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JANUARY 26th - Issue 158

2026



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Hello Readers,

HAPPY NEW YEAR and welcome to the January 2025 issue of Look Local Magazine.

January always arrives with a quieter kind of promise. The festive lights are packed away, the pace softens, and across our villages there's a collective breath before the year truly begins. Winter may still have its grip on the fields and gardens, but beneath the frost there's a sense of planning, purpose, and possibility.

There's plenty happening locally to ease us into the year. From winter markets and coffee mornings to performances at **The Players Theatre** and the much-loved **Chinnor Players** pantomime later this month, our communities remain as active and connected as ever. Seasonal traditions, such as Chinnor's Wassail celebrations, remind us just how deeply rooted our villages are in both landscape and shared history.

That connection to place feels especially important this month as we introduce **Not Bourne Yesterday: Chalk Stream Communities of the Chilterns** — a new community-led project celebrating our rare and precious chalk streams. These beautiful waterways are part of our local heritage and need our collective voice to help shape their future. You'll find a short survey on **page 17**, which takes just five minutes to complete and gives you the chance to share your thoughts, stories, and experiences — with a prize draw as a thank you for taking part.

We also explore smarter ways to keep our homes warm and eco-conscious in this issue. **Cool Heat Solution** features an article on Ecco Stoves, explaining how masonry stoves deliver whole-home warmth with remarkable efficiency, helping homeowners reduce fuel use while creating a cosy, inviting space.

Looking ahead, our January issue is all about preparation and perspective. **Lucie Ponsford** returns with her thoughtful gardening column, encouraging us to use this slower season to plan and nurture what's to come. We also feature **222 Healthcare** in Stokenchurch, who help cut through the noise around weight loss treatments by separating fact from fiction at a time when many of us are setting new intentions.

Finally, January is the perfect moment for local businesses to think about visibility and growth. A new year brings fresh opportunity, and there's no better time to share what you do with your community.

Here's to a hopeful, purposeful start to 2026.

Love Emma

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**BOOKING DEADLINE FOR
FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE:**

Wednesday 14th January

7,100 copies of Look Local Magazine are printed on a monthly basis and delivered to households in, **Aston Rowant, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Great Haseley, Great Milton, Henton, Kingston Blount, Lewknor, Little Milton, Milton Common, Stadhampton, Sydenham** and **Watlington**. In addition, the magazine can also be picked up from businesses in these areas and also **Thame** & **Wheatley**.

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Home Counties Loft Ladders, Quality You Can Trust!

These days most homeowners suffer from a lack of storage space. So many precious items that need to be kept – but where to store it all? That's where Home Counties Loft Ladders come in.

The company, based locally, offers homeowners the opportunity to maximise their storage space with a loft ladder, 50sqft of boarding and a light - all fully fitted in less than a day from just £444! But it's not just the affordability of the package that makes Home Counties Loft Ladders stand out, as manager Jamie Oakley explains: 'Our

watchwords are Quality, Integrity and Value. Quality in the materials that we use for all our installations and the fact that all our loft packages are fitted by time served tradesmen, so our customers are assured of the best job.

Integrity in that we will turn up at the time we say and make sure the house is spotless when we leave, and value in that we offer our services at a price people can afford.

Our business relies on referrals and we get a huge amount of our calls from people who have been referred to us by our existing customers

- that simply wouldn't happen if we didn't adhere to our overriding principles.

At the end of the day the old adage that happy customers lead to more happy customers is true and we work hard to make that happen for

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So, if you want to make use of your loft space, call Jamie free on 0808 301 9558 and he'll be happy to pop round and give you a no obligation quote so you too can make use of your loft!



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Weight Loss Treatments: Myth or Fact?...

By Dr. Large, Private GP at 222 Healthcare with a Postgraduate Diploma in Allergy from Imperial College London.

Weight loss treatments are increasingly talked about - but also widely misunderstood. At 222 Healthcare, we often hear the same concerns from patients. Let's separate myth from fact.

"You have to stay on weight loss treatment for life"

This is a Myth.

These treatments are designed as tools, not permanent solutions. When used alongside a full lifestyle change, they help patients learn new eating patterns, improve portion control, and build sustainable habits. Coming off treatment can still lead to long-term success - provided new habits are embedded. Without lifestyle change, rebound weight gain is more likely.

"Weight loss injections are the easy way out"

This is a Myth.

These treatments support effort - they don't replace it. Success depends on nutrition, exercise, and behaviour change. Problems in instilling meaningful lifestyle changes often arise when injections are used without supervision, a common issue when ordering online. At 222 Healthcare, we act as your accountability partner, providing a monthly appointment with our doctors and nurses to keep you motivated and on track, with a shared goal of achieving sustained, long-term results.

"Weight loss treatments cause muscle loss"

This is a Fact

People generally lose muscle and fat, often in similar proportions. However, muscle loss can be reduced with the right approach, and strength training can help preserve it. At 222 Healthcare, we track body composition and muscle mass, allowing us to spot changes early and respond appropriately. Combined with core and resistance-based strengthening programmes, patients can protect muscle while losing weight safely.

"Once you stop treatment, the weight always comes back"

This is a Myth.

Weight regain is not inevitable. It is more likely when old habits return. Patients who continue prioritising protein intake, regular activity, and strength training are far more likely to maintain progress. Tracking body metrics throughout treatment helps patients stay informed and make adjustments that support long-term, sustainable results.

"Weight loss jabs are not good for you"

This is a Myth.

Losing weight has immense health benefits, including improved blood sugar control, reduced blood pressure, lower risk of heart disease, and enhanced mental and emotional wellbeing. There is a growing body of evidence supporting the safety and health benefits of GLP-1 treatments when used under medical supervision, particularly as part of a broader lifestyle programme.

The bottom line

Weight loss treatments are not shortcuts - and they're not myths either. When clinically prescribed, carefully monitored, and combined with lifestyle change, they can be a powerful part of a long-term health journey. At 222 Healthcare, we focus on body metric tracking, informed patients, and sustainable results, and we act as your accountability partner to ensure progress is measurable, personalised, and lasting.

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“ I was very nervous embarking down the route of weight loss and the various options. Dr Large explained it all and took time to understand my personal reasons and fears. He made me feel at ease and explained clearly the options and a program to manage this.

24/08/2025 - Verified Patient

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A WARM WELCOME TO Smarter, Eco-Conscious Heating



As the colder months set in, many homeowners start thinking about how best to keep their homes cosy - without inflating fuel bills or harming the environment. That's exactly where masonry stoves shine, combining traditional warmth with modern efficiency to offer a whole-home heating solution that's both sustainable and economical over time.

Masonry stoves, differ from conventional metal wood burners. Instead of quickly heating a room and losing most of that warmth up the chimney, they are built with heavy stone bodies - often silicon carbide - that absorb intense heat during a fire and then radiate gentle, long-lasting warmth throughout the home for hours after the flames have died down. This natural heat storage and release method provides a more consistent and efficient warmth compared to many standard stoves.

Why Masonry Stoves Make Sense

While the initial investment in a quality masonry heater may be higher than a traditional log burner, the advantages become clear with use. Because these stoves burn wood at very high combustion temperatures with very low emissions and high efficiency, homeowners burn less fuel overall. With ultra-clean combustion and

energy-saving design, a masonry stove helps reduce heating costs year after year, offering significant savings over its long lifespan - often decades of service.

Many masonry stoves also qualify for EcoDesign 2022 standards, meaning they meet current regulations for cleaner, more efficient wood burning - a vital consideration for eco-conscious households.

Perfect Options for Every Home

At **Cool Heat Solution**, the best-selling entry point into this innovative heating world is the compact **ECCO Stove, EC580**. Designed especially for smaller homes, cottages or living spaces, this model delivers up to eight hours of balanced, radiant heat from just around 5kg of logs — capable of warming homes up to around 140m² without the need for radiators or electrical heat sources. Its silicon carbide body and tri-baffle system

ensure that your fuel goes further, making it a standout choice for efficient, eco-friendly comfort.

For larger or more complex properties - including open-plan living spaces, period homes, or properties with higher heat demands - **Cool Heat Solution** also offers premium models like the ECCO Stove, EC730 and ECCO Stove, EC645. These stoves combine impressive heat outputs with striking, contemporary design, making them as much a stylish centerpiece as a high-performance heating solution. Thoughtfully engineered heat-retention systems ensure warmth spreads evenly throughout your home, whether you're heating up to 260m² or beyond. Every corner benefits from steady, radiant heat, while the stoves' ultra-efficient, low-emission combustion keeps your home eco-friendly and reduces fuel use, offering a perfect balance of luxury, comfort, and sustainability.

A Sustainable Centrepiece for Modern Living

Masonry stoves from Ecco Stove aren't just warm - they're designed to be aesthetic focal points, blending traditional craftsmanship with a modern sensibility. Their ability to sustain warmth for hours reduces the need for frequent re-fueling, lowers wood consumption and helps minimise your home's carbon footprint - benefits that become more significant with every winter that passes.

Choosing a masonry heater like those available from **Cool Heat Solution** means investing in your home's comfort - and in smarter, greener heating that truly pays off.



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NEWS & EVENTS

2026

Community gatherings & school term:....

After the holidays, local schools return on Monday 5 January for the spring term with the promise of upcoming fairs, concerts and sports fixtures. One highlight early in the month is a traditional Wassail ceremony at Donkey Lane Community Orchard in Chinnor – a folkloric tree blessing event held on Sunday 18 January (2 - 4pm, gates open 1:30pm). Families and neighbours gather to sing, drum and toast the apple trees (with mulled apple juice) to wish them health and scare away pests. Admission is free (donations support the orchard's conservation work)

In Watlington and surrounding villages, look out for winter coffee mornings, scouts' jumble sales and any post-New Year fêtes, as well as regular church and library groups resuming in January.

Markets, clubs & community funds....

Local markets and clubs remain active. Thame's monthly Local Produce Market (Upper High Street car park) runs on the second Tuesday each month – next dates 13 January and 10 February (8:30am–1:30pm). Shoppers can pick up fresh farm produce, baked goods and crafts. (The image above shows a typical decorated market stall.) Also, Watlington's volunteers have opened the 2026 WBA Community Fund applications (deadline 30 Jan). This fund - built from Christmas Market proceeds—donates grants to local groups. Recent awards have supported Watlington Cricket, Bowls and Sports Clubs, the Concert Band, the Primary School PTA and others. These schemes strengthen clubs, nurseries and charities across the area, with new beneficiaries to be announced after the application deadline.

Entertainment & Performances...

Local performance groups have lively line-ups: for example, the Chinnor Players pantomime *Sleeping Beauty* (with a musical twist) runs at Chinnor Village Hall 28th - 31st January.

Families can book one of six shows to see this annual winter tradition. Other upcoming events include weekly improv comedy sessions at Thame Barns (drop-in on Tuesdays, including 20 Jan) and live music nights around the district.

Key dates to note are:

- Chinnor Players pantomime (*Sleeping Beauty*), 28–31 Jan (Chinnor Village Hall)
- Thame Improv Drop-In comedy (every Tue eve, next on 20 Jan)
- "Crazy Diamond" Pink Floyd tribute, Fri 31 Jan (The Players Theatre, Thame).
- "The Dung Beatles" Beatles tribute, Fri 20 Feb (The Players Theatre, Thame).

Sports clubs, choirs and adult education classes also restart in January – keep an eye on village hall noticeboards and parish newsletters for any village hall events or concerts scheduled in January/February.

Local achievements & charity news...

This season also brings feel-good news: Chinnor stylist Jemma "Jem" Stevens has earned national recognition. She was named National Mobile Hairdresser of the Year 2025 (UK Hair Awards) and won a Silver medal in Mobile Hairstylist of the Year, among other awards.

In community charity news, Chinnor Churches Go Wild – a local nature education charity – recently celebrated its 18th anniversary with outings like butterfly and bird walks, inspiring children to care for churchyard wildlife. And countywide, flood resilience grants continue to flow: Oxfordshire CC has awarded £25K grants to about 39 community schemes (including land drainage work in Chinnor) to help villages tackle flooding. These achievements – from individual awards to village fundraising – highlight the community spirit in Chinnor and neighbouring villages this winter.

Also, following on from our article in the November about local man, Paul Bradley, he has successfully completed his 100km challenge, raising over £1,000 for the Bone Cancer Research Trust. His determination and commitment have been inspiring, and the funds raised will help support vital research, education and patient support for those affected by rare bone cancers. We would like to congratulate Paul on this incredible achievement and thank everyone in our community who donated, shared his story, or joined him along the way. It is a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when people come together in support of a truly worthy cause.

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Friday 16th January at 7.45pm

Jekyll and Hyde

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Friday 23rd January at 7.30pm

Table-top Role-Playing Game

The Natural Ones Theatre perform this newly written one-act musical comedy.

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Saturday 31st January at 7.30pm

Crazy Diamond

A tribute to Pink Floyd. The band, Crazy Diamond faithfully honour and admire the music of the band they love. Not to be missed!

Tickets £25



Saturday 14th February at 7.45pm

Duo Destino play Flamenco Fusion

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For these shows book online at www.thameplayers.co.uk or by telephone on 01844 212833, or in person from the Information Centre at Thame Town Hall

Exclusive Competition

For a chance to WIN complimentary tickets for a family of four to a Thame Players' production* answer the following question:

Q: WHO WILL BE PLAYING A TRIBUTE TO PINK FLOYD?

Email your answer with your name and address to info@look-localmagazine.co.uk by 31st January 26'.

*There are five Thame Players' productions a year. See website for details.



We want to hear from you...!

Not Bourne Yesterday aims to tell the story of Chilterns chalk streams, reconnecting communities with their local chalk stream, restoring both the rivers and landscapes they flow through. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the programme is currently in an 18-month Development Phase until September 2026. If the second round bid is successful, the Delivery Phase of the programme will be delivered over five years, with an anticipated completion in 2031.

Not Bourne Yesterday is being developed to be a community-powered celebration of the Chilterns chalk streams – and they need your help. Take just five minutes to complete their quick survey and be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 All4One voucher. Add your voice to the story! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XKLGKPQ>.

Terms and conditions can be found on their website: www.chilterns.org.uk/NBY



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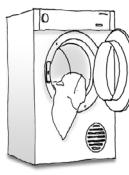
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Look locally over the garden gate with Lucie Giselle Ponsford



Happy New Year and welcome to the January 2026 instalment of 'Over the Garden Gate'. As you cuddle up on the sofa and begin to imagine the year ahead, spare a thought for your garden.

This is my favourite time of year for planning, scheming, and dreaming up visions of what could be. Winter offers the gift of possibility: a blank canvas where ideas can quietly take root long before the soil warms. There is something deeply reassuring about this slower season, when gardens rest and we are given permission to think, rather than do.

Perhaps you're imagining arches clothed in cucurbits or squash, sweet peas scrambling skywards, or a rose garden threaded with new wisteria, its racemes dripping in spring. Maybe it's a small copse of trees underplanted with bulbs, or a bold, dynamic border in shades of yellow, where glaucous foliage sets off buttercream blooms. Or perhaps you're longing for a shady nook, complete with a reading seat nestled into wildflower turf. All of these spaces can be created with a little labour, a lot of love, and some carefully chosen plants — and the willingness to let nature have her say along the way.

Over the coming year, we'll be exploring how to bring this sense of magic into the garden: how to shape spaces that make you feel you've created a small slice of Eden within your own square patch of earth. Gardens don't need to be grand to be joyful; they just need intention, patience, and care. Often, it is the smallest details — a curve in a path, a moment of scent, a play of light — that make a garden feel truly alive.

For this month, take time to consider what you truly wish for. What planting would fill you to the brim with happiness? Once you've identified that desire, think about how you might begin—whether by sowing seed, propagating plants, or planning new purchases. Sweet peas and broad beans can be sown now, onions and garlic should be safely in the ground, and plans can be made for the months ahead, even if they remain pencilled in for now.

I'm currently mapping out my soft fruit garden, as my vegetable patch is still in its infancy. I'll be preparing well-weeded, slightly raised beds for cane fruits, ensuring these shallow-rooted plants are well watered, mulched, and cared for long-term — an investment not just in harvests, but in years of quiet, seasonal pleasure.

So, what is your garden's wish for the year ahead?

With love, Lucie x

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What our customers say



Mary Clements

Mimosa carried out a full redesign and build of the front and back gardens in 2024. Their design gave me exactly what I wanted and more by creating a low maintenance garden full of round year interest. The planting has settled and grown so well and each month so far has shown new areas of interest. It's difficult to find a company that will provide a full design and build package, with the skills to deliver, on time and in budget.



Olwen Comino-James

Firstly I LOVE my new garden! The whole process was really great - Lucie came up with a lovely design, then successfully tweaked it to take budgeting considerations into account without compromising too much on the end result. The construction team were great. The planting is looking lovely and I can't wait to see it all flourish. Thank you Mimosa, highly recommend!

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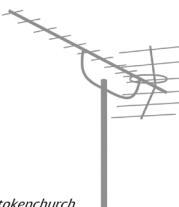


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**Happy gardening and
Happy New Year!**



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