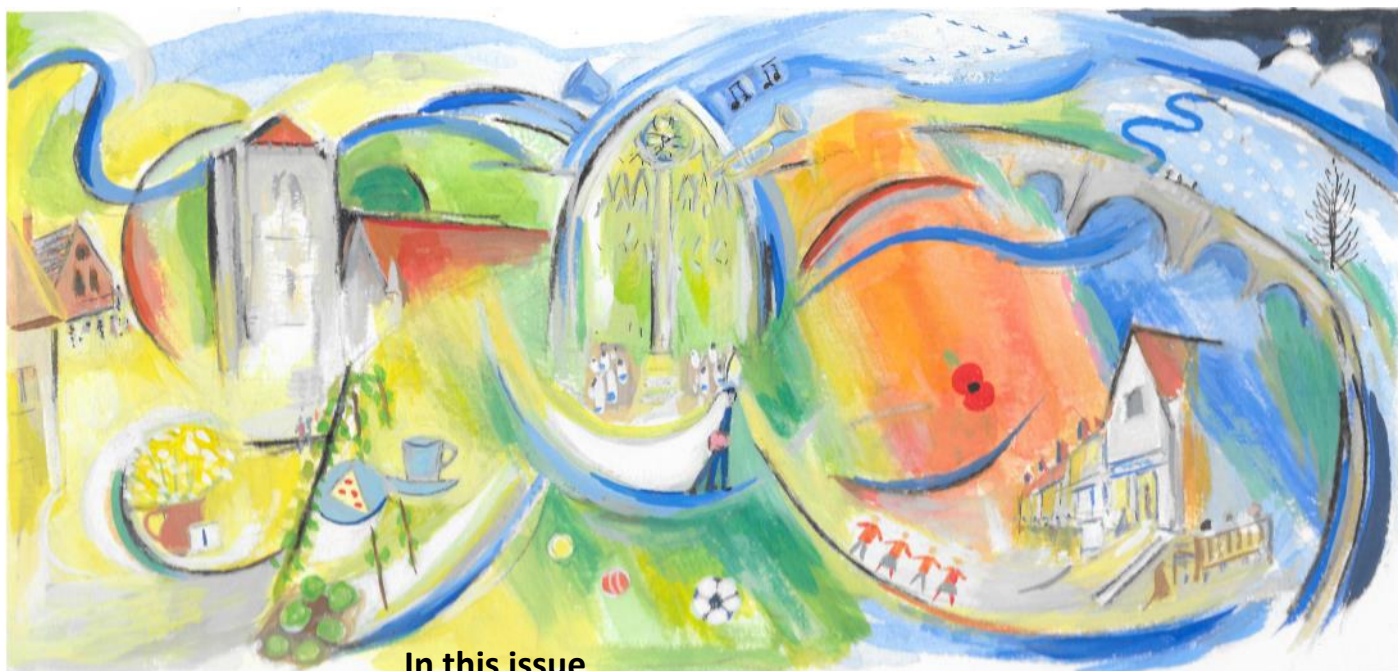


Dorchester News

Free to every home in the parish

May 2020





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Cover picture: Wittenham Clumps, seen from Dorchester.

DoT view

What a strange time. With the lockdown in place, the village has become so quiet. We all know that it must be done and is the only way of getting to the end of the Coronavirus crisis.

And Dorchester has risen to the challenge. The Co-op is doing a marvellous job delivering to those who need it. Well done to everyone there. The Volunteer Group is supporting and helping people in so many ways.

The real heroes of the situation are, of course, the NHS workers who are fighting this war on our behalf. This village is home to a lot of them, so let's make sure we get out on our doorsteps on Thursday evenings and show our appreciation loudly, so that they can know what it means to us all.

But they also serve who only sit and wait, and staying at home, away from other people, is a vital factor in this war. That Dorchester is doing that is reflected in the newsletter, with just two events listed in the Diary page, both online. There are many other things going on online, including Church Services. See the websites of Dorchester Abbey and St Birinus Church for the latest on what is happening and how to access them.

Also in this issue are activities for you to do whilst at home, looking back at previous Mays, and looking forward to the new ownership of Bishop's Court Farm, which should bring us some cheer.

Ian Brace

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It's hard to know

where to start with a letter for publication in four weeks' time because life has changed so rapidly for all of us in the last four weeks. So, first and foremost I hope that in all that has come to pass; in the upheaval and inevitable sadness, you have found some places for comfort and stability. Places to weep and laugh, opportunities to continue friendships in unexpected ways and to discover new ways of doing things that have helped you to adapt in these unusual circumstances.

Our knowledge of the past tells us that in every crisis, in every battle there are heroes – and they are often the same groups of people; first and foremost amongst them those in the medical and caring professions, those who work to put food on our tables from growers to shop-workers and delivery people. In such times the abundance of neighbourly care is always a blessing – if

no surprise! Across the parishes of the Team and throughout the country there are endless examples of the stronger people in communities helping those who are more vulnerable. Two telephone conversations I have had in the last 24 hours have brought home to me what a comfort it is to relatives cut off from their frail loved ones to be able to telephone and find that yes, there are volunteers who will shop for their housebound mother – go to the post office for their vulnerable father.

THANK YOU to all these people in our communities.

By and large in this part of the world we are blessed to live in communities where we know one another well. We are also blessed to live at a time when communications mean that we are not experiencing today the worry that is an even greater burden when one has no

information about loved ones – only our worst imaginations. Instead, I hear accounts of some people finding excitement in mastering technologies they thought were beyond them.

Personally I have been encouraged and supported by those who have found time and space to pray online when they could not come into Church and so, despite the huge challenges and immense sadness of this time for many people there are blessings scattered in the darkness.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Team can I assure you of our prayers. Whilst it has not been, and cannot be for a while, 'business as usual' we are still here for you at the end of the telephone or email. We remain committed to keeping our main point of contact phone number **01865 340007** available at all times.

Closed Churches

It was both a shock and a sense of loss when we discovered that Churches were to be closed to parishioners, visitors and clergy alike during this 'lockdown' period. I am glad to say that deprived of our places the desire to worship and pray has not diminished. The clergy have not stopped being clergy - we're free to visit by phone and to help and pray for you. Please keep in touch as we are trying to keep in touch with you.

Lent Lunches 2020

Because of the current epidemic only three Lunches were held this year.

£270 was raised and is being sent to the charity Yoco (Youth Challenge Oxfordshire) a local charity established to support young people in youth groups following a guided programme designed to help them overcome the problems that they face during teenage years by developing their resilience and confidence.

Many thanks to all who supported the Lunches that were held and to those who offered to host the cancelled ones.

Best wishes to everyone
Meg Fisher and Dawn Dudley

Curate

Rather unexpectedly – but with great delight – we have been offered the opportunity to train another Curate in the team from this summer. Sorrel Wood has been training at Cuddesdon and will join the Team as soon as arrangements can be made about Ordination and removal.

Sorrel writes briefly about herself below :

I was born in Hampshire and my sending church is a rural parish in the north of the Portsmouth Diocese. I have been studying for ministry at Ripon College, Cuddesdon where I served as children's rep, student governor and social secretary. I really enjoyed the breadth and depth of training I received at Cuddesdon and am just completing a Masters in Old Testament, with a particular focus on the book of Esther. Prior to training for ministry I worked as a secondary school English and Drama teacher at schools in Surrey and Cambridge. I am engaged to be married to Andrew Shamel, who is an Episcopal priest from California. In my spare time, I enjoy playing for a local netball team, creative writing and keeping tropical fish. I am very excited to meet you all soon.

New Grant

I'm delighted to report that the Dorchester Team is the recipient of a substantial grant from the Diocesan Common Vision fund to enable us to appoint an additional member of our ministry Team – a Youth and Families Minister. We will be working out how and when to go about this when things are clearer.

Dorchester Abbey Development

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic and its effects, Dorchester Abbey has reluctantly decided to put development of the Visitor Centre and West End Gallery on hold.

Whilst it would still be possible to carry on some work safely and in accordance with guidelines, for example with the architect, we feel that in the current climate raising sufficient funds for the project would not be possible within the planned time frame. Many potential donors, both personal and institutional, will have been and may continue to be affected by the current restrictions and the economic conditions that are likely to follow. This is exemplified by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with whom we were in discussion, suspending all new applications and any projects that they are not already committed to for at least six months.

We will keep this decision under review and hope to make progress with the project as both the health and economic climates improve. When that happens we will assess again the needs of Dorchester and any changes that have come about as a result of the current crisis and work closely with the Parish Council and Village Hall to Develop Dorchester in the best interests of all.

We thank all those who have contributed to the project to date and hope that we will be able to call on them again when the project restarts.

Abbey Development Steering Group

Wallingford Food Bank

As the Abbey is closed, we need to make a new arrangement for people to leave their donations to the Wallingford Food Bank and I am delighted to tell you that Mrs Judy Parker of 26, Manor Farm Road, Dorchester, has very generously offered to leave her garage open for people to leave their food.

We will then organise for the contributions to come over to Wallingford.

Thank you all for your generous support to this wonderful organisation and of course at this moment, the need is getting more acute as the children are no longer in School and enjoying School Lunches. Please keep the children in mind when you are shopping as it is a huge pressure to feed them seven days a week.

THANK YOU EVERYONE

Carole Treadaway

Appointment

I'm very sad to report that the Revd Canon Mark Haworth withdrew his acceptance of the post of House for Duty Team Vicar within days of the date of his Licensing. I have met with the Bridge Group Church Wardens and although nationwide activity has been halted on appointments the Archdeacon of Dorchester has agreed that we can make the details of the post known on an expressions of interest basis. This will begin after Easter. I think it is important for people to understand that this decision was completely unrelated to the post itself or to the Dorchester Team.

Dorchester on Thames Coronavirus Volunteer Group

This group was set up in the early days of the emergency when it became apparent that this awful virus was going to be a real challenge for us all. It has been set up with the support of the Abbey and the Parish Council, with the sole purpose of offering help to local residents who need it whether they are ill, self-isolating or just plain need help. We have assembled a wonderful group of around 70 volunteer helpers who are now collecting prescriptions, walking dogs, sorting bins and getting shopping for people throughout our community.

Our helpers are an enthusiastic bunch and would love even more work so please don't hesitate to ask us to help. Our main contact point is Anne Morrow-Andrew, who is available by e-mail or phone in the afternoons, to make sure those in need are helped in whatever way they need it. See the back page of this edition for contact details and ways we can help you.

In particular we would encourage residents who have been asked to self isolate to take advantage of the shopping service we offer. The Co-op have been just brilliant in working with us but the shop is a bit tight and social-distancing is a real challenge there and neither the Co-op's team, nor we, want to see our friends and neighbours put at risk by feeling they need to do the shopping themselves. We can do that for you, please, please, please just ask us.

Thank you to all our helpers. And to everyone else, take care of yourselves at this difficult time.

On Behalf of the DoT Corona Volunteer Group

Sue Booys, Rector

Mike Corran, Parish Council Emergency Coordinator

Dorchester on Thames Historical Society Summer Outings

Due to the Coronavirus outbreak I am afraid we have had to cancel both our Summer Outings this year.

19 May Guided tour of the Fairmile Hospital site at Cholsey

11 July Hughenden Manor and Operation 'Hillside'

We very much hope to offer these visits in the future.

**Gail Thomas
Dorchester Historical Society**

Massage Matters

Due to current circumstances and the need to keep everyone safe and healthy, Massage Matters will be closed until further notice.



ALL Gift Vouchers purchased will be extended and honoured.

Please take good care – very best wishes Karen

077250 62259 or email massagematterstome@gmail.com – for more information visit www.massagematters.me.uk

British Heart Foundation Sponsorship

The Kempton Park to Caversham Bike Ride was cancelled, so on Saturday, 21 March, I cycled approximately 50 miles on my own around South Oxfordshire. It was a little windy but I had a pleasant ride starting from Standlake and completing a large circular route, returning to Dorchester via Stadhampton. It took roughly five hours. You can still sponsor me or donate to this good cause. So far I have raised £220 and I have another £100 to collect.

Thank you to everybody for your support.

James Pratt

DADS invite you to join their online play readings

Normally hosted at The George, DADS' play readings have gone online for the duration of the coronavirus lockdown. For the first such reading on 10 April, we read 'I'll Leave It To You' which was Noel Coward's first successful play. It proved to be very enjoyable, no doubt aided by the alcoholic beverages on display amongst the ten participants!

Our next online play readings are scheduled for **4 May** and **18 May** at 7.30 pm. We will be hosting these via Zoom. If you would like to join us, we will be posting more information on Facebook via the Dorchester-on-Thames Events and Noticeboard page as well as on our own Facebook page. Alternatively, you can contact Mark Wilkin via email on markwilkin@gmail.com.



Hempcroft Allotments May

If the Hempcroft Allotments was a sentient being it would be very appreciative of all the tender loving care that it has received over the past month. Never in the past has so much digging, planting, tidying up been carried out by this time of year.

Seriously though, a big thank you to all plot holders for being responsible and complying with the requirements of the National Allotment Society and the Parish Council which has allowed the allotments to remain open during the Coronavirus pandemic. These requirements are displayed on notices at all entrances to the allotments.

It is a time to help each other. Some of our more elderly tenants are not able to visit their plot at this time and so if you are mowing or strimming the paths around your own plot look around you and if you see an overgrown path then include that in your mowing or strimming. If you are in lockdown for an extended time (voluntarily or otherwise) and need your plot covered with weed matting please contact the Committee through me (see below) and we will try to help.

The closure of the garden centres etc has led to a shortage of seeds and plants. There will be tenants who have spare seeds and there will be tenants who want seeds. I must confess that I do not know of an efficient way of establishing a "seed transfer". If you have spare seeds, or you want seeds than speak up and talk to your neighbours (from a safe social distance) and maybe word of mouth will help.

We are living through a crisis, the likes of which none of us has experienced before, not since war time has the community spirit that exists on allotment sites been more important. Please remember to look out for each other during these very difficult times.

Edward Metcalfe
edmetcalfe@yahoo.co.uk



Dorchester Village Hall 200 Club Prize Draw

Congratulations to the winners of the March draw.

1st Prize	£75	No.61 Mrs S Jupp
2nd Prize	£45	No.107 Mrs P Kruzko
3rd Prize	£25	No.172 Miss K Fisher



The next draw will be in June, so join now for a chance to win!

The 200 Club is a quarterly prize draw to reward supporters and raise funds for the village hall. We need new members to keep the draw worthwhile but there are good odds of winning as there is a maximum of 200 tickets in the draw. A ticket for the year (4 draws from when you join) only costs £12. To join, contact Elaine Moore on **340441** or email

200club@dotvh.org.uk for a form. You can pay by cash, cheque or standing order.


Thank you for your support and good luck!

Elaine



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St Birinus Primary School News

It seems very strange to write this as I sit with the five children that are still coming to school during these challenging times. Who would have thought this would have been the case as we started the academic year in September.

Another reason that this time feels strange, is that this will be the start of my final term here at Dorchester, St Birinus. However, with the lockdown in place, I may have had my final assembly in school in March – which was a surreal moment and not really how I thought my final term would go after over nine years at the helm.

As this may be my final contribution to the Dorchester News, unless we are allowed back to school before the end of the school year, I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has supported the school from the village throughout my time here, it has always been most appreciated and welcome. A particular thank you to DADs, who have welcomed me into their productions as the pianist – this association started within about two weeks of being in post as someone found out that I played the piano and I have loved every moment.

Thank you to the governors, who have supported me and the school in all our various challenges and successes – with special mention to the chairs and vice-chairs who took on an

amazing responsibility. To the parents, whether on the PTA or just being part of our brilliant school community – thank you for your patience and willingness to work with us.

My special thanks goes to my amazing team of staff, who help to make my life easier and provide great experiences for the children in their care – it has been a pleasure to work with them. And finally, all the children over the last nine years – I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know you, being a part of your formative years and sharing your successes and challenges. I am always thrilled to hear of your adventures as some of you now are at the A level stage of education.

So in September, I move on to be the Headteacher of Ducklington Primary School, I am looking forward to this new challenge but will miss the excitement here, but maybe not the gritting of the playground. Hopefully there will be an opportunity to say goodbye properly, but we will have to see! As you read this, the news regarding the lockdown may be different.

I can tell you that the governors managed to appoint a new Headteacher on the last day before the lockdown started. We shall look forward to finding out who this is in due course.

Keep safe and thank you.

Russell Leigh
Headteacher



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Get creative - things to do with a wooden spoon and an artwork.

During lockdown art galleries all over the world are making their collections more available for us to enjoy. Why not create your own artwork using stuff around the house.

Here's what to do:

Find an artwork you like.

Recreate it using a few objects around the house.

Photograph your piece along with the original artwork, and your name.

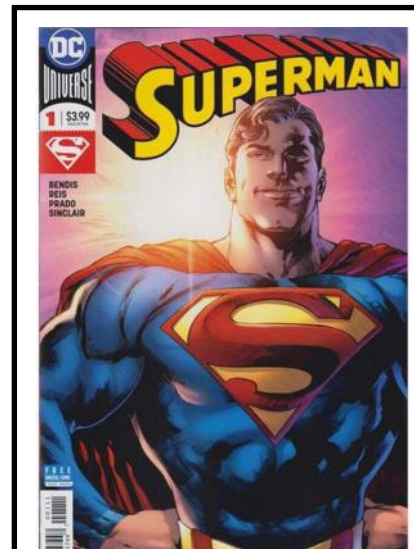
If you feel inspired send the photographs to

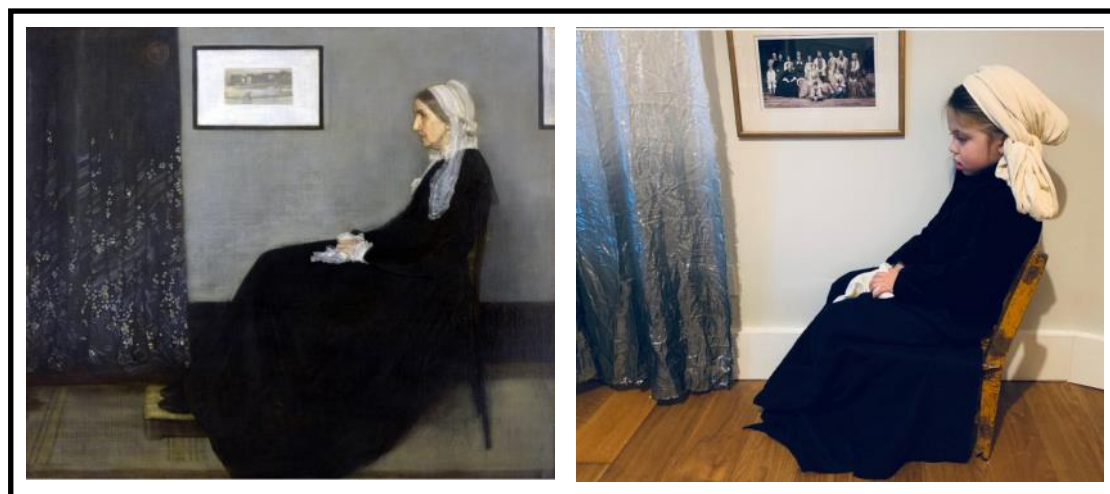
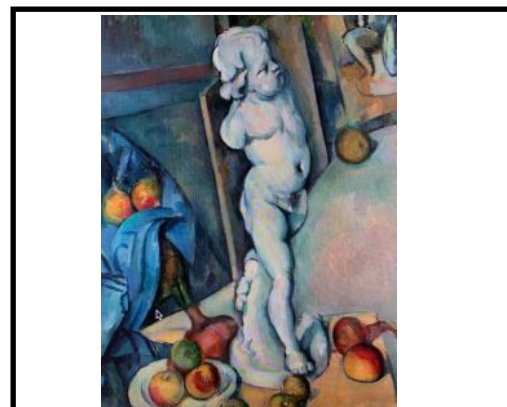
adrianhbrooks@hotmail.com

I'll ask our kind editor to include them in the next Dorchester News as a gallery.

Here are some examples by our artists Holly; Sophia and Robin; Mari Hamilton; Ed; Angela; Adrian, Tony, Susan; Anon.

Adrian Brooks





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Dorchester Abbey Museum News

Edith Stedman – our Museum's founder

The Museum was established in 1960 by Edith Gratia Stedman OBE, an American newcomer to the village, who devoted her retirement years to Dorchester Abbey. A new exhibit to mark the Museum's 60th anniversary will tell the story of this remarkable woman, her Dorchester years, and how her legacy can be seen today.

Edith sets up the museum....

[It appears the Museum was provisionally registered as No 1418 with the Museums and Galleries Commission in 1959 but did not open formally until the following year].

Edith's diary for 27 April 1960 reports a meeting with the new Vicar, Revd Harold Best and Mr Sturdy from the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford:

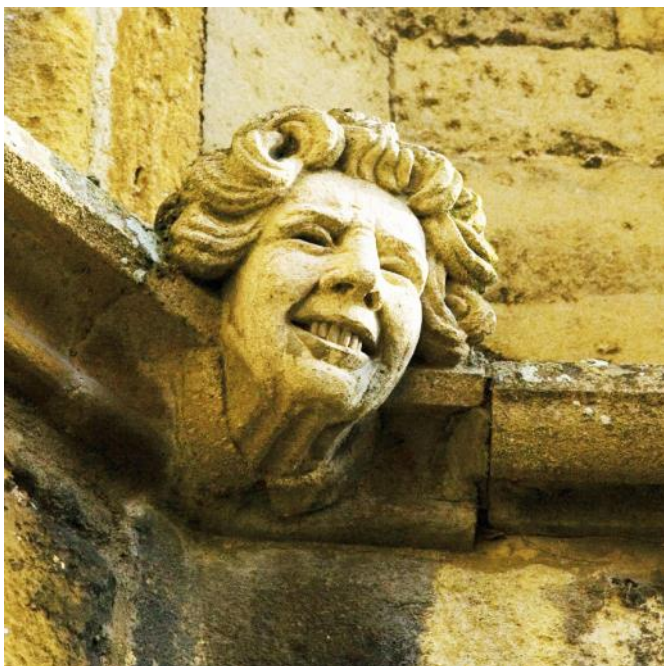
'to discuss turning the old school room in the Monastery Guest House into a small museum. The Ashmolean has promised a set of exhibits, for the Festival Week in June, of Roman and Medieval relics found in this area.

We eventually adjourned to the school room, which was cold as a vault, and is full of mouse holes. Two walls have lovely oak panelling.... One window is most interesting. Under it was a deep recess with a seat which was where a monk sat to pass out doles of bread and beer to wayfarers. ...the walls are to be painted white, the panelling rubbed down, the floors stained and mouse holes plugged up. In addition, a large cupboard is to be converted into a kitchenette, so that coffee can be served there. The room has great possibilities, once the junk has been removed.'

The room was furnished with the 100-year old Parish Chest, a small chest and a large panelled sideboard, together with small tables and chairs, with space for displays.

....and makes it pay

Edith had the Museum up and running in time for the annual Dorchester Festival in June 1960, and continued to find ways of raising money, so the Museum takings rose from £575 in 1962, to £825 in 1963.



Edith on the right seen outside the Museum with Miss Margaret Hankey of Lych Gate Cottage

'A Gift Shop was added in order to make it [the Museum] pay ... This was a howling success, and we made enough money to put in heat, light and sanitation and a new roof, and to build two offices in the back garden'.

She believed visitors should not go hungry:

'I decided to see if Mr Exon, the local baker, could produce a shortbread which could be properly packaged and sold to tourists, as the modern equivalent of the wayfarer's dole. So I went to Huntley and Palmer in Reading.....they offered to make a mould for Mr Exon's use'

and commissioned china from a Staffordshire pottery

'now we had a wonderfully saleable item with the ancient Abbey seal on it'

The mould and examples of the pottery are in the Abbey collection.

In 1971 Edith published a book of reminiscences about her time in Dorchester, entitled *A Yankee in an English Village*.

Edith's cookbook

To mark the 60th anniversary of the Museum's opening by Edith, we've reissued her charming *Monastery Guest House Cook Book*

Price £7.50. Available from the Museum when it opens or Linda Hender, 11 Page Furlong, tel **01865 340032**, email: linda.hender@btinternet.com

Left: Edith Stedman is commemorated in a corbel on Dorchester Abbey. She was awarded the OBE in 1977.



THE HURST WATER MEADOW TRUST

Grant received for work on the Hurst

We are delighted to have received a grant of just under £10,000 to carry out work to improve some of the water retaining features in the Hurst meadow.

For several years the water table and the sub-soil movement of ground water, as well as the historical management of Hurst wetland, has been of particular interest to trustee Shammy Puri, who is a hydro-geologist. A hydrological study by a graduate for an MSc thesis in 2016 indicated that if the present scrapes and ditches were to be extended, so that they retained water for longer in summer, there would be benefits to the biodiversity of flora and fauna, especially of invertebrates.

This has been a long-term vision of the Trust but was brought forward when, unexpectedly, we were invited to apply for grant aid by FCC Community Action Fund. FCC Communities Foundation awards grants to community projects from funds donated through the Landfill Communities Fund. This all sounds a bit complicated but, essentially, we were invited to apply because the Trust is a charity managing an environmental facility on behalf of the community, open to all and situated within 10 miles of a landfill site. Our proposal and costing estimates were submitted on 14 February and we were informed in March that we had been successful.

There is much work ahead to obtain all necessary permissions for the project, which we were anticipating could proceed during the summer. However, the present Covid19 situation may result

in inevitable delays.

Our plan is to excavate two more scrapes: a new scrape in the meadow where there is a natural damp depression, close to the existing scrape where the wildflowers proliferate (see photo) and a further, elongated scrape, within the head of the main tree-lined ditch that runs parallel to the river Thames. This latter scrape would be linked to the river by an underground culvert and would allow us to build up the footpath where it often becomes flooded and inaccessible in winter. Sections of the main ditch would also be deepened and bunds created to improve water retention.

We will publish further information as we proceed with this project.

In the meantime, preparations for the excavation of the two River of Life wetland sites in Old Bridge Meadow and Overy Mead Piece continue. Now that the floods have receded you can see that many of the willows on these sites have been hard pollarded. They will rapidly regenerate and no longer look so naked. Where heavy machinery will be working, when work starts later in the summer, we are having to keep vegetation very short to deter small mammals and invertebrates from nesting there.

Gillian Johnson, Hon. Secretary
Richard Farrant, Chairman
www.hurst-water-meadow.org.uk



Existing scrape (foreground) and proposed site of new scrape (wet depression in background)



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Invasion of the Pre-historic

With the streets of towns and villages so much quieter than usual during the lockdown, Llandudno had an invasion of goats that had come to take a look at some tasty gardens, and Harold Hill, Romford had one of deer. Dorchester is of course far older than either of these, so we had our own invasion from some way further back in the past. It was a dinosaur, pictured, that has been seen several times on Dorchester High Street recently.

There has been much speculation as where it has emerged from. Inevitably the Dyke Hills is amongst the favourites, simply because old things have emerged from there before. Many reckon the smart money is on the upstairs function room of The George, where much has lain untouched for centuries but is now being disturbed by Soul and Jonathan's cleaning and renovation programme. Others say it is from the bar, where no-one has noticed it snoozing in the corner for a millennium or two, just like some of the regulars. These of course are just some of the places that old things, really old things, are seen to emerge from in and around the village. Too many of those to speculate on, though.

The real question, though, is where is it heading? Presumably the Co-op, as there's little else open. But what for? A giant pack of Monster Munch?



Photo: Helen Russell

What else might a dinosaur want to buy from the Co-op?

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Poetry News

James Pratt's book '*Village in Verse*' was continuing to sell well at Lily's and the Abbey Museum until their enforced closure. James is happy to provide copies if required at £7.50 each until they re-open. Call James on **01865 341503**.

His book '*Dorchester on Thames Born and Bred*' is now sold out and is awaiting reprinting.

You may have heard James read his poem '*Treasures of England*' on Radio Oxford on 22 April. A poem to make us all reflect in this difficult time which we reproduce here for you to read.

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Or tea at The Savoy?

There are parks, fields with skylarks,
To let the imagination fly.
There are river walks, or historic talks,
As boats drift gently by.

There are stately homes, and garden gnomes,
For you to enjoy at your ease.
There are village fetes, or grand estates,
Fresh buttered scones, and cream teas.

Yet best of all, I do recall,
Elizabeth, our Queen.
Throughout her days, in so many ways,
Just perfect, like a dream!

James Pratt

When Bishop's Court Farm last changed hands back in 2016 the new owner, Andrew Reid, was someone with no previous connections to Dorchester. As we all know, a number of issues ensued. Now the farm has changed hands again, but this time the new owner is someone with definite and long-standing connections. Keith Ives, who completed on the farm at the end of March is a Dorchester resident of 25 years, living in Abingdon Road. Dorchester News caught up with Keith recently.

Keith has no background in farming, indeed he says that until recently he had

no idea how to 'plant a sheep', so what led him to buy the farm. His house on Abingdon Road, which backs on to the farm, is currently undergoing extensive renovation. We know that Mr Reid had been interested in selling for a little while, and what would happen to it after that has been something that has concerned many in Dorchester. Keith says that one day it occurred to him that why was he spending money on renovating his house when a new owner of the farm could potentially put a housing estate in the field at the end of his garden, as has happened at Benson. He determined to do something about this, and anyone who knows Keith knows



that he is not a man to sit around. He put together a business plan, visited the bank, and secured sufficient capital to get Mr Reid to sell it to him. It probably wasn't quite as straightforward as this, but in the space of a few months a deal was done.

Now he owns it, what does the future hold?

There are a couple of key principles that the farm will be run on. It will be run so as to be environmentally neutral; it will continue to be a farm, albeit with other activities; and most of all it will be a farm for the village.

What does that last one mean? Keith is well aware of the issues that arose between the previous owner and much of the village and is determined to mend those fences, indeed to take some of them down. He has already started talks with the Hurst Water Meadow Trust about donating parcels of land to them to run on behalf of the village. He wants to open up access to as much of the land as possible. However, whilst he is mending fences with the village, he will not be taking down all of the fences on the land. He intends to continue to keep



New owner Keith Ives relaxes for a moment on the grass.

Court Farm



sheep – currently there are about 100 on the farm and he hopes to double that later in the year – and that means fences will continue to be needed to stop them wandering. The barbed wire will go, and the locks on the gates have already gone. But already Keith has found that gates are not always closed, and even as a new farmer he knows that this is dangerous for his stock. So his plea is that he welcomes villagers using the land, but please, please, please always close the gates. This is an old refrain, but still a very important one.

In the immediate term, he is introducing alpacas to the farm, together with miniature horses. This is putting his stamp on it, to show that things have changed. As a long-time bee keeper he is keen to encourage bees and plans to plant 100 acres of borage between the Dyke Hills and the river which will sustain eight hives from which honey can be harvested.

The heritage of the farm as a centre for horses is something he wants to respect, and there are plans to renovate and where necessary rebuild the stables to allow horses to return.

There will also be sheep but not cattle, at

least not in any significant numbers. Keith believes that the grassland is already over-grazed and that cattle take more out of the soil than they return to it, apart from issues over methane production.

The farm comes with a number of planning permissions already granted. These will allow Keith to renovate and extend the existing farmhouse, which dates back to the 16th century and requires much modernising, which he will then be able to sell. There are existing plans to turn some of the barns into housing, which he also intends to proceed with (are these holiday cottages?). However, he is not at all sure about the plans for the large new house that Andrew Reid intended to build, and may well think about trying to change that to several smaller houses.

The farm has, of course, to break even – his bank will be looking carefully at that, if no one else – and the sale of these, together with the two worker's houses on Abingdon Road that came with the farm, will go some way towards that. But Keith also needs to generate on-going revenue to keep the farm viable.

The sale of farm produce will contribute, sheep and honey will be the first, and Keith's plan is to introduce some holiday lets, possibly in the converted barns, including potentially some around the lake. His model is agri-tourism, which is much less developed in this country than elsewhere in Europe, and is something that would benefit other local businesses. There is also an idea for a farm shop, selling produce from the farm and other local sources. All of these though are in the medium term, once he has learnt to be a farmer!

And he is clearly learning, sometimes through mistakes and would like to apologise for the whiff of slurry that wafted across the village in early April, when he misjudged the wind direction.

And that was important to Keith. He wants the farm to be a part of village life, no longer the two set against each other, and for everyone in Dorchester to feel that are welcome to come and see and use the farm. His own children have grown up in Dorchester and he would like Bishop's Court Farm to be a part of the life of every child in the village. But they must please, please, please, learn to close the gates!



The farmhouse is in need of extensive renovation

May—the way it used to be

There won't be much happening in Dorchester this May—only online meetings and events. So we thought it would be good to take a look at some previous Mays and remind ourselves what we have to look forward to by looking back.

Alternate Mays a Dorchester Festival month, so many of the pictures here are from recent festivals, and we can hope to look forward to another Dorchester Festival next year when we can mix, mingle and enjoy once again.

2015: The crowd gathers for the Duck Race...



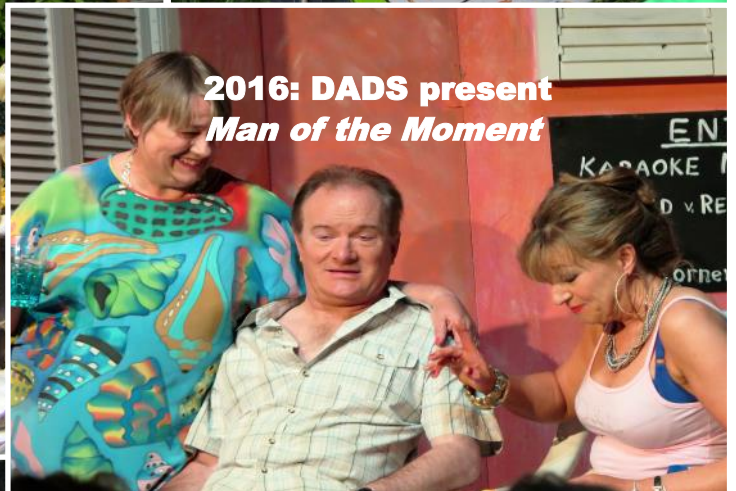
...which an excited small boy finds he has won.



2015: The winner of the scarecrow competition: Calendar Girls



2016: DADS present Man of the Moment



2016: Dorchester Cricket Club get the season under way



2016: May dancing at the village school



2017: Christine Wallace gives a cookery demonstration



2017: entertaining the crowds at the Festival



2018: Art Weeks exhibition in the Abbey Guest House



2018: DADS give us *Caught in Court*



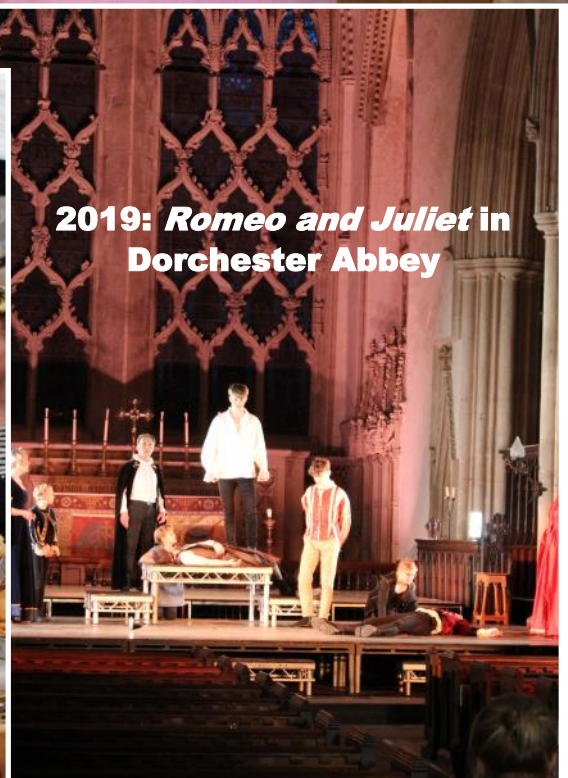
2019: Dizzy Dean entertains at the Festival



2019: The Food and Craft Fair



2019: *Romeo and Juliet* in Dorchester Abbey





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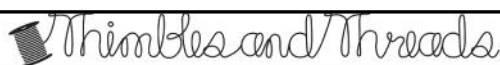
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From the Chairman of the Parish Council

The focus for the parish council this past few weeks has, of course, been on Coronavirus and what we can do as a village to help each other. Please do read the separate article about the wonderful volunteer group that has been set up to help the whole village.

Of course, behind all the great work is a tough reality and the parish council's thoughts are with all those who are ill themselves or have loved ones impacted by the virus. But we also appreciate the positive steps people have taken to cope and keep us cheerful - the mystery dinosaur exercising in the high street and the virtual dinner parties, quizzes, book and play readings that help people stay in touch.

Life continues, however. A village resident has purchased Bishops Court Farm, an event that could bring positive changes and benefits, and in our first virtual council meeting we continued to discuss normal business, whilst feeling somewhat ill at ease with the normal in an abnormal time. However, as I sit writing this on a sunny Easter Sunday, I hope we can ease our stress by taking pleasure in the beauty around us, and look forward to the easing of restrictions. To shamelessly steal a phrase: keep calm and carry on. And stay safe.

Mark Williams
Chairman of DoT Parish Council

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Parish Council Notices

Public Health- Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Parish Council will use its noticeboards and website – www.dorchesteronthames.co.uk - to convey information for local residents and the Clerk will email such news in a timely way to all who have supplied their contact details to parishclerk@dorchesteronthames.co.uk and asked to be on this circulation list. Access to several social media platforms of local interest can be achieved via the website. The main message for us all is to be "Good Neighbours".

Annual Parish Meeting Postponed

The Annual Parish Meeting was due to be held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 8 April but has had to be postponed indefinitely. Notice of alternative arrangements will appear next month.

Council Meetings

Due to the prevailing Government regulations, the Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council on Wednesday 8 April was held remotely via 'Zoom', in accordance with the guidance published by the National Association of Local Councils within the framework laid down by the Government.

The May Council Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 13 May** commencing at 7.30 p.m. The Agenda will be posted on Village Noticeboards and on the Parish Council section of the Village website – www.dorchesteronthames.co.uk – three working days in advance. It is expected that this meeting will also be held 'remotely'.

Since all Parish Council meetings are open to the public, a resident who wishes to raise any matter of concern is welcome to do so at the start of the meeting. Please contact the Clerk no later than **Tuesday 12 May** so that the necessary access arrangements can be made

A Third Defibrillator for the Village

Thanks to the award of a Community Grant under a scheme organised through District Cllr Robin Bennett, the Parish Council will shortly be arranging for a defibrillator to be installed in the former BT Telephone Box near the car park in Bridge End.

Robin says, 'A defibrillator within easy reach can indeed be a life saver, and as well as having an older population, Dorchester does indeed have many older visitors to the Abbey or walking who may need this in an emergency.'

When this project is complete, we shall have three defibrillators in the Village, strategically located at the Sports Pavilion, The White Hart Hotel and Bridge End.

Contacting the Parish Council

The Parish Clerk is Geoffrey Russell of The Pigeons (next to The Fleur de Lys), 5-7 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames OX10 7HH

Telephone (during normal office hours, please, unless an emergency) 07745 311439. Texts are always welcome. e –mail: parishclerk@dorchesteronthames.co.uk

Cllr Mark Williams, the Chairman, can be contacted via chairman@dorchesteronthames.co.uk

For information about the Parish Council go to <https://www.dorchester-on-thames.co.uk/parish-council/> This includes the minutes of all Parish Council Meetings and financial information such as monthly bank balances and payments as well as a record of all planning matters upon which the Parish Council has been consulted and reports from our County and District Councillors.

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From your District Councillor... ...Robin Bennett



Firstly, thank you for everything you are doing to help respond to this Coronavirus pandemic. The best way we can protect and support our residents, particularly those who need help the most, is by proactively coordinating our efforts. A large proportion of the staff at South Oxfordshire District Council are now working directly on the response, alongside county and NHS colleagues, under the control of the Local Resilience Forum, which reports directly to government. This means a different role for councillors, in the absence of the usual democratic meetings, but as a deputy leader I have regular conversations with officers on how things are going. I can only hope that by the time you read this things are getting under control, although 'normality' may look different if and when it returns.

SODC's dedicated support service

We have launched our own telephone-based support service to help vulnerable and isolated residents who need help with shopping, collecting medical supplies, and other day to day tasks. This service is there for anyone who doesn't have friends or family around to help and is for anybody who hasn't been identified by the NHS as high-risk.

High-risk "shielded" residents with no support network around them

Call **01865 897820** or email shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Residents not considered high-risk but without a support network and in need of help— either:

- check online for support volunteers in your area at www.oxfordshireallin.org/local-support-groups or
- call the district council on **01235 422600** / email communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

Operating hours

The phone lines will be open:

8.30am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday

9.00am to 5.00pm Saturday and Sunday

Support for shops and businesses that have had to close

We've updated our dedicated website for businesses, South and Vale Business Support, (www.svbs.co.uk) with the latest advice and support that is available for any business concerned about the impact of COVID-10 on its organisation.

We have also launched an online form for local businesses so they can apply for the government's small business and retail grants. This will make it much easier to access financial help from the government.

Car parking charges suspended

We have suspended all parking charges in our council run car parks across South and Vale until 1 June. This is to support key workers and those who are shopping for essential food or medical supplies during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The situation is changing very rapidly and therefore information can go out of date very quickly. The SODC website is the best sources for the latest information on our services: www.southoxon.gov.uk/covid19

Robin.Bennett@southoxon.gov.uk

tel. **01865 858680**

m.**07979 646815**

We offer our congratulations to Robin on being appointed a deputy leader of SODC in addition to being the Cabinet Member for Development and Regeneration . Ed.



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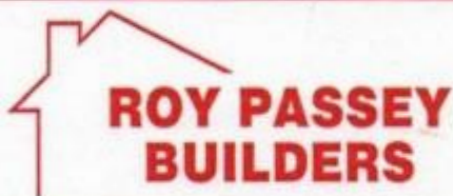
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From your County Councillor... ...Lorraine Lindsay-Gale



COVID-19

These are unprecedented times. We all need to take care and follow the latest Government advice. Staff at the County Council are working flat out as we cannot simply close down or ask everybody to work from home, we are there to support and protect Oxfordshire's residents particularly the vulnerable. We are prioritising our work and where possible staff are working from home. There are some areas that will see an increase in demand at a time when some of our staff will become ill with the virus. There will be some changes as we have to prioritise our work to key areas.

The main area of work in Social Care for both adults and children has to continue on a 24/7 basis protecting around 7,000 residents. We expect the number of people requiring care to increase as informal carers become ill and are unable to continue care. This work is vital as it's important we keep as many people as possible out of hospital.

We are working closely with the NHS to provide care and facilities for those patients that do not require acute care to be cared for away from hospitals or at home freeing up beds for those that most need them. This includes the group that we need to shield from the virus who are thought to be most at risk across the county.

The Government are shielding the extremely vulnerable - approx. 1.5 million across the country full details can be found on the website: **Extremely vulnerable**. Currently those people identified by the NHS as extremely vulnerable will be contacted by the NHS by letter, email, text or all 3 to say that they need to isolate themselves at home for the next 12 weeks. They will be asked if they have any help to collect prescriptions and food, this may be supplied by one of the brilliant local groups that have been set up. If they don't have any help then they will be told to contact the council who will arrange a contact which again may come from one of the local groups. If somebody thinks they should be on the list and haven't yet been contacted, then they should contact their GP or hospital clinician.

To assist in the logistics across the country there are Local Resilience Forums, which in the Thames Valley are based around the Police authority area. These are where the blue light services (Police, Ambulance, Fire) link in with the NHS and local authorities to consider the high-level strategy. These then delegate down to the County to work with SODC and other Districts to coordinate the local hubs. The Government have seconded military planners to assist in the hubs which is where all the local community groups liaise with the local networks. This is about all working together to ensure that we do not duplicate provision or even worse miss a vulnerable resident

The organic growth of the community networks or hubs that we are seeing being set up is fantastic. These groups are providing some excellent services to local residents who are self-isolating or do not have relatives locally. It's important that they are community led but we need to avoid duplication, so the County Council and Districts are working with Oxfordshire Volunteers to list them all and provide support where needed. I have already sent out details to you of how groups can register and a form for them to use. Thank you to those who have already submitted information about their parishes. Are there others out there that we need to know about?

If you are approached by people wishing to volunteer, they can register at:

<https://oxonvolunteers.org/vk/volunteers/index.htm>

My portfolio

I am the Cabinet Member responsible for the Education Service and our Cultural Services. I am extremely proud of the schools and their staff who have shown enormous flexibility and compassion in the face of this pandemic, and our own staff who have worked night and day to ensure that families that need child care through the schools find a suitable place, together with transport and a hot meal.

Our Registration Service has had to stop all but death registrations, even new parents will have to delay the registration of their babies since it is a legal requirement that this is done face to face. All the offices across the county are closed except the Head Office at Tidmarsh Lane in Oxford. A huge temporary mortuary facility has been sourced as this county braces itself for what is to come.

Our 44 Libraries, the Woodstock County Museum, the History Service, the Resource Centre at Stanlake, the County Music Service are all closed.

All waste recycling centres are closed. All our offices are closed including County Hall, for all but very essential staff.

This is a very fast-moving situation so please use the **OCC**, **NHS** and **Government** websites for the latest information.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the residents who continue to work to help us get through this difficult time.

Above all please take care, stay safe and follow the advice

The Importance of Exercise - Making you the best version of you

The 'rug' has been somewhat pulled out from under our feet recently, with everything that you know now operating differently.

Routines have changed or disappeared overnight and due to the pressure on the NHS we've had to adapt by taking a lot more ownership within our own self care.

For some of us this can be very unsettling, not knowing how best to exercise without our usual guidance.

It can be easy to fall into a rut and do nothing and the opposite is also true where we start taking on many a new pursuit that our bodies are not ready for.

It is more important now than ever before to exercise...
...but at the right level for you.

The physical and mental benefits are far reaching.



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Cardiovascular – you are effectively strength training your lungs and heart – the muscles you can't see!

Within two weeks of not exercising we lose up to 25-30% of speed and endurance.

Balance – to help prevent falls.

Boosting your Immune System - Regular moderate exercise keeps the lymph system moving - helping to keep you healthier by shifting the waste and toxins out of your body.

Endorphins – A powerful hormone released from your brain when you exercise to create the 'feel good' factor, lifting your mood.

Mindfulness – Usually, when you're exercising, you're not

thinking about any other external factors. Giving your brain a good rest from stress!

Breathing – Exercise practises such as Pilates, Yoga and Tai Chi will teach you how to breath properly.

At Millstream Pilates we teach nasal breathing for inhalation and exhalation (including whilst carrying out cardio exercise) rather than the mouth, to release Nitric Oxide from the nasal cavity which is the body's first line defence against viruses and toxins.

This practise requires a bit of getting used to and isn't going to stop you catching Covid-19 but it will certainly put your lungs, immune system and physical strength in a much better position to process it.

Too much exercise, such as endurance running and cycling sessions can temporarily lower your immune system by causing an inflammatory response.

We do not need this at the moment and it's important to provide your body with the right kind of exercise to nourish it against what it has to contend with.

Maintaining your base level is fine but building beyond it isn't necessary.

What we need to do:

By taking responsibility for our own fitness, creating a routine that's right for you and exercising at the correct level, we can all take some of the pressure off the NHS.

If you haven't exercised recently, start with gentle walks, then increase the frequency of your walks and then the intensity over a 4-6 week period.

Include some simple strength training to help bone density – Pilates is great for this.

Take some advice on where to start from an exercise professional.

If you are regularly exercising, take a look at what level you're exercising at? Is it what your body and immune system needs right now?

Or can you adapt to include cross training sessions, increasing your overall strength, ready to get back training for when those events are re-scheduled? You will very quickly get back to your base level and more likely injury free too, if you've been working on base strength.

There are a whole host of Online sessions for you to access now so there are no excuses and they are easy to use.

Instructors should be happy to have a chat with you first to make sure you're enrolling in the right session for your level.

Live Online sessions, such as the ones we host at Millstream Pilates, will personalise the exercises for your condition to make sure you're working as safely as possible.

As they were originally local classes, now Online, we still have a real sense of community within our sessions which helps our wellbeing no end.

My mission is to keep as many people moving as possible and to take responsibility for making ourselves the best possible version we can within the realms of what our bodies present us with.

Continued on Page 25 ➡



From your MP...

...John Howell

As we work together to fight COVID-19, I know that it is so very worrying for many people. I have been inundated with emails raising many different questions on the situation and, with the help of my dedicated team - all of whom are working remotely – we are trying to answer as best we are able. COVID-19 queries are dominating our work and due to the urgency of most of these we are giving them priority. If you have emailed on another issue, please bear with us. We are dealing first with urgent COVID-19 casework.

In Westminster, Ministers have been working flat out to bring forward measures to try to keep us all safe and help people in so many different situations. If you still have a question please feel free to email me but please do look at the Government advice first (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>) to see if your question has already been answered. This will help me and my team to respond as quickly as we can on outstanding concerns and individual problems.

Although Parliament is now in recess, mechanisms have been put in place for MPs to question the Government on COVID-19 issues and concerns on a daily basis and feedback is circulated. Along with everyone else we are also using social media to talk to colleagues on issues we might normally have done when we met in the lobby or Members room. Within the House a great deal of work is underway to allow Members to continue to scrutinise the Government remotely now and after recess - should the guidance remain that people should stay at home where possible. I have already taken part in Justice Select Committee evidence sessions online and they worked very well.

More locally other public bodies have made provision to keep MPs updated on their work in relation to COVID-19 and to question them. I took part in a conference call between MPs and the Thames Valley Police Chief Constable in which we were briefed on operational issues and were able to raise questions. From my emails I know that the police use of their new public health powers is a concern to some. The Chief Constable reassured MPs that the overriding approach was to use common sense. The powers will only be used by officers if someone fails to comply after the officer has engaged with them, explained the risks to public health and encouraged voluntary compliance.

The police are also concerned that some people are taking it upon themselves to report people who they believe are flouting the 'stay at home' rules. This is creating an unnecessary workload for the police as they have to triage all calls. Most of the reports are not helpful and simply hinder police in their operations.

Despite the dominance of COVID-19 I remain interested to know the views of constituents on the various topics. Whether on a topic due to come before the House or something else, if you have an issue that you would like to raise with me please email me at john.howell.mp@parliament.uk or write to me at the House of Commons (House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA) or my constituency office (PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD) to share your views.

If you would like to receive my periodic electronic newsletters, and briefings on specific issues, please visit my website www.johnhowell.org.uk and subscribe at the link on the home page. You will also find more about my work on my website which is regularly updated.

The Importance of Exercise

Continued from Page 24

Exploring and Adapting is key!

Eat well - for your body's requirements, move well and rest well.

If you'd like to know more about what we offer, please get in touch or if you'd just like to gain some advice on exercise generally, I would be more than happy to chat with you.

Email: claire@millstreampilates.co.uk

To quote Charles Darwin:

'It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change'

Claire Willett - Millstream Pilates

Low Back Pain Practitioner, Pilates Teacher, Exercise for Older Clients, Neurological Conditions and Sport Performance.

Day by day

Mon DADS Play reading
4 May 7.30pm
Online

Mon DADS Play reading
18 May 7.30pm
Online

For details of online church services at
Dorchester Abbey see

www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk

For St Birinus RC Church go to:

www.stbirinus.co.uk



Parish Registers

Funeral at Crematorium

26 March Frederick (Tony) Jones

Graveside Funeral

9 April Cariad Morgan

Weekly events

Wednesday **Mobile Post Office**
1.00-3.00pm but may vary due to
Covid 19
Outside Co-op

Regular events also appear in the Parish
Council's website:

www.dorchesteronthames.co.uk

Weekly events at the Village Hall

All events suspended



Quizzes and Jigsaws



How well do you remember Wallingford?

Unfortunately, we have had to temporarily close the museum
and postpone our events, walks, and TWHAS talks due to the
coronavirus outbreak. We will re-open and re-schedule our
events as soon as conditions permit.

Whilst Wallingford Museum is temporarily closed, we will
continue to share the museum experience, town history
locations, local history facts... to engage with residents and
future visitors.

Our website will show a **quiz** each week, starting Mondays.
Answers will appear on the website on Sunday evenings.

These virtual quizzes should be solved NOT by going out-and-
about, but by using internet searches, and Google Earth!

In addition we have a selection of **jigsaws** to complete online.
These show past and present scenes of Wallingford.

Look for the quizzes and jigsaws on the Museum website at:
www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk

You may wish to comment or contribute via our Facebook
page!

Hope you enjoy!

Stu Darby

www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk



Due to advice from the Government The Corn Exchange in
Wallingford is closed until further notice. All online bookings
will receive refunds in due course. Patrons who have booked
in person will be refunded on production.

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Full details at www.brannfordsgardens.co.uk



CONTACTING THE POLICE

To report a non-emergency crime, or to give information to Thames Valley Police, call **101**. Alternatively, call Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555111**. In the event of an emergency dial **999**.

HEALTH SERVICES

DIRECT LINE TO URGENT LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES

Dial **111** to access urgent local NHS health care services. Where possible, they will book you an appointment or transfer you to the people you need to speak to or send an ambulance if they think you need one. For non-urgent health needs you should contact your GP in the usual way.

MINOR INJURIES

The Minor Injuries Unit at Abingdon Hospital, Marcham Road, daily from 10.00 am to 10.30 pm: **01865 903476**.

A&E

The nearest A&E units are at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford (**01865 741166**) and the Royal Berkshire in Reading (**01183 225111**)

SURGERIES

Berinsfield Health Centre: **01865 340558**
Clifton Hampden: **01865 407888**
Millstream Benson: **01491 838286**

ROOM HIRE

ABBAY GUEST HOUSE BOOKINGS

To hire the Abbey Guest House for private functions, meetings, exhibitions, etc, contact Kate Herbert on **01865 340007**, email admin2@dorchester-abbey.org.uk

HIRE OF DORCHESTER VILLAGE HALL

To hire our Village Hall, contact Kate Harris bookings@dotvh.org.uk or telephone **01865 689452**. Please telephone at least 24 hours in advance to arrange collection of the key.

FAULTS AND COMPLAINTS

STREET LIGHTING

Report any problems with a street light to **0800 317802**, available 24 hours a day. Callers will be asked for the address of the site and the nature of the fault.

HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

Ring Oxfordshire Highways on **0345 3101111**, available five days a week, with a 24-hour answering facility. Complaints can also be sent via e-mail to southernarea@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

BLOCKED DRAINS

Ring Thames Water for blocked drains on **0800 316 9800**. Callers will be asked for the postcode of the address where the drains are blocked.

REFUSE COLLECTION

If your rubbish is not collected on the due date contact the contractor direct. Call **03000 610610** and the website: www.morerecycling.co.uk

BERINSFIELD LIBRARY

Green Furlong, Berinsfield **01865 340771**
Free Internet access. DVDs can be ordered.

OPENING HOURS

Mon - closed
Tues, Wed, Fri 10.00am - 12.30pm
Tues 2.00-7.00pm
Weds, Thurs 2.00-5.30pm
Fri 2.00-5.00pm
Sat 10.00am - 12.30pm

MOBILE POST OFFICE

The Mobile Post office stops outside the Co-op every Wednesday between 1.00 and 3.00pm but may vary.

Useful Information

ANIMAL WELFARE

RSPCA (wildlife): **0300 123 0206**
St Tiggywinkles animal rescue: **01844 292292**
Swan Lifeline: **01753 859397**

TRANSPORT

DORCHESTER FLYER

The Dorchester Flyer runs every Friday from Dorchester to Wallingford at 10.00am and , returning at 12.00 noon. Tickets must be bought from Lily's in advance.

OTHER BUS SERVICES

Services X38, X39 X40 go every 20 minutes from the bypass at the end of Drayton Road to Oxford and Wallingford. Information about bus services, both local and national, is available from www.traveline.info, and **0871 200 2233**.

VOLUNTARY CAR SERVICE TO BERINSFIELD HEALTH CENTRE

This operates on Wednesday mornings for appointments made for 10.00 am.
To book transport, call Dorchester Fireplaces on **01865 341452**

AGE UK

The UK's largest charity working with older people For help and advice etc. go to www.ageuk.org.uk

WALLINGFORD VOLUNTEER CENTRE

WVC Volunteers provide help for the elderly, disabled or vulnerable, especially by giving lifts to medical appointments at hospitals in Oxford, Abingdon and Reading. You need to register as a client. Contact the Centre for more information. **01491 836345**
www.wallingford.volunteercentre@gmail.com

CONTACTING THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Clerk is Geoffrey Russell of The Pigeons (next to The Fleur de Lys), High Street, Dorchester on Thames OX10 7HH; **07745 311439** (during normal office hours, please, unless an emergency); parishclerk@dorchesteronthames.co.uk.

USEFUL CONTACTS

ANGLICAN PRIEST

Dorchester Rectory
Revd. Canon Sue Booy
01865 340007

EDUCATION OFFICER

Margaret Craig
01865 343164
education@dorchester-abbey.org.uk

ABBAY E-MAIL:

admin@dorchester-abbey.org.uk
Contact details for Church Wardens and other Abbey information are on the notice board in the Abbey.

ABBAY WEBSITE

www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk

VILLAGE WEBSITE

www.dorchesteronthames.co.uk

ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST

The Presbytery
Fr. John Osman
Bridge End
01865 340417
www.stbirinus.co.uk

Dorchester Abbey Museum E-mail
museum@dorchester-abbey.org.uk



REFUSE COLLECTIONS

Fri 1 May **Black**

Sat 9 May **Green**

Fri 15 May **Black**

Fri 22 May **Green**

Sat 30 May **Black**

Weekdays from 7.00am

Saturdays from 6.00am

Weekly: food waste (in biodegradable starch-based bag or wrapped in newspaper, in green caddy).

The recycling centre at Oakley Wood (off the A4130) is open 8.00am - 5.00pm seven days a week.

Oakley Wood and other recycling centres are closed until further notice.

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and happy to help at this tricky time.

Whether its with...



Prescriptions

A friendly chat

Shopping

Help with technical issues

Making online connections

Dog walking

Bins



We are here for you.

Just email:

anne.morrowandrew@gmail.com

Or phone preferably between 2 and 4pm:

01865 340007