



DRAYTON CHRONICLE

VOLUME 49 ISSUE 2

MARCH 2026

EDITOR: VICKY BILLINGHAM

CHRONICLE INFORMATION

KEY DATES

The next Drayton Chronicle will be the April issue, edited by Margaret Inger.
editor@draytonchronicle.net

Issue	Advertising deadline	Contribution deadline
April	Mar 13th	Mar 16th
May	April 17th	April 20th

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
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Curate: Rev Dov Whittle 07586 969985
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The church remains open daily (Sun–Sat, 10-3pm).
 From Sunday 29th March, open till 4pm.

SERVICES INFORMATION: MARCH

Sunday 1st	9:30 am	Holy Communion
Thursday 5th	9:45 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 8th	9:30 am	Family Service
Thursday 12th	9:45 am	Celtic Prayer
Sunday 15th	8:00 am	Holy Communion (BCP) with prayers for healing
	9:30 am	Holy Communion for Mothering Sunday with prayers for healing
Thursday 19th	9:45 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 22nd	9:30 am	Morning Praise Service
Thursday 26th	9:45 am	Holy Communion
Sunday 29th	10:30 am	Palm Sunday Service

REGULAR EVENTS

First Monday	2pm - 4pm	Knit & Natter No need to be a knitter, if you'd just like a natter
Mondays	7:30pm	Bellringing practice
Tuesdays	2:30pm - 4pm	First Tuesday Connections All welcome for a cuppa & chat
Wednesdays (term-time)	10am	Pebbles Baby & Toddler Group For more information contact Katy or Cheryl draytonpebbles@hotmail.com

Funeral

9th January Thelma June Brown



Follow us on Facebook: scan the QR code or search for St Peter's Church, Drayton, Abingdon



YOU STAY WE PRAY

1st-7th Drayton Rd; Milton Rd; New Cut Mill; Fisher Cl;
 Marcham Rd; Meads Cl; Rippington Court; Stone Hill
8th-14th Steventon Rd; Kiln Ln; Mott Cottages; Barton Ct
15th-21st Eastway; Eastway MHP
22nd-28th Church Ln; Henleys Ln; Caudwell Close; Gravel Ln
29th-4th April Abingdon Rd; Oday Hill

FROM THE DAMASCUS MINISTRY TEAM



Dear Friends,
 Whatever our childhood was like, it was formational. We learned from our earthly parents, good things ideally, although not everyone's childhood is great. In the Bible, St Paul refers to the importance of up-bringing and of spiritual heritage. When he greets Timothy in his second letter to him, he calls him his 'Dear Son', praises his 'genuine faith' and then goes on: "You share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you." Timothy's childhood had been rooted in the Old Testament scriptures that he had been taught by his mother and grandmother. Their example had set him on the right path, until he was old enough to choose for himself to follow Jesus.

Physically, when we are young, we need nurturing by mothers and fathers. Spiritually it is the same. When we come to faith, we need spiritual mothers and fathers to help us grow into maturity as God's adopted children. We also need spiritual sustenance: regularly reading the Bible, spending time in God's presence in prayer, and worshipping with the family of the Church. God – our heavenly parent provides our personal nurturing through prayer and the Bible, but He also gives us each other, to encourage and share our experiences of his faithfulness.

However imperfect our earthly upbringing was, God is a good, good Father, a perfect parent who will only teach us good things. And gradually, as the fruit of the Holy Spirit ripens in us, we will become more like Jesus. We will gain more of the family likeness!

Is there someone in your life who has helped you to grow spiritually? This Mothering Sunday (Sunday 15th March), take time to thank God for them. Is there someone in your life whom you have 'mothered' or 'fathered' along the way? This Mothering Sunday, take time to pray for them.

And look out for details of all our Mothering Sunday services across the DAMASCUS Parish – you are very welcome!

With love and prayers,
 Helen
The Reverend Helen Kendrick
 Rector of the DAMASCUS Parish

THAMES WATER UPDATE



Thanks to everyone who took part in the recent statutory consultation on our proposed new reservoir. We're grateful to everyone who shared their views and attended our community information events. We're now carefully reviewing all the feedback received.

In January 2026, we were pleased to introduce the project's new name: White Horse Reservoir. Formerly known as the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO), it remains the same project with the same vision, but with a new identity that reflects its role in securing future water supplies and delivering lasting benefits for people and nature.

We've also published a tender notice to appoint a main works contractor to help design and build the reservoir. Construction is expected to create around 1,800 jobs, with roles during and after the build spanning careers such as ecologists, engineers, archaeologists, electricians, park rangers and sailing instructors.

GARD UPDATE



GARD (Group Against Reservoir Development) has submitted responses to the pre-DCO and to the Rapid Gate 3 consultations. Along with the local Councils and our MPs, we are pressing for a full, independent review of the financial case, to ensure this scheme is properly tested for value for money against safer, cheaper alternatives. The reservoir planning process should stop at Gate 3 until the review and safety assessments are completed.

Helping local people be informed: do you know of a local community group that would like a presentation from GARD about the reservoir? Please let us know so that we can fix a date: gard.secretary@gmail.com

GARD needs active campaigning help please. Do you have ideas for us? Can you help with media / social media? Fund raising? And of course, delivering leaflets? Please let us know at gard.secretary@gmail.com



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The Great British Spring Clean – taking part in a litter pick

Spring has finally arrived! And with it comes a burst of new life into our green spaces. So, what better time to help give nature a fresh start by taking part in The Great British Spring Clean, the UK's biggest mass-action environmental campaign, running from 3rd to 29th March 2026. You can pledge to pick up however many bags you choose from Friday 13th February.

Why Litter Picking Matters

Giving our shared spaces a little TLC helps wildlife, keeps our communities clean, and brings neighbours together. And while it can be tempting to think “a little bit of rubbish won't hurt”, small pieces quickly add up. Litter can harm mammals like hedgehogs and birds like swans, who are frequently injured after getting caught up in waste. A short hour spent litter picking makes an immediate and satisfying difference, and if you don't have much time on your hands as the months get busier, it's one of the simplest actions we can take.

Safe and Wildlife-Friendly Litter Picking

- Complete a risk assessment before you start.
- Wear gloves and sturdy shoes.
- Use a picker if you have one.
- Avoid disturbing piles of leaves or logs.
- Keep dogs close by, especially near roads or thick scrub.
- Report instances of danger, such as fly-tipping.
- Don't forget to sort and separate what you've collected for recycling.
- Tie bags securely and dispose of them appropriately.
- Wash your hands after you've finished.

Vale of White Horse District Council loans equipment to individuals and groups litter picking: waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk.



Wildlife Friendly Gardening Jobs for March

Meanwhile, there are plenty of jobs to be getting on with in your own patch. And while it may be the month of the ‘Big Spring Clean’, when it comes to our gardens at this time of year, less is often more. Resist the urge to tidy (leave that energy for the litter pick!) and instead sit back and let nature run its course.

Leave some areas undisturbed

Sometimes what really matters is what you don't do. Leave dead leaves, log piles, and dead flowers where they are. These provide vital shelter and resources for hedgehogs, insects, and small mammals, and are crucial habitats as wildlife becomes active in early spring.

Feed the birds

Providing food for birds is a great help, but make sure all bird feeders are cleaned weekly to prevent the spread of disease. If you won't have the time or energy to thoroughly clean feeders weekly using disinfectant, then it's better to grow native plants with berries and seeds, such as Elder trees, Hawthorn, and fruit trees, all of which provide natural bird feed. If you think you have spotted a diseased or injured bird in your garden (obvious wounds or bleeding, swellings or crusty growths on the skin, heavy breathing), do not touch them or pick them up. Instead, report any sick birds you see to [Garden Wildlife Health](#). Dead wild birds should be reported to Defra [using the online reporting system](#).

Grow food for bees and butterflies

Sow native wildflower seeds in trays or modules now to grow plants for your own mini meadow later in the year. Keep an eye out for emerging wildlife. As slumbering hedgehogs begin to wake, you can support them by providing suitable food (meaty cat food) and water (not milk) in shallow dishes. Avoid disturbing wild corners and log piles where a hedgehog may be hibernating and create gaps under fences to encourage safe movement in and out of your garden.

Check out the guidance on our website for more details:

<https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/guidance/helping-nature-on-your-patch>

WALNUTS UPDATE

As some of you will have noticed, the Parish Council has installed four new walnuts on Drayton Green. This is following a request by one of the residents of one of the neighbouring houses to protect the curved edge opposite the bus stop, which was being eroded due to lack of protection.

The money was provided by several residents, one of whom I would like to name, as she has unfortunately died in the past month. She was a dear friend, Helen Brasington, and has supported the village in many ways through the years. I am happy to say that I drove her up to see "her walnut" two weeks before her sudden death, and she was very pleased. It is the lone walnut which has been placed on its own, for artistic reasons, and now stands as a memorial to Helen's generosity.

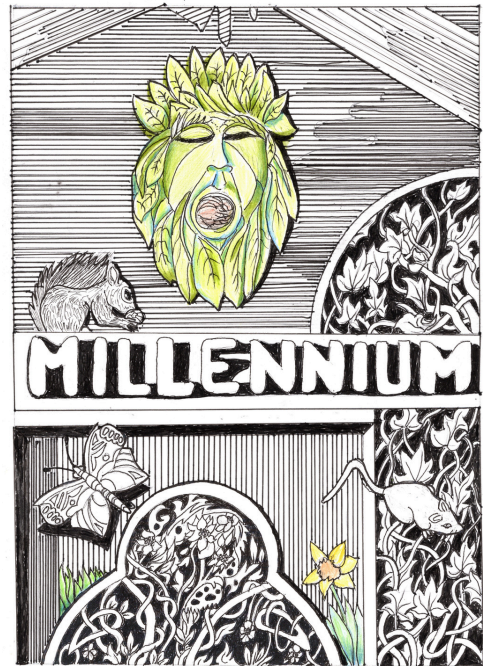
We installed the new additions in the freezing weather towards the end of November, and the team consisted of the artist, Andrew McKeown, with members of the Parish Council, including the Chairman and the Deputy Clerk.

I would like to express my thanks to all those involved, for making the extra walnut installation possible.

Pervin Shahin
(Drayton PC Arts)



WHAT IS A GREEN MAN?



On the millennium green there is a beautiful carved notice board displaying the portrait of a Green Man. However, what is a Green Man?

Our Green Man is shown with a walnut in his mouth. There are some forty walnut trees in the millennium green alone. The parish of Drayton appears has adopted the walnut as an icon, there is a Walnut Way in Drayton and on the village the green opposite the post office are large concrete walnuts, "challenging for the local squirrels no doubt".

The walnut in our Green Man's mouth is just an icon of our Drayton walnuts. The traditional form of the Green Man is depicted with foliage growing from his mouth. He represents the rebirth of green plants with the coming of spring.

He has been depicted for thousands of years by cultures across the world (apart from the Americas) usually to celebrate the onset of spring. He is typically associated with agriculture and/or natural vegetation deities and not a deity in his own right. Effigies of him are most commonly carved in stone and placed on buildings. There are also Green Man figures in Lebanon and Iraq from the second century AD, including in the Hatra ruins.

I find him a pleasing feature of the millennium green and must congratulate the wood carver for such a fine image.

Mike Johnson

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DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT



Hi, all,

Local Government Reorganisation

The official proposals for the three possible proposals to the mandated Local Government Reorganisation have now been put out for official public consultation by the Government.

The online survey is here:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/oxfordshire/>

The first page of it links to the three proposals as put forward by the various councils. I've made my own preferences clear in these pages before (I think One Oxfordshire would be too remote and focused on Oxford itself, Three Councils doesn't even meet the mandatory requirements given; the Two Council proposal looks to me like the best compromise as well as recreating the local region that existed before the 1974 changes). However, you'll all have your own opinions and democracy is best served by hearing all the voices; I urge you to respond.

Single Recycling Bin

You may have seen that the Government has issued a default expectation that, from April this year, councils should introduce separate bins for paper and card to separate that from other recycling, unless they have a good argument not to.

The Vale of White Horse team completed an assessment and concluded that we should keep the one recycling bin for simplicity and to make it as easy as possible for residents to continue recycling, as our approach has worked well enough to consistently put us in the top five of the country for recycling.

New Garden Waste Permits

A reminder that under the new Garden Waste Permit system, the subscription runs from 1st of April to 31st of March. Those of us with brown garden waste bins need to apply for next year's permit before the end of March.



Search whitehorsedc.gov.uk for 'garden waste' or call 01235 422422.

SESRO (Southeast Strategic Reservoir Option)

(And no, I'm not calling it "White Horse Reservoir." More like "White Elephant Reservoir.")



Two brief items on this: following the Public Consultation, we're writing to Government, Ofwat, and Thames Water due to the Consultation being a failure. Public Consultations are governed by what are called the 'Gunning Principles', which include that consultations must occur early enough to have the decision changed or affected, and enough information should be given to the public so they can make "Intelligent Consideration."

Not only have Thames Water insisted the main decisions cannot be affected, they gave insufficient information on Flood Management, Emergency Drawdown, Dam Breach and Emergency Plans, Security, Public Rights of Way, Habitat creation, nearby roads and Construction Traffic Management, Infall/Outfall structure and more. An example is how they propose to fill it? – Farmoor is running lower than at the end of the drought last summer right now (we know they can't fill reservoirs from the Thames when it's too wet and rainy, due to silt (and sewage?) in it). They need to rerun the whole exercise and make it meaningful. Let's see what Government says, but if they refuse, it could open SESRO up to further legal challenge.

We've decided to write to them to request RAPID (the regulators) defer the "Gate 3 decision" until Thames Water make some sort of defence of their now-demolished Business Case for it, following the tripling of costs. DEFRA have demanded they do as such to defend their Water Resource Management Plan and failing to do so could shift focus onto the Severn Thames Transfer instead. Of course, Thames Water will try to torture the numbers to make them say whatever they need them to, but in this case, it'll be a challenge to get them so that DEFRA can still authorise it with a straight face. For RAPID to reward Thames Water with £100 million of public money for their failure seems unsupportable; we'd like to see RAPID Gate 3 suspended until a decision is made.

Community Hub – support

Community Hub: Tel: 01235 422600

Email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

Website: whitehorsedc.gov.uk/costofliving

Office hours: 8.30am-5pm M-Th, 8.30am-4.30pm Fridays.

All the best,
Andy Cooke

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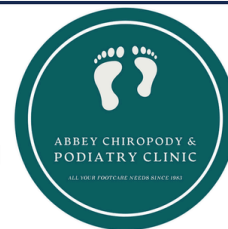
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LOCAL GROUPS

DRAYTON WIVES



Our speaker this month was Joanna Bretell, who was interested in her family tapestries. One year ago she saw a course at the Fashion and Textile Museum in London on Subversive Stitches, went along and became fascinated by the method.

Subversive Stitch documents the history of embroidery, mainly in Britain from the medieval period right up to modern day. The art was predominately a female activity, and they could put hidden messages in their tapestries. Some messages were expressions of rebellion, identity and dissatisfaction, bearing in mind that these dated back to the 19th Century when women were not allowed to express their feelings but found that putting them in diary form in a sampler helped them to survive.

Other examples of subversive stitches can be found in the Doomsday Book, Bayeux Tapestry and an ornate priest's garment near Ely.

The Victorians rediscovered embroidery with tapestries of soldiers and saints. Victorians had a natural desire to embroider and to escape their dependency, both legal and financial, on their husbands.

Another large group of subversive stitchers were the suffragettes, whose use of embroidery was a powerful tool to document their fight for freedom. Often these women embroidered handkerchiefs while in prison, to protest and record their struggles.

Many tapestries were made into firescreens which some of you may still have.

If anyone is interested in embroidery there is the Oxford Embroiderers' Guild at Iffley that run courses throughout the year.

Lisa Lammiman
Chairman

DRAYTON TABLE TENNIS CLUB



The Table Tennis Club annual quiz will be held at Thameside School on Friday 6th March from 7.30 pm. Teams of up to 6 at a charge of £20 per team. Early signs show there will be a good number of teams.

The Handicap Shield competition has just started with 5 of our 7 teams entered. To date the Flamingos and Galahs have won their first matches. There are 8 divisions each with 4 teams playing on a round robin basis. Winners to qualify for the knockout stages.

The Bidmead Cup is also underway. This is for a representative club team with 3 players from 3 of our teams chosen. We had a bye in the first round and will be away at RAL Club in the next round.

I'll report on progress and of course the league results in the next issue.

John Gould
Chairman

Vaccines – can you help?

The Oxford Vaccines Group (part of the Uni) and the Jenner Institute are both constantly searching for paid volunteers 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.

Search for them on Facebook or see their websites for their latest projects.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT



The Council last met on 9th February.

Walnut Meadows: Pavilion

A big thank you to everyone who attended the public meeting on 6th February and follow up open session on 7th February. The purpose of the meeting was to update residents about the sports facilities at Walnut Meadows, and in particular, the Parish Council's proposals for a new Pavilion. Jon Fowler, our Programme Manager, gave a presentation outlining the background to the site, the current status and 3 options for the new Pavilion.

Option A- Pavilion with changing facilities and a 152 sq m main hall

Option B- Reduced footprint pavilion

Option C- No pavilion.

The Parish Council would need to take out a Public Works Loan to partially fund the build. We asked the public for feedback on which option they would prefer. The overwhelming majority selected Option A as their preferred option. This would enable the widest range of sports to be offered and the largest area for meetings, social events etc. If we progress with Option A there would be an increase to the Parish Council proportion of the Council Tax bill of £ 1.37 a week for a band D property from April 2027.

There were some very helpful comments received which the Parish Council are following up and will respond to in due course.

In the meantime we are progressing with Option A and anticipate construction starting towards the back end of 2026.

If you were unable to attend either of the meetings, the plans are on the Parish Council website.

[HTTPS://draytonparish.gov.uk/walnut-meadows-pavilion-public-works-loan/](https://draytonparish.gov.uk/walnut-meadows-pavilion-public-works-loan/)

The Parish Council will be organising a steering group to help direct the future development and operation of the new facilities.

Membership will comprise Parish Councillors and members of the community. If you wish to join the Steering Group please contact Jon Fowler on jon.fowler@draytonpc.org.

Recycling Centre

Peter Stevens has mentioned this in his own report but he is looking for any feedback on the new booking arrangements for the recycling . Are they working for you? Do you see evidence of increased fly tipping since the booking system was introduced? Please let him know.

Public Event

Advanced warning of the installation of a new Walnut Tree and a new notice/map board on the Village Green (opposite Vickery's) in April. More information to follow next month.

Sutton Wick Pond

Thankfully, the flooding seems to have eased, despite the rain! The gullies at the Abingdon Road edge of the pond have been cleared and residents are now waiting for the collapsed drain to be mended.

Councillor vacancies

We have vacancies! If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor please contact the Clerk or any of the Councillors to discuss. We would really welcome new Council members. If you are interested in what is going on in the village this may be for you!

The next Council meeting will be held on Monday 9th March 7pm in the Caudwell Day Centre.

Elaine Wade



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MUGA Pavilion Steering Group

Would you be interested in participating in a Steering Group to ensure that the Pavilion next to the MUGA represents the needs of the village?

(see the Parish Council report on p 11)

If so, please contact the Programme Manager, Jon Fowler jonfowler@draytonpc.org.

Caudwell Day Centre

The Caudwell Day Centre has been a cherished part of village life since 1970, sitting right at the heart of Drayton and offering a welcoming space for clubs, gatherings and friendships to flourish. From Whist and Bridge to Book Club, the WI, Drayton Wives, the Art Group, Baptist Coffee Mornings and Parish Council meetings, the Hall is a true hub for our community.

To keep this wonderful centre thriving for our older residents, the Management Committee is looking for a few kind-hearted volunteers who can spare just a few hours each month. After an incredible decade of service, both our Chairperson and Treasurer will be retiring in April 2026, and we're hoping to find new volunteers to help us continue the smooth running of the Centre.

We have several small but essential roles available:

- Chairperson – light oversight of the Hall, with just one or two meetings a year.
- Treasurer – straightforward bookkeeping and financial management.
- Hall Diary Holder – managing bookings
- Grass Cutting – once a month during the mowing season.

If you're new to the village, this is a lovely way to get involved and meet people. If you've lived here for years, you already know how special this place is. We would be absolutely delighted to welcome anyone who can offer a little time and would enjoy being part of our friendly team.

To find out more or express your interest, please contact **Vicky Malin**, email caudwelldaycentre@gmail.com.

THAMES VALLEY POLICE UPDATE



Back in December, the Government announced the funding settlement for Thames Valley Police - allocating nearly £9m less than they had previously indicated! The funding from central government will barely cover the costs of inflation and pay increases for police officers. In addition the Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood, confirmed at the end of January that the Government would only fund 40% of the cost of new police neighbourhood officers, putting more pressure on your council tax and squeezing other parts of policing.

Despite these financial pressures, I am confident that we will be able to deliver 53 more neighbourhood officers this coming year, that's on top of the 218 extra officers delivered in the last three years.

This comes at the same time the Government has published a White Paper on Police Reform. It sets out radical changes including the regionalisation of policing into mega-forces that could see the abolition of Thames Valley Police. As well as plans for force mergers, the document proposes the creation of a new National Police Force and suggests changing the law to introduce more direct control by ministers for the first time, risking the end of operational independence.

Despite some good intent around better sharing of information between police forces to tackle serious and complex crime, overall I am deeply concerned by these plans which will do nothing to deliver better policing locally and are likely to see less money available for local police. I will continue to challenge the Home Office and stand up for policing locally.

Greater efforts on crime prevention, alongside more police officers, are making a difference, with crime falling across Oxfordshire. Locally the priority will always remain cutting crime and catching criminals despite the pressures imposed by the Government.

Matthew Barber

Police & Crime Commissioner - Thames Valley

News from the council this month centres on the **budget** which must be worked out to balance, in spite of rising costs and budget cuts from central government's new fair deal, which hits Oxfordshire. All services have been protected because the county's finances are actually strong and well managed. Not much new investment except we found some more money for repairing gullies, as this year's long-needed cleaning of 70,000 gullies uncovered a raft of problems which need to be fixed.

Closure of Redbridge **waste recycling** centre for urgent remedial work has required the council to introduce a booking system across the county's other recycling centres, including Drayton, to manage demand. I have the assurance of the relevant cabinet member that this is temporary and it will be reviewed when the work is completed and Redbridge re-opens. Personally, I am worried that putting obstacles in the path of recycling may lead to more fly-tipping (which is illegal), so please keep an eye out for this so I can report back. People can book 30 minutes before their visit or up to two weeks in advance. To help Oxfordshire recycle even more, people are asked to sort their recyclable items from their waste either before they arrive, which will speed up their visit, or use the sorting area on site. On a similar note, the massive illegal dump next to the A34 near Kidlington will be cleaned up in March.

The relevant place planning officer came to talk to local residents to explain the Steventon lights and **Steventon Bridge** works. Work is ongoing to try to minimise the impact of the road works, and attendees and the parish asked for consideration of a weight limit and traffic lights for the bridge, which will be considered. The road works will be completed before work starts on the new HIF1 road later this year, providing better access from the A34 to Didcot and over the Thames to the Culham Campus and beyond, removing the rat run through Milton and Sutton Courtenay.

I have set up a new working group, which Olly Glover MP will chair, to ensure the **construction of HIF1** does not ostracise any community and that heavy construction traffic is kept to safe routes. This road should leave a lasting legacy and I am keen to see it does, using it to leverage improvements to footpath, cycle routes and the Appleford train station.

This month, the council is also going to repair the **walking and cycling route** between Sutton Courtenay over the Thames bridge to Culham and Europa, which has been notorious for children and parents going to and from school, weaving between the rush hour jams. The work will require some traffic management 23-28th March. Following further recent incidents, I am now pushing for a safer crossing at the Sutton Courtenay T-junction, which along with the funded and planned Tollgate Road T-junction project, should make this whole route much safer. This will be further enhanced when the HIF1 road bridge opens and traffic switches to that.

Local government reorganisation (LGR) is the process of reshaping how local public services are organised, governed and delivered. The government wants to make it easier for residents to know where to go for help by replacing our current two-tier district and county system with a simpler, more efficient single tier council structure. Three options have been presented and is now in public consideration. If you have time or have any strong opinions, please do contribute this month.

Lastly, I would like to promote **warm homes grants**. Cold damp dangerous housing is responsible for increases in respiratory problems, cardiovascular ill health and problems in childhood development. It costs the NHS ?1.4 billion a year. There are warm home grants available to fund energy efficiency upgrades - such as insulation and solar panels - for eligible homeowners and private tenants. They are on first come, first served basis. For more information, please contact the Retrofit Team at Oxfordshire County Council.

Kind regards
Peter

Peter Stevens



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50 YEARS OF CARE

This year marks a major milestone for Sobell House Hospice, as we celebrate 50 years of care.

We're holding many events to celebrate this; see sobellhouse.org for more details, but here are two challenges for you:

Spring Stroll

At this time of year, we're usually launching our Winter Walk at Blenheim Palace. But we can now tell you that our Winter Walk is blossoming into a Spring Stroll, which will take place on Sunday 10 May!

We'll have better weather and better views... but at the same much-loved venue. We can't wait to see you there – tickets will be available in March.

50 for 50

To celebrate our golden anniversary, we're going big with the 50 for 50 challenge! Dream up your own 50-inspired fundraiser and help power care for the next 50 years.

Walk 50 miles, bake 50 cupcakes, swim 50 laps, host a 50-question quiz – or surprise us with something unique. The rules are simple: pick your 50 challenge, get sponsored, and make a real difference.

Go solo or ask friends, family, or colleagues to take on the challenge with you. Anyone can be a 50 for 50 hero!



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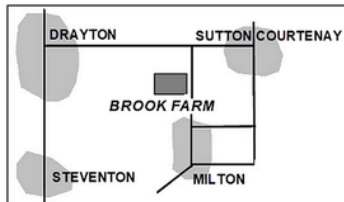
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DRAYTON HALL NEWS

Thanks to all those who bring 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 see bags dumped when the bin is full, and that's officially fly tipping! The Hall gets charged to remove them – which affects the community. 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).

I see that the message on the St Peter's page talks of guidance and nurturing. Sadly we had a **vandalism** incident, late January, when we are given to understand that some children gained unauthorised access, and created a substantial mess, also setting off a fire alarm. The clean-up costs were substantial, but we are told the relevant parents want to avoid responsibility. Perhaps they should study that article? The Youth Club (Damacus) – on whose 'watch' the incident happened – are trying to progress the situation, but they decided to pause their sessions in Hall while seeking a resolution.

We have another **Antiques Fair**, Sunday March 1st, 9am to about 3pm, and a few new stalls apparently, that's plus Kathy running her excellent value cafe for one of her good causes (lovely breakfast, or perhaps just a bacon sarnie!). Another one on April 5th too.

Kathy is running **Coffee Mornings** in the hall on Wednesday mornings (10 to midday), all for good causes, not just tea, coffee and cake, but a well-filled bacon sarnie here as well!

Advance date for your diary, after the great success of the Quilting Exhibition (in 2024), those **Abbey Quilters** are back for a further show, April 18th & 19th.

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 (Tuesday mornings, Alex, she's been with us for ages), contact info on the back page.

Tony Holmes



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LETTER FROM WESTMINSTER



Update from Olly Glover MP

Following the fourth wettest January on record, I am not surprised to have received a flurry of concerns about **potholes and flooding** from across the constituency. While individual cases are all followed up on, I have also been looking into longer term solutions and funding. With services such as adult social care experiencing huge levels of demand, and Oxfordshire County Council facing a £24.1 million cut in government funding, I raised the need for additional resources to repair potholes at Prime Minister's Questions. I didn't get much of an answer, but I will continue working with our local councils to secure the funding required to keep our roads, cycle paths, and pavements safe and serviceable.

In **Parliament**, I questioned a Home Office minister about the mishandling of a domestic violence case by Thames Valley Police, highlighted the lack of safe cycle routes along the A417 and A338, and spoke about the impact of changes to Indefinite Leave to Remain rules on valued employees in local scientific businesses. I presented a bill to create a Rail Passengers' Charter, aimed at securing better train services, including high-speed Wi-Fi, improved accessibility at stations like Cholsey, and adequate seating for passengers. Train travel isn't cheap, and passengers deserve better.

It was great to welcome Dark Horse Roastery and Hendred Vineyard to Parliament in January as part of an event promoting Oxfordshire's independent **hospitality** businesses. I also had the pleasure of meeting students from Uffington Primary School during their visit to the House of Commons. Schools and other groups that would like an educational tour of Parliament can learn more at www.parliament.uk/education or email me if you need a hand to book a visit.

Returning to water issues, I wrote to the Environment Secretary requesting a meeting to discuss the spiralling costs of the **proposed reservoir**, which undermine the business case for allowing Thames Water to proceed with such a large project, one that bill payers would ultimately fund.



We have, however, had some success with Thames Water on a smaller scale. For example, they joined me, business leaders from Didcot, the Environment Agency, and local councils to unblock measures needed to prevent flooding on Milton Park and Trident Business Park.

As always, if there is anything you feel I can help you with please do not hesitate to contact me and my team at olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk, or by leaving a voice message on 0207 219 7657.

Best wishes,

Olly Glover

MP for Didcot and Wantage Constituency

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DRAYTON DIARIES

(MOSTLY) HALL DIARY FOR MARCH

All events held in Drayton Hall unless otherwise stated. To book the Hall email **bookings@draytonvh.co.uk** or call **01235 531180**. Website: **www.draytonvh.co.uk**
To book the Caudwell DC contact **Vicky Malin, malinfamily27@gmail.com** or **07525 462630**.
Or, for small meetings, the Church Hall may be okay; see the St Peter's page in this edition.

Sun 1st	9:00 am	Antiques Fair (to 3pm)
Wed 4th	10:00 am	Coffee Morning (weekly to noon)
Sun 8th	10:30 am	Private Function (child's party)
	11:00 am	Memorial Service (RAF) Sutton Wick
Mon 9th	7:00 pm	Parish Council Meeting (Caudwell DC)
Sat 14th	9:00 am	Private Function (dog show)
Sat 21st	9:00 am	Private Function (all day)
Sun 22nd	10:00 am	Private Function
Fri 27th	7:15 pm	Private Function (meeting)
Sat 28th		Private Function (all day)

REGULAR EVENTS

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

If an entry is incorrect, please contact an editor.

MONDAYS		
10:00am	Coffee Morning (Wives - 2 nd Monday) <i>Caudwell DC</i>	
2:00pm	Short Mat Bowling Club Session	
4:30pm	Damascus Youth ## (see their Facebook group for updates)	
7:15pm	Badminton	
7:45pm	Bell-ringing for 1.5 hours <i>St Peter's</i>	

TUESDAYS	
9:30am	Pilates (Alexandra Merson 07788 248925)
1:45pm	Drayton Art Group, till 4 pm (<i>Caudwell DC</i>)
2:30pm	Tuesday Connect - 1st Tues (<i>Church</i>)
6:30pm	Karate/'Dojang X' (Sabrina 07938 537310)
WEDNESDAYS	
10:00am	Pebbles Baby & Toddler Group (<i>Church</i>)
10:00am	Coffee Morning (for good causes, till noon)
1:30pm	Whist Drive (<i>Caudwell DC</i>)
1:45pm	U3A Science/Tech, 1st Wednesday (07890 385931) ##
2:00pm	Drayton Wives (last Wednesday, most months) ##
2:00pm	Badminton
6:00pm	Brownies (term-time) Laura 07916 459435 ##
6:45pm	Short Mat Bowling Club
THURSDAYS	
9:30am	Parent & Toddler Group
9:45am	Holy Communion <i>St Peter's Lady Chapel</i>
11:00am	Baptist Café (to 1pm) <i>Caudwell DC</i>
2:00pm	Short Mat Bowling Club Session
2:00pm	Crafts Group (2nd Thursday – run by U3A Kate 01235 550486) ##
5:30pm	Rainbows (girls 5 to 7 yrs) ##
7:30pm	Sequence Dancing (01235 531701)
7:30pm	WI meeting (2nd Thurs) <i>Caudwell DC</i>
7:30pm	Drayton Community Choir (2nd/4th Thurs) Kay 01235 204187 <i>Church Room</i>
FRIDAYS	
11:00am	Keep Fit with Faye 07815 583591
4:45pm	Karate/'Dojang X' (07938 537310)
SUNDAYS	
6:00pm	Evening Service <i>Baptist Church</i>

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