

JUNE/JULY 2025

VILLAGE DAY 2025

PARTY IN THE PARK - SUNDAY 22ND JUNE

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KEEP ON SWIMMING

Save Sonning Common
Swimming Pool
P6

MILLENNIUM GREEN

An abundance of flora and
fauna
P18

A GREENER FUTURE

Big Give Green Match Fund
P20



**VILLAGE
DAY**

PARTY IN THE PARK

LIVE MUSIC
WORLD CUISINE,
BEER TENTS,
ARTISAN CRAFTS,
TRACTOR RUN,
DOG SHOW,
BOUNCY CASTLES
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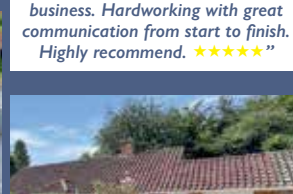
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"Thank you for all your support with this process and your care and help"



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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Sunshine every day for several weeks has set the scene for this issue of the magazine, which is full of good news and events ready for the continuing good weather. We are delighted to hear that Emma Bliss has been appointed Headteacher of MECE as she has considerable experience of the school and also the academy and its ways of working. We wish her all the best and are confident that the continuity she will provide will be beneficial.

The magazine reflects all that is good about what is available for residents of the village, events for all ages and groups. We welcome the appointment of the new Parish Clerk, who together with Sara and Jess will ensure that a number of projects will come to fruition.

However, the enormous worry is that the swimming pool needs renovation and the campaign to raise some of the money is supported by this magazine. We need us all to give as generously as possible? I am sure many of you will have fond memories of when your children learned to swim. It is a resource for future generations that we cannot allow to be lost.

Lots to do but with your support it will happen. ●

Diana and Christine

SoCo Spring Clean 2025

Emma Lawrence has led the SoCo Spring Clean for 7 years. It was another very successful day. If you did not see the photos, they are still on the magazine website and accessible via the QR code. Her work is much appreciated by the village, and she is now looking forward to the next one, 1 March 2026. If you could help, please contact her to start the preparations soon. It is not a massive commitment, and any help would be good and much appreciated. Please contact Emma via editor.sonningcommonmagazine@gmail.com



MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



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SC SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

MECE NEWS

Focussing on hard work and opportunities



The Spring term affords students the chance to reflect on their start to the school year, set goals for the remainder of the academic year and take advantage of opportunities available to them across the extra-curricular programme.

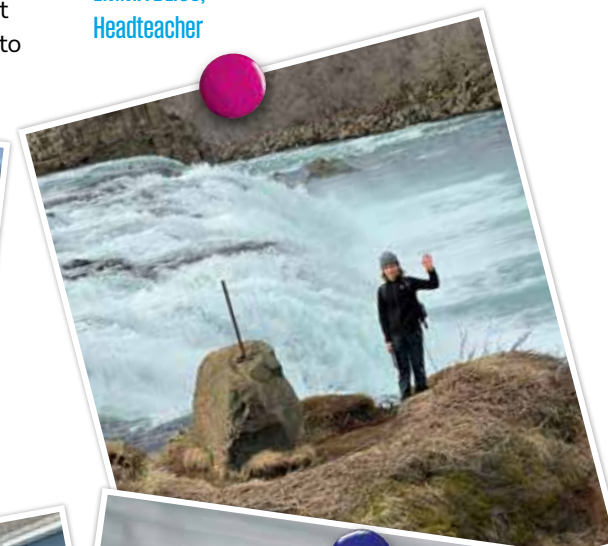
Students at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge certainly did this with gusto! Years 9 & 11 have been considering their current strengths and onward steps with Y9 engaging in activities around choosing KS4 options and Year 11 finalising applications for Post-16 study or employment and preparation for upcoming GCSEs. In the same vein we hosted Year 5 students from Sonning Common Primary School to a "High School Experience Day" to give them a taster of what "big school" is like. Whilst students in Years 7-10 have been taking advantage of clubs and trips on offer including crochet, archery, history & geography, film and public speaking. The Easter holidays saw over 60 students and 6 staff involved in trips to Italy (skiing) and Iceland (Geography). The Skiers were part of a larger group of 200 students and 25 staff drawn from the 3 Secondary Schools within Maiden Erlegh Trust which was a fabulous opportunity to

not only develop their skiing but to make new friends too.

We were also delighted to receive information on our upcoming Year 7 cohort and welcomed families to site in April for an informal event where they could meet current staff, parents and students as well as a first chance to meet peers from across 12 different feeder schools. We wish all of Year 6 the best of luck in their SATs and look forward to the formal Induction events later in the Summer term.

Finally, we kicked off the Summer Term by opening our doors to the community at our Spring Clean Up event. The 40+ volunteers litter-picked, gardened, painted and washed windows for an afternoon interlaced with tea and cake! The results were plain to see and reflected a superb team effort! ●

EMMA BLISS,
Headteacher



SCPS NEWS

Space to learn, grow and be inspired



360 children and is used for daily assemblies, school lunches, and is also great for school plays, musical events and displays, with a modern portable sound system and stage lighting.

All our classrooms have up-to-date interactive whiteboards and a range of other technology. We have a fully equipped computer suite and a huge variety of equipment (robots, mobile laptop trolleys, iPads, sound recording equipment) that children can use to enhance their learning.

Having introduced you to some of my colleagues last month, this time I would like to focus on some of the facilities and equipment we have on offer at Sonning Common. We are very lucky.

A lot of our learning takes place outside. Our motto is 'Space to learn, grow and be inspired', and we are very lucky to be able to live up to this every day. The school field can easily accommodate two hundred or so eager children in a range of PE lessons, and our results in Oxfordshire competitions reflect productive use of these spaces. We also have a well-used all-weather area for football, netball, basketball and tennis.

Recent years (and a great deal of PTA effort) have added the 'canopy'. We still don't know what to call it! This offers a covered space for a range of activities; PE, school lunches, after-school club and other sports clubs. In addition, it has become the go-to facility for staging our school performances and the carol concert. Seeing it lit up on a chilly December night, with three hundred people

singing their hearts out, is a very special annual moment.

The school field extends down into Dobinson's Paddock and is another crucial sports and exercise facility. It leads to our two unique forest camp areas which see near-constant use from a daily procession of excited youngsters clad in all-weather waterproofs and wellies.

Water? That brings me to the swimming pool. We reckon that around 2,700 of our own children, and many more from the village and the wider community, have learned to swim in our pool. I say 'ours' because although it is a community facility, it receives no external funding. We must make it pay day-to-day, and repairs and renovations are up to us.

You will see on page 6 of this issue, some more details of the pool and the initiatives we are undertaking to keep it viable. We need your help. It has long been an aim of our school for no child to leave us without being able to swim. Obviously, the pool is central to that, and we usually succeed. It is a unique facility for a primary school, and in addition to everything else I have outlined here, I am determined to keep it open so that a whole new generation of our children can benefit.

Thank you as usual for anything you can do to support us. ●

RACHEL SALMONS
Headteacher
Sonning Common Primary School



KEEP ON SWIMMING SAVE YOUR POOL CAMPAIGN



I expect a lot of readers will remember anxiously taking your newborns to their first swimming lesson in the village pool, or that desperate moment at 8.30am when your primary age child shouts 'swimming today!'

Remember the scene...? Rummaging around for the swimming kit, buried deep in a bag somewhere? Did we wash it last time? Oh, where is it? Where are the goggles and swimming hat?

Sonning Common Swimming Pool - the place where your child learned to swim. The place where over 5,000 children took their first watery steps, and many others learned basic life-saving and other skills. A place where more than forty local people have benefitted from volunteering, work experience, training and jobs for over the last 5 years alone.

This community facility has been a vital local resource for nearly fifty years. It was

fundraised locally back then and is one of only a very few trainer pools in South Oxfordshire. Not only children from Sonning Common, but many others from the surrounding schools, villages and communities have made the pool part of their growing up. More than that though, sports clubs, adult groups, children with additional needs and senior citizens have used and loved the pool over the years.

And we now have a problem and need your help.

This vital community facility has had no major refurbishment for 20 years and the fixtures, tiles, and flooring are deteriorating and becoming unfit for purpose. This requires a big investment in modern surfaces, some of which we hope will come from the school's vibrant PTA and grants from sporting bodies, but it will cost more than £65,000. As it receives no external funding and relies on income from swimming lessons and community bookings, we need to raise more than half of this before the summer holidays so that we can secure the work from the very best contractor, and get the most important works (relining and reflooring the pool) under way. This will allow us to safely maintain and extend access for vulnerable groups within the community.

We hope that many of you will have good

memories of your children learning to swim here, and we can assure you that every penny raised will contribute to us continuing to offer this vital community resource, many years into the future.

If you have happy memories of your time supporting your children's swimming (and even if it was a struggle!), please do consider a donation to help keep the pool open. We have set up a Crowdfunder site for this - www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/save-your-pool and here is a QR code to easily access it with your phone camera.



Even the smallest donation will be well used in the renovations and every pledge will help people in our community keep on swimming. ●

Thank you.

CATE AND CHRISTINE



The original fund raising which was a mile of pennies

KIDMORE END PRIMARY



With Summer term in full swing at Kidmore End CE Primary School, I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to properly introduce myself to the local community of Sonning Common.

My name is Claire Spankie, and I have been the headteacher at Kidmore End since June 2024. My teaching and leadership experiences before now have been at St Luke's Primary School in Maidenhead, where I worked for 17 years. I was Deputy Head at St Luke's for 10 years, during which period Ofsted graded us Outstanding over two separate inspections (2017 and 2023). My passion and drive for teaching stems from a desire for all children to achieve their full potential, to develop a love of learning and they acquire the skills needed to be successful at secondary school and into adulthood. Learning should be fun, engaging and a representation of real life. I firmly believe that learning, progress and achievement for every child looks different and it is our job as teachers to ensure that every child believes in themselves and they are able to develop the confidence and resilience to face life's challenges.

A nurturing environment, skilled teaching, inspiring curriculum, and enthusiasm for every child to be successful is what children should expect from attending Kidmore End CE Primary. We had a SIAMs inspection in

December 2024 where the inspector noted that "The vision and culture of the school allows pupils to think of others and serve those within their community and beyond", and that "pupils develop high levels of confidence and perseverance through the school's nurturing yet challenging culture, consequently, pupils experience life in all its fullness."

Our school's vision and values govern every decision we make in our school, and we believe that through building resilience, independence and kindness we will work, learn and grow together as a tight knit community.

It has been a wonderful start to 2025 at school, with the children taking part in a wide range of enrichment activities and exciting learning opportunities. January saw the launch of outdoor learning at Kidmore End; this is held on school grounds every week, with the children experiencing a range of outdoor skills and life experiences.

Music and sport have featured highly over the past few months, with the children taking part in a range of events and competitions. Our amazing school choir were finalists in the Bucks and Oxon Primary School Choir of the Year competition and many of our pupils have achieved success in the local cross country competitions, not in the least because of the dedication of the parent team who run our Friday running club at school.

To find out more about our wonderful school, please do follow us on Facebook, X, Linked In or Instagram for regular updates, or contact our school office for more information. ●



TREES, OWLS, BUG HOTELS AND REWILDING...

Have you noticed all the beautiful new trees around the village? Aren't they great?! So many wonderful varieties to bring smiles to our faces and to support our local wildlife. A massive thank you to Oxfordshire County Council and Eco SoCo volunteers for making this happen for our village.

If you're lucky enough to live near one, please take a moment to give the trees some water this summer. All new trees need our help to thrive!

In other news, we have not one but three special events in June and you're warmly invited to them all! Read on to find out more...

A Special Screening Of Wilding(PG), the acclaimed film about the Knepp Estate's pioneering rewilding project in West Sussex. Kindly sponsored by Beville Estate Agents.

Thursday June 5th, 2025, at Peppard War Memorial Hall (RG9 5JA). Doors open at 6:30pm for a 7:00pm start. Tickets are £5 in advance, with refreshments available. To reserve a spot, email: ecosocofilm@gmail.com

All proceeds support our local environmental initiatives in and around Sonning Common. We hope to see you there!



Get Wise About Wildlife: An Evening for Owl Conservation celebrating Great Big Green Week and supported by Community Action Groups Oxfordshire, EcoSoCo is delighted to invite you to meet some feathered friends and explore the important work being done to protect these remarkable birds through habitat restoration, citizen science, surveying, and education — and how Sonning Common can play a role in these efforts.

Thursday June 12th at 7pm, at Sonning Common Village Hall. Admission is FREE, but space is limited, so please register in advance by emailing janehoughton912@gmail.com

We look forward to welcoming you to an inspiring and informative evening!



Free Bug Hotel and Bird Box Building @ Village Day 22nd June We're excited to be part of this year's Sonning Common Village Day with a fun and interactive Eco SoCo stall! Join us for free bird box and bug hotel building – a great hands-on activity for all ages. This year our wildlife box kits have been made and donated by the brilliant volunteers at The Men's Shed, Peppard. Plus, back by popular demand, our Eco SoCo Tombola will be packed with fantastic prizes.

If your green fingers are tingling, why not check out the Eco SoCo FREE seed library at Sonning Common library or get in touch with Alyson Barnes to join in with activities at our wonderful



community vegetable garden? To find out more contact Alyson at ecosocoveggarden@gmail.com

Discovered your garden tools are past their best? Has Spring cleaning unearthed broken household items? Bring your broken items—small electrics, bikes, textiles, clocks, clothes, jewellery and toys—and our skilled volunteers will do their best to fix them. While you wait, enjoy tea, coffee, and homemade cakes at the Revive Café. The repairs are free, but donations are welcome to support Eco SoCo's environmental projects. We look forward to seeing you!

Join us for Eco SoCo's Repair Café every First Saturday of the month, from 10am–12:30pm at Springwater Church, Peppard.

Want to learn more about our exciting community projects? Sign up to receive our fun monthly newsletter. Please email Alyson at ecosocoveggarden@gmail.com to receive your copy.

'Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.' Albert Einstein

Thanks for reading and I look forward to meeting you at one of our summer events. ●

JULIE SHORTER



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR LOCAL GARDENING CLUB?



Known as Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society, (which is our original name from when we used to meet in the school hall) we are more commonly referred to as CEHS.

This is your nearest local group that meets in most months, at Peppard War Memorial Hall in Gallowstree Road, its' home, so not so far from SC residents and a lovely warm hall to welcome you.

We cover all things "gardening" from talks on flowers, fruit and vegetables, to trees, peat free, no dig gardening (yes, it is possible) to demonstrations on, for instance, pruning and propagation. We have knowledgeable speakers visit us on the second Tuesday evening of most months at 7 pm to have time for tea/coffee and a chat, for a 7.30 start. Everyone is welcome, no matter where you live and what interests you have. We have over 100 members already but there's always room for more, not everyone comes to every meeting.

With membership of just £10 a year, it's a bargain even if you only come a few times. Membership gives you access to book (at present) two coach-based

trips in the year. This time we are going to Gardener's World Live at the NEC in Birmingham and our all -time favourite, the RHS in Wisley.

You will have heard about our two shows each year, but have you visited? A chance to see competitive entries in all manner of categories from seasonal flowers, photography, baking and crafts. A packed show in March or April and September, we welcome nonmembers free. Our next one is 6 September 2025 in Sonning Common Village hall and is open from 2 till 4, with refreshments, a plant stall and raffle available so bring your cash. We will also hold a Spring one on 28 March 2026.

Look out for our posters at meetings, usually on bright yellow paper! Our website is cehs.co.uk and we are on Facebook, search for Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society.

Non-members are welcome to try us at any meeting, paying £5, but why not join for £10 and get all the other advantages? We have a monthly newsletter, usually emailed but can be hand delivered on request, plus trips and visits locally when we car share. In the winter we often have Zoomed meetings to save you turning out and afternoon meetings too. Our website is cehs.co.uk

where you can find useful information and updates

Possibly best of all is our Annual meeting in December, where we hear the committee reports and then have a member social and a grand raffle, where we are blessed with donations. Donations from local shops and businesses and our own members are always gratefully received.

See you there? ●

PENNY NOBLE
Vice chair
CEHS
07867 888875

Upcoming meetings include

13 June	Gardeners World Live coach
29 July	Local visit
20 September	Wisley coach
14 October	Talk entitled Desert Island Dix
11 November	Afternoon talk on growing peat free
9 December	AGM
13 January 2026	Zoom talk afternoon



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For more information, please call 01491 628 933
Email: frances@waysandmeans.org.uk
www.facebook.com/greenshoots96
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Denise Jones
1962 to 2025



We are very sorry to announce that our dear colleague and friend, Denise Jones, sadly passed away on Saturday 29th March, after a very short illness.

HEALTH WALKS

The Health Walks continue into the Summer. With the arrival of warmer weather (we hope!) it's good to enjoy a walk in our beautiful local countryside, and if you need company then come and join us!
Phone Chris Brook on 0118 972 2609

Life Skills - Thursdays 10.30-12, June 5th-17th

Do you want to feel more in control of your finances? Life skills is a friendly group that will help you gain confidence and decision-making skills. You'll learn practical budgeting and money-saving techniques such as shopping and cooking on a budget and making your money go further. Come to the taster session on Thursday 5th June, 10.30-12 and give it a try... then weekly for 5 more sessions (June 19th, 26th, July 3rd, 10th, 17th) At Springwater Church, Blounts Court road, RG9 5EU.
Text me (Niki) on 07519 797 770 or email foodbank@springwaterchurch.org to let me know you are interested.

SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL
GROVE ROAD
Summer Fair
28TH JUNE 2025
12.00pm till 3.00pm
PTA

SONNING COMMON AND DISTRICT TENNIS CLUB

A small club situated within the Bishopswood Sports grounds on Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common.
2 excellent courts refurbished in 2022. Affordable tennis for the local community. Pre-booking is not required just turn up and play with friends and family when you like. Our AGM kept our annual fees unaltered.
Memberships are -
Juniors £10, Single adults £25 and Household £40 per annum.
If you are interested in joining please see our website www.sonningcommontennisclub.org or email info@sonningcommontennisclub.org

Springwater Foodbank are very low on stock at the moment. If you are able to support them, donations of food can be dropped at the points in the Co-op, library, Kennylands gymnastics or in the cupboard on the drive of Springwater Church, Blounts Court Road, RG9 5EU. Download the BanktheFood app and Choose Springwater Foodbank to see what items we are particularly in need of.

VILLAGE COFFEE MORNINGS

Sonning Common Village Hall

WEDNESDAY 5th JUNE

and

WEDNESDAY 3rd JULY

10.30 a.m. - 12 Noon

All Welcome - Please join us for a Cup of Coffee/Tea and Biscuits



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PARISH NEWS

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Welcome



I'm Andy Donachie, your new Parish Clerk, and I'm really pleased to be joining the Sonning Common community in this role. Some of you might already know me — or at least know my wife's family — as we have strong ties to the village. After 18 years away, we moved back last year, and honestly, it just feels right to be home. Sonning Common has everything you could want — shops, green spaces, a great community —

all while keeping that proper village feel, which is why we love it.

A bit about me: I spent almost 20 years working for Reading Borough Council, leading teams, managing projects, and generally learning how to get things done. I've worked closely with councillors for most of that time, so stepping into the Parish Clerk role feels like a natural next chapter.

My job here is to help the Parish Council run smoothly: organising meetings, leading the great team in the office, giving advice, and making sure everything we do is above board. But it's more than ticking boxes — it's about helping the village thrive, supporting local projects, and being a link between the council and the community.

Right now, my main focus is on getting stuck into the projects already underway and getting to grips with the day-to-day life of the council as

well as getting to know the well-established and hard working team behind the Parish Council. Once I've got my feet firmly under the table, I'm looking forward to bringing some ideas of my own too.

Outside of work, you'll usually find me watching rugby union, walking our dog or cooking up a culinary delight!

If you've got any questions, suggestions, or just want to chat about what's happening in the village, please get in touch. I can't promise we'll fix every problem overnight, but what I can promise is that we'll listen, we'll try, and we'll work together to keep Sonning Common a place we're all proud of.

Looking forward to meeting you all soon! •

ANDY DONACHIE
Parish Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council

Sonning Common celebrates Summer at annual Village Day

Get ready for a day of fun, family entertainment, community spirit, and local charm! Our annual Village Day is returning to Memorial Park on Sunday 22nd June from 1.00pm.

This year's event promises to be a vibrant mix of traditional country fair attractions, local crafts, live music and delicious food.

Highlights to look forward to include:

- **Live Music:** enjoy a variety of local musicians performing throughout the afternoon, and featuring "So Be It"
- **Craft Stalls;** other shopping: browse and purchase unique handmade items

from local artisans.

- **Food;** Drink: savour a range of delicious foods from around the world, and drinks from Loddon Brewery; Purple Foot Wines
- **Discover your community:** browse the stands of all our local heroes who run the various organisations that keep the community spirit of Sonning Common alive.
- **Family activities:** kids of all ages can enjoy a tractor ride to a range of entertainments including bouncy castles, face painting, tug o' war, fairground attractions and more.

- **Fun dog show;** other animals.

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MILLENNIUM GREEN

How lucky we are in this village to have both the Memorial Field and the Millennium Green. All right, in an ideal world they would have had more distinct names - as it is, those with fading mental powers, myself included, are forever referring to one when they mean the other or having to pause for several seconds to make sure they get it right.

But that's a minor consideration when you think of the blessings each brings to Sonning Common. I am full of admiration for the dedicated people who have worked so hard to make the Memorial Field (I think I've got the right one) what it is. I cycle past it two or three times a week and rejoice at the way it is used and appreciated by such a variety of residents.

My own particular interest, though, is the Millennium Green - mainly, because a couple of years ago I became chairman of the trust responsible for looking after it. Since then, I have

grown to value its contribution to village life deeply, although it is not easy to put that value into words. You must spend time there - breathing in the air, listening to the birds, looking at the sweep of grassland and the surrounding belt of trees, pausing to smell the lavender and the wildflowers and spot the butterflies and moths. Then you become aware of other people: dog walkers, elderly residents of Abbeycrest being pushed in wheelchairs by their children or grandchildren, solitary souls on benches sunk in contemplation, lads booting footballs around, families spread out on the grass.

You know then that it is a special place with a special atmosphere about it. It is somewhere to find peace, to exercise, to savour silence and to chat, to experience the wonder and beauty of nature.

As trustees we feel it is our first duty to maintain this specialness. Our approach is to let the Millennium Green look after itself, which on the whole it does pretty well. But at the same time there is work to be done, and every now and then we must intervene. When an errant white van

veered across Peppard Road into the long-standing metal gate opposite the Bird in Hand, we had to organise a replacement. When the parish council politely asked if we could open up a new entrance/exit on Kennylands Road opposite the footpath to Bur Wood, and install a staggered barrier, we were happy to oblige.

The day after I am writing this dispatch, the volunteers from the magnificent Green Gym are coming with loppers and mattocks and other weapons to tackle the rapidly expanding thicket of brambles beside the path on the Peppard Road side, and to deal with encroaching growth elsewhere. The Green Gym have helped us out before and they do a superb job (volunteers are always wanted - do contact the organiser, Martin Rhodes at martin_rhodes1@hotmail.com).

There are hedges to be cut, lavender beds to be weeded, blackthorn suckers to be removed, wildflower seed to be sown, grass banks to be mown. The Millennium Green is incredibly lucky to have a devoted supporter and worker, Chris Brown (also our secretary) who is to be found most fine days tending to one task or another. He

is also a close observer and recorder of the Green's flora and fauna, and a skilled photographer - witness the photographs accompanying this article.

Thanks to a deal on access with the developers of the new housing site next to Kennylands Gym, the Millennium Green Trust has acquired sufficient funding to put it on a sound financial footing for the foreseeable future. Because of the careful management of previous trustees - I pay tribute here to my predecessor as chairman, Sheila Walker - it has always been possible to fund important enhancements, for instance the path that was redone a few years ago.

Without starting a revolution, we would like to do more. One proposal is for a new path leading from Essex Way

along the fence beside Abbeycrest to the north-west corner of the Green, which would link with existing pavements and be safer than walking up Kennylands Road. The trust is also thinking about providing a Community Orchard on part of the mown green near the gym - a place to pick old-fashioned English apples and pears, plums and damsons, even quinces.

If any reader of this magazine has any thoughts about these ideas, or anything else about the Millennium Green, by all means email me at tomfort3@gmail.com. In the meantime, let us all enjoy this glorious asset and give thanks to Sibella Bonham-Carter and the other crusaders of long ago who enabled it to become part of our village. ●

TOM FORT



A bench has been placed in Millennium Green in memory of Annabel Irwin and Joan Lamprell, both long time residents of Sonning Common.

Friends and family gathered at the bench, kindly donated by many of those close to Annabel and Joan, on the afternoon of 21st of March.

Both families would like to thank everyone who came along on the day and those who kindly contributed. The bench is a lovely testament to both women who were active in village life over their combined 40 years plus as residents. It will provide a peaceful place to remember them.



A GREENER FUTURE FOR SONNING COMMON



Thank you to everyone who donated to the "Big Give Green Match Fund" in April helping CPRE Oxfordshire to secure the funding needed to launch the pilot scheme for Rooftop Renewables. This pioneering initiative aims to help rural communities transition to rooftop solar energy, with Sonning Common chosen as the first community to benefit!

With the intention of helping residents save money on energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint while creating a more sustainable community, CPRE Oxfordshire will be working with the Parish Council Chair, Vicky Boorman, to roll out the project.

We face a climate emergency which will have a huge impact on our countryside, through extreme weather and loss of biodiversity. We must reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, which are high in carbon and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and climate

change, and switch to generating clean energy closest to the point of use.

What next?

The first step is a solar audit across the village to identify where rooftop solar energy can be on private homes and community assets such as the village hall.

Stage one

- Workshops to educate residents about solar energy and its benefits
- Mapping exercises using LIDAR (remote sensing technology) to identify the most suitable rooftops
- Guidance on the installation process

which makes sure all the information is accessible to make the decision to residents about solar energy.

Stage two

- Help with funding applications for solar panel installation
- Community energy groups are helped to set up for the management of the solar products, apply for funding and share information about renewable energy initiatives.
- Support for planning applications and work to encourage local authorities to prioritise renewable energy projects.

The Parish Council and CPRE will be in touch with more details as it starts. •



CELEBRATING VE DAY

The Parish Council organised a gathering at the Butchers Arms to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of WW11. The celebration was marked with the lighting of the beacon.

Some residents made tea and cake for VE day at Redhouse Drive



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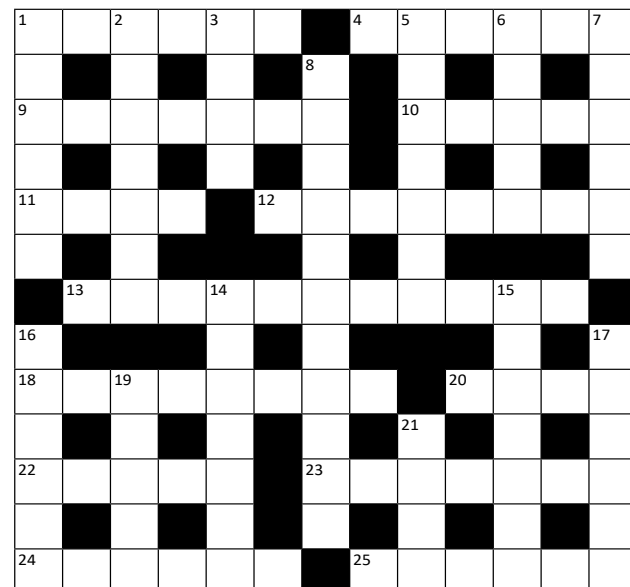
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PUZZLE PAGE

By DAVID DUNSTAN

Cryptic crossword



ACROSS

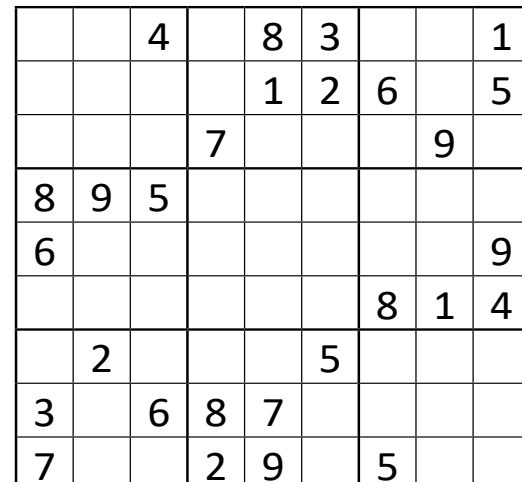
1. A way unknown, a lack of interest (6)
4. See 3 down
9. Feasts Iago used oddly producing tiredness (7)
10. Having a key in Islington alliance (5)
11. Madly need a garden (4)
12. Flying ace with six headless people (8)
13. Gas is dispersed before country meeting (11)
- 18&23. What hand takes in messy village shop (5,3,7)
20. Virtue in Schopenhauer (4)
22. Brush around bush (5)
23. See 18
24. Stay in crazy normality (6)
25. Big gun is clergyman adopting name (6)

DOWN

1. Garnett embarrassed by great king (6)
2. Hepburn perhaps recasts failure (7)
- 3&4 across. Hog can rush around village chemist (4,6)
5. Draw pamphlet after a time (7)
6. Cousin aims to contain holy mountain (5)
7. Stockings in vinyl on silk (6)
8. Recognise in the skies? – it's anyone's guess (6,5)
14. Occupy in practice (7)
15. City dweller has bull on Scotsman (7)
16. He sits uneasily for dissertation (6)
17. Senora confused logic (6)
19. Overall in a pronouncement (5)
21. Stake is up the mountain (4)

Sudoku

Grading: medium



Cryptogram

The following quotation has been encoded using a simple letter substitution. What does it say?

OHN PI SAT NPOSTE HW HFE UPIDHOSTOS
CRUT MGHEPHFI IFCCTE LB SAPI IFO HW
BHEY;

ROU RGG SAT DGHFUI SARS GHFE'U FKHO
HFE AHFIT

PO SAT UTTK LHIHC HW SAT HDTRO
LFEPTU.

NPGGPRC IARYTIKTRET: EPDAREU PPP

Quiz: Books with countries in the title

1. E.M. Forster: A Passage to _____.
2. William Shakespeare: Hamlet, Prince of _____.
3. Daphne du Maurier: _____ Inn.
4. Ira Levin: The Boys from _____.
5. Ian Fleming: From _____ with Love.
6. Giles Foden: The Last King of _____.
7. John Le Carré: A Small Town in _____.
8. Paul Torday: Salmon Fishing in the _____.
9. H.E. Bates: Fair Stood the Wind for _____.
10. Margaret Landon: Anna and the King of _____.

See answers on page 34

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Tori Yates, Google Review



BEAVERS TERM REVIEW

If you ever have fire on your clothes you have to fall to the ground and roll about so the flames are smothered and they will go out. You can also use a fire-blanket but not a normal blanket because that might spread the fire more.

Reuben. 6 years

It was really funny watching everybody squirt water. There was a cone for a target and the water was so powerful it knocked the cone over every time.

Toby. 7 years



At 1st Sonning Common Beavers we have had another term of fun, adventure and learning. We have worked hard towards a number of badges including; creative, international, book readers and safety badge.

One of our highlights was a really exciting trip to Henley fire station where the firefighters spent the afternoon talking to the beavers about fire safety, what to do if they discover a fire and how to act safely in an emergency situation. They also gave a thorough tour of the fire truck and the beavers learnt about how much water is stored on board, how tall the largest ladder is and what happens when they need more

water than is stored on board. The beavers all listened so attentively and were rewarded with time to try on some of the fire kit and spraying the water hoses. A huge thank you to Henley fire brigade who really went above and beyond with their time and enthusiasm to give the beavers a great experience.

Another great trip we went on was to Four Bears Book shop in Caversham. Alex welcomed the beavers into his shop to kick start the Book Readers badge and celebrate World Book day. The beavers had a good explore of the children's section and looked through the special books that had been written especially for world book day.

Alex tested their knowledge of popular books and authors in a fun quiz and our book worm Harry won the book voucher prize! The beavers then spent some time making up and

writing their own adventure stories. We had a brilliant time and our trip inspired the beavers to complete the rest of the badge requirements over the following few weeks. We went on a nature walk to collect interesting leaves to turn into book marks. Used craft materials to design our own book covers, showed we knew how to look after books correctly and read 6 books each and chose the best one to recommend to a friend. A huge thank you to Alex for being so generous with his time and shop!

The term ahead looks to be an

adventure filled time as we prepare for our summer camp in June, complete our sports badge and spend more time exploring our local environment as the weather improves. We will also be teaming up with Eco SoCo to help look after some of the trees planted in the new community orchards. The Beavers will be adopting some of the new trees and making sure they get the water they need. Learning new skills and fun times ahead! ●

HEALTH CENTRE NEWS



A sad goodbye: It is with sadness that at the end of April we said goodbye to Isabelle our Finance Officer who after working at Sonning Common Health Centre for 6.5 years has decided it is time to hang up her hat and retire. Isabelle first started working at the health centre on Reception before joining the Finance team where she has been invaluable. We have all loved working with Isabelle and will miss her however we know she will enjoy every moment of her retirement and will enjoy lots of travelling.

A warm welcome to new staff: We are pleased to welcome our new Dispensary team - Ann-Marie, our Dispensary Manager and Abbie our Dispenser, who

both started at the beginning of April. Ann-Marie has previously worked as a Dispensary Manager within a Primary Care setting and Abbie has worked in Community Pharmacy setting. Both bring a wealth of transferrable skills and knowledge to their new roles. They are both excited to join the Health Centre and are looking forward to getting to know our dispensing patients.

We are also pleased to welcome Joanne our new Finance Officer. Joanne has been working closely with Isabelle throughout April to obtain a good understanding of her new role. Joanne has previous Finance experience which will be a great benefit to her.

Successful Spring booster COVID-19 vaccination clinics: Our Spring booster Covid-19 clinics were a great success with us vaccinating close to 1,000 patients. It was a huge team effort with both Sonning Common Health Centre staff and amazing volunteers helping coordinate the clinic to ensure all our patients had a sleek and efficient experience. Thank you to everyone who made our clinics possible. Thank you also to our Lead nurse Catherine and our Nurse Annabel who also visited Abbeycrest and our housebound patients to ensure they also received their Spring booster. ●

Katie Williams
Practice Manager

ORDERING YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS

The NHS App is the quickest way to order repeat medication. The App displays the medication you are currently on and gives you access to your medical records too.

You can also use Patient Access to order repeat medication.

Please Note: you now need a mobile phone as this requires "2 factor authorisation" i.e. send you a code to allow you to login.

If you have not yet registered to order your prescription online, or would prefer not to, you can also make a request in any of the following ways:

- Email our admin team at **schc.admin@nhs.net** – please include your name, DOB, medication required and which pharmacy you

would like your prescription to be sent to. (Dispensing patients can collect from the health centre).

- Put a written request into the box in our foyer.
- Ask your preferred pharmacy to request medication on your behalf.

Regardless of the method, please allow 3 days (excluding weekends and Bank Holidays) for your repeat prescription request to be processed. We cannot accept repeat prescription requests over the telephone.

Please allow plenty of time when ordering your medication, don't leave it until you have only one tablet or dose left.

Please do not request your prescription if your prescription currently has more than 2 weeks remaining. Your request will be rejected. This follows national guidance to allow supply chains to restock and to ensure everyone has adequate supplies of their medication. ●



PPG OVERVIEW

A Look Back at Sonning Common Health Centre's Patient Participation Group's Impactful Year

At this year's AGM, the Patient Participation Group (PPG) reflected on a rewarding and dynamic 2024. It was a year of meaningful connection, education, and positive change, driven by our mission to bring patients and healthcare professionals closer together for the benefit of the community.

One of the highlights of the year has been our Health Information Events, which proved once again to be an invaluable opportunity to bring expert knowledge directly to our patients. We began in January with a Mental Health Talk led by Sport in Mind, a charity that emphasises the powerful link between physical activity and mental wellbeing. In May, Dr. Kiruba Nagaratnam provided vital insights into stroke prevention and treatment, a session that resonated with many in our community. October offered something a little different—a glimpse behind the scenes of general practice, as Dr. Tom Rockell presented "A Day in the Life of a GP", sharing the challenges and rewards of life on the front line of healthcare.

We closed the year in November with an engaging talk by Professor Deepak Ravindran, whose session "Why You Are What You Eat" explored the intricate connection between diet and overall health.

Beyond our events, the PPG has continued to build and evolve in other important ways. We carried out a Patient Satisfaction Survey, which provided valuable feedback that has been shared with the Health Centre to inform service improvements. We've welcomed new members into the group, bringing fresh perspectives and renewed enthusiasm to our work. Our communication efforts have expanded too, with the creation of a dedicated Facebook page and the ongoing growth of our mailing list, allowing us to reach more patients with updates, resources, and event information. Our feedback channels have remained active, helping ensure that patient voices are heard and considered in decisions that affect their care. Additionally, our Topic Table and features in local publications have continued to raise awareness around key health topics.

Throughout 2025, we're excited to build on this momentum with a new series of

events. We started the year with a "New Year, New Start" event led by the care coordinators, encouraging healthy habits and wellness from day one. We're also preparing sessions focused on the vital topic of caring for elderly relatives and friends, offering support and practical advice for those in caregiving roles as well as those who might need more care. Another crucial issue we'll be tackling is sepsis, with a dedicated talk aimed at raising awareness of its signs and the importance of early intervention - look out for more information for this event which is to be held on the 3rd June.

The PPG is always open to new ideas and new members. Whether you're keen to get involved directly or simply want to stay informed, we invite you to join us. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the health and wellbeing of our community.

Please email **schcpgg@gmail.com** for more information. ●

Vicky Mynott
PPG Chair

SC LIBRARY

FINDING A BARGAIN

How can I put this politely? I don't want to sound negative as I am, after all, talking about myself, but I'm what some people might call, "a cheapskate", "a skinflint", or "a miser". In short, I like nothing more than finding a bargain. My husband even leaves the reduced-price sticker on presents he gets me as seeing the saving gives me almost as much pleasure as receiving the gift. What could possibly be better than a box of chocolates? A box of chocolates bought for half price, of course!!

Imagine then my horror when I was preparing for my recent holiday and realised I might actually have to spend money on buying books. And not just a couple of pounds as I'll easily read at least five while I'm away and, at £8-£10 each, that's a

lot of money. Why did this come as such a shock to me? Well, you see, usually I borrow books from the library, and I don't know if you know, but that's free to do - yes, free! Now, I must admit I have previously taken library books away for a little break with me, but (and this is probably just me) I felt a slight pressure to look after them: not to get sun cream on them, crush them at the bottom of my beach bag, or spill a mojito over them. So, I gave myself a pep talk about how I'm worth it and resolved to treat myself to some new books and damn the expense. But what pressure to choose the right ones! I'm used to borrowing a random one from the library and, if I don't like it, I take it back and choose another, and then another, and then another, until I find one, I love. No cost so no pressure. Choosing a book shouldn't have to be



this stressful surely! No wonder I need a holiday! I can't imagine a life without a local library. When you stop and think about it, how fantastic is it that any one of us can walk into that building and come out with an armful of books at no cost to ourselves? And we're not limited to a certain number of visits a week, month or year. We can go whenever we want and find books on so many subjects; I can't even begin to list them. If you haven't been recently, stop by when you're next passing and take a look. You might spot me, sitting on the settee reading a self-help book as, now I come to think of it, being a penny-pincher does have its drawbacks. Yes! That's the word I was looking for, "penny-pincher". ●

ALISON SMITH
FOSCL

GREETINGS FROM SONNING COMMON LIBRARY!

We get to meet all sorts of interesting people at the Library, from regular borrowers to those new to us who are researching an area of interest. There are representatives from various organisations and events in the village who come in with a poster to put up on our board or to let us know about a new initiative. I know we have big "Self-Service" signs by the machines in the Library, but Elaine and I love talking with our customers so please feel free to come to the desk to let us know what you're up to. One of our hidden super-powers is to connect to people who don't know the other exists so we can match up a want and a need e.g. a gardener with the Village Gardeners or someone who wants to get out in the countryside direct them to the Health Walkers.

On the subject of communication, our landline number (the 0118 one) has now been discontinued so if you need to call the Library, please use: 01865 815 178. Don't worry, you still get straight through to Elaine and myself and not a call centre! In June, our theme of the month is Exploring and Travelling so do

come along and pick up a book about somewhere you would like to visit or maybe read about someone else's life of adventure. We'll also have a special crime fiction book display.

In July the adult summer novels will be front and centre, and the children breaking up from school will start the Summer Reading Challenge. So, if you want your child or grandchild to keep up with their reading over the holidays, sign them up to collect stickers, prizes and, of course, a certificate and medal at the end.

We also have a special crafts day on Saturday, 14 June as we celebrate Father's Day and help the youngsters create something lovely for their Dad or Grandad. In July our crafts will be on the subject of wild animals, so on Saturday, 19 July please pop along and see what roaring-good ideas Elaine has come up with to entertain us all! See you soon!

JULIET
LIBRARY MANAGER



Story Garden

Adventures in Nature and the Great Outdoors

Explore nature and discover the outdoors with a FREE children's reading challenge at your local Oxfordshire library!

From 5 July to 6 September, children across Oxfordshire can collect stickers and rewards as they enjoy reading library books.

The 2025 Summer Reading Challenge, **Story Garden**, celebrates adventure, fantasy and the great outdoors. We'll be inspiring children to tap into a world of imagination through reading and exploring the magical connection between storytelling and nature.

Children who finish the Challenge at an Oxfordshire library will get a medal and a certificate. Under 4s can take part in a mini challenge with their own special collector's folder and stickers.



Look out for fantastic new books and activities at your library. Find out more at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/summer-reading-challenge and go to summerreadingchallenge.org.uk for more fun!

READING Summer Reading Challenge

The Library

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CHURCH NEWS

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

We are pleased to report that the health of our former parish priest, Fr Michael Sharkey, has improved significantly. The improvement means that he has recently moved into a vacant diocesan property in Warwickshire. Hopefully this will enable him to pursue his love of cooking and translating church documents without the responsibility of running a parish.

Although we have no resident priest and are served by priests from neighbouring parishes the life of the parish continues to flourish. Various fund-raising events took place to support CIRDIC, Reading Refugees and the earthquake in Myanmar.

The Catholic Church is currently celebrating a Year of Jubilee. These occur every 25 years and this one is a special year of forgiveness and reconciliation, when we are invited to come back into right relationship with God and with one another. The late Pope Francis made the theme of this year's Jubilee, 'Pilgrims of Hope.' During Lent, a time of reflection in preparation for Easter, amongst our various activities we followed a series of five reflections with the theme, 'We Dare to Hope.' We all have hopes and dreams, but the Christian hope is what was celebrated at Easter. Where the risen Jesus led, we will follow to our true home with him in heaven where all our hopes, all our deepest longings will be satisfied. Our Easter services from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday were very well attended compared to recent years and it was wonderful to greet friends and visitors both old and new. It was Easter Monday when we heard of the death of Pope Francis and we have prayed that all his hopes are now realised.

A number of ladies from the parish

joined those from other local churches to lead the World Day of Prayer at Springwater Church, using a service prepared by the Christian women of the Cook Islands. It was a good opportunity to meet with friends from other churches, many of whom met again for the Walk of Witness around Sonning Common, Good Friday morning.

During the summer months we are delighted to welcome Fr Colin Blayney from Sydney, Australia to live amongst us. We are hoping he will give us the benefit of his knowledge and experience while he enjoys the delights of South Oxfordshire, a place he knows well.

To contact the parish see our website: www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk •

SPRINGWATER CHURCH

The church family here greatly miss Kevin and Linsey Potter, our pastors, who recently moved on to where, after a well-earned break, they believe the Lord next wants to use their gifts.

We are blessed to have a wonderful leadership team, who are ably keeping the church flourishing, until new pastor/pastors are appointed, at the time of writing they are talking to a potential couple.

All the usual activities at Springwater are doing well, the food bank, Compassionate Loaf, The Ark (mother and toddler group), Aspire, the women's group, The Steering Wheel Fellowship, bible study, home groups and so on.

We would love to see you on Sunday morning at 10.30, for worship, coffee and a chat. •

CHRIS GIRDLER
www.springwaterchurch.org.uk
Tel: 0118 972 4519

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AND CHRIST THE KING

In the April/May magazine, I reported that the work at Christ the King church was moving along as expected and that the church would be open at the beginning of May. If you have passed by the church at the top of Sedgewell Road recently you will know that this is not the case! Unfortunately, some unexpected extra work was necessary to ensure that the roof will be completely weatherproof and to allow for good insulation. So, at the time of writing the aim is to be open once again towards the end of June, with a rededication service to follow.

There has been an exciting development for St John the Baptist church, Kidmore End. Plans have been approved for Phase 1 of the improvement project, with work including rewiring, new lighting and replacement heating for the church commencing in the autumn. This will take several months and will mean that St John's will be closed over the winter period and into 2026. However, parish services will continue at Christ the King.

Fundraising for the proposed projects at St John's Church is ongoing. This month (June) several fundraising events are planned:

- **Saturday 14th June** – 'The Sweet Things in Life' concert, 3pm, St John's Church.

The Parish Choir and the choir from Kidmore End Primary School singing music together, with some separate musical items.

- **Saturday 21st June** – 'A Flower Festival' 10.30am–4pm, St John's Church and churchyard.

Come along and see the church and churchyard beautifully decorated with floral displays.

- **Sunday 22nd June** – Patronal Festival Evensong, 6pm, St John's Church.

A special Evensong to celebrate St John's Day.

All events are free to attend, and refreshments will be available. Donations are welcome (towards the St John's Fundraising Appeal).

Details of services for June and July can be found at www.achurchnearyou.com. Everyone is welcome and we particularly look forward to welcoming everyone to the newly refurbished Christ the King Church very soon! •

.....

CHILTERN EVANGELICAL

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

Summer offers a break. Time to unwind, escape the routine, and find a bit of peace. But have you ever noticed that even after a relaxing holiday, there's still a weight that doesn't shift? A nagging sense of guilt, regret, or things left unresolved?

Jesus once said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." He wasn't just talking about physical tiredness. He was offering rest for the soul—a deep peace that comes from being fully forgiven and completely known.

Many of us carry guilt from things we've done—or failed to do. But the message of Jesus is that He came not to condemn, but to save. On the cross, He took the weight of our sin so we don't have to carry it anymore.

That's real rest: forgiveness that frees us from guilt, and love that brings peace.

You don't need to earn it. You just need to come.

So this summer, as you seek rest, consider the rest Jesus offers—a clean heart, a fresh start, and peace with God. In between the BBQs and beach days, maybe take a moment to wonder: is there more to life than just pushing through until the next break? •

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www.cecuk.church



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FLOWER FESTIVAL SATURDAY 21 JUNE
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FESTIVAL EVENSONG SUNDAY 22 JUNE AT 6PM

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FUNDRAISING APPEAL

TOM FORT PHONES

No device has ever had a bigger impact on the way we live than the mobile phone – it is not too much to say that it has imposed a kind of tyranny on us all. But I am doing my bit to resist.

I was very late coming to the mobile party. My first phone was a basic Nokia not much bigger than a fat pork sausage, which did almost nothing beyond making and receiving calls and amusing my children with a game called Snake (which I never played). One day I dropped it into a urinal while talking to my mother, but amazingly it continued to work after being washed under a tap.

Over time I upgraded, reluctantly, without losing my impatience with those who became wedded, almost welded, to their phones. I remember seeing one of my brothers talking on his while wading in the middle of the river we were fishing and hoping very much that he would drop it.

These days I have a smartphone, which is very far from smart. It has many functions of which I know nothing, and I am often in trouble with my family for not having it on me. I never take it when I walk the dog or go for a cycle ride, because – as I explain to them – if it rings I am liable to stumble with the shock or fall off my bike.

My friends sometimes complain that they have not been able to contact me – when I look at my phone, I find that I switched off the volume several days before and neglected to put it back on.

Too bad, I say. I flatly refused to have my life controlled by the beastly thing. I will be its master.

And I live in hope that, one day, I will see someone walking along the road with their phone in front of their face smack into a lamppost and break both phone and nose. ●



ROTHERFIELD UNITED FC

YOUR LOCAL FA AFFILIATED FOOTBALL CLUB

Back in 2023 the club had a double celebration as we completed our 50th anniversary and were also awarded the Oxfordshire FA's club of the season award.

The award was recognition of the club's continued growth which over the past 5 years has seen the club double in size to now having 650+ members across all age groups.

We are extremely proud of the fact that we are one of very few Oxfordshire clubs who offer football over such a wide and diverse range:

- Junior teams from under 6 through to under18
- Dedicated girls teams in 4 different age groups
- Women's first and development teams
- Men's first team

- Men's veterans team
- Walking football section with over 60 members
- Girls Wildcats squad for football development of Reception and Year 1 girls

As your local community focused football club we are keen to extend our coverage further.

Performance Sports Group and Rotherfield United Football Club have teamed up to bring you a FREE SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Football Session on Saturday 21st June, for children who attend mainstream school settings but have a SEND need, are currently on their schools' SEN register and receive SEN support or have an EHCP in place.

Please feel free to share this information with friends and family who may have children who would benefit

from this SEN focused session. If we can make this session a success, then the club plan to run further sessions throughout the year.

Finally, football development of boys and girls who have recently started school is a focus area for the club and we are currently offering free sessions on Saturday mornings.

Full details are in the flyer.

If you wish to find out any further information about Rotherfield United please contact us via our web site www.rotherfieldfc.com ●



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PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 22



N	O	N	N	A	N	C	A	N	C	A	N	S	A	N	S
O	A	N	A	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A
S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S	A	N	S
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Cryptic crossword

7	1	8	2	9	4	5	6	3
3	5	6	8	7	1	9	4	2
4	2	9	6	3	5	1	8	7
2	7	3	5	6	9	8	1	4
6	4	1	3	2	8	7	5	9
8	9	5	1	4	7	3	2	6
1	3	2	7	5	6	4	9	8
9	8	7	4	1	2	6	3	5
5	6	4	9	8	3	2	7	1

Sudoku

Cryptogram

1. India. 2. Denmark. 3. Jamaica. 4. Brazil.
5. Russia. 6. Scotland. 7. Germany. 8. Yemen.
9. France. 10. Siam.

Quiz: Books with countries in the title

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: RICHARD III
IN THE DEEP BOSOM OF THE OCEAN BURIED,
HOUSE
AND ALL THE CLOUDS THAT LOUR'D UPON OUR
YORK;
MADE GLORIOUS SUMMER BY THIS SUN OF
NOW IS THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

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Even if you don't plan to live at Widmore Park, you can still be part of the community! Our wellness centre, café, and restaurant will be open to all, with memberships and bookings available.

Thursday
19th June
and
Thursday
17th July
11am - 1pm



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