



The Mouthpiece

Culham's Newsletter
April 2025



Dates for your Diary

Fri 4 Apr	8pm	Ladies of Culham - Fairy Garden Creations with Laura	St Paul's Church
Sun 6 Apr	11am	Holy Communion	St Paul's Church
Wed 9 Apr	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting	Culham Pre-school/Nursery
Sun 20 Apr	11am	Holy Communion	St Paul's Church
Sat 3 May	TBA	 Culham Plant Sale 	The Green & St Paul's Church

Talking point by Rev'd Jane Willis

We've introduced a box for 'wondering' questions for assemblies at Dorchester St Birinus CofE Primary School – the children post their questions in the box, and then I or one of our Abbey assemblies team pick a question and then base our assembly on it. You might be amazed at the range of questions! A couple of weeks ago I chose 'Why are people in charge of the world and not octopuses?'

Researching in preparation I discovered some remarkable octopus facts (which it turned out the children already knew!) – including an Oxford scientist who argues that if the human race became extinct, through wars or climate change, octopuses are a likely species to evolve to become the dominant species on our planet. As we say, every day's a school day!

All this led us on to think about what is special about human beings, and our responsibility for our world. As we reflect on the deeply concerning developments in our world, what model of leadership do we find in the Bible? What does greatness look like through the lens of the scripture? The Bible speaks of a saviour who has come 'not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' (Mark 10:43-45) The Bible gives us a picture of the 'downwardly mobile' God – of Jesus, our saviour and our example of true greatness:

6 who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
7 but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,
8 he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
9 Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6-11)

So as we approach Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter – may we pray for our needy world, and fix our eyes and our hope on Jesus.

Every blessing,
Rev'd Jane

Events in the Abbey

Saturday 5th April. 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm. Benson choral Society: The Dream of Gerontius

BCS's Spring concert will be a performance of Elgar's powerful and emotional oratorio "The Dream of Gerontius." A world-class team of soloists: Robert Murray as Gerontius, James Atkinson as the Priest/Angel of the Agony and Frances Gregory as the Angel will be accompanied by the English Sinfonia. Benson Choral Society will be joined by the Wooburn Consort and the ensemble will be conducted by Jonathon Cole-Swinard. Tickets £17 / £20

www.bensonchoralsociety.org.uk

Friday 18th April. 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm. Orchestra of St John's: Faure Requiem & Bach Cantata 82

Faure Cantique de Jean Racine

Bach Cantata 82 Habe genug

Faure Requiem

Belinda Gifford-Guy soprano

Alex Jones bass

OSJ Voices

Orchestra of St John's

www.osj.org.uk/osj-concerts-at-dorchester-abbey Tickets £25, £20, £15

Free tickets available for NHS workers and for the disabled. Please email admin@osj.org.uk

Culham Village Community WhatsApp Group

Please scan the QR code below to join now!



To engage with your local community, please join the '**Culham Village Community**' WhatsApp group. To scan the QR code above simply open up your 'photo' app and hover it over the QR code and join the relevant group that interests you.

Village News

Village website: www.culhamvillage.org.uk

Culham Plant Sale

Date for the diary – Saturday May 3rd 2025, timings to be confirmed



If you are able to help by growing plants to sell, running a kids' activity, baking a cake, helping with setting up, serving food and drinks or anything else please contact Jo Oughtred at 12 The Green, Culham (or any other member of the St Paul's PCC.)



Culham Village Defibrillator



The Culham Village Defibrillator is located at the Culham Village Nursery & Preschool on an external wall facing onto the Glebe.

Notes from Culham Parish Council March 12th 2025 Meeting

The meeting was attended by six councillors, the Parish Clerk, plus two members of the public. The meeting opened at 7:36PM and included the District Councillor's report, the County Councillor's report, public participation, the Clerk's report, and discussions relating to the parish.

Summary of SODC Councillor's report

District Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye's March 2025 report covers key local updates. Residents must now purchase an annual permit for garden waste collection before April. A public consultation is open until March 17 on proposed changes to social housing allocation. The council is also encouraging owners of empty homes to seek assistance in bringing them back into use. A grant funding advice session for community groups will be held on March 20 in Didcot. A Green Party motion on electoral governance for Mayors was voted down in a special council meeting. Residents can find more details and participate via the council's website.

Summary of County Councillors Report

Councillor Robin Bennett's March 2025 report highlights key updates on local government reform, with Oxfordshire councils working towards a unitary authority by 2028. The County Council has approved a budget with over £50m for highways, alongside investments in flooding measures, active travel, SEND support, and early years funding. Capital spending includes £38.6m for road maintenance, £11.1m for the Watlington relief road, and £1.8m for walking and cycling infrastructure. Residents can participate in consultations on the Greenways project and local road safety measures. Updates on pavement widening, parking, and speed limits are also provided.

A full report can be found on the Culham Parish Council website - www.culham-pc-gov.uk - Search All Previous Meetings

Public Participation:

One member of the public asked about the recent road repairs leading up to the churchyard and cemetery, and whether it could be extended to improve house access. The PC confirmed that the work was a one-off commitment to ensure cemetery access, but would review this matter once The Green was purchased by the village.

General Meeting:

Road Safety

"Rumble strip" speed measurement devices have been installed on the High Street and Thame Lane. The PC is waiting for this report before finalising the location and installation of Speed Indicator Devices in the village.

The PC also discussed the A415/Tollgate Road junction crossing, which is progressing slowly, but has the attention of Olly Glover, MP Didcot and Wantage.

Village Maintenance

The contractors have almost finished widening paths on the Burycroft and Tollgate Road, improving pedestrian access.

The PC approved the purchase of new notice boards for the village. The PC also committed to creating a multi-year tree planting scheme.

The PC discussed the proposed community orchard adjacent to the Wagon and Horses, raising concerns about how waterlogged the site is. A proposal to arrange temporary access from Tollgate Road will not be pursued.

Abingdon Reservoir

The PC discussed the reservoir campaign group GARD, who have requested further assistance and representation from all communities. Additional information will be shared in the Mouthpiece.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm

The next meeting of the PC is April 9th at 7:30PM.

Further details and links to documents referenced in these notes can be found on the Culham Parish Council website. <https://culham-pc.gov.uk/>

Ladies of Culham Next Dates:

4th April - fairy garden creations with Laura

2nd May - abstract art with April

6th June - tour of Oxford with Ruth

4th July - perfume making with Gaynor

1st August - social walk

5th September - cyanotype printing with Jo

3rd October - sewing / sewing machines /
needle felting with Laura

Thank you so much to everyone who's run
sessions in 2024.

We look forward to lots of workshops, shared
experiences and socializing in 2025.

To be added onto the LOC WhatsApp group, or
any questions, please email us

Email ladiesofculham@gmail.com



There are a few more events remaining in the RSPB Local Group (Vale of White Horse) 24/25 season, and we are already making plans for the next season. At this time of year we meet in the River Room, by the church, Sutton Courtenay once a month, and also have monthly wildlife walks:

- * Walk 30th Mar: Farmoor
- * Walk 27th Apr: Greenham Common
- * Talk 28th Apr: Photographing Birds, Ben Andrew (River Room only)
- * 12th May: AGM and Members' Evening (River Room only)
- * Walk 25th May: Otmoor
- * Walk 22nd June: Greenham Common (evening, nightjars etc)

For the remainder of the 24/25 season you can join for the reduced price of £10 for adults (whether or not you are an RSPB member), and free for under-16s. This covers the programme above, and a quarterly e-Newsletter. You can join using the form on our website (under "Contacts"): www.rspb-vwh.org.uk, or at a meeting (cash, cheque or bank transfer).

Our 25/26 season will start in September, with initial talks from Fergus Mosey who works at RSPB Otmoor, and a visit from the Owl Conservation Project including some of their live owls!!

SODC District Councillor's Report March 2025

Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye

Garden Waste Permit: apply for your permit now!

This new scheme is now live and if you have or would like a brown garden waste bin, you will need to purchase an annual permit before April.

Please visit the council's website where you can follow instructions on how to do this. It's more efficient for the council (and so ultimately for you!) if you do it via the website if at all possible, and means people who don't have easy access to the website can more easily get in touch by telephone.

[Garden waste scheme changes - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

Assistance to bring empty homes back into use

We're encouraging empty home owners to get in touch with the Council so we can discuss the benefits and options available. See the Council website to see what help there is available to you if you own a home that is currently empty: [Are you an empty home owner? - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

And tying in with National Empty Homes Week beginning on 3 March, we'll also be encouraging residents to report empty homes to us via our website here: [Report an empty property - South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

Want to apply for a grant from the Council?

We are holding a grant funding advice session at Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot on **Thursday 20 March, appointments available from 12.30pm to 4pm**. Voluntary and community organisations will have the opportunity to discuss projects, ask questions about the application process including eligibility for any of the upcoming grant schemes.

Places are limited, so please book a time slot by emailing grants@southandvale.gov.uk or phone 01235 422405. Alternatively, the team are happy to book a phone call or Teams meeting at a more convenient time. Please help us to spread the word!

Local Government Reorganisation

Green Party councillor, Andrea Powell, brought a motion to a special full council meeting last month on local government reorganisation. The motion asked the Council leader to write to the Electoral Commission and the Minister regarding concerns over the electoral governance for Mayors – citing that the first past the post voting system the Conservative government brought in for Mayors and the high financial threshold for campaigns and deposits risked undemocratic and skewed outcomes that do not represent the areas fairly.

You can read the motion on the South Oxfordshire website on the Council meetings page: [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 20 February 2025, 6.00 pm](#)

The motion was voted down, with all the Libdems voting against as well as other councillors, despite the fact that similar motions were passed by Libdems in other councils in Oxfordshire. This was an odd outcome, as so many said they supported the sentiment but thought it wasn't the right time to have a motion on this! I struggle to think of a better time to discuss accountability and democracy than when the government is proposing the biggest reorganisation of local government since 1972.

The government are asking for outline proposals for new unitary councils to be sent to them by 21st March. Despite our grave reservations on the advantages of unitary councils and our concerns about the disadvantages – the waste of time and money at this critical time in the wider country and the danger of a loss of democratic accountability with larger councils- we are putting forward an outline proposal for 2 unitary councils for the wider area. One provisionally called 'Ridgeway council', would comprise South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse and West Berkshire. The other would comprise Oxford city, West Oxfordshire and Cherwell councils (Oxfordshire council). The cabinets in both South and Vale believe this to be about the right size for the new unitaries, not so big to lose local accountability but big enough to be viable. You can read more in the Cabinet paper for the meeting on 19th March, where the other two proposals from other councils in Oxfordshire are also attached in the appendices. The link is here: [*South Cabinet 19.03.25 Supplementary Papers - LGR.pdf](#)

Please get in touch if I can help in any way: Sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk

Other News



As many Culham residents will be aware, Thames Water are currently proposing a huge reservoir, to be built between East Hanney and Steventon, including an intake and overflow pipeline that will join the Thames at Culham. The Group Against Reservoir Development (GARD), are seeking expert volunteers, or people passionate to join their team. If you have relevant work experience, or are able to commit time assisting GARD, please contact them via their website.

ABOUT GARD (Group Against Reservoir Development). GARD is a group of individuals whose aim is to identify and promote viable solutions to meet the future needs of water users in the Thames Water Region. **GARD is advised by eminent water industry practitioners.** Our committee is composed of voluntary, unpaid members with technical experience, each of whom is free from any political or vested interests. **Click here for names of committee members and advisors.**

<https://www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk/>



Could you be their next victim?

Whilst many crimes are falling, such as burglary - down by a third since before the pandemic - sadly we are all more at risk online. We can all feel the benefits of living our lives in a more connected way, but with the convenience that technology brings, there are also risks, but a huge amount of cyber crime and fraud is preventable.

Scams can take place online, on the phone or in person. Here are some of the ways fraudsters may try and target you and the signs to spot to help you protect yourself:

MAIL SCAMS Common types of postal scams include fake lotteries and prize draws, offers of investments and inheritance windfalls. What to look out for: irresistible offers that are too good to be true; unfamiliar branding; not using your name; bad spelling and grammar.

TELEPHONE SCAMS Common telephone scams include investments, pension or computer support scams. The person calling often sounds professional and may pretend to be from a trusted organisation such as your bank, the police or a company you recognise. What to look out for: callers asking you to share personal or financial information or a passcode or pin; callers asking for remote access to your computer; callers trying to rush or pressure you into making decisions.

DOORSTEP SCAMS Criminals pose as legitimate business people selling goods or services that are faulty, overpriced, poor quality or non-existent. What to look out for: being asked for money upfront before providing any goods or service; No ID or proof of who they are; telling you they're doing work for neighbours to try and gain your trust.

EMAIL, TEXT AND WEBSITE SCAMS In what is known as Phishing, an email or text may appear to be from your bank or other company in order to trick you into revealing personal details. You may be asked to click on a link which takes you to a fake website where you will be prompted to enter your details. What to look out for: spelling or grammar mistakes in emails or texts; they may not use your name; an unusual email address which may be similar but doesn't match the company email; strong encouragement to click on a link.

Remember, anyone can be a scam victim.

If you spot a scam, always report it. You can also look out for other people who may be vulnerable to scams by joining [friendsagainstsca.ms.org.uk](https://www.friendsagainstsca.ms.org.uk) to help raise awareness throughout your community. For more information visit [stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk](https://www.stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk).

We always welcome new members
We meet every third Tuesday monthly in the
River Room, All Saints Church, at 7.30 pm
Come along for visit

Contact us via email at suttoncourtenaywi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk
Or 01869 331081



April News – Curlew



The Curlew's wonderful 'bubbling' call is one of the most evocative sounds of springtime in meadows and pastures across Oxfordshire. Something we cherish, but which is sadly under threat. The Curlew is arguably the most pressing bird conservation priority in the UK, where nearly half the breeding population has been lost over the last 25 years and where range contraction has seen Curlews disappear from many traditional sites.

Watch our 'Curlew River' film which explores the work of farmers and volunteers to help our wonderful Curlews as well as highlighting the fabulous ancient meadows and wet grassland habitats that they

inhabit in our area. <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/projects/curlew>.

Thank you so much for all you have done for nature's recovery in the last year. Together we have brought people together, created more space for nature, and inspired more people to act for nature. Many people contribute to Wild Oxfordshire, and this support enables us to create a more natural, resilient, and biodiverse Oxfordshire for the benefit of all. If you would like to join in and are able to, we would greatly appreciate a contribution towards our work, either through a [one-off contribution](#), or a [monthly contribution](#). Check out our website to find out more about the many ways you can [support us](#) and our [recent achievements](#).

Mike Pollard, Wild Oxfordshire Curlew Recovery Project

<https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/>



Soldiers of
Oxfordshire
Museum

Victory and liberation in Europe, 1945: Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum launches new exhibition, *From Conflict to Peace: Celebrating VE & VJ Day*

- **New exhibition featuring stories of Oxfordshire celebrating VE & VJ Day 80 years ago**
- **Accounts of soldiers from Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire that liberated towns, POWs and concentration camps in the latter stages of the Second World War**
- **A programme of events at the museum and in Woodstock mark the anniversaries of VE Day and other milestones from 1945**

Marking the 80th anniversaries of Victory in Europe and Victory of Japan Day, as well as those of many other key events from the final stages of the Second World War, Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum (SOFO) is launching a brand-new exhibition. *From Conflict to Peace: Celebrating VE and VJ Day* will go on display from Tuesday, 1 April to Tuesday, 18 November 2025. The exhibition will cover the celebrations across the county itself, but also the experiences of Oxfordshire people serving in the armed forces throughout 1945, and for many, beyond the end of the war.

VE and VJ Day were both celebrated across the country in 1945, including many events in Oxfordshire. Women working for MI5 at Blenheim Palace recall hearing the bells of Woodstock's St Mary Magdalene Church ringing out for the occasion. In Oxford, locals recall street celebrations, with 'people dancing in line from St Giles to Carfax'.

For many Oxfordshire people serving in the armed forces, including the two county regiments, The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light infantry and Oxfordshire Yeomanry, 1945 had seen a series of tough battles before hostilities would come to an end, and the prospect of many new challenges in the wake of victory in Europe and over Japan.

The new exhibition focuses on personal accounts of the people who were there, both soldiers and civilians. It will also be supported by a programme of themed events at the museum, opening with a free talk by Dr Myfanwy Lloyd on the liberation of Bergen-Belsen on Saturday, 12 April, ahead of the 80th anniversary. Dr Lloyd's research, making contact with the families of a British soldier and a survivor of the camp, resulted in a new permanent display at SOFO Museum. Another talk, with local academic Anthony Glees, takes place on 17 April at 7pm, concerning the occupation of the island of Alderney during the war, and the Nazi war crimes perpetrated there that went unpunished. Professor Glees' was an advisor to Margaret Thatcher's War Crimes Inquiry, 1989-91.

On Saturday, 10 May, Woodstock will celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day with a special event in the town's Market Square, featuring live 1940s music, living history displays, food and drink from local businesses, and fun for all ages from 4pm - 8pm. On the same day, the museum will host Lt. Col. (Retd) Mike Tickner for his talk *Savage Wars of Peace*, from 2pm. The talk provides insight into the situation in eastern Asia following VJ Day and the Japanese surrender, as many nations saw an opportunity for independence, and Gurkha, Indian and British troops became responsible for restoring colonial rule in the region.

The new exhibition and accompanying events programme will offer visitors a chance to discover the part Oxfordshire and its people played in achieving victory and liberation in Europe and in East Asia, 80 years on.

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock, OX20 1SN

Registered Charity No. 1145408

www.sofo.org.uk | frontofhouse@sofo.org.uk | 01993 810210

Henry and His Wives and more music from The Composers Workshop



Henry and his Wives

A Cantata by Tim Cook with illustrations by Adrian Brooks

Plus

More music from The Composers Workshop

Dorchester Abbey

Sunday 11th May 3 pm

Raising funds for Dorchester Abbey



On Sunday May 11th at 3pm there will be a short concert in the Abbey to raise funds for its support.

Once a week a group of composers come together in Dorchester to discuss each other's work. They met some years ago during a composition course at Oxford University's Ewert House and now meet in a music room in Dorchester.

The members of the group have a diversity of styles, and there will be an opportunity in the afternoon of May 11th to hear the work of three of them.

The concert will open with some wind quartets, for flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon, played by members of the Langtree Sinfonia, then two trios for Violin, Viola and Piano played by the PaDaTi trio.

The last item will be Henry and his Wives, a light-hearted cantata by Tim Cook, with illustrations by Adrian Brooks, about the much-married monarch and his unfortunate consorts. If you enjoyed The Ancient Mariner last year you will enjoy this one, so do come.

The concert will last about 45 minutes, entrance is free and there will be an opportunity to make a donation for the upkeep of the Abbey.

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The Mouthpiece

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Please send contributions for the May 2025 issue of The Mouthpiece by **April 15th** to:

generalmouthpiece@gmail.com

The Mouthpiece Team

We always welcome new volunteers to join the team whether you enjoy editing, marketing or distribution – please contact

Anne or Gordon directly if you are interested in joining us



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OPEN Monday to Saturday 9am to 5.30pm

WHO IS WHO IN CULHAM

CULHAM PARISH COUNCIL			
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Hon. Treasurer:	vacancy		
Churchwarden:	vacancy		
Hon. Secretary:	Ruth Ward	stpaulsculham@gmail.com 5 Thame Lane, Culham	
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ST PAUL'S & CULHAM VILLAGE RE-ORDERING COMMTEE			
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