



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

Services at St. Mary the Virgin

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

Prayer Focus

† 5 February

Third Sunday before Lent

9.15 Lay-led service

PCCs, all in leadership
& Benefice Operations Manager

† 12 February

Second Sunday before Lent

9.15 Parish Eucharist

Clergy and all those who preach or lead

† 19 February

Sunday next before Lent

9.15 Lay-led Christingle service

Treasurers & church finances

† 26th February

First Sunday of Lent

9.15 Parish Eucharist

Sidesmen, those who help with hospitality
& catering. Flower arrangers

40 Days and 40 Nights

Do you enjoy singing? In the Christian tradition, there are certain hymns which tend to be sung at particular times of year. One of the hymns which is often sung during Lent begins as follows: “Forty days and forty nights thou was fasting in the wild; forty days and forty nights tempted, and yet undefiled”.



The season of Lent will soon be upon us. It starts on Ash Wednesday, which this year falls on 22nd February.

Lent is, of course, the time of preparation before Easter. The words of “Forty days and forty nights” seek to make a direct connection between the forty days of Lent, and the forty days when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. But this is only one way of looking at the spiritual significance of the season.

Down the centuries, Christians have observed the season of Lent in many different ways. For some Christians, the season has been about giving something up- this is what “fasting” means. We might give up a particular type of food or drink, for example chocolate or alcohol. Other Christians observe the season by taking on some additional commitment, for example reading a spiritual book or giving money to a charity. Of course, it is possible to do both: to give something up and also to take on some new commitment. I wonder what your custom has been? Do you give things up or take on new commitments? I think the old tradition tended to focus on giving things up, and the newer tradition tends to focus on taking on new commitments; but both traditions have their value, and both have their limitations.

Indeed, there is no obligation to keep Lent at all. We’re not going to get into trouble with God if we ignore Lent. But Lent, in common with other seasons in the Church’s year, provides us with an opportunity to reflect on how we are choosing to live our lives, and the encouragement to make changes for the better. That is why Christians have traditionally chosen to give something up during Lent, or to take on a new commitment. The choices we make during Lent are designed to make a positive difference to our lives, and to the lives of those around us.

I wonder how we might choose to keep Lent this year? How might we make a positive difference to the world around us?

Father Jason

Benefice Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday 22nd February

7.30 pm at All Saints' North Moreton

Everyone welcome!



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OUTDOOR CHURCH for LENT

Appreciating our world through activity and worship

Looking for life

Sunday February 26th 2.30pm on Blewbury Playclose

Short and fun for everyone!

Rev'd Louise looks forward to meeting you there

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!



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 Rev'd Louise Butler on 07837 009730.

You can contact the clergy & staff on: -

Rev'd Jason St. John Nicolle 01235 850267 office@churnchurches.co.uk

Rev'd Louise Butler 07837 009730 revlouiseb@aol.co

Elaine de Ridder 01235 850267 office@churnchurches.co.uk

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

Parish Council News

Precept Increase

The Parish Council has now agree its precept for the next financial year. Reflecting the views of the meeting reported in the last issue of the Upton News, this has been held to an increase of 5%, with one Councillor voting to have no increase this year.

Recreation Ground Maintenance

Prior to negotiating contracts, the maintenance of the recreation ground and other areas is being requested so that everything can be in place before the growing season commences.

Upton Speed Watch Update

In last month's issue of Upton News I updated you with Speed Watch. Not a lot has changed as the lights have not been installed.

My daily monitoring of speedsters is still the same, drivers from Blewbury still speed round the bend by the orchard up to the George and Dragon; I have even seen cars accelerate going past the pub.

I am considering speed watch sessions in the morning and when evenings get lighter between 5:00 and 6:00 in the afternoon.

I would welcome your views and observations

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

Brendan Heneghan

Dates for your diary:

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

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

Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean

Would anyone in the village be willing to organise a litter pick with help from the Parish Council and the District Council? (see below).

If so please contact Bens Shaw bens@uptonpc.co.uk or the Parish Clerk parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk

The Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean will be running again this year from Friday 17 March to Sunday 2 April. As previously, the waste team will be supporting any community litter picking activities by providing litter pickers, hi-viz vests and bags to groups as well as picking up bagged litter.

To make a booking, group leaders must complete our booking form and declaration document found on our dedicated web pages, linked below. Please note that we cannot accept bookings until these forms have been received. Equipment numbers are limited so we will be operating on a first come, first served basis. Bookings are limited to 50 pickers per booking (this is flexible depending on how many other bookings are made on the same date).

Please note that we can only collect litter which is picked from relevant land and not council parks, private or parish-owned land. Relevant land covers most road verges and footpaths.

I have added another link below showing which footpaths are considered relevant land. We can also only collect litter presented in the branded bags which we provide and not carrier bags or black bags. This is because it is impossible to tell whether bags are actually from litter picks or from someone dumping household waste.

www.southoxon.gov.uk/litterpicking

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/litterpicking

<https://publicrightsofway.oxfordshire.gov.uk/StandardMap.aspx>

Jessica Beare
Waste and Recycling Officer
Waste Team 01235 422146
Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE

Yoga Therapy for Chronic Back Pain

Free Taster Sessions - Blewbury Village Hall, Vale Rm, Monday, 6th Feb,
13th Feb, 20th Feb, 27th Feb at 11.30am.

Small group sessions to cater for specific needs.

To book contact Catherine Watsham -

cath@hopeinyoga.com or 07786 210177.

Accredited Yoga therapist & teacher (PGDip), registered with CNHC,
BCYT, IAYT. For more info www.hopeinyoga.com

Blewbury Brass Band

Rehearsals are held in the Band Room,
Bonhams Road, Blewbury, 7.30 - 9pm every Wednesday.

All Ages/levels welcome.

Instruments supplied. Very friendly group.

Band Room available for Hire

£8 per hour (min.2hrs). Large practice room.

Toilet but no kitchen or storage facilities.

Suit pop groups, theatrical rehearsals, group meetings, etc.

Enquires - secretary@blewburybrassband.org

Blewbury Brass Band is a friendly and welcoming village band, solidly rooted in the local community and has a heritage that stretches back a century. Our objective is to play a wide variety of styles of music - classical, jazz, musicals/shows, chart hits as well as traditional brass band marches - for the enjoyment both of our audiences and (importantly) ourselves.

We are keen to encourage people who have experience of playing a brass instrument, however long ago, to pick up an instrument again. We have instruments for hire and tutorials available. At the moment we are also in need of a percussionist/drummer to play with the band.

So come along! Players of all ages and abilities will receive a warm welcome. Our band rehearse at the Band Hut on Bonhams Road Blewbury (next to the tennis courts) on Wednesday evenings from 7.30-9.30pm and can be heard playing at local fetes, parks and community events throughout the year.

Enquiries to secretary@blewburybrassband.org,uk

Astons Online

So much of what we want to do, know and buy is online;
free and friendly Astons Online is here to help you:

Meeting on Tuesday 21 February from 10:00-12:00 in Astons Village Hall (OX119EQ) where we'll help you with internet, email, social networking and online safety. Please tell us, if you can, that you're coming so we can have helpers available. Also please bring a mask to keep us all Covid safe; see the Covid Protocol on our website www.astonsonline.uk Contact us - theastonsonline@gmail.com

Zoom meeting on Tuesday 28 February 2023 10:30 - 11:15

Astons Online is great but there are other places to get help and information; join in the meeting to find out where and how. Book your place - theastonsonline@gmail.com

Remote help to computer users every Tuesday morning 10:00 to 12:00 by telephone, Facetime, Skype, Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp or whatever is best for you.

Bruno Brunskill (On behalf of Astons Online)

theastonsonline@gmail.com 07780 958249
www.astonsonline.uk

Astons Online has just been donated a sparkling Apple Mac all-in-one desktop and during December we also received a small number of laptops. Please tell us if you are an individual, family or community organisation that needs one of these and is unlikely to be able to obtain one by other means.

Blewbury Post Office news

Royal Mail have decided that the non-barcoded stamps will still be valid until the end of July, so extra time to use them up, however, the 'special' ones, (the ones with pretty pictures on e.g., Christmas, Cats, Royal Marines etc.) will always be valid. We have 'swap out' forms, but you have to send them off, we cannot swap them for you.

We've heard a rumour that 1st & 2nd class stamps are getting a price increase at the beginning of April, so buy extra before then.

Karen will be retiring soon, so the role of Postmaster will be available. A-level Maths & English, no criminal convictions and a squeaky clean financial history will be required. Full training will be arranged. As a community branch, we can have flexibility on opening hours and we have a pretty unique set up. Ring the Post Office 851777 to make an appointment for an informal chat, or email karencbrooks@gmail.com. Please note that there is no accommodation alongside the position.

Karen, Maggie & Andrew

January wine club – Natural wines

It was a cold Wednesday wine club night this month but with the prospect of trying some very different wines, we had a record attendance for January, with 30 people coming along. Natural wines, including organic, biodynamic, and no-sulphite wines, are simply ones that have far less intervention in the growing and production process. You may sometimes see a cloudy wine, which simply means it has not gone through the filtration process nearly all the wines we drink have experienced. The result can be a very different tasting wine....and we found some wonderful examples!



To start the evening, we had a delightful crisp and refreshing sparkling rose called Lia Pet-Nat, from a small vineyard just outside Logrono, the capital of Rioja region. If you see Pet-Nat on a bottle it simply means the wine has gone through a natural fermentation process in the bottle using nothing but the natural sugars from the grape. The fresh fruit taste of apples and pears worked very well with some welcome cake that was brought in from a member, who was celebrating their 50th Birthday - we'll mention no names but you know who you are!

Our first white of the evening was a blend of Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc called Basic Instinct. Produced with minimal intervention, from the Languedoc-Roussillon region of France where the clay soils contain the perfect retention of water, allowing the Mediterranean climate to create some wonderful citrus flavours with exotic fruit and crisp green apples. Well worth a try with or without food!

Our next wine was an unfiltered, cloudy wine called "No es Pituko", Chilean slang for "it ain't fancy". To make a wine from such "simple" minimal interventions does take great talent, and this really was a great example. The grape variety was Viognier and if you like that then definitely one to try, unlike any other viognier you have experienced! The dry long Mediterranean summers create a really vibrant peach and tropical fruit flavour - we wanted to try something a little different and this didn't disappoint!

Our final white for the evening was an Australian wine from a vineyard just by the Frankland River in Western Australia. With the climate being kept at a moderately cool temperature (hardly ever going above 30 degrees!), the grapes are allowed to enjoy the sun for much longer without being too sun kissed! The Fiano grape produces a rich flavour of quince and fig with notes of tropical peach. Worth trying on these cold days and drifting off to somewhere warmer!

Our first red was an orange wine! If you buy on looks alone then you would not fail to be attracted this wonderful deep orange wine, made by allowing the skins and seeds from multiple grape varieties, macerated for three months, far longer at this stage of the process than most wines. The result was a very floral wine on the nose and if the colour orange had a taste, this would be it!

The first real red was made from the Braucol grape from the Domaine Gayard, towards the South of France. Not a common variety but said to originate from the Carmenère family. This wine has been hand harvested from very old vines, which enjoy the clean living of no herbicides or insecticides being used during the growing season. The dark-skinned grape produced a lovely wild blackcurrant grape flavour loved by many on the evening.

Our next red was a Grenache from Chateau de Campuget, 17km south of Nimes, made without sulphites and from sustainably cultivated grapes. If you like Grenache wine then this was well received by the members, very fresh and crisp clear cherry flavour!

To finish the evening we had a Malbec produced by an innovative up and coming wine producer called Emmanuel Rybinski. With a small parcel of land in the Cahors region he has been practicing organic production of grapes since 2015. With this wine we sampled a rich plum and berry wine - perfect for that winter stew!

Next month we are asking what we mean by “value for money”. With such a wide range of wines to try, are you getting what you expect from behind some of those prestigious labels? If you would like to come along or want more details, please see our website: www.uptonwineclub.com

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



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

Blewbury CE Primary School, Westbrook Street, Blewbury OX11 9Q 01235 850411
office.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk



Beginner Karate Classes

Beginner Karate Classes are starting in Upton Village Hall on January 2023 from 11.30am Sundays.

Free Trial Class.

Age 4 to Adult;. Families can Train together

Contact: johnhogan67@icloud.com 07548784929

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.

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



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. 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

Didcot & District u3a

2023 will see the Didcot & District u3a preparing to celebrate its 10th Birthday! An incredible achievement especially considering the last three years of pandemic! This great achievement is due to the dedication and commitment of the Committee members, the Group Leaders and all the enthusiastic members who are retired or semi-retired and looking to keep mind, body and soul active, **Congratulations to the U3A!**

So for all you newly retired or semi-retired individuals in and around Didcot and district, what better way during these dark winter days than to learn a new language, play the ukulele, appreciate art, creative writing, wine tasting, and much, much more?!

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:

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.

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!

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

Secretary - Secretary@didcotu3a.org

Additional information can be found on the u3asites.org.Uk

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