



# The Parish Pump

A regular newsletter from Damerham Parish Council

**February 2026**



***Welcome to the February edition of The Pump!***

*And there it is – we're into February already, I hope you haven't been too adversely affected by all the rainfall and roadworks..*

*In this edition of The Pump, you will find a few updates, Paul's nature notes, some diary dates, including the return of Bingo and some lovely lunches at the Village Hall, then, of course, February is the month for Snowdrop*

*Weekend at St George's. Not to be missed!*

*I'd like to appeal for your photos to include in future Pumps, please. Many people have commented on the new format, and it would be AMAZING if we could have some more photos to include for everyone to see. Please*

*email them to me at [mandysrobbins@gmail.com](mailto:mandysrobbins@gmail.com)*

*Have a wonderful month and see you soon!*

## **Regular Village Events:**

***Mondays from 9am Pilates with Sandie***

Contact: [hello@sandiewillspilates.co.uk](mailto:hello@sandiewillspilates.co.uk)

***Mondays from 6 – 7pm Strong Nation with Carolina***

Contact [carolinatuc@gmail.com](mailto:carolinatuc@gmail.com)

***3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every other month from 7.30pm***

Parish Council Meeting - Contact [clerk@damerham.net](mailto:clerk@damerham.net)

***Tuesdays from 9.45am – Fluffy Chicks parent and toddler group.***

Contact: [fluffychicks21@gmail.com](mailto:fluffychicks21@gmail.com)

***Tuesdays from 6.30pm – Damerham AFC training***

Contact: Dylan – 07380 192020

***Tuesdays from 7.30pm – Badminton Doubles club***

Contact: [m.walter@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:m.walter@hotmail.co.uk)

***Wednesdays from 10.30 – Coffee Pot at the Village Hall***

***Wednesdays from 6pm Zumba with Carolina***

Contact [carolinatuc@gmail.com](mailto:carolinatuc@gmail.com)

***1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month from 2pm – Tea and Chat***

Contact [ellawhitcher@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ellawhitcher@hotmail.co.uk) tel: 07986 650123

***1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, Quiz Night at the Compasses Inn***

Contact: 01725 518231

***2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 9.30 – Walking Group***

Contact: [sarahings56@gmail.com](mailto:sarahings56@gmail.com)

***Every last Wednesday – Fish and chip van at the Village Hall 5 – 7pm***

***1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month from 7.30pm Royal British Legion Social***

Contact: [Jim.eames@btinternet.com](mailto:Jim.eames@btinternet.com)

***1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month from 7.15pm – Bingo at the Village Hall***

Contact: [info@damerham.org](mailto:info@damerham.org)

***Every last Thursday of the month – Dam-Jam live music at the***

***Compasses.enquiries@compassesinndamerham.co.uk***

If you would like to book the village hall for a gathering or event, please have a look at the website at [damerham.org](http://damerham.org), where you can also see regular users, updates and fill in a booking form, or email the booking secretary, Stuart, at [info@damerham.org](mailto:info@damerham.org).

## Looking Ahead!

**Village Hall 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June is the big day.** Plans are afoot to invite the Village to mark 30 glorious years of this fabulous village facility. Please save the date, gather your memories, photos and records and help us celebrate!



Our fabulous duck race is again kindly sponsored by Wooley and Wallis Estate Agents and is set to be a quacking good day out for all the family! We were slightly overwhelmed by the success of last year, so this time, there will be More Ducks, More Food, Fewer Queues and even More Prize Money! Bring the family – it is bound to be MORE FUN!

### **Damerham and District Horticultural Society Spring Show**

The show will be on 21<sup>st</sup> March, so more news in the next Pump, but schedules and entry forms will be available during February – sent to members, on the DDHS website and at village locations. Keep your eyes peeled!

## Thank yous

**Village Hall Tidy Up.** Thank you so much to everyone who came to help tidy up the Village Hall gardens on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January, it wasn't a beautiful day, but we had a brilliant turn out, and everyone worked incredibly hard, it really does look amazing! This is really what our lovely village is about.

**Pantomime.** Thank you so much to Tree House Theatre for a fun packed Pantomime performance of Alice in Wonderland on 17<sup>th</sup> January. There were so many happy faces, and wonderful to see so many budding actors and actresses in our village!



## ***Diaries and updates!***

**BINGO IS BACK!!** Our first meeting of the year is on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February, from 7.15 – eyes down at 7.30. Come along for your first chance to win in 2026. £10 a book, but you don't have to have a whole book, you can share with a friend. Refreshments at half time.



**The Damerham Sportsfield Lottery!!** Get your tickets each month using the QR code on the poster – help to support the upkeep of our lovely sportsfield. As the saying goes – you have to be in it to win it!!

## **Royal British Legion – Damerham & Western Downland Branch**

The Damerham and Western Downland Branch of the RBL has its next social meeting at the Compasses on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February from 7.30 – 9pm. Do come along and join us – everyone is welcome.



## **Damerham and District Horticultural Society – [www.ddhs.co.uk](http://www.ddhs.co.uk)**

Our February event is a talk by Bryan Madders on Chrysanthemums and Dahlias. Bryan is the chairman of the New Forest Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society. It will be held in Damerham Village Hall on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm. A gentle reminder about membership – you can renew at the February talk – forms are available on our website – [www.ddhs.co.uk](http://www.ddhs.co.uk). We welcome new members to join at £12 per couple and £8 for a single membership. We offer a variety of talks, self drive garden visits, a coach trip, garden party and our amazing Spring and Summer shows.

### **Free Lunches 2026**

The next delicious soup and crumble lunch will on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February, with the final one for the year on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March, in the Village Hall between 12.30 and 2pm. The lunches are supported by the Village Fair, and donations of soup and crumble from lovely villagers! All are welcome. Any funds received will be donated to the local Food Bank.

### **Humble Lunch**

The annual Humble Lunch organised by St George's Church will be on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February from 12 noon. All proceeds will go to Sudan Medical Link. Do come along and join us.

### **Snowdrop Weekend – 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> February at St George's Church from 10 – 4.**

It's nearly here – although there are already a few snowdrops peeping out here and there! This is one of St George's main fundraisers, and doesn't just give you a chance to see our beautiful church and churchyard full of snowdrops, but also a to buy from our fabulous bric a brac stall, books and seasonal produce, and, of course, enjoy some delicious refreshments (from 10.30 – 3.30). Donations of good quality items to sell are very welcome, and we would love a few more volunteers to help out on the day. Please get in touch with John Godber at Catherine.godber50@gmail.com

There is a Snowdrop Sunday Walk on the Parish Council website which you might like to try. [www.damerham.net/leisure/snowdrop/](http://www.damerham.net/leisure/snowdrop/)

### **Tea and Chat**

We had a quieter meeting in January as many folk were poorly, but still 22 people managed to get out. It was lovely to catch up with everyone and spend time chatting and eating cake! We have a speaker from the Salvation Army in Fordingbridge coming to talk to us at our next meeting on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm. So if you are interested in hearing about their work, come along with a £1 for entrance to join us.

By the time you read this, our first fundraiser of 2026, the Jumble Sale, will be over, and hopefully all volunteers will have recovered! I want to say a massive thank you to everyone who gives up their time to help, and to those who donate items to sell. I will let you know in the next Pump how we did as the time of writing this is before the Sale!

For more information, contact Ella Witcher on 07986 650123 or [ellawitcher@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ellawitcher@hotmail.co.uk)

## **Paul T's Nature Notes**

### **Weather for December 2025.**

A very wet month with 198mm compared with the average of 95mm. The total for 2025 was 823mm still well below the long-term average of 943mm. On 17<sup>th</sup> we had 38.8mm. There were 7 frosts and the highest temperature was 14C on 4 consecutive days in the second week. The coldest night was on 30<sup>th</sup> at minus 2C. The average maximum was 10C, minimum 4C.

### **Wildlife**

A rather quiet month because of the wet which restricted outdoor activity but there were some good highlights. On Christmas Eve we stopped at Blashford Lakes and had our picnic in the Tern Hide because of the weather. A large group of gulls was resting at the far side of the lake and they suddenly all rose high over the water. I suspected a raptor and we searched among the whirling gulls and spotted a White-tailed Eagle, which flew across in front of the hide and landed not far away. A few moments later it got up and then flew at very high speed low down above the water giving us great views. I think that even my teenage granddaughters were impressed. This was only the second eagle I have seen in the UK (the first was also this species) as even though I have had many holidays in Scotland I have never seen an eagle there.

The meadows in Damerham have been flooded for some weeks and are always worth looking at. A pair of Mute Swans has been there for a while and there are usually Pied Wagtails flitting about. Grey Wagtails used to be seen frequently and bred for years but seem to have left the village in recent years. I did however see one in the yard of the Ship Inn in Fordingbridge recently which was a surprise. There have been Snipe, Little Egrets, Herons and Mallard on the floods as well and a flock of Starlings (called a murmuration) has been roosting in the reeds. As dusk approaches many hundreds of birds join together from their daytime feeding areas and zoom over the meadow for several minutes before suddenly diving into the reeds for the night. Flocks of gulls have been gathering on the flood water in the afternoon before flying off to roost probably at Blashford. There have been Common Gulls, Black-headed Gulls and Lesser Black-backs.

One of my Christmas presents was a very interesting book about Buzzards (by Robin Prytherch) which is based on the superb sketches he made of all the Buzzards in his study area of North Somerset. The area was just 75 square kilometres and when he started in 1982 it had 13 territories. In 2020 there were 120 territories, an amazing density. He sketched every bird and could recognise them all individually and the book is based on Christmas cards he did each year with details about the bird or birds and their life histories. Now the weather has got colder there has been more movement of winter visitors with Flocks of Fieldfare and Redwing and we have seen Lapwings flying over to the south. Don't forget that I would like to hear about any of your sightings.

Paul.toynton@hotmail.co.uk

### **Bridleway News from Annie Bellows.**

I wanted to provide an update on the bridleway improvement works. The resurfacing and drainage on 'Muddy Lane', from the Sandleheath end, have now been completed. The remaining actions relate to the fencing and gate requested by Mr and Mrs Gould; the sleeper posts have been reinstated, and I am awaiting their response following further consultation. I will also seek to replant some of the lost hedge in early February.

The central section has also been resurfaced, and substantial drainage improvements have been installed. Although not all of this is visible, it will significantly improve the long-term condition of the bridleway and support any agricultural machinery that uses it.

### **Outstanding items:**

- We are still awaiting approval of the Ordinary Watercourse Consent for the installation of the culverts and stone topping, which will remove the need for the unsuitable single-plank bridges. Subject to weather, I hope the contractors will complete this by the end of March.
- Additional funding has been secured to address the persistent water pooling at the Damerham end. Following a site meeting with the contractor yesterday, temporary drainage works will begin next week, with a permanent solution to be installed alongside the culvert works. This should provide a fully usable, year-round bridleway by the end of April.

### **Roadworks**

There are lots of roadworks going on and scheduled locally in the next few months – I am sure you have discovered all sorts of interesting detours already. The date for Court Hill closure seems to keep moving, so keep an eye on the Western Downland Noticeboard facebook page for real time updates. All the disruption will be worth it in the end!

**Two Bridges Community Transport** are looking for volunteer drivers, could you help out? They provide transport for health and medical appointments when no other transport is available – a real life saver in our villages. Volunteer drivers can choose when and where they want to drive, and fit around other commitments, so it's a really flexible way to make a big difference.



## **Rubbish!!**

Have you got into the swing of the wheelie bins and the new collection days yet? Hopefully things will have settled into a new normal now.

### **Household Glass collection**

All glass bottles & jars

Metal lids only

No loose or plastic lids

No broken glass

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February from 7.00am



### **Garden Waste**

Collection for existing customers will be on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February.

For more information about collection days for household waste, recycling and more, see [www.newforest.gov.uk/recyclingandrubbish](http://www.newforest.gov.uk/recyclingandrubbish)

**Blister pack recycling** – take your empty blister packs along to the Repair Café at Avonway in Fordingbridge on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month. A donation of £1 per 50 packs is requested please.

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*Do you have any ideas, comments, or suggestions for the future of The Parish Pump? Photos of past or upcoming events, or just lovely views of Damerham? News to share, updates or a village event to publicise? Please get in touch! If you would like to be added to the emailing list, or you have anything you would like to include in the March edition, please email me at [mandysrobbins@gmail.com](mailto:mandysrobbins@gmail.com) by Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February.*

*Space permitting, we are also looking at including small adverts for local businesses and services – please get in touch to find out more.*

Lots of information on the village is to be found on the Damerham website [www.damerham.net](http://www.damerham.net) and on the facebook page.

A welcome pack is available from the Clerk – [clerk@damerham.net](mailto:clerk@damerham.net) for newcomers.

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