

# South Hinksey Echo

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[www.southhinksey.org](http://www.southhinksey.org)

## Happy Snowy New Year!

With over 30 cm of snow falling in one night, residents of South Hinksey and The Hill alike have been out enjoying this rare chance to really have fun in the snow.



Let's hope it

doesn't become like 1947; notorious as one of the harshest winters since the War. In South Hinksey, after the snow melted on March 17<sup>th</sup>, the Village flooded up as far as the Cross Keys public house. Tony Allsworth remembers how his father Albert, who was chair of the Parish Council, delivered milk to people at the bottom of the Village and in St Lawrence road by canoe. Later, a round plaque was erected on the wall of the house on the corner of St Lawrence Road to mark the level the water had reached.

## Children's Halloween Party



Ghosts, goblins and witches were in abundance on October 31<sup>st</sup> when a Halloween party was organised for the children of the village. The hall was transformed and adults and children alike donned their finest scary outfits and brought a frightful feast to share. Apple-bobbing, musical corpses (statues) and other games were held to the sound of the Monster Mash and Ghostbusters. Thank you to Carolyn and the Mock-pub mums for putting the party together.

(Adrian Porter and Nikki and David Newhouse)

## **South Hinksey Christmas Party**

The Christmas Festivities began in South Hinksey on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December at the Village Christmas Party. The Village Hall, decked and decorated for the occasion, was packed with villagers, who brought food and wine to share. A night of festive fun, merrymaking, and good cheer was had by all – partly due to Maggie's extremely potent and delicious mulled wine! The Donkey House Band led us in festive carol singing, and a visit from Father Christmas delighted the younger partygoers. There was a warm and happy community feel to the night - thank you to Adrian and Carolyn for masterminding the party and bringing the village together. Let's look forward to the next village event in the spring!

(Dr Clare Broome Saunders)



## **Flooding News**

The Parish Council has asked farmer Nick Frearson to remove the main obstacles in the village field ditch and I am told he plans to do this in the next few weeks. He will also clear the flood culverts under the Devil's Backbone footpath.

We are trying to get the culverts under the farm track just to the north replaced/repaired. The proposed new culverts under the causeway to the electric substation are still going ahead, thanks to Peter Dela and the Vale of White Horse District Council, and subject to the necessary permissions being obtained.

The Gatters have done an excellent job of clearing the ditch alongside their property in Manor Road. The Parish Council is working to get the ditch cleared and the bank secured further up, before it goes under Manor Road.

The large new flood culverts under the railway access road just north of Redbridge, mentioned in the September *Echo*, were completed by contractors working for the Environment Agency on time. These will come into play during times of flooding, getting water away much more quickly.

The Environment Agency's 'big scheme' to protect Oxford (and us!) to a 1 in 75 year flood level has gone on indefinite hold (see [www.oxfordfloodalliance.org.uk](http://www.oxfordfloodalliance.org.uk) for more). Oxford Flood Alliance is preparing suggestions for a new Medium-Term Flood Strategy for Oxford (again, including us). We are formulating it now and hope to have proposals ready by the end of January.

(Peter Rawcliffe)

## **Wildflowers in the Burial Ground**

We had a cowslip out in November! This was the earliest cowslip that the local Oxford expert on early flowering has ever heard of. Look out for the rest when the snows have gone and spring is back.

The Yellow (Hay) Rattle seeds were all sown well before the snow came - they benefit from such a cold period. Yellow Rattle is a meadow native which is semi-parasitic on grass, so keeping the more vigorous grasses in check and helping other wildflowers to flourish.

The grass paths have been made less bumpy by infilling with soil.

Thank you to our contractor Matthew Ellett and his team who have done a great job this year in maintaining and improving the burial ground.

### **Future Plans**

The Parish Council has ordered a new oak signboard for the burial ground. (The present noticeboard will be relocated at the pub end of Manor Road.)

It is hoped that the path from Parker Road to the church will be upgraded.

The area immediately around the tap will be paved as it gets muddy. An open wooden box will be provided to take the various watering containers which at present just lie around.

The Leylandii 'hedge' is extremely tall and still growing. The PC is considering whether to reduce it or replace it with a native hedgerow.

(Peter Rawcliffe)

## **Saint Laurence Church**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January sees the beginning of the Octave (8 days) of prayer for Christian Unity. This *week* of prayer first began in 1908 when fervent prayer was offered for the unity of all Christians between the old feast of St Peter's chair (18<sup>th</sup>) and the feast of the Conversion of St Paul (25<sup>th</sup>). Christian unity is a subject which causes much debate and angst among Christians, we only have to take a look at the way the Anglican Communion operates at the moment to see this. But at the heart of it all must be the prayer of Jesus himself in the gospel of St John 17: 21 – **May they all be one.**

*News – our new toilet and kitchen extension will soon be completed, watch out for news of the first flush!*

Parish office – Tel 01865 245879, E mail – [frwilkinson@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:frwilkinson@ukonline.co.uk),

Web address - [www.acny.org.uk/468](http://www.acny.org.uk/468)

(Fr James Wilkinson)

## **South Hinksey Parish Council**

At the December meeting of the Council a good attendance of villagers conveyed concerns on the planning application for the General Elliott to create eight rooms to let and a larger restaurant. The council discussed all concerns and relayed the most important to the VWH District Council. These included support for the pub owner's proposals to reopen but to relook at excessive size, overlooking, transport generation and access difficulties. It is believed the Environment Agency and the Highways department have objected on flooding and access grounds respectively so future planning applications will be needed.

Other matters discussed included the finalisation of contracts to use the field at the rear of the village hall for periodic events, and a right for the council to look after and use the area of the old General Elliott car park. The roadside weeds were cleared in the village area before the snow arrived and promises for road and pavement repairs have also been obtained from the County Council.

A proposed new car park to be accessed off Parker Road is being investigated with owners of Church Close, the Oxford City Council and land tenants. The council have also decided to take positive action to improve the drainage arrangements at the top of Manor Road and estimates for remedial work are being obtained.

Last but not least the council intend to apply for a reduced precept this year to reduce local council tax given that current funds are in a very healthy state.

For information on these or any other issues please feel free to contact our clerk, Sheridan Edward, or any of our five councillors listed on the notice boards at the top of Hinksey Hill and at the Village Hall. (Clive Briffett)

## **Letter to the Editor on the General Elliot Planning Application**

Dear Editor,

We are surprised and disappointed that the Vale Brewery's planning application to redevelop the pub has been rejected on several grounds\*. This seems to us to be a poor decision as it both removes an important amenity and is contrary to the opinion of many in the village.

We don't yet know whether the brewery will appeal, reapply, or give up. We would like to get together everybody interested, to support the brewery should they decide to press on.

**If you'd like to join in a campaign to try to help the brewery save the pub please contact any of us as soon as possible.**

Yours sincerely,

Peter and David Rawcliffe	735288	<a href="mailto:rawcy@btinternet.com">rawcy@btinternet.com</a>
Jo and Linda Slater	739183	<a href="mailto:lindas.oxcab@googlemail.com">lindas.oxcab@googlemail.com</a>
Adrian and Carolyn Porter	735210	<a href="mailto:aporter@rm.com">aporter@rm.com</a>
Matthew and Vicky Frohn	736899	<a href="mailto:matthew@oxfordtechnology.com">matthew@oxfordtechnology.com</a> ;

\*For more information on the reasons for the decision, see the Vale website:

[www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk) The reference number is SHI/11845/5-X.

## **Book Club visit**

We thought we knew Oxford, but a visit to the secret parts of the Bodleian Library in October made us revise our ideas. Our knowledgeable guide furnished just the right amount of information as she walked us round the Divinity School, Convocation House, and the magnificent Duke Humphrey's library, then to the Radcliffe Camera and down into the tunnel connecting with the New Bodleian on the far side of Broad Street. The stock of literally millions of books is constantly growing, and storage space is limited. Below the Radcliffe Camera we peered down at several underground levels filled with moveable stacks while under Broad Street we admired the creaking conveyor belt bearing books to the

various reading rooms. No wonder the university has had to resort to a building a new Depository building in Swindon. Thank you to Barbara Jeffrey for arranging this tour.

## **Kennington Health Centre**

**Dr. Verjee:** We will soon be closing our Book of Condolence at the Health Centre for Dr. Verjee and giving it to his family. If you would like to write in it, please come in as soon as you can. Also his fund will soon be closing, and we will be planting a tree in his memory near the Health Centre.

Our extended hours for February and March are:

### **FEBRUARY**

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February until 8.15pm  
Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> February until 8.15pm  
Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> Feb 8.30-11.45am  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February 8.30-11.45am  
Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> February until 8.15pm  
Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> February until 8.15pm

### **MARCH**

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March until 8.15pm  
Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> March until 8.15pm  
Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March 8.30-11.45am  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March 8.30-11.45am  
Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> March until 8.15pm  
Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> March until 8.15pm

**At all other times we will be open as usual 8.30-1pm, 2-6.30pm  
Please ring 01865 730911 for an appointment.**

## **Nature's Niche**

It is amazing to think that we celebrated the start of the millennium ten years ago. It seems only yesterday when the London Thames line of fire fizzled out and the wobbly bridge nearly buckled. Time of course waits for no man and nor do tides and floods and thinking we can tame nature is a false and uneconomic pursuit. Man's influence on nature has however caused substantial negative impacts through adverse developments but also remarkably positive improvements through active nature conservation. To meet my New Year resolution of taking a more optimistic outlook on life I would like to suggest parish projects that would greatly enhance habitat biodiversity, improve more wildlife occurrence and enable us all to gain access to and enjoy the natural environment on our doorstep.

- Work has already started on creating more boarded walkways in the Hinksey Heights Nature Park wood and new hides are to be provided close to the ponds. This work, supervised by Naomi Crawford with students of the Oxford Academy, represents a major contribution by volunteers that we can all admire and perhaps participate in. Do visit the wood through the golf course club premises in the early spring to record the returning reed and sedge warblers and hopefully the increasingly rare cuckoo.
- The community woodland at Chilswell Path is now growing well and should start to attract more wildlife as the trees and hedgerow plants mature. The creation of a flower meadow on this site may be possible to attract more butterflies and if you are interested in helping then please let me know.
- More areas of parish land could be wooded or hedged; there is a suggestion that we might have a long wide hedge on the side of the upward sloping footpath leading to Chilswell Nature Reserve. This is on Parish Council land and your help is needed to support such a project and bring it to fruition.
- We have been monitoring many ponds in the parish recently and due to their major contribution to biodiversity more are proposed e.g. in the community woodland, the grassland site adjoining Chilswell NR footpath and in meadow land adjoining Devils Backbone. If you know of any other suitable sites, even within your own garden, we can ask the Pond Conservation Trust to do a free inspection to assess potentiality.
- Field margins left for wildlife habitation are excellent buffers to hedgerow boundaries, assist in filtering farmland run off of fertilisers and pesticides and create wider green corridors for wildlife to migrate and breed. Such a margin has been established to the north side of the long sloping field running parallel to the golf course at Chilswell and bird and butterfly occurrence in this area is impressive and well worth a visit. It also acts as a circular path returning through the community woodland after a visit to the reserve.
- Our draft conservation strategy included a landscape bridge over the A34 just for wildlife to use to ameliorate the disastrous fragmentation that took place when the road was constructed. In those days no thought was given to possible provision of pipe runs for deer or badgers runs or flyovers to permit continued connection under. Sadly, road kills along the slip roads includes polecat, badger, deer and fox.

In order to save the natural wildlife and enable our future generations to enjoy open, accessible and attractive natural environments we have to achieve sustainability plus. I am convinced this is within our power to do, but then my New Year resolution forces me to make such a positive conclusion!

(Clive Briffett c.briffett@btopenworld.com Tel 01865 327161)

## **Had enough playing in the snow?.....try these local events**

**The Northmoor Trust:** Throughout the spring they are running a series of workshops on Hurdle weaving (13<sup>th</sup> Feb), Landscape Photography (20<sup>th</sup> Feb), Advanced Hedge Laying (27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> Feb) Basket weaving (14<sup>th</sup> March) and Lambing weekends (20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> March)

Contact the Trust for information / booking requirements 01865–407792 or [www.northmoortrust.co.uk](http://www.northmoortrust.co.uk).

**“Science in a new light”:** A temporary exhibition bringing together the work of local artists and community groups in an exhibition featuring stunning textiles, photography, and sculptures using reclaimed materials. The North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Summertown OX2 7NN on from 11<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> January 11 am. – 4 pm. Free admission [www.diamond.ac.uk](http://www.diamond.ac.uk)

**Discover Oxford and Oxfordshire:** Join the Vale District Council in Oxford's Town Hall on Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> February to find out about what is on offer in the Vale and across Oxfordshire. This event will help you make plans for your weekends and leisure time providing information on attractions, events and activities for everyone. 10.30am -3.30pm, Tel: 01865 252200

**Salsa anyone?** Kate Gresswell would like to know who would be interested in doing a 6 week Salsa Dancing class in the village hall. The teacher would need a minimum of 20 people to start the class and the times would be in the evening. If you are interested, or just like to know more, please could you e-mail her at [gressers1972@sky.com](mailto:gressers1972@sky.com)

### **Help in the Cold Weather**

Other than visiting vulnerable neighbours, make them aware of the county council support line - 0845 050 7666 or email address [access@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:access@oxfordshire.gov.uk) and if you think people need specific help with heating, food or medical issues, please contact the county council, as above, and let them know. Remember, sometimes just a simple phone call can do a lot to reassure people who may be anxious or lonely.

### **Summer Fetes – old and new**

The summer fete raised almost £250. These funds will be used to help set up and run next year's Summer Fete. This will again be held in late summer – probably the weekend of September 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>. The meeting to discuss it is now rescheduled for **Tuesday 26th January** at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall (doors open 7.15).

The book sale raised over £100 for the Village Hall funds.

### **News and ideas please!**

If you have contribution for *The Echo*, or would like to join our team (especially if you are from the Hill), we would love to hear from you. Just contact the editor:

[echoeditor@southhinksey.org](mailto:echoeditor@southhinksey.org)