FRIETH VILLAGE SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

February 2026

Welcome to our Spring edition!

With days getting longer, all we need now is some dry warm weather and we'll believe that Spring is really on the way. To counter the gloom and incessant rain, FVS brightened January with its annual Village Quiz. Many more events are being planned for the year ahead. So much so, that this issue is another bumper edition!

Village Teams Go Head-to-Head at the Annual Quiz Night

Our traditional January Quiz Night proved as popular as ever, and 10 teams competed to be Village Quiz Champions.

After a number of years setting and co-hosting the quiz, Steve Taylor took a well-earned break and Rick Lilley stepped up to set this year's quiz and host alongside Patrick Joyce, who both did a fabulous job.

A marathon round of bird-based anagrams and dingbats got everyone warmed up before the quiz rounds commenced.

Later, a 50:50 round, entitled 'Cheese or Chipboard' tested everyone's knowledge of the Ikea catalogue (!) Another round, challenged people's familiarity with the Latin names of different fungi; let's just say there is *mush-room* for improvement before next year's quiz!

The evening concluded with a round of belting singalong tunes with enthusiastic participation: joyful finale or time to go home?

The top scoring teams were:

WINNERS – 'Secret Seven'
RUNNERS UP – 'Ken Dodd's Dad's Dog's Dead'
THIRD PLACE – 'Let's Get Quizzical'

The Wooden Spooners were aptly named 'Fun not Facts'

Some fantastic raffle prizes had been donated – thank you! – and the raffle, together with ticket sales and an excellent game of 'Heads & Tails', raised £650 that will be shared equally between the FVS and the Village Hall to help with ongoing village projects.

Debates (or arguments?) in full flow

'Heads & Tails' up for grabs

'Secret Seven' – the Victors

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

Working Together for Frieth: Recent Village Improvements

If you've been out and about in Frieth recently, you may have spotted a few welcome additions around the village. These improvements are the result of the close and positive working relationship between the Frieth Village Society and Hambleden Parish Council — and they show what can be achieved when we pull together.

With Steve Taylor and David House joining Amanda Hopkins as our Frieth-based Parish Councillors, there has been a renewed sense of energy and focus on village matters. Although Wayne Holmes, who was elected at the same time, has recently stepped down, we're very pleased to welcome Rick Lilley. Together, they ensure Frieth continues to have a strong and active voice at Parish level.

One of the most noticeable recent additions has been the installation of new benches in some of our favourite village spots. They offer a perfect excuse to pause — whether you're catching up with a neighbour, waiting for friends, or simply enjoying the peace and beauty that make Frieth so special.

Another exciting development is that we have secured ownership of our much-loved red telephone box. Now in the care of the Parish Council, the Village Society is exploring plans to restore it and give it a fresh purpose. Could it become a book swap? A walking information point? A mini gallery? We would love to hear your ideas so please email us or speak to any member of the FVS Committee and share your inspiration.

Road safety also remains high on the agenda. A new mobile vehicle-activated speed sign will rotate between the Parish villages, supporting our Community Speed Watch volunteers and reminding drivers to slow down as they pass through. Every small reminder helps to keep our lanes safer for everyone – schoolchildren, walkers, cyclists, riders and drivers alike.

These projects are wonderful examples of what happens when local volunteers, councillors and residents work side by side. Thank you to everyone who has given their time, ideas and enthusiasm. Frieth thrives because of its community spirit and there's plenty more to look forward to as we continue working together to care for and invest in our village.

Road Safety a Shared Priority

There's positive momentum on road safety across the Valley. Building on the community's efforts — including the sterling work of Frieth Village Society's Community Speed Watch volunteers — Hambleden Parish Council is taking action to support residents' concerns.

The Parish Council has written to Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet Member for Transport about ongoing traffic issues such as large vehicles and the lack of pavements, and also to our MP, Emma Reynolds, who has promised to raise these concerns with the Minister for Transport.

Practical steps are underway too. The Parish's Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS) has been recommissioned for use across our villages, and the children's much-admired "Drive Slowly" posters are being reprinted. The Parish is also signing up to the 'Twenty is Plenty' campaign, with free stickers available for residents to display on their wheelie bins (contact amandahopkins@hambleden.org.uk). Meanwhile, Frieth schoolchildren's posters have been featured three times in the Henley Standard, and last September they received a personal letter from Emma Reynolds praising their efforts. Thank you to everyone – councillors, volunteers and young people alike, who are helping to make our Valley's roads safer for all.

Community Matters

A Very Fond Farewell to Rev Sue Morton

From the Square Mile to the Church Aisle

After 14 years of devoted ministry, the churches of the Hambleden Valley have said a heartfelt farewell to our Associate Priest, Sue Morton.

Sue's journey to ordination was far from straightforward. She began her working life in merchant banking before retraining as a teacher. Faith was not part of her childhood; she did not grow up in a churchgoing family and only began attending church as an adult. Ordination was never part of her early plans.

Life, however, had other ideas. While raising four children, Sue was diagnosed with ME and became largely housebound, struggling with the demands of family life from the sofa. Yet it was during this difficult and reflective period that she began to sense a calling to ministry. What might have seemed an unlikely path slowly became clear.

As her health improved, Sue trained for ordination at Ripon College Cuddesdon, the Church of England theological college just outside Oxford. From there she arrived in the Hambleden Valley and quickly became a constant and reassuring presence across our churches.

Over the years, Sue saw several incumbent priests come and go and, on more than one occasion, found herself effectively "holding the fort" during vacancies. Through baptisms and weddings, funerals and festivals, quiet pastoral visits and community events, she walked faithfully alongside valley residents in every season of life.

Innovation was also part of her ministry. During the COVID lockdowns, Sue launched "Zoom Church," ensuring that worship and connection could continue even when buildings were closed. Later, noticing how many different people were gathering when services were held outside in churchyards, she established "Wild Church." Even when restrictions eased, she continued these informal outdoor services, believing deeply that part of her calling was to meet people where they are - sometimes quite literally beyond the church walls.

Earlier still, as a Curate, Sue was the driving force behind Barney's in Frieth Village Hall, a warm and welcoming space for parents and babies to gather for tea, conversation, a Bible story and a hymn. It became a much-loved point of connection for many young families.

Also, amongst her many meaningful contributions, was the creation of the "Footprints" service, a gentle and compassionate space for anyone affected by the loss of a child at any stage of life.

Neighbourhood Updates

A Very Fond Farewell (continued)

On 1st February, a packed Hambleden Church gathered to give thanks and say a fond farewell. Sue and her husband Mark now move to Ewelme, where she looks forward to spending more time with her family, who have supported her so faithfully over the years, and to explore what this next chapter of life and ministry may hold.

We offer Sue our deepest thanks for all she has given to the Hambleden Valley and send our warmest wishes for a fulfilling and joyful future.

We hope you enjoy this small selection of photos from the past and recent present. Will the real Vicar of Dibley stand up please? Who can forget the 'Vicar on a Vespa' when Sue dashed between Turville and Frieth Churches for the Jubilee Celebrations? (Faster than a tractor methinks!) Church can be a Wild place too, but if you're learning the ropes, then best stay in the bell tower. And no, Sue wasn't a Surgeon in a previous life – but simply preparing for the first Holy Communion after lockdown!

History behind village clock that was teacher's dying wish

Frieth Standard Time?

The Henley Standard recently interviewed Jolyon Marshall ahead of publishing an article on the history of our village hall clock. Permission was granted for us to reproduce the piece, so for those of you who did not get to see the original, follow the QR code here to see the article as it appeared in the paper.

With thanks to Helen Hall

Thanks to the dedication of our Newsletter Delivery Team, printed copies of this publication reach several hundred homes across Frieth and surrounding hamlets. One of our longest-serving volunteers, Helen Hall, has faithfully delivered to a dozen or so households in Moor End for nearly forty years. As Helen now moves to Scotland, we offer our sincere and heartfelt thanks for her many years of support and the contribution she has made to our community.

Community Events

Village Spring Cleaning throughout March

A concerted effort

FVS is looking for volunteers to help tackle a series of cleaning and tidying jobs around the village for a couple of hours every Saturday morning in March. Your assistance to smarten up our village would be very much appreciated for at least one of the following sessions, which will **start at 9.30am at the Village Hall** with coffee.

Saturday 7th March – General Litter Pick, Churchyard tidy and weeding of Village Hall flower beds. Bacon rolls will also be available before we leave to pick litter.
Saturday 14th March – Remove and re-hang fencing chains that edge the village green.
Saturday 21st March – Crossroad tidy including the bus stop and pond, so if you have a hedge trimmer or strimmer, please bring these with you.
Saturday 28th March – Tidy footpath off Innings Road; clean all village road signs and finish any outstanding jobs.

Family Friendly Lunch

Saturday 21st March, 12–2pm – Delicious homemade soups, cheese, rolls and fruit shared with friends. No charge but any donations will go to British Red Cross. Activities for children.

Cheese & Wine Event

Have you got the nose for it?

After the resounding success of the last Cheese & Wine Event, FVS has decided to run a similar event on **Saturday 25th April, 7pm** in the Village Hall. Tables of eight will be guided by representatives from the Thames Valley Wine School to taste six wines whilst enjoying a range of cheeses supplied by the Pangbourne Cheese Shop, selected to pair with the wines. Wines will also be available to buy on the evening.

More information and tickets will soon be available from www.fvs.org.uk

Petals and Pastries return this Summer

Blooming Marvellous

Last year, several hundred visitors explored gardens across the village, generously opened by their owners, and enjoyed tea and cake before or after their walk; a delight for all involved.
On **Saturday 14th June**, **10.30am-3pm**, FVS plans to run a similar event with more gardens to see. If you wish to open your garden or volunteer to serve tea and cakes, please contact farrelly3@btinternet.com More information to follow in due course.

The Fate of the Fete Depends on You!

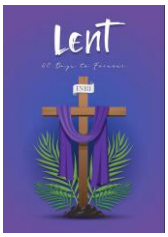
Volunteers Needed

Frieth Village Fete is scheduled to take place on **Sunday 9th August from Noon until 4pm** but will only happen if sufficient volunteers commit to help run the event. Last year's fete was cancelled because of a shortage of help, and we really hope this doesn't happen again.

A Fete Volunteers' Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 6th May, 8-9pm**, in the Village Hall to allocate tasks to volunteers, so please attend *or let us know in advance of this meeting* if you can't attend but will be available to help on the day by emailing Chair@fvs.org.uk

Many hands make light work as the saying goes – so please support your Village Fete!

Dates for your diary



Frieth Church and related activities – ALL welcome

Sunday 1st March, 10am – **Group Service**, Fingest
Sunday 1st March, 3pm – **NEW Family Service**, Turville
Sunday 15th March, 3pm – **Mothering Sunday Service**, Frieth
Sunday 22nd March, 9am – **Communion**, Frieth
Wednesday 1st April, 7pm – **Compline**, Frieth
Friday 3rd April, 2pm – **Last Hour at the Cross**, Hambleden
Sunday 5th April, 9am – **Easter Day Holy Communion**, Frieth

Frieth Village Society

Saturdays 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th March, 9.30am – Village Tidy Programme. Meet at Village Hall.
Wednesday 22nd April, 8-9pm – **FVS AGM**, Frieth Village Hall – an update of what has happened over the last year and what is planned for 2026 followed by complimentary drinks and nibbles.
Saturday 25th April, 7pm – **Cheese & Wine Tasting**, Frieth Village Hall.
Wednesday 6th May, 8-9pm – **Fete Volunteers' Meeting**, Frieth Village Hall.
Sunday 14th June – **Frieth Garden Trail** – more details to follow on www.fvs.org.uk
Sunday 9th August – **Frieth Village Fete** – more details to follow on www.fvs.org.uk

FVS
Frieth Village Society

Frieth Natural History Society

Thursday 26th February, 7.30pm – AGM followed by a talk on 'Wild London' by Jon Mason.
Tuesday 17th March, morning – **Visit to Dinton Pastures** for bird watching; car sharing available.
Sunday 27th April, early morning – **Dawn Chorus Walk** around Frieth.
Saturday 16th May, morning – **Guided visit around Homefield Wood Reserve** looking for orchids.
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 is 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.
Tuesday 3rd March, 6 for 6.30pm start – Plants of the Season by Paul Green.
Saturday 9th May, 10am-12 noon – **Plant Sale and Cakes** – please donate and/or come to buy.

Frieth Lunch Club: Yew Tree Pub

Friday 27th February – **First Lunch Club of the Year** 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

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

D. J. Macleod

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Bad Joke Corner

Q: What happens when you tell an egg a joke?

A: It cracks up