



WHITCHURCH BULLETIN

WINTER
2024

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PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

– JANUARY 2024

Just when things seemed quiet around the village, over the holidays we were hit with Storm Henk and historic levels of flooding. I am told that these were the highest river levels in the village since at least 1947. Luckily there were relatively few that were significantly impacted. It was great to see so many in the village expressing their concerns and keen to help out where they could.

Village Flooding – The most affected areas were the south side of Eastfield Lane, the Mill Pond area, and the Greyhound. Despite volunteers getting sandbags to barricade the Greyhound, the water levels were too much and water seeped through the floorboards and they needed to close the pub on Saturday evening – the Swan in Pangbourne closed even earlier in the day. Fortunately, the Greyhound was able to open again few days later.

- Special thanks to Selby Armstrong, John Southey and others who supported the Greyhound with making sandbags.
- Thanks to Cllr Parkes and our Clerk Jane for locating traffic cones for use across from the Greyhound to reduce splashing from cars.
- I understand a number of others helped the Greyhound with things like humidifiers and carpet cleaning.

I initiated the Emergency Team procedure and asked street emergency contacts to check on neighbours who might be in need of support and to prepare the Village Hall in case it was needed. A special thanks to Neil and Julie Huntington for their support to a number of Eastfield Lane residents with finding and creating makeshift sandbags.

A group of village experts are leading a Flooding Forum to assess the lessons from the flooding with other stakeholders in the village and working to prepare recommendations to reduce future flooding risks. One finding was that the improvements that were made to the Greyhound bowl in recent years with improved High Street drainage by the Greyhound have helped with flash



flooding scenarios, but were insufficient to accommodate the volume of water coming from the river during the recent flooding at record levels.

In general, most residents seemed to just about cope and we need to understand the lessons from this experience as we have to assume that the frequency of this type of flooding will only increase. This will be reviewed with the emergency team, but a couple of clear lessons:

- We continue to encourage households that are vulnerable to flooding to maintain a sufficient supply of sandbags.
- The Parish Council should consider securing a central sandbag/sand box supply to supplement residents' supplies.
- We should also have some village traffic cones for urgent situations.

Christmas Torch Procession – on a brighter note, the inaugural village Christmas torch procession that was organised by Alistair Dunstan was a very festive and successful event, especially considering it is the first time. It included volunteer musicians leading Christmas Carols with at least 20-30

residents who gathered at the Greyhound, proceeding down Eastfield Lane with many residents waving and clapping along the way. It was a very festive atmosphere and hopefully the sign of more to come in the future!

High Street Residents' Parking and Pedestrian Safety Plan Consultation –

The consultation has closed and OCC is planning to make a recommendation to an OCC Cabinet meeting on 25th January – so a decision may have been made by the time you read this. The Parish Council has been working with OCC Highways to address feedback received during the consultation period. We understand that the general feedback showed clear support with most respondents in favour of the changes.

OCC didn't provide us with comments from specific residents but offered the following categories of concerns that were raised. Overall, their view was that the consultation feedback demonstrated 'clear support' for the changes:

- There were concerns about displacement of cars from the High Street parking onto other streets. OCC's view was that this was not something that could be considered as part of the consultation as it only focussed on the changes to the High Street. It is not possible to predict what the impacts of the changes may be, but future restrictions on other streets could be looked at after 6-12 months of monitoring the changes.
- There were concerns about reduced parking on the west side of the High Street by the upper narrows. The Parish Council urged the OCC Officer to request an increase in the number of spaces there from 3 to at least 4 or 5. This was not something OCC was previously willing to consider for visibility reasons, but given the feedback, it appears that they will increase the number of spaces in the new scheme.
- We were also aware of concerns about visibility and access concerns for residents using the Swanston House entrance on the High Street. We are told that OCC will remove one of the parking spaces closest to the entrance to address this concern. The double yellow lines on the remainder of the street across from the entrance will keep the area clear.
- There is likely to be some other shifting of spaces to address other specific concerns that were raised.

Street Food Trading Licence at the Greyhound – Returning to the Greyhound, I attended the SODC Licensing meeting virtually with Oak Taverns application

in December for the street food licensing decision. Oak Taverns were successful in being granted an annual street food trading licence for the Greyhound. This included some restrictions such as no more than four days a week and only within certain hours. Between this and the recently flooding it hasn't been the easiest year for the Greyhound. It was heart-warming to read at least 60 letters of support submitted to SODC by residents of the village and the surrounding area for the Greyhound, the street food offerings, and the significant benefits to the community that the Greyhound provides since it was taken over by Oak Taverns in the past two years.

Tea Hut Demolition – The Parish Council approved a contractor quote to demolish the Tea Hut that will commence shortly subject to approval by SODC. Removal of the existing tea hut would clear the way for the PC to develop a similar replacement building that could be used for fetes and other community activities on the Village Green.

Village Green Car Park Repair – Cllr Parkes has arranged for the repair of an area of the Village Green car park 'grasscrete' surface that has been damaged for some time. Please be aware that the car park is likely to be unavailable for a few days from 31st January.

Leaky tap/stopcock on north end of the Village Green – Thanks to Cllr Parkes for working with Thames Water to have the tap at the top end of the field fixed by Thames Water after the PC agreed to take responsibility for fixing this from the Cricket Club in November.

Residents' issues – We have been working to address a number of issues raised by residents in the past couple of months:

- **Lights out in upper and lower narrows** – I escalated two street light faults to OCC along with County Cllr Kevin Bulmer. Separately, a resident raised a complaint to both OCC about the delays in getting them fixed and our local Henley Standard reporter has even asked for responses from both the OCC and SSE press offices. A lot of work for two light repairs but sometimes that's what it takes!
 - Light by the lower narrows at Ferryboat (no. 2) was fixed as of 9th January.
 - Light at upper narrows (no. 7) is not working as of 14th January. OCC is working on it but says they are having problems with SSE.

- **Repair of pavement at Ferryboat needs to be made good after OCC work** – I raised this to OCC and they said that they have asked SSE to restore the 'faux brickwork' as it was before the work they carried out. OCC to inspect by 17th March.
- **Eastfield Lane potholes** – Following concerns raised about numerous potholes on Eastfield Lane, I raised a number of potholes to be repaired as a FixMyStreet Super user. Several potholes were fixed on 4th January, but some are outstanding. The Eastfield House builder has also filled some near the site entrance with gravel. I have asked OCC to inspect the road and clarify the process for having the road resurfaced once work is completed on Eastfield House.
- **Verges on Eastfield Lane** – The state of verges on Eastfield lane is deteriorating due to Eastfield House work and other construction work on the street, and now also from flooding. I raised our concerns to both OCC and Eastfield house builder Zephyr X. The builder has been trying to manage the situation and has promised to reinstate the verges and reduce damage going forward but has not given a specific plan. I expect OCC to inspect the situation shortly.
- **Cleaning of streets and pavements on Hardwick Road and High Street** – the Clerk has requested this be done again to ensure the pavements are sufficiently clean and safe. They were cleaned in November but could benefit from another clean now that the leaves have all fallen down. We are discussing an option of requesting residents of the village participate in a "Spring Cleaning" where residents are encouraged to sweep the pavement in front of their homes.
- **Cleaning of Bridge Pavement** – I also received complaints about debris on the bridge pavement. I contacted the bridge company and they have now cleaned the surface as of 4th January. I have also raised some potholes to them which they also plan to address.
- **Vegetation overhanging from Walled Garden** – A Green Team working party is being planned to remove overhanging fig trees from Walled Garden that are making the surface slippery for pedestrians.

*Kind regards,
Jim Donahue
Chairman, Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council*



QUARTERLY PLANNING UPDATE FOR WOT PC

JANUARY 2024

Planning Reference	Address and Application	Comments by WOT PC	SODC status
P23/S3372/LDE	Boathouse, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7RA. Seeking lawful development certificate for the use of the Boathouse as a residential dwelling.	The Parish Council did not submit any comments on this application for lawful development certificate.	<i>Granted</i>
P23/S2413/HH	Pavilion Cottage, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EJ. First floor rear extensions and general alterations.	The Parish Council voted to submit a comment that we would support this application as long as the Ecology Team supports the bat survey.	<i>Granted</i>
P23/S3721/LB	The Old Rectory, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7DF Orangery Extension to rear elevation, kitchen and utility room alterations replacement window on front elevation and existing window to first floor rear elevation to be enlarged.	The Parish Council voted to support this application.	<i>Granted</i>
P23/S2277/S73	Coombe Park, Coombe Park Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7QT. Discharge of conditions 9 (surface water drainage works) & 10 (foul drainage works) in planning application P23/S2277/73. Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on application P22/S1324/FUL (The erection of a replacement dwelling and associated works) – to allow for design changes to the house.	The Parish Council voted to confirm no comment to be submitted as this is a discharge of conditions.	<i>Granted</i>
P23/S2869/HH	37 Manor Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EU. Proposed double storey side extension and single storey rear extension following demolition of existing side store and rear conservatory.	The Parish Council voted to support this application.	<i>Granted</i>
P23/S4033/LDP	Byways, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HH. The gas meter will be moved from the internal location in the kitchen, to the external wall side.	The Parish Council advised that SODC has determined that this change does not require planning approval and the application can be withdrawn.	

Planning Reference	Address and Application	Comments by WOT PC	SODC status
P23/S3942/HH	18 Manor Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EU. Remove existing single storey garden room and replace with new single storey garden room within property boundary.	The Parish Council voted to support this application.	<i>Application under consideration</i>
P23/S4094/HH	29 Swanston Field, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HP. Single storey side extension to replace the existing utility room extension and changes to the ground floor extension.	The Parish Council voted to submit to support this application.	<i>Application under consideration</i>
P23/S4055/S73	Eastfield House, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EJ. Variation of conditions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13 and 14 on application P11/S0126 (Application under S73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for Variation of condition 14 (Approved Plans) on application P11/S0126 granted by appeal decision APP/Q3115/A/13/219268	The Parish Council voted to submit the comment that they have no objection to Zephyr X planting a cedar tree near the entrance, but we question whether a cedar tree may be too large for the plot of land.	<i>Consultation period</i>
P23/S1070/FUL	Walled Garden House, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EP Discharge of condition 11 Ecological Mitigation (details required) in application P23/S1070/FUL Demolition of existing dwelling and rear outbuildings, replacement by a detached dwelling and detached double garage (Amended application following withdrawal of application P22/S3901/FUL and as amplified by additional information received 31 July 2023).	The Parish Council noted that SODC has now approved the condition so there is no point in making comments.	<i>Granted</i>
P23/S4171/FUL	Oakfield, Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7EJ Replacement dwelling involving demolition of existing house and garage.	The Parish Council voted to submit the comments to ensure there was no issue overlooking the preschool and access issues with neighbours were resolved. The Parish Council supported the comments from Little Holme regarding future landscape changes need to comply with AONB policies and permitted use of land.	<i>Application under consideration</i>

FROM YOUR DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

After many years on Goring Heath Parish Council, I stood for the District Council last year as I was not impressed by some of the decisions taken by the planning committee when I attended as a Parish Council representative.

Now I am on the District Council, and on the planning committee, I have been able to influence some of the decisions to be made in line with the values that I hold, and I am pleased that some of those decisions have been upheld on appeal.

There are still cases where approval is given for developments that I don't like, but it is really a good thing that these decisions are not based on personal preferences but in accordance with national and local policy. National Policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and one of the main elements of the NPPF is that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Of course, just what is meant by sustainable is not at all clear, and there are often conflicting policies to consider about a development.

When it comes to considering actual planning applications, one of the matters that parish councils will feel most strongly about is retrospective applications, in other words a planning application for something that has already been developed. However, there is no local or national policy which requires that the fact that an application is retrospective is relevant to a planning decision; the decision must only be made on planning grounds. Similarly, an application cannot be refused or approved because of who the applicant is, or the claimed personal needs of the applicant such as family size or need to accommodate an aged relative.

One of the reasons retrospective applications come forward is that they arise as part of the process of addressing a planning enforcement matter, in other words development has taken place that should have had planning consent. A retrospective application regularises the position. Although many people have an expectation that enforcement means that the Council – or demolition contractors – move in to remove or demolish what has been built, that rarely happens. Readers of the *Henley Standard* may be aware of the saga of an unlawful art studio that was built at Rotherfield Peppard, and this was a case where the developer used all the options available to try and legitimise an unlawful development. However, I believe that demolition and site clearance is

now in the offing. A huge expense must have been incurred by this developer in both building work and legal and professional costs; all wasted.

There are few cases as dramatic as this “Art Studio” at Rotherfield Peppard, and very often a retrospective application, brought forward through enforcement, is granted. This is because the development does not cause “Planning harm”, and might well have been granted consent if it had gone through the normal, proper process. At other times changes are made to something that is already built to fix the objectionable aspects of the development.

Other countries take a more robust attitude. Some years ago, I was walking on a coastal path in Turkey, and found that a waterside café recommended in my guide book had been demolished, as had several villas nearby that had been built illegally. I don’t suppose that the process in Turkey had taken as long as it does here, where the Art Studio case has been going on for about six years.

The Local Plan, drafted in compliance with the NPPF, sets out the policies for development, and while there is a current plan, a new Joint Local Plan (JLP2041) is being developed with Vale of White Horse, and there will be a consultation opening very shortly. The results of the 2022 Consultation which will help to frame this new Joint Local Plan is on the SODC website, and it is interesting to see the variety of views that are expressed about issues. I would urge everyone to respond to the next round of consultations on the forthcoming Joint Local Plan 2041.

Peter Dragonetti
(peter.dragonetti@southoxon.gov.uk)
SODC Councillor for Whitchurch on Thames

WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION



What a wonderful first term we had at school! Everyone settled back beautifully into new routines and before we knew it, Christmas Festivities were in full flow. Our first 'Light Festival' in partnership with St Mary's Church, where we enjoyed a lantern parade, was a great success and enjoyed by many in the village. Hopefully, this can become a new tradition, a way of welcoming in the new season and darker nights, whilst getting together as a community.

We want to say a HUGE thank you to all of the local businesses who so generously donated to our Christmas raffle which was sponsored by Warminghams. The prizes this year were amazing and included vouchers for Ninos, Greens, Beauty Box, Floating Point, Crooked Billet, Virgo Beauty to name a few. Other prizes also included fitness classes at the Dolphin Centre, a hamper from Goring Grocer, brewery tour of Double Barrelled and many, many more. We felt very lucky to be supported by the local community both with prizes donated and tickets purchased. The raffle raised almost £2,500 for the school which is just amazing and will ensure we can support the school with delivering a fantastic curriculum for the children.

The PA also funded lots of new books as part of a book advent to give the classroom library a refresh. I am sure the children were excited about hearing lots of new stories and the opportunity to read a variety of texts. Father Christmas also paid the school a visit and handed out a few treats.

Santa at the toll bridge raised an amazing £600 for the school! We also had a lovely event for the school community- '*Get Christmas Cracking*' – and it was wonderful to see the children getting in the spirit, playing festive games, petting the 'reindeer' and drinking hot chocolates. Our Christmas fundraising raised over £4,000 and we couldn't be more grateful!

We are looking forward to the brighter evenings on the way and have lots of fun things coming up in the Spring Term including one of our parents running the London Marathon to raise funds – what an undertaking! If you would like to sponsor her to help keep her motivated running in these cold dark nights, please visit her Just Giving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/beatahageman1>

Finally, the school had a recent Ofsted visit which went well and we look forward to seeing the report come out in the near future. As always, we are grateful for the amazing staff the school has and will support them with the outcomes of the visit.

Happy New Year and thanks once again for all your support!

*Nicola Armstrong
Whitchurch Primary School Parents' Association Chair
Whitchurchpa20@gmail.com*



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WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL



What a terrific Autumn term we have had, learning new skills, playing outdoors and creating new items to take home. Rain or shine we have been outdoors; out and about in the village visiting the local sites or at our allotment just digging around in the mud.

Some of the highlights include making rain clouds, crafting Autumn objects and even measuring dinosaur bones to practise our maths.

New funding for two-year olds and spaces available

From April 2024 many families will be able to benefit from the change in government funding which will give two years 15 hours free childcare. We currently have spaces available for new starters aged from two years upwards. To get in touch email hello@whitchurchpreschool.org

- We're open from Monday to Friday during term time, from 8.45am – 3.15pm, with an early drop-off option at 8.30am and late pick up 3.30pm.
- Free government-funded places are available for eligible two-year olds and three and four-year olds for 15 or 30 hours per week during term time.
- We offer a hot lunch option.
- We are Forest School, Healthy Smiles and Hygge accredited.
- Children from out of the Whitchurch catchment area are welcome to apply.

Help our allotment and spend in Tesco

We want to make more of our dedicated outdoor space, but as the space is large it quickly becomes overgrown (see below) and hard for the staff and parents' helpers to manage, so we need a new design to make it better for the children and easier to maintain.

We need the help of local garden designers, gardeners and those green fingered to make it happen and local trades people to donate materials.

If you can help spare any time or donate towards this cause please get in touch at hello@whitchurchpreschool.org



We are also applying to Tesco for a grant to support our allotment as part of the blue token scheme. This could give us up to £1500 towards the work. Next time you shop in your local Tesco store please vote for us. Voting is open and closes in March. Stores you can vote in include Goring, Didcot and Wallingford.

Bingo Wednesday 20th March to support essential building repairs

Our pre-school building is in urgent need of repairs and renovations so we are fundraising to raise money for this cause.

We had a fabulous fundraising night in November. Thanks to the support of parents, locals and our fabulous sponsors we raised over £580. Our sponsors included The Wasing Estate, Cotswolds Sports Centre, Parkers, The Sun, The Box Baker and Bozodown and The Greyhound pub.

Based on the success of last year we are hosting another Bingo Event at the Greyhound pub in March. There are more great prizes to be won such as a personal training session from Hannah Dunbar and a family pass to Bucklebury Farm plus lots more.

Anyone is welcome so to buy a ticket go to our website www.whitchurchpreschool.org and there will be more events to come.



FREE and EASY ways to support us:

- **Become a Co-Op Member** – select Whitchurch-on-Thames Pre-School. For every £1 spent 2p will be donated to our cause.
- **Sign up to easyfundraising.org.uk** – to support “Whitchurch Pre-School – Whitchurch-on-Thames”. This allows you to shop with retailers like John Lewis, M&S, H&M then sends us a donation of up to 5%. Register for free at: https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/whitchurchonthamespresch/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=w4

To donate anytime scan the QR code here or go to: <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/charity/whitchurchpreschool>

Thank you for all of your support!

Registered Charity. 1183193



THE WHITCHURCH SOCIETY'S ART AND CRAFT EXHIBITION 2023

This year's exhibition was a very enjoyable village event, held over the weekend of 18th–19th November in Whitchurch Village Hall. The exhibits were judged on the Friday evening by four external experts, and the winners were chosen in all the art, craft and photography categories entered by adults and young people. The theme for the Joyce Voysey Prize was 'Re-use, Reduce, Recycle' and, not surprisingly, this encouraged a wide range of imaginative creations, especially from the younger exhibitors.

It was a very successful exhibition, with more exhibitors and more exhibits than in many previous years. This welcome increase is no doubt because we used Facebook for the first time to reach out to a wider audience, encouraging new talent to enter for the first time. As a result, there were 14 adult exhibitors who had never taken part before. In total, there were 192 entries across the full spectrum of classes, in art, craft, photography and new media, from 116 exhibitors, both adult and young people. It was enjoyed by many visitors over the weekend, as were the refreshments which were served on both days.

The full list of the prize winners can be found via the link on the Exhibition webpage on the Whitchurch website (whitchurchonthames.com/groups/artscrafts.html). Also, the website's Photo Gallery holds a great selection of photos of the exhibition.

Also, on the stage, the three local schools, namely Whitchurch Pre-School, the Whitchurch Primary School and the Oratory Preparatory School, had set up impressive and colourful displays of school work by their students. These are always enjoyed by all the visitors.

I would like to thank all of the great team that helped in many ways to set the exhibition up, and without whom it would be impossible to achieve, in the tight schedule. My special thanks also must go to the planning and organising team (Sarah and Adrian Dixon, Wendy Ferguson, Jean-Marc Grosfort, and our new team member, Kate Lowe) and to the Whitchurch Society committee, for all their hard work and support which made it another successful show.

And remember, it is never too soon to start work on your entries for the 2024 exhibition!!

Sally Woolhouse (Exhibition co-ordinator)
sally@wotarts.co.uk

STOP, LOOK AND SEE QUIZ: PART 3

We finished Part 2 of the quiz, in the Autumn edition of the Bulletin, by walking down the Allotment Footpath to the School. This walk will start at its Hardwick Road end. First of all note that before the street light was installed here glowworms illuminated this end of the path in early summer and also the bank of the footpath on the opposite side of the road. There was a badger sett on the far corner of the Maze field. Answers are later in this Bulletin.

Q1 – What herb now grows freely in this area?

Cross over the road and up to the arbour path. Turn right onto it and continue along this path as it dips and rises running parallel to Hardwick Road below. You will pass a commemorative seat and then as you leave the walkway a memorial seat. You will emerge by the old Bozedown Farmhouse and your safer route will be to cross the road to the wide verge opposite.

Q2 – What is the name of your previous higher-level path and why was it so named?

Walk down towards Hardwick, admiring the alpacas in the adjacent fields.

Q3 – Why are alpacas so sought after?

Continue on this safe wider path with the gradually imposing view of our Iron Age Fort (Encampment?) on your left. There is an artist's drawing of a well-trodden path or farm road with a lone traveller heading down towards Hardwick House. I have not been able to locate it but it may have been a connecting path to and from Bozedown House. Cross over to the footpath sign on the opposite side of the road. Go up this path as it runs parallel to the last alpaca field. Your path then turns right to meet a kissing gate, go through and head alongside the hedgerow towards another gate by Path Hill road.

Q4 and Q5 – What is the Norman name for this field leading up to our Iron Age Encampment and the name of the now cultivated field on the other side of the hedge?

Cross through this kissing gate and turn right onto the Path Hill road. Walk down towards the corner with extreme care. Cross over to Sheepwash Lane.

Q6 – What is the Lane’s other, probably older, and possibly more appropriate, name and how significant was this lane in Saxon times?

Q7 – What is the name of the Veg Shed field? Look at the old fashioned (Victorian?) road sign which Keith Brooks and I have rescued (twice!).

Now walk down towards today’s river.

Q8 – Where might we have washed our sheep?

There is a gate on the righthand side of the Lane – part of this field is at present being cultivated by our resident weaver to grow his willows and his osiers.

Q9 – What is the name of this field?

Now turn to the other opposite gate leading into a very large field.

Q10 – What is this field’s name today and how important is/was it?

At the gateway look down the paddock fencing on your left and note in the near distance an unusual large patch of wet ground.

Q11- What is this patch and why was it so important?

Continue and conjecture where a tributary of the river might have flowed, come and look after heavy rainfall in the Winter and see what might have been its course. You will approach another gate on your right and you will be able to see the working end of the Willow Weaver’s acre. Remember that you do not have a right of access to the field on either side.

The lane has now flattened out and you may now be at a point on the river bed where it might have been possible to wash the sheep and perhaps to wade across to the opposite bank. Carry on until you approach the Oratory Boat House and its Boat Sheds. On your right is a very wet patch of ground where Loddon Lillies proliferate.

Go straight ahead to the grassed area by the side of the river in its modern location. Hardwick have kindly provided and installed an oak bench for me which is shaped around the willow tree by the riverside (I have named it ‘Molly’s bench’ in memory of a great dog). Sit down and let your imagination run free for a while. I tell the children to look upstream for any sign of Ratty

and Mole and then you can join in and look downstream for the invading Danes heading for your shallow landing area and their foray then to drive and follow the retreating Saxons up to and through their fortified enclosure above. Hod's Lane at Whitchurch Hill which leads to the North side of the enclosure may be Odin's or Woden's Lane – the continuation of the War Route?

I think there will be just two more sets of questions to complete the series of introductions to the village we see almost daily and we often fail to appreciate our good fortune to be here in such a long line of inhabitants.

Eric Hartley



Goring Heath Parish Charity
Regd. No 1056772

Mike Holland Quiz Night!

Goring Heath Parish Hall
Saturday 24th February at
7.30pm

Cost £15 per person

including Fish and Chip Supper

book your table for a team of up to six

email: events@goringheathparishhall.uk

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

"Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" is the title of our talk by Nick Brazil on Thursday 15th February. You might be surprised. Come along and find out at the meeting to be held at Whitchurch Village Hall at 7.30pm, with coffee and biscuits being served from 7pm – not a full dinner unfortunately!

The talk follows the Annual General Meeting of the Society, which is now thirty years old. Looking at our records, I see that Doreen Godley was on the steering committee right at the beginning, and has been treasurer and then committee member ever since, always active and involved in our discussions. She will be greatly missed.

As time moves on there is a danger that the History Society itself becomes history. There is a need for an influx of interested people to carry on the study of the past as there is indeed always more to find out about our area, the people, the buildings, the events. Why not join us? Our annual subscription of £12 is a bargain against the £3 we have to charge for each meeting attended by a non-member.

Vicky Jordan

THE ART CAFE

The Art Café is open in the Old Stables, High Street (opposite The Ferryboat) from 10:30 am to 1230 pm every Saturday. It is a well-established and popular social event organised each week by a different local group offering tea, coffee and homemade cakes in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. It is also an important fundraiser: in 2023 our Art Cafes raised over £11,400 for local groups.

Thank you to all the organisers, cake-makers and other helpers without whom our Art Cafes could not operate. Thanks also to all those local residents who come along and support our Art Cafes each week.

Finally, if you haven't been to the Art Café for a while please pop in: we'd be delighted to see you and to make you feel welcome.

Geoff Weir
OldStablesBookings@btinternet.com

HARDWICK HAPPENINGS

It's a pleasure to once again update our local community on the goings on at Hardwick. The recent flooding has been dramatic but without damage for us here as we are lucky not to have any buildings on the floodplain, and our boater community have shown their resilience, canoeing across deep water to reach their boats.

In the last newsletter we informed you about the upcoming public consultation on Hardwick's future which we will now be holding in the Whitchurch Village Hall, with wine and cheese afterwards, on 29th February from 7-9pm. We decided to put the date back to give us more time to prepare. I do apologise for any inconvenience caused. This will be an opportunity to find out about the succession changes and upcoming plans, including changes to the Stud Farm, and, as our local stakeholders, have your say about the future. Please do share this information with your neighbours especially around Whitchurch, Whitchurch Hill and Goring Heath, our closest communities. All are welcome!

New Estate Manager

We are pleased to announce that we have appointed Mike Faretra as our new Estate Manager at Hardwick. Mike will cover me as I go into maternity leave in April, and with his background in property restoration and project management, Mike should be able to play a big role in guiding development of the Stud farm and other redundant buildings on the Estate. When we are closer to becoming a charity, we will look to hire someone to run the charitable side of things.

Mike says – "I'm thrilled to join Hardwick as the new Estate Manager and I'm looking forward to embarking on this exciting journey with you all. With a background encompassing architecture, design, and extensive experience in build and restoration projects and estate management, coupled with a passion for creating sustainable, thriving communities, I aim to bring a versatile set of skills and perspectives to this role.

I'm a proud father to two wonderful sons aged 15 and 20. I currently live in Newbury with my partner Saffron, who shares my values in organic growing, my personal interests include marine conservation, scuba diving and spending time on my canal boat preparing healthy organic food. I am honoured to have been invited to be part of this exciting chapter in Hardwick's history, and I can't wait to meet each of you. Here's to a bright and sustainable future!"

Flower Power

Many of you may not know that Hardwick's woodlands are host to one of the UK's rarest orchids. Lady Orchid (*Orchis purpurea*) is a classic plant of the

North Downs in Kent, but beyond Kent the species is extremely rare. Formerly it occurred in the Surrey North Downs and the South Downs in Sussex, but it was last seen in these two counties in 1959 and 1976 respectively.



However, in May 1961, a single plant was spotted in Bottom Wood by local man Roger Kemp. In the following years it disappeared, but reappeared again in the 1970s after clear-felling allowed more light into the woods. By 1997, some 29 flowering spikes (and a total of 46 plants) were recorded from this small spot, creating a beautiful display. Since 1961, single Lady Orchid plants have been found at four other sites outside its usual range, including at the classic orchid site at Hartslock near Goring. In at least three of these sites the orchids are thought to have been introduced, and have mostly failed to persist. However, genetic ‘fingerprinting’ has shown the Bottom Wood orchids to be the same as other UK plants, and its persistence here, suggests that it is most probably a truly natural and native colony.

Hardwick was recently successful in its application to Natural England’s Species Recovery Fund, a national project to protect and enhance rare habitats, for a project to create pockets of ‘woodland pasture’ around the lady orchid and other rare orchid and other plant sites in our woodland, which should help the plants to grow and thrive. The ongoing success of the scheme will rely on volunteers managing the site going forward. If this is something you’d be interested in please get in touch – forestry@hardwick.co.uk

Organic Growers Gathering

The Organic Growers Gathering (OGG) took place at Hardwick on the 6th–8th October. It was a national event for organic growers to share expertise and cross pollinate, which is likely to become an annual fixture. The glorious weather contributed to making the event a sell out with around 300 people attending and supporting. The event was only possible thanks to the great contributions from so many in the Hardwick community, the attendees particularly loved this event being hosted at Hardwick for this reason.

Community Defibrillator

There is now a defibrillator available for community use outside the Path Hill Outdoors office at Path Hill Farm. We can arrange short training sessions for groups who wish to learn about its use.

Upcoming Events

25th January 2024, 7.30pm – John Twyford – Local Food Systems and the Model Farm. Hardwick Lecture Series at Tolhurst Organic Packing Shed, RG8 7RB. What3words: ///indeed.gosh.singer.

29th February 2024, 7-9pm – Hardwick’s Future: Find out more and have your say. Whitchurch village hall, wine and cheese to follow. A public consultation for local people regarding Hardwick’s future with a focus on changes at the Stud Farm. Please inform anyone you know from Whitchurch, Pangbourne, Whitchurch Hill and Goring Heath especially.

Miriam Rose – Estate Manager

STOP, LOOK AND SEE: ANSWERS

- Q1.** Wild garlic
- Q2.** The Jubilee Footpath – in 1977 – the commemoration of Queen Elizabeth’s 25 years on the throne.
- Q3.** As pets and particularly for their expensive wool
- Q4.** Bec Tythe – Bec Abbey is in Normandy (close to our present day twinning link).
- Q5.** Lower Bec
- Q6.** Ford Lane, Saxon – ‘Bleccesford’ (Black’s Ford), together with the Jug Well they defined the Saxon Village’s eastern boundary.
- Q7.** Knight
- Q8.** Shallows for washing sheep
- Q9.** Lower Knight
- Q10.** I know it as the Hay Meadow, its area was expanded to form one where racehorses could have been exercised. Hardwick have a different name for it (Meadow Field or Field Meadow?). I am also reliably informed that it still has evidence of the old Ridge and Furrow system (7th century method of ploughing) and that it has not been ploughed for over 100 years.
- Q11.** A Saxon Jug Well – a source of clean water. Then perhaps a temporary net or weir to catch fish and eels. It was the Saxon eastern boundary of the village and was called ‘Bleccesford’ – Black’s Ford.

THE PARISH OF WHITCHURCH ON THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Acreage – 1,320, Population – 824 (2011 census), Electors – 622

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL			
Chair	Jim Donahue	cllrdonahue.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	07557 668601
V/Chair	Diana Smith	cllrsmith.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
	Nick Brazil	cllrbrazil.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
	Katherine Higley	cllrhigley.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
	Paul O'Grady	cllrgrady.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
	Frances Parkes	cllrparkes.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
	Debbie Leach	cllrleach.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
Clerk	Jane Yamamoto	11 Hillside, Hardwick Road, RG8 7HL parishclerk.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	07876 714906

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL			
135 Eastern Ave, Milton Park Estate, Milton, Abingdon, OX14 4SB, www.southoxon.gov.uk			
Councillor	Peter Dragonetti	Covert Cottage, Hill Bottom	0118 9844711

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL			
County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND, www.oxfordshire.gov.uk			
Councillor	Kevin Bulmer	35 Springhill Road, Goring on Thames, RG8 0BY	07526 743091

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES VILLAGE WEBSITE			
www.whitchurchonthames.com			
News Editor	Richard Wingfield	rmwingfield@btinternet.com	0118 9843682

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL			
St Mary's Whitchurch and St John's Whitchurch Hill			
Hon Secretary		Rosemary Pearce	07761 056125

WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL GROUP			
Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch on Thames, RG8 7EJ			
Supervisor		Kathleen Barrow	0118 9842347

WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL			
Eastfield Lane, Whitchurch on Thames, RG8 7EJ			
Head Teacher		Dawn Chesters	0118 9842347
Head of Parent Association		Victoria Wilcock	
Chair of School Governors		Eleanor Sugrue	

LANGTREE SCHOOL			
Woodcote, RG8 0RA			
Head Teacher		Simon Banford	01491 680514
Chair of School Governors		Alan Dunstan	01491 680514

WHITCHURCH AND DISTRICT ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Chair	John Coupland	jvcoupland@yahoo.co.uk	07397 778872
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WHITCHURCH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Chair	Wendy Ferguson	wendyefergie@gmail.com	0118 9841262
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WHITCHURCH SOCIETY

Chair	John Bradon		0118 9841574
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WHITCHURCH BRIDGE CLUB

Enquiries	Phillipa Turner		01491 875648
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WHITCHURCH AND GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact	Vicky Jordan	Little Langtree, Whitchurch Hill, RG8 7PU	0118 9843260
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WHITCHURCH CRICKET CLUB

Sec	Cormac Neeson	cormac.neeson@gmail.com	0118 9843347
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PANGBOURNE AND DISTRICT BOWLS CLUB

Recreation Ground, Thames Avenue, Pangbourne

Contact	Roy Rosekilly	22 Swanston Field, Whitchurch on Thames, RG8 7HP	0118 9843080
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PANGBOURNE AND DISTRICT TENNIS CLUB

Recreation Ground, Thames Avenue, Pangbourne

Chair	Louise Shearer		0118 9842934
Sec	Amanda Holland		07814 369566

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES HABITAT STUDY GROUP (WotHabs)

Contact	Gill Goodwin	1 Swanston Field, Whitchurch on Thames, RG8 7HP	0118 9842934
Sec	John Bradon	Rylands, Hardwick Rd, Whitchurch on Thames, RG8 7HW	0118 9841574

VILLAGE HALL

Hall Manager	Richard Scearce	38 Manor Road, Whitchurch on Thames, RG8 7EU	0118 9842004
Events Mgr	Jean-Marc Grosfort		07881 312233

OLD STABLES ROOM

High Street

Contact	Geoff Weir	oldstablesbookings@btinternet.com	
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WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Meetings: Whitchurch Village Hall, alternate Wednesdays at 8pm

Chair	Alan Copeland	14 Wayside Green, Woodcote, RG8 0QJ	01491 681471
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GORING HEATH GUIDE AND SCOUT GROUP

Contact	Doreen Pechey	doreen@pechey.org (<i>Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Brownies, Guides</i>)	01491 681236
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PANG VALLEY SCOUT GROUP

The Barn, Purley on Thames

Contact	Ian Shenton	ishenton@ntlworld.com (<i>Beavers, Cubs, Scouts</i>)	0118 9678769
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PANGBOURNE AND DISTRICT VOLUNTEER CENTRE

Committee Room, Pangbourne Village Hall

	Open 09:30 – 11:30am Mon-Friday	0118 9844586
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AFC WHITCHURCH FC (ages 5-16)

Chair	Alex Hilton	hilts123@hotmail.com or afcwhitchurch@yahoo.co.uk	
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THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Wallingford Police Station, Wallingford, OX10 9DW

	Non Emergency Police Number (manned 24/7)	101	
Neighbourhd Supervisor	Barbara Taylor	barbara.taylor@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk	07814 485286

PANGBOURNE LIBRARY

Reading Road, Pangbourne, RG8 7LY

Monday 14:00-17:00	Tuesday 10:30-18:00	Wednesday CLOSED	0118 9844117
Thursday 9:30-12:00	Friday 10:30-17:00	Saturday 10:00-12:30	

ST MARY'S CHURCH

Contact	For Baptisms, Weddings or Funerals	0118 9765905
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THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S AND ST JOHN'S

Chair	Paul Witcher	pwitcher@aol.co.uk	
Secretary	Sally Woolhouse	whitchurchfriends@gmail.com	

PANGBOURNE BOATHOUSE SURGERY

Whitchurch Road, Pangbourne, RG8 7DP

Routine health conditions	Mon to Fri, 08:00-18:30	0118 9842234
Urgent unplanned conditions		NHS 111
Life-threatening emergencies		999

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES BULLETIN

Editor	Richard Williams	rwilliamsafcw@btinternet.com	07810 374280
Associate Editor	Tim Hardwick		
	<i>Deadline for Articles</i>	<i>Planned distribution</i>	
Spring 2024	18th April	12th May	
Summer 2024	14th July	28th July	
Autumn 2024	13th October	27th October	



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