

HAPPY EASTER EVERYONE

The Healing Power of Love

In early 2022 St Peter's school rescued some chickens from the British Hen Welfare Trust. They had previously lived all their lives in small cages, so they had lots of feathers missing and they weren't in great health. However with lots of love, space and good food their feathers grew back and their combs turned a vibrant red. A couple of the original hens did not survive, but in early 2023 three more arrived to join the brood.



The original brood of hens once their feathers grew back

Between them they lay three or four eggs a day, which can be purchased from the school for a donation. A huge thanks to all the chicken leader families, past and present, who look after them at the weekends and school holidays.



Rosie when she arrived in 2022



Rosie - 3 months later.

She still likes cuddles but she likes sweetcorn more!

CONGRATULATIONS

Churchfields Care Home, part of Premium Care Group, has been recognised as one of the top 20 care homes in the South East of England at the carehome.co.uk awards, based on over 90,000 reviews from care homes across the country. Churchfields has previously been in the top 20 list in 2020.

The annual carehome.co.uk awards recognise 20 of the highest-rated care homes in each region of the UK based on independent reviews submitted by residents and their loved ones.

Churchfields offers high quality nursing and dementia care to residents in a safe, comfortable and happy environment. The care home has an 'Outstanding' CQC rating.

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the Playground equipment fund. The total now stands at £4,749.41



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welcome Anne's CAWNer

Welcome to the 562nd edition of CAWN. This month we have some fairly lengthy reports for you. Firstly the Parish Council have provided a much more detailed explanation of the reasons behind the increase in the Annual Precept, which hopefully provides some clarification for everyone.

Secondly there is a detailed report on the Village Hall AGM, which makes interesting reading, and shows what an active and vibrant village we live in. Thank you to all those who keep the building going and arrange entertainment for the benefit of all of us.

There is an update from the Stop Botley West campaign, who continue to present the case against covering all the surrounding land in solar panels.

As ever there are a number of events coming up this month, including a couple of quizzes at both the pubs, and a plea from the Sports and Social club for help tidying up around the Pavilion and Playing fields where the brambles and vegetation are taking over! Please do support them if you can and if you have the time to get more involved you might think about joining the committee.

There is no space in this edition for a local walk or to highlight a local charity. However if you know of a walk you would like to share, or a charity whose work you want to highlight, then please send me details so I can include it in a future edition.

Happy reading!

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.



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Cassington Plant Sale

Saturday 4th May 2024

Cassington Village Green

11am - 1pm

Flowers, Fruit and Vegetable plants will be available.



April stargazing highlights

April 8 - New Moon.

The Moon 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.

April 22 and 23 - Lyrids Meteor Shower.

The Lyrids is an average shower, usually producing about 20 meteors per hour at its peak. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Lyra, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

April 23 - Full Moon.

The Moon's face will be fully illuminated. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Pink Moon because it marked the appearance of the moss pink, or wild ground phlox, which is one of the first spring flowers.

C21 GROUP

6th - 28th APRIL 2024
 The Garden Gallery,
 The Oxfordshire Museum,
 Woodstock OX20 1SN
 Tues - Sat 10am - 5pm,
 Sun 2 - 5pm
 Oxfordshire's "C21 Group" is one of the county's longest established art groups. Painting in oils and acrylics, the group members share a passion for composition and colour management that gives their diverse styles a clear harmony.

01865 897519
Oxfordshire.gov.uk/museums

Oxfordshire Museum Service

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

ACCREDITED MUSEUM

The Quiz in the Red Lion in March saw 10 teams competing. Congratulations to the Stragglers who were the winning team and took away a box of Celebrations and the glory of success. The money raised from the quiz and the meat draw has all gone towards the new Playground Equipment fund. Why not get together a team and try your luck in April?

See details below.
 ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

QUIZ NIGHT AT THE CHEQUERS
 Wednesday 10th April at 7.30pm

VILLAGE HALL SOLAR PANELS

Massive thanks to everyone who supported our appeal to raise £6,000 to help us fit solar panels on the village hall roof. By the time you're reading this, the panels should already be up there as work was scheduled to start on Monday 25th March.

We can't thank you enough for your incredibly generous and swift support. The response was absolutely fantastic and in just four weeks we raised the £6,000 in standing orders and gifts plus around £1,250 to come in Gift Aid that we'll be able to reclaim from the tax man.

We felt it was a bit of a challenge, but that if anyone could do it Cassington could. And you did. Your generosity made it happen.

On behalf of all the trustees of the hall, thank you so much for your support.
 John Hemingway, Chair

Quiz

Join us for a just for fun quiz evening at the Red Lion Cassington on:

Saturday 27th April, 7:30 pm start

Teams of up to 6 people are welcome, entry is only £2 per person, all proceeds for the play area.

Gather your friends, test your knowledge, and support a great cause. We hope to see you there!

CASSINGTON SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

SPRING TIDY UP **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Sunday 28th April 10.30am **Sunday 28th April 8pm**

On Sunday 28th April at 10.30am we are planning to tidy up around the pavilion and would love people to join us. Please bring tools for cutting back brambles and weeds.

At 8pm we'll be holding our AGM in the Red Lion. All are welcome to come along and hear what has been happening this past year, and our plans for this year. New members to the committee are always welcome!



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FUNERAL PLANS FROM
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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 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)
April 16th , 23rd , 30th
May 7th, 14th, 21st, no session on 28th (half term)
June 4th, none on 11th, there is on 18th, none on 25th
July 2nd, 9th, and 16th (last session this term)
Toys, crafts, songs & refreshments for under-fives and their carers

This group is run by St Peter's Church 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

Cassington Parish Council needs a ground maintenance person for various parts of the village including the Burial Ground that we are responsible for - to start ASAP.

For further information please contact the Clerk on Cassingtonclerk@cassington-pc.gov.uk

BELL RINGING

Please note that teams from the Oxford guild will be visiting Cassington church on Monday 6th May, probably between 5-6pm to ring for up to an hour as part of their Guild ringing day across the area. Plans are still being drawn up and if the time changes I will give notice in the May CAWN ' 

To all our Friends....
A warm invitation to join us 7pm Monday 8 April 2024 in The Tolkien Room, St Peter's Catholic Church, Eynsham to watch Episodes 5 and 6 of The Chosen 'The Wedding Gift' and 'Indescribable Compassion'



If you haven't come along yet each episode is stand alone - you can come at any point.
Meet, talk, share refreshments.
We hope you can come. You will be most welcome.

EYNSHAM CHORAL SOCIETY
Cantique de Jean Racine and Requiem by Fauré
Te Deum by Haydn and Stabat Mater by Rheinberger
Saturday 18th May 2024 7.30pm
St Leonard's Church, Eynsham

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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>

April 2024

The church is open for individuals' private prayer daily.

Services this month

Sunday 7th April – 9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 14th April – 9.30am Morning Worship

Sunday 21st April – 9.30am Holy Communion

(to be followed by the Annual Meeting of Parishioners
and the Annual Parochial Meeting)

Sunday 28th April – 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:

Vicar – Revd Duncan Fraser 07810 324088 / vicarslp@gmail.com

Enquiries: Church Office 01865 883325 / stleonards_stpeters@btconnect.com

TURNAROUNDS

Easter is a season of turnarounds. Everyone loves an unexpected turnaround! One of my favourite dramatic football turnarounds was the last game of Man City's 2011-12 season against QPR. They needed the win but the game edged into extra time with QPR at 2-1. Some fans couldn't even bear to stay. But in extra time, beyond all hopes, - an equalizer, then the winner! The crowd went wild, the commentators searched for unique words to describe the unique scenes only to realise that cliches are cliches for a reason! Victory from the jaws of defeat! Spine tingling stuff.

Well, the story of the last days of Jesus of Nazareth is the dramatic turnaround of turnarounds. (Read an account yourself in Luke's Gospel chapters 22 to 24). And the Church celebrates Easter just at the time nature enjoys its own annual turnaround. I approached St. Peter's church recently to take a funeral, and was greeted by the daffodils in the churchyard. Daffodils in a churchyard. There is a perfect metaphor for the Easter story - one into which we are all invited to experience for ourselves. From darkness light, from despair hope, from sadness joy, from death new life. "Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Hallelujah!"

Duncan

Food Bank News



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

Recently with heavy rains some days we have had to put the collecting box inside the church porch but, if so, the porch should be open during daylight hours for your donations. 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.

LETTER FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL REGARDING THE ANNUAL PRECEPT

Dear Residents

You will probably be aware that Cassington Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of many of the village's amenities, such as the village greens, its burial grounds, along with associated stone walls, trees, ditches, and drainage channels. It is also responsible for traffic calming, recreational facilities and buildings owned by the village.

For some of these facilities, the Parish Council is grateful to the team of volunteers from Cassington Sports and Social, the Village Hall Committee and the Allotment Association who maintain the playing fields, sports pavilion, allotments, and the village hall on behalf of the village at little or no cost to the Parish Council.

Each year the Parish Council must set a budget for the services it provides to the village. The source of this funding is via the precept, which is raised through the local council tax.

In 2022/2023 the cost of running the PC was £19,000. For 2023/2024 this has risen to £27,000, and for 2024/2025 the cost is projected to rise to £30,000.

The main increases in the budget are due to:

- Clerk's salary, £4,000 – due to annual pay rises and increased hours worked.
- Tree maintenance, £2,000 – due to increased maintenance requirements
- Waste bin collections, £800 – due to increase in WODC charges.
- Audit cost, £600 – a statutory requirement.
- Grass cutting, £400 – due to increase in charges.

In addition to the above, the Parish Council has made provision in 2024/2025 budget for the following costs:

- Reserve fund, £3,500 – the Parish Council is required to have sufficient reserves, these have been depleted by numerous 'one-off' payments over the last year.
- Vehicle activated speed indicator sign, £2,500 – a mobile device to aid reduction in vehicle speeds.
- Traffic calming measures, £6,700 – survey, admin, and fees.
- Playground equipment, £20,000 – a contribution towards the projected £85,000 replacement cost.

The impact of these increases has resulted in a total precept of £62,900 for the village in 2024/2025. This represents a total annual cost for a band 'D' property of £187.77, or £15.65 a month over 12 months, compared to the previous cost for a Band 'D' property of £80.45.

The Parish Council has always tried to keep any increases in the precept to a minimum. However, we find ourselves in a position where our costs are increasing significantly, along with an ever-increasing list of 'one-off' issues we are required to deal with. Some of this is a result of increasing devolvement of responsibilities and costs from County/District Council level or the Highways Agency to Parish

Council level, because of the state of public finances, a national issue. In other cases, costs arise from maintenance of our environment in an ancient village with ageing infrastructure.

Historically, apart from Botley West Solar Farm and Blenheim's proposed housing development, the speed of vehicles through the village has been the major concern of residents who have made their feelings known to the Parish Council. Therefore, we are determined to do what we can to make the road through the village as safe as possible for all of the residents of Cassington.

You may be aware that despite the reduction in the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph, the volunteers from Cassington Speedwatch are still recording vehicles at speeds of over 40mph. Unfortunately, any measures needed for traffic calming/speed reduction is the responsibility of the Parish Council and not the highway authority, OCC, or the local authority, WODC.

Cassington Speedwatch records for 2023:

No. of sessions:	77
Total number of vehicles:	11,693
No. of offending vehicles:	1,333
Between 25mph & 30mph:	746
Between 31mph & 40 mph:	538
Between 41mph & 50mph:	44
Over 50 mph:	5
Highest offender:	58 mph

In addition to road safety, we have also tried to make the residents aware of our concerns regarding the poor state of the stone walls in the village, many of which are the responsibility of the Parish Council to maintain. The Parish Council recently commissioned a survey of the village walls, which was kindly undertaken by volunteers from the village. We need to be clear that the cost of repairing and/or replacing these walls will be a significant in future years, so an imminent reduction in the current level of the precept is unlikely.

Residents are of course welcome to express their views on these, or any other matters that affect the village, either in writing to cassingtonclerk@cassington-pc.gov.uk, by contacting one of your Parish Councillors – contact details in CAWN, or by attending a Parish Council meeting.

The PC meets 10 times a year. These meeting are held in public, usually at the village hall. Residents are encouraged to attend the meetings and are invited to raise questions. Agendas for the meetings are published in advance on the village website and posted on the village notice boards. Minutes of the meetings are also published on the village website and in CAWN.

Finally, the Parish Council is grateful to the members of the public who attended the March 2024 meeting and raised questions regarding the increase in the precept which had been notified in the February 2024 edition of CAWN, and we welcome the opportunity to explain the rationale behind this increase.

Cassington Parish Council

NATURE RECOVERY PLAN



Nature recovery has been put at the top of West Oxfordshire District Council's agenda as it agrees its Nature Recovery Plan, which will tackle the climate and ecological emergencies across the district up to 2030.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

With approximately 106 hectares of greenspace under the Council's care, comprising parks, fields, greens, and public spaces within housing estates, the Council recognises the need for ongoing efforts to enhance these areas for wildlife and public enjoyment. The process set out in the new plan will involve identifying areas of improvement in areas belonging to the Council, and determining how natural methods can be adopted to make them more resilient and help boost biodiversity.

The plan will prioritise the improvement of biodiversity in planning and development processes. The Council has already adopted Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), a new approach to development that aims to leave nature in a better state than it was beforehand on a site. A minimum 10% improvement has been mandatory for major schemes since February 2024.

To support in the delivery of this new plan, the Council will welcome a Nature Recovery Officer to work with partners, Town and Parish Councils and environmental groups on projects, and support events to boost community appreciation and enjoyment of the natural world.

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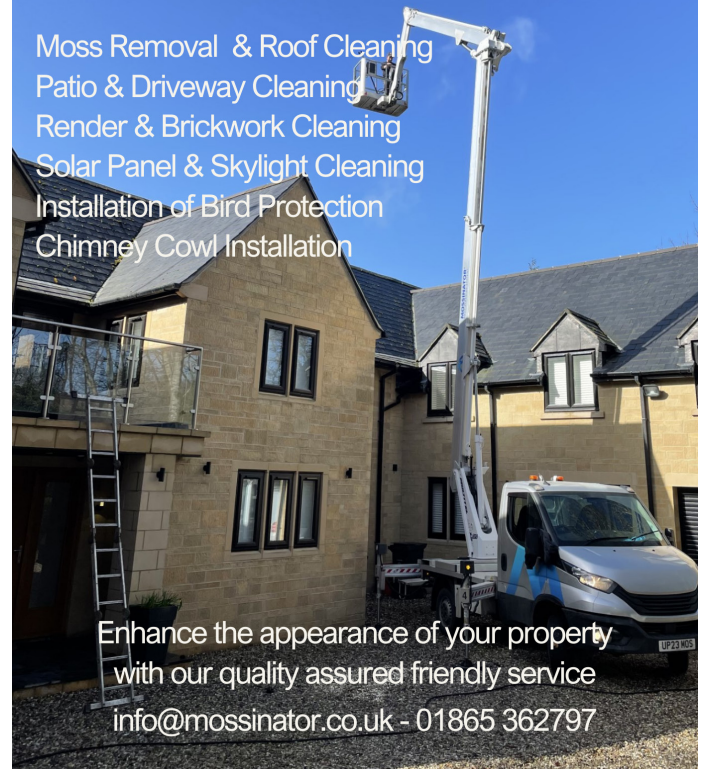
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Update on 'Botley West'



Gaslighting the Public: Smoke and Mirrors on the Agricultural Value of Our Land

Author: Professor Alex Rogers, Chairman, Stop Botley West, March 2024

The first time a representative of Blenheim Estate described the land they manage as mostly Grade 3b and “poor” was at the Cassington Parish Council Meeting of the 1st December 2022. This was stated by Dominic Hare, CEO of the charity Blenheim Estate Trust, and he used this description as part of the justification for converting farmland to a massive ground mounted solar power station.

This incorrect information has been repeated at several parish meetings about the Botley West Solar Farm, and I believe it was aimed at misleading the public. It is this ‘gaslighting’ that is still being repeated, most recently in a BBC Countryfile Magazine article 'The Great Solar Debate' published in March 2024. This article states rather ambiguously: “arable farmland surrounding Blenheim Palace.....25% of this land, the majority of it lower quality, is planned for solar.” This description of the land quality is simply not true; so it’s important to share a more accurate view.



Land Quality

Yarnton Meadows, for example, have been famous for centuries for producing excellent yields of quality hay. As early as 2022 the land under threat held a classification within a range of Grade 3a to 3b. Subsequent findings from the Preliminary Environmental Information Report in 2023, show that a substantial portion—up to 38%—of the land designated for the Botley West Solar project is, in fact, classified as Best and Most Versatile land (BMV). BMV land encompasses Grades 1, 2, or 3a, all of which are described as excellent to good. Experts advising Stop Botley West contend that the proportion of BMV land in the central section of the development exceeds the overall average of 38% and may even reach an astonishing 80%. This is farmland capable of yielding high quantities of a select range of arable crops, as well as good yields of grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet, and other less demanding crops. You don’t need to be involved in agriculture to know this is nowhere near a description of “poor” quality land.

Ground mounted solar panels and soil health

Referring to the BBC Countryfile article, there is the statement that solar farms have a “*generally positive*” influence on soil health. Some of the farmers on this land that have farmed it for generations might disagree.

The following statement is a reiteration of one that appeared in the Phase One Consultation Summary Report: “*Botley West presents an opportunity to improve the condition of agricultural land and soil quality by temporarily taking the land out of intensive agricultural use for a period of time.*” Again, a justification for this massive industrialisation of part of the Blenheim Estate.

Why are these statements questionable? There is evidence that ground mounted solar farms can have significant detrimental impact on land quality due to the compaction of the soil and the potential to increase the chance of flooding by damaging the existing field drains by driving 2 million piles into the ground to support solar panels.

If Blenheim, as the organisation with rights over this land, knows that agricultural practices are damaging their main asset, why have they not done something about it before now? So, rather than prioritising sustainable development that benefits both the climate and people, they are pursuing large-scale industrialisation of Oxfordshire’s farmland and greenbelt. This cynical approach appears to prioritise maximising income over environmental stewardship.

Stop Botley West

Visit stopbotleywest.com and register for updates

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

The Museum is appealing for a wider range of Oxfordshire D-Day stories, calls for families to share their stories and childhood memories from 1944. A new D-Day 80th Anniversary exhibition, exploring the stories of Oxfordshire people involved in the Normandy invasion, will open from 18 May to 24 September 2024. A talk "Pegasus Bridge: In Their Own Words" will be held online on 22 May 2024 and "Sappers in the D-Day Gliders" in-person on 30 May 2024.



Cassington Cafe

The Cassington Cafe will take place in the village hall on the first Thursday mornings in the month at 10am. In May the cafe will be held on the second Thursday, due to the elections taking place in the hall on Thursday 2nd May. This is a change to what has been previously advertised.

The dates for 2024 are:

April 4, May 9, June 6, July 4, NOT August, Sept 5, Oct 3, Nov 7 and December 5.

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Churchfields Care Home

Cassington

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CHURCHFIELDS NEWS

With the temperature starting to rise and spring creeping in on us, spirits are high at Churchfields and so far, March has been a whirlwind of fun, laughter, and community spirit.

Firstly, we're proud to announce that our lovely home has been recognised as one of the 'Top 20 Care Homes' in the UK for the second time! This incredible achievement is a testament to our dedicated team, who go above and beyond to ensure that our residents receive the best possible care and support to lead a happy and fulfilled life at Churchfields.

We celebrated our achievement with a fun, Hawaiian-themed party. Our staff and residents donned grass skirts and flower necklaces and embraced our inner hula dancers - turns out we're all naturals! We soaked up the virtual beach vibes with the sound of crashing waves and a friendly game of beachball. To top it all off, we enjoyed making refreshing cocktails and mocktails - the perfect ending to a perfect day!



On 1st March, we celebrated St David's Day with some Welsh-themed arts and crafts where we made lovely daffodils from paper. We even had a special visit from Miss Daffodil (our very own activities coordinator, Faye, in disguise!)

Throughout the month, we've kept busy with lots of fun and social activities. We kicked off March with a trip to the pub for a coffee which was a great way to catch up with friends and enjoy a change of scenery. The ladies formed their own club and spent some quality time together at the home. We stayed active with our regular 'Keep Fit' workout classes and enjoyed some indoor ball games and balloon tennis.

We enjoyed an at-home pamper session and got beautiful manicures. We also had a visit from our friend Roger who serenaded us with his guitar and soulful singing. In our spare time, we got creative and made some pompoms and dreamcatchers to decorate our lovely home. We also enjoyed some homemade cheese and onion pasties, our quiz mornings, and looking after our pet birds.

As the weather improved, we headed out to soak up the sunshine and fresh air with a walk to the greenhouse. We continued our monthly tradition of visiting the Cassington Cafe and engaging with our friends from the village.



At Churchfields, we recognise the importance of family ties and so had a wonderful Mother's Day celebration. We decorated the home and showered all the amazing mums with flowers. Some family members and loved ones looked in and made our day!

So far, March has been delightful and we can't wait to see what April brings. We're looking forward to a beautiful spring season. If you'd like to be part of our amazing community, drop by for a cuppa and a chat! In the meantime, please follow us on Facebook to find out more about life at Churchfields.

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

Cassington Parish Council met on 7th March 2024.

Comments from the Public –

A member of the public asked why the Parish Council has risen the precept so much. The Council explained that there has been an increase of certain things like trees and grass cutting, and we have to pay for the emptying of the bins in the Recreational Ground. The Parish Council agreed that the original explanation in CAWN was not good enough to explain to the village the reason for such a big increase.

Report from Clerk

Elms Road Ditch – A contractor has been asked to clear the ditches but cannot at the moment as it is too wet. They are hoping to start later on this month.

Replacement for Adrian – New tenders have been sent out to 6 different contractors. Awaiting their responses.

VAS on Eynsham Road & Yarnton Road – Have chased OCC. Have completed a form regarding the VAS machines and have also asked for the existing ones to be switched off as it is causing disruption.

Defib Location Number -

Replacement Speedwatch Sign – Have messaged the company to check with postage

PC Burial Ground Update – Cannot find any info on Land Registry. May have to visit Cowley History Centre to have a look in old minutes.

Suckers removed from Trees on The Green – Have asked Ubico to come and remove them.

Stile at field by Bell Lane – OCC have advised that it is the land owner who needs to replace the stile and that they would not help with the cost. They also said that they do not need to give permission but a heads up would be nice.

Correspondence

- Letter with regards to Purwell Farm blocking foot path and right of way - I have contacted WODC and am waiting on a response

- Almshouse Drainage – The Charity of the Almshouses, has contacted the Parish Council as the storm drain is block and they would like the Parish Council to pay for the clearance. The Parish Council do not believe that they are responsible for the clearance and have asked the Clerk to contact Thames Water to see if they are responsible for the drain.

Reports from County and District & Parish Councillors –

a) County Councillor

Tuesday 20 Feb was the Full Council meeting of the County Council at which we set a budget for the next financial year. We finally ended up adopting a slightly more expensive budget than I had thought ideal, but still well within the parameters of what is safe. We agreed above inflation increases in spending on Adult Social Care and Children's services, and additional money going into flood defences and roads. We are offsetting this with savings in areas such as reducing the layers of management and putting effort into ensuring that our children can be looked after in Oxfordshire rather than elsewhere. The County Council remains financially robust, but there are limits to what can be done within the funding available.

Flooding

The County Council is the lead flood authority and works closely with the Emergency Services and WODC to respond to floods and try to prevent them. There will be a full cross-agency debriefing in the spring, and I would expect the input of parish councils will be sought. There has been some flooding in Cassington, and it shows the importance of preparation, and of landowners taking responsibility for their ditches and culverts.

A40 update.

No further progress to report. Discussions with Homes England continue. This is extremely frustrating, but there really isn't anything that can be done unless Homes England agrees to pay for the A40 work, despite the delays and increased cost. You may recall that the scheme was over ambitious and failed to predict inflation, plus the Homes England funding is linked to the building of West Eynsham and Salt Cross, both of which have taken much longer than the previous administrations of WODC and Oxfordshire CC assumed. Salt Cross of course has been delayed by the successful judicial review of the Planning Inspectorate's objections to WODC's AAP net zero aspirations. I am still confident that A40 improvements will go ahead, and they will include the remodelling of the A40/Eynsham Road junction, so that it works better for Cassington residents. You may have seen that the A40 cycle route is being scraped, to restore it to its original width after decades of neglect. The section near Cassington and the Barnard Gate to Witney section has now been completed.

As ever, please contact me on dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk

b) District Councillors –

Nature recovery plan has been adopted.

Traffic

Speed Watch

Speed Indicators

Traffic Calming

Play Area & Recreation Ground

Replacement Playground Equipment

Date of next meeting: Thursday 4th April 2024 @7.30pm in the Village Hall

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

Clerk contact details: Mrs Tracey Cameron

Email: cassingtonclerk@cassington-pc.gov.uk

ARE YOU READY TO VOTE?

Are you ready to vote in the district council and police and crime commissioner elections on 2 May.



To take part in any election, anyone over the age of 18 must be registered in the area they live in. Some people eligible to vote may not be registered and therefore will not be able to cast a vote. This may be because they have recently moved or are voting for the first time.

Poll cards will be sent to all registered voters at the end of March, you do not need to reapply if your poll card is correct. Residents can make an application to register to vote through the Government website which takes only five minutes to complete. They must register by 16 April and can do so at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

Some residents prefer to vote by using a postal vote. Residents can apply to receive their vote by post, before the application deadline of 5pm on 17 April. Applications can be made online by visiting www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote. Anyone applying to vote by post will need to provide their national insurance number as part of the application. If you have an existing postal vote arrangement, you will not need to apply again.

Electors may also choose to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf in the polling station. To be able to vote by proxy,

applications must be received by 5pm on Wednesday 24 April. Proxy voters will be required to show their own valid ID when voting on behalf of someone else. Applications can be made online by visiting www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote.

Anyone voting at a polling station in England this May will need to show photo ID before they can be given their ballot paper as part of national law. Accepted forms of photographic ID include a UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth passport; a UK, EEA or Commonwealth photocard drivers' licence; and some concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass. Voters will be able to use expired ID as long as the photograph is still a good likeness. Voters may be required to provide further proof of identity if there is any discrepancy between the name shown on the form of photographic ID and the name the voter claims at the polling station.

Anyone who does not have one of the accepted forms of ID will be able to apply for free ID online at voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/ or by completing a paper form which is available from the Council.

More information is available on the West Oxfordshire District Council website, including details of how to apply for the free ID. Anyone not able to visit the council website, or apply for a Voter Authority Certificate online, is being encouraged to contact the Council by calling 01993 861410. Residents must have applied for Voter Authority Certificate by 5pm Tuesday 24 April.

A large green-themed graphic for Worton Park. It features silhouettes of trees, a deer, a swan, and birds. The text is centered and includes the park's name, a tagline, and a list of amenities.


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Village Hall AGM

27 February 2024



Chair's Review of the Year -
John Hemingway

"Not just a building,
but building a community".

2023 was a very eventful year. Over and above the usual, the hall was delighted to support St Peter's Church as Cassington celebrated its 900th year, from the special family lunch for some 200 people on launch day in January, through the community ArtWeeks show in May, to the climax venue for the promenade play of scenes from village history in September. In addition the hall provided the backdrop for the street party on King Charles III's Coronation, and we also launched a successful children's party at Christmas that looks set to become an annual event. At the end of the 900th, the hall was pleased to display permanently in the lobby the gift of the 1797 map of village farms kindly presented to St Peter's by Christ Church college and cathedral.

We owe massive thanks to all our customers who book the hall, both one-off and regular users, and to those who attend the events we organise. Cinema nights continue to be well supported, and we're constantly on the lookout for live entertainment acts and performers. If you have any suggestions for other types of events you'd like to see in the village hall please let us know and we'll do our best. The hall also now has its own system of free-standing display panels for anyone who might like to organise an exhibition.

Throughout the year the major project under consideration by the committee was how best to start moving the hall away from using fossil fuels for heating and lighting. We consulted other halls and external experts, in particular Stewart Thompson consulted contacts at Oxford Brookes University, and we looked into ground and air source heat pumps as potential replacements for the gas boiler and solar panels for electricity. Given the likely costs, and the absence of any large scale grant schemes, our only realistic option was to leave the gas boiler in place for now but to look in detail at solar panels as a sustainable source of electricity.

We invited three firms to give us costed proposals for the installation of solar panels, and the best value for money and ongoing service was offered by Lumos PV Power Systems Limited, based here in the village. We also had to liaise with WODC to make sure that our proposed scheme fitted their requirements, and after a number of options were explored we decided on a 23 panel system with 3 batteries for storage, which should meet most of our needs throughout the year.

We set a target to install the system in spring 2024, after the dark winter months. At that time the installation was liable for VAT which meant the total cost would be upwards of £30,000, so we decided to commit £20,000 from existing funds and endeavour to raise a further £10,000 through fundraising. Very fortunately the decision to defer the installation worked in our favour.

First, on 1st February 2024 the government changed the VAT regulations to make village halls exempt from VAT on solar panel installations. Second, in late January 2024 the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund re-opened to new applicants, especially for smaller grants to smaller villages, and we understand that our application was successful and we should receive just over £2,300 to support the project. As a result, we were able to lower our fundraising target and at the moment of this AGM it looks on course to succeed.

Our annual finances continued to show good results. Total income for 2023 was £2,149 less than the year before, but our underlying operating income was up by over 9%. Income from lettings was up a few hundred pounds at £15,256 (£14,678 last year), with gross revenue from our own events down a few hundred at £3,217 (£3,721 last year). We received donations of £1,043 mostly from Bike Night, plus £1,700 from interest, investments and Gift Aid, all well up on the year before. That gave us total income of £21,216, down on the previous year's £23,365, but in 2022 we had received a one-off post-pandemic grant of £3,953 - and excluding that grant our underlying operating income was up by over 9%. It's great to see a return to growth.

Our expenditure was broadly in line with the year before, except for the massive rise in gas and electricity bills which went up by 44% as our fixed price tariffs came to an end. Our running costs, repairs and maintenance were much the same as usual, and we also committed to spend money in January 2024 on deep cleaning and re-sealing the hall floor to make it great for another 4-5 years. After depreciation our total costs came in at £21,223 (last year £20,544) which left us with a net deficit of just seven pounds.

We have an amazing team who make it all happen and owe each of them huge thanks. First, for her many years of commitment, a massive thank you to our dedicated booking secretary Kathryn Teal who in May decided to move on to new challenges. In her place we were pleased to appoint Pam Coates, who took on additional duties. Thank you Pam. At the same time Malcolm Teal also stood down after many years as a volunteer and his skills and expertise are sorely missed. Thank you Malcolm, and also Penny Burroughs our long-serving Secretary until the start of 2023 who later stood down as a trustee in November. Many sincere thanks Penny.

We also thank two new trustees who joined us at the start of the year, Carolyn Hinton (Secretary) and Hannah Farncombe, and all the other hard working trustees who volunteer their time to serve: Lorna Mills (Treasurer), Adie Gregory (Events), Stewart Thompson (Parish Council), Bridget Sherlock (Sports and Social), and Sheila Nelson who is a regular at committee meetings. We always welcome new volunteers to join our team, so if you're interested please do get in touch.

The village hall is a registered charity and relies totally on generating its own income to keep the place going. If you value the hall at the heart of our community, small regular donations are a great way to support a great asset that's effectively owned by the village for the benefit of the village.

OBSERVATION

by Stephen Wright

Well, it has finally happened. I was at Jenna's house the other night and switched the TV on when I was pleasantly surprised to be greeted with football on freeview - namely Tottenham v Burnley in the FA Cup.

However, ten minutes into the game, I voluntarily suggested changing channel and we tuned into Married At First Sight. There was a woman on the show called Whitney whose eye contact with her potential husband was so bad she may still not have had her First Sight of him.

During the programme, Jenna tried to show me a photo of a cat on her phone but my eyes were fixated on the TV as I was eager to know what happened next. I'm now looking forward to the honeymoon episode. This is the man I've become.

Apparently Tottenham won 1-0 and, apart from a good goal, it was a boring game anyway.

Woodstock and District U3a



Our talk in March centred on the way in which natural selection and our intervention in the animal world gives us the animals we know today. We are looking forward to our next speaker meeting on 4th April, entitled 'Keep Your Hair On' as we welcome back Alan Jones. Discover the lucrative but very secret world of Hair.

U3a is for those no longer in full time employment with daytime hours available to participate in community based activities. Membership year commences in April and gives members access to the monthly speaker meeting as well as various interest groups. Our quiz is on 4th Thursday of the month 2 - 4pm at the Scout/Guide Hut in Woodstock - next date is 25th April. Do check out the website for further information. www.woodstocku3a.uk

As a taster, visitors are welcome to the members' speaker meetings charged at £2 to include tea and biscuits; decide then whether u3a is a positive for you. Doors open at 1.45 for 2pm speaker at St Hugh's Church Hall, Hensington Road, Woodstock; we look forward to welcoming you here. Sue Blackshaw - Chair Woodstock & District u3a

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

As spring has sprung you might be thinking of lunch in the garden? Perhaps the weather is not as kind as it could be so you need something a little more substantial than green salad - this hits the spot and is brightened up with preserved lemon and lemon juice. I haven't given quantities as it is such an easy 'recipe' to adapt for taste and number of people.

Sprightly lentil salad

Ingredients:

Cooked lentils - or cook your own puy vert lentils with a bay leaf and some onion (I add a stock cube but it isn't essential)

Preserved lemon

Fresh lemon juice

Olive oil

Garlic

Feta

Fresh coriander

Pepper (you probably won't need salt because of the feta and preserved lemon)

Crunchy salad leaves - you really need these to be robust to provide a contrast to the lentils.

Method:

If you cooked your own lentils let them cool a little before dressing them with some olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper. The same treatment for the already cooked variety. Cut up the feta into cubes about the size of dice (no precision needed this is just a guide). The preserved lemon needs to be rinsed and patted dry before you chop it into small pieces (these do need to be quite small - you want a pop of flavour not a tongue numbing collision). Take the stalks from the coriander and chop as finely as you can - a bunch of mint and some parsley would add nicely to the flavours if you have some.

Now all you need to do is run all the ingredients except the salad leaves through the lentils and taste test. Arrange the salad leaves in a serving dish and serve alongside the lentils. Some chunks of good country style bread and some peppery olive oil to dip it in and there's lunch.

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BLenheim PALACE

Icons of British Fashion - 23rd March - 30th June

Our biggest exhibition to date is now open! The exhibition features an incredible line-up of world-class British designers and labels, with each fashion house taking over one of our significant rooms, and will celebrate fashion from the past through to the present day. The designers include Barbour, Bruce Oldfield, Jean Muir, Lulu Guinness, Stella McCartney, Stephen Jones Millinery for Christian Dior, Temperley London, Terry de Havilland, Turnbull & Asser, Vivienne Westwood and Zandra Rhodes.

Entry is included with an Annual or Privilege Pass or a Palace, Park and Gardens day ticket. Find out more and book at www.blenheimpalace.com/whats-on/events/icons-of-british-fashion



BLenheim ESTATE

With Easter and springtime comes new life in abundance, and we are looking forward to seeing lambs arriving on the Estate this month. Last year we utilized two different types of rams for breeding our sheep – we introduced the Hampshire

Down rams (which are significantly larger and darker in colour) into our flock, alongside our original white Cheviot sheep. As we exclusively lamb outdoors in order to give newborns the best spring grass and nutrients they need, we ask all visitors to please be mindful of walking their dogs in the Parkland. Keeping your dog on a lead is particularly important to ensure that our sheep are not attacked or chased in a way that may cause injury, suffering or miscarriage.

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

blenheimpalace.com

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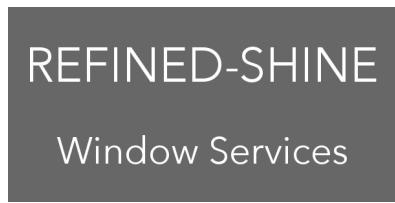


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TEA TIME TEASER

This month, as the weather improves and we start to think about summer holidays we have anagrams of the most visited cities in the world. Can you work out which cities they are? Answers next month

1. BAUNLIST
2. NOLNDO
3. BUIDA
4. TANALAY
5. SIPRA
6. NOGGONKH
7. KAGBONK
8. ROYWECKTINY

Answers to last month's sayings to do with music

1. Play It again Sam
2. To blow Your Own Trumpet
3. To Fiddle while Rome Burns
4. The Hills are Alive With The Sound Of Music
5. To Harp On about Something
6. To face The Music
7. Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts club Band
8. The Last Night Of the Proms

SPEEDWATCH

The Cassington Speedwatch group held 6 sessions in February. They reported the following to the Police.

No. of sessions:	6
Total number of vehicles:	1,256
No. of offending vehicles:	124
Between 25mph & 30mph:	76
Between 31mph & 40 mph:	46
Over 40 mph:	2
Highest offender:	46mph

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

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

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FILM

The film on Friday 12th April is One Life. It's the true story of Sir Nicholas 'Nicky' Winton, a young London broker who, in the months leading up to World War II, rescued 669 predominantly Jewish children from the Nazis. Nicky visited Prague in December 1938 and found families who had fled the rise of the Nazis in Germany and Austria, living in desperate conditions with little or no shelter and food, and under threat of Nazi invasion. He immediately realized it was a race against time. How many children could he and the team rescue before the borders closed?



Fifty years later, it's 1988 and Nicky lives haunted by the fate of the children he wasn't able to bring to safety in England; always blaming himself for not doing more. It's not until a live BBC television show, 'That's Life', surprises him by introducing him to some surviving children - now adults - that he finally begins to come to terms with the guilt and grief he had carried for five decades.

Gardening Tips for April



- Sow hardy annuals, herbs and wild flower seed outdoors
- Protect fruit blossom from late frosts
- Tie in climbing and rambling roses
- Sew new lawns and repair bare patches

Bartholomew Players present

PACK OF LIES

by Hugh Whitmore

**15th-18th
MAY**

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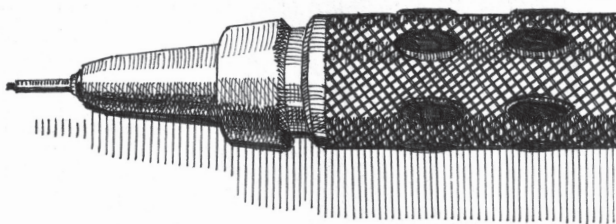
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what's on?

Dates for your diary

April 2024

Thurs 4th 10am	Cassington Cafe
Thurs 4th 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Sat 6th 6pm - 9pm	Piers Pizza night
Wed 10th 7.30pm	Quiz night at the Chequers
Friday 12th 7.30pm	Film "One Life"
Fri 19th 6pm - 9pm	Piers Pizza night
Sat 20th	May CAWN deadline
Sat 27th 7.30pm	Red Lion Quiz and meat draw
Sun 28th 10.30am	Tidy up Pavilion and playing field
Sun 28th 8pm	Sports & Social AGM, Red Lion

May 2024

Thurs 2nd	Elections in the Village hall
Thurs 2nd 7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Sat 4th 11am - 1pm	Plant Sale, Village Green
Thurs 9th 10am	Cassington Cafe
Sat 11th 7.30pm	Murder/Mystery, Eynsham VH
Wed 15th - Sat 18th 7.30	"Pack of Lies", Eynsham VH
Sat 18th	Flower Masterclass, the Chequers
Mon 20th	June CAWN deadline



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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

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.



Cassington Village Hall

This is a very popular hall with a welcoming atmosphere.

It's an attractive venue with a small stage and professional stage lighting, a fully equipped kitchen and preparation room, and ample parking. Free Wi-Fi is included, and there's a fixed projection screen for training sessions. The hall seats up to 100 theatre-style or at tables, and up to 150 standing and is fully accessible with disabled facilities. The hall is available for meetings, training events, shows, lunches, clubs, parties, etc.

Charges per hour are:

Village Residents: £11 (weekday and Sunday)
 £16 (Fri night and Sat)

Non Village residents: £20 (weekday and Sunday)
 £23 (Fri night and Sat)

For further information or to book the hall please contact Seren on:
cassingtonvillagehall@gmail.com or 07507599230

More details of regular bookers and 'What's on' available on the website at:
cassingtonvillagehall.org.uk

