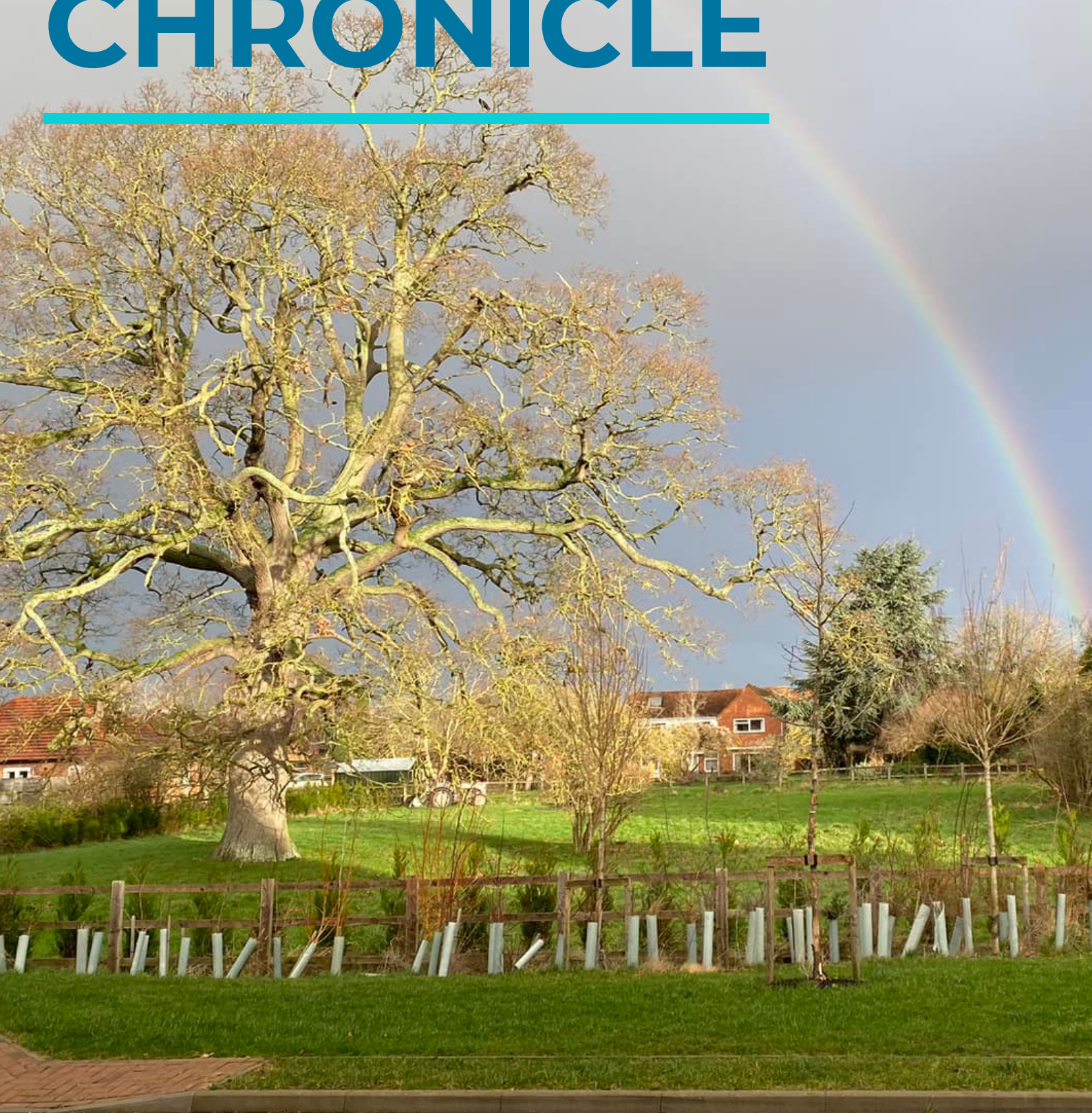

DRAYTON CHRONICLE



JAN/FEB 2024
VOLUME 47 ISSUE 1
EDITOR: BRIDGET PYNE

CHRONICLE INFORMATION

KEY DATES

The next Drayton Chronicle will be the March issue edited by Tony Holmes. Tel.: **01235 531180**

Issue	Deadline for contributions		Printed Chronicles available on:
	Advert	Editor	
February	16th	19th	1st March
March	15th	18th	29th March

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions to and advertisements in the Chronicle are very welcome. Please send us your letters, reports from village clubs and societies, articles, tips and advice, photos, suggestions etc. Please always include your name, address, and (in case clarification is needed) your phone number. Without names, we will usually not print an item at all. The editor reserves the right to place, edit, shorten or even reject contributions as required.

Please send your contributions by email to: **editor@draytonchronicle.net**

Advertisement requests should be sent to: **advertising@draytonchronicle.net**

If email is impossible, please place your contribution, typed or handwritten, in the Chronicle box outside Vickery's Hardware Store on Drayton Green, or post to Vickery's. 5 The Green, Drayton, Abingdon, Oxon. OX14 4JA. After the deadlines, only urgent items will be considered for inclusion and then only if emailed, or delivered directly to the editor's house, by the Wednesday following the deadline.

DISCLAIMER: This Journal is published in good faith and great care is taken in its completion. The organisers of the DRAYTON CHRONICLE, and its Agents, therefore accept no responsibility for OPINIONS EXPRESSED, nor for the validity of any ADVERTISEMENT.

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Requests for advertisements should (preferably) be emailed to Stephen Fearnley, the Chronicle advertising manager (**advertising@draytonchronicle.net**), or placed in the box at Vickery's. If you wish to discuss your requirements, please phone Stephen on **01235 531347**.

Note: deadline for ads is the Friday before the deadline for contributions (see top of page).

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The church remains open daily {Sun–Sat, 10- 3pm}
All information is correct at time of going to press.

SERVICES INFORMATION

Sunday	8:00am	Holy Communion BCP – 3rd Sunday only
Sunday	9:30am	Regular Sunday service
Thursday	9:45am	Holy Communion (1st & 3rd Thurs)
Thursday	9:45am	Celtic Morning Prayer (2nd & 4th Thurs)

PARISH REGISTER

Baptism

3rd December 2023 Jacob and Layla Tully.

YOU STAY WE PRAY

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28th Jan – 3rd Feb Church Lane; Henleys Lane;
Caudwell Close; Gravel Lane

14th – 10th Feb Abingdon Road; Oday Hill

11th – 17th Feb Binning Close; Haywards Road

18th – 24th Feb Sutton Wick Lane; Greenacres;
Newman Lane; Conifer Drive

25th Feb – 2nd March Hilliat Fields; Lyford Close

All are welcome to join us at St. Peter's for our
Christingle service on Sunday 28th January at
9.30 and our **Ash Wednesday service** which will
be held on 14th February at 7.30 pm.

ST PETER'S LETTER

This month both **Ash Wednesday** and **Valentine's Day** fall on the same day. The link between the two can be summed up in terms of the nature of real love.

Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, focuses on learning to love God more, as we give Him space in our lives. This is what Jesus found when He was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan. **(Luke 4:1-13)**. Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. Yet loving God and His word comes before satisfying physical desires. Satan tempted Jesus to worship him. However, worshipping God is an expression of loving God and serving Him. Finally, He was tempted to put God to the test, by jumping off the Temple. Real love for God does not put Him to the test, but wants to obey Him.

Lent also teaches us how to live out the love of God in practical ways, as we follow Jesus in the way of the Cross. We see this clearly demonstrated in the life and death of Saint Valentine. Valentine was a Christian who demonstrated the importance of sharing God's love with others. We know little about him, except that he was a priest who lived in the 3rd Century AD and that he was martyred on 14th February. Emperor Claudius felt that soldiers in the Roman Army were distracted from their duty by their wives, and so had attempted to outlaw marriage. It is believed that Valentine married couples in secret, which is why today we celebrate love on his day. In trying to understand the meaning of her revelations from God, Julian of Norwich found: *'What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was His meaning.'*

**The Reverend Helen Kendrick, Rector of the
DAMASCUS Parish**

First Monday	14:00	Knit & Natter No need to be a knitter, if you'd just like a natter.
Monday	19:30	Bellringing practice
First Tuesday	14:30	First Tuesday Connections All welcome for a cuppa & chat
Wednesday (term time)	10:00	Pebbles Baby & Toddler For more information contact: Draytonpebbles@hotmail.com

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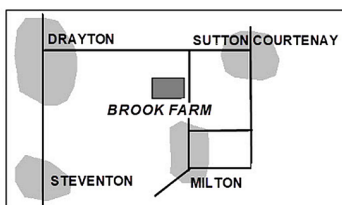


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DODDIE'S GRAND SLAM CYCLE EVENT

The Story

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is an appalling disease that currently has very limited treatment and no cure.

Doddie Weir, affectionately known as the Mad Giraffe, died from MND in November 2022 but not before the former Scotland rugby international and British Lion had brought MND into the public conscience and had inspired millions of supporters and fellow MND sufferers. Rob Burrow described his first meeting with Doddie as like joining a new team with an inspirational skipper.

Another who has been inspired by Doddie is local man Rob Drury-Dryden from Drayton. Rob is a former rugby player and was immediately drawn to the cause to find a cure for MND. Encouraged by a cycling friend Rob joined a group of riders cycling to Edinburgh in 2019 where he met Doddie for the first time. Since then Rob has started to cycle seriously and has completed a number of events to support Doddie's charity - My Name's Doddie Foundation.

The Event

In just a few weeks Rob will be undertaking the biggest of his challenges to date. He will be cycling from Murrayfield in Edinburgh to the Stadio Olimpico in Rome with the match ball for the Cuttitta cup that will be played between Italy and Scotland as part of the 6 Nations Rugby Championship. Rob and his 15 team mates have decided that just cycling to Rome from Scotland is a little tame so they are visiting each of the 6 nations rugby stadia. This means that the group will cycle 3000Km in 8 days across 6 countries.

As a local, and the route planner, for the group (who are called **Doddie's Gr4nd S7am team**) Rob has made certain that the cyclists will be passing through Drayton as they ride from the Principality Stadium in Cardiff to Twickenham in London on 2nd March. This is a wonderful opportunity to see the riders as they pass through the village and also show support for one of our own on this epic journey.

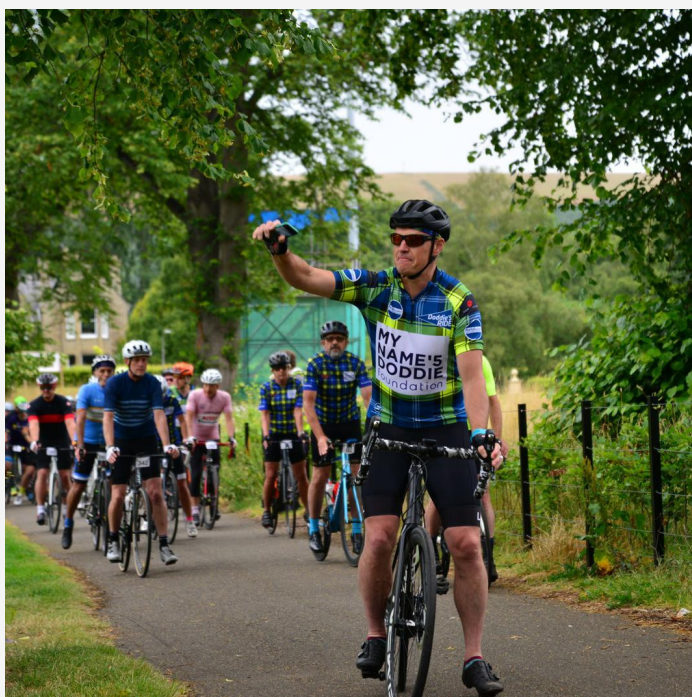
It is hoped that some of the team will be able to stop and those rugby fans amongst us could meet former internationals Roger Baird, Huw Davies and Paul Volley who are riding with Rob.

More Information

If you want to find out more about this event and the fund raising the Doddie's Gr4nd S7am team are doing please follow Rob and the team via the website <https://www.doddiesgrandslam.com/> where you will find links.

You will also find via the website a link to an initiative called Race 2 Rome where schools and clubs are signing up to a virtual ride to Rome - it will be very similar to what Rob and the team are doing except without the hills, the wind, the rain and the lack of sleep! It would be fantastic if you can get involved.

Rob Drury-Dryden



Doddie's Gr4nd S7am Team

Scan for all the info on our 3000km Scotland to Rome cycle challenge & donate via Just Giving





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DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Joint Local Plan Consultation

One of the most significant responsibilities of the District Council is that of planning. The Local Plan is the framework around which planning in the Vale is built. Many aspects of it are driven by requirements imposed by central Government, but we get to set the overall direction and theme under those requirements; it's one of the most crucial documents we ever get to write and pass into regulations.

We're doing it in consultation with South Oxfordshire (which is why it's now a Joint Local Plan, to avoid clashes and redundancy, and to ensure it's all robust. It should govern planning here until 2041.

Different options have been drawn up and the idea is that we meet those imposed requirements, meet the needs of our residents, protect and restore nature, and help address the climate emergency simultaneously. This is obviously going to be a challenge, which is why we need to hear from you – if we want to meet the needs of our residents, we have to hear the voices of our residents.

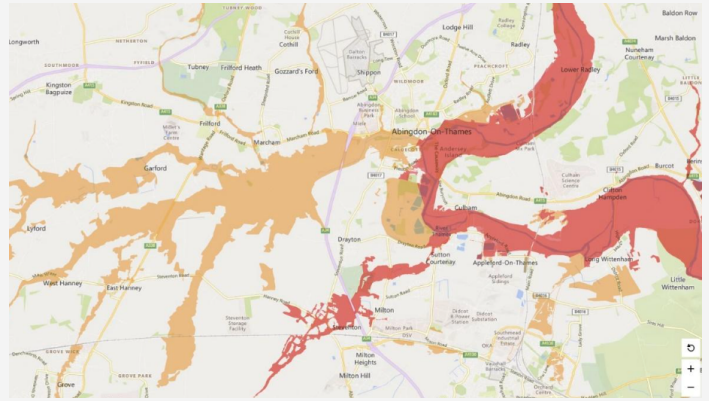
The consultation will run for six weeks, closing at 11.59pm on 21 February 2024. For more information, visit www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLP

There are also options to see and use paper copies in libraries and at the Council offices, and a number of drop-in events.

Flooding and SESRO

Whilst flooding is primarily covered by the County Council (OCC), and the floodwaters should hopefully have receded by the time you read this, residents affected by flooding can also potentially apply for government funding themselves on the gov website.

This does link into the ongoing South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) battle. Remember that a key missing piece of information is that SESRO is to be built on the floodplain that is used to drain waters away from our towns and villages? Thames Water have yet to share their new modelling that they claim shows that this will now somehow not have a negative effect (unlike all previous modelling for it over the past 25 years, which invariably pointed to a “red” risk of increased flooding in Abingdon and the surrounding villages).



For background, this is the area covered by flood warnings on the 5th of January this year. A huge chunk of that orange area would be under the mega-reservoir and its massive earth-walls. The water that otherwise should drain there (and build up there in this warning) has to go somewhere – so the floods we did see could easily be much worse (and more frequent).

Meanwhile, at the last Council meeting in December, we passed a motion opposing SESRO unanimously. Key takeaways were that we're requesting a meeting with the Secretary of State on a non-partisan basis with the MPs for Oxford West and Abingdon and for Wantage, GARD, CPRE, and the County Councillors affected as well as ourselves, to discuss the issues ignored by Thames Water to date and overall options for governance of the water system – because the latter could be crucial.

This is because water transfers – which are essential in the future and to create a long-needed National Grid of water – will need a governing authority to require the water companies to work together (they don't trust each other at the moment, which is potentially behind their resistance to the simpler, cheaper, more flexible, faster, and far more resilient water transfer schemes).

We're also requesting that the “RAPID” process be paused until the flaws and absent reports are addressed.

New Vale wards

The Local Government Boundary Commission are reviewing ward boundaries for Vale of White Horse. They're holding a consultation until 18th March 2024 and you can have your say at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/vale-white-horse>

Cost of Living

If you require help, here are the details for the Community Hub: 01235 422600 and email at communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

LETTER FROM WESTMINSTER



I know it has been a difficult start to the year for some local residents with the flooding that we have seen across the constituency. I have been in contact with the Environment Agency throughout and will be meeting with them to discuss the recent flooding and our flood defences, as well as with the Council about the measures they can take to prevent flooding. Please email me if you have anything that you would like me to raise with them.

I know that of particular concern has been the flooding on the A417. I have written to the Council about this many times and have pushed them again to do the work that they had planned to do on this and other roads. I also visited local businesses like Mellor's Garage and Vale Hydrotherapy in East Challow to talk about their experiences in the recent floods, how I can help and what more needs to be done. Mellor's in particular have been losing a lot of business while the road remains flooded so do support them and others affected if you can.

If you or someone you know has had their home or business affected by flooding, which I hope you did not, there is Government support available to help people recover. This support will be provided through local councils who will announce further details on eligibility and how to apply.

Please do complete my Local Roads Survey to share your experiences and thoughts with me about the issues on our roads, currently on my website at www.david-johnston.org.uk/RoadsSurvey. The more responses we receive, the better data we have to push for change.

From now until 31 March, working parents can get an HMRC code that will entitle them from this April to the first 15 free hours of childcare for their 2-year-olds. Visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk for more information. I am very proud to be overseeing this rollout, which is the biggest ever investment in childcare, as the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing.

Men's Sheds are community workshops which are doing great work across the country to tackle loneliness amongst men.



I visited one of our very own Men's Sheds in Sutton Courtenay to meet with founder Jon and talk to its users – who all said how much it has helped them. They are based in the grounds of the Abbey at Sutton Courtenay, and you can contact them at info@shedoxford.co.uk if you would like to get involved.

Speaking of the Abbey, they have recently recruited a very experienced French chef who is producing delicious food for visitors, which I was pleased to try on my visit there. Find out more at <https://theabbey.uk.com>.

As ever, if I can help with anything then do please get in touch via david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk.

David Johnson

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PARISH COUNCIL REPORT



Footpaths and Bridleways

It will come as no surprise to anyone in this village that we have had very wet weather and that some footpaths have been turned into impassable muddy messes. We are aware that there has been considerable surface water on Footpath 29 (past the old scrapyards) at points beyond where the footpath was resurfaced a couple of years ago. This will be given attention.

Please let the Parish Council (PC) know if you are concerned about other footpaths by emailing: clerk@draytonpc.org

Walnut Meadows

This is taking up much of the PC's effort and the ongoing issues cannot be fun for the residents of WM. With the exception of the planting of a wetland wildflower meadow, Miller Homes have completed Phase 1 of the landscaping works, i.e. replaced dead trees and hedging. The wildflower meadow will be planted in the Spring.

Negotiations are ongoing to agree the legal transfer of the land identified for the sports facility from Miller Homes to the PC. This has been, in part, held up by the PC wanting an undertaking that it will not be responsible for costs to bring the some roads up to standard for adoption by the County Council and clarification of future maintenance costs. The PC thinks it is important to protect village resources from maintenance costs in the future.

Once the PC is satisfied with their future liabilities, the transfer the land will be completed. The next step will then be to complete the archeological survey requested as part of the planning conditions.

The PC's Programme Manager is currently involved in drawing up a detailed design and a business plan for the sports facilities.

We are planning to hold a consultation with the village in the near future. This has taken longer than planned. The PC is well aware that sports facilities were an intrinsic part of the original planning permission for this site. Quite frankly this programme has been held up by Miller Homes' delayed compliance to the terms of the planning permission. We have tried to hold them to account to make sure that the land is ready for handover in a state fit for the development of the sports facilities but this has taken years.

Manor Farm

At the PCs request, Cala have now implemented the missing path from the public open space at Manor Farm. However, the repairs to the perimeter path are still unsatisfactory with membrane exposed in parts. The PC will also be ensuring that a review of the Hemlock takes place in early spring. We are really hoping that Cala can remove remaining Hemlock by hand pulling as we are well aware of the environmental effects of wide-scale chemical spraying.

The Dovecote

The PC has been contacted by a representative from Bloor Homes to improve biodiversity on the site. We have been offered a number of bird boxes. Whilst these are always useful, we think that there should be effort to replace some of the dead planting on the site, and improve the variety and quantity of planting. Bird boxes are great but we take the view that we can do a lot more to attract birds and wildlife to the area. The PC will be attending a meeting with Bloor Homes to discuss.

Traffic calming

A productive meeting took place with Milestone (OCC's Highway contractor) in early December. A number of traffic calming measures will now be taken forward to the design stage. A further meeting is planned for this month to review designs and costs. These plans include work on the Walnut Meadows junction, the crossing by Manor Farm and a crossing on the High Street. The PC has requested that the Vehicle Activated sign on the High Street is replaced. It has been broken for years. We don't have a date for when the new device will be installed.

Defibrillator

An additional defibrillator is to be placed at the side of the Red Lion pub. The PC is now consulting with the District Council to ensure that there is permission to place this on a listed building.

Parking on the High Street

The PC has been made aware of parking on the High Street by contractors who are working on the Halls Close development. There have been several 'near misses' as the visibility for those entering High Street from Church Lane is often really impaired. Andy Cooke, District Councillor, has been asked to take this up with the District Council.

Elaine Wade

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT



Happy New Year!

Flooding

In 2007, more than 100 homes in Abingdon had to be evacuated, some for more than a year. Problems with insurance companies and the overstretched environment agency were compounded by confusion over who was responsible for what. While some of those problems were addressed, the volunteers in the flood group began work on clearing Sandford Brook from Tescos to the Thames.

Clearing the debris and removing the dams caused by supermarket trolleys, bicycles, collapsed trees and branches and the like, it was not long before the brook was flowing clear and fast. Within a year, the gravel bed was clear and to date there has been no repeat.

Unfortunately, memories fade. The flood group is no longer operating for lack of volunteers. There is not the same sense of urgency as there was from 2007 to 2012. Flooding was more the concern of people in Gloucester and Cumbria than in Oxfordshire.

The recent heavy rain and local flooding have reminded us that we may have been lucky. Flooding is, of course, a regular occurrence in Sutton Courtenay but the statistics around the 2023 rainfall suggest that it exceeded 2007 measurements by at least another 10%.

Photographs of the B4016 and Ginge Brook suggest there is no room for complacency. Even more significant are photographs of the proposed land for the Hobbyhorse Lane development (the appeal having been granted).

It becomes ever more important that the drainage scheme for that development works and works well. As the development goes through the various stages of the planning process, it is going to be vitally important that the drainage plans are thoroughly challenged.

I would encourage all concerned residents to respond to the consultation on the developing South and Vale Local Plan 2041 to ensure that Flooding is taken fully into account.

The six-week consultation began on 10/1 and will run until midnight on 21/2 2024. Visit: southandvale.gov.uk/JLP to find out more and have your say.

Other urgent news

The "call in" hearing of the Hifl planning application begins on the 20th February at the Bee House on Milton Park. This is likely to continue for at least two weeks.

As a result of the recent Local Government settlement, it seems likely that OCC is going to have to find more than £10m of savings in order to balance its budget.

In spite of it all...

Happy New Year

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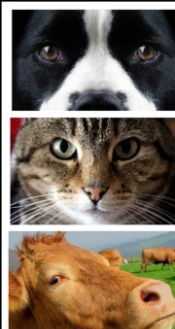
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LOCAL GROUPS AND CLUBS

DRAYTON WIVES

Before Christmas, we had a Bee-utiful talk by Mr Busby the local Bee man.

Mr Busby was interested in the keeping of bees since childhood, when no pesticides or chemicals were used. We learned, if bees aren't happy they will simply leave the hive and go somewhere else.

He shared the different types of bees:

- **Solitary bees;** which are ground bees, harmless, and move around as a family
- **Bumble bees;** where there are 25 varieties, they don't bite, and don't collect for honey.
- **Masonary bees;** which live in holes in the walls and keep away wasps.
- **Honey bees;** with 250 varieties in the United Kingdom.
- **Black bees;** the only protected bee.

The different jobs bees have:

- **Male** bees do the housework
- **Female** bees do the shopping which means collecting the pollen
- **Queen** bee is looked after and likes it clean

And the importance of flowers:

- Bee keepers like to know which flowers etc the bees are eating as it makes the honey tastes different.
- Bees find honey by sight as they have five eyes so they can see infrared and ultra violet. They look for certain colours in flowers as blue and purple have the most nectar ie plants like lavender will always attract the most bees.

As well as a huge host of other facts:

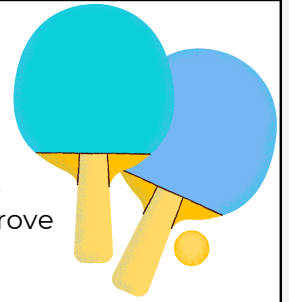
- There are **50-60 thousand bees** in a colony in the summer but in the winter the males die
- They can fly nearly three miles from the hive
- They are also very faithful to the Bee keeper because if he dies the hive has to be told!!
- Honey is a good anti inflammatory, anti microbial and promotes health body tissue, as well as protect against colds.

This was a short summary of an interesting talk where we learnt bees are a very complicated insect but are needed in our gardens. All the honey is local and Mr Busby can be found at Didcot and Abingdon Farmers market.

Lisa Lammiman, Chairman

DRAYTON TABLE TENNIS CLUB

As reported in the December issue this season's **Bidmead Cup** competition saw our team being drawn away to Wallingford. Having finished runners up last season we are hoping for the chance to improve this season.



It was a tough ask bearing in mind the Wallingford teams are currently first in both of the top 2 divisions. Our team of Matt Davies, Daniel Gifford, and Fred Marlin were given the task. I am very pleased to report that the team won through by a score of **358 points to 347 points**. So, the team is now into the quarter-finals stage. There is the possibility of a bye through to the semi-finals, this being due to an anomaly and the draw system.

In the Didcot league, our six teams continue to fare very well. The Artisans lie third in Division One, the Buzzards 3rd in division two and the Corinthians 5th in that division. In division three the Flamingos are third and the Eagles are 4th. I had previously reported the Dingoes aren't faring so well as our five other teams. However, their fortunes have turned around somewhat and they are a number of points clear at the foot of division, with three teams now below them.

We are hopeful that at least one of our teams can finish in the top two of their respective Divisions but there is a long way to go as we are only just passed the halfway point of the season. We have our fingers crossed although obviously not at the same time as playing.

John Gould, Chairman

'DOJANGX' KARATE GROUP

Our Drayton students have started 2024 strong with martial arts rank promotions!

Rank promotions are a significant accomplishment. Students are rewarded for their hard work and commitment towards improving their health and fitness goals, along with character building and learning valuable self-defence skills.

Our Drayton club offers classes for all the family in a friendly and supportive environment.

Our family class (6+ yrs old) is on Tuesdays at 7pm and Fridays at 6pm. We also offer kids-specific classes catered to age. These are: Little Ninjas (4-5yr olds) at 4.30pm on Fridays. Kids Class (6-12yr olds) at 5.10pm on Fridays.

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KATHARINE HOUSE: A CALL FOR HELP

Katharine House Hospice provides specialist palliative care for anyone over the age of 18 years with an incurable illness across north Oxfordshire.

They're now calling on supporters to pledge their support to the hospice this year and help ensure it can carry on!

Whether people want to try something new, give back to the community, take on a challenge, be more sustainable or get fit in 2024, the hospice has an initiative for everyone.

As part of its 'I Am Katharine House' campaign, the hospice is asking supporters to visit www.khh.org.uk/lamKHH and state what they will be doing for Katharine House Hospice (KHH) in 2024. They will then be added to a special KHH pledge page.

Some of the simple ways someone could support the hospice this year include putting some coins in one of the KHH collection bucket, visiting a shop, or making a one-off donation.

Or for those looking for something more on the adventurous side, the hospice is offering people the chance to take part in a host of bucket list activities such as: a 100ft Extreme Abseil off the tallest permanent abseil tower in the world; an adrenaline raising 160ft bungee jump at Bloxham Steam Rally; and an exhilarating skydive through the clouds from 13,000ft!

Other challenges include an extreme bike ride through the Cotswolds as part of Broughton Sportive, the gruelling Blenheim Triathlon, a 100km walk through the picturesque Cotswold villages and a hair-raising hike around some of London's historic haunts.

Karen Welsh, KHH spokesperson said: "It takes our whole community to keep the hospice going, and everyone who supports us, be it through fundraising, volunteering or working with us, becomes part of the Katharine House family. The I am Katharine House campaign aims to encourage more people to join that family. "It costs £12,995 every day to run Katharine House and every single thing our supporters do, be it big or small, helps us to raise these the vital funds we need to care for people affected by life-limiting illnesses.

How will you be Katharine House in 2024? Visit www.khh.org.uk/lamKHH to find out more about the 'I am Katharine House' campaign.

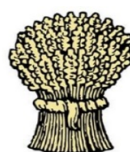


OPPORTUNITY: ARCH READING HELPER

ARCh volunteers work one to one with selected children in a primary school, close to their home or workplace, providing personalised support to boost confidence, build self-esteem and turn around negative attitudes to reading.

We are looking for more people to join us in making a real difference to children's lives. All volunteers are vetted (including enhanced DBS) and receive initial and ongoing training and support as well as resources tailored to each child.

If you would like to get involved as a volunteer or supporter, or if you work in a school and are interested in our service, please email info@archoxfordshire.org.uk



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Pork loin with mushroom sauce served with chips & peas.
Bangers and Mash served with garden peas & gravy

Desserts - Ask your server

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DOVECOTE DRAMA



The residents of The Dovecote, the new housing estate just off the High Street, have voted overwhelmingly to take control of the handover process when Bloor Homes Ltd is ready to walk away from the development.

This follows the residents being let down by Vale of White Horse District Council, when they failed to engage or inform residents that they had issued a Certificate of Practical Completion to Bloor Homes in April 2023.

Out of 140+ homes on the development, 102 homeowners voted (71% turnout) and 101 voted (99%) to take control.

When the Residents' Association informed Bloor Homes of this outcome, the developer refused to respect the views of the residents and re-affirmed its intention of handing over the public open space to FirstPort Ltd, which the residents have explicitly stated they want to avoid.

Bloor Homes joins Vale of White Horse District Council in failing miserably in treating their customers fairly.

As a result of Bloor's rejection of residents' wishes, the residents have now voted unanimously to request an EGM be called of the Management Company as soon as possible, with a turnout of over 60% in a vote that only lasted 36 hours.

The chair of The Dovecote Residents' Association said "We have now submitted a request to the Company Secretary to call an EGM of the Management Company. The residents have secured sufficient votes so there is clear justification for that EGM to be called, Resident Directors be elected and the residents should then be able to take control of the Management Company. But the Company Secretary (run by Innovus, which is controlled by FirstPort) is challenging the validity of this request.

"This is a classic example of an industry monopolised by one company, which attempts to take advantage of consumers that typically do not understand what they are getting into. Bloor Homes and FirstPort is focused on giving the residents, who are the most important stakeholder, no choice in the way they manage the public open space.

"What the public might not realise is that this is all very incestuous. Bloor Homes has a strategic relationship with FirstPort. FirstPort controls Innovus, which provides company secretarial services. Innovus is supposed to be representing the members of the Management Company, for which all homeowners are members of. But the Company Secretary appears to be more interested in protecting the money-making opportunities for FirstPort after handover".

The Residents' Association sees this as an opportunity for all parties to learn lessons about how to best represent residents in the way Section 106 agreements are delivered. So far, there is little evidence from Vale of White Horse District Council, Bloor Homes or FirstPort in wanting to improve.

Nigel Billingham

DANES: GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Danes Newsagents. Recently my wife and I had COVID and they were very helpful, including delivering our paper for no cost.

That reminded me that during the COVID epidemic they were also very kind and helpful, not just to us, but also to others in the village. I understand that they would deliver shopping and hold on to items for customers when they were in short supply. It was very much appreciated. I wish them well.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Fearnley

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GARD NEWSLETTER

At the time of writing (15th December) the Secretary of State for DEFRA (Stephen Barclay) has not made any decision on Thames Water's reservoir plans. So there is still time for you and our MPs to influence his decision.

If you sent your complaints to Thames Water in the consultation, and you feel that they have not answered your points, or you want to write against the new, larger, project, then we urge you to follow GARD's example and write to the Environment Agency and/or Ofwat and complain about TW's attitude. This is the best way to get your point across now (before EA and Ofwat produce their advice for Stephen Barclay).

Email your complaint to:

Environmental and water quality issues:

- water.resources@defra.gov.uk **or** Water-Company-Plan@xn--environmentagency-0z2j.gov.uk

Costs to customers, leakage and water efficiency issues:

- wrrmp@ofwat.gov.uk

Don't forget to copy in your MP.

Support from Councils and other organisations

Oxfordshire County Council have written to DEFRA citing unresolved issues from the consultation (see above), as have Steventon Parish Council and CPRE.

There was good support for the anti-reservoir demonstration, organised by East Hanney and Steventon's county and district councillor, Sally Povolotsky, at East Hanney, outside the Thames Water 'drop-in' event on the Reservoir on 10th November. Inside the drop-in, it was the usual 'brochure stuff' from TW, no proper details of the design, or about the 10-plus years of disruption, but lots of pictures of butterflies and birds in unspecified locations.

GARD remain absolutely convinced that there will be major damage to biodiversity by the reservoir project. We are taking legal advice on whether Thames Water's Environmental Assessment of the project, which we know to be flawed and biased, is actually illegal, not meeting the standards set down by the government.

Both the County Council and the Vale of White Horse have passed unanimous council motions re-affirming opposition to the Reservoir, asking for talks with the Secretary of State, and for the reservoir plans to be suspended until issues have been resolved.

GARD supports these calls. Thanks to those councillors who proposed and seconded the motions: at the County, it was:

- Sally Povolotsky and deputy Council Leader, Peter Sudbury
- At the Vale it was Robert Clegg (Marcham District Councillor) and Andy Cooke (Drayton District Councillor)

Details for contacting your MP

- If your MP is David Johnston, Wantage (covering Grove, Steventon, East and West Hanney, East and West Hendred, Ardington, Drayton, Garford, Marcham, Milton, and Sutton Courtenay) you can contact him at david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk
- If you live in Abingdon, you can support your MP Layla Moran's opposition – and seek her support layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

Please copy gard.secretary@gmail.com into any correspondence.

See the website for developments:
<https://www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk/>

Derek Stork
Chairman GARD



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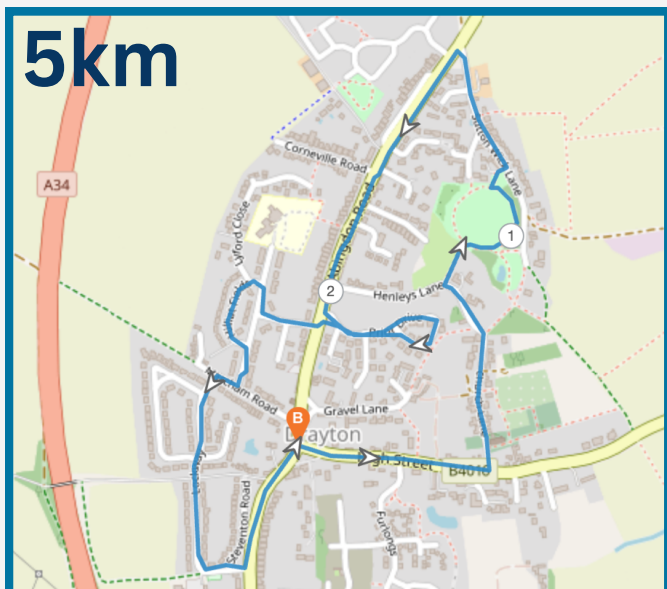
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NEW YEAR, NEW ROUTE



With the dawn of the new year comes a surge of fresh habits, and a popular one is running! Whether you're a seasoned runner or a newcomer here are some of the best routes in and around Drayton.



Kick off your run with the trusty 3k route – flat, sometimes muddy, and a medley of road and trail. It's the go-to pick if you're hankering for a quick countryside fix. If mud isn't your thing, the 5k route sticks to footpaths and roads, ensuring a clean and straightforward run. And for those craving a bit of everything, the 10k route combines footpaths with fields, delivering that perfect mix of urban and countryside charm throughout.

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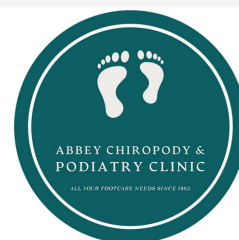
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A CHRONICLE COUPLET

It was funny
It was funny
I know I shouldn't laugh
But it was really funny
Then I felt crass
Was I enjoying someone else's misery
Indeed I was
But it was really funny
Do you know what I mean?
I had to turn away
I really couldn't stare
But it was really funny
Sometimes you just don't care.
You turn your face away
It doesn't help you much.
The image comes flooding back
And your uncontrolled giggles comes back.
You almost choke to breathe
You are gasping for breath
It's all you can do not to scream out loud
It was really funny
I am sorry to say
It tickled my ribs in just the right way
It was really funny.
What's that you say?
What was really funny?
Do you know I can't just say.
But it was really funny.

[No one was harmed, insulted, ridiculed or embarrassed in the writing of this poem.]

Susan A Baird

People watching

I guess
All things considered
I could be classed as a people watcher.
There's no sin in that.
As a writer
I am by nature an observer of life
Of all life.
I watch and anticipate what people will do
How they might react.
I am often amazed by an individual's kindness or grace.
I am equally often shocked by selfishness and greed.
I will often reflect on why one person is this and another that.
It can sometimes drive me mad.
I ask my self, all things being equal
Why is there such a gap.
How can one give unconditionally
Yet one can hoard and consume the last scrap.
How one person can hold open a door Another let it slap your face.
We are definitely complicated
We the human race.

Susan A Baird

DRAYTON HALL NEWS

We've another **Antiques Fair**, Sunday Feb 4th, that's with Kathy Head running her excellent value cafe for one of her good causes (lovely breakfast!) -- and the mention of that hirer brings me back to the weird sabotage attacks.

Those vandalism attacks included trying to sabotage cars, and that could have led to a serious accident, possibly fatal, and did get the Police more interested. An interesting image was caught on camera, and we heard back from the Police after they paid a relevant visit. It was claimed that they'd visited the hall car park around midnight (the night of a particular attack) to "look for their daughter's missing sock", having "attended a fireworks party" – which we didn't run. So, midnight, dark car-park, small sock. Clearly hadn't rehearsed a better excuse?! We're still baffled about WHY it all happened, so if anyone can give clues, PLEASE DO let us know! See www.draytonvh.co.uk.

Our **Bowls Club and Sequence Dancers** have gained a couple of new members, but are always keen to get some more, and we also have two **badminton** groups on a similar quest, one on Weds afternoons, the other one is Monday evenings, the latter has traditionally been for Ladies (but does accept Gents, come on lads, don't be shy!) and they say they're to a "reasonable standard" – but I was always so bad at that game that a reasonable standard to me was just being able to hit that wretched feathered thing at all?!!

Plus -- **PARENTS** -- if your children might like to try **Irish Dancing** (think 'Riverdance' perhaps?) **Ashleigh** has her class on Tuesday (early) evening waiting for you? And Sabrina's **Karate class** ('DojangX' variety) has now expanded from Friday evening to add a Tuesday class (follows Ashleigh), she has sessions just for kids, but ALSO a 'Family' class. Free trials I gather, for both.

And a NEW CLASS just starting, '**KEEP FIT with FAYE**', Friday mornings, 11am. She runs similar classes in nearby villages, her F'book entry says :- "Boost your strength, flexibility, core & pelvic strength, coordination, cognitive skills, and confidence!" Also:- "Aimed at retirees, (seated if you like) no matter your current fitness level". And, "You pick the music, Faye creates the moves". Her sessions are just £6.

Oh, finally, a belated 'Happy New Year' to the as-yet mystery benefactor (?!) who kindly filled in most of the potholes in the car-park, certainly the worst of them, which had appeared and got sharply worse in all that rotten weather before Xmas. GRATEFUL THANKS!!

Tony Holmes

DRAYTON DIARIES

All events held in Drayton Hall unless otherwise stated.

To book the Hall email Tony Holmes at bookings@draytonvh.co.uk or call on (01235) 531180. See the website: www.draytonvh.co.uk

Sun 4th	9.00am	ANTIQUES FAIR (to 3pm)
Sat 10th	All day	Private Function (all day)
Sun 11th	1.00pm	Private Function (child's party)
Tues 13th	7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting (Caudwell DC)
Sat 17th	9.00am	Private Function (dog show)
Sun 18th	1.00pm	Private Function (child's party)
Mon 19th	5.00pm	Chronicle Deadline

REGULAR EVENTS

Weekly in Drayton Hall unless stated otherwise. [## = Small Hall in Village Hall]

NB PLEASE – if an entry is wrong – DO tell an editor (page 2)

MONDAYS	
2:00pm	Short Mat Bowling Club Session
6:00pm	Damascus Youth ##
7:15pm	Badminton (Private Group)
7:45pm	Bell-ringing (St Peter's)
TUESDAYS	
9:30am	Pilates (via Alexandra Merson 07788 248925)
1:45pm	Drayton Art Group (Caudwell DC)
2:30pm	Tuesday Connect (Church)
5.30pm	Irish Dancing (Ashleigh - 07375 878445)
7:00pm	Karate/'Dojang X' session (Sabrina 07938 537310)

WEDNESDAYS	
10:00am	Pebbles Baby Group (Church)
1:30pm	Whist Drive (Caudwell DC)
1:45pm	U3A Science/Tech, 1st Weds (07890 385931) ##
2:00pm	Drayton Wives (Last Wednesday, most months) ##
2:15pm	Badminton
6:30pm	Brownies (term-time / Laura 07916 459435) ##
7:00pm	Short Mat Bowling Club Session
THURSDAYS	
9:30am	Parent & Toddler Group (Now back on Thursdays!)
9:45am	Holy Communion (**) (St Peter's Lady Chapel)
11:00am	Baptist Café (to 1pm) NOW IN >> (Caudwell DC)
2:00pm	Short Mat Bowling Club Session
2:00pm	Crafts Group (2nd Thursday -Call Kate 01235 550486) ##
5:30pm	Rainbows (girls 5 to 7 yrs) ##
7:30pm	Sequence Dancing (Brian - 01235 531701)
7:30pm	Women's Institute Meeting (2nd Thurs) (Caudwell DC)
7:30pm	'Community Choir' (2nd/4th Thurs) Church Room
FRIDAYS	
11:00am	(NEW) Keep Fit with FAYE (07815 583591)
4:15pm	Karate/'Dojang X' sessions (07938 537310)
7:15pm	ShikiDojo Martial Arts (Paul - 07479 824887) Check before attending! ##
SUNDAYS	
(**)	For all the latest info re their Services (Thursday communion, & especially Sundays), PLEASE see our St Peter's Church page
6:00pm	Evening Service (Baptist Church)