

UPTON NEWS

FEBRUARY 2006

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PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Precept 2006/7. At the PC's January meeting it was unanimously agreed that the annual Precept should remain unchanged at £7,250.

Upton roads. Having written to OCC on the state of our roads, the Clerk has been told that Upton might be included in the 2007 surface dressing programme. Some potholes have been flagged up with white paint, suggesting that remedial work will take place. It was agreed that pressure on the Highways must be kept up, pointing out that a section of Station Road is subsiding.

Playground. The PC is doing coppicing work, removing some very thorny bushes, self-seeded trees and overhanging branches. Shrubs will replace the trees in due course and the area should be a lot lighter.

Recreation Ground. It was proposed that the PC should purchase two five-a-side football nets and mark out a new pitch. As there had been a number of requests for such a facility from the youth of the village, this would be a reasonably inexpensive start to the redevelopment of the recreation ground suggested by the Parish Plan. Mrs Seelig would contact those who had expressed interest and elicit their help in setting up this new facility (*see right*).

Parish Plan. Everyone by now will have had a copy, setting out a number of actions to be taken by your Parish Council. It was decided that all decisions and actions taken about development in the village must now be informed by this. We are preparing a special newsletter explaining what is happening and what we hope is going to happen. This will invite volunteers to get in touch with the various working parties. **In April there will be a public open forum at the Annual Parish Meeting, to discuss the Plan and its progress to date.**

County Councillor's Report. Colin Lamont reported that he is chairing a Scrutiny Review Committee looking into all aspects of the proposed new reservoir at Steventon — its size, how to limit its impact on the area, whether it should be developed as a sport and leisure facility, or indeed, whether it is needed at all. Thames Water is planning to use a compulsory works order to get permission to proceed. This will generate an inquiry, as Thames Water must have the blessing of OFWAT. Mr Lamont intends to advise the Cabinet to think about Section 106 Agreements at an early stage. If the reservoir went ahead infrastructure would have to be improved, especially if it were to be used for sports. A new road might be needed between Steventon and the Hanneys.

District Councillor's Report. Richard Farrell reported that in the interests of economy and efficiency the Government is now in favour of setting up unitary authorities throughout the country. Where two-tier systems operate, such as in Oxfordshire, some 30% of the income of a District Council is spent on its own

Village Diary

The Coven is the collective name given to the Upton Ladies who meet once a month at the George & Dragon. It is not in the least bit sinister, just a name, and it gives any lady in Upton the opportunity to sit and have a chat and drink, alcoholic or not. We all live busy lives and do not meet each other much, especially in the winter months. **So please come from 8pm onwards on the second Tuesday of each month.**

Please note the change of days. No longer a Thursday, this has happened as they are too noisy. We look forward to seeing new faces. **Margaret Maytham**

Keep Fit Class. Mondays 7-8.30, Village Hall

There are still a few places left. If anybody would like to come along and give it a try they would be most welcome.

Clare Lightfoot

Tuesday, 21 March 7.30, Village Hall

Under Milk Wood by Dylan Thomas. Oxfordshire Touring Theatre Co. Tickets from **Jessie West** 851206

Saturday, 8 April, 6.30, Village Hall

Skittles and Supper Evening. Tickets from **Jessie or Sheila Dawson** 851205

CALLING ALL YOUNG PEOPLE...

As the newly nominated Parish Councillor responsible for youth liaison, I want to be able to present *your* views to the Parish Council, so please talk to me. I will be contacting those of you (including parent organisers!) who expressed interest in Plan initiatives; in the first instance, using a five-a-side football pitch and the running, organising and use of an Upton Youth Club.

We are keen to have a *Youth Corner* in the *Upton News*, written by and for you. So please if you have something to say, be it a sporting achievement, grievance, comment, anything(!) talk to Carol (the editor) or myself. **Tracy Seelig**
(851437 or tracy@seelig.me.uk)

administration, compared with 3% for County Councils. Mr Farrell would support such a change as for him the arguments seem quite compelling. Should it come to pass, it seems likely that it would happen during the present Parliament. This throws up the question of how the areas would be divided and how we might be affected. There are several options: Oxfordshire as a single council, Oxford City as a single council, all the districts around the City as a council... The likely partner for the Vale would be South Oxfordshire DC but there are other possibilities. Already the Vale is in the process of combining with SODC in out-sourcing aspects of its administration.

Graham de Wilde, Chair

LETTER FROM LOUISE

The church has just celebrated Candlemas, when Jesus is presented in the Temple by his parents and recognised by the elderly Simeon as the Messiah, who will bring light to the gentiles. We walk to the font with candles representing Jesus, the Light of the World, which are extinguished as we turn towards Lent and follow His dark journey to the Cross.

This service made me appreciate the value of using all our senses as we worship God. In the fast pace of life today, it is good to find a much greater emphasis on the whole person. When it comes to the sense of hearing, many now want to appreciate the sound of silence, within themselves or in nature. We have to be more cautious in our sense of touch, but perhaps we should be bold and greet our neighbours with a cheery handshake, the way we exchange Christ's peace with one another.

Louise Butler

DAVID DENDY

Following my resignation as Lay Reader in the Benefice, the Bishop of Oxford has relicensed me as a Reader Emeritus. May I take this opportunity of thanking the congregations and others who gave me such tremendous support during my Ministry, especially the Mattins congregation at St. Mary's, the Evensong congregation at St. Andrew's and those many who prayed for me and called on me while I was ill: I am now fully recovered, Deo Gratias!

The new non-emergency contact number for Thames Valley Police is 0845 8 505 505

VILLAGE HISTORY — the Upton stream

an occasional series contributed by

Juliet Gardiner

The stream is a delightful, clear chalk stream which, unusually for the 'spring-line' villages, originates in the hills high up in the parish. Nowadays it seems to rise in the deep cutting of the old railway line at the top of the hill near Chilton, from which it was piped under the railway track to emerge in a field above the George & Dragon, and from there it flows under the main Reading road (A417), between houses and gardens, to appear again in Frog Alley. Here it joins other streams and eventually finds its way down to the Thames. In very wet years, the springs further up in Chilton village feed the stream — in very dry years it does not run at all. Normally it starts some time in January and continues to perhaps the second week in July. But with a series of dry autumns and winters, the springs have slowed and dried so that it now takes exceptional rainfall to achieve a flow at all. In

wet weather, the bed also acts as a run-off for the surface water from Aldens Lane and the Lynchway. (On the O.S. map it is marked rather dismissively as 'drain'.)

Over the years we have found bits and pieces in it — a child's Dinky car, a marble, shards of thick glass bottles, pieces of willow pattern china and a cache of sea shells, including razor shells and several oyster shells. Perhaps these shells indicate previous occupation, mediaeval or even Roman. Bank voles have taken up residence on the edge.

JOB VACANCY

Clerk to the Parish Council

Responsible for the administrative business and financial accounts.

Earn extra money whilst getting interested in your local community...

For more information please contact

Graham de Wilde (851500)

L Sustrans Award. Didcot has won an award for its success in providing cycle routes within the town and links with surrounding villages. The track linking Upton to Didcot is recognised as part of that achievement. At a recent awards ceremony Sustrans presented members of the Parish Councils concerned with copies of *Millenion Miles*, the story of the National Cycle Network. We have passed this elegant book to the Parish Clerk, if anyone would like to read it. **Juliet and Peter Gardiner** Parish Transport Reps

L The Mobile Library will continue to visit Upton on alternate Wednesdays from 8 February, at 11.30am. Those staffing the library are extremely helpful. Not only is there a stock of books on the shelves, but specific titles can also be ordered for a trifling fee (70p) and they usually come promptly, by the next fortnight. **PDRG**

L The teas, raffle and donations raised over £200 for the Village Hall at **Sheila and Vic Dawson's social event** in December. A big thank you to Sheila and Vic, helpers and supporters. **Jessie West**

L Thank you to those who supported the concert given by **Upton Ringers**. The amount raised for Sobell House was £66.53.

Daphne Simpson

50 Club Winners

November £10 Mrs Stewart, £7 Mr Prior £5 Mr Cordrey, £4 Mrs Amos.

December £20 Mrs Schumacher, £20 Mrs Walker, £10 Mrs Bucknell, £7 Mrs Page, £5 Mr Kent, £4 Mrs Jane Smith.

CHURCH SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

ST. MARY'S

Sunday 9am

5 Parish Eucharist

12 Parish Eucharist

19 Parish Eucharist

26 Parish Eucharist

Mid-week services in St. Mary's

On **Tuesday** the Daily Office is said at 8.15am and 5.30pm.

On **Thursday** at 11am the Eucharist is celebrated.

Coffee is served after church on the first Sunday in the month

METHODIST

10.30am — Preacher

Ruth Dams

David Kershaw

Rev. Helen White

Michael Howlett

UPTON NEWS is published monthly, the copy deadline being the 25th of the previous month. Please deliver or send items for publication, including letters on village topics, to The Old School, Church Street, either on paper or by e-mail to carol-uptonoxon@zen.co.uk

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