

Upton News



January 2022

The Upton News is only as good as those who contribute to it so please make this the first port of call if you have anything to communicate to the wider village community.

For those submitting news items will you please send them to me at neilthorp@btinternet.com. A few days beforehand I will send a reminder of the deadline day to all regular contributors but early submission will always be welcome. Anything received past the deadline of 28th of the month may NOT be included.

Neil Thorp

Church Services

Online Services

Sundays at 10.30am - login or connect at 10am to chat before the service.

Weekday evenings - Compline at 8pm

Please see the Churn for the service access codes and full details of how to join each week. The weekly Churn and Readings are available on the website www.churnchurches.co.uk. See the resources tab.

If you would like to be added to our weekly mailing list to receive the Churn, please contact Elaine.

Services at St. Mary the Virgin

9 January	1 st Sunday of Epiphany
9.30am	Parish Eucharist
23 January	3 rd Sunday of Epiphany
9.30am	Parish Eucharist

We want everyone to feel safe coming to church

Following advice from the Diocese, we will continue to encourage people to wear face coverings and to observe social distancing while in church. Communion will be in bread only. Congregational singing will be allowed when it is safe to do so: as the virus spreads via droplets, to be able to sing will depend on the numbers attending and the ability to be socially distant from others.

PRAM SERVICE PARTY

Unfortunately due to the risks involved we've had to postpone the Pram Service Party. A new date will be sent out soon!

Rector's Note

Trees in Winter

In November of last year, I remember driving through the Chilterns and being struck by the beauty of the beech trees. The leaves were a wonderful range of yellows and browns. The sun was out and for a while it seemed just like a day in early autumn. But the reality of Winter soon became apparent as the evening drew in and the temperature dropped.



It hasn't been long since all the leaves have dropped, and we see the stark outlines of their trunks and branches against grey winter skies.

For me, the seasons of the year have a profound spiritual significance. There are times of Spring: times of fresh green growth, times of hope and new beginnings. There are times of Summer: times when there's so much going on, so much to see and so much to do. There are times of Autumn: times to gather fruit, times when things are winding down a bit. And there are times of Winter: times of quiet and rest, times when nothing seems to be happening. But the quietness of Winter is necessary: it provides time for rest and recuperation, time for preparation before the new growth which will come in Spring.

In our hurried and sometimes hyper-active culture, we can sometimes see times of Winter as a problem. Oh no, all that quietness – help, something's wrong! In fact, we all need times of rest in our lives. I think the same is true for our communities, and for our world. We can't be going be going at full tilt all the time. We all enjoy the times of Spring and Summer in our lives; but our lives cannot be one continual Spring or one continual Summer. We need the times of Autumn and Winter.

I hope we will all find some time for a bit of rest and quietness this January. It can be good to rest a bit after all the busyness of the Christmas period. The trees are taking time to rest. Let us follow their good example.

Father Jason

Parish Council News

The competition to design how the bus shelter might be redecorated has been won by the Amazon Girls Football Club who have asked to play/practice in Upton. Congratulations to them.

The Parish Council Budget for 2022 has been agreed and will involve major expenditure on fencing for the play areas on the recreation ground, primarily to keep dogs out. It is also planned to provide benches in the play area for the use of any adults whose toddlers are playing there.

The next meeting of the Upton Parish Council is on 18th January in the village hall but, depending on the regulations on Covid at the time, may be held remotely. If you wish to attend, please contact the parish clerk for the latest status. parish.clerk@uptonvillage.co.uk

COVID-19 Community Support

A reminder to all residents that the councils' Community Support Hub continues to operate for anyone who needs any assistance, either as a result of COVID-19 or just for anyone who needs signposting towards the appropriate support channel. There are multiple ways to get in touch with the Community Support Hub:

- Call: 01235 422 600 Monday to Thursday 8.30-5pm and Fridays 8.30-4.30pm
- Email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk
- Online Form: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communityhub
- Website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/covid19

Residents can also contact:

- Citizens Advice - 0808 278 7907
- Vale Community Impact - 01235 765348

Remember that the latest figures are updated on the county council's [interactive dashboard](#) on a daily basis. Given the recent colder weather and rising case rates resulting from the Omicron variant, we encourage residents to get tested regularly and, if they feel unwell, book a PCR test.

District & County Council News

Vale 9th most eco-friendly district in England

Vale of White Horse was named the ninth greenest out of 314 local authority areas in England. The research by Oxfordshire Live took into consideration different factors including how often people walk or cycle, domestic carbon emissions per person and how much the council spends on the environment.

Southern Oxfordshire residents put around 700 tonnes of food into their black bins last December, emitting nearly 150 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) into the atmosphere as well as wasting valuable resources and their own money.

The roll-out of hundreds of electric vehicle (EV) charging points in council-owned car parks in Oxfordshire has begun.

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Household Support Fund Available for anyone in need

- The government's Household Support Fund (HSF) is now open, offering a very important lifeline for households who may struggle to afford life's essentials over winter.
- The money will primarily be used to help pay for food, energy, and water bills for residents, but other costs can also be covered.
- The fund is open to any resident who is struggling and can't afford basic household essentials.
- To find out about the scheme or seek help, call Citizens Advice on 0808 278 7907.



Foot Care



A Mobile Foot Clinic for
Upton

Treatment provided in your own home for
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Drop In

The village Drop In is up and running again on alternate Thursdays at 3.00pm
It is open to all villagers so please come along if you want to have a nice
friendly chat over a cup of tea or coffee. Please email me at
richmondbinov@gmail.com if you're interested and to find out the venue for
the meetings.

Richard Burrow

Village Produce Association



BLEWBURY AND UPTON VILLAGE PRODUCE ASSOCIATION
Your Local Village Gardening Club

NOTICE

Following a recent Committee Meeting of the Village Produce Association this Notice is issued to all the residents of the Blewbury and Upton Villages.

**An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Blewbury and Upton
Village Produce Association will be held on TUESDAY 18th
JANUARY 2022 at
7pm in the VALE ROOM, BLEWBURY VILLAGE HALL**

Notice is hereby given that the current Committee Members propose to resign en-block at this meeting, therefore the purpose of the EGM will be to confirm whether any persons attending the meeting would be prepared to form a new Committee and continue the VPA.

Please be advised that if a Committee cannot be formed, then the Village Produce Association will be formally closed at the Extraordinary General Meeting.

VPA COMMITTEE

Astons Online

Visit our website www.astonsonline.uk for free and helpful information about becoming more capable and confident using the Internet and online resources. There's a wide range of courses, advice and services to help experienced and inexperienced users alike.

Free and friendly help for computer users every Tuesday morning from 10:00 to 12:00. We provide help remotely using telephone, Facetime, Skype, Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp or whatever is best for you. Book a 30 minute appointment by emailing theastonsonline@gmail.com or, if this is not possible, by phoning 07780 958249.

Our next online meeting will be 10:30 - 11:15 on Tuesday 18 January 2021 talking about storing, moving and backing up photographs. Book your place at theastonsonline@gmail.com

Upton Nature Garden Volunteers

Not too many people will be shedding a tear for the end of 2021, I suspect, but what a year for nature in Upton! We received funding for the nature garden, broke ground in September and planted bulbs in October with the help of loads of village volunteers. Meanwhile in the overflow cemetery we sowed wildflowers and a flying squad from a local firm planted a 90 metre hedge in the middle of a gale.

What does this add up to? Well, it depends what you want to measure. According to long-standing convention, economic growth is the only scale worth paying attention to. If it doesn't increase GDP, it isn't worth the candle. But this is to ignore all the soft benefits that an activity brings - and any harmful collateral. Quick example: going for a walk generates no revenue, no margin, but it contributes to the walker's health and maybe their happiness, without causing any pollution - as long as they didn't drop any litter while they were out.

Let's take a closer look at the balance sheet for the environmental projects in Upton:

Plants and materials provided a bit of income for suppliers, but the labour was all about love, not money, so economically there's not much to report. When it comes to environmental impact the calculations get interesting. Initially there are carbon emissions from transport of goods and people to consider. But over the course of the, say minimum 30 years we'd expect the hedges, shrubs and trees to grow, the capture rate (according to experts at <https://ecotree.green>) averages at 25kg of carbon a year. That's the equivalent of the emissions a new car produces over a distance of 125 miles (www.nimblefins.co.uk for the calculation). And since we'll have put in more than 600 trees when everything's planted, we'll be safely in the black.

Then there's the direct contribution to nature: food and habitat for creatures that wouldn't otherwise have had the necessary. With the potential to harbour thousands of species, a single hedge is a pretty phenomenal ecosystem. Adding one means a net gain for nature - and indeed for humans since one of the nature garden's hedges is edible, with fruit and berries for jams, jellies and syrups if you're that way inclined.

And what about the contribution to community? Gathering people with a common purpose is definitely valuable, although I'm not sure what metric you'd use. And finally the business of enjoying the end result: bud-burst or birdsong or butterfly-flight. Again, hard to quantify. And maybe that's the point. If the uncountable stuff - birdsong or bud-burst or bumblebee drone - disappears one day, it won't affect the economy, but it will affect all of us.

Kieron Humphrey kieronhumph@gmail.com

Didcot U3A

The **Didcot & District u3a** is pleased to advise that the monthly meetings are now back 'in person' and can be attended by those individuals who are retired or semi-retired and wishing to 'Live, Learn and Laugh'!

With effect from January all monthly meetings (held on the third Tuesday of every month starting at 2:30 pm) are reverting to the Didcot Civic Hall, making access all the more easy.

In addition to meeting with like minded individuals, the monthly meetings also benefit from a visiting Guest Speaker presenting numerous fascinating topics, the first two meetings of 2022 will be:

18th January - 'Spaceships in Oxfordshire' - an intriguing talk by Stephen Ringler

15th February - 'Hedgehog Man' - a talk on one of our most loveable garden friends by Hugh Warwick

We look forward to welcoming back returning members and extending a Warm Welcome to newcomers who wish to find out what u3a is in their local area. (Please arrive 15 minutes early to allow for entry and seating in accordance with current Covid regulations!)

For further details or information contact the following:

Chair - chairman@didcotu3a.org

Secretary - secretary@didcotu3a.org

Membership - membership@didcotu3a.org

Submissions for Upton News should be sent to
neilthorp@btinternet.com

Deadline for the February edition is
Tuesday 28th January