Your Mag

Steyning | Bramber | Upper Beeding

January 2026



yourmag.co.uk



January might be known for grey skies and quieter diaries, but there's plenty to lift the spirits in this month's issue.

We start the year with a packed community section, from winter walks and local events to groups and volunteers keeping things moving right through the colder months. There's lots to dip into - whether you're looking for something to do, something to support, or simply something interesting to read with a cup of tea.

You'll also find inspiring stories from across Steyning, Bramber and Upper Beeding, including local projects making a real difference, thoughtful environmental features, and the return of much-loved events such as the Community Orchard Wassail. Add to that our regular diary pages, local business features and book reviews, and January suddenly feels far from quiet.

As always, Your Mag is about celebrating what's on our doorstep - the people, places and ideas that make our area such a good place to live, whatever the season.

Thank you to everyone who contributes, advertises and reads the magazine. Your support keeps it thriving and truly local.

Here's to a positive and hopeful start to 2026.

Mel
Editor, Your Mag

Sign up to our monthly newsletter Community Matters.

Community Matters will be delivered to your inbox each month giving you a sneak preview to the printed magazine. Look out for offers from advertisers, find out about local events, community news and everything in between.

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Reasons to be Cheerful

As the New Year comes around again, it's a moment to celebrate some of the good stuff that's been happening on the Greening Steyning front over the past year, and look forward to what's in the pipeline for 2026. Here are some of the highlights:

Looking back:

Cutting food waste: The Community Fridge has been breaking new records with the amount of surplus food it has collected from supermarkets and given away to many local people who now make regular use of this twice-weekly service: it added up to an incredible 17 tonnes over the course of 2025!

Repairing not binning: it's also been a bumper year for the Repair Café. It fixed over 250 items last year, from toasters to tricycles! That's not to mention the 300 knives, secateurs, axes, shears and loppers that were brought back to life through skilful sharpening.

Creating wildlife corridors: biodiversity is under pressure everywhere but we're lucky to be living in a real hotspot in terms of action to counter this. There's a whole range of local volunteer groups working on this, not just Greening Steyning. And we've been joining forces with pioneering projects like Weald to Waves so our small-scale efforts connect up with large scale nature recovery initiatives so together we can make a real difference.

Encouraging walking & cycling: who wasn't uplifted to see the new White Bridge being raised into position by that massive crane? It reconnects our communities at last. Once the teething problems with the puddles are sorted out it will be such a boon to walkers and wheelchair users – and, hopefully, cyclists too in the longer term. It was a big team effort. But with the ambitious new Local Walking & Cycling Plan now agreed, there's momentum building to get moving on other improvements that will make walking and cycling a whole lot easier.

Looking ahead:

Intriguing talks: we've got some great talks and discussions lined up as part of our regular monthly Green Drinks programme. In January it's film night, in February it's all about fermentation, and March it's on the promise and perils of AI.

Eco Open House Day: in April we're joining forces with partners in Worthing and Shoreham to open a range of different properties so you can see what others have done to save on bills and make their homes more environmentally friendly. It'll be an opportunity to ask questions, get informed about the realities of fitting solar panels, heat pumps and more, and be inspired.

Celebrating the sounds of nature: for the Steyning Festival in May we're teaming up with sound artist, Hazel Reeves, to create a unique audio experience at Steyning Parish Church. Using speakers dotted around the church she'll be creating an immersive *'Soundscape of Hope'* - the sounds of creatures returning to Sussex that were once hunted to extinction; meadows now teeming with insect life; and more. It should be a real treat!

So while you may tempted by the grim news headlines to *'get back into bed'*, there are plenty of *'Reasons to be Cheerful'*, as Ian Dury put it in his classic song. It's all thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of volunteers who have decided to put the 'Think Global: Act Local' mantra into practice.

If you'd like to find out more, and maybe get involved yourself, do come along to our AGM and Film Night on 28th January. To stay in touch with Greening Steyning, just sign up to our monthly email newsletter at: www.greeningsteyning.org.

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Steyning Community Orchard: It's Wassail time again!

17th January 2026. Steyning Cricket Club. 17:30pm.

So here we are in January; cold, wet and grey, the glitter and sparkle of Christmas packed away with the decorations, the New Year's celebrations fading from memory along with the resolution to go for a run each morning. The only thing left is a hole in your bank account.

But January is better than this. There are clear, dark nights when you can see a thousand stars winking above you. Evenings, when you can listen to a pair of tawny owls calling to each other across a valley as the day dies. Mornings, when you can watch the red of the dawn spread across a field rimmed with frost and laced with cobwebs of frozen water.



Then of course there is Steyning Community Orchard's annual Wassail. It happens in the middle of the month, on the eve of Twelfth Night; **(not the 5th January, but on the 17th according to the old Julien calendar)**, in the orchard at the top of the Memorial Playing Field.

There is something very special about this event with its roots going back into a darker, distant past when we all lived a little closer to the earth that surrounds us. Definitely pagan, this ancient custom has carried its magic down through the ages. At times forgotten, then revived like here in Sussex where villages like Steyning have started their very own Wassail tradition.

The word Wassail comes from the Anglo-Saxon greeting *'Waes hael'* which means *'be hale', 'be in good health'*. Villagers would come from all around to congregate in their nearest orchard to rouse their winter fruit trees into life with chanting and singing; beating the trees with sticks to wake them, praising the trees for past harvests and exhorting them to *'be hale'* for the coming season and harvest. The evil spirits would be driven from the trees to ensure a good harvest would follow that year.

Take a walk across the MPF and through the Community Orchard just as the light fades from the sky on the eve of Twelfth Night and you might see the shadowy shapes of the orchard volunteers getting ready for this special event, laying jam jars filled with candles along the rows of apple trees, lighting the way to the oldest fruit tree in the orchard; dressed in coloured lights and sprinkled with tiny drops of magic.

Wait awhile and listen for the town clock to strike the hour and then walk back towards the town, and join the small crowd that has already gathered outside the Cricket Club where the evening begins.

The Wassail, as always, is led by Mythago, a group of Morris dancers dressed in black tatters. They whirl around dancing in the light falling from the windows of the Cricket Club and the master of the ceremony welcomes those who have gathered to celebrate the orchard and to wake its sleeping trees. He leads them towards the top of the playing field and the soft light of the candles around the trees.



As everyone arrives, they gather around the gnarled tree in the centre and then the fun begins. The music starts, there is dancing, chanting, singing, and the noise of pans being banged together.

The ancient spirit within the tree hears the noise through his dreams, stirs and slowly awakes. The evil spirits dwelling within the tree awake and flee!

Then everyone makes an offering to the tree; a slice of toast dipped in a specially prepared Wassail bowl filled with mead, crab apples, sugar, spices and egg, tied to the strings dangling from the branches of the tree, a token of thanks for the fruit it has borne the previous year and a gift to the tree spirit living within it.

Finally, with a roar of noise, the celebration draws to a close and people drift back across the darkened field to the warmth of their homes leaving the orchard alone in the dark, beneath the dark winter sky.

What better way to cheer up grey January?

Come and join us for this year's Wassail on the 17th January 2026 outside the Cricket Club at 17:30.

Donations towards this evening's Wassail and the upkeep of our orchards would be VERY welcome so please bring some CASH with you.

AGM and Film Night - Wed 28th Jan

'Power Station' is about how two artists in Walthamstow turned their street into an energy-generating powerhouse - an inspiring prototype for a new way of living.

The **AGM** starts at 18:45, with the film following at 19:30. If you come early to join the **AGM** you will get a voucher for free drink!
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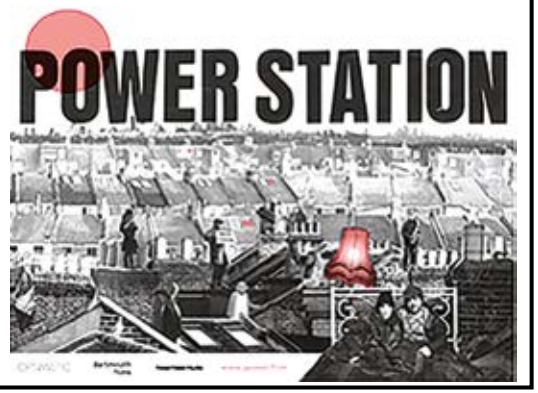

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Transforming Treasures: The Art of Jewellery Remodelling

Diamonds may be forever — but your style doesn't have to be. Many of us have jewellery we once adored but no longer wear. Instead of leaving those pieces sitting in a jewellery box, why not have them redesigned into something new? The beauty of precious metals is that they can be recycled endlessly, allowing your treasures and memories to live on in new designs.

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Paws, Pars and Promises...



Golf – as Mark Twain supposedly once said – *'a good walk spoiled'*. I can certainly attest to that having dusted off my clubs towards the end of 2025 having not touched them for 8 years. It is also important to point out that the reason for this long hiatus was because I am fairly useless at golf and after a particularly torrid experience on a course in 2017 I had decided that I had enough pastimes in my life without enduring an additional one - which generally resulted in negative emotions!

The reason for this change in attitude? The fact that both my boys (aged 11 and 13) have become rather obsessed by it. Given that the consequence of this is many an hour spent in the fresh air, for them it is a *'boring walk made interesting'* and therefore something to encourage.... Time is a healer, hence the pains of nigh a decade ago had dulled, and I thought spending some quality time on the links with my progeny could only be a good thing. Suffice to say that this quality time was somewhat marred by the quality of my golf. It is certainly a time for self-reflection when your 11 year old son takes pity on you after half a dozen holes and says, *'do you want to take that again, Dad?'*! The unintentionally condescending nature of this comment has made me resolve that I need to get better at this golf thing if we are to maintain any chance of a golfing relationship in the future!

So, along with the standard New Year's resolutions to lose weight, drink less, row across the Atlantic etc, I have decided to get some golf lessons. This has got me thinking about whether it is feasible to set new year's resolutions for our pets. Other than the obvious diet for those who are a bit on the portly side, it isn't fair to impose a regime on them that would negatively impact them. However, we can resolve to instigate changes that will have a positive impact such as:

- **Prioritise dental hygiene:**

So many of our pets have bad breath, rotten teeth and gingivitis. Brushing their teeth (if they are amenable) and feeding dental kibble are two ways to improve this and prevent dental disease. There are also a variety of adjunctive products such as dental gels and mouthwashes which are an aid but generally less effective. If the teeth are bad enough a dental procedure may be indicted to descale, polish and remove any diseased teeth. If you'd like any advice on this, just get in touch and we can arrange a dental check up – this is FREE for Health Plan Members.

- **Give them a bath or a brush!**

A bit like watching chimps picking parasites off each other on a David Attenborough documentary, most pets love a bit of a spruce up, so get the zoom groom or the pet shampoo out, or contact your local groomers for a professional job!

- **Teach them a new trick:**

Our pets like spending time with us and teaching them new skills or attending classes or events such as dog agility is a great way to do this. It's also a great opportunity for pet (and pet owner!) socialisation.

- **Mix up the routine:**

More for dogs this one, but try some different walks or different areas, or even visit a pet café. Yes, these do exist – often offering breed specific events!



On the last point, one thing I did see whilst on the golf course, was an individual walking his border terrier at the same time as playing a round - which seemed to be a great bit of multi-tasking. However, I'm not sure it would work for our two labradors, who would probably *'retrieve'* every golf ball that they could find - with a ban from the golf course the likely result. This certainly would be a good walk spoiled!

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Steyning Patient Participation Group (PPG)

All patients registered at Steyning Medical Practice are automatically members of the PPG, which has developed and evolved over the years in response to the changing health environment and the needs of the Practice and its patients.

The work of the PPG is managed by a small committee, in collaboration with the Practice and with representation from our local Parish Councils. The PPG provides feedback from patients to the Practice, and aims to ensure that patient views are taken into account as services are developed, or where there are specific concerns. The PPG also provides information to Practice patients on health and well-being issues, and on developments in health services where the patient experience needs to be taken into account.

Steyning PPG uses Good Health magazine as the main method of communication between the Practice and its patients. It has developed from a slim newsletter into a professionally printed full colour magazine, published three times a year. The magazine provides updates from the Practice, highlights local health issues and produces articles of interest Delivery to 4,500 local homes is a real community endeavour, with volunteers distributing the magazine to Practice patients, local Pharmacies and the Library. We urgently need one or two people to take on the overall management of the magazine distribution, aided and abetted by committee members and other willing volunteers.

We are always looking for help on the committee, and are happy for volunteers to be coopted for a particular interest, or for a specific role. Volunteers with skills in digital technology or design, who can help with the Health Screens and their management, for example, are always welcome.
In particular the PPG is looking for someone to take on the role of Chair after April 2026. As Chair of the PPG for over 10 years, and having worked for some 30 years as a clinician in the NHS, Lesley Humber feels that it is time to step down. Although Lesley has an NHS background, having been a Director of Community Health Services in Southwark, London, for 17 years, NHS experience is by no means essential to the role of Chair. Most PPG Chairs in Sussex are simply people with an interest in the health and wellbeing of their local community.



If any Practice patients would like more information about the PPG committee roles identified above, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the PPG committee: steyningppg@gmail.com

You can also find more information about the PPG, via the PPG website: https://www.steyninggoodhealth.co.uk/

Steyning Parish Council: Chairman's Community Award

Presented at the Chairman's Christmas Function on Friday 12th December 2025. This year, the Steyning Parish Council Chairman's Community Award was presented to two well-deserving recipients: Maggie Holland and Sue Glover.



Maggie Holland

Maggie received her award in recognition of the many years of dedication and contribution she has made to Steyning Museum, supporting the preservation and sharing of the town's rich local history.

Sue was honoured for her committed leadership of community litter-picking initiatives, helping to maintain the beauty of Steyning for everyone. In her speech, Sue reminded us all of the importance of encouraging our children and grandchildren to take responsibility for keeping our town clean and litter-free.

The Chairman's Community Awards (formerly known as the Millennium Awards) are presented annually by Steyning Parish Council to individuals or groups who have made a significant contribution to the town and its community.



Sue Glover

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Upper Beeding Parish Council: Local Government Reorganisation



You may have come across reports that local government is being reorganised in Sussex. We are one part of a cohort of counties nationally currently under reorganisation. Similar processes have already been completed elsewhere.

The changes will abolish district councils and create larger authorities taking on the current roles of county and district councils. In the current proposals there are also new positions for mayors with overall control.
The plans do not mention parish councils. Upper Beeding PC has been monitoring discussions and talking to a wide range of people connected with the current plans and some from areas where the reorganisation has been completed.
Upper Beeding PC is very concerned about what might happen to our tier of government. In areas where the changes have been completed it looks like costs to parishes have increased. There are also concerns that people will find it harder to talk to councillors.
We have no current plans for public meetings on this matter but if you are interested, please contact the Parish Clerk: clerk@upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk

https://www.horsham.gov.uk/devolution-and-lgr/local-government-reorganisation

Grants Awarded:
Each year the Parish Council takes a portion of the precept and distributes it to projects which are going to benefit the residents.
This year the Parish Council has awarded grants to:
The Good Neighbours
The Beeding & Bramber Village Hall
The Hub
Local CAB
Bramber Castle Event
Steyning Area First Responders (SAFeR)
4Sight Charity
If your charity or group has a project that we may be able to fund, please contact the Parish Clerk: clerk@upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk

Councillor Vacancy:
There are four vacancies in the Council.
If you would like to be involved on the Council and help your community, please contact the Parish Clerk: clerk@upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk

Database: The Parish Council is very keen to be able to communicate with the residents.
Due to GDPR we cannot use any of our databases for anything other than for the reason they were set up and therefore we need to ask for your e-mail address if you wish to be contacted by the Parish Council enabling us to send you the details of any planning applications, annual newsletter and details of meetings etc.
Just click the link and add a short message stating that you would like to be added to the data base: https://www.upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk/contact-us/ or contact the Clerk clerk@upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk

Youth Service:
The Youth Club has relaunched in the Village.
Our very well-attended Youth Club for ages 9–13 continues to thrive at Upper Beeding Sports Hall. With focus sessions from partners like Greening Steyning and qualified coaches, plus our popular holiday camps, there's plenty for young people to enjoy. Now in its second year, this is an inclusive club that has been created by and for young people. Parent feedback has been extremely positive, with a 100% satisfaction rate this term. Young people attending can expect to develop increased confidence, improved social skills, greater independence, and have the chance to explore new skills and discover what matters to them, whether it's a hobby, interest, or passion. Looking ahead, we're expanding our provision in 2026 and hope to offer even more places for local young people. Subs are just £2, and we run every Thursday 18:30-20:30 term-time. Contact Lead Youth Worker Vicky for more information: Vicky.heales@steyningpc.gov.uk

New Staff and Volunteers:
The Youth Service are looking for casual staff and volunteers to help grow the service and the clubs. If you would like to be involved, please contact the Parish Council: https://www.upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk/community/youthproject/

New Speed Indicator Devices in Upper Beeding:
Installed in the last few months, the new devices at Dacre Gardens and on the entrance to the village on the Henfield Road, the devices will expect drivers to reduce their speed and make the roads a safer environment for residents and visitors.
The village is a popular walking and cycling area and these two units, it is hoped will encourage more to take these activities.

Speedwatch:
Upper Beeding now has its own Community Speedwatch Team. The Team is made up of 6 volunteers from the village of Upper Beeding, two of which are members of the Parish Council.
Speedwatch is a National Scheme aimed at educating motorists to drive within the speed limit, identify those who do not and encourage them to do so.
Our Team of 6 were trained by the Sussex Police Community Speedwatch Team earlier this year and have been actively running sessions since June 2025.
We currently have registered sites on the High Street UB, the Henfield Road and Pound Lane.
If you think you have motorists not keeping to the speed limit near you let us know and we can consider registering new sites.
Our aim is to try and do a session once a week but at least one a month but we are weather dependent due to safety reasons.
So far since starting we have monitored 2503 vehicles of which 278 were driving over the speed limit (this is calculated as 24 MPH or above in a 20 MPH speed limit and 35 MPH or above in a 30 MPH speed limit). This indicates 11.1% speeding.
If you would like more information or join the Team, contact: sean.teatum@upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk .
Or log onto the Community Speedwatch website: https://www.communityspeedwatch.org/FORMS-Groups.php

Riverside Walk and New Bridge:
The Parish Council and the Steyning and District Community Partnership have completed the project to resurface the stretch of footpath from Kings Barn in Steyning to Dawn Crescent in Upper Beeding.
WSCC also replaced the bridge which as has been documents, had become dangerous for users.
The official opening of the bridge took place on Friday 21st November with the officials from WSCC and the Councillors and representatives from the local area.
The next stage would be the continuation of the pathway from Dawn Crescent through to the footbridge on the South Downs Way.
https://www.upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk/riverside-pathway-upgrade/

Play Areas:
The Parish Council has won a grant for the improvement to the play areas.
This will be added to the funds already raised through budgeting and with a further addition of some CIL Funds there should be enough money to make a difference to the current play areas.
Upper Beeding will have some new items, but also some of the older items will be removed and replaced with some more modern play items.

Skatepark:
As we go to press the Parish council is delighted to announce that the skatepark will be upgraded this year. The funds have been found and the contractor selected.
https://www.upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk/small-dole-skate-park/

Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan for Steyning, Bramber and Beeding:
Over the last few years, a whole range of 'active travel' initiatives have been suggested for the Steyning, Bramber & Beeding area to encourage people to leave their cars at home and walk and cycle more. These include introducing a 20mph zone in Steyning & Bramber, installing improved bike racks in Steyning High Street, creating zebra crossings near schools, reducing speed limits on the bypass, and upgrading the White Bridge Link across the river. So far, and for a variety of different reasons, progress has been slow. But there is no doubt that many residents would welcome a shift in this direction – particularly parents with young children who need to get safely to and from school. Recently the Parish Council adopted the plan and are encouraging Horsham District council to do this as well.
https://www.upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk/local-cycling-walking-infrastructure-plan-for-steyning-bramber-and-beeding/

Volunteers for Gardening:
Fancy helping to keep our village flower beds looking in tip top condition. The Beeding In Bloom team need more members, they have carried out a range of activities and events in the area but there is a need for more members to carry on the legacy just click the link complete the contact form and add a message stating that you wish to be involved in the Beeding In Bloom group.
https://www.upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk/contact-us/ or contact the Clerk clerk@upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk

HDC Local Plan:
The local plan has been the subject of much debate and has been sent back to the drawing board due to a lack of cooperation with neighbouring authorities.
The main issue being that the Horsham District Council housing numbers had not included any dwellings that other districts could not fulfil.
The extra 40 homes proposed need to be on sites already agreed by the Parish in the Neighbourhood Plan rather than added ones which have not been agreed by residents.
https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/local-plan/what-is-a-local-plan

A Yank in Upper Beeding: https://youtu.be/hxES4MtJM2k?si=ENm-XKICSQH4u2-2

Green / Climate Change:
Were possible the Parish Council will endeavour to reduce their carbon footprint where practical.
UBPC are part of HDC Climate Action Network and JPCAG and that we have a Climate Action Plan:
https://www.upperbeeding-pc.gov.uk/community/

Steyning Gardening Club: Talk on Ecology at the Wiston Estate

Steyning Gardening Club recently welcomed Penny Green from the Wiston Estate for an inspiring talk on ecology and conservation.

Penny explained how the team at Wiston see themselves as custodians of the landscape, caring for an impressive 2,522 hectares of diverse countryside, from Ashington in the North, across to Steyning and South towards Cissbury Ring.

The estate's land use includes 70% farmland, 20% woodland, 4% parkland, 3% quarries, 3% ponds, wetlands, vineyards, residential, commercial and amenity areas. The soil varies from greensand to chalk and clay, creating a rich patchwork of habitats that support a wide variety of wildlife.

Volunteers play an important role in managing the chalk grassland, and new helpers are always welcome – contact Penny if you'd like to get involved. A key focus at the moment is encouraging the spread of cowslips, which provide food for the Duke of Burgundy butterfly caterpillar, a species once on the brink of extinction.



If you visit Washington Pits in late spring, you'll see the results of this careful management. When ecologist Neil Hulme carried out butterfly surveys this year, he recorded 32 species of butterfly on the chalk grassland. This habitat is botanically rich, with some sites boasting 40 - 50 plant species per square metre.

Wiston also works closely with the Sussex Wildlife Trust, whose cattle and sheep graze the land to help maintain the chalk grassland. The Sussex Red cattle are particularly useful – as they graze, they naturally spread seeds through their dung, helping to regenerate wildflower species. Thanks to this collaboration, plants such as musk orchid, common spotted orchid, fragrant orchid, dropwort, and viper's bugloss are flourishing. This partnership recently earned Wiston recognition when they were awarded the Schöffel Farm-Environment Partnership Award for its outstanding conservation work with the Sussex Wildlife Trust, benefiting nature and biodiversity across the estate.

The estate's 890 hectares of farmland are used to grow oats, barley and wheat, while also maintaining government-funded conservation headlands which support birds and pollinators. These areas provide essential habitat for skylark, linnet, yellowhammer, and corn bunting – birds regularly seen across the estate, all year round.

Wiston contributes valuable data to the long-running Sussex Study (1968 - present) – the longest-running monitoring project in the world that measures the impact of changes in farming on the fauna and flora of arable land, which informs national environmental policy.

Other research projects include monitoring the invertebrate prey of grey partridge chicks, a key indicator species for the wider health of farmland ecosystems. More than 600 species of invertebrates have been recorded in Wiston's conservation headlands, including the chamomile shark moth caterpillar, golden beetle, green hairstreak butterfly, and the cock's-foot moth.

The estate also tracks cuckoos using satellite tags to study their migration routes to the Congo Basin, helping scientists understand the challenges these birds face on their long journey.

Wiston's 495 hectares of woodland are managed sustainably, with chestnut coppice used for fencing on the estate and a hazel coppice collaboration project which encourages volunteers from the local community to come and spend time in the woods. All are welcome to join this ongoing conservation work. This year has been particularly rich in fungi, with sightings including orange peel fungus, lemon disco, zoned rosette, and the rare Franchet's amanita.

The 10 - hectares of vineyard (4 in total) have been designed with ecology in mind, with cover crops sown between alternate rows to attract wildlife and establish a wildflower meadow. Penny explained that poorer soil, rather than nutrient-rich ground, is best for encouraging wildflowers to thrive.
Ongoing bat studies across a 41 square-kilometre area are helping to map habitat use and improve connectivity across the estate.

Closer to home, many will have noticed Wiston's restoration work at Mouse Lane, where new wildflower areas and wetlands are being created to enhance hedgerows and reduce flooding.

Penny also highlighted the Weald to Waves initiative – a landscape-scale project linking habitats across Sussex to boost biodiversity, improve food production, capture carbon, and enrich rural life.

Everyone can take part. Gardens account for around 7% of Sussex's landscape, so signing up your garden at wealdtowaves.org is an easy way to contribute. The site offers free membership, practical tips and advice on making your garden more wildlife-friendly.

Finally, for those keen to learn more about ecology and conservation, Penny hosts an engaging podcast, The Wandering Ecologist, which comes highly recommended.

Lindsey Pearson: Watercolour Artist

Lindsey works from her studio in Storrington. She exhibits widely across Sussex and teaches, on request, individuals or small personalised groups in her studio.

Inspiration for Lindsey's work emanates from the sheer spontaneity and exuberance of painting & drawing with Watercolour & Inks. Their unpredictable nature & fabulous colours offer exciting challenges & opportunities to work wet in wet with bold washes, energy, and vibrancy. Paintings are highly expressive, colourful, and atmospheric. Her fluid style captures the elements needed to convey a sense of place in a landscape or the wonderful colours and textures of floral images. The alchemy of combining paint, water & paper is what makes watercolour so special, often producing surprising results!

Lindsey enjoys travelling and painting en plein air both at home in the Sussex Downs and abroad in Venice and Malaga. Sketches are developed further back in the studio to produce full sized paintings.

Lindsey continually strives to develop her work & techniques as a painter seeking inspiration from other artists, gallery visits, and courses. The joy of learning & applying new skills inspires and motivate her on her journey as an artist and regularly exhibits with Horsham Artists, Steyning Arts and the Association of Sussex Artists.



www.justlindsey.co.uk
www.horshamartists.org
www.steyningarts.co.uk

January 2026: Diary Events

The following nonrecurring events are also in the What's On section on the Your Steyning, Bramber & Beeding website at: www.yourmag.co.uk

Thursday 1st January
St Andrew's & St Cuthman's
10:30 – 11:30
Vicarage Lane, Steyning

New Year's Day Service

Join us for a special, relaxed and informal service to greet the New Year, at St Andrew's & St Cuthman's, followed by sherry (or soft drink). Contact: Parish Office 01903813276

Friday 2nd January
Vintage Years Club
14:00 - 16:00
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

Cyber Crime Protection

Doors open from 13:45. Today we welcome Daniel Sykes to talk to us about cyber crime and how to keep ourselves safe. Refreshments will be served from 15:15 and we will celebrate January birthdays and draw the raffle. Entrance fee is £3 (£5 visitors). Annual membership fee is £10 (each April). Always contact Bev Francis-Hills before attending for the first time/returning after a long break, for transport needs or any other information. Contact: Bev Francis-Hills 01273493894
E: vintageyears2012@gmail.com

Sunday 4th January
Steyning Town Women
14:00 - 16:00
Peter Humphreys Memorial, Shooting Field Steyning

Steyning Town Women v Bexhill United

Our friends from Bexhill are visitors in this L&SERWFL match. Come and support the Barrownesses - meet friends - kitchen and bar are open. Admission: General £5, Concessions/U16s Free. Contact: Aelred Wilkinson T: 07984603745
E: secretary.stcfc@gmail.com

Sunday 4th January
St Botolphs Church
18:00 - 18:30
St Botolphs Church, Annington Road, Botolphs

Service at St Botolphs

Join us at St Botolphs for the Plough Service. Contact: Sandra Middleton T: 07920015254
E: sandramidd63@me.com

Monday 5th January
Little Stars Bumps Babies & Toddlers Groups
13:00 - 14:45
Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning

Little Stars! our group for 'bumps, babies and toddlers' meets on Mondays from 1300 - 1445 and Thursdays from 0930 to 1130. Toys, crafts, singing and lots more. Cake and coffee for parents, carers and grandparents.
Forthcoming dates:
Mondays - 5, 12, 19 and 26 January.
Thursdays - 8, 15, 22 and 29 January.
Contact: Gary T: 01903813276.

Monday 5th January
Steyning Gardening Club
19:30 - 21:00
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

Gardening Quiz

Back by popular demand! Test your knowledge and enjoy a fun evening with fellow members at our Annual Gardening Quiz Night, hosted by well-known local gardening expert Robert Hill-Snook.
We look forward to welcoming you - and celebrating the start of the New Year - together! Non Members are welcome (£5 entry on door) Contact: Alison Hamer
E: steyninggardeningclub@gmail.com





Wednesday 7th January
Community Film Night
19:30 - 22:00
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

Screening: DOWNTON ABBEY The Grand Finale

Tickets £6.00 to include tea or coffee during the interval. Please purchase tickets in advance from thr office at The Steyning Centre.
Contact: Tessa Eckert T: 01903812042
E: tessa.eckert@steyningpc.gov.uk

Friday 9th January
Good Grief Cafe
14:00 – 16:00
Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning

Those who have experienced any sort of loss are welcome to join us for tea or coffee, biscuits and a listening ear. Contact: Judie T: 01903813276

Saturday 10th January
Repair Cafe & Home Energy Helpdesk
14:00 – 16:00
Beeding & Bramber Village Hall, High Street, Upper Beeding

Don't bin it - let us help you fix it! Bring along your items to repair, and anything you'd like sharpened. If you aren't sure whether we can help please email Robin at repaircafe@greeningsteyning.org for advice. You can also speak to one of our Helpdesk volunteers about how to save energy at home. Contact: Melissa Birch E: greeningsteyning@gmail.com

Monday 12th January
The Arts Society Steyning
09:45 – 12:00
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

The Honourable East India Company and East-West Trade (1600-1800)

Our first lecture of 2026 celebrates the remarkable role the East India Company played in developing cross cultural exchanges between East and West relating to textiles, wallpaper, porcelain and furniture, paving the way for Chintz, Chinoiserie and Chinese exports. Our expert lecturer, Vivienne Lawes, is accredited by The Arts Society as well as an art historian, curator, author and journalist. Free to members. Visitors are welcome - just pay £10 on the door. Find out more at: theartssocietysteyning.org.uk
Contact: Gerard Bagley
E: steyning@theartssociety.org

Wednesday 14th January
Steyning History Society
19:30 - 21:00
Steyning Centre, Fletcher's Croft, Steyning

Vanderbilt Coach

A presentation by Alan Barwick on the Vanderbilt Coach and horses which used to run from London to Brighton stopping off at various points along the route. Contact: Pat Blackie T: 01903 812283
E: steyninghistorysociety@btinternet.com

Saturday 17th January
Steyning Town FC
15:00 - 17:00
Peter Humphreys Memorial, Shooting Field, Steyning

Steyning Town v Roffey FC

Roffey are our visitors in the SCFL Premier Division. Come down, meet with pals, and enjoy an afternoon of top Sussex football - with an award-winning burger, a cup of tea or coffee or a drink from the bar. Up the Barrowmen! SCFL Admission: General £10, Concession £5, Under 16s Free.
Contact: Aelred Wilkinson T: 07984603745
E: secretary.stcfc@gmail.com

Saturday 17th January
Steyning Community Orchard.
17:30 - 19:00
Steyning Cricket Club, Memorial Playing Field, Steyning

Wassail





Free event with bucket collection - (so please bring some coins with you!). We meet outside the Steyning Cricket Club, when the Mythago Morris Side will perform their traditional Wassail Dances whilst explaining the tradition of Wassailing. (Called Apple Howling here in Sussex). At about 18:00 we proceed to the Orchard where the trees will be lit and decorated to welcome us.
Here, Mythago will continue telling the Wassail story with songs and dance. Part of the ceremony involves making as much noise as possible, banging pots and pans, whistling and shouting to scare away the evil spirits and at the same time awakening the fruit trees to prepare for the coming spring. So don't forget to bring some noise-making utensils, and torches, with you! This is a great family event, but might be a bit scary for very little ones. Contact: Roger Brown
T: 07795084546
E: Browns.steyning@btinternet.com

Sunday 18th January
Steyning Town Women FC
14:00 – 16:00
Peter Humphreys Memorial, Shooting Field, Steyning

Steyning Town Women v Three Bridges FC

Come down and see our Women take on Three Bridges in the L&SERWFL. It's always a good atmosphere. Kitchen and Bar open. Contact: Aelred Wilkinson T: 07984603745
E: secretary.stcfc@gmail.com

Saturday 24th January
Climate Cafe
10:30 - 12:00
The Castle Inn Hotel, The Street, Bramber

A regular event on the 4th Saturday of every month except December, offers a warm and inclusive space, to share friendship and mutual support for those with questions and worries about the climate crisis and how it will affect us all. Whether you are feeling helpless and fearful about the future, or feeling positive and motivated to bring about change – you are not alone. So why not join us at 10.30 for a chat over coffee. Contact: Melissa Birch E: greeningsteyning@gmail.com

Monday 26th January
Board Game Café
18:00 – 21:00
Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning

Board Game Café Evening edition

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T: 01903813276

Wednesday 28th January
Greening Steyning
18:45 – 21:00
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

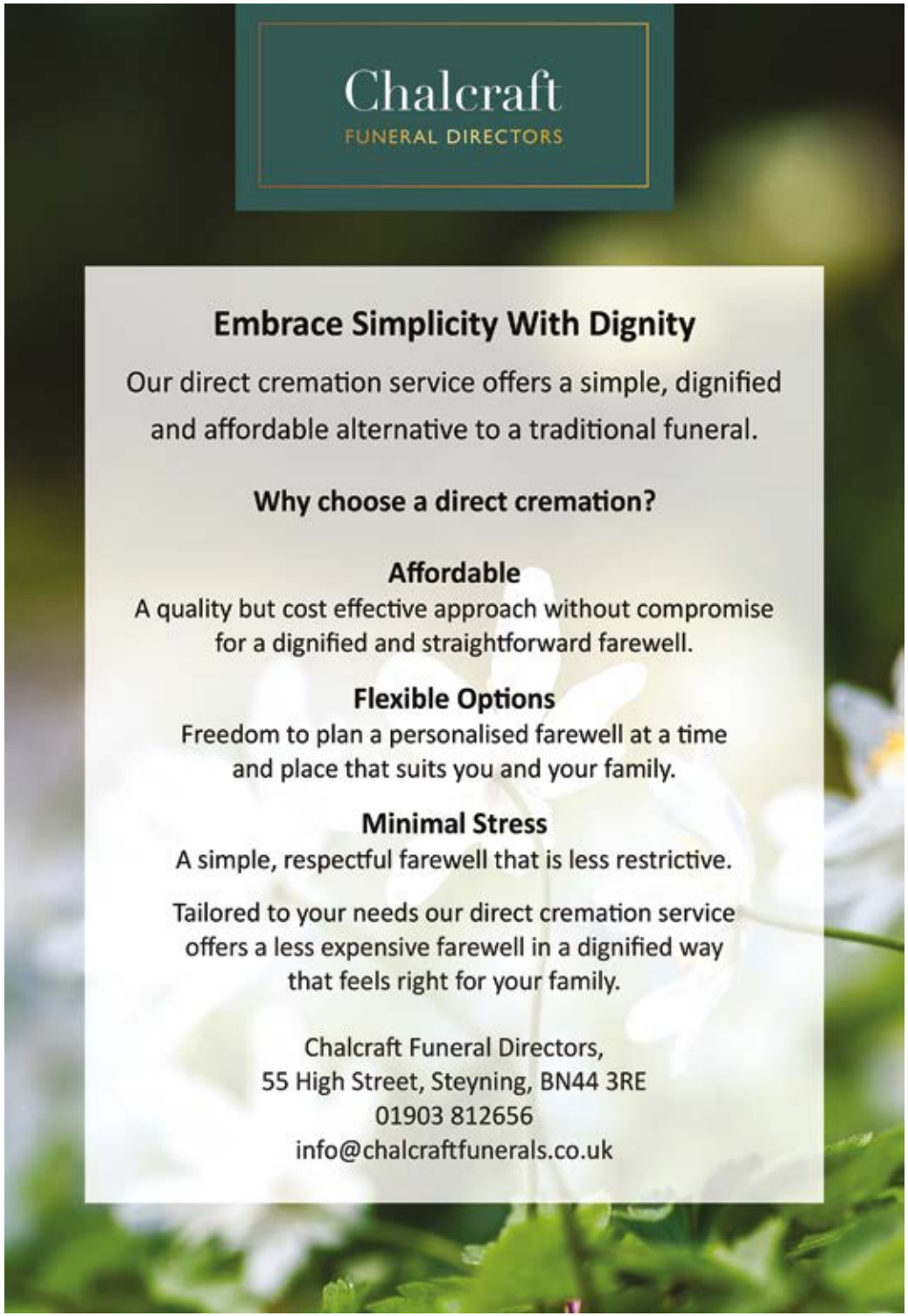
Film Night & AGM

We are delighted to have gained permission for a screening of the inspirational and highly acclaimed film **'Power Station',** which we're combining with our Annual General Meeting. The AGM will be short and sweet, with the film following straight after. AGM begins 18:45 (free drink on arrival). Doors and bar open for the Film night 19:30 - Film begins 19:45. Tickets for the film cost £5 (free for under 18s) and can be bought via the events page on our website www.greeningsteyning.org/events. Contact: Melissa Birch
E: greeningsteyning@gmail.com

Saturday 31st January
Family Support Work
10:00 – 12:00
Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning

Coffee Morning

Enjoy great coffee, cakes and conversation. There will be a wonderful prize laden raffle. All proceeds to the wonderful work of the Family Support Work. Tickets £5 available at the door.
Contact: Parish Office T: 01903813276



Friday 6th February
Vintage Years Club
14:00 - 16:00
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

Alice Day - Chair Yoga

Doors open at 13:45. We are pleased to welcome back Alice who will teach us some simple chair exercises, to help keep ourselves fit this Winter. Refreshments will be served from 15:15 and we will celebrate February birthdays and draw the raffle. Entrance fee is £3 (£5 visitors). Annual membership is £10 (each April). Always contact Bev Francis-Hills before attending for the first time/returning after a long break, for transport needs or any other information. Contact: Bev Francis-Hills
T: 01273493894
E: vintageyears2012@gmail.com

Saturday 7th February
Steyning Town FC
15:00 – 17:00
Peter Humphreys Memorial, Shooting Field, Steyning

Steyning Town v Newhaven FC

The Dockers are in town for a top of the table clash. Get some friends and family together and enjoy an afternoon watching SCFL Premier Division football. Kitchen and Bar open. Up the Barrowmen! SCFL Admission: General £10, Concession £5, Under 16s Free. Contact: Aelred Wilkinson T: 0798460374
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White Bridge Link: What an occasion!

The White Bridge Link was officially declared open on Friday 21st November, with a truly wonderful morning of celebration . The sun shone, the sky was blue and at last the white ribbon was cut, signifying the opening of both the White Bridge and the link to surrounding new walking and cycling routes. Well over a hundred people gathered to witness this superb page in local history.



Roger Potter, Chair of the group that has been responsible for putting these routes together, was clearly thrilled that all the hard work over the last 4 years was now complete and the final piece of the jigsaw - the replacement of the old condemned bridge - was there, in all its glory. Green it maybe, but no need to worry, it will still be called the White Bridge, as was the very first one put in place so many, many years ago.



Roger Potter & Jo Dennis. Photo Frank Bull

Accompanying Roger for the Ribbon Cutting was Jo Dennis, representing WSCC, who had borne the expenses incurred for providing the new bridge.

Representatives from other funders were also present, those being the Wilson Memorial Trust, South Downs National Park .and Horsham District Council (Rural England Prosperity Fund). The costs for the bridge and the improvements to the surrounding pathways totalled over £1M, so without their financial support none of this project would have been achieved.

As an important community link between Steyning, Bramber & Upper Beeding, the bridge, the access and all the people who will use it in the future, were blessed by the Reverend Diane Marchment, Father Mark Heather and Deacon Simon Wright.



The Blessing of the bridge. Photo Frank Bull

In his speech, Roger made sincere thanks to all his wonderful team, who had worked so happily together to create this important new sustainable route. Hours of work and, at times, a lot of stress, but today proved just how worthwhile it had all been.



The crowds celebrating. Photo Carol Levi

Thanks was also given to the Steyning & District Community Partnership, who had identified the need for the link and set up the Sustainable Travel Committee(STC) to take this commitment forward. The Committee concentrates on creating and improving walking & cycling routes to provide enhanced sustainable travel between the neighbouring villages and this link has been a major project.

However, it does not stop there, as it is the intention of this STC working party to add more routes to interconnect further with the White Bridge Link.

Another of STC's sub groups is also currently working on a Local Walking & Cycling Plan, which will enlarge the area's network even further.

Lots to anticipate and celebrate.

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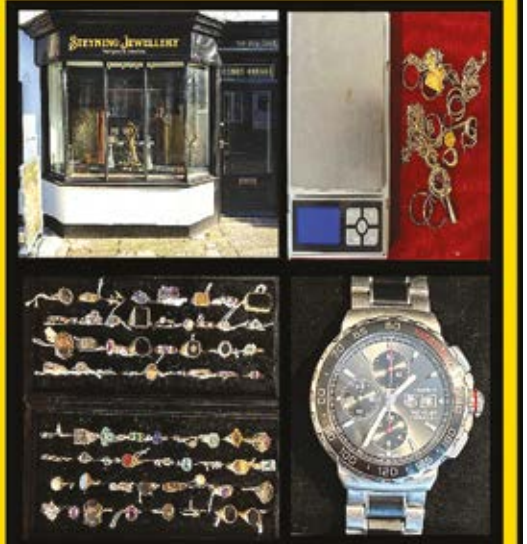

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January 2026: Steyning for Trees

We are so glad to see in the National Press the wonderful heading *'Park Beats 100,000 Tree Target'*.referring to the South Downs National Park Trees for the Downs Scheme. Although not all of our now, 11,000 hedging trees planted have been in the Park, a fair proportion have been over the 6 years . Many Congratulations to all who work at SDNPA. We are very proud to be partly funded by them.

We are so glad that our work with land owners is continuing apace We fund and plant hedges, giving support and advice on increasing biodiversity here, what a great and dedicated crowd they are. Now over 20 places, forming a wonderful mosaic for wildlife , to spread their genes out from the excellent Steyning Downland Scheme into the surrounding countryside



Festival Tree Tour.
We are working with the Festival Team on our Tree Tour 30th May, 2026 , 15:00 - 20:00 where you will be able to see them. You can go by bike, car or on foot to see these hidden gems in and around Steyning. Situated in lovely parts of our town in beautiful settings,with nature and hedges being nurtured to increase biodiversity.

As well as tea at Mouse Cottage. Come and sit in our re-natured garden, or conservatory, providing a home for wildlife now including hedgehogs. I can`t guarantee that they will appear for you but it is a haven for wildlife as well as the lovely flowering plants that have always been here. Hopefully the damselflies and dragonflies that breed in the pond here, will, if it is warm enough, make an appearance. Something to look forward to. Our hedge/wildlife corridor planting is



continuing apace, a wonderful wide hedge at the Bowls Club increasing the different types of hedge plants with a better chance of supporting endangered species. No longer a monoculture so disease will not rip through it. A hedge near the river in Bramber . It will when it reaches maturity suck up flood water as well as providing another wide hedge to shelter nature. The owners are so dedicated to increasing biodiversity.

An addional wildlife corridor/hedge at St. Columba has been planted with help from SFT ensuring that area of the Downs is well covered. SFT paid for the last one. But this one is now part of the SDNPA Trees for the Downs Scheme and has been provided by them but planted by SFT and St. Columba.

Also we have been helping the Steyning Grammar School by ordering and advising



on the right tree mixture for their 420 free hedge plants, selected by SFT, donated by the Woodland Trust and helping them and their teachers plant it. We are donating the recycled canes and spirals as we saw a deer there. We were so pleased to see so many students and parents (23) coming on the Sunday at short notice, it was re-arranged from the wet Saturday. Many thanks to Jayne Michalska, Wellbeing Mentor, Outdoor Learning. They quickly grasped the idea of how and why we were planting. Some of the students asking very pertinent questions of the SFT team who managed to answer these keen young people.
The LNRStrategy for nature recovery



has completed its consultation phase, what a wonderful scheme it is supporting endangered species. It is nationwide with particular areas chosen, East and West Sussex are included.

Hopefully this will cheer up Chris Packham. SFT is certainly very keen to help as we are already doing this, we have the expertise with 3 ecologists and a volunteer with a zoology degree on our team.

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Becky - Steyning

January 2026: The 'No' Year Resolution

Happy New Year! However you choose to celebrate, I hope your festive season was full of peace, joy, and mega loads of cheese. I always have a new year's resolution and try to make them positive. Apologise less. Dance more. Wear the shoes. Before you stop reading for fear of me going full *'live, laugh, love'* don't worry, I'm heading somewhere.

2026 is going to be the year of boundaries. As well-meaning humans, and especially in the UK, we can be a little too agreeable, put up with stuff, get on with it. But as nature illustrates, it doesn't have to be this way.

There are not many better boundary-setting role models than those species who ward off others as standard. Camouflage antithesis, these creatures make themselves obvious to warn incomers that they're not to be messed with. It's called aposematism, a defence mechanism utilised by certain species across the board; invertebrates, plants, mammals, birds, fish and fungi. Told you I had a point.

There are a few different types of aposematism.

Aposematic colouration: deliberately bright colours to visually warn of a toxic taste to others (whether this is true or not). Think ladybirds, wasps and Cinnabar moth caterpillars, who are bright yellow to mirror the toxic traits taken on by their favourite food plant – Ragwort. Then there are



Garden Tiger moth © Alan Price

Cuttlefish, whose colour-changing skills give them the option of disguise or bold vibrant attack.

Olfactory aposematism: repelling predators by producing a smell or foul-smelling substance. This dirty card is played by several species of shield bug, sometimes harshly but accurately known as stink bugs. Many plants are notable for this feature, including the strong-smelling Wild Garlic.



Selsey Cuttlefish © Paul Parsons



Garden Tiger moth © Alan Price

Auditory aposematism sound as a deterrent: Many species make alarm calls to expose a nearby predator, like a Robin tick-ticking at the sight of a cat. But auditory aposematism is making a sound to directly warn of one's own danger or distaste to others. A famous example is the Rattlesnake, which clatters its tail to give the heads up - ***'it's not worth it mate'***.Closer to home, the Garden Tiger moth rubs its wings together to make a rasping noise to the same effect.

Symbolic or tenuous, there's no doubt these creatures have mastered the art of communicating their boundaries. In nature there's no awkwardness, no deeper meaning, no overthink – imagine!

So, in nature's honour, this year I'll be saying a lot more 'no'. Hopefully with no need for any olfactory assistance.

By Kerry Williams:
Communications Officer - Conservation
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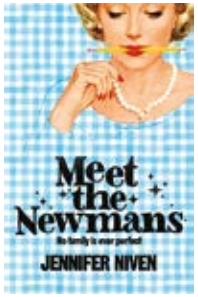
January 2026: Book Reviews

Adult Books



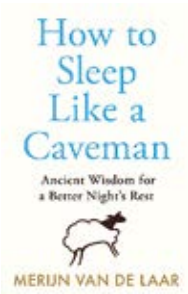
Meet the Newmans by Jennifer Niven
Macmillan hardback £18.99
I enjoyed this breezy, fun novel set in 1960's LA following the unravelling of an American family with a hit 'scripted reality' tv show. For two decades, Del and Dinah Newman and their sons, Guy and Shep, have ruled television as America's Favourite Family. Millions of viewers tune in every week to watch them play perfect, black-and-white versions of themselves. But now the Sixties are in full swing, and the Newmans' polished lives suddenly seem out of touch. Ratings are falling, Dinah is feeling numb, steady, dependable Guy is hiding a bombshell about his love life, and trouble is brewing for rock n roll idol Shep.
When Del is injured in a car crash just before the season finale, Dinah seizes the reins. She hires Juliet, a young reporter, to help her script the final episode. But Dinah and Juliet have wildly different perspectives about what it means to be a woman, and a family, in 1964 America. Can Dinah Newman bring her family together to change television history? Or will she be cancelled before she ever had the chance?
An entertaining read with well-drawn characters and an uplifting feminist message. Will appeal to fans of 'Lessons in Chemistry'.



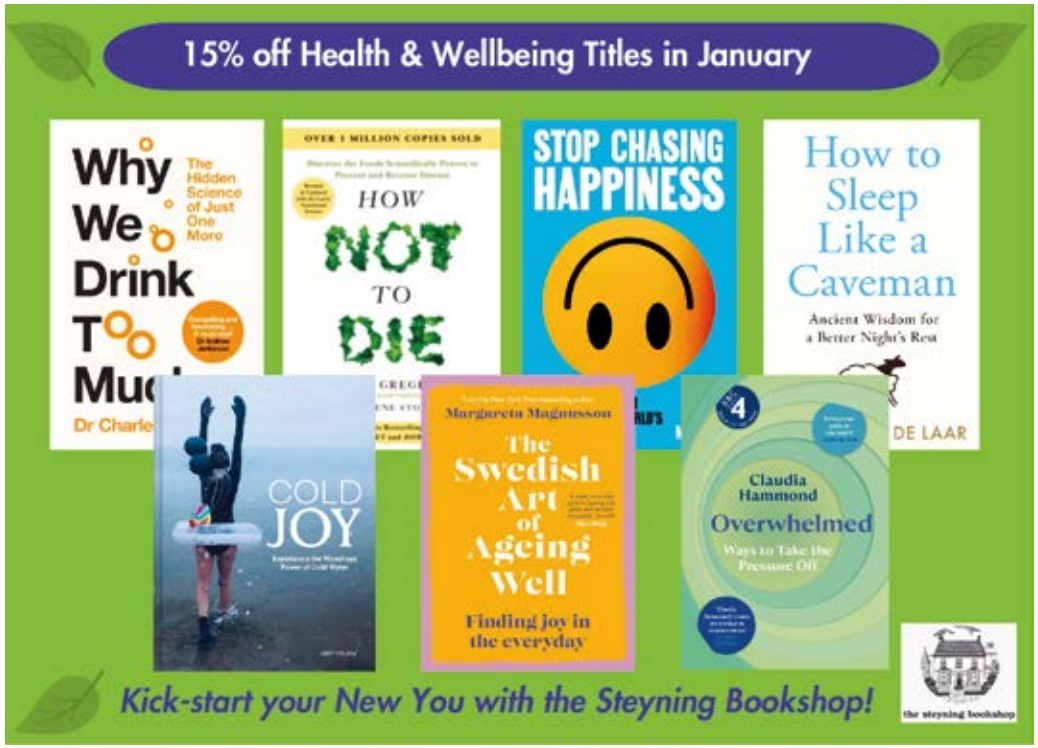
The Wardrobe Department by Elaine Garvey
Canongate Books £9.99
Our bookseller Gill recommends this beautifully written debut novel about a young Irish woman adrift in the London West End theatre scene of 2002. Mairead has left her family home in Northwest Ireland to follow her theatrical dreams, working tirelessly in a run-down West End theatre's wardrobe department - mending shoes, fixing broken zips, dodging the gropes of the stagehands and the scolding tongue of the producer. As the contrast between the life she imagined, and the life she is leading begins to chafe, she returns to her family in Ireland, where a reckoning with the past awaits, and with it, the chance to forge a new future, one stitch at a time.
An atmospheric novel which feels raw, honest and fresh and will appeal to fans of Clare Keegan.



Why We Drink Too Much by Dr Charles Knowles
Harper Collins £20 hardback (Our Price £17 - part of our January well-being promotion)
A smart, witty and illuminating take on humanity's relationship with alcohol. Charles Knowles is a leading surgeon and clinical research director. He also happens to be a recovering alcoholic. In Why We Drink Too Much, he takes us on a fascinating and personal journey into the science of the world's favourite drug. Knowles reveals how the surprising truth about drinking is rooted in ancient biology and brain chemistry. He unpacks how we learn to drink, the brain's powerful reward system, and the facts about alcohol and health to show what really happens in our brains and bodies when we drink.
Packed with jaw-dropping science, relatable stories and an invaluable blueprint for change, this book is for anyone who has ever woken up with a vague sense of dread and asked, 'Why me?'.



How to Sleep Like a Caveman by Dr Merijn van de Laar
Collins £10.99 (Our price £9.35, part of our January well-being promotion)
As a chronic insomniac I seized upon this book by a sleep therapist, which claims to turnaround your sleep problems in 3 weeks! It's too early for me to say yet, but I CAN tell you that it includes lots of revolutionary advice, including why we should let go of the 8-hour rule, how shorter total bedtimes might be better, and includes a sleep diary to record your personal sleep patterns. This groundbreaking book investigates the origins of sleep based on archaeological findings and studies of contemporary hunter-gatherers. Cave dwellers lived in balance with the forces of nature. They were adapted perfectly to environmental influences such as light, temperature and seasonal variations.
We need to look to their example, and adjust our eating, exercise, light, temperature and, most vitally, our expectations of sleep.



Children's Books



Where the Dragon Waits by Tom Moorhouse
David Fickling Books £7.99
A dazzlingly original children's novel which switches between contemporary reality and a fantasy realm like nothing you've read before!
After a boat crash, Ed wakes up to find himself on a deserted beach in a peculiar landscape. He meets a headstrong girl – Steff – who is as confused as him. They are attacked by a fluttering horde of white butterflies and flee from an eerily advancing wall of white mist into an extraordinary world, where they meet an iron armoured Pangolin who reveals that the only way home involves harvesting the tears of a dragon who lives at the top of an impossibly tall, rocky spire....
Sounds mad, doesn't it, but there's a neat explanation for the fever-dream like qualities of the fantasy narrative in this clever, funny novel, which I read almost in one sitting!
Perfect for adventurous, imaginative young readers of 9+ who like the Podkin series or anyone who enjoyed Wed Wabbit by Lissa Evans.

How Chiropractic Care Can Help with Plantar Fasciitis



If you are someone who likes to stay physically active, then you understand just how frustrating it can be if you feel a nagging pain in your foot with every step you take. If this is something that is bothering you, there is a chance that you may be suffering from plantar fasciitis. You have probably heard stories about plantar fasciitis. You may think that this is something that is extremely difficult to overcome. The good news is that there are treatment options available and chiropractic care can help you.

What Is Plantar Fasciitis?

You have a thick band of tissue on the bottom of your foot that connects your toes to your heel. This tissue not only protects the muscles, ligaments, tendons, and nerves of your foot but also allows your foot to function properly with every step you take. Unfortunately, there are situations when this band of tissue can become inflamed. This is plantar fasciitis.

Possible Causes of Plantar Fasciitis:

- Being on your feet for a long time.
- Exercising on a different surface to usual.
- Wearing shoes with poor cushioning or poor arch support.
- Being very overweight can put extra strain on the heel. It can also mean that the damaged tendon is repaired with fat cells rather than tendon cells which in turn makes it weaker.
- A tight Achilles tendon (the tendon at the bottom of the calf muscle above the heel) can affect the ability to flex the ankle and make damage to the plantar fascia more likely.
- Not having fully recovered or not having rehabilitation from a previous injury. Anything that puts more pressure on the bottom of your foot could increase your chances of developing plantar fasciitis.

Some of the most common symptoms of this condition include:

- Plantar fasciitis typically creates a stabbing sensation in the bottom of your foot.
- Even though this sensation can show up just about anywhere, it usually develops near your heel.
- You may experience pain with your first few steps getting out of bed in the morning
- This pain is usually worse after you exercise but not during physical activity. If you are noticing symptoms of plantar fasciitis, it is important for you to get them treated as quickly as possible. That is where chiropractic care can be helpful.

Chiropractic Care for Plantar Fasciitis:

There are several ways that a visit to the chiropractor can help treat plantar fasciitis. Some of the most common treatment methods include:

- A chiropractor can perform adjustments to your feet, ankles, knees, hips, and spine. These adjustments are designed to alleviate pressure on the bottom of your feet, allowing you to relax and heal.
- It is also important to perform stretches on a regular basis to alleviate tension, pressure, and stress on the bottom of your feet. A chiropractor can help you perform specific stretches, exercises, and movements that can help you alleviate aches and pains. This can reduce inflammation in the bottom of your feet, helping to treat plantar fasciitis.
- Finally, the chiropractor can also help you make ergonomic adjustments that shift the weight as you sit or stand over your feet. Even though you might think that you need to take prescription medications or undergo surgery to treat plantar fasciitis, this is not always the case. A chiropractor may be able to use manual therapy to help you recover from plantar fasciitis.

If you would like to return to the physical activity that you used to enjoy, it is important to treat plantar fasciitis in a complete, comprehensive manner.

If you have a specific question regarding any pain or problem areas, or would like to book a Free 15 minute consultation for you or your family please call:
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MARK JONES MCHIRO, DC

January 2026: Gardening Journal

Article by Alex Bell
T: 01903 815065
M: 07866 747849

January can feel like a rather quiet month in the gardening calendar, with not much happening and the weather doing little to encourage you outdoors in your wellies. Still, it's worth making the most of the brighter days when they appear, because there is work to be done—so don't put the tools away just yet. This is a good time to tackle those small tasks that have been lingering at the bottom of the list all year, the ones that are easy to overlook once spring gets busy again. A little attention now can make the months ahead run much more smoothly.

Plant of The Month
Helleborus 'the Christmas rose'

When the garden settles into January's soft, muted tones, Hamamelis - or witch hazel—quietly steals the show. Its spidery, ribbon-like blooms pop open on bare branches, glowing in cheerful shades of yellow, copper, and red. Add in the gentle, citrusy perfume that drifts across the garden on cold air, and it's no wonder this shrub is such a winter favourite. Few plants look this good when everything else is taking a long seasonal nap.

The history of Hamamelis is just as appealing. The genus has roots (quite literally) in both North America and Asia. Hamamelis virginiana was valued for centuries by Indigenous peoples for its astringent, healing qualities. The ornamental stars we grow in our gardens today mostly come from crossing H. japonica with H. mollis. These hybrids - Hamamelis × intermedia - were developed in the early 1900s, with the Arnold Arboretum in the U.S. playing a big part in creating tougher, more fragrant, and more colourful varieties. Cultivars like *'Jelena', 'Diane'*, and *'Pallida'* remain beloved for their glowing winter displays.

Witch hazels are adaptable and fairly easy-going, thriving in moist but well-drained, moderately fertile soils. They do have a preference for more acidic conditions, which means many of us in the Steyning area may struggle to grow them successfully in the ground. That said, they're perfectly happy in a pot with the right compost - so you can still enjoy their winter magic without battling the soil.
They perform best in full sun to light shade, where the low winter light can make their flowers shine. Give them a bit of space so their elegant, wide-spreading branches can do their thing, and they'll need only the lightest of pruning - usually just a tidy-up after flowering.

As for companions, Hamamelis looks wonderful with early bulbs like snowdrops or Eranthis hyemalis, which form bright carpets beneath the branches. Evergreen grasses such as Carex add year-round texture, while colourful-stemmed shrubs like Cornus sanguinea *'Midwinter Fire'* echo the warm tones of orange and red-flowered witch hazels. Later in the season, plants like Hydrangea quercifolia or Acer palmatum keep the border interesting once the witch hazel has finished its show.

In the quiet heart of winter, Hamamelis proves the garden is never truly dormant- it simply saves some of its most magical moments for the coldest days.

Jobs to be done in January:
Ornamental Garden:

- If the ground is waterlogged then keep off the soil to avoid compaction and worsening the conditions.
- If snow falls – Do not let the snow sit on the shrubs, gently shake off to prevent damage.
- Prune bush or standard apples and pears, aiming to create an open framework of about 5 main branches.
- Sweet Peas can be sown this month and those sown in the autumn can be potted on. Place them in a sunny greenhouse, coldframe or windowsill.
- Plan annual cut flowers for the borders.
- Mulch borders if not already done in autumn.
- Plant deciduous hedges.
- Move deciduous trees and shrubs if necessary.
- Ensure protective coverings such as fleece /mulch have remained in place over frost tender plants.
- Avoid walking on turf when the grass is covered with frost or is waterlogged.

Vegetable Garden:

- Protect brassicas from pigeons with cloches, netting or fleece.
- Harvest Winter vegetables such as parsnip, swede, sprouts, leeks and turnip.
- Remove one third of the oldest stems of blackcurrants at ground level to encourage new basal shoots.









Article by: Chris Tod - Steyning Museum.

Beyond the Churchyard Walls

The phone was ringing. I picked it up. *'This is the Police'* said a voice *'We've found these bones'* they said and added, a bit ominously it seemed to me, *'we hope that you can help us with our enquiries'.*

One hour later I was looking down a deep hole along with Pete and Chris who were busy underpinning a house against subsidence. Their mechanical digger had cut through some leg bones of individuals lying almost side by side. The police had taken the bones they had dug up away to get them checked out by their surgeons – in case they were recent (i.e. less than 200 years old) and suspicious.

They weren't, but the policemen on duty didn't fancy having old human remains in their police station overnight and, at 10.00 that evening a bag of muddy bones was delivered to my front door and I began the process of gently washing them down in the kitchen sink.

It was my first encounter with Steyning Man (and his two 'friends') whose burial some one thousand years ago, close to the bottom of the Bostal, suggested that the Heathen Burials plot shown on old maps was more extensive than used to be thought. Laid in the ground with their heads to the southeast they could not have had the benefit of facing Jerusalem when raised from their rest by the sounding of the last trump – as those in the consecrated ground of the churchyard would have had.

Apart from telling us about the condition of the body and the teeth and, with the help of isotope analysis, that Steyning Man was probably a local, the bones also reminded us of some basic biology. When we improvised a display of the complete skeleton to raise the money needed to get carbon 14 dating done, we realised that the vertebrae of the spine could only be balanced on the table used for the display if they were turned upside down – this we did, though the creation of a biological impossibility escaped the notice of our donors.

Assessment of these remains has had the benefit of the latest technology and archival appraisals. That was far from being the case when, in the year 1826, a barrow on the Downs above Steyning was dismantled for its flints and, according to Cartwright in his 'Rape of Bramber', *'On the top of it, within a foot of the surface, there were three entire skeletons and, in the ditch surrounding it, upwards of forty more. Beside these on the west side, there appeared a large grave filled with bones. An urn containing burnt bones was also found.'* It must have been a considerable burial ground – even though we suspect there is some confusion in what is described.

There was indeed, for instance, a bronze age urn burial on the Round Hill but it was to the east of the Bostal. And there may be echoes, in what is described, of an excavation done on the Hill by boys from the Grammar School in 1951.



Anglo-Saxon Hall House

Their target was a tumulus which was threatened by destruction from ploughing. They expected to find mainly Bronze Age material and were not entirely prepared for the discovery of several skeletal remains round the edge of the mound. The skeletons were judged to be pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon but there was no scientific evidence for this conclusion – until now.

Purely by chance a piece of cranium found in a lumber room at the top of the old School buildings, and firmly attributed to the 1951 excavation, came to light. We had it dated and, far from being early Saxon – pre c.700 AD – it turns out to have been from the late 11th century. Whether any of the skeletons mentioned by Cartwright were similarly dated is unknowable.

Perhaps Steyning Man and some of the other pre-Norman individuals whose remains we know of, were familiar with the homestead on Market Field. It was re-created at Weald and Downland Museum as an example of an Anglo-Saxon Hall house and is pictured here.

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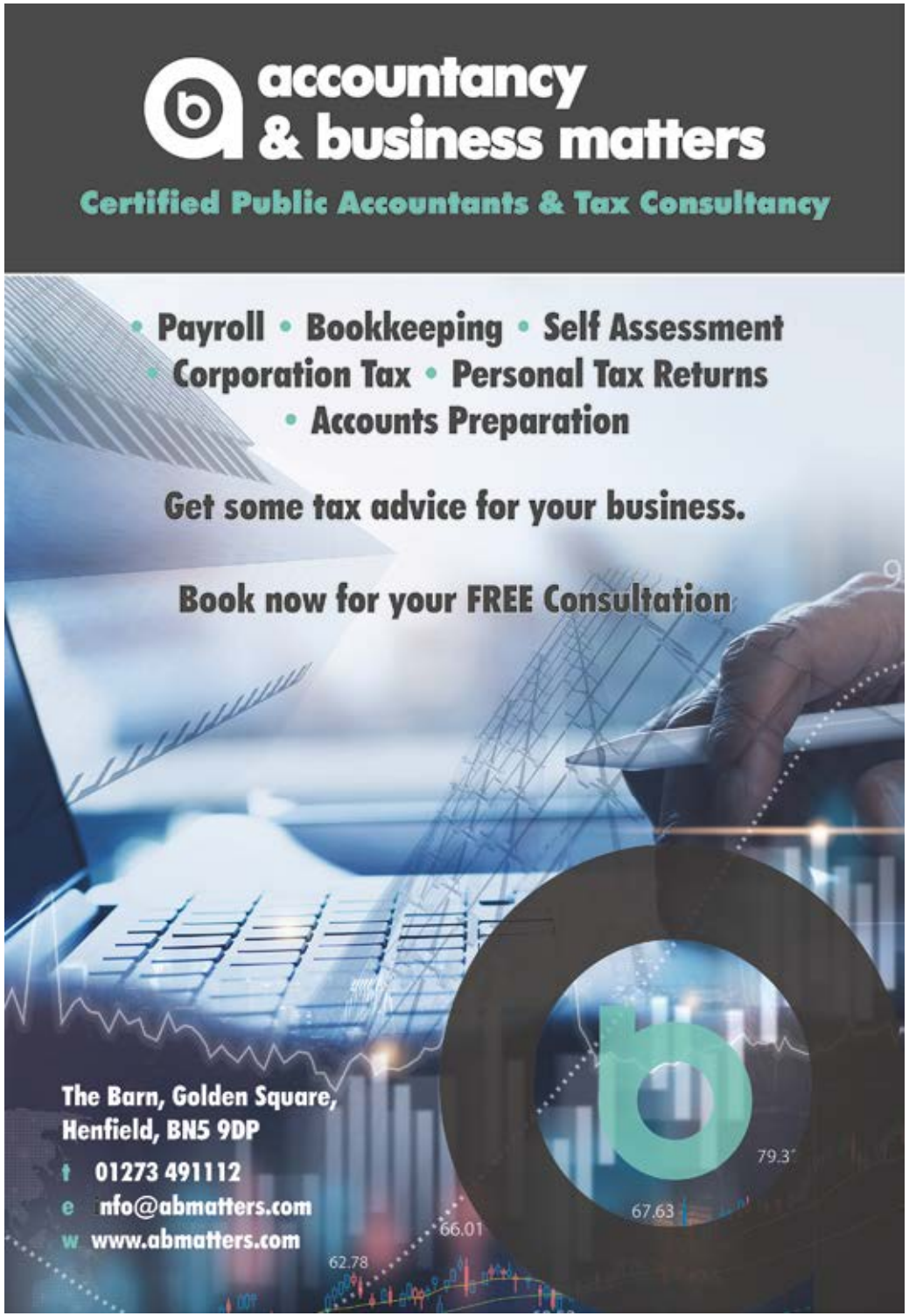

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