

# Upton News

## January 2025

The month ahead	2
Village calendar	2
Sunrise, sunset & twilight	2
Village News	3
St Mary's Church	3
Service times	3
Father Jason writes ...	3
Christmas at St Mary's	3
Upton Parish Council	4
Light up December	5
Upton Wine Club	6
Local News	6
Blewbury WI	6
Blewbury Players	6
Astons Online	7
Vale News	8
VoWHDC News	8
"Hello" from Hayleigh and Debra	8
Thames Valley Police Commissioner	9
Didcot u3a	10
Local directory	11
What's On ....	11
Service centre	11
Useful contacts	12

# The month ahead

## Village calendar

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

### Village Hall

- Parish Council
- Village Fete
- Uptonogood
- Wine club
- Brownies
- Community coffee morning
- Upton Christmas Readers
- Dance & Fitness
- Karate
- Dog training
- Kinetic gymnastics
- Tea Birds WI

### St Mary's Church

- ▲ Parish Eucharist
- △ Lay-led service
- ▲ Other service

### Waste collection

- Black bin
- Green bin + Brown bin
- Green bin + Brown bin + extra garden waste

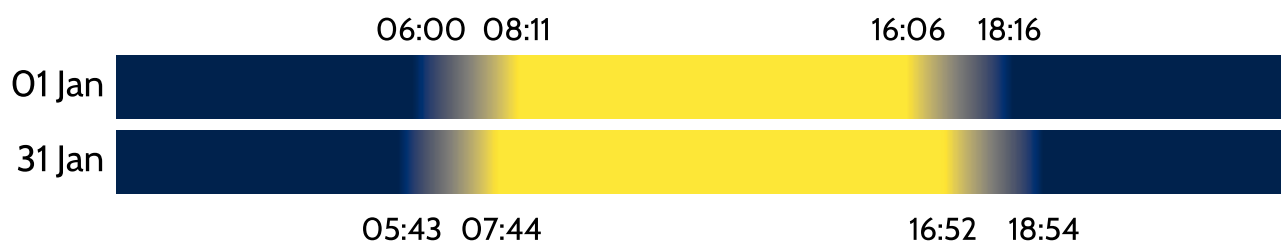
### Other

- Weekend/public holiday
- Clocks change
- Upton News deadline

For details of events at the Village Hall please see [here](#):

For details of services at St Mary's Church, please see [here](#):

## Sunrise, sunset & twilight



---

# Village News

## St Mary's Church

### *Service times*

Date	Time	Type	Prayer focus
5 <sup>th</sup> January	9:15 am	Lay-led service	Children Our village schools Sunday clubs
12 <sup>th</sup> January	9:15 am	Parish Eucharist	Those recently baptised Baptism visitors
19 <sup>th</sup> January	3:00 pm	Family and all age service ("We Three Kings")	CYGnets group Teenagers
26 <sup>th</sup> January	9:15 am	Parish Eucharist	Our worship Musicians, organists & choirs

---

The online services continue every Sunday at 10.30am. Login after 10.00 to chat beforehand or to check your technology. Please click [here](#) to access the Churn Churches website which gives the log-in details.

### *Father Jason writes ...*

... will return next month

### *Christmas at St Mary's*

We welcomed congregations totalling around 150 people to St Mary's for our three Christmas events – the Friends of St Mary's carols and readings, the Christmas eve crib service and the service on Christmas day itself. Wonderful to see so many people and also wonderful to report that contributions to the two charities supported this year – the Oxford Gatehouse homeless sanctuary and the Children's Society – came to nearly £600.

The church was looking extra special for Christmas, with the porch decorated by Emily and Fiona Betts to represent no. 24 on the Upton advent calendar. We were, however, very sad not to have Jessie West, a pillar of support for St. Mary's for nearly 60 years, with us. Jessie died on 17<sup>th</sup> December. The thoughts and prayers of all present were very much with her family, and a full appreciation of her life and her contribution to life in Upton will appear in the next edition.

# Upton Parish Council

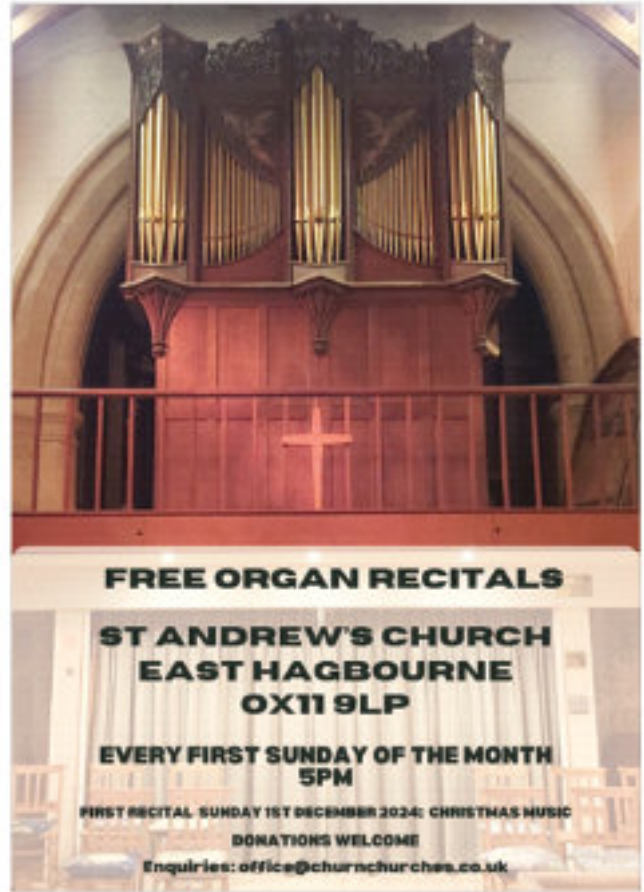
Upton Parish Council hopes that all residents have had an enjoyable festive season and take this opportunity to wish everyone a Very Happy New Year.

The Council would also like to update everyone on the situation at Wattle Farm. The council planning enforcement consultant had advised that his department was aware of the development taking place and had made regular visits. The Council has now been notified that “.....as per the planning process, [the owner] has been invited ....to submit a retrospective planning application. They will be allowed some time to do this before any further action is taken.” The Council has asked to be kept informed of any action taken.

Regarding the ongoing flooding issues the Council also took this matter up with the County Council and the local MP, Olly Glover. Olly met Ben on 6<sup>th</sup> December and walked all the areas about which there is concern. Olly is going to raise the issue at a higher level and hopes for a response within 6 months.

Following a previous notification about the salt bins in the village, it is hoped these will be topped up soon and villagers will then be able to access them if weather conditions dictate.

Finally, due to the necessity to raise funds to extend the car park at the recreation ground, the Council intend to start charging a small fee for using it. Anyone using the hall and recreation ground will not have failed to notice damage being done to the grass where people have been parking when it is wet. To save making the conditions worse, and with the cost of repairs extreme, the gates are going to be closed on a daily basis, only being opened for any event that has booked the hall or the ground. The Council is sorry to have to



impose this restriction but feels it is the best course of action for the whole village.

As always, the Council would like to invite comments from all villagers on any matter with which they have concern. These should be sent to [parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk](mailto:parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk)

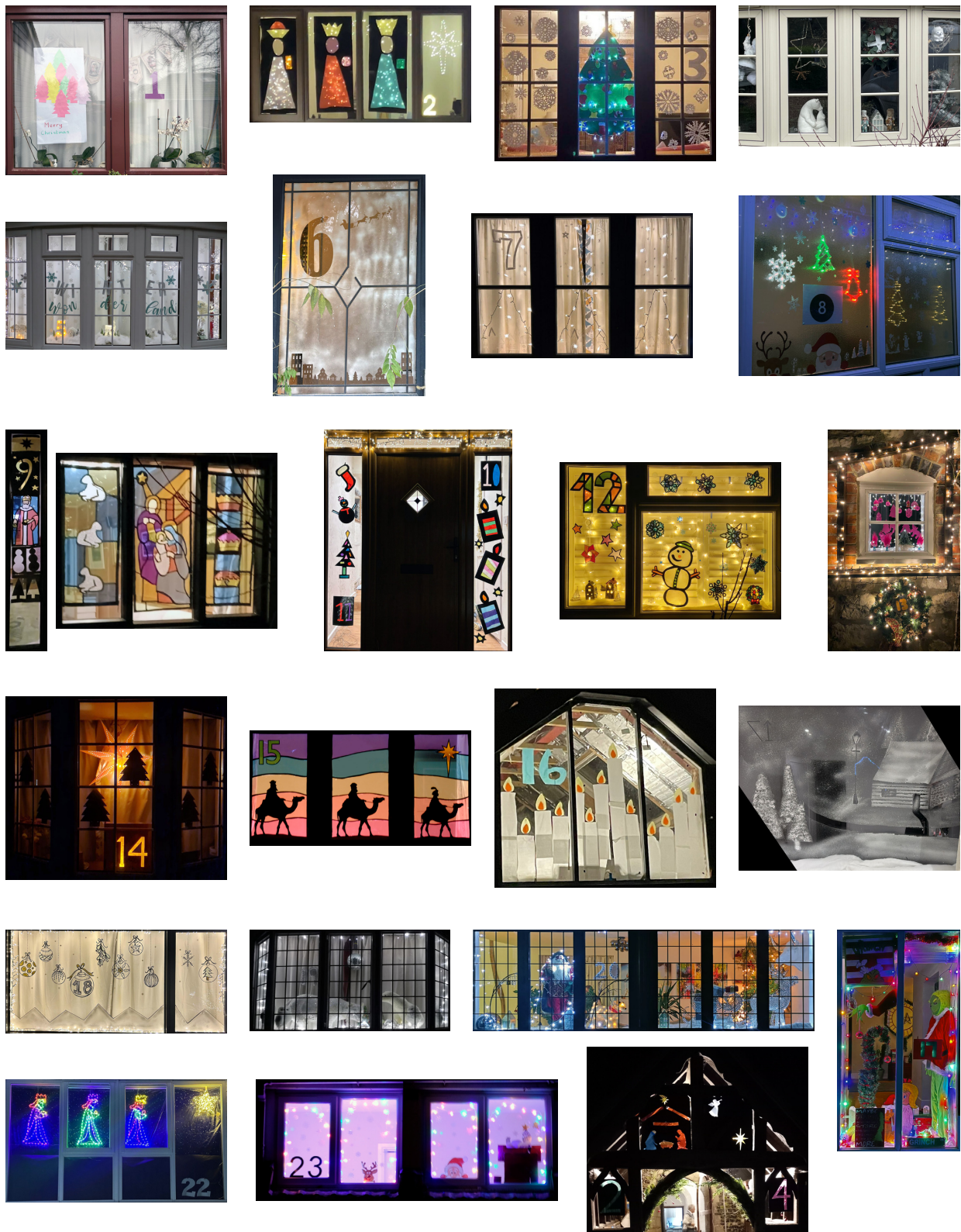
## Note to contributors

Contributions to Upton News are always very welcome. Please include your name, address and contact details (email and/or phone number) in case clarification is needed: we will not be able to publish your contribution without these details. The editor reserves the right to place, edit, shorten or omit contributions as required.

Please send your contributions by email to [uptonox11news@gmail.com](mailto:uptonox11news@gmail.com)

The deadline for the February 2025 issue is **29<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

# Light up December



The montage above shows the windows involved in the 2024 "Light Up December" display. Thanks to all who took part, and to Kirsty for organising the display. It made the village a much brighter place during the darkest part of the year.

---

## Upton Wine Club



Our December Wine Club meeting was held a week earlier this month, giving us all a head start on the Christmas festivities! Celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> season, it was wonderful to see so many villagers enjoying the evening. We are fortunate to have a diverse selection of wines to sample, ensuring there's always something new for our members to experience. Each wine comes with its own story, and a big part of our club is not just discussing the wine, but also its connection to people, places, and its role in creating a bit of history! Wine has made people wealthy, landed some behind bars, kept families together for generations, and sparked a few feuds! Whatever the case, it has always generated interest, and our village would be a little poorer without a Wine Club! So, I'd like to extend my gratitude to everyone who makes it happen each month – from the committee who come up with fantastic topics and make it all possible, to those who help tidy up at the end of each meeting, and of course, all the members who join us to enjoy a glass or two and create more memorable moments!

In January, we will explore what age does to a wine. We have invited the local wine business, Grape Minds, to share their experiences. Hope you can join us!

## Local News

### Blewbury WI

Blewbury WI's next main meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 in the Vale room of Blewbury village hall. The meeting is entitled "*The amazing, life-saving medical detection dogs*". This will be a talk on dogs who detect major diseases, identify dangerous bacteria and alert those with life threatening diseases. The dogs are trained to detect the odour of human disease with the aim of developing faster, more efficient and less invasive diagnostics that lead to better patient outcomes. All bio-detection dogs live in homes as part of a caring family with our fantastic volunteer fosterers, and lead normal, happy lives as pet dogs. This should be a fascinating talk.

Blewbury WI have loads to do on top of our monthly talks. Walks, coffee mornings, outings, pub lunches, Book club, Craft club, Scrabble, Rummikub and Mah Jong – phew – what a choice! Do as much or as little as you like. Your friends in the WI are always there for you.

If you'd like to come along with someone else or find out more, ring our Secretary, Joy, on 850543 or [email](#). If you come as a visitor, you will be made very welcome and will have the chance to see if it is your sort of thing. We don't bite and we certainly can't all make jam! You would pay "pro rata" for the remainder of the year if you choose to join. We hope to see you soon!

### Blewbury Players

Just a short reminder that our pantomime *Puss in Boots* will be playing at 7.30pm each night from 29<sup>th</sup> Jan to 1<sup>st</sup> Feb and there is a 2.30pm Saturday matinee. With lots of laughs, songs and very little politics, this is a traditional pantomime for all the family. Based on Charles Perrault's telling of the classic tale, Puss in Boots takes you on a journey of a firm friendship, in fantastic footwear. Oh yes it does! Tickets cost £16 for Adults and £8 for Children so click [here](#) and book your tickets for some family fun to cheer up January! Please see our [website](#) for more info.

---

We would also like to give advance warning of our summer production: *A Monster Calls*. This will be performed between 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025 in the Orchard Dene Garden Theatre, Blewbury. We will be holding initial auditions on 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Please contact us by [email](#) if you are interested in taking part on or off stage.

This is the play version of the bestselling classic novel by Patrick Ness. It is a powerful, contemporary story about love, loss and hope and the power of story telling that is a mix of moral fable and ancient myth. Its hero is a lonely 13-year-old, Conor, whose mother is seriously ill. He is visited by a monster who offers to tell Conor three tales if the boy will, in return, tell him the truth. We are excited to welcome Sabina Netherclift as our director for this our 49<sup>th</sup> Summer production. Please visit our website for further audition and production information.

## Blewbury School Report

The Blewbury School report is taking a Christmas break but we hope to be back next month.

## Blewbury Post Office

Just a quick reminder that our opening hours over the New Year period will be:

Wed 1 Jan	CLOSED
Thu 2 Jan	CLOSED
Fri 3 Jan	9am - 3pm
Sat 4 Jan	CLOSED
Sun 5 Jan	CLOSED
Mon 6 Jan	9am - 3pm

The sale of our fresh free range eggs is going well and we have a regular delivery every week so should always have eggs available. We also have our delicious local honey, alongside a variety of sweet treats, ice lollies, chocolate and cool drinks.

## Astons Online

If you have any unwanted PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones, would you please consider donating them to us? They could be a New Year gift to someone unable to have their own. Astons Online CIC passes them to Getting Oxfordshire Online – a SOFEA Didcot charity which distributes free digital devices to Oxfordshire residents. If you have any suitable items that you would be willing to donate, please either [email](#) us or call 07780958249

There are in-person one-to-one sessions in Astons Village Hall (OX11 9EQ) on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 10:00 to 12 noon. Please tell us if you're coming. Astons Online CIC events and support are free of charge and open to everyone.

## United Charities

United Charities provides help with essential living costs. For example:

- Are you struggling to pay for food, energy or necessary household items?
- Are you a pensioner who will just miss out on qualifying for the Winter Fuel Payment and worrying about your energy bill this winter?

Over the past few years we have supported many people living in Blewbury, the Astons & Upton by providing small grants to help pay for such things as energy bills, food bills, white goods, school trips etc. If you, or someone you know is in need please consider applying: all applications are dealt with confidentially.

To apply there is a short application form to complete which can be picked up from St Mary's Church porch or requested by email [here](#). We can help you fill in the form if needed.

## Christmas Tree Chipping

Stephen and Ben Strange will be chipping up Christmas trees at Savage's greengrocers on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2025, 10 am until 12 noon. This will be their 21<sup>st</sup> year of doing so, and a donation to Helen and Douglas House would be gratefully accepted.

---

# Vale News

## VoWHDC News

### *“Hello” from Hayleigh and Debra*

There was no news from your local councillors for this edition of Upton News.

### *Current planning applications*

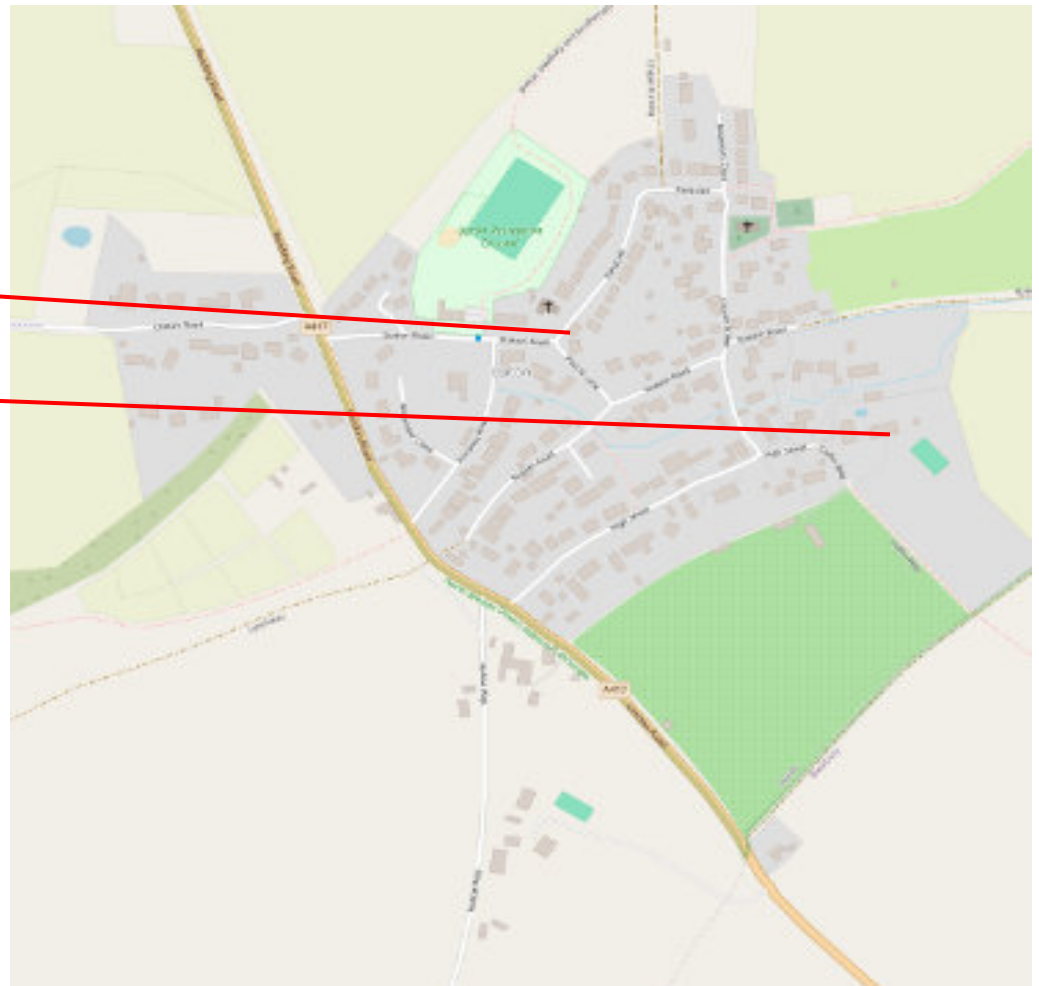
The map below shows the location of all planning applications within the parish of Upton that are *Current* and were registered between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> December 2024. Details of each application can be obtained by following the hyperlinks on the right-hand side of the map

### **Volunteer as a Foundation Governor at Hagbourne C of E School**

The local board of Governors at Hagbourne C of E School are looking for a Foundation Governor to join our board. The role is a voluntary position and the applicant needs to be a regular church attendee to meet the Diocese requirements for the role. If you would like the opportunity to give back to the local community, and be part of a friendly team that makes a real difference to the local children in the area we would be delighted to hear from you. Please email [Jemma Dyson](mailto:jemma.dyson@hagbournece.org) (Chair of Governors) to find out more.

[P24/V2307/HH](#)

[P24/V1119/FUL](#)



# Thames Valley Police Commissioner

This month, I would like to explain how we are addressing concerns about e-scooters and local neighbourhood policing teams.

This is certainly an issue that divides opinion, and whether its Christmas presents or the January sales, e-scooters are on a lot of people's wishlists. For many, they are a convenient way to get around but e-scooters and illegal e-bikes generate a great deal of concern and it remains illegal to use privately owned e-scooters anywhere on public land. Whilst it is an issue that can be more prevalent in our towns, it is one that many residents have a view on.

I've called on both the previous and the current government to review the law around e-scooters. E-scooters are classed as motor vehicles and it is currently impossible to get insurance, meaning that currently only council run schemes are legal and then only with a driving license.

Aside from the risk of injury and concerns about the fire risks from some batteries the police are responding to an increased public concern. During November alone 80 e-scooters and e-bikes were seized. Sadly alongside those who want to use these vehicles to simply get around, criminals will

also use them in an attempt to evade the police. Efforts will continue to tackle this issue as we continue the focus on anti-social behaviour in the New Year.

There has also been more talk lately of having named local police officers across the country. Well I'm pleased to say that this has been the case for many years in Thames Valley. Every neighbourhood area in Thames Valley has a team of sergeants, police constables and police community support officers (PCSOs), and as we're doubling the number of neighbourhood officers those teams are growing in size. You can find out who is on your local team, and how to contact them using this [link](#).

  
**Matthew Barber**  
Your voice in  
Thames Valley

**Matthew Barber is Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, working with the police to help drive down crime locally.**

**STAY IN TOUCH**  
matthewbarber.co.uk

@matthewbarberpcc   

@matthew\_barber 

**JOIN THE WHATSAPP COMMUNITY**



Promoted by Matthew Barber on his own behalf, of Waterloo House, 58-60 High Street, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 6HJ.

---

## Didcot u3a

Winter is well underway and what better time for all newly retired or semi-retired individuals to join a nationwide 'club' through its local branch, the Didcot and District u3a?!

Its 'strap line' is 'Learn, Laugh, Live!' and with 30 Interest Groups (see [here](#) for further details), we are sure there is something for everyone! In addition, we meet on the Third Tuesday of every Month in the Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot, OX11 7JN starting at 2:30 pm where ideas are exchanged and a Guest Speaker provides an interesting presentation. The talk is followed by tea, biscuits and a friendly chat and all new visitors will be most warmly welcomed!

The 2025 programme includes:

- 21 Jan    Schooldays Past  
          Speaker: TBC (Oxford Museum Service)
- 18 Feb    The History of Didcot  
          Speaker: David Taylor (Didcot &  
          District Archaeology & History Society)
- 18 Mar    The Shrunken Garden  
          Speaker: Timothy Walker (ex Horti  
          Praefectus, University of Oxford  
          Botanic Garden and Harcourt  
          Arboretum)
- 15 Apr    Women and the Victorian Army  
          Speaker: Dan Allen

More joining information can be found by contacting us [here](#).

What better way to start 2025 - we look forward to seeing you soon!

---

# Local directory

## What's On ....

Venue	Telephone	Website
<b>Didcot</b>		
Cornerstone	01235 515144	<a href="https://www.cornerstone-arts.org/whats-on">https://www.cornerstone-arts.org/whats-on</a>
Cineworld	0871 2002000	<a href="https://www.cineworld.co.uk/cinemas/didcot/">https://www.cineworld.co.uk/cinemas/didcot/</a>
<b>Wallingford</b>		
Corn Exchange	01491 825000	<a href="https://www.cornexchange.org.uk/whats-on/">https://www.cornexchange.org.uk/whats-on/</a>
<b>Wantage</b>		
The Beacon	01235 763456	<a href="https://www.beaconwantage.co.uk/whats-on/">https://www.beaconwantage.co.uk/whats-on/</a>
<b>Abingdon</b>		
The Abbey Cinema	01235 616000	<a href="https://theabbey.ac/web">https://theabbey.ac/web</a>

## Service centre

If you are an Upton Village resident and have a skill or trade that other residents might find useful, please contact the editor with a short summary of your skill/trade and your contact details. We will include these in the next edition of Upton News, free of charge.

Listings will initially be restricted to Upton Village residents but if there are any skills or trades not covered, then we may include entries from residents of nearby villages.

---

# Useful contacts

Contact	Telephone	email
<b>Upton News</b> Upton News Editor	n/a	<a href="mailto:uptonox1news@gmail.com">uptonox1news@gmail.com</a>
<b>Churn Benefice</b> Father Jason St. John Nicolle Revd Louise Butler Revd John Clarke Revd Dr Mark Rhodes-Smith Elaine de Ridder	01235 850267 07837 009730 01235 510073 01235 850267 01235 850267	<a href="mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk">office@churnchurches.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:revlouiseb@aol.com">revlouiseb@aol.com</a> <a href="mailto:jphclarke@gmail.com">jphclarke@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:mark.rhodes-smith@churnchurches.co.uk">mark.rhodes-smith@churnchurches.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk">office@churnchurches.co.uk</a>
<b>Parish Council</b> Chair Clerk	n/a n/a	<a href="mailto:bens@uptonpc.co.uk">bens@uptonpc.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk">parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk</a>
<b>VoWH District Councillors</b> Hayleigh Gascoine Debra Dewhurst	n/a n/a	<a href="mailto:hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Oxfordshire County Councillor</b> Sally Povolotsky	n/a	<a href="mailto:sally.povolotsky@oxfordshire.gov.uk">sally.povolotsky@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Member of Parliament</b> Olly Glover	n/a	<a href="mailto:olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk">olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk</a>
<b>Afternoon Drop In</b> Richard Burrow	n/a	<a href="mailto:richmondbinov@gmail.com">richmondbinov@gmail.com</a>
<b>Astons Online</b> Bruno Brunskill	07780 958249	<a href="mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com">theastonsonline@gmail.com</a>
<b>United Charities</b> Main contact	n/a	<a href="mailto:unitedcharities@outlook.com">unitedcharities@outlook.com</a>
<b>Blewbury WI</b> Joy	01235 850543	<a href="mailto:blewburywi@gmail.com">blewburywi@gmail.com</a>
<b>Didcot U3A</b> Chair Secretary	n/a n/a	<a href="mailto:chair@didcotu3a.org">chair@didcotu3a.org</a> <a href="mailto:secretary@didcotu3a.org">secretary@didcotu3a.org</a>
<b>First Steps Baby Bank</b> Chair	n/a	<a href="mailto:contact@firststepsbabybank.co.uk">contact@firststepsbabybank.co.uk</a>