

Twyford News

Twyford Parish News

Issue 8 / Spring 2026

Our Chairman's Message

Welcome to our latest newsletter. After a particularly wet winter, the arrival of drier, warmer days is very much appreciated.

Work continues on the Flood Mitigation Scheme in Hazley Road, which is to be completed in time to help protect us during next winter's rains.

Twyford is fortunate to have a strong and engaged community, with many residents passionate about our local environment and increasingly concerned about the impacts of a changing climate.

In this edition, you'll find updates on local initiatives as well as articles that explore these important issues in more detail.

Chris Mitchell TPC Chair

Parish Council Meeting Dates

Parish Council meetings are held monthly on Thursdays at 7.30pm in the Gilbert Room in the Parish Hall.

Please check our website or TIS for the latest information in case of changes at short notice.

The next full Parish Council meeting dates are:

21st May 2026

18th June 2026

For more information on local planning applications or other useful links, please visit our website: twyfordhants.org.uk

Volunteering

Volunteering in a small village can have a powerful and lasting impact, both on the community and on the individual. In smaller communities, every contribution matters more visibly, whether it's helping maintain shared spaces, supporting local events, or assisting vulnerable residents. Volunteers often see the direct results of their efforts, creating a strong sense of purpose and achievement.

Beyond practical benefits, volunteering fosters connection. It brings people together across generations and backgrounds, strengthening trust and community spirit.

In a small village, such as Twyford, this sense of belonging is especially meaningful, helping to combat isolation and build lasting friendships.

Volunteering also allows individuals to develop new skills, gain confidence, and broaden their perspective. Simple acts of giving time and effort can preserve traditions, improve quality of life, and ensure the village continues to thrive. Ultimately, volunteering helps create a more caring, resilient, and united community.





Twyford Parish News

The following article was published in the April 23rd 2026 edition of the Hampshire Chronicle.

Beating heart of local democracy

If democracy is a grand painting, then parish councils are the tiny but determined brushes which apply the paint which make up the glorious picture.

They are grassroots governance – so close to the ground, in fact, that they occasionally trip over an overgrown verge that has not been cut since last April.

Yet beneath their modest exterior lies a world of passion and complexity.

Parish councils are where the great issues of our time meet the even greater issues of whose turn it is to unlock the village hall.

Every parish council has its characters. There's the councillor who has served since the late Bronze Age and remembers when the village had several shops, many pubs, and took no prisoners.

There's the newcomer who joined last month and is already drafting a 50-page strategic plan for horse and dog waste optimisation.

Then there is the clerk – the quiet power behind everything – armed with a laptop, a stack of minutes, access to the bank account and the uncanny ability to recall every resolution passed since 1996.

The parish noticeboard, meanwhile, stands as a monument to village life.

Parish council meetings are magical – they begin with the solemnity of a crown court – apolo-

Yinnon Ezra, MBE

Columnist



gies for absence, declarations of interest – and then swiftly descend into spirited debate about the pothole on the top road which has achieved near-mythical status.

The agenda may look modest, but do not be fooled.

These are gatherings where passions run high.

For all the gentle humour, parish councils are the beating heart of local democracy.

They are made up of volunteers who give their time, energy and occasionally their sanity to make their communities better.

They are the first port of call for residents, the champions of local identity and the custodians of the small but vital things that make a place feel like home.

In a world of grand political dramas, parish councils remind us that democracy is not just about sweeping national and international decisions.

It's about the bench by the bus stop, the footpath to the allotments, and the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

It's about people who care enough to turn up, argue politely (mostly), and keep the village alive.

Twyford Annual Assembly

The Twyford Annual Assembly took place in the Parish Hall on 15th April 2026. The meeting was well attended by a broad spectrum of residents.

There was a mini exhibition with displays on some community projects, including the Flood Mitigation Scheme, new village centre community car park and proposed pedestrian crossing on High Street. Councillors were on hand to answer questions about these projects over a glass of wine.

The new format of the Annual Assembly was deemed a success and the Parish Council look forward to seeing a good attendance at next year's meeting.

The Chair, Chris Mitchell, gave the following report of the work that the council have undertaken during the past year.

Major Projects

Solid progress has been made across several important infrastructure projects.

The Flood Mitigation Scheme (FMS) continues despite some contractor delays. We are confident a major flood event is unlikely this year, and the scheme should be ready to provide meaningful protection for next winter.

The Car Park Extension is progressing well and will deliver much-needed additional capacity. Phase 1 focuses on detailed designs to support a planning application, with input from the village hall committee and SDNP. Later phases will address construction and long-term management.

Improving pedestrian safety—particularly the Phoenix crossing on the High Street—remains a priority. We continue to work closely with our County Councillor to bring plans forward.

Emerging Projects

Work has begun on enhancing Berry Lane and the Sarsen Stone area, with a focus on preserving its character and heritage. More details will follow as plans develop.

Recreation

Recreational facilities remain central to village life. New cricket nets, led by Twyford Cricket Club with Parish Council support, will provide high-quality facilities for years to come. The old nets will be removed and the area restored to grass. Football pitch improvements continue, with positive feedback from users. We are seeking external funding to maintain high standards long term.



Twyford Parish News

Twyford Annual Assembly (continued)

Planning

Planning remains a major area of activity. Alongside numerous householder applications, we have submitted strong representations on larger developments. Some rejected proposals have been overturned on appeal, including at Hockley Golf Course.

We have also responded to proposals at Bushfield Camp in Winchester and for around 15 homes north of Hewlett Close. Our approach remains to balance appropriate development with protecting the village's character, using local knowledge and the neighbourhood plan to guide decisions.

Advisory Groups

The Twyford Climate Action Group has been revitalised and is exploring practical sustainability initiatives.

The Traffic and Highways Group continues to focus on key issues, including Norris Bridge, Hazeley Road improvements, and the installation of two new Speed Indicator Devices funded by the Police & Crime Commissioner.

Berry Meadow and Meads

This much-loved area is looking particularly beautiful after a wet winter, with many residents enjoying it. Planned "drownings" of the water meadows will take place during the year.

Bus Services

Public transport remains a concern. While the 61 service has not yet been reinstated, alternative proposals are being developed with Hampshire County Council and operators. We are hopeful of a solution soon.

In the meantime, real-time passenger information displays have been installed at two bus shelters and have been well received.

Closing

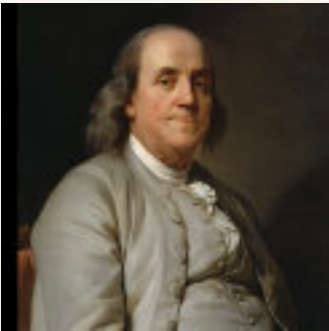
Thank you to councillors, clerks, volunteers, and community members for their contributions. We also remember former chair Waine Lawton.

We currently have two Parish Councillor vacancies—please get in touch if you are interested. We remain committed to supporting and protecting our village while helping it thrive.

Twyford and the American Declaration of Independence

The American Declaration of Independence was signed on 6 July 1776, changing the course of history — and Twyford may have played a small part in its creation.

The village's connection lies with Benjamin Franklin, one of the most influential Americans of the age: scientist, printer, politician and member of the committee that drafted the Declaration. The document was revolutionary for its time, rejecting King George III and declaring the thirteen colonies independent republics. Its famous statement that "all men are born equal" expressed ideas that were radical in the 18th century.



Franklin spent many years in England representing several American colonies and trying to reconcile colonial interests with increasingly unpopular British rule. As tensions grew, he gradually came to believe that independence was the only solution. During this period, he became friends with Bishop Jonathan Shipley who sympathized with the American cause and whose family had strong links to Twyford.

Franklin came down in the summer of 1771 to stay in Twyford House which he loved and there, I suppose, he and the Bishop discussed the treasonous question of "what if" and "how". So, one evening after a good dinner, the two sketched out the steps to independence and the wording which found its way into the final wording of the Declaration. That final bit is speculation, of course, but who knows?



A third Twyford connection was William Jones, later married to Shipley's daughter Anna Maria. Jones accompanied Franklin to Paris in 1772 to help secure French support for the colonies. French military and naval assistance later proved crucial to George Washington's victory in the American War of Independence.

Whether history was truly shaped in Twyford cannot be known, but the village's links to these remarkable events remain fascinating.



Twyford Parish News

Twyford Cricket Club - New Cricket Nets

If you have been up to Hunter Park recently you'll have seen the culmination of 5 years of planning ... Twyford Cricket Club have brand new cricket nets!

The old practice nets are a long way beyond their end of life – they are dangerous in more ways than one, with many holes in the netting, a few wonky poles and an alignment that means the sun makes visibility near impossible at certain times of the year. They will be decommissioned and removed in due course, with the area returning to grass.

The cricket club's committee have spent years organising the new facility. From landscaper's drawings for spoil, to assessments made to protect the biodiversity in the immediate vicinity, as well as a planning application with permission granted by both Winchester City Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.

The club also had to raise a lot of money. There have been extremely generous contributions from Twyford Parish Council, the Southampton Airport Spitfire Wellbeing Fund, the Mike May Foundation, The Phoenix Inn, Coastal Transfers, and Jude's Ice Cream, as well as local individuals through our GoFundMe page. The club extends an enormous thank you to all those who donated to help make this happen.

They have been completed in perfect time, the 2026 season is just about to start. With over 120 Juniors signed up, mens and ladies adult teams, as well as Hampshire age group cricket, there will be plenty of use for the nets and the square this year, made possible thanks to much hard work from volunteer groundsmen Nick Ranger and John Paine. It would be great to see many of you come out and support your local cricket club this year.



Twyford Bowling Club

The bowling club in Twyford is situated behind a hedge in Roman Road where it has existed for more than a hundred years.

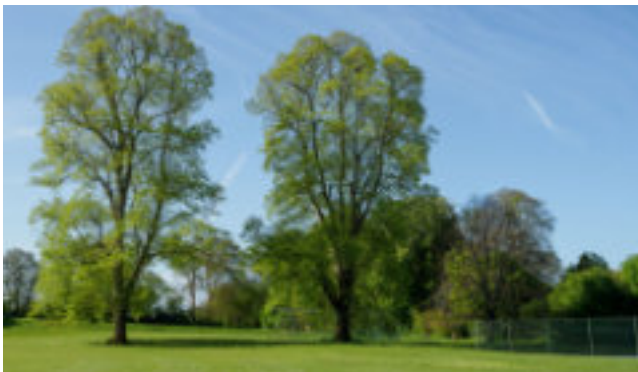
It boasts a membership of about forty men and women, mostly men. It is quite traditional and well organised but you'd never find a happier, more friendly bunch of people who are unbelievably welcoming.

We play friendly matches with local teams and sharpen our skills with practice sessions. Even if you've never played bowls before, encouragement and help is guaranteed.

Is there a downside? Only that it is an outdoor activity and we don't play in the winter.



Look over the hedge on a summer Friday evening and if people are playing, just come in either to watch or to have a go.



Hunter Park trees resplendant in their Spring foliage



Twyford Parish News

Update on the Climate Survey

As the winter fades away, many of us are enjoying watching our lovely corner of the world spring to life again! But that's not to say we've been hibernating all winter... as many of you may have seen, for the past few months we've been working on a climate survey of the village - and with just under 50 responses received, we give an enormous thank you to everybody who has participated so far! We're excited to share the full story once the survey is concluded, but here are some headlines so far:

Respondents' number one concern about climate change is its impact on biodiversity, closely followed by the impact of floods and storms and the impact on future generations. Answers indicate that money is the number one thing holding people back from doing more. People are most interested in information about what they can do, and getting involved with practical tasks and projects!

Your answers help us tailor our work to the unique needs and concerns of our village - so if you want to have your say, please consider taking five minutes to fill in our short anonymous survey!

You can do so by visiting www.bit.ly/twyfordclimatesurvey or by scanning the QR code. Alternatively, paper copies of the survey are available from Twyford Stores, Twyford Community Centre, The Phoenix Inn, and The Bugle Inn.

If you would like to volunteer to help us out, or to get in touch about anything else, you can email us at admin@twyfordhants.org.uk

Wishing you all a colourful spring, from the Twyford Climate Group



What's Going On Here?



this meadow will be a mass of wildflowers.

Some of you may have noticed a strange machine cutting the grass in the Middle Churchfield Meadow. This is called a Grillo and it is being used by rangers from the South Downs National Park to cut and collect grass from the meadow. The grass is taken off rather than left on the surface in order to weaken the underlying soil. This should allow the natural wildflowers to flourish. Hopefully, in a few years time

Twyford St Mary's Primary School are on the case with sustainability!

With monthly second hand uniform sales and an end to book bags that only get used for one year, Twyford St Mary's Primary is improving its' environmental sustainability.



The pupil-led Green Group ran a competition encouraging pupils to increase biodiversity by providing habitats for wildlife in their gardens.

They're also working with Twyford Climate Group to increase pollinating plants and wildflowers in the village - their initial feedback clearly demonstrated the need for cross-generational input to projects!

Rupert, one of the 3 winners, proudly showing off his recycled birdhouse including a removable water tray.

Forestry England Purchase Land near Twyford

Forestry England has recently purchased land at Park Farm, near Twyford, to create a new woodland. Part of the site lies within or borders Twyford Parish Council's boundary. The project is funded through the Government's Nature for Climate Fund, which supports the creation of new woodlands to benefit wildlife, people, sustainable timber production, and climate resilience.

Once established, the woodland will be open to the public, providing opportunities to enjoy nature and explore the landscape. Over the coming weeks, Forestry England will carry out surveys to better understand the land and inform plans for the woodland's creation and management.

Later this spring, draft proposals will be shared as part of a public consultation. Local residents and organisations, including parish, district, and county councils and the South Downs National Park, will be invited to review the plans and provide feedback. A public consultation event will also be held locally, giving people the opportunity to view the proposals and speak directly with the Forestry England team. Feedback will help refine the final designs.

This woodland is part of a wider national programme through which Forestry England has already planted more than two million trees and created 17 new woodlands across the UK.

The Berry Lane Project

Plans are underway to restore Berry Lane, the route linking Twyford St Mary's Church with the River Itchen. Over many years the lane has suffered significant erosion caused by rainwater runoff and heavy public use.

Working with the South Downs National Park, proposals include resurfacing the lane and creating a drainage ditch to help prevent further erosion. The Parish Council also hopes to improve the nearby riverbank around the willow tree using wooden boarding and chalk infill. The fenced bridge at the bottom of Berry Lane is not part of the project, as it is privately owned and subject to a separate planning application for replacement.

A further aim of the project is to uncover and raise two large Sarsen stones lying beside the track, one partially buried and the other completely covered by soil.

The stones would be mounted on a plinth so they can be preserved and enjoyed for years to come. These natural silica sandstone boulders date from Ice Age deposits and are thought to have been moved to the area during the Neolithic period. Evidence of both Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement has been found in Twyford.

Sarsen stones are an important part of the village's history, with 23 scattered around Twyford in walls, gardens and road junctions. Local folklore links them to ancient rituals and legends of stones that "walk" to the river when the church bells ring.

Anyone interested in supporting the Berry Lane project, particularly with expertise in raising the stones, is encouraged to get in touch via ingrid.percival.cllr@twyfordhants.org.uk



Sarsen Stone at Sherford, near Winchester



Twyford Community Centre

Twyford Community Centre (TCC) volunteers have been honoured with the Mayor of Winchester's Community Award, recognising their continued dedication and service to the local community. This acknowledgement highlights the vital role volunteers play in supporting the centre and its activities.

Plans are underway to establish the Twyford (Hampshire) History & Archive Group, which will bring together documents, photographs, recordings, maps, and other historical materials into a single, coordinated collection. The aim is to catalogue and digitise these resources, create a website for remote access, and preserve Twyford's history for future generations. Residents are encouraged to contribute items or get involved in the project, with all materials safely copied and returned to their owners if required.

The Community Centre is also pleased to report that all loan notes relating to its purchase in September 2022 have now been fully repaid, thanks to the generosity and support of the community. As a result of careful management and volunteer effort, the centre now operates at a small surplus, enabling it to cover running costs and contribute to maintenance projects.

Over the past three years, successful grant applications—from organisations such as the South Downs National Park, Twyford Parish Council, and other local funds—have supported essential improvements, including roof repairs, kitchen renovation, and general building maintenance.

Looking ahead, planned projects include managing low-grade asbestos in the attic, resurfacing the car park, installing new carpets, and redecorating. These improvements will be undertaken as funding allows, with ongoing efforts to secure grants and welcome donations to support the centre's long-term future.

Monday Café in the Community Centre



Every Monday morning from 8:45 until 11:45, there is a café in the TCC with coffee (or tea) and delicious cakes served by Wesley and his willing helpers. It's an ideal opportunity to meet other Twyford residents for a chat or even change your 'working from home' location for a couple of hours. Why not give it a try and support this community facility?



Twyford Parish News

Have Your Say!

All members of the Parish Council are keen to improve the infrastructure, services and facilities of our area. We all have ideas of our own which we are working through but we're keen to hear your views too. Please email the Parish Clerk with any ideas that you have and keep the conversation going by keeping in touch with your elected Council members and attending our regular drop-in sessions.

Getting in Touch

The Parish Council has a service called **Twyford Information System (TIS)** which provides information directly to your email inbox about social events, local charitable fundraising, road closures, local public notices, parish council news and meetings. Sign up today at www.twyfordhants.org.uk/intouch

The Parish Council has the **TPC Website** that contains extensive information including meeting agendas and minutes for the Full Council, Finance, Recreation and Planning committees. Plus lots of other content. Logon today at www.twyfordhants.org.uk

You can also keep up to date with news and meetings from the Parish Council by following the **TPC Facebook** page. Access this at www.facebook.com/twyfordhants.org.uk

Your Parish Council

Chairman: Chris Mitchell chris.mitchell.cllr@twyfordhants.org.uk

Councillors: Richard Sellars (vice chair), Liam Bailey-Morgan, Chris Corcoran, Sue Cook, Angela Forder-Stent, Chris Hill, Jade Pain, Ingrid Percival, Steve Pullen

Parish Clerk

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