

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE



Congratulations and thank you to Anthony Thompson, whose vision and backing orchestrated 'The Forever Fields Project' (www.foreverfields.co.uk) that culminated in an Art Exhibition.

On 24th–26th November, more than 1,100 people visited the art exhibition held at Worton Hall by the Forever Fields project team. Professional and amateur artists created 160 works of art, including paintings, photography, sculpture, audio-visual work, poetry and prose – all celebrating our local green spaces, which are under direct threat from the Botley West power station proposal. Collectively, the artists spoke of their commitment to our fields, to our wild places, to our settlements and to the biodiversity of nature.

This picture shows the extent and variation in works on display at Worton Hall. For a full report of the exhibition and more photos please see page 13.

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welcome Anne's CAWNer

Welcome to the 559th edition of CAWN - and a very Happy New Year to you all. Let's hope 2024 is a good one for all of us.

As always I find myself rushing to prepare this January edition, fitting it in with all the pre-Christmas build up of present and food shopping, Christmas card writing and visits to relatives all around the country!

I apologise to those of you whom I have been pestering for articles, both this month, but also throughout the year. I am, of course, immensely grateful to anyone who submits something for inclusion. If you have an idea for either a regular feature or a one-off article please do get in touch.

Each month, as CAWN is posted through your letterboxes, I upload a pdf of the edition to the village website. The edition that is on line is in colour, unlike the black and white edition that comes through your door. So if you want to view the pictures in colour do log on and take a look at it there.

Finally I would like to thank all the businesses that advertise with us each year. It is only because we have the income from the advertising that we can continue to print enough copies for every house in the village, so very many thanks to you all for your support.

Happy reading and a very Happy 2024!

Anne x

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With special thanks to...

Lorna Mills, Fineprint Witney, Emily Lemaire and her team and to everyone who actively participates in the production of Cassington & Worton News.



Kids Quiz
For ages 5-11
Red Lion Cassington
Saturday 6th January
4pm
£3 per child (must be accompanied by an adult)
Teams of 6
All proceeds to the play area

January stargazing highlights

January 3/4 - Quadrantids Meteor Shower.

The Quadrantids is an above average shower, with up to 40 meteors per hour at its peak. It is thought to be produced by dust grains left behind by an extinct comet known as 2003 EH1, which was discovered in 2003. The shower peaks this year on the night of the 3rd and morning of the 4th. The waning moon will block out some of the fainter meteors, but if you are patient this could still be a good show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Bootes, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

January 11 - New Moon.

The Moon will be on the same side of the Earth as the Sun and will not be visible in the night sky. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.

January 12 - Mercury at Greatest Western Elongation.

This is the best time to view Mercury since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the morning sky. Look for the planet low in the eastern sky just before sunrise.

January 25 - Full Moon.

The Moon will be on the opposite side of the Earth to the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Wolf Moon because this was the time of year when hungry wolf packs howled outside their camps. This moon has also been known as the Old Moon and the Moon After Yule.

Burns Night

Village Hall, Cassington

Cost £25 per person

7:30 for 8 pm


Saturday 27th January

Menu

Guid Scotch Broth

*Haggis wi' bashit neeps
an' champit tatties*
(Vegetarian/Vegan/Gluten free option available)

Cranachan
(Mixture of Oats in Whisky with Raspberries, Honey and Whipped Cream)



Proceedings

Welcome to Burns Night

Address to the Haggis

Live Music sing-a-long

The Immortal Memory

Burns Poetry Reading

Toast to the Lassies

Live Music Interlude

Reply to the Toast to the Lassies

Auld Lang Syne

Please book and pay for your seat by 13th January
Contact Ron Macdonald 07766 993724

**All proceeds raised in aid of the Cassington
Playground Appeal**

A good sing along and more

Seats limited – book by 13th Jan

OBSERVATION


by Stephen Wright

Every month that I am still with my girlfriend and have my current job I consider myself grateful. My dad accidentally almost got rid of the former by offering her peanuts when she is allergic, and I remarkably didn't lose her when we went to Crawley together so I could cover the Arsenal Women game while she could... explore Crawley.

Thankfully I still have my job at Arsenal despite the fact that, after a recent 6-0 win over RC Lens, I told Mikel Arteta that the last time Arsenal had six different goal scorers was against an Everton side he was playing for in the mid-2000s. Sadly I think he was still sore on the subject.

And so I was invited to fly out to Eindhoven to work at Arsenal's Champions League game. The weather wasn't too different and everyone spoke English but it was a bit nicer than Crawley. Sadly when we landed back home the pilot said 'good luck' to us as we returned to another of my favourite grim places - Luton.

SPSA NEWS



Thank you to all those who attended St Peter's School Christmas Fair on Friday 8th December 2023. There was a fantastic atmosphere and lots of happy faces! It was great that Father Christmas made an appearance too!

We are pleased to announce that we made approximately £2400 which is a mind-blowing amount! We think the best takings for a Christmas fair and Raffle to date! £1600 of which was from the Raffle. Thank you to all of you who attended, purchased raffle tickets and supported the SPSA and School.

SPEEDWATCH

The Cassington Speedwatch group held 10 sessions in November and reported the following to the Police.

No. of sessions:	10
Total number of vehicles:	1,436
No. of offending vehicles:	168
Between 25mph & 30mph:	107
Between 31mph & 40 mph:	54
Over 40 mph:	7
Highest offender:	44mph

The Cassington Speedwatch group try to meet at least twice a week to record speeding vehicles, in an attempt to make the road through this village safer for pedestrians, especially the young and the old. If you would like to help with this task, even if you can only do a few sessions each month, timed round your availability, then please contact Ron Macdonald at cassington.speedwatch@gmail.com



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JOY IN HEAVEN (The Lost Sheep)

by Clover Southwell

You laid me on your shoulder, rejoicing.
I should have known. You said you would. Perhaps
I didn't want that - that certainty. Not
Choose, not trust. Keep my options open.
Go my way without you. Muddle along
In the middle. And so I wandered around
On the unwise track. It petered out.
I pushed through thorns skidded on mud. My world
Contracting, contained by my fleece, which held
Me tight. And failed to warm me.
Why bleat again? What for, in nomansland?
But that's not the end of the story.

This poem was sent to CAWN by Margaret Bonfiglioli. It was written by her friend Clover who has spent many happy times visiting Margaret in Cassington over the years.

CALLING ALL ST PETER'S SCHOOL PARENTS!

The Tinies and Toddlers group (who meet in the village hall on Tuesdays in term time) invite you on Tuesday afternoons at 2.30 for tea/coffee and an opportunity to chat in the warm, with friends, before you pick up your children from school.



CASSINGTON TINIES & TODDLERS (Tinies Café) Spring 2024 A Parent/Carer & Toddler group

Cassington Village Hall 1.30 –3.00 on Tuesday
(other than where stated, term-time only)
Jan 9th, 16th, 23rd NO SESSION 30th, Feb 6th,
NO SESSION 13th (half term), 20th, 27th
Mar 5th, 12th (last session this term)

Toys, crafts, songs & refreshments for
under-fives and their carers
This group is being run by
St Peter's Church, Cassington with local parents
For more information please contact:
Jane Aston at janeaston53@aol.com
Tel: 01865 880757
Charlotte Metcalf at candcmetcalf@gmail.com
Tel: 07814550878

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Saturday (For Sunday) 5pm. Sunday 10am.
Face coverings required with social distancing.
For details of weekday Masses please visit the parish web page <https://stpeterseynsham.org.uk/>
Contact details:-Parish Priest: Fr Mark Lagorio
Tel: 01865 881613
Email : stpeterschurcheynsham@gmail.com
Parish Safeguarding Representative:

Eric White ericj_white@yahoo.co.uk
For details on Covid-safe worship, other news, and links for live screening, please visit the parish web page.
You can also watch Mass from many other Churches live or recorded online.
Churchservices.tv
<https://www.mcnmedia.tv/>
<https://www.youtube.com/user/Godzdogz>



St Peter's Church

PARISH OF CASSINGTON

The Church of St Peter's is here as a fellowship to worship God,
build people up in Christ and share his love with others

JANUARY 2024

The church is open for individuals' private prayer daily.

Services this month

Sunday 7th January – 9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 14th January – 9.30am Morning Worship

Sunday 21st January – 9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 28th January – 5pm Evening Prayer

On-line streamed services are available every Sunday from 10.30 am at
www.stpeterschurchcassington.org or www.stleonardseynsham.org.uk

If you have particular spiritual needs feel free to contact:

The Vicar – Revd Duncan Fraser Tel: 07810 324088 or
Enquiries: Church Office: email stleonards_stpeters@btconnect.com

Time for the new year

When I was growing up in the 70's and 80's 2024 seemed so distant, the kind of date you would read of in science fiction. But here it is, stretching out before us. What will it bring? How will we use the time it offers?

Of course much of our time will be occupied by routine matters and sleep! There will also be much that will come our way that is beyond our control or prediction. These things will fill most of our time. But that will leave a sliver of time of varying sizes for all of us that we can invest. I wonder how we will each use it.

The writer of Ecclesiastes, an ancient book of wisdom in the bible claims: "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens" (Ecclesiastes 3.1). As we look ahead this year it's easy to doubt this in our hurried and pressurised age. The writer trusts God that they will be given the space for all that is needed. In fact their faith is such that he later proclaims that God has made "everything beautiful in its time" (3.11).

My prayer for us all is that God will lead us to find that beauty in unexpected places in the year to come. Happy New Year!

every blessing,
Duncan

Food Bank News

A New Year resolution to keep...?
Please support those families in need locally this via the food bank.



Thank you for continuing to support via the box outside St Peter's Church (or if it's full place inside the porch) and/or via single financial donations or regular standing order.

Sadly we cannot pass on fresh produce but please give tinned and dried foods and other groceries which need to be well within their "Best Before" date.

We support:

Eynsham Food bank (07450 328530) which supports Cassington and the Hanborough residents as well as Eynsham.
North Oxfordshire Food Bank (07929721172)

If you need some food support or know someone in need of food support please phone the food banks directly at the numbers above or contact our clergy
Duncan Fraser (vicar) 07810324088 or
Roger Aston 01865 880757
or your neighbourhood watch rep.

Thank you.



HAPPY NEW YEAR WISHING EVERYONE A WONDERFUL 2024

It's Year 901 and time for massive thanks to everyone for all your help and support throughout 2023 as Cassington celebrated 900 years of St Peter's Church

From the launch by Bishop Gavin in January 2023 with the 900 years art works by St Peter's School, the school choir, hot lunch for the school families and medieval knights on horses - through the monthly competition photos in CAWN now in the 2024 Cassington Calendar - the fertile plant sale on The Green with the Allotment Association - our community ArtWeeks exhibition in the hall with over 100 local art works - the stunning Flower

Festival at St Peter's Day - the triumphant Ladies' Darts Team 24-hour Marathon in the Red Lion - the high drama of The Cassington Tales promenade play around the village - the Moments From The Past exhibition giving a glimpse into village history - the keenly fought Aunt Sally Christians versus Lions - to the incredible voices of the Cathedral Singers of Christ Church here in our small ancient church ... and more ...



THE BOOK IS NOW UNDER WAY!

Please send your photos showing you, your family, friends and village life in 2023, from everyday happenings to bike night, the more the merrier – anything which will help us capture a snapshot of life in Cassington in 2023.

We plan to include as many people, events and activities as possible – village weddings and newborn babes too – so if you want to be in the book, we need your photos.

Please email your photos to:

John ~ art@hemingwayart.co.uk or Kevin ~ planetkevart@gmail.com

THANK YOU

The Friends of St Peter's Church

Trustees: Margaret Bonfiglioli, John Hemingway, Liz Henman, Ninon Linnell. Keith Turner

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Email

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THE CONSULTATION ON THE SOLAR PROPOSALS IS COMING SOON!

**Cassington Village Hall
Friday January 12th
3pm to 7.30pm**

**This is YOUR village
And YOUR future
YOUR input can make a difference.**

The Booklets

Please read the booklet that came through your door and be prepared to ask questions about what concerns you about the proposals. Especially look at how specific they are.....there are a lot of “mays”, “mights” and “coulds”. Do you need any reassurance that these things will or will not happen? Be prepared to ask questions specific to what you know. And where “mitigations” are spoken of, be sure to ask about what specific mitigations will be in place for the areas you are concerned about.

AT THE CONSULTATION

This is your chance to ask every question that you would like an answer to.

Where you can, illustrate your questions with examples. Think about:

damage to a specific hedge/track;
lorry movements through the village;
temporary construction sites;
fencing restrictions on the track;
vehicular access points on our road;
noise/light pollution;
exact cable route through the Cassington site;
flood risk;
any substations on the Cassington site;
disruption during construction + installation;
decommissioning guarantees;
damage to plants;
protection of the over-wintering swans and other wildlife;
damage to ancient hedgerows and tracks;
accuracy of photomontage visualisations
...are they showing you the views that matter to you and are they looking at them from the vantage points you know?

Look at the Maps

Can you clearly see:
the exact cable route,
new access roads,
security cameras,
inverters,
substations,
vehicular access points,
temporary construction compounds?
Is there enough detail?

How to respond to the Developer during the Consultation

If you attend a consultation you may be given a response booklet. Don't fill it in there - take it away and think about it, complete it and post it back (should be freepost)

- You can fill in the same response form on the Developer's website.
- If you think the form has not give you the opportunity to say everything you want to, send an email directly to the developer (info@botleywest.com) and **ASK FOR A REPLY.**

As you leave the Consultation, please complete our questionnaire.

On leaving, look out for your Cassington volunteers either in a gazebo outside the hall or in the entrance hall, and complete our questionnaire (preferably then and there before you leave)

- If you miss doing this or if you aren't able to get to a face-to-face consultation, please complete the online version of the questionnaire. A link to this will be sent with the weekly email from Alex Rogers.

NB. Make sure you are registered for updates (select the REGISTER FOR UPDATES button on the HOME page of www.stopbotleywest.com)

IMPORTANT NOTE: This questionnaire is NOT about the proposals themselves but about how adequately you feel the consultation has been carried out by the Developer. The Developers' feedback form is where to give your views for or against the proposal.

If you cannot attend on 12th January, please go to another consultation instead:

Woodstock Community Centre, 32 New Road, OX20 1PB	Sat 13th January 2024 11am - 3pm
Cumnor Village Hall, Leys Road, OX2 9QF	Wed 17th January 2024 3pm - 7:30pm
Seacourt Hall, 3 Church Way, Botley, OX2 9TH	Thurs 18th January 2024 1pm - 5pm
Eynsham Village Hall, 46 Back Ln, Eynsham, OX29 4QW	Fri 19th January 2024 2pm - 6pm
Community Webinar Zoom	Tues 23rd January 2024 5.30pm - 7pm



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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



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CHURCHFIELDS NEWS

We can't believe it's December already! 2023 has been such an amazing year for all of us at Churchfields and we're looking forward to ending it with some festive cheer and lots of happy memories.



During the first week of December we decorated our home with pretty festive decorations and also put up our Christmas tree. Our residents enjoyed decorating the tree and one thing led to another and a snowball fight broke out around our home - it was such a fun day!

We celebrated the start of advent with a holy communion and were joined by our friends and frequent visitors Roger, Duncan and Jane. On one chilly morning, all of us headed over to the village hall for a Christmas sing along with the children from St Peter's primary school. It was a lovely morning, made sweeter by some tea and cake! We also wore our favourite festive jumpers for Christmas Jumper Day earlier this month.



We also wore our favourite festive jumpers for Christmas Jumper Day earlier this month.



At Churchfields, we've been spending most of our time being warm and cosy inside and have been engaging in some fun indoor activities. We had a lovely afternoon watching The Greatest Showman. Some of us have been enjoying using the magic table on colder days and Joe had a wonderful time reliving his days as a pilot.

We've also enjoyed another sing along with Neil Patterson, who always impresses us with his dance moves!

All of us at Churchfields are looking forward to celebrating the holidays with our families and friends.



Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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Previous Parish Council Minutes can be found online at <http://www.cassington-pc.gov.uk>

There is nothing to report from the December Parish Council Meeting. There were only 2 councillors present, so no decisions could be made. The Parish Council are currently working on the budget and precept for the next financial year.

Parish Councillors

To contact the Parish Council, please email them on: -
Barbara King – bking1@cassington-pc.gov.uk
Chris Metcalf – cmetcalf@cassington-pc.gov.uk
Alex Rogers – arogers@cassington-pc.gov.uk
Graham Mills – gmills@cassington-pc.gov.uk
Stewart Thompson – sthompson@cassington-pc.gov.uk

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on 4th January 2024 @ 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Clerk contact details: Mrs Tracey Cameron
Email: cassingtonclerk@cassington-pc.gov.uk

Parish Council Meetings for 2024

1st February 2024	4th July 2024
7th March 2024	12th September 2024
4th April 2024	3rd October 2024
2nd May 2024	7th November 2024
6th June 2024	5th December 2024

Community Orchards



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Over 50 new community orchards, benefitting both wildlife and people, are set to be created in West Oxfordshire following a successful bid to secure funding from the DEFRA's Coronation Living Heritage Fund. Local groups wanting to establish community orchards in their neighbourhoods, and with space to plant at least five fruit trees, are now being invited by the District Council to come forward and apply for a slice of the £50,000 fund which the Council is distributing.

Helping to restore lost habitats, the orchards will play a positive role within communities by connecting more people to nature and their local green spaces, while providing much-needed habitat for birds and giving sustenance to pollinators and other wildlife. The orchards - which need to be planted on publicly accessible land to allow as many people as possible to benefit from them - will leave a visible and lasting legacy to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

The closing date for applications is 19 January 2024. Successful applicants will be notified by 31 January with planting expected to take place during February and March. A second application window will open in the autumn. More details about the fund and how to apply can be found at: www.westoxon.gov.uk/CoronationOrchards


Worton Park

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01865 882644

Forever Fields celebrates our precious lands

The weekend of 24th–26th November saw more than 1,100 people visit the art exhibition held at Worton Hall by the Forever Fields project team. It became very clear during the exhibition that visitors were



Mandolin playing on Sunday

united with the artists in their rejection of the Botley West proposal. They could not see how the sacrifice of 11 miles of countryside – 75% of it on green belt land – to a single industrial development of 2.5 million ground-mounted solar panels can be justified, especially when alternatives, such as wind power, produce more electricity without



Poetry reading on Saturday

harming vital food production. They saw financial greed, rather than a sustainable energy strategy being developed.

Anthony commissioned 'CONNECTED' a willow sculpture by, Andy Goodwin of 'Willow Coppice' (www.willowcoppice.com) as the centre piece of the show, the two interlocking 3 metre willow circles expressed the interdependence of 'Humans' and 'Nature' and how we need to maintain the ecological balance forever.



'Connected' by Andy Goodwin of Willow Coppice

A large scale video installation by Charlotte Holmes, also of 'Willow Coppice' had recorded the movements and sounds of wind in the crops and grasses, rainwater and birdsong and ran throughout the exhibition. 16 minutes long on repeat there was constant reminder of the exhibition focus, with a call of the cuckoo punctuating proceedings.



Pictures by Frederica Craig and Dee McLean



One of the responses made by visitors to the exhibition

Before the exhibition opened, all the artworks were photographed and recorded for an archive. If Botley West goes ahead, it will last 40+ years before it is dismantled and the land relinquished. The archive will show how the landscape looked, felt and sounded, and what it meant to the people living, working and walking in it. It can be used to guide future custodians of the land as they help to repair the damage.

The Forever Fields team is working on the best way to retain the archive, and how make it freely and publicly accessible. Details will be shared in due course.

The exhibition was a resounding success – but there is work to be done yet; our fields remain at risk.

Watch this space!

We will let you know what we are planning next and how you can take part. You can contact us with any feedback or queries at: foreverfieldsproject@gmail.com



Anthony Thompson who initiated the project (left) talking to Stephen Hurst (artist).

High Sheriff's Awards for the year 2023/2024

Every year the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire invites nominations for approximately 20 High Sheriff Awards in recognition of individuals in Oxfordshire who have made outstanding contributions to the communities in which they live and work. Nominees will usually have had a high impact on the lives of others over a sustained period of time and will be recognised by other people working in the nominee's area as inspirational and as setting an example for others to follow. High Sheriff's Awards will not normally be made to people whose work and commitment has already been recognised by the award of a National Honour or by bodies such as the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service and Oxfordshire Charity and Voluntary Action.

Nominations can be made by anyone who lives or works in Oxfordshire or who is representing an organisation in the public, voluntary and charitable or private sectors. All nominations will be treated in the strictest confidence

and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated as it can be very disappointing to raise expectations which are then not met.

All nominations should be made on the downloadable form and should include the contact details of the nominee as well as the nominator together with a brief summary (400 words max) of the reasons why the nominee merits a High Sheriff's Award.

The deadline for nominations is Friday 5th January 2024. Successful nominees will be contacted early February and the High Sheriff Awards will be conferred at a ceremony in central Oxford on a date to be confirmed to which nominators, families and friends will also be invited. Nominations will be welcome for people of all age groups who have made outstanding contributions to any aspect of community life.

Nominations should be sent via email to oxfordshire@highsheriffs.com or by post to Mrs Sally Scott, High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, The Limes, Shenington, OX15 6NH.



BLenheim PALACE

50% off adult Adventure Play tickets

Until Friday 9th February, make the most of our new offer and join us at Blenheim Palace

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Head to blenheimpalace.com/adventure-play/

to start planning your perfect family day out this festive season.



BLenheim ESTATE

With Christmas only a few short weeks away now, don't forget that our Forestry team are now selling Estate-grown Christmas trees, including Norway Spruces and Nordman Firs, in a range of sizes alongside stands as well. Trees are available on a first-come, first-served basis from our sales hut located in the Estate Office car park in Woodstock, OX20 1PP from 1st - 17th December every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10am until 4pm. No pre-booking is required and our team will be accepting contactless payments only.

BLenheim

As 2023 draws to a close, we have been reflecting on the many important restoration and construction projects that have been successfully completed this year thanks to the support of our visitors. These include our new 2 acre Adventure Play down at the Walled Garden, the final decorative phase of our £1 million Chapel project to increase environmental stability and our Lake Dredge (which removed 30,000 cubic metres of silt from the Queen Pool). Most recently we replaced the roof of our Orangery as well as Flagstaff Tower, which temporarily had an enormous, colourful wrap created by designs from Oxfordshire Youth. As we set our sights on the future, we are already gearing up for our biggest project yet of restoring the Palace roof in 2025 / 26 – keep updated at blenheimpalace.com/restoration/

Keep up-to-date with our news and latest events by signing up to our newsletter at

blenheimpalace.com

LOCAL PLANNED ROADWORKS

A4260/A4165 Kidlington Roundabout

Construction work for the planned improvements to Kidlington roundabout is due to commence from 8 January 2024 through to June 2024. This scheme will include the following key construction elements:

- New dedicated bus lanes on the Bicester Road (southbound) linking with the bus lane on the eastern section of Kidlington Roundabout.
- New signalised crossing facilities on Bicester Road, Oxford Road south and Frieze Way
- Reduced speed limits to 30mph on the roundabout and its approaches (additional changes, including along the remaining length of A4260 north of the roundabout, and on Banbury Road south of the roundabout toward Oxford are also being proposed alongside the main scheme)
- A new 3.5m wide shared use pedestrian and cycle path to connect to existing infrastructure
- Improved street and footpath lighting

This General Arrangement Plan shows the proposed layout of the improvements on the Kidlington Roundabout. The traffic management scheme has been designed to minimise the impact as far as possible on residents and businesses plus road users affected by these works, including bus services. Traffic lanes on all approaches will remain open for the works, including two vehicular lanes around the circulatory of the roundabout. Whilst disruption will be minimised wherever possible, delays are likely throughout the works, and everyone is being asked to review their daily route, mode of transport and time of travel and, where possible, consider alternatives.

A44 Loop Farm Roundabout to Cassington Road

Construction of the improvements to the A44 between the Loop Farm roundabout and the Cassington Road roundabout was substantially completed at the end of October 2023, including the switching on of the new toucan crossing, north of Cassington Road roundabout, on 9 October 2023 and the bus gate traffic signal at the canal bridge on 23 October 2023.

The section of the new bus lane between the Turnpike PH and the solar farm remains closed for strengthening works on several utility manholes. These are scheduled for completion shortly, allowing the bus lane to open fully.

This scheme has delivered the following construction elements:

- New signalised toucan crossing on the A44 to the north of Cassington Road
- A new parallel crossing on Cassington Road at the junction with the A44
- A new dedicated southbound bus lane
- New footpath on the eastern side of the A44
- New continuous, and widened shared-use pedestrian and cycle path on the western side of the A44
- New and improved informal crossing facilities
- Improved street and footpath lighting

- Maintenance and strengthening to King's rail bridge slab structure

Works substantially completed at the end of October 2023. A minor site presence will be maintained to complete the remaining offline works, i.e. fencing and landscaping, plus any remedial and defects works required.

A34/A44 Peartree interchange

Construction of the improvements to the A44 between the A34 Peartree interchange and the Loop Farm roundabout were substantially completed at the end of September 2023 including the switching on of the traffic signals on Peartree interchange week commencing 25 September 2023.

Since switching on the traffic signals, the Council are aware of queuing occurring on the roundabout due to the ongoing adjacent developer works at the Oxford North site that continues on the A44 past the Peartree park & ride. They continue to monitor this, and traffic signal engineers have scheduled a site visit to validate further the signal phasing against final traffic flows and conditions once the developer works are complete. This is expected in January 2024.

In the interim, and subject to monitoring, the Council are considering the installation of yellow box markings, and if appropriate, they can arrange for their implementation. They have numerous items of remedial works to undertake along the length of the whole project, and these markings could be included as part of those measures.

This scheme has delivered the following key construction elements:

- New dedicated southbound bus lanes between Loop Farm Roundabout and Peartree Interchange
- A new footpath on the eastern side of the A44
- New continuous, and widened, shared use pedestrian and cycle path on the western side of the A44
- Improved informal crossing facilities on Frieze Way
- New signalised crossings on the Pear Tree Interchange (northbound off-slip and southbound on-slip)
- Additional traffic lanes on Peartree circulatory
- Improved street and footpath lighting

Main works - substantial completion end September 2023

Commissioning of traffic signals 25 September 2023

A minor site presence will be maintained to complete any remedial and defects works required. In addition, replacement landscaping works are due to be implemented from January 2024, and these will have a minimum impact on traffic lanes. Installation of new signage to the A34 northbound off-slip remains outstanding, and dates are to be confirmed in future.

Further information, including updates on progress, changes in traffic management, and work programmes, will continue to be provided on the Council website, where you can also sign up for updates:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/roadworks/major-current-roadworks>

RECIPES OF THE MONTH

Festive food over Christmas and New Year tends to turn towards the traditional with a twist. It is one of the reasons we love it – if we are lucky we can remember scenes from our childhood with turkeys and Christmas puddings and crackers with variations, sometimes the turkey is on the floor being eaten by the house cat or dog, sometimes the flavours have been changed and added to adding new traditions when the family grows or moves to other areas of the UK or the world.

We are brilliant in the UK at incorporating food from all across the planet but often stick to the format of what is fundamentally a posh roast dinner for Christmas. So, when it gets to January we are craving, perhaps, other spicier, lighter, fresher flavours, as long as they warm the soul and brighten up the still short days.

Soups will always be brilliant at this time of the year and can be either the run up to a larger meal or be a meal in themselves. The three I have suggested are all delicious in different ways and the inspiration for them came from all over the place!

Curried Apple Soup

(dreadful name but it does let you know what it is!)

For this you will need a mixture of apples, some bramleys, some russets or similar and any other apples which have a good flavour and are not floury.

50g butter (unsalted)
2 chopped onions
650/700g apples, peeled and chopped (at last minute)
2 tbsps gentle curry powder – and here you really can use a generic one – or a curry oil if you can find one.
1 cinnamon stick
1 litre mild chicken or vegetable stock – nothing overpowering but I find it is better than just plain water
Yoghurt to serve and if you can be bothered or have some apple crisps

Method:

Cook the onions and apples so gently in the butter they do not colour but do soften completely. Add curry powder or oil and let it sink into the mixture, then pour in the stock and add the cinnamon stick. Simmer until everything is totally soft (except the stick). Remove the cinnamon stick and liquidise the soup. Serve with yoghurt and apples crisps.

NB: the apple soup can become a banana soup but you need fewer bananas - it is really good!

Pretend Bortsch

This is much easier, I think, to make than a traditional (whether Russian, Polish, Czech or Ukraine bortsch) but has the same flavour profiles and pretty colour.

3 large RAW beetroots and one small raw beetroot
Small celeriac
1 small onion
6 good sized carrots
Stock – either use a marmite infusion or Bovril dissolved in boiling water

Bay leaf

Fermented beetroot juice – I have found this in Polish shops or other Eastern European food suppliers I think you could use pomegranate molasses and a good squeeze of lemon juice to replicate the flavour.

To serve – sour cream and rye bread

Method:

Grate all the vegetables (except baby beetroot) with a food processor (if you have one, if not bad luck!) and pop into a saucepan with the stock and bay leaf. Gently cook until the vegetables are totally soft. Remove the bay leaf and liquidise.

Now, for serving if you are lucky you have found the beetroot juice so pour in a bit and keep tasting until it reaches the flavour you like. The baby beetroot you add in tiny dice at the last moment while reheating. Lots of pepper and some salt. This looks really pretty in blue bowls with a swirl of sour cream and some chives or dill.

Chinese style Soup

If you have some turkey or other bones to make into a stock put them in a pressure cooker or large saucepan with cinnamon sticks, star anise, onions, dried mushrooms and a few Szechuan peppers. Simmer (or pressure cook) until the most delicious fragrance fills your kitchen. Allow the stock to cool and strain.

To finish simply add soy sauce, toasted sesame oil, spring onions, duck, chicken or beef strips and some cooked noodles. What I do is add the flavourings and keep tasting, then, at the last minute, pop in the meat and noodles and serve sprinkled with sesame seeds and spring onions. A veggie version would involve a dark mushroom stock finished with all the same but in place of meat strips use smoked tofu.

One last suggestion (weird at this time of year, but actually sometimes you need something light to wake up your tastebuds) is a salad my sister made me years ago – I had to twist her arm to get the recipe.

Duck (or smoked tofu or tempeh) salad

Take strips of cooked duck or your vegetarian option and marinade in the following: 2 limes – juice and zest, juice of one orange, 2 tbsps of nam pla, some raw chillies – as many as hot, as you like, grated ginger (or cheat and use sushi ginger chopped up). The duck will need less time than the tofu or tempeh to absorb the flavours. Strain the proteins and keep the juices.

Make a huge, crunchy, salad including, romaine lettuce or similar, spring onions, black radishes, coriander and if you like cucumber, although it isn't really the time of year. I sometimes add strips of carrot made using a potato peeler.

Put this in a beautiful bowl, pour on the juices from the marinade and add in some sesame oil and a bit of sunflower oil. Mix with your hands until all the leaves etc are coated with the dressing. Now add in the protein, one last turn to dress the meat or tofu and that's it.

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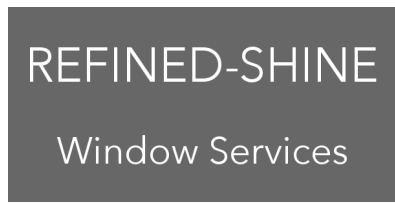


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TEA TIME TEASER

In the September edition I gave you homophones to solve. These are words that sound alike, but have different meanings and are spelt differently. This prompted Alicia and Tom, who live in the village, to come up with some of their own, which they sent to me. So with many thanks to them here are some homophones for you to solve. Answers next month

1. Faith/hunted
2. Teams/boat
3. Lifeless/stain
4. Metal/blade
5. Duo/quince
6. Mass/patience
7. Prune/steep

Answers to last month's dishes from around the world.

1. Venezuela
2. Spain
3. Finland
4. Philippines
5. Puerto Rico
6. Ethiopia
7. South Africa
8. Japan

Disposing of your Christmas tree

When the time comes to take down your Christmas tree, you may be wondering what to do with it. Here are four tips from the RHS Chief Horticulturist, Guy Barter.

Let it rot

Real trees are biodegradable and free from wood preservatives. This soft wood rots away disappearing into the soil within a year or two if nature is left to take its course. Cut up a Christmas tree into sticks and stack in a shady out-of-the-way part of the garden. The rotting tree fragments support many insects and other wildlife, as well as improving the soil and feeding nearby plants.

Shred it

Shredding Christmas trees greatly speeds up their decomposition. Shreddings make a good mulch for shrubs and paths. Many councils and some retailers offer a shredding service with the chipped trees being composted in a green waste site and the resulting compost used to enrich farmland.

Chop it and stack it

If you do not have access to a garden shredder, you can chop the tree up with secateurs – sawing the trunk into short sections will help. The chopped-up tree can be stacked in the garden where it will slowly break down and disappear, feeding and sheltering wildlife as it decays.

Create a dead hedge

If you fancy a 'dead hedge', composed of packed prunings held in place with stout posts, Christmas trees will make a good filler. This is another wildlife-friendly option.

For details of Neighbourhood Watch volunteers, County and District Councillors, Village Hall, Pavilion and MUGA booking fees please see the village website:
www.cassington-pc.gov.uk

FILM

On Friday 16th February the film will be "The Miracle Club".

In a tough district of Dublin, four women each have reasons for going on a trip to Lourdes. Tough-as-nails Eileen Dunne (Kathy Bates) is worried about the lump she has found in her breast, but would rather go to Lourdes than see a doctor; her shiftless husband Frank (Stephen Rea) wonders grumpily who is going to cook his supper. Maggie Smith is Lily Fox, a woman with a small disability in her leg, but whose reasons for going to Lourdes are more to do with her spiritual pain at the loss of her son. Twentysomething Dolly Hennessy (Agnes O'Casey) is going to bring along her little boy who for some reason will not speak. All find that their menfolk are obstructive about wives going to Lourdes or indeed doing anything independent whatsoever.



Cassington Cinema is based at Cassington Village Hall, The Green, Cassington OX29 4AX

Films are shown on a regular basis and ticket price is £5.00

For further details see the website:

<http://countryscreens.co.uk/cassington-films.html>

Cassington Cafe

The Cassington Cafe will take place in the village hall on the first Thursday mornings in the month at 10am.

The 11 dates for 2024 are:

January 4th, February 1st, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 4, NOT August, Sept 5, Oct 3, Nov 7 and December 5.

Gardening Tips for January



- Prune apple and pear trees
- Clean pots and greenhouses ready for spring
- Dig over any vacant plots
- Disperse worm casts in lawns
- Keep putting out food and water for hungry birds
- Start forcing rhubarb

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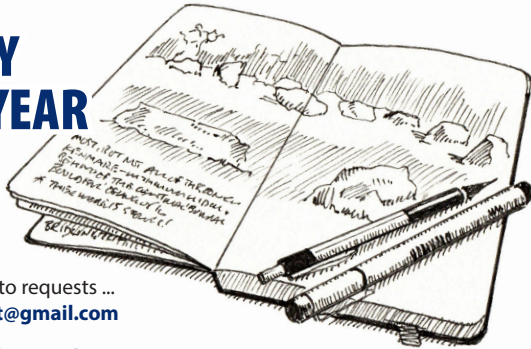
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BABYSITTING

Do you need a (Cassington) babysitter with good references?

Please call/text Amelia on 07732 069003 .

CAWN Advertising rates

Village events and fund-raising stuff is free. Simple local services, 'for sales' etc., are also free on the "noticeboard" page/section. However donations towards printing costs welcomed. Suitable commercial businesses are invited to support our community by buying advertising space at the following rates:

1/8 page, £6 (£60 per year) (landscape)

1/4 page, £10 (£100 per year) (portrait)

1/2 page, £15 (£150 per year) (landscape)

Full page, £25 (£250 per year) (portrait)

Technical details for artwork are available on request. All material included at the discretion of CAWN. Any surplus will be passed to the Cassington Parochial Charities to support our community.

what's on?

Dates for your diary

January 2024

Thurs 4th 10am	Cassington Cafe
Thurs 4th 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Sat 6th 4pm	Kids Quiz, Red Lion
Fri 12th 3pm-7.30pm	Solar Farm Consultation VH
Sat 20th	February CAWN deadline
Sat 27th 7.30pm	Burns Night Supper VH

February 2024

Thurs 1st 10am	Cassington Cafe
Thurs 1st 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Fri 16th 7.30pm	Film "The Miracle Club" VH
Tues 20th	March CAWN deadline

Do you have children or pets?

I live in Cassington and I'm available for babysitting or petsitting. I am studying childcare and education at college, have a paediatric first aid certificate and can show references if required.

Please text/call Seren on 07740 184757 or email on lemaireseren@gmail.com

GARDENING

Do you need help with gardening?

I am available weekends and school holidays.

For more details call Henry on 07496 606993

WITNEY MUSIC SOCIETY

Witney Music Society's first concert of 2024 will be given by award-winning Frederico Paixão (flute) & Mark Rogers (piano). The concert is at 7.30pm on Friday 12 January at High Street Methodist Church, Witney. Tickets (£15, £1 for under 19s) will be available at the door from 7pm or in advance online. .

For more information, please telephone 01993 898020 or visit the Witney Music Society website:

www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk

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