

# Upton News



July 2024

## The Future of Upton News

The following statement appeared in the last two issues of Upton News:

After over two and a half years in the job, the editor feels it is time to step down, so a replacement is required to keep the Upton News going; a fresh approach would also be welcome.

If you are interested in contributing to the village in this way, please give the current editor, Neil Thorp, a call on 01235 850756 to get an idea of what is involved.

There was NO response to this appeal in either May or June and **if no-one comes forward during July, the publication will cease with August being the last issue.**

It may well be that the village considers that the Upton News format has outlived its day and has been superseded by Facebook and other social media platforms, but there are a significant number of viewings every time there is a fresh issue which belies this view.

Generous help will be provided to anyone who takes on the mantle, but it is not difficult to do.

**If you are interested, do not leave it until it is too late.**

## 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 normally 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*

## Church News

### Services at St. Mary the Virgin, Upton

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

#### Services for July:

#### Prayer Focus

**7<sup>th</sup> July**

6<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

9.15am Lay-led service

Those recently baptised  
& baptism visitors

**†4<sup>th</sup> July**

7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

9.15am Parish Eucharist

Youth group & teenagers

**28<sup>th</sup> July**

9<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

9.15am Parish Eucharist

Weddings and God's blessing  
on new and existing marriages

## The Churn Festival of Science

Have you ever wondered about the relationship between Science and Religion? Is it possible to be both a committed Scientist and a faithful Christian? Is there a conflict between Religion and Science?

Well, the short answer to this last question is that there is no necessary conflict between Science and Religion. Personally, I am committed to celebrating and developing the links between Science and the Church. As far as I am concerned, Science and Religion both have the potential to give glory to God - I say "potential", because there is such a thing as Bad Science, just as there is such a thing as Bad Religion.



Later in July, we are putting on a local festival to celebrate Science and

Religion. There are events for all the family, and to ensure that the events are as widely accessible as possible, all the events are free! No prior Scientific knowledge is required.

The festival starts on Sunday 21st July, with an All Age Celebration of Science Service at St Andrew's East Hagbourne at 10:30am. Our Curate, the Revd. Dr. Mark Rhodes-Smith, will give a talk about his life as a Christian and as a Scientist, and there will be an opportunity to ask Mark questions. At 3pm In the afternoon on the same day, there will be family friendly event at St Mary's Upton, focusing on an environmental theme. This event will be looking at the plants and animals to be found in St Mary's churchyard. And at 6:00 pm on the same day, the informal evening service at St Andrew's East Hagbourne will include a short talk given by myself on the history of the relationship between Science and Religion down the centuries, and there will be plenty of time for questions and discussion.

As well as these two special services at St Andrew's and the environmental activity in Upton Churchyard, there will be family-friendly Science activities during the day on Wednesday 24th July, Thursday 25th July and Friday 26th July. The timing and location of these family-friendly Science activities will confirmed nearer the day - check our website for details. By describing them as family-friendly, let me assure you don't have to be part of a family group to come along. You will be very welcome just to come along by yourself, although children under 18 need to be accompanied by a responsible adult. You may wonder what we will be getting up to in these Science activities. Basically, we will do some fun experiments to test various scientific theories, and then talking about the results afterwards. There will be light refreshments. As mentioned before, there is no charge for these activities, although any donations towards expenses will be welcomed.

As well as service and activities, we will be offering daily prayers for all Scientists, especially those who work in our local area.

Why are we holding this Festival of Science? It's because Science is one of the greatest of God's gifts to the human race, and we need to celebrate this gift and show our appreciation for all that Scientists do. I do hope you will be able to join us in our celebrations - it will be lovely to see you!

*Father Jason*

## Vale of White Horse District Councillors

### Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Debra Dewhurst

It was an honour to be invited to attend the local events to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-day both on the Harwell Campus and at the Memorial Stone in Chilton. We laid a wreath on behalf of the Vale of White Horse District Council, remembering all those brave men that gave their lives so that we might have freedom and the families that lost loved ones. It was lovely to see so many residents, organisation and community groups paying their respects and it was especially lovely to meet Pegasus the pony on duty.



People often ask us “What’s a big issue in your local area?”. The South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) is a serious issue for the local area. Thames Water has launched a 12-week consultation on the proposed SESRO. The consultation is available here: <https://thames-wrmp.co.uk/sesro> and runs until 28th August 2024. Thames Water is also running a series of consultation events across the district during this period with our most local ones being Didcot Civic Hall (9<sup>th</sup> July 2-8pm) and Milton Hill House (15<sup>th</sup> July 2-8pm). This is such an important issue, do have your say.

On 4th July, the UK will go to the polls to vote in our next government in a **general election** and you will be able to vote for an MP to represent our area of Didcot & Wantage constituency. Remember, to vote you will first need to register by 18th June (if you haven’t already) and you must take a form of photographic ID on the day. If you will be away, you can register for a postal vote (by 5pm, 19th June) or you can register to get someone to vote on your behalf, known as a proxy (by 5pm, 26th June). For more information on these deadlines, and what type of ID, or if you’d be willing to work at the polling station on polling day or counting votes, head to the Vale website.

*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](http://www.facebook.com/CllrHayleigh) & [www.facebook.com/Debra4BlewburyAndHarwell](http://www.facebook.com/Debra4BlewburyAndHarwell)*

*Please get in touch with any issues or concerns, via email:*

[hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) & [debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

## **Parish Council News**

### **New Parish Council Members**

The Parish Council is delighted to welcome Françoise Yates and Chris Seelig as members of the Council. If any villagers need to contact them for any reason their UPC addresses are respectively

[françoisey@uptonpc.co.uk](mailto:françoisey@uptonpc.co.uk) & [chriss@uptonpc.co.uk](mailto:chriss@uptonpc.co.uk)

### **Uptonogood 2024**

The Parish Council would like to congratulate Bob Lott and Mike Tebbitts and their team on yet another fabulous Uptonogood event. With so many volunteers, whether as stewards, cake bakers or general coordinators, coming from the village it has not been difficult to hear many votes of confidence and praise for the efficient running and success of the day. To have competitors say that it ".....puts Upton on the map ..." is tantamount to the respect the event has gathered over the years and you are well deserved of the credit. Roll on Uptonogood 2025!

### **The George**

The Parish Council would like to extend a huge welcome to the new owners of The George. Villagers have enjoyed the open garden for a few weeks now and are looking forward to the refurbishment being completed. With the exciting and valuable plans the pub has, The George is set to once again become a focal point of the village and the UPC would encourage all villagers to support the new endeavour and ensure Ben and Shona's efforts are justly rewarded.

### **Village questionnaire**

Following the Annual Parish Meeting we are aware that some residents would like to be involved in the detailed village questionnaire which follows on from the broad-brush feedback already given.

We are inviting as many people as possible to be involved in formulating the questions to make sure the Parish Council is setting goals for what the parish wants to happen over the next 5-20 years.

The meetings will be chaired by a member of the Parish Council but the content should be from the community so let us know if you would like to be involved. The more people the better as we can break it up into lots of different groups so that everyone gets a say in what the village might look like in the future! Please contact

Benjamin Shaw: Mobile 07934 389171 telephone 01235 850308

### **Next parish Council Meeting**

The Next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 19.00 in the small meeting room at Upton Village Hall.

## Recreation Ground Problems

Villagers will have noticed that at last we managed to get the slide repaired and just in time for Uptonogood. It took so long because of the need to have the original poor design rectified and to redesign, agree and make additional steel bracketry. Attempts to claim at least the design cost from the original manufacturer delayed things as the equipment was well out of warranty, but it was worth a try.

During this period the tape and notices indicating the slide was out of service were removed several times, yet on at least one occasion a parent was observed allowing his small child to use the slide even with the tape in situ. The orange builders' meshing proved more durable. However, by the time the contractors were ready to fit the new parts, vandals had totally destroyed the platform and even removed most of the timber. As a consequence the village was in danger of losing the play equipment totally because if the fencing at the top had not been screwed to one beam the metal slide itself could have collapsed, maybe causing injury, but certainly hugely expensive repairs. As it was, following this vandalism, the bill to the village was some £500 more than it needed to be.

Vandalism hasn't stopped. These appalling pictures show recent misuse of the area. A shattered vodka bottle was left on the slide and the football team which has started to use the pitch for training has also reported broken glass amongst the litter they regularly collect which is scattered on the pitch.



Does anyone know who is responsible? If you use the rec regularly (perhaps for walking your dog) please call out miscreants or report them to the police.



**Glass and alcohol are expressly prohibited in the play areas of the ground.**

## **Puss in Boots – A Pantomime for Blewbury**

We are beginning preparations for our pantomime Puss in Boots, directed by Andy Jarvis, to be performed in January next year (29th January – February 1st).



**Auditions** will take place on Saturday 31st August and Sunday 1st September. If you'd like to book an audition (including children from Year 6 upwards) please email us at [blewburyplayers@gmail.com](mailto:blewburyplayers@gmail.com). If you'd like to audition, but can't make these dates, let us know and we'll fit you in at another time. And do let us know if you are interested in taking part backstage in any way.

 *Blewbury Players*  Once the Pantomime is cast, we will have a Read Through on Sunday 29th September and rehearsals proper will begin on the weekend of November 2nd/3rd with a break over the Christmas period.

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## **Drum** Landscaping

- ◆ Hard and Soft Landscaping • Fencing • Garden Clearance
  - ◆ Garden and Grounds Maintenance • Hedge Planting
  - ◆ Hedge Cutting • Grass Cutting • Turfing • Power Washing
  - ◆ Winter Gritting • Licensed Waste Carrier • Insured
- Call Nick - Home: 01235 859229 Mobile: 07922 701634

**Email: [ndrumlandscaping@gmail.com](mailto:ndrumlandscaping@gmail.com)**

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

*Richard Burrow*



## Blewbury Primary School fête

We are excited to share with you the details of the Village Fete which will be held at Blewbury Primary School on Saturday 6th of July from 1pm till 4pm.

We are raising money for the school in hopes of purchasing some new play equipment for the school playground. We will be running a variety of stalls, BBQ, bar and the lovely WI will be hosting Tea and cake in the school hall. We also have our exciting summer trail and dance performances.

We hope you are able to attend and enjoy the fair on the day, but we would also be very grateful for any of the following donations:

- 1 Our teddy (eg. soft toys), bottle and chocolate tombolas
- 2 Good quality 2nd hand toys
- 3 Good quality 2nd hand children's books
- 4 Plants for our Plant Stall
- 5 Garden games - we would like to borrow some garden games to have around for people to play.

So that we can keep track of what we have coming and what we still need, please email us at [pta@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:pta@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk) if you are happy to donate anything (or would be able to spare an hour to help out on the day!)

We look forward to seeing you there.

Blewbury Primary School PTA

## **UPTON VILLAGE SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION**

Open to all residents of Upton Village  
Two age categories – below 16 and then everyone else.

### **THEMES**

- 1 Summer photograph taken in Upton and Surrounding Area. This could be plants, animals, people, buildings or the landscape etc.
- 2 Any other 'summer ' photograph. Taken anywhere in the world and any topic that best depicts summer.
- 3 Black and White. Any image taken or converted to B/W

**Free to enter**

More than one photograph can be submitted

Closing date = Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September

Images should be sent in JPEG format (or similar)  
to [upton.photo@outlook.com](mailto:upton.photo@outlook.com)

Smart phone or DSLR  
It is up to you.



## Blewbury Women's Institute

Blewbury WI generally meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month. We play Mah Jong, Scrabble and Rummikub – good for the grey matter they say. On a monthly basis we meet for a coffee, run a craft club and a book club and go for an organised walk. Recently we had a walk in Streatley woods, had a fab a pub lunch and went on a lovely canal boat trip. Variety is the spice of life., they say. Lots to choose from.

Our next main meeting will be **Wednesday July 24:**

### “The life of Estée Lauder”

*“I never dreamed about success. I worked for it.”* —Estée Lauder. Mrs. Estée Lauder started her business with four skin care products and a simple premise: that every woman can be beautiful. Armed with that philosophy, plus perseverance, creativity and passion, she changed the face of the cosmetics industry.

Jane Sampson talks about the life of this cosmetics icon. We are privileged to be able to see Jane's collection of stunning beauty compacts.

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](mailto:blewburywi@gmail.com).  
Come as a visitor - you will be made so welcome.

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## South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO)

Thames Water has launched a 12-week consultation on the proposed South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO). The consultation is available here: <https://thames-wrmp.co.uk/sesro> and runs until 28 August 2024.

Thames Water is also running a series of consultation events across the district during this period:

- Abingdon Guildhall - 1 July: 11am - 5pm.
- Loyd Lindsay Rooms, Wantage - 5 July: 11am - 5pm.
- Didcot Civic Hall - 9 July: 2 - 8pm.
- Milton Hill House, Steventon - 15 July: 2 - 8pm.
- Marcham Centre - 18 July: 2 - 8pm.

For more details and to confirm attendance visit <https://thames-wrmp.co.uk/news/events>

## Post Office News

The school summer holidays are fast approaching. This is a reminder that from the 24th of July to the 3rd of September, during the School summer holidays, we will be operating our reduced hours of 9am - 12pm, Monday to Friday. Thank you for your understanding during this time.

We have fresh kitty's eggs and local honey on sale. As well as a variety of sweet treats, ice lollies, chocolate and cool drinks available to help keep cool this summer.

As well as sending parcels, you can also do all your banking at the post office, including cash withdrawals, cash deposits and cheque deposits.

We look forward to seeing you in the post office soon.

Thanks so much,

Sarah, Karen and Andrew

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## Didcot and District u3a

*Learn, Laugh, Live!* . . . with the **Didcot and District u3a** as we all enjoy Summer 24', with more than **30 active Interest Groups** (gardening, walking, family history, learning a new language, ukulele, etc) offering plenty of opportunity for all newly retired or semi-retired individuals wishing to keep mind and body active to come along to the monthly meeting held on the **third Tuesday of every month** at the Didcot Civic Hall starting at 2:30.

During the monthly meetings you will meet with like minded individuals, listen to the Guest Speaker with upcoming monthly meetings Speakers will include:

**July 16th** - Music with anecdotes of life playing music on horseback ! Jon Woodhouse Ex Life Guards Musician will explain and more !

**August 20th** - Where The Money Went - the cost of WWI - Roy Larkin

**September 17th** - The Worlds Richest Man - Andrew Carnegie - From Rags to Riches Giving It All Away! Jeremy Holmes

**October's 15th** - Morris Minors in the Media - Ann and John Ford

Following the presentations you can enjoy a chat with fellow members over tea and biscuits, all **new members will be most warmly welcomed !**

For further information you can '**Google**' [u3asites.org.uk](http://u3asites.org.uk) or inquire for the Didcot & District via the **Chair** Kath Oldham [chair@didcotu3a.org](mailto:chair@didcotu3a.org) or **Secretary** Chris Jones [secretary@didcotu3a.org](mailto:secretary@didcotu3a.org)

# The Caucasian Chalk Circle at Orchard Dene Garden Theatre 17-20 July 2024.

## A change from Shakespeare...

A gem of a play, full of action, humour, music, and emotion...

Grusha, a maid, flees with abandoned baby Michael and face many challenges to protect him. This is a story as old as Solomon, of motherhood and maternal love.

What makes a good mother: a mother by blood or mother by nurture?

Azduk a drunk or genius - judge or villain? Who will he protect - the landowners or the people?



The Caucasian Chalk Circle welcomes the audience into a world of huge characters, big emotions, and the eternal question of who has the right to claim ownership - who should own what?

Directed by Erica Harley. This adaptation provides an alternative and more accessible version than the more traditional text. Described as a masterpiece of 20th century drama.

**Box office** - Tickets will be available online at [www.blewburyplayers.co.uk](http://www.blewburyplayers.co.uk). Priority booking opens 5 June (using a code that will be sent to them). General Box Office opens 7 June.

**To become a Friend** and get priority booking for Blewbury Players' productions and an annual entertainment and newsletter, please contact of Roger at [bpfriends123@gmail.com](mailto:bpfriends123@gmail.com). Subscription is £15 and is renewable on 1st May 2024.

**Front of House roles.** Fancy joining the front of House Team? Please call David Long on 01235 851574 or 07484 360169 or at [blewburyplayers@gmail.com](mailto:blewburyplayers@gmail.com)  
**Jeff and Peter's Music Quiz - 9 November 2024** More news nearer the date  
**Puss In Boots Auditions - September 2024** We are excited to confirm that we will be performing another pantomime in 2025! This has been written and will be directed by Blewbury's very own Andy Jarvis. More information about auditions soon.

**For updates on events** refer to [www.blewburyplayers.co.uk](http://www.blewburyplayers.co.uk), Facebook or Instagram. We can contact us at [blewburyplayers@gmail.com](mailto:blewburyplayers@gmail.com)

## **Astons Online**

**Astons Online** supports people who want to be digitally confident on the Internet, with smartphone apps or online services like health and banking. **Astons Online** events and support are free of charge and open to everyone.

There are in-person one-to-one sessions in Astons Village Hall (OX119EQ) on Tuesday 16 July from 10:00 to 12 noon. It would help to know if you're coming.

We're available for Zoom, Facetime, WhatsApp or telephone one-to-one sessions on Tuesday mornings between 10:00 and 12:00.

Our next Zoom webinar will be on Tuesday 17 September @ 10:00. (No Astons Online event in August this year.)

Bruno Brunskill (On behalf of Astons Online)  
[theastonsonline@gmail.com](mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com) 07780 958249  
[www.astonsonline.uk](http://www.astonsonline.uk)

UK Online Centre 3455623 Cyber to the Citizen initiative

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## **ST MARY'S CHURCH**

### **Why are churchyards special? - Sunday, 21 July**

The English country churchyard provides a very special environment for trees, birds, animals and insects. Often almost unchanged for centuries, churchyards can provide a haven for species that can be threatened by development or intensive agriculture elsewhere.

On Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> July there will be a special event in St Mary's churchyard exploring and celebrating this special place in the heart of Upton. It's part of the Churn Benefice Science Festival and it will give the opportunity to learn about the history and natural environment of this unique place. It's an event for all ages - adults can join the guided tour of the churchyard and there will be special activities for children to enjoy.

The event will start at 3:00pm and will conclude with tea and cakes. And there's no charge - do come and join us!

Paul Batho



## HELP WITH ESSENTIAL LIVING COSTS

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. If you are struggling to pay for food, energy, an essential item or school expenditure such as uniform, equipment and trips, please consider applying for help.

There is a short application form to complete which can be picked up from St Mary's Church porch or requested by email to [unitedcharities@outlook.com](mailto:unitedcharities@outlook.com). We can help you fill in the form if needed and all applications are dealt with confidentially.

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.

Here we are, already in the middle of Spring, with no sign of economic improvement on the horizon in the country. We continue to receive a steady flow of requests for financial help from local people who find themselves unable to make ends meet. Looking ahead, we are going to struggle to help as many individuals and families in Blewbury, Upton and the Astons as we would like, unless we can generate more funds.

If anyone of you out there in the community feel able to help by donating any amount, small or large, we would be extremely grateful. You can do this through our Just Giving page [www.justgiving.com/ucab](http://www.justgiving.com/ucab)

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:unitedcharities@outlook.com)