



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 March

Second Sunday of Lent

9.15 Lay-led service

Pastoral care & visiting

† 12 March

Third Sunday of Lent

9.15 Parish Eucharist

Families, family services & Mothers' Union

† 26th March

Fifth Sunday of Lent

All the churches in our benefice
& our relationships together

A Controversial Sunday

I wonder what you think about Mothering Sunday? Traditionally, it is celebrated on the 4th Sunday in Lent, which this year falls on 19th March. On this Sunday, churches will typically make an extra special effort to welcome families, and often little posies of flowers are given to any mothers who might happen to be in the congregation.



The meaning of Mothering Sunday has changed down the centuries. In the Middle Ages, the emphasis seems to have been on celebrating the role of Mother Church. People might visit their local cathedral, which was regarded as the “Mother Church” of the diocese. Later on, when many unmarried women lived and worked away from home, the custom arose that their employers would be expected to allow them to take this Sunday off, so they could go back home and visit their mothers. In more recent years, Mothering Sunday has been about celebrating the role of mothers - a role which is so often taken for granted.

However, over the last 10 or 20 years, the idea of celebrating Mothering Sunday has been brought into question. It has been pointed out that our relationships with our mothers can be complex and sometimes a source of deep pain. Furthermore, what if you are woman who has never had children? A traditional Mothering Day service could make you feel quite uncomfortable. And does the whole idea of Mothering Sunday hark back to some mythical age when women stayed at home to look after the children, and the men went out to work? In the modern world, there is the expectation that parenting is shared, so why do we still talk about “Mothering Sunday”? Why don’t we change its name to “Parenting Sunday”, and recognise that in the modern world, families come in all shapes and sizes?

What do you think? Is it time to get rid of the traditional “Mothering Sunday”? Or do you think it should be kept, as it provides a wonderful opportunity to thank our mothers for all that they have done for us?

In our local group of churches, we still keep the traditional Mothering Sunday, but we try to bring it up to date so that it reflects the reality of family life as it is lived today. We see it as an opportunity to say thank you to all who look after us - whatever their gender, and whether they are family members or not.

Father Jason



Mother's Union
welcome you to a special
Communion service celebrating family life



- LADY DAY -

the festival when Mary agrees to be the Mother of Jesus.

3pm on 25th March, St Michael's Blewbury

Tea will be served afterwards.

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 Revd Louise Butler on 07837 009730.

You can contact the clergy & staff on: -

Revd Jason St. John Nicolle 01235 850267 office@churnchurches.co.uk

Revd 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.

Travel with us to Narnia and Middle-earth this Lent

Although the first session was on 26th February, you are welcome to come along to any of the other sessions!

In the 1930s and 40s an informal group of like-minded Christian academics met frequently in Oxford to share and discuss their writing. They were known as 'The Inklings'. Two of them CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien, have become world famous as authors of profound Christian insights and imagination. However, 75 years later, in our more diverse age, we might well ask if they still have anything to teach us. Our four-week Lent course explores themes suited to Lent from the work of 'The Inklings', particularly Tolkien and Lewis. Come to learn more about the themes of Middle-earth and Narnia, stay for friendly discussion and time for reflection.

We believe 'Lent with the Inklings' will have something to say to Christians as well as those who wouldn't give themselves that label. You are welcome to attend any (or all!) of the sessions.



Week 2 - Vale Room, Blewbury Village Hall

8th March, 7.30 pm

Of Orcs and Magician's Nephews: How to care for creation

Week 3 - Vale Room, Blewbury Village Hall

15th March, 7.30 pm

Of Wizardly Wisdom: What to do with the time that is given us

Week 4 - St Michael's Church Blewbury,

Sunday, 26th March, 10.30am

Of Mount Dooms and Kingly Lions: The importance of story



OUTDOOR CHURCH for LENT

A short session of ACTIVITY for all ages
with pause for praise & prayer.

Led by Revd Louise Butler



Saturday 18th Mar 4pm at Manor Farm House, East Hagbourne

By kind permission of the Gover family

A guided tour of the spring garden and opportunity to make flower posies for Mothering Sunday in the neighbouring churchyard – scissors, string or ribbon will be useful

Good Friday, 7th April

10am in St. Mary's Churchyard, Upton

We gather items to make Easter gardens – please bring a plate, tray or bowl

LENT TALKS IN THE BENEFICE

Modern Miracles 23 March

Led by Revd John Clark

Thursday 23rd March at 8pm in the Benefice Meeting Room at Blewbury. Revd John will lead a discussion on modern miracles based on his recent research.

Masterpieces of Christian Art - a tour around our Churches

Led by Father Jason St John Nicolle

Tuesdays 3 - 4.30pm with a cup of tea
and biscuits

28 February - North Moreton

21 March - Hagbourne

7 March - Aston Tirrold

28 March – Upton

14 March - Blewbury



Parish Council News

Recreation Ground Maintenance

The recreation ground now has new signage with corrected emergency contact details and a summary of the rules applicable to the use of the space plus a QR code linking to the full small print.

A big concern is still the correct disposal of dog “waste”. It must be collected and disposed of in the dedicated container by the entrance, NOT in any other waste bins. Dogs should NOT be allowed onto any of the play areas – would you want your children playing in dog urine contaminated chippings? Two new, lockable, waste bins are on order for the recreation ground.

The rotting planks on the slide platform which were highlighted in the last safety inspection have now been replaced at minimal cost.

Waste Collection

The South & Vale waste team arranged a tour of the disposal facility at Ardley in February attended by the Upton News editor. This plant is operated commercially by Vindor and recovers energy from waste that cannot be recycled. Until recently, tours were limited to parish councillors but can now accommodate residents too. There is one almost every month this year with plenty of spaces so feel free to apply!

Contact waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk

Historically, black bin waste (refuse) was sent to landfill so it was often seen as the ‘worst’ bin and therefore the natural mind-set would be to avoid putting as much waste in there as possible. However, very few local authorities now send refuse to landfill due to the environmental and financial costs of doing so.

In Oxfordshire, all black bin waste is sent to an energy recovery facility in Ardley, where it is incinerated, generating enough electricity to power the site itself and then sell the excess to the National Grid. The excess provides electricity to power over 60,000 homes across Oxfordshire. This number can only rise as homes become more energy efficient. It’s also incredibly important to put the right thing in your recycling bin. Recycling contamination (the wrong thing in the bin) can cause an entire truck-load of recycling to be rejected at the sorting facility, wasting a valuable resource.

If in doubt whether an item is recyclable or not, it is always better to err on the side of caution and put it in your black bin. Do NOT put it in the green bin on the off chance that it could be recycled.

Not only does the black bin waste become energy, metals that don’t burn are recycled and the resulting ash is used in deep road construction.

You can put the following (cleaned) items in your green recycling bin:

- Plastic pots (e.g. yoghurt and sauce pots)
- Plastic tubs (e.g. ice cream and margarine tubs)
- Plastic trays (e.g. fruit, meat and presentation trays)
- Plastic bottles (e.g. drinks, milk, and cleaning product bottles)
- Aerosol cans (only when empty)
- Tinfoil products
- Steel and aluminium tins and cans
- Paper and cardboard (should be dry)
- Glass jars and bottles

If you have an item which doesn't fit into one of these categories it is not recyclable from kerbside, and should either be put in your black bin, be taken to your local supermarket for recycling (soft plastics) or taken to your local household waste recycling centre.

If you're unsure of whether something is recyclable feel free to email waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk to check.

You can also use the Oxfordshire County Council Waste Wizard, found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/waste-and-recycling/household-waste/recycle-repair-reuse>

Date for your diary:

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

Local Elections

Everyone will need photo ID to vote at the local elections. The government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at some elections. This will apply for the first time in England at the local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023.

Accepted forms of photo ID will include, but are not limited to, passport, driving licence (including provisional license), disabled parking blue badge, certain concessionary travel cards and identity cards with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme).

Anyone who doesn't have accepted photo ID can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate. The deadline to apply for ID for the local elections is 25 April.

For more information, including details on how to apply, you can visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or call the Electoral Commission helpline on 0800 328 0280.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL SERVICES

One of the concerns of the Parish Council is the lack of medical and dental facilities for Upton's parishioners and local villagers. We have been worried about this lack of medical services and poor access to doctors, dentists and nurses for a quite a while. As of today, all three Didcot Medical Centres have closed their books to new patients, so if you are new to the area these medical Centres will not take you on and will suggest you try centres in Farringdon or Wallingford.

With the enlargement of Didcot into a Market Town, new housing estates have been built (Great Western Park) and planning permission is granted for the building of Valley Park, which is shortly to commence construction. These estates have vastly increased the pressure on medical facilities. To this end we have been asking the Vale of White Horse local councillors who represent Upton what the VOWH have been doing, and what they intend to do to resolve this critical issue.

The current update is below:

Question from Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne to Councillor Judy Roberts - Cabinet Member for Development, Infrastructure and Development Management

People living in the Didcot area have seen a great deal of growth in housing numbers and population in their town and the surrounding area over recent years. Local residents expect the infrastructure to be provided to support this and any future growth. I understand that the S106 agreement for Great Western Park included money allocated for a much needed GP surgery.

Can we have an update on progress of the healthcare facility? Additionally, can the role of the council in provision of healthcare services be explained?

Written answer from Judy Roberts:

Councillors will be aware that the council has no statutory role in provision of healthcare services. It is the responsibility of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to determine need to meet any growth in population as part of the planning consultation process. It is the case that the S106 agreement for Great Western Park secured a part contribution towards the total cost of delivery by health partners of the healthcare facilities. It also directs that the land be transferred via the council for this purpose.

As part of this land ownership provision the council is positively supporting the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board and related stakeholders to procure the provision of the healthcare facilities on the site. Regular meetings are taking place between the various parties to move the project forward and the ICB/council is looking to share a joint update with local residents shortly.

Hayleigh's email comment on Judy Roberts answer:

You must know that Sarah and I fully appreciate the seriousness of this issue, and I am constantly reminded of the lack of the surgery - firstly, by all the parish councils; secondly, by the social media posts giving the real world examples of impact; thirdly, by the many emails I receive on the topic and finally, I live on the same road as the empty site, and so I cycle past it twice a day! Believe me - Sarah and I are pushing all avenues open to us. The body responsible for delivering the surgery is not the council, but we are doing all we can to work with the ICB to enable the process of building the facility. It is a complex matter, involving several parties - ICB, Vale, Woodlands, the developer. As I understand, the council wouldn't have the funds, the capability, or legal standing to deliver this GP surgery. When building a GP surgery, the ICB/NHS have their own processes that need to be followed, and it would be very difficult for the council to also get involved in that part. As I understand, this would only serve to complicate things further, if it were even possible.

The issue of Didcot surgeries closing their books is wider than a lack of premises, it is also a lack of GPs. This is out of the control of the council, and is a national issue.

Be assured, Sarah [Medley] and I will continue to push our fellow councillors, our officers and our contacts at the ICB who we regularly ask to give public updates.

Regards,

Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne

Blewbury & Harwell ward

Vale of White Horse District Council

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

These big issues are common across Didcot and its surrounding villages:

1. A parcel of land was allocated in GWP, but little has happened for four years. We need a similar parcel of land allocated in Valley Park.
2. Our Integrated Care Board (the ICB for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West) is responsible for the design, build, equipping and staffing of these Medical Centres. This is a very unresponsive body and needs constant chasing.
3. ICBs are accountable nationally to NHS England for NHS spending and performance. They are expected to achieve financial balance and to meet national requirements and performance targets.
4. BUT it is local Doctors (e.g. Woodlands, Didcot Health, Oak Tree Medical Centres) who need to occupy additional buildings and provide medical services. However, these are individuals and have a

choice of doing this or not.

5. There is a shortage of doctors, dentists, nurses nationally. This is an issue for Steve Barclay, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.
6. We have a choice of not doing anything, trusting that the process will eventually deliver, or doing something about it.

Upton Parish Council:

1. Has written to our local MP, David Johnston OBE MP.
2. Is working with Harwell PC to lobby the VOWH to stop granting building permission until we have Medical Centres built and staffed with doctors, dentists, nurses, health professionals.
3. Is asking the VOWH what are they doing with the parcel of land assigned for Medical Centres? How are they protecting it and keeping it until Centres are built?
4. Is asking the VOWH to stop all development and not grant new planning until Medical Centres are built, equipped and fully staffed.
5. Is lobbying Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.
6. Is in the process of writing to Steve Barclay, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care asking him to get involved.

Brendan Heneghan

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.**

The next Astons Online event will be our monthly Zoom meeting on 11 April at 10:30 - 11:15. Book your place - theastonsonline@gmail.com

18 April 10:00 to 12:00 Astons Online has its monthly event in Astons Village Hall. 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

Bruno Brunskill (On behalf of Astons Online)
07780 958249



UPTON FETE 2023?

If Upton is to have a fete this year,
we need help!

The greatest need at the moment is for volunteers to form an organising committee - perhaps 3 or 4 more people to get together once a month to agree a date, come up with fresh ideas and make the decisions, bookings and arrangements. Then on the day we'll need more volunteers to help set everything up and take it down again.

If you'd like to get involved, please contact

Paul (pjsbatho@btinternet.com)

and we'll get things under way!



The
countryside
charity

TRUSTEES WANTED

Campaign to Protect Rural England - Oxfordshire

Do you care about your local countryside?

Want to make a difference?

Due to retirement of current trustees, we are looking for an Honorary Secretary and a Board Member to join our team.

This is an excellent opportunity to play an influential role in a respected and long-standing environmental charity, applying your experience to make a real difference and to be part of a friendly group that is passionate about the Oxfordshire countryside.

Application deadline is **30 March 2023** in the first instance, but we are happy to receive expressions of interest on an ongoing basis.

For further info, please contact our Branch Director, Helen Marshall.

E: director@cpreoxon.org.uk

T: 01491 612079

See our website for more information: www.cpreoxon.org.uk

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 Events

Fleur Stevenson Jazz Quartet: Saturday 4th March at 7.30pm, tickets are £20, available at Blewbury Post Office, and include a glass of wine or soft drink, and a free raffle ticket.

This event is run by the Blewbury Bellringers

Blewbury Post Office also has tickets for the two sustainable Blewbury events, and Duck Race tickets will also be on sale very soon.

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

Headteacher of Blewbury School Wins County Award

Jo Reeder joined Blewbury School in September 2021. Initially she was Head of School working with an Executive Headteacher, but within months was promoted to the substantive Headteacher post. During the last year and a half she has worked tirelessly for the School with a commitment that has been much appreciated by her pupils, staff, governors, parents and the local community.

Teachers all have lives that extend well beyond the work that they do in school, and Jo is no exception to that. She has in fact just won an Oxfordshire County Award for her work out of school hours during the period that she has been in post at Blewbury School. She and her partner Mark were awarded the Oxfordshire Foster Parent of the Year Award for 2022. This is a telling insight into Jo's commitment to the wellbeing of children and young people both at Blewbury School and when she is away from there. Some extracts from their award nomination illustrate the respect that there has been for her work as a foster parent:



" They have completely changed their lives to accommodate their new caring roles and accept the significant uncertainty that comes with fostering a child with complex health care needs..... The couple are a joy to work with and I wish that all children coming into Local Authority care could have their own Jo and Mark to welcome them!"

"Since being placed with them in November 2021, Jo and Mark have remained consistent in their availability to the children. Jo and Mark make sure each young person is given their own space and support and spend positive time with each of them. Jo and Mark have been strong advocates for the children and attend all meetings giving clear and helpful feedback. Jo and Mark have created a welcoming, strength-focused and supportive environment in their home, and I am nominating them for this to recognise the hard work they have put in to provide the children with stability."

Congratulations to Jo & Mark on this well deserved award!

Beginner Karate Classes

Beginner Karate Classes started in Upton Village Hall in 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

Blewbury Post Office news

There are still issues from Royal Mail with international parcels; at the time of writing, we can accept letters and large letters (including tracked/signed for) IF they don't need a customs label, we've been told that RM are hoping to get everything back to normal by the end of February, but meanwhile you can process online and bring it into us!

We've not been given any information about price rises, but we're expecting an announcement soon, buy your 1st & 2nd class stamps before April, and they will revalue themselves, new King Charles stamps go on sale in early April. Meanwhile, use your non-barcoded stamps until the end of July, special or picture stamps are absolutely fine. Lots of people still don't know that they can access their bank accounts at a post office, pay in and take out cash and check their bank balance!

Applicants for postmaster are being processed, and I hope to be out in my garden by the summer!

Kitty's eggs are back in stock, delicious honey and homemade fudge too
Karen, Maggie & Andrew

Upton Village Photographic Competition - Winter 2023

Open to all residents of Upton (even teenagers)

Theme - Upton and surrounding area, in winter
- winter pictures from anywhere else in the World.

Your entries should be sent as a jpeg file to upton.photo@outlook.com
Closing date - 15th April 2023

Further information, hints and tips given on the Upton Facebook site.

Rob Traynor



February Wine Club – Value for money?

February is the month to celebrate your love! And so, not to be left out, we celebrated our love of wine this month by sampling some very special bottles of wine.....or did we? If you did want to buy a slightly (or a lot) more expensive wine to celebrate Valentines Day, then you may have looked for a well known grape variety...a Chardonnay or Pinot Noir for example. You may also have looked for a well known region....a Rioja or Sancerre? There is a price to pay for these wines but is it worth it? We decided to put it to the test and “tasted” eight quality wines that were in the region of £30 per bottle....in reality only four of the wines presented were genuine! The other four were still good wines but at least half the price of what we said they were....could anyone tell the difference?



The first wine was a Sancerre called La Demoiselle (£34.99 from Majestic). Sancerre wines have a particular price tag because of the chalky, flinty soils giving the sauvignon blanc grape a particular flavour. If you like it, then it does taste different from other wines made by the same grape and is worth trying!

The second wine was presented a high end quality Chablis Premier Cru at £35 per bottle. In reality, it was the Exhibition Chablis from the Wine Society at half the price. Due to the vulnerability of the seasons in this region, the wine will reflect the quantity produced....so, whilst a great wine, you may also be paying for it's rarity for that year!

Our third wine came from the Rioja region and was presented as a £25 bottle of Conde Valdemar - a very fine white Rioja. In reality, members were trying a £11.49 Nivarius (Strictly wine). Again a wonderful Rioja but at a fraction of the price. Rioja is well know for it's red wines but don't overlook some white wines, they can be exceptional!

Our last white of the evening was presented as a quality £40 viognier called Condrieu. In reality it was a £14.99 viognier called Saint Clair (Waitrose). This wine has had a bit of a resurgence of late, nearly going into extinction several years ago due to lack of popularity. If you like the intense tropical flavours of apricot and peach then do try this grape!

Our first red of the evening was a pinot noir. If you are looking for a classic, then look no further than Burgundy and the well known region of Nuits-Saint-Georges. We tasted a Domaine Jean Chauvenet wine at £30. A really good example of wine from this region.

Our second red was a zinfandel grape and was presented as a £24.99 bottle called Decoy (clue in the name there!). In reality, we tasted a £7.49 Definition wine from Majestic (who do a range of Definition wines showing off a very good baseline for many grapes).

When thinking of well known quality wines, it is difficult not to include a wine from Chateauneuf-du-pape. We tasted a £29.95 Domaine de la Solitude from Strictly wine. Climate change has had an effect on this area, with more sun, increasing the sugar content in the grapes. Net result is that the alcohol content has increased by 2% over the past 30 years. The wine is changing but as it can be produced by blending over thirteen different grape varieties, producers are still creating some high quality wines!

The final wine of the evening was a wonderful deep Merlot from Bordeaux, near Saint-Emilion called Chateau Puy Guilhem Fronsac (Strictly Wine, £25.99). A great example of fine wine from this region and probably the best received wine of the evening.

So what was the conclusion? Hard to say, in reality all the wines were quality and without knowing any different, the general consensus was that they were all enjoyed! So is there value in spending a bit more for a bottle of wine? For me, part of the enjoyment of a wine is knowing the love and care that goes in to the making of it. Usually produced from small parcels of land with huge amounts of love and care put in to the production of the wine, which will make it taste just that little bit more special...and who doesn't like sharing something a little special for what you love!

On the 15th March, we will be looking at wines from Greece.

If you would like to come along, all the details can be found on www.uptonwineclub.com Hope to see you there!

Ian - Chairman



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 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