

Published by Little Milton Parish Council

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Little Milton Newsletter



March 2021

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Advice and support on Coronavirus

National advice on Coronavirus- it's changing all the time, so keep up to date with daily updates to make sure you are getting accurate information!

Take care where you look for advice and guidance, and make sure that you are using verified sites for information as there is a lot of incorrect or 'scam' advice on social media at the moment. Always use the advice below from makes sense and check it regularly for updates.

The following are some key websites

Coronavirus -What you need to do: Government advice
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS England for advice on protecting yourself
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Public Health England for up to date advice and guidance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>
including Easy Read and language translations

Updates from Oxfordshire County Council

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-from-the-government/>

EXTRACTS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10th FEBRUARY 2021

(The minutes will be approved at the meeting held on 10th March 2021)

Planning

P20/S4875/LB: Hillview Cottage High Street:

Create a work from home space in the existing stone outbuilding. Replacing one door with a secure cottage style external door & introducing two wooden windows in keeping with the house

The Council RESOLVED to support the application and allow the conservation team to determine the appropriateness of the proposed changes

Report of Meeting held with Officer from OCC Highways

The Chairman stated that the notes of the meeting held on February 3rd 2021 with an Officer from OCC Highways, members of the Parish Council, County Councillor Stephen Harrod and District Councillor Caroline Newton had been circulated to all Council members by the Clerk. The Chairman expressed his view that although the meeting had proved useful he believed that the Council had not managed to engage with the appropriate team within OCC Highways. However he was encouraged by the suggestion that Government were considering transferring powers to Local Authorities under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 that would empower it to enforce weight limits amongst other traffic offences. Barry Coward commented that volunteers could be used to help to enforce any weight limit on the A329 as had been done on the Haseley Road.

County Councillor Harrod reported that he was working with Officers within the Infrastructure Strategy and Policy Team to set up a further meeting to address the Council's concerns on the application of the LTP4 Freight Strategy and the Traffic Mitigation information provided by AECOM in support of the Outline Planning Application for Chalgrove Airfield. Councillor Harrod stated that he would include the Officer responsible for managing the Chalgrove Airfield Planning application.

Grass cutting quotes 2021/22

The Clerk shared the grass cutting quotes received from three contractors. The Councillors discussed the merits of the quotes in terms of price and service and RESOLVED to accept the grass cutting quote and the verge cutting quote from the Council's existing contractors.

Hard Standing for Grundon Refuse Bins

The Clerk informed the Council that he had obtained a quote to create a hard standing for the Grundon refuse bins sited at the entrance to the car park. The Councillors discussed the quote and requested that two further quotations were obtained to allow them to assess its competitiveness. Cllr. Steve Sidhu and Cllr. Adam Sheppard offered to obtain a quotation and have it provided to the Clerk.

Recruitment of Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

The Chairman reported that he had been informed by Cllr. Alaric Smith that a meeting had been set up with the candidate on Friday 12th February 2021.

Cllr. Steve Sidhu proposed that the recruitment steering group should exchange information prior to the meeting to ensure that everyone shared a common understanding of the details and expectations of the replacement Clerk/RFO

The Chairman commented that the Councillors needed to consider what aspects of the current clerk's duties would not transfer to the new clerk. He suggested individual Councillors could take responsibility for specific areas of activity. The Clerk stated there were tasks e.g. Fix My Street that could be done outside the Council but he considered most of what he did was Council specific.

The Chairman asked the Councillors to bring forward suggestions to the meeting on March 10th.

Thames Water/OCC Highways

The Chairman reported that the Council had received a copy of a letter from Thames Water, as part of the pre-application enquiry into the possible development of Milton House, from Mr Henry Venners. He stated that the Council should review the current effectiveness of the drainage and sewerage system in advance of any planning application for development and consider how it wished to engage with Thames Water.

The Clerk gave a brief background on the drainage and sewerage issues experienced by the village over the past few years. These included the following:-

- Flooding on the lower end of the Haseley Road
- Gainsbridge brook
- Thames Water sewerage network at Little Milton School and adjacent area
- Sewerage Treatment Works (STW) and associated pumping station

The Chairman invited Barry Coward to comment in his capacity as Chairman of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group. Barry referred the Council to page 15 of the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Background Studies Part 6. This section included the details of a letter received from Thames Water in respect of the Neighbourhood Development Plan that commented upon the likely upgrades of the waste water network under the projected developments within the Plan.

The Clerk informed the Council that previous councils had a good working relationship with Thames Water and had regular meetings to review the issues that were of concern to the village. The last meeting had been in January 2020.

In the light of a possible development the Council RESOLVED that it should arrange a meeting with Thames Water to review the progress on the meeting held on 11th January 2020 in respect of tanker activity, infiltration ground water and to review with them their communication included in the Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Background Studies. The Clerk stated that he would draft a letter for consideration by the Council

Current Council members

| | |
|--|--|
| Councillor Francois Van Der Merwe (Chairman) | 01844 278180 |
| Councillor Alaric Smith | |
| Councillor Howard Harrison | 01844 279946 |
| Councillor Adam Sheppard | 01844 279217 |
| Councillor Steve Sidhu (Vice Chairman) | 01844 279448 |
| Councillor David Wakeling | 01844 278014 |
| Parish Clerk Raymond Fergusson | 01844 279150 lmparishcouncil@btinternet.com |
| County Councillor: Stephen Harrod | 01844 278068 |
| District Councillor Caroline Newton | 01491 614662 |

SODC: WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

The minimum charge is £40 for up to 3 items and £8 for each additional item. There is a maximum of six items per collection day: if you have more than six, you'll need to book another collection day. Please note that a bed and mattress counts as 2 items and a three piece suite (consisting of 1 settee and 2 chairs) counts as 3 items.

Before you contact us to book your bulky waste collection, have a good think about whether you have any other big items to dispose of. Once we have processed your booking, we are unable to make any alterations or add any other items – even if you have only booked one or two items.

To arrange this service residents can call the Public Amenities Team on 01235 422406 or book on line from the Council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk

Give your furniture to a good home

Have you considered donating your furniture to charity or a good home? Emmaus is an Oxford based charity that will come out to all areas of the county and collect unwanted furniture free of charge. For legal or practical reasons this does not include soft furnishings without a fire label, safety items, or any item that is not in a saleable condition. Please [visit the Emmaus website](#) for more details.

BIFFA: WASTE COLLECTION DATES – MARCH 2021

| | Brown | Grey | Green | Food |
|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| 2nd March | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| 9th March | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| 16th March | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| 23rd March | No | No | Yes | Yes |

REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR CAROLINE NEWTON

Council tax reminders

We are very aware that many people living in our district have new or increased financial worries because they've lost work or income due to the Coronavirus pandemic. For some this may mean that they are struggling to keep up with their council tax payments.

The government has not suspended council tax during the pandemic, so it still needs to be paid. We will therefore be writing once again to those people who have missed all, or part of, a recent payment to remind them of the support and options available to them and importantly to urge them to contact our council tax team as soon as possible to discuss their situation and agree a way forward.

You can see the full details of the help that's available and what we are saying to people on the attached notice. But above all, if people have any concerns or questions, they should contact our council tax team as soon as possible via sodc.counciltax@secure.capita.co.uk or 0345 302 2313.

For more information, please visit [southoxon.gov.uk/council tax](http://southoxon.gov.uk/council-tax).

Planning

Flooding and new developments

In light of the current flooding situation, and because we are aware that it often comes up as a potential issue on new developments, SODC officers have recently shared the following guidance on how flood risk is treated in the planning process.

“When we allocate land for development in our Local Plans and when town and parish councils do so in their Neighbourhood Plans, we consider flood risk through Strategic Flood Risk Assessments. We only allocate land for development where it is outside areas of high flood risk or we can secure appropriate flood protection or mitigation measures.

We have planning policies in our Plans that we use to assess planning applications. The assessment of planning applications which may be in a flood risk area includes the consideration of a Flood Risk Assessment. This assessment sets out how the development would have safe access during a potential flood, explains how it would not increase flood risk elsewhere, and can propose necessary mitigation measures. If such measures are required in connection with new developments, we will usually make them a condition of planning permission, or through a Section 106 legal agreement.

Applications which may be in a flood risk area are normally assessed by Thames Water, the Environment Agency, the flood risk authority (Oxfordshire County Council) and our own professional qualified draining engineers.

In all new developments we look for sustainable means to deal with surface water run off (from roofs and hard surfaces) which is normally managed and discharged within the development site.”

The risk of flooding is something that rightly exercises residents when plans for large new developments come forward. I will continue to do what I can to ensure that we can all be confident that mitigation and alleviation etc. are fully accounted for during the planning and enforcement processes.

Local Plan 2035

You will have seen in the press that the Local Plan is being challenged in the High Court by a local company. SODC has given the following statement:

“We can confirm we’ve received a challenge by Bioabundance to the Council’s decision to adopt the Local Plan 2035. We will be responding accordingly but we can’t comment further at this stage as this is a legal matter.”

Money for Newt Conservation

Developments in South Oxfordshire and the Vale have generated £240,000 over three years for great crested newt habitats.

Great crested newts are a European protected species. The councils have a Natural England licence allowing us to authorise developers to undertake work that may impact the newts in exchange for the developer investing in off-site compensation schemes, monitoring and long-term habitat management.

So far 5 developments have been authorised in South Oxfordshire (and 7 in the Vale) which has resulted in 23 high quality great crested newt ponds being created as well as the creation of 116 hectares of terrestrial habitat.

If you have any questions about these schemes, please contact **Eleanor Bunn** in the Countryside Team.

NEWS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR STEPHEN HARROD

Home Library Service: Call for volunteers

Residents across Oxfordshire have continued to benefit from the county’s home library service during the pandemic with 8,364 library books being delivered from April to December 2020.

Oxfordshire County Council's home library service is offered free to users in partnership with Age UK to almost 800 residents of all ages. These residents are unable to visit libraries themselves through frailty, infirmity or a disability and have no other means of getting access to loaned products. It is also available to full-time carers and those who might need the service in the short-term following illness or hospitalisation.

The service depends on a team of around 180 volunteers who supply the users with loan items on visits every three weeks. The service matches its volunteers carefully to specific residents to allow the same volunteer to visit each time. During the pandemic the number of volunteers has dropped linked to the impacts of COVID-19.

Investment for frontline service as county council sets annual budget

New investments and high levels of protection for frontline services are the chief features of the budget that Oxfordshire County Council has today (February 9) set for 2021/22 and beyond.

The council is dedicated to investing in services that will have positive long-term impact for local communities. The budget reflects this, with more than £25m of additional funding included. Some of this funding has been previously agreed, but £9.5m of this is new for 2021/22 to help meet additional demands, including within adult social care.

A total of £19.6m of savings will also take place in total across all services although £14.6m of these savings were already planned and are centred on the transformation of services to make them more efficient while protecting the frontline.

Council Tax proposals

A 1.99 per cent rise in basic council tax will take place from April plus an extra one per cent which would be required to be spent on adult social care under national rules, making a total of 2.99%.

Consultation launched on Oxfordshire's draft transport blueprint

Residents and organisations across Oxfordshire are being offered the chance to help shape the transformation of transport and digital connectivity across the county in a new consultation from 15 February to 29 March on a draft blueprint for the future.

With the need for climate action, helping create healthy communities and addressing air quality at the heart of council thinking, the new local transport and connectivity plan (LTCP) sets out a vision for Oxfordshire that will contribute to developing a zero-carbon economy for the county and transform the health and wellbeing of residents.

Government plan to transform Oxford-Cambridge Arc into UK's fastest growing economic region

An ambitious plan to unleash the economic and cultural potential of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, to transform it into one of the world's premier growth corridors and a world-leader in sustainability, has been announced by Housing Minister Rt. Hon Christopher Pincher.

The plan will help to create thousands of jobs, drive investment, protect and enhance the environment, and provide the infrastructure and beautiful new places needed to make the area – which spans the five counties of Oxfordshire,

Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire – an even greater place to live and work.

Rapid symptom-free testing available for public-facing workers in Oxfordshire

From Tuesday 23 February, workers and volunteers in public-facing roles will be able to get a free rapid COVID-19 test as part of Oxfordshire County Council's symptom-free testing programme.

The county council is working in partnership with the city and district councils to provide regular rapid testing for people without COVID-19 symptoms who work and volunteer outside the home.

The free tests are for people who do not have access to workplace testing through their employer. This includes the self-employed and people who work for small businesses, for example taxi drivers, independent retailers, and tradespeople such as plumbers and electricians.

Around one in three people with COVID-19 have no symptoms and so regular testing is an important tool to help stop the spread of the virus. It will help identify and self-isolate those who are unaware they are carrying the virus, which will protect work colleagues, customers and communities alike. The rapid spread of the highly infectious new variant of COVID-19 makes the testing of those who work outside the home an even greater priority.

Oxfordshire's symptom-free testing programme, which launched on 8 February, began with the police and fire service and was then expanded to include early year's workers and childminders as well as council staff in public-facing roles. Now public-facing workers and volunteers across the county are being invited to get tested once a week.

People can [book a free test](#) online and go to one of three locations:

- Spiceball Leisure Centre in Banbury (OX16 2BW)
- The Beacon in Wantage (OX12 9BX)
- King's Centre in Oxford (OX2 0ES)

The tests take just 15 minutes using lateral flow devices and involve taking a swab of the back of the throat and inside the nose. The swab is then given to trained staff at the test centre who process the test on-site. Results are given within an hour by text message or by email. Anyone who tests positive is told to self-isolate and follow the national guidance. They are provided with detailed [advice and support on self-isolation](#).

RECTOR'S PINT

It is nearly a year since we entered the first Lockdown. Since then, we have seen so much pain and hardship. Lives have been lost; many have struggled with ongoing debilitating illness. None of us could have failed to be moved by the heart-breaking stories of people being unable to say the sort of goodbyes they would want to loved ones. Businesses have taken a huge hit with so many people suffering as a consequence. I think we should particularly spare a thought for our local pubs, restaurants and hotels and the livelihoods that have been affected because of their limited trading.

There have been extraordinary stories of hope as well, the ways our schools have kept on providing education and how our villages have responded with people looking out for each other, that has been truly inspiring. I suspect though that as the spring starts to move forward, we will be rather less enthusiastic than last year when

many people commented that it was as if nature itself was taking a deep breath. We are all tired now, we just want this to stop.

I am of course not qualified to speculate on the origins of all of this and I suspect there is much more to come before any clear picture emerges, will it ever fully emerge? Closer to home though, I hope that this has taught us not to take things for granted. I miss the freedom to spend time with family and friends, a pint or two at a pub, and wandering around without any sort of sinister looking covering over my face, I am a man of simple tastes! I have been hugely grateful for the technology that has allowed us to meet virtually, but that of course is no substitute for the real thing. However, online meetings have largely proved to be significantly shorter, a good thing!

We are now in Lent, a season that is a time for reflection, perhaps of sorrow and sadness. We look forward to Easter, following the success of Harvest and Christmas I very much hope that on Easter morning we will be able to host another outdoor service, this time at 10.00am in the Churchyard in Great Haseley, please watch out for confirmation of this. Before Easter comes Good Friday of course. At Christmas we celebrated Emmanuel, God with us. Good Friday is all about God being with us as well, in the wreckage, muddle, pain, death and sin of our existence, God in Jesus Christ, entering into the deepest and darkest of human experiences. None of us can say exactly how this is going to play out, at the moment and for the time being we remain in our Lenten reflection. I believe that God is to be seen in the Good Friday experiences of loss, but also that we look forward in hope, Easter and life will come - That though is for the next 'Rector's Pint'.

Simon

CHURCH CLEANING ROTA FOR MARCH

| | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| W/E 7th March | – | Mrs A Blagg & Mrs C D'Aeth |
| W/E 14th March | – | Mrs M Davies & Mrs S A Dennis |
| W/E 21st March | – | Mrs L. Lovegrove & Mrs C Coward |
| W/E 28th March | – | Mrs A Jones & Jill Hoban |
| W/E 4th April | – | Mrs E. Summers & Mrs Anne Hawkins |

Church Cleaning Important Notice!

This is still taking place weekly and we have just welcomed a new member onto the rota. We thank Sarah Smith for her cleaning during her time with us in Little Milton and wish Sarah, Alaric and the family well in their new home.

We welcome Jill Hoban onto the rota and are looking forward to our next Lamb get together once the world re-opens...

If anyone is interested there is a complete record of the previous 20+ year of cleaning as we keep a record each week of what is done! This interesting document can be made available upon request. It would be especially helpful for anyone undertaking a Research Project into Church Cleaning...!!

S. A. Dennis

CHURCH OPEN ON SUNDAY P.M.

The Church will open every Sunday from 12.00 pm to 4.00 pm for anyone wishing a quiet space to reflect or pray.

BENEFICE SERVICES MARCH

| | Live Service 9.00 a.m. | Virtual Service Zoom 11.00 a.m. |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Wednesday 3 rd March | | Compline 6.00 p.m. |
| Sunday 7th March Lent 3 | NO | Invitation To Zoom Morning Prayer |
| Wednesday 10 th March | | Compline 6.00 p.m. |
| Sunday 14th March Lent 4 | LIVE SERVICE | Invitation To Zoom Morning Prayer |
| Wednesday 17 th March | | Compline 6.00 p.m. |
| Sunday 21st March Lent 5 (Passiontide) | UNTIL | Invitation To Zoom Morning Prayer |
| Wednesday 24th March | | Compline 6.00 p.m. |
| Sunday 28th March Palm Sunday | FURTHER NOTICE | Invitation To Zoom Communion |

GREAT MILTON METHODIST CHURCH SERVICES

The Methodist Church has advised that all churches will cease having services forthwith until further notice.

For further info. Please contact Rev Canon Dr Martin Wellings on 01865 243216

THANK YOU

We would like to thank everyone who have been so thoughtful and kind since we had Rebus put to sleep. We have received lovely messages, cards and flowers and it has been very comforting.

He was a real character and well known across the village and will be missed by many people.

As many of you know he was named after Inspector Rebus of Ian Rankin fame and we will have to see whether there will be a sequel!

Raymond & Sara

LITTLE MILTON WALKING SPRING FAIR

To celebrate the arrival of Spring (and the departure of Winter 2020/2021!) we will be holding a Village Walking Fair on **Saturday 3rd April from 2-4pm.**

Just like the Christmas event, stalls will be on driveways throughout the village and maps will be available to guide you.

There will also be a Treasure Hunt - a clutch of Easter chicks hidden along the way.

Stalls so far include:

Homemade Cakes

Jams and preserves

Easter Tombola

Plants

Children's crafts and activities

Jam Jar Tombola

Pottery and jewellery

Refreshments - including hot chocolate

Wooden crafts

Everyone is welcome.

Do you want to help? Contributions to the stalls will be gratefully received by Little Milton School and The Orchard.

Contact Katie [-kleworthy@hotmail.com](mailto:kleworthy@hotmail.com)

Profits will be shared by the School and the Orchard Preschool.

Of course, this will only go ahead if Covid rules allow and the date may change at short notice. Fingers crossed! Many thanks – Teresa Quedstedt 278922



SPRING FAIR EASTER EGG COMPETITION

Calling all budding artists. As part of this year's Spring Fair we will be holding 'a decorate the egg competition'. There will be two age categories: up to 5 years and 6-10 years.

The only rule is that you can use no more than 2 eggs in your design. How you decorate them is entirely up to you.

If you wish to enter can you please deliver your egg together with your name age and contact details to Sarah at 44 Chiltern View no later than midday on Saturday 3rd April. Entries will cost £2.

The winners will be chosen and announced on the day of the fair.

I look forward to seeing what you can all create.

Sarah

FRIENDS OF LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL- 200 CLUB

January

| | | | |
|-----|-------|-------------------|--------|
| 1st | No 19 | Chris Coward | £10.00 |
| 2nd | No 27 | Raymond Fergusson | £7.00 |
| 3rd | No 43 | Val Coates | £5.00 |

February

| | | | |
|-----|-------|------------------|--------|
| 1st | No 15 | McCulloch Family | £10.00 |
| 2nd | No 33 | Caroline Jones | £7.00 |
| 3rd | No 29 | Teresa Quested | £5.00 |

Diane Austin Little Milton School 200 Club Organiser

WELLS FARM ALLOTMENTS

We met online to discuss the management of the site and the growing year ahead. There is a need this year to form an association ready for next year as BBOWT need us to manage the site ourselves. As a start to this, Guy with help from me will be issuing the contracts on behalf of BBOWT. Please make sure you return them promptly so a BBOWT invoice can be raised. It is great to have more of the allotment holders helping to keep the site tidy. Unfortunately the large willow will not be tackled by SSE until after the bird nesting season now it would appear but BBOWT are keeping an eye on it and will remind them to get it done as soon as possible. If you are on site just before sundown keep an eye out for badgers passing through the site. You might just get lucky. March is a busy planting month so get your potatoes, onions, shallots and root veg seeds ready. Happy growing.

Paul. (paulj201@hotmail.com)

LITTLE MILTON WI

In February, we had a much needed session of Chair Yoga with local Yoga teacher, Yvonne Cartwright. Perfect to get us all moving and stretching, especially for those of us feeling house bound or working from home.

Our next meeting on **Thursday 11th March** is our **AGM** followed by some **Easter Crafts**. We'll also be unveiling our hopefully blossoming Narcissus bulbs given out in October - who will win the most beautiful display? We'll be **online from 7pm**. Contact me if you'd like to join us. Everyone welcome, the more the merrier!

Do you live in Little Milton, Great Milton or The Haseleys, want to meet new people, make new friends? Then join Little Milton WI and meet like-minded, local women of all ages in an informal, friendly group. Please phone or email us if you're feeling lonely, want a chat, fancy joining WI.

We meet every 2nd Thursday of the month at 7.30pm

Too shy to come by yourself? Contact me & I'll find you a WI buddy.

Like us at www.facebook.com/lmpinelodge

Details & news on the Pine Lodge page at www.littlemilton.org.uk

Kath Stacey 279438 or email littlemiltonwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

FRIENDS OF WELLS FARM

Spring is upon us! Thank goodness. It is amazing how quickly nature bounces back following a hard winter. The birds will still appreciate your garden feeders, especially the seed and berry eaters as there is little left out on the reserve. Insects should start to emerge so look out for blue tits or long tailed tits inspecting every twig for a tasty morsel. It will still be a while before the swallows and swifts return and with few nesting sites available, maybe you could install one in your home? Various sites including RSPB will guide you how to make one or you can buy them ready made. Swallows love having someone underneath a porch or in a barn that is easy for them to fly in and out of. Swifts like to find a place in roof spaces maybe under a bargeboard and also need a clear flightpath in.

On Wells Farm the grazing animals are all doing well and we're so grateful to our team of volunteer checkers, braving the rain, wind, mud and cold to look after the animals and feed them hay. We will still have quite a few sheep for a while. Some will stay until they have been shorn, while others may return to Chimney Meadows once the flooding has subsided. You will find the grazing area for the ponies will be restricted again to prevent them eating too much super rich graze and developing laminitis (think really bad athlete's foot).

The bramble and scrub alongside paths have been cut back, in time before the bird nesting season begins. You will see linear barriers created along the bridle path to keep people out of the rough grass where the skylarks are starting to look for nests. We are pleased to be planting some more hedges too.

The funded works in the barn to make a workshop for the BBOWT reserves officers and volunteer team are well underway, despite Covid and supplier related issues. It's all very exciting - the compost loo is now working, the electricity supply installed, and the barn improvements are nearly complete. This will mean BBOWT reserves officers will be with us more often so please feel free to say hello!

May I remind everyone to observe the signs on the gates and in the fields and stick to the paths. We need all dog owners to keep their dogs under control especially in fields where there are ponies or sheep. Sheep are particularly sensitive and a dog

running amongst them could lead to them breaking a leg or even dying so please take heed and remind others to do so. Please also clear up after your dog. It may decompose in time but if 50 dogs use the reserve every day that is nearly 20,000 poos a year! There are bins at the top of Oldfield or in other locations to deposit the doings.

Enjoy the fresh air and the well needed approach of spring.

Paul. (paulj201@hotmail.com)



What do you think about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to hear your views on the COVID-19 vaccine.

The county's independent health and care watchdog is running a survey asking people what they think about:

- The vaccine itself
- Information about the vaccine
- How the vaccine is being delivered

Please have your say by completing this survey at www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CovidVaccine-yourviews

Healthwatch Oxfordshire will report what it hears to those in charge of managing the vaccine delivery locally to help identify if improvements are needed.

Rosalind Pearce, Executive Director at Healthwatch Oxfordshire, said: "We really want to hear how people feel about the vaccine, particularly the reasons why people are deciding to have or not have the vaccination.

"All feedback is completely anonymous – we don't need to know who you are, but we do need to hear your views. Please do take a few minutes to share your thoughts with us on this."

To request a paper copy of the survey, or a translated version, please call 01865 520520 or to find out more about Healthwatch Oxfordshire see www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

census
2021

Be a part of Census 2021

Census day is 21 March 2021.

By taking part and encouraging others to do the same, you'll help make sure your community gets the services it needs.



Find out more at www.census.gov.uk

   Follow @Census2021

 Office for National Statistics

www.census.gov.uk

A4GIP1-A

OUR CHURCH FETE - WITH A DIFFERENCE!

The pandemic has had a big impact on all our lives, but in Little Milton we like to rise to a challenge!

Last year the church fete was cancelled, but we had a very successful late summer raffle that the village supported, and the church benefited from. Looking forward to this year the fete committee agreed that we could not plan our traditional garden fete, courtesy of Mr & Mrs Inge, as we believed that large gatherings would still be an issue in June.

We came up with the idea of spreading our fete across a number of the gardens in the village (and the village hall) and offer a ROVING FETE. This will give us the opportunity of enjoying some open gardens with stalls and activities spread across a number of locations in the village. It will also mean there are only small gatherings in any particular location.

The 'roving fete' will take place Saturday 19th June 2021.....the traditional 3rd Saturday in June for the fete. The details are being worked on but the enthusiasm within the committee was fabulous.

We always have a large number of helpers and these will still be needed across a variety of locations. **If you are willing to open your garden, have a stall in your driveway or help out on a stall we would love to hear from you.** We will support anyone willing to open their garden with guidance around safety and security and additional help if you would like to have a stall in your garden.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Lindsay Heath on 07967 452817 or lindsay@lindsayheathconsulting.co.uk or any member of the fete committee.

The success of the raffle in August last year gives us belief that we can use the same format this year and we will deliver tickets to each house in the village in the spring

We will keep you updated on our plans through the newsletter, and we will look forward to seeing you all at our new style fete.

*Lindsay Heath
Fete Coordinator*

NEWS FROM LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL

It's been quite a challenge deciding how to open this month's newsletter contribution, written on the eve of the half term holiday. Should it begin with a celebration of the children's work? Or the challenges that we've all faced over the last five weeks? Or perhaps a commentary on the extreme weather we've experienced lately? Whilst these are all appropriate openers normally, the headline message is really one of gratitude.

It's been a tough term for our school community and one that we all hope will not need to be repeated in quite the same way again. Yet, despite the challenges, we are so grateful for the resolve, empathy, flexibility and determination shown by everybody in helping our community meet these challenges. So, a HUGE thank you to the staff, parents, governors and, of course, the children too!

The half term break almost feels like it's arrived a week too late. There was a noticeable reduction in energy levels at the end of last week evident in both our remote learners and those children attending school. It's incredible what a dusting

of snow can do though, and by Monday breaktime the children seemed to have replaced their lethargy with excitement and bonhomie. It's always a privilege to observe children playing in the snow, especially the very youngest for whom this recent snow event may well have been their first. Our playground quickly became home to a host of snow angels and, though this might raise a few eyebrows, the children also rejoiced in being permitted to throw a snowball or two (even the staff didn't escape the keen eye and sharp aim of some of the older children!) By lunchtime, however, the snow had pretty much vanished, so it was wonderful that the children had taken full advantage of their earlier opportunity.

With so many children using the internet to access their remote learning, it seemed appropriate that our learners participate in some of the activities created for Tuesday's Internet Safety Day. Both Rowan and Maple classes watched an assembly and participated in a lesson intended to help children identify the more discreet types of online advertising. It was reassuring that so many of our children are already very aware of how to stay safe online, and their responses during these sessions reflected their confidence.

We are hopeful that an announcement from the government will be made on Monday 22nd February regarding the full opening of schools. There has been much talk recently of 'catch up' programmes designed to fill the academic gaps created by this and previous lockdowns, but it is also vitally important that we both acknowledge and seek to address the loss of other, arguably more important, aspects of learning and wellbeing - the opportunity to laugh, play and celebrate with friends and learn collaboratively. As we gradually transition to spring and the weather hopefully improves, we intend to maximise our opportunities for regular outdoor education too.

We would like to end with two additional thank you messages: firstly, thank you to our wonderful wraparound care staff team who are providing much needed additional care hours for working parents; and secondly, thank you to the kind villager who gritted Gold Street on icy mornings and made sure our children and parents were safe.

*Hannah Blest and James Bell
Interim Co – Headteachers*

THE MAPLE TREE CENTRE

During the first lockdown, we were recognised for our online programme and service to the community by Thame Town Council.

We are spending more time at home once again and we know that parents will be looking for inspiration to keep their children challenged, entertained and learning, especially on these chilly wintery days. We also value the importance of looking after our mental health. So, we have moved online once again.

Messy Mondays: Play and Learn Sensory/Creative activities for Facebook and/or The Maple Tree website

Tuesday: Play and Learn: Once Upon a Rhyme-Time with Sasha for Facebook and/or The Maple Tree website

Wednesday: Well-Baby Clinic (with Health Visitors) to be booked through the NHS

Maple Babies Online: Group support for new parents from 10:30am-11:30am

Maple Babies: Activities suitable for under 2s for Facebook and/or The Maple Tree Website

Thursday: Play and Learn: Little Scientist activities for the under 5s for Facebook and/or The Maple Tree Website

Friday: Play and Learn: Physical Fridays

Weekends: Various activities for early learners posted on Facebook and/or The Maple Tree Website and suitable for all the family

Weekdays 1:1 Sessions

The Maple Tree is offering 1:1 sessions to parents needing a listening ear during these trying times; this can be by phone, online, in the centre or on a walk as per **government regulations**.

Appeal for new Trustees, Advisors and Volunteers

These are difficult times for charities and we are looking for more members from our local area to join our committed and friendly group of trustees. At this time we are especially keen to recruit some volunteers who have a particular skill set in business or accounting.

We are here to help you, if you need help, advice or support: 01865236700.

Email: info@mapletree.org.uk

Website: www.mapletree.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley

Laura Spencer

The Maple Tree Centre Manager

CITIZENS ADVICE: SOUTH AND VALE

As you may know, Citizens Advice in South and Vale (and Wantage Advice Centre) have received funds from the councils' Winter Support Grant to distribute to local people struggling with finances or needing help because of Covid 19. This scheme will run until March 31 2021.

We wanted to notify you of this grant in case you wish to make a referral. Citizens Advice is notifying clients who phone our Adviceline number but we also want to reach out to eligible households you may be in touch with. **To be eligible**, clients must be:

- Resident in South and Vale
- Aged over 18
- Suffering financial detriment due to Covid-19 (ie loss of employment)
- The only person in their family to receive a voucher
- Able to provide some form of evidence to verify their situation

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Those eligible will be offered up to £350 for households with children or £175 for individuals. The grant will be allocated in the form of supermarket vouchers and/or payment of fuel and water bills directly to suppliers or provided as top-up vouchers for those on meters.

I attach a **Referral Form** which needs to be completed for each client and returned to the email address on the form. Referrals must come to us from an elected representative, a council, a registered charity or a community organisation. Please note: you will need permission from the client for their details to be passed to us. Please contact the Parish Clerk on 01844 279150.

Demand has been high and we will be in touch with people you refer as soon as possible. Please ask them not to phone us to ask about progress as that will cause delays.

VIEW FROM VIEWS

What an extraordinary winter this has been so far, apart from the Coronavirus, it is said to have been the coldest for several years yet, until the second week in February very little frost. Roses still blooming in January, River Thame in flood continually since early October, in spite of my records indicating rainfall being not much more than other recent years, yet the land is wetter than I can remember, the floods higher than I can remember, with the river now flooding after the slightest rainfall. My concern over the flooding made me write a letter to try and bring it to the attention to as many as possible, this flooding in my opinion is due to development on the River catchment, without the developers making the proper precautions to prevent it, and not complying with conditions of their planning permission, for one reason or another. My hope is that this should be encapsulated in law as it seems to me be getting out of hand, the more people that understand the problem might encourage a change in the law. If anyone reading this is interested in seeing my letter please email me charles@viewfarmbarns.co.uk and I will forward you a copy

It is now the time of year when we start to see the early spring/late winter flowers in bloom, and hear the sounds and smells that spring is at last around the corner, when we can perhaps return to not only warmer days but also a bit freer. Birds have started to pair up with their songs getting louder by the day, one downside is that the grass is beginning to grow I don't mind the corn growing, but the grass will need cutting. Many years ago I put a nest box on our garage wall which it appears was never used, until last year when it was used bizarrely by Sparrows that don't usually use them. Then someone pointed out to us that it was facing the wrong way and would be better were it pointing in a different direction, almost as soon as I had moved it Blue Tits were investigating, very interesting as I didn't have a clue it made a difference, nor do I know if it is on the right wall now, time will tell. I can now report having seen some Fieldfares, also the odd redwing, as well as many other species, Hares seem to be on the increase a good sign as long as Hare coursers leave them alone, groups of Long Tailed Tits are now frequent visitors to our garden feeders.

At this early stage it is difficult to say how our crops are going to have fared through this weird winter, firstly having its roots drowned in water most of its life, followed by several days of hard frost in mid-February, leaving them looking very bare and looking very weak and shrivelled. Of course time will tell a few warm days will make all the difference, certainly as I look at them now they are almost like a lot of us humans, stressed.

Now some weeks into our freedom from the EU, with the predicted queues of Lorries at Dover and the need for extra Lorry parking, not materialising, traffic we are told seems to be back almost to normal. There seems little justification for what holdups there are, other than the EU and petty officials being difficult, insisting on forms being written in the right colour ink for instance. Where there seems to be a real problem is with certain exports of perishable goods which to me seems criminal that food particularly that produced by living creatures should be allowed to rot on the quayside, after all up to 31st December there was no problem with these products what's the difference now? Is it not time for a little common sense, these goods have been traded for years why suddenly the difference, as these are required on both sides of the channel/border, why the fuss. There is a real problem in certain livestock sectors as well, where an animal, particularly pedigree breeding stock from Northern Ireland, which is traditionally sold in at the pedigree sales in Scotland then cannot be taken home if not sold, or bought, seems daft to me.

The current rather erroneous discussions/arguments about the carbon foot print of animals as opposed to plant based food has been countered by a study, which points out that the nutrients produced by 1kg of plant based protein is completely different that if a 1kg of meat. This does not take into account the recycling effect of the grazing animal, it also illustrates that we never can see the complete picture in one report or another, as they can all contradict each other, as there are different angles to every argument, depending which axe you decide to grind. (It is interesting to hear that Bill Gates who is committed to supporting measures to control Climate Change has just purchased a large estate in Australia to graze cattle, with the idea that they will sequester carbon!) This study also states and I quote, "Human nutritionists will tell you that animal-based products – be they eggs milk or meat – have a vital part of a healthy, balanced diet due to the different composition and density of nutrients compared with plant-based foods when consumed together". Another report on a similar theme suggests that a countries GDP should include that countries environmental initiatives, an interesting point.

Let's hope when I next write all things will look a little brighter.

Charles Peers

LETTER FROM CHARLES PEERS

I have farmed on the banks of the River Thame now for 57 years and am becoming more and more concerned about the number and frequency of flooding incidents. When in the 60's the Thames Conservancy used to dredge the river on a regular basis one could guarantee that after say 1" to 1.5" of rain the Thame would flood after about 3 days, now, this year, admittedly the land at the moment is saturated, it will flood the next day after only about 5mm. These floods would cover the road at Cuddesdon Mill once in a blue moon, however this year alone it has been flooded at least 7 times. We obviously only budget to graze these River meadows during the summer, which should carry something like 25 fattening cattle all through the grazing season, some 5 and half months, last year we could only graze 11 animals for about 3 months. For reasons of polluting the river we have not applied any fertiliser for many years but in order to keep our production at a viable level we now have to apply more fertiliser to other areas, this really is counterproductive when we are trying to cut down on potentially polluting materials. If we then factor in the fact that water authorities in emergency circumstances are allowed to release raw sewage into our rivers, this will in turn pollute the grass for grazing animals with the residues

of human medication (antibiotics, steroids and the like). This also needs more regulation.

I can only surmise the cause for this is due to development, both housing and roads, (M40, Aylesbury, Thame, and every available plot of land). This does illustrate the importance of planning insisting that any development must first construct proper measures to alleviate this problem. These measures should be constructed and signed off before any development gets sanction to proceed, rather than as the case is at the moment when the project is completed. There then could be no argument as to the viability of any scheme where the developer can put forward a case that the planners have no power to insist on the agreement being complied with. Can I earnestly ask those who have the power to effect decisions to put whatever pressure they can to make sure this is encased in law?

It also seems to me that farmers and landowners on the flood plain have to forfeit income due to the profits and benefits of others, they should be entitled to some sort of compensation from the public purse. I would not necessarily suggest we return to the regime of dredging, as in the past, as I appreciate that it is better for the environment not to do so. However if we are going to continue to build, and preserve nature at the same time, (which we should) then we have to place draconian measures on any development. In no way do I think our problems from flooding is anyway as bad as having ones house flooded but it is all due to mismanagement by higher authorities, and needs to be addressed before it is too late.

This is in no way to criticise to excellent work already being carried out by the “River Thame Conservation Trust”, but actually to support it.

To illustrate my point the following is derived from the rainfall records I have taken over the last 10 years. These figures do not take into account January’s rainfall of 84mm that has brought the river level higher than I have ever seen it.

| | Years total Rainfall | Oct to Dec Rainfall |
|------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 2010 | No records taken before October | 71mm |
| 2011 | 330mm | 59mm |
| 2012 | No records taken before October | 281mm |
| 2014 | 853mm | 197mm |
| 2015 | 522mm | 168mm |
| 2016 | 576mm | 192mm |
| 2018 | 554mm | 178mm |
| 2019 | 661mm | 315mm |
| 2020 | 702mm | 243mm |

I think this illustrates that although the rainfall this last 12 & 4 months is higher than average it is not all that exceptional, when you consider 2012 & 14.

GREAT HASELEY AND DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Last Monday was such a beautiful day with unexpected sun accompanying the sudden rise in temperature. There was a definite feel of spring in the air. I went walking in the morning and the afternoon (I should definitely have been in the garden working, but I have become accustomed during lockdown to walking whenever the weather is even vaguely hospitable). The joy of seeing happy faces was comforting. Everyone had a smile and the sun combined with the vaccine rollout seems to be making people feel an end of some sort might be in sight.

Unfortunately, the very pleasant conditions have not continued with biting winds tempering the feeling of warmth. However, a leisurely stroll around the garden reveals that the weeds are indeed galloping away and I started to pull them as I walked. There is always a lot of weeding in spring despite all the earlier efforts. The reward is the opening of crocuses and very early anemones to join the extending flowering stems of snowdrops. There are also a few early Narcissi. Of course, I discover that there are Hellebores, still with old leaves intact, with rapidly growing flower stems. What would have been a quick job removing old leaves is now painstaking and slow...

I can see that the roses are rapidly shooting. I still have not decided whether to cut them down further or to leave them as they are, half cut back to keep them safe from winter wind which can loosen their roots. I think I will probably cut back some and leave others. Group 3 clematis which are currently a mass of brown tangled shoots have started to show some new growth. It is undoubtedly best to cut these back to about 30cm from the base to allow new growth to cloth their support and produce healthy flowers in midsummer. Group 2 clematis which tend to have larger earlier flowers need to be just tidied back to fresh growth and tied in carefully as last year's growth is what will flower later in the spring. Be careful as the shoots are very brittle and I always snap some every time however careful I am!

It is time to cut back decorative Cornus and deciduous grasses which have given structure and colour to the garden over the winter months. Hardy Fuchsias have been soundly cut back by the recent very cold weather and can now be cut back low to a framework which will support flower from late summer right through into winter months if the weather is mild; these are particularly hard working plants and provide beautiful colour at a time when the traditional English garden plants have faded. It is really important to think about later colour when buying plants as it's too easy to get carried away in the spring and end up with plants that only flower in spring and early summer; we've all done it!

It's time to start thinking about the vegetable garden and it is certainly easier this spring than last, with garden centres being designated essential and open as normal, with the usual social distancing, masks and hand sanitiser. I have potatoes chitting on the window sill and they have short stubby dark green shoots. It is still far too soon for us to be thinking about planting as our veg patch is still under water. All I can do there is weed, prune fruit bushes and wait for things to dry out a lot more. Unfortunately, stepping on the soil compacts it so weeding from paths, a distance or from a plank is all that can be done. I am hoping we get some dry weather soon. Indoor seed sowing can be done. Check your seed packets for timing and instructions and good luck. It is always lovely to eat something you have grown!

Liz Moyses



John Howell MP writes

February 2021

From many of the communications that I receive and conversations that I have, I know that many people are finding the lockdown harder and harder. I fully appreciate this and, indeed, I too find it difficult in many ways. There is hope in the vaccine rollout, but it is important not to ease up too soon and undo all the progress that has been made as a result of the majority of people observing the lockdown restrictions. Thank you all for your efforts.

The Government has made the re-opening of schools the first priority as we emerge from this situation and I wholly support that. I believe that young people have suffered hugely not only from the problems of learning but also in wider aspects of development. Young people of all ages discover who they are and develop their emotional and social skills through interaction with others of their age. This time of distancing, and for some isolation from their peers, has stunted this. Indeed, loneliness has been a problem for many in all age groups as social interaction is limited. We have made tremendous efforts at new ways of doing things and learned to use technology as never before, but nothing can replace human contact.

Now that we have been dealing with COVID for a year I am mindful too that so many other concerns have grown over time. At the time of writing we await news of the Government plan to move towards greater freedoms and must hold our nerve. However, I know that what most people want is not negative messages of troubles to come, but hope. We have seen how our scientists have been able to develop the vaccine by pooling knowledge and with appropriate funding. I can see no reason not to believe that they will be able to continue their work over coming months and bring us the ongoing protection that we need.

As the rollout progresses there are different groups that have been put forward for higher prioritisation. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has indicated that occupational prioritisation could form a part of a second phase of the programme. The Vaccines Minister has indicated support for this. The programme is moving forward at a good pace and it will not be much longer until we have protected those most at risk. However, as the Minister, Nadhim Zahawi, has wisely said 'no one is safe until everyone is safe.' The mission to reduce to a minimum the effect of COVID-19 is not on an individual basis but national and indeed international.

In other news I was delighted to learn of the additional funding for policing in which Thames Valley police receives an extra £1,160 million. This will go towards Violence Reduction Units, which are special units designed to tackle serious violence and prevent young people being drawn into it. It is part of £35.5 million announced across the country for these units. It will help bring together organisations across our community to tackle violent crime and also to address its underlying causes.

There is also some good news on the horizon for those communities who have been troubled by illegal encampments. I have commented previously on a consultation on this and now the Home Secretary is expected to announce new legislation that will make it a criminal offence to intentionally set up camp and trespass on private land. This will give police authority to move people on and also to take other action in relation to this. I know that there has been concern from organisations such as Ramblers who might find themselves inadvertently committing an offence of trespass. However, the Home Office is clear that measures could be applied in specific circumstances relating to trespass with intent to reside and where the trespasser causes damage. It is important that innocent people are not made into criminals but also to give the police the necessary powers to deal with the problems that we have seen across the constituency in the past year.

Despite the current limitations the work of parliament continues. If you have an issue that you would like to raise with me, if possible, please email me at john.howell.mp@parliament.uk. If you cannot email you can write to me at the House of Commons, London, SW1 0AA or PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD.

If you would like to receive my periodic electronic newsletters, and briefings on specific issues, please visit my website www.johnhowell.org.uk and subscribe at the link on the home page.

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DEADLINE REMINDER – Please note that unless articles are in the hands of the Editor by the 18th of the month (unless otherwise stated), such articles will miss the scheduled Newsletter. The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Parish Council. All material for inclusion in the **April 2021** Newsletter should be with the Editor at 27 Chiltern View, Little Milton, by 8.00 p.m. on **18th March**. The Editor reserves the right not to print items submitted for publication and to edit those items, which are published

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| Citizens Advice Bureau | 0808 278 7907 | Thame & District |
| Church: St James | 01844 278349 | Revd. Simon Cronk |
| Doctors | 01865 872448 111 0845 345 8995 999 | Morland Surgery Out of Hours Service NHS Helpline Medical Emergencies |
| Little Milton Shop | 01844 279978 | Alison Shelton (Manager) |
| Little Milton School | 01844 279310 | Head: |
| Milk Deliveries | 07773006485 | A J Woods Ltd |
| MUGA | Bookings for the courts are made at the Post Office | |
| Neighbourhood Watch | 01844 279468 | Mark Willis |
| Newsletter | 01844 279150 | Raymond Fergusson (Editor) |
| OCC | 01865 792422 | All enquiries |
| Parish Council | 01844 278180 01844 279150 | Francois Van der Merwe (Chair) Raymond Fergusson (Clerk) |
| Pine Lodge | 01844 279535 0844 7255568 | Giles Denby Linda Lovegrove (Bookings) 24/7 Call out service |
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