

Upton News



Vol 4 No.34 November 2014

This issue hits the streets a little later than I had hoped.

For the first time in a while, I could have squeezed in a few more articles. So please, send your contributions to news@uptonvillage.co.uk and let the village know what's going on and what you've been up to. Reviews of your favourite or not so favourite pubs and restaurants are always welcome proving they're not libellous. Small ads for items for sale or wanted, or for recycling, will be included if space permits.

I hope to hear from you!

Brian Rippon

Application to demolish Methodist Church

An application for outline planning permission has been received to demolish the Methodist Church and to erect two 3/4 bedroom houses on the site.

You can see the outline plan of the proposed development on page 7.

Children's Christmas Party

In years gone by there used to be a Christmas Party at the Village Hall for children of the village.

As there are so many young children in the village it would be nice to hold the children's Christmas party again. To do this we would need some volunteers to help organise it. If you are able to help please email me on emmamaytham@hotmail.com or call me on 07796 771773.

Thanks,
Emma

Free Colour Laser Printer!

Looking for a good home, a Samsung CLP320 colour laser printer. Hardly used and in good condition, but needing new toner.

Contact Sarah
sarahpsayers@btinternet.com

Upton Wine Appreciation Club

The September meeting kicked-off the new Wine Club season with the AGM where a motion was put to the floor for life membership to be given to Mike Collins in recognition of his hard work in setting up the Club 10 years ago and laying the foundations for the smooth running the Club now benefits from. The motion was carried unanimously.

We then got down to the real business of the evening with a return of the old favourite “Call My Bluff” where the wines are poured blind and then true and false descriptions are presented by the panel; this time made up from members of the newly installed Committee (there were no new applications for Committee Members and the existing Committee were willing to remain and were duly re-elected).

The white wines started with a perennial favourite the sparkling Bouvet Ladubay Saumur (Majestic £13.49/£8.99) followed by a local wine the Brightwell Vineyard Oxford Flint consisting of Huxelrebe and Chardonnay grapes (Cellar Door/Waitrose/The Oxford Wine Company/ Q Gardens £8.99). Next up was a Gavi di Gavi Contessa Zara 2013 from Piemonte (The Oxford Wine Company £12.99/£12.34) and the last white was another Italian Soave Classico Colombara from Zenato (The Oxford Wine Company £11.99/£11.39)



A show of hands for the favourite white of the evening was an equal split across the French Saumur and the two Italian wines. There were no votes for the Brightwell Vineyard Oxford Flint!

The reds consisted of Casa d'Aragona 2012 Salice Salento from Puglia Italy (Majestic £8.99/£6.74) Ondine 2010 Cabernet Franc (The Oxford Wine Company £11.55/£10.97), Santa Rita Medalla Real 2009 Carmenere from Chile (Majestic £11.99) and P15 Malbec 2013 from Argentina (Majestic £11.99/£8.99).

The favourite red of the evening was a close call between the Carmenere and the Malbec with the Carmenere just coming out in front.

The panel of David, Ellie and Ian did a great job presenting their descriptions of the wines; both true and false! So much so that there was much confusion and frowning when the wines being tasted were described; with Ian scoring a high success rate in convincing that his wine was the correct wine even when it wasn't.

November Wine Club

Wednesday 19th November, 8pm,
Upton Village Hall

“Price Point Challenge - Does more expensive wine equal better?”

For our November meeting we will be trying to answer the question “Does more expensive wine equal better?”

The simple answer to this question would be, yes. It’s true that the old adage of: “You get what you pay for”, is certainly the case for wine; up to a certain point, if you’re paying more for a bottle of wine, then you’ll find that the amount you’re paying for the juice in the bottle is worth much more.

You may be shocked at how little of the price of a bottle of wine actually pays for the wine itself, and you may be surprised by the difference in quality once the price starts moving up the ladder. The facts are simple: the more you spend, the better the wine and owing to the flat duty rate, quality rises at a much faster rate than price.

The figures show the benefits of an increase of only £2.50 from £5 to £7.50, and £7.50 to £10, and then £10 to £20. The difference in product-cost between each bottle is astounding. Even with a comparatively small increase in end cost, the quality of the wine vastly improves. When it comes to the £20 bottle of wine, despite it being 4 times the amount of a £5 bottle, quality (value) of the wine increases 14 times.

Village Clubs & Organisations

Blewbury WI

Karen Brooks 850219
karencbrooks@gmail.com

Calor Gas Syndicate

Lesley Shaw 07739 047688

Drop In Sessions

Yvonne Collins 850989

Short Mat Bowls Club

Tony Durbin 850035

Table Tennis Club

Bob Lott 851222

Tea Birds WI

Jo Christie tea-birdswi@hotmail.co.uk

Theatre Club

Malcolm Wright 850705

Upton Oil Syndicate

Colin Batchelor 01491 672444

Upton Village Hall

www.uptonvillagehall.co.uk 887129

Village Produce Association

Eileen Bracken 510095

Wine Appreciation Society

Kevin Jacklin 851404

Do you run a village club or organisation? Please let us have your details and we will add them to the list.

Submissions for *Upton News* should be sent to news@uptonvillage.co.uk.

Deadline for the December edition is Friday 28th November.

A
Christmas
Carol

*A shortened version adapted from Charles Dickens
Also Quiz, Raffle and Light Refreshments*

7.00 pm

Friday 28 November 2014

Upton Village Hall

Proceeds to St Mary's Church Upton

Tickets, in advance or at door £5, Children £2.50

Available from Hattie, Malcolm or Jessie

Tels. 851449, 850705 and 851206

Dates for your diary

Wed 5 Nov	Short Mat Bowls
Fri 7 Nov	Mobile Library
Wed 12 Nov	Short Mat Bowls
Thu 13 Nov	Drop In, Village Hall
Wed 19 Nov	Wine Club
Fri 21 Nov	Mobile Library
Fri 21 Nov	Shakespeare for sceptics!
Tue 25 Nov	Tea Birds WI
Wed 26 Nov	Short Mat Bowls
Thu 27 Nov	Drop In, Village Hall
Fri 28 Nov	A Christmas Carol, Village Hall
Sun 30 Nov	Advent Carol Service

Highways Projects

Chilton Parish Council have withdrawn their formal objection to the proposed local highway improvements, so work programming can now proceed.

The latest OCC briefing paper provided expected start and end dates for the projects:

A34 Milton Interchange

[Nov 14 - Nov 15]

This scheme will improve traffic near Milton by introducing a hamburger arrangement enabling a direct movement through the roundabout for traffic travelling from Didcot going North on the A34.

A contractor has been appointed and discussions are ongoing regarding a start date.

A34 Chilton North Facing Slips

[Nov 14 - Dec 15]

The provision of two new slip roads and accommodation works to provide access to and from the north, which improves the connectivity to the Science Vale Enterprise Zone.

A417/ A4130 Featherbed Lane and Steventon Lights

[Jan 15 - Nov 15]

This scheme will improve capacity and provide an improved link between the A417 and A4130. The scheme will involve some road widening, new junction layouts and will smooth the two 90 degree turns on Featherbed Lane.

A34 Harwell Link Road Phase 1

[Aug 15 - Feb 17]

This scheme to alleviate pressure on the A34, provides a new link road from Didcot to Harwell Oxford Campus and should relieve Harwell village from through traffic.

A417 / A34 Harwell Link Road Phase 2 - Hagbourne Hill

[Jan 15 - Nov 15]

This scheme is designed to improve sight lines and facilitate movement on the A417 and A34 via a resurfaced link road and new roundabout.

A4185 Harwell Oxford Entrance

[May 15 - May 16]

Still in the early stages of design, this scheme is being implemented to ease access onto the campus and reduce congestion on the A4185.

Rector's Reflections

Remembrance Sunday

Choices, choices, choices - so much of our lives is about making choices, and then living with the choices we have made. Sometimes the choices are about trivial things, and we hardly notice we are making a choice at all. But sometimes they are significant, even life changing. If you were asked to reflect back on your life and list the two or three most important choices you had made, I wonder what would come to mind? Choice of a partner, perhaps; a decision to follow a particular career path; a decision about where to live... Our lives are made up of a whole series of choices.

Sometimes we look back at our choices and feel that they weren't really choices at all - the choice had been made by forces outside our control. This can, of course, be quite accurate; but it can also be a story we tell ourselves, in order to avoid the burden of accepting moral responsibility for a decision which didn't turn out as well as we had hoped. There is something in human nature which assumes that life ought to be a bed of roses, and when it isn't, we look for someone else to blame - the boss, the government, Society, God.

Questions of choice are also relevant when we try to understand the course of human history. The First World War, for instance. Was the First World War inevitable, or could it have been avoided? Many commentators plump for inevitability, which tends to suggest

that no one can be held responsible for the choices which led to the outbreak of war. Diplomats, politicians, generals, the press, ordinary men and women in the villages and cities of Europe - no one was to blame.

But can the diplomats and the politicians be let off the hook so easily? I recommend a recent study (2013) written by Margaret MacMillan. The book is entitled *The War That Ended Peace*, and the subtitle is "How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War". She argues that the politicians and diplomats could - and should - have made different choices in the years leading up to the break out of War in 1914.

Taking responsibility for our choices is not an easy thing to do. It takes honesty, courage and self-knowledge. It takes a willingness to admit our mistakes, to say sorry and to make amends. But surely this is what Remembrance Sunday is all about?

Fr Jason

Advent Carol Service

Sunday 30th November

The traditional Advent Carol Service will be held in St. Michael's, Blewbury on Sunday 30th November at 6pm. Everyone in the benefice is invited to attend this very popular service.

Village Produce Association

On the 11th October we had a successful Cake and Plant Stall at the Red Lion - thank you to everyone who supported our event.

How time flies!! Another Annual General Meeting has arrived and takes place on WEDNESDAY 5th NOVEMBER in the Vale Room - we would love you to arrive at 7pm and join us in a glass of wine and nibbles.

After our short official business we have a very special visitor. Chrissie Harper will be coming with a couple of her owls and will tell us how she runs her rescue centre and hopefully they will give us a fantastic flying display. Everyone is welcome, including children.

To end 2014 on a high note we are having our XMAS SOCIAL on SATURDAY 13th DECEMBER - 7.00pm at Upton Village Hall. Instead of the usual Christmas eats we are having a FISH & CHIP SUPPER provided by Danny's Mobile Fish Bar (Danny will also have chicken, burgers etc. on the menu and gluten free batter is available). On arrival you will receive a complimentary glass of wine and nibbles and finish with the traditional mince pie (please bring any other drink you may want). We have an interesting table quiz and a couple of unusual indoor games!! Everyone is welcome, so why not make it a family evening out.

Tickets are £9 and will be available in Blewbury Post Office, or you can telephone and book your ticket with Margaret Maytham - 01235 850126 or Eileen Bracken - 01235 510095.

DID YOU KNOW? Laid just below the surface of the soil, banana skins have long been said to be very good for roses, and scientists now approve the practice, having found that they are able to provide, as they rot quickly, a considerable quantity of calcium, magnesium, sulphur, phosphates, sodium and silica.

Happy Gardening
Eileen

Notes from the Allotment

The warm weather has lingered on well into October, and I hear that September 2014 was the warmest on record, a worrying thought for those of use concerned with climate change; but helpful when one has an allotment and a garden to maintain!

When I last visited the allotment I couldn't work out what was different about, it seemed bigger somehow; then I realised the surrounding hedge had been cut, so much more light! That's also helpful with the nights drawing in, and by the time this edition comes out the clocks will have gone back and we will lose an hour in the afternoon.

The green manure crop sowed in Sept has now started to flower, and I've been advised to shear them off so they don't set seed but to leave the crop there to prevent weeds sprouting on bare ground until it dies down, then dig it in to nourish the soil.

All my brassicas are enclosed in an allegedly pest-proof mesh cover, which seems to have had the effect of providing the whitefly and snails a snug cosy home rather than deterring them; when I unzip it a positive cloud of flies emerges, and they have left their sticky residue all over the leaves which turns into sooty mould, most unattractive. Something has also eaten the tender tops out of three of my Brussels plants, resulting in early maturing sprouts but denying me the succulent green tops to eat; however, there are still some left, and at least I had some early sprouts. I've grown Cavolo Nero for the first time this year - also known as curly Kale - which is delicious lightly steamed and dressed with a little butter and pepper. The broccoli is coming along well too and will be a welcome treat later in the winter. My leeks are still looking a bit puny (especially compared with others on the site) but I don't mind eating them young!

It's been a terrible year for slugs and snails, and not only on the allotment! Three times recently I have come down in the night either for a drink or a nibble of something when I can't sleep, and found large slugs in the kitchen crawling slothfully over my floor, counter top and even the stove - what are they up to and where are they coming in? It is a complete mystery - has anyone any explanation?

Angela Hoy (angela.hoy@sky.com)

Blewbury WI

I can't quite believe that its November already, I am sure that many of you are starting to get organised for Christmas, making plans and going shopping, but there is still time to go kicking the autumn leaves up in the woods, and for getting together with friends over a baked potato and a sparkler!

Mah Jong; Monday 3rd, 2.30pm

Lyn's walk Wednesday 5th, 9.30am

Village Hall (all welcome)

Scrabble; Wednesday 5th, 7.30pm

Coffee at Style Acre; Monday 10th, 10.30am

IT & Computer Workshop, Thursday 13th, Aston Tirrold village hall, 2-4pm

WI meeting; Wednesday 26th, Blewbury School, 7.30pm, "Dinosaurs of Oxfordshire" with Paul Sargent, visitors always welcome.

For more details of any of our events, or to join the Mah Jong or Scrabble group, or if you wish to join us, please ring Karen on 850219.

Love from Karen

Bus Service Under Threat

In response to rumours that early morning buses are to be withdrawn:

As stated in the consultation documentation relating to the review of the 94 and 95 services, the peak service 94 journeys are relatively sparsely used. There are certainly no 'plans afoot' to withdraw the early morning journeys at this stage, but although I appreciate that these facilities are obviously important to the people who use them, difficult decisions will increasingly be necessary in terms of what can be affordably subsidised, especially if tender prices rise.

As with all of our subsidised services the aspiration is very much to maintain current provision as a starting point, but we have to be realistic and have 'fall-back' options in case prices are prohibitively high (one of which is often the reduction or withdrawal of peak facilities in favour of retention of 'lifeline' off-peak facilities). In that regard service 94 is no different to any of the other peak and off-peak services that are currently under review.

Tim Darch

*Assistant Public Transport Officer,
OCC*

You can write to Tim Darch at Oxfordshire County Council to comment on the review of 94/95 bus service: tim.darch@oxfordshire.gov.uk or OCC, Bus Services Team, Speedwell House, Oxford OX1 1NE, attn Tim Darch.

Post Office News

Christmas stamps go on sale on November 4th, I think they are really pretty, sort of 1950's retro, Christmas trees, Santa, Post Boxes and Robins! We sold out last year, but we will try to get extra supplies delivered, buy yours early to avoid disappointment! We will also have some "Madonna & Child" ones for those who prefer them.

Speaking of Santa, children may write to him at Santa's Grotto, Reindeerland XM45HQ, please include a name and address for him to reply, and put a stamp on it, by 6th December, There is no need to include a stamp for the reply! He will try to answer them all.

Royal Mail have decided to make the sizing of small parcels easier for us all, so from 20th October, a small parcel must fit into our new sizing template. Also from 20th Oct, they are offering ALL small parcels under 2kg for £2.80, a reduction of £1, until mid-January!

All the last posting dates for surface mail have passed, and the only one in November is for BFPO's, on the 30th. Leaflets on the last postings dates are available now!

The BGM will have moved to the Post Office on Saturday mornings, and there should be jam, eggs and other goodies on sale too! We still have a penknife, a Yale key, and a set of keys in our lost property!

No news on the final collection from post boxes, so carry on posting till 4.45pm!

Love from Karen & Angela

Blewbury Players

The Taming of the Shrew

We are excited to announce that next year's summer production at Orchard Dene Garden Theatre will be *The Taming of the Shrew* directed by Erica Harley. Performances will be on 15th-18th July 2015. Auditions 7-8th February - please call 01235 850537 to book an audition.

Shakespeare for sceptics! (Fun and funniness)

Friday 21st November, 8pm, Melland Room

We have been running 'Fork Handles' evenings for a while now and they are proving popular. These are informal evenings for people to come along, enjoy a drink from the bar and have a go at reading a script in pairs or groups, and generally have a bit of fun and build confidence. No pressure, no stage, no audience, just a bit of fun on the night. No pressure to audition for other stuff but a great way to find out more about joining in with our productions if you are interested.

Jack and the Beanstalk

28th-31st January

Blewbury's pantomime, directed by Jo Laugharne, is now cast and rehearsals are underway. It was wonderful to see so many local people audition. This is going to be a lot of fun! All proceeds will be donated to the Village Hall Refurbishment.

Box Office opens on Saturday December 6th 2014 at 10.00 am until 12 noon in The Clubhouse, Blewbury Recreation Ground. After this date tickets may be purchased from Savages Monday to Friday 9.00am till 6.00pm and from 10.00 - 12.00 on Saturday mornings (cash or cheque only). Please note that the Box Office at Savages will be closed Monday December 23rd- Friday December 26th. Tickets are also available online with a link from the Blewbury Players website www.blewburyplayers.co.uk on a best available seat basis. Seat allocation will be advised weekly. A specific allocation of tickets is also available from Cornerstone (credit/debit card or cash) in Didcot (Telephone: 01235 515144).

Friends of the Players will have priority booking. To find out more about becoming a friend please visit our website.

Mobile Library Service

OCC is running a consultation exercise on the mobile library service.

A review of the mobile library service has shown that many of the stops are not very well used, some not at all, and they are considering joining up our mobile services and delivering them in a different way.

The proposal is that the seven mobile vehicles will remain in service but will be used to provide better stopping places with longer stops. There will also be an improved home library service for housebound people.

There will be no financial cuts to the mobile library service budget and everybody who currently uses our mobile library service will continue to receive a level of provision. The proposal is to have:

- Four general service vehicles serving communities.
- One dedicated home library service van delivering to individuals who are housebound and would not otherwise have access to our library services. This vehicle will also deliver to care homes and nursing homes and will complement, support and grow the service already provided by our home library service volunteers.
- Two mobile vehicles visiting primary schools to promote reading for pleasure.

A consultation document is available on all mobile library vehicles and is also published at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mobilelibraries.

Under the proposal, the Upton service, which is lightly used, is under threat. If you want to retain it, use it and make your feelings known via the consultation.

The mobile library calls at the Village Hall car park between 11.50am and 12.10pm on alternate Fridays - 7 November, 21 November, 12 December etc.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Let's make time for something that really matters. Please come along to my Coffee Morning for Macmillan on Friday 14th November. Enjoy coffee and cake and help give people facing cancer the support they need. From 10.30am, at 12 Fieldside. I hope you can join us.

Mandy Dawson 851370