

DRAYTON CHRONICLE



COMING CHRONICLES

The May Chronicle will be available for distribution on or about **Friday April 30th**.

The Editor will be **Margaret Inger (07967 730735)**. **Contributions** may be e-mailed (as below, best to 'editor@'), or placed in the Chronicle letter box, outside Vickery's store on Drayton Green, **DEADLINE = 5.15 pm, Monday, April 19th**.

After this deadline, items get **less precedence** for inclusion (No guarantees!), & need to reach us by the Wednesday.

STOP PRESS - ADVERTISERS should note that the deadline for ads is EARLIER, Friday April 16th, due to their preparation time.

NB :- **Can we politely remind** Contributors that the above **deadlines** are exactly that; It should perhaps be realised that the later an item is received, the less precedence it gets.

NOTES for CONTRIBUTORS (any doubts, ask the Editor!) All contributions to the Chronicle are most welcome. Be sure to **include the name, address and (in case clarification is necessary) telephone number of the author**. Contributions can be made :-

1. By **email** to the relevant editor (and please use a **meaningful title**, we get a lot called Chronicle!)

to reach the next editor → editor@draytonchronicle.net

Please remember to check that you soon get a confirmation reply. We do occasionally have emails sent – and they just don't arrive!

2. An **email attachment**, in WORD please (NOT a PDF file!).
3. A good, **black typescript** on white A4 paper or smaller. **BUT** – IF you can type it, PLEASE see numbers #1 & #2 above?! [Scanning is a real nuisance, and tends to create errors!]
4. **Hand-written?** **Preferably not PLEASE**, if over maybe a para. This is 2021, should be a way to type & send it?! (= fewer errors!).

ADVERTISING RATES

For Block Advert (about 1/12th page)

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Advertiser Category	1	3	6	12
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Half-size block adverts, normally for one or two inserts, are charged at half the above rates.

All requests must be accompanied by cash or a cheque made payable to 'Drayton Chronicle'.

They may be placed in the Chronicle Letter Box, outside Vickery's Hardware Store, Drayton Green, in shopping hours, OR send your requirements :- advertising@draytonchronicle.net

DATES for the FOLLOWING Chronicle

Issue for	Copy Deadlines :- to Editor by (& Ads on the Fri before these)	Chronicle published and available for distribution on Fridays:-
June	Mon May 17th	May 28th

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Sp Adobe Spark

This Month's Cover – Beverley Choules kindly sent us a record of her (High Street) property during the (re-)thatching process, work done during the last part of 2020. Most of it is self-explanatory, but we should namecheck J. Challis (Master Thatchers), with supervisors Leroy, Luna (resident) & Bonnie

Local Groups & Clubs

The Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project

Registered Charity 1098966



Youth & Community Acting Together

Another month has passed and everyone is hurtling towards summer, the team are feeling excited by the prospect of fewer restrictions meaning we can offer more activities and get back to that community feeling once more. However, **Easter is round the corner** and the team are planning another fun-filled half term!

Details of that will be released via our social media pages. We are super grateful to have access to the village hall during these past few months as it has helped provide a safe space for the young people in the village to express their feelings, emotions and concerns.

The support sessions have also been focussing on getting ready for school and reducing the anxiety that returning to school has brought with it. **We are so proud** of all our young people for their resilience and adaptability they have shown in recent months, and hope they are enjoying being back in a dedicated learning environment.

With the return to school comes a return to early wake ups, so we have been talking about **sleep and sleep hygiene** recently so that they are able to return to a routine that works best for them. 121 support sessions are always available too - we design all our 121 work around the specific issues the young person is going through – do get in touch if you would like some support for your young people!

The ADYP Team – Roxy Elford (pic), Jake Fleetwood and James Quartermain, Emily Astley-Madge

Do contact any of us on:-
jamesq.ycat@gmail.com,
jakef.ycat@gmail.com,
roxy.ycat@gmail.com, or
emily.adyp@gmail.com

Tel:- 01235 848694 or 07875 649008



Jake Damascus, Roxy Damascus, James Damascus, Emily Damascus



Jake_Damascus; James_Damascus; Roxy_Damascus, Emily_Damascus

YouTube - The Abingdon Damascus Youth Project – MIND GYM Website - www.damascusyouthproject.org.uk

THAMES VALLEY FARMERS MARKETS (8.30 to 1.30)

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(*'Locally' – Didcot mkt has a wonderful fishmonger, up from Sussex, always sells well – little sea for fishing round here?!)

April Dates Ab'don (3rd Fri) 16th; Didcot (2nd Sat) 10th

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DRAYTON W.I. (by Ann Webb)

We continue to Zoom until we meet in person - but each meeting is getting an air of officialdom. Before we started the meeting we spent a while learning that a long-time member had sadly passed away. **Angela (Painton)** had been a member for almost fifty years but sadly had to leave through ill-health. She was a wonderful person, a loyal member, as were her mother and mother in law before her.

We started at almost the same time and supported every meeting and event through those fifty years. **We will all miss her presence greatly, RIP Angela.**

The meeting continued with the **Committee** deciding they were willing to stand 'en bloc' - also the **President and other officers**. The official part of the meeting over, we had a chance to hear one of our Ladies telling us that after watching the DNA program the evening before, she'd discovered a family connection, but as the subject's family were, shall we say not exactly honest, she was quick to point out that it was a different branch of the line, not hers! Phew!

The meeting closed with a guessing game, 'Who am I?', organized by a member, this proved great fun trying to guess people from a few clues. The subjects ranged from Winston Churchill to Father Christmas, ending the meeting with a laugh.

ST PETER'S CHURCH

(part of the DAMASCUS Parish)

www.damascusparish.org.uk



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Rector	Revd Helen Kendrick	848297
Associate Priest	Revd Rosie Bruce	07707 087131
Associate Priest	Revd Meg Heywood	537100
Pro-warden	Mrs Linda Johnson	527521
Pro-warden	Mrs Val Cross	535183

We're pleased to say that the church remains open daily for private, individual prayer! {Sunday – Saturday, 10-4}.

REGULAR SERVICES – Should have resumed on March 21st.

Sunday	8.00 am	Holy Communion (2nd Sunday only)
	9.45 am	Sung Eucharist (CW) except 4th Sunday, when a non-Eucharistic Morning Praise is held

NB:- There will be **NO** Thursday morning Holy Communion Service until further notice.

We are very pleased to say that the churches across the parish will be open for Sunday worship over Easter!

St Peter's Easter services are as follows:-

Sunday Mar 28th 9.45am Morning Worship for Palm Sunday
Thurs April 1st 10:00 Holy Communion (for Maundy Thursday)

Good Friday April 2nd 2-3pm Hour at the Cross
– a reflective service

Sunday April 4th 8am BCP Holy Communion
and 9:45 Holy Communion for Easter Day

For everyone's safety, once in the building we will all be expected to wear masks (unless exempt) and sanitise our hands and remain socially distant from those who are not in our bubble. **Thank you.** We look forward to welcoming you. [There will also be online services from across the Parish on our website.]

There are resources for **Home Worship** on the DAMASCUS Parish website or join one of the many 'virtual' services such as 'Oxford Diocese Church at Home' at 10.00am – for which please see :- www.oxford.anglican.org/livestream

Listen to 'Sunday Worship' on Radio 4 at 8.10am. Also watch Songs of Praise (usually BBC1, times may vary!). There is also the Church of England free phone line, 'Daily Hope' 0800 804 8044, offering a selection of prayers, hymns, songs and reflections.

Please let us know if you are self-isolating & need help of any kind, so that prayer and practical support can be offered in a safe way.

YOU STAY WE PRAY (April)

Mar 28th – 3rd Corneville Rd; Crabtree Lane; Lesparre Close

4th – 10th Drayton Rd; Milton Rd; New Cut Mill; Fisher Close; Marcham Rd; Meads Close; Rippington Ct; Stone Hill

11th – 17th Steventon Road

18th – 24th Eastway; Eastway MHP

25th – May 1st Church, Henleys & Gravel Lanes; Caudwell Close;



PARISH REGISTER

Funerals	Feb 22nd	Erna (Anna) Bartlett
	March 3rd	Angela Painton

From the DAMASCUS Ministry Team

Easter this year, as in 2020, will be celebrated, but it will be different, just as were all celebrations, anniversaries and commemorations last year. As we look with hope for future social gatherings and freedoms from lockdowns, we need to prepare for the "new normal". We perhaps need to review the past year and ask ourselves questions:-

- ❖ What have we lost and must remain lost?
- ❖ What have we lost and must regain?
- ❖ What have we gained and must retain?
- ❖ What was gained and was alright for a while, but can now be lost?

These four questions were put forward after the first lockdown by the Bishop of Lincoln, and are worth thinking about again in 2021. So many things we took for granted have changed or been lost. New ways of daily living have been found and gained.

As I read back the letter I wrote last April, I can certainly say that things have changed since last Easter! However for Christians, Easter remains the highlight of the year: when Jesus' resurrection is celebrated. His showing to the world, that there is hope, there is life which is eternal. It is a time of new beginnings, of starting a fresh, and also a reminder that we can always start anew with God. His faithful forgiveness will always mean we can start again, begin afresh; a new beginning.

At the time of writing, all corporate acts of worship are suspended for the safety of our whole community. **However we have planned various events** and a variety of ways for retelling and celebrating the Easter story in the Damascus Parish villages.

Further up-to-date details can be found on church notice boards and on the internet www.damascusparish.org.uk

Everyone is warmly invited to join in and enjoy.

*With Love & Prayers, Rev'd Rosie Bruce
(Associate Priest of the DAMASCUS Parish)*

Your District Councillor



Coronavirus

I'm waiting for the day I don't have to mention this on articles, and it may be only a few articles away... [Ed: WE hope too!]

Cases in Oxfordshire & the Vale of White Horse, once more, are down considerably from last month, which is very encouraging.

With the publication of the roadmap out of restrictions, **there was some concern** that people might drop their guard; reassuringly, this doesn't seem to have happened (at least not in significant numbers). Because people are remaining sensible, at least at the time of writing (March 15th), we look to be well on course to hit the roadmap dates.

We've also seen more than 24 million first doses given, and for over 17 million of those, they've had more than 21 days since receiving that first dose and will have built up good protection already. I also understand that recent supply issues are in the past and we expect to see a considerable acceleration.

We expect to meet our target for Groups 1-9 vaccinated in Oxfordshire by April 15th.

You may have read recent concerns over blood clots. Ironically, when the data is scrutinised, the rate of blood clots in vaccinated people (with both vaccines – AstraZeneca & Pfizer) is lower than the rate amongst unvaccinated people.

The MHRA, the NHS, the World Health Organisation, and the European Medical Organisation are all united in underlining that there is NO evidence of any increased danger of blood clots from the AstraZeneca vaccine (and nor the Pfizer one).

With consummate timing in allowing me to put my money where my mouth is, I got phoned up today to be offered my vaccination, with the AstraZeneca vaccine – which I happily accepted. By the time you read this, I'll have had my first dose. **I strongly urge you to take your opportunity** when it's offered as well.

As before:- **If you need any help**, or feel you may need it, during this lockdown and beyond, please contact our Community Hub (which is always staffed regardless of the major incident). **Details on Page 19 of this issue.** ➔➔



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➔➔ Local businesses – please sign up to the South and Vale Business Support mailing list by visiting www.svbs.co.uk - it's the quickest and most direct way to find out as soon as grant funding is available locally.

There is more advice, and options for support, at <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/coronavirus-community-support/support-for-people-who-need-help/> which has the Community Hub details, links for financial guidance, food banks, and Housing Support.

Symptom-free testing centre

Across the county, the three centres have picked up six positive tests so far – remember this is from routine tests for people who aren't displaying symptoms, so the system is showing the benefit it provides already.

The **community testing roll out** is expanding gradually, with it currently available for anyone who works or volunteers in a role where they have close contact with people outside their home or is a childminder.

If you fall into that category, **please don't hesitate** to pop along to your nearest centre (the Beacon, Wantage) for a test to protect others. Plans are already underway to expand the testing further towards the end of this month/beginning of April to all members of the public that cannot currently access them from their workplace. We're working on what needs to be in place to offer this.

Winter support grant deadline extended

The deadline for Winter Support Grant applications has been **extended** by a couple of weeks to April 16th and we now have some additional funds from the government to support residents with supermarket vouchers and fuel vouchers or the direct payment of energy or water bills. **Anyone needing help** should contact the Community Hub (see page 19).

That's all for this month. **Take care, and stay safe,**
Andy Cooke

BAPTIST CHURCH

Church Secretary:- Mrs Jayne Henderson..... 522161



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Letters to the Editor

You may request that your name & address are not shown; however we MUST have those details, and phone number .

WESTMINSTER VIEW



Our new MP (Wantage/Didcot) is David Johnston (OBE, awarded for services to Social Mobility and Education).

I was delighted that 2,620 people responded to my survey regarding **Grove Station** within just 2 weeks – thank you if you did. Some 98% of respondents supported it being reopened! We have stiff competition as there are 85 different bids to Gov't for stations or lines to reopen, but I will keep bashing away until we eventually succeed.

I continue to be frustrated with **Royal Mail**. Our postmen and women work hard, but something is clearly not right as constituents have been complaining to me about mail deliveries for several months, also reported in the national news. When I called a meeting with them last year they said they had gone from 'a letter service delivering parcels to a parcel service delivering letters' and it does seem to be the parcels they prioritise. Every fortnight I enter the Parliamentary ballot (to debate their service) and hope I shall be successful soon.

Unauthorised traveller camps were the subject of my speech in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill debate this month. **The Bill has wrongly been accused** of restricting our right to protest when actually the protest measures target actions we have seen by organised protest groups in the past year, such as people glueing themselves to roads and stopping ambulances getting through, or shutting down printing presses because they don't like the editorial line of the papers involved.

It is a wide-ranging bill that increases the sentences or time served for a wide range of violent and sexual offences, but it also clamps down on **unauthorised traveller camps** which are a **regular source of distress** in the constituency. At the time of writing, in 20 of the past 34 weeks there has been at least one such camp somewhere in the Vale or South Oxfordshire, frequently involving mess, noise, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. The Bill will allow the police to **remove such camps more quickly and impose stiffer penalties**.

I had my first appearance on the BBC's **Politics Live** on 18th March, an interesting if slightly strange experience. Whereas YOU can see everyone's face when you watch on television, **each of the panellists look into a black screen** on our computers as we can't see anyone! We discussed various topics including the EU's latest silly comments regarding the supply and safety of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which has again been confirmed as completely safe. Despite the noise, we shouldn't worry – we've now vaccinated over 25 million people, half the adult population, and remain on course to see every adult offered a jab by the end of July.

If you need to get in touch with our MP,

email david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk, & for up-to-date info please check out his Facebook page [@davidjohnston4wantage](https://www.facebook.com/davidjohnston4wantage)

The **Waste Wizard** is a new online tool to kill the confusion around recycling and help Oxfordshire defeat General Waste. Type in your postcode and the name of any item to find out whether it can be reused, repaired, donated or recycled - oxfordshire.gov.uk/wastewizard

Local Groups & Clubs

Drayton Brownies

All at Drayton Brownies would like to congratulate Hollie (pictured below) on achieving her Gold Award this term! Over the last 3 years she has completed many challenges and has also managed to gain every interest badge that is available, she is a little superstar!

It's not always been easy, especially with a year of lockdown, but she has worked hard and kept smiling, and should be very proud of herself. We will miss you Hollie, good luck with all you do in the future.

At present Brownies is not running in person but we are hopeful that as restrictions lift, we will be able to resume meetings.

If your daughter is aged 7-10 and you'd like any more details, please email to drayton1stbrownies@live.co.uk

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Laura Hughes



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Drayton (NO?!) Table Tennis Club

I am very sad to report that the club is unable to provide table tennis facilities in the village.

Drayton School have decided to terminate our Hire Agreement for use of their hall. The club has been successfully based at the school for almost 40 years, so this very sudden unexpected announcement has come as a shock. Of course, we've not been able to play table tennis for the last 12 months due to Covid restrictions, but we had hoped to return to playing in September 2021.

Unfortunately, there is no other facility currently available that we can feasibly use within the village, so we have to look elsewhere to try and keep the club going.

We are actively looking, and hope to find new premises by August.

Any suggestions will be welcome. We are the largest club in the area in terms of membership and will need a large hall and several nights per week to play. We hope that in the future we will return to the village and

again provide the community with a table tennis facility.

Over many years the club has given children and adults the opportunity to mix and enjoy our sport on both a social and competitive level. Our members are sorry this will now stop. The intention is to retain the club's name.

The club wishes to thank Alec & Rob Taylor who have kindly offered us somewhere to store our tables and other equipment, that we have been asked to move out of the school. This is extremely helpful whilst we look for a new place to play and removes an immediate problem.

John Gould





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EXOTIC HOLIDAY CAUTION!

Looking forward to holidays, sometime, anytime? Indeed. But this [BBC story](#) suggests be wary of the most exotic locations!

A woman in Alaska says she "jumped up and screamed" after she was **attacked by a bear while using the toilet**.

Shannon Stevens sustained a puncture wound while using a remote outhouse toilet at Chilkat Lake. After hearing her scream, Ms Stevens' brother went to see what had caused the injury, only to find a bear's head in the hole of the toilet. [NB Remote Alaskan camp-sites are unlikely to have mains sewage!]

Ms Stevens says the wound was caused by either a bite or a swipe from the animal's claw. She was spending the weekend in a yurt when the incident occurred. "I got out there and sat down on the toilet and immediately something bit my butt as I sat down" she told the AP news agency.

She screamed for her brother who came out with a head torch to help her. After she pointed him to the toilet, Erik saw "right there at the level of the toilet seat was a bear face," he said.

She managed to treat her wound using a first aid kit. The following morning, they noticed bear prints by the firepit and the outhouse. A local expert thought the animal was a black bear.

"She might be the only person this has ever happened to, maybe other folks have had bizarre things - but during February to sit down in an outhouse and have something like that happen is very unusual". Ms Stevens told the Anchorage Daily News that she will practice a "**look before you . . . sit**" policy in the future. . . .

[Ed:- we went camping once, spent half a week in a Scottish launderette trying to dry things - & us - out. In this case, I feel sorry for the bear! Oh, and in Oz it's snakes & spiders?]

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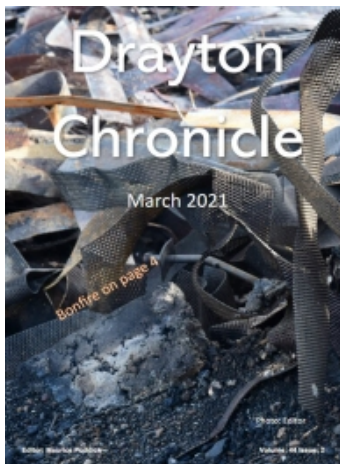
YOUR LETTERS

The Burning Issue

Dear All,

Editor Avenue

Grateful thanks to ALL those (lots!) who emailed or phoned as a result of last month's cover picture, and accompanying



letter, re some burning rubbish on Frogmore Tree Bridleway. The letter was concerned re the likelihood of fly-tipping being the cause (on p4 of that issue).

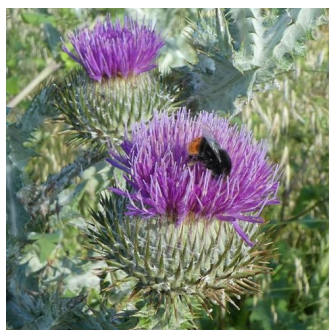
This is a **composite reply**, concocted from all received, as they'd occupy far too much space as individual letters here!

They ALSO **pretty much all said the same thing** – that this is the farmer's land, it's a quite normal practice that's occurred for many years now, (several emails were from long-term

walkers over that way), and one letter recalled a similar query being raised with a local councillor perhaps 20 years ago?

One or two replies did suggest that those people who move to the country might expect country-type things to occur there, with reference to complaints on the local Facebook sites re the occasional manure aroma ('Eau de Cowpat'? - yet to happen this year), and the heavy rains some weeks ago, which caused outbreaks of mud on certain paths.

Stephen Fearnley added, (and they've actually known that site for FORTY years!), "The site to my understanding, has always been tidied up afterwards and in fact last year there was a superb patch of thistles on that corner".



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Prize Delight!

Dear Editor,

High Street

I would like to say how delighted I was to win the Coffee-break Quiz in February's edition of the Chronicle.

Not only did I win, but I had the 'mystery prize' (hyacinths) delivered and it was lovely. This prize has been given pride of place and is doing well. Thank you so much!

Kind Regards

Heather Mole



[Ed:- That Feb issue Comp had involved bird names]

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MORE LETTERS

An Accident Waiting . . .

[Ed's note:- this arrived as a copy of a letter to several councils, and the local MP. The path in question runs next to the former 'Sitting Room' furniture shop]

Dear Sir/Madam, Plough Lane

I am **most concerned** about the growing practice of motor vehicles using the pedestrian footpath to access and exit the Dovecote development - especially in terms of serious threats and endangerment to the safety and welfare of the very many pedestrian users of this footpath.

This Footpath runs alongside our bungalow and comes out into Drayton High Street, the road to Sutton Courtenay.

It is constantly in use (quite properly) by very many pedestrians, also Children going to and from school, Dog Walkers, Joggers, Runners, Cyclists, Toddlers on trainer bikes (with their parents), Elderly people exercising (with walking aids), Young mothers with pushchairs, Horse riders, and Night time walkers with headlamps on their heads.

This Footpath has no pavement edge – on either side – and therefore has no safe refuge from a motor vehicle illegally driving down, often at speed, in pure self interest & personal convenience.

The dangers are only too obvious and if this is allowed to continue, it will only be a matter of time before there is a personal injury incident . . . or worse!



My wife and I have observed numerous vehicles using this route in and out of the estate at all times of the day and evening. I have remonstrated with a number of drivers, to no avail, and they just keep coming.

I affirmed with Bloor Homes, when buying our bungalow, that this was **definitely a footpath**, & therefore no motorised vehicular use was permitted. Indeed, if it is designated as a footpath, motorised vehicular use is illegal and a criminal offence, breaching the Road Traffic Act.

A number of residents are calling for a permanently fixed bollard to be installed at the north end of the footpath, as it joins the High Street. This will not only prevent motor vehicles from using it – in any circumstances other than the needs of emergency vehicles – but would also be a clear and immediate visual deterrent from actually even trying to use this footpath in a motor vehicle.

There must also be a sign erected at a strategic point at the start of Plough Lane, inside the development, that clearly states "This is a Dead End". These must be installed as a matter of urgency, before a tragedy occurs.

Kind Regards Robert Taylor (J.P.)

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Greetings from Scotland!

Dear Editor, Whithorn, Scotland

Thank you SO much for continuing to ****send me the Chronicle**.

Last month (March issue), I noticed that **Suzu Willis** was advertising that she did **phone & video consultations**. So after my second Zoom session with her (today) I can confirm that the *Chronicle* has done me a HUGE favour!

Thank you to the whole team!

Nadine Stah White

[Ed's note:- **** we don't actually 'send' a copy, we've a list of remote readers – a couple in Oz for example – and just email them a nudge when the latest one gets added to the online archive. But THANKS to Nadine for taking the time to send her appreciation. Oh, & Suzu Willis's ad is page 16 this time]**

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A Lovely Gesture!

Dear Editor, High Street

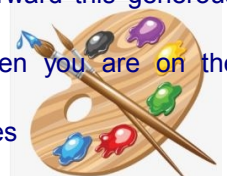
We would like to say thank you to a Drayton resident and very nice gentleman called Brian Thompson for his very generous act of kindness.

Brian turned up on the door step on Mother's Day with a wonderful framed, water colour painting of our house and presented it to me as a gift, insisting it was an amateur effort so wasn't worth much more than a place on the loo wall!

As a very arty household, we very much disagree with Brian. **We will cherish it**. Also we shall be making a **donation** to the Millennium Common Fund/Trussell Trust to show our appreciation and pay forward this generous gesture.

It really does warm the heart when you are on the receiving end of such a generous act.

Kind Regards Beverley Choules



LETTERS GALORE

Diamonds!

Dear Editor, Meads Close

We would like to thank our family, friends and neighbours for their kind wishes on the occasion of our Diamond Wedding celebrated on March 11th 2021.

We were thrilled to receive a card from the Queen and it will take pride of place in our home. Unfortunately we were unable to celebrate with our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren but hope to at the end of May whilst gathering for an 80th birthday!

Yours sincerely, Janet & David Smith



Going/Gone . . .but not Forgotten!

Dear Editor, (ex) Abingdon Road

As it will not be possible to see everybody in the village who has made us so welcome over the last 40 years, we would like to use the Chronicle to **record our thanks** to friends, acquaintances and all other villagers and **wish you all well** in these uncertain times (meaning the climate and ecological emergency as much as pandemics).

We are only moving/downsizing from outer Abingdon to Abingdon proper, before age and frailty makes that an even more complicated and stressful process. Those of you in our age group have been duly warned!

For meeting up we are trading the Millennium Green for Abingdon Market Place, that has a greater range of coffee shops. But (post Covid) we can always catch up at Stonehill Community Gardens.

The human landscape in the village seems to be getting younger - or is that because we are getting older? - and we are sure that Drayton will be stronger for the influx of new and more energetic residents. On which note we hope that Kate and Richard Bridge (& Rachel and Ruth) will be made welcome.

Yours Ellen (Lessner) and Daniel (Scharf)

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A Question of Balance

Dear Editor, Halls Close

I don't share Alan Bourne's view (letter, March 2021) that all spending on public art should be abandoned until poverty has been eliminated. If the Medici and Borgia families had spent all their wealth on the poor of renaissance Italy, we would live in a world without the Sistine Chapel ceiling or Michelangelo's David or Leonardo's Mona Lisa, art which has given pleasure to many millions over the centuries. If our rich Victorian forebears had spent all their wealth on the Victorian poor, we would have far fewer treasures in the National Gallery or the V & A to entrance us all, and neither Turner nor Constable would have flourished.

Much of life requires a difficult balance between competing good: between time spent at work and with our families, between private freedoms and public safety, between taxes so high that wealth creators give up or go elsewhere, and so low that the sick and less able cannot be cared for, between enhancing the built environment for the many and caring enough for those who struggle. **Striking the right balance** is the skill.

I doubt if Drayton's **concrete walnuts and novel village signs** will ever rate alongside the Mona Lisa, but they will make Drayton an even nicer and more interesting place for all of us lucky enough to live here.

Yours sincerely, Derek Pooley



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Letters to the Editor

Editors **reserve the right** to shorten, clarify or reject any letter. Each letter must bear a legible name & address, and phone number in case any text needs verification.

Recipe Time!

(Courtesy of www.carolinescooking.com) This is **Flammekueche** (the German name) or (French) **tarte flambeé** (but you don't set fire to anything!). It's essentially a **bacon & onion flatbread/pizza**. It may seem like only a few ingredients, but they are transformed into a truly delicious dish - **easy to make, too**.

I know when you think pizza, you almost certainly think of a traditional Italian pizza with a tomato sauce base.

This dish is from the Alsace region of France as well as the neighboring areas of Germany. The Alsace region has gone back and forth for centuries between Germany and France. As a result, it definitely has some character from both, language and food included. It seems pretty French in the ingredients, using creme fraiche (or fromage blanc), onions and lardons (strips of bacon). Some sources suggest it was originally made by German farmers, to test the heat of the oven the farmers used to make bread. The high heat was perfect to cook this "flamed tart", using just enough toppings to make a tasty meal, too.

The **base for flammekueche is different** from typical pizza in that there is no yeast or other leavening agent. It's just a pretty simple dough. While it doesn't rise, it does, however, mean the dough rolls out easily and still crisps well. **Just don't be scared to roll it as thin as you can**.

True to the original, less really is more in this dish. If you try to load this pizza up too much, the base won't crisp up properly and will be soggy. **Keep the toppings light** and you'll still get plenty of delicious flavour.

Flammekueche is easier than the average pizza, and with such great flavours. It may have humble ingredients, but the result is crisp, flavourful and oh so good. Give it a try, and you'll be adding it to your regular list as we have!

Notes

If you can't find creme fraiche, try a mix of sour cream and Greek yogurt. Topping with gruyere is optional, but delicious!



Some recipes don't cook the onions or bacon ahead of time. I'm afraid I disagree on this, as while they'll both cook a bit, I think you get a **better flavour pre-cooking**. If not pre-cooked, the onions might crisp, but they'll taste more like slightly charred raw onions?!

Don't get me wrong, that can be good, but I prefer the gentle sweetness of softened onions. And I think the bacon has a

better flavour when pre-cooked.

Nutmeg might sound a little unusual, but believe me it gives a little lift in flavour to the creme fraiche base. If you can't find creme fraiche, try a blend of sour cream and Greek yogurt to get a similar flavour and texture.

You'll find a few variations on this beyond the basic cream/cheese base, onion and bacon. One is **adding a little gruyere cheese** which was too good not to pass up, to me. You can skip this and it will still be delicious, but it does add a lovely extra flavor.

Ingredients For the base

1 cup all purpose flour 140g plain flour
1 tbsp oil (olive oil/vegetable oil as you prefer)
¼ tsp salt; ¼ cup water 60ml, or a little more as needed

For the topping

2 oz bacon 65g ½ onion medium
½ tbsp butter 3 tbsp creme fraiche
1 pinch nutmeg 1 pinch salt & 1 of pepper

Instructions

Mix together the flour, oil, salt and water in a bowl. If it's too dry and won't come together, add a little more water, but it will be a relatively dry dough. Knead for a minute then set aside while you prepare the toppings.

Preheat the oven to 450F/230C. Line a large baking sheet/tray (half sheet) with parchment.

Cut the bacon into thin strips ('lardons') and cook in a small skillet/frying pan over a medium heat until they are just starting to brown. Remove from pan and set aside.

Add the onions to the pan, along with the butter, and cook for a few minutes **until the onions have softened but are only just browning**.

Add the nutmeg, salt and pepper to the creme fraiche and mix well.

Roll the dough out on a lightly floured surface into a circle/oval **as thin as you can** (around ⅛ inch / 3mm).

Transfer the dough to the lined baking sheet then spread the creme fraiche (mixture) over the top, leaving a space around the edge without any topping.

Spread over the sauteed onions, then top with the bacon, spreading them as evenly as you can. **Top** with the gruyere then bake for around 10 minutes until the edges are lightly brown and crisp and the toppings are just starting to colour!


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All Hail Drayton!

Drayton's Night of Hail, 1849.

On June 5th, 1849, Drayton suffered a **natural disaster**. Newspapers across England reported on a 'terrific thunderstorm' that affected towns and villages from Leicestershire to Sussex. Crops were destroyed, livestock and wild animals killed, and homes flooded. Several people were struck by the 'electric fluid.' In Oxfordshire, a man was killed when a fireball fell on a hovel, and an elderly woman died of fright.

The storm produced huge round hailstones, some 'the size of a pigeon's egg'. Napton (in Warwickshire) experienced very serious damage from these hailstones 'of a great size, falling with such force as to shatter the glass', leaving hardly a pane of glass intact in the village. In Brighton, hailstones were 'larger than walnuts', some as large as 3 ½ inches in circumference, and 'very hard, with sharp jagged edges'. They 'fell in congealed masses of christalised ice, committing great havoc.'

The hail-fall was extremely localised to particular villages, and even parts of villages. **The storm was particularly violent in Drayton.** The weather had been oppressively hot for several days, and on Monday June 4th, thunder had been heard all day until the storm finally broke around midnight, with the heavy hail falling at 1 o'clock in the morning. Some damage was also caused in Steventon and Sutton Wick, but by the time the storm reached Sutton Wick, it had abated. →>



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[Ed:- no, this car wasn't around in 1849, but as the snaps from that fateful day seem to have disappeared (!) I thought this hail damage would show that type of force]



→> A land surveyor and resident of Drayton, John Dymock, wrote to the *Oxford Journal* a week later to provide 'a correct statement of the dreadful hail storm at Drayton.':- 'I consider the damage to the growing crops exceeds *two thousand pounds* [**almost £260K today!**], as there are three hundred and ninety five acres that are partially or totally destroyed . . . and, I regret to add it is *all uninsured*. Some idea may be formed of the storm, when I inform you that partridges, larks and mice were found dead in the fields. In addition to this slates were broken into pieces on the roofs, and hundreds of squares of glass were smashed to atoms. The poor will suffer greatly, as the garden produce is much damaged or destroyed.'

Many farmers sustained significant losses. The storm passed 'exactly over' the farm of **James Lyford**, who received the 'chief fury' of the storm and lost 100 acres of beans and wheat worth £1000. **William Caudwell** also lost 89 acres. Nevertheless, seven of Drayton's farmers, who were relatively affluent, set up a donation fund, overseen with the help of two clergymen, to support four of the worst-affected occupants of damaged land. The farmers acknowledged that the storm had been caused by 'an **All-Wise Providence**' (ie God), but asked that people help these 'deserving individuals whose slender circumstances make their loss more severe.':-

WILLIAM BRADFIELD with wife and two children, occupies 10 Acres of Arable Land: the whole of his crop damaged.

WILLIAM MILLS with wife and five children, occupies 6 acres: nearly the whole of his crop destroyed.

WILLIAM LYFORD with wife and four children, occupies 19 acres: 12 1/2 acres damaged.

JOHN HUMPHREYS with wife and seven children, occupies 31 acres: 13 1/2 Acres damaged.

Others were quick to try to profit from the hail storm at Drayton, adverts soon appeared in county newspapers for . . . HAIL INSURANCE!

As I write this, on March 13th, **hail is** - believe it or not - **falling in my back garden**, but I'm cosy and warm inside, and I'm not depending on my allotment to feed my family. In spite of COVID-19 - our current natural disaster - I can't help but think how lucky I am. **Clare Kirk**

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County Council Report

Infrastructure and Growth

For the last 10 years, the six ancient Oxfordshire villages of Appleford, Sutton Courtenay, Milton, Drayton, Marcham and Shippon that make up our County Division, have all been under pressure from rapid development and housing expansion. It is the same in many parts of the South of England, but our thriving economy has made us a focus for growth and an increasing need for more infrastructure. As a result we seem to need more roads, bridges, rail lines and reservoirs. And it all generates millions of tons of carbon and is making our targets to address climate change ever harder to achieve.

The UK is chairing the Cop26 Climate Conference (Glasgow) later this year and government is well aware of our responsibility and need to be seen as a world leader in attempting to solve the Climate Emergency. It seems very likely that we will have to reconsider how we balance economic growth and recovery from the pandemic with understanding and controlling the carbon footprint of so many infrastructure projects. →> →>



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A changed village

→> I recall writing some years ago, as the Neighbourhood Plan was being developed, that Drayton's problem was that no one noticed it. It was the sort of village people drove through on their way to somewhere else. With few outstanding beauty spots and long stretches of ribbon development, it was hard for residents to feel a sense of belonging and these were issues that the Neighbourhood Plan should address.

Many people on their Covid-imposed walks have been discovering the pathways and hidden corners of the village in the past year. Last week, a resident on one of the new estates stopped me to say that Drayton is "a pretty village". I have lived in or around the village since 1975 and become very attached to it but I cannot ever remember thinking or hearing that the village was "pretty" until now. Other friends and contacts in the surrounding area have begun to notice the changes in the village and remarked on them. **It seems we are beginning to be noticed.**

And yet the Neighbourhood Plan is a long way from completion. [Ed:- INDEED SO! But for Miller Homes dragging their feet, and everything else they can think of, the intended Sports Pavilion & pitches would have been pretty much in place by now, and the Table-Tennis club – see their report on page 7 – wouldn't be suddenly homeless?!].

It's all taking much longer than we had hoped, but it is getting there. Improvements to the roads are slowly arriving and we all look forward to improvements to the central village roundabout for which detailed planning is about to begin.

Everywhere has been under enormous change in recent years and it has certainly not all been an improvement.

I hope that future generations will look back at the work of the Parish Council and the efforts of Drayton volunteers and agree that the changes they have helped to bring about to our village were all very much for the good.

If you have feelings on any County issues you would like me to hear, please contact me:- richardwebber777@gmail.com or 01235 534001. **Richard Webber**

(OCC Cllr, Sutton Courtenay & Marcham Division)



www.DraytonPC.org

The period of restrictions and limitations on our work and home lives continues, (plus our activities and hobbies), but the Govt's '4 Steps' plan does seem to offer a reasoned plan for the future. Let's hope that these sacrifices do result in a move back to normal life (though that 'normal' seems hard to remember!).

The Parish Council continues its usual work during this second Covid-19 lockdown, in compliance with government guidelines. We continue to hold our regular monthly meeting, although via video-conference call rather than in person. All residents are welcome to join these video-calls, and details are included on the meeting agendas which are posted on the Village website. (NB >> >> and since January we've switched to Tuesday evenings).

To contact any members of the Parish Council, all enquiries should be directed to the **Parish Clerk, Lorraine Watling**; she may be contacted at clerk@draytonpc.org or 07909 176061, and she will ensure that messages are passed on. Any Drayton resident may also ask to be added to the Clerk's E-mailing list, so that they receive prior notice of meetings and any relevant documents.

All **Parish Council minutes** are now **archived** on the village website: <http://www.draytonvillage.co.uk/> which also has a link to **back copies of the Drayton Chronicle**, information on the latest activities of the Drayton 2020 Implementation Committee, and details of other events in the village.

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[Ed's note :- hopefully you saw the tribute – from afar! - to Suzy's work in the Letters pages!]

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Getting back to 'Normal'?

Yes, let's hope we can, given that the last of the Govt's 'Four Steps' is hinting that 'normality' (or something vaguely like it) could be seen in June. Looking forward to a, what were they called, oh yes, a 'HOLIDAY'? Yes, us too, and for a possible bargain, DO sign up to the Travelzoo newsletter (free) that's via <https://www.travelzoo.com/uk/> (and IF the latest hints are true, they have 'staycations' too!!)

AND – to help pay for that well-earned break, why not check out the full range of Martin Lewis's advice, giving savings GALORE at:- www.moneysavingexpert.com/ (also a free weekly e-newsletter)

Neighbourhood Action Group 5

{NB Information correct at the time of writing, in mid-March}.

People who have received Covid-19 vaccination(s)

After having the vaccination **you should STILL continue to follow the rules**. It's not yet known if it's possible for those who have been vaccinated to pass on the virus to others, and there are concerns about further mutations.

COVID-19 vaccination

When it's your turn to have the vaccination, the NHS will contact you - by phone, letter, email or, more recently, by text - with information on how to book your appointment. There are a variety of ways in which appointments are made: either via a phone call from your GP surgery, or you may be asked to make an appointment by phone or online. Please be aware of the warning about vaccination scams, below.

If you've received a letter, but not booked an appointment, you may receive a call from the NHS Immunisation Management Service - this will be from 0300 561 0240 and will be a reminder to book your vaccination appointment. The caller will ask if you need any help or support.

Vaccination SCAMS

If, during the appointment booking process, you are asked to provide ANY of the following **IT IS DEFINITELY NOT a genuine communication from the NHS**. There are many such scams in circulation, and **you should not proceed any further**.

Your bank details. . . Your PIN or banking password . . . or . . .

Copies of personal documents to prove your identity – such as your passport, driving licence, bills or pay slips.

The COVID-19 vaccination is available only through the NHS and is free-of-charge.

'Regular' Scams Coronavirus has prompted a huge increase in scams. The latest reports include:-

A **Royal Mail text scam**, where the recipient is asked to click on a link to pay a small amount of money to have a package delivered. If you receive one of these texts do not click on the link, since the aim is to obtain your financial details. **Please forward the text to 7726** (free of charge), so that your network provider can investigate.

An **HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) scam**, where criminals are using the Royal Courts of Justice contact information to claim that victims owe money to HMRC and that arrest warrants have been issued. Victims have been contacted by phone and email. If you receive any communication from HMCTS regarding HMRC **you can be sure it's not genuine**. The Royal Courts of Justice will never contact you about tax matters. If you receive one of these emails, report it as follows:-

Suspicious Email Reporting Service

This **new service** has been launched by the National Cyber Security Centre and the police. In the first few months, they had hundreds of thousands of reports, leading so far to several thousand links to bogus websites being removed.

If YOU receive a suspicious email **please forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk** – then of course delete it from your inbox! (this excellent new service is quickly having an effect, please note they DO send you a confirmation email)

To contact the police call either 101 (if it's urgent) or 999 (for emergencies). IF POSSIBLE, please use their online reporting method at www.thamesvalley.police.uk (you'll be contacted within 24hrs of filing a report)

Contact NAG5 by calling 01235 848694 or via e-mail to: neighbourhoodactiongroup5@hotmail.com

If you, or anyone you know, has been affected by a fraud or any other scam please **report it to Action Fraud** by calling 0300 123 2040 or visit the website at <http://www.actionfraud.police.uk>.

Find more online security info and advice at:-

National Cyber Security Centre <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk>

Cyber Aware <https://www.cyberaware.gov.uk>

Get Safe Online <https://www.getsafeonline.org>

More advice about how to protect yourself against fraud is available on the Thames Valley Police website :-

<https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud/personal-fraud/>

→>> And a National Insurance scam

Action Fraud has issued a warning about this scam.

Victims receive an automated telephone call saying that their **"National Insurance number has been compromised"**.

The victim's told that this can be fixed by giving them a new National Insurance number, and that they should "press 1" on their handset in order to be connected to the caller.

Once connected to the "caller" victims are pressured into giving their personal details so they can receive a new National Insurance number. **In reality they've been connected to a criminal** who can now use the victim's personal details to commit fraud.

It's important to remember that if you're contacted out of the blue by someone asking for your personal or financial details, this is 99.9999% a SCAM! Even confirming personal details, such as your email address, date of birth or mother's maiden name, can be used by criminals to commit fraud. **If you have any doubts** about what is being asked of you, hang up the phone. **No legitimate organisation will rush or pressure you.**

Our News the March Neighbourhood Watch e-newsletter, has a lot of useful tips and advice about identifying and avoiding email scams.

https://www.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/images/site_images/72598_Mar_2021_OUR_NEWS.pdf

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So, for this occasional venture back into the **Pop Chart annals**, who was charting this time of year, going back through time? **Remember these?** >>

20 years ago - not a strong month, the Spice Girls were just going their separate ways and flexing their egos, with Geri, Emma & Mel B all high in the charts.

Back **30 years** and **Soft Cell** (Marc Almond/David Ball) were back in the charts (re-released 'Tainted Love'), and **Cher** had hit #1 with 'The Shoop Shoop Song (It's in his Kiss)', but on checking the lists I'm reminded that one of the all-time pop greats had just been at #1, **Hale & Pace & The Stonkers** with that well-known classic 'The Stonk' (ah, they just don't write 'em like that any more . . .)

40 years ago (can it be so long?! **Buck's Fizz** had just been #1 ('Making Your Mind Up' – back then we COULD win Eurovision!), and **Adam & the Ants** were soon to be bringing more dressing up and make-up than usually seen on Top of the Pops ('Stand & Deliver'). **Madness** were at #1 that April, with 'Grey Day', I suppose quite appropriate as we've just had a pretty grey year?!

FIFTY years ago (for real old-timers) and we'd just had **Ray Stevens** (Bridget the Midget) & **Clodagh Rodgers** (Jack in the Box) in the top 5, also **R Dean Taylor** (Indiana Wants Me), but in April **Dawn/Tony Orlando** ('Knock 3 Times'), would hold #1 above all of the **Stones** ('Brown Sugar'), **Neil Diamond** ('I am, I said') and **Tony Christie** ('I did what I did for Maria').

Can anyone recall **60 years back**?! The rather oddball **Temperance Seven** ('You're Driving Me Crazy') had just been #1, and **Bobby Darin's** 'Lazy River' and **Billy Fury** ('Halfway to Paradise') were charting, but the standout #1 in April was **Del Shannon** with the wonderfully evocative (a-run, run, run, run) 'Runaway' (biggest seller that year).

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This month **TEN years ago** our news bulletins were full of concern for the **Fukushima (Japan) nuclear disaster**, its reactor had been badly affected by a major earthquake and tsunami. But we cheered up near the end of April as record numbers watched **William & Kate's** wedding.

In **April 2001**, the first **Space Tourist**, one **Dennis Tito**, paid \$20million for a trip on a Russian Soyuz craft to the International Space Station, spending about a week orbiting the Earth. Apparently he's been complaining about the rotten airline food, and the tiny luggage allowance, ever since, at those prices! Oh, and down in Cornwall, the wonderful **Eden Project** had just opened.

We sadly lost author **Douglas Adams**, who'd given us *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, also former racing driver **Michele Alboreto** (killed in Germany testing a Le Mans type sports car).

In **April 1991**, **David Icke** (ex-Hereford Utd goalie) said (on Wogan's TV show), that he was the "son of God", and that "the UK would be devastated by earthquakes and tidal waves". To be fair, he didn't give a time limit, so the howls of audience laughter may have been premature.

We lost **Graham Greene** that month, & 2 film directors, **David Lean** (Brief Encounter, Bridge on the River Kwai, Lawrence of Arabia, & Dr Zhivago), and **Don Siegel**, a less familiar name, but who helped propel Clint Eastwood to fame, directing 5 of his films, including *Dirty Harry*.

Back in **1981** **Peter Sutcliffe's trial** (Yorkshire Ripper) was soon to begin, his eventual arrest coming after a marathon of investigative incompetence. **Steve Davis** won his first snooker World title, and **Bob Champion** famously won the Grand National on Aldaniti. And we lost **Joe Louis**, one of the most famous boxers of all time.

In **1971**, **David Tennant**, **Ewan McGregor** and **David Coulthard** were all born within a couple of weeks of each other (big shout-out for Scotland, & Happy 50th guys?!), the **Two Ronnies** appeared for the first time, and after a period of substantial unrest, **Bangladesh** was formed. And we were all getting used to the strange new **Decimal Currency**, just launched here (no more thrupenny bits!).

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NOTICE BOARD

VALE of WH District Council (as on page 5)

If you need any help, or feel you may need it, during this lockdown and beyond, PLEASE don't hesitate to contact our Community Hub on the telephone number, website, or email address :- (it's always staffed regardless of the major incident):

Telephone: 01235 422600

Website: www.southoxon.gov.uk/communityhub

Email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

County Council (& Police Commissioner) Elections

May 6th, please try to vote if you can? IF a **Postal Vote** would help, please see the Vale's website, then on the front page, the Elections link, & from there 'Vote by Post'.

<https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk> to start, they say that the deadline for a **Postal Vote** is April 20th (& for a **'Proxy vote'**, that's a week later, April 27th).

DRAYTON HALL NEWS (-ish)

The Govt's 'Four Steps' plan documents are horrendously complex, I suspect the Civil Servants who cobbled it all together might struggle to fathom it all out.

Step 2 is listed for April 12th, Children's activities are then OK (limited size groups), and things like 'personal care' premises can re-open, also zoos, etc.

Step 3 (May 17th) suggests that Adult indoor group sports & exercise classes can restart – but quite a few things have a 30 size limit.

Step 4 (June 21st) is they hope the major 'green light'. BUT – all these dates are subject to change!!



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OR phone 07909 176 061;

District (VofWH) Andy Cooke (07507 602911)
& **Oxfordshire County** richardwebber777@gmail.com



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FIRST TUESDAY CONNECTIONS

Are you feeling lonely, isolated or in need of some friendly company? Now, in these COVID affected times, the USUAL monthly tea and chat afternoons have had to be suspended, **BUT** the 'support group' aspect is continuing, by phone, with a volunteers rota calling round, at least once per week.

If you'd like a chat, with a friendly sympathetic voice, please call me (**Jean Hager**) on **531558**.

LISTINGS

Oxfordshire Craft Guild have their **Spring Exhibition** this month, (in these strange times, it's now a VIRTUAL show!), so, visit <https://gallery.ocg.co.uk> and check out what's on offer. Some **terrific items**, all **handcrafted**, local, **high quality** and **unusual gift options**, inc jewellery, ceramics, glass, textiles & more. On until April 30th.

The **Hawk Conservancy** (near Andover) are able to reopen on April 12th, and besides their usual offerings, they have a number of evening events. See <https://www.hawk-conservancy.org> & then add on [/2021/03/02/training-with-irwin/](https://www.hawk-conservancy.org/2021/03/02/training-with-irwin/) for a terrific description of rearing a young bird (a 'black kite'), right through its training to join the flying display birds!

KENNINGTON MEMORY CLUB - ("living well with Dementia") – tell us they hope to **REOPEN their Day Centre** asap under Govt guidelines, late-April or early-May, in a safe and controlled environment. Existing, and potential members' carers should contact Helen on **07853 883496** or view their website at kenningtonmemoryclub.org.uk

Slightly Off the Wall?! (actually, ON the wall. . .albeit a VERY long French wall) you can now explore the **BAYEUX Tapestry** online, complete with an English description of what's actually being depicted!! (There's also a Victorian copy at Reading Museum, when it's reopened of course – see their <https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk> for details, and there is some online help these days). For the original though, get to: <https://www.francetoday.com/culture/explore-the-bayeux-tapestry-online/>

FOSTER CARERS NEEDED

Could you foster? The demand hasn't gone away with Lockdown! We need **short term and long term** foster carers as well as carers who can just help out for weekends and school holidays for children of all ages from babies to teenagers.

Foster carers receive a comprehensive training and support package along with financial support. **We need a diverse range of people** with different skills and qualities so that more children are placed in the right home, first time.

The package includes:- a fostering fee, recently increased, so **up to £569** per week paid in addition to fostering allowances; local training and unlimited support from a dedicated fostering team; relief care; 24/7 telephone help line; regular support groups; birthday and holiday payments; free membership of Fostering Network. Their website has comprehensive info:-

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/fostering or please call **0800 783 5724**. Types of placements are both short & long term and include sibling groups. And you can check for updates on their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/FosteringinOxfordshireOCC/

There's a range of different fostering schemes, and YOU just might make a big difference to someone's life?

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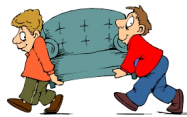
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NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

A very warm welcome to Kate and Richard Bridge, (plus Rachel & Ruth) who have moved into Abingdon Road (or soon will!).



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SIX TRADITIONAL KITCHEN 'HACKS' {Allegedly French hints, but probably grannies will say they knew of them here ages ago!}

GET RID OF BAD SMELLS

Put a bowl of white vinegar in the kitchen and it will absorb all those malingering cooking odours, from fish to onions to cabbage. Phew, that's better!

RESCUE OVER-SEASONED DISHES

If you've been a bit heavy-handed with the salt or the chilli powder, don't panic – peel a potato – pop it in the dish and leave it to do its work – it will absorb the excess spices. Just remember to remove the potato before serving...

PEEL ONIONS WITHOUT THE TEARS

Put some water in your mouth and hold it there while you chop your onions – the stinging tear gas will be absorbed by the water in your mouth rather than your tear ducts. [two other related hints were 1: when peeling an onion do not cut off the bottom of the onion (the root) so the eyes are not affected by the onion fumes, or 2: do that chopping under a hood vent – if you have one – which shifts the fumes away]

SOFTEN BUTTER QUICKLY

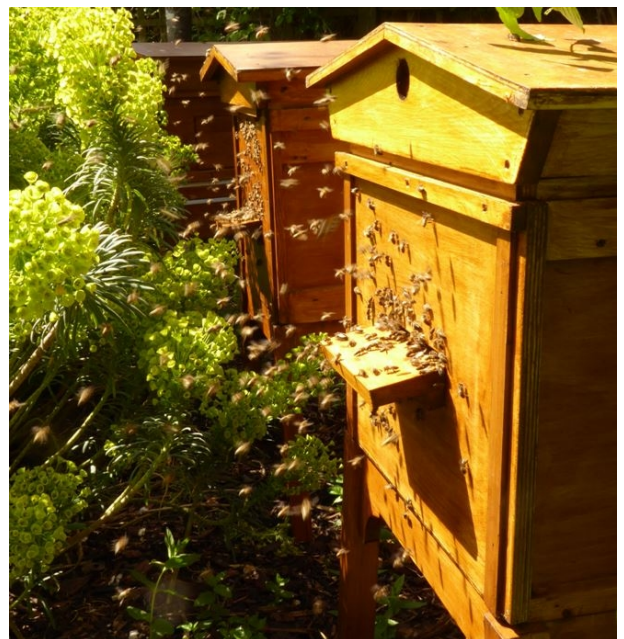
Need soft butter to make a cake and no time to wait for it to soften at room temperature? Or perhaps you just forgot to take it out of the fridge. Speed up the process by grating the butter and it's ready to use straight away. Several baking testimonials for the effects of this [AND -- If your buttery sauce splits, whisk in an ice cube, it will magically reform.]

STOP POTATOES SPROUTING

Pop an apple in with your potatoes and store them in a dry, cool, dark place and they will stay firmer for longer and won't develop those pesky sprouts.

MAKE FRUIT LAST LONGER

Take a cork, cut it in half and pop it in your fruit bowl – it will absorb the excess water from the fruit so it won't turn black and rot as quickly.



[Local bees reminding us that warmer weather's on the way]