

Upton News



Vol 5 No.57

April 2021

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 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

Easter Pram Service - "At Home"

An Easter activity pack is being prepared for families with pre-school children and is also suitable for children in years 1 and 2. These will be delivered at the beginning of April. Please contact Revd Louise if you would like to receive one: revlouiseb@aol.com or mobile 07837 009730.

Revd Louise hopes to resume "face to face" Pram Service in May and looks forward to some socially distanced activities with you all. The venue will be St. Michael's Church, Blewbury on Wednesday 5th May at 12.30pm unless further restrictions are imposed.

Easter Gardens



The Benefice has been encouraging families to prepare Easter gardens. This activity is for all ages! If you are planning to make one in a seed tray or similar, you are invited to bring it into church. St. Mary's will be open on Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday from 9.00am - 5.00pm. Adults must wear masks and sanitise their hands when they enter the church, thank you.

Karate

Karate classes for youngsters aged 4 -17 will be returning in the Village Hall on Sunday 18th April at 11.30am. For more details contact John Hogan on 07548784929. I am hoping that we can get adults back on 23rd May

John Hogan

Parish Council

The Parish Council are delighted to announce play area projects that have recently come to fruition. Many thanks to those villagers who gave up their time to help with turning over the old surface, and then the distribution of the new chippings. It was an excellent turn out and the Parish Council, along with everyone in Upton, is most grateful for your help.



The new toddler play area is now in place but remains cordoned off while the new equipment is 'settling'. The equipment will then need to be thoroughly inspected before it can be used. All equipment from the old toddler play area has been removed. Discussions are underway for repurposing this area. Watch out for news of the 'grand' opening of the new play equipment!

There will be no Annual Parish Meeting this year as we remain unable to meet in person. However, annual reports are being asked of those who usually contribute and these will be published on the web site in due course. Please send any reports to parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk.

If you have any questions to ask of your parish councillors, or would like to know more about contributing to the work of the parish council, please contact the Clerk on 07968772935 or email parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk.

The next full parish council meeting will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council at 7.30pm on Thursday 20th May. This meeting will most likely be held via an e-conference system.

Liz Cooper Parish Clerk

District Council

Hello! We hope that you and your families are safe and well. After a long winter, and a whole year since the pandemic began, we hope we can all now look forward to brighter days ahead. As the government's cautious easing of lockdown restrictions has now begun, we continue to share the important message that whether people have had their vaccine or not, we all need to follow the latest guidance to stop the spread of infection. That means following the measures in place including handwashing, staying two metres apart and wearing a face-covering.

Covid 19 Council Assistance

For the most up-to-date coronavirus information relating to district council support and any changes to services, please take a look at the dedicated Vale webpage for updates: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/covid19

If people have nobody else to turn to, then The Community Support Team continues to be available to help people access support and essentials

during the lockdown and can be contacted on 01235 422600 Monday to Thursday 8.30am-5.00pm and Fridays 8.30am-4.30pm or by email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

The councils' Housing Needs team are available to help people who are at risk of being made homeless or who are sleeping rough - for more details visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/housing.

Support is available to residents who are experiencing financial difficulties - to find out more please visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/benefits. If you are having difficulty paying your council tax please visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/counciltax or call 0345 302 2315.

The deadline for Winter Support Grant applications has been extended by a couple of weeks to 16th April and we now have some additional funds from the government to support residents with supermarket vouchers and fuel vouchers or the direct payment of energy or water bills. Anyone needing help should contact our Community Hub www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communityhub

For details of the support grants available to businesses during the pandemic, visit South and Vale's Business Support website: svbs.co.uk.

Covid 19 Vaccines and Testing

Almost 220,000 people in Oxfordshire have received a Covid-19 vaccination so far, which includes nearly 7,000 people who have received their second vaccine dose. A total of 41,148 people in the Vale have had the jab so far, from a total population of 133,732.

The Beacon in Wantage is a local COVID-19 testing site for anyone who needs to leave home to work or volunteer and cannot access workplace testing from their employer. These free tests can be booked via the county council's [online booking system](#).

Valley Park

Thank you to everyone who attended our residents' feedback session on Valley Park earlier this month. It was great to hear your views, and it is clear that there are still a lot of concerns and questions about the roundabout design, the healthcare and biodiversity/sustainability. We plan to organise further feedback sessions in future to focus on these topics, so watch this space! In the meantime please feel free to email us your ideas and thoughts about the roundabout design, we can pass these on to the planning officers for consideration by the developer.

The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) have now responded to the Valley Park planning application, asking the developer to provide just under £4million for healthcare provision, as well as allocating land for a GP surgery site, in the event that the one on Great Western Park does not get built. The response from the OCCG needs to pass various planning tests so it is not yet set in stone, but we are very happy that this is a big step in the right direction. The application for Valley Park is unlikely to come back to planning committee until May at the earliest.

Recycling

We're very pleased to reveal that in the latest government figures, our

environmentally conscious residents in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are the second and third best recyclers in England. South Oxfordshire recycle 64 per cent of its waste, with the Vale recycling 63.3 per cent. This puts the two districts way above the national recycling rate of 45.5 per cent and they are also two of only 11 local authorities in the country with a recycling rate above 60 per cent.

Election Help

We are looking for people to take on paid work at this year's elections. On Thursday 6th May our residents will go to the polls to vote in the Police and Crime Commissioner and Oxfordshire County Council elections. Some areas will also have local by-elections and neighbourhood plan referendums. The various counts will then take place over the following days. To help ensure the smooth running of this event, we need to recruit as many people as possible. There are lots of roles available, paying a flat rate or from £14 per hour, and plans are being put in place to ensure all staff can work in a Covid-19 safe environment. If you know anyone who may be interested in working at the elections, please encourage them to visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs to find out more and to register their interest.

Encouraging Electric Vehicle Use

The Vale is currently working with Oxfordshire County Council with a view to introduce electric vehicle charging bays in some district council car parks. If this happens then, under the new policy, parking enforcement officers will have new powers to fine motorists who park non-electric vehicles in electric charging bays, or who leave an electric vehicle parked in a charging bay when it's not charging.

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 and sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

Sarah Medley and Hayleigh Gascoigne □□

Blewbury Post Office

Our opening times remain as Monday to Friday mornings 8.30am to 12.00 noon, and Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons, 2.30pm to 5.00pm. On Saturday mornings we are open 9.30am to 12.00noon.

We will be closed on Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Sunday and Monday and on the Saturday of the May Bank Holidays.

'King Arthur' special stamps are out now, and 'Horror Film' out later in April. The old £20 notes are still in circulation, so no need to worry just yet. Fresh eggs are available again, and local honey too.

Happy Easter from Karen, Maggie, Micheal and Katrina 🐣

Rector's Note



The Greatest Festival

Have you been looking forward to Easter? Easter day is always celebrated on a Sunday, and this year it falls on 4th April. For many Christians, Easter is the most important festival in the Church's year, more important even than Christmas or Pentecost. Why is Easter considered such an important festival?

For many people, Easter is the affirmation that death is not the end. Jesus rose again from the dead, and this gives us hope that we too can rise again from the dead. How does

this work? Christians have given different answers to this question down the centuries. But Christians have agreed that Easter is about having firm grounds for the hope of life after death. Jesus really did rise again from the dead. This really happened as a historical event. And so, we can have hope that for us too life does not come to an end when we die. Our death is the start of a new chapter in the story of our lives. Death is not the end.

Easter is also an affirmation that Jesus truly was who he said he was. Jesus made claims that he had a unique and authoritative relationship with God. He was more than simply a religious teacher or a good man: he was God himself in a human form. This was and is a remarkable claim. By raising Jesus from the dead, God vindicated the claims which Jesus made about himself. Indeed, there are passages in the bible which suggest that Jesus himself predicted that he would die and rise again.

Easter is also a celebration of the abiding significance of Jesus's death on the Cross. Christians often refer to Jesus's death and resurrection in the same breath, and there is a profound connection between the two events. By dying on the Cross, Jesus offered his life to God as a sacrifice for sin. In other words, Jesus sacrificed his life in order to restore our broken relationship with God. By raising Jesus from the dead, God declared that the sacrifice was accepted, and the relationship was indeed restored - not just for the men and women of Jesus' time, but for the men and women of every age.

I wonder what the celebration of Easter means to you?

Fr Jason

HUGS

Wildflowers in the Overflow Cemetery

We're getting ready to sow wildflower seeds along the eastern edge of the overflow cemetery. Upton Parish Council, the landowner, has given the go-ahead for us to carry out a trial sowing this year. We've raked out moss and scuffed up the grass (which tends to throttle wildflowers), and we'll be scattering seed soon.

The mix we're using contains flowers and grasses including oxeye daisies, field scabious and black medick.

Don't expect too much in the first year though. In spite of all the preparation the soil will probably still be too fertile for wildflowers to do well. Fingers crossed that'll come in successive years.

The grass won't be cut again until the flowers have bloomed and produced seeds.

If the experiment is successful we'll look at extending the sowing area next year, and maybe planting a hedge to give the space some definition and character.

Chilton Road Closure

As well as giving traffic-free access to the Hagbourne track and beyond, the closure of Chilton Road is proving to be a great wildlife haven. Badgers are active in the hedge, and there are increasing numbers of bird species to be seen. Yellowhammer, reed bunting and firecrest have all put in appearances in the last few weeks. You can check the full list of species on iRecord (www.brc.ac.uk/irecord) - search for 'Chilton Road survey'.

We'll be liaising with Wild Oxfordshire and Sustrans to look at how we can make the hedgerow and verges even better wildlife habitats.

Wildlife Garden Competition

We're launching our search for the most wildlife-friendly gardens in the area on 1st May! The competition is part of our project to support the local owl population.

Our website has ideas and inspiration for wildlife gardening at www.hugsustainability.org/wildlifegardening

Kieron

Wine Club

REAL "old world wines"

Having taken a few months off, it was great to host another virtual wine club in March. With record numbers joining for this month's meeting, the feeling was clearly shared amongst our members as well! This month we were trying wines, which in the main, were new to most members. With the support of

Strictly Wine, we were given a tour of wines from countries that could really be described as “old world”! Wines had been selected from countries that had been making wine for over 2000 years and in some cases, using methods that had not changed much over that time either!

We tried white wines from Turkey (Kayra Narince 2018); Croatia (Jako VINO Stina “Cuvee white” 2019); Cyprus (Kyperounda “Petritis” 2019) and Georgia (Vachnadziani Qvevri Rkatsiteli 2014). All were very good and more than stood up as an alternative to some of the more well known grapes and wines we might normally pick. If you have never tried an “orange” wine, then the Georgian wine was lovely (note, orange wine is very much like marmite - you’ll either love or hate them but definitely worth a try!) All the wines could easily be paired well with some traditional foods, sea foods, creamy pasta’s etc - www.strictlywine.co.uk offer some great suggestions for each one.

The reds again, gave us some wonderful examples of grape varieties that would not normally be classified as main stream! We had wines from Lebanon (Chateau Oumsiyat Desir 2018), Armenia (ArmAs Karmrahut Reserve 2013), Greece and Republic of North Macedonia (Tikves). The Lebanon wine was a great if you wanted an alternative to a Gamay, lovely slightly chilled and with some warm weather coming, would go down well with the first BBQ of the year! If a rich Australian red is your go to wine, then maybe try the Armenian, which had a little more ageing that brought out some amazing deep fruit flavours. There were wines for all tastes, sausage casseroles, classic BBQ’s and fine steaks!

Next wine club night is on the 21st April. If you are interested to know just a little more about wine (with a large serving of some great social fun), then please take a look at our web site www.uptonwineclub.co.uk or contact our chairman, ian.langley@yahoo.co.uk.

Ian

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 or, if this is not possible, by phoning 07780 958249.

Join in an online meeting 10.30am - 11.15am on Tuesday 20th April when we’ll showcase the courses we’ve come across in the last year, most of them free. You’ll be able to find out how to use more features of your equipment, learn new skills, be more confident working in community groups and jobs. Book a place using the email address above.

Please go to www.astonsonline.uk for more information.

David Platt

Those who knew David Platt will have been greatly saddened to hear of his death recently. When he served as Assistant Curate in this parish he was very highly thought of. The parish benefited from his long experience as a parish priest. He always took a sincere interest in all those he met. He cared deeply about the marginalised in society, about those whom he thought the Church neglected. He was outgoing, cheerful and always positive. A man of deep faith and, which is so important in a parish priest, a man of this world. He long supported the global movement for world peace, frequently to be seen, and arrested, at Faslane. David was, like the wisdom teacher in the Bible, a true humanist who believed in free will and, ultimately, in human responsibility.

He and his dear wife Gill, who was such a very good pianist and supporter for him in his work, now lie peacefully together in Upton churchyard. It was a privilege to know them.

Edwin Abbot

Village Produce Association

There is still time to Create a Flowered Bonnet, Hat, Crown or Tiara and enter the VPA Spring Competition on Saturday 10th April. For details Contact Blewbury Post Office or Maggie Maytham in Upton (850126) or email vpa.in.bl.up@gmail.com or call Eileen on 0777 518 5322

I'm sure everyone has been getting to grips with the weeds, cutting the grass and planning what is going into the veggie plot this year. Here's some food for thought on how to go about preparing your vegetable plot.

Five reasons not to dig - 1 Digging encourages soil-living creatures like worms to do the spadework for you. 2 It reduces the loss of moisture. 3 It protects the soil structure. 4 It prevents weed seeds being brought to the surface. 5 It's easier on the back.

Five Reasons to dig - 1 Digging breaks up heavily compacted soil, allowing it to breathe. 2 It kills surface weeds. 3 It exposes pests to predators and the cold. 4 If you don't, you'll need a lot more mulch to grow potatoes as you will not be 'earthing up'. 5 It's good exercise for those who want it.

I've actually tried a semi-no-dig method this year. I've hoed the plots and have gone down about four inches. This has loosened the soil and weeded it at the same time I can then go a bit deeper when I start planting, I hope this works -watch this space!

We are hoping that the VPA will be able to hold the Summer Show this year on the 10th JULY - it will depend on what Covid restrictions are still in place. We will keep you informed through the Bulletin.

DID YOU KNOW -Peppers contain up to five times as much vitamin C as oranges. The highest levels are found when the peppers are in the early green stage of ripening.

Eileen

<div data-bbox="120 116 176 164"></div> <div data-bbox="266 108 381 135" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Foot Care</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="473 116 529 164"></div> <p>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>	<div data-bbox="580 100 652 196"></div> <div data-bbox="720 108 871 135" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Gary Cuddon</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="938 100 1011 196"></div> <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>
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<div data-bbox="115 826 515 853" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>LJD Bell Plumbing & Heating Services</h3> </div> <p>All Domestic Plumbing and Heating Work Undertaken</p> <p>A1 High Efficiency Boilers Fitted</p> <p>Gas Appliances Fitted and Serviced (Inc LPG)</p> <p>Landlord Gas Safety Check and Certificates</p> <p>Aga/Rayburn Servicing</p> <p>Fully Insured</p> <p>Water Safe Approved Operative</p> <p>CIPHE Registered Plumber</p> <p>Mobile 07555100848</p> <p>ljd-bell-plumbing-heating@outlook.com</p>	<div data-bbox="585 818 664 906"></div> <div data-bbox="753 826 843 853" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>N Drum</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="932 818 1011 906"></div> <p>Landscaping, Fencing and Maintenance</p> <p>Garden and Grounds Maintenance</p> <p>Hedge Planting and Cutting</p> <p>Grass Cutting and Turfing</p> <p>Power Washing and Winter Gritting</p> <p>Licensed Waste Carrier</p> <p>Fully Insured</p> <p>Tel. 01235 859229 or 07922701634</p> <p>ndrumlandscaping@gmail.com</p>

Swop Shop

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

1 large frig-freezer

3 wardrobes, 1 Victorian, 1 vintage, 1 MFI

1 matching vintage dressing table

1 presentable chest of drawers, 1 less presentable, perhaps for the garage

Please call Malcolm Wright on 850705

Changing Times

I believe the time has come for a change and I intend to stand down as editor of your newssheet in the near future. My first Upton News was June 2007 and with a break from 2011 to 2017 I have now edited 110 editions. I obviously will not walk away and leave the parish without a newssheet which I know is appreciated by many of you but I would like to make the June edition my last which will give 3 months to find a successor. If any of you are prepared to take over the role please give me a call on 850135. I will give all the help that I can in getting you settled into the role.

I also understand that another change in the Upton News routine will be taking place next month when the Parish Council will be taking over the responsibility for sending out the online copies from Ian Ross who has done the job for the last 4 years. More on this will appear in the May edition.

Mike Brown

Submissions for Upton News should be sent
to

kameki39@btinternet.com

Deadline for the May edition is

Monday 26th April

A Green Heart for Upton

This time next year the old toddler playpark site could be coming into bloom: spring bulbs flowering, trees and bushes blossoming, birds nesting, bees doing their rounds.

That's if we act now, and get to work turning the plans shown on the following pages into a reality.

Please take a look at them, and let the Parish Council know what you think (email: parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk). The PC needs to agree to the proposal because it owns the land.

We think the project has loads of benefits for the village. Helping improve biodiversity, providing a space for relaxation and restoring mental health, educating the kids, linking villagers through a community project ... the list goes on.

Details of how you can get involved are included in the plans.

Kieron, on behalf of Upton Nature Group

Upton Nature Garden

Creating a wildlife-friendly space
for all villagers to enjoy



What's the point of a nature garden?

It's a fair question. We're surrounded by green, and most of us have our own garden, so why do we need another one?

The straightforward answer is that creating a dedicated space for wildlife is one of the most environmentally responsible and sustainable uses for the land. Habitat for birds, pollinators and other creatures has been in decline for decades. Biodiversity has collapsed as a result. Preserving and reclaiming areas for our native species is vital if we want a future with birds and butterflies in it.

Another answer is that a communal nature garden will bring benefits to our community. It's a focus and a pleasure we can share, with opportunities for volunteering, for creativity, for education and exercise.

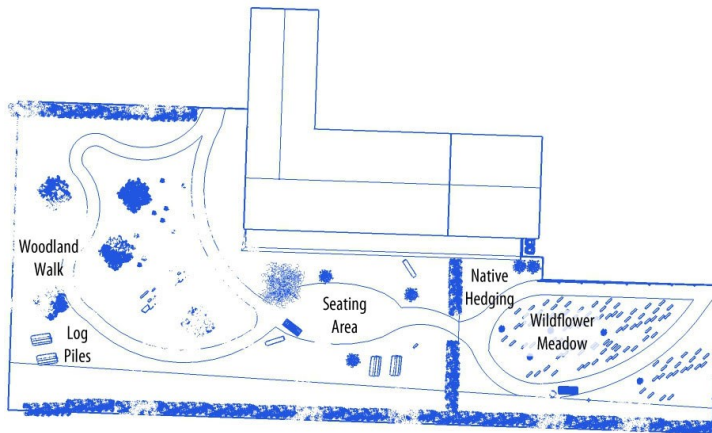
Yet another reason for creating a nature garden is that it shows we are taking seriously our duty to leave the planet in good condition for future generations. Okay, the trees and bushes won't absorb much carbon, but at least we've signalled a preference for plants over car parks.

The location

When villagers voted to relocate the toddler playpark at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2019, the question arose of what to do with the vacant land next to the village hall. A show of hands at the time overwhelmingly favoured some kind of park or garden.

This purpose makes sense: the land is easily accessible, it has mature trees and hedging on it already, and it's been free from canine visits for many years.

The steep bank to the road adds interest to the site, and, counter-intuitively, the poor quality of the soil is ideal for many native trees and shrubs which thrive in such conditions.



Developing the plans

A group of enthusiasts from the village has been liaising with Wild Oxfordshire, a local conservation charity, and a Kew-trained horticulturist, Alex Little, to draw up plans.

The plans haven't been finalised, but hopefully they'll include the following:

- a thickened native hedge on the boundary with Station Road, creating a haven for birds and insects
- smaller indigenous trees and shrubs selected for their pollen, fruit and seed value
- bulbs for spring colour and early-rising bees
- wildflower areas attractive to pollinators
- ornamental grasses for year-round architectural interest
- log piles and bug hotels to encourage invertebrates
- tree boxes for bird nests and bat roosts
- old stumps and tree trunks to create seats for small people
- existing or upgraded benches for people who want to take the weight off

The projection shows how this may be laid out, with meandering mown-grass and bark paths providing access.



Funding the garden

The design involves a modest initial investment, and is deliberately low-cost to maintain.

We've raised some funds already: we successfully applied for a grant from Doris Field Charitable Trust, generously matched by Sherfield Flooring, together with a donation from Strictly Wine.

We've identified other funds to apply to, and we aim to secure long-term underwriting/sponsorship for maintenance costs in the event that volunteers couldn't be found to do the essential seasonal tasks.



Getting involved

Your support is really vital to making a success of the project. You can show this by doing any of these things (or all of them!):

- joining the volunteer group
- attending the next Parish Council meeting (20 May) to support the proposal
- donating a plant, shrub or tree
- building a bughouse or bird box
- pledging your time to help with planting (likely to be in the autumn)

However you want to be involved, just send an email to info@nature-garden.co.uk or speak to one of the volunteer co-ordinators:

Kieron Humphrey
Brian Rippon

