



Dingley Village Pump March 2026

Ed: One of the beauties of living in Dingley is a walk on the Hall Drive at this time of year. Go soon while the snowdrops are still at their best. Start your walk by going through the blue door to approach the church; the snowdrops on your right are like a snowdrift. The first of the daffodils are showing their faces, and in a couple of weeks there will be that wonderful sea of yellow. This year the winter aconites were a bit disappointing, only because they need sunshine to open their little faces, and there wasn't any. Not just aconites; I think we all need a bit of sun.

This edition of the Pump has some interesting contributions from a serious scientist, a friendly newcomer, a very promising young journalist, amongst others. Hope you enjoy it, and feel inspired to contribute in future.

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Village Hall Notes

Forthcoming events

Saturday 7th March – Irish Night - sold out but please enquire if you'd like to be on the waiting list.

Friday 10 th April	Gin tasting evening
Friday May 1st or 8 th	Pizza / Italian night
Friday 5 th June	Possible village walk and social evening
Sunday 7 th June	Open Gardens & Bloom and Bake event
Friday 3 rd July	Village BBQ

Look out for the notices.

Sunday 7th June Open Gardens

Plans for this year's Open Garden event are well underway. We still need more gardens, and volunteers for Teas, parking, etc. Please let Tony (07538 678030) know if you can help with any of those.

We are seeking new members to join the Village Hall Committee – to bring new ideas and help run events. It is not a great commitment – you can contribute as little of your time as you can afford. If you'd like to join, please contact Jo on 07771 842456.

What the Crew do for You!



On the cold and wet Sunday of Valentine's weekend the intrepid crew of the Village Hall Committee spent a couple of hours managing traffic flow on the main road. This was to allow Jack Wilkins to cut back some of the bushes and trees that were starting to overhang the Harborough Road and associated footpath, giving the Valentine's love and care it deserves.

Valentine's Jokes

Did Adam and Eve ever have a date?

No, they had an apple.

When do you invite someone out for a coffee?

When you like them a latte.

Which flowers give the best kisses?

Tulips.

A Batter Night Out in the Village Hall

Once again, the annual Fish'n'Chip Supper reeled in a full house – clearly the promise of fried potatoes remains the strongest force of community cohesion known to humankind.

This year's feast supported Bower House Counselling Services in Market Harborough, and the delicious golden goodness was generously supplied by The Blue Wave.

The evening also featured a raffle – although calling it “organised” might be generous. Halfway through we discovered we'd run out of raffle tickets, which caused a brief period of improvised village-level chaos.

Despite this logistical adventure, winners were declared, prizes were distributed, and no one (publicly) contested the results.

We were pleased to welcome new residents to the village, who now understand exactly what kind of place they've moved to: friendly, enthusiastic, and only mildly chaotic.

A fantastic evening all round – full of fun, full of community spirit, and, most importantly, full of chips.



Compost Science

Most people find worms in their garden, I found an undocumented species – and we called it DingleyDell.

Bacteriophages (or phages for short) are everywhere, yet most have never been studied. They are tiny viruses that infect bacteria, and unlike antibiotics which tend to kill any bacteria, they only target specific bacterial species. Each species of phage is a 'picky eater' as it has evolved alongside its bacterial host.

When phage and bacteria meet, the phage injects its genetic material and hijacks the bacterium to make more phage, which then burst free, killing the bacterial host. But why is this relevant to people?

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a silent pandemic, killing more than a million people every year who have been infected by microbes that are resistant to modern antibiotics. Scientists are on the rapid search for new alternatives, and are hoping that nature might hold some clues.

I work at the Francis Crick Institute, where doctors, chemists and microbiologists are coming together to address this challenge. One lab in particular, is looking for new ways to precisely disrupt the cellular machinery of bacteria and the unique characteristics that help them survive.

They asked staff to send in soil samples as part of a hunt for new phage species. Each new species teaches scientists a bit more about phage diversity and bacterial ecosystems. Understanding how bacteria protect themselves, and how phages might overcome these defences, could help expose unique weaknesses in different bacterial species. Some phages might even form the basis of future therapies.

I had little faith in any of my London pot plants yielding a new species, so I took a sampling kit on a trip back home, and while the odds of finding a phage were low, my parent's Home Close compost heap turned out to be the ideal home.

My phage has been sequenced and structurally analysed, allowing scientists to examine its DNA and establish what bacteria it infects, and leaving me with the naming rights. Naming often reflects origin, and this new species is now called DingleyDell for the scientific record.

Kathryn Ingham – swapped Dingley roots for city boots (at least for now)

How to Enjoy Christmas

My name is Ollie, I'm nearly 3 and love visiting my Nannie, Grumps and Daisy 🐾 who live in Church Lane. I especially enjoy our walks down the lane, spying the owl and the pussycat and knocking on the big blue door. When inside I always look for the fairy that lives in the tree, watch the rabbits hopping by and the squirrels looking for their dinner. The birds are always singing too. When I look through the trees I can see a huge building that looks like a castle.



I'm big enough now to open the big blue gate into the churchyard. I walk to the first door and knock. "Is there anybody there?" I ask.

I then walk to the next big door, knock and ask again.

"Is there anybody there?"

Nobody answers the doors when I knock, until one very special evening the big door magically opened. I could hear the bells ringing and inside there were lots of people chatting. A very kind lady asked if I'd like to pull the big rope that makes the bells ring, I was so excited.

We sat quietly listening to Reverend Hannah talking to us and sang some songs. Then everybody was given an orange with a red ribbon, four sticks with sweets and grapes and a candle in the middle. Reverend Hannah told us all about Christingle and what it means. The candle was so pretty when lit but I had to be very careful. The church looked beautiful with all the lit candles.

Afterwards we walked to the village hall for the Christmas party. The honey sausages were my favourite, I did eat quite a lot. It was so nice to meet Nannie and Grumps' friends too.

Thank you Santa for my present, I hope you liked that I was wearing my Santa outfit just like yours.

I love coming to Dingley, it is such a fun place to visit.

Ollie

Journey to Dingley

First of all, I would like to thank all of you who attended the fish and chip night at the village hall on the 6th for making us feel so welcome.

Four years ago, we had not heard of Dingley let alone thought of moving up this way from our home at the time in Surrey.

Our journey began in 2022 when in a rash moment I decided to buy a Triumph Stag that was for sale at a dealer near Althorp. After a few months it developed a major mechanical fault which required the engine to be rebuilt at a specialist garage in Bruntingthorpe. Roll on three months and it was ready to collect so off we set one morning from Reigate heading North. After a good journey we arrived early. Never having been to Market Harborough and with a couple of hours to kill, we stopped for a look round, thought how nice it was, and made the decision to come up for a weekend to explore further.

Over the following two years we came up as often as we could to get a feel for the place, even renting a cottage in Gumley for a week.

Essentially, we fell in love with the place, the slower pace of life and the people who always seemed to have time for a chat and a cheery smile. We put our property on the market, and began seriously house hunting.

As many of you have probably heard selling property at the moment is not easy, and we had two chains break, which to say the least was frustrating!

Last summer we had ten prospective houses to look at over a period of two days. We had both said we wanted a detached property with a garage. Nine of the properties offered these requirements, except Cottlebrook Cottage 43 Harborough Road.

It was to be the first property we viewed. Even without seeing it I had decided it was not for us, but Shaun was determined to "at least have a look".

My mind remained unchanged until I saw the view from the back of the property over Dingley Racecourse and the charm of the property at which point I said "I love it, this is the place for us"! We viewed the other nine houses but not one had the views or the charm of Cottlebrook Cottage, and we put an offer in.

We were so lucky that the then owners Graeme and Gail Wooley were so patient with us as we desperately went through the process of selling our home in Surrey, with, as I said before, two sales falling through. We could not have bought from nicer people.

So here we are! We have been in for one month as I write this, and every day we feel so lucky to be in Dingley surrounded by a real and warm community.

Both Shaun and I look forward to meeting more of you at upcoming events at the village hall.

Dave and Shaun

Where do we Live?

I love English placenames. Every one of them contains a little bit of the history of the place, usually the oldest element being reflected in the language of its origin. Most names have a basis in Anglo Saxon, more accurately named Old English. A lot derive from Old Norse, the language of the Danish invaders, rather incorrectly called Vikings. A few show a history involving French from the time of the Norman kings.

The map here shows how we live close to the border between the Saxon Kingdoms and Danelaw, which was the area conquered and occupied by the Danes. As a result the placenames around here are a patchwork collection demonstrating a variety of early ownership.

Market Harborough is a great example. The Market bit is easy; the town was granted a royal charter in the first decade of the 13th century. This was important because it allowed regulation of trade and controlled prices. 'Harborough' is more complicated. Most sources cite an early spelling of Haefera-beorg meaning oat hill. But the beorg element could be a



variation of burh or byrig (Old English) or 'borg' (Old Norse) meaning a stronghold. And I don't know where the oats came from as the Old English for oats is 'ate' and in any case 'haefer' in Old English is 'goat'. So Market Harborough is an important market in a place where possibly oats were grown or more likely people kept goats.

Just as another interesting variation, the Har element of the name crops up in Norse (Danish/ 'Viking') names; Harald Harefoot king of England 1035-1040, and Harthacnut king from 1040 to 1042. and Harald Hardrada who helped us to have Norman kings by wearing out Saxon King Harold Godwinson's army at the battle of Stamford Bridge before they were beaten by the Normans at Hastings in 1066. So let's say that Market Harborough could be a goat farm belonging to some Viking called Harald.

There's a lot of fun to be had with Dingley too. The 'ley' bit is easy. It's an Old English word meaning a woodland clearing for pasture. There is a tiny mention in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of a local tribal leader called Dynni. The 'ing' element in placenames usually means 'the tribe of'. Lots of examples of that all over England; **Hastings** – tribe with a leader called Hasta, **Birmingham** -- the farm of the people led by Birm, **Wellingborough** – the fortress of Wella's people. Dingley or Dinningsley therefore was a Saxon settlement in a woodland clearing, of a tribe whose leader was Dynni.

I'll have a look at some more local names in a future Pump.

Reviews

Books

Underland by Robert Macfarlane

This book, *Underland*, is a profoundly memorable exploration of the worlds beneath our feet, and Robert Macfarlane's ability to weave travel, history, mythology, and geology into a single narrative makes the book both compelling and unusually resonant. Each journey—to ancient burial sites, glacial caverns, urban underworlds, and more—feels richly alive, with Macfarlane capturing the character of each place as vividly as the people tied to it.

What stayed with me most was the book's emotional and intellectual depth. Of all the books I read in 2025, this is the one that lingered with me longest, and for all the right reasons. It's thought-provoking, beautifully written, and consistently surprising. I thoroughly enjoyed it and would readily recommend it to anyone interested in nature writing, adventure, or the hidden layers of our world.

Taking the Lead by John Crace

Taking the Lead is an enjoyable and very funny look at British politics from someone who has watched it all unfold up close. John Crace uses humour to make sense of a decade filled with chaos, leadership changes, and constant surprises.

Because he has spent years following the main political figures, his stories feel real and well-observed. The book is light, quick to read, and full of sharp jokes, but it also shows how strange and unpredictable politics has become.

Overall, it's an entertaining and honest account of recent political history, told with wit and a strong insider's perspective.

Restaurants

Hector's Restaurant in Corby is a friendly, laid-back Italian spot that's ideal before a trip to the cinema or The Cube theatre. The menu is full of Italian favourites, and the pizzas are excellent – fresh, flavourful, and great value. Even better, you get 15% off your meal with a cinema ticket, making it an easy and affordable choice for a simple meal.

John's House This is a bit further afield as it's in Mountsorrel near Loughborough. Worth the trip, however, for its Michelin starred menus at a more reasonable price than the other starred restaurant in our vicinity. Local produce, sublime flavours, casual ambience and slightly unexpected surroundings. Chef John Duffin, after working with the likes of Gary Rhodes and Marcus Wareing, established his restaurant in a cottage on his parents' farm, and an 18th century cottage is what it remains.

Church Notes

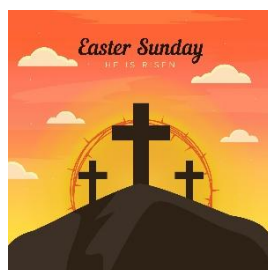
Spring is just round the corner and is a powerful Christian symbol of resurrection, hope and renewal. It reflects God's promise of new life after a cold, barren winter. As nature awakens, it mirrors the spiritual rebirth found in Christ, reminding believers that the old has gone and the new has come, offering a fresh start for faith.

We prepare to celebrate Lent, Holy Week and Easter, following Jesus' journey through suffering and death to new life. Please join us for Morning Worship at our fortnightly services (every second and fourth Sunday or as highlighted below). **All are welcome.**

We will also be holding a village meeting in the village hall on Sunday 26th April, with coffee/ teas and breakfast rolls, to understand how the church and village can work better together.

Our Services over the Easter period -

- 8th March - **Holy Communion 10am followed by refreshments. Rev Hannah Jeffery**
- 22nd March - **Lectio service at 10am.** Refreshments served at the start (Village Hall). **Tim Jeffery**
- 5th April - **Easter Sunday 10am followed by refreshments. Rev Jo Giles**
- 26th April - Village meeting at 10am. Refreshments served at the start including breakfast rolls (Village Hall). **Rev Hannah Jeffery**
- 10th May - **Holy Communion 10am followed by refreshments. Rev Neil Clarke**
- 24th May - **Lectio service at 10am.** Refreshments served at the start (Village Hall). **Rev Jo Giles**



I will post details prior to each service or event on the village WhatsApp and email.

We look forward to seeing you over the Easter/ Spring months

The PCC and Clergy at All Saints, Dingley.

Jamie Robertson
Church Warden and Treasurer

Previous Village Events



Village Contacts

Dingley Parish Council

Justina Medwell – Parish Clerk
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Steve Dudson – acting chair
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Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

Julie Archer
juliearcher81@gmail.com

Dingley Parish Church

Jamie Robertson
Churchwarden/Treasurer
01858 535573

Dingley Village Hall Committee

Chair - Jolyon Ingham – 01858 535300, jolyon.ingham@talk21.com

Hall Bookings – Tony Lucas 01858 535201, tonylucas@aol.com

Trustee – Jamie Robertson, robertsondingley@btinternet.com

Treasurer – David Adderley

Roger Read

Jennifer Clegg

Anna Fitzpatrick

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Dingley Village Pump

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Next issue June 1st submissions by May 1st please