

Upton News



November 2023

Services at St. Mary the Virgin, Upton

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

Prayer Focus

† 5th November

All Saint's Day

9.15 Lay-led service

Clergy & all who preach or lead

† 12th November

Remembrance Sunday

9.15 Parish Eucharist for Remembrance Sunday

PCC's, all in leadership &
our benefice operations manager

† 26th November

Christ the King

9.15 Parish Eucharist

Treasurers & church finances

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

St Mary's Building Works

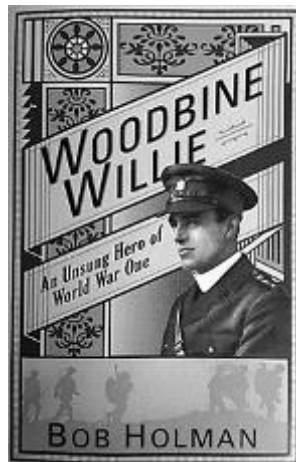
The works to instal a new toilet and to re-equip the vestry began on 2nd October and are now well under way. Excavation in the churchyard for the new path and to lay a drain to the sewer in Church Street should be complete by the time this is published. Intriguingly, they revealed foundations which appear to suggest the west wall was originally some 6 feet closer to Church Street than it is now, which may cause us to review the history of the building. A full archaeological record was made and will be kept as part of the church's history.

At the time of writing (19th Oct), the new drain is due to be connected to the sewer in the week beginning 30th October. This will mean Church Street will be closed for a maximum of four days at a point directly outside the church but access will be retained to all nearby properties. If the works continue to run to time and budget, they will be completed in early December, just in time for the Christmas season.

Have you heard of Woodbine Willie?

This month, many people will be taking part in services of Remembrance, remembering the names of those who have given their lives for this country, especially in the 1st and 2nd World Wars.

It is now over 100 years since the end of the 1st World War, but somehow this war has managed to etch itself onto the collective memory of our country. The war produced many well-known figures, among them an Army chaplain nicknamed Woodbine Willie. This was a time when probably the majority of men smoked cigarettes, and Woodbine Willie earned his nickname through his habit of distributing Woodbine cigarettes to the troops. His proper name was Geoffrey Anketell Studdert Kennedy. He was born in 1883, and, in addition to his time as a Chaplain to the Forces, he served as the parish priest of two urban parishes: St Paul's Worcester and St. Edmund, Lombard Street, in the City of London.



Woodbine Willie combined warmth of character with a deep faith, and he was able to relate to people from a wide range of backgrounds- hence his great success as an Army chaplain. He wanted to show the relevance of the Christian faith to the ordinary man and woman, as they faced the challenges of everyday life. He communicated his message through preaching, books and poetry. After the War, he worked in association with the Industrial Christian Fellowship, an organisation which tried to present the Christian faith to the world of industry.

Tastes change, and I suspect few if any read Woodbine Willie's writings today. But the heart of his message remains relevant today, especially at this time when we remember the dead of the 1st and 2nd World Wars. Jesus does indeed call Christians to be compassionate: to provide practical help and comfort to all who suffer. But Jesus also calls Christians to address issues relating to social justice: the Kingdom of God isn't just limited to the way we live our lives as individuals, but extends to the way we structure our society as a whole and the way the nations of the world relate to each other on the international stage.

Woodbine Willie knew the pain and complexity of the world as it is. But he was determined to work with others to try and make it a better place. I wonder if we have the courage to follow in his steps?

Father Jason

CHRISTMAS READING

Village Hall 9 December 6.30 pm

Reserve the date for your annual Christmas Treat, then join us to enjoy a story full of magic and pathos and fun, adapted from the children's book by Matt Haig, "The Girl Who Saved Christmas". Schoolchildren come free, but adults will be charged a £6 admission fee. That does include seasonal refreshments, though. Tickets will be available next month.

Proceeds go to The Friends of St Mary's Church.

Any questions or offers of help to
Malcolm Wright (850705)

Afternoon Drop In

A village drop-in runs on alternate Thursdays at various villagers' and ex-villagers' houses from 3-5.00. 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

Upton-based Window Cleaning Service

Hi All,

My name is Jake and after moving to Upton a couple of years ago I am now restarting my window cleaning round in the area. If anyone needs a window cleaner or would like me to give them a



VOWHDC Waste Collections

‘Check it before you chuck it’

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have launched a new campaign asking people to “check before they chuck” items in their recycling bins as part of a drive to increase the amount and quality of recycling in the district.

An estimated 3,340 tonnes – the equivalent of just over 200 double decker buses – of items that residents put in their recycling bins during 2022/23 were not actually recyclable – that’s 11 per cent of all the contents of our green bins for the whole year!

It can be very difficult to remove non-recyclable items out of the large loads of recycling in our collection trucks or at the recycling facility; and if it’s food waste or other messy items then it could result in whole truckloads of recycling having to be rejected.

We all need an occasional reminder to ensure we get it right so, this autumn, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils will be placing stickers on all green household recycling bins to encourage people to ‘Check it before you chuck it’.

The sticker features a QR code for people to scan to help them check, along with a reminder that all items in the green bin should be clean, dry and loose.

Even if the label says that something can be recycled, you should still check to make sure – recycling labels on packaging are often incorrect and we may not be able to recycle that item locally.

By ensuring you only put the correct items in your recycling bin, you will play your part in helping to keep us among the top recyclers in the country!

To find out which bin an item should go in, please ‘Check it before you chuck it’ at southandvale.gov.uk/checkit

The following table shows the most common things that people wrongly put in their recycling:

Problem item	Where they should go
food waste	always in your food waste bin
soft plastic packaging (such as film lids from food cartons, salad bags and cling film)	your local supermarket may have a collection point, if not then please put them in your general waste bin
used sanitary products	general waste bin
used tissues	general waste bin
old unwearable clothes	in a tied carrier bag next to your green recycling bin
batteries	in a clear bag on top of your green recycling bin
small electricals (including disposable vapes)	in a tied carrier bag next to your black bin
empty crisp packets	your local supermarket may have a collection point, if not then please put them in your general waste bin

Brown bin subscribers can leave out extra garden waste

Residents who are subscribed to the district council brown bin garden waste service in South Oxfordshire or the Vale of White Horse can have extra garden waste collected for free, on their normal collection day only, **between 30 October and 10 November**.

Householders will be able to put out a maximum of up to four additional sacks of garden waste, per brown bin subscription, next to their brown bin. To be eligible for collection, the extra waste must go in standard sized (60L) sacks and should only contain natural garden waste such as cut grass, plants, or branches. Alternatively, it can be placed in boxes / containers totalling no more than a standard bin full.

All the garden waste collected will be taken to a facility in Wallingford where it is composted. The compost will then be sold on to local farmers for use on their farmland. More information about garden waste collections can be found on the South Oxfordshire garden waste page or the Vale garden waste page.

Council News

Chairman's Chatter

This month's Chairman's Chatter is all about new beginnings as we say farewell to our long standing Parish Clerk, Liz Cooper. Liz will remain as Blewbury's Clerk but leaves Upton on 31st October after 7 years & 2 months of service.

I want to take the opportunity to thank Liz publicly for her many years of hard work, helping lots of different Councils in Upton. We wish you a happy semi-retirement and hope you will find lots of fun things to do with your new found freedom from Upton's work.

We are delighted to be able to announce that Lisa Morgan, who was recently appointed to deputy clerk, has passed her first set of local government exams and achieved a level of training that enables her to take over the role of Clerk. We are all very grateful that Lisa has accepted the position and look forward to working with her.

The finance committee met this month and after several hours of discussions have submitted a new budget for full council to consider for adoption this November ready for next April.

There have been contentious discussions regarding the village survey. We have gratefully received offers of help in distributing the questionnaire which we will take up this month. We look forward to hearing what villagers want for the village over the next five years.

Ben Shaw

Valley Park and the bigger issues for Didcot

The parish council, and in particular Councillor Brendan Henegan, has been pressuring our Vale of White Horse District Councillors, Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Debra Dewhurst to put pressure on VOWHDC regarding the infrastructure issues in the area which affect us all. Our concerns are magnified by the planning application for the first tranche of 179 of 4524 houses of the Valley Park development.

The parish council felt that villagers need to know exactly the position of our elected councillors and the VOWH staff and an extended e-mail exchange is reproduced here. Although edited, it is still a long dialogue to wade through, but worth the effort if you share our worries.

We want the planning consent to be conditional on having key infrastructure (especially medical services) under construction before building starts. However, there seems to us to be a lot of buck-passing.

Hi Brendan,

My answers to your questions in red below...

From: [brendan_heneghan](#)

Sent: 27 September 2023 15:21

To: Dewhurst, Debra

Subject: RE: (P23/V0667/RM), The first parcel of Valley Park and the bigger issues for Didcot

Debra and Hayleigh,

This planning application (P23/V0667/RM), although small 174 houses is part of the bigger problem of the expanding town of Didcot not having the infrastructure, roads/access, healthcare, education, and sewage & drainage in place for the current size of town let alone for the future.

This email is to continue the many discussions we as Upton PC and other PCs (Harwell, Chilton, Blewbury) have had with District Council representatives (Hayleigh before the last election and now you and Hayleigh) over the last four years which have not been resolved and more importantly do not have a plan with actions and dates to resolve apart from the relevant Council departments "talking to the relevant outside bodies e.g. OCC Executive, OCC Highways, ICB."

The issues are laid out below roads/access, healthcare, education and sewage & drainage.

There are a number of questions which need to be answered below:

I've attached a copy of what I said during my 3 minutes at the planning meeting to the end of this email.

Application (P23/V0667/RM), as with all applications the Planning Application does not address the critical issues:

Accessing public high roads and traffic congestion.

This application is for 179 residencies as Phase 1b has three points of access to current highways.

Land at Valley Park has highway frontage on to the A4130 and the B4493 which will be utilised for access, with points of access taken from the following points

- A roundabout access to north-east from the A4130
- A signalised T-junction to the north-west from the A4130, which will serve Parcel

- Addition-
al access from the existing roundabout on B 4493.

Currently there is traffic congestion on these highways and long delays. By adding another 4254 houses the area will become grid locked.

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL THE VOWH (THE FULL TIME EMPLOYEES, AND PLANNERS) PLANS TO SOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT ARE YOU AS OUR DISTRICT COUNCILORS DOING TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE?

Both P23/V0667/RM which covers the 172 homes and PV14/V2873/O which covers the outline planning application for the 4,254 homes and infrastructure of Valley Park, have been approved. Traffic modelling was included in both of these applications and would have been found to have been adequate for the application to be approved. I have referred your question to VOWHDC officers for comment and will come back to you.

Accessing health care facilities i.e. doctors, dentist surgeries with adequate facilities and staff and Pharmacies

The current health care services are not adequate now to meet the needs of Didcot and surrounding villages requirements TODAY.

These issues are known issues which VOWH, South Vale and are not being resolved. More housing will exacerbate the problem.

The VOWH employees and VOWH elected Councillors have pushed this issue onto and the Clinical Commissioning Group the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire who are the official department to provide facilities and staff but this CCG is not doing anything.

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL THE VOWH (THE FULL TIME EMPLOYEES, AND PLANNERS) PLANS TO SOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT ARE YOU AS OUR DISTRICT COUNCILORS DOING TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT IS THE PLAN WITH ACTIONS DATES AND OWNERSHIP?

The VOWH employees and elected councillors have not pushed the issue onto the Clinical Commissioning Group (now the Integrated Care Board). The VOWH has no remit for providing health services, just like it has no remit for building schools. It is the job of the NHS to provide health services. In the situation of GWP, the VOWH had to help in this matter as the CCG had no ability for holding land or money and so an intermediary was

needed to hold the money and land from Taylor Wimpey and pass them on to the CCG (now ICB) when needed. That is all the VOWH can do in this situation - it cannot force the NHS to build a GP surgery, it cannot tell the NHS what type of surgery to build, it cannot mitigate for the lack of funding in the NHS and shortage of doctors.

As it stands legal negotiations are taking place between the three bodies (Taylor Wimpey, VOWHDC, ICB) to transfer the money and land from the developer. VOWHDC staff have been working very hard on this, liaising with both parties to try to get as quick a response as possible. It will then be the job of the ICB to provide a plan of the building and submit a planning application. I am unable to give timescales for this as it's on the ICB to do this.

In terms of what we as district councillors are doing, we're regularly asking for updates on the situation so that we can let parish councils and residents know what is happening and Hayleigh and Sarah before me worked hard on the Valley Park application to make sure that healthcare was secured for Valley Park and that this problem wouldn't happen again with that healthcare.

Sewage NOT drainage

Residents on exiting estates are complaining about sewage and smell problems. The VOWH have problems in Wantage and Kingston Bagpuize with sewage overflowing in the new estates.

Knowing this as a problem

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL THE VOWH (THE FULL TIME EMPLOYEES, AND PLANNERS) PLANS TO SOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT ARE YOU AS OUR DISTRICT COUNCILORS DOING TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT IS THE PLAN WITH ACTIONS DATES AND OWNERSHIP?

Thames water is consulted on all the planning applications. I have referred your questions to VOWHDC officers for comment and will come back to you.

Education and Special Needs

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL THE VOWH (THE FULL TIME EMPLOYEES, AND PLANNERS) PLANS TO SOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT ARE YOU AS OUR DISTRICT COUNCILORS DOING TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT IS THE PLAN WITH ACTIONS DATES AND OWNERSHIP?

I'm not quite sure what the specific question is here, but Education and Special Needs falls under the County Council so you would need to speak to Sally.

Planning application P14/V2873/O-2; Valley Park as a whole.

Valley Park will provide up to 4,254 residential dwellings.

Below is a cut and paste from a document published for the public by Persimmon and Taylor Woodrow 31st March 2023:

"The Persimmon Wessex region has submitted plans for its first phase of development at Valley Park in Didcot.

Valley Park is a consortium-led site between Persimmon and Taylor Wimpey on land to the west of Great Western Park, which was granted outline planning permission for 4,254 dwellings and other supporting infrastructure in February 2022.

"The strategic site at Valley Park will deliver a huge range of investment locally with over £20m allocated for the delivery of two new primary schools on-site, £9m for secondary education, £15.2m for new road improvements, £3.6m for public transport and millions of pounds for the delivery of a new healthcare facility at Valley Park...

This shows the money is there so how do VOWH South Oxfordshire access it and use it and hold the developers to account?

I'm not quite sure what you mean by "hold the developers to account". The money has been allocated and will be accessed in the usual way that S106 money is accessed. The money for healthcare will go to the ICB, the money for education and transport will go to OCC. This document shows the S106 agreements: https://data.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=2111974175&CODE=625E1ED400CB3E3BFA570DA5227147C6

The issues raised above with planning application (P23/V0667/RM) will be compounded. I have read a number of documents regarding the development of Didcot and cannot find any plans for solving the issues raised above:.

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL THE VOWH and SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE (THE FULL TIME EMPLOYEES, AND PLANNERS) PLANS TO SOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT ARE YOU AS OUR DISTRICT COUNCILORS DOING TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE?

Both Councils are run by Liberals in totality, so you can be joined up and get what the parishioners need;

AND IT'S A Liberal OCC.

WHAT IS THE PLAN WITH ACTIONS DATES AND OWNERSHIP?

I'm not sure what particular issues you are referring to.

At a VOWH Council meeting on Tuesday 16th February 2021 at 6pm an agenda item was P14/V2873/0 reproduced below:

Agenda item

P14/V2873/O - Land to the West of Great Western Park (Valley Park) Didcot, (parishes of Harwell and Milton)

- Meeting of Planning Committee, Tuesday, 16 February 2021 6.00 pm (Item 229.)

Outline planning application for a residential development of up to 4,254 dwellings, mixed-use local centres, primary schools, sports pitches, community and leisure facilities, special needs school, open space and extensive green infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping, attenuation areas, diversions to public rights of way, pedestrian and vehicular access and associated works

Minutes:

The issue of Medical facilities was discussed by the Council and the general public. Specifically on health facilities.

The question raised by Mr Lilly:

In response to a question regarding medical and healthcare provision in the locality, Mr. Lilly advised the committee that the situation regarding the 9 villages he represented was already serious, with facilities barely meeting demand. This development would require considerable provision to meet the needs of its residents. The committee noted that the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) had not publicly engaged with the council or representatives, such as Mr. Lilly, and therefore local primary healthcare needs required careful definition. It would be necessary to

obtain the OCCG's opinion on the impacts of the proposal as a matter of urgency. The planning officer reported that the OCCG and NHS England had been consulted on the application and amendments but OCCG had not responded. Whilst NHS England had responded, further information was requested from officers to justify their requests in order to meet the relevant NPPF tests. Since then nothing had been received in terms of defining the level of contributions and the specific beneficiary. On this basis a request to the developers could not be made (paragraph 6.207 of the April 2016 committee report).

ACTION from the meeting for the Council :

Planning officers to engage with the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to **obtain their opinion on the impacts of the proposal for healthcare provision**. Should the OCCG justify a need for any financial contributions or land on site for providing improved healthcare facilities, then committee members wished to secure the requirements through the s106 agreement. Infrastructure for Didcot developing as a Market Town.

What was the outcome of this action and all the other meetings you have had with the ICB.

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL THE VOWH and SOUTH OXFORDSIRE (THE FULL TIME EMPLOYEES, AND PLANNERS) PLANS TO SOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT ARE YOU AS OUR DISTRICT COUNCILORS DOING TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE?

WHAT IS THE PLAN WITH ACTIONS DATES AND OWNERSHIP?

This meeting was before my time on the council so I have referred your question to officers for comment and will get back to you.

Councillor Dr Debra Dewhurst

Blewbury & Harwell Ward

Cabinet member for Leisure Centres and Community Buildings

Vale of White Horse District Council

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

What was the outcome of this action and all the other meetings you have had with the ICB.

Subject: RE: The first parcel of Valley Park houses to be considered at planning committee

Hi Brendan,

In answer to your questions...

Hayleigh and I were the ones who asked for it to be decided at planning committee as opposed to being decided by an officer. We felt given it was the first parcel of homes and that it had moved parishes during its consideration from Harwell to Western Valley and both parishes had made comments on the application, that it would be best for it to be considered at planning committee. I intend to speak at the meeting. I have 3 mins as District Councillor. Western Valley Parish Council will also be given 3 mins and members of the public will be given 3 mins to share. I'm happy to raise any questions/concerns you have within those 3 mins so do let me know if there's anything you'd like me to raise - and likewise for all those copied in. Because the 3 mins for the public is shared, it is best if we take a coordinated approach to make sure all points can be covered.

The VOWHDC, as the planning authority, is unable to take a position on Valley Park as this would be a conflict of interest.

Hope that helps. Any questions please let me know.

Councillor Dr Debra Dewhurst

Blewbury & Harwell Ward

Cabinet member for Leisure Centres and Community Buildings

Vale of White Horse District Council

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Cllr Debra Dewhurst, I'm one of the district councillors for Blewbury and Harwell ward which includes the Parish of Western Valley, where Valley Park will be built. Valley Park will be the biggest development we've had in this ward. It's not in the scope of this application but residents and councillors are still deeply concerned that these homes are being built before the infrastructure needed to support them when healthcare, childcare and education in the area are massively overstretched. Families moving into this first parcel of homes are unlikely to be able to register with a local GP, and will struggle to secure a nursery or school place for their children. That being said we're here tonight to consider the first parcel of homes.

As district councillor for this ward I would like to raise a couple of concerns residents still have. One being the noise from the A4130. There is concern that the passive ventilation and double glazing condition in this report won't be enough and doesn't address noise levels in gardens. Whilst it's not the scope of this application to mitigate for future applications, the potential dualling of the A4130 as part of the HIF1 application is a further concern to noise levels with the widening bringing the road closer to homes and increasing traffic flow.

Another concern is the remote position. Residents would like reassurance that a good surface, well lit pedestrian and cycle path is provided ready for the first occupation, to connect the site to Great Western Park shops and school without the need for car use. It seems a shame to make the commitment to having cycle parking for each home if a car is still needed to reach shops and schools until further homes and infrastructure are built.

I note that there is a commitment to 110 bird boxes, 22 of these for swifts. This falls below the 80% ratio of swift nests per building provided by Taylor Wimpey in their first application for Valley Park. Since swifts are endangered in the area, I urge Persimmon to increase their offering to match this, by installing swift bricks in their buildings.

Aside from these concerns, I'd like to commend Persimmon on their commitment to installing solar panels, heat pumps and EV chargers for every home and look forward to seeing these come to fruition. I hope that some thought has been given to the orientation of houses and placement of the solar panels with respect to getting the best solar output. I would hate to think that some homes would be disadvantaged because the panels were not optimally orientated.

I hope that other developers will follow Persimmon's lead with these important measures for tackling the climate crisis.

BLEWBURY – SONG FOR EUROPE BOX OFFICE is now open

@ www.blewburyplayers.co.uk

Not long now... Tickets are selling very well. Come and enjoy an evening full of fun musical entertainment cheering up a November evening.

Best availability on Thursday & Friday. You can buy tickets for a whole table of ten or in smaller numbers. The twelve countries battling to win the Song for Europe Trophy fight it out on three separate nights (Thursday November 30th, Friday December 1st and Saturday December 2nd). Each night is a "one off" contest. Will it be a different winner every night or will one song dominate the competition? Each evening we have twelve tables (10 seats per table - £15 a seat) with each table representing a participating country. For one night you could be Danish, Spanish, Irish, Italian, German, Dutch, Swedish, French, Greek, Belgian, Australian(!) or be patriotic and represent the United Kingdom.

It would really enhance the evening if audience members joined in the spirit of the evening and donned some form of fancy dress or national costume according to which table they are on. Please also feel free to bring food but do refrain from bringing your own drink as we would like you to support the Bar. Each table casts votes in order to find the evening's winner but, as per Eurovision, you cannot vote for your own country. Hopefully there will be no bribery or rigging of votes – but don't bet on it!! Tickets limited to a maximum of 10 per person per evening.



The Caucasian Chalk Circle, July, 2024. Directed by Erica Harley.

Auditions will be held on 3 & 4 February. We had a great turn out for our launch event.

Thanks to everyone who came with such enthusiasm. We video recorded all that Erica shared about her love for this play and her vision for our production next summer. This has been posted on our website www.blewburyplayers.co.uk for those who were unable to attend. We would like to encourage anybody interested in joining the production team in performing or non-performing roles to get in touch @ blewburyplayers@gmail.com.



Blewbury Players



Jeff and Peter's Music Quiz Saturday 11 November



This ever-popular Music Quiz has questions for all ages and all types of music. Big and small teams are welcome. Maximum size 10. Loads of lovely prizes, including a wheelbarrow of wine! Tickets are £10 and available from Blewbury Post Office. Hall and Bar open from 7.15pm. Quiz starts at 8pm. Please support the bar because monies raised will be donated to support activities for young people in the village.

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



Blewbury Endowed C of E Primary School

Nurture, Grow, Flourish

EARLY YEARS OPEN MORNINGS and Evening

Tuesday 7th and Thursday 9th November 2023, 9.30am-10.30am

Thursday 9th November 2023, 5.00pm – 6.00pm

Our open mornings will include a tour of the school, seeing the class in action and an opportunity to ask school leaders questions about the school vision and curriculum. The open evening will also include an opportunity for your child to experience activities in the classroom and the chance for you to speak to the EYFS staff.

We would be delighted to show you around our wonderful school to help you in your decision to bring your child to join us. Please get in touch with the school office to book a space.



Our school is a place for all to belong. Through **love**, we nurture all to grow in their own unique way. We create an environment for all to flourish; to **forgive**, be **resilient** and **courageous**, making difference to our community and the world beyond.

Our school is:

- ✓ Committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- ✓ Inclusive
- ✓ Committed to developing the whole child
- ✓ Well resourced

Our school has:

- ✓ Beautiful and extensive grounds
- ✓ Climbing equipment of differing sizes for different ages
- ✓ Millennium garden planting area
- ✓ A forest school site
- ✓ Strong links with the local church and community groups
- ✓ Wrap-around care via a breakfast and after school club



Blewbury Primary School joined Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) as an academy on January 1st 2020. ODST was founded in 2012 from a commitment to excellent education for academies in the Oxford Diocese. The Trust has now grown into a large family serving 44 schools, their families and communities.

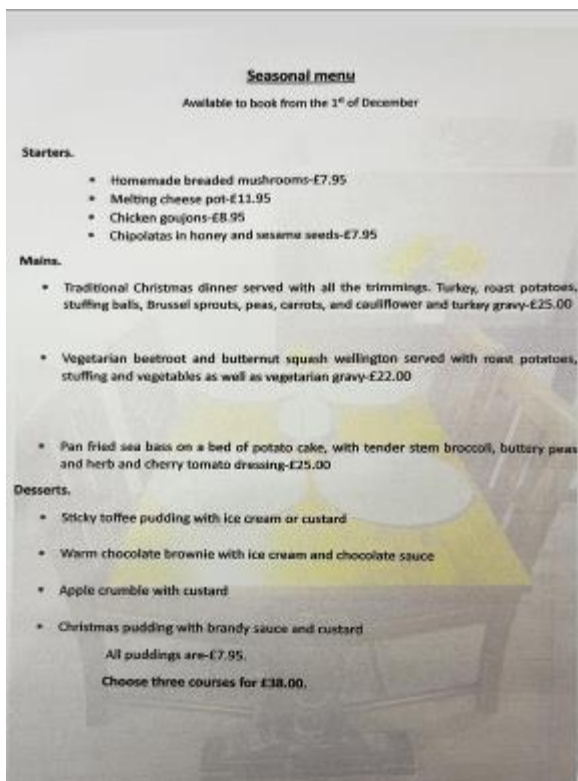
George and Dragon

The George and Dragon is situated on the A417 in Upton, where Francis (landlord) and Tracy (manager) are looking forward to getting to know you all some more. We have been delighted with the warm welcome we have received so far, and cannot wait to extend the same to you.

We have a professional chef creating our menu, the pub is currently open from Wednesday to Sunday from 12.00 pm until close. If I may just take a second to explain, as you know the hospitality industry is struggling, so staying open until 11.00 pm every night with no customers is no valid or financially doable, so we vary closing time, however the kitchen is open 12.00 pm -730 Wednesday -Saturday and 12.00-530 on a Sunday. Booking is preferable but not essential. Our new number is **01235 635053** or email tracy@thegeorgedragon.org

Our seasonal menu for you to have a look at.

We offer take away too, for collection only.



Also we have set up a pool team, and look forward to matches on Wednesday nights.

Tracy

We also have
a special
Christmas Day
menu

—come and
join us!



Upton's Village Hall drop-in

Please join us between 10.00- 11.30 for tea, coffee, biscuits and a freshly baked cake! Many of these will be themed suitable for all ages and we welcome any efforts from villagers to make them fun.

- November - Thursday 30th
- December (pre-Christmas special) - Thursday 21st

If you have any questions or would like to help out with any of the meets, please feel free to email Nicola Hall - events@uptonvillagehall.co.uk

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

21 November: *Freda Skene: Oxford writer, prison reformer* - Liz Woolley

19 December: Christmas Event: *Magic Show* with Ian Keable
(Members Only ticket event)

16 January: Agatha Christie - Judy Dewey (to be confirmed)

20 February: How to be a Gardener in the 21st Century- Timothy Walker

19 March: Curiosities in the Cotswolds Part 1 - Alan Copeland

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

Astons Online

Astons Online's November round table webinar using Zoom will be 10:30 on Tuesday 7 November 2023. Book your place at theastonsonline@gmail.com

Visit us at **Didcot Health Day** on Saturday 18 November in Didcot Civic Hall 10:00 am to 2:00 pm where we'll be demonstrating online wellbeing.

Astons Online's November in-person event in Astons Village Hall (OX119EQ) will be on Tuesday 21 November from 10:00 to 12:00. Please tell us, if you can, that you're coming, what you'd like to talk about and whether you'd like a 1:1 session.

Our website is www.astonsonline.uk and email is theastonsonline@gmail.com

Bruno Brunskill (on behalf of Astons Online)

07780 958249

Blewbury School Consultation

Blewbury C of E Primary School are consulting on their 2025/2026 admissions policy.

As required by the School Admission Code, the Governors of Blewbury C of E Primary School have initiated a consultation period on the Admissions Policy for 2025/2026 which will run until 20th November 2023.

This consultation is to comply with our statutory requirements to consult at least every seven years. The only changes to the Admissions Policy are those required by the Schools Admissions code introduced in May 2021. There are no substantive changes to either our admissions criteria, catchment area or PAN.

The draft policy may be viewed on the school website: <https://blewbury.oxon.sch.uk/>

Any comments on the draft policy should be emailed to Mrs Bealey, School Administrator on office.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk by 20th November 2023.

Blewbury WI

Blewbury Women's Institute meets on the 4th Wednesday of most months at 7.30 pm, normally in the Vale room of Blewbury Village Hall. It is open to women of all ages from Blewbury and surrounding areas.

Our November meeting will be fantastic! On **Wednesday 22 November** at 7.30pm we are thrilled to welcome Steve Wilkinson with "Defying Logic". Steve is a Magician and 'mentalists' who will thrill us. Apparently, there are five words he often hears after his performance - "how did he do that"? We hope to experience some astonishing magic and mind reading. Prepare to be amazed!

As well as the monthly meetings with interesting speakers, we organise trips to the theatre, guided walks, lunches, garden visits, coffee mornings and craft workshops. We also have weekly Mah Jong sessions, monthly Scrabble (evenings and afternoons), monthly craft nights and now run a book club.

Something for everyone.

If you'd like to come along with someone else or find out more, ring our Secretary, Joy, on 850543 or email blewburywi@gmail.com. No commitment

Blewbury Post Office news

We have some exciting news! Sarah will be officially taking over the post office on the 30th October and Karen can FINALLY put her feet up or go travelling around the world! We will be closed the morning of the 30th of October whilst transfer takes place but hope to open from 12pm till 3pm.

From the 31st of October we will be running our temporary opening hours of 9-3pm Monday to Friday until the end of November.

Blewbury School PTA will be hosting a Spooky Halloween Trail from the 21st to the 29th of October. Trail sheets can be purchased from the post office for £2 a sheet and all completed sheets returned to the post office will receive a prize!

Christmas stamps will be available for sale from the 3rd of November. There will also be a Christmas Tree collection tin to help with the increasing cost of the Christmas Tree that sits on top of the church tower.

The post office will be getting very busy soon so please put any customs labels for international parcels on before you reach the counter. The last posting date for International economy to Western Europe in time for Christmas is 27th November so if you require this service please get your parcels into us before then.

Looking forward to meeting more of you soon and seeing you around the village!

Love Sarah, Karen and Andrew

Karen also writes:

By the time you read this, I'll have hung up my date stamp and retired from being the postmaster at Blewbury Post Office, thank you to all of you for supporting us, and visiting when you can, Sarah will be taking over, and I know you will all be as kind to her as you have always been to me.

During November, the opening hours will be 9 to 3, Monday to Friday, but from the 27th November, Tuesdays and Fridays will go back to normal 8.30 to 12 & 2.30 to 5, (9-3 otherwise)

The Bellringers' Post Boxes will be available from 27/11 for festive cards between Blewbury and Upton, , at the George and Dragon, St Mary's, Savages, Blewbury Service Station, Red Lion, The Blueberry and the Post Office; just pop the cards and money, 30p suggested donation, straight into the box, before the 20th December, and they'll be delivered before the big day.

Karen

October Upton 'Wine Club – South African Wines

For October, we welcomed our first external speaker of the season, Preet Sahota from Edgmond Wine, who talked about wines from South Africa.

When thinking about South African wines, we often think of regions such as Stellenbosh or Paarl. As an alternative, Preet took us to a Skerfberg, a region further North, where we tasted some wines, mainly from Villa Esposto, who make wine from small parcels of vineyards, that some have compared to those of more famous regions, such as Burgundy.

First we tried a Villa Esposto Sauvignon Blanc 2022. If you are not a “SB” fan, or even if you are and want to try something very different than the go to French or NewZeland favourites then this is worth a try. Made from vines 30 years old, this is drinkable now but also will keep and offers a very different taste to that of the normal “SB”. A lovely complex wine that would go still work with white fish or a creamy pasta!



Next we tried a Chenin Blanc from the Olifantsrivier region. Again from old vines (planted 45 years ago) from several vineyards, that give a unique taste. A more unusual Chenin Blanc to try, which went down well with the members.

To compare, we then tried another Chenin Blanc from a single vineyard from Villa Esposto. At nearly twice the price of the one just tried, this would have to be exceptional - and it did not disappoint. Full of tropical notes, this had depth and length that would allow the wine to be enjoyed

on it's own but also with food - think of a Sunday roast and something a bit different - yum!

We then moved on to some reds. Our first was a Malbec from Blake Family Wine. Fermented in stainless steel tanks and matured in French oak barrels, this again, gave members something different to try than perhaps your go to regions of France or Argentina for a Malbec.

The Klawer region of South Africa is in the Western Cape province and has been compared to Bordeaux in terms of its terroir and climate. This produces some interesting wines you may wish to compare for a bit of "fun". 2021 had perfect climate conditions for grapes in this region and most wines produced were of very high quality. This was no exception and with delicious red berry flavours pouring through made for a really enjoyable wine!

Our next wine was found by mistake....stuck at the back of a stock room bound for another supplier who had gone out of business, it had remained there for several years. It was a 2018 Pinotage and the years had been very kind to the wine. A really good example of what you get when you are able to leave the wine for a few years, this proved to be the most popular wine of the evening.

Our last red for the evening was a Cabernet Merlot 2021 from Villa Esposto. 70% Cab Sauv and 30% merlot blend. A wonderful wine that was not necessarily trying to compete with similar wines from Bordeaux but would give them a run for their money!

We finished with a dessert wine. These sweet wines are not for everyone but if you are a fan then this was one is very much worth a try. Villa Esposto Muscat d'Alexandrie 2021. A sweet wine produced from old vines, planted in 1969, that have low yields but pure nectar!

The evening was really well received by everyone. Next month, we are looking at wines that are associated with famous people....lan "beefy" Botham, Graham Norton, Kyle, Angelina & Brad....just famous names or do that add something to the wine...we'll find out! If you are not a member and would like to join us on Wednesday 15th November at the village hall, please take a look at our website for details www.uptonwineclub.co.uk

Ian
Chairman



HELP WITH ESSENTIAL LIVING COSTS

Are you on a low income and struggling to pay for food, energy or necessary household items? We are a local charity able to support people living in Blewbury, the Astons and Upton by providing one off payments to help you, or someone you know in need.

To apply 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. All applications are assessed on an individual basis but, as our funds are limited, we give priority to those in receipt of benefits such as Universal Credit, Tax Credits and Pension Credit or those who have extenuating circumstances such as ill health or vulnerability. Please don't be reluctant to ask for help, all applications are dealt with confidentially.

We are pleased to report that we have continued to be able to help individuals and families in Upton, Blewbury, and the Astons over the summer months as the economy has continued to put stress on everyday living expenses. We would like to thank those of you who have helped to make this possible by generously donating to help our local people.

As we approach the winter and Christmas, things are unlikely to get any easier for those struggling financially. We are therefore reaching out again to the local community for a helping hand. Any amount of money would be appreciated and can be donated through our Just Giving page www.justgiving.com/ucab

We thank you very much in advance and if you have any questions, please do get in touch with us by [email \[unitedcharities@outlook.com\]\(mailto:email_unitedcharities@outlook.com\)](mailto:email_unitedcharities@outlook.com)

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

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