

# Upton News



Vol 5 No.56 March 2021

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## Church Services

### Online Services

Online church services will continue on Sundays at 10.30am, login or connect from 10.00am to chat before the service. Please see the website [www.churnchurches.co.uk](http://www.churnchurches.co.uk) .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)

### March Pram Service - Family Praise!

The March Pram Service on Wednesday 10th March at 4.00pm will be a short service in preparation for Mothering Sunday

Contact Revd Louise 07837 009 730 for your log in details on zoom.

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## Courses for Lent

### My Song is Love Unknown.

Taking a look at some well-known Lent and Easter Hymns every Wednesday at 7.30pm over a 6 week period that started on February 24th. Contact Rev'd Jason 01235 850267 for your log in details on zoom.

### Growing in God's Garden.

Making a Lent/Easter garden—a practical, reflective Lent Project every Thursday at 4.30pm over a 6 week period that started on February 25th. An opportunity to share and meet others online at: “Teatime in the Garden”. Contact Rev'd Louise 07837 009 730 for your log in details on zoom.

### York Course - “Living in Hope”

Every Tuesday at 8.00pm over a 4 week period starting 2nd March. Contact Rev'd John [jphclarke@gmail.com](mailto:jphclarke@gmail.com) for your log in details on zoom.

Further details of the courses are available on leaflets in Church porches, or on the Churn Churches website [www.churnchurches.co.uk](http://www.churnchurches.co.uk) .

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## Parish Council

The Parish Council recently held two extraordinary meetings to finalise the response to the Chilton Road and A417 London Road (Upton) Proposed Traffic Management and Toucan Crossing Consultation. The Parish Council followed the results of the Working Group and the response was submitted on the deadline of 19th February. The work does not finish with the consultation response! There remain areas of concern for the village, which it is hoped will be examined further by the Working Group in due course. The consultation response will be published on the village web site, together with the minutes from the meetings.

The Parish Council has ordered new wood chippings for the adventure play area. Delivery is currently scheduled for Friday 12th March. Volunteers are needed for two activities: -

1. Prior to delivery, the existing ground needs to be raked/turned over. If anyone has a good rake or other tool that will do the job and can spare an hour or two, please contact the Clerk. It is hoped this work will take place from Monday 8th to Thursday 11th, all weather dependant of course.
2. On the day of delivery, the endeavour is for the lorry to deliver the wood chippings directly on to the play area. They will then need to be spread about, so this time, if anyone has a shovel, a wheelbarrow, a rake and can spare an hour or two, the Clerk will be glad to hear from you.

Social distancing will still be in place, so if we're lucky to get a number of volunteers, we may need to allocate hourly slots.

Please contact the Clerk on [parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk](mailto:parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk) or 07968772935.

*Liz Cooper* Clerk to Upton Parish Council

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## District Council

### Winter Support Scheme

There has already been a lot of demand for the new [Winter Support Grant Scheme](#) that the councils launched in January. This grant is available for any families or households across the districts who need help to buy food and/or heat their homes this winter. Even if they have had vouchers from a previous scheme, they can access more through this grant to help provide a meal for their family. Residents can contact their local accredited Citizens Advice Centre 0300 3309042 or via their website: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale/>

### Covid 19 Testing

There is now a local Covid 19 testing centre set up at The Beacon in Wantage for public-facing workers and volunteers who are not displaying symptoms. People in these roles who cannot work from home and do not have access to workplace testing will be able to book a weekly test at the centre. Tests are booked via the county council's [online booking system](#).

## Council Tax Support

The Vale of White Horse District Council are to extend the support they are providing to help working age people who are struggling to pay their council tax as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. For more information please visit [whitehorsedc.gov.uk/counciltax](http://whitehorsedc.gov.uk/counciltax) or call 0345 302 2315.

## Garden Waste Collections

Garden waste collections resumed from 15<sup>th</sup> Feb. The service will happily collect any real Christmas trees, if possible please cut the tree up and pop it inside the bin. There are more details on the service resuming on our [garden waste webpage](#)

## Budget

The Council has set out budget plans for 2021/2022 which protect front line services, continue to support local residents and businesses through the pandemic and help stabilise the council's finances for the medium term. The budget would result in an increase of less than 10p per week on Band D Council Tax. Annual council tax will be £141.69 for services provided by the district council, up from £136.69 this year. The Vale currently has the 15th lowest council tax in the country for a shire district and significantly lower than the national average of £194.22.

## Valley Park

We were very pleased with the outcome of Vale of White Horse District Council Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday 16th February - the committee agreed unanimously to defer the decision on the Valley Park planning application! This is great news, as it means there is now more time available for residents and councillors to really push for our own local vision of what Valley Park should be.

Deferring the application was voted for on the basis that further clarity needs to be sought on healthcare provision, the monstrous 5-arm roundabout and biodiversity before a decision can be made. To see the speeches and debate on YouTube go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xZR4Ks-N3o>

We will continue to 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](#). Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any issues or concerns - our email addresses are [hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) and [sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

*Sarah and Hayleigh*□□

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Please note that this month Hayleigh and Sarah sent me six pages of information for which I am very grateful. I have selected what I think are the most important bits that I feel suitably fits into our normal eight page newsletter. If anyone would like to read their full report each month please send me your email address and I will be pleased to forward it to you.

*Editor*

## Rector's Note



### Giving Something Up for Lent

I wonder if you are giving something up for Lent? In the old days, Lent was a serious business. It was associated with a time of fasting when people expressed sorrow for their sins. But times change, and so has the keeping of the Lent. It is fairly rare nowadays to hear anyone proclaiming the virtues of abstinence, perhaps because self-denial seems quite a negative concept. Nowadays, people often choose to keep Lent not by giving something up, but by taking on an additional commitment. It

might take the form of giving money to a charity or attending a course to learn more about the Christian faith.

But I'm wondering whether we might still find spiritual nourishment in the old-fashioned idea of giving something up.

To start with, for most of us, our lives are probably so crammed full of activity and commitments that realistically we simply aren't able to do anything more. Perhaps we need to do less, so that we can create a bit of space in our lives - space for ourselves and for our relationships with one another. Lent can give us the permission to stop doing something. It's not that the thing we're stopping doing isn't a good and valuable thing. But we just need to give ourselves a bit more space in our lives. We can't be running at full speed every moment of every day.

Furthermore, giving something up helps us to strengthen our ability to make good choices in our lives. Our willpower is like a muscle: it needs to be exercised. Sometimes there are things we know we need to do, but we simply lack the willpower to do them. So, we need to strengthen the willpower that we do have. Some people have found that giving something up for Lent is a good way of strengthening our willpower more generally. If we have the strength to give up something fairly small, this will help us when we need the strength to make a more significant choice in our lives.

And what if we fail and give in to temptation? This can also be a helpful if painful experience, because it is a reminder that by ourselves none of us has the strength or insight we need to live the lives we ought to lead.

In short, Lent is a time to remind ourselves of our need for God.

*Fr Jason*

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### **Blewbury Post Office**

Our opening times remain Monday to Friday mornings 8.30am to 12 noon, afternoons 2.30pm to 5.00pm except Wednesday and Saturday and Saturday morning 9.30am to 12 noon. Please note that we will be closed on Good Friday, and Easter Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

The latest acceptance time for mail items is 4.30pm or 9.45am on

Wednesday and Saturdays.

Face coverings must be worn, hand sanitiser is available on the way in and out again, only one person (or bubble) at a time.

There are still delays in the postal system to some areas in the UK and abroad, everything that is a 'large letter' or 'parcel' size, going outside the UK, must have the right customs label on it, filled out in block capitals, (there are 2 different ones, for tracked or untracked items)

We have some very pretty stamps, National Parks, Only Fools and Horses, Star Trek and Rupert Bear. Kitty's hens are laying again, rare breed hens producing beautiful free-range eggs and we also have local honey, pretty scarves, homemade jewellery and other goodies.

We have 'Duck Race' tickets in case we are allowed to go ahead this year.

The Post Office number is 01235 851777, and my mobile is 07825154842, in case you urgently need anything outside office hours.

Stay safe everyone, we're nearly there!

*Karen, Maggie, Katrina and Micheal*

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## **Thank You**

On behalf of the Upton Parish Council I wish to send our thanks to all members of the Chilton Road Consultation Working Group for their time and efforts in making a recommendation to the Parish Council on the OCC survey.

I would also like to thank all of the community for coming forward to let us know their views by joining the online meetings, sending emails and making phone calls.

It was fantastic to see so much engagement from the Parish and we hope this will continue into the future.

*Ben Shaw*

Chairman Upton Parish Council

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## **Astons Online**

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

Join in an online meeting 10:30am - 11:15am on Tuesday 16th March with your questions; things you've seen in media; new online ideas; security worries; how do I? and hear what others talk about. Book a place using the email address above.

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

## HUGS

Our owl project is off to a flying start thanks to help from villagers who've been sending in sightings over the winter, and a grant from South Oxfordshire District Council.

Lu Barton, our owl specialist, will be leading the project. The aim is to:

- Survey areas in East and West Hagbourne and Upton to find out where owls are active.

- Install nest boxes for little owls, tawny owls and barn owls.

- Monitor the boxes and share data with the British Trust for Ornithology.

### Improving habitat for owls

Owls need a good food supply, so we'll be surveying the 3 parishes to find areas where we can plant new trees, hedges and wildflowers which will support the food chain.

For example, Upton Parish Council is looking at the idea of sowing wildflowers in the overflow cemetery.

### Wildlife-friendly gardening

It's not just public land that can help support owls; you could create your own wildlife-friendly garden or a wildlife corner. There's information on how to do this on the HUGS website ([www.hugsustainability.org/nature](http://www.hugsustainability.org/nature))

We'll be running a competition to find the best wildlife gardens in the area - details coming soon.

### Other ways to help

When you see or hear owls, please send the details to [hugsustainability@gmail.com](mailto:hugsustainability@gmail.com)

Include a postcode or use the *what3words* app on your phone so we can get an accurate location.

Tawny owls will be going quieter for now, while they start nesting. Little owls should start calling from now until late June/July. And from March onwards you might hear the screeching of barn owls until they start nesting too.

You can listen to the different owl calls on the HUGS website: [www.hugsustainability.org/owls](http://www.hugsustainability.org/owls)

Kieron

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## Village Produce Association

After the success of our December competition, we've decided to hold another one on Saturday 10th April. Have a go at our Spring Competition which is open to anyone of any age.

Create a Flowered Bonnet, Hat, Crown or Tiara.

## Rules

The headwear can be any size for a lady or gent, boy or girl.

It can be an existing hat or hand-made and any shape.

Flowers can be fresh or hand-made (NOT artificial bought flowers).

Whatever style of headwear it can include accessories.

If you wish to enter, please record your name, address, phone no/email by Wednesday 31st March 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](mailto:vpa.in.bl.up@gmail.com)

Place your name and details in an envelope and attach them to your entry.

Bring the entry between 10.00am and 10.30am to Blewbury Village Hall.

Collect at 12 noon.



The winners will be advised of the result on collection of their entry and prizes presented for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. The result will be announced in the next edition of the Upton News.

Covid-19 restrictions/regulations at the time of the event will be strictly adhered to.

For the safety of the Committee organisers the competition will not be open 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 additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Eileen Bracken at the VPA email address: [vpa.in.bl.up@gmail.com](mailto:vpa.in.bl.up@gmail.com) or call on 0777 518 5322.

*Eileen*

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## Swap Shop

If anyone knows of a good home for any of the following:-

A piano stool, old but perfectly serviceable

A large frig-freezer

3 wardrobes, 2 Victorian, 1 MFI, worn but usable

1 Victorian dressing table with 7 drawers

1 presentable chest of 4 drawers and 1 rather less presentable, to be banished to a garage perhaps.

Please call Malcolm Wright on 850705



### Foot Care



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Submissions for Upton News should be sent  
to

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

Deadline for the April edition is

**Saturday 27th March**