

# SC

# SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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PLEASE COMPLETE THE COMMUNITY SURVEY INSIDE -  
IT WILL INFORM THE FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE.

APR / MAY 2018

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APR / MAY 2018

# FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

As I write this editorial, I should be welcoming Spring and the crocus in the garden, but they are currently under a layer of snow. It also happens to be the coldest March day ever recorded. By the time the magazine arrives through your letter box it will be Spring and an early Easter – good news?

Two important events are affecting the village, one decision is made. Chiltern Edge survives and becomes an academy and the other (which will not be reached until June) is the outcome of the appeal over the development of SON 6. Both of these, had and will have, significant impact on the future of our village. Articles about them are in this edition.

The last part of the Civil War series appears in this issue; Green Gym celebrates its 20 years; Erica who has been a significant part of the village for 21 years at Brambles intends to give bouquets to nominated significant people in our community; Jane Arch after 20 years of organising the Theatre group takes a well-deserved retirement; Irenka Motyka has featured in a film made by SOHA and the magazine has been read in Nepal. An eclectic mix of features. Such an interesting variety of stories and of course not forgetting our usual contributors who continuously entertain us.

Leah, one of our junior writers is stepping down to concentrate on her GCSE's. She has produced some very unusual and interesting pieces and we look forward to welcoming her successor. ●

*Diana*

Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org



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Son 6 Protest - courtesy of The Henley Standard

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**SC** SONNING COMMON  
MAGAZINE

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## MEET THE TEAM ...



Christine Atkinson



Hannah Rice



Jo Stoves



Joan Grummant



Ros Varnes

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# CHILTERN EDGE GOOD NEWS!



On the 1st February it was announced that Maiden Erlegh Trust would be taking over the sponsorship of Chiltern Edge School, who would then be part of the Maiden Erlegh Multi Academy Trust (MAT). Maiden Erlegh Trust was formed in October 2014 and through its Teaching School it has a proven track record of supporting school improvement in other establishments and providing excellent teacher training.

Moira Green – head teacher at Chiltern Edge – said “We have today been able to officially share with staff, students and the wider community that the Maiden Erlegh Trust have had their application to ‘adopt’ us into their Trust accepted by the DfE.

A huge amount of work has gone into the process so far and there is a whole lot more to do, but this is a hugely positive

piece of news for the school as we strive to return to a good school and one of choice for people of South Oxfordshire and Northern Reading.”

This partnership will hopefully be in place by the 1st August so that the school will be ready to open the new academic year as an academy. The school will become known as Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge and the pupils will have a new school uniform similar to those worn at the Trust’s other schools. The academisation was an essential part of keeping the school for Sonning Common and is great news for the village. Parents and children will now be looking forward to seeing the changes and having a good local secondary education establishment on their doorstep.

Oxfordshire County Council’s Cabinet Member for Education and Public Health Hilary Hibbert-Biles said: “This is really

great news for everyone associated with Chiltern Edge School. Through the tremendous efforts of staff and pupils, the school has made excellent progress in recent months and now has the opportunity to secure the best possible outcomes for its pupils as part of the Maiden Erlegh Trust. Credit must also go to the parents for the huge amount of support they have given the school, which I hope will continue in the future.”

A meeting to welcome parents into the trust, and to meet representatives from the Maiden Erlegh Trust was held on the 26 February. This gave an opportunity to hear the values and ethos of the Trust, some insight into their vision for the school and answer any questions.

More information is available on the Maiden Erlegh Trust website here ... <http://www.maidenerleghtrust.org/>

Christine Atkinson

# OUR MAGAZINE IS WELL TRAVELLED

I found myself in Nepal where I was installing equipment which will provide remote populations and disaster areas radio and television. One such place was in far West Nepal close to the Indian border where some of the inhabitants seemed to enjoy SC magazine. ●

Mick Stanyer



## SAVED OUR EDGE

The 12th annual Sue Ryder awards were held at Reading Town Hall on the 12th February. Among the winners was Gemma Levy, a parent and former pupil of Chiltern Edge School who founded the SAVE OUR EDGE campaign along with her friend Charlie Holloway when the school was first threatened with closure last year.

The SAVE OUR EDGE team successfully brought the campaign to the notice of local and national press and to the local MPs, and ultimately were part of the success in Chiltern Edge now becoming part of the Maiden Erlegh Trust. ●

# IT'S OUR BIRTHDAY BUT WE'RE GIVING AWAY THE PRESENTS!

In order to celebrate Brambles Floristry's 21st birthday we want to give away twenty-one FREE bouquets but we need your help. We want to know who YOU think deserves a bouquet.



It could be a relative or friend who always comes to the rescue, a dedicated professional such as your GP, nurse, or carer, a charity worker, local councillor or fundraiser. Maybe a neighbour who walks the dog or does the shopping for you. Perhaps you know someone who in spite of their own difficulties always makes an effort to help others.

All you need to do is nominate them, either by using the nomination form on our website or pop into the shop and fill one in.

We want to deliver all the bouquets during May and June so we will need your nominations in by 30 April.

Terms and Conditions apply but you can see those on the form.

Our decision on the recipients is final and non-negotiable. ●



# SKYLARKS ARE NESTING

A request to walkers to keep to the footpaths or edges of farmland or fallow fields in the spring to avoid ground nesting birds like skylarks? Sonning Common is surrounded by fields and all these open areas of land are potential ground nesting sites.

We used to have house martins, hedgehogs, hares but haven't seen them in years. Perhaps readers of the magazine would like to say this is not the case in other parts of the village and write to the editor with their sightings? ●

Robbie Horsepool



# GO ACTIVE GOLD



GO ACTIVE GOLD is a 3 year Sport England funded project who brought their free taster event for over 60's to Sonning Common village hall on 12 February. Approximately 30 people participated and we sampled Tai chi, Yoga and Senior circuits which seemed to be enjoyed by most. After the aim of helping rural villages to become more active was explained to us, we were offered tea or coffee and the chance to meet the other participants.

THE PROJECT GOALS ARE:

to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of older adults of which there are at least 100 residents aged 60 and over

to encourage stronger community spirit by reducing loneliness and social isolation through participation in activities

to develop a sustainable physical activity programme through training and supporting more coaches and volunteers

Over 60 parishes in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse host a range of activities from Bowls, Badminton, Table tennis and Better balance and strength classes to Swimming, Walking football, Zumba gold, Pilates and many more. For more information email, phone or consult website. ●

Anne Wilmott  
Simone.Passeri@southandvale.gov.uk  
[www.getoxfordshireactive.org/go-active-gold](http://www.getoxfordshireactive.org/go-active-gold)  
07717326661

# WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A GOVERNOR LIKE?

Emma Ashley gives her views...

Having spoken to friends and parents about the role, I am aware that it is something that many have considered. I was appointed into the role of parent governor just over a year ago and I thought it would be useful to share some of my experience to date, in the hope that it will eliminate some of the unknowns and encourage some of you to apply for these interesting and rewarding roles.

## What is the governing body?

There are 15 positions within our governing body and these comprise the headteacher, 9 co-opted governors (some of these are staff), 1 local authority governor, 3 parent governors and 1 staff governor. The governing body is a mixture of experienced and less experienced governors and it is a friendly and open forum which encourages challenging and healthy debate.

## What is involved?

The role of the governing body is to:

- **Set the vision and strategic direction of the school**
- **Hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance**
- **Ensure financial resources are well spent**

The full governing body meets 4-6 times per year (in the evening), receives an update from the Head and will hear about the school's successes in that term. They will look at the academic results of the school and will review the School Improvement Plan. The governing body review the quarterly accounts and sign off the budgets and forecasts. The governors are also encouraged to 'link' to certain areas of the curriculum and this is the opportunity to meet more of the fantastic teaching staff and to see the school in operation.

## How much time does it take?

The role of a governor does carry with it a level of responsibility but it is also recognised that it is a voluntary role, so it is up to you how much time you commit. As a minimum, you would need to devote some time to training (the induction course is 1 day and can be spread over several days or all in one). You would need to attend and prepare for the full governing body meetings which equates to approximately 15 hours per year and then you would be assigned to a sub-committee which would also require some more time commitment. There are always opportunities to take on more, however if life is busy, this can vary over the course of your term.

## What skills are needed?

In order for the governing body to be effective, it is important there is a mixed skill set however, you don't need to have education experience. The ideal range of skills is broad covering health and safety, property, data interpretation, finance, HR, legal, process and governance. You also don't need to be an expert in any of these and so if you have the interest, some available time and a desire to really make a difference, then this could be for you!

## What has been my highlight for the year?

It has to be helping the staff to serve Christmas dinner to all of the happy and well-behaved children. I was amazed by how many sprouts were consumed - this doesn't happen at home! ●



Would you like to be more involved in future direction of our School?

Do you have transferable skills and experience that you would like put to good use elsewhere?

Can you commit some time?

Sonning Common Primary School have vacancies for governors from the local community to join their governing body as a co-opted governor.

Do you have an interest in children's futures, education and some available time? Then this is a great opportunity to make a difference in your local community primary school.

If you would like to be involved in contributing and supporting the school please get in contact with the office via email or telephone for further information.

office.2506@sonning-common.oxon.sch.uk 0118 9722105

<http://sonningcommonprimary.co.uk/>

# LOCAL CHARITIES BENEFIT FROM WI FUND RAISING

Another successful year for the Village Coffee Mornings hosted by Sonning Common WI. At our February Coffee Morning, from funds raised throughout 2017, we were able to donate £900 to local community projects. Gill Hayward, Chair of Fund Raising, welcomed everyone and thanked the community for their wonderful support in joining us each month for a cup of coffee and meeting up with friends old and new.

Jenny Ward, President of Sonning Common WI and Gill Hayward, presented cheques of £150 each to six local community projects represented by the following:

Denise Jones from Greenshoots, June Fisher from Sonning Common Lunch Club, Sunny Smithers from Club SC, Jill Hutchinson from Friends of Sonning Common Library, Chris Brook from First Responders and Zoe Lane from Headway Thames Valley.

The recipients gave their thanks and informed us all of how the funds would be

used to benefit their projects. They all agreed that these donations are invaluable to them and were much appreciated.

The village hall was once again full and resonated with the sounds of people chatting, making friends and enjoying a cup of coffee or tea with a biscuit. There was also the opportunity to browse the sales tables offering books, costume jewellery, knitting and sewing craft items as well as handmade greetings cards. Greenshoots, who are the horticultural part of the Ways

and Means Trust, have a sales and information table at all of our coffee mornings and were present selling their delicious seasonable produce.

The Coffee Mornings are open to all and a warm welcome awaits you and they support the WI Campaign to help alleviate loneliness. The continued support of everyone is very much appreciated by our WI and the local community. ●

Jenny Ward



## SAVE THE DATE – FUTURE OF OUR VILLAGE CENTRE

Hands up anyone who thinks our Village Centre looks good and is fit for purpose! Just as I thought – no one does.

Potholes, puddles, smashed tarmac, damaged flower beds, chaotic parking, pointless bollards, cluttered street signs, litter, graffiti, general tattiness and mess – these are just some of the features of the centre that we all know and do not love.

The parish council has long been aware of the need to tackle this issue, which is why last year a Village Centre Working Party was set up to work out what might

be done. The first major step was to commission a visionary planner called Ben Hamilton-Baillie to analyse our problems and come up with some potentially transformative solutions.

Along the way, Ben said Sonning Common was perhaps the toughest nut he'd ever been asked to crack – and if you look at his website ([hamilton-baillie.co.uk](http://hamilton-baillie.co.uk)) you'll see there have been a few. But after many months of work and thought, he has come up with a masterplan that we think holds out a genuinely exciting prospect for changing the face of our village.

His ideas are radical and will be controversial. We know that. And our intention is to involve the village every step of the way – starting with the publication of the full plan to coincide with the distribution of the June issue of the magazine, followed soon after by an event at the Village Hall at which Ben will present it, and try to deal with all the questions and concerns.

That will be on 7 June in the Village Hall at 8.00pm so make a note in your diaries.

Stuart Howe  
Sonning Common Parish Council

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# BIG BASH 2

Live Music - Beer Festival - BBQ - Hog Roast - Cocktails  
Treasure Hunt - Face Painting - Marquees - Dogs Welcome

All proceeds will go to Sue Ryder and Beating Bowel Cancer

**SATURDAY 30th June**  
**2PM - 1AM**

Check out the event on Facebook





## Snack & Chat Lunch

Come with your friends and enjoy a bowl of homemade soup, a slice of cake and a chat.

There is no charge.

St Michael's Church hall  
behind the church on the Peppard Road  
next to the petrol station  
17 April and 15 May 2018  
12.30pm.

**NOTTAKWIRE**  
is sponsoring a rare opportunity for the village  
in aid of **SUE RYDER**  
**DAVID JAGGS, GUITAR,**  
is giving a  
**RECITAL**  
at  
**SONNING COMMON VILLAGE HALL**  
Friday 4th May at 7.30pm.



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Tapas  
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Glass of Wine

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CHILTERN EDGE  
HORTICULTURAL  
SOCIETY

## SPRING SHOW

Saturday 7 APRIL 2018  
2.00pm - 4.00pm

Sonning Common Village Hall  
Wood Lane  
Sonning Common

Sonning Common  
Women's Institute 

Is Hosting

## COFFEE MORNINGS

Sonning Common Village Hall  
**WEDNESDAY 4 APRIL**  
**WEDNESDAY 2 MAY**  
10.30 - 12 Noon

All Welcome - Please join us for  
a cup of Coffee/Tea and Biscuit



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### Save the date - Nottakwire

"A Day with a Difference!"  
All Day Music Event  
Village Hall - Saturday 23 June.

All Proceeds will go to our village groups and charities  
Look out for posters around the village from the 3rd week of May.  
Please come and support us - and enjoy "A Day with a Difference!"  
"After Nottakwire's Christmas Concert, the following monies were  
donated to"

Christ the King Church - (earmarked for Charlotte's Wheelchair fund)  
- £200;  
Club SC £100 - for their Christmas Parties.  
Embrace the Middle East - £160. (The cost of two Baby Survival  
Packages for Refugee Mothers & their babies in Egypt.)

## LIBRARY

### Opening times for Easter:

FRIDAY: CLOSED  
We are open on Easter Saturday, 9.30 -12.30  
(Important as we used to be closed on Easter Saturday!)

MONDAY: CLOSED

## STAMPS, STAMPS, STAMPS

April and May will be an interesting month for  
Henley Stamp Collectors as two diverse guest  
speakers will visit us to give their displays and  
in May members have a chance to give short  
displays from their favourite collection, after  
the AGM and then The Presidents' evening, an  
opportunity to see another interesting display.

**11 APRIL**  
'A Philatelic Autobiography' by Bill Jackson  
from Oxford Society.

**25 APRIL**  
'1890 Penny Post Jubilee' by John Davies  
from Banbury

**9 MAY**  
Annual General Meeting and afterwards  
members give short 5 page displays

**23 MAY**  
Presidents Evening, always a pleasant,  
informative and relaxed evening  
Hope to see you at Bix Village Hall at 7.45  
p.m.

Visitors and new members are welcome.  
Further details can be obtained by phoning  
01491 681739 or on our website: -  
[www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk](http://www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk)

## Are you a good listener?

Do you enjoy a good one to one chat? If so I would  
love to hear from you. At the FISH Volunteer Centre  
we set up FISH Home Visitors almost two years ago  
and it has been very successful. Many local elderly  
people who do not see friends or family very often  
are benefiting from the relationships they have  
made with their Home Visitors who spend a regular  
hour or so every week or fortnight with the folk  
they visit. Some really strong friendships have been  
made which are valuable to the people visited and  
their visitors. I now need more people willing to be  
needed to be able to drive as I might be able to match  
you with someone within walking distance of your  
own home. So if you would be interested in having  
a chat about this form of volunteering get in touch  
with me via the FISH Volunteer Centre 0118 9723986  
or email [office@fishvolunteercentre.co.uk](mailto:office@fishvolunteercentre.co.uk).

SUE NICKSON  
FISH Home Visiting Coordinator



## Get involved! The SoCo Springclean

The Great British Spring Clean 2018 will see people  
across the country coming together to clear up  
rubbish around their towns, villages, countryside and  
coastline.

Sonning Common launches its own Springclean

**SUNDAY 29 APRIL**  
All you need is a pair of wellies or sturdy footwear and  
bags of enthusiasm  
The rubbish bags and all the kit will be provided  
10am at the Village Hall  
All ages welcome (children must be accompanied)  
All participants will be welcome to enjoy hot drinks  
and cake back at the hall at midday.  
To get involved email Emma or Geoff at soco,  
[springclean@gmail.com](mailto:springclean@gmail.com) or call 07967 569 729 and  
don't forget to like our Facebook page;  
**THE SOCO SPRINGCLEAN.**



## Play bowls TASTER DAY

Shiplake Village Bowls Club Memorial Avenue  
Shiplake

**SUNDAY 29 APRIL**  
Come along between 10.30-16.30  
Equipment provided, wear flat shoes  
All ages and abilities welcomed.  
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# AMBER BURNS 'WE ARE AIMING HIGH WITH OUR CHILDREN'

By ROS VARNES

Amber Burns has been manager of Florence House, in Baskerville Road, since it opened in July 2016.

The children's home, its young residents and care workers have settled in well to the village, quickly becoming part of the community.

"It feels as if we have been here forever," said Amber. "People are very friendly and we have had no complaints. The children like it here. They love taking a dog, belonging to one of our staff members, for walks in the countryside. Some of our children have little experience of the countryside, having spent their formative years growing up in urban areas. So, living here is very good for them.

"We try to put our homes in rural locations, if we can, with good access to amenities like shops, doctors and chemists. Sonning Common is ideal."

Florence House - formerly the Orchard Lodge care home for elderly people - is one of six homes in the Reading area belonging to Calcot Services for Children. Currently home to three teenage girls, it is licensed to take up to five residents between the ages of five and 18.

Florence House is a long-term placement centre for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Amber explained: "All of our children

are in social care and have usually been moved around a lot in their lives. They have all experienced some grief, loss or attachment trauma and have generally low self-esteem. We offer stability here and do everything we can to build them up and help them to recover from their trauma.

"We use art, drama and music therapy. We find that music speaks when words fail. One of our girls was mute when she arrived. She is now talking and playing the piano, having largely taught herself from YouTube videos. Another girl is a great cook and loves to bake.

"We are aiming high with our children. We want them to have aspirations and to go to university, to see that they can achieve what they want to in life."

Prior to joining the children's service three years ago, Amber worked for a drugs and alcohol agency, in a police advisory capacity. A huge amount of crime, such as burglary, is linked to drug and alcohol abuse, according to Amber. Part of her remit was to provide some context to the police on why people get addicted to drugs and alcohol and then offend.

Before that Amber lived and worked in South Korea for four years, teaching English.

While studying Psychology at Bath University, Amber started volunteering at a local shelter for homeless people. Through talking to the people who came into the shelter she learned about what had led them to be on the street.

She did her dissertation on the link between Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and homelessness, since many of the homeless people she encountered were formerly in the military services.

Amber now lives in Reading and works at Florence House from Monday to Friday, nine to five. The centre is continually staffed, including at night.

Said Amber: "We want to thank Sonning Common for having us here. If people want to talk to me about anything they are welcome to call at the house." ●

Contact Amber via 0118 995 2190 or [amber.burns@csfc.co.uk](mailto:amber.burns@csfc.co.uk)



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# JACKIE'S CRAFT COLUMN

## BUNNY PLANTER

This cute bunny planter makes a great alternative Easter gift for mums, dads, grandparents and teachers alike.



1) Paint your tin can using the acrylic paint. Be careful of sharp edges, ask an adult to help. Alternatively you could paint the can and leave to dry before emptying and cleaning, or cover the can in white paper.



2) Draw a design for your bunny's ears and feet on the white card/craft foam. Using the pick card/craft foam, draw details such as the inside of the ears and pads for their feet. Don't forget the bunny's nose!

3) Cut out the shapes from the card/foam using scissors. Ask an adult for help if needed.



4) Using your choice of glue, stick the pink detail to the ears and the feet.



5) Next glue the ears, feet and nose to the tin can – your bunny should be starting to take shape!



6) Add some eyes using glue – I have used googly eyes but you could design your own and cut out from the card/craft foam.

7) Using the marker pen, add details to the bunny's face such as a mouth and whiskers.



8) Finally, fill the can with water and display your daffodils – you could alternatively fill with soil and plant your own blubs and watch them grow.

### What you'll need:

- Tin can (empty and clean)
- White acrylic paint
- Paintbrush
- White and pink card or craft foam
- Scissors
- Glue of your choice (I have used a glue gun here)
- Googly eyes
- Marker Pen
- Small bunch of daffodils

Please be careful of sharp edges when using the tin can. Ring pull cans are less sharp and safer than other cans. Children should be supervised at all times.



# SONNING COMMON AND ITS NEIGHBOURS DURING THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS PART 3

Although many key British towns were fought over during the Civil Wars, and some changed hands more than once, Reading's record stands out: between November 1642 and May 1644 it changed hands three times through abandonment, and once when taken after a siege.

Reading's geographical position was key to its military importance. Parliament controlled London, while King Charles headquartered at Oxford: as Reading was roughly equidistant from both it could control a wide arc of territory, protecting or interfering with war traffic and supplies entering London or leaving it for the Midlands and West, and likewise helping or hindering movement between London and Oxford, and Oxford and the coast. Another desirable factor was its wealth: for centuries Reading had been a major river port at the junction of the Thames and Kennet, which made it a hub for the cloth trade, and Berkshire's principal town.

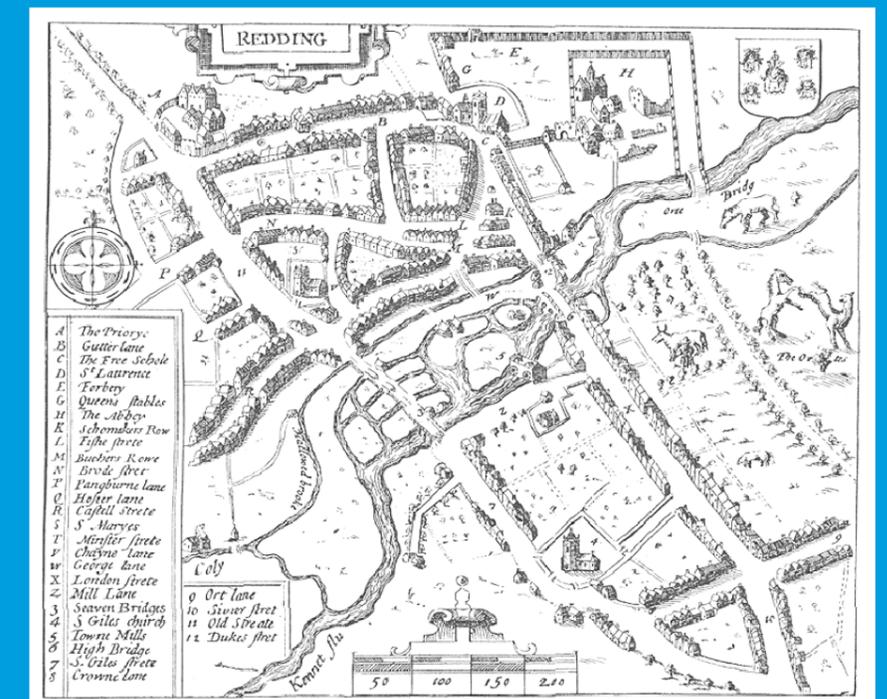
Even before the first clash of arms at Edgehill in October 1642, Reading was garrisoned by hardline Parliamentary MP Henry Marten. Post-Edgehill, however, his resolve collapsed in the face of the approaching Royalist army, and he fled to London leaving Reading to the King. The town's first Royalist garrison comprised a half dozen regiments under governor Sir Arthur Aston, a severe disciplinarian who exacted every morsel of Reading's money and supplies, which respectively made him unpopular with soldiers and inhabitants alike. Neither did his hanging a merchant and turning the town into an impregnable fortress which deterred vital trade, endear him locally. As a prominent Royalist famously said, Aston 'had the fortune to be very much esteemed, where he was not known; and very much detested, where he was.' In mid-April

1643 Reading was besieged by a force led by the Earl of Essex; a Royalist newspaper claimed the garrison 'have long desired to see his Excellency, and try the mettle of his Souldiers', but as the garrison numbered only 3,000 against Essex's 15,000, this assertion can only have been bravado. The siege that followed was intense and destructive, artillery being brought to bear on the town and the town giving as good as it got; the standoff lasted two weeks, during which time the King and his soldier nephew Prince Rupert arrived with a relief force, the King lodging at Caversham Park. Negotiations stalled, and Rupert launched a surprise attack on Caversham's battered medieval bridge during a hailstorm but was beaten back. At some point Aston was incapacitated by a blow to the head from a dislodged roof tile, and command fell to one Colonel

Feilding who ignored the King and unilaterally surrendered the town. The garrison marched away ignominiously on 27th April; Feilding narrowly escaped being shot for treachery.

Parliament held on to Reading until September, when it abandoned the town for a second time after the First Battle of Newbury, and a second Royalist garrison was installed. This, in turn, was withdrawn in May 1644 after the King's defeat at the Battle of Cheriton, and a party from Parliamentary Windsor immediately claimed Reading once again. It remained Parliamentary until the war concluded; however, the physical damage and financial losses sustained during four years of war would set this once prosperous town back for a century.

SERENA JONES



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# SON 6 DECISION

## APPEAL V GALLAGHER

**This month is set to be decisive for Sonning Common and the future of its Neighbourhood Plan. On 10 April a four-day planning inquiry will begin into the now notorious plan by Gallagher Estates to build 95 houses on a field off Kennylands Road. In the Neighbourhood Plan the part of the site along the road was designated for 26 homes – with the rest of the field left untouched.**

Those of us who worked to create the Neighbourhood Plan – and I am now chairman of the working party set up to revise it – believe that if we lose at the

inquiry, our Plan is finished, sunk, dead in the water, whatever metaphor you wish to use. The trust we forged with the village over those long years of consultation – that together we could work out how and where Sonning Common could take the houses – will have been destroyed.

That's why the parish council decided it had to put up the best fight possible. We've hired a highly experienced planning consultant to present our case, which she and we believe is a very strong one. And we will have a barrister acting for us, to defend us against the Gallagher Estates legal team and, hopefully, to pick

big holes in their arguments. It's costing us plenty, as I'm sure you've heard – at least £15,000, although the wonderful response to our crowdfunding appeal has softened the financial blow considerably. We believe that – win or lose – the money will have been well spent. We have to defend our Plan, it's as simple as that. The final outcome will be up to the Inspector who runs the inquiry, and we should know sometime in the summer. Fingers crossed! ●

**TOM FORT**



## BACKGROUND TO THE FIGHT

**Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan allocates SON 6 (1.5 hectares), off Kennylands Road – on the right as you exit the village for Reading – for 26 homes. It proposes a line of new houses to fill in the gap between existing properties.**

Gallagher Estates is seeking permission to build 95 homes on an extended 6.65-hectare site – an increase of 265% on what has been agreed by our community.

This would lead to the destruction of a beautiful green field containing a public footpath, take development right up to the edge of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and erode the gap between Sonning Common, Kidmore End and Reading.

Gallagher's proposal for 95 homes on SON 6 was unanimously rejected by South Oxfordshire District Council's Planning Committee in March of last year. But the company is now appealing against that refusal of planning permission.

The future of SON 6 will be decided following a public inquiry, conducted by a Government planning inspector, from 10 to 13 April of this year.

Sonning Common Parish Council is determined to uphold local democracy and protect our plan – the result of five years' work and £63,000 of taxpayers' money – and will be employing a professional team on behalf of the community at the public inquiry.

### THE CASE:

- 1. This application goes against the adopted Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP) which allocates 26 homes to SON 6;**
- 2. The SCNP's independent examiner endorsed the 26 homes allocation in our plan and said there was no requirement for 'plan-makers' to allocate land for more housing;**

- 3. The development of a greater SON 6 would adversely impact on the countryside and character of the surrounding area. This would result in the permanent degradation of Sonning Common's landscape, which lies within the setting of The Chilterns AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty);**

- 4. If Gallagher Estates wins its appeal it will set a precedent for developers to ignore our Neighbourhood Plan, and others too, to set aside carefully considered local housing policies and site allocations in pursuit of private gain. If successful, the village will be extended closer to Reading.**

**ROS VARNES**

# WHY I DECIDED TO CROWDFUND FOR SON 6

**I went along to the Parish Council's Planning Committee meeting last November for the discussion about the parish's response to the Gallagher Estates appeal.**

Legal appeals are often attempts to put right a perceived injustice. In this case, if the appeal succeeds, it will perpetuate a huge injustice. The dedicated work of the creators of the Neighbourhood Plan will be negated. The 94% support of the village will be disregarded. The strong feelings of the village residents who conducted the campaign to persuade the district council to reject the planning application will be ignored.

At the meeting, people were angry that Gallagher Estates was going to do the inevitable and try to achieve its stated aim of "securing the very best value for landowners" through the deployment

of financial muscle. I considered how Gallagher would be bringing a well-resourced legal team to the inquiry, hoping to be met by a cash-strapped parish council and a group of residents demoralised by yet another battle to fight.

It then occurred to me that to embark on a crowdfunding campaign would give us two huge advantages: it would bring in the resources to enable us to face Gallagher on a level playing field; and it would help to re-invigorate our supporters and give them a platform for the publication of opinions on the appeal.

My suggestion was welcomed by the Parish Council and I was later asked to manage the crowdfunding. An excellent video produced by John Pearman and starring Tom Fort, together with written content by Ros Varnes ensured that the project had impact. Julia Whitelaw

organised the leaflets and emails which ensured that the crowdfunding appeal had the widest possible audience. ●

**DAVID WINCHESTER**



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

**The village crowdfunding initiative – to fight the appeal by Gallagher Estates on SON 6 – raised over £8,700.**

More than 260 villagers raised funds to help towards the Parish Council's legal costs for fighting Gallagher's attempts to get planning permission for 95 homes on an extended SON 6, instead of the 26 new homes allocated to the site under Sonning Common's Neighbourhood Plan.

Donations ranged from £5 to £500 and

many residents posted messages of support on the crowdfunding website, Sonning Common Says No To Gallagher.

Within two weeks of launching the campaign in January the initial £5,000 target was exceeded, prompting the campaign team to 'stretch' the target to £8,000. This target, too, was surpassed as cheques poured into the Parish Office alongside the website effort.

Ros Varnes, Deputy Parish Clerk, said: "The Parish Council is overwhelmed by the response from the community to the crowdfunding appeal. To have

exceeded both of our targets shows how determined this community is to protect our village from predatory developers and to uphold local democracy and our Neighbourhood Plan.

"Thank you so much to our residents. Every penny raised will go towards fighting Gallagher Estates' appeal.

"We are indebted to David Winchester, who set up the crowdfunding website and came up with the idea in the first place and to Julia Whitelaw, who did an excellent job of organising the campaign leaflet drop around the village." ●

# LAUNCHPAD

Launchpad is a charity claiming to open doors and change the lives of local homeless people. Well it certainly opened the doors of Christ the King church in Sonning Common, where Sophie Stokes gave a succinct but moving talk about its work in Reading as part of a series of Lent lunches last month.

Sue Nickson has been organising Lent lunches on the run up to Easter for some years now so it has become somewhat of a tradition to share delicious home made soup in the cosy church hall decked with spring flowers and pretty tablecloths. This time it was chestnut and amaretto soup made by Sue Launders, accompanied by fresh bread and fruit. After grace, said by Sheila Walker, this simple meal, the talk and a collection.

Launchpad was formed in 1979 by a small group of Reading University

students who wanted to do something practical about homelessness they witnessed on the streets of the town. Starting a soup kitchen for the homeless and rough sleepers was the start and today, as a result of these generous spirited individuals, there are 100 properties across Reading available to people who are - or likely to become- homeless. The latest project is to turn abandoned properties into homes for 140 people.

Funded by the council and situated in all its deliberate colourful splendour in Merchants Place, the old Antiques Market, Launchpad also offers access to life skills such as numeracy, literacy, cooking, bee keeping, allotment or money management, and many more activities designed to show the way to independence. Receiving support from companies in Reading has been a lifeline to the charity and working with

St Mungo, an outreach group for drug users and addicts, along with other faith charities such as CIRDIC helps continuity and integration. Talking with insight and assurance, Sophie showed us examples of vulnerable people who had been helped, rehoused and employed as a result of the work of the charity.

As we know, councils are stretched with resources, so whatever we can contribute goes straight to helping homeless people. One tip for those of us who are tempted to give money to rough sleepers who may not be homeless. Don't. You may be feeding an addiction. Better to offer food, hot drink or a blanket.

Sue collected £390.81 for this worthy cause. Thanks to everyone for their generosity. For more information e mail [support@launchpadreading.org.uk](mailto:support@launchpadreading.org.uk) or phone 01189291111



## EASTER SERVICES

### GTK AND ST JOHN'S

#### Sunday 25 March

Palm Sunday at Christ the King 9.30 and St John's at 11.00

#### 30 March

Good Friday walk of witness starting at Christ the King at 10.00

#### 30 March

Good Friday Devotional Service at All Saints Peppard 14.00

#### 1 April

Easter Sunday service at Christ the King at 9.30

#### 1 April

Easter Sunday service at All Saints at 10.30

#### 1 April

Easter Sunday service at St John's at 11.00

### ST MICHAELS

#### Monday 26 March

Lenten Penitential Service at 7.30pm

#### Thursday 29 March

Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7pm

#### Good Friday 30 March

Ecumenical Walk of Witness from Christ the King at 10am

Stations of the Cross for children at 12noon

Good Friday liturgy at 3pm

Stations of the Cross at 7pm

#### Saturday 31 March

Easter Vigil at 8pm

#### Sunday 1 April

Easter Day Masses at 9.00 and 10.30

### ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

In January we were delighted to be able to join with the other local churches at St John's, Kidmore End, to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Later in the month an enjoyable curry and quiz evening was held. A number of our young people are now well on in their preparation to receive Holy Communion or being Confirmed in the summer. The preparation is carried out jointly with our parish

school, St Martin's, in Caversham Park Village. During Lent a series of talks by representatives from other faiths was arranged but unfortunately the 'Beast from the East' caused the first to be cancelled as was the Women's World Day of Prayer. The latter has been re-arranged for Friday 23 March.

.....

### LENT LUNCHES AT CHRIST THE KING HALL

The first in the series of three Lent lunches took place on 19 February. 35 of us enjoyed a bread and soup lunch and heard from Diana Hasting MBE, Trustee of PACT (Parents and Children Together) about the work of the charity. It is a Reading based adoption society and does a lot of work with families with domestic abuse, debt and mental health issues. The charity has a proud record of successful adoption placement of older and troubled children and of helping families through difficult times. Diana herself is a long-term supporter of the charity, being a fundraiser and runs a group supporting young mothers. Donations to the charity amounted to £263.50 inclusive of Gift Aid.

SUE NICKSON



'May the 4<sup>th</sup> be with you' - We shall be again opening our doors for a Lego Star Wars open day at 60B Wood Lane on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

Please pop in for a friendly chat, view the display Lego plus there will be Lego to build/play with, competitions, a charity raffle and free refreshments.

In the interim – and perhaps less fun but more relevant, if you have any Pension, Investment, Mortgage, Protection or associated advice needs, please contact us for a free and without obligation financial review.

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# Parish news

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## HELP WITH PLANNING INQUIRY

**A fight is underway to prevent the building of up to 245 new homes on the outskirts of Sonning Common.**

Land promoter Gladman wants permission for hundreds of new homes to be built in the South Oxfordshire countryside on the edge of Emmer Green.

If successful, the new development would fill the 13-hectare field between the water tower and the road access to Peppard Building Supplies (on the right-hand side of Peppard Road as you head to Sonning Common from Reading).

South Oxfordshire District Council turned down the planning application last year. Now Gladman is appealing against that decision. The matter will be decided following a public inquiry in May.

The site lies within the parish of Eye and Dunsden, which has only 140 homes and a population of 400.

If Gladman's bid for planning permission is successful the new residential development will drastically reduce the gap between Sonning Common and Reading.

Eye and Dunsden's Parish Council has decided to employ a professional team to take on the property giant and has

launched a crowdfunding appeal to help towards its appeal costs.

The council welcomes help from the Sonning Common community. Donations may be made online at the crowdfunding website, or, by cheques made payable to Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, which can be posted in the Sonning Common Parish Office letterbox (right-hand side of the village hall door).

See the CAGE website for more information: [www.cagedunsden.org](http://www.cagedunsden.org). Click on the piggy bank symbol to donate.

**Thank you very much.**

## OVER FOR ANOTHER YEAR

**Sonning Common's snow team got through around 600 kilos of salt this winter keeping village centre pavements safe.**

The volunteers, led by parish councillor Dirk Jones, were called out around six times to grit pavements on Wood Lane, adjoining alleyways with Grove Road and near Sonning Common Primary School when the weather was particularly bad.

Dirk explained: "On a normal callout five or six volunteers were enough to man two gritting machines, which are basically two-wheeled garden lawn/fertiliser spreaders. We all kept in radio contact and I followed in my Land Rover to resupply salt where it was needed.

"We used up to 15 bags of salt per outing. Just over one 25Kg bag covered just under 100 yards and it took about

an hour to complete each gritting spread."

Dirk used his personally-designed automatic weather station to forecast the weather five days ahead. The weather station has its own artificial pavement to measure temperatures above and below it, using 12 different types of winter and solar heating/cooling sensors.

The decision to grit, or not, was based on the pavement temperature forecasts and the type of sleet or snow types that were likely to fall and stick to the ground without thawing immediately.

Said Dirk: "Interestingly, and despite popular views, it is not illegal to clear, salt or grit pavements outside your own or elderly neighbour's home, or your shop, but fewer than one percent of our households and shops do so.

We would all be much safer if everyone cleared pavements around their homes and businesses. One bag of rock salt costs less than a good glass of wine and would probably last one household all winter."

For further information see the live weather station website <http://www.sonningcommonweb.co.uk/WebWeather> and snow team website: <http://www.sonningcommonweb.co.uk/snow%20plan>



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# The Edge

HIYA! 😊

It's Olivia here again! Since we are deep within the season of baby chick decorations, Easter egg hunts and ,more importantly, chocolate eggs, I thought that for this issue I would share some fun and easy things to do with any of that left over Easter chocolate (instead of just eating it as it is)!

## CHOCOLATE COATED FRUIT

To make these chocolate coated fruits, you will need:

- As much or as little chocolate of any flavour as you want (no less than 80g)
- Lots of fruit (strawberries, bananas, blueberries etc.) depending on how much chocolate you have
- Kebab/cocktail sticks (optional)

**STEP 1:** Add boiling water to about halfway in a small to medium sized pan then in a bowl that will sit on top of your pan, break your chocolate into chunks.

**STEP 2:** Place your bowl on top of the pan so it is just sitting on top of the water and, on a low heat, let it melt, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, place some baking paper on a plate and wash your fruit.

**STEP 3:** Once the chocolate has melted, you'll want to move fast. If you're using a cocktail stick, cut the stems off the fruit. Dip the fruit into the chocolate until over half of the fruit is covered and place it onto the baking paper, repeat this with all the fruit. If you're using a stick, add the fruit to it and roll it into the chocolate then place it on your baking paper.

**STEP 4:** Let the chocolate harden for at least 25 minutes in the fridge before serving!



## ROCKY ROAD SQUARES

You will need:

- 75g of biscuits (I would say digestives work best)
- 25g of walnut pieces (optional; don't include them if you are allergic)
- 150g of pink and white marshmallows
- 2 tbsp of golden syrup
- 300g of dark chocolate and 300g of milk chocolate cut into small pieces
- 1-2 tsp of icing sugar
- 100g of butter (unsalted)

**STEP 1:** Line a 20cm x 20cm brownie tin with foil. Then crumble biscuits and walnuts (if using) into a large bowl; you want a variety of chunky and fine pieces. Cut the marshmallow into halves or quarters then add those to your bowl too.

**STEP 2:** Put the butter and golden syrup in a pan and heat it gently until the butter has melted. Meanwhile, add the chocolate in a heatproof bowl then pour the melted butter and syrup mixture over it and leave to sit for a couple of minutes without stirring. Now stir it until the chocolate has melted.

**STEP 3:** Pour the mixture over the biscuits and marshmallows. Stir it well so everything is coated then pour it evenly into your tin. Don't even out the surface too much to keep that 'rocky' texture. Leave to set in the fridge for 1-2 hours or overnight then dust with icing sugar and chop into bars or squares to serve.

## CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

To make this slightly unusual mousse, you will need:

- 100g of chocolate (around 50% cocoa)
- 3 tsp of vanilla essence
- 115ml of chickpea brine (bit odd I know)

**STEP 1:** Break the chocolate into pieces and add to a bowl with vanilla essence and 1 tbsp of your drained chickpea water.

**STEP 2:** Place the bowl over a pan of boiling water and stir with a spatula until melted. Once melted, removed it from the heat

**STEP 3:** Whisk the chickpea water for 5 minutes or until it forms stiff peaks then add quarter of the whipped water to the melted chocolate and mix it together.

**STEP 4:** Now pour the chocolate over the rest of the chickpea water and gently fold it in.

**STEP 5:** Pour the mousse into serving glasses and let it cool in the fridge for a couple of hours.

I hope you try and enjoy these quick and easy recipes!



# HOW USEFUL IS OUR ACADEMIC SYSTEM?

By Leah Tilley

Academia is the most important aspect of a student's life, or so we've been told. We are taught over and over that learning four different methods of solving a quadratic equation or studying all the different forces acting on a table is imperative to our future success.

Perhaps it is for passing our GCSEs, but in real life it simply won't be of any use to us. So, why is it so necessary for the exam board or head of the UK's education system to make all 16-year-olds commit to memory the structure of a leaf?

Personally, I don't fancy becoming a phytologist or joining any other line of work relating to plants, so why must I learn about it? Many other students have a similar opinion on the matter, feeling that their time could be better spent learning more useful life skills. For example, managerial skills, how to collaborate with colleagues or even something as simple as making a professional phone call.

These are skills essential to almost all jobs. Lack of knowledge and coaching in these areas leaves leaving young adults entering the world missing a lot

of what they really need to know.

You could say that school does teach these sorts of things through group class projects or computing. However, truthfully, it simply isn't enough. My school, Chiltern Edge, prepares us for public speaking by getting the students to write and perform a speech every year. However, not all schools do this and even I still feel very nervous when speaking in front of a large group of people - much like many others.

This should not be the case. As public speaking is such a key aspect of the working world, schools should encourage students to speak up more frequently in class, assemblies and school events so that they feel comfortable when presenting in the future.

Maybe, in the future, we would find quoting Romeo and Juliet useful or calculating moles a good conversation starter, but wouldn't being able to write a formal email be more useful to us?



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# SONNING COMMON GREEN GYM IS 20 YEARS OLD

20 Years ago, when William Bird and I were working at the Health Centre, he decided that we needed to new find ways to encourage people to take more exercise. So after the Health Walks (which are also going strong today) William dreamed up the Green Gym. For many of us, the idea of going to a conventional gym doesn't appeal and many gym membership fees are never fully taken up.

So we formed a group working outside in the countryside, supervised at first by a leader from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (now TCV). Research on the group at that time showed that working regularly at the Green Gym was just as effective, if not more so, than conventional gyms.

After our leader left, Jules Thomson (who happened to be the husband of another Health Centre doctor, Margaret Thomson) agreed to become chairman. Others took on other responsibilities.

Today the SCGG has expanded its membership and activities far beyond what we expected at the beginning. We are currently working on around 24 sites across South Oxfordshire from Dorchester, Goring and Streatley in the west to Aston Rowant Nature Reserve and Moorend Common in the north and down through Henley to Dunsden in the south. We work for the Commons,

National Trust, Nature Reserves, Churches, Schools and others. This gives us an enormous range of work including fencing, scrub clearance, tree felling, hedge laying and woodland clearance. This variety enables us to exercise a whole range of muscles and joints and at the same time make a real difference to the local countryside.

We have around 35 members on our emailing list and on any one Thursday or Saturday morning we expect to have anything between 12 and 20 people or sometimes more. There is increased evidence that regular physical activity is important for preventing problems such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity. But it's also important for keeping our muscles and joints strong; unless we keep our muscles working well, they gradually become weaker and we become less mobile and are more likely to end up needing care. But there's also evidence that being outside in the fresh air helps our mental health and we have a small group of people who come to us through the Oxford mental health team. So doctors are now being encouraged to prescribe outdoor physical work rather than pills.

To celebrate our 20 years we spent a morning recently coppicing the small wood on the Millennium Field followed by a buffet lunch in the Bird in Hand. In February we hosted a second celebration on Watlington Hill when five other Green Gyms from Oxfordshire joined us for scrub clearance, three bonfires and a spud roast.

As a result of this pioneering work at Sonning Common there are now around 130 Green Gyms all over the UK and in Germany, New South Wales and South Korea. Not a bad record for our village. Come and join us! ●

JOHN HASLER Chairman



# TOM FORT GIRLS

For the past few years I have had the dubious privilege of transporting a gaggle of girls – plus an occasional boy – to and from their school in Henley an average of two or three times a week. The temptation, of course, is to put on the radio and leave them to their phones and their usually unintelligible grunted exchanges. But I decided early on that actually this was a chance to bridge the half century age gap between me and them, and find out a little about these creatures and how their strange little minds worked.

Food is a favourite subject. They all know how greedy I am, and my eccentric tastes. The revelation that we were

having lamb's liver for supper was greeted with shrieks of horror – "God, I'd rather die" was the general verdict

You have to understand their language and how they use it. The word "like", for instance. I would ask one of them, a sweet, bright girl, how she got on with, say, History and get this for an answer: "Well, like I really like it like."

Then there is "literally". I would try to explain that "literally" literally means literally. I tried to discourage them from sentences such as: "I'm literally going to kill Miss So-and-So the biology teacher/my ex-best friend/that \*\*\*\*\* who thinks she's SOOOO cool". In vain.

Some of the expressions are tricky, as they are all delivered as one word. "WottheHell", "Tbefair", "Tbeonest" are uttered as sort of connecting grunts, and have no meaning. A new one



appeared not long ago: "Inogonnalie". I couldn't get it at first, and when I asked about it, they couldn't tell me because they didn't know they'd said it. Then it clicked: "I'm not going to lie."

The lesson from it all has been that teenage girls do abuse our language most dreadfully, but despite that they have interesting and surprising things to say – sometimes. The school run ends this summer, and in some ways I'll miss it. Literally. Like. ●

# COOK'S CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

Two Japanese inspired dishes, both work well during the barbecue season (we can but hope!)

## EASY CHICKEN YAKITORI – SERVES 6

12 wooden skewers / 120ml sake / 120ml soy sauce / 3 tablespoons mirin\* / 2 tablespoons sugar / 4 spring onions, sliced in 2.5cm pieces / 4 chicken breasts, skin removed / (\*substitute – 3 tablespoons dry white wine and 1 tablespoon sugar)

Soak skewers for 15 minutes in water. Cut the chicken into cubes and thread onto skewers, alternating with the spring onion.

In a small saucepan, combine the mirin\*, soy sauce, sake and sugar. Bring to the boil and then reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Reserve half of the sauce for dipping. Heat a grill pan over high heat and brush with vegetable oil. Cook the skewers, 7 to 10 minutes per side, basting frequently. Use the remaining sauce for dipping. ●



## CUCUMBER SUNOMONO – SERVES 6

2 large cucumbers, peeled lengthways in 4 strips / 1 teaspoon salt / 4 teaspoons granulated sugar / 1 1/2 teaspoons grated root ginger / 1 tablespoon soy sauce & 5 tablespoons rice wine vinegar / Handful of toasted sesame seeds (optional)

Slice the cucumbers into very thin slices. Place in a bowl and sprinkle with the salt, stir well & set aside for 5 minutes. In a separate bowl combine the sugar, ginger, soy sauce and vinegar and whisk well.

Gently squeeze the excess liquid out of the salted cucumbers (with your hands or a clean thin cloth), then toss into the sauce. Stir well, place in the fridge for at least 1 hour and sprinkle with sesame seeds (if using) prior to serving. ●



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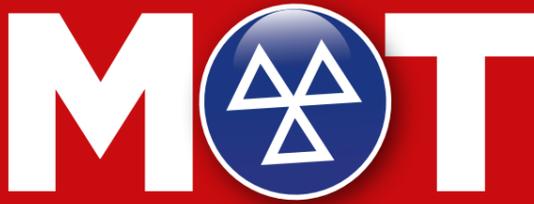
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## Oxfordshire's health and care services - The Big Consultation

You've been invited to participate in Oxfordshire's health and care services - The Big Consultation by Oxfordshire CCG

This is open from 2 Mar 2018 at 09:00 to 31 Dec 2019 at 23:59.

The NHS has reflected on the experience of running Phase 1 of the Oxfordshire Transformation Programme. We understand that we need to learn from the experience and approach the improvement of local services in a very different manner.

Alongside this, a recent Care Quality Commission Local System Review has emphasised the need for much better health and social care planning together and the need for an overarching vision and strategy for health and care in Oxfordshire.

We understand that the best service improvements are those where patients, the wider public and key stakeholders (including local authorities, the voluntary sector and our social care partners) work together to co-design services based upon the health and care needs of the local population. We need to break down organisational barriers and work in a much more integrated way to improve care for residents and patients in Oxfordshire.

We therefore recognise the need to progress with the next phase in a very different way.

We need to listen to local people and understand better at local level how to work in a more integrated way to improve care for residents and patients in Oxfordshire.

Going forward, system leaders will bring together our individual organisation's strategies to ensure we have one overarching strategy, owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Over the next few weeks we will describe how we plan to work with the public and other stakeholders in looking at the population's health and care needs in order to develop together a health and social care system that is fit for the future.

**Update from Communications and Engagement Team**

<http://www.oxonhealthcaretransformation.nhs.uk/>

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- Anita, Trainee Assistant Practitioner, 46

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# A SONNING COMMON FILM STAR

Last summer Irenka Motyka of Wood Lane Close was invited by South Oxfordshire Housing Association to take part in a series of short films about their tenants. The series was to be called "Real People, True Stories" and was aimed at showing the variety of people living in SOHA homes and the diverse lives they lead - from teachers to jump jet test pilots.

Irenka considered it "an honour" to be asked and agreed to take part. She felt it would be a tribute to her Polish parents who had arrived in England in 1947 and after life in three local refugee camps in the woods (Irenka being born in the camp at Checkendon in 1950) had moved into The Close on the 3 September 1955 - the house where

Irenka still lives, over 60 years on.

But, what had "seemed like a good idea at the time" became more daunting as filming day drew near. A crew of 4 arrived at the house in July and set up in the front room. They took a couple of hours filming Irenka chatting to the interviewer and although the film was edited, no retakes were necessary. Later the same day the filming venue moved to the Thames at Henley where Irenka and the crew of the whale boat Molly were filmed. For about an hour they rowed up and down a short stretch of river; a little tedious compared to their usual style of rowing.

Irenka quite enjoyed the experience saying it was "not as bad as expected" but she has no plans to stay in the spotlight. ●

JO STOVES



You can see Irenka's film at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1wWMeK9vS0> or all the films in the series at [youtube.com/sohahousing](https://www.youtube.com/sohahousing)

# EXTRAORDINARY MEETING THANKS EXTRAORDINARY FOUNDER

Over eighty people attended the extraordinary meeting of Sonning Common Theatre Club which was held in the Sonning Common Village Hall on 25 January 2018. The purpose of the meeting, chaired by Jackie and Geoff Million, was to try and find a way for the Club to continue after Jane Arch was no longer able to continue its leadership.

The club was founded in 1986 by Jane and originally started as a small group of like minded friends who enjoyed going to the theatre. It soon grew in size and its present membership is over 200, a testament to the extraordinary effort made to offer interesting, varied and enjoyable entertainment. Up to this time

the Club has visited over 93 separate theatres, enjoyed over 233 plays, 27 musicals, 26 Shakespeare plays as well as opera and ballet. Members have also enjoyed residential visits to many venues including Oberammergau, Dublin, Brighton, Stratford and Chichester.

The meeting began with a vote of thanks and a bouquet to Jane by Judy Skeet. Judy expressed the admiration and thanks of all the members to the founder they call 'superwoman'. The effort and commitment and research done by Jane has given incalculable pleasure to all enabling many to experience and enjoy live theatre. The warmth and admiration of the members was apparent to all

present. Jane responded by expressing her regret at having to step down, but also her hope that the club would continue in the future.

After consultation, the result of the evening was the membership expressed a very strong wish to continue and a future meeting will be arranged with the aim of forming a provisional committee.

Anyone interested in becoming a member should contact [sctc2018@gmail.com](mailto:sctc2018@gmail.com)

JOAN GRUMMANT



# FOSCL EVENTS



Budding writers will be pleased to hear that the FOSCL writing competition is being run for a second year and is open to adults as well as young people. Entries close at noon on Saturday 15 September. We'd like to thank our sponsors for this year's competition T. A. Fisher and Stephen Anthony Associates. Details of how to enter can be found in the library or on the Friends' [www.friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk](http://www.friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk)

The committee has also finalised details for two events for 2018. The first will be the rescheduled talk by two local writers - Vera Morris and Tom Fort - who will give us their version of "The Writer's Life".

It will be on Thursday 24 May in the Library at 7.30pm. Tickets at £5 each (including a glass of wine) will be available from the Library or Occasions from 1st April.

The Quiz is returning by popular demand and will be on Friday 12 October at Sonning Common Primary school. Tickets at £20 for a table of 6 will go on sale from 1st September.

Visitors to the library will have noticed that some of the chairs have had a make-over, thanks to a bit of nifty work with fabric and stable gun by our Volunteer organiser, Jenny Jones. We're

now trying to source some new office chairs for people using the computers. If anyone works at an office undergoing a refurbishment and could donate unwanted furniture, please get in touch with the Friends. As usual a big thank you to all our volunteers.

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**Saturday 7**  
2 - 4pm  
Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - Spring show. Village Hall

**Monday 9**  
2.30pm  
FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

**Tuesday 10**  
7.30pm  
Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - "Green and Gorgeous" Flower farm/business talk. Peppard Memorial Hall

**Wednesday 11**  
7.45pm  
Henley Stamp Collectors - 'A Philatelic Autobiography' by Bill Jackson. Bix Village Hall

**Monday 16**  
8pm  
Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

**Tuesday 17**  
12.30pm  
Snack and chat lunch. St Michael's Church Hall

**Thursday 19**  
11.30am  
FISH - Pub lunch  
7.30pm  
Sonning Common Women's Institute - "Cons, comen and how to avoid them". Village Hall

**Wednesday 25**  
7.45pm  
Henley Stamp Collectors - '1890 Penny Post Jubilee' by John Davies. Banbury Bix Village Hall

**Thursday 26**  
FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

**Sunday 29**  
10am  
SoCo Spring Clean. Village Hall

10.30am - 4.30pm  
Shiplake Village Bowls Club. Memorial Avenue Shiplake

## MAY 2018

**Wednesday 2**  
10.30am - 12noon  
Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common WI. Open to all. Village Hall

**Friday 4**  
7.30pm  
A Recital by David Jaggs, Guitar, sponsored by Nottakwire in aid of Sue Ryder. Entry by ticket only. Village Hall

**Wednesday 9**  
7.45pm  
Henley Stamp Collectors - Annual General Meeting. Bix Village Hall

**Monday 14**  
2.30pm  
FISH - Tea party. Village Hall  
8pm  
Sonning Common Parish Council - Annual Parish Council Meeting. Village Hall

**Tuesday 15**  
12.30pm  
Snack and chat lunch. St Michael's Church Hall

**Thursday 17**  
11.30am  
FISH - Pub lunch  
7.30pm  
Sonning Common Women's Institute - Resolutions followed by a Beetle Drive. Village Hall

**Monday 21**  
8pm  
Sonning Common Parish Council - Annual Parish Meeting. Village Hall

**Wednesday 23**  
7.45pm  
Henley Stamp Collectors - Presidents Evening. Bix Village Hall

**Thursday 24**  
FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

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Heights Tree Care	16	Wood Lane Dentistry	2
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Kidbys Sheds	9		
Kidmore End Pre-School	22		
Laurence Hansen (House & Property Services)	22		

The FISH Volunteer Centre runs regular door-to-door shopping trips to Tesco in Henley every Monday morning and to Henley Waitrose, Henley Farmers Market, Morrisons in Reading and Reading Town Centre every month.

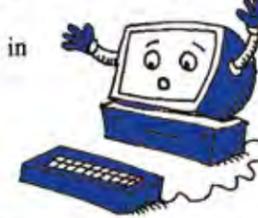
The programme of shopping and leisure trips for each month is published and distributed on 20th of the preceding month and bookings are taken from that date. Copies of the programme are available the FISH Volunteer Centre, Sonning Common Library, the Christian Community Action shop, Pet Country Supplies and on request from Carson's Chemist. The monthly programme of trips is posted on noticeboards in both Peppard and Sonning Common and is also sent to individual email addresses. If you would like to receive a regular monthly copy, please email busmanager@fishvolunteercentre.co.uk with the message 'bus programme please' and your name.

Details of all minibus trips can also be found on the FISH website [www.fishvolunteercentre.co.uk](http://www.fishvolunteercentre.co.uk)  
For more information and to book any trip call 0118 972 3986 any weekday between 09.30 and 11.30 a.m. ●

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