

# Upton News



Vol 4 No.16 February 2013

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A happy, healthy and prosperous New Year to everyone. As I write this we have a few inches of snow and some more forecast, so hope that everyone is managing to keep warm. I look forward to receiving your articles of interest for inclusion in forthcoming editions of *Upton News*. Please submit by the 20th of each month.

*Sarah*

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## ***4000 holes in Blackburn...?***

A topic of discussion at the recent Parish Council meeting was the ongoing concern over the ever growing number of potholes around the village.

The advice given by our District Councillor is that individuals should report these on the web site

[www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com).

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## ***Toys for disposal***

Following the demise of Tiddlywinks we would like to dispose of the toys being stored in the tractor shed at the Recreation Ground. If anybody can make use of these things please can you get in touch with Clare Lightfoot on 850486. Unless we can find a good home these items will be disposed of.

## ***Parish Council***

It was disappointing that the Parish Council notice board alongside the bus shelter was recently vandalised. We are grateful to Ralph True for offering to repair this. The consensus is that the repaired notice board should be sited on the wall of the bus shelter. In the meantime notices are being posted on the board in Stream Road and also on the web site.

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## ***Village Carol Singing***

Many thanks to everyone who came carol singing, rang handbells and donated to our house-to-house collection.

We raised the respectable sum of £138.19, which has now been given to Didcot TRAIN Youth Project to support the work of this excellent local charity. Thank you so much for supporting this event.

*Sarah Tenant-Flowers*

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## **Inside this issue...**

- A417 Closure
- Spring Line Church Meeting
- Community First Responders

## Blewbury WI

We are all looking forward to a bright and busy New Year at the WI, we have lots of outings, talks, gardens and activities planned, which will keep us all busy!

Our activities for February are here;

- 5th: Lyn's walk, catch the bus at 9.49am at the Load of Mischief or later at other stops, for an easy but stunning walk around Ladygrove lakes and hills, with coffee. All welcome, inc non members
- 5th: Scrabble at Graeme's house.
- 15th: RAL lectures "Science Circus"
- 17th: Snowdrops at Swyncombe Church, meet at Village Hall car park, with some cars please to car share, 1pm, small entrance fee charged and homemade teas available, all welcome, inc non members.
- 19th: coffee at Style Acre Tearooms, 10.30am, with Joan.
- 27th: a talk by Dave Talbot on "Modern India", 7.30pm in the School Hall. Visitors welcome.

Forthcoming events also include "The Blues Brothers" in Oxford, a visit to Adam Henson's farm in May, and lunch at The Cherry Tree.

For more details, or to join the Mah Jong or Scrabble group, or if you wish to join us, please ring Judy on 850381. Future events are also listed on our Facebook page, Blewbury WI.

*Karen Brooks*

## *Litter Pick*

This year's Litter Pick is being arranged for **Saturday 16th March**. If you can spare us an hour or two please come along to the Village Hall at about 9.30 where there will be a cup of tea and biscuits awaiting you before setting out to help clean up our parish.

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## *VPA*

My winter garden is just as beautiful as the summer garden; it's just that I have to look a bit closer! The winter aconites are out, the early snowdrops, the pink viburnum, winter jasmine and honeysuckle, green hellebores, blue green daffodils shoots and the untidy leaves of the muscari are all popping up, with their backdrop of last years grasses and hardy evergreen shrubs, just in time for the snow and ice.

We have a programme of talks/ outings/events for the year ahead, and contacts for whom to contact if you wish borrow our garden tools. Everyone is a member of the VPA, we thought that this was easier than collecting 50p from everyone.

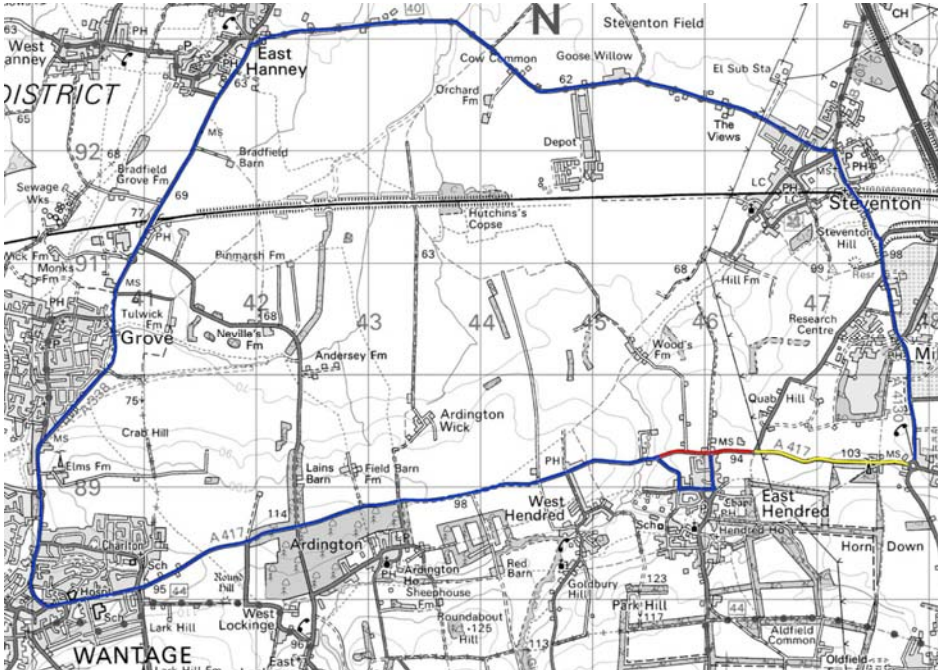
Our talk on 6 February is by one of our favourite gardeners and photographers, Richard Roslyn, with a talk and slides on "Trees from a camera's perspective", 7.30pm in the Vale Room, lifts can be provided, just call me, 850219 or pop into the Post Office.

Happy gardening

*Karen Brooks*

## ***Road Closure - East Hendred ... and restrictions beyond Blewbury***

The A417 at East Hendred, from Featherbed Lane to the 2nd access into East Hendred on the left, if approaching from Rowstock, will be closed between 9.30am - 19.30 from 11th - 15th February. This closure will cause major disruption as the alternative route is a long one. Thereafter, a temporary 30mph limit and 2.3m vehicle width restriction on the A417 between Bessels Way and the double junction with Halfpenny Lane and Westfield Road on Kingstanding Hill, from February 20th for 8 days. Details on the web site.



### **Dates for your diary**

Fri 1 Feb	Writing Music for Film
Wed 6 Feb	VPA - Vale Room 7.30pm
11-15 Feb	Road Closure A417 E Hendred
Sat 16 Feb	Alice (Gobo Theatre) Village Hall
Tue 19 Feb	Univ. 3rd Age - Didcot Civic Hall 2pm
Wed 20 Feb	Wine Club - Village Hall 8pm
Sun 3 Mar	Blewbury Players auditions 10am

## ***Post Office News***

The Royal Mail has announced new restrictions for international mail, basically anything that could pose a danger to aircraft or people, so no aerosols, alcohol, batteries (unless Lithium ones already installed in an item, max 2) and packed securely, corrosives, electronic devices, flammable liquids (which include perfume and nail varnish) and a whole lot more. If you are sending something abroad, you will be asked what is in your parcel. Leaflets are available in the Post Office, or go to [www.royalmail.com/restrictedgoods](http://www.royalmail.com/restrictedgoods) for the complete guide.

Blewbury Garden Market producers are continuing bringing freshly baked bread and cakes on Saturday mornings, and there a few jars of preserves during the week too.

We would like to remind parents on the school run that the village hall car park is also used for the Doctor's surgery and the Post Office and therefore access should not be blocked.

*Karen & Angela*

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## ***Neighbourhood Policing Update***

The Neighbourhood team were involved in locating a vehicle after reports of a driver going door to door collecting scrap metal. The vehicle was located and stopped in Chilton and were found not to have business insurance or a waste carrier licence and was fined £300.

If you see any suspicious persons or vehicles with scrap metal please report it to the Police we can then stop and check any person and also identify the scrap that could be stolen.

Thames Valley Police are advising dog owners to be extra vigilant following a spate of nearly 20 dog thefts from several counties in the past month with thieves targeting pedigree breeds. DOGWATCH was founded 5 years ago to help combat rural crime and the theft of dogs in particular.

For further information and to join DOGWATCH, please visit [www.dogwatchalert.com](http://www.dogwatchalert.com) - this is a FREE service, only available in the Thames Valley police area. If you have any information relating to the theft of dogs,



please call Thames Valley Police via the non-emergency telephone number 101. Alternatively if you have information but wish to remain anonymous, please contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or [online@crimestoppers-uk.org](mailto:online@crimestoppers-uk.org). No personal details are taken, information is not traced or recorded and you will not go to court.

# Spring Line Church Council Meeting

A reminder to church members that the Council meeting will take place at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 5th February 2013, at the Upton Centre. This will be our last Church Council meeting before the closure of the Spring Line Church in April. Any non-members who attend the Spring Line Church and those with an interest in our church are invited to attend.

## Closure

As you read this, the Spring Line Methodist church will have celebrated its last ever Carol Service and Annual Covenant Service.

Preparations for the closure of both Upton and Blewbury churches are in hand (to be marked at services over Easter 2013). It's a time tinged with sadness; but also blessed in the realisation that Christian witness has always been about dying and rising again. Churches (especially village churches) are closing across the country now; it's easy to feel that this is a mark of failure - loss yes, but failure, no.

So much has been put in place over the lifetime of these churches; society has been transformed by their presence. They came into

existence when we had no NHS, no welfare state; in a time when education was selective, for the few. They were planted with a job to do - and that job has been done. They challenged society to embed Christian principles and they have done that. In a very profound way, the closing of churches is a mark that says 'job well done'.

We chose to close at Easter because that is the time when we acknowledge the need to 'die to rise again'. How that takes place is in the hands of the creative force that sits behind all this. It is yet to be revealed; but it will happen (I write this as a person who lives in a Methodist chapel, closed and converted into a place that continues to breathe its heritage in a most unexpected way).

Join us as we give thanks for the miracles that are Upton and Blewbury Methodist Churches, and let's all realise that - without the energy that has been held in these places - life would be that much poorer.

*Richard Bittleston,  
Minister for the Spring Line Church*



## Methodist Services

Services 10.30am Upton

3rd Brenda Boyer

10th John Dennis

17th Rev Richard Bittleston  
(Holy Communion)

24th Rev Dr David Rankin

## 50 Years Ago — a Proper Snowdrift



Photographed in 1963 between Childrey and Sparsholt Firs by the late Bernard Loach, re-printed with kind permission of Martin Loach.

## ***Avoiding Scams***

Fraud costs the British economy £73 billion a year and criminals use a number of sophisticated scams to try and snare victims. Thames Valley Police has produced a booklet which aims to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of fraud.

*The Little Book of Big Scams* includes sections on identity fraud, scam mail, door to door scams and Internet scams:

[www.thamesvalley.police.uk/  
the-little-book-of-big-scams.pdf](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/the-little-book-of-big-scams.pdf)

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## ***Blewbury Players***

**Happy New Year to All!**

2013 is going to be another busy year with lots to get involved with...

### **Workshop and Auditions**

The 2013 summer production, with performances on 24-27th July, will be a new adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* being written for the Blewbury Players by the well-known children's author Julia Golding and directed by Laura Baggaley, who directed *The Winter's Tale* for us in 2007 and *Twelfth Night* in 2009.

This will be a great opportunity for anyone, of any age, experienced or not, to be involved in a splendid large cast play, with roles big and (very!) small.

Anyone who would like to act in *Great Expectations* is invited to a workshop, to be run by Laura in the Methodist Church, Blewbury, from 10-12 on Sunday 3rd March, followed

by auditions from 1pm onwards.

People who are only interested in a small walk-on part, with very few or even no lines, will only need to come to the workshop, others please phone Peter Saunders (850245) to book an audition or for further information about the production and what is likely to be involved. We can arrange further auditions, if needed, for anyone away on 3 March.

Do look at the Blewbury Players website [www.blewburyplayers.co.uk](http://www.blewburyplayers.co.uk) for information about past productions.

### **1st February - 'Writing Music for Film' - an evening in conversation with Richard Blackford**

This event is for the Friends of Blewbury Players. If you would like to find out more about becoming a Friend of the Players please visit our website or contact Tracy Silverthorne on 851649.

## ***Hoax Emails***

Notwithstanding the genuine risk of scams perpetuated via the Internet (see *Avoiding Scams*), we have all received well-meaning emails from friends trying to educate us or warn against some peril. Unfortunately many of these are inaccurate or plain wrong.

One that's doing the rounds again at the moment says that entering your PIN code in reverse at an ATM will summon the police. *This is not true.*

When you get such an email, look for the five telltale signs of a hoax:

**Urgency:** a subject line using language and punctuation such as WARNING!!!!!! , IMPORTANT!!!

**Tell all your friends:** share the 'important information' with as many people as possible

**This isn't a hoax:** it's been confirmed by some nameless official or an employee of Microsoft

**Dire consequences:** answering the phone will cost you £150, or your hard drive will explode

**History:** lots of >>>> in the message itself indicating that it's already been forwarded multiple times.

If you're still not sure, google the subject, e.g. 'reverse pin' or 'premium rate phone email'. Sites such as [snopes.com](http://snopes.com) or [hoax-slayer.com](http://hoax-slayer.com) will soon tell you whether or not it's just an urban legend. Many of these emails have been circulating for 8 years or more.

If it is a hoax, just ignore and delete the email.

*Brian Rippon*

## ***Village web site***

The Upton Village web site, [www.uptonvillage.co.uk](http://www.uptonvillage.co.uk), has undergone something of an overhaul and is now hopefully a bit easier to use, not only on a PC or Mac but also on a smartphone.

As well as holding all the Parish Council's documentation, it contains old census records, history articles and old photos, back copies of *Upton News* (dating from 2000), and current and past news items. Mike Brown, who has helped to keep the site updated for the past five years, has personally uploaded no fewer than 545 articles, not to mention all his additions to the calendar.

Recent additions to the site include live Didcot train departures and cinema listings, as well as an interesting high resolution photo showing Upton in the 1930s and more items in the history section.

The photo galleries continue to expand, but I am always grateful for any old photos of either the village, its buildings or its former residents; even snaps taken in the late twentieth century help to build a picture of how the village has developed over the years. Please have a look in your attic and see if there are any photos which might be of interest.

In recent weeks I have heard from a couple of former residents who lived in the village over 40 years ago, and I hope to be able to include material from them in due course.

*Brian Rippon*

[webmaster@uptonvillage.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@uptonvillage.co.uk)

## Rectors Reflections

### *The Wood and the Trees*

I think sometimes we all find it difficult to see the wood from the trees. Our lives tend to be a mix of the essential and the inessential, and often it is hard to know which is which. And what is true of us as individuals is also true of organisations, communities and countries. For example, I wonder what you think is essential to us as a nation? Being a world player, politically and economically? Being a democracy, in which everyone is treated fairly, and all are subject to the rule of law? Being a country which cares for its most vulnerable, and provides access to education and health care to all?

All of us can benefit from times set aside to think about our priorities, to try and see the wood from the trees. In the Christian tradition, there is a period of 40 days set aside for precisely this purpose. In English speaking countries, the period is known as Lent. It starts on a Wednesday, in February or March, called Ash Wednesday, and finishes the day before Easter Day. This year, Ash Wednesday falls on 13th

February and Easter Sunday falls on 31st March.

A particular tradition on Ash Wednesday is to come to church and to be marked on the forehead with a cross made from ash - hence Ash Wednesday. As the priest makes the sign of the cross, the priest says the following words : "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ". Sobering words.

Jesus took time out to think about his priorities. We tend to imagine that Jesus' life was always a life of preaching, teaching, and healing. In fact, he only seems to have started doing this when he was about 30; before then, he probably worked as a carpenter.

Before Jesus started his new life, he took time out. He went into the desert for 40 days, to think things through - hence the 40 days of Lent. Few of us, I think, would be able to take 40 days out to think things through, to help us see the wood from the trees. But what about 40 hours, or even 40 minutes? It's worth a try.

*Fr Jason*



Submissions for Upton News should be sent to the Editor, Sarah Sayers, at [news@uptonvillage.co.uk](mailto:news@uptonvillage.co.uk) or to Orchard Lodge, High Street, Upton OX11 9JE. Tel 01235 851450. Deadline for the March edition is 20th February.



## ***St Mary's Services***

Sunday 3rd Feb 9am Sung Eucharist\*  
Sunday 10th Feb 9am Sung Eucharist  
Sunday 17th Feb 10am CHRISTINGLE\* - this short, delightful service is  
in aid of the Children's Society  
Sunday 24th Feb 9am Sung Eucharist  
\*refreshments follow these services

Weekday services:

Tuesdays 9.30am Morning Prayer  
10am Said Eucharist  
5.30pm Evening Prayer  
6pm Christ in Quiet

For further information please speak to Jessie West on 851206.

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## ***Snow!***

Snow walrus made by some children in the village on 19 January.



And some temporary visitors  
in Stream Road.

## ***Upton Wine Appreciation Club***

### **December meeting - Sparkling and Dessert Wines**

Our annual favourites Fiona and Will Betts were persuaded to do another talk on sparkling and dessert wines.

Fiona began with a theme of comparing Supermarket sparkling wines and described the process of tank and traditional method wine production with the aid of hand-outs for making sparkling wines and first up was the Underraga Brut (12%) from Chile (£5.99 reduced from £9.99). A Club favourite and a blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. This wine went down well again with the members.

Sainsbury's "Taste the Difference" Cava 2009 (11.5%) £10.49 was next up. Made by the "Methode Traditional" (the same process as Champagne). Made from Chardonnay, Macabeu, Parellada and Xarel-Lo grapes. You could really "Taste the Difference"! Citrusy and biscuity and I got cloves on the nose. I don't think this one will be a Club favourite by some of the comments in the room.

Tesco's Finest Premier Cru NV (12.5%) £14.99 reduced from £19.99. A blend of the classic and well known Champagne grapes Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Fresh, dry and with a good mousse this wine went down well with the members.

Sainsbury's Blanc De Noirs NV (12%) £18. Made from only the black "Champagne grapes" - Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. A nice bright wine with a little yeast detected by

my taste buds.

Bollinger Special Cuvee (12%) £32 Majestic Wines. Fiona explained the different Cru's of Champagne and the hierarchy of the vineyards that grow the grapes for the production of Champagne. Fiona also explained that Bollinger along with other Champagne producers strive to produce the same wine year on year despite different yearly weather conditions and keep wine back year on year to blend for new vintages. Overall a nice wine.

With Fiona's voice managing to get through the sparkling wines Will got up to show the sweet and stickies beginning with Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese, 2007, JJ Prüm (7%) £27 (The Wine Society). A good wine with a low ABV due to the fermentation being halted early to keep the sweetness of the wine.

Went well with Chris's mince pies! The sparkling Moscato D'Asti by Elio Perrone, 2011 (5%) £6.50 (The Wine Society) made by the "Asti Method" in the Piedmont region of Italy. Sweet chilled and fizzy an interesting wine.

Next was The Society's Exhibition Sauternes, 2009 (14%) £18 The Wine Society. Made by the father and son team Pierre and Denis Dubourdieu in Barsac from 75% semillon, 20% sauvignon, 5% muscadelle this was the favourite of the evening. Will explained the intricate and time consuming process of selecting the rotting grapes bunches and even individual berries which goes in to making this wine and helps to explain why these style of wine cost as much as they do. (cont'd)

Finally Will finished the evening with Henriques & Henriques Malvasia, 10 years old Madeira (20%) £17 (The Wine Society). You could feel your teeth melt with this one! Nice sweet and sticky with a slightly dry touch which will go well with Christmas cake, mince pie and cheeses.

A big thank you to Fiona and Will for their research on the wines and preparation of the food to go with the wines and thanks to Emily for her help with the smoked salmon Blinis and Chris for her mince pies! Next meeting is Wednesday 20th February 8pm in the Village Hall.

*Kevin Jacklin*

## **Gobo Theatre**

This is a charity that supports 16-25s who are dedicated to following a career in theatre but have no experience. Bridging the gap between education and work, Gobo Theatre provides career guidance in addition to vocational training. Our production of *Alice* by Laura Wade - a funny but poignant retelling of *Alice in Wonderland* - is touring the area with a cast of five young, talented actors and is coming to Upton Village Hall on **16 February**. For more information and to book, go to [www.gobothatre.co.uk/alice](http://www.gobothatre.co.uk/alice)  
*Astrid Stevens (Blewbury)*

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## ***The University of the Third Age***

The University of the Third Age in Didcot is off to a flying start!

U3A is a dynamic, outward looking organisation which has a positive and creative approach to life after full-time work. It is unique because everything is done by its members. The U3A in the UK was founded in 1982. There are currently more than 870 U3As with over 295,000 individual members and growing daily. One in four of the population is in the third age! The first age refers to childhood and dependence, the second age to full-time employment and parental responsibilities and the third age is that which follows where one is retired or partially retired. Didcot & District U3A believes that the third age should be one of creativity, fulfilment and friendship.

Our first meeting in January was a

tremendous success with over 150 people attending. 115 people joined and wanted to take part in at least 30 interest groups. We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Visitors are welcome to come to one meeting as a taster before joining. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 19 February at 2pm at Didcot Civic Hall and its topic will be May Day to Mummers: Oxfordshire Seasonal Customs.

Anyone in the third age can join Didcot & District U3A and this includes people who are working part time. No qualifications are required, and none are given. There is no lower or upper age limit for membership. Its national representative body is the Third Age Trust (Registered Charity No 288007).

For further information contact:  
Anne Hales on 07804159993 Email:  
[didcotdistrictu3a@virgin-media.com](mailto:didcotdistrictu3a@virgin-media.com)

# Community First Responders—Volunteers Wanted

Community First Responders are local volunteers trained and equipped by the ambulance service to attend certain types of 999 emergency calls within their local community. They carry a medical kit that includes an oxygen cylinder and masks, airways, a defibrillator and other first aid equipment. CFRs are trained in life support to help patients with chest pain, in cardiac arrest, breathing problems, severe bleeding, diabetic emergencies and unconscious casualties; all incidents where seconds count.

Unfortunately, the team for various different reasons has seen their numbers fall and now would appreciate some additional volunteers to help cover the village and surrounding areas.

Studies have shown that the early response to medical emergencies such as cardiac problems greatly enhance the patients chances of recovery. For example, following a cardiac arrest (where the heart stops beating) a person's chance of survival decreases by 10% for every minute they wait for help to arrive.

Following a '999' call, the CFR is contacted by mobile phone with details of the call and at the same time an ambulance is dispatched. The CFR will deliver immediate medical support then hand over to the ambulance crew on arrival and continue to assist as necessary.

CFRs receive 2 days of initial training, have monthly training update opportunities and are re-assessed every 6 months.

Upton formed a CFR team back in 2009 initially with nine trained volunteers and we have been asked to provide occasional support to the surrounding villages of West Hagbourne, Blewbury, Chilton and Harwell. The team to date has been involved in over 90 calls in the local area.

CFRs are volunteers and the equipment is provided by the South Central Ambulance League of Friends, the team has raised funds to cover the cost of the equipment and has managed to fund a second kit for the village.

If you would like to make a donation to support the work of the CFRs or are interested in becoming a CFR and provide lifesaving cover to the village then more information can be found at [www.uptonvillage.co.uk/cfr](http://www.uptonvillage.co.uk/cfr)

If you would like more information about Community Responding, please contact

Ian Jones on 07791 561998 or [ian.jones@scas.nhs.uk](mailto:ian.jones@scas.nhs.uk) or please give me a call on 850031. Thank you for your time and interest and I hope that you are able to help.

*Mike Weston - Upton CFR team -  
Fieldside House Tel: 850031*