# Upton News



# Services at St. Mary the Virgin, Upton

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

**Prayer Focus** 

2<sup>nd</sup> July Trinity 4

Children & Sunday clubs

9.15 Lay-led service

9<sup>th</sup> July Trinity 5

Those recently baptised and baptism visitors

9.15 Parish Eucharist

23<sup>rd</sup> July Trinity 7

Our worship, musicians, organists & choirs

9.15 Parish Eucharist

Following her birthday / retirement weekend, Revd Louise writes:

I am overwhelmed by your very generous gift to me and the beautiful GRACE rose, as I move from Licensed Ministry to "Permission to Officiate". Thank you all so much. After a rest and some time away I look forward to returning to minister among you in September.

Churn Benefice Mother's Union Teddy Bears Picnic Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 12 noon - 2pm

We meet in the garden of Mrs Penny Brassell in Blewbury. We welcome all babies and children and any mums, dads, friends, grandparents and carers. Please bring a teddy bear, picnic and a rug to sit on. Soft drinks and icecreams will be provided. We'll hope to be outside, but will find some shelter if its wet! Hosted by members of The Churn Mothers' Union. For directions please contact Benefice Office on 850267

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

# The Gift and Responsibility of Liberty

The summer is finally here - a time for holidays and outdoor parties. It is also a good time to celebrate the democratic values which mean so much to us all. On 4th July, the USA will be celebrating Independence Day, and 10 days later, the French will be celebrating Bastille Day with their customary flair. Both of these events are an opportunity to celebrate national identity, but they are also a re-affirmation of the importance of the liberty of the individual. The American and French Revolutions of the 18th Century were, at least in part, the result of a desire to ensure individual freedoms against infringement by a largely unaccountable State. The main reason that England did not have a Revolution in the 18th century was that it had already had its Revolution back in the previous century, when it had established the constitutional principle that the State must respect the liberty of the individual citizen.



Of course, society will always impose some limits on the liberty of the individual, but within the democratic tradition, it is generally believed that such limits should be very much the exception rather than the rule, and that any limits that are imposed should be kept to the minimum.

The gift of liberty has been celebrated in the Christian tradition, and it has been felt to be important that Christian leaders develop and protect the liberty of those under their rule. There have been arguments over what this "liberty" means in practice, but the principle has been clear.

But the Christian faith has also been clear that the gift of liberty must not be misused. We are given freedom in order to care for others, rather than to oppress them. An early Christian called St Paul wrote the following words to Christians in Galatia: "you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

Liberty is such a precious gift. Many people around the world yearn to enjoy the liberties which we enjoy in our country. But how are we using our precious gift of liberty? Are we using it for the benefit of all, or do we just use it for our own selfish ends?

- Father Jason

#### **Council News**

# Update from Vale of White Horse District Councillors Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Debra Dewhurst

We were elected over a month ago now on 5th May! Thank you to everyone that voted in the local election. We would like to thank Sarah Medley for her service in the ward these past four years. As Hayleigh and Debra, we are excited to get to work for the residents of Harwell, Blewbury, Chilton, Upton and the new parish of Western Valley. As before, if you have any concerns, questions or suggestions for us as councillors, please do email us. As a reminder, council meetings are held in public and if you wish to address council or committee, you can contact Democratic Services. If you need more guidance on this, please let us know.

Leader and Cabinet Members confirmed at annual Vale of White Horse District Council meeting: Cllr Bethia Thomas was officially confirmed as leader of the Council at the first Full Council meeting in May and Cllr Sally Povolotsky as Chair, taking over from Cllr Margaret Crick. Cllr Povolotsky will create a Chair's charitable fund that will raise cash for local causes.

Have a splashing good time across the Vale this summer: The splash pads in Memorial Park, Wantage and Abbey Meadow, Abingdon are now open for the summer. Try the newly refurbished kiosk at Abbey Meadow, now with outdoor seating and brand new coffee and slushy machines, open weekends 9am-6pm. The outdoor pool in Abbey Meadow will open for the season on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

£100,000 now available for community climate projects in Vale: The Climate Action Fund has opened again for applications from town and parish councils and local groups who have proposals which aim to tackle climate change. The fund will be open for applications until 14th July. See Vale of White Horse Website for more info

We use these monthly updates to keep you updated on our activities and general council news. We also post on our councillor Facebook Pages:

www.facebook.com/CllrHayleigh & www.facebook.com/Debra4BlewburyAndHarwell

Please get in touch with any issues or concerns via email: hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

#### Parish Council News — Chairman's Chatter

**Emergency Planning** 

This month has seen some extreme weather in Upton and sadly that resulted in some properties in the village experiencing flooding. However, some of this was avoidable as blocked drains and culverts had been reported as early as November last year and again as recently as April this year before the extreme weather.

Despite these reports there was no response from either the County Council's Fix My Street (Highways) or the Flooding Response Team despite several emails and calls from both myself and residents reporting the issues.

For this reason I have proposed to council that Upton Parish Council applies for a portion of the Scottish and Southern Electricity Network announced £280,000 grant funds to boost Community Resilience which, in our village's case, may be used to purchase sandbags.

In order to apply for this we will need a community emergency plan. Whilst we previously had one drawn up one, of the locations to go for help was The George and Dragon which is currently not possible to use in an emergency so we need to generate a new plan. If anyone feels they can offer any assistance in helping to form the new emergency plan, please do get in touch and also if you might like to be a volunteer who is contacted to support people in need during an emergency. Please get in touch with me bens@uptonpc.co.uk.

Please do reach out even if you don't know how you can help; having contact information for willing volunteers could make a huge difference in an emergency situation.

**UptonNoGood** 

Upton Parish Council, I'm sure along with everyone else, would like to congratulate Bob Lott and Mike Tibbetts on another great event. Sadly due to work I was unable to attend this event but Councillor Brendan Heneghan was just one of the many volunteers this year and he has told me how excellent the organisation was and what a brilliant time everyone had. Well done to all those involved!

Correspondence from villagers

This month we have received correspondence from villagers pertaining to overhanging tree branches and bushes into the road. Please do take care to ensure any bushes or trees that border a road are properly trimmed back to ensure pedestrian and road safety. Where a particular problem is raised we may write to residents requesting that they take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the community.

**New Village Survey** 

Councillor Nicola Hall has taken on the responsibility of organising a new village survey and is looking for input from residents. If you would be interested in joining the project discussion please contact me at bens@uptonpc.co.uk

Next Parish Council Meeting

Our next Parish Council Meeting will be on the 19th of July 2023 at 7:30 pm. Should you have any matters that you would like to raise please write to me at bens@uptonpc.co.uk.

#### **Didcot Central Corridor public consultation opens**

Oxfordshire County Council has today (6 June 2023) launched a consultation on proposals to improve access and the town environment in central Didcot.

The Didcot Central Corridor project aims to make the town a better place for residents and visitors by improving travel and public space along three important routes - known as the 'Gateway Spine, 'Cultural Spine and Foxhall Road', and the town centre.

The project is part of the Didcot Garden Town delivery plan, which will help to improve the lives of residents by focusing on helping support shops, encouraging healthy lifestyles and helping to tackle climate change.

The council has developed ideas for the three routes, focusing on five geographical areas:

- A4130 and B4493 Science Bridge to Didcot Station
- Didcot Road, Wantage Road and Foxhall roundabout
- Broadway
- Town and station connections
- Cow Lane, Jubilee Way roundabout and Hadden Hill.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy, said: "Didcot is growing and to keep everyone moving while meeting our climate goals, we think improvements need to be made to some parts of the town. We have developed some ideas that we think will make a real difference. These include creating a stronger identity in the town; making it easier for people to walk, wheel and cycle safely; adding more trees, planting and green areas and improving air quality. "We want feedback from the residents of Didcot on whether our project aims are right and which of our ideas they think would be best."

People can view the proposals and take part in an online survey on the county council's digital engagement and consultation platform, Let's talk Oxfordshire. The consultation closes at 11.59pm on Tuesday 4 July 2023.

The online consultation will also be supported by two drop-in events for members of the public to see the proposals in person:

**Saturday 10 June 2023** - 10am - 4pm Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Rd, Didcot, OX11 7NE

**Thursday 15 June 2023** - 6pm - 8pm Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Rd, Didcot, OX11 7NE

Following on from the consultation, the council will review which ideas to develop further and which not to progress at this time. This will include undertaking more testing and assessment to help understand how changes may impact traffic, including public transport.

# **Upton Village Hall Amenities Trust (UVHAT)**

Upton Village Hall Amenities Trust (UVHAT), hope villagers find the following information helpful.

UVHAT held its most recent meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

At this Meeting a New Trustee was appointed Mrs Nicola Hall and Mrs Jacqui Reid stepped down from her position as a Trustee and as Secretary of UVHAT.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Jacqui for all her hard work and dedication to the Upton Village Hall Amenities Trust over the years and express how much her presence will be missed, although we appreciate that she has agreed to continue handling bookings for the Village Hall until a more permanent solution is in place.

Also, at this meeting, the following positions were elected from within the Board of Trustees, Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Please find the newly updated list of trustees and their positions.

Mr R Traynor (Chair) Mr B Rippon (Deputy Chair)

Mr A Dyson (Treasurer)

Mr B Shaw (Secretary) (Appointed Member representing Upton Parish Council)

Mrs N Hall Mrs L Evans
Mrs L Mason Mrs J M West

Mr B Heneghan (Appointed Member representing Upton Parish Council)

As always If you would like to contact the trustees about anything regarding The Village Hall please email trustees@uptonvillagehall.co.uk or if regarding a booking or use of the hall please email

bookings@uptonvillagehall.co.uk.

### Treasurers report

Receipts show that hires are slightly up on last year with one off hires doubled in the year meaning that booking receipts are up 25% with fundraising also up 25% on last year.

Expenditure reports show that costs in general are comparable to last year, with the exception of energy which has seen the electricity bill almost tripled. (This increase does not account for the undercharging that was discovered which will be detailed in the next report.) There has been no capital expenditure yet this year, but plans remain to refurbish the ladies and disabled toilets as well as other key maintenance projects.

In Summary the bank balance still looks healthy, energy bills not withstanding, at £34,842.00 as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

#### Maintenance Report

Guttering has been bought to replace the broken and damaged parts around the hall. As part of the repair project, it is planned to install a new Soak away and attach the water butt for the Nature Garden.

Items repaired since the last meeting include the outside tap, door hinges and stops.

Quotes are being sought for the following items, blown windows, bin store and the women's and disabled bathrooms.

I seem to have upset the UVHAT trustees, for which I apologise. My note in the last Upton News contained an error: the meeting in February that was cancelled at the last minute was not the AGM as I reported. Editor

#### ST. MARY'S VESTRY PROJECT

Great news - after more than five years' planning and saving, the project to refurbish the church vestry is now going ahead! When complete, it will provide a WC (for the first time in more than 900 years!) and new catering facilities that will enable the church building to be used more widely as a resource for everyone in the community.

Work is due to start at the end of July and it will take about 8 weeks. As it is mostly within the existing building, noise and disturbance to neighbours should be minimal but we will directly contact everyone who might be affected in advance to let you know exactly what is happening and to answer any questions.

The only thing that will affect Upton residents as a whole will be the temporary closure of Church Street outside the church itself for a short period towards the end of the project (so probably around the end of September) to allow for a connection to be made to the main sewer. Full details will be published later but access to all properties will not be interrupted.

We are immensely grateful for all the generous contributions from Uptonians and from others further afield, plus a number of significant grants, which have made this project possible. We are planning an opening ceremony in the autumn - look out for details in due course.

Paul Batho and Jessie West - Churchwardens



PLEASE JOIN US FOR WINE AND NIBBLES!

FRIDAY, JULY 07, 2023

at seven thirty in the evening

UPTON VILLAGE HALL

Tickets are £15 per person and can be reserved via email - events@uptonvillagehall.co.uk

Payment can be made by cash or bank transfer.

Tickets include a glass of wine on arrival, and a selection of food. There will also be a paid bar and raffle. Proceeds are to go to Upton Village Hall Amenities Trust, and a donation will be made to Blewbury Preschool.

## **Upton Nature Garden**

The grass is high, there's elderflower in the air and the swallows are swooping - the hallmarks of a classic Oxfordshire summer. In the nature garden one villager has noted a good display of ox-eye daisies, viper's bugloss, campion and purple loosestrife. The roses, irises and honeysuckle are blooming too. Also spotted: cherries on the tree Caroline planted for Kit.

We've been asked by the PC to say whether the garden 'is where it should be in terms of appearance and plant development'. Interesting question.

We planted according to a design drawn up by a professional horticulturalist, using plans and some computer renderings of what the garden might look like in a few years. You can see them on the nature garden website (<a href="www.nature-garden.co.uk">www.nature-garden.co.uk</a>). You can also see a fab bit of tech magic courtesy of Brian, showing how the site looked before we began the transformation and how it looks now. I think that's a fair reflection of where we are. But it'd be great to hear from you, especially if you'd had different expectations of the nature garden, so we can feed back views from everyone.

And while we're talking about the garden's genesis, it's worth remembering that every penny spent on the garden [£6,700], including all materials, plants, trees and equipment has been covered by grants or donations. Creating and maintaining the space has been entirely down to our excellent and enthusiastic volunteers. Thank you.

Which brings me to:

### Working party on Saturday 1 July, 10am

Please join if you can for a maintenance session - plenty of light tasks available or heavier jobs if you fancy a workout.

All ages and abilities welcome. Cake and drinks.

We look forward to seeing you if you have any time to spare.

Kieron Humphrey

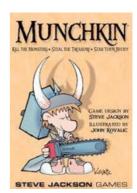
# **Upton Cider Slayers July Saturday Games Day**

Stephen and Ben are pleased to invite you to join The Upton Cider Slayers Board Game Club for our monthly game day in Upton Village Hall on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 2PM.

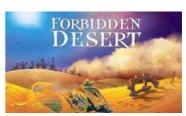
AKENOKO

We play lots of different card and board games and are open to all levels of player from brand new to experienced. We are always happy to show people how to play the games, but you can bring vour own too if you like. We are family friendly with several people brining their children so please come along if you would like to spend some time away from screens and practice the ancient art of imagination and fun!









Some examples of this months' games and how to play are;

Takenoko - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvXqqsFKNH0 Catan - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fW61E5fgRE Munchkin - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTFCWILpEo8 Forbidden Desert - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9He1HXzvQ0

Beniamin Shaw Mobile 07934 389171 Tel 01235 850308

#### **UPTON VILLAGE FETE – 2ND SEPTEMBER 2023**

As reported last month, the Upton fete will be taking place on Saturday,  $2^{nd}$  September from 12:00 to 3:00. Lots of exciting things to do including:

A fun dog show - bring your pooch (it doesn't need to be pampered!) - there are lots of prizes to be won!

Gymnastics display

Morris dancing

Blewbury Brass Band

Classic car display and parade

Teas and cakes

Pimm's bar

Barbeque

Kids' area

Ice cream

Lots of stalls including plants, preserves, books, raffle, tombola and books

Contributions welcome! Please leave books in the church porch and tombola/raffle prizes with Katie Dickens at Midway, Prospect Road (green box in the porch or call 0791 205 9430). Rosemary de Wilde will soon be asking budding bakers for cakes.

We'll need the usual help setting up on Saturday morning and dismantling later in the day. Please let Paul Batho know if you'd like to volunteer (pjsbatho@btinternet.com or 07794 239775).

But above all, keep the date free and tell all your friends!

## Didcot & District u3a

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. 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

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

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

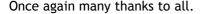
## **Uptonogood teas and cakes**

Once again UVHAT ran the teas and cakes at Uptonogood.

Firstly many thanks to the incredible bakers in the village who produced such an array of delicious cakes. We could not do this without you all - what baking talent we have in Upton.

Secondly our huge thanks to all those who volunteered on the day. Chris Traynor, Brian and Giulia Rippon, Ali Lewinton, Kim Gould, Debbie Paul, Victoria Griffith, Gillian Collins and Georgie Mason, you are all incredible volunteers.

We raised £710.70 which will go towards the much needed refurbishment of the hall's disabled and ladies toilets.



Lucy Mason

On behalf of The UVHAT Trustees



## **Astons Online**

July's Zoom online meeting will be 10:30 - 11:15 on Tuesday 11 July 2023. We'll talk about the Internet of Things (IoT) including digital assistants, doorbells, alarms systems, switches and even fridges. Book your place at theastonsonline@gmail.com

Astons Online's monthly event in Astons Village Hall (OX119EQ) will be on Tuesday 18 July from 10:00 to 12:00. Please tell us, if you can, that you're coming so we can have helpers available and bring a mask to keep us all Covid safe. See our website www.astonsonline.uk and email is theastonsonline@gmail.com

# **New Photographic Competition**

Summer - from now until 30th September.

Three categories -

- 1. Upton and Surrounding Area.
- 2. Birds any kind: sitting, flying, eating and from anywhere.
- 3. People/Person at work, play, holiday, family, friends or stranger

Good luck and get snapping!

Entries should be in JPEG format (highest resolution you can manage) and emailed to - upton.photo@outlook.com

Rob Traynor



# **Blewbury Post Office news**

Unfortunately, due to family commitments, Steve has withdrawn his application, so we are limping along until Sarah can take over sometime in September.

Our new hours for the summer are Monday 8.30 to 12 & 2.30 to 5 Tuesday 8.30 to 12 & 2.30 to 5 Wednesday 8.30 to 12 Thursday 9.30 to 12 Friday 9.30 to 12 & 2.30 to 5

You have until July 31st to use up non barcoded stamps (the pretty ones will still be valid) download a Stamp Swap form from the Royal Mail website and send off asap.

We have Warhammer & Windrush stamps on sale now, and some beautiful British River Wildlife one's coming out in July.

Karen, Maggie and Andrew

# Blewbury School Residentials - A Great Learning Experience!

One of the things that Primary School children often get to enjoy is the opportunity to go away on at least one school residential trip. At Blewbury School many children go on more than one trip in their Key Stage Two years. For many children this is their first ever trip away from home and as such can be a hugely significant rite of passage.

Recently our Year 6 students went away on such a trip to Hill End Outdoor Learning Centre near Oxford. This well-known Centre has been offering unique outdoor learning experiences since the 1920's. The Wytham Estate was purchased in 1920 by the philanthropic ffennell family who established Hill End 'Camp' and who later gifted it to Oxford University. It has a rich history which can be found easily on their website hillend.org. Some of those reading this may well have enjoyed a visit there in the past!

Below is an account of the residential by Evie, who was in the Year 6 group:

Why did we go?

Hill End is a nature reserve which allows schools to come and stay in their lovely accommodation. There are many amazing tutors who help to explain the activities and show

all the unique animals in their habitats. It was fun being able to experience being away from home with my friends and having a little treat for the end of year six!

The journey

The journey to Hill End felt so long but in reality it was only half an hour away! Trixie, Annabel, Millie, Martha and I were driving our "Cars" to Hill End which distracted us from the journey. Finally, when we arrived, we were all ecstatic for what was to come.

Challenge trail

The challenge trail was really fun! We were competing against each other to do challenges and win points for our team. We did many activities such as: Parkour challenges, a spider web, a rock climbing wall and a bridge building challenge. Although these were all fun, my favourite was the pairs blind obstacle course. It was very eventful! My team won the trail and got a well well-deserved sweet each. The team games were so much fun and unique!

Sensory walk

After we had some very yummy BBQ food, we had a nice sensory walk to calm us down before bed. In the sensory walk, we made some 'scent cocktails' out of the plants there. We also used our senses to hear, smell and see things. I quite enjoyed my cocktail. We also played a few games and then had a short walk back to the accommodation.

#### Into the Woods

On the second day, we went into the wood area, and we were set a



challenge to build a waterproof den. We also had a go at lighting a fire and hunting a (pretend) wild boar.

#### Habitat

At Hill End they had set out metal hides to keep the animals warm. On the first day we saw a grass snake and many bugs! On the second day we saw another grass snake and a slow

worm! We also went pond dipping and I caught many newts and tadpoles! I loved the newts.

#### Food

I was worried about the food and came with some of my own; everyone was jealous and nobody cared about me having different food! I'm very glad my teachers convinced me to come.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, I really enjoyed the trip and staying with my friends. I would absolutely recommend coming! I had the time of my life at Hill End and our class all became closer!

Our thanks go to Miss Reeder and the staff, who enable the children at Blewbury School to have a rich variety of learning experiences including a residential, all of which enable them to develop into young people better prepared for the next stage of their lives.



#### CAN WE HELP?

#### HELP WITH THE COST OF LIVING

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, energy bills, school expenditure such as buying uniform and paying for trips and equipment, 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.

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

## **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

## **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 28<sup>th</sup> of the month) may NOT be included - if this causes a problem please contact me.

Neil Thorp, Editor