

sonningcommon

magazine

Amazing local residents

Mel White, Rosemary Dunstan
and Fred Curzon

Latest Traffic Report

One of our village's biggest concerns

Rotherfield FC

Updates and new pavilion plans passed

Annual Parish Meeting

The future of our village



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From

the editorial group

“

As I write this version, from the editorial team, the long hoped for summer days are still awaiting arrival. Let us hope that as you read this, the waiting is over and the sun is shining and warm...

There are yet more articles in this issue about the fascinating people who live in our village and what they have achieved; Mel White, Fred Curzon and Rosemary Dunstan. Centre page is an extract from the Traffic Task group who have completed an interim report. The full version is available on the newly launched Neighbourhood Development Plan website.

When I visited the USA last year, I was fascinated by our visit to a small fishing community called Belfast. They had made an unusual attempt to preserve the limited history they possessed, by celebrating a Museum of the Streets. Any building, monument or façade with some history to it had a board outside displaying the historical information.

It struck me that Sonning Common is in a similar position as it does not have the traditional village accoutrements. The village will see some expansion over the next few years and it seems like a good time to record for posterity any items we feel are worthwhile.

Tom Fort's request for photos, postcards and any other information about Widmore Pond would be a good starting point as it is the intention of the Parish Council to commemorate this ancient monument with just such a board, giving information to those passers-by who pause to remind themselves of its origins.

Another thought might be to display the photo of Sibella Bonham-Carter's trees where they used to stand, in the car park behind the village hall and/or outside one of the homes she had, giving further information about one of the village's most important benefactors. We do have also a few Heritage assets which need to be registered such as Reddish Manor and Old Copse.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition and please keep emailing us information!

DIANA PEARMAN Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

PS...

Sonning Common Magazine is on sale at the village library in Grove Road for £1.50 a copy. Annual subscriptions are available for £15. Contact Geoffrey Adams. Email: chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org Phone: 0118 972 2134

Magazine contributions may be posted to:
1 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9TD

WHILE EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO ENSURE THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION PRINTED IN THIS MAGAZINE, THE EDITOR AND THE PUBLISHER CANNOT ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF ERRORS THAT OCCUR.

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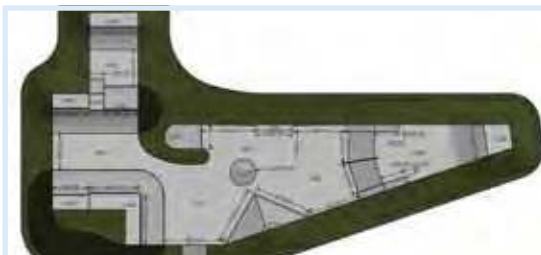
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Skatepark moves forward

The really good news is that 1Skateparks Limited has been contracted to build our Sonning Common Skatepark. Following feedback from the Design Day held in February some amendments are being made to the design. The Skatepark will provide plenty of scope for the novice as well as the more experienced riders to have fun.

What next?

- approval from SODC Planning
- fund raising the sum of £95,000

A lot of money

- YOU, the potential users need to hold some fund raising events
- Ideas and suggestions to Linda Collison: 0118 972 3616) or deputyclerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk
- WE will approach local organisations and companies for their support.
- WE will apply to nationwide organisations for large sums of money
- THEY will need to know that 'we are doing our bit locally'.

So ... now it's up to YOU. With your help and support we CAN make this happen.

CAROLE LEWIS - Sonning Common Skatepark Working Party Chairman

Budding young photographers

Young People from Club SC have proudly displayed their photographic master pieces in the village hall from 25 March. Professional photographer, Richard Pinches of Meadow Farm Studios, Henley, kindly gave his time to teach the young people the tricks of the trade. Youngsters learnt about lighting, composition and camera angles before being let loose in the club, with cameras, to click away. The results were fantastic and gave young people the opportunity to try something new. The youth club is in a desperate search for more volunteers, for one off activities and regular youth club nights. It would be excellent work experience for your CV and extremely rewarding work. Volunteers can be involved as little or as much as they want and duties range from staffing the tuck shop to running arts/crafts, cooking or sporting activities. If you can help in any way please email clubsc@hotmail.co.uk ■

The ancient craft of hedge laying

Travellers along the B481 into Sonning Common have, since January, had their journey brightened by the row of candles beside the road along the boundary to the Millennium Green. Candle is the term given to the angled top of the stake used in hedge laying. It is particularly light and eye-catching when the wood used for the stake is hazel. Tony Chandler, who has been laying the hedges around the Millennium Green for the past five years, uses the Midland style, but has adapted it for an urban setting, since no cattle need to be contained on the Green. Wikipedia has some fascinating information on the twelve different styles of hedge laying.

Whilst this ancient craft is the most visible manifestation of the improvements being made to the Green, much other work goes on behind the scenes to maintain and develop it for the benefit of the residents of Sonning Common. The simple act of clearing a few squares of grass annually in the wild central area leaves patches of earth which the skylarks can use for landing and taking off. An area recently planted

with Buddleias should attract even more butterflies to the Green. The lavender hedges have been weeded and eighty more plants added. The money for their purchase came from donations from the Friends of Kennylands Millennium Green, and the work was done by members of the Green Gym. Sonning Common is very fortunate to have such an amenity, and residents who are willing to support and manage it.

Anyone interested in becoming a Friend of Kennylands Millennium Green should telephone 01189722726. Anyone who would like to work with the Green Gym should contact Robin Howles, Secretary, Sonning Common Green Gym, on 01189723528. ■

STAN RUST



Youth Club supported by Lions

Club SC has received a £400 donation from Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club to help buy equipment for the young people's new activity room.

The youth club was threatened with closure 2 years ago when Oxfordshire County Council withdrew funding from all rural youth clubs. The main financial support for Club SC is now provided by Sonning Common Parish Council, and it's brilliant that there continues to be almost 100 registered young members from 10 to 16 years of age. There

are regularly between 40 and 70 youngsters who sign in and pay a nominal entrance fee to attend each week on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Once they are signed in of an evening they must also sign out when they leave. Thanks to the excellent facilities provided at Chiltern Edge School in Reades Lane those coming to the youth club have a large amount of space, enabling them to meet friends, play and enjoy activities both indoors or out whatever the weather. ■

View the Lions website:
www.lions-gwd.org.uk





Biggest ever On Your Bike!

More than 700 people took part in this year's On Your Bike in Sonning Common.

"It's the most people we've ever had," said On Your Bike organiser, Penny Snowden. "We think we've raised almost £5000, which is fantastic! I think the dry weather helped a lot.

"There were hundreds of families, dozens of hobby cyclists, and a couple of Dads ran the course with their kids pedaling along beside them," said Penny. "Two young lads even did the 6 mile route on unicycles!

"Our On Your Feet treasure hunt walks around the village were a big success too. And the infants playground was full of toddlers racing around on little bikes with stabilisers, and on trikes or scooters. There were so many smiling faces. Our cafe did a roaring trade.

"We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part and all the volunteers who helped us run the event," said Penny. "Do keep looking at our website and facebook page, as we'll be posting up lots of photographs and video footage."

This year's On Your Bike took place on Sunday 28th April at Sonning Common Primary School. All entry fees and monies raised will be shared between Sonning Common Primary School & Sue Ryder. ■

Chiltern Players latest success - Curtain Up On Murder

From the moment the spooky opening music began, augmented by the squawking of seagulls agitated by the stormy weather around the end-of-the-pier venue, the Players had captured the attention of the audience and the atmosphere was set for the evening.

As the story unwound all the characters gradually altered but still maintained their credulity and during the interval it was obvious from overheard pieces of audience conversation that there were almost as many theories of who the murderer was as there were people watching the show! However by the reaction at the end of the play, it is doubtful that any of us was correct in our assumptions.

Curtain Up On Murder is a play within a play and as such needs a strong and confident amateur dramatic society to execute something of this complexity and to maintain a performance level throughout that is both enjoyable and totally convincing, Chiltern Players Director, Ian Miles and Producer, Jenifer Titchener, have achieved this. ■

LESLEY GWYNNE

Forty laps for a school in Zambia

Tabitha Lusted, Emma Dixon and Lally Williams ran 40 whole laps each (5 miles) of the field of Albert Road Park! But, 40 whole laps each isn't quite true, you see on the 40th lap instead of running we did the funky chicken! With some extra motivation from our parents, we made it! We ran on Saturday 6 April when the sun was shining and it was a beautiful day!

We did this because we had an assembly about the people who don't get to go to school, in Zambia, and the people who don't get a proper education because of the lack of teachers and supplies. Emma and Tabitha thought that they should do the sponsored run and Lally agreed to help. So Emma printed off some sponsor sheets and we all ran off to get some sponsors!

When we got there it was time to warm-up. We warmed-up with the help of Emma's Dad Richard. After we had warmed up we set off for a run. Around 11 laps later we realised how hard it was going to be to do 29 more laps, until we got into a groove!

Altogether we raised over £240 and we are sending it to Zambia.

We all attend our school's running club so it wasn't so much of a struggle as it could have been. ■



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Word play is a big attraction Scrabble fans gather together

The first scrabble morning held at Sonning Common Library Friday 3 May was a GREAT success!

A wonderful group of people of all ages came to play and it was a lovely, sociable and enjoyable morning.

Liza Upton the organiser said: "I was delighted with the turn out and the Sonning Common Library was so kind to host the event. I had no idea if anyone would turn up, but there was a lovely group of people of all ages who came to play. We are now planning to hold the event on the first Friday of every month - so the next one will be on Friday 7 June. EVERYONE'S welcome to come along and I'm already looking forward to the next one!

Jill Scraggs, a Sonning Common resident, said "It was great fun".

Lydia Skelhorn commented that it was a lovely way to combine the intellectual with the sociable.

Mike Elliott from Caversham said: "What a lovely way to bring people together". ■

LIZA UPTON

Website goes live!

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Party has opened a new website at: <http://www.scpc-ndp.co.uk>. The purpose of the website is:

- to inform residents and other stakeholders of the progress of the Plan
- to encourage interaction with all interested parties.
- Maps showing the sites that have been considered for development (and this is all forms of development, not just housing)
- Frequently asked questions
- Meetings and Reports

At present, the Website is at a formative stage but contains the following:

- Vision Statement
- Contact Details
- Links to other relevant sites (such as South Oxfordshire District Council's Core Strategy)
- List of Working Party Members
- Link to the NDP Traffic Task Survey

In the near future, we will include sections covering:

- Objectives of the Neighbourhood Development Plan

At this stage, we welcome any constructive contributions for the website development as well as any views on the Neighbourhood Development Plan itself. The development sites assessment and consultation process is already well advanced so the opportunities for changing the work done to date will be limited, although not ruled out entirely!

Please use this website to keep up to date on the Neighbourhood Development Plan. ■

End of year crime figures

All crime has been reduced by 9.8% and 27.9% of all crime reported has been detected. We were the second best performing Local Police Area in Thames Valley delivering:

- A 15.6% reduction in Violent Crime
- A 0.3% reduction in Dwelling Burglary
- A 27.5% detection rate in Dwelling Burglary
- A 30.3% detection rate in Serious Sexual Offences
- A 47.4% detection rate in Violence against the Person with Injury

These figures should be viewed in the context of our continuing reduction of crime over the last ten years which can be seen below;

003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
14740	15675	14635	15017	14220	13475	12351	12076	10178	9159

One of the crimes that we have particularly focussed on during this period has been dwelling burglary. This is a pernicious crime that can have a devastating impact on those in the community whose homes are invaded and where often irreplaceable items are stolen. We have reduced these offences by 57.3%.

2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
844	806	659	635	514	536	580	527	361	360

These figures represent 5,581 less victims of crime and almost 500 fewer victims of burglary a year. This level of performance doesn't just happen. It is delivered by committed, professional Police Officers and Police Staff who care about their local communities

We are extremely conscious that an increasing number of criminals are targeting rural communities, preying on isolated and vulnerable areas and targeting these individuals. This is a priority for us this year. If we are to further reduce crime we recognise that we will increasingly need the help of the public and we will therefore be looking to develop our Neighbourhood Watch Schemes across the district. ■

ANDY BOYD

Superintendent - South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse LPA

Shaping the future of the village

Residents are being consulted on a whole range of exciting, future potential projects for the village.

At the annual parish meeting on 13 May, convened by the chairman of Sonning Common Parish Council, a list of ideas for developing the village was presented to residents for discussion.

The ideas were generated at a parish council brainstorming session at the end of last year. The council is now consulting residents on those ideas to draw up a list of priorities for the future.

Ideas include:

- building a sports centre
- increasing car parking facilities in the village centre
- installing pedestrian crossings on Wood Lane, Grove Road and Reades Lane
- initiating a public tree-planting project
- subsidising staff costs at the village library
- funding and supporting more community allotments

- acquiring land for community green space
- supporting a new Internet cafe in the village
- and providing keep-fit machines for older residents in play areas

The parish council would also consider employing trained staff one day a week to look after care-dependent residents in the village hall so that their carers could have a break.

Speaking after the meeting, Douglas Kedge, chairman of the parish council, said: "It is vitally important that the parish council and residents work together on deciding which future projects are important and which are unimportant.

"We should like as many people as possible to look at the ideas we have put together and give us their comments on them or put forward any new ideas they might have. All views will be given careful consideration by the parish council."

A full list of potential village projects is available from the parish office in the village

hall or from the parish council's website. See www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk under Home page, News and Events. ■

Contact: The Parish Clerk, Village Hall, Wood Lane, Sonning Common, Oxon RG4 9SL.

Email: clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Phone: 0118 972 3616

Comments or suggestions may be made to the parish clerk by email or post, as above.



What has been done to the Post Office?

Changes to the village Post Office came under heated discussion at the annual meeting between residents and parish council representatives last month.

The extensive re-modelling of the Post Office, in the One-Stop shop, early this year has provoked some criticism from residents.

So, Douglas Kedge, chairman of Sonning Common Parish Council, invited Post Office representative Laura Tarling along to the annual parish meeting to explain the rationale behind the changes.

Ms Tarling explained that the village Post Office had been modernised as part of a programme to update half of the nation's post offices by 2015.

She said: "The Post Office needs to move with the times. We are looking to become more efficient so that, in future, we will have to rely less on subsidies from the Government.

"We also need to become more relevant to customers who want to have greater convenience in their shopping. Customers tell us they want longer opening hours and shorter queues and that is what we are trying to provide."

Ms Tarling said that the removal of the "glass fortress" from the back of the One-Stop made the Post Office "more friendly". And positioning the Post Office counter next to the retail counter allowed the same staff to look after both counters. It also freed up valuable retail space for One-Stop customers, she said.

Under the new arrangements, One-Stop employs staff to operate the Post Office while training for those staff is provided by the Post Office. As the operator, the One-Stop is required to meet certain standards in customer service and opening hours.

Residents at the meeting raised concerns over inadequately trained staff, poor customer service, lack of security and queueing times.

Kennylands Road resident Diana Pearman reported that she had to make three attempts to post a parcel; Dirk Jones, also of Kennylands Road, said he refused to post anything of value because he was worried about lack of security; while John Stoves, of Woodlands Road, said he found the new arrangements confusing and no longer used the Post Office.

Ms Tarling promised to pass on residents' concerns to the One-Stop manager. She announced that the Post Office would be carrying out further research following the changes and invited residents to comment.





JUST FOR KIDS

Hi Everyone,

Hopefully by the time you read this, the weather will have warmed up and everyone will be looking forward to the summer holidays. Don't forget to tell me what you get up to, and if you send me a photo too, I will try and include it in the next issue.

In this issue there is another interesting story, written by the twin sister of last issue's winner, as well as an interactive word ladder and a word search to keep you busy Enjoy! ■

ANOUSKA XXXX



Finding Him

By Olivia Horncastle

Dear Mum,

When you receive this note then you will know that I have gone. But you will not know why, I will tell you. All my life, as you know, I have been searching for my father. After years of yearning I have finally found him.

Last week when I told you I stayed home ill with a cold, I actually went to meet my Father. He was staying in a Hospice with terminal cancer; He looked just how I imagined. He has the same eyes as me. We spent all day talking about life and how it had treated us. He told me magical stories about his time in Australia, how much he would do anything to go back before his death. Unfair, isn't it? That just when I find him, God decides to take him from me.

I decided what I had to do. As you are reading this I will be on a flight with my father on our way to Australia. I will look after him and make sure his last days on earth are the best he's had.

Your loving son,

PS. He said he says he's always loved you.

WORD LADDER

This word ladder is quite hard and may take you 5 - 20 minutes. I hope you enjoy it!

BOOK

DICE

THE PARK

WORD SEARCH

R	Y	E	F	I	R	H	I	O	O
G	O	Y	D	L	F	S	K	C	P
H	D	U	Q	I	W	Y	N	K	E
G	Y	A	N	I	L	K	K	B	N
S	I	P	N	D	R	S	S	C	S
S	Q	G	Y	A	A	N	N	N	P
A	S	G	P	C	D	B	H	G	A
R	M	H	D	Y	C	L	O	T	C
G	F	G	K	W	X	E	Y	U	E
W	A	S	E	E	S	R	Q	S	T

GRASS

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Seed Planting

Back in April, my guide pack and a few brownies helped the Sonning Common Village gardeners plant some seeds outside the Scout hut. It was great fun and all of us enjoyed it. We have been watering the plants every week. Hopefully now you'll be able to see the results of our hard work. ■



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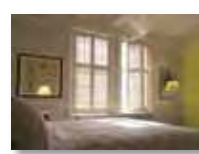
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Age UK and Thames Valley Police

18 July 2013

Sonning Common Village Hall

10.00am - 2pm

This event aims to raise awareness of the
services available to senior residents



How can I find out more information?
Website: www.music4disabledchildren.org.uk
Email: info@music4disabledchildren.org.uk

Sophia Nicholls 07768 298 297 email: sophia@nichollsweb.com
Julie Hinton 01189 722322 email: j.rumble626@btinternet.com

How much does it cost to attend?
£2.00 for monthly meeting. Costs will vary for outings and fun-days.

Where do the monthly sessions take place?
Crowmarsh Village Hall, Crowmarsh, Benson Lane, OX10 8ED

What time do the sessions start and end?
Term time 6-7pm followed by refreshments
Holiday session usually from 11.30am – 3.30pm

Do I need to book to attend?
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Come and meet people, bring along friends, chat
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Hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute
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SONNING COMMON PRE-SCHOOL

Annual fund raising event

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Sunday 14 July
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Pre School garden.

Bar, BBQ, a Silent Auction, cake competition
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of games for the children and much more!
All welcome - adults £1, children free.



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**Saturday 29th
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11 JULY
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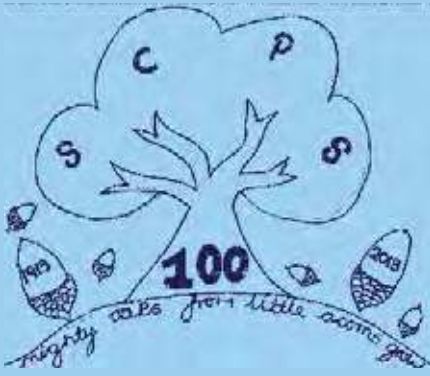
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AN INTERVIEW WITH...

Melanie White

100 years of the primary school in a book

By **ROS VARNES**

In the words of the specially-designed logo to mark the centenary of Sonning Common Primary School: "Mighty oaks from little acorns grow". And that was exactly the case with a book charting the 100-year history of the school came about.

A working group was set up in 2011 to start planning the 2013 centenary celebrations. When retired deputy headteacher Melanie White agreed to join the group, little did she know that she would end up researching the school's entire history and producing a book at the end!

Said Melanie, who taught at the primary school for 34 years: "Someone suggested there should be a book. We talked about a number of people contributing to the book but in the end decided that it should be written by one person, for consistency of style.

"Everyone looked at me and I said I would do it. The whole project took about 18 months from beginning to end. It took over my life at times. I remember many nights lying awake thinking about what to put into the book.

"But it was all worthwhile. I have met and spoken with many interesting people during the course of my research and I am very grateful to all those who helped me put the book together."

Melanie was keen that the book should be written in an informal, chatty style with as many names and pictures of people as she could find.

She planned to start her research by consulting the headteachers' log books, which record daily life at the school, including sporting achievements, school visits and Ofsted inspections.

However, she discovered, to her horror, that the log book for the period 1913 to 1970 was missing and it is still missing.

Undeterred, Melanie, along with teaching assistant Caroline Conway, visited Oxfordshire County Council's archives. They discovered the minutes of managers' meetings - equivalent to modern day governors' meetings - and were able to piece together what had happened during the missing period.

Melanie also researched the school's punishment books from 1913 onwards. She saw who had been caned, how many times and for what misdemeanours. She also had the admissions records from 1913 to the 1990s.

'Sonning Common Primary School. A History 1913 - 2013' was published at the beginning of the year and a copy generously presented to every family currently linked with the school.

Chapter One begins with education in Sonning Common pre-1913. All nine headteachers of the school have their own chapter, beginning with Mr F W Woodward whose tenure was punctuated by military service to the First World War, right up to the present headteacher, Mr Chris Hirst, who joined the school in 2009.

Included is a caretaker's story, from Patrick Butler, who has served at the school for 40 years; a pupil's story, from village resident John Earle, who is now in his mid-80s; a family's

story, from dinner lady Joyce Wise; and a teacher's story, from Melanie herself.

Although prior to producing the book Melanie had never written anything other than school reports, she enjoyed the experience so much that she would consider writing a children's book, set in school.

She certainly has plenty of experience to draw on. As she says: "Over the years I have taught every age group within almost every room at the school." ■

Sonning Common Primary School is holding a series of open evenings to celebrate its 100th birthday. All of the events are from 7pm to 9pm. People with an association with the school pre-1959 are invited to attend on Tuesday 11 June; 1960 to 1979 on Thursday 13 June; 1980 to 1999 on Tuesday 25 June; and 2000 to date on Thursday 27 June.



Traffic –

one of Sonning Common's major concerns



Traffic and parking are of considerable concern to residents. The Neighbourhood Development Plan working party set up the traffic task group which consists of Craig Henderson, Anne Symons, Ann Dayton and Fiona Cummins.

This is an extract from their interim report of the problem areas and potential solutions (in blue italics).

BUS SERVICE

The Bus Company has suggested that the traffic problems in the centre of the village may cause the withdrawal of the bus service from the area. If this happened all buses to the village would be restricted to the Peppard Road.

Introduce time-limited parking

The time limit should be long enough not to discourage shoppers, village hall visitors and other genuine users, but short enough to prevent all day parking to catch the bus into Reading.

PARKING

Car parking is an acknowledged problem with a perceived lack of parking in the village centre.

Marked parking bays

The village centre has a number of areas for parking which are under used because drivers do not know how to park to optimise

the space. We have identified four areas where marked parking bays would facilitate orderly parking and ensure more spaces were available:

- *The parking bay in Wood Lane outside the charity shop and Davis Tate*
- *The three pull-in areas at One Stop, the chemist and Occasions.*

VEHICLE TRAFFIC

The arterial routes through the village are Kennylands Road and Peppard Road. Both of these roads can be very busy, particularly at peak rush hour, and in the case of Kennylands Road, around school times. Both suffer considerably from speeding vehicles. Reades Lane is narrow and winding, especially approaching Chiltern Edge School.

Reades Lane

There are many areas along Reades Lane where the grass verges could be replaced by pull-in bays for dropping off school children, or used to widen the road and install cycle lanes.



Village Boundary Markers

Marking the village boundary (pictured) along the major roads through the village can be effective in raising drivers' awareness that the road conditions are changing.

Speed ramps

It is thought that long, low speed ramps, as used in Pound Lane, Sonning (pictured) are less damaging and noisy for vehicles than traditional sleeping policeman style ramps

20 mph zones

Wood Lane is congested much of the day. Speeding can be a problem at the Kennylands Road end, which makes crossing the road difficult. We suggest a 20mph speed limit zone along the length of Wood Lane.

DELIVERY VEHICLES

Delivery vehicles are clearly necessary for supplying the crucial shops and businesses in the village.

To reduce the congestion and hazard, we propose to introduce time restrictions on deliveries. Deliveries could be banned during peak times when the village is already busy,

CYCLING AND PEDESTRIANS

There is no pavement on Kennylands Road, south of Essex Way, although there are houses to which people need pedestrian access.

There is a grass verge down to Number 112 which could be used to install a pavement; or

Improve access to the Millennium Field at the north side adjacent to the Abbey Crest Nursing Home, and use the existing field footpath to provide access to Kennylands Road.

Walking bus

When the original Community Plan was produced, the Herb Farm owner had agreed to allow their car park to be used as a safe meeting place from which the children could walk to school. It would provide a safe area away from traffic for children

to congregate. A Walking Bus is typically organised by the school or the PTA of a school, and is not a matter for the local council. However, support and incentives could be provided. ■

CONCLUSIONS

This is an interim report of the issues. Further work will refine the proposals and result in a more focussed list.

To read the full Traffic Task Group (interim) report visit www.scp-ndp.co.uk or call into the parish office for a paper copy.



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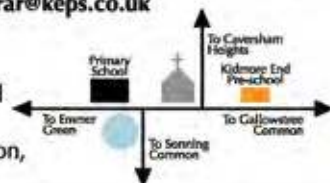
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Sonning Common

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS...

The work of the Parish Council

Your Parish Council is working very hard on a number of projects. In addition, it is perhaps not generally realised that 34 posts within the Council and 7 on external bodies are filled by the 12 councillor members. We may well have to consider increasing councillor numbers once the issue of boundary changes is settled.

All the councillors and many residents are very aware of the remarkable contribution of the office staff to the work of the Council. In particular, without the expertise and commitment of our Clerk (Philip Collings) and Deputy Clerk (Linda Collison) very little could be achieved. Our thanks also, to Tony Parisi for all his efforts in keeping the village and the play areas clean and tidy. ■

COUNCILLOR DOUGLAS KEDGE, CHAIRMAN SCPC

Grants

During 2012-13 Sonning Common Parish Council awarded a total of £15,182.50 as follows:

1. £4,500 - SC Youth Club
2. £1,303 - SC Magazine
3. £500 - Village Gardeners
4. £37.50 - Horticultural Society
5. £8,303 - Land for Skatepark
6. £100 - Henley & District CAB
7. £100 - South and Vale Carers
8. £89 - Twinning team
9. £100 - Home Start
10. £150 - On Your Bike

If you would like to apply for a grant for your charity, club or society, please contact the Parish Clerk.

Introducing your Councillors...

CAROLE LEWIS - JOINED 21ST FEBRUARY 2011

Personally, it has been very important to get to know many more residents and to increase my understanding of their issues. Their views are an important part of the overall planning process and in my role on the Planning Committee I have learned how these processes work. Finally, it has been a great pleasure to be involved in the Skatepark initiative and to work with some of our younger residents on a project which will have such a major impact on the local community. ■

COUNCILLOR CAROLE LEWIS



Thanks to the Snow team

Out of twelve snow forecasts the 20 'Snow Team' volunteers undertook 7 gritting sessions and used 2,375.Kgs of salt/grit in the core high risk pavement areas. Five potential call-outs were cancelled when our own weather station forecasts indicated pavements were too warm to justify gritting, thus saving salt/grit costs and manpower. The number of volunteers and surface temperature forecasting technology have proved very effective. ■

COUNCILLOR DIRK JONES, SNOW TEAM LEADER

Parish Council meetings: June, July & August:

FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS: Mondays
8pm: June 17 and July 15.

FINANCE MEETINGS: Wednesdays
7:30pm: June 5, July 10 and August 7.

PLANNING MEETINGS: Mondays
7:30pm: June 3 & 17, July 8 & 22,
August 5 & 19.

Meetings are held in the Village Hall

Allotments

Now that the deer and rabbit-proof fencing is in place, the new gates hung and landscaping of the perimeter are underway it is timely that the plot holders are emerging from hibernation. The road planings are due to be laid and Oxfordshire County Council have chipped in by dealing with the huge pothole that appeared outside the gate. The finishing line is now in sight for the contractors and I can only marvel at their resolve working through what has been the most difficult of conditions over the winter. There are currently a few plots vacant. Please contact the Clerk at the Parish Office if you are interested. We are adopting a policy of splitting some plots as they become vacant to give residents a chance of starting without being daunted by the challenge. ■

COUNCILLOR JOHN STOVES

DID YOU KNOW?

When is a pot hole, not a pot hole? When it's less than 40 mm deep (according to OCC).

Planning and building in 2012-13

During 2012-13 the planning committee considered 54 planning applications which included 33 applications for house extension and 8 applications for new builds. Anyone wishing to alter or extend their home should visit the SODC website for advice: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building> ■

CONTACTING THE PARISH COUNCIL

For all matters please contact Philip Collings, Parish Clerk on 0118 972 3616 or email clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk

This page has been paid for by the Parish Council and will appear in every future edition.



Bookbus India!

By **ROSEMARY DUNSTAN**

I flew out of a cold and dreary England on the first day of March, looking forward to (amongst other things) two weeks of sunshine. I'd never been to India before, and people warned me about the dangers of 'Delhi belly', awful smells, and violence towards women. I'm pleased to say that I didn't experience any of these problems!





The main purpose of my visit was to be a volunteer in the pilot project of the Bookbus in India, and as we four volunteers, and leader Kelly, faced our first day at school, none of us knew exactly what to expect.

Five small village schools around Mandore (near Jodhpur) had been selected, and we were driven in a jeep through dusty, dry farmland, with our bags of books and craft materials, to the first of these.

They received us, quite literally, with open arms! Few of the villagers spoke English, but they were full of smiles and handshakes for us (Hindi is the common language, but English is taught as a second language, in the same way as schools here in England teach French).

There was drumming, and singing, and dancing, followed by tea, and speeches, and garlands of fresh flowers for all the volunteers.

We had decided to work together as a group for all the classes in the first week, so that we could gauge their level of English and reading. We based all our activities on the theme of 'colour', and had prepared visual aids and worksheets using multi-coloured paper.

We had a very basic book about a dog called Jojo in both English and Hindi, which we varied for the different levels in each class, and as the week progressed we refined and adapted our techniques according to our daily experiences.

We found that some children were not yet able to read the Hindi, so we didn't try too hard to teach them to read English!

Most children had a school bag containing text books, and a pencil tin containing a pencil, a rubber, a ruler, and sometimes a sharpener. Crayons were a real treat, and glue sticks were a mystery to most children.

At the end of the first week we had a discussion and decided that the group work was a success, and we would continue it into week 2. We all took turns in leading the sessions with different age groups and different books, and I thought we worked well together.

The themes for the second week were numbers and animals, and we managed to include colours from the first week too - and fruits, reading the book 'Handa's Surprise'.

For the younger ones, animals were popular, using the book, 'Walking Through the Jungle'

– we all had fun pretending to be the different animals in the jungle!

We played games with the children: matching cards, word searches, and colour-by-numbers; and all the younger children made twirly number snakes to take home. At one school we were even required to attempt to play volleyball. (The game didn't last long though, as the children soon realised that we were hopeless at it!).

We were greeted everywhere with smiles and waves, and found India to be a very friendly place to visit. All the children at the five schools were enthusiastic, and really keen to learn new things.

I was quite sad to leave at the end of my two weeks, and felt I had made many new friends among the volunteers and the staff at the guest house where we stayed. Maybe I'll go back again one day. ■

Donations to help the work of the Book Bus are still being accepted. Make cheques payable to 'Book Bus Foundation' or visit www.justgiving.com/rosemarydunstan

SUMMER 2013 LIBRARY NEWS

Every summer libraries around the country have a 'Summer reading challenge' aimed at keeping children reading over the long summer holidays, and getting them to use their local library. The children sign up to read at least 6 books over the holidays, they are rewarded as they progress and receive a medal and a certificate at the end.

This year the theme for the challenge is 'Creepy House', and it will run from the first weekend in July until the end of September. Sonning Common Library will have special 'creepy- themed' storytimes on Saturday mornings in August at 10am, suitable for primary age children. There will be stories and craft activities, and home-made cakes for sale.

For more information contact the library, on 0118 9722448 ■

ROSEMARY DUNSTAN
library manager





Tom Fort

POND

I've spent a good deal of my life – some might say too much – in, on and around water. I've always been happiest messing around in the proximity of streams, rivers, lakes, pools, meres, lochs, loughs – and ponds.

It follows that I regard village ponds as a good thing, and a village that has a pond is blessed above one that doesn't. Villages without ponds are all very well, but a pond – well, it adds something, does it not?

I would not claim that our own Widmore Pond is one of most picturesque I have ever lingered by. It lacks something in the way of reeds and weeds and weeping willows. On the other hand it has Duckingham Palace, and ducks, plenty of ducks, and fish, plenty of

them too. The water goes an odd colour sometimes, particularly in hot weather. But on the whole it is healthy and clean. It is also extremely well looked after by Mr and Mrs Brownjohn, and Sonning Common can count itself fortunate to have two such dedicated pond-lovers living so close by.

Like most village ponds, Widmore Pond is extremely old. Just how old is a matter for conjecture. It was certainly around five hundred years ago and may – I stress the "may" – even be Roman in origin.

Needless to say, I am on the parish council's pond committee, and we have plans to install one of those splendid information panels next to the pond to give the many visitors something to look at should they grow weary of watching the ducks swimming in circles.



And that brings me to my question: does anyone have any historic photographs or postcards or illustrations of any kind of the pond and its surroundings? We would like to reproduce material of that kind on the board, so if you do have something, please feel free to call me on 0118 972 2641, or email me at tom.fort@virgin.net ■

Church news

A total of £173 was raised at the Lent lunch, organised by Sue Nickson, for the Sonning Common Health Centre Community Fund.

As usual the Lent course attracted good attendance from all church members preparing for the celebration of Easter, when both churches were full.

Many thanks to all those who collected money for and donated to the cause of Christian Aid in May. We really appreciate your support in triple dip times.

COMING SOON:

Saturday 22 June at 11.30 am Gift Day Concert at St John's - donations very welcome!

Saturday 6 July at 7.30 pm By a Mill Stream: Rustic, rural and resonant sounds of the country at All Saints Church, Peppard – a concert for Christian Aid.

Sunday 30 July at 10.30am 5th Sunday in the month – a combined Benefice service at All Saints Church in Peppard. No services at Christ the King or St Johns.

DON'T FORGET:

The Little Lambs church group for under-fives meets the last Wednesday of the month in term time between 9.30 and 10.30 am for a short service, craft and refreshments at St John's, Kidmore End. Contact Felicity Cooper 0118 947 7862 for further details.

Thursday 20 June and Thursday 18 July Drop-in 2.30 to 4pm: for a coffee, chat, and biscuits at Christ the King in Sedgewell Road. Transport can be arranged - contact Jenny McGregor on 0118 947 2855.

Want to find out more about what goes on within the churches for as little as £5 a year? Want to have our magazine *The Lamb and Flag* delivered to your door every month? Contact Neil Scott on 0118 972 3890.

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Concern continues

I echo the views expressed by Geoffrey Adams, in last month's magazine, concerning continued access for the community to Bishopswood Recreation Ground. Of particular concern is that, while footballers and locals having co-existed very happily for decades - with people always deferring to the players when they are on site - since Rotherfield United Football Club purchased the land, some of their representatives seem to have taken up a somewhat unnecessarily hostile position towards villagers who enjoy the use of the field, quite frequently threatening that they will indeed fence it in. As Geoffrey pointed out, this would not only contravene the wording of the Covenant, under whose terms the Club presumably knowingly purchased the land, but also the spirit of cooperation which has worked very well for so many years. As has been mentioned, the field provides probably the only amenity of its kind in the village for recreational activities - at least 12, last time I counted - and it would be a tragedy if any attempt were made to curtail these. I hope a spirit of tolerance, empathy and cooperation will prevail. ■

CAROL O'NEILL

Our village is looking so good

I feel moved to write on two counts.

Firstly I want to record my delight and pleasure in the appearance of our Village. At last Spring has arrived in earnest and the Village Gardeners are truly to be congratulated on the amazing difference all their hard work has made. The daffodils and narcissus look fantastic throughout the Village, and the planted tubs and wheelbarrows add an individual and unusual touch. The newly planted bank opposite Carl Woods Butchers is a sight to behold in the first season since planting. Many congratulations to everyone involved - in any way - and to Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury and Jill Greenwood who had/have the vision and the determination and energy to bring that vision to fruition along with all their gardeners.

Secondly, thanks are due to the Parish Council and to the Clerk, Philip Collings particularly, for responding so quickly to my request for the bus-shelter in Wood Lane to be thoroughly cleaned. The difference a clean bus-shelter makes to the overall appearance of the Village Centre cannot be underestimated. Our Village is looking so good - let's all help to keep it that way - and litter-free for everyone's enjoyment. ■

MARGARET MOOLA.



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1994 – 2013

Quizmaster hangs up his Questions

Interview by IONE STACEY

After nearly 20 years as Quizmaster of the annual Sonning Common Village Quiz, Fred Curzon has decided to step down and hand over the microphone.

Personally, I don't hold any records for attending, winning or even coming last at any of the quizzes but I was curious as to how they started and thought that Fred's reflections on his 20 years at the helm should be recorded and published in the village magazine for others to enjoy.

So ... prompted by a few questions, this is what he said:

First quiz, why, when, where? Who won?

The first Village Quiz was held in April 1994 at Bishopswood Sports Ground in the social club and was won by 'The Teechers' team. I had suggested in the Sonning Common Magazine that this might be a good community event and eighteen teams took part. In those days I posted notices on all the village notice boards.

Have any teams entered all 20 quizzes?

Some team names have changed over the years but only three definitely took part in all twenty: 'The Teechers', 'Joy's Team' and 'Red House Drive'.

Which team has won the most times?

The Teechers, Minus I.Q.s and Brenda's Buddies have all won three times.

Which team has won the most points in one evening?

Since 2004 the maximum points available has been 140. The highest percentage of points to win was by Springers in 1999, and the lowest winning percentage was in the first quiz.

Best moment?

The first year that we had over twenty teams in 2004, when we actually had 22.

Worst moment?

My one real faux pas was thinking Widow Twankey was in Mother Goose. How I made that mistake I will never know and some people don't let me forget it! The joke was that one team in the room had my answer so we ended up with every team getting a point.

Funniest moment?

I enjoyed many amusing moments but I found it really funny when 'The Desperate Housewives' and 'The People's Front of Judea' started to swap messages by way





of the whiteboards. Some people take the evening very seriously but I think it good to have a few laughs.

Most difficult question?

This is not easy to answer. My philosophy is to hope that at least one person in the room has my answer but it is nice to know that occasionally you have asked a question that no-one can answer. Two come to mind:

1. Which is the shortest day of the year?

Answer: The Day the clocks go forward.

2 Who vowed to always love rocknroll?

Answer: Kate Winslet. (she married Ned Rocknroll!)

Tiebreaks...what were they and when/why did you have to use them?

I always have five tie-break questions ready. Three winners have been decided in this manner in 1996, 2004 and 2005. It was like a penalty shoot-out; the highest score from 5 questions. I also used a tie-break to decide second place one year.

Any question that you may have given the wrong answer to?

I have asked 2020 individual questions. Sometimes it might be my question

which could have been clearer. As you know, I always say that my answer is correct for that evening. Most people accept that and hardly any have ever made an issue out of a difference of opinion. For example when does a hill become a mountain? Even Alfred Wainwright was never convinced of this definition and according to the recent news, this is still under discussion.

If you could choose any person, living or dead, to join you to make up a two person quiz team, who would you choose?

I would go for either Fred Housego (a former winner of Mastermind) or Richard Osman of Pointless.

Total raised from the quiz for SCPS?

This is a tricky one. I think that the quiz itself raised a total of £1352 all told. Since 2006 the Sonning Common School PTA has run the bar and raffle, and we have raised a total of £4155, including quiz surplus of £924. You have to remember that I did not set it up with a profit in mind. If I was starting again I would approach it differently.

Who's going to run the quiz from now on?

Hopefully some individual, or a couple of people, will be interested in taking on the quiz. It has been a fixture in the village calendar for twenty years and I would like that to continue for many more. I look forward to sitting on the other side of the fence and competing for the trophy that I have presented every year. ■

If anyone would like information about taking on the village quiz, please contact Fred on 0118 9722827 or freddiecurzon@hotmail.com



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Rotherfield United Football Club & Bishopswood

UPDATE



As many will know Rotherfield United Football Club acquired Bishopswood Sports Ground in early 2012. It has already proven itself as a fantastic asset for the club, which will allow the club to continue to grow and thrive over the generations to come.

We have a flourishing mini and youth section with youngsters from Reception class through to Year 13, which now includes a dedicated girls team. Our adult division is establishing itself in the Reading League, with our ambition of having our first team playing in the Hellenic League within the next 3-5 seasons.

The club has recently been granted planning permission to construct a clubhouse near the main entrance. The clubhouse will consist of four changing rooms, match officials changing rooms, toilets, a teaching / social space as well as a kitchen. The club is now preparing a tender to go out to construction companies in the next 4-6 weeks. Once this is done our efforts will turn to raising the funds for the project from both the club membership as well as funding bodies such as the Football Foundation and Sport England.

Whilst Bishopswood Sports Ground is private property, wholly owned by Rotherfield United, there is a covenant on the land to permit public access for informal recreation, although this can be restricted for the safe operation of the land for its primary purpose, which is for organised sport. As an integral part of the local community we are committed to maintaining public access to the site. Furthermore

responsible users of Bishopswood are good friends of the football club and help to make the whole site easier to manage and safer for everyone. Having the community keep their eyes and ears open to any unwanted uses is exactly what we need. If anyone does see anything inappropriate on the site please call 0845 094 1206.

Our main challenges with managing Bishopswood include litter, dog mess and illegal vehicle access. The club is putting considerable effort and expenses into the maintenance of the ground and we have been undertaking a significant amount of remedial work such as cutting out dead wood and clearing bracken so we can access the boundary and hedgerow for maintenance. We are also in the process of securing the boundaries of the ground to allow continued access for walkers and cyclist but restrict access for motorbikes and all terrain vehicles. These vehicles are not only a safety hazard for users of the ground, but cause considerable damage to the playing surface.

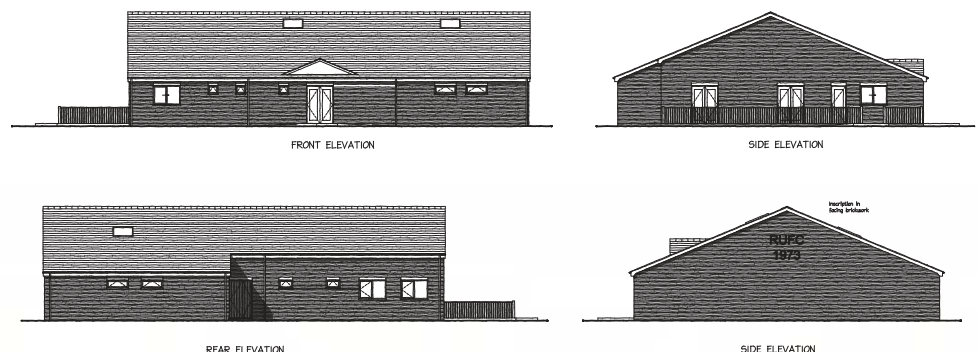
In order to protect public access further we are

working in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council to dedicate a new public footpath around the bottom and woodland side of the ground to join two unconnected public footpaths. We have also recently agreed with Sonning Common Parish Council to release a parcel of land for them to develop a skate park or similar community amenity.

Further projects under planning at the club include improvements to the playing facilities and surfaces and the development of an all-weather pitch on the site of the current temporary buildings and old demolished clubhouse.

In September the club is planning to hold another public briefing in Sonning Common Village Hall to update the village on the developments at the club and at Bishopswood. In the meantime if anyone has questions regarding the club or Bishopswood please do contact us directly via email to info@rotherfieldfc.com ■

ANDY DAVIES
Club Chairman



At the time of going to press Rotherfield United FC were successful in the World Record attempt for mass participation in one continuous 5-a-side game. It was a fantastic effort by everyone who helped organise the event and the 578 players who competed in the game.

June 2013

MONDAY 3	FISH - Garden Centre Visit	1.30pm
WEDNESDAY 5	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
FRIDAY 7	Fancy a game of scrabble? Aimed at the more "mature" - Sonning Common Library	10.00am - 12noon
SATURDAY 8	Peppard Village Fair - Peppard Common	2 - 5pm
TUESDAY 11	Sonning Common Primary School centenary open evening (pre 1959) - Sonning Common Primary School	7 - 9pm
THURSDAY 13	Sonning Common Primary School centenary open evening (1960 - 1979) - Sonning Common Primary School	7 - 9pm
FRIDAY 14	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
MONDAY 17	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 20	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 20	Sonning Common Women's Institute - Coronation Street Party. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 21	Nottakwire dress rehearsal - Village Hall	
SATURDAY 22	Nottakwire concerts: "We Are One" - Village Hall	10.00am & 2.30pm
SATURDAY 22	Sue Ryder Starlight Hike - Green Park, Reading	10.30pm
TUESDAY 25	Sonning Common Primary School centenary open evening (1980 - 1999) - Sonning Common Primary School	7 - 9pm
WEDNESDAY 26	Chiltern Players. Open play reading evening. Everybody welcome. - The Reformation, Gallowstree Common	8pm
THURSDAY 27	Sonning Common Primary School centenary open evening (2000 - today) - Sonning Common Primary School	7 - 9pm
FRIDAY 28	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
SATURDAY 29	Sonning Common Primary School centenary summer fair - Sonning Common Primary School	12 - 4pm

July 2013

MONDAY 1	FISH - Garden Centre Visit	1.30pm
THURSDAY 4	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
FRIDAY 5	Notts group - Village Hall	10.00 am
SATURDAY 6	"By a mill stream" - Tales of rural life & love - All Saints' Church, Rotherfield Peppard	7.30pm
FRIDAY 12	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
FRIDAY 12	Chiltern Players - an evening of one-act plays - Peppard Memorial Hall	8pm
SUNDAY 14	Sonning Common Pre-School - Summer Garden Party	11.30am - 2pm
MONDAY 15	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 18	AGE UK & Thames Valley Police - raising awareness of services available to senior residents - Village Hall	10am - 2pm
THURSDAY 18	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 18	Sonning Common Women's Institute - "Victim Support" a talk by Gerry Duggan. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 19	Notts group - Village Hall	10.00 am
WEDNESDAY 24	Chiltern Players. Open play reading evening. Everybody welcome. The Reformation, Gallowstree Common	8pm
FRIDAY 26	Nottakwire practice & end of term lunch - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am

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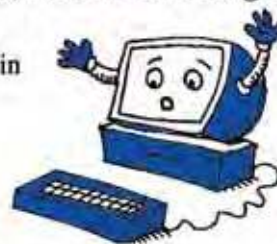


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