

Upton News



Vol 5 No.59 June 2021

Back in the April edition I informed you that I intended to give up the job of editor of Upton News but that I would not finish until after this edition in order to give plenty of time to find a successor. Unfortunately no one has come forward to take over the role. It is unthinkable that this means of local communication will not continue so please, please get in touch if you are prepared to give it a go, I will give you every assistance to produce your first few editions.

What will happen if no one comes forward :

I have agreed with the Parish Council that I will continue if necessary for a few more months to produce an online newsheet which will virtually be an unedited listing of news and information as sent in to me by the regular contributors. It is the editing of the printed version that takes so much time to produce, items have to be edited down or additional material found and it has to be fitted into the right pattern to ensure that all 8 or 12 pages are filled in order to complete the document to a good standard.

Please continue to send information to me as indicated on Page 8 and it will go out to a large majority of parishioners. I sincerely hope we can get things organised in the next few weeks such that it will go out to everybody.

Mike Brown

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

June Pram Service

Our MU Pram Service team invite you to their half-term Picnic with Play + Praise + Prayer. Meeting at 12.00pm on Wednesday 2nd June outside St. Michael's Blewbury.

All ages welcome - join in or sit and watch. Bring your own picnic and rug. Some chairs will be available. Extra drinks and cakes will be served.

For more details contact Revd Louise Butler 07837009730

Parish Council

A big thank you to Mike Brown

First of all this month, the council would like to say a very big thank you to Mike Brown for his stalwart Upton News gathering and production over many years. We all know how important communication is and Mike has kept the village informed. The Parish Council has taken over distribution of the electronic version.

Parish Council Noticeboard

The noticeboard at the entrance to the recreation ground is no longer fit for purpose. The Parish Council is therefore looking at a more modern version of the good old noticeboard and considering how an electronic version may be deployed.

Upton Nature Volunteer Group

Discussions continue as to how best organise the ambitions of this group. Thank you to all those who took the time to express their support, both by email and in attending the last meeting.

New County Councillor

The council was pleased to welcome the new County Councillor, Sally Povolotsky, to her first Upton Parish Council meeting last week. The council looks forward to working together with her.

Parish Council Meetings

At the annual meeting of the council last week, Ben Shaw was elected Chairman for another year, and Neil Thorp was elected Vice-Chairman for the year.

The next full parish council meeting will be on Thursday 15th July at 7.30pm. This meeting is currently scheduled to be held in the main hall. As a face to face meeting may affect the numbers of attendees simply due to the space available, please contact the Clerk on parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk at least 48 hours before the start of the meeting in order to register your intention to attend.

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 and therefore your community, please contact the Clerk on 07968772935 or email parish.clerk@uptonvilage.co.uk.

Liz Cooper - Parish Clerk

District Council

Hello! We hope that everyone has been able to enjoy the latest easing of restrictions, as we continue on the roadmap out of lockdown. The Covid-19 infection rates remain at low levels in Oxfordshire as the vaccination programme is rolled out. However, Covid-19 still presents a real risk, particularly with the emergence of new variants, so we need to keep doing everything we can to control the spread of the virus.

Covid-19 Update

Our residents seem to be coping well as we come out of lockdown, but our Community Hub remains on hand to provide support and advice for anyone who needs to self-isolate as a result of a positive test for them or someone they've been in close contact with. There are supermarket vouchers still available and help with fuel bills, but the scheme closes on 20th June so anybody who needs help should email the Community Hub before then. 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 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

Symptom-free public testing

There's no need to book to get a rapid symptom-free test at one of the four centres - anybody over the age of 16 who wants to get a symptom-free test can simply visit one of the [four symptom-free test centres](#).

This is all part of encouraging people to get tested twice a week to help stop the spread of Covid-19 by identifying those who have the virus but are not displaying symptoms. Of course, people can continue to collect at home covid tests from the various testing sites, or request to have them delivered, all [the details are on the government's website](#). We continue to encourage people to get tested twice a week as even after having the vaccine they can still pass the virus on.

Valley Park Update

The Valley Park Planning Application has been re-opened for consultation, with a closing date of 28th May - [click here for the planning application](#).

The consultation is to the new information that has recently come through relating to the key issues raised at the Planning Committee meeting back in February.

The B4493 Roundabout designs have been revised - see the amendments on the application dated 7th May. In early May we attended a Valley Park stakeholder meeting organised by the developers in order to present the amended roundabout designs, which include traffic light junctions for cycle accessibility.

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) have provided a more detailed response to the Valley Park Planning Application. .

To summarise all the recent updates relating to healthcare on Valley Park and Great Western Park, we have written a [blog post](#) on our new website set up by County Councillor Cllr Sally Povolotsky. We intend to keep this website updated as your local district and county councillor team, so please look out for more links and blog posts in future.

New Community Lottery

The Vale of White Horse District Council's new lottery, the White Horse Community Lottery will launch in June with a special virtual event held online due to Covid-19 restrictions. Organisations from the district's voluntary and community sector will be invited by the council to attend the event on Monday 14th June to find out how they can benefit from income raised through the Vale's new community lottery.

Councils launch a Litter Bug Detectives Activity Trail.

From Saturday 29th May to Saturday 5th June Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils are running a new Litter Bug Detectives Trail for children in four parks across southern Oxfordshire.

The trails will be available in Edmonds Park in Didcot, Southern Road Recreation Ground in Thame, Abbey Garden Meadows in Abingdon and Memorial Park in Wantage.

The activities are aimed at primary school children and have been produced to promote recycling and reuse messages and explaining the damage litter does to our environment. Each trail will be between 0.6km and 1.5km long.

We will continue to keep you updated on council matters and the COVID-19 roadmap 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 □□

Note - More information is available about the lottery and the bug hunt on Pages 9 and 10 of the online version.

County Council

We welcome Sally Povolotsky, our recently elected County Councillor who has agreed to be a regular contributor to future editions of Upton News. Sally can be contacted on sally.povolotsky@oxfordshire.gov.uk or go to her facebook page - [@sally4hendredsandharwell](#).

Council News

Listening to Youth: New Assembly

Launched last week, The Hendreds and Harwell Youth Assembly will empower local young people in the community to be conduits of change, to engage them in shaping the future developments in the division.

As a new County Councillor that campaigned for change, listening to the voices of the whole community is more important now than ever. Those voices include our future decision makers and community leaders. Engaging our youth early on, means we can capture ideas without boundaries, and innovate for the next generation with their engagement. We need to turn

traditional politics on its head, and strive to create a new, inclusive society. I hope that Hendreds and Harwell division will be at the forefront of showing how this level of community engagement can shape policy and strategy from the start. I am inviting parents, children and young people from Pre-School through to Secondary School age to join the first exploratory event. Next year, in 2022, I will add higher education students, to help shape the foundations for a new Youth Parliament for Oxfordshire.

Cllr John Howson, Chair of Oxfordshire County Council welcomed the initiative to involve the youth of The Hendreds and Harwell district in discussing the future for their area. He added "It is important not to ignore the voices of young people."

The First 'zoom' Event is on 6th June at 4.00pm, it will be held virtually, to make the event as accessible as possible, all the details can be found on my Facebook page [@sally4hendredsandharwell](#) or email me for information. Initially it will be for all age ranges to introduce the assembly and then see how it could progress into the age sections.

Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance embraces changes in politics and the need to share visions and decision making across a broad spectrum of communities and stakeholders to create a Fair Deal for Oxfordshire.

For more details please contact me on sally.povolotsky@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Sally Povolotsky

Dawn Saunders

Dawn is leaving her role as administrator in the Churn Benefice Centre in Blewbury after 19 years' service in order to take up a new role working in the Treasurer's Department of Christ Church College.

The Upton News would like to take this opportunity to thank Dawn for her helpful co-operation in producing all of our printed copies for most, if not all, of those 19 years. On many occasions she has gone just that extra bit further to ensure that the copies have been available to us at the earliest possible time.

Her last day in the Churn Benefice Centre is likely to be Friday 11th June. It is planned that there will be a presentation for her on Sunday 13th June at around 11:30am in the churchyard of St Andrews Church, East Hagbourne immediately after the Confirmation Service which will be held there and will involve the new Bishop of Dorchester the Right Reverend Gavin Collins.

Anyone wishing to contribute to her leaving present and/or attend that outdoor presentation is welcome to do so, as it won't be number limited in the same way as the actual indoor Confirmation Service.

Contributions to Dawn's leaving present can be made electronically to the Churn Benefice Bank Account (Sort Code: 40-52-40 Account No: 00006301 marked 'Dawn Leaving Present') or by cheque or cash to Rev Louise Butler or Roger Murphy (Churn Benefice Treasurer) ideally by 6th June.

Rector's Note



Grace before meals

Is it your custom to say a short prayer of thanks before you sit down to eat? Some people do, and some people don't. I can remember one occasion on which everyone present sang the grace, using the following words:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below,
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I wonder if these words ring a bell? They come from a hymn, "Awake my soul, and with the sun", written by a 17th century Englishman, Thomas Ken.

Thomas was born in 1637, and in 1685 he was appointed Bishop of Bath and Wells. Three years later, there was a political revolution, and the then king, James II, fled to France. William of Orange was invited to become the new king, and in due course he was crowned as William III, and his wife Mary as Mary II. However, the previous king, James II, was still alive. Many people were placed in a difficult position. They had sworn their oaths of loyalty to James II: did they keep their oath to James, or did they take a pragmatic view, and swear a new oath to the new King William? Thomas felt that he could not in good conscience take the coronation oath to King William, and in due course he was deprived of his bishopric. Thomas spent his retirement living at Longleat, a guest of his friend Lord Weymouth. Thomas was a very godly man and is often regarded as one of the saints of the church. His saint's day is 8th June, and that's why I'm writing about him this month.

I'm thinking of Thomas words, which I have quoted earlier: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, praise him, all creatures here below. We enjoy so many blessings in our life, and more often than not we take them pretty much for granted. God must look at us and say to himself: what ungrateful creatures they are! I think it would be good for us to pause, from time to time, and say a prayer of thanks to God. We might even be tempted to sing the four lines of Thomas's hymn! But it doesn't have to be anything so formal or elaborate. I'm sure God will be happy with a simple "thank you"!

Father Jason

World Environment Weekend

Blewbury School will be staging an exhibition - Trees of Life - in St Michael's Church Blewbury on Saturday 5th June from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

There will be an Open-Air Service for all ages - Trees for Life - at the Blewbury Play Close on Sunday 6th June at 3.00pm. Bring a rug, some chairs will be provided.



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Mike Brown on 850135 or at
kameki39@btinternet.com

Village Produce Association

The VPA Committee has been required to give serious thought as to whether the Summer Show should go ahead in July, the main concern being the current status of Covid-19. Will it ever come to an end? Things start to look up and then another Variant appears on the horizon. A big worry now is the Indian Variant which is proving more virulent than any other so far. The Government continues discussions on lockdowns, easing, and more recently, suggestions of ending social distancing and no more masks, etc. Many decisions and arrangements will not be confirmed by the Government until the end of June.

Careful consideration has been given by the VPA Committee to various problems. These include the limited time left for the Committee to organise the event, the entrants having only five weeks to prepare their exhibits by the 10th July and most importantly, the currently unknown safety aspects required relating to Covid-19.

It is therefore the decision of the Committee to cancel the 2021 Annual Show.

We will keep everyone updated over the coming months with regard to the future of the Village Produce Association.

A couple of **Did You Know?** to cheer you up: 1. *Dried nasturtium seeds were ground into a powder during the Second World War as a replacement for pepper.* 2. *Claude Monet (1840-1926) said "I perhaps owe having become a painter to flowers."*

Eileen

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.

Our next online meeting will be 10:30 am to 11:15am on Tuesday 15th June on the theme of "Try something new". What would you like to do online but haven't yet? Join in to hear what others would like to try. Book a place using the email address above.

Please contact www.astonsonline.uk for more information."

Submissions for Upton News should be sent
to

kameki39@btinternet.com

Deadline for the July edition is

Saturday 26th June

Additional District Council Information

New Community Lottery

The lottery will have a weekly jackpot of £25,000 and will be available for residents to play online. The draw will take place every Saturday, with a jackpot going to anybody who matches a sequence of six numbers. The other prizes are £2,000, £250, £25 or three free tickets.

Residents can get involved by buying tickets which will cost £1 per week with 50p going towards the player's chosen local good cause. 10p of the remaining money goes into the central community fund, 20p to the prize fund, 17p towards the administration of the lottery, and 3p on VAT.

Proceeds from the White Horse Lottery central community fund will be spent on providing vital support to a wide range of local organisations and community initiatives which have a beneficial impact on the local community. The first draw for the White Horse Community Lottery will take place in September.

You can find more details about the lottery including eligibility criteria for groups that want to get involved on our website whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communitylottery. Any community groups and charities operating in the Vale of White Horse wanting to register their interest and find out more are being asked to email communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk.

Litter Bug Detectives Activity Trail

How to take part

Go to our webpage - www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/litter-bug-detectives-trail - download the trail map of the park you wish to visit. The map will show a trail to 13 sites around the park.

At each site there will be a question on the themes of waste and recycling. The 13 answers will provide you with a letter each to make two words.

Email the two-word answer and your name and address to wasteteam@southandvale.gov.uk before midnight on Saturday 5th June (World Environment Day) and we will send you a Litter Bug Detective Certificate.

Air Quality Superhero Competition

Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils have launched a competition for primary school children to design a superhero to tackle air pollution. The councils will be giving a new Micro scooter* as a top prize to one winner in each district. Children can draw their superheroes or create them as models. The judges are looking for a hero who can easily get about without using cars and whose superpowers can help make our air cleaner and clearer. [To take part in the competition click here](#) The competition is part of the councils' air quality campaign called [Turn It Off](#) which is primarily aimed at drivers who let their vehicle engines idle while they are waiting for

passengers - often waiting outside schools. Air pollution is created from pollutants getting into the air. Petrol and diesel vehicles emit pollutants from their exhaust pipes into the air. Increased traffic means increased air pollution. These air pollutants are linked to a higher chance of developing lung cancer, heart disease, asthma, coughs and bronchitis, particularly in vulnerable people such as older people and children. Keeping the engine running - known as idling - while parked at the side of the road, sitting in traffic, or waiting to collect someone, contributes to an increase in levels of air pollutants. According to information from DEFRA, if a vehicle engine is turned off and restarted after a minute or more this will result in less pollution than if the vehicle was idling for that time. More information on [Turn it Off](#).

Getting Active across the Districts

With restrictions lifting most of the activities run by the Active Communities team are now returning with more to come, including the family Xplorer events in Wantage next month. Please do help to spread the word and share our social media posts over the coming days and weeks.

You can find out more at whitehorsedc.gov.uk/activecommunities or southoxon.gov.uk/activecommunities.

All the sessions follow Covid-19 safety guidelines and so booking in advance is required.
