

Published by Little Milton Parish Council

www.littlemilton.org.uk

Little Milton Newsletter



April 2021

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Advice and support on Coronavirus

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

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

The following are some key websites

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

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

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

Updates from Oxfordshire County Council

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

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

(The minutes will be approved at the meeting held on 14th April 2021)

Planning

P20/S4875/LB: Hillview Cottage High Street:

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

The Council noted that the South Oxfordshire District Council had GRANTED Listing Building Consent

Meeting with representatives of OCC Highways/SODC Planning re A329

The Chairman confirmed that a remote meeting had been arranged for Thursday 11th March with representatives of OCC Highways and SODC Planning to continue the discussion on the unsatisfactory application of the LTP4 2015-2031 Freight Strategy in respect of a weight limit on A329 between Junction 7 of the M40 and Stadhampton and the traffic mitigation strategy included in the Outline Planning Application for Chalgrove Airfield. The Council spend some time considering the key points that they considered important to achieve a weight limit on the A329 through Little Milton. All councillors present indicated that they would join the remote meeting.

Recreation Ground/Playground

The Chairman invited Cllr. David Wakeling to report on the recent operational inspection of the playground by Kompan. He reported that the style of the report was very similar to the annual report submitted by The Play Inspection Company. In general terms he felt that there had been very few actions taken during the inspection. The Council RESOLVED that it would defer any decision to have any further operational inspections by Kompan until after the annual inspection in July/August by The Play Inspection Company. The Clerk was asked to communicate this to Kompan. During the discussion Cllr. Adam Sheppard stated that he would liaise with Cllr. David Wakeling to deliver bark to the playground to top up the areas around the slide. Cllr. David Wakeling highlighted that the existing fencing around the playground would need replaced in the next two years as it was not renewed within the playground project.

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Steve Sidhu had informed him that the quotation he was pursuing in respect of the hard-standing for the Grundon Bins was not competitive to that already received from Monument Pools. Cllr. Adam Sheppard informed the Council that he was meeting a contractor on site on Saturday 13th March and expected to have a quotation for the hard standing. He also reported that he would obtain a quotation in respect of the work needed to address the poor drainage behind the pedestrian gate entrance into the recreation ground.

Report by District /County Councillor

Caroline commented upon the recent letter received from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in respect of the Outline Planning Application for Chalgrove Airfield. The letter raised a number of concerns that challenged the suitability of the site for housing and a new runway. She stated that she was meeting with Officers to review the implications on the application.

Caroline reported that South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are looking into the possibility of developing a joint Local Plan for the area to significantly

PARISH OF LITTLE MILTON

CASUAL VACANCY

Notice is hereby given that due to the resignation of:

ALARIC SMITH

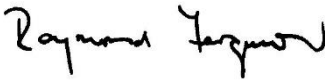
a vacancy exists in the office of Parish Councillor for the
Parish of

LITTLE MILTON

Vacancy will be filled by election if any ten local government electors for the said electoral area submit a written request for an election to held to fill the vacancy to the Returning Officer, South Oxfordshire District Council, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, Abingdon OX14 4SB within fourteen days after public notice of the vacancy has been given. In computing these fourteen days mentioned above you disregard a Saturday or Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a bank holiday or a day appointed for Public Thanksgiving or Mourning.

If no such request is made the vacancy will be filled by Co-option by the Parish Council.

Dated this.....Thirty First day of March 2021

Signed.....


PARISH CLERK

reduce costs and help the councils meet their ambitious targets for making the two districts carbon neutral.

Caroline informed the Council that South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse are the second and third best recyclers in England. South Oxfordshire recycles 64 per cent of its waste, with the Vale recycling 63.3 per cent

Caroline reported that Stadhampton Parish Council had shared a meeting with OCC Highways Officers in respect of the future plans for infra-structure development arising from the OCC Growth Fund as well as the Homes England proposals for Chalgrove and suggested that this might emerge in the scheduled meeting with OCC Highways on 11th March.

The Clerk thanked Caroline for her support in having the trailer removed from the layby at Frogmore. The Clerk stated that the problem at the layby in respect of litter and fly-tipping warranted a visit by OCC and SODC Officers to explore a more cost effective solution.

Caroline reported that the elections for the County Council are scheduled for May 6th 2021 and that the Elections team is always looking for new people to work with them.

MUGA

The Chairman reported on the site meetings he had with En Tout Cas (ETC) and Chiltern Sports Contractors in respect of the MUGA. The feedback from both contractors was that the surface on the hard court and the carpet court were in a poor state and the Council should be looking to replace them. The outline cost was £35k. The Chairman expressed the view that there might be some short term measures that could be taken but the Council needed to address the replacement of the surfaces.

The Council had a lengthy discussion on possible options that could be considered for the existing facilities but also for other potential facilities within the recreation ground. Cllr. David Wakeling shared his experiences of the replacement of the Playground in 2018.

The Chairman stated that the setting up of a Working Party to scope the project and to identify potential sources of funding was essential although an earlier approach to the village had not received any response. He believed that the interest in the tennis club could generate support for the project although there was a need to approach the village again.

Mark Willis was invited to comment on the discussion as he had been on the recreation ground committee for many years. Mark commented on the overall aging of the MUGA as well as the general condition of the grass surface that had benefitted from a weed & feed some years ago.

Thames Water/OCC Highways

The Clerk informed the Council that he had received a comprehensive response from Thames Water in respect of his email of 19th February 2021 that he had circulated it to all Councillors. The response addressed the frequency of tankers attending the sewage pumping station (SPS) that was due to the ingress of ground/surface water infiltrating the foul sewer network that is only designed to take domestic foul waste. This has been a historic problem. Thames Water commented that they did not envisage infrastructure concerns associated with the possible developments in Little Milton. Thames Water will continue to investigate and attempt to identify the root

cause to the capacity restrictions on the sewerage network as a result of the ingress of water.

The Council RESOLVED that the Clerk should arrange a meeting with Thames Water as they considered it very beneficial to maintain an ongoing dialogue with them.

Correspondence

The Chairman informed the Council that he had received an email from Ian & Des at The Lamb informing the Council that they had taken stock of their situation in what had been a testing year and had decided to look at the possibility of selling the pub. They had informed the Council as part of an agreement with the Parish Council in 2014 not to register the Lamb as an Asset of Community Value. The Council appreciated being informed.

The Clerk reported that he had been informed that one of the spars on the bench adjacent to the Council notice board had become dislodged. The parishioner had raised concerns about the safety of the other benches in the village. Cllr. Howard Harrison offered to inspect the benches and report back the Council at the April meeting.

Current Council members

Councillor Francois Van Der Merwe (Chairman)	01844 278180
Councillor Howard Harrison	01844 279946
Councillor Adam Sheppard	01844 279217
Councillor Steve Sidhu (Vice Chairman)	01844 279448
Councillor David Wakeling	01844 278014
Parish Clerk Raymond Fergusson	01844 279150 lmparishcouncil@btinternet.com
County Councillor: Stephen Harrod	01844 278068
District Councillor Caroline Newton	07951 477144

SODC: WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

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

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

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

Give your furniture to a good home

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

BIFFA: WASTE COLLECTION DATES – APRIL 2021

	Brown	Grey	Green	Food
7th April	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
13th April	No	Yes	No	Yes
20th April	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
27th April	No	Yes	No	Yes

RECTOR'S PINT

For the second Easter running we will not be in our churches. Technically we are allowed to gather in church, but I think it would be a dispiriting affair, socially distanced restrictions mumbling through our masks “Christ is risen, he is risen indeed Alleluia”, the latter of course uttered in hushed tones and not with the customary Easter shout that I encourage!

Instead, following the success of Harvest and Christmas, we will be hosting another outdoor service, at **10.00am on Easter morning**, this time again at St Peter's in Great Haseley.

We are hoping to have a small number of singers to lead in an Easter Anthem or two, frustratingly we will not be allowed to sing. We will have to rely on appointed singers and once again, hum!

However, I really want to do it this way. Zoom has wonderfully kept us together. Last Sunday (7 March) I quoted from the New Testament letter, 1 Peter where the Church is described as ‘living stones’, the people who come together in the name of Christ to worship and serve. I was looking at everyone on the brick-like ‘Gallery view’, we were ‘living stones’! But on Easter Sunday, I want us to be physically together again in some way, not on Zoom.

This is the most important of all Christian festivals. It is the Resurrection that pulls everything else together, it is the epicentre of our faith, Christ is risen. What does this mean?

Shortly after I became a Christian, when I was a twenty-one year old student, I had a conversation with another young student. I had been a member of the campaign for nuclear disarmament, and this was important to me. I talked to this young man about this and he basically said, “I don't care about that or what happens to the world, I know where I am going when I die”. That is what resurrection meant to him. It was, and remains, a shocking thing to say, that the Resurrection is simply about something happening in the next life, so we don't need to care what happens in this one. In the New Testament, the Resurrection of Jesus is talked about as the beginning of something wholly new, no less than what will eventually be a new creation, and we are offered a place in that. But what we do in this life, how we treat each other and the world is crucially important, it is the foundation for what will follow. The Resurrection of Jesus is a declaration that yes, for us there is far more to come, but that the beginning of this new creation began with an empty tomb and a risen Christ in a garden, here in our world. We are Easter people; the Resurrection hope begins now.

So please do come along to Great Haseley. If it's wet, bring an umbrella! We will be celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Happy Easter, Christ is risen, Alleluia.

Simon

SERVICES FOR HOLY WEEK, GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER SUNDAY

Weds 31 March – 6.00pm Compline by zoom

Thurs 1 April – 7.00pm Maundy Thursday service by zoom

Good Friday – 10.00 am Good Friday service by zoom

Easter Sunday – 10.00 am Easter Day Family Communion, St Peter's Churchyard, Great Haseley.

CHURCH CLEANING ROTA FOR APRIL

W/E 4th April	–	Mrs E. Summers & Mrs Anne Hawkins
W/E 11th April	–	Mrs A Blagg & Mrs C D'Aeth
W/E 18th April	–	Mrs M Davies & Mrs S A Dennis
W/E 25th April	–	Mrs L. Lovegrove & Mrs C Coward
W/E 2nd May	–	Mrs A Jones & Jill Hoban

BENEFICE SERVICES APRIL

	Live Service	Virtual Services Via Zoom
Thursday 1st April Maundy Thursday		Invitation To Zoom Communion 7.00 p.m.
Friday 2nd April Good Friday		Invitation To Zoom Reflection 10.00 a.m.
Sunday 4th April Easter Day	Easter Day Family Communion, St Peter's Churchyard Great Haseley 10.00 a.m.	
Sunday 11th April Easter 2		Invitation To Zoom Morning Prayer 11.00 a.m.
Sunday 18th April Easter 3		Invitation To Zoom Morning Prayer 11.00 a.m.
Sunday 25th April Easter 4		Invitation To Zoom Communion 11.00 a.m.

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

LITTLE MILTON WALKING SPRING FAIR

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

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

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

Stalls so far include:

Homemade Cakes

Jams and preserves

Easter Tombola

Plants

Children's crafts and activities

Jam Jar Tombola

Pottery and jewellery

Refreshments - including hot chocolate

Wooden crafts

Everyone is welcome.

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

Contact Katie -kleworthy@hotmail.com

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

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



SPRING FAIR EASTER EGG COMPETITION

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

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

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

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

I look forward to seeing what you can all create.

Sarah

FRIENDS OF LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL- 200 CLUB

March

1st	No 22	Kazz Post	£10.00
2nd	No 10	The Duke's Family	£7.00
3rd	No 42	Gordon Smith	£5.00

Diane Austin Little Milton School 200 Club Organiser

WELLS FARM ALLOTMENTS

April is a busy time for allotmenters. Lots to plant, lots to nurture. This is the time when all of that planning will pay off. But so much else wants to grow and it is essential the "weeds" are kept under control from here on in through the growing season. Consider growing something different this to see what happens. I am thinking about trying sweet potatoes if I can get some. I also fully recommend making time to sit for a few minutes, maybe with a flask of tea, and watch nature busily celebrating the approach of summer. I look forward to maybe us having a barbecue in the summer with a chance to meet as a group.

If anybody is interested in having an allotment please contact me at paulj201@hotmail.com

Happy growing.

Paul. (paulj201@hotmail.com)

LITTLE MILTON WI

In March, we had a very successful AGM followed by some Easter Crafts making bunny toys and egg cosies. Some of our Narcissus bulbs given out in October also timed flowering perfectly.

Our next meeting on **Thursday 8th April** is with Alison Vallance's Dad, David Lee who will talk to us about his **life on the British Antarctic Survey base**.

Here's a brief overview: I spent three summers at Rothera, the British Antarctic Base on the Antarctic Peninsula, as a weather forecaster assisting in the deployment of scientists into remote areas of the Antarctic. I will describe this work as well as what general life was like. Did we have fresh food? Did we sleep in tents? Did we see penguins and whales? and many other questions will be answered.

We'll be **online from 7pm**, with the **talk to start at 730pm**. Contact me if you'd like to join us. Everyone welcome, the more the merrier!

A few of us will also be running a stall at the Little Milton Spring Fayre, planned for Easter Saturday 3rd April. Jane's on the cake stall, Maggie's selling her jewellery & pottery and I'll be selling Easter bunnies from our March meeting and Adele's up-cycling and crafts.

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

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

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

Like us at www.facebook.com/lmpinelodge

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

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

FRIENDS OF WELLS FARM

Thank you all (well most of you) for your support keeping your dogs away from the Welsh mountain ponies that returned to us in March following the death of the fifth (Seren) while at Warburg reserve. As I write, the four of them have settled in well and Ginny (Seren's mum) seems to have her head higher now after initially being very down and also suffering from mild colic. Glad this was caught early. Keep an eye on our ponies, it's been a challenging time and we really appreciate your help. Because these ponies are small they are even more susceptible to being fed incorrect food. Apples, carrots etc. can be very dangerous to their rudimentary digestive system and may be the reason why Seren had colic.

Ginny is looking a lot better, which is a huge relief. All four Welsh ponies occasionally enjoy high speed laps of the field, and I think they've been enjoying flirting with Midas and Ollie over the gate too! To reduce the likelihood of laminitis the grazing will be restricted by putting up blocks of electric fencing when needed.

I realise it's getting confusing having all the ponies on site at the moment, so here's a reminder of names:

- Barn Field - Bella (white strip on nose), Millie (Bella's daughter), Bertie (darker brown).
- Ford Field - Ella (chocolate brown), Enfys (mottled grey with darker mane), Ginny (small light grey), Sal (mottled blonde with brown mane).
- Poplar Field - Goldie (red/brown with black mane and summer skin condition), Midas (Goldie's son, white socks), Ollie (the timid one).

Blackthorn is the first hedgerow plant to flower and the first to open was mid-March. The hedgerows are now bursting into leaf and the hawthorn will soon flower as well to give us a rich contrast of white and various greens along the edge of the paths.

As we progress through April we should begin to see early butterfly species, more bumblebees and a load of activity from the different bird species visiting our gardens and using the hedgerows. If you have kids, get them to look out for the first butterfly. Might be a brimstone, and orange tip or maybe a small tortoiseshell.

Please keep your dogs on a lead through the pony fields and clear up your doggy's doings. Thank you to all of those who have been clearing up after those owners who don't seem to understand this.

Paul. (paulj201@hotmail.com)

DOG POO BAGS LEFT AROUND

Sadly this is becoming a regular feature in the newsletter and reflects badly on responsible dog owners who pick up their poo bags and deposit them in the various litter bins around the village or the dedicated recreation bin in the recreation ground or take them home for future disposal. Leaving the poo bags on verges or close to private property is irresponsible and upsetting to residents. **PLEASE ACT RESPONSIBLY**

Raymond Fergusson Parish Clerk

NEWS FROM LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL

What a difference a few more faces make! It was such a pleasure to welcome back all of our children on Monday 8th March. There was a noticeable buzz and excitement as the children filtered in through the gates - the first time in two months for most! Friends were reacquainted, tales of lockdown bravery and boredom were exchanged, and break time plans were enthusiastically discussed.

Walking around the school on Monday morning, all the children seemed to have smiles on their faces and were enjoying activities designed to help them reconnect with each other and the school generally. Our focus for this first week back has, primarily, been on arts and crafts and generally providing the children with the opportunity to create.

In addition to our school-based activities, the children from Rowan and Maple classes enjoyed a long-awaited return to our Forest School sessions. Enjoying some unstructured time in the woodland environment proved to be the perfect antidote to the two long months of lockdown learning.

You may be interested to see some of the pictures from these sessions and others on either Twitter or our 'Twitter feed' found on the school's website.

Over the next weeks, in addition to helping the children to settle into familiar routines, we will be carrying out informal assessments and putting in place support and interventions to ensure that any gaps are addressed.

*Hannah Blest and James Bell
Interim Co – Headteachers*

MORLAND HOUSE SURGERY NEWS UPDATE – MARCH 2021

PPG

Morland House Patient Participation Group, in discussion with the Morland House team, feel that updates, via the various parish bulletins and newsletters, would be a good way to keep our fellow patients notified of anything of note at the surgery. Welcome to the first instalment.

Covid-19 Vaccination Programme

Morland House has been busy vaccinating its patient population since 29th Dec 2020.

As of 10th March 2021, almost 3,500 Morland House patients have had their first Covid-19 vaccine and a further 600 will be vaccinated before Monday 15th March. If you are aged 55 or over and you have not yet been contacted for yours, in the first instance you may book your vaccine online through this website www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or by phoning 119. You may also contact the Morland House reception team on 01865 872448 who will be happy to help.

Administration of second doses will start on 19th March.

The PPG would like to express its deep appreciation to the Surgery and NHS staff for what they have achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the extremely well-organised and effective vaccination programme.

Building Works and Pharmacy

Building work started on converting The Barn on the Morland House site in mid-February and is expected to be completed later this summer. The Wheatley Pharmacy, currently located on the High Street, will move in and operate alongside the dispensary. Thus patients will be able to collect their prescriptions as well as purchase their chemist needs and we could encourage patients (and non-patients) to utilise the pharmacy.

Website

For more information on everything from surgery opening times to the new services (musculoskeletal (MSK) practitioner service), links to self-referral services, online access forms, and much more, please visit www.morland-house.co.uk.

If you would like to contact the PPG, you may do so via the 'contact' page on the website. You may also write to the PPG care of the surgery at London Road, Wheatley Oxon OX33 1YJ or telephone the reception team on 01865 872448.



A great place to grow

Happy Spring from The Maple Tree in Wheatley! How exciting – the sun is shining and the World is beginning to open up again, and so are we!

We are continuing with our online programme, but we will be able to hold sessions at the Centre from April 12th. Spaces are limited and must be pre-booked by emailing info@mapletree.org.uk. Covid measures remain in place and there is a suggested donation of £2.50 per family per session.

Messy Mondays: Play and Learn sensory/creative activities from 10:30-11:30

Tuesday: Play and Learn: Once Upon a Rhyme-Time from 10:00-11:00

Wednesday: Well-Baby Clinic (with Health Visitors) to be booked through the NHS and **Maple Babies:** Group support for new parents from 10:00-11:00

Thursday: Play and Learn: Little Scientists, activities for the under 5s from 10:00-11:00

Friday: Play and Learn: Solitary Bee to Social Butterflies: a new group for young children (from 12 months to 3 years) who have missed key socialising opportunities during this past year from 10:30-11:30

Saturdays: Family Fun on 3rd Saturday of each month, Dinosaurs (April 17th), Construction (15th May), Space (19th June) from 10:00- 12:00

Weekdays 1:1 Sessions

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

Appeal for new Trustees, Advisors and Volunteers: We are looking for people from our local area to join our committed and friendly group of trustees. We are especially keen to recruit some trustees or volunteers who have a particular skill set in business, accounting, garden design or fundraising. We are also looking for volunteers to help with our sessions, working with young children alongside our dedicated staff team.

A big thank you to our local district councillors who kindly gave us some grants to buy new indoor and outdoor play equipment and a super new noticeboard that will soon be placed outside the Centre displaying all our activities. Thank you so much for supporting us during this difficult time!

We are here to help you, if you need help, advice or support: 01865 236700 or 07849 466249. Email: info@mapletree.org.uk

Website: www.mapletree.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley

*Laura Spencer
The Maple Tree Centre Manager*



WHEATLEY LIBRARY

Pandemic Year Summary

We are in the business of books and words. Have you noticed how these new words have entered our frequent, if not daily, wordscape? Some have acquired an intensity of new meaning: social distancing, restrictions, face masks, rule of 6, working from home, must, support bubble, tiers, stay, protect, safe.... to name a few.

From the stressful period, for everyone, of those first few weeks the library leadership faced the magnitude of putting a library service of 44 libraries and over 250 staff 'to bed', branch staff suddenly found their purpose and roles put on ice, librarians switched much of their work to delivering an online library and many of us worked from home.

Since then, we have all got a story to tell about what we did last year and how we fared. While we are still working many things out as guidance changes and

government information grows, we have kept the library service going. It remains meaningful to our residents and has evolved well in some surprising ways.

Jane Mason

Operations Manager for Library Leadership Team

For information about the following topics

- Bookstart
- Home Library Service
- Reading Groups
- Click and Collect

during the pandemic year of 2020 please see

the Friends of Wheatley Library Facebook page, or

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries, or

follow Oxfordshire Libraries on Facebook or @Oxonlibraries on Twitter

The Wheatley library staff hope that the rates of Covid infections will stay low enough for us to be able to re-open our doors in April in line with government guidance but until we see you again, we hope you keep safe.

Wendy Stanton

Wheatley Library Manager

EARLY MORNING EXERCISE!!!

Does anyone fancy half an hour of exercise a few mornings per week?

And get paid for it, whilst providing a service to our community.

We need help with our newspaper deliveries in our village.

For more information contact Mark tel. 279468

VIEW FROM VIEWS

In this time of uncertainty it is reassuring that at least nature is running as per normal, confirmed by array of the usual spring flowers, birds pairing up, and even the solitary Hare, that we have seen all winter now has a mate, or two, I hope they are both females. Also a number of Buzzards frequenting one of our copses, this is in opposition to the Red Kites that we all see every day, I guess they are planning to make us their home for their future offspring, there are good and bad sides to this, it is nature though. We still have a pair of Ravens usually heard and not seen, plus many unidentified small birds around our feeding areas.

As for our crops, at last they too seem to realise that is time they got their act together and start growing, although they will struggle with the land only just started to dry out at the beginning of March, since when, despite it has being dry with and a few good days the ground will hardly have warmed up as yet, this will need to happen before we see much growth. Then dare I say it some nice warm rain, having said that some areas will have quite a struggle to catch up. This year with an area that we were unable to plant in the autumn we are going experiment with a different approach to growing a crop. This will be to plant another crop at the same time, with the idea that this will suppress the weeds, and being a trefoil and clover mix will enhance the fertility that will lead to the reduction of artificial fertiliser. This all sounds fine but of course it will present competition for the crop, and could present a few problems at harvest time, as there may well be a significant amount of green growth for the harvester to content with. However this is the way we need to be

looking as a step towards sustainable farming, which the Government is wanting us to follow.

In the last month there have been a series of contradictions and about turns, and usual conundrums;

Views Farm has had its annual haircut, or should I say hedge trim. As we were unable last year, due to the wet conditions (ha ha), to give our hedges their routine cut (on 1/2 the farm) being worried about leaving them too long between cuts we just had to go ahead, this unfortunately meant the trimmer may have made a mockery of our floristically enhanced grass margins. Having made great play in the past that people should not walk off the paths so as to protect these margins we go ahead and do just that, out of necessity. Were these to be left too long between cuts, a hedge can soon get out of hand and require laying which is more than the farm can afford.

Another, when notified of this road being closed in May, with the forties being used as a diversion, when I pointed out that this was totally inappropriate, as did the Parish council, the County has now stated that they will not advise this diversion, so that is a great result and for once the council has taken notice of local opinion.

Then a letter from the "CAA" has intimated that the planned development of Chalgrove airfield should not be allowed to go ahead, can you believe this to be the case when so much effort, not to mention public money, has been spent by high ranking ministers of the realm, without finding out the basic facts first, and issuing dictates' to "SODC" not to alter the local plan, as they had a mandate to do following the recent Council election, plus Homes England buying acres of adjacent land presumably to build on. Having said that, there has been no more news on the matter for some weeks, so who knows what deals are going on in the back ground, and is this a route to get other developments via the back door accepted by the locals?

Then finally Rabbits seem to have all but disappeared, early in the winter they seemed to be everywhere but now hardly ever do we see them, I cannot explain why. It would be foolish to even think they had disappeared completely, they haven't as there is evidence of their existence.

Some supermarkets, who more or less control what and how their foods are produced, in order to be one step ahead of their competitors, are now adding to their assurance schemes. They are now requesting that producers are able to demonstrate if their animals are happy, and what steps are they taking to make sure they are. All I can say to that is how on earth do you quantify this, anyone who deals with animals will know by instinct, but how you quantify it on paper is another matter somehow, to me, this is going to be almost impossible and over the top. We all know that animals have to be content to preform, so consequently we make sure as far as possible this condition is maintained.

In Great Milton we now a planning issue for a massive expansion of "Le Manior" where the Parish Council seem to have ignored the wishes of the public by accepting the proposal, The outcome remains to be seen.

I don't think I will mention HS2 and the £100bn cost compared with the offer of 1% to the NHS!

Charles Peers



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/

OCC WINTER SUPPORT GRANT 2021

If you are aware of any families in your communities that are struggling to afford food or essential items, please ask them to contact the Community Support team. We can help with supermarket vouchers or refer them into one of our advice centres if they need more support than we can offer. Our contact details are:

Community Connector Team

- Tel: 01235 422600
- Email : communityconnectors@southandvale.gov.uk
-

They can also get in touch with advice centres (referral form attached) for support with affording food or paying their fuel bills. Advice centre contact details are:

Advice Centres

- Citizens Advice – 0808 278 7907 (South and Vale)
- Wantage Independent Advice Centre – 01235 765348 (Vale).

If you require any further information regarding other support, we will be happy to discuss this in more detail.

We thank you in advance for helping us spread the news about the help that is on offer.

Best wishes,

The Community Connector Team,

COVID-19 Community Support Programme Team

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

To find out more information on how we can support you, visit our dedicated [South](#) and [Vale](#) web pages.

Contact Centre: 01235 422600

GREAT HASELEY AND DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

A year ago we were at the start of a long lockdown that resulted in an increasing general interest in gardening; unfortunately, this was thwarted by garden centres being closed. Now, the days are rapidly lengthening as we approach the spring equinox and hopefully we will be soon out of lockdown. This time the garden centres have remained open as essential retail businesses and what a relief that has been. Last year I was scrabbling around to find seed potatoes and onion sets whereas this year I was able to buy those easily and the potatoes are sprouted and ready for planting when the ground dries out enough.

I am behind on seed sowing and greenhouse jobs, but the garden is almost clear and we have even mulched some of the ground to add organic matter and help keep moisture in and the weeds a little under control. Weeding is a major problem as, even with the best intentions, I never keep up so annual weeds seed and reappear every year in abundance. They are even appearing through the mulch, but as a result are juicy and easy to remove, if time consuming. It feels bad to be aiding weed growth, but in starved compacted soil, weeds need to root much deeper and more widely in order to grow and as a consequence are much more difficult to remove. We have such free draining sandy soil that, without organic matter being regularly added, plants simply wilt and die without a lot of water. I am basically lazy so anything that reduces watering is worth the effort. While a watering system would be lovely, watering by hand makes you examine things closely and maybe spot problems before they take hold.

Yesterday I was watching a blue tit examining a hole in the top of the wall that runs between our garden and our neighbours'. Every year this ritual takes place, a nest is built and eggs are laid. The chicks usually hatch, but then the inevitable happens and the magpies come and remove the contents. We have not been able to find a solution, but I am always impressed that hope always triumphs over experience. Blue tits have a lifespan of 2.7 years on average so some of these birds are likely to have tried this nesting site before.

In the article I wrote last year at this time, I noted that I had unplanted Anemone coronaria in the shed and I am ashamed to admit that they are still there. I really will get them in this year as they still appear to be sound. We will see what happens

when I soak them. I am such a procrastinator and always think I will do things tomorrow... I guess that's why I never get on top of the weeds!

If all goes well, we should start to be able to meet friends and family outdoors; I'm sure we are all looking forward to that! Enjoy the spring and get your garden looking good.

Liz Moyses

FROM OUR FRENCH CORRESPONDENT

Bonjour Tous!

After an extremely wet January, when my duck pond came very close to overflowing into the vineyard, we have had a very dry and pleasant February, followed by a cooler March (weather coming from the UK !)..

VINEYARD HEALTH

The vines have been pruned ready for the coming season, and this year I started at the end of January and finished on the 3rd of March. This leaves the vineyard looking rather bare, as those vines which have not reached the trellising wire (most of them) need to be pruned back to the base.

However the good news is that grass has established itself across the whole vineyard, and so mowing makes it look very neat. However, the benefits do not end there. Carbon is the most important element in a healthy soil, and my soil was found to be deficient when tested. Grass clippings when dry are 70% carbon, 4% nitrogen, 2 % potassium and 1% phosphorus. The worms drag the clippings into the soil and improve the biological activity, the organic material content, and the ability of the soil to retain moisture.

France seems to have adopted organic and bio-dynamic vineyard practises more than any other country, and the most recent study by the University of Bordeaux and UCLA suggest that wines made organically score on average 8 points above non-organic wines, while bio-dynamic wines score 13 points above in tastings by French experts.

A further 1.5tonnes of organic fertilizer has just been delivered, so that is the next task. The fertilizer contains a root stimulant, plus zinc & boron, which were also slightly deficient in the soil test.

MY WATER BILL

You may remember that due to the second drought in succession, I was watering my vines frequently last summer, and dreading the resultant water bill. In fact I used 81,000 litres-or nearly 3 gallons per vine (excluding showers etc). The total bill-about £300 for the year-very much less than feared, helped by the fact that I am on a septic tank system, so no waste water to be processed. People here with swimming pools have much higher bills!

COVID AND FRANCE

Well, without a shadow of a doubt, the UK has stolen a march on the rest of Europe with its vaccination program. Whether the reasons were an excess of caution (there are a large group of vaccination sceptics in the EU) or incompetence on the part of the EU Commission is hard to judge. My Mairie is collecting names of all those in the village over the age of 65 with a view to vaccination in April.

France is now struggling with its third wave- 16 departements now going into a month long lockdown including Paris. Here, in Lot et Garonne, we have had 526

fatalities per 1 million residents, vs and average of 1402 per million in France in total, and 1848 per million in the UK. Needless to say, we are not part of the new lockdown.

I was watching CNN one weekend and was astonished to see my GP, Dr Anthony Harnden, being quizzed about the UK program. I had received a letter from Morland Surgery telling me that Dr Harnden had suffered a bad attack of Covid, and was unable to continue normal surgery hours. Now there he is on CNN, looking very well!!! I believe he is now a Professor, so congratulations to him!

A bientot!

Stuart McGill
stuartmmcgill@gmail.com



John Howell MP writes

March 2021

I hope that the hint of Spring and the progress that we are making nationally to emerge from the restrictions that the pandemic has forced upon us bring a note of optimism to many. I say that knowing the wide range of difficulties that the prolonged lockdown has brought for many people which we will need to work through together in the coming months and years.

It was a delight to see such positive reports from teachers and children as they returned to school. It was also moving to hear children say what they had missed and the hopes that they have on going back. Mindful of the mental health concerns that the pandemic has given rise to I was pleased at the recent announcement of £79 million to expand mental health services for children and young people. I know from many emails sent to me that young people across the age range have faced many difficulties in this time.

Last month I mentioned new legislation coming forward to help protect our communities from illegal encampments. This is a problem that has been prevalent in the last year. Mindful of concerns to cut crime and build safer communities. The Government has now laid the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill before Parliament. This Bill seeks to ensure that the police have the powers and tools they need to protect themselves and the public. It also looks to overhaul sentencing laws to ensure that there is better protection from serious sexual and violent offenders and also to place greater emphasis on rehabilitation for offenders to help them rebuild their lives and prevent reoffending. This Bill will now make its way through due process in the coming months.

I know that Climate Change is an issue dear to many hearts. Whilst there are many big things that Government can do and is doing, I have often said that there are also many things that we as individuals and households can do that will also make a significant difference. The recent Food Waste Action Week focussed on one such issue. This was led by the Waste and Resource Action Programme and supported by Defra. Some of the data produced to support this campaign is very revealing as indeed is the impact that we can make if we all try to reduce our waste - for example, the fact that around 20 million slices of bread are thrown away at home every day. It has been said that stopping this would do the same for greenhouse gas emissions as planting 5.3 million trees! Such data certainly focuses our attention and, of course, reducing food waste also saves us money. For more information on this do go to the WRAP website.

Also on the subject of the environment there is also good news from the Department of Transport on the planned introduction of a new blend of petrol for cars and motor bikes to be available later this year which will help reduce harmful emissions. This is not to discourage the move towards electric vehicles but E10 fuel will mean greener fuel available to help reduce emissions from millions of vehicles already on our roads. When it is available it will be important to check compatibility with your own vehicle before use.

Many of our communities have completed, or are working on, Neighbourhood Plans. I continue to lobby Government where there are concerns related to these. I know that there have been concerns over the work involved in producing a plan, especially in smaller communities. I was therefore pleased this month to see some new funding come forward to pilot a simpler approach. The aim of this pilot is to test a simpler approach which aims to overcome the perceived complexity of the process and lack of volunteer capacity that can often result in low uptake for producing a plan despite a strong appetite in the local community to shape their areas. I have written to both SODC and Cherwell DC to encourage them to consider taking part in the pilot.

I hope that Parliament will soon return to a more normal pattern of working but in the meantime the work continues albeit largely remotely. If you have an issue that you would like to raise with me, if possible, please email me at john.howell.mp@parliament.uk. If you cannot email you can write to me at the House of Commons, London, SW1 0AA or PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD.

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

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

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 **May 2021** Newsletter should be with the Editor at 27 Chiltern View, Little Milton, by 8.00 p.m. on **18th April**. 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 278180 01844 279150	Francois Van der Merwe (Chair) Raymond Fergusson (Clerk)
Pine Lodge	01844 279535 0844 7255568	Giles Denby Linda Lovegrove (Bookings) 24/7 Call out service
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

Front Cover courtesy of Paul Jeffery: A yellowhammer