

Holton, Waterperry & Waterstock News

MARCH 2025



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Holton, Waterperry & Waterstock News is delivered monthly and free-of-charge to all households in the three parishes, with additional copies left in the parish churches.

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We welcome letters, articles and announcements from individuals and organisations, but reserve the right to edit or to publish or not.

All copy must be received no later than the 18th of the month prior to publication and with its author's name attached - anonymous entries will not be considered.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor.

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March Church Services

March 2 nd	10.00 St Leonard's Waterstock
March 9 th	9.30 St Helen's Albury 11.00 St Bartholomew's Holton 6.00pm St Mary's Waterperry (Choral Evensong)
March 16 th	9.30 St Helen's Albury 11.00 St Leonard's Waterstock
March 23 th	8.00 St Mary's Waterperry 9.30 St Helen's Albury 11.00 St Bartholomew's
March 30 th	Cluster service TBA
April 6 th	9.30 St Leonard's Waterstock 11.00 St Bartholomew's Holton
April 13 th	Palm Sunday walk and service 10.15 St Leonard's Waterstock 10.45 St Mary's Waterperry

St Leonard's Waterstock

Flowers and cleaning rota

March 2nd	C. Tyce
March 9th	J. Berrill
March 16th	J. Berrill
March 23rd	S. Edmondson
March 30th	S. Edmondson
April 6th	A. Ashby
April 13th	A, Ashby

St Mary's Waterperry

Flower rota

March 2nd	Rebecca
March 9th	Susan Fonge
March 16th	Jan
March 23rd	Susan Fonge
March 30th	Zena
April 6th	Jacqui
April 13th	Rebecca

Letter from the Vicarage

Hello,

In medieval books of hours the occupation for March is ploughing and preparing. March is a month of getting ready, repairing and planting and thinking about a good spring clean in rooms that have been closed up against the winter for some months. Although I write this towards the end of February outside my window I can see some midges are tumbling and revolving around each other promising fairer weather and warmer days.

March is moving month for nature in the northern hemisphere – we move from longer nights to longer days, buds start to swell, the wildlife we are blessed to live among gets busy building homes for mates and offspring. Grass grows and the dormant bulbs, which when I wrote this were green spikes pushing up through the dead leaves of last autumn, are blossoming. The sap rises in the fruit trees and the bees make their first foraging flights if the weather allows and if our hens are not doing anything much because sadly a fox got the last of them at the beginning of this year, I'm renovating their home and run in anticipation of new arrivals.

As most of you will know March was named after the Roman god of war Mars. It was the first month of the year in the first Roman calendars and the name was given because this was the time of year that armies broke their winter hibernation and prepared for battle – and the Romans were fighting seemingly perpetual battles for hundreds of years either on some frontier or another or with each other. Nowadays modern warfare disregards the seasons and killing occurs 24/7 for 12 months of the year. If that thought seems a bit bleak for this letter I make no apology as it seems to me that as we enter the month when spring begins we need to acknowledge that humanity seems to be stuck in the winter of permanent conflicts.

Among all these wonderful stirrings of new birth and growth in nature somehow humanity seems set on a dull stasis; never learning, never growing and rejecting the idea of new birth. But are we to be in despair about the apparent intractability of the cold and darkness of our diseases of greed, anger and hate? We must acknowledge them but must also insist that there is always the hope and joy of spring also built into our nature and our lives. It is the nature of light to dispel darkness – 'the light shines and the darkness cannot overcome it' wrote St John at the beginning of his Gospel. He was talking about the light that Jesus brought into the world precisely because of our natural propensity to bow before darkness.

Easter is late this year and so it is not until March 5th we start to prepare in Lent to celebrate the crescendo of the bursting out of that light on Easter Sunday when the product of darkness – what the Bible calls sin – is smashed once and for all. It is the offer of a change in our essential nature – an offer to live in the light of God's love, the spring of his peace. We will explore Easter next month but if March brings a quickening of the heart and emotions as new life starts to cascade around us in nature we could usefully spend some time committing ourselves during Lent to explore the possibility that we can also experience the spring in our souls as well. Each year March holds up a sign to us to say that hope and light will always ultimately triumph and that that triumph begins with us as individuals embracing the possibility of change and new life.

Stay blessed,

David
Rev David Bendor-Samuel
01865 872102,
dbendorsamuel@btinternet.com

P.S. I will be leading a Lent group each Thursday evening at 7.30pm, 25 Littleworth Rd.

From your Member of Parliament

Dear residents of Holton, Waterperry and Waterstock,

As we move into the first months of 2025, I want to take this opportunity to update you on some important changes on the horizon that could have a significant impact on our community and local governance.

Before Christmas, the Government published a White Paper on devolution and local government reorganisation. This is a top-down document, setting out a vision for local authorities, telling them how they should structure and deliver services. The intention is to bring decision-making closer to local communities by giving councils more powers and larger budgets.

For Oxfordshire, this could mean greater control over key issues such as transport, housing, and public services. One of the possibilities outlined is the creation of a mayoral strategic authority that could cover the Thames Valley region, overseeing decisions on areas like health, policing, fire and rescue. In addition, there is potential for a single unitary council that could manage services such as housing, transport, social care, and waste with fewer councillors representing larger areas.

While I welcome the White Paper and the possibilities it presents, I believe that decisions on local governance should always be made as locally as possible, reflecting the needs and aspirations of residents. Devolution offers the chance to empower local communities and improve the services that matter most to you.

On a personal note, I am honoured to have recently been appointed as Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group focused on championing babies and as a Dementia Research Champion. These are causes I care deeply about, and I look forward to working on them in 2025.

My priorities for this year remain focused on improving NHS services, addressing the sewage crisis, and tackling the cost-of-living pressures that are affecting so many in our community. These are the issues I will continue to work on both locally and in Westminster, and I will keep you updated on any developments as they arise.

I will continue to meet with as many residents as possible. If you would like to get in touch or attend one of my surgeries, I would love to hear from you.

*Freddie van Mierlo MP
Henley & Thame
Freddie.vanmierlo.mp@parliament.uk*

Holton Village Hall

Village Hall Committee AGM

The Village Hall Committee AGM will take place on Thursday May 8th in the Village Hall at 7.30pm. The AGM will then be followed by the May monthly committee meeting.

Afternoon teas.

The coffee mornings and afternoon teas at the Village Hall continue to be a great success. Many thanks to everyone who helps for all their hard work. There will be afternoon teas in March 2025 on 6th and the 20th. They will be from 2.30pm until 4.00pm. These events are really well attended so come along for Tea, Coffee, Cake and a chat with friends and neighbours.

Film Night

A Film Night is planned for Friday 14th March 2025- possibly "Paddington 3" if the DVD has been released by then.

Quiz Night 11th April

Following the success of the 6th December Quiz night, another event has been arranged for 11th April. Full details of costs and how to book a team will be in March's edition.

50th Anniversary

It will be fifty years since the Village Hall was opened and the Village Hall Committee are looking to organise an event to mark the occasion. Look out for further details in later editions

Future Events

For up to date information on all events at the Village Hall please access the website at www.holtonvillagehall.co.uk

Booking the Village Hall

If you would like to book the Village Hall please call **07873 857063** or please E-mail bookings@holtonvillagehall.co.uk

Mel Ault

Holton Cock and Bull

This is the time of year when spring flowers are appearing and, while generally welcome, some unusual displays have been reported.

A sacked council gardener was suspected of taking his revenge in a graphic manner. Daffodils in a decorative planting bank grew in a curious formation, eventually spelling the word 'Bollocks'.

Apparently, this is not a recent phenomenon. A German prisoner of war who was sent each week to work in the garden of Mrs Irene Graham of Boscombe made a similar statement which appeared after he was repatriated at the end of 1945. 'He'd always seemed a nice friendly chap,' she recalled, 'but when the crocuses came up in the middle of our lawn in February 1946, they spelt out "Heil Hitler"'.

Name and address supplied

Holton Parish Council

Holton Orchard Winter Pruning

Thank you Kieron and Dominique for your excellent practical instruction on the logic of fruit tree pruning. Ten people turned out on a rather drizzly morning but all worked hard for a couple of hours enjoying the coffee and cake and the social chat whilst pruning the orchard trees into shape.

Planning Applications:

P24/S38292/HH. Slaymaker, Holton. OX33 1PR.

Retrospective application for garage extension to existing shed.

Parish Transport Representative

Is there anyone in Holton who would like to be the Holton Parish Transport Representative and represent the village on the Oxfordshire County Council Public Transport Parish Group? Two meetings a year mostly via Zoom or Teams. Let the Parish Council know if you are interested.

Holton Litter Blitz Saturday 8th March 10.00 am start from Holton Village Hall

Holton Spring Clean – start 10.00 am outside Holton Village Hall. Bags, Litter pickers and hi-vis jackets will be provided. Please come along and join in – wear suitable clothing and stout footwear. No extreme litter picking but the banks and verges can be slippery and the vegetation prickly. Bags will be collected up and grouped at the Village Hall waste bin for collection by SODC.

Bus Services

Clive Ganczarski researched the following information.

Existing Routes - Possibility for Diversions/Alterations

My first look was to view the current routes and see whether there was a possibility for a bus service to be diverted or the route to be extended into Holton.

1. The 400 operating between Thame and Oxford uses an Alexander Dennis Enviro 400 Double Decker bus 11.4m long, 2.55m wide and 4.3m high, with a curb weight of 18T. Diverting a bus of this size through the village would not be practicable and indeed getting to divert it without missing out current planned stops through Wheatley would mean it having to turn around at the village green, which I can't see would be acceptable.
2. The 280 operates similarly between Thame and Oxford and uses a Wright Eclipse Gemini 2 bodied Volvo B5LH Double Decker bus 11.5m long, 2.52m wide and 4.4m high. The curb weight was not available but it is reasonable to assume it would be similar to the Alexander Dennis at 18T. For exactly the same reasons as the 400 above this would similarly just not be practicable.
3. The 46 operating between Milton and Oxford uses a City bus Single Decker bus 11.4m long, 2.52m wide and 2.8m high. The bus is the same length and width as the Alexander Dennis and Wright Eclipse buses but less high obviously. Coming from Milton, the route at present takes it along Church Rd before turn left onto Littleworth Rd. Diverting the bus into Holton would require it to turn up Holloway Rd across the A40 and down into Holton. If it then stopped at the bus shelter it would then need to do a U-turn

to return the way it came. If it was diverted prior to it reaching Church Rd and ran along Old London Rd and into Holton from Waterperry Rd and past the bus shelter before joining Holloway Rd back to it's current route, would mean it missing a number of stops on London Rd and along Church Rd. The service is run as a partnership between the Oxford Bus Company and Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons run by Raymond Blanc. This service was set-up to facilitate Le Manoir employees travel to and from Oxford to their work. Making an adjustment to this route would require both consultation and support from the Oxford Bus Company as well as Raymond Blanc.

4. The X20 runs from Oxford to Aylesbury using a First Bus Double Decker similar in size and weight to the Alexander Dennis bus. This bus mostly bypasses Wheatley apart from a couple of times a day when it runs along London Road. For this reason and the reasons given above it doesn't seem an appropriate candidate to consider for diversion or route alteration.

5. The 275 operating between High Wycombe/Chinnor and Oxford similarly using a Double Decker bus for this route. During week days there is one service to High Wycombe and 3 to Chinnor which runs along London Rd through Wheatley. For the same reasons diversion of this bus does not seem practicable because of its size.

6. Finally, the 49 service runs from Oxford to Cuddesdon via Denton, Garsington and Cowley. This service operates a First Bus single decker running a limited timetable of two trips a day. Extending this service to Holton would add an additional 3.1 miles to the journey each way. Considering the availability of bus stops at Holton Turn and throughout Wheatley for other buses it seems unlikely that a full route extension would be considered feasible.

So what other options are there:

- a) Request a new bus route service
- b) Alternative solutions

a) Requesting a new bus route service

I believe this will be very hard to justify because of Holton's proximity to existing bus routes that run through Wheatley and Holton Turn. However, any request will need to be presented with hard evidence of need i.e. the number of people that need the service, the reasons they need it and the journeys they wish to take. On top of that there would need to be a good number of villagers that would take up that service.

b) Alternative Solutions

A number of local areas run transport support, for example:

In North Oxfordshire - Barton Good Neighbours Scheme that runs a lift by request scheme serving villages such as Sanford St Martin, Over Worton, Nether Worton, Westcot Barton, Middle Barton.

Beckley Area Good Neighbours Scheme that provides community transport for Beckley, Elsfield, Stanton St John, Forest Hill.

Oxfordshire Comet A bookable transport service from Oxfordshire County Council. If you are an Oxfordshire resident and don't have access to suitable public transport, the Oxfordshire Comet can transport you from your door to any destination in Oxfordshire.

It operates 10am to 2pm Mondays to Fridays (except Bank Holidays). A payment of some sort will be required for this service.

Wheatley Care Scheme A transport scheme for residents of Wheatley, Littleworth and Holton village only. Run by volunteer drivers, offering travel to all medical/dentist/hospital appointments.

There may well be other options available to be explored, not excluding something closer to home even.

Tim Bearder County Councillor regarding Bus Services:

Buses are an essential resource that I have been fighting tooth and nail to restore after all the subsidised routes were cut in 2016.

The trouble is there is very little money to subsidise them and as they are private companies run for a profit, rather than the general benefit of Oxfordshire residents, it can be extremely challenging to get changes like the one you are suggesting - logical as they sound on paper.

To give you an example during the notification period for the new service 280, officers discussed with Oxford Bus Company the possibility of extension of the service from the centre of Oxford to/from Oxford railway station. However, to do so would require an additional bus which would lead to an extra cost of £200,000 per year to run the service - costs that are highly unlikely to be recouped through additional fares. This is therefore not considered to be a commercial proposition for the operator, especially given the very high frequency of existing services between the city centre and railway station.

The bus companies operate each service to maximise the stops per bus and so even a very small diversion to the route of the 280 would push it to another bus and then that incurs those astronomical costs.

I have worked with the wonderful county officers who have restored the 46 (which is only part paid for by Le Manoir most is Wheatley and Horspath Parish councils with some additional OCC monies) more recently we got funding for the 108 through Forest Hill, Stanton St John and Beckley and we managed to get a very infrequent service for Cuddesdon using some county mini buses.

I will keep pushing for a service so it stays fresh in the County Officers' minds but realistically, with a regular service running from Holton Turn and Park Hill I don't think much will change until the new houses come on stream on the Old Brookes site and even then it might be a challenge to get them back into the village itself.

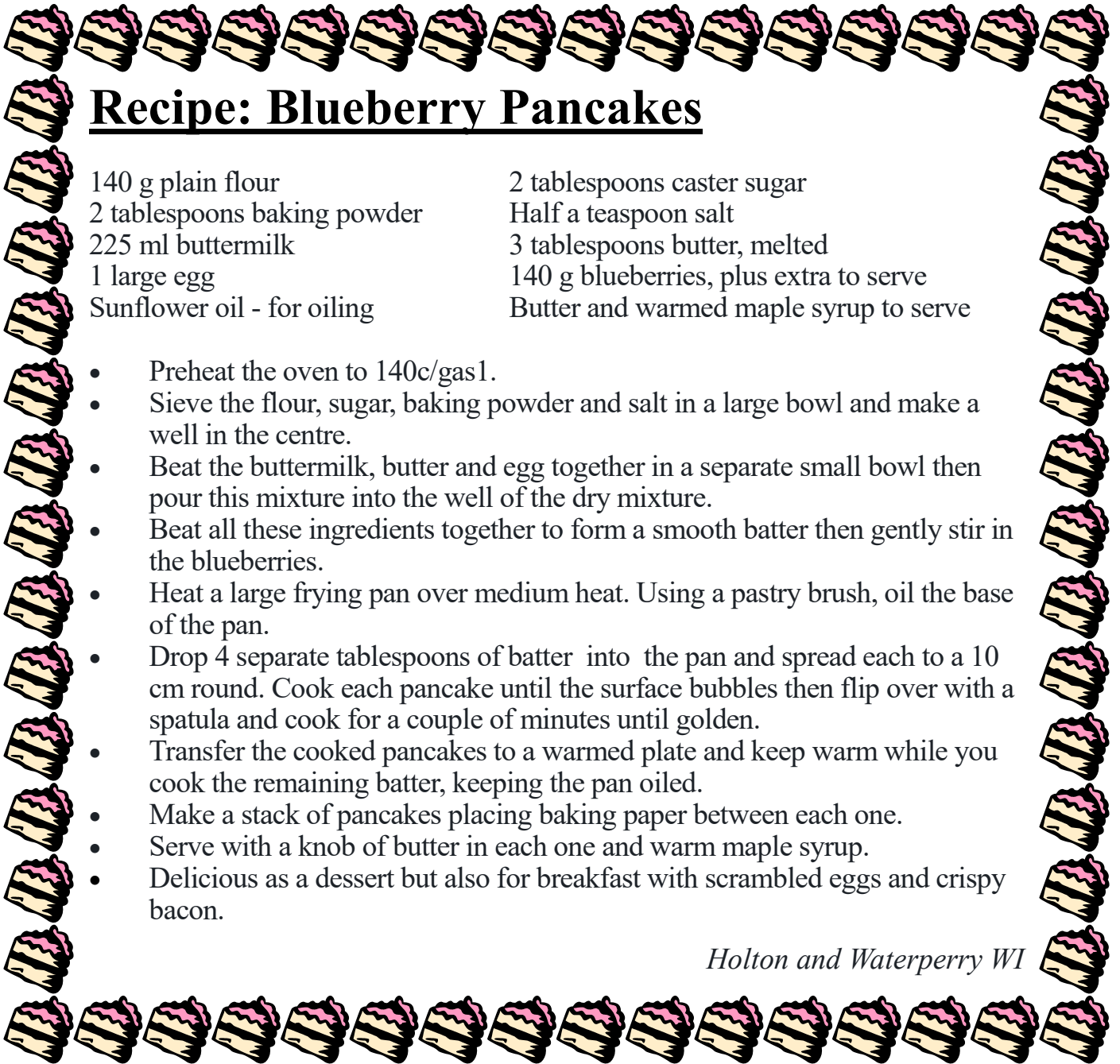
The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 10th March 2025 starting at 7.00 pm In Holton Village Hall Committee Room.

Agendas will be on the village notice boards and Parish Council website.

Contact details below:

Clerk to Holton Parish Council (Sonja Barter) Home Farm House, Holton, Oxford OX33 1QA Email: clerk@holtonoxford-pc.gov.uk Tel: 01865 872334

Copies of Holton Parish Council Meeting Agendas and Approved Minutes can be viewed on the Holton Parish Council website www.holtonoxford-pc.gov.uk



Recipe: Blueberry Pancakes

140 g plain flour	2 tablespoons caster sugar
2 tablespoons baking powder	Half a teaspoon salt
225 ml buttermilk	3 tablespoons butter, melted
1 large egg	140 g blueberries, plus extra to serve
Sunflower oil - for oiling	Butter and warmed maple syrup to serve

- Preheat the oven to 140c/gas1.
- Sieve the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl and make a well in the centre.
- Beat the buttermilk, butter and egg together in a separate small bowl then pour this mixture into the well of the dry mixture.
- Beat all these ingredients together to form a smooth batter then gently stir in the blueberries.
- Heat a large frying pan over medium heat. Using a pastry brush, oil the base of the pan.
- Drop 4 separate tablespoons of batter into the pan and spread each to a 10 cm round. Cook each pancake until the surface bubbles then flip over with a spatula and cook for a couple of minutes until golden.
- Transfer the cooked pancakes to a warmed plate and keep warm while you cook the remaining batter, keeping the pan oiled.
- Make a stack of pancakes placing baking paper between each one.
- Serve with a knob of butter in each one and warm maple syrup.
- Delicious as a dessert but also for breakfast with scrambled eggs and crispy bacon.

Holton and Waterperry WI

Dr Rogers Trust

The Dr Rogers Trustees will be meeting in April 2025 to consider applications from apprentices, trainees and students, aged 14 to 21, who are resident in the parish of Holton, for grants to assist in the purchase of books and equipment or towards the cost of educational trips or courses.

A maximum of 2 grants per applicant will be considered, the first whilst at school and the second for undertaking further education up to the age of 21.

If you would like further information, please contact:
Carol Johnston, Trustee/Clerk, Chance Cottage, Holton
Email: carol.johnstonfj@btinternet.com

Applications **must** be made **in writing** to the above by 5th April 2025.

Holton & Waterperry W.I.

Peter Hague, originally from Leeds, gave us the history of Yorkshire in culinary specialities and traditions at our February meeting. Amongst other things he told us Yorkshire is famous for its Pontefract liquorice, its rhubarb triangle near Wakefield as well as its abbeys and castles.. One tradition he told us about is 'chumping' (collecting wood) for bonfire night and feasting on Yorkshire parkin, jacket potatoes and toffee apples on the 5th November. Yorkshire has cities, beautiful dales and curious coastlines as well as friendly Yorkshire folk.

On the 11th we enjoyed a wonderful meal at the King's Arms in Wheatley. An event held and enjoyed for no other reason than a convivial night out in this dreary, damp February weather. It was well supported.

Our WI resolutions choices will go forward to the annual national meeting in June.

Our March 4th meeting will be our AGM when a new committee will be elected. Please put your name forward if you would like to go on the committee. Many hands make light work. New ideas always welcome. There will also be a quiz on that evening and as it will be Shrove Tuesday there will be pancakes to delight. Don't miss it!

Barbara Martin

March Birthdays



A very Happy Birthday this month to:

Nea who will be turning 13

(to have a birthday included in the magazine, please email Dominique - domisqueak@gmail.com)

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Holton News

Christmas is done and the New Year seen in, the trees have gone to recycling and the decorations and fairy lights packed away for another year. I do miss the lights though and I always feel sad when they are gone. It appears that some others feel that way too as some lights have been left on, which is nice. Nevertheless, the days are getting longer (it's now nearly daylight at 6:00pm) and the year rushes on. The clocks will go forward at the end of the month and the days will seem even longer soon. Maybe we will have some warmth for a change instead of the endless cold, clammy overcast in February. Roll on spring!

A few things happened in February though it was a quiet month. I think this was largely down to the seemingly endless rain we had from January onwards and the 'great inland sea' down by the Thame waxed and waned but mostly waxed and covered the fields for miles around.

The house building works at the Waterperry Road end of the village, which were on pause over Christmas and the New Year, started up again and at one stage the way was blocked when a mobile crane was brought in to put some roof trusses in place. There's not a good place to do a 3 point there, so the reversing camera was put to good use. It was Asda the other way, or nothing at that point. Still, Prosecco had a decent reduction as they had obviously overstocked for Christmas, so it wasn't an entirely wasted journey.

Both the PCC and the 'Potholers' have been concerned about the 'lake' on the Holton turn. This has been caused by blocked drains and we have been trying for some time to get them cleared because the 'lake' was getting bigger during a prolonged wet spell and this was causing cars to move into the oncoming traffic. Anybody driving though it stood a good chance of drowning either their electrics or pedestrians. This has been reported to Highways several times and it would now appear that something has been done as the drain grids are now clear, but the acid test of whether or not the job has been done properly will be when it rains again as to whether the 'lake' re-appears. Watch this space.

There have been several changes of residents recently and I have rather lost count. I am sure I know less than half of the people now. It would be nice to get to know who they all are at some stage. It was a pleasant surprise, thanks to Deb from Oak Close, to meet a nice new family who had just moved in to Garden Cottage. Welcome to Holton, both the Garden Cottage family and all of the new residents.

One point of interest from February was 'Film Night' at the Village Hall. This offering was a new film called 'wicked little letters'. It is based on a true story from the 1920s about a series of poison pen letters sent to a number of residents in Littlehampton; just one very churchy lady is the recipient to start with and then a wider audience. The churchy lady's next door neighbour, who is Irish and a bit 'wrong side of the tracks' for some, is blamed and sent to prison although she is later proved innocent by a group of friends (I won't reveal the real culprit in case you have yet to see the film). One message of the film is making us check our assumptions about people's character based on appearances. The real star of the show is the amount of 'rude words' used, both in dialogue and in the letters. We took an ex-resident of the village, who's in her nineties and now lives in a nursing home, as she wanted to see it. On the way back we asked her if she had enjoyed the film? She said yes dear and I learned a few new words.

Take care

Mel Ault



FILM NIGHT

Holton Village Hall

Friday 14th March 2025

7.00 for 7.30 p.m.

Paddington in Peru (PG)

Starring

Hugh Bonneville * Emily Mortimer * Julie Walters
with Olivia Colman * Antonio Banderas
and Ben Whishaw as the voice of Paddington

Run time: 1 hour 43minutes

Paddington returns to Peru to visit his beloved Aunt Lucy, who now resides at the Home for Retired Bears. With the Brown Family in tow, a thrilling adventure ensues when a mystery plunges them into an unexpected journey through the Amazon rainforest and up to the mountain peaks of Peru.

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Contact: holtonplayers.org or call Deb on 01865 873737

February great for Snowdrop walks



**Waterperry
Gardens**

WINTER *AT WATERPERRY GARDENS*

There are few better places to celebrate the arrival of spring than Waterperry Gardens in Oxfordshire, where the historic ornamental gardens provide the perfect setting for the Galanthus. These wonderful little heralds of spring carpet the old orchard and riverside walks at this time of the year, and winter aconites are also likely to bring a smile to visitors' faces, providing new hints of colour in the garden (normal garden entrance fee applies).

Waterperry boasts beautiful displays of double and single-flowered snowdrops all around the 20 acres of gardens and is the perfect excuse for a walk in the gardens followed by a visit to the Teashop to warm up - a lovely way to spend time with friends and family.

OPEN DAILY 10:00AM - 5:00PM



From your District Councillor

I have been asked by many of you to comment on the Government's plans for local reorganisation. They are calling it 'Devolution' and claim powers are being devolved from Westminster, although the proposals will dissolve all District Councils and create a regional Combined Mayoral Authority (CMA) which will introduce an elected Mayor who will sit over a series of large unitary authorities.

To me that seems to be more about moving decisions further away from the residents they affect and placing the power in the hands of one individual rather than devolving them down. The Government has also not been clear about what powers will be devolved out of Westminster. Whilst we accept that local government is in crisis and needs reform, the Liberal Democrats do not support what is happening. Nevertheless IT IS happening and we are trying to make the best of it...

Initially we were asked with a few weeks' notice if we wanted to be on the fast track. We had an emergency meeting on the 9th of January to confirm we did. Our view was that if the Districts are going to be dissolved and merged with a unitary authority we wanted that to happen as soon as possible to give staff, decision makers and the public as much certainty as possible, rather of years of councils trying to operate knowing they will shortly cease to exist. It is going to make signing contracts challenging. Unfortunately that request was rejected and we received the attached letter from Jim McMahon MP - Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution.

He has now said that local authorities should work together to formulate a proposal for the new structures. He rather ambitiously said: "We therefore expect local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively, including by sharing information, to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area to which this invitation is issued, rather than developing competing proposals."

The trouble is that it is a wide area and there are naturally differences in our various political interpretations of what is in the best interest of the whole area. The Labour leader of the City Council believes it is a good idea to create a unitary authority based on the city of Oxford with an expanded geography, to allow the city to meet its ambitions for growth. She also believes that we should consider combining with authorities like Labour-run Swindon. The Liberal Democrat leaders of all the other councils in Oxfordshire reject this idea as do all five of the county's Liberal Democrat MPs. Whilst we think that decisions should be taken as close to the people they effect as possible, we also feel that splitting up social services, children's care and highways maintenance across a greater Oxford and whatever is left on the periphery will take years of unnecessary stitching and reworking that ultimately won't be in the best interest of residents or make the savings and efficiencies government envisages. I also have no wish for Wheatley and the surrounding villages to be part of Susan Brown's ambitious growth agenda!

The next stage as you'll see from the letter is a deadline at the end of March when plans have to go back to Mr McMahon. Being pragmatic, I personally favour a one Oxfordshire Unitary Authority in a Combined Mayoral Authority that matches the Berkshire Oxfordshire Buckinghamshire Integrated Care Partnership (BOB ICP) geography. I expect we'll end up with a one Oxfordshire in an CMA that is along the lines of the Thames Valley Police geography. Either way there will be much horse trading between now and the final submissions by 28 November.

Tim Bearder
Councillor for Forest Hill & Holton Ward

From your County Councillor

There is no denying that after more than a decade of underfunding by the national Government Oxfordshire's roads are in a poor state of repair. Potholes are the number one complaint in my inbox.

But we've been listening and at the budget on the 11th of February we allocated more than £50m towards highway maintenance with more money also agreed for active travel measures to promote walking and cycling and extra investment to improve responsiveness to flooding.

Crucially this includes £38.6m for a two-year highways maintenance programme, which will extend surface dressing, prevent potholes from occurring and £3.6m for flooding measures including £2.1m for proactive work with communities who have suffered flooding - a massive real problem in our villages.

We also put £1.5m of additional funding for highway drainage in 2025/26, with the council moving back to an annual highway drainage gully emptying and jetting cycle, something that had been reduced to every four years under the previous administration.

You'll no doubt hear a lot in the lead up to the elections in May about our apparent failure to fix potholes but the fact is this is a national scandal of underfunding. Experts say that the cost of maintaining the highway network in the county is roughly £45m a year. We receive a paltry £15m from central - this means we are forced to borrow to fix our roads and that is not sensible or sustainable in the long term.

For now we are doing everything necessary to hold them together and we are also investing in alternatives so that where possible more people can cycle walk or take a bus and for those who can't we are reducing speeds so the roads are safer and there is less wear and tear. It's not been easy but we are making positive changes in the face of years of chronic underfunding.

*Tim Bearder,
Councillor for Wheatley Division*

Waterperry News

The Waterperry Village Facebook page is now 10 years old!

We currently have 123 members. If you aren't a member yet please do join by searching for the page and answering the 'Where do you live' question with your house details. The only requirement to join is that you MUST live in the village or Waterperry Common.

Posts are only about village matters such as; travel issues, lost parcels, power cuts, village events and asking for recommendations. We've found it really useful and posts aren't overwhelming in frequency.

We look forward to welcoming you!

Helen

Waterstock News

As I write this we are in the midst of some dull, cold, damp and uninspiring weather which I guess is normal for this time of year yet tends to reflect the mood which one tends to feel in February. Even a bit of snow or some good hard frosts might make things a tad more exiting.

The news which has dominated Waterstock over the past few months is of course the inquiry into proposed golf course development and Henry has kindly prepared the summary below following its conclusion. The long-drawn-out Planning Inquiry on the future of the western section of the Waterstock Golf Course site finally came to an end on Wednesday 22nd January with closing speeches from the barristers representing SODC, Waterstock Parish Meeting and the Developer. The texts have been circulated to the Parish.

Waterstock received praise for its participation in the Inquiry as a Rule 6 Party, the formal name for a third party in planning Inquiries. SODC's barrister referred to the "careful, dedicated and coordinated Rule 6 party, the Waterstock Parish Meeting" Our barrister stated that " ..[Waterstock Parish Meeting] has covered more issues and fielded more witnesses than perhaps any previous Rule 6 party anywhere."

Waterstock has punched above its weight, but that's to be expected. Our future is now in the hands of the Inspector whose Decision may not be known until March.

Thanks are due to all those who have supported the cause by giving evidence, attending the Inquiry or donating money, and in many cases doing all three. It has been a fine Team effort, helped along by such generous support from neighbouring parishes.

A mystery which appears to arisen, not just around Waterstock, but in neighbouring villages has been reported by Lorna who has written the following piece.

PLEASE HELP SOLVE MYSTERY OF MR FROSTY JACK IN VILLAGE

Following an overdue clean-up along Waterstock Lane we had a record haul of cans. Sarah and Henry did Mill Lane to the A418 section collected a huge haul of around 90 cans of Frosty Jack, 25 other cans, plus assorted bottles and paper wrappings (see attached photo). Gill, Carole, Johnny, Jenny and Lorna did the other end of the lane to Tiddington and similarly collected around 80-100 cans, bottles and plastic. Again most of the cans were Frosty Jack – which if like me you are unfamiliar with this brand – it's a very strong cider at around 7.5%.

So when we heard that Tim Morton had done a video in Ickford showing that the cans are at both ends of their village and on the road between Ickford and Waterstock. And another couple in Tiddington have collected 100s of the same Frosty Jack cans there - we knew this was a big issue.

It looks someone is drinking as they drive through our villages, coming from Wheatley direction, and blithely throwing the cans out of the window. Always before the houses and then after them the other end. We need to catch this person in the act so please everyone keep your eyes open and take photos if you see anything suspicious. Please report back to us.

Thank you

Ambrose Bennett Charitable Trust

Susie has provided an update on the status of this long established village trust. This small and very ancient village charity was established nearly 400 years ago, back on 25th May 1636. Its stated aim was the relief of the poverty for poor persons resident in the Parish of Waterstock. The charity has been active in its current form since being registered with the Charity Commission in 1972.

It is administered by three trustees. One of our current Trustees, Amanda, has just stepped down after over 12 or more(?) years of service supporting Susie and Janet. Thank you Amanda! Shona has stepped up to take Amanda's place as a trustee. Thank you also to other village residents who expressed an interest in becoming involved - you will get your opportunity as further trustee vacancies will come up in the future!

All three trustees need to be approved at the next Parish Meeting to verify their next term of service.

We also hope to explore the possibility of slightly changing the aims of the charity to better reflect Waterstock's situation in the 21st century. This we can do through the Charity Commission should we wish to. There are various other categories available which may make the charity more relevant to Waterstock's current needs. We might also consider broadening the target group so we can offer support to a more diverse range of residents, not necessarily just the elderly. These changes would be something we would want to discuss in the wider setting of a Parish Meeting before approaching the charity commission to make these changes.

Keith Ashby

MSM Electrical

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msmelectrical61@gmail.com



It is with great sadness that we announce the closure of Waterperry Farm Shop, after nearly 7 wonderful years of trading. Since we first opened it has been a true privilege to get to know so many of you and become a community hub for the village - thank you to those of you who have supported us.

This decision has not been an easy one due to a number of reasons.

Firstly, increased overheads for small businesses, most recently from the latest budget, have made profitability almost impossible.

Despite our unwavering commitment to providing high quality, ethically farmed meat, we have found it increasingly difficult to compete with supermarkets and sellers who care less about the origins, welfare & slaughter of their meat.

Staying true to our values and prioritising animal welfare, sustainability & supporting local farming has always been at the heart of what we do. To run an independent farm shop comes at a big cost and sadly economies of scale from the big players have beaten us.

I would like to thank our incredible team who, I'm sure you will agree, have consistently produced outstanding produce for you all to enjoy.

The farm will continue as normal and the farm team here are planning for a busy lambing & calving period ahead and onwards into 2025. We will continue to uphold our values on the farming side of the business and continue with the routes to market we have established there.

With thanks for your support and best wishes for the future.

Lois & the Waterperry Farm Shop team.

In better news... coming very soon...we hope to return 'back to the beginning' and offer home grown beef & lamb boxes on a smaller scale, direct from the farm. To be kept up to date, please put your email address into the contact form on our website www.waterperryfarmshop.co.uk, and we will keep you posted!