

Homeshare brings people together

In Summertown and our wider society there are many older people, single or partnered, who would enjoy some company, appreciate a bit of help around the house, or be reassured by an overnight presence. At the same time, many younger people struggle to find affordable accommodation and would like living with an older person.

Homeshare Oxford, a service of Age UK Oxfordshire, addresses this problem, matching older householders with younger people who need accommodation and can lend a hand for up to ten hours a week. By agreement this could include shopping, computer assistance, light housework, and just spending time together over a meal or cup of tea. Personal care is not involved.

Interested potential householders and sharers



Different generations can learn from and help each other

register with Homeshare who carefully vet all applicants and meet them, separately at first, to discuss their needs and preferences. As Homeshare Oxford manager, Marian Pocock says: 'A

successful Homeshare match depends on finding the right person for the right person! We take great care to do this and have a good track record of getting it right. When we identify a potentially good match, we set up and attend a meeting with both parties, who ultimately make the decision to go ahead or not.' If everyone agrees to proceed, an agreement is made for a minimum of nine months, which also includes the modest amount the sharer will pay the householder to cover additional household costs. Once the share has started, the Homeshare team will keep in touch and provide any necessary support. Both householder and sharer pay a small monthly fee to Homeshare.

Since the onset of Covid, Homeshare has seen an increase in enquiries. It continues to welcome applications, and is taking all necessary steps to minimise any risk from Covid during the application and moving-in process, and beyond. **See:**

www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/homeshare-oxford or contact:
homeshare@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk; 01865 410670

Community larder in Cutteslowe

The Cutteslowe Community Larder started out earlier this year in response to the Covid-19 crisis as a food support service based at the Cutteslowe Community Centre. It has now been transformed into a club with a much wider scope, helping to reduce food waste and cultivate a strong sense of



Tracey Chantier with the fresh produce

community, as well as supporting those who are struggling. Membership is open to everyone in the community and is not means tested. Members pay a regular sum of either £3.50 or £7 a week. For £3.50 they can choose 10 store cupboard items and as

much fresh food as they like every week. The higher amount gives them 20 store cupboard items and, again, unlimited fresh food.

The larder stocks tinned and packaged food like cereals and pasta and a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables. All the food is of good quality and within its sell-by-date. Much of it is donated by supermarkets and collected by SOFEA - the South Oxford Food and Education Academy - and their partners FAIR-share. Some food is also provided by 'food drives' run by local organisations such as The Seven Roads Group. Individual donations are also welcome.

Many members like Liz Patterson are also volunteers. Liz says: 'I love meeting people in my community. It's a place to touch base, it's not just a larder.'

Tom Murray, co-director and local priest says: 'In future we hope to offer other services such as advice about debt and housing.'

The larder is open on Wednesdays from 2 to 4pm. If you are unable to attend because you are self-isolating contact:

cutteslowecommunitylarder@gmail.com or for more information about joining, donating or volunteering contact: tom.murray@standrewsoxford.org or 07851 600778



Charithra Chandran and Tom Murray with other items



Christmas carols

The very first 'carols' weren't linked to Christmas at all. They were dancing songs, part of the oral tradition, sung for fun when people got together. It wasn't until after the Reformation that some of those tunes started to find their way into church.



Our oldest carols are now a fascinating patchwork of music and verse, with many changes made over the course of time.

O come, all ye faithful, for example, started out as a Latin hymn in the 1740s. Verses were added and taken away both before and after it was translated into English in the following century. The words were set to different tunes too. At one time there were at least 50 versions.

Often new "Christmassy" words were paired with much older tunes. *O Little Town of Bethlehem* was written by a nineteenth century American bishop, but we sing his words to the tune of an old English folk song whose first line was originally: 'I am a ploughboy stout and strong'.

Our oldest carol has stayed closer to its roots. *The Boar's Head*, first recorded in 1521, has been sung at The Queen's College in Oxford every Christmas for centuries, and it is still more concerned with feasting than with the birth of Jesus.

Even when the original writer was known, people felt free to make changes. Charles Wesley's carol of 1739 began, 'Hark how all the welkin rings!' and yet, within twenty years and much to Wesley's disapproval, the line had been changed to the more familiar: 'Hark, the herald-angels sing'.

Perhaps it is this streak of anarchy that gives carols their special appeal; they are truly the people's songs and, whether we're singing them ourselves or listening to others sing, there's no doubt that Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without the sound of Christmas carols.

With thanks to Andrew Gant whose fascinating book: 'A History of our Favourite Christmas Carols from Village Green to Church Choir' is published by Profile Books.

SHARE Oxford – a library of things

If you don't want to clutter up your home with equipment you'll hardly ever use, SHARE Oxford's library of things at 1 Aristotle Lane could be for you. Organiser Maurice Herson explains: 'We have 575 items available for loan. It's a great way of reducing waste and increasing



Cargo bike - for loan or to transport loaned items

access to good quality things.' Most items are donated and popular loans include carpet cleaners, power drills and gazebos. The library also runs repair cafés where you can take faulty items to be renovated while enjoying coffee and a chat. The organisation is entirely voluntary and is

currently looking for a publicity coordinator and another 'librarian'.

For information about borrowing, donating or volunteering see: www.shareoxford.org or email: libraryofthings@shareoxford.org

yourstruly... William Whyte

Historian, priest and professor

Local resident William Whyte grew up in Suffolk. His



fascination with architectural history brought him to Oxford where he gained three degrees, becoming Professor of Social and Architectural History at St John's College in 2017. William started attending church at university and in 2006 was ordained as a minister in the Church of England. He is currently Associate Minister at St Peter's Church, Wolvercote.

William is also chair of the Oxford Preservation Trust. The trust runs the successful Open Doors weekend, influences planning decisions, and is currently helping to restore the old Lyndsey's butcher's units in the Covered Market, which date back to 1840. William enjoys having the opportunity to contribute to the enhancement and protection of our architectural environment, and to increase education about our city.

www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk

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Local beers for local people

Steve Baker and Ade Pugh, who both live locally, discovered their shared interest in home-brewed beer when they met at the Oxford Town Beer Festival in 2018. Now they have set up The Heavy Water Brewing Company making fresh, unfiltered, artisan beers with names like *Cloud Chamber* and *Element 79* which reflect the science behind the craft. There are currently six types of beer available with more on the way. As Steve explains: 'It's all about experimenting and developing different styles and flavours.' The beers are low in food miles as they are designed and manufactured locally. Steve and Ade have a stall at the Summertown Sunday Market and their beer is available in local off-licences. Next year they plan to deliver directly to local customers by bike.

www.heavywaterbrewing.co.uk



COOK - a helping hand

When Richard and Kristie Davies first visited the COOK headquarters in 2011 Kristie says they were blown away by the quality of the cooking: 'All the food is made employing the same ingredients and techniques that



you would at home, using huge saucepans with spoons like paddles.' The couple have been running the COOK shop in Summertown ever since, selling over 350 frozen dishes from dinner party desserts to vegan curries. The shop offers home

deliveries, click and collect, and counter service. Richard and Kristie are keen to help out locally too. This year they have supported two local charities, Daybreak and Aspire, and they are currently donating meals to the Oxford Food Bank. As Kristie says: 'Good food is vitally important to wellbeing.'

www.cookfood.net

Cool for school

Our schools have faced many challenges this term but they and their students have continued undaunted.

Interview practice online

Year 11 students at The Cherwell School took part in virtual practice interviews with a number of local employers. This was a first for the school and a really useful and positive experience for the students. The interviewers reported that they were impressed by how articulate and confident the Cherwell students were.



Freddie's fundraiser



Like many charities, Christian Aid was unable to make street or door-to-door collections this year, so when local schoolboy, Freddie Morris, heard they were looking for volunteers to take part in a sponsored abseil down St Mary Magdalen's church tower he decided to give it a go. Eleven-year-old Freddie was the youngest participant and had never abseiled before. He said: 'Letting go of the side was really

scary, but it got better as I worked my way down.' Freddie raised over £1,330 and was awarded a gold medal by Christian Aid.

A problem shared

Members of the peer listening team at St Edward's School have been making sure their fellow students know they are available to lend a listening ear. They have put up posters, organised a special baking event, and made 'thank you' cards to recognise acts of kindness. Students can share their problems - big or small - in confidence with one of the team of specially trained sixth formers.



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yourparish

Belonging to the Summertown-Wolvercote Church Partnership

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

These are the services currently planned for December but please check website for updates:
www.stmichaels-summertown.org.uk

Sundays

8am: Holy Eucharist
Traditional language, no hymns

10am: Parish Eucharist
With choir and hymns.
You can also watch this service live or view later on
www.facebook.com/stmichaelssummertown

6.30pm: Contemplative prayer
A short, meditative candlelit service with chants and silent prayer.

Weekdays

9am Mondays to Fridays: Morning prayer

6.30pm Thursdays: Choir practice

The Baby and Toddler Group is currently suspended but if parents or carers would like to discuss ways of keeping in touch, please email Clare Leal:
curate@stmichaels-summertown.org.uk.

Christmas services

20th December, 6.30pm: Candelight carols

24th December, 4pm: Crib service in The Threshold
NB There will be no Midnight Mass this year.

Christmas Day, 8am: Said Eucharist
10 am: Eucharist of the Nativity of Our Lord

A limited number of bookings can be made for Candelight carols and Crib service only.

Contact: office@stmichaels-summertown.org.uk

All Christmas services can be watched live or viewed later on www.facebook.com/stmichaelssummertown

Contact details

The Revd Gavin Knight (vicar)
The Vicarage, 33 Lonsdale Road, OX2 7ES
07833 251939

***'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;
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

Meet Clare Leal



Clare joined St Michael's in 2019 as a part-time, self-financing curate to learn, under Gavin's supervision, the skills required of a priest. Clare grew up in Kent and has worked in social housing for many years. In 2000 Clare became an oblate (lay person) connected to the Community of St Mary the Virgin in Wantage, and it was following a pilgrimage to Spain that she felt called to become a priest. After

much discussion and heart searching, she began training and was ordained as a deacon in 2019. At St Michael's Clare has had the opportunity to conduct services, write sermons and get involved with pastoral work. In September she was ordained as a priest and so is now authorised to celebrate communion. Clare looks forward to helping build a local church community that serves all ages. She explains: 'Spiritual life is important and needs to be nurtured.'

Being present this Christmas

The Vicar writes:

Many of us are fretting about how to celebrate Christmas this year and wondering about the changes we will have to make. Like most families, our church has had to address similar questions and, like others, we will use technology to try to be present for those who are unable to join us this Christmas. We will be streaming services live online and they will also be recorded and stored so you can visit them whenever you like.

We hope that people will join us online for candlelight carols, the crib service and the Christmas Day celebrations and, although we know that the virtual experience is not quite the same as 'being there', we believe that God will still be found through this virtual dimension.

At the heart of the Christian message is the reality of God being in the world in the form of Jesus. This is what we celebrate at Christmas. So, although we may not all be able to meet in person this year, we can still joyfully celebrate the presence of God in our lives.

www.facebook.com/stmichaelssummertown
www.youtube.com/channel/UCFx4HGfklx1GCGp9Sc2oNAg



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