

# News and Notes

For Bodenham, Britford, Charlton All Saints, Nunton and Odstock

February 2023

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**Next Deadline:**  
**14 March**  
**2023**

At our church service this Sunday we sang these words. It seemed to me that this is what community life and living in our villages is all about. We are good at supporting each other, we have weathered various challenges in the last few years, including COVID, flooding and droughts, whilst community life continued with church services, clergy vacancies, pantomimes, Ebblefest and Jubilee celebrations. All of this has been advertised and recorded in News and Notes, which I have been very privileged to be Editor for the last five years. However, the time has come for me to hand over to a new team, so this will be my last edition as Editor.

The new team will introduce themselves to you next month, but we welcome Jonny and Marelka in Nunton and Orpheus and Anna in Odstock. They have some great ideas, and I am sure that you will continue to support them. I wish them huge success.

News and Notes will continue to be a paper-based newsletter with additional articles in an email version. I strongly encourage you to sign up for this additional information.

Finally, I would like to thank all those that contribute towards this newsletter, to those who send me articles, Speedyprint in Salisbury, who do exactly what they say they do, our advertisers who loyally support us, the host of distributors in our five villages who deliver this to you and are able to walk and talk to our community. My thanks to you the readers whose feedback I have appreciated.

We are a strong and wonderful group of villages, we have lived through some fun and difficult times in the last few years, we are bound together by our loyalty to each other, our neighbourly friendship and our community spirit, none of which can be broken.

Long may it last.

*Jeremy Metcalfe Editor*

# Community News

## Odstock Assistance

A young single mum in Odstock needs help getting her back garden under control. Has someone the time to put a lawnmower and hedge trimmer around it? If so please contact Mary Boydcamps in Odstock on 07760 848 963 for further details. Thank you.

## Royal Mail Stamp Extension

*Use them or Lose them*

**W**e now have until 31 July 2023 to use any non-barcoded everyday stamps before they become worthless. Alternatively, they can be swapped for barcoded versions for free through the Royal Mail scheme. In a U-turn following discontent from customers, Royal Mail has extended the deadline from 31 January for a further six months, recognising that customers needed more time to use up their remaining non-barcoded stamps.

## Warm and Safe in Wiltshire

**I**n winter is your home cold or damp? Are you worried about heating your home this winter? Warm & Safe Wiltshire may be able to help if you are on a low income or receive income related benefits. See the Warm & Safe Wiltshire website for more information: [warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk/](http://warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk/)

Free telephone advice – Tel: 0800 038 5722 or complete the online form and receive a return call.

Warm and Safe Wiltshire offers all residents across the county free and impartial energy saving advice. The service is open 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and can offer advice on the following:

- Help and advice relating to insulation, heating and draft proofing
- Guidance on heating systems and controls
- Issues with damp and condensation
- Advice on understanding your fuel bills + Fuel debt advice
- Help with switching energy suppliers and fuel tariffs to keep bills affordable
- Available grants and schemes
- A comprehensive home fire safety service
- Advice guides and factsheets.

## Help for Households

The UK Government has issued a “Help For Households” web page.

Refer to: [helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/](http://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/) for details, discounts and offers.

# Charity News



## CRESS Christmas Appeal Thank you

A huge thank you to those who supported the CRESS Christmas Transport Appeal. We are delighted to announce that, including Gift Aid, CRESS raised a total of £4235.71.

Some of the money has been sent out already for scheduled maintenance for the new truck pictured above. The rest will be used for the driver's salary, a bicycle, servicing the vehicles, road licenses and more during 2023.

The vehicle has been busy already this year, it took Bishop Joseph to confirm 600 people at the beginning of the January and this week is transporting the team to the two Savings Group Conferences.

CRESS has been nominated as the Chalke Valley Benefice Lent project. There are a number of events planned and more details will be available next month.

Bishop Joseph, who is the Bishop CRESS supports, will be in the UK for the early part of March 2023 and there will be opportunities to meet him and hear him talk. He is inspirational, and it is fascinating to hear how he looks after his South Sudanese people who are mostly living in refugee camps in Northern Uganda. The Lent project is raising funds to support the growing number of savings groups, sponsored by CRESS who will be transforming into agricultural teams as they are trained on how to grow trees and crops. By doing this they are able to become more self sufficient. CRESS strongly believes in teaching them how to look after themselves and being able to educate their families. Please continue to support this amazing charity work.

More details can be found in the e-N&N edition.

## **Odstock, Nunton and Bodenham W.I.**

**T**he first meeting of 2023 on Monday 9 January was well supported. The President wished everyone a Happy New Year and then went on to review club, group and county meetings and events.

Four resolutions had been short listed for the National Federation Annual Meeting in May and these were presented to the meeting. A vote was then taken for the one we, as a WI, wished to support and take forward to the AGM.

After coffee Jackie Worrall, from the Riding for the Disabled Association, Wilton, gave us a brief history of the group. Originally set up in 1942 at Grovely Riding School, to help rehabilitate wounded service men, it now, with the generous support of the Earl and Countess of Pembroke, has a dedicated site of its own at the Pembroke Centre. However £90,000 a year still has to be raised to keep the centre going.

The centre can accommodate over 140 riders a term helped by a team of over 200 volunteers and 16 horses and ponies. Riders range from 3 to 83 years of age and a wide range of disabilities are catered for.

The physical and emotional progress of the clients can be extraordinary and there is now a move to develop and expand the centre's work beyond riding, as the horses themselves can benefit people with a wide range of different needs. Jackie gave examples of how 'Tea with a Pony' has shown amazing results for dementia sufferers as the horses often get a response which can be stimulating but also calming.

There was time for questions before the vote of thanks was given and the meeting closed. The next meeting is on 'A History of Corsetry' on Monday 13 February at 10 am.

### **Join the e-News and Notes mailing list**

You are encouraged to join the E-News and Notes mailing list. It is very easy to do, just go to [NewsandNotes.co.uk website](https://www.newsandnotes.co.uk) and you will find a link on the front page which will ask for your name and email address.

Once a month you will receive an electronic version of this newsletter, with links to more information and articles than are in the printed version.

# Longford Estate

This time last year the weather had been warmer and drier than normal, the last quarter in stark contrast has been colder and certainly more recently wetter. The Rivers Avon and Ebbles have both burst their banks in the middle of January changing the appearance of fields to ponds and lakes.

The farm team worked into the early hours and between the rain to ensure the autumn crops were all drilled, the colder wetter weather combined with the later drilling date has held the crops back in comparison to last year. This year's calves have grown well with some being close in size to their mothers, this is in part due to the bulls that we have selected to breed from and the improving genetics of the herd as a whole.

We have undertaken some scrub clearance on Clearbury Down in an effort to manage the spread of scrub and thorn thereby improving the grass and flower sward, some has been completed in hand and some in conjunction with Wiltshire Wildlife Conservation Volunteers. We also have a large number of sheep grazing Clearbury Down and other grassland on the Estate in an effort to improve the grassland by grazing it in a different manner to how the cattle graze.

In November the height of the river remained high due to the abundance of weed growth during the preceding summer months rather than the volume of water, now the levels are due to water volume. This has made fishing impossible in parts and the rivers are dangerous in terms of flow, depth and debris being carried from banks into the main channel.

The Rainbow Trout at Trafalgar Fisheries have seen some good growth rates within the RAS system and feed conversion by the fish is far superior to that of the old pond system. The RAS is largely unaffected by the recent weather and even the cold spell where fish in pond systems stop feeding. The results we are now seeing prove that we were correct to invest in the RAS system.

The woods team have taken over 550 log orders to date and we are almost at capacity for the season. The higher energy prices we are all now subjected to and the cold spell meant logs were in higher demand earlier in the season than normal. When ground conditions permit we will be starting a large replanting exercise in one of the woods which had been clear felled due to Ash dieback. We will be replanting with a mix of species rather than a monoculture approach which was the norm in years gone by to make harvesting easier however there is now a greater emphasis on disease reduction and habitat creation. The species mix will include Oak Robur, Oak Sessile, Norway Maple, Beech, Sweet Chestnut, Hazel, Hornbeam and Wild Cherry.

The property rental market remains strong and interest in our properties continues to be high. We are in the process of refurbishing a number of properties some of which will come to the market later in the year.

Having been asked a number of times recently about when is our busiest time of year on the Estate is it is fair to say that every day is busy. Different teams have quieter times of the year but across the wider Estate, we will be harvesting something every day from trout at Trafalgar Fisheries, crops or cattle on Longford Farms, trees in the woods, milk at Nunton Dairy or pigs at Allenford Farms.

*David Canty | Estate Manager*



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website: [www.breadandflowers.co.uk](http://www.breadandflowers.co.uk)

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## **Chalke Valley Link Scheme**

*Can you spare some time to drive?*

Serving the Valley from Berwick St John to Bodenham, the Chalke Valley Link Scheme is a Registered Charity that provides good neighbour support with transport and other practical help for Valley residents.

For example: Transport to a doctor's appointment, hospital, collect prescriptions.

**For more information, requests or offers to drive,  
please phone: 01722 718 780**

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# Light Relief

## Signs from around the World

In a Paris hotel elevator: *Please leave your values at the front desk.*

In front of a church: *Don't give up. Moses was once a basket case.*

In a Bucharest hotel lobby: *The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.*

On a long established New Mexico dry cleaning store: *Thirty-eight years on the same spot.*

In a hotel in Athens: *Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 A.M. daily.*

In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery: *You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists, and writers are buried daily except Thursday.*

On the menu of a Swiss restaurant: *Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.*

In a Swiss mountain inn: *Special today -- no ice cream.*

In a Copenhagen airline ticket office: *We take your bags and send them in all directions.*

In a New York restaurant: *Customers who find our waitresses rude ought to see the manager.*

In the window of an Oregon general store: *Why go elsewhere to be cheated, when you can come here?*

In the grounds of a private school: *No trespassing without permission.*

Spotted in a safari park: *Elephants, please stay in your car.*

Outside a photographer's studio: *Out to lunch: if not back by five, out for dinner also.*

Notice in health food shop window: *Closed due to illness.*

On a plumber's truck: *We repair what your husband fixed.*

On a maternity room door: *Push. Push. Push.*

At an optometrist's office: *If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place.*

On a fence: *Salesmen welcome! Dog food is expensive!*

On a church door: *This is the gate of heaven. Enter ye all by this door. (This door is kept locked because of the draft. Please use side door.)*

# Church News

## St Andrew's Church, Nunton Flowers and Brasses Volunteers

*Could this be you?*



The FaB team at St Andrew's, Nunton is seeking new members to swell our ranks following the honourable retirement of some of our long serving members. You know who you are, and we are hugely grateful for your skill, time and financial support.

The responsibilities are not onerous; flower arranging and brasses cleaning take about 2-4 hours per year. You would be teamed with an experienced member of the group who could show you what is required.

Traditionally group members have been drawn from the ladies of the parish, but from 2023 this fantastic opportunity is now open to a wider audience! This means that if you have always wanted to try your hand at flower arranging, or thrill to the gleam of a highly buffed brass candlestick, this could be the opportunity you have been waiting for.

We would be delighted to hear from you! You will be rewarded with the joy of spending quiet time in a beautiful rural church, and of course, the warm fuzzy feeling generated by doing something positive for your local community.

If you want to learn more about joining the FaB team please contact Kate Bullen on [katebullen13@gmail.com](mailto:katebullen13@gmail.com).

## News from the Pews

Christmas is always a very special time in the Church calendar and we enjoyed several carol filled services in all the villages. We were pleased to welcome family and friends of our communities and hope that they enjoyed their Christmas blessings.

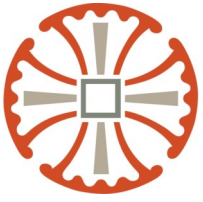
We are also most grateful to Nim & John and Simon & Shell Martin as well as the folk at Nunton Farm, for their hosting and presenting the Cowshed Nativity on 23rd December.

On a sadder note, we have had funeral services for several of our older residents – Roy Grant, Reg Brown, Derek Willis and Julian Johnson. Our thoughts and prayers are with all their families.

Our Benefice community said farewell to our Rector Catherine Blundell and her husband David, at a lovely service at Broad Chalke on Sunday 8 January. There will now be a vacancy for the post of Team Rector. Reverends Jenny Taylor and Ruth Howlett-Shipley will be remaining as our Team Vicars for the next year or so and Ruth will be working closely with the parishes at the East and West end of the Benefice.

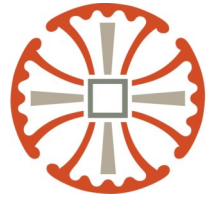
Looking forward, we will be moving into Lent during February and will be holding a Lent course for those wishing to think more deeply on the Bible stories and we will also be raising money for the Benefice's Lent Appeal – CRESS.

*Stephanie Elcock & Mary Boydcamps,  
Churchwardens Odstock with Nunton and Bodenham*



# Church Services

For Britford, Charlton All Saints,  
Odstock and Nunton with Bodenham



## February 2023

BCP = Book of Common Prayer (Traditional Language), CW = Common Worship (Contemporary Language)

**Please check the weekly e-Bulletin or e-N&N for all Benefice Services**

<b>5 February</b> 3rd Sunday before Lent	9.30am 11.00am	Parish Communion Family Service	Britford Odstock	Jenny Taylor Adrian Taylor
<b>12 February</b> 2nd Sunday before Lent	9.30am 11.00am	Family Communion Morning Prayer (BCP)	Nunton Charlton All Saints	Ruth H-S Rhoderick Voremberg
<b>19 February</b> Sunday next before Lent	11.00am	Family Communion	Odstock	Tony Monds
<b>22 February</b> Ash Wednesday	6.00pm	Communion with Ashing (CW)	Coombe Bissett	Ruth H-S & Jenny Taylor
<b>26 February</b> 1st Sunday of Lent	9.30am 11.00am	Parish Communion Family Communion	Charlton All Saints Nunton	Jenny Taylor Adrian Taylor
<b>5 March</b> 2nd Sunday of Lent	9.30am 11.00am	Parish Communion Family Service	Britford Odstock	Jenny Taylor Adrian Taylor

To receive the **Chalke Valley Benefice bulletin**, please email Emily, who will add you to the weekly Bulletin distribution: [thechalkevalleychurches@gmail.com](mailto:thechalkevalleychurches@gmail.com)

### Clergy Team:

**Team Rector ~ Vacancy:**

**Team Vicar ~ The Revd Dr Ruth Howlett-Shipley:** 01722 697 022

**Team Vicar ~ The Revd Canon Jenny Taylor:** 01722 503 081

**Team Administrator ~ Mrs Emily Broomhead:** 07890 262 376

# Church Services



## Services in Chalke Valley Benefice – February 2023

BCP = Book of Common Prayer (Traditional Language), CW = Common Worship (Contemporary Language)



<b>5 February 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday before Lent</b>	9.30am	Family Communion (CW)	Broad Chalke	Ruth H-S
	9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	Britford	Jenny Taylor
	11.00am	Family Communion (CW)	Ebbesbourne Wake	Ruth H-S
	11.00am	Family Communion (CW)	Coombe Bissett	Jenny Taylor
	11.00am	Family Service	Odstock	Adrian Taylor
	11.00am	Morning Prayer (BCP)	Berwick St John	Lay Led
	11.00am	Morning Service	Bishopstone	Sally Leaver
<b>12 February 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent</b>	9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	Bowerchalke	Kate Woolven
	9.30am	Family Communion (CW)	Nunton	Ruth H-S
	11.00am	Family Communion (CW)	Coombe Bissett	Jenny Taylor
	11.00am	Morning Prayer (BCP)	Charlton All Saints	Rhoderick Voremberg
	11.00am	All Age Service	Alvediston	Biddy Trahair
	3.00pm	Evening Prayer (BCP)	Fifield Bavant	Biddy Trahair
<b>19 February Sunday next before Lent</b>	9.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Bowerchalke	Ruth H-S
	9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	Bishopstone	Jenny Taylor
	9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	Odstock	Tony Monds
	9.45am	<b>REFRESH!</b>	Broad Chalke v Hall	Lay Led
	11.00am	Morning Prayer (BCP)	Ebbesbourne Wake	Biddy Trahair
	11.00am	Parish Communion (CW)	Homington	Jenny Taylor
	11.00am	Parish Communion (CW)	Berwick St John	Ruth H-S
<b>22 February ASH WEDNESDAY</b>	10.30am	School Communion with Ashing (CW) - all are welcome	Coombe Bissett	Jenny Taylor
	6.00pm	Communion with Ashing(CW)	Coombe Bissett	Ruth H-S/Jenny Taylor
<b>26 February 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent</b>	9.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Berwick St John	Kate Rosslyn Smith
	9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	Charlton All Saints	Jenny Taylor
	9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	Broad Chalke	Ruth H-S
	11.00am	Family Service	Nunton	Adrian Taylor
	11.00am	Parish Communion (CW)	Bishopstone	Anthony Hawley
	11.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Alvediston	Ruth H-S
	11.00am	Morning Prayer (BCP)	Homington	Jenny Taylor
	6.00pm	Evening Prayer (BCP)	Bowerchalke	Lay Led
<b>5 March 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent</b>	9.30am	Family Communion (CW)	Broad Chalke	Kate Woolven
	9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	Britford	Jenny Taylor
	11.00am	Family Communion (CW)	Ebbesbourne Wake	Ruth H-S
	11.00am	Family Communion (CW)	Coombe Bissett	Jenny Taylor
	11.00am	Family Service (CW)	Odstock	Adrian Taylor
	11.00am	Morning Prayer (BCP)	Berwick St John	Lay Led

**Ministry Team:** Team Rector ~ vacancy  
Team Vicars ~ The Revd Dr Ruth Howlett-Shipley: 01722 697022, The Revd Canon Jenny Taylor: 01722 503081  
Team Administrator ~ Mrs Emily Broomhead: 07890 262376

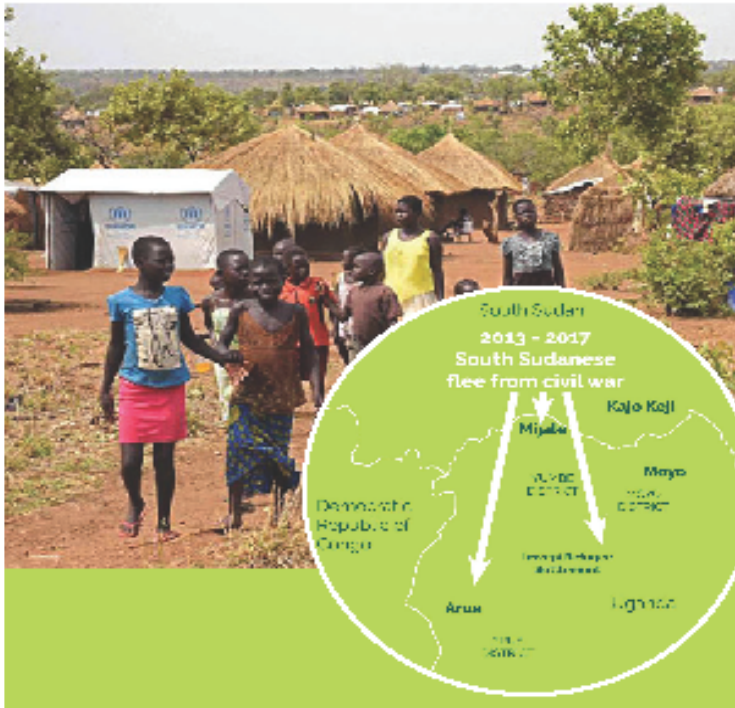
**Assisting Ministers:** The Revd Canon Anthony Hawley: 01794 390607, The Revd Canon Tony Monds: 01722 420942  
The Revd Kate Rosslyn Smith: 01722 780011, The Revd Kate Woolven: 07754 582395

**Lay Worship Leaders:** Yvonne & Kevin Follett: 01747 828785, Caroline Lamb: 01722 780789, Sally Leaver: 01722 780447,  
Naomi Martin: 07713031774, Don Morgan: 01722 718557, Adrian Taylor: 01722 325862, Gill Riley: 01722 780538, Janet Roe: 01725 519242,  
Biddy Trahair: 01722 780666, Rhoderick Voremberg: 07785 304142, James Wardroper: 01722 718152



# Charity News

## LENT PROJECT 2023



## ENABLING AGRICULTURE

CRESS supports South Sudanese Refugees in Rural Northern Uganda through our delivery partners based in Arua. We have established 62 Savings Groups, 34 of which are trained in sustainable agricultural techniques. We want to raise funds to buy tools so the others can benefit from agricultural training

Most of the refugee community in which CRESS works, lives under the \$2 a day mark. Many families just eat one simple innutritious meal a day of maize meaning they are hungry and poor nutrition leaves them vulnerable to illness. For those in refugee camps, the UN World Food Programme has announced it will have no choice but to make further food ration cuts for refugees which adds to their pressures as does the increase in inflation and climate change in Uganda. So we hope you will help us support them through this project

*Carlie.*

## WHAT WE HOPE TO DO

CRESS has trained 34 agriculture groups with an average of 25 members per group, together with 76 pastors who were also trained, giving a total of 926 refugee farmers trained in sustainable organic veg and fruit production and small business development up to 2021. Their gardens are flourishing but we can do more.

We hope to fund **tree seedlings**  
**tools training seeds**  
for **10** more of our 62 Savings Groups.

We want to raise funds so that a savings group of around 25 people can have tools, seeds, training and some fruit tree seedlings. This will enable the members to begin to grow nourishing crops to provide food, security against climate change and eventually produce to sell so they can purchase medicines, school fees and essentials.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP...

## JOIN IN OR RUN EVENTS DURING LENT

The programme of events is now being created, if you can help please email Emily Broomhead at [thechalkvalleychurches@gmail.com](mailto:thechalkvalleychurches@gmail.com) or contact Caroline on 07807 780 707, [caroline.lamb@cressuk.org](mailto:caroline.lamb@cressuk.org)

CHARITY NUMBER 1141343

# Police and Crime Commissioner

## Wiltshire Police Crime Commissioner Update

*Philip Wilkinson*



Listening to recent results of how Wiltshire Police officers feel about their job, their morale and general state of mind causes me great concern.

Hearing people's lived experiences are often very, very, different to what you think you know. I talk to our frontline officers regularly and these results aren't surprising given the last six months Wiltshire Police has had – and how policing is regarded generally at the moment.

But we can't just look at one element of these survey results in isolation.

Everything I, and my office, have been working on in the last few months – getting the right person for our next Chief Constable, the police precept and ensuring we have a budget that balances investment with efficiency, increasing performance, looking at strategic leadership and culture issues – is inter-connected with improving morale.

I heard an interesting quote this week: 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast'. And it's so true!

We can have all the strategies, plans, documents we like but if our workplace isn't in a good place, our standards and culture is off balance then we must acknowledge it will have direct impact on those working for the organisation.

Why does this matter? Why aren't we just getting on with policing?

Well, if we have more happy, satisfied, officers out on our streets – if they are staying in their jobs longer than a few years – then this ultimately has a knock-on effect on our communities, on the police service being delivered and it will contribute to Making Wiltshire Safer – the primary goal of both Wiltshire Police and my office.

Someone said this week that policing had been trading on the goodwill of its officers and staff for quite a long time – it is now time to redress that imbalance.

One good area to start would be to tackle pay - I believe police officers deserve to earn a decent salary – and Wiltshire Police deserves to have a fairer slice of the central government pie.

And that's why I will be adding my voice, along with other PCCs, on both of these issues at a national conference in a few weeks' time.

We all know lobbying for change takes time and that is why, in the meantime, I will be focusing on this – and how to tackle the root causes of these worrying results – over the coming months with our current leadership and our incoming new Chief Constable.

It has been a busy start to 2023 for us all.

*Philip Wilkinson - Wiltshire Police Crime Commissioner*

# Internet Security

## Fraudsters are pretending to be trustworthy companies

*Be aware - and if in doubt - Don't do it*

Impersonation scams are on the increase. Fraudsters are calling you and pretending to be a business or other trustworthy companies to make their scams seem believable.

They might ask or try to manipulate you into:

- Downloading software onto your computer or phone
- Sharing your bank security codes
- Transferring money out of your accounts because your account is at risk
- Transferring money to one of your existing contacts - they'll then try to trick this person into transferring the money into the fraudster's account

**Banks and Reputable businesses will never ask you to do any of these things.**

*Scam calls, texts and emails often seem genuine*

Fraudsters can fake our business number so it looks like it is a genuine number calling you. They often sound very convincing and might even know some details about you, your account or how a payment systems work.

They don't only pretend to be a business - they could claim to be someone else you trust, like your internet provider, the police, the council or any other figure of authority.

*How to protect yourself*

Always be wary of unexpected calls, texts and emails.

If you're asked to, via a text, email or caller, **never:**

- Download software
- Give control of your computer to someone else
- Transfer money to another account or an existing contact
- Give away your PIN, Online Banking, mobile or any other passcodes
- Click a link in an unexpected email or text - including those that seem to be from banks, delivery companies or the NHS

*If you get a call, text or email that asks you do something, contact the company using details from a trusted source, like their official website.*

*Courtesy of Barclays Bank team*



# Salisbury City Council

## A budget statement from the Leaders of Salisbury City Council

Yesterday on Mon 16 Jan 2023 at a meeting of the Full Council, Salisbury City Council agreed a rise in the precept of £102 per year. This means that those who pay Band D tax council will pay £335 per year, and those at Band C will pay £297.78, Band B £260.56 and Band A £223.33. Within the City 60% of properties are Band D and below, with the most numerous band being Band C. Full details of the budget agreed can be seen on the council website [here](#).

Here is a statement issued on behalf of the Leaders of the Council, Cllr Victoria Charleston, Cllr Ian Tomes and Cllr Annie Riddle.

“This is not a party political budget. It is a balanced budget. The city council’s reserves cannot be raided. They are already at the minimum level, and must be rebuilt.

Like households and businesses everywhere in this economic crisis, we face hugely increased costs.

Ours include the management of assets such as the Poultry Cross, where insurance will not cover all the repairs found to be needed after last year’s car crash, and upgrading our public toilets and playgrounds.

There is a significant increase in our staffing budget because we have taken on grounds and streetscene staff from former Wiltshire Council contractors idVerde, who used to work alongside our own teams. We will no longer have to pay the firm and contribute to its profits. This had all-party support because it will be more efficient and makes long-term financial sense.

In the short term we have to buy vehicles for this team, and because we have chosen to be ‘green’ they will be dearer than their fossil fuel equivalents.

We will be holding some posts vacant for now to save £70,000.

Since our previous budget in January 2022, we’ve had an increase of 223% in our electricity charges, 208% on gas and 50% on water and sewerage. Combined, these take our utility bills over half a million pounds.

We’ve had a nationally agreed pay rise for staff averaging 8%, with another 4% allowed for in the next financial year. Our insurance has more than doubled to £160,000. And we’re facing an unknown rise in business rates in April.

We also have to pay higher employers’ pension contributions – up from 11.1 to 13.7%.

We are not funding any fancy new projects. We are maintaining much-needed community services such as the Pantry and looking at co-working with a charity to reduce our overheads. We have reduced or cut entirely spending on other things which are not our core responsibility, such as city centre security guards, policing of litter louts, and public art.

We have cut £10,000 from the Neighbourhood Plan budget, reduced spending on floral displays, ringroad cleansing, the Future Salisbury group which promotes the city, and on our Christmas and summer events budget (down 10%).

We have repeatedly invited the Conservatives to share in the council’s joint administration but they say they prefer to be in opposition. Nonetheless, we invited them to join us in preparing this budget. They didn’t even reply.”

# News and Notes

For Bodenham, Britford, Charlton All Saints, Nunton and Odstock

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