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SEPTEMBER 26' - Issue 166

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WIN TICKETS

to this years

See page 14 for details

Thame
Food
Festival

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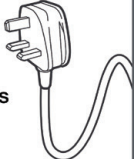
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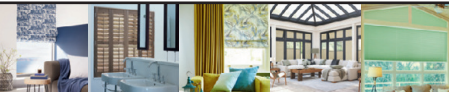
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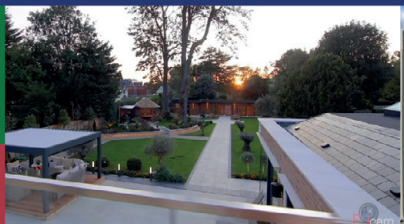

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Hello Readers,

Welcome to the **September** issue of Look Local Magazine.

September always feels like a month of gentle reset. The summer holidays draw to a close, school routines return, and our villages begin to shift into that early autumn rhythm - cooler mornings, golden evenings and the first signs of the season changing around us.

This month's issue celebrates that lovely in-between time, with plenty of local inspiration, events and practical ideas. We're especially excited to feature **Thame Food Festival**, which returns later this month for a weekend of fantastic food, artisan producers, live entertainment, family activities and celebrity chef demonstrations. Even better, we also have a **competition** giving readers the **chance to WIN TICKETS** to this much-loved local event, turn to **page 14** to enter.

Inside the magazine, you'll also find our regular **Thame Players Theatre competition**, on **page 16**, offering another opportunity to enjoy brilliant local entertainment. Our much-loved **Over the Garden Gate** feature returns too, bringing seasonal reflections from the garden as we move from summer abundance into autumn planning.

From **Cool Heat Solution**, this month's article looks at why air conditioning shouldn't just be thought of as a summer luxury. As we head into autumn, modern systems can help keep homes comfortable all year round - cooling when late summer warmth lingers and providing efficient heating during those cooler shoulder-season days.

There's plenty happening locally this month too. Families can still enjoy library activities in Chinnor and Thame, while local talks, exhibitions and community events continue to bring people together across our villages. September is also a lovely time to get outdoors, enjoy a walk along the Phoenix Trail, visit a local café, or make the most of the countryside before the darker evenings draw in.

We're also delighted to welcome some new advertisers to Look Local this month. Supporting local businesses is at the heart of what we do, and as we look ahead to autumn, winter and the busy Christmas season, now is a brilliant time for businesses to start promoting themselves. Whether you offer gifts, food, home services, beauty, wellbeing, hospitality, trades or festive events, Look Local is a simple and effective way to reach thousands of households across Chinnor, Thame, Chalgrove, Watlington and the surrounding villages.

As always, thank you for reading, supporting local and helping keep our community connected.

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**WIN
TICKETS
TURN TO
PAGE 16**



**WIN
TICKETS
TURN TO
PAGE 14**

CONTENTS

07. HOME & GARDEN

Loft Ladders you can trust from Home County Loft Ladders.

08. HEALTH & WELLBEING

The rise of health tracking By 222 Healthcare.

13. HOME & GARDEN

Can Utility Warehouse help save you money on your household bills?

14. NEWS & EVENTS

WIN Tickets to this years Thame Food Festival.

16. COMPETITION

WIN Thame Players Theatre tickets.

18. HOME & GARDEN

Cool Heat Solution explains the benefits of installing an Air Conditioning System for all year comfort.

22. HOME & GARDEN

Over the Garden Gate with Mimosa Garden Design.

**BOOKING DEADLINE FOR
OCTOBER 2026 ISSUE:**

Wednesday 16th September

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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Why is your house full... but your loft is empty?

Local homeowners are discovering storage space they already own

With growing families, home working, and ever-increasing storage demands, many homeowners are finding their houses feel cluttered, even though there's often a large, unused space directly above them.

Home Counties Loft Ladders is a local company that helps homeowners safely and correctly use their loft space. By improving access, lighting and boarded storage areas, most installations are completed in less than a day, with minimal

disruption to the home.

Jamie Oakley, Manager at Home Counties Loft Ladders, explains: *"Most people know their loft is there, they just don't use it because access is awkward or unsafe. Our job is to make that space easy, safe and practical to use."*

"We work to three simple principles: Quality in our materials and workmanship, Integrity in how we treat people's homes, and Value in offering a fair price for a job done properly."

That approach has led to much of the company's work coming from recommendations by previous customers, homeowners who wanted the job done correctly, without mess or hassle.

To find out how you could make better use of your loft, call Jamie on **0808 301 9558** or visit homecountiesloftladders.co.uk to book a free, no-obligation quotation. You may be surprised how much space you already have.

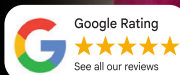


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OR SCAN ME!

The Rise of Health Tracking...

By Dr Oliver Large, Director/Founder/GP, 222 Healthcare.

We are seeing a real change in the way people look after their health. More people are having blood tests, monitoring blood pressure, weight or glucose, and repeating them regularly, not because they are unwell, but because they want to track their health. This can be really useful. Repeat testing turns individual snapshots into trends.

Take HbA1c, the blood test we use to assess average blood glucose and screen for diabetes. A result of 40 mmol/mol is normal. On its own, you might simply be told, "Your diabetes screening is fine."

But what if your previous results were 34, then 37, and now 40? You are still below the 42 mmol/mol threshold for prediabetes, but you are heading in the wrong direction. That might be exactly the time to look at weight, diet and activity and try to turn the trend around, rather than waiting until you develop a problem.

PSA testing in men is another good example. A single PSA can sometimes be difficult to interpret. When I see a raised result, one of the first things I look for is the previous reading. Has it suddenly jumped up, or has it been around the same level for several years? The trend does not give us the diagnosis, but it can be extremely useful in deciding what a result means and what should happen next.

But we are also seeing the other side of health tracking. People now arrive with smartwatch data, sleep scores, continuous glucose readings, large panels of blood tests and automated interpretations. Sometimes all this information creates more worry rather than less.

We increasingly see people who have accumulated lots of health data elsewhere and then come to us when they need help making sense of it. This often needs a longer GP appointment. Before we can interpret the numbers properly, we need to understand the person behind them, their current health, symptoms, medications, family history, previous results and sometimes examination findings.

That made us realise something. A private GP practice is actually very well placed to support people who want to track their health.

Rather than collecting data separately and only involving a doctor when something concerns you, your GP can share the journey. Your results build up over time alongside an understanding of your health.

You do not need to see a GP every time you want a test. But if something changes, or the amount of information simply becomes too much, your doctor already has the history and can help you make sense of it.

Sometimes that means acting earlier. Sometimes it means investigating further. And sometimes it simply means a doctor you know and trust looking at the whole picture and saying, "I'm not worried about this."

That is why at 222 Healthcare we facilitate health tracking for people who want it. The numbers are useful. The trends can be even more useful. But ultimately, making sense of them means understanding the person they belong to.

Contact us on 0333 242 2107 or visiting our website www.222healthcare.co.uk

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A will gives you the opportunity to appoint guardians for your children which is the only way to ensure they are safeguarded if the worst were to happen to you.

For more in-depth information or experienced advice regarding Wills, and Lasting Powers of Attorney contact

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A Simpler Way to Manage Your Household Bills...

With Ofgem's energy price cap having increased from 1st July 2026, many households are once again reviewing their monthly outgoings. For a typical household paying by Direct Debit, the illustrative annual figure has risen by 13% to £1,862, putting renewed focus on how essential home services are managed and where potential savings may be found.

Utility Warehouse, also known as UW, offers homeowners a more joined-up approach by allowing several household services to sit under one provider. Rather than dealing with separate suppliers for energy, broadband, mobile and insurance, customers can bring qualifying services together, helping to simplify accounts, reduce admin and keep more of their essential bills in one place.

For households switching more than one service, UW may offer up to £150 in credit loaded onto a UW Cashback Card, subject to qualifying services and offer terms. UW may also be able to contribute towards eligible early termination fees, which could help make switching more straightforward for those still tied into existing agreements.

The UW Cashback Card is another feature that appeals to homeowners looking for everyday savings. Eligible customers can earn cashback when spending with participating retailers, with some offering up to 10%, while qualifying spending elsewhere can earn 1%, subject to monthly limits.

UW also offers optional household protection products, including home insurance and Boiler & Home Cover, giving customers the option to manage more of their home essentials through one account. For homeowners looking to take better control of household costs, combining services could offer a simpler, more organised way to manage bills while accessing potential savings and rewards..

Find out more visit <https://uw.co.uk/ref/connector/CN-CLW7>, fill out the form and a UW Partner will contact you to guide you through the process and help you start saving.

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NEWS & EVENTS



Thame Food Festival Returns for 2026 - A Weekend of Incredible Food, Celebrity Chefs and Family Fun

Saturday 26th & Sunday 27th September 2026 | Thame Showground, Thame

One of Oxfordshire's most popular foodie events returns this autumn, as Thame Food Festival comes back to Thame Showground on Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th September 2026.

Now firmly established as one of the South East's leading food events, the not-for-profit community festival brings together artisan producers, street food traders, celebrity chefs, live entertainment and family-friendly activities for a weekend packed with flavour and fun.

With more than 94 exhibitors already confirmed, visitors can expect an impressive mix of independent food businesses, local producers and international street food. From handmade cheeses, charcuterie and sweet treats to vegan specialities, global cuisine, drinks tastings and creative non-food stalls, there will be plenty to discover.

The popular Big Cookery Stage also returns, featuring live demonstrations from well-known chefs and bakers including Tristan Welch, Tony Alberti, Great British Bake Off favourite Steven Carter Bailey, Francesco Mattana, Suki Pantal, and Rob Stevens with his Kamado Joe open-fire cooking demonstrations.

What's On at Thame Food Festival 2026?

With your entry ticket, enjoy access to a wide range of FREE interactive experiences across the festival site:

- *Over 94 artisan producers and street food traders*
- *Live chef demonstrations on the Big Cookery Stage*
- *Beer, cider, wine and cocktail experiences*
- *Big Red Bus Bar and live music*
- *Children's cooking classes with Mrs Bun the Baker*
- *Circus skills workshops and giant bubbles*
- *Bouncy castles, roundabout and bungee trampoline*
- *Dog Show in partnership with Hearing Dogs for Deaf People*
- *Axe throwing*
- *Majestic Wine Studio*
- *Real Cheese Tasting Studio with Suzy Pelta and James Grant*
- *Creative stalls including jewellery, art and clothing*

Some premium activities, including cocktail masterclasses, children's cookery classes and axe throwing, carry an additional charge and advance booking is recommended.

**** WIN ** WIN ** WIN ** WIN ** WIN ** WIN ** WIN ** WIN ** WIN ** WIN ****

We have TEN PAIRS of Adult Tickets to giveaway (valid on either day of the Festival). To enter, email your answer to the following question, along with your name and address to info@look-localmagazine.co.uk

Q: Who is doing a Kamado Joe open-fire cooking Demo?

Closing Date: Monday 14th September 26'

Tickets Prices

Adults: £10.00 | Children (12-16): £5.00 | Under 12s: Free | Family Tickets: £25.00

Further information can be found on the website: www.thamefoodfestival.co.uk



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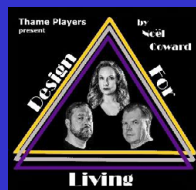
WHAT'S ON AT THE PLAYERS THEATRE

Tuesday 8th to Saturday 12th September at 7.45pm
Thame Players present

Design for Living by Noel Coward

One of the great Noel Coward's best loved plays. Written in 1932, the play remains as relevant today as it always was.

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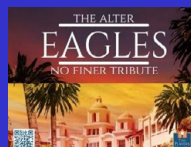


Friday 25th September at 7.45pm

The Alter Eagles – No Finer Tribute

The Alter Eagles are delighted to bring their celebration of one of the best-loved bands of all time - to the Players Theatre.

Tickets £27 (incl. booking fees)



Wednesday 30th September at 7.45pm

An Evening with Freddie van Mierlo

The MP for Thame talks about his life and background and answers audience questions. (all proceeds to Sharing Life trust)

Tickets £11 (incl. booking fees)

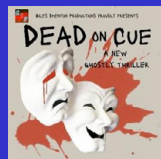


Saturday 3rd October at 7.45pm

Dead on Cue

Giles Shenton returns to Thame with a new ghostly thriller written by Mark Carey.

Tickets £15.50 (incl. booking fees)



Sunday 4th October at 7.45pm

Across the Square

Depicting an encounter between two contrasting women, in the era of the Suffragettes.

Tickets £16, concessions £13 (incl. booking fees)



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 IS THE MP FOR THAME?

Email your answer with your name and address to info@look-localmagazine.co.uk by 30th September 26'.



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

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Don't Pack Summer Away Just Yet: Why Air Conditioning Still Matters in September...

September is a month of transition. The school routine returns, evenings begin to draw in, and our homes slowly shift from summer living towards autumn comfort. But while many people think of air conditioning as something only needed during peak summer heat, modern systems can offer far more value as the seasons change.

After a warm summer, bedrooms, loft conversions, home offices and south-facing rooms can still hold heat well into September. Even when outdoor temperatures begin to dip, homes can remain stuffy, especially in well-insulated properties. A professionally installed air conditioning system can help maintain a comfortable, consistent indoor temperature, making everyday life feel easier as routines return.

It can also support better sleep and concentration. A cooler bedroom can make hot, humid nights more manageable, while a comfortable home office or living space can make busy September days feel less draining. For families settling back into school and work routines, small improvements in comfort can make a noticeable difference.

Another benefit is improved control. Rather than opening windows and hoping for a breeze, or relying on portable fans that simply move warm air around, a fitted air conditioning system gives you the ability to manage the room properly. Many systems also include useful features such as timers, quiet modes and remote or Wi-Fi controls, making them simple to use around daily routines.

However, the real advantage of today's systems is that they are not just for cooling. Many modern air conditioning units are also highly effective air-to-air heat pumps, meaning they can provide efficient heating as well as cooling. This makes them particularly useful during the shoulder months - those awkward weeks when the house feels chilly in the morning or evening, but it may feel too early to rely fully on central heating.

For homeowners working from home, parents managing busy family schedules, or anyone wanting better comfort in key rooms, this flexibility can be invaluable. Instead of heating the whole house, a single room can be warmed or cooled as needed, helping create a more comfortable and efficient living environment.

September is also a sensible time to plan ahead. Demand for air conditioning naturally rises during heatwaves, often leading to longer waiting times and limited availability. Considering a system in autumn gives homeowners more time to choose the right option, arrange installation and be fully prepared before next summer arrives.

At **Cool Heat Solution**, we supply and install high-quality air conditioning systems designed for modern homes, including single-split and multi-split options for bedrooms, living spaces, garden rooms and home offices. We can help advise on the most suitable system for your property, taking into account room size, layout and how you use your space.

A well-planned system should feel like part of the home rather than an afterthought. Choosing the right indoor unit, outdoor location and installation route all helps ensure the finished result is neat, practical and suited to everyday use.

So, as we move into autumn, don't think of air conditioning as something to pack away with the garden furniture. Think of it as year-round comfort - cooling when summer lingers, heating when autumn and winter arrives, and control when your home needs it most.

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Look locally over the garden gate with Lucie Giselle Ponsford



What does it mean to be a gardener at the end of a blisteringly hot summer?

It is a question I have been asking myself as I walk through gardens where plants have failed. The soil is bone dry. Water has been restricted. There is grief in it. Not enormous, world-stopping grief, perhaps, but the quiet disappointment of watching something living decline after you have invested your time, hope and money in it.

As gardeners, we know how much plants can do. We know that trees can cool streets, that soil can hold water, that planting can slow runoff and that gardens can provide food and shelter for wildlife and people. We understand that the accumulated effect of many small green spaces can improve the places in which we live. We know that gardens are not merely decoration.

And yet gardening can still feel as though it sits at the bottom of the ladder. It comes beneath architecture, infrastructure, roads, development, jobs, factories and money-making. Green space is too often treated as something to be added once the important decisions have already been made, rather than something fundamental to how those decisions should be approached.

Perhaps this is because gardening is associated with leisure. Perhaps it is because plants grow slowly, while commerce demands an immediate return. Perhaps it is because care, stewardship and patience are still undervalued.

I am not anti-commerce. I run a business. I understand that projects need budgets, that people need employment and that businesses must make money in order to survive. Most people are not refusing to care about the environment. They are exhausted. They are being squeezed by the cost of living, by work, childcare and the relentless administration of ordinary life. They do not necessarily lack values. They lack time, energy and mental space.

A garden can return some of that space. A garden can change a life very directly. It can become somewhere to sit after work, somewhere for children to play or somewhere to drink coffee in the morning. It can make staying at home feel less like a compromise.

We talk about holidays abroad, but a garden can create its own micro holiday away from the hurly-burly of life. A garden can be practical and still be beautiful. It can accommodate a dog, a gate, a table, a washing line and the movement of family life. It can contain paving as well as planting. It can be designed for someone who is ageing, someone who has limited time or someone who cannot spend every weekend maintaining it. Gardens do not have to demonstrate moral perfection. They have to work. That is part of what it means to be a garden designer. I am not creating gardens for myself. I am designing for people with their own needs, habits, budgets, pressures and hopes. My job is to find the point where those realities can meet horticulture, ecology and beauty and investment.

Autumn asks something different of us. The pace softens. The soil cools. Plants begin to withdraw. We can see the structure of a garden again. Autumn offers time to review what worked, what failed and what needs to change.

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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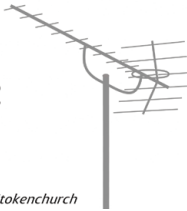
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If your site is slow, visitors won't wait around. In fact, 53% of people will leave if a page takes more than 3 seconds to load.

2  **IT'S HARD WORK ON MOBILE**
More than half of all website visits come from mobile devices. If your site isn't easy to use on a phone, you're losing customers.

3  **VISITORS DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT**
If your website doesn't clearly guide people to take action – call, enquire, book or buy – most won't.

4  **IT NO LONGER REFLECTS YOUR BUSINESS**
Your business evolves, but your website might not. Outdated content or design can undermine trust and lose opportunities.

5  **IT'S JUST SITTING THERE**
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