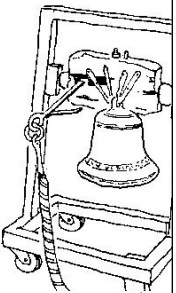
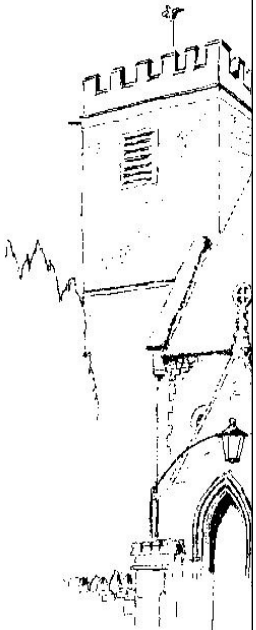


The Mouthpiece

Culham's Newsletter No 325

Village Diary for April 2011

- 1st Mobile Library - The Glebe, 1.40 - 1.50 pm*
- 2nd Car Boot Sale, The Green, 1 pm – 4 pm*
- 10th Family Communion - St. Paul's Church, 10 am, &
Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting, 11.15 am*
- 11th Parish Council Meeting - The School, 7.30 pm*
- 15th DEADLINE FOR MAY'S MOUTHPIECE*
- 15th Mobile Library - The Glebe, 1.40 – 1.50 pm*
- 17th Evening Prayer - St. Paul's Church, 5.30 pm*
- 24th Easter Day Communion - St. Paul's Church, 10 am*
- 29th Mobile Library - The Glebe, 1.40 – 1.50 pm*
- 29th Ladies of Culham - Royal Wedding Party*



Church Services in April

DATE	TIME	PLACE	SERVICE
SERVICES AT CULHAM			
Sunday 10th	10 am	Culham	Family Communion
Palm Sunday, 17th	5.30 pm *	...	Evening Prayer * <i>N.B. Earlier time!</i>
Easter Sunday, 24th	10 am	...	Holy Communion
<p><i>Join us for coffee and a chat after Sunday morning services at Culham Church! All welcome.</i></p> <p><i>Come along for informal prayers with Revd Anne Ilsley at Culham Church on Thursday mornings, 8.15 - 9.00 am.</i></p>			
SERVICES ELSEWHERE			
Mothering Sunday, 3th	8 am	Clifton Hampden	Holy Communion
	10 am	Long Wittenham	Family Service
Sunday 10th	8.30 am	Little Wittenham	Holy Communion
	10 am	Clifton Hampden	Holy Communion
	5.30 pm *	Long Wittenham	Evening Prayer * <i>N.B. Earlier time!</i>
Palm Sunday, 17th	10 am	Long Wittenham	Holy Communion
Good Friday, 22nd	10 am	Long Wittenham	Family Service
	11-12 am	Clifton Hampden	Meditation
Easter Sunday, 24th	8.30 am	Little Wittenham	Holy Communion
	10 am	Clifton Hampden	Family Communion
	10 am	Long Wittenham	Holy Communion

Dorchester Team Lent Lectures

This series of talks on Sunday evenings in Dorchester Abbey will continue in April (except for the 3rd). Refreshments will be available from 6.30 pm and each talk will start at 7 pm, ending with a short act of worship at 8.30 pm. All most welcome!

10th April: 'The Bible and History' - Dr Sarah Apetrei

17th April: 'The Bible and Music' - The Revd Dr Jonathan Arnold

The Future of Culham School

County Council Meeting – Andrew Churchill Stone

OCC's cabinet met on March 15th to consider the future of the school. In view of the fact that, at that time, we had not been able to appoint a head teacher, Cabinet decided to proceed to issue a statutory notice on the closure of the school. This does not mean that council have decided finally that the school should close, but that they are going to consult on a closure, which they will then formally decide on 24 May. In the intervening period, OCC have confirmed that we can continue to explore solutions for leadership and that, should we be in a position to produce a solution during this second consultation period, Council will accept this as a means of keeping the school open.

We hope that we can find a solution to the leadership of the school in this period as we believe that this is the last major hurdle we have to jump. A number of options are being explored but if anyone knows anyone who would be interested in working at our school as a head, either full or part-time, please let me know. I hope that, by spreading the net as wide as possible, the right candidate can be found.

As always, the support of the community in our efforts to keep our school open is much appreciated and thanks to all those of you who have expressed support in a number of ways.

Culham School Action Group – Sam Casey

The Action Group is organising a number of fund raising events for the coming months. There is a scheme whereby anyone who would like to contribute regularly to ensure the financial health of the school can commit a sum of £5.33 per week over a three year period, which together with reclaiming of tax, will be a total of £1000. We already have a commitment to this from a number of villagers. If you are interested in contributing, please contact Simon Williams simwill69@hotmail.co.uk or get in touch with the school.

The women's group (Ladies of Culham) and the Action Group are getting together to organise a party on **April 29th** to mark the royal wedding; car boot sales, a school fete, craft fairs and other events will be happening in the next months, so please look out for notices around the village. One scheme suggested was a day for an 'open gardens' day in the village - probably in June or July. Your garden certainly doesn't have to be a show piece, you just need to be willing to open it on a particular day and the action group will organise tea & cakes (probably at the school). There are certainly lots of lovely gardens in the village so please get in touch with Sam Casey-rerhaye at 34 High St if you would like to join this day: (email sam.casey-rerhaye@gmail.com).

Car Boot Sale – Joan Woodley

We are planning to hold a **Car Boot Sale** on **Culham Village Green** on **April 2nd** from **1 pm** to **4 pm**. This is the first of many fund-raising events planned this year to help with keeping our wonderful Village School open. The cost is £6 per car.

For further details please ring Joan on 01235 529905 or Dee on 01235 522448.

If anyone can come up with some more ideas for fund raising, it would be very helpful.

Village News

Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting - Culham PCC

This will be held in St Paul's Church at **11.15 am** on **Sunday 10th April**, after the morning communion service. If you want to keep your village church open and available for services, then you will be very welcome at this meeting. We have no churchwarden and volunteers to fill this gap are badly needed: *someone* has to open the church for services, turn on the heating, light the candles and count the collection!

Without a little more help, then one day the church may no longer be available for those special occasions like weddings and baptisms.

Ladies of Culham – Mary Rickford

On **Friday 29th April** we will be joining with the action group to save Culham School and together we will be holding an event to celebrate the royal wedding and raise funds for the school. The royal celebration will be held in the village and there will be more information on the notice boards and around the village. Come along and join us for lots of fun, festivity and flag waving!

Police “Have your Say” Meeting – Rebekah Kent

No meeting is scheduled for Culham itself in April. The nearest one will be at Clifton Hampden, outside the village store, on **Thursday 21st April** from **4 pm to 4.45 pm**.

Annual Plant Sale & Village Fete – Culham PCC

This will take place on **Saturday 21st May** from **1.30 pm to 4.00 pm** outside the church (stalls inside if wet!) As well as plants we will be selling home-made cakes, bric-a-brac, books, DVDs, etc. You will also be able to try your luck on the tombola and raffle as well as other stalls, such as welly-wanging!

We would be very grateful for donations of plants, cakes, bric-a-brac (no clothes, please), books and DVD's. These can be brought to the church after **5 pm** on **Friday 20th May** or on the **Saturday morning**. Please can you name your plants if you know what they are!

We'd also be pleased to receive cakes, but please could you label them and note down whether or not they contain nuts? We look forward to seeing you there.

Advance Notice: September's "Ride & Stride" Event - Jean Diggins

The annual "Ride & Stride" event, which raises money for Oxfordshire churches, takes place on **10th September** this year. Each cyclist or walker aims to visit as many churches as possible in a day, and their sponsorship money is divided between the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust and the church of their choice. Our church has received several grants from the Trust in the past, so we really appreciate support for this event. More details from Jean Diggins on 520540.

Parish Council Notes (March Meeting) – Andrew Steele

The OCC Councillor's report should be available soon on the Village Website.

Information from the SODC Councillor is that the budget for this year and next, May elections allowing, will be frozen. There has been a 15% decrease in government funding but it is through efficiencies and a shared management structure with the Vale that this freeze can be implemented.

The SODC reserves are currently £60m and although some of this is for the community investment fund, what the Councillor equated to the government's Big Society, some will also be used for funding purposes.

Despite attempts by CPC to postpone work on the bridge lights, Highways still insisted the work was needed, hence the recent closures during the day. It is unlikely the accident damage to the bridge will be repaired during this time, as the insurance payments will not yet have been settled.

Suppliers for the ground stabilisation slabs proposed for the burial ground are still being finalised.

The loose fill replacement for the area around the play equipment has been agreed at a cost of approximately £2200.

OCC Highways have informed CPC that the requested 'Children Crossing' signs requested for the A415 were 'too expensive'.

It is expected that the consultation over the closure of the school, which will be debated in Cabinet tomorrow (Tuesday 15 March) will continue, although this is not certain.

The noticeboards have been refurbished.

A proposal for the construction of a footbridge over the Thames close to the rail bridge east of Abingdon is being supported by CPC.

Next meeting: **Monday 11 April 2011 at 7:30 pm** at the school.

Vicar's Letter - Revd Anne Ilsley

Culham School under threat of closure, a son unemployed, a friend elsewhere in the country facing an industrial tribunal, unrest in the Arab world and North Africa, Libya worse, earthquake and tsunami, nuclear plants in crisis, the world economy sick, my daughter in New Zealand, thank God she's not in Christchurch. The everyday concerns of our lives alongside a backdrop of extreme uncertainties in the world.

Where to place my attention, my concern, and my prayers? Sometimes there will be real reason to concentrate on our personal situation or on that of our family, but we should not shrink from looking beyond ourselves. All these disparate things and many more will come up in my prayers and in the prayers of the church. It is my privilege as a priest to hold such things in prayer, BUT in 1Peter Chapter 2 the people of God are described as a holy priesthood *As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

The effectiveness of the church cannot rest on my shoulders or on that of the clergy alone. Most importantly the church is the people and not the building! I know I've said it before!

Then again I understand that we can all of us only operate according to the faith that we have been given. We can encourage one another in our faith. Many people have done that for me. How can I find that core of strength, that God given sense of security when I cannot see what lies ahead and I fear the worst? At the beginning of my own return to faith I found simply attending services and accepting the friendship of the Christians I found there began in me a process of renewal of faith. Others have found courses for enquirers really helpful.

This month we celebrate Easter, but first we will face up to the suffering that Jesus endured as he was tried, abused and killed. Each year we relive the story of Good Friday on that day in a service designed for All Ages at St Mary's Long Wittenham at 10.00am. At 11.00am at St Michael's Clifton Hampden and later between 1.00pm and 3.00pm at Dorchester Abbey we hold services designed to help us to contemplate the story in a creative way. Only when we have passed through that darkness will we celebrate his resurrection on Easter Sunday. On every occasion and in every way the joy of resurrection overcomes the pain of Calvary.

*Rise up, O Lord, to help us.
In the darkness of unknowing,
When your love seems absent,
Draw near to us, O God,
In Christ forsaken,
In Christ risen,
Our Redeemer and our Lord.*

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If anyone would like to be part of a group exploring faith or would like to have a conversation with a member of clergy, please contact me on 01865 407605 or annefi36@aol.com.

Heating Oil Supplies – Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

ORCC Trading Ltd's new venture has got off to a flying start, with 14 local community co-ordinators and over 100 members in place, more than half of the members already enjoying the benefits of bulk-buying domestic heating oil. Lots of people have asked us about the price of the oil so here's what's happened so far:-

- **In December**, we ordered 2,300 litres for our first couple of members. They paid 52.95p per litre, compared to an average price that day of 56p per litre.
- **In January**, we ordered 18,700 litres for 19 members, who paid 50p per litre compared to an average price that day of 56p per litre.
- **In February**, we ordered 34,450 litres for 36 members, who paid 53.8p per litre compared with an average price that day of 58.1p per litre.

Between them these members have saved a massive £3,100.

Since we set the scheme up, oil has never been out of the news – first it was the snow and the supply problems, then the Office of Fair Trading’s interest in oil prices, and now it’s the concerns about the effects of the political instability in the Middle East. One thing is fairly certain – the price of oil is far more likely to go up than down, and anything you can do to make it less of a burden has to be a good thing.

So if your community hasn’t yet got a co-ordinator, why not volunteer? There’s plenty of information on our website or we can send you an information leaflet. Take the plunge – we’d love to hear from you! www.oxonrcc.org.uk/home/bulk-oil-buying-scheme

oxfordshirecarshare.com – County Council

Concerned about rising fuel prices? Looking for a way to lessen their impact on you? Well, we have the answer: Oxfordshire Car Share.

The scheme provides a free service for you to find others to share your journeys with, cutting your travel costs in half or by even more.

The scheme is available to anyone living, working or travelling in or through Oxfordshire. Registration is completely free, and there are no obligations involved in using the service. You can choose whom you wish to share with from the matches generated for you; how often you wish to share; whether you wish to be the driver or the passenger, or to alternate. It really is entirely up to you, and you don’t even need to own a car to use the site – just register as a passenger. Register today at www.oxfordshirecarshare.com.

Newington Nurseries: ‘Statuesque Versatility’ - Anne Hendry

The Mahonia is a really statuesque shrub that gives structure to the back of the plants border. It’s a member of the Berberis family which explains its rather spiky leaves (its more common name is Holly-Leaved Barberry) so it’s also a rather good plant to site along a boundary too. Best of all is its highly fragrant, long-lasting yellow flowers that cheer up the long, dull days of winter.

Mahonias are really very versatile shrubs. They can be planted as part of an evergreen shrub border, used as structural plants to combine with other spiky-leaved plants such as Fatsia and Ilex, or planted alongside other winter-flowering shrubs such as Daphne and Viburnum tinus. They can also be used in a contemporary planting scheme that includes Trachycarpus, Phormiums and Miscanthus grasses. They are also a good backdrop for small winter-flowering plants such as snowdrops and hellebores.

Mahonias are native to the chilly environs of East Asia, the Himalayas and North America. For example, *Mahonia x media* ‘Charity’ is a really tough and cold-tolerant plant, producing long, upright spires of sweetly-scented, lemon-yellow flowers from October onwards. These are followed by petrol-blue, edible berries (very sharp in flavour and full of Vitamin C) which are

loved by the birds if you don't pick them first. It's very architectural and will reach a height of some 2 metres.

Mahonia x media 'Winter Sun' is another good choice and will withstand a north-facing position in the garden. 'Winter Sun's wonderfully-fragranced flowers are produced on rather upright stems, are sulphur yellow in colour and are followed by purple berries. The variety *Mahonia x media* 'Buckland' produces very long flower spikes from late autumn, and these last well into the winter. Both get to heights of some 2 metres.

If you prefer a lower-growing variety, try *Mahonia aquifolium* (meaning holly-like). This is a really attractive shrub, small in habit, and used as either hedging or as a ground cover plant. The spiky green leaves often turn red in cold winters. Rich yellow flowers appear in spring and these are followed by bluey-black berries. *M. aquifolium*, or the Oregon Grape (on account of the colour and size of its berries), will get to a height of 1.5 metres and spread to 2 metres. Another good choice is *M. aquifolium* 'Atropurpurea'. The habit is the same as *M. aquifolium* but the foliage turns into a stunning red-purple colour in autumn.

Mahonias are very easy to grow and are very hardy yet rather under-rated plants. They like shady positions and neutral to slightly acidic soil. If planted in slightly alkaline soil, their foliage may discolour and turn yellow so feed the plants with a soluble or liquid ericaceous plant food during the spring and summer. To maintain the shape of Mahonias and to prevent them from getting too leggy, cut back the stems by about a third each spring. This is the key to keeping them compact and shapely.

Anne Hendry, Newington Nurseries, Newington, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 7AW
www.newington-nurseries.co.uk Tel: 01865 890283

Endpiece

Please note that any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors.

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