

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: FEBRUARY 2025

		I ESTOR TOCK		
Sun	2nd	9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion CW St James'	
Tues	4th	9.30–10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge	
Wed	5th	9.30 - 3.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge	
		7.30 p.m.	Parish Council – Pine lodge	
Thurs	6th	6.00 - 7.00 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine Lodge	
Frid	7th	9.30 a.m.	Keep Fit – Pine Lodge	
Sun	9th	10.30 a.m.	Family Service – St James'	
Tues.	11th	9.30– 10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge	
Wed	12th	9.30 – 3.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge	
		7.30 p.m.	Parish Council -Pine Lodge	
Thurs	13th	6.00 - 7.00 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine Lodge	
		7.30 p.m.	WI Meeting – Pine Lodge	
Frid	14th	9.30 a.m.	Keep Fit - Pine Lodge	
Tues	18th	9.30– 10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge	
Wed	19th	9.30 - 3.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge	
		7.00 p.m.	Craft Evening – Pine Lodge	
Thurs	20th	6.00 - 7.00 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine Lodge	
Frid	21st	9.30 a.m.	Keep Fit – Pine Lodge	
Sun	23rd	9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion BCP- St Peter's	
			Great Haseley	
		10.30 a.m.	Benefice Morning Worship - St	
			James'	
Tues	25th	9.30–10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge	
Wed	26th	9.30 - 3.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge	
		11.00 a.m.	Sewing Group: Wayside Cottage	
Thurs	27th	6.00 - 7.00 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine Lodge	
Frid	28th	9.30 a.m.	Keep Fit - Pine Lodge	
MAR				
Sun	2nd	9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion CW – St James'	

<u>PLEASE NOTE</u> If in doubt please check with the event organiser that the event is still taking place at the date and time stated.

SUMMARY FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 8th JANUAY 2025

Below is a summary of some of the topics and discussions which took place at the additional Parish Council meeting held in January.

Report by District Councillor

District Cllr Heritage's report had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Cllr Heritage drew attention to the Government's White Paper on Devolution. County Councils are expected to respond by 10th January 2025. This is what is currently known:

- District councils will be abolished and replaced by Unitary Authorities which take on the duties of both County and District.
- The Government target is for each Unitary to cover a population of around 500,000. Oxfordshire has a population of 720,000 so has a decision to make. Is it too big for one or too small for two?
- The Unitary Authorities will be overseen by a Combined Authority and an elected mayor covering a population of about 1.5m.
- Oxfordshire is likely to align with an existing statutory authority footprint, perhaps Thames Valley Police or ICB BOB (NHS).
- If Oxfordshire is in the first wave it will probably take around two years.
- There are advantages to going early in terms of certainty and stability for services and staff.

Planning

P24/S2595/FUL - 18 Thame Road, Little Milton, OX44 7PZ

Amendment No. 1 Form vehicular access and 2x off street parking spaces. (Amended plans received 17 December 2024).

Resolved to make no further comment

Finance

The Latest Estimate together with the draft budget for 2025-26 was circulated ahead of the meeting.

The budget was discussed in detail together with key financial assumptions related to planned projects, some of which will include funding from Community Infrastructure Levy funds received.

Resolved to approve the budget for 2025-26. The budget covers improvements to public open spaces in the village, new speed indicator devices, replacement of village entrance gates over a 3-year period as well as the usual services provided to the village by the Parish Council.

Resolved to increase the 2025-26 Precept to £14,500, an increase of £500 on the current year.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Wednesday 12th February 2025**, in Pine Lodge, commencing at 7.30pm. Please visit the Parish Council website to read full minutes of Parish Council meetings.

Andrea Oughton, Parish Clerk

Current Council members

0 0 0	
Councillor François Van Der Merwe (Chairman)	07740 438770
Councillor Howard Harrison	01844 279946
Councillor Adam Sheppard	01844 279217
Councillor Ed Horwell	07527 346187
Councillor Giles Denby	07484 187852
Councillor David Wakeling	01844 278014
Parish Clerk Andrea Oughton	clerk@littlemilton.org.uk
County Councillor: Freddie Van Mierlo	07944 492438
	freddie.vanmierlo@oxfordshire
	.gov.uk
District Councillor Georgina Heritage	georgina.heritage@southoxon.
	gov.uk

SODC: WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

The minimum charge is £53.50 for up to 3 items and £10.25 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 count 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 – FEBRUARY 2025

	Brown	Grey	Green	Food
4th February	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
11th February	No	Yes	No	Yes
18th February	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
25th February	No	Yes	No	Yes

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR GEORGINA HERITAGE UPDATE

Meetings and Council Activity

- The Community Grants panel sat on 12th December to consider Capital Grant applications, and I'm delighted that Lewknor parish council were successful in their application to help fund solar panels for the village hall. I'm very much looking forward to seeing the project progress over the coming year.
- As mentioned in my previous report, I chaired the PCC and Chief Constable annual report in December and, following comments from parish councils, I also raised the question of regular reporting to towns and parishes. Most parish councils list a TVP report in the monthly agenda, but apparently, they haven't seen one for approximately five years.

The advice given in answer to my question was that parish councils should register on "Thames Valley Alerts" for up-to-date information: Home Page - Thames Valley Alert. However, it was also accepted that a proactive approach by TVP of advising parish/town councils of this, rather than simply ceasing monthly reports, would be appreciated by towns and villages in the South & Vale districts.

- At the parish meetings I attended last month I mentioned that **SODC's 5 Year**Land Supply position has improved, however the information didn't arrive in time for my previous report. For clarity, our position is now 4.62 years... or 5.59 according to the new Joint Local Plan with Vale, which was submitted to the Secretary of State on 10th December (more details on this below). For South currently, we are being measured against a four-year target as we have undertaken a local plan consultation containing housing requirement and site allocations. This could change as a result of housing targets and changes in the new NPPF and, for reference, I'm including some NPPF key points at the end of this report.
- ❖ The other huge local government matter, which is now a priority concern for councils throughout the country, has come in the form of the White Paper on <u>Devolution</u>. The following points might be helpful in summarising what we know currently:
- District councils will be abolished and replaced by Unitary Authorities which take on the duties of both County and District.
- The Government target is for unitaries to cover a population of around 500,000. Oxfordshire has a population of 720,000 so has a decision to make. Is it too big for one or too small for two?
- These unitaries will be overseen by a Combined Authority and an elected mayor covering a population of about 1.5M.
- We are likely to align with an existing statutory authority footprint, perhaps TVP or ICB BOB (NHS).
- If we are in the first wave it will probably take around two years.
- There are advantages to going early in terms of certainty and stability for services and staff.

SODC's Leader Cllr David Rouane has written to Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, asking her to make formal contact with the Government as soon as possible to express a strong view for Oxfordshire to move forward quickly with local government reorganisation.

In his letter, sent in the days following the publication of a Government White Paper on English Devolution, Cllr David Rouane set out that it was not in the interests of South Oxfordshire to have a prolonged period of debate on the matter within the public sector.

He explained that "the Government has already decided that local government reorganisation is going to happen. Delay will only bring uncertainty for residents and local businesses who depend on our services, and for our staff who will be worried about their own futures. We owe it to everyone to move to a more stable position as soon as possible."

This letter is available on the council's <u>official correspondence page</u> on its website.

❖ On a lighter note, as part of my cabinet work, I was pleased to be involved in December's staff day for GLL/Better Leisure, the organisation that manages South & Vale's leisure facilities. While we don't have leisure centres in Haseley Brook, I know many residents use the centre in Thame and visit the Riverside open-air pool and splash park in Wallingford. The day involved staff awards, and there were some incredibly worthy winners amongst this dedicated team, including a young member of staff who saved a life using CPR. For those of you who frequent the Riverside, you may recognise Harrison in the second photo below, who is known for going above and beyond in customer service. It was lovely to see him rewarded for his work ethic and attitude, and equally lovely to see that the team at our most local leisure centre in Thame were recognised with the South Oxfordshire Facility Award.

New Performing Arts Grant

Community organisations working in the arts in South Oxfordshire will benefit from a new grant launching in February...

On 28th November, SODC Cabinet members approved our new Performing Arts Grant, which will open on 3 February 2025 to voluntary and community organisations in South Oxfordshire, who will be able to apply for up to £5,000 in funding for projects that improve community wellbeing across the district.

The grant scheme aims to enhance the cultural landscape of South Oxfordshire by providing a financial boost to projects that help improve the quality of life of people living in the district, through projects that have a significant impact on the community.

As Cabinet member for Communities, I'm very excited about the approval of the new Performing Arts Grant and would like to encourage all eligible voluntary and community organisations to apply when applications open.

Applicants must show how their projects meet the following community values and priorities, fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable performing arts scene in South Oxfordshire:

- Increase the range of arts opportunities available to local communities.
- Support inclusive practice and celebrate diversity
- Develop local artistic talent
- Promote innovation and excellence
- Develop new audiences and participants in performing arts initiatives

Organisations eligible to apply are:

- Non-for- profit groups, arts, or community groups
- Town and parish councils
- Schools (for non-core curriculum activities)

More details about the grant along with information about the launch event and drop-in events across the district will be made available soon on the council's website southoxon.gov.uk/grants and organisations can contact the Community Arts team performingartsgrants@southandvale.gov.uk for support when the grant is open.

Notice of Submission of Joint Local Plan 2041 to the Secretary of State

A plan for the future in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse took a major step forward on 10th December 2024. The two district councils have been working together to produce a Joint Local Plan (JLP), which aims to help meet their local

communities' need for affordable housing, jobs and infrastructure while tackling the climate emergency.

Following a series of successful public consultations, which produced strong and positive feedback, the plan has now been submitted to the Government for the examination stage.

The Planning Inspectorate will examine the JLP and assess whether it has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements.

At the end of the public examination, the Inspector will conclude whether or not the plan is sound. In most cases the Inspector's report will recommend some changes that would allow the plan to be adopted.

If successfully adopted, the plan would replace the existing Local Plans for both councils.

In the new draft Joint Local Plan, the councils have shown that there are enough new homes in the pipeline already. This means that there is no need to build on any extra new greenfield sites over the next 15 years, beyond what has already been allocated. Only one area of expansion has been earmarked, which is on the brownfield land owned by the Ministry of Defence at Dalton Barracks near Abingdon.

Crucially, the plan also sets out new firmer environment policies so that development is net zero carbon and delivers twice the national level of biodiversity net gain to help with the recovery of nature.

NEW NPPF

The updated **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** has been published following the Government's consultation. Below are some key points, and you can access the full document here: <u>National Planning Policy Framework</u>

Key points:

The Government has re-committed to its promise to build **1.5 million new homes** over the course of this Parliament.

- The total annual **national housing target** has been raised from **300,000** to **370,000**.
- Housebuilding would increase by **more than 60%** under the new targets compared to recent levels of building.
- Mandatory housing targets will require local authorities to use the standard method as the basis for determining housing requirements in their local plans.
- A "modernised, strategic approach to Green Belt land designation and release" will require local authorities to use the local plan process to adopt a "sequential approach" considering brownfield, then grey belt and then higher performing land.
- "Grey belt" has been defined for the first time = land in the green belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143.
 - Those purposes are:
 - a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
 - b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
 - d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
- Green belt developments will have more affordable housing: "a) be set at a higher level than that which would otherwise apply to land which is not within or proposed to be released from the Green Belt; and b) require at least 50% of

- the housing to be affordable, unless this would make the development of these sites unviable (when tested in accordance with national planning practice guidance on viability)."
- New "golden rules" will introduce a 15% premium on top of existing affordable housing requirements, up to a maximum of 50 percent. This differs from the proposed 50% requirement proposed prior to the consultation and has been justified by saying that it may make developments unviable in high-cost areas.

GREAT MILTON METHODIST CHURCH SERVICES: FEBRUARY 2025

For further info. Please contact Rev. Stephen Spain on 01865 763676

Date	Time	Church	Preacher	Comment
2nd February	11.00 a.m.	Great Milton	Paul Spray	
9th February	11.15 a.m.	Great Milton	Miriam Moul	Holy
·				Communion
16th February	11.00 a.m.	Great Milton	Local Arrangement	
23rd February	11.00 a.m	Great Milton	Alistair Jackson	

BENEFICE SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2025 Sunday 2nd February

9.00	Holy Communion	St James' Little Milton				
10.30	Family Worship	St Peter's Great Haseley				
Sunday	Sunday 9th February					

9 .00	Holy Communion	St Mary's Great Milton
10.30	Family Worship	St James' Little Milton

Sunday 16th February 9.00 Holy Communion

9.00Holy CommunionSt Peter's Great Haseley10.30Family WorshipSt Mary's Great Milton

Sunday 23rd February

9.00 Holy Communion BCP St Peter's Great Haseley 10.30 Benefice Morning Worship St James' Little Milton

RECTOR'S PINT

I write this in early January, a couple of days before all the Christmas decorations come down, and I reflect with immense gratitude on the past few weeks. Christmas in our parishes was so good, in every way. I think it was the best I have experienced here, with the final crescendo in St Peter's on Christmas morning and a joyfully full church. I am especially grateful because I think it will be our last one here.

It is good to be able to give thanks, but thanksgiving is a discipline. When I became vicar of our last parish in Hughenden, I enthusiastically established a Saturday morning prayer meeting. But after a while, prayer became something of an exercise in wading through a sea of gloom. I realised that something very crucial was missing, and that was thanksgiving. I did my best to encourage us all by offering to God things we could be thankful for before moving to the important job of interceding for others in our prayers. However, it was a struggle, and when Cath was diagnosed with breast cancer, and I was

needed much more at home I pulled out of the prayer meeting which folded soon afterwards.

I was reminded of this when I read a Facebook post from a friend of mine who posted "Five Helps for New Year" - New Year advice given by Michael Ramsey, the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1961 until 1974, to his clergy. At the top of the list was this.

"Thank God often and always. Thank him carefully and wonderingly for your continuing privileges and for every experience of his goodness. Thankfulness is a soil in which pride does not easily grow".

I love that. I know that it is hard to give thanks, particularly when we are feeling overwhelmed by negative or bad circumstances, or by the confusion of the world, and so I do have some empathy for the faithful attendees of that Saturday morning prayer meeting! Thanksgiving is a discipline that is not dependent upon our immediate circumstances, it looks beyond that. One of the best disciplines when you drive, and particularly when you ride a motorcycle, is that you will go where you look. If there is an obstruction in the middle of the road, look at it and you will probably hit it. But look as far ahead as you are able to see, and seek a route around it.

I think thanksgiving works rather like that. Life throws all sorts of difficult situations at us, the world confounds us, so what do we look at? For me, thanksgiving begins with gratitude that I am known and loved by God, and in God I find my direction:

The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. (Psalm 28:7)

Simon

CHURCH CLEANING ROTA FOR FEBRUARY

W/E 2nd February	_	Mrs Maggie Bell & Mrs Wendy Newby
W/E 9th February	_	Mrs A Blagg & Mrs Cathy D'Aeth
W/E 16th February	_	Mrs M Davies & Mrs S A Dennis
W/E 23rd February	_	Mrs L. Lovegrove & Mrs C Coward
W/E 2nd March	_	Mrs A Jones & Mrs Sarah Holifield/E

CHURCH FLOWER ROTA FOR FEBRUARY

W/E 2nd February - Teresa Quested
W/E 9th February - Teresa Quested
W/E 16th February - Teresa Quested
W/W 23rd February - Chris Coward

CAROL SINGING IN LITTLE MILTON

Wednesday December 18th dawned grey but gradually the rain fell and I was asked whether we might reschedule due to the weather?!! 'Certainly not' I said and so a stalwart band of about 15 of us duly met up at the corner of Old Field opposite the little red post box and set off in the fine drizzle...We rang the bell as we arrived at each place and knocked on doors to invite folk to listen and join in with us...We took the route as advertised but by the time we reached the Haseley Road it was pouring down! However, we managed to sing for Little Milton's newest resident, Sarah, who had just moved in that morning and then we were royally entertained and warmed up at the Manor. We

are sorry if you did not hear us and/or we did not manage to get to you...please make a note of our date in 2025 (when you see it in the December newsletter) and either join us or come out and listen. We collected a total of £139.23 for the Porch...a decrease from 2022 but an increase on 2023. Thank you, Little Milton!

Sally Ann Dennis

CHRISTMAS FAYRE: RAFFLE WINNERS

£100	James Mash	07542 543519		
£50	Shirley Leach	Chiltern View		
Christmas Hamper	Jake Hill	07973 668232		
Luxury Hamper	Lucinda Arnold	Chiltern View		
Bottle of Prosecco	Dennis	Haseley Road, LM		
3 bottles of Wine	Dan	07984 069949		
Bottle of Whisky and glasses	James Mash	07542 543519		
3 packets Christmas Biscuits	Jackie Andrews	07415 610179		
Asda Gift Set	Victoria	07976 533454		
Bottle of Champagne	Westie	07909 968300		
Set of four Monet Mugs	Rosie Nicoll	07876 205890		
Bottle of Gin	T Cooper	Old Field, LM		
2 Boxes of Chocolates	Clio Wilkinson	07889 364395		
2 Art Prints	Dan	07984 069949		
Bottle of Port	Quested	Chiltern View		
Large Box of Fox's Biscuits	Leonado	Reformation Cottage, LM		
Bottle of Prosecco + A Candle	Richard Hart	Blenheim Lane, LM		
Box of Crackers	Willis	Haseley Road, LM		
Bottle of Cava	Jane Donnelly	07818 405383		
Cheese Board	Gillian Hovali	07504 209730		
Leather Holdall	Leonardo	Reformation Cottage, LM		
Bottle of Prosecco	Sam Hobbs	07714 244293		

FRIENDS OF LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL- 200 CLUB

December

1st	No 37	Becky Nunn	£12.00
No	No 57	Mrs H Mogford	£8.00
3rd	No 1	Diane Austin	£6.00

Dinae Austin on bealf of The Friends of Little Milton School

FRIENDS OF WELLS FARM

In January there were many goldfinches in a large flock on the reserve and over a hundred Fieldfares were roosting in the top hedgerow overnight despite having already stripped the hedges of berries so they must be feeding elsewhere.

10 volunteers from Oxfordshire joined me to hunt for harvest mouse nests again following the success of 17 nests in December. I wasn't hopeful to be honest but amazingly we found 20 nests around one field, 7 on a stretch of tussock grass along a short stretch of hedge line near Long Meadow. To cap it all, one of the students even found one by a hedge in Jubilee 2 field while we were walking back!

Some more hedge laying has been done along the bridleway and also a stretch between the Jubilee fields where the volunteers have been wild laying which does not use stakes and binders.

A mink raft has been installed at Wells Farm as part of a wider project that hopefully in the future may lead to the re-introduction of Water voles (Ratty from Wind in the Willows). The raft will allow us to identify whether mink are present and remove them from the site.

This month we switch to tree planting. There are two Black Poplars to plant that have come from the old tree in the middle of Poplar field. They will hopefully grow into beautiful trees that generations to come can enjoy. This will require repair of two existing tree enclosures and planting the young plants. If you want to help us let me know as I am not sure when this will happen yet.

Paul Jeffery - Reserves Warden (paulj201@hotmail.com)

WELLS FARM ALLOTMENTS

We are approaching the new growing year and I will be emailing further details before issuing new contracts in the coming weeks. If you no longer want your plot, please let me know. There may well be plots available for anyone wishing to take one on. Just contact me.

Paul Jeffery - (paulj201@hotmail.com)

DATE OF NEXT SEWING GROUP

Thankyou Teresa for hosting us all in January – a great start to 2025! This month we'll be meeting on Wednesday 26th February from 11.00 onwards at Wayside, the home of Mary and Howard Harrison on the corner of Milton Manor Drive and the Haseley Road. Do join us if you feel you would like to meet us and give the group a go...we've been meeting now for over twenty years so we're pretty established! Our March date will be March 26th, venue to be confirmed

Sally Ann Dennis

TONS TOGETHER (LITTLE MILTON) WI

A massive New Year thank you to the Fox & Goat pub in Tiddington for a wonderful night out in January; delicious food, great organisation and a very warm welcome. Also thank you to everyone for coming along and making it such a special evening.

On **Thursday 13th February 7pm**, we are back in the Pine Lodge for a talk from Dave Gilbert of **Thames Valley Air Ambulance**. We also plan to hold a raffle to raise funds for them, any raffle donations welcome.

Everyone always welcome, men too! Visitors £5.

Do you live in Little Milton, Great Milton, The Haseleys, Stadhampton or surrounding villages, new to the area, want to meet new people, make new friends? Then join Tons Together WI and meet like-minded, local women of all ages in an informal, friendly group.

We meet every 2nd Thursday of the month in the Pine Lodge OX44 7PZ at 7.30pm.

Too shy to come by yourself or need a lift? Contact us & we'll find you a WI buddy

Like us at <u>www.facebook.com/lmpinelodge</u> Pine Lodge website: <u>www.lmvh.org.uk</u>

Kath Stacey 01844-279438 tonstogetherwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

VIEW FROM VIEWS

Not a very promising start to 2025 weatherwise but, at the beginning of the year I thought I would do a rough check on my rainfall figures to see if over the years there was any change as we appear to be getting more rain now, up to 2022 the average was around the 550mm mark, but the average for 2023 & 24 was 810mm, this indicates why the ground seems to be continually wet, in areas that I had not noticed before. This winter, (so far) the flooding has not been continual, has encouraging visits from many more Egrets (Great Whites, Little and Cattle, the later not common in the UK) than in previous years. They seem to like to forage previously flooded areas. Visits from these birds must be an indication of warming, as I don't think they were ever reckoned to be native to the UK. It is good to see that we still seem to be keeping our increasing population of Partridges and Hares, on the subject of Hares I am concerned to read continually of neighbours being invaded by illegal Hare coursing, of late the police have been pretty active and arrested quite a few, unfortunately it is a lucrative pastime for the criminal fraternity, I would urge anyone who sees what they think is this despicable activity to notify the local boys in blue. Do not approach them personally as they can be violent.

I have just mentioned above about global warming, over the Christmas break we noticed the first Snowdrops and aconites, also one or two primroses, and within a week the first signs of Daffodils' coming into bud, the cold weather now in the first couple of weeks of January will have slowed them up a bit. However we must hope that the measures we are taking to mitigate global warming will have some affect, it is a problem as we are all responsible in our own way, being wedded to our cars, for us in the countryside there is little alternative, or any incentive to look for one, with a non-existent bus service and, a rail system that is governed by unions that know they can play fast and loose with our present Government. Also, we all want to be able to fly to all corners of the earth, without thinking of the consequences, to attend one junket or another, also so that politicians are seen and photographed with the right people.

We still have not been able to harvest the Lupins and, now the ground is too wet to attempt any field work, leave alone carry the weight of a combine harvester. Most of the crops we planted last autumn seem to be wintering well, the only tricky one is the later planted Wheat, here it would appear we have created our own problem, we have this wonderful modern Drill, (we call the machine we use to plant seeds a Drill) designed to work in many conditions, it cleverly presses in the seed at the same time obviating the necessity to roll, this leaves a groove which, then will hold a little water, it is then a sign post for crafty rooks to find the rows of seed making an easy breakfast

cereal for them, as they systematically follow the row eating all the seed, the damage being all too obvious.

I am still not happy about this IHT that all of you will know about. Although I am happy to live another 7 years, (as long as, my family are prepared to put up with me), it does mean in our case that, land that has been owned by my family since 1749, may have to be sold in order to pay this very unfair tax, and could then be purchased by just anyone, who may well not have any connection to the locality. What us extremely disconcerting for our industry as we had been assured, before the election, that a labour Government were keen to support farmers. I can understand both the fact that more taxes need to be raised and, trying to curb the investment in land by those with money to just save IHT. The problem with what they propose will decimate genuine active family farmers. Take a scenario as in our case, not only have we made arrangements for succession of the property some 15 years ago, but built up the property with investing with money we have earned and paid our taxes on, not to mention hard work and headaches, as a way to leave a viable business for the next generation, only be sold just to pay a tax. I feel like asking the question, why does taxation have to be so complicated surely, a simple form such as VAT and Income Tax, would be far fairer as in the case of Income Tax, those on low pay would not have to pay anyway, and if they were in difficulties would not purchase items not carrying VAT, this would also cost less to administer.

I make no apology for mentioning these facts as the effects could well go further. Just think of the ways that the genuine farmer supports the community, straw for the fete, support for the church local Post Office/shop, and many other local projects, without the help of anyone least of all Government, who know full well that farmers will continue just by tightening their belts, not sure how long it will be before the belt snaps.

Charles Peers

Just a foot note

I have just read or heard officially that if a small amount of "White Spirit" gets into the sewer it can put a sewage works out of action for some time. The info was that anyone who could, should advertise the fact, so I have!

Looking for a Friendly 5-a-Side Football Game After Work?

Join us for a weekly adult football game at Pine Lodge Astro!

When: Weekday evenings (day to be confirmed)

Where: Pine Lodge Astro

Who: Open to adults of all abilities—everyone's welcome!

It's the perfect way to relax after work, meet new people, and enjoy football in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

I'm gathering interest to get a group of players together and kick things off. If you're interested, don't wait—get in touch!

Contact:

Gabriella Wilkinson (8CV)

07889 364 395

glineker@hotmail.co.u



NEW MEETING ROOM AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

We are delighted to be able to offer a new meeting room within the Pine Lodge for meetings of up to 10 people

- Free Wi-Fi available
- Large smart television screen with HDMI connection
- Free on-site car parking
- Private space
- Adjacent to Village Shop for convenient refreshments
- Fully accessible

Available from only £10 per hour

Take a look at the new website for the hall which includes a calendar to view availability and to book.

www.lmvh.org.uk

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE PINE LODGE

Need a private Meeting Room, there is one in the Hall for hire by the hour. It can seat up to 10 people and has a large wall mounted monitor for video conferencing or presentations, plus WIFI

Regular Activities in the Hall include:

Tuesdays at 9:30 am, Keep Fit on with Alyce (<u>alycefwf@gmail.com</u>)

Tuesday 6:00 pm Dance school (megan_ah@hotmail.com)

Wednesday 9:30 am Advanced Textile on workshop with Amargeet (amarjeetnandhra@virginmedia.com)

Thursday 10:30 a.m. Fitness with Focus (mobility and stretching) on with Alyce (alycefwf@gmail.com)

Thursday 6:00 p.m. Keep Fit on with Alyce (alycefwf@gmail.com)

Friday 9:30 am Fitness with Focus (mobility and stretching) on with Alyce (alycefwf@gmail.com)

WI 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. contact Kath Stacy <u>kathstacey@yahoo.co.uk</u>

Crafts 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. contact Kath Stacy <u>kathstacey@yahoo.co.uk</u>

Parish Council 2nd Wednesday 7:30 p.m.

For further details contact clerk@littlemilton.org.uk

Village Hall committee 2nd Monday 7:30 p.m. For further details contact giles.pinelodge@gmail.com

For details of, news, booking info and the online events calendar please view the Pine Lodge webpage at https://lmvh.org.uk/, or contact Linda Lovegrove linda.pinelodge@yahoo.com



What does a Nature Friendly Garden look like?

It doesn't have to be the whole garden that's left "to go wild" (a common misconception). We are celebrating gardens that help nature out and increase local biodiversity. It could be that you have a wildlife friendly pond – one that's sunken and accessible to amphibians and safe for hedgehogs to drink from – or that you have a mini meadow area or native, insect friendly plants in your borders. You might have an excellent log pile or an undisturbed area for hibernating animals or lots of water dishes out for creatures to drink from, not forgetting hedgehog highway gaps! And of course, never using chemicals toxic to wildlife such as insecticides, herbicides, or pesticides! There are lots of ways to either make your whole garden, or a part of it, great for our local wildlife. Check out Wild Oxfordshire's Resource Library (www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/guidance/helping-nature-on-your-patch) for more tips.

A selection of Garden jobs to help Wildlife this February Nest Boxes

It's soon to be National Nest Box Week (14th to the 21st Feb)! This is to help remind us of the importance of nest boxes in our gardens. With Spring around the corner, now is the time to clean out your nest boxes or put-up new ones ready for this year's inhabitants. Cleaning out a nestbox with boiling water to kill off parasites and other nasties to make it nice and safe and clean for the next resident. You can use boiling water alone or a add eco soap e.g. brands like Ecover. Make sure you leave it to dry out completely after washing to protect the box from mould and rot.

Consider putting up a swift box. Find out more via the Cherwell Swift Project. http://www.cherwell-swifts.org/

Feeding the birds

Put out bird food with high fat content to give extra energy when food is hard to come by. Suet treats like fat balls are ideal.

Making your own fat balls

You can create your own fat blocks by melting suet into moulds such as coconut shells or logs with holes drilled in. Try out different recipes to entice a range of birds; Gardener's World suggest peanut cakes for starlings, insect cakes for tits and berry cakes for finches. You can even put out finely chopped bacon rind and grated cheese for small birds such as wrens, but not if you are concerned about the presence of rats. And remember, whilst fat is important, do also provide a seed mix or nuts to give your birds a balanced diet.

It's still cold!

On freezing days, break the ice on bird baths and water bowls. Refresh the water supply weekly.

Leave piles of leaves and logs undisturbed. In mild weather, it can be tempting to get going in the garden but avoid the urge to tidy away leaf and log piles just yet. This is so hedgehogs and other creatures can enjoy their dormancy Leave healthy herbaceous and hollow-stemmed plants unpruned until early spring. These can provide homes for overwintering insects.

Avoid turning the compost heap until April, even if conditions are mild. Frogs, small mammals, and insects may be hibernating, and any disturbance could harm them.

Check bonfires before they are lit for sheltering and hibernating animals, such as hedgehogs, toads, frogs, and newts.

Bring on the Springtime!

Have plants in your garden that offer winter/early spring nectar – e.g. mahonia, ivy, willow, hellebores, crocuses and snowdrops to provide a boost for our pollinators after the dormant months.

Hedgehog Street

Make your garden connected by putting in a hedgehog gap (13cm X13cm) ready for when our hedgehogs wake up in Spring. Check out how Kirtlington have helped out our wandering hedgehogs. https://kirtlingtonvillage.co.uk/kirtlington-hedgehog-street

Why wildlife friendly gardening practices should be celebrated – fighting the biodiversity crisis from your garden:

All our wildlife gardening efforts should be celebrated — big and small! In these challenging times for nature, our gardens are becoming the last place of refuge for many of our endangered species — even hedgehog populations are stabilising in urban areas, thanks to gardens. There's no doubt about it, big or small, your garden can be a refuge for wildlife.

For too long wildlife gardens have been criticised for not conforming to our cultural ideals of what a garden should look like. Ponds were supposed to have big carp in them, lawns to be kept very short and without flowers, flower beds to have many non-native, showy species, and whilst all of this can look beautiful, it makes life for our wildlife very challenging indeed. Our solitary bees for instance, such as our bumble bees, like flowers that don't have complex structures hiding the nectar source because it prevents them from drinking from them. Fish in ponds prevent amphibians from being able to call it home and water invertebrates get eaten, including baby dragonflies. And whilst short lawns are great for some things, like for blackbirds to dig for worms, varied grass lengths provide foraging grounds and refuge for a whole host of different species from butterflies to beetles, hedgehogs to newts.

However, change is afoot! In recent years many of us have been gardening in ways that help-out our local wildlife. And it's everywhere! A wildlife-friendly garden won at the Chelsea flower show and the RHS have nature-friendly gardens that are showcased. Even Gardeners World have tips on helping wildlife. We're all fighting the biodiversity crisis together, one garden at a time. So, if you're gardening with wildlife in mind, a huge thank you!

if you haven't started on your nature-friendly gardening journey yet, why not get involved? It doesn't mean leaving the whole garden to 'go-wild' – after all, variety is key in a nature-friendly garden. It could be one small thing you do or don't do that makes a difference, like putting out water dishes or not using herbicides and pesticides. Such simple actions in our gardens can offer a lifeline to even the most endangered species, not to mention that it's also great for us to have wildlife in our garden! Happy gardening everyone. Together for nature – always.

Rhiannon Young - Wild Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Engagement Officer



Greetings from the (rather damp) Maple Tree to the wonderful community of Wheatley!

Our ongoing leaky roof situation will hopefully be resolved by the time you read this! As you may know, the volume of rain on an old, flat roof resulted in a constant drip and then a partial ceiling collapse in our resource cupboard right above the electricity boxes. This made the centre unsafe and very cold over Christmas and New Year, however OCC have finally started the repairs. We have been overwhelmed by the encouragement, words of support and contributions to our GoFundMe page. Extra special thank you go to Great Haseley Village and Sean and Katy Manning for their generous contributions. We will be able to replace the damaged supplies and make the building safe again. Many thanks also to The New Club for hosting our Christmas Disco at a moment's notice, as well as the Forest Hill Village Hall and St. Mary's Church for allowing us to hold our sessions! Thank you, thank you – we love our community!

The Maple Tree will need £100k to keep going next year! We are looking for a group of our supporters to help us fundraise – do you have some creative ideas and a little free time? If interested, please email: laura@mapletree.org.uk

Please also have a look at our Maple Tree Market page on Facebook or just come to The Maple Tree for a browse! We have some wonderful children's clothes, baby essentials, toys, and games available. This aids the environment by recycling, helps families during these difficult financial times and helps to sustain our charity when families are able to make a small donation.

Check out our Website and Facebook page for details about our programme and special events, including Emergency Pediatric First Aid, which we had to postpone until February.

Date for your diary; Daffodil Day – 23rd March.

We are here to help if you need advice or support: 01865 236700.

Email: <u>info@mapletree.org.uk</u> Website: www.mapletree.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley

Instagram: @themapletreecentre

Laura Spencer
The Maple Tree Centre Manager



Walks Programme 2025

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 5 th	Undulating 6	mile wall	k from	Lewknor	via	Bald	and	Shirburn
	Hills.							

- Sunday 9th 10:30 8 mile walk from Watlington, town car park on Hill Road, to see snowdrops in Swyncombe churchyard. Bring a picnic.
- Tuesday 11th Gentle, social 3 mile walk with ghost stories, from Thame Leisure Centre, via St. Mary's Church and Birdcage Inn. Coffee at the Thatch en route.
- Thursday 13th Meet at Marsh Baldon for a 7 mile walk, embracing the Baldons from Marsh to Little and Toot. Optional lunch at the Seven Stars PH at the end.
- Monday 17th 5½ mile walk from Bledlow to Horsenden and Saunderton then ascending Lodge Hill before gentle return to Bledlow.
- Sunday 23rd Hilly 7 mile walk from Christmas Common via Cowleaze Wood and the Wormsley estate.
- Wednesday 26th 8 mile walk from Islip, car park opposite The Swan PH, using the Oxfordshire Way and the Oxfordshire Green Belt Way. Bring a picnic.

All walks start at 10am unless otherwise stated.

Please check the website to confirm details as programme subject to change:

www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/thame-wheatley/walking.html or phone 01844 213608

Leaders' contact details and suitability of walks for dogs can also be found on the website.

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no 1093577, Scotland no SC039799) and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales (no 4458492).



Dear Residents of Little Milton,

As we move into the first months of 2025, I want to take this opportunity to update you on some important changes on the horizon that could have a significant impact on our community and local governance.

Before Christmas, the Government published a White Paper on devolution and local government reorganisation. This is a top-down document, setting out a vision for local authorities, telling them how they should structure and deliver services. The intention is to bring decision-making closer to local communities by giving councils more powers and larger budgets.

For Oxfordshire, this could mean greater control over key issues such as transport, housing, and public services. One of the possibilities outlined is the creation of a mayoral strategic authority that could cover the Thames Valley region, overseeing decisions on areas like health, policing, fire and rescue. In addition, there is potential for a single unitary council that could manage services such as housing, transport, social care, and waste with fewer councillors representing larger areas.

While I welcome the White Paper and the possibilities it presents, I believe that decisions on local governance should always be made as locally as possible, reflecting the needs and aspirations of residents. Devolution offers the chance to empower local communities and improve the services that matter most to you here in Little Milton and the surrounding areas.

Locally I have been working to see what support can be offered to residents after the flooding and just as importantly how it can be prevented from happening again in the future. I have discovered that after the January 2024 flooding when 2,000 homes were flooded nationally, the Government released emergency flooding funds, however in September a further 1,000 homes were flooded, and the funds were withheld. I am trying to get to the bottom of what makes one home eligible and another excluded.

On a personal note, I am honoured to have recently been appointed Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group dedicated to championing babies, as well as serving as a Dementia Research Champion. These are causes I care deeply about, and I look forward to working on them in 2025.

My priorities for this year remain focused on improving NHS services, addressing the sewage crisis, and tackling the cost-of-living pressures that are affecting so many in our community. These are the issues I will continue to work on both locally and in Westminster, and I will keep you updated on any developments as they arise.

I will continue to meet with as many residents as possible. If you would like to get in touch or attend one of my surgeries, I would love to hear from you.

Freddie van Mierlo MP Henley & Thame Freddie van mierlo.mp@parliament.uk

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Enhanced access hours are offered outside these times, please speak to one of the reception team on 01865 872448 for more information.

When the surgery is closed, please contact the Out of Hours service by phoning 111

Ordering Repeat Prescriptions: Please use the NHS App or log into your account on the NHS website. For more information on ordering, visit the 'prescriptions' page on our website.

Staying Well this Winter – it is important to get your winter flu and COVID-19 vaccines if you are eligible. You may also be eligible for the pneumococcal and RSV vaccines. Some people are more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather, including those aged 65 or over, babies and children, people with long term conditions, a disability or who are pregnant. If you are in an at-risk group, it is important to get medical help as soon as you feel unwell. The Morland House website provides more information. Also, you can dial NHS for free on 111 for a short assessment of your condition and you will be directed to the right service. In an emergency, go to A&E immediately or call 999.

Visit Morland House Surgery Website for a wealth of information and guidance on managing a vast number of health conditions, symptoms, and treatment: www.morland-house.co.uk For example:

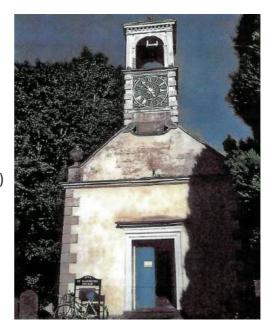
- Medical Records and Test Results guidance on how to access this information.
- Pharmacy First Service (PFS), whereby pharmacies can treat directly seven common health conditions.
- Group Consultation Clinics Group clinics are currently being offered for the menopause and hypertension. Eligible patients are being invited to attend, but if you would like to know more, please do contact us.
- Whooping Cough infections, symptoms and treatment
- Drink Coaches take the quick and confidential text
- Travelling abroad what MHS can and cannot do for you

Sat 26th April 2025 - St Katherine's Church

Chiselhampton - (6.30 for) 7.00pm start

- Fund raising concert

- £15 (including drink & light refreshments - cash only please)
- Parking follow signs on day



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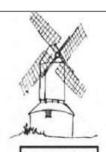


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