

Upton News



December 2021

The Upton News is only as good as those who contribute to it so please make this the first port of call if you have anything to communicate to the wider village community.

For those submitting news items will you please send them to me at neilthorp@btinternet.com. A few days beforehand I will send a reminder of the deadline day to all regular contributors but early submission will always be welcome. Anything received past the deadline of 28th of the month may NOT be included.

Neil Thorp

Church Services

Online Services

Sundays at 10.30am - login or connect at 10am to chat before the service.

Weekday evenings - Compline at 8pm

Please see the Churn website for the service access codes and full details of how to join each week. If you would like to be added to our weekly mailing list, please contact Elaine.

Services at St. Mary the Virgin

12 December **3rd Sunday of Advent**

9.30am Parish Eucharist

24 December **Christmas Eve**

4.00pm Crib Service

25 December **Christmas**

9.30am Parish Eucharist

Following advice from the Diocese, we will continue to encourage people to wear face coverings and to observe social distancing while in church. Communion will be in bread only. Congregational singing will be allowed when it is safe to do so: as the virus spreads via droplets, to be able to sing will depend on the numbers attending and the ability to be socially distant from others.

ACTIVE ANGELS - CHRISTMAS

Our MU pram Service team invite families to this monthly event; with songs, story, games, activity and prayer. **12 noon on Wednesday 1st December** at St. Michael's, Blewbury.

Bring a rug for your family space. Lunch is provided with "Happy Meals" for children. Please book these with Revd Louise on 07837 009730

PRAM SERVICE PARTY

to celebrate nearly 30 years of ministry to the youngest generation

Tuesday January 4th, 3pm, Blewbury Village Hall

ALL who have had connections (and more!) are invited to come along.

BENEFICE NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS SERVICE

St Michael's Blewbury 4.00pm on Sunday 19th December

You are all warmly invited to join us for our traditional Christmas Carol Service with plenty of opportunity to sing carols, listen to readings, and hear the Church Choir sing. The Church is lit by candlelight and we will be serving wine and mince pies afterwards. This is an invitation for all your family to join us as you begin your week of festivities to celebrate Christmas.



BLEWBURY VILLAGE CAROL CONCERT - Please Note New Date and Time

Sunday 12th December between 4.45 and 6pm Outside Blewbury Village Hall.

Unfortunately, for the second year running, we cannot hold our usual Village Carol Concert in the Church. We have now planned a totally different and alternative outside event so we can all come together and sing Carols accompanied by the Blewbury Brass Band. Please come with your family and friends to sing your favourite carols and get the Christmas Season off to a joyful and very happy start. We have chosen to meet at the Hall because it is easily accessible and the ground is safe and flat; there is some light outside the Hall and we hope to also provide some additional lighting. The Hall will be open so that the toilets can be used. There will be some chairs for anybody who might find it difficult to stand for an hour. **Please wrap up warmly and bring a torch.**

Carol sheets will be on sale for £1 per adult please and this is a donation to the Brass Band Funds.

Many thanks to the Blewbury Brass Band and the BVS and Blewbury Village Hall Committee for their cooperation which is hugely appreciated.

Please note - this event is totally weather dependent and will have to be cancelled if wet. It is also subject to all covid rules and regulations at the time of the event.

Parish Council

The Chairman of the Parish Council is very pleased to announce that Upton Parish Council has been awarded a Grant by the Police & Crime Commissioner which it will be collecting on the 13th of December. The grant has been awarded for the purpose of repairing the very well-used Football posts and the Bike Pump Track in the Recreation Ground. We look forward to being able to share the photos in the next edition!

Santa's Visit

Upton Parish Council are pleased to announce that Santa will be coming to visit the Village of Upton at the Village Hall on the Sunday the 19th of December at 4pm. All the children of the village from ages 1 Day to 112 years old are invited to come and see if you are on the naughty or nice list. He will be able to hear Christmas requests, have family photos taken and will have Hot Chocolate available for those who are feeling cold.



Santa requests that if you would like to come and see him, that a responsible adult books a place to ensure he has enough time to see all the children before Christmas Day.

Santa and the Parish Council are trying to raise funds for St. Marys Church to help fund a publicly-accessible bathroom at the Church. It is for this reason that Santa is asking for £5 per person to book your place which will be a 50% discount compared to the general public who will also be invited to attend.

In order to take advantage of this discount please email bens@uptonpc.co.uk and include the number of people you need tickets for and your house address.

Santa is looking forwards to seeing you and all the family!

Competition for Children of all ages!

The bus shelter is in need of some redecoration and Upton Parish Council is inviting all the children of the Village young and old to enter this competition to design how the bus shelter should be decorated.

The winner will be decided on how well their idea can be interpreted onto the walls of the shelter.

We look forwards to seeing your design ideas!

Please email the designs to bens@uptonpc.co.uk deadline for submission is the 28/12/2021 and the winner will be announced in the next Upton News.

Chilton Road Closure - Update

The traffic order relating to the scheme has now been 'made' - meaning it will become legally enforceable subject to appropriate signs and lines being in place. The formal notice reads:

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (UPTON, CHILTON ROAD) (PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES) ORDER 2021

NOTICE is given that on 29 November 2021 Oxfordshire County Council made the above order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and all other enabling powers. The effect of the order, which comes into force on **17 December** is as follows:

Traffic Management:

- Banned Turning movements from Hagbourne Hill into Chilton Road from both directions, supported by No entry signs at the junction for vehicles approaching from the west.
 - Motor vehicle access into Chilton Road will continue to be from the A417 London Road junction for residents and visitors etc.
- Cyclists are unaffected by the restrictions.
-

District & County Council News

Dear Upton Residents

Firstly, a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to you and your families, I hope you have a wonderful rest and reflective period and please do stay safe at this time of rising cases. I am sure we are all hoping for a better 2022!

I want to thank the whole community for their support a few weeks ago when I slept outside the Tower of London to raise awareness and vital funds to stop our veterans ending up homeless, we recently passed a really strong "housing first" homeless strategy at County Hall as well. Greg (my very supportive partner - I promised him a night away and this is what he got!) and we raised £760 in donations and had a humbling night on the side of the Thames, I was thankful for my bed when I eventually got home!

What a whirlwind it's been since the County Council May elections, and in all honesty the workload is vast, is clear to see we our villages and residents have been neglected on many fronts for years but together we can make change, I will not allow our rural communities to be forgotten anymore.



A fine example of this change or as we call it "civic ecology" in Upton is the Nature Garden project, which I have been proud to support through my councillor priority funding. As a member of the Tea Birds W.I I can't wait to also benefit from the tranquility of the space with you all next year! I hope to come and help in the new year and want to thank Kieron and his team for

their amazing work making this vision a reality.

Sustainability and preventing further climate change is at my core, and you'll be pleased to know that Active Travel is at the top of our priorities as the new administration and we have allot of changes to make, which frustratingly take time, but locally I am working with both chairs of Blewbury and Upton Parish Councils to crack the issue of the connectivity of the two villages around a cycle / footpath, and I hope we have some positive news soon!

I know many of our rural communities feel left out when it comes to resources / access to services / bus routes and safe cycle ways and I couldn't agree more, my voice is loud and strong for our villages in these areas and I hope the 20mph roll out locally will be a start of making our streets safer for those not in cars!

I am very aware that things aren't perfect locally, roads, potholes, healthcare access, school places where you live, or even at a County level, and being a fresh and new set of eyes definitely helps highlight areas of improvement. I am thankful for a great group of officers I have met along the way, as well as amazing parishes and our Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance, as working together is how we will get what we need - quickly! We will drive a people and planet first agenda.

Meanwhile I am contactable and responsive, and will restart councillor surgeries in 2022, it's been a busy few weeks responding to the OFWAT gate for the Steventon Reservoir project, objecting against this monstrosity of a project with every ounce of authority I have. I'll be posting my response on our website (shared with Cllr's Medley and Gascoigne so take a look!

Meanwhile you can always reach me at ;

Sally.povolotsky@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Or our website -

<https://hundredsandharwell.mycouncillor.org.uk>

Or find me on social media on

Facebook - [@sally4hundredsandharwell](#)

Instagram - [@sallyforchange](#)

Pharmacy Consultation

Have your say on pharmaceutical services in Oxfordshire

People who use pharmaceutical services in Oxfordshire are being asked to give their views on whether current services are meeting the needs of the population.

Residents will have until 9 January 2022 to comment on Oxfordshire County Council's new pharmaceutical needs assessment (PNA). The NHS will use the PNA to work out if any changes are needed to pharmacy services in Oxfordshire.

Community pharmacies are a linchpin of our local health services. They have remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and have been a vital asset to our communities over the years. They deliver services to support our local health and social care services from providing medical advice and

administering flu jabs, to offering emergency contraception, dispensing medication and so much more.

A pharmaceutical needs assessment is required every three years and looks to ensure that our pharmacies continue to appropriately support to our populations. This is an opportunity for all residents, particularly those who use pharmacies regularly, to ensure that the new assessment accurately reflects the current provision being delivered within their communities. The PNA is a report on all the NHS community pharmacies in the county and also includes those family doctors who are permitted to dispense medicines as a pharmacist would.

Residents can read and respond to the initial draft (including a plain English summary) by going to:

letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxon-pharma-needs-assessment-2022

The final PNA will be published later in 2022 and will cover the period of 2022 to 2025 inclusive.

Alternative formats are available by emailing Consultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk or calling 01865 792422.

Cllr Sally Povolotsky

GWP Healthcare Centre Update Summary by Cllr Sarah Medley:

On Monday 8th November, representatives from the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) kindly agreed to an invitation to speak at the Great Western Park Residents' Association (GWPR) public meeting, to update residents on the progress of the new healthcare facility planned for Great Western Park.

Julie Dandridge, CCG Deputy Director of Primary Care, and Jo Cogswell, CCG Director of Transformation, attended the meeting and explained that the process for setting up new GP facilities is complex; it is not something which happens automatically when new developments are built. The CCG requires GPs, which are independent businesses, to commit to the provision of services for a new development. This is either done through working together with existing GP practices, or seeking a completely new provider.

In the case of the long-awaited GP surgery on Great Western Park, the CCG have been working together with the Didcot medical practices. The main issue is the need for a suitable building - various options have been considered over the past few years, to determine the best fit for GWP. The good news is that the CCG have now identified a suitable developer with experience of building medical facilities. The next stage of the process is for an appointed District Valuer to determine whether the proposed facility is value for money for the CCG, and the next stage after that is to apply for planning permission.

It appears that there is still some way to go in the process, however the CCG are pleased to be able to report back to the public that significant

progress is now being made. They are not yet able to state a timescale for when the new GP facility on GWP will be open for patients, however they are very aware of the urgent need to alleviate the pressure on GP services in the Didcot area - an issue raised by many at the meeting. We questioned whether a temporary or pop-up surgery could be established on GWP in the meantime, for example in one of the community centres or similar, and the CCG representatives agreed to investigate this option. This is promising - and something that we will be chasing up.

Hayleigh and I would like to thank Julie and Jo from the CCG for providing this useful update. Thank you to the many local residents who attended and asked very pertinent questions about the funding, timescales and service provision. The CCG have kindly agreed to provide further updates for the public as the project progresses, and we will ensure that these are shared with residents through our newsletters and social media.

COVID-19 Community Support

A reminder to all residents that the councils' Community Support Hub continues to operate for anyone who needs any assistance, either as a result of COVID-19 or just for anyone who needs signposting towards the appropriate support channel. There are multiple ways to get in touch with the Community Support Hub:

- Call: 01235 422 600 Monday to Thursday 8.30-5pm and Fridays 8.30-4.30pm
- Email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk
- Online Form: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communityhub
- Website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/covid19

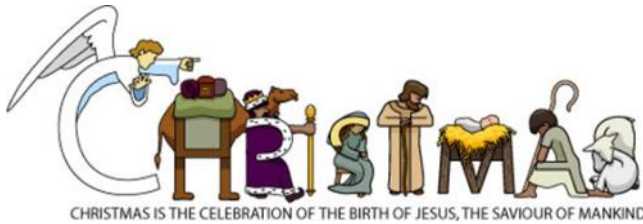
Residents can also contact:

- Citizens Advice - 0808 278 7907
- Vale Community Impact - 01235 765348

Remember that the latest figures are updated on the county council's [interactive dashboard](#) on a daily basis. Given the recent colder weather and rising case rates, we encourage residents to get tested regularly and, if they feel unwell, book a PCR test, as Covid-19 is still very much around.

Rector's Notel

A Favourite Carol



Do you have a favourite carol? One of my favourites is "The Truth Sent From Above".

There are different versions of the words, but the version most people are familiar

with is probably the one to be found in The Oxford Book of Carols. The first verse goes as follows:

This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love,
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all both rich and poor.

The carol seeks to put the birth of Jesus into a wider context: the long history of God's dealings with humankind. As human beings, we all have a tendency to mess things up: to mess up our own lives, the lives of others and the life of our world. God has always wanted to help us to lead better lives, and as part of his plan, he decided to become human himself, taking human flesh as Jesus Christ. When we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we are celebrating the way that God has come to the rescue of the human race. God, out of his great love for us, sent his only Son, Jesus, to teach us how we should live our lives.

In the words of the final verse of The Truth from Above:

Thus he in love to us behaved
To show us how we must be saved;
And if you want to know the way,
Be pleased to hear what he did say.

In short, this carol reminds us that the celebration of Jesus' birth is the celebration of God's love for us and for all humankind. Jesus came to show us the transforming power of God's love. Our task as Christians is to allow the transforming power of God's love to work through us, so that we may be agents of transformation in the lives of our families and our communities. I wonder how we might share God's love with others this Christmastime?

With every blessing for Christmas and the New year,

Father Jason



Foot Care



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Upton

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Drop In

The village Drop In is up and running again on alternate Thursdays at 3.00pm
It is open to all villagers so please come along if you want to have a nice
friendly chat over a cup of tea or coffee. Please email me at
richmondbinov@gmail.com if you're interested and to find out the venue for
the meetings.

Richard Burrow

Village Produce Association



BLEWBURY AND UPTON VILLAGE PRODUCE ASSOCIATION
Your Local Village Gardening Club

NOTICE

Following a recent Committee Meeting of the Village Produce Association this Notice is issued to all the residents of the Blewbury and Upton Villages.

**An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Blewbury and Upton
Village Produce Association will be held on TUESDAY 18th
JANUARY 2022 at
7pm in the VALE ROOM, BLEWBURY VILLAGE HALL**

Notice is hereby given that the current Committee Members propose to resign en-block at this meeting, therefore the purpose of the EGM will be to confirm whether any persons attending the meeting would be prepared to form a new Committee and continue the VPA.

Please be advised that if a Committee cannot be formed, then the Village Produce Association will be formally closed at the Extraordinary General Meeting.

VPA COMMITTEE

Astons Online

Visit our website www.astonsonline.uk for free and helpful information about becoming more capable and confident using the Internet and online resources. There's a wide range of courses, advice and services to help experienced and inexperienced users alike.

Free and friendly help for computer users every Tuesday morning from 10:00 to 12:00. 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 - 11:15 on Tuesday 18 January 2021 talking about storing, moving and backing up photographs. Book your place at theastonsonline@gmail.com

November wine club

As another year winds down and the Autumn months tumble towards Winter, there are a few things that you can guarantee; the cold air in the mornings; the shops decorated with tinsel and decked out with their Christmas products; and the friendly and knowledgeable duo Tim and Gill from Joie de Vin arriving for their annual presentation at Upton wine club. The fact that this has become an annual tradition is what makes the November meeting of wine club extra special and well turned out, and so it was on 17th November when 30 + members of the club came to listen to the expertise of Tim and Gill and participated in the delightful sampling of some of their bestsellers. The evening started with an enjoyable sparkling wine, a 'Maison Peltier Vouvray Brut La Colliniere'. We were informed that this wine had been fermented for two years and produced in the traditional, or "champagne" method. The consensus was that this was a good quality, fresh and crisp sparkling wine.

Our second wine of the evening was a 'Domaine Guillaman Chardonnay 2019', a fresh and crisp wine with hints of apple and citrus. This wine is produced in the Southwest of France, not far from the Bordeaux region, and comprises of 15% Gras Manseng and 85% Chardonnay. It is a highly quaffable wine that can be drunk on its own, but also can be paired nicely with chicken dishes. It certainly went down well with the crowd.

Joie de Vin's third bottle of the evening was a crisp 'Maison Peltier Vouvray Sec 2019'. A typical Vouvray, it is made with Chenin Blanc grapes and has notes of apple and pears on the nose and palate and would pair very nicely with grilled fish or mild curries, or like its predecessor, can be enjoyed on its own.

The final white wine of the evening was introduced as 'Le Pommeraie de Brown 2016', a wonderful example of a barrel-fermented white wine from Pessac Leognan, Bordeaux's premier region for white wine. Made of 84% Semillion and 16% Sauvignon Blanc, the lovely wine had notes of citrus, pear and vanilla. An elegant wine and another crowd pleaser.

At this halfway point in the evening, Tim moved us onto the red wines in his collection, starting with a 'Domaine du Bon Remede Merlot IGP Mediterranee 2019. Deep in colour with a fruit nose, this was a particularly lovely rich and smooth red wine, Tim recommended that this would go very well with a meaty fish such as monkfish.

Wine six of the evening was the 'Domaine La Toupie Quator, Cotes de Roussillon 2017 AOP', a lovely wine with soft round tannins, ripe fruit flavours, spicy notes, complexity and length. Made from four varieties (Grenache Noir, Syrah, Carignan and Mourvedre) in the foothills of the Pyrenees, the wine is hand-harvested. A wine that is great with red meats, cheese and charcuterie, it can be drunk now through to 2024.

The penultimate wine of the evening was the 'Domaine Trilles 10, Cotes du Roussillon 2018', a rich, full wine with a deep colour and big fruit flavours-cherry and plum. The producers do not use chemicals in their processes and the wine is aged in oak. My personal favourite wine of the evening, Tim said it goes well with duck, rick casseroles and barbecues.

The final wine of the evening was a 'Domaine Trilles Rivesaltes Ambre', which had a deep brown/ gold colour with hints of honey, caramel, candied fruits and vanilla. A 'win doux naturel' made, like port, by adding spirit to arrest the fermentation, it was the perfect end to the evening and one can imagine drinking it with a rich pudding or with strong cheeses.

For more details about the wine, you can contact Joie de Vin direct on www.joiedevin.co.uk; and for information about joining Upton Wine Club, please contact Ian Langley on ian.langley@yahoo.co.uk

Natalie Robertson, committee member

Blewbury Post Office news

There are new restrictions for goods sent to other countries, please check on the Royal Mail website for the country you are sending to. Toys, games, books, printed paper etc. are amongst the new items on the list for many countries, and fill in the customs labels in full, block capitals etc. We have lots of beautiful Christmas stamps.

Blewbury bell ringers will be putting post boxes out in Upton very soon, these will be at the George and Dragon and the church; just pop cards in with a suggested donation of 30p a card, and a host of elves will deliver to Blewbury and Upton. The Upton share will go to the team at St Mary's and the Blewbury share will go to St Michael's.

The Post Office will be open as usual up to Christmas, please try to post early as it's chaos in some places! We will close at 12 on Christmas Eve, and reopen on Wednesday 29th December, mornings only for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, then closed for the New Year, open again on the Tuesday.

Please call my mobile if you need emergency gas or electric top-ups, I'm at home, don't get cold or drive miles 07825154842

Merry Christmas & a happy new year

Love from Karen, Maggie & Michael

Upton Nature Garden Volunteers

Upton nature garden

Getting hold of hedges and trees on a specific date turns out to be a very tricky business - the weather needs to be just right to send them into winter dormancy before suppliers can lift them and start making deliveries. Add in the current supply chain shenanigans and it's no surprise that our order of approximately 400 hedge plants, trees and shrubs has slipped into December. This means we've rescheduled the next nature garden volunteer weekend for 11 and 12 December. We'll start at 9am both days.

The job's a big 'un: we've got to get all the plants in so that they benefit from winter rain. There are 3 stretches of hedging to do, plus fruit trees around the seating area and shrubs in the woodland. Each plant will get a mulch mat to prevent grass and weeds encroaching while they get established and a mulch of chippings from the recent tree surgery work to feed the fungi in the soil and in turn make nutrients available to the roots of our new plants.

There's at least 1 plant for every villager, so if you'd like to claim one - and watch it grow and flourish in years to come - grab a spade and join us in December.

Meanwhile the working group has completed tasks like securing the stump seating, spreading leafmould on the mound and collecting coppiced wood to edge the paths. (Thanks for the hazel poles, Mr and Mrs Powell!) Check the notices on the gate and fence to the rear for full details of what's been happening and how to join in.

Overflow cemetery hedging

A huge thank you to Dave Bartlett and Kirsty Butcher for repairing the saggy fence to the eastern edge of the overflow cemetery.

We hope they haven't done too good a job because if all goes to plan we'll be taking it down a few years from now ... when the soon-to-be-planted native hedgerow is established.

Upton has received 420 hedge plants from the Woodland Trust as part of its community planting scheme. The planting will be carried out by a volunteer force from the company where one of our district councillors, Hayleigh Gascoigne, works.

If you'd like to join in on December 7, or help provide refreshments for the volunteers, please email kieronhumph@gmail.com

Didcot U3A

The **Didcot & District u3a** is pleased to advise that the monthly meetings are now back 'in person' and can be attended by those individuals who are retired or semi-retired and wishing to 'Live, Learn and Laugh'! As of the New Year, we are back in the Didcot Civic Hall, making access all the more easier, on the third Tuesday of every month starting at 2:30 pm !

In addition to meeting with like minded individuals, the monthly meetings also benefit from a visiting Guest Speaker presenting numerous fascinating topics, the first two meetings of 2022 will be:

18th January - 'Spaceships in Oxfordshire' - an intriguing talk by Stephen Ringler

15th February - 'Hedgehog Man' - a talk on one of our most loveable garden friends by Hugh Warwick

We look forward to welcoming back returning members and extending a Warm Welcome to newcomers who wish to find out what u3a is in their local area. (Please arrive 15 minutes early to allow for entry and seating in accordance with current Covid regulations!)

For further details or information contact the following:

Chair - chairman@didcotu3a.org

Secretary - secretary@didcotu3a.org

Membership - membership@didcotu3a.org

Remember u3a is for those who wish to 'Live, Learn and Laugh!' . . . we look forward to seeing you there!'

Submissions for Upton News should be sent to
neilthorp@btinternet.com

Deadline for the January edition is
Tuesday 28th December