# FRIETH VILLAGE SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

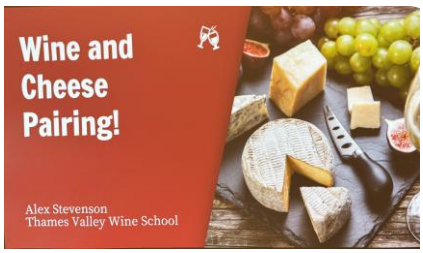
**May 2026**

## Welcome to our Early Summer edition!

From fine wines and luscious cheeses to litter picks and birdsong at dawn, village life is as lively as ever this season. In this edition our articles include looking back at a successful tasting evening, the annual plant sale, reporting on the community tidy-up, hearing what the birders got up to on the Dawn Chorus walk and, most importantly, highlighting an urgent appeal for volunteers - without more helping hands, the future of the Summer Fete is at risk!

## A brie-lliant evening at the Village Hall

For anyone who thought Frappato might be an ice-cream flavour, the FVS Wine and Cheese Tasting provided a swift and rather enjoyable correction. Under the expert guidance of Alex Stevenson from the Thames Valley Wine School, we were introduced to this light, fruity Sicilian wine, complete with rose petal aromas and a distinctly raspberry-sherbet personality albeit, sadly, not served in a cone.



Cheesy grin from Alex

But it was a lot more than Frappato we tasted. The evening took us on a globe-trotting tour via six wines (no passport required), with stops in Australia, Austria, France, Germany, New Zealand and Spain. Each was paired with a carefully chosen cheese, and the partnership of the two explored with gusto. Like the best partnerships, two seemed often better than either alone, but occasionally one stole the show while the other quietly wondered what it had done to deserve such company! We also learned that fewer than 10% of wines are designed for ageing, a fact that seemed entirely plausible given how enthusiastically the evening's selections were consumed.

The cheeses, sourced from the UK and France, were no less adventurous. With offerings from goat, sheep and cow, there was something for everyone, from the firm and wax encased (should we have raised threat levels when the Lancashire Bomb arrived?) to the gloriously soft. Indeed, could it have been that one cheese was approaching a rather Monty Pythonesque level of liquidity for those old enough to remember the cheese shop sketch?

The anticipation builds!

'Before'

As the night went on, favourites were declared, defended, and occasionally argued over with surprising intensity. Bottles were emptied, plates were thoroughly cleared of cheese, and any initial plans for restraint quietly dissolved somewhere around the third pairing.

By the end of the evening, the only thing left was the firm intention to "remember the names of those wines"; an ambition that, like several of the cheeses, likely proved a little soft around the edges

'After' There was little waste from the event ☺

Electronic copies of the newsletter are now available via the Frieth Village Society website: www.fvs.org.uk
We welcome all your feedback, thoughts and ideas for future issues.

**Please send all messages to our email address: newsletter@fvs.org.uk**

# Community Matters

## Sprucing up Frieth

### Bacon Butties, Bollards & Brilliant Volunteers

This March saw a wonderful display of community spirit as the Frieth Village Society (FVS) organised a series of village tidying activities across several Saturdays. The programme got off to a flying start with the ever-popular Spring Litter Pick. Armed with litter pickers, sturdy gloves and a generous helping of enthusiasm, volunteers gathered at the village hall before heading out along footpaths, roads and hedgerows to help restore our surroundings after the winter months. Fortified with welcome bacon butties, the team made light work of the task, and the results were plain to see throughout the village.

Work also continued in the churchyard, where efforts have been focused not simply on clearing, but on careful management to strike a balance between tidiness and preserving space for nature. Ivy, while attractive, had begun to take hold rather too enthusiastically, creeping into mortar and covering walls and gravestones. With patient effort, the "Ivy League" volunteers have continued to bring it back under control, revealing charming glimpses of the churchyard that had long been hidden. In the process, a number of gravestones have been uncovered once more, restoring a sense of history and connection. There is still plenty to be done, but the progress so far has been both encouraging and rewarding.

No litter will survive this crew!

The Ivy League in action

Spruced up – thank you to the graveyard shift

Elsewhere around the village, attention turned to the familiar white roadside posts (see inset top left). In what became fondly known as the work of the "Chain Gang," the chains linking the bollards were removed, cleaned, and in a number of cases repositioned or rehung. This careful maintenance has made a noticeable difference, contributing to the overall cared-for appearance of Frieth. Not to be overlooked, the village's road signs also received a well-deserved clean. A buff and polish has left them clearer and smarter to perform their silent duties.

A big thank you goes to everyone who gave their time and energy to these efforts. The Frieth Village Society and, indeed, all who live here, are most grateful. Your hard work helps keep Frieth looking its very best and is a great example of what can be achieved when people pitch in.

## Frieth Garden Walk

Following the great success of last year's event, plans are now well underway for the return of the Frieth Garden Walk, which will take place on **14th June from 10.30am to 3pm**. Visitors can look forward to exploring a delightful mix of gardens, including several new ones opening for the first time. It promises to be a thoroughly enjoyable day out, offering inspiration for keen gardeners and a pleasant stroll for those who simply enjoy the beauty of cared for outdoor spaces. As always, the event relies on the support and enthusiasm of the local community, so if you would be willing to open your garden as part of the route, contribute by baking cakes, or help out by manning the Village Hall during the day, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Anyone interested in getting involved is warmly encouraged to contact Sean, Penny, Suzanne or Nikki via the Frieth Village Society website or by email at farrelly3@btinternet.com

# Community Matters

## Hambleden Valley Garden Club Plant Sale

### Potty about Plants? And maybe cakes too!

The calm before the storm

Hosta-tively blooming

Sold!

Another year, another wonderfully successful Plant Sale for the Hambleden Valley Garden Club. Earlier concerns about the quantity of plants available were quickly dispensed with, as tables rapidly filled with a splendid variety of flowers, vegetables, herbs and garden favourites, generously donated by members and friends of the club.

The Hall also quickly filled as the sale opened; the gardeners of Frieth finding their way into every available space like a vigorous climber on a sunlit wall. Throughout the morning, they enthusiastically exchanged tips, advice and opinions, not all of them entirely consistent, though all offered with confidence and good intent. Visitors enjoyed tea, coffee and a tempting array of homemade cakes and muffins, a selection almost as broad as the amazing array of plants which covered every inch of the trestle tables.

Thanks to the generosity and support of everyone involved, the event raised valuable funds that will help the Garden Club continue to host its programme of guest speakers throughout the year, including helping to cover their travel expenses.

Our grateful thanks go to everyone who donated plants and refreshments, to all who came along and supported the sale with their purchases, and especially to the volunteers who helped make the day run so smoothly.

See you next year!

Cake it easy, you deserved it!

A helping hand or a dispute over ownership?

House plants for sale too

About to announce the sale ‘open’

Two seconds later…..

# Community Matters

## Remembering Christine Dawson

After several years of illness, Frieth has sadly lost one of its much-loved residents, Christine Dawson. Christine and her husband, John, moved to the village in 1997 following her retirement from a distinguished career in education, culminating in her role as Headteacher of Chalfont St Giles First School.

Christine as School Governor, 1998

Soon after arriving in Frieth, the late Tom Nixey, then Chair of Governors at Frieth School, recognised Christine's wealth of experience and invited her to join the governing body. She served as a Governor for several years, bringing wisdom, dedication and a deep commitment to education. Even in retirement, Christine continued supporting the work of Ofsted, assisting with school inspections across the country.

Christine also made a lasting contribution to village life through this very publication, serving for many years as Editor and, alongside John, publisher of the Frieth Newsletter. Her enthusiasm for the community extended far beyond the newsletter; she was an active committee member of both the Frieth Village Society and the Frieth Natural History Society and played a leading role in organising numerous village events, including garden parties, Jubilee celebrations and the village fete.

She will be remembered warmly as a true village person — kind, capable and blessed with a wonderful sense of humour. In later years, life dealt Christine a cruel hand, and during the final four years of her life she was cared for professionally in Henley, alongside the constant love and devotion of John.

The village owes Christine a great debt of thanks for all she contributed to our community. She will be greatly missed by many friends and neighbours. Our thoughts are with John, their three children and their families at this sad time. Her funeral will take place at Amersham Crematorium on Friday 29th May at 2.00pm. Donations in Christine's memory may be made to Battersea Dogs & Cats Home. Further details are available from Tomalin & Son, Henley.

## A Friendly and Satisfying Lunch

### How many soups did you try?

Thanks go out once again to all the wonderful "Super Soupers" who contributed such an impressive and delicious variety of homemade soups for the Friendly Lent Lunch on 21st March. The selection this year was truly exceptional, with 13 different options on offer, ranging from comforting classics like leek and potato and mushroom, to more adventurous choices such as chorizo, vegetable and barley, pepper and tomato, and carrot and coriander.

In fact, there was something to suit every taste, and many guests commented on how difficult it was to choose just one or two! In fact, the only complaint heard throughout the afternoon was that people didn't have enough room to sample them all. The event was very well attended, creating a warm and lively atmosphere, and it was especially humbling to see so many villagers coming together to share good food and good company.

Thanks to everyone's generosity, an impressive £400 was raised in support of the British Red Cross, making the occasion not only enjoyable but also very meaningful for the chosen charity.

# Community Matters

## Frieth Fete – its fate is (once again) in your hands!

### Will the Bunting fly in 2026?

Many thanks to everyone who attended the Fete Volunteers meeting at the Village Hall on 6th May, and to those who have already offered their time in other ways. Your support is greatly appreciated. Despite these commitments, however, we currently have volunteers covering only around 50% of the hours needed to run the Fete successfully. Without additional help, the future of the event is genuinely at risk.

In an effort to avoid cancelling the Fete for a second consecutive year, difficult decisions have already been made. The event will now open at 1pm instead of 12 noon, shortening its running time by one hour, and one of the planned attractions has had to be removed. These changes improve volunteer coverage to approximately 75%, but we still urgently need more people to step forward. Volunteering does not require a huge commitment, even one hour of your time would make a real difference. If enough people each contribute a small amount, we can keep this much-valued community event alive.

Our Village Fete cannot happen through goodwill alone; it depends on people getting involved. Please don't assume someone else will do it. If you value having events like this in our village, now is the time to support them actively, not simply hope they continue. Please consider volunteering and helping ensure the Fete can go ahead and continue for years to come. Simply pledge an hour or more of your time by dropping an email with your details to info@fvs.org.uk or provide these on the Frieth Village Society WhatsApp chat if you prefer. And don't delay – please do this now or at the absolute latest by Friday 22 May. Thank you!

## The Village Society thanks Graeme Clark

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Frieth Village Society (you can find draft minutes on the FVS website), the Committee expressed its sincere thanks to Graeme Clark for his diligent reviews as volunteer Auditor over the last 40 years.

Graeme now steps down from this role, and while we have a plan to address our auditing needs from FY2027 onwards, there is a 'vacancy' to audit the 2026 accounts next year. Can you help? If so, please contact David at chair@fvs.org.uk

## Chirping Cacophony

### The Dawn Chorus or the Birders?

Six keen birders, armed with binoculars and mobile phones, met on the seat outside Frieth Church at 5.15am on Sunday 27th April – early, but the first birds beat them to it as they started to sing at 4.50am! It was cold, but a cloudless eastern sky was already glowing orange as they gathered.

Greater Whitethroat

Mike Hopkins led the group along footpaths around Frieth, passing through woodland and open fields where 20 different species of bird were identified using the Merlin App, with a further 4 seen but not heard. They returned to Frieth at about 7am for a welcome hot drink and bacon butties, prepared and served by Amanda in their garden.

The most unusual bird heard and seen was a Greater Whitethroat, in the trees along Church path. Others that were recorded were: Robin, Dunnock, Wren, Goldcrest, Firecrest, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Blackbird, Thrush, Mistle thrush, Greenfinch, Chiffchaff, Skylark, Blackcap, Ring-necked pheasant, Wood pigeon, Siskin and House sparrow. Others seen were a Magpie, Cormorant, Rooks and Red kites.

Many thanks to Mike and Amanda for hosting this event and providing refreshments.

# Dates for your diary

**Frieth Church and related activities – ALL welcome**

**Sunday 17th May, 9am** – **Holy Communion**, Frieth
**Sunday 24th May, 9am** – **Holy Communion**, Frieth
**Sunday 31st May, 8am** – **BCP Holy Communion**, Frieth
**Sunday 7th June, 10am** – **Group Service**, Hambleden
**Sunday 7th June, 3pm** – **Church Sandwich Family Service**, Hambleden

**Frieth Village Society**

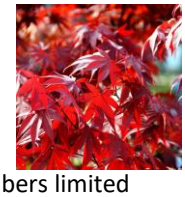
**Sunday 14th June** – **Frieth Garden Walk** – see article and www.fvs.org.uk
**Sunday 9th August** – **Frieth Village Fete TBC** – see article
**Saturday 17th October** – **Skittles & Nosh** – more details to follow see www.fvs.org.uk
**Saturday 7th November** – **Autumn Village Tidy** – more details to follow see www.fvs.org.uk

FVS Frieth Village Society

**Frieth Natural History Society**

**Saturday 16th May, morning** – **Guided visit around Homefield Wood Reserve** looking for orchids.
**Wednesday 3rd June, morning** – **Guided walk on Moor End Common**, SSSI.
**Saturday 11th July, morning** – **Moth identification in Pheasants Hill**.
Everyone welcome but a small charge for non-members. For full details and to book your place, please contact: Mary 01494 881501, Andy 01494 881586 or FNHS2023@gmail.com

**Hambleden Valley Garden Club: First Tuesday of the month, October to March, Frieth Village Hall**



The club provides a focal point for people interested in gardening and the opportunity to exchange ideas and advice. Meetings with external speakers are held 6 for 6.30pm January to March. In the summer, there are a range of garden visits. Annual membership fee is £15 single or £25 for a couple; members then pay £2 per meeting. Visitors are welcome for a fee of £4 per meeting.

**Wednesday 20th May – Acer Corner, Wendover –** contact Penny Farrelly on farrelly3@btinternet.com as numbers limited
**Thursday 11th June, 2pm** – **Old Keepers Cottage, Hedgerley** – English Cottage Garden
**Wednesday 24th June, 2pm** – **Beech House, nr Beaconsfield** – garden with lake, wildlife meadows and a wide range of plants
**Wednesday 29th July, 2pm** – **Bledlow Manor Gardens, nr Princes Risborough** – 12 acres of gardens including a walled kitchen garden, a sculpted garden, individual paved gardens and parterres.
Booking required. Please contact Clair Honnor on clairhonnor1@gmail.com (except for Acer Corner)

**New Body Control Pilates Class in Frieth**

**Wednesdays at 10.40am in the Village Hall –** If interested, please contact Lauren for more information and to book using: lauren@pilat-ease.co.uk or www.pilat-ease.co.uk

**Frieth Lunch Club: Yew Tree Pub**

**Last Friday of the month –** Great food and wonderful company. **ALL** welcome. If you need help to get there, transport is available. Contact Judy for more information and to book a place on 01494 882227 or email ajh.claypit1@btinternet.com

THE LUNCH CLUB

**Afternoon Tea Club at St Katharine's, Parmoor**

**Tuesday afternoons, 2pm.** All welcome for a chat over a cuppa and to play board games if you wish. If you need help to get there, transport is available. Contact Judy on 01494 882227 or email ajh.claypit1@btinternet.com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## Bad Joke Corner

Q: What did one flip-flop say to another?

A: You're sole-mate material!