

Parish Council Newsletter - September 2026

News and updates from North Leigh Parish Council and the Parish Community

View From The Chair

Sometimes the summer months tend to be a little quieter, however this year summer has been a busy time.

Parishioners continue to be rightly concerned about the numbers of housing applications being submitted.

Members of the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan committee made excellent representations at the WODC planning committee significantly contributing to the rejection of the Lioncourt housing application, immediately west of the Common Road/A4095 junction.

A number of well-attended meetings have been held to coordinate parish concerns over the Elivia Homes housing application in Common Road. North Leigh Parish Council's planning committee has sent in a detailed argument against the housing application to WODC.

Members of North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) have contributed to the Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group, (WING), along with at least nine other parish councils. The focus has been on gaining assurances that sufficient infrastructure particularly roads and transport is in place for the planned 950 houses.

Gaining full legal agreement with WODC for the lease on the Adventure Playground has been a long and frustrating ordeal, but we are very happy to say that since the release of S106 monies from WODC, construction of the MUGA was started on Monday 14th of September.

The council is intending to gain residents' opinions on what to construct in the large field adjacent to the Adventure Playground, the objective being to install facilities suitable for older children. Possibilities are a cycle track and a skateboard installation. We intend to hold a parish meeting where everyone's views can be expressed.



View From the Chair continued:

Finally, I must mention that the parish councillors work for you and the community. The Parish Council strives to improve and protect the parish and its environment in conjunction with parishioners. However, we cannot do this without sufficient help. Currently we are two councillors short of our full complement of nine.

The Council would like to thank Paul Kitchin for his time as councillor.

If you have matters you would like to raise, or if you would like to know more of what councillors do, please do not hesitate to contact any of the councillors or the Parish Council clerk, Allison Leigh, all of whom will be happy to discuss with you. All our contact details are on the North Leigh Parish Council website and as always please discuss your concerns at any of the monthly Parish Council meetings in the public forum sections or discuss with any of the council members.

Thank you,

Robert Gunn

Chair

North Leigh Parish Council



North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan Update

Since the Regulation 14 (pre-submission) consultation closed, the Neighbourhood Plan Committee (the Committee) has been carefully reviewing every representation. Of all the responses received 98% supported the Neighbourhood Plan. This has been a lengthy process and has involved considering the suggestions and concerns raised, assessing where changes are needed, and refining the draft Plan.

It is necessary to ensure that it continues to reflect the aspirations of our community while also meeting national planning policy and the requirements of West Oxfordshire District Council.

The Committee would like to thank all of the parishioners who responded to the consultation. Comments that were received and were relevant to, and within the scope of a neighbourhood plan, have been incorporated into the revised version.

The next step will be for the Parish Council to consider the revised Plan before it is formally submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council under Regulation 15. The submission will include the Neighbourhood Plan, supporting evidence, a Basic Conditions Statement and a Consultation Statement explaining how comments received during Regulation 14 have been taken into account.

Once submitted, the District Council will undertake a further period of consultation before the Plan is considered by an independent examiner. Subject to a successful examination, the final stage will be a parish referendum, when local residents will have the opportunity to vote on whether the Plan should be adopted. If approved, the North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory development plan for the parish and will help guide planning decisions for many years to come.

The Committee and Parish Council will be keeping residents updated as we move towards the next stages of the process.

Recruiting two councillors!

North Leigh Parish Council has seats for 9 councillors who meet the second Thursday of every month. The Council has 3 committees, Planning, Neighbourhood Plan and Staffing, and manages several assets including 2 playgrounds and a cemetery.

The Council carries out events during the year such as the Christmas tree lighting and others that arise, such as being involved in the 2025 VE Day celebrations.

The Council also has some exciting projects at the moment such as looking at further use of the land around the Adventure Playground MUGA, a village map and there is always scope for new and fresh ideas.

Being a Councillor involves attending meetings where informed decisions are made on behalf of residents. Decisions range from how finances are spent, comments on planning applications, management of village assets, consideration of future projects, grounds maintenance and more. The Council welcomes and encourages members of the public to attend meetings and communicate with the Council as this is the best way for us to represent the Parish.

The criteria are to be over 18, on the electoral register, live/work/own/rent property in North Leigh or within 3 miles of the village. The Council is a very proactive team and welcomes anyone who has even a spark of interest and enthusiasm to contact the Clerk.

Parish Council Planning Committee

On the planning front there is some good news.

On the 10th of August the Lioncourt Planning Application for up to 80 Houses off Common Road came before the WODC's Development Management Sub Committee.

The Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Committee and a local resident all spoke against the Application.

Our District Councillor Sarah Veasey also contributed to the meeting.

The Committee refused permission.

Parish Council Planning Committee continued:

However, the Applicants have six months from the date of the decision to Appeal, if an appeal is made the Parish Council will be notified and will let the residents know in their usual way.

It is important that people object, the more the better and please note all adult residents can object, it is not one objection for each household.

Appeals can be dealt with in one of three ways, written Representations, Informal enquiry or Public enquiry. We would anticipate it will not be dealt with by written representations but informal or public enquiry, again NLPC will advise you of the mode of appeal if one is made and what you can do to assist.

Although we have the success regarding the Lioncourt application, Elivia Homes has submitted a Planning Application for up to 80 new homes on land to the rear of 18 Common Road.

The Planning Committee held a meeting with residents prior to the submission of the application which was well attended. Elivia Homes was invited but said insufficient notice had been provided.

Many people attended the meeting and a further meeting which was held after the application was made. Residents expressed their views quite clearly and wanted NLPC to strongly oppose the application should it be made.

Finally the Government has introduced new requirements for dealing with Planning applications in the future.

Our District Councillor Sarah Veasey has outlined these in this newsletter below.

Grounds maintenance

The Parish Council contracts out various areas of grounds maintenance.

These are:

North Leigh Cemetery*

St Mary's Churchyard (including a wilding programme in conjunction with the Church)

Area around the Church Road Bench

Cuckamus Green*

Triangle opposite the Masons Arms and weeds along the wall by the Gospel Hall

Grass around the bus stops

Windmill Heights*

Triangular area on Windmill Close/Windmill Road

Children's Playground on Park Road*

Adventure Playground*

Grass at the entrance to Park Road

Weeding down Dark Alley

*The Parish Council is responsible for the trees here as well.

Oxfordshire County Council cuts verges once per year.

They have published a schedule of cutting which can be found on their website:

[Verge maintenance | Oxfordshire County Council](#).

There can be other areas of vegetation which can need attention as well such as hedges overhanging pavements, weeds on pavements, trees.

For these issues, the best way to report these is via Fix My Street:

[FixMyStreet](#)

Sometimes residents may notice issues on public rights of way. 'Public Rights of Way' is the term for footpaths (for walkers only), bridleways (for walkers, horse riders and cyclists), restricted byways (for walkers, horse riders, cyclists and horse-drawn carriages) and byways (for walkers, horse riders, cyclists, horse-drawn carriages and motor vehicles).

Issues on Public Rights of Way can be reported to Oxfordshire County Council's Countryside Access team via:

[Reporting an issue on a public right of way | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Grounds maintenance continued:

Due to the budget constraints and lack of resources, the Countryside Access team encourages others to keep an eye on local public rights of way. Oxfordshire Area Ramblers have Parish Path Wardens who keep an eye on local public rights of way, reporting issues noticed to the Countryside Access team. Stiles and gates are the responsibility of the landowner. Bridges are the responsibility of the County Council. If you do come across any issues with regards to rights of way, please contact the Parish Clerk.

Thank you to landowners, wardens and all who are assisting in making our rights of way enjoyable for all.

If you do have an issue regarding grounds maintenance and are unsure of how to report it, please feel free to contact the Clerk to the Parish Council who can point you in the right direction.

Fire advice

With the summer that we have had, the Parish Council would like to remind residents and visitors to follow relevant safety advice.

Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service provides a variety of advice to reduce the risk of wildfires and other fire-related incidents. Here are some key safety measures and tips:

- **Avoid discarding cigarette butts:** Discarding cigarette butts or throwing them from a car can ignite fires in dry grassland. Always take rubbish home.
- **Barbecue safety:** Ensure barbecues are in good working order; gas connections are secure and place them on stable ground. After use, turn off gas cylinders and do not leave lit barbecues unattended.
- **Gardening fire prevention:** Ensure bonfires are at least 18 metres away from houses, trees, hedges, fences, and sheds. After use, spray embers with water and keep a close eye to prevent reignition.
- **Water safety:** Be cautious in waterways and lakes and follow safety guidelines when visiting the seaside to avoid accidents and ensure safety.

Residents are encouraged to follow these safety measures to help prevent wildfires and ensure safety in Oxfordshire's countryside. For more detailed advice and resources, residents can contact the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service or visit their website:

[Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

From District Councillor Sarah Veasey

As your District Councillor, I am getting to know an ever-increasing number of residents of our Parish. It is always a pleasure to meet you and hear your views and concerns. A large part of my role is to represent those views at West Oxfordshire District Council so please do get in touch on:

Sarah.veasey@westoxon.gov.uk

or through Facebook at "**Cllr Sarah Veasey**" if you have any issues or concerns and I will do my best to help you.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL (WODC)

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Local Government Reorganisation is a central government initiative to restructure and simplify the layers of local government. In Oxfordshire three proposals for restructuring were put forward, and on 16th Jul 2026, central government announced that they had selected the "Three Unitary Councils" (3UA) proposal put forward by Oxford City Council.

This option proposes:

- A **Greater Oxford Unitary Council**: merging Oxford City Council and its Green Belt (including some parts of Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils) together with the Oxfordshire County Council functions in these areas
- A **Northern Oxfordshire Council**: merging West Oxfordshire District Council and most of Cherwell District Council together with the Oxfordshire County Council functions in these areas
- A **Ridgeway Council**: merging parts of South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse District Councils together with the Oxfordshire County Council functions in these areas and also merging with West Berkshire Unitary Council

In May 2028 Oxfordshire County Council and the five local District Councils (including West Oxfordshire District Council) and West Berkshire Unitary Council will be abolished these three new unitary authorities will replace them and will be locally accountable and responsible for providing all local services for their areas.

From District Councillor Sarah Veasey LGR continued:

This Local Government Reorganisation process is closely linked to regional devolution plans which propose the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority for the Thames Valley region (including Oxfordshire). A directly elected mayor would coordinate strategic issues across their region such as housing, transport and economic growth.

Now that the decision has been confirmed, it is anticipated that shadow council elections will be held in May 2027 and the elected shadow councils will then be responsible for the transitional arrangements for establishing the new unitary councils. The new unitary councils are then expected to take over from May 2028. Links to the decision letter and the website showing details of the new three unitary councils are shown below.

[Local government reorganisation: decision letter to Oxfordshire council leaders](#)
[3Councils](#)

NB: As of the 7th of September, the government has launched a review into the proposed plans in light of new legal advice. As of that date the shadow elections due to take place in May 2027 have been cancelled.

PLANNING

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

When the NPPF was updated in December 2024, it significantly increased the pressure on councils to plan for housing by introducing the Government's "Standard Method" to calculate housing need and also introduced the "Grey Belt" policy making it easier in certain circumstances for development to take place on Green Belt land. A major update of the NPPF has since taken place with consultation between December 2025 and March 2026 and the revised NPPF being published on 17th August 2026. This policy framework takes immediate effect and gives guidance on the preparation of local plans and also on the assessment of planning applications.

WODC will now need to refer to this guidance

From District Councillor Sarah Veasey NPPF continued:

The new NPPF is intended to give more consistent rules-based decision-making guidance with the aim of getting more housing delivered. There is a presumption in favour of development and more focus on encouraging housing around public transport hubs. There is also more focus on sites being sustainable, with a specific aim of maximising suitable land within urban areas, specifically prioritising sites that have access to infrastructure, services and facilities and with sustainable transport - and taking a more selective approach to development outside settlements.

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 (WOLP 2043)

The Regulation 18 stage of the WOLP 2043 (consultation on "Preferred Policy Options" and "Preferred Site Options") was evaluated in the first half of 2026 and a Regulation 18 Consultation Summary Report has been finalised also taking into account the December 2024 NPPF requirements described above. The Plan then moves on to Regulation 19 with a 6-week public consultation on the Regulation 18 Consultation Summary Report which runs from 26th August to 9th October 2026. The consultation also includes supporting documentation for the plan including an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which discusses how the local infrastructure will be delivered to support the housing development, including requirements by Thames Water to upgrade the sewer network and sewage treatment capacity. Links to the plan, to the IDP and instructions on how to give feedback to the consultation are shown below.

[Folder: West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 | West Oxfordshire District Council](#)

After the consultation ends and feedback is incorporated, the Local Plan and supporting documents will be submitted to the Inspectorate by December 2026 and examined under the requirements of NPPF 2024. The outcome of the inspection could be known as early as March 2027 but may be a lot later as there is a "queue" of Councils all submitting their Local Plans by this deadline so it could be as late as the end of 2027. If approved by the inspector the Local Plan 2043 could be adopted in late 2027 or early 2028.

From District Councillor Sarah Veasey WOLP 2043 continued:

I have consistently lobbied the Planning Department at WODC over the last 2 years to make them aware of the disproportionate level of unsustainable housing development that has been approved in North Leigh in recent years combined with a total lack of improvement in the supporting infrastructure. WOLP 2031 envisaged only “limited” development in medium sized villages, but in practice this has not been the case. I have repeatedly asked for a mechanism to be included in the new Plan 2043 that would limit the amount of housing that could take place over the term of the Plan in medium sized Tier 3 villages such as North Leigh, and a mechanism is now being drafted which is shown in the Draft Plan under policy DM18 Windfall Housing.

Lioncourt Planning Application

The Lioncourt Application for 80 homes to the west of Common Road, North Leigh was refused at WODC's Development Management Sub Committee on Monday 10th August 2026. As a member of that Committee, I was pleased to see that the members seriously considered the issues raised by many local residents on the WODC planning portal. The Committee's decision to refuse the application was based on a number of planning grounds, including disproportionate development in North Leigh, landscape harm and harm to the setting of Grims Ditch.

COMMUNITY

Thames Water - engineering works in East End and New Yatt

Thames Water has subcontracted Mott McDonald to undertake works in both New Yatt and East End, commencing 28th September 2026 to repair and upgrade the sewer which may take up to 4 weeks. The Parish Council will send out notices of road closures etc nearer to the time.

Thames Water - Water Leaks

There has been a longstanding water leak outside the Memorial Hall in Park Road and another leak developed over the summer on Church Road opposite the Turner Hall. Cllr Liam Walker and I liaised repeatedly with Thames Water to get both of these leaks resolved.

COMMUNITY continued:

Summer Events

Over the summer I have enjoyed attending a number of local events, a plant survey at St. Mary's Church, North Leigh, Bingo evenings in the North Leigh Memorial Hall raising funds for the Hall, an open day at Bridewell Gardens Mental Health Recovery Service based in the Walled Garden at Wilcote, a visit to Gibbetts Hill near Witney - a rewilding project and new acquisition by the Wychwood Forest Trust looking at different approaches to habitat restoration, and the North Leigh Gardening Society Summer Show.

These occasions are a great reminder of what a vibrant community we have, thanks in no small part to the many residents who give generously of their time, energy and enthusiasm to make these local projects and initiatives happen.

Sewer leaks and other flooding issues

As we move into autumn and potentially higher rainfall, please continue to report any sewer manhole leaks to me directly. Please note that other rainfall issues, such as blocked roadside gullies, can be reported to OCC on FixMyStreet: www.fixmystreet.com

Potholes

The roads around North Leigh parish have been in an atrocious state, worsened by the constant rain and water erosion this Spring. In recent weeks we are seeing that some areas have been repaired. Potholes can be reported on:

www.fixmystreet.com

and I continue to work with my OCC ward colleague Cllr Liam Walker on this issue.

Fly-tipping

There have been increasing reports of fly-tipping around the Parish, and a number of landowners are starting to put up signs and cameras to deter people from dumping their rubbish in gateways and on verges. If you notice fly-tipping you can report it (or see if it has already been reported) through this WODC link:

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/fly-tipping>

Update from County Cllr Liam Walker

There has been plenty happening locally over recent months, so I wanted to provide North Leigh residents with an update on some of the issues I have been working on, alongside some of the wider developments affecting our area.

Thames Water – leaks repaired and upgrades underway...

I'm pleased that, following interventions from myself and Cllr Sarah Veasey, with a little bit of help from ITV News highlighting the problems!, a number of the persistent water leaks around North Leigh have now finally been repaired by Thames Water.

Residents were understandably frustrated at seeing water being wasted while these leaks remained unresolved, so I'm pleased that we have managed to get action taken.

There are also a number of important Thames Water works taking place in and around the village to upgrade sewage infrastructure. I fully appreciate that roadworks and temporary disruption are frustrating, particularly when several works are happening around the same time.

However, these upgrades are long overdue. With continued development putting additional pressure on our infrastructure, it is vital that sewage capacity and the wider network are improved to cope with both existing and future demand.

I'll continue to keep a close eye on these works and raise any problems residents experience.

Another delay for Eynsham Park & Ride...

Unfortunately, there is less positive news when it comes to the Eynsham Park & Ride.

Oxfordshire County Council has announced a further delay, with the Park & Ride now not expected to open until early summer 2028, while the wider A40 scheme is not expected to be completed until summer 2029.

Update from County Cllr Liam Walker continued:

This is incredibly frustrating. We have a completed Park & Ride sitting closed while residents continue to deal with congestion along the A40.

To make matters worse, the closed site is costing around £10,000 every month for security, maintenance and lighting.

Residents rightly expect major infrastructure projects to be properly managed and delivered. We desperately need improvements to the A40, and I will continue pressing the County Council to get this project back on track.

Shores Green slip roads finally open...

Some much better transport news is that the long-awaited Shores Green slip roads have officially opened to traffic, marking a significant milestone in improving access to Witney.

The new junction provides a direct connection between the A40 and the eastern side of Witney, giving motorists another way into and out of the town.

Importantly, this should help reduce pressure on other routes, particularly Bridge Street, as well as helping to reduce some of the rat-running through surrounding communities.

This project has been talked about for many years, so it is fantastic to finally see vehicles using the new junction. I hope residents across Witney and the surrounding villages will start to see the benefits.

There is still much more that needs to be done to improve the A40, but the opening of Shores Green is a very welcome step forward.

Fly-tipping

New figures from West Oxfordshire District Council have revealed a concerning increase in fly-tipping during the first five months of 2026 compared with the same months last year.

Fly-tipping incidents increased by 43% in January, 14.5% in February and a staggering 90% in April. March saw a very small decrease of 0.6%, while May was unchanged. The overall picture is clearly concerning.

Fly-tipping is selfish, damages our countryside and communities, and leaves council taxpayers picking up the bill for clearing somebody else's rubbish.



Update from County Cllr Liam Walker, Fly-Tipping continued:

These figures also come following changes to how residents access Oxfordshire's household waste recycling centres, including the introduction of the booking system. I continue to have concerns about making it more difficult for residents to dispose of their waste legally, particularly when fly-tipping figures are already moving in the wrong direction.

We need to make it easier to do the right thing and harder to get away with doing the wrong thing.

As ever, I'll continue working with our local councillors, the Parish Council and residents to raise issues affecting North Leigh and ensure our village gets its fair share of investment and attention.

Whether it is getting water leaks repaired, pushing for better sewage infrastructure, challenging delays to major transport projects or tackling fly-tipping, please do continue to get in touch if there is something locally that you think I can help with.

Cllr Liam Walker

County Councillor for Hanborough & Hailey division



Around the Parish

Café Life

Over the past eighteen months, North Leigh Community Café has become an important feature of village life – so much so that, when our friend “Terry the Teapot” misled people into believing we were closing for the summer, there was consternation among our customers.

We frequently ask ourselves why the café has become so popular but struggle to find a single answer. There is no doubt that the attitude, willingness and energy of our volunteers are critical; seldom do you see a customer left on their own or without a drink and something to eat. They also play a critical role in welcoming newcomers. Over the past few weeks, we have been joined by younger people who have proved invaluable in terms of their energy and engagement.

Our kitchen ‘crew’ seem tireless in delivering a range of food and drinks throughout each morning, as well as leaving the kitchen spick and span for the next hall users.

Another popular element of the café mix is the quiz, particularly the banter and humour between the quizmaster and the customers. Who would have thought that prizes of chocolate bars and fruit would result in such a competitive but friendly environment?

To add variety, we try to identify themes for the café on a regular basis. Recently, these have included Wimbledon (with Pimm’s, plus strawberries and cream), Royal Ascot Week (featuring the best hat competition) and Grand Prix Café (with a large slot-car racing circuit and a prize for the fastest time – this proved surprisingly popular). We even had some ‘at-table magic’ from ‘Fabian the Fantastic.’

When we were lucky enough to be nominated for the BBC’s *Rise and Shine* segment, we asked Jayne McCubbin to describe what she thought the café represented. Without hesitation, she said, ‘Joy.’ However we have managed to create this feeling, all we can say is long may it continue.

If you are interested in finding out more – either as a customer or a volunteer – then we are open on Wednesdays from 10:00–12:00 in the Memorial Hall. You can also follow us (and the adventures of Terry the Teapot and friends) on Facebook at North Leigh Community Cafe or contact us by email at:

northleighcommunitycafe@gmail.com.

The Café Organisers

St Mary's Church

July saw a group of people from across North Leigh join us to conduct a survey of the plants growing in the churchyard. The hot weather has had a detrimental effect on the number of plants growing, or at least visible, this year but hopefully now some rain has arrived they will thrive again in our rich landscape. This year, we offered people an opportunity to visit the church tower and also to ring the bells and then celebrate with cake and refreshments.

The churchyard continues to be a quiet space for outdoor services and to celebrate God's creation. The Labyrinth is available for everyone to walk around and there are details of how to use it in the box under the tree. We hold a Celtic Service about 3 times a year at 4pm and a Green Church about 4 times a year at 4pm. Our next Celtic service will follow the Threads Workshop on Sunday 20th September – all are welcome to join us for the workshop (1.45-3.45pm) and stay for a 30 minute Celtic Service at 4pm. Our next Green Church will be on Sunday 11th October in the Vicarage Garden (opposite the old Woodman Pub). We will have various autumnal activities culminating with making campfire s'mores and other treats. This is for all ages, and more details will be available on the church website.

Everyone is welcome to join us for our regular 10am services. The first Sunday of the month we begin with a 10am Café Church in the Turner Hall which is preceeded with a light breakfast of croissants and coffee. The following Sundays our 10am service is held in church. You will be assured of a warm welcome.

We also run a monthly Seniors' Lunch on a Wednesday and if you would be interested in this please email:

seniorsnorthleigh@gmail.com

for more details and to book a place.

As autumn is upon us we are also beginning to think about this season's events and services – Harvest (27th September and 4th October), Remembering with Love – our special service to remember our loved ones (1st November 6pm), Remembrance (8th November) and as we begin to plan our Christmas Services and events. Do check the church website for details:

www.northleighchurch.org

God bless
Margaret

Threads of North Leigh Parish Life



Committee members recently joined Clare for a wonderful session of fabric dyeing, creating some lovely, luscious greens for the background of our parish textile. We used a variety of fun fabrics and different shades of green to build texture and variation, resulting in a beautiful mix of rich, deep and vibrant greens.

Alongside the dyeing, we have been practising our stitching and collage techniques, creating a range of ideas to share. These activities are great preparation for our first workshop, which will be held at St Mary's Church on Sunday 20th September. Our focus for the workshop will be to reflect the ideals of the Green Church and celebrate the wonderful natural world around us.

We will barely have time to put down our needles, as the following evening we will be joining the Girl Guides. Once again, we'll be creating pieces inspired by and closely linked to the wonderful nature all around us.

It's exciting to see our parish textile beginning to take shape, and we look forward to sharing more of the journey with you. And, of course, you can follow our progress on Facebook.

Would you like to be part of the project?

We'll be organising a series of workshops between September and next March, and everyone is welcome – whether you're an experienced stitcher or simply fancy having a go at something new.

If you would like to take part in any of our workshops, please get in touch. We'd love to have you join us and help create this special textile celebrating our parish, our community and the beautiful natural world around us.

Mari Mitchell

Marimitchell54@gmail.com



North Leigh Roman Villa

Word Spreads About North Leigh Roman Villa

North Leigh Roman Villa Volunteers were delighted to welcome our local MP Calum Miller to the site in June. Volunteers explained the educational, creative and historical approaches which have been developed since the group's inception seven years ago to bring the site and the wider Romano-British context to life for modern visitors. Far from being a one-off, our MP's visit fits a pattern of widening interest in North Leigh.

In April 2026 four North Leigh Roman Villa Volunteers gave an Armchair Talk at Blenheim Palace – which proved most successful as it was the best supported such event to date.

In July volunteers attended the Summer Social organised by The Arts Society of West Oxfordshire [TASWOX], again over 60 people learned about the villa.

At both events, a full embroidery of North Leigh's mosaic was shown and discussed.

TASWOX generously funded craft materials for the embroidery and donated a further £140 from their summer raffle.

In addition, the site has hosted special openings to welcome Oxford University Classics candidates arranged by Queens College for a third successive year; 20 members of the Bentley Drivers Club (minus their vehicles) toured the site in May; Stonesfield's Cub Scouts explored the villa this summer, as did the Banbury Historical Society, who also enjoyed a lecture about the site by volunteer Graham Rutson.

About a dozen local history societies have now made special visits to the Villa guided by volunteers. Cotswold Wardens also returned on one of their organised rambles.

In September, the volunteers look forward to showing local Arts Society members the mosaic they have helped to commemorate; and are particularly excited by the prospect of a first international visit: from Baden-Württemberg's Archaeological Society. An archaeologist at Royal Holloway College, London has recently made contact with a view to involving North Leigh and the volunteers in a proposed research study.

A contactless card reader has already paid dividends with our generous visitors this season. With support from Blenheim Palace, TASWOX and over 1,000 visitors this year so far, 2026 is on course to be a record year for direct donations at North Leigh.

North Leigh Roman Villa continued:

A contactless card reader has already paid dividends with our generous visitors this season. With support from Blenheim Palace, TASWOX and over 1,000 visitors this year so far, 2026 is on course to be a record year for direct donations at North Leigh.

For more details about openings and access to the site, please visit:

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/north-leigh-roman-villa/>

Follow us on X: @villa_north

Or

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/northleighromanvilla>

To join Friends of North Leigh Roman Villa or arrange a special opening:

email: nlrvvols@gmail.com

North Leigh Gardening Society (NLGS)

After what has officially been named the hottest but not quite the driest spring and summer in recorded history it was wonderful to see the quantity and quality of the entries at the Society's Summer Show (Saturday 22nd August) which incidentally is open to both members and non-members (residents of North Leigh including Wilcote, East End and New Yatt). The number of flower and vegetable entries was slightly lower than usual but the quality of the produce entered showed the dedication and stubbornness not to be beaten by the weather of the gardeners involved. The handicraft, flower arranging, cooking and junior classes were well supported too. If you missed it this year be a part of it next year.

What to do to help your garden in such dry summers? Next year, as we are in a Super el Nino year will probably be as bad if not worse than what we have had to contend with this year.

This is my personal opinion which I am sure will be poo-pooed by some, but as an ex arable farmer the big thing is soil health and organic matter content which acts almost like blotting paper holding moisture and feeding the soil microbes, bacteria etc.

North Leigh Gardening Society (NLGS) continued

The second thing is some shade if possible to give plants some relief from the intense sunlight, the majority of plants that you are told need full sun, don't! Some shade during the course of the day helps immensely.

Third on my list is build up reserves of rain water because as sure as eggs are eggs there will be a hosepipe ban, keep it in dustbins or what ever comes to hand. When the going gets tough on your plants carefully watering may not make them flower fit for Chelsea but it will encourage them to stay alive. Especially relevant with expensive young trees. Don't apply with a rose on your watering can, water to the roots in a single stream.

The final point and probably the most important, is mulching your flower beds/plants, young trees etc. I do this religiously in the very early spring when the soil has had a good winter soak. I apply three inches/ 7.5cms of mulch all over the flower beds, the mulch can be your own compost, grass cuttings or you can buy things like spent mushroom compost; I use all three.

Compost on the raised beds, grass cuttings around the base of trees (at least 6 inches/15 cms deep and two feet/60cms, preferably three feet /1 metre around each tree depending on sun exposure and soil type and the time the tree has been planted), mushroom compost goes on the flower beds. Don't mulch right up to the stem of the plant, leave a good inch of space around the stem. The mulch acts like sunscreen for the soil and protects the soil's store of water from rapid evaporation, it will also allow more water into the soil, suppress weeds and provide organic matter to be taken down into the soil by the worms etc. May I politely suggest that you start hatching a plan for your garden sooner rather than later.

Finally up and coming NLGS events:

We have the AGM, Autumn Show (open to members only) and Cheese and Wine Supper on Tuesday the 29th September at 7.30pm in North Leigh Memorial Hall (Staging of exhibits 7.00pm – 7.30pm). It's free and friendly, enter some classes/ come along we would love to see you, a schedule of classes can be found in the Society's Programme of Events (the yellow booklet).

On Tuesday October 27th in the Memorial Hall at 7.30pm we have a talk and presentation by Mr Tim Mitchell on Growing for Asthall Manor Kitchen Garden/ wildlife gardening. If you are not a member and are interested in membership and its benefits give Sarah Veasey a call on 07798 730925

As I write this we've just had 19mm of rain, so Happy Gardening!

North Leigh Memorial Hall – Autumn 2026 Update

The North Leigh Memorial Hall continues to be a busy and important part of village life, providing a home for a wide range of community activities, clubs, meetings and events.

Over the summer, the Hall has continued to be well used by local groups and organisations, as well as for private functions and community activities. The Hall is particularly pleased to provide a venue for activities that bring residents together and contribute to the social life of the village.

Our regular film nights continue to prove popular, providing an opportunity for residents to enjoy a film locally and meet up with friends and neighbours. Details of forthcoming films and other events are available on the Memorial Hall website.

The Hall also continues to support a number of regular community activities.

One of the most recent addition to the many activities taking place is Bingo!

The word can be used when something pleasant happens. But it's also now a regular event at North Leigh Memorial Hall on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

Entry is just £10 which includes the cost of all 6 games and there are cash prizes totalling £150 up for grabs. It's an adults-only event as there is a licensed bar.

The first few events have been extremely well supported with a warm and friendly atmosphere. Some guests are seasoned Bingo players whilst others are giving it a try for the first time, but everyone says they have an amazing evening of fun and friendship.

As well as cash prizes for line and house in each game there is an additional jackpot in the final game of the evening.

Doors open at 6.30pm with eyes down at 7.00pm. The evening finishes by 9.00pm.

North Leigh Memorial Hall – Autumn 2026 Update continued:

As well as the Bingo there is a mid session raffle sponsored by Parker's Estate Agents who donate a £40 voucher for The Edge Deli at each event. Other raffle prizes have been donated by Broadleaf Services and Livey's Taxis and we would appreciate it if other local businesses were willing to support the events in some way please.

All money raised at the Bingo events is used to help with the running costs of the Memorial Hall which is a registered charity and run by volunteers from the parish.

So, please come along and support the event.

If you are a local business and are willing to donate raffle prizes or get involved in some way please contact Malcolm Shead on 07472 497677. Thank you.

The Memorial Hall is much more than simply a meeting venue. It also provides a home for the North Leigh Post Office and Village Shop, the village library and the North Leigh Youth Project, making the building an important community resource for residents of all ages.

We are continuing to maintain and improve the Hall so that it remains an attractive, practical and welcoming facility for the village.

From 1 September 2026, revised hall-hire charges came into effect. The Hall remains keen to offer good-value facilities for local groups, with the Committee Room, for example, providing an affordable meeting space with Wi-Fi, a computer screen and whiteboard.

Looking ahead, we hope to build on the range of activities taking place at the Hall during the autumn and winter months. We are always keen to hear from local groups or individuals who would like to organise an event, start a new activity or make use of the facilities.

The Trustees would like to thank all the volunteers, hirers, users and supporters who help to keep the Memorial Hall at the heart of North Leigh. We look forward to welcoming many more residents through our doors over the coming months.

Lastly, the Hall Committee and Trustees would like to thank Annette Duffell for all the hard work Annette has done for the Memorial Hall as both a Trustee and the Hall Treasurer since 2008, and wish Annette and her family all the best for the future.

For information about forthcoming events, Hall bookings and facilities, please visit the North Leigh Memorial Hall website or follow the Hall's Facebook page.

Parish Newsletter to Nor'Lye News?

You may have noticed that over the last few issues of the Parish Newsletter, there have been more items from local organisations, clubs and societies. This has happened in response to the Parish Council (PC) receiving a number of requests to revive the Nor'Lye News or create a similar replacement. If you were involved in the production of the Nor'Lye News or would like to become part of a new Nor'Lye News production team that can create a parish news paper please contact the Parish Clerk, (contact details below) .

Dates for your diary:

North Leigh Parish Council Meetings: 2nd Thursday of the month.

St Mary's Church:

Green Church will be on Sunday 11th October in the Vicarage Garden (opposite the old Woodman Pub).

Harvest 27th September and 4th October

Remembering with Love – special service to remember our loved ones 1st

November 6pm

Remembrance 8th November

North Leigh Gardening Society

Tuesday October 27th in the Memorial Hall at 7.30pm talk and presentation by Mr Tim Mitchell on Growing for Asthall Manor Kitchen Garden/wildlife gardening.

North Leigh Memorial Hall

Next film night: 'Tuner' on Saturday 17th October.

Bingo every 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

North Leigh Garage & Garden Sale Sunday 27TH September 10AM TO 1PM.

Entry Forms From Joyce Trevail at 1 Bridewell Close,

MOB 07521314897 OR TEL 01993880396

Christmas Tree Lighting: 5th December 2026



Parish Clerk: parishclerk@northleighparishcouncil.gov.uk