

june | july 2011

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# From “ the editor



Having announced that I'd be stepping down as editor after this edition I've since decided to stay. Several people have kindly offered to collaborate with putting the magazine together, which should be a good help.

May saw the first parish council election in the village in more than 25 years. We now have 12 new, elected representatives to take the village forward (see page 15). Council meetings are open to the public, giving us all a chance to have our say on the issues that affect us and our community.

Proposed housing development, one of those big issues, is again on the agenda. In the last few weeks South Oxfordshire District Council has received an outline planning application to build 50 new homes on fields behind houses on Kennylands Road (see page 3).

Revised outline plans for the proposed 50-80 home development on Lea Meadow are expected to be submitted to the district council soon.

We have lots of photographs in this edition, including Sonning Common from the air, the new children's centre, the pre-school opening and the community tea party in the village hall. So, see if you can spot your house or someone you know!

The magazine committee has decided to print more magazines to enable us to deliver copies regularly to Shiplake Bottom and parts of Blounts Court Road and Stoke Row Road. Volunteers to deliver the magazine in Shiplake Bottom would be welcome. Please contact Geoffrey Adams, distribution manager, on 0118 972 2134.

Enjoy the start of summer!

**ROS VARNES** Editor

Email me at:

[sonningcommonmagazine@googlemail.com](mailto:sonningcommonmagazine@googlemail.com)

## 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 distribution manager Geoffrey Adams. Email: [geoffrey.adams5@btopenworld.com](mailto:geoffrey.adams5@btopenworld.com)  
Phone: 0118 972 2134

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

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#### COVER IMAGE

##### LIBRARY MANAGER ROSEMARY DUNSTAN

by Ros Varnes

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# New children's centre for the village

It was a bright day for the youngsters of Sonning Common when the new Rainbow Children's Centre opened its doors this spring.

The purpose-built centre, at Chiltern Edge School, offers a wide range of activities and family support programmes for children under-five and their parents/carers.

Current sessions include stay and play, a music group, baby clinic and Family Links, a 10-week parent nurturing programme. Facilities on-site include a family room, baby area and kitchen as well as an exciting, all-weather outdoor play area. The front of Chiltern Edge School was re-modelled to accommodate the new children's centre.

As part of the £500,000 project, a new, joint reception area was created and the school converted two unused classrooms into a brand new science laboratory and a computer suite to support vocational BTEC courses in science and sport.

Rainbow Children's Centre manager Fran Bunkall said: "We are so pleased that the building has gone ahead in Sonning Common and think that, alongside the new pre-school and other facilities for under-fives in the village, we will be providing good quality support for many young children and their families."

As well as its regular sessions, the centre offers information and advice on a range of topics including early years' learning and development, healthy eating, job vacancies, benefits' information and domestic abuse.

\*An earlier application to build the children's centre in Grove Road was withdrawn after a rare, protected species of newts was found on the proposed site. ■

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**Baby and toddler group now at children's centre**

Sonning Common Baby and Toddler Group has moved its regular sessions to the Rainbow Children's Centre.

The group, which is free, meets on Wednesdays between 9.30am and 11.30am during term-time. Activities include craft, snack time and singing. To coincide with the move the group has acquired lots more new, fun toys.

New mums, dads, grandparents and carers are always welcome. For more information contact: Liz Bland on 0118 972 1081.



The new Rainbow Children's Centre at Chiltern Edge School, built by Lakehouse and designed by Mouchel.

## Peppa Pig opens new pre-school

Around a hundred adults and children watched as children's television character Peppa Pig cut the ribbon at the official opening of Sonning Common's new pre-school.

Pre-school manager Clare Saunders thanked fund-raisers and parents for their support. She said: "I would like to say on behalf of all the staff how thrilled we are with our new building.

"We are very pleased with the much safer learning environment we are able to offer — no more slippery steps, uneven paths or buckets for the roof — and a proper entrance. The children have always had the opportunity to play outdoors but with the canopy they can now enjoy the experience even more - whatever the weather."

Nikki Hampton, from the pre-school's fundraising team, commented: "All the committee members and staff would like to thank all of the many local organisations and

businesses which have helped raise money to furnish and equip the new building.

"We are still working hard to raise the remaining funds we need to finish planting and landscaping the garden.

"If any local families, whose children have attended pre-school in past years, would like to purchase a brick engraved with their child's name, they can order them at the pre-school. The bricks will be laid in a paved path." ■

■ **ABOVE RIGHT:** Children's television character Peppa Pig at the official opening of Sonning Common's new pre-school.

■ **RIGHT:** Jennifer Woodward and Caroline Bennett, the daughters of the late Kate Luckett who worked in the pre-school for 30 years.





■ An artist's impression of what new housing on Lea Meadow could look like (copyright David Parker Architects Ltd.)

# Have your say on housing plans

## Public consultation has begun on a new outline planning application to build 50 new houses in the village.

South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) is currently considering an outline plan, submitted on 10 May, to build 50 new houses on pasture land behind homes on Kennylands Road.

Residents have until 10 June to write to the district council about the Kennylands Road proposal, during this initial phase of the planning process.

Kennylands Road Opposition Group has been formed by some residents who are against the plans.

Henry Pott, from the opposition group, said: "There is no natural boundary to this site - it backs on to an area of outstanding natural beauty stretching towards Kidmore End. The worry is that it might be difficult to contain housing development in this area in future, if current plans are approved.

"Anyone interested in commenting on the proposals should write individual letters to the district council outlining all the different issues they have.

"We do expect there to be new houses in Sonning Common and there will always be an element of, 'not in my back garden'. All we ask for is a fair fight in determining which is the least worst option for the village."

The application to develop the land behind numbers 34 to 56 Kennylands Road is being

made by local house builder T A Fisher. Acting on his behalf, agent Iain Stevenson, from Carter Jonas, said: "We think this is the best site for development because it is well-related to the rest of the village. It is a short walk or cycle to the shops, services and facilities."

Last month a public exhibition took place in the village hall on a revised proposal to build 50 to 80 houses on Lea Meadow, next to the Herb Farm, off the Peppard Road.

Agents for the landowner, Richard Scott, will take into account residents' feedback from the exhibition before submitting a second, more detailed outline plan to the district council.

Planning consultant Ken Dijkman, speaking on behalf of Mr Scott, said: "One of the major benefits of our site is that it is entirely contained. It can't get any bigger because it is surrounded by protected trees."

He went on to claim that if all went well with the proposal, "new houses could be coming out of the ground in Lea Meadow in six months time".

But Michael Moore, major applications officer for SODC, denied this was possible. "A lot of public involvement has to take place before we will even begin to consider whether to approve any application for development of the scale proposed."

At the end of 2010 the district council published its new core strategy, which is currently being examined by an independent planning inspector. If approved, the council can adopt the core strategy which sets out

sites for strategic housing development in the towns of Didcot, Thame and Wallingford.

Later the council will be looking for sites for 740 homes to be split between 12 large villages in the district, including Sonning Common.

"In due course Sonning Common may be expected to take a modicum of development," said Mr Moore. "How many homes and where they go are decisions in which the public will be involved."

The district council would manage this public process, he said, which would include public exhibitions and detailed discussions with Sonning Common Parish Council.


**Further details on the Kennylands Road planning application are available on SODC's website. Hard copies are available from the parish clerk at the village hall. Comments on the application may be made to: [planning.west@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.west@southoxon.gov.uk)** ■



■ Part of the proposed site for development in Kennylands Road, next to Kidby's Yard.

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# What's happening to our library?



**The strong public reaction to the threatened closure of 20 libraries across Oxfordshire has been recognised by the county council.**

In March Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) decided that the proposal to close nearly half of its libraries should be reviewed and that it would look at all options with an open mind.

The council is expected to hold a public consultation on the future of the library service in Oxfordshire, due to run from now until the end of September.

John Jackson, director of social and community services for the county council, said: "As part of the four-month consultation all the available data used to support our proposal will be made publicly available. We will be providing a profile for each individual library which will include high level financial information.

"We want to work with local communities and with friends of libraries groups to determine the future plans for each library. We anticipate holding face-to-face public meetings for each library wherever this is requested by the local community."

In a public statement made earlier this year, council leader Keith Mitchell said the local authority would work hand-in-hand with communities to find a way to keep libraries

open. However, he made it quite clear that this could only happen if, in some places, volunteers stepped forward "to help run them".

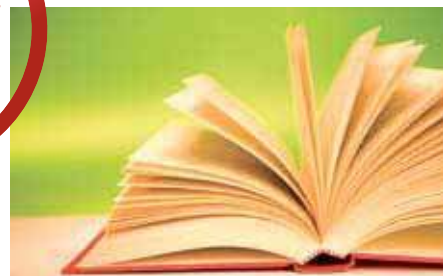
The Friends of Sonning Common Library say they are determined to continue to campaign for professional library staff to be based in the village. Erica Coulehan, from the Friends group, said: "We believe village-based professional library staff are essential to the delivery of a comprehensive and efficient library service in Sonning Common.

"We will be making it clear to the county council that community volunteers may have a valuable part to play in supporting library staff, not in being responsible for running and funding the library themselves.

"We urge people to consider now whether they would be prepared to help at the library in future. Please check at the library for details of how to volunteer."

While awaiting the public consultation period, the Friends of Sonning Common Library have continued to meet and plan and to liaise with the Save Oxfordshire Libraries group - an alliance of the threatened libraries.

When full details of the public consultation become available they will be posted on the Save Our Library website ([www.saveourlibrary.org](http://www.saveourlibrary.org)) and on village notice boards. Please also check OCC's website for information. ■



## Library use continues to rise

**The total number of children's books being issued by Sonning Common Library has gone up by 23 per cent, according to the latest figures.**

All issues of books, DVDs, CDs and audiobooks have gone up by 16 per cent and the total number of visits by users was up by eight per cent, from 25,571 to 27,564.

The figures, released by Oxfordshire County Council, cover the period April 2010 to March 2011.

### KEEP THOSE SIGNATURES COMING

To date 330 signatures have been placed on a petition to save Sonning Common Library.

People are appealing to Oxfordshire County Council to maintain funding for Sonning Common Library and village-based professional library staff.

The petition is still available for signing at the library in Grove Road. It will be handed over to the county council as part of a public consultation on the future of the library service.

### PREPARE FOR THE SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

There are no excuses for being bored these school holidays with the Summer Reading Challenge about to begin.

From mid-July to mid-September, children will be encouraged to visit the library four times for books to read themselves or share with a parent.

On successful completion of the challenge, children will receive a medal and some small rewards.

Don't forget to look out for details of special Saturday story times in August.

## Volunteers required!

**There are many ways in which the local community can help to support and develop services at the library in future. If you are interesting in volunteering some time to help at the library, however little, here are just a few ideas:**

Could you run 'silver surfer' sessions to introduce the internet to novices?

How about providing home-made cakes and coffee on a Saturday morning, or just organising the rota?

Could you assist with Saturday morning story-time for children?

Can you act, learn lines or dramatise a story? You could use the library for one Saturday morning a month to help involve children with active story-telling.

Could you run a book club event, say for teenagers, once a month?

Could you help to transport elderly people to and from the library?

Could you visit the housebound and take them books on a regular basis?

Or perhaps organise a fund-raising event such as opening your garden or holding a table-top sale?

Do you have a particular skill you could apply as a library volunteer?

The possibilities are endless - it's up to us what we do to support our library. Forms will be available at the library or on the Save Our Library website ([www.saveourlibrary.org](http://www.saveourlibrary.org)) to log your interest in volunteering. Or speak with library manager Rosemary Dunstan. ■

**The Friends of Sonning Common Library**

## Library volunteers are battle-weary from raising funds

Shortly after the village hall meeting in January about the possible withdrawal of funding for our library we paid a visit to the community-run library at West Wycombe in Buckinghamshire.

West Wycombe's library is in a 1940s smithy/wheelwright's building. The first impression, with its open fire and sofas, is of a comfortable, cramped and slightly dishevelled reading room.

The shelving space is limited. The books are all donated and this shows, I'm afraid, in the quality of the books on offer. The non-fiction section was very small and reference books appeared to be out-of-date.

There was very little large print and no audio books or DVDs. The children's section was tiny compared to our wonderful selection of books in Sonning Common. West Wycombe has hundreds more books in store but no space to display them.

There are a couple of computers and any spare space is taken up with items for sale, made by supporters to raise funds. The abiding impression, from talking to the volunteer on duty, was one of battle weariness from the constant need to raise funds.

It is very difficult to give a dispassionate view of our experience and it seems churlish to say anything that could be taken as criticism. It is clear that a huge amount of effort goes into keeping a library in West Wycombe open.

Sonning Common Library is in a very good, well-appointed building and needs to remain there. The Friends of Sonning Common Library are working hard to maintain funding, but they and prospective volunteers should be under no illusion about how much effort would be involved with maintaining the library without county council funding.

George May, the treasurer of Little Chalfont Community Library, has been quoted as saying, "There is no doubt the correct method of running libraries is for the county council to do it". And he is a man in a position to know.

**DAVID IRWIN**  
Wood Lane

## Tea party goes with a swing

The village's Royal wedding day tea party was a jolly, chatty affair with much talk about Kate's dress and Princess Beatrice's hat.

Around 100 guests attended a tea party in the village hall, organised by a group of residents to celebrate village and community life.

Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury, one of the organisers, said: "People really got into the spirit of it all. They met people they didn't know and all got chatting." ■



**ABOVE LEFT:**

■ From left, Jill Vallis, Barbara Butler, Sue Frayling-Cork, Carole Lewis, June Fisher, John Stoves, Jo Stoves, Susan Rusman, Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury and Diana Atfield who organised and hosted the Royal wedding day tea party in the village hall.



**ABOVE RIGHT:**

■ Michael Mcleod and Barbara Butler with some of the delicious, home-made cakes on offer.

## A right Royal event

Not to be outdone by the village hall tea party, the primary school held a special picnic to celebrate the Royal wedding.

Children were invited to dress in red, white and blue for the day and spent the morning making commemorative paper plates and crowns.

After lunch they all turned out onto the school's playing fields for a picnic and to toast the new, Royal couple. ■

**ABOVE RIGHT:**

■ Hamish Andrews, from year five, goes patriotic with the Union Jack.

**RIGHT:**

■ Teaching assistant Pauline Jones hands round some goodies at the picnic.





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## Need to borrow a wheelchair?

The British Red Cross operates a medical loan service once a week from the car park outside Sonning Common Health Centre.

Wheelchairs, commodes, walking frames and crutches are usually available on short-term loan while many other items may be requested.

The mobile service runs every Tuesday from 2.15pm to 3pm. It is free although donations towards running costs are welcomed. Some items may also be offered for sale.



**BritishRedCross**

## Looking for someone special

Local housing association Soha is running a competition to find the best community gems of 2011.

Liz Roberts, from Soha Housing, said: "We think that people who make a difference in their communities deserve recognition.

"Who do you know who goes that extra mile to help, someone who makes the world a better place or is just a pleasure to be around because they're always so helpful? Tell Soha about them and let's celebrate them together."

Nominees for Soha's Community Gems of 2011 competition must be Soha Housing tenants although they can be nominated by anyone. Winners will take away £100 worth of shopping vouchers.

**For more information contact**

**Liz Roberts, at the Resident Involvement Department, on 01235 515 900, freephone 0800 014 15 45 or email [housing@soha.co.uk](mailto:housing@soha.co.uk)**

**soha**  
housing



## Picnic in the grounds and be serenaded

For their summer concert, the South Chiltern Choral Society, will be taking a trip down memory lane.

Under the direction of Gwyn Arch, they will be singing some of the best-known and much-loved standards from the Thirties and Forties.

These songs, which have stood the test of time, include Anything Goes, Somewhere Over the Rainbow, Night and Day, Begin the Beguine and many other familiar melodies.

The Society is delighted to be sharing its Summer Serenade (and Strums) concert with the Tetra Guitar Quartet, a distinguished and exciting ensemble.

Formed in 1988, the quartet quickly gained an enviable reputation for innovation and virtuosity, playing at many of the world's top venues and broadcasting on national radio.

All four members of the ensemble are past winners of the Julian Bream Prize and are honorary associates of the Royal Academy of Music.

For this concert their programme will include Manuel de Falla's Ritual Fire Dance, The Carmen Fantasy and excerpts from Kurt Weill's Threepenny Opera.

**DATE:** Saturday 9 July

**TIME:** 5pm & 8pm

**VENUE:** Highdown School, Emmer Green RG4 8LR

**TICKETS:** £12 (Under-18s £6 & children under-5 free)

**BOX OFFICE:** Heather Clark 01491 575727

Concert-goers can picnic in the school grounds between the two performances.



## Big Sing raises big funds

**The all-day charity Big Sing event in the village hall last month raised more than £1,500.**

The event, organised by Nottakwire, attracted around 300 people and culminated in a Sound of Music singalong with a packed audience.

The local First Responders team, which offers medical help under the auspices of the South Central Ambulance Service, will benefit from all the money raised.

Nottakwire leader Margaret Moola said: "We really need to thank the community and all our helpers and singers for their wonderful support, effort and enthusiasm."



## Charity road run raises over £4,000

The annual 10k charity road run organised by Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club has raised a magnificent £4,386.

This has been divided equally between Macmillan Cancer Support in Oxfordshire and the Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

On receiving a cheque on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Support, Julian Knowles, fundraising manager, said: "It's fantastic that local Lions and their supporters have been able to help us to fund our vital services across Oxfordshire."

"It is significant that 2011 is Macmillan's centenary. Over the past 100 years the organisation has achieved many great things for people with cancer. This year it needs to raise £143 million to ensure people living with cancer get the support they need."

**ABOVE:** From left, Lions Jon Solman, John Bridgens and Sally Bergmann hand over a cheque to Julian Knowles, fundraising manager for Macmillan Cancer Support.



## Supermarket appeal raises money for magazine

A Waitrose community appeal has generated £115 for Sonning Common Magazine.

The Caversham branch of Waitrose donated the money to the magazine after shoppers used their green tokens to vote for the magazine as a community project.

# Waitrose

## Centenary celebrations at school

Sonning Common Primary School is nearly 100-years-old. And although it can't expect a telegram from the Queen, it is hoping to gather lots of stories, photos and footage about the school from years past.

The school's centenary will take place in 2013 and a year of celebrations is planned. Head teacher Chris Hirst said: "We want to let people know now that something big will be happening at the school in 2013. We are appealing to the community to help us gather together all of their fantastic memories of the school."

"Please hold on to all of your photos and film for the time being. We will be releasing details in due course about how best to get the information to us so watch this space."

The school plans to launch a special website, dedicated to the centenary, and will be inviting past pupils to visit and enjoy modern school life.



## Buy oil now and save ££s

With summer upon us it's hard to think about winter fuel needs but now might be a good time to consider bulk-buying oil to save money.

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) runs a successful oil bulk-buying scheme. In recent months members have saved an average of £70 on a 1000 litre delivery of domestic heating oil when compared to the highest quoted price.

Annual membership fees are £20 per household; £30 for community organisations and £100 per business. This covers as many oil orders as required during the course of the year.

For further information contact the ORCC: [orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk](mailto:orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk) or 01865 883488.

## Do you have Type 2 Diabetes?

## Do you know someone with Type 2 Diabetes?

Your local NHS provides free education for people with diabetes who are registered with Oxfordshire GPs\*

If you feel you or a member of your family would benefit, contact the Community Diabetes Service on 01869 604091 and ask about diabetes2gether and diabetes4ward or email [diabetes2gether@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:diabetes2gether@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

\*some areas use alternative services please contact us for further information

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# Village elects its parish council for the first time in over 25 years

All of Sonning Common's parish councillors had to stand down in May for the local elections.

This year the number of candidates wishing to join Sonning Common Parish Council exceeded the places available.

This led to an election for the first time in more than 25 years, estimated to have cost the taxpayer up to \*£5,000.

A total of 16 candidates stood for the 12 seats on the parish council, including three of the four people who resigned as parish councillors last December.

Although parish councillors are required to stand down every four years, in previous years 12 or fewer people had applied to become parish councillors. So, they were automatically elected. Any vacancies were filled by co-opting new members on to the council.

Alan Rooke, who was re-elected to the parish council, said: "Competition produces vigorous, democratic councils that are the product of having enthusiastic, informed local residents who are prepared to stand for office and/or to vote.

"All the members of the new parish council are there in their own right. They can go forward knowing they were elected by the people of Sonning Common."

Councillor Rooke, also a Conservative member of South Oxfordshire District Council, said voter turnout in the district had been more than 48 per cent.\*



**ABOVE:**

■ James Stone, from Beech Rise, with his two-year-old Alaskan malamute Kikoo, outside the village hall on polling day.

\*Source of information: the Electoral Office, South Oxfordshire District Council

# Who are our new parish councillors?

THE 12 NEW MEMBERS OF SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL ARE:



**CHRISSIE PHILLIPS-TILBURY**  
Woodlands Road

**Number of votes:** 832  
**Residency:** 12 years  
**Parish councillor:** 3 years  
**Issues:** Active member of the Save Our Library campaign and founder of the Village Gardeners.  
*"I want to continue to work with our energetic and proactive parish council to use your money carefully and wisely for the good of our village and community."*



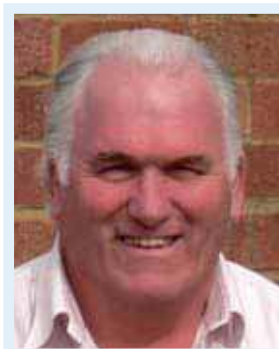
**BARRIE GREENWOOD**  
Grove Road

**Number of votes:** 743  
**Residency:** 36 years  
**Parish councillor:** 16 years  
**Issues:** The Save Our Library campaign and a commitment to a democratic, accountable council.  
*"I am very concerned about the impact of large-scale residential development on our village."*



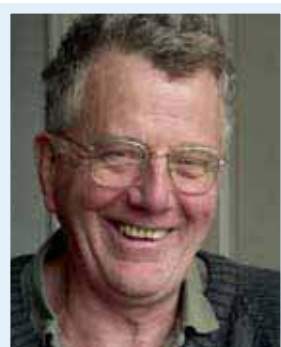
**CAROLE LEWIS**  
Woodlands Road

**Number of votes:** 701  
**Residency:** 9 years  
**Parish councillor:** 4 months  
**Issues:** Maintaining a litter-free Baskerville Road play area and supporting the Village Gardeners.  
*"I want to ensure the village retains its character with any future housing development and to encourage community involvement"*



**ALAN ROOKE**  
Henley

**Number of votes:** 676  
**Residency:** Born and brought up in the village; close family still lives in Sonning Common.  
**Parish councillor:** 4 years  
**District councillor:** 4 years  
**Issues:** Housing, transport, employment and support to keep the library and youth club open.  
*"I am on the planning committee for South Oxfordshire District Council where I fight proposals which are not in keeping with our parish priorities."*



**TOM FORT**  
Wood Lane

**Number of votes:** 745  
**Residency:** 15 years  
**Parish councillor:** 2 years  
**Issues:** Financial support for the Youth Centre and Village Gardeners and campaigning for the library to be retained.  
*"I want our work to continue and I want to be part of that process"*



**DOUGLAS KEDGE**  
Lea Road

**Number of votes:** 716  
**Residency:** 40 years  
**Parish councillor:** 2 years  
**Issues:** Active member of the Save Our Library campaign, the Sonning Common Community Plan group, Village Gardeners and Neighbourhood Watch.  
*"The parish council needs to maintain its transparency, public involvement and democratic decision-making."*



**JO HUNT**  
Grove Road

**Number of votes:** 692  
**Residency:** 44 years  
**Parish councillor:** 23 years  
**Issues:** Keeping Sonning Common in Oxfordshire and the library and Youth Centre open.  
*"I sit on the council to represent all age groups and everyone in Sonning Common"*



**GAIL NOBLE**  
Sedgewell Road

**Number of votes:** 668  
**Residency:** 15 years  
**Parish councillor:** 4 months  
**Issues:** Website creation to better inform villagers of parish council work.  
*"I am particularly keen to bring fresh ideas to the parking problems in the village."*

## NEW MEMBERS OF SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL CONTINUED ...



**JOHN STOVES**  
Woodlands Road

**Number of votes:** 656  
**Residency:** 4 years  
**Parish councillor:** 4 months  
**Issues:** Refurbishing the unisex toilet and improving the village environment and footpaths.

*"I would like to use my experience and skills to preserve and enhance the village for the community".*



**COLIN REYNOLDS**  
Carling Road

**Number of votes:** 613 votes  
**Residency:** 20 years  
**Parish councillor:** 4 months  
**Issues:** The Save Our Library campaign and supporting the Youth Centre.

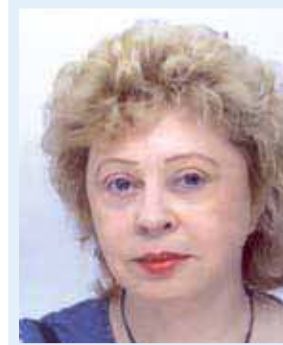
*"I would like to see the parish council continue with substantial initiatives to benefit the village in these challenging times."*



**DIRK JONES**  
Kennylands Road

**Number of votes:** 613  
**Residency:** 36 years  
**Parish councillor:** 10 years  
**Issues:** The Youth Centre and facilities for young people in the village.

*"I act as an independent to represent all residents and not any previous faction."*



**JANE DIWELL**  
Blounts Court Road

**Number of votes:** 565  
**Residency:** 29 years  
**Parish councillor:** 3 years  
**Issues:** The Save Our Library campaign.

*"I wish to ensure that the parish council is subject to public scrutiny and that no excessive or inappropriate spending of public money occurs."*

Pictures: The Henley Standard and Ros Varnes

# What does the parish council do?

**Sonning Common Parish Council is an elected tier of local government and is granted a number of powers by Parliament. These include the authority to raise money through taxation (the precept) and to spend that money for the good of the community.**

The parish council has the broad authority to do anything that will benefit the community that is not the responsibility of another tier of government.

It can play a vital part in representing the interests of the people of Sonning Common and in improving the quality of life in the village and the local environment.

Each councillor is expected to play a full role in the work of the council, taking part in decision-making and being involved with the local community, events and projects.

## The Powers of Sonning Common Parish Council include:

### Footpaths and highways

Providing parking places, repairing and maintaining public footpaths.

### Community transport and road safety

Supporting community transport schemes and providing traffic signs.

### Allotments

Management and rent collection.

### Bus shelters

Erection and maintenance.

### Widmore Pond

Cleaning and drainage.

### Village hall

Ownership. The village hall is managed by a separate committee.

### Recreation/play areas (Lea Road, Baskerville Road, Churchill Crescent)

Providing and maintaining the recreation/play areas.

### Waste and recycling

Providing bins and employing a street cleaner.

## Crime and disorder

Liaising with the police and taking security measures.

## Community plan action

Implementing, as far as possible, the results of the Sonning Common Community Plan survey.

## Planning applications

Making recommendations to South Oxfordshire District Council.

## Contact

For further information on Sonning Common Parish Council contact:  
**Philip Collings, Clerk**

### Email:

clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk

### Phone:

0118 972 3616

### Website:

www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk



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# Top tips from an expert

*During more than 25 years of tending to the beauty needs of Sonning Common's ladies, Sue Duke has seen up to three generations of some families.*

Sue runs Sonning Common Beauty from her home in Newfield Road and has hundreds of clients on her books, some of whom she sees once every three weeks, others once in a while for something special.

"Some clients have been coming to me for 20 to 30 years and have become good friends," said Sue, who qualified as a beauty therapist in 1982. "We try to make visits here friendly, comfortable and informal."

Eyebrow-shaping is an aspect of Sue's work that she particularly enjoys. She must have found her true vocation, since, even at school, girls were queuing up to have Sue shape their eyebrows!

"A good eyebrow shape can really lift a person's eyes and face and take years off them," according to Sue. "Tinting is also a good idea to give added definition to well-shaped brows."

As well as providing a full range of beauty treatments, Sue tries to pass on to her clients some of the valuable knowledge and experience she has gained over the years.

One area she is particularly concerned with is damage to the skin by the sun. Sue

believes people are never too old or young to protect their skin against sun damage.

She advises her clients to use a broad spectrum sun block - to protect against the sun's UVA rays, which cause ageing, as well as the UVB rays which burn the skin.

Said Sue: "The sun's UVA rays are responsible for most ageing as they penetrate deep into the skin, damaging its elasticity and causing lines and wrinkles. These rays are at the same intensity all-year round, even on dull, cloudy days and can penetrate windows and windscreens.

"So, it is important to use a sun block over daily moisturiser. The sun protection factor in most moisturisers and foundations just works against UVB rays."

A range of face creams with both UVB and UVA protection are on sale at Sonning Common Beauty. Spray tan treatments are also offered. These are quick and easy to apply and are effective for up to 10 days with regular moisturising.

Many treatments can be individually-tailored and include manicures, pedicures, facials, waxing and massage. Wedding, holiday and new-mum packages are available along with regular special offers. Some reduced price treatments are available each week. With two treatment rooms, friends and relatives can visit at the same time.

Sue's daughter, Lindsey Youngman, is currently working alongside her mother offering a full range of salon-based beauty treatments.

Lindsey is also a freelance hair and make-up artist. Trained at Shepperton Studios in all

aspects of make-up, Lindsey has worked on film and in television. She will visit clients at their homes to do their make-up and hair for special occasions such as weddings and can provide make-up for photoshoots and events including fancy dress parties.

Anna Hands is the latest recruit to the Sonning Common Beauty team. Now a fully-qualified beauty therapist, some clients may have met Anna while she completed some of her training with Sue. ■



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# Tom Fort

## CURIOUS INSTITUTIONS

As I write this, I am waiting to hear if I have managed to be elected back onto the parish council. I have, as the saying goes, submitted myself to the voters' judgement. I'm hoping they like me; if not I will try to accept their verdict with dignity and not cry like a baby and bang my head on the wall.

They are curious institutions, parish councils. In my youth as a local newspaper reporter I covered countless meetings. Most were extremely boring

and often my chin used to sink towards my chest.

On one occasion a council clerk rang up to complain about my slumbering through discussions on street lighting and kindred matters. A supportive colleague who took the call said I had been working very hard, was under great pressure etc etc. "I wouldn't mind", the clerk protested, "but the last time he came he did exactly the same".

Very infrequently a decent story popped up from the regular dross. I remember Wraysbury parish council in

Buckinghamshire voting to retire their village handyman and litter collector on the grounds that, at 89, he was past it. "Callous council sacks great-grandad Bill", was the headline, or words to that effect, and I managed to sell the story to the Sun. They hated me.

When I joined Sonning Common Parish Council, several people asked me why. The immediate answer was that I was subjected to moral blackmail by someone who shall remain nameless. She said it was time I made more of a contribution to village life.



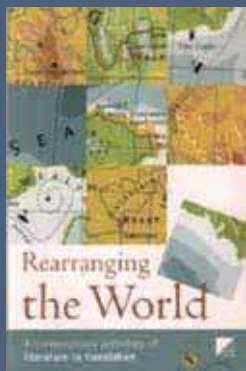
"Why", I asked? "Because it is", she answered. Confronted with such irrefutable logic I gave in.

And she was right. Sometimes it's boring, sometimes it can get quite nasty, often it's frustrating. Overall, though, I can say with my hand on my heart that it has been rewarding for me. Whether anyone else agrees is another matter. ■

## BOOK REVIEW

### REARRANGING THE WORLD

Edited by Josephine Balmer



Do you ever have one of those times when you have a book list as long as your arm, a pile of books on your bedside table but nothing that you want to read? The new Rose Tremain, Sebastian Faulks and Julian Barnes don't cut the mustard and even Jim Crace sends you yawning to the Sunday supplements. If so, then this is the book for you.

This tempting anthology crammed with snippets of poetry and prose leaves you wanting more and eager to search out the whole book to read.

The book has been arranged in chronological order tracing human existence through all its diversity from birth to "calm old age" and beyond. All the extracts are from books that have been best sellers or won literary prizes in other parts of the world.

Rearranging the World celebrates our similarities but revels in our cultural differences. It is published by The British Centre for literary translation, the slogan for which is, "Reaching readers through libraries". What an irony considering the threat that hangs over our library. ■

CHRISSIE PHILLIPS-TILBURY



# Magazine is self-financing

I feel I must clarify some points with regard to the organisation of Sonning Common Magazine, following recent claims made in an electioneering leaflet circulated to the village.

The magazine is a not for profit organisation. It is run by a committee of volunteers and distributed by a further 70 volunteers, all of whom wish to serve the community and contribute to the life of the village.

The magazine is self-financing and is paid for almost solely by advertisements.

At the start of the financial crisis a few years ago, the then committee took the considered decision to hold down advertising rates as a way of helping hard-pressed village businesses.

Reserves were deemed to be sufficient to support this course of action in the short term. Small but manageable losses were incurred for a couple of years as a result.

At the start of this year, the new committee reviewed the magazine's finances. A five-year business plan was produced and advertising rates were increased.

At the same time the magazine's production costs were re-assessed and new quotes obtained for printing. The re-designed publication now costs less to print than previously even though a higher grade of paper is used.

The magazine is grateful to Sonning Common Parish Council for a £500 grant this year.

The Oxfordshire Community Council suggests that parish councils have a responsibility to ensure their communities are kept informed of activities that relate to them and to support social cohesion.

As the magazine contributes to both of these areas, the committee felt it was right and proper to approach the parish council for some financial support. The parish council not only approved the grant but agreed to look kindly on further annual requests.

As a result of all the funding measures taken, the magazine had a small surplus this year and anticipates being able to fully cover its costs next year. ■

**GRAHAM P THOMAS**  
Chairman, Sonning Common Magazine



## Shop music is unpleasant and intrusive

**Graham Thomas (letters, April/May edition) is right about the music played in the Co-op. It is unpleasant and intrusive. It was always a pleasure to shop in Somerfield where there was no music.**

The reply received by Mr Thomas is exactly the same wording as the one we received when we wrote to The Co-operative Head Office, complaining about the music. It is a standard response with no reference whatsoever to the branch in Sonning Common.

It is very hard to imagine that numbers of local shoppers have gone out of their way to say how much they enjoy the music.

There is a disturbing belief in many quarters today that shopping becomes pleasant only when it is accompanied by someone else's choice of music.

It would be very helpful, we suggest, if other customers who object would write to the branch manager, for forwarding to head office. ■

**DOUGLAS AND YVONNE KEDGE**  
Lea Road

## Thank you for your concern

Our family has been overwhelmed by the number of people who have shown their concern and support for our son Chris Butler-Smith over the past five months.

Many people not only knew about Chris's brain aneurysm but professed their respect and gratitude for all his help during his 31 years of working for the Sonning Common Vauxhall garage.

Chris is now recovering from a very successful operation and should be back to his old self within weeks. ■

**ANN AND BOB BUTLER-SMITH**  
Westleigh Drive

## We still need your unwanted wool

**Thank you to everyone who has donated their unwanted double knit wool to our knitting group. Thank you also to those who have volunteered to knit with us.**

As there are more of us knitting we now need more wool. We make jumpers and blankets for children at a creche in Kenya. Donations of wool, preferably double knit, can be made to 86 Wood Lane. Thank you. ■

**LINDA WEBB**  
Wood Lane

# Can you spot your house?

This aerial photograph of Sonning Common was kindly supplied by Daren Greenhow, of Old Copse Gardens, the sculptor who featured in the last edition of the magazine. He got the images by attaching a camera to a small, radio-controlled model! Daren is happy to send free copies of his photographs to villagers via email. Contact him at: [info@recycling.me.uk](mailto:info@recycling.me.uk) ■

■ The Hare and Hounds pub, Woodlands Road, can be seen in the centre of the photograph (white building on the crossroads) with the Baskerville Road play area on the right-hand side.



# St John the Baptist, Kidmore End Christ the King, Sonning Common

**Saturday, 25 June is the date of our Gift Day, which will be held at both ends of the parish. Gift Day is when all parishioners – whether church members or not – can make a donation towards the support of our two churches.**

Christ the King will be open to receive donations between 2pm and 3pm, that day. St John's will be open between 10am and 12 noon, and the church choirs will present a concert there at 11am – an occasion not to be missed!

Anyone wishing to make a Gift Day donation but who cannot get to the church on Gift Day, should make their cheque out to KESCPCC and send it to the Rectory.

The Little Lambs Group (for children under five and their parents/guardians) will have its last meeting before the summer break on Wednesday 29 June, at 9.30am, in St John's. Enquiries to: Felicity Cooper on 0118 947 7862.

The Lamb and Flag is our church magazine. For £5 a year, a copy will be

delivered to your door each month – together with a free copy of the Oxford Diocese newspaper. Enquiries to: Neil Scott on 0118 972 3890.

On Sunday 31 July there will be no morning service at Christ the King. There will, instead, be a combined Benefice service at St John's Church, Kidmore End, at 11am. ■

**NEIL SCOTT**  
(On behalf of the Parochial Church Council)



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# Where

## DID WE SHOP FROM 1900 TO 2011?



In response to a query I received I began to look at changes to the shops in the village over time. Below is a survey of village shops, as remembered by several residents. Another important source of information was Fred Richens' invaluable account, *The Village That Never Was*.

Not surprisingly there have been numerous changes during this period, reflecting the changing lifestyles of Sonning Common residents. Dates are hard to pin down. Confirmation of dates is welcomed along with pointing out names I have forgotten or inaccuracies I have made.

Write to the magazine at 1 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9TD or email [sonningcommonmagazine@goolemail.com](mailto:sonningcommonmagazine@goolemail.com)

### WOOD LANE - FROM THE PEPPARD ROAD JUNCTION

Brinds Corner was named after the butcher's business established beside the road junction in 1905 which was sold to Len Gash in 1968. The shop was later divided into the current two parts, the front becoming an off-licence and the back remaining a butcher's shop, now Carl Wood's.

The chemist's shop was opened in 1958 by Mr Hibbert, sold on to Mr Carson and then to the present owners in about 1999. It has recently changed hands again.

Next door was Brewer's, the butcher's, featuring an interesting old mahogany cash booth; this shop became the Tandoori Connoisseur.

The next three shops along were Amazing Yarns which became Yeungs Chinese Takeaway. The middle shop was a hairdresser's run by Ann Devlin, a corporate logo business and a pond supplier before again becoming a hairdresser's - Shannens then Serenity. Finally came Davies' greengrocer's and off-licence, which is now Occasions.

Where JDP Engineering was (empty at present) is the site of the first shop in the village - a general store founded by Fred Stannard in 1903. Later, his son-in-law Mr Nickless took it over.

When Mr Stannard died in 1936 his shop was run by Mr Fry before becoming West's mini-supermarket and later offices.

Heath & Watkins was built in the 1960s and is the oldest business in the village. Next door was Crescent Stores, later Martins, the newsagent, then an upholstery business and now Pressed For Time. The Pet Stores hasn't changed since it was set up.

### CROSS OVER THE ROAD

The commercial block at the top of Green Lane was built in the 1960s. It housed a branch of Barclays bank until about 1966, then a corn merchant and now the CCA charity shop. An estate agent has always operated next door - first Scotchbrooks, then Nicholas and now Davis Tate.

Round the corner are the fish and chip shop, the vet and the hairdresser - currently Forresters - which haven't changed since being first opened.

The Post Office was built by Eddie Nickless in 1937. He sold it to John Goodwin in 1965 who sold it on to the One-stop group. Daisy's next door has always been a bread shop under various names.

On the corner with Woodlands Road, Rogers opened a grocery store in 1908 as competition to Stannards. This became Plumbs in 1913 which aspired to being 'high class', taking deliveries from Harrods!

The shop was taken over by Kilby's, a subsidiary of International stores in 1933, later by Gateway in the 1980s, followed by Somerfield and now The Co-operative.

### THE PEPPARD ROAD

What is now Beville Estate Agency was originally Josey's, the coal merchant's office. This was a prosperous and very important business in the days before gas

heating. Hazel Gardens was once Josey's coal yard.

The paper shop was originally run by Fred Pointin, later by Dents and by Edward Fulford, from the 1940s for 10 years. It has always been a newsagent's. But a succession of betting and hairdresser's shops have operated next door, along with Village Yarns and now the Village Barbers.

The electrical shop was originally a draper's shop, opened in 1906 by the Howes family. This was a successful business, drawing in custom from around the area. It was sold in 1966 after 60 years and later became a launderette.

At various times there were other general stores in the village: one in Baskerville Road, one in Grove Road and one at the top of Wood Lane - Newells then Stuarts - a very popular store which sold fresh vegetables direct from Covent Garden.

Although businesses have come and gone, this village has managed to retain a diverse selection of shops serving most of our everyday needs. We need to support them if Sonning Common is to retain the successful community spirit that makes it such a popular place to live in. ■

By JILL KENDAL



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	<b>FRIDAY 10</b> <b>Sonning Common Society AGM</b> Christ the King, Sedgewell Road 7.30pm	<b>SUNDAY 12</b> <b>Boogie, Bounce &amp; BBQ</b> Sonning Common Pre-school, Grove Road 12pm	<b>WEDNESDAY 15</b> <b>Craft social evening</b> Village Hall 7.30 - 9.30pm	<b>THURSDAY 16</b> <b>FISH - Pub lunch</b> 11.30am
	<b>THURSDAY 16</b> <b>Sonning Common Women's Institute - Glenn Miller's curious disappearance by Tony Eaton</b> Village Hall 7.30pm	<b>MONDAY 20</b> <b>Sonning Common Parish Council</b> Village Hall 7.30pm	<b>WEDNESDAY 22</b> <b>Craft social evening</b> Village Hall 7.30 - 9.30pm	<b>FRIDAY 24</b> <b>Nottakwire practice</b> Village Hall 9.45am
	<b>WEDNESDAY 29</b> <b>Craft social evening</b> Village Hall 7.30 - 9.30pm	<b>MONDAY 4</b> <b>FISH - Garden centre visit</b> 1.30pm	<b>WEDNESDAY 6</b> <b>Craft social evening</b> Village Hall 7.30 - 9.30pm	<b>FRIDAY 8</b> <b>Nottakwire practice</b> Village Hall 9.45am
July	<b>WEDNESDAY 13</b> <b>Craft social evening</b> Village Hall 7.30 - 9.30pm	<b>MONDAY 18</b> <b>Sonning Common Parish Council</b> Village Hall 7.30pm	<b>WEDNESDAY 20</b> <b>Craft social evening</b> Village Hall 7.30 - 9.30pm	<b>THURSDAY 21</b> <b>FISH - Pub lunch</b> 11.30am
	<b>THURSDAY 21</b> <b>Sonning Common Women's Institute - Cheese &amp; wine sampling evening by Allan Gibbon</b> Village Hall 7.30pm	<b>FRIDAY 29</b> <b>Nottakwire sing &amp; end of term lunch</b> Village Hall 9.45am		

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Recognised by Pet Insurers

### Doggy Day Care

Home alone is no place for a dog for long periods of time so at Doggy Day Care we ensure that your dog has a fun time when you are unable to be with them. Your dog will be walked, played with, fed and allowed to curl up for a sleep.

### Doggy Behaviour Correction

We offer a one-one service to help you correct poor and unacceptable behaviour. We have many years experience in dealing with behaviour correction so if it's constant barking, lead pulling, aggression or some other problem, call us for a chat or simply pop in to the Centre.

0118 972 4849

Unit 1 Kidby's Yard • 28 Kennylands Road • Sonning Common • Reading • RG4 9JT

[www.doggydips.co.uk](http://www.doggydips.co.uk)