

The Bulletin of
Whitchurch on Thames
July 2013
www.whitchurchonthames.com

Half the year has gone, and what a strange half it was. A cold wet spring has caused our gardens and vegetable plots to be several weeks late. Now everything is playing catch up and it is all happening at once. Nevertheless the flowers are magnificent and the evidence seems to be that the fruit crops will be good even if the timing is somewhat strange..

We were very lucky with the weather for the Garden Walks and there were new gardens to see and admire. As usual we have to thank Mr & Mrs King for their hospitality and the Whitchurch Society for its organisation.

The Village Green is now really settling down as part of our Village. The football pitch's goal posts are in position and already youngsters are training there for the next season. The pads for the new benches are being prepared and the benches will be in position shortly.

There is one thing which has to be mentioned about the car parking area. It was designed as a parking area for occasional visitors to the Village Green and simply won't cope with vehicles using it as a turning space.

The Village Green Committee is changing. Lindsay Austin, who has done so much sterling work on behalf of the Green has left the Village and resigned from the Parish Council. She will remain on the VG committee and Harvey Ainley is now the Parish Council representative .

And now I have to turn to the imminent closure of the bridge. The footbridge will start to appear next month. It will be wide enough for ladies with buggies to pass each other . Cyclists are asked to dismount and push their bikes as respect for travellers on foot. The Bridge Company tell me that it will be lit during the night.

At the risk of being repetitive the outcome of many discussions is:

For the footbridge to function, and also for people living nearby to be able to move their own vehicles we must keep a clear passage through the High Street . The only way to do that is to have double yellow lines from Highwayman Cottage to the toll booth. That means vehicles can pick up and drop off but must not wait. The space available is such that anyone who does not move on quickly just stops anyone and everyone else moving. Someone wishing to be picked up will need to use a mobile phone so that they can be picked up without forcing the driver to wait.

We have a temporary traffic order to cover all that. The same TTO allows us to call on OCC Highways to put double yellows almost anywhere else in the village at short notice if we find we need them. Naturally, we don't expect to use that facility.

There seems to be very little enthusiasm for parking cars while at work or over night on the remote side of the River, either way. The exception may be for people who live north of the River but work in Pangbourne and need to leave a car on our side during the day.

The whitchurchonthames.com message board is available to help people with space and people needing space on either side of the river to make contact with each other.

As of the time of writing the possibility of Doctor's consultation for one day (or half day) per week in the Village Hall is being investigated by the Boathouse Surgery manager. NHS regulations will limit this to consultation only, although I am informed that such things as blood tests may be possible.

Prescriptions are slightly different. There may be some dispensing possible at the Village Hall consultation times but this is likely to be very limited. However, Lloyds pharmacy already deliver to Whitchurch on three days each week and I have checked that they are happy to continue this service while the bridge is closed. The service can be activated by arrangement with the pharmacist at the shop in Pangbourne, or you can dial 0118 984 2935 and request the service. A signature giving the pharmacy the right to deliver is of course required. If needed the necessary form will accompany the first delivery.

I am not aware of detailed arrangements for delivery times, but that can be discussed with the pharmacist when setting up the service.

Emergency responses have proved to be a bit more difficult. We no longer have a resident Community Responder, although if anyone is interested I can provide the necessary contacts. If a 999 call triggers a paramedic response it will also trigger a Responder from Pangbourne. So far the best suggestion we have is that there should be a list of phone numbers that person can ring at any time of day or night to get a lift from the footbridge to wherever help is needed. Please contact me if you can help.

In the meantime Dr Oppenheimer is working to ensure that the paramedic services such as the emergency ambulance service remain as near to the current standard as possible.

Discussions continue and there may be changes which we are not yet aware of. The web site will be kept up to date and the next Bulletin is due in September, which will be just before the bridge closes.

The Hardwick Road passing places project has funds allocated from Oxford County Council and is going ahead. It is requiring careful planning and so there will be some while before anything actually shows.

Jim Donahue reports that the extension and replacement where necessary of the Maze bricks is going ahead. He is ready to order the new bricks which will be a very hard type that will survive much longer than the existing ones.

Finally, all those kerbs which were at risk of damage by weeds have been treated with root killing spray. A specialist was called in to do the job. This used to be done either by SODC or by OCC. Now neither will do it, so it becomes another cost shifted from the wider Councils to the Parish.

It does look as if there is a trend there which is going to continue. The inevitable consequence is that the invaluable effort already being put in by a number of volunteers becomes even more important.

Harry Butterworth

Planning:

The Bridge re-build has not started yet but the planning agreements are all cut and dried.

The current application for Eastfield House, which is supposed to be smaller than the original, but actually has a larger footprint, has gone to appeal but we have still not heard any details.

Also there are

7 June 2013 P13/S1509/HH

23 Swanston Field, Whitchurch On Thames RG8 7HP

Rendering over existing brick, in addition to previously approved extension reference P11/E0946

This is under discussion by the Parish Council, who are hearing varied opinions. By the time this is published SODC's decision will have been made

20 May 2013 P13/S0692/HH

Chiltern Edge, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch on Thames RG8 7EJ

Erection of summerhouse.

The parish Council reported "No strong views" and planning permission was granted.

27 March 2013 P13/S0891/DPO

Land off Old Gardens Whitchurch On Thames RG8 7EP

Removal of Section 52 Agreement made in 1974 in the name of M V Raphael (which prohibits use of the Orchard plot other than landscaped open space)

After consultation with people living close to the plot the Parish Council concluded that the proposed building was acceptable. "Should be approved" is kept for the occasions when there really are strong feelings in favour. Therefore the message to SODC was "No strong views". Planning permission has subsequently been granted.

Whitchurch Bridge – News Bulletin 5, June 2013

Reconstruction of the Bridge

After an extensive formal tender process the Whitchurch Bridge Company has appointed Birse Civils Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Balfour Beatty plc, as main contractor for the reconstruction of Whitchurch Bridge. Key dates are:

Early July 2013: contractor erects signage over a wide area giving advance warning of Bridge closure (there are maps of the signage locations on our website).

29th July 2013: contractor starts to establish compounds on Pangbourne River Meadow and at the Boathouse Surgery. Work starts on the temporary footbridge.

3rd October 2013: main Bridge closes to all traffic. The temporary footbridge – 5 feet wide, with no steps – opens to pedestrians, wheeled bicycles and mobility scooters.

14th April 2014: reconstructed Bridge opens to all traffic. Temporary footbridge closes and dismantling starts.

By 31st May 2014: all works completed, contractor compounds removed, ground reinstated and reseeded. All reinstatement works will be managed until established to the satisfaction of the landowner.

West Berkshire Council and Oxfordshire County Council will implement measures to restrict parking on the main diversionary route through Streatley and Goring, but delays may still occur as significant extra traffic will go this way. For those who wish to use the temporary footbridge but are reliant on transport to get them there, a clear turning space for drop off/pick up will be maintained just north of the Toll Booth, and in Pangbourne the car parks close by can be used.

There is more information on our website, including a Message Board where you can ask a question and get a swift answer. Birse will also be erecting Information Boards, providing a hotline and engaging with local people and organisations affected by the works.

The Company acknowledges the co-operation of Pangbourne Parish Council, Pangbourne Medical Practice, and Adventure Dolphin in enabling the reconstruction work to go ahead.

Bridge Cards

Our stock of Bridge Cards is exhausted and we will not be purchasing any more until the Bridge re-opens in April 2014. We have sold 11,000 Bridge Cards since they were introduced in 2006: of these, 3,800 (34 %) have not been used in the last 12 months and are presumed lost. We ask that past purchasers of Bridge Cards seek out any lost Bridge Cards and return them to us: we will refund the Bridge Card deposit and any unused crossings.

When the Bridge re-opens in April 2014 the discounted Toll for Bridge Card users will increase from 20p to 29.4 p (ie 34 crossings for £10). However, we will allow Bridge Cards to be pre-loaded with crossings at 20p before the Bridge closes and these can be used after the Bridge re-opens. There are more details on our website and on fliers available at the Toll Booth.

Geoff Weir

Company Secretary, the Whitchurch Bridge Company
www.whitchurchbridge.com

Whitchurch Pre-School

Summer term means lots of outside play for the children, the garden is looking great with some tasty veggies coming through. The children have been having fun in preparation for their summer sports day and I am sure that parents and children alike are looking forward to our end of year picnic, a chance for everyone to get together and wish all the 'big kids' best of luck on their journey to primary school.

Another chance to get together is the Whitchurch Village Fete, all the planning and preparations are firmly in place so please save the date. Saturday August 31st.

More details about our lovely pre-school are available at www.whitchurchpreschool.org or please feel free to call us on 0118 984 4516

The Pavilion on the Green

The pavilion on the Village Green may seem to be adequate for the purposes of just the Cricket Club. There is a growing feeling that a pavilion with proper changing rooms and decent toilet facilities available for all users of the Green would be very desirable.

So, to pipe dream a little. We could set about refurbishing the existing buildings. Or we could think about something completely new.

Something completely new is a very long shot, but so was the chance of obtaining the Green for the Village when we started that project. And there is a chance in the wind which may not come again.

SODC have sold off their stock of houses and at least some of the cash will be available next year for projects such as this one. That can only happen once.

My information is that we have a good chance of getting a grant for a new pavilion from this pot. Three things are needed: one is a clear picture of what is proposed so it can be costed properly. The VG management group can sort that out and I have no doubt that the Cricket Club will be happy to advise. The second is planning permission. This should not be a difficult problem because we would be replacing existing structures. The third is the real hill for us to climb; we have to show we can find 60% of the cash.

That seems like a huge call for such a small community. But the same community was asked to provide the trees, hedges and seats demanded by the planning agreement for the Green and that pot was over subscribed. The hedges and trees are in and the benches should be on their plinths by the time you read this. . So maybe there is a chance, and we should see that chance as a challenge.

Harry Butterworth



Aug 31st

2-5pm

Whitchurch-on-Thames
Village Fete

Dog show ■ Bouncy castle ■ Tea & beer tents
■ Live music ■ BBQ ■ Classic cars ■ Fantastic
selection of stalls and many more
attractions!

Village Green, Eastfield Lane, RG8 7EJ

GRAND PRIZE DRAW courtesy of BP

Apple mini iPad ■ PS3 ■ Luxury mini break ■ £100 iTunes
voucher and many more!

whitchurch.on.thames@gmail.com





Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability (PAWS) Group

PAWS has just conformed its 2013 Programme of events. Please feel free to join us for any of these events. For more details, check www.pawsg.com or contact Jim Donahue at jimdonahue7@gmail.com.

July 18th Green Broom sustainable community visit
8 pm Greenbroom, Woodcote, Oxfordshire, RG8 7SS

August Holiday Whitchurch Fete -31 Aug

September Roundtable Discussion with Transition Town Reading
26th Pangbourne Village Hall
8- 9:30pm

Barn Dance - Hardwick Packing Shed (Date TBC)

October Presentation on Permaculture by Green Broom
Old Stables, Whitchurch on Thames

Thursday,
24 Oct,
8- 9:30pm

20th Apple Juicing Day,

November

Eco- House Visit – Whitchurch Hill
Sunday Details TBC
10th

30th West Berks Brewery Tour

Woodcote Library News

From 13th July until 14th September children across Oxfordshire are invited to explore the Creepy House. Are you brave enough to take on the Summer Reading Challenge and enter the Awful Upstairs, the Gruesome Ground Floor and the Spine tingling Cellar. All you have to do is pick up your Creepy House poster from the library. During your spooky adventure read six books to collect stickers and prizes.

For younger children we have recently started Rhymetime sessions on a Thursday mornings from 9.30-10 a.m. please come and join us for songs and stories, its good fun and a chance to meet other Mums and toddlers.

It was great to welcome the 1st Goring Heath Cub Pack to the library, and we wish them every success in obtaining their Book Reader Badge.

The next Book Group Meeting will be on Monday 15th July at 6.p.m.

We are continuing with our Rhyme or Story times throughout the summer on Thursday mornings at 10.a.m. when children can join in with stories, songs and craft activities. We have a special event on Thursday 15th August when a mobile library van will be parked at the back of Woodcote library. We will be able to go in and listen to 'Creepy House' stories and join in the fun on the mobile library. So remember Woodcote Library is the place to be on Thursday mornings in the school holidays!

Teenagers might be interested in the Reference On-Line learning courses available through Oxfordshire County Council Library Service. Probably the most popular is the Theory Test Pro. This allows you to practice the Driving Theory Hazard Perception Test online. It beats the printed version and will definitely help you to have a better chance of passing the test first time!

We have some copies of 'Learn something new in 2013' available in the library. This is a catalogue of courses run by Oxfordshire County Council at Adult Learning Centres, the nearest Centres to Woodcote being Sonning Common and Wallingford. You can find the same information online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/courses or call 0845 351 0646 for more information.

We have a quiz to test your literary knowledge, identify the famous authors. No prizes it's just for fun.

Lastly, we would like to thank Clare Herring for volunteering at Woodcote Library on Saturday mornings for the last few weeks, and wish her every success in her Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Dates for your diary:

Thursday 1st August Story and craft time 10.00 – 11.a.m.

Thursday 8th August Story and craft time 10.00 – 11.a.m.

Thursday 15th August Story and craft time Special in the Mobile Library from 10.a.m.

Thursday 22nd August Story and craft time 10.00-11.00

Book Group Monday 19th August at 6.p.m.

New members always welcome

Julie Warner
Library Manager

Art and Craft Exhibition 2013

The Whitchurch Society

Saturday 16th November 2013
(Entries submitted on Friday 15th November)

Rules can be found at www.whitchurchonthames.com
(Village Groups/Whitchurch Society)

The theme for the Joyce Voysey prize is “Wild & Free”

Whitchurch & Goring History Society

We've been contacted to see if anyone knew a Catherine Hopkins who was in service at Bozedown House. The family concerned has found a postcard to their grandmother written on 16th March 1945 from Bozedown, which was owned at that time by Charles Palmer (of the biscuit company).

Please contact Vicky Jordan on 01189 843260 or vickyjordan5@hotmail.com.

Our meetings in June and July are outings for members only, but we re-convene in September for a fascinating talk on the seventeenth century civil war soldier.

OWL – save our Woodcote Library

Thanks to all who supported our coffee shop on June 1st – we raised over one hundred pounds.

When Woodcote has emerged from the throes of the local plan in the Autumn we shall resume negotiations locally. It is heartening to know that the library was mentioned 'most wanted' on the questionnaire sent out in connection with the plan.

BOOK STALL AT VILLAGE FETE

I will again be running a second-hand book stall at this year's Whitchurch fete to raise money for local charities. If you have any good quality books of any sort that you no longer want please contact Felipa (fmthouse@waitrose.com or 07944 523071).

Many thanks.

Village Walks

Summer evening walk (10 July)

By the time you read this we may have already been on the summer evening walk! If not meet in the Dolphin Centre car park at 19:00 hrs on Wednesday 10 July and we will walk to Pangbourne Moors via a section of the Thames Path, back towards Pangbourne, down Sulham Lane and across to the Pang and down to The Moors. About 4 miles (1½ hours) and back to our Greyhound for a drink together.

The Autumn Walk 2013 - back to the Romans

The Romans were present both in our village and area from their arrival in Britain in AD43 until their departure in 407AD. There is evidence of their occupation in Whitchurch and in Pangbourne but the important river crossing and meeting place of two major routes (the Ridgeway and the Icknield Way) meant that they needed to obtain control of the major bend in the river at Goring.

Nearby Gatehampton was a separate community and has a chequered history; it is recorded as one of the lost villages of Oxfordshire. In 1279 it had 5 servi (servants at the Manor House?) and 6 tenants with its own fulling mill, weir and fishery. In 1316 it was linked to Goring but in 1515 14 people were evicted. The Manor House and Manor Farm still exist and in recent years the farmer experienced difficulty in one field where his plough kept striking a hard object or objects. Investigation by the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG) revealed the site of a Roman villa and a Roman road (probably leading to Ferry Lane in Goring). Since then they have been investigating the site.

It is also worth noting that the pipeline installation near Gatehampton Bridge (one of Brunel's and his bricklayers' finest) revealed artefacts from many periods of history and again evidence of Roman occupation and use of this area.

We have been invited to visit the 'dig' and I suggest that we do so on a Sunday in early October. The location allows everyone who is interested to see it. Those who wish to walk with me, there and back, can do so; others may prefer to walk there and then on to Goring and catch the train back to Pangbourne. There is also the opportunity to travel in and back by train or for families to drive to the site.

I will give details nearer the time but hope you can plan to visit this site before it closes once again for the winter.



GORING HEATH and WHITCHURCH
SUMMER SHOW

Goring Heath Parish Hall

Saturday, 24th August 2013

Open for public viewing at 2.30 pm

*** Raffle * Refreshments * Plant Sale ***

Schedules available on the village website

www.whitchurchonthames.com/diary.php and from

Liz Gibson (0118 984 2012)

Ann Lewis (0118 984 2377)

Sue Sexon (0118 984 4236)

Helen Willis (0118 984 3620)

Photo courtesy of foto76 at www.FreeDigitalPh

Purley CofE Infant School

*Calling all ex-pupils of Purley CofE Infant School,
Purley on Thames*

Be a part of the school's history and help us fundraise the building of two classrooms as we progress to Primary status. We are delighted to announce our "Buy a Brick Scheme". You may have heard about it on local radio or in the press. Please visit our website www.purleyinfantschool.co.uk or ring the School Office for a form (0118 984 2384). Everyone who buys a brick will have their names displayed on a wall in school for posterity!

MAZE WORKING PARTIES

These will take place on the following SATURDAYs every month this summer at 10.00AM:

20th JULY, 17th AUG, 21st SEPT, 19th OCT

Please come along and help with edging, sweeping and general maintenance of the Maze and contribute to the important effort in keeping this special place looking good! All tools provided.

Note: these dates may be subject to change during the restoration works but details will be posted on the village website and the noticeboard at the Maze.

DIARY DATES

Contributions welcome for this column if anyone knows of a date that would be of interest to the village.

July

Sunday 7th Haymeadows Walk

Saturday 20th Maze working party

August

Saturday 17th Maze Working party

Saturday 24th Summer Gardening Show

Saturday 31st Whitchurch Village Fete

September

Saturday 21st Maze Working party

October

Saturday 19th Maze Working party

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN

will be published in September 2013

Please send your contributions **preferably by e-mail to**
Sarah.pongo@btconnect.com by 5th September 2013

Views of individual contributors
are the views of those contributors,
and are not necessarily the views of the Parish Council, or the
editor