



THATCHAM TOWN NEWSLETTER

Spring 2026

Historic Town, Thriving Community

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As My Mayoral Year Draws to a Close...

Spring 2026 arrives with a mix of fresh beginnings and heartfelt reflection as I enter my final few months as Mayor of Thatcham. It has been an incredible privilege to serve this community, and each person I've met along the way has added something truly special to my time in this role - especially reading the winning poem at this year's very soggy Christmas Lights Switch On!

I've loved celebrating your achievements, supporting your ideas, and witnessing the dedication behind every event and initiative. Your spirit makes Thatcham shine, and I look forward to reading the applications submitted for the Thatcham Community Awards to ensure recognition is given where it is due (more information on the back page).

Please join me for my last two fundraising events for my brilliant charities. **Thatcham in Old Photographs** at the Town Council offices on Monday 2nd March, and **Bingo** on Friday 6th March at Frank Hutchings Hall. See the Town Council website for more details and to book your tickets.

As these final months unfold, I look forward to enjoying every remaining moment with you all.

Thank you for making this journey unforgettable.

Warm regards,

Councillor
Petra Pemberton
Mayor of Thatcham



Your Voice Helps Shape Future Decisions

Have Your Say

Meet and put questions to your Town & District Councillors and representatives from Thames Valley Police

Keep Up To Date

See an overview of Thatcham Town Council's work and achievements in 2025/26

Be part of your Community

Socialise with free refreshments and cake

THATCHAM ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Thursday 23rd April, 6.30pm. Doors open 6pm

FRANK HUTCHINGS COMMUNITY HALL

Find out more on Page 7

How Thatcham Beat the Floods:

The Story Behind Our Town's Flood Defences

In July 2007, Thatcham faced a major surface-water flood that affected over 1,200 homes and displaced 3,000 residents, leaving much of our community in distress. Fast forward to 2026, and Thatcham now has a robust system that can hold 160 million gallons of stormwater, effectively protecting our town from future flooding. Today, 1,200 homes are protected from surface-water flooding.

What Prompted the Effort?

The Environment Agency and West Berkshire Council analysed the 2007 flood and crafted the Surface Water Management Plan - a comprehensive approach to manage water flow from the hills north of the town. Although in 2011 the Environment Agency declared the plan “not economically viable,” instead of halting, this spurred a strong collective action within the community.

The Surface Water Management Plan Funding Committee

Local representatives, engineers, councillors, agencies, and volunteers united to form the Surface Water Management Plan Funding Committee. Their mission was straightforward: to work alongside West Berkshire Council to secure funding, approval, and execution for every aspect of the plan.

West Berkshire Council, in collaboration with the Surface Water Management Plan Funding Committee, tackled land issues, funding hurdles, planning obstacles, and engineering challenges.



© David Joyce

Did you know:
Thatcham was selected as one of only 6 places to study by the Environment Agency



Station Road © CR7



Ashbourne Way © Nygel Gardiner

Community Fundraising Success

When national rules changed in 2014 and required substantial local financial contributions, the Surface Water Management Plan Funding Committee led the “£100K in 100 Days” campaign. The community responded brilliantly.

£122,000 was raised from:

- Greenham Trust
- Berkshire Community Foundation
- Thatcham Town Council
- Local councillors’ member bids
- Local businesses & residents
- Waitrose green token scheme

This achievement gave the town vital credibility with the Environment Agency, and helped the future unlocking of millions of pounds for the construction of our defences.



© Newbury Weekly News



Cold Ash Hill Reservoir (c) West Berkshire Council



Tull Way Reservoir (c) Newbury Weekly News



Heath Lane drainage basin (c) West Berkshire Council

What Was Built?

Between 2011 and 2025, nine major engineering schemes were delivered by West Berkshire Council, including:

- Cold Ash Hill Reservoir
- Tull Way Reservoir
- Dunston Park Reservoir
- Dunstan Green flood storage area
- Francis Bailey & Kennet School flow control projects
- Agricola Way retention basin
- Heath Lane and Bowling Green Way drainage basin
- East Thatcham and Siegecross works
- Memorial Field & Brown's Field retention basin

These schemes now form a complete protective ring around Thatcham.

Overcoming Challenges

Throughout the construction period, the team managed:

- High groundwater and site redesigns
- Ecological surveys and environmental constraints
- Planning delays
- Conflicts with prospective developers
- Covid-era working conditions

Even with these obstacles, every scheme was delivered.

A True Community Effort

This achievement belongs to the whole town. West Berkshire Council engineers, councillors, volunteers, schools, charities, MP support, and local organisations contributed time, expertise, and funding.

A particular thank you goes to the many town and district councillors who gave their time, energy and support, the consulting engineers without whose expertise the projects simply could not have happened, and the Thames Region Environment Agency staff.

A special acknowledgement is owed to the late Stuart Clark, West Berkshire Council's lead flood engineer from 2007 to 2022, whose commitment and technical leadership were central to this project.

Thank you to Brian Woodham for sharing his knowledge for this article.

What This Means for Thatcham

- 1,200+ homes are now protected from surface-water flooding
- 160 million gallons of stormwater can be safely stored
- The town has a resilient, climate-ready flood defence system
- Thatcham is significantly safer in extreme weather events

Thatcham

WHAT'S ON 2026

Jun 4	FREEDOM OF THE TOWN PARADE THATCHAM BROADWAY 2PM
Jun 28	FAMILY FUN DAY HENWICK WORTHY SPORTS GROUND 11AM - 4PM
Aug 27	KIDSFEST THATCHAM BROADWAY, HIGH STREET, LIBRARY AND TURNFIELDS 10AM - 3PM
Oct 10	THE BIG THATCHAM FEST OFF HIGH STREET 4.30PM - 9PM
Oct 9 - 18	THATCHAM FESTIVAL VARIOUS LOCATIONS
Nov 8	REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY TOWN CENTRE & WAR MEMORIAL CAR PARK 10.30AM
Nov 28	CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON TOWN CENTRE 12PM - 7PM

Freedom of the Town Parade: A Proud Day For Thatcham Thursday 4th June, 2pm

Freedom of the Town is one of the oldest and most meaningful traditions a community can offer. This honour will be given to 67 MI COY based at Denison Barracks in Hermitage. Recognising their connection with the area and the important role they play in local life, including their attendance at Remembrance Sunday as the permanent military contingent.

The event brings people together to show appreciation for their service, their commitment and the support they provide both at home and abroad. The day will include a formal parade through the town, where residents can line the streets, cheer, and celebrate this shared moment of respect.

Freedom of the Town also acts as a reminder of the strong links between Thatcham and the armed forces, shaped over many decades. By presenting this honour, Thatcham marks its gratitude in a warm, public and memorable way. It promises to be a meaningful occasion for everyone involved, filled with pride, tradition and community spirit.

Volunteering

Do you want to get up close and behind the scenes of your community events? Whether that's as a parade marshall for Remembrance Sunday, stewarding for Family Fun Day, or supporting Santa at Christmas Lights Switch On, there is something for everyone to do!

Stallholders, Charities, and Entertainers

If you are a market trader and or charity looking to attend any of our events, please complete our expression of interest form and one of our team will be in touch shortly. Spaces often fill up quickly so be sure to get your applications in!



Sponsorship

We are seeking local sponsors who share our vision of creating meaningful experiences for all who live in, and visit, Thatcham. By supporting these events, you'll have the opportunity to showcase your business while making a tangible impact on Thatcham's cultural and social life. Join us in growing these important events and helping them reach their full potential.

For more information please email enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Get Involved: Sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter for regular event updates.





Family Fun Day FREE

Sunday 28th June, 11am - 4pm
Henwick Worthy Sports Ground

Thatcham Town Council's flagship event, Thatcham Family Fun Day, returns to Henwick Worthy Sports Ground for its 26th year, and is set to be bigger and better than ever! Over 10,000 people joined us last year, and with lots of old favourites returning, including the classic funfair, community and charity stalls, food and entertainment to discover, the Fun Day will continue to be what many consider to be West Berkshire's best FREE day out!



KidsFest FREE

Thursday 27th August, 10am - 3pm
Thatcham Town Centre, Library and Turnfields Recreation Ground

KidsFest Thatcham is a FREE event organised by Thatcham Town Council, aimed at bringing families and the community together for a day of entertainment, activities, and fun. Taking place in the town centre on Thursday 27th August from 10am to 3pm we hope to provide Thatcham's families with a day packed full of fun before heading back to school.



Thatcham Festival

Friday 9th - Sunday 18th October
Various Venues

There will be something for everyone in this year's Thatcham Festival - a 10 day celebration of everything that Thatcham has to offer, and giving opportunities to many of the community organisations, charities and societies that make our historic town their home. From comedy to car shows, workshops to wildlife, and talks to walks. And don't miss The Big Thatcham Fest Off on Saturday 10th October which is a FREE mini-music festival right on the High Street.



New for 2026!

Christmas Lights Switch On

Saturday 28th November, 12pm - 7pm
Thatcham Town Centre

Join us for the Christmas Lights Switch On! Brand new for 2026, the Christmas Lights Switch On and Christmas Market will come together for one festive day on Saturday 28th November. The town centre will be buzzing with stalls and entertainment, leading up to the big lights switch on. Enjoy a lively stage line-up with local singers, dancers, and performers from midday onwards.



COMMUNITY NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Curious about how decisions are made in Thatcham?

Town Council meetings are open to the public and give you the chance to listen, ask questions, and better understand how your town is run. No booking required – everyone is welcome.

Full Council

Monday 30th March, 7pm

Sunday 10th May, 3pm* (Mayor Making)

Monday 11th May, 7pm

Finance and General Purposes

Monday 27th April, 7pm

Planning and Highways

Tuesday 10th March, 7pm

Tuesday 7th April, 7pm

Tuesday 5th May, 7pm

Recreation and Amenities

Monday 23rd March, 7pm

Environmental Working Party

Tuesday 17th March, 7pm

Heritage Working Party

Tuesday 21st April, 7pm

Community Engagement Working Party

Tuesday 14th April, 7pm

*Mayor Making is held at Frank

Hutchings Community Hall

Missed a Town Council meeting?

Watch it back on the
Thatcham Town Council
YouTube channel



Dying Matters Week - Community Q&A

This might be for you if you've ever wondered how to talk about end-of-life planning with family. As part of Dying Matters Week, Thatcham Town Council are hosting an informal and friendly Q&A discussion on **Saturday 9th May 2026, 10am to 12pm**, held in the Chapel at London Road Cemetery.

Led by Thatcham Town Council's Cemetery Officer, Stacey, you can ask any questions, and talk through the things you may wish to put in place for yourself, as well as how to start important conversations with loved ones - before it feels too late. Please note that while Stacey cannot provide legal advice on wills or probate, she will be able to guide you on how to speak with the appropriate professionals for these matters.

If you would like to attend, please contact Stacey on 01635 863592 or email enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk.

Have Your Say - A New Community Hub Proposed for Thatcham

Following feedback from the 2023 Thatcham Town Centre Strategy, West Berkshire Council are exploring proposals for an improved Community Hub at Brownsfield Road.

This early feasibility study is your opportunity to help shape how the space could be used in the future. No decisions have been made yet, and residents' ideas will play a key role in developing the vision.

You're invited to informal drop-in sessions at Thatcham Library, where you can view early ideas, ask questions, and share your views:

Tuesday 24 February, 5.30pm–7pm

Saturday 28 February, 12.30pm–2pm

Can't attend? You can also take part online at:
www.westberks.gov.uk/thatchams-new-community-hub



Celebrate the Year of the Horse at Thatcham's Chinese New Year Market

Thatcham is set to welcome the Year of the Horse with the return of the Chinese New Year Market on Sunday 1st March, 10am - 4pm.

Visitors can enjoy a mix of Asian flavours, from Japanese dumplings to Thai dishes, Indonesian favourites and beautifully made sweet treats. Stalls will offer jewellery, accessories, crafts and home and beauty items, many created by Asian-owned businesses or inspired by East and Southeast Asian traditions.

The Lion Dance will take place outside the Kingsland Centre at 11am and 12.30pm. Community United will also host performances throughout the day, with a full programme to follow.

Music Centre Thriving in Thatcham

Based at Kennet School, the Thatcham Music Centre provides musical opportunities for the whole community.

Established in 1984, the Trust has a long-standing and successful programme for young people and is now expanding its offer to engage people of all ages and abilities. Instrumental and vocal lessons are open to everyone, alongside popular Saturday morning ensembles for both young people and adults.

Get involved!

Thatcham Music Centre are keen to grow and would love to hear from anyone interested in:

- Joining the Berkshire Music Trust Advisory Panel
- Intergenerational singing sessions
- Beginner instrumental ensembles and workshops for adults
- Workshops for SEND learners (ages 0–25), supported by our inclusive instrument library
- Working with established community groups
- Sharing new ideas and suggestions

To express interest, sign up for lessons, or make a general enquiry, please contact: musiccentres@berksmusictrust.org.uk



Have Your Say at Thatcham's Annual Town Meeting Thursday 23rd April, 6.30pm

Thatcham residents are warmly invited to join the Annual Town Meeting on Thursday 23rd April, 6.30pm at Frank Hutchings Community Hall.

This meeting is a great opportunity for the community to come together. Learn about the work being done for you, talk directly with local representatives, and voice your opinions on matters important to Thatcham.

The Annual Town Meeting is a chance for open discussion, celebrating local successes, and shaping the town's future—not a formal Council meeting.

Your Voice Shapes Future Decisions

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. It's your chance to ask questions, share concerns, and see how Thatcham is managed. Don't miss this opportunity to get involved and make your voice heard!

This year's event will feature an engaging programme, including:

- Thatcham Town Councillors will provide an update on the past year's activities and projects.
- Guest Presentation from Thames Valley Police – Officers will share insights into local policing efforts, community safety initiatives, and crime prevention advice.
- Presentations from local organisations who continue to benefit Thatcham
- Presentation of the Thatcham Community Awards

Run Forest Run! Sign Up for Thatcham's 10K May Day Run

The Thatcham 10K is back on Sunday 3rd May, starting at 9am from The Moors, Lower Way, this time organised by Run Forest Run who also organise the Greenham 10k.

Whether you're aiming for a personal best or to soak up the community spirit, this 10K promises a fun and rewarding morning. The event will raise much needed funds for New Life (Special Care Babies).

Spaces are limited, so make sure to sign up online and secure your place. Full details and registration can be found at runforestrun.uk.



Thatcham Community Awards 2026

Join us in honouring Thatcham's changemakers by nominating someone who's truly making a difference! Whether they're volunteering selflessly, committed to the environment, or a young person changing their world, these awards celebrate those shaping a brighter future for our community. Let's recognise our local heroes and give them the acknowledgement they deserve.

Community Contributor

Lifetime Achievement

Inspiring Young Person

Volunteer Champion

Environmental Champion



Submit your nomination for an award at
www.thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/communityawards
Closing Date: Thursday 19th March, 12pm

Monthly e-Newsletter

Would you like to receive news and updates from Thatcham Town Council more regularly? You can sign up to our monthly e-newsletter directly into your inbox!



I agree that Thatcham Town Council can send me the monthly e-newsletter and ad hoc news to the email address below.

Email Address: _____

Full Name: _____

Please drop this form into the Town Council offices or scan this QR code to sign up online



Thatcham Town Council is responsible for:

- Mayor of Thatcham
- CCTV on The Broadway
- Henleys Allotments
- London Road Cemetery
- Public Toilets
- Thatcham Market
- Community Events
- Street Furniture
- Play Areas and Open Spaces
- Burdwood Community Centre
- Frank Hutchings Community Hall
- Red dog waste bins



West Berkshire District Council is responsible for:

- Tax and Benefits
- Business Rates
- Rubbish and Recycling
- Care and Housing
- Planning
- Roads, Transport and Parking
- Schools, Learning and Libraries
- Consumer and Environmental Protection
- Leisure, Parks and Countryside
- Green dog waste bins
- Children and Family Services
- Adult Social Care



To report a problem to West Berkshire Council please visit: www.westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem

Town Councillor Contact

Town Councillors can be contacted by email using the format: **name.surname@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk**

Thatcham Central

Iain Cottingham [D]

Jay Lunn

Tom McCann [D]

Petra Pemberton

Stephanie Steevenson [D]

Thatcham North East

Mike Cole

Jeremy Cottam [D]

Mark Thomas

Dave Lunn

Ben Schiffer-Harte

Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham

John Boyd

Owen Jeffery [D]

Val Watts

Thatcham West

Suzanne Adamantos

Jeff Brooks [D]

Mark Lillycrop

Justin Pemberton [D]

Simon Pike

[D] = also West Berkshire District Councillor

Your Feedback Welcomed

Thank you for being part of Thatcham - we're glad you're here. If you would like to send us any feedback, suggestions, or to report an issue:

Online form:

www.thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/contact_us

Email: enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Phone: 01635 863592

WhatsApp Messages: 07503 634761

Visit a Council Surgery

www.thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/faqs



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