

The Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay Newsletter



March 2021

FROM REVEREND TERESA STEWART-SYKES

One of the great things about having a dog is that you have to go out for a walk every day; and every day you get to meet interesting people, who often stop and talk to you because you have a dog!

This morning I met John, also out for an early morning walk at Toot Church. We had a lovely conversation about the spirituality of being out in nature and John reminded me that people of all faiths, and none, find solace and wonder in the world's natural beauty. That's why we all love David Attenborough's programmes on TV!

I have also been reminded recently, when working with the wonderful BIVC (Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre) and the Abbeywoods Academy to find support for a family in need, that people can be such a joy to us too.

The Rev Sorrel has also been reflecting on the hope and solace we find in nature and in the people around us and she encourages us to find something each day, however small, that brings us joy. This is what she has written:

Every day at the moment, my husband and I walk our little dog and I notice the snowdrops and the crocuses emerging from the very soggy soil. Some days, illuminated by gentle winter sunlight but more often than not, they seem to be drowned in an awful lot of rain!

As we begin to see hints of Spring, I am aware that the people in our communities are all in different places, both practically and emotionally. Some people's lives are full of juggling working from home and home schooling, others are feeling very lonely. Some have had the vaccine; some remain very anxious about the virus. However, one feeling that seems to keep coming back is "when is all this going to end?"

I wish I knew the answer to that. I feel cautiously hopeful that we are beginning to see the signs, not just of springtime but of the possibility of slowly emerging from this horrific pandemic. Right now, though, I am trying to find tiny joys every day!

Tiny joys such as when a friend sends me an elaborate and messy painting created by her toddler, when I hear that my grandfather has received his first vaccine, or when I see that the Six Nations Rugby is soon going to be on TV!

I hope that you are also able to find tiny joys each day, even if some days they are very small!

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

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

CREATION MATTERS – AN ONLINE COURSE FOR THE DORCHESTER TEAM FOR LENT

Does Creation Matter? Yes, it really does.

As Christians we celebrate God's creation yet we also know that our beautiful planet, held together by love is dangerously close to being irretrievably damaged by human sin and greed. And this isn't just a global matter, it is local too. It's about what we do and don't do, how we live and what we will pass on to our children and grandchildren.

That's why our Team Lent Course this year will be looking at some of these things. We are going to offer 5 sessions on Thursday evenings, beginning on 25th February, using the magic of Zoom. There will be a chance to see and respond to a series of short videos prepared by Bishop Olivia, and to hear and respond to special input from people in and around the team.

We will be thinking about the Christian understanding of creation, some of the economic and global challenges we face, the way other faiths are responding to the realities of the climate emergency and ask how we can make a difference, here and now. Each session will begin with a short act of worship and there will be time for conversations in smaller groups too.

If you would like to know more, or to sign up, please contact The Revd Paul Wignall (bridgegroupvicar@gmail.com) or speak to any of the clergy. We hope lots of people from all the parishes of the Dorchester Team will be able to join in, because...**Creation Matters!**

GOOD FRIDAY CONCERTS IN DORCHESTER ABBEY

Friday 2nd April 6pm and 8pm

OSJ Good Friday concert Easter motets, Bach cello suite and Durufle requiem with organ and cello.

With Garwyn Linnell (cello) and OSJ Ashmolean Voices and Orchestra of St John's.

Tickets £5-£15 from www.osj.org.uk PREBOOKING ESSENTIAL

This month's cover photo is of the snow family created by the Singletons, taken by Jacquie Lake...for more snow creations, see pages 6-7.

BALDONS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Planning applications

6 The Green: P21/S 2027/HH & P21/S2028/LB

An application for the replacement of the existing garages with a single garage plus office, utility room, storage space and studio/ gym. The parish council has objected to the application as being too large and of inappropriate design for the location, and not compliant with the Baldons Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Flooding

Again, this winter we have been deluged with rain and fields and footpaths are awash with flooded areas and very muddy. There is also an increasing problem of floodwater on roads due to overflowing ditches and blocked culverts and gullies which have created conditions that could be dangerous to cars and pedestrians in freezing weather.

With global warming this is going to be an increasing problem for us and as a village we must start to look at ways we can help to mitigate problems. The Highways department are principally responsible for dealing with flooding on roads by clearing drains and gullies and under road culverts but due to resource constraints are not doing so as regularly as they used to.

However, most of the road flooding problems stem from the lack of maintenance and clearance of ditches by landowners and tenants. Landowners tenants and householders who have a ditch on or outside their land have a Riparian responsibility to ensure that water flows freely down the watercourses. Some ditches are cleared irregularly others have become very overgrown and almost disappeared or become blocked by fly tipping.

The Parish Council is doing what it can to encourage landowners etc. to do more and cooperate where necessary to resolve problems. We have pressed the Highways department to resolve the problems in Toot Baldon where blocked drains and a culvert under the road are the problem.

But we also need help from villagers

If you have a ditch however small outside your property, please keep it clear and work with your neighbours to ensure the water flows.

The parish council only maintains ditches across the main body of the village green. If there are drains near your property you can help by keeping the top of the drain cover free of leaves and grass mowings which are often the cause of blockages in the pipes. If there is fly tipping in ditches it needs reporting to SODC / Biffa for clearing.

Bioabundance

Villagers will have seen and read the document from a new voluntary community interest company and campaigning group, Bioabundance which was circulated in

January via the village email. They are seeking contributions to its campaign to challenge the SODC Local Plan in the courts and to promote greater protection for the countryside and environment from excessive and inappropriate development. There has recently been more publicity in the local media of the work of the group and information about the group can be seen on their website www.bioabundance.org

The Parish Council will be discussing its support or otherwise for the work of this organization at the March meeting. If you have already indicated your support for the group directly please let your local councillors know as it will help to inform our discussion.

Annual Parishes meeting: Monday 19th April 2021 7.30pm

The Annual parishes meeting of the parishes of Marsh Baldon and Toot Baldon in April last year was cancelled due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

This year the Parish Council will be holding it on April 19th most likely by Zoom unless restrictions are eased to allow a meeting in the village hall. As usual this is your meeting to raise issues with the council and if you wish to raise something in advance please inform our clerk Tom James, **no later than 12th April.**

The council also as usual is required to present its annual report and accounts at the meeting. More information and the agenda etc. will be circulated by village email.

Date of next Parish Council meeting is May 10th: more information in the April newsletter.

ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Items for the April 2021 newsletter
by 16th March 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

SNOWDAY IN THE BALDONS (24 JANUARY 2021)





BALDONS CRICKET CLUB WINTER UPDATE

On the other side of our spinning rock, England (and Wales) Cricket toil away in the energy-sapping Indian heat against the best team in the world. Nearby, a Pakistan team visibly lifts a whole nation with home Test cricket that its people have missed beyond words. In Bangladesh, a West-Indian debutant defies all the odds in conditions as foreign as a crisp pint in the pub now seems. Meanwhile, even as the frost settles into the hallowed 22 yards enshrined on the glorious Marsh Baldon Green, the BCC committee emerges from their Covid-cocoons taking on a now familiar foe: Zoom, Inc.

First of all, there were some overdue plaudits to Cosmo Taylor, captain extraordinaire, for his incredible efforts in leading the club through a successful 2020. This of course immediately followed by all the ways in which the committee he himself has formed, intends to utterly outdo said efforts in 2021.

Joking aside, it truly was great to see the fantastic turnout we had across the villages, both in terms of players and spectators, enjoying the sunshine and the sport. This year, we would love to take this even further and invite anyone of any age to get involved in some way: players, umpires, scorers, supporters, friends. Everyone is welcome and we hope that the cricket can add a centrepiece event to really bring the community together - something we can all appreciate in these times.

With this mind, the committee has begun work on the following projects:

- continued work on the square
- emergency repairs to the Pavilion
- application for grants
- setting up membership scheme to assist in funding
- planning of socials and BBQs throughout the spring and summer

In addition, the committee is looking to open a partnership with the village school opening up more opportunities to members of any age and hopefully enable shared access to essential facilities.

Perhaps most excitingly of all, BCC are looking into the purchase of a cricket net. We will share more information when it becomes available but the intention is to facilitate practice nets for all members of the club. This is a wonderful opportunity to improve skills away from the match environment and to offer a taste of the sport to anyone who might be interested.

All in all, a meeting of immense enthusiasm for what looks to be a busy 2021 BCC schedule filled with fixtures and social gatherings. A positivity perhaps only marginally dampened by the 1000th utterance of "oh, you're on mute by the way".

baldonscc@gmail.com

NUNEHAM COURTENAY VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Village Library

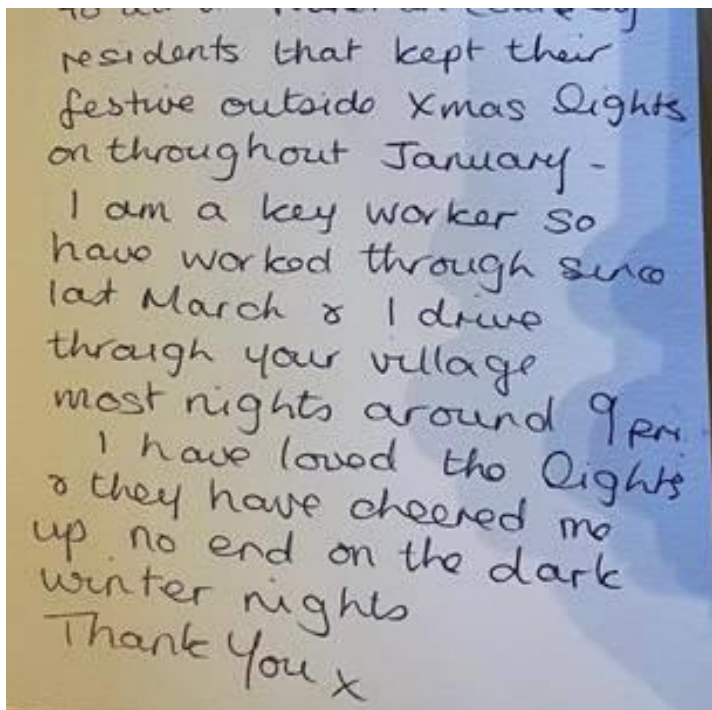
Hopefully by the time the newsletter goes out the library cupboard will be in place, probably on the side of the village hall. Please use the hand sanitizer before and after visiting the library. Currently all the books have been donated and I have quarantined them before placing them in the library. Could returned books be placed on the bottom shelf please. If the library proves popular, I will put an honesty box inside for donations so we can buy a weatherproof cabinet and some new books.

Parking

At this time the village hall remains closed, in line with government guidelines. However, as the weather improves Brian will continue the work he is doing to repair and improve our hall. Please don't interfere with this by parking behind the hall without contacting a member of the committee first.

Easter decorations

You may have noticed that the "Christmas Lights" have returned or continued at many of the houses in the Village. A lovely note was left at Fallow and Fields for the village. I have copied it below.



Some people have decided to turn their lights on until the lockdown ends. As many people have given up a lot this year some of us thought it would be nice to have a positive outlook for the Lenten season, to give up negativity and look forward to a positive future. To this end, we are organising Easter decorations along the lines of our VE celebration and Christmas advent windows. You are welcome to join in any way that suits you, from window decorations, decorating rocks, floral displays, wreaths, etc. If you need any help or guidance feel free to get in touch.

Yoga

Yoga continues weekly on Mondays via Skype. As there are no costs when we meet this way, it is free. Do let me know if you want added to the group. You can contact me at 01865 343459 or jenny@datadaysolutions.com

FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE

Winter Support Grants available to help people hit financially by pandemic

Oxfordshire County Council, in partnership with the county's district councils and Citizens Advice services, is **offering support to vulnerable residents** through a Winter Support Grant. Oxfordshire was awarded £400,000 by the government in December to fund the cost of **food, electricity, heating** and other essential items, and the financial help is available for households to claim by **31 March, 2021**.

Households with children can claim up to £350, while those without children can receive up to £175. The support teams provide the funding through supermarket vouchers, cover costs for pre-payment meters, or make sure that a heating or water bill is paid. If a resident has received a food voucher from a previous scheme, they may also be eligible to have one from the Winter Support Grant.

You can contact me on lorraine.lindsay-gale@oxfordshire.gov.uk or telephone 01865 858976, mobile 07872 592666.



Your voice on health and care services

What do you think about the COVID-19 vaccine?

The county's independent health and care watchdog is running a survey asking people what they think about:

- The vaccine itself
- Information about the vaccine
- How the vaccine is being delivered

Please have your say by completing this survey at www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CovidVaccine-yourviews

Healthwatch Oxfordshire will report what it hears to those in charge of managing the vaccine delivery locally to help identify if improvements are needed. Rosalind Pearce, Executive Director at Healthwatch Oxfordshire, said: **“We really want to hear how people feel about the vaccine, particularly the reasons why people are deciding to have or not have the vaccination. All feedback is completely anonymous - we don't need to know who you are, but we do need to hear your views. Please do take a few minutes to share your thoughts with us on this.”**

To request a paper copy of the survey, or a translated version, please call 01865 520520 or to find out more about Healthwatch Oxfordshire see www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

BERINSFIELD LIBRARY

Revised service during Lockdown

In line with government restrictions, access to Libraries is strictly limited to the following services:

- Pre-booked computer session
- Pre-booked Click & Collect item collection
- Reservation collection
- Return of items on loan

We are closed to all other services apart from those listed above.

To request Click & Collect
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/
libraryclickandcollect](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraryclickandcollect)
or call **01865 897811**

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

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COUNTY COUNCIL



Trees you can plant this winter to help pollinators:-

- Male grey willow (sallow): *Salix cinerea*
- Goat willow: *Salix caprea*
- Small-leaved lime: *Tilia cordata*
- Service trees: *Sorbus torminalis*, *Sorbus domestica*
- Apple: *Malus* (any species), fruit bearing, or ornamental
- Cherry Plum: *Prunus cerasifera*
- Wild Hawthorn: *Crataegus monogyna/laevigata*

Gardening tips

- Leave the dead plant stems over winter. Hollow stems may be used by bees for over wintering.
- Provide flowers throughout the year – some bees emerge as early as February.
- Buy organic to ensure bulbs and plants haven't been treated with neonicotinoids.
- Have a flowering lawn.
- Provide a source of water for bees.
- Leave a patch of bare earth – mason bees gather mud to build egg cells.
- Include a variety flower shapes – different species have different tongue lengths.

<https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/communities/resources/>

ARE YOU FED-UP WITH DOING THE SAME OLD WALKS?

Walking in Oxfordshire www.walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire is the website for you! With hundreds of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

Walking in Oxfordshire is part of the Walking in England suite of websites (www.walkinginengland.co.uk) with one for each county in England. With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

John Harris (john@walkinginengland.co.uk)



Would you like to help protect and improve local footpaths?

Then why not become a Parish Path Warden?

Since 2012 Oxfordshire Area Ramblers, the Oxford Fieldpaths Society and Oxfordshire County Council's Countryside Access Service have been working together to develop a network of volunteer Parish Path Wardens (PPWs) throughout the County.

Neither Nuneham Courtenay nor The Baldons parishes currently have a recognised PPW and we would like to change that – might you be one of the people we're looking for?

There are 4 main aspects to the role.

The main and by far the most important task of a PPW is to walk the paths in their parish twice a year or more, equipped with secateurs to do any trimming away of vegetation that may be overhanging or protruding onto the path, usually at a stile, gate or bridge.

The second task is if, while walking the paths, the PPW spots a serious problem (usually quite rare), for example a bridge where some of the rails are wobbly/dangerous, this is reported as soon as possible to the County Council's Field Officer (with photos if possible)

The third task is to send any new less-serious reports to the County Council using their on-line CAMSweb reporting system (we will provide training in how to do this)

Finally, twice a year the PPW receives information on all the unresolved problems that have been reported in their parish and is asked to update that list to show where a problem has been sorted - for example the farmer may have repaired an unsafe stile – and in that way acting as the 'eyes' of the County Council's Field Officer.

If this is something you feel you might be interested in then please get in touch with either David Tole (the Local Coordinator for this area) davidtole@gmail.com or Jim Parke (the PPW Network Co-ordinator) jmh.parke@btinternet.com .

We will provide comprehensive guidance notes for PPW work as well as large scale maps of the parish which shows all the Public Rights of Way in detail.

PS There's no need to be a member of The Ramblers to take on this role.

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CHURCH SERVICES DURING MARCH

At the time of going to press we are still in lockdown and all church services on a Sunday across the Dorchester Team are suspended.

However!

- ❖ **THE CHURCH BUILDINGS REMAIN OPEN** for individual private prayer everyday
- ❖ **Every Monday at 12pm in St Peter's Church Marsh Baldon** there is a short service of reflection and prayer for the community
- ❖ **There continues be a Team Service online each Sunday** to join with the churches across the Dorchester Team.

See <https://www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/online/>

Our 'route-map' for emerging from the lockdown is that we hope to be able to return to some services in Church in time for Mothering Sunday on 14th March. Please keep an eye out for notices on the Baldons Facebook page and the Village Email where information about services will be posted.

In the meantime if you want to talk to either Rev Teresa or Rev Jennifer please get in touch:

Rev Teresa 07823 809 112 revteresa@outlook.com

Rev Jennifer jennifer@morton8.co.uk



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.

Diocese of Oxford Church at home services are available to dial into too - find out more at www.oxford.anglican.org/livestream