

GREAT MILTON BULLETIN

March 2021

Published by the Parish Council

No. 562



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Great Milton Parish Council

Chairman:	Stephen Harrod	01844 278068
Ward:	Church Road to Monckery Farm/The Priory	
Vice Chairman:	Bill Fox	01844 279716
Ward:	Thame Road, inc Fullers Field and Green Hitchings	
Councillor:	Peter Fewell	01844 279400
Ward:	The Green from Priory Bank to Tara/Applewood	
Councillor:	Clyde Deacon	01844 278554
Ward:	High Street from North End Cottage to The Old Garage	
Councillor:	George Bennett	07482 339905
Ward:	Thame Road from Green Hitchings to A329	
Councillor:	Malcolm Horsley	07970 924194
Ward:	Kings Head House/Red Roofs to Wheatley Boundary	
Councillor:	Peter Allen	01844 278334
Ward:	Milton Common	

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer: Tim Darch – 01844 278347
contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk

Parish Council Representatives

Rec Ground Committee:	Michael Robinson, Michele Block
Old Field Charity:	Hazel Hand, Niki Patrick
Hard Surface Play Area:	Susan Read, Jon Devitt
Neighbourhood Watch:	Jola Miziniak
Kent & Couling Charity:	Tricia Treanor, Simon Cronk
Sheppard Trust:	Ann Price, Pat Cox

Cover: Daffodils on the Green.
Photo: Manny Stone.

Key Contacts:

Local Governance

Oxfordshire County Council	01865 792422	Oxfordshire.gov.uk
South Oxfordshire District Council	01235 422422	Southoxon.gov.uk
County Councillor: Stephen Harrod	01844 278068	steve.harrod@oxfordshire.gov.uk
District Councillor: Caroline Newton	07951 477144	caroline.newton@southoxon.gov.uk
Great Milton Parish Council		
Stephen Harrod (Chair)	01844 278068	
Tim Darch (Clerk)	01844 278347	contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk
Report potholes, fly-tipping, vandalism, broken paving		Fxmystreet.com
OCC Family Information Service	08452 262636	fis.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk
OCC Highways	0845 310 1111	highway.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Missed Bin Collection	03000 610610	admin.southoxford@biffa.co.uk
Bulky Household Waste Collection	01235 422406	waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk
SODC Housing	01235 422422	housing@southandvale.gov.uk
SODC Planning Applications	01235 422600	planning@southoxon.gov.uk

Services

Emergency - Police, Fire, Ambulance	999	
Police non-emergency	101	thamesvalley.police.uk
GP Surgery, Morland House	01865 872448	morland-house.co.uk
NHS non-emergency	111	nhs.uk
Gas Emergency	0800 111 999	nationalgrid.com/uk/safety/
Electricity Outage	0800 072 7282	sse.co.uk
Burst pipe or leak	0800 714 614	thameswater.co.uk
Floodline	0345 988 1188	gov.uk/check-flood-risk

Local information

St. Mary's Church: Rev. Simon Cronk		simon.cronk@btinternet.com
Methodist Church: Rev. John Anderson	01235 529563	
Neighbourhood Watch: Jola Miziniak	07917 676463	jolamiziniak7@gmail.com
Citizens Advice Oxfordshire	03444 111 444	caox.org.uk
The Maple Tree Children's Centre	01865 873916	mapletreecc@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Great Milton Neighbours Hall	01844 278415	
Great Milton Pavilion & Recreation Ground	01844 278116	
Great Milton Website		Carina.martin@gmail.com http://www.greatmilton.co.uk
Great Milton Bulletin	07554 516989	contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk gmbulletin@hotmail.co.uk
Great Milton Primary School	01844 279388	gmilton.org
Wheatley Park School	01865 872441	www.wheatleypark.org

Transport

Comet - for people without access to suitable public transport	01865 323201	oxfordshire.gov.uk/comet
Arriva (280) Bus	0344 800 4411	arrivabus.co.uk
Oxford Tube (Buses to London)	01865 772250	oxfordtube.com
Park & Ride		oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/parkandride
National Rail Enquiries	03457 484950	nationalrail.co.uk

Parish Council meetings: UPDATE

Due to restrictions currently imposed by UK Government on indoor gatherings of more than two people, Parish Council meetings are being held virtually until further notice. Meetings are held on the third Monday of the month as usual, via a virtual meeting platform. The agenda is published on the Great Milton village website no later than the Wednesday prior to the meeting, along with an access code for the meeting. Business is conducted broadly as per a standard meeting, with one or two small variations (cheques require two signatures so are approved at the meeting and signed the next day). All are welcome to participate in the virtual meetings: if you have any issues with access please contact Tim Darch (Clerk/RFO, Great Milton Parish Council) on 01844 278347.

The Clerk is always available should you have any queries or concerns, whether related to Coronavirus or other matters. Any necessary updates will be relayed via the Parish Council website (www.great-milton.co.uk) or via noticeboards.

Tim Darch, Clerk/RFO, Great Milton Parish Council

Draft Parish Notes – February 2021

The meeting was conducted through a video conferencing facility. The new arrangements for the Parish Council are allowed under the following Regulation:

THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020

All parish councillors were present, with Tim Darch (Clerk/RFO) also in attendance. Business was conducted in the order prescribed by the agenda. No declarations of interest were received in matters on the agenda.

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held virtually on Monday 18th January 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were signed by the Vice-Chair on camera.

Matters to report

Regular updates are being received from OCC and SODC and continue to be communicated to residents via the available channels as appropriate. Cllr Caroline Newton circulated her monthly report which is available on the Parish Council website:

<https://www.great-milton.co.uk/community/great-milton-parish-council-18553/meetings-2021/>

Cllr Harrod reported that OCC last week approved the budget for the next financial

year, after accepting minor amendments from the Labour group. No amendments were tabled by other opposition groups. The budget is again a balanced budget with sums being allocated to improve front line services, especially in the area of social care, and with savings achieved at the same time.

Correspondence and Public Discussion

A resident has written an 'open letter' sent to various interested parties about the increasing incidence of flooding of the River Thame. The concerns expressed within are noted: Cllr Harrod has forwarded the letter to SODC via Caroline Newton for their information and any thoughts.

Planning Applications

The following planning applications received from SODC were considered:

P21/S0072/LB. The Priory Church Road Great Milton OX44 7PB. Removal of modern paint finish + internal repairs to stone mullioned windows.

To note retrospectively informal consultation with the resident of Priory Cottage, the only neighbour who would be affected by this proposal, and their support for the scheme. The Parish Council has informed SODC of its full support for the proposal given that it seeks to restore the original appearance of The Priory.

P21/S0086/HH. Clovelly The Green Great Milton OX44 7NP. Ground floor extension to the existing property located to the side of the property and new rear lean-to extension to the rear of the property.


No responses were received from neighbours when consulted by letter, and there were no objections from the Recreation Ground Committee. Other properties nearby have extended with no issues, and as a result it was AGREED to support this application.

P21/S0174/HH (Brook Bank, Church Road, Great Milton). Extension of existing out-building to provide studio, summer kitchen and store.

Two neighbours expressed no concerns about this relatively small proposal when consulted, and it was AGREED to support this application.

The following planning decisions received and any outstanding planning matters were considered.

P20/S3498/FUL (Lantern Service Station London Road Milton Common OX9 2JL). Change of use of existing workshop building and erection of new building to support MOT testing, vehicle repairs and car sales use. External area to be used for car sales and car parking associated with the use of the buildings. Planning permission is GRANTED for the proposed development.

To note the receipt of application P21/S0343/FUL (Belmond Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons Church Road Great Milton). Full planning permission for the erection of a new Wellness Spa, Bistro, Raymond Blanc Academy, Garden Villas, Garden 

Rooms, Pavilions and Storage Barns, minor extensions and alterations to the existing Grade II* Manor House, former Stables building and Staff Facilities building, new highway access, internal road and car parking areas, limited demolition and associated works. This application was received too late to seek local views for this meeting. Residents are advised to use the link below for information about the application and to comment upon it if desired. An extension has been agreed with SODC to enable consideration to be delayed until March's Parish Council meeting.

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/planning/ApplicationDetails.jsp?REF=P21/S0343/FUL>

Financial Resolutions

The following payments were authorised, and were physically signed along with associated invoices subsequent to the meeting:

Tim Darch. Salary, Tax and Expenses. £498.65

Jonathan Dudley. Bulletin production January. £202.60

Website hosting January (reimbursement to Clerk). £19.99

SLCC membership renewal. £112

St Mary's Church annual mowing grant. £600

Wheatley Dental Surgery. Refund of double payment for advertisement. £100

SODC dog hygiene Oct-Dec 2020. £269.10

The latest monthly bank reconciliation, accounts and bank statements were received, signed and approved. Healthy reserves but there will be significant tree works to pay for from them. The reconciled bank balance as at 3 February was £35,481.61.

Review of documents

The council's Fixed Asset Register, Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Risk Management policy were reviewed by councillors in advance of the meeting and the suggested revisions were subsequently APPROVED.

Parish Clerk and Councillors' update of matters in hand

It has been suggested by several villagers that a permanent Christmas tree could be planted in the location where the temporary tree is erected. There is general support for this idea from councillors, and a kind offer to donate a tree has been received from Les Preston. The matter has not progressed beyond 'idea' stage: however residents in the immediate vicinity are asked to contact the Parish Clerk if they have any strong objections to this possibility.

A resident has advised of frequent speeding being observed on London Road in Milton Common. Contact has been established with the neighbourhood policing team with regard to speed monitoring in the area and checks will be scheduled shortly.

Cllr Deacon raised the issue of significant quantities of dog excrement being

deposited on Chilworth Road's verges. All councillors were appalled to hear of this when there is a dog bin in the vicinity and a refuse bin outside the houses on Green Hitchings. Dog owners are once again reminded of their responsibility to keep the village clean and safe, and to tidy up after their dog.

COVID-19: update on village response/impacts

No significant developments were reported in Great Milton with regard to the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak.

Village mowing

Following the receipt of estimates from the current provider and two others, a new contractor is recommended to take over the mowing of the village greens and verges, Recreation Ground, Thame Road verges and other grassed areas. It was AGREED to offer the new contractor (McCracken and Sons) the village mowing contract for the two coming growing seasons and to thank Green and Growing for their sterling work in the village in recent years.

Proposed move to new dog waste collection contractor

Notice has been given to SODC for the emptying of dog waste bins: a private contractor will take over from April, at around half of the quoted cost of continued provision by SODC (although this is still five times more than SODC's charge of two years ago). A Service Level Agreement will be signed once the content is agreed.

Proposed road closure, Windmill Hill 24 - 28 May 2021

Advice has been received from Oxfordshire County Council of a five-day road closure of Windmill Hill from Little Milton to The Forties from 24 to 28 May (except for access to residences and businesses). The suggested alternative route diverts all traffic via the A329 and The Forties: use of The Forties for significant volumes of traffic in both directions raises concerns over safety and the impact on this single-track road for the period of the closure, while the diversion of all traffic that would normally bypass the village via Windmill Hill raises concerns over safety and traffic volumes, particularly at school pick-up and drop-off times. OCC Highways have been informed of the Parish Council's concerns, and have suggested that they will look at an alternative proposed route which diverts traffic via Milton Common and the A418 to Wheatley.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

The next meeting of Great Milton Parish Council is currently scheduled to be held virtually on Monday March 15th starting at 7.30pm.

Tim Darch. Clerk/RFO, Great Milton Parish Council.

Benefice Services March

	Live Service 9:00am	Virtual Zoom Service 11:00am
Wednesday 3rd	NO LIVE SERVICES UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE	Compline 6:00pm
Sunday 7th <i>Lent 3</i>		Invitation to Zoom Morning Prayer
Wednesday 10th		Compline 6:00pm
Sunday 14th <i>Lent 4</i>		Invitation to Zoom Morning Prayer
Wednesday 17th		Compline 6:00pm
Sunday 21st <i>Lent 5 (Passiontide)</i>		Invitation to Zoom Morning Prayer
Wednesday 24th		Compline 6:00pm
Sunday 28th <i>Palm Sunday</i>		Invitation to Zoom Communion

The Rector's Pint

It is nearly a year since we entered the first Lockdown. Since then, we have seen so much pain and hardship. Lives have been lost; many have struggled with ongoing debilitating illness. None of us could have failed to be moved by the heart-breaking stories of people being unable to say the sort of goodbyes they would want to loved ones. Businesses have taken a huge hit with so many people suffering as a consequence. I think we should particularly spare a thought for our local pubs, restaurants and hotels and the livelihoods that have been affected because of their limited trading.


There have been extraordinary stories of hope as well, the ways our schools have kept on providing education and how our villages have responded with people looking out for each other, that has been truly inspiring. I suspect though that as the Spring starts to move forward, we will be rather less enthusiastic than last year when many people commented that it was as if nature itself was taking a deep breath. We are all tired now, we just want this to stop.

I am of course not qualified to speculate on the origins of all of this and I suspect there is much more to come before any clear picture emerges, will it ever fully emerge? Closer to home though, I hope that this has taught us not to take things for granted. I miss the freedom to spend time with family and friends, a pint or two at a pub, and wandering around without any sort of sinister looking covering over my face, I am a man of simple tastes! I have been hugely grateful for the technology that has allowed us to meet virtually, but that of course is no substitute for the real thing. However, online meetings have largely proved to be significantly shorter, a good thing!

We are now in Lent, a season that is a time for reflection, perhaps of sorrow and sadness. We look forward to Easter, following the success of Harvest and Christmas I very much hope that on Easter morning we will be able to host another outdoor service, this time at 10.00am in the Churchyard in Great Haseley, please watch out for confirmation of this. Before Easter comes Good Friday of course. At Christmas we celebrated Emmanuel, God with us. Good Friday as all about God being with us as well, in the wreckage, muddle, pain, death and sin of our existence, God in Jesus Christ, entering into the deepest and darkest of human experiences. None of us can say exactly how this is going to play out, at the moment and for the time being we remain in our Lenten reflection. I believe that God is to be seen in the Good Friday experiences of loss, but also that we look forward in hope, Easter and life will come - That though is for the next 'Rector's Pint'.

Simon

Sinclair Hood

Thank you to all who have sent cards and condolences on the death of our father Sinclair, 18th January at the age of 104 minus two weeks. Sinclair and Rachel Hood came to Great Milton in 1964, looking for a home in the countryside convenient to Oxford and London. We moved into the Old Vicarage - the estate agent vetting Mum and Dad to ensure that they would become part of the Great Milton community. Dad spent over half his long life at the Old Vicarage. He welcomed archaeological friends, students and colleagues from over the world at his home. He wrote several archaeological books in the study at the Old Vicarage – his latest work features photographs by Michael Dudley and was typed by Michele Block, an earlier work was typed by Jenny Hayes. For 40 years Sinclair was to be seen weeding the driveway daily. He greatly appreciated all the help our mother and he had in the garden. Dad was a Church Warden for St Mary's in the time of the Reverend Eric Baker, 

before converting to Catholicism in later life, when he regularly attended St Joseph's in Thame. He loved to attend the village fete, and for many years Dad and Mum ran the bookstall at the fete. In later years, they greatly appreciated the Neighbours Club fish and chip and Christmas dinners, which provided a welcome outing. Both Sinclair and Rachel loved Great Milton dearly and were very fortunate to stay at home till the end of their days. Thank you, everybody, for your kindness and support in the last few years.

The Hood and Van Dyke families

Dog hygiene: a note from the Parish Council

Significant quantities of dog excrement have been observed on Chilworth Road's verges. There is no excuse whatsoever for this when there is a dog waste bin in the vicinity and a refuse bin outside the houses on Green Hitchings. Dog owners are once again reminded of their responsibility to keep Great Milton clean and safe, and to tidy up after their pet, both on Chilworth Road and throughout the village.

Update from Great Milton Athletic Club. Spring 2021.

During the global pandemic and a number of lockdowns, the Great Milton Athletics Club has largely been hibernating as the health and safety of all our young athletes and their volunteer coaches is always at the forefront of everything we do. When the first lockdown came into force last March, the cross country season had just come to an end with medals for under 9 participant Grace Moseley, and under 11s Abbie Simpson and George Moseley.

During the summer months, training was scaled back and recruitment was put on hold so that we were able to safely manage smaller groups of children. At the time of writing, all competitions are on pause but that hasn't stopped our enthusiasm for athletics!

Many thanks to Le Manoir's gardening team led by Anne Marie Owens who very kindly mowed a maze of new paths across their field for the club to train on. Last summer these added interest and variety into training for our young athletes and was very much appreciated by those continuing to train when permitted.

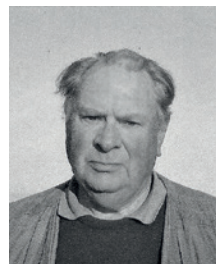
Two of our older members, Jack Spencer and Phoebe Coleman, both of whom have been with the club since their Great Milton Primary School days, are now progressing

with 'coaching assistant' qualifications. There is one remaining practical day to complete (covid permitting) until they can obtain their licence. This qualification will enable them to help with coaching, and pass on knowledge and skills to younger members. The club is delighted to have been able to support Jack and Phoebe's development from year 5 children to young adults at WPS sixth form. They are both fantastic role models and soon-to-be coaches for the next generation of young athletes from Great Milton. The committee thanks our brilliant Head coach, Pat Read for all his hard work and is grateful for the support of the Shepard Trust. Further details about the club can be found on the village website. <https://www.great-milton.co.uk/community/great-milton-parish-council-18553/athletics/>

Great Milton Athletics Club

View from Views

What an extraordinary winter this has been so far, apart from the Coronavirus, it is said to have been the coldest for several years yet, until the second week in February very little frost. Roses still blooming in January, River Thames in flood continually since early October, in spite of my records indicating rainfall being not much more than other recent years, yet the land is wetter than I can remember, the floods higher than I can remember, with the river now flooding after the slightest rainfall. My concern over the flooding made me write a letter to try and bring it to the attention to as many as possible, this flooding in my opinion is due to development on the River catchment, without the developers making the proper precautions to prevent it, and not complying with conditions of their planning permission, for one reason or another. My hope is that this should be encapsulated in law as it seems to me be getting out of hand, the more people that understand the problem might encourage a change in the law. If anyone reading this is interested in seeing my letter please email me charles@viewsfarmbarns.co.uk and I will forward you a copy



It is now the time of year when we start to see the early spring/late winter flowers in bloom, and hear the sounds and smells that spring is at last around the corner, when we can perhaps return to not only warmer days but also a bit freer. Birds have started to pair up with their songs getting louder by the day, one downside is that the grass is beginning to grow I don't mind the corn growing, but the grass will need cutting. Many years ago I put a nest box on our garage wall which it appears was never used, until last year when it was used bizarrely by Sparrows that don't usually use them.

Then someone pointed out to us that it was facing the wrong way and would be better were it pointing in a different direction, almost as soon as I had moved it Blue Tits were investigating, very interesting as I didn't have a clue it made a difference, nor do I know if it is on the right wall now, time will tell. I can now report having seen some Fieldfares, also the odd redwing, as well as many other species, Hares seem to be on the increase a good sign as long as Hare coursers leave them alone, groups of Long Tailed Tits are now frequent visitors to our garden feeders.

At this early stage it is difficult to say how our crops are going to have fared through this weird winter, firstly having its roots drowned in water most of its life, followed by several days of hard frost in mid-February, leaving them looking very bare and looking very weak and shrivelled. Of course time will tell a few warm days will make all the difference, certainly as I look at them now they are almost like a lot of us humans, stressed.

Now some weeks into our freedom from the EU, with the predicted queues of Lorries at Dover and the need for extra Lorry parking, not materialising, traffic we are told seems to be back almost to normal. There seems little justification for what holdups there are, other than the EU and petty officials being difficult, insisting on forms being written in the right colour ink for instance. Where there seems to be a real problem is with certain exports of perishable goods which to me seems criminal that food particularly that produced by living creatures should be allowed to rot on the quayside, after all up to 31st December there was no problem with these products what's the difference now? Is it not time for a little common sense, these goods have been traded for years why suddenly the difference, as these are required on both sides of the channel/border, why the fuss. There is a real problem in certain livestock sectors as well, where an animal, particularly pedigree breeding stock from Northern Ireland, which is traditionally sold in at the pedigree sales in Scotland then cannot be taken home if not sold, or bought, seems daft to me.

The current rather erroneous discussions/arguments about the carbon foot print of animals as opposed to plant based food has been countered by a study, which points out that the nutrients produced by 1kg of plant based protein is completely different that if a 1kg of meat. This does not take into account the recycling effect of the grazing animal, it also illustrates that we never can see the complete picture in one report or another, as they can all contradict each other, as there are different angles to every argument, depending which axe you decide to grind. (It is interesting to hear that Bill Gates who is committed to supporting measures to control Climate Change has just purchased a large estate in Australia to graze cattle, with the idea that they will sequester carbon!) This study also states and I quote, "Human nutritionists will tell you that animal-based products – be they eggs milk or meat – have a vital part of a healthy,

balanced diet due to the different composition and density of nutrients compared with plant-based foods when consumed together”. Another report on a similar theme suggests that a countries GDP should include that countries environmental initiatives, an interesting point.

Let's hope when I next write all things will look a little brighter.

Charles Peers

Re River Thame Flooding.

To Whom it may concern

I have farmed on the banks of the River Thame now for 57 years and am becoming more and more concerned about the number and frequency of flooding incidents.

When in the 60's the Thames Conservancy used to dredge the river on a regular basis one could guarantee that after say 1" to 1.5" of rain the Thame would flood after about 3 days, now, this year, admittedly the land at the moment is saturated, it will flood the next day after only about 5mm. These floods would cover the road at Cuddesdon Mill once in a blue moon, however this year alone it has been flooded at least 7 times. We obviously only budget to graze these River meadows during the summer, which should carry something like 25 fattening cattle all through the grazing season, some 5 and half months, last year we could only graze 11 animals for about 3 months. For reasons of polluting the river we have not applied any fertiliser for many years but in order to keep our production at a viable level we now have to apply more fertiliser to other areas, this really is counterproductive when we are trying to cut down on potentially polluting materials. If we then factor in the fact that water authorities in emergency circumstances are allowed to release raw sewage into our rivers, this will in turn pollute the grass for grazing animals with the residues of human medication (antibiotics, steroids and the like). This also needs more regulation.

I can only surmise the cause for this is due to development, both housing and roads, (M40, Aylesbury, Thame, and every available plot of land). This does illustrate the importance of planning insisting that any development must first construct proper measures to alleviate this problem. These measures should be constructed and signed off before any development gets sanction to proceed, rather than as the case is at the moment when the project is completed. There then could be no argument as to the viability of any scheme where the developer can put forward a case that the planners have no power to insist on the agreement being complied with. Can I earnestly ask those who have the power to effect decisions to put whatever pressure they can to make sure this is encased in law.



It also seems to me that farmers and landowners on the flood plain have to forfeit income due to the profits and benefits of others, they should be entitled to some sort of compensation from the public purse. I would not necessarily suggest we return to the regime of dredging, as in the past, as I appreciate that it is better for the environment not to do so. However if we are going to continue to build, and preserve nature at the same time, (which we should) then we have to place draconian measures on any development. In no way do I think our problems from flooding is anyway as bad as having ones house flooded but it is all due to mismanagement by higher authorities, and needs to be addressed before it is too late.

This is in no way to criticise to excellent work already being carried out by the “River Thame Conservation Trust”, but actually to support it.

To illustrate my point the following is derived from the rainfall records I have taken over the last 10 years. These figures do not take into account January’s rainfall of 84mm that has brought the river level higher than I have ever seen it.

	Years total Rainfall	Oct to Dec Rainfall
2010	No records taken before October	71mm
2011	30mm	59mm
2012	No records taken before October	281mm
2014	853mm	197mm
2015	522mm	168mm
2016	576mm	192mm
2018	554mm	178mm
2019	661mm	315mm
2020	702mm	243mm

I think this illustrates that although the rainfall this last 12 & 4 months is higher than average it is not all that exceptional, when you consider 2012 & 14.

Please pass this on to anyone who may find it of interest, as I do not have contact details for some who perhaps might also be inclined to consider support of any change in the planning laws.

Great Haseley and District Horticultural Society

Last Monday was such a beautiful day with unexpected sun accompanying the sudden rise in temperature. There was a definite feel of spring in the air. I went

walking in the morning and the afternoon (I should definitely have been in the garden working, but I have become accustomed during lockdown to walking whenever the weather is even vaguely hospitable). The joy of seeing happy faces was comforting. Everyone had a smile and the sun combined with the vaccine rollout seems to be making people feel an end of some sort might be in sight.

Unfortunately, the very pleasant conditions have not continued with biting winds tempering the feeling of warmth. However, a leisurely stroll around the garden reveals that the weeds are indeed galloping away and I started to pull them as I walked. There is always a lot of weeding in spring despite all the earlier efforts. The reward is the opening of crocuses and very early anemones to join the extending flowering stems of snowdrops. There are also a few early Narcissi. Of course, I discover that there are Hellebores, still with old leaves intact, with rapidly growing flower stems. What would have been a quick job removing old leaves is now painstaking and slow...

I can see that the roses are rapidly shooting. I still have not decided whether to cut them down further or to leave them as they are, half cut back to keep them safe from winter wind which can loosen their roots. I think I will probably cut back some and leave others. Group 3 clematis which are currently a mass of brown tangled shoots have started to show some new growth. It is undoubtedly best to cut these back to about 30cm from the base to allow new growth to cloth their support and produce healthy flowers in midsummer. Group 2 clematis which tend to have larger earlier flowers need to be just tidied back to fresh growth and tied in carefully as last year's growth is what will flower later in the spring. Be careful as the shoots are very brittle and I always snap some every time however careful I am!

It is time to cut back decorative Cornus and deciduous grasses which have given structure and colour to the garden over the winter months. Hardy Fuchsias have been soundly cut back by the recent very cold weather and can now be cut back low to a framework which will support flower from late summer right through into winter months if the weather is mild; these are particularly hard working plants and provide beautiful colour at a time when the traditional English garden plants have faded. It is really important to think about later colour when buying plants as it's too easy to get carried away in the spring and end up with plants that only flower in spring and early summer; we've all done it!

It's time to start thinking about the vegetable garden and it is certainly easier this spring than last, with garden centres being designated essential and open as normal, with the usual social distancing, masks and hand sanitiser. I have potatoes chitting on the window sill and they have short stubby dark green shoots. It is still far too soon for us to be thinking about planting as our veg patch is still under water. All I can do there

is weed, prune fruit bushes and wait for things to dry out a lot more. Unfortunately, stepping on the soil compacts it so weeding from paths, a distance or from a plank is all that can be done. I am hoping we get some dry weather soon. Indoor seed sowing can be done. Check your seed packets for timing and instructions and good luck. It is always lovely to eat something you have grown!

Liz Moyses

Little Milton WI

In February, we had a much needed session of Chair Yoga with local Yoga teacher, Yvonne Cartwright. Perfect to get us all moving and stretching, especially for those of us feeling house bound or working from home.

Our next meeting on Thursday 11th March is our AGM followed by some Easter Crafts. We'll also be unveiling our hopefully blossoming Narcissus bulbs given out in October - who will win the most beautiful display? We'll be online from 7pm. Contact me if you'd like to join us. Everyone welcome, the more the merrier!

Do you live in Little Milton, Great Milton or The Haseleys, want to meet new people, make new friends? Then join Little Milton WI and meet like-minded, local women of all ages in an informal, friendly group. Please phone or email us if you're feeling lonely, want a chat, fancy joining WI.

We meet every 2nd Thursday of the month at 7.30pm

Too shy to come by yourself? Contact me & I'll find you a WI buddy.

Like us at www.facebook.com/lmpinelodge

Details & news on the Pine Lodge page at www.littlemilton.org.uk

Kath Stacey 279438 or email littlemiltonwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

Wheatley Library

Wheatley library was open for a week before Christmas but sadly, the coronavirus infection rates rose significantly and we had to close our doors again.

As the global population continues to contend with impact of coronavirus on our lives, the library service, as a whole, is ticking away, doing our best to serve our customers within the national guidelines.

From 4 January national lockdown restrictions mean the following services are available at 14 libraries:

- New click and collect service.
- Reservation service via the online library catalogue or the library app
- Prebooked access to computers
- Returns facility.

The nearest libraries, to our parish, for these services are:

- Cowley
- Headington
- Kidlington
- Oxfordshire County
- Thames

Residents can also access our extensive online services, providing inspiration, creativity and relaxation. Ebooks and audio, online music library, Pressreader and RBDigital magazines as well as lots of free resources to help with studying at home are all available at the click of a button.

The Maple Tree

Greetings from The Maple Tree Centre! During the first lockdown, we were recognised for our online programme and service to the community by Thames Town Council.

We are spending more time at home once again and we know that parents will be looking for inspiration to keep their children challenged, entertained and learning, especially on these chilly wintery days. We also value the importance of looking after our mental health. So, we have moved online once again.

Messy Mondays: Play and Learn Sensory/Creative activities for Facebook and/or The Maple Tree website

Tuesday: Play and Learn: Once Upon a Rhyme-Time with Sasha for Facebook and/or The Maple Tree website

Wednesday: Well-Baby Clinic (with Health Visitors) to be booked through the NHS

Maple Babies Online: Group support for new parents from 10:30am-11:30am

Maple Babies: Activities suitable for under 2s for Facebook and/or The Maple Tree Website

Thursday: Play and Learn: Little Scientist activities for the under 5s for Facebook and/or The Maple Tree Website

Friday: Play and Learn: Physical Fridays

Weekends: Various activities for early learners posted on Facebook and/or The Maple Tree Website and suitable for all the family

Weekdays 1:1 Sessions

The Maple Tree is offering 1:1 sessions to parents needing a listening ear during these trying times; this can be by phone, online, in the centre or on a walk as per government regulations.

Appeal for new Trustees, Advisors and Volunteers

These are difficult times for charities and we are looking for more members from our local area to join our committed and friendly group of trustees. At this time we are especially keen to recruit some volunteers who have a particular skill set in business or accounting.

We are here to help you, if you need help, advice or support: 01865236700.

Email: info@mapletree.org.uk

Website: www.mapletree.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley

Laura Spencer

The Maple Tree Centre Manager

Morland House Surgery Vaccination Update

Morland House Surgery is delighted to report that all of our patients aged 70 or over have been offered their first Covid-19 vaccine.

We are now contacting those who fall into Priority Group 6 (adults aged 16 – 65 in an at-risk group) for their vaccine. Please visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19 for more detail on high-risk health conditions.

Those in Priority Group 5 (adults aged between 65 and 69) are being contacted by the NHS directly and offered the vaccine at a local mass vaccination site.

You do not need to wait for a letter from the NHS in order to have the vaccine. If you are aged 65 or over or are clinically extremely vulnerable, you can book an appointment by visiting this website: www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or by phoning 119. You will need your NHS number and date of birth which will be used to confirm that you are eligible for the vaccination now. You can find your NHS number on any correspondence relating to hospital appointments or by visiting <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/online-services/find-nhs-number/>. Those who are considered extremely clinically vulnerable are those people that were told to shield during the height of the pandemic because their medical condition made them more vulnerable to infection.

Whichever option you choose, it is important to be aware that you will need to have your second dose at the same place where you had your first.

John Howell MP writes...

I know that many people are finding the lockdown harder and harder. I fully appreciate this and, indeed, I too find it difficult in many ways. There is hope in the vaccine rollout, but it is important not to ease up too soon and undo all the progress that has been made as a result of the majority of people observing the lockdown restrictions. Thank you all for your efforts.

The Government has made the re-opening of schools the first priority as we emerge from this situation and I wholly support that. I believe that young people have suffered hugely not only from the problems of learning but also in wider aspects of development. Young people discover who they are and develop their emotional and social skills through interaction with others of their age. This time of distancing has stunted this. Indeed, loneliness has been a problem in all age groups. We have learned to use technology as never before, but nothing can replace human contact. Now that we have been dealing with COVID for a year I am mindful too that so many other concerns have grown over time. At the time of writing we await news of the Government plan to move towards greater freedoms and must hold our nerve. While the vaccine rollout is going well the mission to reduce to a minimum the effect of COVID-19 is not on an individual basis but national and indeed international. As the rollout progresses there are different groups that have been put forward for higher prioritisation. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has indicated that occupational prioritisation could form a part of a second phase of the programme. The Vaccines Minister has indicated support for this.

In other news I was delighted that Thames Valley police is to receive an extra £1,160 million. This will go towards Violence Reduction Units, which are special units designed to tackle serious violence and prevent young people being drawn into it. It is part of £35.5 million announced across the country for these units.

There is also some good news on the horizon for those communities who have been troubled by illegal encampments. The Home Secretary is expected to announce new legislation that will make it a criminal offence to intentionally set up camp and trespass on private land. I know that there has been concern from organisations such as Ramblers who fear that people might find themselves inadvertently committing an offence. However, the Home Office is clear that measures can be applied in specific circumstances relating to trespass with intent to reside or cause damage. It is important that innocent people are not made into criminals but also to give the police the necessary powers to deal with the problems that we have seen across the constituency in the past year.

Despite the current limitations the work of parliament continues. If you have an issue that you would like to raise with me, if possible, please email me at john.howell.mp@parliament.uk. If you cannot email you can write to me at the House of Commons, London, SW1 0AA or PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD.

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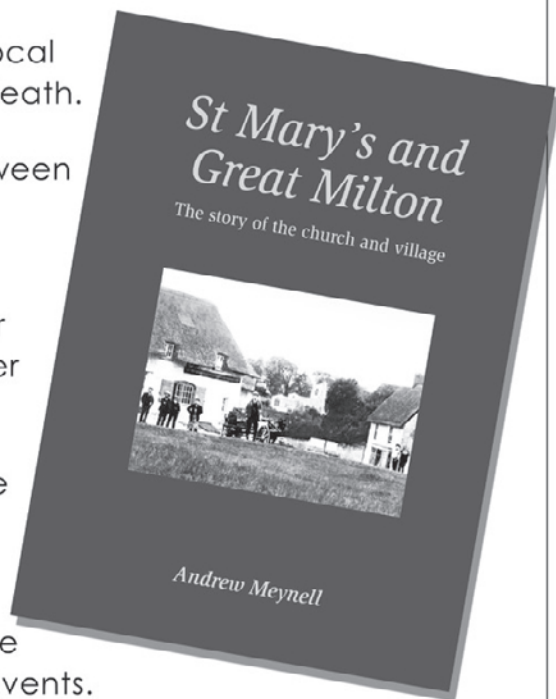
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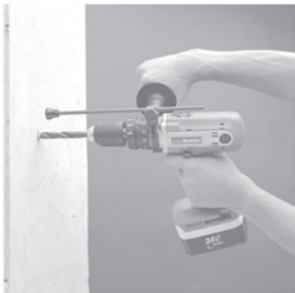
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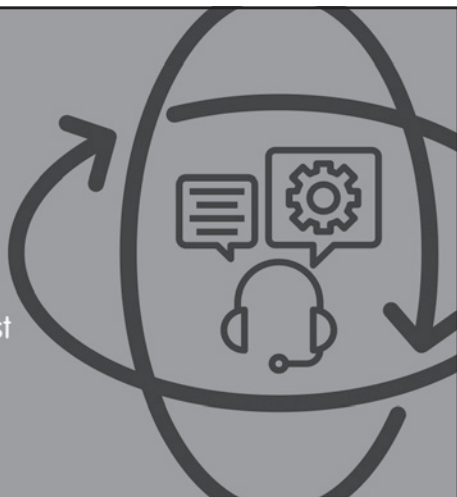


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Hello again!

We're delighted to be able to safely share our wonderful news that we plan to re-open the Garden Shop, Ornamental Gardens* and Take-Away Teashop on Monday 8 March depending on Government guidelines. The garden shop will remain open for on-line and telephone sales, collections and deliveries as normal.

Please see our website and social media posts for further updates and latest news.

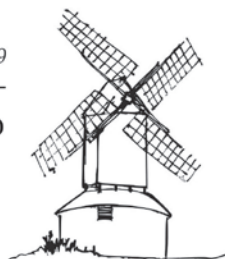
(Pre-booking required for entry to the ornamental gardens, please see our website for more details)

March at Waterperry

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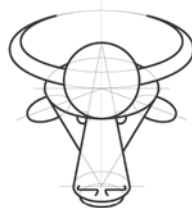
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contact carina.martin@gmail.com
 Fitness & Yoga – The Neighbours Hall. 7:30pm – 8:45pm
contact Yvonne Cartwright – 01844 279205
- Tuesday Athletics Club. Year 8+. 6:00–7:30pm. Horspath Sports & Athletics Ground.
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 Bingo – Neighbours Hall. 7:45pm *contact Ann Price – 01844 279474*
- Wednesday Coffee Morning at The Methodist Chapel 10:00am – Midday
 GM History Archive, The Community Room, The Bull. 11:30am – 1:00pm
or by appointment
- Thursday Fitness & Yoga – The Neighbours Hall. 6:00pm – 7:15pm
 Kids Yoga (4–12) – The Pavilion. 3:30pm
contact Hayley Bamford – 07825 794662. yogalizard.co.uk
 The Neighbours Club. Alternate Thursdays. *contact Janet Earl – 01844 279432*
 Sandy Lane Farm Market. 2:00pm – 6:30pm.
contact Sandy Lane Farm – 01844 279269 www.sandylanefarm.net
 Athletics Club. Year 4–7. 6:00–7:30pm. Horspath Sports & Athletics Ground.
enquiries.gmac@gmail.com
 Badminton – Great Milton School Hall. 7:00pm – 10:00pm
contact Daphne Holland – 01844 214198
 Bellringers – St. Mary's Church Tower. 7:30pm – 9:00pm
contact Pat Cox – 01844 279300. www.gm-bellringers.freeuk.com
- Friday Toddler & Baby Group – The Pavilion. 9:30am – 11:30am
For more information contact Chrissie Wyatt – 07759 283490
- Saturday Old Field: 2nd Saturday of each month. 10:15am – 12:00pm.
Contact Alex Kirkman – 01844 278090
 Bingo – Neighbours Hall. 7:45pm *contact David Spiers – 01844 281345*

March

1st Mon	St. David's Day	—
2nd Tue	Dr. Suess's Birthday	—
4th Thur	World Book Day	—
9th Tues	Commonwealth day	—
14th Sun	Mothering Sunday	—
15th Mon	Parish Council Virtual Meeting	7:30pm
17th Wed	St. Patrick's Day	—
21st Sun	Census Day	—
28th Sun	British Summertime Begins	—

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