

Upton News



April 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 - if this causes a problem please contact me.

Stung by my comment about medical services not being mentioned in the planning approval for Didcot's Valley Park development, Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne reminded me that the decision had been deferred *inter alia* to ask for a recommendation from the OCCG (Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group - in charge of local NHS) on what medical facilities were needed at this site.

Approval now imposes a condition that the developer provides money or space on the site for medical facilities.

More on the current shortage of facilities in Sarah & Hayleigh's contribution later.

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 on 01235 850267 office@churnchurches.co.uk

Services at St. Mary the Virgin

Please note - due to the clergy needing to take another service elsewhere in the Benefice straight after, we've moved the service to the slightly earlier time of **9.15am**. You are always welcome to enter the church even if the service has commenced!

3rd April	5th SUNDAY OF LENT
9.15am	Share a Prayer: St Mary's U
10th April	PALM SUNDAY
9.15am	Parish Eucharist
17th April	EASTER SUNDAY
9.15am	Parish Eucharist
24th April	SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
9.15am	Parish Eucharist
25 th April	Annual Parochial Church meeting 6.30pm

Pram Service Party

to celebrate nearly 30 years of ministry to the youngest generation.

Sunday 10th April, 3pm - 4.30 pm, Blewbury Village Hall
with Easter craft activities, songs and a delicious tea.

ALL who have had connections (and more!) are invited to come along. Pram Service in its old format has run for 30 years! We shall be celebrating this and hope you will be able to come to our party. The "old girls and boys" who used to come when they were sleeping babes / riotous toddlers are all invited! We welcome mums, dads, grans & grandpas as well.

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.

Friends of St Mary's - Good Friday walk

After an enforced break of a couple of years the Friends of St Mary's are delighted to be organising another Good Friday walk on 15th April. We will leave St Mary's at 2:00 for a circular walk of about four miles, arriving back at the church between 3:30 and 4:00 for tea and hot cross buns. There'll be a shorter circuit for those who prefer a more relaxing stroll.

There's no charge and all are very welcome, including friends, relatives and dogs! If possible it would be helpful to have an idea of the numbers attending so we can buy the right numbers of buns etc, so please let Paul Batho know if you're likely to be there (851251 or pjsbatho@btinternet.com). Or if you're not sure, just turn up on the day - we'll make sure there are a few buns to spare! We look forward to seeing as many as possible on 15th.

More than a piece of History

For almost two thousand years, Christians have been celebrating Easter at about this time of year. If you have ever wondered how the date is fixed, Easter Day is always the first Sunday after the Full Moon which happens on or next after the 21st March. If the Full Moon happens on a Sunday, Easter Day is celebrated on the following Sunday. This means that this year, Easter falls on 17th April; next year it will fall on 9th April.



When we think of Easter, we bring to mind the events surrounding Jesus' death on a Cross, his burial, and his Resurrection from the dead. But Easter is more than simply a matter of remembering an event which Christians believed happened some two thousand years ago.

When Jesus rose again from the dead, he did so with a new body. His resurrection body was similar in many ways to the physical body which he had during his pre-resurrection life: in other words, it was similar to an ordinary human body. But it was also different: it had been transformed. Christians believe that what happened to Jesus will also happen to us, when we are raised from the dead: we shall be clothed with a new form of body. When will this happen? No one knows. It will happen in God's good time.

This means that death is not the end for us. At some time, God will raise us from the dead, and clothe us with a new body. It happened to Jesus first; and we will follow in his steps. We shall be like Jesus, sharing his resurrection body.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, Paul expresses this by saying that the "body of our humiliation" will be conformed to the "body of [his] glory": in other words, our ordinary human bodies will be made to conform to the body of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ. It's an amazing vision for our future.

What will this future body look like? What will it feel like to be clothed with the body of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ? We don't know, and can barely imagine. But it is a source of comfort and hope for the future. And this is why Easter Day isn't just about remembering a piece of history. It's a foretaste of the future.

Happy Easter!

Father Jason

District & County Council News

Hello from Hayleigh & Sarah

Hello! Firstly, we just want to say how deeply saddened and shocked we are by recent events in Ukraine.

The Vale of White Horse District Council stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine in these horrific times. Council leader Emily Smith has issued a [statement](#) giving further information on what we can do to support those people caught in this conflict or escaping from the area. We have been heartened to see the efforts of many local residents in donating and collecting essential items for those affected - once again, our kind and caring community stepping up to help in times of crisis.

Locally, we are very aware of the many issues faced by residents in accessing healthcare in the Didcot area. Working alongside the Patient Participation Groups of the three medical centres, we have been calling on the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning group (OCCG) to provide transparency and clarity on the timescales for delivering the long-overdue healthcare centre on Great Western Park.

We are pleased to say that the OCCG are now engaging and they have kindly agreed to provide an **update for the public at the Great Western Park Residents' Association Meeting at 8pm on Monday 9th May**. The meeting will be held in a hybrid in-person and online format, at Boundary Park Sports Pavilion and on Zoom. Please keep an eye on the [GWP Residents' Association website](https://www.gwpra.org.uk/) (<https://www.gwpra.org.uk/>) meeting-minutes-agendas for more details, and note that this meeting will also be their AGM, for anyone wishing to volunteer with this excellent community organisation.

Information about the £150 'rebate' to help with energy bills

Thousands of council taxpayers in the Vale of White Horse will soon receive a £150 council tax 'rebate' to help with rising energy bills.

The government has announced that **most households in council tax bands A-D will be eligible for the rebate** however, contrary to some reports, **the 'rebate' will not be taken off people's council tax bills** when they are issued.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are putting arrangements in place to make a separate payment to households as soon as possible. Here's how the payments will be made:

- If a household pays their council tax by direct debit** - they should be able to receive the £150 directly into their bank account. South and Vale are hoping to start making these payments by the end of April.
- If a household is not on direct debit** - it will take longer to make these payments as the councils will need to write to them to confirm their bank details.

To ensure the council can carry out this work as quickly as possible, we are asking people not to contact us to chase the 'rebate' payment.

To receive the £150 payment as quickly as possible, residents can still sign up to pay their bill by direct debit - for more information on how to do this, visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/counciltax.

Limited funding will also be made available for households in need who would not otherwise be eligible for this energy rebate. This will be a local discretionary scheme and details will be made available on the council's website in due course. If you are struggling to pay your council tax bill, please visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/counciltax to find out about the support available or call 0345 302 2315.

For advice if you are struggling to pay other bills please visit Citizens Advice website citizensadvice.org.uk or Vale Community Impact at vci.org.uk.

For more information, visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/counciltax

Parish Council News

On the recreation ground, wheels have been installed on the goalposts and new nets are imminent. (This brings an opportunity to “move the goalposts” for real rather than metaphorically!)

Plans for the new financial year include the following major items:

- Physically restricting unauthorised vehicular access to the grass area to prevent damage to the grass
- Replacement of the decaying fencing at the far end of the field
- Resurfacing of the pump track
- Provision of fencing around the play areas to prevent dog fouling

Seven instances of potholes and blocked drains in the village have been reported to highways for action via “fix my street”.

Upton Parish Council AGM

will be held at 7:00 pm on 7th April in the village hall. All villagers are welcome to attend to hear the Chairman's report and ask questions whilst mingling with a glass of something.

Speed Watch

The Parish Council has signed up with Thames Valley Police to formally join their Speed Watch Campaign. We have spoken with Blewbury and Harwell Speed Watch teams and will be working closely with them. We now have access to PC Lee Turner, their Speed Watch coordinator, and Thames Valley facilities.

We are in the process of borrowing speed guns and signs from Thames Valley and would like to be the first ones to use them; to enable this we need volunteers from the village to train in the use of the equipment and go out to identify and document the speeding vehicles going through Upton.

The training is a on-line course which takes about 30 minutes to complete. A number of villagers have expressed interest and we would like you to come forward again. Please email the Parish Clerk and we will contact you as to what is needed. parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk



Foot Care



A Mobile Foot Clinic for
Upton

Treatment provided in your own home for
Routine Foot and Nail Care
Toenail Trimming
Corn and Callous Removal
Diabetic Foot Care
Contact Jill Allen DipFh MCFHP MAFHP
Foot Health Practitioner
07767763441 or 01235 815917



Gary Cuddon



9 Harwood Road
East Hagbourne

Painter and Decorator

Providing a High Quality Service

Free Quotations

Fully Insured

Tel. 01235 510680 or 07827752904

Scotlands Ash Garage

Main Street West Hagbourne
Oxford's award winning local
Independent Garage
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

enquiries@scotlandsashgarage.co.uk



Family Nursery, Florist,
Gift and Farm Shop

Visit Savages to discover fresh quality fruit
and veg, home grown plants,
flowers, giftware and foods
The Nurseries, London Road, Blewbury
01235 850352

shop@savagesblewbury.co.uk

LJD Bell Plumbing & Heating Services

All Domestic Plumbing and Heating Work
Undertaken
A1 High Efficiency Boilers Fitted
Gas Appliances Fitted and Serviced (Inc LPG)
Landlord Gas Safety Check and Certificates
Aga/Rayburn Servicing
Fully Insured
Water Safe Approved Operative
CIPHE Registered Plumber

Mobile 07555100848

ljd-bell-plumbing-heating@outlook.com



N Drum



Landscaping, Fencing
and Maintenance
Garden and Grounds
Maintenance
Hedge Planting and Cutting
Grass Cutting and Turfing
Power Washing and Winter Gritting
Licensed Waste Carrier
Fully Insured

Tel. 01235 859229 or 07922701634

ndrumlandscaping@gmail.com

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*

Blewbury post office news

We are still open Monday to Fridays, and are closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday too. Allowances will be paid early.

Stamps will be going up in price from 4th April, 1st and 2nd will revalue themselves, so buy a few extra now, 1st are going up to 95p and 2nd to 68p, but the new bar-coded ones will be on sale soon, and the non bar-coded ones will be obsolete from January 2023, (except the pretty special ones). It will be £1.85 to Europe and the rest of the world, for a card or letter under 20g.

Mail to Russia and Ukraine is suspended, whilst mail to Italy is now getting through customs but we are advised of delays.

On 22nd March, Prepay solutions come online, so customers with Coconut, Countingup, Mettle, Monese, Optimum, Quidity plus & Tide, can top up here

We have Kitty's eggs, bread from the Blewbury bakery in the freezer, and scummy cakes from Chloe. Ice cream will be coming soon, plus beautiful cards, delicious sweeties, and a good selection of packaging.

Duck race tickets will be available at the post office, don't leave it to the last minute!

Happy Easter from Karen and Maggie

Girl Guiding in Cholsey

Do you have some time to spare? We are in urgent need of adult leaders to help our Brownie and Guide units in Cholsey village.

Brownies are aged 7–10 years and meet on Monday early evenings in term time and Guides run after Brownies. We do various activities chosen by the Brownies and Guides – outdoor activities, cooking, craft. learning new skills, badge work, fun and friendship.

We need more adults to help us give the girls chance to take part and enjoy all the activities on offer. You don't need to become a uniformed leader, we welcome adults who would like to be unit helpers. Any offers of help would be greatly appreciated.

Please register your interest to become a volunteer via the website.
www.Girlguiding.org.uk.

If you'd like to find out more in the first instance please feel free to ask questions and contact Rachel Watson on 07766900190

World Book Day Celebrations at Blewbury School!

Learning to read is such a vital gateway experience for anyone who successfully goes through the process. Sadly millions of children and adults in the modern world still are not able to read for a whole variety of reasons.

Blewbury School not only encourages and supports every child to become a proficient reader but also very actively promotes a lifelong love for reading and for books. We know that this can play such an important place in the social, educational and emotional lives of every individual. Parents, siblings, grandparents, other relatives, friends and indeed the whole community can play their part by promoting a love of books, an enthusiasm for reading and talking about what we have all read to children and young people, who we know and meet. It has been said that it takes a whole village to educate a child and this is one area where we can all contribute.

There is no better time for Blewbury School to celebrate the importance of books and reading than on **World Book Day** and they once again did that with great levels of creativity and fun on Thursday 3rd March.

Here is an account of the day written by Chloe and Saskia, who are in the Banksy Class: World book day is always a joyous occasion at Blewbury School. It was all about appreciating books and sharing our favourite characters with each other.



This year, we ploughed straight in with our favourite character costumes (which were all fabulous). To make it interesting, we had a costume competition for pupils and staff. All the pupils did exceedingly well on making, stitching, painting, or buying their creative outfits.

The whole school watched a live book day video assembly which involved all the 2022 short book authors giving tips and pointers about how to write and illustrate our own adventures and even start our days with motivation. The teachers also prepared a Masked Reader competition for us. Later, we had a story swap with a staff member ready in each room to read us their favourite picture book and we could choose where to go, for example we listened to Tyrannosaurus Drip in DaVinci class.

You can see more photos from the day by going to our school website: www.blewbury.oxon.sch.uk

Roger Murphy, Blewbury School Community Governor

Upton Wine Club – March meeting

The third wine club meeting of the 2022 calendar took place on the usual third Wednesday of the month, on 16th March. Attended by approximately 20 of our club members, this was a smaller turnout than usual, which meant slightly more generous samples of the delicious wine on offer throughout the evening (and more headaches the next morning, perhaps!).

The theme of the night was “The Judgement of Paris”; for those unfamiliar with the wine connection to this phrase (as opposed to the story from Greek Mythology), the Judgement of Paris was a wine competition organised in Paris in May 1976 by Stephen Spurrier, a British wine merchant, and his colleague Patricia Gallagher, in which French judges carried out two blind tasting comparisons; one of top quality chardonnays and another of red wines (Bordeaux wines from France and Cabernet Sauvignon wines from California). In every category, the Californian wines came out top, which greatly shocked the judges, as France was at the time considered to be the foremost producers of the world’s best wines.

And so, to the Judgement of Upton. Eight bottles of wine, including four white and four red, and half from France and half from California, were brilliantly presented by the dynamic duo Ian Langley and Brian Rippon, from the wine club committee. Over four rounds, two bottles at a time were sampled and compared by being labelled as A and B, to enact our own blind tasting. The wines were all supplied by the Wine Society and were similarly priced, so the task was to see which one’s members preferred.

Round 1 involved two Viogniers: a 2020 McManis Viognier from California and a 2021 Grignan-les-Adhemar, Viognier from Domaine de Montine, in France. The Californian is a rich, velvety white wine with peach, pear and apricot aromas and could be paired easily with fish curry, prawns, scallops or a melon starter (random!). The French wine, from Southern Rhone, is a creamy, full- flavoured Viognier with peace and exotic guava flavours. Very ripe and full-flavoured, it is said to go perfectly with fish or duck pate. With only 45p separating the two wines in price (£11.95 and £11.50 respectively), both wines present good value for money.

Round 2 involved two Chardonnays: a 2020 Bogle Vineyard California Chardonnay and a 2020 Domaine Andre Bonhomme from the Macon-Villages Vieilles Vignes in France. The Californian is 50% aged in American Oak for eight months to give a rich vanilla and nutmeg spice. The other half is aged in steel to retain the fresh peach and lemon character. It is 14.5% alcohol and priced at £12.50 and is best paired with children dishes prawns and beef carpaccio. The Domaine Andre Bonhomme (13.5%) is a ripe yet refreshing burgundy with aromas of white peaches and a balanced palate with a long finish for a wine of this price (£12.50 also).

We then moved onto the reds. Round 3 involved two Pinot Noirs: The Society’s Exhibition Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 2019 (Californian) and a Reuilly Rouge ‘Les Demoiselles Tatin’, from the Domaines Tatin in France, 2019. The former is a vibrant and bright red fruity wine that you’d expect from the fog-cooled yet sunny Sonoma Coast in California. At 13.5% in alcohol volume and £14.95 in price, the wine goes well with rabbit dishes, roast beef, veal and cold meats. The French wine is a delightful Central Vineyards

Pinot Noir from a ripe Loire vintage. Again, another one that can be paired with cold meats, rabbit and veal, but also with ham, salmon and wild mushrooms. Versatile and a snip at £12.50.

The final two wines of the night were of the Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Merlot variety. The first was a 2015 Chateau Tour Saint Bonet, Medoc (13.5%), a ruby-red coloured, medium-bodied wine from a consistently good Bordeaux estate; it has a bouquet of cassis and cedar and is made from Cabernet- Merlot grapes. The second wine was the 2019 Californian Pedroncelli Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon (14.5%). This wine has blackberry, blackcurrant and mulberry flavours which are well-balanced by subtle cedar and vanilla notes. Both wines are great value (£13.50 and £11.95 respectively) and on the night, were paired with pieces of delicious chorizo.

A vote by a show of arms was undertaken throughout the evening, with the Californian wines overall coming out on top again, although there was of course some divided opinion! A fantastic, informative enjoyable evening was had by all.

Natalie Morgan

Didcot Hash House Harriers

Would you like to run or walk with a sociable, local group, followed by a visit to the pub for a beer (or coffee) and, sometimes, chips? If so, how about joining Didcot Hash House Harriers?

We are part of the international hashing family. We meet at 11:00 on a Sunday in the winter and 19:00 on a Tuesday evening in the summer. We start and finish at a local pub, ending up in the bar or garden for a sociable drink and chat. We welcome anyone and everyone including families (all children must be accompanied by an adult).

Hashing is like a paper-chase or hare and hounds in that a trail is laid in advance and the 'pack' then have to find the correct route. No-one is left behind and the trail is 4.5-6 miles for the run and 3.5-4 miles for the walk.

There is no long term commitment, just join us when you can. There is no joining fee, your first run is free and we charge £1 each time you come along after that. If you are interested please look up Didcot Hash House Harriers at <http://dh3.azurewebsites.net> or email lemonydh3@gmail.com.

Upton Nature Garden Volunteers

Full green ahead for the nature garden!

The verdict on progress in the nature garden is in! Alex Little, the horticulturalist who kindly provided the original designs, declared it the eighth wonder of the world, or at least I think that's what he said. There was a helicopter flying over at the time.

One thing Alex was unequivocally complimentary about was the volunteer posse who came to plant up the perennials a few weeks back. He was impressed to see so many taking part – encouraged by some glorious sunshine!

If you're taking a stroll in the garden, you'll see the individual plants are quite small, but (Alex noted) this gives them an advantage over larger pot-grown specimens which may have become over-accustomed to their pot and fail to flourish when released into the wild. Ours should develop fairly fast as we go from spring to summer, and adapt well to their new surroundings. Inevitably there'll be a few failures - the gooseberries in particular seem a bit reluctant - but in the long run we'll have more robust stock.

Preparing the wildflower meadow

It was hard to miss the display of wildflowers outside Autumn Leaves (at the bottom of the High Street) last year. We're hoping to replicate that in the nature garden. The secret? Really thorough preparation. Wildflower seedlings can't compete with a thick thatch of grass, so it's important to remove as much of the green stuff as possible. Not forgetting to bury a dung-filled cow horn under a new moon ...

To this end if you're using a mini-digger at any point in the next few weeks could we borrow it for an hour to level off the ground? Then we'll be ready to rotovate.

On 23 April we'd like your help raking the bare soil to create a very fine tilth. If conditions are right (i.e. not too windy) we'll be able to sow and tread in. Come along from 10am if you can - there'll be cake!

Signing off

The last stage of establishing the garden will involve putting in a sign, a wooden bench, and a new gate near the bus stop. There's also a dead hedge under construction in the woodland section - dry sticks piled between stakes to create extra habitat - and more mulch-spreading to do.

If you want to get involved, or have ideas for events or new features, please email us: support@nature.garden.co.uk Otherwise, go ahead and enjoy the space as the fancy takes you. Hopefully there'll be lots to see and enjoy.

Kieron

On behalf of the Nature Garden Volunteers

kieronhumph@gmail.com

Didcot U3A

At the time of going to 'press' we are enjoying some glorious early Spring weather as we all come out of Covid hibernation and what better way than to '**Live, Laugh & Learn**' with your local u3a organisation, aimed at retired and semi-retired individuals who wish to keep active, both in body and mind!

The **Didcot & District u3a** provides the opportunity for those very aspirations, whether it learning a new language (French, German, etc), gardening, natural history, family history, playing an instrument and many more, this could be exactly what you are looking for, so join us at the monthly meetings held in the **Didcot Civic Hall** every third Tuesday of the month. Meetings start at **2:30 (early arrival recommended!)** and there is always a guest speaker followed by light refreshments; the topics for the coming months as follows:

19 April - *Passports, Assassins, Traitors & Spies* - Martin Lloyd

17 May - *AGM* - Guest Speaker to be confirmed

21 June - *Four Generations at Fairmile* - Ian Wheeler

19 July - *From Page to Stage* - Jennifer Cowling

If that whets your appetite then we look forward to seeing you there,

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

Astons Online

April's Zoom online meeting will be 10:30 - 11:15 on Tuesday 19 April. We'll talk about using photos, audio, spreadsheets etc. to easily collect and keep what you'll want to know in the future. For example what's in that cupboard, what are my monthly running costs how much yeast went into last week's loaf? Book your place at theastonsonline@gmail.com and see www.astonsonline.uk.

Free and friendly help for computer users every Tuesday morning from 10:00 to 12:00. We provide help remotely using telephone, Quick Assist, 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.