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Kids' Page

The Big Garden BirdWatch takes place this month 28th - 30th January. Can you find all the birds hidden in the letter grid?



Blackbird

Blue tit

Collared Dove

DunNock

GoldFinch

Great Tit

House Sparrow

Nuthatch

Pigeon

Robin

Thrush

Wren

Can you recognise the silhouettes of these common UK birds? The first one has been done for you.

PIGEON

DUCK

SWAN

CROW

RED KITE

WREN

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Bird
Silhouettes
1. Red Kite
2. Wren
3. Pigeon
4. Swan
5. Duck
6. Crow

Word Grid Solution

WORD

MAGAZINE

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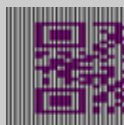
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Happy New Year from Warfield Parish Council!

We hope you have all managed to see loved ones during the Christmas period and have had a safe and peaceful time together.

Updates on events

Our planned programme of events in 2021 were curtailed by the pandemic but we hope to be able to run a full programme of events during the next twelve months. In editions of the Word look out for:

The Great British Spring Clean –TBA through March and April (date TBA)

Vegetable Take & Grow –End of April/Beginning of May (date TBA)

Beacon lighting for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – evening of Thursday 2 June

Other Platinum Jubilee events – 3-5 June

Winkfield & Warfield Family Cycle Ride – July (date TBA)

Summer of Fun event – late July (date TBA)

Arts Week 2022 – 23-30 October

Christmas carols around the Christmas Tree – Friday 2 December

We will also proceed with our delayed 125th anniversary event, to plant nearly 200 trees, to create a small woodland area on Cabbage Hill. Planting will take place between January and March We are currently accepting expressions of interest from anyone with a few of hours to spare to help us out. If you and your family are interested please e-mail us at info@warfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk with the title 'Tree planting'. Final dates will be dependent on ground conditions and availability of tree whips.

Parish Council opening hours

At the time of writing the Parish Office will reopen on Tuesday 4 January. Our opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am – 12noon for any residents that would like to buy garden waste sacks or for enquires.

Contacting your Parish Councillor

If you have any matter you would like to discuss with one of our councillors, you can either find their contact details on our website www.warfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk or you can call our office on 01344 457777 and we will arrange a call back for you.

We expect that Councillor Surgery sessions will restart in 2022. Please look out in the Word or on our website for more details.

Sign up for our digital newsletter

We send out a digital version of the Wren newsletter monthly. To receive this in your inbox please visit our website to sign-up.

Go Nuts in 2022



No longer feared as the enemy of weight loss, these little nutritional powerhouses have come into their own. Here are four reasons to go a little bit nuts this year.

Health - Eating nuts boosts health. They are particularly beneficial to heart health, lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease. A review of 25 scientific led scientists to conclude that eating 70g of nuts per day resulted in lower total cholesterol and lower LDL (bad) cholesterol.

Stay slim - One Spanish study of almost 9000 adults, showed that those who ate

nuts at least twice a week had a much lower risk of gaining weight over the next few years compared to those who rarely or never ate them. Another study found that despite having the same calorie-intake, adults who included 84g of almonds into their daily diet in place of some of the carbs, had around a 60% greater reduction in weight and body fat after 6 months compared to those who did not eat them.

Muscles – Nuts contain the right combinations of protein and essential fatty acids, to protect muscle tissue, repair damaged cells and reduce inflammation.

Portability - If you're looking for the easiest healthy snack to stash in your handbag or office drawer, nuts are your friend. They provide an instant energy-boost to beat the mid-afternoon slump, and don't cause a sudden spike in blood sugar like chocolate-based snacks.

Keep portions to around 30g per day and stick to raw unsalted varieties.

But now is definitely the time to go nuts!

By Sarah Davey

The Perfect Cup of Coffee

Do you love a cup of freshly brewed coffee? Me too. But making it is such a faff - coffee grinder, beans, filter, etc. It can get very tedious, especially if you just want a quick shot. So, what about getting rid of all of that hassle with a coffee pod machine?

Coffee pod machines are a great shortcut to great tasting drinks. Simply load a pre packaged pod into the holder, press brew, and let the machine do all the work for you. Recycle the empty pod and sit back to enjoy your drink. No mess, no fuss.

The machine works by having a precisely measured amount of coffee (along with any other flavourings) in a special pod. When you press the brew button the device draws water from its reservoir, heats it, and then pumps it through the pod to brew the drink. Your coffee is then poured into your cup and frothed on the way.

The contents of the pod dictate what drink you'll get. There are endless options from espresso to latte to hot chocolates and other drinks. Some machines allow you to manually vary how the drink is made,

others identify each pod and will run the best program for that particular drink.

Prices vary from around £40 to a couple of hundred depending on what features you want. There are a few different types of pods, and each machine is usually tied to a particular brand, so make sure you check out what's available before you buy. Recycling pods has become a lot easier with initiatives like <https://podback.org/>

So put your feet up and let technology take the strain.



By Andy Davis

Warfield Environment Group

HEDGE MAINTENANCE

at LARKS HILL



Saturday 22 January

10.30am – 1.00pm

Meet at Larks Hill car park (nearest postcode RG42 3QD)

Warfield Environment Group volunteers, together with volunteers from the 2nd Bracknell Beavers and Meadowbrook Montessori School, have planted over 300 metres of hedgerow at Larks Hill since 2014. In order for the hedges to continue to establish well we need volunteers to continue with essential maintenance tasks started in November, including pruning, weeding and mulching. Accompanied children welcome. Please wear suitable, warm outdoor clothes and footwear, and bring gloves. Please also bring your own tools if possible (secateurs, loppers, fork, trowel, spade). Email for further information or contact Claire on 01344 302708.



www.warfieldenvgroup.wordpress.com
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Visit our website to see our new programme of events for 2022

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CHOOSING A GYM



You've made it through Christmas but, as usual, you've come out the other side with a few extra pounds around your middle. It's time to don the workout kit and exercise. But choosing a gym can be a challenging task. What workout regime do you want? Will you feel comfortable? What facilities and equipment should you be using?

The best way to find this out is to book appointments and visit a few. Most gyms will be happy to have a member of staff walk you around the facility, show you what's on offer and explain what other classes and programs there are. As you go round you need to keep an eye open to work out if this is the right place for you.

Are the staff friendly and helpful? Chat to some of the trainers and fitness team. They should be happy to talk to you about your goals and offer guidance as to what sorts of exercise might work best for you. You should get a feel for their attitude to new members, especially if you've never been a regular gym goer.

Have a think before you go about what sorts of exercise you might like best. If you prefer classes then you'll need to make sure you ask about their timetable. Ask to see where the classes take place and ask about numbers attending. Too few people can mean a class loses the group energy.

If you like pumping iron, make sure the weight area and machines match your skill level. Again, check numbers as you want to be able to use the equipment without having to wait for too long. Are there enough stations? Is there enough room for what you want to do? Is there enough equipment so you're not waiting for someone else to finish with it before you can get going again?

Functional training is becoming more popular now, where you use body weight and movement to build strength and flexibility. If this is your thing make sure the gym has the right equipment for what you want to do. Is there a big enough space set aside for this activity?

What sort of people are using the gym? If it's full of body builders you might feel out of place if your aim is simply to tone up a little. If the swimming pool is full of people in their seventies swimming slowly and chatting and you like to sprint lengths, you might need to look elsewhere for your work outs. The gym should be somewhere you enjoy going. Having the right mix of people goes a long way to creating that feeling.

After you've seen round the gym think about attending for a couple of sessions before committing to a membership. Many places offer a proper introductory gym session where a trainer will take you through all the equipment and suggest an individualised workout program. Use this session to confirm whether the place is right for you and to jump start your exercise program.

Going to the gym has to be fun. If it's not you will find excuses not to go. Losing weight and getting in shape is all about perseverance. It's hard work but worth it.

By Toby Malone

Fishing for Benefits

Why we should all eat oily fish



Oily fish are those that are high in omega-3 fatty acid. This is an essential fatty acid which our body cannot manufacture for itself so has to obtain from food. Omega-3 fatty acid is a polyunsaturated fat, made up of two main fatty acids - EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid)

The most common and easily accessible oily fish in the UK are salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines, herring, and anchovies. Unlike salmon, which is oily whether fresh, tinned, or smoked, tuna is classed as an oily fish only when fresh and not when it's tinned, because the canning process reduces the long-chain omega-3 fatty acids to levels similar to those in white fish. Also, tuna contains small amounts of mercury, which is toxic to humans, and we are advised to restrict the amount we eat. Smoked salmon contains a lot of sodium so is best eaten in small quantities, but the soft bones in tinned salmon are positively beneficial for adding calcium and phosphorous to our diet.

Eating a diet rich in oily fish has many health benefits.

Protection against heart disease – Numerous scientific studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acid is beneficial for helping to reduce high cholesterol and high blood pressure, two of the greatest predictors for heart disease.

Neuroprotective properties - The DHA in omega-3 fatty acid, is required for proper

brain development and function and offers protection against certain neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's Disease.

Joint protection - Omega-3 fatty acid is naturally anti-inflammatory and has been shown in several scientific studies to offer protection of joints and may even help in the prevention of rheumatoid arthritis.

Positive mental health implications - Because depression appears less common in nations where people eat large amounts of oily fish, scientists have conducted studies which suggest that fish oils may prevent or treat depression and other mood disorders. This may be because omega-3s travels easily through the brain cell membrane and may then interact with mood-related molecules inside the brain. Their anti-inflammatory actions may help relieve depression and anxiety.

Reduces risk of certain cancers - Omega-3 supplementation is widely employed in the treatment of cancer patients as a supplement to the main treatment. Many research papers since the 1970s have shown links with omega-3 fatty acid and a reduced risk of certain cancers, including colon, breast, and prostate. This is most likely due to the anti-inflammatory effects of EPA and DHA.

The NHS currently recommends that we include **at least** two portions of fish in our diet a week, **one** of which should be an oily fish. One portion is about 140g. However, all girls and women who reached menopause age, including those trying for a baby, or who are pregnant or breastfeeding, should have **no more than 2 portions of oily fish a week**. A portion is around 140g. This is because the low levels of pollutants that oily fish contain can build up in the body and may harm an unborn baby during a future pregnancy.

Useful websites

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/fish-and-shellfish-nutrition>

By Louise Addison

New Year Resolutions. What's Yours?

A New Year's resolution is a promise for the new year. Regardless of what resolution you commit to, the goal generally is to improve life in the coming year.

Resolutions can come in many forms. Some people make a promise to change a bad habit, such as quitting smoking or eating less junk food. Other people make a promise to develop a positive habit, such as starting an exercise program, volunteering in their community, or recycling more.

The tradition of New Year's resolutions dates all the way back to 153 B.C. January is named after Janus, a mythical god of early Rome.

Janus had two faces — one looking forward, one looking backward. This allowed him to look back on the past and forward toward the future.

On December 31, the Romans imagined Janus looking backward into the old year and forward into the new year. This became a symbolic time for Romans to

make resolutions for the new year and forgive enemies for troubles in the past.

The Romans also believed Janus could forgive them for their wrongdoings in the previous year. They would give gifts and make promises, believing Janus would see this and bless them in the year ahead.

And thus, the New Year's resolution was born!

What is your promise for 2022?



By Tracey Anderson

Sudoku

		5				1		
			5					
	4	7			3		2	
6		1						3
		2						
			9				8	
	8	6			4			1
3					2	9		
						6		8

How to Play

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9, **with no repetition!**

That's all there is to it.

You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic - there's no maths involved and no adding up.

It's fun. It's challenging. It's addictive!

(solution on page 18)

Buttermilk Pancakes

A breakfast treat



Makes 12 pancakes

Preparation time: 25 minutes plus standing time

Cooking time: 15-20 minutes

Ingredients

175g Plain flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ tbsp caster sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 egg

375ml buttermilk

3tbsp vegetable oil

Serving suggestions

Whipping cream

Bananas, Blueberries, or raspberries

Maple syrup and smoked bacon

Method

Sift the flour, sugar, and bicarbonate of soda into a mixing bowl.

Beat the egg lightly into the buttermilk

and vegetable oil in a large jug.

Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and beat to a smooth creamy batter. Leave to stand for at least 30 minutes

Brush a non-stick frying pan with oil and place over a medium heat. Pour enough batter to make 10cm round pancakes. Cook for $1\frac{1}{2}$ – 2 minutes per side. Set aside on a warmed plate covered with a linen cloth until all pancakes are cooked.

What if you don't have buttermilk?

Creamy, tangy buttermilk lends a beautiful flavour to this recipe but its not an ingredient many of us have lying around. But don't worry, it's incredibly easy to make.

Mix 240ml whole milk with 1 tbsp white vinegar or lemon juice. Let it sit for five minutes until it's thickened and curdled slightly. Use it one for one in recipes requiring buttermilk. So, for this recipe use 360ml milk with $1\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp vinegar or lemon juice.



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Garden View

This month - Plants as air purifiers

A friend recently asked me whether there are any plants which might help with the humidity and mould problem in the bathroom and back bedroom of her Victorian house. It's a problem that actually affects many British households. Many of our homes are old, and in our damp climate humidity can rise pretty quickly in the winter when all the windows are closed, and the radiators are on.

With increased humidity comes the increased risk of mould and associated respiratory problems

Obviously, we can install a dehumidifier or an extractor fan, but nature also provides her own dehumidifiers and air purifiers in the form of certain house plants.

The best houseplants for mould-prone areas are those which are efficient at absorbing moisture through their leaves. Not all plants are equally efficient at this task so I've selected four of the best.

Each offers a different aesthetic so there should be one that's perfect for you.

English ivy is a native plant and it's a low-cost option. It removes airborne mould, but also other toxins such as formaldehyde and benzene. It grows best in bright, indirect sunlight so is perfect for north-facing rooms. You need to keep it out of reach of toddlers and pets because the leaves are toxic.

Peace Lilies remind me of the film *Hot Fuzz*. Sergeant Angel, played by Sean Pegg loved his Peace Lily, and he had good reason. Not only are they elegant plants with stunning white flowers, but research conducted by NASA found the



Peace Lily to be one of the top indoor plants for air purification. This tropical plant breaks down and neutralizes benzene, formaldehyde, and carbon monoxide.

One of the advantages of a Peace Lily is that it tells you when its thirsty by drooping and that it's getting too much light by turning yellow. They love high humidity areas with indirect sunlight like most

bathrooms and are great at preventing mould. Like English ivy the leaves and flowers are toxic.

Palms add a tropical touch to a room and will efficiently reduce humidity. There are many varieties and some of the best are the lady palm, dwarf palm and reed palm. Indirect light is best and keep the surface of the soil moist but not wet.

The Snake Plant is a wonderfully architectural succulent. Its evergreen sword-shaped leaves grow upright, and almost resemble artificial foliage. It's great at air purification and is one of the few plants that can convert carbon dioxide into oxygen at night. This quality makes it particularly good for use in a bedroom as it can help regulate healthy airflow. Snake plants can absorb cancer-causing pollutants, including CO₂, benzene, formaldehyde, xylene, and toluene and act as an effective defence against airborne allergies.

Plants can't solve a full-on damp problem and they won't replace a built-in humidifier or extractor fan. But plants are a great way to improve the quality of the air in your home and they look beautiful too.

Happy indoor gardening

By Rachael Leverton

Personal Electric Transport

Going Green on the Roads

Our efforts to be green have been centring around transport recently. The UK is set to ban the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2040. But what about going even greener still with small, personal electric vehicles.



motor built into the footplate. With a throttle and brake built onto the handlebars you simply step on and off you go.

But one of the big differences to e-bikes is that electric scooters are actually illegal to ride on UK roads. This may come

Personal Light Electric Vehicles (PLEV) have been around since the Eighties. The concept was pioneered by Sir Clive Sinclair with his C5. At that time, the vision of personal electric transport was ahead of its time as the technology for batteries and motors could not deliver a truly usable vehicle. But in 2021 electric powered bikes and scooters have now made their way on to our streets and roads.

So, what are your choices and what are you legally allowed to do with these new PLEVs?

E-bikes are the easiest to understand. These are basically bicycles, (so they are not classed as an electric vehicle), with an electric motor and battery bolted on to the frame to provide power assistance to your normal pedalling. Providing your electrically powered bicycle has working pedals, a less than 250 W motor, and a top speed of under 15 mph it still classes as a bicycle. You can ride it on roads, cycle paths and anywhere else a pushbike is legal. You can of course buy more powerful e-bikes, but as soon as you go above these specifications they are classed as a motorbike and you'll need a licence, road tax, insurance, and everything else that goes with it.

An alternative is to go for an electric scooter. You've probably seen these popping up around the country in various rental hire schemes. These are basically stand-up scooters with a battery and

as a surprise as you've no doubt seen numerous people zipping around towns on rental machines. Scooter law is evolving fast and rental scooters have been given special permission to run on roads while the government analyses their effect on town congestion and traffic usage.

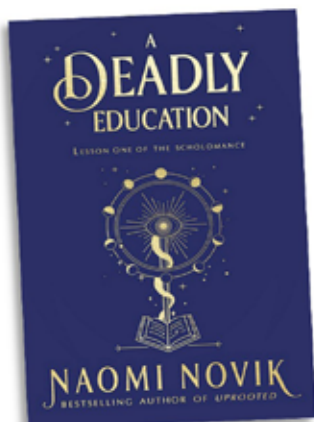
But this special permission is not (yet) extended to privately owned personal electric scooters. These are still classed as electric vehicles which would again mean having tax, insurance, etc. to be legal on the roads. Even then, because they fall into the Personal Light Electric Vehicle category, their low-power and maximum speed mean they can't be used on public roads. This leaves scooters stuck in an inconvenient situation, even if you made them road legal...they wouldn't be road legal!

There is a lot of pressure to change this, but for now if you have a personal electric scooter you are only legally allowed to use it on private land where you have the landowner's permission. Riding a scooter on the road or pavement is breaking the law and you could be prosecuted.

So, before you invest in one of these innovative personal transport solutions do make sure that you are legally allowed to use it to get to where you want to go. With the potential savings in carbon emissions and traffic congestion expect the laws to change quickly over the next few years as we all try to do our bit to save the planet.

By Andy Davis

A Good Read



***A Deadly Education* by Naomi Novik**

It's no secret that Harry Potter books are read by adults as much as by children. But what if there was a series about a school of magic written especially for adults? Well, that is what

Naomi Novik has done. However, it is not wizarding school as you know it.

In this first novel in the Scholomance series we meet El, a student at the Scholomance who is working through her studies, fast approaching graduation. But in this case graduation is not a celebratory event but a fight for survival. As a loner El is in danger. Lone students rarely survive graduation, and her best chance is to find an enclave that will have her. Being born to a Welsh witch she lived most of her childhood in a commune with her mother, away from other sorcerers. This has left her without the support of an enclave, unlike her fellow students such as Orion from the New York enclave. In addition, her penchant for dark magic leaves her isolated from the enclave students.

A school with no teachers or anyone in charge, the students tend to fend for themselves, and building up their skills as best they can to fight the maleficaria: mana-eating monsters who feed on the students.

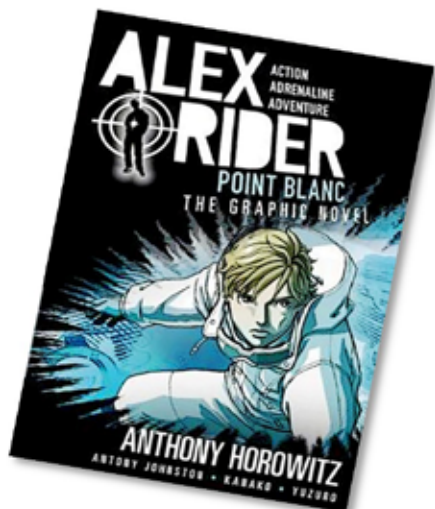
Novik is exceptional at transporting you away from this world and into the world she has created. A multi-layered world with a language and natural law system all of its own. It takes a bit of getting used to but is totally worth it.

***Point Blanc: The Graphic Novel* by Anthony Horowitz, Antony Johnston, Kanako and Yuzuru**

For many young readers the name 'Alex Rider' needs no introduction. Like a teenage James Bond, Alex is a spy who works for MI6. Point Blanc was the second Alex Ryder novel, and this version follows the same story, but adapted into a graphic novel.

Alex is sent undercover by MI6 to Point Blanc, an exclusive school in the Swiss Alps for the rebellious teenage sons of some of the richest people in the world. Two millionaires have been killed and the only connection between them are that they both had sons attending Point Blanc. Can Alex find some connection that will lead to the motive for the killings?

Full of gadgets, chases, and thrills, the original series of books have been a huge hit with teenage readers. This graphic novel is especially suited for reluctant readers who struggle with large amounts of descriptive text, along with fans of graphic novels in general.



By Willow Coby

What's Your Hobby?



Are you looking for a new hobby for 2022?

We have some great ideas, most of them modest, proving you don't have to spend a fortune to have a hobby.

Painting - If you felt that you failed at art when you were at school why not try again as an adult? It's not about aiming to be the next Monet or Picasso (though you never know!), but about learning to express yourself in a no pressure environment.

Join a Choir - Now that singing is allowed again the time is right to join a choir. Communal singing is good for reducing stress and improving your health. It also helps to make new friends.

Try Pottery - If every you've watched The Great Pottery Throw Down (and if you haven't why not?) and thought 'That looks fun!', now is the perfect time to investigate pottery classes at your local college. It's a tactile, absorbing hobby and you'll get to meet some lovely creative people.

Start a small veggie garden - And when I say small I mean really small. If you've never gardened before it can be daunting. So, choose an old garden pot, or measure out one square metre of your plot and choose something interesting to grow, like rainbow chard, or heritage tomatoes. You even get to eat what you grow. As you become more confident add another pot, or another square metre. Baby steps.

Learn to cook - If you can't cook, buy a simple instructional book, and get stuck in. Delia Smith's How to Cookbooks are particularly good. They take you through

which pots and pans you need and even how to boil an egg.

If you can already cook, you could set aside one night a week to try a new recipe. You might decide to try Mexican recipes, or Indian recipes or regional recipes from around the UK. Get the family involved and have fun with it

Photography - We are all photographers now. Every smartphone has a camera. There are evening classes in smartphone photography now. Or maybe you have a nice camera and have never worked out how to use it properly. Taking beautiful pictures is a skill we can all learn and being able to record a beautiful moment: the birth of a child, a special family holiday, or just a sunny afternoon in the garden will make it worth the effort.

Learn to Sew - A few years ago I took an evening class called 'Make do and Mend.' It taught simple skills like hemming, mending and minor adjustments. I even made a festive tablecloth!

Of course, you might prefer to make clothes from scratch. Creating my own wardrobe is on my bucket list and one day I'll take a class and begin to learn how.

Take a Walk - Wherever you live there will be a book of local walks. Discover pocket parks, hidden historical monuments and pretty or interesting views. Better still, find a friend to walk and talk with and explore the area around your home.

Learn Language but stay close to home - The UK has some beautiful languages. Choose from British Sign Language (BSL), Welsh or Gaelic. You can attend a class or learn online, or with an app. Duo is a particularly good app for Welsh or Gaelic, and it's completely free. If you prefer in person lessons then most colleges offer evening classes in BSL.

These are some ideas for new hobbies. If nothing here piques your interest, think about what you love to do and then find a class, or a book and get stuck in.

By Loraine Franklin

Useful Numbers

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111
(Anonymous freephone number)
Thames Valley Police 101
(Non-emergency number)
Emergency 999

Gas Emergency 0800 111999
Electricity Emergency 0800 404090
Power Cut Helpline 105
Water Emergency 0333 0000365

Bracknell Forest Council 01344 352000
(Customer Services)
Bracknell Town Council 01344 420079
Binfield Parish Council 01344 454602
Warfield Parish Council 01344 457777
Winkfield Parish Council 01344 885110

ChildLine 0800 1111
Samaritans 116 123
DrinkLine 0300 1231110

National Rail Enquiries 03457 484950
Gatwick Airport 0844 8920322
Heathrow Airport 0844 3351801

NHS help & advice 111
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Royal Berkshire Hospital 0118 3225111
Wexham Park Hospital 01753 633000
Frimley Park Hospital 01276 604604

South Hill Park 01344 484123
Bracknell Leisure Centre 01344 454203
The Look Out 01344 354400

Sudoku Solution

2	3	5	8	4	7	1	6	9
1	6	8	5	2	9	3	7	4
9	4	7	1	6	3	8	2	5
6	5	1	2	7	8	4	9	3
8	9	2	4	3	5	7	1	6
4	7	3	9	1	6	5	8	2
5	8	6	7	9	4	2	3	1
3	1	4	6	8	2	9	5	7
7	2	9	3	5	1	6	4	8



Save Energy...and the planet

There are many simple changes we can make in our homes to reduce our electricity

and gas usage and do our bit towards saving the planet.

Thermostat - The thermostat is your friend! It's an uncomplicated way to take control of your energy usage. By turning the heating thermostat down by one degree you can save around £60 a year. A smart thermostat can connect to your Wi-Fi so you can control your heating and hot water through your smart phone, tablet, or desktop. A smart meter monitors and displays your energy use in near real-time so you can see exactly how much electricity and/or gas you're using and use the information to make adjustments to cut household costs.

Lighting - Buy energy saving lightbulbs. Gradually phase out any incandescent or halogen bulbs in your home. LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes) are the most energy-efficient bulbs available and are much

cheaper to run. Turn lights off in unused rooms. Consider a timer switch to set lamps to come on and off. These plug straight into the wall and can be programmable. Did you know that dust sitting on lampshades or bulbs can dim the light in your home? Regularly clean lamp shades or fittings to ensure the light can get through.

Stop the standby - Switch appliances off at the plug to save energy. This alone could save you £35 a year.

Unblock the radiators - Items of furniture are often placed in front of radiators, which partially blocks heat circulation. Moving furniture just a few centimetres away from radiators can help boost the temperature of your room, which means you may be able to turn your thermostat down and save money, without feeling the temperature difference. Also, many radiators are placed under windows, and are completely covered by full-length curtains when they are drawn, effectively curtailing their ability to heat a room. Hemming curtains to a shorter length can make a massive difference.

By Caitlin McNamara

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BURNS NIGHT

Robert Burns was a Scottish bard, born in 1759 who wrote many poems and lyrics during his life. His most famous work is probably *Auld Lang Syne*, sang at New Year and which translates as 'times long past'. Burns is one of Scotland's most important cultural icons as many of his works addressed the political and civil issues of the time.



Robert Burns' friends and acquaintances held the first Burns supper on July 21, the anniversary of his death, in the late 1700s. This date was later changed to January 25th, which marks his birthday. Burns suppers gradually became a tradition and are now held by people and organizations with Scottish origins worldwide.

At Burns Night events, many men and women wear kilts or other clothes made from their family tartan. At the centre of the supper is the haggis, which brought to the table to the tune of bagpipes. For the

uninitiated haggis is a savoury pudding containing 'sheep's pluck' (the heart, liver, and lungs of the animal) which are minced with onion, oatmeal, suet, spices, stock

and salt, then encased in the animal's stomach - though artificial casings are more commonly used now. It can be baked or boiled and although it sounds quite revolting is surprisingly delicious, at least to this author! It's

served with a whisky sauce and some neeps and tatties - a mixture of swede and potato which works beautifully with the rough, oaty haggis. Cranachan is the traditional desert of cream, raspberries and oatmeal. It should all be washed down with a good whisky.

Have a great Burns night. *Gun cuireadh do chupa thairis le slainte agus sonas.*

(Translation: May your cup overflow with health and happiness)

By Tracey Anderson

PLUMBING PROBLEMS



Would you know what to do?

Frozen Pipes - Turn off the mains water supply. If the frozen pipe has a split, empty the cold-water cistern by opening all the cold taps. If the pipe hasn't split, thaw it out slowly by applying hot water bottles. If any part of the hot water system is frozen or there is a split, turn the central heating off and call a professional.

Burst pipe - Turn off the mains water. Open all the cold taps so the pipes and

storage system drain quickly, but do not turn on the hot taps. Turn off the central heating, any electric immersion heaters and call a professional.

Blocked sink or toilet - If the sink is blocked, unscrew the trap - the u-shaped pipe under the sink (don't forget to put a bowl underneath to catch any water!) - and check. If the blockage isn't there, or your toilet is blocked, use a plunger that completely covers the outlet. It creates a vacuum to suck and push the blockage away. A chemical dissolver breaks down organic material, clearing the blockage away with little or no mess. Call a professional if the blockage remains.

The best way to prevent plumbing emergencies is to make sure your storage system and exposed pipes are well insulated and have your central heating system serviced annually.

By Tracey Anderson



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