

Upton News



January 2024

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR
2024**

Church News

Services at St. Mary the Virgin, Upton

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

Services January:

Prayer Focus

† 7th January

Children, our village schools & Sunday clubs

Epiphany

9.15am Lay-led service

† 14th January

Those recently baptised & baptism visitors

2nd Sunday of Epiphany

9.15am Parish Eucharist

† 28th January

Our worship, musicians, organists & choirs

Presentation in the Temple/Candlemas

9.15am Parish Eucharist

CHRISTMAS READING

This took place in the Village Hall on 9 December and raised £251 for the Friends of St Mary's. Many thanks to all who attended and contributed.

Malcolm Wright

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's Village Hall drop-in

We wish to provide clarification that due to the availability of our organising group, we have collectively decided to shift the drop-in to the **last Friday of the month**, replacing the previous Thursday schedule. This change will apply for 2024. The regular timing will remain at 10.00-11.30, with the occasional extension for special events.

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

Council News

The Parish Council wish all villagers a very Happy and Prosperous New Year

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on 18th January at 8.00 pm in the village hall.

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

Written as we head towards Christmas, this will be our last update of the year. It's been a busy end to the year for us. This month the VoWHDC has been finalising the 'preferred options' for our Joint Local Plan with South Oxfordshire District Council. The Joint Local Plan will guide the kinds of new housing and jobs needed and where they should go, informing planning application decisions for the districts. Consultation on the preferred options will open in the near year for residents and parish councils to comment on.



We know residents are very concerned about healthcare locally, as are we. This month Debra spoke at the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting to raise the issue of healthcare provision in and around the Didcot area. She also challenged Dan Leveson, the Place Director for the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) to give reassurances that the health centre planned for Great Western Park (GWP) will be built and asked him what is causing the delay. We are currently awaiting a response from Mr Leveson in writing and will share that when we have it.

Whether you are celebrating Christmas or just taking a break, we wish you and your families an enjoyable and restful festive period. We hope that you can spend much-needed time with your loved ones, and we wish you happiness and good health for the new year ahead.

Happy New Year!

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, either via email:
hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk &
debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

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



Didcot & District u3a

Monthly meetings resume at Didcot Civic Hall (on the 3rd Tuesday in the month starting at 2:30 pm) from 16th January 2024.

In addition , at these monthly meetings there is always a presentation on such diverse topics such as those mentioned below in the coming months:

16 January 2024: Joys and Perils of being an Author - Colin Wade

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

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

16 April: Coaches & Coach horns, their story from the Golden Age to the Present Day - Colin Pawson

21 May: AGM. Talk from the Prostate Cancer Charity

18 June: Wildlife Wanderings - David Bailey

Following the presentations tea, coffee and biscuits are served to all new and existing members for a catchup chat - new members very welcome !

So what better way to start 2024 - we look forward to seeing you there ?!

For further Further information contact the following;

Chair: Kath Oldham; chair@didcotu3a.org

Secretary: Chris Jones; secretary@didcotu3a.org

Additional information can be found on the u3asites.org.uk

UPTON PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Winter November 23rd - March 2nd

Open to all residence of Upton

Two age categories - anyone below 16 and all others 16 and above.

Themes

Upton and Surrounding Area (in winter) - Anything that shows off the area in which we live - landscapes, buildings, people, nature, sunsets, weather etc.

Animal(s) in winter - wild or domestic

All submissions should be in JPG format and emailed to

upton.photo@outlook.com

Remember to include a brief description or title.



Previous entry - Upton
from above by Mike
Weston

Volunteer help needed for Brownie unit in Upton

We have a brownie unit that meets in the Upton village hall every week in term time. It provides many girls aged 7-10 years with fun, activities, friendship and adventure.

We are in need of volunteer/volunteers to help our current leaders run the unit.

If you think you'd like to know more information about what is involved - please visit

www.Girlguiding.org.uk or email
millbrookdistrictcommissioner@gmail.com



Blewbury WI

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

Our next monthly meeting is on Wednesday 24 January at 7.30. We will have a presentation on "The history of antique fans". Hear about fans from their inception to the 1950s. We understand that there will be numerous fans on show, all taken from the Speaker's collection of over 650 items. Also that she may be dressed in a 1900s outfit, including a lace shawl and a boater! Can't wait!

As well as the monthly meetings with interesting speakers, we organise theatre trips, walks, outings and coffee mornings. We also run Mah Jong afternoons, Scrabble (evenings and afternoons), craft nights and a book club. Something for everyone.

We have recently had a number of new members join - not just from Blewbury but some from farther afield. We like to think of Blewbury WI as a 'classic' WI - friendship and fun with a bit of education thrown in!

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 - just come as a visitor - you will be made so welcome.

Opportunities to work at the May 2024 elections – register your interest now!

VOWHDC is looking for people to work at the May 2024 Police and Crime Commissioner Election.

If you or someone you know is interested in working either of the following paid roles, please get in touch as soon as possible and please encourage your friends and family to do the same:

- Polling station staff - locations across South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, Thursday 2 May (from 6am until finish - likely to be around 10.30pm)
 - Postal vote staff - Abingdon, 22 April to 2 May (various shifts available)
- To register your interest, simply email electionstaff@southandvale.gov.uk. Our Elections team will send all the information and ask you to confirm your availability for the various roles.

For more information, visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs_

Please note, we are unable to offer the roles to people that work for or are connected with a political party.

Chipping of Christmas trees at Savages Green Grocers

We will once again be chipping Christmas trees at Savages in Blewbury.

It will take place on Sunday 7th January 2024, 10 - 12am. A Donation to Helen and Douglas house will be gratefully received.

This will be our 20th year of supporting Helen and Douglas house, with the support of Savages Green Grocers.

But maybe not as big as this one!!



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

Astons Online

Astons Online's January 2024 round table webinar using Zoom will be 10:30 on Tuesday 9 January 2024.

Book your place at theastonsonline@gmail.com to talk about anything you like; what you did on line for Christmas perhaps?

Astons Online's January 2024 in-person event in Astons Village Hall (OX119EQ) will be on Tuesday 16 January 2024 from 10:00 to 12:00. We'll talk about any issue you like and perhaps touch on festive season scams?

Bruno Brunskill (On behalf of Astons Online)
theastonsonline@gmail.com 07780 958249
www.astonsonline.uk

UK Online Centre 3455623
Cyber to the Citizen initiative

BLEWBURY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS!

With term ending in the week before Christmas Day there is an emphasis on getting the Christmas celebrations underway early, and Blewbury School has been racing ahead with its own very full programme of events.

Savages helped a great deal with the early donation of a Christmas Tree, which was suitably decorated by the house captains and placed in a prominent position. The Wizard Theatre group then came to the School to put on a very popular production of Pinocchio. "It was very funny and made us all laugh" said Jai from Picasso class.

Then Santa Claus made an early appearance on December 8th when he flew past in an RAF Puma helicopter, on his way to deliver some presents to children in the John Radcliffe Hospital. Flight Lieutenant Christopher Northcote had tipped off local schools about this mission which allowed the Blewbury pupils to be out in the playground at the right time to give Santa a wave on his way past.



The next big event was the Christmas Nativity Play 'Shine Star Shine' put on by the Key Stage 1 pupils from O'Keefe and Goldsworthy classes. This was a fantastic success and it was hugely enjoyed by all those parents/ carers and others who saw it at two afternoon performances. The costumes were fabulous, the music and singing were excellent, with choreography and excellent diction, it was a joy to behold. Clearly it represented a major piece of work for the pupils as well as the teachers and teaching

assistants working with those two classes (Misses Brabner, Peacock, Snowball, Pithie, Buckler and Bayliss) ably assisted by Pip Weeden, who helped with the choreography, and the PTA, who provided refreshments.

“What a treat! The children were super and looked great in their costumes. It was clear that the staff had worked tremendously hard to give every child the opportunity to shine. Wonderful job all round!” (Katie Dickens, School Governor)



With a few more days still to go a School choir will perform at the Village Carol Concert, and there will be a Christmas Jumper Day and School Christmas Lunch (Margaret Pritchard's 29th as the School Kitchen Supremo!), a Key Stage 2 Carol Service in St Michael's Church and PTA disco on Dec 19th. Phew - it will then be time for a Christmas holiday!

Roger Murphy
Community Governor

(It is obvious that this report was written before the Christmas break -Ed)

Do you know any people who might need some help with small repairs in their home?

The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) is dedicated to helping older and vulnerable people live safely and independently in their own homes by providing advice, assistance and grants for home adaptations, repairs, heating, dementia and safety within the home.

It currently provides a **Small Repairs Handypersons Service** that will carry out small works within the home at a subsidised rate of £20 per hour if eligible. The service is offered to vulnerable home owners who live within South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse districts. Vulnerable tenants may also use the service for jobs that are not the responsibility of the landlords.

The handyperson scheme is available to persons:

- Age 55 or over; or
- Have a disability or severe health problem that prevents them from carrying out the repair themselves

What we can do?

- Home safety and falls prevention
- Home security
- Keysafe Installations
- General household repairs
- Minor plumbing

Dementia Assistance

Working closely with Dementia Oxfordshire we have created a referral pathway that improves home support and quality of life within the home. Memory aids like calendars, clocks, whiteboards and safety measures such as locks, key safes, gas checks and signage can be requested immediately then delivered and installed FREE to the client.

Please contact us at hia-sv@oxford.gov.uk or call us on 0300 373 5663 if you would like further information / leaflets.

Home Improvement Agency - South & Vale, Planning & Regulatory Services, Oxford City Council, Unit C14 Bizspace, Southmead Industrial Park, Hawks-worth, Didcot OX11 7PH

Phone : 0300 373 5663 Email : hia-sv@oxford.gov.uk

Website: www.oxford.gov.uk | Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/OxfordCity
www.facebook.com/OxfordCityCouncil



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