



WINTER 2022

WHITCHURCH BULLETIN

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE, JANUARY 2022

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope you had a good break over the holidays. Whilst no one can predict the future, I can't help but feel more optimistic about things returning to a more normal state in 2022. The Parish Council is certainly looking forward to hosting a Queen's Platinum Jubilee event on the Village Green on Sunday 5th June. If you would like to help with organising it please contact our Clerk Jane.

One of our focus points recently has been on pedestrian and traffic safety in the village. Some of these will now be coming to fruition by this Spring, so you should expect to see a few changes along the High Street and other parts of the village:

- 1. Pedestrian Safety at the lower Narrows by the Ferryboat –**
Bollards will be installed at the pavement in front of the Ferryboat to protect pedestrians at the lower narrows, including parents and children coming to and from Pangbourne to the school. This has been approved and we expect them to be installed by March. We plan further communications about this before the actual change happens as this will impact traffic behaviour, forcing cars to give way at the single lane narrows. The bollards will be on both sides of the road at the narrows to ensure the brick wall is also protected and to ensure that the road is single lane. The bollards will be black traditional "Manchester Style" but will be somewhat flexible to reduce the likelihood that they will break off in the event of a collision with a car.
- 2. Protection of the verge on the East side on the High Street –**
Our Traffic and Parking WG, led by Diana Smith and Dave Baty have selected a supplier to install 13 bollards to protect the verge on the east side of the High Street between Duchess Close and Racquets. These will be smaller white bollards designed to stop erosion of the verge.
- 3. 20-mph in the village –** Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Highways team has confirmed they have secured the budget for

the change of signs from 30 to 20mph along with a formal public consultation that will likely happen over a four-week period in January or February. Depending on the results of the consultation, the change could happen as early as March or April. More details on this can be found in an article later in the Bulletin.

Further traffic and parking changes also being investigated

- Designated pedestrian crossing near Eastfield Lane to protect parents and children going to and from school in particular. TAPWG have been asked to evaluate three options for the crossing point, two near the Greyhound Pub and one on the south side of Eastfield Lane near Prospect House.
- TAPWG are working toward residents parking and other traffic and safety options based on the feedback from their recent survey. There will be a public forum on the 24th February at 8pm at Old Stables. More details can be found in an article later in the Bulletin.

Thames Path Signs: Finally we have been chasing a number of issues on Thames Path sign markers that we are being told will be addressed soon:

- The bent Thames Path sign at the toll booth is due to be fixed in January.
- Wooden caution signs by the steep dip at the Hartley Steps at the end of Hartslock Bridleway are meant to be installed in February.
- A replacement wooden sign pointing toward the Church is also meant to be put in place in February.

New Defibrillator – Thanks to Alistair Aitchison of the Village Green Working Group for securing a grant for a new defibrillator on the Village Green. This was done with support of the AFC Whitchurch, the Whitchurch-on-Thames Cricket Club and Whitchurch Primary School. Having a centrally located defibrillator in the telephone box on Manor Road is an excellent resource for the village; however,

having an additional defibrillator specifically located where the majority of cardiovascular exercise is taking place (Cricket, Football, Jogging etc) makes absolute sense. Alistair has quoted studies showing that a defibrillator is its most effective when administered within the first minute of a victim collapsing. If a defibrillator is used within the first minute, the survival rate can be as high as 90%. If a defibrillator is used within the first 3 to 5 minutes, the likelihood of survival is roughly 74% showing that having a defibrillator close by really makes all the difference. We expect this to be installed on the side of the Cricket Pavilion by April.

Manor Road Playground Maintenance and Upgrade – Cllrs Higley, Leadbeater-Hart, and O’Grady have been investigating the need to better maintain or upgrade equipment on the playground in accordance with recommendations of annual safety inspections. A Working Group is now being planned that will likely start with a survey of residents aimed at both parents and children. The WG will also make recommendations to maintain or upgrade equipment both as an urgent matter in the short-term and as an ongoing basis. Residents of the village are welcome to join the WG and will be asked to complete a survey in the coming months.

Financial Audits – Whilst this happens every year, I think it is important to recognise all the work that our Clerk Jane Yamamoto puts into completing internal and external audits to ensure that our Parish Council finances are compliant with all relevant financial regulations. Well done to Jane for completing this year’s audit successfully on time!

GDPR Compliance – I would also like to thank our GDPR Officer, Cllr Higley, for all of the work she does to ensure that the Parish Council is compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018. A number of motions were approved at November’s meeting to ensure that councillors receive regular GDPR training and that residents’ personal data is handled appropriately. Further policies are under development to ensure that we have appropriate procedures to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data and to effectively manage any personal data breaches.

Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) – The work from the contractor we use to assess and update the Village’s Conservation Area is now complete and has been submitted to the SODC Conservation Team for review and adoption. We understand that the SODC team has limited capacity and is already evaluating other village CAA’s so we don’t expect to have the results of their assessment for at least another year. Please contact Cllr Higley if you have any questions about the updated CAA.

Councillor Vacancy – We are advertising a new councillor vacancy as Cllr Steward has recently resigned. If this is something that you may be interested in, please let me or our Clerk Jane know at parishclerk.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com by the end of February. Please feel free to contact me or another councillor if you would like more information on what being a councillor entails. There is also a short article on the Parish Council web-page called “Make a Change, Become a Councillor” with more information.

Kind regards,

Jim Donahue

Chairman, Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

**QUARTERLY PLANNING UPDATE FOR WOT PC
– JANUARY 17, 2022**

Planning Reference	Address	Comments by WOT PC	SODC status
P21/S4454/HH	Thames Bank South, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7DB	The Council voted to support this application 12/11/21	Approved
P21/S4312/FUL	Technology Centre, Bozodown Drive Whitchurch Hill RG8 7QR	The Council voted to submit no further comments.	Application under consideration

P21/S3445/HH	Venn Cottage, Hardwick Road Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HH	The Council voted to support this application.	Approved
P21/S4904/FUL	Uplands Cottage, Hardwick Road, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HH	The Council voted to support this application 10/12/21	Application under consideration
P21/S4740/AG	Path Hill Farm, Path Hill, Goring Heath RG8 7RE	The Council voted to support this application 10/12.21	Consultation period
P21/S4199/HH	Wellesley House, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HF	The Council voted to support this application on October 14, 2021.	Approved
P21/S4225/HH	The White House, High Street Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HA	The Council voted to support this application subject to the Tree Officer's report 12/11/21 The Council voted to support this application 14/1/22	Application under consideration
P21/S5271/HH	Woodlea, Hardwick Road Whitchurch-on-Thames RG8 7HW	The Council voted to support this application 14/1/22	Consultation period

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

A few weeks ago, Oxfordshire County Council hit the national press and indeed some international press, through passing a motion that only vegan food should be served to Councillors at Council events. A greater use of vegan food in our diets seems to be a trend that is welcomed by many people, not only for health reasons but also because it's recognised as being good for the planet through reducing carbon emissions. I am not particularly pro veganism but I can see the merits of healthy eating and am happy to be swept along with the tide of a more rational approach to our diet, when the advantages are so clear.

I found the furore raised about this vegan food being served to Councillors at their function a little bizarre when I learnt that this only happens about six times a year, and it's all free anyway; who knew that that County Councillors were fed at the public expense ?

One of the responsibilities of the District Council that does not impinge on most of us, is addressing homelessness and rough sleeping and there is a team that works with partners, health and care agencies, housing and support providers and voluntary agencies to help in this matter. This approach offers rapid access to long term accommodation and intensive support for vulnerable homeless households. At the end of last year, the housing needs team focused on a small number of entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs, people who had physical and mental health issues and had previously refused help. I am pleased to say that as at 31 December there were no rough sleepers in either South Oxfordshire or the Vale of White Horse. This is the first time since 2013 that this has been achieved.

Following a review of Licensing Policy, the District Council decided, as a matter of policy, not to permit Casinos in the District. This was agreed on the basis that casinos bring the potential for criminal exploitation and money laundering and casinos expose the vulnerable to the risk of problem gambling.

The District Council has also adopted a new approach to planning enforcement to improve efficiency and transparency and to address the backlog that has built up since the pandemic. The risk of Covid has restricted the ability to conduct on-site investigations. There are currently some 700 live investigations. Previously all enforcement complaints were addressed in the same way; under the new approach the focus will be on the most damaging and serious incidents.

Peter Dragonetti

UPDATE FROM THE TRAFFIC AND PARKING WORKING GROUP (TAPWG)

Thank you to all those residents who completed and returned the Traffic and Parking Survey in September.

We had 178 responses from 164 residences; the Village total being 330 dwellings. To put that in context, the *Village Survey* undertaken in 2018 for the *Village Plan* of 2019 got 143 responses. Our “Report of Findings” from our Survey can be found on the Whitchurch Website from 17th January 2022.

A key finding is that 83.5% of respondents believe that there is a traffic problem and 81.2% believe that there is a parking problem. These figures underpin our work and are spurring us on to look for solutions to put to the Parish Council.

In 2020, the pandemic gave us a glimpse of what it must have been like in the Village a century ago. It is a relief that things are slowly returning to something like normal but, as many residents have observed, the traffic is growing and with it the previous problems with parking and already some congestion. The geography and history of our Village have resulted in roads and some homes which are not very compatible with twenty-first century high car ownership and use. As an OCC Highway Official recently remarked, “You have a lot of problems”. He was looking at our rather narrow B through

road, three narrows with one way traffic, difficult road junctions, some narrow pavements, lack of space for a public car park and also proximity to the Station and Pangbourne shops, access to Pangbourne Meadow and pleasant country walks all encouraging non-resident parking.

With all this to contend with it is unlikely that proposals to improve safety, lower pollution, lower incidents of congestion and provide easier parking for residents will satisfy everyone.

The Survey has emphasised concerns that were known but has also highlighted others. An example is pedestrian safety in the Upper Narrows.

The Group is now working on options to present to the Parish Council. When the Council has decided on a course of action any changes to the 2019 Plan, which was exhibited at the Informal Consultation in February 2020 will have to be checked by professional traffic consultants before being informally approved by OCC Highways. The last stage will be submission to OCC who would carry out a Formal Public Consultation. If that goes well the work can be commissioned and go ahead.

TAPWG are holding a Public Forum in the Old Stables, 8-8.30 pm on Thursday 24th February.

You are very welcome to attend to ask questions or share views. Please be ready to wear a mask in the building.

Finally, you might be pleased to know that the Survey finding of a high level of support for a 20mph speed limit in the Village has helped to secure OCC backing for Whitchurch to be one of the first in the queue to achieve this (see below). We are waiting for the Public Consultation to be successfully completed in Jan-Feb and then it will happen. One of the conditions for consideration for the scheme was evidence from a village survey which we had just completed!!

David Baty, Marc Cresswell, Linda Gray, Kit Marriott, Frances Parkes, Mike Rayment, Diana Smith.

20MPH IS FINALLY COMING TO WHITCHURCH

I am very excited to report that it looks like a 20mph speed limit is finally coming to Whitchurch-on-Thames. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Highways team has confirmed they have secured the budget for the change of signs and road markings in the village along with a formal public consultation that will likely happen in a four-week period in January or February. Depending on the results of the consultation, the change could happen as early as March or April.

The reason this is happening now is due to a change in policy from OCC promoting a reduction in speed from 30mph to 20mph in built up residential areas. The OCC policy states:

- *The main reason for promoting 20mph is to help enhance and create an environment that is more appropriate for our active neighbourhoods: promoting lower vehicle speeds, encouraging more walking and cycling, and supporting a sense of a community place.*

Villages in Oxfordshire have been invited to apply to the new scheme which has selection criteria to prioritise requests.

- Whitchurch-on-Thames has been selected ahead of this scheme as we have been pushing for this for some time and have met the criteria.
- This will be a popular programme and many other villages across the county will be applying to become part of the first tranche of rollout for next fiscal year.
- The budget for this includes ‘signs only’ changes and will not require traffic calming measures as a pre-requisite or include budget for subsequent traffic calming measures.

This would apply to all streets in the centre of the village including the High Street, Manor Road, Eastfield Lane, Hillside and the portion of Hardwick Road before the village entrance sign. I have attached a high level map that OCC provided showing the three main village

entrance signs that would change. There will be more details of smaller intermediate signs and road markings in the consultation.

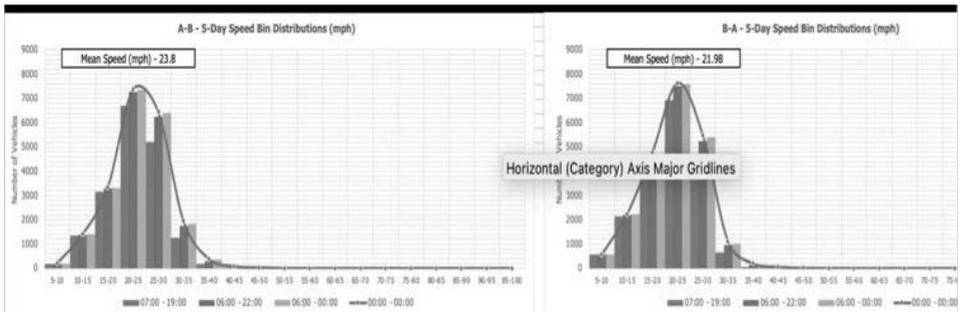
We expect the results of the consultation to be overwhelmingly positive as this is something that residents have been asking for, at least since 2009:

- The 2009 Village plan stated that 85% of residents cited traffic speed as the single most important issue in the village
- The Village Plan recommended the move to 20mph following a similar village survey in which 90% of respondents supported it
- Feedback from the September 2021 TAPWG survey again shows speeding as a top concern

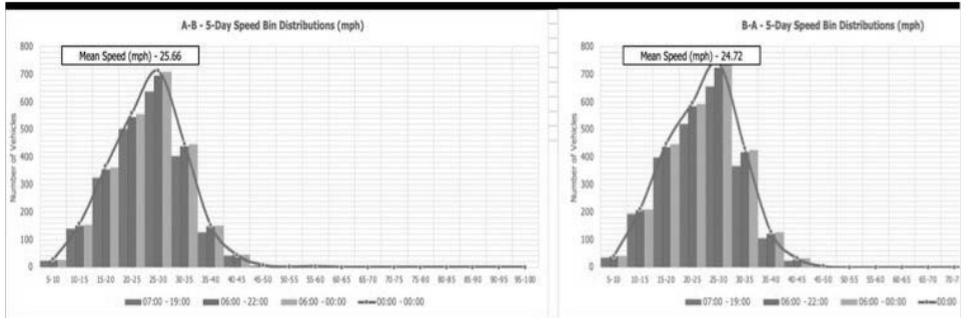
OCC conducted two speed surveys on the High Street and Hardwick Road in November as part of our application. The resulting mean speeds over the seven day period were:

- High St Northbound: 23.87mph
- High St Southbound: 22.32 mph
- Hardwick Road Eastbound: 25.8mph
- Hardwick Road Westbound: 24.69mph

High Street Survey Results (5 day):



Hardwick Road Survey Results (5 day):



The results show that we have really good compliance with the current 30mph speed limit. Average speeds are slightly higher on Hardwick Road than on the High Street.

- OCC highlighted that national research has found: Where existing mean speeds are at or below 24mph the introduction of a ‘signs only’ speed limit should be enough to see compliance with a new 20mph speed limit.
- The results of Hardwick Road are already showing mean speeds above this level, so compliance may not be achieved without the introduction of other measures, for example, an enhanced entrance gateway feature and/or some suitable vehicle activated signs.
- We can re-assess the need for traffic calming measures near the Hardwick Road village entrance in the future once we have some experience with the results from the change on signs to 20mph.

Jim Donahue

Chairman, Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

STEAM LOCOMOTIVE 6233 DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

“Steam engines are a pretty silly way of pulling a train”. Discuss.

Well, yes they are – in 2021. But 200 years ago, as the Industrial Revolution gathered pace, engineers like George Stephenson

were starting to think that “horses are a pretty silly way of pulling a train”. His sales pitch that one of his steam locomotives could do the work of fifty horses got him a contract to build the Stockton and Darlington Railway, in preference to the horse-drawn tramway originally proposed. The S & DR was a great success, the railway age was born.

Fast forward to the 1930’s. Two of the “big four” railway companies, the London Midland & Scottish Railway (out of Euston) and the London & North Eastern Railway (Kings Cross), were competing for the lucrative Anglo-Scottish passenger business by offering ever shorter journey times. This needed faster trains, which in turn required more powerful locomotives.

For the LMS, this culminated in the “Princess Coronation” class, designed by their Chief Mechanical Engineer Sir William Stanier, built at Crewe, and introduced in 1938. 6233 “Duchess of Sutherland” was one of these, working until 1964 before being purchased for preservation.



Duchess of Sutherland approaches Pangbourne Station 23/11/2021, courtesy of Peter Worsley

6233 passed through Pangbourne on a charter special on 23rd November. Steam engines may indeed be a “pretty silly way of pulling a train” in 2021, but 6233 was certainly a sight and sound enjoyed by many of us that morning. It was the first time I had seen her since my train-spotting days at Rugby over 60 years ago.

Geoff Weir

THE WHITCHURCH SOCIETY’S ART AND CRAFT EXHIBITION 2021

The exhibition was again innovative, this time because it was held ‘live’ in Whitchurch Village Hall on the weekend of 20th-21st November but also the entries could be viewed online for a fortnight afterwards. In 2020, the exhibition was only online and consequently it was not possible to award the usual prizes. The 2021 show returned to the traditional arrangements, with the exhibits being judged by external experts and winners being chosen in all the art, craft and photography categories, entered by adults and young people.

If you would like to see the full list of the 2021 prize winners, they can be found via the link on the Exhibition webpage on the village website (whitchurchonthames.com/groups/artscrafts.html). On the same webpage, there is also a link to the History of the Cups & Awards that have been won since the first Exhibition was held in 1972 – this makes for interesting reading, with 50 years of competition recorded.

There were 145 entries across the full spectrum of classes, in art, craft, photography and new media, from 64 exhibitors, both adult and young people. It was enjoyed by many visitors to the Hall over the weekend, with lots of positive feedback. Everyone was pleased that this popular annual village event had returned to its normal format. 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.

I would like to thank all of the great team that helped in the many various ways to set the live 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 & Adrian Dixon, Wendy Ferguson and Jean-Marc Grosfort) and to the Whitchurch Society committee, for all their hard work and support which made it another successful show.

And remember, it is not too soon to start work on your entries for the 2022 exhibition!!

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

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION.

Excitement and fun filled the air for the children at Whitchurch Primary during the last week of the autumn term, with a delicious Christmas dinner including crackers, Christmas dress-up days, a Whitchurch light trail, Christmas shows and Father Christmas himself visited the school to chat with the children and give them a gift. It was such a joy to see the smiles as they came to greet Father Christmas.

The school works tirelessly to ensure our children have the very best experiences at school and this December was, as always, exceptional!

The Parents' Association Christmas Raffle was a huge success and raised lots of money for the school. We had some amazing prizes, and the winners were all extremely grateful. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved with making this a huge success. Thank you to all the sponsors, local businesses who donated raffle prizes and everyone who purchased a ticket. Our programme of events such as these raise much needed funds and we wouldn't be able to do it without your continued support and generosity.

The New Year saw the children return to school excited and refreshed after the Christmas break, ready and eager to start the new term.

The main function of our Parents' Association is to support the school by raising as much money as we can to enhance, enrich and improve learning experiences for the children. There are many ways you can support us starting today!

Co-op Local Causes

We are very lucky to have been chosen as one of the Co-op's local charities. Please support us by registering for a Co-op member's card and opting for 'Whitchurch Primary School Association' as your chosen charity. The money will go towards our Sun Safe scheme.

Whitchurch 'In It To Win It Club'

This is a great way to raise funds for the school and our children. For £12 per number you are entered into the draw for 12 months. Each month we draw 3 numbers, and the lucky winners win a cash prize. To join the fun please email whitchurch100club@gmail.com
Good Luck!!

Amazon Smile

Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of your purchase to our school as we are a registered charity. With so much more shopping happening online, please support us by opening smile.amazon.co.uk and selecting "Whitchurch Primary School Association" as your chosen charity. You get to buy the same items, at the same price and Amazon make a donation to our school. How fantastic!

Matched Giving

Many companies offer matched funding as part of a charitable giving scheme. If you would like to support our school through this way or have any other ideas, please get in touch at whitchurchpa20@gmail.com

Victoria Willcock

Chair, Whitchurch Primary School Parents' Association

Registered charity 1114159

WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL

We've had a great start to the Spring Term at Whitchurch Pre-school. After some very special festive events last term including a wonderful Christmas party and extremely cute carol concert, we've been doing lots of fun winter activities.

We have been baking, duplo building, pasta mixing, playing garden games, dancing and music making, mud painting and much more. In our early year's science sessions, so far this term the children have been mixing up fizzy volcanoes, weighing things, measuring spaghetti, colour mixing and other exciting hands-on stuff!

The children get a chance to try a whole range of fun activities, no matter what sessions and days they attend, as we rotate our activities across the week and follow the early year's curriculum.

The refurbishment of our classroom in 2021 is really paying dividends, the children are making the most of the fantastic set up including a magical book den, home corner, activity mat, tray tables and more. All of this makes our Pre-School a really special place for our little people to grow and learn.

Register now for places in September 2022 or earlier

Places are still available at Pre-School for Spring and Summer term this year but are filling up fast with some sessions almost fully booked. We recommend that you get in touch as soon as possible to register if you are thinking of signing your child up to join this year.

CONTACT US hello@whitchurchpreschool.org | 0118 984 4516 | www.whitchurchpreschool.org

Support us – please help us reach our £10k fundraising target

We are a charity run by a parent volunteer committee and, with the ever-increasing gap between funding for early years places and costs, our fundraising is essential to providing the activities and facilities that are so important for Pre-School children. This year we

are raising money for roof repairs and to replace the sandpit and Astro-Turf areas.

3 FREE and EASY ways to support us:

- Become a Co-Op Member and select Whitchurch-on-Thames Pre-School as your local community cause. For every £1 spent 2p will be donated to our cause.
- If you shop with Amazon, go to <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/> and enter Whitchurch On Thames Pre-School as your chosen charity, 0.5% of your order value will be given to Pre-School
- Sign up to easyfundraising.org.uk to support “Whitchurch Pre-School – Whitchurch-on-Thames”. When you use the easyfundraising website or app to shop with retailers like John Lewis, M&S, H&M, the retailer sends us a donation of up to 5%. You can register here (completely free): https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/whitchurchonthamespresch/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=w4



Please also look out for our fundraising events, and to donate any time you can 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 GREEN TEAM

Since the last Bulletin, 9 working parties have been held, and people throughout the village have, often unasked, helped with various tasks. The onset of the winter naturally saw a reduction in activity. Some key points are indicated overleaf.

- *List of Green Spaces.* We are lucky to have many green spaces in the village; our primary goal is to care for these. The list can be found on our website page: <https://whitchurchonthames.com/groups/greenteam.html>. Photos of the team at work appear in the Pictures section of the website.
- *Village Green and the Maze.* We have regular working parties maintaining these areas. At the maze we work together with WoTHABS to edge and maintain the central area. Work on the village green has been mostly at the southern end where we have cleared a number of invasive plants and unwanted saplings, cut back part of the beech hedge to improve access at the end nearest the school, and planted some ferns alongside the cotoneaster shrubs at the entrance to the car park.
- *Polish Church Garden Project Details* and latest updates can be found here: <https://whitchurchonthames.com/groups/polishgarden.html>. The Green Team has tidied the area around the chapel platform and, together with WOTHABS, helped to present the case for a community orchard, including mapping the area and the proposed planting layout.
- *Verge outside Eastfield House.* We have reduced the height of sumach shrubs to improve visibility and bring them under control, and will further reduce them as is standard practice in February. We have also cleared away some unsightly patches of brambles and nettles, and re-seeded with grass.

We welcome all who would like to help with Green Team work. Our working parties last from an hour up to two or three, but you don't have to stay for the duration. In (say) half an hour or an hour you can still make a worthwhile contribution. If you would like to know more or have a suggestion for work we might undertake, please contact me (details on the website).

Our goals for the year include:

- Find guardians for every green space in the village

- Engage and involve more people to help look after our green spaces
- Involve the school and pre-school more in Green Team work
- Progress the Polish Garden project
- Contribute to the preparations for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations

A provisional working-party schedule for the next three months follows – you can always find the up-to-date version in the village website What's On section

29 January	10am Village Green
26th February	10am Village Green
26th March	10am Village Green
2nd April	10am Maze
30th April	10am Village Green

Charles Cotgreave

VILLAGE HALL NEWS

In the Governing Document for the charity which runs the Village Hall, written in 1970, it says 'The purpose of the village hall is for the use of the inhabitants of the parish of Whitchurch and District for recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants' and fifty years later, this is what guides us.

The Village Hall is managed by volunteers comprising a committee of trustees; three elected members and one representative each of the Parish Council and the Whitchurch Society who are elected at the annual AGM assisted by an Events Manager and a Hall Manager. The hall is owned by the Parish Council and they are the custodian trustees.

In April 2021, we began formulating a new web site design to attract new customers. This included writing a hall history and an introduction page with connection to a reservation system.

We had some relaxation of COVID rules in June; however the pandemic was having a major effect on the village hall bookings which were greatly reduced having a major impact on our income.

We produced a new logo for correspondence in July and started to make plans for the opening of the hall in September with hand sanitiser, signage and COVID prevention advice. We also put together a safeguarding policy which is displayed in the village hall and points of contact identified for reporting any concerns.

The new village hall entry on the village web site was completed in September and a new online booking service was realised which enabled people to log in to the village web site and see the many and varied activities taking place. These include the Bridge Club, Yoga, Tap Dancing, History Society, the Camera Club and the new Whit-Fit and Baby Bloom Society classes. The afternoon teas which have been organised by our event manager Jean Marc have also been a great success. You can also book your own event online, just see the available times and pick your slot.

The grand opening of the Hall was on 6th November 2021, observing the government's COVID requirements of course and this was a great success and now we have bookings from the various groups listed above. The Art & Craft 2021 Exhibition was held in the Village Hall on the weekend of 20th-21st November, displaying a wonderful collection of paintings, craft works and photos entered by Whitchurch residents and school children.

All in all it has been a challenging time and one which we have risen to and we look forward to seeing everyone back in the village hall which is a great asset to the community so look out for classes online and get involved.

New Classes at the Village Hall

As well as existing regular activities such as the Bridge Club and Camera Club, there are two new classes at the village hall. In the last Bulletin, we mentioned the Bloom Baby. The first sessions of this mother and baby group have been very successful and it is so busy that a second slot is being run on Monday mornings.

The other new class is WhitFit a brand new 45 minute community exercise class for mixed fitness abilities. Run by Personal Trainer Hannah Dunbar, these fun and challenging classes will be at 9:05am every Wednesday morning during term time. If you want to improve your fitness, strength and flexibility, in a fun and welcoming setting, then please contact Hannah directly to pre-book your place in the class hannah@coach-hannah.com or 07971 116704.

Keith Brookes, Chair

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

We will be holding our Annual General Meeting at 8pm on Thursday 17th February at Goring Heath Parish Hall.

Our speaker will be Stephen Barker, a specialist on the English Civil War of 1642-46, and he will talk about Oxfordshire characters of that time – soldiers, saints and sinners. Whitchurch lies between the royalist capital at Oxford and London (and Reading at times) which supported the roundheads, and many skirmishes took place locally. Hardwick House still has damage attributed to civil war shells.

Vicky Jordan

SPRING 2022 EDITION

Deadline for content/articles for the next edition will be Sunday 17th April. The plan is to distribute bulletins weekend 30th Apr/1st May.

Richard Williams, Editor

rwilliamsafcw@btinternet.com



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.

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- Serving quality homemade food
 - Comprehensive bistro style menu
 - Homemade stone baked pizzas
 - Traditional Sunday roasts
 - Take-away food available
 - Private function room
 - Superb lunch menu
 - Fine selection of wines, cask ales,
Spirits and soft drinks
 - Parties catered for
 - Great friendly atmosphere
 - On-line booking

The Ferryboat, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG8 7DB
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