



ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

4th January 2026

Hi Friend,

As life starts getting back to normal after the festive period, it's time to reflect on the year just past - the fun, laughter and amazing achievements we've had at Windsor's only Community Pub! Grab a cuppa and that last slice of Christmas Cake and settle down for a jolly good read, it's been a helluva year!

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY



January began with **Windsor Cycle Hub** guiding with a chilly first ride just a few days after New Year, and our **Quiz and Bingo Nights** got going again with

Richard Douglas finally winning at Bingo after five years of trying! Many of our **community clubs** started their new year with new members and got back into the rhythm of their regular meet ups.

The Friends of The Swan put on another great **Burn's Night** supper which saw 85 people squeezed into the pub for a homemade Scottish menu. The evening's entertainment included an amazing bagpipe accompaniment by Matthew Buyskes from Windsor Boys' School, and raised over £2,000 for the Frontage Renovation Fund.

Towards the end of the month, Micky was interviewed by Kirsten O'Brien on **BBC Radio Berkshire** about why The Swan is so special. We held the final Charity Coffee Morning for **King George VI Day Centre** — over the year, £2,185 was raised for this great annual community charity.



In **February**, it was a sell-out for our stupendous **Valentine's Cabaret Night** in The Coach House – an excellent 3-course meal with the amazing 'Marilyn' (aka Lexie Symons) providing the main entertainment.

Our Bingo Nights continued to be popular and our newest and **youngest ever participant Baby Astrid** picked up a special little Swan welcome gift and had a call named after her!

The community chose the **Windsor Homeless Project** as our new **community charity for 2025** and we held our first charity coffee morning for this very worthy cause which was well attended and raised a nice healthy donation for them.

MARCH AND APRIL



At the start of **March**, **The Green Room College** organised a **fundraiser for the Windsor Upper Schools'** upcoming music tour to Paris, hosting talented young musicians who entertained all afternoon.

Chris Brown of the **Windsor Ukulele Band**, based at the Swan, gave a great interview on **BBC Radio Berkshire** showing how important we are as a local Community Hub. The band gave us a brilliant night with their **Uke-Oke**, accompanying all comers for a popular new take on karaoke! **Windsor Town Funrunners celebrated their 1st birthday** with a bracing a run through Windsor, ending with cake and beer. Even David from the bar team joined in!

Our **first beer festival of the year** featured a number of new and popular beers - a cracking weekend! - and Micky Moonshine's **Prohibition Night** in The Coach House included 'non-alcoholic' Giggle Water, enjoyed to the

backdrop of an amazing vocal performance from Jess.

Grant and Mirella organised a **joint charity run/walk** raising funds for St Andrew's Church spire repairs. And a group from the **Conversational French** class took a field trip to Paris to practice what they had learnt (and drink wine)!



In **April**, as Spring finally sprung, we had a mystery visit from the **British Institute of Innkeeping Licensee of the Year Award** judges, and there was much excitement when we heard Micky had made the **semi-finals**!

The **Windsor Town Funrunners** collected donated **Easter Eggs** and then ran round Windsor delivering them to residents of local care homes and Thames Hospice.

And on **St Georges Day**, the Friends put on another of their popular themed nights, with a packed pub enjoying a **traditional three-course meal**, raffle, communal singing of English music hall classics, and a skit to celebrate Shakespeare's birthday, '**The Comedy of Clewer Errors**'. The event raised over £750 for the Frontage Renovation.

MAY AND JUNE



The first **May** Bank Holiday weekend got off to a great start with a **fundraising Walk/Run** for the Renovation Fund. Then we held our fabulous **VE Day 80 celebration**, with wartime movies and a special **Lyons Corner House-style café** complete with volunteer 'Nippy' waitresses preparing and serving a 1940s style menu.

Green Room College hosted its **Spring May Fayre** - with sunshine, colouring, face painting and stalls in the Coach House, it was a lovely day for the community.

We held our **Spring Beerfest** on another fabulously sunny weekend - beer lovers enjoyed **rotating guest ales**, and Xavier's tasty **Zavvy Burgers** were a hit from the BBQ. There was live music and **DJs Danish and Pritpal** spun the tunes over the weekend.

Later in the month the Second Annual **Community Golf Day** drew participants from across the community who all had a super time, raising funds for the Renovation Fund and local charities into the bargain. **Windsor Cycle Hub celebrated its 4th Birthday** with a special ride, with cake and refreshments back at the pub. And our first **Windsor's Got Talent** competition got underway with the winner of the first heat going through to the finals....



The 2nd heat of Windsor's Got Talent saw 6 more acts progress to the final, which was held at the end of **June**. The overall winner was **Bethany**, with her acapella version of 'Hallelujah' which just blew everyone away!

Green Room College welcomed Castro and Mary, friends from the village of **Mankoadze in Ghana**. They gave inspiring **Swan Elders** talks to students about life in the village, the Castro's vocational college, and Mary's work as a community nurse.

On Father's Day we held our first ever **Sausage and Cider Festival!** Father or not, we all enjoyed amazing Sausage Platters washed down with great **craft ciders** from independent brewers.

And a fantastic crowd gathered to watch the conclusion of the **BII Licensee of The Year Awards** on the screens in the bar and to cheer on Micky! Unfortunately, it was not to be this year but we are **immensely proud** of our man, who had an amazing experience!

JULY AND AUGUST



July began with a bit of drama when a short but heavy summer **downpour flooded the bar**, knocking out lighting for a while and damaging our PA and computer systems. Thanks to all who helped in the moment, the bar was back up and running by the end of the day, but ongoing PA problems meant Quiz Lord Martin had some running around to do at a packed **Quiz Night** that week!

We had our first chance to try great **Sri Lankan and Italian menus from The Jackfruit**, our latest kitchen takeover.

July is The Swan's anniversary month and we had a fabulous weekend celebrating at our **6th Birthday Party**. **Girls Record Lounge** played the great soundtrack to the afternoon, and we all enjoyed pizza, cupcakes and Anne's special **Swan Birthday Cake**. The following day the heavens opened but **DJ Dazz**, **Lou's homemade burger patties** and a special **Swan Bingo** kept everyone entertained in the bar until the rain stopped, the evening sun came out and the **Windsor Ukulele Band** were able to play into the night to a packed Courtyard.



Summer finally got going in **August** that could only mean one thing - **SwanFest 2025!** We enjoyed three incredible days of live music, family fun, glitter, pizza, and pints!

There was a **dunk-tank** showdown for Micky, **face painting** magic and the ever-popular Windsor Ukulele Band, all fuelled by **GRCs tasty BBQ and pizzas.**

Windsor's Got Talent winner **Bethany** gave a fabulous headline performance, supported by her fellow finalists, and in the evening **BackTrak** rocked the stage to a packed courtyard who danced the night away. Everyone's favourite DJ **Wildcat Willie** treated us to a game of his Windsor-famous **Music Bingo** and a new **Malteser rolling record** was set at a stonking 18.9m, caught live in Sean's mouth!

Throughout the weekend beer drinkers enjoyed the **many great independent beers** rotating through our taps, proving our unique Beer and Family Fun Festival really is a winner – roll on 2026!

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER



September began with a lovely summer weekend and a record 30 riders taking part in the **Windsor Cycle Hub** Level 1 Easy ride for beginners and families.

The Swan was included in **CAMRA's Good Beer Guide** for the sixth consecutive year and we watched with bated breath as the **2025 Great British Pub Awards** were livestreamed to the bar from Leeds. While we didn't win this year, we were proud to have made the finals for the second year running, showing the hard work of everyone involved, and we raised a toast to our little pub.

There was a great turnout for our **Charity Coffee Morning** which raised £360 for MacMillan, and at the end of the month it was time for our fabulous **OktoberFest!** We enjoyed authentic **Bavarian biers, wurst, dirndls and lederhosen** and of course, our very own **Windsor Ukulele Band** played to rapturous applause (despite a rather miserable turn in the weather) to round off a brilliant weekend and a jolly good summer season!



In **October** we joined many other community organisations at the opening of the Dr Katie Simpson **Wellness Hub** at Dedworth Medical Centre to promote better wellbeing. Volunteers provided refreshments and engaged with visitors, handing out flyers showcasing the incredible range of activities at The Swan.

At our **AGM**, shareholders learnt from the Board that, despite the difficult economic circumstances for hospitality businesses over the last year, we managed to make a small profit and reduce our mortgage whilst retaining our commitment to community and our values.

A small team from The Swan took part in a mighty challenge by sleeping outdoors on a chilly night for **Windsor Homeless Project's Big Sleep Out**, raising £450 for our community charity in the process. Staying on the charity fundraising theme, our regular Charity Coffee Morning was in aid of the **Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal**, and featured an amazing centrepiece cake lovingly created and donated by Jennifer Brown from St Andrews. And Louise organised a special coffee morning for **Wear it Pink Breast Cancer**. There was a great turnout, lots of pink and Dave and Ben shaved their heads to help raise a stonking £1,145!

And we had a surprise visit from the head of **The Great British Pub Crawl**, who came to see our pub, showing we are well and truly on the national map!

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER



As we moved into **November**, our **Stitch Gang** and **Tuesday Social Crochet** groups worked with the **Clewer Memorial Poppy Project**. Over 2000 poppies were created to decorate the war memorial in Clewer Rec for **Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day**. The final creation was a sight to behold – well done to everyone involved for driving such a wonderfully creative, community project.

We knew we'd hit the big time when **The Swan got a mention in 'The House'!** Windsor MP Jack Rankin used us as a great example of what pubs can do for their local community in times of economic pressure. Later in the month we heard more about our community clubs and had our say on upcoming events at the second **Open Forum** of the year.

Our popular **Community Bonfire Night** went with a sparkle as usual – the firepit blazed, mulled cider flowed and there was Ed's chilli to keep everyone warm while watching the live music from the fabulous **BackTrack!** Our **Autumn Community Walk** was our biggest ever, with around 30 joining the stroll along the river, getting to know each other and raising £350 in entry donations towards the Renovation Fund!

Our **Dark Ale Festival** saw some **great independent winter warmer beers** on our pumps and Windsor Ukulele Band were back to entertain drinkers in intimate surroundings of the bar.

And at the end of the month, we learnt that Stuart Robinson will take over from Hollie Harrison as our **new Community Director** from 1 Jan 2026. We say thank you to Hollie for all she has done during her 2 years in office and a very warm welcome to Stuart as he begins his!



And finally, as **December** dawned, a crack team of Santa's Elves decorated the pub and our festive programme of events began! **Chef Ed's festive menu** went down a treat and an amazing 22 **Chatty Café** regulars attended their Christmas party, showing how this great community club has grown!

GRC's Winter Fayre was a credit to the College students and staff, who organised craft stalls, food, and fun for the children, plus a brilliant performance for the Windsor & Eton Living Advent Calendar. Bartender **Steph** generously donated her personal time, materials and mince pies to run a series of free **Christmas Candle Painting workshops**, which proved immensely popular – thanks so much Steph!

Broom Farm Brass and St Andrew's Revd Rosie led **Carols in the Courtyard** - close to 100 people joined in, singing carols and popular Christmas tunes to get us all in a festive mood. **The Friends' Christmas Market** saw stallholders selling a variety of great Christmas gifts and stocking fillers. Visitors enjoyed homemade pizza and mulled wine and the hamper raffle was drawn delighting many, and raising another £1,700 for the **Renovation Fund which, at the end of the year stands at an astonishing £38,000!**

The youngest members of The Swan community came to have **Breakfast with Santa**, each receiving a painting book and a very noisy kazoo as their Christmas gift. Parents were pleased!! The **St Andrew's Posada** arrived and

local choral group **Voci** popped in to give us a stunningly beautiful **a cappella carol concert** in the intimate surroundings of a packed bar.

Christmas Day at The Swan was full of cheer and good humour as our community came together for a couple of hours on the big day itself. And, finally, at the great **New Years Eve Rockabilly Party** we sung, danced and said goodbye to a super 2025, wishing a happy, healthy and prosperous 2026 to everyone!

Well, that's was the year that was folks, and wow, what an amazing year it was! **There is so much more detail on these and other events we just didn't have room for, including lots more great pictures, in the detailed Events Diary on our website.** If your favourite event is not here, or you're looking for specific photos, it's all there. Just click on the big orange button below to be taken straight there, choose the relevant month and browse at your leisure (you may need another cuppa!):

[Our 2025 Events Diary](#)

With enormous thanks to all the volunteers and staff who have given so much over the year to make The Swan the heart of the community and Windsor's place to be - you are too numerous to mention but you know who you are and the difference you make, thank you!

Here's to 2026 and another year in the life of a great little Community Pub!

A very Happy New Year to you all!!

Warm regards,

The Friends of The Swan

Note from The Editor: Picking what to highlight in this year's annual review has been hard! If I have neglected to mention something particularly close to your heart, your club, a contribution you made, or to thank you personally, please forgive me - I mean no offence, disrespect or ill-will, I just couldn't get

everything in without making this e-mail longer than it already is! Take a look at the full Events Diary and you may just find what you seek.



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