

Finstock News 95

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

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This year the village has generously supported the building of a new Village Hall. The village school has become an academy for children aged from three to eleven. Our village shop continues to thrive. The Plough continues to serve Finstock a warm welcome. We have much to be thankful for in our village and in our lives. *Peace on Earth, goodwill to all.*

NEW MEXICO – NEW HORIZONS

A quote from a local paper in the 1870s said it all. "Everything is quiet in Cimarron. Nobody has been killed in 3 days." New Mexico truly was the Wild West then. Not any more.

New Mexico is in the South West between Texas and Arizona. We were visiting our son, who lives in Albuquerque (Edmund Connolly, Finstock School 1984-1990), and now works as a choir director.

Albuquerque is the largest city. It is famous as an iconic stopover on Route 66 and has over 300 days of sunshine each year. The dry climate is so healthy that in 1912, when it became a U.S. state, there were almost forty sanatoriums treating TB sufferers, who came from the Eastern states.

No visit is complete without a drive on Route 66. In the 1930s this was the only paved road from Chicago to Los Angeles. Thousands of migrants fled poverty and hopelessness in Oklahoma and Texas via this road for the dream of better lives in California. Even now there are still ghosts of bygone days such as old, abandoned motels, cafes and petrol stations. (*Editor's Note: The Pulitzer Prize winning Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck describes this migration.*)



New Mexico Street with cactus

Today much of the architecture of modern Albuquerque is adobe-style 'Pueblo Revival', but Albuquerque is not afraid to borrow from elsewhere. The upmarket district of Nob Hill was designed and named because the topography reminded the architect of Nob Hill in San Francisco.

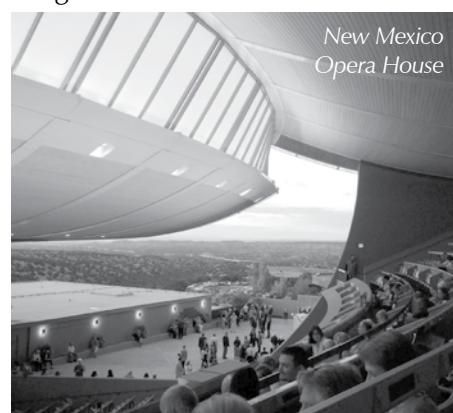
From Albuquerque it is an easy drive 50 miles north to Santa Fe, which is the state capital. Much smaller than Albuquerque, but it has a charm of its own with a large artistic community

and more 'Pueblo Revival'. The historic Plaza has art galleries, restaurants selling many types of food, including the local green chilli and Indian fry bread, and shops and stalls selling Native American pottery, weaving and turquoise and silver jewellery.

There is also Santa Fe Opera whose season lasts for just six weeks each summer and is set in a stunning open-sided theatre on a hill top producing opera of a very high standard.

Finally we enjoyed an expedition to Chama, just short of the Colorado border in the North. Look at the place names and you could be in Spain. Surprisingly green, with terrific views of

mountains and mesas, luminous with mineral colours of greens and reds. These are the Badlands, and how I always imagined the Wild West. And no-one shot at us.

New Mexico
Opera House

This is a land of wide horizons and the friendliest people you will find anywhere. The 'Land of Enchantment' lived up to its billing. As the man in the car rental place said on the day we left, "Don't be strangers, come back and see us soon."

It will be a pleasure.

Sean Connolly

Nobel Peace Prize 2015

The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the National Dialogue Quartet, an alliance of four Tunisian civil society groups for their tireless efforts to foster democracy in the nation that gave birth to the Arab Spring. They have made a "decisive contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy in Tunisia in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution of 2011."

Ready Reference Changes

Telephone contact number for **Witney Minor Injuries Unit** is 01865-904222.

New contact for Friends of Finstock School (FoFS): Rachel Mackenzie htcfinstock@gmail.com Tel: 869284.



VILLAGE EVENTS



The song, Auld Lang Syne, is sung at the stroke of midnight in almost every English-speaking country in the world to bring in the New Year.

December

5th Ramsden Christmas Market
(with the Wychfood Exchange)
12th Finstock Christmas Fair
16th Toddler Christmas

FINSTOCK CHURCH AND SCHOOL FAIR

SATURDAY 12TH DECEMBER AT 2PM IN SCHOOL HALL

There will be tombola, books, christmas wreaths, cakes, refreshments plus the most special attraction of all - a visit from Santa.
Watch for more details on posters.

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!



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Charlbury Society

Friday December 11th: Victorian Lodging Houses. A talk by Barrie Trinder.
Friday January 8th: Emigration from Oxfordshire in the 19th Century. A talk by Shaun Morley.

Both meetings are in the Memorial Hall Charlbury at 8pm. Refreshments from 7.30pm. All Welcome. Visitors £3. Students Free. For more information call 01608 810130 or see the website [www.charlbury.info/community/22](http://charlbury.info/community/22).

North Leigh History Society

December 1st: Mary Queen of Scots.
A talk by Dr Gillian White.

North Leigh Memorial Hall at 7.30pm. Festive refreshments. Visitors £4, Members free. Further details Diana Power 882301.

A merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our members and visitors.

The Windmill Players North Leigh

Arthur's Camelot
North Leigh Memorial Hall
Friday January 29th at 7pm

Saturday January 30th: Matinee 2pm, Evening 7pm

Join the joust in a romp through mediaeval legend with wizards, ghosts, knights and villains, and of course, a fair maiden. This is the perfect pantomime for all the family with audience fun and a magical gift for every child (no matter how old!) Tickets on sale from our friends at North Leigh Post Office and online at www.windmillplayers.com. Tickets £8.50; Concessions £6.

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Events

December 2nd: Above the Dreaming Spires - Oxfordshire's Great War Aviation Story Peter Dye. Tickets £10. Full details can be found on www.sofo.org.uk.

ChOC Films

www.chocfilms.org

Sunday December 13th at 3pm:
The Family Matinee at Christmas

Sunday January 10th 2016 at 7pm:
The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel



War Memorial 2015

Remembrance Service

The Finstock and Fawler War Memorial Remembrance service was led by the Reverend Paul Mansell. The Finstock Brownies read the names on the Memorial and Lenny Nicholls read the Exhortation. Viv Wightman read the Kohima. The Royal British Legion, Finstock Parish Council, RAF, Falklands and Brownies all placed wreaths and villagers added their own crosses. Barbara Pensom added a prayer to the closing ceremonies that acknowledged the courage of conscientious objectors before Reverend Mansell's final prayer. Thanks were given to Val Hoare for her work maintaining the flowers at the memorial. Special thanks must go to Jim and Ursula Symons, with help from Jonathan, for their work on a very cold and misty day to close the road for the safety of those who attended the service.

950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings in 1066 in 2016 – where William beat Harold.

VILLAGE HALL PROGRESS



At the time of printing this edition of Finstock News the village hall should have its entire roof completed and be water-tight allowing electrical, plumbing and plastering to continue the progress. Work on opening the hall has been ongoing since before even the last one was demolished. We have to apply for a new premises licence from West Oxfordshire District Council as it is a new building. (See public notice below) The licensing hours applied for are exactly the same as those of the old hall.

The Village Walkway engraved brick initiative was a great success and we shall be placing 139 paving bricks at the hall on the patio area in front of the main entrance covering an area of 3 sq. m. Thanks go to all those that supported this as it raised over £3,000. Another great event in September, the Finstock Ale beer festival raised £4,994.55 and the two fundraisers completed the £35,000 contribution towards the hall that we set out to raise in

The Village Hall Committee and the Finstock Parish Council would like to thank everyone who has supported the new Village Hall this year through their financial and physical contributions.

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

Your District Councillors have kept their promise to progress a plan for a Dean Pit Recycling Centre replacement. We held meetings with Charlbury and Chipping Norton Town Councils in October and November to discuss this issue and identified some possible locations. We are all determined to get something moving, especially given that, according to the Oxford Times, fly-tipping is on the increase in Oxfordshire and costs residents around £148,000 a year. This cost is borne by the City and District Councils. This amount of council spending to clear fly-tipping is nearly half what the County plans to save by closing household waste recycling centres! That doesn't seem to make a lot of sense financially, let alone the visual impact on our roadsides.

The Town Councils will come up with some initial thoughts on how to proceed, which will then be shared with Parish Councils around the area for their input.

Still on the subject of rubbish, the District Council recently held a briefing

May 2013. This is a fantastic effort Finstock, Fawler, Wilcote and Wychwood.

As we move into the next phase we already have a number of volunteers to help organise new clubs and events. If you are interested in helping to organise, or simply participate, in any of the following drop an e-mail to villagehallfinstock@gmail.com with your contact details. All beginners welcome. Table tennis, short-mat bowls, darts, dominoes, a craft club, an acting/theatre group, keep-fit / exercise such as Pilates or Yoga, folk dancing, folk music, photography club, Friday morning drop-in/coffee morning, or singing workshops. Or if you wish to organise something different, we can help you set up. We will have a fantastic new hall, excellently equipped, so let us ensure we finish the job with thriving, well-supported activities.

We are sorry to lose the Rag Bag recycling as it had raised over £1,000 for the new hall.

Shaun Morley

LICENSING ACT 2003

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE OR CLUB PREMISES CERTIFICATE

NOTICE is hereby given that Finstock Village Hall applied to West Oxfordshire District Council on 27 November 2015

To use premises at Well Hill, Finstock, Chipping Norton, OX7 3BU To Permit the licensable activities of plays, films, indoor sporting events, live music, recorded music and dancing Mon-Fri 0900 hrs to 0100 hrs; Sat 0900 hrs to midnight; Sun 0900 hrs to 2230 hrs; and the sale of alcohol Mon-Thur 1130 hrs to 2359 hrs; Fri 1130 hrs to 0100 hrs; Sat 1130 hrs to 0030 hrs; Sun Midday to 2330.

Any person wishing to object to this application must give notice in writing stating the nature of objection by 25 December 2015.

Any representations made must relate to one of the 4 Licensing Objectives, prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and protection of children from harm. All representations are made public. Please write to the address below:

Head of Community Services
West Oxfordshire District Council
Elmfield, Witney
Oxfordshire OX28 1PB

Full details of the application may be inspected by appointment at the address above. Please phone (01993) 861636 if you wish to view the complete application.

It is an offence, liable on summary conviction to a fine up to £5,000, under Section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003 knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in or in connection with this application.

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Shampoo & Set £14.00.

Gall me (Laura) today, I look forward to hearing from you.

07583238925/
01993 869129

Andy and I wish everyone in Finstock and Fawler a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to the opening of the new Village Hall in 2016!

Liz Leffman and Andy Graham

VILLAGE VIEWPOINT

The Parish Council's chief preoccupation is the Village Hall (see page 3 report); Finstock looks forward to new sporting, social and perhaps cultural opportunities once work is completed.



track immediately behind houses in Hill Crescent is not a permissive path. Landowners only have a duty to "reinstate" designated paths after agricultural disturbance, though doubt remains as to the force of this word.

I heard no mention of any local arrangements to co-ordinate efforts to assist refugees from Syria via Eastern Europe. Those inclined to generosity of any sort to these desperate people might like to contact our Parish Councillors to find out more. A committee has been set up in Charlbury to facilitate initiatives: Tel: 01608 811 378, or jon@phonecoop.coop.

Barbara Penson



Julie Stringfellow

THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Andy Compton	868271	Member
Sean Connolly	868561	Member
Nicky Higgins	868425	Proofing
Tony Hirtenstein	868600	Layout
Joy Murphy	868575	Editor joy.nick@gmail.com
Barbara Wells	868776	Distribution
John Wells	868776	Advertising

Photographs thanks to staff members and others.

Read the Finstock News online at www.finstock.org.uk; join the Finstock Yahoo group – groups.yahoo.com/group/finstock; follow us on Facebook [Finstock Memories](#); 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 views expressed in readers' letters.

Lost Item seeks owner

At the end of June a small silver coloured ring was found on the playground next to the school. If anyone thinks it is theirs and can describe it, please contact the school office.

Lynn Gorton, Finstock School



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First Responders

Our lovely community is rural, this is one of its charms but equally at times this can make a difference. The Community Responders are a local volunteer team that help reaches those unfortunately in need of the ambulance service as soon as possible. As a local team we aim to provide support whilst the Ambulance is en route.

We remain an additional resource and you will still receive the nearest available ambulance. However as the chance of surviving a cardiac arrest decrease 14% per minute before defibrillation occurs, every minute counts. The local presence and those few minutes can make a difference.

We hope that you have a great festive period and wish you all the best for 2016. As usual we continue to ask for any unwanted new or used printer cartridges and mobile phones which we can recycle and adds to our fund raising. Collection boxes are available in many locations including the village school, village shop and Charlbury doctors' surgery. If you would like any more information with regard to Community Responding visit: www.southcentralambulance.nhs.uk.

Sara Cooper

SMALL ADS

(All numbers start with 01993 unless otherwise stated)

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Line ads are charged at 20p per word, payment in advance.
Please contact: John Wells on 868776. We no longer accept inserts for the newsletter.

Recycle Christmas trees

From Monday January 18th 2016 real Christmas trees and greenery such as holly, ivy and wreaths can be put out and recycled with garden waste. Place your tree in your garden waste bin, or if it is over 4ft/120cm cut it up and leave beside it. Please remember that all pots and decorations need to be removed.

You don't need to be signed up for garden waste collections to do this - simply leave your tree out on your green collection week.

Please note there are no garden waste collections from December 25th - January 17th.

Revised collection dates:

Tuesday 29 December 29th will be collected on Thursday December 31st.

Tuesday January 5th will be collected on Thursday January 7th.

and, Tuesday January 12th will be collected on Wednesday January 13th.

Normal collections resume Tuesday January 19th.

Waste crews collect more of recyclable waste over holidays

- Extra recycling can be put out next to your black recycling boxes in open cardboard boxes or clear sacks, but not in black bin liners. Please ensure that there is only one type of recyclable material per bag. (For safety, glass must be put inside recycling boxes.)

- Your kitchen caddy and your outside food waste bin can be put out for collection over Christmas. Don't

forget your food waste bin can be used for any raw or cooked food waste, such as peelings, bones and meat – ideal for turkey carcasses.

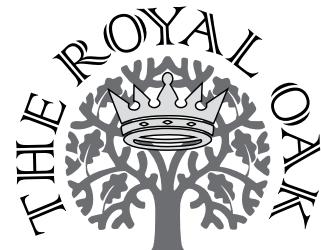
Waste and recycling calendars

Your waste collection calendar is available to download from www.westoxon.gov.uk. Simply type your address into the postcode search box to find your calendar. You can also sign up for free bin day reminder emails. If you do not have online access, printed copies are available from:

- Our Elmfield offices or Town Centre Shop in Witney
- The Guildhall, Chipping Norton
- Or by calling 861000

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The Royal Oak will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Eve evening. It will be open on Boxing Day and New Year's Day from 12 - 4pm.

The United Nations took this for their motto:

*The Sons of Adam are the members of a whole
Each is created from a greater,
single soul
Whenever Fate to one of
them brings pain
No other can without distress remain
You who for others' torment
do not care
Cannot the name of 'human'
rightly bear.*

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COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION

The longer I live, the more beautiful life becomes. Frank L. Wright

Losing ground: The need to protect our soils

Like clean air and water, healthy soils are fundamental to our existence, but despite evidence that soils are in trouble, damaged and degraded both globally and at a UK level, they don't have the same level of protection. The UN has declared 2015 the International Year of Soils. There could be no better time for the Government to review soil protection in the UK and take action to improve it.

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blogs/woodland-trust/2015/08/the-need-to-protect-our-soils/>

Electrical item sparks bin lorry fire

WODC is urging residents to take care about what they put in their household rubbish bin after one of their contractor's vehicles caught fire. Using thermal imaging the Fire Brigade could tell that the fire had been caused during the compacting process when a laptop containing four large lithium batteries was crushed.

Remember that smaller unusable electrical items can be recycled at most of our recycling sites and larger electrical items taken to one of the county's Waste & Recycling centres such as Dix Pit in Stanton Harcourt. The 'crossed out wheelie bin' symbol found on many electrical items means that they should not be put into normal household rubbish bins.

There are nine recycling sites across the district with containers for small electrical items, which are known as WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) banks. They are a bright pink colour. Anything with electrical or electronic parts from straighteners to shavers, and toys to toasters, can be placed in the pink WEEE banks.

Producing electrical items uses a lot of energy and valuable materials, including precious metals like gold and silver. Electrical equipment can also contain chemicals such as lead and mercury. These chemicals can get into the environment and harm people or animals if items are not disposed of carefully.

As part of the recycling process valuable or harmful materials are removed safely and re-used or disposed of. Recycling materials such as aluminium from computers saves raw materials and energy.

*No Spring, nor Summer Beauty hath such grace,
As I have seen in one Autumnal face.*

John Donne

Consumer Rights Act

The Consumer Rights Act 2015 came into force on October 1st and all purchases from that date onwards will be governed by this legislation and seeks to simplify, strengthen and modernise UK consumer law. The act replaces three big pieces of consumer legislation - the

Sale of Goods Act, Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations and the Supply of Goods and Services Act.

Under the Consumer Rights Act you have an early right to reject goods that are unsatisfactory quality, unfit for purpose or not as described and get a full refund.

But this right is limited to 30 days from the date you purchased the product. However, this right doesn't apply to digital content. <http://tinyurl.com/p8uo6ok>

The Plough Inn

Finstock

A very warm welcome awaits you at The Plough!

Our Christmas menu is available from Tuesday December 1st for lunch and dinner. Christmas Eve we are open as usual but Christmas Day and Boxing Day we will only be open for lunch; we will be closed at night. On New Year's Eve we will provide you with a free buffet and a glass of Prosecco.

The Plough will be closed on December 27th and 28th; it will reopen on December 29th.

Tuesday's fish and chips special two for the price of one continues; as does Thursday's two steaks and a bottle of wine for £30. The full menu is available always. Friday you can enjoy half-priced Prosecco or champagne and early-door nibbles.

We are now offering **Wine Specials** by the bottle or by the glass.

Quiz nights continue on the first Monday of the month raising funds for village organisations. Bar open at 6pm and quiz begins at 8pm.

Thank you for your support!

Guy and Jordan wish you a Happy Christmas!



Our Bar is open:

Mon: 6pm – close

Tues – Fri: 12 noon – 3pm & 6pm – close

Sat: 12 noon – close

Sun: 12 noon – 6.00pm

Our kitchen is open:

Tues – Sun

Lunch: 12 noon – 2.00pm

Dinner: 6.30pm – 9.00pm

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COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

BUDGET



Rodney Rose

The County Council has now released the savings it might consider should £50m extra savings be needed when the Comprehensive Spending Review is announced at the end of November. There is a consultation response at <http://tinyurl.com/qy5v3g7>, which I urge all councils to complete. Should less than the £50m be required then the consultation responses will affect what cuts are made and what gets saved. You will see by looking at the lists that rural areas are certainly hit by these savings.

CHILDREN'S CENTRE AND EARLY INTERVENTION CHANGES

The council's Cabinet endorsed a proposal for a full public consultation to take place during the autumn on the future of children's centres and early intervention hubs. The proposals follow the findings of a cross-party review of the council's early intervention services, and children's centres, which was reported to Cabinet in June. That review recommended that a network of Children and Family Resource Centres for 0-19 year-olds be developed, targeted to those areas of greatest need, with a good geographical spread of centres. The focus would be on supporting the most vulnerable children and families. Under the proposals £8m would be saved from the current overall £16m budget for children's centres and the Early Intervention Service. The remaining £8m budget for the current children's centres and early intervention services would be combined with the existing £4m budget for children's social care's Family Support Teams, creating a new £12m service. There will be extensive consultation throughout Autumn before any decision is taken.

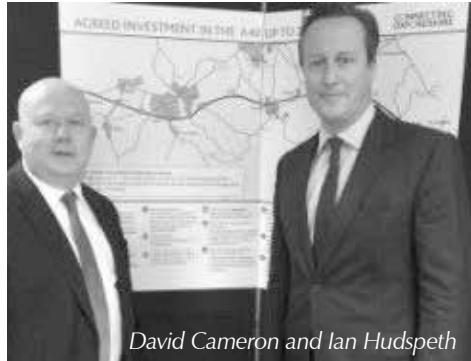
REFUGEE CRISIS

People in Oxfordshire have been shocked and saddened by the images they have seen of refugees fleeing brutal regimes such as that in Syria, where civil war is raging. After the Prime Minister announced that Britain would need to accept more refugees from Syria, the County Council has been talking to partner agencies to see what can be done. The County Council has a legal responsibility to protect young children known as Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers; the number in the care of OCC has doubled over the last year to around 50. Government is being asked for additional funding to minimise the impact on OCC services.

The way we are living, timorous or bold, will have been our life.

Seamus Heaney

A40 LONG TERM VISION



David Cameron and Ian Hudspeth

When the A40 strategy was debated it was decided to develop a long-term strategy for the A40 corridor looking at all possible options. Council Leader Ian Hudspeth briefed the Prime Minister and Witney MP, David Cameron, ahead of the planned consultation. David Cameron said: "I am pleased that Government funding is enabling the County Council to make vital improvements to the A40."

ROAD WORKS AT WOLVERCOTE AND CUTTESLOWE ROUNDABOUTS

The road works at Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts are a necessary part of the A40 strategy and are inevitably causing disruption, but they have the backing of the business-led Local Enterprise Partnership. Once completed, the works will improve the capacity at both junctions improving traffic flow. The recent works at the southern roundabouts have demonstrated the improvements to traffic flow, once completed. The challenge is to carry out the work whilst still allowing traffic to flow through the junctions safely. One of the most costly and important elements of road projects is the traffic management for safety, not only for the workforce but also for all road users. If the junctions were done separately, then the traffic management would have the same effect but the works would take longer, creating more of a problem. A lot of planning and thought went into this project to try to reduce the cost and keep the disruption to a minimum. The planning is carried out with OCC's Partner Skanska, a leading international engineering company, who have expertise in this field.

Cllr Rodney Rose

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FINSTOCK SCHOOL

As I have often said over the last year, one of the unique characteristics of Finstock School is the great relationship that the school has with the local community. This has been exemplified over the last term in many ways, none more so than the opportunity for the school children to create a 'Time Capsule' to be embedded in the wall of the new Village Hall.



Every child in the school, from our Nursery through to our Year 6, produced a piece of work – consisting of writing, art work, or photographs – based around their life at Finstock School or as part of Finstock Village. The school also added a whole school photograph and the past year's newsletters to the package. The idea being that when the Capsule is opened it will give an insight into the life of children in Finstock Village in 2015.

On October 9th we were then able to join members of the Village Hall Committee, parents and other village members in a ceremony where Steve Peters sealed the Capsule behind the Village Hall sign on the new building. As part of the ceremony, the capsule was passed from child to child such that each child felt a connection with it, before Martha Hitchcox, our oldest child, gave it to Steve to be placed in position. This was a very poignant moment, as the children watched their work being sealed into the new building. In years to come, it will be very exciting for them to be able to see the Village Hall sign and know that they have a real connection with the building – a great memory for them to share with their children and grandchildren!

It was lovely to see so many of our parents and members of our community at our Macmillan Coffee morning. The school hall was absolutely packed as children and adults alike enjoyed the cakes and drinks on offer. We raised over £200 for this worthwhile cause. We will also be raising funds for Children in Need during November – so watch out for 'Superheroes' around Finstock. Raising funds for these national events are a great opportunity for children to develop their moral responsibilities and values – and, of course, they are great fun!

By the time this article is printed, we will also have had our annual Open Day on November 14th, where we invite our pupils, current parents, prospective parents and the local community in to see the school in action. It is a really positive time for the school, with the conversion to Academy Status and our new Foundation Stage Unit (FSU). The latter is proving very successful, and we are starting to look even further ahead in our planning. It would really help us if parents of younger children who may want their children to attend the FSU in future years would register them with the school office.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the army of volunteers who come into school to help in so many important ways. We are always very thankful for their support, and they add so much to the life and experiences of children at the school. In particular, I would like

to thank Dave Munday and Nigel Rauhut, who took a day out of their time to erect a number of noticeboards around the school.

All that remains is for me to send you all 'Seasonal Greetings'.

Sue Dawe, Headteacher

End of Term 2

Friday December 18th at 2pm

Christmas Holiday

Monday December 21st to

Friday January 1st 2016

Term 3 2016

INSET day Monday January 4th

Term 3 2016

Tuesday January 5th to

Friday February 12th

Tubs4Tablets

Once again we are asking for your help to collect Tubs4Tablets tokens. These can be found inside special 500g tubs of Flora Original or Light and Buttery 500g – available from Tesco stores only from 23rd September 2015. Hand the tokens into school and we will submit them just before Christmas. For every 50 tokens we submit, we will receive a FREE Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.0" touch screen tablet. Last year we collected enough for two free tablets and are aiming higher this year. Thank you for your continued support.

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TVSA VILLAGE SHOP AND POST OFFICE

It's the Festive time of year and your Village Shop will have lots of Christmas items including cards and wrapping, together with a few stocking fillers. We will also have selected spirits, sherry, port and brandy (to add interest to the Christmas pudding), in addition to our usual very reasonably priced wines and a variety of beers and cider.

Many of our delicious cakes, scones, tarts, jams and chutneys are produced locally. We have meat from Patrick Strange in Bampton, whose suppliers themselves are all local, and smoked goods from Upton Smokery.

Of course we always stock our great selection of newspapers and magazines, general stationery and colouring pencils and chalks for children.

Please consider spending a couple of hours a week volunteering in the Shop. We are short-staffed at the moment and would love to have you! No experience is required, we will show you the ropes and you will have fun. Karen is not a (very) hard task-master.

Our 100 Club still helps to support the Shop. If you haven't joined, give yourself a chance to win a big prize every month and ask Karen for an application form.

It is proving very difficult to obtain stock of fresh goods over the Christmas period so opening times will be:

Thurs December 24th	8am - 12:30
Christmas Day	Closed
Sat December 26th -28th	Closed
December 29th - 30th	8am - 5:30
December 31st	8am - 12:30
Friday January 1st	Closed

Normal Shop opening hours:

Weekdays 8 – 5:30

Saturday 8:30 - 1

Sunday 9:30 – 11:30

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The Post Office will of course have Christmas stamps; buy early, they are very popular!

You can post letters and packages, pay the majority of your utility bills, withdraw cash from your bank account and buy foreign currency.

Children - don't forget to post your letter to Santa Claus in the Shop by December 14th if you would like to get a reply from him.

Post Office opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am – 1pm.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Karen and the volunteers.

Autumnal fun at Finstock baby and toddler group

Finstock Toddlers have had a very busy autumn term. We settled in to the Church's upper room and welcomed a few new faces to the group. Thanks for joining us! We have been doing a variety of different seasonal activities including making cards for Grandparents Day and autumnal crafts with collected leaves, a handprint tree and pine cone owls!

We celebrated Harvest Festival with Rev. Paul who taught the toddlers a song about harvest **Oats and Beans and Barley Grow** and the actions were brilliant! We had a party at the end of the half-term (any excuse for us!) with yummy treats for the toddlers and adults, plus music, games and make-and-take home crafts. We also made firework art, gingerbread houses and painted poppies for Remembrance Day.

In December we'll be busy with the lead up to Christmas. We'll also be having a festive celebration on December 16th with more tasty treats and games – please come and join us! Thanks for all the support to those regularly attending the group, who take it in turns to provide cake, snacks and activities. It's great to be part of such a friendly group!

We meet from 10am – 11.30am on Wednesday mornings (term-time). Head for the upstairs room at Finstock Church where there are plenty of toys, activities and snacks for the kids, chat, cake and hot drinks for the adults. For further details contact Helen Fallows at finstocktoddlergroup@gmail.com or find us on Facebook.

See you there!

Logs for Labour is on again!

Would you like free firewood, or do you have a woodland that needs managing? The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment's Logs for Labour programme aims to promote sustainable use of firewood by running events where volunteers help to manage woodlands in return for logs. The events run most weekends in the winter, are about three hours long, and could involve coppicing hazel, thinning trees or piling up brash. All you need are sturdy gloves, shoes and a saw (only hand tools are allowed for insurance reasons) let us know if your woodland needs the help of volunteers. Information about forthcoming events is at www.oxonwoodfuel.org.uk/logs-for-labour or 'like' www.facebook.com/oxonwood

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CUVEE ATLANTA

"I would like the good wine. And since the result is the same no matter which wine I drink, I'd like to pay the bad wine price." Steve Martin

The restaurant reviewer for the *Financial Times* is Nicholas Lander, former owner of l'Escargot in Soho and husband of wine writer Jancis Robinson.

He recently reviewed Gordon Ramsay's eponymous restaurant in Chelsea, where the Menu Prestige costs a cool £145. Places like this would not suit Steve Martin because there is no such thing as bad wine! Lander, having decided his menu choices, asked the Sommelier to choose a glass of wine to accompany each of the five courses. This is a sure sign of a customer who will not be footing the bill.

The wines were, in order, a Vouvray, a Condrieu, a German Riesling, a white Grenache from Spain and a dry Madeira. The Condrieu is a fine wine. The others are good but not exceptional, but Lander seemed pleased that all were 'under £20 a glass'.

Wine prices in a place like this bear no relation to the real world. We are in luxury territory here. The restaurant is a small, elegant room with fourteen tables and 12 waiting staff, plus another 15 in the kitchen.

This reminds me that I was in this restaurant many years ago when it was owned by chef Pierre Koffman. It was then called *La Tante Claire*, and pricing was on a similar scale. Paul McCartney was in the restaurant with his wife.

Since the McCartneys even then had more than enough money to buy the restaurant, all the wines in the cellar and the wineries that made them I was curious to see what they had chosen to drink.

They were drinking Coke.

Osiris

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FRIENDS OF FINSTOCK SCHOOL (FOFS)

It's been all change at FoFS. We have said goodbye and thank you to some long-standing committee members – Nicky Blackall, Lesley Dore, Paul Hodkinson and more recently Louise Holifield. Thank you to you all for your great support over the years!

We welcome Su Jordan to our committee and also thank Dawn Simpkins for acting as our Secretary and Racheal Coombes for taking on the Treasurers role. I am also delighted to act as FoFS Chairperson and thank Rachel Shaw for all of her efforts as Chair over the last year.

We are currently planning our calendar for next year so watch this space for our events in due course. So far for this year, however, we have organised a Fancy Dress Disco for the children which was, as ever, a very popular event, and we funded the visiting Pantomime *Sleeping Beauty* for the school on November 18th. This was a real treat for our children and would be impossible to arrange without the money raised by FoFS.

We are looking forward to jointly hosting the *Christmas Fayre* with the Church in the School Hall on Saturday December 12th between 2pm and 4.30pm and hope to see many of you there.

Also, thank you to everyone who donated unwanted clothing to our Bag2School collection in October – with your help we raised £48!

As I'm sure you are aware, Friends of Finstock School is a charity run for the benefit of the school by a committee made up of parents, teaching staff and governors to enable the school to further enhance our children's school experience through fundraising. Thank you to everyone who helps make this happen. If you would like to find out more about us or join our committee then please contact me.

Rachel Mackenzie

htcfinstock@gmail.com

Do you know where to go for an illness or injury this winter?

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group has launched a new leaflet called: ***Do you need advice for an illness or injury?*** This leaflet will help patients in Oxfordshire to take greater control of their health by choosing the right health care service or source of advice in Oxfordshire. The aim is for patients in Oxfordshire to get to know the different services available in the county and when to call on them. The leaflet will direct people who need advice for minor injuries and ailments to minor injury or first aid units or a local pharmacist, which will help to free accident and emergency staff and GPs. See <http://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/your-health/choose-well/> You can also download the Choose Well app to your smart phone to find health services closest to you in Oxfordshire.

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FINSTOCK RAINBOWS AND BROWNIES

Rag Bag Bin – Firstly I need to report the sad news that this venture has now come to an end! Rag Bag are no longer providing this service south of Manchester, due to increasing charges and the market being flooded with second hand clothes etc. This is a real shame as we actually felt this was working really well and provided a good income to the village hall. I have tried several other companies but at the moment have not found one that offers this service but will keep trying. Thank you to everybody who supported and used this facility and over the short time we actually raised the fantastic amount of £1241.80 so well done to you all and thank you once again.

Rainbows & Brownies

We have been blessed with a great team of leaders who volunteer their services for our local Girlguiding groups. We have two trainees at present with Rainbows doing their Leadership Qualifications and a possibility of another one waiting patiently in the wings.

The Rainbows this term have been working hard on their Guide Dog Challenge and Fundraising for this good cause. You may have seen them out and about around the village dressed as dogs.

Rainbows have a few places for girls at present so please do contact Amy about getting your daughter involved. Rainbows are aged between 5 and 7 years.



Roald Dahl Event



Brownies Roald Dahl

Brownies

We have had two Brownie groups in the village for a while now due to ever increasing numbers. I would like to report that now our numbers are finally getting back to some sort of normality so we are hoping to go back to one group in the New Year, (more details further down the report!). Our programme this term has been focused entirely on The Roald Dahl Challenge Badge – covering *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Matilda*, *The BFG*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Dirty Beasts*, *The Enormous Crocodile*, *Revolting Rhymes*, *The Magic Finger*, and, not forgetting making birthday cards for Roald Dahl's birthday in September. Some of these titles have been a bit challenging to us as Leaders, so we have had to put our own interpretation on some of them!

We have had great fun and laughter over this term and as a reward we took a group of Brownies plus parents to the Roald Dahl Museum during the October half term. It was great and very interesting to see for ourselves all about Roald Dahl and the characters he so dearly loved. We will end our term with a Roald Dahl party where everybody will come dressed as their favourite characters, leaders as well, where I am certainly looking forward to being an Oompa Loompa.

During November we spent an evening discussing Remembrance of the fallen from Finstock during the First and Second World War. The girls earned a special Remembrance 2015 badge and again had great pleasure in being part of the Remembrance service in Finstock and reading out the names. Thank you again for allowing the girls to be part of such a great tribute.

2016 – New Year, New Hall and New Girlguiding Group! Yes, we are opening up a GUIDE unit in Finstock. From January to April we will be inviting the oldest 12 girls to start a brand new group working towards their Brownie **GO FOR IT Challenge** which will then lead on to the opening of our GUIDE unit in April once the new hall is open.

From January 2016 while in the school hall we will be combining the two Brownie units back into one on a Wednesday from 5.45pm to 7.15pm and once the new hall is open we will go back to 6pm to 7.30pm.

The Brownie **Go for It** group will meet alongside the Wednesday group, again while we are using the school hall, and then from April the GUIDE group will meet

on Wednesdays starting at 7pm in the meeting room and then swap to the hall once Brownies have finished at 7.30, and then finish for 8.30pm.

Caroline (Brown Owl) & Nicky (Nicky Owl) will be running the Brownie group and Kim (Eagle Owl) & Karen (Twit Twoo) will be doing the Brownie GO FOR IT / GUIDE group.

Amy (Little Owl), Charlene (Barney) & Laurie (Snowy) will continue running the Rainbow group.

Any questions or queries regarding Brownies, Brownie GO FOR IT and GUIDES, please do not hesitate to contact Caroline Booth – 07890 629001 or email carolinebooth4@gmail.com.

Rainbow enquiries to Amy Booth – ajb5@btinternet.com or 07444 550569.

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THE WINTER GEMS OF THE GARDEN



Mt Skippett pond in winter

The foliage of the evergreen shrubs and trees form a tapestry of greens, blues and yellows with their sculptural shapes, sparkling with an icing of frost, and decorated with delicate spider webs. The pyramidal slow growing bright green of the fir (*Abies alberta conica*) contrasts with the dwarf prostrate deep green of the slow growing cedar forming a low ground cover, and the golden yellow ball of *Chamaecyparis pisifera*, with the silvery blue-green needles of *Picea pungens*.

To attract the scarce pollinating insects, such as small beetles, strong perfumes are produced by the winter flowering shrubs, such as the Christmas Box (*Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *digyna*) with its deep purple ornamental stems bearing slender green leaves, having white flowers tinged with pink producing a strong delicious honey perfume. The waxy yellow bowl-shaped flowers of Wintersweet (*Chimonanthus*) are also highly fragrant. Then there are the Witch hazels (*Hamamelis*), having lost their autumn cloak of large orange and red coloured leaves, produce their scented yellow, orange or red flowers on the bare branches. *Viburnum tinus* has clusters of delicate fragrant white flowers, looking like splodges of snow, against the deep green foliage. The long yellow spikes of flowers, smelling of lily of the valley, crown the spiny dark holly-like leaves of



Mahonia x media 'Charity'

Lighting up a dark corner of the garden is *Elaeagnus pungens* 'Maculata' with its bright yellow leaves outlined

in green, the undersides, a copper colour, and bearing its very fragrant tiny silver white flowers, followed by the small orange fruits in spring.

An evergreen climber *Clematis cirrhosa* 'Freckles' is tolerant of low temperatures in winter and frost hardy. It is an early winter-flowering variety that produces large cream and pink speckled blooms from December to February, growing up a sunny wall or fence to a height of about 10ft with a wire or trellis support. Another good showy climber is the hardy winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*), with its bright yellow flowers.



Winter Jasmine

Lots to see and do at this time of year, the shapes, colours and textures of the patterned barks of the trees, with children enjoying doing wax rubbings of the barks and making art prints. Walking along the winter lighted woodland trails, such as the ones at Westonbirt Arboretum and the spectacular Illuminated light art trail and "son et lumiere" at Waddesdon Manor.

Enjoy the gems of the winter garden.
Robert Bigwood

Cornbury Estate Report

As part of an ongoing tree planting scheme across the park, Cornbury is looking to replace the avenue of horse chestnut trees which borders the drive way from North Lodge. Sadly, many of

these trees, planted in Victorian times are now diseased and dying. Cornbury is working with the authorities to plan a replacement avenue of trees. This will be the third avenue of trees replaced since the 1990s at Cornbury.

There has been some debate about the electric stock fence which was put in place over the summer along the footpath connecting North Lodge and Southill. The grazing of livestock on this farmland helps to maintain the fields and provides some income for their maintenance, and the estate will be using the land for grazing stock for the foreseeable future. The electric wire fencing will be replaced with a traditional, non-electric stock fence over the coming months. Like the temporary electric fence, the new fence will follow the same line as far as the copse. It is hoped that this safety measure will prevent interaction between walkers and livestock. Cornbury requests that walkers continue to stick to the footpath and keep dogs on leads for safety reasons. As well as upsetting the livestock, dogs which are not kept on leads have been known to disappear down badger setts.

Follow us on Twitter @CornburyPark and at [Facebook.com/CornburyPark](https://www.facebook.com/CornburyPark), or get in touch by emailing us at: estate@cpark.co.uk or phoning on 01608 811 276.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas
and a Very Happy 2016.

A flyer for Hilltop Garden Store advertising various Christmas events. It features illustrations of Santa Claus, an elf, and a snowman. The text includes details for Santa's Grotto, Elf Hunt, Breakfast with Santa, Festive Lunch Menu, and information about fresh Christmas trees.