

Blewbury Bulletin

Number 690 October 2026

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION PAUSED

On 7th September the Government announced that it will review the decision made in July (and reported in last month's Bulletin) on local government reorganisation (LGR), to ensure that the reorganisation is robust and aligns with its new priorities. The scope of the review has not yet been agreed, but the government wants it to be quick, in the next couple of months. As a result, the timeline for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire will likely be moved back a year. This is yet to be confirmed. The government has restated its commitment to devolution – the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government – and has said LGR is a fundamental part of achieving this. As a result, preparatory work across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire will continue while the review takes place.

UPTON FETE THRIVES IN THE SUNSHINE

News from the Neighbours: Upton fete on 6th September was a joyous occasion where the whole village came together. The sun shone, the gymnasts entertained, the Hendred Ukulele Group played and the Cornucopia Appalachian dancers danced, whilst the stall holders sold, the dogs competed in the dog show and classic car and supercars owners proudly showed their vehicles. Peter did a wonderful job of keeping us all informed of the events taking place. Villagers won on the raffle with lots of amazing prizes, and took plants and jams home to enjoy. The great selection of jigsaws, LPs and books gave everyone the chance to spot a perfect bargain for themselves, friends and family - all



in support of local facilities and causes. To keep us going through the sunny afternoon, there was a bar, a barbecue, and tea and cakes. What an array of cakes there were, so a big thank you to all the village bakers and the Rangers who served everything for us. Our children were not forgotten: as well as the donkeys and dogs, they were able to hook ducks or try their hand at archery or their luck on the tombola. We raised in total just under £4k and monies have been distributed to all those named in our programme. Ideas and volunteers for next year are very welcome, please contact Ann Parham (anneparham@hotmail.com). *(If Blewbarians are wondering why an Upton event features on the front page, it highlights an opportunity for more Blewbury news in future issues – if you have news or have organised an event, don't forget to share it through the Bulletin...Editor)*

BLEWBURY PRE-SCHOOL LOTTERY

The winning numbers for the **Blewbury Pre-School Lottery** were as follows: 1st – 032; 2nd -028; 3rd – 058. The prize fund of £152.50 was shared (50%/30%/20%) between the three winners and £152.50 was raised for Blewbury Pre-School. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all our members for your continued support.

As reported last month, Blewbury Pre-School will be closing in December 2026. From the start of the new term in January 2027, a new Early Years Unit will open at Blewbury Primary School, providing early years provision for local children. As a result of this change, the Blewbury Lottery will no longer be raising funds for Blewbury Pre-School. We will be contacting all our Lottery members soon with further news and details about what these changes will mean. We would like to thank everyone who has supported the Pre-School and the Lottery over the years – your generosity has made a real difference to generations of local children and families.

BRITISH SUMMER TIME ENDS

A reminder that the clocks go back one hour on Sunday 25th October.

BULLETIN STOP PRESS SERVICE

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PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY BRIEFING

People's Emergency Briefing

On the climate and nature crisis

Film screening and discussion, Blewbury Village Hall

Tuesday 6th October 8 – 9.30 PM.

A group of independent experts has called for the Government to brief people on a topic that will affect all our lives. This film is being screened in communities around the UK to give us facts, and to build support for such a briefing and the actions that follow from it.

<https://www.sustainable-blewbury.org.uk/event-details-registration/peoples-emergency-briefing-a-film>



For more information see www.nebriefing.org.

You can also find out more and reserve your free place by emailing sarahabennie@gmail.com (this address was printed incorrectly in last month's Bulletin – apologies).

BLEWBURY SCHOOL

It has been a joy to welcome all our new starters into our Reception Class and watch them settle in. Mrs Evans tells me that they are all getting on really well. Meanwhile, Mr Coleman and I are gradually learning all of their names! Thank you to everyone who helped to run the children's stall at the Upton Fete, and to those who supported us by spending money. An impressive £250 was raised for the PTA. We are always looking for more parents to get involved with the PTA and hope that as many parents as possible will accept the invitation to attend the AGM on 30th September at 8pm in the school.

The school also has a vacancy for a parent governor. If any of our parents would like to find out more about what this involves, please let the school office team know and they will arrange for Ann Parham, our Chair of Governors, to contact you.

We are excited to share that planning has now started for our Nursery provision, which will open in January. Anyone who is currently enrolled at, or on the waiting list for, Blewbury Pre-School will be offered a Nursery place from January. If you are interested in a Nursery place from Easter 2027, September 2027 or later, please contact the school office to be added to our interest list. Enrolment forms will be sent out later in the Autumn term.

We have also finalised the dates for our prospective Reception 2027 starter events. There will be two Stay and Play sessions:

- **Saturday 17th October, 10am–12 noon**
- **Wednesday 9th December, 4pm–6pm**

If your child is due to start Reception in September 2027 and you would like to attend one of these sessions, please contact the school office to book a place office.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk Miss Reeder, Executive Headteacher

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE MALTHUS TRUST

The Trustees once again welcome applications from any Blewbury resident of any age for help with the current financial pressures. Applications to other sources for help will not prevent you from being eligible for help from us. Please note that this is separate to our educational grants which are only considered each September.

The application process is totally confidential and, with this in mind, application forms are being made available from inside both Church porches, just call in and pick one up! The forms will be available from **Monday 26th October**.

If you are stuck at home and unable to collect a form, please feel free to call one of our Trustees on (01235) 851789 and a form can be delivered to you. Alternatively, please email us on MalthusTrust@gmail.com and a form can be emailed to you. The closing date for applications is **Saturday 21st November** and the return addresses will be shown on the forms. We plan to distribute funds in early December.



This month's Foodbank dates are Saturday 3rd to Monday 12th October: drop off at the Old School House or the Post Office; local supermarkets also accept donations. Please ensure all food is within its sell by date. Foodbank cannot accept alcohol, razors, medicines, or homemade preserves. The Didcot Emergency Foodbank is still a vital source of help to many local families and if you can give even one item every donation is hugely appreciated. Cash donations, however small, are also very welcome: <https://didcotbaptist.churchsuite.com/donate>, click Foodbank.

ROADWORKS UPDATE

Pre-surfacing works are scheduled between 5th-10th October for the rest of London Road between Blewbury and Upton – this should be some patching prior to surface dressing, which should be done before the end of the year.

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BLEWBURY VILLAGE SOCIETY

Your BVS committee needs you!

The BVS committee is a team of volunteers who help to run events for the village, and we are always grateful to hear your ideas and for any offers of help! We currently have a couple of vacancies on the committee, and we would love to hear from anyone who would be interesting in joining to support the BVS and your community. If you don't want to join but you have an event that you would like to make happen, or if you would just like to support one of our regular calendar events, please contact us at blewburybvs@gmail.com.



The Blewbury Beer Festival returns on 3rd October

Ten years after its inception in the Village Hall in 2016, the Blewbury Beer Festival returns as an Oktoberfest in 2026. Come and join us for great drinks, live music, good food and a relaxed village atmosphere, all in support of local good causes. It will run from 2 pm to 8 pm. Entrance is £5 (under 18s free), and beer tokens are £2 per half pint. We'll have a large range of locally sourced beers, as well as wine and a gin bar, including more local products. You can find out more details at <https://www.blewbury-beer-festival.co.uk/>, or scan the QR code.



Fireworks Night, Saturday 7th November

The BVS Fireworks Night will be held on Saturday 7th November in Tickers Folly Field. We have a spectacular firework display planned, and the bar and baked potato stalls will be back, under our marquee. Gates will open at 6:00 pm, the bonfire will be lit at 6:30 pm and the fireworks will start at 7:00 pm.

We will have the usual wood collection for the bonfire with a small collection fee. We are working on transport, but spaces may be limited, so please email blewburybvs@gmail.com or phone Alex on 07831 692331 if you would like your address to be included on the rounds. The deadline for a request for wood collection is **Friday 30th October** so that we can plan the route. We politely request that you only put out reasonably clean firewood and remove as much metal and plastic as possible. Unfortunately, if you do not adhere to this, we may need to refuse to pick the wood up, so thanks in advance for your cooperation.

As always, we need lots of volunteers for this event – especially with wood collection and potato baking beforehand, and with setup and refreshment serving on the night. If you can help, please email us at the BVS email address above. We'd love to hear from you!

Dates for your diary

It seems a long way off, but December is always busy, so don't forget to put the regular events in the diary: Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve (24th December) and the Boxing Day walk (26th December). More details to follow.

BVS marquee for hire

The BVS marquee is available for hire by other groups, societies and individuals in the village for a small charge. It measures 12m x 6m and has sides if needed. We also now have fairy lights for hire along with it, to help with decorating! If you have supported a previous Beer Festival, Fireworks Night or Summer Dance, you may have seen it in action. To book it, contact lydia.wanstall@gmail.com.

COFFEE & KIDS!

Please note: we are starting earlier to help families who are dropping off older children at school and pre-school. So that will be 9am - 11am on Monday 5th October in the Vale Room, Blewbury Village Hall. Do join us at a time that suits you. We welcome all bumps, babies & toddlers, along with parents, grandparents or carers. Here is a warm, friendly and safe place to enjoy the company of others and have some refreshment as the little ones have fun with toys, learn to play together, do some craft activities and sing together! A donation of £2 is appreciated towards our costs. Mothers' Union hosts look forward to welcoming you. Any queries, text Louise on 07837 009730.

NORTH MORETON BOOK SALE

The North Moreton Book Sale will be held on Saturday 31st October in North Moreton Church, from 10am until 3pm. As usual, thousands of books will be on sale, with all proceeds going to support the village hall and church. Tea, coffee and home-made cakes will be available. Free entry and car parking. Donations of spare books are always welcome. Email northmoretonbooksale@gmail.com or call 01235 818900 or 07908314771 if you have any books to give, and the organisers will happily collect them. *Katy Taylor*

SUNDAY TEAS IN ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Thanks to everybody who made and served delicious cakes and to all our regulars and visitors who came along to enjoy good company and very interesting conversations. The profit this year was £408 which will go towards the cost of the tree on top of the Church so that the whole village will enjoy seeing it from Advent Sunday to Candlemas. Thanks again and we look forward to seeing you again next summer. *Pat Mattimore and team*



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FRIENDS OF ST MICHAELS - AUTUMN EVENTS UPDATE

Sunday 11th October is our final jazz concert for this year starting at 5.30pm. The Luiz Morais Quartet will give an inspiring insight into modern Brazilian music. Rich harmonies and rhythms are based around the Brazilian guitar traditions. Tickets are available from the Post Office or reserve tickets from Gill Loyd 07767 463285. Thank you very much to everyone who has supported these enjoyable events, and we look forward to more next year.

On **Saturday 17th October** we are holding a Barn Dance starting at 7.30pm, open to all the family, in the Village Hall. Dancing (no skills required!) will be called to music by The Mad Hatters. Ticket prices are £15, with a reduced rate of £7 for those aged ten and under. This includes a two-course hot supper. A lovely evening of enjoyment for all the family. The village hall bar will be available for drinks. Tickets available at the Post Office or from Gill as above.

2027 calendars are now on sale. We are keeping the same format and pricing at £8 as in previous years. Please email fosmblewbury@gmail.com for your copy. They will also be on sale at our Autumn Fair on 7th November and at the Post Office.

Saturday 7th November is our Autumn Fair from 10am -1pm to be held in the Church. There is still some room for more stalls; if you have something to promote or sell, please email for a place. No fixed stall fee, donations welcome. If you are interested in helping to preserve our Grade 1 listed Church building and would like to join our committee please email fosmblewbury@gmail.com for more information. *Louise Kieft*

COUNTY COUNCILLOR: REBEKAH FLETCHER

Dear Parish Councillors and residents,

I hope everyone has had an enjoyable summer. It's quite difficult to progress things during July/August due to officer availability, and I have also had some time away for work, so thank you for everyone's patience. Council resumed again fully on 8th September and I will chase again all the outstanding items. Some of these have been several months ongoing, so I'm now starting to escalate beyond usual channels.

Although the government announced the three unitary authority model for Oxfordshire less than two months ago, they have now decided to pause Local Government Reorganisation. Given that LGR has already cost a huge amount of money, this U-turn is extremely frustrating and we don't yet know whether the original decision will stand or be reversed, so we are somewhat in limbo as to what impact this will have on the forward plan. I will let residents know once I have more information.

Last month, I was able to facilitate multiple meetings with officers and with the Didcot Community Partnership to discuss plans for the new Family Hub on Park Road in Didcot. It's a heartening example of the council working with brilliant grassroots community organisations to build services that reflect and support the communities they're in. Once I have a timeline for the new hub, I will let you know.

This month, I'm looking forward to attending the 80th anniversary celebrations of the County Print Finishers, which is a Council-run supported business. It employs people who need support beyond reasonable adjustments in the workplace, with the aim of giving them the essential skills to move into external employment. It makes a real difference to the lives of people across Oxfordshire, and I'm delighted that it's reached such a fantastic milestone.

Lastly, after multiple reports of contractors leaving signage and cones out around the division, I've told officers that I will collect them all so that they can be removed in one go. To this end, I would be very grateful if people could let me know of any offending contractor clutter so that I can do this!

Other updates:

Big Conversation on Care – Baroness Casey is chairing the Independent Commission on Adult Social Care. They are seeking public input on key questions about how social care should be funded, fairly and sustainably. I'm really passionate about this initiative so please do take part (see page 19 for details); social care affects us all.

Shared Lives Carers – If you might be interested in opening up your home to an adult who needs additional support to be independent, please do consider becoming a Shared Lives Carer. It's a paid role, our carers describe it as hugely rewarding, and it can genuinely change lives for people with additional support needs.

Councillor Priority Fund – All County Councillors have access to a pot of funding to support local community projects. Applications are open until November 2026, and I still have around 50% of my fund remaining so any local charity or parish council, please do apply! The minimum grant is £500, and there are rules regarding eligibility of applicants and projects. You can read more at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/communities/councillor-priority-fund>.

Best wishes, *Bekah Fletcher*



News from St. Michael's

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

How to contact us: -

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Revd Dr Mark Rhodes-Smith	01235 850267	mark.rhodes-smith@churnchurches.co.uk

Services in October

<i>Thursday 1st</i>	<i>7.00 pm Time for Reflection</i>
† Sunday 4th October	18th Sunday after Trinity
	8.00 am Holy Communion
	10.30 am All Age service
† Sunday 11th October	19th Sunday after Trinity
	10.30 am Choir-led Taizé Service
<i>Wednesday 14th</i>	7.30 pm Fellowship home group, Charity School House
<i>Thursday 15th</i>	10.00 am MU Holy Communion, St Mary's <u>Upton</u>
† Sunday 18th October	Luke the Evangelist
	10.30 am Parish Eucharist
† Sunday 25th October	Bible Sunday
	10.30 am Parish Eucharist
<i>Wednesday 28th</i>	7.30 pm Fellowship home group, Charity School House

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>. We would also be delighted to arrange for home communion for those who are unable to attend a service.

Spreading the light this Halloween! We are joining many churches across the world spreading the light this Halloween. **St Andrew's Light Trail, Saturday 31st October, 5.30-7pm (East Hagbourne)**

Some churches host "light parties" or in our case, a "light trail" at Halloween as a positive, faith-based alternative to traditional spooky celebrations, offering a way to **celebrate Jesus as the "Light of the world"**. Everyone welcome to come and look at our light trail. There will be goodie bags and hot chocolate too!



Poppies for the Church display. THANK YOU for the knitted and crocheted poppies already handed in for our Remembrance Day poppy display. We need as many as we could get for the new display we are planning for this year and we would be very grateful for any you could make for us. If you are wondering, we do have the ones we used two years ago and will definitely be using them too. Patterns are available from Elaine in the Office. You are welcome to drop them off at any time in the church or at the Benefice office. Final deadline **30th October please.**

Date for the diary: All Souls' Service 1st November 3pm, St Michael's Blewbury

All are very welcome at our annual service of commemoration, which this year will be held at St Michael's Blewbury. The service includes the lighting of candles and reading out of names of loved ones we have lost. Anyone who would like to have a loved one remembered at this service is welcome to send names to Elaine in the Benefice Office.



A Remarkable Woman

For many years, there has been a tradition in the Church to hold a special celebration of the work of the medical profession on or about 18th October. Why this date? Because it's the feast day of St Luke, and by tradition St Luke, who lived back in the 1st century AD, was a physician by profession. He was also the author of two of the most influential books ever written: the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Down the centuries, many Christians have been actively involved in providing medical care to the wider community, and this tradition continues to this day.

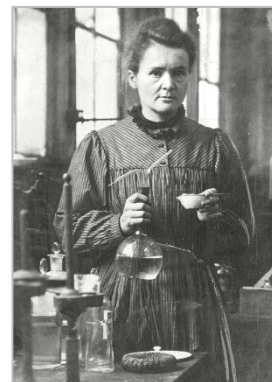
This coming St Luke's Day, I will be celebrating the life and work of Marie Curie, the first woman to win a Nobel Prize in Science. Marie was born in Poland in 1867, and moved to Paris in 1891. She entered the Sorbonne, where she read physics and mathematics. In due course, she met and married another scientist, Pierre Curie, and they worked together as a team pursuing their scientific research. In 1903, Marie and Pierre were awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics jointly with Henri Becquerel. Tragically, Pierre was killed in an accident in 1906. But Marie continued her research, and she was awarded a second Nobel Prize in 1911. Her research led to the use of radiation and x-ray machines in a medical context, initially in the 1st World War, and it has saved countless lives ever since. Next time you are in a hospital and see a sign saying "Radiology", do think of Marie and offer a prayer of thanks. Where would we be without X-rays and their like?

If you are interested in learning more about Marie Curie and her research, do come along on Sunday 18th October to any of the following services: 1030am at St Michael's Blewbury; 4pm at All Saints North Moreton; and 6pm at St Andrew's Hagbourne. You will be most welcome.

Marie Curie was a remarkable woman and a remarkable scientist. Science is one of God's greatest gifts to humankind, and there is no conflict between good science and good religion (there can a conflict between bad science and bad religion, but that is another story!). Let me finish with two thought-provoking quotes from Marie herself: *"You cannot hope to build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end each of us must work for [our] own improvement, and at the same time share a general responsibility for all humanity, our particular duty being to aid those to whom we think we can be most useful";* and *"Nothing in life is to be feared; it is only to be understood"*.

Do come along on 18th October, and help us celebrate not only Marie Curie, but also the life and work of countless other scientists who have contributed so much to the well-being of their fellow men and women.

Praise be to God for scientists! *Father Jason*



I have said before that MU is a "grassroots" organisation. Our members work towards our five objectives. Here are some things we have done locally and are doing now.

Supporting and promoting marriage: we instigated marriage preparation in the 90's, send first anniversary cards to couples and periodically hold marriage thanksgiving services.

Encouraging parents in their role to develop the faith of their children: we support and keep in touch with baptism families and give bible story books to children who start school.

Maintaining a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service: we meet monthly for the Eucharist, annually gather for our "wave of prayer" and also join national prayers against gender-based violence.

Promoting conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children: we run a monthly baby and toddler group and a weekly drop in for elderly folk.

Helping those whose family life has met with adversity: we make and send Easter cards to people who live alone or are in poor health. We raise money to provide holidays for families in particular need.

Our branch meets monthly for a Holy Communion service followed by refreshments, moving to Upton church in the cooler months. This service will be on **Thursday 15th October, 10am at St. Mary's Church, Upton**. All are very welcome. Join us and Join in. Help us to do these things and more.

Revd Louise Butler 07837 009730, leader, Churn MU branch



Recent funeral at St Michael's Blewbury

27th August: Coral Mary Richards, aged 91. *May she rest in peace and rise in glory*

Food Bank Collection

Saturday 3 October till Monday 12 October

Thank you for your continued generosity to the Didcot Emergency Foodbank. Please help if you can! Drop off items at the Old School House between the dates above or at the Post Office anytime. - St Michael's Action Group

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Written by Steve White

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On sale from Savages & Blewbury Post Office or www.blewburyplayers.co.uk (for mail delivery only)



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BADMINTON

Blewbury Badminton Club is back! Every Thursday 8 till 9:30pm in the Village Hall

Come and join our friendly, social club - we are keen to welcome new members of all abilities.

We play every Thursday evening in Blewbury Village Hall from 8pm till 9:30pm and our season runs from the beginning of September through to the end of April.

Membership is £80 for the season (£40 if you are 18-29 years old). Alternatively, you can attend up to 6 sessions at £5 per evening without becoming a member.

FREE first taster session – come and give it a go!

For further information please contact Penny Brassell 07792 692911



THE BLUEBERRY PUB

Good news at the Blueberry pub. Change is good for all sorts of reasons and we are always looking for ways to improve our offering. Coming up soon we have exciting news of new cuisines. You already know that Choi's Chinese serve in-house on Mondays and Tuesday evenings (original menu coming back). A new line up of world cuisines are to join with new menus. Over the coming weeks we are negotiating with other fantastic businesses to collaborate so you get to dine in on some of your favourite foods. We have lined up for you Thai, Indian, Caribbean jerk, Stacks smashed burgers and Turkish grilled foods. No waiting outside for a food van in the cold winter - you get the dining-in experience of a restaurant from top quality cuisines cooked in-house. We still have our fantastic and original wood fired, stone baked pizzas and while this is being set up a pub menu from pies or sausage and mash to mixed grills and steaks. Info boards will be out and news on the BVS site as they come onboard. Friday mornings are great for a cooked breakfast from 8am and weekend breakfast coming soon also. It's your community pub that is fully inclusive so if you have an event we will put it on for free. If you have ideas or drinks / Beers you would like to see let us know, we're a free house so we are flexible and able to please our customers. Our free-to-enter quiz is the last Wednesday of every month with a top prize of £50. Thank you as always for your support. A lot has changed in the 5 years we have been serving you in the pub industry and not all for the best; luckily we have great locals and fantastic staff. Thank you, *Caron and Kevin*

BLEWBURY WI

On Wednesday 28th October we are looking forward to a fascinating meeting when Michelle Johnson will give us a talk entitled "Trust me I'm a chat bot"! She will present a practical talk on how AI is changing online scams and how simple habits can help you stay safe without becoming fearful or tech obsessed. We meet in the Vale room at 7.30pm.

Blewbury WI has monthly meetings, plus we play informal games of Scrabble, Mah Jong and Rummikub.

We run a book club, have a monthly craft get together, a monthly coffee morning plus an occasional walk. Such varied activities and a super supportive network. To find out more, ring our Secretary, Joy, on 07803 697809 or email blewburywi@gmail.com.



Mondays	2.30pm	Mah Jong	Sharon
Friday 2 October	7pm	Craft club	Karen
Tuesday 6 October	7pm	Scrabble	Karen
Wednesday 7 October	10.30am	Coffee morning	Trish
Monday 12 October	09.30am	Walk	Karen
Thursday 22 October	2.30pm	Rummikub	Jane

BRIDGE QUIZ

There's a general principle: pre-empters should shut up in competitive auctions and leave subsequent decisions to partner. If you open 3S but then later want to bid 4S over the opponents' 4H contract, that probably means you should have bid 4S to begin with. But is that always true? Here are three hands I saw at the table. You've pre-empted, but what next?

Answers on page 17. *Finn Clark*

♠ K87632 ♥ A82 ♦ J102 ♣ 10	♠ Q109532 ♥ — ♦ AJ ♣ 87652	♠ J97 ♥ K52 ♦ KJ109653 ♣
HAND ONE Love all Dealer W W N E S 2S P 3S 4C	HAND TWO Love all Dealer E W N E S P 1D 3S 4H 4S 5H	HAND THREE Game N-S Dealer E E S W N 3D P 4S 5C

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BLEWBURY PLAYERS

Date for your diary... We've got our autumn activities covered with rehearsing, set & prop building, costume creating, lights and sound to plan etc., Please do come and see the result to kick off your festive season at the end of November...

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens adapted by Myf Laugharne.

Directed by Jo Laugharne and designed by Loraine Fergusson

St Michael's Church, Blewbury, 25-28th November, 2026

Online Box Office opens on 30 October. Adult £15, child £8, at www.blewburyplayers.co.uk

Myf Laugharne has done a brilliant job adapting Dickens' novella, keeping very close to the original, adding a few ideas and one little twist at the end. Our show will run for an hour and a quarter. Along with ghostly characters and dramatic events, we will have a great band enhancing the action with traditional carols. We have been given permission to hold our production in St Michael's, a wonderful performance space which will add to the atmosphere which Dickens originally created. We are extremely grateful to Father Jason and the Parochial Church Council for this fantastic opportunity.

Our aim is to create a Victorian London Christmas Eve which will surround the audience from the moment they enter the Church. We may be a little early with our performance in late November, but we want to inject a little piece of Christmas spirit for everyone to take away with them, as Advent begins. We can't wait to start rehearsing!

Looking for volunteers

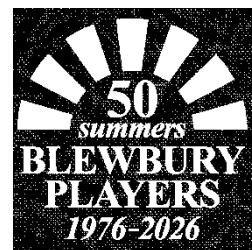
We would like to encourage anybody who would like to shadow or learn non-performance roles during A Christmas Carol, or our Summer 2027 production at Orchard Dene, to get in touch blewburyplayers@gmail.com. We are always keen to encourage people to learn more about technical, front of house, stage management, costume, etc., by working alongside more experienced volunteers. We are particularly interested in people interested in shadowing the Director's Assistant role, light or sound.

CANADIAN CORRESPONDENT

During my recent return to Blewbury to see the wonderful *Wind in the Willows* play, I was able to show off my newly acquired tattoos (The White Horse, and a spray of freesias), which prompted me to investigate the ancient art of tattooing. Tattooing is highly popular here and deeply ingrained in Vancouver's cultural identity, and has evolved into one of North America's premier tattoo destinations. Tattooing has been a global practice for thousands of years, likely since the Neolithic era. Archaeological evidence of the practice of tattooing, such as preserved skin markings, has been found along with traditional tools. Evidence of tattooing has been found virtually all around the world, serving different purposes such as spiritual protection, medicinal therapy, social status, and tribal affiliation among other things, using traditional hand-tapping (with a mallet) methods that have remained largely unchanged for over 2,000 years. The handle and mallet were generally made of wood while the points, either single, grouped or arranged to form a comb were made of thorns, bone, teeth, and turtle and oyster shells. Indigenous people had determined that certain nerves along the jawline connected to certain teeth, thus tattooing those nerves would stop them from firing signals that led to toothaches! In Inuit culture, it was believed that a woman could not transition into the spirit world without tattoos on her skin. However, In Japan, from the early 17th century, criminals were widely being tattooed as a visible mark of punishment and were marked with symbols on certain parts of the body, mostly the face and arms.

Maritime tattoos were deeply rooted in superstition and protective magic: the Nautical Star to ensure the sailor could always find their way home; a swallow earned for every 5,000 nautical miles travelled; Hold Fast, tattooed across the knuckles of both hands, said to give the sailor better grip on the rigging during intense storms, and The Anchor symbolising stability, grounding, and resilience, often earned after successfully crossing the Atlantic Ocean. And The Full-Rigged Ship, earned only after a sailor successfully sailed around the notoriously treacherous waters of Cape Horn.

Originally tattoos were made by skilled artists using a small hammer to tap the tattooing needle (either a single needle or a brush-like bundle of needles, usually made from wood, horn, bone, ivory, metal, bamboo, or thorns) set perpendicular to a wooden handle in an L-shape. The tapping moves the needle in and out of the skin rapidly (around 90 to 120 taps a minute). The needles created wounds on the skin that were then rubbed with the ink made from soot or ashes mixed with water, oil, plant extracts. The first electric tattoo needle was patented in New York City in 1891; now the most common method of tattooing is the electric tattoo machine, which inserts ink into the skin via a single needle or a group of needles that are soldered onto a bar, attached to an oscillating unit, driving the needles in and out of the skin 80 to 150 times a second. *Angela Hoy*



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BLEWSHED

BlewShed Meetings: Pond life as seen down a microscope provided BlewShed members with a fascinating glimpse into a world most of us have never seen since biology lessons at school. Robert Keyes kindly brought his excellent microscopes and a selection of pond water samples for us to marvel at. His beautiful, illustrated pond life guides helped us identify a small portion of all they contained. Too many to list here!

Future Meetings: Our next meeting, on 22nd September (before many of you receive the Bulletin), will be an informal 'club night' for discussion of current and future projects and social chat.

Planned themes for October and November will be an aspect of 'motorcycles' and 'challenges of editing and producing the Blewbury Bulletin'. More details next month. All welcome.

Community Projects: Work on the swift boxes for next year's summer visitors is proceeding apace, and our usual public bench repairs are also in progress.

Collaboration with Sustainable Blewbury continued with another session of sharpening summer-season-blunted secateurs and shears, repairing a hay rake and small domestic electrical items at their September Repair Café.

BlewShed opening times: Monday 2-4pm, Tuesday 1.30-4pm, Thursday 2.00-4pm, Friday 2-4pm and Saturday afternoons 1.30-4.00 pm. Everyone is welcome to club nights on the **fourth** Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm at BlewShed. We look forward to seeing you. *Mike Wrottesley*, BlewShed secretary. email: secretaryblewshed@gmail.com Website: <https://blewshed.home.blog/news/>

OLLY GLOVER MP

With the new government now in full swing, I will continue speaking up on issues that matter to constituents. I have raised the importance of adequate central government funding for our local councils so that they can provide the essential social services we rely on. I have also spoken about safety concerns on new technology advancements such as Meta's Smart Glasses, as well as the regulation of retirement property management companies.

During a Westminster Hall debate on global biodiversity loss, I called for a nationwide broadcast of the People's Emergency Briefing, a film focused on enhancing public awareness of the climate crisis and environmental risks. This summer we saw the real impact of climate change on our area, so I'm really pleased to see many local groups in the constituency organising viewings and working together to raise awareness of this urgent issue (*see page 3 – Ed.*)

Across the constituency, I've enjoyed attending the final events of the summer, including BunkFest in Wallingford, Boundary Park's 10th anniversary celebration in Didcot, and a visit to the new Tap Social venue at Milton Park. I also visited businesses such as LTi Metaltech and Crown Packaging, who both create highly skilled jobs for local people while boosting our local economy.

Following my final summer surgery in Cholsey, I met with Andrew from Amwell Springs Brewery, who produces excellent craft beer in the village. I was also pleased to attend the resurfacing and reopening of Hobbyhorse Lane with Cllr Peter Stevens, who has worked hard alongside residents to resurface this important walking and cycling route linking Appleford and Sutton Courtenay. Over a lunch at the Plum Pudding, Milton Parish Council and I discussed pedestrian access and cycle routes to/from Milton Heights, particularly the bridge at the Milton Interchange, on which I will continue to work with the County Council to help make it happen.

Working with the Mill Brook Restoration Group, we have continued our campaign to restore Mill Brook, including hosting a site visit with key organisations including Thames Water, the Environment Agency and Oxfordshire County Council. This was a major step towards recognising their respective responsibilities and securing a commitment to work together on addressing the issue. I look forward to seeing the results and will continue to monitor progress.

As always, if there is anything I can help with, please contact my team at olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk or leave a voicemail on 0207 219 7657.

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People's Emergency Briefing Film, Tuesday 6th October, 8pm. This will update us on Climate Change and Nature. See page 3 for more details. Be sure to book your free place beforehand because numbers are limited and you may not get in if you just turn up on the door.

Volunteering at the Nature Reserve, Sat 10th Oct, 9.30 to 11.30am. We will need to continue scything as well as doing some hedge and other maintenance. Meet at the Reserve; bring your own protective gloves and a drink. We will also be doing some conservation work at Chalk Pits on some Sunday afternoons: contact the secretary for dates.

Apple juicing. Two sessions remain on **Sun 11th and 25th October** from 2 to 4pm at the Manor. Bring washed apples (bad bits removed but not cores) and your own clean bottles. Arrive by 3pm if you want to pasteurise your juice (which will need glass screw top bottles). Costs: £1.80 to press a large bucket plus 40p per bottle to pasteurize. You can also hire our equipment. For further information email Andy: andy3210123@gmail.com

Repair café. Sunday 1st November, 2 to 4pm in the Melland Room at Blewbury Clubhouse and in BlewShed. Our last repair café was very successful with quite a buzz about the place. Dick Street made a great job of mending a hay rake (see photo). So why not bring your household, clocks, watches and gardening articles for repair or sharpening, clothes for mending and bicycles for fixing for free (except chargeable parts)? This will be your last chance before Christmas. Refreshments available. Donations welcome to cover costs. Arrive early to avoid disappointment (only two items per person can be sharpened). Come and see what we do and enjoy a cuppa and cake. If you can't get to the Melland Room, contact the secretary.



BLEWBURY FREECYCLE FREE ITEMS TO A GOOD HOME	E-MAIL	TEL NO.
Stompa cabin bed with bookshelves, desk and cupboard, with instructions. Can send photos.	Lesley Botchway L.botchway@outlook.com	07709 602923
Jump King large oval trampoline in good condition (safety netting needs to be replaced: can be bought from Jump King). Needs to be dismantled before removal. Can supply photos.	Lydia Inglis lydandmuz@gmail.com	07801 932393
To freecycle your item please send a short description, email & phone number to Lydia Inglis (lydandmuz@gmail.com)		

If you want to know more about Sustainable Blewbury and become a supporter who receives occasional newsletters, email secretary@sustainable-blewbury.org.uk.

BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

(questions on page 11)

HAND ONE = West kept bidding and pushed South into a successful 5C, when he could have passed to try to leave the opponents in an inadequate 4C+1. Whoops. Also, North should have doubled West's 4S and collected 500.

HAND TWO = West bid a phantom sacrifice of 5S and conceded 800, when even 4H would have failed against that bad trump break. Partner might have been about to double! This is even worse than the last hand. Pre-empters should shut up. Leave decisions to the person with the information.

HAND THREE = ...but here's the exception to the rule. East should have bid 5S, which can make if declarer guesses well in hearts. Besides, even 5S-1 beats conceding 600 from North's 5C, although that contract could have been beaten with a diamond ruff at trick one. Does this break the rule? Shouldn't pre-empters keep quiet? **ANSWER:** normally, yes, but this is different. You're not bludgeoning on with your pre-empt suit, instead having a happy surprise that partner won't be expecting. Three trumps and a void in the opponents' suit? That's gold dust.

♠AQ54 ♥97 ♦9653 ♣942			♠KJ8 ♥KQJ83 ♦10865 ♣Q			♠8 ♥J10 ♦AQ7 ♣AKQJ1084				
♠K87632 ♥A82 ♦J102 ♣10		♠J9 ♥KJ654 ♦Q84 ♣873	♠Q109532 ♥— ♦AJ ♣87652		♠A64 ♥A1074 ♦432 ♣943	♠KQ1065432 ♥Q983 ♦ ♣6		♠J97 ♥K52 ♦KJ109653 ♣		
HAND ONE Love all Dealer W		♠10 ♥Q103 ♦AK7 ♣AKQJ65	W N E S 2S P 3S 4C 4S P P 5C P P P		HAND TWO Love all Dealer E	♠7 ♥9652 ♦KQ97 ♣AKJ10	E S W N P 1D 3S 4H 4S 5H 5S X P P P	HAND THREE Game N-S Dealer E	♠A ♥A764 ♦842 ♣97532	E S W N 3D P 4S 5C P P P

BLEWBURY LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

The Miser's Coat has temporarily left Blewbury for some restorative work. We do receive requests about Blewbury personnel and general information about Blewbury from people outside of the village and we have various books that can be of use to them. These are all obtainable from the Post Office or from Mary Gaines.

This Venerable Village Blewbury	£10
The Story of Blewbury Charity School	£5
Blewbury a Hundred Years of Photographs	£20
A Domesday Mills Walk	£5
Walks Around Blewbury	£5



Learn, laugh, live

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. Visitors are welcome to come to one meeting as a taster before joining.

On 20th October we have Sing with Mandy who offers a brief history of folk music (but beware - you will be invited to sing along!). For details email

membership@didcotu3a.org or visit <https://didcot.u3asite.uk/>.

BLEWBURY POST OFFICE

Autumn is well and truly here! As we head into October, we'd like to thank everyone for continuing to support Blewbury Village Store and Post Office. It's always lovely to see so many familiar faces popping in.

October Half-Term Opening Hours

Please note that we will be operating our reduced opening hours over the half-term period.

From Monday 19th until Friday 30th October, the Post Office will be open Monday to Friday: 9am – 12 noon; our normal opening hours will resume from Monday 2nd November:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9am – 3pm Wednesday: 9am – 12 noon.

Thank you, as always, for your understanding during the school holidays.

In the Shop

As we move into the cosier months, we have plenty of lovely bits in store alongside all your everyday essentials. Our greetings card range has recently been updated, with a lovely new selection of cards for birthdays and other occasions now available in store. Our handmade crochet collection continues to be popular too, with beautiful cardigans, children's clothes, cosy blankets and adorable stuffed toys available. Each piece is individually handmade, making them lovely, unique gifts. We also have crystals, gifts, local honey, fresh free-range eggs, sweet treats and lots of everyday essentials. Thank you again for shopping locally and supporting your village Post Office and shop. Your continued support really does mean so much to us. We hope everyone has a lovely October and a wonderful half term! We look forward to seeing you soon, *Sarah, Karen & Andrew*

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR: HAYLEIGH GASCOIGNE

There is an extra council meeting in September, necessary to make constitutional changes to meet the Government's new requirements on planning decision-making. Whilst their intention is to streamline, my fear is that there will be even less input from those you have elected to represent you.

Local Government Reorganisation

This is covered elsewhere in the Bulletin, but one additional note: the timeline is now too short to elect councillors to these new councils next May - there will still be elections for the District Councils (Vale and South).

Wayfinding signs

Visitors to Didcot may have noticed new wayfinding signs across the town. They aim to help people find their way around more easily, encourage sustainable travel and strengthen connections between neighbourhoods, facilities and open spaces. The project, run by the Didcot Garden Town team, has been funded by money from the government, and contributions from developers. During the installation, some inaccuracies have been spotted. I have contacted council colleagues to understand how this has happened, and remain hopeful that the issues can be fixed by the contractor. I still believe the project is a great idea, connecting parts of Didcot, new and old, together.

Great Western Park GP surgery

I have recently been in contact with the Integrated Care Board to ask that they communicate with residents, and publish updates more frequently. They shared with me a new webpage, where they will post updates. thamesvalley.icb.nhs.uk/about-us/improving-our-estates-within-the-thames-valley-icb.

Hayleigh Gascoigne

PARISH COUNCIL

Notes of Blewbury Parish Council's meeting: 7pm, **Wednesday 16th September 2026**, Melland Room, Blewbury Clubhouse. **Present:** Sheila Austin, Andrew Calder, Andy Evason, Sarah Parkin, Lee Robinson, Julia Saunders (chair), Ben Scott, Mark Shayler and Iain Wood (lengthman). Also present Michelle Taylor (clerk,) county councillor Rebekah Fletcher and district councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne. There were apologies from: Anne Millman.

Local news – If you use an electric blanket, you can get it checked to make sure it's safe on 5th October at Didcot Fire Station. Make an appointment by calling 01865 519800. They are also offering free tea and biscuits while you wait or a collection service if you're unable to get to Didcot.

District and County Council news – if you see any traffic signs or cones that have been left behind after work has been completed, please report it to Rebekah.fletcher@oxfordshire.gov.uk, so that they can be added to the list for collection. Pothole filling work Blewbury and Upton is scheduled between 5th-10th October. Baroness Casey is chairing the Independent Commission on Adult Social Care. They are seeking public input on key questions about how social care should be funded, fairly and sustainably. Please use this link to share your opinions: <https://caseycommission.co.uk/bigconversation/>

Planning Applications

Enquiries regarding planning in the parish may be sent to blewburypc@gmail.com. All Blewbury planning applications, decisions and BPC responses, including items under consideration, can be found in the planning section of the Vale of White Horse website. This has full details and plans for all applications.

Responses to the District Council

P26/V3162/HH & P26/V3163/LB: The Cleve, South Street, Blewbury, Didcot OX11 9PR. Demolition of single storey annexe and replacement with a new single storey extension with glazed link and associated external landscaping. Repairs to existing southern gable and provision of rendered external wood fibre insulation to this wall. Provision of new ASHP within timber acoustic enclosure and PV panels on the roof. Minor internal changes. No objection.

P26/V3348/HH: Button Mead, Bessels Way, Blewbury, Didcot OX11 9NH. Erection of a two-storey side extension incorporating a carport at ground floor level and a bedroom above. No objection.

P26/V3434/FUL: Downside Farm, Woodway Road, Blewbury, OX11 9EX. Erection of storage barn. No objection.

P26/V3498/FUL: Robinsons, Church Road, Blewbury, Didcot, OX11 9PY. Conversion of Garage into a 1-bedroom apartment. No objection.

P26/V3610/FUL: Land at Coffin Way, Westbrook Street, Blewbury OX11 9QD. Change of use of land to short-stay holiday accommodation, comprising the siting of 2 holiday pods, with parking, cycle and bin storage, boundary planting and associated works. No objection.

P26/V3839/LB: The Charity School House, Church Road, Blewbury OX11 9PY. Replacement of French windows with like for like white painted wood. No objection.

Decisions from the District Council: none

Need to contact your parish councillors? In the first instance, contact the clerk, Michelle Taylor, 07968 772935 clerk@blewburyparishcouncil.gov.uk, she is then able to organise contact or meetings with the relevant councillors. Your councillors are: Sheila Austin, Andrew Calder, Andy Evason, Anne Millman, Sarah Parkin, Lee Robinson, Julia Saunders, Ben Scott, Mark Shayler who all live in Blewbury.

Next parish council meeting will be at 7pm on **Wednesday 21 October 2026**, in the Melland Room at the Clubhouse.

BLEWBURY VILLAGE HALL

BlewTube will continue in the Vale Room on the second Thursday of each month at 2pm (we have another booking on Wednesday afternoons) with a season of classic films, as requested. Please come and join us, tickets on the door, £6, tea, coffee and biscuits in the interval. The October movie will be on Thursday 8th, *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) with Humphrey Bogart and Mary Astor.

At the time of writing, the solar panels haven't yet been installed, we're just waiting for permission from the energy company, please take care while the work is under way; there is no impact on the hall users. The EV charging stations are available at a very reasonable rate. Occasionally, we have had WiFi connection problems; if you experience this, please ring the helpline on the sign next to the post office, and the engineers can reboot it quickly.

The hall user meeting will be held on 5th October at 7.30pm in the Vale Room – please send at least one person from your group, come along with any suggestions, or contact Karen or Penny.

The Christmas Market is on Sunday 13th December, 12 noon until 3pm, a proper village Christmas event. There will be stalls selling a variety of different goods, outside food vendors and village charity stalls too. To book a table or a spot outside, please email karencbrooks@gmail.com. *Karen Forman*



Autumn Leaves The dates for the Bingo Sessions in the Vale Room, Village Hall at 2pm on 13th and 27th October. For further information, or to join Autumn Leaves, call Cilla Maguire on 01235 851966 or contact Maureen Knapp, Club Chairman - maud24a@gmail.com. We would welcome any new members.

Astons Online CIC supports people who want to be digitally confident on the Internet, with smartphone apps or online services like health and banking. Events and support are free of charge and open to everyone. www.astonsonline.uk.

Landline switchover to Digital Voice briefing followed by Q&A on **Thursday 22 October** from 10:00 to 12noon in **Didcot Library 197 Broadway Didcot OX118RU** because all landlines using copper cables will be discontinued by end of next January 2027. Volunteer digital helpers will provide free information and advice about the switchover including home remotely monitored alarm systems and what to do about power cuts. You can register by using the above email or phone.

Tech help café in **Aston Upthorpe Village Hall (OX119EQ)** on **Tuesday 20th October** from 10:00 to 12 noon for problems with devices, email, internet and online services. Book one-to-one in-person or remote sessions (Tue mornings between 10 and 12 using Zoom, Facetime, WhatsApp or telephone) with digital helpers by email theastonsonline@gmail.com or by phone 07780958249. Didcot based charity, Getting Oxfordshire Online, would love to have your unwanted laptops, tablets and smartphones to distribute to others who are not able to have their own. Contact us by email or phone as above.

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

Regular hours (except dates below): Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 9am-3pm. Wednesday and Fridays: 9am-12 noon.

October half-term (19th – 30th October): Monday to Friday 9am-12 noon.

VILLAGE DIARY for October 2026

				Page
Saturday	3	2 - 8 pm	Blewbury Beer Festival, Village Hall	5
Monday	5	9 - 11 am	Coffee & Kids!, Vale Room	5
Monday	5	7.30 pm	Village Hall User Meeting, Vale Room	19
Tuesday	6	8 pm	People's Emergency Briefing Film, Village Hall	3
Thursday	8	2 pm	Blewtube: The Maltese Falcon, Village Hall	19
Saturday	10	9.30 - 11.30 am	Sustainable Blewbury volunteering, Nature Reserve	17
Sunday	11	2 - 4 pm	Apple Juicing (Sustainable Blewbury), Blewbury Manor	17
Sunday	11	5.30 pm	Concert (Luiz Morales), St Michael's Church	7
Tuesday	13	2 pm	Autumn Leaves Bingo etc., Vale Room	20
Tuesday	13	7.30 pm	Local History Group meeting, 9 Westbrook Green	-
Saturday	17	10 am - 12 noon	School Reception 2027 Stay and Play, Blewbury School	3
Saturday	17	7.30 pm	Village Barn Dance and Supper with The Mad Hatters, Village Hall	7
Tuesday	20	7.30 pm	Editorial and advertising deadline for November Bulletin	-
Wednesday	21	7 pm	Parish Council meeting, Melland Room	19
Sunday	25	2 - 4 pm	Apple Juicing (Sustainable Blewbury), Blewbury Manor	17
Tuesday	27	2 pm	Autumn Leaves Bingo etc., Vale Room	20
Tuesday	27	7.30 pm	BlewShed meeting, The Shed, Recreation Ground	15
Wednesday	28	7.30 pm	WI meeting and talk: Trust me, I'm a chat bot, Vale Room	11

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)

All advertisements should be submitted to the Editor at editor@blewbury.co.uk. 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 arrangements.

WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS We are always happy to receive editorial contributions, 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

The Blewbury Bulletin is published at Brokenwood, Bessels Way, Blewbury, OX11 9NP. While we work hard to ensure the accuracy of published information, the Editor and Officers accept no responsibility for the consequences of any errors. **Problems receiving your Bulletin? Email** louise.esplin1@gmail.com.
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