

TIDDINGTON WITH ALBURY & MILTON COMMON NEWSLETTER

www.tiddingtonoxon.co.uk

DECEMBER 2012/JANUARY 2013



*Wishing all our readers a
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year*

From the Editor

I would like to thank all those who provide material for the articles featured in each issue. Without them there would be no newsletter! And thank you, too, to all those who distribute it promptly to the residents of the Parish, come rain or shine.

If this newsletter reaches you before the beginning of the month, there is the Church Coffee Morning on 1 December (see p13) as well as Sandy Lane Farm's Christmas Market on 1st and 2nd. I hope the Dinner and Dance is as enjoyable as it has been in previous years.

Find details of the good old traditions of Christmas Bingo and the Carol Evening on pages 14 and 15.

In January come and meet the Police and have your say on the 8th (p 4) and do your bit litter picking on the 19th (p 3).

Zena Knight

Tiddington with Albury Poppy Collection 2012

Thanks to our volunteers we have managed another year of door-to-door collection in the

village (sorry if you were out). The total amount raised was £590.00, a little up on last year. Once again thanks to all concerned, collectors and givers.

On behalf of the Royal British Legion

Pam Byrne

Charity Shopping Evening

I would like to thank everyone for coming and supporting the annual Charity Shopping Evening in aid of Sobell House Hospice. It was a great success and we raised a wonderful £1026.00.

Thank you to everyone who came, helped and donated.

See you all next year!

Louise

INSIDE

Advertising	28-38
Church Services	12
Council News	2
Cricket Club	16
Diary Dates	back page
Information	25-26
Maple Tree Children's Centre	18-20
Neighbourhood Watch	9-10
Newsletter deadline	26
Tiddington 4 Village Plan	5
Village Hall	15
Women's Institute	15

From the Parish Clerk

Highways matters - I reported to Oxfordshire Highways that the bus markings in front of the Old Forge have all but worn away. I have recently received a telephone call from Highways Engineer, Mark Francis stating that an order has been placed for the markings to be reinstated. This is a matter of safety, in particular for children, and I am pleased to have received a speedy response. Let's now hope that the work is also done quickly.

We are still progressing the matter of the potholes in Albury Road and hope for a speedy resolution to this issue.

May I ask you please to assist by reporting any highway matters which are of concern to you via the website? The more they hear, the better the chance of some action being taken.

Tiddington 4 Village Plan - a reminder that Drop-in Coffee Mornings are on the second Wednesdays of each month at the Cricket Club 10.30-12.30pm.

The T4VP questionnaire responses have been collected in and are being collated. There was a pleasing 70% response, so thanks to all who did so! The winner of the prize draw was Karen Cripps, who should by now have received her £100!

We have received the £10,000 Big Lottery Fund grant, which is earmarked for some

Tiddington with Albury Parish Council Members		
Chair	Elaine Horne	279520
	Planning, highways and Milton Common	
Vice-Chair	Cherry Draper	339347
	Environment, conservation, recycling waste	
Councillor	Ken Field	339671
	Housing, planning, building & controls	
Councillor	Zena Knight	339340
	Planning, recreation, arts, grants	
Councillor	Brian Price	339977
	Health & safety	
Councillor	John Savell	
Clerk	Ken Poyser	339216
	Rosewood, Ickford Road, Tiddington	
	Email: twaparishcouncil@googlegmail.com	

exciting improvements to the children's play area. There should be in excess of £3,000 to come from SODC also. The agreement which will allow them to release the monies has been submitted. Many thanks to Cate Teideman for her hard and successful efforts!

Please let the committee know if you have any issues for them.

Litter blitz - apparently a fair number of parishioners indicated on the T4VP questionnaire that they would wish to assist with cleaning up the Parish and accordingly there is to be a Litter Blitz on Saturday, 19 January with a team to be chosen from available volunteers. It is intended that there will be further such events every three months or so. Meet at the Village Hall at 10.00am.

Dog fouling - there continue to be problems with fouling, particularly on the playing field. Please be considerate to others when walking dogs and take any mess home for safe disposal. We have obtained some additional signs, which we are intending to display soon to deter fouling.

Ken Poyser
Clerk to the Parish Council

Post Office

Tiddington Village Hall

Please support your local post office facilities in the Village Hall on Wednesdays from 1.30pm-3.00pm. Your postmaster from Great Milton is able to provide all the usual needs including top-up of mobile phones, etc.

**Christmas and New Year
Rubbish and recycling dates
No changes to our Monday
collections except that no garden
waste will be collected on
31 December. Instead 2 bin loads
can be put out on 15 April**

**SWAP SHOP
SATURDAY, 19 JANUARY
9.30AM – 11.00AM
MERRY BELLS, WHEATLEY**

Bring useful old stuff that you no longer need;
take away FREE stuff that is useful to you.
(NOT clothes or shoes)

If you are bringing stuff it needs to be in the
hall by 10.15am*

You can now bring (small) electrical items

We have a notice board to advertise any
items too big to carry easily.

Bringing is not compulsory – call in and see if
there is something you want to take.

**Recycling: You can also bring used
printer cartridges (not Epson please) old
mobile phones, plastic milk bottle tops,
batteries* and foil milk bottle tops for us to
recycle.**

Refreshments available (small charge)

Action Group (www.wheatleycag.org)

Resue, recycle and keep stuff out of landfill

*See website for other places to recycle these
items.

**Freedom of Information Act
Publication Scheme**

Residents of the Parish can see the records of
the Council held by the Parish Clerk or learn
where they may be accessed. Records include
minutes, financial information and responses to
planning consultations. Application can be made
to the Clerk (Tel: 339216) and documents
viewed by appointment. Any copies required will
be charged at 10p per page.

From the Parish Council Chair

Re-planting of trees in Parish - according to
the County Arboricultural Officer, sites at
Milton Common and at the entry to Station
Yard are suitable for tree planting. Our clerk
is to take up the offer of re-planting at these

sites, since maintenance and insurance would
not be the responsibility of the Parish Council.
We are still pursuing the vibration issues on
the A418. The latest repair has made the
situation worse. If anyone is suffering from
vibration issues due to the A418, please e-mail
or write to our County Councillor David Turner
(see David Turner's article for his address).
I hope to see you at the various functions over
the festive season.

Elaine Horne

01844-279520

elaine@ace-training.me.uk

Tiddington 4 Village Plan

Questionnaire

Firstly, many thanks to all of you who
completed a questionnaire and
returned it to us. Thanks also to all
the volunteers who did such a
splendid, and dogged, job in
distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

As a result of all your efforts we achieved an
estimated response rate of some 70%, a level
of interest of which most politicians can only
dream. The responses are now being analysed
for us by South Oxfordshire District Council,
and we expect the first results to be reported
to us by mid-December. The Steering Group will
evaluate the answers in depth and use them to
prepare the village plan, which will then be
presented to and discussed with the Parish
Council, prior to their (hopefully) adopting it
formally. We envisage the plan preparation
taking most of the winter months, leading to a
launch event for all villagers in the spring.

Prize Draw

There was a prize of £100 for one respondent
to the questionnaire. Roughly 45% of those
responding chose to enter the draw, and the
lucky winner, drawn at November's meeting of
the Parish Council, was Karen Cripps of North
Close, Tiddington. I am pleased to say she was
genuinely delighted when she simultaneously
heard the good news and got the cheque.



Volunteering

There was a very encouraging level of positive responses to the questions seeking interest in volunteering to help with various activities and groups in the parish.

Overall 130 people volunteered for a total of nearly 400 different inputs, with providing support to others, supporting the elderly and regular litter picking being the most popular activities. Everyone who has expressed interest will be contacted shortly, firstly to thank them for stepping forward and, subsequently, to see how their interest can be put to best use. Each activity for which volunteers were sought has been allocated an individual who will take the lead on developing positive action in response to this interest.

Litter Picking

The first activity will be a litter pick, which the Parish Council has decided will be held on Saturday, 19 January 2013.

Those of you who have kindly volunteered for this activity will be contacted shortly, if you have not already received a communication by the time you read this.

Playground Success

You will hopefully notice the new play equipment for the under 5's is being installed the week beginning 3 December, and will be finished that week. This will be a play tower with slide and speaking tubes, and panels to keep the children entertained.

We would like to say a big thank you to the following people who made this happen: Tony Dawes, Kelly Wing, Ella Sampson, Tiddington 4 Village Plan steering group, Parish Council, Tiddington Village Hall Committee, National Lottery, and OCHA.

It took a great number of people to make this happen. This project was launched after the playground survey in April 2012, which showed demand for this equipment. The survey results were used for grant applications, and to demonstrate that the equipment was needed and will be used.

Hopefully we can use the Tiddington 4 Village Plan survey to build on this success.

Coffee Mornings

The monthly coffee mornings at the Cricket Club, which were initiated through the village plan process, continue to be a great success with a regular attendance level of between 25 and 30.

Dates for coffee mornings in 2013, all at the cricket club and always on the 2nd Wednesday of each month between 10.30 and 12.30, have been set as follows:

09 January	13 February	13 March
10 April	08 May	10 July
14 August	11 September	9 October
13 November	11 December	

All are very welcome.

Nigel Draper
Secretary

Tiddington 4 Village Plan Steering Group

From your District Councillor

New Service Available to Help Stop Hate Crime

Victims of hate crime in South Oxfordshire who are reluctant to go to the police now have an alternative reporting service. Stop Hate is a new 24-hour freephone helpline for anyone who has been on the receiving end of, or is witness to, hate crime.

Anyone who is a victim of, or witness to, a hate crime is advised to contact the police. However, if they are reluctant to do so, the Stop Hate free 24-hour helpline is available on 0800 138 1625 as an alternative reporting service. For more information, please visit www.stophateuk.org.

Katharine Doherty, Shared Community Safety Team Leader, 01491 823615

Katharine.doherty@southandvale.gov.uk

Two New Welfare Benefit Changes with Effect from April 2013

The Government will be implementing two new welfare benefit changes from April 2013 which will affect **working age** benefit claimants. One of the changes, which will affect benefit

claimants in social housing (housing association) properties may result in housing benefit being reduced if a tenant has **one or more "spare" bedrooms**.

The councils are currently working with all the housing associations in the area to identify potentially affected households and will be writing to them in due course. We will include information on how they can be helped, especially through discretionary housing payments (which the councils can make where award criteria is met) and housing advice.

For further information contact Joshua Nathanielsz (joshua.nathanielsz@capita.co.uk) 01491 823602 or

Paul Howden

(paul.howden@southandvale.gov.uk)

01491 823830/01235 540385

Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation Results

South Oxfordshire and the Vale recently carried out a consultation on a new Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The scheme will outline how Council Tax benefit is administered from April 2013.

The full results and a summary report of the consultation are available on the web site:

www.southoxon.gov.uk/about-us/tell-us-what-you-think/past-consultations/council-tax-benefit

For further information contact Paul Howden (Paul.Howden@southandvale.gov.uk)

01491 823830/01235 540385 or Ben Watson

(ben.watson@southandvale.gov.uk)

01491 823834/01235 540488

Green light for planning blueprint

After more than five years of hard work, we have just received the news that an independent Planning Inspector has agreed that our core strategy provides a sound basis for the planning of the District over the next 15 years. You can find out further information regarding our core strategy and the Inspector's report by visiting

www.southoxon.gov.uk/corestrategy

Scott Riley, Community Engagement Officer (Planning), 01491 823718

scott.riley@southandvale.gov.uk

New tourism project - Ox Trails

Ox Trails is an exciting new project, funded by the Southern Oxfordshire LEADER programme and the town partnerships, to promote tourism across both Districts. Five trails will be developed to take visitors around the towns and villages in South and Vale to exploit the area's natural rich heritage and culture. Please e-mail Trudy.Godfrey@southandvale.gov.uk or telephone 01235 540390 for more information.

Best Improved Recycling Rates Award

We are pleased and proud to be able to tell you that Vale and South won the "Best Improved Recycling Rates" category at the annual LARAC awards ceremony held in Warwickshire. This achievement recognises the local authority that has made considerable progress in increasing their recycling levels. Paul Mocroft from the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership won the "Recycling Officer of the Year" award so it was a great evening for Oxfordshire.

If you would like to know more about this award and why we won it contact Clare Kingston, Head of Corporate Strategy, Clare.kingston@southandvale.gov.uk,

01491 823094 (South) or 01235 540356 (Vale)

Stephen Harrod

Great Milton Ward

01844 278068

Stephen.Harrod@southoxon.gov.uk

From your County Councillor

National recognition for County's food waste treatment. Oxfordshire County Council and Agrivert have received a national award for treating the county's food waste at a state-of-the-art facility. The authority signed a 15-year contract with the company in 2009 to deal with left-over food collected from doorsteps across the county. The work has now received a 'Gold'

Green Apple Environment Award for best practice. Some 15,600 tonnes of domestic food waste was treated at the Anaerobic Digestion (AD) plant in Cassington in 2011/12, with the facility generating enough renewable energy to power around 4,200 homes. The award was received at a ceremony at the Houses of Parliament. The technology works by breaking the waste down to produce methane which is then 'captured' and converted into electricity. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas which would be emitted to the atmosphere if the food waste were land filled instead. The effect is equivalent to taking 70,000 cars off the road each year. The process also produces fertiliser for around 3,000 acres of local farmland, providing a huge boost to local farmers and cutting down on transport mileage.

Oxfordshire Liftshare savings top £7million.

Members of a car share scheme provided by Oxfordshire County Council have racked up estimated savings of almost £7.5million since the project was launched in 2010. Latest figures show 7,231 people have signed up to Oxfordshire Liftshare, helping cut congestion, petrol bills and emissions in the process. Members have been sharing thousands of journeys since the scheme began, saving a total of more than 26.5million car miles - an estimated 8,700 tonnes of carbon dioxide cut from Oxfordshire transport emissions.

Anyone can join for free at www.oxfordshireliftshare.com to link up with others making the same journey. The website provides the opportunity to choose a travelling companion and is open to both drivers and non-drivers. Some people can save thousands of pounds a year just through sharing their journey to work with another person. There are no obligations involved in signing up, and members can use the service as often as they like - from one-off journeys to daily use. Car sharing can also be a great way to meet someone new, relieving the boredom of sitting in traffic and even reducing stress levels.

Oxfordshire's GCSE results in 2012.

Oxfordshire's attainment at GCSE has remained below the national average, although overall figures for 2012 across the UK remain in flux due to the ongoing controversy related to appeals re-sits in English. The national average for A*-C including English and Maths remained at 58.4% while the Oxfordshire score was 57.2% compared to 57.4% in 2011. However, Oxfordshire's youngest schoolchildren have forged ahead. Oxfordshire's primary schools have maintained the high standards they set in 2011 in terms of achievement among children in reception classes, Government data has shown. In the key performance measure of Foundation Stage achievement, Oxfordshire continues to perform above both the national average and the average of its statistical neighbours. These are parts of England that are deemed to be similar to the county in terms of demography and therefore are the most realistic comparators. This is a good sign for the future and reflects the effort put into early years education.

Long-stay charging to begin at Park and Ride
Charges for long-stay parking at Thornhill and Water Eaton Park and Ride were set to begin on Monday, 26 November.

The aim is to protect parking associated mainly with daily journeys into Oxford, which would remain free for up to 11 hours.

Many vehicles currently parking beyond this time limit are associated with travel to other destinations including London and the airports.

Charges at both sites will be:

- More than 11 hours - £3 charge
- A further £3, for every 24 hours, up to a maximum of 72 hours
- £100 excess charge for more than 72 hours

Disabled Blue Badge holders will be exempt from the charges and key workers will be exempt from the initial £3 charge if they are working at the hospitals in Headington.

The system will be operated by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras monitoring vehicles entering and leaving the sites to determine length of stay. Car park staff will continue to patrol the sites and issue parking tickets.

A range of payment methods will be available, including online and mobile phone as well as on-site payment machines. Further information is now available at both Park and Ride sites.

Long-term commitment

Oxfordshire County Council's Deputy Leader Rodney Rose said: "Obviously not everyone is going to be happy with these new charges, but I hope most people will agree that it is not unreasonable to introduce a modest charge for parking beyond 11 hours, and that such a charge will help protect the primary function of Park and Ride, which is for travel into Oxford.

"We want to safeguard the future of the County Council's Park and Ride sites and this is something we have committed to doing for some time now.

"The fees compare very favourably with long-stay charges at a rail station or city centre car park and it should also be noted that for the majority of Park and Ride users - those who travel into Oxford for work and shopping - parking will remain free."

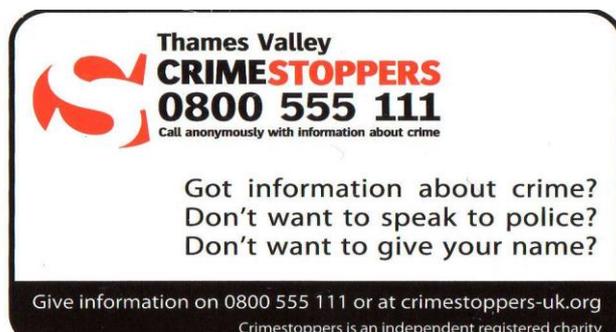
Please feel free to contact me about County Council issues that concern you. My contact details are as follows:

Address: David Turner, 50 Hardings, Chalgrove, Oxford, OX44 7TJ.

Home Telephone: 01865 891169

Email: david.turner@oxfordshire.gov.uk

David Turner
19 November 2012



Milton Common NHW (West Side) and Sandy Lane

In the last couple of months the ringmaster messages have been more about vehicle thefts and power tools left in vehicles over night.

With the darker evenings now upon us ensure you have good lighting on the approach to and around your house. Use a security chain on your door in the event of any unexpected visitors.

Try not to leave any tools or equipment out or around the garden, especially ladders, which could be used to force and gain entry.

Ensure all sheds and outbuildings are properly secured.

Property mark valuable items, televisions, DVD players, computers including laptops with an ultra violet marker pen. (postcode and house number) I still have some stock of marker pens.

I know every year I say the same thing but remember when putting the Christmas tree up, try not to place it in front of patio windows as this can be too tempting for our would-be burglar, with presents laid underneath the tree.

If you are going to be away over Christmas for long periods please let me know. Once again during the Festive Season Dog Watch is going to be in Operation.

If pets need to be looked after during holidays and your direct neighbours are away - please give me a call.

The NHW Oil group has proved successful in keeping the price of Oil down.



Welcome to all our new neighbours in Milton Common, some newer than others. If you would like to be part of the NHW scheme please give me a call.

Last but not least enjoy the festive season. Keep Safe and a Happy New Year to you all.

Elaine Horne
NHW Co-ordinator
Milton Common and Sandy Lane Estate
elaine@ace-training.me.uk
01844 279520

Tiddington NHW

Although criminal activity is low in our area, being located near to the motorway we can be considered a potential target by criminals. If you see anything suspicious please make a note of the person and/or vehicle and dial 101 and immediately report it. Your vigilance can help reduce criminal acts.

On Friday, 16 November between 07:30hrs and 17:20hrs, a property in London Road, Wheatley, was burgled. Entry was gained by forcing open a small window. Offender(s) stole keys from a kitchen worktop and a bag before stealing a Silver Audi A3 vehicle. The stolen vehicle was found abandoned early the same evening on a soft verge on the A40.

The same day between 13:45hrs and 14:45hrs, a property in Oxford Road, Tiddington, was burgled. Entry was gained by forcing open a front window. A tidy search was carried out although nothing appears to have been stolen, it is believed the offender(s) may have been disturbed and made off.

If you have seen any suspicious looking people or vehicles in the area or have any information relating to this message, please call the police on the new national single non-emergency telephone number 101 and state you are responding to a Community message.

Alternatively if you have information but wish to remain anonymous, please call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or online at crimestoppers-uk.org. No personal details are taken,

information is not traced or recorded and you will not go to court.

Thank you for your support of the neighbourhood watch scheme, that operates across the region for the protection of people and property.

A very Happy Christmas to you.

Chris Williams
NHW Co-ordinator
07710 620820



Metal drinking troughs are still being stolen in our area.

The volunteer at Amersham Police Station, who used to send out the Horsewatch e-mails has left, hence why I have not been forwarding any e-mails out to the group. So we are now waiting for her replacement.

Dobbins Clobber is having a One Day 10% off everything.

On 2 December 2012, 10.00am - 4.00pm.
Mulled wine and Mince Pies

If you want to become part of Horsewatch and receive the e-mails, please e-mail me on elaine@ace-training.me.uk.

Elaine Horne, Horsewatch co-ordinator
01844 279520

From your MP, John Howell



A look back at recent key issues in Westminster and the Constituency (Late October- early November 2012)

During my recent Village Tour I was asked why, when you see footage of proceedings in Parliament on the television the Chamber is often quite empty. The reason is that at any one time there are many different debates and meetings going on in the Palace of Westminster and MPs have to divide their time among these. It is therefore not always possible to be in the Chamber.

If you want to know just what is going on in Parliament full details are published on the Parliament website and verbatim reports of main debates in the Chamber are published in Hansard. If you want to find out more about the work of Parliament and the progress of specific Bills you can find full details at <http://www.parliament.uk>.

I am often asked by constituents about visiting Parliament. This is indeed possible. You can attend debates, watch committee hearings, go on a tour of the buildings and also climb the Elizabeth Tower. Details of this can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/visiting>

In this regular newsletter I report on some key issues which may be of particular interest. This month there are three that I would like to draw to your attention.

Growth and Infrastructure Bill

A recent key debate has been on the Growth and Infrastructure Bill. This seeks to reduce delays in the planning system through various means, including referring certain projects to the Secretary of State to be determined. It also has provisions relating to telecommunication equipment and energy infrastructure and gas transport. To promote development, the Bill would allow for planning obligations (section 106 agreements) relating to affordable housing to be renegotiated to make a development economically viable again. To promote economic growth, it makes

provision for a planned revaluation of business rates in England to be postponed and to create a new employment status of employee owner.

Libraries

The future of local libraries has been an issue dear to several communities within the constituency for some time now. On 6 November 2012, the Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee published a report which indicated that some local authorities, under considerable pressure to quickly find cost savings, have drawn up plans without taking proper account of local needs for library services and the variety of options available to provide them, and are therefore in danger of failing in their statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service. Other councils, however, have found innovative and cost-effective ways of continuing to supply - and in some cases improve - their library service.

Reserve Forces

On 8 November the Defence Secretary, Philip Hammond, made a Statement to the House on measures to overhaul Britain's Reserve Forces to create a fully integrated Armed Forces. These measures will be part of a wide-ranging consultation 'Future Reserves 2020: Delivering the Nation's Security Together'. The consultation proposes more training for reservists, a 'kitemark-type' award for supportive employers, and the idea of changing the Territorial Army's name to reflect their enhanced role.

For more information, my website is regularly updated and offers information on my work both in Westminster and in the constituency. Its address is www.johnhowellmp.com In addition, if you would like to subscribe to my free e-newsletter please email me at: john.howell@oxfordshireconservatives.com

Christmas Wishes

Although this newsletter looks back at October and early November the lead times of some Parish Magazines are such that it may be

December before this is published. I would therefore take this opportunity to wish all constituents a peaceful Christmas. It is my wish for us all that 2013 will be a good year. May I also say thank you to all those who work hard in our communities to make them special for the rest of us. It is always a pleasure when I get the opportunity to visit community activities and I look forward to learning yet more about what is being done in 2013.

St. Helen's Church News

Since the last update nothing much has happened in the quest to find a new vicar for the four parishes of Holton, Waterperry, Waterstock and us here at Albury. However we have had a second meeting with Sue Booy's the Area Dean and have all submitted Parish Profiles so an advertisement for the job can be drafted.

Meanwhile we have enjoyed services in church every Sunday from wonderfully kind clergy who Anne Edwards miraculously finds, contacts and invites to come. The church is now so warm with its new heating that none of us want to leave!

We do hope everyone will come to support our Church Coffee Morning on 1 December in the Village Hall. It has been organised for the morning, 10.30am until 12.00 noon, and replaces the usual afternoon Bazaar. There will be lots of good things to eat and buy and a Children's Tombola to entice the younger members of the village (see opposite).

We are looking forward to having Bishop Anthony Russell to take our Christmas Eve service at 6.00pm.

Services are planned into January and February for every Sunday, in the usual pattern of two communion services and two Matins or Morning Prayer as described on the rota.

Moo Nowell-Smith
Churchwarden
The Old Rectory
Albury
Oxfordshire OX9 2LP
01844 339 650
moo @ nowell-smith.com

Church Services	St Helen's Church, Albury
2 December	9.30am Morning Prayer with Rev D Knight
9 December	9.30am Holy Communion with Rev P Jefford
16 December	9.30am Morning Prayer with Rev J A Morrison
24 December	6.00pm Christmas Eve with Bishop Anthony Russell
30 December	9.30am Holy Communion with Rev J Dunn
6 January	9.30am Morning Prayer with Lay Minister Robert Hutton
13 January	9.30am Holy Communion with Rev D Owen
20 January	9.30am Morning Prayer with Rev T Farrell
27 January	9.30am Holy Communion with Rev N Hawkes

Carol Evening
Monday, 17 December, 7.30pm
Tiddington Village Hall
Community singing
with coffee and mince pies in the
interval
in aid of Cancer Research UK
Tickets: £3.00 for adults
£1.50 for children
Available from Anne Edwards 339794
or Zena Knight 339340

Waterstock & Tiddington W.I.



Jenny Morgan's talk in October was very thought-provoking, when she described the work of the Samaritans, citing the staggering statistics of people requiring their help both locally and nationally. In November we had a change of speaker as Angela Nightingale had just been in hospital for a hip replacement operation. Instead, Warren Ford described with slides the many processes required in producing "Tea: the nation's favourite drink". His vast experience over many years buying the different teas for the Yorkshire Tea Company gave an interesting personal touch.

Hosting the Group Meeting in October, about sixty members from our own and neighbouring institutes enjoyed hearing Claire Moore relate, with great humour, her experiences singing with well-known performers in musicals over the years. We were also treated to her beautiful operatic singing.

On 13 December we will be celebrating for Christmas with dinner at the Three Horseshoes in Towersey. We gather at 7.00pm for 7.30pm and bring along a wrapped present to exchange.

We are fortunate to be having David Barber to speak at our meeting on 10 January. He

oversees the take-up and marking of swans on the Thames in the ancient custom of "Swan Upping". Royal swans are left unmarked. As this might be of interest to a wider audience, we cordially invite other villagers to the meeting, including gentlemen! There will be tea or coffee and cake and biscuits to follow the talk. We have recently welcomed a new member, Wendy Paterson, and other members are reminded that subscriptions of £33.00 will be due in January. The subscription includes eleven issues of the County Newsletter and eight issues of the National magazine, as well as the chance to attend meetings and workshops at preferential rates.

Visitors and new members are always very welcome to join us on the second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in Tiddington Village Hall. Meanwhile we wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and good New Year.

Zena Knight

Tel: 01844 339340

Email: zenaknight42@btinternet.com

Tiddington Village Hall

On Saturday, 8 December we will be holding the Annual Christmas Dinner and Dance. We have once again been overwhelmed by your support, so much so that we sold out of tickets within just a few weeks of them going on sale. However, we do have a reserve/waiting list so if you are interested in coming then please register with Pauline Field on 339671.

Once again, we will be hosting the ever popular **Christmas Bingo** (see opposite) which will take place on **Thursday, 20 December**. All donations of suitable prizes are very welcome and a committee member should call sometime during the previous week to collect. If for any reason you don't get a visit then please call me on 339430 or 278534 and I will drop round.

I'm pleased to say the new lighting has now been installed in the Hall and we hope to replace the old ceiling fans as well soon.

In November we held our AGM and I am very pleased to welcome two new recruits to the committee, Bev Bristow and Fergus Kendall. I want to thank them for giving up their valuable time to help run the Hall.

In 2013 we also plan to make improvements to the bar area. To help save on cost we plan to do most of the building work ourselves. If you are at all interested in giving up some of your time to help in any way then please let me know. This might include building walls, installing cupboards, painting walls, laying tiles etc.

And finally, may I take this opportunity on behalf of the Village Hall Committee to thank you for your support in 2012 and to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Alan Stratton,
Chairman, Village Hall Committee
Tel: 07889 851588
email: stratton@gmx.com



Our Aunt Sally teams both celebrated success as the Wednesday team won the Knockout Cup and the Friday A team won the League and were Knockout Runners Up.

The winter season is well under way, with Crib on Mondays, two ladies' darts teams on Wednesdays and men's darts on a Friday evening.

There are also the golfers who enjoy their days out and come back to the Club for a meal and presentations, together with the

presentation of the 'green jacket' and mandatory fines. Thanks to Nobby and Keith for their organisation.

We have entered a team in the Indoor Cricket League and have played 6, won 3 and are midway in the table. It is a very fast moving game and needs accurate bowling and quick running between the wickets.

A very talented, mostly youthful, Tiddington CC side took on Aston Rowant CC at football last Sunday. A large crowd saw some great skills from Tiddington, leading to a comprehensive 4-0 win. All players met back at the Club for food and refreshments.

We are open over Christmas and New Year and dates and times will be published in the Clubhouse.

Our annual Race Night is planned for Saturday, 16 March - more details will be in the next newsletter. If you wish to sponsor a race, please let us know.

Plans are being drawn up for submission for an extension to our bar storage. If successful, it will help us to store stock and have room to move around as our current cellar is very small. If we get approval, we aim to have the work completed for the start of the season.

Lesley Pykett
07762 572558

London Marathon 2013

Three years ago I set myself the challenge of running (and finishing) the London Marathon. In 2012 I did it again and in a moment of madness I have agreed to run it for a third (and potentially final) time in 2013.

What I am really pleased to announce is that I will be joined this time by three Tiddington Ladies who are going to embark on this 'adventure' as well. Debbie Chaplin is running for The National Osteoporosis Society and Julie Smith and Tessa Howlett are running for Children with Cancer.

I must give a big thank you to Peter Bernstrom, Julian White and The Oxford

Belfry Hotel for their extremely generous support in kick starting our challenge.

More details of websites, sponsorship, donations etc to follow in February!

Alan Stratton

the charity for
your community



Worried about the Benefit Cap?

From April next year, there will be a limit on how much money you can get from some benefits. This is called the Benefit Cap. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is writing to people who might be affected to tell them about the changes.

You are only likely to be worse off than before if you're getting Housing Benefit. This is because your Housing Benefit will be cut if you're getting some benefits that, together with your Housing Benefit, take you over the cap.

The cap is expected to be:

- £500 a week if you're in a couple, or a single person, and you have dependent children
- £350 a week if you're single and don't have children or have children who don't live with you.

You won't be affected at all if you qualify for one of the following:

- Working Tax Credit
- Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance, if paid with the support component
- Industrial Injuries Benefits
- War Widows or Widowers Pension.

There are also some benefits which won't be counted when working out whether you're over the cap. These are:

- Council Tax Support, which replaces Council Tax Benefit from April 2013
- Pension Credit
- State Retirement Pension
- one off payments, for example, Social Fund loans
- non-cash benefits, for example, free school meals.

It's important that you find out now if you might be worse off after the cap starts next year, so you can plan how to deal with it. You can get more information about the Benefit Cap on the Citizens Advice website www.adviceguide.org.uk or the government website www.direct.gov.uk.

Need information about local caring services? Just Toogle it !

A new local information website is coming to Thame. Have you ever wished you could put your hands quickly on some relevant local information, like how to find an NHS dentist in the area, where to get help for an elderly relative with mobility issues or even, where to access impartial energy savings advice? Well now you can!

Toogle is a collaboration between the charity, Sharing Life Trust (www.sharinglifetrust.org) and the Thame Alliance Group (TAG). It is a community information, advice and referral service aiming to ensure that the residents of Thame and surrounding areas are easily connected to the available health and human services in their communities.

Just Google, www.toogle.org.uk and you will have instant access to a wide range of local information from Animal Welfare to Social Care. It is set to be a vital local resource.

CAB adviceline 08 444 111 444 or
0300 3300 650(mobile)

For general advice visit www.adviceguide.org.uk
Your local CAB is in Market Square, Thame

Thame & District Citizens Advice Bureau
Market House, North St, Thame OX9 3HH

Opening Hours

Monday, Thursday, Friday 9.30 – 4.00
Tuesday, Wednesday 9.30 – 1.00

Advice line: 08444 111 444

Or 0300 3300 650 (mobile)

Website: www.adviceguide.org.uk

General information: www.thamecab.org

A session is held at the offices of the United Reformed Church, Crown Square, Wheatley on Monday mornings by appointment from 10.00am-1.00pm

Wheatley Library

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from us all at the library.

This year we close on Saturday, 22 December at 1.00pm and reopen on Wednesday, 2 January at 9.30am.

Please come along for coffee and mince pies on Saturday, 22 December, we are open 9.30am to 1.00pm.

Our December Thursday rhymetime for the under 5s is on the 13th at 2.30pm, further dates to follow in the New Year.

Fridays from 3.30pm to 4.30pm in December and January, we are holding drop in storytimes for children who would like a story or two read to them. This is with one of our Duke of Edinburgh volunteers from Wheatley Park School. Please come along and support him if you can.

Did you not get that book, dvd, or boxed set in your Christmas stocking this year? Try the library. We will try our best to get it for you to borrow. Adult charge only £1 to reserve.

Opening Hours

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	2.00pm – 7.00pm
Wednesday	9.30am – 1.00pm 2.00pm – 5.00pm
Thursday	2.00pm – 5.00pm
Friday	9.30am – 1.00pm 2.00pm – 6.00pm
Saturday	9.30am – 1.00pm

The Merry Bells, High Street, Wheatley

Tel: 01865 875267

Email: wheatley.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Great Haseley and District Horticultural Society

December 2012

We are now less than five weeks away from the winter solstice, a point in time which I very much like as the days will then start to lengthen, although, admittedly, very slowly at first. This allows me to kid myself that spring is on its way even though the worst of winter is yet to come. Since I became a gardener my appreciation of the seasons has become more astute. I had always considered winter to start in October and finish in March which made for very long winters. Now that I use the horticultural definition of winter which is December to February, my winter feels much shorter and this feeling is enhanced by frequent walks in the garden even if I am not gardening. By December the signs of spring are already visible in the shoots of bulbs and emerging perennials which lift my spirits.

Perhaps more encouraging is the sight of decaying foliage. Flowers and fruit is the sense of being given yet another chance to get things right. I don't think any gardener ever feels that their garden is perfect, but every year as summer turns to autumn I feel that I could have done better (sometimes much better!). Each winter I am given the chance to clear everything away and start again and I always think that this time I will succeed in achieving in reality the ideas that run through my mind.

Of course sometimes plants will come together in a completely unexpected and wonderful way and there is the temptation to tell people it was planned that way!

In December there is the final chance to plant any bulbs that remain in your shed. Tulips in particular do very well when planted late. I am only just completing my winter tubs today as, although the Panolas would have performed better if planted earlier, my summer plants were still putting on a colourful show and I was reluctant to remove them. I am also cutting back decaying vegetation around the garden which will not provide food for the birds. This is a good compromise as it means that some cover remains in place for other wildlife in the garden and the grasses will look very good over the winter when covered in frost. However I do cut back everything where I have bulb displays or the job becomes extremely difficult and time-consuming in the spring when I would need to avoid emerging bulbs. The floral bulb display would also be somewhat marred by a mass of soggy, brown stems.

Over the winter months I try to get outside as often as possible as I will make things look tidier, get a head start for next spring and feel better in the process.

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Liz Moyses
Membership secretary
liz@moyses.org

Please contact me for further details of membership which costs only £5 per family per year.

The society Christmas Party will be on 4 December at 7.30pm in Great Haseley Village Hall. There will be festive refreshments, a hamper raffle and Andrew White will talk on the subject of a garden through the year. All welcome. Seed catalogues will be available to members.

01865 883488

margaret.eaglestone@oxonrcc.org.uk

Newington Nurseries

The holly and the ivy

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and ivy (*Hedera helix*) conjure up all that is traditional and festive. Both evergreen plants are native to most of Europe and western Asia and despite their Christmas connotations, they're very useful and versatile plants in the garden and countryside alike.

Holly is a fantastic health indicator of an ecosystem. It's regarded as a 'pioneer species', namely that it will establish itself before any other plants in an area that has been devastated by flood, fire, deforestation or man-made destruction. As a tree, holly can get to a height of some 10 metres in time and its lifespan can be 100 years or more. It's a slow-growing plant, untidy in habit whilst young but improving in appearance and habit with age. Planted in a group, it will make a good hedge although taking time to establish. Otherwise, holly can be used for topiary, clipping shrubs into a shape to suit.

Holly produces inconspicuous white flowers during the spring months and these are followed by brightly coloured berries (on female plants only) from late summer, lasting well into the autumn and early winter. The flowers are a nectar reservoir for bees and butterflies whilst the berries are an important food source for birds and small mammals. Not until the frosts have softened the fruit will the berries be eaten; prior to a cold snap, they're like little bullets and very unappetizing. In addition to offering sustenance to our wildlife, holly is a natural guardian for mammals and birds. Thrushes, in particular but not exclusively, favour holly shrubs and trees for nesting as the prickly foliage provides protection against predators whilst deer use areas of woodland which have become dense and tangled holly warrens as a sanctuary from danger and harm.

In order to get berries on a female plant, a male plant has to be in the vicinity. If space doesn't allow in the garden, opt for the self-pollinating *Ilex aquifolium* J C van Tol (a non-prickly variety) or *I. aquifolium* Pyramidalis (spiny leaves). *Ilex* Nellie Stevens (a fast grower) also has a tendency to self-pollinate and produces berries. Otherwise, if there is room for 2 or more plants, go for both male and female plants. For reasons unexplained, breeders gave misleading names to their plants, for example *I. aquifolium* Golden Queen is male whilst *I. aquifolium* Golden King is female so check plant labels carefully.

Ivy is also a valuable plant both in terms of its ornamental value as well as its ecological benefits. People love it or hate it; its bad press stems from planting rampant varieties left to their own devices.

However, it's a highly useful plant that just needs to be kept in check. Planting it against a house wall is not to be recommended because its aerial roots will break through the mortar but sited against ugly structures such as fences or sheds or planted to grow through trees or pergolas, it will create natural living screens (Frank Lloyd Wright supposedly said that 'doctors bury their mistakes, architects cover them in ivy'). The key is not to let the plant get out of control so regular pruning is a must.

Ivy attracts wildlife like no other plant. Birds love to nest in its dense foliage so prune only after the young birds have fledged. A wide variety of insects feed on the nectar produced by the greenish-yellow flowers which appear in dainty clusters from late summer to late autumn. Bees are particularly attracted to the flowers making ivy a vital autumn food source for this endangered insect. Purple-black and orange-yellow berries follow the flowers and ripen enough for the birds to devour in late winter when the pickings are slim. Like holly, ivy will form dense clumps in woodland environments, providing shelter and refuge for a variety of birds and mammals including deer.

Hedera helix (English Ivy) is a bit more rampant than the cultivars and is used primarily in amenity landscaping projects. *Hedera hibernica* (Irish Ivy) is probably the one to avoid as it will reach an uncontrollable height of 10 metres or more. For the garden, *Hedera helix* Ivalace is a great choice for ground cover or topiary. It gets to just a metre in height and produces dark and glossy green, deeply-lobed leaves. To conceal a fence or shed, try *H. helix* Glacier which grows to around 2 metres height-wise. The leaves are grey-green, splashed with silver and cream. *H. helix* Atropurpurea is a rather lovely plant whose green leaves in summer turn to purple in winter. It will attain a height of some 3 metres.

Evergreen foliage at this time of year is rather uplifting when the rest of the garden is in its winter dormancy. Use holly and ivy to make natural decorations, hang them on front and back doors and they will last well into January.

Anne Hendry
Newington Nurseries (on the A329 on the outskirts of Stadhampton)
Tel 01865 400533
www.newington-nurseries.co.uk

Dark chocolate and amaretto mousse

Serves 6 (or 4 if you like your food)

300g dark chocolate
6 medium eggs
500ml whipping cream
4 shots of amaretto
150g caster sugar

1. Do not mix any of the parts that follow until steps 1 – 7 have been completed.
2. Separate the eggs
3. Add the egg yolks to the sugar and whip until double in volume
4. In a separate bowl whip the cream
5. In a separate bowl whip the egg whites to a stiff peak meringue
6. Melt the chocolate
7. Tip the amaretto into a saucepan and bring to a simmer
8. When the amaretto has reduced by half, set to one side.
9. Once you have all of the previous steps ready you are now able to build the mousse; you must work quickly to blend each set of ingredients otherwise the mousse will try and set before you're ready.
10. First fold in the chocolate to the egg yolk mix
11. Add the warm amaretto to the chocolate mix (this will help melt the chocolate a little if its started to set)
12. Then fold in the cream
13. Fold in the egg whites slowly
14. Tip the mix into glasses or a plastic container to set in the fridge overnight
15. Garnish with white chocolate or whipped cream and fruit

*By courtesy of Richard Edwards
Newington Nurseries*

How much does eco-refurbishment cost?

The Green Deal has launched but are the costs of eco-refurbishment well understood? A number of basic factors influence the costs involved:

- Scale and ambition of works
- The age, type and size of your home
- Grants, subsidies, offers and incentives

Most projects start with improved insulation and draught-proofing and move to more efficient heating and windows. Solar and heat recovery systems may also be suitable, but

radical carbon reduction could require all this and more.

The final cost will be driven by how green you want to go. Reducing a typical older home's carbon emissions by 80% will not be cheap. One study by The Existing Homes Alliance puts the cost at between £12,000 and £54,000. If your budget is at the lower end, solar panels and external wall insulation are likely to be off the menu.

Insulating older solid wall properties is challenging, especially if all your walls are exposed to the elements. But, if your property was built after 1930, it will probably have cavity walls. These can be insulated at little or no cost with an energy supplier offer. Subsidies change over time so it is worth seizing a good deal. Modest grants are available for renewable heat technologies like solar thermal, biomass and heat pumps. The long awaited Renewable Heat Incentive is due in summer 2013. Green Deal finance packages are due in the New Year.

Be sure you get the best independent advice and start with a refurbishment plan and a defined budget. For more on costs, see www.superhomes.org.uk/refurbcost



Sash windows can be double-glazed

Photo courtesy of www.superhomes.org.uk

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www.thamesvalley.police.uk



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