

# **Finstock News 123**

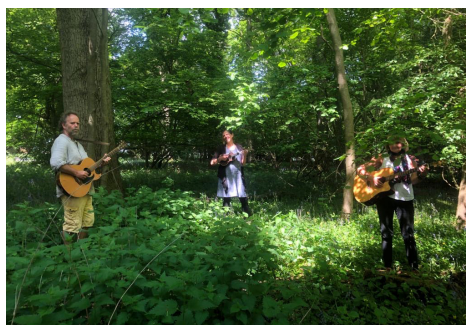
Serving Finstock, Fowler, Wilcote, Mt. Skippett and Finstock Heath

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**W**e talk of 2020 vision and now we are experiencing the year 2020 with a new vision of our future. That foreseeable future would seem to consist of new ways to shop, new ways to enjoy our leisure and new ways to greet one another. Unfortunately, there are still restrictions on activities that we share with others. Wearing masks and avoiding touching is new but necessary.

It must be said that the sight of plane contrails and the noise and pollution that accompany them have not been missed. In fact, the blue skies and quiet roads have been a salve to our new confinement. We are more likely to have enjoyed nature and appreciated the green land, and the birds, bees and butterflies that call our gardens, woods and heaths their home.

The following article – **Unnamed – Lost for Good**, might remind you of the importance of our green land.



## **Unnamed – Lost for Good**

A Lament for the ancient woodlands being sacrificed for HS2

Oxfordshire folk musicians have just recorded a beautiful new folk song entitled *Unnamed* in isolation during the lockdown using their mobile phones and getting the tracks mixed

and produced by a friend in Scotland. (Photo of the band by Alex Smith; Left to right: Richard Fox, Laura Middleton, Rachel Fox (no relation).

The song is a heartfelt lament about the ancient woodlands being destroyed to make way for the HS2 railway. Laura Middleton from Eynsham was researching the destruction of at least 108 irreplaceable woodlands for the controversial and vastly expensive construction project when she was struck by the poignancy of the list of their names. She also noticed there were a number of woods that were unnamed. Heartbroken at the thought that these ancient woodlands will be

lost for good she began to sing their names and a haunting lament emerged.

Rachel sent a recording of the song to her friend Helen Graham in Edinburgh (originally from Stonesfield). Helen replied that she thought it was a beautiful song and should be shared online, convinced that people would want to hear it and to have the chance to sing the lament themselves. It would also be a way to help draw attention to this wanton destruction and to support the people who were giving their time to protest in the woodlands. The result can be heard on this link: **www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpvvYQ55iSzs**

## **An Update From Finstock School**

It has been a very busy term at Finstock School. Since June, groups of children have been welcomed back to the Finstock School site for face to face teaching. It has been great to see (and hear) life returning to the school. But this has not been the only activity going on. At the same time as running lessons on site, Finstock staff have been preparing online lessons for those unable to attend and providing a childcare service alongside our sister school, Queen Emma's in Witney. I want to thank all the staff for the huge amounts of energy, passion and determination they have shown in providing brilliant education at such a difficult time.

Finstock School will be opening its doors on September 3rd for the start of the Autumn term. The school will be open but it won't quite be school as we know it. The Government has recently issued advice for full school opening, stating, 'given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school'. Continued on page 11.



# VILLAGE EVENTS



**THANK YOU!** *The donations of bras and plastic milk tops for two great charities have been amazing.*

## Bottle caps raise funds

Your soft plastic bottle tops can be donated to me to help raise funds for The Gift of Sight. We collect only milk bottle tops; that is, blue, green, orange, yellow and red variety. We cannot accept anything else. Please drop your milk bottle tops off at 63 High Street, Finstock. Joy Murphy

## Ladies, give us your support!

Give all your unwanted old bras a new lease of life and help raise money for breast cancer research. Bring them to Joy Murphy at 63 High Street. Against Breast Cancer will receive a donation based on the weight of bras we collect, so every bra counts!

**Wychwood Forest Fair** - There will not be a Forest Fair for 2020 for obvious reasons.

## Ramsden Tennis Club

The membership renewal date was July 1st and it seems tennis, being one of the last sports to close during lockdown has become one of the first to open again. We have 95 members and also run a thriving social side -- .once the restrictions have finished!

The village court is getting very booked as it is another opportunity to exercise at this time. A new booking system has been introduced and if you feel a need to play please contact Sue Tucker on 868722 or Tim Mayhew on 868793. You can contact either Sue or Tim for a form or download a membership form from the Ramsden village website and send it to Park Cottage, Lower End, Ramsden. Annual subscriptions are £40 adults, £20 juniors under 18 and £100 families.

**Blenheim Palace Christmas Lights Trail** November 20th-January 3rd.

## The Plough Finstock

*A huge thank you goes to everyone who has supported us during the Covid-19 lockdown by ordering takeaways. This was crucial to our survival and we are very grateful.*



backroom) plus the outside tables. Booking is essential.


The Fish-n-Chips two-for-one special will continue for those eating at the restaurant, as will the steak night special. Inside you will find a freshly painted pub, new umbrellas outside and a new water feature on the patio. All Safety Protocols required for compliance with government Covid-19 rules include marked traffic flows to follow, hand sanitizer at the doors, no one will be able to drink standing at the bar and you will be required to check-in for NHS Test and Trace. Test and trace can be handled by smart phone by clicking on a link or it can be done by simply telling the bar staff.

The takeaway menu will now include the full pub menu with the exception of starters; you can now have a dessert! You can also take away wine or a draught beer in a pint container.

Please see the boards in front of the pub for specials and visit [www.theplough-inn.co.uk](http://www.theplough-inn.co.uk) or Tel: 868333.

**Welcome back!**

Guy, Jordan and the Plough Team



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## **Finstock Village Hall**

Village Halls – they were recently described as places “where great human events happen.” And the question on everyone’s lips is “when are we going to get our own events back in Finstock?” Sadly, there’s no easy answer. Emergence from lockdown can appear slow, confusing, illogical, haphazard, or too fast, depending on your perspective. At the start of July, the legal position was that Halls may start to reopen, providing a full COVID risk assessment has been carried out, including provision of materials, signage and other investments designed to ensure that risk of exposure is prevented.

There is also a long list of “non-permissible events” which cannot yet take place. These include any singing, any exercise (including what they describe as “soft exercise”, such as Yoga or meditation), dancing, indoor sports, gatherings of more than six people from different family groups, which pretty well accounts for most of our regular clubs, parties and other users. The Craft Club should be fine, provided they don’t break into song while sewing, and the History Society could meet, as long as they don’t attempt to restage any famous land battles.

This is a fast changing situation. However, armed with the information available in early July, the Trustees assessed the steps necessary to reopen the Hall. Our preference is to wait until there is a clear green light for our normal activities to resume. We’ll use the continuing lockdown to improve the functionality of our crowded storage room and ensure everything is in place for user safety. When a realistic date for reopening becomes clear, we will be consulting with all our regular user groups on an individual basis to understand their wishes and explain new safety practices, and we’ll communicate on village websites when we have concrete information to give you. In the meantime – we share your frustration.

*Rod Ireland*

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## **Craft Club**

Finstock Craft Club has remained connected through social media but it’s clear that like everyone else, everywhere, we can’t wait to be with our friends, neighbours and families. We all hope it will be soon but until then, the emphasis on taking care of ourselves and keeping safe is more important than ever.

When Craft Club returns to the village hall, we will meet as usual, on Monday evenings at 7.30pm. All welcome. Email [rosacharlesworth@icloud.com](mailto:rosacharlesworth@icloud.com) if you have any questions.

*Rosa Charlesworth*

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## **Girl Guides**

Rainbows have been super busy completing their mermaid badges at home. They have baked treats, crafted, learnt sign language and they even snuck in a virtual trip to the national marine aquarium. We are super proud of how the girls have adjusted to our new way of meeting in these challenging times.

All rainbow, brownies and guide units have plenty of interest badges they can be working towards at home and hopefully we will be back soon when girl guiding HQ deem it safe for girls.

We are still looking for volunteers to help our units remain open once we get back to physical meetings. If you would like to help, please contact Sian or Kim on the emails below.



All sections meet on a Wednesday. If your child is interested in joining please email the below contact depending on age:

Rainbows - for girls aged 5 to 7 years

Contact for Rainbows is Sian - [finstock-rainbows@outlook.com](mailto:finstock-rainbows@outlook.com)

Brownies -for girls aged 7 to 10 years. Guides - for girls aged 10 to 14 years

Contact for Brownies and Guides is Kim - [Kimberley.lovelock@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Kimberley.lovelock@yahoo.co.uk)

**Tour de France 2020**  
**Saturday August 29th to September 20th**  
<https://www.letour.fr/en>

The Tour de France 2020 will follow the route from Nice to Paris. The women’s event, La Course by le Tour de France avec FDJ, has been postponed to a date that is still to be determined, but it will take place during the Tour de France 2020. Equally, the 30th edition of the Etape du Tour cyclosporive will also be postponed to a date yet to be determined.



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## Letters to the Editor:

Finstock Halt has been without service for some time due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Mike Breakell, as a member of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group (CLPG) has been asked to find out if any Finstock users have views on this. You can contact him with your views on 868201 or [mjbreakell@aol.com](mailto:mjbreakell@aol.com).

There is one other outstanding issue at Finstock Halt; the shelter mysteriously disappeared many months ago. Mike has raised this issue with CLPG, the Parish Council, and the rail operator Great Western, with nothing new to report from any source. CLPG is keen to re- invigorate services to the Halt as soon as possible and would like to add a Saturday shopper service to and from Oxford too! Does anyone know anything more about the Halt shelter's disappearance?

## The Comfort of Books

A big thank you to Joy and Nick Murphy for providing Finstock with a Lending Library. In these difficult times this has been a sanity-saver for those of us unable or unwilling to "go on-line", (as instructed) for entertainment and information. So a 'proper book' with paper pages is a real comfort and a pleasant escape. It has also revealed the breadth of interests we have in the village; we read instructive manuals, marshmallow rom-coms, dark fantasies, fast-paced thrillers, brain-cudgelling whodunits and silly laugh-out-loud nonsense; it's such fun to try out books we'd never normally give shelf room to and sometimes to find ourselves converted so we're all grateful to our imaginative 'librarians' and to each other for sharing our books.

*Barbara Pensom*



**A thank you from the community** for the thoughtful provision of lending library and introducing us to new authors at this difficult time - Also worthy recipient of prestigious RBBA Award for Architectural Innovation by local Rabbit Buildings and Burrows Association.

*Bagseye FirstDibs, Chairman*

## News from the Parish Council

The PC has been meeting via Zoom which has worked well. Any members of the public who wish to attend are very welcome. Contact the Clerk for the relevant code. It is very straightforward.

Sadly, we have had further reports of dog poo on the track leading up from the Plough. This is the third incident in the recent past. It is totally irresponsible and anti-social behaviour for dog owners not to clear up effectively. Bins and warning signs have been put in place and yet, this kind of behaviour persists. If this does not cease, the PC will be forced to explore the possible deploying of surveillance cameras. This will be a last resort which should be avoided if everyone is sensible. Do remember there are significant fines for dog fouling and WODC will prosecute.

Some better news is the re-opening of the Adventure Playground on July 4th. Follow the commonsense instructions at the site and all will be well.

The PC has made a grant of £450 to the Village Shop to improve storage and provide a bench outside. The Shop has proved to be very valuable to us all over the past months. Do continue your support to ensure its long term future.

As life begins to slowly return to some sort of normality, the PC wishes everyone a happy and fun summer.

Hywel Davies on behalf of the Parish Council

## THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Kay Connolly	868561	Member
Lesley Dore	868280	Distribution
Tony Hirstenstein	868600	Member
Joy Murphy	868575	Editor

[joy.nick@gmail.com](mailto:joy.nick@gmail.com)

Nick Murphy	868575	Member
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Barbara Wells	868776	Member

Photographs thanks to staff members and others. Read the *Finstock News* online at [www.finstock.org.uk](http://www.finstock.org.uk); or write to us at 63 High Street, Finstock Oxon OX7 3DA.

### Plan ahead – Know the deadlines

Issue	Deadline
Feb/Mar	First of January
April/May	First of March
June/July	First of May
August/September	First of July
October/November	First of September
December/January	First of November

Please keep articles short. As space is limited, the Editors reserve the right to shorten long pieces in the interest of balance. *Finstock News* does not necessarily share the views expressed in readers' letters.

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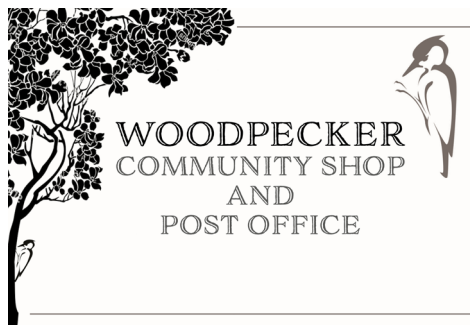
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## Woodpecker Community Shop and Post Office



Another enormous “thank you” to our community for your continued support of the Shop. As we emerge from lockdown, we’re very grateful to each of our customers. Now that the Shop’s future is not in imminent peril, we’ve been able to spend more time focusing on how we move forward. You may have noticed that the giant chasm in the car park has disappeared. We have laid gravel traps at the points where cars turn, and this seems to have solved the problem.

We’ve also been very excited to be able to offer customers the chance to buy a copy of a book, *Tales of Wychwood*, which is a magical fantasy novel by an American author, Daniel Eckhart. This must be the first time that Finstock has featured as the central location in a novel. Dan draws on his experiences from his visits here to chronicle the close and sometimes unnerving relationship between our village and the forest that looms on its edge. You’ll recognise many of the references – local places, features of the forest, and village characters, including the manager of the Village Shop and Post Office, who “felt herself the village guardian, keeping an eye on everything and everyone”. Dan donated the books, so all funds have gone directly to help keep the Shop afloat.

We have also been fortunate to benefit from the generosity of the Parish Council, who have given us a grant to enable the purchase of some storage cabinets and some benches so that those queuing to enter the shop have somewhere a little more comfortable to wait and as we enjoy some balmy summer days, may be a place to unwind over an ice cream or some other treat. Our next steps include cleaning up the forecourt and getting rid of the ancient shelter which always seems in danger of collapse. Perhaps smartening-up will deter the person who left their rubbish in our car park for us to dispose of. Fly-tipping hits Finstock!

At the time of writing, we are looking at extending the opening hours. Karen still has to work without the support of volunteers, but with fewer people now

sheltering, commitment to deliveries is not so great. Current core opening hours are listed below, but please check the Shop website or Facebook page because these will change over the coming weeks. Visit us on Facebook @ woodpeckercommunityshopfinstock; [www.finstock.org.uk/village-shop](http://www.finstock.org.uk/village-shop).

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 8.30am – 3.30pm  
Tuesday Main delivery day 8.30am – 1.30pm  
Saturday 9am – 1pm

Post Office Monday – Friday 9am – 1pm  
Last acceptance time for postage 12noon

***Reasoning will never make a Man correct an ill Opinion, which by Reasoning he never acquired.***  
Jonathan Swift

## Charlbury Medical Centre

***The Medical Centre wishes to thank patients for their support*** of the new ways of working and their understanding during the pandemic. Look out for information from the Practice and the patient group on the Charlbury Town Website under “News”, or from the patient group under Community: Health and Wellbeing.

**Easy Read guidance on Covid-19:** Oxford Health NHS Trust’s Learning Disability Service has created accessible easy-read guidance on Covid-19. This is written in clear English with good diagrams, including information on all sorts of health issues. See: [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/learning-disability-service/useful-stuff](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/learning-disability-service/useful-stuff).

***Don’t forget you can view Finstock news online at [finstock.org.uk/the-finstock-news](http://finstock.org.uk/the-finstock-news).***

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# COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION

*For everything that lives is holy, life delights in life... William Blake*

## Is Giant Hogweed Coming Back?



**DANGER!** Giant Hogweed is a plant that can be mistaken as cow parsley. It can make you go to hospital and can even make you blind if you touch it and rub your eyes. This is because of its sap. If it gets on to your skin and the skin gets exposed to the sunlight it forms into a blister.

What can you do if you get sap on you? Put a cloth or a shirt over it if outside. Go home and rinse with mild soap and cool water to get the sap off. If blisters appear, go to hospital.

Hogweed can be found in gardens, woodlands and riverside. We have found some near Finstock on our dog walks so beware!

By R Findlay-Ashfield, Aged 9.

## The A-Z of Food Storage [lovefoodhatewaste.com/article/food-storage-a-z](http://lovefoodhatewaste.com/article/food-storage-a-z)

From apples to yoghurt, you can find where to store your food item, whether or not to freeze the item, how to keep it fresh for longer and using your item up. According to the site, eggs are best kept in the fridge. Bananas and uncooked pineapple should live in the

fruit bowl, but most other fresh fruit and vegetables can be given an extended shelf life by being refrigerated. Just be sure, they suggest, to bring them back up to room temperature before cooking or eating to increase the flavour.

## Residents urged not to contaminate recycling bins

Residents are being reminded to check what they are placing in their recycling bins as contamination is increasing. Recycling crews will be checking bins and any containing incorrect items will not be emptied. It will then be the householder's responsibility to remove the contamination before the next collection. Anyone requiring guidance on what can be recycled and which bin to use should see:

[www.westoxon.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/what-to-put-in-your-bin](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/what-to-put-in-your-bin)

## Wild Oxfordshire

Nature continues to face an uncertain future, with many birds, butterflies, flowers and other wildlife disappearing from Oxfordshire's countryside at an alarming rate. Nature can bounce back given a chance. Experts from around the county are developing a Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire. <https://tinyurl.com/y928qu7e>.

## Nature recording for your village

Benson Nature Group has turned their attention to encouraging more people to record their local wildlife. They have produced a brilliant YouTube video on dipping a toe into biological recording: [https://youtu.be/J2f\\_SPpXuM/](https://youtu.be/J2f_SPpXuM/)

## Earth Trust

Earth Trust is your local champion of accessible, biodiversity rich, green spaces as well as being guardian to iconic local landscapes such as the Wittenham Clumps. Our income has been gravely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and we are asking everyone who appreciates beautiful and bountiful green spaces and values the work we do to act now to help us. Any amount at all would be so appreciated as we struggle to bridge the impact of COVID19. Please visit our website to make a donation or consider becoming a Friend from just £24 a year. <https://earthtrust.org.uk/support-us/donate>.

## What's that Bumblebee App?

Andy Benson's simple video tutorial on how to use the app to identify bumblebees. <http://ow.ly/61W250Am4KP>

## Butterfly ID for beginners

[www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk)

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## Live Music

With the recent reopening of pubs and restaurants, thoughts may well shift towards the gradual return of live music. At time of writing, government guidelines don't yet permit live performances, apparently due to the increased possibility of 'aerosol' transmission of the virus between performers and audience.

The live entertainment industry is going to have one of the hardest jobs of all to recover from the effects of the pandemic. Even when performances are permitted venues will likely be subject to limited capacity and limited revenues as a result. Certain venues are proposing initial workarounds including some that may have longer term

potential (such as two performances per night) and some that may not (such as raising ticket prices). Venues like pubs that don't charge an entry fee will likely be less inclined to pay the going rate for live music as their other income streams will be diminished.

If live performances restart in the coming months we may see a flurry of smaller outdoor shows and festivals as promoters and acts look to capitalise on the desire for live music. But economic troubles will impact on this long-term, and promoters who have rescheduled festivals for summer 2021 will already be wondering how much uptake they will get.

Even when social distancing ends it will be tough for venues to bring the crowds back as they previously were – media coverage of the pandemic has depicted busy, enclosed spaces and crowds in general as dangerous settings to be avoided. However, online shows from venues have potential (providing streaming quality can be maintained) and there are ways to entice punters back. Most importantly, musicians and the industry are learning to adapt. There will be no shortage of effort to bring live music back, whenever the green light may be given.

**Ags Connolly**

## FINSTOCK UNPLUGGED - ONLINE!

Yes, still online! I am glad to say that our sessions in May and June continued to be well attended despite the obvious limitations imposed by Zooming. In May the reception was problematic at times and at one point the host was even briefly excluded from her own meeting, just when she was settling down to hear some virtuoso mandola playing from one of our attendees, but fortunately I was permitted to return in time to introduce the next performance.

As in our earlier Zoom meetings, some newcomers joined our ranks. In May we were lucky enough to welcome Jane and Colin, two-thirds of the Owl Light Trio, to our session. Some readers may remember that the Owl Light Trio (<https://www.owllighttrio.com/>) gave an excellent performance in a 'pop up' folk concert in Finstock Village Hall a couple of years ago. It was a treat to hear them in our Zoom session and we hope that they may visit us again, perhaps when we are back at The Plough. In the same session we were also delighted that Lara Linette, an American singer-songwriter, was able to join us from El Paso, Texas, via Zoom. She introduced some powerful, precisely observed songs into the mix.

In June, our meeting enjoyed better bandwidth and we had a quite mellow

session. There was an interesting combination of traditional and modern, including good original songs from at least three of our attendees. There were also further additions to the range of instruments on offer – this month we heard performances accompanied by concertina and accordion as well as the more usual guitar, fiddle and keyboard. As for traditional folk music - John G. solved the perennial problem of the lengthy narrative ballad brilliantly – by dividing it into two halves! He left us on a cliff-hanger at the end of the first half of the programme, and then completed the story for us at the end of the second

half. It was a very successful approach and indeed rounded off the evening very entertainingly.

Next month – who knows – if the weather holds, we may be able to meet outdoors at The Plough. Here's hoping!

**Ginnie Redston**

**Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.**

Harriet Tubman, abolitionist and political activist born a slave in 19th century America.

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## County Councillor Report

As we emerge from the lockdown, the challenge that faces the County Council is to make sure that people can move around safely. This includes being able to walk and cycle around town centres while maintaining social distancing. As a way of enabling this, the centre of Witney has been made traffic free, and I have had conversations with several people who say how much they enjoy the lower noise levels and the cleaner air.

The County Council made a bid for £600,000 from the Government last month to assist their Active Travel programme intended to widen pavements, calm traffic, provide cycle paths across the county, and cut emissions from cars in our town centres. However, they failed in their bid and were only given half what they requested. Councillors were asked for their views on what was needed in their wards but much of this appears to have been ignored.

Oxfordshire's bid included spending on repainting lines and trimming verges, rather than providing new infrastructure, and this was rejected by the ministry. Now the County is proposing to spend £300,000 from their own budget on something which they should have been doing all along! This is extremely disappointing but also begs the question as to why, when we

ask for these things to be done, we are often told there isn't the money to do them.

Recently, I am pleased to have been able to use my Councillor Priority Fund to help our local community through this difficult time. I have donated to Charlbury Community Centre to make sure that they have the staff to manage their programme which includes helping with shopping for people who are shielding and I have also donated towards the Give and Take food bank in the town. Most recently I have made a donation towards the final stages of building the new pavilion for the Football and Social Club. If there is anything that I can help with in Finstock, please do get in touch, as I want to be able to use my Priority Fund to full advantage.

As I write we have yet to see what the effect of opening bars and restaurants may have, but our local shops have been managing well. There has been an upsurge in the number of people using local shops and I hope that this will continue as people recognise how convenient our local shops are. Meanwhile as the lockdown continues, I send you all my best wishes and hope that you remain safe and well.

Best regards, Liz Leffman  
[liz.leffman@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:liz.leffman@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
01608 810153  
07741 073088

## District Councillor Report

Dear Residents,

I have been busy working cross-party to support the efforts of West Oxfordshire District Council in response to the pandemic. We hold weekly meetings together to ensure our businesses receive grants or loans, ensuring the systems are in place to handle your calls and those that need help with shopping, prescriptions, and the like. The homeless are in emergency accommodation and the next priority is ensuring they are more permanently supported so we can look to the day when there are no homeless in West Oxfordshire.

Whilst we all look forward to some kind of normality, we need to all keep safe and just as much keep everyone safe. What the government says sometimes is confusing and there are mixed messages, so you have to be extra vigilant in knowing what to do and where to go and who to mix with. If in doubt, I always say DON'T!

We have to use our own common sense even when there appears to be a lack of it.

Supporting our business and traders and the self-employed should be recognised and we can help by buying local, contracting local skilled workers, and supporting our cafes, pubs and restaurants.

There are more difficult times ahead and I want you to know that there is always somebody there to advise or give support. As one of your councillors, you can contact me! That is my duty and my vocation to support the residents of Finstock, Fawler, Wilcote, Mt. Skippett and Finstock Heath in any way I can.

My kindest regards to you all  
Cllr Andy Graham  
07908832632 or  
[andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk)

***If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Power concedes nothing without demand.***  
Frederick Douglass

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## Robert Courts Report

It has now been nearly three months since the Government began to take the unprecedented steps to impose a 'lockdown' on the UK in response to coronavirus. I know it has been very difficult, and a very long time to be separated from family, friends and the community. I know it is uncomfortable to endure the limits on your freedom. I hear you and I would like to thank every reader for everything you have been doing to help our collective response to this public health emergency, be that volunteering, working, or just staying at home.

It is thanks to everyone like you that we can now look to beginning down the path to re-opening the country. The Government has now sketched

out a road map for carefully lifting the restrictions in a phased, managed approach. The plan is conditional on sustained falls in the death rate and considerable falls in the rate of infection. Our scientific experts will be monitoring the data closely at every step and restrictions will only be lifted once the evidence shows that it is safe to do so.

Over the past week I have seen for myself how businesses and shops on high streets across the constituency have taken measures to protect the public while re-opening their doors to serve the community. I would certainly recommend, if you are able, you visit your local shops once again and help to re-start our local economy.

*Robert Courts, MP*

## Organ Donation

[www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)

The Organ donation law in England changed on May 20th this year to an 'opt out' system. Organ and tissue donation is the act of giving your organs and/or tissues to help save or improve the lives of others when you die. One organ donor can save or transform the lives of up to nine people. All adults in England will be considered to have agreed to be an organ donor when they die unless they have recorded a decision not to donate or are in one of the excluded groups. If you would like to speak to somebody about your choices, please call the dedicated phone line: 0300 303 2094 Monday – Friday: 8am - 8pm; Saturday and Sunday: 8am - 4pm

Everyone should: [www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register-your-decision](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/register-your-decision)

1. Record your organ donation decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register
2. Tell your family and friends what you have decided

## New Telephone System at Charlbury Medical Centre

The new telephone system installed at Charlbury Medical Centre uses internet technology. When a call is answered your phone number is recognised by the system and automatically linked to our patient record. This helps the receptionist to swiftly identify the caller and answer the caller's query or make an appointment for them. If the number is not recognised, the receptionist will make a note of the number on the patient record, so the number is recognised from then on. If possible, please avoid phoning the Practice on Monday morning, its busiest time.

Please do not use this email as it is not checked frequently. If you wish to have an e-consultation, please use econsult. At the time of writing, July 12th, you will find the link to e-consult on the home page of [www.thecharlburymedicalcentre.nhs.uk](http://www.thecharlburymedicalcentre.nhs.uk) below the writing in red. The name of the provider of e-consultations may have changed by the time of publication, please check the website for details.



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## Bird Aid doubles the number of farmland bird feeding sites in West Oxfordshire



If you've come along to the Finstock Bird Aid, a West Oxfordshire charity that feeds farmland birds during the 'hunger gap' has doubled the number of feeding sites from 11 to 22 in the last year. The charity's success is thanks to a passionate and growing band of over 40 volunteers who hand feed the birds daily from November to May, and local farmers providing new sites including ones in Finstock and Wilcote. Storage is provided by Dave Holloway. Over one tonne of wheat donated by Michael Green and all the volunteers who survey monthly from December to March. A huge thank you everyone.

Farmland bird populations have declined by almost half since 1970, due to a variety of factors, including changes in farming practices. Bird Aid would welcome more volunteers to help with feeding and surveying the birds at the new Finstock and Wilcote sites. If you can help, please contact Jo Gomm at [gommdevelopements@gmail.com](mailto:gommdevelopements@gmail.com). If you are interested in helping to coordinate parts of the project such as surveying, please contact: [judy.anders66@gmail.com](mailto:judy.anders66@gmail.com)

### The importance of pollinators

Our gardens can be home to a huge number of invertebrate species and one of the best ways to help them is to provide suitable plants. Bees, butterflies, moths, flies and beetles, amongst others will gather nectar or pollen, and some (such as butterflies) have larval stages which feed on leaves. The plants themselves also provide homes for these animals in a variety of ways. The insects are

important food for birds, reptiles, mammals and amphibians. Native plants can be particularly beneficial for some species. If you would like to find out more about the research being done in this area, take a look at this article from our Bird Table magazine. <https://tinyurl.com/y8oc8at5> (BTO the British Trust for Ornithology)

### The Hotbin

The Hotbin is a heavily insulated container into which all kinds of organic waste (including meat and cooked food) can be put to make compost in a short time: 30 days for mulch compost, 60-90 days for pure compost. It has a lid at the top for inserting weeds and other stuff, and a removable flap at the front for removing the compost. It is about the size of a wheelie bin.

Simply add waste to the Hotbin mixed with chipped wood for aeration and shredded paper to balance the moisture. It comes with two thermometers; the first measures the outside temperature, the second the temperature inside. Adding the right ingredients will make the internal heat go up dramatically, as high as 60°C!

In my case, the compost left for two months over winter was perfect when dug out; whereas the stuff I dug out after a month and a half, desperate to see results, is still not fully composted.

You are likely to see red worms ('brandling' worms) in the Hotbin. This is a very good sign! They devour all organic waste.

Tony Hirtenstein

**It is the 72nd birthday of the National Health Service this year.** Although it was celebrated with spectacular flair during the London Olympics, the Thursday night clapping and rainbows appearing everywhere showed how much we appreciate the hard work, long hours and many sacrifices that were made during this Covid-19 epidemic. We thank you all from the cleaners to the nurses and surgeons for your commitment.



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## The Royal Oak Ramsden is OPEN!



Additionally:

1. Every guest must book in, even if they only come for a drink. You can drop in and book in on the spot if there is availability. Please go to our website [www.royaloakramsden.com](http://www.royaloakramsden.com) or call 868213 to book.

2. You must enter through the front door (opposite the War Memorial) and observe our one-way system (clockwise around the bar).

3. We will do all we can to observe the guidelines, but in return, if you are feeling at all off-colour please make sure to stay at home! This will ensure we can run our pub safely and help protect our hard-working staff, fellow guests and community.

After a full renovation, we were thrilled to open our doors in mid-July. As everyone seems to agree, the newly refurbished Royal Oak looks incredible -- old, familiar and welcoming, but also new, fresh and exciting. We have some lovely new outside space with new areas of rain cover at the back, complete with an outdoor stove and twinkling lights at night.

You will find our food is very special thanks to our wonderful new chef Rob Marshall. We now have five beautiful new bedrooms available.

Safety is our primary concern. We have adopted new rules to fully comply with the Safety Protocols for Covid-19. These include restricted numbers, a strict booking policy, social distancing, a one-way system and stringent cleaning.

Subscribe to our newsletter on the website, or follow us on Instagram @royaloakramsden for the latest pictures, stories and general fun!

**We can't wait to see you - book now! (868213 or [royaloakramsden.com](http://royaloakramsden.com))**

Luke, Joseph and the whole Royal Oak Team

## Finstock School

(con't) from page 1

All children will be expected to return in September and the school is working hard to ensure the safety of children and staff. Measures are being introduced to prevent possible infection, through social distancing on site, rigorous cleaning and dividing the children into 'bubbles'. Changes are also being made to the curriculum and in the first term there won't be school trips, external visitors or whole school assemblies. There will also be a greater emphasis on outdoor learning which will be enabled by the exciting redevelopment of the school's outdoor learning area.

Behind the scenes this year and during lockdown the school has been busy planning the transformation of the outdoor area. The aim of this redevelopment is to enable learning inside the classroom to continue

outside the classroom, facilitating opportunity for our children to explore, experiment, discover, to be active and healthy, and to develop their physical capabilities. This new outdoor area will provide rich opportunities for the children's developing imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness. Work on the redevelopment will happen during the Summer Holidays in three stages, and hopefully all three stages will be completed ready for the next academic year.

We do have spaces for children at Finstock. If you would like your child to attend please do get in touch with the school through the website. [www.finstock.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.finstock.oxon.sch.uk).

Rob Barkworth  
Chair of Finstock School Local Committee



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## North Leigh Roman Villa

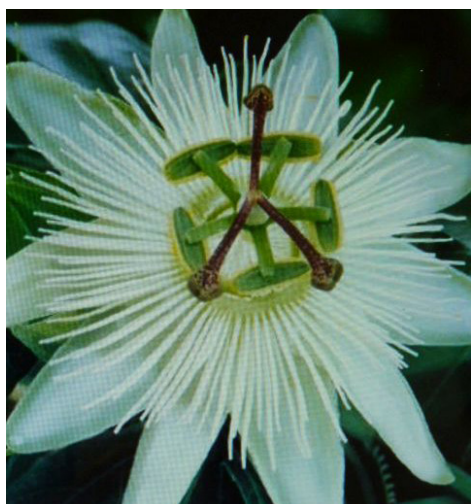


On two weekends in August - 8th and 9th; 22nd and 23rd and September: 12th and 13th. The mosaic house of North Leigh Roman Villa will re-open 11am to 5pm. These are Oxfordshire's only Roman mosaics still in their original location. To see the 3rd century AD mosaics, which are housed in an enclosed space, access will only be by timed ticket, available on the day, at the site. FREE ENTRY. <https://tinyurl.com/ybkjg8kz>.



## Taking a magical journey of flowering plants from Peru

Even in the recent period of isolation, I can travel to so many places by walking around the garden and thinking about the countries some of the plants come from, and those I would like to visit. For example, a plant with fine variegated foliage called Rock and Roll sporting flirtatious jewel-like blooms of a rich brick red, a new variety of the Lily of the Incas or Parrot Lily, which is better known as *Alstroemeria*. It was first discovered in the 18th century by the Swedish botanist Baron Von Alströmer who brought the seeds to Europe. Rock and Roll enjoys the front position in my herbaceous border and has been joined by the rich orange, purple and red flowered varieties. Just my sort of plants as they seem to be hardy and pest free.



The magical white flowers of the Passion flower *Constance Elliot* seem hardy, climbing our south facing wall. It reminds me of the *Passiflora caerulea* I planted at my mother's home in Somerset. It always produced a marvellous display of exotic snow white petals crowned with an explosion of purple filaments followed by inedible egg-shaped, orange passion fruits making a spectacular feature in late summer. It flowered for many years, but sadly died in the heavy snow of 1962. The star of the group must be the magnificent *Passiflora quadrangularis* with its dark red flowers, that I saw covering a gazebo in the warmth of the Tresco sun. *Passiflora* was discovered by the Spanish doctor, Monardes, in

Peru in 1569. Forty years later, it was introduced to Europe as an ornamental plant. Its medicinal use is helping with sleep problems, anxiety, and ADHD. The sweet-tart flavour of passion fruit is found in drinks, desserts, condiments, and even poultry glazes.

The Apple of Peru has light purple to bluebell shaped flowers and star shaped black fruits; mine came originally from a neighbour's garden. Its nickname is the Shoofly plant because it is used as a fly repellent. Sometimes it just appears in the garden from a bird seed mix.

Another extremely easy-to-grow plant is the Marvel of Peru (*Mirabilis*) which has the curious ability to have more than one different-coloured petunia like flower on the same plant. I remember using it as a good example of Mendelian inheritance. The flowers usually open from late afternoon or at dusk (namely between 4 and 8 o'clock), giving rise to the common name of 4 o'clock flower; it produces a strong, sweet-smelling fragrance throughout the night, to attract long tongued moths such as hawk moths for pollination.

Bon voyage on your journey around your garden.

*Robert Bigwood*

## National Open Garden Scheme

<https://ngs.org.uk>

**Book to visit a garden:** We are delighted that many of our gardens in England are now open. All visitors must pre-purchase tickets on our website for a timed slot at their garden of choice. All funds raised will go to the Help Support Our Nurses campaign.

**Virtual Garden Visits:** Although many gardens are now open, we know that many people enjoyed our Virtual Garden Visits. Even though we will not be adding new videos from the end of June, our library of nearly 200 garden videos will be constantly available here. And the Help Support our Nurses campaign continues to the end of the year so if you visit a garden or view a Virtual Garden Visit, do please consider a donation.

<https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits>



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