

Upton News



May 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.

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 the slightly earlier time of **9.15am**. You are always welcome to enter the church even if the service has commenced!

1st May	3rd SUNDAY OF EASTER
9.15am	Morning Prayer (BCP)
8th May	4th SUNDAY OF EASTER
9.15am	Parish Eucharist
22nd May	6th SUNDAY OF EASTER
9.15am	Parish Eucharist

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.

Benefice Ascension Day Service

The whole Benefice is invited to St Michael's Blewbury for our Ascension Day service

Thursday 26 May 8pm, followed by refreshments



What's Happening on 26th May?

I wonder if you have anything planned for 26th May? Now, you might well be asking yourself what's so special about the 26th May. Well, since the late 4th century, Christians have been celebrating the Ascension of Christ on the fortieth day after Easter. This year, Easter Day falls on 17th April, and hence Ascension Day is celebrated on 26th May.

What does Ascension day commemorate? According to the Acts of Apostles, Jesus, after he had risen from the dead on Easter Day, "presented himself alive to [his disciples] by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God". After this, "he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight".



What exactly happened? How did it happen? We don't know. All we know is that Jesus was "lifted up", and the word "Ascension" simply means "lifting up". Traditionally, heaven has been pictured as a sphere of existence "above" us, and hence any journey to heaven has necessarily involved a "lifting up", as heaven has been pictured as lying somewhere "above" us. Nowadays, I think we are more likely to picture heaven as a sphere of existence "beyond" us – "beyond" our imagining. I hasten to add that this is the language of poetry-

heaven is not literally “above” us, somewhere up in the sky.

So the Ascension commemorates Jesus’ return to a life lived with God in heaven. But this does not mean that Jesus left his followers comfortless. He promised to send them the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the days following the Ascension, his followers waited patiently for the coming of the promised Holy Spirit. They did not have long to wait: the Holy Spirit arrived on the Feast of Pentecost, 9 days later. The Feast of Pentecost is one of the major festivals of the church’s year, and this year it will fall on Sunday 5th June. Because of the way our calendar works, Ascension Day will always fall on a Thursday, and Pentecost on a Sunday.

At its heart, the Ascension is a declaration that Jesus Christ is king of the whole Universe: his is the ultimate authority, and we are to recognise his authority in all that we do. Jesus’ kingly rule is all about love, peace and justice; and we recognise his authority by putting love, peace and justice at the centre of our lives.

- *Father Jason*

District & County Council News

Hello from Hayleigh & Sarah

We have several important updates this month, starting with the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The local councils are working to provide extensive support for Ukrainian refugees, and there is information available for residents looking to sponsor or provide help in other ways - more details below.

Financial Support Helplines

With rising energy prices and the cost of living increasing, it is a difficult time for many residents. Anyone who is struggling financially can contact Citizens Advice on 0808 278 7907, Vale Community Impact on 01235 765348 or the council’s own community support hub - details below.

£150 Council Tax Rebate

Residents will soon receive a £150 council tax rebate to help with rising energy bills - note that this does not need to be paid back. 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 councils can carry out this work as quickly as possible, they are asking people not to contact them to chase the 'rebate' payment.

Community Support

The Community Support Hub, originally set up by the council in 2020 in response to the pandemic, is still available for anyone in need of help: if you have COVID-19, or if you are struggling financially, or if you are just finding life difficult due to the pandemic. Whether it's practical support or just advice, get in touch. Call: 01235 422 600 (Mon to Thurs 8.30-5pm and Fridays 8.30-4.30pm) or visit www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communityhub.

Didcot Healthcare Update

A reminder that we have invited the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide an update for the public on the Didcot healthcare provision 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 for more details, and note that this meeting will also be their AGM, for anyone wishing to volunteer with this excellent community organisation.

Vale and South Oxfordshire councils step up to support Ukrainian refugees

Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils are redeploying staff from across the councils to ensure Ukrainian refugees moving to the districts get the support and help they need. The government has published a welcome pack for arriving refugees to signpost people to the help that is available, including advice about accessing universal credit and job support. The councils' joint team will be supplementing this with local information as well as providing clear signposts to help and support online.

The county council's website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ukrainesupport is being used as the central host for this information. Sponsor information has been published on this site along with local information for Ukrainian guests. South and Vale's website will signpost people to these pages. The government has also published a set of frequently asked questions for sponsors and individuals applying to the scheme.

There is a lot of joint work underway between the councils. The county council's customer services team has started to make first contact phone calls to hosts and letters will begin to be distributed as part of this process outlining next steps for hosts and guests. In partnership, councils (including us) have begun initiating the accommodation and safeguarding checks required. However, it is important to also recognise that as we

activate our plans, our approach and processes will evolve and improve as we get more detailed information from government.

Valley Park Update

The planning application for the first 'parcel' of 246 homes on Valley Park is now live and open for consultation on the online planning portal - reference P22/V0539/RM. We (Hayleigh and Sarah) know how important it is to residents that these new houses are environmentally sustainable, and we will be pushing for this in our own consultation responses. However, we encourage all residents to comment on the application to ensure that everyone's views are heard - the deadline for consultation responses is 29th April.

The outline planning application for the Valley Park development was approved by the council's planning committee in July 2021. This came after the decision was initially deferred in February 2021 due to the three key issues we and the local community raised at the time: lack of health care provision, inadequate cycling infrastructure and insufficient sustainability commitments. These issues were addressed through placing additional requirements on the developers when planning permission was granted.

The additional requirements were secured earlier this year via the legal agreement between the developers and the councils. The signing of this agreement means that millions of pounds have now been secured for vital infrastructure, health provision and tackling climate change as part of the planning application for Valley Park. Developers will have to provide the funds as part of an application for the homes - 35% of which will be affordable - at Valley Park near Great Western Park through what is known as Section 106. The money includes £200,000 for biodiversity improvements, four times more than applicant Taylor Wimpey originally proposed, that must be made before any development begins. There is also just under £4m for public transport, including bus shelters and bus services, to encourage sustainable travel to, from and around the site.

Following requests from Vale of White Horse District Council Planning Committee members, developers must also implement so-called 'green wave' technology to improve cyclist safety at the roundabout proposed on the B4493 Harwell / Didcot Road, as well additional cycleways to connect the site with the surrounding area. Also secured on site are allotments, sports pitches, a community centre, two primary schools and a special educational needs school, and two local centres to provide services meeting the daily needs of future occupants. £9m is secured for improving and expanding secondary school provision.

The contributions will ensure the development contributes to the aims of Didcot Garden Town, which sets out how to build new homes in a well-planned and sustainable way.

Fix My Street

In addition to the website <https://www.fixmystreet.com>, a new telephone

number (01223 849731) has been launched for Oxfordshire residents to call for urgent out of hours highways related issues.

People can now report a highways matter to Oxfordshire County Council outside normal office hours - including evenings, weekends and bank holidays - if there are concerns about it causing an accident or damaging property. The call adviser will discuss the urgency of the issue and take appropriate action as required.

Parish Council News

The cycle “pump” track will be resurfaced during May; the provisional start date being the 10th.

Upton Annual Parish Meeting

A reminder that the rescheduled APM will be held in the village hall on 4th May at 7:00 pm. Every elector in the parish is encouraged to attend.

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 have been granted the loan of speed watch equipment from Thames Valley Police and a number of villagers have been trained in its use. If you would like to join their ranks please contact parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk



**Oxfordshire Artweeks
2022**



www.artweeks.org

Aston Tirrold and Blewbury have ten exhibitors, venues 231 -240.
Paintings, drawings, photography, jewellery, textiles, prints, cards.
Do come for a free visit, May 14-22, all welcome and lots to see.
For details of opening times and locations see website and guide.
Many other exhibitions near you and throughout all Oxfordshire.



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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*

Blewbury post office news

By the time you read this, I'm hoping to be back open again, and hopefully, fully recovered. Thank you for everyone's good wishes and offers of help.

There isn't very much news at the moment, except that we'll be closed for Saturdays and the Bank holidays, Monday 2nd May, and of course for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Chloe is baking her delicious cakes for us, we have Blewbury Bakery bread in the freezer, Kitty's eggs, Bellringers honey, and the ice cream is here!

Andrew will be 'flying solo' for a few days, I'm sure you'll all be patient with him!

COFFEE & KIDS!

Thursday 5th May, 9.30am - 11am, Vale Room, Blewbury Village Hall

Louise and Emily look forward to meeting families again and welcoming new ones. Time for parents / grandparents to chat, toddlers to play, babies to be cuddled and refreshments to be enjoyed. We usually have some songs with actions towards the end of the session. A donation of up to £2 per family is welcome. The contact number is 07837 009730 if you have any queries.

Rev'd Louise Butler

Astons Online

May's Zoom online meeting will be 10:30 - 11:15 on Tuesday 24 May. We'll talk about doing something new - for example two factor verification, connect devices with bluetooth etc. 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.

Uptonogood? Mountain Bike Festival



After an enforced two years away, we are delighted to announce the Uptonogood? - Mountain Bike Festival will take place this year in Upton, Oxfordshire on Saturday 18th June.

As before there will be a range of route options available, catering for riders of all ages and abilities. The routes take in the beautiful North Wessex Downs on and around the Ridgeway National Trail. On route there will be medical and mechanical support, as well as feed stations to keep riders moving.

After the rides, there will be festival atmosphere at Upton Recreation Field where the rides start and finish. Live music will be playing throughout the afternoon and refreshments will be available to suit all tastes. From teas/coffees and lots of homemade cake, to a fully licensed bar and BBQ fare.

The event is community organised and has run most years since 2010, on a voluntary basis. Volunteers may nominate any charity for a £25 donation and receive a free drink and burger back at the festival as a thank you.

Over the years Uptonogood? and has raised £65K for local organizations and charities.

More information on our fundraising can be found here: <https://www.uptonogood.org.uk/fundraising/>

More information on the routes can be found here: <https://www.uptonogood.org.uk/routes/>

Riders may register here: <https://www.uptonogood.org.uk/enter/>

Volunteers may do so here: <https://www.uptonogood.org.uk/volunteer/>

Contact: info@uptonogood.org.uk

Uptonogood?

Call for Volunteers

After two years of COVID restrictions and lockdowns, it time to get Uptonogood!

You will have read that we are planning to hold the event again this year on Saturday 18th June, and as usual we aim is to raise money for local causes and primarily projects here in Upton. In the past this has included many improvements to the facilities on the recreation field and the village hall. As always though, hosting up to 1000 riders safely, requires a small army of volunteers to help marshal the course and provide support on the rec. Whether it be marshalling, providing "admin" services, pouring pints in the bar, or dunking tea bags, there is much to be done on the day. Before the day there is signage to deploy, cakes to be baked, and marquees to erect. All in all there is much to be done and Upton has always rose to the challenge.

If you would like to volunteer to be part of this year's event, please make yourself known to either Bob Lott (07890316126) or Mike Tibbetts (07966280155) as soon as possible. Alternatively you can register your interest on the Uptonogood website www.uptonogood.org.uk/volunteer



BLEWBURY BEER FESTIVAL-2022

The Blewbury Village Society (BVS) is once again putting on a Beer Festival in Blewbury Village Hall on **Saturday 14th May**, with proceeds going towards the BVS and Blewbury preschool.

There will be a good selection of 10 local, real ales and there will also be lager, cider and wine for those not into

quaffing pints of bitter. Entry is £5.00 and includes a commemorative glass.

The event will run from 2pm until around 11 pm, during which time beer will be drunk, wine will be tasted, the food van can be visited and a full program of music and entertainment can be enjoyed.

So why not come and join us for a jolly good drink, as it's always nice to see our friends from neighbouring villages.

For more details see <https://fb.me/e/1k0aJphER>

Goldsworthy Pupils Create New Maps of Blewbury



In the weeks leading up to Easter the Year 2 & 3 pupils in Goldsworthy Class at Blewbury School were busy researching both the history and geography of Blewbury village. They did this in response to their theme for Terms 3 & 4, which was 'Is it important to belong?'.

The class worked collaboratively with some members of the Blewbury Local History Group and through them accessed a range of old maps and pictures of the village. They then went together with their teacher Miss Banfield on a walk around the village, noting details of interesting features and buildings as they went around. Certain village landmarks, such as the Church and the Blewbury Wagon captured their attention, and they went back to school determined to find out more about them.

A little while later three members of the Blewbury Local History Group visited their classroom to see how they were getting on, and to help out by trying to answer questions that the pupils had devised. This led to a

fascinating discussion about how our village has a history that stretches back more than one thousand years, when it already had significance as a farming community and a stopping place for those travelling nearby. The pupils were also fascinated by the number of times the Blewbury Post Office has moved location, the fact that most of the village was originally an orchard, the old pub names especially the 'Load of Mischief' and the fact that even the garage is more than 80 years old now!

The pupils then planned and drafted information texts, which they linked to a website that they created using Google Sites. Then they used QR codes to create links to significant buildings and other features on their map. This allows others to do virtual walking tours around the village and on the way find out interesting information revealed by the Goldsworthy researchers.

Key to this next stage of their journey was mastering the essential geographical skill of map drawing, and as they mastered that they were quickly able to create some great new maps of the village.

If you would like to learn more about the outcomes from this great strand of Goldsworthy project work then do talk to any pupils you know from Goldsworthy class or contact the Blewbury School Office, where help and advice is always available. The pupils would all be delighted to share their maps with you and if required explain to you how a QR code works!

Roger Murphy
Community Governor