

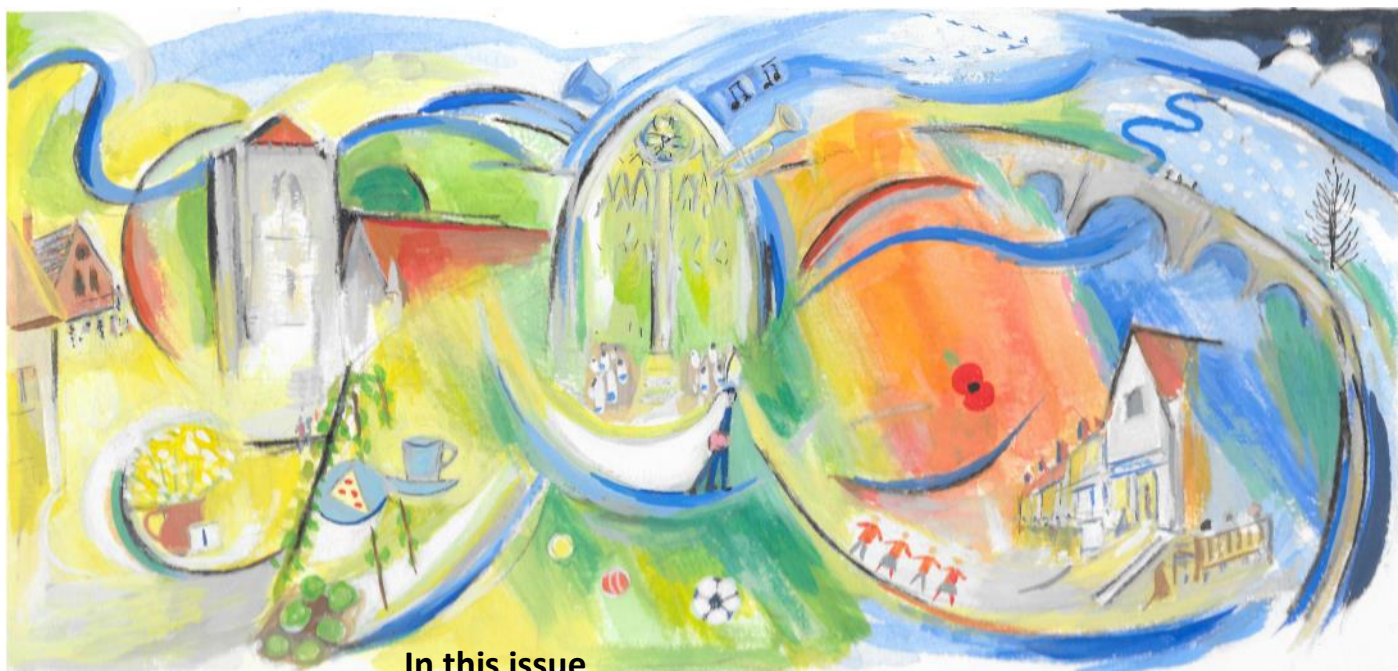
# ***Dorchester News***

*Free to every home in the parish*

***June 2020***







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### **DoT view**

We have now completed a second month of lockdown with a third about to start. Events that involve gatherings have not yet returned, and there is no indication of when they might be able to.

Many of these have moved online. The DADS play readings, the Tuesday coffee morning, and even the Abbey bell-ringers weekly practice are now conducted virtually from our own homes. And I have just heard, too late to tell you before the event, that the English Music Festival, a staple of late May entertainment for many of us, is, or will have been by the time you read this, going online.

So many of us are now getting used to working from home, and we are already hearing from employers that it is working so well, and saving them so much money, that that is likely to continue.

Unlike online working, online socialising, whilst it works when we have to do it, is no substitute for meeting, touching, hugging family and friends. We look forward to when The George, The White Hart, Fleur de Lys and the tea rooms are all open again, when the Village Hall is vibrant once more with noise, dancing and the Historical Society. And, of course, particularly to when Dorchester Abbey can reopen its doors to all.

I fear that may not be as soon as we might hope, though.

**Ian Brace**

### **Editorial Team**

Ian Brace, Megan Parry

### **Distribution Co-ordinator**

Maurice Day

### **Printed by**

Artisan Print Solutions

Cover picture: Tea in the Rectory Garden, when we still could.

### **Deadline for July Dorchester News**



email:

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

Apart from Sci-Fi aficionados, doomsday-mongers and Bill Gates none of us ever imagined we would be living in times like these. At the time of writing, we are still shut in our homes and our church doors are closed and locked. We do not know when our lives will return to normal. Emotionally, we are in a place that could be described as a wilderness, an inhospitable region, an uncharted country. That said, our village communities remain buoyant, supportive, and hopeful places. The message pinned to our church doors, 'We'll be back soon' draws our eyes to future horizons, but is there anything at all we can learn from our current situation?

In Christian spirituality, 'going into the wilderness' can be a positive experience. The Israelites wandered around in the desert for '40 years' learning to know themselves, to discover what was important to them, and to rely on God for the very bread and water that enabled them to survive. They emerged from the wilderness a people capable of establishing a nation and a culture, a self-confident community equipped for the battles ahead. So, for Christians a time of retreat spent apart from the world is seen as an opportunity for reflection, analysis of self, and spiritual growth. For many, these days under the lockdown are similarly an opportunity to discover what we value the most, who is most important to us, and what direction we would like our lives to take after the lockdown. Our time in this 'wilderness' is a time for us as a community and a nation to examine our shared ideals and to change our lives and the lives of those most vulnerable in our society for the better.

The flip side to this 'wilderness' experience is what is known as the 'dark night of the soul' a place of devastating loss, of weariness, and listlessness. We've all been in this place at some point in our lives and have struggled to make sense of it all. There are many of us who are suffering currently because of Covid 19, the cruel way in which it separates families and loved ones at a time when the comfort of a hug and the loving touch of a hand is most needed. The book of Job in the Bible is an excoriating account of an individual wrestling with God to



make sense of the darkest experiences of human suffering. Even the most devoted Christians have battled to live through such times; Mother Teresa spent the last 50 years of her life afflicted with a spiritual darkness, but like Job she eventually came to accept her pain as part and parcel of her calling to serve others. The collective pain we are experiencing in these times tests our character. The love and gratitude we are feeling for those who serve us, the doctors and nurses, the carers, the refuse collectors, and the postal staff, is a testament to the character of our communities. It is not so long ago that we were anxious about the divisions in our society, but we are discovering a commitment to each other that is as courageous as it is loving.

'We'll be back soon' and the future holds the possibility of change and renewal. God's blessing to you all until we meet again.

But for now .....

THE GOOD NEWS is that clergy are able to go to Church to stream services – so far I have done this for prayers at 11am on VE Day (the first day this was allowed) and for Morning Prayers on some mornings. There is a 'new normal' church and you can find Zoom links on the Abbey website for services at 10.30am

every Sunday and a short family style service alternate weeks at 9.30am. 'Catch up recordings' of daily Morning Prayers and all the Sunday services are also available. If you have agreed to the Abbey holding your email address you should be receiving a weekly letter from me – if you don't and would like to please email [admin@dorchester-abbey.org.uk](mailto:admin@dorchester-abbey.org.uk). If you would like the letter delivered just give us a call on **01865 340007**.

ALTHOUGH THE CHURCH IS CLOSED we are still available to chat on the phone – or well away from your door on the doorstep, to conduct funeral services for you in person and other services online. We are trying to call people regularly and if you feel you are missing out – or it's too long since we called – just pick up the phone. The church doors may be locked but the people who lead and who make up the Church are still here.

The Tea Room is also now operating a collect and take away service on Saturdays thanks to Steph Forman, the Tea room leaders and bakers.

Unfortunately we do not yet have any idea when we will be back in church 'properly' – as we have to plan in the context of government and church guidance. This means that we cannot say yet when we will be able to hold public services or even weddings or funerals in the Abbey again. We can conduct funerals either at the Crematorium or at the graveside in Dorchester and I am very happy to work with families and funeral directors to offer the best service we can at either place. When we are allowed to hold services in the Abbey we can arrange memorial services for anyone who wishes – and I will arrange a service for all those who have had to have services outside the Abbey.

What is most likely is that church buildings large enough and able to provide properly distanced space will gradually be permitted to hold funerals and weddings with limited numbers and that the return to public worship as we know it will be much slower. As news is available we will update the website – and, of course the first available edition of Dorchester News.



## Malcolm Airs

We were all delighted to hear that Professor Malcolm Airs, resident of Dorchester and frequent contributor to Dorchester News, had been discharged from hospital after treatment for Covid-19. You may have seen news of this in the Oxford Mail or on the BBC Regional News.

Below is a note of thanks from Malcolm and Megan for the kind wishes of the village.

We reported last July that Malcolm had been awarded the OBE. Below is a photograph of Malcolm, Megan and their son Thom, outside Buckingham Palace following the presentation.



## Thank you

We would like to express our deep appreciation for all the messages, cards and support that we received from so many people in the village while Malcolm was ill. We have always known that Dorchester is a wonderful community in which to live and we were genuinely touched by the support we received.

**Megan and Malcolm**

## Dorchester on Thames Coronavirus Volunteer Group

Mid May and we are on our seventh week of lockdown. The Dorchester Volunteers Group is keeping busy daily, though it's probably fair to say most of us get Sundays off! We have approximately 70 volunteers who are willing, and happy, to help with simple and not so simple requests. Our main tasks have been delivering shopping from the Co-op and collecting prescriptions. To date we have delivered shopping for over 150 people and collected, and delivered, almost 100 prescriptions from both Berinsfield and Clifton Hampden pharmacies. We have been able to connect up people on Zoom, deliver newspapers, shop, post mail, this list goes on. It's also worth mentioning the wonderful lunch donations, direct from The Springs Golf Club. Almost 170 beautifully presented meals have been delivered to both lunch club members and vulnerable people.

Our volunteers range from college and university students right through to retired villagers so you never know who may turn up on your doorstep to drop something off. It goes to show what a great community we have here in Dorchester with people of all ages looking out for each other, and new friendships being made along the way.

So, if you need help with shopping, prescriptions, basic IT, your bins putting out, walking your dog or just feel you could benefit from chatting to a friendly voice then please do not hesitate to contact us.

**anne.morrow-andrew@gmail.com**

or call **01865 340007** preferably between 2pm and 4pm.

**On Behalf of the DoT Corona Volunteer Group**  
**Sue Booys, Rector**  
**Mike Corran, Parish Council Emergency Coordinator**

## Wallingford Food Bank

Thank you very much to everyone who donated items for the Food Bank last month. Your generosity has made a great difference to many people.

All contributions however small are very welcome. Please leave anything you can spare in the yellow box in my garage at 26, Manor Farm Road and I will make sure that it is delivered to Wallingford.

Please could you check that the use by date on each item is at least three months ahead.

Thank you everyone.

**Judy Parker**

## 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)



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## Thank a friend The DoT Roll of Honour

At the current time there are many people who are helping out neighbours, friends, other villagers in lots of ways, both big and small. If you would like to publicly acknowledge someone who is helping you, send their name and what they are doing for you to:

**dorchesternews@dorchesteronthames.co.uk**

and next month we will print a roll of honour of those kind people who are selflessly helping others.

## DADS online play readings

DADS online play reading evenings have proved to be very popular and they are being run on a weekly basis, on Mondays from 7.30 pm, whilst we are under lockdown. The readings are free to join but you do have to pre-register to get access to that week's play script. We read a range of types of plays including classics, pantos and film and radio scripts but, nothing is too heavy. We host the meetings 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

@DorchesterAmDRamSocietyDADS and website [www.dads.org.uk](http://www.dads.org.uk). Alternatively, you can contact Mark Wilkin via email on [markwilkin@gmail.com](mailto:markwilkin@gmail.com).



## Hempcroft Allotments June

'Ne'er cast a clout 'til May is out!' This is a familiar old English phrase, often still heard, particularly north of Watford, and used in relation to whether or not to plant out bedding plants in spring, but what does it actually mean? "Clout" in this instance generally refers to warm winter clothing and it is usually assumed that May refers to the month of May. However "May" actually refers to the "May Blossom" of Hawthorn rather than the month itself. So the old saying warns of the variability of our spring weather and not to pack away warm winter clothes, or plant out bedding plants, until the Hawthorn is in full flower.

During the night of 12 May an overnight temperature of -4°C was recorded at Benson and the effects of this frost was evident on the allotments the next day. Any potato plants, french beans, tomato plants, asparagus which had not been covered with fleece showed great signs of damage with many crops lost. Overnight temperatures of -2°C during 13 May and 14 May also inflicted further damage. I am writing this at 11.00pm on Friday 15 May to meet the Dorchester News publication deadline and I uncovered my potatoes this morning trusting the weather forecast for warmer weather. Time will tell if the risk paid off.

### Conditions for letting – a reminder

The Hempcroft Allotments, occupying the site of the old Roman town, are on a Scheduled Ancient Monument. There are legal requirements to preserve the site for all our benefit and that of future generations.

You must not:

- Dig deeper than 30cm. or drive in posts deeper than 30cm.
- Erect any building or permanent structure (such as sheds or fruit cages) without permission of the Allotment Association.
- Light bonfires
- Plant any trees or bushes, other than fruit bushes.
- Excavate, remove or sell any antiquities, soil or minerals.



In addition to these legal requirements, the Parish Council and Allotment Association require you to:

- Keep the allotment reasonably free from weeds and properly cultivated
- Mark the allotment with your name and/or plot number on a small sign.
- Keep the path bordering the allotment cut and trimmed.

You must not:


- Use any hosepipes except to fill water containers
- Keep any livestock on the allotment
- Allow dogs to foul or cause damage to any allotment; dogs must be kept under close control

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


**We're working hard during the current UK situation to continue to provide a service to patients that need essential care in line with Government Guidelines.**


**We can provide video consultations directly with one of our vets to discuss options.**



**The situation can change rapidly so we are trying to keep our website and social media up to date with latest info!**

**[www.larkmead.co.uk](http://www.larkmead.co.uk)**



*Online booking available*  
*<http://bit.ly/bookthevets>*


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## Dorchester Abbey Museum News

### Dorchester Abbey Museum - Online Collections

Encouraging the development of digital skills and making museums and their collections more accessible online has been an increasingly important aim over

the last decade for institutions large and small. Although nobody could have predicted that museums and heritage sites up and down the country would be forced to close their doors en masse, what we have seen is how vital this digital work can be to ensuring museums can still reach out to visitors and play a part in their communities. Museums have offered virtual tours that allow people to walk through galleries from home, curators have taken to podcasts to continue telling the stories of collections while conservators have led video masterclasses and volunteers have worked on transcription projects to help make archives more accessible.

Although not quite as huge in scale as some museums, we do have some ongoing digital projects underway at the museum, one of which has been to try and get a good proportion of our collection available to view online. With one of our key objectives for our next Museums Accreditation assessment being to improve accessibility, enabling people who may not be able to visit the museum physically to explore the stories of some of our key objects is a great step forward. It also has the added benefit of letting us show off fantastic items that aren't usually on display, so even if you are a regular visitor something may catch your eye that you haven't seen before!

As we don't currently have high quality images for many objects in the museum and store, another project we are hoping to get underway once the crisis is over, we are beginning by focusing on particular highlights that provide a cross-section of our extremely varied collection. From beautiful, delicate, panes of painted glass to fossilised sea urchins to the programme for the 1963 Dorchester Pageant, there are fascinating glimpses into almost every period of Dorchester's past, from when it lay beneath a shallow and tropical Jurassic sea, right up to the beautiful village it is today.

The system we are using to store all these records is called eHive, a relatively new service that currently displays over 600,000 objects from mostly small museums across the world. To explore our collection just head to [ehive.com](https://ehive.com) and search 'Dorchester Abbey Museum' or follow the link from the Abbey website. We will be looking to upload more objects in the coming weeks and will also be researching and writing up more detailed descriptions for those which are already there. If

you spot an object you think you may know more information about, please do get in touch and hopefully we'll be able to welcome you back to the Museum before too long.

A couple of highlights from the online collection;

**Child's leather shoe; 16th - 18th Century; DORAM.1990.346**

Visitors and volunteers alike regularly name this child's shoe as their favorite object from the museum. Found in 1979 within the walls of a cottage in Dorchester High Street, the shoe is believed to have been put there deliberately as part of a household ritual that began in the Middle Ages and slowly faded in the late Victorian period. Theories vary on why the shoes were concealed, ranging from a fertility ritual to trapping mischievous spirits, but the most widely accepted explanation seems to be that they were supposed to protect houses from witches and their familiars. Northampton Museum maintains a Concealed Shoe Index which has nearly 2000 entries, and reports of concealment have come in from across Europe with North America and Australia also seeing the practice grow as European settlers began to arrive in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

**Triangular piece of stained glass with leaf design; 16th - 18th Century; DORAM.1977.15**

The museum has some really beautiful fragments of painted



and stained glass that likely came from the ecclesiastical buildings that have formed part of the Abbey over many centuries. This particular piece is not currently on display but is a good example of 'Came Glasswork' where small sections of cut stained glass were joined with strips of metal and solder, often lead. Creating large panes of glass was extremely difficult throughout much of history, and with the elaborate stained glass designs it was much more efficient to build them as mosaic, although still a job for the very skilled! The first person to write about this method of joining glass together in this fashion was Theophilus Presbyter, an 11<sup>th</sup> century Benedictine monk who worked extensively with glass himself, and it can be seen in the windows of almost any medieval church.

**Joe Raine**  
Curator

<https://ehive.com/objects?query=Dorchester>  
<https://ehive.com/collections/9217/dorchester-abbey-museum>





## Local businesses that are delivering to Dorchester during the Coronavirus pandemic

During these very strange times, a number of us are being advised to stay at home at all times, and everyone is being advised to stay at home as much as possible, limit contact with other people and keep our distance.

As a consequence of the effects of the virus, while Amazon and Ocado may be flourishing, many small and local businesses are really suffering.

We have therefore put together a list of local businesses that will deliver to Dorchester on Thames. Thanks to many people on the Dorchester Facebook page for suggestions and recommendations, who contributed to this list.

### Bookshop

#### The Wallingford Bookshop

01491 834383

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

*Will send / deliver to Dorchester. Ali gives great recommendations on books for yourself / others / presents.*

### Brewery

#### Loose Cannon Brewery

01235 531141

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

*Free delivery on orders over £25 – Dorchester area on Fridays. They also have bread etc (if ordered with beer!).*

### Butchers

#### Benson Village Butchers

01491 838330

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

*Can take orders via Facebook.*

#### Aldens Specialist Catering Butchers

01865 722093

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

*Free delivery for orders over £60.00.*

#### Wallingford Butchers

01491 833553

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

*Has a sustainable fish counter and a range of excellent cheese as well as meat. Will deliver to Dorchester (a member of staff lives in the village).*

### Convenience Store

#### The Co-op

01865 340038

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

*Our local Co-op, staffed by local heroes! Will deliver within the village through a partnership between the shop staff and local volunteers.*

### Greengrocers

#### Bonners

01865 242183

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

*The fruit and veg merchants in Oxford covered market.*

### Gift Shop

#### Derry's Den, Benson

01491 824152

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

*Delivering items available at the shop every Monday and Thursday. Stamps – balloons – kids toys, cards and arts and crafts – stationery – partyware.*

### Meal delivery

#### Streetfooddelhi

<https://www.streetfooddelhi.com>

*Will deliver to Dorchester on Thames and Wallingford on a Wednesday. Based in Garsington. Delivered cold, to heat it up when required. ('Will be more sustainable if a few people are able to order from the village.')*

#### H Cafe

01865 341607

<https://h-pizza.com>

*The local biker's cafe! Takeaways and deliveries are available from 5pm until 9pm with free delivery on orders over £10 within a 5 mile radius of the restaurant.*

#### Chinese Whisper

01844 300300

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

*Around £4.00 delivery charge to Dorchester*

#### Skogen Kitchen

<https://skogen.kitchen>

*Can deliver Swedish style cinnamon and cardamon buns on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Order through the website or contact Claire on the village facebook page. Use DORCH10 for a 10% discount.*

### Pet Food

#### Blakes

01491 834911

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

*Based in Crowmarsh, can supply a wide range of pet foods by post.*

More details available on the village website

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

We would love to have ideas for additions or improvements to the list – please use the contact form on the village website.



## Limerick Alert

While out exercising, or walking your dog you will have come across some yellow and red A4 posters dotted around the village titled 'Lockdown Limericks'. Composed by our own villagers they are reflections on the strange times we're living through - the Corona Virus Pandemic of 2020. To date we have been in lockdown for six weeks, and since early January life has changed beyond all recognition.



Limericks are brief, witty, memorable and familiar verses, providing one ideal format for recording and reminding us of our community experience of the pandemic.

Far from being trite, some of the limericks express our shared sadness of loss:

*There has been a tragedy here.  
Of a Thursday, she's come out to cheer.  
Now all that is left  
Is a family bereft.  
Cold coffee, and vaporised tears.*  
TW



Others share our frustration with the Government's response:

*For this I make no apology  
Our leaders are not what they ought to be.  
They blag all the time  
About taxes and crime  
But they're stumped on epidemiology  
PC*

Many express our gratitude to the NHS and Careworkers:

*So here's to the critical workers  
The dustmen and medic researchers.  
I've written these verses  
In praise of the nurses  
And all who are there to support us.*  
IS

Of course the creeping boredom of lockdown:

*The lockdown has got me quite floored  
I've read all the books that I stored.  
And even at stages  
I've read Yellow Pages  
Do you think I'm a tiny bit bored?*  
IB

There are 24 Lockdown Limericks and together they cover many aspects of our shared experience: admiration for Captain Tom, appreciation of the Co-op, the scarcity of loo paper and pasta, the closure of our village pubs, the disappearance of cold calls, putting on weight and much, much more.

Thank you to every villager who has contributed a verse. This time next year, and in five and ten years time we will recall this Great Pandemic in many different ways. Hopefully these limericks will help remind us of our shared experience, with a smile.

For those who cannot get out, we hope to have all the limericks on the Dorchester-on-Thames website.

**Adrian Brooks**



# The Mysterious Goings-on at The Limes

Gnashers and punchers. No it's not Peaky Blinders, it's recent arrival in Dorchester, Peter Firstbrook, who has had some unexpected experiences in The Limes, not previously well-known for its curios and surprises.

## Red Kites and Hole Punches

I always thought it was magpies that you had to watch out for, with their reputation for handling stolen property. It was therefore a surprise to find a red kite up to no good. My son was self-isolating a few weeks ago and needed a hole punch. We left it for him on the patio table—it was red, looking for all the world like a meaty morsel. Before he had a chance to collect it, a red kite swooped down, picked it up and flew off over the garden hedge. After deciding the hole punch was probably not edible, the bird dropped it as it flew over the next garden. Our neighbours Kathy and Alan caught the suspect on camera, and Vera next door eventually recovered the stolen property stuck in the top of her hedge. We are now looking out for a kleptomaniac kite with an appetite for office filing.



The suspect sits brazenly above the scene of the crime.



## Midsomer Murders and the Missing Mandibles.

Having moved to Dorchester-on-Thames from the Isle of Wight just before Christmas, we had to put up with lots of jokes from our friends about the homicidal dangers of this part of Oxfordshire. So it was a little unsettling to uncover what appeared to be a human thigh bone and a set of teeth when digging a new flowerbed. This presented a dilemma—did we run the risk of wasting police time by reporting the find, or ignore it and run the risk of digging up the rest of the body? They always say if you're stuck in a hole, then you should stop digging. So I did exactly that, and tentatively filed a police report online complete with photograph, emphasising it was probably nothing significant, but I thought it ought to be reported.

It took Thames Valley Police less than an hour to arrive, and to their credit they took the matter very seriously. Our garden was immediately declared a crime scene, and nobody was allowed to come or go. This caused a little confusion when Amazon decided to deliver a couple of packages, and the young policemen kindly offered to go to the bottom of the drive to carry them up for us. What he didn't realise was that one of the packages contained a new garden roller!

The policemen were clearly settled in for the rest of the day after their exertions, so deckchairs and cups of tea were provided in the sunshine. (It was a lovely afternoon and this hospitality was probably counter-productive and extended their stay by several hours). Next came the crime scene investigator dressed in a white forensic suit and facemask. He too seemed unsure, so more photos were taken and a bone specialist consulted, then another, and another, and... another. In all, four orthopaedic experts were asked for their opinion.

By this time it was 10pm, the sun had gone down, it was getting chilly, and the tea was no longer forthcoming. The police called it a day and decided it was most likely an animal bone, and the teeth were dentures that had probably been dropped. Even so, the flower bed still remains undug, and will probably stay that way for some time to come. And there is always that nagging doubt that maybe, just maybe, the tibia and teeth were props left over from a long-forgotten episode of Midsomer Murders.



The object of desire, which turned out to be a bit tough to digest.



## Dinosaur competition

Last month we asked you to tell us what you thought a dinosaur would want to buy from the Co-op.

Well done everybody who sent in an entry. Everyone had clearly worked hard at it, and well done to Jessica King, Alessandro and Sebastiano Somma, Casper Gonfas and Charlotte Bristow who came up with some great ideas. We particularly liked Charlotte's Diplodo-couscous, and Casper, you were right about eating people as you can see from the picture. Unfortunately we asked at the Co-op, but they told us they do not sell them.

The winner has to be Cressida Kilby-Birch who gave us a complete shopping list:

- Jurassic Pork Sausages and Dinosauce
- Loose leaf Tea Rex
- A can of silent peas for the pterodactyl and ptesaurus
- Eggs – because they are eggstinct

Congratulations to Cressida — we can see that a career in copywriting lies ahead for you! A postal order, or an Amazon voucher, is winging its way to you.



Photo: Helen Russell, and we hope that the counselling required after taking this photo has helped.

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## Bishop's Court Farm

A month on from our article about Bishop's Court Farm under the new owner, Keith Ives, Dorchester News returned to see what is happening. A lot. The first of the alpacas are in place, with the total expected to rise to 34 shortly; stables are ready and a number of horses are now in residence there. Paddocks are being made ready for more livestock and pigs are expected to arrive fairly shortly. Remarkably some of the alpacas appear to have adopted one of the sheep with a lamb.

Apart from the livestock, much of the barbed wire on the fences has been removed and the gates unlocked, and the farm has become a regular route for Dorchester people to take their exercise, opening up views that few of us have seen before. Keith has been supportive of the council's request to open up a field for a one-way system to allow social distancing on the narrow footpath towards Day's Lock, and the Parish Council's thanks for that are expressed elsewhere. Below is an open letter of thanks from a villager to Keith for opening up the farm for us to come and walk, and I know that others have also expressed their thanks to him. At a time when things could get a bit melancholy, this has clearly had a positive impact on the lives of many local people.

As we know, Keith is very happy to welcome walkers from the village, but he makes the following requests:

- Please close the gates—they are still being left open
- Please, dog walkers, clear up your dog's mess—it may be in a field, but even there it can be harmful to livestock
- Keep your dog on a lead around livestock, even if there is a fence between them.

### Who is the sign writer?

Someone has made some very nice signs asking you to close the gate which have been hung on many of the gates. Keith does not know who this is but is very grateful, and has asked us to thank you on his behalf.

### Thank you

Thank You. As a Dorchester resident, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to Keith Ives, the new owner of Bishop's Court Farm, for his generosity in allowing villagers to access his property. I have walked round several times; it is an absolute delight, magical! Thank you, Keith.

**Kathy Glass**



On Monday 18 May Household Waste and Recycling Centres were reopened for essential visits, from 8am to 4pm. They are open seven days a week as long as they are not overwhelmed and can operate safely.

To keep everyone safe and allow for social distancing the number of vehicles allowed on site at any one time has been reduced, so queues are very likely, especially at peak times like weekends. You may find local traffic restrictions around each site in order to prevent queues blocking the network, so it is recommended that you check the **latest information online** before each visit.

There will be restrictions at the recycling centres including the size of vehicles coming in, and social distancing, and unfortunately our staff won't be able to help with the lifting of bags.

Please only visit the site if you can't safely store your waste at home. And to make sure you can visit safely, OCC has made changes to the site rules

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/waste-and-recycling/>





## Dorchester on Thames Village Hall

Registered Charity Number: 900244

Dear Villager,

Our village hall is a precious asset, in regular use (pre Covid-19) by a variety of groups as well as for parties and weddings. However, not only is it showing its age, but increased regulation over the years means the building is falling behind in some areas of legislation. Key issues include: the flat roof over the entrance is failing; rainwater management is inadequate, leading to damp and rot; electrics trip; exterior woodwork needs attention; the kitchen no longer meets professional requirements; disabled access is inadequate.

In addition, should there be a major emergency event, the hall is the official evacuation centre for the primary school, but there are no facilities to accommodate this.

We could just deal with each problem, but the Trustees felt that this was an opportunity to look to the future and enhance the hall. In addition to addressing the known issues, Trustees are considering suggested enhancements including; additional toilets; reorganising the hire spaces; moving the bar; creating an office for the Parish Clerk; creating an emergency electrical system.

Trustees would now like to hear from you, the users, in order to test and prioritise these ideas; how you currently use your village hall and hear your suggestions on how the building could best meet your needs and those of our community. To help with this, please go to <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/DOTVH2020/> and answer a few questions. It's a short survey and responses are confidential.

Many thanks for your help,

**Keith Russell**

Chair, Village Hall Trustees

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The Hempcroft Allotments have been an important feature of life in Dorchester for hundreds of years, but rarely more so than now, when they are providing a haven for so many of us otherwise staying at home. So now is a good time to take a look at the allotments, and what they mean to some of their holders in the current pandemic.

Ed Metcalfe is the Chairman of the Hempcroft Allotments Association and

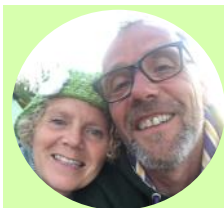
Dorchester News spoke with him, via video call, to find out all about them.

We need to go back to the dissolution of the monasteries. Dorchester Abbey had been a considerable landowner and when it was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1536 the Abbey Manor was passed to Edmund Ashfield. From him it passed to his grandson, Edmund Fettiplace, and it remained in the Fettiplace family until they died out in 1806. The other major landowner in Dorchester at that time was the Earl of Abingdon, whose family had acquired the land from the Crown in 1547, when the Crown received it from the Bishop of Lincoln.

In that time, hemp was grown in an area known as The Hempcroft, and was used to make sails and canvas. In 1764, John Wallis, in charge of the workhouse, wrote 'Payments were made for hemp seed and digging up ground which the town rented'.

In 1808 the Fettiplace estate was broken up and sold and Lot 49 was bought by Mr Savory Simpson, (landlord of the White Hart and Postmaster) and comprised amongst others, Hempcroft, Day's Piece, Field Meadow and The Orchard.

Over several hundred years, allotments had become popular across the country largely because of the enclosure of common land which meant ordinary people had nowhere to grow their vegetables. Many landowners gave a small plot to their workers as an alternative to increasing their wages.



**Debbie and Brian Field**

Our allotment is a place that we probably went to once a week but

since we have been in lockdown we have been every day. We both feel it is such a special thing to be able to have this space outdoors safely distances from other users and watch how things grow. The hour we spend at the allotment takes us away from the worry of what is going on and just for a few minutes things seem normal.



**Malcolm Ains**

Because of my illness I missed preparing the allotment. However my spirits were lifted when I was strong enough to venture down there and

found that my neighbouring allotmenters had rallied round, cut the grass, dug one of my beds and provided me with vegetable seedlings. I was really touched by their generosity.

They also tended to make it a maximum of 10 poles in size, enough to feed a family but not so much that the worker would be worn out for their day job. Then, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of allotments increased substantially, largely driven by urban households, their need for vegetables, and the craze for gardening.

In Dorchester, the records show that an area of some 8½ acres was called 'Hempcroft', owned in part by the Earl of Abingdon but also parts of it owned by others, descended from the Fettiplace estate. Together with areas known as 'Porks' (because pigs were kept there) and 'Orchard' they include the area where today's allotments are.







# ft Allotments



**Meg Fisher**

Living on my own and unable to visit family and friends nor receive visits, going to my allotment allows me to communicate with others safely. The space in the open air is such a pleasure. There is no need to step back into hedgerows in order to converse. Conversations and sharing of expertise and sometimes seeds and plants all at a safe distance are all most appreciated.

During the 1880s, several Acts of Parliament were passed to encourage allotments and during WWI there were 1½ million plots in the UK, which was the peak of allotment holding.

At some point the Hempcroft had been organised into allotments and in 1926 just short of 5 acres known as The Hempcroft Allotments was sold to Mr Guy Nevill Kennet-Barrington of the Manor House. This is the area that we now know as the allotments. It included the areas previously known as 'Porks' and 'Orchard'. Demand for allotments increased again during WWII. At that time there were several allotment areas in Dorchester, including what is now the cemetery and Page Furlong (then 'Peach'



**Richard Juniper**

Since the lockdown in our lives, Hempcroft has been a real bonus – a haven for exercise, and (distant) companionship. The allotments have been full of busy people preparing their plots for the growing season. Never have the plots looked so good and all done in the best weather for years with no traffic noise, no aeroplanes, just birdsong and the Abbey clock striking in the distance. A scene out of a Hardy novel.

Furlong).

In 1950 the Parish Council bought the allotments for £465, and they remain the property of the village to date using borrowed money which took until 1992 to pay back. The council delegates the running of the allotments to the Hempcroft Allotments Association, and it is this body that is responsible for letting and maintaining the individual plots.

The area is divided into around 85 plots, mostly of the traditional 10 poles, but many of 5 and some 2½ poles. (Metric measures have not penetrated this part of Dorchester yet. For younger readers, a pole, or more correctly a square pole, is about 25 square metres.) These are held by just over 80 tenants, and Ed says that he has had six new plots let in the last few weeks, which means that all the plots on the eastern side are now taken.

On the northern side, north of the footpath between Rotten Row and Watling Lane, there is now room for further plots to be let, where the archaeological dig had previously been, but which was closed last year.

The archaeological dig was here because the allotments sit on an area that was once the Roman town. Like much of the eastern side of Watling Lane, the allotments are a 'Scheduled Monument', a status that was granted in 1964 and which is overseen by Historic England. This imposes restrictions designed to protect the archaeology that lies



**Jon Rosby**

Since the beginning of lockdown, I have been struck by the real sense of camaraderie that exists between the allotment community, young and old, seasoned veterans, newcomers and happy dabblers alike. Lockdown has seen us all exchanging ideas, swapping and giving seeds and plants to each other when these were in short supply and helping out on one another's plots if help is needed, and we've even had time to organise a couple of (alert!) work parties to fill a couple of skips. As a consequence, the allotments look the best they have during our time in the village.

beneath the surface, and includes not being able to dig more than 30cm deep and no metal detecting. It is this scheduling that has kept this side of Watling Lane undeveloped.

If you want to become an allotment holder, a 10 pole allotment will cost £15pa and a 5 pole one, £10. You are also required to be a member of the Hempcroft Allotment Association, for a further £10. This includes insurance and membership of the National Association of Allotment Holders.

You can then grow vegetables and fruit, but not trees unless in a container. At one time you could have raised goats, chickens and pigs, but not any more. And definitely no hemp – or as we would now know it, cannabis.

Recalling the 1950s, Cathy Pepper wrote of the peace and tranquillity of the allotments, particularly sought by soldiers who had returned from war, but she also wrote about how sociable it was, how mothers would take their babies there in their big prams. We may no longer see many Silver Cross prams there, but the peace, tranquillity and sociability that we seek now are all here reflected in the contributions from some current allotment holders.

## Peter Brian Madden 1945-2020

**P**eter Brian Madden was born on 2 March 1945 in Bridlington, Yorkshire. The first child of Brian and Betty Madden.

Brian was a Fleet Air Arm pilot who was still active in the Royal Navy, so the first few years of Peter's life had him living in Bridlington, Somerset, Scotland, Cornwall, and then in 1952 he came to live on Culham airfield (or HMS Hornbill as it was known then). By this point Peter had a brother, Simon, and a sister, Susan – with a second sister, Carolyn, joining them a few years later.

Peter went to Northcourt School in Abingdon, then moved to a boarding school in Hampshire called 'Stubbington'. This was an illustrious school where five Victoria Cross winners had been educated, along with the Arctic explorer Robert Falcon Scott.

By 1954 Culham airfield was in the process of being closed with operations moving to nearby RAF Benson. It was around this time that Brian and Betty purchased a house in Dorchester on Thames which they would own for the next 62 years.

In 1956, Brian was posted to Malta with all the family.

Peter then spent the next two years living an idyllic life on Malta. He quickly learnt to swim, and soon after started doing some basic Scuba diving using equipment he'd borrowed from the Navy – which was the start of a lifelong love of being underwater.

In 1958 after returning to England, Peter was sent to another boarding school – this time Rodbourne in Wiltshire.

In the early 1960s Peter left Rodbourne and started working for the Marconi Company working as a wireless operator on a fishing trawler based in Hull. When this didn't work out Peter returned to Oxfordshire and started working in Cowley at a place called 'Spicers Writing Paper'.

After this Peter spent a short amount of



time writing articles and doing illustrations for fishing magazines when an old friend mentioned there was an opening as a diver working on the Thames. Peter jumped at the opportunity and embarked on a career that would span the next 44 years and would have him working under the Thames Conservancy, Thames Water, National Rivers Authority, and finally the Environment Agency. His work had him dive on locks and weirs up and down the Thames carrying out various work – lock gate repairs or replacement, re-floating sunken boats, or recovering dead bodies.

In 1967 Peter and his lifelong friend Bruce Ferriman went up to York where he met his future wife, Rosemary. It was love at first sight. A love that would last the next 51 years.

They were married in 1972 in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, and then moved into their first home – a static caravan alongside Dorchester Sailing Lagoon.

In 1976 their first child, Kim, was born. A

few months later they moved to the Oxford Road in Clifton Hampden, where they'd stay for the rest of their lives. Stephen was born in 1980 completing the family.

Peter was an active member of the local community. He was on the board of school governors for years, and later joined the Parish Council where he campaigned hard to reduce the amount of traffic coming through the village, he petitioned against the building of a quarry nearby, and probably the thing he wanted most – to keep 'The Plough Inn' operating as a pub.

In 2004 Peter and Rosemary became grandparents for the first time when their daughter Kim gave birth to Hollie, followed shortly after by Sophie in 2006. Then their son Stephen gave them their first and only grandson, Henry, in 2012, and lastly Matilda in 2016.

Peter remained an active diver until 1996 when an issue with his hearing meant he was no longer allowed to dive professionally. He took on the role of Diving Supervisor, which he held until his retirement in 2010.

Peter had many plans for his retirement, but sadly this wasn't to be. In 2012 he was diagnosed with cancer. Not long after this, Rosemary was diagnosed with cancer too, but over the next two years it had been found to have spread, and she died peacefully at home in February 2018. Peter cared for her attentively during her final months and was at her side when she died.

Peter was lost without her, but then one day he bumped into Shelagh, an old friend from years before, and romance soon blossomed. Sadly by this point Peter had been informed that his lung cancer had returned, and over the next few months his health deteriorated. He fought on bravely with Shelagh at his side. Peter passed away on 31 January 2020 at Sobell House in Oxford



## VE Day Celebrations

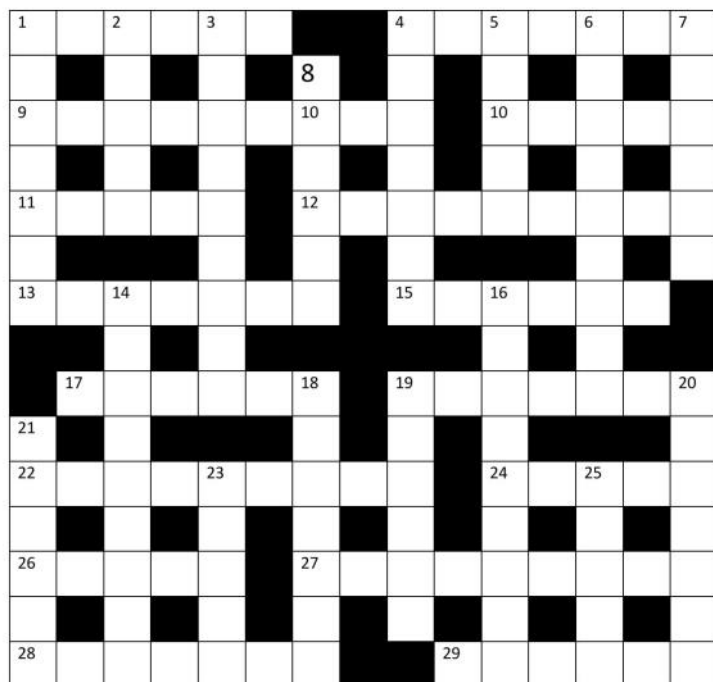
The celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day on 8 May were inevitably much curtailed. Some of the streets in Dorchester had socially distanced street parties, and some of us sang 'We'll meet again'. Here are some pictures of just one of the street parties—Jemmett's Close—never a street to miss an excuse for a party!



Photos: G Roberts

## Dorchester News Crossword No. 12

Compiled by Slider



### Across

- 1 Singularly possessive following in top soccer management is not a good thing. (6)
- 4 Controlled sellers in an Eastern city. (7)
- 9 A cop works hard and seizes the goods (9)
- 10 Postpone the making of iron in France (5)
- 11 Concealed decoy puts a killer by the bank (5)
- 12 A director needs loot for a get-together. (9)
- 13 Tarka's leaving the junction after injury (7)
- 15 Old money the key to uniform party (6)
- 17 Some violinist less strings! (6)
- 19 Get fine stuff from the river with a good friend who is not all there (7)
- 22 Dora and me played about but she was bound to be on the rocks. (9)

- 24 Pull back after a second tycoon like Goldwyn (5)
- 26 An each -way principle for X film (5)
- 27 Frantic speed, tear to an assembly (9)
- 28 Put soldiers in office? He may try to. (7)
- 29 A plane is in the thoroughfare but one can find a way (6)

### Down

- 1 Sequential arrangements for popular bets (7)
- 2 Particular loud American craft unknown (5)
- 3 With a pouch for mail spur a new collection (9)
- 4 Live around St Andrews perhaps to get the leftovers (7)
- 5 Loosed once the lumpy knots are tied in reverse (5)
- 6 This driver is not on the way to the leading lady (9)
- 7 Cut up when moving right down from the North beginning to get sensitivities (6)
- 8 Best cut to load the film (6)
- 14 Live over a Northern church and make it home (9)
- 16 This could be on board right after the award arrived first (9)
- 18 He uses cash to get odds on the finish of royalty (7)
- 19 Maybe high born but form unknown (6)
- 20 Chuck a hundred in for part of the service (7)
- 21 An audible interrogation on the French / Australian tree (6)
- 23 Group officer commanding the offensive (5)
- 25 Such elegance for the great willow doctor (5)

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## From the Chairman of the Parish Council

With Covid-19 still looking over us, the Parish Council continues to operate through the power of Zoom, getting updates on the work the county and district councils are doing, particularly on the emergency but also reviewing planning applications (8 at the last meeting), work quotes and so forth. Residents can 'attend' via Zoom if you have issues to raise.

The council has reviewed access to our public areas in the light of changed government advice. And I'm pleased to say that, in line with government guidelines, we have been able to reopen the tennis courts as one small step on our return to normality. It may not be Wimbledon but it's progress. Contact the tennis club for access. Unfortunately, as I write, the playground has to stay shut for the time being due to the difficulty with social distancing. But one day....hopefully soon.

One thing we are trying to do more of at this difficult time is to put useful information on the village website so please do look there for up to date information from the parish council and other local authorities. See: <https://www.dorchester-on-thames.co.uk/> for regular information on our response to the coronavirus pandemic, and on everything to do with Dorchester.

The Parish Council would like to give public thanks to Keith Ives of Bishop's Court Farm for allowing us to install a temporary one-way system to avoid congestion on the narrow path down to the lock. A number of residents expressed some concern over social distancing being impossible despite their best efforts on that busy route and Keith was incredibly helpful in swiftly putting the diversion in place. Thank you.

Thanks also to Andrew Clements for continuing to organise volunteer grounds works on the path to the Hurst and also to Becky Waller for clearance work at the Bridge End slipway to the Thame (AKA Waterloo).

Even with the slight easing of restrictions, we still have to be sensible in order to stay safe but if you do have general issues, please do contact either me or Geoff Russell, parish clerk.

**Mark Williams**  
Chairman of DoT Parish Council

## Parish Council Notices

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

The Parish Council will use 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 currently 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 June Council Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 10 June** commencing at 7.30pm. The Agenda 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 this meeting will 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 9 June** so that the necessary access arrangements can be made

The July Council Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 8 July** commencing at 7.30pm.

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

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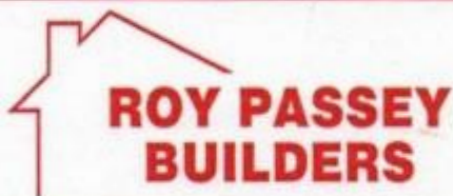
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## From your District Councillor... ...Robin Bennett



Greetings – it's a while since I've seen many of my fellow village residents in person! The lockdown has shown the value of the support and resilience that local councils can provide, and has also led to some great collaboration with local groups. I really hope this collaboration will continue even after the crisis subsides. SODC has received a larger allocation from the government's second fund of £1.6 billion for council, recognising the significant contribution we are making to the country's response to COVID-19, but the financial impact of the pandemic is likely to affect the council for many years.

A general community support contact line is operating on **01235 422600** or by email, **communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk**.

My Green colleague Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye is the district council's 'Cycle Champion' and has written, alongside councillors from other districts, asking county highways to use the special powers granted by government to make changes to road usage in our towns to allow easier and safer cycle routes. Of course, we also need safer routes to get to the towns (and to Oxford).

Another area where the crisis has led to innovation is in online meetings. By the time you read this SODC will have held its first online planning meeting, and other formal council meetings will follow. These meetings will also be streamed live, enabling residents to observe from wherever you are, which is good for council transparency. As we all become used to working from home, the impact on office and transport arrangements for businesses – and the council – are likely to be profound.

I am also hearing reports that the Examination in Public for the controversial South Oxfordshire emerging Local Plan is likely to

be held online, which would make it the first ever to be held in this way. Arguably this disadvantages local protest groups, and make it harder for the examiners to pick up on the strength of community feeling – which remains considerable!

SODC has been processing small business support grants on behalf of the government. This is a national scheme and we have no discretion over whether we pay this money or not. We can only pay grants to businesses that meet the criteria and complete the form correctly, and all straightforward requests have now been paid.

The grants scheme is being extended to include some small businesses that don't currently pay business rates – for example, businesses operating from serviced offices – on a discretionary basis. The government has also announced a business loans scheme.

South and Vale Business Support has launched the **Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award (iDEA)**. With schools currently closed due to COVID-19, parents will be looking for ways to keep their children engaged and stimulated. iDEA is about lifelong learning, for anyone who wants to develop their skills. Through a series of online challenges, users complete interactive modules known as 'badges', which can be accessed for free on any device connected to the internet. These vary in length and difficulty and there is a huge range to choose from. Find out more here **www.svbs.co.uk/idea** and do share with family and friends.

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## Suspicious emails

Use new fast-track reporting for suspicious emails - Citizens Advice

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Scam emails, one of life's most tiresome phenomena, are becoming so smooth and sophisticated that even computer experts can be deceived by them, and the rest of us are in constant danger of being taken for a ride.

There is no need to feel isolated with the problem, though. If you are suspicious of an email or simply unsure, you can use a new, dedicated reporting service which is very quick and convenient: forward the email to **report@phishing.gov.uk** and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) will investigate it.

How does a scam email work? The usual methods are persuading you to divulge sensitive information, like bank details, or urging you to click on certain links. If you click on those links, you could be directed to an unsafe website which might download viruses on your computer or steal your passwords or data.

It's crucial to bear in mind that a scam email is designed in such a way as to get you to act quickly and without thinking, so NEVER give way to that pressure.

How do you spot a phishing email? This

is very tricky, since many of them look just like the real thing. Scammers are quite capable of producing professional quality graphic design with pleasant pastel colours, for example. This makes the email look authoritative and trustworthy and thoroughly up to date.

However, and fortunately for us, if you examine a scam email carefully it will reveal its true nature. Remember these key points:

First, it is very unlikely to be a message you are expecting.

Second, the language of most scam emails has an uncompromising toughness that isn't characteristic of the average business email. It might try to rush you into making a decision or threaten you with legal action or financial losses, telling you that you have to act right away to avoid them. The email might claim to be from a bank, a government department or the Inland Revenue, perhaps saying that a warrant has been issued for your arrest.

The email could also be from a company that doesn't normally contact you or from an organisation that you normally deal with in a different way, e.g. TV Licensing

or the district council - which, it might strike you, have never emailed you before.

Beware too of topical scams: an email might offer you a cure for coronavirus or encourage you to donate to a related cause.

Always check the sender's email address because this is the only part of the message which can't be beautified. There will be something peculiar about it for sure. For instance, it might be extremely long and complicated with lots of numbers and letters, or the country code might be unfamiliar.

If you are in any doubt, don't open the email and don't click on any of its links, but forward it right away to **report@phishing.gov.uk**. The NCSC says it acts on every message received, analysing it and the dubious websites it links to. Government specialists can then block the criminal's email address and instruct hosting companies to remove the websites from the Internet.

For essential reading see **<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/report-suspicious-emails>** or ring Citizens Advice Adviceline on **0300 330 9042**

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



## Library Staff Go the Extra Mile as Readers go Online

As all our 44 libraries across the County remain closed our staff have been seconded to support other services, including the Customer Service Centre with our Shielding Operation; the Registration Service homeworking staff by collecting paperwork to enable the production of death certificates to the public, and at our Waste Recycling Centres to assist with traffic management and customer queries.

Bookworms have been having a good old read during lockdown – and the library service is continuing to thrive as a result, even though its doors are closed to the public. April saw a record for people joining Oxfordshire libraries online. A total of 589 people joined – a record for one month and an 86 per cent increase compared to the figure for April 2019.

Meanwhile loans of eBooks and eAudio loans have nearly doubled compared to this time last year. During April more than 22,000 items were borrowed from the county council's online library. Oxfordshire County Council has doubled its investment in purchasing eBooks and eAudio to support this demand.

It's a joy to see so many people continuing to engage with the library service despite this odd and difficult phase in our lives. No one needs to worry about returning or renewing items. Before the lockdown, we suspended the date due of all items that are on loan. This will continue indefinitely. People also have the option of visiting our Facebook pages to view story-times, quizzes and be part of our online bookclub.

### How to find out more

To find out what services the Oxfordshire County Council library service offers you from the comfort of your own home visit here [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/reference-online?utm\\_source=libraryhomepage&utm\\_medium=referenceonline](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/reference-online?utm_source=libraryhomepage&utm_medium=referenceonline)

## Pregnant women encouraged to attend important appointments

Pregnant women in Oxfordshire are being reminded that medical help is still at hand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The OUH has made a number of changes to how maternity care is provided during pregnancy, to keep both women and staff safe. This has included carrying out some appointments by telephone or video. However, maternity services are still open 24/7 for births, urgent care, and clinical advice for women who have concerns about their health or their unborn baby. Some face-to-face appointments with a midwife or doctor are essential, and it is important for women to attend. It is understandable that many people have anxieties around their health during this very unusual time - especially pregnant women.

Women are reminded care is still available and it is important that they stay in contact with their maternity team and attend their scheduled appointments. Appropriate measures will be taken to keep them safe from infection and wherever possible appointments will be done remotely.

## Education

### Primary Schools Re-Opening after 1 June

The Government has advised that Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils should return to school as soon after 1 June as it is practicably possible to do so. There is considerable concern among headteachers, their staff and parents over this requirement. The County Council is working closely with schools to provide advice and guidance on how social distancing can be achieved for very young children. Any parents who are concerned about sending their children back to school should contact their headteacher to discuss their family situation. The Government has confirmed that no one will be fined if they have justifiable reasons for continuing to keep their children at home.

### National Primary Offer Day

Co-incidentally, and as is required by law, on 16 April the County Council announced that 90.6% of 7,384 Oxfordshire children have been offered their preferred choice of primary school for September 2020. In this Division 99 children gained their first preference, and 3 their second. Every family was notified on 16th April. The full data by Constituency, Division, District and School is available online. Let us hope that by September things have returned to some level of normality, and that these little ones can take their first steps into primary education in a more settled environment.

### Brokering Service

Through our Emergency School Place Brokering Service all schools whether academies or maintained schools have worked together to make the best arrangements they can for our children during lockdown. This provision will continue until all the restrictions on schools are lifted.

### Schools Building Programme

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the construction industry, the majority of projects are stalled – mitigation measures are in place where necessary. Currently there are 10 school projects under construction across the County including Benson which continues to operate, the choice of the individual contractor and their workforce. All other projects are in the pre-construction phase, and may encounter staff shortages and delays to planning.

## COVID-19

### Clinical Lead urges people to use Emergency Departments

Staff at OUH are encouraging people whose health may be at risk to come to the Emergency Departments at the John Radcliffe and Horton General hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attendances have been significantly lower since the pandemic started and the Trust is concerned that people are putting their health at risk by not accessing life-saving services. Staff will treat any serious conditions or ailments. There are systems in place to triage patients with suspected COVID-19, so everyone who comes to hospital will be treated in a safe way. More information is available on the OUH website.



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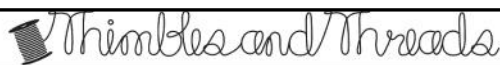
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# From your MP...

# ...John Howell

A few weeks ago Ministers were working flat out to bring forward measures to try to keep us all safe and to help people in the very many different situations faced with the onset of COVID-19 in the UK. The initial raft of measures was a blunt instrument which had to be refined to meet ever more detailed concerns that had fallen through the net. The Chancellor acknowledged that, in the end, there may be some people we would not be able to help, so many and varied are the lifestyles and circumstances of people across our country.

Whilst it seems that the media have worked harder than ever to try to find holes in what the Government has done there has been a general cross-party consensus on the actions as the Prime Minister has worked to keep an open dialogue.

Now the challenge is to chart our recovery strategy, and this will almost certainly be much harder than setting out the survival measures. If I simply take my own correspondence as a measure, I know that people are either afraid or frustrated; some people feel both. The Government is working hard to be guided by the science but inevitably there are conflicting scientific reports. Across the world there are different studies and, of course, variations in the different national demographics, cultures and overall health which have to be taken into account when interpreting findings.

We now have the benefit of hindsight on which we can build and with which many criticise. It is easy to be wise after the event. As we try to move forward there are those who would prefer us to slow down and those who would like us to speed up. There are those fearful for their physical health, those fearful for their mental health, those fearful for their livelihoods and so much more. No strategy is going to satisfy everyone, and I await the inevitable attack on our Prime Minister and other Government Ministers.

The Prime Minister has set out a general direction of travel, the stages through which we might move and the precautions that we will take. As before it will take time to refine the details and help us all to return to our new normal. The experience has inevitably led to questions about our previous ways of doing

things, in our national life and in our personal lives. There will be debates about how we can learn from the experience, there may be permanent changes, and doubtless there will be a raft of PhDs gained from research into this situation.

Technology has been invaluable in helping us through. It has enabled us to maintain some sort of contact with our family and friends, it has helped us in education and in business, it has helped us in Parliament to find new ways to hold the Government to account and to pursue enquiries. But we are social beings and the one thing so many people tell me they long for is the opportunity to meet face to face again. Our non-verbal behaviour is such an important part of our communications and it is just not possible to read the nuances as clearly online.

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 show a generosity of understanding.

Parliament is already picking up the agenda on other Bills making their way through the system. As always I welcome the views of constituents on the various topics and issues before us. 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](mailto: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](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.

For details of online church services at  
Dorchester Abbey see

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For St Birinus RC Church go to:

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

## Parish Registers

### Graveside Funeral

23 April Thelma Leckie

4 May Cherrilyn Annette Wood



## Weekly events at the Village Hall

All events suspended

## Weekly events

Monday	<b>DADS Play reading</b> 7.30 pm Online See page 5
Tuesday	Coffee Morning 10.30am Online
Wednesday	<b>Mobile Post Office</b> 1.00-3.00pm but may vary due to Covid 19 Outside Co-op

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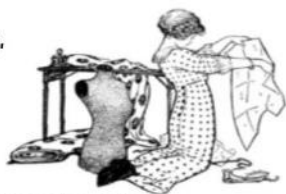
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To report a non-emergency crime, or to give information to Thames Valley Police, call **101**. Alternatively, call Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555111**. In the event of an emergency dial **999**.

## 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

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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.

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### 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

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

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RSPCA (wildlife): **0300 123 0206**  
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### 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](http://www.traveline.info), and **0871 200 2233**.

#### VOLUNTARY CAR SERVICE TO BERINSFIELD HEALTH CENTRE

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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).

## USEFUL CONTACTS

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### EDUCATION OFFICER

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### ABBAY E-MAIL:

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Contact details for Church Wardens and other Abbey information are on the notice board in the Abbey.

### ABBAY WEBSITE

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### VILLAGE WEBSITE

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# ***Don't ever be too shy to ask for help.***

Your village has a support group ready  
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](mailto:anne.morrowandrew@gmail.com)

Or phone preferably between 2 and 4pm:

01865 340007