

SOUTH HINKSEY ECHO

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News and Information

Flood barriers for the village

In the unlikely event that anyone's managed to miss the news, the Vale District Council has agreed to pay for necessary groundwork that would then allow temporary barriers to be deployed if flooding threatens.

Matthew Frohn has a team of nearly 20 volunteers to help put these barriers up. The Environment Agency will be providing training in the next few weeks.

While unfortunately we are not guaranteed to get temporary barriers, this preparation, last year's precedent and the availability of more barriers generally, it seems very unlikely that we could any longer simply be "left to flood".

There are many people to thank - the Vale District Council, the EA, our MP, Nicola Blackwood - and, crucially, everyone, from all parts of the parish - not just the flooded part - who over time have variously turned out for noisy public meetings, waved umbrellas at a demo, wielded spades for photos by the paper, talked to journalists, written letters, volunteered for the barrier team - and so on.

Permissions have to be obtained, plans drawn and contracts agreed, so it will be some time till diggers appear. Surveying has begun. The latest (12 Feb) is that work on the ground is now expected to begin in September.

Some people will have seen temporary barriers in use in Hinksey Park or on Osney Island but for anyone who hasn't there are some photos of them being demonstrated at <http://oxfordfloodalliance.org.uk/2009/09/22/temporary-barriers-for-the-hinksey-park-area/>

Peter Rawcliffe, for the Parish Council

Railway Bridge: Hope for safe access for everyone

Brief history

Many people simply cannot get across the present bridge, particularly with bike or buggy, or only with a struggle and some risk. As many readers know the campaign to make the planned replacement bridge (needed for electrification of the line) open to all, by having it endowed with ramps - proper ramps, big enough to take buggy, bike or wheelchair - began in 2012.

Where are we now, February 2015?

There is now a strong possibility that the new bridge will have the ramps that so many people need, but it is not yet a done deal and Network Rail are still developing their proposals for the project. Both the City Council and the Vale Council have agreed in principle to provide some funding to support the extra costs involved in a ramped bridge. The discussions about design and costs are continuing. But, after two years a little longer doesn't matter - if at the end the bridge can be used safely by everyone, now and for the next century at least.

Peter Rawcliffe

South Hinksey Parish Council

Defibrillator

The Council is pleased to announce that due to a grant from County Cllr Bob Johnston for £1500, the fundraising target for the defibrillator has now been met, the equipment has been bought, and it will shortly be installed on the outside wall of the Village Hall. The Council wish to thank Bob, Emmeline Bryant, and all those who have made donations towards the project.

Finance

The Council has approved its budget for 2015/16 and have set the precept at £7,500, an increase of £250. This means that a tax band D property should pay £41.12 towards the Parish Council, an increase of 1.98%.

The Parish Council meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:30pm in the Village Hall and all parishioners are welcome to attend and raise any issues that they would like the Council to consider. Minutes and agendas for all Council meetings are circulated on SHInfo and are also available from the website: www.southhinksey.org. For more information or to discuss any of the issues above, please contact the Clerk, Sheridan Edward, on 07720 052572 or parishcouncil@southhinksey.org.

Village Hall

The change of status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation is gathering pace. The new Constitution has been approved by the Charity Commission and we hope to have April 1 as Changeover Day. You should not notice any difference in the way things are run, but it solves a lot of legal problems and helps to secure the hall as an asset for future generations.

Recent Events

Pub Opening

You may have seen the rave review of the General Elliot in the Oxford Times a couple of weeks ago. The long-awaited reopening of the pub took place on 28 November and the place was packed with diners, drinkers and the the Hippie Haze Band.



Helen and Cass have really surpassed themselves; since that first evening “events” have followed thick and fast and there can be few in the village who haven’t sampled the welcoming atmosphere and good food. I know that when we went for a Sunday lunch every table was full and the atmosphere was buzzing. It was lovely to be served by people who knew us and took a lot of trouble to be sure we were enjoying ourselves. Linda Slater

Regular events include: Once a month Quiz Night, next on 10 March. Once a month on

a Thursday Ladies’ Night, next on 5 March. Friday is Fish, Fizz & Jazz, Saturday we do Specials on Steaks. Sunday is The Big Roast.

Christmas Party

This seems (and is!) a long time ago now. Here, at last, is a picture, courtesy of Beatrice Krebs. You can just see Father Christmas in the front.



South Hinksey Supper Club (“The pop-up!”)

Sadly, Pippa has decided to give up organizing these evenings, and the last event was held on 31st January. The food and the company were as good as ever! Many thanks to Pippa and her team for all their hard work.



Indoor Bowls in the Village Hall

Mick Watkins of the English Carpet Bowls Association came from Suffolk on Saturday 31 January to introduce a keen group of parishioners to indoor “carpet” bowls in the Village Hall. Over twenty people came along, including children. After a demonstration of how it should be done, we had a go, with varying degrees of success! It was a fun and sociable afternoon. Many thanks to Mick for making it so enjoyable.

As there is plenty of interest, we're setting up a Bowls Club, so we have now bought a set of second-hand bowls and already had a mat. We'll probably start with three or four meetings a year, in the winter months, with a small annual fee to cover expenses. Details, and hopefully the first session, soon! STOP PRESS: 3pm on Saturday 21 February.

If you haven't yet expressed an interest, and would like to join, just let one of us know, or just come along and see what it's all about.

Peter 735288; Keiron 326418



Forthcoming Events

A Café Evening at the Village Hall



With Howdenjones in concert

Friday 27 February, 7pm for 7.30

Price £10 including nibbles.

Friday 27 February, 7pm for 7.30

Donations bar



Come and enjoy a convivial evening with nibbles included in the price and entertainment from the singing duo Howdenjones, with a variety of musical instruments, sharing their music and stories.

Tickets from Maggie Rawcliffe: 735288 or mstopard1@btinternet.com

Macmillan: Family Fete

Sunday 26 April 2015

10 am-1pm

South Hinksey Village Hall

Face painting. Manicures, tombola, cake sale

Decorate your own biscuit

Sweet sale, jumble sale...And much more!!

Everybody welcome. Come along and see what interests you whilst helping to raise money for one of the most well-known, essential and worthy charities

Macmillan! Together we can help beat cancer

Wildlife

Chilswell Valley – Wilderness on your doorstep.

It's been about 3 years since I began exploring Oxford's wild places in search of inspiration for a project which would help inspire people to get out and enjoy their local wild spaces and get involved in local conservation. Chilswell Valley (locally known as Happy Valley) was part of a long list of sites which I needed to explore.

I parked up on the road and started my walk up the Chilswell Path; what I discovered was unexpected and magical. I entered the reserve on the board walk which winds its way through the swaying reeds, past the trickling Chilswell stream and into the dark wood of Chilswell Copse. The cool dampness of the wood signalled an immediate change in habitat and walking through the wood, it was as if I was a million miles from the busy ring road. Passing through the wood I entered an altogether different habitat of the warm open valley buzzing and teeming with busy insects feasting on the abundant nectar provided by the incredible array of wild flowers. It was at this moment that I realised this place has the ability to inspire people: where else in the city could you experience such a diversity of life and habitats? Or experience such peace and tranquillity? I thought to myself that this place has something for everyone and it had to be included in the project sites.

We are now a year into a project called "Wild Oxford" which is a joint project between the local Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and Oxford City Council. Three sites were chosen; Lye Valley in Headington, Rivermead in Rose Hill and Chilswell Valley. All of the sites contain Calcareous Fen which is extremely rare nationally (only about 19 Hectares remaining) and located in Oxford due to some pretty incredible local geology. Oxford is located on the edge of a large limestone plate called the Midvale Ridge and it's here where this ridge meets the clay of the Thames catchment that these fens are formed. Over thousands of years springs located in the limestone carry alkaline rich (calcareous) water out onto the non-porous clay where it

has been trapped, forming pools which have gradually turned to peat. It's here that we find one of the most bizarre and diverse habitats in the country!

Chilswell Valley's spring-fed fens have been unmanaged for about 30-50 years which has led to water loving reed and willow taking over from open fen. The fen species would have evolved alongside huge roving grazing animals, genetically related to Bison and Ox which are long since extinct. Open grazing had taken place here probably up until about the turn of the century when agricultural intensification led to grazing becoming unfeasible. It's here that our enthusiastic volunteers come in to help try and create some new fen by cutting back reeds and encroaching willow. A year working in the fen has had dramatic results with a large area of open fen being established, we wait with eager anticipation to see what grows in the cleared areas. The hope is that dormant seed preserved in the peat will take this opportunity to germinate. Plants like the insectivorous Bladder Wort and the exotic Grass-of Parnassus may once have been here, these species still exist at Lye Valley, another Wild Oxford site.

Our volunteer group meets every 2 weeks on the three sites, that's every 6 weeks at Chilswell Valley, if you are interested in joining the group please get in touch. We also run a series of events at Chilswell Valley including the traditional Happy Valley Picnic which takes place annually on Good Friday.

Explore your local nature reserve at the Good Friday picnic in Happy Valley

Chilswell Valley has been known as Happy Valley for at least 100 years because of its popularity as a place for people to enjoy their local natural heritage.

During the last century people used to come to Happy Valley every Good Friday for a family picnic. The Wildlife Trust has taken on the tradition and invites local people to come and see what's been going on at Chilswell Valley since the Wild Oxford project started last year. Come along on Good Friday, 3 April, any time between 11am and 3pm; bring a picnic, take part in games, quizzes, nature trails and guided walks with local wildlife experts. The Wildlife Trust is also providing cakes and hot and cold drinks.

During the last 12 months dozens of volunteers have been working in all weathers. They've made new board walks for people to get closer to nature, cut back the dense reeds to create more diverse habitats for birds, amphibians and insects, and removed some of the scrub that was encroaching on the rare limestone grassland at the top of reserve.

1. If you would like to know more about Wild Oxford, please contact Andy Gunn andygunn@bbowt.org.uk who can tell you about work parties and events on each of the three sites, or visit the website www.bbowt.org.uk.

St Laurence Church – from Fr James Wilkinson, the Vicar

Lent – forty days and forty nights

Ash Wednesday sees the first day of Lent on 18 February 2015. This solemn season is the preparation for the great feast of Easter, but it is a time to be considered in its own right, not just something to be got through.

A prayer for use during Lent,

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts
that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Advance notice of... Easter!

Easter Eucharist at St Laurence at 9.15am on Sunday 5 April 2015, followed by an Easter Egg hunt for children. All welcome!

Sunday Services

The pattern is usually the first and third Sundays of the month at 9.15am with other services in the summer months.

Calendar to April 2015

Sunday 1 st March	Lent 2	Eucharist at 9.15am
Sunday 15 th March	Lent 4	Eucharist at 9.15am
Sunday 5 th April	Easter Day	Eucharist at 9.15am
Sunday 19 th April	Easter 3	Eucharist at 9.15am

Best wishes

Fr James Wilkinson

frjwilkinson@gmail.com

Contact – 01865 245879 or www.acny.org.uk/468