

# The Villager

February 2017 Volume 46 No 1

The community newsletter for Mapledurwell,  
Up Nately, Newnham, Nately Scures & Greywell

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## Diary dates

### February

- 10 Up Nately Coffee Morning,  
Lealands, 10-12am
- 10 Rural Matters Conference,  
Sparsholt College, 9am-4pm
- 11 Rural Matters Conference,  
New Forest Outdoor Centre,  
9am-4pm
- 13 Cops and Coffee, Bartletts  
Cafe, Hook, 1.30pm-4pm
- 15 Rural Matters Conference,  
Riverside Centre, Newport  
IoW, 9am-4pm
- 17 Rural Matters Conference,  
Netley Police Training Centre,  
Hamble, 9am-4pm
- 23 Rural Matters Conference,  
Gill Nethercott Centre,  
Whitchurch, 9am-4pm

## United Parish Messy Church News

Great fun was had by all at  
our Christmas Messy Church!  
Over 30 children from all over  
the United Parish gathered  
together to help us tell the  
story of Christmas, sing songs,  
make gifts, decorations and  
presents and enjoy a delicious  
tea. Thank you to all who came  
along, to all who helped on the  
day and to those who supplied  
our scrumptious tea.



A Date for your diary-

Please do come along to walk  
with a donkey from Mapledurwell  
Village Hall to the Church on  
Palm Sunday (9th April). We will  
meet at 8.45am by Mapledurwell  
Village Hall, setting off on our  
journey towards the church at  
9am. Everybody is very welcome  
- old and young. We will be met  
at Church at 9.30am by Bishop  
Tim for a special Palm Sunday  
Service.

advertisement

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# Mapledurwell & Up Nately

## Next Up Nately Coffee Morning

The next coffee morning will take place on Friday 10th February, 10-12, at Lealands. Contact Jane on 762891



## Carols at the Pond

The Carol singing around the Pond was a festive occasion held on Friday 16th December, a good time was had by all with robust carol singing ably accompanied by John Maclean on his accordion. The singers enjoyed mince pies washed down with great home made mulled wine and were all kept warm with a very welcome brazier. Many villagers supported the occasion and a collection for the Children's Society raised £108.00.

## Blaegrove Barn

A space for creation, learning, friends, food, fun and everything else in between. Blaegrove Barn, the pop up barn on the farm is a space created by 5th generation farmers James and Jo. With spectacular views over the Hampshire countryside The Butlers aim has been to create a room which can host all number of events, courses and corporate events. To find out more, please visit their website: [www.blaegrovebarn.com](http://www.blaegrovebarn.com)

## PARISH PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### New Application

**T/00002/17/TCA** (3rd January 2017) The Gamekeepers, Tunworth Road, Mapledurwell. T1 eucalyptus – reduce height by approx 6m (30%) leaving the tree standing at 12m height. T2 walnut – crown thin by 5-10% removing branches close to power cable and to 10cm clearance.

**16/04642/ADV** (15th December) Unit 1, The Hatch Industrial Park, Greywell Road, Mapledurwell. Display of non-illuminated fascia sign on south elevation.

**16/04585/RET** (8th December) Pennybridge Farm, Greywell Road, Up Nately. Removal of condition 2 of 13/02230/RET to allow permanent retention of agricultural workers cabin.

**16/04537/FUL** (6th December) Land At Andwell Mill, Andwell Lane. Change of use and alterations to two existing buildings used for ancillary residential accommodation to two separate dwelling units and relocation of site access.

**16/04446/HSE** (30th November) Oaklands, Greywell Road, Up Nately. Erection of conservatory.

### Application pending

**16/03715/VLA** (6th Oct) 11 Aspen House, The Hollies. Variation of Section 106 agreement to allow sale of property on open market.

### Application granted

**16/04198/FUL** (11th January, reg 9th November) St Mary's Mapledurwell. Installation of compost toilet, provision of footpath for wheelchair access and upgrade existing footpath.

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

**Next Parish Council meeting** Wednesday 15th March, 8pm, Village Hall Committee Room. Everyone is very welcome to attend.

## MAPLEDURWELL & UP NATELY VILLAGE HALL



### HIRE THE VILLAGE HALL

Contact Caretaker Jayne Norman on 474432 or check out the website at [www.mapledurwellvillagehall.com](http://www.mapledurwellvillagehall.com)

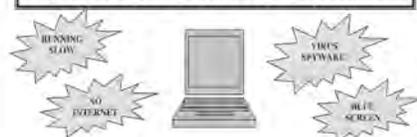
## Local Free Range Eggs

Super, free range, organic eggs available from Eastrop Farmhouse, Heather Row Lane, Up Nately. The eggs are boxed up and ready for sale within 24/48 hours of them being laid. Most supermarket eggs sold as 'free range' have to reach the shelves by day 8 and cost around £3. So our box of half a dozen eggs for £1.50 are a real fresh bargain. It's our children Izzy(14) and Archie(12)

who run this enterprising business. Who've also named the hens, with suitable themes.....  
Birdy  
Egg Sheeran  
Peckzie Lott  
Lindsey Lohen  
Princess Layer  
Yolko Ono



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01256 701480

07719738897

imcs@hotmail.co.uk



## POLICE UPDATE

Dear Residents,

I start with an appeal for any information concerning an incident at Mapledurwell between 2.30 and 2.45 pm on Sunday January 22nd. At this time two young white men were seen in a field which backs onto Frog Lane, they went through a hedgerow from one field into another, however as they did so they startled a horse which was in the field with its owner, the horse became agitated and the owner who was holding the horse fell to the ground and the horse fell on top of her causing severe injuries. I am ask if anyone was in that area of Frog Lane or the allotments at this time and saw these men to please give me a call direct, likewise if the men are local and reading this again please get in contact.

We have also had a continuation of sheep worrying incidents in our area where 14 ewe lambs have now been killed by a dog of which I suspect is local to the area. I urge ALL dog owners to keep their dogs under strict control/on a lead when near livestock, please be aware that farmers can lawfully shoot any dog found worrying livestock on agricultural land, so please if near livestock keep your dog on a lead.

I now wish to present you with the annual reported crime statistics for 2016, overall across the whole of the beat area, (not my new extended area), 174 crimes were reported which is an increase on the 142 of 2015. The first figure is the 2015 and 2016 second:

Mapledurwell 15 – 17, Andwell 3 – 4, Natley Scures 12 – 18, Newnham 11 – 7, Water End 0 – 1, Up Natley 2 – 10.

The types of crime that increased was burglary dwelling from 3 to 6, albeit one was a hotel room, vehicle crime rose by one, the burglary of outbuildings and sheds doubled + from 24 to 49, a spike being 11 in March and 17 in April 2016. Theft also rose from 18 to 23 instances and assault also increased albeit by one to 24 cases. Overall of the twenty-two parishes of this beat area fifteen saw an increase and

## Rural Communities Matter 2017 Conference

The new Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) Mr. Michael Lane is seeking your support in two forms.

The first is where he is seeking you views on an increase in the precept that residents pay for policing in the county, if you wish to either support or not support this idea please click onto the PCC website at <http://www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk> for more information and an opportunity to complete the survey. The website has more of the intentions behind an increase in finances from council tax payers.

The second items is a series of five meetings being held across the county and the IoW regarding rural policing. The events are being held on Friday February 10th at Sparsholt College, Winchester, Saturday February 11th at New Forest Outdoor Centre, Wednesday February 15th Riverside Centre, Newport IoW, Friday February 17th Netley Police Training Centre, Hamble and Thursday February 23rd at Gill Nethercott Centre, Whitchurch. All start at 9 am and go to 4 pm. The aim is to give those who live and work in rural communities the opportunity to give their views on rural crime and to help set future rural priorities that will eventually form part of a new rural crime strategy for Hampshire and Isle of Wight. This is a chance to have your views to be heard. I urge anyone who wishes to have their say on the policing of this area to visit any of these venues and have your say. Again the above website has more details.

We have managed to obtain a draft agenda of the day which is reproduced as below for your information.

### Rural Communities Matter 2017 Conference Draft AGENDA

- 09:30 Arrival teas & Coffee
- 10:00 Housing Keeping Rules (5mins)
- 10:05 Welcome PCC Michael Lane (10mins)
- 10:15 Rural Voices Short films 3mins each (25mins)
- 10:40 Hants Constabulary DCC Sara Glen (20mins)
- 11:00 Prominent, rural figure presentation (20mins)
- 11:20 Country Watch Insp Lou Hubble (10mins)
- 11:30 Crime and policing trends locally – a brief review (30 mins)  
What are the main rural crime issues in your communities?  
(interactive voting session)
- 12:00 Rural communities matter snapshots of people who live and work in the rural community 6 x 30 secs long (3mins)
- 12:05 Close of morning session: Intro of afternoon session
- 12:10 Lunch and Networking (visit the stalls)
- 13:30 Tackling Rural Crime Action Plan development /Priority setting  
Introduction 1hr Strands:- Rural Crime, Rural Communities, Rural Business, Rural money
- 14:30 Feedback from the groups 5 minutes each (30 mins)
- 15:00 Question and Answer Session
- 15:30 Brief next steps and summing up – fill out evaluations
- 16:00 Close

four a decrease and three remained the same. I wish to remind residents of the continued need to be vigilant, report any suspicious vehicle / people, make sure your property is secured, record the serial number and if possible take a photograph and made sure buildings had good locks, alarms and CCTV if possible.

I am happy to call and give home security advice.

Many thanks as always

*Andy*

**Andrew Reid, Local Constable**

01256 389 050

Mob 07768 776 844

[andrew.reid@hampshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:andrew.reid@hampshire.pnn.police.uk)



# Newnham & Nately Scures

## Newnham Clubroom is for hire



Please visit [newnhamclubroom.org.uk](http://newnhamclubroom.org.uk) for availability, booking and further information.

## NEWNHAM OPEN GARDENS

Sunday 18th June 2017

More details to follow in next month's Villager.

Any queries please contact Jackie on 762407 or Philippa on 760139.

## St Nicholas' Newnham

Our thanks to the person or persons unknown who just before Christmas left in St Nicholas' church Newnham several large carrier bags of high quality groceries for the Basingstoke Food Bank. They were much appreciated.

Newnham Lent lunch. This will take place on Tuesday March 7th. Lady Sara Allenby has very kindly agreed to host this event. Please contact her on 01256 762689 if you would like to attend.

A big thank you from the VCC to Chris Broughton for organising and to all those who helped in the spring cleaning of St Nicholas' church on 17th January especially Carolyn, Edward, Jo, Lisa Bingham, Kate Jefferson and Sarah Laird.

It was the first time for many years and the church looks much better as a result.

Regards Jeff Ford

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS Next Parish Council meeting

Tuesday 28th March from 7pm in the Clubroom. Everyone is most welcome to attend.

## PARISH PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### New Application

**17/00143/HSE** (18th January 2017) 3 Kingsbridge End, Old School Road. Conversion of loft to living accommodation with rooflights to the front and rear elevations.

**17/00034/FUL** (5th January) Land Adjoining Scures Hill House, Scures Hill. Erection of one detached dwelling and integral garage (amended application to replace 15/04234/FUL approved March 2016).

**16/04600/HSE** Well Cottage, Newnham Green (12th December). Erection of a single storey side extension and infill front extension, construction of front and rear dormer windows and installation of rooflights.

### Amended application

**16/03282/RET** (15th September, amended 20th January 2017) Manor Farm, Blackstocks Lane. Amended description 'Continued use as a working farm with flexibility to welcome visitors for educational, leisure and therapeutic use (Class D1 and D2) throughout the year with ancillary tea rooms and associated car parking (Retrospective).'

### Applications pending

**16/03850/FUL** (31st Oct) Land Adjacent To Nately Towers, Scures Hill. Erection of a five-bedroomed dwelling with double garage and creation of a new access.

**16/01315/FUL** (26th April) The Old House At Home. Change of Use A4 Public House to C3 Residential Dwellinghouse.

**16/00097/OUT** (13th January 2016) Land Adjacent to Oakfield Farmhouse, Scures Hill. Outline planning application for three detached dwellings, including access.

### Application granted

**16/03726/HSE** (30th Nov, reg 7th Oct) Oakfield House, Scures Hill. Erection of a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension.

### Application refused

**16/02187/FUL** (1st Dec, reg 16th June) Nately Scures House, Scures Hill. Three x four-bedroomed dwellings and garages including new access onto the A30, and associated landscaping.

## Hart Applications

**Granted 16/02929/PRIOR** (18th January, 14th November) Owens Farm, Newnham Road, Hook. Prior approval for the change of use of agricultural barn, outbuilding B, into one one-bedroom residential dwelling.

**16/02681/PRE-APP** (5th October 2016) New dwelling and associated works Beehive Farm, Tylney Lane, Rotherwick.

**16/03353/PRE-APP** (3rd January 2017) Rawlings Road, Hook. Advice for demolition of all buildings and structures and replacement with 110 apartments, 22 affordable apartments, creation of 400m2 retail space, parking, public plaza and consolidation of accesses.

## Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan

Consultation on the draft 'East of Basingstoke' and 'Redlands' development 'Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD).

Approx 615 homes with facilities including a primary school are planned for these adjoining Greenfield sites.

The consultation runs from Friday 20th January to Friday 3rd March 2017. All comments will be taken into consideration in compiling a final version.

For further info email [local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk) or contact Edward Rehill on 845 573 or John Dawson on 845 492.

See [www.basingstoke.gov.uk/EoBandRSPD](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/EoBandRSPD)

# Greywell

## VILLAGE HALL



To hire the Village Hall please contact isabel.pound@hotmail.com or alibarther@aol.com. For Marquee hire (Greywell residents only) contact Debbie Scott; Tel 01256 701624; deborahjscott1@gmail.com

## WELCOME

We would like to welcome our new residents to Greywell. We hope that they enjoy living in the village.

Scott and Abbie Flatman have moved to Dorchester Way.

Jamie and Cara Tredwell have moved into Old Pound Cottage. Hook Road.

Gareth and Kelly Sainsbury and family have move from Moor View Cottages to Dorchester Way.

Alan and Carole Patterson have moved into The Barracks.

Richard and Vicky Steel have moved into Skylark Cottage. Deptford Lane.

Amanda Kyme has moved back to the village and living in One Vine Cottages.

Mark and Catherine Hutton and family have moved into the Old Wharf House.

Graham and Pat Thomas have moved into the Royal Oak. Hook Road.

Robin Sergeant has moved into 1, Horseshoe Cottages.

Tom Comely and Geni have moved into Moor View Cottages.

## Hart to Home

By Cllr. John Kennett



The change in the make up of the council mentioned last month is continuing to cause problems. The number of seats is now 14 Conservatives, 10 Community Campaign Hart, 8 Liberal Democrat and 1 Independent. In other words, the Conservatives provide the Leader and Cabinet but hold just 14 seats out of 33 and can therefore be out voted if and when the other parties decide to do so.

This is crystallising the tension that has always been present in Hart between the 'urban' nature of Fleet and Church Crookham versus the rural one of the villages in the Western area. The villages generally accept the need for a proportionate number of new houses in their community but argue that new development should be concentrated around existing infrastructure such as a railway station, buses, shops etc. for greater sustainability.

Community Campaign Hart (CCH) was formed as an anti-development group in Church Crookham and was originally called Church Crookham Homeowners. It argues that major development should be away from Fleet and Church Crookham and concentrated in rural areas to the west of the District.

The Liberal Democrat councillors all come from the Yateley and Blackwater area. Generalising, land there is either SPA (Special Protection Area) or a flood zone or already built on. Little large scale development is therefore possible in their areas and consequently the Liberal Democrats tend toward neutrality in the urban versus rural debate.

The two councillors who defected from the Conservatives are from the Fleet West ward and by joining the CCH are rejecting development in or near that area.

This shift is starting to affect the direction of the Local Plan. At a meeting of the Local Plan Steering Group, planners were directed to re-examine the idea of a Winchfield new town, which we had previously thought was dead, and reducing the numbers at Hartland Park (aka Pyestock) from 1,500 to 750 houses. The Planning Committee deferred a decision on a major development at Grove Farm (which is between Fleet and Crookham village).

The re-examination of Winchfield will probably come up with the same negatives as previous studies, Pyestock either works at 1,500 houses or not at all, because of its existing permission for a warehouse, and the developer at Grove Farm will probably file, and win, a "slam dunk" appeal.

All this re-examination is costing the council both money and time. The Local Plan consultation will be delayed from January to March and it still have to undergo tweaking to reflect the result and then examination by a Government Inspector before it can be formally adopted.

*If you would like advice on any matter relating to Hart District Council, please do not hesitate to contact me. Whenever I can, I go to Parish Council meetings, the Coffee Pot in Long Sutton and the Tea Pot in South Warnborough; I can always meet elsewhere by arrangement.*

[John.kennett@hart.gov.uk](mailto:John.kennett@hart.gov.uk)  
01256 862203

**PARISH PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**New Applications**

**17/00050/HOU & 17/00051/LBC** Old Wharf House Hook Road Greywell Hook RG29 1BT. Addition of bathroom to single-storey modern extension. Alterations to external brick wall at rear of existing modern extension and replacement of timber French doors. New conservation roof light to modern extension. Removal of modern plasterboard suspended ceiling.

**Application Granted**

**16/02837/LBC** Southfields The Street Greywell Hook RG29 1BZ. Creation of new L-shaped extension to existing modern element at rear of property with hipped and pitched clay tile roof, to include new kitchen, with an additional timber-framed lean-to addition to provide utility room, boot room and porch. Refurbishment of existing dressing room and bathroom at 1st floor level in modern extension. Reinstatement of previously removed timber sash window at 1st floor level at rear of modern extension. Introduction of traditional clay tile-hanging on section of front elevation between Southfields and The Old Vicarage. Minor alterations and refurbishment to ground floor rooms adjacent to new kitchen extension including the removal of historic brickwork beneath the existing rear sash window to allow for new doorway. Minor alterations to first floor room layouts including the alteration of modern timber stud walls and reinstatement of previously removed arched door. Provision of new family bathroom and en-suite shower room to rear bedroom.



**Come and chat with your local policing team**

Your local Neighbourhood Policing Team are trialling multiple beat surgeries in your area. Please come along to one of them mentioned below and let us know your thoughts...

Location	Date and Time	Attending
Crandall Church / Crandall Church Rooms	Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2017 10:30 – 12:00	PCSO's WHITEAR and GAHAN
Bartlett's Café - Hook	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2017 13:30 – 16:00	PCSO WHITEAR and GAHAN
The Fountains Mall Café – Odiham High Street	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2017 10:00 – 12:00	PCSO's WHITEAR and GAHAN

**Meet YOUR Police officers      Get advice**  
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Hampshire & IOW CRIMESTOPPERS 0800 555 111  
 HAMPSHIRE ALERT  
 HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY 101  
 HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY

**Please come along to enjoy a delicious SUNDAY LUNCH in the village Hall - 5<sup>th</sup> March at 12.30pm**

**Includes roast ham, vegetables and pudding\***

**Cash Bar**

**£12.50/head**

**£7.50/child under 12**

\*Vegetarian option available if requested on booking  
If you would like to attend please notify and provide cash or cheque as usual - to

**Joy MacAndrew** – The Old Chapel Deptford Lane or  
**Giles Blagden** – 3 Dorchester Way - or any other member of the committee



# Church Notices

'Journeying together, we worship God and serve the community'  
www.united-parish.org.uk

## From the Parish Registers...

### Funeral Services

December 14th at St. Mary's Mapledurwell, Tryphena (Kitty) Pont  
December 16th at St. Nicholas' Newnham, Doreen Wilson  
*May they rest in peace.*

### Weddings

December 17th at St. Mary's Mapledurwell, Scott Cannon and Sherry Tickner-Jones

### Mid-Week Holy Communion

We next meet in the warm and welcoming home of Lady Nell at The Dower House in Greywell on Thursday 2nd February at 11 am. We have a traditional service, with a chance to discuss the gospel reading, to offer our own prayers and then to enjoy coffee, cake and conversation before we go home! We'd love you to join us – and if you would like to hear more about it, or would like a lift, please contact Rev Linda Scard. The dates for January are still to be arranged.

Curiouser and curiouser...it's

North Hampshire Downs



## Benefice Quiz Night

Friday 10th March, 6.45 for 7pm

All Saints Odiham

Village teams of 6 can be made up on the night

### Fish and Chip Supper Included

Chicken or vegetarian alternative available

To book your place for £12.50 contact All Saints Odiham Church Office

Preferably by emailing [admin@allsaintsodiham.org.uk](mailto:admin@allsaintsodiham.org.uk) or leave a message on 01256 703395



## Church Services

### February 5th

8.00am	Green Communion	Nately Scures
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	Mapledurwell
11.00am	Holy Communion (CW)	Greywell

### February 12th

8.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Up Nately
9.30am	Family Service	Mapledurwell
11.00am	Family Service	Greywell
11.15am	Matins	Newnham

### February 19th

9.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Mapledurwell
11.00am	Matins	Nately Scures

### February 26th

8.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Newnham
9.30am	Family Communion	Up Nately
9.30am	Morning Prayer (said)	Mapledurwell
11.00am	Morning Service	Greywell

## Special Church Services in February

January 29th there will be a United Parish Family Service, **Candlemas** with Holy Communion, at Up Nately, a lively service with lots of things for the children to share in. Candlemas commemorates the presentation of the infant Jesus at the Temple 40 days after his birth. It actually falls on 2nd February, which is the 40th day of the Christmas-Epiphany season. Whilst it is customary for Christians in some countries to remove their Christmas decorations on Twelfth Night (Epiphany Eve, 5 January), in other countries they are removed on Candlemas. So if you haven't yet taken down all your decorations, you still have time - just!

February 5th there will be a special **Green Communion** service at 8am at Nately Scures. A Rocha UK is an organisation that provides ideas, resources, and support for churches who put caring for God's earth at the heart of mission. We do and so we have signed up to their Eco Church award scheme! A Rocha UK celebrates its first birthday in February, and to mark the occasion they have written a special "Green Communion" service. To show them our support we decided to be one of the very many churches across England and Wales which will use their service on 5th February. Please do come along.

February 28th is **Shrove Tuesday** and you are all invited to All Saints Odiham for a Benefice Pancake Feast from 3 pm to 6 pm. This is an event for all ages; there will be some specific activities for children. £3 per plate and eat pancakes to your heart's content!

Looking ahead to March 1st there will be a Benefice Service for Ash Wednesday at 7.30pm at Weston Patrick. Our Lent course "Turning to Christ" also begins that day with a lunchtime session in All Saints Odiham from 12.30 to 2.00 pm. The evening sessions will start on 8 March from 7.30 – 9.00 pm at Mapledurwell Village Hall.

**The Benefice Quiz Night is back!** Friday, 10 March at 6.45 for 7.00 pm at All Saints, Odiham. Tickets £12 which includes a fish (or vegetarian alternative) and chip supper. Get your village teams of 6 together and let Sian know that you're coming on [admin@allsaintsodiham.org.uk](mailto:admin@allsaintsodiham.org.uk) or leave a message on 01256 703 395.

### Diary dates in February:

February 8th VCC Up Nately      February 15th PCC meeting 8pm

# From a Church Warden; Monica Wardrop

Dear Friends

As most already know, I am lucky to have married into a farming family; I thank God every day for the privilege of being a custodian of His most beautiful land. We had our Plough Sunday celebration service and lunch last week and whilst chatting to one of our local farmers he shared these thoughts with me "I feel close to God through nature particularly when I am caring for His creation". Farming can be a solitary lonely business often spending days on one's own tending the land but he explained that this can also be therapeutic. He also shared an inscription on a notice board that reads, "You are never closer to God than in the heart of a wood". It's an intriguing claim that might resonate with many today who would rarely attend church or describe themselves as religious, but who might talk of forests, mountains, deserts and other natural landscapes as being spiritual locations - places where they can sense a divine presence, feel refreshed, experience healing and make a deeper connection with nature.

Throughout the Bible, elements of God's creation are seen to reveal aspects of His character and purposes. The rainbow after the flood symbolised God's promise to Noah and all living creatures never again to destroy the earth. Abraham sensed God's presence near large trees and in a cleft on a mountain where Moses saw God's glory. In a cave on another mountain, Elijah heard God's "still small voice" and Isaiah considered God's loving care as he observed the desert in flower. Job was told plainly to learn from nature when he was reminded how the deer gave birth. Many of the writers of the Psalms reflected on the diversity of nature and praised God for providing all creatures with food and breath. And Paul explained to Christians in Rome that creation itself is a revelation given to everyone of God's eternal power and divine nature.

Jesus provides a clear role model about the importance of engaging with nature. Much of His inspiration was taken from birds, plants and even the weather. He told His followers to look and learn lessons about The Father and His kingdom from the natural world – whether they were sparrows, ravens, vultures, seeds, wild flowers, thorn bushes, fig trees or southerly winds.

We might also learn from His example of withdrawing to the natural world to seek prayerful solitude. Few of us today are called to the wilderness, but the principle of retreating to quiet places in order to spend time alone with God has proved vital to Christians throughout the ages. Such journeys may be critical for our future well-being.

The Bible presents us with a paradox. Nature is God-created and we can learn various lessons about God's goodness from it today. Yet we are not called to get back to some idyllic state of nature. How many times have you heard? "I must get some fresh air to clear my head" or "A walk in the woods always helps me to get things into perspective" or "there's nothing more relaxing than a bit of gardening"

Dear People of the United Parish please take time to allow yourself to experience the spiritual well-being of feeling closer to God in nature.

With my love

*Monica*

## **Villager Contact Details**

**Editor: Stephanie Webb 07789 860401 -  
StephanieWebbVillager@gmail.com;**

**Distribution: Robin Howard - 07799 664454;**

**Mapledurwell: Lorna Cuthill 354651;**

**Up Nately: Liz Preece 762059;**

**Newnham: Sue Turner -  
newnham.clerk@btinternet.com;**

**Greywell: Jane Butler -  
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