

# **The Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay Newsletter**



**July - August 2022**



## FROM REVEREND TERESA STEWART-SYKES

Phew! What a scorcher! I am writing from the cool refuge of my office, my black cocker spaniel and my little black cat are slumped on the cold tiles of the Vicarage kitchen floor, and we are expecting temperatures to rise even further, perhaps to thirty degrees! I am reminded of summers spent in New York City and the wall of heat that hits as you step out from the air-conditioned buildings onto the scorching sidewalks! Perhaps you have similar memories of living abroad or from foreign holidays?

How lucky we are in Britain not to experience these extreme temperatures and the danger of drought more frequently. Of course there are many who cannot escape the debilitation and danger of extreme weather, the risk not only to their health but their homes and their livelihoods. My colleague Caroline has been reflecting on this and on the 'Marmalade sandwich incident' at the Jubilee. She writes:



*For me, a real highlight of the national celebrations was the moment the Queen had tea with Paddington Bear and we learned what she keeps in her handbag - a marmalade sandwich! It was just the most wonderfully innocent joy filled moment, giving us all a glimpse of the Queen's sense of humour, but it was also a moment of great profundity.*

*Children's literature often expresses great truths in an accessible and non-threatening way. Paddington Bear is no different. Through the books and the lovely animated films Paddington has much to say to us about the importance of welcome to those who need to hear that they are welcome, loved and a part of our communities.*

*'Long ago, people in England sent their children by train with labels around their necks, so they could be taken care of by complete strangers in the countryside where it was safe. They will not have forgotten how to treat strangers.'* Aunt Lucy in *Paddington Bear*.

*Paddington Bear was an illegal immigrant, who made his home amidst a pretty traditional strait-laced family and as a result enriched their lives in a transformative and wonderful way. Aunt Lucy makes this point beautifully. The quote says something important about our compassion and tolerance as a nation; I'm sure it still rings true today.*

I know that our communities are offering a warm welcome to those settling here, indeed many have opened their homes to Ukrainian refugees. The Platinum Jubilee has highlighted that modern Britain is a dynamic and diverse place. My hope and prayer is that our communities continue to come together and offer friendship and welcome to all.

Rev Teresa

## **ELIZABETH LONGMUIR QUELCH**

On behalf of our late mother Elizabeth, we would like to pass on how comforted we were by the many cards, flowers, notes and messages we have received. Thank you to everyone that came to her funeral, sharing your memories, and funny stories with us. This has lifted us up, whilst we process the enormous hole that she's left in our hearts and lives.

Patricia, Andrew & family

***The Revd Teresa Stewart-Sykes*** is Team vicar for *The Baldons with Nuneham Courtenay, Berinsfield and Drayton St Leonard.*

e-mail: RevTeresa@outlook.com and tel: 07823 809112

***The Revd Jennifer Morton*** is Associate Team Vicar and lives in Toot Baldon:  
*jennifer@morton8.co.uk.*

Our current curate is ***The Revd Sorrel Shamel-Wood*** who lives in Berinsfield.

Our safeguarding officer is Sara McDouall: *saramcdouall@gmail.com*

**A clergy person can always be reached in a pastoral emergency by ringing the Dorchester Team Office 01865 340007**



## JUBILEE PARTY ON THE GREEN

Joe Cullen is not only a talented photographer but also a licenced drone operator: here are some of his bird's eye views of the Jubilee party on the green. Thank you Joe for sharing your talent with the village!



## **BALDONS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS**

### Platinum Jubilee Picnic on the Green

Despite the cool rather damp day everyone who turned out to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee appeared to have a great time on the village green. A big thanks on behalf of the Parish Council to everyone who helped to organize it and make it such a success. BEC, the volunteers, the Pub, the band etc. It will be a long time before we have another Jubilee to celebrate.

### Planning applications

#### **Solar Farm Nuneham Courtenay P22/S1541/FUL**

The developers have applied to extend the life of the Solar Farm from 35 to 40 years intended to correct an administrative error that occurred at the time of SODC decision. The Parish Council and other bodies including CPRE have expressed concern about this on the ground that it creates a considerable extension of the project which was not part of the original application. As there were also concerns that the original decision didn't take sufficient account of the suitability of the site in the Green Belt and was taken on a casting vote of the chairman it has been argued that the decision this time should be taken by the planning committee and not just by the planning officer. This opinion has been supported by our District Councillor. We await the outcome.

There have been 2 applications for Toot Baldon

**Court House P22/S1726/FUL** Conversion of a redundant barn to a single dwelling. This barn has had prior approval for conversion to a dwelling its use tied to Court House This application with some minor changes is for a totally separate dwelling. The parish council has indicated its support to SODC

**Manor Farm P22/S1672/N4** A permitted development application for conversion of the large modern barn behind the Mole Inn to a four bedded house applied for by the land agents for Queen College. Permitted development of redundant barns are normally approved by the district council without detail plans and consultation with parish council. In this case we have expressed our concerns to both SODC and the land agents that in view of the site and its inclusion in the Baldon Neighbourhood plan, and other developments on the site, we would have welcomed a full application although the principle of development is not objected to.

### Date of next meeting 11 July 7.30 pm Village Hall

Member of the public can attend and are welcome and can address the council during the open session. We will be discussing amongst other items on the agenda, repairs to the southern track and on the corner outside the Stars and tree planting for the Jubilee.



***BNCS in Partnership with the Seven Stars present....***

***A Village Evening with Food Truck at the Seven Stars, incorporating the BNCS AGM***

***Wednesday 27th July 2022 from 6pm***

*All Villagers and BNCS shareholders (Seven Stars shareholders) are invited to an Evening at the Seven Stars, featuring the Freespirit Food Truck (50% off for villagers and shareholders) and the ninth Annual General Meeting of the Society (for shareholders only).*



*This will take place on Wednesday 27th July 2022, with the Food Truck serving from 6pm and the AGM at 7.30pm.*

*The committee hopes to see as many villagers and BNCS shareholders as possible at the meeting. Supporting our local pub is vital to its survival and this provides an ideal opportunity to do this, socialise with friends and neighbours, as well as for shareholders to attend the society AGM. All welcome!*

*Further documentation relating to the AGM will be circulated to shareholders in due course and be available via the BNCS website [www.bnclslimited.com](http://www.bnclslimited.com). BNCS would welcome new committee members at this time – if any shareholders are interested in joining the BNCS Committee or who would like more information about this, please e-mail us on [info@bnclsld.com](mailto:info@bnclsld.com) or speak to an existing member of the committee (details on the website), no later than 20th July 2022.*

## **NUNEHAM COURTENAY SPORTS AND PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION (NCSPFA)**

Following on from our last update I am pleased report that we have obtained a small grant which will allow us to replace the fence. We will now proceed with getting the works done.

However we have been informed that we will need to obtain planning permission from SODC before any tree surgery can take place due to this being a conservation area. We would like to thank The Arboretum for cutting the grass.

If anyone would like to join the NCPFA committee please get in touch: [ncspfa@gmail.com](mailto:ncspfa@gmail.com)

Ron Benson - Chair

## **NUNEHAM COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS**

### Playing Field

Do you realise next year will be the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conveyance by which the Harcourts transferred to the village the piece of land originally known as the War Memorial Recreation Ground?

It should be an occasion for a celebration but isn't it sad that with that anniversary approaching the field is completely closed to parishioners for the first time in its history after new gates were recently installed and padlocked. Now it's not just a patch of overgrown grass but a useless patch of overgrown grass you can't even walk on. Is that what the Harcourts intended? Probably not.

### Audit and Accounts

The Council's 2021-22 accounts have been audited and, unusually, the auditor has not made one single recommendation for improvement. In his covering letter he wrote: "I don't often get to review such a clean set of records". These were the accounts for Madhvi Saini's fifth and final year as Chair of the parish council and what a transformation she achieved. When she took on the chair in May 2017 the Council had failed to produce audited accounts to show where your money had gone in 2015-16 and none were in hand either for 2016-17.

At that Annual Meeting she was one of only two councillors left – the other three had resigned – so South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) had to step in. They made it clear Nuneham Courtenay was the worst parish council in the whole of South Oxfordshire and they wanted you to agree they could abolish it. You decided to try to get it back on its feet and Madhvi made it her mission to see it was properly run. Now it has achieved a clean bill of health from its auditors and there is no more talk from SODC of abolishing it. So, Madhvi definitely achieved what she set out to do.

You can see lots of stuff about last year's accounts on the Council's website but if you want to see more, just ask: it's your money so you have the right to see where it's going.

### Meetings

The next ordinary meeting of the Council will be on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June, a week earlier than normal, so the Council can complete the annual audit by the legal deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June. The meeting is at the usual time of 7pm in the Village Hall. If you want to address the Council about anything, please let John Peters, the new Chair of the Council, know before he starts the meeting.

## **Study scammers' ways and beat them – Citizens Advice**



Much as we hate them, we must concede that today's scammers are thoroughly up to date and quick off the mark. In very recent months scammers have pretended to be energy companies offering great deals; local councils speeding up Council Tax rebates; and government departments tendering financial support– each attempt closely following on the heels of breaking news and timed to exploit any sign of vulnerability or need.

Be on your guard generally. To help you defend yourself, here are a few things which should ring alarm bells:

- Someone you don't know contacts you unexpectedly
- An entity that you normally deal with contacts you in an unusual way (for instance, DVLA emailing you when it has never done so before – this actually happened in one scam)
- A telephone caller asks for you by your last name, mumbles the name of his business and adds "how are you?" (watch out for callers who end every phrase with a question)

If worst comes to worst and you think that you have been tricked (or if you simply want to report an attempted scam), contact your bank right away to stop any payments, change your computer log-in details if appropriate, and report the scam to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040. You can also use their online reporting tool at <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk> Action Fraud can sign you up for email alerts so you will know what scams are on the way. And lastly, they can also give you a useful crime reference number. Another source of help is the National Trading Standards scams team: their website has lots of useful information.

Citizens Advice can help, and our advice is free and impartial. For online scams you can talk to our specialist scams action advisers on 0808 250-5050, or by webchat; or you can call our Consumer Service on 0808 223-1133; or visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) for more information.



## NUNEHAM COURTENAY VILLAGE HALL NEWS



### Centenary Tea

Thank you to everyone who came and brought cakes, friends, children, and/or dogs! It was amazing to see so many of our lovely village gathered in the hall again! I loved seeing the pics of the hall that people brought along with them. It was especially lovely to see pictures of the men listed in our village roll of honour.



We would like to create a book to keep in the hall with some of your pictures. If you are happy for me to scan your photos do get in touch to chat with me about it. A special thanks goes to Caroline for cakes and set up before she dashed to work and Karen who was an amazing help on the day!

**Summer BBQ:** We would like to hold a bring and share BBQ at the end of summer, date to be confirmed. The hall is looking amazing after all the hard work of the working party and we would like to build on this and create a real community space. Please look out for more information about this in August.

**Walking Tour:** Before lockdown we had a lovely series of talks about the history of Nuneham Courtenay and the historic gardens. The next activity was due to be a walking tour of the gardens. We are currently trying to reschedule this in time for the Autumn.

**Yoga:** Yoga is on Mondays at 7:30. Contact [jenny@datadaysolutions.com](mailto:jenny@datadaysolutions.com) to be added to the group.

**Men's not so youth club:** By popular demand we are starting an event with the gents of the village in mind along the lines of a youth club (but with beer). Games nights, ping pong, x box, etc. Look for more details toward the end of summer.

**Panto:** A village panto was suggested to us. The hall was home to the very successful Baldon players for many years. If you are interested to helping put on a panto in the hall, get in touch!

If you would like to book the hall, please contact Karen on [nunehamcourtenay.villagehall@gmail.com](mailto:nunehamcourtenay.villagehall@gmail.com) or [drew242@btinternet.com](mailto:drew242@btinternet.com)

## EVENTS IN DORCHESTER ABBEY

### **Saturday 2nd July 7.30pm Berkshire Maestros Choirs Summer Concert**

Join us for a fantastic concert which will include a variety of performances by Berkshire Young Voices, Berkshire Youth Choir, as well as our Music Centre Area Choirs, culminating in a massed piece by all the choirs. Tickets will be available from 27th May from the Berkshire Maestros website <https://berkshiremaestros.org.uk>

### **Thursday 21st July 7pm, Friday 22nd July 7pm and Saturday 23rd July 6pm DADS are back with another outdoor production in the Abbey Cloister Garden!**

The comedy, Mansfield Park and Ride is an irreverent take on Jane Austen's classic novels. Originally written for Eastern Angles, Brendan Murray has reset this new version of his acclaimed play here in South Oxfordshire. It is sure to delight and entertain, whether or not you are a fan of Jane Austen. Will Mrs Bonnet see her daughters wed? Will the dashing Captain Knightly keep his shirt on? Please bring your own low-backed chairs or rugs. Performances will continue in wet weather so please come prepared. Tickets from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/dads](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/dads)

**Saturday 10th Sept 7pm OSJ perform Tales from the Wilderness Prokofiev Peter and the Wolf, Saint-Saens Carnival of the Animals, Canteloube Songs of the Auvergne and Rachmaninov Vocalise.** Tickets £15 to £25, family concession from [www.osj.org.uk](http://www.osj.org.uk)

## ABBEY CONCERT MANAGERS REQUIRED

The demand for Events to be held in the Abbey has been steadily increasing this year and we need to increase the number of volunteer Concert Managers who play a vital part in helping to make the events run smoothly . This is an opportunity to find out more about what goes on behind the scenes, meeting interesting artists, hearing lovely music and being the welcoming face of the Abbey to the audience. Training will be given. For further details please contact the Events Administrator, Dorchester Abbey, Kate Herbert; [events@dorchester-abbey.org.uk](mailto:events@dorchester-abbey.org.uk) and 01865 340007 (Mon, Tues and Fri mornings)

## ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Items for the September 2022 newsletter  
**by 16<sup>th</sup> August please**

Any villager is welcome to send items for publication in the newsletter. Please send copy to Natasha Eliot: [tashaandjames@btopenworld.com](mailto:tashaandjames@btopenworld.com). Alternatively, I can be contacted on 343478 or at Baldon House East, Marsh Baldon.

For advertising queries, please contact Leanna Maggs on:  
[leanna.maggs@gmail.com](mailto:leanna.maggs@gmail.com) or on 01865 340 521

## THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES – A REVIEW

This time I'm reviewing Peter Wohlleben's book, *The Hidden Life of Trees* – what they feel, how they communicate: discoveries from a secret world.

This is a book I wish I had read when I was younger. Not saying it's a life changing experience reading this, but it's a mind altering and expansive read, for sure. In some shops, I've found this on the philosophy shelf. From the title, some assume before reading, this is the limit of this book, but it does have an environmental science influence.

The running order of the sections of the book, is a flowing series of interesting titles, and every chapter clearly covers the theories behind various schools of thought. For me, at times, some of the contents seemed too repetitive, and too speculative for the average reader, who might be sceptical. For example, there's a lot of anthropomorphism in these pages, and some will argue, tree's are not sentient beings, and should not be portrayed as such. People with experience in the field, might be more receptive to some of the newer ideas written about. Whoever reads it though, it will certainly profoundly change the way you look at Trees (and Forests).

The author highlights areas where universal understanding of tree biology may be weak. We understand trees extract nutrients from the ground, but this book, surprisingly to some, maybe, reveals that we don't actually always know how they do it. Osmosis, capillary action, or transpiration cannot always account for the heights the nutrients reach.

I think how trees support the weaker specimens, of the same species, hold metaphoric lessons for how humanity could maybe organise its societies better. The strong ones weaken themselves, to enable the weaker to strengthen, I don't think I'll ever forget Peter's writings about this. Everyone should make time to read this book.

A wonderful book, that's accessible, readable and clearly tells the story of the collaboration, in a multi-species forest ecosystem. The writing style develops in the reader, empathy for the forest ecosystem, and it's a book which subtly alters perceptions of reality. In many ways, the book is profound, maybe because when it was written, it wasn't meant to be?

Happy Gardening  
Stuart Mabbutt  
Wildlife Gardening Specialist  
[www.wildmaninspires.co.uk](http://www.wildmaninspires.co.uk)  
01865 747243



## FROM JOHN HOWELL MP

When I wrote last month we were anticipating the Jubilee Weekend and the celebrations that were planned. Whilst the weather wasn't quite what we might have hoped, from what I hear celebrations around the constituency went well. The national celebrations were certainly a credit to all of the planning, and it was lovely to see Her Majesty the Queen at her public appearances. I think tea with Paddington Bear was one of the favourite events and shows that even in her 90th decade Her Majesty still has a great sense of humour. The Jubilee weekend was a great opportunity for community events and a chance to get together after so much separation in recent times.

Sometimes it good to do something different and in May I did something else that I have not done before - I joined thousands of other people across the country in the Big Plastic Count. It was an interesting exercise where you have to count the single use plastic you throw away over a 7-day period. Some of the time I was at home at others I was in the office or away. Overall I was quite shocked at just how much single-use plastic I get through in the different settings. The office is pretty good with glass replacing plastic water bottles and corn-starch wrapping use for many documents that are sent to me. But I was quite taken aback at just how much single use plastic there still for food products. Clearly some of this is avoidable and the exercise certainly raised the profile of the need for us to cut back further. The Government Resources and Waste Strategy set out plans to reduce, reuse and recycle and was a step in the right direction. A promising start on which we are now building.

For some people the half term break was an opportunity to get away and I know that many people have been caught up in the backlog of passport applications. During the pandemic, around five million people delayed applying for or renewing their passports which has led to huge demand now that international travel has opened up. My team has been helping as best we are able and where the need to travel cannot have been anticipated, or where the delay in an application being processed has been longer than the advertised time, we have been able to assist some people. The Home Office has been doing all that it can to increase output and it does seem that the situation is beginning to ease. Staff have been working 7 days a week and additional staff have been recruited. I understand that between January and March 2022, over 90 per cent of cases were completed within six weeks. However if you are planning to travel and need to apply for or renew a passport please do so as soon as possible and do not rely on being able to get a fast-track appointment as these are like gold dust. The official guidance is still to allow up to 10 weeks to get a passport. There is little that my team can do with late applications.

Another thing to watch out for are the new barcoded postage stamps. Royal Mail has introduced these new stamps as part of their drive to improve operational efficiencies and security. If you have bought stamps recently you may have

noticed the change with the addition of a barcode alongside the image of the Queen's head. If you have a stock of stamps you can still use them until the end of January 2023. If you cannot use your stock before then you can swap them for new ones. Full details are available on the Royal Mail website under the heading 'Reinventing stamps for the next generations.' The change only applies to the regular stamps with the profile of the Queen's head on and not the special stamps such as Christmas stamps.

In any month a wide range of issues are raised with me from things in the general media to specialist issues. With the help of my team I do my best to respond to all polite correspondence but sometimes it may take a while, especially if an issue needs research. If there is an issue that concerns you please do share your thoughts. Email is the easiest way in you have access to that. My email address is [john.howell.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:john.howell.mp@parliament.uk). Alternatively, you can write to me at the House of Commons (House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA) or my constituency office (PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD). Please note that correspondence sent through the post takes longer to reach me as it has to go through offsite security scanning before being delivered.

If you would like to know more about my work on behalf of the Government and the Constituency please do look at my website which is regularly updated. The address is [www.johnhowellmp.com](http://www.johnhowellmp.com). Further details of the work of Parliament is available on the parliament website at [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

# WILL ON THE GREEN

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THE SEVEN STARS  
at  
MARSH BALDON

# SEVEN STARS BALDON FESTIVAL 1st & 2nd July

We will be hosting the  
Seven Stars Baldon Festival!  
A FREE entry event!

Come along and enjoy some amazing live music, something yummy from our fire pit grill and plenty of things to do for the whole family from bouncy castles to magicians, crafts stalls to craft beers!

**THIS IS A FREE ENTRY EVENT!**

You can rock up with your picnic blanket or grab a table if its free. We recommend booking a table as it's set to be super busy! Tables can be reserved for £10 online now - which can then be refunded against any food or drink purchased on the day.



Scan to find out more and book your table.  
[www.sevenstarsatmarshaldon.co.uk](http://www.sevenstarsatmarshaldon.co.uk)

Contact us on  
[sevenstars@freespiritpubs.co.uk](mailto:sevenstars@freespiritpubs.co.uk)  
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## CHURCH SERVICES FOR JULY AND AUGUST

|                         |         |                                   |                        |
|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> July    | 11.00am | Toot Baldon                       | Air Crash Service      |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> July   | 4.00pm  | Toot Baldon                       | Evensong               |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> July   | 9.30am  | Marsh Baldon                      | All Age Holy Communion |
|                         | 4.00pm  | All Saints Chapel<br>Nuneham Park | Music and Reflections  |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> July   | 10.30am | Warborough                        | Team Service           |
| 31 <sup>st</sup> July   | 10.30am | Marsh Baldon                      | Cluster Service        |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> August  | 10.30am | Marsh Baldon                      | Holy Communion         |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> August | 4.00pm  | Marsh Baldon                      | Evensong               |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> August | 9.30am  | Toot Baldon                       | Holy Communion         |
|                         | 4.00pm  | All Saints Chapel<br>Nuneham Park | Music and Reflections  |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> August | 10.30am | Dorchester                        | Team Service           |

## CHURCH FLOWERS

| <b>Date</b>        | <b>Marsh Baldon</b> | <b>Toot Baldon</b>                           |
|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| 3 & 10 July        | Veronica Sandilands | Jane Brook / Ann Druce                       |
| 17 & 24 July       | Iris Wright         |  |
| 31 July & 7 August | Alison Lyall        | Please contact Jane<br>Brook for information |
| 14 & 21 August     | Veronica Sandilands |  |

## TOOT CHURCHYARD PATH - AN UPDATE!

First of all, I would like to thank all of you who enjoy the churchyard at Toot for your patience over the past few months. The work to improve the access across the churchyard has now been completed and a new pathway has been created so that walkers can make their way through the churchyard without disturbing any of the graves. Huge thanks to Nigel Cullen and Ron Wells for making all of this possible.

Rev Teresa