

the guardian angel

your community's news & views



Produced for the parish of St Michael & All Angels, Summertown
Summer 2020

Alexandra Park for everyone



Geoffrey and Janet Randell (standing) with friends in the park

There have been changes to Alexandra Park recently. The loss of six grass tennis courts resulted in a new green area, and the Alexandra Park Working Group has been formed with the aim of creating a colourful space suitable for everyone, from babies to elderly people, while increasing the biodiversity of the park.

Earlier this year three picnic tables were installed, one in the children's play area and two in the field. Three birch and three lime trees were planted on the western perimeter of the field, and a further five young trees are due to be planted later this year. These improvements were funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy, a planning tax on those who build houses or developments in the area, but the funds are limited.

Future plans could include improvements to the play area, a perimeter walk, and more varieties of shrubs and flowers. The working group is keen for local people to get involved, when possible, with fundraising and decision-making, and to offer practical help. Their design consultant Geoffrey Randell says: 'We want to involve the community in making this a beautiful space for all to enjoy.'

Norham Gardens Lawn Tennis Club, which is based at the park, has already raised funds for spring bulbs to plant around the trees and also helped plant them. So the local tennis club has set the ball rolling! In future all will be invited to join in on emerging projects to make our local green space more attractive as it reaches its 100th anniversary in 2025.

www.summertownstmargaretsforum.org.uk

New team for Summertown Stars



Some enthusiastic members of the new Warriors team

The Summertown Stars is the largest youth football club in Oxfordshire with over 700 playing members and more than 50 teams for boys and girls of all ages and some adult teams, too.

At the time of writing all training, matches and events have been suspended. This is a huge disappointment for the new team for children with cerebral palsy, Warriors, set up earlier this year by disability and inclusion officer, Sarah Griffiths. The Warriors have been relishing the opportunity to meet up with their friends on a regular basis and improve their football skills.

There are around twelve Warriors, both boys and girls, aged five to twelve years old, half of whom play with the use of frames. The focus is on fun and being part of a group. The sessions last for one and a half hours, and take place on AstroTurf at St Philip and St James' Primary School on alternate Saturdays. Sessions are completely free of charge and football kit has been provided by the team's sponsor, The Oxford Round Table.

Sarah says: 'The children gain confidence and improve their fitness. It's magic watching them enjoying themselves and achieving things that they never thought possible.'

The Summertown Stars has no selection process and everyone is equally entitled to play. New players are most welcome and no experience is necessary. The club is run entirely by unpaid volunteers and the involvement of parents and carers is actively encouraged.

Contact: enquiries@summertownstars.org;
www.summertownstars.org.uk

This is **your** newsletter; if you would like to contribute in any way, please email:
guardianangel.newsletter@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you.



Neighbours in lockdown

The UK lockdown which began in March deprived us of our usual sources of shopping, connecting with friends and expressing affection. Our city councillors Louise Upton and James Fry were concerned for those suddenly cast into self-isolation. The Oxford Hub was set up at the North Oxford Community Association in Diamond Place to act as a distribution centre for food and medicine. Meanwhile many individual roads set up community help groups or developed the use of those already in existence.

Local shops including Gatineau and Alcock's Butchers offered deliveries. When the Sunday market was closed, stallholders including Severn Bakery and Styán Family Produce made deliveries.



Styán Family Produce vegetables ready for delivery

There was also concern for those in financial difficulties. Philippa O'Connor raised funds for the local charity Aspire by selling groceries from her reduced waste social enterprise company, the Good Fill; and the charitable organisation North Oxford Action Against Homelessness offered financial help to Summertown's *Big Issue* sellers, Paul and Dan, while they are unable to sell their

magazine on the streets.

Many of us discovered the delights of FaceTime, Skype and Zoom for the first time. Local businessman Phil Walsh offered to set up Zoom free of charge for neighbours, while those with teaching experience offered youngsters stuck at home free Skype lessons.

While we were confined to our homes our immediate neighbourhood became more important than ever, and new connections were made with people in the same street who may never have spoken before. Lockdown has been unbelievably difficult for many people in vastly different circumstances, but hopefully the sense of community will continue when the crisis is over and the country comes to terms with the effects of the pandemic.

Contacts: www.oxfordhub.co.uk;
www.aspireoxfordshire.org/appeal/no-one-left-behind-aspire-emergency-appeal;
phil@walshslearningtoachieve.co.uk

Wood engraving at The North Wall



Peter Lawrence at work

Wood engraving is arguably the single art form invented in Britain, and is distinguished from woodcutting by the detailed finish obtained by using finer wood blocks and tools. The Society of Wood Engravers is currently celebrating its centenary and plans to hold its annual free exhibition at The North Wall Arts Centre from October 28th to November 7th. Prints will be available at affordable prices and can be viewed in advance on the society's website.

Among the artists featured is Peter Lawrence, who lives in Summertown. Peter specialises in abstract designs and has wood engravings in the collections of the Ashmolean, the Manchester Metropolitan Museum, and the V & A. He says: 'Engraving engages the brain, hand and eye. It's the antidote to computers.'

See: www.woodengravers.co.uk/swe-galleries/82nd-annual-exhibition; www.peterlawrence.co.uk

yourstruly... Elaine Steane



Writer, rambler and nurse

Elaine is Chair of Oxford City Ramblers and has written three books on walking in Oxfordshire as well as a collection of oral histories from the district of Sunnymead where she has lived for more than 40 years. She is about to publish her fifth book, *Nurse, the Bedpans are out of Alignment - a collection of memories of 1965 Bart's student nurses*. Elaine herself trained at

Bart's and then went on to qualify as a midwife in Oxford, but it was while doing a stint with the Flying Doctor Service in Newfoundland that she discovered her passion for working in the community. On her return to England Elaine worked as a health visitor and went on to specialise in the prevention of heart disease and strokes, now known as the NHS Health Check, for which valuable work she was awarded an MBE.

www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk

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Celebrating our trees

Trees are important these days - planting trees, and preserving the ones we have is a way of fighting pollution and climate change, as well as improving our local environment.

In our area we have some wonderful trees. There's the magnificent hornbeam next to the lychgate at St Michael's Church. It stands in contrast to the delicate maple planted in memory of Nigel Evans, who contributed so much to the church garden. Then there's the row of extraordinary ginkgo trees along the Summertown shopping parade, and the trees in the lovely Turrill Sculpture Garden.

Our trees are beautiful in all seasons and provide a habitat for wildlife. They give us shade and shelter in all weathers. Let's enjoy them all, and make sure we keep planting for the future.



Bright Properties - a family business

Local father and son team, Chris and Tom Bright, have been running Bright Properties, an independent lettings agency based in Summertown, since July 2019.



Chris has lived in Oxford for over 25 years, and has a background in commercial law, so brings useful skills to what is an increasingly complex business. Bright Properties pride themselves on providing a personalised service to landlords and tenants, and aim to make good quality housing

affordable in Oxford. Some of their own properties are let at a reduced rent to tenants referred to them by charities, making the homes accessible to people on housing benefit. They are also prepared to do the additional paperwork involved in organising this at no extra charge.

Contact: tom.bright@brightproperties.co.uk.

Cool for school

Although our schools have been closed recently, plans for the future continue ...

New sports hub for The Cherwell School

The Friends of Cherwell, an independent charity, was set up last year to help raise funds for much-needed facilities at the school. Their first big project addresses the problem of the sports field on the south site, which suffers from poor drainage and is frequently unusable. A redeveloped hub is planned with a



floodlit all-weather sports pitch, high quality grass pitches, and a new pavilion including a café. The facilities will be available for hire outside school hours, providing a valuable resource for the community too. Work is scheduled to begin this winter.

For more information or to make a donation see:
www.friendsofcherwell.org/sports

New quad development at St. Edward's

Nearing completion at St Edward's is the largest project undertaken by the school for over 100 years. The buildings are designed to address the modern requirement for flexible work spaces where



collaborative working is the norm. The development comprises: a library, where pupils will be encouraged to talk to each other and share their work; a café

area where pupils can work on their own with their laptops or meet in informal groups; a top-floor reading room for quiet study; and a new oval-shaped hall with seating for 1,000 for assemblies, performances, exams and other functions. The hall will be shared with the wider community as often as possible. St Edward's would like to thank the local community for their forbearance during the recent building work.

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St Michael & All Angels Church *All are welcome!*

As we go to press, the church building is still closed but St Michael's is very much alive.

See: www.stmichaels-summertown.org.uk

Sundays

8am: Holy Eucharist

Traditional language; no hymns.

10am: Parish Eucharist

With choir and hymns.

For children

The Sunday club meets in the church during the 10am service. On the first Sunday of the month the children participate in the all-age Eucharist. Godly Play session on the fourth Sunday of the month.

6.30pm first Sunday of the month: Silent prayer

6.30pm all other Sundays: Taizé worship

A short, meditative candlelit service with chants and silent prayer.

Weekdays

8.30am Mondays to Fridays: Silent prayer

9am Mondays to Fridays: Morning prayer

10am - noon Tuesdays: Baby & toddler group

Contact Juliet Field: [01865 552640](tel:01865552640)

10am Thursdays: Holy Eucharist

Coffee/tea and biscuits are served afterwards.

5.30pm Thursdays: Choristers' practice age 3+

Term-time only. Contact Alice: [07791 328108](tel:07791328108)

6.30pm Thursdays: Choir practice

Contact Stephen: [07717 852020](tel:07717852020)

8.30am first Saturday of the month: Men's breakfast

An informal social. Contact Steve: [01865 552475](tel:01865552475)

Contact details

The Revd Gavin Knight (vicar)

The Vicarage, 33 Lonsdale Road, OX2 7ES

[07833 251939](tel:07833251939)

***'No matter where you are on the journey
of faith, you are always welcome
at St Michael & All Angels!'***

Parish office

Contact: Leah Mattinson [01865 552738](tel:01865552738);

office@stmichaels-summertown.org.uk

Church and church hall bookings

The church and the upper and lower church halls (with kitchens) are available for hire.

Contact: bookings@stmichaels-summertown.org.uk

The Church and COVID-19

The Vicar writes:

It takes a mighty force to close the doors of the Church. Persecution, plague and insurrection could not do it. Reformation, Counter-Reformation, two world wars, safeguarding scandals, and terrorism could not do it. The invisible, global virus known to us as COVID-19 has caused seismic quakes throughout society. We have all had to work out how to live without our norms, our structures, in isolation and in the face of illness and death.

Since the Archbishop's call to close the churches, communities and neighbourhoods have galvanised in order to help the most vulnerable. I was struck by the words of a parishioner: 'Never has there been a more important time to think of others before ourselves'. So, despite the doors closing, people have opened up and have been sharing their resources and caring for their neighbours.



Services and prayers were live streamed this Easter

No public worship, no baptisms, no weddings, no Eucharist, no Easter services – we have had to do things in a different way. We have had to learn new skills and use new technology. The Church has become virtual, live streaming worship, and offering links to prayers and meditations, using video conferencing facilities for meetings and services. Social media platforms have publicised important messages and blog sites have provided news. The Church's mission – to bring people together in faith – has been deeply challenged. The fellowship that we once enjoyed – gathering together, sharing the Peace, the Eucharist, coffee, offering a consoling hug – all of this has been replaced by social distancing protocols.

It has been a challenge knowing how to address the COVID-19 crisis in my role of parish priest. Yet the reality has been that kindness, empathy and resilience have prevailed. It is these virtues that will finally beat the coronavirus. For the most part, the human spirit has won through. I see it in my neighbours, my friendship groups, across the nation and beyond. Despite the awful times of isolation, anxiety and loss, people have found a way through, possibly recognising parts of themselves which had been buried, opening internal doors leading to new-found treasures.

For parish news, services and events go to our website: www.stmichaels-summertown.org.uk

Join the crowd, sign up to **Gavin's WEEKLY BLOG FOR ALL SEASONS:** www.gavinknight.me