

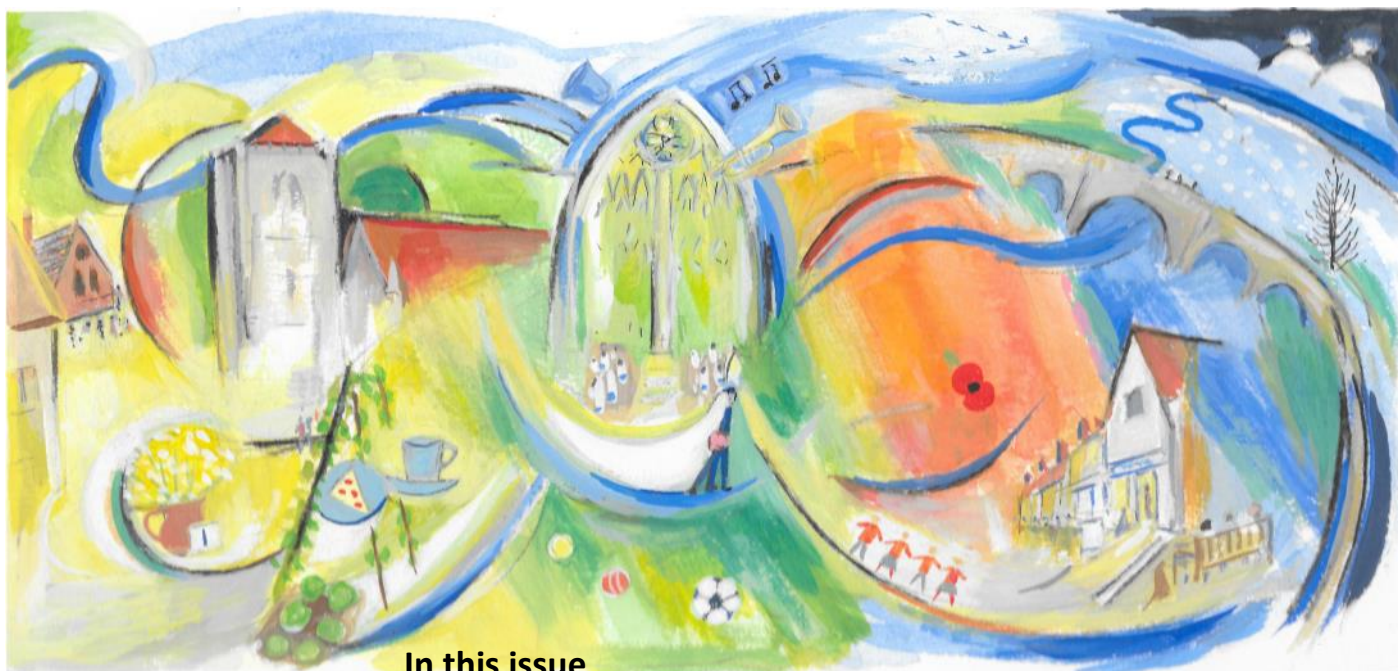
# ***Dorchester News***

*Free to every home in the parish*

*July/August 2020*







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## **DoT view**

As I write, the lockdown is beginning to ease. Non-essential shops are opening and some schools are beginning to have some pupils back for some of the time. The government has a difficult time ahead balancing lives and livelihoods.

Some sports are back. Tennis has resumed, providing you maintain a distance from your partner, as has golf, under similar conditions, and with no socialising. Events where social distancing or bio-security cannot be maintained are not yet back with us and do not likely to be for a while yet. So unfortunately there will be no Open Gardens event nor Safari Supper in Dorchester this year, both of which would have happened in July. The Autumn Flower Show has been revamped as a mostly virtual event, with photographs of exhibits to be submitted for judging. (See page 7.)

Some businesses and charities have found ways of generating some income, even if they cannot offer their whole service. The Abbey Tea Room has been doing good business selling cake to take away (see page 8) and Fleur de Lys is currently doing take away beer and meals (see page 5). If restrictions ease at the beginning of July then other of these may be able to offer more by the time you read this, but nothing will be back to how it was for a while yet.

**Ian Brace**

## **Deadline for September Dorchester News**



email:

[dorchesternews@dorchesteronthames.co.uk](mailto:dorchesternews@dorchesteronthames.co.uk)

**Editorial Team**  
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**Dear Friends**

*This month's letter comes from my Colleague Reverend Caroline. Just as we were going to press we heard that we could re-open the Abbey in a limited way and I am looking forward to meeting you there as (hopefully) restrictions are eased. You can still join in services by using the links on the Abbey website and contact me on my normal phone number. I look forward to seeing you around and about. God Bless Rev Sue*

**So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.**

**God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. 1 John 4.16 NRSV**

It is impossible and simplistic to sum up the Bible in one verse, but for me this verse from 1 John comes quite close, because it sums up our call to love each other, and also my faith that we if can somehow live out that love then it will be reflected in our earthly structures. In that sense the core of my personal faith is very simple; living it out is a lifelong challenge. The words of G K Chesterton are always in my ears; The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried." It sums up how difficult it is to live out something that at its core is simple.

I am writing this letter at a time where it seems the headlines are dominated by global strain and catastrophe. At the start of the year barely anyone had heard of Covid 19, it has now changed the world beyond recognition. Here in the United Kingdom the official death toll stands at 40,000+ the actual death toll is possibly a third higher than that. Each one of those numbers is not a statistic but a name, a life lived, someone special, someone loved by friends and families, someone created in the image of God, loved by God and infinitely precious to God.

Alongside this I have been profoundly shocked by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, and the subsequent reaction to it and the #Black Lives Matter campaign. My initial reaction to this was to say there is no need because all lives matter. Unfortunately, as the disproportionate figures of the effect of Covid-19 on BAME have shown and the undoubted prejudice that many people from BAME communities experience it is simply not enough for me just to say all lives matter. It has to go further.

I write as a person of privilege, I am white, I have received an education (much of it at tax payers expense), I have a roof over my head, food on the table

and money in the bank. Within reason I can go about my daily tasks without interruption or suspicion. #Black lives matter has forced me to see that these freedoms and privileges are not enjoyed by everybody and that this is counter to our Christian faith and the gospel of love and inclusion I seek to preach. 'God is love and those who live in love live in God'.

There is still much work to do until we truly live out a faith which displays this central truth. Recently Bishop Steven wrote very succinctly when he said 'This seems a very good moment to say to all our BAME colleagues and neighbours in the Diocese of Oxford how much we value you and need you, how much you add to our richness and diversity as a society and as a church and how much as members of Christ's Church we take our stand against all forms of racism.

These are days to pray and work for a just world, free of any form of discrimination, and to reach out with words of kindness and love.

With best wishes to you all  
**Caroline**

## Opening the Abbey

We are delighted that the Abbey will have commenced limited opening for private prayer by the time you receive this copy of the Dorchester News. As we gradually return to an open church we want to make certain that everything that happens is safe for people who come to pray and as time goes on to worship and to visit. We are now able to conduct Funerals in the Church and be open for private prayer but every step of re-opening has to be undertaken with social distancing measures in mind. We are fortunate in having a large space with different exits and we have a basic plan which we hope will enable us to open gradually and safely. This will undoubtedly be slower than some would wish and too fast for others – please bear with us as we do our best to keep you safe.

## Heavenly Host Angels Dorchester on Thames. Advance Notice

There will be Angels in Dorchester again this Advent. The details of how, why and when will follow later. Details of the project may also be found on the Facebook page for Heavenly Host, including the pattern. So if you want to knit, here's your chance! Thank you.

**Denise Line**  
**01865 340905.**

## Coming out of Lockdown

What did you do in Lockdown? Were you a knitter, an artist a sourdough expert, photographer or gardener? Together with our local artists we are planning to organise a weekend in the Abbey when you can show off your experiments, achievements and new accomplishments. For obvious reasons we don't know when this might be but do hang on to those pictures, craft items and projects or take photographs to share what you have been doing.

Local artists have generously offered to make images which can be sold with part of the proceeds coming to the Abbey to help us with the financial consequences of Lockdown and we are enormously grateful for this.

## Wallingford Food Bank

Thank you very much to everyone who donated items for the Food Bank last month. We delivered seven large bags of groceries to Wallingford for distribution. Many of the recipients were unable to collect their supplies due to the coronavirus and so volunteers have been making home deliveries.

Your support is invaluable. The greatest demand is for tins of potatoes, carrots, peas, spaghetti and rice pudding. Dry pasta, rice and long-life milk are also needed, but other items with a long shelf life are very welcome.

**Judy Parker**



## Securing the Abbey's future during Covid

The announcement of lockdown and the closure of the Abbey in mid-March presented a significant issue to the finances of the Abbey. The Abbey is much larger (and so more expensive to run) than a parish of around 1,100 people would normally have and so over the years we have made sure that in addition to voluntary giving we have other ways of generating income to pay both for the work of the Abbey in the community and also for the ongoing maintenance of the wonderful building. Lockdown meant that those other ways of generating income were suddenly cut off and our initial estimates were that we would have a deficit due to lockdown of over £40,000 by the end of September.

The announcement of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was the first welcome piece of news and that has enabled us to continue to pay the five part-time staff members whilst most of them have been furloughed. The Business Support Grant from SODC followed soon after and contributed £10,000. We are very lucky to have the support of the Friends of Dorchester Abbey in making a monthly contribution to our costs and following an appeal to the Abbey congregation and others in the parish we have been overwhelmed with the generosity of those people in making one-off donations and new or increased regular giving.

All of this means that we are now really close to eliminating the cash deficit by the end of December on the assumption that no significantly sized events will be possible in the Abbey before the end of the year. However, there is still more to do to finally close that gap, which currently stands at around £4,000.

So we would like to say a big Thank You to all of those who have helped us to continue to look after the building and so continue our work in the community in these difficult times. If you would like to help then please contact Nick Forman at [treasurer@dorchester-abbey.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@dorchester-abbey.org.uk), 01865 340434, or go to [www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/donate](http://www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/donate).

**Nick Forman**

**Treasurer to the Abbey Church of St Peter & St Paul**



## Hempcroft Allotments July

We have come to the end of the asparagus harvesting season and people are now letting the spears grow to full size. So now is a timely warning about the dreaded asparagus beetle. They are bright red, cream and dark blue coloured beetles, oval shaped and about 1cm long. They feed or lay eggs only on asparagus spears and fronds. Larvae are grey coloured hump-backed grubs with black heads and three pairs of short legs. They will usually be found feeding on the fronds.

Adults appear in mid to late spring as asparagus spears are emerging through the soil. They lay their dark coloured eggs in small rows on the spears and when the eggs hatch the larvae will initially feed on the tips of spears, but later will migrate to the fronds. They will feed for a few weeks before pupating in cocoons in the soil around the base of the plant or in nearby mulch. The larvae and the adults can both be very damaging to the leaves and the stems of the asparagus plant and can even make harvesting difficult.



Many of the methods for getting rid of the asparagus beetle involve physically removing them or relying on other insects and animals to eat the beetles. In the event of a really bad infestation, neem oil or pesticides may be the only way to get the problem under control. Pyrethrum (e.g. Bug Clear Gun or Ecofective Bug Killer) is an effective pesticide. However if you want to stay organic regularly inspect and hand pick the adults from the spears and fronds is pretty effective in keeping things under control.

Wild birds and chickens will readily eat the larvae and the adult beetles, both directly off the plant and from the ground. Although not an option on the allotments, allowing chickens to forage in the asparagus bed over the summer months will easily rid a garden of asparagus beetles without damaging the asparagus plants.

Adults will overwinter in the soil, leaf litter, or in hollow stems of asparagus plants. Getting rid of the beetle's overwintering sites will help keep their numbers down. Clear away, shred, or compost old fern at the end of the year, and remove plant rubbish, stones, planks and any other cover that beetles could use around the asparagus plot.

**Edward Metcalfe**  
[edmetcalfe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:edmetcalfe@yahoo.co.uk)

## 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](mailto:massagematterstome@gmail.com) – for more information visit [www.massagematters.me.uk](http://www.massagematters.me.uk)

## Our thanks to those who have helped The DoT Roll of Honour

Thanks to all the kind people whose names I do not know who kindly brought my Co-op shopping every week! I do not know their names.

Sue at 93 Abingdon Road

Nikki Kelly of Oxford Road. We are new to Dorchester and hence know few of our neighbours. However Nikki, although busy with her own young family, has taken the trouble to check with us that we are ok, to include us in events such as VE Day celebrations and to get food or medicines if we were in need. And she and her family stop for a chat when we are out in the garden.

Anne and Les Haywood

- The staff of the Co-op for deliveries
- The Revd Sue Booy and her colleagues for making morning prayer available on line.
- Annie Morrow-Andrew for efficient and good-humoured coordinating ...
- All the volunteers who helped with deliveries, prescriptions etc
- The teachers at the school who worked during the lockdown
- The dinosaur, for a laugh.

Denise Line

### Thank you to the Springs Golf Club

At the start of 'lock down' Lindsey and Anthony Esse, the owners of the Springs Golf Club, part of the Darwin Escapes Leisure Group, made a most generous offer of giving vulnerable older residents in Dorchester a cooked meal to be delivered to their doorstep, to be cooked by the furloughed staff at the Springs Golf Club. In total 63 Dorchester residents became the receivers of really delicious meals of a main course with vegetables and a dessert and in addition two mouth-watering biscuits for tea later.

Originally 45 residents received the meal then numbers increased over succeeding dates to 63 residents and 6 dates in total, with delivery to 45 houses! Without exception we really appreciated this generous gift and we all felt we would like to pay back this generosity by donating money to various charities. The charities that we chose are: Wallingford Emergency Food Bank, NHS Together, Triple Negative Breast Cancer Research, Thames Valley Air Ambulance, Emmaus Oxford (helping homeless people in Oxford) and Mediciens Sans Frontieres.

All participants thank Lindsey most sincerely and her staff for a magnificent and generous action which certainly helped make 'lock down' much more tolerable.

## Local businesses delivering to Dorchester

Last month we brought you a list of business delivering to Dorchester during the pandemic. Here we repeat that list. Together with some additions. However, as regulations change, some of these will be re-opening their premises, so check whether they are still delivering.

### Bookshop

**The Wallingford Bookshop**

01491 834383

[books@wallingfordbookshop.com](mailto:books@wallingfordbookshop.com)

### Brewery

**Loose Cannon Brewery**

01235 531141

[shop@lcbeers.co.uk](mailto:shop@lcbeers.co.uk)

### Butchers

**Benson Village Butchers**

01491 838330

<https://www.facebook.com/BensonVillageButcher/>

**Aldens Specialist Catering Butchers**

01865 722093

[info@aldenoxford.co.uk](mailto:info@aldenoxford.co.uk)

**Wallingford Butchers**

01491 833553

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

### Convenience Store

**The Co-op**

01865 340038

<http://www.midcounties.coop/>

### Greengrocers

**Bonners**

01865 242183

[Order@bonnersoxford.co.uk](mailto:Order@bonnersoxford.co.uk)

### Gift Shop

**Derry's Den, Benson**

01491 824152

[elisa@derrysden.co.uk](mailto:elisa@derrysden.co.uk)

### Meal delivery

**Streetfooddelhi**

[www.streetfooddelhi.com](http://www.streetfooddelhi.com)

### H Cafe

01865 341607

[h-pizza.com](http://h-pizza.com)

### Chinese Whisper

01844 300300

<https://www.chinesewhisper.co.uk/>

### Skogen Kitchen

<https://skogen.kitchen>

### Pet Food

**Blakes**

01491 834911

[sales@blakespets.co.uk](mailto:sales@blakespets.co.uk)

More details available on the village website

<https://www.dorchester-on-thames.co.uk/>

Places in Dorchester that are open:

**Fleur de Lys** Takeaway food and drink  
**01865 661865** Takeaway drinks, coffee and beer, baguettes and takeaway meals Wed, Fr, Sat, Sun.

**The Wandering Kitchen** Coffee etc and food takeaway Queenford Lakes, Burcot Lane OX10 7PQ **01865 343568**  
[hello@thewanderingkitchen.co.uk](mailto:hello@thewanderingkitchen.co.uk)  
Down Drayton Rd. and over the bridge to Queenford Lakes

**Dorchester Abbey Tearoom** - See Page 8

Further Information

**'Life in a locked-down village'** A useful page of resources serving Dorchester during the pandemic crisis  
[aftercancers.com/life-in-a-corona-locked-down-village/](http://aftercancers.com/life-in-a-corona-locked-down-village/)

**South Oxfordshire Takeaway / Delivery Services** Facebook page  
[www.facebook.com/southoxtakeaways/?hc\\_location=ufi](https://www.facebook.com/southoxtakeaways/?hc_location=ufi)

**The Big Small Shop** A website directory of small businesses based in Wallingford  
[thebigsmallshop.co.uk/](http://thebigsmallshop.co.uk/)





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# **DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES**

## **AUTUMN FLOWER SHOW**

### **VIRTUAL SHOWING**

**Saturday 12th September 2020**

Anticipating ongoing restrictions of social distancing due to coronavirus it is unlikely that we will be able to host the Autumn Flower Show 2020 in its normal format.

Exhibitors are therefore invited to join a celebration of their horticultural and domestic achievements during these unprecedented times by submitting entries in new and exciting ways. Entries will be judged anonymously by local experts, as our usual judges will not be available.

#### **Section 1 – Vegetables (photographed entry)**

**A collection of 4 different types of vegetables in a container**

Competing for: The Vegetable Collection Plate

#### **Section 2 – Flowers (photographed entry)**

**One dahlia, any size**

Competing for: The HC Smith Dahlia Cup.

#### **Section 3 – Flower arrangements (photographed – two photos per entry)**

**A posy for bees. Max 6 x 6 x 6 inches**

Competing for: The Floral Art Cup

#### **Section 4 – Domestic (Entries to be submitted and donated to the Dorchester Abbey tearoom; please label with your name)**

**Sponge cake, any flavour, buttercream filling**

Competing for: Victoria Sandwich Award

**A pot of jam**

#### **Section 5 – Photography**

**A subject beginning with F** (unmanipulated image)

**A funny photo** (unmanipulated image)

Competing for: The Blackwell Photography Cup

#### **Section 6 – Children, all ages (photographed entry)**

**Halloween mask**

Please state age.

#### **All entries should be submitted by 12 noon Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September**

All entries must have been grown or home produced by the exhibitor. One entry per exhibitor in each category.

Sections 1 to 4 will be judged on content not photographic quality.

All photographic entries should be sent to:

**flowershow@dorchesteronthames.co.uk**

Entries for the domestic classes should be delivered to the Dorchester Abbey tearoom between 10 am and 12 noon Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September.

Queries to Christina **01865 341150**

**Winners will be announced and the show open for virtual viewing on the Dorchester on Thames website at 2.00pm on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September.**







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## St Birinus Primary School News

Just a quick note from me for my last entry in the Dorchester News as the headteacher of the school. I am writing this on the day that we have opened our doors to a wider group of children from Foundation, Year 1 and Year 6. It was hard to believe that for these children it has been ten weeks since they were last here. At this moment in time, who knows what decisions will be made for more children to return in the coming weeks and by the time you read this everything could have changed.

As promised I write to confirm the appointment of Mrs Staples as the new headteacher of Dorchester, St Birinus and she will be joining the school on 1 September and I wish her well and hope that she has an equally enjoyable time leading this wonderful village school as I have for the last nearly ten years.

Another goodbye this year, is to Mrs Eacopo (class teacher of Owl Class), who is leaving at the end of this summer term to take on a new teaching role in the county. Thank you to her for all her hard work, which has been appreciated.

I wish you all a fond farewell and take my wonderful memories from Dorchester to my new school in September. Thank you.

**Russell Leigh**  
Headteacher

(See page 14/15 for more about Russell.)



## Beat that lockdown lethargy Join Dorchester Tennis Club today

Our courts are now open! Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to participate in a great sport which can have marvellous beneficial effects on our mental as well as our physical health. Join Dorchester Tennis Club to receive priority access to the courts, club sessions, adult coaching and entry to the 2021 draw for Wimbledon tickets. Brilliant pricing - £25 individual, £40 family membership - this year only. You will be warmly received by our regular players always keen to meet new members. All abilities very welcome

### Wednesday

10.00am – 12.30pm Open club mixed session

### Friday

10.30am – 12.30pm Ladies morning

### Saturday

Gentlemen's morning

### Sunday

10.30am to 12.30pm - Open club mixed session

## Forthcoming Club Events

Quiz Night – **Saturday 10 October**, Village Hall

Enquires to Chris Smith  
[chriscsmith@btinternet.com](mailto:chriscsmith@btinternet.com)  
Tel. 01865 341947



## Dorchester Historical Society Plans for future meetings

Having looked carefully at the possibility and practicality of holding further meetings in 2020, the Historical Society Committee has decided that the safest course amidst so much uncertainty, and with many members in vulnerable categories, is to cancel the remainder of this year's programme.

We aim to resume in January 2021 with the AGM and a talk from one of the cancelled speakers. Look out for further information in later issues of Dorchester News. We shall also send email updates to members when we have more news. Meanwhile, keep safe.

**Margot Metcalfe**  
Chairman



## Dorchester Village Hall 200 Club Prize Draw

Congratulations to the winners of the June draw.

1st Prize	£75	No.35 Miss K Langton
2nd Prize	£45	No. 50 Mr K Russell
3rd Prize	£25	No.150 Dr D Parker

The next draw will be in September, 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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T: 01491 833227

E: [holiday@fullcircletravel.com](mailto:holiday@fullcircletravel.com)



## Recent history on top of ancient history

You may be aware that the east side of Watling Lane, in common with several other parts of Dorchester, is scheduled as an Ancient Monument, a designation it has held since 1964. This was mentioned in the article on Hempcroft Allotments in the June issue of Dorchester News. The reason for this scheduling is that below this land are likely to be remains of the Roman town of Dorchester, and that these remains are not to be disturbed. Hence this was the site of the annual archaeological dig in recent years on the allotments, and it is what has protected this area from being built on extensively for housing in recent years.

If you have been taking your lockdown exercise along Watling Lane recently, you may have noticed a piece of rather more recent history sitting on this site of ancient history. In the orchard about half way along Watling Lane stands a caravan, or rather the remains of one.

My partner, Maggie, and I bought the orchard in 2017. We were aware that the caravan was on the land, but being covered in ivy and brambles it was disregarded at first, put aside as a project for the future, after plenty of other clearance work had been completed.



The caravan from Watling Lane

that name only lasted three months before being changed. It is easy to imagine that some pilots got a bit confused when told to fly to Dorchester, and a name change became inevitable.

Comparison with photographs showed that it was of the right dimensions and construction for a runway control caravan, and when we finally cleared sufficient of the ivy and brambles to get inside it, there was a pot-bellied stove. The USAAF

manual on runway control caravans which I had found online mentioned the pot-bellied stove as a fire hazard, with crews instructed not to tow these caravans in an erratic manner whilst the stove was lit for fear it would topple over with disastrous consequences. That seemed to reinforce my suspicions.

A discussion with the late Norman Blissett, confirmed that the caravan had been in the orchard since at least 1946, when he had come here as a boy, which further added evidence to the theory that this caravan had been 'liberated' in some way from Mount Farm when the American Air Force had left at the end of the war.

The Imperial War Museum were very interested when I contacted them in 2019, and confirmed from photographs that it is, as suspected, probably a WWII runway control caravan. They do not possess an example of one and initially said that they would like to have it for their collection at Duxford Air Museum. On further examination, however, they decided that they did not have the budget to restore it, and so the caravan lies there still in the orchard, slowly falling apart.

It cannot stay there. I am loathe to dismantle it as it is an historical remnant, if a minor one, and am pursuing other interest groups who may be prepared to take on its restoration as a voluntary activity for display at an aircraft museum somewhere. But I am not hopeful, so if anyone knows of an organisation that might be interested in having it, please let me know.

Whether it survives or not, I would love to have any information about how it got here, and what it was used for over the last 75 years so that its history can be properly documented. If you know anything at all about the history of this caravan, I would be delighted if you could let me know at

**dorchesternews@dorchesteronthames.co.uk.**

**Ian Brace**



Slowly, though, as the undergrowth was removed and as the caravan emerged, it became clear that it was not an ordinary caravan of the sort that you would go on holiday with. A little bit of investigation and some guesswork, suggested that it could have originated as a runway control caravan from one of the local airbases during World War II. The obvious suspect would be Mount Farm airbase, being the nearest, around which Berinsfield was created after the war. Originally Mount Farm was known as RAF Dorchester, but



Far left, A USAAF runway control caravan in WWII.

Left: The caravan as it stands now, without its roof and windows.



## Cherrilyn Annette Wood 1963-2020

Cherrilyn was born on 4 September 1963 in Wallingford hospital, and grew up in Long Wittenham. She attended the village primary school and then Blackstone school in Wallingford. Cherrilyn loved animals, and had a succession of dogs, cats, rabbits and later her beloved horse Farley. Her mother Gladys was a Wittenham girl, but her father Richard Bates came from Dorchester. His family lived in Watling lane, and his younger brother Vic Bates is fondly remembered by many Dorchester residents.



leg had gone to her lungs. She was just fifty-six years old.

Cherrilyn will be remembered by her friends and family as shy but kind-hearted person, who would help anyone. She was a wonderful cook and her cake making skills were legendary, most importantly a wonderful wife, mother, nanny and sister.

When Cherrilyn met her future husband Ian Wood, she was surprised to find he came from Dorchester and knew her uncle Vic and aunt Ruby very well. Ruby and Ian's mother were in fact good friends.

Ian and Cherrilyn married and initially lived with Cherrilyn's mother, her father having died two years previously. After several moves, they settled in Fieldside. They called the house 'Carters Cottage' after Fred Carter who had lived there previously and were very happy there. They had four children, Evangeline, Alex, Bonnie, and Ashley. They enjoyed holidays in Weymouth and the surrounding areas and would often dash down to Weymouth at weekends. When the children grew older, they began to visit Devon and Cornwall. Foreign holidays held no interest for Ian and Cherrilyn.

Their youngest son Ashley suffered from autism, and as he entered his twenties, he became increasingly unhappy about living in Wittenham. By then Ian and Cherrilyn had inherited Ian's parents' house on Tenpenny so they moved there leaving the older children at Wittenham. Ashley was much happier living in Dorchester, so they made the change permanent.

In recent years, Cherrilyn began to suffer health problems, and her legs became swollen and painful. This

meant she could no longer ride her beloved horse Farley, but she would not hear of parting with him and went to see him every day. The leg problems also meant she could no longer ride pillion on Ian's classic Triumph Bonneville motorcycle which she had always loved, but she still enjoyed visits to the Isle of Man for the Manx GP and riding on the steam railways and horse drawn trams. She also found great joy in becoming a grandmother to her youngest daughter's three children and was looking forward the birth of her oldest daughter Evangeline's child due in August.

When Ian came home from hospital after recovering from Coronavirus, he found Cherrilyn was unwell and set to nurse her. After a week, Cherrilyn began to feel better and sat in the garden enjoying the sunshine. Her health continued to improve, and her appetite returned. On Saturday 18 April Cherrilyn and her husband spent the evening discussing the things they would do and places they would visit when the Coronavirus was beaten. Ian went to bed early as his lungs were still very painful from the virus, but was woken up by Ashley saying that his mum could not breathe. He phoned for an ambulance, which arrived in less than seven minutes and the crew set to work. They did everything they could but were unable to save her. A blood clot in her

### Mum by Marilyn

You went away so suddenly; we did not say goodbye.

Wife, mother, nanny and sisters, can never be parted, precious memories never die.

Jesus took you for a sunbeam to shine on him each day. In every way you'll please him and brighten up his day.

A ray of sunshine came and went, a beautiful treasure only lent, in God's keeping quietly sleeps, wife, mother, nanny and sister, we loved but could not keep.

Angels in heaven, all robed in white, were playing one day in the garden of light, and Jesus came smiling and said to his band, here's another playmate, take Cherrilyn's hand.

We lost a wife, mother, nanny and sister with a heart of gold worth more to us than wealth untold, from early toil to heavenly rest, God took our wife, mother, nanny and sister, one of the best.

There's a place in our heart, no one can fill, we miss you dear wife, mother, nanny and sister. And always will.

Of all the many blessings, how great or small, to have had you for a wife, mother, nanny and sister, was the greatest one off all.

The family chain is broken now, and nothing seems the same, but as God takes us one by one, the chain will link again.

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## Robert James Gabbey 1938-2020

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Robert James Gabbey - known to most as Jim, but to his wife, Maureen, as Bob - apparently, because when he first met her, he felt that Bob gave the impression of sounding more sophisticated and mature!

Jim was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1938, and spent the war years growing up in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh. His family then moved to Newry in County Down. His father worked in insurance, and his mother stayed at home to look after him, his older brother, Perry, and also his much younger sister, Janice, who survives him.

Having attended university in Belfast, Jim's work brought him to London, where he was employed by HM Customs and Excise. Whilst living in London, he met Maureen, and the rest, as they say,

is history! Maureen and Bob married in 1963. They initially lived in Craigavad, Northern Ireland, where Claire was born. Soon after, Jim was transferred back to London to work, and they moved to Coulsdon where Sara and Kieron were born. Jim's work was then transferred to Oxford, and they moved to the house where he was to spend the rest of his life – Red Tiles, 88 High Street, Dorchester on Thames. A house which carries so very many deeply felt memories for us all, as part of his family.

Jim remained an employee of HM Customs and Excise until his retirement in 1997. During his employment, his work transferred between Oxford and Heathrow airport. After his retirement from Customs and Excise, Jim took on a part-time job at Pearson's in Oxford,



where he continued to work until March of this year.

Jim loved living in Dorchester. He loved to go down to The George, White Hart, or in previous years, The Chequers, Old Castle and Plough, and have a drink (or more). He would love chatting and telling jokes, and his friendships meant a huge amount to him. He equally always wanted to support events with the village and had been an active supporter of the Hurst Trust, as well as that he had been a member of the tennis club and The British Legion. He was also known to many in the village through taking his dogs for walks. Jim was an avid sportsman and had loved playing hockey, as well as squash. He also enjoyed keeping fit generally and would attend the gym in Abingdon and Berinsfield.

Despite having lived most of his life in England, Jim remained in his heart someone who was Irish. He had an undying love particularly of the Mountains of Mourne. Amongst some of the happiest times for him would be when he would return to visit his sister, Janice, and brother-in-law, Alan, where they live in Donaghadee. It was never a surprise to us that he would always be avidly supporting Ireland in any rugby or football match on television.

Despite in more recent years, facing some health problems, Jim's courage, discipline and persistence, led to him continue his life with the enthusiasm, support, love and commitment we were all so comforted by. His sometimes less than

appropriate jokes, which no one found more hilariously funny than he himself, continued until the day he was taken into hospital – 11 May of this year. Jim sadly passed away on 22 May in the John Radcliffe hospital after contracting sepsis.

A loving, loyal brother, husband, father, grandad, great grandad, uncle and friend. We are all so very proud of you, dad. God bless you.

Our family will be holding a memorial service later in the year, when current restrictions are lifted, to remember and celebrate Jim's life.





# DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES ST. BIRINUS PRIMARY SCHOOL



**As our village school and community say goodbye this summer to the long-serving headteacher Russell Leigh, we'd like to share memories about his time here...**

Russell joined the school as headteacher nine years ago and so has overseen the education of a generation of children from Dorchester and its surrounding villages, as well as becoming a regular face in the community, supporting DADS drama events with his nimble piano skills.

Over the last few years, the school has been through two OFSTED inspections, achieving a GOOD rating both times, which is a tribute to the consistency of teaching and learning at Dorchester St Birinus that Russell and the staff have achieved.

He is much-loved by the children for his skilled teaching and gentle humour, and his supportive nature is much appreciated by the staff.

The role of a village school headteacher is all-encompassing, whether managing tight budgets, school development plans, leading school trips, or covering lessons for unwell colleagues. He has also been seen sweeping leaves, gritting icy playgrounds and marching the school to the rec for sports day, not to mention crawling through tiny gaps in limestone caves in the Brecons!

Russell has always calmly and capably presided over this happy school, embracing the inevitable regular changes schools face, leading his staff in a constant drive to improve the provision. Importantly, Russell's excellent teaching and his nurturing of each individual child in his care have helped make the school the special place that it is. His cheerful and popular after school maths sessions for the older children, for example, whether 'booster' or 'extension', have cemented a love of maths in so many of his pupils and given them a flying start at secondary school.

Russell forged good links with the local community and with the Abbey, including as a venue to showcase the children's (and his own) musical skills. We are glad we were able to have a special musical evening with him last summer there because, as it has turned out, the lockdown has made a big farewell event impossible.

On behalf of all the governors I'd like to thank Russell for his work here and wish him all the best for his new role as headteacher of Ducklington primary school.

We also wish to thank **Jane Eacopo** for her work teaching Owl class and acting as special educational needs co-ordinator. We wish her well in her new role.

**Jo Staples** - currently at Stephen Freeman School in Didcot - takes over as headteacher in September.

**Robin Bennett**  
Chair of Governors





"I remember when, for May dancing in 2016, my dance partner dropped out and I had to partner up with Mr Leigh. It was great fun, although he didn't fit through the small human arches!"

**Annabelle King**

"I will never forget getting a shock when I saw him in Woodlands in his caving outfit!"

**Cecily Gauden**

"I remember Mr Leigh holding the banner at Young Voices."

**Sasha Jasinskaite**

"I really like that Mr Leigh is so, so, so funny, kind, helpful, and I really like when we sung together."

**Kata Czirkus**

"The interesting thing about Mr Leigh is that everyone at school thought that they were his favourite. This must have been because he took such an interest in every child there."

**Theo Beaman**

"Mr Leigh had a very sympathetic approach towards injuries. He would always announce that we should chop it off!"

**Annabelle and Jessica King**

"Mr Leigh is funny, helpful, kind and nice."

**Mikey Ashley**

"The best headteacher ever."

**Carys Sadler**

"I would just like to say that Russell has had a hugely positive influence on the school particularly with his love and support of the arts."

**Caroline Seed**

"I remember Mr Leigh taking everyone who played an instrument to the Royal Opera House to see 'The Magic Flute'. It was such a brilliant opportunity and has stayed with me ever since."

**Tabitha Gauden**

"Mr Leigh is renowned for his humour but what I really remember is his kindness... every year he would buy breakfast for the whole week for the Year 6s during their SATS exams."

**Amelie White**

"I will always be grateful for the advanced maths after school that Mr Leigh gave me before SATS."

**Nat Gauden**

"(He has) helped motivate, encourage and inspire so many young children."

**Megan Sadler**

"According to Mr Leigh he was 21 for 5 years!"

**Melissa Obeng**

"He is a wonderful pianist, has always been exceptionally kind and patient when playing for our shows... He never complained. I know he usually came to rehearsals straight from his day in school, and without supper."

**Rosemary Mills, DADS**

"Mr Leigh might like to know that, amongst other things, 3 of the girls from Dorchester St. Birinus now in year 10 at Didcot Girls School are now house captains out of 7 houses! And of course last year's head girl was from the school - not bad for a little school!"

**Penny White**

"I really enjoyed your company and your piano playing and of course sharing your Jelly Babies!"

**Christine Jones, DADS**

"Not only an amazing pianist but... a fantastic sense of humour and thank goodness for that!"

**Ann Winslet, DADS**

"We are all sorry to see Russell go."

**Ian Brace, DADS, Dorchester News Editor**

"Russell has the knack of being able to adjust his playing according to the needs of both director and cast with an easy grace. We will miss him!"

**Mark Wilkins, DADS**

"I remember when, as a key stage one student, I was always very slow at eating my lunch. Eventually I would still be eating when all of my friends went to play and the key stage twos came to eat their lunch. Mr Leigh realised that I was quite scared of the older children and he would often come to sit with me while I finished my lunch. I was always so happy to see him."

**Toby Atkinson-Seed**

"It was a stressful time as we prepared for a crucial OFSTED inspection. Thanks to all the hard work you put in, we achieved the result we wanted - and the result the school deserved. I vividly remember the moment the inspector gave us our result - tense times! Thanks for being such a great headteacher."

**Duncan Lochhead, former Chair of Governors**





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## Mary Gwenith Wyn Lewis 1933-2020

Gwen was the fourth child of Mary and Willie Jones, and her family owned a grocery shop in Brynaman.

In 1952 Gwen met Bill and they married in 1957. 1960 saw the birth of their eldest daughter, Christine, followed by Helen in 1963, and Catherine in 1966.

In 1970 the family uprooted from Llantwit Major to Newbury when Bill secured a position at Didcot Power Station. It was hard for Gwen leaving the Welsh valleys, but her family bonds remained unbreakable.

Gwen's focus was her family and her home, she dressed her three girls immaculately and kept the house spick and span. She was known for her excellent culinary skills, and it was nothing for her to whip up Welsh cakes or millionaire's shortbread for afternoon tea. She regularly held dinner parties - always cooking far too much and never making just one dessert!

Gwen loved to go shopping EVERY Saturday; Bill would tease that she bought things one week in Reading, only to return them the following week to Oxford, helping the stores stock management! She enjoyed keeping fit and attended weekly aerobics and trampolining classes.

In the evenings, whilst enjoying a glass or two of Bill's homemade Bailey's – her only vice - Gwen loved to keep up with the TV soaps. She also loved to sing along to everything, from The Bachelors to George Ezra, only she never got the words right!

When her daughters married, Gwen gained three sons: Mark, David and Andy, and between 1990 and 1995 she gained six grandchildren: Owen, Charles, Brontë, Rhys, Maddie and Harvey. Gwen was very much a 'hands-on' nana.

Having moved home several times in Newbury, then relocating to Charlbury and Benson respectively, Bill and Gwen finally settled in Dorchester on Thames in 2011.

In 2013 Bill sadly passed away; the family was concerned about how Gwen would cope. However, she



embraced this new chapter by joining Dorchester's WI, attending the Lunch Club and dining weekly with the local ladies. She supported DADS and attended services and events in the Abbey.

Gwen visited the local hairdressers to maintain her impeccable appearance and, when running late, Adele would pop over to fetch her - what customer service! Afterwards, she would join her good friend, Irene, at Lily's Tea Room.

Living alone, Gwen struggled with technology, neither mastering the use of an i-Pad, nor her mobile phone, and she often, unintentionally, disturbed Andy at work - his name listed first in the contacts! Also, she frequently telephoned Helen in Australia in the middle of

the night, having not factored in the time difference!

In 2017, almost 84, Gwen travelled to Brisbane for her granddaughter's wedding. She joined in the Hen Party and, on the wedding day itself, spent the evening on the dance floor!

Gwen's physical decline hastened after returning from Australia. Even with increased help and support from her daughters, in August 2019, following a succession of falls, she moved into Watlington Nursing Home. Here she became one of the favourites with her infectious smile and good humour. Billy-Jo, a new care assistant, got into trouble during her first week for spending too much time in Gwen's room chatting!

Despite Gwen's petite stature and quiet demeanour, she was a strong and determined lady, impeccably presented to the end. She was generous and nurturing, with an impish sense of humour that counterbalanced any difficulty she faced. She will be remembered by her family as being the best mum and friend, and the best nana - she will be hugely missed.



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## Margaret Vinson Stevenson 1928-2020

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Margaret Vinson Thomas was born in Ealing, London on 24 January 1928. Her parents, George and Hilda were both from Welsh stock. Margaret, known as Margot, was very proud of her Welsh background. She had a very happy childhood, punctuated by the onset of war in 1939. She has vivid memories of the blitz but also of an idyllic spell in South Wales as an evacuee. She had the freedom of her own little world in a tiny village on the shores of the Bristol Channel. She chased rabbits on Sully Island, picked blackberries, went to school on the steam train and thanked the driver every day.



Margot had a zest for life and an eye for mischief. She loved books and French and raced up the wing on the Lacrosse field. She would tell her seven grandchildren how naughty she had been at school. She was expelled from one wartime boarding school after leading the younger girls into the woods for a midnight feast. The grandchildren lapped it up.

Margot always wanted to be a nurse. She was accepted into the hallowed training school of Guys Hospital in London. She immediately formed a bond with Lynn and Joyce, who became lifelong friends. The three musketeers waltzed their way through training. All -powerful matrons would purse their lips and resolve to bring that Margot girl into line. Not a chance. Margot continued to land herself and others in trouble. After an illicit late night out with the musketeers, she would, the following morning, run (strictly forbidden) to start her first day on the Male ward. She stood, in her crumpled uniform, in front of Matron, her own uniform and smile starched to within an inch of their lives. Matron would look her up and down, 'Child, it is you, if I am not mistaken, the nurse who likes to entertain innocent young housemen in the linen cupboard.'

Margot supported the Guys Rugby team against St Thomas, the deadly rivals, and through this met Dermott Murphy, a handsome young Irish doctor who swept her off her feet onto his BSA motorcycle. They went on to marry in 1950. Once wed, a young nurse was expected

to resign her commission. Playing the role of a London GP's wife she devoted herself to her family and raised her five boys in South London. Sadly, the marriage ended in the mid 1970s.

A sad period in her life was turned around when she met Bob Stevenson, an Electrical Engineer with M&S, and a cockney to his boots. They were perfect for each other. They started a new life in Purley, both had experienced sadness in their first marriages but they truly made each other happier than they had ever been.

Mrs Stevenson, as Margot now was, finished her nursing career with a demanding but happy role in the Croydon Mayday Hospital's Cardiac Arrest team.

Margot coaxed Bob into sharing her love of France and not only got him to eat snails but also to agree to retire to a 'gite' in the Dordogne, that they named Le Paradis. They worked tirelessly to convert a working cottage into a home.

Life, though, is cruel at times, very cruel. On the eve of retirement for both of them, Bob had an unexpected heart attack and the dream was over.

Margot, devastated, but never one to look back, sought her own little paradise in England and came to Dorchester-on-Thames in 1991. She, and her beloved dog, Buzz (the apple of Bob's eye) threw themselves into village life through dog -walking groups, the Abbey tearoom and the WI. She and Buzz would walk miles down to the lock or across the Hurst Meadow and far beyond.

Recently she had become less mobile and active. She passed away on the 31 May 2020 in her chair, in the lounge of her beloved Lavender Cottage, with its pink frontage and thatched roof, in her beautiful village.



## Name that flower

The Autumn Flower Show will this year be a virtual one. (see page 7). So, in case you are in danger of missing the flowers, Yvonne Lawden has put sent us a 'Name that flower' fun quiz, courtesy of Oxfordshire Keep Fit Association. Twenty descriptions; and 20 answers in the next issue of Dorchester News. Have fun.

- |                              |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Not a dance all night     | 11. Lonely in an onion patch    |
| 2. Falling from the sky      | 12. You will remember           |
| 3. Last call in a pub        | 13. Used to thicken a sauce     |
| 4. Part of the eye           | 14. Marry that millionaire      |
| 5. Accident in the dairy     | 15. St George's card game?      |
| 6. On a bicycle made for two | 16. Baby in Popeye              |
| 7. Sweethearts in a fog      | 17. Max Bygrave's Dutch flowers |
| 8. Religious headgear        | 18. Novel by Baroness Orczy     |
| 9. Bouquet not bucket        | 19. A cathedral's campanile     |
| 10. A hardworking girl       | 20. Full fat vessel             |

## Solution to Dorchester News Crossword No. 12

Compiled by Slider

1	I	N	2	F	A	3	M	Y			4	R	A	5	N	G	6	O	O	7	N
	N			U		A			8	F		E			O		F			E	
9	D	I		S	T	R	A	10	I	N	S			10	D	E	F	E		R	
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11	C	O	Y	P	U			12	L	O	D	E	S	T	O	N	E				
	E					P			E		U					A				S	
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				E		A									A			E			
			17	J	S	T	L	E	18	S		19	C	A	M	B	R	I	20	C	
21	W			I					P		L			E						O	
22	A	N	D	R	23	O	M	E	D	A			24	M	O	25	G	U	L		
	T			E		C			N		S			B			R			L	
26	T	E	N	E	T			27	D	E	S	P	E	R	A	T	E				
	L			C		E			E		Y			R			C			C	
28	E	L	E	C	T	O	R				29	S	T	R	E	E	T				

## RAF Benson Night Flying

You may have noticed that helicopters have been flying slightly later at night over recent weeks. RAF Benson have put out the following explanation.

'Unfortunately, there is still a requirement for our crews to be fully qualified in all aspects of operating in the hours of darkness...This means that we will sometimes need to fly into the early hours of the morning to ensure our crews can complete essential training. The latest that we expect to be flying at any point is 0300hrs. This only applies to our military helicopters though – the National Police Air Service and Thames Valley Air Ambulance that are both resident on our airfield will continue to operate whenever they are needed to respond to emergencies.

We publish our weekly forecast of the flying hours on our website every Monday morning. While we will always aim to finish our flying as early as possible, in order to continue to provide qualified and experienced crews to the front line for operations in the UK and overseas, we have to fly after midnight.

The link to our flying programme is: <https://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-benson/documents/raf-benson-flying-programme/> This link remains the same each week and it is updated with the latest information early on a Monday morning, giving the first take off and last landing times for that week.'

## The Landscape Group Oxford

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## Parish Council Notices

### Public Health- Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Parish Council is using its noticeboards and website – [www.dorchesteronthames.co.uk](http://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](mailto: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”.

### Council Meetings

Due to the prevailing Government regulations, the Monthly Meetings of the Parish Council are being 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 next three Council Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 8 July, Wednesday 12 August and Wednesday 9 September**. All these meetings will commence at 7.30 p.m. The Agendas will be posted on Village Noticeboards and on the Parish Council section of the Village website – [www.dorchesteronthames.co.uk](http://www.dorchesteronthames.co.uk) – three working days in advance.

It is expected that these meeting will also be held ‘remotely’ but **all** Parish Council meetings are open to the public and any 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 3.00pm on the afternoon before the meeting so that the necessary access arrangements can be made

### Bonfires

Some residents have complained to the Parish Council about bonfires and nuisance smoke. The District Council is **urging people not to light bonfires at this time to protect the respiratory health of the vulnerable and to avoid unnecessary burden on the NHS**. COVID-19 is a respiratory disease and smoke inhalation can impair people’s breathing. In addition to this, with larger numbers of people now working from home and also looking after children, the smoke from such bonfires can cause unnecessary nuisance to your neighbours. Additional information includes:

If you feel that having a bonfire is the only option, it is important that you follow this advice:

- out of courtesy, inform your neighbours you are proposing to have a bonfire
- only burn dry ‘clean’ wood/garden waste
- do not burn household rubbish, such as plastic, foam, paint or rubber.
- do not light bonfires when the material is damp because this will generate more smoke
- do not use old engine oil, meths or petrol to light the fire
- do not light bonfires when the wind is likely to blow smoke into neighbours’ homes or gardens
- do not leave bonfires unattended, even if it is just smouldering.

### To complain about a bonfire contact

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/> or telephone: **01235 422410**

### 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



The parish council continues to function on your behalf and, as lock-down eases a little, we are starting to open up some of our facilities again. Hopefully everything will be open before too long and we can enjoy part of the summer at least.

As things have started to get less difficult I’ve reflected a bit on the one thing we have been encouraged to do that I’ve really enjoyed. Walking. Getting out and about in our village, meeting other residents and getting some exercise at the same time. Which brought me to a few observations about what I’ve seen and what I’ve heard from residents I’ve bumped into (socially distanced of course). The overriding theme has been the same as my reflection, how lucky we are to live with all the green space around us, made even better by the opening up on much of the land of Bishop’s Court Farm.

But also I’ve heard about things where we can all help to make our village and its surroundings an even nicer environment for us all. So, in no particular order and at the risk of coming across as a bit grumpy, my ‘could do better’ list included; cleaning up dog mess and not leaving bags hanging on fences; closing gates on the farm; not overfilling bins (outside the Co-op in particular, where some residents regularly deposit their household food and recycling waste); driving more carefully through the village.

Little things in some ways. And few of us are perfect of course, I’m sure we all have our weaknesses as well as our pet annoyances. But if we can all do a bit more to tackle these things as a community then we will be even more lucky to live in Dorchester. On that last topic, some of you have asked us to look into reducing the speed limit in the High Street to 20mph. The county council will be conducting a traffic survey once things return to normal-ish and the government may be making it easier and quicker to make that change. Please get in touch if you have an opinion either way.

**Mark Williams**

**Chairman DoT Parish Council**

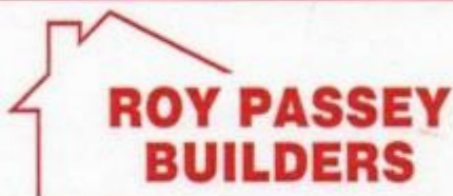
**[chairman@dorchesteronthames.co.uk](mailto:chairman@dorchesteronthames.co.uk)**

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Cllr Mark Williams, the Chairman, can be contacted via **[chairman@dorchesteronthames.co.uk](mailto: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



### Coronavirus response

The newly established Community Hub at SODC has been extremely active in supporting vulnerable residents over the past couple of months. The Hub's current opening hours are 9am to 6pm, Monday to Saturday and closed on Sundays. We are very proud of the way SODC staff have stepped up to the challenge and have responded to the new demands.

### Virtual meetings and Local Plan

SODC's first virtual meeting took place successfully on 28 May, and it's great for transparency and openness that you can now watch pretty much all official council meetings online. Try it if you've run out of options on Netflix! Find the links and timetable on the SODC website.

It has now been confirmed that the Examination in Public of the local plan will also be held virtually, starting on 14 July, and we're just awaiting confirmation that this too will be streamed live. Proposed changes to the plan are being drafted by some councillors, including me, for submission to the inspector. It will be up to him to accept or reject them. The council is still under the legal direction of Secretary of State Robert Jenrick to push this controversial plan through.

### Adapting our roads to accommodate safe cycling and walking

It is clear that our narrow pavements and car-oriented roads are simply unsafe for an increase in bicycle traffic and social distancing. Much of the focus so far has been on the more urban areas, including Oxford, but we would like to see this vision extended to our villages and towns.

There's a website called [www.widenmypath.com](http://www.widenmypath.com) where you can submit a suggestion for improvements to be made to an existing pavement or cycle path. Apparently it is monitored by OCC, so worth using!

Recent air quality measurements show clearly the impact road traffic has on levels of air pollution, with a massive drop in Nitrogen Dioxide levels during the lockdown, by more than half in places like Wallingford.

### Support for Local Businesses

We have been processing applications for the new Discretionary grants fund, aiming to support small businesses which were not eligible for the earlier rounds of funding, and we continue to push for funding for those who are still missing out on support. Further information is available at <https://www.svbs.co.uk>.

### Diversity and inclusion

Leader of SODC Sue Cooper has written an open letter highlighting the approach to diversity in our district, in light of recent events in the US and here in the UK, saying: "we practice equality, fairness and inclusion. Through many of our services we work hard to ensure marginalised and isolated members of communities get all the support they need."

### Dorchester celebrated for Bike Week by cycle champion Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye:

"My favourite route at the moment is from Culham to Dorchester-on-Thames. Although the path does need some attention in parts, it's an easy going 10-mile round trip and feels safe because of the cycle path. This journey has been even more enjoyable of late because fewer vehicles are on the road and, although the ride takes you along a main road, the cycle path sits between open fields on both sides. It's so lovely to arrive at the beautiful and calm Dorchester cemetery, where my mother is buried. I stay for a while and enjoy the surroundings before I head back to enjoy my return journey."

**Robin.Bennett@southoxon.gov.uk**

**tel. 01865 858680**

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



## Primary schools – partial re-opening on 1 June

A key issue for the County Council this month will be welcoming more pupils back into our primary schools and early years settings. As Cabinet Member for Education, I am confident that our Headteachers will make safety, hygiene and social distancing 'absolute priorities' as they carry out risk assessments in preparation for welcoming back Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils in June.

## PPE to every school

As a contribution to the situation, this week, the County Council delivered hundreds of thousands of personal protective equipment (PPE) items to Oxfordshire schools:

IIR Masks: 151,000; Aprons: 181,000; Gloves: 121,000; Visors: 900; Sanitiser: 7,500 litres.

In addition, support is being provided to over 900 early years providers regarding supplies of PPE.

## Government £250m grant towards Active Travel

Cyclists and walkers are set to benefit from a concerted plan of action to clear and prepare Oxfordshire's network of cycleways and footpaths ready for the expected rise in demand as lockdown is very gradually relaxed.

As people look to return to work and school during the summer, cycling and walking will become more important than ever – both offer zero emission ways to travel which will improve health and wellbeing as well as helping to address the need to keep socially distant.

A recent survey of all 63 Oxfordshire County Councillors found that the need to improve cycling infrastructure was a standout priority in terms of how Oxfordshire's share of the government's £250m Emergency Active Travel grant fund should be spent. The grant will be supplied in two tranches. Our share of the first tranche is £597,000 but we are expecting that the second tranche will be in the region of £2-3m.

Amongst other practical and quick to implement measures are improving signage and sweeping the busiest paths and cycle lanes, keeping vegetation under control and fixing surfaces. This is all part of keeping the network safe to use for cyclists and pedestrians as lockdown restrictions ease but will also encourage more people to walk and cycle in the long term.

There has been clear support from Councillors, including me, for measures including a wider roll-out of 20 mph speed zones where supported by residents; the introduction of school streets to restrict motor vehicles at certain times of day; improved cycling infrastructure, such as more cycle-only lanes; and additional cycle facilities, such as more secure cycle racks at rural bus stops.

If you encounter any issues whilst out walking, cycling or riding on the path network, these can be reported or checked on OCC's website. You can report a roadside vegetation problem, and other street problems, through our online reporting tool **Fixmystreet**.

## 94% Oxfordshire schools have remained open

Since the lockdown began in March, 94% of Oxfordshire schools have remained open for children of key workers and those classified as disadvantaged. The council is committed to supporting disadvantaged children and existing free school meals arrangements will continue.

In preparation for receiving more pupils back to the classroom, schools are now being asked to complete a risk assessment in conjunction with staff and unions. The risks and challenges will vary, so what works in one school may not work in another. This means that some schools will be able to welcome more children, or more year groups than others. Should a school decide that opening up would provide too greater risk, then they should remain closed. No parent will be fined for keeping their children at home should they feel that would be appropriate. Each school will act in the best interests of each child and family.

Whilst current scientific evidence shows little COVID transmission among children, we will never be complacent. The health of children, teachers, support staff, and parents will always come first in Oxfordshire.

## Registration service – 1600 births

Oxfordshire Registration Service ceased birth registrations (as well as all ceremonies) on 24 March 2020 in line with changes to Government guidelines. Since that time the service has worked exclusively on the registration of deaths. The Coronavirus Act 2020 did not make any changes to the birth registration process. Face to face appointments therefore remain the only way in which a birth can be registered. In line with ongoing Covid-19 social distancing requirements, the GRO has set out guidance that all registration authorities should only conduct emergency birth registrations until further notice and we have adhered to this locally.

Emergency registrations are defined as:

- Adoptions – urgent cases referred to registration by social services to allow adoption proceedings to commence
- Safeguarding – urgent cases referred to registration by social services in order to safeguard a child at risk
- Deportation – urgent cases referred to registration by social services where the family are being deported
- Neonatal death – cases referred to registration by bereavement teams/specialist midwives where a baby has died and it is necessary to register their birth before their death
- Repatriation – for overseas nationals whose government has arranged a repatriation flight to enable them to return to their native country (evidence needed)
- Critical illness of a parent who needs to sign the birth certificate (evidence may be needed)





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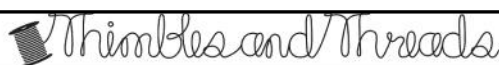
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**From your MP...**

**...John Howell**

In the last couple of weeks I have been back in Westminster as MPs have returned to Parliament. With COVID-19 measures in place and a strong emphasis on social distancing, it is a very different working environment but, with initial teething problems resolved, it is right that MPs return to continue the work of scrutinising the Government. Remote systems worked to a point but there were severe limitations. There is, of course, provision for those MPs unable to return to continue to work remotely.

Others seeking to return to work will also have to get used to different ways of working as will those supporting the businesses that can re-open. Most will rise to the challenge as indeed they have when we entered this crisis. I would like to pay tribute to all those in our communities who adapted quickly to meet the difficult circumstances and to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

I know that schools reopening has been met with different responses. Many are delighted that some children can return and sorry for those who still cannot. Others are fearful of children returning. The Government has given a steer but in the end the decision has been left to Head Teachers who are best placed to know what is possible within their own schools. I am aware that this has caused tensions in some places, but I think it is right that Head Teachers have the final decision on this.

I have always felt that it would be harder to get out of lockdown than it was to go in. As with schools there are those who are desperate to get back to work, to re-open their business, and to be able to do all the things that we used to do. There is no doubt that the lockdown has taken its toll on the mental health and wellbeing of many people aside from the virus itself. Government is well aware of this. However, we have to proceed slowly and rightly be guided by the science. That said, science will always provide a range of answers and in the end, one has to decide which science to follow. This is the Government's dilemma, and which ever path they choose there will be criticism.

As I said previously, as we move forward together, we will have different strongly held views and our needs may be very different. None of us can really know the toll that this situation has taken on the other so I hope that we can continue to show the generosity of understanding that has been shown thus far. The road ahead will not be easy.

Finally, with Parliament back in action I welcome the views of constituents on the various topics and issues before us. On many issues I make comment on my website so please do have a look. [www.johnhowell.org.uk](http://www.johnhowell.org.uk). If you have an issue that you would like to raise with me, if possible, please email me at [john.howell.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:john.howell.mp@parliament.uk). If you cannot email you can write to me at my constituency office - PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD. My staff all continue to work remotely, and all mail is diverted to my constituency office.

If you would like to receive my periodic electronic newsletters, and briefings on specific issues, please visit my website [www.johnhowell.org.uk](http://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.



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## Parish Registers

### Funeral at Crematorium

28 May Mary Gwenith Wyn Lewis

### Funeral at Cemetery

11 June Robert James Gabbey



## Weekly events at the Village Hall

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## Weekly events

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### 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](mailto:parishclerk@dorchesteronthames.co.uk).

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

### RAF BENSON

For information on flying schedules and night flying, [www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-benson/documents/raf-benson-flying-programme/](http://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-benson/documents/raf-benson-flying-programme/).

## USEFUL CONTACTS

#### ANGLICAN PRIEST

Dorchester Rectory  
*Rev. Canon Sue Booy*  
**01865 340007**

#### EDUCATION OFFICER

Margaret Craig  
**01865 343164**  
[education@dorchester-abbey.org.uk](mailto:education@dorchester-abbey.org.uk)

#### ABBAY E-MAIL:

[admin@dorchester-abbey.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk)

#### VILLAGE WEBSITE

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

#### ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST

The Presbytery  
*Fr. John Osman*  
Bridge End  
**01865 340417**  
[www.stbirinus.co.uk](http://www.stbirinus.co.uk)

Dorchester Abbey Museum E-mail  
[museum@dorchester-abbey.org.uk](mailto:museum@dorchester-abbey.org.uk)



## REFUSE COLLECTIONS

Fri 3 July **Green**  
Fri 10 July **Black**  
Fri 17 July **Green**  
Fri 24 July **Black**  
Fri 31 July **Green**  
Fri 7 Aug **Black**  
Fri 14 Aug **Green**  
Fri 21 Aug **Black**  
Fri 28 Aug **Green**

### Weekdays from 7.00am

Weekly: food waste (in bio-degradable 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. See page 12.

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*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](mailto:anne.morrowandrew@gmail.com)

Or phone preferably between 2 and 4pm:

01865 340007