

DRAYTON CHRONICLE



Volume 49 No. 5

June 2026

Editor - Tony Holmes

(Photo-info P2)

COMING CHRONICLES

The **July Chronicle** should be ready for distribution on or about **June 26th**.

The **EditorS (!)** will be **Vicky Billingham & Gaston Legris**. **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 pm, Monday, June 15th**.

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

NB - ADVERTISERS - PLEASE note that the ads deadline is **EARLIER, Friday June 12th** due to their preparation time.

NB :- Can we politely remind Contributors** that the above **deadlines** are exactly that; in general, **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!)

for the next editor → editor@draytonchronicle.net

Please Note that the **Chronicle editor emails 'Inbox' is NOT monitored 24/7**; you may therefore not get an immediate confirmation reply. This isn't a daily paper with paid staff!

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 #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 2026, should be a way to type & send it?! (= fewer errors!).

ADVERTISING RATES

For Block Advert (about 1/12th page)

- - - Number of Monthly Inserts - -

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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





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This Month's Cover – see p12, re **FORGE Cottage**.

Chronicle News (Ins & Outs!) >> **GRATEFUL THANKS** to those who responded to our recent appeal for 'new blood', that's (in no special order) **Polly & Julian Bennett, Stuart Payne, Gaston Legris and Nigel Billingham**. Gaston is due to join the editing team (see the LH column!), the others are intended to take on a shared role to look after the Chronicle's Advertising. Here we should say we owe a massive vote of thanks to **Stephen Fearnley**, who's 'stepping back' after doing a terrific job with our ads for the best part of **20 YEARS!**

On the editing front, also a **big THANK YOU** for **Bridget Reid**, who's also stepping away, due to job and family demands.

AND – this is due to be **MY last edition**, as after some 33 or 34 years (? – can't recall, memory isn't what it used to be?!), the editing process takes too long, and is just too tiring!

When I got recruited (dear old Harry Bisby, & Geoff Long - RIP both) we had bits of paper produced by typists (remember typewriters?!), then pasted into a big book for the printer. An issue was only 8 or 10 pages, much easier! After a year or two, we acquired an **Amstrad computer**, it got moved round to each month's editor in turn! [Later we got one each!]

DATES for FOLLOWING Chronicles

Issue for	Copy Deadlines :- to Editor (& Ads on the Fri before)	Chronicle published and available for distribution:-
Aug	Mon July 20th	Friday July 31st





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Local Groups & Clubs

Drayton W.I.

At our meeting on Thursday 14th May, members of Drayton WI welcomed **Bruce Wakeling**, who gave a very informative talk on **estate planning, wills and lasting power of attorney**. The subject prompted plenty of interest and discussion, with many members asking questions and leaving keen to find out more.

During the evening, we were also pleased to announce that Drayton WI has contributed to the **OFWI Memorial Fund** in memory of the late **Ann Webb**. To honour Ann's remarkable contribution to the WI for over 60 years, an engraved vase has also been commissioned (see picture below) which will be on display at all WI meetings

We are now looking ahead to our June meeting, when **Chloe Martin** will be joining us to lead a session on 'Junk Journaling' (Ed:- I'm told it's a bit like scrapbooking!).

We always welcome visitors, so please do come along and see us if you can. Our meetings are usually held on the **second Thursday of each month** at 7.30pm in the Caudwell Day Centre, Gravel Lane.

Georgina Arnold (Secretary, Drayton WI)



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(*‘Locally’ – Didcot mkt – NOW up on the Broadway - has a terrific fishmonger, always sells well, freshly caught fish & crabs, up from Selsey in Sussex – not much sea round here!). NB:- The Abingdon one is under the Thames Valley Farmers Markets banner.

JUNE Dates Ab'don (3rd Fri) 19th; Didcot (2nd Sat) 13th

TVFM news - ring 01235 227266 see website - Tvfm.org.uk

Drayton Table Tennis Club

Summer will soon be with us and for us ping-pong players it dovetails with the season end. Our seven teams competing in the Didcot League's 3 divisions have all competed well but sadly there was no silverware this time. The Galahs in their first season came closest in losing their semi-final of the Handicap Shield. They overcame Drayton Flamingos in the Quarter -final. **On the plus side none of the teams suffered relegation!**

The Artisans and Corinthians finished 4th in Divisions 1 & 2 respectively. They were our best performers. Buzzards in their first season in the top Division were a commendable 9th of 12. Our other division 2 teams Dingos and Eagles (in their first season in the division) finished 6th and 9th respectively. Division 3 saw the Galahs finish 10th and Flamingos 12th. Both with mostly novice players. They can now consider themselves to be seasoned players and will hope to improve next season.



Club practice / social play will continue every Monday evening (at Thameside school) from 7- 9pm until further notice.

Finally, the 32nd club senior championships were held on 17th May and I will report on the results in a future issue.

John Gould

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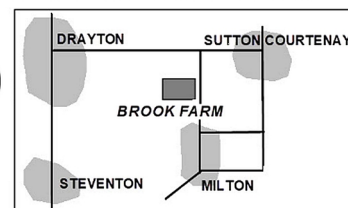
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The church remains open daily {Sun – Sat, now 10 – 4pm}

REGULAR SERVICES INFORMATION

Everyone is warmly invited to join us

Sunday	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP – 3rd Sunday only , with Prayers for Healing);
	9.30 am	Regular Sunday service ; 1st & 3rd Sundays Holy Communion 2nd Sunday Family Service (3rd Sundaywith Healing Prayer) 4th Sunday Morning Praise
Thursday	9.45 am	Holy Communion – or . . . Celtic Morning Prayer (2nd Thurs).

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Mondays	2.00 pm	Knit & Natter (to 4pm – First Monday) And you don't have to be a Knitter for a Natter!
	7.30 pm	Bellringing Practice (each Monday)
Tuesday	2.30 pm	FIRST Tuesday Connections – ALL welcome for a cuppa & chat (runs to 4pm)
Weds	10.00 am	Pebbles Baby & Toddler Group (term-time) For more information contact Katy or Cheryl Draytonpebbles@hotmail.com

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

PLEASE SEE

>>> Pages 9 and 10 for details of Helen Kendrick's Leaving Service (Sutton C'nay, Aug 30th), and a SURVEY re New Rector, and how this Ministry should develop (it's YOUR Parish!).

YOU STAY WE PRAY (June)

May 31st – 6th Lockway
7th – 13th Whitehorns Way
14th – 20th Corneville Rd; Crabtree Lane; Lesparre Close
21st – 27th Drayton Rd; Milton Rd; New Cut Mill; Meads Close
Fisher Close; Marcham Rd; Rippington Court; Stone Hill
28th – July 4th Steventon Rd; Kiln Lane;
Mott Cottages; Barton Court

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PARISH REGISTER

No entries

From the DAMASCUS Parish Ministry Team

"To know how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much they make of the thought of being God's child and having God as their Father." (J I Packer, 'Knowing God', 1973).

This month we celebrate **the importance of fathers on Father's Day**. This is often overshadowed by the commercial explosion of 'Mother's Day' earlier in the year. And, unlike Mothering Sunday, this doesn't have a distinctly Christian origin. However, it does provide an opportunity to celebrate God's Fatherhood and what it means for us. I am very fortunate to still have my Father still alive aged 89, and who is always one of my biggest supporters and encouragers. Whilst human fathers may not be perfect and some of us may have difficult relationships with them, the relationship between God and Jesus is something we can all aspire to and learn from. At His baptism, when Jesus came out of the water we are told by the Gospel writer, Matthew that: 'heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased'. So what do we learn about Jesus' relationship with His Father, our relationship with God and the role of fathers?

The Father's presence

When Jesus was baptised, the Father was present in the Holy Spirit. It's the Spirit who enables us to address God as daddy ('abba', Galatians 4:6) in an intimate way. God is present with us and understands our joys and sorrows, fears and trials. Ideally Dads should relate to their children like this.

The Father's love

The Father described His Son as 'beloved'; like us, Jesus was the subject of God's unconditional love. Dads should strive to assure their children of their unconditional love.

The Father's pleasure

The Father tells Jesus that He is 'well pleased' with Him, as He embarked on His public ministry. We need to hear this as well, especially when we feel that we are disappointing God or letting Him down. We should also be aware of the effect of our words spoken to our children. Dads should be using every opportunity to encourage, affirm and demonstrate their pleasure in their children.

So this Father's Day let's celebrate and give thanks for our Dads and make sure they know how much we appreciate them and all that they do for us. And, also remember to pray for those who have difficult relationships with their Fathers and those who are not able to be part of their children's lives..

With love & prayers,

The Reverend Helen Kendrick

(Rector of the DAMASCUS Parish)

Local Groups & Clubs

Drayton Wives (Lisa Lammiman)

This months meeting was the Annual General Meeting, which can be quite serious, however we had a lovely floral demonstration by local florist **Jack Matthews** from Sutton Courtenay to start with.

He showed us how to balance the flowers to get the best look and how to create the traditional 'triangle' arrangement. The design was quite large as it could go onto a pedestal or a good centre piece for a table. He completed it in about 20 minutes which showed how professional he was -- it would have taken anyone else a good hour!!

We then had the serious part of the meeting where we went over the year's highlights (lots of them) and elected our new committee.

The chair will now be **Ruth Hudson** who will have lots of new ideas for the New Year. If anyone would like to join and knows Ruth please get in contact with her. We also have **outings, coffee mornings and craft mornings**.

We are a **very friendly group** and we are looking for **new members** to join us. Why not come to a **coffee morning** on the **second Monday of the month** at the Caudwell Day Centre at 10.00am?

Lisa Lammiman

Letters to the Editor

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

Seen on an American 'Blog'

I keep hearing people ask, "Is America ready for a woman president? Or a gay president?" Funny thing is I never heard anyone ask if America was ready for an incompetent, vindictive, mentally unstable, misogynistic, homophobic, racist, traitorous egomaniac and yet, here we are.

Neighbourhood News – we rarely hear now, since the Chronicle Agents don't need to sell tickets for the former Lottery game, of any folk moving in or out of the village. **But if you hear such news** (& the people are OK with it publicised of course!) then do please let us know!

The New MAP



(more pics on later pages)

Vehicle Crime Strategy

Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber, has pledged a hostile environment to those who seek to commit vehicle crime in Berks, Bucks, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes as he launches a **new strategy to tackle vehicle crime**.

Developed in partnership with Thames Valley Police, the Vehicle Crime Strategy aims to reduce harm and prevent offending with a focus on five key pillars; **Prevention, Collaboration, Data and Intelligence, Enforcement and Trust and Confidence**.

He said: "This strategy delivers on the commitments to drive down vehicle crime across Berks, Bucks, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes. Having your vehicle stolen, or something stolen from it, isn't a trivial crime – it can result in substantial financial loss, emotional stress and, depending on where the theft took place, security and community safety concerns.

"Whilst we have seen a reduction in vehicle crime across Thames Valley, with almost 2000 less incidents of theft from or theft of a motor vehicle in 2025 compared with 2024, there is more to do.

"This strategy places prevention at its core, alongside improved crime recording, closer collaboration with our partners and industry and a robust policing response."

"By working closely with Thames Valley Police and using the full breadth of tools and partnerships available to us, we will ensure that the Thames Valley remains a hostile place to those who seek to commit vehicle crime, protecting those who rely on their vehicles for their daily lives."

The Vehicle Crime Strategy was launched at a **tool marking event** in Bracknell. **Tool marking for tradespeople** is one of the key deliverables within the Vehicle Crime Strategy.

ANY VILLAGERS carry TOOLS about?!!

Tradespeople are significantly more likely to experience vehicle crime because their tools are seen as high-reward, low-risk targets for thieves. According to statistics from Wickes, 4 in 10 tradespeople have experienced tool theft across the UK.

Matthew Barber said: "**Tool marking is one of the simplest ways tradespeople can protect themselves from tool theft**.

"Since March, my office has distributed over 500 **SelectaDNA tool marking kits** to electricians, plumbers, carpenters and other traders across the Thames Valley, increasing the number of tools marked, making them less desirable to thieves and protecting more tradespeople's tools and livelihoods."

Next PC Meeting

Now **Monday** evenings (2nd of month – so next it's **June 8th**, in the Caudwell Day Centre (Gravel Lane), 7pm. **All residents are welcome to attend**, and raise issues within the public participation item early in the meeting.

The agenda is published on the PC website prior to meetings. NB Parking IS a bit limited near the CDC, so if you attend, & can walk or bike there, please do?!

The Council met on May 11th >>>

Walnut Meadows

Several residents of Walnut Meadows have asked the Council **questions about aspects of the sports development.**

Q- Is the pumping station capable of managing the outflow from the proposed new sports pavilion?

A- The Programme Manager Jon Fowler has ascertained from the original planning permission that the pump was designed to be able to cope with the outflow from the proposed pavilion. Jon has also discussed this recently with the management company and no issues have been identified.

Q- Will the Council pay for its use of the pumping station?

A- Yes, the Council have discussed this recently with the management company.

Q- Who is paying for the electricity used during the build and for the MUGA lighting?

A- The Parish Council have a separate meter and are paying for all the electricity used on the site.

Q- When will the building of the pavilion take place?

A- We hope to start the building in the Autumn of 2026.

Q- Is the Council determined to go ahead with the building of the pavilion as currently envisaged including the use of floodlighting?

A- Yes, we are committed to implementing the Neighbourhood Development Plan that the village overwhelmingly endorsed in a referendum. We have subsequently gained planning permission for all the features in the current design. This was part of the planning permission for the whole of the Walnut Meadows site.

In terms of progress, a temporary walkway has been created from the car park to the MUGAs, HERAS fencing has been erected along the length of the walkway to safeguard users from the machinery being used on the sports pitches and we hope to bring the MUGAs into use in the near future. The sports pitch contractor has completed 90% of the perimeter track. We are in the process of submitting a grant application to the Football Foundation for the supply of junior goals and nets.

A contractor engaged by Miller Homes has dug pits in some of the estate roads in order that CBR (California Bearing Ratio) testing can be undertaken. These tests are required by OCC Highways prior to the roads being rebuilt in preparation for adoption by OCC.

To contact any members of the Parish Council, all enquiries should be directed to the **Parish Clerk**, and messages will be 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. **Clerk@draytonpc.org**

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**, and details of other events in the village.



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Wayfinding map

An event was held on May 3rd to unveil the wayfinding map and to plant a dwarf walnut tree on the village green. **This was well attended and enjoyed.** We also enjoyed some wonderful walnut cakes! [Ed:- Thanks Pervin & her many helpers!]

Sutton Wick Pond

We are in the process of gaining further quotes to dredge and clean the pond. We are very grateful to a local resident for helping with this, and **also to Paul Caudwell for his offer of help.**

Drayton Youth Charity

We are extremely grateful for the transfer of the remaining £73,345.33 from the **Drayton Youth Charity** to the PC. A cheque was handed over by **Paul Caudwell** at the start of the meeting. **The money will be earmarked specifically to be spent on sport for young people.**

[Paul Caudwell gives the cheque to Richard Wade, PC Chair]



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Upcoming attractions include:- **(the new) Star Wars, Sheep Detectives, The Christophers, World Cup matches (no chucking things at the screen!), National Theatre live shows, Devil Wears Prada 2, and on July 8th a trip (hello gardeners!) to RHS Wisley.**

Firstly, a big shout out for **Sabrina's Karate class**, I hear that three of their first students will be testing this month, nationally, for their Black Belt. **GOOD LUCK!**

Second, **NEW CLASS, Art for Beginners**, first week in June, (Weds morning), see back page!

Next, Hall now has **CCTV installed**, and a **warning** to anyone who might be considering an energy supplier called **UGP (United Gas & Power)** who from late April has been trying to impose "missed Standing charges", with a mass of threats of court action and massive fees, BUT we discovered that this sharp/fraudulent practice is related to a meter that was the old Economy 7 rate (done with some 20 years ago!), and furthermore we found emails from 2020 confirming that the meter was officially marked as 'de-energised' & 'deactivated'. **Shark alert?!**

The **Hall C'tee AGM**, in May, returned all officers to their positions, but we'd love to hear from anyone who can help with day-to-day running, or in the imminent future with the schedule of planned improvements? **COULD YOU PLEASE HELP?** See the back page for contact details.

It's another **ANTIQUES Fair, Sunday June 7th**, 9am to about 3pm, and a few new stalls apparently, that's plus Kathy running her great value cafe for one of her good causes (lovely breakfast!). Another one on July 5th too.

Kathy is also running **Coffee Mornings** in Hall on **WEDS** mornings (10 to midday), all for good causes, not just tea, coffee and cake, but a well-filled bacon sarnie if you like!

Thanks to all those who brought clothes (and / or shoes) for the **charity bin** (in aid of the **Child's Air Ambulance**, a very good cause). BUT – partly due to the OCC's new and much criticised policy at recycling centres, we saw many bags dumped when the bin is full – **and that's officially 'fly tipping'!**

That BIN has now been REMOVED, due to that unsightly problem. **OTHER CLOTHING bins** are in the village, at the Red Lion and the 'Danes/Mace' shop, the local Tesco stores have them, and also at the Gainsborough Green shops. You can also **put clothes out, in a carrier bag, by your green recycling bin** (& in passing, small electricals in a bag on black bin day!).

Now, a shout out for our **TODDLER GROUP** (Thursday mornings), leader Tracey tells me that she has space for a few more little customers!

Our **Friday exercise classes** continue, **KEEP FIT with FAYE**, (11am for an hour --- seated if you prefer!). And mustn't forget **PILATES** (Tues mornings, Alex, she's been with us for ages), contact info on the back page.

Vaccines – can YOU help?!

The Oxford Vaccines Group (part of the Uni) and the Jenner Institute, are both constantly searching for volunteers (but PAID ones!) to help them **develop and test all manner of vaccines**.

Far too many to list here, and the requirements and payments differ greatly, but see their websites **www.ovg.ox.ac.uk** and **www.jenner.ac.uk**

They **GENERALLY** want people from 18 to 55, but occasionally seek pensioners (as now!), or toddlers at the younger end of the age scale!

Payments can be substantial – but may require quite a few visits.

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Helen Kendrick

You are Invited to Helen's Farewell Service
-- Sunday Aug 30th 2026 -- to be held at All Saints' Church Sutton Courtenay (10:30am). And it's to be followed by **a Bring and Share Lunch** in the River Room.



Come and help us say **thank you and goodbye** to the Reverend Canon Helen Kendrick as she retires from fulltime parish ministry, after **over 23 years** in Sutton Courtenay with Appleford and the DAMASCUS Parish.

Everyone is welcome to attend both the celebratory service and the lunch, but to help with catering please RSVP by July 31st to: Alison Budd alison@pbudd.me or The DAMASCUS Parish Office, All Saints' Church, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, OX14 4AE (or call 01235 847179).

If you would like to contribute to Helen's leaving gift then donations can be made online:

A/c: The DAMASCUS PCC Sort Code: 40-52-40.
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Or cash / cheque (payable to the DAMASCUS PCC) via the Parish Office (address above) by August 21st. Thank you.

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Reconciliation ?

Dear Editor, via email

My friend in the village tells me they've won a small prize in a **Poetry Comp** ('Peoples Friend' she said?) so I thought I'd share it, topic of "Reconciliation", the spec was 3 verses each four lines.

I'm reconciled - to growing old,
And the daily aches & pains;
But overall - I'm still not sold,
On an Op for varicose veins.

I'm reconciled - to a failing brain,
Memory that's now just a tease;
And I struggle to run for a bus or a train,
But sooner that, than a killer disease?

I'm reconciled - I have to confess -
That my patience, once famed has departed.
BUT if I hear one more "Dear", or worse an "Oh BLESS",
My reply will be far from lighthearted!

Regards, P. Sternbroke

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Village Event (Map!) Drayton Green 3rd May

The event was the unveiling of the **Wayfinding Map on the Village Green**, as well as the planting of a baby walnut tree, which so far is less of a tree than a small stick, but we all have to start somewhere.....

The event was really well attended, and against all weather forecasts, the sun shone and the temperature was perfect for a spring celebration. **Three members of the PC and our village caretaker spent the morning installing the notice board**, prior to the unveiling in the afternoon, by **Andrew Bax**, our esteemed village member who has contributed so much to the village in the past.

Kay Davies arrived with her band and erected the gazebos, which were used for the tea tent and for their lovely music. I must say that the **Drayton Choir**, which Kay directs, has gone from strength to strength in the years since I last heard them, under her excellent tuition. They serenaded us while the children planted the walnut tree, which was a great success.

We laid on a **treasure hunt** for the children which went down a storm, as well as **competitions and races**. The prizes also went down a storm, being Cadbury's Celebrations, and Walnut Whips and the last ones disappeared before you could say "ready steady....." [ED:- for some pics, see Page 14]

The tea tent was a great success, with baked walnut cakes made by ladies in the village (THANK YOU ladies!). The generosity of our attendees was staggering, considering the contributions for tea were entirely voluntary. I have handed over **£164.16 to the Parish Council** to help to pay for the event.

I would like to thank everyone who helped to make this event into the success it was, from the ladies who ran the treasure hunt and the drawing competitions, to the tea ladies, and of course Kay's choir and wonderful band.

I heard someone say "Let's make this an annual event!" We'll just have to dream up another excuse for a community event, but I'm sure I'll come up with something!

Thank you again one and all,

Pervin Shahin (Drayton PC)

St. Peter's Church

Church and Churchyard Tidy Up

Saturday 6th June
10.00 a.m. to 12 noon.

Do come along and help;
many hands make light work!

If anyone can spare just half an hour,
it would be much appreciated!

Refreshments provided.

SAD NEWS (Teresa Taylor)

Dear Editor, via email

Teresa Taylor, aged 72 years died peacefully at the John Radcliffe Hospital on May 5th 2026

Beloved wife, much loved mother, aunt and adored great aunt.

Funeral service to take place at St Peter's Church, Drayton at 1pm on Thursday June 11th.

Family Flowers Only Please. Donations are gratefully received for Cancer Research UK.

To make a donation, and for all enquiries, please visit www.tonksbrothers.com -- or call 01235 539444 / or 01865 736144.

Kind Regards, Emma Rose
Senior Administrator & Assistant Funeral Director
[On behalf of Tonks Brothers Funeral Directors Ltd]

Dane's / 'Mace' / FoDSA



Thank you very much for your lovely article about us [April Chronicle – detailing help re FoDSA fundraising, and a substantial charity donation]. We truly appreciate your kind words - it really encourages us to continue working closely with the village community and to support FODSA in every way possible.

We are always pleased to nominate FODSA for our supplier's charity contribution (MADL), as we know the funds go directly towards supporting the children in the village school.

We highly appreciate your hard work in improving the facilities and helping to raise the standard of the school. Your efforts are making a meaningful difference.

Further, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Mr Stephen (Fearnley) and the Editor for arranging and publishing that article -- we are truly grateful for their support.

We look forward to staying in touch and working together at future events.

Thank you once again for your thoughtful article.

Best regards,

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New Rector for The DAMASCUS Parish

The DAMASCUS Parish, covering Drayton, Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courteney and Steventon, will be looking for a new Rector after The Reverend Helen Kendrick's Retirement on 31st August.

A rector is a local church leader, responsible for guiding the spiritual life of a parish. They may support people through key life moments such as weddings, funerals, and baptisms, and provide a listening ear during difficult times. Rectors may help organise community events, work with local schools and charities, and contribute to the overall wellbeing of the village

We'd really appreciate thoughts & ideas from the wider Parish:- What qualities and skills a new Rector should have?

What are the needs of the Parish?

What would you like their Ministry to look like?

Please respond to Alison Budd – Churchwarden by 26th June alison@pbudd.me or post:- the DAMASCUS Parish Office, All Saints' Church, The Green, Sutton Courtenay, OX14 4AE



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Planning Legislation Changes

The Government have changed some Planning rules that impact directly on the powers of the District Council with respect to approving or, more importantly, refusing planning applications.

As I've mentioned (possibly far too often!) before, the Vale is mandated to follow a detailed set of legislation (and case law) when assessing planning applications, including the **National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan**.

The Government have decided to add to that:- ever since March 26th, if we, as the Local Authority, are minded to refuse a planning application for **150 homes or more**, the application must now be referred to the Secretary of State (SoS). They will then review the case and state whether we will be allowed to issue the refusal, or whether they intend to "call in / recover" the application (which means that they would take over the decision).

Even on smaller applications, when an application goes to the Planning Committee, if it chooses to overturn a recommendation for approval and so refuses the request, the application must then be referred to the SoS before any formal decision can be issued.

This does look to me to be quite a micro-managerial approach. However, we're advised that as **we have a 5 year housing supply** and that most of the applications we receive for over 150 houses are connected to already-allocated sites, we don't envisage there will be many sites where the referral will occur. I hope for the SoS's case this is also true for the 200-odd other Planning Authorities in the country, or the red box will get rather packed?!

Local Government Reorganisation

The LGR consultation has closed. We won't hear the Government's decision until late this year.

We have heard that the Government are setting up a "Greater Oxford Corporation" to support development in and around Oxford. Coincidentally on exactly the boundaries for "Greater Oxford" proposed by Oxford City Council in their Three Councils proposal (which is not compliant with the population figures given as a guidance). The Government have stated that this does not indicate any decision being reached on the LGR question here.

Beyond the unitarization, the new Higher Tier of Local Govt ("Strategic Authorities") is still in embryonic state. Locally, we've put forward Oxfordshire plus Berks to become a 'Mayoral Strategic Authority'. Whilst Buckinghamshire would likely be a good fit with us, it seems they have refused to engage with anyone.

Early indications are that a 'Foundational Strategic Authority' (with less powers) is being considered for us by Government, and they seem to want to jam Swindon in with us as well. More information as it becomes available (the Govt had been expected to publish its proposals last month, but we were then informed that they would be now delaying this until after the local elections, but as of the time of writing, we've still not heard anything). ➔

Community Repair Hub

Going up against the modern throw-away culture, the VoWHDC Active Communities team (ably supported by Abingdon and Witney College, Active Oxfordshire, UKSPF and local bike shop Pedal Power Cycles) are now running a **space to refurbish bikes and household items**, work on **projects together**, and **share skills**.

It's called **Shed Space** and is based at Ride Revolution HQ, Ferry Walk, Abingdon, OX14 5HR. It will initially run on a fortnightly basis (day to be confirmed soon), moving to weekly, offering a programme of events, workshops, and other activities. Email the team here:- active.communities@southandvale.gov.uk or see <https://www.facebook.com/SouthAndValeActiveCommunities>

Community Hub Support Once more, PLEASE **do not hesitate** to contact the Hub for support if you need it.

If you need help because you are struggling financially or if you are just finding life difficult, **the Vale can help**. Whether it's for practical support or just advice, get in touch:-

01235 422600 or communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

Website: whitehorsedc.gov.uk/costofliving

Office hours are 8.30am - 5pm Monday to Thursday, but 8.30am to 4.30pm on Fridays.

SESRO News

In the recent Vale Full Council, we unanimously passed a motion asking for "Targeted Consultations" with Thames Water over SESRO. I'm sorry, I can't bring myself to call it "**White Horse Reservoir**" --- I did learn that the Vale had considered asking for legal action over Thames Water unilaterally deciding to call it that without even asking us, as the District Council is so associated with the name "White Horse", but I'm told that the advice was that it would be costly to do and likely fail. Still, it was nice to learn that it had annoyed so many other people in the Council.

As they've said they want to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in November, and DCOs typically aim to have anything contentious or difficult cleared up in the Pre-Application phase, and as we are statutory consultees who will be asked if we're happy with the applicants pre-consultation, we're making it clear that we believe there are **a swathe of unanswered crucial questions**.

Such as the effects of Dam Breach, important aspects of Emergency Drawdown, Security, Flood Plain calculations, Traffic Planning and Construction Plan, Water quality, Biodiversity net gain & environmental aspects, and lots more.

They may ignore this, but if they do, they shouldn't be surprised at us pointing out to the Planning Inspectorate that we are NOT satisfied with the consultation process, and we will have plenty to point to in support of that.

All the best, Andy Cooke

(Cllr, Drayton Ward, VoWHDC)



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Forge Cottage (by Clare Kirk)

The Hyde Blacksmiths of Drayton

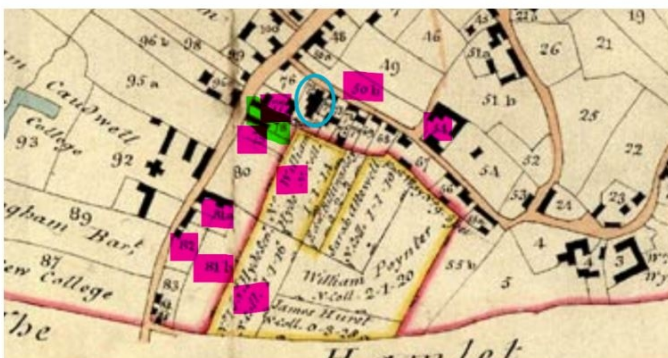
[NB >>> For a more detailed account of The Hyde Blacksmiths of Drayton visit digupyourancestors.com and read 'A History of Forge Cottage, Drayton'. Part 2 of the History of Forge Cottage will follow when I have time!]

Part 1: A blacksmithing dynasty

In 2018 I moved into my new house. Or rather, my old house. After years living in the States, where my oldest home dated from the 1920s, I was delighted to be the owner of 'Forge Cottage', especially as the keys to the house came with an envelope of historic property deeds, the personal memoir of a former occupant, and even an old photograph of the house in the downstairs loo! As the house's name implies, it was once the village blacksmith's — the village being Drayton near the ancient market town of Abingdon on Thames (historically in Berkshire but part of Oxfordshire since 1974).

In tracing my house history, I've discovered the identities of the people who gardened, lived and worked here from the Georgian era up to my arrival. **In this blog I'll be sharing the story of the extended family of blacksmiths who built the house and lived and worked here for most of the 19th century.** And in part 2 I'll write about the eclectic families that followed them in the 20th century.

The site of my house, Forge Cottage (55 High Street) was owned by one family of blacksmiths, **the Hydes**, for about 100 years. The Hydes were a prominent family in the village, many of whom were yeomen (landholding farmers). The first to become a blacksmith was probably John Hyde (b. c1731 - we'll call him John Hyde I) who was apprenticed to Joseph Hunt, blacksmith of Drayton, in 1748. After John Hyde I and his wife Hannah died just weeks apart in 1774 (their gravestone can be seen in the churchyard), their oldest son, John (John Hyde II), about 10 years old, was apprenticed to a woman master blacksmith, Martha Hanns of East Hendred. Martha was in her seventies when she took John on, but she lived to be 100!



Pink highlights show parcels of land close to my home owned or rented by the Hyde family in 1815. The green highlight shows the village's almshouses and the blue circle shows the location of Drayton's medieval church and churchyard.



John Hyde II purchased the land my house stands on in about 1826, from the Lord of the Manor, but he had already been renting it for at least a decade. The plot of land was a garden of one rood ($\frac{1}{4}$ acre). John was also renting a cottage nearby, but probably needed more land to feed his growing family. His first wife, Hester, had died just a month after the birth of their first child (John Hyde III) but he had four more children with his second wife, Martha.

When John Hyde II died in 1834 he left his smithing tools and stock of iron to his son Joseph. His eldest son John Hyde III had already been established as a blacksmith in Abingdon. John Hyde II also left a bequest of £20 for his young nephew, Stephen Hyde, the son of his unmarried sister Elizabeth, with the wish that Stephen would also learn a trade.

By 1841, Joseph was Drayton's blacksmith and Stephen, aged 11, was working under his supervision. Joseph must have been a well respected member of the community, as he was elected to serve as the Parish Constable (a role often given to blacksmiths due to their strength) and tax collector (unpaid roles). However, he was assaulted while carrying out his duties more than once, and a fellow villager also 'willfully broke the glass of [Joseph's] window'.

Joseph is probably the owner who decided to build a cottage and forge on the garden plot. In 1838, he was paying parish rates for three parcels of land, and his home and workshop were squeezed into the smallest. It's very likely he participated in the construction (which must have been between 1838 and 1851), at the very least producing nails and metal fittings. By 1851, the census indicates that Joseph was living and working next to the almshouses, where my house is located today. Stephen, a fully trained blacksmith, had already left to start his own family. In 1861, Stephen died at the age of only 30, leaving behind a widow and seven children. His oldest son, Isaac, aged 12, then joined Joseph at the forge. Isaac Hyde Buckell later became a blacksmith in East Hanney. [Ed:- continues>>]

More Forge Cottage (by Clare Kirk)

Part 1: A blacksmithing dynasty (cont)

Joseph never married, but had a long-time servant, Martha House. After her death in 1854 he hired a young woman called Thirza Giles, but she stole tea and sugar from him, for which she was sentenced to two months in gaol. Joseph died intestate in 1865, and probate was granted to his brother John Hyde II. A sale of Joseph's goods took place the next day at his home, including furniture, two fat pigs, home cured bacon, and a set of new iron harrows (a farming implement for tilling soil). John Hyde II had eight children, but only one surviving son, Jesse Hyde (b. 1839), and it was Jesse who took Joseph's place as Drayton's next smith.

After Jesse's death in 1888, his sons John (John Hyde IV, b. 1867), and Charles (b. 1874) ran the forge together. Another of Jesse's sons, Henry James, became a blacksmith in Cholsey, and a fourth, Harry, began an apprenticeship as a smith but then joined the Royal Artillery. In 1897, John Hyde IV died, aged 30 (the Hyde blacksmiths seem to have been short-lived), prompting his widow to leave Drayton and work as a tailoress to support her four young children. And by 1901 John's brother Charles had married, moved to Abingdon and given up smithing to become a gardener.

At the start of the 20th century, for the first time in about 150 years, Drayton's blacksmith wasn't a Hyde — his name was Charles Fisher. But the Hydes, or their descendants, were in fact still the owners of the house and blacksmith's workshop. After the death of John Hyde II, the property had passed to his sister Elizabeth (mother of Stephen), who was by then married to John Parker, a mason from Marcham. As women could not own property, the smithy was officially her husband's, but he died the same year, and Elizabeth Parker (née Hyde) became the owner for the next 14 years, until her death in 1879.



Excerpt from OS map of Drayton, 1899

Berkshire X.13, Revised: 1897, Published: 1899. Re-use: [CC-BY](#) (National Library of Scotland)

➔➔➔ The property next passed to her son Charles Parker, a mason in Lambeth, and then in 1906 to his widow, Frances (née Gammon). By 1911 the property had been divided into a separate cottage and blacksmith's shop; Frances Parker lived in the cottage, 'The Smithy', and rented the adjacent workshop to the Fishers, who lived on Church Lane. (There will be more about the Fishers in Part 2.) In the spring of 1914 Frances died, leaving instructions in her Will for her sons Charles and Henry Parker to sell the property. Finally, on the eve of WW1, the property was sold, ending a century of ownership by one Drayton family. And by 1921 it had ceased to be a working smithy altogether.

Look out for Part 2, the story continues into the 20th century!

An advertisement for 'HAIR THERAPY'. It features a close-up of a woman's long, wavy, reddish-brown hair. The text is overlaid on the image. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

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Village Blacksmith (date unknown – J Bailey)

An advertisement for 'TAPS AND TOILETS' plumbing service. It features two blue vans parked side-by-side. The vans have the company name and logo on them. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting.

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Stay alert

Victims of romance fraud lost more than £102 million last year, as criminals continue to exploit online relationships to manipulate people into transferring money.

Analysis shows people **aged 55 to 74** experienced the greatest financial losses, accounting for almost half of the total amount stolen. Although men submitted a higher number of reports overall, women experienced higher individual losses, making up just over 40 per cent of the total value reported.

Romance fraud remains closely linked to online platforms, particularly social media and dating sites, where offenders can create convincing false identities. Investigators are also seeing increased use of AI-generated images and messages to support these profiles. In many cases, it is also linked to fake investment opportunities, including cryptocurrency, increasing the financial risk to victims.

As part of this campaign, we are urging the public to stay cautious when forming relationships online and to recognise the warning signs:

- ✚ Be cautious of individuals who develop relationships very quickly or express strong feelings early on
- ✚ Be wary of excuses not to meet in person or to avoid live video calls
- ✚ Never send money, cryptocurrency or gift cards to someone you have not met face-to-face
- ✚ Be alert to requests linked to investments, medical emergencies or travel costs
- ✚ Speak to a trusted friend or family member if something feels unusual or pressured

If you think that you have been targeted, please report it to **Report Fraud at www.reportfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.**

If money has already been transferred, you should contact your bank immediately.

Drayton Map Ceremony



Happy pics from the Drayton Map ceremony (see Letters page).



Insect Week: Tiny Creatures, Big Impact

They may be small, but insects make a BIG difference to nature recovery.

From 22 June to 28 June, the Royal Entomological Society's spotlight week is a celebration of all things insect.

And these small critters really do make all the difference... there are more than 24,000 species in the UK alone, and they can be found in almost every habitat. Their jack-of-all-trades role spans pollinators, predators, pests, parasites, and prey, and the study of insects has long been central to conservation, food production, medicine, and ecology.

At **Wild Oxfordshire**, insects are essential to our Yellow Wagtail Partnership project. Established in 2020 by patron Dr Robin Buxton, the Partnership works with the Earth Trust Church Farm Partnership and Lower Farm, to "learn and communicate as much as possible about the impact of different land management techniques both on this species and the wider environment".

As a migrant species, insects are a vital part Yellow Wagtail diets. However, recent changes in farming practice and other human impacts on the landscape have led to habitat and insect declines, harming Yellow Wagtail populations. They now find themselves on the conservation red list.

Yellow Wagtail in Oxfordshire, Mike Pollard



How You Can Help

Volunteer. We occasionally ask for volunteers to carry out small projects to help with the Yellow Wagtail Partnership; this can range from helping out with fieldwork and managing data to creating visual aids for our work.

Our partner, Earth Trust, regularly recruits volunteers. Whether you are out counting insects or sitting at a desk, volunteering your time (with the Earth Trust) will help them carry out the vital work they do for the Yellow Wagtail Partnership, as well as their other projects.

Help to look after our grasslands.

- Stick to the path and avoid wandering into the fields as this may disturb nesting birds or lead to nest abandonment.
- Be respectful of the livestock, keep dogs on leads when there are calves in the fields.
- Remember to take your and your dog's rubbish home with you.
- Don't have BBQs on the grasslands, as you may cause a fire.

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Gardening tips for June

Want to help garden birds? ***Don't feed them in warmer months. The RSPB have released guidance on feeding birds, stating that putting up bird feeders in your garden could be putting some species at risk of disease. Stop filling bird feeders with seeds and peanuts from 1 May to 31 October as will prevent too many birds gathering in one place. Instead, still put out small amounts of mealworms, fat balls or suet all year round.

[***Ed's NOTE >>>> This advice is NOT GUARANTEED to be correct, even though 'Wild Oxon' are quoting the RSPB].

Thousands of people round the country have adopted routines, under advice, to clean bird-feeders and maintain the feeding regimes, as many birds have juniors to feed.

Contrary advice can be found on the Ivel Valley, and Haith's websites, and possibly by the time you read this, from the RSPB too – it's a highly contentious issue!!

Let the grass grow

June is peak time for insects like butterflies, bees, and beetles. Leaving even a small patch of lawn uncut creates shelter and food for the likes of Meadow Browns, Large Blue butterflies, and Thick-legged flower beetles.

Go chemical-free

Gardening organically is a good way to ensure that the food and plants you grow are free of pesticides or chemicals, and the wildlife will thank you for it too.

By stopping the use of chemicals, slugs, snails, and insects such as aphids will return, but don't worry! In time, so will their natural predators, such as hedgehogs and slowworms to help keep pest numbers down.

Keep Bird Baths Topped Up

Fresh water is essential for birds in warm weather. Keep a shallow dish with a few pebbles and help insects drink safely. However, only put out a bird bath if you can replace the water daily and clean the bird bath weekly to prevent the spread of diseases, especially in the warmer months.





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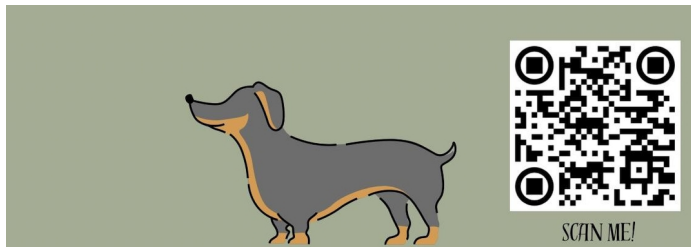
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People matter: together we have a voice.

SESRO / White Horse Reservoir does not have planning permission; Thames Water will not put in their application for a Development Consent Order until Nov 2026 at the earliest.



Before this the battle is at the moment concentrating on the politicians. On 12th May, the regulator, Ofwat's agency RAPID, issued their final decisions on the 'Gate 3' milestone SESRO report submissions after considering comments on their draft from GARD, OCC and others. Whilst their final decisions are not as strong as we would like, they nevertheless have demanded many priority actions from Thames for completion in the months ahead.

Thames Water **must carry out further work** on the following: "risks of further cost escalation – how secure is the new cost; biodiversity and protected species; archaeology, water quality; flood risk; dam safety and whether the reservoir still represents the best-value option compared with alternatives (especially the Severn Thames Transfer option). The key is to make these actions stick and our MPs, led by Olly Glover are meeting Ofwat in early June to press home our requests on this set of actions.

On a twin track, there was **unanimous condemnation** from GARD, CPRE and Oxfordshire councils at all levels that Thames Water's January pre-DCO consultation was totally inadequate, with serious issues being either swept under the carpet with vague future commitments (flooding risk, traffic noise and pollution, risk of Dam Breach) or completely ignored (water quality dangers from the reservoir). At the Vale of White Horse District Council's Annual Meeting on 13th May, Council agreed to take this further by passing unanimously a motion requesting the Planning Inspectorate to demand seven Targeted Consultations from Thames Water about the issues of : Flood risk, Dam Breach risks; Emergency drawdown risks; Water Quality in the reservoir and environment; Biodiversity effects of the new enlarged project; Construction and construction traffic effects; and Security issues against terrorist threats

'Targeted consultations' are a tool in the Planning Law to hold further consultation on the facts of a particular issue before an application for a DCO is lodged. In principle this is a very strong move by the Vale, but will need work to make stick. We are very grateful for councillors **Andy Cooke (Drayton) and Peter Stevens (Sutton Courtenay)** for proposing the motion and for the very forceful speeches in support delivered by Councillors Sally Wightman (Steventon and Hanneys) and Sarah James (Hendreds). GARD will alert people to any Targeted Consultations launched.

CAMPAIGNING: GARD will be at Q Gardens and Millets between 9.30 & 4pm on the days below, talking to the public, distributing leaflets, getting our petition signed, recruiting members. Feel free to **join and support** us.

Sunday 31st May MILLETS	Wednesday 3rd June Q GARDENS	Saturday 6th June Q Gardens	Wednesday 10th June MILLETS
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JOIN GARD TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

(for any new readers. . .GARD is a group of individuals whose aim is to identify and promote viable solutions to meet the future needs of water users in the Thames Water Region. GARD is advised by eminent water industry practitioners. Our c'tee is composed of voluntary, unpaid members with technical experience, each of whom is free from any political or vested interests).



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→>> **Thanks to all** who are volunteering to deliver leaflets round the area.

JOIN GARD and work towards a full opposition at the DCO hearings early next year. We can show them that democracy works – three MPs, OCC, the two District Councils, the town & parish councils: all these oppose the Reservoir plans.

Add your name to the list of GARD members and be part of that opposition. The joining link is on the website: **Group Against Reservoir Development | GARD**. You can also find a link there to donate to GARD – **we need funds to fight a DCO!**

Come forward and volunteer – we shall be delivering leaflets to all the affected villages and we are planning events too. There are jobs small and large, active and more routine. **Please get in touch at gard.secretary@gmail.com 07773 029409**

Show that people matter. Join GARD to stop the Reservoir.

Advance notice of the **AGM**: this will be on FRIDAY 3rd JULY

Derek Stork (June 2026)

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Wallingford Beach! ... as we go to Press (late May), the 'ThisIsOxfordshire' newsletter reports that the facility has reopened for the season, but that "swimmers are sceptical of sewage". Surely not, with Thames Water on the case?!

The site had been classified as "poor" when it first opened, with testing "spikes" of bacteria in samples taken by the Environment Agency. And swimmers & families are understandably wary – given TW's appalling record in almost all aspects of its franchise.

NB >> The latest glossy TW brochure about the **White Elephant project**, oops, sorry, they're calling it 'White Horse' now (!), invites questions, so **DO PLEASE bombard them with awkward points** (GARD have a long list of topics they won't discuss!) at this email >> whitehorsereservoir@thameswater.co.uk

BAPTIST CHURCH

Church Secretary:- Mrs Jayne Henderson 522161



REGULAR SUNDAY SERVICES

6.00pm Evening Service A traditional form of service, often with guest speakers.

(PLEASE check the Church noticeboard for info re services)

NB LOOK OUT for the BAPTIST CAFÉ with tea, coffee, cake & a chat! **Thursdays** 11.00 to 13.00, BUT – please NOTE it's been relocated, to the **Caudwell Day Centre, Gravel Lane**.

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SPARE CHRONICLES?

Need an extra copy? You can collect one from Vickery's. Lawrence has very kindly agreed to keep a few spares.

WESTMINSTER VIEW



Our MP (constituency = Didcot & Wantage) is Olly Glover (Lib Dem).

This last month has been full of interesting constituency visits, advice surgeries with constituents, and busy days campaigning for change in Parliament.

Speaking in debates helps create change for local people and our community. I attended two e-petition debates that a significant number of constituents had signed to represent **their views and concerns on maternity services and animal testing**. At PMQs I challenged Keir Starmer on social and affordable housing, as new developments in the constituency continue to price out local people and young first-time buyers. The Govt needs to support local councils to deliver truly affordable homes, alongside vital infrastructure. In addition, I spoke about the many cases of **delayed licence renewal and medical assessments**, calling for improvements to the DVLA.

I was proud to represent the Wantage-based charity **SUDEP Action** in my debate on sudden and unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP) prevention. Founded by five women, the charity works tirelessly to support bereaved families and raise awareness. The minister responded by promising to meet with me, and I look forward to discussing the next steps the Govt needs to take.

At a **Wantage Chamber of Commerce event**, local Wantage businesses raised the impact of changes to business rates, soaring energy costs and changes to employment legislation on their viability. Two weeks later, I made their voices heard to the treasury minister in parliament and will continue to push for a fairer deal for our local businesses.

I also had the pleasure of visiting **RAW Workshop**, a social enterprise manufacturing high-quality furniture. The organisation channels their profits into their youth training schemes, supporting young people facing mental health and educational barriers, and adults re-entering the workforce.

At the Didcot Powerhouse Fund Impact event, we celebrated the fantastic work of local groups and organisations for Didcot and the surrounding areas. It is a pleasure to spend time with so many people making a meaningful contribution to their neighbours and our communities.

This month, my hardworking team and I passed the milestone of **15,000 individual cases handled since I was elected**. As always, if there is **anything you feel I can help you with, please do not hesitate** to contact me and my team.

If you need to get in touch with our MP >>

Please email olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk
(or leave a voice message at 0207 219 7657)

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Peter Stevens – County Councillor

Firstly, please accept my apologies for not providing an update last month.

Since my last report, I have been in close dialogue with **Thames Water** over the period on a number of issues. The **sewage spill from Abingdon** into the ditch next to Peep'o'day Lane has been cleared up and I met the environmental expert to check the water.

I seconded a motion at district council to request more **targeted consultation** on the new mega-reservoir (SESRO aka 'White Horse' Reservoir) where insufficient analysis and information has been provided to date on its impact on local flooding which I want it to improve, the potentially massive impacts of any emergency discharge, and the impact of over ten years of construction on our local daily lives. The motion was universally carried.

On the other hand, **Thames Water have agreed a solution** to reinstate the Hobby Horse Lane byway between Sutton Courtenay (after the National Cycle Route 5 junction to Didcot) and Appleford, which they and FCC have agreed to repair, and I am hopeful that the work will be completed this summer in the dry months, before it becomes a bog again next Autumn. This would be fantastic as it has taken many years to find and agree a solution. [Ed – 'FCC' = **FCC Environment**, the waste management and recycling centre].

Preparatory work has started on the **new HIF1 road**, which will run from A34 Milton interchange bypassing Didcot and across the Thames at Culham, around Clifton Hampden and up to the 'Golden Balls' roundabout, relieving pressure on the existing Thames river crossing and enabling much easier access to the A34 reducing the rat runs through our villages. The build will take two years, as crossing a flood plain and the river is so complex. I am working closely with the project team to minimise any disruption and mitigate road closures. Our MP, Olly Glover is also helping with any issues. I am hoping that we can secure extra train & bus services, particularly for Appleford.

On **local government reorganisation**, a decision is expected around July, to whether the new unitary council will be Oxfordshire, or Ridgeway combined with West Berkshire. Whichever way, it will mean all council services are delivered by one body with one locally elected representative which will reduce confusion about who is accountable for what services.

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➔ Given all the work locally for the new road, the Bridge Farm quarry, the waste facilities, and local solar and battery applications, I am pressing the council to brush off the vision for our local area for its restoration after the work has completed to make sure the **environment is better** and stands to gain in **biodiversity, walking, cycling and leisure facilities** after 2030. An independent review has been agreed, prompted by our parish councils, to prevent restoration timings being allowed to drift out any further.

Lastly, I am pleased to say that we have found budget and resource for **installing a new zebra crossing at the Appleford and Abingdon road T junction** (next to the Sutton Courtenay bridge), which will make life much safer for the many children and parents who use this route daily to reach **Culham Nursery, Europa School and beyond**. I am pressing for this work to be completed this financial year after the work at the top end making the Tollgate Road A415 junction safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

That's it for now, best regards,

Councillor Peter Stevens

Down the Years



For this occasional delve into Pop history, who was charting **THIS TIME OF YEAR**, going back through time? Which ones take you back, if they pop-up on the radio? Remember these? >>>>

In 2006, Nelly Furtado was being a 'Maneater' (#1), but Tony Christie was in the top-10 with 'Is This The Way to the World Cup', a reworking of his massive 'Amarillo' (he could try it this year too?!).

And back to 1996 – More on the World Cup theme, as Baddiel & Skinner (plus the Lightning Seeds) hit #1 with their "3 Lions" anthem (& they're back this year!). Later in the month, the Fugees had the year's biggest seller, 'Killing Me Softly' (earlier a huge Roberta Flack hit, 1973).

40 years ago (THAT long?!) we had just had 2 memorable #1 hits (for different reasons!), Dr & The Medics with 'Spirit in the Sky' (also a previous #1, Norman Greenbaum, 1970), and 'The Chicken Song' from the Spitting Image team. And Simply Red were busy 'Holding Back the Years' at #2 with the iconic Bananarama just below ('Venus').

This month though saw Madonna at #1 with 'Papa Don't Preach', to be followed by Chris de Burgh & 'The Lady in Red' (apparently often voted to the public's most disliked list?!). Also very popular was Lionel Richie, who was 'Dancing on the Ceiling' (but PLEASE – don't try this at home!).

FIFTY years ago (for real old-timers), we'd just had the Wurzels (the leading 'Scrumpy & Western' group?!) all over the airwaves, with (I've Got A Brand New) 'Combine Harvester' (ooh argghhhh), keeping out amongst others Dolly Parton and her foot-tapper 'Jolene', also Candi Staton with 'Young Hearts Run Free'. Soon to be #1 were Elton John & Kiki Dee with 'Don't Go Breaking My Heart'.

Anyone date right back to 1966?! Let me help:- Just a FANTASTIC few weeks! Several iconic #1 hits, Nancy Sinatra ('These Boots' . . .), the Walker Brothers (though they weren't! – 'The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Any More'), Spencer Davis ('Somebody Help Me, Yeah'), & wonderful Dusty Springfield ('You Don't Have to Say You Love Me').

They shaded some great near-misses, the Kinks ('Dedicated Follower of Fashion'), Stones '19th Nervous Breakdown', Mindbenders 'Groovy Kind of Love', Beach Boys 'Barbara Ann', Crispian St Peters 'Pied Piper', Simon & Garfunkel (who were 'Homeward Bound'), the Bachelors ('Sound of Silence'), Cilla ('Alfie'), Cher ('Bang Bang') & The Who ('Substitute'). WOW – what a time!

RIP – SAD News as we go to press, we've just lost the great voice of Dennis Locorriere, who gave Dr Hook their unique sound.

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This month back in 2016

we had the **Brexit** referendum, and were soon to have the first **solar-powered flight** round the planet, plus **Andy Murray** won Wimbledon (hurray!). Sadly we lost **Muhammad Ali**, the most influential boxer of all-time, and MP **Jo Cox** was murdered at a constituency meeting in West Yorkshire.

LATER that year - **Nigel Farage** resigned as UKIP leader (post Brexit), as he'd "realised all my political aims", also the **Dog Microchipping Act** was implemented.

Back in 1996 – the new **Ariane 5** space rocket sent billions up in smoke when it blew up seconds after lift-off, we hosted the **Euros** football (Germany won), and **Dolly the Sheep** was about to become the first cloned mammal.

Sadly we lost **Ella Fitzgerald**, and legendary Aussie cricketer **Ray Lindwall**. On TV that year, BBC would first air the **Two Fat Ladies** cookery show (WHAT would they have to call it now?!), and **Poldark** made its debut.

This month in 1986 – we saw the (in)famous '**Hand of God**' goal (well, everyone bar the referee. . .) which helped Maradona & Argentina knock England out of the World Cup, a week later, they beat Germany in the Final.

Earlier that year, the **Chernobyl** nuclear disaster (started by a faulty 'safety' test!) had alarmed the world, & the UK & Netherlands had signed a treaty to end the '**350 Years War**' (no, nor me!), which was apparently due to the Scilly Isles being involved with the Dutch Navy, at the time of the Civil War, though no shots were actually fired?!

Later that year, **Andrew married Fergie** (how are THEY getting on, we don't hear much about them?) – **Phantom of the Opera** opened in the West End, another **Fergie** became **Man Utd** manager, and the **M25 Motorway** was opened, so drivers could get to the next traffic jam much quicker than before!

Sadly we lost **Dame Anna Neagle**, **Pat Phoenix**, **Cary Grant**, **Hylda Baker** & **Hermione Baddeley**.

100 YEARS ago – **Henry FORD** made 'the **Weekend**' famous when he gave his auto-factory workers Sats & Sundays off. He reasoned that with more leisure time, they would be buying far more cars!

More Notices & Other Local Churches

Catholic Churches – Didcot (English Martyrs)
- Abingdon (Our Lady & St Edmund)

Bridge Players?? Alternate Fridays (1st & 3rd) at All Saints (Sutton Courtenay) from 2pm to 5pm, £5 (includes tea & cake!)

All Welcome.

Abingdon LIBRARY has masses more events than you might expect from a mere library!
<https://www.facebook.com/AbingdonLibrary>

But DO SEE their ex-stock **Book Sales**, last Friday & Saturday of each month

Cost of living support (Oil)

Do you live in Oxfordshire in an oil-fuelled heating property? Are you struggling to afford your home oil heating costs? [The Oxfordshire Crisis Support Scheme](#) run by Oxfordshire County Council might be able to help you.

If you're not eligible for oil heating support, [Better Housing Better Health](#) offers free warmth and wellbeing assessment for your home, advice on what other fuel grants are available, energy saving tips and more.

For any other cost-of-living support, please contact our Community Hub team on 01235 422600 option 3 or email

Communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk.

We would like to know what you think of the **waste & street cleaning services** offered by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. These include refuse, recycling, food and garden waste collections, and street cleansing services.

This survey is run annually and in 2025, more than 2,100 people took part.

By taking part in this year's survey, you will help us to continue to identify satisfaction levels with these important services and identify areas for improvement.

This year's survey also includes a section on local repair cafes and how to find your nearest one. **But – don't delay, closing date is end of June 4th**

<https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/housing-and-environment/waste-survey-2026/>

Milton Methodist Church News

Services start at 10.30am, and last about an hour.

We are always pleased to welcome visitors.

(for those unaware, the Church is on Milton High St, a few doors down from School Lane, parking on site)

Knit and Natter, 4th Tuesday of the month:-

Sessions run from 10am - 12 noon cost £2 including refreshments (& wool as available). Come and join us if you enjoy knitting and/or nattering! (01235 763321)

Lunch Club (First Tuesday), 12.30pm

Art Group 2 to 4pm, Fridays

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Just sign up to the **excellent** Independent travel newsletter (**Simon Calder**), latest edition has a new Rail service to the Northwest, a BARGAIN new service (almost half-price!) from Cardiff to Canada, HS2 latest news (third of the network, THREE times the estimate!), and DO beware the EU's clever (?) new Border checks, **you could get left behind!**

Google '**Simon Calder Travel Week Newsletter**'!

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If you feel you need any help, PLEASE don't hesitate to contact our Community Hub -- details are on **page 11**.

YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL CONTACTS :-

Parish (Clerk) TBC (clerk@draytonpc.org)
District (VofWHDC) Andy Cooke (see page 11)
& Oxfordshire County Peter Stevens via email >>
peter.stevens@oxfordshire.gov.uk
& your MP Olly Glover (olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk)

FOSTER CARERS NEEDED

Could YOU foster? The demand didn't go away in or after 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 has recently been **improved**, now has a wide range of benefits, the website has comprehensive info:-

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/children-and-families/fostering> or please call 0300 131 2797. 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/FosteringinOxfordshire/

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

FIRST TUESDAY CONNECTIONS >>

(See p4 – St Peter's - monthly tea & chat afternoons).

And the **Baptist Cafe** is on **Thursdays** – each week – but NOW held in the **Caudwell Day Centre**, 11am to 1pm, more tea and cake, **a warm welcome assured**.

LISTINGS

DRAYTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY

In a cabinet outside **49 Whitehorns Way**, a carried stock of books (some for children), **donate or borrow**, check it out!

WATERMILL THEATRE

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang >> a summer season from May 26 to Sept 13. The theatre is in a riverside setting, Bagnor Mill, just outside Newbury, and they just won 'Theatre of the Year'. Book early to avoid disappointment, watermill.org.uk or on 01635 46044 (they also have a nice restaurant, and offer some 'British Sign Language', 'Audio Described', 'Captioned', & 'Relaxed' performances).

Antiques Fair – In the Village Hall - Sunday June 7th (& July 5th too) from 9am (to about 3pm). Varied stalls, just £1 entry, and the chance of an ace bacon sarnie, toasties, etc!

The Oxford Vaccine Group, and the Jenner Institute, are frequently looking for volunteers to test new vaccines, you need to be 18 to 55, and they usually pay for your time (sometimes very well, **as at present!**). <https://trials.ovg.ox.ac.uk/trials/>

Sobell House 50th Celebrations -- Westgate Sat June 13th from 10am to 7pm, workshops, music, live shows, funfair games, and all FREE.

NEW Theatre -- again, you'll need to be quick (!), amongst their varied list of shows, even though 2 are in 2027 (!) **Fisherman's Friends** (Oct 2nd), and **Rick Wakeman** (Mar 4th). This year they have **Welsh National Opera** (Nov 19 – 21), & **Pretty Woman** (Aug 10 – 14th).

And CYCLISTS - security is always a worry so DO check out the highly recommended **HIPLOK** range of products <https://hiplok.com/product-category/bicycle-locks/> . . . and they do a **motor-bike range** too.

GARDEN OPEN – for **Flexicare** 10 Eynsham Road, Botley, OX2 9BP **Sunday, 7th June**, 1pm-5pm Entrance free but donations to Flexicare. Teas, cake & sale of plants, beautiful organic garden, wildlife pond and bee habitat

Keep fit and Have Fun? So they say . . . it's **Scottish Country Dancing**, at **Chilton Village Hall** (Tues, 7.45 to 9.45), and/or **Ab'don Northcourt Centre** (Mons, 7.45 to 10pm). Come on your own, or with a friend, beginners welcome, and they say "no special clothes needed" (no kilt then?!) but soft shoes ARE. First visit FREE – then £4 per evening. secretary@ascdc.org.uk

Lee Miller - A Woman at War A new exhibition of Vogue model, surrealist photographer and war correspondent Lee Miller's wartime work in **Lee Miller: A Woman at War**, from 23 May to 13 September 2026. In WW2 Lee worked as a combat photographer with the US Army, creating a unique historical record. **Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum**, Park Street, Woodstock.. Open Tues to Sat, 11am to 5pm, Sundays 2 to 5pm, see www.sofo.org.uk



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DRAYTON DIARIES

(Mostly) Hall Diary for June

All events held in Drayton Hall unless otherwise stated
To book :- bookings@draytonvh.co.uk or call Tony Holmes on
(01235) 531180; see the website :- www.draytonvh.co.uk
(for other regular events, see that diary column)

Weds 3 10.00am **COFFEE MORNING** (weekly, to noon)

Weds 3 9.45am **ART Class** (beginners) – a NEW GROUP
To 11.00am **Oxfordshire Art Rooms** (Small Hall)
Contact **Freda** on 07922 202847

Sat 6 10.00am **Churchyard Tidy** (to midday) (Church)

Sat 6 1.00pm Private Function (child's party)

Sun 7 9.00am **ANTIQUES FAIR** (to 3pm)

Mon 8 7.00pm **Parish Council Meeting** (Caudwell DC)
NB – Now **2nd Mondays!** (check F'book for any late change?!)

Fri 12 11.00am **Keep-fit FAYE** is AWAY (just this week!)

Sat 13 1.00pm Private Function (child's party)

Mon 15 5.00pm **Chronicle Deadline**

NB – Other Drayton Venues?

To hire the **CAUDWELL Day Centre**, please contact Chloe Martin, caudwelldaycentre@gmail.com & 01235 531627.
Or, for small meetings, the Church Hall may be OK, for their contact info see the **St Peter's** page in this edition.

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REGULARLY OCCURRING EVENTS

Weekly in Drayton Hall unless stated otherwise

NB **PLEASE** – if an entry is wrong – **tell an editor** (p 2)

MONDAYS [## = Small Hall in Village Hall]

10.00 am Coffee Morning (Wives – 2nd Mon) *Caudwell DC*
2.00 pm Short Mat Bowling Club Session
4.30 pm Damascus Youth ## (NB – taking a break)
7.15 pm Badminton (Looking for NEW Members!!)
7.45 pm Bell-ringing (for 1½ hours) *St Peter's*

TUESDAYS

9.30 am Pilates (via Alexandra Merson 07788 248925)
1.45 pm Drayton Art Group (until 4 pm) *Caudwell Day Centre*
2.30 pm Tuesday Connect (back to 1st Tuesday!) *Church*
6.30 pm Karate/Dojang X' session (Sabrina 07938 537310)

WEDNESDAYS

9.45 am Art Class (beginners – Freda 07922 202847) ##
10.00 am Pebbles (Baby, Toddler, Carer group) *Church*
10.00 am **Coffee Morning (for Good Causes, to midday)**
1.30 pm Whist Drive *Caudwell DC*
1.45 pm U3A Science/Tech, 1st Weds (07890 385931) ##
2.00 pm Drayton Wives (Last Wednesday, most months) ##
2.00 pm Badminton
6.00 pm Brownies (term-time / Laura 07916 459435) ##
6.45 pm Short Mat Bowling Club (seeking NEW members!)

THURSDAYS

9.30 am Parent & Toddler Group
9.45 am Holy Communion (**) *St Peter's Lady Chapel*
11.00 am Baptist Café (to 1pm) NOW IN >> *Caudwell DC*
2.00 pm Short Mat Bowling Club Session
2.00 pm Crafts Group (2nd Thursday – run by U3A, but it's simple to join. Call Kate for info 01235 550486) ##
5.30 pm Rainbows (girls 5 to 7 yrs) ##
7.30 pm Sequence Dancing (01235 531107 for info)
7.30 pm Women's Institute Meeting (2nd Thurs) *Caudwell DC*
7.30 pm **Drayton Community Choir** (2nd/4th Thurs)
-- Call Kay for info 01235 204187 *Church Room*

FRIDAYS

11.00 am **Keep Fit with FAYE (07815 583591)**
4.45 pm Karate/Dojang X' sessions (07938 537310)

SUNDAYS

(**) For all the latest info re their Services (Thursday communion, & especially Sundays), **PLEASE** see our **St Peter's Church** page
6.00 pm Evening Service *Baptist Church*

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