

Parish Matters



June 2020



Monthly newsletter for

Ambrosden, Arncott, Blackthorn, Merton & Piddington

Usually delivered to over 1,150 households

And online on Parish Council & community web sites

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Note from the editor

In May we witnessed not only huge community spirit in helping others and supporting those supporting us, but we also came together to celebrate and remember VE day 75 years ago. So I have dedicated a page per village to photographic memories of those wonderful celebrations.

I have also included sections on how to make your own face mask and how to look after your mental health – both truly relevant at the moment.

I am always on the lookout for news and ideas, and I continue to champion local businesses, so please get in touch if you have something interesting and useful to contribute.

Sadly, we are not printing again this month, but maybe for the next edition.....

And as last month, notice that the web addresses are now **coloured** and will link when clicked – but you may need to download the pdf file first, to make them work.

Enjoy and stay safe...

Martin Richardson

Clergy Contacts

Clergy

Church of England contacts:

Rev Steve Hayes (Rector Ray Valley Benefice) 01869 247813
Rev Lisa Holmes (Charlton and Oddington) 01865 331279
Rev Lucy Thirtle (Islip, Noke and Woodeaton) 01865 379470
Mrs Glenys Edwards (based in Oddington) 01865 331233
Lynne Lewis Benefice Administrator 01865 331225

Methodist: Rev Steve Mann (Bicester Methodist Church) 01869 323030
Methodist services: Please consult the website: www.bicestermethodist.org.uk
Roman Catholic: Fr John Batthula jbaththula@gmail.com 01869 253277
Catholic services: Please consult the website: www.immaculate-conception.org.uk

Churchwardens

Ambrosden:
Piddington: Margaret Hutchings, Kings Cottage, Lower End, Piddington 01844 238724
Merton: Lawrence Comiskey, 2 Church Close, Merton 01865 331429
Robert Kerr, Merton Croft, West End Lane, Merton..... 01865 331870

Organist and Bells

Ambrosden:
Organist: (vacant)
Piddington: Mrs Betty Newell 01844 237236
Morwen Ashton 01844 238510
Merton: Mr Russell Thompson 01869 246093

Letter From The Clergy Team

It doesn't seem like a month since the last edition – where did those 4 weeks go? One of the slightly unsettling features of lock down is the way in which days blur into each other. We are encouraged to maintain a routine precisely to help with this, but when we lose those markers of church services or football matches or the children's after-school activities, we can lose track of time. Especially when you throw in a bank holiday on a Friday!

One of the new markers has become Thursday evenings at 8pm when people gather to cheer



on our key workers. And I hear of groups of people meeting for coffee from the safe distances of their front gardens at a regular time

each week or having virtual coffee mornings on Zoom – we have become quite imaginative.

Piddington's new radio station is just one example of how we have risen to the challenge of these last few weeks – if you have not tried it, make sure you do – follow the link from their website:

<https://piddingtonvillageoxfordshire>.

Hasn't it been wonderful hearing of all the stories where people have been supported by friends and neighbours across the benefice in all our villages?

Of course, we hear all the bad news on the news and in the papers, but there is so much good news too. We are surrounded by generosity and kindness in far greater measure than we realise because of the media's tendency towards constantly focusing on gloom and doom. Thank you to everyone who has done their bit – especially those who have done something which no-one else knows about.

The Emergency Fund set up in Islip is another example of how we have rallied in these difficult times but there are countless examples of individuals taking it upon themselves to help others or checking up on the vulnerable with a phone call, email or wave from the bottom of the garden.

Inevitably, church has taken on a different shape over the past couple of months with YouTube clips, Zoom services, virtual coffee gatherings, phone conferences, Facebook postings and radio services. I have attended more Zoom meetings that I would have thought possible – mostly successfully!

All our lives have taken on a different shape these last few weeks and inevitably there will be anxiety as we begin to discuss returning to how it was before. How safe will it be? What will I be able to do? What new guidelines will there be? What will happen if people don't stick to those guidelines? Will there be a spike? All these questions are only natural, and we need to draw on all our reserves for remaining calm and confident as uncertainty continues for a while.

It is reassuring to know that we have a constant amongst all this change. The bible reminds us that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and for ever. He is referred to as our rock and our anchor, reminding us that He is a source of comfort and security when times are hard. Our gospel readings in the church calendar have recently included the story of Jesus being in the boat with His disciples when the boat was hit by a storm. The disciples cried out to Jesus for help and He calmed the storm – a very reassuring picture and a reminder to turn to Christ when we are buffeted by circumstance.

I'm looking forward to the time when we are able to open our churches again and welcome you back inside to worship God together. In the meantime, take advantage of all the services available online and also take time to enjoy the splendour of our wonderful churches from the outside.

Now that we are able to wander a little further from home, perhaps it is a good time to take the opportunity of visiting the churchyards in neighbouring villages. There is

a wonderful concept called wild worship which is being promoted by the sanctuary centre (www.thesanctuarycentre.org) who produce a guide to take with you on a walk so that you can tick off different sights in nature (a flock of birds or a lamb or an oak tree, for instance) – well worth a look.

Take care and God bless,

Steve



The first is a picture of the tulips given to us by the parish council - their first appearance in bloom The second is a display of Easter flowers on the altar to remind people the church is still there even if not open at the moment!

Church Services

During lock down we are not hosting services at St Mary's church, but we are very much still wanting to be available for support within the community.

Many of you are walking round the churchyard and enjoying the opportunity that affords; thank you to everyone who maintains an area within the churchyard – all efforts are very much appreciated. We have a continuous battle with ivy and brambles but are keeping it at bay. We have some more work needed on a couple of trees on the boundary and are constantly clearing up fallen twigs and branches.

Please continue to enjoy walking round the churchyard – we look forward to welcoming you back inside as and when that is permitted.

In the meantime, we are encouraging people to tune in to the diocesan service on Sunday each week at 10am on

www.oxford.anglican.org/livestream

This can also be listened to on the phone.

The number to dial each week is

01865 920 930 – press zero for the short service and 1 for the full Church at Home service. It takes a few seconds to retrieve the recording, then the service will start.

We are also providing a recorded service on the Piddington Radio station available through their village website

<https://piddingtonvillageoxfordshire>
at 11.30 am and 6pm on Sundays.

Across the benefice we have Zoom meetings for coffee and contemplation or other services – please ring any of the clergy team for further details.

As always, we are keen to be of support in any way we can. Please let us know of anyone who would appreciate a phone call or email or who needs help with shopping.

Once we are allowed to hold services, we will keep you informed of our plans.

Please keep safe.

God bless,

Steve

hayesfamily@freeuk.com 01869 247 813

Making Your Own Face Mask

The government advises “If you can, wear a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing isn’t possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas, for example, on public transport or in some shops. Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 2 or by those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly, or by those with respiratory conditions.

Here are three types (courtesy of the BBC) you can make yourself - apparently the last two, that use a coffee filter or kitchen towel as a filter, are the most effective.

Bandana type

The one with the bandana:

Folding cloth and elastic bands



Materials

2.5cm = 1 inch

Elastic bands
(or hair ties)

Bandana, handkerchief

50cm

50cm

Start

Lay the cloth out flat

Fold in half

Fold top third down, fold
bottom up to meet it

12cm

Thread through two elastic bands,
12 cm apart

Fold each side to the middle
and tuck into the folds

T-shirt type

The one with the t-shirt:
Cut up t-shirt* and pin together



Materials



T-shirt



Scissors



Kitchen towel



Pins

Start



Draw pattern across arms
and body of t-shirt



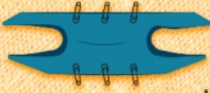
Cut along pattern so you
have two layers from front
and back of t-shirt



Pin one side



Insert non-woven fabric material,
coffee filter, paper towel



Pin other side

Tie at back so it is tight
across nose and tight
under chin



*Always ask the t-shirt owner's permission

The one that needs sewing

Hand sew or machine sew hems



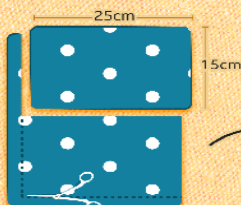
Materials



Cloth



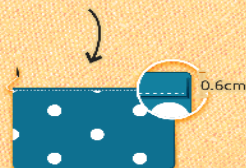
Start



Cut two cloth rectangles
25cmx15cm



Place on top of each other,
lengthways



Fold over the top of the fabric
0.6cm and stitch all the way
across



2.5cm

Fold the bottom up and stitch
2.5cm inwards from the edge on
either side - this will create a
filter pocket



Fold the shorter sides in about
1cm and stitch - leaving a gap
to thread elastic



Thread a 15cm piece of elastic
through the hem on one side
and tie the ends. Repeat on
the other side



Put kitchen paper inside pocket as filter

Gather the side of the mask on
the elastic and adjust so the
mask fits your face. Then, stitch
the elastic in place.



Looking After Your Mental Health



While feelings of stress and anxiety are a completely normal response to our unusual and unprecedented circumstances, it's important we try and curb the impact it's having on us both emotionally and physically. Stress can cause an excess of the hormone cortisol in our bodies, which increases our vulnerability to depression.

It also shrinks our synapses, making us less able to think clearly and work productively. Meanwhile the anxiety chemical adrenaline has been shown to have an adverse effect on our immune system – the very last thing anyone needs, at the moment

Below are top tips for managing your mental health and regulating your chemical balance, whilst stuck indoors:

Maintain a routine

You don't necessarily have to get up at the same time as you would have done if you were going out to work (in fact, lockdown is a good opportunity to tune into your body's natural rhythms, whether you're a lark, night owl or have peak productivity in the afternoons), but you should aim to wake up and go to bed at approximately the same time each day.

Sleeping too much or too little can both disrupt mental wellbeing. If you're having difficulty drifting off, try doing something before bed that uses your imagination, like writing a story or visualising your dream holiday. The imagination is the doorway between conscious and unconscious thought and this should help you feel sleepy.

Stretch

While we're currently allowed to leave the house for a walk or run, the danger is that we become more sedentary when we are confined to the house.

Physical activity has been shown to be as effective in combatting mild to moderate symptoms of depression as medication, so it's important to take the opportunity to be active when we can.

Many online influencers are creating workouts you can follow at home (including Joe Wicks the Body Coach – head over to his YouTube channel to find out more), but if you're really short of space then doing some simple stretches is a quick way to release feel-good endorphins.

Limit News Consumption

The situation with Covid-19 changes daily and we naturally want to stay on top of the latest developments and advice.

Unfortunately, even if the news you're accessing is from a reputable source (and not a sensationalist 'hot take' or scaremongering 'fake news') hearing it over and over again is going to increase your anxiety.

Pick an outlet you trust and check in once or twice per day.

You can mute certain keywords on Twitter, if you want to keep up to date with your online community while swerving coronavirus panic. You'll also generally find picture or video-based social media sites like Instagram to be a much more positive online environment.

Do Something for Others

Whether it's calling to check in on an elderly relative or texting your neighbour to ask if they want something when you venture out to the food shop, contributing positively to the community not only has a positive impact on others, but has also been shown in numerous studies to increase our own wellbeing. Win/win.

Avoid 'What If' Thoughts and Conversations

Here's something not a lot of people know about the nature of anxiety: one of the reasons our brains invent catastrophic future scenarios is not only to help us prepare for if the worst should happen, but also because when we seek assurance that it probably won't happen, it's comforting.

Therefore, the more you speculate, the more comfort you give your brain when you tell yourself everything will be OK.

Unfortunately, the brain's fear/anxiety mechanism happens in the amygdala, which is not particularly sophisticated and doesn't know the difference between real and imagined dangers.

So the more you do this, the more anxious you'll feel, the more reassurance you'll seek and the whole thing will quickly end up being a vicious circle.

Instead, remind yourself that the past is unchangeable, the future unknowable and the only thing we can control is the present

Be Mindful

Mindfulness can help you to achieve the goal of staying in the moment.

The app Headspace is a great introduction to the practice for beginners and is currently offering some free resources called 'Weathering the Storm'.

Connect

Belonging is absolutely crucial to mental health so thank goodness for FaceTime, Skype, Zoom, Google hangouts and their ilk.

Try to create digital versions of your usual social activities – At first it's a bit odd looking at a screen whilst drinking a cup of coffee and remembering that the person you're taking to is incapable of passing you the sugar, but you soon get used to it.

Being able to see your friends' face as you chat will increase your sense of community and genuine connection.

Ambrosden News

Ambrosden Parish Council meetings held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7.30pm.

Currently meetings are being held on Zoom, until such time as the government allows public meetings to resume.

The time and location will be announced on the Parish Council Notice Boards.

Parish website and Facebook

www.ambrosdenpc.org.uk

Ambrosden Parish Council

www.facebook.com/ambrosden.parishcouncil

Ambrosden Allotments

Facebook - Ambrosden Parish Council Allotments

Ambrosden Parish Councillors:

Mark Longworth (Chair) –
ambrosden@mlongworth.co.uk

Maureen Cossens (Vice Chair)
01869 252722

Chris West, Philip Blazdell, Dawn Seaward
Tom Duff, Vicky Rose

Parish Clerk – Gemma Jennings
11 Oak Lane, Ambrosden, Oxon, OX25 2SG
Ambrosden.parishclerk@gmail.com

District Councillors

Three District Councillors represent the ward of Ambrosden and Bicester South
Dan Sames (Conservative)
Daniel.Sames@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Lucinda Wing (Conservative)
lucinda.wing@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Nick Cotter
Nick.cotter@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

County Councillor

Dan Sames (Conservative)
dan.sames@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Facebook Community message boards

Ambrosden Community
Ambrosden and Caversfield Forces Wives

Five Acres School

www.fiveacres.org.uk/

Ambrosden Village Pre School

8.20-11.20 Monday - Friday term time only
Jackie Floyd – 07759 755 179
ambrosdenvillagepreschool@hotmail.co.uk

Tiddlywinks Playgroup

8.30-11.30, 11:50-14:50
Debra Cherry 01869 256 555
tiddlywinks_playgroup@msn.com

Ambrosden Doctors Surgery

01869 256 336
Alchester Medical Group (Langford Surgery)
01869 248 585

Ambrosden4Children

Ambrosden4children@gmail.com
Rosie Hayes 01869 247 813

Parish and Village Hall Notice Boards

Costcutter and Merton Road (outside village hall).

Community Notice Board

Public board – Ploughley Road bus shelter

Recycling

Bottle banks, behind shop

FLYTIPPING AND POTHOLES

Streetlights, potholes, fly tipping, hedges obstructing footways, and many other highways issues can be reported direct to the County and District Councils, via

<http://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

AMBROSDEN PARISH COUNCIL UPDATES

While many residents are self-isolating or shielding, it is heartening how this is bringing the community together, from neighbours looking after each other, to the front garden picnics on VE day, or the clap for the NHS each Thursday, everyone in the village is being wonderful and respectful of each other's needs.

The Parish Council currently holds monthly virtual meetings by Zoom, which have been attended by our District and County Councillor Dan Sames.

At the last meeting, the Parish Council reviewed a large number of new policies using nationally produced standard documents to allow the Parish Council to follow best practice in terms of paperwork compliance. These will be made available on the Parish Council website which is currently being heavily revised.

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting was held on the 21st May, where Mark Longworth was elected Chairman and Maureen Cossens was elected Vice Chairman.

Minutes of this meeting will be posted on Parish Council Notice Boards and Website.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

This meeting has been postponed – details of how the meeting will be held and dates will be posted on Parish Council Notice Boards and Facebook

POST OFFICE

The village shop and post office has extended their opening hours after installing screens to protect the staff.

Please remember only 2 customers in the store at a time, and posters have been removed from the windows so that you can check before entering.

If you need to use the post office and/or part of the shop, and there is already someone at the counter, please wait outside

Mon – Sat 7am to 7pm

Sun – 7am to 7pm – Post Office closed at 1pm

ALLOTMENTS

There are several maintenance issues dating back from when the council adopted the allotments last year that were not resolved last year. Our new Parish Clerk is working through the unresolved issues, and has appointed plumbers to fix all the taps, after pipework was cracked in freezing weather, which was unfortunately not turned off and drained over the winter period.

The Parish Council has asked the allotments committee to liaise with users about the best way to keep paths clear of weeds, and other maintenance issues.

TRAFFIC CALMING/ SPEEDING

The outcome of the public drop-in session hosted by the Parish Council, with representatives from the County Council on the 13th February, was highly inconclusive, with a myriad contradictory comments received with a large number of people objecting to the proposals tabled, some quite vocally, which unfortunately in tandem with Covid 19 has unfortunately stalled the process. The only consensus was that all attendees thought traffic speeds were too high.

To move this forwards, Parish Council representatives met with the highways officer again on 19th May, to review the issues, and to discuss how revised proposals can be moved forwards.

Our County Councillor Dan Sames has agreed to chase the Highways Team to ask for new proposals to be developed.

WAREHOUSE APPLICATION ON THE A41.

The application by Tritax Symmetry (20/00530/F) to extend the warehouse site on the A41 was approved by the District Council at planning committed on 21st May.

Our district councillors Dan Sames and Nick Cotter spoke against this application on behalf of the Parish Council via Zoom.

Cllr Broad who is an independent councillor representing Bicester reports

Although Cllr Cotter and Cllr Dan Sames did their best, the application got passed by 9 votes for and 8 votes against with one abstention!

KEEPING FIT

Government Guidance is that people can leave their home once a day to keep fit.

Tim CW a Cherwell District Council Community Warden has given the following advice for anyone planning out running.

Running clubs advice is runners in public are to maintain a 9 mtr distance unlike pedestrians 2 mtr.

Ambrosden is lucky to have a sports common at Springfields for use by the whole community. This is for informal sports and recreation. Social distancing of 2m, or 9m for runners should be maintained at all times.

The Parish Council is now examining the potential to create an adult outside gym on the land recently acquired at Springfields to enhance facilities for the village once Covid 19 restriction have passed.

GLADMAN DEVELOPMENT ON MERTON ROAD

We are advised that the Judicial Review was not accepted, and that a second one submitted by the District Council in relation to an appeal approval in the Sibfords has also not been allowed.

The judgements (CO/4937/2019) by the Honourable Mr Justice Jay were

- *I agree with the IP that this is a forensic, overly microscopic challenge*
- *I agree with the IP that the assessment of the delivery rate was not an issue of fact but one of planning judgment.*
- *Given that the 750 dwellings allocated under PV2 was not a ceiling, the “material exceedance” point is not easy to follow. Once DL46 is taken into account, as well as the fact that this village is Category A, it cannot be said that the Inspector either misunderstood or misapplied this particular policy.*

- *The sustainability challenge does not raise arguable points of law. I agree with the IP's rebuttal of this part of the proposed challenge.*

Costs of £13,925 were awarded against the District Council.

The full court decision in relation to the Sibfords court hearing is available from the Parish Clerk on request. The Parish Clerk has again requested a copy of the Ambrosden Decision.

VILLAGE HALL NEEDS YOUR HELP – COMMITTEE MEMBERS REQUIRED

The Village Hall Committee has now lost most of the committee members, and the Village Hall is unlikely to be able to re-open if it cannot form a legal committee.

The Village Hall needs committee members who are willing to provide support in book keeping, chairing meetings, co-ordinating refurbishment works, ensuring legal compliance with health and safety, but perhaps most importantly active members who can enable and enhance the offerings for the wider community.

The Parish Council will be hosting an EGM as soon as technically possible and seek expressions of interest from people who are willing to get involved.

The village hall is currently closed and is in danger of not re-opening due to lack of volunteers. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Village Hall Committee, please contact the Parish Clerk who will be able to forward your details to the remaining members of the Village Hall Committee.

For any errors or omissions please contact Mark Longworth - ambrosden@mlongworth.co.uk

Priory Manor Estate

The children's recreation area should still not be used as, quite apart from the lockdown restrictions, the surface has been incorrectly laid by the builders Croudace.

This is the responsibility of Croudace who are ignoring requests to take up the old surface and put a correct one down. Croudace are being chased by the council and an update has been requested from them.

Residents of the Priory Manor Estate can apply to join their Facebook group – search for Priory Manor Ambrosden

Ambrosden VE 75 Celebrations



Championing Local Businesses

Training your dog out of lockdown life

From Ambrosden resident Jennie Logan – owner of local business Completely Canine

Something that's cropped up during this time of lockdown, is how will our dogs adjust when we return to our normal work routine?

Have they become too used to you being in the house 24/7?

Here are some tips to help prepare them for when you go back to normality:

- ✿ Make small amounts of time where your dog has some time away from you. Such as in the place or rooms they're used to being in when you usually go out.
- ✿ The time can be as short as you think is best for your dog – start out short if you think your dog is anxious when separated from you. It can be as little as a minute and you can build it up each time. Start with what your dog is happy with but try not to extend it too long too soon.
- ✿ Don't worry about lockdown restrictions. You can start this in the house by settling your dog, then move to another part of the house.
- ✿ Consider installing a dog camera if you want to check on them whilst out! This way you can check on them for your peace of mind without disturbing them. They're also a good way to discover if your dog is anxious when on their own.
- ✿ If your dog copes well with shorter periods of time, you can try and mimic your 'going to work' routine. Do the actions you do the most before leaving for work, because your dog will have picked up on subtle things, such as picking up your car keys. Even doing this for a 30-minute outing and not a full work shift can

begin to let your dog adjust back into a normal routine.

- ✿ Ensure your dog has had sufficient exercise suitable for them, before being left alone for longer periods of time.
- ✿ You can help prevent boredom by providing strong chew toys (ensure they are dog friendly and safe for them to be left alone with).

Remember that all dogs are unique, and some will adapt to change faster than others. Some may not even bat an eyelid! Lockdown has affected everyone in different ways, so don't be scared to reach out if you have any questions. If you need any further information or advice, please consult a fully qualified dog trainer or behaviourist. If you don't know who to ask, I would be happy to steer you in the right direction. You can contact me using the details below.



Stay safe everyone, enjoy the positives of lockdown and see you on the other side!



Completely Canine



Pet Services



Dog Day Care - Dog Walking - Home Visits - Collection & Delivery

Jennie Logan

Tel: 07590292214
jennie@completelycanine.co.uk
www.completelycanine.co.uk

4 Poppy Close, Ambrosden
Bicester, Oxfordshire
OX25 2AJ

Arncott News

Covid 19 considerations

Much like the last couple of months, a reminder that formal Arncott parish council and village hall management committee (VHMC) meetings have been suspended until further notice.

The members of the parish council and the VHMC will continue to do their best to deal with parish council and VHMC business via the use of telephone, email and social media. The parish councillors intend to hold an on-line parish council meeting on June 2nd and the VHMC & ACA will attempt to do the same very soon.

The Arncott village hall is still closed to the public until further notice as is the weekly Thursday meeting of the Craft Club which is held in the Greenfields common room.

As mentioned previously, the AVHMC will arrange for the village hall to have a deep clean before the hall is made available once again to the public.

It is likely that some of our villagers will have now been in isolation for many weeks.

As the Government restrictions start to be slowly relaxed with regard to folks getting out and about again and meeting up with others, the Parish Council, VHMC & ACA are asking for everyone to please follow the Government's rules and advice as to what you can and can't do.

It is important that we do as asked to try and make sure that a second wave of this virus problem doesn't happen.

Once again, many, many thanks go to the **Arncott Covid-19 support group**.

A reminder that this group was set up by village residents

HEIKE MACKENZIE

and CHARLENE WHITE and supported by PETER FORREST.

The group has enthusiastic support from other village residents who are local and will possibly be known to you.

If you need some help because of the covid19 issue then you can phone HEIKE on 07956 743 260, PETER on 07716 812 430 and CHARLENE on 07950 365 294.

For security purposes, the support group can agree on a password with you so that you can be sure your helper is genuine.

The support group also has DBS certificated volunteers if required.

It should also be mentioned that, in the best community spirit, there are also neighbours who are stepping forward to offer help, advice and a friendly ear.

For computer users, the support group has a group on social media called **Arncott Covid 19 help**. The support group would also like to say a huge thank you to all those wonderful people who have already selflessly offered their help to others.

On behalf of all our village residents, the parish council, VHMC & ACA will offer its most grateful and heartfelt thanks to Heike, Charlene and Peter for starting and heading up the **Covid-19 support group**, the members of that group and also to everyone else who has helped and / or is still helping people within our village community.



Many grateful thanks are due once again to Thomas and his wife at the One Stop shop. They continue to provide a valuable resource to the village and they do their best to try and take care of the grocery and household needs for our community.

Spencer, Jan and their family have continued to make sure that folks can get fresh fruit and vegetables.

They have been working very hard and putting in a lot of hours on behalf of many people. Once they have dealt with the folks who turn up to collect orders, the family then go off out and about doing home deliveries for people in isolation so many grateful thanks to them as well.



Don't forget the time –
8:00pm on Thursday
evenings.
Make sure that you are
available for a couple of
minutes to take part in

the nationwide hand clapping and saucepan banging for the amazing people who are working on the frontline in our hospitals, care homes and all aspects of the emergency and community services.

Our lorry drivers, farmers, bus and train drivers, home delivery drivers – all the folks who are often putting themselves at risk on behalf of those of us who are able to stay home and keep safe.

Give these people the respect they deserve and show your gratitude by giving them some applause – not asking for much.

Another reminder that the ACA and VHMC would ask that you keep safe all of the lovely rainbows that the children have made and have put in the windows.

When the village hall re-opens, the ACA and VHMC would like to put them all on show in the hall and invite the residents of Arncliffe to come along and view what the children have done.

The good folks at Greenfields celebrated VE day on May 8th.

An air raid warning sounded then Big Ben chimed at 3:00pm followed by a speech from Winston Churchill telling everyone that the war was over.

A song from Captain Tom and Michael Ball - You'll Never Walk Alone - followed by a few war time songs that got everyone in the mood for a good time.

Excitement started with a few games of Bingo with the winners getting chocolates.

At a minute to 4:00pm the last post was played and everyone fell silent for two minutes to remember the fallen and those who have passed away due to this awful virus. It was very emotional and touched everyone for those few moments.

Everyone at Greenfields would like to say many thanks to Mark Perry for the work he did to make the day so special - he brought us all some great music.

To top it all a VE quiz was held in which everyone entered into and the winner was John at number 14 and he won a bottle of wine.

It was so lovely to see everyone out on the front enjoying a drink and a picnic with friends and neighbours joining in to celebrate our freedom.

Just after 9pm everyone came back out to sing We'll Meet Again which was a wonderful way to end a wonderful day.



PARISH COUNCIL

Parish council meetings would normally take place in the village hall starting at 7:30pm on the first Tuesday of each month.

Parishioners are welcome to attend.

Your current parish councillors are

Paul Wilson (Chair) 01869 245 514

Lee Savidge (Vice Chair) 01869 246 565

Martin Byrne 01869 246 532

Ade Doore 07850 979 455

Linda Hooper 07803 592 183

Russell Todd 07368 492 525

Parish clerk is Mrs A. Davies 01865 379 645

clerkatarncott@gmail.com

The Parish council website is

www.parish-council.com/arncott

(also contains pages for the ACA)

Parish council Facebook address is

www.facebook.com/arncottpc/

Parish council email address is

arncottpc@gmail.com

At this time, if you would like more information / detail about any parish council item / project then please email your question(s) to the parish council email address or contact the parish council chairperson.

For more information / detail about any Village Hall / VHMC / ACA item please contact the VHMC chairperson at arncott300@gmail.com

The parish council is continuing to try and do its best regarding ongoing projects and parish business.

Current projects include an additional car parking facility at the village hall, the installation of outdoor gym equipment on the playing field, improvements to the toddlers' play area next to the village hall, identifying and arranging for the installation of a new changing room / shower facility / storage room next to the village hall, the installation of new oak posts along Green Lane – a lot of things that are being worked on.

If you want to know anything about these projects then please contact the parish council for information.

Palmer Avenue Chicken Farm planning application

Yet another reminder.

Most people will be aware of the new planning application for a free range egg laying facility towards the top of Palmer Avenue.

Around 180 – 190 public comments have been submitted to Cherwell District Council regarding this application.

As previously stated, the parish council are opposed to this application.

At this time, the parish council does not know when the application will be put before the CDC planning authority.

Should you wish to comment on the application then you can do this by sending in a letter to the CDC planning authority or by going online to the CDC planning register. If you want to go online to do this then follow this link ;

<https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/Planning/Display/20/00871/F>

Dog Poo - Take photos / videos of anyone you see who does not pick up after his / her dog. Email them to the parish council and / or the CDC dog warden - Christopher Cundy – telephone number 01295 221 633email Christopher.Cundy@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk.

Defibrillator Units - Arncott has two public defibrillator units.

One unit is at the village hall on the wall facing Murcott Road – ID no. AR84.

The other unit – ID no. AR82 is on the building end wall in line with the car park entrance at what was The Tally Ho Hotel now named BTC. Telephone the ambulance service on 999 to gain access.

Tell the call desk operator the ID number on the cabinet door.

Moto Parc - If you have any questions / concerns regarding the Moto Parc then please contact CDC and / or the operators of the Motor Parc – telephone 07377 988 580.

Illegal drug use - If you are aware of or see this happening report it to the police, make the report anonymously by telephoning Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or fill out an anonymous form online.

Litter louts and fly tipping - Please report this to CDC. Video / photographic evidence is useful.

If the problem persists, CDC can assign an enforcement officer to get involved.

Anti-social behaviour - Get witness statements, take photos and / or record video of the behaviour and report it to police. The parish council has no legal power(s) to deal with this.

Roads and streetlights - Report any road / pavement / street light issues you see to OCC on via the Fix My Street website - www.fixmystreet.com.

Village Hall / AVHMC / ACA – AVHMC



Contact Wendy Wilkins (Chair) - arncott300@gmail.com

For Village Hall hire, contact Christine Dunkin 01869 249 560 – avhlettings@gmail.com

Village Hall email address is arncottvhmc@gmail.com

ACA contact is Christine Dunkin (Chair) 01869 249560 – avhlettings@gmail.com

ACA email address is arncottca@gmail.com.

ACA 300 club is Wendy Wilkins – arncott300@gmail.com

ACA Facebook address is

[www.facebook.com /groups/arncottCA](https://www.facebook.com/groups/arncottCA)

Please note – Due to the coronavirus outbreak and government advice regarding socialising, the door to door subscription collections can no longer take place so the 300 club has now been suspended until further notice.

Arccott VE 75 Celebrations



Blackthorn News

Blackthorn Village Hall

Despite the lockdown it was great to see so many people celebrating the 75th anniversary of VE Day on Friday 8th May. It would have been nice to celebrate together at the Hall, but sadly that wasn't to be.

As soon as the Government are able to lift the lockdown we'll ensure we make up for lost time and will put out a schedule of Village Hall events.

Keep safe – Blackthorn Village Hall Committee

If you would like to receive email updates and reminders of events being held in the village, please send an email to blackthornvillagehall@gmail.com

VE Day

Around Blackthorn, bunting and flags decorated houses, fences and other buildings where there was a large turnout to celebrate the historical event of VE Day.

It was a beautiful sunny day and villagers set up their tea and cake in their gardens and driveways to celebrate this important date. Social distance was observed but this did not detract from the celebrations an example can be seen below:

<https://www.blackthornparishcouncil.co.uk/>

NB Click the link and scroll down the page to view the video.

Parish Council

The council continues to meet virtually and will keep its website updated with virtual meeting minutes and will link this to the Village Facebook page.

We will also publish the virtual meeting room details ahead of the next meeting on the council website.

Several residents raised concerns via the village Facebook page about the proposed free-range egg production unit on Palmer Avenue.

The council would like to advise residents that we have formally logged objections with the council in line with those made by Arncott and Piddington Parish Councils and all updates to that planning application can be found on the C.D.C. website:

<https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/>
(using Ref: 20/00871/F)

Village Volunteers



A reminder of the names and contact details of our excellent volunteers in the village who are available to help on a variety of matters. Some members of the group are DBS checked and are available to help collect and deliver prescriptions.

Even if the help required is not listed below, just call and somebody will help.

Prescription collection volunteers:

Please note surgeries are contacting the volunteers direct and prescriptions are being delivered once a week on a specified day.

- ☞ Naomi Karslake 07803 606 915
For Croker Close surgeries
(currently Mondays)
- ☞ Emma Bradley 07447 961 805
For Victoria House Surgery
(currently Tuesdays)
- ☞ Susan Henderson 07900 800 923
Emergency prescriptions

Assistance with shopping etc, posting mail, a friendly phone call:

Station Road:

- ☞ Caroline and Graham Jenner
07896 204 844 or 07974 442 415
- ☞ Sue and Andy Sparkes
01869 246 229 or 07957 334 005 or
07801 653 539
- ☞ Emma Bradley 07447 961 805

Lower Road and Weir Lane:

- ☞ Lizzie Mobbs 07899 906 598
- ☞ Liz Bonified Smith 07599 796 956
- ☞ Sandie Stevenson 01869 321 542 or
07881 788 581

Thame Road and outlying properties:

- ☞ Naomi Karslake 07803 606 915
- ☞ Janet Watson 07973 165 975
- ☞ Alison Wynne 07885 505 504



Vitamin D the Sunshine Vitamin

Vitamin D is essential for healthy bones and is often called the sunshine vitamin as it is produced by the body when sunlight hits our skin.

Research over the last few years has demonstrated that adequate levels may be even more important than previously thought and may well have a protective role with regard to covid-19 infection.

Research in Norway covering a time period of 20 years, demonstrated that the high numbers of winter influenza and pneumonia deaths in Norway were related to low vitamin D levels.



In other studies, not only has it been seen to be an important regulator of immunity, but also help protect from lung infections.

There are other research papers demonstrating Vitamin D's positive impact on low mood/depressive disorders and its ability to stop tumour cells proliferating.

The University of Granada in Spain is starting a trial of a single dose of vitamin D in mild cases of Covid-19 to see if it makes a difference (25000 iu*), whilst researchers in Ireland are recommending supplementing with up to 2000 iu a day of vitamin D to limit infection.

*(iu = international units)

If as believed, 1 in 5 of us has low vitamin D levels, then it's time to think about how to increase them.

The best way to obtain vitamin D is as mentioned above, is from exposure to the sun – from 15 minutes a day exposing as much skin as possible.

In the absence of sunlight, supplementation with vitamin D3 ought to be considered, especially for the winter months.

Different studies suggest a variety of strength of supplements, though 4000 iu a day is seen as beneficial in many.

So, if you can, get out in the sun and if not, think about using a good nutritional supplement (they are not expensive to buy!).

Lee Butler BSc (hons) TCM Acupuncture MSc Chinese Herbal Medicine
www.TheVillageClinic.co.uk

Research papers used:

Cheng, Ying-Chih & Huang, Yu Chen & Huang, Wei-Lieh. (2020). The effect of vitamin D supplement on negative emotions: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Depression and Anxiety, May 2020

Foong, R.E., & Zosky, G. R. (2013). Vitamin D deficiency and the lung: disease initiator or disease modifier? Nutrients, 5(8), 2880–2900.

Grant, J., Lahore, W.B.' McDonnell, H., et al. (2020). Evidence that Vitamin D Supplementation Could Reduce Risk of Influenza and COVID-19 Infections and Deaths. Nutrients.12(4)

Lo, MCI, Maraka, J., Garioch, J., John, WG., Moncrieff, M. (2017). Monitoring vitamin D in the patient with melanoma: impact of sun avoidance on vitamin D levels of patients with melanoma at a U.K. tertiary-referral melanoma service. Br J Dermatol. 177(1):282-283

McCartney DM, Byrne DG. (2020). Optimisation of Vitamin D Status for Enhanced Immuno-protection Against Covid-19. Ir Med J. 2020;113(4):58.

Moan, J., Dahlback, A., Ma, L., Juzeniene, A. Influenza, solar radiation and vitamin D. Dermatoendocrinol. 2009;1(6):307-309.

Otoshi T., Iwata H., Kitano M., Nishizawa Y., Morii H., Yano Y., Otani S., Fukushima S. (1995). Inhibition of intestinal tumor development in rat multi-organ carcinogenesis and aberrant crypt foci in rat colon carcinogenesis by 22-oxa-calcitriol, a synthetic analogue of 1 α ,25-dihydroxyvitamin D3. Carcinogenesis. 16:2091–2097.

Clinical trial information:

University of Granada -
<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04334005>

If you have any news or other items you would like included please email John Henderson at j_henderson@btinternet.com by the 10th of each month.

Blackthorn VE 75 Celebrations



Merton VE 75 Celebrations



Piddington News

Piddington Parish Council

Next meeting: TBC subject to coronavirus updates. Councillors have been holding informal Zoom meetings through lockdown to ensure any outstanding business is dealt with.

Clerk: Anne Davies, Tel: 01865 379 645, Email: piddington.parish.clerk@googlemail.com

Councillors: Mike Nixon (Vice Chair), Andrew Coleman; Pam Feltbower; Ken Howard; Mario Terzino.

New parish councillors needed: It is with regret that the Parish Council sees the departure of two of its councillors this month. Both Lynda Galloway and Francesca Darby have now stood down. We would like to thank them both for their dedication to their positions on the council. Lynda was co-opted four years ago, and Francesca has been a parish councillor for 8 years, the last four as Chair.

Piddington Parish Council will confirm its new Chair and Vice-Chair at its next informal meeting in June. In the meantime, if you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor it will be possible to co-opt successful applicants for the next year. For more information either talk to one of the councillors above or contact the clerk (details above).

The Parish Council will be holding a virtual Annual Parish Meeting, probably in July – details to follow.

Planning Applications: 20/01180/F – Proposed rural workers' dwelling at Manor Farm and 20/01235/F Garage extension 12 Lower End.

Piddington coronavirus support network



The village has come together in an amazing way to give support through the lockdown period. We now have an active 'buddy' system, a number of local businesses delivering food and produce to the village on a weekly basis and our group of volunteers are delivering prescriptions.

GIVE SUPPORT: If you would like to give your support, please contact either Ann or Francesca (see below), who are acting as co-ordinators, and your details will be added to the group. Please include your mobile phone number as we use WhatsApp. There are many practical ways we can help, including being a friendly voice at the end of the phone.

NEED SUPPORT: We do not want anyone in Piddington to feel alone. You may not feel you need help now but please keep these details for future reference. Contact either Ann or Francesca (details below) with concerns or requests and they in turn will liaise with the WhatsApp group to coordinate support. Those already signed up will have been allocated a couple of 'buddies' to contact.

CONTACT: Ann Cummings (email annmcummings1@icloud.com/phone 07920 487 583)
OR Francesca Darby (email francesca.darby@btinternet.com/phone 01844 238 294).

KEEP IN TOUCH: Village emails – to sign up go to www.piddingtonvillageoxfordshire.org.uk and Piddington Facebook – www.facebook.com/piddingtonoxfordshire/ and the new Piddington Coronavirus Support Network Facebook (see village website). These emails and posts have become an invaluable source of information and communication over the last few weeks.

SSE Resilience Funding

The Parish Council has been successful in an application to SSE for £3,000 in resilience funding to be used by the community through the lockdown period. In consultation with the support group the money has been used to purchase a supply of PPE equipment – gloves, hand sanitisers and masks – to be made available to those individuals who are out and about on behalf of the village. The balance of the money has been used to purchase ten Facebook Portals (8 inch). These will be made available to **those individuals in the community who currently do not have access to technology** allowing them to keep in touch with friends and family. The portals do need broadband and the Parish Council has secured favourable rates from Gigaclear for an 18-month period, including free installation and set-up. There are people in the village who will help with setting up. If you would like more information or know of someone you think might benefit from access to a Facebook portal please contact Mario Terzino (mario.terzino@piddingtonpc.com or phone 07713 081 822) or Ann Cummings (annmccummings1@gmail.com or phone 07920 487 583) .

Piddington pop-up shop



With financial help from The Pantry and Piddington Parish Council the support network has set up a pop-up shop at the village hall. A stocklist of products is sent out regularly on the village email and includes household goods and basic groceries (including flour), and we occasionally get fresh milk which is advertised by email. There are stocklists also at the village hall and on the village website. The shop is managed by Sue Roberts, who is available to take orders by contacting her directly. These can be arranged for pickup from the village hall or delivered to you if you are self-isolating. This service is available for everyone in the village to make use of. Telephone Sue Roberts 07708 480 076.

Food and produce deliveries to the village

The following local companies will deliver produce to the village.

MILKMAN: Chris 07842 426 793 comes to the village on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and is still accepting new customers at the time of writing. Please call him directly.

BOARSTALL MEATS (Boarstall): Local meat producer offering full selection including an 'essentials' pack: 4 fillet steaks, 500g steak mince, 500g diced beef, 500g chicken fillet, 6 rashers bacon, 6 sausages and 6 free range eggs for £30. You can order by calling the shop 01844 238 256. They are now delivering to Piddington on a daily basis.

NEWITT BUTCHERS (Thame): <https://www.newitt.co.uk>. Contact Ann Cummings if you are interested in placing an order (annmccummings1@icloud.com or 07920 487 583). Free delivery to Piddington if part of the village order. Orders taken up to 3pm Thursday for a Saturday delivery.

THE FRUIT STALL (Bicester): The stall at Bicester Market is closed. Spencer and Hayley are offering small assorted fruit and veg boxes at £15 and large for £25. Orders for a Saturday delivery to the village are available by contacting Francesca by Thursdays 3.00pm. Please include your NAME, ADDRESS, POSTCODE, CONTACT NUMBER, SIZE OF ORDER AND QUANTITY AND WHETHER YOU ARE PAYING CASH OR BACS. Francesca: francesca.darby@btinternet.com. This service is made possible by village volunteers picking up the orders and delivering to your door.

THE BULL AND BUTCHER PH (Ludgershall): Emily is now offering a fruit, veg and salad selection for £20. Delivery is approx. 48 hours after you order. Payment by BACS payment or cash to be confirmed when ordering. For more information call or text Emily: 07835 421 562.

THE COTTAGE BAKERY (Thame): Offering free delivery to Piddington on Tuesdays and Fridays. Payment by phone. For more details and to place your orders look at their Facebook page or call the shop 01844 212 257.

CONSTABLE'S CONVENIENCE STORES (Brill): Free delivery of basic groceries, newspapers and magazines subject to availability. Call 01844 238 511

PRESTON BISSETT NURSERIES (Preston Bissett): Orders to be placed directly with the nursery via phone or email – 01280 848 038 or shop@thenurseries.com. Quote reference 'Piddington Massive'. Deliveries every Wednesday to David and Cynthia Cook at Gwith Cottage. Please let them know if you have placed an order. Nursery range of plants found on their blog:

<http://prestonbissettnurseriesandcountryshop.blogspot.com/>

To contact David or Cynthia: david.gwithcott@btinternet.com or 01844 238 368

RECTORY FARM PYO: Rectory Farm PYO are now delivering to Piddington on Fridays for a £5.50 delivery fee and minimum spend of £20. For more information go to their website

<https://www.rectoryfarmpyo.co.uk/>

Prescription deliveries to the village



The volunteers now have in place an agreed system with the Council and all the local surgeries to collect and deliver prescriptions to the residents of Piddington. Mondays: Bicester Health Centre and Montgomery House; Tuesdays: The Alchester Group, Bicester and Thursdays: Brill Surgery.

Deliveries will be made as soon as collected. Please answer your door if a volunteer has your prescription as they cannot be left without your picking them up. Social distancing rules will be adhered to at all times.

For more information contact Ann 07920 487 583.

Piddington '5 a Day'

Throughout lockdown we are bringing you 'a daily dose of inspired thinking' via the village email. We are looking for inspirational pieces of prose, poetry or quotes, music, art and a little bit of comedy thrown in for good measure, and let's not forget 'Piddington in Pictures' - memories old and new of life in the village. Please send your ideas to Francesca (francesca.darby@btinternet.com).

'Close to the Brook'

The imagined diary of a labouring man in Piddington born in 1813. Written by David Cook of Gwith Cottage. In these difficult days David has decided to share some of the things he has learned from studying the history of Piddington village life. There have been some changes over time, and yet, many things have remained the same. We are always dependent upon the weather, the seasons and the ups and downs of family life.

Follow this fascinating story <https://closetothebrook.weebly.com/>. The diary is updated every Sunday.

Piddington Community Radio



Those of you who enjoyed the music on VE Day will know that Piddington now has a community radio station! Information on upcoming programmes will be sent out by email and Facebook and can be accessed via the village website. We are pleased to announce that the Reverend Steve Hayes will be broadcasting every Sunday his 'Sunday Reflections' at 11.30 and 6pm. Further programmes are also planned for broadcast over the next few weeks. The Parish Council, Village Hall Committee and The Pantry have all made donations to running costs of the

station for the next 12 months. The station will be run by the community, for the community, and villagers are now encouraged to get involved.

Would you like to produce a programme? Do we have any budding DJs out there?

Contact Francesca to discuss your ideas: francesca.darby@btinternet.com.

Village information

Piddington News & Events: For regular updates of what is going on, and important issues affecting our locality, go to the home page of the village website and register:

www.piddingtonvillageoxfordshire.org.uk. The website **Information Centre** contains a range of useful information, including phone numbers and email addresses:

www.piddingtonvillageoxfordshire.org.uk/information-centre.html

Village housekeeping

Monthly grass cutting at Widnell Park, the playing field and St Nicholas' Church has now begun.

Although the playing field and park are open to visitors during the lockdown, social distancing rules must be followed, and the outdoor gym has been closed until further notice. The Parish Council has been advised that some dog walkers are not picking up in the fields around the village and outside the 30-mile sign, particularly along the Ludgershall Road. Please be considerate and pick up wherever you might be.

It is important to continue to report **issues with roads, overgrown verges and hedges** along public highways around the village. The Parish Council can then follow up any reports that have not been followed through. Contact OCC: <https://www.fixmystreet.com/report/new>

Full or damaged dog bins: contact Cherwell District Council (CDC: 01295 227 007) or the Parish Clerk.

Fly-tipping: use CDC's website (<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/7/environment/374/fly-tipping>).

If you cannot access the internet contact the Parish Clerk with an accurate location.

Allotments

It's great to see the allotments in all their glory and so many people using them. For more information and to apply for a plot, please contact the new chairperson, Trish Wills (willstrish0@gmail.com).

Rural policing

If you have experienced any problems locally or wish to raise any concerns, contact Ken Howard (ken.howard@piddingtonpc.com). To report suspicious behaviour or vehicles in the village, email BicesterRuralNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.

VE Day celebrations

Piddington certainly partied like it was 1945! Well done everyone who got into the spirit of the occasion and decorated their houses and gardens, even going so far as to build an air-raid bunker in the front garden! How lovely to see so many folk enjoying the sunshine and their kerbside picnics on VE Day. Big thank yous to Mario and Francesca for organising the VE Day playlist care of our new community radio station. What a fantastic backdrop for the afternoon's celebrations. Thanks also to all those volunteers who helped their 'buddies' enjoy the day. Check out all the photos on the village website entitled 'Piddington in Lockdown'.

And finally, many congratulations to Bev Hopkins and her sister Gill, who produced the most wonderful VE Day 'Tea Boxes'. Through their hard endeavour the village raised over £1,000 for charity and community projects. And well done to Private Hopkins for his distribution efforts in the sweltering heat!

Village hall news

The village hall was closed on 17th March, and except for access to the temporary village shop will remain closed. The new play area was opened without the planned opening ceremony and Easter egg hunt on Saturday 21st March. Following government advice, it had to be closed 3 days later. Both will remain closed until the lockdown is lifted.

Piddington 200 Club

The 200 Club is currently in abeyance. The last draw was in February. No collection for 2020/21 will take place.

St Nicholas' Church

Although our church buildings are closed, you may like to join the thousands of people who are now attending Church at Home each Sunday at 10am. Find the livestream service at:

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/livestream/>

Also, we are delighted that the Reverend Steve Hayes will be broadcasting his 'Sunday Reflections' on the new Piddington Community Radio station, every Sunday at 11.30 and 6pm. You can access the station on the Home page of the village website.



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www.piddingtonvillageoxfordshire.org.uk/booking-calendar

Piddington VE 75 Celebrations



Simon Edwards' video of a cycle through the celebrations is here: <https://youtu.be/K1YC7kT7WYI>

Otmoor Garden Society



A big thank you to all of you out there who supported us in our endeavours to produce an on-line Plant Sale. I am pleased to report

that it has been a big success. We had customers from Murcott, Fencott, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Oddington, Noke, Islip, Piddington, Blackthorn, Arncott and Merton, and even some from further afield. If it was a competition though I think the winning village would have been either Islip or Merton!

It has been an interesting exercise. When we have our normal plant sale, everyone runs in and grabs anything that is in flower! Within 10 minutes the hall changes from rainbow to green. But when we gave you a catalogue of pictures and descriptions, the choices were totally different. Everything sold on a much more even spread, with still a few of our normal hot-favourites available at the end.



We spread the order collections over five Saturdays, in order to give people ten-minute time slots to collect their orders and not come into contact with any other customers. Some people were able to collect for others in their village, and some we delivered. So, it has been another example of the team-spirit that has been on show in the villages since the Coronavirus crisis began. A great community that it is good to be a part of.

We hope you are all happy with your plants. We certainly know some of you are, as you came back for second and third orders!

Trust the weather to throw a spanner in the works though, as this week we have had some of the hardest May frosts for years. It has done a lot of damage in the garden, even to fully hardy shrubs and trees, not to mention early potatoes. The new growth is all blackened, flowers bent and bowed. I do hope that those of you who bought from our Tender Perennials section heeded the frost warnings and protected your purchases. Hopefully, all should be safe now.

As the lockdown starts to ease slightly, we start to look ahead to what might be possible on our programme. Might the garden party go ahead at a social distance? Clearly the coach trip will not be a coach trip, but might it be possible to still go to the planned venues in cars? At the moment it is too early to tell, but we will keep members informed by e-mail.

I believe the village halls are scheduled for July opening if things go to plan, so if all else fails see you in September....maybe!

My apologies for the lack of content, but I am afraid nothing else has happened this month!

Happy Gardening

Judith Rawlinson

For more details, or to join, contact
Brian Eadle on 01865 331 472

www.otmoorgardensociety.org.uk
or find us on Facebook

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aastevenson@willowpond.co.uk

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NO Expressway Report

NO EXPRESSWAY noexpressway.org

Oxford-Cambridge Expressway Update Campaigning in the time of Covid-19

Our very successful day in Westminster on February 26th, both delivering our petition to 10 Downing St. and having a drop-in session in Portcullis House, is recorded in a video on our website at

<https://www.noexpressway.org/expressway-stories>. BBC and ITV news coverage of the day can be seen at <https://www.noexpressway.org/news-updates/2020/2/27/news-bbc-amp-itv-report-neg-westminster-event-february-26-2020>

The No Expressway Group (NEG) has now ceased active campaigning for the time being, but is keeping watch over various developments that might affect the proposals for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

One of these is the Road Investment Strategy for the period 2020 to 2025 (RIS2) which announced a 'pausing' of the Oxford Cambridge Expressway scheme.

Greg Smith, MP for Buckingham and one of the three sponsors of our Westminster event, firmly believes this means the expressway will be cancelled but, until a Ministerial announcement is made, this remains purely speculative.

Indeed, we have recently heard over the grapevine that the Government may well 'un-pause' Arc plans in the next two months; whether or not this involves the expressway remains to be seen.

Readers will remember rumours of the cancellation of HS2 in late 2019 before it was finally given the go ahead, against much local opposition, in February of this year.

The March 2020 confirmation of the selected route for the Bedford to Cambridge section of East-West Rail was accompanied with a promise from the East West Rail Company to run a train service all the way from Oxford to Cambridge 'before the end of the decade'. Thus there is really no longer any need for a brand new road to link the two cities, but the NEG remains alert to the possibility that improvements to existing roads may result in an expressway in all but name (RIS2 includes proposals to improve, to expressway standard, a small section of the A422/A428 between Bedford and Cambridge, and a commitment to improve the A34 South of the M40 Junction 9 near Bicester).

Like the proposals for Heathrow Runway 3, RIS2 does not take into account the Government's Climate Change commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (as opposed to the previous target of only an 80% reduction by the same date).

It is difficult to see how this target will be met with road transport now the single biggest contributor to the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, and set to expand considerably in the next five years.

The total budget for RIS2 (£27.4 billion) is 80% bigger than that for the previous round of road building, RIS1 (from 2015 to 2020; cost £15.2 billion).

Transport Action Network is crowd-funding a judicial review of the Department for Transport's road-building proposals in RIS2 and will argue the money should be spent instead on public transport, and rail freight improvements

(https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/stop-largest-ever-roads-programme/?utm_source=sendinblue&utm_campaign=Update24042078onStopthelargesteverroad-buildingprogrammeMay142020&utm_medium=email).

Although much is made in the newspapers recently of getting more people to walk or cycle, only 3% of total personal journey miles by road are on foot and only 1% are by bicycle (figures from RIS2). The solution must be in the provision of much better public transport, both bus and rail.

Excessive housing remains the biggest threat across the Ox-Cam Arc.

In March the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) produced a 'Planning for the Future' document that anticipates a White paper later this year proposing a radical reform of the existing Planning system to 'speed up the delivery of more homes'.

The MHCLG document includes the usual trope justifying building so many new houses; "Our children should be able to put down roots in the places where they grew up, rather than being priced out and forced to move away."

The Office of National Statistics estimates an increase of only 16% in the UK population by 2050, approximately 8% by natural growth in the population of existing residents and 8% by immigration from elsewhere.

In Oxfordshire's case (290,000 dwellings in 2018) a 16% increase would require only an additional 46,000 houses by 2050. Anything over and above these figures are not for our children but are instead for growth above the average national rate, about which there should be a full public debate. How much growth do we need? How much growth do we want?

The Oxfordshire Growth Board deal commits the county to delivering 100,000 new houses in current Local Plans to the mid 2030s (i.e. more than twice as many as our children will need to 2050) and many (up to 200,000) more between the mid 2030s and 2050.

More than 20% of all new planned houses are to meet the chronic under-supply of houses in the capital, i.e. are for London commuters. A recent CPRE analysis shows that over 19,000 Oxfordshire Local Plan houses will be built within the Green Belt around the City (including 1,100 in land North of Bayswater Brook)

(<http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/news/item/2812-the-oxford-green-belt-the-gap-between-ambition-and-reality>). Do we really want to sacrifice our beautiful countryside for excessive growth-driven housing targets?

NEG will resume active campaigning only when it is safe to do so. Information in this article suggests we will need to resume our activities raising awareness about the plans being determined now for yet more roads and houses.

In the meantime, we thank all our supporters and urge them to stay safe and support our neighbours and communities through these difficult times.

Actions

- ☞ Until the expressway is officially cancelled our STOP the Ox-Cam Expressway petition remains open at noexpressway.org/petition-signup
- ☞ Sign up to receive our email updates noexpressway.org/#newsletter
- ☞ Follow us on Facebook, facebook.com/noexpresswaygroup/ and Twitter @no_expressway

For all lockdown news about the Ox-Cam Arc developments visit noexpressway.org
To contact us please email noexpresswaygroup@gmail.com

Otmoor Woman's Institute

Report on Otmoor WI May Meeting 2020

The May meeting of Otmoor WI was once more conducted using Zoom. After time for people to catch up with news and for the brief business matters to be dealt with the answers to the latest quiz were announced and several members recorded high scores in the latest challenge.

In preparation for our July garden meeting, which may have to be a virtual event this year, Ann offered hints and tips on pressing flowers which can later be used for the competition to create a bookmark. Glenys had chosen two poems to share with members. Although not written for current circumstances their message chimed well with the feelings of uncertainty.

The meeting paused to allow members to Show a Light in support of International Nurses Day and the 200th Anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, an appropriate cause in these challenging times.

The competition for the month was to find an alternative use for a bandage and thoughts had roamed wide on this theme. Suggestions included a substitute for a jelly bag and plant ties for stems affected by the strong winds. Several members had created their designs. These ranged from a ghostly light and a rose to a headband and a very fetching hat created by Glenys which all agreed would be useful in disguising wayward hairstyles now visits to the hairdresser are on hold.

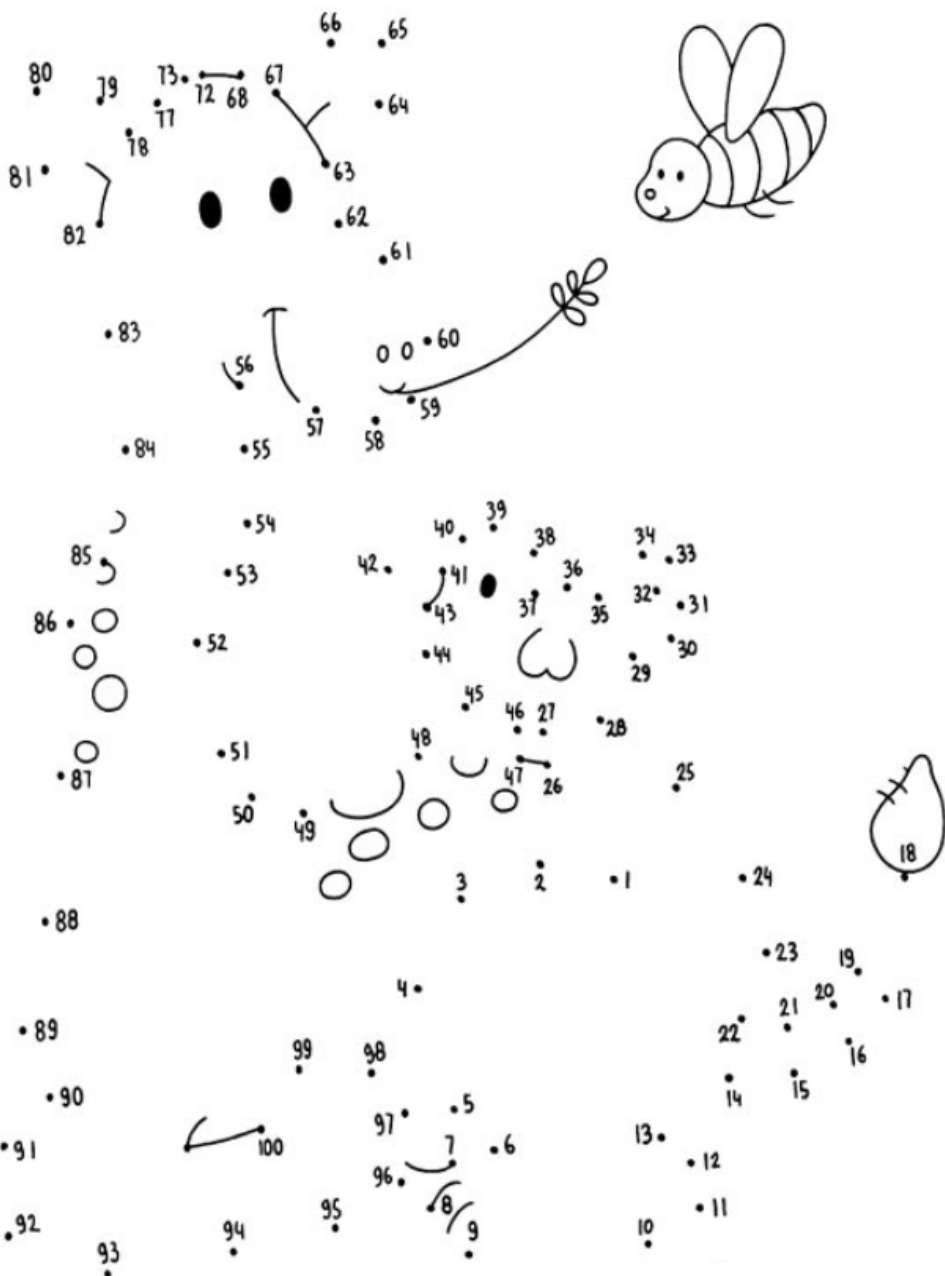
Members had been asked to bring along suggestions for books to recommend (or indeed avoid) as reading has been the relaxation choice of many. This led to much lively discussion to round off a very enjoyable evening.

Below are a couple of photos supplied by members, of the blankets they have been knitting. This is an ongoing project and is something we can keep doing in our own homes as part of a bigger picture.



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https://www.ssen.co.uk/powertrack/	
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Last month's solutions

2	5	1	4	8	3	6	9	7
4	8	9	5	6	7	3	2	1
6	3	7	2	9	1	4	8	5
1	7	4	3	2	6	8	5	9
8	9	5	7	1	4	2	6	3
3	2	6	8	5	9	1	7	4
7	4	2	9	3	8	5	1	6
9	6	8	1	4	5	7	3	2
5	1	3	6	7	2	9	4	8

1	6	7	9	5	3	2	4	8
8	9	5	4	2	1	7	6	3
3	2	4	8	6	7	5	1	9
9	4	3	1	7	5	6	8	2
6	7	1	3	8	2	4	9	5
5	8	2	6	9	4	1	3	7
4	5	8	2	3	6	9	7	1
2	1	9	7	4	8	3	5	6
7	3	6	5	1	9	8	2	4

Easy

7								
	5				8	6		
				6			7	3
5			8			3		1
						7		8
		2	3	9			4	
		3					5	
8						4		
		4			9		6	

Difficult

9	4				5			
	1	8						
	6			1	4			
6	3			2			9	4
	2				4	1	6	8
				6	7		2	
						3		6
	7				9		5	
		3			2	4	7	

Advertising & Contacts

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Ad Size	Cost Per Issue	Width (mm)	Height (mm)
1/8 Page landscape	£ 7.50	45	65
1/4 Page portrait	£ 15.00	65	97
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Full Page	£ 60.00	128	170

These sizes are approximate, and adverts can be supplied in either portrait or landscape.

When supplying artwork, please supply in full colour and larger than these measurements and in the best resolution possible.

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The collection and editorial team

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Piddington: Hazel Coleman hazel@piddingtonvillageoxfordshire.org.uk

All items for the next magazine and all adverts should ideally be given to the village collectors by the 15th of the month preceding publication, and to the editor by the 24th.



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