

# The Oracle

Bedfordshire

May 2024

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See page 42



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We offer a FREE review of your existing Will.

## The Average Inheritance Tax bill continues to rise

- In the Autumn Statement the government announced that the Inheritance Tax threshold will be frozen until 2028. This means many more people who do not consider themselves wealthy will be facing an IHT (Inheritance Tax) bill.
- With average property prices almost doubling between 2009 and 2022 and further increases projected, freezing the allowance for longer is going to include more estates in the IHT net.
- The average IHT bill was around £165,000 in 2010, this has now grown by almost £50,000 to around £215,000. The average bill is projected to hit around £280,000 by 2028.
- Whilst the Inheritance Tax allowances can be as high as £1m (if there is a couple and the house is left to direct descendants and the Property Nil Rate Band is used), the majority start incurring inheritance tax for much smaller estates. Why is this? Some people are not eligible for the full allowances but many people are not taking inheritance tax advice and are not having their Wills professionally written. The financial loss to the family can be considerable.

**We recommend:** Review your Will in the light of current legislation and current family needs. Take professional advice and ensure that documents are professionally drawn up. This is money well spent.

- We quote our fixed fees up front
- We meet with you in informal surroundings and spend a lot of time making sure we get everything right and you are happy
- We believe in plain English
- We advise on the most tax effective solutions
- Our clients tell us that the experience has been a pleasant one and they are extremely glad that they have the necessary documents in place.

### Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA)

- ❖ These are not only for the elderly.
- ❖ We are all at risk from accident or illness particularly those who travel or do risky sports.
- ❖ An LPA for financial matters permits your chosen attorneys to manage your affairs for your benefit.
- ❖ An LPA for health matters permits your attorneys to speak for you if you are unable to yourself.

Your 'attorneys' are trusted family members who agree that they will act for your benefit and you can make your wishes known to them in advance.

If we are unable to act for ourselves and there is no LPA in place even a joint bank account is frozen and the family faces a possible application to court for a Deputyship Order. This is very time consuming and expensive in legal fees and ongoing costs and greatly adds to the stress that the family will have to face.

A policy of 'wait and see' can be disastrous. You can only sign when you have full capacity.

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## to the MAY Oracle.



Our local high streets are constantly evolving as shopping habits change. Only recently we've seen the disappearance of Post Offices and banks. But, those products and services that you can't buy off Amazon continue to thrive.



And here's the living proof .... Darren Johnson has been running men's hairdressers, dr. barbers, for over 13 years. And, despite the arrival of numerous other men's coiffures, he continues to go strong.

As a mother of three boys, I've met Darren many a time. Find out his secrets to success on page 36.

With the weather on the turn and two bank holidays in May, you'll be looking to check off some jobs around the house. I'm sure The Oracle will be able to help you with that!

*All the best,*

*Kirsty*



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# The Garden Diary

## Open Gardens (May and June)

As gardens come into bloom, what better way to show them off than to open them to the public as part of the National Gardens Scheme. Running since the early 1900s, it supports a range of health and nursing charities through donations from garden admissions, and of course tea and cake sales! You can find out more about the scheme at [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk) including information about the gardens, opening times, and how to go about opening your own patch to the public. Don't be afraid - gardens of all shapes and sizes can be added to the scheme - and offer people a chance to be inspired and share their passion. Many of the gardens are dog friendly too (on a lead), but before you set off please do check the website for details.

In Bedfordshire this coming May and June there are a number of gardens opening their gates to visitors.

### 18th May - Pulloxhill



Church Farm - featuring drought-tolerant planting, topiary, a kitchen garden and wildlife pond.

### 19th May - Sandy

The Old Rectory - wildlife-focused gardens,

including gravel areas and wildflower meadows.

### 26th May - Steppingley

Middle Barn, Townsend Farmhouse, 21 Church End and 1 Park Farm Cottage

These are some of the gardens, which can all be visited on the same day for one admission fee, that are open as part of Steppingley Village Gardens.

### 2nd June - Biggleswade

Southill Park - one of the gardens to open its gates on the first NGS open day in 1927, this is set in the grounds of the Palladian house, with parkland designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

### 9th June - Roxton

Hill Farm House - featuring a Japanese-style courtyard, woodland walk and wildlife havens

### 16th June - Turvey

Chantry House, Peppers and Gable End  
These are some of the gardens, which can all be visited on the same day for one admission fee, that are open as part of Turvey Village Gardens.

### 30th June - Shefford

Queen Elizabeth Close - lush, tropical tree ferns and foliage-focused planting in this fabulous secret paradise.

*See you next month!*



Adrian Cole, Arcadia Horticultural Services  
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# THE HISTORY OF BANK HOLIDAYS

**EVERYONE loves a bank holiday, giving people a day off work and the chance to meet up with friends and family and have a bit of fun ... and the month of May has 2 of them!**

This year there are eight bank holidays in England and Wales, nine in Scotland, and 10 in Northern Ireland. Have you even wondered why we have them?

The statutory bank holidays we know and love today were introduced in 1871 by banker and politician John Lubbock, the first Baron of Avebury. Before he came on the scene and made bank holidays all proper, the Bank of England and the Exchequer — as well as numerous other public offices — took a large number of holidays (about 40) to celebrate royal events, Christian festivals and saint's days.

This was trimmed down to 18 days in 1830, then slashed down to just four in 1834.

After the Industrial Revolution, 'local holidays' became a strong tradition, with factories shutting down on certain days and giving everyone a day off at the same time. You still see factory shutdowns in some industries and areas of the country, but overall, the tradition faded with the advent of paid leave for employees, standardised school holidays and a downturn in manufacturing.

The term 'bank holiday' can be interpreted very literally, with banks closing on these days, postponing any financial dealings until the next day. The Bank Holiday Act ensured no penalties were incurred for these delays. Before the introduction of the Act, banks feared they'd go bankrupt if they closed on a weekday, but Lubbock's work took away such concerns.

Lubbock drafted the Bank Holidays Bill in 1871, and when that became law the first official bank holidays

in England, Wales and Ireland were Easter Monday, Whit Monday, the first Monday in August and Boxing Day.

It's no coincidence that, right across the world, many public holidays align with religious festivals, allowing believers to fulfil their religious duties on those special days. The popularity of a particular religion will typically decide which religious festivals are celebrated as public holidays.

Spain has the highest number of public holidays of any European country, with up to 14 each year. The vast majority of these are linked to the Catholic calendar, for example the Assumption of Mary and All Saints' Day.

It's not just the UK that has public holidays though. In fact, the UK actually has one of the lowest numbers of public holidays in the world, with eight. Only Mexico has fewer with seven.



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# Fostering Teenagers



Caring for a teenage foster child is a hugely fulfilling role, and often comes with fewer challenges than other age groups. Without a solid family foundation and a good role model, many teenagers leave the care system to face challenges independently.

**By fostering a teenager, you can help them move towards a bright future and support them in healing from their past to prepare them for adulthood. The stability and support a foster carer can provide at this important stage in their lives can have a huge impact and help them develop into caring, confident, and independent adults.**

Along with all the changes that happen during adolescence teenagers navigate through a challenging key stage of their development. Teenagers in care are often trying to understand who they are and overcome traumas from the past. They can often feel overwhelmed with the changes that puberty brings along with exams and the prospect of finishing their education and deciding what to do next. Sadly, many teenagers in the UK are overlooked due to the perception

that a teenage foster child will be more difficult to manage. **While it may sound initially hard work, fostering teenagers tends to be less demanding than caring for younger children as they need less supervision. Often, they are at school full-time and have formed friendships which gives them increased independence.**

Adam and Halima have been Nexus foster carers since 2018, they fostered a 16-year-old teenager alongside their two young birth children. The pair explains, **'We try to embrace having a teenager in the house, there's something beautiful about the nature of a teenager, and I think if you get your head around how they feel, what they are going through, it is incredible'.**

There is a stereotypical image of what teenagers are like, but this is not true of all teenagers, including those in care. Sometimes

teenagers in foster care will behave as though they are much younger children, and sometimes they will engage in behaviour that can put them in danger, so foster carers are needed to keep these young people safe. **Opening your home up to fostering can be a life-changing experience not just for you, but also for the child you'll be taking in.**

Based in Ampthill, Nexus Fostering believes all children and young people deserve a chance to live in a family setting. Their ethos is centred around providing unrivalled support and training for foster carers to create the best positive outcomes for those in their care. Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted since 2011, their extensive team of social workers, specialists, and clinicians are there to help you excel as a foster carer.

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## Age is not a disease...



By Dr Sarah Bolt

Thank you to everyone for the positive response to the last article. It mirrors the kindness shown to our team and we are so lucky to have such wonderful clients.

I intend to use this space to write about various veterinary topics – if you have any areas you'd like to see covered in the future or any questions about something mentioned then please feel free to get in touch. It could be a medical topic or about the profession generally.

I wanted to start with a subject which is close to my heart: our older pets. A huge proportion of our patients are seniors, and just like humans, certain medical conditions become more likely to develop as pets grow older.

It is very common to hear from owners that pets are slowing down, and given that they can't tell us exactly how they feel, it is easy to assume problems are just due to general old age and that not much can be done.

However, in many cases, there are various things that we can do to keep our senior pets as happy and healthy as possible, ranging from relatively benign changes, such as adapting the home to make it easier for arthritic pets to get about, through to medical or surgical procedures (the most common being dental procedures) at the vet practice.

It is completely understandable that more involved treatments, such as dental procedures under anaesthetic, may be a more daunting prospect for our older patients. Indeed, for some older pets, a procedure under anaesthetic wouldn't be fair or appropriate. But for others it can vastly improve quality of life by reducing pain, discomfort and longer term complications of medical conditions.

I do feel strongly that age is just a number, and it's always worth reviewing our senior pets and whether any changes or treatments are appropriate for them, to keep them living their best life. Starting regular reviews earlier also means that we might catch any changes early, therefore hopefully reducing the extent of any veterinary intervention needed.

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

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

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

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



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# FOOD INTOLERANCE TESTING

**Hi, I'm Vicki and I run Your Health and Holistics, a company that offers Food Intolerance Testing and Holistic treatments. This is my story ...**

About 25 years ago, I collapsed at work with excruciating stomach pains, I was bloated, fatigued, and felt generally terrible. I went to see my GP who told me it was IBS. He gave me some medicine which helped a bit, but the symptoms kept coming back.

Everything I ate gave me more stomach cramps. A friend thought that I might have a gluten intolerance and suggested I go for Food Intolerance Testing which I did. At the end of the test, the therapist told me what I was intolerant to, the main one being gluten. The test cost me £54. It was the best £54 I have ever spent!

From that day, I have avoided gluten and feel so much better.

In the last couple of years, I have also become lactose and dairy intolerant so adapt my diet accordingly. But at least I know the signs to look out for now.

I am so passionate about this form of testing, that I am now running my own business doing it. I test for nearly 100 foods/drink. I also test for E numbers, and for vitamins and minerals, to see if you are lacking in any of these.

Using Electro Dermal Screening, this is a non-invasive test that uses a probe on your finger to measure electrical skin resistance at acupuncture points. There are no electrical or other unpleasant sensations.

Intolerances and sensitivities affect a great number of people at any time of life and can also be hereditary. They can also increase with advancing age.

When you are intolerant to a food, a common response is that your body doesn't completely digest it. This allows incompletely digested food to enter into the bloodstream where it is treated as an invader and is targeted either by antibodies or certain enzymes that then trigger a reaction. Reactions to foods can sometimes produce inflammatory conditions and can also produce a whole range of chronic health problems as well as unexplained symptoms.

So, if you have tummy pains, an upset tummy, feel fatigued, bloated or feel constantly itchy, then it could be something that you are ingesting. I truly believe that if I didn't have that food intolerance test, then I would still be suffering today.

If you are suffering from any of these symptoms, please do get in touch.



*Vicki*

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## The Surprising History of Lawn Bowls

Bowls has a long, rich history dating back thousands of years, with many twists and turns along the way – for one thing, did you know that playing it was once illegal?

The roots of lawn bowls can be traced all the way back to ancient Egypt, over 5,000 years ago. According to archaeological findings, a game using stone balls was played in Egypt around 3200 BC. The Egyptian version involved using sticks as targets and playing on dirt instead of grass.

Moving forward to ancient Greece, a variation of the game involved throwing light objects such as flat stones, coins, or stones as far as possible. Ancient Rome's version was much closer to the modern understanding of lawn bowls, where players aimed to toss balls closer to a target than their opponents. It is believed that the Romans brought this version of the game to the rest of Europe, with several countries creating their own adaptations, including France's boules and Great Britain's lawn bowls.

A rudimentary form of bowls can be traced back to the 13th century in England. The world's oldest surviving bowling green is the Southampton Old Bowling Green, first used in 1299.

The game faced bans from both the king and parliament due to fears that it could distract

from archery, which was critical in battle. Even when the advent of firearms made archery obsolete in battle, the ban remained in place. The disreputable reputation of 15th century London bowling alleys, which were often associated with taverns and gambling, likely contributed to the continued restrictive legislation. It wasn't until 1845 that all prohibitions were lifted.

In 1830, bowls took a massive leap forward thanks to Edwin Beard Budding's invention of the lawnmower. This innovation made it possible to prepare and maintain greens to a much higher standard, allowing for a game that's very similar to the one played today.

In 1864, William Wallace Mitchell, a Glasgow cotton merchant, published the "Manual of Bowls Playing". This would become the foundation for the rules of the modern game.

The English Bowling Association was founded in 1903. In 2008, the English Bowling Association and English Women's Bowling Association would merge to become Bowls England, the current governing body for outdoor bowls in England.

Bowls is one of the Commonwealth Games' "core sports", featured at every event since its creation in 1930 (except for the 1966 Games). England has been the dominant force so far, taking home an impressive 51 medals to date.

# FLITWICK BOWLS CLUB

Bowls England are promoting their annual **BOWLS' BIG WEEKEND** sponsored by AVIVA.

The aim is to promote bowling and to encourage everyone, of all ages, to come and have a go, and see what your local club has to offer.

Our **Bowls' Big Weekend Open Day** is on Sunday 26th May starting at 11am

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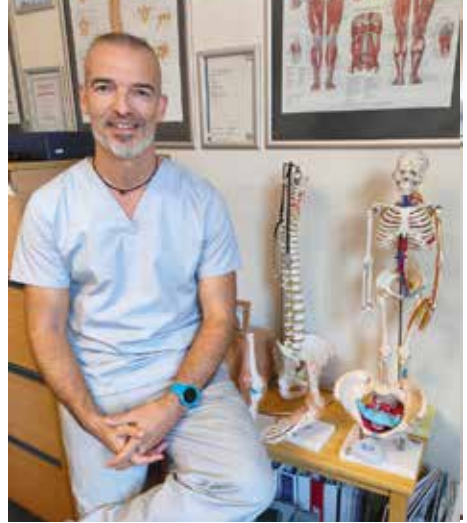


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No, what we do really well as both a Clinic and a Studio is create an environment where people have a sense of belonging. It's a community, and you are amongst people who are going through similar experiences. This creates adherence, accountability, continuity and consistency which leads to a successful programme cycle being completed and targets met or achieved.

Once someone has overcome their initial issue/s or injury they want to move onto other goals whether they are sport related or personal. This can be in the Strength and Rehab Centre or at a class in our studio where we offer seven different styles of Yoga and three styles of Pilates as well as other

movement systems. All of which engenders further success.

One of the biggest factors in either getting Depression or overcoming Depression is the loss of a sense of belonging. With the birth of social media, online platforms, and working from home we have seemingly removed ourselves more than ever from society, interaction and our social connection.

Most of us remember the local corner shop, speaking to a Teller in a Bank, having their own branch manager, paying for goods through a checkout, going "out to work". Automation isn't always a positive step forwards when we lose a sense of being amongst other people, our community and belonging.

Training with people you resonate with and have something in common with is powerful and perhaps an undervalued component that you may not realise you are missing when you look at where you train, practise or receive therapy or treatment.

**If you would like to experience that difference for yourself and in person, don't hesitate to get in contact. It's what we do best.**

## Stuart McCabe

Founder of Akarmalife Studios and the MAT Clinic  
Movement Specialist, Teacher and Educator  
Biomechanics Coach & Sports Therapist  
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# How is your mental fitness?



## How often do you have thoughts like these...

**I'm a rubbish parent. I'm not good enough at my job. I'm overweight and don't have any worth. I'm a failure.**

These are the result of our inner saboteur voices. They take a situation and make it harder to deal with - each negative thought adding a little stone into your emotional backpack. If these stones keep building up, eventually you will have allowed your negative thoughts to be in control and they will keep you stuck in a place of stress. If this sounds familiar then you'll know it can feel overwhelming to take action.

But what if we focus on one stone at a time? Small, positive actions can have a transformative impact on our wellbeing and this is exactly what I offer during my Positive Intelligence training.

## What is Positive Intelligence?

Positive Intelligence (PI) is a 6 week training

programme incorporating weekly coaching along with access to the PI app. Using a combination of theory and short, simple, daily practice, PI incorporates breakthrough, research-based tools, to strengthen the part of your brain that serves you and quieten the part that sabotages you - leading to a more positive mindset, increased productivity and better wellbeing and relationships.

## How does it work?

The system is very simple.

- 1) We practice INTERCEPTING our saboteur thoughts.
- 2) We practice taking COMMAND of our thoughts.
- 3) We develop our SAGE (the part of our brain where we're calmer, more creative, more focused and have more empathy).

## What can I try today?

Scan my QR code to take a free Saboteur Assessment. Here you'll find out more about the 9 different types of saboteur thoughts (things like the Avoider, Pleaser and Stickler) and find out which are most dominant for you.

You can also practice Self Command. When you notice a negative thought (or perhaps a negative physical sensation, like tension in your shoulders) stop for 10 seconds. Close your eyes and rub your fingertips together, focusing intently on the sensation of touch. This tiny reset can stop extra 'stones' being added to your emotional backpack and make life easier to manage.

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Email me on [karenpottercoaching@gmail.com](mailto:karenpottercoaching@gmail.com) or scan my QR code.

Karen Potter Coaching offers Mental Fitness Coaching. Having worked as a teacher for 15 years, Karen especially loves working with parents and educators to bring them calm, clarity and confidence.







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The word 'barber' is derived from the Latin word Barba meaning beard. My full name is Darren Raymond Johnson (DR Johnson), so people often used to ask me what kind of doctor I was. I decided I was wasting too much time explaining to people what the real story was, so when it came to choosing a name for my new hair establishment in Ampthill,

**dr. barbers seemed the obvious choice!**

I've been involved in the hair industry since 1981. I started as a trainee hairstylist in Bedford, before moving into the more colourful life of London. I also spent a short period of time in northern Italy and Barcelona. Over that time there have been some large changes in the way men approach their grooming and hair regimes. All industries change over time but this is especially true for creative industries like fashion, makeup, and hair. Over the years, men's hairstyles have changed dramatically – and not all of them were great!

I think that one effect of these changes has been to give men more confidence and self-esteem which in turn has helped the barbering industry grow into a lucrative and flourishing industry. It's no longer just women who refer to a 'bad hair day'. A bad haircut or style can have a huge impact on anyone's state of mind.

During the pandemic, we were forced to move to an appointment service only. Much to my surprise this was a business changer and increased productivity. We now have our very own booking app so that people with busy schedules can plan the haircut they want to suit their needs and lifestyles.

Running your own business is always challenging but I am very lucky in the support and loyalty I have in our team: Sophie is funny, creative and a child whisperer, Carl has years of experience and knowledge and also loves a chat, Josh is new to the industry and brings loads of enthusiasm and passion ... then there's Me.

My aim in opening dr. barbers was to educate men on style, look and general wellbeing. Having a smart/tidy/cool haircut can put a big smile on your face and boost confidence. Being rather vain myself, I can vouch for that!



*Darren*

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# May Quiz

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## It's all about the 'M' words this month ...

1. What is an infectious disease common in children in which there are red spots all over the body?  
.....
2. Which MM is a famous French mime artist born in 1923?  
.....
3. In which of Shakespeare's plays did Shylock demand a pound of flesh?  
.....
4. Which M is equivalent to the speed of sound?  
.....
5. What is the occupation of Siegfried and Roy?  
.....
6. In Greek legend, which creature is half man and half bull?  
.....
7. In which 1996 movie did Tom Cruise play Ethan Hunt?  
.....
8. In Islam 'Hadj' means a pilgrimage to the sacred city. What is that city?  
.....
9. Which Animation film has animals named Alex, Marty, Gloria, and Melman who escape from the Central Park Zoo?  
.....
10. An onomatopoeic word for the sound made by cattle.  
.....
11. Who is the Roman God of War?  
.....
12. Which animal is commonly known as a Sea Cow?  
.....
13. Which author wrote the novel Frankenstein?  
.....
14. Which U.S dramatist was once married to Marilyn Monroe?  
.....
15. Which country has Kuala Lumpur as its capital?  
.....
16. What fabric do you get after shearing an Angora goat?  
.....

Please email your answers to [kirsty@thebedfordshireoracle.com](mailto:kirsty@thebedfordshireoracle.com) or post to Oracle Quiz, JAC Publications Ltd, Stewart House, Station Road, Ampthill MK45 2RE. All entries must be in by 16th May 2024. The winner will be selected at random and contacted.

NAME: ..... TELEPHONE .....

ADDRESS .....

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### The answers to last month's Love Quiz:

- 1.** False **2.** Aries & Taurus **3.** St George **4.** Grand National **5.** Diamond **6.** Daisy  
**7.** Emmerdale **8.** Cuckoo **9.** Royal Air Force **10.** Spaghetti **11.** Shakespeare **12.** Apple  
**13.** Sir Bobby Moore **14.** Grace Kelly **15.** Martin Luther King **16.** London



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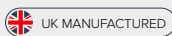
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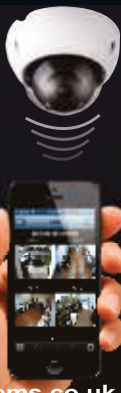
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Flitwick Town Council

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- **Friday 10th May**  
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- **Friday 17th May**  
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- **Friday 24th May**  
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# May Diary

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Wednesdays 1-2.30pm	NCT Mid Beds Bumps and Babies. Drop in for parents & babies. £2 donation.	Village Hall Flitwick	NCT Mid Beds facebook page
Thursdays 2pm-4pm	Painting Circle. A self help group for budding artists. £2.50 per session.	Rufus Centre, Flitwick	Zoe, Flitwick Town Council 01525 631900
Sundays 6-7pm	Walking Football Club. New members 50+ welcome. Also Tuesdays 8-9pm	Flitwick	obmauldenwalkingfootball@outlook.co
Wednesdays 9-10pm	Weekly recreational football. Over 25s	Redbourne Upper School, Amphill	www.fff.football
Friday 3rd 2-10pm	Woodland School is 50! Festival in a day for everyone.	Woodland School	hardacres@woodlandacademy.co.uk
Sunday 5th 5am	Bedford RSPB Group. Dawn Chorus. Followed by breakfast in Toby Carvery.	Priory Country Park MK41 9DJ	group.rspb.org.uk/bedford/
Monday 6th 10am-noon	Children's May Day Celebrations: face painting, biscuit decorating, stories etc	White Hart Amphill	07778 876889. Booking essential.
Thurs 9th 6-8pm	FREE Defibrillator Awareness Seminar.	Rufus Centre Flitwick	01525 631900 to book
Friday 10th 10.30am Friday 24th	Wellbeing Walks. Free, approx 3 miles. No need to book. From Silsoe Village Hall MK45 4DY	West Car Park Amphill Park	mikef@bedsrcc.org.uk
Saturday 11th 10.30-4pm	Clophill Village Fete. Stalls, refreshments, bbq, games.	St Marys Church, Clophill MK45 4BE	Gill 07960 662334
Saturday 11th 10.30a,	Amphill Cancer Suppot Group meet up for anyone who would like to talk.	Calkstand & Crumb Amphill	acsg2024@aol.com
Monday 13th 1.30-3.30pm	Forget Me Not. A group to support people & carers with memory problems or dementia.	Rufus Centre Flitwick	01525 631900
Thursday 16th 7.30pm	Bedford RSPB. AGM plus update on Hope Farm.	ARA Club, Manton Lane MK41 7PF	group.rspb.org.uk/bedford
Sunday 19th 11am-6pm	Street Food Heroes. Spend a relaxed afternoon with food trucks and a DJ!	Millennium Park Flitwick	flitwick.gov.uk
Tuesday 21st 12.30p,	Over 60s Lunch club. £7.50 for 2 course meal.	Rufus Centre Flitwick	01525 631900 to book.
Sunday 26th 0am-4pm	Bowls Open Day for all ages & abilities. Fun family day.	Barton-le-Clay Bowls Club, MK45 4LQ	bartonleclaybowls.club 07935 254782
Sunday 26th	Bowls Big Weekend. Come and have a try - family fun day out.	Flitwick Bowls Club Kings Rd, MK45 1ED	
Sunday 26th 2-4pm	Kings Arms Garden Open.	Amphill	Facebook: King's Arms Garden
Thursday 30th 11am 2pm	Free Community Movie Day Teenage Kraken Spider-Man Across the Spider Verse	Rufus Centre Flitwick	No need to book.



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