

## Onwards 2022!

### Chipping Norton looks forward to a festival year

**Busy Christmas season** – Chippy’s community ended a tough 2021 with something resembling a normal festive season – community carols, concerts, tree trails, the Hunt, Panto, many families back together, and Town Centre busy with shoppers and families ‘staying local’.

**Festival Fun in 2022** – Now we look forward to a succession of festivals: Snowdrops in February, Music in March, ChipLitFest in April, ArtWeeks in May, and the Queen’s Jubilee and Town Festival in June. More inside on things to do – from tree planting and getting fit, to clubs to join and Theatre shows to book.

**But challenges ahead** – Covid restrictions are lifting but many remain vulnerable. 2022 will be tough for those hit by financial or health issues. Average Chippy families could be over £1000 worse off – with a £100 Council Tax rise, National Insurance hike, and energy bills up 50%. Our ‘community superheroes’ like the Chippy Larder, the Food Bank and The Branch will still be needed. Time to stick together.

### Covid Superheroes!



Over 70 Chippy community heroes were thanked at December’s Town Council Ditchley event. Pictured are some of our wonderful health staff and volunteers from Chippy’s major vaccination campaign. See centre colour pages for full report and more photos.

### News in this Issue

Chippy’s 1000+ new homes – more debate ~ Work starts on High Street cinemas ~ Still no HGV solution in County’s new transport plan ~ Diddy Squat restaurant hits planning issues ~ Missing bus stop is back – standing room only ~ Chippy’s Valentine traditions  
*Plus Arts, Sports, Clubs, Schools and bumper Letters pages this month*



### Town Sports Awards

Nominate your local sporting heroes.  
Deadline 21 February.  
Details page 24.



### Future of Highlands

Local charity Age Concern Chipping Norton appeals for future ideas.  
See page 2.

## The future of Highlands and its community services

**The Management Committee of our long-serving local charity Age Concern Chipping Norton has announced that, with continuing financial deficits and declining use as an elderly day centre, they are having to reduce paid staff and are looking at the best future options for using their valuable major asset – the large Highlands house and garden along the Burford Road. The Committee, chaired by Pat Lake, want help, volunteers and ideas from the Community.**



**Successful day centre since 1993** – In a public statement for the Chippy News, the Committee explained that when Age Concern CN opened Highlands, Dr Bruce and Dr Sheila Parker and others decided that a Day Centre would be a positive contribution to the Government's 'Care in the



*Busy back in the day ... hosting a well-attended Millennium celebration in 2000*

Community' programme. It was very successful, open four days a week, with a waiting list of elderly people wanting to come. A manager and staff were hired. Members could enjoy a two course meal and tea or coffee on arrival and before going home. Highlands was physically extended to cope with numbers and provide more daytime activity space. A new minibus was bought to help members get there, with a further minibus later added.

**Early funding and expansion** – Way back, the Trustees negotiated an extremely helpful annual funding contract with Oxfordshire County Council – keeping day rates for members affordable and accessible to Chippy's elderly community. At one time a large part of the building was let to Mental Health Services and further letting was done to help with the costs. The practical help to members and their carers continued and the Highlands Day Centre became one of the best in Oxfordshire. Expansion included Age Concern Chipping Norton taking over running the old Monday Club after other such day clubs folded.

**From Day Centres to activities** – Over the decades Day Centre and Day Clubs were less in demand. The elderly became far more active. Age Concern Chipping Norton started a club called Chippy Active Trips (CATs) – organising trips each month to places of interest, theatres, river trips and other energetic activities. This club now has 220 members. The Committee also organised exercise classes (run by Age UK on a Monday and Friday). All this has paused through Covid, but hopefully could and will be revived.

**Loss of funding and drain on reserves** – In the last five years many other local Day Centres closed and Oxfordshire County Council stopped their funding for Chipping Norton.

By good management over years, the Trustees had built up liquid reserves and were able to plan an overspend of £20,000 a year, if needed, for a while to keep the Highlands Day Centre staffed and running. The pandemic meant temporary closure, but dedicated staff kept up emergency help services. But, even before the pandemic, the trend in day centre use was clearly downwards. Currently the Day Centre can justify opening only two days a week – despite looking for more members. It was also become increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff. The Trustees say that all this will see liquid reserves start to vanish.

**Hard decisions and new ideas** – The Committee say, 'the time has come for a very close look at what the community we serve wants and needs, and what that means for the organisation – with potential challenging decisions.' They are considering a number of ways forward, including some of the following:

- running a weekly lunch club at Highlands staffed by volunteers.
- running other activities for the elderly, such as exercise classes.
- continuing to run the present successful transport service, to get people to hospital appointments, etc.
- making greater use of Highlands for the wider community and for other age groups.

The Committee say they would prefer to keep Highlands, the house, which they own, and use it to serve the community. Opportunities to use the building could include finding ways to continue existing services, or broaden thinking to other ways of helping both the elderly and the wider community. If you have any ideas, or would like to volunteer, please contact the Committee at 01608 643320.

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## Chippy News all set for 2022!

A Happy New Year from all the volunteers on the Chipping Norton News Team! The Team held a successful and enjoyable



AGM and Christmas drinks for volunteers and supporters in December in the Lower Town Hall. The News, started way back in 1976, is run as a Volunteer Club and aims to cover its costs (mainly printing) with your 50p readers' contributions and just enough adverts. The first year of Covid saw a small financial loss, with lockdown, and the decision to produce some free news sheets to keep the community up to date on news around town and where to go for help. For the financial year to October 2021, the Club was back in surplus – and, by December, circulation (just under 2000) was almost back to pre-Covid levels. Thanks to everyone for your continued support. The deadline for the March edition, out on 28 February, is Friday 11 February. Don't forget you can come and help: writing articles and features, following up stories, doing distribution, editing, desk top publishing, proofreading, or taking photos. It only works because of those who help or contribute! Contact Jill on 01608 643219 or [chippymail@aol.com](mailto:chippymail@aol.com) or come and have a coffee.

## Town's festive Christmas



After another year of Covid and restrictions, Chipping Norton made a positive effort to put on a festive Christmas – with tree and church trails, carol services, concerts, a visiting tractor Santa, children parading with their home-made lanterns behind the Mayor, communal carol singing around the arcade piano – and many shops open for late evening shopping. The Hunt was back in town as well. Well done all.

Christmas lights were glowing in the town centre: many thanks again to Pat Lake and his volunteer team – out again this year stringing lights on (and off!) the little Christmas trees. The Town Council's ambitions for an upgrade to the Christmas lights ended up with some new lights along Middle Row and impressive snowflakes in the Market Place. Many liked the snowflakes (see letters), but some social media comment to the News expressed disappointment. After 11 months' storage, it appears nearly half the little light sets for trees did not work. New professional contractors were paid to provide the replacement displays, repair old ones and put up and connect the little trees. An original budget of £3000 (similar to previous years) for trees and lights was increased significantly, in mid year, to £15,000. The Town Council set aside some of their reserves for this and for buying the little trees. Final actual spending is not known.

The Town Council continues with ambitions to upgrade the Christmas lights and have now included £15,000 in the 2022/23 budget (agreed on 17 January) for next Christmas. They will need to go out to tender to ensure the best value. What sort of lights would you like to see? Do you like the all-white theme? Can we take inspiration from other towns such as Woodstock or Stow? Let the Town Clerk or Councillors know so that public opinion can be reflected in any tender process.

## Work starts on new cinemas

Might we be able to watch next Christmas's cinema blockbusters right here in Chippy? That is certainly the aim as



the conversion of the old Harper's Department Store in the High Street into two boutique cinemas and apartments gets underway. Contractors moved on site on 15 November and have already stripped out the building and started construction of new dwellings in the grounds. Developer Alex Giacchetti told the News, 'A lot of preparation and planning has been going on in the background, so we are aiming to have the cinema and serviced apartments open in time for this coming Christmas'. Permission was granted in July 2021 for a two-screen cinema, eight apartments for sale and five serviced short-let apartments.

## Town Piano in action

The Town's new Community Piano, installed thanks to the Town Council back in October in Withers Court arcade, has been getting a lot of use. The (donated) Welmar upright is in very good tune and survived some of the black keys coming unstuck



*Tenor Gwyn & Pianist Ruth entertain passers by in Withers Court*

with the wrong sort of glue. Fully back in action, it 'hosted' a wonderful carol singalong in early December with members of the Chipping Norton Community Choir and lots of onlookers joining in. The piano is free to play for anyone – young, old, beginners, professionals! Pianist Ruth Dale sent us this picture of her and tenor Gwyn Osborne in action. You can find them enjoying making music most Wednesdays from 11am to 12 noon. Why not follow their example?

## Town dentist – future plans

The popular Chipping Norton Dental Practice in New Street, opened by Dr Matthew Emmott in 2002, has recently been



*Patients queued down New Street back in 2002 to register with Matthew Emmott's new dental practice*

taken over by Damira Dental Studios – a large and growing group with 26 practice locations mainly in the south of England. Dr Emmott, who still owns the building and will continue practising as a dentist there, spoke to the News about future plans. He was with Dr Anushika Brogan, founder and Managing Director of Damira. She started as a dentist in



Oxford, building Damira from 2003, and still practises herself.

The Chipping Norton practice, like most in the UK, has had a challenging two years of Covid. Dentists were closed for three months and are still restricted in numbers of sessions. Extra care with cleaning and protecting patients and staff is time-consuming and stressful. A 'perfect storm' has seen 'locked down' patients with dental health issues, existing patients facing big backlogs, and appointment delays. However, Dr Emmott said he was delighted to be working with Dr Brogan and the excellent team in Chippy – and Damira provided a great opportunity to provide the best service, including with new technology and specialisms.

Responding to questions about the continuation of NHS work, Dr Brogan said all but one of the Chippy dentists are retaining NHS contracts. Back in 2002, it was very difficult to get to see an NHS dentist, and patients queued down New Street to register at the new practice which has since had much positive feedback. The News was told that existing NHS patients will continue to be offered NHS appointments – but with backlogs, capacity was an issue as were waiting times. The Practice did want to start taking on new NHS patients but this may not be for months. Dr Brogan said she knew that Chipping Norton had many families which might not be able to afford private treatment and wanted to meet those needs – she stressed that anyone with serious pain could contact the surgery for NHS help.

## Health Centre's Xmas guests

After another busy and stretched year, the team at Chipping Norton Health Centre continued full-on with Covid jobs, before and after Christmas. By mid January they had done 74,313 Covid vaccinations including Firsts, Seconds and Boosters. The efforts of many staff and volunteers were rightly recognised and applauded in the Covid Superheroes awards in December (see centre pages).

The CNHC team did manage to celebrate Christmas as well with a huge Christmas tree outside the Health Centre. CNHC's Kris Chodyniecki told the News, 'we were lucky enough to decorate the tree with beautiful hand-made decorations given to us by some of the local nursery groups. Thanks to Banana Moon, Chipping Norton Pre-school, Forest Fawns and The Town Nursery for the decorative pine cones, wood slices, fruit slices and lolly pop shapes! It really made our tree a sight to behold!'



On 6 December the nursery children and accompanying adults had a merry time with apple juice, mulled wine (for the grownups!) and mince pies, singing carols around the tree and admiring their handiwork.

## Award for Fairytale Farm

Fairytale Farm, the family run farm park visitor attraction near Chipping Norton, was awarded the Best Family Entertainment Centre in the Park World Excellence Awards 2021. The annual awards are organised by Park World Magazine, a leading magazine for the attractions industry. The award goes to a family attraction that has stood out as doing something exceptional over the past twelve months, going above and beyond their usual standards. Fairytale Farm, opened in 2013 by David Cameron, mixes classic fairy tales, animals, adventure play and an enchanted walk with a surprise around every corner. It is a sensory and learning wonderland for all the family. Owner Nick Laister says, 'it is a great honour to be recognised by such a highly respected awards ceremony with international competition. It's a tribute to the great team that operates Fairytale Farm; without their hard work and commitment, this would not have been possible.'

## Finding NHS dental care

Nationally, the availability of NHS dental care has become a big issue. The Government says it should be available but, with no statutory requirement to do NHS work, many dentists have stopped offering this option in order to prioritise private work. The situation has been severely aggravated by Covid restrictions and backlogs. Finding a convenient dentist to take on new NHS patients is currently virtually impossible, although some practices run waiting lists for registering – with no promise of when. Website searches and local phone

calls confirm this as a widespread problem. An attempt (via the NHS website) to find a local dentist to register a new adult NHS patient found only Lion House Dental Practice in Hook Norton – and even then no appointments until May. Children can apparently be registered at Charlbury and Shipston-on-Stour. Website promises are not always met in practice. Hopefully we are not returning to a time when patients risk suffering severe pain and dental problems because they cannot afford a dentist.



## New bus shelter – standing only

Loyal readers will remember the twisting story of the Walterbush Road bus shelter. In February 2018, Chipping Norton Town Council decided to remove the shelter after complaints to police of disturbances caused by young people gathering there. However, the Council had not consulted the nearby residents, many elderly and infirm, who regularly waited for buses under the shelter in wind and rain at the top part of



*Rita Heritage pictured at the replacement bus shelter*

Chippy. A determined campaign and petition by Rita Heritage and her friends saw the Council, later that year – in November 2018 – vote to reinstate a smaller shelter but still with a small seat and Perspex sides (as noted in Council minutes). But residents still affected by disturbances objected again, the local police inspector joined them, and so the Council paused once more. But eventually, over three years later, after three cold winters and a public survey, the Town Council finally erected a new shelter in December 2021.

Rita, now proudly aged 88, told the News she is grateful to have the shelter but that it is missing two key elements – sides to protect against the wind and rain, and a sitting ledge to rest on. Insult was added to injury when the existing old seat beside the shelter was removed when the new bus stop was erected. Despite a warm day when our News reporter visited with Rita (pictured), the wind was cold and a lengthy wait standing up for a delayed bus was an unattractive prospect – it's a good thing Chippyites are hardy! Rita has written to the Town Council about her concerns. Maybe, eventually, we might even see a plaque erected there acknowledging Rita's determined efforts for local residents.

## East Chipping Norton update

After disagreements and delays, Oxfordshire County Council are restarting work planning the 1000+ home East Chipping Norton town expansion. But Town Councillors have major concerns about the commitment of the County and other landowners to delivering an 'exemplar' development. Councillors met new OCC LibDem Leader Cllr Liz Leffman last year and she has now sent a 'next steps' letter to Mayor Cllr Georgia Mazower. Cllr Leffman says OCC (as lead landowner) are returning to producing a comprehensive Masterplan for the whole site, using the same consultants (LDA Design) who worked on the previous stalled process. OCC also promise undefined 'local engagement' meetings and public consultation (using another external consultancy) possibly by March.

But Town Councillors called assurances in the letter 'underwhelming' and short on specific commitments. Cala Homes, the second major landowner, reportedly told Town

Councillors last year they 'would only build houses they could sell'. So Councillors feel more detail is needed to set adequate guidance for an exemplar, sustainable development. They fear LDA Design are not architectural specialists and that a superficial Masterplan could allow Cala and other developers to fall short of the vision and high standards Town Councillors are seeking. Mayor Georgia Mazower said she would be responding to OCC setting out her concerns.

A further issue, not discussed by Town Councillors, is that OCC say their Masterplan will be adopted by WODC to use when determining detailed planning applications for each phase; there is no mention of an outline application for the whole site, nor of the resurrection of WODC's Supplementary Planning Document, setting out detailed requirements – abandoned last year after Cala Homes' legal challenge. All this could better ensure the development meets our needs, for example, on environmental issues, integrating East Chipping Norton fully into the Town and providing adequate funding for necessary infrastructure and facilities via Section 106 agreements.

Cllr Leffman says 'everyone is committed to working together' but the fear is that rushing to relying only on an inadequate 'high level' Masterplan could, intentionally or not, leave the Town at the mercy of commercial interests pursuing piecemeal applications for their land. The resource-constrained planners at WODC could come under pressure to get things approved.

## Celebrating the Queen's Jubilee

After nearly two years of Covid restrictions The Town Festival Committee is pleased to announce exciting plans for the Town to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Committee is delighted to be working with the Town Council to make this a memorable time – with lots of opportunities to get involved. Here's a sneak preview:

### TOWN FESTIVAL

**Sunday 5 June, 11am–9pm in the Town Centre**

The programme opens with Churches Together and then a full day of local bands and choirs. There'll be something for everyone: stalls, street food, children's rides and games, picnic tables, vintage military vehicles display, tombola, raffle with great prizes, and more. Watch out for details in the Chippy News and the commemorative programme on sale in May. The Festival is a free event organised by volunteers and sponsored by local businesses, raffle sales and donations on the day. Help will be needed setting up on Saturday and the actual day. If you can spare a few hours please let the team know via [cntownfestival@gmail.com](mailto:cntownfestival@gmail.com).

### STREET PARTIES

Why not organise a Big Jubilee Lunch and get your neighbours together for a Street Party, ideally on the Friday or Saturday so you don't miss the Town Festival!

### THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY

The nation is being encouraged to do some tree-planting this year – and put it on a Green Canopy Map. Let's get Chippy involved! See article on Page 13.

## Council tax rise

It looks like Chipping Norton's Council Tax payers (Band D average) will be paying £100 more per household from April next year – if proposals from our different public authorities are finally agreed. County, District and Police authorities were consulting the public on their proposals – to be confirmed early February. The Town Council has already fixed theirs.



### Proposed Council Tax for Band D taxpayers

	2021/22	2022/23	% rise
Ox County Council	£1578.1	£1651.6	5.0%
Thames Valley Police	£231.3	£241.3	4.3%
Chipping Norton Town	£115.1	£120.8	5.0%
West Oxon District	£109.4	£114.6	4.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2028.9</b>	<b>£2128.3</b>	<b>4.9%</b>

The County Council take the lion's share with large costs in education, highways, and social services. The main OCC rise (in fact 4.99%) is 'capped' by the Government to 1.99% but an additional 3% is allowed to try and fund serious shortfalls in social care. West Oxfordshire, providing refuse collection, planning, tourism and other services, say they are still one of the lowest spending in the country. Thames Valley Police say they need the money to keep up local resourcing. All this is alongside constraints in funding from central Government. Chipping Norton Town Council is a 'third level' parish council with no statutory service duties but does look after local assets such as Greystones, Town Hall, Pool Meadow, Recreation Grounds and Cemetery. Partly because of this, last year it set the second highest tax rate (after Witney) out of the 81 parish and towns in West Oxfordshire. For this coming year, 2022/23, at their 17 January full Town Council meeting, councillors agreed to raise their 'precept' share by 5% to around £121 for a Band D property.

## Town Council budget and spending

The news of a 5% tax increase (around £5.70p per year for Band D) by the Town Council should be set in context. Last year there was no rise. The Town Council, as a policy, raised its Council Tax precept (per household) above inflation over the previous 12 years partly to take on more staff and services aimed at benefiting the Town – such as street scene improvements and grants to local organisations. The Council has also already deliberately built up reserves to fund, for example, expensive maintenance of our listed Town Hall – for which it receives relatively little income. 2020/21 and 2021/22 have been unusual years because of Covid – income has dropped, for example from Town Hall bookings. There has been some Covid support and furlough grants from government, but also the Council has had to pay for locum contract staff and other unbudgeted items (see Letters page).

For 2023 the Council will need to start spending on a 10 year programme of works for the Town Hall (they have now agreed to earmark £270,000 out of nearly £500,000 in current reserves for the first part of the programme). They also want to take on more staff, continue to upgrade recreation services, do more for young people, improve the town centre and spend on professional help to advise on things such as the town expansion and traffic. The Town Council's total budget expenditure will be over £500,000. To pay for it there is some income, for example from lettings, and the Council already plan to use around £83,000 of reserves already earmarked (eg Town Hall repairs, youth services, recreation equipment and street scene). The remainder needed, £352,000, would have had to come from increasing Council Tax by over 8%. But at their meeting, Councillors voted to restrict the rise to 5% – meaning another £11,000 will need to come from general reserves to plug the gap. Full copies of the budget are publicly available from the Town Clerk.

## Grants for Town organisations

Chipping Norton Town Council agreed at a special meeting in December to award around £26,000 in grants from the current 2021/22 year's budget to local clubs, charities and 'voluntary bodies', who submitted requests by last September.



- The larger grants included CN School PTA £5000, The Theatre £3000, Lido £4000, Home Start £2900, CN Air Training Cadets £2000, CN Preschool £2000, Cricket Club £1500,
  - Grants of £1000 each go to CN Museum, Green Gym, and CN Scouts.
  - Smaller grants (from £150 to £700) include CN Community Church, Friends of Gt Rollright School, Mindful Mums Chipping Norton, CN Rainbows, CN Royal British Legion, West Oxon Women's Institute,
- Around 50% of funds applied for were allocated. There were unsuccessful applications from Sunshine Cats Rescue and CN Rifle and Pistol Club. A further grant of £5000 (outside the £26,000) had already been awarded after a special request from the North Oxon Thrive charity which has been helping children from local families in financial difficulties.



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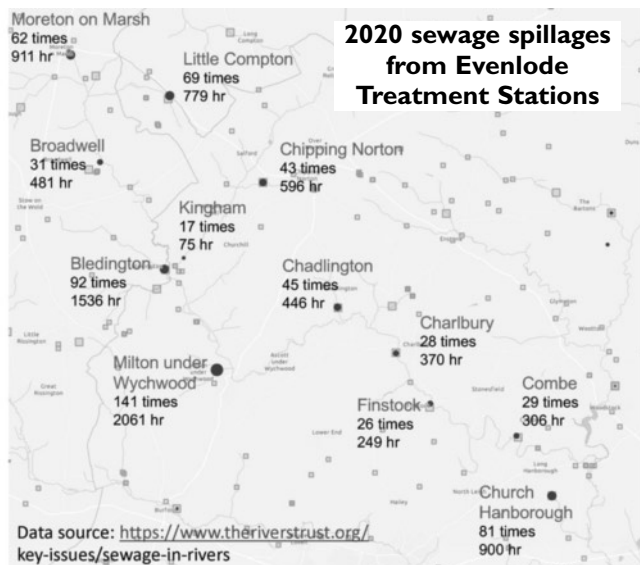
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## Chippy sewage petition

In November the national press (and the *Chippy News!*) had front page stories about routine discharging of untreated



sewage from local Sewage Treatment Stations (STs) into our rivers. The record of Thames Water Utilities has come under severe scrutiny – in Parliament with local campaign group Windrush Against Sewage Pollution producing research evidence. The River Windrush saw Boxing Day swimmers near Wolvercote having to abandon their swim after sewage had been dumped at Thames Water’s Witney STS on Christmas Day.

Campaigners (WASP came to talk to Chippy Town Council in November) say Thames Water routinely discharge large volumes of untreated sewage into local rivers to protect inadequate sewerage systems from overflowing. Permits allow this in exceptional circumstances (eg after rainstorms), but in practice the STs spill raw sewage as often as they wish. Nearer to Chippy is the River Evenlode and in 2020 Chipping Norton’s treatment works had 43 incidents – totalling 596 hours of discharge – polluting the Evenlode Valley. Over 8700 hours of dumping took place in 12 STs which include locally Little Compton, Kingham, Bledington, Chadlington and Charlbury (data from The Rivers Trust).

Local Hanborough campaigner, Dr Lidia Arciszewska, says this has devastating ecological consequences and adverse effects on human health – but the Government’s Environment Bill ‘failed to make polluting rivers with untreated sewage illegal’. Lidia wants local communities, including Chippy, to make Thames Water face up to their responsibilities and hold WODC to account for allowing major housing developments with no sewerage system investment. Sign the petition at <https://chnng.it/TBKHWvwbxt>.

## Ready for Offbeat Chippy?

Sean Callery, who runs local tours under his Offbeat Cotswolds banner, has some more dates lined up for him to take you on a quirky tour around Chipping Norton town. The News Team tried it in the Autumn and, even if you think you know all of Chippy’s tales, you will still learn something new, odd and intriguing. His next dates for ‘the Town that moved uphill’ are Saturdays 12 and 26 February at 11am. Sean says, ‘if you know Diddy Squat about what’s on our doorstep, this is the tour for you’. Watch out for an upcoming item on Sean’s

quirky tours in *The Observer* to be published shortly. See [www.offbeatcotswolds.com](http://www.offbeatcotswolds.com).

## County’s new transport plan

Oxfordshire County Council, under new Labour/Lib Dem/Green leadership since last June, have finally made public the new ‘Local Transport and Connectivity Plan’ (LTCP) and want to know what Chippy’s Town Council and public think. Read it at [letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltcp](http://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltcp) and respond by 16 March. OCC Cabinet Member Duncan Enright, a Witney



labour councillor, is in charge. A priority shift makes it less about road building, and more about a vision for a ‘zero-carbon Oxfordshire transport system’ – thriving while protecting the environment and making it a healthier place to live. There’s much emphasis on reducing the need to travel, discouraging unnecessary private vehicle journeys and making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice.

But how does this affect rural Chipping Norton – a little different from Oxford? Here, concerns are likely to focus on those HGVs through town (not much sign of any proposals in this 160-page document), making streets safer, parking, public transport and more facilities and jobs in Chippy as the Town expands at East Chipping Norton – to avoid those car journeys! The LTCP report has many high level policies but

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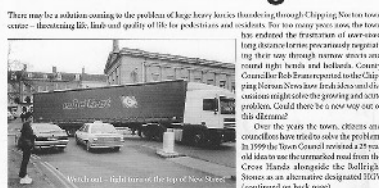
little yet on how all this will apply to Chippy. Our County Councillor, Geoff Saul, told the News this is only 'Part 1' of the plan. 'Part 2' (later this year?) should have specific strategies for local areas such as West Oxfordshire, including Chipping Norton. Why not respond to OCC's 'Part 1' grand ambitions – and perhaps stress specific things we want that will benefit our Town?

## Where is our HGV solution?

This new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (Part 1) is still silent on Chipping Norton's noise, pollution and safety issues from HGV traffic – notably the A44 'primary route' through town. The previous OCC Plan (LTP4) mentioned the Air Quality Action Plan for Chippy including a proper study on an alternative lorry route (perhaps past the Rollright Stones), 'downgrading' the A44 and implementing a weight restriction. For 20



### Lorries must go!!



Not a new problem! Chippy News front page February 2000

years this was the preferred County solution. Buried deep in the new Plan's 'Freight Strategy' it says 'work is continuing in Chipping Norton'. But specifics are missing – two years after County Councillors unanimously passed a Chippy resolution promising to 'find the solution'. A local working group, including Geoff Saul and town councillors, has been working with County Officers for 18 months and Geoff says that discussions on a Rollright route continue – but solutions are awaited and local lobbying may still be needed (see letters).

Another setback in January saw OCC Cabinet Member, Duncan Enright, announce that he was halting a pilot scheme which stopped HGVs using the A361 through Burford and onwards to Chippy. HGVs had been apparently using inappropriate, nearby village roads. Burford Town Council had led the way, with Chippy's Town Council contributing £15,000 towards signage. After many local objections, Cllr Enright's decision has been 'called in' for scrutiny. But it does look like all the A361 lorries could be back while our money has been spent. Chipping Norton's 1000+ home expansion at Tank Farm could still pay for substantial HGV mitigation action – much more than an uninspiring 'link road'. But there are no signs yet that the County and District will find funding for such substantial HGV action nor for practicalities like more town parking.

So what will the County and its Cabinet member Cllr Enright now be doing about our HGVs – whether in Burford or Chipping Norton? After the Burford decision, Cllr Enright said, 'I think the best option is to engage the public across the County and beyond in a more strategic and regional freight strategy to reduce the number of HGVs on inappropriate roads in our towns and villages'. Readers might wonder what exactly that means – and, again, how long it might take. Our County Councillor, Geoff Saul, says that 'Part 2' of the LTCP, expected by summer 2022, would have 'more detailed area transport strategies' (eg covering Chipping Norton) and a 'corridor strategy' for the A44 through town. Next steps are awaited ... once more.

## Local pubs get upgrades!

The popular dining pub The Fox in Oddington is set to reopen for summer this year after major refurbishment. Bought in 2021 by Daylesford Organics founder Lady Carole Bamford, to add to her other pub The Wild Rabbit in Kingham, the pub will house eight bedrooms.



Carole Bamford from [www.carolebamford.com](http://www.carolebamford.com)

The Coach House, opposite the pub, will offer a self-catering alternative, ideal for larger families or parties of friends. The traditional inn will serve classic pub dishes such as burgers, fish and chips and Sunday roasts, made with local organic ingredients, seating 90 covers inside, and a further 40 people on an outside terrace. Daylesford farm shop was started more than 40 years ago and now includes the Bamford Wellness Spa, three restaurants: the Old Spot, the Trough Café and the Legbar; as well as a cookery school. Last October Daylesford took over The Maytime Inn at Astall, and plans to develop Kingham's Mill House Hotel site are still outstanding.



Tom Hartley from his website

Nearer to Chipping Norton, the Greedy Goose Inn on Salford Hill has been bought by well-known car collector Tom Hartley Junior for around £700k – his first hospitality investment. The restaurant and pub, has around 100 table covers, and a 25-pitch camping area including five glamping pods. The pub is closed for redevelopment with Tom saying he would bring it up to standards he expects of his existing businesses. He is best known for his passion for collectable cars, with a particular specialisation in sports, racing and GT cars of the 50s and 60s – and some modern supercars and hypercars. So keep an eye out in that pub car park!

Meanwhile, the Salford Arms in Salford remains empty and up for sale.

## Library news update

Did you know that if all the food that currently goes into Oxfordshire's rubbish bins was recycled, it would save more than £2 million each year? You can recycle food waste that's not suitable for garden composting in your kerbside collection including meat, fish, dairy and cooking oil. Oxfordshire Libraries are helping to promote food waste recycling by providing residents with a free roll of food waste caddy liners. If you'd like a free roll to get you started with food waste recycling then drop into the library on Goddards Lane.

Book sale alert! We'll be holding a second-hand book sale throughout February to make space for some great new books to borrow. A broad range of ex-library stock will be on sale from picture books to hardback cookery books. Prices will range from 50p to £1.50 per book.

Sally Moore Library Manager



## Xmas tractor helps Hospice

Chipping Norton based agricultural business, Krone Forage Solutions, raised £1620 for Katharine House Hospice through its Christmas tractor run. Three people took two days to



decorate the tractor with 4500 lights. The participants in the R C Baker Christmas Tractor Run visited local villages and towns, including Chadlington, Charlbury, Chipping Norton and Woodstock – and even a care home in Witney. The company had taken part in 2020 and after such an enthusiastic reception, decided to repeat the run but on this occasion collecting money for Katharine House Hospice. Every location visited brought praise for the fantastic care given by the Hospice and thanks for the contribution made by Krone. 2022 events for Katharine House

Before Christmas, Katharine House were thrilled to welcome the Duke of Gloucester to the Hospice for their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. He met patients, volunteers and staff, and officially launched a Celebration Tree – a specially commissioned rose tree celebrating the lives of loved ones. Sadly, in December the Hospice said goodbye to much loved Chaplain James Grote, who has provided crucial support during tough times for the past six years.

In the New Year, some fantastic fundraising events will include abseiling (1 April), the Blenheim Fun Run (15 May), wing walking (26 May), cycling 100 miles (29 May), Oxford Half Marathon (16 October) and the flagship rebranded Moonlight Walk on 9 July at Banbury Rugby Club. International Women's Day on 9 March sees events at The Mill Art Centre and Lock29 in aid of the Hospice. Open Gardens will be back and finally, don't forget the five local charity shops for donations and bargains. Volunteers are critical to helping the Hospice care for local people – so, if you have time to spare, why not think of volunteering. All details at [www.khh.org.uk](http://www.khh.org.uk).

## Old stamps & coins wanted!

The Christmas rush is over, with cards and crackers put away, so now is the time to turn to other items, and you can help Oxfam via their Chipping Norton bookshop! Somewhere in the back of your drawers and cupboards there lurk unwanted stamps or stamp albums from youthful hobbies and leftover foreign coins and notes (often no longer legal tender in their country) from all those far-flung places we all used to go to pre-Covid. Please dig them out and consider donating them. Stamps sell well and the coins can be traded in to go towards Oxfam's projects providing much needed practical help to the world's poor. Good quality stamp albums are needed, and the coins and notes can be in any condition. During the Christmas holiday our online sales have been doing well. If you can't find

the book you are looking for in the shop have a look at [www.onlineshop.oxfam.org.uk/books](http://www.onlineshop.oxfam.org.uk/books) – you will be amazed at what you can find. Over coming months there will be a variety of topics showcased in the shop so keep an eye on the large table and pop in regularly – the stock is always changing!

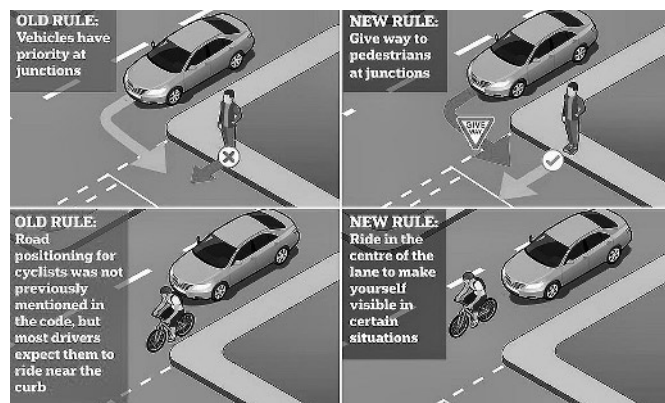
Liz Atkins – Chippy's Oxfam Bookshop team

## 20mph & more Healthy Streets

Leaving aside the so far unsolvable HGV problem, Oxfordshire's new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan holds forth prospects of funding for healthier streets and towns – reducing the dominance of cars and traffic while increasing emphasis on shared space, cycling, walking, outdoor street areas to enjoy, and quieter, safer neighbourhoods. The Town Council's Traffic Advisory Committee in January welcomed these ideas. Chipping Norton was an early adopter of some '20 is plenty' measures, helped by Town Council funding.

The County's new emphasis could be backed with funding and be carried out 'holistically' as part of other ways to improve life and people's safety in the streets – such as near schools and busy crossings. The rollout and extensions to the 20mph idea are being encouraged, with support for more volunteer Speedwatch schemes and possible enforcement measures. Chippy Town Councillor, Mark Walker, part of the countywide 20mph campaign, said this is all in line with the countywide 20mph campaign, said this is all in line with the Town Council's own vision for town growth. County money is available and our Town Council can submit bids and ideas for new expanded schemes.

One interesting related topic is changes to the Highway Code coming into force on 29 January, whereby motorists have to give way to pedestrians at road junctions (ie not just



*New Highway Code priorities*

at traffic lights and zebra crossings). Under new rules, there is a hierarchy of users: when turning into a road, cars and bikes have to give way to pedestrians waiting to cross that road – for example, at the junction between the London Road and Albion Street pedestrians have precedence over cars turning into Albion Street off the London Road. Cars turning also have to give way to bikes going straight on. Cyclists are also advised to use the middle of the road when things are quiet.

## Tea Set café closed

Chipping Norton's The Tea Set café premises in the High Street have closed. Victoria Wills, who has run the popular business for some years, said it was a difficult and sad decision – and wanted to thank all their loyal customers and her amazing team. Victoria says they are honouring any

# LOCAL NEWS

outstanding afternoon tea vouchers, and she will be still be doing outside catering for weddings, christenings and events. See details are on facebook about Tea Set Catering.

## Healthwatch survey in Chippy

Healthwatch Oxfordshire are delighted that over 200 people completed their survey before Christmas about accessing health and care services in Chipping Norton.



The Healthwatch team also talked directly to people when they set up this stall at the Wednesday market, and visited Chipping Norton Larder, Connect Café and the Library. They also carried out

their own 'enter and view' visits to Chipping Norton Outpatient Unit, the First Aid Unit and a vaccination clinic at the Health Centre. The Healthwatch report, with results and suggestions on improvements, will be out in February. See [healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk](http://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk) or, if you would like a copy, call 01865 520520 or email [hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk](mailto:hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk)

## Help to keep homes warm

Could your home benefit from investment in energy saving actions – and save money as energy prices rocket? Chippy is cold, set high up in Oxfordshire, but many of us are trying to reduce our energy costs: turning thermostats down, changing to more efficient lighting and more. We also know our houses need much better extra insulation or more efficient means of heating. But with another 50% hike in energy prices possible in April, hundreds of Chipping Norton households could be plunged into fuel poverty (called that if you spend more than 10% of your income on energy). Can you get help? We have some of the worst heat-leaking homes in Europe – not least in Chippy and Oxford with lots of older properties. Schemes are getting better, but insulation and retrofitting better heating systems is not cheap up front. But the aim fits Oxfordshire County Council's Climate Emergency commitment for a net zero carbon target by 2050 – as residential carbon emissions make up 25% of emissions in the County.

OCC want to help and recently bid for over £3m from the Government's Sustainable Warmth Grant fund – which would have funded 310 'household refits' for those in fuel poverty with inefficient properties. Chippy's County Councillor Geoff Saul, a great enthusiast for the important plan, was disappointed when, in December, the Government said Oxfordshire would get only just over £1m. Geoff said it will help 120 homes – but meet only a fraction of the need. The County would need to retrofit 4000 properties every year to hit targets. Investment in retrofit and heat pumps by 2030 needs £1.5 billion. Geoff is campaigning for more financial help and was angry at the Government's 'pathetically small pots of money' made available. It should be a 'win-win programme' lowering emissions and bills, with new opportunities and jobs for the green business sector. Geoff added, 'After hosting COP26, Government must do better and put its money where its mouth is.'

## Electric car charging in New St



*Charger installation work at New St car park*

Twelve new electric vehicle (EV) charging points, for residents and public, being installed in Chipping Norton's New Street Car Park should now be going live mid to late February. Work started in November with an end-December target, but there were delays with electrical connections to the District Network, operated by Scottish and Southern Energy Networks.



*Example charger*

The main use is expected from visitors and town residents who can't install a charger at their home (for example, town centre flats and houses fronting on pavements). Any EV drivers should be able to access the new 'Park and Charge' hub using contactless payment at 'competitive rates' but regular customers can join a membership scheme to access cheaper rates though a unique booking system for a small monthly fee. The chargers will be 'fast' chargers, between 7–22kw, depending on your EV. Tariffs are being finalised but should be between 25–35p per kWh, with cheaper rates for overnight use. While it's not currently possible to offer public charging points as cheaply as home charging, EV charging at 35p per kWh is still between five and seven times cheaper per mile than an average petrol or diesel vehicle.

The 12 parking bays will be clearly marked in green as 'EV charging only', and WODC parking wardens will serve fixed penalty notices to any non-charging vehicles parking there. Normal long-term parking restrictions will apply, and so residents can leave their cars to fully charge overnight and collect in the morning if they have no way of charging at home. For latest updates on your new EV charging hub visit [parkandchargeoxfordshire.co.uk](http://parkandchargeoxfordshire.co.uk) or follow 'Park and Charge Oxfordshire' on social media.

## Help students manage money

The CAP team at St Mary's Church, through Christians Against Poverty's 'Money' Programme, is working with Chipping Norton School to provide personal development about budgeting and money management. Each Year Group at the School will have a session (between February and July) and pupils will learn about creating a personal budget and managing their money to help them develop healthy financial

# LOCAL NEWS

habits and understand the impact of their spending choices, helping them to stay clear of debt.

**Yvonne Champion** – St Mary’s Church

## Co-op Funeralcare office closed



Before Christmas, Chipping Norton’s branch of the Co-operative Funeralcare business, in Albion Street, closed – and Midcounties Co-op are selling the building. Midcounties, who run our supermarket, travel and utilities businesses – has decided to withdraw from funeral care. Of its 67 funeral homes, 50 are being transferred to Central England Co-operative (CEC). Existing customers’ arrangements, including pre-

paid funerals, are transferring with them. Midcounties were also discussing action for their remaining 17 sites, but it’s the Chippy one that has closed and proceeds from the asset sales will be reinvested in Midcounties’ main businesses. Chipping Norton residents can still access funeral care through CEC – with offices including Banbury, Witney, Bicester and Kidlington. A L Sole in Over Norton remains the nearest funeral directors to Chippy. Last year, Midcounties also stopped providing pharmacy services, with the standalone shops either closing or being sold to other pharmacists. Chippy’s Topside Pharmacy was bought and is being run by the existing pharmacist, Yasin Jussab and his family. Yasin – and, it seems, the customers – are delighted by the move.

Midcounties, with more than 500 sites and 700,000 members, aim to focus on their core supermarket, travel, utilities, healthcare and childcare businesses. The substantial Your Co-op Travel business is run online, as well as from shops such as in Chippy’s High Street, and by Personal Travel Agents operating independently using Co-op products. The shop has had restrictions during Covid – and a desk was set up in the main supermarket foyer over Christmas. But the shop is back in action – currently Monday to Saturday (closed Wednesday) – offering a personalised advice and booking service much preferred by many customers.

## Maternity unit issues continue

Chipping Norton’s popular Cotswold Birth Centre – at Chippy Hospital – has remained closed for new births since August and there is little sign of it reopening. Wantage Birth Centre, another small midwife-led unit, is also still closed. Issues include service-wide recruiting problems and absences due to Covid across the whole maternity service in Oxford University Hospitals – notably the main JR units. The overall OUH service was also criticised by the Care Quality Commission in a September report citing flaws in procedures and risk management, as well as some staff not feeling valued and respected.

It appears that the overall OUH staffing issues mean that midwives in the smaller Chippy and Wantage units are ‘called back’ to work in the main JR acute centre on births, rather

than in the community. OUH say this is an ‘Oxfordshire-wide approach’. No dates for a return to normal at Chippy have been promised. One midwife told the News before Christmas that they were all feeling pretty frustrated as they felt so passionate about women having choices around where to give birth. In January, one local mother expecting a baby said the midwives were fed up about Chippy’s unit still being closed for births. She said ‘they want to be community midwives, not hospital midwives on 12 hour shifts’. At Chippy, pre- and post-birth appointments are available – and mothers can opt for births at home if midwives are available.

## The best kind of candles

A new small business called The Little Flame, has been started in Chipping Norton by Lisa Strachan, selling sustainable candles online. Lisa (pictured) believes you can enjoy the luxury of candles in your own home without the cost to the environment. Her candles are lovingly hand-poured using only soy wax, complete with essential oils and cotton wicks making them natural and sustainable. She believes the whole process is important, includes the packaging, which has been carefully considered. For every candle sold, The Little Flame will plant a tree, giving something back. There are eight different fragrances to choose from and each 210g candle comes with a beautiful bamboo lid and gift



## Introducing Willow Gardens...

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To arrange a viewing or find out more please call **07595 055 542** or email **Jackie.Davies@housing21.org.uk**

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Extra Care Living

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wrapped in a Fairtrade Cotton Bag. You can even add a handwritten personalised greeting card making it the perfect gift! See [www.thelittleflame.co.uk](http://www.thelittleflame.co.uk) for more and on Instagram @thelittleflamecandles.

## Help create a Forest Garden!



Many local communities are taking up the idea of creating very local 'Forest Gardens', a promising idea for using our land to benefit livelihoods, communities, nature and climate resilience. They are well suited to our local terrain around Chippy. The National Forest Gardening Scheme's website has lots of examples. Marston in Oxford has one and other communities in Oxfordshire are doing it. If you are interested, you can sign up to a practical workshop on Saturday 12 February (2-4.30pm) at St Mary's Church Parish Rooms. Antony Melville, a member of the national scheme who worked with Marston, will lead the discussion, with the Churchyard as a case study! Book via Eventbrite at [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/241449460837](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/241449460837) or alternatively email [transitionchippingnorton@gmail.com](mailto:transitionchippingnorton@gmail.com).



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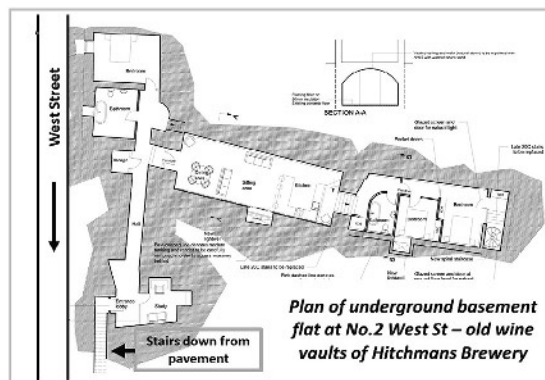
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## Chippy goes underground?

Since prehistoric times, people have lived underground, in caves in the Loire Valley, Matera in Italy, more locally at Kinver Edge, or even in multi-level underground cities such as Derinkuyu in Turkey, which possibly housed 20,000 people. More recently, earth-berm homes are increasingly popular. There are advantages to this: historically for safety but even today, cool in summer, warmer in winter than traditional homes. Now plans are afoot in Chippy to convert underground cellars into a luxury two- or three-bedroom, two-bathroom home. The cellars, formerly the wine-vaults associated with Hitchman's Brewery at 2 West Street, are Grade II listed, along with the rest of the building, and



proposals are indeed ingenious. Local owner Nick Grant, who is also renovating the rest of the two adjacent ranges, describes the conversion as a basement flat because each habitable room will have natural light and ventilation. 'We looked at various options for the cellars, including a wine bar or jazz club, but felt the spaces worked better and more cost effectively as a single dwelling', he told the News, adding that he had enjoyed living in a basement flat himself at one time. Other local examples, also Grade II listed, include Underhill at Barton-on-the-Heath featured in Grand Designs 2010 series, and at RAF Bicester an entirely windowless former World War II decontamination unit was transformed into two exciting, light-filled homes, now known as The Bunker. It can be done, and very well too. Watch that space!

## Keep up the good recycling

Chipping Norton residents can congratulate themselves for helping Oxfordshire top the table nationally for recycling, reusing and composting. For the eighth year in a row, OCC was named the best performing county council waste disposal authority in England. In 2020-21, residents recycled, reused or composted 59.5% of household waste, up from 58.8% the previous year. Of 310,479 tonnes of household waste in Oxfordshire in 2020/2021, 186,052 tonnes were reused, recycled and composted, creating a carbon benefit of 126,603 tonnes of CO2 compared with using landfill.

Kerbside collection also achieved excellent results, but Chipping Norton and West Oxfordshire residents were behind South Oxfordshire who came second nationally. WODC were only in the top 25%. Many items can be recycled in your kerbside collection. Search OCC's Waste Wizard online for help and see if we can do better. Vicky Beechey, from Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership (District, City and County Councils), said they are targeting 70 per cent recycling by 2030. This is wonderful news but



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more can be done to improve rates even further. We can all influence the recycling and waste we create and which bin we put it in, simply from our own homes. By taking action and recycling everything we can it would save another 60,000 tonnes of CO2 a year – the same climate impact as taking nearly 40,000 cars off the road.

## Green Gym's Jubilee trees

Chippy residents are being invited by The Green Gym to come along on Saturday 26 February and plant a tree, to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and help tackle climate change. It's part of the national Queen's Green Canopy project (see box). *Green Gym volunteers clear the Hawkyard Green Gym Chair*



Clive Rand said, 'there are few opportunities for tree planting in Chippy due to lack of sites and planning uncertainty at East Chipping Norton. But three years ago, the Green Gym decided to do something about this. With the support of the Field Reeves, they identified part of Hawkyard Common and fenced it off. Since then, Green Gym members have been busy clearing the site removing dense thickets of Russian Vine and brambles. They came across four vacuum cleaners, a pushchair, plastic chairs and a variety of other items that had found their way to this part of Hawkyard. The plan is to create a small wood on the site with over 750 new trees.' Individuals can help with planting on the 26<sup>th</sup>, starting at 10am and finishing at 3pm. The trees are free and include oak, beech, alder, birch and other native trees. The new wood will be a short walk from the entrance to Hawkyard Common at the bottom of New Street opposite the main entrance to the playground.

See Clubs p26 to find out more about Green Gym projects

## Rollright Stones' year ahead

A wet December and January did not deter hardened visitors to the Stones and numbers were up for autumn. Newly planted native woodland plants at the entrance should appear soon. Exciting plans for the



year include: a possible beacon on 2 June in the Kings Stone field for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee; a July collaboration with The Theatre with giant puppets in the Kings Men circle; and regular events through the year from the regular Druid Group, The Watchers of the Old Ways (see page 20). Planned in October is an all-day archaeological event in The Theatre celebrating the Rollright Trust's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – a likely popular event with guest speakers, exhibition and films. August Bank Holiday Monday sees Family Fun Day with exhibitions, stalls, music plus a flypast by aircraft from the Battle of Britain Flight. Both copses will be given the onceover in March with the removal of dead and diseased wood and debris and installation of bird and bat boxes. The Rollright Stones enjoy an international reputation as a place of peace, spirituality and tranquillity, a rare place to unwind in a fast paced world. Choose a warm sunny day, pack a picnic, head up there and walk in the footsteps of our Neolithic ancestors.

Robin Smitten, Trustee and Site Manager

## Plan for prayer room

A planning application has been submitted to WODC to convert the mainly unused basement of the Café le Raj restaurant in Chipping Norton's Horsefair to a prayer room. Currently, the Muslim community in Chippy – around 15 families – rent the Town Hall on Fridays for weekly prayers.

## The Queen's Green Canopy

The QGC is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, inviting people from across the UK to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'. Everyone from individuals to Scout and Girlguide groups, villages, cities, counties, schools and businesses are being encouraged to plant trees during the official planting season, between October and March, then again after next October. In addition, a network of 70 ancient woodlands and 70 ancient trees will be dedicated. Lots of schemes across Oxfordshire have started – many using help from charities such as the Woodland Trust who had tree packs of over 3 million saplings to give to community groups such as schools and scouts. Individuals with their own garden or land can join in and everyone can add their new trees to a special QGC map. One News Team member



HM launching the QGC!

planted a Cherry tree in December and has uploaded it to the map.

Advice on all of this can be found at [www.queensgreencanopy.org](http://www.queensgreencanopy.org). Chippy's landscape is already quite blessed but there are more opportunities – particularly on private land. In October, the News reported a plan for a new woodland in four acres of private land in the valley behind The Leys. Chipping Norton Town and local parish councils are eager to find more opportunities. Marcus Simmons, from Transition Chipping Norton, is involved in the Oxfordshire Treescapes Project ([www.oxtrees.uk](http://www.oxtrees.uk)) and they can provide customised 'Tree Opportunity Reports' to help landowners and councils with ideas. A new 'Chippy4Trees' group has also formed to do more – email Marcus at [transitionchippingnorton@gmail.com](mailto:transitionchippingnorton@gmail.com) for details.

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This conversion would give them their own room. There is pedestrian access off Goddards Lane. Chipping Norton Town Council had no objections to the change of use request.

## Get fit in 2022!

Chipping Norton Leisure Centre staff are looking forward to welcoming everyone in the community in 2022 to come along, have fun and get fit. Although the pandemic initially forced many of us to become couch potatoes, gyms and pools have reopened to the public, so could now



be the ideal time to take some steps back to fitness? The Leisure Centre told the News they have a wide range of activities, a heated pool, a spacious, newly



refurbished gym, a whopping 18 weekly fitness classes, clubs for folks of all abilities, and a range of memberships without binding contracts. During Covid, the Leisure Centre has, like many service businesses, had to deal with staffing shortages and physical restrictions. Responding to nervousness around ventilation, it has relocated many of the fitness classes to the large sports hall. One enthusiast said: 'I find it hard to self-motivate when it comes to exercise, so I'm very happy to be back doing aerobics classes at the Leisure Centre. The sports hall is huge, so social distancing is not a problem. These friendly and fun classes really lift the spirits as well as the muscles!'

As well as aerobics, the Centre offers spinning (new for 2022), yoga, body conditioning, Pilates, aqua aerobics and circuit training. There are courts for squash, badminton and outdoor tennis; and other activities such as hockey, walking football, trampolining, table tennis and an all-weather football pitch. The 25-metre swimming pool offers daily swim sessions and lessons for all ages. Leisure Centre General Manager Adam Colling said, 'We understand that starting your fitness journey may be daunting, which is why we've taken steps to make it easier than ever – join James for an induction into the gym when taking out a membership or try out one of our swimming sessions which are limited to a smaller number of swimmers'. To find out more, Adam suggests dropping into the Leisure Centre for a chat with one of the team or contact them via [chippingnorton@gll.org](mailto:chippingnorton@gll.org). Classes can be booked by downloading the 'Better UK' mobile app where it is also possible to sign up as a member. Or search online for Chipping Norton at [www.better.org.uk](http://www.better.org.uk). A healthier Chipping Norton starts here!

*Footnote: as the Leisure Centre gets busy with more of its own new sessions, some longstanding user groups (such as Hockey and Badminton) say they are being squeezed out by organised clubs*

*and commercial operations who can make long-term booking commitments – see letters page on this continuing problem.*

## Supporting the Lawrence Team

A Happy New Year from the Lawrence Home Nursing Team. 2021 was extremely busy! The total nursing hours were 2866, with 326 day visits and 232 night visits to 121 patients. Year on year, the Team cares for more people in the community – more than ever relying on generous support from the community to provide free, end of life care, to people in their own homes. We hope this spring and summer will see a return to our normal fundraising calendar of events including: Open Gardens in South Newington, Clay Shoot, Supper and Auction on Saturday 11 June, and a concert and picnic in Church Enstone on Friday 17 June. The Jane Phillips Memorial Golf Day will be replaced with a Cricket Day in July and the annual John Barrows Memorial Cricket Day will be as usual on the first Sunday in September at Sandford St Martin Cricket Club. More details to follow. As well as attending our fundraising events, there are other ways to support LHNT including buying lottery tickets through our website, setting up a monthly standing order or shopping online and choosing LHNT as your chosen charity. For further details please visit the LHNT website: [www.lawrencehomenursing.org/donate](http://www.lawrencehomenursing.org/donate).

**Verity Fifer**

## Methodist Church updates

After a supper, the singers of Chipping Norton Methodist



Church entertained everybody at Christmas with a selection of carols and poems, helping to raise money for Crisis at Christmas – one of the charities supported by the Church over the Christmas period. For 2022, the regular weekly Wednesday cuppa and chat mornings, 9.30–11.30, will continue raising funds for the Church. The Church plans to choose a charity each month to support, starting on 2 February with Beech Haven care home. Also continuing are the crafty cuppa and chat sessions on the first Monday of the month from 10–12. Happy New Year to you all.

**Elaine Parsons**

## Special Needs education

Many children across Oxfordshire, including in Chipping Norton, have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) that can benefit from additional or special help. The County Council wants to develop a more inclusive approach to supporting children and young people with SEND – including making specialist education available closer to home, reducing out-of-county provision and improving outcomes. There are two consultations on this which run until Thursday 10 March – respond via [letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/SEND-2022](http://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/SEND-2022) and you can also reserve a place at an online roadshow in February.

## Chippy Fly-tippers fined £400

Chipping Norton residents feared more fly-tipping when the Town's recycling sites were closed last year. The bring sites



were prime targets for illegal fly-tipping, so since then WODC and the public have been on the lookout for offenders. A fixed penalty notice was issued to fly-

tipplers following someone reporting a crime which WODC officers investigated. Two people in a car were witnessed driving down the side of a retail property in Chipping Norton, dumping rubbish at the back (see picture). Council officers found evidence to trace the waste to the vehicle doing the dumping. Both vehicle occupants, from the same address, were given fixed penalty notices of £200 under the Environment Protection Act 1990. One Chippy resident also told the News about the lanes leaving Over Norton also being a prime site for fly-tippers, with various items from garden waste to office equipment left by the road. Councillor Norman MacRae, WODC's cabinet member for Environment, said, 'Fly-tipping is a crime which blights our community and is a risk to human health and damaging to the environment. There are many ways for people to get rid of their waste safely and responsibly through kerbside collections, waste recycling centres, bulky waste collections or many other methods. If you witness fly-tipping contact WODC.' You can report fly-tipping via [westoxon.gov.uk/environment/fly-tipping/](http://westoxon.gov.uk/environment/fly-tipping/).

## Fundraise for The Branch

Can you help raise the final 10% of the target funding to create The Branch town centre community hub? A new local charity, The Branch Trust, is up and running to make the vision a reality for a major space in the heart of Chippy to foster community, bring individuals and families together, unlock potential and help build brighter futures. Gina Orchard, the campaign leader, told the News about very positive progress. By January, fundraising had reached an astonishing 90% of its target for buying and redeveloping the former NatWest Bank building at 16 Market Place – now called The Branch. Over £3.1 million has been received in gifts and pledges, but there's more to go! With the building bought, planning permission granted, a comprehensive tender completed and builder appointed, the project timetable should be public in next month's *Chippy News*.

Gina said 'We really appreciate all the support we've received. It has been amazing to hear of local Christmas markets and fairs raising funds for The Branch. We would love to encourage everyone to join this last push to transform this historic building to serve our town for generations, by creating your own fundraising initiative to help The Branch. Why not hold a coffee morning, invite friends and neighbours and encourage donations? Or take on a physical challenge such as a walk or bike ride, hold a cake sale or organise a

neighbourhood car wash?' For support and materials for fundraising, information about The Branch, to sign up to their quarterly newsletter or make a donation, go to [thebranchtrust.org](http://thebranchtrust.org). Gina and the team look forward to hearing your ideas and fundraising stories!

## Local New Year Honours

The New Years Honours list this year gave more attention than usual to local people who helped their communities and stepped up during the pandemic – rather than to too many national celebrities and big donors. Oxford's medical, health and research communities received a number of plaudits.

More locally, around Chipping Norton, **Dr Mick Donegan**, founder and CEO of the charity SpecialEffect, based in Cornbury Park, was awarded an MBE for services to Technology for the Disabled. They have pioneered the use of computer technology to help severely disabled young people and injured service personnel access technology including games using special controls.



*Dr Mick Donegan introducing a gaze-controlled computer to Rob, who had a spinal injury in 2013*

**Kay Willett** from Enstone received an MBE for services to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Kay is CEO of the Gallery Trust, a multi-academy special trust in Oxfordshire. She has worked in mainstream and special education locally for 25 years. The

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- **All types of removals:** local and long distance
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# LOCAL NEWS

Trust is currently opening its 7<sup>th</sup> special school, Bloxham Grove Academy, catering for 100 students with special needs. Finally, the first manager of Chipping Norton's Henry Cornish Care Centre, **Dan Hayes**, was awarded an OBE for services to social care. Dan has, since 2015, been the overall Chief Executive of the Orders of St John Care Trust. OSJCT run 16 Oxfordshire care homes and nine extra care house schemes.

## Help out at the Lido



In this first issue of 2022, the Lido team would like to thank everyone who supported fundraising at the Christmas shopping evening – enjoying a mulled cider or juice in return for a

donation. People talked warmly about the pool out of season and £100 was raised. While closed to the public, work goes on to maintain and improve Chippy's little oasis, so if you can help to support all this with a donation, please use [totalgiving.co.uk/donate/chipping-norton-lido-limited](http://totalgiving.co.uk/donate/chipping-norton-lido-limited). Or join The Lido Lottery with a small regular contribution and the chance of winning some money back! Instructions via [chippylido.co.uk/support-your-local-lido/](http://chippylido.co.uk/support-your-local-lido/).

Outside swimming may be weeks away but the team of Trustees is already planning for the new season. Can you help

as part of the team? If you are passionate about The Lido, have expertise, or experience as a Trustee, or simply want to help run this valuable facility, we would love to hear from you. We'd encourage anyone with technical and engineering skills, and/or experience/interest in Leisure provision, Health & Safety, Marketing or Fundraising to get in touch – but other expertise of enthusiasm all welcome.

The Lido is now recruiting this season's team, including lifeguards, front of house and café staff. Full training is available, including a pool lifeguard course, so, even if not qualified, get in touch. All candidates 16 years of age and over are welcome. We particularly encourage applications from older members of the community with skills and time to offer. Whether interested in a trustee role or one of these seasonal jobs, please email [info@chippylido.co.uk](mailto:info@chippylido.co.uk) to register interest, preferably attaching a short CV. We look forward to hearing from you!

**Claire Williamson**

## Bus service changes

In line with the Government's Bus Strategy, Oxfordshire County Council has agreed some rationalisation of bus routes



with the main bus companies in the County. This will reduce some duplication and also takes account

*National Express to take over Stagecoach* of the Covid impact on patterns of demand. The main changes affect services in the City and the south of the County. However, of interest to Chippy residents will be the connection at Woodstock on to the Stagecoach 7 or Oxford Bus 500 to reach Oxford Parkway or Summertown/Banbury Road, and the few peak hour through 7 services from and to Chippy. From the New Year the 500 was withdrawn and the 7 diverted to go into Oxford Parkway en route. The revised 7 timetable is available at [www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com).

Further to the article in November's *Chippy News*, National Express has confirmed they will be purchasing Stagecoach. Subject to the agreement of the Competition Authorities, the deal will be completed later in the year. Bus users will need to keep a close eye on developments to ensure there are no damaging impacts on our S3 and 7 services and their local drivers, and that other current benefits, like through booking on to London coach services, are maintained.

## Gt Rollright church update

St Andrew's Church is again open every day during daylight hours for private prayer or just a quiet moment. Services are held at 10am on the first three Sundays of the month and 8am on the fourth Sunday. Please put the next Quiz Night in your diaries – Saturday 19 March in the Village Hall. Have you thought about being baptised or confirmed? Do speak to Revd Janet Faull on 01608 737223 for an informal chat. Could you be a Foundation Governor at Great Rollright School – to promote Christian distinctiveness and the well-being of the School and its pupils? For more information contact Revd Janet. See the Church's Facebook page or page on the 'A Church Near You' website for regular updates.

**Sarah Durham**



**OLIVERI  
BARBER'S SHOP**

EST. 1961

Opening hours:  
Monday: 8.30am–5pm  
Tuesday: 8.30am–5pm  
Wednesday: 8.30am–7pm  
Thursday: CLOSED  
Friday: 8.30am–5.30pm  
Saturday: 7.30am–1pm  
Sunday: CLOSED

01608 642532  
4 Market Street  
Chipping Norton



## More tales from Diddly Squat

**Jeremy Clarkson's run-ins at his Diddly Squat enterprise with villagers and planning authority continue, and his farm shop is temporarily closed. Chippy News readers may be tired of the story – but important issues keep coming!**

### Traffic chaos at Diddly Squat

Right up to Christmas, fans and shoppers eager to get to the Farm Shop generated multiple complaints about traffic congestion. It came to a head on New Year's Eve. One Chadlington householder told the press, 'Buses couldn't get



*Traffic congestion on the road down to Chadlington*

through. Everything was at a standstill and nothing was being done. A 10-minute trip took over an hour due to traffic and parking on the road. I was 20 minutes late for a doctor's appointment due to queues.' To which Mr Clarkson retorted, 'There are three roads from Chadlington to the A361. She could have used one of the other two instead of moaning.'

### Farm shop closure & planning issues

Then in late December Mr Clarkson announced to his



674,000 Instagram followers: 'Thanks to everyone who visited. Happy New Year. See you in March. Milk machine open 24/7'. The *Daily Mail* said, 'fans were left heartbroken', but

closure will bring a welcome temporary relief to locals fed up with disruption. He later revealed the shop was closed for replacing the roof, which is corrugated metal instead of the approved slate. His planning application to retain the unauthorised material was refused by WODC back in March. WODC has also served a Planning Contravention Notice after complaints that goods sold there are not restricted to 'goods and produce grown, reared or produced on the holding itself or from local producers' as required of a farm shop. A further planning application to change the roller shutter doors and cladding on the lambing shed (needed for any restaurant) is not yet determined.

### Diddly Squat restaurant refused

A further setback came on 10 January when WODC's Uplands Planning Committee refused planning permission to make the defunct lambing shed a restaurant – serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, seven days a week to 10pm using beef raised on the farm. The application mentioned 50 covers and a 70-space car park, but an earlier building regulations application had said 150 covers. The building has already been used without planning permission as a café with outdoor seating, with a bar area recently installed. Planning Officers recommended refusal saying the plan '.....would not be sustainable and would not be compatible or consistent in

scale with the existing farming business or its open countryside location; .... and would have a visually intrusive and harmful impact on the rural character, scenic beauty and tranquillity of the area.' There were over 50 letters of objection and 13 of support. Councillors agreed, refusing permission by 8 votes to 2. Afterwards Jeremy Clarkson said, 'This is a bad day for farming, but we shall appeal and win.'



*TV coverage of the WODC Planning Committee meeting*

Subsequent social media comments have been mixed with fans and some locals offering support. *The Guardian* reported a local shopworker saying some newcomers were against, but locals, who had been here longer, might like the new jobs. She added, 'Jeremy Clarkson is Marmite, but I'm backing him'.

### What they said

**Jeremy Clarkson** addressed Uplands committee members saying, 'Much has been made that the area is an area of nature beauty, which it is. The reason it is, is because farmers maintain it, farmers look after the woodland, the hedges and streams and fields. They keep it beautiful. Farmers are not going to be able to do that for much longer because of the state of finances. We have been told to diversify and that is exactly what this proposal is.'

**Barrister Charles Streetham** representing a neighbour said the lambing shed had been a 'Trojan horse' for the restaurant, that Mr Clarkson had a 'general disregard' for planning rules, his conduct was 'shameful' and indicated 'a 'give me an inch and I'll take a mile' attitude.

**Local Ward District Cllr Dean Temple**, said anything that helped employment was welcome, but he voted against with 'heavy heart' because of the impact on a beautiful area.

**Chippy District Councillor Geoff Saul**, voted to refuse, telling the *News*, 'I quizzed Mr Clarkson on the proportion of produce from his own farm to be sold in the restaurant (the mainly arable farm has only 8-10 fat beef cattle planned per year). Mr Clarkson's agent explained they were asking neighbouring farmers and businesses to serve locally sourced produce as a sort of co-operative venture. However, this was not reflected in their rather sketchy business plan'.

**Chippy District Councillor Laetisia Carter** told ITV there were real safety concerns 'if this were just a tourist attraction rather than genuine diversification'. He should not come to a planning meeting and 'get what he wants just because he is Jeremy Clarkson'.

*All these antics might be keeping the planners busy but, just as his farm manager Kaleb Cooper announces that filming of Series 2 of 'Clarkson's Farm' has started, might it also all make good television?*



## Ditchley Superheroes evening

Chipping Norton Town Council hosted a sparkling evening on 6 December for over 70 local 'Covid Superheroes', in the wonderful reception hall of Ditchley Park stately home – kindly



lent that evening by the Trustees. Superheroes had all been nominated by members of the community last year for their efforts in the pandemic's first year.

Mayor Georgia Mazower led the tributes, with Council colleagues helping to read the commendations (see centre box). With Covid cautions, there was no shaking of hands but much



applause – with certificates collected at the end. Special guest Simon (Lord) Stevens, who led the NHS through Covid until retiring last summer, read the Health nominations expressing admiration for everyone who has worked together to get our communities through.

Our Superheroes were nominated from right across Chipping Norton's community. Georgia herself had volunteered at Health



Centre vaccination clinics and talked of the privilege of meeting people around town doing their bit across the breadth of the community – which she likened to a tightly woven tapestry. The awards were about 'recognising the incredible commitment and selfless spirit of the people of this Town... an expression of thanks...about what it means to be part of a community.'

# Supporting our

*The last two years have seen Chipping Norton tackling the challenges of the health pandemic for families and individuals facing financial hardship. The community spirit to help each other through the Town Council's 'Covid Superheroes' awards at Christmas, are only some examples. The credit goes to terrific community projects such as The Covid Outreach, and the Community*

## Chipping Norton's Covid Superheroes

**Health awards** – Everyone across our five local Health Practices (60,000 jabs!) and volunteers – with special mentions to Avis Akers, Fiona Henderson, Dr Catherine Rose, Peter Branson and the PPG team, plus Alison Meeson, Jackie Tinkham, and Marion Holland for mask and scrub bag making.



**Support for education, families and vulnerable groups** – Individual awards ranged from family support to heroic home schooling and Jodie Green. Collective nominations: Yvonne Stallwood team, Barry Doherty and the Chipping Norton School team, Oxfordshire.

**Community spirit and connection** – For support, champions: McColloch from WODC, local High Sheriff, Amanda Ponsoby, the Chippy News team; Rupert Parsons, Jenny Astor and Tim and Ziparound; St Mary's Church phone and contact team: Nancy Whitfield, Harriet Fender, Christine Clinch, Jane Pringle, Emma Bayley, Pat Rushbrook, Amanda Gafford, Denise Povey, Rob and Yvonne Champion. For great community support, King Elaine and Steve Parsons, Lisa Hughes, John Marshall and the heroes Sherry Bishop, Linda Carpenter, Matthew Carpenter, Phil Cowdrey, Phil Cowdrey and Matt Jeffrey with Chipping Norton

**The lifeline of food** – North Oxfordshire Food Bank with Vanessa, all the volunteers and their 'force of nature' champions: nominations, Rizvana Poole leading the Chippy Larder then the Henry Astor, Simon Lloyd, David Cameron, and Scott Fisher. For UK Leisure Centre staff including Will James, Phil Stanley, Lev and Mary's food and wellbeing work: help with food supplies from Diddy Squat Farm; multiple nominations to Wild Thyme's pass cooking – and Rollright neighbours Helen Haine and Brenda coordinator Emma Kennedy and to St Mary's Church and packers and drivers alike. A special mention to star packer Ben Waddilove and Suzanne Saunders. Big applause for logistics Rachel Sharman, along with The Branch's Ben Waddilove. Local Rob and Dan nominated with their young adult team and support Mary's Meals and Chippy Larder delivery volunteers helping h

**10 young Community Superheroes** – A terrific group of 10 (5-10 years old) producing a magazine, Joe Darlow (10) volunteer for deliveries, selfless Ollie Longworth (16) with St Mary's, packer Ben Waddilove Larder team members Alex Lawson and Kai Lloyd, and dedicated Jasper Schofield Linnell, Zach Brooks, Nancy Cameron, and TH





**Chipping Norton and local villages  
have been remarkable. The  
Chippy Larder, St Mary's  
Food Bank.**

## Superheroes Awards



Fig: Sarah Saxby, Lucy Hanks, Emma T, Barnes with the St Mary's Primary and Andrea, Nicci and Thrive North

ioning, and communication: Heather, and Jill Thorley & Keith Ruddle with Hammond with Community Basket members notably Susanne McCrae, le, Judith Marshall, Sue Butterworth, emi Taflan and family, Christine Banks, ham's Delphine Stockwell, Chippy's the St Mary's craft pack and hamper and Betina Goodall. Finally Bonnie on Petfood Bank.

Joyce, Steph, Jane, Martin, Toni, Barry, coordinator Steph Risi. With many their whole volunteer team including or amazing Larder support, the Better vis Brain and John Busby. Amazing St n the staff at Aldi, Costa Coffee, and ionate Nick and Sally Pullen for their Hayden; admiration and love to lead their volunteers – shoppers, cooks, Katie Dashwood, Tash Savidge, Jessie mastermind and heroes Philip and cal charity You and Me, with Sophie, port workers. Finally the whole 130 households.

young people: Alex Simpson (then 8 packing, Michael Astor (11) on larder Abigail Davis (sent home from uni!), cated youngsters on St Mary's team neo Godfrey.

## Chippy Larder's busy year

*The Chippy Larder's volunteer-run subscription service started to provide healthy, good value weekly supplies of food to families in and around Chipping Norton. But in early 2020 the Covid Pandemic spurred larder founder Rizvana Poole and the team to provide free emergency help for those hit by the crisis. Rizvana reports on an eventful 2021 and future plans.*

During 2021, our quest to Nourish, Empower and Connect Chipping Norton and surrounding villages has achieved a staggering amount. Early in 2021 another lockdown found us again distributing food packages from the Leisure Centre helped by GLL. The easing of Covid restrictions eventually allowed us to operate again from the Guildhall where we host the weekly community food larder scheme and base all our other activities. Chippy Larder was ahead of the curve last winter with plans to assist families hit by the Government withdrawal of holiday school meal vouchers. We launched our FEFA (Food Equity For All) programme in February and have since held many events during school holidays, providing families with much needed additional food stores.



In Spring, a time for new beginnings, we cemented our relationship with Bruern Farms by opening a popular weekly opportunity for anyone to come and help out on the farm. Assisting on the farm and market garden has improved our volunteers' mental, physical and emotional health by socialising, sharing knowledge and learning new skills in fresh air and beautiful surroundings. As part of Chippy Larder's 'Futures' work we bought every year 6 pupil from Holy Trinity, St Mary's and Great Rollright primary schools a copy of Go Big: The Secondary School Survival Guide to help them get ready for senior school.



In April we received an award, for valuable services to the community, from Oxfordshire's High Sheriff Amanda Ponsonby. Summer saw us again distribute food vouchers from WODC to families in need, and collected clothes and other items for Oxfordshire Afghan Aid. We launched our 'Chicky' Larder scheme at Bruern farms in August where families can sponsor a chicken and visit, clean and feed their chick in exchange for six beautiful, healthy, fresh eggs every week.

Autumn was spent preparing for our second Better Christmas event in December. Over 260 Chipping Norton children woke up to new presents and a beautiful book each, thanks to generous businesses and people in Chipping Norton. Through the year we've continued to supply items to the Food Bank and other community groups, breakfasts and lunches for young people at Chipping Norton School and fruit for children in the Town's nurseries and primary schools. We also became collection point for much-needed Lateral Flow Tests for the whole community.



We're looking forward to 2022 being a year where The Chippy Larder really takes off, expanding our offerings. A Summer Festival, Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award opportunities and Toy Library, are all coming soon.

*If you would like to join or help please make contact, the team is always looking for more volunteers, fundraisers, project leaders and friends. See [www.chippylarder.org](http://www.chippylarder.org), the chippy larder on facebook, tel 07890 394297 or email [thechippylarder@gmail.com](mailto:thechippylarder@gmail.com)*

## Festivals to celebrate the year

*Spring is coming! First up in February is a celebration of snowdrops – and then we look to local group, the Watchers of the Old Ways for an explanation of an ancient festival.*

### The Snowdrop Festival

For many, snowdrops are the first sign of spring after a difficult winter. Around Chippy we find banks of snowdrops in hedgerows, churchyards and glimpses in private gardens. There are many species of these delicate but robust flowers, known since Greek times, which often appear in drifts through the snow. Since 2016 an annual Snowdrop Festival invites us into the fresh air – often with the offer of hot drinks and warm soup!

**The National Garden's 2022 Snowdrop Festival** runs 1–28 February, with over 100 gardens open with snowdrops alongside hellebores, cyclamen and other spring flowers. In Oxfordshire, Sunday 13 February sees gardens open at Stonehaven (OX2 9PE) and 23 Hids Copse Road (OX2 9JJ) in Oxford (both 2–5pm) and Hollyhocks Kidlington (OX5 2SQ) 1.30–5pm. Take a pre-Valentine daytrip or just treat yourself! Gardens further afield include Newbury and Cirencester. More details at [ngs.org.uk/snowdrops](https://ngs.org.uk/snowdrops)

For more local snowdrop-spotting a fruitful straw poll of enthusiastic walkers suggested the following. Try **Chipping Norton** churchyard round the back of St Mary's church and beside the path. **Batsford Arboretum** opens daily with

good refreshments and **Sezincote Gardens** are opposite (open Wed, Thurs, Fri 11–5) both have plenty of snowdrops.

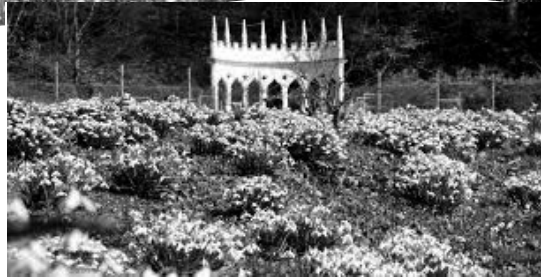
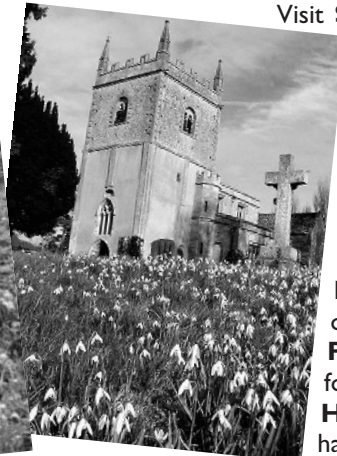
Visit **Spelsbury** churchyard (pictured left) and see the murals and grave of the 17<sup>th</sup> century libertine & poet, the Earl of Rochester in the church itself while you're there.

**Waterperry Gardens** are near Oxford and the enticing Stars and Snowdrops day at **Hanwell Castle** near Banbury is on 12 February. **Sherborne Park** estate near Burford is good for winter walks and **Cerney House Gardens** in Cheltenham has homemade cake and a secret garden. Wikipedia lists

**Colesbourne Park** in Gloucestershire as one of the best English snowdrop gardens. Henry John Elwes lived there with snowdrop species named after him (*Galanthus elwesii*) – open weekend afternoons in February. **Painswick's Rococo garden** (National Trust) –

pictured above – boasts 5 million snowdrops.

In the language of flowers the snowdrop is synonymous with hope – another reason to go out and look for them in these uncertain times. Twitter reported first UK sightings of snowdrops on New Year's Eve. Let the *Chippy News* know your snowdrop stories.



### The Wheel of the Year

The Watchers of the Old Ways, founded by Rebecca Henderson, can regularly be found marking ancient seasonal festivals at The Rollright Stones. Back in December 2019, when 265 people filled the area bounded by the Stones to celebrate the festival of Yule, Rebecca 'realised just how much we all need to feel a sense of belonging. To create a tribe of our own in these busy stressful times we live in. To feel supported by others not just family, to feel connected. The world was about to change for all of us'.

The Watchers of the Old Ways follow 'The Wheel of the Year', an annual cycle of seasonal festivals consisting of the year's chief solar events (solstices and equinoxes) and the midpoints between them. Rebecca explained, 'As well as the Ritual elements of casting the circle we call in the Elements to join our Ceremony. We have a ritual fire and a play that brings to life the meanings of the Sabbat we are coming together to celebrate.'



The season's first festival is Imbolc on 1 February: an important date in the agricultural year, when farmers would prepare their fields for the first sowings and fishermen would return to the sea. Sheep udders start to engorge with milk ready for Spring births and Imbolc means 'in the belly or womb'. It is a celebration of the Celtic Goddess Brigid, and many of the traditions of Imbolc are linked to her magic as Goddess of fire, blacksmiths, wells, healing waters, springs and poets. She is also linked to motherhood, fertility and abundance.

The Watchers' 2022 Ceremonies at The Rollright Stones – starting 2pm for around an hour – are: Imbolc 29 January; Ostara Spring Equinox 19 March; Beltane 30 April; Litha Summer Solstice 18 June; Lammas 30 July; Autumn Equinox 17 September; Samhain 29 October; Yule Winter Solstice 17 December

Rebecca said, 'Check out Watchers of the Old Ways Page on Facebook – we look forward to seeing you as the wheel turns.'



# THE ARTS

## The Theatre

### Live performances

Following on from the very much alive Chippy Panto, The Theatre has a dozen or so amazing live performances for all tastes.

**The Greatest Magician: An Evening of Wonders**, Wed 2 Feb, 7.30pm – Mind-bending feats and illusions from James Phelan, the magician famous for jamming the BBC switchboards when he correctly predicted the lottery. £15, £7.50 under 26s



**Here's What She Said to Me** (15+) Thu 3 Feb, 7.30pm – Drama with music and poetry, telling the story of three generations of African women in a world of migrations and shifting identities. £15, £13 concs, £7.50 under 16s

**Genesis Visible Touch**, Sat 5 Feb, 7.30pm – Performing iconic Genesis and Phil Collins songs from the 1981 album *Abacab* as well as hits like *Mama* and *Land of Confusion*. £19.50

**Gary Delaney: Gary in Punderland** (16+) Wed 9 Feb, 7.30pm – A brand-new show from one of the most sought-after joke writers in the country, and star of *Live at the Apollo*. £21.50

**Buddy Holly and the Cricketers**, Thu 10 Feb, 7.30pm – Britain's most popular Buddy Holly act play all the hits including *That'll Be The Day* and *Peggy Sue*. £20

**Frankenstein**, Tue 15 Feb, 7.30pm, Wed 16 Feb, 2.30pm & 7.30pm – Blackeyed Theatre's thrilling adaptation of Mary Shelley's gothic horror masterpiece, fusing storytelling, live music and puppetry. £17.50, £15.50 concs, £10.50

**Luke Kempner: Macho Macho Man**, (14+) Thu 17 Feb, 7.30pm – One of Britain's hottest new comedy talents and star of *Spitting Image*, Luke tries to work out what masculinity really means. £17.50

**Steve Knightly**, Fri 18 Feb, 7.30pm – Performing his extensive back catalogue and introducing new material, Steve explores the art and craft of songwriting. £19.50

**Tweedy: Lost Property**, Sat 19 Feb, 2.30pm & 6pm – Gifford's Circus's slapstick legend Tweedy stars as a clown who follows government guidelines to retrain and gets a job in a Lost Property Office. £15, £12 under 16s

**Jonny Donahoe: Forgiveness**, Thu 24 Feb, 7.30pm – Heart-breaking yet funny show about the cycles of abuse that form and affect who we are, from the frontman of musical-comedy satirists, Jonny and The Baptists. £15, £13 concs, £7.50 under 16s

**David Gibb's Family Jukebox**, (3+) Sat 26 Feb, 11.30am – Family fun with David and his magical jukebox with songs about dragons who live under the bed and teddy bears dancing at the disco. £11

**King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys**, Sat 26 Feb, 7.30pm – Jump, jive and swing band who are rough, tough and always rocking. £17.50, £15.50 concs

### On Screen at The Theatre

**The Power of the Dog** (15) Tues 1 Feb, 7.30pm – Benedict Cumberbatch plays fear-inspiring rancher Phil Burbank whose brother brings home a new wife (Kirsten Dunst) and her son. £10, £7.50 under 16s

**The Electrical Life of Louis Wain** (12A) Fri 4 Feb 7.30pm, Sun 6 Feb 4pm & 7.30pm – The true story of eccentric British artist Louis Wain (Benedict Cumberbatch) whose psychedelic pictures transformed the public's perception of cats forever. With Claire Foy as his wife Emily. £10, £7.50 under 16s

**Bill Murray's New Worlds: The Cradle of Civilisation** (12A), Tue 8 Feb, 7pm – Screen legend Bill Murray and cellist Jan Vogler rock the Acropolis with music, literature and poetry. Captured on film by Andrew Muscato, with Mira Wang on violin and Vanessa Perez on piano. £15

**Cyrano** (12A), Fri 11 & Sat 12 Feb, 7.30pm – Music, romance and beauty feature in this re-imagining of the timeless tale of a heart-breaking love triangle, directed by Joe Wright. £10, £7.50 under 16s

**Clifford the Big Red Dog** (PG), Sat 12 Feb, 10.30am – Based on the beloved Scholastic book character Clifford who teaches the world how to love big, this family film stars John Cleese and Jack Whitehall. £5

**A Hero** (12A), Sun 13 Feb, 7.30pm – From Oscar-winning Iranian auteur Asghar Farhadi comes a riveting moral drama, co-winner of this year's Cannes Grand Prix. £7.50

**Romeo and Juliet** (12A), Sun 20 Feb, 2pm – A screening of Kenneth MacMillan's modern classic performed by the Royal Ballet to Prokofiev's ravishing score. £17.50

**Belfast** (12A) 20–28 Feb various times – Coming-of-age comedy-drama film exploring the troubles in Northern Ireland, written and directed by Kenneth Branagh, starring Judi Dench. £10, £7.50 under 16s

### Owen Mumford Gallery

#### David Hugh Lockett

Ongoing to 14 February – David's paintings grow from two years of drawing and exploring Ditch-hedge Lane, an ancient local trackway, 3–4 thousand years old. It divides Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, going virtually due south from Southam to Chipping Norton.

David says '(The paintings) are mental images of places which I wanted to show in the actual locality – The Theatre Gallery is ideal'.



*Summer. Oil on canvas*

1-3pm Saturdays & 30 minutes before all performances. Free.

**Myrica Jones** 17 Feb–22 Mar – After working as a decorative artist, Myrica now channels her energies into contemporary art, enjoying the power she finds in large-scale simple forms produced with ink and exploring the strength and strangeness of nature. Prizewinner at the 2020 Oxford Arts Society's Open Exhibition.



# THE ARTS

## Theatre Fundraising

**Panto Saviours Fund** – Sophie Harvey, Fundraising Officer, says, 'Thanks to everyone who donated: £7,000 was raised towards keeping the Panto going. Once again, the generosity of Chippy Theatre-lovers shines through. Also, a massive thanks to Karen Biles who hosted a candlelit yoga class and raffle raising £393'.

**Online auction** – Chippy Theatre launches its first ever online auction 4–6 March. At this all-weekend event, you can bid on fabulous prizes and one-off opportunities whilst raising money for The Theatre. All money raised helps keep The Theatre going. [chippingnortontheatre.com](http://chippingnortontheatre.com)

## Upcoming festivals

### Chipping Norton Music Festival 4–19 March

The Festival is live this year and alongside the main performances is a series of concerts and events. On 6 March, Oxford student capella group Out of the Blue is holding an afternoon workshop and evening concert: £25 to take part in the workshop and attend the concert, £15 concert only. Tickets from [cnmf.org.uk](http://cnmf.org.uk). A further concert on 13 March tba. Adderbury Ensemble perform on 20 March. Full details tbc. Tickets at [adderburyensemble.com](http://adderburyensemble.com)

**ChipLitFest** is back 21–24 April! – After an absence of two years, the Festival will be in Chipping Norton with its popular programme of big names and debut authors in fiction and



non-fiction, along with writers' workshops and many lively children's events. The small-but-mighty festival again promises to punch above its weight. Festival director Jenny Dee says: 'We have some amazing authors lined up, including a Booker Prize winner. More news on that and other sessions shortly. The first events are going up on the website to encourage everyone to save the dates and become a Festival Friend for priority booking. We can't wait to be back in town'. Tickets and further information at [chiplitfest.com](http://chiplitfest.com) and [chippingnortontheatre.com](http://chippingnortontheatre.com), released to Festival Friends on 28 February; general sale on 7 March.

**Bledington Music Festival 7–9 June** – Tickets at £22 each will be available soon for the 20<sup>th</sup> Festival. 7 June: Thomas Trotter, organ with Crispian Steele-Perkins, trumpet. 8 June: Craig Ogden, guitar, with Claire Bradshaw, mezzo-soprano. 9 June: Four Girls, Four Harps. Further information at [bledingtonmusicfestival.co.uk](http://bledingtonmusicfestival.co.uk) or on 01608 658669. All concerts are at 7.30pm in St Leonard's Church, Bledington.

## Galleries and art projects

**Kingham Lodge Sculpture** – Following the 5<sup>th</sup> biennial show in May 2021, held in the garden of Chris and Delphine



Art at St Mary's school

Stockwell, another uplift in charitable income has led to the launch of an ambitious art outreach programme in local primary schools. Offering after-school clubs and whole school art experiences, artists go into schools to introduce children to experiences they would not otherwise have. The outreach programme tailors funds to each school's needs. Gill Bray, Art lead for St Mary's Primary School, Chipping Norton, said,

'The resources arrived after a couple of weeks and are now being used and appreciated'. (See also *Schools News* p31) If you are a local artist, willing to go into schools and deliver after-school clubs or help with whole school experiences, contact [info@sculptureatkinghamlodge.com](mailto:info@sculptureatkinghamlodge.com) for details.

**The Chippy Exchange** – Working in partnership with organisations in Chippy such as The Theatre and Chippy Larder, Chippy Exchange offers creative engagement opportunities across the Town, drawing from facilitators' backgrounds as professional artists, theatre makers and musicians. They want to collect ideas on what really matters for people in Chippy through drawings of maps of the Town: 'Be guided by where you know and what you love about the place where you live. Draw, collage, use words, colour and your imagination!' Drop off your map at the Chippy Larder (in the Guildhall), The Theatre or the Leisure Centre, or send a photograph to [thechippyexchange@gmail.com](mailto:thechippyexchange@gmail.com) or [thechippyexchange](https://www.instagram.com/thechippyexchange) on Instagram. Include your contact details. All returned maps will go into a prize draw to win one of two £25 Co-op gift vouchers.

**The Arts Society Cotswolds 9 February 11am** – Talk on *Stories in Stained Glass* with Susie Harries. Stained glass has been used to play politics, bribe bishops, recruit soldiers and tell jokes. Remarkable subjects appear in its panes, from miracles to Mandela, tanks to Tiffany, Burne-Jones's water-

### What's On

**LIVE @ THE THEATRE**

2nd Feb, 7.30pm  
3rd Feb, 7.30pm

5th Feb, 7.30pm  
9th Feb, 7.30pm  
10th Feb, 7.30pm  
15th & 16th Feb,  
17th Feb, 7.30pm  
18th Feb, 7.30pm  
19th Feb, 2.30pm & 6pm  
24th Feb, 7.30pm  
26th Feb, 11.30am  
26th Feb, 7.30pm

**FILMS**

31st Jan, 7.30pm  
1st Feb, 7.30pm  
4th Feb, 7.30pm  
& 6th Feb, 4pm & 7.30pm  
12th Feb, 10.30am  
13th Feb, 7.30pm  
20th-28th Feb

**SCREENINGS**

8th Feb, 7pm  
20th Feb, 2pm

**GALLERY**

18th Jan-15th Feb  
17th Feb-22nd Mar

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**THE GREATEST MAGICIAN**— £15, £7.50 under 26s  
**HERE'S WHAT SHE SAID TO ME**—£15, £13 concs, £7.50 under 26s

**GENESIS VISIBLE TOUCH**— £19.50  
**GARY DELANEY**—£21.50  
**BUDDY HOLLY AND THE CRICKETERS**—£20  
**FRANKENSTEIN**—£17.50, £15.50 concs, £10.50 schools  
**LUKE KEMPNER**—£17.50  
**STEVE KNIGHTLEY**— £19.50  
**TWEEDY**—£15, £12 under 16s  
**FORGIVENESS**— £15, £13 concs, £7.50 under 26s  
**DAVID GIBBS FAMILY JUKEBOX**—£9.50  
**KING PLEASURE AND THE BISCUIT BOYS**—£17.50, £15.50 concs

**TICKETS £10, £7.50 UNDER 16S**  
**THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH**  
**THE POWER OF THE DOG**

**THE ELECTRICAL LIFE OF LOUIS WAIN**  
**CLIFFORD THE BIG RED DOG**—£5  
**A HERO**—£7.50  
**BELFAST**

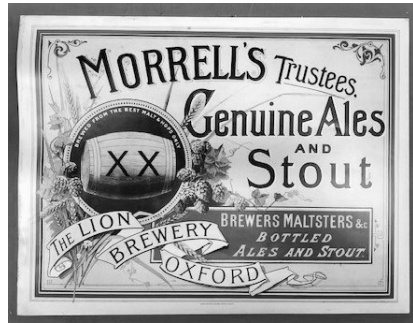
**TICKETS £17.50**  
**BILL MURRAY'S NEW WORLD**  
**ROMEO AND JULIET**

**BOX OFFICE 01608 642350**    [www.chippingnortontheatre.com](http://www.chippingnortontheatre.com)

# THE ARTS

closet to Churchill's cigar. A powerful way to create atmosphere and send a message. The talk includes a look at stories in the Cotswolds; your saints and your sinners. Warwick Hall, Burford, live or on Zoom. For more information, contact Frances Sparkes on 01993 823943 [publicity@theartssocietycotswolds.org.uk](mailto:publicity@theartssocietycotswolds.org.uk)

**Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock** 5 February–27 March –



*Signs of the Times: From advertisers to waywisers in Oxfordshire.* Sign-posting of days gone by: from enamel advertising signs to posters and waywisers large and small, this exhibition shows a colourful variety of signs from

Oxfordshire's past not usually on display.

**Zuleika Gallery, Woodstock** Ongoing to 7 March Monday, Wednesday–Saturday 10–5pm – *Riley and Hyndman: The Rhythm of Life*: original paintings by Kathleen Hyndman and a selection of prints by Bridget Riley. Two nonagenarian female artists side by side.

**Blenheim Palace Stables** Ongoing to 31 March – Zuleika Gallery exhibition in the café: *Weavescapes* by Julia Engelhardt presents several different series of woven artworks by Engelhardt exploring the painterly and sculptural qualities of yarns and fibres.

**Darl-e and The Bear, Woodstock** Open Monday, Wednesday–Sunday 10am to 4.30pm – Check out the peaceful Bear Den at Number 17: short-term exhibitions by local artists throughout the year. A relaxing mobile- and laptop-free art lounge (pictured) is the perfect place to catch up with friends over an organic Fairtrade coffee and a locally-baked cake.



## Local concerts and cinema

**North Cotswold Chamber Choir** 27 February 3.30pm – *Winter Sun*: Music of the moon, stars, sun and the dawn to warm a cold midwinter featuring harpist Victoria Davies. An afternoon concert with tea, cake and music in Chipping Norton Town Hall. Tickets £12 are available online via [eventbrite.co.uk/e/winter-sun-tickets-244700585037](http://eventbrite.co.uk/e/winter-sun-tickets-244700585037). Further information from Jenny Mead 01608 730146 or contact [choiradmin@nc3.org.uk](mailto:choiradmin@nc3.org.uk).

**Chipping Norton Choral Society** Concert performance 2 April – Under their new Musical Director, Ben Goodall, the choir are currently rehearsing works by Puccini and Verdi at the Methodist Church every Wednesday from 7.30–9.30pm. More information at [cncs.org.uk](http://cncs.org.uk).

**Charlbury Refugee Action Group Sunday Concert** – doors open 2.30 for 3pm start in Charlbury Memorial Hall: 13 February, Dorian Ford, jazz piano; 20 March, James Eastaway, oboe, Lucy Russell, violin and friends, Mozart quartet for oboe and strings. Seating socially distanced, please bring a mask. Concerts last about 1 hour. Tickets £12 (£6 for under 16s) on 01608 811558 or email [nick.parker@cooptel.net](mailto:nick.parker@cooptel.net). Limited tickets may be available at the door.

**Burford Singers** 9 April at 7pm Cirencester Parish Church – *Bach St John Passion*. Tickets £25 (reserved), £15 (unreserved). Booking from 20 February to 8 April available at [burfordsingers.org.uk/buy-tickets](http://burfordsingers.org.uk/buy-tickets) and in person (unreserved tickets only) from The Madhatter Bookshop, Burford and Cirencester VIC.

**Screen by the Green** Saturday 12 February 7.30 start Churchill Village Hall – The next movie is the much anticipated James Bond adventure *No Time to Die*. An epic barnstormer, outrageous old-fashioned action, but pathos, heartbreak, camp comedy and even some respect from Bond for female colleagues! Daniel Craig as Bond, with Ralph Fiennes, Naomie Harris and Ben Whishaw as M, Moneypenny and Q. Long movie, drinks intermission, numbers limited with spacing, booking essential – tickets £5 from 01608 659903 or [screenbythegreen@gmail.com](mailto:screenbythegreen@gmail.com).

*Thanks to Colin Little, local songwriter & poet for these reflections ....*

### A Chipping Norton Angle

Every morning I walk the slope  
And view new seasons' slow changes  
The floating hills clipped by old rooves  
My morning bonus in the sky

A Ropewalk hemmed by walls so old  
That limed beams protrude like ships' ribs  
Washed ashore from another place  
Rigid with age, smoothed by sandstone

Hellebores, raggedly perfect  
Wind hassled, grip a grassless ground  
Fusing defiant winter light  
Into fragile purple and white

The High Street speaks of other years  
Of a solid time of order  
And deference, hardship and wealth  
With high windows frowning above

Fat columns reduce us in scale  
Why so tall? How small should we be?  
In each shop walk the quiet ghosts  
Of tailors, barbers and butchers

My morning americano  
Is served from reclaimed antique boards  
Riddled with freshened woodworm chic  
Fake Italian for fake English

Matching my dubious lifestyle?  
But when the sun slashes honeyed  
Walls and lights the shadowed shapes between  
I am content and rest awhile.

## Town Sports Awards are back!



After the challenges of the pandemic, we look forward to a great sporting year in 2022 – boosted by Chippy hosting a national cycling event! I am delighted the Town Sports Awards are back after two years off – with thanks to the Town Council. See the Town Clerk's poster below and local social media and please send nominations to the Council for someone you think deserves an award. The more the better – don't hesitate! Deadline is 21 February. Come on Chippy!!

The Sports Awards Town Hall event will be later at 7pm on 25 March and after the awards, the Town Council will be inviting local sports clubs to join discussions on how to support and promote all Chippy's sports – at Greystones and with other ideas. I hope everyone will come and join in.

Graham Beacham – Sports Editor

## Chipping Norton's 12th Annual










### SPORTS AWARDS

Nominate your local sporting heroes!

For more information and to obtain a nomination form please scan the QR code or email: [townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk)

Closing date for nominations - 21st February 2022





## Cycling spotlight on Chippy

Chippy's cycling fans were given a boost in January with the news that the organisers of the 2022 Women's Tour of Britain Cycle Race want to use the Town as the base and starting point for the Professional Race on 11 June. Town Councillors gave their full support to the idea at their January Traffic Advisory Meeting. Cycling enthusiast Cllr Mark Walker, who, with Transition Chipping Norton organized successful cycling projects last year, will be pursuing this and how the Town can link the big event with local cycling ideas and promote cycling for all.

## Celebrating a vintage year!!



The Vintage Sports-Car Club team is pictured here standing outside their headquarters in the Old Post Office in West Street proudly displaying their Club of the Year 2021 award which was presented by the Classic and Sports Car Club at the end of last year.

## Hook Norton Tennis Club

In the Winter League, the A team is currently 3<sup>rd</sup> in Division 1, the B team is 6<sup>th</sup> in Division 1 and the C team is 3<sup>rd</sup> in Division 3. Ladies', men's and mixed doubles ladder matches are under way. Coaching is available from: Marc Gilkes: 07930 406015 (till 19 February, restarting w/c 28 February), also Faith Heron: 07771 904 905 and Steve Bone: 07850 036656. Visit <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/HookNortonTennisClub>. to book courts (members) details of Club sessions plus Covid guidelines etc. Contact Kate Hopkins 01608 642774, [khs.shoes@gmail.com](mailto:khs.shoes@gmail.com) or visit the website for details.

Elaine Priestley

## A New Year running resolution

Hook Norton Harriers had a great end to 2021 when our sell-out Christmas Canter saw runners in a range of festive outfits rewarded with lots of mulled wine and mince pies! Now, we're looking ahead. After the success of our last Couch 2 5K programme, the Harriers start a new 8-week programme on Tuesday evenings in February. If your New Year resolution was to get fit and meet new people, why not join us? Just email [info@hooknortonharriers.org.uk](mailto:info@hooknortonharriers.org.uk) to find out more.



Photo: Barry Cornelius

*The Angel Gabriel turned up to run the Harriers' Christmas Canter*

Our members are planning a range of races and routes, some as part of our Club Championship and are looking forward to our Winter Social! Several Harriers take part in, and volunteer, at Chipping Norton School parkrun and, on 12 February, there's a Hooky Harriers takeover with members filling up the volunteer rota. We hope to see lots of you there – and if you're interested in joining the Harriers, please come over and talk to one of us, we're really very friendly!

Nell Darby

## Walking Football

Walking football continues over the winter months indoors at the Leisure Centre on Mondays 5–6.30pm and is open to players of all abilities aged 50 or over. As the name suggests there is no running and no physical contact but walking football is an excellent way of keeping fit and socialising. Oxfordshire FA has recently confirmed its continued support of the Leisure Centre as a JustPlay Centre and provided



# CLUB NEWS

## WOWI looking to a new year

West Oxfordshire WI had a good Christmas despite the intrusion of Omicron. Thanks to The Blue Boar for our delicious Christmas meal. Our December meeting was just five days before Christmas so we took to Zoom and had a successful quiz with questions from our President, Linda Durant, getting our grey cells working. There were the usual bumper hamper raffle prizes – the Christmas goodies hamper was won by Tina Shelley-Smith (pictured above) with the toiletries hamper won by Val Clark. Sadly the Cuppa, Cake & Chat session on 6 February has been cancelled because of Omicron. Let's hope we can go ahead on Sunday 6 March 2.30-4pm in the Methodist Church hall. The WI meets on the third Monday of the month at 7.30pm at St Mary's Parish Rooms. Please come and join us. Email [wowi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk](mailto:wowi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk) for details.



Hilary Dix 01608 646228

## U3A back for 2022

A frustrating start to our year! Fortunately we had decided, even before we'd heard of Omicron, to cancel our Annual Dinner in January and now we have switched our monthly Open Meeting to Zoom until Easter. Our Speaker on 2 February at 2.30pm will be Andy Smith, a performance poet with a talk entitled *War and Romance*. He says, 'War is a grim business, but romance doesn't come to a grinding halt ... and neither does British humour!'

Our smaller Interest Groups make their own decisions on how and where they want to meet. The Italian Group has happily met on Zoom since the start of Covid whilst the Improvers French Group meet in person. Life has been much easier for the two Walking Groups who have mostly been free to enjoy the local countryside. The Leisure Centre has allowed our Table Tennis Group back now and the same is true for the Bowls Club. One Reading Group is meeting on Zoom while the other meets in person. So, if you would like to know more about these and other meetings, contact us through our website, [u3asites.org.uk/chipping-norton](http://u3asites.org.uk/chipping-norton)

Chris Clinch

## Chippy Ramblers in Blenheim

Six of us met and drove to Woodstock for a lovely walk in Blenheim Park. The trees there are magnificent in winter and the lake was full of birds, especially seagulls. As we left the parkland near the palace for the wilder parts, we walked along the edge of a creek and saw more swans and a great crested grebe. Then up through the woods and past the monument recording the Battle of Blenheim. If you too would like to enjoy the countryside in good company, join us on the first Sunday of every month. We meet in New Steet car park at 1.30pm and walk for about two hours at a leisurely pace! If you'd like to join us please contact Heather Leonard (01608 643691 or [rheatherleonard@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rheatherleonard@yahoo.co.uk)) or me (01608 643269 or [jennyharrington@btinternet.com](mailto:jennyharrington@btinternet.com)) and we'll put you on the list!  
Jenny Harrington

## Green Gym's winter work

Since I last reported we have held eight sessions (and cancelled one because of rain!). Many have been clearing brambles from the top of the Common where we plan to plant trees – see p13. But we have also cleared undergrowth at Fizalan Wood (near Travis Perkins), tended the borders at the Health Centre, and cut back invasive blackthorn at the BBOWT Glyme Valley nature reserve.



This picture shows the hedge at William Fowler Wood (beyond the allotments) where we have started to cut back the overgrown hawthorn hedge and 'lay' it – an old

technique to rejuvenate hedges and keep them stock-proof. All this work has to be done before the birds begin nesting.

If you would like to join us on Wednesday mornings, working in the fresh air on environmental projects in good company visit [www.chippygreengym.org](http://www.chippygreengym.org) and then contact me at [jennyharrington@btinternet.com](mailto:jennyharrington@btinternet.com), or phone 01608 643269. Everyone is most welcome! And there are lots of different jobs – you don't need to know how to lay a hedge!

Jenny Harrington

## Chipping Norton Explorer Scouts

After a very strange and unsettled 2021 we have looked back at what we did manage to achieve and are very proud of efforts of our Explorers and the Unit.

One of our Explorers achieved the Queens Scout Award, the highest award in Scouting, and two others received Young Leader Awards. We managed to continue Scouting in some form or another – camping at Youlbury for two weekends and doing various hikes and wide games in the dark, light and any weather conditions thrown at us. And we've also cooked over Zoom and played socially distanced games. Then we met in the Scout Hut in January – our first meeting of 2022. We are looking forward to a more normal year – with a Monopoly Challenge booked for March, a camp in June and an international camp in the Swiss Alps in August.

Something that has changed from a year ago is that we now have 26 Explorers – an increase of nearly 40%! Which is



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[www.chippingnortonphysio.com](http://www.chippingnortonphysio.com)

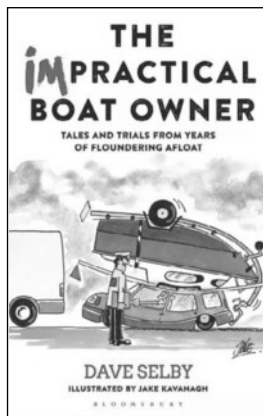


# CLUB NEWS

great for the Unit. We do have three Leaders, but it would be great to have more adult support. You don't have to commit every week and you don't need any qualifications; training is provided. You just need to enjoy working with 14-18 years old enabling them to develop and learn new skills by doing things! For further information email [chippyesu@gmail.com](mailto:chippyesu@gmail.com) or call Jill on 07535 111746. You can find out more about Explorers generally at <https://www.scouts.org.uk/explorers>

Jill Elliot

## Yacht Club – Marlin's Mission



We gathered in the Blue Boar, just before Omicron, for a socially-distanced Christmas party. We do not deny it was a party. Dave O played guitar and sang, Barny S teased us with another erudite quiz which, by popular demand, needed almost no ancient Greek. Food and drink was consumed. A genuine party!

In November well known sailor, author and humourist Dave Selby entertained us at our second physical gathering since Covid. The jokes came thick and fast as he

described an intrepid 338 nautical mile passage in Marlin, his Sailfish 18 ('feet not metres') from the East Coast to the Southampton Boat Show, in a record time of two months (the record for the longest time taken for that passage). Dave is a cheap boat evangelist –claiming there are many cheap old boats around with oodles of life and fun in them that've depreciated down to being extremely affordable. Then came 'the depressing bit'. In 2012 Dave contracted a rare condition called Guillain-Barré Syndrome. His voyage along the South Coast was in part to raise money for GAIN, the charity dedicated to helping people affected by the syndrome. (Donations can be made at [www.justgiving.com/Dave-Selby-Marlins-Mission](http://www.justgiving.com/Dave-Selby-Marlins-Mission))

For Chipping Norton Yacht Club's programme of talks, to join, to enquire about joining, or to come along to test the water please visit [cnyc.co.uk](http://cnyc.co.uk). No boat needed.

Roger Backhaus

## News from Chippy Labour Party

Chipping Norton Labour Party is delighted to announce that Town Councillor Rizvana Poole will be standing as our candidate in the District Council elections on Thursday 5 May. Rizvana seeks to succeed Councillor Laetisia Carter as one of our three District Councillors. Laetisia is currently Labour Group Leader at WODC and for eight years has brought care, compassion and commitment to her District role. Many will want to pay tribute to her and we thank her profusely for all she has achieved for Chippy residents.

Many readers know Rizvana both as Town Councillor and founder of Chippy Larder, organising many community initiatives, including the recent Building a Better Christmas event at the Leisure Centre. She hopes to meet as many of you as possible during the campaign or when out with Chippy Labour members delivering our latest Newsletter. Speaking to Labour members at her adoption meeting, Rizvana said she hoped to get a better deal for Chippy at WODC. She particularly wants to bring more resources from Councils and other agencies to address areas of deprivation and food

poverty in the Town. We invite all supporters and friends to join her campaign and help her become Chipping Norton's next District Councillor. To support her campaign, contact Steve Akers Vice Chair and Campaign Co-ordinator on 07908 151538 or [steveakers55@gmail.com](mailto:steveakers55@gmail.com)

Meanwhile Chippy Labour, and Constituency Labour Secretary, and long-time Ascott resident and parish councillor Sue Richards, is our candidate to represent Shipton and Ascott-U-Wychwood in the May elections. To support Sue's campaign, please contact her at [wychwoodslabour@myphone](mailto:wychwoodslabour@myphone) Steve Akers

## Amnesty International in action

Chippy Amnesty Group met for its AGM and its 29<sup>th</sup> year of action by welcoming several new members. We reviewed our actions over the last year including fundraising through street collections and sales, vigils, and links with local human rights organisations such as CRAG and Asylum Welcome.



2021 was the year of the Zoom meeting and Chippy Amnesty was no exception for both business meetings and Speaker Sessions, the latter covering Yemen, Ethiopia & Eritrea and Modern Slavery. The group will continue to support and defend the work of Indigenous Rights Group Aseinpome in Colombia, 'disappeared' Eritrean Ciham Ali Ahmed and cases in the Horn of Africa. The New Year brings new actions including a meeting with our MP Robert Courts in February and plans to extend our local outreach work. If you're interested in finding out about or joining in with our work, please get in touch via Val on 01608 645036.

Tricia Seaton

## Burford and Kingham Rotary

New year New Beginnings. Why not think of doing something new in 2022? Get involved with your community, meet likeminded people, enjoy entertaining speakers and new social life, raise money to help local charities ... How? Join Burford and Kingham Rotary!

Come to one of our meetings at Burford Golf Club on Monday evenings. We are a small but very friendly group with members from all the local villages and would love to welcome new members. Contact our Secretary John Smith email [jpw.smith@jasss.co.uk](mailto:jpw.smith@jasss.co.uk) 07717 883182.

Future meetings: 31 January Bill King – *The Magic and Mystery of Glenn Miller*; 28 Feb Ben Nicholls – *My Journey in Ancestry* (... to get you started on this fascinating hobby), 14 March *International Meal*, 28 March Brian Barber – *Aid Working in a Civil War in Liberia*.

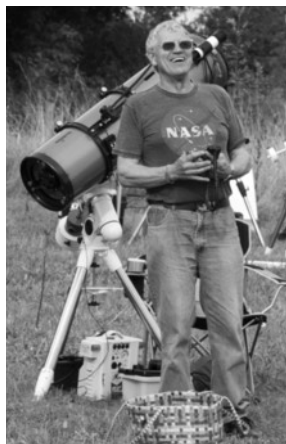
Please do call 01608 643844 or 07702 135731 for an informal chat so I can tell you more about Rotary.

Ros Richardson

# CLUB NEWS

## Chippy stargazers – eyes wide open

With all members of Chipping Norton Amateur Astronomy Group champing at the bit to get out under the stars, there was a collective sigh of relief when the protracted run of cloudy nights gave way to long clear spells which triggered a flurry of astronomical activity – setting up in frosty conditions to shake off the cobwebs of Covid and lockdown. Our astrophotographers were even able to get some video and pictures of the James Webb Space Telescope after its launch on Christmas Day, on its way to loiter in space almost a million miles from Earth.



In January we awarded our first and well-deserved 'life time' membership to longstanding CNAAG member, Bryan (Lefty) Hunt from Milton u Wychwood. Regular evenings at Daylesford Organics also began in January and continue on 9 February and 10 March – contact Daylesford direct for details. Monthly Club meetings continue by Zoom while concerns about the virus remain and when conditions improve we will return to our own Dark Sky site at the Rollright Stones.

Our diary is beginning to fill – on 16 February we return to Chipping Norton School for a family learning workshop. Do get in touch if we can be of use. Chipping Norton Amateur Astronomy Group hopes to work its way back to normal and if you have an interest in the stars and Universe, please contact CNAAG via our website: [www.cnaag.com](http://www.cnaag.com)

Robin Smitten

## Railway Club keep steaming on

Here we are then... back on track for our new season. Beginning with the AGM on 1 February followed by a slide show with Evesham member Geoff Turner. We have a full programme for the coming year and meet in the upper Town Hall with tea and biscuits in the interval. The Chairman and Committee look forward to welcoming members back. There will once more be two outings... organised by Emma Bayley. The first, to the Bluebell Line in May... should be very colourful! The second, in September is yet to be decided. In March the Club is proud to celebrate its 48<sup>th</sup> Birthday. In these difficult times we just have to keep steaming on! So, members... do come back! Newcomers are most welcome too... as are visitors to the Town. Meetings are in the Upper Town Hall at 7.30 on the first Tuesday of the month.

Estelle Brain

## History Society explore St Mary's

The Chipping Norton History Society will meet on Monday 14 February at 2pm in the Lower Hall at the Methodist Church, West Street. John Marshall is coming to talk on 'What's so special about St Marys?' – Chipping Norton's parish church. Visitors are welcome – £3 visitors' fee.

Janis Paxton

*Chipping Norton British Schools* is a new book by Barbara Allison, published by Chipping Norton History Society and Museum. It is based on the original school log book for 1863-1881 and contains an amazing amount of information about

school life at that time, including lots of names of teachers and pupils. Sales have been going well since just before Christmas and if you would like a copy, priced £8, please contact Jan Cliffe 07938 682674 or Pauline Watkins 07977 059527.

## Organic gardening group's events

We have a stimulating programme this year, starting on Wednesday 2 February. John Letts, Founder of The Heritage Grain Trust, and Henry Astor of Bruern Farm both grow heritage grains and believe that British farmers can produce all the grain needed to feed the UK by growing heritage grains in ways that improve soil health and increase biodiversity. On 2 February they'll be sharing their views on *Ancient Grains*. And on Wednesday 2 March, John Heathcott's topic will be *Ancient Woodlands of Gloucestershire*, explaining what ancient woodlands are, why they're important and where we can visit them. North Oxon Organic Gardeners meet in St Mary's Parish Rooms, Chipping Norton, meetings start at 7.30pm. Visitors welcome (Members: £1, visitors: £3). For info, please contact Tracy Lean, [tracylean@gmail.com](mailto:tracylean@gmail.com), 01295 780710, [www.noog.org.uk](http://www.noog.org.uk).

## Last minute snowdrops for gardeners

The January meeting of the Chipping Norton Horticultural Association was cold and dry with a good turnout of members. At very short notice, John Taylor of Chippy agreed to speak about *Snowdrops*. We are very grateful to John and his presentation was well received. He described the different varieties, their height and the formation of the flowers explaining that he'd learnt a lot about snowdrops from his late father-in-law. Our next meeting is on Wednesday 16 February in the Methodist Hall. As some speakers may have to cancel, due to Covid we can't yet say who the speaker will be but do come along as we will still be holding our usual meeting. Visit [www.cnha.uk](http://www.cnha.uk) or contact the secretary Eileen Forse 643275 for more details nearer the time.



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- **Volunteer befrienders** regularly visit people in their own homes for company and conversation alleviating loneliness, social isolation and boredom.
- **Other volunteers** help people with shopping, tidy gardens and do small DIY tasks for people who have difficulty doing this for themselves due to frailty or disability

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# SCHOOLS NEWS

## Chipping Norton School

**House News:** The annual Santa Run is always challenging and fun. Students were asked to run around the school field three times wearing a Santa hat as a charity fundraiser for Katharine



House Hospice in Banbury. So far, we have raised over £700 for this special organisation. On the last day of term, students came into school wearing a Christmas jumper to raise funds for Aspire, a local charity that supports people in Oxfordshire facing homelessness and disadvantage.

An impressive number of students entered our first Philosophy house competition, with particular interest from KS3 students. Each cohort had a variety of puzzles and paradoxes to respond to. In the end, Mr Dye arrived at three winners from each of the learning cohorts: Naomi Boddy (7TW), Florence Pearce (10AJ) and Flo Mantell (12BMG).

**Performing Arts News:** At the end of term our music students completed our very first virtual concert. Mr Brown recorded four pieces with the brass group and a lovely duet



sung by sixth formers Jessica Bradford and Lia Barker. There were two flute group pieces with Miss Johnston leading the way. Concert band even had an audience of classmates for their three recorded pieces! At the end of the school day, members of choir (including staff) gathered for our final set, which included Mr Brown's very own version of 'O little town of Bethlehem' to end our concert in a nice Christmassy way.

**Sixth Form News:** After two years of no trips, we were delighted to be able to take our Year 12 students to the University of Gloucestershire for an 'Introduction to Higher Education' event. This forms part of our Sixth Form Careers programme and is intended to provide every student with the opportunity to visit a university. Students were given a tour of the campus at Gloucester and had talks on the university application process and student finance.

Both staff and students enjoyed the day and it has inspired many students to begin their research into degree courses and university destinations.

**CNPS News:** We were pleased to host two Able, Interested and Motivated workshops last term for pupils from Chipping Norton partnership primary schools. The Design Technology session was led by Ms Drinkwater, who showed the children



how to make LED bracelets and Mrs Duffy ran an English session based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

The CNS Library hosted a Literary quiz, ably assisted by Reading Club members from Years 7 and 8. It was a great occasion showing the children's very extensive knowledge of classic and contemporary literature. Well done to Kingham who came first this year in a very tight contest.



At the end of term the Year 11 sports leaders delivered a Ball Skills Festival for Year 4 pupils. This being their first experience of sports leadership, we couldn't be prouder of how they fought their nerves to teach ball skills and run a fun bench ball tournament.

Eight primary schools turned out for the U11 Football tournament. The Big Schools winners were Charlbury in both the boys' and girls' competitions, and the Small Schools winners were Enstone (girls) and Chadlington (boys). We also ran the U11 Hockey tournament at which Enstone took first place in both the girls' and boys' events. The Year 12 sports leaders, with help from the Sports Department, did a great job organising these events taking charge of teams, refereeing, umpiring and scoring.

Year 12 sports leaders, with support from Mrs Du Cros, also visited St Mary's School to teach a dance routine to the Year 3 children, achieving a full dance by the end of the session. They provided a very inclusive event with all students enjoying it very much. Our sports leaders also hosted our first ever boccia event for primary SEND students and Mr Robinson's group of Sports leaders delivered a very successful inclusive Sports Hall Athletics Festival.

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## Holy Trinity Primary

As we welcome in the New Year, we look back at the final events in the lead up to Christmas that ended the Autumn Term at Holy Trinity.



The hustle and bustle of the final week involved: Year 3 leading a lovely Christingle Assembly that reminded us how a simple symbol has such a powerful meaning of Jesus being the light of the world; and Christmas Jumper Day where seasonal sweaters were worn to help raise £133 for the Salvation Army as well as provide festive cheer during the Christmas Dinner that was served on the day. To top it off a big Thank You to the PTA who organised Father Christmas's socially distanced visit to drop presents off for the children and to those who contributed to the Teams4U Shoebox Appeal which has enabled those less fortunate in Eastern Europe to receive some essential supplies.

So far this Spring term, we have welcomed five students from Oxford Brookes who are on their second placement of

their PGCE. Also, we have begun preparations for the Sports Competitions that are taking place over the course of the next half-term such as the Swimming Gala and U11 Netball Competition at Chipping Norton School. Despite the ongoing COVID Omicron variant, the children have settled well into the new term and have begun their topics on Animals, China, Extreme Earth, Ancient Greece, Monarchy and The Romans.

We look forward to the warmer weather that the springtime brings and the blooming of our Jubilee Woods which the Year 1 and HT Active children planted before the Christmas Holidays to provide a future forest school provision donated by the Woodland Trust.

Finally, we would like to congratulate Freddie in Year 5 for qualifying for the National Short Mat Bowls Championships. Very well done Freddie!

## St Mary's Primary

**School Singing Club:** It is wonderful to have our Singing



Club in action once more and Friday lunchtimes see around 60 children participating. Recently the children visited several local care homes to entertain the residents with a selection of their favourite Christmas songs. They sang outside and were viewed through windows. Well, done to all of you as we know this means so much to so many in our community.

**Nativity:** The whole school was treated to a performance of the Year 3/4 Christmas production and we learned so much about how families celebrate Christmas across the world. The narration, dancing and singing was of such a high quality, and it really made it feel like Christmas once more.

**Response from Robert Courts MP:**

During Term 2, the whole school participated in the *Be the Change* Project studying climate change and understanding how it is the most important crisis that our world is facing today. The project encouraged our pupils to be courageous advocates for change. Part of the initiative invited children to write to their local MP regarding their concerns and making their own suggestions on how we can all aim to be carbon free. On their return to school in January, the children had received a response to their letters from our MP and were delighted that he had clearly taken time to read the letters and reply. His letter outlined climate initiatives by our Government and what is being done locally within Chipping Norton and West Oxfordshire to reduce carbon emissions.

New charging points at New Street car park were highlighted with the promise of more to come. This pleased



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# SCHOOLS NEWS

the children who were concerned about the limited number of charging points currently available for electric cars. There was also a promise of a commitment to increasing cycling infrastructure and a promise to raise the issue particularly for Chipping Norton.

We are very proud of our children's passion for climate change and hope their letters, along with thousands of other school children will result in more rapid change.



**Kingham Art project:** Many children took part in this exciting venture, and we were impressed by the quality of the pieces of artwork

submitted. The theme was darkness and there were many interpretations including nocturnal animals and landscapes. We certainly have some very talented artists.



See also the report on this project in Arts page 22

**Covid 19 Superheroes Award:** In December we were delighted to be nominated and awarded with a certificate, recognising all the staff as COVID 19 SUPERHEROES for our work with children and families during periods of lockdown. The award was presented at a ceremony at Ditchley Park attended by a variety of local people who had been recognised for their efforts to help others across the Town. Many thanks go to Mayor Georgia Mazower and the Town Council for organising and hosting the event. We were thrilled to be nominated within the Education Sector and feel this award also belongs to our children and families who worked so hard with remote learning during these strange times and who supported our staff throughout every challenge.

## Great Rollright Primary



We have exciting news this month – we now have our own Forest School site, next to the school. A year ago we got the chance to lease the field next door, and after much planning and hard work it has now been transformed,

with a small pond, a fire pit, and many newly planted trees. We can't wait to watch these grow – and to plan new additions as we learn what our children, and local wildlife, most enjoy!

The site will be used by our younger children for Forest Thursdays and by the whole school to support science, geography, and other aspects of the curriculum. We are already proud of our strong focus on outdoor learning here at Great Rollright, and the new site will add a further

dimension to the opportunities we already enjoy due to our beautiful location. We are very grateful to Nicholsons Garden Design of North Aston, who gave us invaluable support with funding, design, and execution of the project.

If you'd like to see our new site, or learn more about what we offer – including a free bus to Chipping Norton – please make an appointment to visit by calling 01608 737202.

## Chipping Norton Pre-School

Kaleb Cooper helped Chipping Norton Pre-School bring Santa to town on Friday 10 December. Starting off from the



hospital, many families took to the Town's streets to come out and see Santa driving by in his tractor. The event raised a fantastic £269.29 for the Pre-school charity. The staff and committee enjoyed seeing so many happy faces which made the event such a success. Thank you to everyone who supported us that evening.

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## The Town Nursery

Nursery School 3's focus for January has been all things music and movement. Each week they focused on different sounds and how to make them, exploring pitch, tone, volume and speed. All the activities will help develop the children's listening skills while providing opportunities for stillness and movement. They have done shaking and rattling, pinging and strumming, banging and bashing, twirling and dancing and most importantly of all Sophie said, 'was being together laughing and having fun'. To incorporate music they have been making their own instruments using recycled materials. Charlotte has been busy collecting boxes and various old household items that the children can place inside to create different sounds. This was very popular as the children just love filling and shaking bottles. Using old elastic bands that come wrapped around the post have made brilliant guitars and opportunities for strumming and pinging, really working those finger muscles. Rachel had been searching online for old CDs to use for movement. She found a brilliant party CD which has some old songs with classic moves. Rachel and Sophie know the moves from their disco days. The favourite was *The Locomotion*. It's wonderful to hear the children having so much fun, great project Nursery School 3.



## Sibford School

Sibford School is delighted to be opening its doors once again for a series of events.

**Sibford School Open Mornings:** 9.45am – 12pm on Friday 14 January (fully booked), Friday 4 March and Monday 2 May. These events offer the opportunity to talk to staff, meet current parents and take a tour of the School with student guides.

**Sixth Form Open Evening:** Thursday 17 February from 6 – 8pm. This event is an opportunity to talk to subject staff and Sixth Form students and find out more about the broad range of A Level and BTEC subjects on offer.

Headteacher Toby Spence explains, 'At Sibford we value holistic education where the happiness and well-being of pupils is paramount. We encourage pupils to live adventurously and foster resilience and we look for the unique talents in every individual that comes to the school'.

Sibford School is a co-educational independent day and boarding school set on a 50-acre campus that offers a junior school, senior school and separate Sixth Form, as well as its own forest school, a state-of-the-art climbing wall and 25 metre swimming pool.

The School offers a wide range of sporting opportunities and an excellent learning support department to support those with additional learning requirements. Scholarships and bursaries are also available.

Please note that booking for these events is essential: [www.sibfordschool.co.uk/events](http://www.sibfordschool.co.uk/events), or call Elspeth Dyer, Admissions Officer on 01295 781 203.

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# LETTERS

## Memories of Roy Watson

Seeing the recent article on Roy Watson, I sought out an old old photograph that I took for the first book *A Day to Remember* in 1989 which recorded Chipping Norton life over one day. The picture was taken outside the Joiner's Workshop



*L to R back row D Perriton – Electrician, T Foden – Carpenter, C Townsend – Builder, P Darvill – Assistant Supervisor, D Yerbury – Carpenter, P Boobyer – Builder, Roy Watson – Plumber circled, K Mills – Labourer. Front row: D Brain – Painter, R Clifton – Builder, G Beacham – Storekeeper, B Payne – Carpenter*

up at Greystones. This group was some of the workforce of the West Oxfordshire District Council Housing Maintenance Northern Depot. We serviced the northern half of the then council houses for the District.

Roy's day job was as our plumber; however, he could be paged if there was a shout for the Town Fire Brigade. You could upset Roy if you called Wednesday Drill Night 'practice'! Great Days and Great People. Sadly not many still around.

**Graham Beacham**

I was so happy and touched to see the piece in the *Chipping Norton News* celebrating Roy Watson. Roy was the kindest, most helpful person you could imagine. Along with his wife Joy and Debbie (their daughter), he was always there to help with any crises, little or large, whether they were to do with our electrics, our plumbing or anything practical needed in the house. Joy and Debbie were always on hand to help with the children. We had lots of Christmases with Roy and Joy (whose mince pies were so scrumptious) and many a dram was taken with them both. Roy was the epitome of a gentleman and I, like many many people, miss him.

**Sylvia Nicol**

## Future of Guildhall and Town Hall

I read with interest your article in last month's Chippy News about the Town Hall and Guildhall. It seems to me to be a 'non-starter' to hire or buy back the Guildhall when we gave it to West Oxfordshire District Council at the time of the reorganisation of Local Councils. It is one of the oldest buildings in town and potentially a future 'millstone' to maintain. Surely we have reached a point when we must consider dropping the trappings of the old Borough and adapt to today's situation. With falling bookings, more competition from other hirers, ever increasing fuel costs etc and changing circumstances, we must find a solution. I would suggest closing the Guildhall, moving the offices to the lower Town Hall and using the underused Council Chamber jointly with the Town Clerk's office. The Upper Hall would then be used for all

functions. Unless something urgently is done to reduce costs, things will get completely out of control and will lead to large Council Tax increases every year. What do other people think?

**John Grantham** – Former Town Councillor and Mayor

Referring to your article in the latest edition regarding the Town Hall and Guildhall, the only reason for the prospective costs to repair and maintain these buildings over the next 10 years is their relative neglect by the Council over a long number of years and their consequent lack of any pre-emptive action. Any private citizen would be rightly castigated for allowing their property to fall into such disrepair and would not be offered assistance from elsewhere. The Chipping Norton Council responsible for these architecturally significant buildings should be ashamed that they have acted like absentee landlords and then go bleating to the public, their paymasters, that they can't afford to do anything. Bless! What do they suggest? Sell them to a developer so we can have some more nice, new ticky-tacky box housing?

**Forrest H C Robertson**

*Editor's note: The Town Hall is owned by Chipping Norton Town Council. The Guildhall is currently owned by West Oxfordshire District Council, but the Town Council occupy part of the building and are considering options for taking on future responsibility.*

## Town Council saving and spending

I admit to being a little out of touch with recent Chipping Norton Town Council events; however, your December article does worry me (Town Hall – asset or liability). When I was Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (Summer 2011 to December 2020) we were totally aware that major repairs would have to be done to the Town Hall and were saving into reserves to ensure the work could be paid for without increasing the precept too much. Your Editor used to castigate the Committee on a regular basis for precept increases – but we did build up substantial reserves which, if they had been looked after, should have been more than sufficient to make the repairs now needed. As a listed building, CNTC are under a legal obligation to ensure it is maintained in good condition.

Also, in December 2020, it took a lot of persuasion by the more experienced councillors to ensure the precept was not increased at the time of the pandemic. The money wasted in the past year solely on employment of locum Town Clerks

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# LETTERS

will, I am sure, show in this financial year's account as being astronomical. Why oh why wasn't the Deputy Town Clerk (by that time being fully qualified and already a long-term employee) promoted to Town Clerk? That is why the previous CNTC had trained her to allow for some succession planning. This competent lady was totally overlooked and underpaid by this Council and then when she left, her position is advertised at a 30% increase in salary. This Council should be asked to explain where the money has gone – or will they, at the end of their elected terms, take a leaf out of a previous Chancellor of the Exchequer's book and leave a piece of paper saying 'Sorry no money left in the bank .....?'

**Mike Tysoe** – Retired Town Councillor and ex-Mayor

## Our 'Better' Sports Hall?

Following Sharon Truelove's letter in November's CNN about the Sunday Hockey Club, just who are the community that GLL/Better claim to be supporting? The GLL website mentions supporting the community dozens of times and they claim: 'We believe social values are just as important as financial performance'. Really? Well, ABC badminton have been playing on Monday evenings since the new hall was built (and some of us even before that in the old school sports hall). We are a group of local players, currently ranging in age from 14 to 74, playing to keep fit and for fun. And we welcome all-comers. No membership fees, no on-going commitment for our players, but people have been turning up every week – for the last 20 years. And we were the first back after lockdown, supporting the community, sports hall and GLL/Better finances and although we were then the only players, other groups of friends or families are now playing alongside us and the Hall has been full on Monday evenings.

Isn't that the very definition of a 'community' with 'social values'? Several years ago, GLL insisted that we needed to be a club to have a regular booking, so we started to call ourselves ABC – the Alternative Badminton Club, since there was then a more formal Chipping Norton Badminton Club. We were also supposed to have officers and insurance cover. We still have neither, we are just members of the community who enjoyed playing badminton on Mondays. But like the Sunday Hockey Club, and with less than a month's notice, GLL/Better have told us that we have lost our Monday night booking to what appears to be a commercial organisation. And although GLL/Better have now found us an alternative

booking on Thursdays, several of us will no longer be able to play badminton. So who made the decision and why? It is certainly not 'Better' for us!

**Peter Gilbert** – ABC player since 2002

## Overflowing litter and dog poo



At a time when Chipping Norton's Mayor is encouraging us all to keep the Town Centre attractive and tidy, it seems strange that West Oxfordshire District Council is busy removing litter and dog poo bins. These bins have been disappearing gradually over the last month or more, some being replaced by new combined bins. These new bins have a smaller capacity. Pedestrians will be familiar with the sight of overflowing bins, particularly after sunny weekends. What is the rationale for reducing the bin capacity by about half?

**Local resident** – name and address supplied

## HGVs – County urged to act!

*The following is an extract from a speech made by Steve Williams to County Councillors on 14 December. He sent it to the News for the Letters page.*

'Two years ago, this County Council voted unanimously to provide weight limit signs to the approaches to Chipping Norton and re-route HGVs away from the High Street. This was subsequently fully endorsed by Chipping Norton Town Council. Since this historic vote, pollution levels have increased with smaller particulates causing far more health issues than previously thought. HGVs have become bigger, heavier and far more numerous. What has been accomplished since your historic vote? After 20 years of campaigning, when will we see an existing route upgraded and re-classified along with weight limit signs?

'Many of you were voted on to this County Council at the last elections on an environmental platform, but the fact that we still have no date when action will actually take place raises a very serious question. What confidence will the Oxfordshire electorate have that any of your decisions will be acted upon? The very democratic nature of this Council will be called into question and the Oxfordshire electorate will see the inability to act on this issue as an example of your ineffectiveness. Two years ago, Councillors present were reminded of at least two fatalities, a number of serious and minor accidents and near misses – which helped to persuade everyone to vote for the changes. Another near miss recently involved a mother and her two young children and a heavily laden HGV – undoubtedly weighing on the minds of everyone who witnessed it. If action is not taken very soon to re-route these HGVs, the near miss will become a terrible reality. I will take no pleasure at all in returning here and uttering those four words 'I TOLD YOU SO'. Please, on behalf of the residents of Chipping Norton, put into practice what you voted for two years ago.'

**Steve Williams** – Chipping Norton resident

## Rollright Stones HGV route issues

I feel I have to disagree with Pete Godfrey's assessment of the Rollright Stones route (December letters). During my paramedic career, I attended several serious incidents along the route, including one which resulted in me being named



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# LETTERS

UK paramedic of the year 1996. The upgrade to the route that would be required would be hugely expensive, requiring reconfiguration of junctions, lighting, and compulsory purchase of properties. In the current financial climate, that is never going to happen. The traffic problems through Chipping Norton were being discussed when I started school in 1963, in New Street School, when the top of New Street was very narrow. I don't know what the answer is, but I DO know that an HGV route past the Rollright Stones isn't it!

**Graham White**

## Sewage and Government U-turns

Thank you for your coverage of the sewage scandal that is clearly affecting Chipping Norton as it is much of England. It's worth noting that our MP, Robert Courts, voted against the amendment to impose stricter rules on the release of sewage by the water companies. The primary reason cited was the cost of making these improvements. These are the companies that were privatised over 30 years ago, the reason being then that private companies could invest and improve the system. However, in those years the companies have extracted some £60 billion in profits and dividends whilst water quality has continued to decline. When there was a huge outcry at the Government's failure to address the issue of penalties for sewage discharges, they rapidly U-turned and introduced their own amendment. However, this is woefully weak – just asking the water companies to make reductions in the amount of sewage discharged each year, with no targets or deadlines. Needless to say, our MP not only voted for this amendment but vigorously defended it against any criticism. Perhaps if Chippy News readers happen to meet Robert Courts on the streets of Chipping Norton (assuming that he ever visits us?) they might like to ask why he voted for more sewage in our rivers, especially as he claims to be 'a passionate conservationist'.

**Jonathan Powell**

(See p7 for article on local petition)

## Delighted with Christmas lights

I did want to commend the Town Council. Following the previous dismal Christmas light display in town, I wrote to the News expressing my disappointment at the poor effort. I am delighted that my remarks were heeded as this festive season the array has been fabulous. However, I have a question. What did the poor 'Billy No Lights' tree by the Kebab Van do wrong?

**Local resident** – name and address supplied

## Thanks for help with Xmas lights

Please could you thank all of the people involved in helping with the Town Christmas tree lights. Without their help we would not be able to make the Town look so good over the Christmas period. That's thanks to: those who helped before the trees even went up; those who put the lights on the trees and our army of people taking the trees to be erected by the Town Council's contractors, on what was a very cold morning; those who took the lights off, in record time; the providers of food and checking the lights. To you all, thanks on behalf of the Town for your great efforts. Christmas will soon be around again and so I hope will our volunteers.

**Pat Lake**

## Sadly missing Banners

When my wife and I returned to Chippy 10 years ago we were informed that the gems of the Town were Banners for electrical and Gills for mechanical bits and pieces. We subsequently discovered that two specialist, filament bulbs were broken. I went to Banners, planted the two bulbs on the counter and asked for two similar replacements. I was told 'We don't sell broken bulbs, sir'. Replacements, however, were found. Banners will be sadly missed!

**Peter Nuttall**, Over Norton

*The Chipping Norton News Team welcomes letters but reminds writers that name & address must be supplied and that the opinions expressed are not those of the Team.*

# ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

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**March deadline: Friday 11 February**  
**Final copy should be sent to Chipping Norton News, c/o Hill Lawn House, 22 New Street, Chipping Norton, OX7 5LJ tel 01608 643219.**  
**Items should preferably be typed or sent via email to [chippymail@aol.com](mailto:chippymail@aol.com)**

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# Chippy goes Valentining

*Valentine's Day is usually seen as a celebration of adult romance, but in former times local children were at the heart of 14 February customs*

Sending elaborate Valentine cards became popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but many local farm workers were said to have been so poor that they sent their children out chanting Valentine's Day rhymes hoping to be rewarded with coins.

In **Bodicote**, near Banbury, the rhyme went: *The rose is red, the violet's blue, Carnation's sweet and so be you, So please to give us a Valentine.* All was well if local householders rewarded them with a gift but the children punished anyone refusing to contribute by adding: *The Devil's black and so be you!*

The **Charlbury** rhyme went: *Good morrow, Valentine, I'll be yours if you'll be mine, Good morrow, Valentine.* Children in **Lower Heyford** had a similar rhyme, but in 1867 the rector objected to a custom he saw as a form of begging and asked local farmers to send nuts or cakes to the new village school to be given to the children instead.

This attitude had an echo in the ending of **Chipping Norton's** own Valentine tradition nearly a century later. It had become so famous that the BBC sent a film crew to record the event. The Chipping Norton rhyme, chanted by children early in the morning before school was: *I'll be yours if you'll be mine, Please to give me your Valentine.* Shopkeepers and householders would throw sweets, nuts and pennies (the old pre-decimal copper pennies – much larger than our



2p piece.) Sometimes the coins were heated on shovels – either to warm the children's hands or to discourage them from grabbing too many! The panel from the Millennium Tapestry shows the rhyme which children are chanting outside Packers Photography studio near Horsefair.



*The last Valentining in Chippy – when it was still safe to stand in the middle of New Street!*

Local historian Brenda Morris often went 'Valentining' and told the News about the last one in 1953 when the BBC filmed a crowd of children gathered in the snow in front of the George Inn in New Street (now Barfields the Opticians). The George's Landlady, Flo Hovard can be seen leaning

over the wrought iron balcony throwing heated pennies down to the eager children. According to Brenda the tradition was banned when a new Headmaster arrived at the Grammar School and objected that it encouraged children to beg.

*Acknowledgments: Photo – CN Museum of Local History; Oxfordshire folklore: May Day to Mummers by Christine Bloxham*

## DIARY

### February (News out Monday 31 January)

- 1<sup>st</sup> **Railway Club** 7.30 Upper Town Hall - see p28
- 2<sup>nd</sup> **Methodist Coffee Morning** in aid of Beech Haven Care Home 9.30-11.30am - see p14
- U3A Zoom Meeting** 2.30 pm - details p26
- North Oxon Organic Gardeners** 7.30 Parish Rooms - see p28
- Town Council Finance & Resources Cttee** 7.15pm details call 01608 642341
- 6<sup>th</sup> **CN Ramblers** meet 1.30pm New St car park see p26
- 7<sup>th</sup> **Methodist Crafty, Cuppa & Chat** 10am - see p14
- 9<sup>th</sup> **The Arts Society Cotswolds** 11am Sue Harries - Stories in Stained Glass - see p22
- Stargazing Evening** with CNAAG at Daylesford nr Kingham, 6-8pm - book via [www.daylesford.com](http://www.daylesford.com)
- 11<sup>th</sup> **CHIPPING NORTON NEWS DEADLINE** - see p35
- 12<sup>th</sup> **Offbeat Chippy** walking tour 11am - see p7
- Forest Gardens Workshop** 2-4.30pm St Mary's Parish Rooms - see p12
- Screen by the Green** No Time to Die 7.30 Churchill Village Hall - booking essential - see p23
- 14<sup>th</sup> **History Society** 2pm Methodist Hall see p28
- 16<sup>th</sup> **Horticultural Assoc** 7.30 Methodist Hall see p28

- 16<sup>th</sup> **Town Council Strategic Planning Cttee** 7.15pm details call 01608 642341
- 19<sup>th</sup> **Farmers Market** 8.30am-1pm
- 21<sup>st</sup> **Deadline for Town Sports Awards nominations** see p24 for details
- 21<sup>st</sup> **West Oxon WI** 7.30 Parish Rooms John Caldicott - The Foundling Hospital see p26
- 26<sup>th</sup> **Offbeat Chippy** walking tour 11am - see p7
- Jubilee Tree Planting** 10am-3pm Hawkyard Common see p13
- 27<sup>th</sup> **North Cotswold Chamber Choir Concert - Winter Sun** 3.30pm Town Hall see p23
- 28<sup>th</sup> **Chipping Norton News Team Meeting** 7.15 – call 01608 643219 for details

### March (News out Monday 28 February)

- 1<sup>st</sup> **Railway Club** 7.30 Upper Town Hall - see p28
- 2<sup>nd</sup> **U3A Zoom Meeting** 2.30 pm - details p26
- North Oxon Organic Gardeners** 7.30 Parish Rooms - see p28
- 4-19 **Chipping Norton Music Festival** see p22
- 6<sup>th</sup> **CN Ramblers** meet 1.30pm New St car park see p27
- Cuppa, Cake & Chat** 2.30-4pm Methodist Church see p26