

WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN

TheVillageNews

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2023



Kirtlington Park Lake by Roger Evans

Village Directory

THE VILLAGE NEWS

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From the editor

WELCOME to the first 2023 issue of the Village News.

As we move further into the new year and the wintry weather takes hold, I'm relishing snuggling next to my roaring fire whilst a typical January day of howling winds and pelting rain rages outside. Bad weather doesn't stop your News being delivered and my gratitude to the volunteers who so kindly distribute the Village News to every house as well as the businesses in Weston whatever the weather is immense.

A massive thanks is due to the Delivery Team, so ably organised by my colleague Diane Bohm, so please take a much-deserved bow

Eric Bohm, Nicola Donne, James Henderson, Mark Johnson, Helen Price, Jordie Riches, Jan Ricketts, Sarah Smith and her children Riley, Rosie, Daisy and Dougie, and Louise Talbot.

THANK YOU!

Although now retired from delivery duties, a special mention must go to Joy Lawrie who delivered the Village News for so many years.

Would you like to help with the deliveries? We need an extra pair of hands for one of the routes and it'd be great to have a few people who we can call on to step in on the odd occasion when our regulars are out of town or ill. If you'd like to be involved, please call Diane on 01869 352006 or email admin@wotgnews.uk

An extremely important meeting concerning the future of our shop and Post Office is being held on 22nd February - for more details see p. 11. Please do go to this if possible.

See you in April when Spring will be springing, lambs gambolling, bulbs blooming, and Easter just around the corner (and talking of Easter reminds me of bunnies – there's a story on p. 17 that could be called "Rabbits' Revenge" ...).

Happy reading!



**Deadline for April/May edition:
9TH MARCH 2023**



A letter from the Rector

Gareth Miller

Rector of the Akeman Benefice and Area Dean of Bicester & Islip

Dear friends,

I write this just after watching the funeral of Pope Benedict XVI, a liturgy that is very familiar to me but always deeply moving, as is any funeral. Familiar because I was privileged to spend two semesters at the Venerable English College in Rome in 1980/81 and became well acquainted with the traditions and practices of the Holy See.

While I was there, the Synod on the Family took place, and many of the participants stayed at the English College, including Cardinal Basil Hume, whom I was able to observe at close hand. He was a profoundly holy man but, as with most saintly people, endowed with a huge capacity for friendship and for laughter. This springs from someone who is comfortable with himself but has learned not to be self-absorbed, someone who has grown deeply and richly into life with God. I have been blessed during my life to know many such people.

Pope Benedict was a different kind of personality - not naturally clubbable, and probably more at home with his books, his cats,

and with Mozart (and, I learned recently, somewhat to my surprise, with a daily can of Fanta!). Yet he brought to the papacy, and to the Church in general, many and singular gifts.

It is very easy to categorise people too quickly (I am also thinking of Prince Harry!). Closer investigation usually uncovers layers of complexity and richness. Be careful what you read in the newspapers and – even more importantly, be careful what you believe. Pope Benedict was not a Rottweiler, though some might argue that he steered too firmly in a conservative direction. He was, rather, a man of faith who encapsulated that ever-present tension between the conservative and the progressive. If you read his teaching on social issues you might conclude that he was a liberal. He undoubtedly made mistakes, notably on matters of abuse, but these should not detract from his very considerable contribution to theology and the Church. Above all, his book on Jesus of Nazareth is a model of clarity.

Pope Benedict liked to quote the saying of St Francis de Sales, “cor ad cor loquitur” (“heart speaks to heart”). He said the most important thing in life is “pursuing a friendship with Christ”. Relationship has primacy over theology. When we get preoccupied with the finer points and detail, whether of theology or any other matter, it’s worth remembering this. .

BENEFICE NEWS

Lent Lectures

Wednesdays at 19:30 in Kirtlington Church on 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th March. More details to follow on the Benefice website: [/www.akemanbenefice.org.uk](http://www.akemanbenefice.org.uk)

Special Services February/March 2023

5th February 11:00 Café Church at Weston
Coffee, pastries, conversation, informal worship

19th February 11:00 Café Church at Chesterton Community Centre
Coffee, pastries, conversation, informal worship

22nd February Ash Wednesday
10:00 Holy Communion at Chesterton
19:00 Holy Communion at Weston

26th February
18:00 Lenten Iona Service at Chesterton

5th March
09:30 Breakfast Church at Middleton Stoney
Coffee, pastries, conversation, informal worship

19th March
09:30 Breakfast Church at Bletchingdon
Coffee, pastries, conversation, informal worship

26th March
18:00 Passiontide Evensong at Weston

For other services across the Akeman Benefice please visit www.akemanbenefice.org.uk/church-services



At your service

We pray that you and your loved ones had a wonderful Christmas. We wish you all good health and happiness in the New Year.

We are experiencing a modest rise in attendance at our festive services. On Remembrance Sunday 56 people participated. The commemoration was supported by a representative of the armed forces, Wing Commander Richard Lewis from RAF Brize Norton. We raised £225 which was donated to the Royal British Legion. Over the years our parish has been a strong supporter of the Legion.

The annual Big Breakfast on December 3rd was a smashing success. Our sincere thanks to the volunteers who cooked, served and cleaned up and managed the stalls at the event. It is an important aspect of our church life and the villagers' support is wonderful to behold. We estimate that 65 breakfasts were served on the morning.

The next major festival was our Lessons and Carols service. We are grateful to the owners and management of the Weston Manor Hotel for hosting a mulled wine and mince pies reception prior to the service. We enjoyed a good turnout despite abysmal weather and there was a procession from the hotel to the church. The Parochial Church Council decided to direct the collections and food/toy donations from the service to the Bicester Food Bank. We raised £224 for the food bank together with numerous toys for children. The volunteers at the food bank were very grateful for these donations which are a reflection of the generosity of spirit of the Weston community. Perhaps one of the more important lessons is the necessity to work together with the Parish Council, the Village Hall and other volunteer groups to make a meaningful impact.

As we move into the new year, we will explore opportunities to further support both our community and those in need. We are trying to increase the number of services on offer, but this is proving



difficult due to the limited resources available to us. At our instigation a meeting between Bishop Gavin of Dorchester and the Akeman Benefice PCCs was held in November. We outlined to him our concerns and challenges. He is a sympathetic listener and we are hopeful that some remedies to the lack of manpower will be addressed.

From the Register:

Funeral

1st December 2022: Ann Gwendoline Sturt

February and March services at St Mary's Church, Weston on the Green

5th February	11:00	Café Church
19th February	11:00	Holy Communion
22nd February: Ash Wednesday	19:00	Holy Communion
5th March	11:00	Morning Worship
19th March	11:00	Holy Communion
26th March	18:00	Passiontide Evensong

We hope and pray that you will join us.

For other services across the Akeman Benefice please visit: <https://www.akemanbenefice.org.uk/church-services>



 @oldflighthouse

The Old Flight House

The Old Flight House is a refreshingly different antiques centre. It has a fantastic range, from quality traditional antiques to vintage and retro items and stunning painted furniture, all set out in beautiful light and spacious surroundings. A licensed cafe serves good coffee and freshly prepared lunches with a lovely outside terrace for sunny days. Open Monday to Saturday 10am-5pm, Sunday 11am-5pm. Northampton Road, Weston on the Green, Oxfordshire, OX25 3TJ

01869 343441

theoldflighthouse.co.uk

Chair's comments

IT SEEMS RATHER LATE to wish you a Happy New Year, but it is in the spirit of good wishes that the Parish Council wishes you a good year. We will have challenges. One thing that I have learned about this village is that a simple request for help brings such good will. As the stresses go up, our sense of community needs to widen as well.

We have established an Emergency Fund following on from the June/ July heat wave. The Parish Council wishes to extend this to winter emergencies as well. If either you or a neighbour finds that a cold snap is harming your health and well-being, please get in touch. Things we can do: establish a short-term blanket and warm sweater bank, request donations of warm packs and meals that can be heated in a microwave. There are also several activities offered by the Village Hall that would help with isolation and cold homes.

The Budget

Onto the new year and the Parish Council's first action is agreeing the budget for 2023/24. Our first principle was to attempt to keep the parish council tax at the same level as last year. We wish to extend our work to include the ongoing Emergency Planning Fund, the Community Bus Scheme, Neighbourhood Plan Review, new amenities at Milestone Lane, and a defibrillator installation at the Jubilee Playing Field. Further information and the approved 2023/24 budget can be found under the Finance section on the Parish Council website.

Planning Enforcement Seminar

Our Cherwell District Councillor, Angus Patrick, organised a very useful Cherwell Planning Enforcement Seminar which Susan and I attended (virtually). There was a lot to take away and I'd



Food Bank Donations

Reflecting on 2022, a highlight for me was the success of the food bank drives, including a toy drive in December. This combined effort with St. Mary's Church, the Parish Council and the Village Hall will have made a great difference to many families. When specific items were requested, many of you made a special effort

with your shopping. Special toy shopping seemed to bring pleasure to others. The Bicester Food Bank is very thankful for our efforts. We received two thank you letters, one generic and then a lovely personal one for the village. Deliveries have been greeted with a warm hug from one of the volunteers!

recommend looking at the slides which can be found under the Planning section of the website. These are four areas that are key:

- New online form to improve the information being gathered by the enforcement team. The aim is to get as many new

complaints coming via this method rather than emailing direct to officers or other routes.

- There are three priority levels. Priority level one is breaches that cause harm over a wide area, impact the number of

people, or cause irreversible harm to historic buildings, areas or trees. Priority level two are breaches that have a wide impact on the surrounding area and residence, but do not require immediate action. Priority level three are all other breaches.

- There are monitoring performance targets, which we will find helpful based on our previous experience with the enforcement team. The key links for anyone starting a planning application, and or requesting assistance with enforcement are very helpful and can be found under the Planning section on the Parish Council website.
- Improvements that the team wishes to make are communication, reporting breaches at Parish Council meetings, reducing the number of multiple complainants, and further training needs.

Further information, including the Local Enforcement Plan, can also be found on the Cherwell DC website: <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/115/planning-process/169/planning-enforcement>

Solar Farm

The Botley West Solar Farm came to our close attention just before the December Parish Council meeting. It is important to share some of the issues and views with villagers because this is a complex issue – or maybe quite a simple issue depending on your point of

view.

Susan Davis, Vice Chair, wrote a summary briefing paper on the proposal, which is posted alongside the December 2022 Minutes, on the website. Some notes:

“The Proposal: To provide a very large solar panel array comprising three interconnected sites, collectively on 1400 hectares of agricultural land. The sites span areas close to Woodstock, Bladon, Launton, Cassington, Eynsham and Botley and are on land owned by Blenheim Estate and Merton College. The overwhelming majority of the solar panels (73.1%) are within the greenbelt around Oxford with only the north Woodstock site being outside the greenbelt. This total development will use 3.1% of the Oxford greenbelt designation, bringing the total of greenbelt under threat of development (or already breached) to 15% up to 2050. Target date for completion and commissioning of Botley West SF is end of 2025 and the report included a very helpful map of the three areas which rather alarmed the Parish Council in terms of size and position in the area.”

In her thorough discussion of the impact of the solar farm, Susan sums up an issue that was not clear to councillors previously. The power generated is not for this area alone, thus reducing the cost of our energy bills. The power will go to the National Grid

thus reducing the impact on us considerably. Further discussing the pros and cons of solar panels on agricultural land, effect on insects, bees, and butterflies, which can be positive, Susan asks the question as to why Green Belt should be used for such a project. There is a constant erosion now on Green Belt land which was supposed to be protected from development. Also, with the advance in technology, such solar farms could be redundant long before the life span of the proposed project.

Councillors discussed the issue carefully. The consensus seemed to be that although there is no objection to solar farms in principle, the size and location of this one seems questionable. One comment that has resonated with me over the month since the meeting is the suggestion that perhaps smaller solar farms near villages and towns, out of sight, possibly surrounded by hedges could provide power to the village/ town and potentially keep costs down.

...and remember

Please register your contact details with the clerk if you have moved to the village in the past three years. We would like to update our mailing list!! (clerk@westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk)



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Planning Update

If you are interested in learning more on parish planning applications they are discussed at each Parish Council meeting and a report is placed on the Parish Council website.

BUILDING APPLICATIONS:

Decisions Received – Permitted

22/03175/F and 22/03176/LB – Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane
Resubmission of 22/01291/F.
Erection of a pergola canopy to the side of the garage, including solar panels on part of the canopy.

22/03148/F – Old Police House, Northampton Road
Resubmission of permitted development from 2015 (15/01102/F). Erection of a two storey side extension and a single storey rear extension following removal of existing conservatory and rear extension.

22/03133/LB – Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane
Resubmission of 22/01292/LB.
Internal remodelling of kitchen and bathroom (ground floor) and retrospective application for installation of EV charge point on the garage wall.

Decisions Received – Refused

22/03149/F – Old Byre, Northampton Road
Erection of a three-bay oak frame open-sided garage with games



room above. This is a building of significant scale sited on the property's eastern boundary (backing on to the B430).

Applications

22/02733/F – Milestone Cottage, 3 North Lane
Single storey ground floor extension and extensive revision of internal space and roof line. Replacement of rear garage with three bay structure.

22/03092/TEL – Shell Layby, A34
Application by Openreach to install a fixed broadband communications line.

22/03510/DISC – Kemsley Farm
Discharge of conditions relating to riding surfaces, access tracks, arena fencing and shed roofs.

22/03547/F – North View, North Lane
Removal of existing stone lean-to store and part of kitchen wall to the rear; removal of modern conservatory; rebuild garden store to bring within cottage footprint. Part of extension roof to cover external turret staircase and window to bring internal to the cottage. New porch to the front.

22/03804/LB - Weston Manor Hotel, Coach House
Proposal to remove and replace existing stone tile roof to Coach House.

22/03709/F – Starbucks, part Of A34 services
Addition of a drive-thru facility and associated parking changes.

22/03463/AGN - Weston Manor Hotel
Erection of a traditional log store.

TREE WORKS

22/03631/TCA – Weston Manor Cottage

22/02993/TCA – Barnacre, Northampton Road

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Let's talk about dogs!

The holiday season has seen a number of complaints about dog behaviour and owner responsibility. The issue always starts with owner's not picking up dog mess - that includes the School Field and farmland. Please be mindful that dog poo kills grass and wildflowers and potentially spreads bacteria and parasites. According to research (hillspet.com) the ecosystem can generally handle up to two dogs per square mile. By picking up after your dog, you'll help protect the ecosystem. Everyone walking through our lovely fields deserves to enjoy the walk - so please let's create a better environment.

The pathways in parts of the village are unpleasant due to a lack of picking up d-p. Simply put, it smells bad, looks awful and is dangerous, especially to children.

Please note dog litter bins are located at the playing field car park, Knowle Lane, Village Hall car park, Westlands Avenue and North Lane and are emptied regularly by Cherwell District Council.

Second big issue - dogs off leads. This is a serious issue for many dog owners who are peacefully walking their dog, on a lead, when another dog bounds up to them who is off lead. There is often a lot of arm-pulling and barking with owners



shouting, "Don't worry, he//they isn't dangerous!!". A village isn't the place for a dog to have a free run.

We kindly request that all dogs are on leads on the village pathways *and* in the country areas where other dogs are regularly walked.

The Countryside Code is clear that dog mess must be picked up, that dogs must be under control, so farm animals or wildlife are not scared or disturbed. By law a farmer is entitled to destroy a dog that worries or injures their animal. Finally, if your dog does not have reliable recall, please keep them on a lead. Between 1st March and 31st July ALL dogs must be on a short lead. Oxfordshire.gov.uk has a section on "Advice for dog owners when walking in the countryside"

and gives similar advice to the above.

Cherwell District Council has a dog warden service, their job is to encourage and monitor responsible dog ownership throughout the district. Please call the service on 01295 227007 or fill in an online form (<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/193/dogs/391/dog-warden-service>) to register a concern relating to dog fouling, dog bins, dog attacking dog, stray dogs and barking dog complaints. Cherwell DC also offer a free dog registration scheme.

If you wish to report a dangerous dog, please contact Thames Valley Police on their non-urgent number 101 as well as the dog warden service.




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WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN VILLAGE PANTRY & POST OFFICE

2022 ended on an extremely disheartening note for Post Offices around the country and 2023 doesn't look as if it's going to get much better any time soon.

Some twenty odd years ago, village shops and Post Offices like ours in Weston were a dying breed. Those that managed to hang on led a very different working life to what the Post Office has now become. It's now the agent for the closed high street banks, the first port of call for the online selling and buying platform (which was in its infancy back then) and twenty years ago newspapers were the main source of revenue - nowadays, newspapers are fast becoming a thing of the past.

Mounting pressure

The pressure on the Post Office is greater than ever, as surrounding villages who have lost their POs over the last couple of decades grow ever larger, with more housing and more businesses, meaning the huge increase in the volume of mail as well as banking is channelled through the few that have managed to remain open. The management structure of small Post Offices like ours has had to change radically in order to provide the service required of the Post Office and the shop for the lunchtime trade, impulse buying and emergency/convenience shopping.

As a result, alongside me, our PO and shop employs 2 full-time workers and 4 part-time workers from the local community, not to mention Wiz's input every morning to set up the shop, which he does voluntarily - I cannot thank the great man enough for his dedication and support to ensure we keep going and keep providing the level of service expected of us.

It was only a couple of years ago when nurses and posties were being heralded as heroes during the pandemic; now it's as if the



world has just spun on its axis as they are on strike. From the posties point of view, Royal Mail's modernisation concept, which is imploding a 500-year-old business from being the best postal network in the world into nothing and with it the knock-on effects to rural communities, is heart-breaking.

Despite closing local branches and refusing to deal with cash, banks have very recently capped the amount of cash one can bank through Post Offices which is not only inconvenient for the customer but loses revenue for the PO banking it too. Every bank has introduced different limits for their business and personal customers causing even more confusion and have not notified their customers about the change. Without getting political or going down rabbit holes of conspiracy theories, clearly someone, somewhere is trying to get rid of cash. Regardless of the fact that both the FCA and the Government have allegedly pledged to protect cash, life at the coalface shows a very different picture. Charges for card payments have recently increased too, costing the shop over £200 per month in transaction fees.

The Royal Mail strikes have resulted in over 20% loss of income in our Post Office with a knock-on effect in the shop due to drop in footfall. If Royal Mail management get their way, if the FCA don't rethink the cap on cash and if the Government doesn't extend its relief scheme on energy bills for small businesses, your Village Post Office and Shop will become more than difficult to maintain, it will become impossible. Please be assured, I am doing my utmost to maintain some continuity and thank all of you who wrote in to our MP expressing your concerns.

Protecting community

We are not just about our own village; we serve at least 11 other villages in many different ways. We will fight as hard as we can to remain standing to protect the concept of community which is what we truly believe in but given the circumstances cannot guarantee a lasting or successful outcome. I'm so sorry to start the new year on such a pessimistic note but with the best will in the world, 'the elements' are against us.

A village meeting has been called on Wednesday, 22nd February at 7.30pm in the village hall to discuss the possibility of preserving the Shop & PO as a community asset. Whether you use the shop or not, your say about the future of a valuable village amenity is important. Please do come along.

FRIENDS PRODUCE:

As ever a huge thank you to Mick, Toddy and Corinne to keep this initiative in aid of St Mary's Church and the Village Hall going and to those of you who purchased this year's Weston Christmas cards. The total raised since the last edition is £294.36.



Look no further for your eye care needs

Put your vision in focus and your hearing in tune with Specsavers in Kidlington

While your sight and hearing are vital senses, we can sometimes overlook keeping up with routine appointments for our eyes and ears.

Focus on your vision

Unless your vision has changed, you might not give your eyes much thought when it comes to health. But your eyes can actually tell a lot about your general wellbeing, even if they don't feel any different.

Specsavers in Kidlington offers the very best optical care to local people. The store is kitted out with the latest high-tech optical equipment, which includes an optical coherence tomography (OCT) machine which produces a structural scan of the eye to help detect a range of eye conditions up to four years earlier than traditional methods.

Frames you love for less

You will see that Specsavers Kidlington stocks almost 2,000 pairs of glasses priced from just £15, to designer styles from £99. With frames from the likes of Quiksilver, Kylie Minogue and Vivienne Westwood there's sure to be something that matches your style and individuality perfectly. Plus, the team are highly trained in fitting and styling to help you chose the best frames for you and your lifestyle.

Sound advice

As well as looking after your eye care needs, Specsavers Kidlington also offer hearing advice and care, with the same commitment to providing the very best professional and affordable service for their customers. The service is available three days a week and includes free hearing checks, alongside a range of hearing aids, including the latest high-tech and discreet models, as well as free aftercare for as long as you need it.

Part of the community

The team at Specsavers Kidlington are committed to supporting the local community. Alongside local sporting club sponsorships, staff have set their sights on fundraising for local causes, as well as getting involved with local groups and associations.

To book an appointment or find out more visit www.specsavers.com/stores/kidlington, call 01865 509578 or pop into the store at unit 2b in The Hampden Building at 40 High Street.

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00008280

A busy year in prospect

We start the first Village Hall report for 2023 by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. The festive season already seems a while ago but we must thank everyone who created an Advent window in the village. It really did bring some Christmas cheer to the village in the run-up to Christmas and beyond. Thank you also to everyone who came along to the Christmas Lights switch-on and made it a very special evening.

Over the last few weeks we have been busy planning for the year ahead and we are hosting some events that we hope will be of interest. In May we will be showing the Coronation of King Charles III on the Big Screen in the Hall and we hope some of you will be able to join us to raise a glass and enjoy a light lunch/Afternoon Tea to help celebrate the occasion. More details will be in the next edition of the Village News regarding timings and booking a place for this event.

The following week sees the UK host the Eurovision Song Contest on behalf of Ukraine and we would like to invite villagers to join us in the Hall for a Eurovision party which will include screening the live show from Liverpool, Eurovision Bingo, Eurovision Quiz, food and a cash bar. This will be the first time that the Eurovision

Song Contest will be shown in the Hall and we're really looking forward to it, so much so that we already have the bunting for the evening! As you can tell, we are taking a light-hearted approach to this event and hope you will be able to join us for 'Le Grand-Prix Eurovision'. If you would like to come along to either (or both) of these events please let us know by calling 350992 or emailing us at westonvillagehall@live.oc.uk

In the autumn we plan to show some of the rugby world cup games in the Hall so please do keep an eye out for posters advertising these events or via the Village Hall email and Facebook page (search for Weston on the Green Village Hall).

For the first time since 2019, we will be holding a Quiz Night on Saturday 4th March. Pre-lockdown the quiz nights were fiercely contested evenings, with lots of good-natured ribbing and entertaining rounds. We can't promise a re-run of the Lockdown Film Round (the re-enactment of

classic film scenes still causes us anxiety!) but we can promise an entertaining evening.

Teams can vary in size from 2-6 people and tickets are £10 per person and includes a two-course supper. There will also be a bar running at this event. Booking is open and teams /places can be booked by emailing us or calling us on the number above.

We have finally been able to plant the rose bushes purchased to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee. They were dispatched in November just before the cold spell and so it was a waiting game for the ground to thaw! The Queen Elizabeth II Rose, bred by Harkness Roses, was officially selected by The Queen to mark the Platinum Jubilee. This new hybrid tea rose has large classic soft pink flowers and is a welcome addition to the rose collection we now have at the Village Hall. Alongside the spring bulb planting we hope there will be a beautiful show of colour in the coming months.



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Nicola Wallbank



Julian Taylor



Paula Rome

250 Club

Recent Results

The December (and June) 250 Club draw are the 'big' ones with bumper prizes of £90.00, £45.00 and £15.00. Congratulations to all the winners.

DECEMBER

1st £90 no.14
Debbie Obied
2nd £45 no.33
Sylvia Bristow
3rd £15 no.176
Graham Fennimore

JANUARY

1st £18 no.97
Neil Mullane
2nd £12 no.15
Carolyn & Gerald Bushby
3rd £6 no.108
Keyna O'Reilly

Weston on the Green Memorial Village Hall

Join us on Saturday 6th May 2023
The Coronation of King Charles III



On the Big Screen at the Village Hall
Time TBC • All welcome



Phone Box Library Opening Times for 2023

The phone box is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, from early morning until dusk when it is then locked up for the night.

Please feel free to borrow a book to read. We only ask that you return it in a good condition for the next person to borrow. Stock will be rotated on a regular basis.

Please could we ask that book donations are not left in the phone box. If you wish to donate books please email westonvillagehall@live.co.uk

Many thanks and happy reading!

The Village Hall Committee would like to thank everyone who took part and made such beautiful windows for the Living Advent Calendar Windows Event, 1st-24th December 2022.



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DATE

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Where there's muck there's gold!



I've never thought of Weston on the Green as being a twitcher's paradise. By "twitcher" I mean the sort of person who dons an anorak and dashes off to look for a rare bird, an uncommon winter visitor or an escapee from a wild-life park, and they do this in all weathers. Me? If I can sit in a stationary car and watch then that's great. I occasionally see one of the peregrine falcons that nest near the Ardley incinerator chimney and then there was the osprey near the mill pond in the village several years ago. And of course I do see barn owls regularly!

However I was reminded of Wordsworth's poem "I wandered lonely as a cloud" the other day as I was driving past the airfield. "When all at once I saw a crowd, a host of golden daffodils". Except these weren't daffodils but Golden Plover. They were standing in the field near to the trackway that leads down to New Barn Farm – the field where there is a large muckheap near the entrance.

Difficult to identify positively in the late afternoon sun but they were accompanied by some 100+

lapwings which are far easier to recognise. So back home to collect binoculars and camera, by which time they'd flown to the other side of the field – at least 100 yards away.

In summer the golden plover frequents the Southern Upland and/highlands of Scotland, Peak District, north Yorkshire and Wales. But in winter they move down to the lowland fields forming large flocks, one of which was here at Weston on the Green. They hung around for nearly two weeks and I decided to try and take a photograph of them. There must have been around 200 of them but

when they landed it was usually in the middle of that field. I did see them once near the entrance to the field, to the right of steaming muckheap. I went home and got my camera with long telephoto lens. When I returned they were still there. I carefully manoeuvred the car so I could photograph them from the open window of the driver's door. I slowly raised the camera, pointed it towards the flock of birds and that's when they all took off!!!

These are the best pictures I got – I've not seen them since!!!

Bob Hessian



In July 1885 the local paper carried an article written by an often astute, observant and sometimes satirical and humorous reporter writing under the title 'District Tatler'.

He wrote about North Lane which, in the 1881 census, was the home to 21 households, including the school mistress.

The Tatler reported:

... Weston is seldom troubled with anything exciting ... The other evening a lady connected with educational matters bought the news that a well-known resident was lying shot in a field. The man's good wife was just in the act of preparing her lord and master's supper and had cooked a most tempting rasher of bacon and provided a foaming half pint of porter. No thought of supper now; the unlucky woman hastened from the house to behold the corpse of him who in life she would never see again! She reached the field in an agony of suspense, and there, alas, the fearful sight met her eyes – her better half stretched in the field, his gun by his side, and he – asleep. She woke him up and took him home. He had been there to shoot rabbits; but bunnie was not so anxious to be caught and whilst waiting the would-be sportsman had fallen asleep. His dreams of rabbit – baked, stewed, and boiled – had been rudely dispersed by his anxious spouse. Meanwhile the rasher of bacon had not escaped, 'Miss Puss' had eaten the bacon, and her flight had upset the porter ...



It is easy to identify the 'lady connected with educational matters' because the school logbooks indicate one school mistress, living in the schoolhouse, attached to the school building. She was Elizabeth Hindshaw, who ran the school between 1884 and 1886, one of many who worked here during the years before the new schoolhouse was built in 1887.

The accommodation was poor and many left the job because of the inadequate facilities coupled with the interconnecting school and house. Elizabeth had been born in 1862, the daughter of two teachers, who was, herself, employed as a teacher in 1881 in Salford, Lancashire – her place of birth. So, in 1885, Elizabeth was a 23-year-old teacher living alone in poor accommodation adjoining the school. When she left Weston she returned to Salford, married, raised a family and continued to teach. She died in 1940, aged 78.

It is a bit more difficult to identify the 'well-known resident' and his 'good wife'. Using the 1881 census, discounting married couples too old to suggest a wife who 'hastened from the house' there

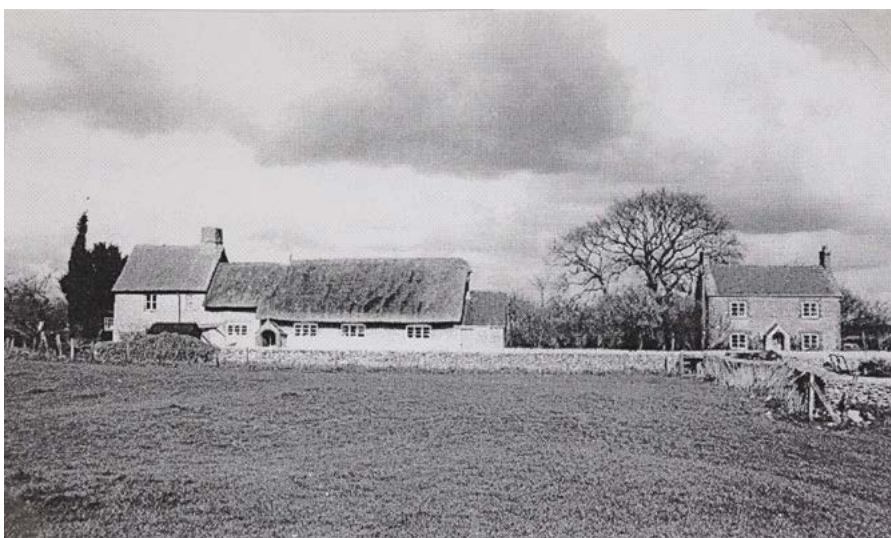
are a few contenders. There were 11 homes for young/middle-aged couples and 4 of these had been in the lane over 10 years. So the 'well-known resident' will probably have to remain a mystery.

Poaching – out with a gun in pursuit of game – was an offence although not as prevalent in the courts as in the first half of the century. The article specifies that the man 'had been there to shoot rabbits' not game in the form of pheasants, so perhaps it was possible to take rabbits for the pot – if you could aim true. The supper of a 'rasher of bacon, and ... a foaming half pint of porter' was a standard meal for a working man at the time, the bacon being home-cured and the porter home-brewed, and many would have kept a cat to keep vermin at bay and in this case the cat had a good supper of bacon.

Who told the Tatler of the events isn't known, doubtless the schoolmistress was teased about the episode and the 'well known resident' would perhaps not go out again in search of rabbits when he was tired and the evening was warm.

In the mid-20th century North Lane was dubbed 'suicide row' and this was probably one of the events giving it such a nickname.

Paula Hessian



Above: Rear of Weston school – building on right was teacher's house before 1887 (taken ~1910)
Left: Weston School showing teacher's house on left, overlooking School Field. (taken ~1970)



Weston-on-the-Green WI

At our meeting in November we enjoyed a good fun evening with our speaker Richard O. Smith. Richard is a comedian, author and script writer, who has written scripts for television and radio. He gave very funny excerpts from his book *The Z to A of Oxford*. We found out hilarious facts about Oxford that you wouldn't usually know. As he only got through half the alphabet, we hope to invite him back to hear more.

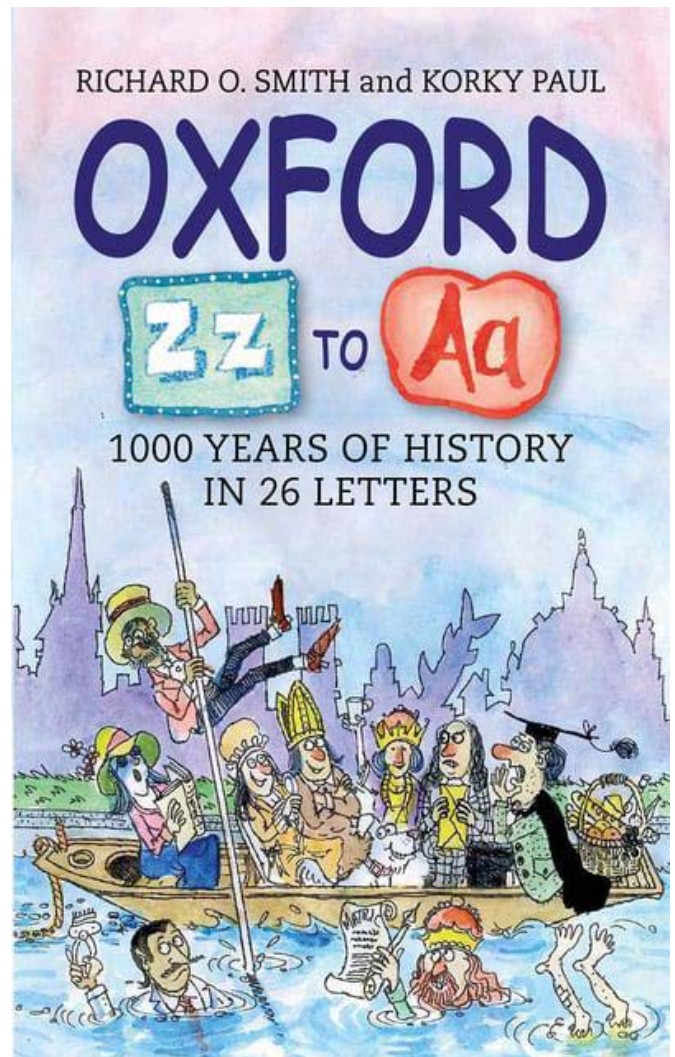
Instead of our usual December meeting we had a Christmas lunch at The Chequers on the 16th December. By the noise and laughter, it seems that the ladies who could attend had a good time. We would like to thank the staff for being so attentive and making our meal so enjoyable.

Our February meeting is on the 15th February when Richard Preston will give us a talk on the Life and Times of 'Primrose Garden' at Tackley. This will be followed by a visit to the garden in the Spring.

The March meeting is our AGM with entertainment. We would like to invite all ladies to join us at our meetings, several are already from Bletchington and other villages. If you are new to either village it's a great way to make new friends, or if you have been here for a long time, give us a try and you will be very welcome.

Our WI meets at Weston Village Hall every month except August, on the third Wednesday at 7.30.p.m. We also have a craft afternoon on the 4th Monday at 2.00.p.m. and walks on the 2nd Monday at 1.30.p.m., both of which were WI initiatives although you don't need to be a member to take part in these. We'd love to see you so please contact our secretary Lyn Barnett on 01869 350707 or email her on wotg.wi@gmail.com if you would like to know more.

Lyn Barnett



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Weston Walkers

Our November walk, being the last of the year, was in the morning following another of the Bicester Health Walks, starting and finishing on Bure Park local centre, where we then enjoyed lunch together at The Bure Farm.

We do not usually walk as a group in December or January, so our first walk of the new year will be on Monday 13th February.

All are welcome to join in as and when, there is no commitment to every month, so if you wish to enjoy sociable company, conversation and exercise please come along and join in or speak to me.

There are now also several local walks to enjoy published on the Weston on the Green Parish Council website, under Health and Wellbeing.

If while out walking you encounter any problems with overgrown vegetation, damaged stiles or footbridges, or any other issues, please let me know for Weston Parish or Katie Holt (01869 350219) for Bletchington Parish, in order that they can be reported to the County Council for repair.

Graham Barnett
01869 350707



Weston Society

Weston Society began when a few like-minded people met in the Ben Jonson one night and discussed their mutual worries that the village they then knew might be under threat. This threat, from developers, was successfully overcome but the original group became interested in the preservation of the village and its environment and slowly became a group who met on a monthly basis to enjoy speakers on many topics ranging from local history, the environment both built and natural and the people and activities specific to our area.

Over the years we have broadened this to include the wider environment and, on some occasions, national and international events but our main focus has always remained our village and its people. We now meet on the second Monday of alternate months to hear speakers on a variety of topics.

Simon Wenham spoke to us on "The Great Exhibition" at our November meeting, relaying some fascinating facts and figures on how it was financed, how the structure was built in a relatively short time and some of the amazing exhibits. For our January meeting, the Commanding Officer at RAF Brize Norton will have given us the history of the RAF at Weston on the Green.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 13th of March at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, speaker to be confirmed.

All are welcome free of charge to their first meeting, there is an annual subscription of £10 per person for anyone who then wishes to join, which enables us to pay for speakers and to share wine and nibbles after the meetings.

Graham Barnett

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The Wood Fairy's Winter Musings

The first bag of kindling went to the shop on September 3rd. Since then, there has been a steady 9 bags per week sold. That is until 15th November when a surge took place. Between the 15th and 20th, 36 bags were delivered to the shop. I thought that was just a blip, but, from 12th to the 17th December 36 bags were required followed by 20 bags on 29th and 31st. The chop saw was working overtime and the Fairy's old worn-out chopper glowed from overuse. Some of the big bags of Nobby ends have been ~~disem~~ ~~discern~~ broken down into normal bags and sold that way to keep up with demand. So far, up to 1st January, 242 bags have been sold.

The Wood Fairy has also been busy making 20 new shell racks for fireworks, 10 at 2" which holds 9 shells and 10 at 2.5" which holds 6 shells. Although you will hear



people talk of rockets, none have been used by the pyrotechnicians for the last 15 years, much too dangerous.

Also, Christmas animals etc have been produced, along with 3 commissioned train sets. As if that wasn't enough, the front of the house is being re-thatched and the fairy has spent 2 days on the scaffold replacing slate cills. Just like old times but with less tea breaks and no payment. It was easier before retirement, at least I could book a day off!

The scaffolding (elf and safety) made the Advent window a bit obscured, but it was still there. The scaffold was actually a landing strip for Santa as the roof wasn't safe to put reindeer and sleigh down on – reminds me of the old joke about leaving the landing light on.

Thursday 8th December was notable, not only a full moon but the first sighting of the secretive snow fairy, scurrying along, complete with hi-vis vest and own shovel. He was seen spreading salt on Westlands Avenue and associated footpaths. Lovely action. Winter has arrived.

Happy New Year to everyone and hoping for a heatwave and a rest anytime soon.

Iro Tytt

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Neighbours' Natter



Weston-on-the-Green Village Hall

Thursdays Feb 9th and Mar 9th 10am - Noon

£1.00 for coffee or tea and a biscuit

Ring for the King



Would you like to be part of the bell ringing team, ringing in Weston on the Green for the Kings Coronation on the 6th May 2023? A unique event that you will remember for the rest of your life. There is still time to learn.

Bell ringing is no more difficult to learn than riding a bike. It provides an excellent physical, mental, and musical stimulus, working in a team. If you have recently moved to the village, it's a great way of meeting other villagers and becoming involved with the local community.

We often hear about the Heritage Assets of our Towns and Villages. Generally people consider these assets to be in the form of historic buildings. The sound of Church Bells however could be considered to be as important a Heritage Asset as any village building. It is probably one of the oldest man-made sounds heard in the Village, the

same sound that has been heard for hundreds of years.

On several occasions our team have rung bells at churches in villages where there is no team of ringers and where the bells are rarely rung. There is almost always someone who is waiting for us when we have finished ringing, to say how much they loved hearing the bells being rung again and how they regretted that it is only on the rare occasion, often just for weddings, that the church bells are rung.

To maintain the ringing of the bells in Weston we need an active team of ringers. If you like hearing the Church Bells rung in the Village and want to keep the tradition going, why not become a bell ringer? We would be very pleased to welcome anyone, young or old, to help in ringing the church bells and thereby maintain the Heritage Asset of the sound of church bells being rung in the Village.

If you are interested and would like to try to see if bell ringing suits you, or if you just want to see how we ring the bells, contact me directly (01869 351730) or just call in at the bell tower when we are ringing. We run a practice most Thursday evenings starting at 19.30 pm. If you can hear the bells being rung, we will be there; come through the open door at the back of the church and climb up the steps. Just call in to have a chat and see how we ring.

When people ask you in years to come, where were you and what did you do on Coronation Day, you could be able to say, "I rang the Church Bells in our village in celebration of the King's Coronation".

Gerald Bushby
Tower Captain



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Dodgy dealers!

One benefit of living with an entrance on to the B430 is that you receive regular visitations from people who are interested in what you have in your front garden – especially if you have a skip partially full of rubbish parked there. It's like an open invitation to people - "please come and see if you'd like anything that we're throwing away". And whilst they're there, they'll help themselves to anything else that's lying around irrespective of whether it's in the skip or not. When you go out to ask them what they want, they'll say that they've come to collect the scrap metal. And if you suggest that they need to ask before taking anything they tell you that they tried knocking on the door but couldn't get a reply.

"But just because you didn't get a reply, that doesn't entitle you to take it away!".

"But it's scrap and you don't want it because you've put it in the skip".

"But it wasn't in the skip, it was under those tarpaulin sheets several feet away and the other side of the skip. What you're doing is stealing!".

I got my iPhone out and started to take a picture of them – I was mindful that there were two of them but only one of me! They put the scrap sheets of lead down and quickly walked back to the white van parked half off the road (and already causing a bit of a traffic issue with three lorries trying to get past the van). They drove off towards Middleton Stoney.

I quickly dialled 999 and reported the attempted theft. The police asked me for the colour, make and model of the van and its registration number. I was able to send them the pictures that I'd taken with my iPhone. They subsequently told me that the van had been reported for similar offences. The vehicle was



not currently registered to anyone - it was showing as being "in trade" but they were pleased with the full-frontal facial photo I'd taken of one of the men.

My family didn't think I was a hero or anything like that – just a b... fool for confronting them on my own! I did like to think that if these two guys had turned against me then maybe the lorry drivers would have come to my assistance - or maybe not!!!

Bob Hessian
(with Neighbourhood Watch hat on!)

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Quiz night

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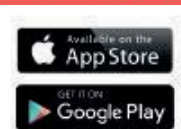
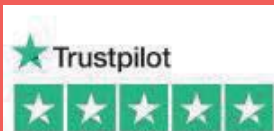
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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Help with the Cost of Living Crisis



The rising cost of living is a worry for many. It's going to be a challenging winter and knowing where to turn to get the help you need will be important. It can be hard to know where to start though and also whether that support is available locally or nationally.

To make sure you're getting the help you're entitled to, Oxfordshire County Council has pulled together the top ten things you can check right now. More information is available on oxfordshire.gov.uk/living

1. Many energy, water and broadband services offer cheaper packages for those who receive certain government benefits. They are known as social tariffs. Get in touch with your provider to find out more.
2. The district and city councils are supporting residents with dedicated web pages packed with advice on energy, food, housing and living costs.
3. An estimated £55-£70 million of benefits go unclaimed each year in Oxfordshire. The government website has a calculator to help you check whether you're missing out – you just need to enter some details and it will check what might be available to you. Visit gov.uk/benefits-calculators You can call your local Citizen's Advice – they offer free, confidential advice to everyone in Oxfordshire. Visit: caox.org.uk/
4. With the free Better Housing Better Health service, you'll get advice on saving energy, accessing grants and financial support. Visit bhbh.org.uk or call 0800 107 0044.
5. In October, Oxfordshire County Council provided vouchers to help with the cost of food and energy, to households with lower income older people in receipt of council tax reduction, and families of children eligible for free school meals. If you have received a voucher or a letter with a voucher code from the council, make sure you redeem it before expiry.
6. The government has pulled together a range of offers available from grocery, entertainment, retail, health and other businesses – all designed to save us money. Visit helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/
7. Meet and make friends, take a step out of the cold or access services and community activities across the county. You'll always get a warm welcome in any of our libraries. Visit oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries The national Warm Welcome Network also lists a wider network of warm spaces across Oxfordshire. Visit www.warmwelcome.uk/#find-a-space
8. The Oxfordshire food access map allows you to search for community food services such as food banks, community larders, and food projects. Most food banks need a referral to access them. This can come from many groups – a doctor, housing association, local council, charity, or the council. But you don't need a referral to access food larders and fridges, which provide either low-cost or free food which otherwise would go to waste. Visit foodmap.goodfoodoxford.org/
9. Stay fit, keep busy, meet new friends and find new interests by using Live Well Oxfordshire. The site brings together a searchable online directory of services and groups for adults. Visit livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk/
10. On a prepayment meter? Access the government's £400 rebate, as part of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS). You can access it where you usually top up. At the start of November, only sixty per cent of those on prepayment meters have accessed this support.

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John Howell MP writes...



I AGREE with the Prime Minister when he said that New Year should be a time of optimism and excitement and yet many look ahead to 2023 with apprehension. There are indeed many concerns at home and abroad. The concerns that dominate for each of us will vary according to our own circumstances and needs. Over the Christmas and New Year holiday period I had several conversations on the fallout from the pandemic with many people feeling that the negative effects, particularly in relation to mental health and well-being, are still taking their toll. The nervousness at the news that China would reopen its borders is an example of the fear that lingers, not only in relation to physical health, but also over the dread that life could be restricted once again. However we must remember that we are in a very different place to where we were at the start of the pandemic with knowledge, vaccines and medicines available to help prevent such devastating measures being taken again.

For those concerned at the continued cost of living issues I was pleased to see the Government announcement of further support this year for pensioners and those on low incomes. It is also good to see the continued support in relation to energy costs for business and non-domestic customers. This is subject to on-going review in a fast-changing situation.

I know that many constituents are concerned over issues relating to Thames Water. I have written previously on my concerns on storm discharges. I have also raised a number of other specific concerns with the company over time. I was saddened, although not entirely surprised, to read in the Ofwat annual assessment of water company performance that Thames Water fell amongst the worst performers. I am in touch with the Chief Executive of Ofwat on this. He has confirmed that they are very concerned over this and advised me that Thames Water have committed to spending an additional £2bn in the 2020-25 regulatory period on top of the £9.6bn final determination to turnaround their performance. He acknowledges that there is much to be done and has confirmed that they are monitoring the situation closely. We will be keeping in touch on progress.

Another concern that also tends to arise with the new year is changes to bus services when timetables are reviewed. I fully appreciate that when bus companies make changes some people will be inconvenienced having got used to services running at particular times. Although buses are run on a commercial basis there are some subsidies available to support services in specific circumstances. These are administered by the County Council. Having investigated some

of the concerns I understand that for bus companies there are many issues to consider when looking at the sustainability of services. In some cases it is simply a matter of low passenger numbers that makes a route unsustainable, and the companies need to divert resources to other routes where there is greater usage to keep these running. However sometimes the issues are wider. For example on one route up for change the bus company wanted to use double decker buses across the whole route and some of the rural roads included in the journey were not suitable for such vehicles. Whilst the Government does have a National Bus Strategy the challenges in rural areas are many. As we know all too well some routes are simply lost altogether due to lack of use.

There are, of course, many big issues which affect us all which are well rehearsed in the national media and which the government is already working to address. If there is a particular issue that concerns you, please do share your thoughts.

If you would like to know more about my work on behalf of the Government, and in the Constituency, please do look at my website. The address is www.johnhowell.org.uk. My contact details are also on the website.



From your local councillors

Launton & Otmoor District Update January 2023



We hope you all had a great Christmas break and are looking forward to all the possibilities that a new year brings. Welcome to 2023!

It is a short update from us this month, as December was largely a clean-up and prepare for 2023 at the District Council. There is a brief update on the Local Plan for housing and development, and a report on what happened at the December full Council meeting. We are available as always on 01869 717712 or via email at gemma.coton@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or angus.patrick@cherwell-dc.gov.uk.

The Local Plan

The delayed Local Plan has now been released, with additional detail on housing needs across the region, and will be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny



committee in early January. It is very detailed, running to many pages, and once that committee reports back, the CDC Executive will work further on it.

The draft has been forwarded to the Parish Councils locally, and more information on the Local Plan for Cherwell is available on their dedicated page at <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/homepage/27/local-plans>

A41 Ploughley Road junction

The roadworks and closures around the A41 Ploughley Road junction are apparently still on track to end by March 2023. The two-way operation of the lights has eased some traffic pressures, but as work and schools open up for the new year, the pressure will likely come back. Note that one-way operation is again due until February 3rd. Keep an eye on up to date information on closures and more details can be found at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/roadworks/future-transport-projects/ploughley-road-a41-junction>

Full Council meeting – Dec 2022

A full council meeting was held on December 19th with a number of motions and questions being raised. The proposed Botley West Solar Farm was raised by me in a question to the Leader of CDC, Cllr Barry Wood. He appreciated this was timely, as several councillors have been receiving emails on the subject. I asked for an official CDC position to be published so we can respond to you better, and for a mechanism to capture public comments before it is available on the planning portal. Both were agreed to by Cllr Wood and we hope to give more detail on this as soon as possible.

You can find more information on the meeting, and see the exchange above at 18 minutes in to the webcast, on the CDC portal at https://cherwell.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/731072

That's it!

Thank you for reading all the way to the bottom if you have! Please do get in touch on 01869 717712 or via email at gemma.coton@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or angus.patrick@cherwell-dc.gov.uk.



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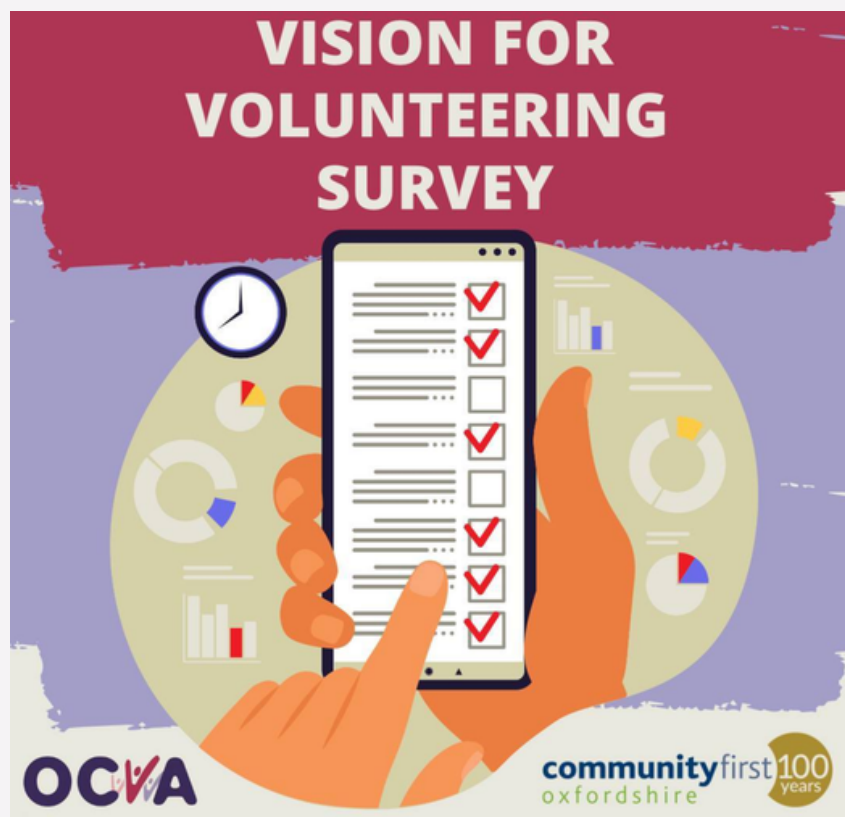
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Dates for the Diary

1st February	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
7th February	12.30 pm	Golden Leaves Lunch
9th February	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
13th February	1.30 pm	Weston Walkers; meet at the Village Hall
15th February	7.30 pm	WI Meeting
1st March	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
4th March	6.30 pm	Quiz Night
7th March	12.30 pm	Golden Leaves Lunch
9th March	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
13th March	1.30 pm	Weston Walkers; meet at the Village Hall
13th March	7.30 pm	Weston Society
15th March	7.30 pm	WI Meeting and AGM



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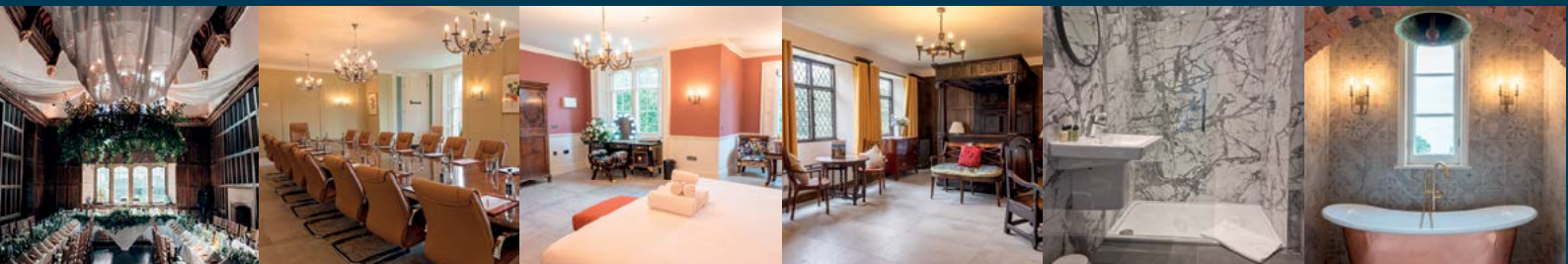


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