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Some images in this brochure are from Freepik.

hello AND WELCOME

Glimmer of Spring!

Well, I had every intention of getting this out earlier in the year, but various things conspired against me and here we are a long way through February and tipping into March. So, some of the reflections in this edition; looking back at the festive period may feel well overdue. However, saying that Fiona Kermack is so good at capturing all the spirit of the various occasions it makes it feel like it was just last week too.

Thank you again for your contribution, Fiona.

WANTED

JUNIOR REPORTERS

Sydenham Newsletter is looking to have an on-going feature by a Junior Reporter. Ideally we would like a different young person each edition to write about something they are interested in. It could be...

Something that has happened to them
Somewhere they have been
Something they have done
Anything that inspires them!



With a period of adverse weather including extensive flooding and long power cuts, it is good to see the daffodils that are popping up all over the village, reflecting that there are many things to look forward to. Including Mothering Sunday on the 10th March which will no doubt be a lovely service in St. Mary's from10.30 a.m. Followed by Holy Week services culminating in the Easter Sunday service.

Clearly the Parish Council team have been working hard liaising with the various authorities to try and find solutions to these issues. And just as importantly keen to raise awareness of the various potholes to make sure they get fixed, while also organising various working parties to clear vegetation, make sure streams are free of debris and drainage working as effectively as possible.

There is an incredible account from Duncan McDonald about the story behind the Nandi School project. It outlines where the project originally started from, the incredible evolution of the programme over time and the impact it has had on so many people.

Thank you so much for sharing as it makes for an inspiring read.

Then it is farewell to Tina, Pete and Sparky as they leave The Crown after 5 years in the village. As they say; "we felt it was the correct time to give up pub life for good. It will be sad to close the front door for the final time, but proud our last pub is The Crown."

Looking at timings, I suspect we are probably going to start preparing the next newsletter for April. So, please do share with me any contributions as they happen as I am always compiling the content, or at the very least by the 19th April to rachel@curvemarketing.net.

Thank you

Rachel

HAVE YOU CAPTURED A GREAT IMAGE RECENTLY? WOULD YOU LIKE IT TO APPEAR ON OUR COVER?

Email Rachel with an image you feel captures Sydenham village life and it could be the next front cover!*





church PNEWS



MARCH (SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION)

10TH MARCH 10.30AM MOTHERING SUNDAY WITH JACKY AND JOAN

17TH MARCH 6.00PM BCP EVENSONG WITH JACKY 7.00PM HOLY COMMUNION WITH JOAN

29TH MARCH 10.00AM MEDITATION WITH JOAN

31ST MARCH 10.30AM EASTER SUNDAY WITH JOAN AND TONY

MOTHERING SUNDAY

Please come along to this lovely family service to celebrate as well as remember this special person. Bring along drawings, photographs and special memories of your Mum.

We would also love a few sentences to share too. It could be on:

My Mother is the best because... My favourite meal that Mum makes is... I love my Mother because... My special memories are...

We look forward to seeing you.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)

This will be held on Wednesday 24th April at 7 p.m. at the Village Centre in Chinnor. Everyone who lives in the United Parish can attend the first part of the meeting to elect Churchwardens. With those on the United Parish electoral roll invited to attend the rest of the meeting.

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CHRISTMAS AT ST MARY'S

As ever, Sydenham is a magical place to be at this special time of the year. Our pictures and reports remind us of just how much!

The St Mary's Christmas fayre is wonderful in so many ways and a lovely way to start the Christmas season. Not only does it create a lovely community spirit raising a healthy amount of money for the church, but it also brings together lots of willing helpers who all work so hard to make it the success it is. We had a lovely mix of stalls, delicious soup, bread, and puddings galore, mulled wine, a brilliant raffle and silent auction fun activities for the children including a baking competition and of course, the 'quess the weight of the cake' – and what a very stunning cake it was too kindly created and made for us by Angela Tipping. Thank you to everyone for your help, support, and fellowship.

St Mary's was packed for our traditional Carol Service. All were welcomed with mince pies, sherry and home-made apple juice whilst the Christmas tree lights and cross twinkled, festive flowers brightened the windowsills and the congregation, led by Chris, Judy and the choir, in fine voice, sang well.

We must have had over 20 children and adults gathered round the festive Trees on the Green at Sydenham for our outside carols. Despite the rather gloomy weather, folk sang with gusto, then retired to the pub afterwards for mulled wine and warmth.



The choir, along with some of the Chinnor members performed at the Emmington Carols hosted by Michael Holland. Lit by hundreds of candles, welcomed with mince pies, and mulled wine and warmed by underfloor heating, what was there not to enjoy at this enchanting occasion. We were pleased to be joined by Bishop Gavin. The Countryside Carols event at St. Mary's also extended a warm welcome to visitors for this yearly tradition.

church NEWS cont

Our most popular service of the year welcomed over 120 adults and children to St Mary's. The Crib Service on Christmas Eve is a village favourite as children seek out hidden figures including camels, kings, shepherds and baby Jesus to place carefully in the crib whilst carols are enthusiastically sung. Led brilliantly by Joan and assisted by Emma this was a great show of Sydenham supporting the church at its best!

Then Midnight Mass, a gentle and reflective service completed the many festive celebrations in Sydenham.

Fiona Kermack ~



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The Crown Inn

Sydenham Road Sydenham Oxfordshire OX39 4NB Tel: 01844 351634 / 07817 593022 Email: thecrown. sydenham@gmail.com



Opening Hours

Monday - closed

Tuesday - Friday 4pm until late Food from 6pm until 8.30pm Saturday - Midday until late Food from Midday until 3pm, then 6pm to 8.30pm

Sunday - Midday until 5pm Food from Midday until 3pm

parish COUNCIL INSIGHTS

FLOODING

Villagers will be no doubt aware of the disruption caused by flooding in and around the village in January due to unprecedented rainfall. The Parish Council has repeatedly reported these areas of concern to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

Villagers will have seen the deep floods that formed at either end of the village during the storm of January 5th and 6th. The Parish Council has been working with the various authorities try and find solutions to these issues, as follows:

- We reported the flood on the Stert Road (by the Bridge) on FixMyStreet, but in the end Chris Cooper helped us to clear the blocked culvert under the road. Thank you Chris!
- The Emmington junction with the main Chinnor/Thame Road is more complicated as
 it involves OCC Highways and landowners. We are consulting with OCC about what can
 be done to alleviate flooding here on a long-term basis.
- The ditch on the left-hand side of the road travelling out of the village towards
 Emmington is blocked and difficult to clear owing to the placement of a gas main just
 under the ditch. The Parish Council has now arranged for Paul Grafham to dig out the
 ditch. Hopefully this will alleviate excess water running off the fields from the hills by
 the pinch point.
- We have organised with OCC that the road culverts in eight locations around the village will be jetted through in March.
- The brook in Brookstones very nearly overflowed and the road flooded due to water coming up out of the road drains and the sewer. Discussions are ongoing with Thames Water and OCC Highways to resolve these issues.

In addition, the previous problem areas by Holliers Close, Sewells Lane and Byre House did not flood on this occasion, thanks to our work in regularly clearing ditches.

POWER CUTS

The Emmington End of the village suffered power cuts owing to the storm on 22 January. The Parish Council organised for the Old School Room to be opened up for heat, hot water, phone charging and use of the fridge.

A handy list of who to contact in an emergency (e.g. flood, power loss) is included on our village website: www.sydenhamvillage.co.uk.

SYDENHAM EMERGENCY PLAN

Villagers may or may not be aware that Sydenham has an emergency plan that is actioned in the case of major emergencies (e.g. disruptive weather events). It includes things like emergency contacts, first aid help, location of the village generator etc.

The Parish Council reviews this information on a regular basis and will be implementing its annual update in the next month.

SALT BIN

The new salt bin to be installed near The Inn at Emmington has been held up by supply issues. It should be in place very shortly.

FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

As soon as it is dry enough, Sewells Lane bridleway is going to be cleared back to the hedges again by Paul Grafham.

PLAYING FIELD

As you may have seen, new hedging has been planted on the roadside of the playground and is now complete.

A contractor has been found to replace all the edging for the bark areas around the play equipment. The council is also investigating replacing the board underneath the slide steps which is starting to rot. A new football goal has been purchased and will be installed once the weather (wind!) has calmed down a bit.



parish COUNCIL INSIGHTS cont.

VILLAGE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Potholes in the road opposite Sydenham Grove have been reported.

A working party is being planned for February half term for clearing the Brookstones brook – look out for a Sydenham Mail asking for volunteers!

The dead oak tree in Brookstones has been taken down and replaced with a sweet chestnut and a new bench has been installed on parish land in Brookstones.



SYDENHAM VILLAGE FACEBOOK GROUP

As a result of villager feedback, we have made improvements to the news page of the village website, which will now include key items for people who are not on Facebook.



VAS SIGNS AND SPEEDING

We are still awaiting an update from OCC on the replacement VAS signs, that are needed to reflect the new 20mph limit, coming into the village from Emmington.

The new chicane on the B4445 near the Inn at Emmington has been completed and the data is showing that it is having a dramatic effect in slowing down vehicles. A real success!



Following feedback from villagers about ongoing speeding by the playing field and past Box Cottages, villagers may have noticed that OCC installed speed measurement cables across the road. These were in place for around a week and the Parish Council will review the data and decide how to move forward.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The government published a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 19th December which sets out its planning policies for England and how it expects them to be applied. This provides more protection for the Neighbourhood Plan and has changed the timescale of the update. The NP committee will be working on this towards the end of the year, with the updated plan likely to be in place by mid-2025.

planning IN SYDENHAM

P22/S4643/0

Public Planning Inquiry PINS Ref: APP/Q3115/W/23/3323268

Original Planning Application: P22/S4643/O

150 residential dwellings off of Thame Road, Chinnor.

Planning Inspectorate decision - appeal dismissed.

parish COUNCIL INSIGHTS con

DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING

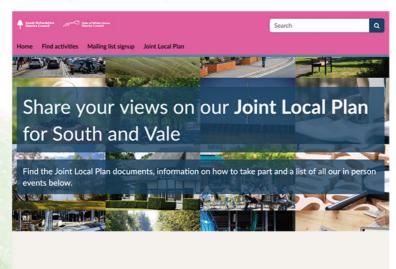
In response to villager interest, the Parish Council is organising a defibrillator/basic life support course. More details will follow.

JOINT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The Parish Council has been busy writing its response to the consultation for the Joint Local Plan.

For those who are not aware, South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) has drawn up different options and drafted new planning policies that help address the climate emergency, protect and restore nature, and meet the needs of residents.

The consultation runs from 10th January to 26th February and covers a multitude of areas from housing, to jobs and tourism, town centres and infrastructure.





What is a Local Plan?

A Local Plan looks ahead fifteen years and plans how much development is needed in an area, like new homes, jobs, roads and schools, and where they should go. It also sets standards for environmental protection, sustainability, water quality and much more. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are working together to produce a

Villagers can also have their say by visiting this website:

https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/jlp/

Save The Date! ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - 26TH APRIL

All villagers are invited to the Sydenham Annual Parish Meeting on Friday 26th April 2024 at 7pm in The Old School Room.

There will be complimentary wine, beer, soft drinks and snacks and The World-Famous Sydenham Village Quiz!

The Annual Parish Meeting is one of the village social events of the year and we would like to encourage everyone, especially those of you newer to the village, to come along and meet more of your neighbours, villagers and your Parish Councillors.

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE NIGHT?

The first part of the meeting is the opportunity for villagers to find out what the Parish Council and the various groups in the village are doing – and for villagers to put forward and discuss their views as to what they would like to see the village doing in the future.

We then move onto Dave's Village Quiz! Think about making up a team, possibly with a neighbouring household, in advance – but we also make them up on the night. There will be prizes!

More information to follow and we look forward to seeing you on April 26th.

It would help with catering if you could let us know how many will be coming from your household by Monday 22nd April by emailing: parishcouncil@sydenhamvillage.co.uk



sydenham WOMENS INSTITUTE







NEWS FROM THE WI

The OSR was transformed into a Christmas setting for the annual WI Christmas party.

We always have so much fun with good chats, a tasty buffet, party games and Christmas songs. And then... the highlight of the evening – a visit from not only Father Christmas but his helpers too who handed out presents to everyone! If you would like to join our merry group, you would be so welcome – and its a great way to get to know your fellow villagers too. We meet once a month (3rd Thursday) and invariably have a good evening.

Contact sydenhamwi@gmail.com for further information.

Fine

The WI meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month, usually in the OSR at 7.30pm and would welcome anybody who would like to join them. Why not pop along one time and find out more about it all?



CLIVEDEN: POWER POLITICS AND SCANDAL

At the first meeting of the new year our members were treated to a very entertaining talk by our speaker Peter Hague. Cliveden House, a country house and estate near Taplow has a fascinating and colourful history and we heard accounts of the many interesting characters who have lived or stayed at Cliveden.

The present house stands on the site of a much older house built for George Villiers, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham, in 1666. He was challenged to a duel by his mistress's husband Lord Shrewsbury who subsequently died of his wounds. After Buckingham died the house passed to the Earl of Orkney who added two new wings and completely revamped the gardens.

Cliveden was also home to Frederick, Prince of Wales, oldest son of George II and under his tenure Rule Brittania was performed for the first time in public, in the amphitheatre.

The house burned down in 1795 (rumour had it that a maid left a candle burning!) It was rebuilt in 1824, only to burn down again in 1849.

Perhaps the most famous owners of Cliveden were the Astor family. William Waldorf Astor purchased the house in 1893. He gave the house to his son Waldorf on the occasion of his marriage to Nancy Langhorne. They became famous for entertaining on a lavish scale and made Cliveden a destination for film stars, politicians, world leaders, writers and artists. It also became the setting for the events leading to the notorious Profumo scandal.

A fascinating evening and a very good speaker.

out AND ABOUT

NANDI SCHOOL PROJECT STORY

In 2010, my journey began with a startling revelation from an article that exposed the misappropriation of charity donations by major corporations, including the one I supported.

With huge wages and expense budgets the fat cat chiefs were coining it in! This meant that, after factoring in all their costs and expenditures, the child I had been sponsoring in Kenya received a mere 10p for every £1 donated.

Later that year, my family and I embarked on a trip to Mombasa, staying in a top hotel which was all very nice, but I was driven by a desire to reveal authentic Africa to my two sons. I approached a hotel security guard named Vincent. He graciously agreed to let us visit his home, leading to a profound moment when my sons witnessed the stark reality—a 10-foot square living space which represented everything they owned.





Motivated to make a difference, I decided to sponsor Vincent and Caroline Mwei's first son, Theophilus, through school. Vincent, working gruelling 12-hour days, six days a week for approximately £150 a month, faced limited options for providing his son with a quality education. I arranged to send funds directly via Western Union.

Fast forward six years, and in 2016, Petra, my new partner and I visited the Mwei family, spending time with them in their challenging living conditions in the ghetto. Later, we took them on a transformative safari, culminating in a visit to their family home in Kipsamoite, Nandi Province. During our travels, we identified an opportunity to rebuild the village school in this impoverished and remote region. The initial project involved constructing two classrooms, with Vincent's family ensuring proper project management. Generous donations from friends and family poured in, allowing us to commence the work.

Nandi School Project

The success of the initial build empowered us to expand our efforts with the results later explained.

One poignant day we encountered a small group of children. The eldest, 11-year-old Gordie was carrying a sick baby. His shocking revelation that the mother was seeking money for the baby's treatment, as hospitals required payment upfront, prompted us to intervene immediately.

Petra being a nurse recognised immediately the child was suffering from severe malnutrition for which she had to spend several days in the hospital. This encounter opened our eyes to the harsh reality of severe poverty.

Sharing their story on social media yielded an incredible response, with a sponsor stepping forward to support all eight children, ensuring education and daily meals. This prompted the initiation of a broader sponsorship scheme for orphans and the needy in the village. Now 186 children are sponsored, meaning through economies of scale achieved it allows us to procure school fees, food, and uniforms at discounted rates, with excess funds fuelling additional projects.

As of January 2024, our initiatives have raised over £120,000, enabling the construction of six classrooms, an administration block, a community hall doubling as a dining hall and kitchens, as well as latrines and a school farm producing food for the children's meals.



We've also created employment opportunities for three locals – Vincent as our coordinator, Winnie as our farm manager, and Moses as our handyman.

This journey underscores the transformative potential of properly managed charity funds. As of now, our plans are ever evolving, with 24 projects planned for 2024,

out AND ABOUT cont

including additional toilets, a biodigester for gas production, rainwater harvesting tanks and filtration systems, two more classrooms, an expanded farm, and a poultry farm, among other smaller initiatives at an estimated cost of £30,000.



People often wonder why we embarked on this journey. Initially, it was an adventurous step into retirement, fuelled by a disdain for being exploited – a sentiment that stemmed from my initial disappointment with the charity I supported. However, a poignant incident made it all worthwhile. While standing with a group of children watching an old classroom being dismantled, one of the children, Gordie who I mentioned earlier, grabbed my hand, and simply said, "thank you".

In that moment, a genuine connection and a profound sense of satisfaction enveloped me. Witnessing Gordie, once a ragged semi-orphan, now standing in his uniform, cheeky, fresh-faced, and well-fed, served as the inspiration needed to do more.

Finally there is Theopilius, Vincents and Caroline's son, now 16 years old and attending one of the top 10 schools in Kenya with a dream to be a doctor. The ability to really transform lives is profound. These two examples show what is possible and such outcomes continue to drive Petra and I further to see the project through to the end expecting even more twists and turns along the way.

For those interested in delving deeper into our journey or contributing to our cause, please visit www.nandiproject.com or our Youtube channel @nandischoolproject3132. We are always on the lookout for individuals willing to help fundraise through various means. If you can assist, please drop us a line.

Duncan McDonald



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out AND ABOUT cont.

SPEEDING

Speeding cars are a major concern especially for people like me who lead 2 dogs twice every day on walks. One of which is very slow because of age. They are always on my inside and I wear a hi viz so I am seen. The limit signs are quite clear **20 MPH** through the village and when houses start at the Emmington end and **30 MPH** in between to deter any development in between!

I am sorry to anyone I have annoyed through my misjudgement of speed but **PLEASE** be considerate as walkers - adults and children do need to feel safe.



FLOODING DISASTER

A recent memory of Sydenham through the storm was when there was a mishap on the 5th January when the road flooded by the bridge. A big shout out for Christopher Cooper who came to the rescue and towed John Comino-James out). Luckily despite looking at the pictures, the car survived against the odds.



John ~ (Comino-James)

IS THIS YOURS?

This John Lewis bag made of natural material with a broken memento in the pocket was erroneously given to Gilly Harrison.

If you recognise it, then contact Gilly on **gillylawther21@aol.com** to re-claim.



OSR 200 CLUB

REGULAR SUPPORTERS WILL BE PLEASED TO SEE THEY HAVE WON AND BOTH MONTHS
RESULTS OCCASIONALLY SHOW SURPRISE WINNERS.

THE JANUARY WINNERS WERE:

CYNDY THOMAS WHO WON WITH BOTH THE FIRST AND LAST NUMBERS, SO WON £35!

THE REMAINING SIX WINNERS WERE:

JOAN DEVAL, SIMON WILSON, MADELAINE, AMBER, SANDRA ROCHE AND SHARRON MAISEY. CONGRATULATIONS TO THEM ALL.

THE 12TH FEBRUARY DRAW REVEALED WINNERS:

KELLY HEMP, SUE JONES, ISOBELLE GRAFHAM. ROY HARRISON, ABIGAIL CHURCH, RAY HEMP, PHIL ARCHER AND SPENCER JONES.

THANK YOU ALL FOR SUPPORTING THE CHARITABLE MONTHLY DRAW - THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED REMAINS OPEN AND COSTS ONLY £12 FOR THE YEAR. CONTACT ROY HARRISON AT FUCHSIA COTTAGE AND YOU WILL BE INCLUDED FOR THE NEXT 10 MONTHS!

THANK YOU TO DAVE MAISEY FOR ALLOWING US TO HAVE THE DRAW AT THE INN AT EMMINGTON AND TO THE TEAM DIPPING IN AND PICKING OUT THE WINNING NUMBERS WHICH ALL GO TO SUPPORT THE LOVELY VILLAGE OLD SCHOOL ROOM MAINTENANCE.





Easter Word Search

S R R C Н Т Ε N н R F S R R R C F т Е В U S н S Т Т R В N N E E R ı N N т X N Т Κ т В S Е н R P E 0 S S Ε Ε R н ı R R Ε S Н S Т Н Т Ε н U Ν Т

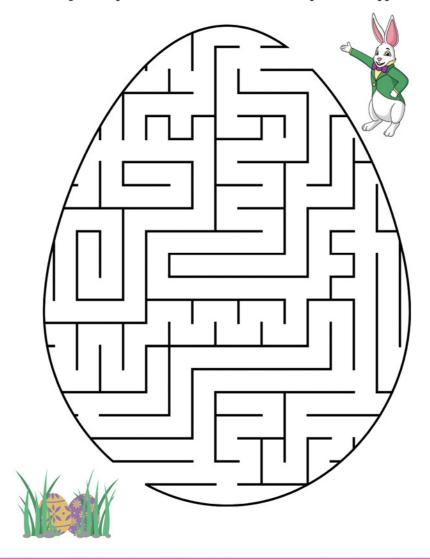
HOP CHIC EASTER CHOCOLATE

HUNT RABBIT BASKET HOLIDAY

EGGS APRIL BUNNY CARROT

Easter Maze

Help the Easter Bunny find his way through the maze and to the missing Easter eggs.



the CROWN INN

Sunday 4th February saw our last meal served and the big final party on Sat 17th February with music & drinks. After 5 years here & 25 years combined between us in other venues, we felt it was the correct time to give up pub life for good. It will be sad to close the front door for the final time, but proud our last pub is The Crown.

You may still see us about for a couple of weeks after as we have some contractual obligations to complete before we hand the pub back.

We've had so many different activities recently with a lot of people to thank.

Rewinding back to the 2nd December... Sydenham Cricket Club. The much-anticipated Moles Annual Awards Supper kicked off a busy period for us. Skipper Dan Bradley arranged proceedings ensuring a very enjoyable evening.

Jack Blakeley deserves special praise from myself for consuming gallons of tipple and with his confidence in atmospheric conditions, took on seasoned quizzer Mark Jones with musical knowledge.

Santa's Sleigh arrived on the 20th, a lot of ages all enjoying the pub. Thank you to all the committee, Paul Grafham & T-Roe.

Thursday 21st a very big thanks to Gordon for arranging The Sydenham Christmas Office Party. It was very well attended, and everyone was in good spirits.

Christmas Day we opened for our usual two-hour drinks slot which was very well attended. It felt like a solar eclipse as we both managed to crowbar a drink out of Buster! Thank you, Buster.





the INN AT EMMINGTON

Well at least that's January and February behind us, the two worst months of the year for the hospitality industry - thank you to those who did still support their local pubs and businesses during this time.

A particular mention to the Sydenham 'elders' who once again held their Valentines Dinner at The Inn - a romantic table for 22 people organised perfectly again by Gordon Macleod - thank you to one and all who attended!

The next big date in the diary is Mothers Day which this year falls on Sunday 10th March - please book your Sunday Lunch early to avoid disappointment on what is sure to be a busy day. After a break in January, we are back serving a traditional Sunday Roast every week with a choice of roast chicken, roast rib of beef or loin of pork. Our Sunday menu also has a selection of starters and desserts from our main menu and it is wise to book before the day to ensure we have a table for you.

For those that aren't aware, or are new to the village, we currently open 7 days a week, from 3pm Mondays to Fridays and then from 12 noon on Saturdays and Sundays. We serve food from 6pm each midweek evening, all day on Saturdays and between 12 noon and 4pm on Sundays . We will always try to accommodate you to eat, although Sunday Lunch does get full so pre booking is recommended. Once the better weather comes, there is plenty of room outside for eating and drinking, although that seems a way off at the moment.

We also have 6 guest rooms at The Inn so if you are planning a party in the Summer or have family visiting that you can't accommodate at home, please contact us directly to get a preferential accommodation rate rather than booking online. All rooms are double bedded and en suite.

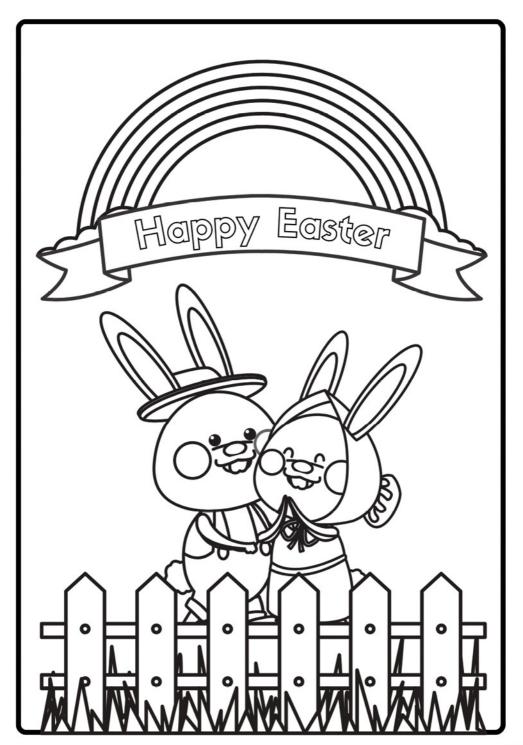
Finally, a huge thank you to everybody who has visited The Inn over the Winter period, it is not the busiest time and your support is greatly appreciated....roll on The Spring!!

All the Team at The Inn xx



25







Pub & Restaurant Large Beer Garden Bed & Breakfast 01844 351367

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