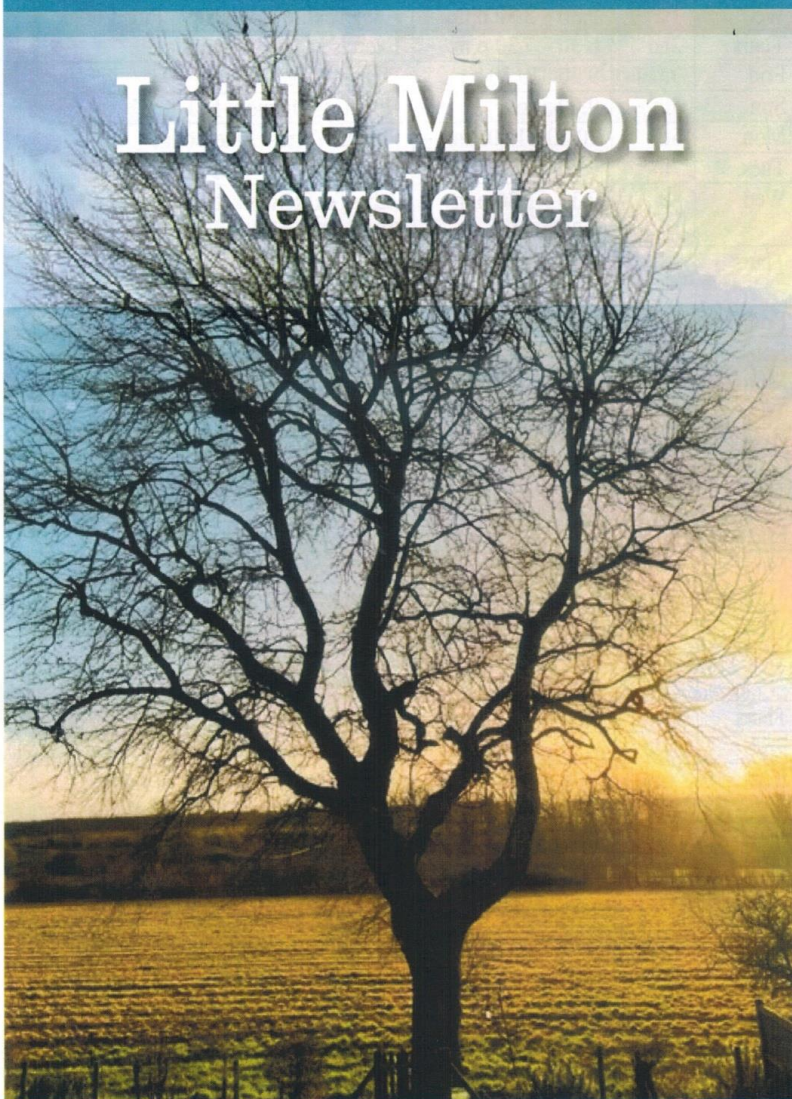


Published by Little Milton Parish Council www.littlemilton.org.uk

Little Milton Newsletter



FEBRUARY 2023

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: FEBRUARY

Wed	1st	9.30 – 3.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge
Thurs	2nd	6.30 – 7.30 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine :Lodge
Frid	3rd	9.30 – 10.30 a.m.	Pilates: Pine Lodge
Sun	5th	9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion: St James'
Mon.	6th	10.30-11.30a.m.	Fitness/Yoga – Pine Lodge
Tues.	7th	9.30– 10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge
Wed	8th	9.30 – 3.30 p.m. 7.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge Parish Council Meeting Pine Lodge
Thurs	9th	6.30 – 7.30 p.m. 7.30 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine :Lodge WI Meeting: Pine Lodge
Frid.	10th	9.30 – 10.30 a.m.	Pilates: Pine Lodge
Sun	12th	10.30 a.m.	Family Gathering St James
Mon	13th	10.30-11.30a.m.	Fitness/Yoga – Pine Lodge
Tues	14th	9.30– 10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge
Wed	15th	9.30 – 3.30 p.m. 7.00 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge Craft Evening – Pine Lodge
Thurs	16th	6.30 – 7.30 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine :Lodge
Frid	17th	9.30 – 10.30 a.m.	Pilates: Pine Lodge
Mon	20th	10.30-11.30a.m.	Fitness/Yoga – Pine Lodge
Tues	21st	9.30– 10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge
Wed	22nd	9.30 – 3.30 p.m. 11.00 a.m. 6.00 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge Sewing Group: Wayside Cottage Holy Communion St James
Thurs	23rd	6.30 – 7.30 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine :Lodge
Frid	24th	9.30 – 10.30 a.m.	Pilates: Pine Lodge
Sun	26th	9.00 a.m. 4.00 p.m.	BCP Holy Communion: St James' Family Gathering- St Peter's
Mon	27th	10.30-11.30a.m.	Fitness/Yoga – Pine Lodge
Tues	28th	9.30– 10.30 a.m.	Exercise Class- Pine Lodge
MAR			
Wed	1st	9.30 – 3.30 p.m.	Adv. Textile workshop – Pine Lodge
Thurs	2nd	6.30 – 7.30 p.m.	Exercise Class – Pine :Lodge
Frid	4th	9.30 – 10.30 a.m.	Pilates: Pine Lodge
Sun	5th	9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion St James'

PLEASE NOTE If in doubt please check with the event organiser that the event is still taking place at the date and time stated.

SUMMARY FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11th JANUARY 2023

A summary of some of the topics and discussions that took place at the Parish Council meeting held in January.

Parish Forum

Nine residents attended the meeting seeking clarification from the Parish Council on its position with reference to planning application P22/S1241/FUL – The Site of Milton House, Gold Street.

The District Councillor had called in the application having concerns on the massing of the buildings on site and impact on the conservation area. If the District planning officer is minded to recommend approval the application will be taken to the District Planning Committee for a decision. If this were to happen what will the Parish Council's position be?

Chairman, Cllr van der Merwe replied that the parish council had a duty to act on behalf of the whole community. When considering any planning application the parish council had the choice to Object, Approve or state No Strong Views. In the case of the Milton House application none of these presented a perfect choice. The parish council's approach has been to engage constructively on a range of important points it felt strongly about in order to work towards an acceptable outcome.

If the planning officer recommends approval the application will go the District Planning Committee for a decision. At the Committee meeting those wanting to speak against the application will have five minutes to put their case, those speaking in support will have five minutes and a further five minutes each will be given to the Parish Council and District Councillor to put forward their points. If not already addressed, the Parish Council will make the points it has already raised which are a matter of record both through the minutes and the responses to the application on the District Council's website.

To make best use of the time allowed to put points across at the District Planning Committee meeting, the Chairman encouraged residents to co-ordinate their participation at the meeting.

Planning

There were no planning applications to consider.

Gold Street

On 20th December 2023 Cllr Harrison met with a member of Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) Highways team to discuss the installation of bollards to help protect trees and prevent further erosion of the bank on Gold Street. The proposed scheme includes installation of 11 white 'Dragon' verge marker posts, positioned to allow parking for 3-4 vehicles. OCC have agreed to split the cost and installation of the posts 50:50 with the parish council. After discussed the parish council **resolved** to install the bollards and to pay 50% of the cost.

A329 / Road Safety

A group of parents with children at Little Milton Primary School raised concerns about safety on the A329 and Gold Street and shared their ideas. Can traffic speed be reduced near the school and on Gold Street? Can a speed camera or a speed display device (SID) be installed? Can the barrier be extended? Can faded road markings be repainted?

The parish council responded to confirm the 20mph speed reduction scheme was with OCC awaiting a final decision by Cabinet on 26th January. If approved the scheme will be implemented by the end of March. As part of the scheme 'dragon's teeth' will be painted on the road at the entrances to the village. The parish council is already pushing OCC to repaint road markings and it is hoped this will happen at the same time.

It was very unlikely that a request for a second speed camera in the village would be granted. However, the council will request, via the Neighbourhood Police Team, to have a mobile speed monitoring van visit the village.

An extension to the barrier has been considered in the past and it was thought the location of a Thames Water manhole in the middle of the pavement may have prevented work going ahead. Cllr Wakeling promised to look through the records and report back.

The parish council will investigate the installation of a SIDs device and bring back to a future meeting for further discussion. The parish council continue to campaign for HGVs to be banned from travelling through the village.

Finance

A revised draft budget for 2023-24 was presented following discussion at the last meeting. The Council **Resolved** to approve the budget for 2023-24. The budget covers improvement to public open spaces in the village and recreation ground as well as the usual services provided to the village by the Parish Council.

Resolved to set the 2023-24 Precept at £13,500, the same as the previous two years, which equates to £63.38 per annum for a Band D property, a 0.3% increase

Reports from Councillor Representatives

Recreation Ground and Open Green Spaces

Two planters have been placed on the corner of Haseley Road and the A329. These will be filled with top soil and planted.

Village Hall

A meeting has taken place with the organiser of the local annual Tug of War competition and where it was agreed that the competition will be held in Little Milton at the beginning of September. The Village Hall Committee are working on plans for the village to celebrate the King's coronation in May.

Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 8th February 2023, in Pine Lodge, commencing at 7.30pm.

Please visit the Parish Council website to read full minutes of Parish Council meetings.

Andrea Oughton Parish Clerk

Current Council members

Councillor Francois Van Der Merwe (Chairman)	07740438770
Councillor Howard Harrison	01844 279946
Councillor Adam Sheppard	01844 279217
Councillor Steve Sidhu (Vice Chairman)	01844 279448
Councillor Giles Denby	07484 187852
Councillor David Wakeling	01844 278014
Parish Clerk Andrea Oughton	clerk@littlemilton.org.uk

County Councillor: Freddie Van Mierlo	07944 492438 freddie.vanmierlo@oxfordshire.gov.uk
District Councillor Caroline Newton	07951 477144

SODC: WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

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

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

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

Give your furniture to a good home

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

BIFFA: WASTE COLLECTION DATES – FEBRUARY

	Brown	Grey	Green	Food
7th February	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
14th February	No	Yes	No	Yes
21st February	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
28th February	No	Yes	No	Yes
7th March	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

COUNTY COUNCIL NEWS

£2 bus fare cap scheme

Most residents will be able to travel more cheaply by bus for three months at the start of 2023, thanks to a new government scheme.

As part of the wider 'Help for Households' initiative, [the bus fare cap](#) will limit the price passengers will pay for an adult single fare to £2 on most routes operated by participating bus firms.

Running from 1 January until 31 March 2023, the bus providers in Oxfordshire which have opted in are:

- Arriva
- Oxford Bus Company
- Redline Buses
- Stagecoach
- Thames Travel
- Reading Buses
- Thames Valley Buses
- Langston & Tasker

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

You will need photo ID to vote at the local elections

The government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at some elections.

This will apply for the first time at the local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023, so please spread the word to your friends and family.

Accepted forms of photo ID will include, but are not limited to, passport, driving licence (including provisional license), disabled parking blue badge, certain concessionary travel cards and proof of age cards with a PASS mark.

Anyone who doesn't have accepted photo ID can apply on [the government's website](#) now for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

For more information, visit the [Electoral Commission website](#) or call their helpline on 0800 328 0280.

Play your part in the local elections

Would you like to earn money, meet lots of people and play a key role in our local democracy?

We're looking for people to work as poll clerks across South Oxfordshire and the Vale.

If you sign up, you'll receive £168 for the day, working from 6am until the finish *around 10.30pm*.

If you or someone you know is interested, please get in touch as soon as possible by emailing: electionstaff@southandvale.gov.uk

For more information, visit: southoxon.gov.uk/electionjobs

Please note, we are unable to offer the roles to people that work for or are connected with a political party

Do you know anyone who is interested in becoming a councillor?

With the local elections coming up, Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) is holding a series of free online sessions via Zoom for those who are looking to become a councillor for the first time.

The sessions are one hour long, no need to book, on:

- 24 January 7pm-8pm
- 13 February 10am-11am
- 15 March 2pm-3pm

If you know someone who may be interested, please send them [this Zoom link](#), along with the joining detail:

- Meeting ID: 871 2501 2109
- Passcode: 386520

The OALC have also provided [this useful presentation](#)

BENEFICE SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2023

Sunday 5th February

9.00	Holy Communion	St James' Little Milton
10.30	Family Worship	St Peter's Great Haseley

Sunday 12th February

9.00	Holy Communion	St Peter's Great Haseley
10.30	Family Worship	St James' Little Milton

Sunday 19th February

9.00	Holy Communion	St Peter's Great Haseley
10.30	Family Worship	St Mary's Great Milton

Wednesday 22nd February (Ash Wednesday)

7.00 p.m.		St James' Little Milton
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Sunday 26th February

9.00	BCP Holy Communion	St James' Little Milton
10.30	Benefice Holy Communion	St Mary's Great Milton
4.00	Family Gathering	St Peter's Great Haseley

Wednesday 1st March

6.00 p.m.	Compline	St Mary's Great Milton
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Sunday 5th March

9.00	Holy Communion	St James' Little Milton
10.30	Family Worship	St Peter's Great Haseley

RECTOR'S PINT

I was given a wonderful little book for Christmas 'Tales of a Country Parish'.

It is a beautifully written book, a series of daily reflections written by the Vicar of Savernake Forest throughout 2020, to stay in touch with his parishioners during the Pandemic. Reading it did make me feel a little inadequate, I find coming up with a suitable theme once a month for these pints enough of a challenge! But Colin Hever-Percy, when he is not being a vicar of four rural parishes in Wiltshire is a professional script writer, so I have forgiven myself for my lack of literary output!

He reflects on a sense of place, and the people who live there, and he brings a deep learning to his reflections, of philosophy, country lore, music of all kinds and a deep knowledge and application of the Bible and his own understanding of the Christian faith, it is a delightful read.

Quite early in the book he writes something that really grabbed my attention. He talks about the incident when Jesus returns briefly to his hometown of Nazareth, where 'he could do no deed of power there' (Mark 6:5). He was the Carpenter's son, the people there don't need to believe in him, they assume they knew him.....The people he is able to help *need* him, they can't afford to question him or dismiss him..... Faith is much closer to needing than knowing. At first glance this seems to put the religious believer fundamentally at odds with the scientist, but actually it draws them closer together. Like scientists, Christians are devoted to pursuing what they don't know. So, St Augustine warns us, 'If you understand it, it's not God'".

I really like that sense of faith described as need. Some might see need as a weakness. But we all have needs and I reflect that Jesus talked in terms of needs being met in him.

For instance, in the beatitudes, a part of the wider Sermon on the Mount, he tells his listeners “Blessed are the poor in Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 3:1), which could be understood as meaning blessed are those who know their need of God. In John’s gospel he is recorded as saying “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6: 25). Relationally, few people would have the personal resources to survive, let alone thrive, if they were living an existence of total isolation, there is something fundamental in the need for relationship and the lack of this and the loneliness that results is a real problem in our modern theoretically inter - connected world.

Paradoxically I know that I am most spiritually alive when I am aware of a deep hunger and thirst, when I know my need for God, and I am spiritually dead when I ignore that need. So here, at the beginning of a New Year (which is when I write this) I have a single, simple prayer, ‘Lord, may my need for you increase, satisfy that need in the year ahead.’ Amen.

Simon

Advance notice for Lent 2023: Come and See and Lent lunches.

Cath and I will be hosting the oxford Diocesan Lent Course, ‘Come and See’, this year looking at the Beatitudes. This will take place on Wednesday evenings during Lent at 7.00pm at the Rectory in Great Milton, with the first one on Wednesday March 1st. If you are interested to come please email me at simon.cronk@btinternet.com or leave a phone message on 01844278349. The numbers will be limited to who we can get into our sitting room so if you would like to come please let me know as soon as possible.

We will also be hosting Lent Lunches again this year, with the first one to be held at Orpswoods Farm, hosted by Trudy Timbs on Thursday 2 March at 12. 30pm. The following week the second lunch will be hosted by Sally-Anne and Ian Denis and Jane Willis at 12.30pm on Wednesday 8th March at Spring Cottage, Little Milton. Details all the lunches will follow in the March Village publications.

Simon

**Great Milton Methodist Church Services
For further info. please contact Rev Stephen Spain on 01865 763676**

Date	Time	Church	Preacher	Comments
5th Feb	11:00 am	Great Milton	Liz Spain	
12th Feb	11:00 am	Great Milton	Alistair Jackson	
19th Feb	11:00 am	Great Milton	Rev. Stephen Spain	Holy Communion
26th Feb	11:00 am	Great Milton	Alistair Jackson	

CAROL SINGING 2022

December 22nd saw about twenty of us carolling around the village. Halfway through our singing we were hosted royally by Joyce and George at the Old Rectory who plied us with mulled wine, mince pies – non-alcoholic drinks for the children. We finished at the Lamb pub after 8pm and entertained the assembled folk with a couple more carols before calling it a day for 2022. Many thanks to Niamh and Davina for the repaired carol sheets, to Amelia for galvanizing support and to George, Joyce and Ben for hosting us. Finally, just to say that through your wonderful generosity we were able to take £185.05 to the Porch in Oxford, the shelter for the homeless...Here's to 2023!

S.A. Dennis

THE CRIB SERVICE

A belated entry as we missed the deadline for January, but to say a huge thankyou to Gilbert for creating so many stars for us, almost all of which were taken as fold entered for the Service. Each was then written upon (or drawn by the smaller people) and brought up at the end of the Service to be placed around the Crib (see photo) whilst Jane played Silent Night (several times over). It truly was wonderful to see the Church so full with over 60 adults and about 30 children making a very special Christmas Eve.

S.A. Dennis



CHURCH CLEANING ROTA FOR FEBRUARY

W/E 5th February	–	Mrs A Blagg & Mrs C D'Aeth
W/E 12th February	–	Mrs M Davies & Mrs S A Dennis
W/E 19th February	–	Mrs L. Lovegrove & Mrs C Coward
W/E 26th February	–	Mrs A Jones & Mrs Sarah Holifield
W/E 5th March	–	Mrs E. Summers & Mrs Wendy Newby

S.A. Dennis

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE PINE LODGE

After many years doing an amazing job looking after the village hall, keeping it in great shape for all those who use it, Linda and Jim Lovegrove have decided to step aside at the end of March to have a bit more time for themselves. The last few years in particular with Covid made their roles increasingly complicated with all the extra requirements that had to be met to keep the hall open. A massive thank you to both Linda and Jim. Linda plans to remain on the hall committee continuing to manage clients wishing to use the hall so you will keep seeing her details as the contact for the Hall.

If there is someone in the village who would be interested in helping keep the hall clean and tidy, this is a part time paid role, please contact Steve Willis steve.pinelodge@gmail.com

Regular activities in the Hall include:

Mondays at 10.30 am **Yoga & Fitness** with Yvonne (y.cartwright@btinternet.com)

Tuesdays at 9:30 am, and **Thursdays** at 18.30 **Keep Fit** on with Alyce (alycefwf@gmail.com)

Wednesday 9:30 am **Advanced Textile** on workshop with Amargeet (amarjeetnandhra@virginmedia.com)

Friday 9:30 am **Yoga and Pilates** with Lee (lee@grahamcaulfield.co.uk)

WI 2nd Thursday of each month at 19:30 contact Kath Stacy (kathstacey@yahoo.co.uk)

Crafts 3rd Wednesday of the month at 19:00 contact Kath Stacy (kathstacey@yahoo.co.uk)

Parish Council 2nd Wednesday of the month. For further details contact clerk@littlemilton.org.uk

For details of, news, booking info and the online events calendar please view the Pine Lodge webpage at www.littlemilton.org.uk

Giles Denby

FRIENDS OF LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL- 200 CLUB

January

1st	No 9	Dee Waldron	£9.00
2nd	No 25	Jane Willis	£7.00
3rd	No 34	Tom Roberts Day	£5.00

Diane Austin

NEWS FROM LITTLE MILTON SCHOOL

Small School, Big Heart, Great Start

The first weeks of the spring term in school have seen the children venturing further into their new topics (see Twitter photos and new curriculum maps on the website), as well as enjoying the return of our specialists with Corinne's music lessons and singing club, Mrs Robertson's woodwind lessons, Madame Prevost's French lessons, and Jon Knapp's art club. It has been fabulous to see all the children fully engaged in their learning and continuing to grow their talents.

Another favourite resumed when Maples and Willows went to the nature reserve for Forest School. Whilst it was rather wet and soggy, it was great to hear that the children had worked well as a team and used their problem-solving skills effectively.

By the time you read this the children will have experienced 'Starry Night Stories', a magical and exciting annual event. The children are invited back to school after hours in their PJs and onesies to share stories with their teacher, enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and some star gazing.

Our fantastic Friends Committee have planned a Burn's Night Ceilidh evening for January

27th and we hope that many in our village community will have joined us at the Pine Lodge for a fun evening to brighten up these dark January nights!

Another event for Maples and Rowans to look forward to is our upcoming trip to the Sheldonian Theatre which will enable the children to see a full orchestra performance and appreciate live music first hand in an amazing setting. We are really excited about this fantastic opportunity!

As ever, we are very grateful for the continued support and positivity of our parents. We really value their support and are always open to new ideas or suggestions. It is important that we work together for the benefit of all our children.

Hannah Blest and James Bell Co-Headteachers

TONS TOGETHER (LITTLE MILTON) WI

A big thank you to the Coach & Horses pub in Chiselhampton for a wonderful New Year dinner for our January meeting. We had record numbers, 23 of us filling the restaurant with laughter and chat. The food was delicious, the staff were welcoming and attentive, highly recommend a visit.

We're back in the Pine Lodge on **Thursday 9th February at 730pm** with a **Pilates taster class by Lee Caulfield**. Some gentle exercise to shift those Christmas calories! Everyone welcome - Visitors £5.

Do you live in Little Milton, Great Milton, The Haseleys, Stadhampton or surrounding villages, new to the area, want to meet new people, make new friends? Then join Tons Together WI and meet like-minded, local women of all ages in an informal, friendly group.

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

Too shy to come by yourself or need a lift? Contact us & we'll find you a WI buddy.

Like us at www.facebook.com/lmpinelodge

Details & news on the Pine Lodge page at www.littlemilton.org.uk
Kath Stacey 01844-279438 tonstogetherwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

FRIENDS OF WELLS FARM

February is a time to see the hedgerows stir with the promise of green and early white flowers from blackthorn. Is it to be a warm dry spring I wonder? The Mammal Society are running a project to gather more records of harvest mice in the UK. During the winter I found five harvest mouse nests around one of the fields at Wells Farm in the tall grass patches. These vary in size from a tennis ball down to a squash ball. An adult harvest mouse weighs no more than 11 grams! It creates the nest by weaving grasses around a few tall stems or twigs and shredding grasses to create it snug and strong. Harvest mice have been in decline so wide, undisturbed field edges are of vital importance to them.

Due to flooding at Chimney Meadow in west Oxfordshire we had some more sheep visit us and they will remain until it is safe to return them. Please keep your dogs on a lead through these fields.

Lastly, please join me in hedge planting now starting Saturday 11th February, meeting in the farmyard at 10am (OS: 462060,200804 - What3words: pancakes.expanded.talkative) then walking up to the top path and into Blenheim field (OS: 462318,200736 - W3W: curly.marshes.diverged) for about 10.15. The plan is to replant in the gaps along the two new hedges in Blenheim fields at the top and put some mulch round to improve their chance of survival. If the ground is very dry we may even water them in. Please bring gardening gloves and if you have a spade that would also be useful although I should have a few available. There is a fence to get over but I will try and provide something to make it easier to manage.



Do your bit for wildlife
Plant a hedge at Wells Farm
Nature Reserve
February 11th
10.00am – 1pm

Note: We will carry on the work on the Sunday or February 18th if needed. Keep an eye out for signs and fb invites.

**Paul Jeffery (Tel: 278 424 Email:
Paulj201@hotmail.com)**

SEWING GROUP

This will take place on Wednesday February 22nd from 11.00 onwards at Wayside on the Haseley Road, home of Mary Harrison.

Sally Ann Dennis

VIEW FROM VIEWS

I don't think we realise how lucky we are in this part of the country, being in the centre we are isolated from some of the extremes of weather, being shielded by the Chilterns Cotswolds and the Berkshire downs. Our average rainfall is around the 25 inches mark, last year I recorded only 19.2 inches; in the 11 years I have been recording rainfall the highest was in 2014 (33 inches) however this month (as I write in the middle of the month) already we have had about the average for January. And yet again we are encountering more flooding than is commensurate with the rainfall we have had. I mention this because I think it also applies to wildlife, it cannot have escaped anyone's notice that we have an epidemic of bird Flu (Avian Influenza or AI (not to be confused with other issues that are referred to as AI)). The fact that around here it does not seem very prevalent, we've only had one gull that must have died of AI, on the farm this winter. Talking to a friend of mine in Framlingham, Suffolk, who says he hardly ever sees birds on his bird table. nowadays I can only assume this because most migratory birds land there first and only infect the local population so it doesn't get this far.

Regarding birds, contrary to East Anglia, we seem to have an abundance around here, and most of our winter visitors have arrived great flocks of Fieldfares, AI does not seem to have affected them, even seen more Woodcock than usual, with many others I cannot identify. When the river first flooded there were a multitude of waterfowl present but they have not been seen since which seems odd, maybe it is that these species suffered more than any other. The farm seems have had the right conditions not only for breeding but also holding Partridges, as there are several good coveys around. Other wildlife seems to be flourishing Hares and Deer hardly a day goes past without seeing some of them, unfortunately Rabbits are beginning to pose a problem in one area of the farm,

It is fantastic to see how good the crops are looking after the very cold period we had in the run up to Christmas; this will have killed a lot of diseases that would otherwise have been a problem. This followed suddenly by a very mild early January has given them a real boost making them look healthy, just waiting for something else to hit them. Pigeons have just started to find the Rape so we must keep a continual lookout for them, this crop has not recovered quite so well as other crops but hopefully this will not present a problem, as it has plenty of time to recover, or at least I hope it will.

A new year in the farming calendar always brings the "Oxford Farming Conference" (OFC), which has been going since 1936, now joined by the "Oxford Real Farming Conference" (ORFC), in its 16th year. The difference between these two is that the "OFC" is of a more Political, scientific, and business orientated, whereas the "ORFC" tends to be more down to earth and appealing to the more practical Organic side of farming and, attracting the smaller mixed farmer, was thought of originally by the delegates of the established "OFC" as the sandal brigade, however now both conferences complement each other and share delegates.

Usually the environment minister attends, usually invited by the "OFC" as it is the most important independent farming conference of the year, this year though the environment minister decided it was more important to attend the inauguration of the Brazilian Prime Minister/President. I do not think that the farming industry took very kindly to this attitude that the minister in overall charge of this area of expertise was not present at this important time. The Farming minister did attend but, listening to him I do not

believe he, or his predecessor, both of whom are farmers in their own right, did not seem to know much of the subject or, the necessity to push their department “DEFRA” to decide on measures that need to be taken after leaving the EU, none of us have any more of an idea what the future may or may not hold for us or the direction the Government wishes us to take.

I was horrified to read that our local MPs seem to think that the water companies are only letting raw sewage into our water courses when there is excessive rain fall not sure where their information comes from, as it is made quite clear in the press that this is not the case and that it is continually in the press both locally and nationally. This is just not good enough and has to be stopped as the committed 2035 target for it is far too far in the future to be acceptable, and if nature is to survive. What must happen is an embargo on all house building until this problem is solved and, those that are profiting from development should help foot the bill as it is not fair on the taxpayer or, the water companies

Charles Peers.

WELLS FARM ALLOTMENTS

A “dig” or “no dig” method. Which is best? Well some of the plots are sandy while others have clay. I have found, the clay in mine compacts and prevents root veg from growing properly, so my idea of not digging has not really worked out as well as I wanted. Time to work over the soil and add composted material to help maintain soil moisture in dry weather. Seed ordering should be underway but still too early to put anything in unless it can withstand some cold weather.

Contracts will go out next month and I will contact existing allotment holders to see if they want to renew for this coming year. I will also arrange a call or meeting in the Lamb.

If anybody wants to take on a plot please contact me, preferably by email.

Paul. (paulj201@hotmail.com)

MORLAND HOUSE – January 2023

Visit Morland House Website

In addition to providing a wealth of information and guidance on managing a vast number of health conditions, symptoms, and treatment, please visit the Morland House Surgery website www.morland-house.co.uk for:

1. Up-to-date information about surgery opening hours and the wide range of services provided.
2. A link to the electronic consulting service eConsult. Use eConsult to ask about your health symptoms, conditions, or treatment. You can even request things like sick notes and GP letters. From the home page click on ‘Contact your GP practice Online’.
3. A link to the NHS App. Download the App, or open the NHS website in a web browser, to set up and log in to your NHS Account. Owned and run by the NHS, your NHS Account is a simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services online.

4. Up to date information on current news items including:
- Oxford Community Diagnostic Centre – X-Rays, blood tests, ultrasounds, CTs and more
 - Information on the NHS 111 online service which is available 24/7
 - Advice on how to stay healthy and well this winter
 - COVID-19 and flu vaccine updates
 - Looking after your mental health
 - Electronic Prescribing Service (EPS)



Hello from The Maple Tree!

We have started another exciting year – there is something for every family with young children at The Maple Tree and all our sessions are drop-in. Each session has at least one Early Years focus.

There are 7 Areas of Learning in Development Matters, which is the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. The Prime Areas are particularly important for building a basis for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These are Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Physical Development. Then there are 4 Specific Areas, through which the 3 Prime Areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design. To find out more, why not attend one of our Play and Learn sessions?

Monday: Messy Mondays at 10:00-11:30am

Tuesday: Story and Rhyme Time at 10:00-11:30am

Wednesday: Baby Cafe at 10:00am-12:00pm

Thursday: Little Explorers at 10:00-11:30am and Twinnies at 2:00-3:30pm

Social Butterflies at 10:00-11:30am

Family Fun at 10:00-11:30am, 3rd Saturday in monVillage Outreach: The Maple Tree at Forest Hill Village Hall on Thursdays from 11:00am-12:00pm. This session is also drop-in but is generally a little quieter if you have a little one with a gentle soul.

There is a suggested donation of £2.50 per family per session.

Check out our Website and Facebook page for more information about our special events, our programmes, and popular our First Aid classes!

For details, please go to www.mapletree.org.uk

We are here to help young families, if you need advice or support: 01865 236700 or 07849 466249

Email: info@mapletree.org.uk

Website: www.mapletree.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley

Instagram: @themapletreecentre

Laura Spencer The Maple Tree Centre Manager

FROM OUR FRENCH CORRESPONDENT

As I write this, snow is falling-the first snow of the winter. We have had a large amount of rain, and my pond is starting to fill up, but up till now temperatures have been mild-up to 17c during the day, but now the forecast is a maximum of 6c during the day and -2c overnight.

CHRISTMAS EVE TRADITION

There is a tradition, at least in this part of France, to have a sumptuous seafood meal on Christmas Eve, and I used to watch these magnificent platters of seafood leaving LeClerc Hypermarrket in large quantities every year on the same date, so decided this year to join in with some friends to share.

There were three menus-one at 15 Euros, one at 25 Euros, and the full month at 35 Euros-the last containing Lobster, Crab, Langoustines, Oysters Mussels, Prawns, Cockles, Snails and Winkles., so I decided to go for the 35 Euro feast.

“How many persons” I was asked.

“ 6” I replied (in French of course)

So he multiplied the 35 Euros by 6 ! “Ah no “ I said, “just for 3”. Just as well- between 6 of us we failed to finish even that amount. A very good start to the Christmas festivities!

VINEYARD SOIL TESTS

After 2 months of waiting, I have finally received the results of the soil tests for the areas where the vines refuse to grow. In both cases, the results showed a massive deficit in phosphorus. All other major elements are there in abundance- nitrogen, potassium, and magnesium, but the lack of phosphorus explains why the vines have not rooted and grown. I have therefore ordered 1.2 tonnes of high phosphorus content organic fertilizer.

The good news however is that every other parameter on the health of the soil has improved-more organic material, higher levels of biological activity, higher levels of carbon in the soil, etc. So at least I know I am heading in the right direction.

TRIP TO PARIS

In early December the wife of one of my cousins died, so I attended the funeral in Bromley and decided to fly back to Paris for the weekend. I was there for the England/France quarter final, and saw the jubilation of the French after the game.

My journey back from Paris to Bordeaux was on the TGV.

The distance is 630KM, or 391 miles, and with one stop the TGV rolled into Bordeaux St Jean station after 2hrs and 5 minutes, an average speed of nearly 200 miles an hour. There is a TV screen in each carriage telling the current speed, and where you are on the map. Very impressive.

FRENCH BANKS

Just in case anyone thinks that I am painting too rosy a picture of France, let me tell you about French Banks!

When I transfer money over from the UK, my bank in the UK transfers to the Foreign Currency Bureau I use in around 2 hours. After the Foreign currency Bureau sends the money to my French Bank, it takes 2 days to appear in my account! This is worse at weekends, where money sent on Friday does not appear in the account till late Monday. Very irritating.

Secondly, the French have a strange system where you can only draw out a certain amount of money from your account each week, at least from the hole in the wall. To

get more, you have to ask a Bank clerk. This is not a problem during normal living expenditure, but as I am having building work done, it can be very frustrating. Finally, and for reasons I simply cannot fathom, the French still often use cheques for paying at the till in a grocery or other store. I have often had to wait in the queue to the till while a customer writes a cheque and has it verified by the cashier. Even more unfathomable is that in LeClerc, on my last visit, they were advertising the fact that cheques written by customers on the 20th January would not be presented until 2nd March???? If anyone out there can explain that, I would welcome it!

I hope all goes well in LM

Best Regards

Stuart



John Howell MP writes

January

2023I 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.

Another concern that also tends to arise with the New Year is changes to bus services when timetables are reviewed. 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

Walks Programme February 2023

- Thursday 2nd** Meet at Aston Rowant, Lambert Hotel, for a 7½ mile walk via Aston Rowant Nature Reserve and Lewknor.
- Sunday 12th 2pm** Meet at Stokenchurch for a 5½ mile walk to Radnage church for Snowdrop tea. Hot drinks and cakes available to buy. Usual Chilterns fields, woods and views to enjoy.
- Tuesday 14th** Meet at Stokenchurch for a 4½ mile gentle walk with some undulations. Possibility of Valentine's Day chocolates and flowers! Optional coffee/lunch at the "Coffee on the Green" café at the end.
- Sunday 19th** Meet at Wheatley, car park off Church Road, behind King and Queen PH, for a 6 mile walk via Shotover park.
- Wednesday 22nd 11am** Meet at Chalgrove, village car park, for a leisurely 7 mile walk via Cuxham. Lunch (pizza/pasta) at the Half Moon PH. Option to return by bus.
- Sunday 26th** Meet at Ewelme (Cow Common car park) for a 7 mile walk via Brightwell Baldwin.

All walks start at 10am unless otherwise stated.

Please check the website to confirm details as programme subject to change:

www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/thame-wheatley/walking.html

or phone 01844 213608

Leaders' contact details and whether walks are suitable for dogs can also be found on the website.

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.

There are, of course, many big issues which affect us all which are will 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. My contact details are on my website - www.johnhowell.org.uk.

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

TIME TO GET WALKING AGAIN!

With Spring on its way we start to think about getting out to walk in the beautiful English Countryside again, but where to find new and interesting walks?

Walking in Oxfordshire <https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire> has loads of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, details of all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

John Harris (who maintains the website) said ‘There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find. Walking in Oxfordshire (part of the Walking in England website) has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you’.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

John Harris

www.walkinginengland.co.uk

john@walkinginengland.co.uk

DEADLINE REMINDER – Please note that unless articles are in the hands of the Editor by the 18th of the month (unless otherwise stated), such articles will miss the scheduled Newsletter. The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Parish Council. All material for inclusion in the **March 2023** Newsletter should be with the Editor at 27 Chiltern View, Little Milton, by 8.00 p.m. on **18th February** The Editor reserves the right not to print items submitted for publication and to edit those items, which are publish

KEY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Age UK	01865 890879	Naheed Qureshi
Citizens Advice Bureau	0808 278 7907	Thame & District
Church: St James	01844 278349	Revd. Simon Cronk
Doctors	01865 872448 111 0845 345 8995 999	Morland Surgery Out of Hours Service NHS Helpline Medical Emergencies
Little Milton Shop	01844 278175	Alison Shelton (Manager)
Little Milton School	01844 279310	Hannah Blest and James Bell Co-Head Teachers
Milk Deliveries	07773006485	A J Woods Ltd
MUGA	Bookings for the courts are made at the Post Office	
Neighbourhood Watch	01844 279468	Mark Willis
Newsletter	01844 279150	Raymond Fergusson (Editor)
OCC	01865 792422	All enquiries
Parish Council	01844 278180	Francois Van der Merwe (Chair) Andrea Oughton (Clerk)
Pine Lodge	07484 187852 01844 279535 0844 7255568	Giles Denby (Chairman) Linda Lovegrove (Bookings) 24/7 Call out service
Police	101	Thames Valley Police (Non-emergency)
Post Office	01844 279001	Alison Shelton (Postmistress)
Public Transport	01865 323201	Comet
SODC	01235 422422	All enquiries
Southern Electric	0800 0727 282	Emergency Number
Thames Water	0800 3169 800	Emergency Number
The Lamb	01844 279527	Ben & Charmain
Biffa (Verdant)	03000 610610	All enquiries

For all other numbers go to website www.littlemilton.org.uk

Front Cover: Elizabeth Offen