

Village News

in Swindon Village, Cheltenham

Your local newsletter sponsored by the Parish Council and delivered by volunteers.

February 2026 Edition No.520



FEBRUARY

Monday 9th **Parish Council meeting.**
7.30 Swindon Village Hall, bar area.

Wednesday 14th **Swindon Village Society.** 7.30pm.
A talk on 'Gloucestershire's Inland Waterways'
by Tony Conder. Visitors welcome - £3

Sunday 22nd **Litter Pick.** Start 10.30 Village hall

MARCH

Monday 9th **Parish Council meeting.**
7.30 Swindon Village Hall, bar area.

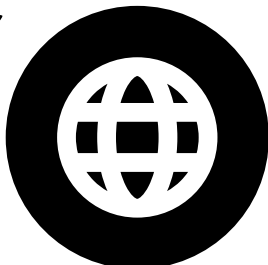
Wednesday 14th **Swindon Village Society.** 7.30pm.
The talk is 'Tewkesbury Abbey – An Armchair Guide'
by Richard Goddard. Visitors Welcome - £3

Sunday 29th **Litter Pick.** Start 10.30 Village hall

A Connected Community!



Using your phone's camera to hover over each QR Code square below for direct link access.



Parish Council Website

For full, detailed information from and about the Parish Council visit www.swindonparish.org.uk



Parish Council Facebook Page

A public page for live information and news updates from the council:
www.facebook.com/swindonparish



Swindon Village Facebook Community Group

A private group for the discussion of local issues, sharing and requesting help in the local community.



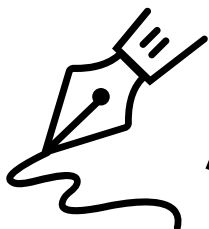
Anti-Social Behaviour

If you have any concerns about anti-social behaviour do not hesitate to contact the police.



Ring 101 (you may be charged for this phone call)
email101@gloucestershire.police.uk
<https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/ro/report/>

NB: Get an INCIDENT REPORT NUMBER and let the parish know about it. If the police are not made aware of the problem THERE ISN'T A PROBLEM.



A Note From The Editor

Happy New Year to you all!

As I've said before, I'm not one for New Year resolutions. If something was that important to me, I hope that I'd have made the changes earlier in the year.

Of course, I'd love to drop three dress sizes or take a walk in the fresh air every day, but these would require large effort (and willpower) for me. Experts say that small adjustments bring about big changes, so I decided to give it a try.

Last year, I was becoming a bit overwhelmed with work and the extras I take on. It wasn't necessarily the amount of the extra time taken, simply that all the deadlines began to hit at the same time. I'm not great at saying no, sorry I don't have time to that, or please would somebody help me to...

I realised that unless I made myself say those tricky (to me) phrases and ask for help, then I was using the extra tasks as excuses not to do the things I really should prioritise.

I'm happy to report that things are less frantic. Although I am still busy (who isn't?), my days are now complemented by things that I really want to do and once we finish the excesses of Christmas chocolate lurking in the cupboard then maybe I'll even start the walking, and the dress size reduction will be a happy by-product?

Please don't suggest I go to the gym though. That will be a very easy NO to say!

Karren



Swindon Parish Council

Swindon Parish and Community Website: <https://swindonparish.org.uk>

Let's start with Elms Park. The number of houses that developers can build is subject to limits due to the traffic issues in the area. Prior to the commencement of the M5 Junction 10 improvements no than 1,306 dwellings can be occupied, and only 3,327 dwellings before the scheme is finished. You may have seen that some works have started along the Tewkesbury Road. This work was started at risk as the full funding to make M5 Junction 10 four way was not in place.

However, it has now been announced that the UK Government will commit to providing an additional £71.5 million for the work, which will now proceed. Presumably we can expect the housing developments to also ramp up.

The Parish Council has set a precept of £14,765.94 for 2026-2027. This equates to 37p per week on the council tax bill of a band D household.

The Parish Council got parking bay lines painted on the Village Hall car park on the 12th January. On the same day a woman approached the Chair of the Village Hall Committee and a Parish Councillor and delivered a torrent of abuse, claiming that the lines reduced the number of parking spaces. Untrue unless you include people who park illegally and/or inconsiderately. It was also pointed out that one of the objectives of the exercise is to make the space safer for children. We are always prepared to listen to other points of view but it is a disgrace that volunteers working for the community should receive such abuse. I hope this woman finds somewhere to park, hopefully a long way away.

Tom, one of our Parish Councillors, planted a number of small trees in Old Mill Way but, while we enjoyed a dry, hot summer, the trees (for the most part) didn't and keeled over. We have accepted an offer of two larger trees to be planted in the area. We are also arranging



Swindon Parish Council

arranging to receive a tree report that will help us to proactively manage our trees rather than simply reacting to limb failures and public safety issues.

The dry summer has been followed by howling winter winds that tore the roofing felt on the Quat Goose Lane bus shelter. We have had it repaired.



We have had a new traditional finger post installed in Church Road pointing down Quat Goose Lane towards Brockhampton. “New traditional” sounds like an oxymoron. The previous (old traditional) finger post had rusted and failed. We were offered a modern sign but felt that the post should be replaced with one similar to the deceased

one in keeping with the vibe of the Conservation Area. It was purchased by the Parish Council and installed by our colleagues at the County Council.

The finger post points the way to Brockhampton but don't follow its advice on 19th and 20th February. Works on the railway crossing barriers will close the road.

Fly tipping has become an even bigger problem following closure of the recycling centre. Around the industrial and retail areas in particular the problem is of a scale the volunteer litter pickers are unable to address. We are trying to get more rubbish bins in the area, though only prosecution is likely to deter some of the tradesmen who deposit commercial rubbish in our hedgerows



Swindon Parish Council

The Parish and Borough Councillors strongly opposed planning consent being given for the Home Farm housing development. The developer had been told that the local roads (Quat Goose Lane, Brockhampton Lane) could not support the construction traffic and increased residential traffic. The roads need to be built out in Elms Park first. Gloucestershire Highways and the Parish Council are of the same opinion. When the scheme came forward again the developer was told that, since no mitigation of the traffic issues had been offered, it would be refused. To avoid that the scheme was withdrawn. The Home Farm site is part of the North West Cheltenham housing allocation. It will happen at some point.

Despite tracking the application, the Parish Council received no notification that new documents were available or that a new consultation period had commenced. We have taken this up with the Borough Council. Sometimes we only get to hear of revised planning applications when eagle eyed local residents tip us off!

The Parish Council has produced a grants policy. We aim to support deserving local organisations. If you represent such a group and have sound reasons for seeking funding, please get in touch.

We have set a date for the Annual Parish Meeting of the 24th April. That is provisional. The Village Hall is only available from 8:00pm so the Council might see if an earlier slot is available on a different day. Stick it in your diary anyway, just in case. If we move the date you can go to the pictures.

On a number of occasions, the traffic lights in Manor Road have been stuck on all red or not functioning at all. The Council wondered whether a roundabout or part time lights would be a better solution, a thought echoed by residents. At quiet times (when the lights are working) traffic is unnecessarily delayed.



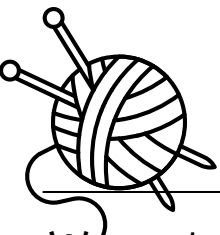
Swindon Parish Council

Because of the traffic issues in the area, Highways had told National Grid that they could only carry out essential work. However, routine work had been done under an “essential” permit. Highways will take them to task.

I have just heard that Borough Council elections won't take place in May. You can breathe easy. This is due to impending changes to local government arrangements. Parish Council elections will still take place.

I was recently corresponding with a supplier. We were at cross purposes and I received the lovely message “Thanks so much for your email and the confusion.” Politeness costs nothing.

Shaun Cullimore, Clerk to Swindon Parish Council
parish.clerk@swindonparish.org.uk



Marle Hill WI

We met on Monday 5 January 2026. Our speaker was Sarah who gave a very interesting talk on the History of Pantomime with slides.

Our monthly lunch and book club dates were given out to the members. Do come and join us and have some ME time and enjoy the company of like-minded ladies.

Our next meeting is on Monday 2 February 2026 and our speaker will be Sarah Davies talking about Managing Memory together. We will have the usual Bring and Buy table with items left over going to the charity shop.

If you would like any more information, please contact Sara Jefferies.

Sue Davies, Marle Hill WI



St. Lawrence's Church

RECTORY REFLECTIONS - REV JACQUELINE

I wonder if you have a bucket list? A list of things you would really like to fit into your lifetime. It might be a sky dive or to visit far-off shores. Whatever our age and skills, there is always time for a new experience. Perhaps 2026 will be the year where your plans will be put into action.

At the beginning of February in the church, we celebrate Candlemas, or the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. This festival marks the end of Christmas. It was the Jewish tradition to make sacrifice in thanksgiving for the birth of a son. We hear the story of two elderly people, Simeon and Anna who have waited all their lives to meet the Messiah. This was the only thing on their bucket list and they have waited patiently for years. When they see the Holy family, they rejoice because they recognise the baby Jesus as their Messiah and give thanks knowing that their wait is over.

They also predict that the child will have a turbulent life but that he will save those who believe in who he is. These two older people see the light of Christ for the first time and it shines brightly for them in their darkness.

Candlemas leaves us with an important message which is that we are never too old or too young to do God's will. The Candlemas heroes are the baby Jesus and two elderly people Simeon and Anna both of whom have waited years to see the Christ Child. They were in God's eyes not too old to proclaim the Christ. The baby Jesus is also not too young to offer God's salvation to us. Candlemas is a festival celebrating not only the salvation offered by Christ but the wisdom of the elders in recognising who that baby really was. Simeon and Anna also prove that we are never too old to change our minds or to see something afresh or with new eyes.

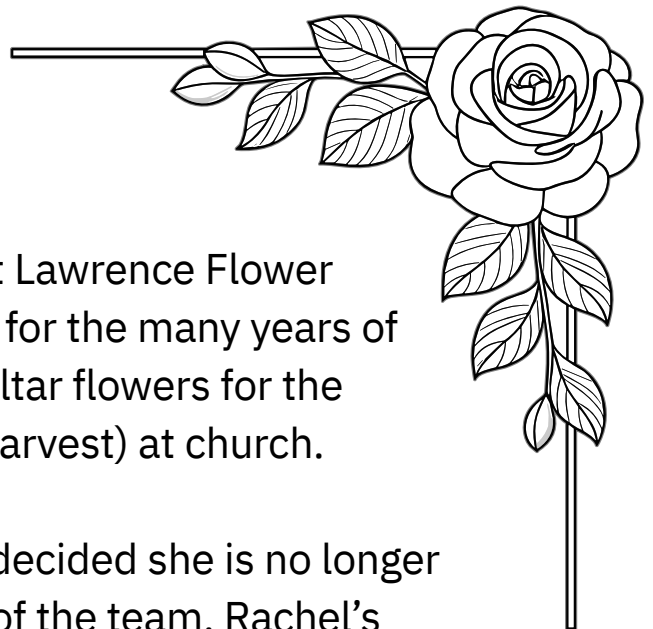


St. Lawrence's Church



Both ends of life are represented in this feast of Candlemas; this festival shows us that in God's eyes, age is no barrier to proclaiming his truth and salvation. It may not suit our human logic that it is the elderly and the very young acting as prophets of God, but it suits God's logic and shows us that God will use us as he thinks best, regardless of our age, gender or background. We don't need to lead exciting, eventful lives to meet with Christ. We are all welcomed for who we are, just as we are.

So as we venture further into the New Year, hear the message of Christ's light being for everyone and shine brightly in your endeavours, whatever they are.



Mrs Rachel Bamford

Rev. Jacqueline and the members of the St Lawrence Flower Team would like to express sincere thanks for the many years of service Rachel has given to arranging the altar flowers for the festival services (i.e Christmas, Easter & Harvest) at church.

Sadly due to health problems, Rachel has decided she is no longer able to continue as an important member of the team. Rachel's skill at flower arranging has always been greatly admired. Rachel will be a hard act to follow and she will be greatly missed.

Thank you, Rachel



Services at St. Lawrence's Church –
February 2026

Sunday 1st
February

9:30am

Family Holy Communion

Candlemas

5pm

Evensong

Sunday 8th
February

9:30am

Holy Communion
from the Book of
Common Prayer

Sunday 15th
February

9:30am

Holy Communion
with baptism

5pm

Evensong

Wednesday 18th
February
Ash Wednesday

7pm

Holy Communion with
the Imposition of Ashes

Sunday 22nd
February

9:30am

Holy Communion



St. Lawrence's Church

Cornelius Alfred Hollister Cooper

Cornelius Alfred Hollister Cooper, known as Neal, passed away peacefully in his sleep in the early hours of 20th December at the grand age of 99.

He was born on the 4th June 1926 in No.1 Sumner Cottages, and was christened and married at St Lawrence's Church, Swindon Village. His funeral will take place at St Lawrence's at 1pm on Friday February 6th and will be followed by burial in the churchyard with his beloved wife, Valerie.

Hugh

St. Lawrence's Church

Chatterbox

Every Tuesday

10.30am to 12noon

Pop in for coffee/tea and biscuits
and a good old chat about
anything and everything.



Everyone's welcome, old or new. (It's free!)



St. Lawrence's Church



From the registers



Baptism

We welcomed into the family of the church

Lochlan Ray Edwards 4th January

St. Lawrence's Church is part of the

 North Cheltenham
Team Ministry

Enquiries about baptisms or weddings

If you would like to enquire about baptism (also called christening) or would like to book a wedding in St Lawrence's church, please contact Karen in the Team Office on **01242 244373** or admin@northchelt.org.uk

You can contact the Team Vicar, **Revd. Jacqueline Henson**, by email: revjacquelinehenson@gmail.com or by phone: **01242 220053** or via the office as above.

Palm Sunday

Sunday, 29th March 2026



*Can you help?
Do you own a donkey?*

We would like a gentle donkey to lead
the procession of palms from the Seasons
football ground up to the Church.

Please contact Rev. Jacqueline — revjacquelinehenson@gmail.com —
if you might be able to help.

1. As of end of 2025 who is the number one male British tennis player?
2. Which politician was known as "the milk snatcher" for withdrawing free school milk for children over 7 in 1970?
3. Who was the main character in the TV sitcom Porridge?
4. Whose first novel was "Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less" in 1976, and his latest, in 2025 was "End Game"?
5. Who has starred in Spooks, Last Tango in Halifax and the Split?
6. Who created Inspector Morse?
7. Who did the voice over for Little Britain?
8. Who was the partner of Dudley Moore in a comedy double act in the 60's and 70's?
9. Who had a hit with Espresso in 2024?
10. What do all the above have in common?



Eileen Allen taken at Sherbourne

Hello Gardeners! I hope you all had a great Christmas and new year's break. It's certainly been a fairly mild Winter so far!

This Winter is the first Winter I've ever had a greenhouse to store my more tender plants in, but also my first proper attempt at Winter vegetables, in the form of Cauliflower. I always found Cauliflower from seed particularly difficult to do from seed pre-Greenhouse, but so far so good, looking like a March/April harvest.

Another new thing I've done this Winter is to spread manure on my raised beds. In specific, chicken manure from Stoke Orchard Farm shop (£3 a bag), which was not only used to rejuvenate my raised beds, but my half full potato sacks too. Potatoes love Nitrogen, so it makes total sense to do this now, as fresh manure has the ability to 'burn' roots if applied too close to planting. Needless to say my 4 year old son found it hilarious helping Daddy spread 'Chicken Poo' on the garden. As well as supplying Nitrogen to the soil, manure also breaks up heavier soils, of which I know my raised beds consist of 50% clay, which should mean deep root vegetables like Carrots should benefit later this year.

If you've not already, February is the perfect time to prune Ornamental Trees. Acers in particular benefit hugely from a bit of light pruning in late Winter, to make them more vigorous in Spring onwards. Only cut back up to a quarter though and make sure you have some very sharp loppers to ensure clean cuts.

Lastly, if you've read some of my previous articles, you'll know I love growing my own Autumn Raspberries. February/March are when you should prune these down to the ground. This is because Autumn Raspberries fruit on the current year's growth. This always feels counter-intuitive to lose all of last year's height, but come Spring this will really help them rocket away!

Thanks for Reading, looking forward to Spring now.

Dale.



The Swindon Village Society

We will start with a bit of catching up. Our last talk was in November and was first rate. David Elder told us about Cheltenham's iconic buildings. He covered about twenty of the town's best. I knew them all and had visited several. Nevertheless, David managed to give at least one piece of information that I had never heard before about each building and sometimes three or four new facts. For instance, the Library has a one and a half ton foundation stone taken from Cleeve Hill. Now I have to go there and see if I can spot it. And, staying with the Library, he showed us a carefully taken photograph of its facade. I must walk past that building at least twice a week but have not really recognised how fine it is. Part of the problem is that you can't get far enough away to fully appreciate it. It is time to go and take a better look.

David was asked which building in the town he would most recommend for a visit and his recommendation was the Ladies College. The only problem here is that for most of the year it is not open. When it is, for instance on heritage open days, you have to book and the list fills up fast. Don't forget St Mary's in the centre of town. I think it is still England's newest Minster church although most of it is several hundred years old. It has superb windows including a fascinating rose window which has a flaw in it. If ever you have an hour or so to spare go in and see if you can spot the flaw: 'taint easy'! It also has one of the longest life histories on the walls of an English church. This is Skillicorn's memorial which not only tells about his life but also much of the history of the early days of modern Cheltenham.

By the time you read this we will have had our AGM on 21st January but this is members only. What we do have is some bookings for the rest of the year. In February the talk will be on Gloucestershire's Inland Waterways. In March the talk will be 'An Armchair Guide to Tewkesbury Abbey'. April, and John Heathcott will take us round Cirencester and anyone who goes will come back with at least three times as much knowledge about the town as when they arrived.



The Swindon Village Society

In May we have a talk about the life of Amy Johnson. She was the UK's most famous pre-war aviatrix and she lived in Stoke Orchard. June is normally a garden visit but we don't book this until the National Garden's Programme for the County is out. And August will be the Garden Party. Another four meetings are under planning.

Subject only to a rubber stamp at the AGM the annual membership fees will stay at £10 for an individual and £20 for a family. If you are not a member but want to help keep Swindon Village a good place to live or would like to know more of our local history do come and join us. If you came to No 3 Swindon Hall clutching a newly minted item of currency you may even get a cup of tea and a one hour lecture on the history of the hall and Scrooge's contribution to the fabric (optional, and not necessarily recommended). Or you could just turn up at any meeting with legal tender.

Barry Simon



THE TERRAPINS OUT OF HOURS CLUB

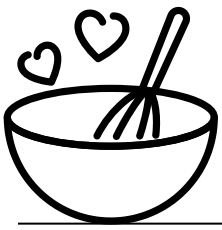
I am looking for an enthusiastic, friendly, reliable person to join our team to work with children 4-11 years old. Experience would be preferable, but not essential as training would be provided. You will support the children to follow their own ideas and interests for play and help to provide snacks. Hours are:

Breakfast 7.30am to 8.30am

After school club 3pm - 5pm

Job shares considered.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Becky at theterrapins@hotmail.com



Cook with Dawn

February.....Seasonal fruit and vegetables...

Fruit.. apples, pear

Vegetables.. Beetroot, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Celeriac, Chicory, Jerusalem Artichoke, Kale, Leeks, Mushrooms, Onions, Parsnips, Purple Sprouting Broccoli, Spring Greens, Spring Onions, Squash, Swede

Fish Pie... serves 4

Ingredients...

1kg potatoes, peeled and chopped - plus a drop of milk

2-3 leeks sliced

4 eggs, hard boiled , cooled, and cut in half. lengthwise.

250ml milk

600g white fish cut into chunks

200g King prawns, cooked and peeled

(If using frozen fish or fish pie mix and prawns, defrost before using)

1/2 pkt fresh dill, chopped. (Or dried dill)

2 tbsp chopped parsley (or dried)

Juice of half lemon. Cut other half into slices

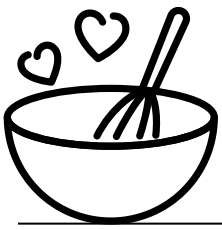
Seasoning... salt/pepper

1 tbsp cornflour

To serve....

Purple Sprouting Broccoli

Spring Greens



Cook with Dawn

1. Heat over. To 200°c/fan 180°c/gas 6
2. Cook the potatoes in boiling water until tender, drain and mash with a drop of milk until smooth. Set aside.
3. Place the sliced leeks into a microwave dish, microwave on high for 2-3 minutes until soft, then tip into a large ovenproof dish.
4. Pour the milk into a saucepan and bring to a simmer, add the white fish, reduce the heat to low and cook for 5 minutes.
5. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the fish to the ovenproof dish... add the prawns, herbs and lemon juice. Season to taste.
6. Strain the milk into a clean saucepan and heat... in a cup, mix the cornflour with a little cold water and add to the warm milk - reduce heat to low and cook for 2 minutes - stirring often until thickened.
7. Pour the sauce over everything in the dish and carefully mix it all together.
8. Place all the boiled egg halves, yolks side up, inbetween the fish pieces.
9. Spoon the mash potato on top, use a fork to make a pretty pattern... bake for 20-25 minutes, until topping is slightly browned.
10. While the fish pie is cooking, cook the purple sprouting broccoli and spring Greens in boiling water until tender. Drain.
11. Divide the fish pie and vegetables between 4 plates and serve with slices of lemon on the side.

As always.... enjoy..! 😊



Swindon Village Hall

Swindon Village Hall Car Park – Updated Markings Now in Place

Regular visitors to the Hall will have noticed that the car park received a fresh set of line markings on Monday 12th January. The repainting was carried out to improve safety, maximise available space, and make access to the Hall easier for everyone.

Now that the work is complete, we kindly ask all users to follow the updated parking requirements:

- Please park fully within the marked bays
- Avoid all hatched areas
- Do not park in front of the Hall entrance at any time

These simple rules help keep the car park safe and accessible for all visitors. If persistent misuse occurs, the Hall Committee may need to consider further restrictions, including temporary closure of the car park – something we are keen to avoid.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support in keeping our community spaces running smoothly.

FRIDAY NIGHT BAR

- Every Friday night from 7pm till late
- Wine, beer, spirits and soft drinks
- Indoor and outdoor seating (weather permitting)
- Everyone welcome. Bring your friends and meet your neighbours!
- Sorry no dogs allowed inside unless assistance dogs.



Personal Development & Wellbeing Coach

I am passionate about my business and have dedicated over 10 years to research, studying the subject and working with clients of all ages. I also work with young people, helping them to understand themselves better, control their emotions, and lead a healthy lifestyle. I keep my clients accountable and motivated by providing exercises and tools to manage stress levels, emotions and behaviour.

Diddie Morton-Holmes

01793 680330 / 07787 712165

wellbeing@diddie.co.uk / www.diddie.co.uk



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Answers to quiz:

1. Jack Draper
2. Margaret Thatcher
3. Norman Stanley Fletcher
4. Jeffrey Archer
5. Nicola Walker
6. Colin Dexter
7. Tom Baker
8. Peter Cook
9. Sabrina Carpenter
10. All surnames are jobs/professions

SWINDON PARISH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Footpaths	John Heathcott	527753
Scouts, Cubs, Beavers		info@ 1sv-scouts.co.uk
Rainbow Guider	Hannah Butler	07464 784155
Village Hall Chair	Jana Bridger	07913 911930 swindonvillagehall@gmail.com
Village Hall Bookings	Jana Bridger	swindonvillagehall@gmail.com
Village News Distribution	Hugh Evans	241678
Play Group	(Playgroup hours) For Sept 24 admission	690479 07949 352507
School Headteacher	Geraint Mills	690016
Friends of the School		chairfosvps@gmail.com
Art & Crafts Club	Lynne Mumford	07515 461876
Swindon Village Society	Barry Simon	521723
Mary Godwin Under 5s	(Playgroup hours)	mgu5@hotmail.co.uk
Marle Hill W.L.	Sara Jefferies	07477894639 / 692500

Please inform the editors of any changes to the contact details for village organisations.

Deadline for the next issue of the Village News is the 16th February 2026

Please send contributions to the editors via Karren Parsons
at 29 Dark Lane or e-mail village-news@swindonparish.org.uk

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr. Alison Berry (Chair)	07754 006634
Cllr. James Cornish	07950 196709
Cllr. Sharon Collicutt	07884 184423
Cllr. Natalie Blankley	07725 948935
Cllr. Lynne Allen	07979 890134
Cllr. Tom Harcourt	07963 581371
Cllr. Ruth Hudson	07850 185871
Mr Shaun Cullimore (Clerk to the Council)	07833 089435
	parish.clerk@swindonparish.org.uk

There are currently two vacancies. Please get in touch if you would be interested.

Cheltenham Borough Councillors

Springbank Ward (south of Tewkesbury Road)

Cllr. Peter Jeffries	07717 493686
County Cllr. Suzanne Williams	01242 230648

Swindon Village Ward (north of Tewkesbury Road)

Cllr. Flo Clucas	01242 255844
Cllr. Frank Allen	07402 011272
County Cllr. Ian Cameron	ian.Cameron@gloucestershire.gov.uk

ST.LAWRENCE'S CHURCH

Part of the North Cheltenham Team Ministry

Team Vicar:	Revd. Jacqueline Henson	revjacquelinehenson@gmail.com 220053
Churchwarden:	Hugh Evans	241678
Tower Captain:	Hugh Evans	241678
Organist:	John Collins	511950

North Cheltenham Team Ministry Office 244373 admin@northchelt.org.uk

The office is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.00am to 1.30pm, and on Friday from 1.30pm to 4.00pm.

Outside these hours please leave a message on the answer-phone.

The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors or the Parish Council.