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magazine

Peppard Common



decision

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The editorial group from left to right: Jo Stoves, Joan Grummant, Christine Atkinson and Diana Pearman.

From the editorial group

“ On these grey winter days I hope there is something in this issue of the magazine to engage the interest of every one.

Nuffield Place, In Focus, would be a good place to visit on the brighter Spring days at the end of March. The centenary year of the Morris car will be celebrated on 29 March and a special event is planned. Colin Reynolds has shared his connection with the car industry and another new contributor is Hannah Rice writing about Abbeycrest, giving an insight to this residential home. An interview with Carol Viney our district councillor reveals how she has always made the welfare of Sonning Common her concern.

A very impressive start to the primary school's centenary year is displayed in Edwardian costume and the achievements from Chiltern Edge do them credit. Christmas seems a long time ago but its highlights appear, as well as many other interesting articles.

I hope you have all noted the dates on the front cover and will be able to attend one of the presentation shows. The selection, for possible development, of some of the 14 sites around the village perimeter is of pressing importance to every resident. This will be your last chance to comment, in writing, upon what you hear.

Anouska's page has moved closer to the front of the magazine. She and I are very keen that she has some response to the writer's competition. Please encourage your child/grandchild to write a short piece. The deadline is after half term – it might be a good activity on a wet or snowy week??

Recently I was contacted by one of Sibella's relatives asking for a copy of the Oct/Nov magazine, which I sent to her. I thought readers might be interested in what she said.

... most interesting and very well thought out. Many of her remarks were familiar to us, and by highlighting them brought her back to life for us, and I am sure for many others. We had not heard about the searching of the waste paper baskets at 10 Downing Street!

We shall treasure the article and keep it safe for posterity.

Well what can I say! ”

Diana

DIANA PEARMAN Editor
 Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

PS...

Sonning Common Magazine is on sale at the village library in Grove Road for £1.50 a copy. Annual subscriptions are available for £15. Contact Geoffrey Adams. Email: chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org Phone: 0118 972 2134

Magazine contributions may be posted to:
 1 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9TD

WHILE EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO ENSURE THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION PRINTED IN THIS MAGAZINE, THE EDITOR AND THE PUBLISHER CANNOT ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF ERRORS THAT OCCUR.

Contents

- 2 SC Primary 100th anniversary / Christmas lunch
- 3 Chiltern Edge news / Edwardian Christmas / Lions Santa
- 6 NDP / Finding Grandma's family
- 7 Housing survey / Cricket Club news
- 8 Kids page
- 10 Noticeboard
- 13 100 years of Morris cars
- 14 William Morris - Nuffield Place
- 17 An interview with Carol Viney
- 18 Abbeycrest home
- 20 Parish page
- 21 Tom Fort/ Nottakwire thanks
- 23 Library / Book reviews
- 26 Church news
- 28 Diary dates

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COVER IMAGE

Village map

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Centenary Celebrations at SC Primary are underway and will continue throughout 2013

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON

On 6 January 1913 Sonning Common Primary, then known as Eye and Dunsden Sonning Common Council School, opened its doors to 67 children. The first child registered in the admissions book was Nellie Grimshaw aged 10 from Shiplake Bottom. 100 years on from then there are now 400 children on the roll. During this year the school will be celebrating the centenary in a variety of ways.

During the autumn a photo was taken from the air of all the children and staff making a '100' shape on the playing fields.

On the 7 and 8 January all the staff and children were invited to dress in the clothes that their ancestors had 100 years ago. The desks were

laid out in lines as they would have been then, rather than in groups as they tend to be now. The parents had obviously made a big effort and almost all the children had dressed up and looked fabulous! They were nearly outdone by the efforts of the staff, including all those who cook lunch for them. Headmaster Mr Hirst looked especially impressive in his robes.

Every family at the school was given a lovely book to take home written by Mel White (also known as former teacher Mrs Choules) covering the history of the school since 1913. It has obviously taken a lot of time to put together, so a big THANK YOU to Mel!

Please contact mail@scps100.co.uk for further information, or if you have anything you would like to contribute – such as stories, photos etc. Do have a look at the photos on the school website - <http://sonningcommonprimary.co.uk/gallery/>



Another successful and much appreciated Christmas lunch

Christmas Day 2012 saw some 50 villagers and their guests sit down in the village hall to the 4th annual Lunch.

Tables had previously been laid up in festive style and each guest was greeted with a glass of very tasty home made mulled wine.

The atmosphere was convivial with plenty of chat and diners enjoyed traditional roast turkey and all the trimmings (washed down with wine or fruit juice), Christmas pud, mincepies, coffee and chocolates. Ron Brindley proposed a vote of thanks saying how much everyone appreciated the lunch and the work put in by Chrissie Phillips Tilbury and Jill Vallis who had, again, organised the event. He also thanked all the cooks, servers and 'washer uppers' for making it such an enjoyable day.

After the guests left with their decoratively wrapped gift of homemade marmalade, the clearing up was completed in record time. ■

JO STOVES



Chiltern Edge School Term 1 News Update

■ **Ofted** – The inspectors arrived in the first week for a surprise visit, to the well prepared school. The reward for the positive, hard work was a 'Good' grade

■ **Digigirlz** – A Year 9 girls' group spent the day at Microsoft. Chiltern Edge won the challenge, against 20 other schools, to design an app for a new phone and the girls were rewarded with vouchers. Well done Digigirlz!

■ **GCSE Presentation** – Former Year 11 pupils and their parents came to collect certificates and awards following their fantastic GCSE results in the summer.

■ **Public Speaking Competition** – Chiltern Edge are becoming well known for their public speakers and in November 60 people come to hear the 10 teams. Chair of the judges - Stewart Collins Henley Festival Artistic Director – commented on the high standard of the performances. The winning teams go on to the Kenton Theatre at the end of January.

■ **Wind in the Willows** – Another great production by the drama department. The cast were fantastic with Liza Swart as Ratty, Alex Humm as Badger, Guillaume Gougeon as Mole and a terrific performance from James Little as Toad. The weasels, and Mr Joyce from PE as their leader, were especially scary running through the audience. Backstage the sound, art and lighting were all provided by a dedicated crew and the band performed faultlessly each night. Well Done to Mr Harte and Miss Baxter.

■ **Sponsored Walk and House Charities** – Each house has its own nominated charity. The total so far is over £4300 for all five houses.

■ **Rugby** – A very successful rugby season across years 7, 8 and 9 and former pupil, Nathan Busby, is coaching the students twice a week.



Sonning Common Primary School's 2012 Edwardian Christmas Fair

Another terrific amount was raised at the school Christmas Fair to go towards a new all weather sports facility. As the school is 100 years old in 2013 the fair had an Edwardian themed café and a special visit from Father Christmas himself. Carols were enthusiastically sung outside with help from members of Nottakwire and £3600 was raised. ■



Lions thank Santa helpers

Lions toured the villages of South Oxfordshire with Santa on his sleigh to collect donations whilst playing seasonal carols. Each volunteer group of helpers will receive 50% of the amounts they collected towards their chosen charity project. In Sonning Common the Lions were helped by Shirehall Rugby Club, in Woodcote by local Beavers, Cub & Scout Leaders and in Goring by Goring Primary School PTA. £1,026.30 was collected in Sonning Common. ■



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Finding Grandma's Family - The Hunt Goes On

BY JO STOVES

In the last edition of the magazine Anouska reported that, following receipt of a letter from Tim Bigalow in Canada, she and her mum had tracked down a relative of his late Grandmother who is living in Orchard Avenue.

It appears that Barbara Kingston's mother-in-law and Tim's Grandmother were cousins and there was some contact by letter whilst they were still both alive. But Barbara says she knows "very little" of the history as her mother-in-law seldom spoke of her family. However, Tim's letter has prompted Barbara to write to him and she has received a personal reply. Happily, that reply has encouraged her to turn out some old photos and documents and in the New Year she plans to contact Barnados in the hope that they will have some information about Grandma.

Barbara now plans to keep in touch with Tim and has promised to let us know how her investigations go. So, watch this space! ■

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

After an initial briefing meeting in early January 2012 with the consultant appointed by the Parish Council, the NDP Working Party (NDPWP) was finalised and began work in February 2012. Thus started an ongoing process of regular meetings with task related agendas which have produced to date a lot of data including photos, maps, reports, documents, statements and surveys encompassing important elements of the NDP. For example:

- A Vision Statement for Sonning Common 2026
- Character Assessment and Design Statement
- Housing Survey
- Traffic Report
- Business Survey
- And surveys on sites, landscape setting and residential character plus individual site analysis booklets of residents' evidence.

All the information gathered by residents on the sites in and around the village is now being processed and summarised by the NDPWP and will be presented in the form of

a spreadsheet. This evidence and many of your photographs are now being prepared for public meetings to be held on 7 February at 7.30 pm and repeated 9 February at 10 am to 12 noon in the Village Hall.

Our intention is for the sites you have identified to us as viable, non-viable or uncertain about to be described in more detail via displays, photos and a visual presentation. Residents who attend will have the opportunity to complete written feedback. These comments along with all the other evidence will then enable the working party to make a final assessment of all the sites. ■



Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Survey

As part of the evidence gathering process the Neighbourhood Planning Working Party commissioned this survey. This is a summary of the findings.

Listed below are the findings considered most significant;

- 25% of respondents have lived in the village for more than 30 years, and 40% for more than 20 years, implying a strong affection for and commitment to, the village.
- 25% put the income of their household at £20,000 to £40,000 p.a., which is comparatively modest. 10% had an income of more than £100,000.
- 79% declared their intention of staying in their current homes. 14% intended to move, 7% said they would like to move, (25 people), but either could not afford it or there was a lack of suitable housing. Of the 14% intending to move, 50 people, (roughly half) said they would stay in the village and half said they would go elsewhere.
- 18 of the 72 people who have left the village in the past 5 years did so because of the lack of affordable or suitable housing, 24 left for employment.
- In answer to the question "What kind of accommodation does SC need?" almost a quarter said affordable housing. The next biggest category at 15% indicated semi-detached houses.
- Dealing with "supported housing", 45%, of 160 people, felt the village needed Housing Association and private

- warden assisted accommodation. Just over a quarter chose independent accommodation with care support.
- Just under two-thirds opposed back land development, and one third favoured it.
- The three biggest categories in the pie chart illustrating answers to the important question "Why do you need a home in SC?"; are being with family, those wanting a first home, and those wanting a bigger home.
- More than 40%, (39 people), of those seeking a home want either terraced or semi-detached. 15.5% are after either detached house or semi-detached bungalow.
- 24 people responded to the question about "How much rent/mortgage could be afforded?" 8 said £651-750 per month.

We have not attempted to summarise the comments included in the report. The very broad themes are:

- a. People like living in the village and want to stay.
- b. The village needs more affordable housing.
- c. Traffic is bad at certain times and in some places.
- d. Parking provision is inadequate in the village centre.



Minor County Cricket returns to Gallowstree Common

Kidmore End Cricket Club was founded in 1863 so 2013 will mark the club's sesquicentenary. Berkshire CCC has not played at Gallowstree Common since 1996. The county side will return on Sunday, 26 May 2013 to play Buckinghamshire CCC in a Minor County Trophy match.

In addition to other representative matches which will be played during the summer, the club's 150th anniversary will be celebrated with a Dinner and Ball, held at Shehnai, London Street, Reading on Saturday, 28 September 2013. It is also planned to publish a revised history of the club, first compiled by W. E. Townsend in 1963, with new editions in 1988 and 2003.

Matches begin with a friendly at Datchet on 13 April while Thames Valley League matches begin on Saturday, 11 May. Kidmore End CC is always ready to welcome new members of any age and playing standard to enjoy the pleasures of the delightful ground at Gallowstree Common. Interested readers should contact club secretary David New on 07786-527640. Enquiries about participation in the club's very successful junior section, for boys and girls, can be made to Rupert Loader (07940-797046) or Alastair Johnson (07900-902550). ■

JUST FOR KIDS

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the first issue of 2013, which is all about creative writing.

With lots of tips from local authors, you should be able to write a novel in no time! So, I've decided to run a little competition to see how creative your writing is. I hope you'll enter!

Also, if you like this page please tell me. I'd love it if you emailed me at: junior_editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

Love, ANOUSKA



TOP TIPS

for very creative writing

I have spoken to lots of local authors, who have kindly sent in some great tips that I can share with you all. I'll give you a few each issue to keep you inspired.

Stephanie Baudet

Where Horses Have Wings, The One That Got Away

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Remember that the opening of a story is the HOOK. It must immediately interest the reader so that they want to know what happens. Here is a saying which illustrates the point: Start the story when the kettle is boiling and not when you're filling it at the tap.

Adrian Townsend

Gran's Gang

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Ideas are everything for a story writer. Try looking at the ordinary things in life and then wondering 'what if'. For my book *Gran's Gang* the 'what if' came through observing a group of teenagers one day and saying 'what if Grandmother's behaved like them'.

AUTHOR

WORD SEARCH

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Can you spot any author that you know?

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- enid blyton
- cathy cassidy
- jacqueline wilson

Write, Write, Write!

Write, Write, Write! is a competition to get you writing stories. If it's brilliant, which it will be, I'll publish it in the upcoming issues. No more than 200 words please. It's open to anyone from 3 to 16 years old, and can be on any subject you like. The competition will be on-going throughout the year but the deadline for the next issue is 18 February 2013.



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 All are welcome.
 SHIRLEY RIXON, LOCAL COMMITTEE.

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 25 March
 ONE STOP, SONNING COMMON
 10:00-10:30



At Sonning Common Primary we are celebrating our 100th Birthday!
 We would like to invite you to one of our Open Evenings.

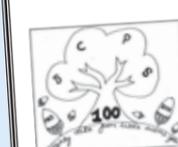
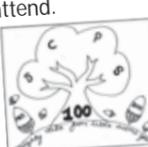
Come and enjoy a glass of wine (if you are over 18!), meet up with old friends, view our children's displays and take a tour of the school.

Please choose any date, but we suggest the following so that you are able to meet former school friends or colleagues

If your association with school is pre 1959	Tuesday 11th June 2013 from 7 to 9pm
1960 to 1979	Thursday 13th June 2013 from 7 to 9pm
1980 to 1999	Tuesday 25th June 2013 from 7 to 9pm
2000 to date	Thursday 27th June 2013 from 7 to 9pm

If possible please reply letting us know when you are able to attend.
 We look forward to welcoming you.

RSVP to Centenary Open Evening,
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 Or email office.2506@sonning-common.oxon.sch.uk

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100 years of the Oxford Cowley Automotive Plant 1913-2013

By COLIN REYNOLDS

It seems amazing that over the years I have crossed paths many times with the historic Morris car company - founded 100 years ago - so it is only right that I take time to record and share these memories.

Firstly my dad had a job at Pressed Steel Fisher, who made chassis and bodies for most of the car manufacturers. William Morris acquired this company, based near Fort Dunlop, Birmingham, in the 1950s.

Way back in 1927 Morris had bought outright the Wolseley Motor Company in Drews Lane, Birmingham. One of my first jobs was as a 16 year old delivery boy for the Co-operative Society and my usual destination, Drews Lane.

The place had a special buzz. Every day, except Sunday, the first delivery of freshly-baked bread was to the café. Many of the cafe customers were workers from the car factory. Those who couldn't leave the works would dangle a basket with a note and the money for daily sandwiches.

My next job was with a car dealership and repair garage and my introduction to the motor trade. I remained in the industry for 40 years.

Initially employed as a parts store man, I asked to take driving lessons so that I could

drive the new Mini van. The link with William Morris resurfaced as my first job was to drive from Birmingham to the Cowley works to collect urgent parts.

I can recall a conversation with an older, more experienced work colleague around 1965. It was his belief that, in future, all cars would be made by just two or three manufacturers with badges for different models. Fifty years down the line and it has happened!!

Some years later I ventured into the Austin Longbridge Birmingham works to visit a contractor within the works. At that time Longbridge produced the Rover 200 and 400 series cars. I was also shown the last virtually hand-made original two-door Mini being produced, which was badged as part of a special series.

The success of the New Mini works, formally Morris Cowley, and now owned by the German BMW group, proves that fortune can come around again. But NOW its production is so much better for people and the environment.

Had Lord Nuffield been with us today I am sure he would have been the first to congratulate BMW for the investment and the systems which produce four times the units compared with the 'glory years' of the 50s and 60s and with a quarter of the original factory site and staff.

To conclude my life-long association with William Morris, early last year I was fortunate



to receive a personal invitation to a private visit of Lord Nuffield's former home, Nuffield Place, which is just a few hundred yards from Huntercombe Prison where I have been working these last 10 years.

The National Trust re-opened this visitor attraction. The house is much the same as it was when Lord Nuffield died in 1963 - an Aladdin's cave for the automobile enthusiast coupled with sparse living accommodation, surprising when you consider Lord Nuffield would have been a billionaire by today's standards.

With my working life having revolved around William Morris, I couldn't have envisaged that my last link with the company would be to stand in Lord Nuffield's bedroom looking at the work station where he used to repair watches. ■



William Morris Lord Nuffield

Profile of a man who brought motoring to the masses

By **DIANA PEARMAN**



“What I have done others can do. If they don’t they will regret it when they die. I just want to pass out feeling I’ve done my best for mankind”.

William Morris

This article gives a glimpse into the lifestyle of one of Britain’s greatest philanthropist. As his fortune grew he dispersed £30 million, approximately £700m in today’s money. He created the Nuffield Foundation, Nuffield College Oxford and his name lives on in the healthcare charity Nuffield Health. “It is to me an act of love” he said when he donated money to orthopaedics. Hearing that hospitals throughout the Commonwealth were struggling to cope with the polio epidemic he ordered the manufacture of 5,000 iron lungs at his car factory and distributed them free of charge.

William was so much more than a successful industrialist and philanthropist; he was also a very caring person. “He comes to the hospital; he takes an interest in everybody and everything in it ... a very real assistance and encouragement to us all at Guy’s. This is what makes him such a friend to us all.”

(1944 chairman of Guy’s hospital).

A man who was not interested in life’s luxuries and despite his enormous wealth his lifestyle was very modest. His humble beginnings may have been the reason he was very careful with his money. For example, his bedroom floor was carpeted with cut offs from the Morris car factory and what appears to be a wardrobe in his room, when opened, reveals a treasure trove of tools, including stick-a-soles to repair his shoes rather than buy new ones.

There was no collection of cars on his drive – he drove a Wolseley, a gift from his work force. In 1938 he was the target of an armed kidnap attempt at the Cowley factory. A contemporary news report noted that the unflappable peer “seemed quite composed and made very little of the affair”.

William’s membership of a cycle club led to his meeting with Elizabeth Maud Anstey (Lizzie), a seamstress at



Debenhams and their later marriage on 9 April 1903. Her diary reveals some of her interests and personality. As a careful manager of the household, she was firm with the servants and kept detailed accounts. She had an active social life visiting friends/relatives and welcomed them to Nuffield Place. Jam making and bottling, gardening walking and cycling (even at 66) were among her hobbies and she enjoyed theatre, shopping and touring Europe. She loved watching tennis, attending Wimbledon and was always seen at Henley Regatta. Lizzie and William did not have children, so their home was left to Nuffield College and it was subsequently purchased by the National Trust. Joanna Gamester House Steward, who has looked after the house since the 1970’s said “I was absolutely delighted when this happened because it secured the future of the house”.

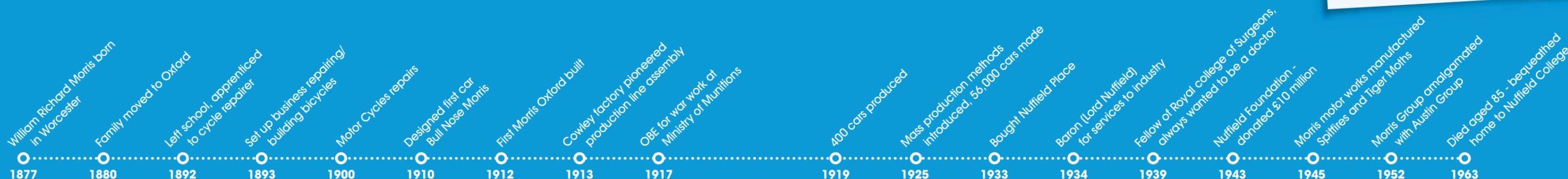
29 March 2013 is the 100th anniversary of the first Morris car

There will be special celebrations at Nuffield Place this year, so it is just the time to arrange a visit! The house was opened to the public in 2012. The Morris’s bought the house in 1933 and had it extensively altered and extended, installing central heating and modernising the bathrooms. It was furnished in the tastes of the time with some furniture made especially for them. The furnishings are little changed, from the cocktail cabinet and gramophone in the drawing room to the dining table laid with china and glass. William was a dedicated smoker and there are fascinating bits of paraphernalia, from a pull match stand, an ashtray full of cigarettes to sheet music entitled ‘Songs for Smokers’. The garden was beloved by both, William and Lizzie, and many happy hours were spent ‘pottering’ in old clothes. One day a passing motorist

asked what sort of a man was Lord Nuffield, to which William replied “Oh, he is not so bad when you get to know him”.

Lord Nuffield’s home and life is summed up by Richard Henderson National Trust general manager “Despite Lord Nuffield’s extraordinary philanthropy and achievements, he remains relatively unknown. His home is a wonderful time capsule without any of the ‘show’ of a multi-millionaire and reveals so much about the man who changed many people’s lives for the better”.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nuffieldplace



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AN INTERVIEW WITH...

Carol Viney

By ROS VARNES

After more than two decades as Sonning Common's "problem solver", councillor Carol Viney is to step down from the county council in May.

Carol has served as a Conservative county councillor for the Sonning Common ward for 12 years. Prior to that, she was a member of Sonning Common Parish Council, from 1991 to 1999, chairing the committee from 1996.

Although she and her husband Michael now live in Stoke Row, they raised their son and two daughters in the village. Three generations of the family were educated at Sonning Common Primary School and Carol also attended Chiltern Edge School.

Carol, 67, was in a reflective mood when we met to discuss her life-long association with the village and her time as a local representative.

She said: "I am a Sonning Common person. I was born and brought up here and have a strong sense of loyalty to the village.

"I am known among my family and friends as a problem solver. I got involved with local politics because I like solving problems and sorting out things for people."

She has certainly risen to the challenge of trying to protect village services on a number of occasions previously.

Carol was chair of the Parish Council when the village library was first threatened with closure and during the second, more recent attempt to close it, Carol campaigned for a fair deal for Sonning Common.

She was a founder member of the original Friends of Sonning Common Library group and was partially behind the move to house the village library within the primary school.

It was hoped this would mean a safe and secure future for the library as a joint school/community facility.

And although she is delighted that after a successful local campaign the library will remain open, she believes Sonning Common should have received a larger slice of the county council's budget for professional staff.

Club SC, the village's youth club based at Chiltern Edge School, is another of Carol's principal causes. As a member of the club's management committee, she has been successful in finding some financial support from within the local community to keep the youth club open, in the face of local government cuts.

During her years as a councillor, Carol has helped to shape the development of the village. One of the projects she is most proud of is Farm Close, at the end of Ashford Avenue, off Reades Lane.

Farm Close was developed around 1998 to provide 10 low-cost homes for rent and

five shared equity homes, in partnership with a housing association. A stipulation in the contract means that these homes will be held 'in perpetuity' for local people so that only individuals born in the village or those with strong, local connections can live there.

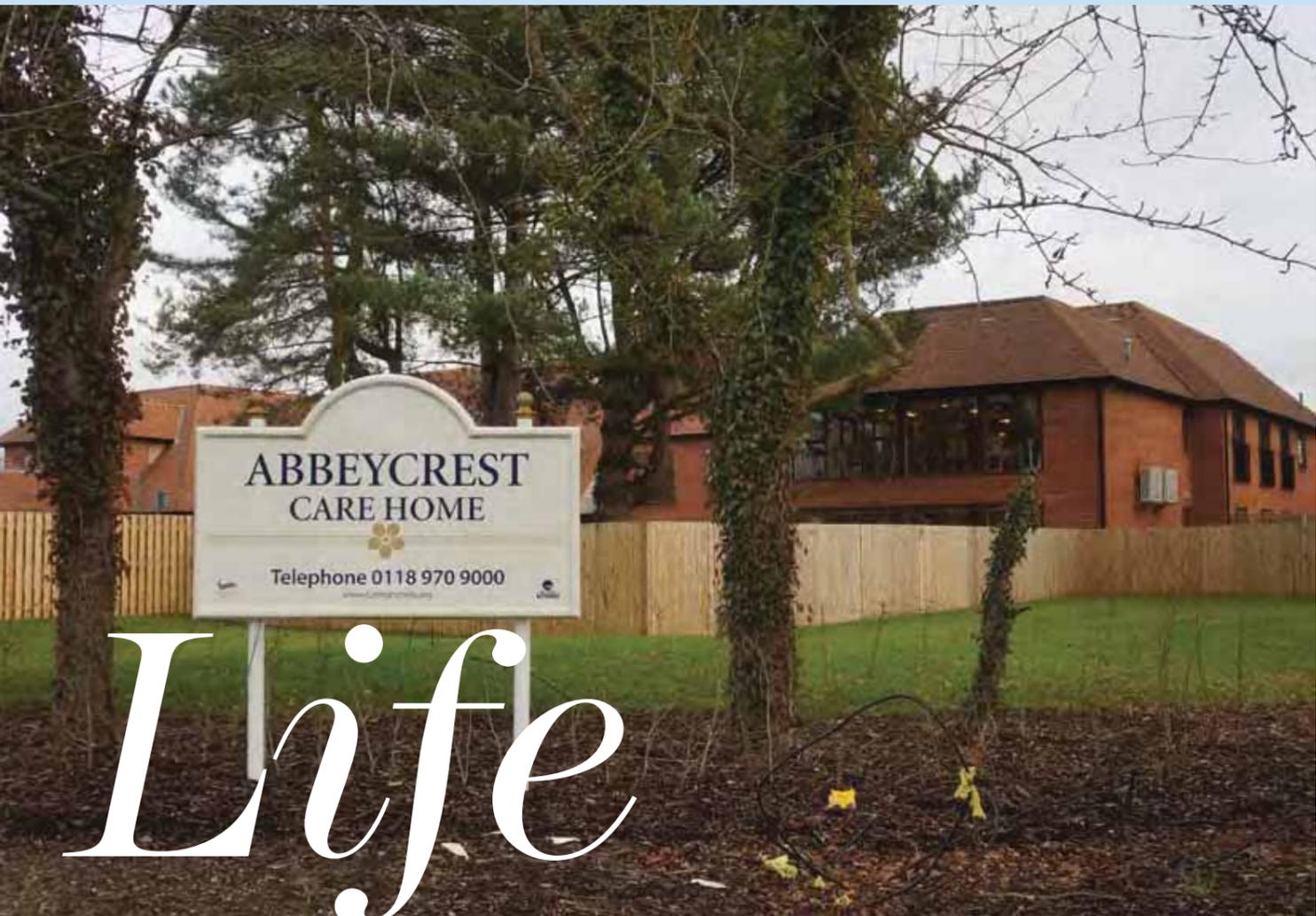
When speaking with Carol there is a strong sense that she has been motivated, not by self-service and political ambition, but by a simple loyalty to her community.

Now that the electoral boundaries are being redrawn and the Sonning Common ward is to grow, Carol hopes that the new, local representative elected in May will retain their focus on Sonning Common.

"Sonning Common is a unique place which serves lots of villages like Kidmore End, Gallowstree Common, Greys, Peppard and Highmoor," she said. "I hope that whoever becomes county councillor will see that Sonning Common is at the centre of everything." ■



Carol Viney, county councillor for Sonning Common, outside Farm Close, one of the projects of which she is most proud.



Life in a residential home – what is it really like?

Most of us see Abbeycrest Care home from the outside when walking our dogs, going for health walks or driving past. I was given the opportunity to find out what it's like for the residents who live there, by being taken on a tour around the spacious accommodation Abbeycrest provides. I was impressed by the communal dining and lounge areas and that there was even a hairdressers! I went to talk with Pat Lewis, who has recently moved to Abbeycrest from the village.



So Pat, what's your daily routine at Abbeycrest?

Breakfast! Most important meal! Then we have time between then and lunch to do whatever we like, but they do have activities for an hour in the morning, and then an hour in the afternoon.

What kind of activities are there?

Gentle exercise, playing word games, bingo, and skittles... things to keep your mind lively really. They hand out a leaflet that changes every week of the activities for each day. There's a great activity they do called "the memory box" where they bring out a big suitcase full of different things from a certain time and we have the chance to reminisce, talk and share the stories we're reminded of, by the objects we choose from the suitcase.

Does the location of the care home fulfil the need for you and the other residents to be part of the community?

Well at the moment, I don't feel a great part of the community. I've been here just over 3 months and we haven't spent a lot of time in the village, even though I have a house there, apart from Christmas. We went to see the children at the Sonning Common Primary School and then they came here.

What suggestions would you make to encourage people to visit and get involved in Abbeycrest?

I'm not sure they would come and take part in all the activities we have at the moment but I suppose they could have bingo sessions, but it would have to be discussed.

Do the residents at Abbeycrest have trips out often?

We went to Woodley just before Christmas to do a bit of Christmas shopping, and some went into Reading to do theirs. I didn't do that because my daughter had done all my shopping for me! I sometimes go for walks up and round the millennium field, which is a nice short walk as most of the residents can't do long walks.

Is there freedom with you and the other residents to do whatever you wish?

Oh yes, as long as we have a carer with us when we go out, just in case. We can go wherever we like, though the weather hasn't been too nice, mostly rain!

Do you feel safe at Abbeycrest and do they look after you well?

I feel safe here; in fact what I tell people these days is that I don't want to go home! I'm happy here. It is home, I went to my daughters' at Christmas and at the end of Christmas day I asked her could you take me home now. It just came out automatically.

How long have you been here?

Since 18 October so I've been here nearly three months and I've decided to stay. They give you a trial period to see if you like the home and I shall be bringing in some of my pictures and furniture in to make it more homely.

Does it feel like a community here at Abbeycrest?

Yes, well it's a family really, we call all the nurses and carers by their first names and I've made some good friends here. All my friends and family say "it's like a 4 star hotel!" and it doesn't feel like a care home. I like my room very much.

How's the food!?

Ha, well that depends on the cook! They have three courses with a choice of starter and main and they do the usual Christmas roast which the residents and their families are invited to.

What do you think peoples perceptions are of this place?

I'm not sure. Personally I was apprehensive myself when I first came, but it's because you don't see what goes on. Everyone is so nice and helpful, I think there should be more interaction with the local community.

Are pets allowed in the building?

Yes, in fact people bring their pets, dogs mostly to the home quite often, I don't think they would be allowed to stay here, but for those residents who might have had to leave a pet behind it's good that they are free to visit and interact with them.

(There's a knock at the door)

...Ah and this is what I really like!

(A staff member enters with a full tray of refreshments, cakes and biscuits! We tuck in for a few minutes, ..yum!)

Do you have Physiotherapists come in?

They can come in if you like, and opticians and other medical help should you need it.

And finally, what words would you use to describe the atmosphere at Abbeycrest?

Homely, friendly and relaxing, my friends and family have said they've never seen me as relaxed as I am when I am here, it's done me good. ■

By HANNAH RICE

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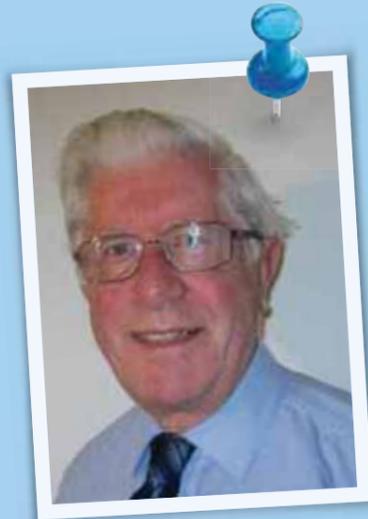
PARISH COUNCIL NEWS...

Douglas Kedge Chairman of the Parish Council writes:

Your Parish Council is taking a page in each edition of this magazine to keep residents informed of our current activities and those that we are planning. We welcome ideas and suggestions from you by letter, phone or email or at our monthly meetings.

Residents frequently tell me that the appearance and the spirit of the village have lifted over the last two years. I believe the Parish Council has played a direct part in this improvement together with the huge efforts of volunteer groups such as the Village Gardeners, the Neighbourhood Development Plan contributors, the Snow Plan team and Nottakwire. They add to the remarkable contributions made by the many long established village societies, organisations and groups.

We congratulate Sonning Common Primary School on reaching its centenary this January with thanks for its long contribution to village life. ■



A GUIDE TO THE PARISH "SNOW PLAN"

The plan targets the core pavements of the village centre and the primary school area by pre-salting and gritting before snow arrives.

Using three hand pushed gritters a team of eight volunteers can cover the area in about 90 minutes, using 300Kgs of dry salt/grit mix.

Once snow lands the full team uses shovels and brooms to clear the salted areas and re-salts if required. For larger areas they have a mini snowplough to take the strain, but only if cars are not parked on the pavements!

Shop and domestic houses are expected to clear their own access or pavement frontages. Our "YES, WE CAN" motto will make the village safer for all.

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Planning Committee News from its Chairman Barrie Greenwood.

This committee of the Parish Council has the delegated power to respond to planning applications made to South Oxfordshire District Council. We do not have the power to determine those planning applications.

We meet twice monthly and in 2012 have considered 61 applications. In every case we listen to local views and consider SODC's planning policies before we recommend to them that they should either approve or refuse each application. In a few cases we decide that we hold no strong views either way.

We also sponsor the Neighbourhood Development Plan.



Finance Committee News from its Chairman John Stoves.

We meet in public every month to scrutinise how all Parish Council funds are used and use our delegated powers to approve all payments.

We also consider requests for grants or donations and may approve them up to £250 if we think they will benefit our residents. If a larger grant seems appropriate, such as our annual £4,500 contribution to running the Youth Club, we will recommend it to the full council for consideration.

We review the annual budget and recommend the precept amount to full council. There is a separate insert in this edition on that topic.

Tom Fort

DOG

A while ago I incurred the displeasure of a reader of this magazine by referring to myself as not being a Tesco person. She charged me with being a Tesco snob, which is true I suppose, though I'm afraid I can't feel that bad about it.

This time last year I would have said I wasn't a dog person either. My two girls were endlessly on at me – as children do – about getting one, but I wasn't keen. I had bad memories of Jack, the dog I got for my first batch of offspring.

Jack was a Keeshond or Dutch Barge Dog, medium-sized, very fluffy, very keen on barking. He used to bark at the postman

all the way along the drive past our house to the next house, and all the way back, dashing up and down with such energy that over time he wore a trench along the fence.

Taking Jack for a walk was trying. On the lead he pulled your arm off. Off the lead he chased anything that moved. On one horrible occasion, walking in the fields near Burghfield, he got into a field of cattle. They scattered as he raced around, barking his head off; then he focussed on one which eventually escaped by leaping over a sizeable hedge. Jack arrowed into the hedge like a missile and became trapped in the brambles. God knows what happened to the cow, or what the farmer must have thought.



The Jack experience put me off dogs for life, I thought. Yet now we have a dog, Meg, a Lancashire Heeler (bred to nip the heels of cattle in Lancashire, if you're interested). She is small, dinky, pretty well behaved except when she gets on the table and eats the butter. My girls adore her, and I – well, even I think she's quite sweet.

Thus I have become a dog person, sort of. So maybe one day I will be a Tesco person. Who can tell what the future holds? ■

letter

Another hugely successful concert by Nottakwire

We would like to record here our huge thanks to Nottakwire members for their fantastic dedication and hard work in performing two very enjoyable concerts in the Village Hall on 8 December. Both audiences expressed their pleasure in those performances and we all thoroughly enjoyed a wonderful Christmas celebratory day together. We'd like to express particular thanks to our wonderful support teams - our stewards, Colin Porteous, David Mew and Mike Grinsted ; our refreshment team -

Jill Grinsted, Beverly Ing; Beverley Luther and Anne Wiseman ; to new recruits Jill Greenwood and Sheila Walker; to Jason Moola who travels from London to film for us, edits and produces our DVD's and to Peter Rickards - our "official" photographer.

Elaine and I are very grateful to have such loyal, enthusiastic and supportive audiences and a special thank you is due to you all for coming to hear us sing. We hope interest and support will remain with us in the New Year.

If anyone is interested in purchasing a copy of our (professionally produced) DVD, which will be ready sometime in the Spring of 2013, please let us know. Sale of our DVD's not only supports our own funds but allows us to release more money to community groups.

With our thanks once again and good wishes to you all,

Yours sincerely,

MARGARET MOOLA AND ELAINE WILLIAMS.

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Serving ourselves at the library

Sonning Common Library is due to receive two new kiosks for customers to issue and return books on Tuesday 12 February.

The library will be closed on the 12th for the installation but will re-open as normal on Wednesday 13 February.

At the kiosks customers can issue and return books, pay fines, do renewals and examine their accounts.

After the installation Sonning Common library staff and additional support staff will be on hand to help customers get used to using the kiosks.

Oxfordshire County Council is installing self-service machines across all of its libraries as part of the modernisation of the library service.

This cost is being met solely by contributions from housing developers, as part of the overall improvement of the county's infrastructure.

According to the county council, the self-service kiosks have been well received by customers at other libraries. At Benson Library, which received its machine last September, 90 per cent of its transactions are now being done via self-service.

RIGHT: Two self-service kiosks like this one will be installed.



JUNIOR BOOK REVIEW

I have just read a cool book called "The Brilliant World of Tom Gates" by L Pinchon.

It's really funny with brilliant drawings. Tom Gates is about 10 and he writes a diary. He really likes a girl who is very clever. Her name is Amy Porter and he invites her to a pop concert.

He has a seriously weird granny who makes him food like a pizza in the shape of his face with the mouth made out of a banana. She makes him his tea one day which consists of a lemon, cucumber juice and lavender biscuits. Tom can't spell so he splats ink all over his work so that he doesn't have to do a test. He has a very annoying sister called Delia and he can never tell what she is thinking because she has the same face whether she is happy or sad.

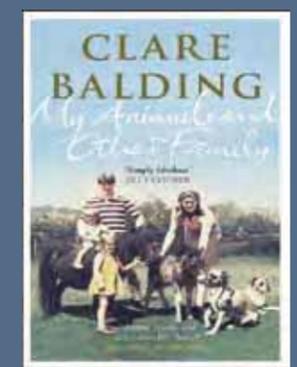
Reading is not my favourite thing. I prefer to play hockey and football in the winter and cricket and golf in the summer but there are 4 books in this series and I am definitely going to read them all.



LOUIS JOHNSON Aged 9
Kidmore End School

BOOK REVIEW

MY ANIMALS AND OTHER FAMILY
BY CLARE BALDING



Every so often I like to read an autobiography and following Clare Balding's success at the Olympics and Paralympics, I felt her story would be interesting and relevant.

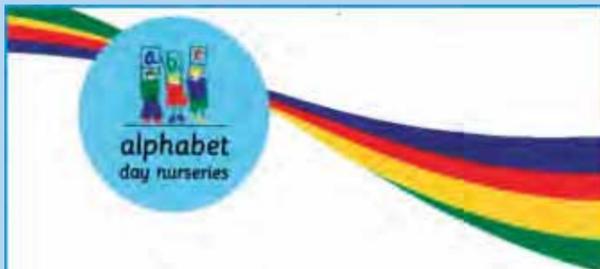
I knew it was going to be a good book when I found out I was 17th on the waiting list for it at the library but her honest, frank and funny tales of her childhood were refreshing and, quite frankly, a complete joy to read.

The stories follow Clare from her birth until her late teens and each chapter is named after an animal that has played a part in her life. Whether you are an animal lover (especially horses) or not, you will thoroughly enjoy what she has to say and the way in which she says it. You will laugh out loud at some of her exploits.

From her relationship with her father, to her time at school and her horse racing success, this book sheds a favourable light on one of our most popular TV presenters.

This is a lovely book to read by the fire on these cold January nights. I just hope that the waiting list has gone down a bit! ■

By PHILLIPPA TAPHOUSE



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Church news

As usual, there was much activity around Christmas and its many services. Flowers, cribs and other seasonal decorations welcomed large congregations to all services.

There was a slightly different flavour at the Christ the King Christingle this year, as it had been decided to use glow sticks instead of the traditional candles; popular with children who were able to hold them longer but not quite as romantic as the original candles. However church candles and a line of tea lights welcomed us into the service. Many thanks to everyone, who donated £145 to the Children's Society (collected by Joan Lamprell).

The Churches in Reading Drop in Centre (CIRDIC) received very generous donations this year from congregations of the churches in the form of clothing and food. This very worthwhile organisation (comprised largely of volunteers) provides food and daytime shelter for homeless and poor and is centred at St Saviour's Church in Reading. They are always grateful for donations and can be contacted on: enquiries@cirdic.org.uk

Easter services

Ash Wednesday 13 February All Saints Church Peppard 8pm

Watch out for details of **Lent courses** which will run as usual.

Women's World Day of Prayer Friday 1 March Christ the King Church 2pm

Mothering Sunday 10 March 9.30am at Christ the King or 11am at St John's

Good Friday 29 March begins 9.30am Christ the King or 11am St John's

Easter Day 31 March 9.30am at Christ the King or 11am at St John's.



On behalf of all churches in Sonning Common and Peppard we'd like to wish you all a very happy new year!

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD

Services on Good Friday and Easter Day

Good Friday 29 March

10am Morning Prayer and Litany
2pm Devotional Hour

Easter Day 31 March

9am Holy Communion
10.30am Sung Eucharist
6.30pm Festal Evensong

THE WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER Friday 1 March 2013 - All are invited

Groups of Christian churches get together each year throughout the world for a one hour service prepared by women of different countries. Sonning Common is in the Peppard and District group.

Participating churches:

Stoke Row Chapel, Springwater Congregation Church, Christ the King, St John the Baptist and All Saints' CE Churches and St Michael's Catholic Church.

This year it is the turn of Christ the King CE Church, Sedgewell Road, Sonning Common, to host the local service on **Friday 1 March from 2-3 pm**. The women of France have prepared the service and their theme is "I was a stranger and you welcomed me". Over 3 million people world wide will be praying and worshipping together during the day, beginning when the first service is held in the Queen Salote Girls' School in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service, some 35 hours later. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and more than 6,000 services will have been held in the British Isles alone.

Although organised by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody, demonstrating our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and all are welcome to attend.

Do come along and join us. Refreshments will be available after the ceremony. ■

Shirley Rixon, Secretary, Peppard and District WWDP Committee.



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February 2013

FRIDAY 1	Notts group - Village Hall	10am - 12 noon
MONDAY 4	FISH - Garden Centre Visit	1.30pm
WEDNESDAY 6	Have your say, come & talk to your PCSO - Health Centre, Sonning Common	10 - 10.30am
FRIDAY 8	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.15am
SATURDAY 9	National Library Day - story time, activities, home-made cakes - Sonning Common Library	10am
TUESDAY 12	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - Quiz night - Peppard Memorial Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 15	Notts group - Village Hall	10am - 12 noon
MONDAY 18	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
WEDNESDAY 20	Sonning Common Pre-School - Shopping & Pamper evening - Sonning Common Primary School	7.30 - 9.30pm
THURSDAY 21	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 21	Have your say, come & talk to your PCSO - One Stop, Sonning Common	4.00 - 4.30pm
THURSDAY 21	Sonning Common Women's Institute: Solicitor in Henley - a talk by Toby Greenwood. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 22	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.15am

March 2013

FRIDAY 1	Notts group - Village Hall	10am - 12 noon
FRIDAY 1	Women's World Day of Prayer Service: Theme "I was a stranger & you welcomed me". Refreshments after service - Christ the King Church	2 - 3pm
FRIDAY 1	Have your say, come & talk to your PCSO - Health Centre, Sonning Common	4.00 - 4.30pm
MONDAY 4	FISH - Garden Centre Visit	1.30pm
FRIDAY 8	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.15am
TUESDAY 12	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - "The secrets of how to beat garden pests" - Peppard Memorial Hall	7.30pm
WEDNESDAY 13	No Smoking Day - thinking of quitting smoking? For advice on how to stop and what help is available - Sonning Common Health Centre & Day Lewis Chemist	9am - 5pm
THURSDAY 14	Sonning Common Women's Institute - AGM - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 15	Notts group - Village Hall	10am - 12 noon
MONDAY 18	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 21	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
FRIDAY 22	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
FRIDAY 22	Annual Village Quiz - Sonning Common Primary School	7.30pm
SATURDAY 23	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - Spring Village Garden Show - Chiltern Edge School	2.30 - 4.30pm
MONDAY 25	Have your say, come & talk to your PCSO - One Stop, Sonning Common	10 - 10.30am

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