

Neighbourhood News



from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 83 - March 2026

bell-tower.org.uk  info@bell-tower.org.uk  [belltowercommunity](https://www.facebook.com/belltowercommunity)   [@belltowerrdg](https://twitter.com/belltowerrdg)

Show Us Spring Has Sprung!



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Spring is coming and so is our gardening competition. This is an opportunity to beautify your home and possibly win a prize – all you need to do is cultivate your front garden and let us know.

We'll be looking at your spring bulbs and offering prizes for the best con-

tainer or hanging basket. The deadline for entry by emailing us at info@bell-tower.org.uk is 31st March.

The winning entries will receive John Lewis vouchers. However, if there are not enough entries we shall postpone the event until the summer.

Bob Murrant

Diary Dates

- **21 March:** Bell Tower AGM, 10:30 am, New Hope.
- **31 March:** Spring Gardening Competition deadline.
- **11 April:** Councillors' surgery 2:30-4:30 pm, New Hope
- **25 April:** Meet the Neighbours, 10:30 am-12 noon, New Hope

News in brief

• Member discounts:

River Spice restaurant is offering a 5% discount on food on presentation of a valid Bell Tower membership card. Scan the QR code to learn more about the restaurant.



• Elizabeth Rose Studio, a local seamstress, is also offering a 5% discount to Bell Tower members. She offers sewing, alterations and bespoke pieces. Email hello@elizabethrosetudio.co.uk or telephone 07795 327 101.

• We are planning another Street Party on a Saturday in June or July, depending on the availability of New Hope and volunteers to help set it up and run it.



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Changing Places



Bell Tower's secretary, newsletter editor and web-master, David Neale, is moving on. He and his wife Mary are planning to head for pastures new -- well a country pad, with its own vineyard in Portugal -- later this year.

David, with Mary's support, has been involved with Bell Tower almost from the start, serving the community in a variety of ways for over 20 years.

The committee has met the news with sadness tinged with a little envy but above all gratitude for the incredible amount of time and energy David has put in to *Neighbourhood News* as its only editor from issue one until now.

Also as secretary to the committee since 2017 he has faithfully minuted of a considerable number of committee meetings.

Both he and Mary have been very supportive in the staging of our annual street party, with David often playing the keyboards in the band.

The Bell Tower Community Association sends David and Mary its heartfelt thanks for their service to this community and wishes them a very happy life in Portugal. We shall really miss you both but our loss is Portugal's gain.

David's departure means we are looking for people to help committee members Jonathan Dart and Daff Chelani create material for the newsletter and website. If you're interested contact us via info@bell-tower.org.uk.

Drama Promised for AGM

Reading Rep's director of youth theatre, Sam Amestoy, will be the guest speaker at the Bell Tower annual general meeting to be held at New Hope on Saturday 21st March at 10:30 am.

Reading Rep says on its website that it was founded in 2012 by Reading-born Artistic Director Paul Stacey with just £500.

The theatre says it tries to ensure anyone regardless of background can access the arts. Ten percent of its tickets are given away for free to those who can't afford them, adding that it works with over 10,000 individuals through its outreach programme.

Sam's talk is part of the theatre's efforts to reach out to local community groups. In this context, Reading Rep has offered Bell Tower free tickets as prizes for community events in exchange for publicising its programme of plays as well as both its youth and adult workshops.

Details of its productions and classes can be found by using the QR code or emailing boxoffice@readingrep.com. The box office, which has very limited opening hours, can be contacted by telephone on 0118 370 2620.



Gardener Sought



The New Hope Garden is looking for help as its founder, Sajjad Zalaki, is leaving the area.

The garden grows a variety of seasonal vegetables to share with the local community. If you are interested in helping replant the garden please email hello@newhopechurchreading.org.uk.

Leading Lights

Two Bell Tower committee members walked around the area on a cold December night not gathering winter fuel but seeking prizewinning illuminations.



On their quest, Bob and Jonathan found over 60 homes with varying displays of lights, from a single string to full-colour flashing displays covering the house from ground to eaves. There were even a few large inflatable figures, including a reclining giant gingerbread person!

As in the previous year there were a few homes that had lights which could not be judged because they were not switched on. It was a close run thing, but 14 Randolph Road pipped several others to the top spot. The display had several layers to it that impressed the judges, and the changing colours reinforced this. We hope the winners enjoyed the chocolates.

JOIN US NOW

for only £2 per person per year and support your community!

You can join us or renew your membership at our AGM or at any of our events.