

The Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay Newsletter



February 2016

FROM THE TEAM RECTOR, CANON SUE BOOYS

I'm writing at the beginning of a New Year and the edition of your parish magazine in which you'll read this is the first one of 2016 – albeit not arriving until the beginning of February – so A Happy New Year from me and from the Dorchester Team of Churches!!

What are your aspirations for 2016? I love the 'clean sheet of paper' sensation of New Year – the opportunity to make a fresh start and to put behind us all the 'might have been' and 'wish I hadn't' feelings. It's a human blessing, I think, always to feel that we could have done things better – but there are times of human sadness overcomes us – like that year which the Queen called her 'annus horribilis'. We hope and pray that 2016 will be a good one for Her Majesty as we plan in our different communities to celebrate her 90th Birthday.

So what do we hope for our blank sheets of paper this year? All our village communities have their different issues – more than one is facing the prospect of welcoming newcomers to inhabit significantly large numbers of new homes. Sometimes we worry that village activities and businesses are unsustainable but we remain chary of new building and greater populations.

Within the Church Team, the Bridge Group of parishes is looking forward to appointing and welcoming a new vicar. I always look forward to what a new colleague will bring - part of our richness is the variety of expertise and enthusiasm that a group of clergy serving a number of parishes can share.

Internationally, like all of you I shall be praying for peace and for our care of the environment and I shall be continuing to look for ways we can help men women and children across the world. Through the Dorchester Team we give particular support to a very small community on the edge of the Kalahari where, week by week, local women feed children and impoverished families. Here AIDS and alcohol-related illness represent a real threat to life and many children are orphans. In world terms this is a mere grain of sand - but we have seen the real difference our support and interest has made through better nutrition and in the burgeoning confidence of the women in charge as they rejoice in achieving their hope to bring life to their community. Those of us who have met these women of the Burning Bush have learned much from them – I hope that in 2016 you will get to meet them as a visit here is planned later in the year!

This letter encompasses two kinds of new beginning in one – Easter is so early this year that Lent begins in February – Ash Wednesday is 10th! In Lent Christians take on a new discipline – it may be doing something new or giving something up – but its intention is to be a little more rigorous in the way we live our lives so that we have the opportunity to grow in heart and soul, mind and strength and service of our neighbour. Little wonder that many people who would not call themselves active Christians still use the forty days of Lent to help them make a new start.

(Forty days is approximately the time that research has shown it takes to establish a new habit!)

Choose Life – in the Old Testament this is a challenge that God makes to his people over and over – it is not about choosing to keep on existing but about choosing to live in a way that reaches into our deep rooted humanity, spirituality and mutuality. In our time we are fortunate to be able to live our lives in a way that takes account of women and men across the world. How will we Choose Life in 2016?

God Bless You
Sue Booy

*The Revd Paul Cawthorne is Team vicar for The Baldons with Nuneham
Courtenay, Berinsfield and Drayton St Leonard.*
e-mail: bbdparishoffice@rocketmail.com and tel: 01865 340460.



Poppy Appeal – Final Total

The final figure for the Poppy Appeal reached £1,040.10. Thank you to everyone who supported the appeal.
Iris Wright

BALDONS VILLAGE HALL NEWS

The Village Hall Committee hope that everyone enjoyed the Seniors' Party on 9th January, and would like to thank all those who helped make it a success. The Committee will be meeting on 4th February to discuss plans for the coming year, including events and improvements to the hall. If you have any issues to raise, please let a committee member know or contact James Bufford (340091), John Barne (343624) or Natasha Eliot (343478).

The Baldons Village Hall is for everyone's use: to book, please contact Ali or Darren on: 01865 340264 or dbaber@rm.com



Marsh Baldon C.E. Primary School

The Green, Marsh Baldon,
Oxford, OX44 9LJ
Telephone (01865) 343249
Facsimile (01865) 341496
Email: office.3188@marsh-baldon.oxon.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Herring

www.marshbaldonschool.co.uk

15th January 2016

To the community of Marsh Baldon,

Firstly, I would like to wish you a belated Happy New Year and hope that you all had an enjoyable and restful Christmas! It has been lovely to see the children returning to school with so much energy and enthusiasm for their learning and to see all the positive changes we have made having a real impact on their education.

As you will remember I wrote to you before Christmas to give details of the work carried out to set the school descriptions and vision. I am pleased to say that this has now been completed following final feedback from the School Council and the Staff. I would like to thank the large number of you who took part in this process which has helped to ensure we have a shared vision for our school which will both guide us and shape our direction of travel.

I am sure that you will be pleased with the final outcome, and for those who took part, I am sure you will agree that we have captured the essence of all the discussions.

Our School Mission Statement: *Marsh Baldon is a small, inclusive school where all are supported to grow and learn informed by the Christian values of love, respect, trust and moral courage.*

Our School Description: *We are a small Church of England Primary school in an idyllic location at the heart of the Marsh Baldon village community, south of the city of Oxford. We are proud of our diverse, inclusive school and the pupils we have on roll who come from the local communities of the Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay as well as the wider catchment of surrounding villages and Oxford suburbs. We respect our pupils as individuals and encourage an ethos of mutual respect and tolerance for all. We challenge and support all our young learners so they can achieve their full potential. We want the very best for all and prepare our pupils for their continued journey as independent, free thinking, confident individuals.*

Our School Strapline: *Growing together, succeeding together.*

Our School Values: Love, Respect, Teamwork, Courage

As you may be aware, because we are Church of England Primary School then in addition to an OFSTED inspection, we are also inspected under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) The principal objective of the SIAMS inspection is to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school. We had our inspection on 13th January 2016 and will await the outcome which will come through over the next 2 weeks.

Finally, the Interim Executive Board approved the minutes of the IEB meeting on 23rd October 2015 at our 18th December 2015 meeting. These are now available on the school website: <http://www.marshbaldonschool.co.uk/governance-information> should you wish to view them.

I will update you throughout the year as our journey continues, but If you have any questions or would like to discuss anything with me then please do e-mail on kprm1982@hotmail.com or contact the school on: (01865) 343249 to arrange an appointment with me.

Best wishes,



Kevin Moyes
Chair of Governors

PRINCIPLES OF GARDEN DESIGN

At the February meeting of the Wallingford Gardening Club, Duncan Grosart will talk about 'Principles of Garden Design'.

Duncan trained at the Pershore College of Horticulture and has been teaching and judging landscape design for the past 35 years.

The talk will be held at Ridgeway Community Church, Wallingford at 7.30pm on Thursday 11th February.

Visitors very welcome £2.



Isabelle Darby
01491-836867

*Advance notice of future talks :-
10th March 2016- A Diet Plan for Plants (Paul Patton)*

THAMES CROSSINGS - FERRIES, FORDS AND BRIDGES



February's talk to The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society (TWHAS) will be given by **Steve Capel-Davies**. He will present '**Thames Crossings - Ferries, Fords and Bridges**'.

Steve has had an extensive career involving rivers, and will draw on his personal experiences and knowledge of the River Thames. The River Thames has been very important as a key route for trade but it has also been a major barrier to those wanting to cross it! This talk on Ferries, Fords and Bridges will look at how these have evolved over the years including local examples, such as at Wallingford where the bridge has at times had drawbridges installed, been destroyed by a flood, rebuilt and widened. The talk will be preceded by a short (as usual!) AGM.

This talk will be held on Friday 12th February, 8 pm at the Methodist Church Centre, St Leonard's Square, Wallingford.

Visitors (£3) are most welcome.

www.twhas.org.uk

TWO EXCITING NEW SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS AT WALLINGFORD MUSEUM



Did you know that William the Conqueror came to Wallingford after the battle to cross the River Thames with his army? Why did he choose Wallingford? What was happening here at the time to make him come? What effect did it all have on the people living here? There is certainly an intriguing story to tell and in this new exhibition - '1066: William Comes to Wallingford' - based on the very latest research and evidence. Not to be missed! You'll also be able to see some of the latest discoveries from our recent archaeology, including the smallest medieval chess piece ever found in England - a beautiful little object made of antler, discovered behind the Museum in the dig last summer.

There's also a brand new special exhibition presenting '300 Years of Cartoons!' This spectacular private collection has been brought together by Dr Steve Head to show wonderful examples of the development of the use of cartoons in the last three centuries. Featuring about a hundred cartoons of all kinds, the exhibition allows you simply to look at the cartoons and enjoy them for themselves, or to take time to read a little about each one and learn a great deal - a very special experience.

Your £5 entry ticket will give you terrific value, as you'll be able to return as many times as you like for no extra cost. The Museum is open from 1st March. Children under 16 are free, and there's lots for the family to enjoy throughout the rest of the Museum too. Full details at www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk

Healthwatch Oxfordshire is your voice on health and social care

Whether it is improving services today, or helping to shape them for tomorrow, Healthwatch Oxfordshire is all about enabling local voices to influence the delivery and design of local health and social care in our county. Not just for the people who use them now, but for anyone who might need to in future.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire was set up on April 1 2013, as a result of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The organisation sits alongside 151 other local Healthwatch across the country.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire hears what children, young people and adults have to say about health and social care services, whether that is praise, criticism or ideas for improvement. We strengthen the collective voice of patients and the public, so that service providers and commissioners listen to what they have to say. We then hold them to account on how they use the information we provide to shape, inform and influence service delivery and design.

In order to ensure that we have the best possible evidence and the widest possible views to influence the delivery and design of health and social care services, we need as many people as possible to speak out about their experiences, so that we can speak up on their behalf.

Healthwatch is independent, and we are accountable to the people of Oxfordshire, so please tell us how you would like to be treated and cared for, and what is important to you when using health and social care services, and we can make a difference together.

To find out more about Healthwatch Oxfordshire, please visit our website, www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

Contact us on 01865 520 520 or email hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

You can also follow us on Twitter @HealthwatchOxon and find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/HealthwatchOxfordshire

Dennis Jones: 11 December 1920 – 27 July 2015

A tribute from his daughter Jenny and granddaughters Natasha and Sam



Dad was born in Normanton, Yorkshire on 11th December 1920 the son of a Miner. He worked as a Tailor at John Colliers until he joined the RAF just before war was declared.

He did not tell his Mum and Dad until he and his friend had enlisted. They enlisted rather than wait to be called up as “they liked the uniform of the RAF” (so Dad used to tell us!!!). Dad was a Leading Aircraftman and he specialized in decoy and camouflage.

Dad was in charge of a Second World War bombing site at Sandford which was built in early 1941 as a permanent ‘Starfish’ site to deflect the enemy bombing from the industrial area of Cowley. By late 1941 a ‘QL’ decoy was incorporated into the site as part of the ‘C-series’ of civil decoys to protect the Morris car production plant. ‘The Starfish’ decoy operated



by lighting a series of controlled fires during an air raid to replicate an urban area targeted by combs. The ‘QL’ decoy displayed simulated factory lighting to reconstruct the Morris plant. The site is referenced as being in use until 1943. Dad told us the Germans would only have one aircraft with navigation capabilities and this aircraft would drop fire bombs to mark the site, the rest of the German Squadron would then drop the bombs.

As soon as German Bombers were seen Dad would set off fire bombs on around the Starfish site so the bombs would be dropped on the Sandford decoy site. Dad always said that most people spent the war trying not to get bombed and he spent it trying to get bombed!

Dad was in charge of the RAF team responsible for making sure aircraft, vehicles and equipment were camouflaged to protect them from enemy attack. He arrived in Normandy on an American barge landing on Utah beach. He was forced to postpone his wedding to Mum (only days before the date) because of D-Day. Mum and Dad were finally married 11th January 1945.



Dad marched from Normandy to Paris with very little food but plenty of cigarettes. Dad said he had never been so cold and hungry as there was little or no food and they slept in ditches at night and marched in the day. They liberated Paris, they were cheered and girls were kissing them. One French man gave Dad 10 francs for a packet of cigarettes and that paid for a slap up meal that evening for Dad and his mates – it was the first time they had eaten for days. Dad says he always



regretted taking the 10 francs as the cigarettes were free issue but they were so hungry. Dad also served in Burma.

After being de-mobbed Mum and Dad moved to Nuneham where Dad worked at Upper Farm for Mr. Watts. Dad ran a Youth Club at Nuneham Village Hall

in the 1950's where he arranged table tennis darts music and dancing. In the winter he used to bring hot Oxo or Bovril for the children to drink! He also arranged the annual Flower Show together with other members of the British Legion. Dad grew Gladiolis to show and Mum was never allowed to cut any of these until after the flower show.

When Mr Watts sold the farm Dad then worked as Head Gardener at Thames Water at Sandford, probably not far from the Starfish site which had been given over for agriculture use in 1969.

After retiring Dad together with Mum worked with Duncan at AVC Motors until they moved to Watlington in 2008.

My Grampy – Natasha Major

Was a fantastic magician – he made me believe he was a member of the Magic Circle – I only found out a couple of years ago he had never been in the Magic Circle!

He had an amazing garden at Nuneham Courtenay in which he took a lot of pride. I used to love helping him dig up the carrots and pick runner beans; every time I smell a fresh tomato lovely memories come flooding back of helping Gramp in his garden and greenhouse.

He bought me a lovely necklace to match earrings I had already, he was a very observant man and he knew I had been looking for a necklace to match and he managed to find one.

All our family have a saying “Grin and Bear it” which we all use no matter how we feel we just “Grin and Bear it”.

He was a very modest man; he hardly ever spoke about the war until recent years, even though it was sheer bravery that got him through the war years.

He was a very good baker and cook but he didn't hold back any punches to tell me how he DID NOT LIKE my baking ha ha!

On my wedding Gran and Gramp played a bit part and Gramp was as proud as punch in his morning suit – he looked so smart.

He loved my Gran so much and he made sure we were all ok and settled before he went off to meet her again and report back to her (in heaven).

He loved any gadget or gizmo; he loved looking at all the new mobiles and was always very impressed by them. He also had a Facebook account – not many people in their 90s could say that!

I loved my Gramp so much and I miss him terribly. There hasn't been a day that's gone past that I don't think about my Gran and Gramp. I have much comfort

knowing he is back with my beautiful Gran having a whiskey and a dance and looking out for us, as always.

My Gramp – Sam Green

Here's to the magical man who always called me Lucy. He showed me:-

- how money grow out of your ears (magic trick)
- how to make a home brew
- how to dance standing on his feet
- when life is tough you grin and bear it
- when I was scared, to think of fairies
- how to cheat at cards!

He told me stories and even now I don't know if they were true or not.

He loved a party so we are partying now for you Gramp.

Granddads hold your hand for a while but your heart forever.

RIP Gramp. Gran's waiting with a whiskey for you (just the one)!!!

Love you forever and always Dennis Jones xxxxx

NUNEHAM COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Parish Council Meeting

- The Parish Council meeting was held on 24th November 2015 2 to 5:30pm at the Village Hall.

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

- The Parish Council welcomed our new RFO Barbara Gifford who has been acting as RFO for other parish councils, and will be carrying out this role separately from the Clerk.
- Our Clerk who has been with us for over a year has taken up further studies at university, to study a master's degree and has expressed that the workload to do both would be a stretch. We therefore, advertised just before this meeting for a replacement clerk with the OALC.
- The Chair thanked our Clerk for her excellent service over the past year.

Village Gates and Shutters on Main Road

- It was agreed to assess the entrances to the village, and in the meantime keep the present gates and repaint.

Notice Board

- It was noted that the village notice board needs to be replaced and funds have been allocated in the draft budget for 2016/17.

Salt Boxes

- A discussion occurred about the purchases and costs of these boxes. A decision was made to go with the colour dark green, and a supplier was found that is both cheaper and more robust than the OCC offer.

- The final decision about costs will be made at the next meeting on 18th January 2016.

New Tables for Village Hall

- Cllr Love proposed the purchase of lighter and more manageable round tables, and two rectangle tables for the village hall.
- This decision was agreed and funds have been allocated for this in the draft budget for 2016/17.

Parish Council laptop

- Finally, our Parish Council has bought its Clerk a laptop to secure all Parish Council data and information. This will also enable us to have a more updated website.

Financial Matters

Financial Report

- **Broadband renewal in the village hall:** The Parish Council explored contracts and are sticking with Talk Talk because the deal we have with them is cheaper.
- **Oxfordshire Together (Grass Cutting/Trees):** The Parish Council will now be responsible for cutting the verges that were previously done by OCC 2-3 times per year.
- The Parish Council decided that the areas involved need to be marked out on a map so the amounts can be worked out.
- Liaison with the OCC will be required, and along with some quotes from contractors, a final cost will be agreed upon.
- The issue of trees were discussed. OCC have said they will not repair footpaths because they are damaged by trees, however they will continue to take care of the trees with tree surgeons.
- In the long-term therefore, as a parish we will need to look at the footpaths and the damage created by the tree roots.
- Cllr Love raised the issue of the leaves that conceal the kerb and therefore make it dangerous. It was thought a contractor and quote should be sought for clearing these in October/November.

Draft Budget and Precept for 2016/17

- This will be finalised in our meeting of 18th January 2016.

Governance

- **Standing Orders and Financial Regulations :** The Parish Council formally adopted these

Planning Items

- **P15/S3447/HH and P15/S3448/LB – 30 Nuneham Courtenay.** The Parish Council held a special meeting to determine this application. The decision was that it should be refused.

Training

- Our Councillors attended the Planning Training course and they all found it extremely useful and felt up-to-date with new regulations.
- A discussion took place about making material planning considerations available to the community and that this would help them when making planning applications. These will be uploaded onto our website by the end of January.

Flooding Resilience

- On 16th September 2015, Cllr Love raised the importance of keeping ditches clear and liaising with landowners to that end. The Parish Council discussed the matter and our Clerk intends to contact all farmers and landowners to ensure that this has been done.
- In our November 2015 meeting, Cllr Peters agreed to give the Clerk all the relevant names of those who need to be notified.
- Our new Clerk will follow this up in January.

Development of an Emergency Plan

- It is intended that we create an emergency plan for our parish that covers all potential disasters, be they floods, power cuts, extreme weather conditions, and so forth.
- We want to do this with all relevant stakeholders; they will therefore be invited to a meeting in which all locals will be welcomed. This is planned for 2016.

Our next meeting is to be held Monday 18th January 2015 2pm at the village hall.

UPDATE

- Since this previous Parish Council meeting we have successfully appointed a new Clerk. She is very experienced, and along with her many achievements, is a qualified Clerk with CiLCA status (Certificate in Local Council Administration), and prior to joining us was the deputy Clerk for Didcot Town Council. We will be delighted to welcome her to our first meeting of 2016.

Power Cut on 16th January 2016:

- The power went off at Nuneham Courtenay due to a power cable coming down between Abingdon and Nuneham Park Estate. This day's process exposed a whole series of issues that needed a clear emergency strategy.
- Cllr Love and Cllr Brookes spent much of the day along with other residents trying to liaise with the electric company, and for those living on Nuneham Park Estate, trying to get the water supply connected as this is pumped electrically.
- Cllr Love has since discussed with Savills, the Global Retreat Centre, Home Farm, the need for an emergency strategy with stakeholders and locals involved, with an easy and accessible plan on the website and the noticeboard for steps to take when such things occur. As per the minutes above, a meeting will be planned for all parties to be involved.

For any further information, all our minutes are available on our website:

<http://www.ncpc.uk/minutes.html>

I look forward to updating you with more news in the next article.

Cllr Love (Chair)

For items and photos to be sent, please contact the Clerk:

Karen Dodd| nunehamcourtenay.clerk@gmail.com

NUNEHAM COURTENAY VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Film nights return in February with Far from the Madding Crowd (2015 version). We will set the date once we have approval. Look out for signs around the Village advertising the date.

Yoga group will once again be meeting on Mondays at 7:30. There is a £2 a session contribution requested. If there are not enough people, the group sometimes decides to skip a week. Contact Jenny at jenny@datadaysolutions.com if you have any questions.

The Village Hall is available to rent. The hire charge includes full use of all the facilities. Contact June at 01865 343 371 to book the hall.

Thinking of starting a new regular activity meeting in the Village Hall? Contact June on 343 371 to discuss discounted rates (for a limited time) to support the success of your activity.

ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Items for the **March 2016** newsletter
by **16th February** please

Any villager is welcome to send items for publication in the newsletter - this can be anything from articles, poems or pictures, to publicising your event. In addition, if you have an image you would like us to consider for the cover, do send it in!

If you would like to receive a reminder e-mail each month for newsletter contributions please let me know.

Natasha Eliot: tashaandjames@btopenworld.com. Alternatively I can be contacted on 343478 or at Baldon House East, Marsh Baldon.

For advertising queries, please contact Sheila Harris on:
s.harris886@btinternet.com or on 340403.

BALDONS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Happy New Year

Parish Council Meeting 12th January revised date 2nd February

Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances the January meeting had to be cancelled at fairly short notice. Apologies to any of you who were hoping to attend. The meeting has been rearranged for Tuesday 2nd February in the village hall at 7.30 pm, the agenda is as previously displayed on notice boards.

Speed survey The Croft

Following the request that was made at the November PC meeting the highways department conducted a speed survey in The Croft during the week commencing 7th December. The equipment was placed near the village hall and monitored both the numbers of vehicles travelling both north and south and their speed. An initial look at the data shows that whilst most vehicles travel at or below the 30 mph speed limit a small number 7-10 per day travel between 30 and 36 mph, a speed which is a cause for concern.

The results will be discussed at the next parish council meeting and more information included in next month's newsletter.

Neighbourhood plan

The application for a Neighbourhood Plan has now been made to the SODC and their approval is expected at the end of January. This approval will trigger the first substantial activity in the Plan's preparation, a consultation of all Baldon residents and stakeholders on various key issues - the extent and nature of future development, the need for infrastructural improvements, and environmental aspects that will provide us with the foundation on which to base the Plan. All residents are urged to respond to this consultation.

South Oxfordshire District Council is also required to consult widely and with other interested parties on the neighbourhood plan proposed geographical area. Below is their notice.

Baldons Neighbourhood Plan proposed area

We would like to notify you that Baldons Parish Council (Toot Baldon and Marsh Baldon) has submitted proposals to proceed with developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Baldons. The first stage of this process is consultation on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan area, to this end we would like to invite comment on the suitability of the proposed area for a period of six weeks. To view proposals of the area submitted for the plan, along with the Area Designation Application Form please visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans and click on the Baldons link.

The consultation period will run from Monday 11th January 2016 to 5.00pm Monday 22nd February 2016. If any person or party would like to make comments on the proposed area, this publication period is the opportunity to do so. Please note this is not formal consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, merely the identification of the potential area that it will cover.

You can comment on these proposals by using our online consultation system at **consult.southandvale.gov.uk/south**. Please note that you will need to register to make your comments, if you have not already done so. You can also email comments to **planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk**. Letters can be sent to South Oxfordshire District Council, Planning Policy, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB. Please be aware that all comments that we receive will be publicly available and will be included on our website.

If you have any queries or problems accessing this information please contact the Planning Policy team on 01235 540546.

Planning Policy
South Oxfordshire District Council
Customer Service: 01235 540546
Email: Planning.Policy@southoxon.gov.uk

Planning applications

There have been no new planning applications received during December and early January.

Date of next Parish Council meeting

Tuesday 2nd Feb revised date of postponed meeting
Tuesday 8th March Village Hall 7.30 pm.

FROM JOHN HOWELL MP



The question of what an MP does is obvious to some but less so to many. I am often asked about the role of an MP or to speak to groups on what I do. There is no job description for an MP but rather some key roles they are expected to play. The main role is to review legislation and represent local interests in Parliament. During the course of a week MPs divide their time in Westminster between scrutinising legislation, attending debates, committees and a wide range of briefings and other meetings. In doing so an MP will hold the national interest at heart and ensure that the interests of their own area are represented in this bigger picture. By and large an MP's time is divided between working in Parliament or representing parliament elsewhere and working in their constituency.

Beyond this overall description it is down to each MP to work it out in practice. When Parliament is sitting MPs are expected to be in Westminster from Monday to Thursday and so time in the constituency is limited. Outside of sitting weeks

there is more time for constituency meetings and visits. A key constituency time for me is the September recess when I try to do a tour of villages. This is the only recess that does not coincide with school holidays and so many more people are available than in other recesses.

When in Westminster there are many different issues that I would like to speak on but to some extent we are dependent on being called by the Speaker to make a contribution to a particular debate. Since the General Election in May I have spoken on a number of subjects including schools funding, human rights in Egypt, refugees, aircraft noise over Henley, NHS and social care integration, Operation Bullfinch in Oxford, prison reform, dangerous driving, business rates, the BBC, mental health and children, Junior doctors, the Middle East, Right to Buy, grammar schools, lead shot, unemployment in the constituency, the role of Henley College, and the work of Network Rail in the constituency.

There are many issues that I raise in Parliament and it is always essential to choose the best way of doing so to get the desired action or response. Some issues are best raised directly with Ministers. Other issues can, where appropriate, be raised on the floor of the House. At other times I ask questions of Ministers either in the Chamber or in writing.

When in the constituency I attend events and meetings. Since the General Election I have attended some 148 meetings and events in the constituency. I also hold advice surgeries which provide an opportunity for constituents to raise specific issues with me. However, like many MPs I find that many people now prefer to use email or to phone my office if they have a problem. This way they can get a quicker response than if they had to wait for the next available surgery appointment. Generally speaking the individual issues that I may be able to help with relate to Government departments. Concerns with local council services are best raised with local councillors.

I am always pleased to know what is going on around the constituency and welcome constructive debate with constituents on a range of issues in person, by letter or email. However it is impossible for me to represent all of the different views inevitably expressed on different issues by people from across the constituency. In the end every MP has to make a judgement on what they say and how they vote on particular issues.

I send out a regular general e-newsletter and also special briefings on an occasional basis on specific issues. If you would like to be on my circulation list for these bulletins please email me at john.howell@oxfordshireconservatives.com. For more information about my work both in Westminster and in the constituency please do visit my website. The address is www.johnhowellmp.com. You can also follow me on twitter @johnhowellmp or on Facebook www.facebook.com/john.howellmp

I look forward to hearing from you as the year progresses.

Local Government Settlement

Oxfordshire County Council has now received details of future grant funding from central Government and the levels are even worse than feared. The council had been preparing for up to £50m of savings from 2016 to 2020 (on top of the £292m it is already in the process of making for the period from 2010 to 2018). However, on the basis of figures provided by central Government last month, OCC will have to make £20m further savings on top of the £50m, bringing the total saving to £70m over the next four years. Central Government has changed the formula for funding councils, and it seems shire counties, particularly in the south of England, have come off worst.

The list of proposed savings for £50 million was already controversial, with many members of the public opposing them. To achieve the additional £20 million savings, no area of the council can be exempt other than those where there is a statutory obligation to provide for the most vulnerable in the county. This means other areas will suffer disproportionately, which will involve some very difficult and controversial decisions. By law, the Council has to pass a balanced budget with no revenue borrowing. The Cabinet recommendations will be published 18th January for decision 26th January, before the budget goes to Full Council on 16th February.

New Oxfordshire Libraries App

Oxfordshire Libraries can now be accessed from smart phone or tablet. People can:

- manage their account
- search the catalogue
- renew and reserve books.

Bar code scanning is available on devices with a front-facing auto-focus camera. Search for 'Oxfordshire Libraries' at the App Store or Google Play.

Preparations For Winter Weather

OCC is fully prepared for winter with a full fleet of 31 gritting vehicles, which have been serviced and tested over the summer. They are ready to run on 28 routes, covering a total distance of 1200 miles. Winter depots have been stocked with 12,500 tonnes of salt, which allows OCC to undertake 50 gritting runs of the entire network (at 240 tonnes per run). Since the last major 'snow event', OCC has increased the starting stock of salt by a third and has also restocked the county's 1300 salt bins. Free bulk bags of salt have been offered to all town and parish councils. The take-up so far this year has been minimal, with only 52 requested, as stocks have been retained from previous years. The daily update on whether roads will be gritted is posted on the winter pages of the OCC's web site <http://winter.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/>

BERINSFIELD LIBRARY

Visit your Local Library
and see what we have on offer

Books



Coffee Morning
3rd Tuesday
10.30-12.00am
All Welcome

Free use of the computers

Half Term Craft Afternoon

Wednesday 17th February 3.45pm
Children to be accompanied by an adult please

Rhymetimes for Under 5's
Wednesday 10.30am

Junior
Reading
Group

Knit and Natter
3rd Tuesday
2.30pm

One to One Computer
lessons for over 50s
Friday mornings

Storytime
Wednesday
3.45pm

Book and a Bun
Reading Group
2nd Thursday of the
month 2.00pm



Here to help



join in ● explore ● discover ● log on

THE THAMES CONSORT AT DORCHESTER ABBEY

On Sunday 31st January 2016 at 7-00pm The Thames Consort will be giving a concert in aid of The Friends of Dorchester Abbey. The programme will include vocal and instrumental music by Purcell, Hassler, Buxtehude, Vivaldi and Mozart. Some of the music will have a slightly seasonal flavour! The singers of The Thames Consort are joined by Sharon Warnes and Claire Parkin (Violins) and Judith Dallosso ('Cello), directed by Jeremy Boughton.

Do come and uplift your spirits on a winter evening and hear some beautiful music performed in the splendid surroundings of the Abbey

Entry free! There will be a collection at the end of the concert and all proceeds (after expenses) to go to the Friends of Dorchester Abbey.



Wednesday 3rd February 2016
7.30pm
Marsh Baldon Village Hall

Come and meet with the powerful presence of God at our monthly celebration of the Christian faith The talk will be given by a Nigerian pastor, Hassan John, who has been working in his country to bring Muslims and Christians together in friendship despite the sectarian killings devastating their communities. Refreshments at 7.30, our celebration starts at 7.50pm.

Contact: Liam 07738 004176

LENT GROUP: SUNDAY EVENINGS AT 8.00PM

Beginning on Sunday 14th February for six weeks, we will be using the Church of England's Pilgrim course to look at how Jesus' teaching in the Beatitudes shapes the Christian life for us today. The first meeting on 14th February will be hosted by Sara McDouall Saw at 20 Toot Baldon. For other information please contact Jennifer Morton Tel. 343302, email: jennifer@morton8.co.uk

SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2016

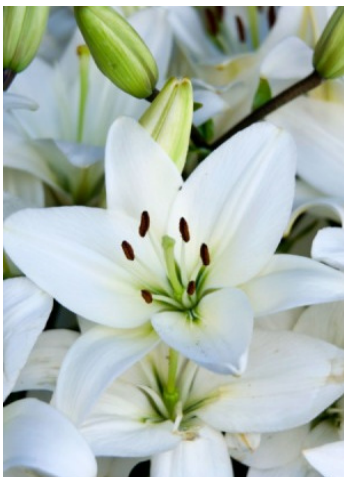
31 st January	10.30am	Team Service	Warborough
7 th February	9.30am	Holy Communion	Toot Baldon
10 th February	9.30am	Holy Communion	Berinsfield
Ash Wednesday		<i>with imposition of ashes</i>	
	7.30pm	Holy Communion	Warborough
		<i>with imposition of ashes</i>	
14 th February	6.00pm	Evening Prayer	Toot Baldon
21 st February	9.30am	Holy Communion	Marsh Baldon
28 th February	8.30am	Said Communion	Marsh Baldon
	9.30am	Family Worship	Marsh Baldon
Friday	tbc	Women's World Day	Berinsfield
4 th March		of Prayer	
6 th March	9.30am	Family Communion	Toot Baldon
		<i>for Mothering Sunday</i>	

SIDESDUTY

	Marsh	Toot
7 th Feb		9.30am Ann Druce
14 th Feb		6.00pm Ian Gillespie
21 st Feb	9.30am Stephen Dance	
28 th Feb	9.30am John Mason	
6 th March		9.30am Jenny van Dijk

FLOWERS

	Marsh	Toot
7 th Feb	P & J Slaney	V Bowler
Lent	NO FLOWERS	



EASTER LILIES

If you would like to buy a lily in memory of someone, please let us know.

£3.00 a stem.

Debbie Dance 341323

d.dance@oxfordpreservation.org.uk