

# SOUTH HINKSEY ECHO

www.southhinksey.org

Volume 11, number 3

October 2011

## South Hinksey Fete

The Great British Weather did not augur well for our fete on 11 September, but the stall holders' determination not to be beaten by a torrential downpour just when they were setting up paid off. The clouds rolled back, the sun shone, intermittently, and lots of fun was had by all.

There were old favourites such as the Donkey House Band, the bar, Splat the Rat and the Egg Throwing Competition, and some new stalls including Superior BBQ Bangers, Pick the Duck, 2nd Hand Books, Bring & Buy and even a fire engine visit.

The fete made a profit of £281 and donations have been made to UK and overseas charities.



Photos by Bob Marsden. These and others are available from [www.bobmarsdenphotography.co.uk](http://www.bobmarsdenphotography.co.uk) with 50% of proceeds going to the fete fund.

## The Hinkseys' Cricket Match, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2011



White-clad figures on a green village pitch; the tap of leather on willow; lots of cups of tea; sunshine occasionally obscured by threatening dark clouds. Yes, the first South vs North Hinksey cricket match had all the ingredients for the perfect summer afternoon in an English village. It was the battle of the Hinkseys: the experienced North team vs the newly-formed South, led gallantly by Captain Nick. In the end the results were admirably close, in great part due to a fine innings by Keiron Blay.



The Toss, The Teams, The SAVE!

Roll on next summer!

### Diary Dates for 2012

S Hinksey vs N Hinksey Cricket match – Sunday 2 September 2012

South Hinksey Fete – Sunday 9 September

## Parish Council

Thanks to the Parish Clerk, Sheridan Edward for this summary (07720 052572 or [s.hinksey@gmail.com](mailto:s.hinksey@gmail.com))

### **Speed Restriction on Hinksey Hill**

Following many years of campaigning by the Parish Council, and particularly Cllr Liz LeFevre, Oxfordshire County Council have installed a 40mph speed restriction at the top of Hinksey Hill. It is hoped that this will help to reduce accidents on this stretch of road. The footpaths are to be cleared. To improve safety around the junction at the top of Hinksey Hill the County Council are due to repair the anti-skid road surface. The Parish Council would like to thank Mark Francis and Laura Hutchins of Oxfordshire County Council for their work.

### **Car Parking on St Lawrence Road**

The Council has investigated several options for easing the parking problems along St Lawrence Road. The Council met with local residents earlier in the year. To keep access clear for local residents and the church, a sign has been erected at the entrance to St Lawrence Church, and No Parking road markings have been installed.

### **South Hinksey Village Hall**

The Council is still in the process of transferring ownership of the Village Hall from the current trustees to the Council to ensure that the building remains a permanent asset. We are hopeful that this will be concluded soon. The day-to-day running of the hall will remain with the Village Hall Management Committee.

### **General Elliot PH**

The Vale Brewery are appealing against the refusal of the planning application requesting change of use of the pub to residential. The hearing at Abbey House, Abingdon, was on Wednesday 19th October.

At the last Parish Council meeting, the Council received a proposal from a developer, looking at ways of developing land around the General Elliot. The proposal would include refurbishing the General Elliot building, part of which would be handed back to the community. See **General Elliot: the latest** below.

### **A34 Road Safety**

The Council is in the early stages of investigating possible ways to improve road safety along the A34 next to South Hinksey. Progress will be reported through the Parish Council meeting minutes.

### **Finance**

The Council finances continue to be strong. There have been significant underspends on many overheads, income is on budget, and the Council predicts a small surplus for 2011/12. Both internal and external audits were very positive and raised no serious problems.

## General Elliot: the latest

The last pub in the Parish has now been closed for three years. It is owned by the Vale Brewery. After a series of short-lived tenancies, John took over in 2006. Unfortunately he was unable to make a go of it, and at New Year 2009 he closed the pub for the last time, gave away all the fixtures and fittings - which belonged to him - and left the village in disgust. Since then the pub has stood empty and increasingly derelict.

Later on that year the Vale Brewery put forward plans to invest in the pub, providing a restaurant and bed-and-breakfast accommodation. We were invited to view the plans and feeling was, on the whole, in favour, although there were some misgivings over the plans to raise the height of the building and over increased traffic. The Parish Council wrote to the Planning Authority expressing overall support for the plan but pointing out this anxiety. The plan was rejected on the grounds that it would detract from quality of life in the village.



Rather than discussing modifications the Vale Brewery withdrew the plan entirely, later submitting a Planning Application to convert the pub to a single dwelling house. This provoked outrage from the Parish, as the Elliot was the last remaining facility in the village apart from the church and the village hall. A group of villagers had started a “mock pub”, meeting in each other’s homes, which had fallen victim to its own success as the numbers grew too big to fit comfortably into private houses. There was a Parish Meeting, many people wrote to oppose the Brewery’s application and in due course it was rejected by the Planning Authority on the grounds that the Brewery had not proved the pub was not a viable business. Vale Brewery appealed against this rejection. The appeal hearing was on Wednesday 19 October, and we are now awaiting the outcome.



Meanwhile, a development company, rCOH, had been in contact with the Parish Council suggesting a partnership which would see them buying the land, building five new houses in a courtyard development in the garden, in exchange for handing over to the Parish rooms in the building which could become a community pub, restaurant and meeting rooms. The Parish Council organised a questionnaire to find out local opinion. A meeting on 4 October came to the conclusion that, although this looked good at first glance, it would not actually promise the provision of a pub, and that the parish was too small, even using the available pool of volunteer labour, to support such a venture.

This latest meeting was not, however, all negative. Those present felt that the best course of action would be to wait for the outcome of the latest appeal but meanwhile to prepare a concept note stating our objectives and willingness to work with Vale Brewery in the event of their appeal failing. Meanwhile we will continue to oppose the conversion of the pub to a private dwelling, on the same grounds as previously.

## **Things to Do**

### **Garden Club**

Membership of the Garden Club is getting very low and the Club is debating whether to carry on. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Ann Markham (anne@truckfindersite.com ). There is a little bit of background about the Garden Club on the website: [www.Southhinksey.org](http://www.Southhinksey.org). Typically the Club meets once a month for teas and garden visits.



## Nature's Niche

Having spent the last few days picking the fruits from the garden trees I cannot recall such a successful year of fruitfulness. With the odd exception of our mulberry everything else is incredibly prolific. A quince tree which normally bears only a few fruits is simply dripping with hundreds of fruits. Apples, cherries, damsons, greengages, plums, grapes, strawberries, gooseberries and medlars have all been outstanding in numbers. Everything is also a few weeks early. The preparation for jams, jellies and damson vodka and sloe gin were already in motion in August. The wild fruits of the hedgerows have similarly exceeded all normal expectations. We have been picking blackberries from the roadsides since late July and crab apples, hazel nuts, hips and haws and sloes have all been available in vast quantities. The question that immediately comes to mind is why is this year so good? Much has to do with the climate-both of last winter which was reasonably wet containing a cold snowy spell before Christmas, the very dry Spring - March to early May and a lack of late frosts which in some years is so devastating at the end of May.

The wildlife has been and will be benefitting hugely from the feast. Cherries were snapped up by the Blackbirds, Thrushes and Finches. Even the strawberries under nets on our kitchen window sill were nicked by a blackbird. Nuts will feed the larder coffers of the Jays, Squirrels and Dormice. Hedgerow berries will supply the winter thrushes including the Redwings, Fieldfares and Waxwings and Crossbills. Such bonus years as this should increase and support larger bird and mammal populations which have all been decreasing by enormous numbers in the last twenty years.

The recent Defra White Paper on the Environment is another bit of good news. Details can be accessed here <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/>. At long last the Government is recognising the need to protect biodiversity. Twelve new Nature Improvement Areas are planned to connect up the landscape and thus allow wildlife to move more freely through it. Establishing a new independent Natural Capital Committee to put the value of England's natural capital at the heart of our economic thinking is indeed a novel and welcome approach. Details of the National Ecosystem Assessment: <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/Resources/tabid/82/Default.aspx>

In the Parish we are blessed with the benefits of living in the Green Belt of Oxford which up to now has given us undeveloped flood meadows, open parkland chalkland valley slopes and relatively uncontaminated streams and rivers. Let us hope the other government planning proposals for more localisation which introduce new guidelines that favour more development will not be at the expense of the natural assets we all enjoy and need whether we are wildlife, plant life or human.

*Clive Briffett*



### **Burial Ground flower meadow**

Some young plants were lost over the harsh winter. However a good deal remains and is becoming more firmly established. There was more Cuckooflower than last year in the spring. Stocking continues; we have just been given more yellow (hay) rattle seeds and some common spotted orchid seeds - the latter are hard to establish. Field scabious and salad burnet have been planted. The mowing regime has been changed so the sward will be left shorter at the end of the season, to better control vigorous grasses.

Betony, musk mallow and a few harebells are among the flowers to be seen just now (mid-August). Marjoram should flower soon. Pleasingly there have been many insects, including butterflies nectaring on the flowers in the spring end, though this has just had its hay cut. This year the hay will be collected by raking rather than with a rotary mower, which should mean more seeds staying behind. I hope these changes and new planting will mean further progress by next year.

*Peter Rawcliffe*

### **News from Kennington Health Centre**

In October a new booking system will be installed. This system will make things easy for the GPs to have a consultation with you as well as enabling the receptionists to make appointments. All together it should make things better for the practice and therefore the patients. However, like all change it will have a short term impact on how we currently do things. In this instance we will be unable to make any appointments beyond the end of October until the new system is up and running. We will of course try and minimise the difficulties this may cause those of you who will want to book future appointments.

*Dave Dixon, Practice Manager [dave.dixon@nhs.net](mailto:dave.dixon@nhs.net)  
[www.kenningtonhealthcentre.co.uk/](http://www.kenningtonhealthcentre.co.uk/)*



### Local recommendations

Are you looking for a good tiler, or someone to sweep the chimneys before winter sets in? We now have an informal list from caterers to plumbers who have been recommended by others in the parish: [http://www.southhinksey.org/Local/local\\_recommendations.htm](http://www.southhinksey.org/Local/local_recommendations.htm) If you have any recommendations to make please let Linda know (Oxford 739183 / [jolinda.slater@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jolinda.slater@tiscali.co.uk)). Only recommendations please.!

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### Note from the Editors

The Echo is put together and distributed three times a year by volunteers from the Hill and the Village. We would welcome some help. If you would like to contribute to content, and or help edit, please contact us ([editor@southhinksey.org](mailto:editor@southhinksey.org)).

Also – if you have received a printed copy and have email, please supply your email address so we can email you ([editor@southhinksey.org](mailto:editor@southhinksey.org)). We are trying to limit printed copies for those who do not have access to email. This saves on costs and volunteer time.

**Nature photos courtesy of Clive Briffet**