

# TIDDINGTON WITH ALBURY & MILTON COMMON NEWSLETTER

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

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2009

## From the Editor

Best wishes for the New Year.

These coming months seem to be quiet but do support the regular activities such as yoga and karate.

The Police are holding a surgery in February (see page 5 for details).

Zena Knight

### Poppy Collection 2008

Boxes in The Fox, Garage and Caravan Centre, plus all the houses visited by Pam, Joan and Freda in "Tiddington with Albury" raised the grand total of £392.76 for 2008.

Thanks to all.

Freda Brown, Pam Byrne and Joan Manning

Milton Common NHW  
(West Side) and Sandy Lane



Welcome to more new members, we are very near 100% membership.

My new Deputy is Debbie Devine. Now Debbie is on board we will try to arrange a social event for the summer.

A message from Area Commander, Chief Inspector Andy Boyd - "Thank you for your continued help and support in reducing crime across South Oxfordshire. As a result of your efforts and those of our partners we continue to live in one of the safest areas of the country. May I take this opportunity to wish

you, your families, and all your scheme members a Happy New Year."

Thank you to all dog walkers and their pooches that helped with Dog Watch over the festive season.

Elaine Horne

NHW Co-ordinator M/C and Sandy Lane

01844 279520

### Tiddington NHW

It is uncomfortable to hear that the village shop in Stanton St John was robbed last week and realise that there are criminals looking for opportunities and planning such attacks.

If you do see or hear anything suspicious do not take matters into your own hands, but report the matter immediately.

The telephone number to contact the police is  
**0845 8 505 505.**

By being alert and watching out for your neighbours in the village you are providing a very valuable service.

If you would like to know more about the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, please contact me by email at [meteorltd@btinternet.com](mailto:meteorltd@btinternet.com) or by phone on 07710 620820.

Thank you.

Chris Williams

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## From the Parish Clerk

**Drainage** - in the last newsletter, I reported that a survey had revealed that there were major problems with the drainage system from the Village Hall to the outfall on the other side of the A418. I have asked if there is any chance of the necessary work being done before the end of March, but am told that the necessary work cannot be undertaken until after April, in the next financial year, due to budget constraints.

**Sandy Lane flooding** - I have also asked what is happening about the water running down Sandy Lane, which has resulted in thick, dangerous ice in recent weeks. I am told that this is being looked into by Tim Wilde from Oxfordshire Highways, as well as the icy corner at Draycot.

**Ditching and waterways** - some work has been done on ditching and waterways, following the resolution by the Parish Council to allocate monies for this purpose. Monies have also been budgeted for 2009-10 to carry on this work.

**Station Yard housing** - you will have noticed that work on the Station Yard site continues apace. The Parish Council was asked to suggest a name for the road, and Station Yard was

### Tiddington with Albury Parish Council Members

Chair	John Nowell-Smith	339650
	Econ.development, businesses	
Vice Chair	Elaine Horne	279520
	Planning, highways and Milton Common	
Councillor	Ken Field	339671
	Housing, planning, building & controls	
Councillor	Zena Knight	339340
	Planning; recreation, arts, grants	
Councillor	Brian Price	339977
	Health & safety	
Councillor	Janet Willis	339415
	Environment, conservation, recycling, waste	
Clerk	Ken Poyser	339216
	Rosewood, Ickford Road, Tiddington	

suggested, but I am informed by SODC that it is to be called Stephenson's Copse. So much for consultation!

**Councillor resignation** - Janet Willis has tendered her resignation from the Parish Council with effect from 31 March. Thank you, Janet, for your input and effort over the last few years. If you feel that you could fill her shoes, please let me or any member of the Parish Council know.

Ken Poyser - Parish Clerk

## Local Government Act 1972

### Tiddington with Albury

### Parish Council

## Notice of vacancy in the office of Parish Councillor

Notice is hereby given that due to the resignation of Janet Willis, a casual vacancy has occurred in the office of councillor for the above Parish.

The vacancy will be filled by election, if within fourteen days of the date of this notice, any ten local government electors for the said parish submit a written request to the Returning Officer, Council Offices, Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, OX10 8PH.

In computing the fourteen days, a Saturday or Sunday shall be disregarded.

If no written request for an election is received by the Returning Officer within the time specified, the vacancy will be filled by co-option by the Parish Council.

Dated this first day of February, 2009

Signed Ken Poyser  
Clerk to the Parish Council

## From your Chairman

Welcome to 2009.

Very sadly Janet Willis has tendered her resignation as Parish Councillor, to take effect in two month's time. She will be much missed. We need a replacement and any volunteers should contact me or Ken Poyser.

As is mentioned elsewhere, possibly the most dramatic bit of news is that SODC is intent on naming the development at the Station Yard "Stephenson's Copse". I have objected strongly, both as your Chairman and your District Councillor. Any suggestions for alternative names would be welcomed.

Also, SODC is introducing new schedules for waste collection. It has issued a press release which seems to say that food waste will only be collected once a fortnight. I believe this to be incorrect and it will continue to be collected weekly.

OCC, as the highways authority, has been carrying out various repairs to some of our roads. Generally speaking these are not satisfactory and I will be taking the matter up with them.

With great regret I have to announce the death of Elsie Newitt at the age of 89, having lived in the village for more than 50 years.

John Nowell-Smith  
339650

## From your District Councillor

Relevant news from the SODC has been dealt with in the Chairman's letter. Otherwise Council business has concentrated on finalising arrangements for joint management with the Vale of White Horse District Council.

There has also been a comprehensive review of flooding problems.

John Nowell-Smith  
339650

### Green Bins for recycling

Remember these may be collected free  
from Tiddington Garage

### 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.

**FREE!**

## SWAP SHOP

**Saturday 7 March, 9.30 – 12.00**

**Merry Bells, Wheatley**

**Bring useful old stuff you no longer need;  
take away FREE stuff that is useful to you.**

**If you are bringing stuff it  
needs to be in the hall by 10.30am**

**You can now bring electrical items!**

We have a notice board to advertise 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, old mobile phones, Tetrapaks, plastic milk bottle tops, batteries and foil milk bottle tops for us to recycle.

Refreshments available (small charge)

Run by Wheatley Community Action Group  
[www.wheatleycag.org](http://www.wheatleycag.org)

Reuse, recycle and keep stuff out of landfill!

## From your County Councillor

### Accident Statistics Show Welcome Reduction

Oxfordshire County Council has targets to reduce accidents on its roads over the period from 2000 to 2010 by 50% for all fatal and serious injuries, 60% for fatal and serious injuries involving children between 0 and 15 and 20% for all slight injuries. Because there can be variations from year to year the targets are based on the average annual injuries for 1994 to 1998. The latest figures available up to and including 2007 show that good progress has been made as the following statistics show:

#### All Injuries

	Fatal	Serious	Total	Slight	Total
2000	63	453	516	2923	3439
2007	34	340	374	2276	2650
Target 2010			245	2223	2468

#### Injuries (0-15 children)

	Fatal	Serious	Total	Slight	Total
2000	4	36	40	289	329
2007	3	21	24	205	229
Target 2010			20		

The nature of road accidents is that there can be large variations from year to year. However the downward trend towards the 2010 targets is very encouraging, although there is no room for complacency and efforts are continually being made to reduce accidents on our roads.

### Future Temporary Closure of A329 at Milton Common.

The saga continues! UK Highways, following further investigations, have concluded that the deterioration in the bridge over the motorway is not as far advanced as was originally feared and that a fuel pipe contained in the bridge plans does not actually exist. They have sent a report to independent specialist consultants for review and comment. They are now saying that it is unlikely that work will start before the Summer/Autumn of this year. The good

news is that they do not expect the same level of disruption to traffic as was first reported when the repairs finally commence. Does any one of my age recall "The Continuing Story of Peyton Place?"

### County Four-Year-Olds to Start School Full Time.

From January 2009 all children are entitled to a full-time school place for the whole of the academic year in which they turn five. Previously they were only entitled to a half-time place from the September after their fourth birthday, which then became a full-time place in the term after their fifth birthday.

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 (20 January 2009)

**Monthly Farmers' Markets**  
**Great Haseley Village Hall – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday**  
**Tetsworth Village Hall – 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday**



**THAMES VALLEY**  
**POLICE**

**0845 8 505 505**

**The single number for non-emergency calls**

**THAME POLICE STATION**  
**OPENING HOURS**

**Mon & Fri 0900 – 1700**

**Tue, Wed & Thurs 0800 - 2000**

## From the Vicar

This month's magazine letter is written by Stevie Cross. During this year the letter will be written in turns by one of the team vicars from the Wheatley Team Ministry. This will give us a lot more variety in our church contributions.

Christmas and New Year celebrations are well behind us and I hope that you all had a happy and healthy time. The beginning of February sees the last of the church's Christmas celebrations, the final mention of the baby Jesus in the bible.

Candlemas - 2 February - is one of those lesser known events and sitting here in the middle of January with the heating on I am reminded of the old rhyme:-

*If Candlemas day be fair and bright,  
Winter will have another flight.  
If Candlemas day be shower and rain,  
Winter is gone and will not come again*

"Candlemas" is the day for observing the ritual purification of Mary forty days after the birth of Jesus as well as the presentation of Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem as required by Jewish law (Luke 2:21-40 & Lev.12). It is celebrated at the same time as the Celtic festival of Imbolc which had great significance in the rural calendar, because the date lies half way between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, so it marks the day upon which winter is half over!

The Mass of Lighted Candles can be traced to at least 543 AD and is mentioned by Bede. It was at the presentation of Jesus in the temple that the old man Simeon moved by the Holy Spirit came to speak with the holy family the words which have become an important part of evening prayer, the Nunc Dimittis, where he refers to the infant Christ, "*A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*"

We have enjoyed the mystery of candlelit carol services, Advent candles etc., but must not forget that Jesus, the light of the world, is for all times and all places, not just this time of year. In the old days at Candlemas huge bundles of candles would be stacked in church waiting to be blessed, enough candles to see the church alight throughout the year. We too are called to see that the light of the love of God is shining in our parishes throughout the year.

With the current economic climate, job losses and falling savings, it does seem a very dark time of year and for many people money worries are piling up. There may not be very much we can practically do to help but often a smile, a word and a prayer can help to bring some light into a dark situation. So let's not worry what the weather is doing on 2 February, but as we leave the baby for this year, think how we will follow the man he became. If we can strive to follow the two great commandments to love God and love our neighbour then the warmth of God's love can be spread around.

I pray that we, like Simeon and Anna may know the glory of the Living Lord and reflect his light in the year ahead.

Stevie Cross

## From the Registers

### Baptism

**28 December 2008**

Finn Haines

Welcome to the Lord's Family

### Funeral Service

**16 January 2009**

Elsie Newitt

May she rest in peace

<b>Church Services</b>	<b>St Helen's Church, Albury</b>
<b>1 February</b>	9.30am Morning Prayer with Caroline King
<b>8 February</b>	9.30am Holy Communion with Caroline King
<b>15 February</b>	9.30am Morning Prayer with Caroline King
<b>22 February</b>	9.30am Holy Communion with Caroline King
<b>1 March</b>	9.30am Morning Prayer
<b>8 March</b>	9.30am Holy Communion
<b>15 March</b>	9.30am Morning Prayer
<b>22 March</b>	9.30am Holy Communion
<b>29 March (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday)</b>	9.30am Cluster Service with Caroline King

## **Carol Evening**

The proceeds from the Carol Evening, in aid of Cancer Research UK, amounted to £301.30. Unfortunately, due to the cold evening and the amount of colds showing signs, the numbers were down on last year.

However, thank you to all who supported this project.

Anne Edwards

## **Waterstock & Tiddington W.I.**

We had a very convivial evening at the Oxford Belfry Hotel in December for our Christmas meal. It was good to see so many members were able to come and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere.

In January members of Wheatley WI joined us to see John Hunt show the inner workings of the two organs he had made and demonstrate the music which came from the paper rolls.

On 12 February, John Fieldsend will talk on Kinder Transport and the competition is for memorabilia of World War 2.

Our annual meeting will be held on 12 March. This will be the time we choose a new committee and so at the February meeting we will ask for nominations. We would welcome some new faces on to the committee.

Activities being organised by the County Federation include a visit to Chichester and

Petworth House in April and a day out at Denman College, with lunch and a guided tour in March. The annual council meeting at Oxford Town Hall on 24 March includes the guest speaker, Sheila Dibnah, who will talk about "Life with Steeplejack Fred". Apparently it is a talk with a difference and much humour.

We look forward to seeing you on the second Thursday of the month for our regular meetings at 7.30pm in Tiddington Village Hall and new members are made very welcome.

Zena Knight  
Tel: 339340

## **Tiddington Village Hall**

I hope 2009 is treating you well so far.

In December we held two events, both of which were a huge success. On the 13<sup>th</sup> we had the Annual Christmas Dinner and Dance followed a few days later by the now famous Christmas Bingo, which raised over £600.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank everyone for coming and, in particular, all the people who helped collect the brilliant prizes for the bingo. Once again we were overwhelmed by the generosity of the villagers. I would also like to thank Peter Bernstrom from the Oxford Belfry Hotel, who arranged a special voucher for dinner, bed and breakfast at the hotel that was auctioned on the night, adding even more to the total. Don't

forget there are regular Bingo sessions in the Hall throughout the year.

The Christmas dinner gave us the perfect opportunity to try out and show off the new kitchen, which we are all so proud of. It has been hard work and thanks to the generosity of the skills of many villagers, we've finally made it happen and on budget! When you are next at the Hall, feel free to pop your head round the door and take a look.

Then in January the Hall hosted a *Live & Local* event supported by SODC. The Steve Steinhaus Swing Band put on a terrific performance attended by more than 70 people. The number of people attending was a welcome surprise as we were worried about numbers so soon after Christmas. I'd like to apologise to people who initially found it difficult to get a seat! Based on what people have said to me the event was a welcome addition to what is often a very quiet month.

Following the success of this event, please make a note in your diaries for **Saturday, 25 April**, when we will welcome **The Daniel Smith Blues Band**, also under this fantastic *Live & Local* scheme. Tickets go on sale in March, but if you want to reserve yours now please call me (339430/278534) or send an email to [alan@medialane.co.uk](mailto:alan@medialane.co.uk)

With best wishes for 2009.

Alan Stratton, Chairman  
01844 339430/278534

### Yoga Sessions

Tiddington Village Hall

Thursday mornings, 10.30am

All classes are reasonably priced and suitable for everyone. They are based on drop-in sessions.

Yvonne Cartwright  
01844 279205



A quiet time for the Club at the moment but lots of news to come in the next edition of the Newsletter!

Gareth D. Munson (Chairman)

## Wheatley & Chalgrove Neighbourhood Policing update

### Wheatley issues

Due to reports of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in the area, three youths were signed up Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's). These contracts specify what behaviour the youths carry out which is unacceptable and advises them of what they should not do and where they should not go. Local officers monitor these youths and their ABC's and if a youth breaches their ABC then arrangements can be made to apply for an Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) from the courts.

In January the Wheatley Area Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) carried out public consultation around the area to find out what local issues the police and other agencies within the NAG need to be dealing with.

Currently Wheatley NAG priorities are speeding, parking and vandalism to telephone boxes and bus shelters.

Local officers are happy to report that incidents of vandalism to telephone boxes and bus shelters have reduced to almost nothing over the last year, and the issues of parking and particularly speeding will be tackled again in the new year, in part by using our new SID.

### Speed Enforcement/Road safety

Local officers will soon be using our new SID (Speed Indicator Device). It will be used at

numerous locations around the area on a regular basis. Drivers who drive past the SID at excessive speed will have their car details taken and these details will be forwarded to Thames Valley Police roads policing. First time offenders will receive a warning letter which will be recorded by Thames Valley Police. Further incidents by the same vehicle will be recorded and may result in formal action.

### **Community Safety/Engagement**

Your local Neighbourhood police team are in the process of re-launching a new and revitalised country watch scheme across the area. Farms and other agricultural premises and businesses will be contacted by local officers with a view to having the owners sign up to Countrywatch. This is a free service maintained and co-ordinated by the police. Farms and other agricultural premises, etc. can sign up to Countrywatch free of charge and have their contact details placed on a secure email system. As and when Thames Valley Police receive intelligence or other useful information to farmers, etc. this information will be distributed to Countrywatch members via the email messaging system. Countrywatch members will also have a local police contact who they can discuss issues with and receive free crime reduction advice. Members will also receive signs which can be placed at suitable points on their premises which indicate they are members of Countrywatch and these signs will hopefully deter casual offenders/trespassers. The paperwork required consists of one form which takes 2 minutes to complete and the visiting police staff will even put the signs up for you! Please support this initiative to make farming and agricultural premises safer.

If you own a farm or other agricultural premises in the Wheatley area and surrounding villages then please contact PCSO C9814 Ken Cooney on 0845 8 505505 for more information or to arrange signing up to the scheme.

### **Police surgeries**

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009, Tiddington Village Hall (in conjunction with the Post Office) between 1.30pm-3.00pm

This surgery is an ideal opportunity for local residents to speak to their local police officers and PCSO's about any local issues. No appointment is necessary, just turn up and speak to your local officers.

If anyone would like any crime reduction advice then please call us on 0845 8 505 505 and ask to speak to your local crime reduction adviser.

This is also the number for contacting your local neighbourhood team.

Ken Cooney  
0845 8 505 505

### **M40 Chilterns Environmental Group January 2009 Report**

#### **Junction 7 Bridgeworks**

John Gardner of the Highways Agency together with UK Highways has now completed their reworking of the M40 Junction 7 Bridgeworks programme.

It's apparently no longer necessary to replace the surface or deck of the bridge; they merely have to renew the joints in the surface, this is in order to make them waterproof. This work will take them just a week and can be undertaken without the bridge closure. They will merely use temporary traffic lights to control the traffic flow across the bridge in one direction at any one time. This is expected to take place in the summer of 2009.

In the Autumn, once they are sure that the remedial work is successful in stopping the water penetration of the bridge piers, they will proceed with the works to repair the piers themselves. This will be undertaken without dismantling them. This is likely to involve temporary closure of the M40 Motorway, probably overnight each time, necessary with no traffic management scheme in place.

### Milton Common Noise Barriers

Lord Andrew Adonis, Minister of Transport has responded to an enquiring letter about the Highways Agency's continuing work on the study of noise mitigation measures on the M40 at Milton Common. His letter of reply stated:

"The proposals for the bridgeworks at Junction 7 of the M40 have undergone significant changes since the M40 CEG and Tom Harris' meeting on 26 March 2008.

A fundamental review of the works required to the structure has established that the bridge deck does not need to be replaced as was previously thought. Instead its condition can be maintained by remedial works. In consequence, the Highways Agency no longer envisages the need for traffic management on the M40, and hence the potential opportunity to reduce costs by installing noise mitigation measures at Junction 7 in parallel to the forthcoming bridgeworks is no longer an option."

What Lord Adonis failed to recognise in the M40 CEG's Scoping Study, is that Noise Absorbent Barriers can be installed inside the existing barriers on the West Side of Milton Common without the requirement for traffic management. To the East or London bound side of the bridge, a barrier can also be installed on private land adjoining the motorway side. In the absence of an existing protective barrier, for safety reasons the hard shoulder should be closed during the work.

### Help from our County Councillor

On a positive note, David Turner, our County Councillor, is working very closely with our group. David is investigating a joint funding scheme with either the SODC or County Council or both, contributing towards the costs of providing absorbent environmental noise barriers along the M40 at Milton Common. A similar joint funding scheme was proposed, submitted and approved for the A404M - M4 Junction 8/9 to Maidenhead Thicket when this bypass was constructed back in the late 1990's.

If David manages to persuade either of these authorities to trump up some cash, our chances of obtaining Effective Noise Mitigation Measures at Milton Common will improve.

To conclude, our current chances of having Effective Noise Mitigation Measures installed at Milton Common have now greatly diminished following the letter from Lord Adonis.

The impact of the Highways Agency decision to suddenly change the repair status of this bridge from "urgent repairs needed" to "no longer required", together with the greatly reduced time scale to undertake the repairs has removed our justification to install fencing whilst the bridge was being repaired. Our MP John Howell has been asked to discuss how the bridge repair status changed so dramatically with Lord Adonis.

Tony Giddy,  
M40 CEG Representative, Milton Common  
E-mail: [TonyGiddy@aol.com](mailto:TonyGiddy@aol.com)

<b>Wheatley Library</b>	
<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: <a href="mailto:wheatley.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk">wheatley.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>	

<b>Thame &amp; District Citizens Advice Bureau Opening Hours</b>		
<b>Monday, Tuesday, Friday</b>	<b>9.30 - 4.00</b>	<b>Open door</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>9.30 - 1.00</b>	<b>Specialist debt clinic (appointment)</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>9.30 - 1.00</b>	<b>Telephone advice</b>
<b>Advice line: 01844 214827</b>		
<b>Appointments line: 01844 217186</b>		
<b>A Drop-in session is held at the offices of the United Reformed Church, Crown Square, Wheatley on Monday mornings from 10.00am</b>		

## Newington Nurseries

### Perfect Start

Once the decorations have been packed away for another year, it's time to get your gardening head on again. Early season planting is a great way of getting everyone in the family into the spirit of the growing year. If you can, get to work outside, otherwise spread some newspapers out on the floor and get ready to plant. Visit the nursery for containers, compost and some beautiful plants for potting-up. Children will love the idea of "indoor gardening" and planting containers will be a fun and rewarding activity for them if the weather is against you.

*Erica*, or Heath, is the ideal choice of plant. It's an evergreen shrub, similar to Heather (*Calluna*). However, unlike Heather, many species and varieties of *Erica* will tolerate both acid and alkaline conditions, allowing them to be used in a wider variety of garden situations, and if you want to grow them in containers, you can manage the soil conditions to suit those species that must have acid soil. Check when you buy and get the right plants for your situation.

*Erica carnea* (Alpine Heath or Winter Heath) is an excellent choice for getting maximum benefit right now. Flowers may be reddish-purple, pink or white, and foliage is generally mid to dark green but can also be yellow, golden or even orange-red. Look out for *Erica carnea* 'Ann Sparkes' with its rose-pink flowers and dark golden foliage or 'December Red' with its pink to purplish flowers. The flowers of 'Springwood White' are fabulous as is its bright green foliage. 'Foxhollow' is another winner - the colder it gets, the more interesting its foliage becomes. During mild winter weather, foliage is yellow with bronze tips but as temperatures drop, it becomes orange-red.

In their native habitat, *Ericas* grow on sunny slopes bordering pine forests but they are also tolerant of deep shade. Growing them in full sun however enhances their foliage colour. They are extremely hardy, being able to grow in extremely cold and snowy conditions, their flower shoots popping up through blankets of snow. Aftercare is easy. The plants should be pruned immediately after flowering. This can be carried out by lightly trimming with a pair of shears. Simply cut back the flowered stems. This will ensure compact bushy plants.

Heaths make excellent partners for dwarf conifers, either in borders or in large containers. Alternatively, grow them with others of their own kind for a delightful display. They're easy to care for and will give years of enjoyment. Establishing evergreen shrubs and conifers is also a fantastic way of doing your bit to improve air quality. Evergreens have been proven to be effective at removing particulates so that's another powerful reason to get planting.

Colourful, tough and even potentially beneficial to our health (Heaths are very pollution tolerant), evergreen shrubs certainly earn a rightful place in our gardens. The weather can throw anything at us but we all want to kick-off the New Year with some colour and fun. *Erica* is just the plant for this.

Newington Nurseries, Newington, Nr Stadhampton, Oxon,  
OX10 7AW Tel 01865 400533

[www.newington-nurseries.co.uk](http://www.newington-nurseries.co.uk)

## GREAT HASELEY AND DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Tasks for February in the garden include pruning of Wisteria and other garden shrubs, cutting autumn fruiting raspberries to the ground, and tipping back summer fruiting raspberries. In mild areas, towards the end of the month prune roses. For hybrid T roses, cut back the strongest growth to about 23cms, and less vigorous stems to about 15cms. Take out any very old or diseased wood or stems that cross. For floribunda roses, prune vigorous 1 year old shoots between a third and a half and cut back older growth to 15-23cms, and as the plant becomes crowded with stems, cut out 1 or 2 of the older stems. For established shrub roses, cut out about a third of the oldest and woodier stems, to encourage new shoots, and for repeat flowering ramblers, cut out long and overgrown branches whilst they are free of leaves and you can see the stems. Do not prune non-repeat flowering climbers and ramblers.

In the vegetable garden, continue sowing broad beans and shallots towards the end of the month. Carrots, celeriac, lettuces, beetroot and spinach seeds can be sown if milder weather is forecast, or cover with fleece or cloches, and start to chit early potatoes.

## Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum

ONCF brings together organisations, groups and individuals involved in nature conservation and works with them to help co-ordinate and focus our county's approach to biodiversity conservation.

ONCF compiles a FREE, weekly environmental email bulletin with information about local walks, talks, debates, job vacancies, training in species identification/habitat management, etc, anything in fact to do with nature conservation and climate change in Oxfordshire. Anyone can advertise their event for free so long as it is relevant and not for profit. (A small charge is made for items that are relevant and profit making). The bulletin is posted to 1,500 people weekly and is growing rapidly.

To subscribe to the bulletin, see a copy or to discuss submitting an item please email [cynth@oncf.org.uk](mailto:cynth@oncf.org.uk) or call Cynth on 01865 407034 or go to the website [www.oncf.org.uk](http://www.oncf.org.uk).

**SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP!**  
**Luxury shopping day**  
**Oxford Belfry Hotel**  
**November**

The event was well supported and over £4,500 was raised for The Oxford Cancer Centre and Helen and Douglas House. Many thanks to all.

**Thame and District**  
**Citizens Advice Bureau**

There has been a recent rise in enquiries on redundancy. Where an employer is making 20 or more employees redundant, this is called a "collective redundancy". He has to consult with a recognised trade union where there is one. Where there is no recognised trade union, an employer should consult with employee representatives before issuing redundancy notices.

You can only be dismissed because you are genuinely redundant, e.g. your company's business, or part of the business has ceased or diminished, or is expected to diminish. When your employer chooses who to make redundant, it is illegal to use selection criteria which discriminate against anyone because of their age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

To be entitled to statutory redundancy pay you need to have worked for the firm for at least two years continuously since the age of 16 and be an employee. Self-employed people do not qualify.

If you do not meet these conditions, you won't get a statutory redundancy payment, even if you are genuinely redundant. If you are excluded from statutory redundancy pay you may still be entitled to contractual redundancy pay from your employer under your contract.

This is a complicated area and if in this position you should seek help of an experienced adviser. For more information on redundancy go to [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) For advice on redundancy or other problems you can make an appointment to see a CAB adviser in Thame or Wheatley by calling 01844 217186. CAB services are free, confidential and independent.

**Age Concern**  
**Oxfordshire City & County**

Age Concern Oxfordshire, in association with Seamless Relocation Ltd, are pleased to offer older people residing in the county an innovative new service to help with the physical

and emotional aspects of moving home. Launched in May 2008 the service has helped people with all aspects of moving; searching for a more appropriate place to live, buying or selling a property, sorting out and getting rid of unwanted goods and settling in on moving day. A free consultation and quotation gives you ideas and options available if your old home is not right for you.

The need for such a service was recognised following the award winning Rural Needs Survey carried out by Age Concern Oxfordshire last autumn. Mary Daniel, Chief Executive said "It was apparent from many of the respondents that they wanted to move to somewhere more suitable but just couldn't face the thought."

For further details please contact Charmian Boyd from Seamless Relocation on 020 8621 3553 or Age Concern Oxfordshire on 01235 849400.

**South & Vale Carers Centre**  
**Have you time to spare to meet someone new and help them?**

Our scheme to train and place volunteers is gathering speed and we already have a terrific team in the field. But here at the Centre in Didcot we would like to recruit more. Would you be interested in helping out someone caring for a relative in their own home? You would be introduced to a household where the carer and the cared-for person are living, and asked to stay in the home while the carer took some time off: perhaps an hour a month, perhaps an afternoon a week.

This would all start off with an interview for you and references sought, and then a short training course to equip you for any situation and send you free from anxiety into your future career as a volunteer! We will take care in matching volunteers and cared-for people.

Chris is waiting to hear from anyone interested on email [chris@svcarers.org.uk](mailto:chris@svcarers.org.uk) or telephone 01235 510212.