

# Upton News



August 2024

## Upton News has a new Editor

I am delighted to report that Alun Griffiths has agreed to step into the role. Alun hopes to bring a new look to the Upton News.

### **Contributions for future issues of the Upton News**

should be sent to Alun at

[uptonox11news@gmail.com](mailto:uptonox11news@gmail.com).

A few days beforehand Alun 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 him.

## 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 August:**

#### **Prayer Focus**

#### **4<sup>th</sup> August**

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

9.15am Lay-led service

Churchwardens, fabric & churchyards. Church cleaners

#### **11<sup>th</sup> August**

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

9.15am Parish Eucharist

Families, children's outreach, family services & Mothers' Union

#### **25<sup>th</sup> August**

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

9.15am Parish Eucharist

Clergy & all who preach or lead

## Online Services

The online services continue every Sunday at 10.30am. Login after 10.00 to chat beforehand or to check your technology. Access the Churn Churches website for login details on how to join:

<https://www.churnchurches.co.uk/services-this-week/sunday-service.php>

The permanent link for the Sunday service is <https://meet.goto.com/ChurnBenefice/sundayservice>

Weekday evening Compline at 8.00pm for 10 minutes. Access via <https://meet.goto.com/312446493>

If you would like to be added to our weekly mailing list to receive the Churn newsletter, please contact Elaine.

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## Teddy Bears Picnic

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August 12 noon - 2pm

We meet in the garden of the Chantler family in Blewbury. We welcome all babies and pre-school children with siblings, parents, grandparents or carers. Please bring a teddy bear, picnic and a rug to sit on. Soft drinks and ice-creams 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

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**Home Communion** is available to anyone who is unable to get to church through sickness or frailty, either for a short time or on a long term basis. If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact the office 01235 850267 and Elaine will arrange it for you.

## Vale of White Horse District Councillors

### Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and Cllr Debra Dewhurst

On 4<sup>th</sup> July, a general election was held. We are delighted to say that our constituency of Didcot & Wantage elected Olly Glover, Liberal Democrat to be our new MP. The full results can be found on the Vale website, [here](#). Whilst the council does not directly report to the local MP, having a strong local representative is important. We can work with them to raise issues to parliament that the council doesn't have power over or lobby the government to make changes to the way things work to make lives for our residents better. The government sets what kind of powers and funding we get to deliver services for our residents. As we have an entirely new government, it will be interesting to see what changes occur and the impacts this will have on us all.



We've been continuing to help our residents with queries about planning applications in the area. If you're concerned about a planning application near you then do get in touch for advice.

It was great to see Harwell Campus open to the public with a very successful Harwell Open Day on the 29<sup>th</sup> June. The sun was shining, and it was lovely to see so many people attending to look at all the interesting exhibits and to visit the different buildings and experiments. A reminder of what a fantastic science campus we have right on our doorsteps.

As always, if you have any 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 ahead of time. If you need more guidance on this, please let us know!

*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).

## **Councils encourage everyone to rethink waste**

We all need to rethink how we deal with our waste.

That's the strong message from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils whose residents have consistently been among the very best recyclers in England for well over a decade.

The two councils are now striving to take things to the next level and are encouraging everyone to rethink their approach to waste.

Part of the big plan is to encourage and enable people to reduce, reuse, repair, refill and rehome items, instead of throwing them away.

The councils have set out the many ways they will move towards a waste service that is de-carbonising, provides value for money and better works with residents to reduce, reuse, repair, refill and rehome. Some of the many ways this could be achieved include:

- making sure kerbside collections are easy and efficient.
- continuing to deliver clean public spaces for everyone to enjoy.
- making it easier to report waste-related issues.
- listening to local knowledge to improve street cleaning.
- supporting efforts with community litter picks.
- signposting information about local events such as repair cafes.

## **Parish Council News**

The path by the George has at last been cleared and is open to walkers. The adjacent fields are however so overgrown that in places they are intruding and would benefit from cutting back. That is the responsibility of the landowners.

Replacement of the rotted play area surround will commence in mid-August. The new surround will be recycled plastic which should last a lifetime thus avoiding the need for regular expenditure on this feature.

Would you be interested in being part of the group that finds out what villagers want and how to make it happen over the next 5, 10, 15 & even 20 years? If so please send an email to join the Volunteers and Questionnaire working group on WhatsApp at [bens@uptonpc.co.uk](mailto:bens@uptonpc.co.uk)



The next full meeting of the Parish Council will be in the Village Hall on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September (there is no August meeting) in the small meeting room. All are welcome to attend but, if possible, please advise the Parish Clerk in advance.

## **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 SCHOOL RATED**

### **‘GOOD’ AND ‘OUTSTANDING’**

Blewbury School is delighted with the outcomes from its recent Ofsted inspection, which gave the School an overall grade of ‘Good’ with its Early Years provision being graded as ‘Outstanding’. The now published Ofsted report recognises the School’s ‘high ambitions’ and how children work hard, behave well and achieve well. It states that leaders *‘have high aspirations for pupils. They share the same inclusive vision and keep pupils at the heart of decision-making’*. Inspectors also praised the School’s focus on reading, and how it *‘provides well for pupils’ wider development’* with a range of experiences such as pupil leadership opportunities, trips and clubs.

The ‘Outstanding’ Early Years provision is highlighted, with the report stating that *‘children get off to an excellent start. The early years curriculum prepares children well for the next stage of their education. Children cooperate extremely well with each other and happily share resources with friends.’*

Headteacher, Jo Reeder, said: *‘We are extremely pleased with the outcome of the inspection. The first sentence of the report ‘pupils are proud of their inclusive and caring school’ absolutely reflects our ethos. I am incredibly proud of the staff team for their hard work and dedication; and am grateful to governors, parents, carers and wider community for supporting the School on its improvement journey. I am delighted with the way pupils articulated and showed our values to the inspectors, who particularly commented to us on how respectful and tolerant they were of each other’s views and differences.’*

The successful inspection outcome marks an important milestone for our School which joined multi-academy trust Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) in January 2020 following a previous inspection that was not so positive. The School has since undergone a transformation with new leadership and support from ODST. Anne Dellar, ODST Chief Executive said: *‘Ofsted inspections are rigorous and to be graded ‘Good’ with ‘Outstanding’ for Early Years education is a remarkable achievement. Children really are getting the best possible start at Blewbury. I’m extremely proud of the School leaders, staff and children, who make it such a happy and inclusive environment in which to learn. Blewbury strives for excellence and ODST will continue to support the school through this next exciting chapter.’*



*Jo Reeder (left) & Ann Parham with four jubilant House Captains*

The School governors, led by Ann Parham, have also congratulated the School for this huge commendation for its work.

There are spaces in all year groups so if you know anyone who is looking for a primary school place please ask them to contact the school office to arrange a visit. Full details of how to contact the school are on the school website.

## **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 Women's Institute (WI) generally meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month and we have 11 'regular' meetings a year. Generally a speaker plus a little drink or two (hold on, that could be apple juice).....

Our next meeting will be Wednesday 28 August 4-6pm in the Melland room but members only. This an afternoon tea master-minded by the committee. So not the usual Bring and Share - what a treat! Fingers crossed for good weather but, of course, we have the Melland room to shelter in if it is inclement. The theme is "the Sixties" so come in your maxi dress with flowers in your hair.....

In addition to the regular monthly meetings, Blewbury WI play Mah Jong, go on walks, play Scrabble and Rummikub as well as running a craft club and a book club. Recently we have had a pub lunch, a canal boat trip and a walk round Streatley woods plus another walk to historic Dorchester on Thames.

So much to choose from! Most of all we are a group of friends and support each other at all times.

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). September meeting is 25<sup>th</sup>, more news next month. Come as a visitor - you will be made so welcome. New members can join at any time and pay a 'pro-

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## 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. 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

## 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:

**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)

## Nature Garden News

There are a few ways to get free plants - collecting seed, taking cuttings, digging up your neighbours' beds in the middle of the night. But recently I came across a simpler - and thankfully legal - method of increasing our plant stock. I signed up on behalf of the nature garden to provide a home for orphaned plants left behind after the Hampton Court Flower Show.

Facilitated by an organisation called [Wayward](#), we were allowed to select a maximum of 50 plants from the selection that might otherwise have gone to the dump. It was a bit of a lucky dip as the plants weren't labelled and the person collecting on our behalf (thanks Jo G) claimed no horticultural knowledge. But when the haul eventually arrived in Upton we found some real gems. I used Picture This - the plant ID app - to identify what we'd rescued. Specimens included false buck's beard with splendid purple spires, an attractive Japanese fern, a substantial juniper, and lots of perennials including some useful evergreens.

### Volunteering opportunity: Sunday August 11

You can see the new batch for yourself if you come to the working party on Sunday August 11, from 10am. We'll need help to site the plants according to their preference for light and soil type, and to get them planted.

The plants we put in this spring are flourishing for the most part. The eleagnus ebbingei in particular have put on a mass of berries and look very well. Also the hebes, sedums and spirea. In spite of the wetter weather it can be dry, especially near the large trees, so if you're in the garden feel free to fill the watering can at the butt and give some things a dousing. The water point for birds and insects often needs a top-up too.

If you'd like to see a more detailed list of jobs, head to [www.nature-garden.co.uk/get-involved](http://www.nature-garden.co.uk/get-involved). You can pitch in (and delight us all) by knocking something off the list. No need to ask - the garden belongs to everyone.

Recent joys in the garden have been delicious cherries on the tree Caroline planted for Kit Maunsell, gorgeous gooseberries, a splendid great mullein in the meadow, and a wonderfully disguised dragonfly. Long live nature!





## 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)