

# FEBRUARY 2026

Community Update

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### PREAMBLE



Wildflower of the Month – Snowdrop (blossoms around 2<sup>nd</sup>),  
then Crocus (flowers around 14<sup>th</sup>).

Flower of The Month: Primrose

Tree of The Month: The Rowan up to 17<sup>th</sup>, then the Ash

Full Moon this Month: Snow Moon

*"The hush of winter landscape is a poem without words."*

Emily Dickinson

## February 2026

### **A warm welcome to February.**

January has once again made its presence known, bringing blizzard conditions in the Highlands (as predicted) and a significant cold spell across the United Kingdom. Temperatures fell well below freezing, and many regions saw substantial snowfall, disrupting travel, closing schools, and reminding us just how powerful winter can still be.

Here in Dorset, we remain largely snow-starved, so it has been a particular pleasure to see your photographs and observations from across the country. Thank you, as always, to everyone who took the time to share them within our Facebook community – it is a real privilege to witness the season through your eyes.

I look forward to reviewing January in full once the month has ended. These monthly reflections will gradually build within the Reflections section of the forecasts page, offering a gentle record of what the year is bringing and how nature is unfolding.

I have also been deeply enjoying 365 Days of Dave, and I hope that many of you have been following along too. Seeing posts created in his honour has been genuinely moving. Dave would have absolutely loved the thought of people across the country stepping outside, looking up, and noticing the world more closely because of him. It feels a fitting and heartfelt way to carry his spirit forward.

If you have not yet joined our Facebook community and would like to do so, you are very welcome. Simply email me at: [indigenoukweather@outlook.com](mailto:indigenoukweather@outlook.com)

In addition, you can follow along via our Instagram page:  
<https://www.instagram.com/indigenoukweather/>

### **Honouring Dave – A Community Gathering**

Just a quick reminder that we will be hosting a Zoom call on Saturday 31st January at 19:00 in honour of Dave. We will be raising a glass, sharing our favourite memories, and simply honouring his incredible life.

Joining instructions will be sent out to all those who have already expressed an interest during the week commencing 19th January. If you would like to join us and have not yet been in touch, please do reach out using the email address above. It would be lovely to have you with us.

### **Exciting News**

On Friday 30th January, the first edition of a new monthly podcast will be going live. It is called Notes from Nature by Lesley Coyle and will be available via Spotify.

These episodes will be released at the end of each month, reflecting on what the month has brought and what nature has been quietly telling us along the way. I love

listening to a good podcast while cooking dinner or pottering about the house, and I thought this might be a gentle, accessible way to keep building momentum in Dave's honour. I truly hope you enjoy it.

(The podcast will become visible once the first episode is published – it is all set up and ready behind the scenes.)

In other exciting news, I will be recording 2026's first episode of Country Signs on 21st February in Kent. I will be completing the same walk I always did with Dave and sharing as much as I possibly can along the way. Do ensure you are subscribed to the channel – it is completely free and really helps the channel's visibility. The wider the reach, the more content I can produce.

You can subscribe here:

<https://www.youtube.com/@IndigenousUKWeather>

## **Website Updates**

Over the coming month I will be focusing on some website updates. No real downtime is expected, and everything should continue working as normal, however if you do notice any issues, please do let us know so they can be resolved promptly.

## **With Grateful Thanks**

I just want to take a moment to say that over the past couple of months I have been truly blown away by this incredible community. The kindness, generosity, and warmth you show – not just to me, but to one another – has been deeply moving.

I feel utterly cocooned in your support and genuinely honoured to be continuing Dave's legacy alongside you. What we are building here feels special, and I am very grateful to each of you for being part of it.

## **Final Thoughts**

As January comes to a close and February opens, we find ourselves caught in winter's lingering grip. The cold will be biting, and more snow is still to come.

So many people struggle at this time of year, believing they should be further ahead, more productive, or doing better with their New Year's resolutions.

May I be radical and suggest we take a hint from nature?

Why not press pause for another month.

Snuggle up.

Read a good book.

Drink hot chocolate.

Enjoy winter's stillness.

Personally, I think Mother Nature has been giving us the clues for how to live through winter all along, and we humans have tried to override what is natural. Winter is a time for stillness, reflection, and space.

Let February be February. And let us be grateful for it.  
Stay warm, keep watching the skies, and embrace the season.  
And of course, don't forget your warm cup of tea and your Vitamin D supplements.

Best wishes,

*Lesley & Bailey x*



## Photographers of the Month – Hayley & John Martin

*“Excuse Me, That’s My Berry”.*



Hayley and John from Hereford managed to capture this superb photo of a fieldfare in an orchard near their home. They stopped in awe to admire its beauty and take it all in.

These fleeting moments in time are what make them all the more magical. A huge thank you to Hayley and John for sharing this photo with us all. What a moment!

## **Farmers Take a Stand: Supermarket Blockades and the Fight for British Agriculture**

British farmers have once again been forced to take dramatic action to highlight the deep crisis facing UK agriculture, staging surprise blockades at major supermarket depots in protest against stagnant farmgate prices, unfair supply chain practices and government tax policies that threaten the future of family farms and national food security.

In the early hours of 12 January 2026, farmers mobilised tractors and farm vehicles to block access to several Tesco supermarket distribution centres across the country, including sites in Peterborough, Doncaster and Hinckley. Loaded lorries were prevented from entering or leaving the depots, although supermarket staff and empty vehicles were allowed through as part of an agreed “static blockade” designed to minimise risk to workers while still disrupting the movement of food supplies as a tactical protest.

These actions were not taken lightly but after years of eroding real incomes on farms, soaring input costs and a lack of fair pricing and transparency in the food supply chain. In interviews at the Peterborough blockade, one farmer explained how prices for key crops and materials have barely budged even as fertiliser, machinery and energy costs have skyrocketed – making farming increasingly unviable.

“In 2008, wheat was £170 a tonne and a 200-horsepower tractor was around £50,000,” he told reporters. “In 2026, wheat is still around £170, fertiliser is well over £400 a tonne and that same tractor now costs £150,000. We just can’t carry on like this.”

### **Protests Rooted in Long-Standing Concerns**

The blockades are part of a broader wave of farmer activism that has continued in the UK over the past year. Many protests have roots in government proposals to change inheritance tax treatment of agricultural land and family farms – a policy critics dubbed a “tractor tax” – which could force struggling family farms to sell land just to meet tax liabilities, breaking up generational holdings and weakening Britain’s domestic food production.

Earlier phases of this movement included tractor rallies in London and London-area demonstrations, as well as planned protests to coincide with the autumn Budget, all aimed at urging political leaders to reconsider measures that farmers believe threaten the survival of family farms and the wider agricultural sector.

Blockading supermarket distribution centres is an escalation in that campaign, reflecting deep frustration not only with government policy but with how the food supply chain currently works – where farmers are being squeezed by slim margins while supermarkets and importers benefit from cheaper produce that often meets lower production standards.

## Clear Signals from the Ground

Farmers participating in the blockades have also raised slogans and messages aimed squarely at policymakers – including calls for a full U-turn on inheritance tax changes and fairer treatment throughout the supply chain. Some protestors have even made their views about current political leadership clear, emphasising the desperation many in the agricultural community feel as they struggle to make ends meet.

While these protests have attracted significant attention and some political commentary, they speak to a real and deeply felt concern: the future viability of British farming. For many family farms – whose work underpins national food security, rural communities and traditional ways of life – the threat is not abstract but existential. Maintaining a productive farming sector in the UK is essential not only for rural economies but for the resilience and sustainability of the nation as a whole.

## Standing with Farmers

It's clear that farmers are not resorting to these tactics lightly. They are doing so out of necessity – feeling unheard for too long and now compelled to take direct action to make their voices heard. Their focus is on fair prices, equitable market practices, sensible tax policies and a viable future for family farms.

At a time when global food systems are under pressure, and when local production plays an increasingly important role in resilience and sustainability, it's vital that the concerns of British farmers are taken seriously by retailers, policymakers and the public alike. Ensuring the survival of family farms and a fair supply chain is not just a rural issue – it's a national one.

For many rural communities, farms are the heart of local life, passing through generations and contributing to the fabric of British culture, landscape and economy. Supporting them is not only a matter of fairness, but also about safeguarding food security, stewardship of the land, and the future of our countryside.

## Source links:

- [🔗 Farmers blockade Tesco supermarket depots in surprise raid – Farmers Weekly \(12 January 2026\)](#)
- [🔗 Farmers launch surprise 'Labour out' supermarket blockade in demand for FULL inheritance tax U-turn – GB News \(12 January 2026\)](#)
- [🔗 2024–2025 United Kingdom farmers' protests – Wikipedia \(background on protests and inheritance tax context\)](#)

## How You Can Support British Farmers

If, like us, you stand firmly with our farmers, there are meaningful ways you can show your support – both locally and nationally.

- **Buy British where you can.**  
Choose British produce in supermarkets, farm shops and markets. Look for Red Tractor and local assurance schemes, and don't be afraid to ask where your food comes from.
- **Support farm shops, butchers and local producers.**  
Every pound spent locally strengthens rural businesses and helps keep family farms viable.
- **Write to your MP.**  
A short, respectful email asking them to support fair taxation, sensible inheritance policy and a sustainable future for British farming really does matter. Politicians count correspondence.
- **Share farmers' voices.**  
When farmers speak out, listen. Share their stories, their concerns and their perspectives. Visibility matters. If you are a farmer and would ever like space here to share your perspective, experiences or concerns, please do reach out. This is your community too, and your voice would be very welcome.
- **Talk about it.**  
With friends, family, schools and communities. The more people understand what is at stake, the harder it becomes for decision-makers to ignore.

British farmers are not asking for special treatment – they are asking for fairness, respect and the chance to keep doing what they do best: feeding the nation and caring for the land.

We stand with them. And we know many of you do too.

## **30,000 HOMES LEFT HIGH & DRY**

Imagine waking up and your tap doesn't work — not a trickle, not a dribble, nothing. No water for washing, drinking, flushing or even making tea. Luxuries? Forget them.

This is exactly what tens of thousands of households across Kent and Sussex have been forced to endure for six days, thanks to a catastrophic failure by the very water companies we pay to provide the most basic service imaginable.

Around 30,000 homes were left without running water after severe disruption to supply, prompting Kent County Council to declare a major incident — a move reserved for situations so serious that normal emergency responses are overwhelmed. Schools and public buildings were closed, hospitals were forced to move appointments online, and residents queued for bottled water in freezing January conditions. Then some stations that will remain nameless ran out of bottled water, of course!

Let that sink in.

This is Britain. In 2026.

### **A “MAJOR INCIDENT” — AND A MAJOR FAILURE**

The outage was blamed on a combination of storm damage, burst and frozen pipes, and treatment works struggling to cope. Weather happens — but what doesn't happen by accident is years of under-investment, fragile infrastructure, and repeated profit driven failures.

This wasn't a one-off. Large parts of the same region suffered weeks without reliable water supply in late 2024, with thousands of customers still reporting problems long after the company claimed the issue was resolved.

Once again, it was customers who paid the price.

### **BILLS UP 20% — SERVICE DOWN TO ZERO**

What makes this situation especially infuriating is the timing. South East Water customers have already been hit with around a 20% increase in bills since April, sold as a necessary step to “invest in infrastructure” and “secure future resilience”.

So let's be clear:

- Bills have gone up sharply meaning customers have paid more than ever
- And yet 30,000 households were left without water

For what, exactly?

When households are paying significantly more for a service, it is not unreasonable to expect that service to actually exist.

## **ANGER, INVESTIGATIONS — AND STILL NO ACCOUNTABILITY**

Public anger has been swift and justified. MPs, local authorities and residents have all demanded answers, and Ofwat has launched an investigation into whether South East Water breached its obligations to customers.

But for many people, this feels depressingly familiar. The UK's privatised water system allows companies to raise bills, pay executive bonuses, and distribute shareholder returns — even while infrastructure fails and communities are left scrambling for bottled water.

Meanwhile, vulnerable residents, care homes and small businesses bore the real-world consequences of a system that simply does not work.

## **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH**

This wasn't just an inconvenience. It was a failure of planning, investment and accountability — and it has rightly reignited debate about whether essential utilities should be run for profit at all. Spoiler: they shouldn't.

Customers are being asked to pay more, accept less, and stay patient — while the same problems repeat again and again.

Frankly?

It's not good enough.

We deserve a water system that works, is resilient, and doesn't collapse the moment conditions get tough — especially when bills have risen by 20%.

### **Sources:**

- BBC News – Water supply disruption in Kent and Sussex leaves thousands without water  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czdqv5vvq1go.amp>
- The Guardian – Major incident declared as 30,000 homes left without water in Kent and Sussex  
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/jan/12/major-incident-declared-as-30000-homes-left-without-water-in-kent-and-sussex>
- Financial Times – UK water firms face scrutiny after supply failures  
<https://www.ft.com/content/f3272bb8-c67c-4434-bd49-958dc6ec5320>

## **February Spotlight:**

### **Macdonald Spey Valley Resort**

Christmas 2025 was not one I had expected to enjoy.

Dave had only just passed away, and if I'm honest, I wasn't feeling remotely festive. But I have young children, and I knew that however heavy my heart felt, I still had a responsibility to create something memory-making for them.

Rather than fight my grief, I decided to lean into it.

Inspired by Dave himself — by his love of weather, wilderness and the healing power of being outdoors — I chose adventure instead of tradition. A change of scenery. Space. Nature. Healing. And so, somewhat impulsively, my extended family and I booked a Christmas trip to Aviemore: eighteen of us, spanning three generations.

None of us had ever been to the Highlands before. Unsure where to begin, a friend recommended the Macdonald Spey Valley Resort — and that was that. Decision made. Bags packed.

Most of the family flew north, but I couldn't bear the thought of being away from our dog Bailey over Christmas, so we drove. I'm endlessly grateful we did. Mile after mile, the landscape grew wilder, quieter, more awe-inspiring. By the time we reached the Cairngorms National Park, I was genuinely breathless. Raw beauty on a scale I had never seen before. The kind that humbles you.

When we arrived at the resort, we were greeted by deep frost and intricate hoar frost — nature's own lacework — spun across the landscape as if specially prepared for our arrival. It felt magical. Otherworldly. Exactly where we were meant to be.

The resort itself struck a rare balance: quietly luxurious, traditional without feeling dated, and deeply comfortable. Every time we entered reception we were met with genuine smiles and effortless warmth. Nothing felt forced. Nothing felt corporate.

Each family within our group had their own holiday home, all positioned together, effectively giving us our own small village for the week — something we hadn't even requested. Given this was a last-minute booking for eighteen people, that level of thoughtfulness was remarkable.

It quickly became clear that this was a place that anticipates its guests — a rarity these days.

On our very first night, we discovered just how true that was. It happened to be my mum's 65th birthday... and I had accidentally booked dinner at the wrong Macdonald resort entirely. Before we'd even realised our mistake, the team at Spey Valley had already contacted their sister resort and rearranged everything. The evening was saved without a hint of fuss. The restaurant manager was outstanding, the food delicious, and the whole experience seamless.

The hospitality didn't stop there. The bar and restaurant staff were consistently warm, attentive and welcoming, making us feel more like regulars than visitors. A particular mention must go to Keiran at the bar, who spent time each day chatting

with us, offering local recommendations, and ensuring we didn't miss the very best of the area.

It was obvious that the people who work here genuinely love what they do — and where they live.

The resort itself was beautifully decorated for Christmas, complementing the frost-covered landscape beyond. Between nature's decorations outdoors and the warmth inside, I genuinely can't imagine a more atmospheric place to spend the festive season. If I'm honest, I'm not sure I'd want to be anywhere else for Christmas now.

Each morning, stepping outside our accommodation meant being greeted by silence, frost, and vast Highland skies — a grounding ritual I came to treasure.

Beyond the accommodation and hospitality, the resort offered everything a multi-generational group could need: a welcoming spa to warm up in, a great swimming pool, a huge games room for the children, evening entertainment ranging from live music to family quizzes, and an expansive golf course set against one of the most spectacular backdrops imaginable.

What surprised me most was the value for money. I had expected something “nice but modest.” What we found was comfort, quality and quiet luxury at a price that worked exceptionally well for a family of five — let alone a group of eighteen. It was an unexpected and very welcome surprise.

As a weather enthusiast, the surrounding area was endlessly fascinating. Deep frosts, hoar frost, snow, ice, and treacherous sheet ice (which, I can confirm, is no joke — my poor southern mum discovered this the hard way and ended up briefly in hospital after a spectacular fall). Thankfully she's fine now, but it served as a sharp reminder of just how wild and real this landscape is.

For nature lovers, there is no shortage of wonder. My dad was particularly taken with the birdlife, while the rest of us marvelled at the sheer scale of it all.

We rode the funicular railway to the snow-tipped mountains and visited the UK's highest restaurant, met the UK's only free-roaming reindeer herd, walked the breathtaking shores of Loch Morlich, and explored Aviemore itself — a relaxed, characterful town full of independent shops and a wonderfully laid-back feel. Even with all of that, we still had much to explore and completely ran out of time.

This trip turned out to be one of the most unexpectedly wonderful experiences of my life.

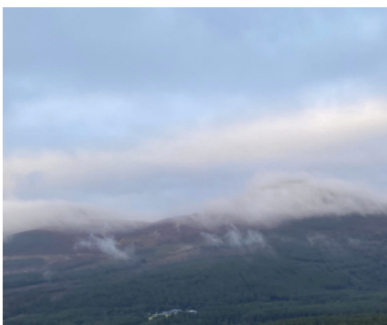
To take eighteen people — from six-year-olds to seventy-year-olds — and somehow please every single one of them is no small feat. Yet that is exactly what happened. Every one of us left feeling restored, connected, and grateful.

I suppose the point of this piece is this: not everyone finds Christmas easy. I certainly didn't expect to enjoy it this year. But choosing adventure over expectation, and nature over noise, turned out to be exactly what I needed.

If you're reading this, chances are you already love weather, landscape and the quiet magic of the natural world. If so, you truly won't go far wrong with Macdonald Spey Valley Resort in Aviemore.

I've shared a few photographs below — and I hope they might inspire you to take the trip.

You won't be disappointed.



## Wildly Unexpected: Whacky Sightings from the Natural World

*Because nature's weird side deserves the spotlight.*

Welcome to Wildly Unexpected – a monthly feature celebrating those wonderfully odd, easily missed, or downright head scratching moments you stumble across when you slow down and really look at the world around you.

This month I am only sharing one item, because it is fascinating. There I was on my totally ordinary daily walk, when I spotted something unfamiliar. On closer inspection I accepted I didn't recognise it, and it would require further research.

I present to you: *Tremella mesenterica* more commonly known as Witches' Butter.



Why is it called Witches Butter?

In British and European folklore, it was believed that witches milked cows from afar. Villagers thought witches could steal milk from neighbouring farms with magic. They'd chant, curse, or use enchanted objects... and the stolen milk would manifest as this buttery substance on trees. So when people found witches butter on a branch, the thinking was:

"A witch has been at work here." And not in a cosy, herbal-tea way. In a lock up your livestock way.

Butter was serious business in rural life. It meant food, wealth, survival. So anything that looked like butter but didn't behave like butter? Deeply suspicious. There was a strong belief that witches could spoil butter, stop it churning, or steal it outright with magic. Witches butter was seen as physical proof of this mischief. In some areas people would burn it, bury it, or throw it into running water. It was essentially treated as magical contraband.

In British countryside lore, Witches Butter was widely seen as a sign of wet, unsettled weather to come – and often proved uncannily accurate. Some believed witches made witches butter to draw down rain to spoil hay, ruin harvests or cause hardship.

So in that worldview, witches' butter was never just a fungus, it was a warning. And once you've seen it, you never quite walk past a tree the same way again.

Magic Sightings waiting to happen in February are:

- Badgers
- Barn Owls
- Bitterns
- Brown Hares
- Crocuses
- Dippers
- Fieldfare
  
- Frog & Toad Spawn
- Frosted Spiderwebs
- Golden Plovers
  - Goshawks
- Great Crested Grebes
  - Hazel Catkins
  - Lapwing
  - Mistletoe
  - Otters
- Pink Footed Geese
- Red Squirrels
  - Redwing
  - Robins
  - Snipe
- Snowdrops
- Snowmen
- Starling Murmuration's
  - Stoats
- Tawny Owls/ Short Eared Owls



Redwing – Photo credit to Jim Bishop

This year February is the perfect time to sow broad beans.

Hardy and dependable, they cope well with cold soil and even snow, using the slower conditions to build strong roots.

Sow now, and they'll be ready to surge into growth as soon as the weather softens.

Trust the cold – the earth is working even when it looks asleep.

**IF YOU ARE  
UNSURE OF  
IDENTITY DO  
NOT EAT. WE  
HAVE A  
SURPRISING  
NUMBER OF  
POISONOUS**

- Black Mustard.  
- Three Cornered Leek

Please do not forage mushrooms/ fungi unless you are with a qualified professional.

# THE SKIES: FEBRUARY 2026

## THE SKIES

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Full Snow Moon
- 17<sup>th</sup>: Annular Solar Eclipse
- 19<sup>th</sup>: You may be able to see Mercury



Full Moon:  
1<sup>st</sup> February @ 22:09  
Fair & Frosty



3Q Moon:  
9<sup>th</sup> February @ 12:43  
Snow if cold enough, else cold rain



New Moon:  
17<sup>th</sup> February @ 12:01  
Snow if cold enough, else cold rain



1Q Moon:  
24<sup>th</sup> February @ 12:27  
Snow if cold enough, else cold rain



**PERIGEE @ 23:03 ON 24<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

**APOGEE @ 16:41 ON 10<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

