

# Blewbury Bulletin

Number 663 April 2024

## BROOCH FOUND

Found at bus stop on Bessels Way: a colourful brooch. To reclaim it call Brenda on 01235 850181 and describe it.

## CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH

A football match is being organised to raise money for four local charities, Blewbury Primary School, The Playgroup, The Tony Loy Trust and The Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue. The two pubs, The Blueberry and the Red Lion, will go head-to-head in an 11-a-side football match to raise money for these amazing charities. All are welcome to come watch the game, kick-off is 3pm on **Saturday 6th April** at the Blewbury Clubhouse, Bohams Road.

Beer, Wine and soft drinks will be available to purchase before and during the game. The event is **CASH ONLY**, so can people please ensure they bring cash to the game, as all money raised at the event will go to charity. We hope to see you all there and may the best team win.

## NEW WASTE COLLECTION CALENDARS

April sees a couple of irregularities in the weekly bin collection. Firstly, the collection that would normally be made on Friday 5th will in fact be made on Saturday 6th. Also, for registered brown bin users, there will be a chance later in the month to put out twice the usual amount of green waste. Thanks to the split calendar system that applies to Blewbury, details of these collections will vary according to which bit of the village you live in. To get the info that's relevant to you, you'll need enter your postcode at [whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wastecalendar](http://whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wastecalendar) or call Biffa on **03000 610610**.

The Cleve Derby  
The Blueberry  
vs The Red Lion  
Saturday  
April 6th  
Kick Off @ 3pm  
The Blewbury Clubhouse.  
Boham's Road  
Drinks Available  
All donations welcome for:  
The Blewbury Primary School, The Playgroup, The Tony Loy Trust  
& Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue.



United Charities  
of the Ancient Parish of Blewbury

## FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED

Here we are, already in the middle of Spring, with no sign of economic improvement on the horizon in the country. We continue to receive a steady flow of requests for financial help from local people who find themselves unable to make ends meet. Looking ahead, we are going to struggle to help as many individuals and families in Blewbury, Upton and the Astons as we would like, unless we can generate more funds.

If anyone of you out there in the community feel able to help by donating any amount, small or large, we would be extremely grateful. You can do this through our Just Giving page [www.justgiving.com/ucab](http://www.justgiving.com/ucab). Thank you very much in advance, and if you have any questions, please do get in touch with us by email [unitedcharities@outlook.com](mailto:unitedcharities@outlook.com).

United Charities of the Ancient Parish of Blewbury Registered Charity No: 203538



The winning numbers for the March Blewbury Pre-School Lottery were as follows: 1st - 085; 2nd - 030; 3rd - 066. In February, the prize fund of £187.50 was shared (50%/30%/20%) between the three winners and £187.50 was raised for Blewbury Pre-School. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all our members for their continued support. Membership spaces are available - to be a part of the next draw, download and fill out a form from [www.blewburypreschool.co.uk](http://www.blewburypreschool.co.uk) - also available from Blewbury Post Office - or email [lottery@blewburypreschool.co.uk](mailto:lottery@blewburypreschool.co.uk)

## SPRING FORWARD...

Now that we've moved into the half of the year when the days are longer than the nights, British Summer Time is once again upon us. At 1 am on Sunday March 31st (Easter Day), clocks go forward one hour.

## BULLETIN STOP PRESS SERVICE

If you would like to receive urgent village news and information by email, you can sign up to the Bulletin Stop Press service at [www.blewbury.co.uk](http://www.blewbury.co.uk). Powered by MailChimp®, all emails are blind copied so no addresses are shared.



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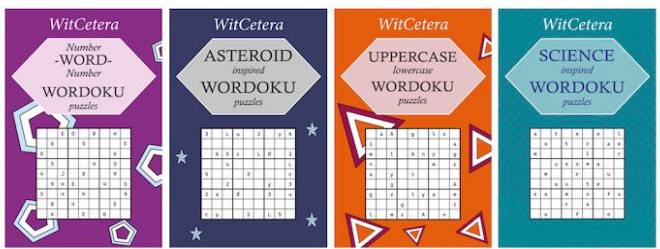
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## MAUREEN POTTLE: FAREWELL TO A FRIEND AND FELLOW GARDENER

The remaining members of the former Village Produce Association were saddened to hear of the passing of our dear friend Mo Pottle in January. She was an extraordinary lady who loved her garden and the village very much, and her apple pies were legendary. Her late husband, Ken, was also a stalwart member of the VPA. *RIP*

## BELL RINGING NEWS FROM BLEWBURY TOWER



We are very much looking forward to the **DUCK RACE** on Easter Sunday at 12noon. It's always a fun event over in time for Sunday Lunch, leaving plenty of time for Egg Rolling in the afternoon. This is our fundraiser for the year; the tickets are selling well and will be sold out by Easter Sunday so please make sure you have your tickets. They are on sale at Blewbury Post Office or by contacting either Gill Loyd on 01235 850459 or Chris Cook on 07786 635062. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible, with lots of cheering for the intrepid ducks!

## POST OFFICE NEWS

Spring has sprung in the post office and we now get a regular delivery of fresh Kitty's eggs. You can also buy our lovely local honey. We have a variety of sweet treats and Easter chocolate for sale so do come and have a look.

- From the 28th of March to the 14th of April we will be hosting the BLEWBURY EASTER TRAIL 🐣: find the chicks around Blewbury to win a treat. Pick up a map from the post office or the Blueberry pub. Maps are £2 per child and every completed map can be exchanged for a treat at the end of the trail.
- Our last few remaining tickets for the Annual Blewbury Duck Race are still on sale. The Duck Race takes place on Easter Sunday so buy your tickets quick whilst you still can.
- From now on our opening hours have slightly changed and we will be closed on a Wednesday afternoon going forward. Our new opening hours can be found on the back of this and future Bulletins, and via Google.
- **Easter:** We will be closed for the whole weekend including Good Friday 29th March and Easter Monday 1st April.
- **School Easter Holidays:** From April 2nd to 12th, we will be operating reduced hours of 9am - 12pm, Monday to Friday. Thank you for your understanding during this time.
- Royal Mail have announced prices will be rising on the 2nd April 2024. The prices of 1st and 2nd class stamps will both increase by 10p to £1.35 and £0.85 respectively. Stock up your stamps quick to save some pennies!
- We have a variety of special stamps in stock including Harry Potter, Spice Girls and many more. Another special issue celebrating 100 years of commemorative stamps is being released on 16th April. You can also do all your banking at the post office, including cash withdrawals, cash deposits and cheque deposits.

We look forward to seeing you in the post office soon. Thanks so much. *Sarah, Karen and Andrew*

## OLD CLOTHES WANTED

I am holding a collection box for our friend on the bike, Andrew. He needs some men's trousers, size 34, and some t-shirts, jumpers and socks please, if you are having a clear out and have any you need to get rid of. I'm in the post office on Tuesday or Friday for any donations, or leave on my doorstep, Tadcombe, Besselslea. Thank you. *Karen*



## BLEWBURY VILLAGE HALL NEWS

We held a successful AGM, a big thank you to John Ogden who retired from the trustees committee, and a big welcome to Jill Allen for joining us. We are continuing to work on PR, general maintenance and on the outside spaces, including a spring cleaning session sometime in April. It's surprising just how quickly those dirty marks appear on the walls! To book go to [www.blewbury.co.uk/venues/village-hall](http://www.blewbury.co.uk/venues/village-hall) or email [blewburyvillagehallbookings@gmail.com](mailto:blewburyvillagehallbookings@gmail.com), or pick up a form from the post office.



## FOOD BANK DATES SATURDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

The Didcot Emergency Foodbank is currently helping a larger than average number of needy families each session due to very high demand and if you can help by giving even one item it will make a difference. Please do help if you are able. The collection boxes are outside the Charity School House on these dates or at The Post Office any time. All the usual items will be welcome. Please make sure that all food is within its sell by date.

- Foodbank cannot accept alcohol, razors, medicines, or homemade preserves

**ALL DONATIONS ARE HUGELY APPRECIATED -- SINCERE THANKS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT**

**CASH DONATIONS HOWEVER SMALL ARE VERY WELCOME** - To make a cash donation on line visit

<https://churchsuite.co.uk/donate/> and select Foodbank.

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## ARTWEEKS EXHIBITIONS IN BLEWBURY & ASTON TIRROLD - SAVE THE DATES!

The 2024 Oxfordshire Artweeks festival runs throughout the month of May with over 400 venues to visit. This year we have two exhibition venues in Blewbury and four in Aston Tirrold to inspire and entertain you!

Firstly in the **Blewbury Clubhouse**, five local artists: Josie Clouting (expressive landscapes), Lin Kerr (still life oil paintings and floral watercolours), Julian March (hand thrown ceramics), Ellie Wong (semi abstract painting) and Yvette Phillips (textiles and embroidery). *Blewbury Clubhouse, Bohams Road, OX11 9HF: 18-27 May, 10am-3pm (Weekends & Bank Holiday 10am-5pm)*

Also in Blewbury we have Artweeks newcomer Anna De La Mare (animal, landscape painting and portraits). She is at *59 Bridus Mead, Blewbury, OX11 9PJ: 18-19 & 24-27 May, 11am-6pm*

In **Aston Tirrold** there are many artists spread across 4 venues, all of which are open **18-19 & 25-27 May, 11am-6pm**: Anna Dillon and Hedley Thorne (*Heathersage, OX11 9DJ*), Deb Sutcliffe and Caroline Vivian (*Finches, OX11 9DD*), Helen Young, Giulia Valentini, Mandy Reid and Pippa Smith (*Springfield House, OX11 9DD*) and Susanna Brunskill and Lucy Burtleson (*Twitten, OX11 9DQ*). For further information visit [www.artweeks.org](http://www.artweeks.org)

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## BLEWBURY VILLAGE SOCIETY

Thank you to everyone who came to Comedy Night and made the evening so enjoyable and such a success. The tickets sold out within three days, and we are very grateful for the amazing support for this event. Paddy Lennox (our compère) never fails to deliver, and we were treated to three fantastic comedians. A huge thank you to everyone who helped us set up, run the bar, and clear up.



**Easter Egg Rolling, Sunday 31st March** - The annual Easter Egg Rolling takes place on Easter Sunday, 31st March, at 3 pm. This event is open to everyone – bring your decorated eggs to the chalk pits (head up the footpath on the village side of Tickers Folly Field and you'll find us!) Prizes for the best decorated eggs and longest rolls (see the separate advert in this issue, designed by Elphin Lloyd-Jones).

**Blewbury Garden Market returns from Saturday 11th May** - The Blewbury Garden Market will be back for its 15th year on Saturdays at 9:15–11:00 on the garage forecourt from 11th May. The BGM gives Blewbury people an opportunity to sell excess home-grown or home-made produce and plants, to promote local food and reduce waste. We welcome all types of home produce for sale, including fresh fruit and vegetables, cut flowers, all kinds of seedlings, bedding plants and perennials, free-range eggs and home cooking including preserves such as jams and chutneys, bread, cakes and biscuits. Producers set their own prices for their sale items. A 10% levy is taken by Blewbury Garden Market to cover our costs. See the BVS Facebook page for more information.

**BVS and Parish Council AGM, Wednesday 15th May** - The combined BVS and Parish Council AGM will be held on Wednesday 15th May at 7 pm in the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.

**Blewbury Beer Festival, Saturday 18th May** - Organisation for the 2024 Beer Festival is in full swing. We have twelve interesting locally sourced beers and cider for the connoisseur as well as wines and the Gin Bar. There will be live entertainment throughout the day as well as food served by the PTA from 4pm. All profits will be supporting the Blewbury Pre-School, Unicef Ukraine appeal and the BVS. For more information, please take a look at our new website <https://www.blewbury-beer-festival.co.uk>. If anybody would be willing to join the rota for the day, please contact us through the volunteer page on the website.

**Blewbury Summer Dance: Saturday 22nd June** - The annual Summer Dance will take place on Saturday 22nd June at Ashbrook House with music from the brilliant McFunky. This is a great evening to get together in a beautiful setting with your village friends and beyond. See next month's Bulletin for more information on how to buy tickets.

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## APRIL ROAD CLOSURES

**6 to 8 April:** Hagbourne Road, Aston Upthorpe will be completely closed for water management works. This means that access to the Astons from Blewbury during this period will be only be possible via the A417.

**8 to 11 April:** The Park Road link between Didcot and West Hagbourne will be closed from 05:00 to 18:00 each day to facilitate surface dressing works.

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## COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING WALK

Flexicare is a charity providing a specialised sitting service for registered families with a severely disabled child (and their siblings) in Oxford, Abingdon and Wantage and the surrounding villages. Join us at 9:00am on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024, when we return to Snells Hall in East Hendred, OX12 8LA for our annual community fundraising walk. The walk is an amazing event, bringing together people of all generations and walks of life. Routes of varying lengths (including two wheelchair/buggy accessible options) are available to walk, run or cycle, some taking in the glorious views from the Ridgeway. Refreshments are available en route and at the Hall and dogs on a lead are welcome. To register, or to find out more, visit [www.flexicare.org/events](http://www.flexicare.org/events) or contact [admin@flexicare.org](mailto:admin@flexicare.org)

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As we launch ourselves into Spring (at last!) we find ourselves busy with exciting plans. We already have two events in the calendar for 2024 and exciting news for 2025. Here are a few dates for your diaries...

**Friends Evening - A night of Blewbury films - 26 April, 2024**

This will be held in the Village Hall on Friday 26 April. We will show all the short films from the recent Song for Europe, which were hilarious and people said they'd like to see again, as well as films from previous revues and live and on-line shows. It's sure to be an evening of fun and nostalgia. The evening, which is free to our Friends of Blewbury Players, will include wine and gossip. Roger Colebrook, our Friends Secretary, will be contacting our Friends about tickets. To become a Friend and get priority booking for Blewbury Players' productions and an annual entertainment and newsletter, please contact Roger at [bpfriends123@gmail.com](mailto:bpfriends123@gmail.com). Subscription is £15 and is renewable on 1st May 2024. If you subscribe for 2024/25 before 26 April you will have a complimentary month and invitation the Friends' Evening.

**The Caucasian Chalk Circle at Orchard Dene Garden Theatre - 17-20 July, 2024.** Directed by Erica Harley. This modern translation provides an alternative and more accessible version than the more traditional text. "A gem of a play. This is full of action, humour, music, and emotion... a wonderful story performed by a gang of actors - in a new translation".

**Box office** – Tickets will be available online at [www.blewburyplayers.co.uk](http://www.blewburyplayers.co.uk). Priority booking for Friends opens 5 June (using a code that will be sent to them). General Box Office opens 7 June.



**Puss In Boots – January 2025**

We are excited to confirm that we will be performing another pantomime in 2025! This has been written and will be directed by Blewbury's very own Andy Jarvis.

**Puss In Boots Auditions – September 2024**, more details soon.

For updates on all our events please refer to [www.blewburyplayers.co.uk](http://www.blewburyplayers.co.uk), or visit us on Facebook or Instagram. Anyone who would like to get involved in our plans please email us at [blewburyplayers@gmail.com](mailto:blewburyplayers@gmail.com)



**BLEWBURY WI NEWS**

Wednesday 24 April is our regular monthly meeting 7.30 pm in the Vale Room. We will hear about "A day on the life of a Metropolitan Police crime scene investigator". The television abounds with dramas involving 'Crime Scene Investigations' - have you ever wondered about what this actually entails?

Discover what happens behind the crime scene tape and learn about the science involved as Hayley Scott tells us about forensics, DNA and fingerprints.

A fresh new committee will be launching after our Annual meeting on 27 March, when we hope to welcome new committee members. Being a member in Blewbury WI gives you so many opportunities to get out and about and make new friends. Being on the committee is very rewarding and you get a chance to have a say on what we'd like to get up to... Do you remember when Blewbury WI did our very own 'Calendar Girls' calendar? Just ask - you might get a peek at that historic document!

Come as a visitor in April – no commitment – see if you fancy it. If you'd like to join any of the regular events listed below contact our Secretary Joy, on 850543 or email [blewburywi@gmail.com](mailto:blewburywi@gmail.com).

**Calendar of events**

Monday afternoons	2.30pm	Mah Jong	Sharon
Wednesday 3 April	7pm	Evening Scrabble	Lyn
Friday 5 April	7pm	Craft evening	Karen
Tuesday 9 April	2.30pm	Rummikub	Susanne
Thursday 11 April	10.30am	Coffee morning	Trish
Tuesday 16 April	2.30pm	Afternoon Scrabble	Jane
Friday 26 April	7pm	Book Club	Karen

**BRIDGE CLUB**

Wantage Thursday evening Realbridge sessions will be on April 4th and the 18th. Blewbury sessions will be on the 11th and 25th. We will try to run Friday evening Social Bridge sessions through April, provided there are sufficient pairs, before suspending them for the summer. So, hopefully, the dates will be April 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th.

Oxfordshire Bridge Association are running a Cafe bridge event in Abingdon on Tuesday 21st May in aid of Sobell House. Please see the OBA website for further details. *Michael Allen 851870*



**DIDCOT & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE**

D&D U3A meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 2pm at Didcot Civic Hall.

**Learn, laugh, live** Visitors are welcome to come to one meeting as a taster before joining. On **16 April** there will be a talk entitled **Coaches & Coach Horns, from the Golden Age to the Present Day** by **Colin Pawson**. For details email [chairman@didcotu3a.org](mailto:chairman@didcotu3a.org) or [secretary@didcotu3a.org](mailto:secretary@didcotu3a.org) or visit [www.u3asites.org.uk/didcot](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/didcot).

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**Thanks to everyone** who came to help plant the 280 whips making up the new hedge at the **Nature Reserve** on 9 March. Now to watch it grow. Next volunteering sessions are on 6 and 27 April from 0930 to 1200. And **thanks to the 13 litter-pickers** on 16 March. We collected about 22 sacks of rubbish from the ditches alongside the roads; fewer than last year because there was less rubbish to pick up. We have overcome the backlog but how do we stop it being dropped in the first place?

**Celebrating one year of the Nature Reserve and AGM, Weds 24 April 8pm, Melland Room (Blewbury Clubhouse)**

Glen Meadows and Martin Latham will talk on “Blewbury Nature Reserve: the first year” and show photos of what wildlife has been seen or we expect to see in the coming months as well as showing what our great volunteers have done. Free refreshments. Following the talk, John Ogden, chair of the Trustees, will give a short report on SB’s past year and his vision for the coming year.



It is an opportunity find out more about SB and to give your ideas about new projects. Everyone invited.

**Repair café, Sun 28 April, 2 to 4pm, Village Hall**

Bring your household items including clothing, electrical, clocks and gardening articles for mending and bikes for fixing for free. Refreshments available. Donations welcome to cover costs. Thanks to all our volunteers who come to do the fixing!

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**BLEWSHED NEWS**

**DIY for beginners:** We look forward to welcoming back our DIY beginners for their third session on 26th and 28th March, when they will find out how to tackle simple DIY home plumbing jobs. There are still a few places available, and the sessions are open to anyone. although priority will be given to those who have attended before.

**Community Projects:** Thanks to the tireless work of Dick Street and his team throughout the winter and early spring the cricket club mower refurbishment is almost complete. We expect a test run will be possible very soon.

**BlewShed products:** Some garden trugs and wood-turned cake stands will be reappearing on sale at Savages and are ready to go on sale at the village garden produce stall when it re-opens for the new season. New items this year will be bat boxes, garden trays , boot removers and a mini version of our popular full-sized trug.

**Meetings:** A full house of members with tools to sharpen came to BlewShed's evening of grinding and sharpening techniques, ranging from the humble whetstone for gardening implements to a state of the art, hi-tech, plane iron sharpening system demonstrated by Mike Magnay. Members went away with their favourite chisels in good working order again and BlewShed's set of set chisels is re-sharpened, ready for use.

April's meeting will feature a hands-on session on woodturning, helping attendees to become adept with that most versatile turning tool, the skew chisel. Date: Tuesday 9th April, 7.30pm. All welcome, you don't need to be a member - come and have a go at turning some spindles. You'll get plenty of guidance.

**Donation:** A big thank you to Shirley Smith for donating many of her late husband Ron's tools to BlewShed. Ron was a member of Didcot Woodturners and would have been pleased to see his tools put to good use again.

**BlewShed opening times and membership:** Tuesday and Saturday afternoons 1.30-4.00 pm and Thursday afternoons 2.00-4pm for electronics sessions, non-dusty work and a chat. Friday afternoons by arrangement.

BlewShed annual individual membership subs are £25, or £37.50 for a family, which includes expert advice from members and use of a well-equipped metal, woodworking and electronic workshop.

**Aims:** BlewShed is there to help members learn various woodwork, metalwork and other practical techniques, so come along and acquire some new skills, or just have cuppa and chat.

Everyone is welcome to club night meetings on the second Tuesday of the month. We look forward to seeing you.

*Mike Wrottesley, BlewShed secretary <https://blewshed.home.blog/news/>*



# News from St. Michael's

**Rector - The Revd Canon Jason St. John Nicolle**  
**BENEFICE OFFICE - 01235 850267**

How to contact us: -

Elaine de Ridder, Operations Manager, is available Monday to Friday from 9.00-2.30 pm on 01235 850267, 07434 686044 or via email [office@churnchurches.co.uk](mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk). Website [www.churnchurches.co.uk](http://www.churnchurches.co.uk)

Bookings for Weddings, Baptisms and funerals may be made by contacting the office via email or on the office number.

<b>Father Jason St John Nicolle</b>	01235 850267	<a href="mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk">office@churnchurches.co.uk</a>
<b>Revd Louise Butler</b>	07837 009730	<a href="mailto:revlouiseb@aol.com">revlouiseb@aol.com</a>
<b>Revd John Clarke</b>	01235 510073	<a href="mailto:jphclarke@gmail.com">jphclarke@gmail.com</a>
<b>Revd Dr Mark Rhodes-Smith</b>	01235 850267	<a href="mailto:mark.rhodes-smith@churnchurches.co.uk">mark.rhodes-smith@churnchurches.co.uk</a>

## Services at St Michael's Blewbury for April 2024

### † Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Easter

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.30 am All Age service

### † Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday of Easter

10.30 am Parish Eucharist

Followed by the APCM at noon

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> 10.00 am MU Holy Communion

### † Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Fourth Sunday of Easter

10.30 am Taizé Service

### † Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Fifth Sunday of Easter

10.30 am Village Service

In addition to the services in Church, we continue to have an **online service at 10.30am every Sunday** via the link <https://meet.goto.com/ChurnBenefice/sundayservice>.

We also have **online Compline at 8pm during weekdays** via link <https://meet.goto.com/312446493>.

Everyone is invited to the mid-week communion service every Wednesday at 10am at St Andrew's Hagbourne as well as the Mothers' Union communion service on the third Thursday of the month here in Blewbury. We can also bring home communion to those who are unable to attend a service in person.



### The Drop-In Coffee Morning

**Every Wednesday 10.30am to 12noon,  
Benefice Centre ("Church Office"), Blewbury**

All welcome to drop in for coffee & a chat.

Run by the Churn Branch of the Mother's Union



**Home Communion** is available to anyone who is unable to get to church through sickness or frailty, either for a short time or on a long term basis.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact Elaine in the office who will arrange it.

## Now the Green Blade Riseth

What a joy it is to see the signs of Spring all around us! The blossom, the birdsong, the new growth all around. We are fortunate indeed to live in such a beautiful area of the country.

For Christians, the celebration of Easter is above all the celebration of new life. We think of Jesus' death on the Cross, commemorated on Good Friday, and his Resurrection to new life on Easter morning. The flowers and greenery which decorate churches at this time of year provide a beautiful visual reminder that Eastertide is all about new life.



A few days or so before Jesus was arrested and then crucified, he spoke the following words to his followers:

*"Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."* (John's Gospel Chapter 12, verse 24).

Many Easter hymns pick up this theme of new life. One of my favourite is the hymn which starts "Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain". Perhaps you know the hymn. It was written by J.M.C. Crum, a Church of England priest, and was first published in 1928. It is usually sung to an old French tune known as "Noel Nouvelet".

If you have a chance, do listen to a recording of this hymn. The combination of words and music does a marvellous job of communicating something of the joy of Spring, and also the hopefulness which is at the heart of the Christian festival of Easter. Yes, Jesus died; but Jesus rose again, and is alive today! So let me finish by quoting these words from the hymn:

*"Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,  
He that for three days in the grave had lain,  
Quick from the dead, my risen Lord is seen:  
Love is come again,  
Like wheat that springeth green."*

My prayer for us all is that during this Easter season we will experience once again God's gift of new life – that we will see new beginnings all around us and have a real sense of hope for the future.

*- Father Jason*

### **BeSpace at Blewbury school 29th April - 1st May Making time for prayer and/or reflection/contemplation**

BeSpace is a Christian charity based in Oxfordshire that equips churches to run prayer and reflection spaces for their local schools and in the wider community. There will be 10 sessions of about 45 minutes each with groups of up to 16 students. The timetable of each session will be introductory talk explaining about prayer/reflection/contemplation (about 10 mins) then an opportunity in small groups of 3 or 4 students spend time with an adult experiencing all 4 activities (4 x 5 mins) and a final plenary where the students are encouraged to feedback on their experiences (10 mins).

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED PLEASE** – please contact Elaine in the office if you can help.

### **Food Bank Collection**

SATURDAY 30 MARCH

- MONDAY 8 APRIL



The Didcot Emergency Foodbank is currently helping a larger than average number of needy families each session due to very high demand. If you can help by giving even one item it will make a difference.

Drop off at the Old School House between the dates above or at the Post Office anytime.

**Your generosity would very much be appreciated!**

Many thanks, *St Michael's Action Group*

**COFFEE & KIDS!**

Our April session is a little delayed as we do not usually have a session in school holidays. With summer term starting we meet again on **Monday 15th April**. We welcome all bumps! babies & toddlers, along with parents, grandparents and carers.

We meet in the Vale Room, Blewbury Village Hall, 9.30am - 11am. A friendly and safe place to enjoy the company of others and have some refreshment as the little ones have fun with toys, learning to play together. We finish the session with songs and action rhymes. A donation of £2 is appreciated towards our costs. Mothers' Union hosts look forward to welcoming you. *Louise - 07837 009730*

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## FROM OUR CANADIAN CORRESPONDENT

There's a fascinating little leaflet that's being distributed here by the Invasive Species Council of BC that lists 28 of the most unwanted horticultural plants that grow here, along with recommended alternatives. I fear that British horticulturalists are largely to blame for a lot of these, some of which will surprise you.

English Ivy (as it is called here) *Hedera helix*, is at the top of the list for its alleged tree killing and ground smothering properties, and it is ripped out whenever we find it, despite its yellow blossom being a useful snack for hungry insects when there is not a lot else around, as well as providing a home for useful over-wintering insect predators. There's a lot of conflicting advice on the Internet about it too, but *Salal* is our local alternative, a hardy low-growing bush that's also great in flower arrangements. Buddleia, an untidy shrubby tree is alleged to be a favourite of butterflies, which spreads like wildfire in the most inhospitable of places; recommended alternatives are *Philadelphus* (Mock Orange, which also smells delicious) or the flowering currant *Ribes sanguineum*.

English Holly is another shrub or tree that seems to pop up everywhere as its berries are consumed by birds and subsequently emerge as new plants (prickly to deal with!). A useful alternative (and native to our West Coast) is Oregon Grape (*Berberis aquifolium*), still prickly but with attractive blue berries. Common Comfrey is also on the list, which is a blow to me because of its wonderful use as a compost activator on account of its high nitrogen content, so I shall continue to grow it but just not let it go to seed. Nettles are similarly useful, and Borage, they just need to be kept under control.

The beautiful Yellow Flag Iris is not to be grown either; instead we should choose the Virginia Iris or the Oregon Iris (both purple). Obviously there are the usual suspects that we don't want in our gardens at any price, such as Himalayan Balsam, Knotweed, Purple Loosestrife and a lot of the Sparges (which have nasty sap), but some unexpected additions are Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) which forms dense mats and crowds out other groundcover plants, Foxgloves, Oxeye Daisies and Bachelors Buttons (aka Corflower) – where would our wildflower meadows be without these, I wonder? And Baby's Breath, beloved by florists for its frothy addition to bouquets, is also disliked; the recommended alternative, *Achillea millefolium*, does not have the same ethereal appearance. Waterlilies are on the list, because they interfere with oxygenation in the water and can block too much light on ponds, which in extreme cases can cause flooding. Who knew? **Angela Hoy ([angelahoy23@gmail.com](mailto:angelahoy23@gmail.com))**

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## LETTER FROM DAVID JOHNSTON MP

Being an MP involves a lot of travel across the length and breadth of my constituency from my home in Didcot and this means I know first-hand that the state of the roads across our area is not good enough. I launched my Roads Survey last year and I'm grateful to the almost 900 people who have filled it in. More than 80% of residents agreed that our roads are poor quality. Flooding on the A417 and safety issues on the A420 and A34 were frequently mentioned, and many people spoke about issues with congestion. I am meeting with the Roads Minister to share the findings with him. From potholes to congestion to flooding and safety issues, it is clear that we need improvements. We do not need blanket 20mph zones across our area – and the Government is rightly making clear that these should be decided on a hyper-local basis with local consent. No-one objects to strict limits in areas near schools or other sensitive areas but are they required across an entire town? Constituents regularly say no and 71% of residents who filled in my Roads Survey agreed with the Government's policies here. I have been taking action since I was elected and have raised every issue that has been reported to me with the County Council and the Highways Authorities, who are responsible for our roads. This has resulted in some issues being fixed but I think everyone can agree that it should not take an MP writing a letter for this to happen. I have spoken about the need to improve our local roads in 13 separate debates, met with the Roads Minister about it, and led a debate in Parliament on safety issues on the A34 and A420. It's not all about money, but the Government has also rightly given the County Council millions in funding to help improve our roads and fix our potholes - including a substantial increase of 30% for 2023/24. We need to see this used effectively. I will keep campaigning on this, but please fill in my Roads Survey at [www.david-johnston.org.uk/RoadsSurvey](http://www.david-johnston.org.uk/RoadsSurvey).

In other news, Didcot Powerhouse Fund celebrated their two-year anniversary, and I was pleased to attend the launch of their new Impact Report and meet some of the local people who have received funding from them – including great organisations like the Cornermen in South Moreton.

I also took senior managers from the Environment Agency to Steventon to talk about our flood defences and what more can be done to prevent the flooding we have seen. Many constituents shared their thoughts with me ahead of this and I raised various issues on their behalf, including concerns about the proposed reservoir. I will remain in close contact with the Environment Agency and the Council.

Other highlights in recent weeks have included visiting Willowcroft School in Didcot, Williams Racing in Grove, the Happiness Horse Box in Uffington, and Quantum Detectors in Harwell as well as holding a Pop-Up Surgery at Tesco in Didcot. As ever, if I can help with anything then do please get in touch via [david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk)

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## **RUNNING FOR THE REGIMENT: MORE TALES FROM THE MILITARY**

It is 1961 and I am now 18 years old. I have been posted to West Germany as part of the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR), which then comprised 4 Armoured Divisions with a total strength of 50,000 military personnel. I settle in and become a member of my regiment's athletics team, competing in the mile and three mile races. We spend weeks training for the BAOR Athletics Championships in West Berlin.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> August our team set off for this event, catching the military train to West Berlin at Hanover. The journey is about 155 miles but will take four to five hours, as the train will be travelling through East Germany. We are not allowed to look out at the passing countryside because blinds on the carriage windows have to be kept down while we are travelling through enemy territory. There are armed guards on the train in case of any trouble but the officer in charge would have to get permission from the train commander to fire back if the train was attacked by the East Germans. However the journey is uneventful and we arrive in the British Zone in West Berlin six hours later.

We have been billeted in the Olympic Stadium where the 1936 Olympic Games were held. This is the infamous Games where Adolf Hitler boasted that the Aryan people were supreme in sports. His words rang hollow when Jesse Owens won gold in the 100 and 200 metres, the 4x100 metres relay and the long jump. Hitler refused to shake hands or hand out the medals to the athlete.

The next day, August 12<sup>th</sup>, we go into the city. British soldiers are allowed to travel in the Russian Zone but we decide best not to go in case the East Germans and Russians thought we could be spying and arrest us. Anyway East Berlin is very drab and still bears the scars of the damage done by the Russian Army in May 1945. During the night the East German Government without any warning decides to close all crossing points from East to West Berlin. At first barbed wire fencing is placed in position, to be quickly followed by a concrete block wall. This would eventually measure 155 kilometres long (96 miles) and 4 metres high (13 foot) and would remain in place till November 1989.

Despite all this the army championships are held over three days and I am picked to represent the regiment in the 5000 metres. However I do not perform well, finishing ninth in the final. In fact I'm lapped by the winner, a soldier called Ernie Pomfret, who went on to represent Great Britain in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. However the regiment performs well as a team, coming third of the twenty regiments that competed.

When the championships are over, we travel back on the military train to Hanover without any trouble from the East German army as we pass through the various checkpoints. *Pat Warn*

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## **NATURE NOTES**

In Blewbury we are all familiar with the streams that frequent our village. The gin-clear water and gentle babbling nature of the Mill Brook meanders past our homes and open spaces. And like most rivers you can see it, touch it, splash about in it, if so inclined. However, there is also a mysterious sub-set of rivers that are underground, lost to our senses. Probably the most famous of the UK's 'lost rivers' are found in London; Fleet Street, once famous for its newspapers (and Sweeny Todd!), is entirely built over the River Fleet. The river was used extensively by the Romans and Anglo Saxons. But as it became more polluted and boat traffic declined it was slowly built over, starting in the 1730s and ending in complete obscurity in the 1870s. Blewbury has its own lost, subterranean river, found (the clue is in the name!) along Westbrook Street.

Over the past few months the old West Brook has re-appeared from underground and spilt out on to the road. But what has caused this to happen? Blewbury lies along the spring line of a great chalk aquifer on the Wessex Downs. The water in our village streams derives from this underground store of water. February 2024 was the wettest on record, with 281% of the long-term average rainfall. Soil moisture deficits (a measure of how much water the soil can hold) were at 0mm, meaning there was no space in the earth for the water to go. This has led to exceptionally high groundwater levels within the productive strata of the chalk aquifer. Not only have forgotten streams re-appeared, but the groundwater has infiltrated and overloaded the aging sewage system of the village, with devastating consequences for those impacted by raw sewage entering their properties and gardens.

Although groundwaters, by their very nature, are deep underground, they are not devoid of life. In fact, far from it! A plethora of Crustaceans, Copepods and water mites, amongst many other species, can be found hundreds of metres underground. These fall under the term 'Stygobites', the name being derived from the ancient underground River Styx that marked the boundary between the living and the dead. Charon, the ferryman, would take the souls across to Hades. Stygobites fit perfectly in this surreal underworld. Through evolution they have no need to see in the utter darkness of the deep and have lost the use of their eyes. They are often ghostly pale, almost translucent. In the cramped space deep underground, many species have become elongated as they feed upon sparse microbial biofilms in the crevices below. *Glen Meadows*

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## **NORTH MORETON BOOK SALE**

The North Moreton book sale will be held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April, 10am until 3pm in the Church. As usual, thousands of books will be on sale, with all proceeds going to support the hall and church. Tea, coffee and homemade cakes will be available. Free entry and car parking. Email [northmoretonbooksale@gmail.com](mailto:northmoretonbooksale@gmail.com) or call 01235 818900, or 07908 314771 if you have books to give, and the organisers will happily collect them in the weeks before the sale.

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## PARISH COUNCIL

Notes of Blewbury Parish Council's meeting: 7pm, **Wednesday 6 March 2024**, Melland Room, Blewbury Clubhouse.

**Present:** Dermot Mathias (chair), Andrew Calder, Jane Gibson, Anne Millman, Lee Robinson, Julia Saunders and Mark Shayler. Also present Elizabeth Cooper (clerk), David Hollick (lengthman) and district councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne. Apologies were received from Lydia Inglis, Sheila Austin and county councillor Sally Povolotsky.

Jane Gibson has resigned from the PC after kindly stepping up again last year following an unexpected exodus of councillors. We are very lucky to have benefited from her knowledge and hard work for a while longer than she would have liked...! The PC is hugely grateful for all her years of hard work on behalf of the residents of Blewbury. The zip wire at Ticker's Folly Field cannot be fixed until we have a longer period of better weather – this will be completed as soon as possible. Speed indicator devices (SIDs) to help tackle the persistent problem of speeding on both London Road and Bessels Way should be put up onto their metal poles over the coming 4-6 weeks.

### PLANNING APPLICATIONS

All Blewbury planning applications, decisions and BPC responses, including items under consideration, can be found in the 'Parish' section of the Blewbury website ([www.blewbury.co.uk/parish/planning/](http://www.blewbury.co.uk/parish/planning/)), updated monthly. This also has links to the Vale's planning site, with full details and plans for all applications.

#### Responses to the District Council:

MW.0166/23 (P22/V1914/CM) Chilton Recycling Facility, Chilton OX11 0ST. Variation of condition 5 to allow limited HGV movements outside of permitted hours and days of operation for HGV movements. BPC has no objection.

P24/V0533/HH Lowmans, South Street. Rear extension, internal alterations, new rooflights, external wall materials changed. BPC has no objection.

P24/V0610/LB The Cleeve, South Street. Various works to exterior and interior including removal of spray foam insulation from main roof structure and replacement of roof covering, removal of impervious materials, insulation upgrades, replacement of rainwater goods and redecoration of exterior. Various minor changes to interior to enhance breathability, ventilation and removal of late C20th additions to fireplaces. BPC has no objection.

P24/V0405/FUL Open space in village centre called the Playclose, Blewbury. Community artwork sculpture made of stainless steel and Corten steel, with a Corten steel base. This is an application made by the PC, in agreement with the PCC (the owner of the Playclose), so no comment can be submitted by BPC.

P24/V0350/LB Corrydon House, London Road. Various works to whole house (external & internal) including sensitive removal of impervious materials, structural repairs, joinery refurbishment, insulation upgrade, replace rainwater goods & decoration. BPC has no objection.

P24/V0384/S73 Ashbrook House, Westbrook Street. Variation of condition 9 (wildlife protection) & 10 (Ecology) on application P23/V1825/HH – amended impact plan & certificate. BPC has no objection.

#### Decisions from the District Council:

P24/V0217/HH Collis Moor, Nottingham Fee. Demolition of existing annexe. Erection of new single storey side extension. Granted.

Enquiries regarding planning in the parish may be sent to [blewburypc@gmail.com](mailto:blewburypc@gmail.com)

NEED TO CONTACT YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS?	
Sheila Austin 3 Ladycroft Park	Lee Robinson 6 Chailey Gardens
Andrew Calder Trefagus, Chapel Lane	Julia Saunders Charity School House, Church Road
Lydia Inglis Chapmans, Nottingham Fee	Mark Shayler 2 Eastfields
Dermot Mathias The Old Mill, Berry Lane	
Anne Millman Brook Cottage, Church End	Elizabeth Cooper (Clerk) 07968 772935 / <a href="mailto:blewburypc@gmail.com">blewburypc@gmail.com</a>

The next PC meeting will be at 7pm on **Wednesday 10 April 2024**, in the Melland Room at the Clubhouse.

### ELECTION STAFF NEEDED!

The Vale of White Horse District Council still has roles available at polling stations across the district for the Police and Crime Commissioner Election on Thursday 2 May, working from 6.30am until around 10.30pm.

Presiding officers (experience required) – £233

Poll clerks - £182

If you or someone you know would like to earn some money, please get in touch as soon as possible. For more information, visit [whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs](http://whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs)

### EASTER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

For a range of free and low-cost activities, for young children, teenagers and families to enjoy at locations across South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, visit <https://bit.ly/3VrPqoR> and choose from Sports and Exercise, Arts and Crafts and Shows and Movies.

**Autumn Leaves** The dates for April Bingo Sessions in The Vale Room at Blewbury Village Hall, at 2pm are April 9th and April 23rd. For further information call Cilla Maguire (01235 851966). If anyone would like to join Autumn Leaves, please contact Cilla on the above phone number. We would welcome any new members.

**Astons Online's April event** on Tuesday 16 April will be a Zoom webinar discussion about digital banking, including online and mobile banking. We'll start at 10:00 and finish at about 10:45. Please tell us that you'd like to join us. We're available for one-to-one sessions on Tuesday mornings between 10:00 and 12:00.

Website: [www.astonsonline.uk](http://www.astonsonline.uk) Email: [theastonsonline@gmail.com](mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com)

**BLEWBURY FLYING SQUAD** is a volunteer hospital car service for Blewbury residents. We cover appointments in hospitals, doctors' surgeries, dentists, opticians, chiropodists, physio etc. As the Flying Squad is a voluntary service which relies entirely on people's personal time and vehicle availability, we need as much notice as possible to arrange a driver. Please note that journeys to the Horton Hospital in Banbury are not available from the Flying Squad. To make a booking, telephone **07891 768197**. If the Flying Squad telephone holder is not available, you will be prompted to leave a voice message. Wait for the beep at the end of the BFS phone message then give your name and telephone number. Please speak clearly. You will be phoned back as soon as possible.

### BLEWBURY POST OFFICE OPENING HOURS

Monday & Thursday: 9am – 3pm. Tuesday & Friday: 8.30am - 12pm & 2.30 – 5pm. Wednesday: 9am – 12pm.  
For Easter weekend and school holiday restricted opening times see p3.

<b>VILLAGE DIARY for April 2024</b>			<b>Page</b>
Saturday	6	3 pm Charity football match, Recreation Ground	1
Tuesday	9	2 pm Autumn Leaves Bingo etc., Vale Room	18
Tuesday	9	7.30 pm BlewShed meeting, The Shed, Recreation Ground	9
Tuesday	9	8 pm Local History Group meeting at Robinson's, Parsonage Lane	
Wednesday	10	7 pm Parish Council meeting, Melland Room	17
Monday	15	9.30-11am Coffee & Kids!, Vale Room	12
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7.30 pm Deadline for May Bulletin – Swallows, Church Road</b>	
Tuesday	23	2 pm Autumn Leaves Bingo etc., Vale Room	18
Wednesday	24	7.30 pm WI meeting and talk: Metropolitan Police crime scene investigation	7
Wednesday	24	8 pm SB AGM and Talk on Blewbury Nature Reserve	9
Friday	26	7.30 pm Blewbury Players Friends' evening, Village Hall	7
Sunday	28	2-4 pm SB Repair Café, Village Hall	9

**HOW TO ADVERTISE IN THE BULLETIN** The Bulletin welcomes advertisements from organisations and individuals based in Blewbury and immediately neighbouring villages. Space permitting, we also welcome ads from further afield if they do not duplicate existing local services, are not widely advertised elsewhere and are likely to be of interest to residents. Acceptance of advertisements does not imply endorsement of the products or services offered. Display advertisements **must** be submitted in one of three rectangular sizes:

- 60mm wide x 40mm high (cost: £2.00)
- 60mm wide x 85mm high (£4.00)
- 90mm wide x 65mm high (£6.00)

Please note that artwork is printed in black and white only, although colour versions will remain in colour in the online Bulletin. You can also send plain text for us to fit into an appropriately sized box. If you are advertising a village event you can also present it as plain editorial, i.e. not highlighted in a box, for no charge.

All advertisements should be submitted to the Editor in the first instance, either emailed to [editor@blewbury.co.uk](mailto:editor@blewbury.co.uk) as a Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, JPEG or PDF attachment, or typed/handwritten and delivered to **Swallows, Church Road, Blewbury OX11 9PY**. If your advertisement is accepted, please note that payment **must** be received before the Bulletin goes to press. If you require repeat insertions over multiple months, you will be referred to the Advertising Manager to make the appropriate arrangements.

**WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS** We are always happy to receive editorial contributions, which can be submitted in the same way as advertisements – see above. We ask for a maximum length of 500 words (closer to 400 if there is an accompanying photo). Anyone supplying information for publication must be responsible for its accuracy. We require name and contact details in all cases, although if requested these will not be published. The editor reserves the right to reject submissions. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Bulletin.

**To see the Bulletin online visit [www.blewbury.co.uk](http://www.blewbury.co.uk).**

The Blewbury Bulletin is published at Swallows, Church Road, Blewbury, OX11 9PY. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of published information, the Editor and Officers accept no responsibility for the consequences of any errors. **Problems receiving your Bulletin? Call 01235 850337.**

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