# The Four Parishes News Magazine

# BECKLEY FOREST HILL HORTON-cum-STUDLEY STANTON St JOHN



Early Spring at Shotover House

**April 2021** 

### The editor writes:



Yesterday was the National Day of Reflection, when the whole nation paused to look back over the past year. Now that science has offered us a way of dealing with this terrible pandemic through the miracle of vaccination, we can start to appreciate the signs of new spring life all around us and to hope for easier times ahead.

Although we are not yet able to plan for the community events that are normally so much a feature of our village life, there are signs of new beginnings everywhere. In addition to familiar features, such as 'Knowing our Neighbours' and 'Notes on the Rural landscape', we have a new section focusing on families with children (see page 18 onwards). The only sad news is that we are saying farewell to Mark Szorkowski, the wonderful Head Teacher of Beckley School, who is moving on to pastures new.

I would like to wish you all a safe and happy Easter and I hope to be able to meet some of you in person again one day soon.

Julia Stutfield

All contributions to this magazine are the sole responsibility of the author and do not imply or represent any official editorial view or endorsement.

### Our cover photo ...

was taken by Alexander Stanier.

Alexander kindly sent this photograph to us last year, along with a number of other lovely shots of the grounds of Shotover House, in response to a request for contributions to the Four Parishes Calendar.

If you have taken a photo which you think might be suitable for the cover of the next magazine, please email it to 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com

# We welcome contributions or notices for future issues. Please send them to:

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### The closing date for the May 2021 issue is 15 Apr 2021

The Four Parishes News Magazine is produced under the auspices of our four village churches for the benefit of the whole community. It is funded by advertising revenue, which is used to cover the printing costs.

We are dependent on volunteers to assemble the content, book and invoice the advertisers, compile and edit the magazine, collect it from the printers and distribute it throughout the four parishes. If you are interested in getting involved, please email Julia at 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com

Recent issues of the magazine are available to view online at <a href="https://www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine">www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine</a>

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Anthea Beresford

The Four Parishes News Magazine has 10 issues per year and is distributed free of charge to approximately 850 addresses in Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley, Stanton St John and Beckley.

To advertise in the magazine please email JULIA adverts.4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com

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| Church Services in the Four Parishes, April 2021 |   |   |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|
|  | St Nicolas,<br>Forest Hill<br>with<br>Shotover                                      | St John<br>the Baptist,<br>Stanton<br>St John | Assumption of<br>the Blessed<br>Virgin Mary,<br>Beckley | St Barnabas,<br>Horton-cum-<br>Studley |  |  |
| <b>1 Apr</b> <i>Maundy Thurs.</i>                | 7.30pm Benefice Maundy Thursday Service via Zoom                                    |   |   |  |  |  |
| <b>2 Apr</b><br>Good Friday                      | 12pm Benefice showing of The Riding Lights Theatre Company<br>Passion Play via Zoom |   |   |  |  |  |
| <b>3 Apr</b><br>Holy Saturday                    | 12pm Easter Vigil of Readings, Psalms and Prayers via Zoom                          |   |   |  |  |  |
| <b>4 Apr</b><br>Easter Sunday                    | 11am Benefice Service via Zoom  |   |   |  |  |  |
| Í  | 6pm Taizé via Zoom  |   |   |  |  |  |
| 11 Apr   | 11am Benefice Service via Zoom  |   |   |  |  |  |
|  | 6pm Evensong from the Book of Common Prayer via Zoom                                |   |   |  |  |  |
| 18 Apr   | All services to be confirmed  |   |   |  |  |  |
| 25 Apr   | 11am Benefice Service via Zoom  |   |   |  |  |  |
|  | 5pm Family Church via Zoom  |   |   |  |  |  |

At the time of writing, our churches are closed for services with the exception of funerals due to the country being in Lockdown 3, protecting ourselves and the strain on the NHS.

All are welcome to join our 'Zoom' online services. Simply get in touch with Anthea (contact details opposite) to request an invitation.

We continue to review opening our churches for services in light of Government announcements regarding easing of Lockdown. Please do look out for announcements, through emails from Anthea, by the Four Parishes website, and on Church noticeboards for any changes, depending on what is safe, allowed, and possible.

Following updating of Risk Assessments, all churches in the Benefice are open for private prayer on Sundays and Wednesdays from 10am (9am in Horton-cum-Studley) to 4pm.

### A letter from Anthea

Hi everyone



In last month's magazine, I suggested we might observe in the beauty of nature, signs of Spring 'springing'. Well now I can say that Spring has officially 'sprung'! 21 March is formally the first day of Spring, and as it happens, is the anniversary of me meeting Bertie, and of him coming into my life. With the excitement of meeting him, I did not connect with any other significance of the date. All that was in mind was

the urgency of collecting him before the country went into Lockdown 1 on 23 March. Today, on the anniversary of the first Lockdown, it is heart breaking to read that total deaths due to Covid-19 stand at 147,681.

Lost loved ones are not the only price of the pandemic. Loneliness, isolation, separation, juggling home schooling and home working, lost educational experiences, lost jobs, job insecurity, financial insecurity are to name but a few things people are dealing with. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins are yet to see new-born babies, and hold them in their arms. People have had to lay loved ones to rest without the usual support of family and friends. Weddings have been postponed. Milestone birthdays have come and gone. Life has been, and remains, hard.

Not everyone has been blessed with their own 'Bertie'. Bertie, like my other

dogs before him, yet uniquely in his own way, has journeyed with me, through this time. He arrived from his first home - apparently rather palatial as the photograph shows - although he lived in a barn with his siblings, not in the 'drawing room' on the chaise longue! The photograph of him is the first I took - he had visited his



'toybox' - the recycling bin - to collect a cherished plastic bottle to play with - something he still does on walks when he finds a discarded bottle which brings him great joy!

He senses my mood and shares his love. He snuggles on my knee for hugs; he sits looking adoringly at me; he licks away my when sad. He shows tears am unconditional love towards me. However L am feeling, he brightens my mood. You might say he is only a dog! It makes me smile that in reverse dog spells God! - is that a coincidence? I marvel at his love he shares. Unconditional love, there for me always. Yet he is 'just' a dog. If a dog can show such deep love, just imagine the perfect love available to us from God, who is love.



As we battle through life's difficulties, so much more acute for many at the current time, may we all remember that God's perfect love is available to us all. God showed his love for us by Jesus dying for us on the Cross - which we remember on Good Friday. May we linger at the Cross, not leapfrogging straight from Palm Sunday and the celebration of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, straight to the joy of the empty tomb on Easter Day. May we journey together, if remotely, slowly and reverently through Holy Week: remembering the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, the horror of the Cross on Good Friday, the darkness of Holy Saturday, and the joy of the empty tomb and the risen Lord on Easter Day, despite the restrictions we are still under.

I wish everyone a blessed Easter, and may we look forward to gradual easing of restrictions, especially as we are blessed by the rollout of the vaccine. But may we be cautious, as infection levels are rapidly on the rise in mainland Europe.

Please do get in touch if you need to talk. Take great care, keep safe and God bless you and your loved ones.

Anthea

### **CHURCH MATTERS**

### Advent challenge and beyond

We continue our reading through the New Testament and the chats on people's experiences from the month's readings. Our chat on **March for Mark** is scheduled for **6 April at 7.30pm** for an hour via Zoom. Please do come along and share your thoughts, comments, and questions.

The challenge for April is to read the Acts of the Apostles: **Acts for April** which seems apt following Easter - do have a read and see if you agree!

For those doing the **Psalm a Day for 150 Days** challenge, I hope you are doing well. You are probably just over half way through now! Keep going!

### Summary of Lockdown 3 activities

In addition to the Sunday Services and Special Services listed on page 5, we continue with the now regular weekly activities on Zoom. With the Government's planned easing of the 'stay at home' rule on 12 April, we will continue these activities throughout April, seeing if people would still like them for the time being. Look out for emails with any updates on activities. Please do get in touch with Anthea for invitations if you do not already get emails from her:

|   | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri |
|---|------|-----|-------|-----|
| Morning Prayer at 9am                         | ٧    |     |       | ٧   |
| Evening Prayer at 6pm<br>(not 1 April)        |      | ٧   | ٧     |     |
| Midweek Elevenses at 11                       |      | ٧   |       |     |
| End of the Week Drinks at 7pm (not 2 April)   |      |     |       | ٧   |
| Lent Book Group 7.30pm<br>(finishing 8 April) |      |     | ٧     |     |

### **Easter Garden Competition**

Photos will be displayed on the Four Parishes website. Please take a look at the entries. The winner will be announced on Easter Day.

### Riding Lights Theatre Company

### Breaking Day: A Lockdown Passion Play by Les Ellison

With restrictions for gathering remaining in place for us for the Easter weekend, we have decided to offer this play, free of charge, to people in the Benefice on Good Friday at 12 noon via Zoom. We will send out the Zoom invitation nearer the time. It will also be possible to watch the play privately, should you choose to. We will send details for that too. The play is in three acts and lasts 45 minutes. Please do join us.

Riding Lights says this about the play: As day begins to break on Good Friday, the occupying Governor's tenuous grip on authority is slipping. It's festival time in Jerusalem but his wife is plagued with disturbing dreams. Amid the demands of the Sanhedrin and the murderous cries of the mob, the lines between personal and political in Pilate's house start to blur. The teacher at the centre of it all remains silent.

### **Beckley School**

Please remember to pray for the School and for a new Head Teacher to lead the School in the next phase of its life. It is really important for the children of our communities that the right person is found. Please also pray for those leading the School during this time of change, and for Mark Szortowski as he takes up his new post after Easter.

### **Recordings of Services**

Do not forget that you can watch edited recordings of the Zoom Benefice Services by going to <a href="www.fourparishes.org.uk/online-services">www.fourparishes.org.uk/online-services</a>.

This link takes you directly to a page from which you can select a service and either play it directly or select to watch it on YouTube. You can watch on a computer, tablet (e.g. iPad), smartphone, or even on a smart TV.



If you need help working out

how to do this, please contact Julia Stutfield on julia.stutfield@gmail.com.

### Getting Started on 'net zero emissions' by 2030



In February 2020, the General Synod (the legislature of the Church of England) passed a resolution asking all churches to produce a plan to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Our vicar, Anthea, has asked me to lead the work on this, with an initial focus on the historic church buildings in our four parishes. In addition to being our Associate Priest, I am

also an energy economist, and I have been working in this field worldwide since I left university more than 50 years ago.

There is a looming climate crisis. The human race has reached the point where we can either destroy our habitat through our greed or we can re-balance our lifestyles. We have to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to net zero before the planet reaches a tipping point when the climate crisis would become irreversible. Although there is a lot to be done at a global, national, local and personal level, it is do-able; so it is good that our four parishes are getting started. God calls us to care for his creation as part of our response to his unconditional love for us.

It may not be too difficult or even very expensive for each of our church buildings to reach net zero. The only fuel that they use is electricity. A first step will be to ensure that we are buying our electricity from a supplier that only uses renewable generation. There are tools for finding the best/cheapest such supplier, so this shouldn't be too complicated. There may also be other things that are worth doing, such as changing to LED lighting, or re-wilding our churchyards. Any proposals will, of course, be put to the PCCs (Parochial Church Councils) for approval.

We are looking for a 'net zero champion' in each village to work with me on this endeavour. You don't need to be a church-goer, just someone who cares about our communities. If you have any experience in this area and/or you have a passion to help avert the climate crisis, please get in touch with me (01865 316245 or <a href="https://hugh.lee@btinternet.com">hugh.lee@btinternet.com</a>). I would also be happy to hear from anybody who has any ideas or concerns.

The Rev'd Hugh Lee, Associate Priest

### **GENERAL**

### Wheatley Library

### Pandemic Year Summary



We are in the business of books and words. Have you noticed how these new words have entered our frequent, if not daily, wordscape? Some have acquired an intensity of new meaning: social distancing, restrictions, face masks, rule of 6, working from home, must, support bubble, tiers, stay, protect, safe.... to name a few.

From the stressful period, for everyone, of those first few weeks the library leadership faced the magnitude of putting a library service of 44 libraries and over 250 staff 'to bed', branch staff suddenly found their purpose and roles put on ice, librarians switched much of their work to delivering an online library and many of us worked from home.

Since then, we have all got a story to tell about what we did last year and how we fared. While we are still working many things out as guidance changes and government information grows, we have kept the library service going. It remains meaningful to our residents and has evolved well in some surprising ways.

Jane Mason, Operations Manager for Library Leadership Team

For information about library services during the pandemic year of 2020 please see the Friends of Wheatley Library Facebook page, or <a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries</a>, or follow Oxfordshire Libraries on Facebook or @Oxonlibraries on Twitter.

The Wheatley library staff hope that the rates of covid infections will stay low enough for us to be able to re-open our doors in April in line with government guidance but until we see you again, we hope you keep safe.

Wendy Stanton, Wheatley Library Manager

Wheatley Library, The Merry Bells, High Street, Wheatley, OX33 1XP Telephone: 01865 875267

For the most up to date information see the relevant page at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

# Oxford-Cambridge Expressway Update EXPRESSWAY CANCELLED



The Government has officially announced the cancellation of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway.

The No Expressway Group, which was started by a small group of volunteers from Horton-cum-Studley, would like to thank all of its supporters who have campaigned so vigorously, and who have helped in so many ways, to stop this destructive proposal.

Our campaign's next challenge is the over-inflated housing and urban development across the entire Ox-Cam Arc. Please continue to support us in our future campaign.

### Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Thank you for printing, in the March issue, the correspondence between David Radford and John Howell MP about the proposed new underground coal mine in Cumbria.

Cumbria County Council is rightly promoting jobs and the economy. However these need to be good jobs not bad jobs. Jobs in a new underground coal mine would be bad jobs for three reasons.

- Firstly, working underground is unpleasant, dangerous and unhealthy because of the very high levels of airborne dust; I know because I have worked in a coal mine.
- Secondly, these jobs would not last long because, although the mine may initially appear profitable, it will soon have to close, as the coking coal it would produce will be replaced by hydrogen for steel making; a hydrogen steel plant is already being built in Sweden.
- The third reason why the new mine would provide bad jobs is that it
  will inevitably be seen to increase British and global carbon emissions
  and so worsen the climate crisis. This will be a PR disaster for the UK.
  We will be trying to persuade the world to do more about the climate
  crisis at COP26 this year and yet be seen to be dithering about allowing
  or banning a new coal mine.

Cumbria County Council could instead be promoting good jobs. There is plenty of opportunity for new employment in Cumbria in offshore wind and in solar farms on poor quality agricultural land.

It is ironic that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, decided not to call in the planning application for the new mine, saying it was a local issue, when he did not let South Oxfordshire District Council decide our local planning issues about Land North of Bayswater Brook.

The government has now decided to have a Public Inquiry. I was deputy head of strategic planning in British Coal at the time of the last Public Inquiry for a new underground coal mine, which was near Kenilworth thirty years ago. I was closely involved at all stages of that Inquiry. It was a very lengthy process and cost British Coal, the government and those opposed to the mine a great deal of money. That Public Inquiry was completely unnecessary, as British Coal did not want to succeed but was going through the motions in the mistaken hope that it would raise the morale of the miners in the country. This new Inquiry will be similarly lengthy, expensive and unnecessary: Robert Jenrick should simply disallow the planning application for all the reasons given above (and let our democratically elected District Council decide on our local planning issues!)

Hugh Lee, energy economist and Associate Priest in the Four Parishes

# Recycle your inkjet cartridges for charity and help to save the environment

This is a reminder that you can recycle your empty **inkjet cartridges** at St Nicolas Church, Forest Hill. A wanted list can be found at <a href="https://www.recycle4charity.co.uk/InkjetCartridges">https://www.recycle4charity.co.uk/InkjetCartridges</a> and these may receive a small donation to church funds, but even unwanted items can be recycled and prevented from going to landfill. While the church has restricted opening hours, a collection box will be kept in the porch, available at any time. Unfortunately, **laser cartridges cannot be recycled** here. For more information, see the website above, or contact Peter Stutfield, tel: 01865 876848 or use the contact form on our website www.stnicolasforesthill.org.

### 'Notes on the Rural Landscape': The First Taste of Spring

The 2021 Asparagus Season will be on its way very soon and for over 30 years the residents of the Four Parishes have been able to pick their own asparagus at Rectory Farm.

Traditionally the Asparagus Season lasts six weeks starting on 23rd April, St George's Day and runs until Midsummer Day, the 21st June. The start date depends entirely on the temperature of the soil, but the spears can grow 4 inches or 20 cms in 24 hours when conditions are above 25C degrees.

Rectory Farm planted its first six acres of French Asparagus after a fact-finding trip, in 1986, to the French Chapeau de Paille growers based south of Paris. It takes three years from planting for the plants to build up the energy reserves needed to produce the first crop of spears that can be picked. We now grow 60 acres producing some 35 tonnes; a lot is for pick your own and local sales and the rest goes to a packhouse for the supermarkets.

In 1990 our first pickers started with just a basket and a knife to pick the asparagus; now they have a buggy (most have a favourite), that they pick from. The buggies provide shelter from the sun and the rain so the pickers can pick all day. These buggies and our asparagus were featured with Nadiya Hussain, Queen of Bake Off in 2017, for her first big TV cookery show.

In our first season we found few people were familiar with asparagus and not many knew how to pick it, cook it, or had even eaten it, so we had a pop-up BBQ and kitchen in the field for customers to sample asparagus, discover its delights and ask questions. Our field chef was the late Jonny Chick, a local publican who went on to take over The George in Stanton St John and extend and convert it into The Talkhouse as we know it today. Later, he bought and led the modernisation of the Abingdon Arms. Great generous platters of our asparagus were always on the pubs' menus as one of Jonny's seasonal specials.

In those early days we relied on our PYO (Pick Your Own) customers to pick most of the crop, with some well-known politicians - Jack Straw, Home Secretary at the time, being one - and celebrities like Jeremy Paxman stopping in the field, along with their security, to pick their own en route

back to London. We supplied local restaurants such as Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons who were so very specific about the length and width of their spears that it was called "manoir grade" by the pickers. Bonners in the Oxford Covered Market were keen to have local asparagus and 30 years on, they still sell ours every year. In 1994 our asparagus was served at the elaborate dinner for the Queen and President Mitterrand in the Channel Tunnel to celebrate its opening.



International production in Peru and Mexico means asparagus is now available year-round in the supermarkets and restaurants. However, since the stems start going tough and the quality deteriorates as soon as it is picked, nothing tastes as good as the spears you can pick and cook within a few hours rather than days.

Over the years we have tried lots of different recipes with Asparagus but still we think asparagus is best steamed within a few minutes of being picked and served with melted butter or Hollandaise sauce. After six weeks, as the season finishes, we put away the asparagus steamer. We then resist temptation to eat it out of season because it always disappoints, and we wait patiently until the season starts again the following April.

Carla Stanley, Rectory Farm

### A Website for Walkers

Are you fed-up with doing the same old walks? Walking in Oxfordshire <a href="https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire">www.walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire</a> is the website for you!

With hundreds of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy. So home or away, check out the website and get walking!

John Harris email: john@walkinginengland.co.uk

### 'Knowing our Neighbours': Ian Walker

Originally from Sydney, Ian Walker has had many roles in commercial radio that have seen him work all over the world. He is currently station manager for Jack FM and co-CEO of Jack radio in the UK. He bought his house in Forest Hill, known as 'the funny house' due to its colourful architecture, in 2017.

He confesses that one of the main reasons he chose the village was due to



his love of Thai food, having discovered that The White Horse pub, just around the corner, happens to specialise in Thai cuisine. "I travel to Thailand at least three times a year because it's halfway between London and Sydney", he says. He also values Forest Hill for its green spaces and sense of community. "I couldn't think of a better place to live to be honest and I've been made to feel very welcome by everybody here".

lan came to Oxfordshire in 2006 when his company purchased Passion Radio. This led to the launch of Jack FM in October 2007. At that time Oxford didn't have much coverage in terms of commercial radio; now there are six stations under the 'Jack' brand, three of which - Jack 2 Hits and Jack 3 Chill (the newest station, on 107.9FM and DAB, which targets an over 60 audience) - are local to Oxfordshire. The other three broadcast nationally. His passion for the success of commercial radio is clear, and he describes it as a battle of David versus Goliath. "I want commercial radio to win because we're under-resourced", he says. Nevertheless, after just 14 years, 106 Jack FM has now become the most awarded local radio station in UK radio history.

Having known from a young age that he wanted to work in broadcasting, lan started his career in radio when he was in secondary school and is now approaching 38 years in the industry. "I ended up getting a work placement at 2CH, the number one radio station in Sydney, which was an easy listening station", he says. He recounts how he would go to the 2CH station offices at 5am to sit in with the morning show presenter and newsreader and get them McDonald's burgers. Throughout the week, lan gained experience in the inner workings of the newsroom, music scheduling, and marketing.

"Invariably I'd still be there at 10 o'clock at night because I wanted to be a presenter", he explains.

On leaving school, Ian kept working for the community radio station taking on a range of assignments, such as presenting at mobile discos and corporate events, in venues such as the Sydney Opera House and Hilton Hotel. He was then offered a job at 2CH working night shifts. "I would do this four nights a week: I would get in at 11 o'clock in the evening and work until five o'clock in the morning", he says. "I ended up presenting with people that I had been listening to as colleagues on the airwaves".

lan continued to work in the Sydney radio market, the most competitive in the southern hemisphere, for a number of years. He explains that Australia, despite its smaller population, generates far more revenue from commercial radio than the UK. In 1999, after becoming a station general manager at the age of just 28, he was head-hunted by the GWR international radio group, moving to Vienna for three years to help implement commercial radio across Austria. During this time he moved from music director to programme director, organising the output of the whole station.

Last year, with his work spread across six radio stations, lan didn't take a

single day off but he has since taken the advice of his business partner to have a break. "You have to have balance in your life and I think health is really important, mental health particularly", he says. Ian aims to give young people the same chance for success in the broadcasting industry that he got. He recounts how in 2016 he was a



judge at the student radio awards and the winner was given their own breakfast show on the new national station Union Jack. "The satisfaction that I get is seeing somebody improve and learn and succeed and enjoy what they're doing", he says. Looking forward to the end of lockdown, lan is eager to return to the gym and get back in the swimming pool.

Robert Macfarlane, Horton-cum-Studley

### **FOCUS ON FAMILIES**

### Friends of Beckley School (FOBS)

FOBS would like to say a huge THANK YOU to everyone who bought a Christmas tree from us in 2020. This year we made around £1000, which will be used by the school to pay for educational resources, repairs and trips for the children.

Times are tough so we've also been helping struggling families with food vouchers, internet access and devices to access online learning. We are incredibly grateful to the local community for your support!

Every year FOBS Christmas Trees remind us how willing the local community is to help out. Many of you attended Beckley School or have children who went there/are still there. It's an important hub for the local community.

From now on we will add more regular updates to the Four Parishes Newsletter with information about ways to help.

The school will soon launch its 'forest school' initiative in which children

learn outdoor skills, courage and resilience away from the classroom. Teachers have kindly requested donations of logs for children to sit on (ready sawn), old ropes, pots and pans (for mud!), a toolbag and tarpaulins. Please email FOBS at <a href="mailto:BeckleyFOBS@gmail.com">BeckleyFOBS@gmail.com</a> if you can help. Due to Covid, please don't deliver items to school before emailing FOBS.



You can make a financial donation to FOBS any time at donorbox.org/FOBS.

Friends of Beckley School Friends of Beckley School is a registered charity (1160166) whose aim is to enrich school life by funding new IT equipment, school building updates and school activities.



### News from Beckley School Reopening After Lockdown



It was simply fabulous to have every child back in school, with 100% attendance by 9 March! Pupils quickly re-established friendships and are already becoming used to the new routines. Most importantly, they are back with their teachers and TAs, learning in their classrooms. Hooray!

### **Red Nose Day**

The coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on all of us, especially those helped by Comic Relief funding. This year's Red Nose Day gave our pupils a real lift, as well as the chance to be part of something positive.

### A Fond Farewell

In view of my departure at the end of this term, all I can really say is that I have had a wonderful time at Beckley. It has been a privilege to teach, work with, support and learn from an amazing school community. With the help of many passionate and committed people, both within the school and beyond, Beckley continues to thrive, going from strength to strength. The decision for me to move on was not one I made lightly. I am excited about the future and know that I can travel to the next chapter in my life secure in the knowledge that the school is in safe hands. The major highlight of my time at Beckley is without doubt the people and the teamwork; laughing, sharing and encouraging.

My thanks go to the governors, who have been critical friends and an invaluable support in the strategic development of the school. They are a team of huge-hearted people who rarely get a mention for all their hard work and time, but are pivotal in the smooth leadership of the school. I would also like to say on record an enormous thank you to every member of staff who I have had the pleasure of working alongside over the past five years. They each play their part in making Beckley the place it is today and the school only works because of these remarkable people. And so to the pupils of Beckley School, who each hold a very special place in my heart. I will continue to smile and glow with pride as I hear about these marvellous children reaching milestones and achieving their dreams.

All best wishes, Mark Szortowski, Headteacher

### 'Call the Midwife'

Julie Osborne from Forest Hill is a midwife, based at Wallingford Maternity Unit. This article was triggered by the delightful fact that we are currently experiencing a small 'baby boom' in our villages.

It is always a pleasure to visit new babies in the Four Parishes. I have been thinking for a while it may be helpful to write about the birth place choices for families in our area, as there are a number of pregnant women in our villages.

The choices are to have your baby at home, in a midwife-led birth unit (these can be "freestanding" such as Wallingford Maternity Unit, or "alongside" such as The Spires Birth Centre) or in an obstetric unit (John Radcliffe Delivery Suite). In any setting midwives will do their best to make you feel safe and comfortable and support your birth preferences.

The following information is for what we call "Low Risk Pregnancies" ie,

you are healthy, your baby is healthy, and you are having 1st to 4th baby your (inclusive) between 37 and 42 weeks. If you have any special circumstances, for example, you are having twins, a pre-term birth or you have a pre-existing medical condition then you would be advised to have your baby in the John Radcliffe Delivery



Suite with the whole team of midwives, doctors, anaesthetists and neonatal staff available if necessary.

If you would like to have your baby at Wallingford or Spires, you do not need to "book" in advance. Your midwife will have asked you your intention at your first pregnancy appointment, but you do not need to make up your mind until you go into labour. All the telephone numbers are in your blue notes.

Birth is a very personal experience and is driven by birth hormones which do their job best when a woman feels safe, undisturbed and comfortable. This is why some women like the idea of a home birth because they feel that they will cope with labour and birth very well if they are in familiar surroundings.

If you would like to consider having your baby at home, you just need to mention this to your midwife. The next step is usually a home birth assessment appointment, where we come to your home and have a look at some practical things, like the access and parking, and go through lots of information with you about what to expect, and how to prepare. You do not need to have any special equipment, but some women choose to hire a birth pool. It is also possible to use your own bath to labour or give birth in if you like the idea of a water birth.

The midwives bring along everything they might need, including emergency equipment and entonox (gas and air) if you choose to use it. One midwife will come to your home and look after you in labour and a second, additional midwife will be called to come for the actual birth.

If there are any problems during the labour or after the birth, then we call an ambulance so that you can be transferred to hospital where our medical or neonatal colleagues may need to get involved in your care. From Wallingford or from a home birth this transfer will be to the John Radcliffe Hospital.

### Additional information

Once the pandemic is over, we hope to be able to resume our regular tours of Wallingford Birth Centre. Meanwhile you may wish to see our virtual tour on Instagram #Wallybirth

https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/NHSE-your-choice-where-to-have-baby-first-baby-sept2018.pdf

Brocklehurst P. (2011) Perinatal and maternal outcomes by planned place of birth for healthy women with low risk pregnancies: the Birthplace in England national prospective cohort study.

www.bmj.com/content/343/bmj.d7400

### The Maple Tree children's centre charity

Happy Spring from The Maple Tree in Wheatley! How exciting - the sun is shining and the world is beginning to open up again, and so are we!

We are continuing with our online programme, but we will be able to hold sessions at the Centre from 12 April. Spaces are limited and must be pre-booked by emailing <a href="mailto:info@mapletree.org.uk">info@mapletree.org.uk</a>. Covid measures remain in place and there is a suggested donation of £2.50 per family per session.

Messy Monday: Play and Learn sensory/creative activities from 10:30-11:30

Tuesday: Play and Learn 'Once Upon a Rhyme-Time' from 10:00-11:00

**Wednesday: Well-Baby Clinic** (with Health Visitors) to be booked through the NHS and **Maple Babies** Group support for new parents from 10:00-11:00

**Thursday: Play and Learn** 'Little Scientists', activities for the under 5s from 10:00-11:00

**Friday: Play and Learn** 'Solitary Bee to Social Butterflies', a new group for young children (from 12 months to 3 years) who have missed key socialising opportunities during this past year from 10:30-11:30

**Saturday:** Family Fun on 3rd Saturday of each month, Dinosaurs (17 April), Construction (15 May), Space (19 June) from 10:00-12:00

**Weekdays 1:1 Sessions:** the Maple Tree is offering 1:1 sessions to parents needing a listening ear during these trying times; this can be by phone, online, in the Centre or on a walk.

Appeal for new Trustees, Advisors and Volunteers: we are especially keen to recruit trustees and advisors with a particular skill set in business, accounting, garden design or fundraising. We are also looking for volunteers to help with our sessions alongside our dedicated staff team.

We are here to help you, if you need help, advice or support.

Telephone 01865 236700, email: info@mapletree.org.uk

website: www.mapletree.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley

Laura Spencer The Maple Tree Centre Manager



The Maple Tree is a community charity (registration no. 1174117) based in Wheatley, aiming to replace some services that were lost when local Children's Centres closed in 2017. We serve families from Wheatley and surrounding villages, including Stanton St John, Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley and Beckley.



As day begins to break on Good Friday, the occupying Governor's tenuous grip on authority is slipping. It's festival time in Jerusalem but his wife is plagued with disturbing dreams. Amid the demands of the Sanhedrin and the murderous cries of the mob, the lines between personal and political in the Governor's house start to blur ... while outside momentum is gathering – the power of the Capitol in tension with the will of the people.

Filmed remotely in an innovative lockdown style, Breaking Day is a virtual passion play for Easter 2021, available to watch with others in the Four Parishes via Zoom at 12 noon on Friday 2 April, or individually until 15 April. Email <a href="mailto:anthea@fourparishes.org.uk">anthea@fourparishes.org.uk</a> for an invitation.

### Volunteers needed



### to listen to children read in primary schools

Schoolreaders is a charity (1159157) that matches volunteers to primary schools where they give free one-to-one reading support to children. In a normal year, 1 in 4 children in England leave primary school unable to read well, but estimates suggest that, due to the impact of Coronavirus, the most disadvantaged pupils have fallen even further behind their peers. Children who struggle with reading are more likely to live in poverty and be unemployed as adults.

Schoolreaders are currently seeking more reading volunteers for a primary school in Headington. No qualifications are needed; just a love of reading; some spare time each week and a willingness to go where the children need you most. The process to become a Schoolreader takes a few weeks, so please apply now so you can be ready to start as soon as it can be arranged. Please visit <a href="https://www.schoolreaders.org/volunteer-application-form">www.schoolreaders.org/volunteer-application-form</a> or call 01234 924111 for further information.

### The Otmoor Flyer

### A message from Comet-Corporate Services.

The Otmoor Flyer will restart on 12 April with the following conditions:

- A maximum of 6 passengers may travel.
- Please continue to social distance from passengers outside your household.
- Wear a face covering at all times (unless exempt).
- Maintain good hand hygiene.
- Be aware, windows may be opened to increase ventilation, which may cause drafts.
- Do not use the service if showing symptoms of Covid, have tested positive, or been advised to self isolate.

For anyone booking an individual journey, there will be an increase of 10p per mile from 1 April.

To book a journey from Horton-cum-Studley and Beckley, telephone Jill Meyjes: 01865 351496. For Forest Hill and Stanton St John, telephone Kate MacFarlane: 01865 351086.

Please book before 10am the day before travel. For Monday journeys, book the previous Friday.

### **BECKLEY**

### **Beckley Church**

Details of all church services can be found on page 5. Any changes to the published schedule will be on our website <a href="www.fourparishes.org.uk">www.fourparishes.org.uk</a>.

### Beckley & Stowood Parish Council

The next meeting will be held remotely on Thursday 8 April 2021 at 8pm by Conference Call. Parish Council information, including agendas and minutes, is available on the website <a href="www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk">www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk</a>. The Clerk's email address is <a href="mailto:clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk">clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk</a> if you wish to contact the Parish Council to raise a question for the next meeting.

The **Otmoor Flyer** service will restart on 12 April. See facing page for details.

For information on **Beckley Village Hall** please see <a href="https://www.beckleyvillagehall.org">www.beckleyvillagehall.org</a> and to enquire about a booking please contact the Booking Secretary at <a href="mailto:booking@beckleyvillagehall.org">booking@beckleyvillagehall.org</a>.

**Fix My Street:** anyone can report a road or street problem on the County Council website at www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Reminder from the Parish Council: Please clean up after your dog and dispose of bagged waste and litter in your Grey bin at home or in the dual-waste litter bin on the playing field. Please don't leave bags on the verges and pavements or hanging in the hedgerow. Thank you.

### Beckley and Area Community Benefit Society More than a Pub program. https://bacbs.org/events

The monthly Sunday evening talks by Zoom continue and remain popular with 30-60 people 'zooming' in. This is the current Sunday evening programme so far, with more events in the pipeline:

### Sunday 11 April, 6:30pm

The Cutting Edge: Surgery in the Pandemic and Beyond.

Professor Neil Mortensen, FRCS, a Beckley resident and professor of colorectal surgery at Oxford University and Consultant Surgeon in the Oxford hospitals.

### Sunday 9 May, 6:30pm

Saving Elephants in West Africa.

Dr Susan Canney, a resident of Horton-cum-Studley, has worked on a variety of nature conservation projects across Africa, Asia and Europe, and in sustainable development policy at the Green College Centre for Environmental Policy and Understanding. Susan's work was featured in the October 2020 Four Parishes Magazine ('Knowing our neighbours'), which can be found at https://www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine.

Zoom access details are distributed nearer the time. If you would like to watch previous talks then email Adrian Hampshire at <a href="mailto:info@bacbs.org">info@bacbs.org</a> with your request.

(continued over page)

**Family Treasure Hunt.** There will be an Easter "treasure hunt" around both Beckley and Horton-cum-Studley villages for families, with a closing date of Friday 9 April. Please contact Susy Jepson, <a href="mailto:susy.jepson@gmail.com">susy.jepson@gmail.com</a> for more information or see <a href="https://bacbs.org/events">https://bacbs.org/events</a>.

Good neighbour scheme. This service is still available to give lifts to those with no other transport, to attend vaccination appointments, collect items from surgeries, Stanton village shop etc., as well as to the Barton/Green Road roundabout where buses into Headington and central Oxford are frequent. To request a lift, either ring 07514 791919 (answerphone if no answer) or email <a href="mailto:BACBSgoodneighbour@gmail.com">BACBSgoodneighbour@gmail.com</a>. Given COVID issues, both driver and client need to be satisfied with both parties wearing masks and having open car windows. If you know of anyone who might need help, and perhaps does not know this service exists, please do let them know.

### **FOREST HILL**

### St Nicolas Church

Lockdown continues at time of writing but there is light on the horizon. We hope that you are all keeping positive and enjoying the lighter evenings.

Details of all church services can be found on page 5. Any changes to the published schedule will be on our website at <a href="www.fourparishes.org.uk">www.fourparishes.org.uk</a> or <a href="www.stnicolasforesthill.org.uk">www.stnicolasforesthill.org.uk</a>.

The church building is open on Wednesdays and Sundays for private prayer.

### Forest Hill Baby and Toddler Group

Forest Hill Baby and Toddler Group, which is run in partnership with The Maple Tree in Wheatley (see page 22), is hoping to re-start at the end of May or some time in June. If you have a baby or toddler, or you are expecting one, or if you are interested in volunteering to help with setting up and running the sessions for 2 hours per week or fortnight (termtime only), please contact Julia Stutfield, telephone: 07766 103427 or email: julia.stutfield@gmail.com.



### Forest Hill Village Hall

All things being well, the Village Hall will be available for certain activities from 12 April. These are specified as 'support groups, supervised activities for children, parent-and-child groups (up to 15 people, not counting those aged under five), communal worship, or a wedding reception, or a commemorative event like a wake'. Further expansion of use is possible after 17 May, leading to full availability from 21 June.

Special arrangements have been made to ensure that the Hall is compliant with the safety and health regulations for Covid-19.

If you would like to hire the Hall and find the rules confusing, and who doesn't, please get in touch and we can advise on whether or not the Hall would be appropriate for your use.

Lettings are via Dawn Dunbar on 873885 or <a href="mailto:dunbardawn1@gmail.com">dunbardawn1@gmail.com</a>.

### Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

There is still uncertainty nationally about when Parish Councils will be able to hold face to face meetings. We will keep you updated on when physical meetings will be held again in the Village Hall. Until then the Parish Council will continue to hold meetings remotely.

The next 2 meetings will be held on Thursday 8 April 2021. The Annual Parish meeting, where parish groups will be invited to give a report or update on their activities over the last year will begin at 7pm. This will be followed by an ordinary Parish Council meeting. If you would like to attend either or both of these meetings via Zoom or have issues you'd like raised on your behalf, please contact the clerk.

The **Otmoor Flyer** service will restart on 12 April. See page 24 for details.

If you notice road, street or lighting problems please report them on the Oxfordshire County Council website <a href="https://www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk">www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>.

During COVID-19 restrictions, agendas with planning application details and minutes of meetings, along with other Parish Council information will be posted at <a href="www.parish-council.com/foresthillwithshotover/index.asp">www.parish-council.com/foresthillwithshotover/index.asp</a>. You can contact Helen Cross, the Parish Council Clerk, tel: 0844 884 3328, during the hours 09:00 - 17:00, or email: <a href="mailto:theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.org.uk">theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.org.uk</a>.

### **HORTON-cum-STUDLEY**

### News from St Barnabas

The PCC has considered how it may move towards holding services in the church again. However, until national guidance on Covid changes, it was thought appropriate to continue virtual services by Zoom.

We will keep it under review and whilst keen to share worship with parishioners in the church building, realise that the safety of individuals is paramount.

Anyone wishing to receive information about Zoom services, please email <a href="mailto:stbarnabaspcchcs@gmail.com">stbarnabaspcchcs@gmail.com</a> or ring David Slingo on 07850 004700.

Information can also be found at www.fourparishes.org.uk.

### Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council

The Parish Council continues to meet remotely via Google Meet on the 2nd Thursday of every month at 7:30pm. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 8 April.

The Parish Council would like to remind all Parishioners to remain vigilant, after a recent theft in the village and other suspicious activity. Please report any suspicious activity, with details of vehicle registration numbers to the Police by calling 111.

After recent fly tipping on Ragnall's Lane the Parish Council are talking with Oxfordshire County Council regarding the possibility of Ragnall's being gated from where it becomes a restricted byway.

Please remember to report potholes and fly tipping on the FixMyStreet website https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/.

### The Otmoor Flyer

The **Otmoor Flyer** service will restart on 12 April. See page 24 for details or contact Jill Meyjes 01865 351496 for more information.

### Horton-cum-Studley Women's Institute

We have now completed the process of formally closing Horton-cum-Studley WI and we are naturally very sad to reach this point. However, our members have now joined the Stanton St John Group and we look forward to continuing our friendship with them and enjoying activities and hopefully some face-to-face events over the coming year. As this is our final message for the Four Parishes Newsletter, we would like to thank everyone in Horton-cum-Studley and surrounding villages for their help over the years with our meetings, celebrations and special occasions. We have very much appreciated and valued your support. We hope that there may be a revival of the WI presence in Horton-cum-Studley at some time in the future and wish any potential new group every success. With all our best wishes for a hopefully happier year and a chance to be together again.

### Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club

Schools are open and the country is emerging slowly from lockdown. Daffodils, tulips, dog's tooth violets and camellias are flowering. The fat noses of the crown imperials have pushed up at a rate of knots - I can almost see them growing - and the snakes head fritillaries will open any day soon.

Our meetings are still held remotely using Zoom. Avril Hughes will be inspiring us at 8pm on Tuesday 20 April with her talk on 'Bulbs of the Peloponnese'. The full programme, including details of forthcoming garden visits is on www.horton-cum-studley.org.uk/community/clubs/.

Visitors are welcome to our meetings - please ensure we have your email address, so you get the Zoom link. We would welcome new committee members - no gardening expertise is needed, just enthusiasm and a love of gardens. If you would like to know more about the Gardening Club, or would welcome some



advice about your own garden, please do contact me on 01865 351310. You would also be most welcome to visit our garden, Upper Green, which is open for the NGS by appointment. Enjoy the spring sunshine!

Sue Burge, Chairman

### Millennium Hall Committee

The Annual General Meeting took place on Thursday 18 March via Zoom. Stuart MacFarlane was elected as the new secretary. Rachael Ayres and Derek Jewell will continue as treasurer and as chairman.

We are beginning to receive bookings which is excellent news. Local elections take place on 6 May. The hall will be used for voting having been passed as COVID secure. There will be a one-way system and availability of sanitising agents.

One heater in the main hall is not working. The model is now obsolete. The committee have chosen not to replace it at the moment with the hall not in use and ambient temperatures beginning to rise. All other lights and heaters are functioning.

### Horton-cum-Studley Tennis Club

### Back on court - 29 March

We are looking forward to reopening the courts following new government guidelines. On 22 March we Tennis is the Best





will open the online booking system again, so you can reserve a court and play from the 29th. We will share guidance for safe play from the LTA on our website and Facebook page as well as on the bulletin board by the courts.

Membership: The new season begins on 1 April, so please remember to renew your membership. The access codes will change on 1 May. Annual membership fees remain unchanged - adults (£47), juniors (£20) & families (£80). Contact bex.hopkins@btinternet.com or 07714 746904 for a form.

Coaching: We are appointing a new Head Coach to start after Easter. We are looking to offer a range of different coaching packages, from toddler and junior tennis, to senior coaching such as Rusty Rackets and Tennis Express. We aim to keep coaching affordable, accessible, and inclusive. We can also recommend LTA accredited coaches for private lessons if required.

### Find us on the internet:

Web: https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/HortonCumStudleyTennisClubOxford

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/hsctennisclub

### STANTON ST JOHN

### Stanton Church

Details of all church services can be found on page 5. Any changes to the published schedule will be on our website <a href="www.fourparishes.org.uk">www.fourparishes.org.uk</a>.

### Stanton St John Parish Council

Stanton St John Parish Council currently have a number of Parish Councillor vacancies, following a resignation in 2020 and three further resignations this year. The parish council is following the defined South Oxfordshire District Council procedure for Parish Councillor vacancies. The vacancies may not all have been filled by April 2021. If you are interested in joining or even helping the parish council then please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Clerk: <a href="mailto:stantonstjohnpc@gmail.com">stantonstjohnpc@gmail.com</a>.

### Stanton St John Women's Institute

We have just had our first AGM incorporating the members of Horton-cum-Studley. They joined us for the first time as part of our WI for a Zoom meeting, which ended with an enjoyable Quiz based on Oxford. I think we will all look at familiar places more closely in future. Our next meeting promises to be a light-hearted talk by Kevin Little and is entitled "Donkeys, dolphins, foxes and fish". It will take place on Tuesday 20 April at 7.30pm and members will be invited to attend through a Zoom link. Contact Dawn Taylor, President on 01865 873392 if you are interested in joining the WI.



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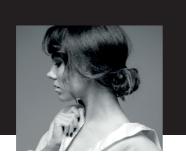
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### WE WISH YOU ALL A SAFE AND HAPPY EASTER!





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