

sonningcommon

magazine

Back to the Sixties
with the village annual lunch

On to the future
planning for the skate park

What now?
NDP review of development options

A group of five people are standing in front of a building with a green sign that reads 'SONNING VILLAGE'. On the left, a man with a beard and a white shirt is seated in a motorized wheelchair. Next to him stands a man in a light-colored blazer and a woman in a colorful floral dress. To her right is a woman in a pink jacket, also seated in a motorized wheelchair. On the far right stands a man in a high-visibility orange and yellow safety vest over a white shirt and tie. The building behind them has large glass windows and a brick wall on the right side.

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The editorial group from left to right: Jo Stoves,
Joan Grumman, Christine Atkinson and Diana Pearman.

From the editorial group

The 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' has arrived again and looking back it has been one of our better summers, even if it was late arriving!

WELL DONE to the children and their teachers who have so much to celebrate with another year of high achievement. Our congratulations go to them all and our wishes for every success in their future choices of secondary school, work or college.

In the last edition of the magazine I asked for artefacts, comments and memories about the magazine. My thanks go to Liz Field, Mary Bremner, Margo Church and Mr D. Brewer for examples of the magazine that date back to the first edition. The December / January edition will be celebrating the 40th anniversary since the first publication, so if you have any items you would like to loan then please do contact the team as soon as possible as we will start planning the anniversary edition at the end of September.

One of the main features for this issue is about the role that the FISH bus provides for many of the residents in Sonning Common and the surrounding villages. Fred Nickson is intending to increase the range of services provided for our increasingly elderly population. Alan Goswell is encouraging us all to enjoy our local countryside with his detailed walk. The usual features are included, as well as many more about local issues and interesting people.

Please keep sending information and articles, they make our magazine what it is.

Diana

DIANA PEARMAN Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

PS...

Sonning Common Magazine is on sale at the village library in Grove Road for £1.50 a copy. Annual subscriptions are available for £15. Contact Geoffrey Adams. Email: chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org Phone: 0118 972 2134

Magazine contributions may be posted to:
1 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9TD

WHILE EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO ENSURE THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION PRINTED IN THIS MAGAZINE, THE EDITOR AND THE PUBLISHER CANNOT ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF ERRORS THAT OCCUR.

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Highways and Kerbs by Ros Varnes

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Help for disabled residents

In the April / May edition a feature on disabled access in the village was printed – here is what has happened since then.



Pictured from left are Matt O'Sullivan, David Bartholomew, Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury, Hannah Rice and Keith Stenning.

Oxfordshire County Council is considering installing additional dropped kerbs in the village, following an appeal by residents and the parish council.

Hannah Rice, 21, from Woodlands Road, who has cerebral palsy, and Lea Road resident Matt O'Sullivan, who has muscular dystrophy, accompanied two county council representatives on a tour of the village in July.

They were joined by parish councillor Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury and local resident Ros Varnes.

The purpose of the visit was for county councillor David Bartholomew and Keith Stenning, area steward from the Highways department, to see for themselves some of the access problems faced by wheelchair, pushchair and mobility scooter users.

The village residents highlighted difficulties in crossing the road in some places, due to a lack of dropped kerbs and problems caused by narrow, uneven pavements, potholes, overhanging hedges and other pavement obstructions.

They also drew attention to problems with accessing village shops and services due to the lack of ramps, automatic doors and doorbells within reach of people in wheelchairs.

The group also discussed whether installing a pedestrian crossing on Wood Lane to make accessing the shops and health centre easier could be considered.

Councillor Bartholomew said he was pleased to have had the opportunity to see first-hand some of the access issues in Sonning Common.

"We will do what we can to help address the issues within the limited Area Stewardship budget we have available," he promised. "We have only £16,000 to divide between the nine parishes for which I am responsible, but we will definitely make a start. If we can identify priorities and get them costed then we will be able to agree what can be done."

Among the improvements being considered are the installation of a pair of dropped kerbs at the Grove Road end of Lea Road, and some kerbing and footpath work at the bus stop outside the One-Stop in Wood Lane, to make getting on and off the bus with a wheelchair easier.

Highways officer Keith Stenning said the best chance of getting funding for additional projects would be through Section 106 agreements, where developers make available funding for additional services/amenities when they build new houses in an area.

Speaking after the visit resident Matt O'Sullivan said: "Sonning Common is such a great village with all its amenities. It is just a case of getting better access for everyone."

Hannah Rice said she hoped the county council would look at the most practical solutions for easing access problems and not go for the cheapest options. ■

Another great year of GCSE results at Chiltern Edge School

The Year 11 students and staff at Chiltern Edge School were very pleased to celebrate another excellent set of GCSE exam results in August. These results are very similar to the record performance last year on many indicators.

The key benchmark of 5A*- C grades results, with English and Maths, matched last year's figure of 66%. The overall 5A*- C figure was 77%, again the same as in 2012.

Results for the 'English Baccalaureate' were also outstanding with 28% of students achieving at least C grades in a humanities subject and a modern foreign language, alongside their English, maths and science.

At a time when the achievement of more able students in state schools is under regular scrutiny the top students at Chiltern Edge again performed exceptionally well. The proportion of A* grades awarded increased by an amazing 4% with some of those pupils gaining 10 A* and more – an outstanding achievement!

Headteacher Daniel Sadler said, "I am delighted with the results this year. They reflect five years of hard work by the students, highly effective teaching from our staff and excellent support from parents. Our year started with a very positive Ofsted report and has finished on another high." ■

Sonning Common Primary School

Year 6 SATS Results (School Assessment Tests) 2013

The pupils and staff have been working very hard towards the primary school tests, and have again excelled in their efforts.

	MATHS	READING	WRITING
Level 4	82%	87%	86%
Level 5	5%	60%	44%
Level 6	18%	4%	5%

A level 4 is the expected level for a Year 6 pupil and so the school is very pleased to see a high percentage of pupils achieving above the national average.

Headteacher Chris Hirst said in the end of term newsletter: "We say a fond farewell and thank you to our Year 6 leavers. They have been great role models for the school and I wish them well in their educational journey through life. Our leavers this year are going to: Abbey, Chiltern Edge, Didcot Girls, Gillots, Highdown, Langtree, Kendrick, King Alfred's, Reading Blue Coat, Reading School, St Joseph's and Shiplake College. I am sure they will all achieve great things..."

The deputy head, Mrs Flora Barton, left at the end of term to take up a headship in a school near Wallingford, and the new deputy head is Mrs Rachel Salmons, who is a current Year 6 teacher. Good luck to them both in their new roles. ■



The holiday club had another very busy summer, and right in the middle of it OFSTED decided to arrive for an inspection. Due to the great training and hard work of all the staff at the club they have been awarded an OUTSTANDING grade which is very well deserved for the Holiday Club and Chiltern Edge School who host it each summer ...looking forward to the next one! ■

Bishopswood News

We have heard that the Skate Park has been given planning permission to be built at the southern end of the Bishopswood site. The area has been cleared over the last year and so the children will at last get their skate park.

Rotherfield United Football Club who are also based at the Bishopswood ground, have just started their new football and fundraising season. As it is their 40th year a Ruby Ball is being held in the Great Hall at Shiplake College in October. They will also be holding a quiz night on Friday 22nd November at Sonning Common Primary School. If you are interested in booking a table please contact Heather Mullin on 01189723458 or via email heather.mullin@rotherfieldfc.com. All proceeds are going towards a new clubhouse which will be a great community facility. ■

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News from the Village Hall

Helen Lewis, as the new Booking Agent, has now settled in wonderfully well and is keeping the hectic business side together with Susan Launder, the Treasurer, so all is running smoothly.

An Energy Audit has been carried out on the hall and there are various suggestions for the committee to consider as possible improvements.

The art work on the back wall continues to be a source of much enjoyment and pride, especially during the Community Art month in May. The hall is well used and enjoyed by a variety of local residents and the Chairman thanks all the committee for another successful year. ■

SUE FRAYLING-CORK

Formal consultation about Sonning Common's Neighbourhood Development Plan has begun....

Sonning Common Parish Council has submitted a formal request to undertake a neighbourhood plan in Sonning Common with some sites included from Kidmore End and Rotherfield Peppard parishes. A neighbourhood plan is a way in which the parish council can play a key role in shaping the way Sonning Common develops and grows in the future. It is a tool created by government to help empower local communities in the planning process.

The parish council has already been very active in promoting and developing strong foundations for their neighbourhood plan, having established a working party in 2012. Receiving an official application is the first stage of the formal neighbourhood planning procedure. We as the local planning authority, must carry out a consultation to see if the neighbourhood planning area that the parish council want to do the neighbourhood plan in, is appropriate.

We are conducting a six week consultation seeking views on whether or not the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan Area is suitable. The area that the parish council has submitted

follows the parish boundary for Sonning Common with the inclusion of small areas of Kidmore End and Rotherfield Peppard. The consultation runs from 6 September – 18 October 2013. You can find out further information on this consultation by visiting www.southoxon.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans and clicking on the Sonning Common link.

Anyone wanting to comment on the proposals can send through our online consultation portal found at this address.

Any further queries can be directed to planning, policy@southoxon.gov.uk ■

Back to the Sixties Nostalgic Lunch

The annual village lunch, with a theme of Back to the Sixties, was held in Sonning Common Village Hall on the first Friday in September. It was a very successful and enjoyable event, attended by 68 people, and it raised £550 toward the cost of the new village skate park: this was accepted by the organiser of the project- Carole Lewis. Money from the book stall and raffle went towards the Village Gardeners autumn bulb planting fund.

The event was organised by Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury and Jill Vallis who were superbly supported by a team of regulars who decorated the hall, prepared the food and washed up.

The hall was decorated with a very festive display of blow up electric guitars, record covers and bunting. It looked great and added to the atmosphere. The decorations were the work of Laura and Grace

Johnson and the record sleeves and photos were great talking points. The food was delicious and brought back many memories of how very different entertaining was 50 years ago. The meal started with salmon and mushroom vol-au-vents and foil covered potato hedgehogs spiked with cheese and pineapple chunks speared on cocktail sticks. This was followed by gammon, fresh carrots, broad beans and new potatoes with grilled pineapple and a roll and butter. The pudding was Black Forest gateaux or Lemon meringue, followed by coffee and chocolates. There was also a glass of wine included.

Jill and Chrissie will be organising food for the Quiz Night on Friday 27th September in the Village Hall. The proceeds will also be in aid of the skate park and the hall is also booked for lunch on Christmas Day. ■



Neighbourhood Development Plan



The NDP team held an open meeting on the evening of the 19 July 2013. It was attended by 46 residents and the agenda was an update on the work of the NDP group since the February open meetings, to feedback the results of the surveys on SON 15 and the draft built limits map, as well as the possible OPTIONS scenario on a matrix to show where homes, offices and amenity green space might be placed.

Chiltern Edge School now has foundation status – separate from Oxfordshire County Council. Its buildings date from its construction in 1956/7 and, due to limited re-investment and refurbishment in the intervening period, are now in need of some major work. The governors tell us that to bring them into an appropriate condition for the standards of this century and to allow the school to compete efficiently, against both private fee-charging and state capitation-funded schools, an extensive re-investment programme is required.

The governors of the school applied to SODC to have the site 15 added to the SHLAA for development consideration. As a result, the NDP working group, were then obliged to carry out surveys using the same paperwork, as were used on the 14 other sites.

Feedback forms were completed at the end of the presentations by many who attended. It was assumed that those who did not complete the forms were in general agreement with the proposals. The feedback from villagers, including that from the working party who met on 27 June to audit the work of the NDP sub group, and the comments have been summarised. The AUDIT group was made up of villagers who had not completed the surveys on SON 15 and so were able to provide an independent view.

SON 15A 27 proposals returned: 18 agreed and 9 disagreed

SON 15B 27 proposals returned: 25 agreed and 2 disagreed

Feedback comments are in *italics*

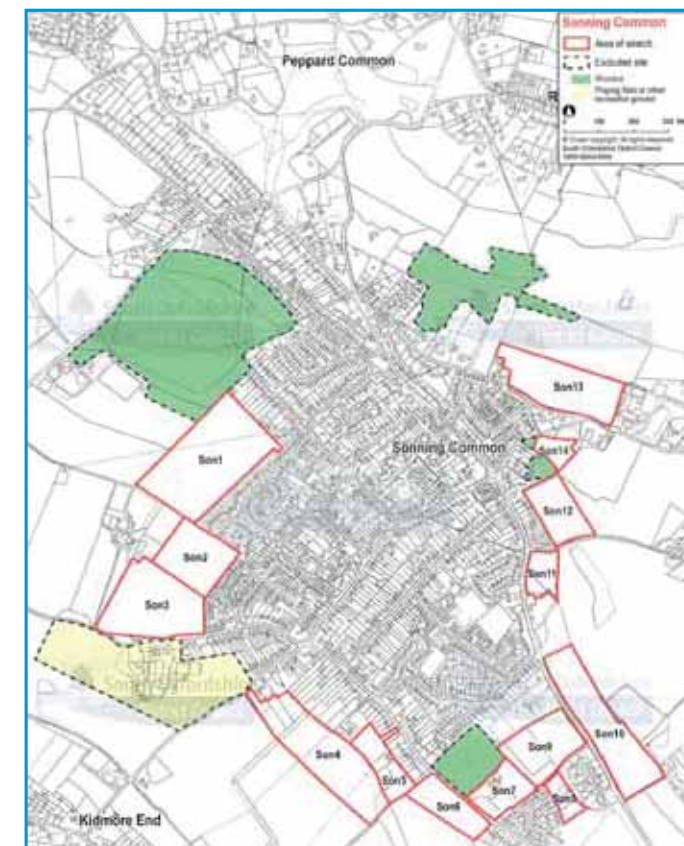
SON 15A Proposal: This site has potential for a development option and should go forward into the next design phase of our NDP

- *Has the capacity to see good layout on a site that will not take away the village effect that the team are trying to retain.*
- *More three bedroom homes please and affordable small houses and/or bungalows.*
- *Reade's Lane would require upgrading to cater for traffic. However, with heavy development on SON 2 Reade's Lane will be too congested.*

SON 15B Proposal: This site is to be set aside and not included in the next design stage of our NDP:

- *Re. housing I agree. However I do wonder if there is an opportunity for a small recreation area at the northern edge of the site for use by residents of any new development on 15A. This would eliminate the need for children to cross Reade's Lane and help prevent unauthorised use of school premises.*
- *Development would not fit in with rural surroundings due to rise of land. Not to be built on: too visible and encroaches on slim line separating Sonning Common from Kidmore End.*
- *Agreed that the site should NOT have buildings on. Only possible use is AG or sports pitches.*

The proposals for SON 15A and 15B will be discussed by the parish council at their September meeting.



JUST FOR KIDS

Hi guys,

I hope you've had good summer holidays because I certainly have! This issue includes a book review and a film review, as well as a word search and a word ladder! I hope you'll enjoy your new term in school.

Here's my email address: junior_editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

ANOUSKA XXXX



SCHOOL

WORD SEARCH

Seeing as we are starting school again I thought that the word search should be about school, so here it is:

l d r p o l c r e c
l e e a s o u a o b
o h k p d l r p i e
e e a e e t e a l h
s c s r c n h p s a
n k i c l o c k o n
r k o p r e a i o c
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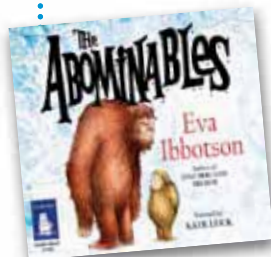
WORD

LADDER

MORE

LESS

BOOK REVIEW



The Abominables, by Eva Ibbotson. Read by Katie Fort, for 9-11 year olds. The Abominables is an adventure story and it is also a funny and amazingly scary book. Eva Ibbotson is a well known author and I recommend her books.

Dinosaur Scramble, by Jeanne Willis. Read by Zack Hawkes, for 6-7 year olds. I read dinosaur scramble over the summer and think it is a great book. It was so funny and a page-turner. I would definitely recommend this book!

The David Beckham Academy. Read by Finn Hawkes, for 5-8 year olds. This book was really good and there were lots of exciting football scenes. I would recommend it - it was brilliant. ■

FILM REVIEW

FOR BOYS

Percy Jackson and the Sea of Monsters

Percy Jackson was a really good film although it was scary I loved all of it! It makes you want to see all of the films that have been made about it. It was brilliant!

FOR GIRLS

One Direction: This Is Us

This is an awesome film and I would definitely recommend it! I would go and see it with some other people who love the film as it makes it more enjoyable. ■



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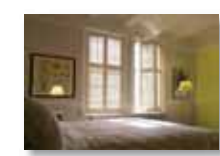
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PTA

40th Anniversary of Sonning Common Magazine

Anniversary issue planned for December / January edition
Exhibition in the library

Late November/early December

Artefacts/comments/memories

Please email editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org
Or phone 0118 972 2382 to arrange delivery/collection

Rivermead Indoor Bowls Club OPEN DAYS

Come and try the sport

Saturday 5 October 1.30 to 5.00pm

Sunday 13 October 9.30 to 1.30pm

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Christ the King Hall

3.30 to 5pm

6 October, 3 November, 1 December

More details from Ros on 01491 874220

Design the village sign

The Sonning Common Society's competition is for a
Village Sign (similar to a pub sign)

The Village Sign should include its
name and some of its local features,
such as trees, Kites, the pond

Designs to be A4 or larger

Entries with your name and contact
details to:

Mark Richards 2 Lambourne Road,
RG4 9LX
mark.richards62@btinternet.com

Open to EVERYONE - closing date 31 March 2014

Entries will be displayed in the Village Hall and
there will be a prize of £20 for the winner.

**PLEASE SUPPORT THIS
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ENTERTAINMENT ON THREE EVENINGS

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HOUSE PLANTS

Geoff Hawkins gives an illustrated talk showing some of the
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Tuesday 15th October at 7:30 pm

BEAUTY & DIVERSITY OF PLANT FOLIAGE

Brian Fisher has been lecturing in horticulture for many years.
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Tuesday 12th November at 7:30 pm

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MRS TIGGY-WINKLE IS IN *big trouble*

By Diana Pearman



I wonder when you last saw a hedgehog in your garden. Or, for that matter, one squashed in your road? Search for Erinaceus europaeus and you will find the common hedgehog. On google you will get 500,000 hits.

Memories of kindly Mrs Tiggy-Winkle and her starring role in Beatrix Potter's books, bring back childhood bedtime stories and a reminder of how firmly engraved in our minds are these prickly creatures. BUT the common hedgehog is in trouble as a species. Hedgehog numbers are declining in Britain by 3 to 5 % each year in our towns and villages. Amazingly it looks as though the hedgehog's decline is on a par with tigers. The losses are worst in the south of Britain.

Alarm bells ringing? They should be. Luckily people around the country have been spurred into action.

This year researchers are looking into regional differences and if changing weather patterns are playing a significant role in behavioural change. Are the milder winters making hedgehogs wake up earlier?

Once up and awake, these normally nocturnal creatures are thought to travel about a mile

every night foraging for food. Unfortunately the garden fence is in their way. Hedgehogs need corridors to travel around to find their diet of earthworms, beetles, caterpillars and slugs. Hedgerows make good corridors, garden walls and fences do not.

Interested in helping hedgehogs? Here is what you can do!

Will you become a hedgehog champion? and make your street into a hedgehog friendly environment? (Oxfordshire has over 200 hedgehog champions across nine towns and villages)

A hedgehog street is a good way to help. Make a small hole under the fence of gardens that back onto or are alongside each other, and suddenly life gets a whole lot easier for Britain's spiky mammals.

Interested then visit www.hedgehogstreet.org to find out more. ■

Volunteer if you have a garden...

Dr Phil Baker from the Reading University School of Biological Sciences is launching a study to examine hedgehog populations in gardens throughout Reading and the surrounding areas, and is looking for help from families / individuals with gardens.

Dr Baker explains: "Many people are not aware that their garden is a home for hedgehogs. Volunteers will simply be asked to have a small plastic tunnel in their garden for a week or two, to record the footprints of any hedgehogs that walk through it. This technique will give us the first real indication of where hedgehogs actually are in urban areas."

If you are interested in taking part email: hedgehogs@reading.ac.uk

Look out for dead hedgehogs, killed on the roads...

Ben Williams, an ecologist at the University of Reading, is looking to obtain genetic samples from hedgehogs in a zone approximately 10 miles north and south of the M4 between Bristol and Reading. One source of these genetic samples is the body of a hedgehog killed on the road.

"As many hedgehogs now seem to be living in and around villages, we are hoping to enlist the help of people living in this study zone by getting them to report any sightings they have of dead hedgehogs so that we can collect the remains and take a small tissue sample for our analyses," explains Ben. Please contact Ben b. williams@pgr.reading.ac.uk for more information. To report any sightings, please get in touch via email: hedgehogs@reading.ac.uk

These studies will probably take a long time but the results should provide the information why there has been such a decline in the hedgehog population, especially in rural areas. When was the last time you saw one squashed in the road or a Mrs Tiggy-Winkle in your garden? ■

A bright future for FISH

By Ros Varnes

FISH Volunteer Centre chairman Fred Nickson is a man with a vision. He has clear ideas on how he would like to develop the 35-year-old village charity over the next few years.



One of his aims is to raise the profile of FISH so that more people know it is there to help; another is to diversify the service to offer more than transportation; while a third is to modernise.

FISH currently offers a transportation service to residents who do not have their own cars, are disabled or are too frail to drive. Scores of residents regularly use FISH to get to and from medical appointments, to go shopping and have fun days out.

Chairman for just over a year, Fred began his association with the charity as a driver of the yellow FISH bus. He says: "FISH is such a worthwhile charity and we have so many wonderful volunteers working with us but we are really only scratching the surface of what we could do if we had a higher profile and more funding."

"I come from a commercial background and I believe the charity needs to be run like a business. We need publicity and we need on-going financial support so that we can develop the service and help more people.

"I am not a 'do nothing' person. I am committed to taking FISH forward over the next few years and expanding it."

The organisation, based at the village hall in Wood Lane, has come a long way since it was started by Ann Butler-Smith in her kitchen at the Rotherfield Peppard/Rotherfield Greys Rectory three and a half decades ago.

Altogether around 70 volunteers currently support FISH as committee members, office workers, bus and car drivers.

According to Fred, who runs an antiques business from his home in Stoke Row Road, Rotherfield Peppard: "More and more people need us but they don't know we are there because we are in a small office at the back of the village hall."

"I would really like to see us being able to move to bigger, more suitable premises so that we could put up a big sign outside and people could drop in for a cup of tea and a chat."

One of FISH's future aims is to resurrect a home-visiting service for the housebound once sufficient, suitable volunteers are recruited. The charity also needs additional drivers to take people to and from essential appointments.

Although FISH carries the Christian symbol of the fish, it is not linked to a church and

people of any faith, or none, are welcome to use the service, according to Fred.

This month the charity is taking delivery of a new minibus - and it isn't yellow! Fred explained that the committee had decided to opt for a light blue bus because a yellow one would have been more expensive.

The new bus is specially-built with an hydraulically-operated disabled platform at the back. The charity is selling advertising space on the bus to local businesses to help pay for it.

FISH is currently running monthly tea parties in the village hall which are proving very successful. ■

For more information about FISH and to volunteer contact:
www.fishvolunteercentre.co.uk
Phone: 0118 972 3986



All aboard THE FISH BUS

This summer FISH bus clients have enjoyed day trips to Bath, Brighton, various National Trust properties as well as the legendary mystery tea tours.

For some of its regular users the FISH bus is something of a lifeline. It improves their quality of life by taking them on days out and helps with routine tasks like shopping and getting to and from essential medical appointments.

When people do not have their own car or are unable to drive, for whatever reason, the FISH bus is a real godsend.

It serves not only Sonning Common but the whole area covered by Sonning Common Health Centre, including Rotherfield Peppard, Rotherfield Greys, Kidmore End, Gallowstree Common, Binfield Heath, Kingwood and Cane End.

Crowsley Way residents Sally Stallwood and her friend Joan Wade are FISH bus regulars and go on many of the fun days out organised by the charity's volunteers.

On Sally's birthday this August they went on a boat trip which took them along the River Thames from Wallingford to Abingdon.

Said Sally: "It was really lovely, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I go out with FISH four or five times a month. If I didn't, I wouldn't get out and it is the same for a lot of other people."

"I feel that going on the FISH bus really improves my quality of life. We always go to different places and we can all come

up with ideas about where we want to go. It is also really good value for money."

Barbara Butler, from Wood Lane, volunteers for FISH and is usually up for a fun day out on the bus. Recently, she went to Bath and was very excited about spending time luxuriating in the world-famous Bath Spa.

Speaking before she left, she said: "I think it is the bestest treat ever. The last time I went was in February and it was the most extraordinary experience to have been in the water at 95°F when it was snowing outside."

She had persuaded her friends Edwina Lamond and Barbara Blackwell to join her this time and had been giving her friend Edwina some swimming lessons in preparation for the visit.

Edwina described what going on the FISH tours meant to her. "It is fun, it is freedom and it is camaraderie. We have a lot of laughs."

Sheila Maughan got involved with FISH six years ago as an organiser of trips to National Trust properties. Now treasurer, she continues to help in the office organising FISH's schedule.

She said: "The pleasure I get out of being involved with FISH is seeing other people enjoy themselves. They are having a day out, a day away from home and that is what it is all about." ■

TOP LEFT:
Volunteer FISH bus driver John Pearman preparing to leave for Bath.

TOP RIGHT:
On the bus and looking forward to the trip to Bath are, back row, from left, Sylvia Dickins, Valerie Borsberry and Sheila Maughan. Front row, from left, Barbara Blackwell, Edwina Lamond and Barbara Butler.

BELOW:
FISH bus regular Sally Stallwood.



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Sonning Common PARISH COUNCIL NEWS...

Bus stop should remain

The parish clerk Philip Collings and councillor Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury have met with a representative from the county council's Highways Department and Mr Fuller, the developer of one of the Wood Lane sites behind the shops.

It was feared that the bus stop outside Occasions would have to be removed to accommodate housing development on the site behind the row of shops.

However, the parish council is pleased to report that, subject to agreement from the Highways Department, the bus shelter will remain where it is.

A question mark still hangs over the fate of the flower bed outside Occasions but Mr Fuller has agreed to look again at the plans.

There is no schedule yet for work on the two pairs of semi-detached houses to commence. ■

News in brief

- Linden Homes has been reminded of its responsibility with regard to the overhanging trees at Gardeners Copse.

The Village Gardeners remain committed to their planned project - using a £1,000 donation from Linden Homes - to build a long wooden trough at the development, made from reclaimed railway sleepers, and fill it with shrubs to give all year round colour with minimum maintenance. However, they cannot commence the work until the trees are made safe.

- The county council's Highways Department has been invited to look at the path between The Herb Farm and the entrance to the Millennium Field, which is now almost impassable, to establish whose responsibility it is to maintain the path and who will bear the cost.

Making a contribution

My wife and I have been committed to Sonning Common for almost 40 years with our tribe being raised and educated here.

Fifteen years ago, I decided to try and repay the welcome we were given by joining the parish council and now enjoy managing technical projects, in particular the snow clearing programme, the skate park project and the writing competition. ■

COUNCILLOR DIRK JONES



Planning applications

Except in special circumstances, residents are no longer required to place a notice outside their property when applying for planning permission to extend/change their property, although immediate neighbours are still sent letters.

SODC runs an Email-Alert facility that will send you an email of any planning applications in your area. It's completely free and takes 5 minutes to complete the on-line form:

https://forms.southoxon.gov.uk/ufs/ufsmain?esessionid=91D408C476007DB7D07B31B0D329E468_1&formid=ALERTSREGISTRATION&SOVA_TAG=SOUTH ■

Skate park project

Following the successful planning application for a skate park at Bishopswood, the parish council has now accepted transfer of ownership of the site. The parish council is fully behind the skate park committee, the members of which are busy applying for funding from Sport England and other large organisations as well as raising funds locally through a variety of events. ■



CONTACTING THE PARISH COUNCIL

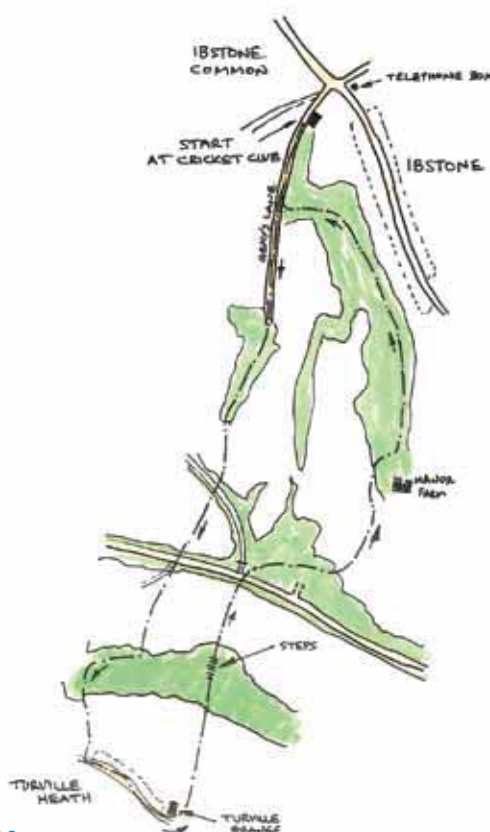
For all matters please contact Philip Collings, Parish Clerk on 0118 972 3616 or email clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk

This page has been paid for by the Parish Council.

A calf stretch...

By Alan Goswell

We love our local walks, but often fancy something a bit more more challenging and uplifting. The Chilterns offer thousands of footpaths and bridleways to choose from. But, to really stretch the calves and expand the lungs one has to venture a bit further afield...



Up on the Wormsley Estate at Ibstone there are some steep ascents and fine views. This estate is owned by Mark Getty and is where the Red Kites were originally released. It houses one of the most scenic cricket grounds in England. John Paul Getty might have revelled in meanness (putting in a payphone for his guests) but he certainly knew a good view when he saw one. It's only 15 scenic miles by car from Sonning Common via Henley Hambleden and Fingest.

This walk is only 4 miles, but it offers fine views, rolling Chiltern valleys and guarantees stretched calves and expanded lungs. It will take you about 2¼ unhurried hours. Boots are advisable, especially in winter when some areas are muddy.

Park on the grass verge on the edge of Ibstone Common opposite the cricket pavilion at the top of Gray's Lane. SU75303 93620

Walk down Gray's lane as far as you can go. You will soon find yourself descending through woodlands with some large houses dotted here and there. You emerge overlooking some fields to a lovely view down over the valley.

Follow the steep footpath straight down across the field to a stile entering a wood and across a small byroad. Look out for white arrows on the trees to guide you. You have just descended about 100 metres in total. Now for some climbing... straight up over the field to a wood, possibly some sheep grazing here.

Through the second wood, straight over another road and down a lane between some fields. Continue on the path which swings right as you enter a wood.

Now there is a steep ascent up a wide flint-strewn path until you emerge onto a byroad at Turville Heath.

Turn left past some houses and barns to the far side of Turville Grange where immediately on your left you will find a footpath beside the Grange which heads back towards Ibstone. There may be cattle in the field here. This is the halfway point.

The path skirts the Grange gardens and crosses a large field to a kissing gate leading into the woods. As you descend into the valley again you will encounter some steps which are testament to how steep the descent is. You emerge to stunning views again.

Follow the path down to the road. Across the road you will see a gated entrance to the Wormsley Estate with bollards and cameras.

Leaving this to your left, swing right on the path which leads through the woods towards Manor Farm. You will emerge onto a field close to a fence with the Farm buildings over the field to your left. There is now a steep ascent.

You enter the woods to your left via yet another steep ascent and turn left just by the church, heading back to Gray's Lane through the woods and back up to your starting point.

Now you will doubtless be feeling in need of refreshment. There are several nice hostellers nearby. Our particular favourite is the Chequers Inn at Fingest straight back down the valley. It has a nice garden, a roaring wood fire in winter and serves excellent food.

See you in the woods! ■

MEMORIES OF

Margaret Dolphin

A conversation with her daughter, Liz Field

Margaret Dolphin, who died in April, aged 89 years, was a true Sonning Common villager.

Born Margaret Saunders at Coopers Field, which is now Kidbys Yard, she was the eldest of three children (two girls and a boy). The family was fairly well-to-do and Margaret had the benefit of private schooling at Highlands Nursery in Peppard and Malvern House School in Reading.

But the Second World War brought a halt to her education when she was 16. Margaret was needed to help with the milk round which operated from Coopers Field. She drove into Reading to meet the milk train with only candle-lamps on the cold, dark winter mornings, and delivered milk to the villagers.

It seems that, during this period, her love of the village and its people began to flourish and she started keeping a diary of her observations (a habit which lasted almost to the end of her life). She noticed when a pair of boots was on

the doorstep of a house where the husband was in France, and watched the village women "liberating" soiled linen dumped in a pit opposite Chiltern Edge School by the Americans based at Highmoor.

Margaret married Sidney Dolphin, from Peppard, in 1949 and they moved into their house near the Bird in Hand where Margaret lived until 2012.

Married life was busy. Sidney was Highways Engineer for Oxfordshire County Council, based in Shiplake Bottom, and was home at one o'clock each day for his cooked dinner. Margaret and Sidney had 3 children; Pat, Liz and Peter. Sadly, Pat died when she was only 17 but, in the belief that "there's always someone worse off", Margaret kept busy.

She was a founder member of Sonning Common Women's Institute, which became her great passion, and she regularly attended meetings and held all posts. She was a volunteer at Peppard Chest Hospital, wheeling



By Jo Stoves

her trolley round the wards; she knitted jumpers for African babies; raised money for the Ken Thomas Body Scanner appeal at Royal Berks Hospital; and attended classes at Kidmore End Memorial Hall for art, calligraphy and flower arranging. She was a great gardener and loved her greenhouse. She loved books and looked forward to reading and delivering the Sonning Common magazine. And she was always home for her husband at lunch time and for the children from school.

In her 60s Margaret began working in Sonning Common Library where she held story time for the children. She bought herself a Mini and would drive into the village for supplies, preferring to support the village shops whenever she could.

In her lifetime, Margaret witnessed vast changes in society but was always able to accept them. She was one of the generation who lived through the Second World War. We may never see her like again. ■

Rivermead Indoor Bowls Club is one of four clubs in Berkshire...

By Maureen Eatwell

The bowls club was founded in 1989 and is now approaching its 25th season. It is a friendly club with good facilities and excellent 6 rink green gauge carpet. We currently have a membership of 350.

Beginners are all well catered for with 5 qualified coaches affiliated to the English Bowls scheme. There are regular leagues run from 10.30am through to 8.30pm giving everyone, including those who are employed, a chance to join in. There are regular matches with other clubs in Berkshire and adjoining counties.

The club takes part in national and county competitions both for individuals and teams and also a range of club competitions.

Parking at the club is free with plenty of spaces.

We are holding 2 open days this year for anyone to come and try the sport on Saturday 5 October, 1.30pm to 5pm and Sunday 13 October, 9.30am to 1.30pm

The coaching team hold 2- 6 weeks courses during the season, held on a Saturday morning, cost £18.00 for six sessions. During the course video equipment is used. A specially-designed wheelchair is also available to aid anyone with a disability.

Rivermead Indoors Bowls Club
Rivermead Leisure Complex
Richfield Avenue
Reading RG18 EQ



Tom Fort

AWAY

Wonderful though Sonning Common undoubtedly is, it is good to get away sometimes from my vegetables and soft fruit and the attendant predations of birds and sundry other cares and burdens.

And to get far away – not necessarily geographically (the reach of the appalling Blackberry being what it is), but spiritually. Such a place is Camasunary, a house that stands on its own a little way back from a beach of pale sand looking out from south-east Skye towards the islands of Soay, Rhum and Eigg.

There is no road to Camasunary, just a terrifyingly steep track hacked out of the rock, manageable only by a proper 4x4 and much better walked. There is no electricity there, just daylight, candles, torches and two gas lamps in the sitting room. Best of all there is no phone signal – it's a four hour climb up a mountain to get one, and even then reception is abysmal.

Life there is simple but arduous. Meals have to be provided for twelve ravenous mouths. There are lobsters and giant edible crabs to be collected from the pots by boat, big juicy mussels to be harvested from the rocks, mackerel to be caught in the bay. The weather blowing in from the Atlantic is

changeable beyond belief: dazzling sunlight one moment, a curtain of rain the next. The one thing you pray not to get is flat calm, because then the aerial armies of midges make being outside intolerable.

The views, when the clouds clear, are staggering, with the jagged crests of the Cuillins towering to the west. The soul is cleansed, sleep is deep, appetite keen. I came back from just a week feeling like a new man capable of wrestling with giants and even mastering the latest flood of communications regarding village matters.

I know that won't last, but while it does, it feels very good. ■



BOOK REVIEW

GONE GIRL

by Gillian Flynn



Psychological thriller *Gone Girl* spent numerous weeks on the bestsellers list both in the UK and America and was widely hailed as one of the best written books in decades.

Focusing on the marriage of New York-loving Nick and Amy Dunne as they are about to celebrate their 5th wedding anniversary, this book tells of murder, manipulation and marital breakdown against a backdrop of economic recession in Nick's Midwest hometown.

It's very difficult to review a book without giving too much away but I have to admit that I picked this book up three times, read the first two chapters and then put it down again thinking this just isn't for me.

Finally one evening when I had nothing else to read, I persevered and I am so glad I did.

This thriller twists and turns like a fast flowing river. It's exhilarating and absorbing and you just have to keep reading to the very last page. It's a brilliantly thought out plot and even though the characters are not hugely likeable, you do find yourself caring about what will happen to them.

I hear Hollywood actress, Reese Witherspoon, has snapped up the film rights and if the film is as good as the book then we are in for a treat.

So if you are looking for a book to keep you entertained ... then this is the one. ■

By PHILLIPPA TAPHOUSE

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Joy & Meirion Morgan

By JANE ARCH



Many of you will remember Joy and Meirion who lived in Grove Road, Sonning Common from 1968 until they moved to Somerset in 1994.

Sadly, Joy died at home in May this year in Nailsea, (near Bristol) after a long, cruel and debilitating illness which she fought with great courage. Meirion, who had cared for her throughout, sadly followed her only two months later and they are buried together in Holy Trinity Church, Nailsea.

They are greatly missed by their children, Helen, Graham, Gillian, Louise and Anne, all of whom grew up in Sonning Common and went to the local schools and Henley College. We send them our love and best wishes.

Joy and Meirion were involved with so many aspects of village life. Their love of music resulted in Joy singing with South Chiltern Choral Society for many years and Meirion with Reading Male Voice Choir. He also ran South Oxfordshire Concert Society for years before it closed when The Hexagon became too competitive for classical concerts. At the end of his working life he was Financial Director of Burton Biscuits and was involved with the charity Reading Industrial Therapy Organisation (RITO) (the parent of Greenshoots at Manor Farm, Peppard). As a keen member of the primary school PTA, Meirion was one of the key people involved with the planning and building of the swimming pool. Many children will have gone to their house for PTA-organised music lessons. They were made

very welcome as was anyone who visited their home. Meirion was Treasurer of FISH, probably the first, and also of the Berkshire branch of St John's Ambulance organisation for many years. Joy was Treasurer of the play group when her children were young but she will probably be best remembered by the village as a whole as a very understanding and helpful pharmacist in Carson's (as it was then) in Wood Lane where she always welcomed both friends and strangers with great warmth and good humour. Both were involved in the Chiltern Villages Oxfam Support Group. They were active members of Caversham Baptist Church.

They had their sadnesses in life, particularly the death of their daughter Ruth, but were always cheerful and optimistic.

For those of us who were their close friends, it is hard to come to terms with the fact that they have both gone, but we all have such happy memories of their time here. The village has every reason to remember their lives with gratitude and appreciation. They gave themselves tirelessly to others. ■

Keep Sonning Common beautiful

I note in today's paper that a philanthropist has left £2.3 million to his local town of Sidmouth in Devon with the stipulation that it be used to keep Sidmouth beautiful with the planting of a million flowers. Lucky Sidmouth!

The Village Gardeners here in Sonning Common don't need anything like that amount of money but we do need some funds for bulb and tree planting this Autumn.

If you can help us, please make out a cheque to The Village Gardeners, or cash, if you prefer, and leave it with the Parish Clerk in the village hall. Any donations, however small, will be gratefully received to help keep our village up to the current standard. Thank you. ■

CHRISSE PHILLIPS-TILBURY Woodlands Road

We moved house earlier in the year and would like to say how useful we found Sonning Common Magazine. We carried out quite a bit of work to our new home and decided to try and use local companies, all of which we found in Sonning Common Magazine. We were planning to undertake a very large volume of work over a 5 day period and adherence to programmed slots was essential! This work involved decorators, heating engineers, roofers, tree surgeons, new double glazing, electricians and a locksmith. (They probably all know who they are!) Without exception the local companies we used were punctual, efficient and their work was of very high quality. (We had no idea how much strong tea and biscuits were to be consumed during the week!) We now keep a copy of the magazine handy - just in case!

We would like to say many thanks to all those involved. ■

A & G GRAY

Unexpected behaviour

On Thursday 4 July at about 8pm I saw a car parking, blocking my car in my drive. I went out to let the driver know and I was very surprised when she dismissed me with a gesture and said: "I've got a job to do". This lady was dressed in a nurse's (or carer's) uniform.

I have a family member I sometimes have to meet about this time and I need to use the car. The obstruction has happened on more than this occasion but this is the first time I saw the driver. There were lots more spaces to park in the street and indeed she only had to move her car forward or back a couple of metres to leave the drive exit free but she ignored me.

I saw the lady again about 45 minutes later when she came back to her car and told her I would let the police know of her behaviour to which she answered: "Don't be ridiculous".

At 10 am the following morning I did go to the Police office in Sonning Common and gave to them all the details. Who would expect such behaviour of somebody in her position. ■

MRS. P. MEADOWCROFT Crowsley Way

Inconsiderate parking on the pavement

I know the parking around the shops is bad, even though there always seem to be parking spaces available in the car park.

I wanted to point out another problem which I see every day as I walk my dog - cars seemingly abandoned on the pavements around the village. This causes obvious problems for parents with prams, elderly people and the disabled. ■

IAN TROUP



Not much happens in August - hah!

When I was approached about becoming a parish councillor some five years ago I started to take an even closer interest in the council and began attending monthly parish meetings.

I found that the parish council did not meet in August. "Why?" I enquired. "We just don't. Not much happens in August," came the response.

With three Augusts as a parish councillor behind me I now know that, even without parish council meetings, the wheels of local government do not stop turning over the summer.

In preparation for the August break, responsibility for urgent decision-making was delegated to the parish clerk who was able to obtain support from appropriate councillors where needed.

To give you a flavour of what happened this year:

- Our street cleaner went on holiday for much of the month. An understudy had to be recruited, trained and paid.
- The assistant parish clerk resigned and wheels had to be put in motion to find a replacement. This entailed writing a

job description, drawing up an advert and signing off costings involved.

- SODC Planning Office deadlines for recommendations on planning applications and appeals still had to be met.
- Then, just to keep those of us not away on holiday on our toes, a giant wasps' nest, located in an incinerator on the allotments, had to be destroyed. Good job the pest control officer wasn't away for August!

JOHN STOVES, Vice Chairman, Sonning Common Parish Council

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY...

Summer story times


Over the summer the library held special story times every Saturday morning. These were based on the Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge which this year was 'Creepy House'.

A corner of the library was turned into a Creepy House, with spiders, ghosts, owls and bats. Witches & monsters visited, and each week over 20 children enjoyed creepy stories and crafts. They made such things as badges (a different one each week), puppets, masks, mobiles, windmills, spiders & skeletons. Each week we also had a sale of home-made cakes, to raise money to pay for the craft materials.


I don't want to mention names in case I miss anyone out by accident, but if you helped in the library in any way over the summer - thank you very much, we couldn't have done it without you!

Saturday story times return to normal now: each week at 10am there will be stories and colouring for under-8s. Our next special story time will be on 2 November, with a Bonfire Night theme. ■



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There are a host of other attractions. Apple games for the children and an array of apple peelers - who can get the longest piece of peel. See how the fresh apple juice is made and sample the different varieties. Bees are essential for apple growing and the beekeepers will be keen to share the secrets of the bees with you. Stalls will be selling delicious apple pies, cakes, muffins and jellies with local cider and plants too.

Join one of the guided walks at 11 am or 12.30pm and 2pm or 3.30pm. This will show

what is involved in producing excellent fruit in today's climate. Do you have problems with pest and disease or with your pruning? Displays in the barn will answer your questions. Many surprising stories about apples will be there too.

The Farm Shop, selling Cross Lanes apples and pears, juices and honey, will be open as usual. Tea and refreshments will be available all day.

Entrance and car parking are FREE. For further information contact Gill Franklin on 0118 972 3167 or see www.crosslanesfruitfarm.co.uk

NOTE: If you miss the day, the Farm Shop is open every Wednesday to Sunday from 10.00am to 6.00pm until the apples run out in January. Or see us at Farmers' Markets in Reading, Purley, Wallingford, Henley, Abingdon or Ascot. ■



Orchard open day

See noticeboard pages 10-11 for more detail. Apple tasting & fresh juice. Guided orchard walks.

Parkinson's UK Henley on Thames Branch

By **DR T.P. DUDENEY**

The Henley branch of the national charity Parkinson's UK was formed a little over twelve months ago. With other branches in Oxford and Reading, it was apparent that a branch serving Henley and district was required.

In February of this year the branch was formally recognised at its inaugural meeting.

The role of the branch is to be a support for Parkinson's sufferers, their carers and families; change attitudes to the condition; and ultimately find a cure, through fundraising for research.

The branch meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month between 10.30am and 12.30pm in the Kempster Hall at The Christ Church Centre, Reading Road, Henley.

Anyone suffering from Parkinson's, their carers, families and volunteers wishing to help are very welcome. The meetings are for socialising, sharing problems and have a wide range of talks from guest speakers on subjects both related and unrelated to Parkinson's.

Further details can be obtained from the Branch Secretary on 0776666651 or email: nickie.parkinsonshenley@gmail.com ■





October 2013

WEDNESDAY 2	FISH National trust visit to Chartwell - Village Hall pick up	9.15am
FRIDAY 4	Notts Group - Village hall	10am - 12noon
SATURDAY 5	Open Day Indoor Bowls Club - Rivermead Leisure centre	1.30pm - 5pm
MONDAY 7	FISH bus to Tesco Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
THURSDAY 10	FISH bus to Waitrose Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
FRIDAY 11	Notkwire - Village hall	9.45am - 11.15/30am
SATURDAY 12	Sue Ryder sale - Nettlebed	10.30am - 12.30pm
SUNDAY 13	Apple Day - Cross Lanes Fruit Farm	10am - 6pm
SUNDAY 13	Open Day Indoor Bowls Club - Rivermead Leisure centre	9.30am - 1.30pm
MONDAY 14	FISH bus to Tesco Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
TUESDAY 15	FISH mystery tea tour - Home pick up	From 2pm
TUESDAY 15	CEHS "House Plants" an illustrated talk - Peppard War Memorial Hall	7.30pm
WEDNESDAY 16	FISH bus to Reading Town centre - Home pick up	From 9am
THURSDAY 17	FISH pub lunch - Home pick up	11.30am
THURSDAY 17	WI "Movers and Shakers: a WI history" - Village hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 18	Notts Group - Village hall	10 - 12noon
MONDAY 21	FISH bus to Tesco Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
MONDAY 21	Parish Council meeting - Village Hall	8pm
TUESDAY 22	FISH trip to Kew Gardens - Village Hall pick up	10am
WEDNESDAY 23	FISH bus to Morrisons Reading - Home pick up	From 10am
THURSDAY 24	FISH bus to Henley Farmers Market - Home pick up	From 9am
FRIDAY 25	Notkwire - Village Hall	9.45am - 11.15/30am
SUNDAY 27	Felt makers get together - Village hall	10am - 4pm
MONDAY 28	FISH bus to Tesco Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
TUESDAY 29	FISH trip to Garden centre - Home pick up	From 1.30pm
THURSDAY 31	FISH trip to London Zoo - Village Hall pick up	9.30am

November 2013

FRIDAY 1	Notts group - Village Hall	10am - 12noon
SATURDAY 2	Sue Ryder sale - Nettlebed	10.30am - 12.30pm
MONDAY 4	FISH bus to Tesco Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
WEDNESDAY 6	FISH bus to Reading Town centre - Home pick up	From 9am
FRIDAY 8	Notkwire practice - Village Hall	9.45am - 11.15/30am
MONDAY 11	FISH bus to Tesco Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
TUESDAY 12	CEHS "Beauty and Diversity of Plant Foliage" - Peppard Memorial Hall	7.30pm
THURSDAY 14	FISH bus to Waitrose Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
THURSDAY 14	SCS - a talk by SC First Responders - Library	7.30pm - 9pm
FRIDAY 15	Notts group - Village Hall	10 - 12noon
MONDAY 18	FISH bus to Tesco Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
MONDAY 18	Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
WEDNESDAY 20	FISH bus to Morrisons Reading - Home pick up	From 10am
THURSDAY 21	WI "Chinese Brush Painting" - a talk - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 22	Notkwire practice - Village Hall	9.45am - 11.15/30am
SUNDAY 24	Felt makers exhibition day plus demos - Village Hall	
MONDAY 25	FISH bus to Tesco Henley - Home pick up	From 9am
TUESDAY 26	FISH bus to Winchester market - Village Hall	9am
WEDNESDAY 27	FISH bus to Winchester market - Village Hall	9am
THURSDAY 28	FISH bus to Henley farmers market - Home pick up	From 9am
THURSDAY 28	Chiltern players - evening of entertainment - Peppard Memorial Hall	8pm
FRIDAY 29	Notts group - Village Hall	10am - 12 noon
FRIDAY 29	Chiltern players - evening of entertainment - Peppard Memorial Hall	10am - 12 noon
SATURDAY 30	Chiltern players - evening of entertainment - Peppard Memorial Hall	8pm

FISH runs regular shopping trips to Tesco in Henley and Henley and Reading town centres. Also monthly trips to a local Garden Centre and a Mystery Tea Tour. For more information and to book call 0118 972 3986. ■

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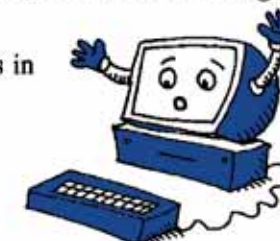


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