

# ***Dorchester News***

*Free to every home in the parish*

*March 2021*





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## **DoT view**

The days are getting noticeably longer, and after some very cold and some very wet weather, as I write it is getting milder. The unmistakable first signs of spring are definitely here: snowdrops replacing snow on the garden and the first daffodils poking through.

We may still be in lockdown but nature isn't.

And we can celebrate nature and the return of Spring with the Spring Flower Show at the beginning of April. And no ordinary Flower Show but a Show that will hopefully stretch around the village, with displays and celebrations everywhere you turn. This is something that we can all get behind and make a display in our windows and gardens. Now is the time to get planning though, and don't forget to tell the organisers so that they can get you on the map.

Lots of places got on the map for the fairy doors recently, around 40 in total, all thanks to 'Doorsy', our own version of Banksy. What fun and delight the fairy doors gave, to adults and children alike, and how honoured were those visited by the fairies. We celebrate that in this issue with the front cover and an article on page 14.

But the creativity doesn't end there. Spoonville is springing up on the corner of Drayton Road, another colourful and artistic endeavour; a real collaborative effort by people in DoT to brighten our lives.

And later this year, pandemic permitting, the magical Henge is due to return as a collaborative multi-disciplinary arts venture, following the success of Henge 19.

We may be only just coming into Spring, but the creative juices of DoT are alive and well.

**Ian Brace**

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Cover picture: A fairy is caught on camera in the Abbey grounds.

**Deadline for  
April  
Dorchester News**



email:

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

Moving out to a village has made me much more aware of nature and the changing seasons. Every day at the moment, my husband and I walk our little dog and I notice the snowdrops and the crocuses emerging from the very soggy soil. Some days, these flowers have been illuminated by gentle winter sunlight from a cloudy blue sky. But more often than not, they seem to be drowned in an awful lot of rain!

As we begin to see hints of Spring, I am aware that the people in our communities are all in different places, both practically and emotionally. Some have already received the vaccine, some have not. Some are overwhelmingly busy working in hospitals, or tackling the lambing season, whereas others are feeling bored with long days stretching out and

nothing to do. Some people's lives are full of juggling working from home and home schooling, others are feeling very lonely. However, one feeling that seems to keep coming back is "when is all this going to end?"

I wish I knew the answer to that. I feel cautiously hopeful that we are beginning to see the signs, not just of springtime but of the possibility of slowly emerging from this horrific pandemic. Right now, though, I am trying to find the tiny joys every day! Tiny joys such as when a friend sends me an elaborate and messy painting created by her toddler, when I hear that my grandfather or a parishioner has received their first vaccine, or when I see that the Six Nations is soon going to return to the television.

I hope that you are also able to find tiny joys each day, even if some days they are very small! And on days when that feels very difficult, perhaps even impossible, I hope that maybe someone else will be able to share a tiny joy with you. I have been very excited to observe the emergence of fairy doors springing up in some of our villages. What a delightful, creative, innocent way to make a small moment of joy for others, of all ages, in the local community. To the many unsung heroes in our community who find safe ways to reach out to others, who pick up prescriptions or shopping, or who check in on isolated neighbours, thank you so much. To those who are feeling that joy is very faraway, please know that your clergy team are here for you and are just on the other end of the phone.

## Online Lent Courses

Lent is a good time to make an extra space in your life to learn and explore something new.

**Come and See** - The Abbey Fellowship group is inviting you to 'Come and See' in a weekly invitation to meet Jesus and hear what is special in one of the gospel stories. For your invitation contact Catherine (dorchesterteamcurate@gmail.com) or Sue.

**Creation Matters** – an online course for the Dorchester Team for Lent

Does *Creation Matter*? Yes, it really does. As Christians we celebrate God's creation yet we also know that our beautiful planet, held together by love is dangerously close to being irretrievably damaged by human sin and greed. And this isn't just a global matter, it is local too. It's about what we do and don't do, how we live and what we will pass on to our children and grandchildren.

That's why our Team Lent Course this year will be looking at some of these things. We are going to offer five sessions on Thursday evenings, beginning on **25 February**, using the magic of Zoom. There will be a chance to see and respond to a series of short videos prepared by Bishop Olivia, and to hear and respond to special input from people in and around the team. We will be thinking about the Christian understanding of creation, some of the economic and global challenges we face, the way other faiths are responding to the realities of the climate emergency and ask how we can make a difference, here and now. Each session will begin with a short act of worship and there will be time for conversations in smaller groups too. If you would like to know more, or to sign up, please contact The Revd Paul Wignall (bridgegroupvicar@gmail.com) or speak to any of the clergy.

We hope lots of people from all the parishes of the Dorchester Team will be able to join in, because *Creation Matters*!

## Services

At the time of going to press it is difficult to judge the situation with regard to Church Services in person for a month ahead. In the second week of February the Team clergy met and agreed that our two guidelines for a return to services in Church would be the return of all children to school and the local rate of infection in South Oxfordshire.

In the same way as last June we will continue to make provision for at least one online service each week whilst returning worship to our churches in a safe and timely way. Our hope at the time of writing is that we will be worshipping in person in some form in time to celebrate Easter. Most parishes are sending a weekly email with service information; if you want to receive this email – and for up to date information about services - please call the Team Office on **01865 340007** or email [admin@dorchester-abbey.org.uk](mailto:admin@dorchester-abbey.org.uk).

## Thanks re Leslie Radford and apology note

Jean Radford and family wish to convey a rather belated but heartfelt thank you to all our wonderful friends who have offered unfailing love and support at this sad time, and continue to do so again and again. This really is a marvellous village to share our lives in, something we are reminded of everyday. Apologies for the fact that this was not published with the tribute to Leslie last month. SB.

## Annual Parish Church Meeting and Thank You

The Abbey will be holding its annual meeting on **21 March** at 12noon in the Abbey and/or broadcast from there. All members of the Church Electoral Roll whose email addresses are registered with us will receive an email invitation. Please contact the office if you do not receive this by **5 March**.

The first part of this meeting is a separate meeting called the Annual Vestry Meeting. At this meeting the whole village receives an account of church finances and has the opportunity to elect Church Wardens – anyone can come to this meeting, ask questions and vote. Do contact the office for details if you would like to join us. The reason for this is that the parish Church is here for everyone and the Church Wardens have been village officials from the earliest times.

During this year we said goodbye to Dr Hans Paul who stepped aside from being Warden during the Covid outbreak because of his responsibilities at the Wallingford Health Centre. I want to record our thanks to Hans here for all he has done as Warden. Gail Thomas is willing to seek re-election and we are seeking a new Warden to work alongside her and the rest of the Abbey team. Although the Wardens bear responsibility, with the Rector, for what happens at the Abbey we are fortunate to have a wider group of people helping with services, fabric and finance. If you'd be interested in knowing more about how you can help in this role or more generally do give me a call or contact the office and ask to be put in touch with a member of the PCC Standing Committee.

**Sue Booy**  
340007



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## EASTER LILIES 2021



This year more than ever we are looking forward to decorating Dorchester Abbey to celebrate Easter. The Abbey Flower Arranging Team invite you to participate by contributing towards the cost of the flowers for this joyous season.

Perhaps you would consider donating in memory of a loved one whose name will be displayed close to the Easter Lilies on the centrepiece arrangement.

Please complete the form below and send it to me:  
Sandie Griffith, 7 Castle Close, Benson OX10 6SN 01491 832598

or hand it to one of the flower arranging team - Kathy Glass, Susan Jupp or Vera Baker

Name .....

Contact phone number .....

Amount of donation .....

Donation in memory of .....

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Easter Basket Kits: £17.50

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# DADS Weekly play readings

DADS will host their 50th play reading evening on **22 February**, why not come and read a play with us? We read a variety of scripts for stage, radio and film, so there should be something you would enjoy.

We meet nearly every Monday evening at 7.30pm via Zoom. Everyone is welcome and there is no fee and you don't have to be a DADS member. You can find details of what we will be reading next on our Facebook page. **@DorchesterAmDramSocietyDADS** or the DADS website **www.dads.org.uk**.



## Dorchester Abbey Museum News

### Museum Delayed 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

When the Museum reopens later this year, it will feature a brand-new exhibit telling the story of its foundation in 1960 by the American Edith Gratia Stedman. The exhibit also explains her huge fundraising efforts on behalf of the Abbey, and how many of her activities still live on in the village.

We shall also be publishing, 50 years after its first edition, a reissue of Edith's vivid memoir of her time in Dorchester, *A Yankee in an English Village*, with a new preface, photographs, and explanatory notes.

Edith's charming *Monastery Guest House Cook Book* is still available. Price £7.50, from the Museum when it reopens, or Linda Hender, 11 Page Furlong, tel **01865 340032**, email: **linda.hender@btinternet.com**

### Museum display - Edith Stedman material – can you help?

Does anyone have any of the following they would be willing to donate/lend to the Museum for the forthcoming (delayed) celebration of the museum's establishment in 1960?

- Article from a US magazine entitled 'A Yankee face on the Abbey wall' by Linda Payne Williams, probably written in the mid-1970s when her corbel was put up. We have the original pages, but the name and date of the magazine are missing.
- Any photos of Edith with the Queen Mother – we have several pics of the Queen Mother's visit, but none of her with Edith, only one reproduced in the magazine article mentioned above
- programmes for festivals in the 1960s, especially 1960 itself.
- photographs of the museum interior, especially from the early days
- photographs of Edith Stedman herself, or any other 'Edith' items

And do you have any personal 'Edith stories' – I know there are a few people in the village who remember her!

Your help would be greatly appreciated

**Margot Metcalfe**



## Hempcroft Allotments March

In mid-February on the allotments the ground is frozen and the water butts are ice so there is not much activity and little to report. Instead, I thought I would write a short piece on famous allotment holders such as Albert Einstein, Charles Dance, and Jeremy Corbin. However, I did not get further than Albert Einstein because a number of allotment information sources describe him as an allotment holder who tended a plot but was told off by the authorities for his lack of care. The truth is, however, slightly different.

Einstein's allotment was in the 'Kolonie Boxfelde' in Berlin-Spandau in the 1920s. The German allotments at this time were more like weekend retreats in the countryside with a small shack on each plot where you could stay. Einstein's plot also bordered the lake.

Einstein had for some years toyed with the idea of buying a sailing boat and a weekend cottage somewhere on the water near Berlin. Sailing and the Brandenburg lakes were to him the best things about Prussia. His money was not sufficient for a country house, so he pursued his dream in a more modest way. He rented a small shack in the garden settlement of Boxfelde. Einstein was fond of retiring to his 'Spandau castle', where no one could disturb him. The fact that his wife could bear it for no more than two days at a time suited him fine.

Here he put up his sons in the summer of 1922. 'The boys are here and reside in my Spandau castle. I oscillate between my apartment in town and my castle, which has proved more watertight than my yacht' he said. His neighbours in the settlement remembered him as a popular and peaceable weekend visitor, though not as a model gardener. He allowed the weeds to take over and the property to become so untidy that in September 1922 the district administration wrote to him and warned him that the plot would be relet unless it was put in order at once.

Bezirksamt Spandau to 'Herr Professor Einstein': *You are presently leasing allotment 2 at the Burgunderweg in Boxfelde. Said allotment has not been managed since a long time, weeds have spread all over the whole parcel and have soared. The fence is not in order, and the whole allotment makes an unesthetic impression. We have to assume that you are no longer interested in leasing the parcel, and we will give it away to someone else, unless you object prior to the 25th of this month, and the allotment is put in order until that date. Please take care of the removal of this nuisance, and give us further notice.*

If one disturbs the good German cleanliness and order say by forgetting to water the plants while being too busy with explaining the universe, or being just too lazy to remove the weeds while throwing dices with God, one will be contacted by the authorities sooner or later. That's what happened to Einstein on September 12, 1922:

*Einstein promised to do better and protested 'that we continue to have the greatest interest in renting the plot.' Einstein's real interest in renting this plot was to use it for fleeing the town and its obligations and having a sailing boat just in front of the door.*

**Edward Metcalfe**  
**edmetcalfe@yahoo.co.uk**  
**01865 340160**



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## St Birinus School News

Half way through our school year already and what a strange time to take on a new headship! I couldn't have chosen a better place to take on this challenge.

We continue to teach most of the children remotely here at Dorchester St Birinus. Children and parents are working very hard to continue with their learning and are achieving amazing things. There is no substitute for being in school though and we are all looking forward to re-opening (hopefully soon).

Teachers have worked incredibly hard to provide quality remote education and provide for the key worker and vulnerable children that we have in school each day. I am very proud of our school and the community. We have received excellent support from the village and I hope that seeing our children out on their daily walk can help to put some joy in your day as they wish you a cheery 'good morning!'. We have enjoyed spotting the fairy doors and spoon characters around the village and our children are keen to take part in these community endeavours.

We would like to say thank you to all our well-wishers, cake providers and flower senders. Your kindness is appreciated.

We are currently waiting to find out when we will be fully open and I look forward to sharing our continuing progress and successes with you when that happens.

Jo Staples  
Headteacher



## St Birinus School PTA New fundraising goal to improve our IT equipment

**Please help us to raise £12,500 to buy iPads to support our children's learning in the classroom.**

### Why do we want to use iPads in the classroom?

- iPads are versatile, intuitive and accessible to all
- To increase children's engagement in learning
- Apps can help with reading, maths, coding, music and creativity
- To help us teach online safety and equip children for the future

### How can you help us with our fundraising?

- Look out for **events on our Facebook Group** 'Dorchester St Birinus School PTA' and support us!
- **Create photobooks** - <https://easyphotobook.uk/primaryschools/>  
By adding our school code - **b3rsze** - we receive £5.10 per book.
- Buy lottery tickets via the **SO Charitable lottery for £1**, we receive 50% from each ticket sold and you could win up to £25,000!  
<https://www.socharitable.co.uk/support/st-birinus-ce-primary-school>



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## WE'VE LAUNCHED OUR LOTTERY PAGE

**Buy Your Tickets From Our Page - We Get 50%**

- We now have a SO Charitable Lottery page!
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- PLUS 10% goes to other good causes in South Oxfordshire!

To Start Supporting, Visit:  
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And Search For:  
**St Birinus School**



Supporters must be 16 years of age or older

## Berinsfield Library Revised service during Lockdown

In line with government restrictions, access to libraries is strictly limited to the following services:

- Pre-booked computer session
- Pre-booked Click & Collect item collection
- Reservation collection
- Return of items on loan

We are closed to all other services apart from those listed above.

To request Click & Collect  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraryclickandcollect](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraryclickandcollect)  
or call **01865 897811**

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## 'Spoonville' Dorchester On Thames

Why not get crafty and join our  
Community Lockdown project?



Decorate a wooden spoon however the mood takes you.  
(Or maybe even two!)

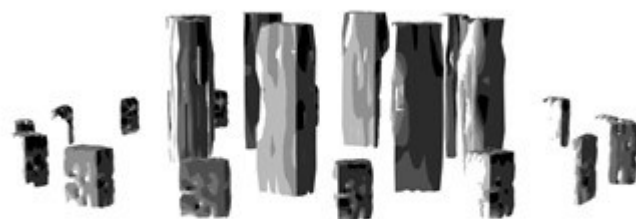
Place your spoon in the patch of grass on the corner of  
the High Street and the Drayton Road, near the Recreation  
Ground, to join the growing community of Spoonys.

### Rules of Spoonville

- Place your Spoony during your daily exercise outing.
- Make sure bits won't blow off your Spoony as we don't want to create litter.
- Make sure that your Spoony can cope in the rain without getting spoiled.
- Spoonys are not keen on dogs. Please can dog owners ensure that dogs stay well back.
- Come and see the Spoonys, but please remain socially distanced and please, no touching
- Please ensure that your Spoonys are collected from the site by the end of the Easter holidays as they need to be cleared away in time for the grass to be mowed.

There are lots of great ideas for decorations – or perhaps  
invent your very own Spoony character. People, animals,  
flowers, cartoon or book characters, all are welcome. **Do  
take part and enjoy the fun.**

Spoons can be purchased from The Co-op as they are  
'essential' shopping!



## H E N G E 2 1

Following the HENGE19 pilot, HENGE21 - Settlement is  
scheduled for September 2021. It will be a multidisciplinary  
arts collaboration with our rural communities in a celebration  
of a shared prehistoric heritage - the first settlements sited  
under the Wittenham Clumps and the Dyke Hills.

Drawing on professional and local artists, composers,  
dancers and actors, it will:

- Commission original works for the Settlement Celebration.
- Invite residents of our communities to participate in the Celebration.
- Partner with schools, libraries, museums for workshops and an exhibition.
- Offer a *Call to Artists*, *Call to Writers* and a *Family Challenge* to produce work for Celebration.
- Offer the opportunity for our communities to socially renew and deepen their ties.

**More information to follow.**

### Oxfordshire Libraries



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## Warborough & Shillingford WI

The January Members Meeting on Zoom was on Well Being and given by Deborah Humphrey who was formally a mental health nurse before doing a Coaching Course at Oxford Brookes University. Deborah has found using creativity [eg photography, writing, painting] a useful way of helping people to express their feelings and cope with stressful situations. She gave us some of the exercises she uses with clients who may be individuals or groups such as junior nurses from abroad. In one exercise we were shown a group of pictures and asked to choose one then write two sentences saying what the image meant to us. Committing those thoughts to paper made them more real than a cursory glance. Courses are weekly meetings for up to 10 weeks.

**2021 Programme.** Rachel and Clare are putting together a fascinating and varied programme for the year with hopefully some outdoor activities and visits.

In February, Rosie Jacobs talked to us about Independent Oxford.

March will be our first ever Annual Meeting on Zoom followed by an illustrated talk on a journey from East to West in Bhutan by Pat Norman.

**Shillingford Bus Stops** – A Community Project. The Parish Council have agreed to the project to clean up and improve the bus stop.

**Tea and Chat with optional Craft** These informal meetings are very popular and providing much needed contact for lots of us. Some of us are going to bring our latest craft activity to the next meeting. More news next time!

**Dorchester residents** if you are reading this and feel that you would like to join us, please get in touch with me. There are already five Dorchester residents and we would love more of you to join us! And when we start to meet in the Hall again there will be lifts available. Please call Ann Wells a Dorchester resident on **01865 341246** if you would like more information.

### Book Group

*Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche was a popular choice. A fascinating and well written story of a young Nigerian woman who did not know she 'black' until she went to study in the USA. Then after a successful career in the USA returned to a changed Nigeria. And it's a love story. The insights into both cultures are illuminating.

*The Tenderness of Wolves* by Stef Penny,  
*The Skylark War* by Hilary McKay  
*The Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield.  
*Full Tilt* by Dervla Murphy  
*Red Notice* by Bill Browder  
*A Single Thread* by Tracy Chevalier

**Pat Norman**  
Secretary  
pnorman87@btinternet.com  
tel 07717 295165

## Alistair Macdonald

Alistair was a Captain in the Royal Navy, although he had previously served as a Midshipman on the Royal Yacht Britannia in his early naval life. He and Connie were posted to some wonderful places during his career, and they often talked about their experiences in Naples and Turkey.

When he retired, they came to live in Burcot. Alistair loved singing, and he soon joined the Wittenham Singers. He had a good, strong bass voice, and was a most valuable member of the choir.

Alistair and Connie were members of the Dorchester Amateur Dramatics Society, and took part in many productions - Alistair particularly enjoying the musicals.

They were also members of a fine dining group in Dorchester, the Dobunis, which met regularly; and they both enjoyed playing golf.

Alistair was a superb raconteur, and was huge fun to be with. Having led such an interesting life in the Navy, he had many fascinating stories to tell. He was kind and thoughtful - a truly lovely man.

Having tragically lost their son, George, Connie and Alistair decided to move to Eastbourne to be near their daughter, Tory.

Alistair became unwell last autumn. He died in Eastbourne on 18 January 2021, aged 86.

**Rosemary Mills**

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## The Quilt that Tells a Story

Some readers will recall seeing a beautiful display of quilts at the Abbey's 'Lockdown' exhibition last Autumn. I was moved to ask the artist, Gill Whitten, more about her craft and how she came to learn the art of 'scrap quilting'. Her account is most inspiring, and, with her consent, I am delighted to bring you something of the remarkable story she shared with me about the making of her stunning 'Africa' quilt:

'I love to take small pieces of left-over fabrics, many of which hold special memories, blending and framing them to create a unique piece that has its own story. It is the ultimate in recycling and goes back generations, linking us to the women who cut out the 'good bits' of material in worn garments to create something useful, warm and beautiful. The lockdown has forced me to look closely at my 'stash' of fabrics and use pieces I might previously have discarded if I had had more choice. Sewing has kept me motivated and occupied during this strange time. The results have been surprising and pleasing and include the "Africa" quilt (the centrepiece of this article). Since I was raised in South Africa, the colours of Africa appear in many of my throws.

This particular quilt holds many personal memories for me and tells something about the story of my own life, and of the land and people I remember so lovingly from my youth.

My mother, who made all our clothes, taught me to sew. We lived on a small farm and shops were far away and, in the 1950s, hard to reach, so every bit of material was valued. Piecing bits of fabric together to make a whole was something natural to me, and when I discovered how quilting gave texture, life and strength to my work, I was hooked!

The quilt is made from fabrics I collected in Africa. The large fabric panels, which display different flora and fauna of Africa, are all from a hand-made apron that I was given when I was

fourteen years old. This apron held special meaning for me not only because it was beautifully made, but also because of who gave it to me. It was a gift from the nuns at a local Church of England religious community for helping them over the years with their annual fundraising fête. From the time I was eight, my mother had taken me with her when she went to help raise money at the fête. The quilt's central panel of

zebras and giraffes is formed from the apron's front pocket, where I stored the money I collected at the event during my teens.

The nuns held the fête to raise money to support the home they had set up for young unmarried mothers and their babies. Some homes in those times were known for their harshness, but the nuns ran this home in a refreshingly progressive way, helping mothers who desired to raise their children as single mums by giving them a place to live and providing meals and childcare, while helping them gain skills for work. Those mothers who decided on adoption for their babies were able to meet prospective adoptive parents and to choose which family would raise their child.

The dedication shown by these nuns made a deep impression on me and influenced my faith deeply. Although it couldn't have been an easy time for the young mothers, I have wonderful memories of spending time with them, their little ones, and the nuns, who always made us feel welcome.

The apron was so beautiful that I hardly ever wore it for fear of damaging it! But over the years, I would take it out from time to time to remind me of the sights and sounds of my homeland and the loved ones I missed when my husband, Mike, and I moved from South Africa to Oxfordshire in 1966 with our two daughters.

*Continued...* →



**Africa-themed Quilt by Gill Whitten**



*...The Quilt that Tells a Story, continued*

In one of life's happy coincidences, I learned in 1972 that the home and orphanage I visited in my childhood had been originally founded in Wantage in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, making it one of the earliest Church of England Religious Communities, known as The Community of St. Mary the Virgin, and dedicated to Mary and the love for her son, Jesus. Not only that, two of the nuns who had especially touched my heart as a child, Mother Joan and Sister Dorothy Rafael, had returned to the community in Wantage to retire, and so we were reunited! Sometimes, on cold days, I sit with a quilt around me and feel reminded of the warmth and love of those times we shared.

If anyone reading about my own experience as a scrap quilter is thinking of taking up the art, my advice would be to put all the bits you want to use together and play with them to see

how you could blend them into a whole. Don't worry too much about whether the colours 'match' or not, just follow your heart, and each piece will find a place in the whole. The finished article will be very special.

When making a quilt for someone I usually start by asking questions about their favourite colours, what their interests are, what's personal to them and part of their lives. I then look for fabrics which depict their answers, blending the pictures into a personal story, threaded together with love.'

**Gill Whitten and Melinda Powell**

Contact [gill.whitten@gmail.com](mailto:gill.whitten@gmail.com)  
if you would like to commission a quilt  
or learn more about scrap quilting.

## **Dorchester Fireworks Event 2021** **An invitation to fund raisers**

It may seem a long time to 5 November and hopefully things will be very different by then but decisions on whether to run this event must be made imminently in order to secure the Fireworks company for another year.

Recently, a village charity, 'Footsteps', has been running these fireworks evenings, but as they have decided not to do so in 2021 this could provide other organisations with an opportunity to use it for fund-raising.

As with previous years the Parish Council will provide seed funding to support upfront costs of the event, which is then repaid from takings on the night, otherwise the format is well established, successful and just needs an enthusiastic team to take it over.

If you and other members of an organisation based in the village might be interested in becoming involved then please contact our Parish Clerk, Geoff Russell, and he will outline the way it works and how to contact organisations who can tell you how they have financially benefited their good causes and charities in the past.

Don't be put off by thinking your organisation may be too small for such a venture, there is always the possibility of teaming up with others to share the responsibility and the proceeds.

It does sound a bit strange to be talking about a major social gathering at a time when we are all doing our best to stay away from each other, but we have to confirm our intentions to the fireworks display specialists in the very near future, so we have to act fast.

Geoff Russell can be contacted at either:

[parishclerk@dorchesteronthames.co.uk](mailto:parishclerk@dorchesteronthames.co.uk) or by telephone on **07745 311439**





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## Play Area Development

The COVID-19 crisis has emphasised the important community service that is provided by the Play Area. It has been the only village amenity that has been allowed to remain open, albeit with strict instructions from the Government about how access is to be managed and the equipment kept clean.

The layout, design and specification of the current Dorchester Play Area was settled by a joint working group consisting of parents and parish councillors more than 15 years ago. The

Parish Council believes that it is time for a review of these facilities.

We know from past experience that the development and fund-raising involved in such a project takes at least two years to complete. It is the Parish Council's opinion that a new working party should be brought together in the near future in order to stand a chance of its plans coming to fruition by 2023/4.

Several neighbouring villages have recently upgraded their children's play facilities and so there are plenty of ideas that can be viewed in our surrounding area.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions about the future provision of children's play facilities, or indeed any other outdoor, free-standing leisure equipment for residents of any age, then please send them in an email to

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

Please state if you would be prepared to join the new joint working group. The project will not succeed if it does not have community support. The process will probably commence with a brainstorming session via Zoom which will be open to all interested parties. It is important that you let the Parish Clerk know if you would like to participate in this. Email or write to Geoff Russell, Parish Clerk, The Pigeons, 5-7 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames OX10 7HH



## Dorchester Abbey Tea Room Takeaway

...is looking for volunteers!

Could you help by baking a cake or serving tea in our brilliant village tea room for an afternoon?

We'd love to hear from anyone who can offer anything from just one cake or weekend afternoon session to a regular monthly / weekly commitment. Any spare home made jam also gratefully received!

(Enthusiastic cake eaters needed from Easter Sat, April 3rd!)

Please contact Steph Forman [steph@forman.org.uk](mailto:steph@forman.org.uk) 340434

## The fairies have come to town...

During the early weeks of January 2021, a strange phenomenon occurred across the village. Quietly, miniature doors started to appear attached to homes and buildings. Clear evidence, (without a shadow of doubt), that fairies had moved into Dorchester. Each door was different, sometimes echoing the style of its host property, sometimes not.

Traditionally fairy doors are found tucked away, hidden in the countryside, in woodlands or near streams. Increasingly however, urban fairy doors have been encountered as the fairies have gained confidence to live alongside us humans. Perhaps the reduction of visitors and our quieter streets during lockdown, provided the ideal opportunity for the fairy folk to peacefully come and join us in the village. Perhaps, they sensed the sadness and fearfulness experienced by us humans during the pandemic and thought that their presence with us might



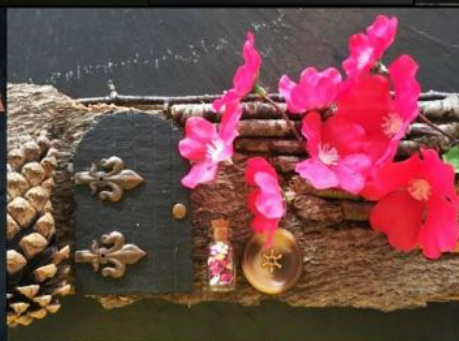
lift our spirits and bring joy. Placed against the outside wall of a house the doors allow the fairy folk to access the home and the shelter provided within. Out of gratitude for our centuries old tradition of providing welcome and kind hospitality to visitors, perhaps the fairies will reward the village with their magic and good luck.

The secret nature of fairies makes them difficult to spot. But as we can see from the photograph of the front cover, if you genuinely believe, with luck and patience you can sometimes catch a brief glimpse of these magical folk.

Long ago, it was felt that favours offered freely would be rewarded with gifts given just as freely.

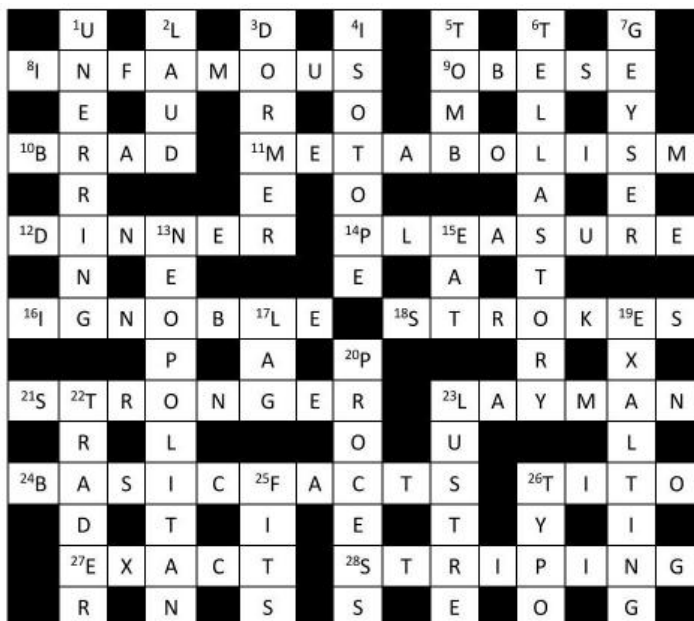
So when there is snow on the ground or when the cold wind blows remember... if you look after the fairies, the fairies will look after you.





## Dorchester News Crossword No.15 Solution

Compiled by Slider



### Council launches dog-poo complaint maps

South Oxfordshire District Council has put together dog fouling maps of local towns and villages showing the areas with the highest number of complaints about owners not picking up after their animals.

Using the maps the councils want to highlight the issue of dog fouling and remind owners that it is an offence for a person in control of a dog – an owner or dog walker – not to clean up immediately if the dog has fouled on public land.

The councils' envirocrime officers can issue a **£50** fixed penalty notice to someone who fails to clean up after their dog. If the case goes to court this could cost the owner or person in charge of the animal up to £1,000.

In the past year the councils' joint envirocrime team has received **118** complaints about dog fouling. These included a video message from a mother and young daughter after the child got covered in dog mess not cleared up by the animal's owner. They also got CCTV of a night-time dog walker allowing his pet to foul a neighbour's path.



The councils are also trying to tackle the issue of dog walkers putting their pets' mess in a plastic bag and leaving it as litter on the ground or near a litter bin or sometimes hanging in a tree!

The councils' envirocrime team patrol popular dog walking areas and talk to dog owners and other residents about the problem. Dog owners have been issued with fines for dog fouling and residents are being encouraged to report incidents of dog fouling via the councils' website pages.

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## Marjie Seed

**13 April 1940 - 3 January 2021**

Marjie was born not long after the beginning of the second world war and spent her early years living in a rambling Victorian house in Stretford with her parents, Faith and Harold, her aunt, uncle, grandparents and cousins. As an only child she loved being a part of this extended family and was particularly close to her grandmother.

Sadly for her, her parents eventually got a place of their own in the form of one of the new prefabricated homes that were being built for young families after the war and Marjie was separated from her beloved grandmother and her cousin, Winnie, who was her best friend. She still went there every day after school as it remained home to her.

Profoundly shy and quiet, Marjie was taken along, by her mum, to Stretford Children's Theatre in the hope that drama and performance might help to make her more confident. On her first day there she met another girl her own age, Jean, with whom she would remain close friends for the rest of her life. Marjie then went along to watch their production of *The Merchant of Venice* and the 16 year old Joe Seed, who was playing Shylock, blew her away. Years later she would talk about how incredible it was that someone so young could be so convincing, so believable in the role of a miserly old money-lender. She fell in love with him then before they had even met. Sadly (or perhaps thankfully for he was a few years older) Joe left to do his National Service shortly afterwards and did not reappear until three years later.

Joe and Marjie's first date was on 27 December. Joe would have quite happily made it Christmas or Boxing Day but Marjie was having none of that – Christmas was for her family and quite sacred!

At Stretford, they went on to perform in many productions together both musicals and plays and by the time Marjie played Ophelia to Joe's Hamlet they were very much a couple. However, such was their ability to 'live the role' and become at one with their characters, this particular casting nearly tore them apart!

After a six year courtship, Joe and Marjie married. Family commitments prevented Joe following a career in the theatre but he was hugely supportive of Marjie and encouraged her to audition for drama school. She won a place at The Bristol Old Vic and Joe did his best to persuade her to take this up but she was too attached to home and family and turned it down in favour of staying close and joining the Manchester Library Theatre where she worked with the likes of Janet Suzman, Martin Jarvis and Patrick Stewart and the great theatre director, David Scase, who she remembered rehearsing actors in Shakespeare with cups of tea in their hands to help them to 'stop bloody acting'.

Joe and Marjie married and the birth of their daughter,



Caroline, forced Marjie to turn her back on what could have been a promising acting career to devote herself to being a mother. A short foray back into professional theatre when Caroline was very young convinced her that home was where her heart lay and that was the end of it.

In the 70s, Joe was carving out a career in business which brought him and a reluctant Marjie to London with Caroline. Marjie hated leaving her mum behind and returned almost every weekend to Manchester to visit. After a few years, they settled in Henley and adopted their son, Nick. As the children grew up, Marjie started to get involved with theatre again and became a big part of the Kenton Theatre scene. She also started having singing lessons and discovered her beautiful voice. This won her roles in shows such as Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* and Nancy in *Oliver*.

Marjie found herself in demand from various organisations – charities, rotary and golf clubs – for her singing talent and this did earn her something of an income. Particularly popular were her evenings of Songs from the War and her celebrations of Edith Piaf. So good was her French singing accent that French people would chat to her in their native tongue believing her to be French too! Sadly, her language skills were not that fluent.

Work-wise, Marjie tried all sorts of jobs but none of them were as rewarding as her years as a Carer in the Community helping people with learning difficulties to live more independently. She often had to do overnight stays and was particularly good at just listening to the people she looked after who came to love her very much.

When her first grandchild, Tabitha, was born, Marjie was a huge support to Caroline and gladly took on the child-care so that Caroline could get back to work. She was a very big part of Tabitha's up bringing and went on to be there for Tom and Toby too throughout the years that they needed taking to and from school and tea on the table when they came home. She didn't ever want to be known as Grandma or Granny, not a label she could associate with herself and she became known as Maggie to the children and also to their friends who came over frequently for tea because she was also a fantastic cook and a great foodie.

Sadly, Marjie developed throat cancer in 2013 and although the treatment kept her alive, it took away her singing voice, her ability to eat and drink and over time made breathing so difficult, she eventually lost her ability to even speak. She relied on a white board to communicate and despite everything that was taken from her she remained brave and determined to live the best life she could. She was very excited to move into the home that was built for her and Joe in the garden of Caroline and Mike's home in Dorchester but, sadly, did not get nearly enough time to enjoy it.



# The Countryside Code



## Protect the natural environment

We all have a responsibility to protect the countryside now and for future generations, so make sure you don't harm animals, birds, plants or trees and try to leave no trace of your visit. When out with your dog make sure it is not a danger or nuisance to farm animals, horses, wildlife or other people.



## Respect other people

Please respect the local community and other people using the outdoors. Remember your actions can affect people's lives and livelihoods.

### Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors

- Respect the needs of local people and visitors alike – for example, don't block gateways, driveways or other paths with your vehicle.
- When riding a bike or driving a vehicle, slow down or stop for horses, walkers and farm animals and give them plenty of room. By law, cyclists must give way to walkers and horse-riders on bridleways.
- Co-operate with people at work in the countryside. For example, keep out of the way when farm animals are being gathered or moved and follow directions from the farmer.
- Busy traffic on small country roads can be unpleasant and dangerous to local people, visitors and wildlife – so slow down and where possible, leave your vehicle at home, consider sharing lifts and use alternatives such as public transport or cycling. For public transport information, phone Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 or visit [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info).

### Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home

- Protecting the natural environment means taking special care not to damage, destroy or remove features such as rocks, plants and trees. They provide homes and food for wildlife, and add to everybody's enjoyment of the countryside.
- Litter and leftover food doesn't just spoil the beauty of the countryside, it can be dangerous to wildlife and farm animals – so take your litter home with you. Dropping litter and dumping rubbish are criminal offences.
- Fires can be as devastating to wildlife and habitats as they are to people and property – so be careful with naked flames and cigarettes at any time of the year. Sometimes, controlled fires are used to manage vegetation, particularly on heaths and moors between 1st October and 15th April, but if a fire appears to be unattended then report it by calling 999.

### Keep dogs under effective control

- When you take your dog into the outdoors, always ensure it does not disturb wildlife, farm animals, horses or other people by keeping it under **effective control**. This means that you:
  - keep your dog on a lead, or
  - keep it in sight at all times, be aware of what it's doing and be confident it will return to you promptly on command
  - ensure it does not stray off the path or area where you have a right of access

### Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

- A farmer will normally close gates to keep farm animals in, but may sometimes leave them open so the animals can reach food and water. Leave gates as you find them or follow instructions on signs. When in a group, make sure the last person knows how to leave the gates.
- Follow paths unless wider access is available, such as on open country or registered common land (known as 'Open Access land').
- If you think a sign is illegal or misleading such as a 'Private - No Entry' sign on a public path, contact the local authority.
- Leave machinery and farm animals alone – don't interfere with animals even if you think they're in distress. Try to alert the farmer instead.
- Use gates, stiles or gaps in field boundaries if you can – climbing over walls, hedges and fences can damage them and increase the risk of farm animals escaping.
- Our heritage matters to all of us – be careful not to disturb ruins and historic sites.

- Special dog rules may apply in particular situations, so always look out for local signs – for example:

- Dogs may be banned from certain areas that people use, or there may be restrictions, byelaws or control orders limiting where they can go.
- The access rights that normally apply to open country and registered common land (known as 'Open Access' land) require dogs to be kept on a short lead between 1 March and 31 July, to help protect ground nesting birds, and all year round near farm animals.
- At the coast, there may also be some local restrictions to require dogs to be kept on a short lead during the bird breeding season, and to prevent disturbance to flocks of resting and feeding birds during other times of year.
- It's always good practice (and a legal requirement on 'Open Access' land) to keep your dog on a lead around farm animals and horses, for your own safety and for the welfare of the animals. A farmer may shoot a dog which is attacking or chasing farm animals without being liable to compensate the dog's owner.
- However, if cattle or horses chase you and your dog, it is safer to let your dog off the lead – don't risk getting hurt by trying to protect it. Your dog will be much safer if you let it run away from a farm animal in these circumstances and so will you.
- Everyone knows how unpleasant dog mess is and it can cause infections, so always clean up after your dog and get rid of the mess responsibly – 'bag it and bin it'. Make sure your dog is wormed regularly to protect it, other animals and people.

Extract from *The Countryside Code* leaflet published by Natural England. [www.gov.uk/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/natural-england)

## Parish Council Notices

### Monthly Meetings

The next meetings will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday 10 March** and **Wednesday 14 April**. Both will commence at 7.30pm. The Agenda for each meeting will be posted on Village noticeboards and on the Parish Council section of the Village website three clear days in advance of each meeting.

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 of the meeting so that the necessary access arrangements can be made.

### 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/>

## From the Chairman of the Parish Council



When the Parish Council sat down this week to do its business by Zoom I did wonder if it would be as exciting as the Handforth Parish Council meeting that went viral this week! But no, just the usual consideration of viruses, planning permissions, recreation ground, footpaths and floods. No tantrums, no 'standing orders'. Maybe next time...

As daylight slowly comes back and vaccines start to go into arms I'm hoping that like me you feel the hardest part of 2021 is behind us. For those that have been for their first jobs at Clifton Hampden the support of the team over there has been just brilliant and shows that community spirit is very much alive. I'm sure many more of us will experience the same uplift over the coming weeks. And then let us hope we can start to enjoy ourselves a bit more.

In my update last month I mentioned the Countryside Code, not realising that it had been moved into this month's edition. (See page opposite. Ed.) However, you will have seen Keith's insert about the imminent lambing season. The Parish Council stands as one with him on the need for courtesy and it was disappointing to hear of one dog chasing an alpaca. We all hope the lambing goes well and I won't have to bleat on again about behaving as good neighbours.

Just to test us a bit further the heavens seemed to have opened these last few weeks with the Thame getting very close to its all time recorded high level. For those in Bridge End in particular these have been tense times but I'm pleased to say that with the hard work of the residents themselves and the support of the parish council to help mobilise the county authorities to get more sandbags delivered at short notice, the worst impacts of rising water were averted.

As a last thought, thanks to the instigators of the fairy doors and Spoonville that have brought a smile to many of us as we walk round the village. The spirit of Dorchester lives on undimmed.

**Mark Williams**  
Chairman DoT Parish Council

## Litter pickers

Many villagers have been contributing to collecting up and discarding litter whilst on their daily walks. Their efforts have been much appreciated. The village is looking particularly clean and tidy at the moment and a great uplift to all our spirits.

A special vote of thanks is due to Matthew and Maggie from Wittenham Lane. Many villagers will have spotted them out and about with their collections of litter. They have made a noticeable difference especially in those hard to reach areas. A big 'thank you' to them both for their hard work and community-spirited endeavours.

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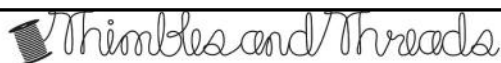
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## From your District Councillor... ...Robin Bennett



South Oxfordshire DC has just passed its budget for 2021-22. Despite being in the midst of a global pandemic, it's great to see we are starting to move forward on our priorities. Many of the projects in our corporate plan are either already being addressed, or can be when officer time allows. This direct link to the corporate plan – which received record public feedback – will give transparency and confidence that spending is happening on the right things. Over the year we will also be introducing performance measures to see how we are doing on these projects.

Of course – the response to the pandemic must come first, and many SODC officers are taking on new and unfamiliar roles to help support residents and roll out the vaccine programme, spending many hours responding to government demands as well as those of the council. Councils have proved their importance during this pandemic and it's time for a proper funding settlement and real devolved powers from Whitehall – at present, the central government grant goes down every year.

Given that backdrop, it is fantastic we have been able to avoid service reductions, and that many behind the scenes changes from the last budget and over the last year, such as better use of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) monies, in-sourcing of services and investing-to-save, have set us up well for the future.

We have council tax reduction and other schemes in place to support those who may struggle to pay their council tax. Please contact the council if you need help.

### Winter Support Grants

The Winter Support Grant scheme is available for households who have been hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic. Support is available in the form of advice, supermarket and fuel vouchers or through the direct payment of energy or water bills. If you are struggling to afford food or pay your fuel bills, you may be eligible to receive help. Get in touch with your nearest advice centre for further guidance or if you know of someone who is struggling please tell them to get in touch with Citizens Advice – **0808 278 7907**.

Our community hub is still operating via [www.southoxon.gov.uk/communityhub](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/communityhub) or on **01235 422600**. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you need help.

### Business Support

The Economic Development team along with finance have taken on a giant task of managing government grants – to date, 11 schemes paying out just short of £6million in total in funds to business. Our businesses, to a large extent small and medium sized, with over half based outside towns, will be key to the recovery, and we will continue to do all we can to support them through this. If you run a business large or small, make sure you are signed up to the mailing list for the latest government

grant availability via [www.svbs.co.uk](http://www.svbs.co.uk). There are a number of grant schemes currently open, and we are pressing for more support for those business types which have been overlooked so far.

### Garden Waste

By the time you read this, garden waste collections should have resumed. We had to delay the restart of the service as many of our bin crews were off sick or were having to self-isolate due to COVID-19. We'll continue to provide a weekly update on our website, or I can personally recommend the council's 'Binzone' app for updates.

### Flood warnings

With sustained heavy rainfall, it won't have escaped your notice we have had very high river levels and flooding across the area. [www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com) is the best place to look for more information on flood response.

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m. 07979 646815

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 Full details at [www.brannfordsgardens.co.uk](http://www.brannfordsgardens.co.uk)



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[simplycoralwood@gmail.com](mailto:simplycoralwood@gmail.com)





# From your MP...

# ...John Howell

From many of the communications that I receive and conversations that I have, I know that many people are finding the lockdown harder and harder. I fully appreciate this and, indeed, I too find it difficult in many ways. There is hope in the vaccine rollout, but it is important not to ease up too soon and undo all the progress that has been made as a result of the majority of people observing the lockdown restrictions. Thank you all for your efforts.

The Government has made the re-opening of schools the first priority as we emerge from this situation and I wholly support that. I believe that young people have suffered hugely not only from the problems of learning but also in wider aspects of development. Young people of all ages discover who they are and develop their emotional and social skills through interaction with others of their age. This time of distancing and, for some, isolation from their peers has stunted this. Indeed, loneliness has been a problem for many in all age groups as social interaction is limited. We have made tremendous efforts at new ways of doing things and learned to use technology as never before, but nothing can replace human contact.

Now that we have been dealing with COVID for a year I am mindful too that so many other concerns have grown over time. At the time of writing we await news of the Government plan to move towards greater freedoms and must hold our nerve. However, I know that what most people want is not negative messages of troubles to come, but hope. We have seen how our scientists have been able to develop the vaccine by pooling knowledge and with appropriate funding. I can see no reason not to believe that they will be able to continue their work over coming months and bring us the ongoing protection that we need.

As the rollout progresses there are different groups that have been put forward for higher prioritisation. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has indicated that occupational prioritisation could form a part of a second phase of the programme. The Vaccines Minister has indicated support for this. The programme is moving forward at a good pace and it will not be much longer until we have protected those most at risk. However, as the Minister, Nadhim Zahawi, has wisely said 'No one is safe until everyone is safe.' The

mission to reduce to a minimum the effect of COVID-19 is not on an individual basis but national and indeed international.

In other news I was delighted to learn of the additional funding for policing in which Thames Valley police receives an extra £1,160 million. This will go towards Violence Reduction Units, which are special units designed to tackle serious violence and prevent young people being drawn into it. It is part of £35.5 million announced across the country for these units. It will help bring together organisations across our community to tackle violent crime and also to address its underlying causes.

There is also some good news on the horizon for those communities who have been troubled by illegal encampments. I have commented previously on a consultation on this and now the Home Secretary is expected to announce new legislation that will make it a criminal offence to intentionally set up camp and trespass on private land. This will give police authority to move people on and also to take other action in relation to this. I know that there has been concern from organisations such as Ramblers who might find themselves inadvertently committing an offence of trespass. However, the Home Office is clear that measures could be applied in specific circumstances relating to trespass with intent to reside and where the trespasser causes damage. It is important that innocent people are not made into criminals but also to give the police the necessary powers to deal with the problems that we have seen across the constituency in the past year.

*Despite the current limitations the work of parliament continues. If you have an issue that you would like to raise with me, if possible, please email me at*

***john.howell.mp@parliament.uk.*** *If you cannot email you can write to me at the House of Commons, London, SW1 0AA or PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD.*

*If you would like to receive my periodic electronic newsletters, and briefings on specific issues, please visit my website ***www.johnhowell.org.uk*** and subscribe at the link on the home page.*



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## **BOSOM FRIENDS** Oxfordshire Breast Cancer Support Group

This time last year, nobody had any idea what 2020 would have in store for us. The coronavirus pandemic has meant that the last few months have been challenging and difficult for just about everyone.

Hearing the news that you have cancer is devastating; receiving such a diagnosis during these uncertain covid times can be even more frightening. As well as the obvious physical effects, such a diagnosis is emotionally overwhelming and ultimately life-changing; it's common to feel alone, fearful and anxious.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, with one in eight women being diagnosed in their lifetime. Men can also be diagnosed with breast cancer. Each year around 12,000 people will die from the disease. Although survival rates have improved dramatically – with more people now surviving breast cancer than ever before – there is still a long way to go.

Bosom Friends is a small, Oxfordshire support group run entirely by volunteers and offers a listening ear as well as practical, confidential support to those who have been affected by breast cancer. The group was formed several years ago by two women who wanted to ensure that others in Oxfordshire would not feel the same isolation that they had experienced following their diagnosis.

Members of Bosom Friends would usually meet once a month, often in the home of one of the members with a chat, cuppa and cake. Although currently unable to hold normal group meetings due to coronavirus, Bosom Friends continue to hold monthly meetings online via Zoom.

Whether you have just been diagnosed, are currently undergoing treatment or completed your active treatment a while ago, the group offers emotional support and practical, up-to-date information. Above all, we can offer an understanding voice at the end of the phone should you ever need it.

If you or someone you care about has been affected by breast cancer, please do take a look at the Bosom Friends website - [www.bosomfriends.org.uk](http://www.bosomfriends.org.uk); alternatively if you prefer, please call Jan in confidence on **01844 290362** for more information.

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[claire@millstreampilates.co.uk](mailto:claire@millstreampilates.co.uk)**

## **healthwatch** Oxfordshire Your voice on health and care services

## **What do you think about the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to hear your views on the COVID-19 vaccine.

The county's independent health and care watchdog is running a survey asking people what they think about:

- The vaccine itself
- Information about the vaccine
- How the vaccine is being delivered

Please have your say by completing this survey at [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CovidVaccine-yourviews](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CovidVaccine-yourviews)

Healthwatch Oxfordshire will report what it hears to those in charge of managing the vaccine delivery locally to help identify if improvements are needed.

Rosalind Pearce, Executive Director at Healthwatch Oxfordshire, said: 'We really want to hear how people feel about the vaccine, particularly the reasons why people are deciding to have or not have the vaccination.

'All feedback is completely anonymous – we don't need to know who you are, but we do need to hear your views. Please do take a few minutes to share your thoughts with us on this.'

To request a paper copy of the survey, or a translated version, please call **01865 520520** or to find out more about Healthwatch Oxfordshire see

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

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## Weekly events at the Village Hall

All events are currently suspended.

## Parish Registers

### Funerals

29 January Marjie Seed



For current information about services at Dorchester Abbey see page 3 or [www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk](http://www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk)

For St Birinus RC Church go to: [www.stbirinus.co.uk](http://www.stbirinus.co.uk)

## Weekly events

Monday	DADS Play reading 7.30pm Online
Tuesday	Coffee Morning 10.30am Online
Wednesday	Mobile Post Office 2.00-3.00pm but may vary due to Covid 19 Outside Co-op

See also the Parish Council's website: [www.dorchesteronthames.co.uk](http://www.dorchesteronthames.co.uk)

## Getting well and truly phished...nearly.

I normally reckon that I'm pretty good at spotting fake emails and attempts at phishing for my personal details. The strange-looking email address—the first thing I look at—gives away even the most convincing email that appears to come from BT asking me to log in on the link provided. And I've regularly included in Dorchester News advice on this subject from various authorities.

However, I nearly fell foul of a phishing scam a couple of weeks ago. I received a text message, apparently from my bank, informing me that a new payee had been set up on my bank account about five minutes previously. Confirming a new payee by text is something that the bank regularly does. It provided a link to the bank's security desk for me to report if this had not been set up by me. I knew that I hadn't done this, but went to my bank account to see if there was a new payee to whom I had started paying money. There was nothing out of the ordinary there, but I thought I should inform the bank of this suspicious activity anyway. I therefore clicked on the link to the security desk, where I was asked to identify myself by giving my account number and passwords. I started to enter my account number and only then smelt a rat. The screen looked authentic, but when I looked more closely at the bank's logo it was a bit distorted and fuzzy and the font of the text was not quite right. I went back to the original text message. This had not addressed me by name, which messages from my bank always do. At this point I came to my senses and got out of the scam website as quickly as possible, and immediately changed the passwords on my bank account.

By creating a concern that someone else was trying to rob me, these phishers had cleverly diverted my attention from the normal care that I would give to any request of this type. Very clever. I got away with it. My bank account has remained untouched. But I came close to being had, and it was several days before I could be certain I was in the clear. A salutary tale.



In the box on the right are tips from the National Cyber Security Centre, a genuine government agency, to help you from falling for this, and me from falling for it again!

Ian Brace



## National Cyber Security Centre

### Spotting Suspicious Messages

Spotting scam messages and phone calls is becoming increasingly difficult. Many scams will even fool the experts. However, there are some tricks that criminals will use to try and get you to respond without thinking. Things to look out for are:

- **Authority** - Is the message claiming to be from someone official? For example, your bank, doctor, a solicitor, or a government department. Criminals often pretend to be important people or organisations to trick you into doing what they want.
- **Urgency** - Are you told you have a limited time to respond (such as 'within 24 hours' or 'immediately')? Criminals often threaten you with fines or other negative consequences.
- **Emotion** - Does the message make you panic, fearful, hopeful or curious? Criminals often use threatening language, make false claims of support, or tease you into wanting to find out more.
- **Scarcity** - Is the message offering something in short supply, like concert tickets, money or a cure for medical conditions? Fear of missing out on a good deal or opportunity can make you respond quickly.

**Current events** - Are you expecting to see a message like this? Criminals often exploit current news stories, big events or specific times of year (like tax reporting) to make their scam seem more relevant to you.

### If it could be genuine

If you think a message or call might really be from an organisation you have an existing relationship with, like your bank, and you want to be sure:

- **Go back to something you can trust.** Visit the official website, log in to your account, or phone their advertised phone number. Don't use the links or contact details in the message you have been sent or given over the phone.

**Check to see if the official source has already told you what they will *never* ask you.** For example, your bank may have told you that they will *never* ask for your password.

See more at: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/suspicious-email-actions>

## CONTACTING THE POLICE

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

## HEALTH SERVICES

### DIRECT LINE TO URGENT LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES

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

### MINOR INJURIES

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

### A&E

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

### SURGERIES

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

### ROOM HIRE

#### ABBEY GUEST HOUSE BOOKINGS

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

#### HIRE OF DORCHESTER VILLAGE HALL

To hire our Village Hall, contact Emma Shrimpton [bookings@dotvh.org.uk](mailto:bookings@dotvh.org.uk) or **01865 689452**.

Please telephone at least 24 hours in advance to arrange collection of the key.

## FAULTS AND COMPLAINTS

### POTHOLE, STREET OR ROAD PROBLEMS

Abandoned vehicles, dog fouling, flyposting or graffiti, flytipping or litter, street cleaning, such as broken glass in a cycle lane, unlit lampposts, potholes can be reported on [fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk). In an emergency, call **0345 310 1111**.

### BLOCKED DRAINS

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

### REFUSE COLLECTION

If your rubbish is not collected on the due date contact the contractor direct. Call **03000 610610** and the website: [www.more recycling.co.uk](http://www.more recycling.co.uk)

## BERINSFIELD LIBRARY

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

### OPENING HOURS

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

## ANIMAL WELFARE

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

## Useful Information

### TRANSPORT DORCHESTER FLYER

Suspended until further notice.

### 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**. Reduced services currently being run.

### AGE UK

The UK's largest charity working with older people For help and advice etc. go to [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

### WALLINGFORD VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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

[www.wallingford.volunteercentre@gmail.com](mailto:www.wallingford.volunteercentre@gmail.com)

### CONTACTING THE PARISH COUNCIL

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

### MOBILE POST OFFICE

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  
**Revd. Canon Sue Booy**  
**01865 340007**

### ABBEY 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.

### ABBEY 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 5 March **Black**

Fri 12 March **Green**

Fri 19 March **Black**

Fri 26 March **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. Check website <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/>

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# Spring Flower Show 2021

## Special Lockdown Edition: 'A Spring Village'



### WHEN

**Saturday 3rd April** and for the rest of the Easter Bank Holiday Weekend.

### WHAT

Not a normal flower show - not even a virtual flower show like last Autumn – but an event across the whole village. No competition - just take part and let's decorate the village to celebrate Spring.

### HOW TO TAKE PART

Decorate your windows, house, fence or front garden on a floral theme.

Some ideas—feel free to develop your own:

- Live flowers, bulbs, baskets or pot plants in your front windows
- Drawings, paintings, photos or sculptures in your front windows
- Spring wreaths, swags, hangings, bunting or sculptures on your front door, garden gate or fence
- Add potted plants or sculptures to your front garden
- Children's drawings and sculpture particularly welcome



If you intend to decorate your house, windows, fence or garden, let us know by **Sunday 21st March** if you'd like to be added to a map so that people can find you.

Email (and for enquiries): [flowershow@dorchesteronthames.co.uk](mailto:flowershow@dorchesteronthames.co.uk)

**Team efforts to decorate our public spaces would be great!**

Please maintain social distancing and combine touring the show with your daily exercise. Please view from public rights of way and don't enter private property unless invited.

