

THOUGHTFUL LIVING NEWSLETTER JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026

With the recent weather, many of us are probably longing for Spring and the chance to enjoy nature in our gardens and parks. Spring has certainly been on the minds of the TLG members as we bring on young plants for our plant sale in April - new additions for your gardens and homes are being looked after in the greenhouses of some of our members, so look out for our sale in early April.

However, the TLG has been looking ahead for the whole of 2026: in March we are looking forward to the World Day of Prayer, which has been prepared for us by the women of Nigeria. Learning about the challenges facing women in other parts of the world is humbling, but we need not look too far afield to recognise some of the challenges here in our locality. We are asking you once again to support the charity, Smart Works, which helps unemployed women to get the coaching, clothing and confidence they need to secure employment and change the trajectory of their lives. As you update your wardrobe in preparation for Spring, ladies, and if you have any unwanted items that are suitable for job interviews, the TLG would like to pass them on to the charity. Look out for a box at the back of church labelled Smart Works during March.

As well as the various projects and charities we hope to support, we are ever mindful of the late Pope Francis's concern for our common home, and which Pope Leo XIV continues to highlight. Respect for our planet is key - a friend recently shared with me a short extract of a sermon from St Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome from September 440 - November 461:

*"Use creatures as they should be used: the earth, the sea, the sky, the air, the springs and rivers.
Give praise and glory to their Creator for all that you find beautiful and wonderful in them."*

A tenet of Laudato Si' is to live in harmony with creation and we all have our role to play from recycling responsibly to using facilities like repair cafés, and saving energy and limiting pollution. If you live in Sonning Common, consider supporting the village's Eco SoCo group in planting pollinator plants and looking after the local orchards. Last Autumn members of St Michael's planted over 100 crocuses, passed on from Eco SoCo, at the front of the church. Perhaps you'd like your garden to be part of the Hedgehog Highways Scheme? The hedgehog is the gardener's friend, eating pests that might harm your plants. If you need help in making gaps in or tunnels under your fence, contact ecosococharles@gmail.com.

Let's look forward to Spring and continue to protect our common home.

Mary