

Berkshire News

.....the open **W**indow on Berkshire



Welcome to the new look 'Berkshire News' which has been redesigned to complement the newly introduced bulletin 'Window on Berkshire', first issued in July this year.

This Autumn, the Trustees of the Berkshire Federation are introducing new social events, activity classes and initiatives across the county. We hope all our members find something of interest to attend. We aim to make our WI Federation a vibrant, sociable and interactive women's organisation.

Individual trustee roles have been redefined to better reflect

the needs of the Federation. We now have three trustees, Hilary, Katrina and Carole, who have taken on the role of 'WI Liaison'. Indeed, some of you may already have had a call, or even a visit, from one of them.

The concept of WI Liaison does not replace the WI Advisor but aims to improve and develop fellowship and communications across the Federation as a whole.

Interested in Patchwork or want to advance your Patchwork skills?

Many WI members have expressed an interest in starting basic patchwork or, for the more experienced, learning new patchwork techniques, without the need to produce a whole quilt.

Quilting is a very popular past time. Many quilters make quilts & blankets for charities who, in turn, donate the homemade quilts & blankets to children's wards in hospitals & hospices. A home-made quilt or blanket offers love, security, warmth & comfort to a sick or distressed baby or child. It can also be a token of love & comfort for parents.

Whilst homemade quilts & blankets are donated to neonatal units and children's wards by Project Linus, they are often not available on A&E wards where, tragically, as a monthly average, three babies/children do not survive long enough to be admitted to a baby unit/children's ward. The very best efforts of the medical staff often require clothes to be cut off the baby/child so bereaved parents often face cuddling their dearly loved baby/child in a used towel.

Many WI members will empathise with these tragedies and want to help. So, what better way to help bring comfort to grieving parents than by meeting friends, having coffee, enjoying a chat and learning a new patchwork skill.

Each month in these patchwork groups, participants will be



provided with fabric and instructions to make a block using a different technique, applique, foundation piecing or log cabin for example. After the session the co-ordinating blocks will be assembled into a Bereavement Quilt for donation to A&E departments; a departed child will be wrapped in that Quilt post-mortem and then the Quilt given to the parents to take home as a lasting memory of those final moments.

Hopefully each meeting will produce enough blocks to make one quilt, and members will also have enjoyed learning new skills whilst meeting new people. Perhaps the group participants could share their newfound skills with their own WIs, because the block design and instructions will also be available for download.

Introducing the WI Liaison Team:



Hilary Fraser, Trustee & Vice Chair & President of Burghfield WI. A keen traveller, Hilary's voluntary work includes teaching maths to more able primary school children. Hilary is also an avid rugby fan and supports Exeter Chiefs.

Email: h.fraser@berkshirewi.co.uk



Carole Seymour, Trustee & member of Tilehurst Afternoon and Tilehurst Triangle. In addition to being a hands-on Nana, Carole volunteers at a local care home and a community café. In her spare time, Carole enjoys baking, gardening, walking & travelling.

Email: c.seymour@berkshirewi.co.uk



Katrina Sell, Trustee and President of Maidenhead WI. Katrina helps run the family farm whilst raising her family. Passionate about the 1940s, Katrina enjoys knitting, reading and the pleasures of home making and baking.

Email: k.sell@berkshirewi.co.uk

Welcome to WI House.....

Meet Diane Reeves, Berkshire Federation Secretary, the woman behind the friendly & professional voice that answers the phone at WI House. Diane has been working with us for nearly three years and is a valued member of the team. She is secretary of Sonning Glebe WI and a longstanding WI member.

Over the summer, several of the trustees worked hard to tidy up WI House and the side garage.

Sincere thanks to Marion, Margot, Carole, Katrina, Caroline & Sally for toiling in the heat to convert the upstairs archive room to a craft & sewing room.

Marion and Margot then went on to clear the garage and take all the rubbish to the tip. A huge thank you to you both.



WI House is open Tuesday to Thursday 10am - 2pm. The meeting room is available to members, free of charge, to book for various activities including crafts, book club and meetings.

If you would be interested in joining either the new Knowl Hill group or the Mortimer group, please contact m.scott-baker@berkshirewi.co.uk for further details.

Refreshments will be provided.

Both groups will meet Monday mornings 10-12noon.

Knowl Hill dates:

12 Sept, 10 Oct, 7 Nov, 5 Dec

WI House, Mortimer dates:

1 Sept, 6 Oct, 3 Nov, 1 Dec



Berkshire Federation of Women's Institutes

Contact Details:

WI House, The Street, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3RD

Tel:

0118 933 3448

Email:

federationsecretary@berkshirewi.co.uk

Website:

www.thewi.org.uk/berkshire

Charity Registration No: 1199538

Office Hours:

Tuesday - Thursday 10am - 2pm

Berkshire WI News Subscription:

Institutes £4.00pa

Private Purchasers £8.00pa

Digital copies available, contact office for details

Editorial Deadline:

22nd September 2025

for Nov/Dec 2025

Photos:

Digital photos 300 dpi high JPEG

As attachments please.

Federation Chair:

Trish Kilgour

Federation Secretary:

Diane Reeves

Berkshire News Editor:

Ann Knee-Robinson/Trish Kilgour

The Editor is not responsible for the contents of advertisements

Publisher: BFWI

Designer: Jo Glen

Email: jo@lancemediagroup.co.uk

A Note from WI House.....

A warm welcome to a revised 'Berkshire News' which, as explained on the front page, has been brought into line with the newly launched Berkshire Bulletin, 'Window on Berkshire'.

The overriding aim of the Board of Trustees is to produce a varied, interesting & entertaining programme during the coming Autumn and Winter months to encourage a unity and fellowship amongst WI members across Berkshire.

Due to space limitations, we are unable to include the full planned programme in the Berkshire News so it is important to read this edition in conjunction with the Bulletin sent out at the very beginning of September. Hence, it is very important **that WI Secretaries send out the monthly Bulletin to all their WI members every month.**

We have some extremely talented WI members in Berkshire who can offer a wide variety of different skills such as quilting, dressmaking, patchwork and other more specialised crafts to fellow members. However, we do not seem to have any WI members who can offer art & painting, be it watercolours, oils, acrylics etc. As a WI member, if you are skilled in any aspect of painting, have some spare time and are willing to pass on your expertise then please get in touch for a chat.

I also have a second request. As you can read on the front page, the trustees worked over the summer to convert the former archive room upstairs into a craft & sewing room. If any members have an unwanted sewing machine would they please consider donating it to WI House? If you can help then please give Diane a call. Thank you.

Berkshire Federation is very keen to offer life-long, learning opportunities in as many skill areas as possible to our members. New skills learnt, or skills further developed, will enable members to enjoy creative time with like-minded members, make new friendships and further enhance the strength of WI fellowship within our county.

This Autumn, we are reintroducing 'WI lunches + speaker' starting with 'Fashion in the 1940s' on 27 October at the Bird in Hand, Knowl Hill. We are already aware of significant interest in attending this event which can be booked either on-line or by sending a completed application form & cheque to WI House. Please do not be disheartened if you apply and are obliged to accept a place on a waiting list. We are planning a rolling programme of WI lunches at a reasonable price, with entertaining speakers, across the county and we need to gauge interest in these early days so do be patient with us.

Finally, I wish to express our gratitude to Jennie Abbot-Hauxwell for her many years of dedicated and enthusiastic service on the subcommittee, 'Our Future World'. The Board of Trustees send Jennie every good wish in her future endeavours. Thank you, Jennie, for all your hard work and commitment over the years.

Looking ahead, it has been decided to reform and rename 'Our Future World' and details will be issued during the Autumn months.

With kind regards on behalf of the Berkshire Board of Trustees,

Trish Kilgour
Chair

Email: t.kilgour@berkshirewi.co.uk



"Women have a voice, and whenever they speak together, they are heard"

'A force to be reckoned with: a History of the WI' by Jane Robinson, social historian, 2011

Bracknell and Wokingham Districts for cats

Also covering Crowthorne, Woodley, Earley and Winnersh

Please help us make a better life for cats.

Find out more: 03453 714 212 | cats.org.uk/bracknell

Cats Protection is a registered charity 203644 (England and Wales), SC037711 (Scotland) and is listed as a Section 167 institution by the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland. A company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (06772997). Registered office National Cat Centre, Chelwood Gate, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH17 7TT | BC_1067



WI ADVISER CORNER

By the WI Advisers

Top News for WI Members and WI Committee Members

WI Members: do you like money and figures? Fancy learning about how a WI's finances work? Are you a Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer for your WI? Or would like to be an Independent Financial Examiner for Berkshire? Come along to one of our next workshops to find out more...

Our Independent Financial Examiner (IFE) Training is on Saturday 27th September 2025, 10:00am – 3:00pm at: WI House, The Street, Mortimer Common, RG7 3RD. A one day course covering how to do a review of a WI's accounts and how the IFE scheme works. It is free and is open to all WI Members. If you are interested in training as an Independent Financial Examiner, please send your name, WI & Email address to Anita West at a.west@berkshirewi.co.uk by Wednesday 24th September 2025.

Please bring a packed lunch, tea/coffee and cake will be provided.

Are you your WI's Member Communications System (MCS) Rep?

Please can you check that all your members' details on MCS are correct this month! And add new members to MCS as they join your WI! You do an important job: making sure their details are correct means your members can access ALL their WI membership benefits. And ensures your new Officers and committee members get the important mailings they need for your WI. Please don't miss out. Also, sadly, when members pass away, you can spare families the distress of getting WI post and emails by updating MCS records quickly and telling the Federation Secretary at WI House.

For ALL WI Members: Did you know ...?

Dual Members are now called Multiple Members? And they can be committee members and Officers of any WI they have joined! For this and other changes to the WI Constitution, have a look at the **NEW WI HANDBOOK FOR 2025** which is NOW ON **MYWI** – Download your copy... All the important information you need to run your WI is found on myWI, in the WI Constitution, the WI Handbook and the Guidance on Fund-Raising. Find them here:
<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/> <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/wi-handbook>
<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/essential-information/wi-policy-and-guidance#constitution>

Ask your WI Adviser if you have any questions or need any help with situations that arise.



Still time to sign up for our popular **Treasurer's Workshop** for New, Existing and Potential Treasurers and Treasurer's Assistants!

On Saturday, 11 October 2025, at St Paul's Parish Rooms, Reading Road, Wokingham RG41 1EH, 11am to 3:30pm.

Your WI will pay the cost of £10 per WI, including tea/cake.

Email Anita to book your place: a.west@berkshirewi.co.uk

See flyer sent to Secretaries.

Dates for your Diary

Monday 15 September

Sashiko Wooden Pin Cushions, WI House
£15 pp including materials.

Wednesday 24 September

Red Cross Basic First Aid Course, WI House.
Free. Morning 11am - 12.30pm.
Afternoon 1pm - 2.30pm.

Saturday 27 September

IFE (Independent Financial Examiner) Training, WI House, 10am - 3pm.
Free. Bring a packed lunch.
Tea/coffee & cake provided.

Saturday 11 October

Treasurer's Workshop, St Paul's Parish Rooms, Wokingham, 11am - 3.30pm.
(cost paid by your WI).
Bring a packed lunch.
Tea/coffee & cake provided.

Friday 17 October

Speakers Selection, Woolhampton Village Hall, 10.30am-1pm.
£6pp with max. of 3 per WI.

Monday 27 October

BFWI Lunch at 'Bird in Hand', Knowledge Hill & Speaker 'Fashion on a Ration'.
Booking details to follow in September Bulletin.

Fashion On A Ration

Speaker Lunch - The Story of Fashion In The 1940's

Speakers

Bret and Karen Wiles
From 'Doing Their Bit'

Monday 27th October

- 12.00 for 12.30pm
- Two Course Lunch, £32pp
- Bird in Hand, A4 Knowl Hill RG10 9UP



Booking information will be available in the September Bulletin, **W**indow on Berkshire

A Berkshire Federation Event

TO: ALL WI MEMBERS

PLEASE NOTE: When you apply for a place at one of our events you are making a commitment to attend. Your booking confirms your attendance to the event. If, having booked, you find you cannot attend the event you should notify the organiser as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to find a replacement as refunds cannot be given.

Please apply promptly for tickets.

If you are applying late, please get in touch using either the email address or contact number given to see if there are still vacancies. Remember, unless otherwise stated, all events are open to members' family and friends.

SUB COMMITTEES

Health & Well Being

Introducing Trustee Margot Gosney: member of Beenham WI & Thatcham WI

Professor Margot Gosney qualified as a medical doctor at the University of Liverpool and has had many medical papers published whilst practising as a doctor during her long and distinguished career.



Margot grew up wanting to help people and knew at an early age that she wanted to be a doctor. As a trustee, she believes she can guide the WI to play an important role in offering advice to women on health & well-being matters.

Margot's plans include regular newsletter topics on health and welfare issues. To help women to access these topics, she will also be delivering a series of mini topics that can be downloaded and viewed at leisure. Margot is keen for everything to be interactive but stresses she cannot, and will not, address any personal health concerns.

It is hoped that WI members will suggest topics of interest of which they wish to be informed.

Margot has a son & daughter and, in her spare time, she enjoys sewing and making clothes for her grandchildren.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCREENING

During her medical training Margot took time out to do a Doctorate. She focussed on the hormonal type of effects of some cancers on the body itself. Following this she spent two years in Cancer medicine and saw the importance of early detection of cancer. Screening and patient self-awareness are both vitally important and this helped her to decide which topic to write about first.

The purpose of screening is to detect a disease or condition

at an early stage. This enables potentially curative therapy as the disease is caught early. For screening to be effective, there must be an acceptable test for it and the condition needs to be both common and treatable. In the UK, the main screening tests are mammography for breast cancer, faeces testing for signs of bleeding which may indicate bowel cancer and PSA blood tests for prostate cancer. Testing of faeces for blood may indicate other causes such as polyps or diverticular disease.

Screening that is positive will always cause anxiety, therefore, it must be remembered that some screening tests are not specific for cancer. This is the case in testing faeces for blood. The blood test PSA in men can also be raised in non-cancer which is why there was controversy about it for many years.

To discuss screening in the UK, it is important to discuss the types of cancer, which are more prevalent in the older population.

In the United Kingdom breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer and the leading cause of cancer deaths among women worldwide. The highest incidence is in women over the age of 70 years.

Advanced age at diagnosis is usually associated with less aggressive tumour biology. Unfortunately, older women are more likely to present with locally advanced tumours, they are less likely to attend screening and more likely to not undergo the treatment that younger women would have.

For screening to be useful the following factors need to be considered; a general estimate of the person's life expectancy and the risk of a death from

that cancer, rather than other coexisting diseases. In addition, the screening outcomes must be considered as well as the potential harm from screening and patient preferences.

In 1986 the Forrest Report led to the introduction of mammographic breast cancer screening in the United Kingdom. In England in 1990 the program began inviting women for a single view mammogram. At present approximately 75% of women aged 55 to 70 years are entered into screening and figures suggest that women in London are the least likely to be screened. Approximately 73% of those invited for a first screen will attend, but on subsequent occasions, women are more likely to attend. This suggests that women generally find the process acceptable and attend after subsequent invitations. What is not widely known is that women over the age of 70 are not routinely invited for screening. However, if a woman aged 71 or above requests screening, this will be provided. This involves contacting the local breast cancer screening service directly or if people struggle with this, a GP can help. Even if women have never been screened before the age of 70, they can still request screening. The whole process takes approximately 15 minutes and is generally not painful but is described as "uncomfortable". Results are sent directly to the person who was screened and then up to the age of 70, a routine invitation is sent three years later. Screening is free, it exposes you to a small dose of radiation but can save lives.

Even if women attend screening, any changes in the breast should be noted and reported to your GP. It is also worth remembering that although men have small amounts of breast tissue, they can still develop breast cancer and therefore any lumps or bumps require further investigation.

Speakers Selection

Speakers Selection Audition Meeting

The next Speakers Selection Audition Meeting will be held at Woolhampton Village Hall, Bath Road, Woolhampton RG7 5RE on **Friday 17th October 2025 from 10.30am till 1.00pm.**

Price: £6.00 per WI member.

Doors open at 10.30am and the meeting will start promptly at 11.00am.

Come along to hear prospective new speakers audition for entry into the WI Year Book. Each speaker will give a short talk on their chosen topic to give a flavour of their full presentation.

Please note that due to the popularity of these events places will be limited to a maximum of three per WI.

To apply please use the 'BFWI Application for Events' form which can be obtained from your WI secretary or downloaded from the BFWI website.

Fully complete the details for all applicants on the reverse of the form including details of persons to contact in the unlikely event of an emergency.

Payment can be made by either cheque payable to BFWI - or - by bank transfer to the account number given on the form using code SPEAK25b

**Closing date for applications
Friday, 26 September, 2025.**

Send your application, and cheque if appropriate, to:

Speaker Selection 09/2025
WI House
The Street
Mortimer Common
Reading RG7 3RD

Tickets are not issued but your application will be acknowledged.

READING
REP
THEATRESEASON
2025/26

THE LAST FIVE YEARS

THE AWARD WINNING MUSICAL
WRITTEN AND COMPOSED BY
JASON ROBERT BROWN

Book Now at readingrep.com | USE Promo Code WI and get 20% off your booking
 “Heart-stopping Theatre” The Telegraph | “A hidden Gem in Reading” Audience Member

HARWOOD HOUSE

LUXURY CARE

The Cookhams' Care Home *Providing superb long term or respite care*

Harwood House is not just a beautiful building,
 it's a home from home where you can enjoy
 exceptional levels of compassionate care.



*My father has the most excellent
 care...The staff are kind and caring.
 The home is beautiful and feels
 homely...Visitors can visit any time*

Resident's son 2024

9.8

9.8 Harwood House review score
 (out of 10) on carehome.co.uk,
 as at 24/1/2025.



T: 01628 478000
harwoodhouse.co.uk

Spring Lane, Cookham Dean
 Maidenhead, BERKSHIRE SL6 6PW

WI MATTERS

REPORT BACK – THATCHAM WI

Thatcham WI 80th Anniversary VE Day Celebrations



On Saturday 10th May Thatcham WI celebrated the 80th Anniversary of VE Day by dedicating their Spring Coffee Morning to this event. The committee all dressed up in appropriate era costume from land girls to pretty frocks.

In the 2 hours that we were open we raised over £1000 with £676 going to the West Berkshire Community Hospital Courtyard Garden which Thatcham WI look after. The Gardening Group had a stall outside the front door of the Catholic Church Hall (where we meet) and sold out of all the plants donated by our green fingered WI members. The coffee morning was opened by Andrea Bradd who is the Lead Radiographer at the hospital who told us that all the staff and patients are so

grateful to us for keeping this green space available to them when they are in so much need of some fresh air and calming plants. For full details and pictures visit our website on thatcham-wi.com/fundraising

We were also involved in the Thatcham Town Council event on Thatcham Broadway on Monday 5th May – the weather was cold that day. Where we gave away over 400 pieces of Victoria Sponge Cake to everyone who came along and passed by our stall, promoting the WI as an exclusive organisation for all age women. Again, all the information and pictures are on thatcham-wi.com/fundraising

Caroline Lang

REPORT BACK – LITTLEWICK EVENING BELLES WI

In May, we invited Kate Buchanan back to run another session teaching us water colour painting. As you can see from the photos, we made a good effort at painting flowers, carrots and grasses to make into our own mini art gallery.

There were 24 of us and, at times, you could have heard a pin drop, the concentration on our works of art was so intense!! We had our usual raffle and refreshments at half-time together with an update on social events from our president, Steph Howell. We all left our meeting hall, suitably relaxed and clutching our wallet of paintings.

Kate Buchanan is a textile artist living and working in Harpenden, Hertfordshire. Creating is her passion, whether it's following her own creative process through and developing her own artwork or



in the setting up of a creative space for teaching others in the workshops she runs from her studio at home, or in the larger creative spaces she hires or attends (as she did with us). She has added needle felting and macrame to the brush lettering, water colour, collage and stitching classes as well as free tutorials. You can find her online by googling katebuchanan.com



REPORT BACK – CALCOT AFTERNOON WI



We celebrated VE Day at our meeting in May with tea and cake and also lots of decorations. With a fantastic speaker Derry Pope, giving us an insight to his life in music with running 8 choirs, west end shows and finishing with a lovely sing-a-long.

Also, on Bank Holiday Monday our wonderful Committee had a stall at the VE celebrations in Linear Park and raised money for our Charity and afternoon tea for our ladies. It was enjoyed by all who took part.

Linda Deacon

REPORT BACK – DATCHET WI

Datchet W.I began its 78th year with two meetings in May. At our monthly meeting we had an enthusiastic speaker, Mr G. Jenner, who gave us an in depth talk on the history of the supersonic plane, Concorde. With coloured slides, short videos with the sound, of course, we heard about the development and life of this unique aircraft. Various Concorde memorabilia were on display. Some of our members even recalled Concorde flying over the village.



Also in May, we hosted Sunningdale W.I. and the two Windsor Great Park W.I.s at a Group Meeting. There was a bring-and-buy table and a raffle. Mr Chris Brown, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Town Crier, talked to us about his role and experiences as well as some background history of the job. He came dressed in his magnificent outfit and introduced

his talk by ringing his big bell. A lovely surprise came at the end of his talk, when he made a proclamation in his town crier mode, announcing the coming 100th birthday of our eldest member, Mrs Win Slinn. In verse, he recited a poem about her life, which was rapturously received and appreciated. All members of the Group who attended enjoyed a splendid afternoon tea and social time together. We all look forward to our next Group Meeting in 2026.

Micheline Pound

REPORT BACK – KNOWL HILL WI

Knowl Hill WI had a double celebration in June; it was their 70th Birthday and June Sulley celebrated her 50th anniversary, quite an achievement! June has always been an active member and was our President for many years. She has recently rejoined the committee giving her continued support. Guests and members were treated to a delicious meal and an amazing flower arranging demonstration from Mickles Farm, who



also provided a wonderful display of flowers and beautiful table decorations. They kindly donated their bouquets to the raffle.

Anita West, WI Adviser, presented a congratulations 70th birthday certificate to our President, Frances Moody (pictured). Everyone enjoyed a very special evening.

Rachel Lloyd

REPORT BACK – BRADFIELD WI

Towards the end of June, Bradfield WI hosted Sunday Afternoon Tea at Bradfield Village Hall.

Cheese scones and sweet scones 'with all the trimmings' were on offer along side plates of delicious home baked cakes, all served with individual pots

of tea or coffee. There was also a raffle and a competition to win half a case of wine.

To date, Including this event, Bradfield WI have raised over £1,000 with various fundraising initiatives to contribute to refitting the Village Hall kitchen.

**REPORT BACK – UPPER BASILDON WI**

Upper Basildon WI held their traditional 'Strawberries & Pimms' summer party in August on one of the hottest days of the year when temperatures hit 32°C.

Members enjoyed a glass of Pimms (a non-alcoholic drink was available) followed by strawberry scone tea. A selection of different sweet scones were available served with clotted cream, home made strawberry

jam and fresh strawberries.

The evening finished by announcing the winner of the 'Guess the weight of the cake' competition who took home the beautifully decorated fresh cream chocolate cake. The raffle was also drawn with the final ticket picked being held by Tracy Glover, President of Upper Basildon WI who won a beautiful bouquet of pink summer flowers.



It's time to
feel good
about care

With award-winning not-for-profit care homes, flexible trial stays and Home for Life funding assurance.

Finally, a care decision you can feel good about.

RESPIRE CARE

Book your short stay or trial today!
(T&Cs apply)

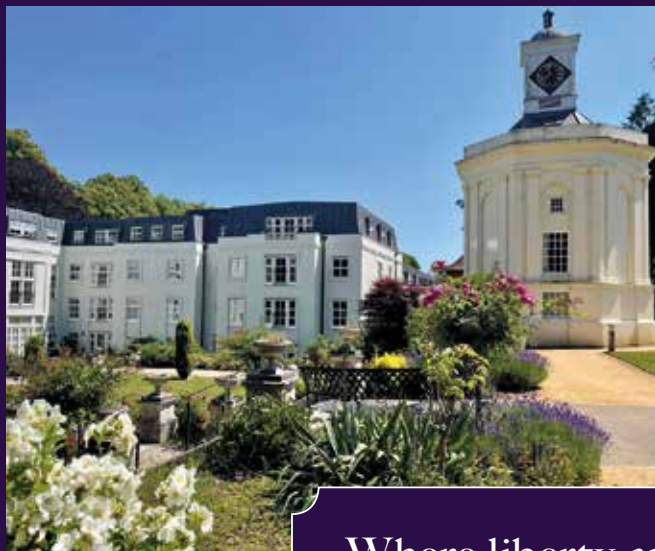
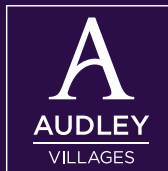
**Buckler's Lodge
Care Home**
Woodcote Green
Crowthorne
01344 964 859

**Glebelands
Care Home**
Woolf Drive
Wokingham
01182 309 422

**The Manor
Care Home**
Church Road
Old Windsor
01753 981 151

**greensleeves
care**

Audley Inglewood



Where liberty and luxury meet



Nestled in 39 acres, one mile from Kintbury in Berkshire, the luxury retirement village offers 91 apartments and cottages and exquisite facilities.



Find out more

www.audleyvillages.co.uk/visitinginglewood

01488 208 100

Templeton Road,
Kintbury, Hungerford,
Berkshire RG17 9AA

It can only be Audley.