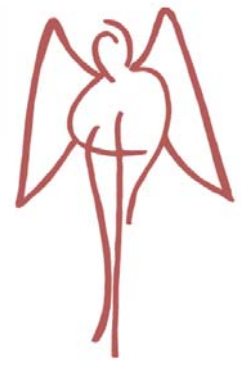


the guardian angel

your community's news & views



Produced for the parish of St Michael & All Angels, Summertown
June 2022

A very local welcome



When the Al Hasan family arrived at Heathrow from Iraq this year they were greeted by a small group from St Michael's Church, Summertown, waving a banner saying 'welcome' in Arabic. After more than a year's preparation there were huge smiles all round.

Oxford Welcomes Refugees was formed in 2020 to help resettle refugees fleeing conflict through the Community Sponsorship Programme. It has since satisfied the Home Office and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees that it is able to resettle a vulnerable family who had experienced war and discrimination. Training and safeguarding checks have been completed, funds raised (local people helped raise over £20,000), and one Summertown resident has offered a beautiful house in Cowley at a reduced rent for the family to live in. It has been a true community effort.

For the family, arriving in Britain was just the first step of another, longer journey with the continuing support of OWR. The group has helped them apply for benefits, register with a GP, set up bank accounts, find schools, and – perhaps the biggest task of all – begin learning English.

Alyson Peberdy, Chair of Oxford Welcomes Refugees, says: 'Community sponsorship is often hard work, but it is incredibly worthwhile. In the UK it is also one of the few safe ways for refugees to come to a safe place.'

Since March the British public, appalled by the violence inflicted on ordinary citizens in Ukraine, has demanded even more direct ways of welcoming people into their communities. The situation is changing constantly but it is safe to say that many more helping hands will be needed locally to offer advice and support for both guests and hosts in future.

For more information see:

www.oxfordwelcomesrefugees.co.uk

Budget hotel for Summertown



The newly built easyHotel on Banbury Road opened in December last year and is already becoming part of the local landscape. The building replaced a 1960s garage and office block and features shops at ground floor level, while the next four floors provide 180 hotel rooms and six residential maisonettes to replace five lost from the former building. Majestic Wine has returned to its old site on the ground floor, joined by a crêpe café - Crepeaffair - and Terzetto, a shop specialising in natural stone and porcelain tiles.

The planning application for the hotel received over 400 complaints with issues ranging from the size of the building to concerns over parking. Now the hotel is complete, although it is arguably a storey too high for the architectural landscape, the choice of bricks is in keeping with Summertown's traditional architecture and, unlike reinforced concrete, their texture and colour should weather well. The space in front of the shops with its street art, trees and places to sit provides a more interesting frontage than the previous situation of cars parked behind a chain link fence.

The building meets BREEAM (Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method) standards, and the efficient use of water and energy should be superior to buildings built before 2000.

The hotel has 14 parking spaces, but it is thought that most guests will use the Park and Ride or arrive by public transport.

The hotel hopes to provide reasonably priced accommodation not just for tourists and parents dropping off their student children, but also for local people who might need extra space to put up guests.

www.easyhotel.com/hotels/united-kingdom/oxford/oxford



The origins of Summertown

Alastair Lack writes: Perhaps the first question is: why Summertown? The name was chosen by James Lambourne, a horse dealer from Cumnor, who built the first house in the area in 1820. He chose Summertown after 'the best season of the year' and because it was 'the pleasantest place in England, in fact in the world'.

Before then there were just three tracks going into Oxford from the north west: the way from Woodstock, from Banbury, and Middle Road. There was only one building: an inn called Diamond Hall, described as a den of highwaymen in the 1760s.



By 1832 Summertown had grown, and consisted of a line of houses along the eastern side of Banbury Road, with gardens at the front, plus a few large houses for successful traders, either

to live in or as an investment as land was cheap. Later in the century more houses were built not only for Oxford dons (when they were allowed to marry and needed a family home), but also for the increasing numbers of Oxford city professionals and prosperous tradesmen.

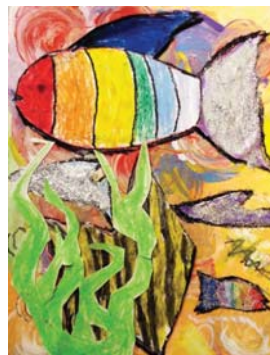
The first church, St John's, was built on the corner of Middle Way and what is now Rogers Street in 1832. It was replaced by the larger St Michael and All Angels Church in Lonsdale Road in 1909 and was demolished in 1924.

As the population grew, so Summertown became effectively a suburb of Oxford, with mains water and drainage. By 1900, the west side of Banbury Road became the first shopping centre, with the ground floor and front gardens of some houses turning into shops.

In the years that followed the area saw the addition of schools, small-scale industry, pubs, some large market gardens, and much else. In short it became the Summertown we recognise today.

Cutteslowe family art club

Every Monday afternoon during term time a group of enthusiastic young artists meets at the Cutteslowe Community Centre for an hour after school. They draw, paint, make sculptures out of clay and create multimedia collages using a wide range of materials including tissue paper and wool. The club is open to children aged 4 to 11 and their families, so parents and carers are welcome to stay too.



Collage by Peter Esemuze

Participants are encouraged to engage with their imaginations and improve their sensory and motor skills, as well as discuss their work, and make new friends. Community artist and art therapist Helen Edwards, who

facilitates the class, says: 'It's great to create a space where children can tap into their creativity and slowly start to blossom.'

Contact: cutteslowecca@gmail.com or 01865 311172

yourstruly... Joe Shuter

Charity manager and volunteer artistic director



Joe is manager at the North Oxford Association community centre. He grew up in Oxford and attended The Cherwell School before studying drama and film at Aberystwyth University. Various front of house roles followed at the Oxford Playhouse and at the Pegasus Theatre, where he was

duty manager for eight years. He joined NOA in 2018.

Joe's love of theatre began when, aged 10, he joined the North Oxford Youth Theatre. He relished being part of a creative team and using drama to tell stories. In his spare time Joe now volunteers for NOYT as an artistic director and this year he is directing their summer shows. He loves the energy and humour of the young actors and enjoys watching them develop into confident teenagers.

There are many volunteer roles available at NOYT - from director to someone who serves drinks at performances and everything in between. For more information contact: noyinfo@gmail.com

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Housewarming with LCON

Low Carbon Oxford North (LCON) has launched 'HouseWarming' - a new initiative providing information and support for householders who want to reduce their energy costs and carbon footprint. There's a series of five concise and well-illustrated guides to the key steps



in the process, all available on the website. Subjects covered include: taking stock of the house; planning a renovation pathway; improving insulation and ventilation; and non-gas

heating - most likely by an air source heat pump. Also, LCON has created a support network where members can meet collectively or individually, in person or online, to discover what others have done, share ideas, and get impartial advice. **Sign up on:** <https://lcon.org.uk/> or **by emailing:** info@lcon.org.uk

See also: Green Open Homes week 22nd to 29th June, and the Oxford Eco-Renovation Fair 26th June.

Sustainability in action

Summertown Tailoring is a new, family-run business on South Parade. It was set up by Mustafa Barcho, an energetic Kurdish entrepreneur who speaks four languages, has a 'can do' attitude and a passion for sustainability. Mustafa arrived in the UK as a refugee in 2000 and is now keen to offer work opportunities and motivation to other refugees. The shop can make, alter and mend clothes, bags, soft furnishings and upholstery. A laundry and cleaning service is also available. Sustainability is important so, rather than replacing a broken zip, the business will always try to mend it first, if possible. Mustafa also hopes to give talks to schools on how repairing and taking care of our belongings can help counter the effects of climate change.

Contact: 01865 512203



Cool for school

Record Oxbridge offers for Cherwell

A record 22 students from The Cherwell School have received offers from Oxford and Cambridge Universities this year in subjects ranging from engineering and natural sciences to Japanese and music.



English teacher and Academic Enrichment Coordinator, Charlotte Richer, said, 'We congratulate all the students who put themselves forward, took risks and embraced challenge and, regardless of the outcome of their university applications, we know they will go from strength to strength in all their next steps beyond Cherwell.'

Charity at home and abroad

Cotteslowe School families have been busy this term helping others, as well as raising money to improve the school playground. The school responded to the urgent need for help for Ukraine by collecting clothing and essential supplies, which were driven to Brize Norton to be delivered. There was a huge and generous response.

Many students also took part in a sponsored run, raising an amazing sum to add to other donations for the £13,000 required for new playground equipment. This total is now almost achieved.

Already in the playground is a separately funded wooden gazebo and decking area providing a quiet space where pupils can take their reading books, or a writing or drawing project, during playtime. There are also some new football goals, kindly donated by Summer Fields School.



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yourparish

St Michael & All Angels Church

All are welcome!

We are open for public worship but will keep Covid protocols so that people feel as safe as possible.

Sundays

8am: Holy Eucharist

Not during July or August. Traditional language; no hymns

10am: Parish Eucharist

With choir and hymns

For children:

On the first Sunday of the month the children participate in an all-age Eucharist. On the fourth Sunday of the month there is a special Godly Play session.

6.30pm: Taizé worship

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

Weekdays

Mondays to Fridays, 9am: Morning prayer

Tuesdays, 10.15am – noon: Baby and toddler group

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

Wednesdays, 11am – 2pm: The Friendship Centre

For Ukrainians and their hosts.

Thursdays, 5.30pm: Choristers' practice age 3+

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

Thursdays, 6.30pm: Choir practice

Contact Alice: [07791 328108](tel:07791328108)

First Saturday of the month, 8.30am: Men's breakfast

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

For enquiries about baptisms, weddings and funerals please email Gavin Knight:

vicar@stmaa.org.uk

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 Friendship Centre

The Vicar writes: In the light of the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis, the church is ready to be more than just a building or a group of people. This is a church without walls, offering a place of sanctuary and welcome to the traumatised and displaced. St Michael & All Angels has opened as a Friendship Centre for our Ukrainian friends and their hosts. Our vision is to provide a safe space, food, activities, advice and tutoring. People from all over the community are offering their skills and time to help in whatever way they can.



If you wish to help, the Friendship Centre opens each Wednesday.

Contact: ukraine@stmaa.org.uk

FairPlay's cooling tower



Suzanne Dalton and granddaughters

Look out for this colourful tower outside the Summertown shops this summer! It's painted in angry reds and oranges at the bottom and cool greens and blues towards the top, and decorated with animals, birds and insects. The local social justice network, FairPlay, is using it, together with a family quiz, to talk with shoppers about climate change and how 'cool' they think they are. People then decide where to put an emoji of themselves - sad or smiley - on the tower: cool ones (walking, recycling and saving energy), near the top, and not so cool ones lower down. The message? The cooler, the better!

Biodiversity in the church garden



The garden team at St Michael's is working to improve the biodiversity of the church garden. More than 400 bulbs have been planted, not only to bring cheer in spring but also to provide pollen and nectar for early-flying insects. The blossom of

two new trees – a hawthorn and a crab-apple - will encourage pollinators and the fruit will attract birds later in the year; and the triangle of grass near the Threshold is being left unmown until June to increase the number of plant and invertebrate species. Two sections of the lawn have been sown with wildflower seeds, and honeysuckle has been planted on the east fence. All this should be of great value for wildlife as well as a delight for passers-by!

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