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From the editor



The summer holidays are here and lots of people will be dispersing but if you're sticking around there's plenty going on locally.

One of our readers has contributed a lovely feature about Greys Court - a jewel in our midst - and if you haven't been to see the house yet, it's worth a visit (see page 24).

Planning issues continue to dominate the village's agenda with the parish council having recommended refusal of the proposed Kennylands Road development and a planning application for Lea Meadow having been resubmitted (page 3).

It's good news that the library will stay open but bad news that the county council expects this community to largely run it ourselves. If you believe this is the wrong solution for the library you have until 30 September, when the public consultation closes, to make your views known.

As ever, we are indebted to all of our advertisers who pay to have this magazine designed and printed. Many people tell me they keep the magazine as a record of all the trades and services locally. May I ask that if you respond to one of our advertisements, you say you saw it in Sonning Common Magazine?

Have a great summer - wherever you may be!

ROS VARNES Editor

Email me at:

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 Geoffrey Adams. Email: geoffrey.adams5@btopenworld.com
Phone: 0118 972 2134

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

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

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by Gill McGowan

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It doesn't get much better than this

Kidmore End Pre-School has been rated outstanding in every single category by Ofsted inspectors.

The inspectors found the learning environment to be "inspirational" and said that children were "incredibly confident" and "happy".

Gemma Malaperiman, chairwoman of the pre-school committee, said: "We've known for quite some time that our pre-school is a very special place, where the children are encouraged to play, learn and grow in a wonderfully nurturing environment.

"To have it officially recognised is fantastic, and testament to the enthusiasm and devotion of the staff who work so hard towards creating a welcoming family atmosphere."

The pre-school has been operating from the Parish Rooms in Kidmore End since 1983. A maximum of 14 children attend each session. A few places are still available for September 2012. For more information contact registrar Louise Wood on 0118 9242740 or email enquiry@keps.co.uk. ■

Successful times at the village hall

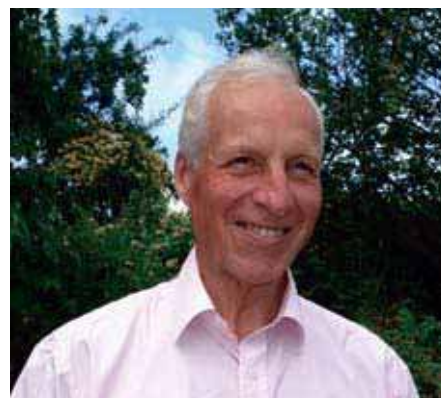
The past year has been a busy one for Sonning Common Village Hall.

The building is owned by Sonning Common Parish Council, which is currently funding some more improvements to include an excellent sound system and better ventilation. The village hall management committee is responsible for the day-to-day business of the hall and is pleased to have kept the calendar full.

Booking agent, Penny Harvey, is retiring after many years during which time she has done much to ensure the smooth-running of the hall and the efficient collection of fees.

Susan Rusman has replaced Mrs Harvey and they have worked together to achieve a very smooth transition. Chairman Jill Vallis has also relinquished her post after seven years.

Looking ahead, the management committee plans to make greater use of the village hall's website and to encourage more on-line transactions. ■



Moving on up

Sonning Common Magazine has a new chairman.

Former distribution manager Geoffrey Adams took the helm after Graham Thomas stepped down as chairman at the magazine's AGM in May.

Said Geoffrey: "I look forward to continuing Graham Thomas' great work as chairman of the magazine committee. The magazine plays an important role in fostering a community spirit in the village and Graham has guided this not-for-profit organisation to a sound base.

"My three years as distribution manager have demonstrated to me the wealth of support there is for the magazine.

"As ever, my profound thanks go to the editor and all the other volunteers who so regularly give their time to ensuring the magazine is delivered to homes in Sonning Common - and now to adjacent areas - six times a year, and to our advertisers who provide the money needed for printing and design.

"Looking ahead, I am sure we must embrace the digital age to a greater extent while retaining the pleasure of receiving a printed document through the door.

"The committee and I will work together to ensure we take the magazine forward. Any suggestions and volunteers for the committee will be welcome."

Craig Henderson was re-elected as secretary at the AGM. ■

Parish council takes action

The recently-elected Sonning Common Parish Council has set about tackling some long-awaited tasks in the village.

- Windows, which open, have been installed in the village hall along with sun screening for windows in the side room
 - A new sound system for the hall has been installed
 - The re-opening of the public lavatories is imminent
 - A footpath officer has been appointed to examine all footpaths in the village and make recommendations to the council on repairs and re-surfacing work
 - Robert Watson has been appointed to hand-weed all weed-infested kerbs
 - An anti-Japanese knotweed campaign has begun
 - A proposal is underway to fence in all three play areas in the village
 - New noticeboards are being sourced
 - The charity bins in the car park behind the Co-operative have been moved to free up much-needed parking space
 - Grants have been made to two voluntary groups - Sonning Common Magazine and The Village Gardeners - who, in different ways, do so much to improve the life of our village
- All parish council meetings are open to the public. Please come along and let us know what else we can do to improve the village. ■
- COUNCILLOR CHRISIE PHILLIPS-TILBURY**
Sonning Common Parish Council

Change in council's housing strategy

More new houses may be built in Sonning Common under the latest proposals from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC).

An extra 414 homes will be allocated to 12 large villages in South Oxfordshire, including Sonning Common, taking the planned, overall total from 740 to 1,154. The new homes are to be shared among the 12 large villages.

SODC revised its housing strategy after an independent inspector ruled that windfall sites could not be relied upon to meet the district's housing needs for the next 16 years.

Windfall sites are sites suitable for development but are either too small for inclusion in the council's core strategy or have some uncertainty over their availability.

Meanwhile, a new planning application to build 80 dwellings on Lea Meadow has been submitted to SODC.

The access for the proposed development - on land between the Herb Farm and Bird Wood Court - is now to be combined with the Herb Farm's. The layout has been revised to protect all the trees and the roadside hedge, and additional trees will be planted. Provision is being made for 30 affordable homes.

Copies of the proposed plans can be viewed at the parish clerk's office in the village hall.

Phone 0118 972 3616.

To have your say on the new plans:

Email: planning.west@southoxon.gov.uk

Or write to: SODC planning department, Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford OX10 8NJ. ■

* Anyone interested in an affordable home, proposed for Lea Meadow, is invited to contact: Stewart Lilly Associates, agent for the landowner. **Phone: 01235 832867.**

Email: saglilly@googlemail.com



Village resident Sally Stallwood, who grazes two ponies and an elderly horse on the Kennylands Road site, has written to the district council to object to the plans. She said: "Any development on this site would turn my life upside down and I can't bring myself to think about the outcome for my horses. I object to the impact this proposed development would have on the countryside. These little pockets of green, peaceful land make Sonning Common what it is. I moved here 19 years ago because of the nice, green areas but that is all disappearing." ■

Village says 'no' to Kennylands Road plans

Parish councillors have unanimously recommended that outline plans to build 50 new homes on pastureland behind Kennylands Road be refused.

All councillors agreed that many aspects of the proposed development ran counter to the district's local plan for housing.

The planning committee of Sonning Common Parish Council met on 13 June to consider the proposals and to make their recommendations to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC).

The Kennylands Road proposal is still under consideration by SODC's planning department and a decision is due on 9 August 2011.

Parish councillors objected to the plans on the grounds that:

- the built-up area of the village would be extended into the open countryside
- a dense development of 50 houses would have "a dramatic and detrimental effect on the character of the countryside immediately to its west"
- the single access on to Kennylands Road created "a potential hazard for vehicles entering or leaving a busy road"
- Sonning Common sewage works could not cope with the added capacity


Their submission to SODC also states:

"Parking is a huge problem and already causes great difficulties for service vehicles, buses and cars and for residents needing to use village facilities and amenities.

"The proposed development will greatly increase these problems and the extra cars and people resulting from it would, we believe, bring the existing infrastructure of roads, parking, education, health, water and sewerage to breaking point."

Iain Stevenson, from Carter Jonas, agent for the proposed development, said: "We are currently reviewing the other consultation responses to see if the application can be modified to address any concerns. We should have a decision within the next month or so." ■

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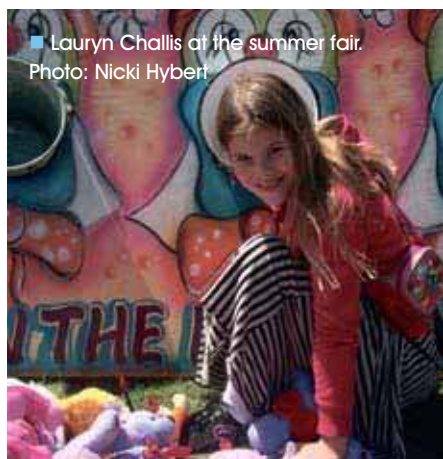
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■ Lauryn Challis at the summer fair.
Photo: Nicki Hybert

Smiling through the rain

Once again Sonning Common Primary School's annual summer fair was a huge success.

The Caribbean Carnival theme provided a summery feel to a not particularly summery day! Despite the occasional rain shower hundreds of people turned up on the day to support the school.

A total of £3,195 was raised, which will be used to purchase equipment for the school.

The organisers, the school's Parent Teacher Association, wish to thank everyone who turned up to support the event along with sponsors Beville Estate Agency and Carl Wood, the butcher. ■

Open Farm Sunday

People had a chance to discover more about life on Britain's farms at a recent event in Cane End. Vines Farm organised trailer rides, bird-spotting, visits to see growing crops, conservation areas and farm animals, as part of a nationwide initiative to promote farming, Open Farm Sunday. ■



■ Cattle at Vines Farm, Cane End.
Photo: Peter Rickards

The youth club helps to protect our young people

Oxfordshire County Council will cease to fund The Edge youth club at Chiltern Edge School at the end of August. Members of the club's management committee, all local volunteers, are working hard to ensure that funding is in place to safeguard the club's future.

We are looking to fund-raise from local businesses and charities. The management committee has secured a welcome £4,500 donation every year for three years from Sonning Common Parish Council, which shows a great deal of foresight on behalf of the parish council.

The youth club helps to protect our young people and makes a necessary contribution to the safety and welfare of the village.

It provides a safe place for young people to meet their friends and take part in various

activities. It helps to prevent youngsters from meeting outside local shops to socialise, which some residents find intimidating.

This is a local club, for local youngsters, managed by local people. For further information about the club, or to volunteer to help, please contact the chairman, Beverly Dobson on 01189 72 3266 or 07979 811318, or Rosemary Edgington on 01189 72 3076.

COUNCILLOR CAROL VINEY
Oxfordshire County Council
Sonning Common Division

Like to be an adult in Scouting?



The Scouting Association is appealing for help to set up Beaver and Scout sections in the village.

Adult leaders are needed to run both sections - up to three adults per group. The group is also looking for non youth-led roles such as committee members. Full and free training would be given. No experience is necessary and all potential leaders would be CRB-checked.

Beavers is for boys and girls aged six to eight and Scouts is for boys and girls aged 10 to 14. There is already a Cub pack in the village, for eight to 10-year-olds, which meets at the Scout Hut in Baskerville Road. Kae Meadham, from Oxfordshire Scouting, said: "We have a joining

list across the county for Beavers and we need a Scout troop because the Cubs have no Scout provision in the village and have to travel to other troops. We would very much like to hear from any potential adults. Scouting is great fun and incredibly rewarding." ■

For further information contact Kae Meadham, local development officer for Oxfordshire:

Phone: 07825 768803 / 01865 739317
Email: ldo@oxonscouting.org.uk

It's time to make the switch

Don't forget the nationwide switch to digital TV next month!

In Oxfordshire the switchover dates are 14 September for BBC2 and 28 September for the remaining analogue channels - ITV, BBC1, Channel 4, and Channel 5. After these dates anyone without digital-compatible TV equipment will be met with a blank screen.

A help scheme is available for people aged 75 or more, care home residents, the disabled and those on benefits.

For further information contact:

Jayne Bullock, Oxfordshire Rural Community Council,
Jericho Farm, Worton, Witney, Oxon OX29 4SZ.
Phone: 01865 883488 Email: orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk



get set for digital ✓

Volunteers to help in an emergency

When village singing group Nottakwire decided to donate money to the local Community First Responders team some people seemed unaware of the sterling work the group does. So, village residents Jo Stoves and Joan Grummant spoke to Chris Brooks, from Community First Responders, to find out more.

Community First Responders is a nationwide initiative whereby local volunteers are trained to support the ambulance service.

The ambulance service can call on trained volunteers to attend appropriate 999 calls within a five-mile radius of where they live. This often means that emergency treatment reaches patients far faster than an ambulance can - in less than 8 minutes.

And it has been proved that in cases of stroke and other life-threatening conditions, the quicker help is administered the greater the chance of recovery.

One Nottakwire member, Sue Hedges, spent a long time searching for the First Responder who she thinks saved her husband Joe's life.

Joe had been stung by a bee and had stuck his epi-pen into his finger by mistake! He was clearly suffering anaphylactic shock when the First Responder arrived and successfully revived him with a swiftly administered second injection - much to the relief of his distraught wife.

This episode illustrates the important and life-saving work done by Community First Responders when they answer calls about strokes, heart and chest pain, falls, breathing difficulties and much, much more.

The basic training the volunteers receive covers life support, oxygen therapy, use of a defibrillator, care of an unconscious patient, medical emergencies and minor traumas and

paediatrics. They have access to advice from the control room when they are responding to calls. The Sonning Common and Kidmore End Group was started in 2008. Since then it has doubled its number of volunteers to four and is going from strength to strength.

In 2008 it was called out nine times. In 2010 it answered 71 calls. In the first three months of this year it answered 24 calls and looks set to achieve about 100 responses in 2011.

In 80 per cent of call-outs, the Community First Responders were first on the scene.

Chris Brooks, from Kidmore End, one of the founders of the local group, is very proud of the life-saving work she does. She joined because she wanted to, "put something back into the community" and has learned a few tricks to help her respond quickly to calls, like parking her car facing outwards to save reversing time!

Currently, cover is limited to around 40 hours during the week and about 20 at the weekend. More volunteers are always required.

The skill and dedication of this team is unquestionable and we are very lucky indeed to know they are out there supporting us as part of the local ambulance team. ■

For further information contact

South Central Ambulance:

Phone: 0800 587 0207

Email: cfr@scas.nhs.uk

Website: www.southcentralambulance.nhs.uk

SCPS Sports Day

The weather held for the infants' sports day at Sonning Common Primary School recently. But the juniors weren't so lucky and their event, planned for the afternoon, had to be postponed when the heavens opened. These photos, by Peter Varnes, capture some of the essence of the day.



ABOVE FROM TOP:

■ Boys racing in the infants' sports day at Sonning Common Primary School.

■ Charlie Partlow has got space hopping down to a fine art.

■ Lucy Tucker is first over the line in the egg and spoon race.

■ Michael Varnes, age 6, looks unimpressed with his egg and spoon.

There's money in singing

A cheque for a final total of £2,000 was presented to the Community First Responders by Nottakwire members last month.

Henley MP John Howell attended the presentation, having previously written to Nottakwire to congratulate members on their successful fund-raising concert - the Big Sing on 14 May.

Margaret Moola and Elaine Williams, Nottakwire founders, thanked everyone who had supported the concert so enthusiastically. ■



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Roll up for the summer reading challenge

Circus Stars is the theme of this year's summer reading challenge at Sonning Common Library.

Children are encouraged to visit the library four times over the summer (up until mid-September), and choose at least six books to read.

Each visit will be rewarded with a small prize, and there will be medals for all the finishers! There are lots of new books in the library – come and see for yourselves.

There will be a special storytime on every Saturday in August at 10am, with different guest story-tellers and activities for junior school-age children, including balloon modelling and face painting.

There will also be tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits on sale for parents and children.

For more information ask at the library, or phone 0118 972 2448. See www.circus-stars.org.uk for more information about the reading challenge.

Rosemary Dunstan
Library manager

Like to learn?

Interested in learning about the life and art of Leonardo da Vinci or the making of modern Reading?

Then look no further than the latest brochure of short courses from the Reading branch of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA).

Courses for the autumn term include English Poetry, from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War and Chips With Everything - an examination of the development of IT and its impact on our lives.

There is also a varied programme of music, archaeology, philosophy and art history courses and day schools.

Copies of the brochure are available from the WEA website or: WEA Reading, 27 Derby Road, Reading, RG4 5HE. Phone: 0118 946 4137. Email: WEAreading@googlegmail.com.



Walk this way ...

A Nordic walking group has started up in the village every Saturday morning from 10am.

For more information, contact Lil Roe, community activator for GO Active: Phone: 07825 089 618. Email: lil.roe@nexuscommunity.org



Pamper me, please!

Many ladies were tempted by an evening of pampering at Chiltern Edge School recently.

The Pamper Evening, organised by Leena Wisely and Pippa Andrews, raised £485 towards school funds.

A host of therapists were on hand to offer taster sessions in everything from Pranac healing - an Eastern healing process - to head massage, pedicures and facials. There was even a palm reader.

Organiser Leena Wisely said: "There was a great buzz on the evening. Mothers brought daughters and everyone really seemed to enjoy themselves."



Alice Horncastle receives a manicure by Sue Duke of Sonning Common Beauty, watched by Zoe Wright.

A grand day out

If you're aged 90 or more, then you're invited to a grand tea party to celebrate the 90th birthday of Peppard War Memorial Hall.

The trustees of the hall have decided to mark the special occasion by inviting those people of a similar age, from the parishes of Peppard and Sonning Common, to help celebrate.

The event will take place in the hall on Friday 19 August, from 3pm to 5pm.

Phone 0118 972 2201 or 0118 972 4751 for more information.

JILL KENDAL

Reap what you sow

Gardeners - it's time to start gathering together your entries for the 52nd annual Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society autumn show.

The show will take place at Chiltern Edge School on Saturday 3 September from 2.30pm until 4.30pm.

There will be all the usual classes for flowers, vegetables and fruit as well as floral art, photography, cookery, handicrafts and children's classes.

Entries are requested by 31 August. Contact horticultural society chairman Mark Richards on 0118 972 3939 for further information.

Services for MS sufferers

The local branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society has been running a therapy centre in Henley for 18 months.

It is based at Brunner Hall in Greys Road and is open from 10am until 4pm every Thursday.

Services include group and individual therapy sessions, footcare and informal lunches with an MS specialist nurse. Donations are encouraged since this enables the branch to help more people.

The local MS branch is keen to stress that there is also the option for people with MS, together with their family and carers, to socialise and exchange ideas and information.

For more information please contact Maddie Ames who chairs the local committee on 01628 825773 or email madeline@starames.co.uk.



Have fun, get thinner

Zumba Fitness is the latest craze to hit Sonning Common with two new classes having started up recently in the village. The Latin American dance-inspired workout is designed to tone all areas of the body and build fitness levels.

WEEKLY CLASSES ARE TAKING PLACE AT:
Sonning Common Primary School, Grove Road, Thursday 7.30pm, £4
Kidmore End War Memorial Hall, Reades Lane, Monday 6.30pm, £5



Martial arts, anyone?

Are you interested in organising something different for a summer fete or community event?

Master Nazim Gokceade, from the martial arts club at Kidmore End War Memorial Hall, in Reades Lane, is keen to do demonstrations of the ancient arts.

He runs two classes a week, aimed at five-year-olds to adults, and says: "We are a very friendly martial arts club where you will learn practical skills including effective blocks and strikes, advanced kicking, foot work and evasion."

Beginners are welcome. The first lesson is free. Training times are:

Sunday 10am (mixed ages)

Monday 3.45pm (under 10 years of age)

For further information and to book a demonstration contact: Master Nazim on 07798 852499 or 0118 947 1047

Email: nazim.gokceade@ntlworld.com
Website: www.tangsoudao.com



As a late summer treat, the Chiltern Players have come up with something a little bit different to entertain their audiences at Peppard Memorial Hall.

For one night only they are presenting *Playing on the Radio*, an evening of staged play readings – just like you hear on the radio! – on Friday, 9 September.

The first play to be featured is *Sentenced*, a thought-provoking drama by the Players' very own award-winning in-house playwright, Jane Brough. The second is *Lunch Hour*, a ground-breaking one-act play by John Mortimer set in the Sixties.

The performance begins at the village hall in Gallowstree Road at 8pm. Tickets, priced £5, are now on sale at Occasions, Wood Lane, Sonning Common, or from Carol Evans on 0118 972 3628. They will also be available on the door.




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Council wants to *cut library staff*

After several delays the public consultation into the future of Oxfordshire's library service began at the end of May and will run until the end of September.

Oxfordshire County Council has issued a new proposal to keep all libraries open and to give them continued access to their buildings, the library infrastructure and book stocks.

However, the bad news is that professional staff would be substantially reduced at many libraries, undermining the quality of the library service. Sonning Common Library would be among the worst hit, retaining professional staff support for just eight hours a week as opposed to 25 hours currently.

Under the county council's new plans, a three-tiered system of library provision would be created with Sonning Common being in the bottom tier.

The council is proposing to fully fund and staff 22 libraries, cut professional staff by one-third at five libraries and by two-thirds at the remaining 16 libraries, including Sonning Common, Goring and Woodcote. The changes would be phased in over three years from next April.

The county council expects volunteers to fill in the gaps left by the removal of professional staff, and, in many cases, undertake much of the responsibility for running libraries themselves.

Ros Varnes, chair of the Friends of Sonning Common Library, said: "The Friends do not consider the county council's proposal to be a viable, long-term solution for Sonning Common Library.

"We believe volunteers have a valuable part to play in supporting professional staff but do not necessarily have the knowledge

and experience to run a professional service themselves. Nor should they be expected to.

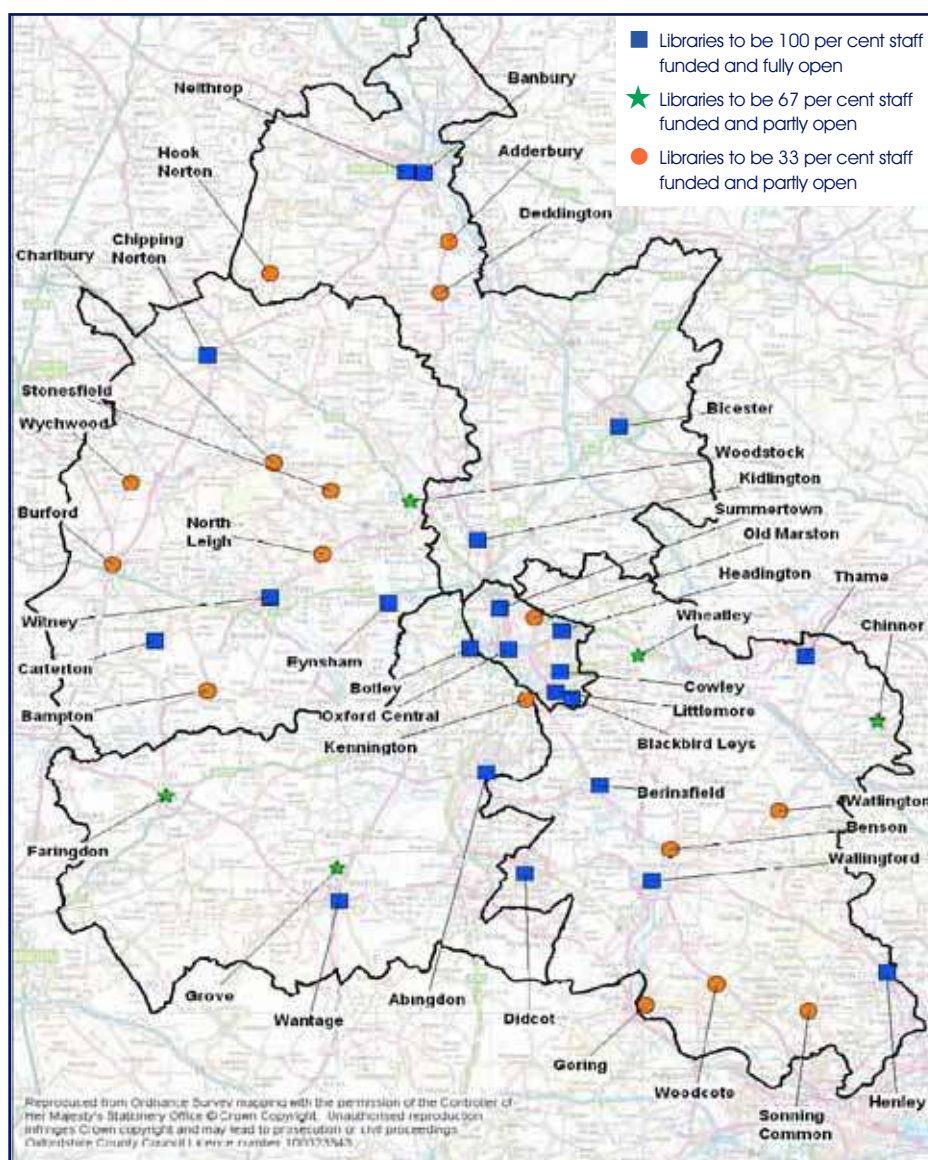
"The proposal to create a three-tiered system of library provision is also extremely unfair. While spending cuts are necessary, they should be shared among all libraries in the county.

"Under the county council's new plans, some libraries - many in densely-populated, urban areas - would benefit through better

resources and longer opening hours, at the expense of others, including Sonning Common, in rural, isolated communities.

"By law the county council is bound to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service. This legal obligation should apply to all areas where there is a library, not just areas of the county council's choosing." ■

[See reader's letter on page 21](#)



Five ways to help support the library

1 Join in with the county council's public consultation on the future of the library service.

2 Help the Friends of Sonning Common Library make the case for retaining professional library staff.* Give examples of how the professional staff have helped you.

3 Attend the public meeting on the future of Sonning Common Library, which will be held in the village hall on Monday 12 September at 7.30pm.

4 Volunteer to help support professional staff in the library.*

5 Use the library!

The Friends of Sonning Common Library would like to hear from non-users of the library. What would entice you to use the local library service? Please place your ideas in a suggestion box on the Friends of Sonning Common Library desk in the library foyer or email the Friends at: foscl@ymail.com

To have your say on the future of Sonning Common Library write to: **Library Service Consultation, Freepost, Oxfordshire County Council.** Please copy your correspondence to the Friends of Sonning Common Library: foscl@ymail.com

Phone the county council on: **01865 792422**

* Forms are available from the desk in the library foyer or from the Save Our Library website: saveourlibrary.org.uk
Friends of Sonning Common Library



Public meeting on the library's future

A public meeting to discuss the future of Sonning Common Library is due to be held on Monday 12 September.

The meeting will take place in Sonning Common Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Oxfordshire County Council representatives John Jackson, director of social and community services and councillor Judith Heathcoat, cabinet member with responsibility for libraries, have confirmed they will be attending.

Carol Viney, county councillor for Sonning Common, is also due to attend.

The meeting is taking place as part of the county council's current public consultation on the future of the library service in Oxfordshire.

The Friends of Sonning Common Library will be requesting a face-to-face meeting with county council representatives following the public meeting to discuss feedback from it and to agree an acceptable way forward for the village library.

The public consultation will close on 30 September. Decisions on the future of the library service are due to be made towards the end of this year with changes being implemented after April 2012. ■

During 2010-11 Sonning Common Library:

- achieved 1.7 per cent of the children's book issues in the county
- achieved 1.2 per cent of all age and all format issues in the county

Oxfordshire County Council's library service consultation document claims that:

- 81.5 per cent of all issues are made by their 22 Core (blue) libraries, averaging roughly 3.7 per cent each
- the five Community Plus (green) libraries account for 5.5 per cent of issues, averaging roughly 1.1 per cent each
- the remaining 16 Community (orange) libraries account for 13 per cent of issues, averaging roughly 0.8 per cent each

BUT our library accounts for 1.2 per cent overall – so you would anticipate that we would be designated at least Community Plus status, which would mean a one-third cut in professional staffing levels as opposed to the two-thirds cut currently being proposed for Sonning Common.

Analysis provided by Leigh Rawlins, of Woodlands Road



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Do the doggy dip

I wonder what dogs would say, if they could speak, about having their own swimming pool in Sonning Common for health, rehabilitation, fitness and fun?

Village resident Beverly Dobson fulfilled a long-standing ambition last spring when she opened Doggy Dips, a canine hydrotherapy centre, at Kidby's Yard, off the Kennylands Road.

Having seen how swimming therapy helped her own golden Labrador, George, recover from a serious spinal condition, Beverly became convinced of the benefits of regular swimming for most dogs.

So, she trained as a canine hydrotherapist, found the right premises and launched her dream career of working with dogs full-time. Said Beverly: "This is the best job ever. Nothing makes me happier than spending all day being surrounded by dogs."

Swimming therapy is beneficial to dogs for all sorts of reasons, according to Beverly, who also runs Pressed for Time in Wood Lane and the Herb Farm coffee shop.

It helps to restore muscle strength in those animals recovering from accidents and injuries; it provides pain-free exercise for old dogs who find walking difficult; and it's ideal for puppies, who need exercise and

stimulation without undue pressure being placed upon their developing joints.

Agility dogs, too, can build up their cardiovascular strength and fitness by swimming against water jets at the centre. Even timid, under-confident dogs, can gain a major confidence boost as a result of their swimming achievements.

From the moment a dog enters the hydrotherapy centre, the whole place is awash with exciting smells, sights and sounds, designed to stimulate them but also to make them feel comfortable in their surroundings.

With its open plan design, use of fencing and gates instead of solid walls, dogs can always see what is around the corner and this reassures them. There are also tubs of canine toys dotted around in case they feel like a chew!

When a dog owner books a swim for their pet, they have the place to themselves. Safety in the seven by five metre pool is paramount. Each dog is fitted with a life jacket before being swum by Beverly or her brother, Alan Rooke, who have between them 70 years dog experience with dogs.

Beverly is also a trained dog behaviourist while Alan works as a dog trainer and will be undertaking his canine hydrotherapy training shortly.

Each dog is assessed and veterinary approval given before individual treatment plans are worked out, in consultation with other canine health professionals, including the in-house canine physiotherapist at Doggy Dips.

The centre takes many referrals from canine chiropractors, osteopaths and veterinary and orthopaedic surgeons. Increasingly, pet insurance companies are recognising that hydrotherapy is a better and cheaper alternative to surgery for managing a complaint.

It's also a lot of fun!



Doggy Dips

Canine Hydrotherapy Centre
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The club's aim is to include all children who want to have fun and exercise. We play teams in leagues throughout Berkshire and Oxfordshire and have had great success this season with all age groups.

Newcomers are always welcome and the youngest new players will be starting training on Saturday 27 August at 9.30am. Come along and join in for an hour of football fun!

For further information please contact:

info@rotherfieldfc.com

or visit our website at:

www.rotherfieldfc.com

CHRISTINE ATKINSON
Rotherfield United
Football Club

See cover photo



Adventuring with the Brownies

Brownies from the 2nd Kidmore End group recently enjoyed an adventure day at Longridge Activity Centre in Marlow.

On a bell boating trip up the Thames the girls heard intriguing tales of the crocodile carelessly released into the murky waters by a mad scientist. Unfortunately, (or fortunately), no sightings were made by the eager Brownies!

Afterwards the girls went climbing. Go-karting followed, then Jacob's Ladder, with the girls encouraging each other to reach the top.

Huge thanks to all the staff at Longridge for making the day such a success! ■

BROWN OWL JESS HIGSON
2nd Kidmore End Brownies
Christ the King Church Hall



■ From top to bottom, Isabel Barnett, Mia Muncer and Oli Higson climbing Jacob's ladder.

Birds fly in for a visit to 1st Peppard Guides

The 1st Peppard Guides group has reopened for the summer term under the leadership of Jo Waugh and Merryn Ough.

The Guides had a visit recently from Feathers and Fur at Maidenhead. They met guinea pigs, ferrets, a giant rabbit, a barn owl and an eagle owl.

The girls enjoyed learning about how to handle the animals and birds and had a go at flying some of the birds themselves.

For further information about 1st Peppard Guides please contact Jo Waugh: squirreljo@yahoo.ie

JUNIOR BOOK REVIEW

FROZEN IN TIME

By Ali Sparkes
(suitable for ages 9+)



This book review was written by the Bun 'n' Chiz reading group, (Isabel Mulligan, Caitlin Stacey, Alice Jones and Olivia Hope), year 6, Sonning Common Primary School.

In 1956, Freddy and Polly are frozen in time – they are put into cryonic suspension by their scientist father.

When Ben and Rachel find a metal vault hidden underground in their garden in 2009, they discover Freddy and Polly still alive.

The two children and their dog Bessie have to try to adapt to 21st century life. But what happened to their father? Why did he leave them frozen for so long? Read the book to find out!

Isabel says: "This book is gripping and I didn't want to put it down."

Caitlin says: "I think this book is imaginative and it has a great storyline."

Olivia says: "It was a very interesting book with lots of suspense and enjoyment."

Alice says: "I liked the bits of the story where Freddy and Polly have to adapt to the year 2009."

Frozen In Time was the Blue Peter Book of the Year in 2010. Ali Sparkes has also written the Shapeshifter series. All can be borrowed from your local library. ■

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Memories of yesteryear

I was very interested in Jill Kendal's contribution to the June/July edition of the magazine regarding shops in the village from 1900 to 2011.

I have lived in the village since 1932; I was six-years-old when we moved to Sonning Common and I'm 87 now.

I remember the chemist's shop being built. What is now the Co-operative was Mr Plumb's grocery store. During the 1930s it was run as two shops; half was grocery and provisions, the other half was Mrs Plumb's drapery and haberdashery.

When Newell's shop at the top of Wood Lane was built, it was opened as a library, where, for a charge, books were loaned. It soon changed to a general store where we used to get our sugar and dried fruit weighed up and put into blue paper bags.

There was one more small sweet shop at the bottom of Grove Road owned by Mr and Mrs Ryder. This closed when a Mr Vellum opened a general store nearer to the school.

In the building, which is now the NatWest Bank, was a 'high class dress shop and drapery', owned by Mrs Swann. Swann's garage was tacked on the side.

Next door, the detached house, which now belongs to the catholic church, started out in the early 1930s as a fruit and vegetable store. Fish and chips were also fried there on Friday and Saturday evenings.

At the top of Gravel Hill, on Stoke Row Road, were two more shops which, although in Peppard, were well used by the people of Sonning Common. One was the Co-operative store. The other, almost next door to the Co-op, was Mr Faber's Post Office.

These were all businesses that came and went while I was growing up. I don't think there can be many around now who can remember them. ■

FLORENCE ROOKE
Josey Close

We're still here!

We read your article (Where did we shop from 1900 to 2011?) in the Sonning Common magazine with interest.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, the rumour of our demise is greatly exaggerated. JDP is still trading from 31 Wood Lane and is still one of the largest employers within the village.

You have clearly noticed that we are investing in our business by undertaking a long-overdue refurbishment of our offices for the benefit of our staff and enabling us to recruit, given that we are currently very busy.

This will enable us to remain part of the village for many years to come, rather than move out as you seem to have implied.

On a more positive note, it was a very interesting article and particularly informative for us to find out about the history of our property, which we knew had been a shop but not the first shop in the village. ■

STEVE DIXON
Director
JDP
Building Services Engineering
Consultants

Our library is being driven to virtual closure while others are protected

Oxfordshire County Council has produced its latest plan "to keep all libraries open". However, 16 libraries are to lose two-thirds of their paid staff, another five will lose a third of theirs, whilst 22 libraries will be 100 per cent funded.

The model that produced this ranking used rigged parameters. It counts 'potential' users of each library according to whether their work or shopping journeys take them close to it during a month. Thus an individual can be counted as a potential user of numerous libraries!

For this reason, Eynsham, similar in size to Sonning Common and Peppard combined, can count everyone who uses the A40 between Witney and Oxford. As a result, our library is driven to virtual closure by being

reduced to eight opening hours a week whilst Eynsham library (in David Cameron's constituency) is protected with full funding.

Using this trick, people in Goring, Woodcote and Sonning Common can also be counted into the scores for Wallingford and Henley libraries and therefore lose out...while lots of libraries in Oxford remain fully funded – despite being close to each other with excellent public transport links.

What about the need to give easy library access to children and older/disabled people who face transport barriers and have more critical usage needs?

The council wants volunteers to save the day in the locations that they have designated unimportant. But they do not plan to use volunteers in their fully funded urban libraries,

which already offer extended evening and Saturday opening. Why not? Because they do not believe that the idea will work or be sustainable!

Retaining the staff funding in all 21 threatened libraries would cost a total of about £490,000, the equivalent of an increase in council tax of just £2 per annum for the average Band D property. Maybe some cuts are necessary, but the present scam is based on loading all the local library cuts on a few communities, whilst none are borne elsewhere.

There is a public consultation on this latest plan - lasting until 30 September. I would urge all readers to comment and to support a fairer, more enlightened plan. ■

LEIGH RAWLINS
Woodlands Road



What Sonning Common means to me

Our lovely village has many issues – from uncertainty over the future for the library, to car parking problems, to possible housing developments – but I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

Let me tell you what living in Sonning Common means to me. My husband of many years, Michael, died recently having lost his battle with cancer. During the last few months and weeks of his illness, I found life pretty tough.

However, the practical support received from the health centre doctors and district nurses was invaluable.

My family have now returned to their homes to pick up the threads of their lives again, and when I close my front door at the end of the day, I'm alone with my memories and photographs. But when morning comes around and I step outside, it all changes.

In the village there are so many friends and acquaintances who I know are there for me – with a friendly wave, a chat over a cup of tea (or glass of wine!) or a shoulder to cry on.

And so many willing hands to help with practical challenges like recharging a car battery, tying up the wisteria, or pumping up a flat car tyre.

So, thank you, Sonning Common, for being there for me. ■

CAROLE LEWIS
Woodlands Road



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Tom Fort

GETTING ON

"You're as old as you feel" is one of the more annoying clichés deployed to soften or obscure the truth about advancing age.

Speaking for myself, I don't feel any different from how I felt 20 years ago. I still laugh at the same things, enjoy the same books, love the same music. From inside, the world looks as absurd and full of rich possibilities as it ever did.

I still do many of the things I used to. I play cricket, go fishing, drink beer and tell rambling anecdotes

in pubs. I eat as much as I always did (and continue to make the same unavailing efforts not to). One change is that I don't actually get drunk any more – mainly because I start falling asleep first.

Generally the body holds up all right. It creaks a little and lets me know when I'm pushing it too far. (I recently walked 24 miles in a day, getting material for a book, and it protested loud and long, and I won't be doing that again).

But I don't kid myself that it is the body of a young man, nor is the

face that goes with it that of a young god any more. I had my 60th a little while back, and the pictures show the truth.

Another irritating cliché is that having young children keeps you young. It doesn't; it just reminds you, when you go to the playground, how much younger all the other mums and dads are.

I do have one tip for staying fit and happy as the years roll by. It concerns the afternoon nap. Have one if you can, it makes all the difference.



I read somewhere that the Spanish have given up their siesta in the attempt to be modern and dynamic, and look what a mess they are in. The nap makes all the difference. Now, if you'll excuse me, I think I'll go and lie down. ■

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A jewel in *our midst*

BY DIANA PEARMAN

*Greys Court still retains the
impression of a family residence
today – ancient but not grand.*



■ Greys Court, renovated to
preserve its family home feel.



Visitors have been flocking to Greys Court since the re-furbished house opened last year.

During 2010, the first season the house was open, a total of 85,000 people visited. Since April of this year many more have come, keen to find new delights with each visit.

The National Trust property, on the road between Sonning Common and Henley, has been home to only six families since it was built in the 14th century. It still retains the impression of a family residence today - ancient but not grand!

The work of making Greys Court a comfortable family home was mostly due to its last residents, Sir Felix Brunner and his wife, Lady Elizabeth Brunner.

They bought the estate in 1937, restored both the house and the gardens and brought up four sons there - no wonder, then, the pervading family atmosphere. Lady Brunner lived to a great age and was well-known locally for her involvement with the Women's Institute and for being an enthusiastic marmalade and jam-maker!

This homely theme is continued today. If you visit, you may have the opportunity to watch lace-making, baking and preserving along with patchwork quilting. You may even be able to try some of these crafts yourself.

The attractive gardens are maintained by a small number of staff and lots of volunteers. Sonning Common's own Green Gym

group has recently cleared brambles and bracken from across the estate.

The Chiltern Society has placed gates on all of the stiles, redrawn the maps and identified a walking route from Henley to Greys Court.

A volunteer handyman undertakes routine maintenance tasks while a considerable number of local people help in the gardens, act as room guides, serve in the shop and on reception.

Property operations manager, Jane Greenhof, believes Greys Court "provides enrichment to the community". In return, the volunteers receive pre-season training together with two annual social events as a 'thank you'.

Says Jane: "We encourage people to engage with the property and it is lovely to receive fantastic feedback from visitors."

Laura Gangedeon, the house steward, runs a history group to record and research the estate's history. Members meet every six weeks and are helping to build the archive as well as researching certain aspects of the Greys Court story, including its links with the drunken monks of the Hell Fire club and James Bond creator, Ian Fleming.

Families are encouraged to visit Greys Court and there is a range of eight exciting activity packs to keep children occupied. There is also a children's trail around the gardens. The maze is great fun and when everyone is tired and hungry, the tea room beckons! ■



TOP LEFT:

■ House steward Laura Gangedeon, left, and Jane Greenhof, property operations manager, outside the house.

TOP RIGHT:

■ The walled garden at Greys Court.

ABOVE:

■ The pavement maze at Greys Court.



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| | SUNDAY 14 Peppard Bowls Club - Gala Day Peppard War Memorial Hall 10.30am - 5pm | THURSDAY 18 FISH - Pub lunch 11.30am | SATURDAY 27 Binfield Heath Flower Show | |
| | SATURDAY 3 Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - Autumn Flower/Vegetable Show Chiltern Edge school 2.30pm | MONDAY 5 FISH - Garden centre visit 1.30pm | FRIDAY 9 Notkwire practice Village Hall 9.45am | FRIDAY 9 Chiltern Players - Playing on the Radio. An evening of stage play readings. Peppard War Memorial Hall 8pm |
| | MONDAY 12 Public meeting - the future of Sonning Common Library Village Hall 7.30pm | THURSDAY 15 FISH - Pub lunch 11.30am | THURSDAY 15 Sonning Common Women's Institute - The work of OXFAM by Victoria Treacher. Visitors welcome Village Hall 7.30pm | FRIDAY 16 British Legion - Tea dance Village Hall 2 - 4pm |
| | MONDAY 19 Sonning Common Parish Council Village Hall 7.30pm | FRIDAY 23 Notkwire practice Village Hall 9.45am | FRIDAY 30 Notkwire (Shiplake group only) Village Hall 9.45am | FRIDAY 30 British Legion - Tea dance Village Hall 2 - 4pm |

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