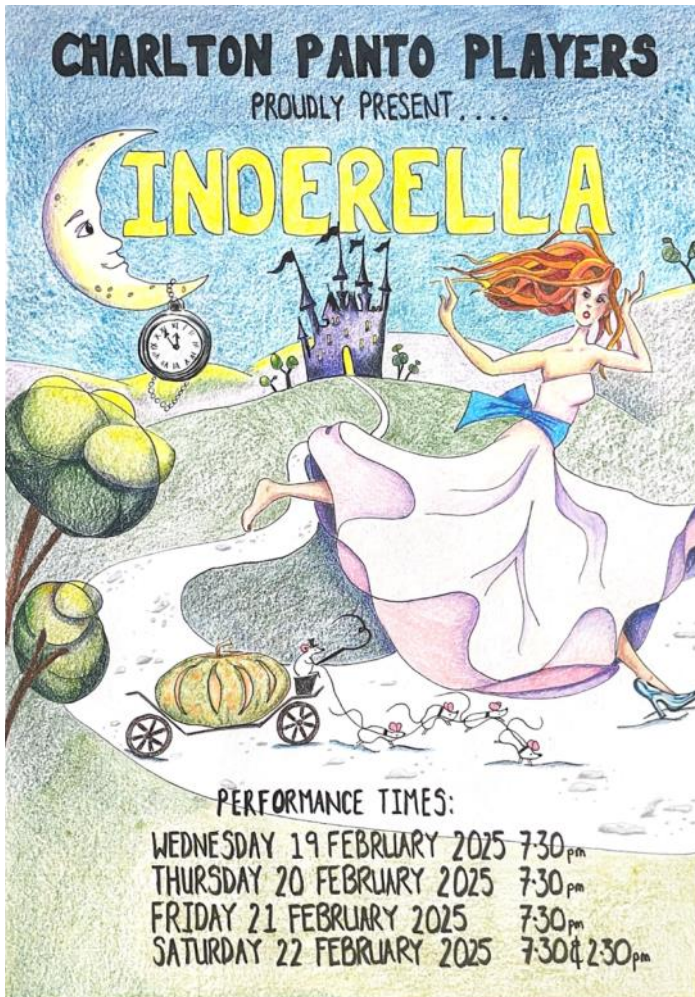


# CHARLTON LINK

Village News for the People of Newbottle & Charlton

ISSUE 429 JANUARY 2025

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**CHARLTON PANTO PLAYERS**  
PROUDLY PRESENT...  
**CINDERELLA**

PERFORMANCE TIMES:  
WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2025 7:30 pm  
THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2025 7:30 pm  
FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2025 7:30 pm  
SATURDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2025 7:30 & 2:30 pm

Read the Link in colour at [www.charltonandnewbottle.com](http://www.charltonandnewbottle.com)

*Charlton Link Editor: Julia Rands, [juliarands@hotmail.com](mailto:juliarands@hotmail.com)*



**Charlton Panto tickets available from  
Wednesday 8th January.**

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## **Community gardening anyone?**

Alice from Forceleap Farm here!

I wanted to reach out to see if there is any interest in developing a community garden in Charlton?

I have got some land we could use if there is any interest. I have moved house and my old vegetable garden behind the Shepherds Huts on Drury Lane is free.

It is a really lovely space and I am open to all ideas about how best to use it as a garden. I would particularly love to see some sort of group or community approach to growing food.

Let me know if you have any ideas, or if you know anyone who might be interested,

Alice

[alice@forceleapfarm.com](mailto:alice@forceleapfarm.com)



## Wonderful Advent Windows!

Well done and thank you to all the properties in Charlton that treated us to a lovely Christmas display in December. 24 homes, school and village hall were decorated and lit up each evening.

Thank you to the Playing Field volunteers, especially Katy Snelling who organised the event. Here are just some of the glorious displays that brightened up our dark December evenings!



Thanks to everyone for a very jolly 'Carols in the Car Park' on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December! The village gathered around the Christmas tree at the front of the Hall to sing rousing carols, helped along by a cup of mulled wine or hot chocolate. The children were especially excited to see two very large, very brightly lit tractors fresh from the Katharine House Tractor Run parked in the car park.



We collected enough money to make a £50 donation to the Parish Food Bank and the rest will go towards next year's Village Hall tree and lights.

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# CHARLTON 2025 CALENDAR (more to follow)

<p><b>January</b></p> <p>20<sup>th</sup> Parish Council Meeting</p>	<p><b>February</b></p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> Panto, Cinderella at the Village Hall</p>	<p><b>March</b></p> <p>10<sup>th</sup> Quiz Night in aid of the playing field</p> <p>17<sup>th</sup> Parish Council Meeting</p> <p>29<sup>th</sup> Easter Bingo, Village Hall</p>
<p><b>April</b></p> <p>13<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday</p> <p>Community Tea, Newbottle &amp; Charlton School</p> <p>14<sup>th</sup> Parish Council Annual Village Meeting</p> <p>Charity Car Wash in aid of the</p>	<p><b>May</b></p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> Parish Council Meeting</p> <p>Della Defies Gravity in aid of the playing field</p>	<p><b>June</b></p> <p>Village Cricket</p>
<p><b>July</b></p> <p>Village Cricket</p> <p>21<sup>st</sup> Parish Council Meeting</p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> Charlton Fete &amp; Tennis Tournament in aid of St James' Church</p> <p>Community Tea, Newbottle &amp;</p>	<p><b>August</b></p>	<p><b>September</b></p> <p>15<sup>th</sup> Parish Council Meeting</p> <p>Harvest Festival, St James' Church</p>
<p><b>October</b></p> <p>5<sup>th</sup> Apple Pressing at the Village Hall</p> <p>31<sup>st</sup> Halloween Activities in aid of the playing field</p>	<p><b>November</b></p> <p>11<sup>th</sup> Act of Remembrance, Charlton War Memorial</p> <p>17<sup>th</sup> Parish Council Meeting</p> <p>Quiz Night in aid of the playing field</p>	<p><b>December</b></p> <p>Charlton Living Advent Calendar</p> <p>Carols in the Car Park</p> <p>Carol Service, St James' Church</p> <p>Community Tea, Newbottle &amp; Charlton School</p> <p>24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve; First Communion of Christmas, St James' Church</p> <p>25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day; Holy Communion, St James'</p>

## Nature Notes

We woke up this morning to a lot of wind which was a little unexpected. But what with Storm Bert and Storm Darragh we have had plenty of wind to contend with just recently. Here in the garden we have not had any serious losses, but plenty of debris and broken branches littering the ground (that will all be kindling for the fire). One of the curious things about the effects of gales is that it is not always the big old trees that fall. Sometimes it is young trees which look perfectly healthy which go. Trees are much less vulnerable when they are leafless, with less wind-resistance, but if they are full of ivy then the ivy leaves act like a sail and can bring them down.

This morning's run revealed quite a number of wild flowers or weeds in full flower. You don't expect to find much in flower in December, but it is extraordinary how many plants take any opportunity to flower and set seed. There was groundsel and shepherd's purse in the field, plenty of daisies in the verge (the 'day's eye') opening up to greet the sunshine, and a few dandelions too. In the garden it is a little depressing to find next year's weeds in abundance, especially goosegrass, or cleavers, coming up all over the place – one of our worst weeds. We also have wild primroses coming into flower all over the place, and an occasional rose still coming out. Then there are the flowers that are meant to flower in winter: we have winter jasmine covered with bright yellow stars on the wall opposite a kitchen window – very cheering at the moment; we have a winter-flowering shrubby honeysuckle with small white flowers that look insignificant but which have a delicious scent to bring inside; and a delicate clematis which is just beginning to open out its creamy little bells. We have had so little real winter weather that all the bulbs are beginning to poke their heads up too.

Everyone is much more conservation-aware than they used to be. Some years ago if you listened to Gardeners' Question Time, the answer to almost every question involved spraying whatever it was once a fortnight with some horrible chemical. Now we are urged to let everything grow more naturally, not to be too tidy in the garden, relax about untidy corners, encourage our pollinating insects and provide bug and bee hotels. The Royal Horticultural Society is even encouraging us to be kind to slugs, which is perhaps a step too far, if you like us had whole crops destroyed overnight by the slimy monsters. We don't of course use slug pellets because of the birds – there's no point in feeding the birds if we then poison them with poisoned slugs – and the RHS has found that many of the typical non-toxic barriers such as copper tape, bark mulch and eggshells do not reduce slug damage. We concur with that but find it difficult to accept the advice that we have to learn to live alongside slugs and snails.

Later in January we shall be doing the Big Garden Bird Watch during the weekend of January 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, and we hope that lots of you will be doing this too – being part of one of the biggest scientific surveys that takes place every year in this country. You only need to spend an hour counting all the birds that you see either in your garden, or from your balcony, or in the Memorial Hall open space or the Playing Field. Then you visit [www.rspb.org.uk/big gardenbirdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/big gardenbirdwatch) and report what you see. Even if you don't see anything, that's still useful information so do report it.

**Deborah and Paul Hayter**



# School Update

It was lovely to welcome local residents to the school for the second of our Community Teas. The children, including our young choir, sang Christmas songs and the Year 6s enjoyed serving tea and cake. Our next Community Tea will be on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

The school's Nativity was a great success, it was called 'The Fleece Force'. A set of sheep police officers who are keeping the peace and making sure that only those who are there for the census are let into Bethlehem! The children were amazing, especially our 'rockin' stars!

The services for Christingle and Christmas went well and the singing was beautiful, we even had a few children doing solos. The Christingle service is one of my favourite events of the year.

It was lovely to see so many at our Mini Christmas Fayre, a great way to end the term. Thanks to the staff and PTFA for their support running different stalls.

Last month we took the whole school to watch 'Peter Pan' at Milton Keynes Theatre which was a great success and very funny. Myself, our chair of Governors and some of our pupils will be taking part in the Charlton Village panto of Cinderella at February half term, so we hope to see many of you there.

On the first day back after Christmas we will be going to Church for our Epiphany service on Wednesday 8th January at 9:30am and you are all more than welcome to join us.

Happy New Year!

**Mr Smith**  
**Headteacher**



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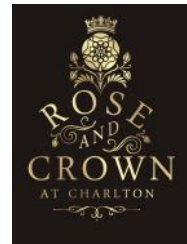
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The Rose and Crown Family would like  
 to thank all of you who have supported  
 us throughout 2024.

We would also like to take this  
 opportunity to wish you and your  
 families a Happy New Year!

*Happy  
 New Year*



Happy New Year!

Did you begin this month by making resolutions, and seeking a new start, or new challenges, in life? In church we begin this year with the festival of new starts, known as the feast of the Epiphany.

This is the moment when the Three Kings, also known as the Magi, or Wise Men, took their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to Christ. You may be familiar with the story from childhood Bibles, or depictions on Christmas cards. For them this journey was a new start, a life-changing time.

We can easily forget that their journey was daring and dangerous. They travelled without modern transport or amenities, across lawless, sparsely populated and inhospitable territory. The Magi took personal risks to seek the Christ-child, to look for God. What could have driven them to take this path?

The answer is summed up in one word; vocation. This was their new start. This was the thing for which they were born, the task that completed them, that gave their lives purpose and meaning. We all have one. Like life itself, it is God given. It is the role in which we feel truly fulfilled. This doesn't mean that the going will always be easy, but it does mean that the difficult times are worthwhile.

Finding our own vocation can take time. We have some clues from Jesus' teaching. For example, it will be a calling that enables us to live-out His commandment to love one another. As God is the source of our vocation, being attentive to Him is the quickest, most reliable route to finding our vocation. This is something we endeavour to do each Sunday in church. Time spent in the presence of God is, as the Magi found when they finally reached Jesus, life-changing. Although they brought valuable presents with them, they left with a greater gift, a new life infused with fresh purpose and meaning, they had found their vocation.

Wishing you every blessing in 2025.

Father Matthew

Tel. 811364

email: [fathermatthew.r@icloud.com](mailto:fathermatthew.r@icloud.com)

Facebook/St James's Church, Newbottle & Charlton

## FORTHCOMING SERVICES

EVERY SUNDAY IN CHURCH AT 9.30AM

WEDNESDAY 15th JANUARY AT 9.30AM AND FORTNIGHTLY THEREAFTER  
AN INFORMAL SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION, AT 7 CARTWRIGHT  
ROAD, FOLLOWED BY REFRESHMENTS

*ALL ARE WELCOME*

# Playing Field Update

As 2024 draws to a close, Playing Field HQ have been reflecting on the year and have been absolutely astounded by our fundraising total.

This year we managed to raise over £7.5k for the playing field project and that's all thanks to our amazing volunteers and supporters, thank you. We've had great fun this year with a full calendar of activities, thanks to Pete, for his sponsored parachute jump that raised over £1k and to the village children who came out on a rainy July day to wash cars. Our auction in September was a fantastic night with lots of laughter and over £3k raised. We were also excited to receive a £250 donation from JSR Newbottle at the end of the year.

It's great to see the Playing Fields themselves getting so much use; from regular users Brackley Athletic to our fundraising big bike ride and, now legendary, village cricket matches. We're proud to have purchased 2 new benches for spectators using donations in memory of Vince Marsella & Conor Dowers.

2025 we hope will be as good!

We've got some of our favourites in the diary; quiz night, car wash and Easter Bingo and we've got some new activities for the village to have a go at or come and look out for (one we hope involving a tractor...more to follow!)

And to top it off, our very own Cinder-Della is going to be defying gravity in May! We'd like to say a HUGE thank you to everyone who has got involved, donated and supported, it wouldn't be possible without you.





Without your support, Katharine House wouldn't exist and thousands of people would miss out on vital palliative and end-of-life care. Here's how your donations, fundraising, volunteering and event participation has helped the hospice this year.

- We provided care for 815 patients
- Our community team made 4,547 visits to patients
- 384 patients were cared for in their homes
- 172 patients were cared for in the hospice ward
- There were 2,989 bed stays at the hospice
- 30% of people went home after their stay at the hospice
- 130 people received bereavement support
- 69 patients received care from our Living Well day service
- We served 9,887 meals to our patients
- 357 physiotherapy sessions were carried out

### **Branching out**

Our brilliant tree-cycle scheme is back, giving people the opportunity to get rid of their Christmas tree in a hassle-free, environmentally friendly way once all the festivities are over. You make a donation to Katharine House Hospice and, in return, we will send one of our elves to collect and recycle your tree. Head to our website to find out more and book your collection by 10am, 5<sup>th</sup> January. [www.khh.org.uk/christmastree](http://www.khh.org.uk/christmastree)

### **We need you**

Do you want to gain valuable skills and experiences while meeting new people and doing something amazing for your community. We're looking for more shop volunteers to join one of our 7 charity shops. You'll be part of a friendly team, helping raise vital funds that support our care for patients and families. If this could be you, visit [www.khh.org.uk/volunteer-shops](http://www.khh.org.uk/volunteer-shops).

**DMJ**  
**Home Improvements**

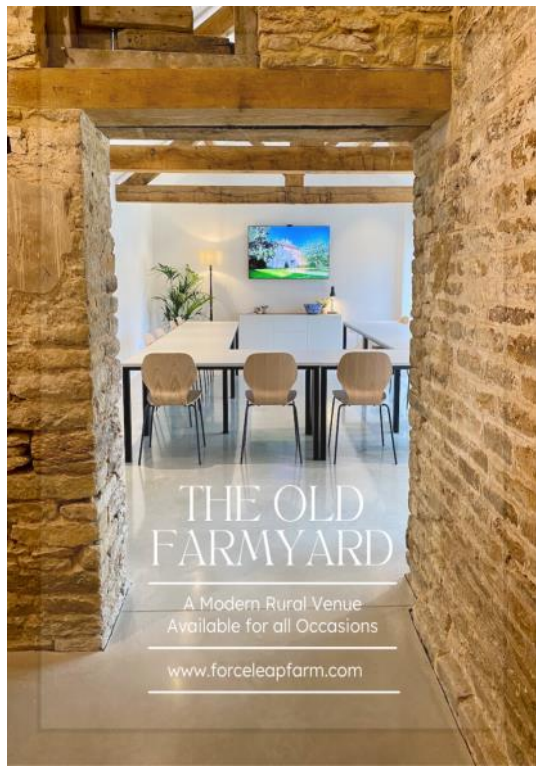
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