

# Upton News



January 2023

*A very Happy New Year to all readers of the  
Upton News*

## News from St. Mary's and the Churn Benefice

### 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](mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk)

### Services at St. Mary the Virgin

You are always welcome to enter the church even if the service has commenced!

#### Prayer Focus

#### 1 January

*Second Sunday of Christmas*

NO SERVICE IN UPTON TODAY

#### 8 January

*Epiphany*

9.15 Parish Eucharist

#### 22<sup>nd</sup> January

*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany*

9.15 Parish Eucharist

Children & Sunday schools

Those recently baptised &  
baptism visitors

Those recently baptised &  
baptism visitors

## Field and Fountain, Moor and Mountain

These words come from the first verse of one of the traditional hymns sung at this time of year: "We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star". The verses go on to list the three gifts brought by the Kings to the baby Jesus: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The story is found in Matthew's gospel, and the word used for "king" in this passage can also be translated as "wise man", or "Magus"; hence sometimes they are known as the Wisemen, or the Magi (the plural of Magus).



You might be thinking to yourself : what have words from a Christmas carol got to do with the month of January? The answer lies in a Church festival which always falls on 6<sup>th</sup> January: the Festival of the Epiphany. This is the festival when the Church remembers the visit of the Kings to the baby Jesus. The word "Epiphany" comes from a Greek word meaning "appearance" or "manifestation", and the "manifestation" in question is the "manifestation" of the baby Jesus to the kings. The significance of this is that the kings were non-Jews, and Jesus's appearance to the Kings shows that his life and teaching is relevant to all the peoples of the world, Jew and Non-Jew alike.

And what of the gifts which the Kings brought? Why were they chosen? Did they have particular significance? The gift of gold is often seen as signifying Jesus's kingship; the gift of frankincense, the fact that Jesus was God as well as Man; and the gift of myrrh, the fact that Jesus was to suffer and to die.

And what happened next, after the Kings had begun their homeward journey? We don't know. Did they become Christians themselves? Again, we do not know. All we do know is that the story of their visit was important to the early Christian community, and it was important enough to be included in Matthew's gospel.

The Kings had had the courage to journey into the unknown: to follow the star, not quite knowing what they would encounter. I wonder what is on our hearts and minds as we journey out into the year that lies ahead? Where might God be leading us?

*Father Jason*

## **You can contact the clergy & staff on: -**

Revd Jason St. John Nicolle 01235 850267 [office@churnchurches.co.uk](mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk)

Revd Louise Butler 07837 009730 [revlouiseb@aol.co](mailto:revlouiseb@aol.co)

Elaine de Ridder 01235 850267 [office@churnchurches.co.uk](mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk)

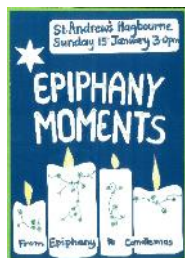
**The Benefice Operations Manager, Elaine de Ridder, is in the office from 9.00am - 2.30pm Monday to Friday.**

Date for the diary:

### **EPIPHANY MOMENTS:**

**Carols and readings  
from Epiphany to Candlemas**

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January  
3pm at St Andrew's Hagbourne**



**ALL WELCOME TO THE SERVICE!**

## **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

**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.

## **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. 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!

# **Parish Council News**

## **Temporary Road Closure**

Hagbourne Hill will be closed between 09:30 and 15:30 starting on 09 January 2023 to facilitate the reinstatement of all road markings including centre lines and rumble strips at the top of Chilton road. Diversion is via Rowstock roundabout.

## **CCTV**

The cameras which appeared mysteriously in the village in December were apparently part of a wider survey on behalf of the Didcot Garden Community Cycling, Walking Investment plan which aims to justify upgrading pathways such as Coffin Way.

The parish council chairman and our county councillor will be meeting in January with those responsible to stress the need for informing parishes in advance and for seeking permission before the exercise is repeated. Any data obtained from their four days of use in the recent freezing weather will be totally unrepresentative!

## **Happy New Year to Upton from Sally**

What a busy and weird year 2022 has been. On the plus side the Crossing on the A417 was started, on the downside couldn't be completed due to SSE and timings (you can't make this stuff up now to be honest!) but hopeful by middle January it will be finished.

Then there was the mystery cameras, needless to say I sent a fair few emails, made some rather irate phone calls and Ben Shaw and I got to the bottom of it in the end.

It's been a pleasure to watch the "garden grow" in the Upton Nature Garden, and help residents with their casework. Be assured, I am working for you all year round, alongside Ben Shaw, the parish council, the clerk and the district councillors. The focus is and will always be, for me, about putting decision making and influence at the heart of the local community. In 2023 we hope to see your 20mph consultation and, fingers crossed, progress the Coffin Way route as a formal link between Blewbury and Upton.

I wish you all a peaceful, safe and healthy 2023, and do get in touch if I can ever be of any help.

Sally Povolotsky  
County Councillor, Hendreds & Harwell Division

## **Dates for your diary:**

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

## Upton Speed Watch Update

As you may have noticed we have not been too active over the last four months with Speed Watch.

This is due to the installation of the cycle path and Toucan Crossing on the A417 between Station Road and Chilton Road which has automatically slowed down traffic. My observation to date is the construction works have slowed cars speeding apart from the odd idiot who continued to speed and then brake hard and the idiot who sped through the lights when they were red.

When the temporary traffic lights were installed, traffic from Rowstock had to slow down before entering the village but traffic from Blewbury on the A417 still sped round the bend before the turn right into the High Street and left into Hollow Way. There are still more works to continue in January 2023 but all should be finished by mid January.

My proposal is to observe and receive comments back from you, the parishioners, as to what you are seeing and experiencing. From this we can decide if we need to go out with our speed-watch guns.

Please let the Parish Clerk have your comments and views at [parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk](mailto:parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk) or speak to me on 07802900513.

Brendan Heneghan

## Village Consultation & Communication Meeting

On 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022 a Parish Council (PC) Consultation meeting was held in St Mary's church and, in spite of the village being in the throes of very cold weather, was well attended. Thanks to all those who took the trouble to turn out and to Paul Batho for opening the church for us. The following is a summary of the discussion points at the meeting and also from emails sent to the PC Clerk by villagers who could not make it in person.

The purpose of the open meeting with Parishioners on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022 was to solicit their opinions and thoughts on the options for expenditure by the Parish Councillor for the financial year 2023/24.

1. Opening the meeting, Neil Thorp explained to the audience the PC budget and options for expenditure which the attendees then discussed and gave their views.
2. **Stock Proof Fence at end of recreation ground**
  - a. A long discussion was had covering many options, the legal necessity, and the timing of installing a new fence. This conversation was stopped as it had taken up a lot of time and there other more important items to discuss
  - b. General acceptance that it was expedient to consider installing a new fence in the future but not in financial year 2023/24.

**3. Maintenance and repair of the apparatus in the children's playgrounds.**

- a. General feeling was the PC should not spend large sums of money on new equipment or major repair and maintenance.
- b. The PC should repair apparatus where it was economical and take out of commission if it was too expensive.
- c. The PC should budget for new equipment but survey the village as to whether the money should be spent before expenditure is committed.
- d. The PC should accrue funds for repair & maintenance, but replacements should be funded by grants if possible (e.g., the Magnox socio-economic fund which re-opens in April).

**4. Maintenance of recreation ground, footpaths hedges and verges**

- a. It was recognised by the attendees and PC that that the volunteers did a very good job but were not able to maintain all the areas which needed maintenance on a regular and continuous basis throughout the year.
- b. The volunteers were getting older with no new people coming through to replace them.
- c. Graham De Wilde who led the volunteers explained what equipment was required and the time needed to do a professional job. Sitting on a ride-on mower cutting the grass on the recreation ground was only part of the job. The verges, hedges, footpaths, recreation ground perimeter needed to be worked on to get to a satisfactory standard, and then continuously maintained throughout the year.

The PC explained volunteers using their own equipment may be okay but would not be appropriate for the regular maintenance of the verges, hedges, footpaths, recreation ground perimeter. Also, the PC need to verify with their insurance company whether the volunteer approach using their own equipment could continue and be covered.

- d. The PC explained professional landscape equipment and tools would be required for continual maintenance. Even if volunteers could be found, equipment would need to be purchased or hired and anybody using it would need to be trained, certified, insured, and suitable protective clothing bought and worn. An expensive process.
- e. Graham thought that contracting professional Landscape and Maintenance companies with the professional equipment needed to maintain the verges, hedges, footpaths, recreation ground perimeter was the best way forward. The PC agreed with him and shared with the audience the quotes from professional companies to do this.
- f. The PC position was accepted, namely that a professional Landscaping and Maintenance company needs to be contracted with to bring the footpath, verges, recreation perimeter and hedges up to a satisfactory standard and then regularly maintain them throughout the year.

The contract would have SLAs (Service Level Agreements), payment schedules, payments for work completed to an agreed standard which would be monitored and signed off by the PC.

- g. It was agreed a Working Group should be set up, made up of villagers, who would submit proposals and options to the PC for which paths, hedges and verges need to be maintained and which could be left to go wild.

Kieran Humphries volunteered to set up this Group with interested people from the village. Graham De Wilde and Brendan Heneghan put their names forward to be members.

- h. The PC informed the meeting that the PC had gone out to tender for a company to pick up the waste/rubbish bags left out from the recreation ground. All agreed the rubbish bags needed picking up and an outside company should be used because Biffa and the District Council had formally told the PC

they would not do this in future.

The PC informed the audience that they had gone out to tender requesting proposals from several companies but only had one reply which was from Organised Grime, owned by Ben Shaw.

The PC are pursuing discussions to reach a formal agreement with Organised Grime.

## **5. Trainee PC Clerk**

- a. It was generally accepted that succession planning was a good idea, and a trainee should be found.
- b. The meeting discussed why a Clerk is needed. The PC explained a Clerk is needed to enable the PC to function and legitimise the processes and procedures e.g. submitting a request for the Precept.
- c. Stuart Frazer (an ex- PC Chairman) explained the Clerk's role and why they are so important. If the PC do not have a Clerk, the PC could not operate properly, would not have the necessary legitimacy, would fold, and be replaced by the District Council.
- d. The PC asked the audience for volunteers to come forward to be the trainee and eventual PC Clerk. This is left open.

## **6. Precept 2023**

- a. Every member of the audience and e-mails from Parishioners had a different view as to the increase for the Precept for 2023/24; the range was from 0% to 15%.
- b. The majority thought it should be in line with the rise of District Council Rates of 5%.
- c. The PC agreed to pursue ways of supporting people in the village who were suffering hardship and may not be able to afford the increase. As part of the submission for the Precept increase reference would be made to assisting villagers who could not afford it.

## **7. Village Survey**

- a. It was suggested by Derek Whitmell that the PC should conduct a Village survey with regard to what needs doing in the village? What needs to be bought? Maintained? Repaired? Replaced? Or not replaced? The PC explained that such a survey could not be completed before the precept is set, which is mid-January 2022, but it would still be of great value.

Derek Whitmell to lead a Working Party to draft a Survey for the PC to consider. The timing for the draft would be asap.

## UPTON PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to the three winners of the summer photographic competition -

**Sophie Pithie, Katie Dickens and Kieron Humphrey.**

Their pictures have been printed, framed and will be on display in the Village Hall.

Copies of the pictures can be viewed here and on the village Facebook site along with some of the other entries. If you think you can do better, or missed the closing date, then ***you can enter the next competition.***

### **Upton Village Winter Photographic Competition.**

Residents of Upton only; age categories - 16 and below and the rest of us.

Theme - **WINTER** in Upton and Surrounding Area and **WINTER** anywhere else.

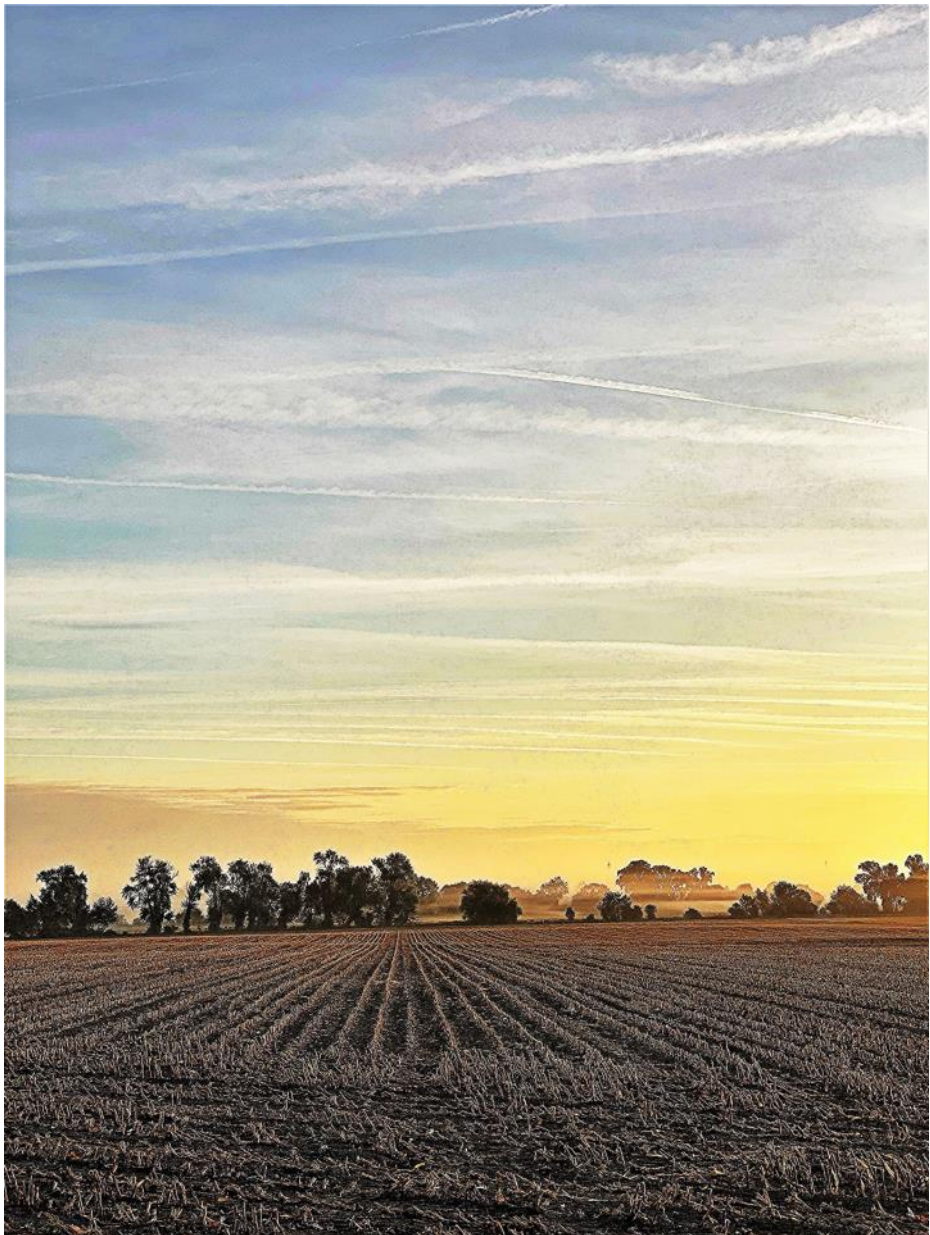
Closing date - April 15<sup>th</sup> 2023      Rob Traynor      [ronyart5@hotmail.com](mailto:ronyart5@hotmail.com)



**Katie Dickens**



Sophie Pithie



Kieron Humphrey



## Astons Online

Free and friendly help for computer users will continue to be available every Tuesday morning through January from 10:00 to 12:00 remotely using telephone, Facetime, Skype, Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp or whatever is best for you. Book a 30 minute appointment using email (below) or phone 07780958249 if you can't email.

**Face-to-face event** for computer users on Tuesday 17 January 2023 10:00 to 12:00 in Astons Village Hall (OX119EQ). Please tell us, if you can, that you're going to join us so we can have helpers available. Also please wear a mask so we all stay Covid safe. Contact using email or phone above.

**Next Zoom meeting** is on Tuesday 24 January 10:30 to 11:15 to talk about managing your photographs online. Book your place using email or phone above.

**Bruno Brunskill (On behalf of Astons Online)**

[theastonsonline@gmail.com](mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com) 07780 958249  
[www.astonsonline.uk](http://www.astonsonline.uk)

## Blewbury Post Office news

We send our best wishes to everyone for a peaceful New year/ Hogmanay.

We are closed for the New Year's weekend and Monday 2nd, as it's a public holiday, and reopen on Tuesday 3rd as usual. 8.30 am to 12 noon, and 2.30 pm to 5pm.

We are open every morning Monday to Fridays, and every afternoon except Wednesdays; if we get heavy snow or ice, then we'll open just for the mornings.

I really hope that Royal Mail find a good solution to their ongoing problems, it's been very difficult for us, and of course, for you.

Love from Karen, Maggie & Andrew

Karen, Maggie & Andrew

## 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.

# Changes to your waste collections over the Christmas and New Year period

Christmas and New Year 2022/23

Normal collection day		Revised collection day	
Monday	26 December 2022	Wednesday	28 December 2022
Tuesday	27 December 2022	Thursday	29 December 2022
Wednesday	28 December 2022	Friday	30 December 2022
Thursday	29 December 2022	Saturday	31 December 2022
Friday	30 December 2022	Tuesday	3 January 2023
Monday	2 January 2023	Wednesday	4 January 2023
Tuesday	3 January 2023	Thursday	5 January 2023
Wednesday	4 January 2023	Friday	6 January 2023
Thursday	5 January 2023	Saturday	7 January 2023
Friday	6 January 2023	Monday	9 January 2023
Monday	9 January 2023	Tuesday	10 January 2023
Tuesday	10 January 2023	Wednesday	11 January 2023
Wednesday	11 January 2023	Thursday	12 January 2023
Thursday	12 January 2023	Friday	13 January 2023
Friday	13 January 2023	Saturday	14 January 2023

Please remember that we suspend garden waste collections over the holiday period to concentrate on Christmas waste collections. Collections resume in January 2023. For more information, please see our garden waste page on our website.

Find out more about recycling tips and waste collections over Christmas and New Year on our website [www.more recycling.co.uk](http://www.more recycling.co.uk)

We will post information about any disruption to waste collection services on our websites and social media sites.

Our call centre is open for queries from 9am – 3.30pm on 23 December, 9am - 5pm on 28, 29 and 30 December on 03000 610610.



## December Wine Club – Christmas celebration

The Upton Wine Club was established nearly 20 years ago. Yes, it's primary purpose was to broaden the knowledge of wine for anyone interested. A very close second however, was to allow the residents of Upton catch up for a "bit of a social". The December wine club was a great example of that! For the past few years, rather than the usual presentation of 8 wines for our members to try, we put on a festive dinner and with nearly 60 people attending, we were just about at capacity!

In true village spirit, people arrived early to help set all the tables up. A core team from the committee had prepared the food and set to task, putting the village kitchen's facilities to stretching point to get all the food out!

Over the course of a very enjoyable few hours, we enjoyed prawn cocktail starters, a full turkey roast dinner, which was finished off with sticky toffee pudding and mince pies! There was plenty of wine to accompany the food, topped off by wonderfully rich and smooth Pedro Ximenez sherry to pair with the pudding - "Christmas in a glass", which if you have never tried is a must (provided you like the taste of Xmas pudding!).



The evening was made all the better with a high level of chat throughout the hall, lots of good spirit from many in helping get the food out to everyone, a few raffle prizes to add a bit more fun to the evening and to top it all, Rob and Fiona singing live between courses to keep everyone entertained, whilst the kitchen became a hive of activity with food preparation!

For this meeting at least, the wine took a back seat, whilst the members of the wine club and their friends enjoyed a great Christmas get together - proof, if it were ever needed that wine is so much more than just a drink!

Ian Langley

If you would like to come along and see what we are all about then please do get in contact at [mail@uptonwineclub.com](mailto:mail@uptonwineclub.com)



# Blewbury Endowed C of E Primary School

*Nurture, Grow, Flourish*

## Can you help Blewbury School?

There are the following opportunities for individuals to support our vibrant and growing village school:

### **Reading Volunteers**

No previous experience or special qualifications needed. The main task is to sit and listen to one child at a time reading a book and helping them out a little if they need some support. You will be reading with our Reception and Year 1 class. Ideally, one day or two afternoons (13:15 - 15:15) per week.

### **Lunchtime Supervisor (Paid Role)**

You would be supporting the pupils in the school hall while they eat and outside while they play. You will need to:

- Ensure the safeguarding of all our children
- Be sensitive to the needs of individual children
- Work to maintain a calm and orderly environment at lunch time
- Follow the school behaviour policy and other relevant policies

11:45 - 13:15, 5 days per week, Term time only. Grade 2 (£18,516 FTE, £3,146 actual).

### **Foundation and Parent Governors**

The School Governing Board has extremely important responsibilities to perform in guiding and monitoring the work of the School. The governors work collectively and strategically in partnership with the headteacher and staff to manage the finances and general plans, staffing and policies of the School. This includes identifying the most important things that need to be improved, and approving plans to achieve that and ensuring progress. The full Board meets around five times every year and Governors also sit on one of two sub-committees, which also meet around five times per year.

The Parent Governor needs to be the parent/carer for a child currently attending Blewbury School. The Foundation Governor needs to be someone with a connection to St Michael's Church in Blewbury.

All adults who work within our School, whether as a paid member of staff or a volunteer, are expected to work and behave in such a way as to promote Blewbury School's aims, vision, values and educational purposes.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate (s) will require an enhanced DBS clearance and appropriate references, and the School will support them in going through that process.

**Please contact Mrs Heather Watts, Office Manager, if you would like to discuss any of the roles further** [office.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk)

Blewbury CE Primary School, Westbrook Street, Blewbury OX11 9Q 01235 850411  
[office.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk)



## Beginner Karate Classes

Beginner Karate Classes are starting in Upton Village Hall on January 2022 from 11.30am Sundays.

Free Trial Class.

Age 4 to Adult;. Families can Train together

Contact: [johnhogan67@icloud.com](mailto:johnhogan67@icloud.com) 07548784929

[www.tiskakarate-abingdon.co.uk](http://www.tiskakarate-abingdon.co.uk)

## Contributions for Upton News

For those submitting news items, will you please send them to me at [neilthorp@btinternet.com](mailto: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 28<sup>th</sup> of the month) may NOT be included - if this causes a problem please contact me.

*Neil Thorp, Editor*



### **CAN WE HELP?**

We are a local charity which supports people of all ages living in Blewbury, Aston Upthorpe and Upton, and have the funding to give a helping hand during these difficult times.

From the weekly food shop to energy bills and other living costs, we can provide one off payments to help you, or someone you know in need.

There is a short application form to complete which can be picked up from St Mary's Church porch, Blewbury Post Office, or requested by email to [unitedcharities@outlook.com](mailto:unitedcharities@outlook.com). We can help you fill in the form if needed. Please don't be reluctant to ask for help, all applications are dealt with confidentially.

### **CAN YOU HELP OTHERS WITH THE FUEL CRISIS?**

At United Charities we continue to help local people who are struggling financially.

Households across Britain are receiving discount on their energy bills to help with the cost of living crisis, starting from this month. For so many, it's much needed. But some who feel they can afford it are donating the extra money. If that's you, you can help local people in Blewbury, Upton and Aston, by gifting your discount through our Just Giving page

<https://www.justgiving.com/ucab>

We thank you very much in advance for your generosity and if you have any questions, please do get in touch with us by email at [unitedcharities@outlook.com](mailto:unitedcharities@outlook.com)



## **Didcot & District u3a**

Monthly meetings are held on the **third Tuesday of every month** at the **Didcot Civic Hall** starting at 2:30 to meet and greet new members whilst chatting over tea and biscuits after the Chair's updates and the Guest Speaker presentations which in the coming months include;

**17 January:** *10<sup>th</sup> Birthday Tea Party* (afternoon tea with lovely homemade cake!) - featuring the Ukulele Group. Tickets £5 each.

**21 February:** *Where do novelists get their ideas from?* - Bobbie Darbyshire.

**21 March:** *Cheltenham Racing Heroes*, a talk about famous jockeys living in and around Cheltenham - Peter Gill

**18 April:** *Chrissie's Owls* - a non-profit organisation committed to the care and conservation of Owls based in Oxfordshire. More here

**16 May:** *AGM*

**20 June:** *Oxfordshire on Canvas* - Marie Louisa

So we look forward to meeting old and greeting new members alike, and arrive early!

Additional information can be found on the [u3asites.org.Uk](http://u3asites.org.Uk) or by contacting; [Chairman@didcotu3a.org](mailto:Chairman@didcotu3a.org) or [Secretary@didcotu3a.org](mailto:Secretary@didcotu3a.org) ‘

Thank you all once again for your support in publishing and advertising the Didcot and District u3a, appreciated by all, and we take this early opportunity to . . .

***We Wish You All a very Happy New Year!***

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

All newcomers welcome, just **arrive early to ensure you get a seat!!**

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](mailto:chairman@didcotu3a.org)

**Secretary** - [Secretary@didcotu3a.org](mailto:Secretary@didcotu3a.org)