

# The Mouthpiece

Culham's Newsletter

June 2020



## For your diary:

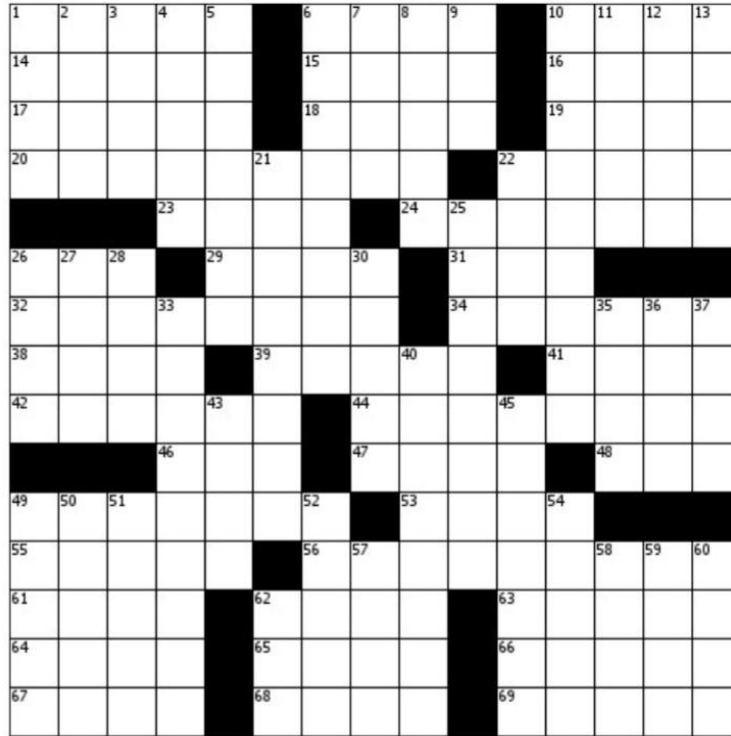
|                                      |               |                                 |  |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Tuesday June 9<sup>th</sup></b>   | <b>7.30pm</b> | <b>Parish Council Meeting</b>   | <b>This will almost certainly be an online meeting</b>           |
| <b>Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June</b> | <b>7.00pm</b> | <b>Friends of St Paul's AGM</b> | <b>This meeting is via Zoom:<br/>See inside for full details</b> |

## Crossword Puzzle

Find the solution at  
<http://onlinecrosswords.net/9240>

### Across

1. It may follow an attorney
6. Went down
10. Came down
14. Place to spend centimes
15. Canal to the Hudson River
16. Prom sight
17. Burdened Titan
18. Seductress
19. Land map
20. Canvas cost?
22. It's 17 miles from the Loop
23. Legal right
24. Cajun dinner chaser, perhaps
26. Modem pair
29. Monumental
31. Physicist with a law
32. Act up
34. Like one snuggled in a blanket
38. De-ported?
39. Bio lab specimen
41. "Make \_\_\_": "Star Trek: TNG" catchphrase
42. Prophet in Babylon
44. Court burden
46. Bar order
47. Fort south of Louisville
48. Duffy's foe in the 1966 MSU-Notre Dame game
49. They'll chew you out
53. Moxie
55. Doesn't age well
56. Contract addition for a bit of sandbox equipment?
61. "The Cherry Orchard" role
62. Ivy in Philly
63. Voltaic cell terminal
64. Jamaican fruit
65. Carry on
66. Carp
67. "Agreed!"
68. Just about
69. Connect with



### Down

1. Words of discovery
2. Later relative
3. Actress Palmer
4. In any way
5. Harder to make out, as smoke
6. Ms. movement
7. Red explorer?
8. Top of a form, perhaps
9. Latin law
10. Pile into which letters to Aristotle are sorted?
11. Lavender cousin
12. Japanese porcelain
13. Carried
21. Legislature, at times
22. Roman emperor in 69 A.D.
25. Nobody
26. "Yikes!"
27. Flat formation
28. British shooter
30. Tab
33. Sprite's appendage?
35. Acropolis locale
36. Leader until 1917
37. "Do or do not. There is no try" speaker
40. Hit hard
43. They're vital for good looks
45. Distill
49. One skilled at taking in
50. Duel action
51. Sanctuaries
52. Old weapon
54. Peninsula bordering the Negev desert
57. Actress Jillian et al.
58. Peacenik
59. Cut, say
60. Move, to a realtor
62. Super Bowl participant

## Talking Point from Revd Teresa Stewart-Sykes

### We'll be back soon.....

Apart from Sci-Fi aficionados, doomsday-mongers and Bill Gates none of us ever imagined we would be living in times like these. At the time of writing, we are still shut in our homes and our church doors are closed and locked. We do not know when our lives will return to normal. Emotionally, we are in a place that could be described as a wilderness, an inhospitable region, an unchartered country. That said, our village communities remain buoyant, supportive, and hopeful places. The message pinned to our church doors, 'We'll be back soon' draws our eyes to future horizons, but is there anything at all we can learn from our current situation?



In Christian spirituality, 'going into the wilderness' can be a positive experience. The Israelites wandered around in the desert for '40 years' learning to know themselves, to discover what was important to them, and to rely on God for the very bread and water that enabled them to survive. They emerged from the wilderness a people capable of establishing a nation and a culture, a self-confident community equipped for the battles ahead. So, for Christians a time of retreat spent apart from the world is seen as an opportunity for reflection, analysis of self, and spiritual growth. For many, these days under the lockdown are similarly an opportunity to discover what we value the most, who is most important to us, and what direction we would like our lives to take after the lockdown. Our time in this 'wilderness' is a time for us as a community and a nation to examine our shared ideals and to change our lives and the lives of those most vulnerable in our society for the better.

The flip side to this 'wilderness' experience is what is known as the 'dark night of the soul' a place of devastating loss, of weariness, and listlessness. We've all been in this place at some point in our lives and have struggled to make sense of it all. There are many of us who are suffering currently because of Covid 19, the cruel way in which it separates families and loved ones at a time when the comfort of a hug and the loving touch of a hand is most needed. The book of Job in the Bible is an excoriating account of an individual wrestling with God to make sense of the darkest experiences of human suffering. Even the most devoted Christians have battled to live through such times; Mother Teresa spent the last 50 years of her life afflicted with a spiritual darkness, but like Job she eventually came to accept her pain as part and parcel of her calling to serve others. The collective pain we are experiencing in these times tests our character. The love and gratitude we are feeling for those who serve us, the Doctors and Nurses, the carers, the refuse collectors, and the postal staff; is a testament to the character of our communities. It is not so long ago that we were anxious about the divisions in our society, but we are discovering a commitment to each other that is as courageous as it is loving.

'We'll be back soon' and the future holds the possibility of change and renewal. God's blessing to you all until we meet again.

# Village News

Village website: [www.culhamvillage.org.uk](http://www.culhamvillage.org.uk)

## **Culham Parish Council (CPC) notes – April & May 2020**

Including notes from the postponed April meeting  
from Andrew Steele Councillor Culham Parish Council

The reports from OCC and SODC councillors (for both April and May 2020) should appear elsewhere in The Mouthpiece and on the CPC website.

### **April 2020**

This meeting was held virtually due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Public participation**

A report prepared by SCGB sub-committee covering the Didcot expansion scheme was approved by CPC for submission

### **Other Items**

There has been no response from the Church about the use of the school for CPC meetings.

CPC is in contact with the Diocese agent about the long term future of the recreation ground as there is only 9 years left on the current lease.

A recent funeral was covered by regulations that are in place during the Covid-19 pandemic. The regulations were approved by CPC

The Culham Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has been suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic.

CPC will write to SODC expressing concerns that the normal planning process is continuing whilst the NP process has been halted.

### **May 2020**

A meeting is to be held next week concerning the lease on the playing field which has 9 years to run.

There has been no reply from the Diocese on the continued use of the school for CPC meetings. CPC will write to the Bishop directly.

Jim Boyland will water the trees on the playing field every two weeks.

The grass verges around the village will be cut this week.

It was agreed to change the CPC bank account from NatWest to Unity bank.

Regarding the Local Plan, the Inspectors have stopped the Examination in Public. In June SODC are likely to engage in an online meeting with the inspectors. It is not clear how this will be made public.

The traffic report for Thame Lane (traffic measurements) has not been forthcoming. CPC will chase it up.

### **Next meeting**

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7:30pm. **This will almost certainly be an online meeting.**

As ever all villagers are welcome to attend - please come along even if you have no specific items to present/discuss.

CPC website: [www.culham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.culham-pc.gov.uk)



**FRIENDS OF ST. PAUL'S CULHAM** - Registered Charity 1062648

**NOTICE OF AGM**

THURSDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020 AT 7PM VIA ZOOM

On behalf of the Friends of St Paul's I write to invite you the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of St Paul's. The aim of the Friends is to raise sufficient funds to maintain the fabric of the Church building, and where possible to make improvements. It is a registered charity run by the Trustees united in their common aim of preserving the village church. St Paul's is a beautiful and historic structure and is important as part of Culham and deserves our support.

Because of the present COVID-19 crisis the AGM will be held via Zoom. The details for joining are:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75812019074?pwd=KytRb3I4Q24vWWxLeGJkbmZFT1FSUT09>

Meeting ID: 758 1201 9074

Password: culham

The Friends has been pleased to support the Church with funds for repairs and improvements since 2000 of over £16,000. Our last major investment was in 2017 when we provided about half of the funds to repair and replace the north roof of the church. Looking forward, the Friends are committed to supporting the remodelling of the Church to provide a community space which will require locally raised funds as well as grants. If you are able to make a donation to become a member of the friends or to renew your membership please see the details below.

**Everyone is welcome to attend and speak at the AGM whether they are a member past or present of the Friends although only members are entitled to vote.** The AGM also gives anyone the opportunity of becoming a committee member of the Friends for those willing to give a small amount of their time to supporting fund raising activities. The Friends have managed a number of successful events in the past year including a concert and a quiz evening and film nights for which we thank everyone who participated and we hope to be able to do so again in the future.

Yours faithfully

Philip Owen  
Chairman

Friends New/Renewal Membership

I/We wish to subscribe to the Friends of St Paul's for 2020 for an amount of £..... and help maintain the Church in a good state of repair.

The suggested donation amounts are:

|                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| Single membership   | £20  |
| Family membership   | £30  |
| Lifetime membership | £200 |

but whatever amount you can spare will be gratefully received and put to good use. The methods of payment are set out below.

**Gift Aid Declaration**

Please regard my subscription/donation as covered under gift aid. I pay an amount of UK income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that will be reclaimed.

Signed .....

Dated .....

## Payment Method

You can donate by cheque or by bank transfer.

If paying by cheque, please make payable to the "Friends of St Paul's" and return to Philip Owen at 6 The Green, Culham.

If paying by bank transfer our details are:

|                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Account name   | Friends of St Paul's Culham |
| Bank           | Santander Bank              |
| Account number | 07758579                    |
| Sort code      | 09-01-29                    |

**Please send subscriptions to Philip Owen, 6 The Green, Culham or to a member of the committee**

**Please think about using easyfundraising when making any online purchases. It doesn't cost you a penny extra**

**When you shop the easyfundraising way with one of the 3,135 shops and sites they give us a donation every time you shop. Easy! Just go to [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) to sign up and help Culham Church.**

**In addition, purchases made through Amazon can support us; go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) to see how.**

## **Volunteer for Advertising Role Needed – The Mouthpiece**

A volunteer is still needed to manage The Mouthpiece advertising. Access to email essential, any skills relating to publishing an added bonus! You would be contacting advertisers to invoice them (usually annually) and dealing with any enquiries relating to the advertising. It is not a heavy workload!

If you are interested, please contact [generalmouthpiece@gmail.com](mailto:generalmouthpiece@gmail.com) or call/text Anne on 07826 360402.

## OCC Recycling Centres Re-Open From 18 May For Essential Use

Oxfordshire County Council will re-open Household Waste Recycling Centres on 18 May, for essential use. Essential use means waste that cannot be stored at home, or would cause harm to health if stored.

There will be new site rules to ensure social distancing and the safety of residents and site staff. This includes reducing opening hours to 8am – 4pm to allow for cleaning, limiting the number and size of vehicles coming in and contactless payments only.



Queues are likely, so if it can wait, please do. If it's waste that can be disposed of legally and responsibly in another way, such as weekly kerbside collections or district council collection services please do that.

Full information about the changes to recycling centre rules can be found on their website –

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wastereopenquestions](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wastereopenquestions)

## District Councillor Report – Sam Casey-Rerhaye

### May-June 2020

Parish clerks now receive weekly updates from the Communications team at SODC on every Wednesday. These have far more up to date information than I can provide in my monthly reports, so I ask clerks to disseminate widely and put relevant parts up on websites if they can.

As a council we would like to ensure that the local mobilisation and neighbourliness isn't lost once the emergency subsidies, and we will be working to see what the District Council can do to support such volunteer groups in the future.

I still have some grant money for Covid-19 uses, so do get in touch if any of the groups need some financial support.

### **Planning & other Council business**

We are pleased to report that many normal council-run operations are continuing to operate, **including waste collections, taxi licensing (renewals only), payment of benefits and housing services. All known homeless people in the district have been housed safely.** Bulk waste collections have now resumed, as has the doorstep collection of small electricals, linen and batteries, which should help anyone who has taken advantage of lockdown to have a bit of a clear-out! We can also take on new brown bin customers again. I have lots of praise for the way Biffa have worked during this crisis to keep the waste collections going while looking after their staff. Please call the Biffa number if you have any issues or a missed collection – some staff are on different routes than their usual. Biffa: 03000 610610.

**Routine planning applications** have been processed throughout the lockdown period, and there has been no significant drop in the number of applications in South Oxfordshire. Virtual Planning Committees are likely to resume in the coming week, although it is still not always possible to conduct site visits. This is necessary as there is a large back-log of applications that need decisions. Public contributions will need to be submitted in advance. Please check with the Planning department for information 01235 422600 or check the website:

[www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/find-application](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/find-application)

**A letter has been sent by the Leaders of both South Oxfordshire and Vale Councils** to ask the Secretary of State to consider suspending the targets for the length of time to determine applications and also to readjust the 5-year Housing Land Supply calculation, given that a) major applications cannot be considered fairly and b) many local construction sites have effectively closed down during the emergency and therefore risks us being forced into accepting speculative planning applications as a result of the Covid-19 stoppage. We await a response, but we know that other planning authorities across the country are also lobbying on these issues.

### **Local Plan**

Officers are having monthly progress meetings with MHCLG (although the one in March was cancelled). Proposed modifications to the eLP2034 are being drafted for submission to the Inspectors (e.g. on improving the environmental performance of all new buildings, both residential and commercial), but it will be up to the inspectors to accept or reject these. It has been suggested that the Examination in Public (EIP) could take place in the summer and could be as early as June as an online event. This process is being overseen by SODC's new Cabinet member for Planning, Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson.

### **Planning Reform**

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government is consulting on how to reform the current planning process (we suspect in an attempt to remove barriers to development in the post-COVID and post-Brexit world). It is possible that District Local Plans will become less significant as spatial planning is elevated to the regional level (e.g. at the Oxfordshire Growth Board/Oxfordshire 2050 level), and that Neighbourhood Plans will be even more important as a way to identify specific sites for development. It's crucial for SODC Councillors and Officers to engage actively and constructively with our regional counterparts and for us to demonstrate leadership in the need for a wholesale reduction in carbon emissions from construction and transport. It is clear that we will not be returning to the way we used to live, work and travel before the coronavirus pandemic and we need to set a vision for renewal and future prosperity within the means of the planet. And this leads on nicely to the next item:

### **Adapting our roads to accommodate safe cycling and walking**

Across the nation authorities are preparing for the easing of the lockdown restrictions and it has become patently clear that our narrow pavements and car-oriented roads are simply unsafe for an increase in bicycle traffic and social distancing. We are trying to get wider support for making roads more pedestrian and cyclist friendly, and through the network of Cycling Champions across the County, are suggesting that OCC takes this opportunity to consider road closures (even if only on a temporary basis) or reallocation of road "real estate" to prioritise bicycles. The Green Party is also lobbying for a reduction in the national default speed limit to 50mph, for widescale "bikeability" training and for bike racks to be added to buses (amongst other things).

The Dept of Transport has given some money to local highways authorities to implement these changes. Officers at SODC have suggested that Parish Councils go straight to OCC (Cllr Liam Walker is the Cabinet member responsible for Highways) to propose roads which could be adapted in this way or simply to support the principle of safer active travel. E.g a 20 mph limit through villages, some temporary extension for pavements/cycle lanes.

### **Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 5 from the County Council**

I have replied to this initial consultation as Cycling Champion for South Oxfordshire. It contains a very long set of detailed documents but it is an important first stage of devising their new strategy for the coming years. Strategically I think it still works on the assumption that the road network is first and



foremost for cars, and as such is not ambitious enough for healthy, safe, active travel and good reliable public transport.

### **Council Finances**

We were very glad to hear that SODC had been allocated an additional £1.4m in funding from the latest round of support from central Government. This brings the total reimbursement for what has been paid out by SODC so far to £1.45m. While this is very welcome, our officers have calculated that a full year's losses under the current circumstances would amount to £4m, which is a combination of the additional costs incurred plus the loss of income from services. The Government has committed to recompensing Councils for the additional expenditure, but has not been clear on how it will fill the gap in lost income (if at all). We can only wait to hear more on this from the Minister, but in the meantime our finance team is providing regular feedback to him on how much the crisis is costing and how it is being spent. We are certainly very proud of the way SODC staff have stepped up to the challenge and have responded to the new demands being placed on them while mostly working from home and, like so many people, organising schooling for children or caring for other family members.

### **Covid-19 essential information:**

**If you or someone you know has been identified as extremely vulnerable by the NHS and have nobody around to help with day to day tasks, like shopping please call 01865 897820 or email [shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:shield@oxfordshire.gov.uk).**

**Anyone that is in this situation, but is not considered high risk can check to see if there are any volunteer groups nearby to help them at [www.oxfordshireallin.org/local-support-groups](http://www.oxfordshireallin.org/local-support-groups) or they can call 01235 422600 or email [communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk)**

**These support lines are open 8.30am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm on Saturday and Sundays.**

**For local updates on District Council activities such as waste collections and help for households and business, please see:**

**[www.southoxon.gov.uk/news-events/coronavirus-covid-19-information](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/news-events/coronavirus-covid-19-information)**

For up to date national advice, check the Gov.uk website (www. <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response> )

and the NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

For business support and information, check <https://www.svbs.co.uk/coronavirus-guidance-and-support/>

**Please do not hesitate to call me or email for any information or concerns you have about any District Council or Covid19 related issues:**

**01235 799489, or email me at [sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk)**

# COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS – MAY 2020 BY COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LINDSAY - GALE

## **Library Staff Go the Extra Mile as Readers go Online**

As all our 44 libraries across the County remain closed our staff have been seconded to support other services, including the Customer Service Centre with our Shielding Operation; the Registration Service homeworking staff by collecting paperwork to enable the production of death certificates to the public, and at our Waste Recycling Centres to assist with traffic management and customer queries.

Bookworms have been having a good old read during lockdown – and the library service is continuing to thrive as a result, even though its doors are closed to the public. April saw a record for people joining Oxfordshire libraries online. A total of 589 people joined – a record for one month and an 86 per cent increase compared to the figure for April 2019.

Meanwhile loans of eBooks and eAudio loans have nearly doubled compared to this time last year. During April more than 22,000 items were borrowed from the county council's online library. Oxfordshire County Council has doubled its investment in purchasing eBooks and eAudio to support this demand.

It's a joy to see so many people continuing to engage with the library service despite this odd and difficult phase in our lives. No one needs to worry about returning or renewing items. Before the lockdown, we suspended the date due of all items that are on loan. This will continue indefinitely. People also have the option of visiting our Facebook pages to view story- times, quizzes and be part of our online bookclub.

## **How to find out more**

To find out what services the Oxfordshire County Council library service offers you from the comfort of your own home visit here [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/reference-online?utm\\_source=libraryhomepagereferenceonline](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/reference-online?utm_source=libraryhomepagereferenceonline)

## **Education**

Primary Schools Re-Opening after 1<sup>st</sup> June.

The Government has advised that Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils should return to school as soon after 1<sup>st</sup> June as it is practicably possible to do so. There is considerable concern among Headteachers, their staff and parents over this requirement. The County Council is working closely with schools to provide advise and guidance on how social distancing can be achieved for very young children. Any parents who are concerned about sending their children back to school should contact their Headteacher to discuss their family situation. The Government has confirmed that no one will be fined if they have justifiable reasons for continuing to keep their children at home.

## National Primary Offer Day

Co-incidentally, and as is required by law, on 16<sup>th</sup> April the County Council announced that 90.6% of out of 7,384 Oxfordshire children have been offered their preferred choice of primary school for September 2020. In this Division 99 children gained their 1<sup>st</sup> preference, and 3 their 2<sup>nd</sup>. Every family was notified on 16th April. The full data by Constituency, Division, District and School is available online. Let us hope that by September things have returned to some level of normality, and that these little ones can take their first steps into primary education in a more settled environment.

## Brokering Service

Through our Emergency School Place Brokering Service all schools whether Academies or Maintained schools have worked together to make the best arrangements they can for our children during lockdown. This provision will continue until all the restrictions on schools are lifted.

## Schools Building Programme

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the construction industry, the majority of projects are stalled – mitigation measures are in place where necessary. Currently there are 10 school projects under construction across the County including Benson which continues to operate, the choice of the individual contractor and their workforce. If other projects are in the pre-construction phase, and may encounter staff shortages and delays to planning.

### New Appointments

A New Director for Childrens Services was appointed last week – Kevin Gordon who has recently been working for Hammersmith. A New Assistant Director for Education will be arriving in early June – Hayley Good who joins us from Warwickshire County Council.

### **Household Waste Recycling Centre to re-open from 18<sup>th</sup> May**

The County Council is reopening all seven Household Waste Recycling Centres from 8 am on 18<sup>th</sup> May. They will be open seven days a week, and will close at 4 pm to allow for extra cleaning overnight. The number of vehicles allowed on site will be reduced by 50% to allow for social distancing. This means that queues are highly likely at peak times such as weekends. Traffic marshals will be in place to manage queues. However, residents are asked not to visit the sites unless their trip is essential and they cannot safely store their waste at home. Site staff will not be able to help unload, and only one resident will be allowed out of a vehicle unless they are dealing with really heavy items. Hire vans and trailers will not be permitted at the moment.

### **COVID-19**

#### **Clinical Lead urges people to use Emergency Departments**

Staff at OUH are encouraging people whose health may be at risk to come to the Emergency Departments at the John Radcliffe and Horton General hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attendances have been significantly lower since the pandemic started and the Trust is concerned that people are putting their health at risk by not accessing life-saving services. Staff will treat any serious conditions or ailments. There are systems in place to triage patients with suspected COVID-19, so everyone who comes to hospital will be treated in a safe way. More information is available on the OUH website.

#### **Pregnant women encouraged to attend important appointments**

Pregnant women in Oxfordshire are being reminded that medical help is still at hand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like many providers of maternity services, the OUH has made a number of changes to how maternity care is provided during pregnancy, to keep both women and staff safe. This has included carrying out some appointments by telephone or video. However, maternity services are still open 24/7 for births, urgent care, and clinical advice for women who have concerns about their health or their unborn baby. Some face-to-face appointments with a midwife or doctor are essential, and it is important for women to attend. It is understandable that many people have anxieties around their health during this very unusual time - especially pregnant women.

Women are reminded care is still available and it is important that they stay in contact with their maternity team and attend their scheduled appointments. Appropriate measures will be taken to keep them safe from infection and wherever possible appointments will be done remotely.

#### **Advice to help food banks and markets stay open**

After learning some food banks and food markets had closed over concerns about maintaining social distancing, staff from Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council have devised practical infection control guidance for people and organisations supporting more vulnerable groups. A shared resource is now in place which helps communities, third-sector organisations and small businesses understand how to keep themselves and others safe. The guidance, which has received positive feedback, has helped several food banks and food markets to remain open, providing essential items to less privileged individuals and families.

### **OxLEP COVID-19 support**

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) has launched additional business support programmes, which complement its existing support for the county's business community:

- Critical COVID-19 support programme – this is designed to provide support and guidance in areas including business resilience, cash flow, cost reductions, and business diversification.
- Regional redeployment service - this service will match those recently made redundant with new work in sectors experiencing a surge in employment demand.



### **Green Recycling Bins - The Railway Inn**

Green Recycling bins are situated at the end of The Railway Inn Car Park. This is to raise funds for Children's Air Ambulance. There is also a green bin for media. All items should be bagged.



## Meteor seen above Culham on VE Day by Paul Saunders



The title of this piece will undoubtedly stimulate images of a celestial event above Culham, but when I talk of a Meteor, I talk of the Meteor jet fighter plane.

VE Day early afternoon I was sitting on my door-step, awaiting my cream tea when, to my surprise and during these Covid empty skies, I heard the sound of a jet fighter plane and saw it flying over Sutton Courtney in the direction of Abingdon when it unexpectedly performed a tight banking turn, which brought it directly over The Willows and the Glebe. I looked up into the cockpit and waved at the silver and day-glo orange colour schemed aircraft, which I immediately identified as a Meteor jet fighter. It then headed in the direction of Clifton Hampden before repeating another circuit of Culham and the Glebe; was this because myself and others waved? Many people may not have realised the poignancy of this event on VE Day: the Meteor is a World War 2 RAF jet fighter plane.

The Meteor was the RAF's first jet fighter and entered service towards the end of the war. It was deployed against the German V1, Doodlebugs, the unmanned flying bombs powered by a jet engine, which were launched against London from sites in France. The safest way to destroy a V1 wasn't to shoot it down with the Meteor's canons because the V1 was quite simply a flying bomb and when it exploded the debris could hit the aircraft shooting at it; therefore, the Meteor would fly alongside the V1 position its wing tip under the wing tip of the V1, raise its wing and flip the V1 over, resulting in the V1's gyros, which controlled its flight, being disturbed, sending the V1 crashing to the ground. So for those Culham residents who saw the Meteor, they were seeing a very rare piece of World War 2 history in the air on VE Day. Only 4 Meteors are still flying in the world, 1 at an Australian Museum, 1 in America and two based just a few miles from Culham at Chalgrove airfield.

Chalgrove airfield is owned by Martin Baker Ltd, the company who developed the ejection seat and continue to manufacture them. To test their ejection seats, they many decades ago modified two Meteor jet fighters and these same Meteors are still used. You may be asking the question, why do they still use World War 2 vintage jets to test their ejection seats? Quite simply they do the job perfectly well and have done so for decades so why spend huge amounts of money on purchasing, modifying and certifying a modern jet to perform the same task?

On the subject of tasks I owe a big thanks to Niki and Katie for the surprise cream tea that appeared on my doorstep on VE Day.

## The Mouthpiece

Please note that any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors. We accept contributions and advertisements in good faith and cannot be responsible for errors therein.

Please send contributions for the July issue of the Mouthpiece by June 15<sup>th</sup> to:

[generalmouthpiece@gmail.com](mailto:generalmouthpiece@gmail.com)

|                      |                        |                  |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Anne Churchill Stone | 21 High Street, Culham | Tel 01235 533011 |
| Gordon & Joan Gibbs  | 32 High Street, Culham | Tel 01235 523679 |

Printed (at discounted rate) by Culham Publication Services, Culham Science Centre, OX14 3DB



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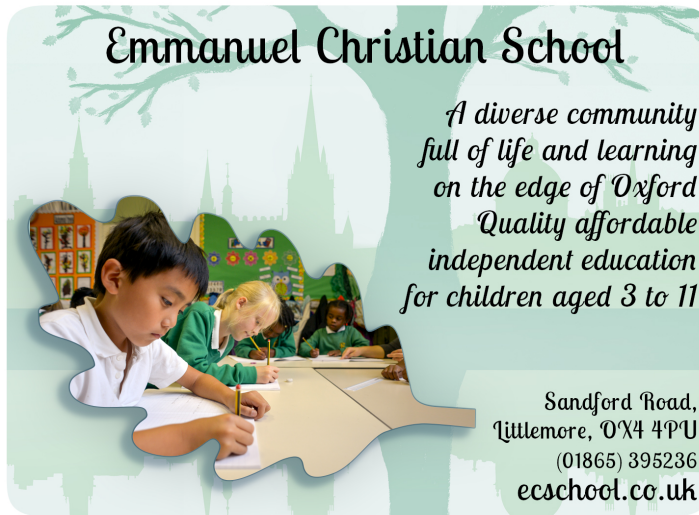
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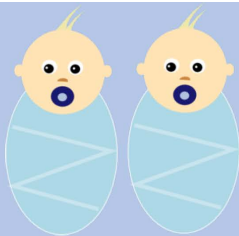
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| Sam Casey-Rerhaye (Chair)                                   | s.caseyrerhaye@culham-pc.gov.uk          | 3 The Burycroft, Culham                                | 01235 799489 |
| Andrew Steele   | a.steele@culham-pc.gov.uk                | 27 High Street, Culham                                 | 01235 534910 |
| Adrian Morris   | a.morris@culham-pc.gov.uk                | 5, Manor Farm Barns, Culham                            |              |
| Philip Owen   | p.owen@culham-pc.gov.uk                  | 6 The Green, Culham                                    |              |
| <b>CLERK TO PARISH COUNCIL</b>                              |  |  |              |
| Lucy Dalby  | clerk@culham-pc.gov.uk                   | 76 Evenlode Drive, Didcot OX11 7XQ                     | 01235 817464 |
| <b>DISTRICT COUNCILLOR</b>                                  |  |  |              |
| Sam Casey-Rerhaye   | Sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk       | 3 The Burycroft, Culham                                | 01235 799489 |
| <b>COUNTY COUNCILLOR</b>                                    |  |  |              |
| Lorraine Lindsay-Gale                                       | lorraine.lindsay-gale@oxfordshire.gov.uk | Nut Tree Cottage, The Green South, Warborough OX10 7DR | 01865 858976 |
| <b>ST PAUL'S CHURCH</b>                                     |  |  |              |
| Associate Team Vicar:                                       | Vacancy                                  |  |              |
| Ordained Local Minister                                     | Revd. David Haylett                      | familyhaylett@yahoo.com                                | 01865 407382 |
| Hon. Treasurer:   | Andrew Churchill Stone                   | churchillstone27@gmail.com 21 High Street, Culham      | 01235 533011 |
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| Editors:  | Anne Churchill Stone                     | 21 High Street, Culham                                 | 01235 533011 |
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| Advertising Manager:  | <b>VACANT</b>                            |  | 07503 511264 |
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