The Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay Newsletter



March 2024

FROM REV TERESA

As I write this I am sitting in my study, wreaking of smoke, having just burned last year's Palm Crosses to make ash for Ash Wednesday. This is one of the jobs that I really enjoy as a vicar, who doesn't like the spectacle of a fire! But preparing the ash for Ash Wednesday at the beginning of Lent, transports my heart to the end of Lent, to the centre of the drama of Easter, the crucible of the Cross and the first fire of Easter on Holy Saturday when the Church celebrates the light and the power of the Resurrection. This story of passion, death and joyful resurrection is the story that every Christian carries in their heart.

Johann Sebastian Bach carried this story in his heart, and he expressed his faith through sublime music that continues to move Christian and non-Christian alike today. This year is the 300th anniversary of the first performance of Bach's St John Passion, his re-telling of the story that defined him as a man and as a musician. A deeply moving musical account of the last days of Jesus. Bach, aged 39, composed this work during his first year as director of church music in Leipzig and it was first performed on 7th April 1724, at Good Friday Vespers at the St. Nicholas Church. It was originally planned to be held at St. Thomas in Leipzig, but due to a last-minute change by the music council, it was to be first performed at St. Nicholas. Bach quickly agreed to the move, on condition that a little additional room be provided in the choir loft of St. Nicholas Church, where he planned to place the musicians needed to perform the music. What must it have been like to sit in a pew and hear this piece for the first time, what a revelation!

300 years after its first performance, Bach's St John Passion remains as powerful and profound as it must have been in 1724. The human drama of the story - Pilate's dilemma, Peter's denial - plus the emotion of the characters makes this a compelling pilgrimage, whatever your belief, not least the majestic acceptance at the end of the piece, 'Es ist vollbracht' - It is accomplished!

If you get a chance to catch a performance of the St John Passion, I hope you will be blessed by the experience and hear anew the wonderful story at the heart of the Christian Faith. But whatever you are doing this Easter, enjoy the change of the season and the promise of new life.

Rev Teresa x

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

Our current curate is The Revd Sorrel Shamel-Wood.

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

EASTER LILIES



As in past years we would like to decorate the churches for Easter with lilies in memory of loved ones who have died. If you would like to buy a lily in memory of someone, please let us know. £5.00 a stem Veronica – 343367 or vsandilands@btinternet.com

If you are able to help with decorating the churches for Easter, please contact Veronica for Marsh (343367) or Jane Brook for Toot (343457).



Lent in the Dorchester Team

Details of all our services and courses can be found at www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk under the services section or a printed copies can be found in either of our churches.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: ST MARY'S LONG WITTENHAM FRIDAY 1 MARCH 3.00PM

Each year on the first Friday in March a worldwide day of Prayer takes place. Formally Women's World Day of Prayer the service is prepared by women of a different country each year.

Appropriately in 2024 the Christian Women of Palestine have prepared the service. Therefore everyone is invited to join us in Long Wittenham to pray with the women of Palestine and hear some of their stories.



Wednesday 13th March 7.30pm

Marsh Baldon Village Hall OX44 9LL

Anybody and everybody is welcome to our Filling Station meeting, where we come together in an informal setting to worship God, and explore and build our Christian faith. Refreshments from 7.30pm. Introduction and worship 7.45pm. Speaker 8.10pm. Close 9.15pm.

"How to eat bread" 21 NOURISHING WAYS TO READ THE BIBLE







led by
Ven Miranda Threfall Holmes
Saturday 2nd March
10am-4pm

for more information & to book contact
Admin Team: 01865 340007
admin@dorchester-abbey.org.uk

DORCHESTER TEAM QUIET DAY

The Dorchester Team are delighted to have been able to book Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes to come and lead a

quiet day for us on Saturday 2nd March.

Miranda has been a parish priest until recently, and is now serving as Archdeacon of Liverpool.



She is a biblical scholar and particularly gifted at inspiring and enabling anyone and everyone in getting into the Bible.

Her most recent book, published by Hodder and Stoughton, is called 'How to Eat Bread – 21 Nourishing Ways to Read the Bible'.

Berinsfield Church presents

Free! Free! EXPERIENCE EASTER All ages welcome Fun and interactive! Easter Egg Treasure hunt

Saturday23rd March 10.30am-12.30pm

NUNEHAM COURTENAY VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Easter Bingo

Bingo will be held a little early this year, to give you a chance to win some Easter treats! So hop along on Friday the 15th March! Doors open at 7pm. Eyes down at 7:30. Everyone welcome, even well behaved dogs.



Yoga

Come along most Mondays at 7:30 (ish) to this small and friendly group. Sessions are £3 pay as you go and all funds go to benefit the village hall

Cleaner needed

The village hall is in need of a cleaner. This is for two hours a month, to take place before the luncheon club. The actual day is flexible though. Do get in contact if you or someone you know is interested.

Book the Hall

The village hall is available to book! Contact nunehamcourtenay.villagehall@gmail.com.

Help wanted!

As I am sure many of you know, Madhvi and Mandy are both stepping down from their roles on the village hall committee. We thank them for their service and wish them well. This of course leaves a gap on the village hall committee. We need a booking clerk. This person would just need to be able to sign into the village hall email address once a week and answer email enquiries as well as flagging up any special requests to the rest of the committee. We can show you how to sign into the email account. We also need more general members. All members do not need to help with every activity of course! The village hall has had quite a few changes recently. But the importance of having a central place like this was brought home first during covid and again when we had the flooding. Perhaps you would like to run an activity to benefit the hall. Come along for a chat at our next meeting and we can plan for the future! Look out on the chat for details of the meeting.

11TH ANNIVERSARY FOR THE BALDON RUNNERS

Our group's running journey started as a short 10 week 'couch to 5k' course, 11 years later the runners are still going strong. The first Baldon Runners session started at 8 am on a sunny but cold Saturday morning in November 2012. The initiative was part of the legacy programme for the 2012 Olympic Games.

Nic Defilion, our captain for many years, had just completed a run leaders course and decided it would be a great idea to form a group of villagers who wanted to start running. The runners' collective have been meeting at the cricket pavilion every Saturday morning since.

Each Saturday morning we run a structured and inclusive session with options available for runners at every level. Over the last 11 years we have had over 70 members, we currently have about 30 active members who range from recreational runners, all the way through to Boston marathon qualifiers, ultramarathon runners and Olympic standard athletes. So if you are a regular runner who wants to add a social run to your weekly training, please get in touch.

At the beginning of 2023, as part of our ongoing commitment to the Olympic legacy programme we held a 12 week 'couch to 5k' course. The course was a great success and everyone who graduated from that course is still running with the group today.

We are planning on running a repeat 'couch to 5k course' at the beginning of 2024, the course will be suitable for anyone who is new to running or wants to get back into running after some time away. Please don't be concerned about pace we will be taking things very slowly. The course will start at 9am on Saturday 9th March and will run until the 25th May. If you would like to take part in the couch to 5k or join the main group please email mark.tidmarsh@outlook.com for more information.



NUNEHAM COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Windfall

Your cash-strapped parish council is suddenly going to have a bit of money to spend – and it's not come straight from your pockets, but from a development at Notcutts Garden Centre. The Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government introduced something called Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where developers have to pay money to the local district council and parish councils get 15% of it.

But Nuneham Courtenay has a conservation area and lots of listed buildings, so there is hardly any development and what little development that happens is usually exempt from CIL, so the parish council has never received a penny of CIL. Until now. Soon the parish council will receive £12,384.65 – that's almost twice the parish council's usual annual income. What can the parish council spend it on? The clue is in the name: Community Infrastructure Levy.

You can't spend CIL money on everyday things like my modest salary. But you can spend it on things like improvements to a Village Hall or a Playing Field. You can spend it on a Vehicle-Activated Sign to encourage drivers to slow down. Things like that. The parish council's first chance to discuss ways of spending the money will be at its next meeting on 5th March. If you have any ideas, come along and put them forward.

Recent flooding

Financial help is now available to some of those affected by the flooding related to Storm Henk in January. There are different schemes involving South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), the County Council and the government. Some help is available to homes, some to businesses and some to farmers. It would take quite a lot of space to explain all the rules, but there's a page on SODC's website that explains it all. If you have the internet, type this into your browser: https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/flooding/flood-financial-support/.

Deep cleanse

It is Nuneham Courtenay's turn again to be visited by a team carrying out a deep cleanse for SODC. The pavements along the main road are about the only bit of the parish that's eligible.

The team will pick up litter, sweep pavements, remove weeds and moss but they don't cut grass or vegetation and they don't spray weeds. They will be in the parish between 20th and 22nd February. So, the pavements should look a bit cleaner when they've finished. You may remember the last time they came was November over a year ago when the pavements were ankle deep in leaves in many places.

Next meetings

The next meeting of the parish council is due to take place on **Tuesday 5th March** at **7pm in the Village Hall**. Among topics that may come up are: should there be a Neighbourhood Watch group in the village in the light of a recent spate of burglaries? Should the parish council try to get a plan drawn up to tackle the risk of a repeat of the January flooding?

Following the recent spate of thefts in Nuneham Courtenay the Parish Council contacted the police are pleased to say that Beverley Kaur, our PCSO is coming to the Village Hall at **7pm on Tuesday 12th March** to talk about security, prevention, self defence and how to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme and answer questions.

Geoffrey Ferres,

Parish Clerk - Nuneham Courtenay Parish Council

Tel: 07419 991623 - Email: clerk@nunehamcourtenay-pc.gov.uk

BALDONS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

At the last Parish Council meeting on 8th January, the final budget for 2024/25 was approved. The Precept charge for the Baldons was discussed at length. The Council is keen to balance the increased cost of living pressures with the need to maintain services in the villages. It was agreed that the Council tax for a Band D house should rise by 6% giving a Precept of £15,180 (£10,120 for Marsh Baldon and £5,060 for Toot Baldon).

Save the date, Spring Litter Pick

Our Village Spring Litter Pick will take place at 10.00am on Saturday 13th April 2024. Please meet at the Mole inn Car Park for Toot Baldon and at the green by the Seven Stars Pub for Marsh Baldon. We will have bags and litter pickers for all.

Planning Matters

The following application has been received.

Reference P24/S0486/HH, for development work at the following location: Hornbeam Cottage Marsh Baldon Oxford. The application is for construction of a dropped curb to create a vehicular access to the site. You can see further details of this application on the SODC website planning section.

Dates of future Parish Council meetings:

Date of Next Meeting	11 March 2024 at 7.30pm
	22 April 2024 – Annual Villages Meeting (tbc)
	13 May 2024 – BPC AGM
	8 July 2024
	9 September 2024
	11 November 2024.







The Gallery and Picture Framing

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The Dovecote

Hello! My name is Karen, and I have opened a small hair studio in the dovecote in Little Baldon Farm.

My hours, prices and online booking is available via my website www.thedovecotehair.studio

or you can contact me direct on 07538993460.

Tuesday Thursday and Friday are long days with late appointments, while Wednesday and Saturday are by prior arrangement and as required.

Hope to see you soon, Kx





WALLINGFORD MUSEUM OPENS ON MARCH 1ST FOR THE 2024 SEASON WITH TWO NEW SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS:-

Mammoths to Modern: the unfolding story of Wallingford's Landscape.

This special exhibition presents the exciting emerging evidence of what lies beneath our feet in the vicinity of Wallingford. The gradual development of the town has given opportunities for archaeology to reveal the fascinating story of the people who have lived here over thousands of years before us.

The exhibits take us on an illustrated timeline from the mammoth bones and stone axes left by earliest settlers some 10,000 years ago, through Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman remains, to the coming of the Saxons who eventually built our present town defences just over 1,100 years ago!

It also traces how the town itself has changed over 11 centuries, with evidence from archaeology, documents and numerous aerial photographs.

So whether you have lived here all your life, have only just moved into the area, or if you are just passing through, you are part of this story and this exhibition is a must for you and your family - with plenty to interest young and old!

Axe-heads to Agatha: a history of metal-casting in Wallingford

Examples of cast metal items can be seen all over Wallingford – from the iron drain covers in our streets, to the cast-iron roof supports of the Corn Exchange, and from the Bronze Age weapons in the museum to the new bronze statue of Agatha Christie in the Kinecroft.

This exhibition traces evidence of local metal-working through the centuries, from coinmaking and medieval blacksmithing, to modern foundries. It features especially a superb collection of photographs of the working Walter Wilder iron foundry in Crowmarsh shortly before it closed in 1992.

Meet the Anglo-Saxons! An event for all the family!

Saturday 13th April 2024 Time 1100-1600 Normal admission charges to the Museum apply.

Please note-This Living History event is FREE as part of the Museum admission.

The Anglo-Saxons are coming to Wallingford Museum.

Come and discover more about the day to day lives of the people who lived their lives within the Anglo-Saxon burh of Wallingford. Weaving to writing, wheels to warfare, how would you manage without electricity, plastic materials or modern transport?

THE WALLINGFORD HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

https://www.twhas.org.uk/meetings-programme.html for the 2024 talks programme. Graham Twemlow: 'Recording Britain - Celebrating the Country's Natural Beauty and Architectural Heritage'

At the outbreak of the WW2 an ambitious scheme was set up to employ artists on the home front. The result was a large collection of watercolours and drawings that make up a fascinating record of British lives and landscapes at a time of imminent change. This talk will highlight the works that featured Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire landscapes and landmarks, recorded by artists such as John Piper, Walter Bayes, Barbara Jones, Stanley Anderson and William Fairclough www.wallingfordmuseum.org.ok

FROM JOHN HOWELL MP

I was interested to read a review of a discussion programme on Times Radio where people were asked what they thought their MPs role was. As you might imagine the issues raised with me week by week are many and varied. Many emails are campaign emails drafted by a particular lobby group for constituents across the county to send to their MP. However a good number of emails are from constituents who have a particular problem that they want to raise. Some of these I can help with others I have to steer elsewhere. Among the issues raised it is not infrequent for people to have concerns around NHS services, which is something that I can sometimes help with. Problems with accessing GPs are not uncommon nor are concerns with accessing NHS dentists.

The Pharmacy First initiative is therefore very welcome. This is an approach to make better use of the skills of pharmacists whereby they can offer treatment for some common health conditions themselves without the need to visit a GP or have a prescription. Pharmacists will be able to treat conditions including sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bite, impetigo, shingles, and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women without the need for patients to see a GP or have a prescription. Following the assessment, the pharmacist can then supply the prescription-only medicines, including antibiotics and antivirals, to treat the problem. I have always felt that pharmacists have been undervalued and under used and so am delighted to see this avenue for treatment opening up. There has been a good take up across the country and I look forward to seeing many pharmacies in the constituency taking advantage of this to the benefit of all.

I know that it has not always been easy to access NHS dental services in the constituency and the NHS Dental Recovery Plan seeks to encourage more dentists to offer treatment on the NHS. As always these things take time to roll out and I look forward to seeing this implemented locally with greater access to dental services available through the NHS.

Another common issue raised with me is the state of our roads. Towards the end of last year the Government announced substantial additional funding for resurfacing roads, with money redirected from the cancelled Phase 2 of HS2. Oxfordshire will get a total indicative additional funding allocation of £82,340,000. This will be spread over a period of time from 2023/24 to 2033/34, and in reality it will take that sort of time to plan for and resource the repairs needed. The money will be passed to local highways authorities to spend and by mid-March we should see a summary of the plans for the next two years. I am sure many people will watch with interest, and I will certainly be looking to see a fair allocation to rural areas where I believe the state of the roads is particularly poor and where public transport is most lacking.

As always I am interested to know the issues that concern constituents. The best way to contact me is via email: john.howell.mp@parliament.uk.

REDISCOVERING NATURE IN THE MODERN WORLD

I've been asked to return these scribblings back to gardening and environmentally leaning book reviews, that readers of this gardening article can maybe look to get hold of, and expand their thinking a bit. Happy to do that, and how about the book by Sue Stuart-Smith called "The Well Gardened Mind: Rediscovering Nature In The Modern World." A Times and Sunday Times Best Book of 2020 and described as: "How can gardening relieve stress and help us look after our mental health? What lies behind the restorative power of the natural world?"

It's an interesting book and I enjoyed much of it! It for me clearly explores how gardening can affect mental health. Well written and focusing on the holistic healing qualities of gardening and nature, the book reflects on the life changing impacts of nurturing a seed, based on the author's research among prisoners, hospital patients and people with long term mental health challenges.

If anyone ever thought any form of gardening was generally a good thing, they should get this book. If you're interested in modern scientific research, brain biology, or trying to regenerate communities, you'll probably find the content interesting. It sends a great message to this generation addicted to screens. This book to some, I can see, may feel like a right slog though, I tell you. It's all about how gardening makes you happy, but it doesn't tell you how to do it properly. It will to some feel like reading a cookbook without any recipes. It's on the whole, a lot of science stuff about your brain, and how it works when you're digging up weeds and planting flowers, which I personally learnt from. You can tell the author has put a lot of effort into it, but if you're a looking for a fun book, maybe this wouldn't be for you.

A lot is spoken about people who have overcome their problems, by getting in touch with nature and gardening. But what about the ones who hated it? I'd have liked those to be looked at too. What about the ones who got stung by bees, or slipped on a slug, or got chased by a fox? They don't really mention them, do they? Maybe they learned a different lesson: that gardening is not for them, and they'd rather stay indoors where it's warm and dry. Gardening and nature, by default isn't a positive thing for everyone. And then they say that gardening is not the only thing that can make you happy. They say that music and art and drama can do the same thing. Well, that's a bit obvious, isn't it? Of course they can. Anything can make you happy if you enjoy it. But that's not the point of the book, is it? The book is supposed to be about gardening and connections with nature, not about anything else. The book left me wanting to explore more about the people who didn't enjoy gardening. That's the point and mark of a good book though in my view. It leaves you wanting to read on.

Happy Gardening Stuart Mabbutt - Wildlife Gardening Specialist 01865 747 243 - Wildmaninspires.co.uk Oxfordshire Libraries

March events at **Berinsfield Library**

Digital Helper: Thursdays 2 to 5pm

Help in using smart phones, tablets and laptops. Support for those less confident with technology. Booking essential



Children's Book Club Thursday 7 March 3.30pm

NEW club for children age 8 to 11! Discover new books and enjoy fun activities. Booking essential. Contact the library for information



Berinsfield Local History Group Tuesday 26 March 2.30pm A talk with light refreshments followed by chat and a chance to reminisce. All welcome



Rhymetime Wednesdays at 10.30am during term time Gentle singing and rhyming fun for preschoolers and toddlers with toys, instruments and bubbles!







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EVENTS IN DORCHESTER ABBEY

Sun 3rd March- 3pm The Choir of The Thames Consort – Bach, Vivaldi, Bruckner All proceeds will go to Dorchester Abbey Tickets £16/ £12 (16 and under free) https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/dorchesterabbey/t-dvxpznn

Sat 23rd March-7.30pm-9pm Benson Choral Society Benson Choral Society's next concert combines the new with the old – local composer Richard Blackford's recent Pietà and Gabriel Fauré's incomparable Requiem. Tickets are £20 (reserved) or £17 (unreserved) and are available online at www.bensonchoralsociety.org.uk.

Sat 30th March- 6pm- 8.30pm OSJ- Bach – St Matthew Passion A highlight of our musical year, we celebrate Easter with our annual performances of JS Bach's sacred oratorio. Featuring some of Bach's most delicate chorales and rousing choruses, this depiction of the last few days of Jesus's life is as powerful today as it was when it was written nearly 300 years ago. Free tickets available for NHS workers and for the disabled. Please email admin@osj.org.uk. Tickets £6 to £35 from www.osj.org.uk

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- · Adjusting to change
- Moving forward healthily
- · Faith questions (optional)

To find out more visit: thebereavementjourney.org Hosted by Dorchester Team of Churches

Online Course: Tuesdays 2nd April to 14th May 7pm

To book or for more info: Contact Rev Teresa 07823 809 112

revteresa@outlook.com

CHURCH SERVICES FOR MARCH 2024

3 rd March	10.30am	Marsh Baldon	Holy Communion
10 th March	9.30am	Marsh Baldon	Mothering Sunday
17 th March	9.30am	Toot Baldon	Holy Communion
24 th March	10.30am	Toot Baldon to Marsh Baldon	Palm Sunday walk with Reflections
26 th March (Tuesday)	7.00pm	Toot Baldon	Tenebrae: a service of music and reflections for Holy Week
29 th March (Good Friday)	12.00pm	Drayton St Leonard	Solemn reflections and music from St John Passion
31 st March	9.30am	Marsh Baldon	Easter Communion

CHURCH FLOWERS

Date	Marsh	Toot	
LENT	No Flowers		
31 st March - Easter	Please contact Veronica for Marsh (343367) or		
	Jane Brook	k for Toot (343457) if you can help)
	with dec	orating our churches for Easter	

