

SC SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

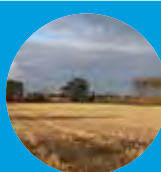


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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Another year, some new year's resolutions and probably some anxiety about what 2019 and the future holds. But since we cannot affect much of the last, let us focus on what we are able to enjoy in our locality.

The Christmas activities are well documented in this issue and a lot of fun was experienced by those who took part. Two amazing women tell their stories, one to find the Lost City and the other taking bulbs to India. An award has been won by Green Gym, an initiative started in our village. The whalers have linked up with the village gardeners. So many happenings for good are retold.

The noticeboard is full of activities to alleviate the dark days ahead, countryside walks are highlighted for the better weather, the primary school children are leading the way with extra plans for recycling and there are many small events for people to attend with opportunities for meeting up, such as Lent lunches, snack and chat, coffee mornings and a number of general information pages. As well, of course our regular contributors whose articles are so highly regarded.

The Local Plan 2034 is In Focus and will need to be carefully managed if its effects are to be ameliorated. Get involved if you can, as your help with site assessments would be much appreciated! ●

Diana

Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org



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SC SONNING COMMON
MAGAZINE

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TRACTOR SANTA RIDES AGAIN

Santa visited Sonning Common again this year, on 14 December 2018, and was accompanied by his elves!

Seeing Santa on the back of a tractor is becoming a popular and much looked forward to annual event in the village. The tractor, driven by Paul Jenkins, drove through roads in the village where the collectors, who walked many miles in the cold, handed out sweets, chocolate and stickers to the children.

The bubble machine streamed bubbles in the air and thanks to a kind donation from Chiltern Edge Community Association we were able to purchase more consumables

along with hats, bells, buckets and a PA system which can be used year after year. A big thank you to One Stop, Hare and Hounds and Gosia Lamparska for the donations of sweets and Duncan Bradley for the 'Elf and Safety' high viz jackets.

This year we collected for two amazing local charities; FISH and Sonning Common First Responders and raised an outstanding £884.36.

A massive thank you to all those who helped with posters, decorating and undecorating the tractor, collecting and counting the money raised; Craig and Kirsten Henderson, Alison Baillie, Richard

MacKenzie-Black, Matt Hopson, Mathew White, Nerys Havers, Karen Lowe, Mary Norris, Ewan Ashley, Matt Conor, Caroline Turner, Alyson Barnes, Duncan and Christine Bradley, Pippa Norris, Lyndsay Henderson and John Evans.

We are looking forward to doing it all again next year and always looking for new volunteers before and on the night. ●

HELEN COYNE
Event Organiser



GOOD CHEER, GOOD FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP

A very contented group of 60 guests and volunteers met on Christmas Day in the Sonning Common Village hall to share a traditional Christmas Day lunch.

The event, started 8 years ago by Jill Vallis and Chrissie Godfrey, has been handed over into the very capable hands of Sandi Onofrio, already known to Sonning Common residents for her regular cookery column in the Sonning Common magazine.

The traditional turkey lunch - prefaced by a welcoming glass of Bucks Fizz - was accompanied by all the very special dishes that make Christmas Day lunch so tasty and special. The main meal with wine was followed by mince pies and/or trifle, tea and coffee.

The guests, mostly but not all Sonning Common residents were also given presents of chocolates and miniature gingerbread Christmas trees. We could not run such a successful and happy event without the help of the volunteers who lay the tables, cook the meal, drive the FISH Volunteer bus, wait on the guests and clear up!

Neither could we manage without our loyal supporters, Carl Woods butcher, Waitrose at Caversham, our local Chiltern Edge Community Association, The Eye and Dunsden Poor's Land Trust, Henley Lions club, Rob at the Butchers Arms and the anonymous donors of the wine.

The event is open only to people on their own or couples who don't want to cook a turkey for two. We are already planning next year's event hopefully with some entertainment. Watch this magazine for details.

If you would like to help on Christmas Day or at other community events please contact sandi.onofrio@yahoo.co.uk chrissiegodfrey42@gmail.com ●

CHRISSIE GODFREY



SANTA RUNS FOR FOOTBALL

by **CHRISTINE ATKINSON**



Rotherfield United under 11 girls coach Vanessa Stowell had a fabulous idea to organise a Santa Run to raise funds for the club. The inaugural run was held on Sunday 18 December and over 80 'Santas' turned up to join in the fun. The course was around the pitches and through the woods with some obstacles in the way to deal with. The run raised over £400 and will hopefully be bigger and better next year. The committee at RUFC would like to say a huge thanks to Vanessa and her husband Adam for organising the event. ●



A GOOD SING SONG FOR CHARITY

Thank you to all those who attended our Carols Event on Saturday 8 December 2018 and so generously donated to our Retiring Collection.

Money given on that day totalled £306. We have added to this - and made donations totalling £400 as follows :

Sonning Common Magazine £50
The Village Gardeners £50
CCA Sonning Common £50
FOSCL £50
Chiltern Air Ambulance £100
FISH £100

In addition, this Christmas we also gave:

Club SC £150
Crisis at Christmas £112.72 (For 4 homeless people.)
The Salvation Army £100 (Christmas dinners and companionship for 16 lonely, older people.)

Embrace the Middle East £100
The Shelter Box Appeal £200.

Grateful thanks to all the singers who took part so enthusiastically and performed a good number of unusual seasonal items that were much appreciated by our audience.

Thanks also to our stewards: David McKnight, David Rusman, Alan Gibbon and Craig Henderson for their willing support.

Nottakwire started its new term on 11 January. We do not plan to hold a Summer Fund Raiser in 2019 - but there may well be open rehearsals for anyone wishing to pop in on specific dates, to listen in and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea. Look out for dates.

We wish everyone a Very Healthy New Year.

MARGARET AND ELAINE
Nottakwire Founders and Directors.

BUILDING BRIDGES

Building Bridges by Colin Calvert is a delightful new comedy dealing with environmental issues. A group of like minded villagers get together to create a bridge over a swampy piece of ground. Chiltern Players new play is scheduled to be performed on 14, 15 and 16 March at Peppard Memorial Hall.

Tickets will be on sale mid February.

Book now at Occasions or phone 0118 972 2632 to reserve your seats.



GREEN HEROES WIN SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD



At a Green Heroes reception held by The Conservation Volunteers at the Barbican in London recently, the Sonning Common Green Gym received a Special Recognition award to recognise that we were the pioneer Green Gym and that we are still continuing after 20 years.

Six members, including several originals, with Dr William Bird (ex. Sonning Common GP who initiated the Green Gym movement) accepted the award which consists of a plaque mounted on a hand carved wooden leaf together with a framed certificate.

During recent months we have worked

on many sites including installation of fencing at Aston Rowant Nature Reserve, clearance at Streatley Church Yard, and Peppard Memorial Hall, hay raking at Greys Court, ground management at Bishopswood Field for the football club and a new ongoing task at Stoke Row where we are working to help the Maharajah's Well trustees restore the Cherry Orchards and grounds partially to their original layout.

As you can see we have a very varied programme, if you fancy joining us check out our Web site <http://sonningcommon.tcv.org.uk> or give our secretary a ring on 0118 972 3528 to find where we will be on each Thursday and Saturday morning. You will be very welcome! ●

BRIAN GARDENER

LIBRARY GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

A belated Happy New Year from the FoSCL committee – and a big thank you to everyone who supported the library through 2018. It was a good year, with library attendances up and more than 80 people either renewing their Friends' membership or joining us for the first time. The accounts – which were presented at the AGM in mid-November – show that we also had some tremendously generous donations; more than £600 on top of membership fees. That money more than made up for the loss of funds from Oxfordshire County Council, allowing us to buy lots of new books.

Fund-raising efforts brought in another £1,300 – money which meant the committee could provide some financial support for artistic events that we hope will draw new – and younger – readers into the library. We also want to buy a bigger selection of large print books and have plans to buy new noticeboards, a small sofa and an extra bookcase. The children's corner now has a beautiful new bean bag thanks to the generosity of the W.I.

Adele O'Connor stepped down from the Friends' committee at the AGM – although she will remain a volunteer. Thanks go to her for all her hard work – and to June Duckworth who kindly agreed to stand in her place.

More help is still needed with Story Time, Rhyme Time and the digital drop-in sessions – please speak to the library staff if you are interested. Ideas for new books, or how the library might be involved in other community events, are always welcome. ●

HELEN FORT

NEWS FROM SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE

PREMISES BUILDING WORK

We are starting some internal building work in January at the surgery which will enable us to create several new consulting rooms, increase our waiting room size, improve our Treatment Room and move our Dispensary. The building work will take place from January to March and we hope that noise and disruption will be minimal. We appreciate your understanding during this time. The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) is kindly helping us with this development work. We are trying to raise funds for this project and for providing improved patient facilities. Any fundraising ideas are much appreciated. We understand that our car park will be busy during the building work and we appreciate your co-operation in parking considerably. ●

POSTCARD FROM THE ALLOTMENT HIBERNATION TIME – REST AND RECOVERY

by CHRISTINE ATKINSON

Winter months are when the gardens go into hibernation and gather strength for the springtime.

The school allotment is also mostly asleep, but there are always jobs to be done and the mild weather so far means that there are still some plants awake!

Amy O'Connor, one of the allotment team, told me that the black radishes continue to grow, as well as the Jerusalem artichokes and onions. Helen, another member, has potted up lots of strawberry plants and put the other strawberries to bed for winter.

The team has also created an extension to the allotment and made some other layout alterations. The extension was completed by fencing off a small corner of the playing field and making a new entrance to the allotment and a 'back gate' to allow easy access to the water butts which are now situated at the base of the swimming pool down pipes. There are also some new beds ready to be sown in spring with flower seeds and areas for children to dig.

One of the projects on the list for 2019 will be the old plastic bottle greenhouse,

which is looking sadly neglected, but now is enclosed within the allotment area. It was built from empty 2 litre drinks bottles some years ago and hopefully can be given a bit of attention to make it useful again.

Mrs Fraser (Year 1 teacher) has had the children plant some beans in the largest bed during November, and the Kites children (reception age) made a bug hotel.

Amy said 'It is great to be inspiring some teachers to get out and use the space.' ●



MATTERS OF MEMORY TALKS/FORUMS FOR THOSE WITH DEMENTIA OR ALZHEIMER'S AND THEIR CARERS

Talks at Sonning Common Health Centre, upstairs in the Palmer room. Two short talks per session to help and advise those with Dementia and their carers, then an hour or so for your questions. Tea, coffee, cake and biscuits will follow.

Booking essential: forms are available from reception at Sonning Common Health Centre or the SCHC website <http://www.sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk/> or email schcppg@gmail.com

The sessions will start at 2pm and finish at 4pm

1. Tuesday 26 February 2019

Kate Hampton from Dementia Oxfordshire and Diana Beveridge – who spent several years as a one to one carer.

2. Tuesday 26 March 2019

Jane Varghese a Dietician and Marilyn or Sonia from Abbeycrest Care Home.

3. Tuesday 30 April 2019

Esther Ramsay-Jones from Sue Ryder and an Admiral Nurse from The Orders of St John Care Trust.



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13 FEBRUARY
Club competitions – (all Classes please see website for details) and a Quiz.

27 FEBRUARY
Auction Viewing for the Auction being held on March 13. Please note in your new diary! Non-members are welcome to come to find that elusive item. Hope to see you on both evenings.

13 MARCH
Auction with over 600 Lots. Make a note in your diary now, visitors are welcome to bid.

27 MARCH
Ian Hill – Aspects of South Africa an excellent and humorous speaker.

Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at Bix Village Hall at 7.45 p.m.

Visitors and new members are welcome. Further details can be obtained by phoning 01491 681739 or on our website

www.henleyphilatellic.org.uk

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Support and Transport for the Community

HEALTH WALKS

Free daily walks continue until Easter
2 trained leaders (volunteers) accompany every walk, one to lead the way, and the other to bring up the rear to ensure no one gets lost.

In the event of really bad weather (heavy rain/strong wind/snow) the walks may be cancelled!

Timetables in library, Health Centre and Herb Farm or
www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable.

ROSEMARY DUNSTAN

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EAR WAX REMOVAL CLINIC

A new private clinic run by a company called Tripp Hearing, will launch in February 2019. There will be an audiologist at the health centre on the third Tuesday of each month.

(For more details see page 27)

HERE WE GO AGAIN! NDP revision

OPEN MEETING

An exhibition about the next stage in the NDP process
Come and find out the options

Saturday 2 February 2019
10 - 1pm

Village Hall, Wood Lane

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St Michael's Monthly Snack & Chat Lunch

Come with your friends and enjoy a bowl of homemade soup, a slice of cake and a chat.
There is no charge.

Place: St Michael's Church hall (behind the church on the Peppard Road next to the petrol station).

Date: Usually every 3rd Tuesday of the month.
Look for the notice on the local noticeboards or check our parish newsletters at
www.saintmichaelssonningcommon.org.uk for updates.

Time: 12.30pm.





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A LITTLE BIT TOWARDS HELPING THE PLANET

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON

How many crisp packets do you throw in the bin each year? I bet it is hundreds....



Walkers Crisps promised to do something about it and, in collaboration with Terracycle, have started a scheme to collect and reuse all crisp packets regardless of make.

We are lucky in Oxfordshire that the recycling is quite good, but there are items that cannot be put in your green bins.

Sonning Common Primary School and the library have become collection points for Terracycle in the village, who will collect and recycle any crisp packets, along with some other everyday items. Terracycle give points for all items collected which converts to cash for the Parent Association.

Currently there are collections for all one-use pens (including felt tips/

whiteboard markers/highlighters), all old toothbrushes and used toothpaste tubes and their packaging, some beauty products and their packaging/containers and now the crisp packets too. These include any make or flavour plus the tubes like Pringles and other makes.

Please help our planet and do your bit.....just collect items in separate bags and drop them off in the correct bin for each sort of item. There are collection bins inside school for those who have pupils at the school for use during drop off and pickup times. Several colourful recycling bins are also in the Library entrance hall for items to be recycled for use by those who do not have access to the primary school. The library also collects used printer cartridges, and plastic milk bottle tops for recycling for charity.

Mr Hirst – headteacher at the school – said ‘We are not perfect and this is not a perfect world. However, we

can make a difference if we all try and sometimes that means changing the habits of a lifetime. With your help and support we can divert plastic waste from landfill AND raise money for our school at the same time. Spread the word!’

For more information on which items are suitable please see the TerraCycle website:
www.terracycle.co.uk/en-GB/





LOST CITY – FOUND!

TREK TO CIUDAD PERDIDA, NOVEMBER 2018

Indiana Jones would've loved it: the trek to the Lost City in Colombia. He would've had no problem with the gelatinous mud, the rocky steps, the fast-flowing rivers to be crossed, the insects, the steep terrain, the humidity, the treefalls and the (on occasions) torrential rain. I, however, am no Indiana Jones and I found this trek particularly challenging.



There were 10 of us in our group, aged between 50 and 75, but we noticed that the majority of other groups on the trail were made up of younger people, probably under 40 years old – and they seemed to have far more energy than we had!

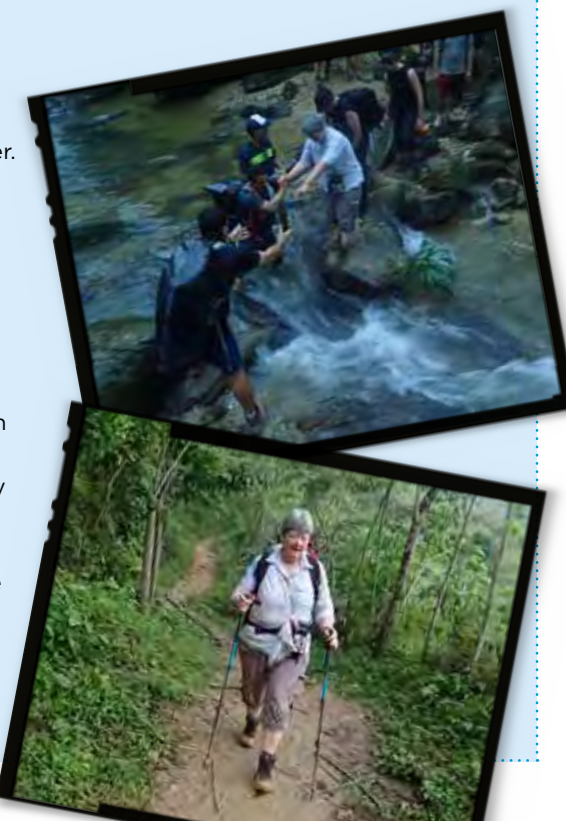
However, all of our group completed the trek without recourse to the 'mule of shame' (having to ride a mule because the walk was too difficult). After a day and a half of (very) undulating track, and two nights under mosquito nets, we crossed a thigh-deep, fast-flowing river and were faced with over 1,200 steps, uneven, slippery and ladder-steep, to the lowest level

of the Lost City. The site is huge – far bigger than the famous 'helipad' photo – and is comprised of several levels all joined by steep stony steps. There are no kiosks selling souvenirs (in fact there are few Lost City souvenirs anywhere in Colombia), but there is a house which provided a platter of fresh fruit for us to enjoy. After listening to talks about the history of the area, we headed back down the way we'd come and crossed the river again. After a while it started to rain – heavily. We kept going. We found the track blocked by a tree which had fallen recently and had to clamber over the debris in near darkness. We kept going, sharing out the head torches, and eventually ended back at camp, having left it over 12 hours earlier.

The problem with a 'there and back' route is that you can remember all the problems on the way there – and know that they'll have to be faced on the return. I found this knowledge particularly worrying. I'd already fallen in a stream on day 2, putting my camera out of action (and getting even more soaked than I already was!), and on the final day I managed to strain my heel, meaning that I limped my way back for the last four hours. But I felt blessed that it hadn't happened on the first day – how awful that would have

been, not to have reached the Lost City at all.

So to all of you who have already sponsored me: thank you very much! And to all those who haven't: I went through a lot of pain and effort on the trek, so perhaps you might find some money for the Institute of Cancer Research which is making a huge effort to defeat cancer. You can donate by cash or cheque (payable to the Institute of Cancer Research), or online: www.justgiving.com/RosemaryDunstan62



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NEW UPDATED LOCAL PLAN LP2034 IS NOW OUT FOR CONSULTATION

This article provides a brief summary of the plan and how it will affect Sonning Common, compiled by Diana Pearman.

In May 2018 a decision was taken by councillors that officers should reassess sites in SODC to form a strategic allocation and prepare an updated plan for public consultation. As the Plan requires a 15 year lifespan, the end date has been extended from 2033 to 2034. Actions taken since May are ...

- The six local authorities in Oxfordshire have committed to providing 100,000 new homes as part of the Housing and Growth deal signed with the government.
- Changes have been made following the public consultation in October 2017
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF2) 2018 has been taken into consideration
- Changes in circumstances eg. Oxford to Cambridge Expressway
- Creating the Strategic Site Selection and potential allocations list, see below.

Strategic Site	Delivered during plan period up to 2034	Beyond 2034	Total number of homes
Grenoble Rd	1700	1300	3000
Culham	1850	1650	3500
Berinsfield	1600	100	1700
Wheatley	300	0	300
Northfield	1800	0	1800
Chalgrove	2025	975	3000
North of Bayswater Brook	1100	0	1100
Total	10375	4025	14400

Sites nearer to Sonning Common(SC) have been discounted at this stage; Palmers Riding Stable, Playhatch and Reading Golf Club.

Larger villages have a requirement to take a 15% growth above the Core strategy allocation. Homes that have already been built or have permission in SC are 269 so there are another 108 outstanding.

Smaller villages are no longer expected to contribute towards housing supply.

Affordable housing remains a 40% requirement except at sites on the edge of Oxford where it will be 50%.

Green belt Several of the new strategic allocations are in the Green Belt, which will have to be modified to take account.

Otherwise LP2034 states that green belt development will be limited to those deemed appropriate in NPPF2, unless there are very special circumstances.

Employment strategy largely unchanged at SODC requirement of 37.5ha between 2011 and 2034.

Infrastructure where interventions are necessary, planning permission will be granted for developments where the infrastructure and sustainability is already in place or will be provided within an agreed timescale.

Efficient use of land

The significant impact on SC will be how the LP2034 ensures efficient use of land. There is a new housing density policy which requires a minimum net density per hectare of 45dph which is almost double the Core Strategy minimum of 25dph.

To give context for this, Churchill Crescent is estimated to be 54dph.



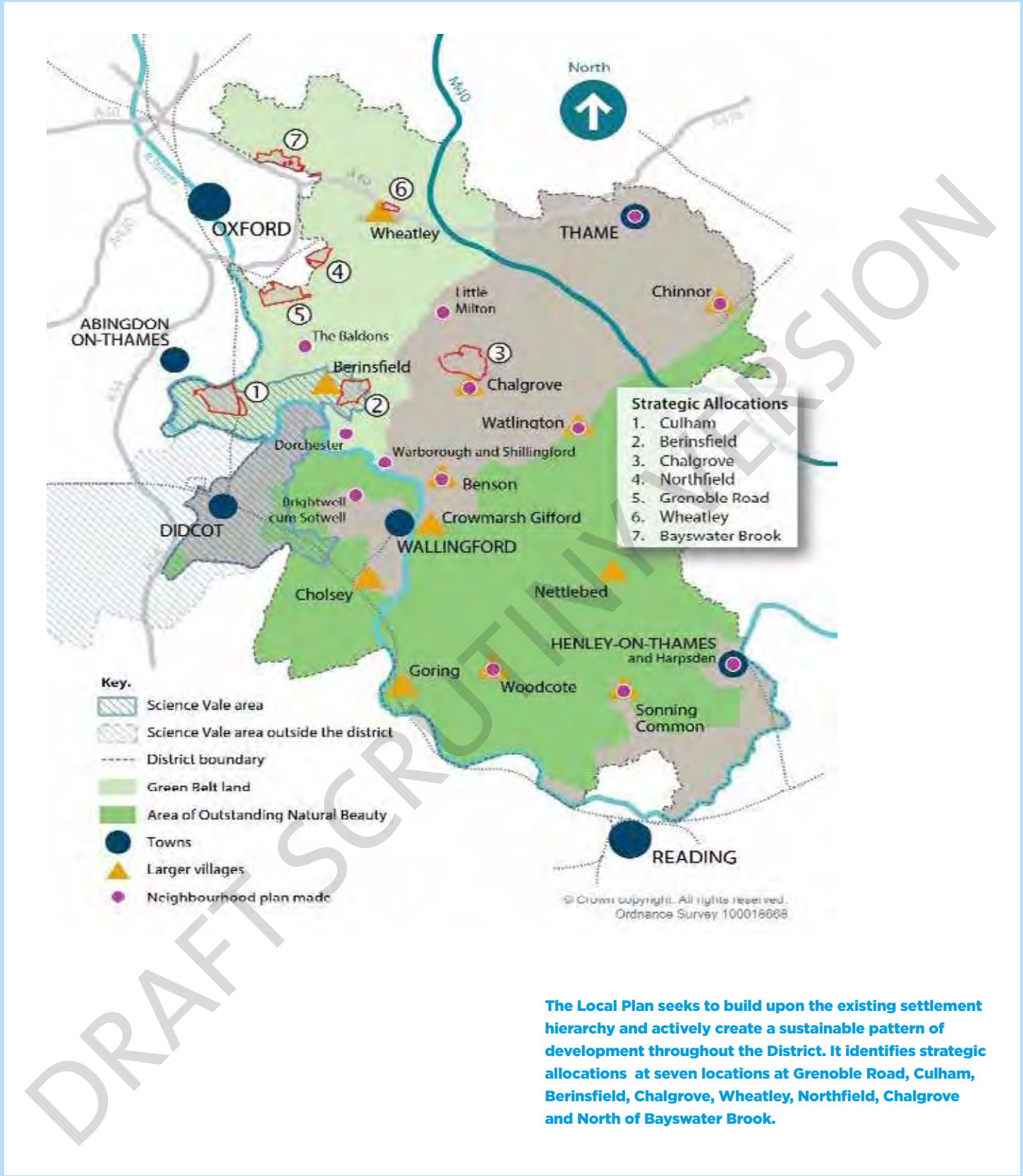
Location	Dwellings per Hectare
Major Centre and Sustainable Transport Hubs (Didcot, Oxford, Reading)	70dph
Market Towns	50dph
Larger Villages	45dph
Smaller Villages	40dph
Other Villages	35dph

The Local Plan 2034 has been out to consultation since 7 January and it will end at 5pm on 18 February 2019.

In the light of this new information it will be extremely important for the NDP review team to adjust the plan accordingly.

A more heartening and supportive piece of information came from John Howell in his Christmas message:

"I was pleased to be able to introduce my own Private Members' Bill in the House of Commons on helping to protect communities that have made neighbourhood Plans." ●



The Local Plan seeks to build upon the existing settlement hierarchy and actively create a sustainable pattern of development throughout the District. It identifies strategic allocations at seven locations at Grenoble Road, Culham, Berinsfield, Chalgrove, Wheatley, Northfield, Chalgrove and North of Bayswater Brook.

Parish news

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LOCAL PLAN 2034

The planning committee considered the draft plan at a meeting on 17 December. Leigh Rawlins, Chairman of Sonning Common's planning committee expressed his concerns about the Local Plan 2034 and below are the points he made.

- It promotes excessive numbers of new houses beyond what Government formulas require. These figures are based on untested assumptions of future economic growth which may prove to be unfounded.
- SODC is proposing a fixed housing need of almost 23,000 new homes. Failure to meet this excessive, fixed target presents a major risk of a developer 'free for all' across the whole district.
- The proposed housing density figure for large villages like Sonning Common marks an 80% increase from 25 to 45 homes per hectare. This will

have the effect of urbanising our rural areas.

- The proposed density figures do not take consider or respect the individual characteristics of settlements and local circumstances. Having high-rise/high density estates on the outer edge of villages is bad planning and will lead to a backlash against housing development.
- The current proposal will encourage speculative development.
- The Local Plan fails to provide for vital Settlement Boundaries to maintain separations between town and villages which promotes individual identities.

Consequently, this motion was sent to SODC following from the planning committee meeting of Sonning Common Parish Council on Monday 17 December 2018:

"This committee is deeply concerned about the housing figures proposed in

the draft Local Plan 2033 (2034), which are based on assumptions about future economic growth which have not been properly tested and may well prove to be unfounded.

Furthermore, the committee is fundamentally opposed to the new 45 dph density for future housing developments in large villages proposed in the draft plan. The committee regards it as wholly inappropriate to impose a single density requirement for an entire settlement irrespective of the individual characteristics of individual sites.

On this basis, Sonning Common parish council's planning committee calls upon the two district councillors for the area to do their utmost to have the draft plan as it stands rejected."

The plan was approved by SODC's cabinet on 20 December. Of our two district councillors, Paul Harrison voted in favour and Will Hall was absent' ●

EMERGENCY TREATMENT

The Parish Council is considering installing a defibrillator (emergency treatment in the event of a cardiac arrest) in the village centre, probably at the village hall. Although in an emergency it is capable of being used safely and easily by anybody, it would be helpful to have a number of residents with some basic training in its use. If we proceed with the purchase and installation, the Parish Council would organise one or more, as the demand dictates, short training sessions at the village hall conducted by an approved instructor. If you would like to take part in a training session please leave your name and contact details with Philip Collings, Parish Clerk. E-mail: clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk Telephone 0118 972 3616. The Parish Office is open on Monday mornings. ●



Sonning Common Parish Council
Parish Office, Village Hall, Wood Lane, Sonning Common RG4 9SL
T: 0118 972 3616

E: clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk (Philip Collings)
deputyclerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk (Ros Varnes)
W: www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk
Reminder to all readers to use the Parish website for information



VILLAGE GARDENER TAKES BULBS TO INDIA

By JOAN GRUMMANT

Andrea Baple recently visited a place called Kanthari in Southern India and took with her some Tête-à-Tête daffodil bulbs and photos of the work done by the gardeners around Sonning Common. The purpose of Andrea's visit was to see her granddaughter, Rallou, who has been working and studying in India for nine months. Rallou wanted to show Andrea this very special place where she had worked for three months and they visited Kanthari together. Andrea was overwhelmed by this truly inspirational place that offers a seven-month programme aimed at people who have overcome adversity in their lives and who wish to help drive social and ethical change to make the world a better place. It was an experience she will never forget.

Participants of the course are truly diverse, and practical workshops are led by a group of international experts keen to share knowledge and skills that will change peoples lives for the better. Those taking part come with very different backgrounds. Some have university degrees, others have little formal education, some are blind or physically impaired in other ways and some have no disabilities at all. What all have in

common is the passion and motivation to make the world better and pass on vital skills to others.

Andrea felt extremely privileged to be there and helped Navina, who is blind and who wanted to teach other blind people in Nepal to cook. They worked together and made apple crumble for twenty-three people! Sahiba from Tajikistan was applying for a grant to set up a chess club for able and disabled to work together in her home town of Vilka. Sahiba was passionate about enabling disabled people, who are normally outcasts, to get to tournament level in chess. Andrea was able to help with the form filling process in this case. Kabir was also an inspirational character. He was from Bangladesh and was bullied at school for having to look after and take his severely disabled brother to school each day.

Kabir wants to set up a sports academy for disabled and able bodied to work and play together. He told Andrea he wanted to bounce his ideas off a 'granny',

Andrea was able to talk about the work done in Sonning Common to help the village and shared photographs of the village. The strong sense of community was a common bond. The daffodil bulbs were planted out in a pot and the delighted gardener was looking forward to seeing if the bulbs resembled their photograph.

Kanthari is the name of a small very hot chilli that changes a dish from bland to spicy. It is also the name of this place that hopes to transform lives for the better. ●



SOME COUNTRYSIDE WALKS AROUND SONNING COMMON

1. Old Copse

There are three recognised OS Map footpaths running through this beautiful beech wood from the entrance at the end of Woodlands Road. These relatively flat paths go approximately north, north-west, and west respectively through this woodland to join up with roads bordering the wood to the north and north-west. The westernmost footpath leads towards the Bishopswood Sports Ground. The first part now belongs to the Parish Council, which has started a programme of controlled cutting back of the holly to prevent it from over running the footpaths and woodland glades. The rest of Old Copse is managed by the Woodland Trust www.woodlandtrust.org.uk Their website and also that of the Chilterns Conservation Board www.chilternsaonb.org have more information about what can be seen.

2. Footpath to Kidmore End

This starts from Kennylands Road at a point nearly opposite where Westleigh Drive joins it. It runs south-west down beside Kidby's Yard and then enters the AONB, with lovely views across fields. It can be used to access Kidmore End, but shortly before reaching the road a track running south-east crosses it. If this is followed past Vines Farm, it joins the footpath coming from Bur Wood, giving a circular walk back to Kennylands Road. If the Millennium Green is used to get to

Essex Way, then the rest of Kennylands Road has a pavement on at least one side, allowing a safe route back to the start of the walk.

3. Footpath to Bur Wood

This starts from Kennylands Road along a section of it which has no pavement on either side, so is best approached via the Millennium Green, which has a metal kissing gate exit almost opposite the start of the footpath. The first section is along a driveway to some properties, and then it veers to the right alongside some fenced-off horse paddocks, before reaching a wide field which is accessed through a kissing gate. Up to this point the path is wide and flat, with just the odd bump or root along the way. The footpath across the open field is also flat, but then drops as one leaves the field and passes between Bur Wood on the left, and Rudgings Plantation on the right. Both have a lovely display of bluebells in the springtime. The ones in Rudgings Plantation on the right are sooner, and more easily, accessed, with only a slight slope down to the track leading through the woodland, with good views of the bluebells on the gentle slopes above. The walk to and from the road up to this point is relatively flat, but still allows good views of paddocks, an open field, woodland, and bluebells in the spring.

The footpath now drops down through the woodland and then rises again as it

passes beside a wide-open field in the AONB. It leads to Chalkhouse Green Road, but shortly before reaching that it crosses the track leading past Vines Farm towards Kidmore End, thus linking up with Walk 2 above, giving a circular walk in the opposite direction.

4. The Chiltern Way

This long-distance footpath, the Chiltern Way extension, www.chilternsociety.org.uk/ - runs east-north-east from the minor road just off the B481 running beside the Bird in Hand pub, and south-west from the bus stop at the start of Kennylands Road, situated near Gardeners Copse, passing through the end of the Millennium Green in between. Near Sonning Common it is the south-west section which has the more open views, although this area has not yet been designated as AONB! ●

STAN RUST

This is just the start of an article informing residents about possible walks around Sonning Common.

Please contact the Parish Council Office with details of any other Countryside Walks around Sonning Common that you know.

Thank you.

Church news

MAGICAL CHRISTINGLE SERVICE RAISES £200 FOR CHILDREN

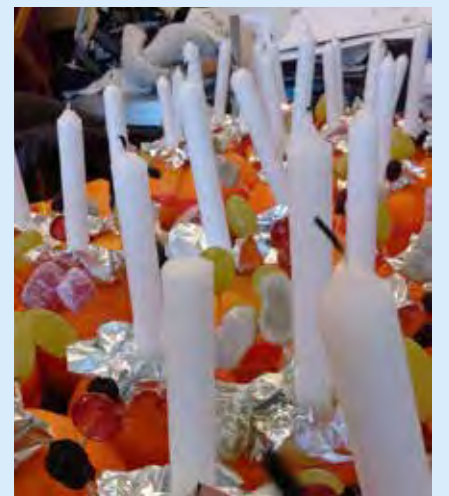
Candle lit oranges were again the centre piece at Christ the King's charming Christingle service on Christmas Eve 2018. This magical crib service, suitable for all ages but especially geared to children, gave adults and little ones alike the chance to sing carols by candlelight, meditate on the meaning of Christmas and enjoy fellowship before the man in red arrived with the presents.

Organised by Joan Lamprell and originating in Eastern Europe this is the 50th anniversary of Christingle services in this country. The orange represents the world, the red ribbon the blood of Christ, the four fruits the seasons

and the candle the Light of the World. The very first service here was held at Lincoln cathedral. Joan was assisted by Karen Broadbent, who provided the entertaining but meditative talk involving Christmas crackers and Rector James Stickings who did the prayer and blessings.

As always, a collection was taken for the Children's Society who sponsor Christingle events throughout the UK and on this occasion a very respectable £200 was sent to this organisation which helps abused and needy children. ●

by ROSEMARY HOUSE



LENT LUNCHESES AT CHRIST THE KING HALL SEDGEWELL ROAD, SONNING COMMON

This year's Lent lunches will be on Mondays 11 March, 18 March and 1st April all starting at 12.30pm. We are staying local with our choice of good causes this year and our local primary schools will be our focus. A small group of children and a teacher from each school will be coming to talk to us about a project they need money for at their school.

As usual the bread and soup lunches will be free but you do need to let us know you will be coming so we know how many we are catering for. The children will give their talk after the meal and a bucket will be available for donations as you leave. The schools in our community need all the financial support we can give them.

The first lunch on 11 March will support Kidmore End Primary School. Next on 18 March will be the turn of Peppard Primary School and on 1st April we will meet a group of the children from Sonning Common Primary School.

We very much look forward to having children as our guest speakers, for the first time at Lent lunches and hope that mums, dads and siblings of children at the schools will also be able to join us.

Just phone one of us to book your place and we look forward to welcoming you! ●

Sue Nickson 0118 972 4520

Ann Butler-Smith 0118 972 1871

Jenny MacGregor 0118 947 2855

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

A well supported Christmas concert by the Pangbourne Silver Band introduced the festive season for us. Over Christmas itself we were delighted to welcome many visitors to our services who had come to stay with relatives in the local area. Our annual Curry & Quiz evening helped dispel the gloom of January and we are looking forward to our second games afternoon in early March. St Michael's and our school St Martin de Porres, on Caversham Park, are getting ready to celebrate the season of Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Jesus Christ prepared for his ministry by fasting in the wilderness for 40 days and we commemorate that in the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday 6 March, with the blessing and distribution of the ashes, 9.00 am in school, and then midday and 7pm at St Michael's. ●

BRIAN THEOBOLD

CALL CITIZENS ADVICE CONSUMER HELPLINE WHEN YOU HIT PROBLEMS!

It's time for the January sales - and to the tired shopper it seems as if the whole country is mobilised in some civil emergency, pouring along the pavements, off buses and into the shops in search of reduced goods. And inevitably everyone else is in competition with you as you swing your loaded shopping bags through the driving snow, pushing the melting slush with your boots, weariedly schlepping from one shop to another, trying to beat closing time, longing for cappuccino... does it sound familiar?

But although the seasonal ordeal might be draining all your energy and enthusiasm, you can still shop with confidence, knowing that the Citizens Advice helpline is there to help you if you have a consumer problem - if you need to return faulty goods, if you've bought something fake or counterfeit, or if something you've ordered hasn't arrived.

The Citizens Advice consumer helpline (03454 040506) is open Monday to

Friday 9 - 5 (closed bank holidays). Advisers will answer your call, explaining how you can pursue your claim. They cannot make a complaint or take legal action on your behalf but they can give you practical and impartial advice, explain the law which applies to your situation, and also pass complaints to Trading Standards for you.

Before you call the helpline, prepare by jotting down the factual details of your problem, such as when you paid for the item or service; how much you paid;

how you paid; the seller's name and address; and what you have done so far to resolve the issue.

Citizens Advice can also be contacted in person during opening hours or on Adviceline (03 444 111444). For locations of offices and opening hours see www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale ●

**citizens
advice**



HARNESSING THE GOOD WILL OF THE PUBLIC IN ADVANCE OF A CRISIS

WHY DO WE NEED COMMUNITY RESERVE VOLUNTEERS?

When a major crisis hits, members of the public are often quick to offer their support.

By recruiting community reserve volunteers, the British Red Cross can harness the goodwill of the public in advance of a crisis, so that when an emergency happens, those registered in that area can play an active and immediate role in helping.

WHO CAN BECOME A COMMUNITY RESERVE VOLUNTEER?

Anyone who wants to help in a crisis, as long as they are over 18 and living in the UK.

WHAT SORT OF SKILLS DOES A COMMUNITY RESERVE VOLUNTEER NEED?

No special skills are required.

You don't have to be a firefighter to make a difference in a crisis.

In the last few years the UK has witnessed several large-scale emergencies; from severe flooding in Somerset, to the devastating Grenfell Tower fire. When crises like these occur, people naturally want to help, but it's not always clear how they can. This is why the British Red Cross has launched a new volunteering programme.



Introducing Community Reserve Volunteers

By signing up in advance you will be helping your local community better prepare for an emergency. You will receive a text message when an emergency happens in your local area, you only need to respond if you are available to help. It's the little acts of kindness that make a real difference to people in their time of need. Preparing kit, filling sandbags, sorting donations or providing refreshments are all simple tasks which will go a long way in the event of a crisis.

It only takes ten minutes to sign up. After you watch a short video and fill out a form you will be ready to help when a crisis strikes.

Sign up at reserves.redcross.org.uk ●

DO YOU HAVE A SPARE ROOM IN YOUR HOUSE?

SHARE YOUR HOME AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Do you feel that you could offer support to someone in order to make a difference to their life? If so, you could be just the person we are looking for!!

The Oxfordshire Shared Lives Scheme supports carers to provide paid care and support in their own home to vulnerable adults.

People who use the service need practical and emotional support in order to live their lives more fully and independently and feel part of a family household. They may have a learning disability, physical disability or mental health need or they could be an older person or someone with dementia.

Here in Oxfordshire we are keen to recruit people from all walks of life who feel they can offer this type of paid support in their own home. It could be anything from occasional short breaks or day time support through to a longer term full time arrangement. The support that our carers give makes a huge difference to the lives of people using the service, often enabling them to



experience new opportunities and reach new goals.

No matter what type of arrangement our carers provide, they all receive on-going support and training from a team of qualified social workers to ensure delivery of high quality, person centred care. They could also be paid up to just over £400 per week for each person they support.

There are also regular opportunities to meet up with other carers and people

who use the service at social and information events so a wider support network is also available.

If you have a spare room to offer and would like to play a key part in making a positive difference to someone's life, **then we really want to hear from you!**

Call the Oxfordshire Shared Lives Scheme on **01865 897971** or visit our website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sharedlives. ●

FIRE SAFETY ALL IT TAKES IS ONE DISTRACTION

Did you know that 1 in 3 people rescued from house fires in Oxfordshire are rescued from cooking fires? Or that distraction is the main cause of cooking fires?

It's easy to get distracted - the phone rings, someone's at the door or a TV show catches your attention. If you need to leave your cooking, even for a couple of minutes:

- turn down the heat
- set the timer
- or ask someone to watch it for you

Or you could find that Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service firefighters join you for dinner!

Find out more at:
www.365alive.co.uk/cooking



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SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG)

The PPG is a small group of active and helpful patient volunteers from Sonning Common Health Centre. We provide a link between patient and staff to improve its health care provision and environment to mutual benefit.

The role of the PPG is to be a 'critical friend' to the practice. We are there to gain information about responsiveness and quality of services, from a patient perspective, therefore being able to provide informed insight back to the practice.

The PPG are also present to encourage patients to take greater responsibility for their own health and their family's health; this is done by organising health promotion events in consultation with the Health Centre and improving

understanding of health issues and services available to patients.

The Sonning Common Health Centre PPG will communicate and research regularly with the patient and practice users about current Health Centre issues and advances as well as any other concerns or recommendations they may have. This helps us to optimise knowledge of the patient population and make sure they are as informed as possible. In turn we can then help make their whole Health Care experience as efficient as possible.

Sonning Common Health Centre was rated Outstanding after its last Care Quality Commission visit. We are very proud to say we are one of only 6% practices in the country to receive this rating. And in a recent patient satisfaction survey the Health Centre came 51st in the country

out of 7,901 practices. The PPG are here to help the practice continue to provide the best service it can and hopefully improve on this already amazing ranking.

If you have any feedback or comments please don't hesitate in getting in touch - we would appreciate hearing from you via the communication links below.

The PPG is currently looking for new members to help it fulfill its role. If you are interested in joining Sonning Common Health Centre PPG, or have any questions or feedback for us, please do get in contact either via the website's "Contact Us" link at www.sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk via our email address schcppg@gmail.com or directly at the Health Centre on a PPG contact form which is held in reception. ●

EAR WAX REMOVAL

Patients will need to book an appointment directly with the Tripp Hearing team; their contact information is on our website. You can alternatively visit their website www.tripphearing.co.uk or ask for a business card when you are next at the health centre. This is a private clinic for micro suction (not ear syringing), costing £85 for an appointment. The price is the same for one ear or two ears being checked and treated. If there is no wax present the audiologist will perform some tests to explore why your ear/s are feeling blocked. Please note that our nursing team here at SCHC only provide ear syringing for:

- patients for whom the ear nose and throat department at hospital have requested ear syringing
- patients who are pre-referral to Audiology (hearing clinic) Do ask a member of our Reception team if you have any questions about this.



SONNING COMMON BEREAVEMENT GROUP

The next bereavement group sessions will be on Wednesday 27 February, Wednesday 27 March and Wednesday 17 April. from 2pm to 4pm at the FISH building on Kennylands Road. The group will be facilitated by Jill Poll, a qualified counsellor. The group is free. The only cost involved is a contribution towards refreshments. If you would like to join the group please contact Jill by email at jill@dragonfliescounselling.co.uk ●



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TOM FORT DRY

With all due respect to those of you who have been virtuously following a 'Dry January' regime – sorry, but in my view your sacrifice has been well-meant but futile.

On New Year's Eve – I went to bed before midnight, pretty sober – my closest friend asked me if I was thinking about going dry for a month. Why should I, I asked him? Well, to prove you can, he said.

Before taking my next sip of red wine (alright, gulp), I thought of the other pointless things I could do to prove I could do them. I could probably stand in a bucket of iced water for twenty minutes a day. Or study the speeches of Mrs May. Or do my cycling circuit in one gear. Or....

Of course I can see the point in cutting down alcohol consumption or giving it up altogether if you drink too much or can't handle it. And I can see the point of abstaining for a month and then cutting back thereafter. But if you are a moderate drinker – and I am, whatever my best friend or the doctor thinks – then why deprive yourself of that pleasure for thirty-one days if you are going to go back to previous levels of consumption from Feb 1st onwards?

To me moderate drinking of beer and red wine – again, I emphasise, moderate – is one of the reliable pleasures of daily life. Why would I want to deprive myself of it, any more than I would want to give up putting marmalade on my toast, watching



rugby on TV, or eating bacon? Would it make me a better person, because I had proved I could do it? I think not.

So, no, I have made no resolutions – apart from doing my best to abstain from talking about Brexit, but that is for mental health reasons. I raise my (moderately filled) glass and offer a toast to the readers of this magazine – and say, enjoy yourselves! ●

COOK'S CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

"The people who give you their food give you their heart."

– CESAR CHAVEZ

VALENTINES OYSTERS – serves 2

8 fresh oysters
2 green peppercorns
2 red peppercorns
4 shallots, finely diced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
4 limes, (zest of 1, juice of 4)
chopped basil to taste
chopped coriander to taste
50ml olive oil



Get your fishmonger to show you how to shuck the oysters or do it for you. Keep the base part of the shell for presentation. Crush green and red peppercorns in a mortar and pestle. In a mixing bowl add your finely diced shallots, crushed garlic, zest of 1 lime, juice of the limes, peppercorns and your freshly chopped herbs. Whisk in your olive oil and leave to infuse for 20 to 30 minutes before using with the oysters. Arrange the shells on a serving plate and place the oysters back in their shell. Just before serving spoon over the marinade to fill the shell. (Don't do this too soon as the oysters will cook in the lime juice in about 10 minutes or so). ●

CRÈME BRULÉE – serves 4

4 large egg yolks
50g caster sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
400ml double cream
4 teaspoons caster sugar for topping, or as needed



Whisk together yolks, 50g sugar, salt and vanilla in a bowl, then gently whisk in cream. Pour mixture through a sieve into a measuring jug. Line the bottom of an oval slow cooker with a folded piece of kitchen roll to create a level surface so ramekins don't slide around. Set 4 ramekins on top of the kitchen roll. Fill slow cooker with enough water to come halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Pour custard evenly into ramekins. Drape pieces of kitchen roll over the top of slow cooker (to absorb any condensation during cooking), then cover with lid. Cook on Low until custard is set but jiggles slightly, about 2 hours. Transfer ramekins to a rack to cool completely, about 45 minutes. Chill custards, uncovered, until cold, at least 3 hours. Sprinkle 1 teaspoon of sugar evenly over each ramekin. Brown the sugar with a culinary blowtorch (or place under a hot grill until sugar has caramelised); serve immediately. ●

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(AND ENJOY MESSING ABOUT ON THE RIVER)

Complete Novices - On Saturday 3 November a group of four complete rowing novices from Sonning Common Village Gardeners went aboard the whale-boat 'Molly' for a row down the Thames. This was the result of a suggestion by one of their members, Paul W, who accompanied and led the trip from Upper Thames Rowing Club to Aston, for lunch and back.

Clear Instruction - It was a beautiful Autumn day, and despite being told that no experience or special equipment was necessary, there was an anxious air at the beginning that soon dissipated after some excellent, clear instruction from Paul. Aided by four Henley Whalers (including our helmsman) we were soon underway, rowing as a team and concentrating on establishing a very relaxed rhythm. It proved to be a most enjoyable day; a perfect way to "introduce an ageing beginner to the joys of rowing". "Seeing wildlife at such close quarters" was very special. It was something that all felt should be repeated!

Molly is a delightful craft - She is a lightweight 10-oared whale-boat and "feels very stable and safe". She is ideal for non-rowers and beginners, and no

particular fitness is necessary to try her out. The journey downstream to Aston was easy because of a following wind. It was great fun negotiating the lock too.

At the Flowerpot in Aston, the Gardeners' forks were soon busy as they dug in to their delicious lunches.

Relaxed - The extra energy was useful for the return trip upriver against the increasing wind. As we rowed back we felt we were relaxed and rowing together in harmony as a group of hardy gardeners. One member of the gardeners felt "very proud of our achievement", and said she "could understand the draw of water". "Once back on dry land we all felt exhilarated to have been a part of Molly's world for the day". All agreed it was an exhilarating and fun day out, and hope to repeat it soon.

Join them? A re-run is planned for the Spring, maybe to a different venue. Sign up soon!

The Village Gardeners meet twice a month for an hour and are supported by Sonning Common Parish Council. No gardening knowledge or skills are required but will be a bonus if you have them. For more details of this

very friendly group email Jillgrwood@aol.com.

The Henley Whalers, who "provided such a magnificent and fun day out", welcome new rowers of any age, and all abilities or none. Everyday clothing is fine. "It is not rowing as you might expect it, but very different; accessible to a wide range of people and definitely worth a try". You can find more details of their organisation at www.henleywhalers.org.uk or contact the Parish Council. ●



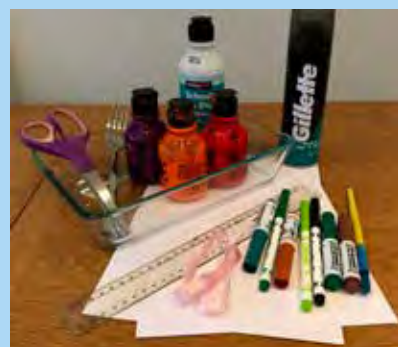
JACKIE'S CRAFT COLUMN

HEART BOUQUET VALENTINES CARD

This idea can get a bit messy so have newspaper to hand to cover up any surfaces and aprons at the ready!

What you'll need:

- Card
- Paint
- Scissors
- Glue
- Colouring pens
- Shaving foam and dish
- Fork or kebab skewer
- Ruler
- Small piece of ribbon



1) Cover the base of the dish with shaving foam.



2) Squeeze paint into the dish. Using a fork or kebab skewer, drag the prongs through the foam to make a pattern.



3) Lay a piece of white card on top of the foam. Gently push down on the card to transfer the paint pattern then lift the card from the dish.



4) After a minute or two, use a ruler to scrape of the excess foam then leave to dry – you should be left with a pretty marbled pattern.



5) Take another piece of card and fold in half to make the base for your design. Using the coloured pens, draw the stalks for the flowers in your bouquet.



6) Tie a piece of ribbon into a bow and stick to the stalks to hold the flowers together.

7) Once dry, cut heart shapes out of the painted card – these will form the heads of the flowers.



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FEBRUARY 2019

Saturday 2 10am - 1pm

NDP next stage - Open meeting. Village Hall

Wednesday 6

10.30am - 12noon

Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common WI. Open to all. Village Hall

Saturday 9 10am - 10.30am

Valentine's Day storytime, craft session & cake sale. Sonning Common Library

Monday 11 2.30pm

FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

Tuesday 12 7.30pm

Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society: "Unusual Edible Plants" by Paul Barney. Peppard Memorial Hall

Monday 18 8pm

Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

Thursday 21 11.30am

FISH - Pub lunch

Thursday 21 7.30pm

Sonning Common Women's Institute: "Musings from the Amateur Stage - 30 years of treading the boards", a talk by Mike Brook. Village Hall

Tuesday 26 2-4pm

Matters of Memory talk. Health Centre

Wednesday 27 2-4pm

Bereavement Group. FISH Building

Thursday 28

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

MARCH 2019

Wednesday 6

10.30am - 12noon

Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common WI. Open to all. Village Hall

Monday 11 2.30pm

FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

Tuesday 12 7.30pm

Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society: "Bulbs That Flower From May to September" by George Lockwood. Peppard Memorial Hall

Thursday 14 - Saturday 16 8pm

Chiltern Players present "Building Bridges". Peppard Memorial Hall

Friday 15 7.30pm

Sonning Common Primary School. Village Quiz

Monday 18 8pm

Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

Thursday 21 11.30am

FISH - Pub lunch

Thursday 21 7.30pm

Sonning Common Women's Institute: AGM followed by a Quiz. Village Hall

Tuesday 26 2-4pm

Matters of Memory talk. Health Centre

Wednesday 27 2-4pm

Bereavement Group. FISH Building

Thursday 28

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

Saturday 30

FISH craft fair. Peppard Memorial Hall

Saturday 30 10-10.30am

Mothers' Day storytime, craft session & cake sale. Sonning Common Library

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