

Upton News



April 2023

Services at St. Mary the Virgin, Upton

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

Prayer Focus

Children & Sunday schools

† 2 April

Palm Sunday

9.15 Lay-led service

† 9 April

visitors

Those recently baptised & baptism

Easter Day

9.15 Parish Eucharist

† 23rd April

Our worship, musicians, organists & choirs

Third Sunday of Easter

9.15 Parish Eucharist

Other Holy Week services in the Benefice:

Maundy Thursday

8pm Eucharist and watch: St Andrew's Hagbourne

Good Friday

10am Outdoor church: **St. Mary's Churchyard, Upton.** We gather items to make Easter gardens - please bring a plate, tray or bowl

2pm Good Friday Service: St Michael's Blewbury

2pm One hour at the cross: All Saints' North Moreton

2pm One hour at the cross: St Andrew's Hagbourne

Easter Day

9.15 Parish Eucharist: St Mary's Upton

(More Easter Day services in the Benefice on the back of the *Churn*)

For details of on-line services and contact information for clergy and staff please see the last copy of the Upton News (always available on the village web site) or contact Elaine on 01235 850267 or at office@churnchurches.co.uk

The Easter Message

Have you ever wondered why Christians make such a fuss over the celebration of Easter? Christians have been celebrating the resurrection of Jesus ever since the very first Easter morning. We tend to associate the celebration of the resurrection with one particular day in the church's year: Easter Day, which this year falls on 9th April. But the resurrection is in fact celebrated every week, in the usual Sunday service. Jesus rose again from the dead on a Sunday morning, and this is why the tradition arose of Christians going to church on a Sunday, and why Sundays have been kept as a special day, different from the other days of the week.



What makes Easter so special? In part, it is because Christians have seen Jesus' resurrection as God's seal of approval for all that Jesus did and taught. How can we be certain that Jesus is truly who he claimed to be? Yes, we can point to the coherence and truth of his teaching. Yes, we can point to the fact that his life and teaching has attracted countless millions of disciples down the centuries, and continues to do so. But we can also point to the fact of the resurrection: by this unique miracle, God affirmed that Jesus is indeed the Son of God.

But there is more to Easter than this. It shows us that death is not necessarily the end. If God raised Jesus from the dead and gave him new life, there is hope for us too. God can raise us from the dead, too. Death is not the end. It is the gateway to new life- the resurrection life. The resurrection of Jesus gives us hope.

Finally, the resurrection life is eternal life: it is life lived with God for ever. So this means that Jesus is alive today, in his resurrected body, and will be alive for ever more. He can guide us and help us today, and we can share in his life through baptism and holy communion. Most of us will never see Jesus in his resurrected body, but many of us will experience his presence through our prayer and worship, in the life of the Christian community, and in the love we share with one another in our everyday lives.

No wonder Christians continue to celebrate Easter day with such joy!

Father Jason

Parish Council News

Recreation Ground Waste Collection

The March waste collections from the recreation ground bin, now done commercially by “Organised Grime”, resulted in 10kg of recyclable waste and 12kg of non-recyclable waste. The latter included a very large amount of dog waste. This should NOT be placed in the general waste bin as it is classified as hazardous and has to be sorted out. [Will all dog owners please use the dedicated bin at the entrance to the recreation ground.](#)

Food Waste

In March, the South & Vale waste team arranged a tour of their food waste processing facility, once more attended by the Upton News editor. Our food waste, once collected, is taken to an anaerobic digestion facility in Wallingford run by Severn Trent Water where it is turned into energy to power 4,800 homes. It takes 85 days for the food waste to break down and at the end of the process it is sold onto local farmers as a nutrient-rich liquid fertiliser. The tour was not as informative as the one reported in the last issue, but one thing I did take away is that there is no need to line your food waste caddy with compostable bags. Any bags, newspaper (or even nothing) is equally acceptable. *All* bags are stripped off in the initial maceration process and extracted. They then are sent for incineration at the energy recovery facility just off the M25.

Chilton Road Crossing

At a meeting on 24th March with Tim Shickle, the responsible person in Oxfordshire CC, concerns about the implementation of the crossing were discussed. Amongst many other things, the lighting design and the removal of vegetation at the corner of Station Road were covered. It was agreed that trees would be replanted and that the light levels would be reduced or redirected if permissible within the mandatory design parameters for such crossings.

Upton Village Fete

The parish council has offered to take over responsibility for the Village Fete which will still be for the benefit of St Mary's Upton. Volunteers are required still - see poster later in this issue.

Date for your diary:

This year's Annual Parish Meeting for Upton has been arranged for Wednesday 26th April 2023. This is the forum for all village activities to report and is not a Parish Council meeting, although it is facilitated by it.

Parish Council Meeting Dates Changed

These will now take place on Wednesdays at 7:30pm. All are welcome to attend.

The next meeting is the Parish Council's AGM which will be on Wednesday 17th May at 7.30pm.

Local Elections 4th May 2023

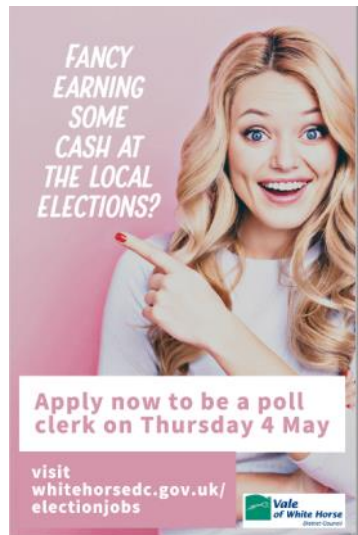
Play your part in the local elections

Would you like to earn money, meet lots of people and play a key role in our local democracy? South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are looking for people to work as poll clerks at the local elections on Thursday 4 May.

If you sign up, you'll receive £168 for the day, working from 6am until the finish around 10.30pm. If you or someone you know is interested, please get in touch as soon as possible by emailing:
electionstaff@southandvale.gov.uk.

For more information, visit:
whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs
or
southoxon.gov.uk/electionjobs

Please note, the councils cannot offer these roles to people that work for, or are connected with, a political party.



Local Elections - photo I.D. requirements

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.

Job Vacancy

Deputy Parish Council Clerk for Upton Parish Council

This role would suit someone who is interested in part time flexible work, mostly home based. Applicants should have small or large business or local authority administrative experience but the latter, whilst an advantage, is not essential.

Upton Parish Council has robust financial processes and systems in place, together with a suite of policies & guidelines for the running of a Parish Council and the Parish councillors are active in their support to the Clerk. These policies & guidelines will serve as a framework for the new appointee, who will maintain and improve these as part of the role.

The Parish Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer for the Council. Where required, training leading to a recognised qualification will be given in the responsibilities and functions of a Clerk and, including the serving, or issuing of all the notifications required by law and other essential legal and local authority requirements. Depending on the experience of the applicant, training may additionally include administering budgets, finances, setting agendas & minute writing.

The appointee will report directly to Upton Parish Council and work alongside the Parish Clerk, producing information required by the Council to make effective decisions and learning how to advise and assist the Council with the formulation of Council policies. The appointee will also learn how to ensure that there is open and effective communication between the Council and village residents.

It is envisaged that the appointee would take over as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer in due course.

Starting Salary: Depending on qualifications & experience. A trainee Clerk would start on £12.97-£13.95 per hour & a qualified Clerk would start on £14.21-£15.67 per hour. (All salaries based on the NALC pay scale).

Contract: Permanent, part time.

Hours of work: Initially, up to 5 hours per week (plus training time).

Location: Work from Home / Upton Village Hall.

Please send your c.v. and application letter to the Parish Clerk at

parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk

Nature Garden News

After the long, dry winter, the rain has certainly perked up the plants in the nature garden. Daffs, hellebores and cowslips are all in abundance. As inevitably are the weeds and grass, so it's time for the spring spruce-up.

Working party on Saturday 1 April, 10am

If you could spare an hour or so from 10am this Saturday we'd love your help to:

- weed around the trees and perennials
- get the wildflower meadow raked and ready for sowing
- reapply mulch to the hedge plants to suppress the grass

Please bring a few tools if you can. There'll be fruit and veg (in cake form) and hot drinks to keep everyone's energy up.

Over the winter

Most plants have a period of dormancy in the dark months, to conserve energy and escape the weather. This gives the garden elves time to look at other jobs, so here are a few of the changes since November:

- another 2,000 bulbs were planted - hearty thanks to Malcolm Wright, Julia Nehring, Ian and Judy Robertson
- a fact-filled sign now welcomes visitors near the bus shelter-end gate, with lovely illustrations by Rob Traynor
- the original metal bench has been stripped (HT Ian Wright) and repaired, repainted and reinstalled (huge props to Brian Rippon)
- fruit tree and hedging pruning (tvm Jo Fidgen)

We've also taken delivery of a large water butt (made from recycled plastic). The aim is to start harvesting water off the village hall roof soon, so we're ready for any dry spells. This time last year we had some very warm weather, so best to be prepared.

Hedging at the overflow cemetery

A hardy half-dozen volunteers turned out in February to restock the native hedge around the as yet unused cemetery. Thanks very much Ian Robertson, Kim Gould, Paul Batho, Kathryn Fletcher, and Duncan Reid. We were surprised to find that relatively few plants had perished in spite of the long hot spell last year.

Chips with everything

Mulching with wood chips is vital to conserve moisture in the soil after planting hedging, and to suppress weeds. But it's quite hard to source the mulch. If you're having tree or hedge work done, please mention to the tree surgeon that they can drop off the shredded material at the overflow cemetery or by the nature garden so we can take advantage. They're usually happy not to have to make a special journey to dispose of it.

Thanks very much for reading - and for weeding on Saturday 1 April if you can make it!

Kieron, on behalf of the Nature Garden Volunteers

Upton Village Hall News

Upton Village Hall has started 2023 well in terms of bookings with all regular classes such as Karate, Dog Training, Gymnastics and Yoga returning. Tea Birds Women's Institute group also meets at the hall every month. Children's party events and other celebration bookings continue to rise.

In terms of maintenance we still hope to undertake refurbishment of the disabled and ladies toilets providing we can find a contractor to do so which is currently proving problematic after much searching. Unfortunately we suffer occasional problems with the mains drainage - the result of the drains running at too shallow an angle. Unless a permanent solution can be found we have committed to have the drains cleared on a regular basis. We will shortly be performing repairs to the guttering and downpipes together with a new soakaway.

The internal facilities remain in good shape with the kitchen floor recently being replaced, a new microwave and the cooker fixed.

If you have any ideas or thoughts on facilities or features the hall could benefit from for the use of villagers please contact:

info@uptonvillagehall.co.uk or if you are interested in booking the hall please follow the guidance on www.uptonvillagehall.co.uk

Jacqui Reid (on behalf of UVHAT)

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 NEEDS



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

Last month's appeal resulted in just one volunteer but we need more. The greatest need at the moment is 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!

Emergency Alerts System – test on 23 April

On Monday (19 March), the Cabinet Office launched a new system that will give the government and emergency services the capability to send an alert directly to mobile phones when there is a risk to life.

The Emergency Alerts system will allow the government to get urgent messages quickly to nearly 90 percent of mobile phones in a defined area. The system is now ready to be tested across the country following successful tests in East Suffolk and Reading.

The alerts will only ever come from the government or emergency services, and they will issue a warning, the details of the area impacted, and instructions about how best to respond.

Emergency Alerts will be used very rarely - only being sent where there is an immediate risk to people's lives - so people may not receive an alert for months, or even years.

Emergency Alerts will be used across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and their initial use will focus on the most serious severe weather-related incidents, including severe flooding in England.

By broadcasting from cell towers in the vicinity of an emergency, the alerts are secure, free to receive, and one-way. They do not reveal anyone's location or collect personal data.

Some vulnerable groups may want to opt out of the emergency alerts system. However, the government strongly recommends that people do not opt out of the service, as it is intended to warn people when lives are in danger.

Emergency Alerts will appear on your device and you will hear a loud siren-like sound for up to 10 seconds. It will appear on your device's home screen and you must acknowledge it before you can use other features. They appear as a notification and may include telephone numbers or website links containing further information. A loud, siren-like sound and vibration will accompany the message to raise awareness of the hazard or threat.

When you receive the Welcome Message on 23 April, you do not need to take any action. The siren will stop automatically after ten seconds. The message will stay on screen until you acknowledge it, just like a 'low battery' warning.

More information: <https://www.gov.uk/alerts>

Upton Village Photographic Competition

A reminder that the closing date is April 15th so still time to get out there and click away.

The theme is WINTER either in Upton or anywhere else.

Two age categories - 16 and below and anyone else.

You can enter as many pictures as you like, just give your name and a description of the picture and send it, in JPEG format, to -

upton.photo@outlook.com

Photo taken at Wittenham Clumps

Rob Traynor



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2023

Advance Notice for your diaries: Christian Aid this year is Sunday 14 - Saturday 20 May. Envelopes for donations will be distributed in the village and last year's Tea Party in the Churchyard will be repeated by popular request.

Any offers of assistance would be most gratefully received.

Elisabeth and Malcolm Wright

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 School Goes Green In Partnership with Sustainable Blewbury!

An exciting new partnership between Blewbury School and Sustainable Blewbury is looking at green issues such as sustainability and care for the natural environment. The immediate work is focusing on developments within the School grounds, which are of course very extensive and look out over some superb farmland and downs views.

It is a key part of the School's curriculum to explore and educate pupils about sustainability, biodiversity, the environment and climate change, and so this project ties in very neatly with the childrens' ongoing studies and curriculum coverage.

A recent site visit from Camilla Burrow and Sean Morris, of Sustainable Blewbury, accompanied by the headteacher Jo Reeder, and community governor Roger Murphy, led to the development of a list of suggestions about simple but effective improvements that could be made to further develop the very beautiful school grounds. These suggestions include adapting the School's existing Forest School site; creating a corner to plant native species of woodland bulbs, and dedicating an area to establish a long grass wildflower meadow.

The pond in our Forest School area is to be the starting point. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 (as pictured) have been busy scooping out the leaves and pondweed, leaving the leaves on the side of the pond for a couple of days (to allow bugs to creep out) before being composted. The next job is to create a better marginal low-gradient edge; using large logs and stones at the edges.



Following this the School would like to add native aquatic oxygenating plants. Can you help us with this? We would love the Blewbury community to donate a few plants from your garden ponds. Species such as Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*), Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), Fringed Water-lily (*Nymphaoides peltata*) or White Water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*) would be ideal. And while we are asking for

help the School Gardening Club urgently needs the equivalent of eight bags of compost to re-stock their raised beds ready for the 2023 vegetable growing season

Please email

office.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch if you can donate plants and/or compost to Blewbury School. Please also contact Sustainable Blewbury if you would like to help with some of the work that will be involved in this project.



Miss Reeder - Headteacher

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

As expected, Royal Mail have announced the price of postage from 3rd April, 1st class will go up by 15p to £1.15, while 2nd class goes up by 7p to 75p, large letters stamps go up too. It's worthwhile buying a few extra before then, as they revalue themselves automatically. New King Charles stamps go on sale that day too.

Speaking of stamps, please use up any non-barcoded stamps before the end of July, (the pictorial ones are okay to use after that) and please do not tear off the barcode on the newer ones, they need that bit! You can download a swap-out form from the Royal Mail website, and send off any you are not going to use before the cut-off date.

International parcels are now able to be processed with us, but you must have the appropriate customs labels applied & filled out before you get to the counter, we now have to input the data onto our system, which takes a few minutes per parcel.

We have Duck Race tickets available, along with tickets for various other events, please note that you can only pay with cash, but you can take cash out at the counter as usual.

I've handed in my resignation letter, and the new postmaster is about to go on his training, so you may see him in the branch by the end of April, but I'm afraid you've still got me until June!

We'll be closed for Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Sunday and Monday, (7th to 10th) and reopen on Tuesday 11th, allowances & pensions will be paid the previous working day. For emergency gas, electric and phone top-ups, please call my mobile 07825 154842

Happy Easter everyone

Karen, Maggie and Andrew

Baby Sitting Service

Are you looking for a reliable and caring babysitter for those late-night outings or for when you just need some time for yourself?

Look no further!

I am a 17 year-old with a passion for children and experience in babysitting kids of all ages. With me, you can have peace of mind knowing that your children are in safe hands.

Contact me by email:

amelia.thackray@gmail.com or by text: 07718 832079



Upton Wine Club

Our March meeting was an evening sampling Greek wines, presented by members of the club - occasionally interrupted by bouzouki music.

Having been making wine for several thousand years, Greece is home to some 300 varieties of indigenous grape. Most of these varieties are unheard of outside the wine producers, and probably only one (Assyrtiko) has made it to other countries. The evening was an opportunity to taste and learn about 8 indigenous varieties, albeit ones not easy to find in this country.

Debra Paul opened the evening with a Savatiano from Central Greece, made a lady winemaker Vasiliki Akriotou. A gold medal winner, this dry and creamy white has caught the attention of Julia Harding MW on Jancis Robinson's web site, who described it as outstanding and very good value. Natalie Morgan followed with a Robola from Cephalonia of Captain Corelli fame, a fresh and aromatic wine. From vines grown at an altitude of 600m on Mount Ainos, this mineral and acidic white has also been praised by the critics, James Suckling awarding it a high 92 points.



Mike Collins presented an Assyrtiko made by Karavitakis in western Crete. Santorini is the home of assyrtiko, a mineral almost saline white. However the desperately difficult growing conditions there - on volcanic rock with very little rainfall and strong winds - mean that yields there are low, although quality is superb. This, coupled with demand for land to build holiday homes, has led to ever-increasing prices for Santorini Assyrtiko, making it comparable to Chablis. Fortunately, the grape is now grown elsewhere in Greece, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, California, Italy, and even in trials in Champagne. This is a grape to watch for the future.

The final white of the evening was shown by Dermot Paddon, a Malagousia from Vourvokeli in Thrace, northern Greece. Alongside some other Greek varieties, this grape was rescued from extinction by a couple of winemakers. This aromatic wine featured spice and floral flavours with a tropical fruit backbone.

Brian Rippon showed the first red of the evening, an Agiorgitiko from Domaine Skouras in the Peloponnese. This grape, allegedly pronounced AYE-yor-YEE-tee-ko, is probably the Greek red that you're most likely to find in this country - should you be lucky enough to find one at all in a wine merchants or on a restaurant list (most supermarkets are yet to discover them...). Delicious and easy drinking but sweetly fruited and aromatic, this could probably be enjoyed slightly chilled in a hot Greek taverna! Another one that has drawn praise with 92 points from James Suckling.

Fiona Poole entertained everyone with her showing of a Liatiko from Douloufakis in Crete. This early-ripening grape, named after Ioulitiko, meaning 'of July', is up-and-coming, following its earlier decline in favour. This was a wine that has benefitted from 12 months in oak, making it silky but not at all oaky.

The evening concluded with a couple of stunning reds. Derek Whitmell showed a Xinomavro from Alpha Estate, named 'Hedgehog' because of the nesting site of these inhabitants in the single vineyard in which the grapes are grown. Jancis Robinson described it as a very individual wine that shows Xinomavro's distinction well. Dermot Paddon followed with a Moschomavro from Magoutes - another rare variety rescued from extinction by the producer, and yet again one which Jancis Robinson raved about: 'utterly captivating' and 'charmingly fragrant'.

The wines were sourced from Maltby & Greek, Strictly Wine, and The Wine Society.

Members enjoyed a selection of Greek snacks produced by Natalie Morgan and Giulia Rippon, and the wines mostly impressed and probably surprised those present.

At our next meeting on 19th April we look forward to a presentation of Czech wines, shown by Betty Novotna from Wines of Bohemia Ltd. Whether you are an existing member or would like to come along as a guest, we hope to see you there! You really don't need to know anything about wine to be able to enjoy the evening...

All the details can be found at <https://www.uptonwineclub.com/>

Brian (mail@uptonwineclub.com)



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 if you are struggling financially during these difficult times.

From the weekly food shop, help with clothing, equipment or dinner money for schoolchildren, 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 the porch of St Mary's Church, Upton, 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.

United Charities of the Ancient Parish of Blewbury Registered Charity No: 203538

John Sutton Garden Care

A new business based in Chilton, offering a range of gardening services, John Sutton Garden Care caters to a wide range of needs including: grass and hedge cutting, weeding, planting, pruning, maintenance of flower beds and more.

The service offers appointment flexibility of weekly, bi-weekly, monthly and one-off slots.

For all queries please contact John at:

johnsuttongardencare@outlook.com or call 07891190009.



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:

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

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