

# TIDDINGTON WITH ALBURY & MILTON COMMON NEWSLETTER

[www.tiddingtonoxon.co.uk](http://www.tiddingtonoxon.co.uk)

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2014

## From the Editor

I can't think of very much to say this time – it seems to be quiet on the activities front after the Christmas and New Year celebrations. Next time there will be preparations for Easter and we hope signs of Spring. Here is a picture to help us visualise it!



Zena Knight

## Thank you

I would like to thank everyone in the village for looking out for my cows through the calving months of last year. It is very reassuring to know that when anything is happening someone will ring myself or Ken to let us know.

Can I also remind all dog owners to please keep their dogs on a lead when in the field, for your own safety. The cows will be back with you in a very short time to start all over again.

Thank you.

Richard Ilbery

## Acknowledgement

My sister and I would like to thank family, friends and neighbours for the support and kindness shown on the recent sad loss of our father, Jan Flaga, which we very much appreciate. Donations have been made to Cancer Research UK, a total of £160.00

Suzanne and Tracy

## Art and Craft Group

Our first session of the new year on Wednesday, 15 January had a very disappointing response from the village. However



we plan to continue for another nine sessions to take us up to Easter, so hope to see more of you in the coming weeks. We will meet every Wednesday except the 2<sup>nd</sup> one in the month from 9.00am to 12.00noon. Further details in the diary on the back page.

For a cost of £2.00 per session you will be able to make use of the excellent facilities of the hall and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits.

Artists and crafters are welcome to bring their projects and share tips and ideas with other like-minded people. Also bring along any books, magazines or materials that you might share and swap with others.

For more information please do not hesitate to contact me: Zena Knight, 24 Albury View. Tel: 01844 339340

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## From the Parish Clerk

**Highways matters** - I need hardly tell you that there are problems with surface water in the parish. The main problem is Sandy Lane, which has a large pool of water under the railway bridge. Both Chairman Elaine Horne and I have been in contact with Oxfordshire Highways about this. I warned them that there would be a problem with ice, since the water is spilling out on to the A418. Sure enough this has happened and I again spoke to Highways, and was told that the matter would be raised with the local highways "rep", asking him to re-inspect the "site" as a matter of urgency.

There are surface water issues also on the A418 coming down from Albury Lane towards Tiddington, at Draycot and by the allotments in Ickford Road.

Thanks to Richard Ilbury for his efforts in keeping the brook clear.

May I ask you please to assist by reporting any highway matters which are of concern to you via the County Council website?

The more they hear, the better the chance of some action being taken.

**Pelican crossing on A418** - I have previously reported that I have written to SODC and have also contacted Thame Town Council to request that S106 monies be set aside from the proposed major housing development in Thame to fund a Pelican Crossing which would make it safer for children, the less able bodied and the elderly to cross the road. Meanwhile, our County Councillor, Mrs Purse, is endeavouring to pursue the matter with the Area Steward.

### Tiddington with Albury Parish Council Members

Chair	Elaine Horne	279520
	Planning, highways & 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	338078
	Economic development, businesses	
Clerk	Ken Poyser	339216
	Rosewood, Ickford Road, Tiddington	
	Email: <a href="mailto:twaparishcouncil@googlemail.com">twaparishcouncil@googlemail.com</a>	

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

**Litter Blitz** - there will be two of these in the forthcoming months, the next one in April. To be held on Sunday mornings.

**Play equipment** - please be wary of the equipment in the play area. Due to the very wet weather of late, there is a danger from slippery woodwork.

KEN POYSER

Clerk to the Parish Council

## From the Parish Council Chair

As I sit typing my piece for the newsletter, I am also considering my response to our County Councillor, who has e-mailed me in response to my e-mail concerning the flood water at the bottom of Sandy Lane, spilling over on to the A418.

Our councillors have rung in to OCC Highways, the Clerk and myself – I know families of councillors have also rung in.

My first phone call to OCC was on the 27 December, 2013. Most recent was 17 January – still no nearer in getting an educated response from OCC.

OCC say they have sent contractors to pump it out. No one has seen contractors doing this – only asleep in the lay by near the Old Forge.

On Thursday, 16 January I was told an engineer would be out on Friday to assess the problem again – not a soul to be seen.

So you can understand my frustration when our County Councillor asks what is the history behind Sandy Lane – its all in the Parish Council minutes – one blocked drain at the bridge and a spring that was not tapped properly by Highways some three years ago. We will carry on regardless – but I feel an article to the Oxford Mail might be our next step if our Councillors agree.

Elaine Horne

01844-279520

[elaine@ace-training.me.uk](mailto:elaine@ace-training.me.uk)

**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.

**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.

**For the residents of Milton Common**



**New community bus services to Wallingford and Thame start on Monday 9 December 2013**

Go Ride CIC, Oxfordshire's not-for-profit bus operator, is pleased to announce that new community bus services will operate between Thame, The Miltons and Wallingford up to three days per week starting from 9 December 2013.

The service allows for just over 2 hours shopping in Wallingford or Thame – the 13:20 departure from Thame is great for those who may wish to leave Thame later than the current 12:10 Arriva service

The timetable for this new service is shown below. Concessionary passes are accepted.

**125 Thame - Wallingford**

**Go Ride CIC**

Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays only (except Public Holidays)

effective 9 December 2013

	M Tu Th Sch	Tu	Tu			Tu	Tu	M Th Sch	Tu
<b>Thame, Town Hall</b>	<b>09:00</b>	<b>11:10</b>	<b>13:20</b>	<b>Wallingford Market Place</b>	<b>10:05</b>	<b>12:15</b>	<b>12:15</b>	<b>14:25</b>	
Milton Common Three Pigeons	09:08	11:18	13:28	Benson, High Street	10:16	12:26	12:26	-	
Great Milton, The Bull	09:13	-	13:33	Watlington, Library	10:30	12:40	12:40	-	
<b>Little Milton Old Field</b>	<b>09:16</b>	<b>11:24</b>	<b>13:36</b>	<b>Chalgrove Red Lion</b>	<b>10:40</b>	<b>12:50</b>	<b>12:50</b>	<b>-</b>	
Chalgrove Red Lion	09:25	-	13:45	<b>Little Milton Old Field</b>	<b>10:49</b>	<b>12:59</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	
Watlington, Library	09:35	-	13:55	Great Milton, The Bull	10:52	13:02	R	-	
Benson, High Street	09:49	-	14:09	Milton Common Three Pigeons	10:57	13:07	R	R	
<b>Wallingford Market Place</b>	<b>10:00</b>	<b>11:43</b>	<b>14:20</b>	<b>Thame, Town Hall</b>	<b>11:05</b>	<b>13:15</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	

**Notes**

Sch means this journey operates during school terms only (see below).

R means this point is served to set down only by request of passengers on the bus.

School terms: Monday 9 December - Friday 20 December 2013; Monday 6 January - Friday 14 February 2014; Monday 24 February - Friday 4 April 2014; Tuesday 22 April - Friday 23 May 2014.

This service operates on a trial basis until Friday 30 May 2014.

**From your District Councillor**

**New charges for Environment Agency advice**

From 2 January 2014 the Environment Agency in the South East Region began charging for advice they provide to planning enquiries that they receive from developers and their consultants.

Responses to statutory consultations on validated planning applications will continue to be free of charge. Statutory timescales will not be affected and the Environment Agency will continue to provide a free service to developers and their consultants in the form of a preliminary opinion outlining their position and highlighting any environmental issues they may be concerned about as a statutory consultee. They can then provide developers with further advice, if required, at a chargeable rate. This could include Flood Risk Assessment reviews, meetings, or site visits.

Charges will be £84 per hour and they do not charge VAT.

Advice on strategic plans or strategic advice to Local Enterprise Partnerships, City Deals and Enterprise Zones will continue to be free; however charges will apply for detailed technical advice on individual development proposals, including schemes where the local authority is the applicant. This is in line with treasury guidance.

The Environment Agency is communicating these changes to key developers and consultants.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact their Sustainable Places team at [planning-wallingford@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:planning-wallingford@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Shelter Appeal**

One in 13 people in the South East fear they won't be able to afford to pay the rent or mortgage at the end of this month. Yet many people in this situation would feel too ashamed to ask for help. Shelter's helpline receives too many calls from people in desperation, and on the brink of losing their home, because bills and notices have been left unopened and problems have piled up.

This January Shelter is encouraging those at risk to seek advice and avoid problems spiralling out of control. We would very much appreciate your help in getting this message out there. You can take these four actions to help people in South Oxfordshire to find professional advice:

1. Post a link to our online advice on your website [www.shelter.org.uk/advice](http://www.shelter.org.uk/advice)

2. Encourage your case workers to bookmark our online advice pages [www.shelter.org.uk/advice](http://www.shelter.org.uk/advice) so they can refer to them when dealing with housing-related case work
3. Let your constituents know how to get help from Shelter via our online advice and free telephone helpline number [www.shelter.org.uk/advice](http://www.shelter.org.uk/advice) 0808 800 4444
4. Tweet our online advice details, or re-tweet us. You can find us at @Shelter

### **The Big Move – it's here!**

The Vale recently finalised its deal to lease the top two floors of Abbey House to Oxfordshire County Council. This means we can go ahead with the project to move a significant number of shared staff from Abingdon to Crowmarsh.

This is good financial news for South Oxfordshire, as we will be recharging the Vale for the use of office space, which reduces our costs, not to mention making much more efficient use of the building.

At the end of January, we will be moving the first group of staff from the Vale to Crowmarsh. This is a considerable project, and includes a number of renovations and improvements to our building. We have employed a project manager who specialises in accommodation projects like this, and we're working to a tight, but well organised project plan.

We have planned this process exhaustively, so we hope any problems will be kept to a minimum, and it's very unlikely that they'd have a knock-on effect to anybody outside the council. However, if we do hit any issues, we hope you'll understand.

Please note, that all contact details should remain the same before and after the move. If in doubt, our website will be kept up to date with all details.

Stephen Harrod  
Great Milton Ward  
01844 278068

[Stephen.Harrod@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.Harrod@southoxon.gov.uk)

### **Milton Common NHW (West Side) and Sandy Lane**

Thames Valley Police is currently investigating the distribution and use of illegal pesticides, including



counterfeits, across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.

Illegal pesticides have been found in increasing amounts across the UK and Europe and Thames Valley Police has a particular interest in illegal pesticides not just because of the risks they pose to the rural communities but the links to organised crime gangs. There is growing evidence that the illicit activities of such gangs finance other serious crimes such as human trafficking and international terrorism. It is not yet known to what extent, if any, illegal pesticides are being sold within our rural communities. Gathering intelligence and information is a vital part of the investigation, which is where you come in. If you notice anything suspicious about pesticides you have either been offered or purchased, please call the 24 hour non-emergency number 101 and mention 'Operation Silo'. Things to look out for:

- **Does the product look or smell unusual?**
- **Have you been offered a product which has been described as the same as another but at a discounted rate?**
- **Have you been sold a product because your first choice was 'out of stock'?**
- **Do you have any feelings that a product you have bought isn't quite right? Are there any unusual symptoms or irregularities? (clogged spray jets/nozzles, etc)**
- **Is the packaging unusual or not what you would expect?**

If you do not want to speak to the police, you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or online at [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org). More information about illegal and counterfeit pesticides can be found on the [Thames Valley Police website](#) or read more about the [national 'Watch Out' campaign](#).

Elaine Horne  
NHW Co-ordinator M/C and Sandy Lane  
01844 279520

### **Tiddington**

The police report that the thefts of number plates continue across our sector. Reputable car stores will stock anti-theft number plate screws which provide effective prevention. Also it is important that missing number plates are reported to the police as they are often used to commit a crime.

If a burglary has happened near you or if you think it is time to have your security reviewed, then the police neighbourhood team can arrange a free visit to your

home, or to visit a neighbour who you think may be vulnerable, to give advice on home security. You can do this by calling the police non-emergency number 101 and requesting a Crime Prevention visit. A Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) will then arrange a suitable time to call round.

If you want to protect your property then the Smart Water home security packs are available to buy for £15 at Thame Police Station, Greyhound Lane. This is a reduced price and only a number of discounted packs are left. Please call in or get your pack by calling 101, asking for the Thame Station Duty Officer. They will have a demonstration pack soon, so will be able to show residents what it contains and how it works should they want to see it first. Smart Water is a brand of forensic marking fluid containing millions of microscopic particles that make up an individual property identification code. It can be painted on to valuable items e.g. laptops, MP3 players, phones, jewellery, garden equipment, TV's, antiques, home entertainment items etc. The kit also has SmartWater awareness stickers for around the home.

If you are connected to the internet, always be aware of emails that may appear to come from a reputable company such as BT, but are in fact fraudulent. Genuine emails from organisations that you might expect to receive will usually contain a unique reference or your registered name.

Finally there have been a series of scams where individuals purporting to be from your bank or credit card company will attempt to deceive individuals by advising that their credit card has been replicated and that they will send out a courier to collect the old one. This is not the genuine procedure so don't be taken in and immediately contact the police on 999 and report the matter.

Please report any suspicious activities to the police using 999, and for non emergency matters call 101.

Chris Williams  
NHW Co-ordinator Tiddington  
07710 620820

## From your MP, John Howell



*A look back at recent key issues in Westminster and the Constituency*

Many of us begin a new year with ideas and plans. Although I spend as much time in the constituency as

commitments in Parliament allow, this year I would like to meet even more constituents than last year. It is particularly helpful to me to meet community groups and to visit businesses and other organisations. If you are involved in something that you think it would be helpful in my parliamentary work for me to know more about please contact my constituency office to discuss and if appropriate arrange a visit.

On returning to Westminster after the Christmas recess two key Bills were in their final stages of working through the House of Commons before being sent to the House of Lords for their deliberation.

The Water Bill had its 3<sup>rd</sup> reading in the House of Commons on 6 January and is now with the House of Lords. This Bill seeks to make provision about the water industry; about compensation for modification of licences to abstract water; about main river maps; about records of waterworks; for the regulation of the water environment; about the provision of flood insurance for household premises; about internal drainage boards; about Regional Flood and Coastal Committees; and for connected purposes. All of this is, of course, particularly important in the light of recent weather conditions and flood problems.

The Offender Rehabilitation Bill completed its 3<sup>rd</sup> reading in the House of Commons on 14 January and was sent to the House of Lords. This is a Bill to make provision about the release, and supervision after release, of offenders, to make provision about the extension period for extended sentence prisoners, to make provision about community orders and suspended sentence orders, and for connected purposes.

On 13 January the Foreign Secretary made a Statement on the deepening crisis in Syria. He highlighted the urgent need for the UK to continue working to reach a political settlement to the conflict, thereby also protecting UK national security. We must also make every effort to alleviate the desperate humanitarian suffering, and to prevent the further use of chemical weapons. The Foreign Secretary set out the ongoing work and confirmed that the peace conference on Syria will begin later this month. He also explained the importance of UK financial support which has helped the UN strengthen security and humanitarian coordination mechanisms inside Syria. Additionally, UK aid to the World Food Programme has enabled the organisation to enhance its food storage facilities and security management procedures. This effort is in response to a catastrophe that has seen more than 100,000 people killed. In

addition, the number of refugees has exceeded 2.2 million, more than half of whom are children and 6.5 million people have had to flee their homes and are now displaced within Syria.

Further details of the proposed legislation and the work of Parliament is available on the parliament website at [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk). As always I am interested to hear views on the proposals before the House.

For more information my website is regularly updated and offers information on my work both in Westminster and in the constituency. The address is [www.johnhowellmp.com](http://www.johnhowellmp.com) In addition, if you would like to subscribe to my free e-newsletter please e mail me at: [john.howell@oxfordshireconservatives.com](mailto:john.howell@oxfordshireconservatives.com) You can also follow me on twitter @johnhowellmp or on Facebook [www.facebook.com/john.howellmp](http://www.facebook.com/john.howellmp)

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## **St. Helen's Church**

### **From the Vicar**

I wonder if you have ever been given the 'Cold shoulder'? Or, even worse, given the cold shoulder to somebody else. Do you know what it means? To give somebody the cold shoulder means to act towards them in an unfriendly manner - to treat them indifferently as if they don't matter - to make it plain, we have little time for them.

This strange expression comes from the time of the knights in the Middle Ages. In those days, it was expected that a knight would always give a welcome to a fellow knight who might visit him. He also was expected to provide board and lodge, the best food and drink he could provide and do it for as long as the knight chose to stay.

Sometimes a visiting knight stayed too long so the knight instructed the kitchen staff no longer to serve the best food and drink but to offer in its place a cold shoulder of mutton which was regarded as a meal only fit for servants. He knew it was time to go.

One person who never gave the cold shoulder was Jesus Christ, people who were sick or anxious came

to Him. He did not turn them away. "He that comes to me, I shall in no wise cast out", said Jesus.

Jesus Christ once said, "I am the door". It is an open door our Lord offers, we can come to Him at any time, we will not be turned away. The doors of our Churches are also open doors; if you have not worshipped with us for a long time or never at all, come on in. I assure you that you will not be given the cold shoulder but a warm welcome.

Michael Grantham  
The Vicarage  
Buryhook Corner  
Holton  
Oxford  
OX331PY

[Michael\\_grantham@o2.co.uk](mailto:Michael_grantham@o2.co.uk)

### **St. Helen's Church News**

We had a joyful service on Christmas Eve with the church filled to the brim.

This was preceded a couple of weeks earlier by a workshop for the children to make Christingles for a service in church the following day. We are planning to hold these workshops occasionally in church on a Saturday to make contributions to church festivals. The next one will be on Easter Saturday. Now we have the heating installed it has made winter events in church such as these so much more enjoyable.

Since Christmas we have held our first Family Service. This was enjoyed by the usual congregation and it was lovely to see some new faces too. This service will be held now every month on the third Sunday.

The Annual General Meeting of the Parochial Church Council will be held in the Old Rectory at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 11 March. All churchgoers are welcome to attend and contribute their views. Before this we shall be updating our Electoral Roll and anyone wanting to come on the Roll should complete a form which will be available in the church or at The Old Rectory.

Moo Nowell-Smith,  
Churchwarden  
The Old Rectory, Albury, Thame,  
Oxfordshire OX9 2LP  
01844 339650  
[moo@nowell-smith.com](mailto:moo@nowell-smith.com)

Church Services	St Helen's Church, Albury
<b>2 February</b>	9.30am Matins BCP with Robert Hutton
<b>9 February</b>	9.30am Holy Communion BCP with Reverend Michael Grantham
<b>16 February</b>	9.30am Family Service with Reverend Michael Grantham
<b>23 February</b>	9.30am Holy Communion with Reverend Michael Grantham
<b>2 March</b>	9.30am Matins BCP
<b>9 March</b>	9.30am Holy Communion BCP with Reverend Michael Grantham
<b>16 March</b>	9.30am Family Service with Reverend Michael Grantham
<b>23 March</b>	9.30am Holy Communion Common Worship with Reverend Michael Grantham
<b>30 March</b>	9.30am Cluster Service for Mothering Sunday

## Waterstock & Tiddington W.I.



Our Christmas meeting was very festive, enhanced by the lovely decorations already in the Hall. Red tablecloths and flower arrangements, together with delicious eats supplied by members made it a joyous occasion. The entertainers Keith Harris and Lesley Morris brought us the atmosphere of the Old Time Music Halls with their appropriate costumes and familiar songs from the Shows.

In January Michael Palmer's travelogue of the Falklands and Antarctica showed what extreme weather conditions prevail. He had been there as an experienced meteorological man, measuring all the vagaries of the weather at all seasons of the year.

On 13 February, we will learn about leisure and entertainment in Victorian and Edwardian Oxford with Liz Woolley and there will be a bring and buy stall. This meeting is also the time to consider the make-up of the committee for the beginning of the new W.I. year in April. Please consider being nominated as we are getting short of numbers and fresh ideas would be welcome.

On 13 March, our Annual Meeting will give us a chance to look back over the past year and all the fun and friendship we have had. There will also be a preview of the programme of speakers for next year. The competition for an item of fruit or vegetables begins with the letter "H" in February and "I" in March.

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.

For a subscription of £34.70, members receive a County Newsletter 11 times a year and the National "W.I. Life" magazine 8 times a year. There are also many outings and events to choose from at a reduced rate.

Zena Knight

Tel: 01844 339340

Email: [zenaknight42@btinternet.com](mailto:zenaknight42@btinternet.com)

## Tiddington Village Hall

All is quiet with the Hall at the moment. Some electrical improvement work has been done and redecorating is in progress.

Tot Boswell

Village Hall Chairman

01844 338146



January 2014

A Happy New Year to all.

It has been a very wet time but our ground has not flooded as much as in previous times. This must be due to the drainage work that has been carried out. We hope it dries up soon so we can start work on it for the season. The preliminary round of the National Knockout is 13 April, so not that far away, although we can but hope for a bye in that round as it is very early in the season.

Darts and Crib continue during the winter, with mixed results, but plenty of laughter. As well as the monthly coffee mornings, which are still proving popular, the Club is being used regularly on Tuesdays and Saturday daytime, by the Umpires Association for their training courses.

Our AGM will be coming up shortly and members will be notified in advance of the date. We are always looking for new members to help run the Club. Memberships will become due on 1 April and we always welcome new members.

We have planned a Race Night on Saturday, 15 March. This is always well supported and one of our major fundraisers in the year. We have to raise funds to pay back our loans for the building of the bar extension.

Many thanks to the team in getting this finished, it makes a great difference.

Congratulations to the 20 boys and girls who have been selected for Winter Training with our County/District squads from Under 16 to Under 11 (two only being 8) a credit to our coaching team. Looks good for the future of the Club.

We look forward to welcoming all members to the Club during the winter season. A full Sky TV package and free Wifi are available.

Lesley Pykett  
07762 572558

the charity for  
your community



### **OFGEM last week announced that finding a better deal on your energy is getting easier. What does that mean for your energy bills?**

A ban on complex tariffs is now in force to help consumers get the best deals, claims the energy regulator. In the biggest shake up to the market since competition was introduced in the late nineties, the reforms aim to make the energy market simpler, clearer and fairer. Households who have never switched could save more than £200 per year.

#### **The reforms**

Suppliers can now only offer customers a maximum of four tariffs for gas and four for electricity. This means that some existing tariffs will be withdrawn. These

changes make it far easier for consumers to compare and find the best deals. Complex deals like charging high rates for energy which then fall as more is used will no longer be allowed.

Energy firms must structure their tariffs in two tiers, as a single unit rate and a standing charge. The unit rate is the cost for each unit of electricity or gas, the standing charge is a fixed amount and is a way to recover the costs of getting the gas and electricity to your home. Suppliers will be allowed to set their standing charge at zero. Lower standing charges can benefit people who do not use a lot of gas or electricity, higher standing charges benefit people who use more. We expect that suppliers will offer different combinations, so shop around to make sure you get the best deal for you.

Customers on fixed term deals will remain on that tariff until it finishes - increasing those prices during the contract period is now banned and automatically rolling householders on to another fixed-term offer will no longer be allowed. At this end point, suppliers should automatically put you on the cheapest standard tariff available and it's worth shopping around to check this is the best deal.

If you have a standard tariff, which is a continuing deal that doesn't have a fixed end date, you will be contacted by your supplier if the terms and conditions are changing. If the tariff is withdrawn you will be moved to their cheapest equivalent by the summer. This is also the case for special tariffs, for example deals for pensioners, though your supplier may choose to retain this as one of their four tariffs.

April will see further reforms to give consumers clearer, more personalised information on energy. Suppliers will for the first time have to write to customers regularly informing them which of their tariffs is cheapest.

The Citizens Advice consumer service can provide general advice about what the reforms mean. If you have a question about what will be happening to your gas and electricity tariffs and when, contact your supplier. You can find out more about tariffs and how to compare prices for gas and electricity from Adviceguide, the self-help website of Citizens Advice.  
[http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/consumer\\_e/energy\\_contracts\\_explained.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/consumer_e/energy_contracts_explained.htm)  
[http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/consumer\\_e/comparing\\_prices\\_for\\_gas\\_or\\_electricity.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/consumer_e/comparing_prices_for_gas_or_electricity.htm)

**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)**

**Appointments: 01844 217186**

**Website: [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)**

**General information: [www.thamecab.org](http://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  
Opening Hours**

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

The Merry Bells, High Street, Wheatley

Tel: 01865 875267

Email: [wheatley.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:wheatley.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Wheatley library has been through, and will continue to go through changes over the next few months. We welcome two new members of staff this month, Elizavette and Helen, who will be joining Peggy and Wendy as regular faces behind the counter; while Dominique will be acting in a managerial role while our manager, Anne, is on extended leave. Do come in and say hello.

We will gradually begin the transition to one-third volunteers during the course of this year and as we do so we will do our best to maintain the standards and services of the Oxfordshire County Council library service.

Our regular events include Rhymetimes on Friday mornings at 11.00am for babies and toddlers and our Lively Library Club on the second Wednesday of each month at 2:15pm.

On 12 February John Halliday will talk about the Wheatley Village archive and Memories of the First World War. You could contribute to this event by bringing along any interesting information about experiences of family members.

On 12 March Caroline Dalton will talk about local landmark Wheatley Windmill.

These events are free but we do ask that attendants be members of the library (it is very easy to sign up while you are there if necessary) and also that you take the opportunity to borrow some books/audio-books/dvds.

We have new and different library items moving through the county libraries all the time which means each time you visit, there will be something to catch your eye.

We also have computer and internet access, photocopiers, a scanner and PC tuition can be arranged if you are interested.

Wrap up warm for the winter months and we hope to see you soon at Wheatley Library.

Wendy Stanton

**GREAT HASELEY AND DISTRICT  
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

February 2014

There is much evidence in the garden of the onset of spring, but we have not yet had snow so winter is sure to return. The days are becoming noticeably longer and the sun stronger. The gardener in me is longing to get started, but I often find it difficult to venture outside if the sun is not shining. For all you similarly reluctant gardeners I find the answer is to make a coffee to warm my hands and put on lots of layers so that I feel toasty warm to start with. Once you get started you can shed the layers gradually as you warm up. A good piece of advice I received was to limit the amount you attempt in one go so that it is easily doable and then if you do more than that there is a sense of achievement rather than a sense of failure because you haven't finished the work you planned.

Important work to complete soon is the clearing of decaying vegetable matter in areas which are planted with early bulbs; these are already through the ground and are easy to damage by the careless application of a boot. However I find that even when trampled this growth is astonishingly tolerant. If emerging bulbs are covered in detritus from last year they will not provide you with such a good show. A visit to a local ornamental garden will give you an idea of how beautiful early bulbs can look against the bare soil. I confess I have nowhere near completed the

clearing up and indeed have not actually planted all my bulbs yet, so you are not alone!

Garden centres have plenty of plants for sale that are in flower at the moment; they always sell plants when they look their best. It is easy to fall into the trap of only visiting garden centres in spring and early summer which, if you haven't planned your planting (and that is most of us, including me), can result in your garden only having colour and interest at those times of year. It is desirable to buy some plants when they are showing colour, whether that be flower, stem or leaf, so that you know what you are getting. Currently the plants for sale include Hellebores which can be a rather unpleasant muddy pale pink; buying now means you can choose the exact colour you want. There will also be pots of hardy Cyclamen corm with its tiny pink or white flowers and pots of bulbs. From these you can plant an area which will give you colour for several weeks which will be repeated every year with only a little effort. If you can identify the times when your garden has little of interest then you can gradually add plants through the year to address this. To reduce the cost talk to gardening friends who will usually be very happy to help if they can. Also, visit village fetes in the summer and look at plants that are not in flower and, at first sight, may appear dull, ask questions about these plants and you could well come away with a real bargain which less canny shoppers have missed.

Happy planting!

Liz Moyses  
Membership secretary  
[liz@moyses.org](mailto:liz@moyses.org)  
01844 279875

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

Thank you to those members who have already paid their subscription for 2014 and may I remind other members that your subscription is now due and will be gratefully received.

### Should we be burning wood, gas or coal?

Fracking has support in government and here's a possible reason. According to the government's statistics, North Sea gas production is in rapid decline, falling by nearly two thirds since 2000. In 2012 we imported about four times more gas than we exported, mostly from Norway and Qatar. Of the electricity we used in 2012, 39% started life as coal, 28% as gas, 19% as nuclear and 11% renewables. A rise in wholesale gas prices saw energy suppliers

switching back to coal. Yet, the government wants CO<sub>2</sub> down 80% by 2050. What's to do? 27% of UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from our homes. We all need electricity and winter warmth. Fracking could be an answer, although the film Gasland points to potential downsides. What options do homeowners have? Some are switching to a 100% renewable electricity tariff. Others are generating their own electricity and hot water with solar panels. Some are even using waste wood for space heating. The most determined are reducing their home's space heating requirement, so insulating themselves from future energy price hikes.

To find out more about these low carbon trailblazers, visit [www.superhomes.org.uk](http://www.superhomes.org.uk).



*SuperHomers Paul and Celia Sousek have reduced their fossil fuel use to near zero. Photo courtesy of [www.superhomes.org.uk](http://www.superhomes.org.uk)*



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