

The Harwell News

harwellparish.gov.uk

Harwell Swifts meet the Cubs

Susan and Jerry Pride of Harwell Swifts held **three** informative sessions with the 1st Harwell (St. Matthew's)

Cubs where the children were **amazed** to learn about the **mysterious** life of the swift.

They learned that the swift **never** **lands** except to **breed**. They fly **continuously** once they leave the nest and must be at **least three** years old before they can breed. That means they will leave the nest,

fly straight to **Africa**, and stay in Africa for our winter, fly back **here** in the summer, then **back** to Africa and stay there in our winter and then fly back **here** **again** in our summer – all **without landing**. They are chasing the summer. A continuous flight of at least three years. They eat, sleep, drink and even mate on the wing.

The Cubs were delighted to learn about the swifts that breed in **Harwell** village and were very keen to **help** Harwell Swifts provide some future swift homes by **assembling** some swift boxes. As swifts are **endangered**, they need swift boxes on our homes and buildings to nest. Sadly, some of the swift fledglings don't make it, and are especially **vulnerable** to extreme temperatures. They can't fly until they are **six weeks old**, and if they fall from their high nest, they need **immediate** help from an expert. They cannot fly away and **cannot** survive on the ground - a young bird on the ground is in **trouble**.

Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue based in Blewbury is the nearest **expert** centre to contact. We have **many** swift nests on our houses in Harwell – this is **not common** in the UK, so Harwell Swifts are trying to help preserve the colony for **future** generations like the Cubs. Some of the Cubs were keen to have boxes on their houses and these were installed by Harwell Swifts after the sessions. Hopefully, these will attract some swifts when the swifts return next year.



Cubs making a swift box



Jerry installing a swift box



Inside this issue

• Age UK	6
• Almshouses	2
• Big Ginger Tom Music	10
• Cholsey Repair Café	4
• Cholsey Village Show	16
• Church News	14
• Citizens Advice	11
• Craft Group & Hare Trail	12
• D-Day Service	9
• Didcot Phoenix Drama Group	6
• Fun Club Appeal	14
• Gardeners' Club	3
• Harwell Community Park Fit	12
• Harwellian	7, 16
• Harwell Swifts cover story	
• Harwell WI	6
• Healthwatch Oxfordshire	7
• History Group	13
• Local government reorg.	5
• Olly Glover, MP	5
• Orchard Film Club	12
• Oxme.info	7
• Parish Council	4
• PC Archives	15
• Police & Crime Commissioner	10, 15
• Summer Reading Challenge	3
• U3A	14
• Village Hall	2
• Wild Oxfordshire	8

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The Francis Geering Almshouses - Phase 1 Works Complete



The Frances Geering Almshouses in Harwell, Oxfordshire, a listed building built in 1734 with funds bequeathed in Frances Geering's will, provide vital, **affordable** homes. For years, residents suffered from significant **damp** issues, exacerbated by previous **inappropriate** repairs, making living conditions **challenging**. This **multi-phase restoration** effort began in 2024 following a Quinquennial review by the trustees.

We're incredibly proud to announce that **Phase 1** of our comprehensive renovation is now **complete**! Thanks to very **generous donations** and a vital **£50,000 interest-free loan** from The Almshouse Association, we successfully tackled the **root causes** of the damp. Key works included installing new independent foul and storm water **drainage** systems, replacing old

windows with new **double-glazed** sash units, re-plastering internal and external walls with **breathable** lime-based materials, and undertaking crucial **structural reinforcements**, including steel rods and oak beam replacements, after unexpected discoveries of shifted brickwork. Our residents now enjoy **warmer** homes, **lower** heating bills, and **no signs** of damp.

The preservation journey continues - Phase 2

We are now eagerly looking to **Phase 2**, which is crucial for the **long-term integrity** and **safety** of these historic homes. This next phase will specifically focus on:

- Essential **roof** and **gully** structural repairs: These are vital to prevent future water ingress from above, safeguarding the entire building.
- Comprehensive brickwork **re-pointing**: This work is critical to maintain the structural integrity and aesthetic appeal of the 300-year-old facade, ensuring its longevity.

Phase 2 is **pending fundraising** success and will commence **once adequate funds are secured**.

We expect this phase to cost between £45,000 and £75,000. Your contribution is **more vital than ever** to help us secure the funds for these **critical** works and ensure these beautiful Almshouses **continue** to provide safe, warm homes for **future** generations.

Any amount, no matter how small, is gratefully received - every £5 will help us reach our target.

To donate, [click this link](#) or scan the QR code (right). Thank you for your support.

Frances Geering Almshouse Trustees



HARWELL VILLAGE HALL



CHARITY NUMBER 1157858

Firstly we want to say a **huge thank you** to **Duncan Chappell** who has held the role of Chair of Trustees since February 2021, his contribution to the hall has been **enormous**, both as Chair and through Big Ginger Tom Music. Duncan is staying on as a Trustee in the **short term** but is planning to travel a lot more in his new camper van! He will be much missed when he leaves.

Trustee Vacancies - our current trustees have been in their roles for many years and **two** are planning to **step away** by year end, so we are also looking for **volunteers** with a **few hours** to spare each month who would like to get involved with the village hall and consider **becoming** a Trustee. If you have some **spare time**, or work for a company that gives you **paid leave** to volunteer, please consider **joining us**, we have some interesting projects coming up and would love some help to deliver them!

Our bookings admin team, cleaners and caretaker handle the **day-to-day** running of the hall and as a Trustee you will help with **strategic planning**, **projects delivery** and **oversight**, etc.

As a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation), being a trustee does **not** attract any financial liability.

Please contact us at chair@harwellvillagehall.co.uk to find out more!

Decarbonisation of the Village Hall - we are mid-way through our plan to decarbonise the village hall to help **protect** the **environment** and shelter the hall from fossil fuel price **volatility**. The first stage involved the installation of **solar panels** and a **large battery**, and was completed in 2023. Since then, this system has been quietly delivering loads of **free electricity** to the hall which has helped keep costs and charges **down**.



Now we are embarking on the **second stage** of the plan, to **remove gas** from the hall and we are reaching out to **suppliers** and **grant providers** to help us with this. We aim to convert the **Cherry Hall** from gas to an electrically driven **heat pump system** which will **heat** the hall in the winter and provide **air conditioning** to cool the hall on hot summer days. Naturally, this will make use of the free power we are producing on our roof top. If you would like to be **involved** in this exciting village **community project**, please do **get in touch** to find out more.

Alison Fautley, Acting Chair of Trustees



Grow your child's imagination - It's summer reading challenge time!

All our libraries are ready for this year's challenge, which runs from **now until Saturday 6 September**. This summer, step into the magical world of **Story Garden**, where children will uncover stories that **celebrate** the **great outdoors** and the **power of imagination**. This is a fantastic opportunity to get kids **engaged** with books and **reading** over the holidays, collecting **rewards** as they read. It's **fun**, it's **free**, it's **local**. Head to your local library to sign up.

How to take part - Children will need to be members of Oxfordshire Libraries – [Join online now](#), it's free!

Children can sign up for the challenge at their nearest library and tell us about the great books they have read.

Children get a bright Story Garden **booklet** to track their library books. Each time they visit and talk about a book, they earn a **sticker**. When they finish, they get a **medal** and a **certificate**. Also, **ALL** finishers will receive a **Golden Ticket** for the **prize draw** to win a **fabulous goodie bag** full of Story Garden delights from their Library!

Harwell Gardeners' Club



Harwell Gardeners' Club meets on the first **Monday of the month** in **St Matthew's Church** at **7.30pm**. Visitors are always welcome. Your first visit is **free**. Upcoming events are as follows:

- **Monday 4th August** - A garden visit to 'Green And Gorgeous Balliff's House' Little Stoke, Wallingford. **£15 per person** to include refreshments. Visitors welcome. Please call **Kate Hunneman** on **01235 835163** to book a place.
- **Monday 1st September** - 'Early Women Professional Gardeners' a talk by Katherine Bradley.
Competition : Purple, White & Green.
Tomato Tasting - bring along your named favourite tomato.
- **Saturday 13th September** - The Produce Show



Staged in Harwell School, schedules are now available in Bob's Butchers. Classes are **open to all** - you do not need to be a member of Gardeners' Club to take part. There are classes for fruit, veg, herbs, flowers, arts & crafts, domestic cooking & flower arranging - for **adults** and for **children**.

Doors open at 3pm for general viewing with **prizegiving at 4.15pm**.

- **Hanging Basket Competition** for the **John Mackerness Trophy**



To be judged in situ during the **week prior** to the Produce Show. Baskets must be at the **front** of your property. Trophy to be awarded at the show. Entries to be emailed to Janice on jvmarkey@googlemail.com. Closing date: 31st August 2025.

- **Monday 6th October** - 'Apples - The Myth Mystery of England's Favourite Fruit', a talk by Tim Healey.
Competition : Apple Pie
Apple Variety Display from the Community Orchard.
Spiced Apple Punch Refreshments



Janice Markey, Chairman, [Harwell Gardeners' Club](#)





Harwell Parish Council Update

There's a **lot going on** at the Parish Council. Consider some of the decisions made at the most recent meeting...

Footpath

The Council approved Cllr Davidson-Locke's proposal to **confirm** the Public Right of Way with an application to OCC for entry into the Definitive Map for the footpath **linking** two parts of **Westfield Road** and work with the landowner (Vale of White Horse District Council) to establish its **maintenance** so as to avoid problems of use, especially in the winter months when it becomes muddy.

Pump track

Pump tracks are **popular** in the local area and Long Wittenham offers a successful local precedent, having constructed a **volunteer-led** pump track at Acklings with **active involvement** from residents.

It was decided to **move forward** with plans for a community-designed and built pump track in **Harwell** with **two core areas**, one restricted for **younger children** and the other for more **experienced users**. This approach supports **youth engagement**, offers a **designated** area for cycling, and provides a long-term **asset** for the community.

The **concept** of a pump track was approved by the Harwell Parish Council some years ago, and **£106 monies** (funds paid by developers, negotiated by the District Council when approving planning applications) were **reserved** for this.

We would like to **thank** Long Wittenham Parish Council for their helpful **information** and **guidance**. Their community pump track project is being used as a **reference** case to inform the approach proposed for Harwell.

The Council is seeking **volunteers** (young people and adults) to help us **deliver** this exciting project. If interested, please contact **the Clerk**.

Pedestrian Crossings

There was a motion put forward by Cllr Lacy to work through the process (design, consultation, seek funding and commission) to install pedestrian crossings on the **A417/Reading Road** for the benefit of **pedestrians** and **cyclists**, and at the same time introduce a **traffic calming effect** on a stretch of the road that has a high volume of traffic and frequently record **excessive speeds**. Though the final Parish Council decision was **deferred** until after confirmation from Oxfordshire County Council that the plan is **acceptable** and to confirm available funding, the intent is that this be brought up at the next meeting (September 9th) for a **final go-ahead**.

Councillor Vacancies

Harwell Parish Council currently has **three vacant seats**, and we're inviting residents who **care** about our community to **get involved**. If you're **passionate** about local issues, want to help **shape the future** of Harwell, and are willing to give a **bit** of your **time**, it would be **great** to hear from you.

If there are any **residents (18yrs +)** **looking to improve their CV**, consider getting involved with the Parish Council. **No** previous council **experience** is **necessary** - just a genuine interest in the community and a desire to **give back**. To express your interest or find out more, please contact the Parish Clerk at clerk@harwellparish.gov.uk or **07749 361957** for more information, or pop in during **Office Hours** (10am-2pm Tuesday and Thursdays, other times by appointment) for a **chat**.

The recent meeting also confirmed **approvals** for the **Scout hut/ acoustic panels**, the use of the Rec by the Harwellian for an **out-door music** and **picnic** (subject to parking issues being addressed), and to address some **overgrown conifers** near the cemetery.

Wouldn't you like to get involved?

As ever the best way to **contact the Council** is via **email**: Clerk@HarwellParish.gov.uk or by phone if email is not available to you **07749 361957**. Both contact methods are being monitored regularly, but please bear with us it may take up to 72 hours us to reply.

Bryan Urbick, Clerk (locum)



Cholsey Repair Café - 20th September

The next bi-monthly session of Cholsey Repair Café will be held on **Saturday 20th September** at the **Cholsey Pavilion**, with doors open between **10.00 and 12.45**. The usual **wide range** of repair assistance will be available from skilled fixers.

Special services may include clock- and furniture repairs, replacing watch batteries and ultrasonic cleaning, although it's advisable to **contact** the organisers beforehand if you need this kind of help. As ever, repair assistance and **advice** are given **free** but **parts** must be **paid** for and a **modest donation** towards running costs is always **appreciated**. The **Cholsey Community Café** will be right next door to serve **refreshments**.

For more information, check www.cholseyrepaircafe.com or email repaircafe@cholsey.com

A Message from Your MP

I spoke on the radio this week about the **proposed reservoir** and why I have concerns. There's understandable **anxiety** in the local community, especially given Thames Water's **shaky finances**, poor record on **leaks**, and questions around **value for money** for bill payers. They've held glossy **exhibitions** but what they haven't done is **face opponents** in a proper public debate. I've called on them to do just that.



Learner drivers are still waiting **far too long** to get a driving test. Despite plans announced last year to increase the number of examiners and improve the booking system, constituents are still having to wait **many months**, or travel **huge distances** to take driving tests. Others feel forced to pay hundreds of pounds to buy driving test slots from 'middlemen'. Based on the number of my Liberal Democrats colleagues who have signed my letter to the minister asking for a progress update and how the DVSA are being held account for hitting wait time targets, this is a persistent problem nationwide.

Last week I had the pleasure of co-chairing an event organised by **Be Free Young Carers** bringing together inspiring charity, **education** and council **professionals** to discuss ideas to **improve support** for young carers across Oxfordshire. Young people with caring responsibilities are far more likely than their peers to be **absent** from school and achieve **poorer** educational outcomes. Lots of ideas for improving **identification** of and **support** for young carers were generated. Supporting young carers and tackling this **inequality** needs continued **multi-agency** working and **sustainable** funding. You can read more at: [Oxford Mail](#).

Access to **NHS services** was one of the biggest issues raised with me during the General Election campaign. Since then, I've visited local **GP surgeries**, met with **dentists** and **pharmacists**, raised concerns about **National Insurance** in Parliament, and secured regular public updates on the **GWP surgery**. I'm committed to making sure residents can get the care they need — and I'll keep working to improve access across our community.

As always, feel free to contact me at Olly.glover.MP@parliament.uk (or leave a voice message at **0207 219 7657**) if there is anything I can help with.

For more regular updates you can follow me on Bluesky: [@ollyglover.bsky.social](#) and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OllyGloverLD/>

Olly.



Oxford County Council: your councils are changing

The government wants to simplify the structures of councils.

Right now there are **six councils** across Oxfordshire, all delivering services that affect your lives. Everything from **roads** to **rubbish** and from **housing** to **social care**.

County and district councils will be **replaced** with a **unitary council** or **councils**.

It's a chance to make things **simpler** and more **connected** to you and your communities.

So let's do it **properly**. **One place** for your question. **One place** to get it done. **One council** for Oxfordshire. We think it just makes **sense**. We'd like to hear your **opinion**.

Proposals for local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire

In February 2025, the government invited councils in Oxfordshire to submit an **interim proposal** or proposals for local government reorganisation, with full proposals by **28 November 2025**. There are **three options** being developed for Oxfordshire.

1. **A single unitary council** for Oxfordshire – Oxfordshire Council (responsible for all services for Oxfordshire residents). This is our **preferred** option.

2. **Two unitary councils:**

- Oxford and Shires Council (previously referenced as North Oxfordshire Council) created from the existing district councils of Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire.
- Ridgeway Council created from the existing district councils of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse and the unitary council of West Berkshire.

3. **Three unitary councils** – with a unitary city on expanded boundaries (referred to as Greater Oxford) as well as northern and southern unitaries, also including West Berkshire.

Oxfordshire County Council's preferred option is for a single unitary council for Oxfordshire. We believe a single unitary council for Oxfordshire will create stronger, simpler services that are closer to communities, cost effective and connected.

To find out more and to have your say, please visit ["Let's talk Oxfordshire"](#) and take the survey.



Harwell WI

For the attention of all the women of Harwell and the surrounding area. Harwell WI is a **thriving** organisation for any woman who wishes to join us, **meet** different people and forge **friendships**. We have some very interesting topics for the next few months as the nights start drawing in and this heatwave becomes a distant memory.

At present we are busy making poppies for a Remembrance Day display in the village. We also take part in the village Hare Trail and the Christmas Tree Festival.

Below are what you can look forward to hearing and joining in with for the next few months:

- **August:** NO MEETING (Garden Party for members only on 14th)
- **September 10th:** Birds, Bees, Butterflies and Bugs through a lens by David Marsh
- **October 8th:** The Role of Pain. (Ouch it hurts – But why?) by Daniel Ruby
- **November 12th:** The Life of Estee Lauder by Jane Sampson
- **December 10th:** Christmas Party for Members



Harwell WI welcomes, supports and inspires all women. We meet on the **second Wednesday** of each month at **7.30pm** in **Cherry Hall** at **Harwell Village Hall**, where we are entertained by interesting and informative Speakers, followed by a cup of tea/coffee and cake/biscuits, and a good chat. All visitors are made very welcome, and you will not be on your own, so come along and see for yourselves what we are all about. You won't be disappointed. In addition to the monthly meetings Harwell WI also organize days out, **walks**, crafts, **Knit & Natter** group. You also have the opportunity to attend various events held by **Oxfordshire Federation WI**. These include crafts, day trips and holidays. These events are advertised in the monthly WI magazine *Oxfordshire Inspires*. If you would like to know **more** or have any **queries** please email: harwellwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk Lesley Muddiman

Didcot Phoenix Drama Group Showcase - Friday 12th September

Didcot Phoenix Drama Group are pleased to present a **Showcase evening** of **two award winning one-act plays**, on **Friday 12th September at 7.30pm in Harwell Village Hall**. Reviving two pieces from this year's Oxfordshire theatre festival season, we bring you **Visitors** by Emma Gardner and **Calling All the Dreamers** by Adelina Inganno.



'Visitors' is a situation comedy set at **Little Denys Castle**, England's most boring ancient monument, where the staff are facing an **unexpected** new phenomenon: visitors. Site manager Freya, pedantic volunteer Joan, and work experience student Sally must overcome **fudge shrapnel**, new-age gardeners and **flying tomatoes** to convince the tourists that Little Denys is worth visiting. Above all, they must **stop** their unexpected visitors escaping to Beaumaven – the grand castle next door, whose site manager, Shirley, would very much like her visitors back. The play was first performed at the **2025 Henley Drama Festival**, where Jo Easterbrook (Freya) was nominated for Best Actress, with subsequent performances at the Oxfordshire Drama Network Festival and the Wallingford Corn Exchange Drama Festival, where Natasha Anderson (Sally) won Best Supporting Actress.

'Calling All the Dreamers' is inspired by the works of Dario Fo. This is a world where **Artificial Intelligence** has seeped into every corner of daily life. It is a fast-paced, **absurdist farce** that follows the working class as they struggle to navigate an increasingly AI driven society that leaves people like them behind. Brimming with **black humour**, social commentary and biting **satire**, Calling All the Dreamers is a wake-up call and a warning about the promises and risks **new technology** brings.

Tickets are **£10** and **£7** available in **advance** from www.ticketsource.co.uk/didcot-phoenix-drama-group or on the **door**.

Jon & Alison Driscoll, Didcot Phoenix Drama Group



Oxfordshire Age UK Oxfordshire is a local independent charity supporting older people in Oxfordshire. We have a variety of **services** available to help you to live **independently** and live life to the **full**. Our services range from **support at home** to helping **link** you into your **community**, from **foot care** clinics to **exercise** classes. We offer a **free information** and **advice** helpline, as well as one-to-one support if you have been a victim of a **scam**.

Please visit www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire email: contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or call **0345 450 1276**.

Proud to offer our services to the Harwell community

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www.theoxfordsmileclinics.co.uk

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01235 813245

Tell us about using the NHS App!

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to hear about your **experiences** of using the **NHS App** to manage your health and care.

We want to know things like:

- Have you **heard** of the NHS App?
- Do you **use it**, or do you prefer to **deal directly** with your GP practice?
- Would you **like** to use the app but **can't**?
- What works **well** and what **doesn't**?



Whether you use the NHS App or not, we would **really** like to hear from you.

Please share your views and experiences by **completing our short anonymous survey** <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/AppNHS/>

The survey will be open until **Friday 15th August**.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire is an **independent charity** for people who use health and social care services. It finds out what **matters** to local people and ensures their views are **heard** by decision-makers.

We will use your feedback to **tell** the people **in charge** of local NHS services how **well** the app is working and what could be **better**.

If you would like a **paper copy** of our survey or would prefer to **talk to us** about this please contact Healthwatch Oxfordshire on **01865 520520** or at hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

To find out more about the work of Healthwatch Oxfordshire see www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

healthwatch
Oxfordshire

Using the NHS App
Tell us your views!
Fill in our short survey

Everything for young people

Oxme.info is packed with information for **young people**, aged 11 to 18.

From **next steps** in education, work and training to local services offering **health** and **wellbeing** support.

Visit <https://oxme.info/> to find out more...



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The Harwellian Club

ROCK ON THE REC

"Get ready to rock out at Harwell's new event, "Rock on the Rec"! The perfect opportunity to enjoy some great music in the great outdoors. Grab your friends and family, and come join us for a day of tunes and treats. Don't forget your wet weather gear, just in case the skies decide to join in the fun. Let's make some memories together!"

Sat 6th Sept
All afternoon

Drinks & snacks available from
The Harwellian

CONFIRMED ACTS:
FROGSTAR
DUMBER THAN CHICKENS
THE BAGG'S TREE BUSKERS
VOCALIZE COMMUNITY CHOIR

Organised by The Harwellian Club for Harwell villagers. Please walk to the Rec and leave the Car Park for those less able.

RIDGEWAY FUNERAL SERVICE

A CHAPEL IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRYSIDE
Hill Farm, Church Lane, Steventon, OX13 6SW
www.ridgewayfuneralservice.co.uk
info@ridgewayfunerals.co.uk
01235 355269

August News – Share your wildlife sightings!

The value of contributing wildlife records – please help

Everyone can play a part in the submitting of wildlife observations to local **Environmental Records Centres**. This is so that they appear on the “official record” that is consulted by **planning authorities** and used by other parties to track changes in **distribution** and **abundance**.

As well as the value of the data submitted, keeping a systematic note of what you see on your **walks** and in your **gardens** adds extra interest and depth to the experience, and can help you to improve your identification **skills**.

How: using iRecord

A great way of easily logging records is via the [iRecord](https://irecord.org.uk) website or app, from which Records Centres like our [Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre \(TVERC\)](https://www.tverc.org/) can extract data. You can also send records **direct** to TVERC to ensure they get them in a timely fashion – and see below for how you can contribute even if you **don't** get on with iRecord.

Local groups or parishes can provide **focus** to their efforts by setting up an “**Activity**” within iRecord, whereby all records submitted by participants, within a designated **geographical area** or within specified window of **time**, will combine to form an easily accessible overview of what has been seen and where, including a **species list**.

You can, of course submit via iRecord observations from **beyond** the activity area and historic observations (as long as you still have the relevant information to hand). For greatest efficiency, we recommend that anyone who is interested in contributing to this effort, or perhaps **already** keeps records of observations but has not shared them, creates their **own** iRecord **account** and uses that to record their sightings; to do this, go to <https://irecord.org.uk>. There is an option to start in “**training mode**”, which allows you to get used to the system of submitting records without risk of causing any damage! And even in live mode, iRecord uses a system of **checks** to assess records, so that the **risk** of erroneous records getting on the official record is **minimised**. You can also attach **photos** to records to assist with this.

Once you have an account, you can find your group's Activity by **searching** Activities and the name of your **group** or **parish**. If it is a “member-only” Activity, your application to join will need to be approved by the group's **administrators** before you can access the activity.

Other methods of submitting observations

If you do not have the means to use iRecord, you can record your observations in a **field notebook** and ask someone in your group to **upload** your data for you. If this is not possible, then you can **submit** your field notebooks to **TVERC**. They will need certain **key** pieces of **information**: species name, name of observer, location name (provide the name of the site, ideally using one that is recognisable from an OS map; **do not** enter a postal address as the information you provide will be visible to others), grid reference, and date of observation.

If you have **multiple** observations to report, then you will need to upload the records as a **spreadsheet**. In this case, please provide the information either in a spreadsheet format with headings as described above, or otherwise such that we can easily **transfer** it into a spreadsheet. You can also download TVERC's spreadsheet templates [here](https://www.tverc.org/records/share-your-records). You can find more information on how to submit your records, including links to **video guides**, on the [TVERC website](https://www.tverc.org/records/share-your-records) (<https://www.tverc.org/records/share-your-records>).

How your records are used

Your records are first **validated** (checked for location errors) and **verified** (checked for species identification errors) before they are entered into the TVERC database. This ensures that the data passed on to decision-makers is as **accurate** and informative as possible. The records are shared with **local authorities** in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire **Wildlife Trust** and the **Environment Agency**. They are also provided through data searches to **local groups**, parish councils, ecological **consultants** and **researchers**. The information is used:

- by **planning authorities** and developers to make informed decisions on the design and location of sustainable development
- to help farmers, landowners and conservation organisations **manage land** in the best way to enhance biodiversity
- by **nature partnerships** to direct wildlife conservation work
- by teachers, students and scientists for **education** and scientific **research**

The database currently holds over **5 million records**, including over 1.1 million records of **Protected** and **Notable species** i.e. those that should be taken into account in planning applications. The vast majority of records in the TVERC database are collected by **volunteers** and **local wildlife groups**, showing just how **vital** your efforts are. So please, make your nature spotting **count** and submit your records to TVERC.

Joanna Higson, TVERC Biological Recording Co-ordinator joanna.higson@oxfordshire.gov.uk <https://www.tverc.org/>

Check out our **Wild Oxfordshire's** website to find out more about the many ways you can [support us](https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/) and our [recent achievements](https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/).

<https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/>

Wild 
Oxfordshire



*Snakes-head fritillary,
Sophie Cunnington,
Wild Oxfordshire*

D-Day Service at the RAF Harwell Memorial Stone, 7th June 2025

This year's Commemoration was supported in **good numbers**, despite the **poor weather** forecast. Fortunately, the rain stopped and the skies **cleared** just for the duration of the Service.

The event was jointly organised by the **Harwell Branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL)** and **Natalie Gelder of Harwell Campus** with the support of **Harwell and Chilton Churches**.

The attendees were welcomed by **Group Captain David Drew**, President of Berkshire and the Vale County RBL. The Guest of Honour was **Major Jim Sibbald**, National Trustee of the RBL. He explained the **significance** of the site and commemoration, and the new **artwork** which had been unveiled during the previous week.

A total of **40 wreaths** were laid by a **wide range** of organisations: The wreath laying was led by the Guest of Honour, followed by Chilton Parish Council, Vale of the White Horse District Council, Didcot, Wantage and Abingdon Town Mayors, and Councillors from Harwell and Grove. The **Armed Forces** were represented by Officers from 4 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps from Dalton Barracks, 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Regiment from Vauxhall Barracks, and RAF Benson.

Wreaths were also laid by many **Veterans organisations** from across Oxfordshire and Berkshire, as well as representatives from **Campus businesses** and other local organisations, concluded by **Chilton School pupils** who laid Poppies and Crosses.

A joint **Guard of Honour** was formed by the Didcot Detachment Army Cadet Force, and the Wantage and Didcot Squadrons of the Air Training Corps. Standards were not paraded due to the weather conditions, so the **Standard Bearers** formed part of the Guard of Honour.

The Parade was marshalled by **Angela Logue** of Newbury Branch and Berkshire County RBL. The Service was conducted by **Rev. Jeremy Parsons**, and The Last Post was sounded by **Richard Selvidge** of the Wantage Silver Band.

Poppy Appeal collection buckets and a card reader were circulated during the event and raised **£115**, with thanks to **Hazel Benton** for her efforts.

Thanks are also due to **Natalie Gelder** of Harwell Campus for the site preparation and management, printing a significant number of service sheets and granting permission and access to hold the event, and to **Alan Proctor** (and team) for managing the car parking and event security, also **St. John Ambulance** for providing first aid cover.

Peter Cox, Harwell RBL Branch Secretary



Big Ginger Tom Music - Gig Review



Tony Christie & Ranagri on Friday 18th July

The audience for another **sold out** gig at Harwell Village Hall was treated to a **delightful** evening of music inspired by the **Emerald Isle**. This was the second date in the four date **Great Irish Songbook tour**, with Sheffield being the night before and Barnard Castle and Inverness to follow next weekend.

Set one was kicked off by **Ranagri** who played their instrumental track **The Hare**, always a good song to start a gig with, Tony **Christie** (aka Anthony Fitzgerald) then came on and the delivery of



songs from **both** Great Irish Songbook albums with a bit of **banter** about Tony's background in between.

The end of each set was rewarded with **rapturous** applause. For those who like the details, here is the set list...

Set one: The Hare - She Moves Through The Fair - Star of County Down - Galway Shawl - Paddy's Green Shamrock Shore - Raglan Road - Whiskey in the Jar - Wild Mountain Thyme

Set two: An Darreen - Lord Franklin - Whiskey You're The Devil - Rocky Road to Dublin - Sweet Sixteen - Leaving of Liverpool - Black Velvet Band

Encore: Leave Her Johnny

There was of course many opportunities for **audience participation** and everyone was in **good voice** for the likes of Whiskey in the Jar, Wild Mountain Thyme, Leaving of Liverpool and Black Velvet Band.

There were **plenty** of people who queued at the merch desk to **pre-order** the new album and **talk** with the artists. A good night was had by all with much **excited** talk as people exited into the now **cooler** evening air.

See the poster below for future dates this autumn!

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 at www.harwellvillagehall.co.uk/events or go to the BGTM website at www.biggingertommusic.co.uk/events

Duncan Chappell, Big Ginger Tom Music For some more cracking music, check out *Folkin' Around* on Radio Cherwell - <https://radiocherwell.com/our-programmes/listen-again>

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SATURDAY 01 NOVEMBER - EDWINA HAYES - SUPPORT: BARTON HARTSHORN
FRIDAY 21 NOVEMBER - NINEBARROW
FRIDAY 05 DECEMBER - RUSTY SHACKLE - SUPPORT: CRAIG JOINER

BIGGINGERTOMMUSIC@GMAIL.COM
BIGGINGERTOMMUSIC.CO.UK

SCAN FOR TICKETS

Thames Valley Police cracks down on crime in town and city centres

Thames Valley Police will be **increasing** police officers' presence and working with partners to tackle **urban crime** to ensure people feel safe from July to the end of September, for the national **Safer Streets** Summer campaign.

Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner Matthew Barber said: "Each year, Thames Valley Police plans for a potential **increase** in antisocial behaviour.

"I support the work being done to **increase** the visibility of officers and tackle ASB and retail crime in our streets, as these offences really **matter**."

People visiting town and city centres this summer will see **more** neighbourhood police officers on patrol, so please feel free to **speak** to them and share any **concerns**.

Local policing teams will also be organising days of **action** and **operations** to tackle issues such as **illegal e-scooters**, street crime, **shoplifting**, and other offences that affect communities most.

Furthermore, existing Public Spaces Protection Orders may see **enhanced** levels of enforcement as well as other local issues, alongside partners.

Assistant Chief Constable Christian Bunt said: "This summer, there will be an emphasis on effective local policing; that it is about **more** than just fighting crime – it is also about building **relationships**, police addressing local concerns and being where it matters most."

Matthew Barber
Your voice in Thames Valley

Matthew Barber is Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, working with the police to help drive down crime locally.

STAY IN TOUCH
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Citizens Advice Oxfordshire needs Volunteers

Are you looking for a **new challenge**, and want to **contribute** something to your community? Citizens Advice Oxfordshire is looking for **volunteer advisers** to work in our friendly offices in Abingdon, Didcot, Henley or Thame.

Citizens Advice gives people the **knowledge** and **confidence** they need to find their **way forward** - whoever they are and whatever their problem. In a typical year our 300 staff and volunteers support **20,000 people** in Oxfordshire.

We are currently looking for **Advisers**: After comprehensive training you will be giving advice to clients **in person** or via the **telephone** or **webchat**. We advise on a broad range of topics including **debt management**, benefits, **employment**, housing and **relationship** issues. You will need **good IT skills** and a desire to **help people** in your community.

We would like you to be available for **two sessions** per week, either mornings or afternoons or for a whole day. We offer a **rewarding**, flexible and **supportive** working environment. You'll also learn new skills and meet new people in the course of your volunteering.

If you would like to discuss these volunteering roles, please email: volunteer-recruitment@caox.org.uk and one of our team will contact you.



Oxfordshire



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The Harwellian on Thursday mornings 9.30am until 12.00 noon

Walk in any time, come when you like
£2 a session, the first week is free
 Tea and coffee are provided
 Open all year round (except Christmas)

Any craft, learn a new skill from other members and
 occasional demonstrations.

For further information contact
heather.stevens46@btinternet.com



"The Crafty Hare" made by the Craft Group displayed on the wall at the **Harwellian** as Number 1 of 30 in the **2025 Hare Trail**. The whole trail will be able to be viewed from **Saturday 26th July until Sunday 3rd August**.

The Orchard Film Club

July 2025 Update

Many thanks to everyone who came to our July film - we hope you all enjoyed it, despite the warmth of the evening! Our next film is the classic detective thriller "In the Heat of the Night"

starring Sidney Poitier & Rod Seiger and is showing on Friday 5th September.

Upcoming films:

- **August** - no film, summer break
- **Friday 5th September** - In the Heat of the Night (12)
- **Friday 3rd October** - film to be announced
- **Friday 14th November** - film to be announced

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** (adults) & **£3** (children) and available in advance from **Bob's Butchers** in the High Street, and on the door.

See you soon! Alison, Martin and Janice.

Harwell Community Park Fit



Start your fitness journey for **FREE**
 Mondays 7.15pm
 From 16 June
 Harwell Recreation Ground Westfield Road

- 👉 Sessions designed for adult beginners
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Harwell Parish History Group - August 2025



Talks

The opening talk of the Autumn series will be “**Holmes of Hanney and Birth Control: ‘The most useful man in England’?**” by David and Katherine Gahan on Wednesday **17th September**. Professor Katherine Watson will speak on “**Crime, Medicine and Science in History**” on Wednesday **15th October**. Lois Glitheroe M.Phil. will give a talk entitled “**A Stitch in Time: Conserving our Textile Heritage**” on Wednesday **19th November**. A programme full of contrast! All talks start at **7.30 pm** in the **Cherry Hall** at Harwell Village Hall. Members: free; non-Members: £3.

What is tennis good for? A sixteenth century opinion

As I write, **Wimbledon** is dominating the T.V. schedules. Modern lawn tennis possibly evolved from a game played in C12th monastic cloisters, when the ball was struck with the palm of the hand. Rackets came into use in the sixteenth century, when the game acquired the name “**Real Tennis**” or “**Royal Tennis**”. This is the ancestor of modern lawn tennis.

Henry VIII was a keen player and a Real/Royal tennis court, built by Cardinal Wolsey 1526-29, **still exists** at Hampton Court. Such courts are complex indoor **asymmetric** structures, in which three of the walls have sloping roofs; the net sags in the middle. This version of tennis is still played at Hampton Court and elsewhere.

In 1875 the Marylebone Cricket Club **standardized** the Rules of Lawn Tennis and these, with slight modifications, remain the official rules today. In 1877, the All England Croquet Club modified its name by adding “and Lawn Tennis” after the word “Croquet.” But back to Real/Royal tennis.

Below is one of the earliest depictions of a (Real) tennis court. It appears in an **Emblem Book of 1564** by the Hungarian scholar John



“emblem” for Real tennis, from the 1564 book

Zsambocky, latinized - as was customary among scholars - to Johannes Sambucus. Emblem books contained **pictures**, sometimes realistic, sometimes symbolic, with a **verse** underneath. These pointed to a moral. Zsambocky used Real tennis to illustrate **a waste of time, energy and money!** He accused the ball (*pilula*) of lying and the equipment seller of taking too much money. Below is a translation of his original Latin, partly adapted from that by Michael Bath, from the book “*The Royal Game*” published 1989.

“Little ball, why do you deceive the young men who follow your battle standards (i.e. tennis fans)? Do you restore strength? Do you repay what is expended on you? You don't, do you? When the netted rackets send you flying, is it by your own strength that you escape safe beyond the bounds?You (the ball) have boldly promised sure health to the sick, though you actually take it away from the sane and healthy; you harm them in their madness. You empty their pockets..... Trifling and lies come together in you. (Once.....) O shopkeeper (the man selling

tennis equipment) the well-trodden courts did not fill your hand with those wasteful expenses. So either reduce your expenses - and give many back their time - or may the breeze never waft you lightly aloft.” (I think he means the equipment seller will never go to Heaven!) Of course, this was written centuries before the days when professional lawn tennis players could make a **fortune!**

Odd fact for quizzers: The colours of the All England Club – **purple and green with white** – are coincidentally those later adopted by the **Suffragettes**: purple for passion, green for hope and white for purity. On a February night in 1913, a Suffragette prepared to **burn down** a Centre Court stand. Caught by the groundsman, Joseph Parsons, she served 2 months in prison. Her identity remains

unknown - she refused to give her name.

JMC



The “silent Suffragette” from The Western Mail www.bbc.co.uk/sport

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COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNINGS

Tuesdays 11am at The White Hart
1st Thursday of the month 10.30am at
St Matthew's Church
Fridays 11am at The Harwellian
All welcome - just turn up!

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

What's coming up during June and July 2025



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.

For more information visit the [Fledgelings Group FaceBook page](#)

Both mornings run within term time only.

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 (BCP) 11am 14th August and 11th September held in All Saints' Chilton. 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).

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

Everyone is welcome to come along to any of our services.

Didcot and District U3A



Are you a recently **retired** or **semi-retired** individual living in or **around Didcot** and looking for new **interests** whilst making new **friends**, then look no further and consider

joining the Didcot & District U3A to . . . 'Learn, Laugh, Live'!

With over **30 Interest Groups**, such as learning a new **language**, delving into your family **history**, enjoy walking with friends, learning to play an **instrument**, and many more (full details can be found on [Didcot.u3a site.uk](#))!

New members are always **warmly welcomed** to join (first visit is 'free to see') and chat over tea and biscuits at the monthly meetings held on the **third Tuesday** of every month for this nationwide self-help teaching and learning organisation in the **Didcot Civic Hall**, meetings start at **2:30pm**.

At the monthly meetings there will also be an interesting presentation by a **Guest Speaker**, and over the coming months we have the following Speakers and topics:

- **August 19th** - Fraud and Scam Awareness! Viviana Salmon
- **September 16th** - Coleshill - the Nerve Centre for British Resistance by Gillian Cane

For further information concerning matters u3a and wishing to 'Learn, Laugh, Live' . . . then go to the NEW

WEBSITE: [didcot.u3asite.uk](#)

Brian & Lynn Burscough - PR for Didcot & District u3a

Can you help us to keep Fun Club running...?



Harwell Fun Club has been providing fun, play and support for **pre-schoolers** and their parents/carers on **Tuesday mornings** at Harwell Village Hall for over **40 years**, thanks to the generosity of various teams of **volunteers** who have kept it going over the years.

Two of our regular volunteers will be **moving on in July** and without additional help, this will leave just **Sue & Maureen** to run Fun Club from September, leading to a **scaled-down** offering of activities and unavoidable **cancellations**. So we really need more helpers to **get involved**, in particular to help with the following:

- **arriving early** to help set up (8.30-9.00am)
- **staying to help tidy away** at the end (until 11.45/12noon)
- the **admin** of the **Facebook page** & monitor the **email**

If you are also interested in helping to: plan & organise **craft activities**, lead group **singing & stories**, and/or help out in the **kitchen**, then **all help** is really appreciated. You **don't** need to commit to coming every week, or staying for the full session and your child(ren) can, of course, be with you while you're helping out.

If you are able to help out in **any way** please email

funclubharwell@gmail.com

Many thanks in advance for helping us keep Fun Club going for another 40 years!

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babies and toddlers at harwell

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Chat
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At Harwell Village Hall (Orchard Hall, car park on Westfield)
For more info email funclubharwell@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook

From the PC archives - 100 years ago...

A Parish Meeting was held in the schoolroom on 16th March 1925 for the election of Councillors for the following 3 years. The 6 candidates included Richard Rice MRCP, John Pryor Grocer and Robert Palmer Gardener, which "not exceeding those to be elected the Chairman declared all those nominated to be duly elected Parish Councillors for the ensuing three years."

*There followed the Annual Parish Meeting. On the Recreation Ground "The Chairman reported that the **old trees** had been removed and **young trees** planted on the north and west sides thereof."*

*"The Chairman reported that the War Memorial had now been **completed** and accounts paid and upon the proposition of Dr Rice seconded by Mr Blissett it was resolved that the War Memorial be **handed over** to the care of the Parish Council."*

*At a meeting on Friday June 5th "A post card is read from Mr E Ellis on behalf of the Harwell Cricket Club that they proposed to levy a charge of **1/- per head** as entrance fee to the Harwell Recreation Ground during the evening of July 25th on the occasion of a **Concert** and **Dance** being held there in aid of the club funds."*

*"Resolved that permission be **granted** the Harwell Cricket Club to levy a charge on July 25th and the Clerk is instructed to publish a notice of the intended charge 7 days before the day named and also notify Police Sergt. Marten."*

At the next meeting, "A letter is read from the Director of Agriculture making enquiry as to rural development in the villages."

*"The Clerk is instructed to **reply** informing him that there exists in this village **Women's Institute**, Social Club in Hut opened by Major Glyn M.P. last month, School Institute in course of erection financed by the Harwell Charity Trustees. Lectures on **Horticulture** had been given recently (in the) Recreation Ground Pavilion."*

Oxfordshire County Council's planned changes to local recycling centres will increase fly tipping!

Oxfordshire County Council are **consulting** residents on changes to how our local recycling centres are run.

I am concerned that these changes, if left unchallenged, will lead to an **increase** in waste crime and **fly-tipping**.

They've already decided to introduce a **booking** system - that is **not** being consulted on now.

So what else is being planned?

- **Reducing** the hours that recycling centres are open
- **Reducing** the number of days they are open (possibly from 7 to 5)
- Imposing **checks** to prove that you live in Oxfordshire
- Making more vehicle times subject to **registering** for a permit
- **Reducing** the number of times people with permits can use the sites from 12 to 6 each year

and 50 Years Ago...

*The planning of the A34 dual carriageway way in progress, and was referred to several times in the meetings. At the June meeting Mr Cumberland reported "It was hoped that if the new A34 construction commenced later this year, the contractor might be prepared to give a **favourable** quote for the grading of the ground. In anticipation of this possibility, final plans would be prepared for the re-grading etc. and the **tree planting**."*

*At the P.C. meeting on July 22nd - "On the War Memorial It was agreed to accept, in principle, responsibility for the **repair** of the memorial. A.P. Symm had been requested to inspect and issue a **report** which was expected in two weeks time. The Legion were cutting the grass on both sides and the Committee were asked to make a decision about the **paving stones** alongside the road."*

*On the Bargain Stone "It was agreed to obtain Mr Churchman's approval to **lift** the Stone, **mount** on piers with paving stones underneath, followed by a tarmacadam **surround**, the latter being done by the County."*

*On the new A34 "It was noted that **stiles** permitting pedestrians to cross the new A34 had been suggested by the Minister at some points. It was **agreed** to suggest stiles on path No.3 and possibly the Hagbourne Path."*

*By the next meeting, the Environment Committee "had agreed to ask that footpaths No 3 and Bridleway No 1 be **joined** on the east side of the Bypass and joined on the south side of the proposed Didcot link road."*

*Also, there had been much concern over encroachment by adjacent landowners of land in The Cleave at an unspecified site: "The Chairman said that the **controversial** issues had been taken by F&GP Committee who had had a meeting with Mr Gowers of the County Secretary's Office. The view of the Parish Council that means should be found of **stopping** neighbouring owners claiming adjacent land causing a **loss** to the Parishioners was put to Mr Gowers **forcibly**. Mr Gowers said he **accepted** the Council's view and explained the **difficulties** of the cases. The Committee said that the Council would be prepared ... and if necessary employ **legal** help to keep the Cleave **as it was**, because otherwise others would take it as a **precedent**. The Committee said that they would like all activities to be co-ordinated by the County Council. Mr Gowers said the first action should be to prove the **width** of the Cleave by statements from **witnesses**."*

The first edition of what became the Harwell News was still more than a year away – December 1976.

Martin Ricketts

- **Banning** horseboxes
- **Banning** any vehicles with sign writing or business logos on them all together

You can respond to the Oxfordshire County Council consultation at: letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hwrc-consultation
Add your name to my campaign to oppose these changes at stopflytipping.org

Matthew Barber, Police & Crime Commissioner, Thames Valley

Other than where stated and in reports of Parish Council matters, any opinions expressed are not those of the Parish Council. Items for the next issue should be sent by **15th September** 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, The White Hart, St Matthew's church porch and in Harwell Village Hall for users. It is available online at <https://www.harwellparish.co.uk/harwell-news/>

Sign up [HERE](#) if you would like to receive an emailed copy of the latest issue. Advertising queries to the clerk.

Parish Contact Information

All contact information can also be found on the **new** Parish website:

<https://harwellparish.gov.uk/>

Phone: 07749 361957

Post to: Clerk, Harwell PC, Harwell Village Hall, High Street, Harwell, OX11 0EX
For appointments please email Clerk@HarwellParish.gov.uk

Parish notices can be found on the new noticeboard by the office at the Village Hall.

Parish Councillors

Cath Convery, Patrick Davison-Locke, Anthony Dearlove (Vice-Chair), Mike Fox-Davies, Robert Hughes, Vaughan Humphries (Chair), Lucy Lacy, Simon Peacock.
(3 vacancies)

District Councillors

Debra.Dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
Hayleigh.Gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
Campus Ward:
Sarah.James1@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

County Councillor:

rebekah.fletcher@oxfordshire.gov.uk
MP: Ollie Glover
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk

Harwell News edited by Alison Fautley,
print version distributed by Martin Ricketts.




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Discounted fees for rest of the year

Ask for a membership application form at the bar

Individual £17 NOW £12

Family (including partner & children U18) £29 NOW £20

Junior (age 14-17) £9.50 NOW £7

+ £4 one off admin & share purchase fee

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-  **Discounted prices on food & drink 7 days a week**
- Access to members only bar, pool and snooker tables** 
-  **Discounted & priority tickets to all our events**
- Bands and discos** 
-  **Quizes & monthly members only bingo**
- Sky Sports & TNT Sports**  
- Weekly emails with whats going on & much more....**

Membership year runs January to Dec - Membership needs to be renewed each January
The Committee have final approval for all new memberships

 The Harwellian
The Harwellian Club - Members

 

 info@harwellian.club



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