



# The Drake News

5TH DECEMBER 2025

Where a World of Opportunity Awaits

## Lantern Parade Preparations Begin!



This week, the children began designing and creating their individual lanterns in preparation for our annual Lantern Parade on 18th December. It has been wonderful to see their creativity shining through, and we can't wait to watch the finished lanterns light up the woods in just a few weeks' time.

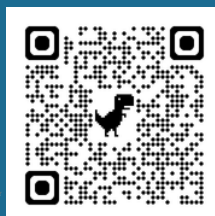


A huge thank you to all the families who joined us to help—your support makes this event truly special. We want the Lantern Parade to be a magical evening that creates lasting memories for everyone involved.

In celebration of our Year of the Tree, the children even incorporated leaves from our class trees into their lanterns, adding a meaningful and personal touch to their designs.

We look forward to sharing this beautiful tradition with you all.

If you'd like to take a look at last year's parade, you can watch a short video on our webpage using the QR code below.





## The Halcyon Forest: A Living Legacy Begins at Drake



This week marked an exciting milestone for our school community as every child at Drake named and planted their very own tree—an unforgettable moment that forms part of the wider Halcyon Forest project. Our trees were generously donated by the Woodland Trust, and we are extremely grateful for the incredible support from our volunteers, including help from Thetford Town Council. Their contributions have made this meaningful experience possible for all our children.



The Halcyon Forest is a tree-planting initiative led by the Halcyon Schools Federation, inspired by a challenge set by renowned naturalist Chris Packham. The idea for the Halcyon Forest began when our leaders met with Chris Packham and committed to the inspiring challenge of ensuring every child in the federation plants a tree. This ambitious initiative reflects our federation's core values of environmental stewardship, hands-on learning, and strong community engagement. Trees play a vital role in carbon capture, habitat creation, and supporting wellbeing and this project gives our pupils the opportunity to make a positive, lasting impact on their environment.

A big shout-out to Kolby, our Drake gardening expert, who supported the planting all day. We're so grateful for your hard work and enthusiasm!

## Celebrating Our Incredible Drake Runners!



We couldn't be prouder of our Drake runners, who delivered an outstanding performance at the SSP Cross Country event this week. Despite the freezing cold rain and challenging conditions, every member of the team showed exceptional determination, resilience and true Drake spirit. We enjoyed huge success across the board, with many of our runners placing in the top 10 and securing a well-deserved place in the county finals. A special congratulations goes to our Year 6 girls, with Amanda taking 1st place, and to our Year 6 boys, where Theo and Spencer powered through to take 1st and 2nd place respectively. These are incredible achievements, and we are immensely proud of them. What made the event even more impressive was the way our pupils supported one another cheering, encouraging, and celebrating each other's efforts. Their sportsmanship and team spirit shone just as brightly as their athletic ability.

A huge thank you must also go to Miss Valentine for her hard work in training, motivating, and supporting our runners. Her dedication has played a key role in helping our pupils achieve such brilliant results.



Well done, Team Drake—you have done us proud!

## Drake Singers Light Up Thetford



A huge well done and thank you to our wonderful singers who performed so beautifully while representing Drake at the Thetford Christmas Light Switch-On. They were true performers, rising to the occasion despite some unexpected technical difficulties. We are incredibly proud of the way they showcased their talent and confidence in front of the community.

**NUT-FREE**

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# CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE

**MONDAY 8TH DECEMBER**  
**3.20PM MAIN HALL**  
 (PLEASE BRING CHANGE)

**WE WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL FOR ANY BAKED GOODS, PLEASE BRING DONATIONS TO THE MAIN OFFICE ON MONDAY MORNING, THANK YOU!**

## Climate Ambassadors Event



On Wednesday, our sustainability leads represented Drake at a Climate Ambassadors event at the University of Reading. They were filmed as part of a video case study about Drake's sustainability journey and met with teams from National Education Nature Park, Let's Go Zero, and the Geographical Association. It was a useful opportunity for them to share ideas with other schools and learn more about ways we can all help look after our environment.

# Have an eco-Christmas

Save any Christmas cards and cut them up to use as tags for next year.



Help save the planet this festive season!

### PRESENTS

- Try making gifts yourself! From knitting a scarf to baking a batch of cookies, there are lots of fantastic presents you can DIY.
- Buy presents from shops that make their products in an ethical and sustainable way... just like The Wildlife Trusts' store.
- Think quality not quantity: having a family Secret Santa means you don't have to buy for everyone and helps to create less waste.
- Avoid non-recyclable wrapping paper by using brown paper and brown paper tape. Better yet, go for a reusable option like a bag or a box.



### FOOD

- Plan your meals so food doesn't go to waste. Leftovers can make some of the tastiest meals!
- Shop local. Are there ingredients for your Christmas dinner that you can source from local farms or shops?
- Compost your vegetable waste.
- Try out some veggie and vegan alternatives to cut down on meat and dairy.



### DECORATIONS

- If you already have a cupboard full of sparkly Christmas decorations, make sure to reuse them.
- Instead of plastic tinsel, try using bunting, pinecones, or popcorn tinsel instead.
- Avoid buying Christmas crackers that contain plastic toys. You might want to try making your own using toilet roll tubes instead. Writing your own jokes is the best bit!





## Celebrating Our Year of the Tree with Willow Creations



As part of our 'Year of the Tree' project, some pupils in our SRB have been busy crafting their own willow Christmas trees this week. They worked with a range of different willows, including some willow and dogwood freshly harvested from the school grounds. The pupils shared how calming they found the weaving process and they enjoyed discovering the different colours, textures and smells of each type of willow.



# Carol singing in the woods

We warmly invite  
all families to join us  
for lantern lit festive singing  
in Sir Frederick's Wood.



THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER

- 2:30 - School Christmas Fair
- 4:30 - Meet at classroom doors to collect lanterns and line up
- 4:40 - Lantern parade across to Sir Frederick's Wood
- 4:45 - Carol singing in the woods

## Drake Primary School CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Thursday 18th December  
2.30pm-4.30pm

Come along for stalls, games,  
refreshments, visit to Santa,  
donkeys and lots more fun!

★ The Fayre will be followed by  
the Lantern Parade