

Upton News



Vol 5 No.51

October 2020

Church Services

The Harvest Festival Service will be held at St Mary's on Sunday 4th October at 10.30 am. There is a special collection for the Didcot Food Bank and contributions may be left in the container behind the church gates during the daytime. The food bank has requested tinned meats and tinned vegetables, especially carrots, potatoes, peas, green beans, tomatoes and sweetcorn. All contributions will be gratefully received, by Saturday 3rd October please.

In the meantime the church will continue to be open on Wednesdays and Sundays from 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Online church services will continue 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

The October Pram Service will be held on Wednesday 7th October at 12.30pm. The service will be held outside Blewbury Church, on the grassy area by the North Door, but we shall be able to go inside church if it is too cool or wet. Please be prepared to wear face covering inside the church. For more details and if you would like a Happy Meal please contact Revd Louise Butler 07837 009 730

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2020

Owing to the ongoing Covid 19 Pandemic, there will not be any house to house collections this year. However, from the 22nd October there will be a collection box and poppies available at the George and Dragon here in the village, in Blewbury at Savages, the Garage, the Post Office, the Blueberry, the Red Lion and also at the Horse and Harrow in West Hagbourne.

I am also trying to arrange to set up a table somewhere in the village so that villagers can purchase a Poppy from myself or one of the other collectors, this will depend on current restrictions and also the weather. I will provide further details nearer the time.

Helen Weston

Parish Council

The Parish Council (PC) held a full council meeting on 17th September. Subjects close to resident's hearts were discussed:-

- Decommissioning of the toddler play area and creation of a new area next to the adventure play area

- Replacement fence/hedge to the rear of the rec

- Car park extension

Progress is being made in all areas and largely consists of fact finding and estimating potential costs. Progress is slow - the council remains two councillors short, and current councillors are dealing with their own health issues. No concrete decisions have been made by the PC on any work at this stage.

The PC has devised a questionnaire for the whole village on what they would like to see happen. This will be with you in the next month.

The PC is also about to engage a contractor to deal with repairs to play equipment/play areas. If any area or piece of equipment is cordoned off, please leave it that way - it will be for a very good reason.

If you'd like to help with the rate of progress, either as a councillor or as a volunteer, and make a difference for your village, then please contact the Parish Council Clerk on 07968 772935 or email

parish.clekr@uptonvillage.co.uk. We'd love to hear from you.

Parish Clerk

District Council

Hello! We hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well, now that children are back at school and more people are returning to their workplaces. Although it feels as though things are returning to normal, many residents are still feeling the impact of coronavirus in one way or another. If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out for help: the council's Community Support Hub is still available, see contact details below. There is also new emergency assistance funding available from the council for voluntary and community groups who are helping those in need. On that note, a huge thank you to The United Charities of the Ancient Parish of Blewbury (which includes Upton!) for your essential support for local residents throughout the past few months.

Savages have also done a fantastic job throughout the pandemic, continuing to provide delicious fresh fruit and veg to residents from Upton, Blewbury and beyond. We hope that residents were able to make use of the "Eat Out To Help Out" scheme in August, to enjoy meals and drinks at The George and Dragon and other local venues. We recently met up for our first in-person catch-up in months over coffee and cake at the wonderful Style Acre Tea Rooms - a real community asset, we encourage you to support their

[crowdfunder](#) if you can. Please do continue to support the lovely local pubs, farm shops and other local suppliers as much as possible, to ensure that they can keep going through these difficult financial times. Shopping locally is also better for the environment, particularly when it comes to locally grown, produced or sourced products, as they have travelled far fewer miles to get to your doorstep.

As always, we will keep you updated on council matters and the council's response to COVID-19 through these newsletter articles, as well as on our dedicated councillor Facebook Page: [Cllrs Hayleigh Gascoigne & Sarah Medley](#).

Community Support Hub

Even though the guidelines for those shielding has changed, we want all of our residents to know that the Community Support Hub is still here to provide support and advice. To contact the Community Support Team: call: 01235 422 600 Monday to Thursday 8.30am-5.00pm and Fridays 8.30am-4.30pm or email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk.

Cycling Update

Councillors and staff at the Vale have been taking part in “Cycle September” - a global event to help more people realise the benefits of riding a bike. More information can be found on <https://www.lovetoride.net/uk>. If you took part in this yourself, or if you would like to spread the word about your favourite cycling routes around the local area, we would love to hear from you. One of our favourite local routes for cycling is along the Harwell link road, with its dedicated cycle path separated from the road, and beautiful views of the Didcot landscape and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We were very pleased to see the new cycle-only access scheme on Chilton Road, a change which has been in the pipeline for a long time, and has been accelerated due to the recent circumstances. We have been informed that it is proving to be very popular with a big increase in its use for recreational walking and cycling and even roller blading.

Car Park Charges

Vale of White Horse District Council's Cabinet has prioritised supporting local businesses recovering from COVID-19 ahead of addressing the council's own longer-term financial pressures in deciding about changes to car park charges across the district. Earlier this month, Cabinet considered a range of options for the district's council car parks.▫ After listening to feedback from local residents and businesses, Cabinet members unanimously agreed to retain two hours free parking across the district in order to ensure that town centre shops and cafes can continue to benefit from the scheme while they recover from the pandemic.▫

Planning for the Future consultation

The government has started its consultation to overhaul the planning system and reform the way development is allowed. Its stated aims are to

streamline processes, achieve community engagement early in the process and increase the use of technology in consultation and provide interactive maps, so it is more open and transparent. There is a lot of discussion in the press about the proposed reforms, but we encourage you to read the consultation paper, link below, and get your comments to the Government by the deadline, 29 October 2020.□□

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907647/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us with any issues or concerns - our email addresses are hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.□

Sarah and Hayleigh

HUGS Hagbournes and Upton Group for Sustainability.

HUGS were at the Hagbourne Produce Show last month (socially distanced in the car park) to ask villagers what sustainable activities they'd be interested in. Popular suggestions included tree planting, a repair cafe, a pop-up refill station and wilding of verges and other areas. We'll be working on making these happen.

We also attended September's Upton Parish Council meeting to propose ways to keep the village green and low-carbon.

3-Village Wildlife Walk

We're pleased to launch a wildlife walk in celebration of the beautiful landscape we live in. It's a 2 mile circular route connecting the 3 villages along footpaths and the cycle track. It's mainly metalled path so will be great for autumnal and wintery walks as well as spring and summer.

A printable map and directions are at www.hugsustainability.org/walk

As locals, you've probably enjoyed the scenery and wildlife on parts or all of the route already. There are several hidden gems including the Hagbourne cemetery wildflower meadow (in summer) and Mowbray Fields Nature Reserve. There's a top 10 wildlife spotting list for kids too.

We've walked the route with Steve Gozdz of Goring Gap Wildlife Walks, who's offering guided tours of the route and has described it as a 'haven of wildlife to be discovered.'

We'd be delighted to see any pictures you take and to hear about wildlife you find along the way.

The HUGS Team hugsustainability@gmail.com

Swap Shop

Single Electric Adjustable Bed - Free but a contribution to the Village Hall or Parkinson's UK would be welcome.

Elizabeth 07771640860

Village Produce Association

The Banksian Medal competition will be held on 12th December. In order to enter you need to make a Decoration for the Christmas Lunch Table and also a Wreath for the Front Door.

The table decoration can be any size and shape with all types of decoration and accessories. The wreath can be any size and include all types of accessories. Both items must be entered into the competition which is open to everyone in the family so it can be a combined effort.

Details:-

1. If you wish to enter, please record your name, address, phone no./email, by Monday 30th November at either Blewbury Post Office, Maggie Maytham at Toad Hall, Upton (Tel: 850126) or send your details to the VPA email address: vpa.in.bl.up@gmail.com
2. Place your name and details in envelopes and attach one to each of your entries.
3. Deliver your entries between 10am and 10.30am on Saturday 12th December to Blewbury Village Hall.
4. Judging will take place at 11.00am
5. Collect your entries between 11.45am and 12 noon.
6. The winner will be advised on collection of their entries and the medal presented. It will also be announced in the next editions of the Blewbury Bulletin and Upton News.
7. All Covid-19 restrictions/regulations at the time of the event will be strictly adhered to.
8. For Covid-19 safety the Committee will NOT be opening the competition for members of the public to view the exhibits. We will take photographs. If there is a total Government lockdown again at the time of the event, it will have to be cancelled.

If you have any queries or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Eileen Bracken at the VPA email address:

vpa.in.bl.up@gmail.com or call on 0777 518 5322.

Please support the Village Produce Association whilst having fun with this competition and have the chance to win this prestigious medal.

Eileen

Driving Miss Daisy

Life is for living. Regardless of age and ability, we passionately believe life should be lived to the full and we're just as passionate about helping people to do just that. We are Driving Miss Daisy Didcot and would like to introduce ourselves to the Upton community. Providing specialist door to door transport services and friendly companionship, we do more than just take you from A-B. We can accompany you on your trip and even settle you back afterwards with a cup of tea or a game of chess. Whether you need to attend a medical appointment, or you want a day trip to the garden centre or even the seaside, we're here at your service. We've even helped an 82 year old to tick sky diving off her list! So whatever is on your to-do list or bucket list, you can count on us as your friendly, reliable transport and companion service.

Contact Jen at jen.missdaisy@gmail.com

Blewbury Post Office

We are still open Monday to Friday mornings 8.30am until 12 noon, there are rumours about us closing, but not to our knowledge. Two potential new members of staff are about to embark on their training, so hopefully we will be able to open in the afternoons and on Saturday mornings very soon. Maggie is working full time in Hagbourne, as Steve has had a nasty accident and is off work until December.

We have beautiful Rupert stamps out now, glorious Bugs in early October, and we are expecting the Christmas stamps in shortly, they will be on sale in early November. The basic rate for Europe is now £1.45 and for the rest of the world £1.70

Anyone with a Post Office card account, will be receiving letters that this service is closing, just fill out the form, and have your pension and allowances paid into a bank account, you can still get your money out at the post office, (and pay in cash or cheques very easily)

Royal Mail have reported an increase of 40% in mail since March, there are still delays to the service, and we ask that ALL mail is processed by 11.30 am every day, we still have people rushing in at closing time, when we are struggling to clean and cash up.

We rely on sales from the shop to support paying for staff, Post Office Ltd do not pay for them, I have to pay them from my allowance, (which is a pittance I can tell you), we have heard from the High Court that POL have once again asked for a delay in court case No 4, (the one that decides if we are actually employed by POL, or still classed as 'agents' with no sick pay, no pension or rights) POL have lost the last 3 cases decidedly, and have little hope of winning this one either! They still take tax and national insurance out of my 'remuneration' as they call it!

So please help us by buying a few cards or something, when you are next in! Christmas stock is on its way! Trying hard to stock up with more recyclable goods, with less glitter and plastic!

Karen and Maggie

Electric Blanket Testing

The county council is offering free electric blanket testing as they do every year, but because of Covid restrictions the process will be a bit different. They'll post a special plastic bag to the address for residents to put their electric blanket in, and then someone will come and collect the blanket from their homes, take it away to be tested and then return it once it's done.

The tests will be carried out across Oxfordshire in October. Book now by emailing communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk or by calling 01865 895999

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Foot Care</p> <p>A Mobile Foot Clinic for Upton</p> </div>  </div> <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>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Gary Cuddon</p> <p>9 Harwood Road East Hagbourne</p> <p>Painter and Decorator</p> <p>Providing a High Quality Service</p> <p>Free Quotations</p> <p>Fully Insured</p> <p>Tel. 01235 510680 or 07827752904</p> </div>  </div>
<p>Scotlands Ash Garage</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>enquiries@scotlandsashgarage.co.uk</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>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>The Nurseries, London Road, Blewbury 01235 850352</p> <p>shop@savagesblewbury.co.uk</p> </div>  </div>
<p>LJD Bell Plumbing & Heating Services</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>Mobile 07555100848</p> <p>ljd-bell-plumbing-heating@outlook.com</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>N Drum</p> <p>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>Tel. 01235 859229 or 07922701634</p> <p>ndrumlandscaping@gmail.com</p> </div>  </div>

Astons On Line

Free and friendly help for Upton computer users every Tuesday morning from 10:00am to 12:00noon. We provide help remotely by telephone, Facetime, Skype, Zoom, Teams or WhatsApp, whichever is best for you. Book a 30 minute appointment by emailing theastonsonline@gmail.com or, if this is not possible, by phoning 07780 958249.

Join in an online meeting 10:30am to 11:15am on Tuesday 20th October to exchange good ideas about communicating online, using Facetime, Skype, Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp etc. Book a place using the email address above.

Go to www.astonsonline.uk for more information”

Rector's Note



The Doctor and the Artist

On the 18th October, the church traditionally celebrates the feast of St. Luke, the author of one of the 4 gospels in the New Testament, and also the author of the Acts of the Apostles, a historical work telling the history of the early Church. Not much is known of Luke's life, although in one of the other books of the New Testament he is described as Luke the Physician. Down the centuries, Luke has been regarded as the patron saint of doctors and others in the medical profession.

By the early Middle Ages, Luke was also regarded as the patron saint of artists. It's not clear why this came about. It might be a sign of respect for Luke's skill as a writer. Luke's gospel is full of passages of great artistic beauty, and these passages have inspired artists down the centuries to produce significant works of art. For example, it is in Luke's gospel that we read of the visit of the Angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary, known as the Annunciation, and it is Luke's gospel which includes the parable of the Prodigal Son. Both these stories have inspired memorable works of art.

So, Luke has become the patron saint of Doctors and Artists, and it is his feast day on 18th October. It is an opportunity to give thanks for our Doctors and other medical professionals, and to pray for them and for their work. These Coronavirus times have made us even more aware of the vital role played by all who work in our health services. It is also an opportunity to pray for all artists, and to give thanks for all who work in the creative industries - the painters, sculptors, musicians, actors, and writers who do so much to improve the quality of our lives. The restrictions brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic have had a serious impact on the financial viability of much of the cultural life of our country. Our artists certainly deserve our prayers, and our financial support, too.

The fact that Luke is the patron saint of both doctors and artists reminds us that our well-being as human beings has many dimensions. Of course, our physical and mental health is important. But the arts also play a role in our well-being. So too do our relationships with one another, and the wider well-being of our communities and our society.

Father Jason

Cycling Support

Safe Cycling' sessions for novice or nervous riders over the age of 16 will take place at Abingdon on Saturdays the 3rd and 10th of October at 10.30, you will need to book by contacting Ashley from our Active Communities Team, ashley.chapman@southandvale.gov.uk. The activities are Covid-safe.

Wine Club

September saw the start of a new season for the UWC. With the first ever virtual UWC quiz finishing off the last season in June, this was the first “real” meeting since February this year! It was great to see everyone together, albeit with the new social distance rules that apply to the village hall.

The rules and guidelines for the village hall relating to COVID-19 are constantly being reviewed to ensure we are fully up to date and compliant. Whilst we have had to make some changes for everyone’s protection, it has been brilliant to have the opportunity to bring back a little bit of normality for everyone who enjoys the wine club.

September allowed the club to start the new season with the delayed March meeting, which was wines from Brian and Giulia’s Strictly Wine business, presented by Ros and Andy, the distributors that have helped Strictly Wine build their business from the start!

One of the great things about wine is the varying tastes experienced from the same grape, which you get from the differing regions and methods of wine making. Great for the variety but not always easy to make a selection. Ros and Andy helped out here by comparing various wines for different countries and regions for everyone to compare and contrast.

To start we tried the Zorzal, Sauvignon Blanc “Eggo Blanc de Cal” from Mendoza with the Saint Clair Pioneer Block 1 from Marlborough. Whilst the New Zealand Marlborough is perhaps better known for SB, there was an even split on preference. Try the Zorzal for something different!

Next we tried the Tahbilk Viognier, Nagambie Lakes from Victoria and the Swartland Winery 'Limited Release' Carignan. Really interesting to try a white against a red. There was a clear winner here, with one member ordering several cases of the Carignan....Christmas come early (if it lasts that long!) 100% Carignan, with some great complexity and a combination of dark red fruits and chocolate - Yum!

We had two very contrasting Pinot Noir’s to taste next. Lake Chalice 'The Nest' Pinot Noir from Marlborough and Ernst Gouws Pinot Noir, Western Cape. Two great wines, which changed people’s view as the wine opened up. The Nest, produced some very aromatic flavours mixed with light raspberries, whilst the Ernst Gouws was a much deeper red with again, more chocolate notes with red berries. Both great and worth trying with some Pate for a lazy Sunday supper!

Out last wine comparison was the Argentine Piattelli Premium Malbec Premium, Cafayate and the Berton Vineyard Gundagai Shiraz from New South Wales, Australia. Both brilliant wines to finish on, with the Australian Shiraz becoming the overall favourite, with some beautiful deep red berry flavours. Just right for a beef casserole!

If you fancy trying any of the wines above then please look up strictly-wine.com (or just see Brian). For anyone wanting to know more about the wine club or who wants to come along and see what it's all about please go to our website (www.uptonwineclub.com) or mail ian.langley@yahoo.co.uk. Looking forward to October's meeting, where the committee will be talking about some of their favourite wines from the Summer!

Ian
(Chairman)

Update on Covid Testing in Oxfordshire

A message from the District Council

We've been made aware of a worrying trend of people turning up at our hospitals in Oxfordshire, asking to be tested for Covid-19. This is possibly as a result of the national issue with testing capacity, where people have struggled to book a test online. We are therefore supporting our NHS and Public Health colleagues in pushing out the extremely important message that people with symptoms must NOT go to a hospital. Testing does not take place in hospital settings and by turning up people are putting extra strain on resources by having to turn people away and also potentially putting vulnerable people at risk.

If you're aware of anyone struggling to book a test online the advice is to keep trying as it's only possible to book a slot when one becomes available. Slots become available throughout the day so it may take a few attempts at different times of the day.

The other key message is to only book a test if you're displaying symptoms. You can book a test by calling 119 or by registering online via gov.uk/getting-tested-for-coronavirus.

Submissions for *Upton News* should be sent to

kameki39@btinternet.com

Deadline for the November edition is

Tuesday 27th October