



The Harwell News

www.harwellparish.co.uk

Harwell Christmas Tree Festival



Hats off to all of the community groups who took part in this year's **Harwell Christmas Tree Festival** on Friday 8th December.

Harwell Squirrels, GWP guides, Harwell Fun Club, Little Pippins Pre-School, Harwell Gardeners' Club, The Barn Breakfast and After School Club, Harwell School Reception Class and Harwell WI - we appreciate all of the **time** and **effort** you took to create such **fantastic** trees! Almost **400** people **visited** and **voted** for their **favourite** and we managed to raise a wonderful £600 for our village pre-school.



2nd place: Harwell Gardeners' Club

Congratulations to all of you for getting Christmas 2023 off to a wonderful start!



Harwell Fun Club



Winners: Little Pippins Pre-School

And the **winner** was....**Little Pippins Pre-School!** Second place went to **Harwell Gardeners Club** and coming in a close third was **Harwell School Reception Class!**



3rd place: Harwell School Reception Class



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Harwell Scouting

The Autumn Term started with a **Camp** on **Brownsea Island** (The Birthplace of Scouting) on September 23rd when 46 of our Leaders, Explorers and Scouts travelled to **Poole** to catch the ferry with all we needed for a two-day camp. The weather was **kind** and the experience **rewarding**.

Just two weeks later **two Patrols** of Scouts attended **CPCW** (County Patrol Camping Weekend). This County-run event requires Scouts to camp as self-disciplined Patrols (**without** adult guidance). Teams are **graded** according to ranking of Skills and Efficiency. I was absolutely **delighted** to learn that Harwell Patrols achieved **4th** and **8th** places out of **58** Patrols overall from Oxfordshire. **Well done** to the Scouts and to our Leader team who gave them the **grounding** to **succeed**.

The Group were once again **grateful** to the **Magnox** social scheme who this year purchased **five** sets of **Fire Bowls** and **Grill Tripods** to facilitate training members in **Backwoods** Skills and open-fire **Cooking**. These will see **frequent** use in the months ahead.

On November 3rd our **Fireworks** were again well-supported, and I would like to convey the groups **gratitude** to all who came along. **SOMEHOW!** The **weather** took pity on us and provided a **lovely** evening within a period of crazy storms. Attendee generosity surely **secures** this event for 2024. We would also like to acknowledge the kind **support** of the **Collard** group in providing a **skip**, making the clear up easy to manage.

Over half term four **Explorers** undertook their **DofE Bronze** award expedition, **congratulations** to them for **succeeding** in this stage of their award.

By the time of publishing our **Cub Scouts** will have taken part in the district **Scrapheap challenge** on November 26th. This is a new District event, and we wish our team **success** in their execution of this challenge which certainly sounds quite exciting.

Before signing-off can I again **remind** readers that Harwell scouts seem to be a **popular** group. It is **essential** those seeking places get their children's name on our waiting list at the **earliest** possible time. It is **unlikely** that once they reach joining age, children not previously on the list will be offered a place. As a reminder **Squirrels** join at **4** years of age, and **Beavers** at **6** years.

Brian Zimmerman (Group Scout Leader)



Harwell Community Orchard Group update



Malcolm Thick by one of the pear trees

Our last 4 tree **sponsors** were able to see their trees in the ground last month, with 4 more **apple** varieties added to the orchard including **Oxford Beauty**, developed in Eynsham.

Also the sponsors of the two **Black Worcester Pear Trees** and 2 others planted last December, **Malcolm and Jane Thick**, were finally able to put the **labels** on their trees. Black Worcester is the **oldest** named variety of pear still available as well as being on the Worcester coat of arms.

Martin Ricketts



Some of the group planting the Oxford Beauty



Harwell Feast Quiz 2023



Winners: Sit Where You Like

Photos by Patricia Cooke

The Cherry Hall was filled to **capacity** for this year's quiz, with quizmaster **Chris Lambert**.

After the challenging **12 rounds** last year's winners **Gangreen** were pushed into **3rd** place by team **Sit Where You're Told** in **2nd** place and **winners** team **Sit Where You Like**.

After the tie for last place was resolved the **Wooden Spoon** went to team **Heaps**.



Chris Lambert



Wooden Spoons: Heaps



Harwell Parish Council

The PC wishes to **thank** all those who contributed to the recent **Remembrance Day ceremonies**, in particular to the **RBL**, the **marshals** on the 11th and on Sunday and **members** of the **PCC**. Also thanks are due to the **Harwell Gardeners Club** which maintains the beds there and cleaned the surrounds in **preparation** for the events.

The Council wishes to **thank** those who have **left** the Parish Council recently for their service. In May **Stewart and Katy Lilly** stood down; Mr Lilly had been co-opted in 2002 and was for a few years our **County Councillor**, and always took a keen interest in **planning** and **public transport**. Also our Clerk since July 2005, **Mrs Stephanie Taylor** has recently resigned; Councillors wish to record their thanks to her for her **service**.

The Parish Council will be seeking to appoint a Clerk in the **New Year**, and as a preliminary to the selection process Councillors agreed to an **independent assessment** of the current 3 staff roles, to be carried out by an assessor **recommended** by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils. Meanwhile we have a **locum** Clerk, **Mrs Laura White**, who is also Clerk of the new Western Valley Parish formed from the eastern part of Harwell.

In September **Mr Davidson-Locke** resigned but continues to process the **data** from the SID speed indicator that is regularly moved between 3 locations in the Parish. There have been 3 co-options to fill vacancies on the Parish Council recently, **Paul Luper** and **Gavan Raine** at the September meeting and **Martin Ricketts** in October. There are still **2 vacancies** and if you are interested have a look at the PC web pages [here](#).

At the **September meeting** the District Councillors reported that the District Council is working with Taylor Wimpey to put legal agreements in place for the **Health Centre** on **Great Western Park**.

Our County Councillor reported on the **20mph scheme** in the village, saying it is to be put to the County Council Cabinet **later** in the year. Councillor Povolotsky also reported that thanks to the bus company, Harwell is now in the **Didcot zone** for tickets, and OCC are carrying out a **feasibility** study into bringing the bus service **back** into **their control**.

The Council was due to **transfer** a portion of its **reserves** to the new **Western Valley Parish**, which was part of Harwell Parish until April. The transfer of the sum previously agreed was **approved** subject to the receipt of an invoice.

Among the **financial matters**, it was noted that the Council had received funding from the **County Councillor Priority Funding** towards **equipment** for the Community **Speedwatch** team, for which the PC **thanks** our County Councillor.

On **Lands matters**, there was a request from the **Tennis Club** to replace its existing **shelter** and install **floodlighting**. Councillor Luper declared an **interest** in this item as a member of the Tennis Club and also took Councillors through the **details** of the proposal. It was agreed that **further information** will be required before the Parish Council can make a decision. Whether planning permission is **needed** must be determined, and a change to the **lease** would be required.

At the **October meeting** various financial matters were **agreed**,

and it was noted that the 2022-23 **Audit of accounts** had been **completed** satisfactorily. Parishioners have the right to **inspect** the Annual Return up to the end of **December**, on **application to the Clerk**.

The County Council is consulting on **new ward areas** that County Councillors serve, and are elected by. It was agreed by Parish Councillors that the **resolution** of the map provided was **not** adequate on some boundaries in the area and therefore the Council could **not comment**.

At the **November Meeting** County Councillor Sally Povolotsky said that the Harwell village **20 mph scheme** should be going to the OCC cabinet **soon**, for formal consultation in the **New Year**.

District Councillors reported that work had **begun** at Valley Park, although planning permission for the first parcel of houses has **yet** to be granted; they were asked if the recent **flooding** there had been **recorded**, to compare with the flood **modelling**. The Planning Officers are asking that this be classed as flood zone 1, but TW are **insisting** it should be zone 2 or 3. It was said that near the A4130 the Cow Lane path was **unusable** due to the flooding.

Councillor Dewhurst reported that in the New Year the new **Combined District Local Plan** will be out for **consultation**; she asked for **prompt** comments as the consultation will only be open for **6 weeks**. This document will contain the policies on which **planning decisions** will be made, for example on **additional housing**, so look out for its **announcement**.

There was a **request** from a Councillor to ask Didcot Town Council that they move to **occupy** some of the space in the **new** District Council offices **near the station** and thus provide an early **opportunity** to expand GP facilities in the town using the **vacant** offices. This was unanimously **approved**; one of the objections the PC has been making to the Valley Park applications is the lack of **medical facilities**, compounded by no **additional** provision yet having been made for GWP residents.

The provision of a **safe crossing point** on the A417 was discussed; there was discussion a few years ago of putting a roundabout at the Wantage Road junction which could have **improved** crossing for both pedestrians and cyclists. The new suggestion is to have a **cycle path** from the Winnaway to the Link Road with a crossing at the Holloway. It was **agreed** to ask our County Councillor to put this proposal to **OCC Highways**.

It was also agreed that the Clerk write to **Thames Water** regarding the **repeated flooding** of the A417 just beyond the Princes Manor Farm lane.

Various **financial matters** were **agreed**; the full meeting minutes can be found [here](#) for those online, under **meetings** on the PC web pages. It had previously been agreed **not** to hold a meeting in December but because a **lot** of business on the agenda had **not** been completed, it was agreed that a meeting **should** be held on **30th November** to cover mainly the 2024-25 **budget** plus approval of various changes to policies.

Find 'Planning Matters' on p5



Hello from Hayleigh and Debra - Update from your Local District Councillors, November 2023

Hello from Hayleigh and Debra



It's November and with **Halloween**, Bonfire Night and **Diwali** over, we are naturally looking forward to other winter celebrations such as **Christmas**. If you are **struggling** this winter to pay for **bills** or keep your house **warm**, there is some **information** further on in this newsletter on how the council or other organisations can **support** you.

This month we've had **discussions** as a council about the future **waste strategy** – did you know that waste makes up **half** of the Vale of White Horse Council's **emissions**? We had training on **safeguarding** and being able to spot the **signs** in our community of when an adult or child may be in **danger**. If you spot something and a person is in **immediate** danger, then contact the **emergency services** on **999**. You can also **report** any Safeguarding concerns to **Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Children** or **Adults** Boards, or contact the **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub** (which Vale is part of) on one of the following numbers:

- **Office hours** (8.30am – 5pm, Monday to Thursday, 8.30am – 4pm, Friday): **0345 050 7666**
- **Outside office hours**: Emergency Duty Team: **0800 833 408**

We also had the honour of laying a **wreath** on behalf of the Vale of White Horse District Council at **Harwell's Remembrance Sunday Parade**, remembering all those lost in the first and second **world wars** and all **conflicts** since. We will remember them.

Council News

A new grant to help people stay warm and fed this winter: will help support people in our **communities** who may otherwise struggle to afford **essential** things. Launched by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils, the grant is aimed at local **voluntary** and **community groups**, and town and parish **councils**, who can use it to support those **most** in need in the districts. Organisations can apply for grants between **£2,000** to **£5,000**, or up to **£10,000** for collaborative projects between **groups** of two or more **organisations**.

Over £82,000 awarded to expand youth activities: Children across Wantage, Grove and nearby neighbourhoods will soon have more **exciting youth activities** on offer, thanks to a funding boost for **Sweatbox Community Youth Services** from the Vale of White Horse District Council.

Over £440,000 awarded to support swimming pools in South and Vale: The award from **Sport England** will help ensure residents continue to have access to good **swimming** facilities across the two districts.

Over £130,000 boost for Didcot Wave gym: The centre, located in Newlands Avenue, Didcot, will benefit from new **cardio** and **resistance gym equipment** early next year. The plan is to provide state of the art equipment – with some self-powered items that will **reduce** the **energy** consumption of Didcot Wave.

We use these monthly updates to keep you updated on our activities and general council news. We also post on our councillor

Facebook Pages: www.facebook.com/CllrHayleigh & www.facebook.com/Debra4BlewburyAndHarwell

Please get in touch with any issues or concerns, either via

email: hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and

debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

Christmas Tree Recycling

Recreation Ground Car Park by recycling bins

Westfield, Harwell

Drop off your tree no later than Thursday 18 January 2024

Trees over 6ft must be cut smaller



Harwell Christmas Tree Festival

(continued from front page)

Little Pippins Pre-School Fundraising Team would like to **thank** all of our **sponsors** for supporting this year's Harwell Christmas Tree Festival and each sponsoring a **tree**!



Little Pippins Pre-School Fundraising Team would also like to thank **Wellers Accountants** for kindly sponsoring the **gifts** at this year's **Santa's Grotto**, part of the Harwell School Christmas Fair, helping us to raise £200 for our pre-school!

Natalie Napper



Turn to **page 16** for more pictures of the event!

MP David Johnston's message for Harwell News - December update



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I particularly enjoyed attending the **Wantage Dickensian Evening** to kickstart the festive season. It was minus 2 degrees, but the atmosphere was very **warm** and everyone from the Wantage Silver Band to Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary to Team Mikayla was there to **celebrate**.

Looking back on the last year, I am pleased with the progress made on a number of my campaigns. We took another step forward on **health services** with my Health Services Survey, which **thousands** of you responded to and which was followed with me holding a **debate** in Parliament on health services in Wantage and Didcot.

My petition to re-**open Grove Station** was signed by 2,127 of you and I will be meeting the Rail Minister in the near future to discuss this again with him. **Thank you** to Andy Holding of the Wantage and Grove Station Supporters Group for providing the final signature. I will keep going until we are successful.

My campaigning for more **renewable energy** run by the local community, through my sponsorship of the Local Electricity Bill, led to the creation of the new **£10 million Government Community Energy Fund** which will hopefully benefit groups across Oxfordshire.

And my campaign for **justice** for our local AEAT pensioners resulted in me securing the first ever **independent investigation** into their case, as well as a Parliamentary **inquiry**.

I was also pleased to welcome so many **constituents** to Parliament this past year from schools to charities to members

of the armed forces. I also hosted a local young person for **work experience** almost every month – thank you to all of them. If you are planning a visit to Parliament or would like me to

arrange a **free tour** for you then do get in touch.

In 2024 I will be continuing campaigns on **infrastructure** issues like GP surgeries and Grove Station, as well as my other priorities like protecting our **environment**, tackling anti-social **behaviour**, and improving **opportunities** for children and young people.

Right now, as part of my campaign to improve our **roads**, I have my Local Roads Survey running so that you can tell me **exactly** where you are seeing **issues** on our roads that need to be resolved – including **potholes**, congestion, **speeding** and other safety concerns. Since being elected I have spoken in 13 separate **debates** about the need to improve our local roads, **met** with the Roads Minister to raise it with them, led a debate in Parliament on **safety** issues on the A34 and A420 and welcomed the **£3 million** for this year from Government to help fix Oxfordshire's potholes.

However, there is more to do and I want to hear from **as many people as possible** so that we have the best data to make the case for improvements, so please do take part on my website at www.david-johnston.org.uk/RoadsSurvey.

As ever, if I can help with anything please email me via david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk



Parish Council (contd from p3)

Planning Matters:

In **October** the PC had several planning **applications** for development on the **Campus** on which to respond to the Vale WHDC. It was noted that a lot of the applications add **employment** buildings to the parish and therefore **traffic** movements but not improve the local area infrastructure. County Cllr Sally Povolotsky added that the OCC Highways comments often ask for **less parking** and **increased infrastructure** for buses and cycles etc. District Councillor Dewhurst confirmed that there is an **awareness** that there needs to be a more **joined-up** approach to all the applications and ensuring they work **together** on the design and infrastructure aspects.

On one application, P23/V1217, which had a large double height **cycle rack** planned a Councillor commented that a number of smaller racks near the entrances would serve **better**; it was said that the current guidance was **not** to allow double-height racks and the PC **agreed** to put this comment in its response while not objecting.

There was a further application for 25 Orchard Way, P23/V2385, following outline **approval** for **5 dwellings**. This was the **second** Reserved Matters application, whereby details are submitted. It was noted that the previous application was **not available** online for comparison.

After discussion it was agreed unanimously to **object** on the

grounds made previously under P21/V0679/0 that this development will directly the affect the **look and feel** of the shared **amenity** space of the Parish Recreation Ground; that it is **overdevelopment** of the site and waste vehicles will struggle to get in and out of the development. Should this application be approved the Council asked that the construction management plan stipulates that all construction vehicles park **on site** for the **duration** of the build.

The Council further approves to ask that the District Councillor to **'call in'** this application to be considered by the Vale Planning Committee, and check that the **entirety** of the site is already zoned for the residential use.

There was a **retrospective** application from Grove Farms, P23/V2304, for a **further** Temporary Permission, for 5 years, for Max Events to operate on land north of the Grove Road north development. There was acknowledgement that it would provide some **employment**, but it was noted that the documents submitted were the **same** as in 2016 and there had been housing developments at Milton Hill and Grove Road North **since** then. The PC agreed unanimously to **object** because the application does not take in to account the **surrounding development** in the intervening years, and previous conditions have **not** been met.

Prepared by Martin Ricketts, approved by HPC Chair Ms Tracey Pearson.

Big Ginger Tom Music - Gig Review



Well, what a way to **finish** our 2023 programme of events off! Our **third sell-out audience** of the year were treated to a **wonderful** evening of music.

Craig Joiner was back in Harwell for the **third** time,



having previously opened for Kitty Macfarlane and The Magpies. He performed **six** great songs which were from his **last album** and his **new album** due out in **January**.

His delivery of 'The Wedding day of Eliza May' left the audience **spellbound**. He finished with 'The Making of a Life'. He left the stage to **rapturous** applause. Look out for him on his **headline** tour in **February** and **March**.

Rusty Shackle were of course **immense**, opening the first set with 'Devils Pulpit' and playing favourites such as 'Lanterns',



'Moving On' and 'Coming Home'. They finished the first set with their cover of Dolly Parton's 'Jolene'.

The second set saw some **dancing** from the audience, who had been **remarkably** restrained up until then, to songs such as 'Down to the Valley', 'Newport Rising', 'Love is the Answer' and of course '3AM'.

Their last song was 'The Bones' and it was **heartily** joined in with by all. It was a great end to the **evening** and a great **end** to the **year**.

We look forward to seeing you all back in Harwell in 2024.

Tickets to all our gigs are available from wegottickets.com or by contacting Duncan at biggingertommusic@gmail.com

For more information about BGTm events see the village hall website www.harwellvillagehall.co.uk/events or go to the BGTm website at www.biggingertommusic.co.uk/events

Duncan Chappell, Big Ginger Tom Music

Proud to be working with Ranagri, The People Versus, Patrick Griffin, Anna Renae, Plumhall, Craig Joiner, Joe Hicks and Fred's House. Check out my lockdown activity - Folkin' Around on Radio Cherwell - <https://radiocherwell.com/our-programmes/listen-again>



No one needs to be cold this winter, next winter or any winter.

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BIG GINGER TOM MUSIC

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FRI 16 FEB	KATIE SPENCER/ HENRY PARKER	THE CORN EXCHANGE FARINGDON
FRI 23 FEB	SHOW OF HANDS	THE ORCHARD HALL HARWELL
FRI 15 MAR	NINEBARROW SUPPORT: WEDNESDAY'S WOLVES	THE ORCHARD HALL HARWELL
FRI 19 APR	RANAGRI SUPPORT: NATALIE HOLMES	THE ORCHARD HALL HARWELL
FRI 17 MAY	ELIZABETH & JAMESON/ LIZZY HARDINGHAM SUPPORT: ANNA RENAE	THE CORN EXCHANGE FARINGDON
SAT 21 SEP	HANNAH SCOTT SUPPORT: TBA	THE CORN EXCHANGE FARINGDON
FRI 18 OCT	MAN THE LIFEBOATS SUPPORT: TBA	THE ORCHARD HALL HARWELL
FRI 15 NOV	EDWINA HAYES SPECIAL GUEST: EMILY SLADE	THE CORN EXCHANGE FARINGDON
FRI 06 DEC	MERRY HELL SUPPORT: TBA	THE ORCHARD HALL HARWELL

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Harwell Bell Ringers - join us on Boxing Day

Thank you to everyone who came and supported us at the **Tower Open event** in **July**. It was lovely to have so many **visitors**, 60 signed in, and we gained a new ringer **Michael**.

We have had **visiting ringers** through the year, the latest ones being from **Whitstable**. The next visitors booked in are on **Saturday 20th January** at 4:15pm from **Bath** and 2pm **Sunday 21st January** our branch **young ringers**.

We have also hosted branch **practices**, normally one or two a year. These branch practices are often on our practice night but sometimes they are on other evenings in addition to our **Thursday practice**.

The photo shows some of the bells in the **up position** ready for ringing - they are **half muffled** for **Remembrance Day**. Half muffled bells have a **leather covering** on one side of the bell clapper which **deadens** one stroke of the bell.

The ringers once again invite you to join them for ringing and refreshments on **Boxing Day** from 10am - 12noon.



Harwell WI



The WI is all about **inspiring** women. It's a rich source of **experiences**, knowledge and **skills** passed down through generations and updated every day. We offer women of all ages **opportunities** - to make new **friends** or catch up with existing ones, to **learn**, to widen their **horizons** and take part in **issues** which matter to us and the community. Why not **join us** and see what we can offer you?

Harwell WI meets on the **2nd Wednesday of the month** in **Harwell Village Hall** and we also participate in a variety of **community events** such as the Harwell Feast in May and the Christmas Craft Fair in November. Our programme of inspiring **speakers** is complemented by **trips** to interesting places and **workshops** to learn new skills. If you want to dip your toe in the waters of the WI, please do come along as a **guest**. All women are **welcome**.

Upcoming Talks:

- **10 January 2024** "Seated Zumba" Thea Rogers Latin Style Dance. Fitness all from a chair.
- **14 February 2024** "Fluff and Stuff" Morven Avery-Leitch, Harwell WI member. An informative talk about her style of art and what happened to the tumble dryer fluff.

If you would like to know more or have any queries, email harwellwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Christmas Gifts for Children in Ukraine



In November, villager Yvonne Sanderson put out a **call for help** on the Harwell Community Facebook page. A friend volunteering in the **Donetsk** region of Ukraine had asked for help to ensure that **every child** in the town of Lyman receives a Christmas present this year. Lyman has been subject to **severe bombardment** by Russian artillery, many children are **displaced**, some have lost **parents**, siblings and their **homes**, and there is a lot of suffering.

Friends, family and villagers from Harwell and Chilton **responded** and people also dropped off lots of wrapped gifts at the **Toy Services** at Harwell and Chilton churches. On 10th December Yvonne and volunteer Alison packed a van with the presents and headed off to Ukraine via the Channel Tunnel and Poland, **singing carols** and sampling local coffee! And then **look** who they saw **motorbiking** on the motorway! Hope he'll catch up with the gifts in Ukraine. **Thank you** to all of the generous people who gave gifts and we'll follow up in **February** with how they got on!



Sunday's Remembrance Parade – 12th November

On **Sunday 12th November** Harwell Village recognised the annual Remembrance with a Parade along the Village High Street to the **War Memorial** where a **Commemorative**

Service was held.

In wetter conditions than experienced in recent years, but perhaps more **seasonal** for November, the Parade **marched** from Townsend to the War Memorial in the High Street and included members of the **RBL**, Harwell Parish Council and Local representatives from the **VOWH DC**, Didcot Cadet Forces (Army and Air) Scouts, **Guides** and this year joined by a number of Harwell Organisations for the **first time**, including Alma Barn, **Arts & Craft Group**, Harwell Bowls Club, **Harwell Rugby Club**, Tennis Club and the **WI** and also joined by the newly formed **Western Valley Parish Council**, who are **without** their own memorial.

The attendance was **positive** given the wet start to the day, those attending **welcoming** the Service at the War Memorial being conducted by **Rev. Jeremy Parsons** for the first time in his new role as Rector at St Matthews. The laying of the **wreaths** was led by **Angus Horner**, the Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire, with **Dr Tony Hughes** playing the Last Post to signify the start and end of the two-minute **silence**.

A collection for the **Poppy Appeal** went around ahead and after the service which raised **£199.05**, thanks go to **Mrs Hazel Benton** and **Ms Tracey Pearson** for their part in walking around with the collection buckets.

Following the service held on the High Street, the Parade marched to **St Matthew's Church**, where upon the arrival the Standards formed a **Guard of Honour** at the entrance to the Church.

After the Church Service, the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant, Harwell Parish Chairman and Rev Parsons joined the RBL Branch Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Branch Treasurer and Branch Secretary all attended the **War Memorial** at the Commonwealth War Graves in **Harwell Cemetery** where a short moment of **reflection** was held before a wreath was laid.

Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire, Angus Horner, said of the event "As ever, it was an incredibly **well attended** and **executed** Parade. The Cadets, Beavers, Scouts et al are a particular **credit** to themselves and us all (turning out in large numbers in poor weather). I am sure that Generations Past **look down** with great **satisfaction** at this robust and consistent act of **Remembrance** by Harwell's People."

Photos of the event can be found on the Branch Facebook page, and Branch Treasurer's Flickr account, linked below:

[Harwell RBL Parades Facebook Page](#) / [Simon Haycox, flickr.com Album](#)



11th November, Armistice Day, 2-minute silence

A short **commemoration** was held at the High Street War Memorial on **Saturday 11th November** at **11:00**. About **30 people** attended, together with members of **Harwell School**, and members of the **Harwell Branch RBL** including the Branch Standard. The High Street was **closed** by the Parish Council staff.

Branch Chairman Reginald White conducted the **Ceremony** and recited the **Exhortation** and **Kohima Epitaph**. The **Last Post** and **Reveille** were sounded by **Dr Tony Hughes** and the Two Minutes Silence was **observed**. The Chairman **thanked** all present for their attendance.

Peter Davies, Harwell RBL



Oxfordshire Wildlife Hospital Appeal

Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue is an **award-winning** wildlife **charity** that **rescues**, cares and **rehabilitates thousands** of sick, injured and **orphaned** wild animals throughout **Oxfordshire** and Berkshire every year. We care for many species from tiny mice to **foxes**, badgers, **owls**, swans, **hedgehogs**, and deer, working together with **veterinary professionals** we aim to release our patients back to the **wild** wherever possible. We've developed **specialist** techniques and practices, establishing OWR as both a **reliable** and **professional** organisation with **integrity**.

In November 2023, we received our **12-month notice** from our landlady to **vacate** our site in Blewbury, Oxfordshire, so we are now **fundraising** to buy land we've found to build Oxfordshire's **first registered Wildlife Hospital**, complete with **onsite** veterinary care as well as **educational** and public facilities that enable everyone to **connect** with nature and the environment.

Your donation will not only help us to **continue** to save sick, injured and orphaned wildlife, but you will also join us in **making history**! Visit our website to donate and find out more at

<https://www.oxfordshirewildliferescue.com/oxfordshire-wildlife-hospital-appeal>



GARD Update - December 2023



GARD has written to the **Secretary of State for DEFRA** (Therese Coffey) to ask her to confirm the **timetable** for her **decision** on the Thames Water plans, and particularly for the **Mega-Reservoir**. Our information on the grapevine is that this will be around the **end of November**. We will let all residents know her decision (Newsletter or Village website).

Until then, GARD will continue to send in our list of **Unresolved Issues** about the Reservoir plan, which Thames Water **refuse** to answer properly. Looking at TW's "Statement of Response", GARD finds that they did not actually answer criticisms properly. If you feel that they have **not** answered complaints you made to Thames Water in the consultation, you can **write** to the Environment Agency and/or Ofwat and **complain**. This should be done as soon as possible, so it can inform the Secretary of State's decision. Email your complaint to one of these and please **copy** to your MP and to GARD

- **Environmental and water quality issues:** water.resources@defra.gsi.gov.uk, and Water-Company-Plan@xn--environmentagency-0z2j.gov.uk
- **Costs to customers, leakage and water efficiency issues:** wrmp@ofwat.gov.uk

In the meantime, Thames Water are on a 'charm offensive' trying to sell the Reservoir plans to local residents. They were met by **protesters** at their 'Drop-in event' at East Hanney Village Hall on 10th November, when Councillor Sally Povolotsky and Helen Marshall (Oxfordshire Director for CPRE) were interviewed by Press and TV. Thanks to all protesters, including other Vale and Parish Councillors from Steventon, East Hanney and East Hendred. Thames Water gave the **usual** PR-based presentation (not a bulldozer in sight on any of the posters). We are promised 'leisure facilities' (which we already have, and which they have no idea how they will provide, after devastating the area), but our questions on **disruption**, pollution, **flooding** and safety of the structure were brushed aside. We must keep up the **pressure** for the Reservoir plans to be scrapped!

Details for contacting your MP: make your voice count:

- David Johnston, Wantage david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk
- Layla Moran Abingdon layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

Please copy gard.secretary@gmail.com into any correspondence and see the website for developments <https://www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk/>

Derek Stork, Chairman GARD



Save the Date! Harwell Safari Supper - Saturday 27th April 2024

The next **Harwell Safari Supper** will take place on **Saturday 27th April 2024**. This popular village event is an opportunity to enjoy **good food** and **good company** in the houses of Harwell residents, and to **widen** your circle of **friends**.

Each participant is told in **advance** which private house in the Village they are to go to for their **starter** course, but they don't find out where to go for their **main** course until **after** their starter. After the main course, **everyone** from the whole Safari meets up in the **Village Hall** for **dessert** and **coffee**. The maximum price for this three-course meal, including wine with the first two courses, is **£32.50 per head**. The charge is reduced for those who **host** a course or provide a dessert.

Anyone with an **association** to Harwell village can take part. If you don't live **close** enough to the centre of the Village to **host** a course, then you can choose to **provide a dessert** or just come and **enjoy** the food. Couples are kept **together** but, apart from that, everyone is '**reshuffled**' after the starter, so you meet **different** people at each course. Please be aware that you may have to **walk** some distance between courses.

Over the years the Supper has raised many **thousands** of pounds for **local charities**. This year, as well as most of the profits going to support the excellent work of **1st Harwell Scout Group**, a donation will be made to support the meetings of **Sustainable Harwell**.

Typically, the Supper attracts up to **150 participants** but it couldn't happen without the generosity of the hosts who **welcome** villagers into their homes. **Thank you** to everyone who has done this over the years!

For more **information**, or to be added to the **mailing list**, please email **Debbie Greenfield** at the Harwell Safari email address (harwellsafari@gmail.com) and add this address to your Safe Senders list.



Cholsey Repair Café



Following the Festive Season, Cholsey Repair Café will be back on **Saturday 20th January** at the **Cholsey Pavilion**, hoping to help even more local residents to **repair** their broken items **instead** of buying new. Doors open at **11.00** and the session ends at **13.45**.

There is a **charge** for any **spare parts** needed but repair **help** is given **free** by volunteers — although a **donation** towards running costs is always **appreciated**. The fixing crew can look at **electrical** faults, **PAT testing**, **sharpening**, **bicycle** repairs, small **woodwork** jobs, **needlework**, general **gluing** and even **ultrasonic cleaning** of small items. **Advice** is freely available if a repair isn't possible on the day. More **information** can be found at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com

Harwell Gardeners' Club



We meet in St. Matthew's Church on the **first Monday** of every month normally at **7.30pm**. From September through to May to hear **talks** on a range of gardening subjects. In June, July and August we go out to **visit gardens** locally. In September we put on the **Village Produce Show** in the school.

We are a **friendly** group who are always willing to **share** our knowledge on gardening matters and we **welcome** visitors of any **age** and of any **ability** to any of our meetings - just come along. Your first visit is **free**.

On **Monday 8th January** we have our annual New Year visit from **Timothy Walker** who will give us a talk on '**Plants For Shade Woodland**'. The competition will be **Ferns**.



On **February 5th** our speaker will be **Lara Honnor** with the talk '**Skool Beanz - How To Inspire A Love Of Gardening In Children**'. Any families with children are very welcome to join us this evening. As it is a school night we have brought the start time **forward** to **7pm**, as Mr Gibson won't want any **sleepy** children in school the next day. The competition will be **A Garden In A Seed Tray**. Visitors are welcome to enter. There will be **free seeds** and **plants** for children.

Janice Markey, Chairman, [Harwell Gardeners' Club](http://HarwellGardenersClub.com)



Will there be too much January at the end of your money?

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CAP

If things are going to be **financially tight** after Christmas, it may be that a bit of **free budgeting help** will make all the **difference**.

Have a look here <https://capuk.org/get-help> at all the opportunities to get **money coaching** from award-winning charity CAP UK - including a short **day course** on **Saturday 3 February** in **Didcot** supported by a **grant** from the **Harwell Feast**. Call **07745 802030** or email harwellandchiltoncap@gmail.com for more info.

Budget, don't fudge it!

Harwell School Governor Vacancy

The Governing Board at Harwell Primary School has a vacancy for a **co-opted governor** and are seeking **candidates** from the **wider village community**.

We would **welcome** and **encourage** interest from candidates from **diverse** backgrounds.

If you are **interested**, please contact the **Clerk to Governors** by email clerk@harwellprimaryschool.co.uk who will arrange for the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors to **contact** you and discuss what is **involved** and the **time** commitment.



HARWELL VILLAGE HALL

Welcome back to Kath!

The Trustees would like to say a huge welcome back to former Trustee, **Kath Luker**, who re-joined us in November - it's great to have you back and we're looking forward to working with you again!

We are always happy to welcome new members to our team, if you would like to **help** with looking after the Village Hall in **any** way, do please **contact** us at chair@villagehall.co.uk, we would love to hear from you.



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News from Harwell Primary School



The second half of the **Autumn term** is busy with plenty of **opportunities** for parents to come into school, **see** their children's learning and be **part** of school life - parent-teacher **consultations**, KS1 **Nativity**, Reception Class **Christmas Play**, our traditional **Mummers Play**, carol **singing** around the village and a **lantern parade** with our Year 6 children.

This term, children have tried their hand at **golf** during a taster **workshop** and we have just booked '**Pop Lacrosse**' (primary school version of lacrosse) for **9th January** when we return from the Christmas Holidays. Something new for us - Lacrosse will feature for the first time as an **Olympic Sport** in 2028.

We have a **new team** leading the Harwell School Association who have been busy organising our Christmas Fair on **Friday 8th December**. Lots of fun, **music**, games, a **visit** from the 'man in red', stalls selling Christmas **gifts**, **Café** run by Harwell WI and the annual **Christmas Tree Festival** organised by **Little Pippins**. They were outside Bobs Butchers selling raffle tickets on 2nd December (big **thank you** to Danyelle & Bob) for lots of super prizes with the winning tickets drawn during the evening of the Christmas Fair.



Parents of Year 6 pupils have now all **submitted** their preference for secondary school places and the focus for **admissions** now moves to **new Reception** starters in September 2024 and we enjoyed welcoming prospective new parents to our **Open Morning** and **Open Evening** on 22nd November. The online Oxfordshire County Council system to apply for a Reception class school place for next September is now **live** and closes on **15th January**. If you missed our Open Day and have a child due to start school next September (children born between 1st September 2019 and 31st August 2020) please do **contact the school office** to arrange a look around our lovely school.

We are very pleased to be leading a very exciting project for **Service Families** having secured a grant from **The Service Covenant Fund** to support schools with small cohorts of service families.

Sending Seasons Greetings from all at Harwell Primary School.

Warm regards,

Bryn Gibson, Headteacher.



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Tea and coffee are provided

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For further information contact

heather.stevens46@btinternet.com



The Orchard Film Club

December 2023 Update



Our next film is on **Friday 15th December** and is **Three Thousand Years of Longing** starring Tilda Swinton as an academic who, whilst at a conference in Istanbul, encounters a Djinn played by Idris Elba who offers her three wishes in exchange for his freedom. It should be a wonderful escape from all the Christmas shopping and planning!

Upcoming films for 2024 - Save the dates!

- Friday 12th January - The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry" (12A)
- Friday 2nd February - film TBA
- Friday 1st March - film TBA
- Friday 12th April - film TBA

Details of films & trailers can be found on the [Harwell Village Hall Events](#) pages or look out for the posters on display around the village and in **Bob's Butchers** window.

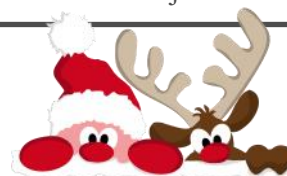


Visit our webpage [here](#) and/or [sign-up](#) to our regular newsletter. Please send your suggestions for films to: orchardfilmclub@gmail.com

Films are shown in the **Orchard Hall at Harwell Village Hall**, doors/bar open at 7pm & the film starts at 7.30pm. Tickets are £6 and available in advance from **Bob's Butchers** in the High Street, and on the door. See you soon! Alison, Martin and Janice.

COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNINGS

1st Thursday of the month 10.30am - St Matthew's Church
Fridays 11.00am - The Harwellian
All welcome - just turn up!



Harwell Parish History Group - October 2023

Our Spring Programme of Talks

- **20th March**, Dick Richards will speak on "Commonwealth War Graves";
- **17th April**, Brendan Bailey will give "Adnams Farmhouse Revisited";
- **15th May**, Clare Sargent's talk is "Capability Brown at Radley- rediscovering a lost landscape."



Many thanks to Patricia Cooke for organizing these. Look out for the **new displays** in the **Village Hall** which focus on the restoration of the 1703 church clock, and on Harwellians well known in science, the arts, etc.

Bringing in the Boar's Head : Queen's College and St. Edmund Hall

By the late middle ages, the **Christmas feast** given by a lord or a large institution often included a **procession** bearing a cooked



The month of January from the Canterbury Calendar c. 1280. Find the boar's head!

boar's head, accompanied by music and torches. This custom has deep roots.

For Vikings and Anglo-Saxons, the boar symbolized **strength** and **fertility**. The Norse god of fertility and harvest, **Frey**, rode the boar Gullinbursti (Gold Bristles); his sister **Freya**, goddess of love, fertility, battle and death (quite a combination) rode the boar Hildisvini (Battle Swine). At mid-winter feasts, boar was eaten with **apples**.

Queen's College, Oxford, continues the custom. Its own **legend** is that a fourteenth century Queen's student, studying a book by the philosopher **Aristotle**, in the quiet of Shotover Wood was **charged** by a wild boar. It was too late to run, so he thrust his book into the boar's **mouth**, choking it to death. A legend obviously created to explain a much older, widespread tradition! At Queen's, on the **entry** of the



A C19th image of an Elizabethan Boar's Head entry.

boar's head, in a silver dish presented in 1668, The Boar's Head **Carol** is sung. This version was published in 1521.

For a **brief** period in the early 1970s, St. Edmund Hall observed the same tradition, because the **Principal** was an alumnus of Queen's, and because two leaders of its Middle Common Room (one of which is the HPHG current Chair!) were keen on cooking and **food history**. Though founded before 1317, St. Edmund Hall was **overseen** by Queen's College until incorporated in 1957. It is named for St. Edmund of Abingdon, onetime Archbishop of **Canterbury**, who taught on the site in the 1190s. One year in the early 1970s, I was drafted into the carol-singing group at St. Edmund Hall, and my hair was **singed** by an over-enthusiastic torch-bearer.

To prepare a boar's head was **complicated**. It had to be boned, the meat separated from unwanted fat...all **without** piercing the skin...then **brined**, and **stuffed** with what in effect became a brawn. It was boiled for 4 -5 hours in a cloth, then pressed into a **mould** of the required shape. When cold, it was **decorated**, sometimes with a coloured glaze, but always with **rosemary** and bay, and with an **apple** or orange in its mouth. This very elite dish had its roots in the **usefulness** of the pig in centuries when no foodstuff was wasted. One can eat pretty much **all** of the pig in some form (including Bath chaps, pigs' trotters, black and white pudding, faggots, brawn etc.).

The Boar's Head Carol. It is "macaronic" because it uses two languages.

Chorus. *Caput apri deferro/ Reddens laudes Domino.* (I bring in the boar's head, giving thanks to God.)

- 1)The Boar's Head in hand bear I /Bedecked with bays and rosemary,
And I pray you my masters be merry/ *Qui estis in convivio.* (Who are at this feast/party)
- 2)The Boar's Head as I understand/Is the rarest dish in all this land,
Which thus bedecked with a gay garland/ Let us *servire cantico.* (Let us serve it with song.)
- 3)Our steward hath provided this/ In honour of the King of Bliss.

Which on this day to be served is/In *Reginensi atrio* (In the Queen's hall) OR *In Sanct'Edmundi atrio*

See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0x9Zczwsvhw> for a lively rendition by a noted Oxfordshire folk group, with historical pictures. <https://www.queens.ox.ac.uk/events/boars-head-gaudy-2023/> shows a splendid picture of a Queen's College boar's head. **JMC, DD and MF**



The Worshipful Company of Butchers process along Cheapside to the Mansion House, with drummers. For health and safety reasons, a papier mâché head is carried, while a real one is sent ahead for the Lord Mayor's Feast!

[The Boar's Head Ceremony - Butchers Company City of London. \(london-walking-tours.co.uk\)](https://www.london-walking-tours.co.uk/)



Age UK Oxfordshire is a local **independent charity** which helps enable older people in Oxfordshire to live life to the full. We provide free local information, advice, and a wide range of **support services**, from **exercise classes** and digital support to telephone **befriending** and bereavement support – with much more in between.

To find out more visit www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire , email: contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or call **0345 450 1276**.



Greetings from St Matthew's Harwell and All Saints' Chilton!

It's the **variety** that makes Christmas **magical** for me. Mince pies and **dodgy** knitwear, Santa and the **star** over the stable, silent nights and **pine** trees in party outfits. As short days grow shorter still, we **fill** them with fun and wait for that **special** day.

There's something for **everyone** in our churches over Christmas. What's your **favourite**? We have **carol services** that trace the story of Christmas, a chance to **decorate** the church Christmas trees, the magic of **crib services**, bells ringing out in **celebration** and, of course, **midnight** and **morning** services that usher in **Christmas Day**. What do you look **forward** to every year? What will you put in your **calendar** this year?

Christmas speaks to me of an **ancient mystery** freshly revealed: In an ordinary village, something **beautiful** happens: a baby is born. Beautiful, yes; **special**, yes; and also very, very **normal**. And yet...

We **sing** in the carol O Little Town of Bethlehem, "*The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*" This village, this baby, this moment is **remembered**, this story is told around the **world**, because to Christians it's the moment that God's love **breaks** into our lives. God sees us, **sees** our world, knows the **best** and the **worst** of our hearts, and does the last thing you'd ever have guessed: God **joins** us, becomes **one** of us. This helpless baby is the **Lord** of heaven.

I hope you will enjoy the sheer **variety** of seasonal celebrations. At their heart is a strange story that holds a **deep** and life-changing truth, **evidence** of God's amazing love for all people. May that love **enfold** you at this Christmas time.

Rev'd Jeremy Parsons

Rector, Harwell and Chilton Churches

What's coming up during December 2023 and January 2024

1st Thursday of the month - 10.30am to midday - Community Café at St Matthew's Harwell - please come along, bring **friends** and family for good free **coffee** and home-made **cake**.

Thursday midweek Communion 11.am

14th December All Saints' Chilton and **28th December** St Matthew's Harwell. **11th January** (BCP) All Saints' Chilton and **25th January** (BCP) St Matthew's Harwell. Everyone is welcome.

3rd Saturday of the month - 10am to midday Oasis Café at All Saints' Chilton - Everyone is welcome to come along to enjoy free **coffee** and a **chat** (always delicious biscuits and cakes too).



Monday mornings 9.30am-11.30am

St Matthew's Church

Wednesday mornings 9.30am-11.30am

Chilton Community Room.

A **free** playtime with **refreshments** for grown-ups and a **snack** for children. Singing songs and a short Christian focused story reminding us of God's amazing love for us and the world.

Both mornings run within term time only.

Christmas Services:

23rd Dec 3.30pm **Crib Service**, All Saints' Chilton

24th Dec 9.30am Morning Worship, All Saints' Chilton

10.30am Morning Worship, St Matthew's Harwell

3.30pm **Crib Service**, St Matthew's Harwell

10.00pm **Midnight Communion**, All Saints' Chilton

11.30pm **Midnight Communion**, St Matthew's Harwell

25th Dec 9.30am All Age **Christmas Day Communion**, All Saints' Chilton

10.30am All Age **Christmas Day Communion**, St Matthew's Harwell

Everyone is welcome

For full details of all our Sunday Services please look out for our flyer or consult the [calendar on our website](#).

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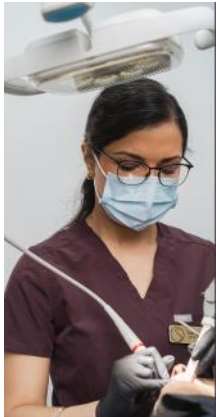
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Didcot and District U3A

In a recent **Radio 4** programme ('Just One Thing'), the BBC medical guru, **Dr Michael Moseley**, said how during our inevitable aging process & progress, we all need to keep **active** in mind, body and soul! This is never more important than for those who have **time** at hand, such as **retired** or **semi-retired** individuals. The **Didcot and District u3a** (University of the Third Age) can provide 'Learn, Laugh, Live'!

So every **Third Tuesday** of the month at the **Didcot Civic Hall** we hold meetings starting at **2.30pm** with an informative get together over coffee, tea and biscuits and learn about and the numerous **Interest Groups** available most week days. These include learn a new **language** (choose from 4!), gardening, **nature** and social walks, wine appreciation (4 more groups!), **family history**, science maths & **technology**, photography, **ukulele** and many more!

In addition, during the monthly meetings there is a Guest Speaker giving interesting talks:

- **16th January** - The Joys and Perils of being an Author - Colin Wade
- **20th February** - How to be Gardener in the 21st Century - Timothy Walker
- **19th March** - Curiosities in the Cotswolds Part 1 - Alan Copeland
- **16th April** - Coaches and Coach Horses, their story from the Golden Age to the Present Day! - Colin Pawson

Hopefully something for everyone and we look forward to welcoming new and returning members.

For further information contact either chairman@didcotu3a.org or secretary@didcotu3a.org,

You can find the u3a Thames Valley Network events and information about national u3a events by visiting u3asites.org.uk

And always remember... 'Learn , Laugh, Live! Happy Christmas to all!

Brush & Lynn - Didcot & District u3a - PR



You could help brighten older people's lives

While our volunteers are currently supporting over **375 people** with a free, weekly telephone call, there are **thousands** more who could benefit from the service.

With **1 in 5** older people in Oxfordshire reporting feeling **lonely**, and as we move into winter with **colder** and **shorter** days heightening feelings of loneliness and **isolation**, our service really is needed **more than ever**.

Volunteering as a **Phone Friend** requires a minimum commitment of **1 hour per week** which enables you to call up to **3 people** and can be at a **regular** time that **suits you**. Calls can be made from the comfort of your **own home** and any **expenses** for call costs are **covered**.

If you're friendly and feel comfortable **talking** whilst also providing a **listening** ear, you could bring **comfort** and **friendship** to local older people this winter.

To register your **interest** in supporting us to reduce loneliness amongst local older people please call **01295 234 850** or visit

www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/get-involved/volunteer/telephone-befriending-volunteer for more information.



Winter Hub: Please help us support older people in Oxfordshire

We have brought together some **useful information** and resources in the form of an **online Winter Hub** - please **share** this resource with both older people **and** those supporting them this winter. <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/about-us/winter-hub/>

We are also aware that not everyone **has** or **wants** access to the internet so we have created **physical Winter Wellbeing packs** which we can **post out** to you for any older people or groups you support / connect with.

These contain (see picture):

- An introductory letter
- Our 'Little Handbook of our Services'
- A Live Well Oxfordshire bookmark
- An Oxfordshire Talking Therapies leaflet
- Our Cost-of-Living Payment Grid
- A Winter Wrapped up Guide (from Age UK)

Please get in touch via contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or **0345 450 1276** if it would be helpful to receive some packs, or any of these items individually. Just a reminder too that we have a **Cost-of-Living Hub** on our website with lots of useful information - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/about-us/cost-of-living-hub/>



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

news@harwellparish.co.uk

Printed copies of the Harwell News will be available for collection at the Harwell Newsagents, Bob's Butchers, the Harwellian, St Matthew's church porch and in Harwell Village Hall for users. It is available online at <https://www.harwellparish.co.uk/harwell-news/>

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Advertising queries to the clerk.

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

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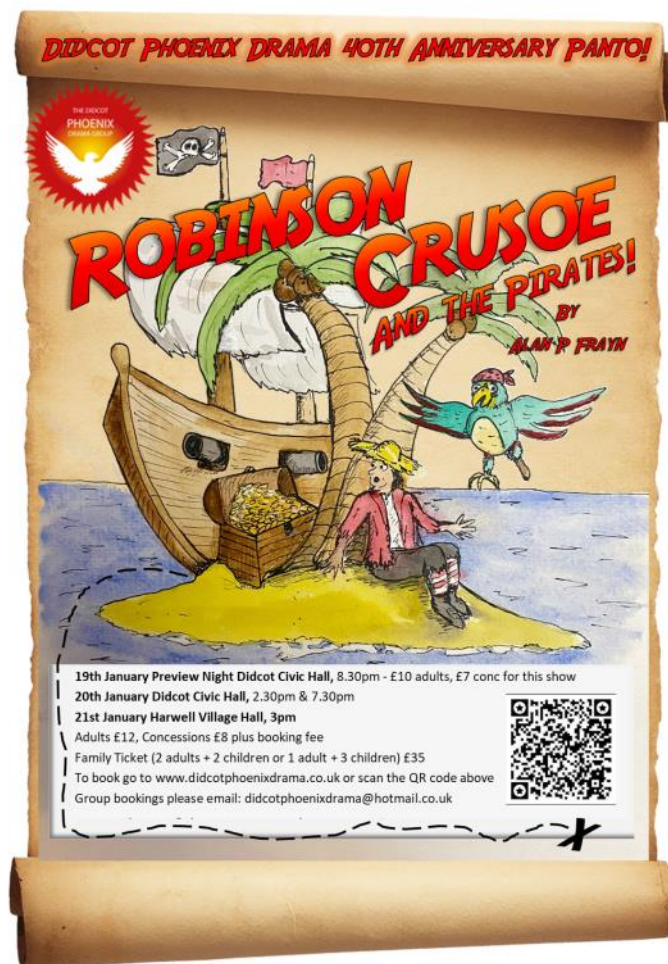
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Harwell Squirrels



Santas Grotto!

Harwell Christmas Tree Festival
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