

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Well summer is fast approaching. "About time too" you say, although the winter wasn't that bad, I recall times when we had to push cars up the High Street to negotiate the Hardwick Road junction due to the snow!

Anyway lots of projects to do over the coming year as we come to terms with dwindling finances which will put extra pressure on your Parish Council, but I can assure you we are up to it. I must also say that we always have your best interests at heart and consequently the projects we carry out are designed to enrich your lives and we do listen to what people want!

One of the projects we have in mind is to create a new pavilion on the Village Green and Carrie has done a sterling job and put together a rough plan of what this might be like and of course we want the whole village to be involved in the creation of this. Details can be seen on the village website.

We have also been thinking about designs for a new village sign, with James and Jim organising a competition, with the primary school. This resulted in many fine drawings and paintings by the children which will be used to give us ideas of what the new village sign will look like.

We of course realise that traffic control in the High Street is a very important issue for many residents in terms of speed and parking. We have a dedicated group of people, including James, Carrie, Rachel and Dave, who are doing their utmost to keep everyone happy. We live in a very busy village with much traffic using small roads that weren't designed for such use and I think we all have to be patient when negotiating the High Street especially at peak times.

In due course, we will be putting together a Neighbourhood Plan which Rachel is heading up and we would like residents to be involved in this important blueprint of how they would like to see the village develop over the coming years. To this end we will soon be having an open day, on 14th May, when we would like as many people as possible to attend and we need volunteers to come forward to take on the different aspects of the plan. See the article in this issue.

You may have noticed that flower borders are beginning to appear around the village and this is down to the hard work of Jon who has also taken on the maintenance of the Village Green.

The loss of our pub 'The Greyhound' which at one time was the hub of the community, is of great concern to us and so Dave has nominated it as an Asset of Community Value which if successful, will protect it in the short term but we must think of a long term solution which will secure its future. He is also in close contact with Thames Travel with regards the bus service which we will do our utmost to keep.

Dates for the diary are the Annual Parish Council Meeting 3rd May, Annual Parish Assembly 11th May and the open gardens 19th June organised by the Whitchurch Society. Hope you all have a great summer.

Keith Brooks

PS: The Queen's 90th birthday will be celebrated in Whitchurch with an Afternoon Tea on the Village Green on Saturday 11th June. If you can help in any way with setting-up, catering, marquees, music, bunting, etc. please contact coordinator Felipa House, our Parish Clerk parishclerk.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

Our lecture season at Whitchurch Village Hall continues with on April 21st when we will hear Catherine Sampson's description of unusual churches in Berkshire and around. She will talk about some of the quirky stories connected with the buildings, and suggest places to visit.

On May 19th we move up to Goring Heath Parish Hall for Katherine Bradley's account of the people and events connected with the Votes for Women campaign in Oxfordshire.

All meetings are on Thursday evenings, starting at 8pm, coffee served from 7.30. Visitors are welcome, £3, to include coffee.

In June and July there are members' outings to Thame and Basingstoke – contact Sue Matthews for information.

Vicky Jordan

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES SIGN COMPETITION

The Whitchurch on Thames Village sign at the entrance to the High Street by bridge has had a bit of a rough time recently. First the brown Chilterns 'Area of Outstanding Beauty' sign was defaced with spray paint and efforts to repair it evenly resulted in its removal. Then, more recently, the remaining sign was damaged in a car accident. We have tried to straighten it but it is still not a suitable welcome to our lovely village.

The Parish Council thinks that Whitchurch, being the special place that it is, should have a sign that lets visitors know this. The sign would be used at all three entrances to the village. To come up with some inspiration for the new sign, the Parish Council asked the primary school to ask the school children to use their imagination to come up with a design.

Six representative designs can be seen on the cover of this month's Bulletin. The designs were created by (clockwise from upper left): Louis Tuckwell, Henry Hart, Jasmine Hogg, Ella from Class 4, Celine Butcher, and Tilly Philips. I think you'll agree that they are all very imaginative and well-prepared entries. Well done!

We have settled on an overall shape for the sign that the entries on the cover used, but would like feedback from residents on what elements are most appropriate to include in the sign. The sign would be a rectangular shape with a semi-circle on the top and "Welcome to Whitchurch on Thames" as shown in the front cover designs. We also propose to replace the Chilterns – 'Area of Outstanding Beauty' as an additional sign below the Whitchurch sign.

We would like residents of the village to vote on the following:

Choose one of the following – for an image to be placed in the semi-circle above the "Welcome to Whitchurch on Thames":

1. An image of the bridge
2. The view of the church from the bridge
3. A stylised image of the Maze

- 4. The Whitchurch Primary School coat of arms
- 5. New coat of arms designed for the Village
- 6. Other

Choose one of the following – to be printed below “Welcome to Whitchurch on Thames”:

- 1. Twinned with La Bouille France
- 2. Please Drive Carefully
- 3. Population 824
- 4. Other

Please send you votes to the Parish Clerk (email: parishclerk.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com) or drop off a hard copy with Felipa at 23 Swanston Fields.

Jim Donahue

WHITCHURCH CRICKET CLUB

Calling all cricketers in Whitchurch; now's the time to brush down your pads, oil your bat, and join us for Outdoor Nets at the ground in Eastfield Lane on Wednesday evenings from 7.30pm commencing 27th April, with light refreshments at the Ferryboat afterwards.

We play friendly 35 over games most Saturdays and Sundays, so there's plenty of room for a new face. We look forward to seeing you on a Wednesday evening soon (if you have neither bat nor pads – we can supply them too!). New players are always most welcome.

David Mattimoe

OPEN DAY FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: 14TH MAY

Do you have a great Idea for our village to make it a better place? Would you like to change something? Is there something near your home that annoys you? Worried about development in the village?

You are just the person our village needs to volunteer and help create our Community and Neighbourhood plan!

We will be facilitating separate teams to focus on key subjects, for example:

- Traffic & Parking
- Planning (Development)
- Environment

And holding “open days” to share information and get feedback from the community.

At the end of the process a final plan will be shared with all residents. There will be the opportunity to vote for or against the plan. The Open Day will be at the Village Hall between 11am & 3pm.

If the majority of residents agree with the final plan this will be the blueprint for the Parish Council activities.

Please email your Name, Contact Details and the key subject you are interested in (it can be something not on the list above), or area you would like to address, to wotpeoplesplan@gmail.com

Rachel Hatcher

AFC WHITCHURCH FOOTBALL CLUB

We are a small, friendly club based in Whitchurch on Thames. We welcome players from Whitchurch and surrounding areas and have 5 strong teams plus our blossoming Academy section for our 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. If you are interested in joining us please get in touch – afcwhitchurch@yahoo.co.uk

As we approach the end of the season, an update on a couple of our teams

U12s report by Gary Stovell

Following an indifferent start after last season's promotion, the under 12's have improved and consolidated their place in this tougher league. The two losses since mid-November have been against the league's runaway leaders who are clearly in the wrong league, and a place in the cup quarter final show this team has steadily improved.

U16s report by Alistair Aitchison

The U16s have had a number of very close games since the start of the year that has seen us win one match, draw one and lose by 1 goal on 4 occasions despite playing some very attractive football. We are safely placed to continue in the 2nd division of the EBFA next year again and continue to strengthen our squad in preparation for the jump up to U18 football next year. Our biggest challenge is finding a good quality pitch to play our match games on. We currently use Upper Basildon village hall pitch which suffered during the winter rain and is very bumpy and therefore not so conducive to the skilful play the boys like to play. If anyone is aware of an alternative pitch that may be available for next season please let coach Alistair Aitchison know (alistair@aitchisonassociates.com).

On the 2nd April we re-seeded the goal mouths on the village green and moved the goals to their off-season position. We would appreciate if our pitch users would avoid using the goal areas for the next 6 weeks until the grass is established.

Our AGM this year will be held on Thursday 16th June at 8pm at The Ferryboat.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for news and photos – facebook.com/afcw

Lindsay Austin, Club Secretary

WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES HABITAT STUDY GROUP (WoTHABS, the parish wildlife conservation group)

GUIDED WALKS to see the cowslips AT CHALKHILLS Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames, RG8 7QS Sunday 8th May 2016

There will be two walks, meeting in the Car Park at 11.15am and 2.45pm.

Each walk will last about 2 hrs. The paths are uneven and fairly steep – sturdy footwear is recommended, and there may be brambles, nettles and thorny bushes. It is not suitable for very small children (unless carried) or the infirm and sorry – NO DOGS

This is a free event, but donations will support WoTHabs and the management of a chalk downland Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site.

For more information, please contact Sandra sparkinson7@googlemail.com or tel. 0118 984 4031.

EXPLORERS DAY – This local event is for children aged 5 – 11 Sunday 26th June 2016

The children will look for and learn about the different creatures and plants in fields and woodland at the same time as having fun and enjoying themselves! Look out for posters and in the Bulletin nearer the time or contact Sally on email: sally.woolhouse@gmail.com or tel. 0118 984 4365

WHITCHURCH SOCIETY

Spring Walk 20 March

A group of 18 plus two dogs (Molly & Milly) embarked on this year's Whitchurch Society Spring walk on Sunday 20th March. We were just coming to the end of the extended cold spell that has lasted some weeks and that and the predicted overcast conditions made for a smaller turnout than usual. Nonetheless, the weather was fine and the sun came out at various stages and the walk was enjoyed by all (below – most of the walkers at the boundary of the Great Chalk Wood en route to Elvendon Priory).

Due to travel plans, there unfortunately will not be a Mid summer walk this year, so the next WS walk will be the Autumn walk and details (date and route) will be included in the July Bulletin. However, see below, Eric Hartley has suggested a short walk (about 3 miles) that would be ideal for a Sunday afternoon stroll with some friends:



Drive to the crossroads at the Old Post House at Goring Heath, go across to Deadman's Lane immediately opposite and park on the right at the approach to Haw Farm. I always thought that sometime in the past a tramp or itinerant traveller had been found dead along this lane but it has been pointed out to me that the lane leads directly across the A4074 to Wyfold Grange and towards Gallowstree Common!

Return on foot with care to the Post House and turn left down the marked bridleway alongside the house and the adjacent farm garden. Just before the bridleway emerges onto a section of metalled road you turn right and through a kissing gate to follow a narrow fenced footpath. You reach a recently ploughed field, with the footpath route sensibly cross-ploughed to indicate its route. Over on your right is the thatched house of Querns – a quern is a millstone, perhaps there was a windmill on this exposed higher point?

Your path leads you to another gate and onto Bunces Lane (the upper section of our old parish boundary). Turn left onto this lane and go straight ahead to reach a crossroads at the end of a line of cherry trees (note the Pump House on your right which provided drinking water to all the estate houses and also supplied the fire hydrants). This is the area where King Charles played bowls in 1648, the year before his execution. The pub he frequented was the original King Charles Head (now a private house) over to your right on the edge of Hardwick Wood.

No pubs today; again go straight ahead to reach and pass Rose Cottage on your right, carry on to a new stile on the field boundary on your left, cross over with your faithful hound using the specially provided vertical gate. Head diagonally to another new stile (and vertical gate) on the top edge of this field which often has sheep grazing in it. Again cross over and straight ahead to a very old stile leading into the next field. Follow the field boundary on your left to the main road ahead which you will reach by crossing yet another stile.

Cross over the road with care and head slightly right to pick up the entrance into Gutteridge's Wood. Take the left hand unmarked footpath that contours round the boundary of the field on your left. Keep the boundary on your left as you also turn left on this path. You will eventually reach a crossing of paths (the one to your right has a blaze mark on it as it leads further into the wood). The left hand path drops down to a kissing gate and is a return route directly across the open field (good for a show of poppies later on) to a distant gate. Here you follow a path with the hedgerow on your immediate right to join the driveway to Haw Farm. Turn left to reach your parked car.

If you would like to add a little more history and charm to the walk then go straight ahead at this crossing of paths and, shortly afterwards when the path divides, take the smaller left hand path to follow the edge of the wood until it emerges onto Deadman's Lane. Cross over with care to the narrow footpath immediately opposite, this follows round through a sequence of gates to reach a stile and a short lane,

which in turn leads to the rear of the almshouses. It is well worth reading the history of this benefit and looking at the chapel.

Turn left and follow the broad green trod with the ha-ha on your left to reach the pedestrian entrance gate and emerge onto the end of Deadman's Lane. Your parked car is over to your left.

WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PRE-SCHOOL

In addition to brighter weather and warmer climates, the Spring term and Easter holidays brought lots of cheer to the children at the pre-school. Living eggs taught the children how eggs develop into chicks, and how to care for the chicks – feeding, cleaning and of course, cuddling them. There are now some resident stick insects at the pre-school which are providing much amazement and fun in trying to find them! The annual Easter egg hunt was thoroughly enjoyed by parents and children alike and an educational trip to Rushall Farm to see the new-born lambs is planned for soon after Easter.

A new roof, funded by the National Lottery, is going on the pre-school during the Easter holidays to ensure the building is watertight for the years to come. We have managed a good year of fundraising, thanks to the fete and various initiatives throughout the year. The 2016 fete is planned for the 3rd September so please put the date in your diaries. Many locals have contributed to our internet sales programme which has raised over £500 for the pre-school, so thanks to all those who have contributed so far. If you have any unwanted household items or furniture that you think can be sold on please contact whitchurchpreschool@me.com or phone 0118 984 4516 and someone will be in touch to help you to sell them (and give you back 50% of the proceeds).

Finally, if anyone can donate any of the following items to the pre-school please contact Kathleen on the above details who would be really appreciative: Clipboards, Playmobile, doll's clothes, CD story books, tablets and a portable CD player. It doesn't need to be new!

Beth Baxter, Whitchurch pre-schools secretary

WHITCHURCH CRICKET CLUB

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David Mattimoe

WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

As I spent the morning resetting the clocks in the school to British Summer Time, it led me to question, 'Where did the time go?' The past few months seemed to have flown by, in part due to a very busy period at school.

At the start of the calendar year, our Year 3 and 4 pupils gave a superb performance of 'The Time Lord' musical, as they transported their parents and peers through time, where they were able to meet many historical figures including Florence Nightingale, Beethoven and Boudicca.

Last month, we held our annual Book Week which saw the children explore a range of texts as well as having the opportunity to come to school dressed as their favourite book character. Seeing Fantastic Mr Fox and Harry Potter to name but a few walking down Eastfield Lane is a sight to behold?

March also saw us welcome the pupils' mums in to school for the day. On the day the mums took part in a range of activities including science experiments and singing and ocarina lessons. Also this month, our pupils organised a charity run and cake sale for Sport Relief, raising over £400 for this worthwhile cause.

The children have also taken part in activities to learn how they can

keep themselves safe. Our STARS (Safe Travel and Road Safety) group have been working with the Police Community Support Officers to help both pupils and parents travel to school safely, as well as trying to reduce the traffic in and around Eastfield Lane and Hardwick Road. In addition, the children have been learning how to stay safe online through work on e-safety. As part of this we held an e-safety workshop for parents led by a representative from CEOP (Child Exploitation & Online Protection).

Away from the classroom, the children have also enjoyed a range of trips and visits. Our Year 3 pupils visited Bradfield College to take part in an a cappella workshop with the music group Apollo 5, while our Year 5 and 6 girls travelled to Queen Anne's School to compete in a science quiz. Moreover, a team of our Year 6 pupils were triumphant at the Langtree School maths challenge against the other schools in the local area. However, the biggest trip of the term was undoubtedly the three day residential to Hooke Court, Dorset our Year 3 and 4 pupils went on, as part of their history topic on the Saxons.

On the sports field, our pupils have continued to have great success, with our cross country, netball and football teams all qualifying for Oxfordshire County finals. Furthermore, our netball teams successfully won the Langtree School tournament; our Year 3 girls won both the Chiltern Edge School and Crosfields School tournaments; and our Year 3 boys came away victorious from The Oratory Prep School football tournament.

Our School Association have also been busy over the last few months, holding a quiz night and an Easter egg hunt to help raise funds for our new school library, and thanks to their hard work we look forward to having our new library installed this summer.

With the summer term now upon us, we look forward to another exciting period at school. Our Year 6 pupils will be taking their SATS in May, before preparing for their musical performance in July. Additionally, we will be holding our annual Sports Day and fete, as well as joining in with the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations.

MAZE WORKING PARTIES

These will take place on the first SATURDAY of every month for the 2016 season starting at 10.00am:

7TH MAY, 4TH JUNE, 2ND JULY, 6TH AUG,
3RD SEPT, 1ST OCT, 5TH NOV

(if needed)

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.

Members of WoTHABS have been instrumental in producing a document designed to take forward maintenance by the parish of these lovely areas in a way which will protect and enhance our wildlife - both flora and fauna and at the same time allow all users of these areas to pursue their various interests - both sports and leisure. This is not an easy task, but we are pleased to be involved through Gill Goodwin, WoTHABS' representative on the Village Green Working Group, with the invaluable assistance of Sally Woolhouse and other members of WoTHABS.

GORING HEATH AND WHITCHURCH SPRING SHOW

Once again our talented residents managed to gather together flowers from their gardens, cakes and jam tarts from their kitchens, eggs from their poultry, handicrafts and artwork from their nimble fingers and photos from their albums and put on a wonderful display in Goring Heath Parish Hall on Saturday, 9th April. Considering the unseasonal weather so far this year, the number of daffodils on display was particularly impressive! Thank you so much to everyone who entered, to the judges who had the difficult (but we're told very enjoyable) task of 'ranking' the exhibits and to Sarah Hanfrey who did a great job with the refreshments. One tip for future exhibitors – if you're thinking of entering the Flower Arranging section, you are allowed to use bought flowers in your arrangement, they don't have to be home-grown.

The show was also well supported by the public who came along in the afternoon to see the entries, buy plants and raffle tickets and enjoy a cup of tea and slice of homemade cake. Several visitors came from further afield than Goring Heath and Whitchurch and we're very grateful to them for making the effort to join us – they were surprised at how many green fingered and artistic residents the villages boast, together with great cooks and photographers, and have promised to return to future shows.

A questionnaire was handed out to exhibitors and visitors asking for their views on when the shows should take place, whether any additional classes would be welcomed and whether they would be prepared to help out with any aspect of organising the show. A good number were completed and returned to the committee on the day but anyone who took it home to think about their answers can drop it in to a committee member (addresses are on the schedule) or scan it and email it to helwillis@aol.com. If anyone who normally exhibits at or visits the show but couldn't make it this time would like a copy of the questionnaire, please contact Helen Willis (email as above or phone 0118 984 3620). You don't have to put your name on the questionnaire but, if you are able to offer some help with the organisation of the shows, it would be very helpful to have your contact details!

Finally, the most important part of this report, the cup and trophy winners:

Cup/Trophy	Category	Winner
Betty Haytor Memorial Cup	Most points in Flowers Section	Dave Sexon
Floral Arrangement Trophy	Most points in Flower Arranging Section	Denyse Williams
Arts and Crafts Trophy	Most points in Art and Handicraft Section	Liz Gibson
Egg Cup	Most points in Egg Section	Sarah Dragonetti
Baking and Preserves Cup	Most points in Baking and Preserves Section	Sue Sexon
Photography Cup	Most points in the Photography Section	David Pearson
Douglas Allardyce Memorial Rose Bowl	Most outstanding exhibit in the Vegetables, Fruit and Flowers Sections	Sarah Dragonetti
Children's Cup	Winner of the Children's Section	Sophie Bucknall (aged 4)
Whitchurch Hill Trophy	Most points overall	Dave Sexon

Thank you again for your support and see you in September.

The Show Committee

EDITOR'S NOTES

The next Edition of the WOT Bulletin will be published in July and will mainly cover events in the months of August to October. Deadline for articles will be Sunday 10th July and the Bulletin will be distributed w/e 23rd-24th July.

SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

(Please visit Village web-site (whitchurchonthames.com) for up-to-date and more extensive range of events in the Village).

Date	Event	Details
21st April	History Society: Catherine Sampson & Unusual churches in Berkshire	8pm Whitchurch VH
29th April to 2nd May	Twinning Association visit to La Bouille	Contact Vicky Jordan 01189 843260 & see January Bulletin
3rd May	Annual Parish Council Meeting	8pm, WOT VH
7th May	Maze Working Party	10am, The Maze
8th May	Guided walks to see Cowslips at Chalkhills	11:15 & 2:45
11th May	Annual Parish Assembly	8pm, WOT VH
14th May	Open Day for WOT Neighbourhood plan	11am-3pm, WOT VH
19th May	History Society: Katherine Bradley – Votes for Women Campaign in Oxford	8pm Goring Hth PH
28th May	Whitchurch Hill fete	2pm, Whitchurch Hill Recreation Ground
4th June	Maze Working Party	10am, The Maze
11th June	Celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday	Village Green
19th June	Whitchurch Society Garden Walk	1:30 – 4:30pm (tea & cake at the White House from 3:30pm)

I am still looking for volunteers to distribute the Bulletin to households in Eastfield Lane and the Hardwick Estate. Please contact me by email on richardwill444@onetel.com if you are interested in helping.

Richard Williams, Editor