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SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



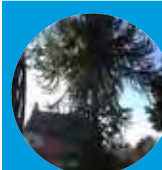
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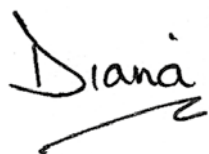
FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

As I write this editorial in the second week in March there is still no clear direction or decision about what will happen on 29 March. Perhaps there will be Brexit by the time this issue is published. Some of you, like me may feel totally disempowered by the whole situation and feel it may be better to just concentrate on where we can affect and initiate change in our own lives.

The magazine front page depicts one good example of the local effect and there are some others. Many residents turned out to tidy up the village for the SoCo spring clean; the MHF working group is preparing the planning application to start the groundworks on what will become the recreation/sport ground; the primary school is a front runner for recycling; also at primary and pre-school, both sets of children are involved in activities for growing and appreciating what our earth can produce; the health centre is tackling the challenges of Dementia and providing more space and more doctors; the NDP review group are working to lessen the effects of the latest requirement for more homes in Sonning Common. All of this will have a local impact.

This issue also includes awards for the Club SC and our local dentist; the WI raising money for village charities and the efforts of volunteers in our library; our young people enjoying reading and reviewing books and the progress of children in our local schools. The favourites are also included Jackie, Tom and Sandy as well as our churches. Lots to do on the Noticeboard.

I hope you find something to enjoy doing, or reading about in this issue. ●



Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org



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SC SONNING COMMON
MAGAZINE

MEET THE TEAM ...



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SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Chinese New Year

The Primary Workshop for Schools Ltd came into school during February to teach reception and years 1 and 2 all about the Chinese lion dance. This is an event that was paid for by the PTA, the money having been raised at the school's trivia quiz earlier in the year.



Safer Internet Day

Sonning Common Primary School marked Safer Internet Day 2019 by asking a selection of (mostly Year Six – aged 10/11) children to give some insight into their online lives. They were asked all that they thought was good about being able to be online, and to outline all the great things they enjoy doing.

The word cloud below gives an indication of the weighting of each of the tools they use most. As expected the popular messaging apps came out strongest, in addition to YouTube.

The session finished up by asking the respondents to assess and describe any concerns they may have in using any of these tools. To our surprise (perhaps as adults) they found it very difficult to see many downsides, despite having had a full four-week social media module in Year Five. With a little prompting, there were some comments expressing concern (mostly related to the non-specific fear of 'being hacked').

Finally the opportunity was taken to remind children about how to stay safe online. Given the prevalence and popularity of messaging apps (some of which carry a recommendation that users should be 16 years of age), the children

were reminded that most messages, however bland or innocent, could be interpreted differently by some recipients. It was pointed out that although there were things that no child would dream of saying to someone on the playground, apparently it was fine to type it into a message – potentially one seen by many others.

So, in conclusion, it was suggested that the need for care was even greater online, given the ease with which users and their parents can screenshot or print out messages, and ultimately how easy it is to track a user's history online. ●



MEMORIAL HALL FIELD

The transfer of ownership of the Memorial Hall Field (MHF) from Linden Homes to the Parish Council took place with the final signing of the Transfer and License agreement on the afternoon of 14 February 2019.

The MHF task group is now working to submit a planning application to SODC for groundworks. This is the first stage towards transforming the field into a recreation and sports area. It has been a long slow process but at last we are moving forward. There will be regular updates on progress published in this magazine. ●



FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

It continues to be a busy time at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge, as the school goes from strength to strength on its improvement journey. The Trust, in conjunction with the school leadership, are developing a 5 year improvement programme that will see the school transformed over that period into a 21st century learning environment that will benefit the whole community.

In collaboration with our partners Vocosa IT, the first phase of the ICT improvement programme is nearing completion. At a cost of just under £200,000, the school now boasts a resilient and up-to-date network infrastructure with the provision of a new server room, cabling upgrade, new servers and a brand new telephony system. Additionally, each classroom has been provided with new PC's to improve the teaching and learning experience. Over the coming months, further investment is planned to improve the

classroom experience.

This work follows on from the significant investments made over the summer, including the recommissioning of two science laboratories, installation of a site-wide CCTV system and installation of a new visitor management system.

Jonathon Peck, Chief Financial and Operations Officer at Maiden Erlegh Trust said "The Trust has once again demonstrated its commitment to the students and staff at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge by providing financial support to the school to secure these improvements. The school is growing, and the Trust is committed to supporting that growth with targeted investment so that students and staff get the very best experience possible. The Trust's aim is for Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge to become the school of choice in the local area and for it to serve the local community for many years to come".

Moirra Green, Headteacher at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge said "These are very exciting times for the school and we are working

closely with the Trust to implement our five year plan to improve the facilities for the benefit of students and the local community".

For further information about the school please visit www.maidenerleghchilternedge.co.uk

●



MAIDEN ERLEGH
CHILTERN EDGE

POSTCARD FROM THE ALLOTMENT

by CHRISTINE ATKINSON

Preparing for the new season

Now is the time for waking up! The team have been busy digging and preparing the beds for the new plants and vegetables. Many other jobs are ongoing around the site. New signs have been made, the equipment has been tidied up and all is in place.

Potatoes have been resting in a warm dry place to CHIT. Chitting means sprouting the tuber - putting it, most eyes upright, in a light, cool but frost-free place. Light is important so they shouldn't be shoved to the back of a shed. This process is thought to ensure a quicker and slightly larger harvest. But the really exciting new project the team have been working on during February is planting Christmas trees in a plot of land at the school! They have 100 mini trees planted out now and they are visible from the junior school classrooms, so the children can keep an eye on the them growing. They should grow 20-30cm each year.

There are another 100 mini Christmas trees on order to try and fill the plot up some more. It will provide a revenue for school over the years to come as they are cultivated.

We have had such a very mixed time with the weather through February and into March with snow, rain, sunshine and heat!. An old saying comes to mind - March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers... Hopefully a bit of a settled time will encourage and spur on the plants in the spring time.

The aims for the allotment garden are:

- to be self-sufficient financially by selling produce and having cake sales to enable reinvestment

- to reuse raw materials already on the school site in our projects
- to get the children out more in the garden and maybe have a regular lunchtime gardening club in future
- and to involve the local community in sharing their produce and planting ideas and selling together in future.



WI PRESENTS DONATIONS TO LOCAL CHARITIES

Sonning Common WI's February Village Coffee Morning is one highlight of our year and the day we distribute funds raised in the previous year to local community projects. Jenny Ward, our President, welcomed everyone with thanks them for coming. This year, £1000 was divided between five local community projects.

Gill Hayward invited each recipient onto the stage where they spoke movingly about their projects within the community and how much they valued our donation. Their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm provide services which are invaluable. With demand increasing all the time, they could not continue without donations for which they are so grateful. Jenny Ward presented the cheques.

Our monthly Coffee Mornings are most importantly, open to all. Our aim, first and foremost, is to welcome anyone who just wants to pop in for a chat while enjoying a cup of coffee or tea and a biscuit. There is always someone to chat with, or, if you prefer you can just sit quietly and enjoy the friendly atmosphere or browse the sales tables. Our first coffee morning was in 2013 so we are in our 6th year and getting busier all the time. Since then, we have raised over £8000 from the coffee mornings with the wonderful support from all who attend. Sue Hedges and some of our WI craft club members had decorated the hall with beautifully embellished green hearts which represent the National Federation

WI "Show the Love Campaign," to love our environment and support a future where the UK no longer contributes to climate change. There was a display in the foyer with suggestions on ways individuals could help reduce plastic waste and ideas for recycling. This is a National WI campaign, supported every February, to coincide with Valentine's Day. It was a lovely morning and it was great to see so many people enjoying themselves in the company of others while helping to alleviate loneliness. ●

GILL HAYWARD



From L to R:
Annie Hoddle, Nicky Williams-Grey, Hilary Arthur, Peter Lewis, Jenny Ward, Sunny Smithers, Becky Jenkins, Clive Mills.

ALL SMILES AT WOOD LANE DENTISTRY

by JOAN GRUMMANT

Congratulations are well deserved at the Woodlane Dentistry, Sonning Common. Vikram Chugani and his team have yet again performed extremely well in the National competition of Best Practice in the South East. The Woodlane practice was Highly Commended for it's work. It was also finalist in the years 2017 and 2018, and Vikram is particularly anxious to commend the strong team around him, whose support is vital in establishing the surgery's growing reputation for preventative care and it's use of high-performance technology.

The recent refurbishment of the surgery has transformed the inside of the building but investment in modern technology, including that of a 3D scanner, has completely changed many aspects of the work undertaken at the surgery. Uncomfortable procedures such as taking impressions, implants etc are now more accessible, exact

and accurate for far more patients, because the use of high tech enables such procedures to be less intrusive. This focus on modern and exciting developments enabled Vikram to become a finalist in the Best Dentist category at the awards this year, and Dipesh Kothari was also a finalist in the Best Young Dentist Category.

These impressive achievements as well as the work done in preventative work, Smile Days in schools and dental care in care homes must leave us feeling we are in good hands in Sonning Common. ●



HEATH AND WATKINS



What a difference 5 months makes!

After 4 days of trialling the new hours, it's become clear that 9-5 is much better! At this time of year anyway. I'll be reverting back to:

Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm

I will still tweak the weekend hours to the following though:

Saturday: 9am to 4pm

Sunday: 10am to 12noon

SHARONA FAIRWEATHER

STEP UP PHOTOGRAPHERS

Some say a picture is worth a thousand words – so the Friends' committee is asking those with an artistic bent to take part in a photography competition. The theme will be the wonderful village of Sonning Common and the beautiful countryside around it. The winning entries will be turned into postcards for sale. Rules for the competition will be available in the library and on the FoSCL website from 1st April. www.friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk



the spot – in the shape of a new two seater sofa. FoSCL made use of funds raised at last year's quiz to pay for the sofa and a new bookcase to go behind the counter. Extra noticeboards are also on their way. ●

HELEN FORT



COULD YOU BE A VOLUNTEER FISH HOME VISITOR?

At the FISH Volunteer Centre in Sonning Common we started the Home Visiting Service in Spring 2016 and it has proved to be very successful with some strong friendships being formed between people who are on their own at home and their volunteer visitors.

To get the match right between client and volunteer I now need more volunteers as it is important to have a pool of possible visitors to choose from when I get a request from a client.

I visit both clients and volunteers initially to find out about their interests and remain available to each, after a match is made to talk through any problems which might arise.

If you think you might like to consider this rewarding form of volunteering I would be pleased to come and talk to you at home and give you more information before you make a decision. While most of the clients are elderly there are a few younger people who have visitors and there is no upper age limit to being a Volunteer Visitor.

Contact me via the FISH Volunteer Centre weekdays from 9.30am -11.30am on 0118 972 3986 or on my home no. 0118 972 4520. ●

SUE NICKSON

FISH Volunteer Home Visiting Coordinator

GERONTIUS AT THE SHELDONIAN

"The South Chiltern Choral Society is delighted to be joining forces with the Wantage Choral Society and the St Giles Orchestra, plus professional soloists, to perform Elgar's Dream of Gerontius at the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford on Saturday 27 April at 7pm.

Classic FM says that this is generally acknowledged to be one of the greatest pieces for chorus and orchestra ever written. It is based on a Victorian poem by Cardinal John Henry Newman and is about life, death and what comes afterwards – set to a beautiful score.

Tickets are available from Tickets Oxford (01865 305305 or www.ticketsoxford.com)



GOING, GOING, GONE?

In 2007, a new community activity started, a monthly session of circle dance on a Sunday afternoon. This phenomenon was first introduced in this country (at Findhorn in Scotland) by a German professor of dance who collected dances from around the world and described them as holy, meaning they could promote healing and wholeness. Regardless of origin they bring people together to mark significant events – weddings, seasonal changes, connection with the Divine. There is always a centrepiece to help the circle keep its shape and remind participants of the light/joy dancing together brings. There are groups all over the world and sessions take place in churches, village halls and schools.

Despite people moving away or becoming less mobile it has kept going for 12 years but it is currently needing more fresh blood. Sunday, 3 March, was the last gathering. If you are interested please call Ros 01491 874220 ●



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Shout out for Parish Councillors

- 2 May is the date for the next election
- Recruiting new members is important
- Need to represent all areas of Sonning Common
- Parish councillors give a few hours per month
- You could have a big effect on the village
- Please volunteer

Talk to the parish office if you are interested
972 3616

A new Parish Council has to be elected on 2 May unless there are only 12 or fewer people who put themselves forward.

The present council members are predominately from the centre around Woodlands Road and Wood Lane so it would be a good thing to have members who live in other parts of the village.

Except a few hours per month it costs you nothing to be a parish councillor and yet you can have a big effect on the village. Think about it please.

If you need to know more about any of the above, please call into the parish office.

Anyone who would like to read plays out loud in an informal venue....

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Tuesday 9 April
Wednesday 8 May
Tuesday 11 June
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There is no charge.

Place: St Michael's Church hall

(behind the church on the Peppard Road next to the petrol station).

Date: Usually every 3rd Tuesday of the month. Look for the notice on the local noticeboards or check our parish newsletters at www.saintmichaelssonningcommon.org.uk for updates.

Time: 12.30pm.

SUMMER FAIR

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Library opening times over Easter

Good Friday (19th): closed

Saturday 20th: open 9.30 – 12.30 as usual, with a storytime at 10am

Monday 22nd: closed

Tuesday 23rd: open for the school only

May Day: closed Monday 6 May (no Rhymetime)

On Saturday 25 May Elmer the Patchwork Elephant will be celebrating his 30th anniversary – join us for an Elmer themed storytime and crafts at 10am!

Just a reminder of the following events which take place on a regular basis in the library:

1st and 3rd Mondays of the month (unless there's a Bank Holiday)

Rhymetimes for pre-schoolers and their parents/carers from 10am – 10.30am

Every Thursday from 10am until 12 noon: Gadget drop-in session, for those with queries/problems with lap-tops, Macs, androids and Smartphones. It's advisable to book as these sessions are becoming increasingly popular. (Sessions may be arranged at other times if necessary – just ask)

Every Friday from 10am – 12 noon: Scrabble Club meets. More players always welcome!

Every Saturday from 10am: Storytimes for under-8s, with stories and colouring.

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<https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/play> and search for Sonning Common Primary School.

Katie Skilton SCPS PTA

Health Walks

Spring is surely here and it's good to get out into the beautiful local countryside for a brisk walk. The Health Walks timetable continues throughout the year with a programme of walks to suit all levels of fitness: it's fun and it's free!

The timetable changes after Easter with new routes and new starting points. Timetables are available from the library, the Health Centre and the Herb Farm, or on the website at www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable.

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THE JOY OF CYCLING IN THE NETHERLANDS

Last October my partner and I enjoyed an extraordinary fortnight exploring the Netherlands by bicycle. Unless you've tried it, you'd find it hard to imagine how cycle-friendly is the national infrastructure and how ubiquitous and stress-free the experience.



We used Vrienden op de Fiets (Friends of the Bicycles) which enables bikers and hikers to stay overnight at one of the 6,000 hospitable addresses along routes throughout the Netherlands. (Annual membership: £10; nightly rate with very generous breakfast: 20 Euro.)

Everyone we met was open, kind and thoughtful. Some lodgings were very charming and decidedly artistic. One, solitarily centred in a wood, bore show-cases of Indonesian folk sculptures gracing the guest apartment and handsome stags regularly gracing the garden. Two

properties backed on to dykes. One offered wine libations and a vast, exquisite, antique red glass vessel collection occupying an entire room! A place right on a quiet harbour gave excellent views of enormous Dutch barges. An elegant country home gently boasted grand heirloom furniture, fine artefacts and Really Good Taste. Another offered lovely terraced gardens and several kilometres of unrestricted views to the setting of the sun. Elsewhere, a silver birch circlet announced an otherwise innocuous town house frontage with scarce hint of the amazing and amusing interior. The owner, a psychologist-cum-sculptor, had enhanced her home with flamboyant yet tasteful tributes to Gaudi; kitchen fittings followed organic lines (touches of La Pedrera and other delights), sculptures adorned the shelves and quirky Park Guell



multi-ceramic "benching" beckoned outdoors. Elsewhere, by an exquisite old house right next to a church, bells beautifully pealed every half hour to the tune of "Lord of all Hopefulness". The splendid bathroom-with-a-

view enabled silent constip....sorry.... concentration, whilst admiring much of the length of the steeple visible through the Velux window. A humbler abode, a purpose-built garden guest-house catered handsomely, with wine included.



At a mariners' meeting place we joined Dutch friends participating in the Grand Friesland Fossil-Free Initiative beginning the following day. They had built a huge, magnificent traditional boat (in two months) and the next morning this bore a suit of politicians in glorious floating government. We photographed and saw off all the craft, then cycled on to participate in the road vehicle convoy of the Fossil-Free parade. Ten miles of a major motorway, closed for the occasion, bore thousands of bikes, cars, lorries, trucks, milk-floats, skaters, "bubble-type" cars, bizarre contraptions of no fixed description and clever solar- powered craft. The sailors, meanwhile, had their own

parade, accompanied by a cheery guitarist hoisted up in the crow's nest. Our route passed under an aqueduct, over which the flotilla sailed and over which flew a two-person battery-powered plane.

The event was widely filmed and we saw ourselves on the news that same evening.

It was a unique holiday with nearly 450 miles covered and the richest of sights and experiences. We saw Shetland ponies galore (one with numerous blonde plaits), butterflies, hares, scores of peewits and wagtails, swallows that swept between and around us, fine horses, storks, goats-a-plenty, post-squatting huge raptors, ducks, swans, herons, a white-tailed eagle, Friesian cows of course...and the ubiquitous crows/rooks in their coarse gangs. There was even a sign: "Be Aware of Otters".

I've never cycled through so much forest, pasture, bog, scrub and dune; seen such quantities of purple loosestrife, evening primrose, chicory,

meadow-sweet, king thistle, great willow-herb, water avens, reeds, mallow, corn marigold, yarrow.....

The joy of cycling in The Netherlands cannot be over-estimated. ●

<https://www.vriendenopdefiets.nl/en/page/homepage>

Irena Motyka



BOOKREVIEW

SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL READING GROUPS

Each September year 6 pupils are offered the chance to be in a reading group led by librarian Rosemary Dunstan. Last September there were enough volunteers to fill 5 reading groups! These are some of the books they have been reading:

CHASE

by Linwood Barclay

Synopsis: Chipper

(a dog) is fleeing from a sinister organisation determined to bury the truth about what he really is. Miles away, 12-year-old orphan Jeff is working at his aunt's lakeside cabin business and missing the life he used to have. When Chipper's and Jeff's paths collide, they find themselves in the most dangerous game of chase imaginable.

Review by Ben

White: 'Chase' was a good action book with lots of questions that were finally answered. I really enjoyed this book and how it kept you guessing every step of the way. I also like the 2 pages at the end which lead on to an interesting sequel. A real page-turner.



THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER

by Jane Hardstaff

Synopsis: The crowds at the Tower of London love nothing better than watching an execution. Preferably while eating a pie. Not Moss – she'll never get used to beheadings, no matter what Pa

says. She watches the river as it flows past and longs to escape. But danger is lurking on the riverbank, and its murky depths hide a secret that could change everything...

Review by Alice

Burton: I really liked the story because the author makes you feel like you're watching what's happening, not just reading. It made me want to read on because of the surprises.



FIZZLEBERT STUMP, THE BOY WHO RAN AWAY FROM THE CIRCUS (AND JOINED THE LIBRARY)

by A F Harrold

Synopsis: Fizzlebert Stump lives in a travelling circus. He hangs around with acrobats, plays the fool with clowns, and puts his head in a lion's mouth every night. One day Fizz goes to the library – and something awful happens.

Review by Toby

Norris: I thought the story was very funny and I liked the setting. I liked the story because the author made it very informal (e.g. Do read chapter 10 to find out what happens to Fizz and Kevin. I don't think you'll be disappointed.) It made me feel that the story was more personal to me.



GORILLA DAWN

by Gill Lewis

Synopsis: Deep in the heart of the African jungle a baby gorilla is captured by a

group of rebel soldiers. Imara and Bobo are 2 children also imprisoned in the rebel camp. When they learn that the gorilla is destined to be sold into captivity, they swear to return him to the wild before it's too late.

Review by Emily

Williams: I liked this story because there was a lot of action. But it also made me feel sad because gorillas are getting killed all the time and this book raised my awareness of it.



WORRY MAGIC

by Dawn McNiff

Synopsis: Courtney is a worrier: she worries about everything, from her parents quarrelling, to her gran being in hospital. Then when her mum and dad start arguing AGAIN, Courtney begins to feel a bit funny....a bit woozy....a bit like a dream is coming on – and then afterwards everything has been magicked better.

Review by Amelia

Salek: I thought it was the best book I have read in the book club because it was full of surprises and I LOVE magic. I also thought it had a lot of descriptive writing that makes the book come alive.



All of these books are available to borrow from Sonning Common Library

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SONNING COMMON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

We need to review our Neighbourhood Plan. This will keep it current, compliant with planning policy and ensure that it continues to shape local development in line with residents' wishes.



Our current Neighbourhood Plan allocates five sites for the construction of 195 homes. One development has been completed at Lea Meadow, off Peppard Road and another is already underway at Sonning Grove, off Reade's Lane.

Potential new sites for development have been put forward by landowners and SODC. As before these will be consulted upon with the local community.

The Neighbourhood Plan working party hosted an open meeting at the Village Hall on **Saturday 2 February**. The information below was on display to the 150 residents who attended the meeting.

Why revise our Neighbourhood Development Plan?

Our Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was overwhelmingly approved by residents in a referendum in September 2016. Under Government rules it has full official force for two years but after that time, it remains a statutory plan, but becomes more vulnerable to challenge by developers. In order to retain maximum protection for the village the NDP needs to be updated and revised. In 2018 Sonning Common Parish Council took the decision to proceed with a revision of the plan and members of a new working party were recruited.

The Challenges

Our original NDP set out a vision and timetable for the future growth of the village – including allocating sites for almost 200 new homes. It had to be in full compliance with the Local Plan 2011 produced by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) – and so does the new plan. SODC is currently consulting on a new Local Plan 2034, that includes a big increase in housing for the district. For Sonning Common that is likely to mean an increase in our overall target allocation of more homes. Fortunately, the allocations in our original NDP plus more recent infill developments cover most of the target – BUT we still have to find room for 108 additional new homes.

SODC has also decided that the density on new development sites has to go up from 25 homes per hectare to 45 – nearly double.

Our Strategy

We are challenging SODC's overall housing targets AND the restrictive density requirement.

We have invited landowners to submit sites to be considered for development – this we have to do. We emphasise that NO planning applications have been made and that we have NOT formed any view about these sites. As a first step in assessing these sites, we are seeking volunteers from the village to carry out Site Assessment and Landscape Setting surveys.

What Next?

We will assess the feedback from the Open Day held on 2 February 2019. Volunteers are needed to help carry them

the Site assessments and if you were unable to attend the Open Day but would like to be involved please contact Tom Fort! The survey results will be assessed and recommendations made about potential new housing development. These will be brought forward to the village for discussion at a public meeting.

Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

Parish Council: Cllr Tom Fort (Chairman), Cllr Leigh Rawlins, Cllr Barrie Greenwood, Ros Varnes (Deputy Clerk, SCPC)

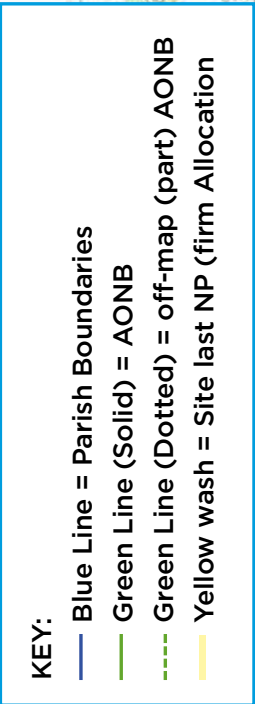
Residents: Michael Bowker, Sheelagh Bowker, Alastair Morris, Diana Pearman, Julia Whitelaw, Derek Wilmot, Stewart Woolfrey.

New sites submitted for consideration

- Johnson Matthey Car Park SON 23
- Land north of Reddish Manor SON 21b
- Kennylands Gym SON 8
- Reddish Manor (part garden and paddock) SON 29
- Blackmore Lane North SON 12a
- Blackmore Lane South SON 21a
- Blounts Court Road SON 22
- Alpen Rose SON 27
- Rudgings Plantation SON 26
- Widmore Pond SON 24
- Old Copse Field SON 1

These sites are shown on the village map on the opposite page. ●

scnp SONNING COMMON
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



THE MONKEY PUZZLE TALE ...

By COLLEEN PAVIOUR



A few years ago, when we were new to the village I was pushing my toddler boys in the double buggy along Peppard Road when I caught sight of the largest Monkey puzzle tree I'd ever seen.

Majestically centred outside the front of an equally striking home, this tree became a small obsession for me, following on from a childhood fascination with Monkey puzzles.

I was not surprised to learn that it was, in fact, the Monkey puzzle that led Stewart and Val Morgan to buy their house on Peppard Road, when they moved from Kent to Sonning Common with their four children, 31 years ago.

"We were very sad to leave Kent, but we were moving with my husband's work and looking for a house," Val remembered.

"Our previous home had a large oak tree and when we saw this house we fell in love with it because of the Monkey puzzle. It was quite special."

Their children loved it, too.

Val, now retired from her role as head teacher at a Henley primary school, said she explained to them how it got its name.

"Because when the monkey tries to climb it, it's very painful," she said, with a smile.

The sharp branches have not, however, stopped a family of nimble-footed squirrels from making their home at the top of the tree, Stewart pointed out.

(Reverend) Stewart Morgan was recently appointed as Associate Priest at All Saints' Church in Rotherfield Peppard.

Stewart believes their tree is roughly as old as the house, Bembridge, which sits tall on a spacious corner lot where Wood Lane meets Peppard Road.

"The house is 1910, and if you look at the size of the Monkey puzzle it must be at least 100 years old.

"There is a smaller shoot in front of the main tree, which was about two feet tall when we moved here 31 years ago, and now that is about 20 feet so based on that rate of growth, we think the main tree was planted when the house was built," said Stewart.

Curator at University of Oxford's Harcourt Arboretum, Ben Jones, recently wrote about the Monkey puzzle for Oxford Plants 400, a celebration of 400 plants of scientific and cultural significance.

The weekly highlights are part of an anniversary celebration in 2021 of 400 years of botanical research and teaching by the University of Oxford.

Ben said: "Monkey puzzles are quite prehistoric-looking and they were very much a botanical curiosity. It's actually

not uncommon to find them shoved in people's front gardens beside other trees, even though they can become very big."

The Monkey puzzle (scientific name: *Araucaria araucana*) is native to Chile and Argentina. It was introduced to the UK during the Victorian era and is now widely planted as an ornamental in parks and gardens.

The Victorians were also responsible for giving the tree its name due to the thinking that a monkey would be puzzled trying to climb its sharp and spiralling branches. Its other common names include: Chilean pine; Monkey tail tree; Pehuén, *Araucaria* and *Piñonero*.

The tree's seeds, which are similar to pine nuts, are edible and can be eaten raw or toasted.

In Oxford Plants 400, Plant 272 Monkey puzzle, Ben writes: "It was introduced to Europe shortly after its discovery in the late-eighteenth century. Whilst sailing as a surgeon under Captain Vancouver, Archibald Menzies attended a banquet hosted by the Governor of Chile. Menzies pocketed some of the unusual seeds from the dining table, germinating them aboard ship on his return voyage to England, successfully raising five or six seedlings in 1795; thirteen years after the species had first been described to science by the Chilean botanist Juan Molina under



the name *Pinus araucana*.”

Ben, who has been the arboretum curator at Oxford for 8 years, said Monkey puzzles need space to grow, free draining loam soil, its dead branches removed every so often, but beyond that, not much else.

“They are pretty self-sufficient,” he said.

Ben revealed, elsewhere in the world the species is under threat from fire, grazing and logging.

He said: “There is a disparity between the frequency of which you might see it in horticultural collections over here, versus in the wild, where they’re incredibly threatened.”

Monkey puzzle wood is very good timber that is ideal for carving.

Ben writes in his Plants 400 entry: “Before logging was outlawed, *Araucaria araucana* was one of the most desirable timbers in Chile, due to its durability and resistance to fungal decay, resulting in it being used for beams in buildings to veneers and plywood.”

It was originally my older sister, Genie, who sparked my family’s love of the Monkey puzzle during our 1980s childhood.

As first-generation Americans, my sister and I had never seen anything like this exotic tree, even in books. On a summer trip to Ireland to visit

my grandparents Genie managed to take back a cutting in her suitcase.

For decades later, that dark brown, painfully pointy branch served as an object of oddity and wonder to all who visited. The branch still likely rests on a shelf in my sister’s childhood bedroom in Edmond, Oklahoma.

The fascination with this ancient, extraordinary tree has been passed on to the next generation. Our two boys - now out of the double buggy and at school - jumped with excitement when I showed them the sizable cuts of *Araucaria araucana* that Val and Stewart kindly lopped off for me to bring home.

That which may puzzle monkeys, sure solved Show and Tell for the week. ●



MONKEY PUZZLE FACTS

In the Chilean Andes, it can reach heights of 50 metres and live for up to 2,000 years. Because of the longevity of this species, it is described as a living fossil.

The tree was alive 200 million years ago and rubbed shoulders with the dinosaurs. Its spine-like needles acted as protection from ancient grazing animals now long extinct.

It is the national tree of Chile.

It grows on the slopes of rocky volcanoes and its bark is fire resistant so can even survive lava flows.

Its conservation status was changed to Endangered by the IUCN in 2013 due to the dwindling population caused by logging, forest fires, and grazing.

It is usually dioecious, with the male and female cones on separate trees, though occasional individuals bear cones of both sexes. The male (pollen) cones are oblong and cucumber-shaped. The female (seed) cones hold about 200 seeds.

Rodents are important consumers and dispersers of its seeds. (That explains the squirrels living in the Morgan’s tree.)

In Chile the tree is called the Pehuén and is sacred to the local Pehuenche people: its seeds are an ancient staple of their diet.

The tree is home to the slender-billed parakeet and over 70 types of insects that live nowhere else on earth, but no monkeys.

You can buy your own single stem 60-90cm Monkey puzzle for about £45-£65.

Sources:

Oxford Plants 400: <https://herbaria.plants.ox.ac.uk/bol/plants400>

The Eden Project: <https://www.edenproject.com/>

The Woodland Trust: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>
Wikipedia



BRILLIANT LITTER PICKERS IGNORE THE AWFUL WEATHER

After enjoying the hottest February day on record, * The SoCo Springclean team ie Geoff Davis, Mark Weston and I, grew increasingly concerned. We watched the weather change from wall to wall sunshine, to a forecast of heavy rain and high winds. At one point we joked that we might well be the only litter pickers out in the village on Sunday 3rd March, but the winds held off and despite the rain, 66 volunteers turned out to join Sonning Common's annual litter pick, now in its second year.

At the time of writing we join 150,000+ people who have also signed up to take part in litter picking events for the Great British Spring Clean. Keep Britain Tidy is hoping that this number will rise to 500,000 by the end of their month long campaign, 22 March – 23 April, encouraging us to come together to clear the litter that builds up in our towns, villages, countryside and beaches.

We were therefore thrilled, to see volunteers of all ages, arriving to register on Sunday, despite the light rain and threat of heavy weather. Our aim for The SoCo Springclean is to reach areas of the village that our full-time litter picker Mark Weston, assisted by Tony Parisi, don't get out to regularly. We identified our litter hot spots which included Kennylands Rd,

Peppard Rd, Blounts Court Rd, Blackmore Lane, Reade's Lane and The Old Copse at the end of Woodlands Road. Our teams of volunteers were led by team leaders; Sunny Smithers, John Stoves, Leigh Rawlins, Alex Lawrence, Geoff Davis, Mark Weston, Jill Greenwood and Jason Applebey.

By the end of the hour litter pick we had filled 68 bin bags bursting with litter, plus a pile of other more unusual items including a microwave, a water feature and a high pressure gas canister. One lucky young picker went home with 50p, which caused great excitement.

A team from Sonning Common WI led by the wonderful Jenny Ward, ensured that everyone received a hot cup of tea or coffee after the pick and put on a fantastic spread of cakes donated by WI members. "SCWI really enjoyed providing cakes and drinks at the litter pick. It was such a worthwhile enterprise and so well organised by Emma and Geoff. It involves a lot of young people who care about the environment." commented Jenny.

During the pick, Missy Simic aged 9 said 'I'm actually really enjoying this, I'm having fun and saving the environment'. We were so pleased to hear this Missy, you really summed up the mood of the morning.

Geoff and I are already making plans for

the next SoCo Spring Clean in March 2020. Please do find, like and share our page on Facebook The SoCo Springclean will be on Sunday 8 March 2020 – save the date. You can also email us at soco.springclean@gmail.com ●

By EMMA LAWRENCE

Emma and Geoff would like to thank the following companies who helped support The SoCo Springclean 2019.

- FISH volunteer centre for use of their mini bus and driver Paul Jenkins to help transport pickers
- Adam Negus from Sonning Common Community Responders
- WI Sonning Common for supporting the event with teas and cakes
- Ellie Bunn at South Oxfordshire District Council who supplied bags, gloves, pickers and high-viz
- Biffa put on a special collection to deliver kit and pick up all the rubbish we collected
- Waitrose Henley donated refreshments
- Peppard Building Supplies loaned us barriers and supplied our children's rigger gloves in 2018
- Davis Tate Henley supplied our 50 children's high-viz in 2018

*20.3C in Wales on 25 February according to the Met Office



RECYCLE YOUR TOOTHBRUSH AT SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL

During the SoCo Springclean briefing, four school children from Sonning Common Primary School; Emily Applebey, Rosa Laming, Ben Lawrence and Stanley Lawrence told us about TerraCycle. The school is now a registered collection point for hard to recycle items such as crisp packets, Pringle tubes, tooth brushes, beauty product bottles and pens. Their TerraCycle collection bins are located in the entrance of the Library. It's a fantastic scheme that helps the environment and raises money for the school too. Mr Hirst the Head teacher is also hoping to add a collection point for pet food pouches in the near future. Head over to the Library to find out more.

Mr Hirst told us that the school has so far raised £64.79 from the recycling collections. They've passed on about 4000 crisp packets, 100 crisp tubes, 10kg from tooth brush scheme, 8kg from the beauty scheme and over 2200 pens and other writing implements.

"We would love some companies and other schools to contribute their recycling to the schemes, especially pens as I think this would be the easiest to collect."

So if any of you work for local companies, or other schools, and would like to collect on the schools behalf please do contact Mr Hirst via email at head.2506@sonning-common.oxon.sch.uk



Church news

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2019 COME – EVERYTHING IS READY

On Friday 1st March a wave of prayer encircled the globe organised by World Day of Prayer (WDP). This is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women that originated in the nineteenth century. The purpose is to encourage prayer and action for peace and justice. The WDP worship service has a special annual theme which is developed by women of a different country each year. Based on Slovenia's reputation for 'pushy' hospitality, this year's theme was "Come – Everything Is Ready" organised by the women of Slovenia. This reflected on God's invitation to everybody to

come and join his feast and that we must welcome all in our local community. Our local WDP service was held at Christ the King, Sonning Common and was organised by women from churches in Kidmore End, Peppard, Sonning Common and Stoke Row. Due to the presence of a Slovene speaker the choir were able to sing some of the refrains in the Slovene language. Christ the King was packed for the service and people were able to chat afterwards over a cup of soup and homemade cakes, including potica, the traditional Slovene cake.

Next year's theme is "Rise! Take Your Mat



and Walk" and the service will be written by the women of Zimbabwe. Make at date for 6 March 2020 at Springwater Congregational Church, Peppard. ●

10TH ANNUAL HENLEY CHOIR FESTIVAL IN AID OF DIABETES UK

Saturday 26 January 2019

Conductor: Frances Brewitt-Taylor BA(Hons) MA, ARCO

Organist: Michael Howell MA (Oxon)

Seven local choirs participated this year in the 10th Annual Henley Choir Festival which was held on Saturday 26 January 2019 at St Mary's Church, Henley. The concert conductor was our very own Frances Brewitt-Taylor BA(Hons), MA, ARCO (Director of Music at St. John the Baptist Kidmore End). The organist was Michael Howell MA (Oxon). The founders of the event are David Butler BA(Hons) MA Dip Mus(OU) (Director of Music at All Saints Peppard) and Elizabeth Hodgkin.

Each choir was invited to perform one or

two works of their own choosing.

The concert began with the choir from St Mary the Virgin, Henley; Aliquando. Then St John the Baptist, Kidmore End & Christ the King Sonning Common; St Margaret's Harpsden; St Nicholas Rotherfield Greys; All Saints, Rotherfield Peppard & All Saints, Junior Choir; Hambleden Valley Choir.

The programme consisted of secular and sacred works. The choir of St John the Baptist chose to sing an Argentinian love song entitled, "Te Quiero" which conveyed a tender love story intermingled with patriotic love of country and was well-received. After a 20-minute interval for refreshments, the massed choirs sang Part 1 of The Messiah (Handel) and concluded with

the Hallelujah Chorus. Among the four soloists was our parish rector, Rev. James Stickings, who sang the Bass solo.

The other soloists included Rebecca Bell, soprano from All Saints Peppard, Lucy Gibbs, alto (a Choral Scholar at Merton College, Oxford) and Emlyn Williams, tenor (whose professional career includes performances with English National Opera amongst others).

Apart from having fun making music together, Elizabeth Hodgkin as presenter explained that the event is one of several in the Henley area raising much-needed funds for various charities. This year the concert was held in aid of Diabetes UK and raised £1,700. ●

LINDA SCOTTORN

SPRINGWATER CHURCH

Over fifty people attended a 'Unity Service' at Springwater on Sunday evening 17 January.

The sound of the praise as the various denominations sang together was incredibly powerful and moving.

One visitor described how she felt wrapped around in a cocoon of God's presence that fortified her for the week ahead, another commented on the warm welcome enhanced by the smell of baking (goodies to be enjoyed at the end of the service!).

We recently enjoyed a superb 'brunch' (Full English plus fruit, cereals cheeses etc...) followed by a much-needed walk.

By the time you read this, we will have held a fellowship bring and share meal on 10 February and a sale of bread

freshly baked by ('Compassionate Loaf') in the Springwater kitchen - bit of a theme here!

Kevin and Linsey (our joint pastors) will be going to India for a week to introduce 'Compassionate Loaf' to the victims of trafficking at the Oasis hostel. The people there are very keen to learn how to bake bread and how to sell it to raise funds for this project, while giving purpose and confidence to those who take part.

Our regular events such as the Ark Baby and Toddler Group and The Steering Wheel Fellowship continue to thrive.

We really look forward to welcoming you to one of our friendly Family Services which take place on Sundays at 10.30am and do join us for tea or coffee and a chat afterwards. ●

Easter

Easter will soon be upon us and we will be having various events during Easter week including a traditional Seder dinner and a guided tour of our Biblical Garden, please do call or email for times and details. We have our Easter Sunday service at the usual time (10.30am). On the Monday prior to Easter Sunday we will have a free film night, we are showing the film 'Risen', the Seder dinner will take place on the Thursday evening and on Good Friday the church will be open and warm all day for people to meditate and pray as they choose.

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

As this issue of the magazine is being distributed, we are just a couple of weeks away from the most important week of the Christian calendar, Holy Week. The week we join Jesus as he enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey cheered by the crowds, share his last supper, see him mocked and put to death and then celebrate the joy of his resurrection. St Michael's will be celebrating each of these events to which everyone is invited:

13/14 April - Palm Sunday

Blessing of palms at each of our weekend Masses.

18 April - Maundy Thursday

7.00pm Mass of the Lord's Supper at which the feet of 12 parishioners will be washed.

19 April - Good Friday

3.00pm Solemn Passion of the Lord.

20 April - Holy Saturday

8.00pm Easter Vigil and Mass of the Resurrection.

21 April - Easter Sunday Mass

at 9am and 10.30am.

Other devotions include our Lenten reconciliation service with an opportunity for individual confession at 7pm, 15 April and Stations of the Cross at various times. We are also looking forward to joining all the Christians of the area for the Walk of Witness around the village on Good Friday starting at 10am from Christ the King.

As a prelude to Lent we had a Games and Pancake afternoon in the church hall. A huge variety of board games for all ages were available and 'experts' were on hand to get us started on unfamiliar games.

On the 2nd Sunday of Lent our 10.30am Mass was dedicated to babies who had died in the womb or at birth. It was an opportunity to remember and pray for them and the families who had suffered such loss. We hope to make this an annual event.

Please check the Weekly Newsletter on our website for up to date information: www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk

EASTER SERVICES

MAUNDY THURSDAY:

St John the Baptist 8.00pm

GOOD FRIDAY:

St John the Baptist 2.00pm

GOOD FRIDAY WALK OF WITNESS:

10.00am from Christ the King car park

EASTER SUNDAY:

Christ the King 9.30am;

St John the Baptist 11.00am



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Parish news

The content of this page is the sole responsibility of, and is paid for by, Sonning Common Parish Council

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU GET FOR £1.64 PER WEEK?

That's what the services of your Parish Council will cost you this year.

Every year the Parish Council has to decide on its precept - the money it needs to carry out all its responsibilities to the residents of the village. Our precept then becomes part of the total Council Tax bill that is sent to every household. The precept is always stated as the charge made to a Band D property, so it is higher for properties in Bands E to H and lower for Bands A to C.

For the year to 4 April 2019 the Sonning Common Band D precept has been £77.68 or £1.49 per week; for the new year starting on 5 April it will be £85.45 or £1.64 per week. These notes are to explain why we need these funds including the extra 15 pence per week.

When deciding on the precept for the new financial year from 5 April the Parish Council has had to budget for the greatly increased range of activities that it undertakes for the village. Our 2019/20 budget is set up under the headings below. Where an amount is shown as net this is because we expect to receive grants towards the total cost or some of it is being funded from our earmarked reserves.

- **Administration - £60,930** - this covers all the things that we are obliged to do by law and/or by existing at all. These include staffing and running the Parish Office which manages all our activities. Under this heading these

range from the public conveniences to the parish website, communication with many statutory bodies as well as residents and ensuring that everything is legal and above board. We hold 11 public Council meetings, 12 Finance Committee and 24 Planning Committee meetings each year as well as various one-off events. In the coming year costs will include those of electing a new council if enough people come forward. More on this below.

- **Allotments - £397 net** - we have 44 plots on Horsepond Road which we let and look after.
- **General Environment - £49,815** - this is the cost of grass cutting, street cleaning, footpath maintenance, hedge and tree cutting, flower beds, dog poo bins, seats bins, signs and bus shelters plus graffiti removal and our CCTV system. We also make small grants totalling around £7K per annum to many deserving organisations.
- **Play Areas & Skatepark - £14,400 net** - our three play areas and the skatepark have to be looked after and maintained for their safe enjoyment.
- **Widmore Pond - £4,400 net** - there is a lot that needs to be done in and around the pond to keep it as a safe and attractive amenity.

- **Woodlands - £5,500** - this is the area of woodland between Old Copse and the RUFC football pitches that we purchased for £50,000 last year. Long term plans are being made but in the meanwhile we must ensure that they are safe and well managed.
- **Village Hall - £1,290 net** - the hall is now managed by the parish council and we have obtained significant grants towards the cost of the flat roof replacement this year.
- **ClubSC - £10,000** - the youth club only exists because we are continuing to fund its base costs which we have done for many years.
- **Neighbourhood Plan Update - £3,000 net** - this is a vital activity to ensure that developments in the village are planned and controlled.
- **Major Projects.** At present we have two working parties set up. The Memorial Hall Field Working Party is planning and directing how we will develop and use the field opposite Chiltern Edge whilst the Village Centre Working Party is developing plans for the village centre. Both of these large projects will be funded from a variety of sources including reserves and grants. •

Could you be a parish councillor? Have a look at the noticeboard on page 10.

TOM FORT MICK

Mick Wells – known as ‘Uncle Mick’ to legions of customers at Heath and Watkins – died quite suddenly early on the last day of February. It was his third go of cancer and he knew he wasn’t going to get through it, but it was still a shock. On the other hand, Mick being Mick, he would have hated the indignity of a long, slow decline.

Like many others I got to know him as the genial presence behind the counter in our favourite hardware store. Perched on his stool, he was a reassuring presence with his fine beard and equally fine nose – dispensing opinions and advice on everything under the sun, from the respective merits of different kinds of rat poison to which early seed potatoes you

should be planting (he favoured Lady Christl).

I got to know him better when I asked him if I and Sharona – who now runs Heath and Watkins – could refurbish and use the polytunnel behind the shop. He was glad to see spuds sprouting there again, and it was seeing me and Sharona there on a regular basis that gave him the idea that we might be interested in taking over the shop – as Mick himself was becoming too unwell to do it.

We became great pals in the course of the negotiations, and I know he was delighted that Heath and Watkins would keep going after he was gone. Mick believed in calling a spade and spade, usually a ***** spade, and one



could never accuse him of suffering fools gladly. But he had a big heart and a generous soul, and he loved running the shop because of the unlimited opportunities it gave him to interact with his huge range of customers.

I last saw him the Sunday before he died, when the sitting room was filled with the smells of an impending roast to which he was much looking forward. As always we had a good laugh – that’s what I will most miss about him, the laugh. ●

COOK'S CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

BAKED FALAFEL WITH CUCUMBER AND MINT RAITA

175g (6 oz) low fat natural yoghurt
1/2 cucumber – peeled, seeded and finely chopped
2 tablespoons of chopped coriander and mint
1 teaspoon ground cumin
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 tablespoon mayonnaise
1 (400g) tin chickpeas, drained
1 onion, chopped
1/2 bunch fresh parsley
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 egg
1 dessertspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon salt
1 dash pepper
1 pinch cayenne pepper

1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon olive oil
100g (4 oz) dried breadcrumbs

1. In a small bowl combine yoghurt, cucumber, coriander, mint, cumin, salt, pepper and mayonnaise. Chill for at least 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven. In a large bowl, mash chickpeas until thick and pasty; don't use a blender as the consistency will be too thin. In a blender, process onion, parsley and garlic until smooth. Stir into mashed chickpeas.
3. In a small bowl combine egg, cumin, coriander, salt, pepper, cayenne, lemon juice and baking powder. Stir into chickpea mixture along with

olive oil. Slowly add breadcrumbs until mixture is not sticky but will hold together; add more or less breadcrumbs, as needed. Form 8 balls and then flatten into patties.

4. Place patties on a greased baking tray until brown on both sides, approx. 15 minutes.
5. Serve with pre prepared mint raita. ●



SAVE MONEY ON ENERGY BILLS! - CITIZENS ADVICE TIPS

**citizens
advice**

Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South and Vale is encouraging people to analyse their home energy spending and take steps to cut down on fuel wastage. The charity has these tips:



1. Check your bills carefully and make sure you're on the cheapest tariff. Most energy suppliers offer fixed price tariffs, where the price of a unit of energy will remain the same for the length of the deal. Think about switching to a new supplier (for an energy prices comparison tool, go to <https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk>). Citizens Advice has helped many people to switch successfully to a new energy supplier, so contact us to discuss your options.

2. Make your home energy-efficient. Insulate lofts and walls, double-glaze your windows and use thick curtains to keep heat in. Get your boiler serviced annually. Grants are available to help with insulation: call the Energy Saving Advice Service on **0300 123 1234**, Monday to Friday 9 am to 8 pm.

3. Your central heating thermostat and your timer (or programmer) are your good friends and allies when it comes to saving money. Shave down the timings so that the boiler is only working when you need it. A thermostat temperature of 20 degrees is adequate for most homes.

4. Try an online Home Energy Check at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/resources/tools-calculators

5. For those who qualify, various grants and discounts are available to help with bills: the Warm Home Discount [https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount)

scheme and the Winter Fuel Payment <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>

6. Sign on to the Priority Services Register if you're of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick. The scheme gets you extra energy services free of charge. Visit <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk> for further information.

For more help and support, contact Citizens Advice in person or on Adviceline (03 444 111444). For locations of offices and opening hours see www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale ●

SONNING COMMON PRE-SCHOOL NEWS

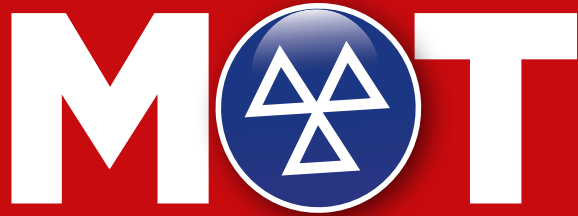
Our Forest School has been running for over 6 months and the pre-school children love it! They made some bee food - seed "bombs" made of clay, compost, and seeds, and we are on a journey to become plastic free - eg changing our plastic milk jugs to glass bottles.

In March we had a book swap week (thanks to the CCA charity shop for book donations) and looked at fairytales including a visit from the Giant from Jack and the Beanstalk who left us some magic beans to grow (thanks to Heath and Watkins for supplying the giant with the beans!).

We are now able to accept children from 2yrs of age, offering early drop off and late pick up sessions. Do follow us on Instagram #scpreschool where we try and have daily updates of our activities. ●



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HEALTH CENTRE NEWS

New GP registrars

Dr Abi Taylor and Dr Chiedza Matongo joined the practice team on Wednesday 6 February. Welcome to them both.

Dr Taylor is at SCHC for one year and Dr Matongo is with us for 6 months.

Dr Oliver Walsgrove is at the health centre until August 2019, having completed his year.

Healthy Activities for all ages in and around Sonning Common

There is an addendum available for the above on the SCHC website <http://www.sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk/> or paper version in the entrance lobby or reception. The list is also available in the Library and Day Lewis chemist.

Social Prescribing in Sonning Common

To find out more about social prescribing, what it is and how it can benefit you, please see details on the topic table from the middle of March-June in the foyer of The Sonning Common Health Centre or ask your Doctor.

Alternatively visit our web page:

www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/social-prescribing for full details. ●

BIGGER, BETTER HEALTH CENTRE

The office space downstairs has been converted to create three new clinical rooms. The small outside patio area has been altered and will become part of a larger waiting room with a glass lantern roof flooding the new room with lots of natural light. A new dispensary area is being built accessible by patients from the Reception entrance. The old dispensary will be converted into a larger treatment room and clinical testing area. The work is being part funded by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and will enable the Health Centre team to manage its increasing patient list in the years ahead. ●

WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION ABOUT DEMENTIA AND ALZHEIMER'S

At Sonning Common Health Centre the following are available

The Dementia Guide – Living well after diagnosis. An excellent book which contains information about many aspects of Dementia, including where to get help.

Dementia Oxfordshire Living well with dementia – Leaflets available. Call 01865410210 or Website www.dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk.

Carers Oxfordshire Leaflets available. Call 0345050 7666

Website www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk or Email carersoxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Dementia – Local Help Resources was compiled by Sue Litchfield to help those with Dementia and their carers find local information. This can also be found on www.sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk

Dementia UK – Helping families face Dementia.

Email info@dementiauk.org Website www.dementiauk.org

Alzheimer's Society Call 0300 222 1122 or

Website www.alzheimers.org.uk

No Leaflets – AGE UK Oxfordshire Call:0345 450 1276

Website: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire>

Email : admin@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

MATTERS OF MEMORY TALK/FORUM

26 February

The Palmer Room at the Health Centre was the venue for the first of three talks on Dementia. It was a glorious spring afternoon. Dr Sam Muncey introduced Kate Hampton from AGE UK and Diana Beveridge both of whom told very personal stories of being carers for family members and gave much useful advice.

They explained how, when & where to get help. The talks were followed by questions and experiences from the audience. Tea, coffee and home-made cakes were served to round off the very successful afternoon.

SUE LITCHFIELD



JACKIE'S CRAFT COLUMN

SPRING WOOL BASKET

Another opportunity for some sensory crafting - have newspaper to hand to cover up any surfaces and aprons at the ready!

What you'll need:

- A bowl or an inflated balloon
- Cling film (if using a bowl)
- Wool
- Scissors
- PVA glue
- A bowl for mixing glue
- Paintbrush
- Tissue paper and pompoms to decorate



1) If using a bowl, cover with cling film to stop the project sticking

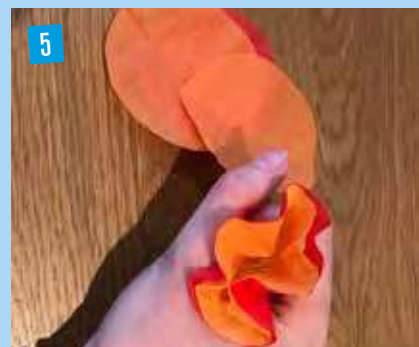


2) Squeeze a generous amount of PVA into the mixing bowl and add a drop of water – too much and the project won't dry properly so be cautious!

3) Cut lengths of wool and dip them in the PVA mix. I chose green wool to look like grass but any colours will work – why not try a mix of colours?



4) Drape the pieces of wool over the bowl or base of the balloon until it is reasonably well covered. The more wool you use the more stable your final bowl will be. When you think you are finished, use the paintbrush to give your bowl another coating of glue.



5) Once the bowl is covered, put to one side and start making your decorations. To make my flowers I cut circles out of tissue paper and pushed the centres into a closed fist to give them a 3D effect. You could use stickers, shapes – be creative. Then I used pompoms as the centre of the flowers.

6) While the glue is still wet, stick your decorations to the outside of the bowl.

7) Wait for the wool to dry completely, remove the bowl and peel off the cling film. It may take a couple of days to dry depending on the glue you have used and how much water you have mixed in. If you remove the bowl too soon it will collapse so be patient!



Why not fill your bowl with eggs ready for Easter?

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DIARY DATES

APRIL 2019

Wednesday 3

10.30am - 12noon

Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common WI. Open to all. Village Hall

Saturday 6

2-4pm

Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - Spring Show. Village Hall

Monday 8

2.30pm

FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

Tuesday 9

7.30pm

Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society: "Growing Auriculas for Pleasure" by James Smallwood. Peppard Memorial Hall

Monday 15

8pm

Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

Wednesday 17

2-4pm

Bereavement Group. FISH building

Thursday 18

11.30am

FISH - Pub lunch

Thursday 18

7.30pm

Sonning Common Women's Institute: "Recycling with a difference", a talk by Sue Drage. Village Hall

Thursday 25

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

Tuesday 30

2-4pm

Matters of Memory. Health Centre

MAY 2019

Wednesday 1

10.30am - 12noon

Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common WI. Open to all. Village Hall

Thursday 2

Election for Parish Councillors

Monday 13

2.30pm

FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

Thursday 16

11.30am

FISH - Pub lunch

Thursday 16

7.30pm

Sonning Common Women's Institute: Resolutions followed by a Beetle Drive. Village Hall

Saturday 18 May -

Sunday 2 June

Chilterns Walking Festival

Monday 20

8pm

Sonning Common Parish Council - Annual Parish Meeting. Village Hall

Thursday 23

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

Saturday 25

10am

Elmer the Patchwork Elephant's 30th anniversary. Library

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Beacon Flooring	8	Pilates ABC	35
Beville Estate Agents	2	Property Maintenance	33
Bondright Roofing Services	Back	Red Kite Electrical	9
Bonner Locksmiths	12	Robin James Opticians	9
Brambles Floral Service	33	St Michaels Church Hall	12
Bridges Estate Agents	17	S J Hinton Carpenter & Joiner	35
Carl Woods Butchers Ltd	26	Sonning Common Beauty	35
Caversham Aerial Services	2	Sonning Common Garage	30
Compass Water Softeners	12	Sonning Common Pet Care	12
Computer Repairs	33	Sonning Common Pre-School	2
Curtains, Blinds, Pelmetts,	30	Spruce Property Maintenance Service	13
Davis Tate Estate Agency	8	Stafford & Son (Garden & Building Maintenance)	9
Elements Kitchen Design	2	Studio One (Pilates, Matwork & Yoga)	8
Ell's Decor	9	T C Fuller Plumbing & Heating	35
Family Hairdressing	12	Tandoori Connoisseur	35
Functional Physio	Back	TexturePlus (Interior & Exterior Decorating)	30
G B Transport (Removals)	12	Time 4 Pilates	9
Girl Power (Electrician)	9	Tomalin and Son Funeral Directors	Back
Graham Blake Soft Furnishings	13	TV Aerial Services	33
Heights Tree Care	13	Wee-Cot Seating	26
Henley Antiques	26	Wood Lane Dentistry	2
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Kidbys Sheds	9		
LC Chauffeurs	33		
Mike Farina Auto Services Ltd	Back		

The FISH Volunteer Centre runs regular door-to-door shopping trips to Tesco in Henley every Monday morning and to Henley Waitrose, Henley Farmers Market, Morrisons in Reading and Reading Town Centre every month.

The programme of shopping and leisure trips for each month is published and distributed on 20th of the preceding month and bookings are taken from that date. Copies of the programme are available from the FISH Volunteer Centre, Sonning Common Library, the Christian Community Action shop, Pet Country Supplies and on request from Day Lewis Chemist. The monthly programme of trips is posted on noticeboards in both Peppard and Sonning Common and is also sent to individual email addresses. If you would like to receive a regular monthly copy, please email busmanager@fishvolunteercentre.co.uk with the message 'bus programme please' and your name.

Details of all minibus trips can also be found on the FISH website www.fishvolunteercentre.org.uk

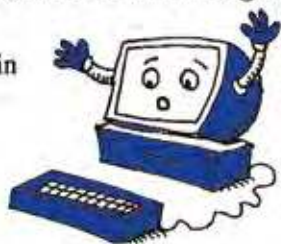
For more information and to book any trip call **0118 972 3986** any weekday between 09.30 and 11.30 a.m. ●

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