

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES BULLETIN

From the New Chairman of the Parish Council:-

Firstly I would like to thank Harry Butterworth for his outstanding contribution as Chair of the Parish Council for the past five years and I would like to say how honoured I am to have been chosen to succeed him. I will do my utmost to represent the village and endeavour to keep it a great place to live in. To this end I would urge any resident who has something to say about the toll increase to register their interest: the details of how to do this are on the village web site and speak at the inquiry.

Furthermore I would like to draw people's attention to the Annual Assembly on Tuesday 19th at 7.30pm in the Village Hall which will be hosted by Jim Donahue the new Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council.

I cannot be there for personal reasons but I am sure it will be a very interesting evening.

Keith Brooks

MAZE WORKING PARTIES

These will take place on the following SATURDAYs every month for this 2015 season at 10.00AM:

9TH MAY, 13TH JUNE, 4TH JULY,
7TH NOV, 1ST AUG, 19TH SEPT, 17TH 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.

Eric Hartley and the Whitchurch Village Walks

After organising some 27 village walks, Eric Hartley has decided to step down and to hand on his maps, compass and Hi-vis tabards to the next generation. But Eric's Walks, as they are sure to be known, will continue!

Some seven years ago the Whitchurch Society decided to introduce a village walk to be held each New Year's Day, and Eric, as our local walking guru, was asked if he would plan the route and lead the walkers. Over 100 people attended this first walk, and Eric decided that there was clearly a call for organised walks at other times of the year too, and so further walks were arranged for Spring, Summer and Autumn. Each year since then there have been four walks, all organised by Eric, where walkers have been furnished with OS maps and Eric's own commentary on the geography, history and natural history of our route.

This year's Spring Walk was held on 10th May, when we enjoyed a sunny day along dry paths where, as far as possible, we followed the parish boundary and "beat the bounds". As usual, we were well furnished with Eric's historical references – boundary stones, Boundary Farm, the Pump House, and, a new one for many of us, an Anglo-Saxon jug well. A welcome break at The Sun – Eric's walks are invariably punctuated by hospitality – and then a more leisurely return down the hill.

Eric's Walks have generated a loyal following, and there are many in the village and beyond who have come to appreciate not only his meticulous organisation but also his courtesy, good humour and friendship. He has made a wonderful contribution to village life, and we are very grateful to him. Thank you, Eric.

Peter Smith

WHITCHURCH SOCIETY GARDEN WALK SUNDAY 7 JUNE

Gardens will open from 1.30 to 4.30 pm. As in the past, with the generous agreement of Matilda and Neil King, tea and cakes will be served in The White House garden from 4 pm. Cost £3 adults, £1 children.

Matilda is happy for children to use the swimming pool provided they are supervised. The tennis court is also available if you bring your own racquets.

A list of open gardens will be delivered to each household nearer the date. A Garden Open notice will be provided for display at each address.

We have signed up six gardens to date, including one new one, one which people have told me they missed last year and some not shown for several years. We are happy to include one or two more. Please contact the undersigned ASAP if you are interested in showing your garden.

Ian Bruce

Secretary – tel 984 2653, mobile 07879 405559, email ian.bruce@btinternet.com

WILDLIFE EXPLORERS DAY,
CHALKHILLS, HARDWICK RD,
WHITCHURCH, RG8 7QS

SUNDAY 28th JUNE
11am – 3.30pm

This event is being run for children aged 5 – 11 by WoTHabs, the local environment group, at Chalkhills, a lovely private location of chalk grassland surrounded by mixed woodland, on the edge of the Chilterns.

The children will look for and learn about the different creatures and plants which are found in the fields and woods at Chalkhills, at the same time as having fun and enjoying themselves!

Cost: £10 per child, £16 for 2 siblings

All children MUST be pre-booked. Adults are welcome to stay with their children – you will be required to fill in a permission form if you leave your child in our care. Places are limited to a maximum of 16 children.

To book or for more information, please contact Sally Woolhouse
0118 9844365 or email sally.woolhouse@gmail.com

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Visit of our friends in La Bouille to Whitchurch, 1st to 4th May 2015

Our friends from La Bouille arrived bringing lily of the valley, a traditional French gift on the first of May. The weekend indeed cemented old acquaintances, and new ones were made, as their party of 35 included six people who had not previously visited. For our part, three new families joined in, hosting our guests, and participating in the events of the weekend.

Saturday was spent with the host families. Shopping was high on the list of activities, to buy tea, custard powder, Marmade (prepared oranges to make marmalade), and sliced white bread as well as other English delicacies! There were visits, including those to Mapledurham food and craft fair, Greys Court with its amazing bluebell wood, Henley for boat trips and ice creams, Goring for riverside walks, Abingdon for a concert, and Oxford for museums.

At 6pm we congregated at Goring Heath parish Hall for a reception, addressed by the two “presidentes”, and then we sat down to a two course roast dinner with wine, coffee and mints. A quiz of famous faces was judged by Sally Woolhouse and then flowers given to our “never again” cooks, Alison and Sandra. Loud applause confirmed our appreciation of the delicious dinner they had given us.

Sunday saw us leaving on our outing to Bath in the French coach, in typically changeable English, and we were assured Normandy, weather. After a quick picnic we went to the Roman Baths, where many spent more than two hours inspecting the displays, helped by French and English audio guides. Then there was time for tea and a stroll around the town. The evening meal was at various venues throughout the two villages, with hosts joining together to hold dinner parties.

Pictures of the visit are on the Whitchurch on Thames website, and we will have more on our stall at the Whitchurch Hill fete on Saturday 23rd May, where there will be a chance to win a hamper of French produce, as well as the usual cakes and savouries.

We acknowledge the financial contribution of the two Parish Councils to enable us to entertain the people of La Bouille, and of course, the English hosts paid their own expenses. We were roundly thanked by Martine Cousin on behalf of the French party, and they will now be preparing for our return visit to them next year. Please feel free to join us. 5

Whitchurch Pre-School

Last month Pre school had their annual trip to Rushall Farm. We were very lucky to have a wonderful sunny day to enjoy our picnic on the grass before going off for a tractor/trailer ride across the fields to visit the animals and feed the baby lambs.

Continuing on the animal theme one of our children bought their pet snake - Snakey - in to meet the other children. Another great success with all the children having a stroke, asking questions and getting a selfie with him. Even one or two of the staff got quite attached to Snakey! Next month we have our living eggs delivery - a box of eggs arrive and the children get to follow their progress from egg, to hatching, to chickens!

Our AGM takes place on 13 May where we will welcome a mostly new Committee. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing committee, especially those who have been committed to the cause for 2 years! You've done a great job - thank you. Our loss will be the school's gain - hopefully!

Whitchurch & Goring Heath Twinning Association

Our main event of the year, the visit by our friends from La Bouille, took place on 1st to 4th May. See report elsewhere.

Look out for us at the Whitchurch Hill fete on 23rd May when we offer delicious cakes, samosas, and the chance to win a hamper of French food.

Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society

We move up to Whitchurch Hill – the Goring Heath Parish Hall- for our May meeting, on Thursday 21st at 8pm. We will hear contributions from members on a variety of topics of local interest, including a small footnote on Allen Gardiner. In June and July we go on outings, returning in September to Whitchurch Hill for a talk on “The Invisible Brick”.

Wallingford Blues and Beer Festival

are delighted to be celebrating their silver anniversary this year on 12 and 13 June at the Regal Centre in Wallingford, and to celebrate this momentous landmark, have some wonderful Blues Bands playing - none other than Dr Feelgood, Britain’s finest Blues band and Chantel McGregor, voted Britain’s Best Blues Guitarist 2014. We have many more bands playing over the weekend too, to keep you entertained.

The festival is over two days and you can sample the world’s finest Blues and Beers. As usual, all proceeds go to two local charities and this year, we are pleased to be supporting [Blewbury Brass Band](#), who are especially keen to encourage local children and young people (not forgetting adults!) to learn to play a brass instrument and [FarmAbility](#), a local charity providing training, therapeutic activities and work experience for adults with autism and learning disabilities, in a supportive and caring environment on an organic, livestock farm.

Tickets are excellent value at £15 for Friday and Saturday night each, £5.00 for Saturday afternoon, which is family friendly and always good fun, and £30 for all three sessions (or £25.00 online). You can see more details here. <http://www.bluesandbeer.co.uk/>

John Howell MP writes...

Mid-March 2015

Many issues are raised in Parliament on a wide range of subjects and the issues raised with me privately are no less many and varied. Generally in my monthly newsletter I seek to report back on the issues being raised in Parliament and in the constituency that seem to generate wider interest. However, I am often asked for an overview of the work of an MP and thought it may be of interest to share something of the range of issues that are raised. A quick glance at the issues coming across my desk in the last couple of months is fairly typical.

In the constituency I have visited schools, met with GPs and GP Practice managers, I have been asked to declare a new post office facility open in Stadhampton and also a new disabled toilet at Goring and Streatley Station! I have met with representatives from parish councils in the south of the constituency to assist their request for a review of the AONB and I have met with residents in and around Henley to discuss air traffic issues in the skies above the town - drawing together experts from key organisations to inform discussion. I have had the pleasure of meeting people undertaking apprenticeships in two Thame based companies and joined in the welcome for the Princess Royal as she visited Thame Market to celebrate their 800th birthday! In Westminster I have met with school groups from across the constituency visiting parliament, and I have attended sessions to support constituents on a range of issues from the volumetric industry to Alzheimer's.

Back at my desk many issues are raised by email, letter and phone. Some are personal issues that my office seeks to help with and they can relate to absolutely anything. Other issues are lobby issues where I am regularly asked to support both sides of an argument!

Some people comment that when they see the Chamber of the House of Commons on television it can be relatively empty. This is because behind the scenes in Westminster there are many meetings going on and a range of Committees sitting in other locations. For example I sit on the Justice Select Committee which takes evidence on enquiries relating to any matter dealt with by the Department of Justice.

At this time in the Parliamentary cycle there are a number of Bills that MPs are seeking to draw to a close. Amendments from the House of Lords are being considered on a number of Bills including the Recall of MPs Bill, the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill, and the Modern Slavery Bill.

So, all in all it's a varied and busy programme. But there is always time to pursue specific issues on behalf of constituent groups.

One issue that has long been high on my agenda, and one that is the subject of many conversations and emails, is that of business rates. They can be a problem for small businesses where margins can be tight anyway. Coupled with high rents in the constituency they can be prohibitive to new businesses opening and add to the demise of others in times of downturn. I believe that it is an unfair tax for which businesses see little return. I have lobbied the Chancellor on behalf of local business. I am therefore delighted that the Treasury has launched an enquiry into business rates. I am keen that the businesses of this area have their say and would be delighted to hear from businesses interested in making a contribution to the debate.

Further details of the work of Parliament is available on the Parliament website at www.parliament.uk.

My website is regularly updated and offers information on my work both in Westminster and in the constituency. The address is www.johnhowellmp.com In addition, if you would like to subscribe to my free e-newsletter please e mail me at: john.howell@oxfordshireconservatives.com You can also follow me on twitter [@johnhowellmp](https://twitter.com/johnhowellmp) or on Facebook www.facebook.com/john.howellmp

During the forthcoming election period the above means of communication will remain in the public domain but will be static, simply providing historical information. In due course details on where my election literature can be found will be posted on my web page and Facebook page.

John Howell MP
20th March 2015

Printed and promoted by John Howell MP House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

WHITCHURCH HILL FETE

BANK HOLIDAY SATURDAY

23rd MAY

STARTING AT 2PM

Whitchurch Hill Recreation Ground

25 Piece Concert Band

Bottle Stall

Stalls & Games

Fun Dog Show

Beer and Tea Tents

Barbecue

Punch & Judy

Raffle

Children's Races

Swingboats

Candy Floss

'A Fun Day out for all the family!'

Calling all **STUDENTS !!**

The trustees of Whitchurch United Charities want to remind all students and families that the Charity has funds available to help with the cost of books and equipment or other educational expenses such as school trips.

The two closing dates per year for applications are now **31st March and 30th September**. These have been changed slightly following a review of the timetable which was undertaken by the trustees at a recent meeting. Late applications are considered if the available funds for the previous 6 month period have not been fully allocated. Please note that there are some unallocated funds at the present time (May '15).

Eligible students are young people between the ages of 5 and 25 years and whose permanent residence is within the parish of Whitchurch. (Note - if the St Mary's and St John's Parish Magazine is delivered to your house, then you are in the parish and therefore eligible).

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

If you would like to know more, please contact Peter Hawley (our Grant Application Secretary) on (0118) 984 3069 or write to him at:-

3 Whitchurch House
High Street
Whitchurch-on-Thames
Reading RG8 7EP

DIARY DATES

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

MAY

21st Thursday History Society GPHH

23rd BH Sat Whitchurch Hill Fete

**30th Saturday War Memorial Open Day
Old Stables 10am to 1 pm**

JUNE

7th Sunday Garden Walks

28th Sunday Wildlife Explorer's Day

November

15th Sunday Art & Craft Exhibition

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are the views of those contributors,
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editor