the Advice Line free on 0808 2787829. For details of the weekly drop-in advice sessions across Basingstoke or general enquiries online, please go to: www.cabasingstoke.org.uk

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