

SC SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

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of smiley faces
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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

This editorial comment is written during a few days of glorious sunshine. Our brief Indian summer?

Very soon, by the time this issue is published, it will be the season of 'mists and mellow fruitfulness' and the long nights will be drawing in. At least this winter there will be some events for us all to enjoy. For example, there is a Christmas Fair organised to raise money for the Rivertime Boat Trust - all are welcome - Saturday 20 November at Peppard Memorial Hall.

In the last issue there was an article about the Widmore Pond railway which was in fact a spoof. Ken Stevens had prepared it for an April Fool's Day - I was the fool, as he had told me so!!

One of the joys of this summer holiday has been the number of activities organised for the children of the village. It was so wonderful to see them mixing with friends, socialising and out in the fresh air for a range of events. The photos inside reflect some of this fun.

Importantly, it will be the 21st year of the existence of the village library. It is potentially a very important part of our lives, old and young, and we should value it by using it. Look out for additional information about the various activities which will be returning as soon as possible.

I look forward to receiving more of the articles sent in by readers. They are what makes the magazine so varied and interesting. ●



Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



Diana Pearman



Christine Atkinson



Joan Grumant

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HEAD'S REPORT



MAIDEN ERLEGH
CHILTERN EDGE



I hope everyone had a good summer. One of my highlights has been to return to school to see just how well the new Memorial Park, just across the road from school, has greened up in the last few weeks. This looks like it will be a fabulous resource for the village, and I congratulate everyone concerned with this initiative.

With reference to the village, one of my objectives as a new head has been to forge links with the wider community as much as possible and this summer afforded me the chance of letting the school out for free to two groups who provided activities and events for the young people of the area. Active Leaders, led by the formidable characters of Penny Snowden and Amanda Watkins-Cooke were able to provide sports and games to 127 children. I was also really pleased to see a number of our older students coming up to school for training as 'young leaders' by Darren Hunter, our excellent Head of PE. The feedback I had from Penny regarding how our students

organised the children and showed great responsibility and enthusiasm for their work was really pleasing to hear. In addition, the Sonning Common Youth Club, led by the brilliant Sunny Smithers, also used our facilities for one week. When I popped my head in the music was pumping and lots of our local Year 6, 7 and 8 students seemed to be having a great time.

Given the disruption to all our lives in the last 18 months and especially for the children, hopefully having some structured fun and challenge, social interaction and fresh air will have helped them to enjoy their summer break even more.

This idea of character development and student leadership has been one we at MECE have been looking to enhance as we move the school forwards. Last year's re-introduction of the House System with a huge range of competitions from the spelling bee to rounders, to busking and the House Quiz showed the appetite our students have to further themselves. In the forthcoming academic year, we intend to further embed and widen the opportunities available through the House system as well as the introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme for our Year 9 and 10 students. This award encourages students to stretch themselves through volunteering, acquiring a skill, showing a commitment to a physical activity and completing an expedition. This is just the sort of experience and skill set that tomorrow's citizens need to equip themselves for successful future lives and we can't wait to get started.

Finally, it goes without saying

that I hope we can return to a little more 'normal' in the next few months. We hope that we can finally welcome prospective parents onto the site to see our wonderful school in operation. We will be hosting tours on the following dates from 9.15am to 10.30am.

- Tuesday 05 October
- Tuesday 19 October

We will also be holding our open evening on Tuesday 28 September between 5.30pm and 7.30pm. Details of both of these events are available on our website.

Take care and stay safe ●

ANDY HARTLEY
Headteacher



GCSE results

Overall, 26.17% of all the grades awarded were achieved at Grade 7 or above and 60.42% of all grades were at Grade 5 or above. These positive attainment grades demonstrate and reflect the strong position of the school at this current time and compare well with local schools.

ACHIEVING IN LOCKDOWN

by Christine Atkinson

What a year it was for schools all over the country! Our own primary school has weathered the storm, so far, with the fantastic support of all the staff and parents. From a sudden and dramatic lockdown with the school closed to pupils, setting up online learning for all, dealing with a return in September 2020, only to be closed down again before Christmas, and a return to school in March.

Headteacher Chris Hirst told us, "around Christmas time things were particularly difficult, but we actually managed to make it through to the end of the school year with relatively little disruption to teaching and learning, unlike some other local schools. The 2021 challenges have included welcoming everyone back to school in March, settling them gently back in, and ensuring that any gaps were sensitively identified and then addressed. I would like to extend huge thanks to all staff, pupils, and parents for all that you have done, and continue to do, to make this possible. We are naturally hoping

that we can return to something close to normal in September and have planned for this, but we also have contingency plans and risk assessments in place if we need them. "

With no performances, no school fairs, and no On Your Bike for two years, fundraising has been particularly difficult. Zoom bake offs, jumble trails and other new ideas have ensured that the PTA have been able to continue to raise some funds. A just giving page was opened and a good sum has been added through the year.

Enough in fact to have almost completed the covered area that the school needed, to provide a safe space for outdoor learning, performances, lunch when it's too hot, or too cold, a space to chill out and even to use for PE if needed. It is looking great!

The last assembly of the academic year, and the first whole school assembly since March 2019 was held just before the end of term on a glorious day, outside under the oak tree - where else? Lots of certificates and trophies were presented,

and it was an opportunity to introduce staff who joined in September 2020 to pupils who they had never seen. Pupils in reception and year 1 had never seen the whole school together! A lovely way to end such a challenging year. ●



FOREST SCHOOL RECOGNITION

A very recent bit of good news is that the school have become a Recognised Forest School Provider following a very thorough application process through the Forest School Association (FSA).

The school told us "As soon as we saw the FSA scheme, we knew this was one for us. Our children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 love their sessions in our Forest School sites and our whole team of staff are fully engaged and committed to this approach. Many parents choose us as their child's school because we offer



this experience as part of our curriculum. We know that having this recognition will give us something that sets us apart from other schools" ●



CHILTERN EDGE ORCHESTRA

Not many people know that Sonning Common has a fully functioning orchestra. We've been playing continuously since 1970 approx. We're not high profile because we don't do paying concerts. We hold 2 social evenings per playing year with friends and families. We're essentially a 'players group' who meet up to play serious music in a relaxed atmosphere with excellent tuition from a professional leader and conductor. This type of group is unique in a wide local area, and our members regularly come from Basingstoke, Hartley Wintney, Slough, Gerrard's Cross and many other far flung places. We've lost a few members due to the pandemic and closedown and are now looking for more string and brass players. We're very supportive of lapsed players or new players who would like to familiarise themselves with the orchestral repertoire. If you're interested, please contact Ruth Winchester at 01189722164 or ruth@segment.co.uk ●



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MARY WILSON BAIRD (AKA JANE)

Jane was a Lancashire lass who lived most of her long life in Sonning Common. After serving in the WRNS during World War Two, during which she was drafted to Northern Scotland, she became school meals supervisor for Berkshire. At the age of 70 she married Terry Baird, an Irish doctor and moved over to Northern Ireland, although she periodically returned to her little bungalow in Kennylands Road "to keep it going." Sadly, after only ten years Terry died so Jane came back full-time becoming an active member of Peppard Church and sang in the choir. She lived on

Kennylands Road until her death last year, aged 107. She is missed by all who knew her. ●

Sheila Underwood



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SUNNY'S SUMMER FUN



Each day at SO CO STAYCAY was a success, from the slip and slide which went down a storm, to the cinema night and to the bubble football games. Parents said they slept well each night after coming home. We had young people from 10-16 and two young leaders aged 17 who are safeguard trained as both aspire to be teachers.

The main aim for our week was getting the young people out having fun with their peers, to get them off their phones and just enjoying life by actively participating in physical events. For some trying new things, if that be a new game, making new friends (which many did) or building confidence to try something they had never thought they could do before. Memories have been made that will last these young people their lifetime and that's what I think keeps us adults striving

to create these opportunities for the young people.

Our lovely young leaders Tom and Kate worked hard this week along with Jolene, Charlie and Tia. One even said he didn't want the week to end, so us adults enjoyed it just as much as the young people. We were all just so thrilled that everyone had fun and couldn't wait to come again. We will be employing more staff next time as our 10-1 ratio meant we could only have up to 40 and we reached capacity each day, so the event has proved to be very popular. I have no doubt the parish council will approve us for an annual event, as they are extremely pleased with the amount of young people who benefited from our week. ●

Sunny Smithers



JAMMERS

Rhythm, beat and fun from The Studio, Grove Road, during the Summer Holidays



Twelve Jammers completed the first ever Junior Active Music Leader course this August. Professional musician and teacher Paul Stead, and former headteacher Philip Marples, led the 4 day course, assisted by Jack Thomas, a trained Active Leader and talented drummer. Children learned communication skills, how to organise groups, teamwork, created rhythms and moves, grew in confidence, planned and led a samba workshop for over 30 guests on the final day. The energy, upbeat vibes and broad smiles each day confirmed the enjoyment had by all.

Jammers was funded by a grant from the Chiltern Edge Community Association and by the government's Holiday Activity and Food programme. The course was modelled on the successful Junior Active Leader course, but this time used music as the core theme to develop leadership skills. It took place at Sonning Common Primary School's 'Studio' – an appropriately named facility for such a course! Each Jammer received a booklet of instructions and games, a t-shirt, a whistle and a certificate.

The course trainers were really impressed by the achievements of the Jammers in only 4 days, many of whom started with little or no musical experience. Future courses for older students may include a rock theme.

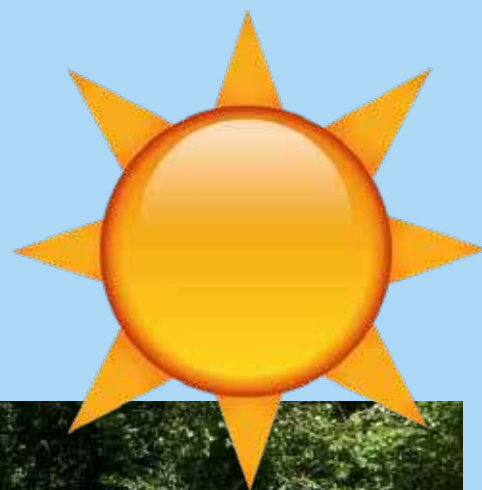
Kite's Kitchen provided a healthy packed lunch to everyone who attended and the Co-Op supplied fruit for break time.

Active Leaders, who created and organised the programme, together with the parents of all the children who attended, would like to thank everyone who made this possible, providing local young people with new skills, positive social interaction and experience and healthy, fun activity. ●

Penny Snowden



SUMMER FUN 2021 REPORT



Eight days of Summer Fun took place at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge in Sonning Common between Monday 26 July to Thursday 5 August.

Funded by the Government's 'Holiday Activity and Food' Scheme, the programme was open to all primary-aged children in the local area, with healthy packed lunches supervised by the Kite's Kitchen team to eligible children.

For four hours each day, the participants took part in over one hundred activities ranging from Fun Games, Super Sports, Olympic Challenges, Teamwork Challenges, Wild Art, Ball Runs made from guttering and giant homemade Kerplunk! It is fair to say there were a lot of smiles and tired children at the end of

each day! The importance of such accessible, well-organised activity during the holidays, proved vital for families. It offered much needed fitness, social interactions and skills development which could be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of circumstance.

Running alongside Summer Fun was an Active Leader Course attended by 14-16 year olds from Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge and Gillotts schools. During the morning sessions, the group learned key leadership and employability skills which they put to practical use in the afternoons by leading Summer Fun activities. The training proved to be hugely effective and successful. The younger children were undoubtedly motivated and inspired by the newly-trained Active Leaders who became great role models.

SUMMER FUN IN NUMBERS!

- 500 visits from the local community
- Over 1400 active minutes across eight days
- Youngest attendee two days old (having attended pre-birth 2 days earlier!)
- Over 62 families taking part
- 360 hours of paid work for local students
- 12 newly trained Active Leaders

Huge thanks go to Andy Hartley, Headteacher of Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge who very kindly allowed the school's facilities to be used and whose staff team supported the programme's delivery. Head of PE, Darren Hunter, ran the Active Leader course in the first week of his Summer Holiday. Facilities Manager John Agar was on hand every day to ensure all facilities were accessible, chef Michelle Boden provided delicious food and Helen Bridger kept everything clean. Sonning Common Primary School lent their gazebos to provide shelter and the energetic Active Leaders (students, teachers and university undergrads) worked tirelessly to ensure every day was action-packed and fun-filled!

"Summer Fun has really helped us as a family, being a non-driver and with 3 children. Seeing my children having fun, getting out and meeting different people is great and I can't be more grateful."

"An essential resource.... just a shame it doesn't run throughout the school holidays".

"We had the best time at Summer Fun – it really was the highlight of our week, giving my kids something fun to do and covered all their ages". ●

Amanda Watkins-Cooke



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DR PETER HEMPHILL

9 APRIL 1920 TO 18 JULY 2021



A tribute to Dr Peter Hemphill - a patient's personal perspective in memory of a very fine gentleman and doctor of highest integrity, compassion and dedication, who generously lived out his Christian ethos.



An outstanding man of wisdom, kindness and professionalism, Dr Hemphill served our community for nearly forty years.

As an alumnus of Clare College, Cambridge, Dr Hemphill graduated in 1942. During the war he faced terrible casualties, then set up his first practice in Northern Ireland in 1947. His service continued when in 1949 he served with the British Army, caring for British families and German civilians around Osnabrook.

Upon his return, Springhill, his home in Sonning Common was built, complete with integral surgery attached. It was there that we first attended until the new health centre in Wood Lane was completed and opened in 1970, from where his GP work continued.

Among the many he served in the early days, were displaced, refugee or repatriated families such as ours, living in the hutted camps at Bishopswood, Kingwood Common and Scots Common.

An anchor to us in the vulnerability of the early fifties, where so many war-stricken Polish victims of Siberian forced labour camps were striving to rebuild their lives. He remained an ever-continuing force for good. This carried over into our more settled lives in "bricks and mortar" housing in Sonning Common.

I remember innumerable home visits which he conducted with respect and tact.

Some quirky memories remain; as an asthmatic I was advised to blow balloons and play my recorder (to strengthen my lungs and increase capacity). This was an enjoyable and creative mode of exercise. In the surgery I once fainted upon the doctor's feet before he'd even begun the verruca removal procedure. In a more serious vein, my interminable teenage melancholy was always treated with kind understanding.

Dr Hemphill's family describes his engineering aptitudes among his many diverse interests and skills:

"...he did an all-night marathon to finish building and testing his first television set, enabling his family to watch the Queen's Coronation live in 1953 and although in black and white, was met with grateful amazement."

Another instance: "He built a couple of powerful reflector telescopes by hand, using completely recycled materials and even a favourite cake tin was found to be just right and was fashioned into a mirror cover! It was always considered a treat if we convinced him to let us into his observatory to see the delights of a night sky and I remember my breath being taken away at a first glimpse of Jupiter."

Well into older age he could be seen stoically walking to Kidmore End Church where he generously contributed to parish life. A practical contribution I observed included the upkeep of the stunning, yew-tree framed lych gate and surrounding greenery. Whenever we chanced upon one another he was ever-courteous and gentlemanly, a lovely attribute which I welcomed.

Again, on a personal theme; what an unexpected pleasure it was to find that one of his beautiful granddaughters was a pupil in my classes at Chiltern Edge School! She did her Grandad proud, as did her sisters. (How bitter-sweet to meet again at his funeral.)

On his 100th birthday we called on Dr Hemphill where he still lived in his Springhill home. Naturally, we were received with kindness and pleasure; it was a delight to converse with the doctor who'd first ministered to me and my family over the previous sixty-five years.

Doctor Peter Hemphill served our family from the 1950s, ever impressing us with his intelligence, honour and decency. Peter, the rock, the bedrock of our community, RIP. ●

Irenka M.



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21ST BIRTHDAY CELEBRATI



The credit for good ideas is often claimed by the wrong person – the boss usually – with the true bright spark overlooked. But in the case of the Library's move from its portacabin home 21 years ago, the opposite is true. Our current librarian, Rosemary Dunstan, says it was Pip Marples the former head at the primary school who came up with the idea; modestly, he claims it was any number of other people. However, he does accept credit for pushing through the negotiations to a successful conclusion – and choosing the cheery colour scheme of red, yellow and blue. Rosemary apparently joked that she would need sunglasses to work there!

The hard work on the day was done by the library staff at the time – Sue Brewer and her two assistants, Sandy Hale and Linda West. A working party (including some county library staff) packed up the books and DVDs the week before. Then came the task of moving them two hundred yards along Grove Road to the old hall at the front of the school, which had been an underused room and seemed a perfect location, giving safe access for the public. Sandy remembers trundling many of the

boxes along the road using a sack trolley – quite a task, according to both her and Sue.

The library began in 1947 when two ladies in the village began issuing books from a stock of around 100 volumes one morning a week at the Congregational Hall. Two years later, shelving was provided at the home of one of the women, a Mrs Shoesmith, with two shillings and six pence paid for heating and lighting. By the early 1950s, a mobile library began visiting the village, spending 30 minutes at the Hare and Hounds and at the school. In 1965, the terrapin building was put up next to the school caretaker's house and the stock of books began to grow. By 1971 there were more than 7,000 volumes. Now we have nearly ten-thousand.

According to Veronica Angel, who was principal librarian in charge of south Oxfordshire in 2000, the move was more than just a response to premises that had become too small for a growing village. The school's books were spread across several classrooms, and by joining forces with the public library it benefited everyone. A joint community-school library had already been opened at Woodcote.

"Thanks to a very farsighted headteacher the principle was agreed", she said. "The operation had its moments – not least when the shelving company went bankrupt. But the public gained much better premises, with more books and seating and the school gained professional library staff". The opening of the "new library" was marked by a visit from the children's author Sarah Hayes and the chairman of Oxfordshire County Council.

A serious threat to close the library was seen off ten years ago thanks to an active local campaign. Fortunately for the village and the school, we still have a dedicated professional librarian, supported by members of the public who provide time and money to keep this vital service running.

The Friends committee will see a changing of the guard at their next AGM on 15 November. We would welcome new members – please come and join us at the meeting. Details can be found on the FoSCL website: www.friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk ●

Helen Fort

ONS FOR VILLAGE LIBRARY

BACK TO NORMAL

By the time you read this the library opening hours should be completely back to normal:

Mon: 2 – 5pm

Wed: 2 – 7pm

Thurs and Fri: 9 – 1; 2 – 5pm

Sat: 9.30 – 12.30

Following the popular Story and Craft sessions every Saturday in August, we have continued to have Stories and Colouring at 10am every Saturday. There will be crafts on certain 'special' Saturdays e.g. Hallowe'en and Christmas, and half-term. Please contact the library for details of any extra activities in October half-term.

Library activities Scrabble Club, Digital Helper Sessions, Rhymetimes and Knit & Natter will restart as soon as Covid restrictions allow – check in the library for more information.

Rosemary Dunstan

JOINT USE PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARY

The move from the pre-fab building to the school hall was more than just a response to inadequate premises. Oxfordshire Library Service, part of the County Council's department of Leisure and Arts, had recently opened a very successful joint use library at Woodcote with Langtree School; this was an option currently being explored around the country to provide a better service to both school and public.

In Sonning Common, the public library was well used but no longer big enough or flexible enough for the increasing population. The children's library was particularly limited.

The primary school had no dedicated library but several classroom libraries. Thanks to a very farsighted head teacher, the school and the library service agreed on the principle of a joint use library and the head suggested the school hall, which had the advantage of

having direct access from the public road, so the public did not have to cross the school site or enter any other school buildings to access it.

A lot of discussion was needed to agree on the opening hours to accommodate the public and the school – some overlap occurred and time was dedicated to the school. The county bought most of the books and paid for the staffing. It took a lot of hard work from both organisations to kit out the new library, move the stock from the old library and reorganise staffing.

The public gained much better premises, with more books and more seating and the school gained professional library staff and a lot of new books.

A win-win situation for all. ●

Veronica Angel

A LIFE LONG READER

Chrissie Godfrey, recently retired from the FoSCL committee, relates what libraries have meant to her as a lifelong reader: –

I recently took a little trip down memory Lane when I realised that I have had a library ticket for 73 years!

I joined the library in Watford where I lived when I was 5. I was one of those precocious kids who just 'got' reading and can't remember a time when I couldn't read.

In those days the children's section was quite small and although you were allowed only two books at a time, I'd soon read everything and the librarian – a dragon called Miss Mander -- got fed up with me and allowed me to start in the adult library. I can remember reading some fairly unsuitable stuff!

When we moved to Henley I joined the library which at that time was in the

basement of the town hall and remember being told off by Miss Forester for bringing my pram and baby down the stairs. My daughter was far too precious to leave outside but I was very unpopular if I stayed too long and she started to cry.

When we moved to Sonning Common I joined the library, which was in the terrapin on the left hand side of the school. How it has changed with so many more books and all the extra activities that go on now.

Chrissie was one of the leaders in the campaign to save the library in 2011. We have her to thank and her team, who fought against the challenge. It meant we still have our library with a paid manager. Other small libraries on Oxfordshire are run entirely by volunteers. Use our precious library or lose it. ●

FOSCL QUIZ NIGHT

15 October 2021 - Tickets £24 for table of six purchase in the library



THE MONOLOGUES CONTINUE ... FACT, THE GOOD STANDARD BEARER

On Friday evenings we looked forward to meeting at orchestra practice. Afterwards it was expected that I should have supper at his parents', my weekly visit. The house was quite small, a terrace house fronting straight onto the street at "Normanby Top" where the trolley buses turned round; a busy spot, a meeting place, with shops on each corner of the T- junction.

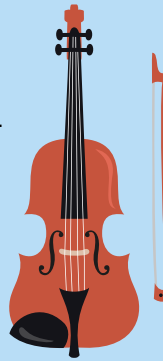
Mrs Richardson enjoyed the view through her net curtains. She could see what was going on, not miss anything. I never felt quite relaxed there; there

was a sort of formality in the house that I was unused to. At home we were a lackadaisical lot.

But Mrs Richardson had standards to maintain, and she did not shirk from her responsibility to point out to others where they were going wrong. So, when I said **"gosh, aren't you critical!"**, she took it as a compliment, and agreed with relish, **"OH, YES!"** Now, years later, in old age, she complains, **"Do you know, not one of my neighbours talks to me. They're a hopeless lot."**

There were 3 sons: Malcolm away at university doing music, David a chief engineer in the merchant navy, and Anthony, my boyfriend, taking A levels at our local grammar school. She had come from a Durham mining village where ambitious mothers made sure

their children had the opportunity to shine in musical performance if they showed any aptitude. So, whilst money was scarce, she somehow paid for piano lessons for Malcolm, violin lessons for David, and singing lessons for Anthony, who won numerous cups as a boy soprano. And when he was 15 they bought him a 'cello.



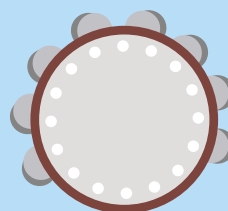
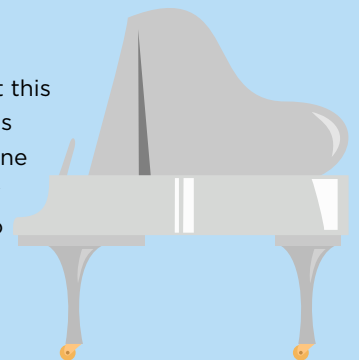
I have to admit she was a very good manager of very limited resources. Sometimes they could not afford to tax the car, so it sat in the garage for weeks. During the summer months the TV, rented, was seen as a luxury and sent back. And now, in old age, living alone on a state pension and benefits, she continues to confound us all with the way she can make her money stretch. Always well-dressed and enjoying good food, for she is an excellent cook, she has a gardener once a month, sees the hairdresser every week and has a cleaning lady for 2 hours weekly. She is scornful of anyone complaining of being hard-up on income support, which she considers generous; she even continues a lifetime habit of saving for a rainy day.

"But you must be careful not to put too much into a savings account; they check up on you, you

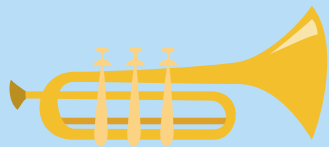
know, and if you're over the limit, you lose your benefits."

She had been difficult about her first and second sons' marriages, so I suppose I should not have been surprised to learn that her third son, announcing our engagement, was also making a mistake and should reconsider. We were too young, it seems. Her letter advised us to forget about getting engaged, and to go instead to some quiet church to plight our troth! A strange old-fashioned expression, especially inappropriate since we were neither of us church-goers.

I began to realise that this woman was not someone I was likely to warm to without a lot of effort. She is now in her 88th year, and our relationship has developed so that we have an understanding. Her role as my senior is to instruct and advise, also to entertain me by recounting the minutiae of her day. I know not to interrupt; I have by now learned from bitter and frustrating experience that my comments and thoughts will be brushed aside as of no consequence.



FACTION OR FABRICATION?



She is not a sympathetic listener. Her sons, too, keep the peace with a charade of false deference. David and his wife, visiting after the holiday of a lifetime, were disappointed that she expressed no interest, asked no questions. Instead they sat quietly listening, as required, to a detailed account of her fortnight. Nowadays on Friday evenings I make a point of phoning her, preparing myself to be surprised to learn how many people I don't know have died, or gone into hospital, or have fallen out with their family, or neighbours, or both. Like a lot

of elderly people she is keen to share the details of her meals with any listener, and I express interest in the chicken leg and vegetables she tells me she had for lunch. Afterwards my husband says *"Did you ask her if it was the left leg or the right?"* Sometimes I persuade him to make the phone call. *"Just say how are you"* I say. *"You won't need to say any more."* And sure enough, he's on the phone for half an hour, just nodding agreement, with the occasional *"Did you?"* or *"Really"*. Sometimes she has a story that makes him laugh. Sometimes he offers a piece

of our news, but there is obviously no follow-up question from his mum. But then, duty over, we can settle down to enjoy a Friday night music session, me on piano, he on the 'cello that cost his mum so much all those years ago. ●



OLD FRIENDSHIPS STILL IN TOUCH

by Christine Atkinson

When Red House Drive was first built in the mid sixties, and a new house was under £1000! The first residents quickly formed a close bond. As they were all new it was easy to meet up and make friends. Some of those first residents held regular parties, and some even went on holiday together.

They all lived in the cul de sac between 1965 and 1980. As they moved on, they kept in touch and regularly got together. Now sadly only 5 of the ladies are left and rely on their daughters to help bring them together for their annual meet up with lots of chat, and a happy trip down memory lane.

It would be lovely to hear any other stories of old friendships in the village. ●



Photo L-R:

Linda Gaffney , Norma Green, Joan Bartley (seated) Barbara Phillips , Mike Green, Laura Stopforth (nee Bartley), Ron Wing (seated) , Shirley Wing, Sally Hesketh (nee Phillips), Elaine Wing, Ann Croxson (seated), Jane Jones (nee Croxson), Jackie Close (nee Woodcock)

WI RAISING AWARENESS

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



In 2021 the WI passed a resolution to raise awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer among women and healthcare professionals, to help ensure that women receive early treatment where necessary.

One of the main challenges to ensuring that people see their GP early is that many women do not feel confident that they could spot a symptom of ovarian cancer. A survey carried out in 2016, with more than 1,300 women, found that only 4% of respondents were very confident they could spot signs of ovarian cancer. In England, the number of urgent referrals for suspected cancer has fallen by 60% since the Covid-19 pandemic. Many women are worried about visiting GP surgeries with symptoms, for fear of overburdening the GP, or coming into contact with the virus.

Ovarian cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in women, mainly affecting those who have been through the menopause. However, the early signs are similar to several other conditions. According to Cancer Research UK, there are around 7,400 new ovarian cancer cases in the UK each year, and 4,100 deaths. The earlier ovarian cancer is diagnosed the easier it is to treat and so public awareness and understanding of the symptoms is really important. Cancer Research UK states that when ovarian cancer is diagnosed

early, nine out of ten women will survive for five years or more. This compares to less than three in 20 women when diagnosed at the latest stage.

This month inside your village magazine is an excellent poster provided courtesy of Sonning Common WI. Our wish is to increase understanding of the signs and symptoms of this cancer within our community and help raise awareness. ●

Lesley Davis

**Public Affairs Rep for
Sonning Common WI**

An even more poignant Remembrance Day in 2021

The Village Hall will be open on 14 November 10.30am - 11.45am. The one minutes silence will be observed and members of the armed forces will be remembered.

In particular, former pupils of Chiltern Edge School Francis (Fred) Slough who lost his life in the Falklands War, Barry Weston and Cyrus Thatcher who lost their lives in Afghanistan.

Alex Manning who lives in Reade's Lane and is a navy veteran, who served in the Falklands War, will be coming to speak. His wife Gillian Manning MBE, who served in the navy charting aircraft carriers, will blow the bosun's whistle before the minutes silence.

The poppy wreath has faded so the WI knitters will be replacing the poppies so it will look good for Sunday 14 November. ●

Sue Hedges

What we did in Lockdown

The Banner was a project which ten WI members enjoyed sewing at home in Lockdown

The squares picture "What we did in Lockdown" were sewn by members of Sonning Common WI Craft Group who at the time were not able to meet together. The ladies were missing crafting together. When Covid regulations were more relaxed the squares were sewn together to make a wall hanging.

There are 16 squares - titles listed.

Lock Down 2020 -2021 Rainbow of Hope
Cross Stitch - Events of Lockdown
WI Relay of Garden Parties for 6 Neighbours - Togetherness
Thank You NHS
Blue Days and Sunny Days
Walking in the Countryside
WI Tea and Cakes
Clapping Hands
Thankful For members supporting each other
NHS Love Heart
Knitting Baby Hats for RB Hospital
Sir Captain Tom £ 40 Million
Christmas at Home
Lockdown Hobbies

Not a competition piece just a fabric record for our archive of what we did in Lockdown. ●

Sue Hedges



HELP INFLUENCE OTHERS – TELL US ABOUT THE CLIMATE ACTION YOU ARE TAKING!



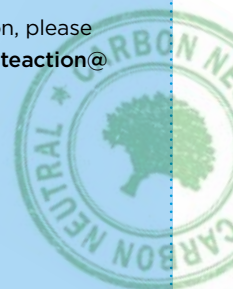
As a council, we will do all that we can to take action to adapt how we work to achieve our carbon neutral targets, helping to reduce the impacts of climate change locally, nationally and globally.

We're encouraging everyone who lives and works here to play their part. We now want to hear from anyone who is taking climate action, both as a resident and as part of the local community – our aim is to share your stories to help and to



influence as many people as possible to get involved in taking their own climate action, as we aim to become a carbon neutral district by 2030.

If you are taking climate action, please let us know by emailing climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk ●



FROM THE GROUND UP: STORIES OF CLIMATE ACTION

From 28 August to 9 October, Community Action Groups Oxfordshire (CAG Oxfordshire) is holding an exhibition at the Old Fire Station in Oxford called From the Ground Up: Stories of Climate Action to celebrate community action groups across the county.

For more information visit from-the-ground-up.co.uk

Once the city exhibition is complete, parts of it will travel to venues across Oxfordshire to make it accessible to the public in more rural areas. ●



CPRE OXON PLAN

The latest consultation on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 has now launched and runs until 8 October.

The Oxfordshire Plan will set the development framework for the county for the next generation. It will affect all Oxfordshire residents, either directly (through development) or indirectly (through impacts on services, infrastructure, our countryside and rural character).

CPRE Oxfordshire is fighting to make sure that the growth options are deliverable without undue damage to our countryside and some otherwise good policy proposals

for getting to net zero and restoring nature. That means guiding development to the right places and building high-quality compact housing to make the best use of scarce land.

We urge you to respond to the consultation – it is our best chance of influencing both the outcomes of this Plan and the OxCam Arc proposals.

Have your say NOW – it's too late to act when the bulldozers arrive.

Find more information on the CPRE Oxfordshire website cpreoxon.org.uk

Julia Benning
Communications Manager



LOGO FOR SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

Appeal for Magazine

Are there any Graphic Designers in Sonning Common? If so Cllr Jonny Bidgood is appealing for your help to produce a stylish Logo for the Parish Council.

Please contact him via the Parish Office on 0118 972 3616 ●



TOM FORT HELP

In the hot spell that came after the first lockdown I did something I had thought I would never do again – and embarked on a significant DIY project.

It will surprise no one who knows me to hear that I am not a natural DIY man, nor am I much good at it. Even so I put on filthy clothes, bought a new paint burner and a load of sandpaper and paint, dug out the scraper and got down to repainting the exterior windows.

The thing is, lockdown had removed any excuse I might have had. I had been looking at the flaking, peeling window sills and frames for a couple of years and saying to myself: I must get someone in. Or, maybe, I must do that

myself. But there was always a good reason not to.

So I did it, not very well, and it was pretty boring as such work always is. But I felt pretty good about it, so later I removed the seven hundred or so books from my office and repainted that – a rather fetching Racing Green, if you want to know – and felt pretty good about that.

Now I am asking you, the readers of this magazine, if you did something similar. I am writing a new book – it's bad luck to reveal exactly what it's about so I won't – and I would like to include in it some of the DIY/home improvement experiences of the last couple of years. Triumphs, failures, wild ambitions finally realised, hopes dashed. Inside or

outside. Loft conversions, raised beds, patios, shelves or any other woodworking, tree houses, walls, new kitchens – anything.

If you email me your DIY story at **tomfort3@gmail.com**, I absolutely promise not to reveal any identities or locations – I just want to hear what it was like for you, how you went about it, where you got your materials from, how you feel about it now.

I would be most grateful. ●



SANDY ONOFRIO

'LEARNING TO KNOW MYSELF AND MY LIMITATIONS'

by Diana Pearman

Sandy moved to SC from Caversham, as she found the village very attractive. Although she had no previous contacts, she soon made friends in her new neighbourhood of Ashford Avenue where she felt very safe. Being able to walk to the shops in the village centre was a particular benefit as was her soon 'belonging' to a local pub. The whole experience enabled her to quickly settle into her new home following her divorce.

Not long after she became a volunteer for the village Christmas lunch event. Her capabilities were soon recognised and by 2019 she was the main organiser. In 2020 when it was not possible to have the lunch due to COVID, she led the trio who

organised the treats boxes for nearly 100 elderly residents.

Sandy is no stranger to events organisation both in her professional and personal life. Her qualifications are in catering management gained in Scotland led her to working for a hotel group on their management trainee programme. Later with AA group of hotels, after doing front of house roles in various places within the Thames Valley, she became a Hotel Inspector. More recently she worked at Emmer Green primary school teaching the children to cook and currently her skills are regularly delivered in tray bakes for sale at Flemings.

The school community has also been an important part of her recent life, she established a book club, weekends away

in Snowdonia using the Youth Hostels out of season, theatre trips, gin tasting and caravan breaks. The staff appreciate her organisation especially the walks, which act as useful ice breakers and allow all members to join in and feel comfortable.

Joining the magazine committee was another example of her embracing community involvement and for 5 years she has been the contributor of the very popular Cook's corner page.

Her daughters live in the west country and lower house prices mean it is a move that will pay off her mortgage. We will miss her in the many ways as she has made her mark, although she would say the benefit is all hers, living here has boosted her confidence!

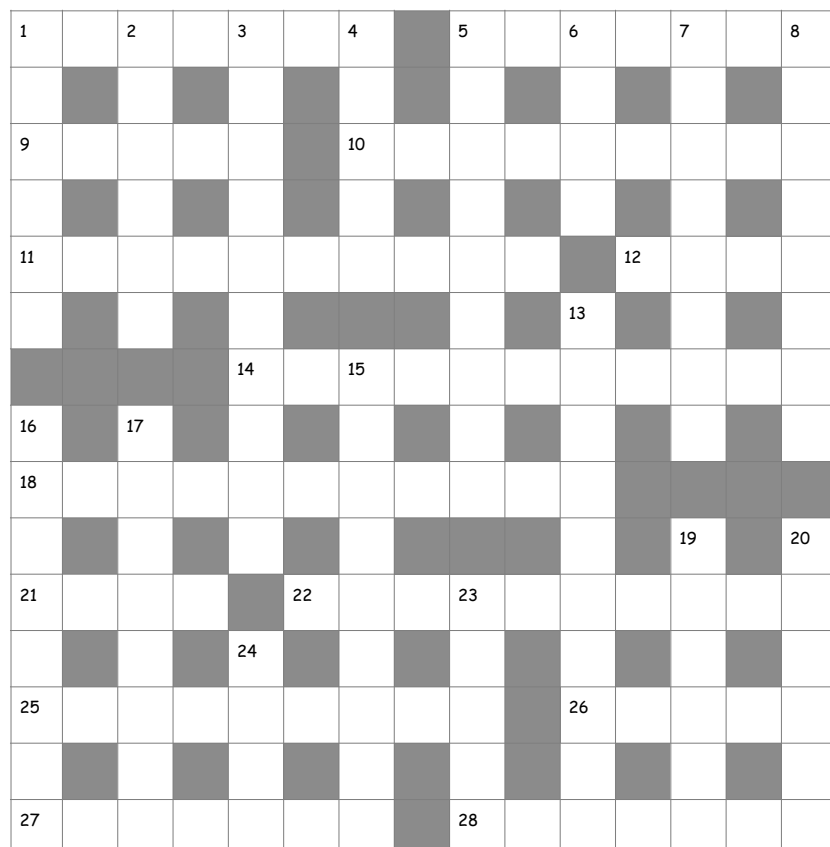
Best wishes for your future Sandy. ●



PUZZLE PAGE

By SHEILA WALKER

WOMBAT 6



CALL MY BLUFF Which of the following definitions is correct ?

PIPSISSEWA (a) A type of Asian heather (b) A complaint of the small intestine (c) A hybrid dessert apple

VOE (a) soft, napped cloth (b) a small bay or creek (c) oath of allegiance from a serf to his master

KILLICK (a) a small heavy anchor (b) thick onion soup (c) a layered underskirt

GRINDELIA (a) a pestle and mortar (b) a happy cook (c) a type of yellow daisy

FRAISE (a) strawberry mousse (b) 180 degree turn in ice skating (c) 16th century neck ruff

HOW MANY WORDS OF 5 OR MORE LETTERS CAN YOU MAKE FROM THE WORD 'PANDEMIC' ?

(there are at least 16)

CROSSWORD CLUES:

ACROSS

1. What one does when the lights go out? No! (7)
5. They have you in stitches (7)
9. Grand award, by the sound of it (5)
10. Not much coming and going at such times (4,5)
11. All colours of the rainbow, surprisingly (5,5)
12. See 16D
14. A former Livingstone? (11)
18. Preoccupation of sailors being pulled away (10)
21. Ever change direction (4)
22. His dream is 'art rules, OK?' (10)
25. Transport to Norfolk, and takes possession (9)
26. Imply iron is popular, right? (5)
27. Tired, not to say insulted, even knocked over (3,4)
28. Neither pole is underneath, so it's all go (3,4)

DOWN

1. Warren owner finds fame (6)
2. Great material, with the right person in charge (6)
3. Wales river sets a fine table (10)
4. Nuns, I think, could not join him (5)
5. Western food, found around 24D? (9)
6. Sum up national shopper (4)
7. Has new thoughts – about winds? (8)
8. Heard such sittings should come to an end (8)
13. What happens when 24D goes over the top 10)
15. Uncoils in order to experience belonging (9)
16. 12 See 22 (8,4)
17. Leads the way – to the wedding? (6,2)
19. Odd one out not quite as healthy as she seems! (6)
20. Agitate because harness is not quite right (4,2)
23. Keep going wrong with the sticky stuff (5)
24. Rely on artist - for watercolour? (4)

Is your dog
slowing down or
showing signs
of stiffness?



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LOOKING FOR SOME NEW ACTIVITY? GREEN GYM?

Now that the Covid-19 restrictions have been eased it is great that Sonning Common Green Gym can return to our normal arrangement of meeting on Thursday and Saturday mornings 9.30 'til 12.30 without the necessity of booking in advance, just turning up on the day. All our activities are out of doors and we maintain social distancing, as safety is paramount.

Recently we have carried out a variety of tasks including amongst others, boardwalk construction, redundant fencing removal and footpath clearance at Greys Court, fruit tree pruning at Henley Community Orchard, Holly clearance and bonfire at Spring Wood, rhododendron removal at Home Farm Wood and bramble and bracken clearance to allow heather and wild flowers to flourish on the local Common.

The Green Gym session planned for Saturday 9 October at Memorial Park will mainly involve the planting out of the tree whips which we heeled into a large planter on our previous visit in May. At that time the contractors were still working preparing the area where planting is to take place.

All tools are provided you just need to bring gloves and wear stout shoes or boots.

We are increasingly being told that we are an obese nation and advised of the problems associated with lack of fitness and of being overweight, so, if you have been thinking that it's about time to get moving, why not now? We would love you to join us – we are a friendly bunch and enjoy a chat over coffee and cake at half time.

Please contact our secretary Martin Rhodes on 0118 972 4228 with any questions or visit our website <http://sonningcommon.tcv.org.uk> to see where we will be meeting. See you there? ●

Brian Gardener



COMMUNITY ECOLOGIST SPOTTED THIS RARE BEE IN OXFORDSHIRE

Keep your eyes peeled for this beauty – *Andrena hattorfiana* or the Large Scabious Mining Bee. It is Britain's largest mining bee with females that are substantially larger than a Honey Bee. *Andrena hattorfiana* is listed as nationally rare (RDB3) in Falk, 1991. It is widespread across southern England but has declined across its UK range, with the exception of Wiltshire. It is oligolectic on scabious flowers, using field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*) and small scabious (*Scabiosa columbaria*). Scabious plants are late flowering, poor competitors and sensitive to grazing, so the bees are largely restricted to unimproved grasslands with low disturbance or late cutting regimes where the scabious can grow in high densities.

For more information on how you can help bees and other pollinators <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/communities/resources/>

VERA'S NEW BOOK PUBLISHED



Last September, Vera Morris, spent a week in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, researching for her fifth book in the Anglian Detective Series, **The Great Shroud**. It was published by Headline on 19 August 2021. The important people she talked with were the Lifeboat Operations Manager, RNLI, and the owner of the famous Aldeburgh Fish and Chips. Also she had to sample oysters and Dover soles to help strengthen the character of Frank Diamond.



Vera lives in Caversham, and was a former headteacher of Chiltern Edge School, Sonning Common. ●

'TALKING MAGAZINE'

I met Betty Freeman (who lives in Beech Rise) in Woodlands Road this afternoon – and during our chat she asked if it would be possible to have a 'Talking' version of the SC Magazine – like the Henley Talking Newspaper?

Carole Lewis

Volunteers please contact
editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE



Postponement of the 50th Birthday celebration until June 2022

It is with regret that we have decided once again to postpone this celebratory event. Although big national events are happening, COVID rates continue to climb and whilst we are still supporting social distancing, mask wearing and trying to reduce the number of people in the health centre, to host a big open house event this year does not seem the safest or most appropriate thing to do.

Sadly, with the recent death of Dr Peter Hemphill, one of the founders of the health centre over 50 years ago, it seems even more appropriate to postpone. The new date will be announced next June.

Kind regards, stay safe.
Kim, Ralph and Nick
GP Partners

If you would like to reply by email so that we can use this for future communications, you can either send to Sue Abbott sue.abbott6@nhs.net or Sue Litchfield sue.HAT1999@gmail.com

Staff Update

Welcome to two new registrars, Dr Rebecca Martin (for a 6 month placement) and Dr Antonio Stavrou (for a 1 year placement), and Julie Davis our new phlebotomist.

Congratulations to Dr Kim Wild on the birth of her daughter. Dr Claire Webster is due back from her maternity leave in October.

Covid Vaccination figures:

SCHC is well ahead of the national average for delivering both 1st Vaccinations and 2nd Vaccinations. This was achieved by the support of everyone in the practice, and our fabulous group of volunteers.

The health centre have administered a total of **11,263** vaccinations:

1st Vaccination = **5805**
2nd Vaccination = **5458**

And along with vaccines administered at main hubs this means:

1st Vaccination 89% of our adult population
2nd Vaccination 84% of our adult population

The national influenza immunisation programme 2021 to 2022

Last year saw the roll out of the biggest NHS influenza vaccination programme ever, with the aim of offering protection to as many eligible people as possible during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. A huge thank you to all those involved for your hard work during very challenging times, which led to the best influenza vaccine uptake rates ever achieved.

As a result of COVID-19 restrictions (such as mask-wearing, physical and social distancing, and restricted international travel) influenza levels were extremely low globally in 2020 to 2021, but because of this, a lower level of population immunity against influenza is expected in 2021 to 2022. This will be the first winter when seasonal influenza virus (and other respiratory viruses) will co-circulate alongside COVID-19.

This situation will have the potential to add substantially to the winter pressures usually faced by the NHS, particularly if infection waves from both viruses, coincide. This is all still an unknown, but mathematical modelling indicates the 2021 to 2022 influenza season in the UK could be up to 50% larger than typically seen, and may begin earlier than usual.

Influenza vaccination is therefore an important priority this coming autumn to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with influenza, and to reduce hospitalisations during a time when the NHS and social care may also be managing winter outbreaks of COVID-19.

Check if you have flu

Flu symptoms come on very quickly and can include: sudden high temperature of 38C or above, an aching body, feeling tired or exhausted, dry cough, sore throat, headache, difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite, diarrhoea or tummy pain, feeling sick and being sick.

The symptoms are similar for children, but they can also get pain in their ear and appear less active.

How to treat flu yourself

Rest and sleep, keep warm, take paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower your temperature and treat aches and pains, drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration (your pee should be light yellow or clear)

A pharmacist can give treatment advice and recommend flu remedies.

Be careful not to use flu remedies if you're taking paracetamol and ibuprofen tablets as it's easy to take more than the recommended dose.

Call a pharmacy or contact them online before going in person. You can get medicines delivered or ask someone to collect them.

For urgent advice call 111 ●

Sue Litchfield for SCHC



FLU & COVID AUTUMN BOOSTER CLINICS 2021-2022



We are inviting patients in alphabetical order with 65 years and over category first followed by 18-64 years at risk and then 50-64 years. Please wait until you receive an invitation via a text message or letter before you ring the surgery to book an appointment for the Flu Clinics.

Please book an appointment with Reception. Our clinics are by appointment only and are not walk in clinics. We have a dedicated Flu Only phone line option when you call through to the surgery. Please call 0118 972 2188 and when prompted press OPTION 8 to make an appointment. The Flu line will be open daily from 10am to 3:30pm.

Saturday 16th October

9am - 1pm & 1:30pm to 5:30pm

Flu Only

18 years - 64 years at risk
Over 65 years

Wednesday 13th October

4pm - 6pm

Flu Only

18 years - 64 years at risk
Over 65 years

Monday 11th October

4pm - 6pm

Flu Only

18 years - 64 years at risk
Over 65 years

Wednesday 20th October

2pm - 6pm

Flu Only

18 years - 64 years at risk
Over 65 years and 50-64 years

Saturday 6th November

9am - 1pm

Flu Only

50-64 years

Clinic dates and times may change due to demand.

You are eligible for a free flu vaccine if you fall into any of these categories: Children aged 2 and 3 years, over 50 years, registered carers, care home residents and patients in a clinical risk group. Dates for children are still to be confirmed.

If you are unsure of your eligibility please ask a nurse or GP at the Health Centre.

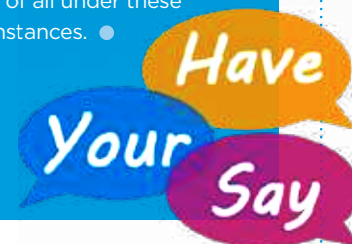
Please note: COVID Autumn Booster are dependent on a decision by Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on how and when COVID vaccine is to be administered. The Health Centre is waiting for advice. ●

FROM THE HEALTH CENTRE'S PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

The PPG, being patients ourselves, totally understand the wish for the return of the normal face-to-face consultations at the Sonning Common Health Centre. In line with national advice, patients are currently asked to phone in and book a telephone consultation with a doctor who will phone back at a specified date/time. At this point, the doctor will assess whether the patient should come in for further exploration of the problem or physical examination. This provides the safe, best service to patients currently and it is regrettably not sensible to move back to routine face-to-face appointments.

Even if patients have had the two anti-Covid vaccinations they could still carry and transmit the virus. If this happened during a visit, the other patients present would have to enter isolation and so would the staff, reducing the number of appointments available. We are sure that the huge majority of patients appreciate the problem but, unfortunately, we understand that a small minority become aggressive and even rude when the reception staff explain the procedure. This is most unfair and we hope that this article makes clear that the telephone consultation is for the benefit of all under these difficult circumstances. ●

Vicky Mynott
Chair PPG



SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP Annual General Meeting 13 October 2021

Due to the present COVID-19 situation and restrictions on meetings, this year's Annual General Meeting will be held virtually on 13 October 2021 commencing at 19.15 hours. If you are a patient of the Sonning Common Health Centre and wish to attend, please contact schcppg@gmail.com so that your name and email address can be added to the list of attendees. You will then receive an email with the link during the week prior to the event.

Vicky Mynott
Chair PPG

HEALTH WALKS

The Health Walks still have a reduced number of walks each week at the moment. First Steps at 10am on Mondays at the Millennium Field, other walks at 10am on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 9.30am on Fridays and Saturdays. These are in different locations, so go to www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable for the most up-to-date information. If you want to speak to someone about any aspect of the Health Walks, phone Chris Brook on 0118 9242515

Church news

ST MICHAEL'S

A discussion has begun on how and when we should lift the restrictions related to the pandemic. Should we increase our capacity with less social distancing, introduce singing, allow people to take on specific roles in our liturgies and begin social gatherings again? These decisions are not easy to make. Hopefully the views of our parishioners will help us decide how best to move forward safely.

In the meantime, we are encouraging anyone who has stayed away from the church since the pandemic started, to put their foot over the threshold once more. However, if you arrive and are uncomfortable with the number of people present just turn around and go home in good conscience and with God's blessing. Likewise, if you prefer to avoid the crowd after Mass has finished then feel free to depart early. The invitation to step over the threshold once more is also extended to those who have been away for many years. There are many reasons why we stay away from church but we hope you will give us the opportunity to welcome you back home when you are ready.

Over several Sundays a number of our young people were Confirmed and these were joyful occasions. The gathering of larger family groups, despite social distancing, highlighted how much we miss the entire community being able to gather to worship and praise God together.

Over the summer months more people from the parish have come forward to support the local foodbank run from Springwater Church. ●

The parish hall is now open to both its regular and casual hirers. **www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk**

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AND CHRIST THE KING

For many of us, autumn brings a more or less explicit expectation that now is the time to get back in harness, resume

hostilities, put all those new plans into action, launch into a new term.... However, if you're anything like me, recent months may have left you with the feeling that, as we used to say, my get up and go has got up and went. Energy levels are somehow not quite what they were. It's not easy to move on from that lowest-common-denominator mode. What, then?

Do we have permission to go a bit easy on ourselves, edit our programme, refuse some of those overtures and requests? I do hope so: preserving one's sanity is a legitimate priority, as Jesus well knew when he took time out, with or without his disciples, or as one wise old prophet (Isaiah) said: 'in returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength'.

Having said that, our churches are now resuming live services each week, plus a short evening service on Zoom at 7.15pm. There will be a special harvest service At St John's at 11am Sunday 10 October. For details please do check on www.achurchnearyou.com, on the church boards and doors, or call James (07522 042735) or Sheila (0118 972 4861): you will be most welcome at any time! ●

Rev. Sheila Walker

SPRINGWATER

It has been an interesting summer. Many of the Coronavirus restrictions lifted but the disease remained very much around, even affecting some people who have had both jabs. Nevertheless, it has been possible to get back to more normal worship, which is just wonderful and even having chats over a cup of coffee after the Sunday service.

The Foodbank continues to be very much in demand and **donations of food or funds are very much needed** and can be taken to Springwater in Blounts Court road.

All the other activities are flourishing: the Ark parent and toddler group,

Compassionate Loaf breadmaking for charity on Monday mornings, woman's group Aspire and the Steering Wheel Fellowship.

We would love to meet with you and your family on a Sunday morning, everyone is welcome.

May God bless you during this beautiful time of year. ●

Chris Girdler

www.springwaterchurch.org
email: springwater@gmail.com
0118 972 4519

CHILTERN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

We are super excited to be able to run 2 youth groups (Adventurers) at the church this September. They both meet on a Saturday evening with a younger group (reception - school year 3) from 5:30-6:45pm and an older group (school year 4 - 8) from 7-8:30pm. Newcomers are very welcome to come and join the fun!

Our Sunday services are now back in person at 4:30pm and our baby and toddler music group (Mainly Music) is back with gusto, music and cake (!) on Fridays at 10:30am.

We are also excited to be launching a new parent and baby course running weekly from Monday 4 October at 1-2:30pm in our church building. It's called Wonderfully Made and has been popular in the past. We only have 8 places available so book your place now!

Please do contact us/see the website for more information: **www.cecuk.church**.

Lockdown has broken many of our connections with each other. Many of us have missed, and in some ways, are finding it hard to reconnect with people. We would love to see you at any of our events and a warm welcome is waiting for you.

You never know - it might just surprise you! ●

Parish news

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PLANNING INSPECTOR'S DECISION WAS 'SERIOUSLY FLAWED'

A joint initiative, led by Sonning Common Parish Council, pushed the district council to apply for a judicial review from the High Court on the outcome of the Little Sparrows planning inquiry.

Sonning Common Parish Council wrote to all district councillors - on behalf of the 10 parish councils in the ward - calling for South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to try to get the decision by an independent planning inspector reviewed by the High Court.

The letter said that the decision by inspector Harold Stephens to allow a major retirement complex to be built in the protected countryside, off Blounts Court Road, was seriously flawed, biased, based on dubious evidence and should

not be accepted.

There will now be a preliminary hearing at the High Court this autumn and a judicial review of the planning inquiry, which concluded in May, will be granted, if a judge considers there are sufficient grounds for doing so.

Chairman of Sonning Common Parish Council, Michael Cann, said: "The inspector's decision has serious repercussions not just for Sonning Common and the surrounding parishes but for the whole of South Oxfordshire and further afield.

"This inspector has sanctioned a major development within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) on a

site which has not been allocated for development. He has decreed that our countryside has little scenic value and has overridden the wishes of our community, as expressed in our Neighbourhood Plan."

In response to the inquiry's outcome, Dr Matt Thomson, of the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB), lodged a formal complaint with the Government's Planning Inspectorate.

He praised the parish councils for their joint initiative and said: "I'm delighted to see your joint letter and the level of support from the surrounding parishes is very heartening. We really appreciate the offer of support from the local communities." ●

PLANS TO LIGHT MEMORIAL PARK

A bid has been submitted to install lighting at Memorial Park.

The parish council is seeking planning permission to install lighting around the multi-use games area and the trackway at Memorial Park.

Deputy Parish Clerk, Ros Varnes, said: "We are very aware of the need to create a lighting scheme which is sensitive to the site's surroundings while at the same time being safe and practical for the users of Memorial Park.

"We will be working with planners at South Oxfordshire District Council to try to get it right."

£100,000 GRANT FOR NEW PLAY AREA

Sonning Common Parish Council is delighted to announce that it has received a £100,000 donation from the Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund towards building a new play area at Memorial Park on Reades Lane.

The play area will be designed to include equipment for children of all abilities aged 1-12 years old and will offer different play opportunities to those already on offer in the village. A public consultation of the successful tender bid is due to be held this autumn and the play area is anticipated to be installed and ready for use in the spring of 2022.

Becky Jenkins, Deputy Clerk of the Parish Council, said: "It's fantastic to see this project get off the ground and it will be

exciting to see the chosen design become a reality. The play area at Memorial Park will become a family destination for the local community thanks to the generous donation from Tarmac." ●



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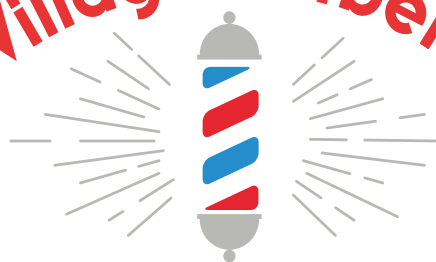
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PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 25

Wombat 6

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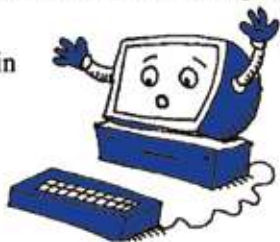
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