



London Street

United Reformed Church

BASINGSTOKE, HAMPSHIRE RG21 7NU

and

TADLEY (OLD MEETING) URC



Ps 88:13 Early each morning I pray to You

Ps 4:1 Lord, be kind to me and hear my prayer

Ps 141:2 May my prayers to You be like incense

Ps 141:2

Ps 143:1 O Lord hear my prayer

Ps 143:1

Ps 42:8 At night I say to You
Sing to me a song as my prayer

Ps 42:8

March, 2019

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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Tadley (Old Meeting) URC

10.00am Prayer Time followed by Worship at 10.30 every Sunday
“TASTE” Youth Event at 7pm at the Point (behind Community Centre)

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View from the manse:

'So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.' (Isaiah 55:11)

It is with a rather heavy heart that I look forward to March. There seem to be many issues weighing in upon our society at the moment. Some are local social injustices, some are national political and economic battles and others are global concerns.

As February draws to a close, I look back at all those who have been supported through the Night Light Winter Shelter. All those, often otherwise hidden within our community, whom we have had the privilege to come to know by name. We may now know some of their stories too, and many of those stories are sad. A life of complex traumas from childhood, of bad relationships formed, as a result a life which spirals into addiction and crime. Yet this isn't the story of all. Some have been fleeing from domestic abuse, some have experienced a very sudden decline into homelessness through job loss and family breakdown, which can be incredibly frightening. Many have, through the night shelter, been helped emotionally, physically or spiritually. The guests have often been helped most by the small random acts of kindness executed by some of the 240 volunteers that have helped to keep the NLWS open. Several of our guests are now thankfully housed. But, very sadly, some guests will be going back out onto the streets when we close our doors on 28th February 2019.

It takes a huge amount of effort and volunteer hours to keep the night shelter open. Many of the volunteers feel pretty worn out by their three months of working (or at least five months of working for the main coordinators), but the end has a very bitter-sweet taste. As the doors close on that last morning many tears will be shed. We have done what we can.....yet it doesn't feel enough. It really doesn't feel enough. A little part of me wonders if what we have done may have made **us** feel perhaps a little bit better about ourselves, especially during the over-indulgences of the Christmas period. But, to be honest, it doesn't make me feel better. The experience highlights for me the lostness of a society that treats Jesus as irrelevant. From the injustices of a system that sees problem cases rather than individuals, to the addictions that wrap people in chains from which they can't break free. A big issue is the sense of hopelessness that traps people in homelessness.

Homelessness is such a huge problem, and in a relatively wealthy society such as ours it should not be happening.

Of course nationally, March sees the finalising of the Brexit deal and our release from the European Union. Even at this late stage, there seems so much confusion and uncertainty about what Brexit will actually look like or feel like. Will our economy rally and flourish, or will it fall into recession? I think the jury is out on this. Both humility as well as wisdom is needed for all those involved in the negotiations and in leading this country through the Brexit minefield. Much prayer is needed this month.

Meanwhile, just this morning, I was listening on the radio to some young people raising their voices against the complacency around the impending ecological disaster which is said to be irreversible unless dealt with well within the next 15 years. Are we rather like Nero fiddling while Rome burns? Are we so pre-occupied with local injustices, or national politics that we fail to see the bigger picture! One scientist said this morning, 'We are standing at the precipice...whole eco systems are at risk of collapse.'

Let us pray then as never before, that God's Kingdom will come, and God's will will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. For Jesus came to be the key to freedom, freedom from all sin. He came to restore not just us, but all creation. When Jesus comes again the restoration will come in full. Then there will be no more tears and no more pain, no more injustice and no more death. Then all things will be made new, in his name. But for now, just for now, we continue to live through the discomfort and pain of labour until all is made new. But if we truly believe in scripture then we place our hope in God's word, that 'it shall not return to [God] empty, but it shall accomplish that which [God] purposed, and succeed in the thing for which [God] sent it.' (*Isaiah 55:11*). And God's word, through Jesus, is one of restoration, renewal and healing for all creation.

Yours in Christ, Kay



CIRCLE OF PRAYER:

Please remember the following in your prayers, together with their families, friends, carers, doctors, nurses:

Short Term: Barbara Banbury and sons Richard, Michael and Paul; David Corfield; Dick Davey; David Shaw; Edmund Shaw; Betty Shipway.

Long Term: Jan Blight and family; Beverley Cantwell; Christine Clucas; Aubrey Dommett (granddaughter of Beverley Cantwell); Penny Dilley; Brian and Carys Haywood; Gus and Noorie Khatkur; Claire Macro; Ron and Rosemary Martin; Maggie Morgans and family; Patterson family; Doina Rasnita and family; Hyacinth Ridguard; Molly Shaw; Joyce Smith; Fay Spurr; Rev John and Marion Whitton.

Prayer Focus:

Matthew 7 vv 24-25 Jesus said: "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock."

I like family sagas. The joys and sorrows, the romances, the mistakes and the resulting fallings out, meetings and partings, births and deaths, loss of jobs, strikes, adventures and wars, rich and poor, drunkards, gamblers, maiden aunts, slaves and slave owners their lives all set in their different historical backgrounds. In a book or film the characters come alive as individuals rather than groups. The settings of many of the tales are now within my lifetime and what changes there have been! I grew up in Basingstoke and we lived with my grandmother in one of the poorer but respectable streets of the town – that remark speaks volumes about attitudes! No mod cons, an outside WC, bedroom shared with parents. WW2 started, people's gardens were dug up for shelters, fathers away, mothers working, evacuees from big cities descended on us, schools bursting at the seams, food rationing, bombs drop, the war ends. AWRE Aldermaston is built and there is an influx of workers in Oakridge and some became part of London Street's history. Small industrial and residential estates follow and there is a rush hour! More people have cars. The swinging 60s arrive, old boundaries are swept away and long held acceptable ways to behave are flouted. Then comes the news that Basingstoke is to be an overspill town and thousands of people will be coming to live here. Many homes will be bulldozed to make way for new housing. The shopping centre will move nearer the station. Very little will remain the same and it will all happen relatively quickly. The doctors' surgeries were inundated with people worried sick by the prospect of the compulsory purchase of their homes and being separated from their friends and neighbours, their support system. It was a truly traumatic time for many in Basingstoke as, in addition, long established industries closed or moved away and skills gained in them were no longer required. Most of the people endured the upheaval and although memory lane can be an attractive place those who have come out the other side seem to be happy in the town as it has developed.

One of the old buildings still remaining is London Street URC and many have found within its walls what they most needed in times of testing and trial – the assurance that God is alive and active in His world. In the middle of all life's uncertainties God is the same yesterday, today and forever. His word is the rock on which our lives are built – we will not fear!

Prayer Pointers

- That all in positions of power and authority may ask for the God-given gifts of wisdom and love for the people they serve.
- That God's will is sought and done in all decision making.
- For justice, and peace where there is conflict and oppression.
- For reconciliation and a desire to work together for the good of all.
- For people in crisis situations. That they may turn to their heavenly Father in their time of need and know His faithfulness through the love and support of His children, their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Joy Williams

World Day of Prayer

(A women-led, global, ecumenical movement)

This year's service will be held on Friday, 1st March at 1.30pm at London Street. The Service has been written by the women of Slovenia and is entitled 'Come - everything is ready!'

Everything is ready and the invitation is for everyone - men, women and children of all ages - to join this Day of Prayer.

Women of Slovenia, one of the smallest and youngest countries in Europe, encourage us to reflect on the barriers they have faced since the end of the Second World War when their country was part of Yugoslavia, a Marxist socialist republic. They share the challenges they have met and the hopes they have for the future.

The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 120 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer, in native languages, travels throughout the world – Asia, The Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later.

Editor: The Ven John Barton considers a Christian reaction to Brexit. You may find this useful as it does not react to any specific outcome. (Because who knows quite what will be happening by the end of March?)

BREXIT: where do we belong now?

I was in France when the clock struck midnight on New Year’s Eve 1973 - the moment Britain joined the European Union - and later I received the maroon passport which identified me as one of its 743m citizens.

Almost all our new-found friends had been Britain’s enemies in the past, so this union seemed to be a breakthrough. Perhaps that was naïve. International relations have always been treated as opportunities to further national interests and if others also benefitted, well, that was a bonus.

We are now retracing our steps and no one can be sure whether our communal fortunes are going to improve or deteriorate.

The Bible doesn’t offer a blueprint for Brexit, but it does remind us of our routine responsibilities towards our nation. Here are three extracts, written at a time when the State was far from Christian.

The little church in Rome was instructed: “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”

And in the First Letter to Timothy, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

The First Letter of Peter actually instructs readers to “honour the Emperor”, which is surprising when you consider what blackguards some of the post-holders were.

The Christian’s ultimate citizenship will be in a recreated fusion of heaven and earth, but that’s not an excuse to opt out of our duties here and now. We must guard against narrow nationalism which pits us against the rest of the world, but rather develop a gracious patriotism which begins with gratitude and ends with generosity.

Daily Bible Readings for March:

	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	
1 st	96	Acts	28	16 th	98	Reflection
2 nd	119:81-96	Reflection		17 th	119:161-176	"
3 rd	17	"		18 th	19	Hebrews 11
4 th	119:97-112	Hebrews	1	19 th	54	" 12
5 th	18:1-19	"	2	20 th	86	" 13
6 th	51:1-13	"	3	21 st	121/122	Galatians 1
7 th	84	"	4	22 nd	99	" 2
8 th	97	"	5	23 rd	20	Reflection
9 th	119:113-128	Reflection		24 th	56	"
10 th	18:20-30	"		25 th	23/24	Galatians 3
11 th	119:129-144	Hebrews	6	26 th	87	" 4
12 th	18:31-42	"	7	27 th	100/101	" 5
13 th	52	"	8	28 th	124/125	" 6
14 th	119:145-160	"	9	29 th	25:1-10	James 1
15 th	85	"	10	30 th	126/127	Reflection
				31 st	25:11-22	"

Ffald-y-Brenin

Palm Crosses

At our Palm Sunday service on 14th April, each member of the congregation will be given a Palm Cross.



In traditional Christian services Palm Sunday is used to observe the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. During this week the most significant event of the Christian religion is re-enacted, observed, and remembered. For this reason this week is named 'Holy Week'. On Palm Sunday many churches pass out palm leaves and London Street is no exception. They are waved in victory and kept in homes as a daily reminder of the Victory of Christ. One way people have given more meaning to the palm leaf is to form it into the shape of a cross. This symbolises that the ultimate victory of Christ was his sacrifice.

Have you ever wondered where we obtain our palm crosses from? We order them from African Palms.

The African Palms project was started in 1965 by Fr. Alan Talbot, an Anglican priest, who served for 6 years as a missionary in the diocese of Masasi Tanzania. His aim was to give really poor villagers the means to earn some extra money to supplement their meagre income.

How much do they receive? This year, when I ordered them, they were priced at the equivalent of 1.8 pence per cross. If you then take off the shipping and packing costs, the answer is not a lot!

The palm crosses are made from dried branches of the dwarf palm *Hyphaena coriacia*. These grow wild in the Masasi area, so are not cultivated, furthermore no trees are cut down in the work of collecting the palm leaves for plaiting the palm crosses. The work of making the crosses does not interfere with the villagers' normal work of producing the food they need just to survive; it provides much needed additional income. The crosses are sent once a year to the UK where they are sorted and packed.

Over the years the number of crosses sold has increased and in 1986 African Palms Ltd was formed, which is a company owned by African Palms Association, a charitable trust formed at the same time. Any profit made by the company is transferred to the trust and used for health and education projects in the Masasi area. At present the trust is working on a project to get clean water supplies available in all eight of the villages where the crosses are made. This is an exciting project! On a visit in 2018 by the trust, villagers who make the crosses, without exception, told them how the project would make a huge difference to their lives.

Past projects have included other water projects, hostels and safehouses, work on clinics, books and desks for children at school and supporting those with special needs.

The important thing about all these projects is that, with the funding, the villagers go on to help themselves so they are not totally reliant on charity.

Want to help? Well, you can! Make a note in your diary as we shall have a retiring collection on Palm Sunday. Thank you, Owen.



Happy  Birthday

*Lizzie Payne, 11 years on 10 March
Sylvia Reynolds, 87 years on 12 March
Les Wenham, 88 years on 20 March*

Flower Rota - March



3 rd	Jean Hooper
10 th	Christine Robertson
17 th	David/Julie Bath
24 th	Liz Lindsay
31 st	Edmund Shaw

SHROVE TUESDAY: Pancake Day

Ever wonder why we eat pancakes just before Lent? The tradition dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when Christians spent Lent in repentance and severe fasting.

So on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the church bell would summon them to confession, where they would be ‘shriven’, or absolved from their sins, which gives us *Shrove Tuesday*. At home, they would then eat up their last eggs and fat, and making a pancake was the easiest way to do this. For the next 47 days, they pretty well starved themselves.

Pancakes feature in cookery books as far back as 1439, and today’s pancake races are in remembrance of a panicked woman back in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire. She was making pancakes when she heard the shriving bell calling her to confession. Afraid she’d be late, she ran to the church in a panic, still in her apron, and still holding the pan.

Flipping pancakes is also centuries old. A poem from Pasquil’s Palin in 1619 runs: “And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne.”

Some people have noted that the ingredients of pancakes can be used to highlight four significant things about this time of year: eggs stand for creation, flour is the staff of life, salt keeps things wholesome, and milk stands for purity.

Shrove Tuesday is always 47 days before Easter Sunday and falls between 3rd February and 9th March.

Changing Times.....

With volunteer numbers across the UK seeing a 15% decline over the last decade, Hart is proving no exception. High employment, long commutes, busy family lives, bucket lists, U3A and not forgetting the 480 plus television channels to watch means that fewer and fewer people living in the district have time to volunteer on a regular basis. Fortunately, this doesn't mean that residents don't want to help in our community it just means we need to look at different ways for people to get involved when time is in short supply – step forward Time4Hart!

Time4Hart is a 'time bank' - a way for people to exchange skills, experience and interests. Individuals and organisations earn 'time credits' by giving practical help and support to others and then spend their credits when they need some help themselves. For example, by helping an elderly neighbour with their ironing for an hour, or walking someone's dog, you can earn 1 time credit – you could then spend this credit when another member of the time bank helps you for an hour, perhaps by pulling together a CV or with helping you tackle your overgrown garden! If you don't want to use all the time credits you earn, you can donate some or all of them to the 'community pot' so they can be used by someone who may need a little extra help.

It's ad hoc, with no commitment and open to all – a way for even the busiest people to get involved and feel part of the community. Time Banks don't look to replace traditional ways of volunteering but are a way for people to help at a time to suit themselves – with today's fast pace of life giving just an hour of time to help someone enables everyone to benefit.

If you are interested in finding out more about how Time4Hart works or wondering if you could get a little help from someone in your community then contact the team on 01252 627070 / time4hart@hartvolaction.org.uk alternatively you'll find us on Instagram/FB/Twitter.

Traidcraft is still here, and intends to stay.

Last October we received the news that Traidcraft would cease to exist at the end of the year, and that the directors were looking at how to close the company ethically. On hearing the news one member of staff with the appropriate background got together with a few colleagues and proposed a new way of continued operation. The drive for this came from the conviction that although they could not continue as they were they could still make a difference to some poor peoples' lives. The plan was examined by an external consultant and was accepted by the board. Matt Oliver was that guy and on 12th February we had the opportunity to meet with him, and with other Fairtraders from the Hampshire/Surrey area.

Matt outlined the reasons that the old Traidcraft was failing and then went on to talk about how the new "Traidcraft2" would operate. Here are some of the salient points that we want to tell you.

Traidcraft is still a Christian faith based company.

"Trading as if people matter" was a slogan for Traidcraft and is still at the core of their thinking, and the Christian message of "good news to the poor" is at the heart of what they do. This approach being extended to include wider ethical issues such as care for the Earth, the use of chemicals as in fertilisers and in production processes, and also carbon emissions. Matt is a committed Christian and an MBA who previously worked for Lidl and then the Church of England.

The new Traidcraft is smaller.

Traidcraft has shrunk. There were about 1400 products in the catalogue last year, they are planning around 200 – mostly food items. A few profitable crafts will remain. This will be boosted by some additional items in the runs up to Easter and Christmas.

There were 67 employees, there are now 11. A new structure has been implemented and is designed to empower employees to contribute all that they can to the venture.

Traidcraft is no longer going to be "all things fair-trade to all people". Many of the crafts are still being imported by other companies and so will continue to be available through other channels.

There are supply problems at the moment.

When it was announced that Traidcraft was planning to close suppliers stopped making Traidcraft products (like cookies) and withdrew all credit. Also packaging was not printed etc. It is much easier to turn off a supply

chain than to turn it on. The good news is that chocolate cookies should be available to us in the next couple of weeks and ginger cookies in late March. They have increased the fair-trade content of the ginger cookies which has required more time for quality assurance.

They need to empty the warehouse.

Currently Traidcraft owns their warehouse. In the future they will be renting space in another warehouse and need to empty the current one. This is why there is a massive sale going on. Please look on-line at traidcraftshop.co.uk and look everywhere as not all Sale items are in the Sale section! The prices will not be repeated and it is much better that Traidcraft get some money for the items rather than having to dump them. At the time of writing they still had £600,000 worth of stock to clear!

No more chance to buy individual food items from the warehouse.

Currently it is possible to buy a single bar of chocolate from the web-site. The cost of picking a single low-value item makes it uneconomic. This will not affect us greatly as we already buy packs of items from Traidcraft most of the time. Fairtraders like ourselves are being encouraged to pool orders locally so that we can still buy a pack and then spread the content among a few traders. This means that no one trader has to take the risk on a whole box when they only want a few of the items. We are in contact with a couple of Fairtraders in the Basingstoke area and will see how this idea works.

Focus on Fairtraders for the present.

Matt commented that any sales organisation would love to have resellers as committed to the cause as Traidcraft Fairtraders are. There are about 3500 of us although he suspects that some, maybe a few, may not want to carry on. In many ways this is going back to its roots in the Christian churches, to people who know that the poor need good news and that trade should be fair and sustainable.

The future is not secured.

Matt and the team believe that they have a plan which will work, but the company needs to survive the next 12 to 18 months before it can be more confident about the future. They have a sound business plan but it is a plan and may not be achieved - although they are working as hard as they can to make it work. Please support them with your prayers and purchases.

What you can do to help.

Traidcraft does make a difference to the lives of some of the poorest and provides them with the dignity of being able to work their way out of poverty. Please pray for the Traidcraft team at Gateshead, I know they will value this. Please also turn your prayers into purchases if you can. We as

Fairtraders do not take any money out of our Traidcraft activity for ourselves. We have supported the church, Oasis Café, and provided resources to help other people become Fairtraders themselves.

Finally,

I hope that you are encouraged by this communication. There is a committed team at Traidcraft and many other Fairtraders like us who will do their best to nurture Traidcraft back to health. We would like to increase our sales this year by 25%. It will be difficult until the supply problems have been resolved (particularly cookies!). Please help us. We can't stock all we would like, but if there is a product you will buy which we don't have we will do our best to get it. If you want to know more please have a word with us and we will do our best to help.

John & Margaret Carrick Smith
13th February 2019

Seven Deadly Sins:

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Science without humanity
- Knowledge without character
- Politics without principle
- Commerce without morality
- Worship without sacrifice

Mahatma Ghandi



ECO TIP

Eat before you shop

Studies show that we buy more food if we shop when we're hungry. So a good meal beforehand and a list to stick to helps you buy only what you need, therefore reducing the likelihood of food waste.

**God's Gift – Our World
Our Environment – Our Responsibility**

March, 2019 Diary

at London Street, unless otherwise stated

Fri	1 st	1.30pm	World Day of Prayer
Sat	2 nd	10.00am	Concourse Spring Clean
Sun	3 rd	8.30am	Prayer Breakfast
		10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister. Fairtrade Service followed by Fellowship Lunch
Wed	6 th	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting
Thu	7 th	7.00pm	Bible Course (Session 3)
Fri	8 th	7.30pm	Messy Church Planning Meeting
Sat	9 th	6.30pm	Skittles Evening at Tadley (see Feb. FOCUS)
Sun	10 th	10.30am	Worship – led by Revd Howard Sharp
Thu	14 th	7.00pm	Bible Course (Session 4)
Sun	17 th	10.30am	Worship – led by Revd Jonathan Clark and including Holy Communion and followed at 12.15pm by Church Meeting
Deadline for articles for April FOCUS			
18 th to 22 nd Minister's refresher training at Cambridge			
Wed	20 th	10.15am	3C's (Coffee, Chat, Company) in the Oasis Café – All welcome
Thu	21 st	7.00pm	Bible Course (Session 5)
Sun	24 th	10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister. Festival Service, including representative from Christian Aid and followed at 12.15pm by Christian Aid Lunch
Thu	28 th	7.00pm	Bible Course (Session 6)
Sat	30 th	3.30pm	Top of Town Messy Church
Sun	31 st	2.00am	British Summer Time begins
		10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister. Mothering Sunday

Services at Old Meeting, Tadley

March, 2019

	<u>Preachers</u>	<u>Welcome</u>
3 rd	Rob Lloyd	Ena and George
10 th	Rev Kay Blackwell	Mandy and Dave
17 th	Mark Ward	Ladies Cell
24 th	Sydney Shore	Elaine and Brian
31 st	Philip Jones	TBC

Regular Events and Meetings

(at London Street unless otherwise stated}

**The Sanctuary is open for prayers every weekday from 9.30 to 10am
and again from 12.15 to 12.30pm**

Mondays:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 10am-1.30pm | OASIS Café in the Concourse |
| 10.15am | Craft Group |
| 2.30-4pm | HOME GROUP normally at 39 New Road:
prayer time, Bible exploration and fellowship |
| 3-5.30pm in
Term Time | Youth Café for secondary school and
college students |

Tuesdays:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 10am-1.30pm | OASIS Café in the Concourse |
| 10am-12 noon | 'LITTLE ANGELS' pre-school Club (Term time) |
| 3-5.30pm in
Term Time | Youth Café for secondary school and
college students |
| 5.45pm | (BEAVER SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Colony |
| 7pm | (CUB SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Pack |
| 7pm | (SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Troop |
| 7-8.00pm | PRAYER MEETING at Tadley URC or St Paul's |

Wednesdays:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 10am-1.30pm | OASIS Café in the Concourse |
| 10.30-12 noon | MEMORY TREE SOCIAL CLUB |
| 10.15-11.30am | 3Cs on 3rd Wednesday of each month |
| 12.15pm | Lunch time worship and prayer meeting |
| 3-5.30pm in
Term Time | Youth Café for secondary school and
college students |
| 7.30pm | House Group at 5 Magnus Drive, Hatch Warren |

Thursdays:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 10am-1.30pm | OASIS Café in the Concourse |
| 9.30-11.30am | TADLEY LITTLE ANGELS in the Immanuel Centre |
| 10-11.30am | CCBBies Parent and Toddler Group at Christ Church,
Chineham |
| 3-6pm in Term Time | Youth Café for secondary school and college students |

Fridays:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 8-9.30pm | TGIF Youth Club at Christ Church, Chineham |
|----------|---|

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