

FROM REVD PAUL CAWTHORNE

The nights are drawing in and Advent is coming close. Every year there is a wistfulness as the hour changes and there is less light for gardening or relaxing outdoors after the rigours of the day. Each day brings a little more constriction and chill. Bonfire night spears through the growing power of darkness with its rugged warmth and kaleidoscope of skylights (especially on our own local green). The heating gets turned up and indoor fires get lit earlier in the day as we try to ward off the oncoming cold. If we are fortunate, we can enjoy the cosiness of the hearth and the sense of shutting out the dark and the chill. If less fortunate, the season becomes one of making preparation for the bleakness of winter ahead.

Winter asks questions of us moderns in perhaps different ways from that agrarian lifestyle when the success of the harvest was a measure of how much comfort one could expect from the coming cold. It asks questions of how we face into the darkness, of what defiance means and what acceptance means, of how open we are to the changing seasons of life, of how prepared our stores are, and of how we retain hope that the future joys of spring are a horizon we can trust.

As the weeks of December that constitute Advent arrive, questions are asked of how much we realise our other needs too. How much we acknowledge our fragile human nature is in need of divine light and warmth, how open we are to the divine presence coming to share our messy world. It asks questions of how fully we really understand that world and what we should do with our hard-won unknowing. If we are fortunate we can resight the childlike side of life with a second naivete, we can bring back to our hearts the joys of gift-giving and excitement, the sharing and playing. If less fortunate our minds can get stuck on the hype and the commercialisation, the loss of normal balance and the desire for it to just be over. We are all one under heaven and most of us are a mix of these disparate elements of temperament and experience, of security and worries, of fear and hope. We are all one and we become more one as we wait in expectation.

So as our Advent unfolds, the innocence of nativity plays can bring us back into the primeval garden, the hurried shopping seems a metaphor for a distracted world, the planning for the big day takes on an almost Biblical significance, the relaxation of the following 'days of Christmas' bring a sense of relief and precious fellowship. The story of Scrooge's redemption in A Christmas Carol shows us a depth of life we can recognise and hopefully laugh with. The story of redemption in the arrival of a special baby in a dark world seems to laugh at the limitations of our adult preconceptions, to challenge us to open up to life's deepest mysteries.

It came upon a midnight clear that glorious song of old.....O hush the noise of mortal strife and hear the angels sing.

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

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

BALDONS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Planning applications

Durham Leys Farm P17/S3500/FUL: An application for a 2 bedroomed house to replace a hay barn in the farm yard has been supported with a recommendation to SODC for conditions to be applied.

New Farm House P17/S2706/FUL: An application for replacement of a single storey extension with a 2 storey one and conversion of garage to a single dwelling. The council has expressed some concerns to SODC.

Masonic Centre Baldon Lane: The council has been consulted on the club and licensing application for the premises which appear to be open from the end of the year. Although having no objections to the main hours applied for the council has recommended a reduction in the hours applied for New Year and Burns Night events.

Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

Since the last newsletter more villages have joined the campaign pressing to influence the recommendations on the future expressway route options.

The Oxfordshire EAG(Expressway Action Group) consists of over 23 villages from across Oxfordshire representing over 25,000 people and more are joining every day. The Group is trying to find out more about the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway and the proposed routes to encourage proper public consultation before any decision is made. They are calling for a full public inquiry into this proposed new motorway route and development corridor for 100,000 houses because they believe that ten miles of Oxfordshire's green belt, unspoilt countryside and irreplaceable wildlife havens are at risk of being concreted over without any proper public consultation or a democratic mandate.

It is an important issue and we hope villagers and friends will want to keep up to date . The Parish Council will continue to put information in the newsletter but the action group have launched a Facebook page which you may want to follow. See: fb.me/expresswayactiongroup or https://www.facebook.com/expresswayactiongroup/

The National Infrastructure Commission have very recently published their report and whilst it makes a number of important recommendations to government there hasn't yet been time for us to fully digest the contents. However it does urge the government to invest in further work by the Highways Agency on the route options for the Expressway.

Neighbourhood Plan

Following consideration of the comments received in the recent consultation it is intended that the final version of the neighbourhood plan will be submitted to SODC in early December.

Bonfire

The Bonfire evening was again hugely successful with a longer and better fire work display and great food and a bar. Thanks to all those who put the effort in before and during the night. And we mustn't forget that it raises money for the village. However both the council and members of the Baldons Events Committee who organise the bonfire are aware that there were problems this year in the dumping and control of material for the fire. Robin Timms, a member of BEC, attended a Parish Council meeting and we had a useful preliminary discussion on ways to improve the situation next year. We intend to continue this dialogue in the coming months.

Blenheim Corner

There is a small area of village green at the eastern end and in the top right hand corner which has become very overgrown and inaccessible and the council is engaging a contactor to undertake some clearance and open it up a bit.

Road closure

The council is aware of the frustration the recent road closure has caused. The work was to install fibre optic cables. We made great efforts to get information ahead from the contractors about the extent, timetable and the programme of work to minimise the inconvenience. But the information given and subsequent arrangement on site by the contactors did vary and was out of our hands.

SODC Lottery

In the spring next year SODC planning to start a lottery which it is hoped will provide funds for local Charities as well as winnings for players. The Lottery will be played on line. More information will be available nearer the time.

Date of Next meeting Monday 8th January, 7.30pm Village Hall

POPPY APPEAL 2017

Thank you to everyone who gave so generously to this year's Poppy Appeal. The total raised was £942.16, a wonderful amount for a small community. My thanks also to those who helped with the selling of the poppies, without your help we would not have achieved the amount which was raised.

Sadly it is with my deepest regret that if I cannot get more help for next year that 2018 will be my last year to organise this very important event. I have sold poppies in the village for 50 years, now age is catching up with me.

If anyone feels they could take on this important fundraising for once only in each year please do contact me on 343318.

Thank you

Iris Wright

NUNEHAM COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Nuneham Courtenay Parish Council meeting took place on 7th November, which was a wild, wet & windy evening. Understandably no members of the public were prepared to brave the elements to join Madhvi Saini, John Peters, Mandy Rigault, Sue Lawson & Lorraine Lindsay-Gale in the Village Hall.

However, they missed a professional & illuminating presentation by Chelsie Bickford, Simon Olliffe & Lucy Anderson from SSE on how to get extra support during power cuts. A Register for Priority Services is readily available for people who might consider themselves at risk, because of their young children; through illness, disability or age, in an emergency. Members of the public are encouraged to register for extra advice & services, free of charge. It was stressed that the completed information is not shared with other agencies.

Call FREE: 0800 294 3259 or textphone: 0800 316 5457. Find our more at ssen.co.uk/priorityservices

The village issues with the Low Voltage Network was also addressed by SSE, explaining how the system was being upgraded to overcome recent faults & how extra protection devices were being fitted to help prevent any recurrences. The tree cutting programme was also discussed in the expectation of preventing further problems with the overhead network.

Nuneham Courtenay Sports & Playing Fields Association [SPFA] advised that the Lease to the Playing Fields is still with a local solicitor but it is hoped that this will be made available soon. The Council needs to agree to take over the lease, & legal responsibility, at an annual peppercorn rent &, after adoption, fund raising can begin in earnest, with the support of the whole community.

Matters arising. Council to meet SODC Conservation Officer to explain & preserve the uniqueness of the village. Councillor Sue Lawson will follow this up to re-establish a standard. Street lighting is an important element in establishing a zebra crossing. Questionnaire needed. District & County Councillor's reports were discussed with much time devoted to the exciting Culham Science Village development & any possible impact of extra traffic through Nuneham Courtenay. All villagers are advised to read the development plans & make their views known.

Any other business. Clerk to obtain 3 quotes for a <u>defibrillator</u> to be sited outside Village Hall.

Councillor Lindsay-Gale enjoyed the meeting & asked to be copied into future agendas. Stewart Deakin is moving outside Oxfordshire so has offered his resignation as Parish Clerk. Anyone interested in this remunerated role should contact Madhvi Saini directly for details.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 9 January 2018 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE

Apply Online For Primary School Places

Applications for children due to start primary school in September 2018 can now be made online. Families with children born between 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014 are urged to visit the primary school admissions pages on the county council's website to find out how to apply for places for next year. The council still accepts postal applications but recommends families apply online where possible, as this helps speed up the applications process. It also means families receive an automatic response confirming their application has been received and can be quickly notified if further information is needed. Those who apply online will also receive an email on allocation day, 16 April 2018, informing them of the outcome of their application. Postal application forms are available from all Oxfordshire schools and from reception at County Hall in Oxford.

Help Someone Get Online – Be A Digital Helper At Your Local Library

Oxfordshire County Council recently launched a campaign to recruit 'digital helpers' in libraries to boost the confidence and skills of those who need extra help to get online. Volunteers able to give up just a few hours a week are being sought at branches across the county to provide one-to-one support for people with little or no experience of using computers or the internet. The aim of the campaign is to help people:

- access services online including council services
- access employment or training opportunities
- become more independent
- reduce isolation

To find out more or to sign up as a Digital Helper visit: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/digitalhelper

WINE, MINCE PIES AND QUIZ

At the December meeting of the Wallingford Gardening Club, our members will test their gardening know-how with a short quiz.



Following a very brief Annual General Meeting, they will all enjoy wine and mince pies!

This event will be held in the Ridgeway Community Centre, Wallingford at 7.30pm on Thursday 14th December.

Visitors very welcome £3.

Isabelle Darby

CHRISTMAS WISHES FROM JOHN HOWELL MP

As this newsletter will appear in December magazines I would like to take this opportunity to wish all constituents a peaceful Christmas and to send my best wishes for the year ahead.

We draw to the close of what, for many, is another unsettling year with change and uncertainty. I am always pleased to correspond with constituents on issues of concern. Sharing views can help people understand different perspectives. During the course of the year I have had some very interesting and informative exchanges with people. It is good to learn and understand, even when we do not agree. Sadly at times there is less graciousness in disagreement and I hope that in this season of goodwill there may be opportunity to greater understanding across our communities.

Many people in our communities work hard to make them special for the rest of us. I know that at times this can be a thankless task. May I take this opportunity to say a special thank you to all those who work hard on behalf of the rest of us in their voluntary work. It is always a pleasure when I get the opportunity to visit community activities and I look forward to learning yet more about what is being done in 2018.

With the many and varied means of communication available to us and the mass of information shared it can be difficult to get clarity on specific issues and this itself can be a cause of anxiety. Indeed at times situation develop so quickly that it can be difficult to keep up with things. The media will choose their key stories and report them as they will but there is always so much more going on than flashes past us each day. Perhaps the speed and volume of information coupled with the lack of time and opportunity to share views in any depth encourage the often argumentative and insensitive nature of social media.

For my part, as well as personal communications, I share what I am doing and my thoughts in specific issues on my website www.johnhowellmp.com. I also produce a periodic electronic newsletter and briefings on specific issues as well as writing in these parish magazines. If you would like to subscribe to these please email me at john.howell@oxfordshireconservatives.com You can also follow me on Facebook www.facebook.com/JohnHowellOxfordshire or on twitter @JHowellUK For those who are interested in the aspects of the detailed work of Parliament this can be followed on the Parliament website where there is a specific section dedicated to what is going on in the House. http://www.parliament.uk/business/

I look forward to continued correspondence on the wide range of issues that are of concern across the constituency in the New Year.



THE BALDONS FUEL CHARITY (but not just fuel)

For the past 50 years, the Baldons Fuel Charity has been helping some residents living in Marsh, Toot or Little Baldon with their energy costs. Financial support has also been given towards personal alarm systems for the elderly, training expenses, costs of education such as uniforms or school transport or in any other situation when financial help might make life a bit easier.

The Charity has an annual income of about £15,000.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, or know anyone in the villages who is, please let us know. Either talk to one of us or obtain an application form for a grant from the Clerk, Mrs Barbara Wright (343276) or any of the Trustees. All applications are dealt with in the strictest confidence by the Trustees.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU NEED HELP THAT IS WHAT THE CHARITY IS FOR!

Trustees:

Chris Nichols (Chair) - 343388 John Wright - 343276 Ray Claridge - 343393 David Greenaway - 343496 Graham Hobbins - 343227 Alison Porter - 340405

Help with energy costs may also be available from the National Energy Foundation www.nef.org.uk



Seven Stars Switch-On



Forget Oxford Street, join us for some real sparkle when we switch on the Baldons Christmas tree lights at the Seven Stars, at 7pm, Friday December 8th.

Villagers from the Baldons and surrounding communities are all welcome at this informal festive get-together, where you can meet old friends or make new ones.

Delicious mulled wine and mince pies will be served and the pub committee will be on hand to answer any questions about becoming a shareholder.

Bring a Christmas decoration to hang on the tree if you like.

See www.sevenstarsonthegreen.co.uk for more info on this and other pub events or contact Matt and his team at the Stars via info@sevenstarsonthegreen.co.uk.

For information on becoming a BNCS shareholder see www.bncsltd.com or e-mail info@bncsltd.com.

I am a currently working as an au pair in Marsh Baldon. I will be returning to my native France next July to pursue a degree in children's education but while in the UK, I would like to get as much experience as possible

I am currently free most days between 10am and 2pm and after 7.30pm.

I am very practical and available for running errands or helping out with children and babysitting. I am very good at inventing and playing games, creating artwork, cooking French specialities, and can help out with French homework too.

If this advert is of interest to you, please email astridpechdelaclause@yahoo.fr for more information.

ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER Items for the February 2018 newsletter

by 16th January 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: sheilaharris778@yahoo.co.uk or on 340403.

SARAH WELLS Cordon Bleu Cooking

A First Class Service For All Occasions

Weddings, Anniversaries, Christenings, Funerals Birthdays, Drinks & Dinner Parties, Corporate Events.

Enquiries welcome - call Sarah on 07721 609600 or 01865 407538 email: sarah@cordonbleucooking.co.uk www.cordonbleucooking.co.uk

Established over 25 Years







Wednesday 13th December 7.00 for 7.30pm

> at The Seven Stars pub Marsh Baldon

At the Filling Station we come together with friends to engage with the Christian faith in an informal contemporary context with worship, a talk and prayer.

Come and join us for a Christmas celebration at the Seven Stars. If you'd like to join us for the meal, you need to reserve a place, choose your dishes from the menu and pay in advance (£20.95/£25.95 per person, for two/three courses). You can see the menu at http://www.sevenstarsonthegreen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Christmas-Menu-2017.pdf
Alternatively, just pop in for a drink.

RSVP by 30th November (or asap thereafter) to: Tom Hunnings: info@penntreeservices.co.uk or Catherine Mason: catherinevmason@gmail.com or Liam McCormick: liamandchris1@me.com

.....

Wednesday 10th January 2018 7.30pm in Marsh Baldon village hall

We kick off the New Year with our January meeting of the South Oxon Filling Station back in Marsh Baldon village hall. Our speaker will be David Bunn, with a talk entitled 'Listening to God'. He will be addressing how and why busy professionals in today's high-pressure world should even attempt to find time or space for meditative practices, with some practical application of how to halt the mind's constant tirade for a very few moments and listen to God

If you are interested you can find out more at http://thefillingstation.org.uk.





BERINSFIELD LIBRARY

Visit your Local Library and see what we have on offer Christmas craft Afternoon Wednesday December 20th 3.45pm

Rhymes for the Under 5's Wednesdays 10.30am

Storytime Wednesdays 3.45pm

I.T Help Thursdays 2.00pm

Knit and Natter 5th December 2.30pm & 2nd January

Reading Group 14th December 2.00pm 11th January

Coffee Morning 19th December 10.30am 16th January All Welcome





Ben Smith

Carpentry & Building

07803533163 01865 361171 07884103142

Enquiries@bscarpentry.co.uk

Carpentry, Joinery & Building Contractors

Suppliers & Installers of Windows, Doors & Conservatories

Purpose Made Joinery Products Kitchen Furniture

We undertake all building works, Including the design through to local authority approval if required.



References Available Upon Request





VAT REG NO: 212 6529 30





EVENTS IN DORCHESTER ABBEY

Thurs 7th Dec 8.00pm HFT Concert The Coming of Christmas

Learning disability charity, Hft, invites you to join them on 7 December for this much-loved festive event. As usual, the beautiful Abbey will be bathed in the glow of over 1,000 tealights as we enjoy music performed by the acclaimed Choir of New College Oxford, conducted by Paul Brough, and some wonderful readings from renowned actors Juliet Stevenson CBE and Michael Pennington*. Tickets can be booked online at https://comingofchristmas17.eventbrite.co.uk or by phone on 0117 906 1767, and include a souvenir programme, mulled wine and mince pies. All proceeds from the event will go towards supporting Hft's two services in Oxfordshire, helping to provide ongoing support for people with learning disabilities in the local area. *work commitments permitting.

Sat 9th Dec 7.30pm OSJ Concert

Handel's Messiah in its original scoring Tickets available from www.osj.org.uk £12 - £24

Sun 10th Dec PACT Carol Concert

Back by popular demand, PACT's annual carol concert is being held once again at Dorchester Abbey on Sunday 10th December.

Light refreshments will be served from 4pm-5pm with some fun activities for children. This will be followed by the carol concert at 5pm-6:30pm with performances from the Abbey Choir, Benson Military Wives Choir and professional soprano Erin Hughes, as well as lots of opportunities for the congregation to join in for classic Christmas carols.

The carol concert is free to attend but there will be a retiring collection to raise funds for PACT's award-winning therapeutic support services for adopted children. Tickets are free but must be booked in advance via PACT's website: www.pactcharity.org/carols

Wed 13th Dec 7.30pm OSJ Concert

Christmas Carols Plus with The Ex Swingle Singers, conducted by John Lubbock and Guest appearance by the Shillingford & Warborough community choir, conducted by Christine Cairns. Tickets available from www.osj.org.uk £8 - £16

Fri 15th 7pm Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse Celebratory Concert A concert celebrating the achievements of local domestic abuse services. Tickets £5 - £12.50 available from: www.list.co.uk/event/862571-reducing-the-risk-celebratory-concert/ or 01865 305305. www.reducingtherisk.org.uk

Sun 31st Dec 7.00pm OSJ Concert

Wonderful waltzes and polkas mostly by Johann Strauss Junior. Plus well-known tunes from Strauss and Lehar. Tickets available from www.osj.org.uk £8 - £12

Until 6th January 2018 Realms of Glory: A Celebration of Angels Exhibition in the Abbey Open daily 9.00am to 4.30pm (excluding services)

Sat 6th Jan – ANGELOS – an event to celebrate the end of the Realms of Glory Exhibition and to remember Rebecca Slingsby, Church Warden Teacher Friend

Enjoy the atmosphere of the Abbey, enjoy good conversation, a drink and take a last chance to savour the Angels exhibition. The Abbey will be fully candlelit for this evening, and the time will be interspersed with performances from the Dorchester Abbey Choir, Holly Papaphilippopoulos (Slingsby) and Brian Catling, Meditations on Rebecca's Nativity scene led by Canon Sue Booys and others and an interactive Art installation in which everyone is invited to participate......

Sun 7th Jan – 10.30am Morning Service

Our speakers will be Val Jourdan and Alison Driscoll from ABCD (Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability), who have a long connection with the Abbey. They will tell us about the charity, and explore the true meaning of "The 12 days of Christmas".

BALDONS CHURCH FLOWERS

Marsh Baldon

ADVENT NO FLOWERS

St. Peter's will be decorated for Christmas on Saturday, 16th December Contributions of Holly and help decorating would be greatly appreciated Contact Veronica on 01865 340562 or by email vsandilands@btinternet.com

7th & 14th January A Lyall 21st & 28th January F Ardern 4th & 11th February V Sandilands

Toot Baldon

ADVENT NO FLOWERS

Please contact Jane Brook on 01865 343457 for details of Christmas flowers

for St Lawrence's

7th & 14th January H Maskell & J Knight

21st & 28th January M Trinder 4th & 11th February V Bowler

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2017 AND JANUARY 2018

3 rd December Advent Sunday	9.30am	Holy Communion	Toot Baldon
	6.00pm	Team Advent Service	Dorchester Abbey
10 th December Please note time	3.00pm	Christingle	Toot Baldon
17 th December Please note time	5.00pm	Carol Service	Marsh Baldon
Friday 22 December	5.00pm	Christmas Celebration with stories and pizza	Marsh Baldon
Christmas Eve	11.30pm	Midnight Communion	Toot Baldon
Christmas Day Please note time	10.30am	Family Communion	Marsh Baldon
31 st December	10.30am	Team Service	Warborough
7 th January	9.30am	Holy Communion	Toot Baldon
14 th January Please note time	5.00pm	Evening Worship	Toot Baldon
21st January	9.30am	Holy Communion	Marsh Baldon
28 th January	8.30am	Said Holy Communion	Marsh Baldon
	9.30am	Family Worship	Marsh Baldon
4 th February	9.30am	Holy Communion	Toot Baldon

SIDESDUTY

3 rd December 10 th December 17 th December 24 th December 25 th December	Marsh 5.00pm John Mason 10.30am Stephen Dance	Toot 9.30am Sonia Hobbins 3.00pm Natasha Eliot 11.30pm Ian Gillespie
7 th January 14 th January 21 st January 28 th January	9.30am Graham Hobbins 9.30am Liam McCormick	9.30am J & H Maskell 5.00pm Jenny van Dijk

FLOWERS - SEE INSIDE