



WHITCHURCH BULLETIN

SUMMER
2023

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PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR'S UPDATE – JULY 2023

I hope you are enjoying the lovely summer weather and have made some nice summer holiday plans. The Parish Council doesn't normally meet in August to allow us to have a break as well. It's been relatively quiet in the village since the Village Coronation celebration in May, but a number of things have been steadily progressing.

Eastfield House update – The latest update I have received from the Urban Villages programme director was on the 10th of July. He confirmed that J Guest Ltd was selected as the contractor for the project and they plan to start work on the site by the end of July.

- The bat survey was completed as of 4th July and they expect to receive the bat licence from Natural England shortly.
- A number of enabling activities will start this month are not dependent on receiving a bat licence. The main activities that are linked to the bat license are demolition of sensitive parts of the main building that could impact bats.
- The initial enablement work will include:
 - Clearing the road frontage and overgrown gardens
 - Installing bat mitigation measures
 - Improving security measures including CCTV and fencing along the eastern boundary
 - Removing asbestos
 - Demolition of garage block

Whitchurch Award – At the Annual Assembly in May, I was pleased to present Jean Marc Grosfort with a well-deserved Whitchurch Award. For those who may not know Jean Marc, he organised the refurbishment of the Village Hall over the past several years including successfully applying for a number of grants, carefully defining what improvements were needed, and securing volunteers for many activities. He is still actively involved in its management and has set up monthly afternoon teas where everyone in

the village is welcome to attend. Jean Marc is also an excellent chef and usually prepares a choice of delicious things to be served at the teas making use of the refurbished kitchen. The full speech that John Bradon gave in his honour can be seen on the village website, but I thought that I would share one of his comments about the afternoon teas that should give you an idea of the care he puts into them; *"I'd never seen an Opera Cake before. It has about six layers, each of which would be a major challenge to Bake Off contenders. There are flowers on the tables and each event has a seasonal theme"*.

Toll Bridge Access Road Safety – West Berkshire Council commissioned a Feasibility Study to review and detail options for widening the Toll Bridge access road and pavement on the Pangbourne side. The study has now been completed and I have seen the report that recommends three options that they would like to consider further. I have been asked not to share the results any further at this time but can say my preference is for two of the options that would achieve the objective of widening the pavement to the minimum required 1.5m width for the full length of the access road. The study includes cost estimates for taking each option into the next two phases, preliminary and detailed design and gives indicative cost estimates for implementation and maintenance. I'm working with the various stakeholders to ensure we can get approval to move this to the next stage.

The Parish Council has been working to address a number of issues that residents have alerted us to:

- **Thames Path sign fixed** – I worked with Neil Huntington to repair the bent Thames Path sign by the Toll Booth. This involved a lot of digging and the use of some fast-drying cement. The bent part of the sign is beneath the soil so the repair looks fine from the surface. I had reported this over a year ago to OCC Countryside Access team. They did repair other signs including the new Hartley Steps sign, but this repair was given lower priority compared to other damaged signs in the county. When I attended a recent OCC Open Day, the Countryside Officer said that they had a backlog of nearly 4,000 lower priority items and they were glad for us to repair things like this ourselves, where possible.
- **Hillside dangerous step** – A resident of Hillside notified me of a loose concrete slab on the steps in front of Hillside that could be dangerous. They reported it to Fix My Street and OCC have confirmed that they are

responsible for it; however, given OCC's backlog, I would welcome a local volunteer with relevant experience to help fix it.

- **Greyhound bins** – Some residents have expressed concern about the red bins that are kept by the garage on Eastfield Lane. I have contacted the Greyhound owner and they will investigate whether they can clear out the garage and fit the bins inside or find another solution to keep the bins hidden.
- **Village Green signs and bins** – thanks to Cllr Frances Parkes for her work on some recent improvements on the Village Green:
 - CCTV signs to improve security were installed on the Pavilion
 - 'No BBQing' signs were posted on the fence to address recent reports of BBQs that could be especially dangerous in the hot dry weather we've had.
 - We are investigating moving the bin and bench from the west side of the football goal to the east side to discourage incidents of rubbish being tossed into the neighbouring paddock which could be dangerous for the horses.
 - I also thank Cllr Parkes for her work in regularly emptying the bin adjacent to the paddock, as it is not one that is covered by the SODC contract.
- **Cherry Tree Guardian** – A special thanks to Liz Gibson for volunteering to water and look after the new Tibetan Cherry Tree planted by OCC on the Eastfield Lane verge.
- **Recycling of blister packs** – Thanks to Tim Hardwick for offering to organise a place in the Phone box for residents to deposit used medical blister packs often used for tablets (details elsewhere in this bulletin).
- **First Aid Course** – A resident from Hardwick Estate recently took a first aid course aimed at rescuing people on the river who may be based on a boat, but the training also addressed other general scenarios, and would like to ensure other people in the community have access to this training. We are applying for a grant to fund this training and, if successful, we would offer it to a limited number of people in the village, with the idea that they could act as contacts if urgent first aid was needed by other residents in the village. More information will be provided later, but please let me know if this is something that you may be interested in.

Speedwatch – Traffic monitoring continues with a dedicated group of volunteers at agreed locations on the High Street and Hardwick Road at different times of the day and week. Whilst there are many drivers observing the 20mph speed limit, there are still considerable numbers who are not.

- During the week commencing 10th July the highest recorded speed on the High Street travelling northbound was 39mph and Hardwick Road Eastbound 31mph.
- You might not be aware that the speed gun records the fastest speed a vehicle is travelling at, so slowing down once the high viz jackets have been spotted is too late.
- The Speedwatch group would like to be able to do more sessions but more volunteers are needed to be able to do this. No regular commitment is necessary, other than to undertake the online Thames Valley Police Speedwatch training. Help can be given with this. If anyone would like to know more, please contact Linda Gray on lindapgray100@gmail.com

Residents' Parking and Pedestrian Safety Plan Consultation – We are still waiting for OCC Highways to confirm when formal consultation on the planned Residents' Parking scheme and changes to parking restrictions on the High Street is likely to start. Our scheme is paid for and is in the pipeline along with some others. We are amongst the first group of towns and villages to take advantage of the new residents' parking scheme so OCC may still be working out the process.

Councillor Vacancy – We still have one vacancy on the Parish Council and have extended the deadline for applications until 31 August. There is an article on the Parish Council section of the website called 'Make a Change, become a councillor' that provides some background on the role of a parish councillor. Please contact me or our Clerk Jane at parishclerk.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com if this is something that you may be interested in or would like to discuss it.

*Kind regards,
Jim Donahue*

Chairman, Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council



QUARTERLY PLANNING UPDATE FOR WOT PC

JULY 2023

Planning Reference	Description	WOT Parish Council Response	SODC status
P23/SI328/LB	Wellesley House, High Street, WoT RG8 7HF: To replace 4 x non-historic wooden frame windows with 4 x wooden frame, slimline double-glazed windows.	The Council voted to support this application.	Listed Building Consent
P22/S4285/HH	19 Swanston Field, WoT RG8 7HP: Detached-garden room/ outbuilding. The scale and size of the proposed outbuilding has now been reduced and additional information for the forestry officer received.	The Council voted to object on the basis that the building could be a separate dwelling as submitted previously.	Granted
P23/SI438/LB	2 Hill Cottages, High Street, WoT RG8 7HG: Removal of 3 rooflights from north elevation. Installation of a conservation rooflight into north elevation.	The Council voted to support this application.	Refused
P23/SI445/HH	Lane End Cottage, Eastfield Lane, WoT RG8 7EJ: Building a two-bay oak-frame garage to be used as a garden/ cycle store and workshop.	The Council voted to support the application.	Granted
P23/SI404/FUL	Uplands Cottage, Hardwick Rd, WoT RG8 7HH: Demolition of 95% of existing dwelling and erection of 3 bay garage on part footprint of dwelling.	The Council voted to approve this application.	Granted
P23/SI537/HH	18 Hillside, Hardwick Road, WoT RG8 7HL: Conversion of an existing garage to living accommodation, replacement of a garage door with a double-glazed window.	The Council voted to submit the comment that they were content with the application if SODC deemed there was adequate parking for the applicant.	Granted
P23/SI592/HH	4 Old Barn Cottages, High Street, WoT RG8 7EZ: Loft extension, single storey rear extensions, front bay window, single storey porch, external cladding, and internal alterations.	The Council voted to support this application.	Application under consideration

Planning Reference	Description	WOT Parish Council Response	SODC status
P23/S1433/HH	Farthings, Eastfield Lane, WoT RG8 7EJ: Upward extension to create first floor accommodation and external rendering/cladding to existing dwelling.	The Council voted to support this application.	Application under consideration
P23/S1650/FUL	Former Theatre, Hardwick Estate, WoT RG8 7RD: Proposed new 3 beddwelling on the site of the former theatre, including the conversion of an existing redundant storage building/workshop.	The Council voted to support this application.	Application under consideration
P23/S1836/LB	4 Whitchurch House, High Street, WoT RG8 7EP: Replace three ground floor windows with timber double glazed sash windows to match the design of existing.	The Council voted to support this application.	Application under consideration
P23/S1484/DIS	BP Technology Centre, Bozedown Drive near Whitchurch Hill RG8 7QR: Discharge of Conditions 6 (Tree Protection), 9 (Constructions Traffic Management), 10 (Construction Method Statement – 2) and 16 (Archaeology WS) under application reference number P22/S3223/.	The Council voted to submit a comment that Condition 16 needed to be reviewed to satisfy archaeologist concerns.	Still within Consultation period
P23/S2145/DIS	Coombe Park, Coombe Park Rd, WonT RG8 7QT: Discharge of conditions 6 (glass coating or external glazing) & 8 (tree protection) on planning application P22/S1324/FUL (The erection of a replacement dwelling and associated works).	The Council voted to submit a comment that it supported the Forestry Officer's comments.	Still within Consultation period
P23/S2277/S73	Coombe Park, Coombe Park Rd, WoT RG8 7QT: The application is for: Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on application P22/S1324/FUL – to allow for design changes to the replacement house.	The Council voted to submit a comment that there was no objection to the design changes.	Still within Consultation period

DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

The election in May is now fading from memory and I was delighted to be re-elected as the District Councillor for Whitchurch. My only opponent, your Parish Council Chair Jim Donahue, worked hard across the ward, and he seemed to be one of the few Conservatives who made a real effort, and this was reflected in the overall result for the District. When I was first elected four years ago, it was against a Conservative controlled Council where about 33 of the 38 councillors were Conservatives. Today, there is only one Conservative councillor in the whole District. An interesting side note is that, our neighbour, the Vale of White Horse is now believed to be the only District Council in England where there are no Conservative or Labour Councillors.

I am pleased to say that although the LibDems are now the majority in South Oxfordshire District Council, the agreement to work together with the Green Party continues, and that two members of the SODC Cabinet will be from the Green Party, namely Robin Bennet and Andrea Powell, and I will remain as Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee.

I hope that the next four years will not include anything as game changing as Covid which was very disruptive at the time but has brought new ways of working that seem to have bedded in quite well. In terms of political disruption, we have got through the Local Plan signoff and seen off the Arc and its Expressway, although the latter is something of a Hydra and however many heads get cut off, it springs back to life with some new soft sell branding. More immediately, we have the challenge of the HIF road, a multi-million pound project that is supposedly a relief road for Didcot but like all good road schemes, may be simply stage one of a more ambitious scheme. Join the dots.

South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Offices

One of the challenges that the current administration of SODC faced when taking over in 2019 was what to do about the council offices. Many of you will remember that the former council offices in Crowmarsh were destroyed by arson in 2015, some four years previously. Unfortunately, the previous administration at that time was unable to take a decision on what to do, and while a temporary solution was to rent offices in Milton Park at Didcot, this cost about a £1m annually. With no alternative permanent solution in place, the new Lib Dem-Green administration needed to resolve this as this position was unsustainable and put the council's finances at risk. The insurance pay out was to cover both the rebuild costs and temporary offices, but after four years, during which time the replacement office should have been built, most of the money had been spent with nothing to show for it.

Plans were immediately drawn up to resolve the situation, with options examined of rebuilding on the old site at Crowmarsh, using land already owned by SODC opposite Didcot Station or using Abbey House in Abingdon owned by the Vale of White Horse District Council. The last option was ruled out because it is likely that Vale District Council will dispose of it, and in any event, there is not sufficient space to accommodate both Councils. If using Abbey House had been a good option immediately after the fire, the question has to be asked why the previous administration did not take it up. No doubt it's the same reason why the current administration is not going to take it up as a permanent solution, which is that there is insufficient available space in Abbey House, as the building houses a number of functions of the County Council, including Social Services.

The plan is now to build a new office in Didcot which will be able to accommodate the needs of both SODC and Vale, and which will contribute to the improvement of the character of the area. Until a year or so ago, the view that greeted one as you left Didcot Station was a scene of dereliction and decay, with a row of boarded up shops or offices, an extensive badly surfaced open car park and the Prince of Wales pub sitting isolated surrounded by parked cars.

New buildings do not come cheap and this new office will be well designed and energy efficient and well connected to public transport. It is now largely forgotten that a few years ago SODC was considering demolishing and rebuilding the offices at Crowmarsh because they were not "fit for purpose". I cannot now recall all the problems, but I think the heating system, ventilation and insulation were wholly inadequate, and so the building was either too hot or too cold, and also suffered from leaking roofs.

The new office, which is now close to final design, will contribute to the regeneration of a key part of Didcot, now our largest town, and will also provide for the needs of both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils.

The building is now being designed as four storeys high, not five as initially planned, and still includes large 'living walls' which will align the building closely with the garden town principles and support biodiversity

There are lots of positive reasons for choosing the Didcot Gateway site, its proximity to excellent public transport links, its location is close to the centre of the two districts, it's a sustainable option for the future both economically and environmentally it's land that South Oxfordshire District Council already owns and it offers the opportunity to share space with partners.

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

WHITCHURCH PRE-SCHOOL



Our pre-school has been busy this Summer Term, full of the sounds of children exploring, making new friends and having fun.

During these summer months we have been enjoying the outdoors, spending time in our dedicated allotment and getting green fingered. Our staff are now Forest School accredited so are keen to put their new learning into practice and the children are seeing the benefits.

Some of the children's favourite moments have included an outing to Rushall Farm Berkshire Birds of Prey visit to mark the thirty year anniversary of Whitchurch Pre-School at our current site and a leavers party for those starting Reception in September.

Our supportive parent and carer community have been a big part of these events. They also turned out in force for our Summer Social, our silent auction and to run our ever popular 'Ice Cream Fridays'.

Come and Join Us from September 2023

We currently have spaces available for new starters aged from 2-2.5 years upwards.

- We're open from Monday to Friday during term time, from 8.45am - 3.15pm, with an early drop-off option at 8.30am.
- Free government-funded places are available for 3 and 4 year olds for 15 or 30 hours per week during term time.
- Children from out of the Whitchurch catchment area are welcome to apply.

To register your interest, please use the form on our website or email: hello@whitchurchpreschool.org



WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION



With the end of the academic year fast approaching, the school and children have been busy with a huge array of activities.

We have had a fun packed and busy term so far. This week has seen the years 4, 5 and 6 perform their version of The Wizard of Oz. The shows were fantastic, with each child doing extremely well with learning their lines and showing off their individual talents. Mr Chesters worked tirelessly over the last few weeks with the children and his re-write of the play and songs has shown the school community his hidden talent for showbiz.

Sports Day at Whitchurch Primary School is always a huge event and this year was no exception. The children kicked off the celebrations with a drumming parade around the field. The sports day itself was a tense sporting battle of the four school teams to the very last race, keeping all spectators engaged with bated breath.

After the sporting activities, the Parents' Association held the annual BBQ, bar, raffle and inflatables for the children to play on. The Ice Cream van came to help everyone cool down after an afternoon in the sunshine. Thank you to the parent body for your support for this event and throughout the school year.

The Sports Day is one of our main fundraisers and we would like to thank the local businesses who supported us with donations and raffle prizes. A special thank you to Warmingham Estate Agents for their continued support, Hazel and Jeffries for the delivery of a skip and portable toilets, Whitchurch Cricket Club for the use of the pavilion and BBQ and Whitchurch Parish Council for the use of the village green.

Now the end of the year is nearly here we would like to wish the leaving year 6 children all the best for their next chapter and say a massive thank you to all the staff at Whitchurch Primary School; once again our children have enjoyed a fulfilled educational year that has been hugely enriched by the level of care and support offered by the staff. This will be my last bulletin report as I hand over the role of Chair to a new committee at our AGM in September. It has been a privilege to lead the fundraising efforts for our very special and unique school. If you would like to get involved, please email whitchurchpa20@gmail.com

Victoria Willcock – Whitchurch Primary Parents' Association Chair

LANGTREE SCHOOL, WOODCOTE

And so we're already at the end of July and yet another academic year is about to be put to bed; students, teachers and all staff at Langtree deserve a good break. Some might argue that the PTA deserves a break too, although that's debatable. We have, however, had a fantastic spring and summer term and it's great to close up shop for this season, knowing that we've raised some much-needed funds for our children. The world of education is turbulent at the moment, as most who follow the news will know – a turbulence which will hopefully ultimately provide more stability to every student and their educational outcomes. Our job as a PTA is to plug those (ever increasing) funding gaps and to make sure that the children will not notice or suffer as a result. This is vital work and we take it seriously.

First out during spring term was Quiz Night on the 10th March – the first one since Covid descended, and a real comeback. Twenty-one teams were all battling it out, trying to identify the cartoon dog and answer GCSE questions, all whilst eating a delicious cheese and meat grazing platter and taking frequent trips to the bar. The night was topped off with a big bunny themes activity – all judged by our eminent head teacher, Mr Bamford himself.

We raised £1,400 towards kitting out our proposed new Science Labs, so the night couldn't have ended on a better note – thank you to everyone from the community, both inside and outside of Langtree, who came and supported us.

Almost right on the heels of this – 21-23 March – came the fantastic production of Bugsy Malone – a wonderful interpretation of the classic musical, courtesy of our Drama & Music Departments. It's evident that there's a lot of talent at Langtree, with so much passion displayed by both actors and producers. Langtree has always been big on Drama and likes to put a lot of emphasis on the subject, which is a clear hit with the majority of the students; our Drama Club is the most popular of all the extra-curricular clubs. The PTA held the fort with yet another bar service (or should we say Speakeasy) and came out with the same grand total as for Quiz Night (or just over) – let's just say that the spirit of Bugsy prevailed throughout the audience!

On June 10th, Langtree PTA hosted the Whitchurch Art Café (The Stables, Whitchurch) and despite two major competing events on the day, we managed to become a small haven and watering hole for exhausted cyclists,

visiting all the way from Guildford – which saw us go home with a whole £145. Not bad for a quiet and sweltering Saturday morning!

At this moment of writing, we still have our big Summer Concert to look forward on 18th July, which promises to be a beautiful and relaxing finale to our two busy terms. The microcosm of Langtree will merge with the wider world for six peaceful weeks, ready to join the hubbub again come September. Happy Summer!

The Langtree Parents' and Teachers' Association

HARDWICK HAPPENINGS

As ever much is happening here at Hardwick! The transition to the Estate becoming a community-led charity is now in full swing, boosted enormously by the seven person Hardwick delegation's trip to the Community Land Scotland conference in Skye in June. The conference is an annual gathering of the many community-owned Estates in Scotland, which now make up 3% of the country. It was hugely informative and inspiring for the group of tenants and management team who attended, giving us a renewed sense of confidence that our approach has great potential for the future of the land and community.

Last week's *Henley Standard* featured a full page spread entitled '*Heirs hand over Estate to community stewardship*' which is our first piece of public coverage about the transition and points out that this will be the first community-run Estate in England, following the success of the Scottish community-owned land model.

We are also very aware that our surrounding local community are also key stakeholders in Hardwick's land, and have valuable ideas and input into its future. Therefore, we will be holding a public talk and consultation about Hardwick's future in the village this winter where you will be able to find out more about the transition and some other upcoming changes such as the change of use of the Stud Farm land as well as input your thoughts and ideas.

Top title for Tolly!

On 17th June Iain Tolhurst (Tolly) of Tolhurst Organic CIC was awarded an MBE in His Majesty's The King Birthday Honours list for services to agriculture, and on 5th July the Soil Association presented Tolly with the Lifetime Achievement's Award in the Best On Organic Markets BOOM Awards.

Tolhurst Organic was the first farm to attain the Stockfree Organic standards and Tolly's philosophy of a "systems approach" to working with soil, nature, biodiversity continues to inspire farmers and growers worldwide. He has pioneered many key techniques, including the use of green manures, intercropping and under sowing, functional biodiversity, alternatives to peat growing media and the use of woodchip.



However, Tolly's greatest achievement and impact, and that of the farm itself, is the knowledge and skills shared with over 200 trainees and volunteers across the years. These are people who will perpetuate the values of the farm, and in his speech at the lovely MBE party at Walled Gardens on 1st July, Tolly dedicated his award to them all and handed custom-made medals to those present.

Congratulations!

Spotlight on The Real Tennis Court: by Tim Tomalin, Chair of The Friends of Hardwick Tennis Court

The Court at Hardwick is a favourite of many real tennis players throughout the world. It is visited often by players from Australia, France and the USA. The charm of Hardwick House and the Estate is admired by all. Prince Edward came and played on his world tour on behalf of the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme. During the Ladies World Championships being held at the Oratory recently, Hardwick hosted the parallel amateur doubles tournament as part of the event.

The court was built for Charles Day Rose by Joseph Bickley in 1907. It is the third Rose court: Sir Charles already had a court in his house in Newmarket and the first one at Hardwick, built in 1896, allegedly proved too far from the house for convenience. Mr Bickley developed the formula for the finish of the walls and floor, and the technique for curing it that nobody has managed to reproduce. He took his secret to the grave, and "our" court is one of the few remaining Bickley courts with all its original surfaces intact. In 1989 The Friends of Hardwick Tennis Court was formed and made an agreement with Sir Julian Rose to have access to the court under license, to play and maintain the court and its facilities. Over time the roof was fixed and lights installed, and changing rooms and kitchen updated. Hardwick is one of very few regularly used privately owned courts in the world.

The game of real, or Royal, tennis developed from games played in the street where there was sufficient space, or we think played by monks in abbey cloisters, as the shape of the playing area suggests. Real tennis thrived until the late nineteenth century when lawn tennis was invented.

The court is laid out with galleries under a sloping roof, the penthouse, which runs round three sides of the court. On the fourth wall there is a short section set at about forty-five degrees. This is a useful target as it sends the ball flying sideways across the court; quite alarming for anyone whose duty is to return the shot and isn't ready! If the player at the service end fails to hit the ball before its second bounce, the distance of the second bounce from the end wall is marked and a chase has been laid. The best chases are the ones nearest to the wall. After the players have changed ends, the new server serves and the new receiver has to win the chase, placing the ball closer to the wall. If the ball isn't going to make it then the server doesn't have to hit the ball to win the point. Are you following? It has been said that it is like a cross between lawn tennis, squash and chess. And the Royal bit? Well, Henry VIII enjoyed the game and, it is said, every time he lost a point he invented a new rule to put things right!



Willow Weaving in the Woods by Suz Williams

Willow weaving workshops are in full swing at Greenbroom Farm this spring and summer. I hold a variety of weaving and carving workshops in the coppice behind the farm and people from across the country have been coming along to learn a new skill.

More workshops are planned for later in the year. If you'd like to attend a workshop then get in touch with Suz on thecoppiceco@gmail.com

EVENTS:

31st August, 7.30pm – James Norman, 'We need to talk about livestock' – Hardwick Lecture Series at Tolhurst Organic Packing Shed.

1st – 3rd September. Wellbeing gathering at Hempen with Earth Living.

A curated intimate event for those wanting to connect with nature, organic nutrition, the hemp plant and our community farm. Hempen.co.uk

16th September Stockfree Organic – for life and for business AUTUMN.

Farm walk for growers, farmers and general public, guided by Iain Tolhurst.

10 am – 2 pm Hardwick Estate, Lin's VegShed, Tolhurst Organic Farm. See <https://www.tolhurstorganic.co.uk/events/>

23rd September 11am – 3pm. Hardwick Market at Lin's Veg Shed – farmers market, street food, arts and crafts and live music.

28th September, 7.30pm – Iain Tolhurst, 'Stock free organic horticulture, how and why?'. Hardwick Lecture Series at Tolhurst Organic Packing Shed.

1st October – Tolhurst Organic CIC annual Squash and Pumpkin festival.

See <https://www.tolhurstorganic.co.uk/events/>

6th – 8th October. The Organic Growers Gathering at Tolhurst Organic CIC.

Talks, workshops, music, sauna etc. Search Organic Growers Gathering 2023 on Eventbrite to book.

26th October, 7.30pm – Ben Manning, "Near natural woodland management at Hardwick". Hardwick Lecture Series at Tolhurst Organic Packing Shed.

Miriam Rose, Estate Manager

WHITCHURCH ART & CRAFT EXHIBITION

The Whitchurch Society are very pleased to be holding this popular annual event again, in the Whitchurch Village Hall, Manor Road, on the weekend of **18th – 19th November 2023**.

It will take place in the traditional 'live' format in the Hall only this year. We have decided to not put it online afterwards, which we hope will make it simpler for submitting your entries (no need to photograph them) and will hopefully encourage a higher turnout.

This year's theme for the Joyce Voysey prize is 'Re-use, Reduce, Recycle'. You are encouraged to start thinking about how you might produce a piece of art, craft or a photo which interprets this very topical subject! Of course, please remember that your entries for all the main classes (Photography, Art & Craft) can be on any subject whatsoever. All entries are very welcome (4 max per person though please!).

Save the date in your diaries and begin your entries soon – the exhibition is only about 15 weeks away! All the details about how to enter will be available by the end of September. Keep an eye on the website and look out for posters around the village – also coming soon to Facebook!

Sally Woolhouse sally@wotarts.co.uk

FIRST AID COURSE



A free 2 day outdoor first aid course is being organised for the residents and boaters of Whitchurch and Pangbourne in collaboration with Tirio first aid. www.tirio.co.uk. Please register your interest by emailing **communitycraftcollective@hotmail.com**. Dates TBC.

WHITCHURCH CRICKET CLUB:

Mike Butt

Mike Butt, long time resident of Hill Bottom Close, died peacefully aged 82 on 11th May 2023. Mike was captain of Whitchurch Cricket Club for many years. More latterly, when he gave up playing cricket he became chairman of the cricket club and chief groundsman, cutting, seeding and watering the pitch.

Mike moved to Whitchurch Hill with his family in 1973 and on Day 1 he drove down to the cricket ground to find the then cricket captain to ask about a game! Mike also worked for nearly 30 years at South Oxfordshire District Council as Chief Planning Officer, moving on to be Deputy Chief Executive prior to his retirement.

He will be remembered by a memorial bench, outside the changing rooms, where he sat and scored for many years, inscribed with his name, on the ground he loved best, Whitchurch Cricket Ground.

Cormac Neeson

Home Fixtures this Summer

Date	Start time	Opponents
23 July	1pm	Jack Frost
30 July	1pm	Exiles
13 August	1pm	Pangbourne
27 August	1pm	Reading University Alumni
03 Sept	12:30pm	Farley Hill
10 Sept	12:30pm	Checkendon

THE GREEN TEAM

For those of you not familiar with the Green Team, this is a group of volunteers that looks after the green spaces in the village. We do not do the larger jobs, such as mowing the village green and the churchyard, as these are carried out by external contractors appointed by the Parish Council, but there are many other areas around the village that need attention. We hold regular working parties at the maze and at the village green, plus working parties at

other locations as necessary. In addition, people act as guardians of other specific areas around the village. The guardians will ask for additional helpers if they need assistance with work on their area.

The current guardians are listed below. If you think there are other parts of the village that need looking after, and would like to volunteer to be their guardian then please do get in touch (jill@jbradon.co.uk).

Area	Guardian
Village Green	Village Green Working Group led by Gill Goodwin
Maze	Sally and Pete Woolhouse
Manor Road verges, north side	Martin Bengtzen and Frances Dixon
Manor Road verges, south side	Katherine Higley
Jubilee Walk, Hardwick Road	Richard Wingfield
Muddy Lane	Neil Huntington
Hardwick Road/High Street triangle/bench area	Tim Hardwick
Flower beds at entrance to Walliscote Drive	Leslie Maynerd
Polish Memorial Garden	Anna Szczeponek
Hardwick Road embankment, north side, west end	Sarah and Adrian Dixon

The work that has been carried out over the past few months includes:

- Working parties at the maze, chiefly to trim the grass along the edges of the bricks and to mow selected areas.
- Working parties at the village green to keep the nettles, goosegrass, brambles etc in check in the area around the practice nets and near the pavilion.
- Weeding at the MOWS flower beds and surrounding area at the entrance to Walliscote Drive.
- Planting and maintenance at the Polish Memorial Garden.
- Cutting back shrubs and tree branches that were obscuring the 20 mph signs at the entrance to the village from Whitchurch Hill and along Hardwick Road.
- Work by individual guardians on their own areas.

We would love to hear from anyone who would like to get involved in helping the Green Team. Just send me an email or turn up at any of the published activities – see the What's On section of the Whitchurch on Thames website for details.

*Jill Bradon – jill@jbradon.co.uk
Green Team Coordinator*

THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S AND ST JOHN'S, WHITCHURCH

The Friends have two vacancies for trustees of this local independent charity.

The Friends purpose is to raise funds to help preserve the heritage of our two historic church buildings in this Parish, support the use of the churches by the wider community, and help bring together people from Whitchurch on Thames and Whitchurch Hill.

All money raised from The Friends social events, membership subscriptions and donations will be contributed towards the maintenance, preservation and improvement of the two church buildings in our Parish, and their churchyards.

The trustees of The Friends work closely with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) as the two church buildings are, of course, their responsibility and the trustees have the responsibility of assessing requests from the PCC for projects needed on our church buildings and allocating financial help as appropriate.

Trustees meetings are usually held every other month, and if you feel this is a role you would be interested in, or you would like further details, please contact Sally Woolhouse, the Secretary to The Friends, by email to whitchurchfriends@gmail.com, or Paul Witcher, the Chairman of The Friends by email to pvwitcher@aol.co.uk.

Paul Witcher, Chairman

**The Friends of St Mary's and St John's present:
A Musical Evening featuring local singers and instrumentalists**

The programme features an eclectic mix of pieces from different musical genres which will appeal to all tastes and celebrate local talent. The performers will include professional musicians, Clare Langan and Tim Valentine as well as local enthusiasts. Refreshments will be served prior to the start of the performance.

Where: St Mary's Church, Whitchurch-on-Tames

When: Friday 20th October 2023

- welcome drinks from 6.45 pm
- performance at 7.30 pm
- expected running time 1 hour 15 minutes

Tickets: Entrance is free with a suggested donation to the Friends of St Mary's and St John's Whitchurch of £10 per person

See village website for more details - Whitchurch-on-Thames > Diary
whitchurchonthames.com

Graeme Pearce & Susan Lee

WHITCHURCH UNITED CHARITIES

(Reg Charity no. 264826)

Students living within the Parishes of Whitchurch or Whitchurch Hill are most fortunate because if they require financial support for any educational need, they can apply to the Trustees of Whitchurch United Charities. Twice a year, the Trustees consider applications and award grants.

One of the original United Charities was set up in 1602 by Augustine Knapp who left a legacy of one pound - roughly equivalent to £400 today. His father had left him the Manor of Woodcote, which became known as Rawlins Manor, and has now become part of The Oratory School. Described in his will as a yeoman of Rotherfield Greys and Peppard, he became a rich landowner and a thoughtful philanthropist leaving a further £200 to the Mayor and Corporation of Henley on Thames for a grammar school.

In order to ease their administration, the *Augustine Knapp Charity* and seven others were combined in 1907 to become the Whitchurch United Charities. At this time funds were to benefit “poor, lame, blind or impotent parishioners” but, in 2003, the Charity Commission agreed to change this so that the Trustees now assist students with a wide range of educational needs; items like books, instruments, additional tuition, sports equipment, tools and educational outings have been recent awards.

Over the last five years a total of £3,295 has been awarded to thirteen students. The awards are treated confidentially and because of this, parishioners may be completely unaware of them and the beneficiaries.

Whitchurch United Charities uses the interest from funds that are invested with the COIF Charities Investment Fund to provide a sustainable income. Our annual income is about £500 from the £26,500 we have invested.

We hope that parishioners may wish to provide more help to local students by leaving a legacy. A gift in your Will can mean that Whitchurch United Charities will continue to grow its investment fund and make meaningful grants to students that apply.

We, the Trustees, would like this local charity to have more funds to support local people in the same spirit that inspired Augustine Knapp 420 years ago. As the Charity is small, a gift of any size in your Will can make a significant difference to our investments and the interest received.

Sarah Dragonetti
whitchurchunitedcharities@gmail.com

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

After our two outings, one to the Berkshire downs and the other to Dorchester, we will be taking a break for August. We'll meet up again in Goring Heath Parish Hall on Thursday September 21st to hear Mike Cooper, a local historian, talk on a Reading topic. All are welcome.

Vicky Jordan

STOP, LOOK & SEE: A WALK THROUGH OUR HISTORY

Walk down Eastfield Lane towards the High Street, as you reach Chiltern Edge you will pass over a hidden duct in the road below you.

Q1: Why is it called Eastfield Lane?

Q2: Why is the duct there and what is its purpose?

Turn left into the High Street and with care to and over the Toll Bridge into Pangbourne. Turn right down the narrow path by the Surgery car park. Cross Ferry Lane to reach the small bridge over the river Pang. Stop and look upstream and immediately down the river. This is Thimble Bridge and you will see the brick foundations for the Thimble Mill.

Q3: What is a thimble and why was the Mill here?

Return to Ferry Lane and walk down to the river's edge and visualise where the ferry might have plied its trade across to the Whitchurch side.

Q4: Where to? Why are we now called Whitchurch on Thames?

Return to the centre of the toll bridge. Stop, and look down river to the distant hillside.

Q5: Where is the hill and what is its name and why?

Now turn round and look upstream at our substantial weir and then the lock. The histories of the locks and our Toll Bridges are recorded on the village website.

Q6: What were the purposes of such a substantial weir?

But finally, look and admire the much photographed and painted scene of our village of today and of yesteryear. The scene has hardly changed for centuries – a Mill is recorded in the Domesday Book and a Church has stood on its present site for over a thousand years. The Toll Booth in its present location, is relatively new.

Sixty years ago, I paid one penny to cross over on foot in the morning and crossed without an additional toll on my return.

Note the slipway on your left; despite the Village having a three-mile river boundary, this is the only one of three access points to the river.

Turn left along the public footpath (the start of our section of the Thames Path) and head towards the Mill. This was the Village Hard or Wharf, so use your imagination and go back a thousand years or more and visualise this as a scene of great activity. Corn and flour from the Mill being loaded or unloaded onto the river craft to be conveyed up and down the river and on carts up the hill or the cheaper packhorses using many of the paths and ways we still use today. Timber in various forms being brought down from the nearby woodland to use and distribute. Perhaps, eels and other fish would be on sale; live or cooked. Church cottages would almost certainly have been one of the many Alehouses in the village.

As you head towards the Mill, you will pass the small and restricted access to steps leading into the Mill Pond and our second point of access and egress. The third is Sheepwash Lane – a mile away downstream.

The once proud Mill wheels are now still and derelict. A generator once provided power for the Mill and the nearby cottages.

Now follow the public footpath (as the Thames Path now leaves the Thames) down the lovely curved brick lined alleyway to enter our recently cleared graveyard (an almost Herculean effort!) that has revealed the tombs and graves of those that have been long dead. Turn left and walk down the south side of the Church to the second Porch to see where the Saxon entrance is still present but no longer in use, and look up to see the Gargoyle above it; a gesture from the past?

Now go to the north side and follow the pathway to the lych-gate. Go through this and onto the road that served the Manor House (now Walliscote House) and its surrounding community – the High Street of the past? But you will turn right and exit through the distinctive brick bell mouthed entrance onto our once tree-lined High Street.

Q7: What is a lych-gate and why was it provided?

Answers at the end of this Bulletin.

Eric Hartley

RECYCLING INITIATIVE

More than one billion prescription items are dispensed in England each year, with the vast majority packaged in blister packs. Furthermore, a huge number of non-prescription medicines and health supplements are also packaged in this way. These cannot be conventionally recycled, as it is very difficult to separate the metal and plastic components, and so most end up in landfill.

However, there is a scheme operated through Superdrug branches in association with Terracycle, which provides such recycling. Empty blister packs can be taken into participating branches of Superdrug, such as that in Broad Street in Reading, where there is a collection box next to the pharmacy counter. So please do consider saving used blister packs and taking them into Superdrug.

For those who are unable to visit Superdrug, a collection box has now been placed in the phone box on the corner of Manor Road and the High Street. This will be checked and emptied regularly, and the contents taken to Superdrug. If anyone is able to help with emptying this box and taking the contents into Superdrug, please contact me.

Tim Hardwick
thardwick269@gmail.com

AMICO DANCE ACADEMY CLASS AT THE VILLAGE HALL



We're fortunate to have new dance classes on Saturdays, beginning on 16th September. The classes are run by Rachel Griffin and Sarah Toms, who say "Dance is a great way for children to develop creativity and self-expression while improving their strength, coordination and flexibility. We offer a variety of dance classes for children of all skill levels using selected programmes of study from Acrobatic Arts, bbodance and BTDA".

The classes being offered include Acrobatics / Ballet / Modern / Tap for children aged 6+, and Mini Amicos for younger children.

If you'd like to ring either Rachel (on 07771 753088) or Sarah (on 07929 760204), they would be happy to explain their classes and discuss what would work well for your child. There is also information at www.AmicoDance.co.uk.

The Amico Dance Academy are a welcome addition to the other classes running in the village hall: the Mother and Baby Classes on Mondays, Yoga on Tuesdays, Bridge Club, Painting Class and Photographic Society on Wednesdays and the Circuit Training Classes on Mondays and Wednesdays.

*John Bradon
Treasurer, Whitchurch Village Hall*



WHITCHURCH NATURE NOTES

It is a while since I wrote my last Nature Notes, which are published on our village website, but I am pleased to say that I quite regularly receive interesting photos or queries about the flora and fauna in our local area.

The latest issue (No 12) is entitled 'Sights and Sounds of Summer' and is a miscellany of topics, written by me and two contributors, one from Alan Boarder about the recent sad story of his honey bees and the other from Gill Goodwin's encounter with an extraordinary moth caterpillar.

I hope you enjoy reading these Notes – I certainly enjoy doing the research and writing them. Do keep sending me your stories and photos about the lovely natural world which surrounds us. If I can, I will try and include in my future Nature Notes issues.

*Sally Woolhouse – WoTHabs
sally.woolhouse@gmail.com*

STOP LOOK & SEE: ANSWERS

Q1: Eastfield Lane leads to what was the Village's "east field", now occupied in part by the School, the Allotments and the Maze. A field on the east side of the village and, where possible, one on the west side, would increase the crop growing area with early and late sunshine.

Q2: Water from the Thames upstream is conveyed across the land of Walliscote Farm to and through the gardens of the Walled Garden house and its pond and then under the High Street and the Greyhound PH and then under Eastfield Lane to return to the Thames downstream. I like to conjecture that it was a Moat; a defensive ditch defending the Village on its land side.

Q3: A thimble is any piece of worked, shaped, piece of protected metal, usually associated with providing protection to a sewer's finger. The curved metal piece often inserted into a mooring rope to protect it and the mooring bollard from undue wear is also a thimble.

The Mill driven by the Pang, was adjacent to the Boathouse and its thimbles could have provided protection for many fingers and ropes in employment there.

Q4: The ferry from Pangbourne to Whitchurch plied its trade to the downstream, eastern, end of the island. The passengers would have then crossed in front of the Mill (no Lock then!) to reach the Wharf and the Village.

We acquired the posh name of Whitchurch on Thames to distinguish us from Whitchurch in Hampshire whose postcode is RG28 (Whitchurch Hants also has a Hillside to where many parcels get delivered to that are intended for our Hillside – Editor). We have had a marriage ceremony in our Whitchurch where some guests were mistakenly in Hampshire.

Q5: The distant hill, where we often sit, picnic and gaze, is called Westford Hill and it lies on the Mapledurham side of our village's eastern boundary. This suggests there must have been a ford on the west side of Mapledurham.

Q6: Weirs were important parts of every Thameside village. A weir upstream could deny a village downstream of its fish and sometimes even, its water. Our weir was even more important because it also provided control of the

water by the Miller; he determined when vessels, both upstream and downstream, could use the water. When the paddles in the weir were withdrawn, the vessels upstream came down on the "flash" flood of water. The downstream vessels had to be towed up against this flash. Look at the drawing in the Boathouse Surgery Waiting Room which was drawn by the man who was determining where he planned to then build our Lock. Note the location of the restraining winch, which on our side is still visible, but my sympathies lie with the horses that had to tow along Shooters Hill past The Swan PH.

Q7: Lych is the Anglo-Saxon word for corpse and the shielded porch allowed the bearers to rest the coffin under cover whilst they waited for the priest to arrive.

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	
V/Chair	Diana Smith	cllrsmith.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
	Nick Brazil	cllrbrasil.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
	Katherine Higley	cllrhigley.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
	Paul O'Grady	cllrgrady.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com	
	Frances Parkes	cllrparkes.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			01865 792422
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

Front Cover photo courtesy of Keith Williams – *Swan Upping at Whitchurch Lock, July 2023.*

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 Searce	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	hiltsl23@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	whitchchurchfriends@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	rlwilliamsafcw@btinternet.com	07810 374280
	<i>Deadline for Articles</i>	<i>Planned distribution</i>	
Autumn 2023	15th October	29th October	
Winter 2024	15th January	29th January	
Spring 2024	15th April	29th April	



NOT JUST TRAVEL ALEX HARDING

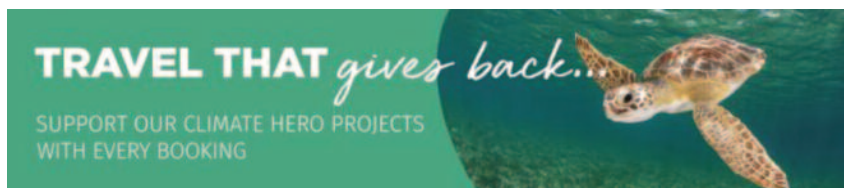
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 <https://alexharding.notjusttravel.com/>





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