

The Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay Newsletter



June 2021

FROM REVEREND JENNIFER MORTON

As I write this for the June magazines there is a song, 'June is bustin' out all over' from the Rogers and Hammerstein musical Carousel, which I cannot get out of my head. Only the first line of course so I thought I would check out the rest of the lyrics and remind myself of the story of Carousel since it is many years since I saw the film.

It is a love story set on the Maine coastline but one that is far from straight forward as you would imagine. The optimism and joy expressed in the song celebrates the month of June because it is spring, winter has passed and love is in the air. Billy, a carousel barker and Julie, a local millworker, fall in love amidst much disapproval and she becomes pregnant. But tragedy strikes when Billy falls on his knife and dies after a failed robbery attempt. Julie's cousin, Nettie then sings another very well-known song "You'll Never Walk Alone" to comfort her in her grief.

This song is reprised in the final scene to encourage a graduation class of which Louise (Billy and Julie's daughter) is a member. The now invisible Billy, who has been granted the chance to return to Earth for one day in order to redeem himself, watches the ceremony and is able to silently motivate the unhappy Louise to join in the song. Prejudice is redeemed with acceptance. Mistakes forgiven. Walking on with hope in our hearts.

Towards the end of June the church remembers St Peter, who is the dedication Saint for Marsh Baldon and Little Wittenham churches as well as for Dorchester Abbey (with St Paul). St Peter was the disciple of Jesus, who we know often failed. When Jesus was arrested, he denied knowing his friend. However, after his resurrection, Jesus gave Peter the chance to redeem himself. "Master," Peter says "you know everything! You know I love you" Jesus then gives Peter the job to care for and lead his followers. The Christian Church is born and today we still remember Peter's role in the early Church, even though he still didn't always get things right. A frail human like us all.

The joyous celebration of June bustin' out all over to the reassurance of the final song 'You'll never walk alone' echoes the story of all our lives. We know things will not go right all of the time but we can celebrate the joyful times and know that, because of his promises, with Jesus we will never walk alone, whatever storms come our way.

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**

You are invited to a nature count!

CHURCHES COUNT ON NATURE

All ages welcome
Record our biodiversity!

**JOIN US AT ST PETER'S CHURCH ON
SUNDAY 6TH JUNE**

ANYTIME FROM 11.30- 3:00

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!



EVENTS IN DORCHESTER

Saturday 5th June 6pm and 8pm Violin and Voices in Dorchester Abbey.

Pre-booking essential Tickets £5 to £15 www.osj.org.uk

OSJ Oxford Voices will perform some of English choral music's greatest works, from Tallis to renowned film composer Harry Escott, alongside a choral arrangement of Vaughan Williams' sublime Lark Ascending with international violinist Johanna Roehrig.

Sunday 4th July 2pm to 5pm – Open Gardens

Three gardens in Dorchester – 26 Manor Farm Road, 6 Monks Close and 7 Rotten Row – will be open for the National Garden Scheme. We were not able to open in 2020 because of the pandemic, but it looks fairly certain we shall be able to open this year just as we did in 2017, '18 and '19.

SHARE YOUR LIFE, CHANGE A LIFE



Could you give someone the opportunity to live the fullest life they can live? Help them grow in confidence? Encourage them to become more independent and do things they never thought they would be able to do?

The Shared Lives scheme matches people who need additional support to be independent, with carers and their families. The opportunity to share a family's life, as part of their household, gives them a valuable alternative to staying in residential care or being looked after by a team of support workers.

Becoming a Shared Lives Carer for Oxfordshire County Council will make a big difference to someone's life. If you love people, and are looking for something that is rewarding, paid and home-based - share your life, change a life - oxfordshire.gov.uk/sharedlivescarers

This month's cover photo is another of Lizie Giraudeau's Country Bunches

Book Launch: Life and Faith in a Victorian Village

Sunday 13th June

Life and Faith in a Victorian Village

Revd James C Ross, Vicar
of Toot Baldon, 1871-1888

Marcus Braybrooke

After Evensong at Toot Baldon on Sunday 13th June, which is at 5.00 p.m., there will be a chance to learn more about the history of the church and the village, when Marcus Braybrooke will briefly introduce his new book *Life and Faith in a Victorian Village*, which is based on the careful records made by Revd James C. Ross, who was Vicar of Toot Baldon 1871-1888.

Veronica Sandilands, who has a detailed knowledge of local history, will also speak.

All Welcome

Drinks and nibbles will be served

The book is available from Amazon, or from Marcus Braybrooke

(marcusbraybrooke4@gmail.com) and Veronica Sandilands (vsandilands@btinternet.com)

The cost is £10, from which £1 will be given to the Church in the Baldons.

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BALDONS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Annual Parishes Meeting April 19th on Zoom

At this open village meeting to which 6 villagers logged in, several issues were brought forward by villagers for discussion. They included the Parish Council's plans for maintenance of tracks round the Green, the hazardous condition of fencing along Pylon Farm land on Baldon Lane, a possible water supply to the allotments which was thought to be problematic for the village hall, and the council's position on a children's Play area. The village garden group are keen to do more to improve hedgerows and in association with ideas to improve /extend footpaths; Laurence Attewill volunteered to be the link for the council.

A progress report on the Neighbourhood Development plan was given by Laurence Attewill. The report highlighted that developments had or were progressing on the majority (9) of the preferred (11) sites for houses and that most were of modest scale but noted the difficulty of achieving the smaller 2 bed roomed houses hoped for. The full report will be on the village website. The council also gave an update of the progress of the Solar Farm planning application.

The meeting received annual reports from our County and District councillors and both were thanked for their support to us and for their grant applications for village projects. Councillors also questioned the disconnect between infrastructure planning by OCC and local planning and development at District level. It was confirmed that planning by OCC for the new road to bypass Clifton Hampden leading to a new roundabout at Golden Balls was progressing and parish councillors emphasized the need to be involved in consultation.

The council's annual report and financial report were received and adopted. Both were circulated via village email in advance and are on the village website.

Parish Council AGM and meeting 11th May: Election of officers

Dorothy Tonge was re-elected chairman. Tel 343234 chairman@baldonspc.org
Stephen Dance was re-elected vice chairman. Tel 341323 stephen.dance@baldonspc.org. The meeting also welcomed Robin Bennett, our recently elected County Councillor who it is hoped will be attending our July Meeting in an official capacity.

Village Green Track repairs

The parish council has agreed that in view of the poor condition of the track on the south side of the green some repairs must be made until such time as discussion with the developer at Durham Leys Farm allows for a more substantial repair. The council has agreed to use £350 money previously raised for track repairs plus a council grant of £150 to purchase Type1 planings plus cement for filling the potholes. A small number of villagers are leading on this and we hope other villagers on the south side will come forward to help to undertake the work and contribute to any additional costs that may arise.

Driving on the Green

Several vehicles, cars, and delivery vans, some believed to be local some not, are now increasingly driving on the south side of the green and the council has agreed that we should take other preventive measure than the polite notice asking for cooperation. Driving on a village green is an offence in law on all Common land and Village Greens. The council has agreed to seek estimates for installation of posts for urgent action. The need for posts has previously been a discussed and agreed with the land agents for Queen College. As I finalise this report, I have just received an email from our Clerk reporting a white van overtaking him along the track by taking to the Green at some speed!

Village Footpaths

One of the aims of the neighbourhood plan was to develop and improve footpaths around the village and a proposal has been made that we try to secure additional permissive footpaths behind the village hall and in Toot Baldon in such a way as to create a circular footpath route around both villages. Walking round the villages has been an important recreation during the Covid-19 restrictions and the Council has given its enthusiastic support to taking this forward with other interested parties. The Baldons now also has a volunteer footpath warden Shona Fisher who volunteered following a request from the Ramblers' Association which was included in the March Newsletter.

Bridge over the ditch

The bridge that crosses the ditch on the green has lost one of its handrails and the support posts are unstable. Care needs to be taken when using it and the council is seeking estimates for an urgent repair.

Solar Farm Planning application

The Parish Council has submitted a further letter of objection to the plans. Also, SODC website now includes a letter of objection on behalf of the developers of the Science village Grenoble road strategic development site. The parish council has indicated it would seek to speak at a planning committee meeting should the plans be recommended for support.

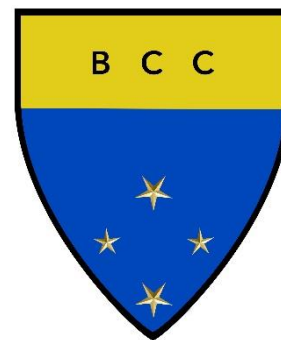
Future of Parish Council meetings

As Covid-19 restrictions come to an end the government legislation to allow virtual meeting has not been extended and all councils are now required to return to meeting in public providing this can be done safely. The parish council will therefore be returning to meetings in the village hall.

We have found that online meetings have encouraged more of you to log in and listen and participate and that has been helpful and encouraging for us. Please do try and come to the village hall. Agendas and papers will still be circulated in advance.

Date of next meeting 12th July 7.30 pm at the village hall.

BALDONS CRICKET CLUB:
Sunday in the “Hot Gates”
Reported by Henry Williams



Oxford Downs CC, 420/3 (40 Overs): Henry Williams 2-63

Baldons CC, 44 all out (13.3 Overs): Cosmo Taylor 34* (41)

Oxford Downs CC won by 376 runs

David's meagre slingshot toppling the indomitable Goliath. Henry V's longbows repelling the rampaging French in the muddy woods of Agincourt. Relegation-threatened Leicester City F.C. sealing the 2015/16 Premier League title. The mighty 300 Spartans who delayed the vast Persian forces at the narrow pass of Thermopylae.

History is spoilt for wonderful underdog stories: a true triumph of the small over the mighty. As the Baldons squad ambled up to the venue (and yes, it was a venue), it was clear that this would be our chance to add to this fabled collection. The designated car park was overlooked by coaching staff encouraging the club youngsters to put more pace into their already deadly bouncers. Past the nets, a media team was urgently assembling the live stream equipment and comparing commentary notes. At the pavilion, bar staff hurriedly prepared outdoor seating for expected patrons. While on the crisp outfield, a gathering of further coaches muttered tactical nuances as they oversaw 12 athletes going through warm up manoeuvres more at home in an Olympic stadium. Indeed, the 9 timely Baldons' players had a not completely insincere discussion as to whether they had arrived early at the New Zealand test match, and not the so-called Village cup. Thus, the chaos began.

The surprisingly adequate opening bowling from Cookson and Williams was perhaps not quite able to cope with the vacancies at third man and deep cover, as the final 2 of the squad hastily sped through the Oxfordshire roads. Within moments of being at full complement, key bowler Collet tweaked a muscle leaving us staring hopefully at the small, partitioned area formerly assigned to the Baldons' spectators. Thankfully, there we found a suitably hungover Francis, who was kindly willing to don some whites rapidly. With the stench of underpriced vodka pervading the square from a far-too-straight point, the game could continue.

Contention lit up the early overs as Downs' opener strangled a Williams half volley straight to Cookson at mid-wicket. The ball was fumbled but eventually claimed having nestled on the fielder's leg. The umpire's figure was raised. The batter did not walk. There ensued a frankly comical dispute with the argument that we had nothing to gain from cheating, finally helping the red-blooded gentleman to exit the field and enjoy a pint (of electrolytes presumably) in the sun.

After that, things were slightly less positive for the Baldons as the Downs boys showed why they were in the conversation for national favourites for the cup. Brand managed to skittle the number 3 in the middle of 8 overs of admirable will - all with a beaming smile that energised the field. Cookson bowled well without reward. Brandon bowled expertly but suffered when the pyrotechnics came on display from their lower order batters. With Collett out, Cosmo Taylor had to shed the wicket keeping gloves to take up the honour of being the 5th bowler to be splatted around the park. The rare moment of true celebration for the Baldons was a diving catch from Brandon, again at mid-wicket off the bowling of Williams, which frankly was the moment of the game for both sides. A special mention for van Dijk's deep fielding throughout, which was as exceptional as it was required, Singleton's faultless groundwork at mid-off and to Price for impressively keeping wicket having had no warning of the task.

Having conceded 420 runs in 40 overs, discussions in the huddle turned to the flatness of the pitch. Baldons openers, Taylor and Bruce, strode to the crease, eyeing their own centuries to match. Within the space of a handful of balls, those murmurings were utterly discarded. It appeared that they had also practiced the bowling side of the game as well - darn those coaches. A certain pace bowler of their number proceeded to tear through the entire Baldons lineup, save of course captain-fantastic Cosmo Taylor. His early patience against the quicks followed by his exquisite aggression against the spinner, dragged the score from a state of utter derision to, perhaps, only acute embarrassment. Indeed, every run, let alone boundary was cheered by all the spectators present. He ended with a superb 34 not out that meant we could enjoy a smile and a tinge of pride as the pints were finally shared around.

All in all, it was a desperate resistance for our own "300" at the Hot Gates where victory was never on offer, only honour. Sadly, we missed out on that too.

For those particularly interested, if you go to the link below you can see the full scorecard, or perhaps a glimpse into the organisational might of a Persian army.

oxforddownscc.play-cricket.com/website/results/4885515

Baldons CC vs Oxford Brookes Invitational XI

Reported by Cosmo Taylor

One week on from a tough match in the village cup away at Oxford Downs, the Baldons were looking forward to their first home game of the season, a hotly anticipated clash against an Oxford Brookes side led by Archie van Dijk. The Baldons started well, taking early wickets with opening bowlers Max Deakin and Jake Ball before the Brookes middle order started to fire. Suddenly, the boundary was being cleared on a regular basis and it looked like the opposition were back into the game. A sharp stumping put the brakes on their charge, and it was left to Hugo Howarth and James Garnett to clean up the tail. The Baldons had been set 102 runs to win, although in overcast conditions and facing a strong attack buoyed

by their star player van Dijk's arrival, it wasn't going to be an easy chase. The team got off to a steady start, but it was difficult to score against some tight bowling and the required run rate kept creeping up. The match was all to play for when Max Deakin and Jake Ball started playing their shots in the middle of the innings, finding the boundary with regularity. However soon they both fell with a fair few runs left on the board and it fell to Cosmo Taylor batting at 8 to get The Baldons over the line. After a shaky start, the runs started to flow and he and Charlie Riley batted with composure to cruise to victory, finishing with a six with an over to spare.

Upcoming Fixtures

Sun 23rd May	Gary Crook XI	home
Sun 6th June	Islip	home
Sun 20th June	Marlow	home

Cricket Nets: every Thursday at 6pm (weather permitting)

Please do email us at baldonscc@gmail.com if you have any questions, would like to make a donation, or wish to be added to the mailing list for fixture / nets updates.

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MUSIC AT ST PETERS WALLINGFORD

Music at St Peters in Wallingford is back! – although the concerts will be mostly at St Mary’s, this year until all Covid restrictions are lifted. As ever, we aim to present a wide range of chamber music played mostly by young professional musicians of the highest quality, with a sprinkling of more mature artists. The concert schedule will be as follows:

29 May	Lipatti Piano Quartet	Quartets by Beethoven and Fauré
12 June	Indira Grier and Florian Mitrea	Cello sonatas by Beethoven and Brahms
26 June	Pocket Sinfonia	Prokofiev (Romeo & Juliet) and Beethoven (symphony no 5)
17 July	Ferio Saxophone Quartet	Arrangements of Baroque and more recent music by Bach, Handel, Bizet, Gershwin and others
14 August	The Consone String Quartet	Works by Dvorák, Haydn, Puccini and Verdi
28 August	Dominic Degavino	Piano recital of works by Beethoven, Schumann and Debussy
18 Sept	The Brompton String Quartet	Works by Haydn, Bartok, Schubert and Beethoven
2 Oct	The Thames Consort	Handel: Alexander’s Feast
16 Oct	The Sacconi String Quartet	Quartets by Haydn, Ravel and Schubert

The first two concerts will be performed compliant with the covid regulations currently in force: the two performances will be given , the first at 5.30 pm the second at 8pm. Each will last approximately one hour and there will be no interval. The ticket price for these concerts will be £12.

It is assumed that for the remaining concerts covid restrictions will be relaxed sufficiently for full length concerts to be performed, with an interval. The ticket price for these concerts is £16. All tickets must be pre-booked on line via our website www.musicatstpeterswallingford.org.uk or by phoning Laurence Attewill on 01865 343336

Summer Reading Challenge 2021

WILD WORLD HEROES

Presented by The Reading Agency.
Delivered in partnership with libraries.

**Get ready to go *wild* about your world
by joining the FREE reading challenge at your local library!**

From **10 July to 11 September** children across Oxfordshire can join the Wild World Heroes, Summer Reading Challenge 2021 to help save the environment of Wilderville.

Collect stickers and rewards as you read library books over the summer holidays.

Complete your challenge at an Oxfordshire Library to win a Wild World Heroes medal, certificate and a keyring.



Under 3s can take part in a mini challenge with their own special card and stickers.

Illustrations © Heath McKenzie 2021

Visit summerreadingchallenge.org.uk for the fun to carry on at home.

If you finish the challenge at your local Oxfordshire Library, you will be entered into an **exciting prize draw!** Don't miss out!



NUNEHAM COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Annual Meeting

The Council held its annual meeting on Tuesday 4th May, the last meeting it was allowed to hold via Zoom under the Covid-19 legislation. The Council re-elected Madhvi Saini as Chair and John Peters as Vice-Chair.

The Council fixed the dates of its meetings for the coming 12 months – you can find them all on the website – and renewed its membership of a range of bodies: the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, the Open Spaces Society and the Oxford Green Belt Network.

Lost rights of way?

The Ramblers have published a map showing what they believe may be historic rights of way in Nuneham Courtenay which do not appear on the County Council's current "definitive map" of rights of way. Unless these possible historic rights of way are researched and put to the County Council for adding to the definitive map before 2026, they may be blocked up for ever on 1st January 2026.

The Ramblers' "Don't Lose Your Way" project is concerned with historic rights of way that may be missing from the current "definitive maps" maintained by highways authorities such as Oxfordshire County Council. The Ramblers refer to a principle of English law: "once a highway, always a highway". So, the project aims to identify historic rights of way and get them added to the definitive maps by the legal deadline set in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

During 2020 volunteers compared certain old maps with the definitive maps and highlighted routes that do not appear on the current definitive maps but seem in the past to have been accepted as rights of way. By going onto The Ramblers' website and typing in Nuneham Courtenay, you can access a map on which possible missing rights of way are shown in blue. Interesting – but there might be quite a bit of research to do to establish which, if any, of these highlighted routes were ever rights of way.

County Council elections

There is a new County Councillor for the Berinsfield and Garsington division, which includes Nuneham Courtenay: Robin Bennett, the Green Party candidate, won the seat on 6th May ending Lorraine Lindsay-Gale's 12 years as a county councillor. Crispin Flintoff, the Labour candidate, came third. The County Council is holding its annual meeting on 18th May when it will have to choose a new Leader as the outgoing Leader, Ian Hudspeth, lost his Woodstock seat to a Liberal Democrat.

Playing Field

No news yet but we hope the Playing Field Association may soon arrange to cut the grass, if not in time for half-term, then certainly in time for the school summer holidays.

Next Council meeting

The Council's first physical meeting since February 2020 will be held on Monday 21st June at 7pm in the Village Hall, which is expected to be the first day when all Covid-19 restrictions on gatherings may have been lifted.

Parish councils are supposed to complete the audit process by 30th June, which is why the Council is not waiting to meet on the first Tuesday in July, which have been a more usual date for a Council meeting.

Anyone is welcome to attend and, if you wish to address the meeting, just let the Chair know in advance.



THE MAPLE TREE

A great place to grow

Toddle and Talk

Come celebrate being able to meet in groups outside again! Please wear clothing suitable for all weathers - slings and buggies welcome. Let's meet at at The Maple Tree Centre every **Tuesday** from 11:30am - 12:30pm!

Book your place by emailing:
info@mapletree.org.uk



HELLO FROM THE MAPLE TREE!

Have you seen our lovely new notice board? Many, many thanks to Chris our fab Chairperson, Yu-Ho, a wonderful volunteer and the splendid Doug and Geoff from the Wheatley Wanderers!



As government restrictions are lifted, we are cautiously optimistic and gradually opening. Spaces are still limited and must be pre-booked by emailing info@mapletree.org.uk. Covid measures remain in place and there is a suggested donation of £2.50 per family per session. Check out our Website and Facebook pages for special events, holiday programmes and helpful information.

Messy Mondays: Play and Learn sensory/creative activities from 10:30-11:30

Tuesday: Play and Learn: Once Upon a Rhyme-Time from 10:00-11:00 and **Toddle and Talk** from 11:30-12:30pm. [Online - Story Time](#)

Wednesday: Well-Baby Clinic (with Health Visitors) to be booked through the NHS and **Maple Babies:** Group supports for new parents from 10:00-11:00 and 12:00-1:00. [Online - activities for babies](#)

Thursday: Play and Learn: Little Scientists, activities for the under 5s from 10:00-11:00

Friday: Play and Learn: Solitary Bee to Social Butterflies: a new group for young children (from 12 months to 3 years) who have missed key socialising opportunities during this past year from 10:30-11:30. [For the weekend online - ideas and activities suitable for the whole family](#)

Saturdays: Family Fun on 3rd Saturday of each month, Space (19th June), Under the Sea (18th July) and Endangered Animals (15th August) from 10:00- 12:00

Weekdays 1:1 Sessions

The Maple Tree is offering 1:1 sessions to parents needing a listening ear during these transitional times; this can be by phone, online, in the Centre or on a walk.

We are looking for Volunteers! Would like to join our committed and friendly group of trustees? Or are you interested in helping with our sessions, working with young children alongside our dedicated staff team? Or fundraising? Do you have a lot of spare time or just an hour a week? All welcome!

We are here to help you, if you need help, advice or support: 01865 236700 or 07849 466249.

Email: info@mapletree.org.uk

Website: www.mapletree.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley

Laura Spencer

The Maple Tree Centre Manager

FROM JOHN HOWELL MP

This month will bring with it a major step forward in the COVID19 recovery programme, which is welcomed. I know that many people have been enjoying the opportunity to meet up with friends again outdoors, but the weather has, quite literally, put a damper on that! The new opportunity to meet indoors and, to be able to stay overnight with people, is good news. The progress that has been made to enable this is also good news. With the virus deemed to be suppressed in most of the constituency I know that many people are looking forward to a more normal way of life. The vaccination programme has, of course, played a huge part in this and my thanks to those who have come forward to take up the vaccination. However there are still many people who have yet to be offered the vaccine and so I encourage everyone, including those who have already been offered the vaccine, to remain vigilant and follow the guidance for the sake of these people.

The State opening of Parliament marks the start of a new session of Parliament and many MPs, including me, have taken this as a signal to return to the parliamentary estate rather than continue to work remotely. Restrictions do remain in place but simply being on the estate and being able to meet with colleagues informally is of great benefit.

One thing that I have very much missed during lockdown and under COVID restrictions is being able to meet people within the constituency. Prior to the pandemic, along with all other MPs, my Fridays and sometimes weekends were filled with visits to schools, businesses, charities and meetings with individuals and groups to discuss a wide range of issues and concerns. Some of this has continued through virtual meetings but I am looking forward to getting out and about more and seeing what is going on for myself. Once all restrictions are lifted, hopefully in June, I will be looking to schedule visits and meetings. Please do get in touch if there is something you would like me to come to.

One thing that I plan to continue is virtual surgeries. This has been one very positive thing that has emerged from lockdown. The constituency is geographically spread and, although I move surgeries around, people wanting to meet with me would sometimes have to travel some distance to discuss something that did not take long to talk about to enable me to take an issue up for them. With online opportunities we have been able to save people much time and at the same time reduce car journeys. Face to face meetings continue to have an important place in our communications but in future we can determine the best way to meet according to the time needed and the travel involved, which I hope will bring a benefit to many people.

With the beginning of the new parliamentary session we have some important new legislation coming forward. Much of the detail is yet to be published but as information is available I would welcome, as always, views on proposals. Although I have been going to the Westminster office at present my team continues to work remotely and email remains the quickest form of communication. If you have an

issue that you would like to raise with me, if possible, please email me at john.howell.mp@parliament.uk. If you cannot email you can still write to me at the House of Commons, London, SW1 0AA or PO Box 84, Watlington, OX49 5XD. Please be aware that remote working means that it is taking longer for mail to get through to me.

My website is regularly updated on key issues. If you would like to receive my periodic electronic newsletters, and briefings on specific issues, please visit my website www.johnhowell.org.uk and subscribe at the link on the home page.

CONSCIOUSLY MAINTAINING OUR AWARENESS

It's been said to me quite regularly recently, that there are more birds around this year, and their breeding season is full of even more vigorous song this time too.

I don't know if I fully agree with these anecdotal statements, as I'm wondering if the restrictions on all our lives during the last year or so, due to Covid, have made us take more notice than usual of what's going on around us, that we may have missed engaging with during that lockdown time. Bird song included.

Anecdotal evidence, though very useful, isn't scientific by any means. So, before we all believe nature is doing well coming out of the 3rd English lockdown, let's just think if it's our own awareness that's improved and kicked in? If it is, the skill is maintaining that going forward, and not going back into old habits, that is so easy to do. Old habits that enabled us to walk like zombies, oblivious to the nature around us, just not noticing it. The art of consciously maintaining awareness is just that, pure art, and a metaphor for life.

If, on the other hand, the birds are actually doing well coming out of lockdown, and it's not just down to increased awareness on our part, then let's see why that is scientifically. Replicating that in future years. We're all custodians of the little bit of the environment around us, so we have a duty of care towards it.

I've always said, I don't have all the answers, as my job is to keep us all thinking about the big issues. Keeping them in all our consciousness, and these issues deserve our attention, and need talking about more often.

Happy gardening
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CHURCH SERVICES FOR JUNE

Sunday 6th June	10.30am	Marsh	Holy Communion with Children's Corner
Sunday 13th June	5pm	Toot	BCP Evensong followed by a talk from Revd. Marcus Braybrooke on "Life and Faith in a Victorian Village"
Sunday 20th June	8am	Toot	BCP Holy Communion
	3pm	Marsh	Forest Church
Sunday 27th June	5pm	Marsh	Holy Communion
Sunday 4th July	11am	Toot	Air Crash Memorial Service

If you would like to attend, please let Revd. Teresa know so that we have details for Track and Trace: 07823 809 112 or revteresa@outlook.com.

Or if you just want to chat, please give Revd Teresa a call (07823 809 112) or drop her an email: revteresa@outlook.com



A free phonenumber of hymns,
reflections and prayers



A free Church of England phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers.

Do share the number, 0800 804 8044, with those who may be feeling lonely and isolated.

ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Items for the July / August 2021 newsletter
by 16th June please

Any villager is welcome to send items for publication in the newsletter. Please send copy to Natasha Eliot: 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 or on 01865 340 521