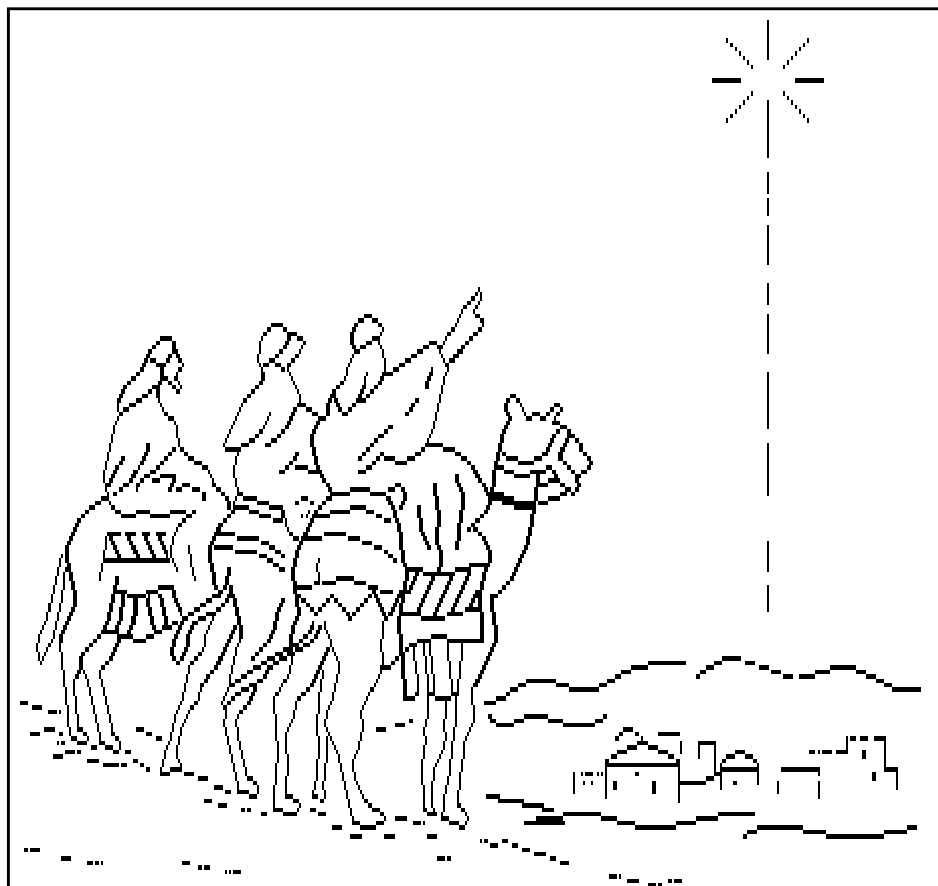


the Link

**The Methodist Church of
Leatherhead
Cobham
Effingham**

January 2011



Family Link

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with...

Margaret Meynen as she recuperates from her second hip replacement.

Congratulations to...

John and Charlotte Walker on the safe arrival of Poppy on 14th December, a sister for Amelia and a second granddaughter for Freda and David.

Our best wishes to...

Freddie Jenkins who is delighted to announce the birth of twin great-granddaughters (see Effingham's pages for details).



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All copy for the February issue to the editor by 15th January



The Ministers Write...



From Rev. Ian Howarth

Dear friends,

This comes with every good wish to you all for 2011.

This year all five churches in the pastorate are sharing taking part in a Covenant service to begin the New Year. This service comes from the Methodist tradition, and goes back to the days of John Wesley, but it is a service that in recent years has been increasingly taken up by Christians of all denominations.

Unfortunately the word Covenant is used in different ways in churches, and this can lead to some confusion. For example, in Leatherhead we have a Local Ecumenical Covenant, which is the written, legal, commitment of Christ Church, LMC, and the Anglican Parish to work together and share some ministry. The Covenant service is nothing to do with this!

The word Covenant means a solemn binding two-way promise, and the Covenant service is a reflection on God's promise to us, through Jesus Christ, to be faithful and gracious, and our promise to God to give our lives to him in love and service. It is a way of renewing our commitment to God at the beginning of the year, a spiritual New Year's resolution if you like, and it includes a solemn promise where we say together a prayer, written by John Wesley, that begins: 'I am no longer my own, but yours, put me to what you will.' In some ways it is a hard and demanding commitment, but we believe we can make it because of God's commitment to us, and his love for us shown in Jesus. Further details of the Covenant service, its history and meaning can be found on the Methodist website, www.methodist.org.uk and putting 'Covenant Service' in the search box.

I hope that for those of you for whom this is a new experience it will be a valuable and enriching one, and that for those for whom it is a regular start to the year, the fact of sharing in it with others, will deepen its meaning. My prayer is that for all of us it will be a sign that we travel into 2011 committed to putting God at the centre of our lives, seeking to serve Him in all we do, confident in the knowledge of His love and faithfulness.

Yours in Christ,

Ian

From Rev. Kim Plumpton

Dear Friends,

Christmas will undoubtedly seem like a million years ago and the waft of turkey and mulled wine will be a distant dream. It's amazing how quickly we forget December. Although we know that Christ does not remain in the crib it's a shame that the sentiments of Christmas can't live on and that we can continue to be reminded that it is Christ who remains at the centre of our lives.

As Christians, carrying these sentiments of Christmas through into the New Year, of a Christ who offers so much hope, will challenge us, as many around us will now look to the New Year 2011 as an opportunity to change their fortune. New Year's resolutions will become part of everyday conversations as many will look at ways in which they can change themselves.

The baby born in a stable will have little time to remain snuggled in the warmth of the crib before the church calendar has him marching towards baptism. I find the sudden leap from infancy to adulthood a little hasty and often wonder what we might be missing in those absent years (although the bible gives us virtually nothing). But in those missing years this baby born will have gone through the testing times of life in all its intricacies to experience what it means to be fully human (I often wonder what Jesus was like as a child and wish that more had been written about him so that the younger members of our community had something more to grapple with). Yet we can only imagine where the divine begins, and where the human side of Christ revealed itself in the drama that was his life, or perhaps the two were so inseparable that there seemed no distinction. The early church had to grapple with such issues before declaring Christ was both fully human and fully divine.

In this New Year, life will begin again with renewed optimism, a freshness that comes from the beginning of something new and I pray that we will be able to begin our journey towards adulthood taking with us the hope, peace, joy and love found in the Christ child carrying with us the experience of life in all its richness. I pray that if we were to make a New Year resolution it would go something like this: *May we go through this coming year trusting God for all our needs, allowing ourselves to be transformed and changed so that the divine may shine brightly through our humanity.*

With every blessing,



Cobham

Cobham Diary - January



Sun	2nd	11.00am	Mr David Cappitt
Sat	8th	2.30pm	Platinum Service
Sun	9th	10.30am	United Covenant Service at the URC - Rev Kim Plumpton & Rev Michael Meech
Sun	16th	11.00am	Rev Kim Plumpton
Sun	23rd	11.00am	Mr Rhys Frost
Sun	30th	11.00am 6.30pm	United Service at Cobham URC Churches Together in Cobham Service - at Cobham URC

House Fellowship - To be arranged



Apologies to our readers at Cobham for the errors that crept into last month's diary. I was in a hurry to get away for, what turned out to be, a wonderful singing holiday in Scotland, with my wife Maureen and Joy Foreman, just before the snow came! Had we gone the following week, I think we'd still be there! Anyway, many apologies and very best wishes for the New Year.

Editor



Effingham

Effingham Diary - January



Sun	2nd	10.00am	Mr Alex Cloke
Tues	4th	2.30pm	Tuesday Tea in the R. C. Hall
Sun	9th	10.00am	Rev Ian Howarth - Covenant Service
Tues	11th	2.30pm	Tuesday Tea in the R. C. Hall
Wed	12th	8.00pm	Christian Meditation in the Church
Sun	16th	10.00am	Rev Val Ogden
Tues	18th	7.30pm	Church Council with Rev Kim Plumpton
Sun	23rd	10.00am	Mr Robert Pitt
Tues	25th	2.30pm	Tuesday Tea in the R.C. Hall
Wed	26th	8.00pm	Christian Meditation in the Church
Sun	30th	10.00am	United Service at St Lawrence with Rev Kim Plumpton



Please note Service times this month
and remember ALL Chapel Services
will now be at 10 o'clock

Dates to celebrate this month

Happy Birthday to Philip Bearden on 4th
and Charles Dawson on 29th January.



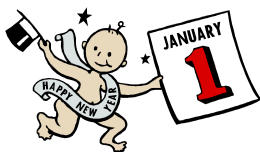


Mrs. Freddie Jenkins is delighted to announce the birth of **twin great-grand-daughters**, born on December 2nd to her foster son Bob's eldest daughter, Sarah, and her partner James. They weighed only 2lb each but are making good progress, and have been named **Evelyn Alice** and **Willow Jayne**.

Dates for your diaries: Our next **Church Council** meeting is on 18th January at 7.30pm.

On 13th February our Chapel at Effingham will host the first **United Pastorate Evening Service at 6.30pm**. These will then be held on the second Sunday of every month, alternating between each church in our Pastorate. Cobham URC will host the next one on 13th March.

Another Year...



...another chance to turn over a new leaf ? What are your resolutions for 2011 and will you have broken them by the end of the first week? Maybe eat less, lose weight and learn to love healthy "rabbit" food: maybe to give up bad habits like smoking, or over-indulging in cake or alcohol? Maybe trying to be a more careful driver and less of a speed-hog ! Perhaps trying to be more patient and understanding and less judgmental, or to stay in touch with friends, spend more time with the family and count your blessings. Phew!!

Last year *The Daily Telegraph* asked a few "celebrities" about their resolutions for 2010. Maybe they'll give you a few ideas!

Gordon Brown's wife, Sarah, said "Work hard. Have fun. Stay true". (*True to what ?*)

John Simpson, BBC world affairs editor said "Lose more weight, of course, and take more exercise; maybe this year it'll happen".

Joan Bakewell said "Do it now! Give up delaying, postponing, procrastinating. As you get older there's less time to waste. So do it now!"

Lord Hattersley, politician and writer said "I intend to lose two stones in weight; thus – my doctor assures me – instead of only living to be 90, breaking my mother's record for still annoying people at the age of 98".

Libby Purves, broadcaster said "I intend to spend more time in pubs, and to remain artificially blonde. I am going to sing a lot, quite loud, and give up worrying".

And finally **Sue Lawley** said "More faith, less cynicism".
Mmmmm ! I've made my selection !



RECIPE FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Take twelve whole months.
Clean them thoroughly of all bitterness,
hate, and jealousy.
Make them just as fresh and clean as possible.
Now cut each month into twenty-eight, thirty, or
thirty-one different parts,
but don't make up the whole batch at once.
Prepare it one day at a time out of these ingredients.
Mix well into each day one part of faith,
one part of patience, one part of courage,
and one part of work.
Add to each day one part of hope,
faithfulness, generosity, and kindness.
Blend with one part prayer, one part meditation,
and one good deed.
Season the whole with a dash of good spirits,
a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play,
and a cupful of good humour.
Pour all of this into a vessel of love.
Cook thoroughly over radiant joy,
garnish with a smile,
and serve with quietness, unselfishness,
and cheerfulness.
You're bound to have a happy new year.

~Author Unknown~

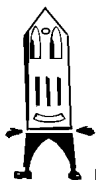
Open the Door!

"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light as I venture into the unknown!' He said to me: 'Put your hand into the hand of God; that will be better than a light, and safer than a known way'". These words by Minnie L. Haskins were quoted by King George VI in one of his Christmas broadcasts during the war. The surprising thing is that Minnie Haskins was an academic, a tutor at L.S.E. where my college friend Margaret got to know her. I wonder how the King came across this quotation from such an unusual source?

I often think about these words at the beginning of a New Year, because most of us would like to know the way, but we can't! All we can do is to trust God, that no matter how scary the path is, and how treacherous and painful, God is travelling with us. This quotation seems to me to link with Holman Hunt's picture "the light of the world", which shows Jesus standing outside a closed door. It has been pointed out to me that there is no handle on the outside of the door. We have to open the door to Jesus and let him into our lives if we want him to bring happiness, joy and laughter, as well as comfort in times of trouble.

Freddie Jenkins



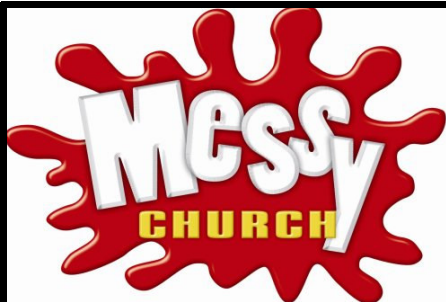


Leatherhead

Leatherhead Diary - January



Sun	2nd	10.30am	Rev Ian Howarth - Covenant Service with Holy Communion jointly with Christ Church at LMC
		6.30pm	Rev Ian Howarth
Sun	9th	10.30am	Mr John Oborn
		6.30pm	Rev Ian Howarth - Holy Communion
Sun	16th	10.30am	Rev Ian Howarth
		6.30pm	Rev Val Ogden
Thur	20th	3.30pm	Messy Church (ends 5.30pm)
Sat	22nd	8.00am	Men's Breakfast Fellowship at LMC - Speaker: Dave Banko
		10.00am	Joint Church Meeting with Christ Church
Sun	23rd	10.30am	Mr Martin Ellis
		6.30pm	New Fire - Rev Ian Howarth
Thur	27th	8.00pm	Leadership Team
Sun	30th	10.30am	Rev Paul Cockburn
		6.30pm	Uniting Churches Service at Parish Church (venue to be confirmed)



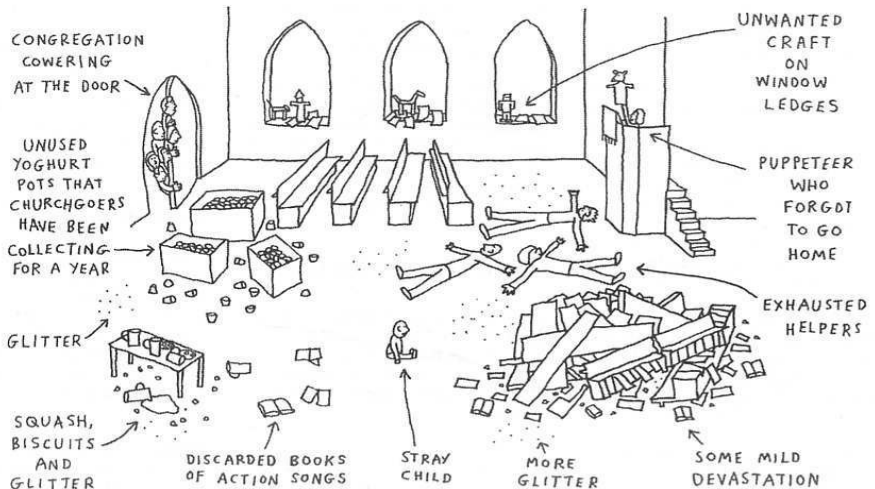
Next Messy Church:

Thursday 20th January,
3.30pm to 5.30pm at



THE HOLIDAY CLUB

SIGNS THAT THERE HAS BEEN ONE TAKING PLACE DURING THE WEEK



Welfare proposals fail to take account of the reality of poverty, say Churches

Christian organisations have warned that the Government's welfare proposals are based on a lack of understanding of the poor. They argue that constructive reforms are at risk of being lost under a wave of punitive measures and cost-cutting.

The Methodist Church, the Church of Scotland, the United Reformed Church, the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Housing Justice and Church Action on Poverty have welcomed plans for a simplified benefits system, but have raised concerns that the proposed reforms are based on inaccurate assumptions about the poor.

"There is a serious danger that people living in poverty will be stigmatised by government announcements that imply they are lazy or work-shy," said Rev. Alison Tomlin, President of the Methodist Conference. "The Government seems to assume that if people are forced into working they will comply and their lives will be made better. The poor we meet are seeking to better their lives in difficult circumstances. They are willing to work, but face difficulties in finding jobs, in meeting caring responsibilities and in living on the wages offered."

Elections...

The General Election in May now seems a distant dream with the new Coalition Government coming to terms with running the country. I was quite excited back in March when I was asked whether I'd like to join the army of election counters at the Hounslow count. Votes for two constituencies were being counted at Hounslow Civic Centre - Brentford & Isleworth and Feltham & Heston and the seats were held by Labour. Alan Keen was MP for Brentford and his wife Ann Keen held Feltham. I had always wanted to be involved in an election count, so jumped at the chance, even though it meant travelling up to Hounslow, and being up all night counting ballot papers!

The counting process is manual and very labour intensive - not a computer to be seen anywhere. Apart from some initial training, nothing happens before 10 o'clock, when the postal votes are counted. Then the papers start arriving from the polling stations and all papers are separated and placed in bundles of 25. A verification process takes place where the numbers of ballot papers in each box has to tally with the number of ballot papers indicated by the Returning Officer for the postal ballot and by each polling station for the remainder. Then the actual count happens and ballot papers are placed in separate trays for each candidate. This is when the candidates and their agents can scrutinise what the counters are doing! Ultimately, each counting team's numbers are collated centrally until all votes are in, and the results declared by the Returning Officer. Speeches by the candidates follow, and not until that has happened are the counters free to go home. At Hounslow, this wasn't until 6.00am! The results were that Alan Keen was re-elected, but Ann Keen lost her seat to Mary MacLeod, the Conservative candidate.

In our churches, we have several folk who are local councillors. At Leatherhead, Tim Hall is a County Councillor at Surrey County Council, but sadly lost his seat on the Mole Valley District Council at the local elections held on the same day as the General Election. David Walker continues to be a District Councillor at Mole Valley, while Dave Howarth was newly elected to the District Council.

"Father, You guide and govern everything with order and love. Look upon our elected representatives in Government and Local Government and fill them with the spirit of Your wisdom. May they always act in accordance with Your will and their decisions be for the peace and well-being of all. Amen".

Les Prescott

United Pastorate Evening Service

On 13th February, Effingham will host the first United Pastorate Evening Service at **6.30pm**. For a trial period of six months, these will then be held at 6.30pm on the second Sunday of every month, alternating between each of the five churches in our Pastorate. Cobham URC will host the next one on 13th March.

"Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Today's Society"

This was the theme of the Inaugural Conference of Westminster Women's Outreach. The vision for this initiative is the brainchild of Ollie McEwen. Ollie is a local preacher and also the administrator at Central Hall and the personal assistant to the superintendent minister, Rev Martin Turner. The idea of a women's ministry had been churning around in Ollie's mind for some time. Then, in consultation with Martin, approved by the Church Council and the Circuit Meeting, a committee was formed and the November Conference was the result. The Outreach aspires to nurture and encourage, and to give mentoring and blessing, a platform for all women to explore in daily life.

Why the title? Says Ollie: "It was topical. If there is no forgiveness, then it is very difficult for God to work with us. In a nutshell, I just want people to go out knowing that with God all things are possible..... forgiveness enables moving forward. If you are hurting, God is there to restore you completely." During the theological study at the meeting we were urged to seek the forgiveness of God, not only to know it but live it. Keep on keeping on, we were told, in order to make a difference and rise up to a greater level.

There were 200 or so at this first Conference. At least three quarters were black women, mostly from the local area. The singing was quite wonderful! It was vigorous and uplifting, a mixture of traditional and new, all sung with the same enthusiasm. Black women add that 'sometime' to music which is special to them and adds a particular quality. The last hymn of the day 'How great Thou art' sent shivers down my spine as that truth impaled my soul.

Rev Baroness Kathleen Richardson, a former President of Conference, addressed the gathering, speaking on the important role women play in today's society. From her vast experience travelling around this country and further afield she was able to illustrate her words with stories of forgiveness and reconciliation. She stressed the importance of breaking the circle of hurt in order to live peacefully within our multi-cultural society.

The four speakers were a Dad, sister and Mum who have had a son or brother killed through knife or gun crimes. They each told their tragic stories, talking about how they had come to terms with what had happened.

The father of Damilola Taylor was still very confused about his feelings towards the perpetrators and was finding it very hard to forgive them. He explained how he wanted them to feel remorse for what they had done and then maybe his forgiving process could be complete.

The mother and sister's stories were very moving and brought tears to my eyes and I had to reach for a tissue as the Mother, whose son was the most recent victim, fought back tears, as she still found it very hard to speak of what had happened to her son. She said the only reason she kept going was for her daughter.

The thing that struck me was the complete forgiveness of these two amazing ladies. They had seen loved ones snatched away from them and their lives turned upside down, and yet they were able to forgive the young gang members who had killed their innocent son and brother. I cried for their strength and courage and desire to reach out to young gang members. They were not thinking about their own shattered lives but about the types of lives the perpetrators, and many others, must experience, to lead them to their current lifestyle, where gang fighting and revenge gives them a 'buzz'.

Ejos Ubiribo, the sister, worked with the police to seek out and befriend gang members. She spoke of her realisation that, although these gang members had done a terrible thing, they too were victims, victims of a lack of love in their lives, like many others on the streets. They were often from broken homes or living in care, experiencing little, if any, love. They seek comfort and love in the wrong places through drugs, alcohol, crime and gangs. They are angry at the world that they are exposed to, seeing fellow gang members injured and often killed by others in disputes and fights. The sister talked of the role of the church and how she is part of a charity who reaches out to these young people befriending them, getting alongside gang members and showing them love, the love of Jesus, often inviting them to their homes, giving them a meal and showing them the love they have never received, helping them to get back on to the right path and showing them that life can be better than they have experienced it. They show Jesus' love to these young people.

Tracey Ford, the mother, also spoke of the perpetrators as victims and saw them as 'someone's son'. She too forgave them and wanted to reach out to other young gang members and help them to experience the love of Jesus in their lives.

Sheldon Thomas, who shared his life story, was an ex-gang member who had become a Christian and spoke of the role of the church in helping young gang members to experience a better life. He had almost had a 'brother' killed by a skinhead, had hated all other skinheads. This then escalated to hating almost everyone and wanting to fight and harm others as his brother had been harmed. He still seemed to be driven by anger but was channelling that anger towards good and helping gang members to change their lifestyle and experience the love of Jesus.

These stories may seem a little distant to us here in Surrey, and yet I am aware of families who struggle, where some children do not experience the family love that most of us know. They have parents that struggle with life, who take drugs, drink excessively and don't know how to be 'good parents'. Their children wander the streets, maybe form gangs and find petty crime and vandalism a good 'kick.' These petty crimes escalate and before long they too are in trouble with the police and the vicious circle of turning to drugs and alcohol etc. starts all over again.

There is a role for us, as the church and as Christians, to reach out to these young people and to show them Jesus' love. We have Leatherhead Youth Project which does a fantastic job reaching out to these young people, keeping them off the streets, getting alongside and quietly sharing Jesus' love with some of our young people that may be finding life tough.

So our challenge is to help, don't dismiss it as someone else's problem.

The next Conference is planned for 25th June 2011. Why not book the date and come?

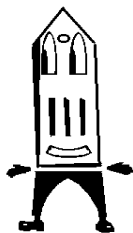
Jean Plant & Sue Friend

Despair and Joy

Dark days
Standing on the edge of a pit.
A black hole
Ready to receive a broken soul
In turmoil, a despair so deep
And crying out to be heard -
And listened to.
The devil pushes, pushes harder
Against a greater resistance.
A stronger force of unseen hands
Pulls back
And turns the demented to a brighter future.
The arms of God enfold and heal.
The grieving eases, tears are dried,
Anger subsides.
The All-Knowing Mighty One
Recognises unspoken words
Asking forgiveness.
An irresistible calm pervades
Enabling
A moving to a higher level.

JP





Leatherhead

Activities at Leatherhead Methodist Church

Sunday Services: 10.30am and 6.30pm

Holy Communion is normally celebrated on the second Sunday in the month (morning) and the third Sunday in the month (evening).

Evening Services - The fourth Sunday is normally "New Fire" contemporary worship with the Leatherhead Uniting Churches held at LMC.

Crèche available for young children during the morning service.

Coffee is served after every morning service - all are very welcome to join us.

LMC Discoverers: Sundays at 10.30am **Contact:** Mary Pittam 01372 272658

Messy Church: Third Thursday 3.30pm - 5.30pm **Contact:** Jane Smith 01372 372919

House Fellowships

Monday Fellowship: Meet fortnightly **Contact:** Carol Stoves 01372 377125

Wednesday Fellowship: Meet monthly **Contact:** Winifred Ashbrook 01372 276776

Friday Afternoon Fellowship: Meet fortnightly **Contact:** Jane Smith 01372 372919

Splatter Box: Thursday mornings term-time 10.00am - 11.30am **Contact:** Jane Smith 01372 372919

Tiddlywinks: Friday mornings term-time 10.00am - 11.30am **Contact:** Jane Smith 01372 372919

ROOM BOOKINGS Contact: Joy Foreman 01372 378869
ALL BOOKINGS MUST BE ENTERED INTO HER DIARY

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