

# Upton News



Vol 5 No.49 August 2020

I am pleased to report we are back to normal and those of you who prefer to receive a paper copy should get one delivered to you this month.

My thanks to Jessie West who provided me with the information to produce the article on the history of St. Mary's church. (see pages 7/8)

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## Online Church Services

There will be an online church service on Sundays at 10.30am, login or connect using a computer, laptop, tablet, smart phone or landline from 10.00am to chat before the service.

Please see the website or The Churn if you receive it for the service access codes and full details of how to join each week.

During weekdays Fr Jason is writing a short reflection and prayer. If you would like to receive this, please contact the office. Tel: 01235 850267 or [office@churnchurches.co.uk](mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk)

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## Upton Village Tea

Saturday, 5th September was to have been the date of the Village Fete but current circumstances mean we can't hold this in its traditional format. However, the government's restrictions do allow certain events to take place and many people long for something to look forward to in a summer when so much has been cancelled. So instead of the fete, we are planning a grand village tea party on 5th September, open to Upton residents and their invited guests.

Reserved tables will be set up outside the village hall, one per family or group, and delicious sandwiches, cakes and tea will be served up to all. There will be a small number of stalls (preserves, raffle, tombola etc) and, with music playing the scene will be set for a jolly afternoon. If the weather doesn't cooperate, we will erect the village marquee to provide shelter.

We are likely to be restricted to 30 people at a time so if there's enough interest we will arrange a couple of sittings. Pre-booking will be essential so we can cater for the right numbers. We are of course very aware of social distancing and other safety measures which will be carefully observed.

The cost will be £10 per head, with children at half price. Tickets must be booked through Jessie (851206), Frankie (851404), Gloria (850683) or Paul (851251). Don't forget that they must be booked in advance and that numbers are limited!

*Paul Batho*

## **Parish Council**

### **Meetings**

Upton Parish Council continues to meet via e-conferencing and will do so for the foreseeable future. By the time you read this, a meeting will have taken place on 23rd July and minutes will be published in due course. The next scheduled meeting is at 7.30pm on Thursday 17th September. Anyone is welcome to join the meeting if you inform the Clerk at least 24 hours before the start.

### **Play Areas**

The Parish Council would like to make it clear that the Upton recreation ground play areas have not been officially re-opened. People have long since seen fit to remove barrier tape and use the play equipment. Before the play areas can be safely and officially re-opened, they must be thoroughly inspected, risk assessed and any repairs carried out. Any ground work must also take place. Until such time as this is all completed, the play areas remain out of use. Anyone who chooses to use the equipment does so at their own risk.

### **Car Parking**

The Parish Council would like to reiterate that cars should only be parked in the car park of the recreation ground, or in the overflow area which is the strip of grass immediately in front of the car park. No vehicles should otherwise be driven on to or parked on the recreation ground.

### **Fencing at the rear of the recreation ground**

Investigation work has begun into the replacement of the fence at the rear of the recreation ground. The existing post and wire fence is beyond repair and something more suitable will replace it in due course.

### **Toddler Play Area**

The Parish Council has been successful in obtaining some funding towards the creation of the new toddler play area. The first phase is obtaining quotes for the ground work, which is planned to 'mirror' that of the adventure play area. The PC plans to re-use some of the equipment from the old toddler play area in the new area. While the PC is a little way from the installation phase, we would like to know if there are people in the village who would be prepared to help dismantle and perhaps clean, paint, rust proof equipment for its re-use in the new play area. Please make yourselves known to the Clerk and the PC will contact you in due course.

Any suggestions, concerns, questions or queries about your Parish Council, its work or how you can help, please contact the Clerk on [parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk](mailto:parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk) or call on 07968772935.

*Liz Cooper*

## **County Council**

### **Chilton Road - Update**

As part of the Active Travel review, OCC are trying to speed up the possible closure of Chilton Road to through traffic. This road is part of the National Cycle Network route 5 and closing the road will make it much safer for cyclists to use.

The intent is that OCC will undertake a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (allowed up to 18 months) and will consult with the County Councillors as well as the Parish Council. OCC would then look to implement the physical closure, with probably water filled barriers, that close the road to through traffic, in the next few weeks/months.

The temporary closure could be allowed for up to 18 months and it is hoped that OCC would be able to deliver the permanent closure, including undertaking a formal consultation, before the temporary traffic regulation order expires.

As with all these schemes, there is a long time in planning stages, but hopefully, there will be the sign soon that the road closure may be a reality.

*Mike Fox-Davies*

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## **Astons Online**

Free IT advice for Upton computer users is available throughout August every Tuesday morning from 10:00am to 12:00noon.

Advice is provided remotely using telephone, Facetime, Skype, Zoom, Teams or WhatsApp. Book a 30 minute appointment by emailing [theastonsonline@gmail.com](mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com) or, if this is not possible, call 07780 958249.

We help users feel confident, effective and safe communicating with friends and family. Our advice deals with all types of computer, user and security issues by being friendly, informal and avoiding IT jargon.

See [www.astonsonline.uk](http://www.astonsonline.uk) for more information.

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## **Blewbury Post Office**

We are back open again on Monday to Friday mornings, 8.30am until 12noon, closed on August Bank Holiday Monday. The days post is collected between 11.00am and 12noon, so urgent mail needs to be in by then. Pretty stamps are available to buy but stick on at home.

We are still working on the 'one in, one waiting in the corner, everyone else outside' system, face coverings are appreciated, but not really needed, as we are behind our glass screen and everyone can keep more than 2m apart. We are taking a short break at around 10.30am, so don't worry if no one is there at that time.

*Karen and Maggie*

## Rector's Note



### Taking a Break

Well, it's August and it's a traditional time for holidays. I don't know whether you are in a position to take a break this month. It might be that this simply isn't possible, for health or financial reasons, or perhaps because of family obligations. It might be that you have holidays planned for later in the year.

It does us all good to get a break, if we can. In the Bible, God himself is pictured as having a break from his work of creation. God is said to rest on the seventh day - even God only works 6 days a week. This is one reason why Jews observe a day of rest every week, called the Sabbath. Christians have continued this tradition, shifting the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, in honour of Christ's resurrection, which happened early on a Sunday morning.

You may remember the time when shops and other places were closed on a Sunday. The idea behind this was that there should be at least one day of the week when we had the time and space to rest and recharge our batteries. Of course, people's experience of an old-fashioned Sunday varied enormously. For some people, it was certainly not a day of rest. For others, perhaps especially for children, and if we go back say 100 years ago, it could be a day of boredom and restriction.

Our world has changed enormously and nowadays we live very different lives. But I think we could benefit from setting aside a day a week for rest and recreation. It might be that finding a whole day is not going to be realistic, so perhaps half a day.

Rest and recreation come in lots of different forms. It needn't involve spending any money. It needn't involve going anywhere. It might simply be about giving ourselves permission to have a bit of "me" time.

The last few months have been particularly stressful for many of us, perhaps for all of us. I think we could all do with a bit of a rest.

You might be planning on a holiday - going away somewhere nice, or perhaps a staycation at home. Or a holiday might simply not be on the cards. But in any event, I think a bit of a break will do us all the world of good!

*Father Jason*

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## Ride and Stride

The Ride and Stride event in aid of Oxfordshire churches will go ahead on Saturday 12th September under Government guidelines. St Mary's church will be open all day. Further information can be obtained from Clare Lightfoot, [lthimbles@btinternet.com](mailto:lthimbles@btinternet.com)

## Village Produce Association

Gosh, we're halfway through 2020 and at least some of the lockdown has been eased. We still all need to be very careful and I must admit that, personally, I'm pleased we have to wear masks in shops. Anything that can give a tiny bit of protection must be good. I'm just glad I'm not a politician, having to make decisions to try and protect us from something that we know so little about. Sorry, I know this is nothing to do with the VPA and gardening, but there is not a lot to update you with regarding the VPA during the lockdown.

To update you with one VPA activity. Given the lockdown, you know we had to cancel the Summer Show scheduled in July. However, our Xmas Social at Upton Village Hall in December is still in the diary and instead of the usual quiz and games we plan to hold a skittles evening with a meal, but we will have to be guided with what happens with Covid over the coming months.

So, here are a few more Didcot Ramblings.

At least we have started to get a bit of rain over the past couple of weeks. I'm convinced my arms are two inches longer from carrying the watering cans to water the allotment - we're not allowed hosepipes which is perfectly understandable. Still, the allotment is doing well and I've had pickings of French beans, runner beans, carrots, cabbage, cauliflower and I had my first tomatoes a couple of days ago. The beetroot have done really well so I've been pickling some for the winter months.

I have a small section of one of my plots where I grow flowers. Each year I grow gladioli and last year because of the wet weather I wasn't able to dig up the corms. However, this year they have done really well, in fact the best they have ever been. So, I'm going to take a chance and leave them in over winter this year and see what happens. I sowed a row of California poppies and they are amazing, they've really enjoyed the hot sunny weather.



I had a fig tree in a very large pot in my garden which wasn't very happy but unfortunately I didn't have room to plant it in the ground. As I didn't want to compost it I decided to plant it on the allotment. I had a space next to the greenhouse and adjacent to the greengage tree. It's been there for about two years and is surviving well.

The hens seem happier now it's not so hot. I had to do a running repair on their run roof - a slight leak - so one of the lads on the allotment very kindly got up on a ladder and filled the roof joint with mastic. It's worked a treat and the inner run is nice and dry again.

**DID YOU KNOW?** *Lavender, (Lavandula), comes from the Latin Lavare, 'to wash', because its oils were often used in cleaning clothes. To make one and a half pounds of Lavender Oil, you'll need to harvest almost a quarter of a ton of flowers.*

Happy Gardening - keep well and safe

Eileen

## Rhona Hogg

Those who have lived in Upton for some time will be sad to learn of the unexpected death of Rhona Hogg on 8th July. A small family service has already taken place in Somerset as Rhona had expressed a wish to be cremated.

Rhona and Maurice moved to the Gate House of Upton Lodge with their children Lizzie and Charlotte in the late 1970's and built an extension for Rhona's mother, Mrs Gale, who came to live with them. The whole family were a big part of Upton life in those days - Rhona, Lizzie and Charlotte all sang in the choir at St Mary's Church, organised by Elizabeth Greenfield and Rhona particularly enjoyed singing carols round the parish to start off Christmas. Rhona played the organ in church when Tony West and Audrey Damjanovic were unable to be there - in those days we could call on five organists to play at the morning service. The family helped with the Church Fete and Rhona taught the piano at home before returning to teaching at The Manor Preparatory School, Abingdon until they moved to Somerset on Maurice's retirement in about 2002. Lizzie and Charlotte always had ponies which they kept in the paddock above the house and various girls from Upton crossed the A417 to help groom and muck out, which for some of them, started a lifelong love of horses.

*Hilary Powell*

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## Teddy Bears Picnic



This year our Benefice Teddy Bears Picnic on Wednesday 5th August will be slightly different - we will be on church grounds and they will include a story and thank you prayers.

Following a thorough risk assessment to limit the spread of Covid 19, Hagbourne and Blewbury PCCs have approved that we can meet outside church at Hagbourne Church at 12noon, outside the South Porch and at

Blewbury Church at 4.00pm, beside the North Porch.

We welcome pre-school children with older siblings and other family members. Family groups will be seated 2 metres apart. Please bring rugs, picnics and Teddy Bears. Toilet facilities are available at both locations. Please pray for fine weather! We cannot meet if wet. For more information, contact Revd Louise Butler, 07837 009 730

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## Leisure centres

Leisure Centres in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse have begun a gradual, phased opening which includes changes to opening times. While not all facilities will be available immediately, there will be plenty of things for customers in southern Oxfordshire to book on to.

For more information go to the websites of the various centres.

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Foot Care</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">A Mobile Foot Clinic for Upton</p> <p>Treatment provided in your own home for Routine Foot and Nail Care Toenail Trimming Corn and Callous Removal Diabetic Foot Care</p> <p>Contact Jill Allen DipFh MCFHP MAFHP Foot Health Practitioner 07767763441 or 01235 815917</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gary Cuddon</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">9 Harwood Road East Hagbourne Painter and Decorator</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Providing a High Quality Service Free Quotations Fully Insured</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tel. 01235 510680 or 07827752904</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Scotlands Ash Garage</b></p> <p>Main Street West Hagbourne Oxford's award winning local Independent Garage</p> <p>MOTs from 6.00am by appointment Vehicle Servicing and Repairs Tyres, Clutches and Exhausts Paint and Bodywork TerraClean Service Free Courtesy Car Tel. 01235 850707</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:enquiries@scotlandsashgarage.co.uk">enquiries@scotlandsashgarage.co.uk</a></p>	   <p style="text-align: center;">Family Nursery, Florist, Gift and Farm Shop</p> <p>Visit Savages to discover fresh quality fruit and veg, home grown plants, flowers, giftware and foods</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Nurseries, London Road, Blewbury 01235 850352</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:shop@savagesblewbury.co.uk">shop@savagesblewbury.co.uk</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LJD Bell Plumbing &amp; Heating Services</b></p> <p>All Domestic Plumbing and Heating Work Undertaken</p> <p>A1 High Efficiency Boilers Fitted Gas Appliances Fitted and Serviced (Inc LPG) Landlord Gas Safety Check and Certificates Aga/Rayburn Servicing Fully Insured Water Safe Approved Operative CIPHE Registered Plumber</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mobile 07555100848</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:ljd-bell-plumbing-heating@outlook.com">ljd-bell-plumbing-heating@outlook.com</a></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>N Drum</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Landscaping, Fencing and Maintenance Garden and Grounds Maintenance Hedge Planting and Cutting Grass Cutting and Turfing Power Washing and Winter Gritting Licensed Waste Carrier Fully Insured</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tel. 01235 859229 or 07922701634</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:n drumlandscaping@gmail.com">ndrumlandscaping@gmail.com</a></p>

## History of St. Mary's Church

There has been a church in Upton since at least 1092, when it was recorded that the tithes were given to the Cluniac Priory of Bermondsey. Perhaps the present building is the actual church mentioned as some of its features suggest it could have been built at an even earlier date. Its simple structure has never been drastically enlarged. It still consists basically of a nave and chancel which communicate through a round chancel arch.

The vestry and entrance doorways, north and south, are both narrow and round-headed. They are also opposite each other, an arrangement common before the Norman Conquest. On the outside, the entrance door has a



St. Mary's Church in about 1900

Vandyke pattern round the arch, a late 12th century decoration. The arch itself seems to have been reset at some time and the stones displaced, the keystone appears to be at the side. There are two scratch dials (sundials), one dated 1629 on the east side of the doorway, with signs of knife-sharpening on the outside. On the inside of the south door, the arch has been flattened to allow the door to open.

The fine timber roof is probably 15th century; what the original roof was like we do not know. A ceiling which hid the rafters, box pews, a three-decker pulpit and a gallery (would that have been for musicians?) at the west end were all removed during a major restoration in 1885.

The walls are of chalk rubble and are very thick, with a pronounced batter (thicker at the base than at the top), but chalk can dissolve if wet so the surface had to be covered. The present flint was applied when the church was restored; an old framed water colour painting shows that previously there were patches of brick and that the roof was thatched. Originally the walls were probably covered with mud and lime. The interior walls remain lime-washed.

The stonework around the chancel arch doors and windows could be Beer or Caen stone (a very fine relatively soft limestone). The font is lead lined, it underwent repairs in the 1800s so is not of the same stone. The Chamber Organ was given to the church at the end of the 18th century and for many years it stood by the chancel arch. It is believed that the instrument was a mix of two organs and that some of the pipework was 17th century in origin, probably around 1680.

A major restoration of the church was undertaken in 1885. The porch was added early in the 20th century and the vestry in 1934-5.

We now have wood block and tile flooring and electric lighting that was installed in 1938, but the lighting was not what you see now. The present 'up' lighting reflecting off the inside of the roof was installed in the late 1960s in memory of the Rector Derwas Chitty and further 'down-spots' were installed in 2002.

But what would it have been like originally? Probably the floor was just earth strewn with straw, we know that early churches did not have seating, perhaps they took their own cushions or stools or had bundles of straw or hay around the edge, the lighting would probably have been by tallow and oil lamps. Imagine what Upton must have been like in those early days, no more than a small hamlet, I wonder how many would have attended those early services and what form they would have taken.

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Submissions for *Upton News* should be sent to

[kameki39@btinternet.com](mailto:kameki39@btinternet.com)

Deadline for the September edition is

**Thursday 27th August**



Unfortunately Covid 19 prevented us from having the normal Annual Parish Meeting at which the Chairman of the Parish Council gives an account of how he has seen things evolve in the parish during the previous 12 months. As he was not able to give the report in the usual way he has asked that it be sent out as an addendum to the Upton News. Please note the report was written at the end of May but as a result of a misunderstanding it did not get added to last month's edition.

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## **Parish Council's Chairman's Report 2019-2020**

It has been a roller-coaster of a year for Upton Parish Council. The very sad passing of the long serving Upton Parish Councillor Stuart Norman, the co-option of myself and David Beccles and the resignations of Stuart Fraser, Ian Sykes and Jo Fidgen have meant that keeping everything going has proved particularly difficult with such a loss of experience this year. We are still remaining two Parish Councillors short of a full complement, not to mention Covid 19 which has not only made it a challenge to hold meeting, but also difficult for those volunteering to maintain the village facilities.

Despite this evolving situation, I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as Chairman of Upton Parish Council. The ever changing position of the Council certainly keeps the situation both challenging as well as rewarding.

My thanks must certainly go to all of the volunteers who have worked so hard both on behalf of the UPC and the Village. In particular, Graham De Wilde, who has for so long been organising the Volunteers including Paul Batho, Nick Thackray, Stuart Fraser, Rob Traynor, Bob Lott and Peter Head all of whom help to cut the grass and maintain the play areas, amongst many other pivotal duties that they undertake. We truly appreciate you and all your efforts.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Mike Brown for his ongoing hard work with Upton News. It is a highly demanding task that keeps us all informed and entertained which, as I write this, strikes me as much more difficult than I had realised.

My thanks also go to Jacqui Reid and the UVHAT committee of volunteers for all their help supporting the Village Hall as a fantastic focal point for the village. Their role in supporting the community with fundraising and events is such a pivotal part of what being a resident of Upton Village means to so many of us.

I also want to thank Sarah Carter for her welcome initiative in setting up the Upton Village Help Group which I know has been widely appreciated by many Upton residents.

Lastly, I want to thank all of my fellow Councillors for everything that they have done this past year.

The challenges they have faced have been numerous and it should hopefully always be recognised that everyone on Upton Parish Council are volunteers

often giving up their free time at the expense of time spent with their friends and family.

I as Chairman and we as a Community are very fortunate to have such a passionate and resilient Parish Clerk for a village like Upton. Liz's job can often be difficult and very time consuming and I thank her warmly on all our behalves for her efforts.

I am very pleased to report that there have been some great successes this year: Following the successful Village website set up by Brian Rippon, Peter McLaughlin has completed the transfer of the website hosting and set up new councillor web mail addresses. I'm sure it has taken him longer to explain it to me and the other Councillors than it did to set it up. We very much appreciate that he made his skill set available to the Council and for the Village.

Following last year's Annual Parish Meeting (APM) we have had reason to explore all manner of suggestions and ideas put forwards by Parishioners such as: Additional car parking facilities for the Village Hall; The relocation of the toddler's playground to a new location nearer to the other play area, as well as the passionate views of some parishioners about the possibility of a garden and seating area within the recreation ground.

No one Councillor could have done this alone but a considerable number of face to face meetings, perspective plans and organising took place by Brendan Heneghan, David Beccles, Peter McLaughlin and Liz Cooper, who has been meeting and vetting contractors for the purpose of drafting questionnaires and then making plans for the coming 5 years.

The UPC, in conjunction with Sustrans, High Ways and County Councillor Mike Fox-Davies, has supported the campaign led by Ben Amos and Mike Brown and other parishioners to close the Chilton Road leading to Hagbourne Hill Road to motor vehicles.

Councillor Brendan Heneghan has worked closely with the Blewbury Parish Council and Speed Watch to acquire a camera and training to help reduce speeding through the villages, which is an ongoing project.

This year, more than ever, it has become even more apparent how much we rely on our community for support. Our focus therefore has primarily been in planning and costing the works that have been diligently and committedly undertaken for so long by our volunteer support army both on big and small jobs around the village.

Many of you will be aware that for a very long time the local elections in the Parish have been uncontested. On more than one occasion, we have not managed to garner any interest from villagers in being co-opted onto the UPC.

It is so very easy to become complacent and expect that others will do these important jobs; What you may not be aware of, is that this is also the case for the Volunteer Work Groups and for Upton News where we have sadly been advised of resignations in both but have high hopes of being able to

pass the torch on so that they can continue their well-established legacies.

If you are reading this you will hopefully have seen that we have sent out several messages in Upton News and on the Village Notice Boards asking for voluntary support and yet, sadly we have found little to be forth coming.

Frustratingly for the Council we do need to remind people that we do not run the Upton News and nor do we run the Working Groups. They are both Volunteer Groups which we support as a Council with either money and/or advice and technical support as requested (albeit that it is all too often the other way around given that the leaders of the volunteer groups and the Editor of Upton News are so long standing).

It should therefore unfortunately be noted that if we find that we no longer have sufficient volunteers to run these groups then we would (if it were requested that we do so) have to hire people to do these jobs at a cost to the Parish.

As it currently stands if things are left as they are, there will be a void and it will not be possible to maintain the village as it is now without either an increase in volunteers, very large increases to the precept, or a steady general decline of the available facilities to the village.

There are over 400 residents in the village and we need villagers to play their part to make things happen. As you can see, Upton Parish Council has achieved a great deal this year and the Council has plenty of exciting things planned for the future but it needs your help, to make the village you live in a better place to be. Please do consider whether you can spare an hour or two a month to help

The more people who are willing to come forward to support the village, the less work and associated cost there is and the more we can achieve together. If you value the village and its facilities, then we really need you to be a part of the change you want to see. It really is that simple. We need the Village to help make plans to implement the changes you want to see and to commit to its upkeep or to fundraising to pay someone to do so.

With all this in mind we will soon be sending a sample survey out to all households in the village on a number of different areas. This will not be dissimilar to the previous Parish Questionnaires. We hope that this will help us to formalise a Five Year Plan for the village to work towards and to identify the village priorities.

It has been an honour and a privilege to have served as co-opted Chairman of Upton Parish Council during the past year. I believe that our actions have continued to have a positive impact on providing improving facilities within the Parish and will we hope continue to do so in future years to come.

Kind regards,

Cllr Benjamin Shaw

Chairman of Upton Parish Council