

The Harwell News

www.harwellparish.co.uk

A new Circular Walk in the Parish

Forty years ago Harwell News described two circular walks from Harwell village [[link](#)]. One went through **Grove Farm**, along the newly opened A34, and back up Townsend, and the other went **south** along the Holloway and the Winnaway. During lockdown these have been well used, thanks, no doubt in part, to Martin Ricketts "Parish footpath walk - call to action" article published



in December 2020, issue 225.

Now, the track (parish right of way #25) between **Cow Lane** and **Great Western Park** has been **cleared**, and a circular walk from the village of just over **3 miles** is possible.

Start **anywhere** on the circuit, but, from the village, go down

Townsend. Cross the A34, and proceed down Cow Lane. Once you reach a small group of trees on your right (East) look for **way markings**, and turn right to follow the path through the trees, along a hedge, and across open ground. You then join the new, well made, **GWP path**. Keep right and follow the path all the way back to the Didcot Road. Return to the village passing either side of the link road roundabout.

Soon the developers will move in and much of this walk will become part of the **Valley Park development**. Until then, while walking past GWP, enjoy the **views** west to Harwell and Cow Lane, over land that will soon be covered in houses.

More information and photos taken round the walk can be found on harwellvillage.uk

David Marsh



© David Marsh

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News from Sustainable Harwell

Next Sustainable Harwell meeting Weds 7th April starting on-line at 7:30pm – Guest Speaker Alison Futter of The Environment Agency



The next sustainable Harwell meeting will be held on-line at 7:30 pm on Wed 7th April. We are lucky to be joined by Alison Futter of the Environment Agency who will be speaking about **biodiversity**. She will cover the importance of biodiversity globally, the UK

performance on biodiversity and then more specific issues such as the benefits of orchards and hedgerows. Alison is currently the team leader for the Biodiversity, Fisheries and Geomorphology team at the EA. Her interests include rewilding, regenerative agriculture, wildlife gardening, and anything to do with climate breakdown and sustainable living.

Everyone is welcome and we hope you can make it. Please email us at Sustainable@harwellvillage.uk and we will send you a link for the meeting.

Valley Park Planning Application Deferment

At the recent Valley Park planning application meeting, David Marsh, one of Sustainable Harwell's officers, spoke to raise our concerns about the new 5-arm roundabout planned at the top of the Link Road on the 4493 into Didcot. Following deferment of the application, several ideas have been put forward to suggest **improvements** to the **design** and the officer for Sustainable Harwell wanted to make sure that the following possibility is also included among those considered:

Reduce the number of arms on the roundabout from 5 to 4 by removing the planned new spur road which goes into the southern area of the Valley Park development. This would make the roundabout **smaller** as well as **reducing** the number of major **crossings** that pedestrian and cycle users would need to make. As part of its reduction in size the roundabout should be of **radial** rather than **tangential** design thus **reducing** the approach **speed** of motorised traffic entering the roundabout making it **safer** to navigate.

An **emergency access** route, closed to non-emergency traffic, from the B4493 by the care home could be considered if access to this part of the site is deemed necessary. Traffic from the southern area of Valley Park would then access the Link Road via a new roundabout instead of the junction which is currently planned further along it.

More details and a diagram showing this suggestion is available on the Sustainable Harwell website [here](#)

Didcot Trees

A very informative web-site about **notable trees** in Didcot has been launched. You can link to the site [here](#).

And, although not focused on trees, David Marsh has photographed a walk down **Cow Lane** (*cover story*), and back via GWP – round "Valley Park", before building starts, to add to photos of the Holloway and the Winnaway (and a bit about Bag's (or Bagg's) Tree).

He is happy to provide **web support** if anyone wants to start, or contribute to, a "**Harwell Trees project**".

Solar Streets in Harwell

Sustainable Harwell has been asked by Sustainable Didcot whether they would like to be involved with the launch of a solar streets scheme to encourage more **renewable energy** generation. More information available [here](#).

If you would like to find out more, please email Sustainable@harwellvillage.uk to let us know you are interested.

Giles Barwell, Sustainable Harwell



Didcot's largest and oldest oak (1680), Edmonds Park

Harwell Branch RBL is looking for a Standard Bearer

THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



The Branch has a position for a **volunteer** Standard Bearer to carry to Branch Standard on formal **Parades**.

The role does not require any previous military service or Parade experience, although either is preferred. Expected commitment will be to attend the **Village Remembrance Parade** (November) and **D-Day Commemoration** at the Harwell Campus (June).

Monthly Branch meetings occur January-November where reports of any involvement can be shared or attended in person to deliver.

Occasionally we are asked to provide a Standard to attend funerals, which is provided if the Standard Bearer is available.

Reasonable out of pocket expenses (travel and uniform) will be covered, training will be provided.

Applications to the Branch Ceremonial Officer, Peter Davies, via Harwell.committee1@rbl.community



MP David Johnston's message for Harwell News

I was delighted that **2,620** people responded to my survey regarding Grove Station within just 2 weeks – thank you if you did. Some **98% of respondents supported it being reopened!** Over 90% said they would prefer it to a new bus service and 89% said they would use their car less if it reopened. We have stiff competition as there are **85** different bids to Government for stations or lines to reopen, but I will keep bashing away until we eventually succeed.



I continue to be frustrated with **Royal Mail**. Our postmen and women work hard but something is clearly not right as constituents have been complaining to me about mail deliveries for several months and the problem has been reported in the national news too. When I called a meeting with them last year they said they had gone from 'a letter service delivering parcels to a parcel service delivering letters' and it does seem to be the parcels they prioritise. Every fortnight I enter the ballot to have a debate in parliament about their service and hope I will be successful soon.

Unauthorised traveller camps were the subject of my speech in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill debate this month. The Bill has **wrongly** been accused of restricting our right to protest when actually the protest measures target actions we have seen by organised protest groups in the past year such as people gluing themselves to roads and stopping ambulances getting through, or shutting down printing presses because they don't like the editorial line of the papers involved. It is a **wide-ranging** bill that increases the sentences or time served for a wide range of violent and sexual offences, but it also clamps down on unauthorised traveller camps which are a regular source of distress in the constituency. At the time of writing, in **20** of the past **34 weeks** there has been at least 1 such camp somewhere in the Vale or South Oxfordshire, frequently involving mess, noise, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. The Bill will allow the police to remove such camps more quickly and impose stiffer penalties.

I had my first appearance on the BBC's Politics Live on 18th March, an interesting if slightly strange experience. Whereas you can see everyone's face when you watch on television, each of us panellists look into a black screen on our computers and we can't see anyone! We discussed various topics including the EU's latest silly comments regarding the supply and safety of the **AstraZeneca vaccine**, which has again been confirmed as **completely safe**. Despite the noise, we shouldn't worry – we've now vaccinated over 31.5 million people, over half the adult population, and remain on course to see every adult offered a jab by the **end of July**.

I recently became one of the Conservative Environment Network's Net Zero Champions. What this means in practice is I will be campaigning for nature-based solutions to help tackle climate change, including stopping the sale of peat for use in horticulture, protecting and improving our blue carbon assets and undertaking a national capital audit. More on this in the future – and some other campaigns.

As ever, if I can help with anything then do get in touch via david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk

Norman and Muriel Ponting Celebrate their 70th Wedding Anniversary



1951, memorable to some for Sir Winston Churchill's Conservative Party **winning** another election, 'Dennis The Menace' first appearing in The **Beano**, or perhaps the average salary being just **£344**. But the most memorable, to some long standing Harwellians, and our amazing grandparents/parents, Muriel and Norman Ponting, was their **wedding day**.

Saturday 24th March 1951, with rationing putting paid to a **lavish** celebration and the **weather** so awful that Muriel's veil blew off into a tree, you could say luck was not on their side - but we understand a great day was had by all. We're very pleased to confirm, however, that they are **still together**, some 70 years later.

From all the family, we want to wish you a huge **congratulations** on your **70th wedding anniversary**, we love you very much and cannot wait to **celebrate** once out of lockdown.

Holly Ponting



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Harwell, Oxfordshire.



Hello from Hayleigh and Sarah - Update from your Local District Councillors, Monday 15th March 2021



Hello! We hope that you and your families are safe and well. After a long winter, and a whole year since the pandemic began, we hope we can all now look forward to brighter days ahead. As the government's cautious easing of lockdown restrictions has now begun, we continue to share the important message that whether people have had their vaccine or not, we all need to follow the latest guidance to stop the spread of infection. That means following the measures in place including handwashing, staying two metres apart and wearing a face-covering.

We will continue to keep you updated on council matters and the council's response to COVID-19 through these newsletter articles, as well as on our dedicated councillor

Facebook Page: [Cllrs Hayleigh Gascoigne & Sarah Medley](#). Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any issues or concerns - our email addresses are hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and sarah.medley@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

COVID-19 Update

The Community Hub continues to be available to help people access support and essentials during the lockdown if they have nobody else to turn to and can be contacted on the usual details below.

To contact the Community Support Team:

call: 01235 422 600 Monday to Thursday 8.30-5pm and Fridays 8.30-4.30pm

email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

fill in an online form at: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/communityhub

Remember, for the most up-to-date coronavirus information relating to district council support and any changes to services, please take a look at the dedicated Vale webpage for updates: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/covid19

- The councils' Housing Needs team are available to help people who are at risk of being made homeless or who are sleeping rough – for more details visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/housing.
- Support is also available to residents who are experiencing financial difficulties – to find out more please visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/benefits.
- If you are having difficulty paying your council tax please visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/counciltax or call 0345 302 2315.
- The deadline for **Winter Support Grant** applications has been extended by a couple of weeks to **16 April** and we now have some additional funds from the government to support residents with **supermarket vouchers** and **fuel vouchers** or the **direct payment** of energy or water bills. Anyone needing help should contact our Community Hub.

Cases: the number of positive cases in Oxfordshire overall is continuing to decline - and the rates in the Vale have again gone down this week so across the board we appear to be heading in the right direction. The latest figures are updated on the county council's interactive dashboard on a daily basis.

Vaccines: the vaccination programme in Oxfordshire is progressing at pace and is on track to meet its target of groups 1-9, which is everyone up to and including all those aged 50 and over, receiving their first vaccination **by 15 April**. Almost 220,000 people in Oxfordshire have now received a Covid-19 vaccination so far, which includes nearly 7,000 people who have received their second vaccine dose, which is now picking up pace too. At the time of writing, a total of 41,148 people in the Vale have had the jab so far, from a total population of 133,732.

Philippa Spits Counselling

Do you need someone to talk to?

Are you feeling overwhelmed, anxious or depressed? Or perhaps struggling with grief, or trauma? I offer a warm, friendly, safe and compassionate space to explore the difficulties you may be experiencing at the moment.

Please contact me on **07899 858763**

philippa@counsellor.com

www.philippaspitscounselling.com

I work locally in Wantage and Oxford.

Testing: The Beacon in Wantage is a COVID-19 testing site for anyone who needs to leave home to work or volunteer and cannot access workplace testing from their employer. This includes taxi drivers, independent retailers, and tradespeople such as plumbers and electricians. These free tests can be booked via the county council's [online booking system](#).

All businesses in England can now sign up for **free lateral flow tests** for their employees. The government asked them to register their interest in this, by 31 March. The message to businesses is that regular testing of their employees could be the difference between a workplace being able to stay open and operational, or needing to close due to a

coronavirus outbreak. There's more information for businesses on the [government website](#) where they will be provided with all the information they need to plan and deliver their testing programme, along with promotional materials.

Business support during the pandemic: for details of the support grants available to businesses, please visit South and Vale's Business Support website: svbs.co.uk.

Local News

Great Western Park Update

Great Western Park community centres: The council has been able to open our **Northern Neighbourhood Centre** to the GWP residents' association's Covid-19 Community Response Group. In line with government compliance, the group is using the building up to 11 April to coordinate an **emergency food support**. From 12 April, and in line with the government's roadmap, the council intends to start a phased approach to opening the Northern, District and Southern community centres.

The list of activities that we are allowed to offer:

- support groups
- supervised activities for children, parent-and-child groups (up to 15 attending, plus under-fives) including dance classes, musical activities, cubs, scouts, brownies and parent and toddler groups
- communal worship, or a wedding reception or commemorative event like a wake (up to 15 attending)

Other activities (e.g. art classes, clubs, WIs, craft groups, adult exercise classes) are **not yet permitted**.

Detailed information about how to book and the hire charges will be available on the council website shortly.

Skatepark, MUGA and tennis courts

Since last year the remedial work by Taylor Wimpey has been **completed**. Legal Agreements to transfer the facilities over to us are still ongoing and the council is seeking to have these open as soon as possible.

Boundary Park floodlights

Last year the council was able to provide **£25,000** from developer contributions to help the Boundary Park Sports Association to install floodlighting on their pitches so that local sports teams can train in the evening. Once restrictions are lifted, we hope that the Sports Association can once again make full use of the lighting.

Didcot Garden Town update

The councils have held successful online **Sounding Board** meetings for our neighbouring parishes, business representatives and residents in the garden town area. At each meeting, we've been able to ask those attending to give their opinion on what garden town projects are important to them as well as **ideas** on how they'd like to shape future meetings. Sounding Board meetings take place **twice a year** – to join the next online meeting, please sign up to the Didcot Garden Town newsletter or keep an eye out on our social media. More information can be found on our website.

Valley Park

We were very pleased with the outcome of Vale of White Horse District Council **Planning Committee meeting** on Tuesday 16th February - the committee agreed unanimously to **DEFER** the decision on the Valley Park planning application! This is great news, as it means there is now more time available for residents and councillors to really push for our own **local vision** of what Valley Park should be. Deferring the application was voted for on the basis that further clarity needs to be sought on the following key issues with the Valley Park proposal before a decision can be made:

B4493 Roundabout between Harwell and Didcot - committee asked council officers to look at this design again and consider alternative options to make this monstrous 5-arm roundabout safer and more accessible for cyclists. Thank you to the **HarBUG - Harwell Bicycle Users Group** and **Sustainable Harwell** for your excellent speeches on this issue, and special shout out to local resident **Kate Stevenson Weal** for your Facebook comment about an underpass on the roundabout - this sparked an entire debate the possibility of an **underpass, bridge or another alternative solution** to be explored in the design!

Healthcare Provision - the committee asked council officers to go **back** to the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group - OCG once **again** to obtain a proper answer regarding the medical provision for Valley Park. This site would bring 10,000 new residents to the area and yet there is **no provision** in the plans for a GP surgery or any Primary Medical Care, primarily because the **OCG didn't even respond** to the consultation in the first place! Thank you to Patient Participation Group (PPG) chairman **Stewart Lilly** for speaking on behalf of all 3 Didcot Medical Centres - we're certain that your eye-opening statistics about the pressure our local services are under was **key** in influencing this decision.

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Harwell Parish Council



February: There was an extra meeting at the beginning of the month to **approve** expenditure on a **SID – a Speed Indication Device** which was to be shared with East Hendred Parish mainly for use around Rowstock. There was due to be a pole sited on each of the 4 approaches, and it would be moved at 3-week intervals when the battery would be recharged and data downloaded – it also collects data on speeds measured. Since that meeting East Hendred has decided to get its own SID and so will **Harwell**, for use on the A417 both in **Rowstock** and the **Reading Road** and **Didcot Road** in the village.

At the main February meeting, in the Open Forum, Mrs Convery spoke about what **Harwell Helpers** has been doing to assist parishioners during the past year, from helping with **shopping** to supplying refurbished **laptops** to children. She said it had been a great team effort from many sections of the community including local businesses.

Then Ms Tibarewal explained that she was interested in setting up a **community garden and composting scheme**. During the discussion it was suggested that she might work with **Sustainable Harwell** to further this.

District Councillor Ms Medley added to her written report, encouraging Parish Councillors to attend the Planning Committee meeting the following week at which Valley Park was due to be discussed. Concern was raised by Councillors regarding the lack of **medical facilities** in the plan, due to the local Clinical Commissioning Group's **inactivity**.

The **S106 agreement** had yet to be finalised but no funding was proposed for the wider Parish as the development was meant to be self-sustained.

Oxfordshire Councillor Mr Fox-Davies in his report said that he had been seeking a response from developers regarding the proposed **traffic-calming scheme** for the approach to the village from Didcot and along High Street, which is still not out yet for consultation.

There were various matters relating to **Council Lands** including the new staff building, and revisions of the Rec rules of use and the Trees and Open Space Policy. Work on a tree in the churchyard, where maintenance is the Council's responsibility, was also approved.

A donation of **£100** to **Wantage Independent Advice Centre** was approved.

At the **March meeting**, Ms J Bell asked about traffic calming measures, particularly near the **Primary School**. Mrs Turner & Mr Fox-Davies summarised schemes already in hand and currently under discussion. Mr Paterson suggested that the **"school streets"** scheme could be investigated – Mr Fox-Davies said he would find out.

Mr Fox-Davies summarised his written report, mentioning that on-call **fire-fighters** are currently being **recruited**, that there was currently a consultation on the latest version of the **Local Transport and Connectivity Plan**, and that OCC has been named as the **best county council waste disposal authority in England**, by recycling and composting nearly **59%** of household waste.

Ms Medley with Ms Gascoigne had provided written report and she said that the main item was that the Valley Park planning permission had been **deferred** (*for more on this see p5 and p14*). Regarding GWP, some land transfers from the developer to the Vale have taken place or are imminent, including community centres, although the public open spaces may take longer. Mr Paterson mentioned that some paths in GWP will need repair due to water erosion.

A draft **Equality & Inclusion Policy** came before the Council for approval; a few changes had been made by Mr Ricketts following a previous discussion of it. However, following discussion, voting was 10 votes against and 1 in favour and the matter was **deferred** to the April meeting; Mr Fearon volunteered to redraft the document.

The Terms of Reference for the proposed new **Environmental Advisory Committee** were **approved**. This will include several Parishioners as well as Councillors (*see separate item on page 14*).

The Parish Council has been discussing with **The Harwellian** their use of an area just to the west of their building; at the meeting it was agreed to consult Parishioners on the proposal (*see separate item on page 13*).

Other matters agreed were that grass will be left **unmown** in a larger area of the rec west field than last year, and also for part of the new area of the **Cemetery**. Approval was given for a **memorial bench** near the large tree on the north-eastern edge of the rec.

Because **virtual meetings** are not be permitted beyond 7 May 2021 under the current Government regulations, it was agreed that to avoid uncertainty the **May Parish Council Meeting will be held on 4 May 2021**. The Council will consider at its **April 13th** meeting the implications of returning to face-to-face meetings. As usual, any items for the agendas for these meetings need to be with the Clerk a week before the meeting date.



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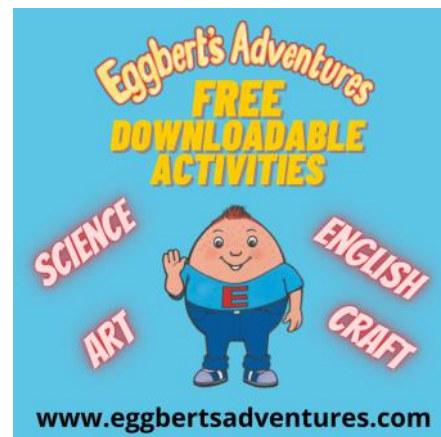
FREE Easter Activities for all Parents, Children and Teachers

Free Easter activities can be found on the eggbertsadventures.com website are absolutely **free** to download.

Sir Cliff Richard, Jenny Agutter, Chris Tarrant, Jane Seymour and Sir Tim Brighouse all appear on the website and have written lovely quotes about the **Eggbert** characters. Sir Tim was former **Chief Education Officer** for both Oxfordshire and Birmingham Education Authority and schools commissioner for London. He was professor of Education at Keele University and Educational Advisor to the British government.

The Eggbert activities have been illustrated by the worlds leading children's artist Ray Mutimer, Ray also illustrated **Paddington**, Postman Pat, **Rupert**, Noddy, Charlie Chalk and Star Hill Ponies for the **B.B.C.** He also illustrated the **Eggberts Adventures** series. Parents, children and teachers will get hours of enjoyment from the activities this Easter.

With every best wish, **Paul Gustafson**, International Children's Author.



Harwell Village now has a Time to Think Certified Coach



In March, local resident Fiona Brennan-Scott celebrated **21 years** in business, 15 years of which has been based in **Harwell**, however, a greater celebration and accomplishment has been acquiring her qualification to deliver coaching as a **Time to Think Coach**.

Harwell is well located to Henley Business School and Streatley, where international author and founder of Time to Think, **Nancy Kline** delivered training on the first two courses. Fiona, owner of **BESPOKEN**, completed the third course in this internationally practiced coaching discipline in November 2020 online



during the pandemic.

Time to Think isn't like conventional coaching or counselling. "All too often these involve influencing someone's thinking and behaviour," explains Fiona in her website article on the subject. "How much better would it be if people had an environment that **encouraged** them to **think for themselves**? To make discoveries and reach their **own conclusions**?"

With isolation due to the pandemic creating a raft of **challenges** for people, it's wonderful to know Harwell has **qualified** coaches to help people survive and even **thrive** as we hopefully emerge from this current crisis.

Book [here](#) for a no-obligation, no-fee chat to explore working together.

#gratitudeattitude #Harwell #communityspirit

#coaching #timetothink

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Oxfordshire County Council Annual Report from Mike Fox-Davies, your Oxfordshire County Councillor for Blewbury, Upton, Chilton, Harwell, Steventon, East Hendred, West Hendred and Ardington.

As we head into the Spring, I am looking ahead to the **end of lockdown** and (hopefully), slowly and safely back to normality for us all, thanks to the highly successful vaccine rollout.

During this last year, the County Council was soon used to working by **video call** and meetings of all the committees, sub-committees and Full Council were back to their normal timetables in this new format.

You may not be aware, but I am **standing down** after serving as your County Council for the past four years, so I thought I would give a quick recap on my time representing Hendreds and Harwell.



Full Council

At Full Council, I presented **four** motions over my time, all carried with unanimous cross-party support. (Many councillors present no motions during their term as elected members.)

HGV Routing Agreements – My motion was to link a **financial** effect with those agreements, so that if they were flouted in the future, there would be a commercial imperative to ensure the developer or operator did not repeat the practice.

HGV Developer Road Damage – My motion put more requirement on the developers to be **responsible** for the damage they cause, by demanding they undertake condition surveys **before** development starts and then return the damaged routes back the prior condition at **their** cost. This became a two-page spread across the front of the Oxford Mail.

Steventon Reservoir – This reservoir (which will be the size of Heathrow and can be shown **not** to be needed) would be the largest and most **intrusive** construction project in the area, spread over ten years and highly disruptive to traffic in all local areas. It is being presented by Thames water as the **main** option in its draft plan, but the Council agreed to demand a **second consultation** with Thames Water. This was then further strengthened when I presented an amendment to the cabinet paper to demand a public enquiry, again **accepted**.

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Adoption of New Housing Developments - There are several new developments across my division, with developers finishing their housing for sale, but in many cases, not finishing the elements **fully** so that the County can adopt the roads and lighting infrastructure. This motion called on the County Officers to use **all** their powers to push the developers to **complete** the works so that OCC can sign off the final adoption for the development. As overall planning permission actually sits with the District Council, I suggested that **no more** planning permissions are granted to **any** developers who take unreasonable time to complete outstanding snagging. District Councillors have yet to action this.

Support for Parishes

During the past 15 months, I have attended the majority of my eight Parishes' meetings; reporting back from the County Council, but also hearing about **local** issues where I can bring additional pressure to bear on behalf of the residents. All the meetings from March 2020 have been by video call, which makes it easier when visiting two or three parishes on the same night. However, members of the public who attended many of the public meetings, tended **not** to join the video calls and I did miss that contact and hearing the residents' concerns **face-to-face**, although email communications **increased**.

I have pursued Thames Water, the Environment Agency and Highways England, many times **successfully**, on behalf of residents.

During the last 18 months, I **facilitated** the resurfacing of Rowstock roundabout and the resurfacing of Burr Street and ensured that the long-standing flood along the footpath between the Link Road and UTC was **fixed**, once and for all. Getting potholes filled is an **ongoing** task.

One of the over-riding issues continues to be **traffic** volume and **speed** and I continued to push for **20 mph** limits within all Hendreds and Harwell **residential** areas, and more traffic calming where necessary. For Harwell Village, the traffic calming is heading towards the **consultation** stage, which will be after the election, with the works planned to be carried out in late 2021/early 2022. My successor should **ensure** that it is delivered.

Valley Park roundabout - Worked with the highways team to respond to residents' concerns about safe cycle access through the roundabout. This is also **ongoing**.

Councillor Community Fund

During the past three years, a Councillor priority fund of **£15,000 per year** has been made available for **each** Councillor to spend in their own Division on specific community projects. Across my parishes, this has been **fully invested** in over **20 community**

projects including Play/Recreation ground **equipment**; Village Hall **repairs**; new **footpaths**; car park; **lights** for pedestrian crossing; extra street lighting; primary schools – **healthy eating** programme; Covid 19 **support**; Arboreal **safety** management.

Committees and Role

As well as assisting at **Parish** Level and attending the Full Council of the **County** Council, I have used my previous business and local government experience on **three** committees; the **Performance Scrutiny** Committee, holding County Council departments to account for performance; **Health Overview and Scrutiny** Committee (where we kept PET-CT Scanners within the JR); and the **Planning and Regulations** committee looking at minerals and waste. (Residential waste is the responsibility of the Districts, not County.) Additionally, among my sub-committees were the **transport** Cabinet Advisory Group and I chaired our **County Locality Group**, as well as being the Group Deputy Chairman (Backbenchers).

The most satisfying committee has been the **Climate Action Cabinet Advisory Group**, inputting into the Council, which has aimed to combat climate change, since before its official recognition.

The aim of the County is to achieve **net-zero carbon on the OCC estate by 2030** and enable **all Oxfordshire** to achieve net-zero **by 2050**. The County supports over **85** community climate action groups, including many of my Parishes local sustainability organisations. OCC is pursuing over **80 projects**, including; five **Cycle Network** routes; converting street lights to **LED** (initially over 30% completed); **low traffic** neighbourhoods; installing 240 Park and Charge **EV charging points** in Council owned car parks; delivering **zero emissions zone** in Oxford; Home to School transport **decarbonisation** plan; developing policy for zero-carbon **new build schools**; developing **hydrogen strategy**; sourcing zero-carbon **grid** electricity; programme to increase rooftop **solar generation** and improve energy **efficiency** in existing buildings.

I am proud to have been part of a pro-active Carbon Zero focused Oxfordshire County Council.

Finally, I must **thank** all who have contributed to my work and to those valued residents and hard-working Parish Councillors whom it has been my honour to quietly serve.

CLlr Mike Fox-Davies, Oxfordshire County Councillor mike.fox-davies@oxfordshire.gov.uk



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HarBUG Cycle Group Welcomes New Cycleways



The Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group (HarBUG) has published a [leaflet](#) explaining how to use new cycleways currently being built on Wantage Road in Didcot. The leaflet explains how motorists, cyclists and pedestrians can make the cycleways work for Didcot.

HarBUG chair, Kevin Wilkinson, explains that 'the **'hybrid' cycle lanes** are new to Didcot so HarBUG thought it would be good, for all users of Wantage Road, to explain how they work before they are opened. He continues 'if the cycleways are kept clear they will improve flow, **reduce congestion**, increase space for all users as well as improve safety for cyclists'.

The new cycleways run from **Foxhall Roundabout** through to **Holly Lane** on Great Western Park. The section from Foxhall Roundabout to the hospital are lanes adjacent to the main carriageway on both sides, they are **single direction** with the flow of traffic. Cyclists in the lanes will have the **same priorities** as motorists. From the hospital to Holly Lane the cycleways will be **two way** and run on the north side only using **new paths** and the **service road**.

The cycleways are part of the County Council's **Science Vale Cycle Network** to improve cycling between local towns and major employment areas. The Wantage Road scheme is being jointly funded by the UK Government's Local Growth Fund via **OxLEP** (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) and the **Great Western Park Consortium Developers** (Taylor Wimpey and David Wilson Homes). The cycleways will be open for use in **early April**.

The leaflets have been paid for and published by HarBUG. They aim to deliver a leaflet to **all residents** of Wantage Road and adjoining roads. HarBUG hopes that the leaflets will also be available from shops along Wantage Road. The leaflet has been endorsed by OxLEP, Great Western Park, Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner as well as the County, District and Town councils.

To sign up to any of our Oxfordshire Travel Choices bulletins please click [here](#)

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A Year in the Life of a Music Promoter



Big Ginger Tom Music (BGTM), run by Duncan and Vanessa Chappell, have been putting on music events in Harwell Village Hall since August 2017, and normally hold 10 or 11 gigs a year in the hall, but there were only limited opportunities to do so in 2020. Before that they had been successfully building audience numbers to the point where they had their first sold out gig in January 2020. Then came the Covid pandemic.

After a great start to 2020 with **Ranagri** and **The People Versus** in January and **Honey & the Bear** and **Little Red** in February, the Covid Lockdown brought everything to a **halt** and so started the shuffling of gigs from one date to another and in some cases from one venue to another (and back again).

Duncan not only promotes BGTM gigs in Harwell, but he also collates the programme for the **Music At The Unicorn (MATU)** team in Abingdon so there were many gigs to rearrange. Thankfully most have now been sorted out, but sadly, some artists due to play in early 2020 now won't be seen until the first half of **2022**.

There **was** some music late on in 2020 as, with the support of the Harwell Village Hall Trustees, BGTM were able to arrange three **socially distanced** gigs, starting with the pilot gig in September. There was an audience of just **30** allowed to see **Anna Renae** and **Patrick Griffin**. This enabled all social distancing measures to be tested and involved

allocated seating, mask wearing, a one-way system and track and trace requirements, among other things.

Once they were happy that the measures had worked, two further gigs went ahead - three were planned, but November was lost to Lockdown 2.0. In October **Kitty Macfarlane** and **Craig Joiner** and December **Katherine Priddy** and **The People Versus** gave great entertainment to those who managed to get tickets with the Katherine Priddy gig **selling out** in 11 days.

Ticket numbers were limited to about **40** depending on what the size of households/ social bubbles that attended. There was also the additional hoop to jump through in that people could **no longer** go to the bar. However, a bit of research on the Internet came up

with an app called **Dines** which allowed people to order and pay for their drinks **from their seats** and our volunteers took on the additional role of waiters/waitresses.

Lockdown 3.0 saw the loss of **four** gigs planned in January to early May, but BGTM do hope to be back later on to do another socially distanced gig with **The Black Feathers** and **Chris Fox** on **Friday 21st May**. For the time being **all** gigs are being planned as being socially distanced, but the hope is by the time of the June gig, most restrictions will have been lifted and the programme for the rest of the year can go ahead with a full hall again.

For more information about BGTM events see the village hall website www.harwellvillagehall.co.uk/events or go to the BGTM web site at www.biggintertommusic.co.uk/events

Duncan Chappell, Big Ginger Tom Music.



Anna Renae & Patrick Griffin perform a duet



Kitty MacFarlane, Craig Joiner and the BGTM team

Big Ginger Tom Music

Presenting evenings of Folk, Americana, Roots and Country at The Orchard Hall, Harwell Village Hall, High Street, Harwell, Oxon, OX11 0EX.

Friday 21st May 2021

The Black Feathers

support – Chris Fox

Saturday 20th November 2021

Ranagri

support – Plumhall

Friday 25th June 2021

Hannah Sanders & Ben

Savage

support – Thom Ashworth

Friday 3rd December 2021

Watch this space!!

support – TBC

Friday 3rd September 2021

The Magpies

support – Craig Joiner

Saturday 22nd January 2022

Joe Hicks

support – Steady Habits

Friday 17th September 2021

Roswell and Anna Renae

Double Header

support – The Last Inklings

Friday 18th February 2022

The Askew Sisters

support – TBC

Friday 15th October 2021

The People Versus with special

guests **The Lost Notes**

support – Patrick Griffin

Friday 18th March 2022

The Portraits

support – Dom Prag

Friday 22nd April 2022

Sam Carter

support – Wednesday's Wolves

Tickets are limited to 40 for events until Covid 19 restrictions are lifted, available online at www.WeGotTickets.com or from Duncan at biggintertommusic@gmail.com

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Harwell Fun Club



Harwell Fun Club is a baby & toddler group that runs every term-time Tuesday from 9.30-11.30am at Harwell Village Hall. A range of toys and activities are set up each week, including craft activities, messy-play, ride-on toys and singing/story time. We provide healthy snack for little ones and refreshments for adults. The cost is £2.50 per family and the first visit is free. We welcome all parents, carers, grandparents, with children aged 0-5 and new faces are always welcome.

Fun Club has been closed since January due to lockdown. If the easing of restrictions goes ahead as anticipated, we hope to be able to reopen after the school Easter Holidays, from 20th April. When we do reopen, numbers will be limited and places will need to be booked a week in advance. We will also continue to follow the precautions in our COVID-19 Risk Assessment.

Please follow our [Facebook page](#) (Harwell Fun Club) for further updates and details about when we will reopen, how to book a place and what precautions will be in place. You can also contact us by email at: funclubharwell@gmail.com.



Face-to-face Scouting is, of course, **not possible** at the moment, but our team of committed leaders have put together a regular schedule of **online Scouting meetings** and events to help our young members keep in touch with their friends and **build skills and confidence**. We are hoping though that reduced restrictions will mean that face-to-face scouting can make a return sometime in the **summer** and we are awaiting guidance from

national Scout HQ on this.

After a quiet period, we are now resuming work on the **Pavilion refurbishment project** – workmen will be on site through much of **March** and **April** starting the refurbishment of the meeting room area and preparing the new kitchen area for fitting of the kitchen equipment. When completed, the Pavilion will serve as both **meeting** space and **storage** space and allow outdoor activities to be run much more easily.

We would like to express our thanks to **Magnox** who have made a grant of **£1000** available to us to purchase chairs for the new meeting room area in the Pavilion.

As usual, we have a waiting list for children who wish to join the **Beaver** packs. If want your child to become a Beaver when he/she reaches the qualifying age of 5½ **PLEASE** get their name on our waiting list. If you leave it until after they are old enough it may be too late! While quite full, we will of course squeeze in newcomers to our village who have been Scouts elsewhere. Others wishing to join may of course get in touch to see if we have any spaces.

Membership enquiries should be made using our form found here:-

<https://harwellscouts.org.uk/aboutus/joinus/>

Our capacity to grow as a Group depends entirely on our **Volunteer Leaders**. Should you be inclined to explore how you might assist **PLEASE get in touch**. The only prerequisite is you have some spare time and are prepared to **give it a go**. For all enquiries call **Brian** on **07736 691426** or e-mail gsl@harwellscouting.org.uk

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Harwell WI

Harwell WI is 100 in May! Hopefully you will be seeing the **celebratory bulbs** we planted in the Village Hall borders and on the Rec. in full bloom. Our committee is planning some lovely surprises for our members.

We are pleased to announce that our President for the coming year is **Kate Beswick**. We held a very brief **annual meeting** on Zoom on **10 March**, most of the business having been conducted online in advance.

There followed entertainment in the jovial form of **James Haddow**, one-time taxi driver, who would regale his passengers in the Nottingham area with his own poetic reflections on life and love as he ferried them to their destinations. In fact, his notoriety led to people queuing up to be his fares.

Our **February** meeting, with **Lynda Swan** as our speaker, had a more serious, but informative, tone. She explained that, while investigating her own health problems, she discovered how crucial the health of our gut is, not only to physical, but also to mental health. She demonstrated how the nutritional value of, for example, a salad, has been depleted, so that you would now need to eat the equivalent of forty bowls to get the same nutrients that were present in just one bowl years ago.

You can see how varied our speaker programme is. In the next couple of months we have:



- 14 April, Elizabeth Gowing, humanitarian, and contributor to BBC Radio 4, talking about 'Unlikely Positions in Unlikely Places: a yoga journey around Britain.'
- 12 May, Paul Wilkinson, UK Portrait Artist of the Year 2020, on 'Mastering Portrait Photography'.

Our virtual **monthly coffee mornings** on Wednesdays are continuing, and socially-distanced '**Walks and Talk**' are resuming from the end of March.



Lots to look forward to!

If you would like to join us for one of our monthly Zooms, or any of our other activities please contact our Secretary, Penny Marsh, on **01235 835430**, or email: harwellwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk or look at our website – harwellwi.org



HARWELL VILLAGE HALL



CHARITY NUMBER 1157858

Following the latest announcement from the government about the Easing of Lockdown, the hall will **re-open** on **12th April**.

In line with **Step 2** of the Government Guidance, this initial opening will **only** be for **organised children's classes** (e.g. dance classes, karate, etc.), **parent and child groups** (max 15 attendees plus under 5s) and **Grace Church**.

We expect adult activities may restart with **Step 3**, i.e. no earlier than **17th May**, assuming that the current timeline for coming out of the lockdown happens as laid out by the government's published plan, and that all restrictions will hopefully be lifted on 21st June. We are taking bookings for all activities from that time with the caveat that this date could be moved back if there is a setback in the battle against Covid. For more information and updates visit our [website](http://www.harwellwi.org).

Fees - we are pleased to confirm that there will be **no increase** in hall fees for the second year running.

Trustee Vacancy - We continue to look for **enthusiastic volunteers** with a few hours to spare each month who would like to get involved with running the village hall and might consider becoming a trustee. We are a **CIO** (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) so being a trustee does **not** attract any financial liability. Please contact us at chair@villagehall.co.uk and let us know what you have to offer! *The Trustees, March 2021.*

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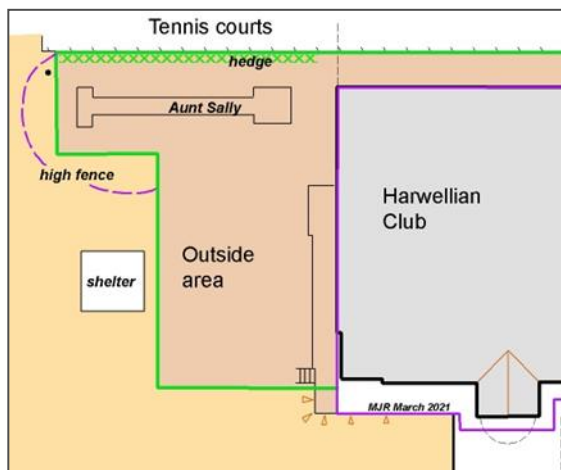
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Consultation by the Parish Council regarding the Harwellian Club

Harwell Parish Council hereby gives notice of its intention to **grant a lease and/or licence** to **The Harwellian Club**, to fence off a small parcel of land for use as an **outdoor café/bar seating area** and Aunt Sally pitch. The proposed parcel of land is currently part of Harwell Recreation Ground which is **public open space** in Harwell Village, as shown in the adjacent plan.



Harwell Recreation Ground is used for **recreation** and **outdoor sport**. It hosts a fenced playground, additional play/exercise equipment, a tennis club, a youth (Scouts) building and a bowls club, in addition to 2 large fields used for dog walking, informal games, football tournaments and other activities. There are currently no public toilets and, until recently, no café facilities available to the public.

The Harwellian Club is a not-for-profit **sports and social club** located on the Recreation Ground, which **disaffiliated** from the Royal British Legion a few years ago. The Club is **licensed** to sell alcohol, provides indoor sports facilities (darts, snooker, pool) and hosts Aunt Sally matches with an outdoor pitch. It also provides entertainment, for example quiz, bingo, music functions.

The Club has a vision to broaden its customer base and become a **village community asset**. At present (due to Covid related restrictions) the Club is opening as a **takeaway** café only, serving hot drinks and snacks to the users of the Recreation Ground and allowing the use of its toilets. In the summer of 2020, when the Club was able to open as a bar for a few months, temporary tables were used to provide an outdoor seating area which proved **very popular**.

The Club is now requesting that the garden area be made **permanent** with fixed outdoor seating. **Fencing** would be installed to delineate the licensed area and to secure the seating area during closed hours.

The Club's lease **does** currently include outdoor space, but it is **not** fenced off. The size of the proposed fenced parcel of land is **0.04 acres** or **220 square metres**. The total size of the Recreation Ground is approximately 15 acres or 6.2 ha.

Comments on this proposal are invited by emailing clerk@harwellparish.co.uk before **13th May 2021**. All comments received will be considered as part of the **consultation**. The land and works were the subject of a recent planning application and the proposed areas and more details can be viewed on the [Vale of White Horse planning application register](#). Search on reference number P20/V3325/FUL.

Amy's "5k per day for 30 days" Challenge

She's done it! On 1st March local girl **Amy de Freitas** pledged to run 5km every day for 30 days to raise money for **Cancer Research UK** and on 30th March she posted on the Harwell Community Facebook page that she had succeeded. **Well done Amy!**

On Amy's **Just Giving** page she said that she wanted to support the fantastic work that Cancer Research UK is doing every day to save the lives of millions of people. "Their ambition is for 3 in 4 people to survive their cancer by 2034 - please help me to help them achieve their goal. I'm certainly **no athlete**, but I run regularly to keep myself **healthy**, in body and mind, so I can be here for my son for as long as possible."

On completing the challenge Amy posted "I'm so overwhelmed by the **incredible support** I've received and so, so grateful for every single donation. Harwell is such a lovely village to run around and you have all been so kind, cheering me on and moving aside to allow me to run past - THANK YOU ♥"

To date Amy has raised **£1,290 plus over £300 in Gift Aid**. There's still time to add to her total though, so please visit <https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/amys-giving-page-231239> to donate.



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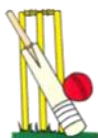


We were delighted to be able to welcome **ALL** our children into school on March 8th. It was wonderful to hear them enjoying meeting with their friends in person and to see their smiling faces.

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous **parental support** for remote learning during our restricted opening period. The whole school community of children, staff and parents showed their **resilience** and **resourcefulness** in dealing with the remote learning either from within school or at home. The commitment and dedication of the school staff has been **tremendous**.

We remain in the **National Lockdown** and continue to make the school as safe a place as possible for pupils and staff.

We continue to plan for curriculum **enrichment**. There was great fun to be had on the last day of remote learning as we celebrated **World Book Day** with some wonderful costumes and a whole school **virtual disco**, enjoyed by children both in the classroom and at home.



We have a visit booked from **Roving Bookstore** after Easter, a whole school **skipping workshop** and a **cricket** activity in the calendar.



I am really excited that our **swimming pool opens** at Easter and the children can look forward to swimming lessons as part of their regular PE in the summer term.



Furthermore, we have **residential** visits booked for Year 4 to **Hooke Court** in **Dorset** and for Year 6 to **Yenworthy** at the end of May (this will naturally be subject to government guidance but fingers crossed). Traditionally, Year 6 buy Yenworthy hoodies which they then wear for the remainder of the school year. It was our pleasure to arrange for these to be delivered for them to wear on their return on March 8th and their enthusiasm was both infectious and colourful!

We are also preparing Year 6 for the **next step** in their learning journey. As Year 6 begins to prepare to leave us, much younger children will soon find out which school place they have been offered for September. While we will miss our Year 6 children, this will be an exciting time to **welcome** new children and families.

We are looking forward to **safer times** when we can **gather together** without worrying about the distance between us or the masks on our faces, until then, **stay safe**.

With warm regards,

Bryn Gibson, Headteacher, Harwell Primary School

Annual Parish Meeting

Thursday 15th April at 7.30pm

This will be **online** again – contact the [Clerk](#) for details of how to attend. Topics will include:

- Valley Park,
- PC Environmental Committee
- Proposals for the Harwellian Club
- Ongoing Recreation Ground work.

Environmental Advisory Committee

Harwell PC, working with Sustainable Harwell, has **approved** the setting up of an advisory committee to be made up of a small number of Councillors and interested **parishioners** for the purpose of monitoring, advising and promoting **environmental matters** in line with the Parish Council's Sustainability Policy.

The full Terms of Reference may be seen [here](#). The PC hopes to select members at its **April meeting**. If you are interested in being considered, then please send a **brief summary** of your particular interests, and any **expertise** you have that you feel might be useful, to the [Clerk](#) before **13th April**.

Harwell Gardeners' Club

We have two Zoom meetings scheduled. They are:-



- Monday 5th April - Darren Lerigo with the talk 'Helping The Honey Bees', Plants for Bees and
- Monday 3rd May - Martin Fish, Live from his Potting Shed

Zoom links will be emailed to club members.

If you would like to join us for either of these talks please contact Janice Markey on jvmarkey@googlemail.com. New members welcome at any time.

Janice Markey, Chairman, Harwell Gardeners' Club



Harwell Parish History Group

Talks At the time of writing we are looking forward to Marie-Louise Kerr's talk on **Oxfordshire Blue Plaques (March 17th)** on Zoom. Because our April and May speakers are unable to Zoom, they will be **rescheduled**; the next talk will be on **May 19th**, again using Zoom : **"Through the Kaleidoscope: how history changes historical figures,"** by Jane Card. Our usual **summer break** then begins – fingers crossed our original programme will proceed from September. (Details were published in the October 2020 Harwell News.)

Edward Caudwell of Harwell, Clockmaker.

You may recall that we received a **query** from an antiques dealer who had acquired a clock by the above. Dave Drummond's research unearthed interesting material; he was then contacted by Edward Caudwell's 5 times great grandson, Mark Caudwell. We now know that by 1742 Edward was a respected Harwell citizen, who married in 1746, fathered 5 children, died in 1797 and was buried here. Originally apprenticed to a **weaver**, he became a master **mill**er, farmer and **clockmaker**; plainly he liked complex machinery. He made 6 clocks in total, which came into the possession of descendants in Blewbury, Drayton, Abingdon and New Zealand. Mark Caudwell owns, at the time of writing, 2 of the 6 clocks. Right is the face of his **8 day clock** – which alas, will not run for more than 4 weeks at a time.



Gefreiter Hans Bossdorf, the German airman whose plane crashed on the Downs above Blewbury, November 1940.

Blewbury History Society requested any information about the above, who was buried in Harwell. Thanks to the efforts of Fiona Pryor, Mick Russell, John Strange, Steve Fallon and Dave Drummond, we now know the following. Bossdorf was buried **NOT**, as was thought, in Harwell's church cemetery but in **unconsecrated** ground next to it. Mick was requested to dig up the skeleton sometime in the **sixties** - he thinks about 1961-63 - to hand it over to an unknown (and not local) undertaker, with a doctor present and at **midnight**! He thinks the transfer was organised by the War Commission. The body is now buried or recorded in the German Military cemetery at **Cannock Chase**, with an individual headstone – which is unusual ([link](#))



The crashed Junkers 88 on the Blewbury Downs

John Strange often told a story from when he was a child about the plane flying so low over their house in **Blewbury** that they could see the **gunner** pointing his gun at him and his brothers! John's father went to the **crash** site as part of his Home Guard duties.

The "Eagles Over Europe" ([link](#)) database loss entry read : "November 13, 1940: 8./LG1 Junkers Ju88A-1 (6157). Port engine and controls damaged in attacks by F/L W.J. Leather and P/O R.A. Johnson of No. 611 Squadron during sortie to attack De Havilland works at Lostock Hall, south of Preston, and belly-landed at Woodway Farm, Blewbury, 2.45 p.m. BS Gefr Hans Bossdorf killed, FF Fw Willi Erwin and BF Fw Erwin Zins both captured slightly injured, BO Uffz Herbert Wermuth captured unhurt. Aircraft L1+LS 100% write-off."

So the other German aircrew became POWs. We have found nothing about the rumour in Blewbury that Bossdorf's family and local people objected to the transfer of his body at the time – if anyone out there has information, do contact us on harwellhistorygroup@gmail.com

The Easter Bunny started as the Easter Hare!

"Harwell" comes from "hare(s)-well", so we have an interest here! Hares have had a **dubious** reputation, being associated with pagan **fertility** goddesses, the changeable **moon**, witches and **shape-shifting**. They were at one stage thought to be hermaphrodite or able to change sex, because both male and female hares urinate backwards. But they were also symbols of **sacrifice, resurrection** - and of the Virgin Mary, since they were believed capable of virgin birth.



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Hares, like eggs, were fertility symbols signifying **Spring** and new life. The goddess **Eostre** is usually depicted with a hare. The German legend of the 'Oschter Haws', the white **Easter Hare**, which laid colourful eggs for children, travelled to the USA with German immigrants, and the hare morphed into the perhaps more cuddly **"bunny"**.



Eostre / Ostara (1884) by Johannes Gehrts.

Jane M. Card, with thanks to Dave Drummond, Fiona Pryor and Patricia Cooke.

Hayleigh and Sarah - Local District Councillors *(continued from page 5)*

Biodiversity - massive well done to **Sally Povolotsky** for your fantastic speech raising the issues with biodiversity considerations on the site, including the protection of **red kites**. Thanks to you, the committee asked for the financial contributions from the developer relating to biodiversity off-setting (totalling £200,000) to be brought forward from a staged payment (after 1000th house is occupied) to a **full amount paid upfront** prior to commencement of the development. A brilliant win for protecting the natural environment before the first house is even built!

Here is our [extensive written statement](#) that we submitted to the Planning Committee in advance of the meeting. Click [here](#) to catch up on the speeches and debate.

Updates since the planning committee meeting on 16th February:

- The **Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG)** have now responded to the Valley Park planning application, asking the developer to provide just under **£4million for healthcare provision**, as well as allocating land for a **GP surgery** site, in the event that the one on Great Western Park does not get built. The response from the OCCG needs to pass various planning tests so it is not yet set in stone, but we are very happy that this is a big step in the right direction.
- To address the rumours about when Valley Park will be coming back to planning committee for further consideration, we would like to clarify that it can **only** come back to committee once the planning officers are satisfied that the issues raised at the deferral decision **have been addressed**. Due to purdah, i.e. the time before an election period (in this case local elections on May 6th) in which councils are not permitted to make big decisions, the application for Valley Park will not come back to planning committee until **May** at the earliest.
- Finally **thank you** to everyone who attended our residents' feedback session on Valley Park last week. It was great to hear your views, it is clear that there are still a lot of **concerns** and **questions** around the **roundabout design**, the **healthcare** and **biodiversity/sustainability**. We plan to organise **further feedback sessions** in future to focus on these topics, so watch this space! In the meantime please feel free to **email us** your ideas and thoughts about the roundabout design, we can pass these on to the planning officers for consideration by the developer.
- The news of the decision on Valley Park was featured in a recent edition of the [Didcot Herald](#)

Council News

2021/2022 Budget at Full council 10th February

The most recent meeting of Full Council was on Wednesday 10th February – the agenda & link for viewing online can be found [here](#)

The key agenda item for discussion was the **proposed budget for 2021/2022**. The council set out budget plans which protect front line services, continue to support local residents and businesses through the pandemic and help stabilise the council's finances for the medium term. The budget would result in an increase of **less than 10p per week** on Band D Council Tax. Annual council tax will be **£141.69** for services provided by the district council, up from £136.69 this year. The Vale currently has the 15th lowest council tax in the country for a shire district and significantly lower than the national average of £194.22.

Since the pandemic began, the district council has re-allocated significant resources in order to provide **vital support** for residents and businesses across the district. This has included: administering more than **3,300 Covid-19 grant payments** to local businesses totalling **£21 million**. We provided the new **Community Support Hub**, supporting **5,208 vulnerable residents**, including providing **direct assistance** for 785 people. It is currently expected that this work will need to continue well into 2021. The council's income also remains significantly affected by the Covid-19 restrictions.

Like many councils, the Vale still faces **significant financial challenges** which have been caused by years of reduced funding from government, and the lack of clarity about the future of local authority financing.



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Along with the other Oxfordshire councils, the Vale has repeatedly called on the government to urgently provide additional funding to help ensure the future of vital public services.

The full press release on the budget proposals can be found [here](#).

South and Vale residents are top recyclers in the country... again

We're very pleased to reveal that in the latest government figures, our environmentally conscious residents in **South Oxfordshire** and the **Vale of White Horse** are the **second and third best recyclers in England**. South Oxfordshire recycle **64%** of its waste, with the Vale recycling **63.3%**. This puts the two districts **way above** the national recycling rate of 45.5% and they are also two of only 11 local authorities in the country with a recycling rate above 60%. Both districts have consistently been in the top ten in the past five years. As the figures cover the period from the beginning of April 2019 to the end of March 2020, they only include the very first week of the national lockdown last year. So the impact of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns on the collection of household waste in the districts will not be revealed until next year's figures.

New waste calendars

Residents will shortly be receiving their new waste collection calendar for the coming year – it'll be included in with the council tax bills hitting doormats this month. Residents who get their council tax bills electronically will get a link to an online version of the calendar in their email bill. The new calendar which runs from April 2021 – March 2022 is available [here](#).

Call for people to help at the elections

We are looking for people to take on paid work at this year's elections. On **Thursday 6 May** our residents will go to the polls to vote in the **Police and Crime Commissioner** and **Oxfordshire County Council** elections. Some areas will also have local by-elections and neighbourhood plan referendums. The various counts will then take place over the following days. To help ensure the smooth running of this event, we need to recruit as many people as possible. There are lots of **paid roles** available, paying a flat rate or from £14 per hour, and plans are being put in place to ensure all staff can work in a **Covid-19 safe environment**. If you know anyone who may be interested in working at the elections, please encourage them to visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs to find out more and to register their interest.

Changes to Vale parking arrangements confirmed following public consultation

Following a public consultation, Vale of White Horse District Council's Cabinet have **approved** several changes to parking arrangements to help **reduce vehicle emissions**. Last November almost 200 people commented on proposed changes to the parking arrangements. At their meeting on Friday 5 February, the council's Cabinet considered the consultation results, and approved that the following measures which will now be included in the district's new parking policy:

Reducing vehicle emissions

In Abingdon, lorries will no longer be able to park in Rye Farm car park and specific spaces will be allocated for a coach and campervans in Hales Meadow car park. This popular move to free up more spaces in Rye Farm for smaller vehicles, should encourage people visiting from the A415 to park here on edge of town rather than joining the traffic in the town centre, helping to **reduce congestion** and **improve air quality**.

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Encouraging electric vehicle use

The Vale is currently working with Oxfordshire County Council with a view to introduce **electric vehicle charging bays** in some district council car parks. If this happens then, under the new policy, parking enforcement officers will have new powers to **fine** motorists who park non-electric vehicles in electric charging bays, or who leave an electric vehicle parked in a charging bay when it's not charging.

Tackling the car parks deficit

The Vale's car parks, in Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage, collectively cost more than **£700,000 a year** to run. Once the income from parking fees has been taken into account, there is an average **shortfall** of over £300,000 a year, which

is currently subsidised by council tax. To help address this deficit, Cabinet agreed that the price of **resident permits**, which provide significant discounts on daily parking rates, would need to **go up by 10% each year until 2023**. This decision was taken after carefully considering feedback from the public and taking the potential impact on individual residents and families into account. Members rejected options to implement a price increase of up to 100 per cent, in favour of a 10 per cent increase per year over the next three years.

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Other than where stated and in reports of Parish Council matters, any opinions expressed are not those of the Parish Council. Items for the June issue should be sent by 15th May to

news@harwellparish.co.uk

Distribution is on hold during the current health crisis, in line with social distancing measures. Harwell News is available online at <https://www.harwellparish.co.uk/harwell-news/>

Sign up [HERE](#) if you would like to receive a pdf copy of the latest Harwell News issue. Advertising queries to the clerk.

Parish Contact Information

All contact information can also be found on the parish website: www.harwellparish.co.uk
Phone: 07749 361957

Post to: Clerk, Harwell PC, Harwell Village Hall, High Street, Harwell, OX11 0EX
Core office hours, in the office at the Village Hall, are 9am to 4pm Monday

Parish Councillors

Syed Aly, Dee Boughton-Waite, Patrick Davidson-Locke, Ian Fearon, Jeremy Hawthorne (Vice-chair), David Munyemweri, Neil Paterson, Martin Ricketts, David Roberts, Clive Seabrook and Debbie Turner (Chair).

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Harwell News edited by Alison Fautley

Harwellian Club News

The Harwellian Café, which is located in the ex RBL building next to the Rec car park, is continuing to open, as a takeaway-only until we are allowed to open indoors, **every Saturday and Sunday, 11am to 3pm** (weather permitting).

While there is nothing else to do, wrap up warm and get out for a walk, with a pitstop at the Harwellian for a hot drink and a cake!

We are now offering a **10p discount** if you bring your own clean refillable drinks mug.

Soy milk and gluten free cakes are available.

We can take payment by **cash/card/phone app**.

Please wear a **face covering** to enter the building and conform to current [government guidelines](#) regarding meeting people outdoors for recreation and exercise (we do have facemasks available if you have forgotten yours).

The Committee is intending to **fully reopen** the Club as soon as the Covid roadmap reaches **Step 3** (no earlier than 17 May). At this point we will be allowed to reopen indoor hospitality. Customers will have to order and drink while seated and the 'Rule of 6' is expected to apply.

We are intending to reopen the bar initially with 'normal' hours but slightly less days:

- Wed and Thu 7-11pm
- Fri 5pm to 11pm with possible café opening from 11am
- Sat 12 noon to 11pm with café opening from 11am
- Sun 12 noon to 7pm with café opening from 11am

A meat draw will take place each **Friday**.

Look out for our plans for events on [our website](#) including, hopefully, a **quiz on Sat 29th May**.

	
Café Menu	
Tea (also mint, green)	£1.50
Filter Coffee (also decaf)	£2.00
Hot Chocolate & toppings	£2.50
Soft drinks	£1.10
Coke	£1.20
Fruit Shoots	£0.80
Flapjacks/Shortbread/GF	£1.20
Cakes	£1.50
Crisps/Nuts/Pringles	£0.90-1.10
Chocolate bars	£0.80
Harwellian Club members' discount 10% (please show your card or give your number when ordering) Gluten free cakes subject to availability	