



Finstock News 131

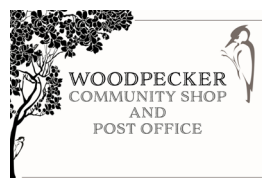
Serving Finstock, Fowler, Wilcote, Mt. Skippett and Finstock Heath

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"O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?" - Percy Bysshe Shelley

Seaason's Greetings and may your Festive Season bring some moments of peace and calm, amidst the stresses and bustle that characterise this time of year! For this issue we have a bumper number of contributions, embracing many of the topical issues that have appeared during 2021. Enjoy your reading of it and do, please, write in with any comments or reflections that you'd like to add to the discussion in our community.



A message from Karen Williams:

When you read this, Christmas will be just around the corner, so please remember we are here for all those special Christmas parcels going out to family and friends. Please don't feel offended when asked the contents of your parcels; we have to do this to stay in line with the Dangerous Goods Act and I would much rather I was able to tell you either something was restricted or prohibited to be sent than your parcel being held up, or worse destroyed! Only here to help! Also, a big thing to keep in mind is that, as we all know, the High Street banks are either disappearing or not actually doing very much banking! You can do the majority of your banking in your post office - including withdrawing cash, depositing cash or cheques into your account, and checking your balance.

While we see a steep decline in the use of your local community shop,

the post office is seeing an increase in footfall. The shop cannot survive on the post office alone so please think about the impact of the loss of these two amenities to our villages. Make that one stop in the week to maybe pick up a special treat, a bottle of wine, locally sourced meat from our supplier, Patrick Strainge, or cured bacon from Simon in Charlbury at The Old Curiosities, or that wonderful local honey we have. As we have said before on many occasions, if every household spent just £5 per week in the shop it would become viable but at the moment the future of the shop is once again threatened as weekly spend declines.

During those months of Covid lockdown the increase in customer base was huge and we did everything we possibly could to make sure you as the community were provided for. Please don't let all that hard work performed by not only myself and my family, but by all those volunteers that went out of their way every day to restock the shop, go by in vain. **Let's keep this shop and keep the lesson of community going in our villages.**

I recently wrote some words on the village Facebook site, and there was a very positive response. I'll repeat them

here so others can see them:

This shop to most is just somewhere you can pick up your bottle of wine for the evening or a carton of milk when it's been forgotten on the online delivered shop, but I need you to know that for others this shop is their lifeline. It's somewhere they come to have a chat, when they haven't seen anyone all week, somewhere they come if they're concerned about a pain they can't get rid of and may not be serious, but talking about it to someone makes them feel all the better. Somewhere they come to talk about their wonderful pet that has become ill and is the only friend they have. Somewhere they come to ask advice on that letter that has come through the door that they don't understand and they put their trust in you to help. Somewhere they come when they have lost their one and only love and need to talk. This community shop is exactly what it says, a shop for the community.

You will not get this at Sainsbury's, Tesco or the major supermarkets as they are not set up for this, WE ARE! Don't let our community shop disappear and take this lifeline away from those who need it. I like making a difference, you will too.

Editor's note – If you can't make use of the shop on a weekly basis because you're out of the village during opening hours, then you can still show your support by joining the **100 Club**. For a regular monthly investment of £8.00 you have a chance to win the £100 top prize or one of the four £50 prizes. You can actually win a maximum of £300 as all the numbers are put back in for each draw! Contact the shop for details (869096 or Facebook page - woodpeckercommunityshopfinstock).



VILLAGE ACTIVITIES



The village playground



A bright and sunny early October morning saw a small group of helpers gathering at the playground for the second big clear up of the year. The numbers grew as the morning progressed and ten helpers set about re-distributing a pile of woodchips to the various points that needed infill, as well as working

away at removing some pretty stubborn weeds that had found the most awkward places to seed themselves and grow! This is all part of the essential maintenance that goes on each year to maintain a safe place for play and to keep the environment attractive.



It's sixteen years since the playground was built, and from talking around the group on that October morning very few of the participants were living in Finstock at that time - and know little of the tremendous community effort that went into both the design and the building of what was, at the time, the first playground of its kind in Britain!

Plans are hatching for the Local History Society to present an account and slide show of the build, hopefully in Spring 2022, to fill in the blanks for many of you about a brilliant piece of community history in Finstock. Watch this space!



Just as a taster, this is what the playground looked like when it arrived in the village -

(The original flat pack!)

The Rainbows, Brownies and Guides

They have been very busy since their return from the summer holidays. Rainbows are working towards their feel-good page, looking at what they need to stay fit and healthy. Brownies finished off their camp badge and started working towards their cookery badge. Guides are working towards their first aid badges.

They also took part in a "dance united" session to create street dance routines with all groups, which the girls loved, as well as attending Finstock Church for harvest festival.

All sections meet on a Wednesday. Rainbows - for girls aged between 4 to 7 years.

Contact for Rainbows is Sian - 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

Finstock Craft club,

Sadly, will not be holding its annual, pre-Christmas Craft Fair again this year but please look out for news of a Spring Craft Fair in the next newsletter. In the meantime, we continue to meet as usual, every Monday, except Bank Holidays, 7.30 to 9.30 pm at the village hall. A warm welcome awaits.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: rosacharlesworth@icloud.com

Rosa

Mother Nature

Mother Nature has a way of finding a balance.

Over five million people have died of Covid 19 since the start of the pandemic.

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Finstock Local History Society

Friday 10th December



A talk by Frank Collingwood from the Oxford Bus Museum titled **"The life and times of William Morris, later Lord Nuffield"**

Scheduled for the May meeting - Cotswold Arts and Crafts and Folk Music - A talk by Martin Graebe. Look out for further details in the next issue.

Doors open for all meetings at 7.30pm for 8pm start. Admission is £2.50 for visitors/non-members.

Two Wychwood Villages

With Christmas in mind, and it will make a great present, please do not forget that we have printed copies of *'Two Wychwood Villages: Finstock Upon the Hill and Fowler Down Derry.'*

For those of you who may not have come across this finely crafted book by Shaun Morley, the book was published by the Finstock Local History Society in December 2019. The book covers the history of the two villages, is very well illustrated with maps and plans and photographs and a substantial index. It is now into its second printing.

To obtain a copy come along to one of the advertised local history meetings in the village hall or call the Society Treasurer on 868743. The cost of the book is just £30.

Finstock Short-Mat Bowls

We are now back in full swing every Monday at 2pm and Thursday at 1pm at the Village Hall. We have space for three or four more members to join us - just £1 each time you attend (which includes refreshments).

This is a winter form of outdoor bowls, using the same woods.

Beginners are welcome, and all you need is a pair of clean, flat-soled shoes (like trainers) to change into and we have all the rest. Just turn up ten minutes before one of the start times above and you will be made very welcome.

We play in the Wednesday morning Witney Triples League, and many of our members also play at Charlbury. Short-mat bowls at Finstock is a great way of trying something new, getting exercise, and having social interaction in a safe environment.

If you want more information, call Shaun on 868134

Finstock Baby and Toddler Group:

It has been great to be back in the hall again at long last and to meet regularly with our friendly group! We love having the space to set out different toys each week, including ride-ons, books, puzzles as well as having a baby area with play mats and baby toys. It's lovely and warm in our brilliant Village Hall and it's great to see the little ones playing together and making

friends. We provide a healthy snack and drink for them and hot drinks and tasty cake (donated each week by a parents/carer) for the adults to enjoy.

We are still running the group cautiously and ask that you book in advance - if you haven't attended before and would like more information about the group, please email us on finstocktoddlergroup@hotmail.com. You can also follow us on Facebook for regular updates. We are open Wednesdays (during term-time) from 10-11.30am - our last session this year will be 15th December and we will return again after the Christmas holidays.

Many thanks, Helen & Tammy



There's lots going on at the Royal Oak to keep our spirits high and glasses full this winter!

Upcoming Events

- French cuisine supper club - Nov 24th
- Ramsden Christmas fare pop up bar - Dec 4th
- Honky-tonk piano night - 7.30pm Dec 9th
- Opera night & Christmas supper club - Dec 14th
- Christmas quiz - 7pm Dec 19th
- Charity carol service - 2pm Dec 23rd
- Feast of the seven fishes supper club - Dec 24th
- Burns night supper club - Jan 25th
- Kathy Slack's winter supper club - Feb 8th

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What makes Finstock special?

Although there are some fine old farmhouses, Finstock is not really one of the Cotswolds' 'picture book' villages. But it is special in another way: it has what many 'prettier' villages have lost: a school, a pub, a Post Office and a shop. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Finstock has acquired over the years a large number of (relatively!) affordable houses and these have been in the heart of the village, not tucked away on the outskirts - from the Watney Cottages on School Road, built on land given by Vernon Watney, the then owner of the Cornbury Estate, through several phases of social housing, to developments like Hill Crescent, built on farmland in the late 1960's. Here, many young families have started life (and where I have lived happily for over twenty years and will be very sorry to leave) and these have provided the opportunity, so often lacking in villages today, to put down roots. These are some of the reasons that I hope that more affordable houses will be built in the years to come.

Finstock, for me, is also special in that it has allowed me a very interesting neighbour in the shape of the Allotments Field. As we learned from field walking (much of it done by Finstock School children) from the time of Roman farmers to the more recent allotment holders it has been carefully cultivated, the soil kept in good heart by diligent manuring, and a wide range of crops grown. Over the years I have enjoyed hearing about the allotment-holders of the past and finding bits of their tools in my garden! It is only modern subsidy-based agriculture with its reliance on chemicals and heavy machinery that has compacted the soil and put paid to the wildlife and flowers that used to flourish there. It has taken climate change to turn society and government towards a more environmentally-friendly way of farming: I hope that in future the Allotments Field

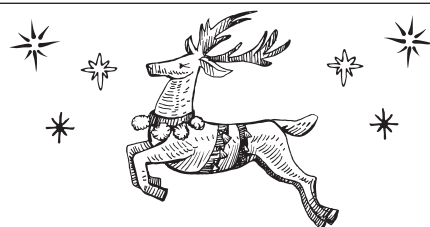
will look more like its old self again.

Living on the edge of Cornbury Park has brought its own delights. I've enjoyed seeing thriving traditional breeds of cattle, pigs, and sheep; and now the free entertainment of Horse Trials; and the amazingly "instant" festivals: one of the new 'crops' which help to finance great estates nowadays, when the guns of pheasant and deer shoots have fallen silent (although I'm glad to say that local game still regularly appears in local butchers and on pub tables.) I've enjoyed Cornbury walks, both on and off the footpath itself. For all the sorrow and anxiety they have brought, the 'Covid years' have also brought new walkers in large numbers and they in turn have established networks of new, unofficial, paths in the neighbourhood: let's hope these will continue.

I'll miss Finstock people most of all. I've made good friends here and hope to keep them! The children who made me welcome to Hill Crescent now have children of their own and it has been a pleasure to hear news of them. Although my work has involved studying country people in the distant past ('between the

Romans and the Normans') I've constantly found myself learning something relevant from local people that I could never have learned from books, especially from Roy Townsend: there's nothing like asking a retired woodsman about forestry! The wonderful people of the Finstock Local History Society have taught me what local history really is and how much it matters to explore it for ourselves. Recently greening and the environment have come to the fore and I know that Finstock's many wonderful gardeners will be making it an ever greener place. I'll miss Karen and the shop - Witney, where I'll be living next, has nothing like it for usefulness and a warm welcome - and the pub, and the Christmas mummers and the Morris, and all the amazing things that Finstock people get up to...and are all part of What Makes Finstock Special.

Ros Faith



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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.



A LOVELY CHEESECAKE

Recipe submitted by Viv Wightman

Serves 8

Coatings 30g. melted butter. 115g. crushed digestive biscuits,

Fillings 225g. cottage cheese. 225g. cream cheese. 170g. caster sugar. 2 eggs. 2 level tbsp cornflower. 1 tsp vanilla essence. Pinch salt. 280ml sour cream. 3 tbsp milk. 30g. cleaned sultanas.

Method Set oven to 335 degrees F - mark 3 – about 165 C. Well grease a 20cm loose-based cake tin with the melted butter and coat the base with 60-80g of the crushed biscuits. Place both the cream and cottage cheese in a bowl and mix well for a few minutes. Beat in the eggs – one at a time – beating thoroughly after each addition. Stir in the sugar, cornflour and salt, - then the vanilla essence, sour cream, milk and sultanas. Mix to a smooth batter and pour into the prepared tin. Sprinkle the top with some – or all – of the remaining biscuits. Bake in the pre-heated slow oven for about 1¼ hours – (until well risen and quite firm), then turn the oven off, and allow the cheesecake to cool completely in the oven, with the door slightly open, before turning it out - and leave it on the base of the cake tin. I hope you enjoy!

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Finstock Pipemakers-John Willis & Joseph Cox

As many readers will know there is a brief mention in 'Two Wychwood Villages' about the clay pipe manufacture that took place in Finstock. Locally sourced clay was being used to make these interesting and historic items.

The clay pipe makers were based on the High Street during the early part of the eighteenth century, and would have had built a special kiln to fire the clay pipes so that the clay would harden and the pipes could then be smoked. They would have needed wooden or metal moulds to form the correct shape and length of the pipe and it would have taken some skill to make them. No doubt landlords of The Crown and The Plough would have purchased quantities for their regular customers to use.

The pipes being made in Finstock at this period would have been quite long but not curved and have a bowl heading away from the smoker at a gentle angle. It was not usual for pipemakers of this period to stamp their wares so it will be hard to prove that you have a pipe actually made in Finstock. Having said that I recently found a pipe bowl from the early eighteenth century with a lovely off-white colour to it and it may well be one of our local pipes.

The pipe makers would have had a kiln to fire their pipes and it is known to have been built in about the middle section of the High Street and no doubt is in someone's garden. If anyone has come across a semi-circular structure in their garden or at least the foundations of a kiln the Local History Society would be pleased to know. Equally, any clay pipe finds from the High Street gardens would be very interesting. I expect you have found the broken stems whilst gardening.

Vicus

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• Thu 23 rd Dec	6.00am – 6.30pm	• Wed 29 th Dec	7.00am – 5.00pm
• Fri 24 th Dec	6.00am – 2.00pm	• Thu 30 th Dec	7.00am – 5.00pm
• Sat 25 th Dec	CLOSED	• Fri 31 st Dec	7.00am – 2.00pm
• Sun 26 th Dec	CLOSED	• Sat 1 st Jan	CLOSED



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Clint, Abi & all the Denshams staff would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year!**

COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION

"To be a conservationist is to be an eternal optimist...when you are trying to change the world." – Jan Deblicq



Five simple actions you can take for the climate and local wildlife

The climate and ecological crises are intimately linked. Happily, even seemingly small actions can have a cumulative, positive benefit for our local environment. Here are five things we can all consider doing to make our natural environment a better place, helping wildlife thrive and capturing carbon, too.

Leave some space for nature to run wild. Leaving an area of garden unmanaged and 'untidy' can help a surprising variety of wildlife to thrive. Long, rank grass will provide cover for small mammals like voles and shrews and wilder, thriving grassland absorb more CO₂ compared with cut grass. By letting nature run a little wilder, you are not only helping our wildlife, you are also helping capture that bit more carbon dioxide, too.

Make a compost heap if you don't already have one. A compost heap is a sustainable way to deal with any green waste, and if you are really lucky the warmth of your compost heap might also attract slow worms or even egg-laying grass snakes. Composting the organic waste we produce and reusing it as fertilizer is a wildlife-friendly, climate-friendly solution.

Provide some deadwood in your local environment. Before you reach for the chainsaw, why not think a little creatively? If you have to fell a tree, could you leave some of it safely where it falls? In a garden you could make a 'loggery' by partially burying a group of cut hardwood logs in a quiet corner. You just might attract stag beetles, whose larvae feed on the wood for up to seven years before emerging as magnificent adults.



Pond and wilder habitats at Foxburrow Wood



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Dig ponds. Large or small, they all provide vital habitat for aquatic insects, plants and amphibians. It can be very surprising to find even the smallest of ponds supporting dragonflies and spawning frogs.

As well as providing habitat for wildlife, recent research has shown that newly created, maturing ponds capture up to 30 times the carbon of many other habitats, including woodlands!

Join a conservation organisation like the Wychwood Forest Trust.

We are dedicated to restoring habitats and making space for nature to recover on our own land; to helping and advising partners and other landowners to do the same; and to working with local communities to engage people with all the benefits of a healthier natural environment.

Neil Clennell,

CEO of the Wychwood Forest Trust

*From the Washington Post, 28th
September 2021*

E-Waste!

Your drawer full of old tech could have a new life — or start a fire! Here's how to handle it.

E-waste is a growing problem, but there are ways to avoid making it worse.

Many of your old phones and tablets are packed with components containing rare metals that are difficult to find and pull out of the ground. Once those components wind up in the landfill, there's no easy way to recover them, so the limited supply we already have shrinks even further. Other kinds of e-waste, such as rechargeable batteries, often contain chemicals that could pose problems for the environment or human health, and gadgets that contain non-removable batteries **could start a fire** if they, say, get crushed in a compactor.

The world generated **53.6 million metric tons of e-waste** — comprising laptops, smartphones, electric toothbrushes, air conditioners and much more — in 2019, according to the Global E-Waste Statistics Partnership, who track the growth of the problem. Less than a quarter of those castoff products were verifiably recycled.

Managing the growing e-waste problem will take serious effort from tech companies and the governments that regulate them. But there are some important ways you can help, too — consider some of the ways to repurpose and recycle some of the tech taking up space in your life by viewing <https://tinyurl.com/fwy7jd34>



Tree Champions - a network growing near you!

We co-hosted the Tree Champion networking and learning day in late October. Over thirty people attended the day of workshops to learn more about how to get more trees planted all over Oxfordshire. There were workshops on planting, community engagement and resources for community groups. The Treescapes Mapping Project also showed how communities can use the brand-new mapping tool to influence councils and landowners to plant the right trees in the right places. Find out more at www.oxtrees.uk/

Recycling waste for road repairs saves cash and carbon

Hundreds of tonnes of material that was previously treated as waste and which needed to be safely and expensively disposed of is being used to help repair Oxfordshire's roads.

Oxfordshire County Council is working with its contractor Milestone and its partner OCL Regeneration to make use of the toxic tar-bound material that is removed during road and path resurfacing work.

The recycled material will be used in road maintenance projects at 11 different sites in Oxfordshire between 11 October - 3 November. The process is an example of the 'circular economy' – where waste products are utilised, rather than disposed of – and will save money, reduce carbon emissions, and minimise the need for new materials.

Volunteers wanted to help feed farmland birds over the winter months

Farmland Bird Aid Network is a registered local charity which exists to promote the conservation of farmland bird species, particularly those in decline, through supplementary feeding, monitoring and habitat conservation.

The Network is looking for volunteers who would be willing to feed birds at a designated site in Finstock. This would involve joining other volunteers on a rota, feeding the birds once a week. This takes about twenty minutes.

If you are interested in helping, please go to <https://farmlandbirdaidnetwork.org> where you can find more details and get involved.

Most Successful Villa Open Days Yet

September 11th and 12th proved to be North Leigh Roman Villa Volunteers' most successful open weekend to date. Saturday saw over 250 visitors to the mosaic, while Sunday achieved the highest attendance on a single day, of 330, since the volunteer group started.

Set within a peaceful landscape on the banks of the River Evenlode, North Leigh Roman Villa is considered to be one of the largest villas in Roman Britain with a history of occupation spanning five centuries. At its most extensive in the early 4th century AD, it included three bath suites, sixteen mosaic floors and eleven rooms with under-floor heating. Today visitors can imagine the villa's former richness as they walk through the rectangular footprint of its walls – but the mosaic house hides the real gem, of a near complete mosaic floor. The mosaics form the floor of the villa's winter dining room and, as the only example in Oxfordshire still found in their original location, they give a powerful sense of the Villa's original opulence. The mosaics were not on display to the public from the early 1990s for almost 30 years. North Leigh Roman Villa Volunteers [NLRVV] are a local group working with English Heritage, who first opened the mosaics in September 2019. The group's efforts were recognised by a Heritage Alliance Commendation Award for volunteering in 2020.

To join Friends of North Leigh Roman Villa or arrange a special opening, email: nlrvvols@gmail.com



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From our Member of Parliament

At the end of a very difficult couple of years for us all, facing the most significant global health crisis of our generation, it is welcome news that our world-leading vaccination programme has, in addition to saving countless lives, enabled us to take major leaps towards normality in recent months. Teachers and school staff, who have adapted to challenging circumstances with enthusiasm and ingenuity, have returned to the classroom. Businesses have gone back to providing the services and products that are so vital to our economy. Health and social care staff and volunteers can continue caring for our sick and vulnerable, as they have done so excellently over the pandemic.

Now that I have been able to resume my usual constituency visits, I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet many of you and to hear your priorities in person. Recently, I have been out and about to support the superb village store in Finstock.



It has also been very encouraging to visit some of the local schools and to see how enthusiastically pupils are taking to being back in the classroom. In October, I attended Finstock Church of England Primary School to meet with school staff and hosted an interactive 'How Parliament Works' assembly for pupils. I enjoyed meeting with the children and hearing about their successes leading to their well-deserved hot chocolate. It was also wonderful to meet all the talented teaching team and

to see everything that they are doing at their warm, nurturing school.

As we now approach the festive season, we pay particular thanks to those health and social care staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to administer the COVID-19 vaccine, without which we would not be able to celebrate Christmas in our usual way. We thank them all for their service.

May I finally take this opportunity to thank every reader for all you have been doing to help our collective response to this public health emergency. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas when it comes around.

As ever, if there is anything I can do to help, please do not hesitate to contact me at robert@robertcourts.co.uk.

Robert Courts

News from the Parish Council

The Adventure Playground was passed as fit for purpose by the safety standards inspection team and minor ongoing maintenance and repairs have been carried out by a working party under the organisation of Mike Woodfield, Chairman of the PC., (see page two).

The playground is a valued resource for the village but represents a significant cost to maintain to the proper standard. The working party saves outside labour costs so represents a worthwhile contribution to the village.

A report by Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP) accused Thames Water of illegal and unreported discharges of untreated sewage into the Windrush and Evenlode. Discharges from Chipping Norton sewage works into the Evenlode on 69 days between January 2020 and April 2021 were identified in the report. The Witney area was rated the sixth worst in England by total hours of spilling to watercourses in 2019!

In Finstock, we have for several years been in negotiations with Thames Water over the problems at the bottom of Well Hill. Thames Water are difficult to get to grips with and appear to value their profits over the requirement to invest in new infrastructure to solve these problems.

We hope that WODC and the County Council will be engaged actively in pressurising Thames Water to improve this dreadful state of affairs.

If you want further details on this, contact friendsofevenlodevalley@gmail.com
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*Thanks to the indomitable
Viv Wightman,
at 84, who organised the
annual Remembrance Service
this year as she has done
so many times in the past.
Nearly 65 people were in
attendance.*

The village is grateful.

News from the County Council

The past six months have been a very exciting time for the new administration at Oxfordshire County Council. We have started to see some of the key priorities that we agreed as a Fair Deal Alliance come through the pipeline, and these will have an impact in Finstock. The first of these is the decision to make "20 the new 30". When I was re-elected last May I promised to campaign for 20 mph everywhere. It is great to see this coming to fruition and we will be the first county in the country to do this across the whole of our area. It will take three years to roll this out but it will be done and I will be working with the Parish Council to get a 20 mph speed limit installed. The police have agreed that if 20 mph is the speed limit, that will be enforced.

Another major step forward is the Bus Service Improvement Plan that has now gone to government for funding. The intention is to provide a more regular bus service across the County, with information boards being extended beyond the major towns, and better rural networks.

As well as transport, we are introducing a county-wide youth service. Funding for youth services was severely cut back under the previous administration, and we are investing £1 million this year, employing youth officers across the county and improving access to services. Our young people have suffered greatly from the effects of the pandemic and it is vital that we support them now, to ensure that they have a bright future.

This is just a flavour of what we are doing, and we are going out to consultation on this and our other priorities. We have completely overhauled our consultation process and have had a number of very successful meetings with town and parish councils and the voluntary sector and we have sent questionnaires to a random sample of residents. This is a process we will continue with as we recognise that as your elected representatives, we need to hear from you on a regular basis.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone in Finstock a very Merry Christmas, and a happy New Year. I hope that 2022 will be the year when we finally say goodbye to the pandemic.

Liz.leffman@oxfordshire.gov.uk.
07741 073088

News from District Council

Covid update/message-

By the time you read this, data will have changed and hopefully improved but the signs are not good and it would be remiss of me if I did not say, "we may be in this together" but in each town and village and in each household, nothing is the same.

Some have lost loved ones; some are working so hard to keep the NHS going against the odds and some are isolating the vulnerable and those not knowing what will happen next.

Unusually, I am dedicating this opportunity to ask everyone to be empathetic and think of others before ourselves.

Wear a mask when you can and please, please do isolate if pinged, or even before if you, or someone you know, have been in close contact with someone who has covid.

District bin news

Dog waste and litter bins are now being provided as a combined bin and replacing the separate bins. In theory, it should be a more effective way of collecting both. Hopefully, we shall all use them to keep our children safe and keep our village tidy. We shall see.

Replacement bins for recycling and the like will continue to be replaced but a charge is being introduced for additional bins. This is largely a cost cutting exercise, so be warned!

Protecting our environment

The government seems to be backing off with planning reform, but there is no certainty of that. I take the view that to sustain our villages we need growth that is based on local need and that housing developments on the scale we have seen in other areas of the district are not fulfilling that need but creating unrecognisable change to the landscape and a threat to biodiversity. I will continue to fight the building on the flood plain, particularly a few miles away in North Witney. Homes for generations to come are a priority and their needs should supersede the four and five bedroomed homes often built as an investment or as second homes.

As we know, with the Thames Water issues in the village, infrastructure needs to come first before building homes that preserve our settlements - enhancing the beautiful environment must be the mantra that planning should enforce.

Kind Greetings to you all and get in touch if you need me.

Cllr Andy Graham, District Councillor
Finstock, Fawler and Charlbury, 07908 832632

DURING THESE MONTHS

December 1, 1942 - The Beveridge Report was published in Britain envisioning the welfare state including insurance for the entire population.

December 5, 1791 - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died a pauper at age 35 in Vienna, Austria.

December 14, 1918 - British women voted for the first time in a general election and were allowed to run for office.

January 10, 1863 - The world's first underground railway service opened in London.

January 28, 1935 - Iceland became the first country to legalize abortion.



*"Blow, blow, though winter
wind, thou art not so unkind
as man's ingratitude"*

– William Shakespeare

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Finstock Festival

FINSTOCK FESTIVAL and SCHOOL FETE, FRIDAY 24th and SATURDAY 25th JUNE 2022

With no festival in 2020 and 2021, what a wonderful feeling to hold our first meeting since February 2020. The decision was made to bring back Finstock festival with a mighty roar.

The committee met recently and set the dates for 2022, as above, so get them in your diaries and calendars!

We held our AGM in the Plough on the 2nd November. The officers remain the same with Colin Stringfellow, Chair; Pete Welply, Secretary; and Julie Stringfellow as Treasurer. At the meeting a band list was chosen and they are in the process of being booked. A Pizza van has been booked and we will also provide our usual barbecue, so the planning is coming together.

Financially we have survived even with no income for two years. Yet again we are appealing for help with the event. Any time you can spare, even for a couple of hours, helps immensely. We start the build on Tuesday evening 21st June and carry on through to pulldown on Sunday 26th June - so please, if you can, come along and help. It's fun!

Which just leaves with my usual finish: ROCK ON FINSTOCK FESTIVAL and SCHOOL FETE!

Colin Stringfellow, Chair

FoFS

Friends of Finstock School are busy planning our Christmas Fair, which will be happening on Friday 10th December, 3.30pm-6pm in the grounds of the school. All are welcome to join us. There will be crafts and gifts stalls, food and drink, games, a lantern parade and of course a chance to meet Father Christmas in his grotto! We will also be drawing our raffle which has lots of fantastic prizes including lots of vouchers for meals out, days out and even a Tiger Encounter experience! Tickets are on sale in the shop, from school families or email us at fofsfinstock@gmail.com.

We held our AGM last month at which Su Jordan and Theresa Crawford stepped down as trustees after both serving five years. We are so grateful for all their hard work over the years and glad they remain on the committee! Chris Skerrett was elected as chair, Shona Dunning as treasurer and Helen Fallows re-elected as secretary.

We will have plenty of social and fundraising events coming up over the next few months so do follow our Facebook page [facebook.com/FriendsOfFinstockSchool](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfFinstockSchool) for all the latest news!

Chris Skerret, Chair

Wikipedia is catching up with the Finstock News! The online encyclopaedia was founded twenty years ago this year.

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News from Finstock School

This term Oak Class have been learning all about the Victorians. They had a Victorian school day and learnt to play lots of Victorian games. They also had lots of fun getting into the Christmas spirit! The children worked so hard and gave an amazing performance in their Nativity "Shine, Star, Shine". It was so lovely to have everyone back into school to watch their performance and we are so proud of them.

As a school, we had a brilliant Christmas service at the Holy Trinity Church. We love making our Christingles every year and it was very special being able to light them in church once again.



Cedar class have ended the year on a high, having had an action-packed term. It feels like a long time ago when we visited the ruins of Minster Lovell Hall on a hot September morning to start off our project 'Invasion'! We have now wrapped up our project by designing and creating our own looms and learning lots about the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings along the way.

Year 5 and 6 took part in the 'Bikeability' scheme, learning how to cycle safely on local roads and understand the highway code.

We launched 'Prayer Spaces' in school and have daily time to reflect, pray and explore life's questions, spirituality and faith in a safe way.

L. Dixon, Headteacher



Traveller's Tales - Biggest overland peacetime expedition ever (continued from FN130)

The whole journey along the Hippy Trail was fascinating and there are many tales to tell, but Afghanistan was just so wonderfully different. Incredibly primitive in places - remember this was before the Russian invasion of the late seventies but long after the defeat of the British in 1842. Just like now the rural places appeared wonderfully biblical to those of us who knew nothing of Muslim culture or traditions. Sheep and goats and camels and donkeys scattering along the roads with herdsmen in pursuit as we passed by. Roads were really primitive in places and then perfect in others where international aid, often British or American, had been applied. Wonderful cities like Herat had much unspoilt splendour to be seen in fortresses and mosques, (many sadly destroyed by military activities since). Kandahar too, was also impressive especially where the mullahs maintained a presence, yet sad too was the thoroughly American architectural gem of an airport built in 1962 with its fine interior finish and containers marked up ready for root beer and coca cola. I spent some time here in the control tower watching the sole Afghani on duty ask colleagues to chase the camels off the runway so the incoming Ariana Afghan flight could land!

In 1973 I journeyed back through the Khyber Pass en route overland from Australia to find it still frightening, especially travelling on the public bus from the Pakistan border. The hippies were still in Kabul but the Khyber restaurant was now charging much more than I could afford, due I suspect to more aid workers earning more than the locals - so I ate at my local hotel before catching the early morning bus to Kandahar and so over the border back to Quetta in Pakistan to catch the weekly train to Zahedan in Iran. As a traveller I needed a road permit, passport stamp, and other relevant information to leave the country but sadly my bus simply avoided the customs shed, so I had no such information to hand when finally leaving the country for Iran! I guess if this hippy had been shot no one would have known as this was long before the days of mobile phones, so I am just grateful to the many friendly folks, both local and international, in cheap hotels, and on local buses and trains, as well as border guards who let me get back to western Europe. But that was how one Ten Pound Pom got back to blighty and such was the single travelling life in the sixties and seventies!

Mike Breakell

Finstock Unplugged (Finfolk) - feedback on meeting of October 25th 2021

This was a treat of a meeting! It was one of those nights when there was an excellent turnout and everyone was in good form. Colins Greenway and Pitts, 'Turning Signs' (Brock and Kim), Jim Driscoll, who brought Chris Floyd, the leader of The Holy Fools, with him, and Ben Whittaker, who is about to revive Witney Acoustic in a new form, taking up the mantle from Colin G., all made fine musical contributions to the evening. It was a delight to welcome singer-songwriter Craig M., who joined us for the first time, and who was an excellent addition to the 'good fellowship' of the evening. A bonus was that one of his songs gave Anabel an opportunity to exercise her bodhran! Rachel contributed a powerful new song, and Claire, Anabel, Frances (as a cappella singer of 'Rosemary Lane' and accordion soloist) and Mike B., all made strong contributions to the interestingly varied musical texture of the evening. Bring on the next!

Future meetings (last Monday of the month): 29th. Nov., 27th Dec., 31st. Jan., 28th.Feb.

Finstock Unplugged's next chamber concert at Wilcote Art Studios: The Owl Light Trio (www.owllighttrio.com), who treated Finstock to a wonderful evening of music in the Village Hall some five years ago, have been persuaded to return. They will headline at our concert at 7.30 on Friday 10th December 2021, and they will be supported by the versatile harpist Steph West (www.stephanie-west.co.uk). Tickets can be booked through Ticket Tailor and are limited to approximately 30 to ensure social distancing in this airy, well-ventilated studio.

You are requested to wear masks until you are seated, and please bring your own beverages (and remove empties).

Ginnie Redston





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**Jack Handey, quoted in
Reader's Digest**

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Evergreens at Christmas

The tradition of bringing evergreens into the home during winter was shared by the Druids, Celts and Romans who believed the plants' ability to keep their leaves was magical and assured the return of spring.

The Holly tree was highly sacred in Celtic mythology and symbolised peace and goodwill. Due to its resistance to lightning, it was associated with the Celtic and Norse gods of thunder, Taranis and Thor, and so was planted near dwellings to protect people from lightning strikes. Holly wood also made a good fuel on cold winter nights.



One of the most colourful Hollies is *Golden King*, with purple stems, red berries and almost spine-free leaves with yellow margins. Another is *Ilex Argentea Marginata*, having new young shoots tinted pinkish-red, broad spiny foliage with a broad creamy white margin surrounding the olive-green centre and clusters of glossy, bright red berries; one of the best for hedging or topiary.



The romantic association with Mistletoe was most likely started with the Celtic Druids of the 1st century A.D. Since mistletoe could blossom even during the frozen winter, the Druids came to view it as a sacred symbol of vivacity, and they administered it to humans and animals alike in the hope of restoring fertility. The kissing tradition appears to have first caught on among servants in 18th Century England and

spread to the middle classes. Men were allowed to steal a kiss from any woman caught standing under the mistletoe, and refusing was viewed as bad luck. In winter Mistletoe produces clusters of pearlescent white berries which are favourites with hungry birds such as thrushes. Mistletoe will keep for a few weeks after gathering if it is kept in a cool place such as a shed or garage. If you have a

fruit tree and wish to grow your own, cut a diagonal slit in the bark of the host tree, insert fresh seed and with luck the seed will germinate.

It was thought unlucky to bring greenery into the house before Christmas Eve. During the festive season the spirits would shelter in the foliage but they needed to be driven out on 12th night, by being put on the fire. If this custom wasn't followed, it was believed to cause agricultural problems in the spring.

Best wishes to all.

Robert

A few jobs for the garden during December and January

- cover tender plants to protect them from frost damage
- continue to collect fallen autumn leaves to make leafmould
- aerate your compost heap by turning it
- winter pansies can be affected by Downy mildew and leaf spots. Deadhead regularly and remove diseased leaves on sight.

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

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