

Published by Little Milton Parish Council

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# Little Milton Newsletter



February 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 13th JANUARY 2021

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

### Election of Chairman

The current Chairman Cllr. Alaric Smith explained to the Council his desire to relinquish his role as Chairman as he had moved out of the village but would remain on the Council up to the Annual Meeting in May. The Chairman invited Councillors to offer themselves for the position to avoid any nominations of a Councillor who did not wish to be considered. As there were no offers Cllr. Francois Van Der Merwe was proposed as Chairman and this was supported by all Councillors. Cllr. Francois Van Der Merwe signed the Acceptance of Office form and agreed to return it to the Clerk. Francois expressed on behalf of the Council his thanks to Alaric for his contribution as Chairman.

The Chairman stated that the position of vice-chair would be considered at the Council meeting in February

### Planning

The Clerk reported that the following Planning Applications had been determined by South Oxfordshire District Council.

#### P20/S3934/HH

Orchard House Windmill Hill: An extension to the first floor bedroom at the back of the house (**Approved**)

#### P20/S4133/FUL

Wells Farm Haseley Road: Proposed Roller & Personnel Doors, Concrete Blockwork Walls & Cladding to existing barn and installation of a waterless WC Unit (**Approved**)

#### P20/S3985/HH

Hilltop House High Street: To close off a secondary unusable driveway which provides a dangerous exit on a blind corner onto the A329 (**Approved**)

Certificate of Lawful Development: 20 Thames Road: erection of a new garden building to create a garage and storage. (**Application withdrawn**)

P20/S3312/FUL Land West of Old Belchers Farm: Change of use of land to provide Sculpture Park (existing agricultural use maintained) (/temporary duration) (**Approved**)

### Other Planning related matters

The Chairman welcomed Henry Venners who had requested an opportunity to address the Council on behalf of his client in respect of an un-named site in Little Milton. Mr Venners stated that the site was Milton House. Mr Venners stated that his client had appointed builders Sweetcroft Homes to create preliminary design options for the site that he shared with the Council.

The Chairman invited Barry Coward, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to outline the planning policies that would be considered when a planning application was submitted. Barry stated that the site would attract a considerable interest if a planning application was submitted. He highlighted the key questions that the Council would need to consider.

- Is the development needed at all?
- Would the development fit in with the surrounding built environment?
- Would the development be sustainable in terms of access and infra-structure

Barry went on to highlight some of the key planning issues

- Infill development or Re-development
- Housing density
- Waste Water System
- Conservation Area
- Design and character
- Dwelling Mix

Barry stated that Planning Policies which would address the planning issues were detailed in the recently Adopted Local Plan 2035 and the Made Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Henry Venners left the meeting.

The Council having directed Mr Venners to some key points in the Neighbourhood Development Plan, **RESOLVED** that the most appropriate engagement going forward would be in the context of a public and formal planning application.

#### Recreation Ground/Playground

##### Entrance Gate into recreation ground

The Clerk highlighted the poor drainage behind the pedestrian gate into the recreation ground from the car park and asked Cllr, Adam Sheppard if he could investigate the situation. Cllr. Sheppard initially suggested that he would fill the indentation with compacted hard-core.

##### Hard Standing for Grundon Refuse Bins

Cllr. David Wakeling informed the meeting that he had been approached by Mark Willis to bring to the attention of the Council the positioning of the Grundon Bins on the delineated pedestrian part of the car park. Mark considered that this presented an avoidable risk to both motorists and pedestrians. Mark suggested that the creation of a hard-standing close to the barrier would provide an acceptable solution. There was a discussion on the suggestion and the Council **RESOLVED** that it should be investigated. The Clerk highlighted that such a construction could encroach on the existing drainage infra-structure when the car park was constructed.

#### Finance

The Chairman summarised the budget proposals considered at the December meeting that resulted in a 10% increase in the precept for 2021-22. The Chairman invited Councillors to approve this proposal or put forward other options for consideration. Cllr. David Wakeling expressed his concern that the increase was too high and would prefer holding the current precept of £12,500. The Clerk highlighted the drivers for the 10% increase were the additional cost of Council Administration as result of a new Clerk and the anticipated cost of improving the MUGA. After a lengthy discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to increase the precept for 2021-22 by £1,000 to £13,500. This results in a Band D equivalent rate of £63.10 an 8.8% increase over 2020-21.

## Current Council members

Councillor Alaric Smith ( Chairman)	01844 279993
Councillor Francois Van Der Merwe (Vice Chair)	01844 278180
Councillor Howard Harrison	01844 279946
Councillor Adam Sheppard	01844 279217
Councillor Steve Sidhu	01844 279448
Councillor David Wakeling	01844 278014
Parish Clerk Raymond Fergusson	01844 279150 Imparishcouncil@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](http://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 2021**

	<b>Brown</b>	<b>Grey</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Food</b>
2nd February	No	Yes	No	Yes
9th February	No	No	Yes	Yes
16th February	No	Yes	No	Yes
23rd February	No	No	Yes	Yes

Please note the brown bin collection has been temporarily suspended but please check with SODC

## **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.

## **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**

## **RECTOR'S PINT**

I read in *The Guardian* on Boxing Day an article by Simon Jenkins, with the heading 'If the Church of England worships online, how can its historic buildings survive'?

It was a serious article, but one part of it made me laugh: 'Lockdown 2020 brought incipient disaster, with Boris Johnson putting churches on a par with steamy nightclubs and sweaty gyms. This was despite the clergy pleading that empty churches had been socially distancing for years'. It was the last part that brought the laughter!

It is perfectly true, in our context, social distancing has in fact been an ever-present reality before we ever heard the term! As those who might have come along when I have been presiding know, I sometimes ask people to move so at least we can all have a sense that we are together in this! Oh, happy days.

As many will know, we aren't even doing social distancing now. I was very eager to open our churches as soon as we were able following the first lockdown, but after consultation with our churchwardens in the New Year I felt that with another lockdown and with a new and more virulent strains of the virus at large, closing our churches for public worship was in fact the only choice we had, although legally we were permitted to stay open. We have a duty of care; at times this must mean doing what we don't want to do. Also, in some small way, I felt that we should stand in a kind of solidarity with local businesses, pubs, and schools who have had to take a hit. We continue with our online presence and we are in contact with vulnerable people. We continue with these restrictions as we await with hope the slow opening up of our lives again, as more and more people are vaccinated. I think though, that we all need to acknowledge that things have changed, that vaccines won't rid us of this virus, only help to control and contain its spread, this is now a part of who we are, and we will have to adapt.

Feb 17<sup>th</sup> is Ash Wednesday, and so marks the beginning of Lent. I will be arranging a special Ash Wednesday Zoom service to mark the occasion. Traditionally, we give something up for Lent. I'm not so sure about that given the many things we have all had to give up in the last year! I prefer to think of it positively, such as taking something good and positive up, more exercise perhaps, or better eating and drinking (which yes may involve dropping a few things, but think of it in a positive way) and as a Christian, most importantly, I believe in the importance of a reset of my spiritual life, with self-examination and prayer. So may I wish you all well, that in the present restrictions you will find something purposeful, positive, and life enhancing this Lent.

Ash Wednesday Zoom Service: Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> Feb 7.00 pm – Zoom details to follow.

**Simon**

**BENEFICE SERVICES FEBRUARY**

	<b>Live Service 9.00 a.m.</b>	<b>Virtual Service Zoom 11.00</b>
Sunday 7th February <b>2 Sun. Before Lent</b>	<b>NO</b>	Invitation To Zoom <b>Morning Prayer</b>
Sunday 14h February <b>Sun Next Before Lent</b>	<b>LIVE</b>	Invitation To Zoom <b>Morning Prayer</b>
Wednesday 17th February <b>Ash Wednesday</b>	<b>SERVICES</b>	Invitation To Zoom <b>Service at 7.00 p.m.</b>
Sunday 21st February <b>Lent 1</b>	<b>UNTIL</b>	Invitation To Zoom <b>Morning Prayer</b>
Sunday 28th February <b>Lent 2</b>	<b>FURTHER NOTICE</b>	Invitation To Zoom <b>Communion</b>

**CHURCH CLEANING ROTA FOR FEBRUARY**

W/E 7th February	–	Mrs M Davies & Mrs S A Dennis
W/E 14th February	–	Mrs L. Lovegrove & Mrs C Coward
W/E 21st February	–	Mrs A Jones & Mrs Sarah Smith
W/E 28th February	–	Mrs E. Summers & Mrs Anne Hawkins
W/E 7th March	–	Mrs A Blagg & Mrs C D’Aeth

**FRIENDS OF LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL- 200 CLUB**

Winners will be announced when normality returns to the school

1st	No	£10.00
2nd	No	£7.00
3rd	No	£5.00

*Diane Austin Little Milton School 200 Club Organiser*

**NEWS FROM THE PINE LODGE**

With the positive news of vaccines being rolled out and thus the prospect of freedom to socialize by the summer, the Hall is beginning to plan for a celebratory summer event, tentatively at the end of August.

Our current plan is to organize a series of fun activities/competitions for children and families in the afternoon, and then hold a dance with live music in the evening at the Hall.

We are looking for volunteers from the village to help us plan and then organise the event. If you would like to help, please contact Linda Lovegrove. [linda.pinelodge@yahoo.co](mailto:linda.pinelodge@yahoo.co)

*Giles Denby [gilesdenby@yahoo.com](mailto:gilesdenby@yahoo.com)*

## **LITTLE MILTON WI**

In January, we couldn't have our traditional New Year dinner and decided it's a bit weird eating on Zoom. We will have a meal out to look forward to later in the year. Instead we used Alison's idea of Zingo - bingo to music, which luckily was more fun than normal bingo! We played 3 rounds of 80-90s, 60s and 70s music, so had great fun reminiscing about our favourite bands and teenage crushes.

Our next meeting on **Thursday 11th February** is **Chair Yoga** with local Yoga teacher, Yvonne Cartwright. We'll be **online from 7pm** with Yoga session starting at 7.30pm. The class is approximately 30 mins & participants just need to be sat in an ordinary dining room type chair (not an armchair). Suitable for any age group & all levels of mobility!! 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://www.facebook.com/lmpinelodge)

Details & news on the Pine Lodge page at [www.littlemilton.org.uk](http://www.littlemilton.org.uk)  
*Kath Stacey 279438 or email [littlemiltonwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk](mailto:littlemiltonwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk)*

## **WELLS FARM ALLOTMENTS**

Time to plan for the planting and growing season that is nearly upon us. It is good to grow things that taste just that bit better than being forced through industrial scale farms. I find that root veg can be so different in flavour. Time to cover the rhubarb, starving them of light so the emerging stalks stay red and white rather than the bitter green of the oxalic acid. Beetroot and radishes are worth considering. Try the orange beetroot varieties if you don't like the purple ones. A very different flavour. I will be starting my tomatoes from seed in the conservatory once more. It is worth doing chillies early too as they take a long time to germinate.

Discussions with BBOWT are underway regarding the future of the allotment management due to changes in BBOWT organisational structure, which will be discussed at the annual meeting. But the allotments will continue to be a key part of our village regardless of the administrative challenges moving forward. It looks like we should be able to provide everyone on the waiting list with an allocation for this year. If anybody wants to go on the waiting list please contact me.

Looking forward to an allotment get together barbecue sometime this year. Happy digging, happy growing, happy eating!

*Paul. ([paulj201@hotmail.com](mailto:paulj201@hotmail.com))*

## **FRIENDS OF WELLS FARM**

Some hedge plants have been purchased to continue the hedge line along the top of Long Meadow. Over the last twenty five years the farm has transformed from a place with no hedges to one where we now have lots of interconnected areas, providing more food, shelter and allowing wildlife to move around more freely. Bird counts suggest that Wells Farm has seen increasing numbers, especially linnets, yellow hammers and linnets. It is also clear that more blue tits and great tits are



surviving this winter. I am sure all the bird feeders in the gardens are helping. Please make sure you keep the feeders clean to prevent the spread of disease.

Work should be completed on the barn area in the farmyard which includes a composting loo, which is for staff and volunteer groups who help to keep Wells Farm well maintained. At present, due to Covid lockdown restrictions only core staff and key volunteers are visiting the site for essential work.

February is a time for nest planning, some building, displaying to prospective partners, and for some, and the nursing of new arrivals. It is the very start of an amazing transformation that happens every year without fail. The ongoing struggle and the emergence of new life. New hope. A new future.

There is an increasing problem of dog fouling on parts of the reserve and also dogs off leads particularly in fields with animals in. The vast majority of people using Wells Farm nature reserve are brilliant of course, but there are a few people who are not following the rules clearly displayed (analogy to Covid spreaders?). Clearly the reserve is a lifeline to our sanity, providing fresh air, exercise and a change of scenery from our lockdown routine.

In the short term you will see a few new signs appearing in certain places to make it even clearer what the rules are in places that are particularly important. Please take heed to these as they are there for a reason. Dogs should not be running around in the arable fields as there are birds and other animals sheltering. Continued disturbance will force them to move somewhere else and they may not survive there. Longer term, if significant disturbance to wildlife continues, further restrictions to some areas may be introduced. It would be great to have a dog bin by the entrance gate in Oldfield but due to a residents objection this sadly was not approved by the council and had to be abandoned. It is now a real mess there so mind where you step!

Stay safe!

*Paul. ([paulj201@hotmail.com](mailto:paulj201@hotmail.com))*

### **A PLEA TO SOME DOG OWNERS!**

We were quite startled to discover a number of dog poo bags thrown into the little copse by our foot path boundary. It is the first time we have experienced this unpleasant sight.

**Whoever is responsible, please next time take your dog litter bags home.**

Thank you.

*George and Joyce Inge*

### **NEWS FROM LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL**

We hope that you and your families are all well and that you managed to enjoy the festive period despite the strange circumstances.

The beginning of term was certainly a very different start to the one we had been expecting!

We were delighted to welcome back keyworker children and we have been very impressed that they have returned eager to learn and settled back quickly. We are also thrilled to welcome to our school community the new Nursery children in Willow Class. It has been wonderful to watch them gain confidence so quickly and enjoy playing with the older children.

Luckily, our plans for a second lockdown last term meant that we had sent work and books home already. Our aim is to increase our live teaching sessions and we are also expecting to be able to offer a weekly yoga/meditation session provided by an external yoga teacher for all children as part of our on-going commitment to well-being provision.

We would like to thank all the staff who have returned to school despite anxieties and children of their own at home. They have worked tirelessly as a team at this very challenging time and we are very grateful.

*Hannah Blest and James Bell  
Interim Co – Headteachers*

### **NEWS FROM THE ORCHARD**

Thank you to everyone who came out for the Christmas Market – it was lovely to see so many people supporting the village services and the fundraising is a huge help to the pre-school at the moment.

We are currently looking for a couple of new members to join The Orchard Committee. The pre-school is run by a management committee and we would love to have members of the community to join us to share experiences and ideas, and help to keep the pre-school running. If you could spare an evening (a Zoom call at the minute!) about once a month please do get in touch!

[chair@theorchardps.org.uk](mailto:chair@theorchardps.org.uk)

### **VILLAGE INFORMATION GROUP**

From time to time there is information that would be beneficial residents of the village. It might be a communication from Homes England or an email from SODC/OCC or just a be-aware type communication. The number of residents who have subscribed is growing but I need you to subscribe to use your email for this sort of information. There is already a Neighbourhood Watch Group that is specifically for Neighbourhood Watch although occasionally I have used the distribution list to share some data. A data base of emails really is an excellent way to instantly distribute information. Under GDPR you need to apply to join the distribution group.

There are 43 residents on the Village Information Group distribution list and if you would like to be added please send me an email requesting to be added. You can always be taken off the list at any time.

This is an easy way to be kept up to date with local information or to allow the communication of relevant village information.

This is my last time of asking...honest!

*Raymond Fergusson  
[fergie.milton1@btinternet.com](mailto:fergie.milton1@btinternet.com)*

### **HERE WE GO AGAIN!**

Little Milton Walking Christmas Market was thought to be such a success that we thought that a Spring Fair run along the same lines might be popular too!

Planning is in the early stages, but Saturday March 20<sup>th</sup> needs to be in your diary.

If you would like to help or have a stall you want to run just let us know. So far, we have an Easter Egg Tombola, Cakes, Easter Activities and possibly Crafts. Donations to any of these would be gratefully received.

More details to follow and, of course, Covid restrictions permitting.

The Orchard  
Little Milton School  
The Pine Lodge

*Teresa Quested*



## **OXFORDSHIRE SOUTH AND VALE CITIZENS ADVICE: TREASURER AND TRUSTEE NEEDED**

We are looking for (a) a Treasurer and (b) a Trustee to join our Board.

We are a local charity providing the Citizens Advice service in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. We advise **12,000** people each year and help four in every five to resolve their problems. We are members of National Citizens Advice. Our funding comes from District, Town and Parish Councils and local charities.

**Treasurer** We are looking for an experienced Treasurer with a relevant financial qualification or experience. Knowledge of charity finance is preferred but not essential. Your main role will be to guide the board on the financial implications of budgets and plans; and work with staff to prepare a budget, monitor our finances and present management accounts.

**Trustee** We are looking for a new Trustee to contribute to the work of the Board as it navigates the uncertainties of a post-Covid world. Each Trustee oversees a particular aspect of the charity's work.

There are seven Trustee board meetings each year, held in the evening of the third Tuesday of every other month

**What's in it for you?** You will make a truly positive impact in your local area by ensuring that OSAV CA is sustainable and addresses the needs of the community. You will build relationships with trustees, staff and volunteers; and build on your governance skills.

We welcome applications from all sections of the community so that we have a diverse board that reflects our clients and communities.

If you would like to discuss this opportunity, please contact Jane Richardson (Chair) [jane.richardson@osavcab.org.uk](mailto:jane.richardson@osavcab.org.uk) or Jon Bright (Chief Officer) [jon.bright@osavcab.org.uk](mailto:jon.bright@osavcab.org.uk)

### **CITIZENS ADVICE NEEDS VOLUNTEER ADVISERS**

We can all face problems that are too stressful or complicated to sort out alone. In 2019 our 150 volunteers advised over 11,000 people. We helped three quarters resolve their debt, benefits, employment and housing problems.

We now need more advisers to help us during and after the Covid-19 crisis.

Our main offices are in Abingdon, Didcot, Henley and Thame. Since March 2020, 90 volunteers and staff have been advising the public from home on our Adviceline service. Recently we partially re-opened our offices, in part to train new advisers.

What will you get out of it? You will join a friendly team, meet new people, develop your skills and make a real difference to people's lives.

You'll need to have good listening and interpersonal skills, a willingness to learn and be confident with computers. Full training will be provided.

If you have eight hours a week to spare for the next two years or more and are looking for a satisfying and stimulating volunteer role in your local community, please contact us at:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale/volunteer/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale/volunteer/)



### **Wheatley Library**

Wheatley library was open for a week before Christmas but sadly, the coronavirus infection rates rose significantly and we had to close our doors again.

As the global population continues to contend with impact of coronavirus on our lives, the library service, as a whole, is ticking away, doing our best to serve our customers within the national guidelines.

From 4 January national lockdown restrictions mean the following services are available at 14 libraries:

- New click and collect service.
- Reservation service via the online library catalogue or the library app
- Pre-booked access to computers
- Returns facility.

The nearest libraries, to our parish, for these services are:

- Cowley
- Headington
- Kidlington
- Oxfordshire County
- Thame

Residents can also access our extensive online services, providing inspiration, creativity and relaxation. Ebooks and audio, online music library, Pressreader and RBdigital magazines as well as lots of free resources to help with studying at home are all available at the click of a button.

- All loan periods have been extended until April 2021 and you will not incur fines.
- All activities in libraries have been cancelled until further notice.
- Libraries are unable to validate documents during the national lockdown period for applications such as: Blue badge, Bus passes, Residential parking permits

- The Home Library Service remains operational – in line with government guidelines.

Keep safe everybody and we look forward to being able to see you in our village library again as soon as possible.

### **VIEW FROM VIEWS**

Now we have past the witching hour and “surprise” “surprise” at the eleventh hour of Brexit negotiations, “we have a deal”, not perfect I am sure in fact some are very unhappy but I am sure it will all pan out over a period of time, and we will have forgotten all about it with life more or less back to normal, (wishful thinking!) some prices will rise and some fall. Did we really believe we would see livestock waiting to clear customs day after day, or food rotting on Lorries waiting for clearance? I think not. The Fishermen are not happy but as I do not know much about that side of food production it would be wrong to comment, unfortunately as in all negotiations some sectors are going to be disadvantaged, I just hope there will be some sort of compensation, for those disadvantaged. As in all these cases there is more to them than meets the public’s eye, we will have to wait and see how things pan out in the long run, many aspects are not good for my industry I just hope we are able to manage our way through them, I am sure there are plenty of opportunities around the corner.

Now while we are in lock down again all wildlife seems to be taking advantage of the fact they can carry on their life with less human interference, except the birds have their own pandemic to contend with but unfortunately we cannot impose a lock down on them, except for the domestic ones who have to be kept in, as they have their own pandemic to contend with. This can be a real problem for those with large flocks of free range birds, I know from experience when we had just a small flock what a problem it was. Our Egrets still come and visit when the floods go, I note that my assumption that they are more common is due to climate change was confirmed recently by some expert somewhere. Fingers crossed as at last the Hare (as long as the Hare coursers don’t visit again) and Partridge population seem to be on the increase at Views Farm, this is great news as both species have stayed very low or non-existent for some time now hopefully this is through the measures we have been taking. What I had thought were a small number of Fieldfares have I think morphed into a small flock of Starlings not so attractive but non the less important, in that Starlings do seem to be on the decline.

Now we enter a new world for our industry and most of us do not really know how it will affect us, all we do know is that the basic payment we receive from public funds is due to be reduced by 2026 for the larger units, and 2027 for the rest of us. The plan is that this will be replaced by environmental payments, which in theory will make up support to similar amounts received at present. There is no mention however what this will be: A. for, or B, how it will affect those of us that are already in various schemes, and will the criteria be the same? Many readers will be aware of the term ELMS this stands for “Environmental Land Management Scheme” and is reckoned to be “Public Funds for Public Goods”, (PFfPG) which after all one cannot argue about, and covers things like the environment, land management, pollution of (land ,air and water), but nothing about the production of food. The only mention of food is the quality and production methods, as this was the issue that the public supported, and pressurised Government to create the “Trade & Agriculture Commission”, this was to safeguard our production methods and British agriculture and to control the import of food produced to a lower standard. As yet we do not

have a clue what, when, or where, making planning extremely difficult. No doubt we will respond in our usual resilient way.

Most importantly we have vaccines that are supposed to control this awful Virus, let's hope so, so that we can progress with a normal or near normal life. Interesting comments made in the press on the same day and on the same page by Prince Charles and Boris Johnson that there was a connection between the pandemic and the way we are pushing nature into a corner. A fact I have been eluding to for some time. This is when the PM is allowing the HS2 contractors to plough through nature reserves, without as I understand it the permission of those who have spent hours, and pounds of public money, on their conservation.

It is good to hear politicians at last saying that we need to start to train the workforce in skills that will help us out of this climate change problem, as we recover from this awful pandemic, and reap the benefits, if any, of Brexit. There should now be a climate for individuals with a bit of Government encouragement, to set up some small projects. Also to support other projects like the fact that Rolls Royce have produced small nuclear electric generators, that could go into production fairly soon and employ many of the unemployed. Just think of the possibilities, this would enable us to have smaller generators around the country, giving us more flexibility should one or two breakdown.

An interesting link to a video <https://youtu.be/feSBsLSRkWs>

*Charles Peers*

### **GREAT HASELEY AND DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

The winter has seemed very long this year and this dismal wet January is not helping. January always seems a very difficult month with poor weather and the day length only creeping a little longer every day. Being under lockdown means that walks for me are limited to road walks within the village as footpaths are very muddy and often under water. A large part of our meadow is under water (it is a water meadow after all!) and reaching the compost heaps requires the big risk of getting the garden tractor stuck as, unfortunately, it is not four-wheel drive. Nevertheless, my other half manfully digs compost for me to spread on cleared areas of the garden.

Things are undoubtedly improving on the signs of spring front. Winter box and Daphne are flowering as are a number of named snowdrop varieties. Primroses and hellebores are coming into flower. I'm afraid I only cut back the leaves on the latter this week which was too late as the flower stems are starting to elongate and getting in the way. This year the biggest issue with Hellebores is that something has been chewing off the flower buds; it would feel so bad if they had actually eaten the bits, but those are just dumped. I suspect it is mice. Mice have also been eating the centres of my beautiful spinach plants which have so far survived the winter. I can't blame any other creatures as the plants are in an old bath which has a mesh cover so it cannot be either deer or rabbits as they cannot gain access; I'm rather sad about this. Despite the underwater status of the veg garden, we have a serious mole problem which I cannot understand; who knew that moles could live in such conditions?

Some days there are a worrying number of large deer roaming the field and garden and I know they will eat my roses in particular. Still, it is lovely to see lots of animals and, adding in red kites sitting in the trees, it has a feel of the savannah. The birds that have given me most pleasure have been the large flocks of Gold Finches which have been visiting on cold, bright days to eat lavender seed. Normally, my

other half would tidy up the lavender after flowering to make it neat for the winter; we will not do that again as we have had close up views of these beautiful birds which is a huge treat.

When the sun shines and the wind drops, it almost feels there is a touch of spring in the air, but the Tulips aren't peeping above ground so I think is a way off yet. I think we will all feel a bit better with more light and warmth in our lives.

*Liz Moyses*

## **FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN FRANCE**

Dear All,  
Bonne Annee!

### **COVID 19 & FRANCE**

Well, here we are again. The cases in France have stabilized, around 20,000 new cases per day, and hospital bed occupancy has fallen-down from a peak of 33,000 people in hospital with Covid on November 16<sup>th</sup> to 24,500 now. However we now have a curfew at 6pm across the country for 15 days.

### **XMAS IN FRANCE**

The French enjoy their Xmas and New Year just as much as anyone and the highlight of the season is Xmas Eve, when families have a feast of seafood. Visiting Leclerc Hypermarket on Xmas Eve, you see huge platters of every kind of seafood being bought by families. Absolutely gorgeous!

New Year was more subdued this year, for obvious reasons. I normally hold a New Year's Eve party here, with around 30 people invited, but this year gatherings of more than 6 were banned, and a curfew imposed at 8pm, so that put paid to that.

### **BREXIT!**

Well, the UK is finally out of the EU, and the full consequences are beginning to emerge. I now have to apply to the French government for permission to live in France. This involves filling out a form which requires evidence of income, the point being that France is unlikely to grant a residency permit to anyone who cannot support themselves, and hence becomes a burden on the state. I understand that the income threshold is 900 Euros per month (about £800), which is not unreasonable. However the situation in Spain is more challenging, with a threshold income of 2000 Euros per month apparently required.

### **BLOOD TESTS**

My local GP has taken a leave of absence, so a stand-in is there, and we did not get off to a good start. I turned up for my usual appointment to renew my medication, (staying outside the surgery due to Covid) and an unfamiliar character appeared, said something, and then disappeared. I was expecting my GP, Dr Gauvin, so did not react. An hour later, as he was locking up, the replacement asked me what I was doing there!

He then discovered I was not regularly taking my medication, and told me off, insisting I have a blood test.

The process here is amazing. You visit a clinic- I went in at 10.30am-waited 5 minutes to be called in, and the results were sent to me at 4pm the same day!

This is a hypochondriac's heaven! Here are your blood test results-3 pages of them, with the normal ranges specified so you can worry about them! In fact mine were

very good, but I was reminded of “Three Men in a Boat” where J reads a medical encyclopaedia and decides he has every disease in the book bar housemaid’s knee!

### STRANGE LETTER ARRIVED!

I collected my post one day a week or so ago and there was a letter from the local Tax Office. I briefly scanned it, and it seemed to tell me I owed another 23 Euros to the taxman. I then re-read it, and it was in fact a tax credit-why?

Because of the dry summer, the Tax authorities had given me a refund of 23 Euros to compensate for the reduction in my (non-existent) harvest! Amazingly, my neighbours, who just have a small garden, received a credit for 6 Euros!

I think I shall write to President Macron to suggest he might cancel this rather pointless giveaway. I might receive the Legion D’Honneur!

Stay Safe!

*Stuart McGill*

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



**John Howell MP writes**

**January 2021**

When I wrote in December, for publication in January, I was optimistic for this New Year and now in January, despite this current lockdown, I do remain so. Having said that I fully appreciate the difficulties of yet another tightening of restrictions, I know that some people are very worried and others very frustrated, but it is essential. What does sadden me is the lack of understanding by some as to why this is so necessary. I have received emails from people seeking my support for their own justification to push the boundaries of restrictions to allow particular activities. Such requests go completely against the spirit of the restrictions and each of us has to be able to justify any activity outside or our own homes for ourselves should they be required to do so. We simply have to reduce unnecessary face to face communications as far as possible.

However I do remain optimistic as we see more vaccines approved and the pace of the rollout stepped up. The priorities for vaccination remain to protect the vulnerable, reduce deaths and reduce pressure on the NHS. In conversation with the Chief Executive of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, which is heavily involved in the rollout, I have been reassured that we are on track to meet the Government schedule. At the start of the rollout it took time to get different locations set up and more will be operational by the time this newsletter is published. There is plenty of supply of the vaccine and it is being used as it becomes available. The Government is, of course, concerned to make sure that distribution is evenly spread across the county so that vulnerable people nationwide are protected.

Some very generous people has asked me if they can bypass their vaccination to allow some other person to receive it. The spirit of this is much appreciated but in truth we need everyone who is in the categories set to take the vaccine for the reason set out above. In contrast to this generosity I have also had reports from GP surgeries of people verbally abusing staff as they have been wanted higher priority for themselves. I too have received calls along the same lines. I am sure that most of us will be relieved when we personally have the protection of the vaccine, but we have to be patient and we have to look at the collective good. Our turn will come and in the meantime we must all continue to follow measures to protect one another



whether we have been vaccinated or not. It takes time to build immunity after receiving the vaccine and those who have been vaccinated must remember that others have not yet had the benefit. Hands, space, face will remain the mantra for some time yet. There is no place for selfishness in this, only by working together and showing mutual respect will we be able to get back to a way of life that we would prefer.

In this current lockdown Parliament continues to run as best it can with remote working. The Speaker has strongly encouraged MPs not to travel into London unless absolutely necessary and has limited further the number of MPs who can be in the Chamber at any one time. However, this does not mean we are simply twiddling our thumbs; far from it. Many changes have been made to enable MPs to carry on with important business. My staff team continue to work remotely and together we are doing our best to respond to the heavy workload we are experiencing particularly at present.

### **Council of Europe**

I am delighted and honoured to have been asked by the Prime Minister to become Leader of the UK delegation to the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe is a non-EU organisation of which we remain as members beyond Brexit. My delegation is cross-party and represents the UK at the Council in a number of ways including dealing with climate change and other important issues. The Council of Europe was founded in 1949, in the wake of the Second World War to uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. It has 47 member states and remains an important link with our European neighbours. The Parliamentary Assembly is made up of parliamentary representatives from the member states and has to reflect the political balance of the country.

*If you have an issue that you would like to raise with me, if possible, please email me at [john.howell.mp@parliament.uk](mailto: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](http://www.johnhowell.org.uk) and subscribe at the link on the home page.*

*Printed and promoted by John Howell MP House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA*

**John**

**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 **March 2021** Newsletter should be with the Editor at 27 Chiltern View, Little Milton, by 8.00 p.m. on **18th February**. The Editor reserves the right not to print items submitted for publication and to edit those items, which are published

## KEY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Age UK	01865 890879	Naheed Qureshi
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 279993 01844 279150	Alaric Smith (Chair) Raymond Fergusson (Clerk)
Pine Lodge	01844 279535 0844 7255568	Giles Denby Linda Lovegrove (Bookings) 24/7 Call out service
Police	101	Thames Valley Police (Non-emergency)
Post Office	01844 279001	Alison Shelton (Postmistress)
Public Transport	01865 323201	Comet
SODC	01235 422422	All enquiries
Southern Electric	0800 0727 282	Emergency Number
Thames Water	0800 3169 800	Emergency Number
The Lamb	01844 279527	Ian & Des
Biffa (Verdant)	03000 610610	All enquiries

For all other numbers go to website [www.littlemilton.org.uk](http://www.littlemilton.org.uk)