



Churn Benefice Office Temporary Closure

Unfortunately the Benefice Office was shut due to Covid when the Upton News went to press. Benefice news is therefore shorter than usual. We offer everyone our best wishes for a full and speedy recovery.

It is expected that office will be up and running again the first week of August.

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!

3.00pm

7th August

8th Sunday after Trinity

9.15am

Lay-led Parish Service

14th August

9th Sunday after Trinity

9.15am

Parish Eucharist

28th August

11th Sunday after Trinity

9.15am

Parish Eucharist

The Drop-In Coffee Morning

Every Wednesday 10.30am to 12noon, Benefice Centre Blewbury

All welcome to drop in for coffee & a chat. Run by the Churn Branch of the Mother's Union

The Churn Mothers' Union

Annual Teddy Bears Picnic

3 August at 12noon

in the garden of Penny Brassell, Lynchets, Bessels Way, Blewbury.

Please bring a rug/chair and a picnic plus teddy bear. We welcome all children and any mums, dads, friends, grandparents and carers. Soft drinks and ice-creams will be provided.

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.

***** Upton Village Fête – Saturday, 3rd September *****

Make a date for the fête! As usual, this will be held on the village recreation ground on the first Saturday of September between 1:00 and 4:00 pm.

In the central arena there'll be a gymnastic display and a not-too-serious dog show. All sizes and shapes of dogs are welcome! - please call Gloria Hancock on 850683.

Wantage Silver Band will be playing and Tracey Seelig's ladies Morris Capering Crew will entertain us during the afternoon. We're also promised a great display of classic cars and possibly even a couple of steam traction engines!

The fête is in aid of Upton Village Hall and St Mary's Church, and there'll be plenty of opportunities to spend your money! Amongst the many stalls will be a tombola, books, garden plants, preserves and ice cream, and to keep you going there will be the usual magnificent teas, cakes and a barbeque. For children, there'll be a special area with games, toys and other delights.

As ever, we rely on the generosity of Uptonians to donate cakes (please contact Giulia Rippon), tombola prizes (Ian and Judy Robertson) and books (Bill and Sue Harper - or leave your donations in the church porch). And we also need assistance from 9:30 am on the day to put everything up, then take it all down again at 4:00 pm. Please contact Paul Batho (851251) if you can help with this.

Thanks to everyone who is working hard to make this a special day for Upton. We look forward to welcoming you all!

Paul Batho

CAKES FOR UPTON VILLAGE FETE

SATURDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER

It's this time of year again when I am asking our villagers to bake, bake and bake with all contributions for the cake stall which is always very popular and successful. We are looking for whole cakes, sliced cakes, scones, cupcakes, cakes for kiddies, tray bakes and biscuits.

We would be very grateful if it could be dropped off at Autumn Leaves (junction of Church St and High St) on Friday, 2nd September or bring along to the Village Hall in the morning, from 11am. If you need to deliver earlier, I'll make sure there is a table set up for drop-offs. We are also happy to collect if this helps.

We are also looking for volunteers to help, between 1pm and 4pm. Drop us an email with time preference please.

Many thanks and happy baking!

Giulia and Brian Rippon

giulia@rippon.net

brian@rippon.net



Parish Council News

Chilton Road Cycleway

Work is at long last due to commence on the A417 and Hagbourne Hill crossings and the Chilton Road Cycleway works. The final resurfacing of the A417 is booked for October 2022.

Playground Equipment

The have, of late, been some issues with the maintenance of the playground equipment. This has been taken up with the contracted supplier and have been rectified. However, in the longer term the Parish Council is looking at contracting with alternative organisations for the regular safety inspections and also for repairs that are determined to be necessary.

Between the formal examinations, weekly inspections need to be carried out preferably by volunteers to avoid incurring costs. **Would you be willing to volunteer to do this? It is not onerous nor difficult but helps to ensure that children can use the equipment in safety.** Checks could be always be done whilst you are supervising your children using the equipment. Please contact the parish council via the Parish Clerk or the Chairman parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk, or bens@uptonpc.co.uk

Waste Bin in the Children's Play Area

Upton Parish Council has been aware for some time now that the bin in the children play area is not being collected any longer by the District Council's Contractor due to budget cuts and being outside of the service level agreement that they hold with Biffa to collect bins at the roadside only.

For over a year a village resident has kindly volunteered to empty the bin and leave it next to the roadside bin for collection. Sadly however we have now been informed by the District Council that, following a survey of all bins being collected, only waste within the bins will be removed and any sacks left next to them will be considered fly tipping! Upton Parish Council has made enquiries as to what facilities will be put in place to replace these collections and has been told that none are planned for the foreseeable future.

This has led the Upton Parish Council to undertake a project to seek ways of removing the waste on a consistent basis without relying exclusively on the goodwill of residents. If anyone has any suggestions on how we might achieve this please email the Parish Clerk or Chairman (as above).

Dates for your diary:

Next year's Annual Parish Meeting for Upton has been arranged for Wednesday 26th April 2023.

The next ordinary Parish Council Meeting will be on 20th September 2022 at 7:00 pm. in the meeting room of the village hall. Villagers are always encouraged to attend.

District & County Council News

County Councillor News

Dear Upton

Firstly I just wanted to let you all know that finally work is due to commence on the A417 crossing and the Chilton Road Cycleway works. With the final resurfacing booked for October 2022. More info coming soon, you'll all get notifications when it's due to start. It's been a bit of a headache, and I've fed back improvements for other schemes! So I apologise for any inconvenience and the unsightly barriers and issues but finally we are over the hump and crossing the final line!

It was great to catch up with Kieran and Jo at the Upton Nature Garden the other day, and look at what's worked and what needs help. I've funded a chipper / mulching machine to help reduce the waste and turn fallen branches and weeds into productive material for nutrients and growth. I've also got my engineer head switched on and thinking about an irrigation system that's about water saving and distributing in an eco-friendly and renewable way! More action on this soon I hope. I am hugely jealous of the wildflower zone, it's an amazing display for the first year indeed! Well done to all the volunteers and the Parish Council for supporting this vision and having contributed £3000 of my priority funding to the scheme I am delighted to see it reclaimed and thriving. To every hand that's helped, thank you, we need more help that's for sure!

Another thank you is needed, as always Cllr Ben Shaw's chairing of your Parish Council is to be applauded. It's no mean feat being a parish councillor and I want to thank all Upton councillors but a special thanks to Ben. I enjoy our phone calls and the candid and open relationship we have which just helps us both get more things done. Thanks Ben!

So onto my ramble and news...

There can be no doubt now on the climate emergency we are facing after the extreme weather in July. As I pen this, drought orders are being banded around in the news and harvests underway and my blackberries are ripe. The bee hive we got this year needs harvesting already and the whole growing season is way ahead of itself! The devastation of this spring / summer weather to habitats and our natural world are as yet unknown. Which is why groups like HUGS are key to local civic action like the nature garden and wildflower planting. What's clear is we need adaption and resilience, and since I was elected in May 2021 I am constantly the voice at county hall for making sure we have plans and contingency in place, I sit on the carbon working group to ensure Oxfordshire County Council hits its target reductions.

What's clear is we are pretty much on our own, there's no major funding or guidance coming from central government that addresses the fact we are heading towards potentially a 3+ degree rise in global temperatures.

The clocks ticking and the sand is running faster than national politicians can stop procrastinating!

I know it can feel overwhelming but we can't sugar coat this any longer. We need to face facts head on. So please connect with HUGS, Sustainable Didcot, Sustainable Blewbury and any other local action groups, let's start doing what we can together, more info from me coming soon on my socials!

So what else is new?

In May 2022 I stood for election in the Vale of White Horse by election (the conservative councillor resigned) and won the seat, in Steventon & Hanneys. Consequently I was voted by my Lib Dem group onto cabinet and am the cabinet member for Climate Emergency & Environment. I stood because the reservoir threat to our local area has never been as real as it is right now! I am still yet to hear a convincing argument that's not based around private industry profits and greed!

We have much to do around climate, carbon sequestering, waste reduction, improving air pollution, mass tree planting and our open spaces. We need nature to be front and centre and rapid biodiversity increase. Do follow me on Facebook for news and stories and how you can get involved. We had a great conversation at the Parish Council in July about waste and I'll be liaising with your district councillors Sarah & Hayleigh to look at how we can work with Upton on some waste reduction trials! More info soon!

Meanwhile we need to make our streets safer for walkers and cyclists, as we need to travel differently. We need 1 in 4 journeys by 2025 to be by foot, bike, or public transport. I'm working with officers to link up travel routes and have a more joined up approach to our transport network, because frankly what we have inherited is a patchwork quilt of convoluted nonsense of active travel, either not segregated, or linked up, or surfaced properly. I am constantly the voice of criticism and pushing for a holistic travel and transport master plan! On that note, the coffin way active travel scheme ideas and concepts continue and I look forward to catching up with Blewbury and Upton Parish Chairs soon on next steps.

I recently attended the county Bus Summit, and was the voice for rural bus services, it was painful to hear so much focus on Oxford city, but there was a few of us "country folk" there ensuring that we are not forgotten given that this county is 80% rural! I mean this isn't hard - is it? Would you drive less if there were better bus services ? .

Meanwhile food, cost of living crisis and fuel / energy costs worry me every day! Back in February I founded a food surplus group. You can join the HEG (Hendred Environment Group) Community Larder, and get access to food surplus for just £3.50 a week. This scheme is powered by Sofea and we are open every Monday from 4-6pm at Snells Hall in East Hendred. SOFEA also have a larder in Didcot and Wantage too! To join just email - heglarder@gmail.com

We have launched a community kitchen (Roots & Shoots) and expanded this to Steventon now plus we are looking at a community market garden too.

So let's all work together to ensure we are resilient and have adaptive plans in place to help all our residents through the next 12 months and beyond!

What's key is place making, and creating safer, healthier and sustainable communities, and over the coming months, reaching out and helping each other. Now some may criticise this approach, say I'm a woke lefty seed munching snowflake, I've even been criticised for being too radical and doing "too much" (yes yes, it's been said!) but we are not sustainable, we devour the earth's resources in less than 7 months of the year and we are hitting a crisis where no government is coming to our rescue. So I'll just keep upsetting the apple cart and just being me, because I am damn sure that the remainder of my term representing you won't be about forwarding emails and sitting on my backside! It's not been my approach and I'm not changing the energy I have to "get things done!".

When I stood for election I promised change, I was tired of being represented by the same old type of politician, and my goodness I am trying, but the biggest change you can make is in your own home, we don't have time for top down direction. This is about our kids and the next generation and what we leave for them. So let's all work together?

On that note the county council have launched a new website here

- <https://www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk>

Working together with our district partners to spread the word of action and change.

There is a lot going on at the moment from our volunteer and communities' strategy to funding more help with domestic abuse to catching rogue traders. You can follow all our news here- <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

Sadly my "cost of living emergency" motion wasn't heard at the July Full council at Oxfordshire - which was really disappointing, to only have got through a single motion (this was second), given the importance of the motion!

If you need me just reach out, I am here to listen and help in any way that I can. Meanwhile look after each other, spread a little kindness and sow a seed or two to help nature or help yourselves. Please do contact me with any enquiries or issues or even just for a cuppa on the banana bench in the Nature Garden.

Sally Povolotsky

Councillor for Hendreds & Harwell Division
Email - Sally.povolotsky@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Didcot & Villages Healthcare Update

Representatives from NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) and Woodlands Medical Centre attended the Great Western Park Residents' Association public meeting on Monday 13th June to provide an update on the long-awaited GP surgery planned for the site next to the pharmacy. The good news is that progress is being made at last! We have summarised the key points below.

Woodlands Medical Centre will be operating the new building as a new branch surgery. The new surgery will serve the Didcot Primary Care Network - this covers Didcot and the surrounding villages, and includes Blewbury, Harwell, Chilton and Upton. Woodlands have identified an appropriate medical developer for the new building and they have submitted for pre-application planning advice. Dr Alex Hart from Woodlands showed us all some designs of the building - great to see what it will look like!

Next steps are to apply for planning permission, the value for money to be determined by the government-appointed District Valuer, and then the affordability to be determined by the new Integrated Care Board (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire - BOB).

Clearly this is a long process, and the OCCG could not specify exact timescales, but they emphasised that both they and the Vale of White Horse District Council are committed to delivering the healthcare centre as soon as possible. Dr Alex Hart stated 2025 as a viable target, especially as the construction of the 3300th home on GWP triggers a two-year deadline for the developer funding.

OCCG recognise the existing pressure on Woodlands and the other GPs in Didcot, and highlighted that the Oak Tree Health Centre on Ladygrove has now converted some of its facility into additional consultation spaces - see the news story from South Oxfordshire District Council.

In the meantime, the OCCG are working with Woodlands and the Vale to determine how to accommodate the current demand. They are exploring the use of an area of the new District Centre on GWP, determining the cost and viability of this being adapted to a suitable clinical grade. The OCCG confirmed that any temporary solution will not impact the plans for the permanent new healthcare centre.

Astons Online

Astons Online next Zoom online meeting will be 10:30 - 11:15 on Tuesday 20 September (no August meeting).

What's going to happen when passwords are no longer necessary? We were going to talk about this in July but had to postpone. We'll discuss the consequences of Apple, Google and Microsoft's decision to phase out the use of passwords. Book your place at theastonsonline@gmail.com and see www.astonsonline.uk.

Free and friendly help for computer users will be available during August but our response time to requests will be longer with so many of us on holiday. 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.

Didcot & District u3a

Having survived UK's hottest day on record, which unfortunately meant the cancellation of the July Didcot and District u3a monthly meeting, we are pleased to say Summer is returning to more 'normal' temperatures?! However, come rain or shine, it never stops retired or semi-retired members of the u3a from attending their various Interest Groups, enabling likeminded individuals to continue to 'learn, laugh, live!' whilst enjoying the same interests such as, discovering family histories, learning a language, nature walks, playing the ukulele, and many more fascinating subjects!

Monthly meetings are held on the **3rd Tuesday of every month** in the Didcot Civic Hall, (albeit, **August's meeting** will be held in the GWP District Neighbourhood Community Centre, Great Western Park opposite ASDA!), meetings start at 2:30 with Interest Group updates followed by a Guest Speaker presenting a variety of interesting talks; Speakers in the Autumn months are;

20 September: 'Violet Jessop's Escape from the Titanic' speaker Jane Glennie

18 October: '66 Men of Grandpoint 1914-1918' speaker Liz Woolley looking at the lives of some of the men named on the Grandpoint War Memorial, Oxford.

15 November: 'Birth of Hoaxes in the 18th Century' speaker Ian Keable.

For much more information on your local u3a just use Google or the search engine of your choice for 'Didcot & District u3a' and you can see the Interest Groups, News, Events, etc, alternatively you can contact the following:

Chair - chairman@didcotu3a.org
Secretary - Secretary@didcotu3a.org

Blewbury Post Office news

We have reduced hours in August while I'm away:

Thursday 11th am only
Friday 12th am only
Monday 15th, Tuesday 16th open as usual
Weds, Thurs & Fri (17, 18, 19th) morning only
Monday 22nd open as usual
Tuesday 23rd open as usual
Wed 24th am only
Thursday 25th closed
Friday 26th am only
Monday 29th closed for bank holiday
Open as usual from Tuesday 30th
Also closed Thursday 8th & Friday 9th September (Hagbourne is open)

N.B. If there are Royal Mail strikes, we will not be able to accept parcels as we don't have any room to store them.

Karen, Maggie & Andrew

UNITED CHARITIES OF THE ANCIENT PARISH OF BLEWBURY

£ £ Financial Support Applications Invited £ £

Are you struggling to pay for your energy or the weekly shop?

Are you worried about additional costs during the school holidays and being able to afford clothing and equipment for the new school year?

If so, please read on..

United Charities are a local charity that supports people living in Blewbury, Aston Upthorpe and Upton and we have funding to provide 'one off' payments to people who could benefit from some financial help.

If you, or someone you know, are struggling financially then please consider applying. We welcome applications from anyone, whatever their situation.

There is a short application form which has to be completed which can either be picked up from Blewbury Post Office or requested by email to unitedcharities@outlook.com. Help can be provided to complete the form if necessary and all applications will be dealt with confidentially.

UNITED CHARITIES OF THE ANCIENT PARISH OF BLEWBURY

Registered Charity No: 203538

Blewbury School News

Governors' Annual Report to the Community

As part of our commitment to openness and transparency, we have prepared a 2022 report about governance at Blewbury Primary school. We hope that as parents/carers and members of the community you will find this informative and interesting.

Blewbury Primary school has had many challenges in the past few years; the school joining ODST (Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust); changes to the leadership and staffing and, of course, Covid. During this time the school's core values of Community, Appreciation, Perseverance and Forgiveness have been important in moving the school forward. These values, along with a terrific team effort between staff, children, parents, governors and the wider community mean that the school has emerged with greater resilience, strength and with well-founded aspirations for the future. Blewbury school is on an upward trajectory and is an exciting place to be.

The 2021 Autumn term commenced with eager anticipation tempered with caution. Jo Reeder was appointed as Head of School to work alongside Lisa Austin our executive Headteacher. In January Jo's hard work was rewarded as she was made substantive Headteacher. Her enthusiasm, creativity, love of teaching and learning, sheer hard work and above all her passion for the welfare and education of all the children is rapidly moving the school forward.

As we review the year, we are pleased that so many of the normal events have taken place. Sports Day took place in September followed by Harvest and then the Christmas events. School visits have taken place and the children and after-school activities are running again. It was lovely that the Jubilee was able to be celebrated by the whole community in the school. The Year 6 children made us proud with their end of year play.

How have Governors held the school to account?

There are two key documents prepared by the school which guide the Governors and the leadership team in their work. These are the School Evaluation Form (SEF) and the school development plan (SDP). A number of techniques are employed to ensure accountability, and these include challenging the Headteacher at governing body meetings and conducting monitoring visits when Governors are able to speak to teachers and children as well as see their work. This enables Governors to gather evidence that objectives are being met. Focus this year has again been on

Safeguarding

Behaviour

Leadership

Curriculum

Improved teaching and learning through coaching and professional development.

Improved Early Years provision

We are of course a Church of England school and the Christian ethos is at the heart of all we do. Our vision statement for the last few years has been “Shine your light and share it with the world”. It is now being reviewed to make it more in keeping with the new curriculum developed by the school. Further information will be shared with you in the Autumn term.

Looking to the future

Each year we have goodbyes to say at the end of term. Zoe has only been with us since January, but she is moving away from Oxfordshire and will be taking up a new position. Emma has worked as an HLTA supporting the children. She too is leaving us to take up a full-time position. Sue remains on maternity leave having delivered a son earlier in the year.

We also say goodbye to our year 6 pupils. It has been a different couple of years for them but they have proved themselves to be resilient and resourceful and we wish them every success in their new schools.

During the year we also said goodbye to Tracey who left the school after many years of teaching the children of Blewbury school and Caroline who has worked so hard as Office Manager. Caroline has taken early retirement and we wish her well.

Riz will be joining the teaching team in September. Riz who has been working as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant is a qualified teacher and will be teaching year 4 with Alex. Heather has joined us as Office Manager, and we hope she will enjoy being part of our team.

Since joining ODST we have had a small Governing board with only 6 members, but ODST recognise the progress that has been made and have agreed that it is now time to evolve into a full governing body. We have recruited three new governors Matt Stone who is a community governor, Sarah Mols who is a parent governor and Vita Parvin who is staff governor. There remain two vacancies one for a parent governor and one for a foundation governor.

Finally, may we thank you all for the support you give the school and the way you have worked with us all to ensure that Blewbury school continues to make good progress.

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*

***** Reminder *****

Upton Photo Competition

For all residents of Upton a free to enter photography competition.

Rules -

Residents of Upton Parish only

- Two age groups: under 16 and over 16
- All photographs submitted should be in JPG format
- Photographs should be emailed to upton.photo@outlook.com

There are two themes:

1. Upton and surrounding area - landscapes, wildlife, people, events, buildings etc. etc.
2. Holiday - coasts, mountains, cities people and places in the UK or some far flung destination.

Entries should be emailed in between September 1st and October 1st 2022 - please include a description of the picture

Winning three photographs will be enlarged and go on display in the village hall.

So it is time to get snapping with your phone or your lovely digital SLR that has been gathering dust. Hang on to your best pictures (do not delete!)

Rob Traynor

Contributions for Upton News

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 (usually 28th of the month) may NOT be included - if this causes a problem please contact me.

Neil Thorp
Editor