

The Harwell News

www.harwellparish.co.uk

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Parish Council

In December the Parish Council did not have an ordinary meeting, but discussed affordable housing for the Parish, before the Finance Meeting to discuss the Budget and Precept for the coming financial year.

For the first item the Council met Paul Staines from the Vale WHDC and a representative from Sovereign Housing. Also present were our District Councillors and a number of parishioners from Orchard Way, close to the site under consideration. A presentation was made followed by questions first from Councillors and then other parishioners.

At the January meeting, the decision had to be taken whether to ask Sovereign Housing to proceed with consideration of a proposal for Affordable Housing on the Orchard Way site. A petition had been received from residents of Orchard Way, and some were present at the meeting; see page 2 for some of their points. Councillors were concerned about the narrowness of the entrance and what appeared to be excessive density of the current proposal, which would result in building very close to some residents' boundaries.

On a proposal of Mr David Marsh, the Council voted on three resolutions concerned with affordable housing. The first was 'Based on the 2003 Housing Needs Survey, and the updated information of housing needs presented by the Vale in December 2007, the Council still endorses the need for affordable houses in the village'. This was passed with 8 in favour and 2 abstentions. The second motion was, after an amendment, 'the Council supports and endorses a proposal for affordable housing on the Orchard Way site' which was carried by 5 votes to 3 with 1 abstention. The last motion moved by David Marsh was 'that the Council recognises the concerns of the local residents and will work with them to make sure that they are addressed as part of the planning procedure'. The resolution was carried unanimously.

The January meeting confirmed the recommendations of the December Finance Meeting. Included in the coming year's budget is £300 towards a new office computer, £3000 to add to £1500 in reserves towards a new van, £700 for a new mower for the cemetery, and £800 towards other machinery. The Parish Council agreed a precept for the coming year of £38480, an increase of 3% over last year. The effect of the rise on a Band D property would be an increase of just under £1.50 per annum, to around £38 per annum.

The Council met representatives of the Vale WHDC Environmental department, and of Veolia, the company that collects our waste and recyclables. Mr Mackay from the Vale wanted to involve parishes more and improve communications on all aspects of waste; with landfill charges due to double the Vale of WHDC is taking more interest in the amount of refuse and recycled material. Topics covered included:

- The extent of use of green boxes and recycling; the Vale agreed to supply figures at a local level, so hopefully we can see how Harwell compares with the Vale as a whole. See page 10 for information on what can be put in green boxes and what additional items can be taken to the Drayton site, and what to other collection points.
- The leaving out of rubbish bags days before the collection. This can result in rubbish being scattered from the bags by animals, obviously a health hazard.
- Litter left behind after the collection, and bins left in locations which could be hazardous.
- Brown bins not being emptied. This will happen if a bin lid is not closed. So please do not overfill your brown bin – it will not be emptied as the equipment on the lorry requires the lid to be shut.
- New powers available on dog fouling; again see elsewhere for the Parish Council's plans with regard to the Recreation Ground.

Parishioners are asked to report any problems they have with waste and recycling collections to the Clerk, so the Council can see if the problems persist. With landfill charges being directly reflected in the Council Tax, it is obviously in our interest to recycle materials where possible. Representatives from the Vale WHDC and Veolia were invited to the Annual Parish Meeting and to a future Council meeting to monitor progress.

Under reports from District Councillors, it was reported that the Customer Services number for Benefit Enquiries has changed to 0845 300 6129, for which calls are handled in Bromley and Coventry, not always without problems. The Vale number for general enquiries is unchanged at 520202. Mr Taylor expressed thanks to Mr Waite, one of our District Councillors, for arranging for the Waste representatives to address the meeting; the Council felt this was very useful.

Under Council-owned Lands, there is a revision of the Cemetery Policies in progress, as there was seen to be a lack of clarity over what was allowed. The Council agreed that there should be no kerbstones or ornaments except a headstone and planting was only allowed at the headstone. Copies of the revised policy will be available from the Clerk in due course.

Also, Mr Fisher reported that a consortium agreement has been drawn up for the organisations involved in plans for the proposed new Pavilion.

Under Environment matters, Mr Lilly reported on a meeting with OCC Councillor Hudspeth, and on conversations with the Oxford Bus Company director; the disappointing response to all queries is that no major changes are planned for bus services in Harwell. Dr Beswick suggested that buses to John Radcliffe Hospital which run through Abingdon could be asked to extend the service to Harwell.

The next meetings of the Parish Council are on Tuesday 12th February and 11th March. Items for the agenda should be with the Clerk, Mrs. S. Taylor one week before this. The Clerk is at clerk@harwellparish.co.uk, on 01235 820006 where messages can be left, or in writing to 1, Wantage Road, OX11 0LJ. Office hours are 9 to 11am Monday to Wednesday.

Contact details District & County Councillors:

Reg Waite reg@regwaite.co.uk 7 Hengest Gate

Colin Lamont colin.lamont@oxfordshire.gov.uk 2 The Old School, School Lane.

Planning matters

Permissions:

HAR/16731/3 Erection of hotel & leisure club etc. land at Curie Avenue for Four Pillars Hotels & UKAEA.

HAR/15647/1 1st floor dormer extensions forming bedroom, wc & gable end at 10 Barrow Road.

New Applications:

HAR/9934/2 Single storey extension at Heron House, Blenheim Hill.

HAR/13273/2 Alteration frontage 20 Jennings Ln.

The Council requested that neighbours' comments be taken into account by Planners.

HAR/19692/1 Detached dwelling at Greenbanks, Downs Close. The Council objected to this proposal on grounds of prominence of the site, safety of access.

The petition against affordable housing in Orchard Way by residents close to the site included these points:

Orchard Way is a narrow circular Road. There is often congested parking along this road already for residents, visitors, commercial and service vehicles. The new site of 13 units, between 40 - 50 more persons, will not have sufficient parking space for their overall needs; this WILL cause yet more problems in an already overloaded space.

A main objection to the location is the proximity of the only infants/junior school in the village. Due to the narrowness of the road and sharp corners adjacent to BOTH sides of the only access to the proposed site, this will be dangerous to the children coming to and from school.

The road in Orchard Way is in a very poor state and the pavements a disgrace and dangerous, in spite of many official requests made for proper repairs. There is no money is the answer. Neither road nor pavements have been properly repaired in 49 years; additional short/long term usage of both, without major improvements, will aggravate accidents waiting to happen.

Allotments

There are currently allotments available on Hagbourne - Green Road, only £6 pa. It is also possible to have half an allotment (same fee); contact the Clerk.

Bob's Bags

You can now get in, Bob's the Butcher, a long-lasting shopping bag which will hold a lot more than the supermarket plastic bags, and be more environmentally friendly. Only £1, and with many other uses!

From Your County Councillor, Colin Lamont

The European Commission and the Government have ordered that the amount of domestic waste sent to landfill by the County must be drastically reduced on pain of heavy fines, which would have to be paid out of council tax. I am glad that they have done it. At present huge amounts of obnoxious rubbish are being buried in the old sand quarries and is contaminating land along the Thames for ever. The County has responded by putting a new waste disposal contract out to tender, specifying a reduction in landfill but leaving it to bidders to propose how that should be achieved.

The bidders have all proposed Energy from Waste. This means building small power stations fuelled by burning the rubbish, which will not only reduce the amount of waste going to landfill but also reduce the amount of fossil fuel that has to be used to generate power. Some people worry that incinerating waste may itself be a polluting process, but having visited plants of this kind I can assure everybody that they are commendably clean. The effluent from the chimneys is actually cleaner than street level air in towns.

The possible contractors have now been whittled down to two. Who they are has not yet been announced, nor have the sites that they propose to use. However there must be a strong possibility that one of those sites may be somewhere on the huge landfill that is currently in use at Sutton Courtenay. If that is so I hope that everybody will welcome it and accept that it will be much more environmentally friendly than what goes on there now. There will still be some residual waste to go to landfill, but it will be biologically inactive and will not evolve methane or attract vermin, which the present landfilling process does.

Affordable Housing in Harwell

This Parish Council and its predecessors have been concerned that young people, some wishing to buy their first home, are having to move away not through choice but because there is nothing even remotely affordable in Harwell. The survey in 2003 showed this and the Parish Plan the same year said 'there is a need for some new smaller and more 'affordable' dwellings in Harwell Parish. Here we provide some explanations:

What is affordable housing?

There are several types of affordable housing. The scheme the Parish Council is pursuing is called a Rural Exception Site. This means that the planning authority accept that there is a need for affordable housing in the village and are prepared to grant an "exception" to their general policy of not allowing any new development on the edge of the village, providing that the development is affordable housing that will be available to local people in perpetuity.

The scheme in Harwell will provide homes that are both shared ownership and for rent.

Why is 'exception affordable housing' different from ordinary affordable housing?

Exception site affordable housing is different from that provided elsewhere in the district because the allocation of the housing is restricted to people that have a local connection with the parish of Harwell. It is therefore very much for local people.

In addition, the rules governing the scheme will ensure that the homes remain available only to local people into the future. It will do this by not allowing the shared ownership properties to be sold outright so they always are offered to local people.

Who will be able to apply for this housing?

The exact detail of who will be able to apply has yet to be agreed. However the Parish Council will look to ensure that the homes are available to, for example, those who either live or work in the village or who have close relatives living in Harwell. The Parish Council is, for example, aware that there are numerous employers in the village who will welcome affordable local housing.

Who chooses who lives in the affordable housing?

The District Council will agree the allocations scheme with the Parish and will allocate the properties accordingly. All Applicants will need to join the District Council's Housing Register.

How do people pay for their affordable house?

A proportion of the properties will be rented and the occupants will pay rent to their housing association landlord. However a proportion of the houses will be for shared ownership. This means that the occupants will buy a percentage of the property by raising a mortgage on that proportion and will pay a ground rent for the percentage remaining in the ownership of the housing association.

Can someone buy their house outright?

The Parish Council has stipulated that this will not be allowed. This will ensure that the houses remain available to local people in housing need into the future.

What happens if somebody moves away?

If the person occupies a shared ownership house they are required to sell the house back to the housing association. The District Council will then allocate the property according to the agreed policy.

If they rent then the housing association can offer the house to those that qualify from the allocations policy.

Which site is being considered?

The Parish Council has looked at several sites over the last few years. Unfortunately the owner of the first choice site at the bottom of the Winnaway is unwilling to sell.

Though other sites have been explored around the village they have been rejected as not suitable for affordable housing development because of infrastructure costs or access. Some sites were deemed to be too far from the centre of the village. This leaves a site off Orchard Way as the current choice.

What is the Parish Council's view?

The Parish Council is in favour of affordable housing because it accepts that there is a real need for such housing demonstrated by the results of the local housing needs survey. The Parish Council will support the residents of Orchard Way to ensure that any scheme put forward is in keeping with the locality.

Why not wait for Great Western Park development for affordable housing?

The Orchard Way site will be limited to people who have a connection to Harwell and will be for local people. The development at Great Western Park will be for people in housing need from across the Vale of White Horse district. It is also some years away.

What will happen next?

The District Council will hold planning consultations and all interested parties will be able to comment. As part of this Oxfordshire County Council highways will comment on the changes to traffic flow.

The Parish Council is seeking to arrange visits to affordable housing schemes in the Vale to talk to residents and neighbours of those schemes.

Finally the scheme will be considered by the District Council's Planning Committee.

Where do I find out more?

The relevant minutes of past Parish Council meetings are on the parish website www.harwellparish.co.uk once they have been approved by the following meeting. Our two Vale Councillors are taking a lead on the affordable housing project and can be contacted at:

Margaret Turner at 15 Tyrells Close, by e-mail on margaret.turner@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and **Reg Waite** by e-mail on reg.waite@whitehorsedc.gov.uk or at 7 Hengest Gate.

Little Pippins Pre-school

We welcome Evie Willings, Jacob Smith, Kade Collett, Kian Thomas, Katie McDowell, Megan Fanstone, Oliver Cadman, Olivia Drew and Luke Barter who all join us this term.

We are holding our AGM on Monday 10th March at Little Pippins at 8pm, everyone welcome, there will be a speaker and refreshments.

Our **Open Day** will be on Saturday 15th March from 10am-2pm. This is an opportunity for you to come and have a look around; there will be a craft activity out plus lots of different activities for the children to try.

Our annual Easter Bonnet Parade is going to be held on Thursday 20th March, this is where the children show their creative side by making wonderful bonnets!

We always welcome visitors and if you are unable to come to the Open Day, please contact us and we can arrange a more suitable time for you to visit. We welcome children from two and a half with an adult present and from the age of three on their own. Both morning and afternoon sessions are offered and parental choice in session choice is very important to us. We also provide a supervised lunch session so the children can stay in the setting and eat their packed lunch.

In addition, we provide a BREAKFAST CLUB that is also open to children at Harwell School. You may have seen our 'walking bus' each morning that goes between Little Pippins and the school. Children can come on a regular basis or on a 'drop in basis' – ideal for early morning business meetings, shopping trips etc – please do contact us if you are interested in using this service. Tel 821741.

Nicky Mercer, Supervisor

Christmas Tree Festival

Little Pippins Pre-School would like to thank everyone who helped make the Christmas Tree Festival a success. We especially want to thank our sponsors, Little Kickers and Maxwell Daly Estate Agents, and Chinnor Garden Centre for supplying the beautiful trees. Thanks also go to the Bagg's Tree Buskers and Harwell Young Singers for kindly performing and added to the festive cheer. Finally, a big thank you to everyone who helped on the day, and for all those who spent many hours crafting decorations.

The day was filled with festive cheer, music and of course the trees; sixteen trees were decorated by different village organisations; all were adorned with handmade decorations and each was individual and beautiful. A total of 281 votes were cast every with tree receiving votes but the runaway winner was the Harwell Young Singers who took the trophy:



Second place was a tie with Rainbows, Fun Club and Pelvic Partnership all receiving the same number of votes. The festivities continued with Father Christmas parading through the village on his sleigh pulled by his trusty team of reindeer. Thanks to Dave Mobbs for providing the transport.

The day raised £1167.59, which will go to the little Pippins Pre-School new build fund.

The 2008 Christmas Tree festival will be held on Saturday 13th December so put it in your diaries!

FUN CLUB NEWS

Fun Club is the village baby and toddler group. We meet in the Village Hall on Tuesday mornings in term time 9.30-11.30am. All parents and carers of babies and toddlers (ie 0-5s), as well as mums-to-be, are most welcome. Just to make it clear, we do also welcome men - some dads do actually come regularly. The cost per session is just £1 per family, including refreshments, regardless of the number of children. Your first visit is free. For more information please contact Nickie Dunphy on 832963 or nickie.dunphy@gmail.com

Harwell W.I. News

Spring should be bursting in a month or so and the WI is likewise full of fresh ideas and opportunities.

We have David Marsh to speak about *Small Game Safari* on February 13th. Visitors, including men, are most welcome to come along to this talk.

The AGM meeting on March 12th will include an exchange of recipes and food tasting.

The new programme, which you can access in full online at wi.harwellvillage.info starts in April with a talk, demonstration and chance to try out Historical Dancing with the Vale Islanders.

We are hoping for a good summer weatherwise as we have planned several outings including a tour and tasting at Brightwell Vineyard and a Ridgeway walk.

Meanwhile to help get through the rest of the winter gloom there is an art and craft afternoon on Friday 22nd February where members can try their hand at some impressionist creations.

For any information on WI please ring 835405.

Joyce Doughty

Harwell Feast Committee

Auction

Saturday 1st March 7 for 7.30pm

Licensed Bar

Catalogue of lots, £1, will be available in advance from Bob's and from Committee members.

Promises include babysitting, cake-making, dog-walking, gardening, computer tuition, flower arrangements, children's entertainment, a ride in a sports car, English tuition and much much more.

Lots range from furniture to Indian saris, from wooden animals to cuddly toys, from large potted plants to wine and chocolate.

Come along, bid for a bargain and help the Harwell Feast funds.

Harwell Gardeners' Club

Monday 4th February: Visit to Hanney Gardening Club 7.45pm. A practical demonstration on Spring Pruning.

Monday 3rd March: 7.30pm Village Hall *Gardens of the Yellow Book* by Derek Leary.

Competition – A Vase of Spring Flowers

Monday 7th April: 7.30pm Village Hall *English Manor Gardens* by Jenny Whitham

Competition: A Single Flower

New members always welcome to our meetings.

Any queries please contact Wendy Sinclair (Chair) on 221008 or Janice Markey (Sec.) on 832802.

Wantage Silver Band

proudly presents

Magie of the Movies & Sounds of the Shows

With Steve Drury, ex Black Dyke Mills, on Flugel Horn

Saturday 16th February 7.30pm Didcot Civic Hall

Doors open 7pm Bar. Tickets £10, £8, conc.

In Aid of the Multiple Sclerosis Society

Harwell Primary School

Harwell School Association is very busy at present preparing for The Key Stage 2 annual Valentine Disco on 14th February, a Sing-along for Year 1 on Monday 1st March and is hosting a

Quiz Night on Friday 29th February,

8pm at the School. £5 per person, teams of 4.

The cost includes supper and there will also be a licensed bar. Entry forms are available from the school reception and I am sure last minute teams will be welcomed on the night! There will be entertainment and supervision of children (free of charge) - so no need to worry about babysitters! All proceeds will go to the Harwell School Fund.

the charity for
your community



Didcot & District Citizens Advice Bureau is opening an Information Point for local residents in February. The project, run in conjunction with Harwell Primary School and the Extended Schools Partnership, aims to provide general information on a wide range of subjects.

Sessions will start on Monday 4th February and will run every Monday morning during term time from 9 to 10.30 in the Community Room at Harwell Primary School. You don't need an appointment but can turn up and have access to the CAB website and a range of leaflets and fact sheets on subjects such as employment, benefits, housing and debt.

This project is staffed by volunteers who can help you use the computer and find leaflets and fact sheets that may help you. They are not trained CAB advisers and so will not provide advice on any subject, but if you need further information or advice they will help you to make contact with the CAB or another more appropriate organisation.

The service is free and completely confidential but if you have an urgent or complex enquiry you can still contact the CAB directly at Didcot (open every day apart from Wednesday afternoons) on 01235 813632.

Harwell Senior Citizens Fund

We would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and to let you know that we were able to give 188 Senior Citizens in our parish £30 each again this year, so you can see that we had to raise £5,640 for our funds. This money has to be raised throughout the year by selling bingo tickets to people around the village and local areas. We are always wanting to increase our bingo sales as the more money we make the more we can give our over 70's of this parish, the bonus being is that you could win £50 at any time, its all good fun.

Is your name on our Christmas present list, if you would like it to be please ring either Wendy Appleby on 832717 or Ursula Moore on 834338 and they will be happy to have a chat to you. You need to be 70 years or over and have to have been resident in this parish for at least six months. Applications close on the 25th November 2008.

Would you like to join our committee, we only have about three meetings a year, we would like more people to share the load with the distribution and selling of tickets and are looking forward to another successful year working to provide the Senior Citizens of our parish with a nice gift at Christmas. Can you help us in any way, if you feel you can please ring Yvonne Hinchliffe on 835397 and have a chat.

A very big thank you to all those people who sell bingo tickets every week for us - Pat Connolly, Sarah Harmer, Jake Castle, Hilda Brown, Ron Fry, Jeff Hopkins, Betty McNiven, Pauline Lay, Scottie Powell and Ursula Moore without these kind people, we wouldn't be able to function properly, they are really appreciated.

Yvonne Hinchliffe



News from Harwell Scout Group

The Scout Group in Harwell is very active with sections available for boys and girls of all ages from 6 years upwards. If your child is interested in joining or finding out more please call Liz Roberts on 834295.

Section	Age	Approx. numbers
Beavers	6-8	18
Cub Scouts	8-11	25
Scouts	11-14½	50 (2 sections)
Explorers	14½-18	35

Forthcoming Activities: Here are some examples of the varied activities planned for the next few months:

Explorers: Winter Camp in the New Forest, rock climbing, caving and fundraising has started to enable a trip to the Dutch National Jamboree in July.

Scouts: Night hike race between patrols in preparation for the HIKE Oxon later in the year and cooking skills using plants etc. rather than the more common ingredients found in the kitchen. Plans are also underway for the annual Summer camp.

Cubs: Swimming, pancake making on Shrove Tuesday, map making and reading. The Cubs are also looking forward to camping at Youlbury in the Spring holidays.

Beavers: Celebrating Chinese New Year, making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and looking at the Easter story.

Later in the year we will be holding a Sponsored Walk as a fundraiser for the Group. All ages (with suitable supervision) and dogs welcome! **Saturday 21st June.**

100 Club

The 100 Club is back by popular demand! This has been a major fundraiser for the Group over the last few years and raised nearly £400 in 2007. You buy a numbered ticket for £10 that gives you a £1 entry into each of 10 draws running from April 2008 to January 2009. Each month three tickets are drawn to win prizes of 1st £25, 2nd £15 and 3rd £10. If we achieve our aim of selling 100 tickets, then you will have roughly a 1 in 3 chance of winning over the course of the 10 monthly draws. To participate you must be 16 years or older. Early entrants can choose their own (hopefully lucky!) number and this goes back into the draw for the next month even if it has won. For further details and / or an entry form please contact Nigel Hartley on 821442.

Date for your diary

Saturday 24th May (Feast Weekend) – Barn Dance. A fantastic time was had by all who attended last year's event despite the inclement weather and the disappointment of the cancelled Feast. So why not join us this year for what promises to be an enjoyable (and energetic!) evening?

A rare treat to boost autism research

The John Lewis Partnership is holding the first 2008 public opening of its private garden, The Longstock Water Garden in Stockbridge, Hampshire on Sunday 6th April to raise funds for Autism Speaks, the only registered charity in the UK set up solely to raise funds for research into the causes of autism. The Longstock event comes just four days after the United Nations-declared World Autism Awareness Day on 2nd April.

Longstock is in the grounds of the Leckford Estate – the Waitrose Farm which supplies many of Waitrose's fresh produce lines, and the charity intends to use this rare fundraising event not only to boost cash for research at hospitals and universities across the UK but also to raise the profile of Autism Speaks in the South-East.

"The promise of Spring has its parallels in what Autism Speaks is doing," says Harwell's Liz Roberts, who works with the charity: "hope and help for thousands of families affected by autism throughout the UK is within our grasp. Please come to join us and experience spring at its most delicate and enticing in The Longstock Water Garden on Sunday 6 April."

Entry is £5 for adults, children £1. For more information or to purchase tickets in advance please go to www.autismspeaks.org.uk or contact Lynn Hart on 01491 411569 or lynn.hart@autismspeaks.org.uk.

By kind permission of the John Lewis Partnership.



If you think you would like to be a Home-Start volunteer offering regular support, friendship and practical help to young families in the area, we would be delighted to hear from you. We are starting a Volunteers' Preparation Course in the near future and if you would like any further information about the course or Home-Start, please contact Hilary Mundy on 01235 511152 or at Homestartso@btconnect.com

Home-Start Antique Roadshow!

Didcot Civic Hall, 19th March 10.00 a.m. to 1.00pm

Dig out your treasures and bring them along for valuation by the experts on Wednesday 19th March at Didcot Civic Hall, Didcot between 10am and 1pm. Bonham's, who have been auctioneers and valuers since 1793 will be using their expert skills to value your household wonders, all in aid of Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire, a local charity helping local families with small children. The cost of valuing 2 items is £5 and £1 per subsequent item. Refreshments are also available.

So come along and bring your treasures, ceramics, books, toys, silver, pictures etc. You never know what might be in your attic! All proceeds to Homestart's First Babies Group in Didcot.

For more information, please contact Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire on 01235 511152

In aid of Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire, supporting local families Registered Charity Number 1006230

Village Hall

All is well at the Village Hall. We have not, touch wood, had any break-ins lately, but that has been more by good luck than anything because there have been several instances of windows and fire doors being left insecure. We ask everybody to be punctilious about checking them when they leave and to inform the undersigned or Martin Ricketts in case of doubt or difficulty. The same applies to turning off the heaters. The main heaters switch themselves off after a short time, but those in the kitchen and the lavatories do not and they are easy to miss.

We have also had a few problems with car parking. People quite often park their cars in the Village Hall car park when it is empty, thinking that it will not inconvenience anybody, but it can do so when a large number of people arrive for a meeting. For the same reason we ask all members of groups that meet in the Freeman Hall to use the rear car park which is accessed from Westfield. It is equally close to the Freeman Hall.

We wish all our users a happy New Year and hope that, with your help, we will continue to provide you with the service you need.

Colin Lamont

What's On in Didcot Library

Rhymetimes for toddlers Fridays 8th, 22nd Feb, 7th March 10.30 to 11 a.m.
Look out for Winnie the Witch on the 22nd Feb!

Coffee Mornings

Friday 29th Feb & 28th March 10am until noon Free tea, coffee and biscuits for all.

Thursday 6th March – Stop and Read 11.30 a.m - National Year of Reading

LIBRARY CLOSURES

Library is closed Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th March For essential building works
I.T Suite closed 10th – Wednesday 12th (inclusive)

Easter Closing: Friday 21st – Monday 24th March inclusive

From our MP: In some ways, I am afraid that it hasn't been the happiest of starts to the New Year. Already, four local issues have landed with a thump on my desk.

First, the trains seem to be up the spout again, if my mail bag is anything to go by. I had hoped the new timetable would make a difference, but that is only part of the solutions. Lack of train drivers, guards, and rolling stock, as well as engineering delays, have all added to the problems. So I am back in regular correspondence with First Great Western.

Second, the beginning of the year sees the announcement of Post Office closures around the country. With plans to close 2,500, you can be sure that some of our local Post Offices will be hit. If your Post Office is hit, please let me know and write to me explaining how important it is to you, so I can make the best representations possible.

Third, I am not sure how much joy we will get from the Environment Agency on flood defences, following the chaos from last year. If January was anything to go by, flooding looks like it will become increasingly common, but the EA does not seem to have the money to carry out engineering works. It has said, however, that it will oppose building on the flood plain, which is one piece of good news.

Finally, the new year came with the news of voluntary redundancies being sought at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Harwell. The lab is run by the Science and Technology Facilities Council, which has an £80 million deficit. It is a ludicrous position to be in, to be sacking some of the country's top scientists for what is, in Government terms, a very small amount of money. I held a debate on the subject and will be pressing the Government very hard to sort out this mess.

Parliament has been unusually lively. In January, we debated proposals to abolish the crime of blasphemy, which have been put on hold while the Government consults the Church of England. I support proposals to abolish this law, which has not been used for almost a century. We also debated changing the law to allow householders greater protection when they use force against burglars, gay hate crime, and we ran out of time before we could get on to prostitution! Such is the racy life of your MP!

You can contact me at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA, on 0207 219 6350, vaizeye@parliament.uk

MP's Surgeries

8 February 2008, Didcot, King Alfred Drive Community Centre, 5:30 - 7 pm

22 February 2008, Grove, Old Mill Hall, Old School Lane, 5:30 – 7pm

7 March 2008, Wantage Civic Hall, Waylands Room from 5:30 -7pm

University of Oxford Harcourt Arboretum

Free Family Half-term activity

Tuesday 19th February Noon to 4pm

There are many carvings and sculptures of the Green Man on Oxford buildings, but what about at the Harcourt Arboretum? Come and explore, and see if you can find the Green Man. Have a go at making your own Green Man mask to take home. Free drop-in session. Parking £3.

Northmoor Trust February 2008 events

15th & 16th March and 22nd & 23rd March, 10am - 4pm

Lambing Weekends at Hill Farm, Little Wittenham

Find out about sheep production and maybe see a lamb being born. Lots of family fun.

Adults £3, Children and Members Free.

Quiz Night

SATURDAY 9TH FEBRUARY HARWELL VILLAGE HALL

£5 per person including hot meal. 6 per team. Licensed bar from 7pm. We can put you in a team on the night, so don't worry if you haven't got a full team together. Call Debbie on 820760 or Claire on 221049.

All proceeds in aid of Harwell Scout Group.

Recycling

If like your editor, you've sometimes wondered whether you can put that thing in your green box, here's the Vale WHDC's summary of what can and cannot be put our green boxes:

Paper – including newspaper, magazines, catalogues or brochures, junk mail, envelopes and telephone directories. Shredded paper can be collected for recycling but due to possible spillage problems this must be contained within a paper bag or envelope, not in plastic bags.

Glass bottles and jars – all colours of glass containers can be placed in your green box. Please ensure they are empty of their contents and rinsed clean if necessary.

Cans and aerosols – including food and drinks cans. Ensure cans are empty and clean with no sharp edges.

Aluminium foil – please ensure this is cleaned of any food contamination.

Plastic bottles – plastic bottles are the only kind of plastic that you can put in your green box at the moment (see below for more details). All lids need to be removed from the bottle and the contents emptied. Please pay particular attention to containers for bleach and other caustic materials which need to be washed out thoroughly before placing for collection.

Clothing and textiles - good quality clothing, shoes and household linen should be placed in carrier bags (not black sacks) and put on top of or next to the green box for collection.

Batteries and mobile phones - car batteries should be placed next to your green box. Put domestic batteries and mobile phones in a clear bag in your box.

The following items cannot be put in your green box:

Cardboard - cardboard of any type cannot be placed in green boxes. This can however be taken to one of the County waste recycling centres or to some Vale recycling collection points – check to find your nearest point. Cardboard can also be collected for composting as part of the Council's brown bin scheme – please our pages about The brown bin scheme for more details.

Yellow Pages – cannot be put in your green bin. Special banks are provided for Yellow Pages at the time of distribution. They can also be taken to County waste recycling centres or placed in cardboard banks at Vale recycling collection points.

Window or broken glass – please do not put window glass, drinking glasses or broken glass of any kind in your green bin.

Plastics - at present only plastic bottles can be placed in green boxes for collection due to logistical and financial restraints. Space on board the green box collection vehicles is limited, and if we were to extend the range of plastics collected to all mixed soft plastics it is estimated that a further two vehicles would need to be added to the fleet, costing approximately £250,000 a year. The situation will be reviewed at the end of the current contract, but in the meantime mixed plastics can be taken to Drayton.

You can take to Drayton: Batteries – household and car, Bicycles, Cans, Cardboard, Chemicals – household, Computer monitors, Foil, Fridges and freezers, Gas bottles, Glass – bottles and jars, Glass – sheet, Green waste for

composting, Light bulbs and fluorescent tubes, Metal – scrap, Oil – engine oil only, Paper, Paint, Plastics – mixed soft plastics, Soil and rubble, Televisions, Textiles & clothing, Tyres – small quantities for which there is a charge, White goods – cookers, fridges, etc, Wood .

Other local sites:

Harwell Rec. Car Park: Mixed glass, clothes.

Shops Car Park on Curie Avenue: Clothes and shoes (Planet Aid), Paper except Yellow Pages, Mixed glass, Cans and tins, food and drink.

Sainsbury's: Mixed glass, shoes (Variety Club), clothes and shoes (Salvation Army), glass.

Tesco: Mixed glass, shoes (Variety Club), clothes and shoes (Salvation Army), glass, books, cans.

Didcot & District Archeological & Historical Society

Abingdon after the Abbey

A talk by Janey Cumber Didcot Civic Hall

Wed. 6th Feb. 7.30pm Visitors £3.

Dogs on the Recreation Ground at Harwell

As you may have read in the local press recently many sporting organisations are campaigning for dog owners to keep their dogs off pitches being used regularly for sports such as Football and Rugby. Since 1997 dog walkers have been required by law to clear any of their animal's faeces whilst exercising them on recreation grounds. Harwell is now being used on a regular basis for Football, not only by adults, but also by an increasing number of junior sides. This is expected to grow in numbers next year and be used by even more junior teams and by then the rugby pitches will also come into use. The Parish Council is concerned that a small number of dog owners do not behave responsibly when exercising their animals on the Recreation fields. This is unfortunate as we are lucky that the majority of our village owners treat the grounds with respect and carry out their clean-up duties responsibly.

At present we have regular, random visits, from 2 Environmental Officers from the Vale, who have the power to issue on the spot fines to people who do not clean up after their dogs. **There is new legislation available that the Parish Council could ask the Vale WHDC to introduce. These dog-control orders could require dogs to be kept on leads, restrict the number of dogs a person can walk, or even ban dogs from part or all of the Recreation Ground. ***

The Parish Council however would prefer it if dog owners who use the Recreation field would voluntarily keep their animals off the designated playing areas marked specifically for Football. They would like them kept on the perimeter of the fields in the area near the Pavilion and British Legion Club and allowed free access only on the field after the boundary hedge where at present the rugby posts stand. We propose to operate this system from the beginning of February and signs indicating this will be displayed on the Recreation ground. This new policy will be monitored by councillors and Environmental Officers in the hope that there will be a reduction (if not a complete eradication) of fouling on the playing areas.

We are fortunate in our village to have such a sizeable and well - kept recreation ground. It is a pleasure to see people of all ages walking their dogs and enjoying the facilities that we have to offer. We have a hard-working ground staff who keep our village and the Recreation ground up to a high standard and it is rewarding to see sport being played regularly by adults and juniors on our pitches. We hope therefore to be able to work out an amicable arrangement for sharing our facilities for all to enjoy. If you are a regular dog user and wish to make any comment about this article or the Parish Councils stance on this issue please contact the Clerk and let us know your views.

Harwell Parish Council

* A Dog Control Order would not apply to anyone to whom the Parish Council had given permission to bring dogs onto the rec, such as the Wallingford Dog Agility Club, in so far as the order contradicted the permission.

Can your group make a scarecrow?

Following on from last year's success the wildlife trust staff at Sutton Courtenay environmental centre (which is partly in Harwell Parish – on Milton Park) are holding another scarecrow trail in its grounds from the 7th to the 11th of April. They are inviting schools and other groups to design scarecrows around children's nursery rhymes. You can design more than one scarecrow to depict the rhyme of your choice and make props to highlight the theme. The scarecrows **must** be made of recycled materials and be able to withstand the weather! Any group interested in making a scarecrow for the trail should ring us on 01235 862024 to find out more and to register the nursery rhyme they would like to do.

From the Archives

100 years ago: At the meeting on January 21st 1908 'Dr Rice brought forward the matter of licensed premises in the village. He explained how the matter stood with regard to compensation and considered there were certainly too many Public Houses in the village. He therefore moved and Mr WJ Bosley seconded the following - "That this Parish Council begs to ask the magistrates of Wantage Petty Sessional district to recommend the withdrawal of the license of one of the licensed premises at Harwell". The proposer and seconder voted for this, the others remained neutral. The resolution was therefore carried *nem con*.

The Clerk was requested to send to Mr Bosley, Hendred and ask him to inspect the Fire-engine when in the village, to report thereupon and give an estimate for its repair if it can be made serviceable for a reasonable sum. He was also requested to send to the Clerks of the following Parish Councils, in the event of the Engine not being repaired - that they must not in future, in the event of a fire breaking out in their village, rely upon the Harwell F Engine. Parishes to be sent to: Upton, East Ilsley, West Hagbourne & Chilton.

50 years ago: At the meeting on Monday 24th February 1958 it was reported that 'No requests have been received for allotments from the Broadway allotment holders. Also there were 1½ allotments available in the Barrow allotments. It was agreed to keep the empty allotments in the Hagbourne Road cut during the summer.

A letter had been received from the RDC asking whether parking facilities were required in the village. After discussion it was agreed that there were no areas in the village where lack of parking caused a genuine difficulty.

Estimates for 1958-9 of lighting (8d), General (1d), Burial (1d) Rates were approved. A precept was approved for the General Account of £300, for the Burial Account of £500 & for the Lighting and Watching Accounts of £280.

It was decided to write to the Wantage RDC to remind them that they had promised to repair the footpaths in The Park when the bungalows had been completed.

* **Harwell News from issue 1 in 1976, to 1993 is now on line at harwellparish.co.uk/archives**

Editorial Notes: Harwell News is published at the beginning of alternate months. Other than in reports of Parish Council matters any opinions expressed are not those of the Parish Council or editor. Items for the April issue should be with the editor by March 25th. Email martinricketts@waitrose.com. Page numbers here are not necessarily the same as in the printed version.