

# Upton News



May 2023

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## Services at St. Mary the Virgin, Upton

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

### Prayer Focus

#### † 7 May

*5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter*

9.15 Lay-led service

Churchwardens, fabric & churchyards.

Church cleaners

#### † 14 May

*6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter*

9.15 Parish Eucharist

PCC's, all in leadership &

our Benefice operations manager

#### † 28 May

*7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter*

9.15 Parish Eucharist

Treasurers & church finances

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## Ascension Day

**Benefice Choral Evensong**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 7pm**

**St Michael's Blewbury**



A service for the whole Benefice. Everyone welcome!

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

## A Significant Number

Are you interested in numbers? Sometimes numbers can express something very particular and precise, but on other occasions numbers serve to express a more general idea. For example, if someone said to you, "I'll be with you in 5 minutes", does this mean that they will be with you in precisely 5 minutes' time, or does it mean that they will be with you shortly? Clearly, the meaning of "5 minutes" depends on the context.

The same is true of references to time in the Bible: sometimes the reference to a period of time should be taken quite literally, and on other occasions, it needs to be interpreted more loosely.

40  
days

You may well wonder: why have I chosen to write about time? The reason is that this month will see the celebration of Ascension Day, which is by tradition celebrated 40 days after Easter. This year, Ascension Day falls on 18th May, and in our group of churches we will mark the occasion by a special service at Blewbury. Ascension Day commemorates the occasion when Jesus was "taken up to heaven": "he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of ... sight". The fullest reference to this mysterious event is found in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. I describe the event as "mysterious" because something mysterious happened to Jesus' resurrected body, and the event has been remembered ever since. In terms of when it happened, the account in the Acts of the Apostles points to it happening 40 days from Easter Day. However, in the Bible "40 days" is sometimes used quite loosely to express an indefinite but significant period of time. So when we read that the Ascension took place "40 days" after Easter, the reference to 40 days does not necessarily have to be interpreted literally.

Why is the Ascension celebrated? In essence, it's because it is the companion festival to Christmas. At Christmas, we celebrate Jesus coming down from Heaven, being born as a human being; at the Ascension, we celebrate Jesus returning to Heaven, but still retaining his human nature. It's a way of saying that although we no longer have sightings of the risen Jesus in our day to day lives, he remains alive, fully human and fully divine. He is still present, caring for us and for our world - not just today, but for all time.

This is good news indeed!

*Father Jason*

# Parish Council News

## Parish Council Meeting Date

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

## Elections

Six villagers put their name forward as candidates for the Upton Parish Council. There being six vacancies, the election was uncontested and all will become Parish Councillors from the 8th May.

## Chairman's Chatter

It's a new financial year and a newly elected Parish Council is almost upon us! There have been some other developments this year too, such as the trial of a grounds maintenance company (with the appropriate machinery) to keep Upton looking at its best. We have had some concerns raised via direct text and WhatsApp as follows:

"Are the contractors meant to cut beneath the trees?" - Tracey

"Have you seen Tracey's message about mowing beneath the trees? If true = biodiversity vandalism" - Brian

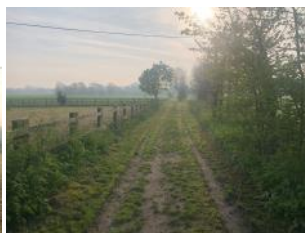
"Critical time of year for wild flowers. Hence No Mow May" - Bob

"Yes unfortunately razed to the ground" - Tracey

In answer to these points, the contractor was asked to do one full cut back in April for the start of the year. Ideally this would have taken place at the end of the season but it didn't happen last year so it was decided that one would be done at the start of this year *before* No Mow May. Due to the weather, this took part across two cuts in April as the ground was too wet for the longer grass. The Parish Council specified that there be a wildlife corridor left which as you can see from the pictures is definitely the case.



The outgoing council previously held discussions regarding wild spaces and came to the conclusion that there should be a reasonable distribution of the amenity space between children's play area, sports space for games such as football, and nature. This has equated to roughly a third each. I will raise at the next full council the need for further public discussion covering biodiversity and conservation and how it should balance with the other needs of the village but, as you'll see from the wild life corridor to the



nature garden, there is more opportunity than ever for biodiversity in Upton's recreation ground.

There are two new waste bins installed in the recreation ground; thanks to Peter for helping to install these.

We are all looking forward to the Jubilee and a big thank you to Judy Robertson for getting leaflets delivered door to door for all those not online. We are looking forward to seeing you all there!

Next month I look forward to being able to share some more photos and information with you all and please feel free to contact me if there are any questions or topics you'd like raised by emailing me at [bens@uptonpc.co.uk](mailto:bens@uptonpc.co.uk)

Kind regards,

Ben  
Chairman of Upton Parish Council

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## **District Councillors' News**

### **Didcot & Villages Healthcare**

The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, with the support of officers from Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, has been considering options to provide more GP consulting space in Didcot while longer term plans are made for delivery of new GP premises at Great Western Park.

Options reviewed included the conversion of some rooms in the Great Western Park District (community) Centre to be used temporarily for primary care or creating temporary space or a permanent extension on the existing Woodlands Medical Centre site to provide more space for patient care.

All options present some challenges. However, a decision has been made by the ICB to seek to increase the space in the short term on the current Woodlands Medical Centre site. Work is underway to assess the viability of this.

# **The Annual Parish Meeting Of Upton Village**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Upton held in the Village Hall at 7pm on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023, facilitated by the Parish Council.**

Present: Mr B Shaw (Chair / BS), District Cllr H Gascoigne (HG), County Cllr S Povolotsky (SP) and 14 Upton residents.

Welcome and opening remarks -

Parish Council Chairman Ben Shaw thanked everyone for attending. He noted that reports received from various groups were available on the village website (advised via Upton News Bulletin) and hard copies were available to anyone present.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Peter McLaughlin, Ann Parham, and Jenny Slatter.

Chairman's Report

BS covered the main points of his Parish Council Chairman's report. He thanked all who had actively supported the village and noted the improved village communications via Facebook, WhatsApp, Upton News, the website and new notice boards. Following the UPC open consultation in St Mary's, contractors were being trialled for maintenance of the recreation ground.

District Councillor's report

HG spoke about the Valley Park development with its outline permission for 4,000 homes as this would have an impact on the whole area. Much discussion ensued about the impact on the area's infrastructure and healthcare in particular. The meeting made clear its dissatisfaction about the lack of performance of the Integrated Care Board and the performance of the District Council, who hold the S106 funds, to expedite things. Childcare, also sadly lacking, does not come under S106.

HG noted that there may be grants from the community infrastructure levy (CIL) which might be applicable to Upton.

County Councillor's report

SP's discussion centred on roads and the hazards presented by the gullies on Hagbourne Hill; these have been raised with the highways authority. BS reported that the imminent temporary closure is to permit close examination to assess the remedial work required. General repairs are still on an emergency fix only so it is important to continue to report defects via "Fixmystreet".

Healthcare provision was covered too and SP advised reporting issues to "Healthwatch Oxfordshire" the county's independent health and social care watchdog as they can pressurise the ICB to take action.

SP advised that her priority fund would re-open next month and that the Oxfordshire Volunteer Fund may have grants for which the village hall could apply.

### Other reports

No other reports were delivered in person and there were no reports from the PCC, the Nature Garden Group nor from UVHAT.

The meeting felt strongly that UVHAT was not transparent in its operation and wanted governance meetings to be better publicised so that villagers could attend. Concern was expressed that there was a lack of involvement with the village and it was failing in its role as the centre of the community and was merely a “room for hire”.

### The open forum covered:

Access/fencing at the north side of the recreation ground

Hazardous parking on Fieldside

Cyclists exiting Chapel Furlong dangerously

Conversion of Coffin Way footpath to Blewbury into a bridle path

The cost / condition of the nature garden

The Chairman again thanked all for attending & brought the meeting to a close at 9.30pm.

Date of the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting - 24/04/2024

### Reports requested & received from:-

County Council

District Council

Parish Council Chairman

Parish Council Finance

Malthus Trust

Blewbury School

United Charities

PCSO

Harwell Site Stakeholders Group

All reports will continue to be available to read on the Village website.

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## Astons Online

There will be two Astons Online events in May. Our monthly Zoom meeting on 9 May at 10:30 - 11:15 about making the best use of ICT when on holiday. Book your place - [theastonsonline@gmail.com](mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com)

On 16 May from 10:00 to 12:00 will be Astons Online's 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; the infection rate is increasing at the time of writing this notice. See our website [www.astonsonline.uk](http://www.astonsonline.uk) and email is [theastonsonline@gmail.com](mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com)

Bruno Brunskill (on behalf of Astons Online)

07780 958249

## Upton Village Photographic Competition

The 'winter' competition is now over. Many thanks for all the entries, including some from under 16s.

The winning pictures will now be chosen and displayed in the foyer of the village hall. The winners plus others will also be displayed on the Facebook site as well as here in the Upton News.

*Rob Traynor*



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## Christian Aid Week 14 - 20 May

After the Coronation there's another party planned. Come to St Mary's Church for Tea on Saturday 20 May at 3 pm. Envelopes will be delivered throughout the village and you could bring yours with any donation you feel able to give to this charity which supports the poor and oppressed all over the world. Or you could drop it in to one of our collectors.

I've also, as usual, got some tomato plants for sale, still only 50p each — though I'm happy to accept any higher offers. They're not yet ready for planting outdoors but if you have somewhere to bring them on, call in at Karibu, High Street or ring me on 850705 or text me on 07760 227244. Unusually, they're selling fast.

*Malcolm Wright*

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## Board Games

Ben & Stephen are pleased to invite the residents of Upton to join the Upton Cider Slayers at the monthly gathering of Board Game and Tabletop RPG on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May in the Village Hall at 2pm for family friendly fun!

Bring your own drinks and snacks and come and enjoy some classics and possibly games that you haven't played before such as Werewolf, Settlers of Catan, King of Tokyo and Ticket to Ride!

Please contact us on our Facebook page "Upton Cider Slayers" for more details.

*Benjamin Shaw*

Mobile 07934 389171 Tel 01235 850308

# Upton Wine Club

## April - Wines of Bohemia

It was really good to see such a large number of members and some new to the Upton Wine Club come along to the village hall for a presentation on wines across the Czech Republic. Known perhaps more for its consumption of beer, it was good to hear Alzbeta (Betty) Sutura from Wines of Bohemia take us all through a fascinating tour of some excellent wines that we may not have thought of trying.



We started the evening, as we sometimes do, with a sparkling wine called Chateau Radyne. Made with Welshriesling and Gruner Veltliner grapes, using the traditional method (second fermentation in the bottle - just like champagne), this wonderful wine was a great opener for the evening. Dry and crisp, it is a great alternative from perhaps your normal go to sparkling wines.

Our first white, from the Cech Winery, was called Veltlinske Zelene. Made from 100% Gruner Veltliner, a grape variety mostly grown in Austria. It came with some wonderful fresh green apple, peppery flavours that would make it a great summer wine.

The next wine was a white from a winery called Svoboda. They had produced a wine from a variety called Welshriesling, not to be confused with the more common Riesling grown worldwide. The same grape as used in the sparkling wine produced a lovely wine tasting of gooseberry and clean minerality, created by the chalk soils where the vines are grown.

Our last white divided the audience, which was great! Some thought it was the best wine of the evening, whilst others found it a little too powerful! The Castle Winery and vineyards have produced a wine from the Palava variety grape called Herbiun. The result was a complex wine with hints of



rose petal and lychee. A great wine to try for your next curry, rather than perhaps the usual Riesling?

Our first red of the evening was called Rulandske Modre and came again from the Castle Winery and Vineyards producer (ZVB). As soon as it was poured, it looked and smelt like a Pinot Noir. We were not disappointed, with very familiar flavours of strawberry and cherry jam. It was a light Pinot Noir and those wanting the more complex deeper flavours of a Burgundy may be disappointed. However, for the price, it could not be beaten and was a firm favourite across all members.

Our next red was a Neronet grape from the Cech Winery. It was great to try some different grapes and again this one did not disappoint. Neronet is a cross-bred grape from several dark grapes, producing a rich dark red fruit wine, rich in sour cherries and cassis flavours. Definitely worth a try if you want to have something different.

Our next red was produced by the Horak Winery and named Svatovavrinecke. The grape, St Laurent, is the most popular grape grown across the Czech and is from the Pinot family. The wine was a lovely deep red, which had been aged in oak barrels for 24 months.

Our final wine for the evening, was Frankovka, produced by Tanzberg winery. A wonderful deep red with notes of forest fruit and plenty of depth. Definitely one that goes better with food and a great wine for a special with friends.

There was plenty of interest and on this occasion, orders, from our members. If you are interested in any of the above wines, check out Betty on [www.bohemiawine.com](http://www.bohemiawine.com).

For May, we will be bringing some high-end wines for our members to try and asking - "are they worth the extra ££££?"

For further information, please see our website: [www.uptonwineclub.com](http://www.uptonwineclub.com)

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## 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*

# BLEWBURY SCHOOL PUPILS GET OUT AND ABOUT!

You might imagine that Blewbury School pupils go to school each day, and then go straight home afterwards. Judging by recent reports that is far from the case. There is now a full programme of after-school clubs and many other activities that can broaden pupils' experience away from their classrooms. Here are a few examples:

**Football** The School has several very successful football teams. In recent games the year 4/5 team beat Harwell School 2-0 in an away fixture and also held on for a 0-0 draw against Whitchurch School. Not to be out-done the boys team has also had some good results and this report comes from Kian in Picasso Class: "On Tuesday, the boys played at home against Sutton Courtenay. We won 3-0. I scored all 3 goals. We played well as a team and were attacking the other team well".

*Kian, Picasso.*

**Choir** We are very fortunate that our Headteacher loves singing and she has been working with a School Choir, and taking them to sing in some great venues. A few weeks ago she took the choir to a Music Festival at Didcot Girls School, where over 260 children were taking part. Each school sang two songs then all the choirs joined together to sing one final song, which made it a great experience. Bryn Gibson, Head of Harwell School, said following the event 'Your children were fantastic today. They sang with joy and enthusiasm which gave me goosebumps!' Then a few days later they went off to perform in the stunning and acoustically brilliant setting of Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford, which was an experience most of them will never forget. At the Cathedral they joined other ODST schools for the first ever ODST singing event, and by all accounts they did very well and the whole of Blewbury village should be proud of them and Miss Reader of course.



As well as these activities there are other very active after-school clubs including gardening, volleyball and cricket. So if you see some children going home in their red jumpers later on in the afternoon you will have some idea what they may have been doing!

*Roger Murphy and Sarah Mols, School Governors*

## Blewbury Post Office news

We're closed for the Bank holidays Monday May 1st, Monday 8th and Monday 29th, allowances usually paid on a Monday will be paid the previous Friday.

Please remember that customs labels must be filled in before getting to the counter, and must include every item in your international mail if it's not just a card, letter or personal document. We now have to do an 'online data capture' which corresponds to the barcode on the customs label OR the barcode on a 'tracked or signed for' label. Hopefully this helps the customs departments and gets your post through quicker.

You may discover new staff in the post office when you pop in over the next few weeks, I'm breaking them in gradually!

*Karen, Maggie and Andrew*



### Sunday 11 June 11am – 5pm

Blewbury's renowned gardeners are going to let you in to see the results of their hard work.

- Nine gorgeous gardens to peruse
- Delicious ploughman's lunches at The Village Hall
- Tea and homemade cakes at Chapmans
- Gardeners' plant stall

One £8 per adult for entry to all the open gardens- children go free with an adult. Card or cash at the main car park, or cash at the gardens. The website has further details and a detailed map you can download.

[www.blewburyopengardens.co.uk](http://www.blewburyopengardens.co.uk)

*All surplus money raised will go to ReST whose aim is to help a family that has been forced to flee their home country, settle and become part of our community.*

*The family has already been recognized as refugees and given the right to live in the UK but are now waiting for a permanent and stable place to re-start their lives.*



THE BVS IS SUPPORTING BLEWBURY  
RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT TEAM TO  
RUN THIS EVENT

BLEWBURY  
ReST



## 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](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.

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

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## 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](mailto:richmondbinov@gmail.com) if you're interested and to find out the venue for the meetings.

*Richard Burrow*

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## 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](mailto:johnsuttongardencare@outlook.com) or call 07891190009.

## Didcot & District u3a

After a three month absence we are pleased to return to business as usual and bring you the latest diary updates from the **Didcot and District u3a**, your local National organisation for retired and semi-retired individuals who wish to continue to keep active in body and soul and **'Learn, Laugh, Live'**!

Meeting on the **third Tuesday of every month** in the Didcot Civic Hall at 2:30 pm, this very sociable gathering encourages a whole variety of interest groups to have regular get-togethers with likeminded individuals in such activities as; art appreciation, gardening, learn a language, photography, walking, medieval manuscript, and many more! In addition, at the monthly meetings, where tea, coffee and biscuits are served, a Guest Speaker provides a presentation on diverse topics which in the coming months include

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

**18 July:** *Inside the world of a TV & Film extra* - Peter Hague

**15 August:** *Sue Ryder- A Life Lived for Others* - Joanna Bogle

**19 September:** *A Brief History of Tattoos and their Meaning* - Janine Kilroe

We always look forwards to welcoming new members and we hope to be seeing you there . . . . ?

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)

Additional information can be found on the [u3asites.org.Uk](http://u3asites.org.Uk)

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

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## 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](mailto:amelia.thackray@gmail.com) or by text: 07718 832079

