

Upton News



February 2022

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

The online services will continue on Sundays at 10.30am login after 10.00 to chat before if wished. Access the Churn Churches website for login details on how to join:

<https://www.churnchurches.co.uk/services-this-week/sunday-service.php>

The link for the service is published in the weekly Churn, which can be downloaded from this page: <https://www.churnchurches.co.uk/resources/>

Weekday evenings Compline at 8.00pm for 10 minutes. Access via Churn Churches website above.

If you would like to be added to our weekly mailing list to receive the Churn, please contact Elaine.

Services at St. Mary the Virgin

13 February 3rd SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

9.30am Parish Eucharist

27 February SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT

9.30am Parish Eucharist

We want everyone to feel safe coming to church

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.

Home Communion is available to anyone who is unable to get to church through sickness or frailty, either for a short time or on a long term basis. If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact The Revd Louise Butler on [07837 009730](tel:07837009730). Full COVID precautions will be followed.

Confirmation Group

Father Jason will be leading a confirmation group in the New Year.

Please contact Elaine in the office on office@churnchurches.co.uk if you are interested in joining. We would love to welcome you to this group!

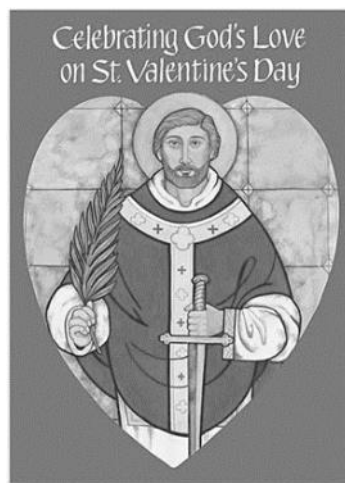
Churn Climate Change Action Group

The purpose of the Churn Climate Change Action Group is to encourage conversation and action within the communities served by the Churn Benefice to reduce the impact of Climate Change.

Our churches and benefice office are hoping to set an example by undertaking energy surveys and working towards the national scheme of Eco Church accreditation. If you would like to get involved with the CCCA, please contact Elaine in the Office and she will put you in touch with the group. New members always welcome!

Thoughts on St Valentine's Day

I wonder what you think about St Valentine's Day? We know very little about the original St Valentine, other than that he was an early Christian martyred for his faith back in the 3rd century. In due course, Valentine's feast day, 14th February, became associated with the celebration of love and courtship. How did this happen? No one really knows. In England, the tradition of



choosing and calling oneself a Valentine goes back at least as far as the 15th century.

I wonder if you will be sending a Valentine card this year, or be expecting to receive one? Perhaps you will be planning on taking your loved one out for a special meal, or you will be giving them a special gift.

Or perhaps you're dreading Valentine's Day. I think it is important to recognise that Valentine's Day can be a difficult and painful time. It can bring back memories of a departed loved one, or bring back the pain associated with a broken relationship. And for some, it can heighten a sense of loneliness.

I think it is good to remind ourselves that love and pain often go together. The more we love someone, the more we open ourselves to the possibility of being hurt. It is the way it is. Yes, when we love someone there will be times of pain and hurt. But there will also be times of great joy, and I think for most people most of the time, the joy of being in love far exceeds its challenges.

The Bible teaches us that God is Love, and that love is at the heart of the Christian life: love for God, and love for our neighbour. It also teaches us that love can be costly. For Jesus himself, the life of love led to him being crucified on the Cross. Many Christians have seen Jesus' death and resurrection as signs of the transforming power of God's love. God's gift of love in and through his son Jesus gives us forgiveness of our sins and the gift of new life.

Whatever your thoughts about Valentine's Day, I think it's a good opportunity to reflect on the importance of love in our lives. It is a time to give thanks for all who have loved us down the years, and a time to give thanks for those whom we have loved.

- *Father Jason*

Parish Council News

The parish council has been approached by several residents who are keen to see a reduction in speed limits in the village. The area of maximum concern is not the narrow winding roads in the village centre but through traffic on the A417.

Options are being investigated to establish whether the issue is the speed limit *per se* or rather general non-adherence to the existing limit. No credible approach can be made to the Highways Authority without this data nor until the calming effect of the Toucan crossing (which is part of the Chilton Road cycleway scheme) can be assessed.

The Parish Council notice board is moving but not very far! It may already have happened when you read this but its future location will be on the outside wall of the bus shelter to the left of the entrance gate to the rec.

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 resulting from the Omicron variant, we encourage residents to get tested regularly and, if they feel unwell, book a PCR test.

District & County Council News

Steventon Reservoir

Sally Povolotsky, our Elected Member for Hendreds & Harwell has been working very hard on this issue with fellow councillors, GARD and members of stakeholder groups over the last 5 months. We have been in a process with OFWAT called RAPID which has been a frustrating and less than open process. Now the regional plan has opened for an 8 week consultation and the SESRO scheme is back again...now we have two consultations and forms of approach -

<https://wrse.uk.engagementhq.com/about-our-consultation>

You can find the **GATE 1** submission decision here -

<https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/regulated-companies/rapid/the-rapid-gated-process/gate-one-submissions-and-final-decisions/>

Coverage - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-60021422>

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Household Support Fund Available for anyone in need

- The government's Household Support Fund (HSF) is now open, offering a very important lifeline for households who may struggle to afford life's essentials over winter.
- The money will primarily be used to help pay for food, energy, and water bills for residents, but other costs can also be covered.
- The fund is open to any resident who is struggling and can't afford basic household essentials.
- To find out about the scheme or seek help, call Citizens Advice on 0808 278 7907.

 <p>Foot Care</p>  <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>	 <p>Gary Cuddon</p>  <p>9 Harwood Road East Hagbourne Painter and Decorator</p> <p>Providing a High Quality Service Free Quotations Fully Insured</p> <p>Tel. 01235 510680 or 07827752904</p>
<p>Scotlands Ash Garage</p> <p>Main Street West Hagbourne Oxford's award winning local Independent Garage</p> <p>MOTs from 6.00am by appointment Vehicle Servicing and Repairs Tyres, Clutches and Exhausts Paint and Bodywork Terraclean Service Free Courtesy Car Tel. 01235 850707</p> <p>enquiries@scotlandsashgarage.co.uk</p>	 <p>Savages</p>  <p>Family Nursery, Florist, Gift and Farm Shop</p>  <p>Visit Savages to discover fresh quality fruit and veg, home grown plants, flowers, giftware and foods</p> <p>The Nurseries, London Road, Blewbury 01235 850352</p> <p>shop@savagesblewbury.co.uk</p>
<p>LJD Bell Plumbing & Heating Services</p> <p>All Domestic Plumbing and Heating Work Undertaken</p> <p>A1 High Efficiency Boilers Fitted Gas Appliances Fitted and Serviced (Inc LPG) Landlord Gas Safety Check and Certificates Aga/Rayburn Servicing Fully Insured</p> <p>Water Safe Approved Operative CIPHE Registered Plumber</p> <p>Mobile 07555100848</p> <p>ljdbell-plumbing-heating@outlook.com</p>	 <p>N Drum</p>  <p>Landscaping, Fencing and Maintenance Garden and Grounds Maintenance</p> <p>Hedge Planting and Cutting Grass Cutting and Turfing Power Washing and Winter Gritting Licensed Waste Carrier Fully Insured</p> <p>Tel. 01235 859229 or 07922701634</p> <p>ndrumlandscaping@gmail.com</p>

Drop In

The village Drop In will soon be 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. Note that we won't be restarting until February 24th.

Richard Burrow

Village Produce Association



BLEWBURY AND UPTON VILLAGE PRODUCE ASSOCIATION - Your village gardening club

The Extraordinary General Meeting of the Village Produce Association was held on Tuesday 18th January 2022. It was proposed at this meeting that the current Committee would resign en-bloc and a new committee be formed by attendees at the meeting.

It is with regret that we have to announce that a new committee could not be formed (no residents attended the meeting) and therefore the VPA has officially closed. A few formalities require completion upon which a full report will be available at the end of February. To receive a copy email: vpa.in.bl.up@gmail.com

May I take this opportunity to thank all the Committee Members, past and present, and in particular, Karen Forman (Chair) and Chris Jarvis (Secretary) both from Blewbury and Maggie Maytham (Treasurer) and Malcolm Wright (Vice Chairman) both from Upton, for their hard work for so very many years. I myself, (although not a resident of either village) really enjoyed the challenge of being Show Secretary and seeing the smiles on the faces of winners at the summer show.

Unfortunately, over the years, support for the VPA diminished and we, the Committee, reached the decision that the VPA had reached the end of its viable life. As the saying goes, all good things come to an end.

On behalf of the ex-Committee - Thank You to everyone in Blewbury and Upton (and surrounding villages) for your support and as always **HAPPY GARDENING.**

Eileen Bracken

Astons Online

February's Zoom online meeting will be 10:30 - 11:15 on Tuesday 15 February 2022. We'll talk about protecting your data by backing up and/or using cloud services. These are the best ways of safeguarding your personal, business and financial information from ransomware and from being tempted to respond to "Hello, I'm from Microsoft ... " and other scams.

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; www.astonsonline.uk for more information.

Upton Nature Garden Volunteers

Bumper crop of volunteers for the Treebilee!

Whether spurred on by Prince Charles' rallying cry or not, Upton came out in force to plant up the nature garden on the 22 and 23 January.

There was a brilliant atmosphere as everyone got stuck into digging, shifting mulch and carefully planting our healthy-looking trees, shrubs and hedges. It takes a little imagination to picture it, but the work we've done should result in:

- the restoration of the hedgerow along the bank by the road

- a new edible hedge crammed with nuts and berries to separate the meadow from the glade

- a miniature orchard with apple, pear, mulberry, cherry, crab apple and wild service

- shrubs and more edibles throughout the woodland

- a new native hedge between the nature garden and the rec

Volunteers, take a bough

Thanks to our 30+ volunteers (including plenty of doughties who gave up time on both Saturday and Sunday) we exceeded expectations - about 500 plants are now settling into their new home.

This follows the previous volunteer events where we planted bulbs, erected fencing and prepared the site. Thanks to all those who got involved.

We also had two exciting donations to make sure the nature garden gets a reputation as a des-res for wildlife as soon as possible:

- a deluxe hedgehog house from William Lott

- a birdbox from Frances Telling

Your next planting opportunity

We're hoping to order perennials for the nature garden soon. Maybe you'd like to plant a few dozen foxgloves, some graceful ferns, trailing honeysuckle or heavenly hellebores.

Keep an eye on www.nature-garden.co.uk for updates.

Kieron Humphrey kieronhumph@gmail.com

Blewbury Post Office News

Unfortunately, Micheal has resigned, and we are left in a bit of a pickle. Maggie and I will struggle on with Andrew will be coming to help, but there will be some Saturdays and other days that we just won't be able to open. I will put them on the local facebook pages, and send a stop press via the Bulletin. I will stay on for a while, until a suitable replacement can be found, otherwise we may lose our post office completely.

We have new Rolling Stones stamps in stock, and the Queens Platinum Jubilee stamps are out on Feb 4th!

Royal Mail tell us of delays to both inland and overseas mail, due to the high volume of mail and staff illnesses; Italy are at a standstill, and some other countries have imposed taxes on incoming mail.

We have Kitty's Eggs back in stock, and some loaves from the Blewbury Bakery in the freezer, plus lots of jam jars if you need any for marmalade!

Love Karen & Maggie

Make a Difference:

Become a School Governor at Blewbury School.

Do you want to make a difference to your local community and use your professional skills?

Blewbury School is currently looking for people in the community with the right professional skills who are willing to volunteer as a School Governor. You would bring your professional expertise to the school setting and work with school leaders to support childrens' learning and wider development. We are looking for people with marketing, human resources, finance, management or information and communication technology skills.

The School is part of ODST (Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust), a large multi-academy trust with 41 schools in Oxfordshire, Windsor and Maidenhead and Berkshire. It will provide you with training and support and you will become part of a forward looking team at Blewbury School. Governors of a school have three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff

- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

If you are interested in considering this opportunity, please contact Ann Parham (Chair of Governors) who is available to talk to you and answer any questions you may have. Her contact details are:

aparham@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk

Didcot U3A

As we are now back at the Didcot Civic Hall on the third Tuesday of the month we have decided this year we will send out the monthly brief within days of the meeting thereby ensuring the most up-to-date u3a news and information is being passed to you all, which you can then include in your next publications at your choosing; the January brief is as follows:

‘Live, Laugh, Learn’ never has a ‘punchline/slogan’ been ever more appropriate in these current times as we head back (hopefully?) to ‘normal’. The words are the three main objectives of the **Didcot & District u3a** and for anyone semi-retired or retired wishing to keep these three ‘buzz words’ to the fore, then joining your local u3a could be the answer?! Just come along to the monthly meeting (**third Tuesday** of every month) at the **Didcot Civic Hall at 2:30 pm** and review all the various **Interest Groups** on offer (learn a language, ukulele, natural history, walking, wine appreciation, etc) and also be entertained by the visiting **Guest Speaker**, of which here are the next three meetings;

15 February - *‘Hedgehog Man’* - a talk on one of our most loveable garden friends by Hugh Warwick

15 March - *‘The Importance of Regular Eye Tests to Keep Healthy’* - Adela Garcia

19 April - *‘Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies’* - Martin Lloyd

As always we look forward to meeting existing members and to give a warm welcome new members wanting to **‘Live, Laugh, Learn’**

For further details and information you can contact the following:

Chair - Chairman@didcotu3a.org

Secretary - secretary@didcotu3a.org

Brian & Lynn Burscough - PR for the Didcot & District u3a