

## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Well I hope you are all rested after the Christmas and New Year festivities and now we look forward to a new year where we can embark on projects which will ensure that Whitchurch on Thames remains one of the best places to live in South Oxfordshire. Your Parish Councillors work hard for you all year round attending meetings, contacting relevant people, organising working groups and are generally there to support you. In return I hope that many of you will feel able to participate in the projects that the council organises and which are often advertised on our web site since it is the village which benefits in the long run.

One of these projects is a Village Plan which we are in the process of putting together. This plan is a substantial task and hence we need as many people as possible to organise groups which will cover the many aspects of the plan which make up an overall picture of how we see the village developing into the future. The different topics which could be covered are traffic and transport, countryside and environment, housing and community and recreational facilities. The plan should be led by the village so if you feel you could make a contribution to the plan and get involved in one of the groups get in touch with either Rachel Hatcher or Jim Donahue.

We also need volunteers to form a village hall committee to oversee the maintenance and possible refurbishment of the hall which is a great asset of the Parish Council and the village and as such should be looked after. There is much which could be updated and if this was done then it might encourage more people to use it and make it more enjoyable for those who do. So if you feel you have some spare time to give and get involved in our village hall then contact our Parish Clerk Felipa.

Our other great asset the village green could also do with some volunteers particularly around March to get it ready for the summer season so if you fancy some exercise and are a dab hand with the shears get in touch with Jon Steward and we can keep it looking smart and inviting. There is of course the village itself which is now being looked after by a group called MOWS (make our Whitchurch special) and who need volunteers for gardening work in our open spaces – contact Leslie Maynerd on 0118 984 5513.

Lastly we need to welcome our new councillor Denise Huxtable who I am sure will make a great contribution to our essential work.

*Keith Brooks January 2017*

## **VILLAGE PLAN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council is sponsoring the development of a Neighbourhood plan for our community. The plan will need support and active participation of members of the community and will likely take at least 18 months to complete. We held an initial meeting on the 14 of November to start this process.

Not to be confused with the Village Plan this is also being developed, the Neighbourhood Plan is a legal document that becomes part of the Oxfordshire Local Plan that would govern where, how much, and what kind of development can happen in our village. The Village plan will address other aspects of the Village such recommended solutions to the various traffic and parking issues and other improvements we would like to see in the village.

Why have a Neighbourhood Plan? If we work together to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, then we can have a degree of control over any future development that does happen in our village. And if development happens that is in our approved plan, we stand to receive 25% of a Community Infrastructure Levy that South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) receives from developers (we would get 15% without a plan). We would be able to decide how these funds are invested in our community.

The risk of not having a plan is that new developments would likely continue to be proposed in our area over time that we are unprepared to respond to and have little ability to influence.

The number of houses in Whitchurch hasn't changed significantly in recent years and we may expect that to continue. However pressure to build new housing in the UK is great and will only continue to grow in the future. Whitchurch doesn't officially have any allocation of new homes under the Local Plan, but SODC is now proposing that all small villages look at increasing the number of houses by 5% by 2032. That would mean up to 17 new houses in our small village.

<b>Whitchurch on Thames</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2011</b>
Residents	758	824
Occupied Households	324	327
5% increase		17

We are initially looking to understand how the many constraints on development in our area affect development and where any future development would likely to happen. These constraints include the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that covers the village, the flood plain areas, the conservation area in the village, not to mention limitations in primary school places and increasing traffic congestion expected from other developments in South Oxfordshire. Once the implications of these are better understood, we will be in a better position to understand where future development is likely to be proposed, and start to think about what we would like that to look like.

The WG already has a number of active members led by Cllr Jim Donahue, but it is open to any interested members of the community.

The next meeting will be on Monday 30th January, at 8pm at the Old Stables.

*Jim Donahue*

## **PANGBOURNE TRAIN SERVICE AFTER RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION – UPDATE**

We now know that from December 2017 our train services from Pangbourne station will be provided by brand new 110 mph air-conditioned Class 387/1 electric trains, some of which are now operating between Paddington and Hayes. They are amongst the most comfortable suburban trains in the country with 2 + 2 seating, tables and armrests for every seat, free wi-fi and power sockets. They will run as 8 car trains, which provide about the same number of seats (but in far more comfort) as 5 cars of the current trains. Both

platforms at Pangbourne station will be extended to accommodate the new trains.

When they're introduced they'll run between Paddington and Didcot only as electrification to Oxford won't be completed until around 2024. Until then, Pangbourne passengers travelling to Oxford will need to change at Didcot on to a diesel train.

*Geoff Weir*

## **WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL**

Children have had a lovely pre-Christmas term at the Pre-school - probably the busiest term of the year. From ongoing rehearsals for the nativity play which proved to deliver an excellent show created by Lori Bannerman, to the Christmas party where Bertie Slippers entertained and the children were visited by Father Christmas himself, Christmas was a very magical occasion. A special visit by the local police last term gave the children an opportunity to explore the police car and discover how the police help support the local community. If you are interested in exploring the pre-school setting for your child, please contact Kathleen Barrow to register your interest and arrange a visit. [whitchurchpreschool@me.com](mailto:whitchurchpreschool@me.com)  
0118 984 4516

*Beth Baxter*

## **WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY**

On Thursday January 19th the Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society is opening its doors to all comers to hear about Sir Charles Rose, owner of Hardwick House in the early Twentieth century, and a possible model for Mr Toad in "The Wind in the Willows" by Kenneth Grahame. With his love of cars he might seem to fit the bill, but in real life Sir Charles was also a fascinating character, a sportsman, liberal politician, member of the leisured class, with connections to Edward VII, but with a private life shadowed by bereavement.

Michael Redley, of Oxford's Department of Continuing Education, who has researched the life of Sir Charles and the times in which he lived, will give an illustrated talk, introduced by Miriam Rose, his descendant and current owner of Hardwick House. His booklet will be available to buy at £7.

The event is at 8pm at Whitchurch Village Hall, Manor Road, Whitchurch, RG8 7EU.

Our AGM takes place in Whitchurch Village Hall on Thursday 16th February at 8pm. Come and hear of all our activities – and maybe join us – and see Nick Brazil's delightful new film "The Secret Life of Father Thames", a journey of discovery down the Upper Thames.

Those who visited the Police College museum with us last year will remember the infamous Amelia Dyer, the baby farm murderer from Caversham. On March 16th we welcome Angela Buckley to tell us the story, and the historical background to the case.

Our meetings are open to non-members for £3 including coffee.

*Vicky Jordan*

## **WHITCHURCH SOCIETY WALKS 2017**

**NYD Walk.** Fifteen walkers took on the challenge of the five mile NYD walk. Numbers were a little down as the weather forecast had predicted heavy rain during the walk. The route took us north to Blackbird's Bottom via the War Memorial, Beech Farm and Coldharbour hamlet and the return through Little Oaken Wood and then back south via Whitchurch Hill. The rain was fairly light at first but as we made our return it did become heavy and some walkers took solace in the Greyhound post walk.

**Spring Walk.** This will be on Sunday 30th April, 10:30am start outside the Art Gallery. The route goes north then west along the Thames Path then up Hartslock and return via Great Chalk Wd & Coldharbour hamlet. Approx 5.5miles so allow about 3 hours.

*Richard Williams*

## **A SMILE**

A smile costs nothing yet gives so much,  
enriching those it comes to touch  
Without impoverishing those who give,  
for only a moment does it live  
But its memory sometimes lingers on,  
though the time has been and gone  
No-one is rich enough to go without,  
the poor deserve it without a doubt  
Within the family it creates goodwill,  
relations between friends are better still  
To those who are tired a smile gives rest,  
renders courage to one who's depressed  
A great consolation to those who are sad,  
a natural cure I you're feeling bad  
It cannot be sold, it cannot be bought,  
it cannot be stolen, its value is nought  
Someone you'll meet will touch a raw nerve,  
refusing to give you the smile you deserve  
Be generous with yours and do it with style,  
the effect is amazing – that gift of a smile.

*Translated by Leslie Prater from the French poem, "Un Sourire"  
16th February 2002, in memory of his brother Alan who died this  
day 5 years ago and whose smile will last for ever.*

## **WHITCHURCH UNITED CHARITIES**

The Secretary of Whitchurch United Charities wants to remind all families that the Charity has funds available to help meet the costs associated with educational needs such as books, equipment or educational trips.

Eligible students are young people between the ages of 5 and 25 years and whose permanent residence is within the parish of Whitchurch.

Applications are processed twice a year, with the closing dates being 31st March and 30th September. However, late applications are considered if the available funds for the previous 6 month period have not been fully allocated.

All applications and decisions are treated in strict confidence by the Trustees.

If you would like to know more, please do contact Sarah Dixon (our Grant Application Secretary) Contact details: Tel. 0118 984 4262 or Flint House, Hardwick Rd, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HH, Email – whitchurchunitedcharities@gmail.com

*Helen Bowsher*

## **WHITCHURCH HILL CAMERA CLUB**

### ***2017 New Year's Resolution our Chairman Alan Copeland New Year's challenge :***

**Project 100.** Take two photographs every week throughout 2017 with the exception of two weeks, for you can decide on. This will result in you having taken a total of 100 images by the end of next year which you will then share with your fellow Club members in the first half of the following year.

The real challenge is motivating yourself to use the camera when you would not normally be taking images and stretching your creative abilities in finding images, possibly in the depths of winter, to show at the club to your fellow members. Five years ago, we had 16 keen members who accepted the challenge.

Meanwhile – a varied programme lies ahead (Annual Fee £35 – On the night £3.00) :

**February** – Gets competitive with the area Rosebowl Round 3, the more local 6-Club and our in house Digital Competition, No.3 the subject 'Transport'. While the Practical Photography Group on Thursday 2nd holds a studio evening... always rewarding.

**March** – Kicks off with another competition, Transport – but this one is for prints so every member, whatever their chosen medium, gets their chance to compete. We visit Sri Lanka on the 8th and hold the much awaited Natural History Competition on the 22nd.

**April** – Four months in, we are in our stride on the 12th – we view the Maasai Mara through the eyes of our intrepid Nigel Glover-Wright then on the 26th – The Alps in all their Glory... now that is a contrast...(well done Alan).

There is of course many others to choose from. For the full programme and to enjoy just a few of our images visit our website (see below).  
– Come join us

*Lyn Higgs [www.whitchurchhillcameraclub.co.uk](http://www.whitchurchhillcameraclub.co.uk)*

## **THE 2016 WHITCHURCH ART & CRAFT EXHIBITION**

This popular annual event, now in its 38th year, was staged by The Whitchurch Society in Whitchurch Village Hall over the weekend of 19th & 20th November. It was, yet again, a very successful and sociable occasion which provided the opportunity for everyone to see and share the results of creative talent in our community. There was a wonderful variety of artwork, craftwork and photographs from young and old, showing a very high standard. Suki Millar's entry which won the Popular Vote is shown on the front cover – a charming picture of an owl made of leaves which was justifiably chosen as the favourite exhibit.

This year's theme for the Joyce Voysey Prize was 'Trees' and we had a record-breaking 47 entries for this award this year – obviously an inspiring subject! Note that the theme for this year's Joyce Voysey Prize will be decided shortly and will be revealed in the next Bulletin.

Colourful displays of work by children at the Pre-School, the Primary School and the Oratory Prep School were very eye-catching and showed great promise. Visitors enjoyed refreshments all weekend and meeting up with friends and neighbours before the prize-giving ceremony at 4.30pm on Sunday.



We were very pleased to welcome Gill Williamson and Alison Livesey from the ArtCafe, who were displaying and selling lovely art and craft items.

Congratulations to all the prize winners; a full list of these can be found on the village website, on the link to Village Groups/Annual Art & Craft Exhibition.

Very many thanks to all the exhibitors and also to everyone who helped with the setting up, dismantling and running of the show, including serving the refreshments and making delicious cakes. Finally, my special thanks to Sarah Dixon and Peter Smith who helped me in the planning stages and to the Whitchurch Society members who supported us.

*Sally Woolhouse (sally@wotarts.co.uk)*

## **WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH TWINNING ASSOCIATION**

All are welcome at our AGM which is taking place on Wednesday 1st February at 7.30pm in the Old Rectory Stables in Whitchurch (where the Art Café is held). A group from La Bouille are visiting from 29th April to 1st of May and we will be making plans to entertain them.

*Vicky Jordan*

## **AFC WHITCHURCH FOOTBALL CLUB**

AFC Whitchurch are a small, friendly club based in Whitchurch on Thames, welcoming players from Whitchurch and surrounding areas. We run 6 teams plus our blossoming Academy section for our very youngest players. We are a parent-run club and are all extremely passionate about football, encouraging our children into regular exercise and promoting healthy team spirit.

Team and training details are below, if you are interested in joining us please get in touch – [afcwhitchurch@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:afcwhitchurch@yahoo.co.uk)

**Academy / U7** – train on Saturday mornings at Whitchurch Village Green, Eastfield Lane.

**U8** – train on Wednesday evenings at Whitchurch Village Green in the summer, Langtree School in the winter. Play in the Berkshire Youth Development League on Saturdays.

**U9** – train on Saturday mornings at Whitchurch Primary School, Eastfield Lane. Play in the Reading & West Berkshire League on Sunday mornings.

**U11** – train on Friday evenings at Langtree School. Play in the Berkshire Youth Development League on Saturdays.

**U13** – train on Thursday evenings at Langtree School. Play in the Berkshire Youth Development League on Saturdays.

**U18** – train on Thursday evenings at Langtree School. Play in the East Berkshire Football Alliance on Saturdays.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for news and photos – [facebook.com/afcwh](https://www.facebook.com/afcwh)

*Lindsay Austin, Club Secretary*

## **WOT-HABS FOR ‘WILD OXFORDSHIRE’**

Wild Oxfordshire is a local conservation charity working to make Oxfordshire’s environment rich in nature for the benefit and enjoyment of all. This charity issues an excellent free fortnightly Environmental Bulletin via email which is full of interesting local environmental news, walks, talks, jobs, volunteering and training opportunities.

In their latest issue, they are encouraging everyone to spread the word: “We’ve just signed up the 1,500th subscriber to the bulletin. We’d appreciate it if you could help us get to 1,600 – please spread the word amongst friends, family and work colleagues. There’s a subscribe button on our home page <http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/>”.



A beautiful 18th Century country style pub and restaurant  
nestled in the small riverside village of Whitchurch-on-Thames,  
just a few yards from over the Whitchurch toll bridge,  
a short walk from the car parks in Pangbourne.

- 
- Serving quality homemade food
  - Comprehensive bistro style menu
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Spirits and soft drinks
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The Ferryboat, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG8 7DB  
Telephone 0118 984 2161 email [info@theferryboatwhitchurch.com](mailto:info@theferryboatwhitchurch.com)  
[www.theferryboatwhitchurch.com](http://www.theferryboatwhitchurch.com)

It is inspiring to read about what is happening across the county in our neighbouring parishes. We in WoTHabs would love to receive your ideas and feedback about what you think we ourselves should be doing to encourage and protect the wildlife and habitats in our own parish.

*Sally Woolhouse and Gill Goodwin*

## **WHITCHURCH SOCIETY: VILLAGE QUIZ**

### ***1. Name the MP for the village?***

A) Boris Johnson, B) Kevin Bulmer, C) John Howell

### ***2. Name the main road that runs through the village***

A) B471, B) A471, C) B4714

### ***3. When you're standing on Whitchurch Bridge, which county are you in?***

A) Oxfordshire, B) Berkshire, C) It depends which way you are going

### ***4. What is the most recently recorded population of Whitchurch?***

A) 758, B) 824, C) 926

### ***5. How many bridges have been at Whitchurch before the current one?***

A) 4, B) 3, C) 2

**6. In what year did the worst flooding of Whitchurch occur?**

A) 1968, B) 1947, C) 2003

**7. What is the name of Whitchurch's microbrewery?**

A) The Hen House brewery, B) The Chicken House brewery, C) The Whitchurch brewery

**8. The ancient road which ran from Caversham to Wallingford along the route of Hardwick Road was known as**

A) The Icknield Way, B) The Ridgeway, C) Tuddingway

**9. The narrow footpath which leads from Swanston Field to Eastfield Lane is called**

A) The Ginnel, B) The Snicket, C) The Cut

**10. The new steps on the Thames Path towards Goring are known as**

A) The 39 steps, B) The Hartley steps, C) The bridlepath stairway

## **THE BULLETIN FIFTY YEARS AGO**

**SPEED LIMIT:** Col. Gantry-Birch, County Council member for Whitchurch, reported that his representations to the County Surveyor regarding extension of speed limit in Hardwick Road failed to produce any satisfaction. It was agreed that the Clerk should write a strong protest to the Clerk of the County Council, based on the fact that it was taken up by the Parish Council six years ago, and that the dangers were pointed out before the primary school was built.

**THE BROOK:** Mr.W.N. Coglen reported as follows: “I arranged that Dr. Currie, Chairman of the Public Health Committee of the Henley R.D.C. should visit the site. He did so with myself in November last when he inspected the brook from the Eastfield Lane exit of the culvert for some considerable distance towards the river. There was little flow of water. He later informed me that he again visited the brook with Mr. Gothin, R.D.C. Engineer and Surveyor. On this occasion (after some days of heavy rain) there was, according to him, a considerable flow of water and no evidence of obstruction or building up of water in the brook itself. I have recently spoken to Mr. Harrison who tells me that he has written to the County on the matter last September and as yet has had no reply. It is Mr. Harrison’s suggestion that the Parish Council should write direct to the County on the matter in the hope that this added communication might produce some results.” The Clerk was asked to write again to County Council pressing for the work to be done and pointing out that a government grant was available for drainage schemes.

**STREET LIGHTING:** The following report of the Lighting Sub-Committee came under review:- “After careful survey of the existing street lighting in the parish, it was found that three new lights were required in badly lit areas, and that one light should be re-sited”.

**PRECEPT:** An estimated precept for the coming year was approved: £110 General Purposes and £410 Lighting. The proposed new lighting places an extra 2d. on the rates; the product of a penny rate being £119.

*Keith Brooks*

## **DONATIONS SOUGHT FOR WAR MEMORIAL PLAN**

Goring Heath parish chairman Peter Dragonetti has reported good progress towards the plan to reconstruct to its original height the war memorial belonging to the two Whitchurch communities. The project was initiated by Martin Wise of Whitchurch Hill in 2014. A subsequent survey conducted in Whitchurch Hill/Goring Heath showed strong



support for restoring the memorial. An approach in 2014 by Goring Heath parish council to Whitchurch parish council to share the cost of restoration failed to generate support. But the Whitchurch parish council elected in 2015 conducted a survey of its constituents a year ago which attracted 52 responses. Of these, 33 favoured the most extensive option of a full height cross, a plaque, cleaning and landscaping, then estimated at £19,000, while 12 favoured a full height cross without any landscaping, 3 wanted to keep the present low cross, and 4 favoured only cleaning the memorial. Undeterred by the initial lack of enthusiasm from Whitchurch, Goring Heath parish council hired an architect to prepare drawings and approached the War Memorial Trust. The Trust agreed to fund 75% of the cost of cleaning and restoration, amounting to £3,450, but would not contribute to the landscaped surround and would not allow an interpretive board to accompany the memorial. Peter Dragonetti said last week that the estimated cost of the project was now £9,000 for full height restoration, professional cleaning and improvements to the immediate surround. The expected grant, supplemented by donations already made (enhanced by Gift Aid), amounts to a fund of around £7,000. Further donations from individuals or companies are now sought towards the remaining £2,000. If you would like to donate, please email [whitchurchwarmemorial@gmail.com](mailto:whitchurchwarmemorial@gmail.com) indicating how much you would like to give. The intention is to complete the

project without further cost to either of the parish councils, in time for the centenary of the Armistice in November 2018.

*This note/article first appeared as a news item on the Whitchurch Web on 12th December 2016*

## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

Deadline for contributions for the April (Spring) Bulletin will be Sunday 9th April and this edition will cover events in May to July inclusive.

Any local businesses can advertise in the Bulletin at attractive rates of £40 (half page) and £70 (full page). Fees are annual and cover four editions of the Bulletin.

*Richard Williams*

### ***Answers to Village Quiz***

1. C, 2. A, 3. A, 4. B. Population of village recorded as 824 in 2011 and 758 in 2011, 5. C. Wooden bridges were constructed in 1792 & 1854 and the existing metal bridge in 1902 which was reconstructed in 2014. 6. B, 7. A, 8. C, 9. C, 10. B